



# COA Bulletin

Volume 38, No. 2  
Summer 2023

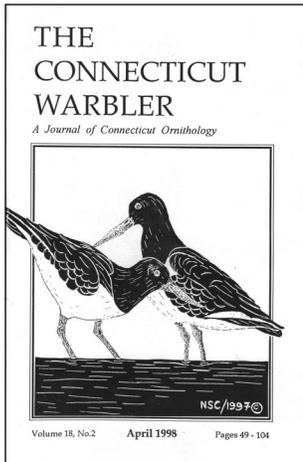
## Connecticut Ornithological Association

### 2023 Summer Bird Count

Tom Robben

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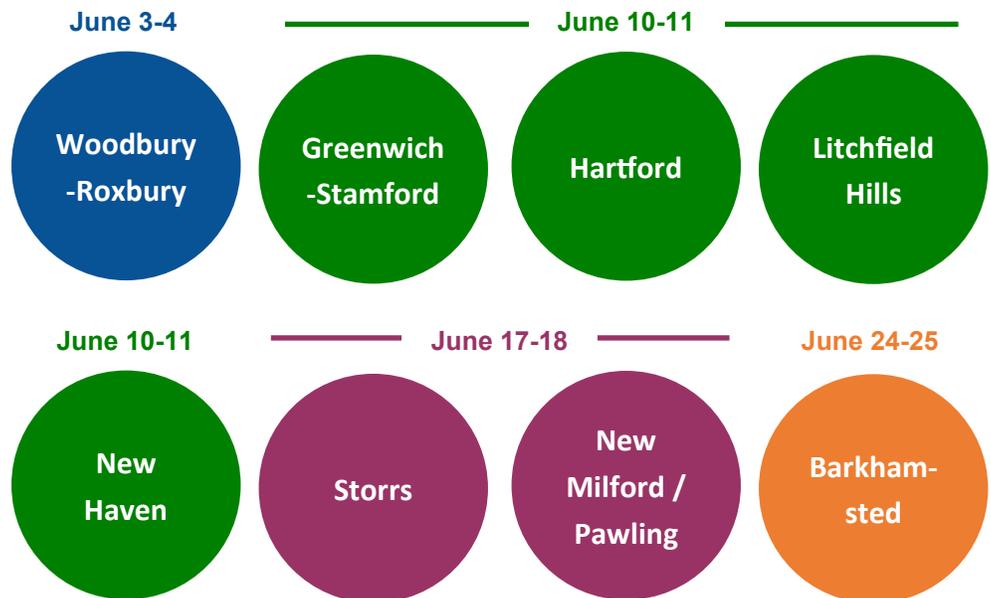
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COA is an all volunteer organization with the mission of promoting interest in Connecticut birds, and collecting, preparing, and disseminating the best available scientific information on the status of Connecticut birds and their habitats. While COA 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) is 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 environments 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 47 years to 1976 (thanks to Tom Burke and Gary Palmer) and Woodbury-Roxbury going back to 1978 (thanks to Ed Hagen, Russ Naylor, Chris Wood, Angela Dimmitt, et al.). 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 3-4

**Woodbury-Roxbury.** Contact: **Russ Naylor**, 44 Church St., Woodbury, CT 06798; 203 841-7779. (both June 3 & 4 ok, but June 4 is preferred).

### SECOND WEEKEND: JUNE 10-11

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

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

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

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

### THIRD WEEKEND: JUNE 17-18

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

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

### FOURTH WEEKEND: JUNE 24-25

**Barkhamsted. Dave Rosgen.** Contact: [d.rosgen@outlook.com](mailto:d.rosgen@outlook.com), and 959-202-8996 for text messages only. Participants should report all their SBC findings into eBird checklists, where Dave will retrieve them and compile the count. Backup contact for this SBC is Bianca Beland at [bianca.m.beland@gmail.com](mailto:bianca.m.beland@gmail.com) or text to her at 860-485-5776



**Connecticut  
Ornithological  
Association**

Baltimore Oriole, New Haven  
(John Oshlick, 14 May 2023)



## 2023 COA Annual Meeting Wrap-Up

The 39<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of COA was held via virtual format on Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023. COA President Tom Robben reviewed the events of 2022, highlighting the many ways that COA serves the CT birding community.

