



COA Bulletin

Volume 37, No. 2
Summer 2022

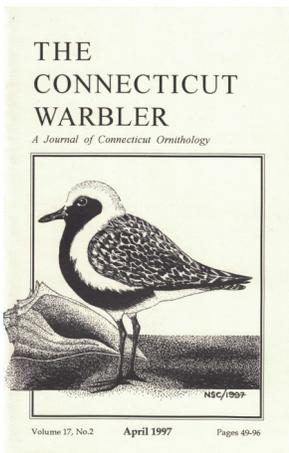
Connecticut Ornithological Association

2022 Summer Bird Count

Tom Robben

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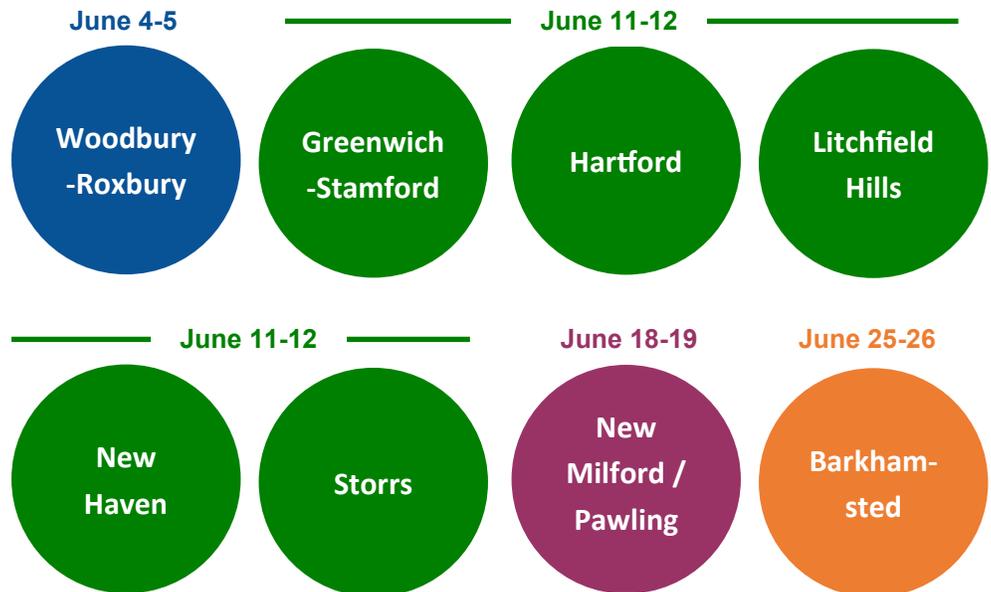
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COA is an all volunteer organization with the mission of promoting interest in Connecticut birds, and collecting, preparing, and disseminating the best available scientific information on the status of Connecticut birds and their habitats. While COA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

The eight June Summer Bird Counts (SBCs) in Connecticut are just a few weeks away. The schedule (see below and next page) is very similar to last year. Please contact your SBC compiler(s) to join one or more of these efforts. These counts are very similar to Christmas Bird Counts, on those same 15-mile circles, except that they are run in June, the crucial time of year when most birds are breeding here. It is very important to continue these long time series of breeding bird counts, since they are one of the best ways for us to measure the changing populations of our birds. These changes can be a good index of clean air, clean water and the overall health of our natural and human environment in CT.

Fortunately Connecticut is the one state that has an unbroken set of annual SBC data going back to around 1990 for most counts (thanks to Joe Zeranski and the local SBC compilers), plus Greenwich-Stamford SBC data going back 46! years to 1976 (thanks to Tom Burke and Gary Palmer) and Woodbury-Roxbury going back to 1978 (thanks to Ed Hagen and Russ Naylor). This multi-decade set of SBC bird data gives us a good view of some long-term changes in our bird life and our environment.



SUMMER BIRD COUNT DATES AND CONTACTS

FIRST WEEKEND: **JUNE 4-5**

Woodbury-Roxbury. Contact: **Russ Naylor**, 44 Church St., Woodbury, CT 06798; 203 841-7779. (both June 4 & 5 ok, but June 5 is preferred).

