



COA Bulletin

Volume 38, No. 3
Fall 2023

Connecticut Ornithological Association

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| Osprey Nation Update | p.1 |
| President's Message | p.2 |
| LI Ferry Pelagics | p.3-5 |
| Sparrow Subspecies ID | p.6-7 |
| Spring Rare Birds | p.7 |
| Lights Out CT/ Legislative Updates | p.8-9 |
| New Workshops | p.10 |
| 25 Yrs Ago in TCW | p.11-12 |
| COA Membership/ Young Birder Ops | p.13 |

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology



Volume 18, No.3 July 1998 Pages 105 - 160

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.

Continued Success for Connecticut's Osprey

Nick Ferrauolo, Osprey Nation Coordinator

Nearing the conclusion of its tenth season, Osprey Nation is projecting another successful year for this historically imperiled raptor. Osprey Nation is Connecticut Audubon's statewide volunteer effort that monitors our state's Osprey. This year's nest count is expected to be similar to the 2022 tally of 827; just over 50 years ago, Connecticut's Osprey population looked very different.



In the mid-20th century, the pesticide DDT, and its breakdown product, DDE, led to the rapid decline of many piscivorous bird species, including Osprey. The chemicals built up in waterways and aquatic food webs which lead to thinner eggshells and lower reproductive rates. The decline was so extreme that the Connecticut Osprey population reached an all-time low in 1970 with only eight breeding pairs. Following the ban of DDT in 1972 and a dedicated effort to increase nesting opportunities, the state's Osprey population slowly began to recover. For decades, the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) monitored the recovery of the population until 2010. In 2014, the Connecticut Audubon Society in coordination with DEEP, initiated Osprey Nation in an effort to continue the monitoring of this sentinel species. The project immediately gained traction and a network of 100 monitors and 174 nests were established in its first season which grew to 385 monitors and 827 nests in 2022.

Several of the original monitors remain with the project to this day and are among the nearly 390 stewards that participated in this year's season. These stewards sign up in early spring and start documenting the return of breeding adults. This season, monitors have logged data at a record, 844 nests compared to 174 a decade ago. Throughout the season, monitors have observed breeding behavior at nearly 550 nests with many others expected to be confirmed in the coming weeks. Once monitors determine that a nest is active, the ultimate goal is to record how many young fledge. For the last three seasons, there has been a steady increase in the number of nests monitored, with little change in the total fledgling count. When the fledgling count for this season is finalized, if consistent with previous years, it may be a reason to give these birds an even closer look to determine what factors could be limiting their population growth.

The Osprey population represents a remarkable success story in Connecticut's conservation history. Osprey Nation's growing effort serves as the best method for detecting the unknown effects of human disturbance, other pollutants, and climate change on these recovering raptors. To find out more regarding the final fledgling count and the conclusion of the 2023 season, visit Connecticut Audubon's website ctaudon.org.

President's Message

In yet another sign that birders are the vanguard of contemporary cultural evolution, the New York Times has embarked on a Birding Project, in partnership with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, titled "The World of Birds." Components include "Help Us Track", encouraging new and experienced birders to submit observations that will be funneled to eBird. "How to Start Birding" provides some of the basics of learning about birds and birding including the terrific Cornell resources such as Merlin. The Times project also includes "The Joys of Sketching Birds" and "Bird Song Quiz." (If you have a Times' subscription, here is a [link to the project](#).)

Now most of this information is well known to the active birding community, but the Times' interest speaks to the rapidly growing ranks of recreational birders, spurred in part by the COVID induced desire to get outside and away from germs. Organizations like COA are a valuable resource for both new and experienced birders and this is reflected in our growing membership.

Working in partnership with Connecticut Audubon Society and other bird-oriented organizations, COA provides not only basic birding guidance and information, but also scientific contributions to the field of ornithology, which is the original impetus for the creation of COA. The foresight of COA's founders – including Miley Bull, Dennis Varza, and Roland Clements - recognized the scientific and even the cultural value of "birdwatching" and channeled that in the creation of our Ornithological Association.

Although raised as an old-school birder, that is before cell phones, iPads, eBird, and Merlin, like most of our cohort I have embraced the technological and organizational improvements to birding tools. Admittedly, there's a little cynicism about the ease with which today's birders can use that technology to identify birds and birdsong after nearly 50 years of trying to memorize every warbler and sparrow song. But making birding a little easier can only enhance the experience and grow the awareness of birds as a measure of our environmental condition. Sort of a macro "Canary in the Coal Mine."

So, a key part of COA's mission is "to promote an interest in and an appreciation of birds," which carries with it the real value of more people caring about birds and, by extension, our environment. If you are not already a member, do consider joining us and helping us further this mission; after all, it's for the birds.

I'll close with some news about next year's Annual Meeting, which we are increasingly optimistic about actually being live and in person. Our Annual Meeting Committee, headed up by Abby Sesselberg, is hard at work on lining up a venue, speakers, and all the activities that we have missed the past few years. Stay tuned for updates.