Noted accomplishments that have taken place in the last two years included: ongoing workshops and funding of camp scholarships and an increase in mini-grants for worthy projects. Also shared were a number of new initiatives that the COA is proud of, including: a new look for COA and *The Connecticut Warbler* designed by Julian Hough, saving trees and expenses by going to all digital with membership and with the COA Bulletin, an improved website, new CT Birds listserv moderator - Chuck Imbergamo, 2 Science Conferences, the Bird of the Month Project, and last but not least, the [Lights Out CT](#) Campaign led by Meredith Barges and Craig Repasz- a project of COA with the aim of helping millions of birds safely migrate through the state.

The winners of the Mabel Osgood Wright Award (Frank Mantlik) and the Betty Kleiner Award (Phil Rusch) were announced. The \$7,500 of Mini-Grants awarded to Recipients for 2023 were publicized, and the George W. Zepko Scholarship was given to Sophie McAndrew Chen of West Hartford. Further details for each can be found on following pages.

President Robben thanked COA members who have made notable contributions to the organization and the birding community in the past year. Thanks were given to those leaving the Board: Denise Jernigan, Andrew Dasinger, Frank Gallo, Craig Repasz, Larry Reiter and Kathy Van Der Aue; those not leaving the Board: Paul Wolter, all affiliates and all ARCC; and others: Cynthia Ehlinger, Steve Mayo, Miley Bull, Steve Broker, Frank Mantlik, Tina Green, Chris Wood, Guy Tudor, Tom Burk, Paul Buckley, Ces (Paul Cecil) Spofford (1894-1977), Joe Zeranski (1941-2019), Tom Davis (1944-1986) and Joe Hickey (1907-1993). Tom Robben emphasized how much these friends supported birding education, conservation and community.

The new additions to the board were voted in by the members (3-year terms): Joe Attwater, New London; Jim Hunter, Woodbury; Kimberly Jannerone, New Haven; Micky Komara (filling a one year vacancy), Westbrook; Bill Rankin, New Haven; and Dan Rottino, East Haddam.

The COA business meeting was followed by keynote speaker Jennifer Ackerman. Jennifer is an award winning science writer and *New York Times* bestselling Author. Her books include *The Genius of Birds*, *The Bird Way*, *Birds by the Shore*, and soon to be released, *What an Owl Knows* (June 2023). Her articles on science, nature, and health have appeared in such well known publications as *National Geographic*, *New York Times Magazine*, *Scientific American*, and many others. In an effort to better understand the feathered geniuses around us, Jennifer has traveled to places such as the beaches of Barbados and the rainforests of New Caledonia. She discussed her experiences and shared photos from her adventures. She explained how birds make and use their own tools, teach one another new skills, count, navigate, exercise astonishing feats of memory, create works of art, communicate in ways that resemble language, and even pass along cultural traditions. Members who missed the meeting are encouraged to view Jennifer's fascinating presentation on the members-only section of the COA web site.

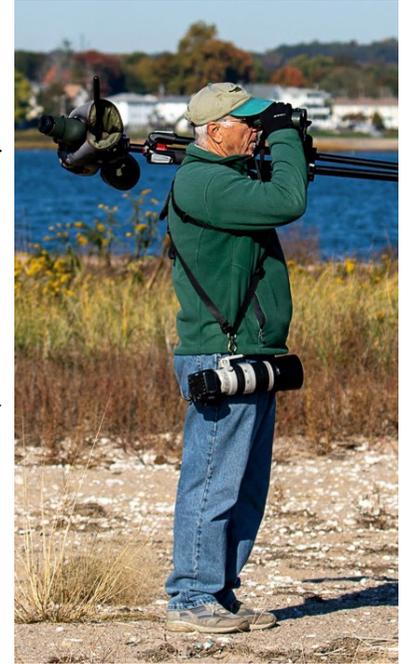


## 2023 COA Award Recipients

### Denise Jernigan and Chris Wood

#### Mabel Osgood Wright Award—Frank Mantlik

This award is presented annually to a person in Connecticut who has made a significant contribution to the knowledge, study, and conservation of birds. Frank Mantlik of Stratford has been an outstanding advocate for birds and birding for decades, generously sharing his impressive knowledge and understanding of birds and bird life, his fine photography, and his love of discovering new species with the entire community of bird and nature lovers. He has authored or contributed more than 30 articles in *The Connecticut Warbler*, including Connecticut Field Notes, ARCC reports, and Site Guides. He has discovered and documented the first state occurrences of Anhinga, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Bell's Vireo, and Pacific Golden-Plover. His bird photographs have appeared in Audubon, Natural History, The New York Times, American Birds, Birding, Field & Stream, Bird Watcher's Digest, and of course in *The Connecticut Warbler* and the COA Bulletin. He has served as President of COA from 1991-1993 and Vice-President from 1989-1991 and 2017-2018, has been a long-time member of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (and is now its Chair), ran COA's Rare Bird Alert (recorded weekly) for 10 years, and was a Regional Coordinator for the Connecticut Bird Atlas. COA is proud to honor its good friend Frank Mantlik with the 2023 Mabel Osgood Wright Award.