SECOND WEEKEND: **JUNE 11-12**

Greenwich-Stamford. Contact: **Thomas Burke**, 235 Highland Rd., Rye, NY 10580; 914 967-4922, thomaswardburke@gmail.com, and **Gary Palmer**, 34 Field Rd., Cos Cob, CT 06830; 203 661-4897, geilpalmer@yahoo.com

Hartford. Contact: **Jay Kaplan**, 71 Gracey Rd., Canton, CT 06019; 860 693-0157, jaybrd49@aol.com

Litchfield Hills. Contact: **David Tripp Jr.**, 97 Hunter Court, Torrington, CT 06790; dtrippjr@gmail.com

New Haven. Contact: **Steve Mayo**, 27 Tuttle Court, Bethany, CT 06524; 203 551-1707, rsdmayo@sbcglobal.net

Storrs. Contact: **Steve Morytko**, 288 Varga Rd., Ashford, CT 06278; 860 680-5728, smorytko@yahoo.com, [note, this is a shift from last year]

THIRD WEEKEND: **JUNE 18-19**

New Milford / Pawling. Contact: **Angela Dimmitt**, PO Box 146, Sherman, CT 06784; 860 355-3429, angeladimmitt@aol.com

FOURTH WEEKEND: **JUNE 25-26**

Barkhamsted. John Marshall and Dave Rosgen. Contact: John Marshall, 60 Wilson Dr., Watertown, CT 06795; 203 232-4393, johnmarshall47@gmail.com (alternate: d.rosgen@outlook.com)



2022 COA Annual Meeting Wrap-Up

The 38th annual meeting of COA was held (via virtual format, once again) on Saturday, March 19th, 2022. COA President Tom Robben reviewed the events of 2021, highlighting the many ways that COA serves the birding community of the state. The winners of the Mabel Osgood Wright Award (Paul Fusco) and the Betty Kleiner Award (Julian Hough) were announced (further details on the following page). Coincidentally, both have worked together on the graphic design for one of Connecticut's most important annual ornithological publications, *The Connecticut State of the Birds*.

President's Awards were given to Steve Broker, Nick Bonomo, Angela Dimmitt, Maureen Wolter, and Dave Provencher, in recognition of their service as board members and other contributions to CT birding, and to Cynthia Ehlinger for her excellent administration of the COA web site and Denise Jernigan for her fine service as COA secretary. The mini-grant award recipients were announced (see details elsewhere in the issue). The George W. Zepko Scholarship was given to teen birders Jonathan Wright-Goodison and Connor Lehmacher to attend the National Audubon Society's summer camp at Hog Island, Maine. The new additions to the board were voted in by the members: Rick Gedney (Madison), Emily Keating (Norwalk), Dave Woolery (Norwalk), Joanne Fasciolo (Norwalk), and Adam Fasciolo (Norwalk).

The COA business meeting was followed by keynote speaker and renowned sea bird researcher George Divoky from Seattle, Washington, and Cooper Island, Alaska. Dr. Divoky discussed his long-term study of Mandt's Black Guillemots, an ice-obligate seabird, on Cooper Island, 35 km east of Point Barrow, Alaska. Begun in 1975, his



research offers the longest continuous seabird study in the Arctic and its findings on the consequences of reductions in snow and sea ice to seabird demographics and breeding provide some of the best examples of the long-term biological consequences of climate change. Members who missed the meeting are encouraged to view George's fascinating presentation on the members-only section of the COA web site.

2022 COA Award Recipients

Mabel Osgood Wright Award—Paul J. Fusco

Denise Jernigan

The Mabel Osgood Wright Award is presented annually to a person or persons in Connecticut who have made a significant contribution to the knowledge, study, and conservation of birds. This year's award is presented to Paul Fusco of Oxford, CT. Paul has used his significant photographic, research and writing talents to produce over 150 articles for Connecticut Wildlife magazine in the past 25 years, documenting the history and importance of our state's birds, animals, fish, reptiles, insects, and plants. In his position as an Environmental Analyst at CT DEEP, he has contributed significantly to programs bringing the beauty and value of birds and wildlife to the public. Paul served on the COA Board of Directors from 1991 to 1997, serving on the Conservation and Executive Committees. COA is honored to present this award to Paul Fusco for his significant contributions to the documentation, study, and conservation of Connecticut's birds.