Meanwhile, Bird On!

Chris Wood, COA President



Connecticut Ornithological Association

Pelagics from the Long Island Ferry

Abby Sesselberg

If you are from the Nutmeg State and considering a pelagic trip to observe seabirds, you may find yourself looking up locations in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, or New York — states that have shorelines on the Atlantic Ocean. As far as seabirds are concerned, Long Island Sound does us no favors, but that doesn't mean we are without opportunities to spy a good pelagic bird within our borders. It usually takes prolonged severe weather to bring seabirds deep into Long Island Sound, so the best bet is the far eastern coastal area of the state. It may not have the same allure as a three-day pelagic trip off the coast of California, but in Connecticut, pelagic birding most often means taking the ferry from New London to Orient Point, New York. These large vessels are operated daily by the [Cross Sound Ferry](#). There is a second regularly-scheduled ferry service, between Bridgeport, CT and Port Jefferson, NY but it doesn't get much attention because the New London service provides a higher chance of seeing pelagic birds since it is farther east and closer to the Atlantic Ocean.



One of the most experienced riders of this route is Frank Mantlik, current Chair of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (ARCC). Thanks to his wisdom and willingness to share tips for successful birding, we know there are two specific ferry boats that offer the best viewing as far as mobility and room on the bow deck: *M.V. John H.* and *M.V. Mary Ellen*. The names of the ships can be seen on the sailing schedule. It takes approximately 1.5 hours each way, with a layover at Orient Point lasting around 30 minutes. That brings the total round-trip time for the voyage to approximately 3.5 hours. There is limited day parking at the ferry terminal with overflow available in public parking garages across the street. If you suspect you may be traveling during a busy period, give yourself extra time for the walk from the public garage. Tickets cannot be purchased on board, so plan a stop into the ticket office located in the ferry parking lot. There is also an online purchase option. When considering a trip, keep a close eye on weather forecasts and remember you'll be on the bow, fully exposed to sun, wind, and anything else that comes along. Rain and fog can hamper use of optics and severely limit visibility. Bring your best pair of binoculars, and photographers, pack a big lens.

Once on board, you will want to be on the bow of the ship. If you are with other birders, communication is key, so treat the boat as you would a clock. Looking straight off the bow is always 12:00. From 12:00, looking slightly to the right is 1:00, 2:00, and so on. Off the stern is 6:00. Remember, the bow is constant and is always 12:00. You want to give other birders the best chance to get on what you are seeing, so any details you can pack in are helpful. For example: I have a bird (insert name if you know it) at 2:00, moving left to right, 10 feet over the water, 75 yards out.

If you are eBirding, it is advised you use existing locations New London to Orient Point Ferry — CT Waters, New London to Orient Point Ferry (NY waters). As you get underway, consult Google Maps or another navigation program to help determine when you have crossed over into New York, or on the return trip, Connecticut waters. Should you spot a rarity, it is important it gets attributed to the correct state. Keep in mind that depending on wind direction, the ferry does not always follow the same route. There are some trips where it may skirt the border between the two states but not cross for some time, so the time spent in Connecticut may be shorter (or longer) on one trip than on another. If you make the journey and get skunked on seabirds, that is also important data to report as that information is good for science and may help other birders decide if they want to go after some birds.

The ferry plays an important role in the New London Christmas Bird Count. Depending on the count schedule, on or around New Year's Day, a hearty group participates in the crossing hoping for a rarity to add to the count. And yes, the on-board cafe offers hot cocoa. If you consider the ability to identify uncommon birds from the bow of a ferry to be a mystical art, there are usually a few highly-skilled birders on board for the CBC to help with the identifications. If this is of interest, keep an eye out for emails announcing the ferry the CBC participants will be taking.

Perhaps the most common questions about taking the ferry are when to take the ferry and what might be seen. Phil Rusch, Co-Secretary of the ARCC, has shared the following based on both historical data and personal experience:

There are two seasons when pelagic species tend to appear in Long Island Sound. Summer [June to September] is the season that Shearwaters and Storm-Petrels, along with those harassers of tubenoses, Jaegers, are most often seen from the ferry. Winter [December to March] is the season of Alcids and Black-legged Kittiwakes.

Most long-term incursions of seabirds are caused by food availability, such as large numbers of bait-fish in the Sound. The birds will stay as long as the food is available. Shorter term incursions are typically caused by stormy weather. These are harder to predict, but generally require sustained winds above 35 knots from the east, southeast, or south; preferably multi-day in length. Searching from the ferry on these days and under these conditions can be difficult at best and impossible when the ferry run is canceled due to sea conditions.