#### Betty Kleiner Award—Phil Rusch



This award honors the memory of Betty Kleiner, whose name is synonymous with *The Connecticut Warbler*, COA's flagship publication. It recognizes a deserving author or artist in the field of ornithology. This year's recipient of the Betty Kleiner Award is Phil Rusch of Chaplin, CT for his two articles, "First ARCC Historical Report," *The Connecticut Warbler*, Volume 42 Number 2, April 2022, and "2<sup>nd</sup> Historic Report of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut," *The Connecticut Warbler*, Volume 42 Number 3, July 2022. These two articles document an extraordinary review of historical records and specimens of rare (Review List) bird species found in Connecticut prior to 1985 and held by research collections. Phil's painstaking work of inspecting specimens and records dating back to 1849 at institutions in multiple locations has resulted in adding over 50 new records to the ARCC list of accepted records. These two Historic Reports have significantly expanded Connecticut's knowledge and understanding of its avian landscape. COA congratulates Phil and his colleagues on the ARCC for this accomplishment.

## A Message From Our New COA President - Chris Wood



Bird, Bird, Bird; Bird is the Word!

COA is forty years old this year and still giving Connecticut birders not only help with finding, identifying, and learning about birds in our state, but also providing scientific leadership in the field of ornithology. Birding has grown as an avocation, sometimes more than a hobby, sometimes only a pastime, but always a life-affirming activity. Recent developments, especially the programs at the Cornell University Lab of Ornithology, have greatly enhanced the tools available to learn about birds. At the same time, projects like eBird, Christmas and Summer bird counts, and locally sponsored studies, have turned many birders into avocational scientists. All to the benefit of birds and our opportunities to enjoy their company.

Ornithology and birding are not necessarily identical disciplines. But they are certainly compatible and synergistic. COA was founded with primary objectives that meld the science of bird study with the fun of birding, and nothing in our founding principles demotes birding or compels everyday birders to contribute to some inscrutable scientific database. Birding is about as personal an outdoor activity as we can have. Watching a feeder out your window, walking around your neighborhood with binoculars, hiking deep into the woods to find special birds, enduring snow and cold to record 20 species for your Christmas Count, or sitting in one spot for 12 hours to see what birds come by to laugh at you - these are all birding activities and some have scientific value. But all are enjoyable in the mind of the birder.

We are fortunate to live, or at least be able to go birding, in a relatively small state that supports a terrific diversity of birds – almost half of all birds recorded in the continental US have been confirmed here. And almost everywhere in Connecticut is pretty accessible from everywhere else (except Stonington when you live in Litchfield County!). Our birding community has been inspirational, comforting, and welcoming, providing friendships and support that goes beyond our common interest in birds. I like to think that at least some of that arises from the mission and activities of COA.

When I was studying biology way back in the 1970's, I took ornithology and related courses with Noble Proctor. These were not necessarily "Birding" classes, but the enthusiasm and experience Noble brought to his teaching led many of us to become life-long birders. I hope COA can similarly continue to inspire and support new as well as long-time birders.

I also hope that COA members will feel free to contact us with ideas ([contact@ctbirding.org](mailto:contact@ctbirding.org)), even criticisms if necessary, and we intend to reach out to the birding community for guidance in planning for the next 40 years of the Connecticut Ornithological Association. But meanwhile, just remember: "Bird is the Word!"

Chris Wood

President – Connecticut Ornithological Association

## Spring Rarity Gallery

As of **May 15th**, **250** bird species have been seen in CT!



Townsend's Solitaire, Madison  
(Barry Fasciano, 19 Feb 2023)



Stilt Sandpiper, Stratford  
(D. Noel Hawthorne, 6 Mar 2023)



Green-tailed Towhee, Fairfield  
(Michael Richardson, 9 April 2023)



Trumpeter Swan, Windham  
(David Funke, 13 Apr 2023)



American Avocet, Milford  
(William Batsford, 18 Apr 2023)



Black-legged Kittiwake, Barkhamsted  
(Jo Fasciolo, 6 May 2023)