Betty Kleiner Award—Julian Hough

Denise Jernigan

The Betty Kleiner Award recognizes a deserving author or artist in the field of ornithology, and was presented this year to Julian Hough of New Haven, for his article, "Identification of Dowitchers in Juvenile and Non-breeding



Plumages" in the October 2021 issue of The Connecticut Warbler. Julian's article tackles the difficult task of distinguishing Long-billed Dowitcher versus Short-billed Dowitcher in juvenile and non-breeding plumages, a daunting identification challenge for even the most skilled birder. His clear explanations of the key differences are illustrated with his own excellent photographs, and backed up with thorough research and consultation with other expert birders. Congratulations to Julian Hough for a fine and valuable piece of writing

“Lights Out Connecticut” to Help Protect Millions of Migratory Birds

In mid-April, the Connecticut Ornithological Association launched its new [Lights Out Connecticut](#) initiative to help save migratory birds in the state of Connecticut. Connecticut is now the fourth state in the nation, after Colorado, Georgia, and Texas, to have a dedicated statewide “Lights Out” program. Through Lights Out Connecticut, residents, businesses, schools, and building managers pledge to turn off non-essential exterior lighting each night from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. during periods of peak bird migration.

Because most migratory birds in North America travel at night, artificial light from buildings and other structures can attract and disorient them, leading them off course into fatal window collisions. The result is catastrophic: an [estimated 355-988 million bird deaths in the United States each year](#).

“Our decisions about lighting matter to the millions of migratory birds who rest and nest in Connecticut each year,” said **Craig Repasz**, Co-chair of [Lights Out Connecticut](#) and long-time Hamden resident. “While our cities’ bright lights present a risk to birds, it also means that our state has the opportunity to make a tremendous impact to save wildlife just by turning out lights.”

The launch event drew representatives from many of Connecticut’s leading bird and wildlife conservation groups, including the Audubon Connecticut, Connecticut Audubon Society, Conte Urban Partnership, Hartford Audubon Society, the New Haven Bird Club and the Menunkutuck Audubon Society — as well as faculty and students of Yale Divinity School, Yale Law School, the Yale School of the Environment, the Yale Peabody Museum and St Joseph University.

Viveca Morris, Associate Research Scholar in Law and the Executive Director of the Law, Ethics & Animals Program at Yale Law School, presented on her multiyear bird mortality studies at Yale School of Management’s Edward P. Evans Hall. In partnership with colleagues and the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, she has documented that Evans Hall, constructed almost entirely of glass, is responsible for more than 430 bird deaths since 2018—including many species of concern.

Participants discussed the links between bird collisions and lighting — and planned through the new [Lights Out Connecticut website](#) to offer a place where local residents can commit to turning off lights during migration and report bird fatalities across Connecticut.

“Birds are an important part of our ecosystem. They eat pests, move seeds around, fertilize the soil, and provide us with beautiful birdsong,” said **Meredith Barges**, Lights Out Connecticut Co-Chair and Yale Divinity School student. “But as their numbers decline, they desperately need our help. I encourage everyone to do their part to switch off lights this spring to help save birds.”

Cities like Stamford and New Haven are situated along the Atlantic Flyway, an important migratory path for birds. Millions of birds that move along and across the Long Island Sound depend on safe passage through Connecticut to reach their nesting and wintering grounds. Excessive artificial lighting makes their long-distance journeys more difficult and dangerous.

“Darkening our night sky for Lights Out Connecticut is an important step toward making our state safer for birds and other wildlife,” said **Bob Pattison**, Vice President of the Connecticut chapter of the International Dark Sky Association. “Our good stewardship of the night sky can not only save birds and trim our energy bills but also make a big difference for human health. We benefit from less light pollution too!”

To learn more about this effort, visit www.lightsoutct.org

Spring Rarity Gallery



Short-billed Gull, Long Beach
(Jason Rieger, 20 Mar 2022)



Slaty-backed Gull, Long Beach
(Patrick Comins, 18 Mar 2022)



Arctic Tern, Bantam Lake – Point Folly
(Abby Sesselberg, 13 May 2022)



Say's Phoebe, Sikorsky Memorial Airport
(Bruce Finnan, 21 Mar 2022)



Prothonotary Warbler, Birdcraft Sanctuary
(Michael Richardson, 14 May 2022)



Kentucky Warbler, East Rock Park
(Cody Limber, 9 May 2022)