## 2023 Mini-Grant Recipients

- ✦ **Brown Charitable Trust:** \$1,000 to increase the number of nesting boxes and feeders, replace older ones and purchase birdseed on property in Griswold, CT.
- ✦ **Litchfield Hills Audubon:** \$250 to expand pollinator gardens at Wigwam Brook in Litchfield, CT.
- ✦ **Avalonia Land Trust:** \$500 to install Screech Owl boxes on trust property.
- ✦ **Coalition for a Sustainable Cheshire:** \$500 for the Cheshire pollinator pathway.
- ✦ **Aaron Scott:** \$1,000 to establish a bird friendly ecosystem around a pond that he has restored which had a broken dam and sluice system.
- ✦ **Abington Cemetery Association:** \$500 to install 6 Bluebird boxes in the historic cemetery.
- ✦ **Horizon Wings:** \$500 to provide food and medical supplies for birds in rehabilitation.
- ✦ **Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy:** \$750 to expand the Litchfield Pollinator Pathway project within their 16-acre aviary.
- ✦ **Roaring Brook Nature Center:** \$1,000 for an avian ICU and oxygen. Concentrator
- ✦ **Woodcock Nature Center:** \$500 to install 5 nest boxes on its 150-acre preserve.
- ✦ **Simsbury Pollinator Pathway:** \$1,000 toward the long-term project making the Triangle Meadow in Simsbury into a protected grassland sanctuary.

**Mini-Grant Committee:** Allison Black (Chair), Melissa Baston, Angela Dimmitt, Miley Bull.

We received applications for projects totaling \$13,000.00 and were able to fund the projects listed above within our budget of \$7,500.00.

*COA Mini-Grant Committee*

Students at Marvelwood School in Kent continue to maintain Purple Martin houses and band them. COA Mini Grant update.



Chimney Swift Tower at Habershon Field in Meriden. COA Mini Grant 2022.



Pollinator Pathway in Stamford. COA Mini Grant 2022.



## Meet COA's 2023 George W. Zepko Hog Island Award Recipient

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.

Winner of this year's George W. Zepko scholarship awards is:

Sophie McAndrew Chen – Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens, June 2023.



### Sophie McAndrew Chen - West Hartford, CT

Sophie is a sophomore from the Kingswood Oxford School in West Hartford. Sophie became interested in birds in 6th grade around the time of the "Hot Duck" mandarin sightings in Central Park. She is a 4-year member of the Hartford Audubon and has participated in excursions to Station 43, Cedar Hill Cemetery, and Great Pond. She has also supported the Christmas Bird Count, Crow Count, Summer Bird Count, and Big January. She comes with glowing teacher recommendations. Sophie is eager to learn from expert birders and meet other young birders at the Hog Island Audubon Camp in Maine!

### COA Calendar of Events

Remember to check out our COA Calendar of Events for birding opportunities and workshops!

[COA Calendar of Events](#)

### Looking to test your birding skills?

Check out this Birding Quiz site!

[Birding Quiz](#)



*Let's Go Birding*

## **Twenty-Five Years Ago in *The Connecticut Warbler***

Compiled by Steve Broker

Volume 18, No. 2 (April 1998)

### **The Mabel Osgood Wright Award**

*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 28, 1998.*

The Mabel Osgood Wright Award is presented each year to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to Connecticut Ornithology. Education, research and public awareness are all areas in which individuals have made Connecticut a better place for birds and people.

This year the committee has taken a slightly different direction in making this award, in that this year's honor is awarded posthumously to Dr. Roger Tory Peterson. Dr. Peterson, who lived in Old Lyme for over 30 years, is certainly no stranger to any of us here.

Dr. Peterson was perhaps the best known naturalist of our time and a recipient of the United States's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, which he received in 1980 from President Carter. The inventor of the modern field guide, Dr. Peterson is best known for his *Field Guide to the Birds* and *A Field Guide to Western Birds*, which have taught countless millions since 1934, how to identify birds. The Peterson Field Guide Series, of which he was editor and sometimes author or illustrator, consists of about 50 titles on such diverse nature subjects as birds, butterflies, fishes, trees, mammals, animal tracks, stars, etc. His European bird guides have been translated into 14 languages.

[Ed's Note: Miley Bull "skims some of the highlights of [R.T. Peterson's] career over the last 60 or so years." These include Peterson's 1908 birth in Jamestown New York - the site of today's Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History - his training as an artist, and his place as "an internationally known lecturer, film maker, and photographer." Miley notes that Peterson was twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.]

### **A Connecticut Birding Year - Part 2, by David Provencher**

This installment of the year long series covers the months April through June. This period is one of great change in the birds present in Connecticut. A flood of migrants return to their northern breeding grounds. Some of these species will be Connecticut breeders while others will pass through on their way to more northerly territories. The returning breeders are full of song, and a working knowledge of bird songs and calls is immensely helpful.