2022 Mini-Grant Recipients

- 🦅 **Meriden Natural Resources** was awarded \$800 to to build a Chimney Swift tower using community youth .
- 🦅 **Sue Frisch** was awarded \$1,000 for a project to restore a heron rookery.
- 🦅 **Simsbury Land Trust** was awarded \$300 for a habitat improvement project.
- 🦅 **Southington Land Trust** was awarded \$400 to restore habitat with native plants.
- 🦅 **Sam Merker**, a post-doc at UConn, was awarded \$675 for an American Bittern study (under supervision of Chris Elphick and Min Huang).
- 🦅 **Nancy James** received an award of \$300 to educate about the hazards of fishing line.
- 🦅 **Wendy Kovar** was awarded \$600 for an Osprey platform and perch pole to be erected in Clinton.
- 🦅 **Canton Land Conservation Trust** was awarded \$400 for a pollinator pathway garden in their Peace Pole Park.
- 🦅 **Hart Magnet School** was awarded \$700 for urban school habitat revitalization.
- 🦅 **Pollinator Pathway Stamford** received \$500 in funding to plant songbird habitat at Chestnut Hill Park.
- 🦅 **Freedom First Wildlife Rehabilitation, Inc.** was awarded \$1,000 for a Barn Owl nest box project.

The Board approved \$7,500 for next year’s COA Mini-Grant budget.

COA Mini-Grant Committee

Kathy Van Der Aue (Chair), Angela Dimmitt, Chris Wood



Osprey nest platform funded by 2021 COA Mini-Grant



COA Facebook post by educator Laurie Does providing an update of 2021 COA Mini-Grant project on nest boxes for the Marvelwood School Purple Martin colony



Meet COA's 2022 George W. Zepko Hog Island Award Recipients

The George W. Zepko Scholarship Award goes to a deserving Connecticut secondary school student who has shown a great interest in birds and birding. The winner of the award attends the National Audubon Society's Hog Island Summer Camp in Maine.

Funding for the camp enrollment each year is made possible by a generous endowment from George Zepko, a lifelong Connecticut birder. George sadly passed away on August 14th last year. He will be missed by all. To honor George, an additional scholarship has been donated this year by Florence and Michael McBride. Several more of George's friends made donations in his honor, contributing to the other scholarship.

Winners of this year's George W. Zepko scholarship awards are:

Jonathan Wright-Goodison – Mountains to Sea Birding for Teens, June 26 – July 1, 2022

Conner Lehmacher – Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens, June 19-24, 2022.

Jonathan Wright-Goodison – West Hartford, CT



Jonathan attends William H. Hall High School in West Hartford. Since a young child Jonathan has been interested in nature, and he also loves to draw. In late elementary school, birds became the main subject of his interest in art. Jonathan has been fortunate to travel to Costa Rica and Jamaica with his family, and experience the nature there.

Conner James Lehmacher – New Milford, CT



Conner attends New Milford High School. He has been an active bird watcher since the age of 10. He became an Eagle Scout in January 2021. His merit badges include Bird Study, Environmental Science, Mammal Study, Camping and Nature.

Coming in August: Shorebird Workshop

Date, time and location to be determined.

Sharpen your shorebird identification skills when it is prime time to see shorebirds in the state. We hope to have an online or indoor presentation followed by outdoor field study. Stay tuned.



Twenty-Five Years Ago in *The Connecticut Warbler*

Compiled by Steve Broker

Volume 17, No. 2 (April 1997)

The Mabel Osgood Wright Award, by Milan Bull

Editor's Note: The following is the presentation by Milan Bull of the Mabel Osgood Wright Award at the annual meeting of the Connecticut Ornithological Association on March 29, 1997.

This award is open to all, professional and amateur, young or old, but to someone who has significantly added to our knowledge of Connecticut bird life. We are very pleased to make this year's award to Mr. Gordon Loery of Morris, Connecticut.

Mr. Loery has a long career in Connecticut conservation and ornithological research that began soon after his graduation from Harvard University in 1948 and the Yale University master's program in 1952 with degrees in biology and conservation, respectively.

Mr. Loery began his career working with the Connecticut River Watershed Council; he was a naturalist at the Greenwich Audubon Center, and for the last 40 years worked as Conservationist, Museum Director, and Research Director for the White Memorial Foundation, Litchfield Nature Center and Museum, and the White Memorial Conservation Center.