[Ed's Note: Dave Provencher begins the article with a section called Understanding Migration: The Key to Spring Birding. Then, for each of the three months covered in this article, he provides an introduction, a general strategy for birding, and further discussion. Another heading is entitled Where, When, and Weather. The Advanced Birding Tip notes that "June is known as one of the best months for rarities to show up." Information is given on several audio products that would aid the improvement of birding by ear.]

### **Identification Notes: Stints and Sandpipers, Problems, Pitfalls, and Misconceptions, by Julian Hough**

In the last few decades, it is probably the small North American sandpipers, affectionately referred to as 'peeps', and Eurasian stints which have caused some of the most controversial and heated identification debates. That Little and Red-necked Stints are occurring in the northeast is hinted at by records of both species from New York and Massachusetts. The Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (ARCC) often receives reports of such rarities [as stints], but unfortunately many involve common species ['peeps'] in unfamiliar or extreme plumages. This

article hopes to inform the observer of some of the pitfalls and main identification criteria required to substantiate a claim of a stint. We hope that it will lead to an accepted record for Little and/or Red-necked Stint in Connecticut in the near future.

[Ed's Note: Julian Hough provides detailed information on the size and structure, head patterns, upper parts, underparts, and calls of Semipalmated Sandpiper, Little Stint, Western Sandpiper, and Red-necked Stint. His hope that Little Stint and Red-necked Stint soon would be added to the all-time Connecticut State List of Birds was fulfilled in a subsequent few years. The Tenth ARCC Report, published in the April 2001 issue of *TCW*, states: "An adult, representing a first state record [of Red-necked Stint], was discovered 29 Jul 2000 in a large flock of Semipalmated Sandpipers and other "peeps" on the tidal bars at Milford Point (Frank Gallo\*, Mark Szantyr, Greg Hanisek 00-20). Although the bird was in nearly full alternate plumage, it was tucked in among the flock and required careful and patient study by more than a dozen birders present before its identification was satisfactorily deduced. The intricacies of identifying small *Calidris* sandpipers are such that an almost feather-by-feather description is needed to satisfactorily confirm a rare species." Connecticut's first Little Stint was found by none other than Julian Hough. Here's part of the description of this sighting in the Thirteenth ARCC Report from the January 2008 issue of *TCW*: "An adult [Little Stint] was observed at Sandy Point, West Haven, on 1 & 5 Aug 2005 (06-12 Julian Hough). This is a first state record and probably one that was overdue. An adult in worn plumage presented a challenge that fortunately was met by a birder with extensive experience with the species as well as expertise in stint/peep identification."

See also in this issue of *The Connecticut Warbler*: Connecticut's 1997 Fall Hawk Migration, by Neil Currie; The 1997-1998 Connecticut Christmas Bird Count, by Stephen P. Broker; Books on Birds: Peterson Field Guide to the Warblers of North America, by Julian Hough; Connecticut Field Notes: Fall, August 1 to November 30, 1997, by Greg Hanisek; Photo Challenge, by Julian Hough. Cover art of American Oystercatchers is by Nancy Leary. The April 1998 issue of *The Connecticut Warbler* can be seen in its entirety at the following link to the COA website. Download Volume 18, and view pages 49-104.

<https://ctbirding.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/CTWarblerVolume18.pdf?x82746>

## Two More Spring Rarities!



Black-necked Stilt, Middlesex  
(Dan Rottino, 13 May 2023)



White-faced Ibis, Hammonasset Beach State Park  
(Kristin Mika, 13 May 2023)





# Connecticut Ornithological Association

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## COA OFFICERS

President	Chris Wood, Woodbury, CT
Vice President	Cynthia Ehlinger, Greenwich, CT
Secretary	Tom Robben, Glastonbury, CT
Treasurer	Paul Wolter, Beacon Falls, CT

## COA CHAIRPERSONS

Annual Meeting	Tina Green
Conservation	Emily Keating
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Membership	Dan Rottino
Avian Records	Frank Mantlik
Research	Tom Robben
Workshops	Allison Black
Mini-Grants	Melissa Baston
The Connecticut Warbler	Greg Hanisek
COA Bulletin	Jo Fasciolo
Christmas Bird Count Compiler	Steve Broker
Summer Bird Count Compilers	Tom Robben, Patrick Comins
Great Backyard Bird Count	Patrick Comins

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 August 20, 2023 to the editor at [jo\\_fasciolo@msn.com](mailto:jo_fasciolo@msn.com)  
*Thank you Andrew Dasinger and Steve Broker.*