Although Mr. Loery has published and edited a number of papers and other publications, including Audubon Field Notes by the National Audubon Society, he is perhaps best known for his work over the last four decades with Black-capped Chickadees at the White Memorial Foundation.

[Ed's Note: Gordon Loery died in January 2021 at age 96. His master's degree was from the Yale Forest School (recently renamed the Yale School of the Environment), which was founded in 1900. His leadership in many civic and conservation organizations and his honorary awards are detailed in Miley Bull's tribute.]

Emissaries From the Sea, by Seth Kellogg

For better or worse, vagrants provide the stimulation the birding community craves. . . One clue to answering the question of why we crave vagrants may be the fact that many vagrant sightings turn into major communal events. One gets to see and visit with others who share your passion. Standing around in the cold and wind, waiting for the bird's arrival seems less absurd when others are doing it too. There is considerable humor at one's companions and one's own expense at such events. . . We marvel at how and where birds come and go, and we have learned that the weather has a lot to do with their movements. So we watch the weather. . . Birds that live almost entirely over the ocean are the most mysterious of all.

In August of 1976 and then in May of 1977, two storms passed directly over Connecticut and left my home town a gift from the gods of the earth and sea. The first was a hurricane named Belle that came up the Atlantic coast on August 8-9, 1976. The center of the storm took a path from Long Island across western Connecticut, veering to the east. It crossed the Massachusetts border at Southwick [where Seth Kellogg lived] early in the morning of August 10th. [Seth recounts his observations and those of a dozen other birders he called. The storm-driven birds included 15 Leach's Storm-Petrels, Laughing Gulls, and a Sanderling, seen in Massachusetts on the Congamond Lakes and in Connecticut on the Connecticut River.] The birds were tame and perhaps exhausted. They would allow us to approach [by small boat] within five feet before rising to the surface and fluttering fifty feet or so farther. After doing this once or twice, we learned to keep enough distance so as not to spook them.

The next spring on May 9-10, 1977 a massive storm moved up the Atlantic coast bringing high winds, torrents of

rain and finally, several inches of heavy, wet snow. In the Berkshire Hills trees already leafed out simply broke and crashed to the ground under nearly a foot or more of the heavy wet stuff. Late in the afternoon of the 10th I checked the Congamond Lakes again and found a Red-throated Loon and 31 Red-necked Grebes, resting on the churned up surface. [Seth Kellogg continues his recollections with description of his observations there of a shearwater on the water and in flight, with dark, muddy brown upperparts and completely black undertail. He and the dozen or so other birders he called identified this as an Audubon's Shearwater.]

It is important to say that such experiences with vagrants have made me more appreciative of common birds. Ovenbirds, Veerys, and even Downy Woodpeckers all share the same airspace as the vagrant. Our world needs to rediscover the sanctity of the common experience.

[Ed's Note: Forty-five years after Seth Kellogg's recounted field experiences, the subject of vagrancy remains a topic of considerable research. See *Vagrancy in Birds*, by Alexander Lees & James Gilroy, 2021, Princeton University Press.]

See also: The 1996-97 Connecticut Christmas Bird Count, by Stephen P. Broker; Books on Birds, by Alan H. Brush (a review of *Ecology and Evolution of Acoustic Communication in Birds*, by Donald Kroodsma and E.H. Miller, 1996, Cornell University Press); Connecticut Field Notes (Fall, August 1 to November 30, 1996), by Greg Hanisek, and; Photo Challenge, From the Editor (Betty S. Kleiner). The cover art of Black-bellied Plover is by Nancy Cleary. The April 1997 issue of *The Connecticut Warbler* can be seen in its entirety at the following link to the COA website. Download Volume 17, and view pages 49-96.

<https://ctbirding.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/CTWarblerVolume17.pdf>

Two More Spring Rarities!



Black-necked Stilt, Rocky Neck State Park
(Bruce Finnan, 23 May 2022)



Lark Sparrow, Hammonasset Beach State Park
(Monica Nichols, 22 May 2022)





Connecticut Ornithological Association

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www.ctbirding.org

COA OFFICERS

President	Tom Robben, Glastonbury, CT
Vice President	Chris Wood, Woodbury, CT
Secretary	Denise Jernigan, South Glastonbury, CT
Treasurer	Paul Wolter, Beacon Falls, CT

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Summer Bird Count Compilers	Tom Robben, Patrick Comins
Great Backyard Bird Count	Patrick Comins

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