Since 2010, there have been several incursions of these pelagics that were seen from the Cross Sound Ferry. These have included:

COSH = Cory's Shearwater
GRSH = Great Shearwater
SOSH = Sooty Shearwater

WISP = Wilson's Storm Petrel
PAJA = Parasitic Jaeger
POJA = Pomarine Jaeger

Incursions of COSH and WISP occurred in Aug-Sep 2015, and Aug 2017. Also sighted were several PAJA. In July and August of 2018 in addition to large numbers of COSH, nice numbers of GRSH, SOSH, WISP, and PAJA were visible from the ferry. One group of birders on a private boat was treated to seeing 2500 Shearwaters in New York waters, but very close to the Connecticut line. That had to hurt, but seeing that spectacle most likely helped ease the pain. <https://ebird.org/checklist/S47620536>

August and September 2022 brought a small group of GRSH into the ferry lanes where many observers got looks at this species, along with some WISPs. 2023 has started well with several sightings of WISP in June. As of July 16th, no other rarities have yet been reported in our waters.

The composition of possible rarities is different in winter. There are six species of regularly occurring alcids in the North Atlantic. Only three have been seen from the ferry crossing: Razorbill, Thick-billed Murre, and Common Murre.

The first CT record of Razorbill (RAZO) was accepted in 2004. Since then, the number of RAZO sightings in the sound has increased. That being said, it is sometimes easier to get a good look at RAZO from shore than from the ferry.



**Great Shearwater, New London to Orient Pt Ferry
(CT side), Abby Sesselberg, 5 Aug 2022**

**Cory's Shearwater, New London to Orient Pt Ferry
(CT side), Michael Harvey 26, Jul 2018**



With over 70 records of Thick-billed Murre (TBMU) from CT, this is another species often easier to see from land. There are fewer than five records from the ferry.

Common Murre (COMU) finally made it onto the state list in 2011. Since then, there have been 17 more records with a majority (13) seen from the decks of the ferry.

The other species that may be seen from the ferry in winter is Black-legged Kittiwake. In fact, the species has become so regular in Long Island Sound, the CT Records Committee [ARCC] has taken it off the review list unless the individual is inland.

The best ways to learn if seabirds are being seen are the same sources available for land birding. The Connecticut Ornithological Association (COA) has a free ListServ you can subscribe to by emailing ctbirds-join@lists.ctbirding.org. Emails can be received once daily in a digest format, or live as they are submitted. eBird can be mined for data and likewise you can set up rare bird alerts to be viewed daily or hourly. The Connecticut Audubon Society also has a rare bird alert you can sign up for [here](#). Remember, these communication systems only work if people participate by sharing what they are seeing and in some cases, what they are no longer seeing. These may be the most valuable tools for people deciding when and if to catch a ride on the ferry.

It may seem like a lot of effort for only a few possible birds, so why do we ride the ferry? Because there is always a chance you may see something new and extremely rare, or even something familiar and loved. If we're out there we might see an Atlantic Puffin, Long-tailed Jaeger, Brown Pelican, or Brown Booby. Maybe the Magnificent Frigatebird recently seen in Rhode Island will decide to do a ferry fly-by. When you step on board you feel there is a possibility, however small, that you may see an exciting bird. That hope is what keeps so many birders returning to the ferry year after year.



Sooty Shearwater, New London to Orient Pt Ferry (CT side), David Provencher, 31 Jul 2018



Wilson's Storm Petrel, New London to Orient Pt Ferry (CT side), Dan Rottino, 10 Aug 2017



Parasitic Jaeger, New London to Orient Pt Ferry (CT side), John Oshlick, 13 Aug 2018



Identifying Sparrows to Subspecies – Another Birding Challenge

Chris Wood

Many bird species consist of two or more subspecies, usually delineated geographically but sometimes overlapping in range as well as appearance, complicating distinctions. Cornell's eBird program (probably the most widely used avocational science tool today) apparently would like birders to distinguish some subspecies, at least in some situations. I have not tried to discern the criteria for that, but our eBird reviewer recently pointed out a White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) photographed in Stratford as being of the Gambel's subspecies, nominally a bird of western US but occasionally found here in Connecticut. With Fall sparrow migration fast approaching, here's a quick primer on leucophrys vs gambelli subspecies of the White-crowned Sparrow.

The primary distinctions are the black lores (or brown in immatures) of leucophrys vs. white lores (or pale tan in immatures) of gambelli and the pinkish (*leucophrys*) vs. yellowish (*gambelli*) bill.



White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) © C.S. Wood

Top: immature (left) and adult leucophrys.

Bottom: immature (left) and adult gambelli.

Go birding! Look for a rarity!

Another occasional visitor to Connecticut is one of the Oregon subspecies of Dark-eyed Junco. BOW recognizes 15 subspecies of Dark-eyed Juncos in 5 groups; all but one subspecies occur in the US. “Slate-colored” is the abundant winter resident here in Connecticut but occasionally one of the “Oregon” variety subspecies (of which there are 8) appears. Complicating junco identification is regular hybridization among subspecies leading to much variation in plumages. It is possible that some subspecies may be recognized as full species in the future, so recording occurrences may be useful. Here are a few comparisons to help Connecticut birders watch for a different junco subspecies.



All photos © C.S. Wood

Note the concave  bib of the Oregon form compared to the convex  bib of the Slate-colored form. Note also that females of some subspecies are usually paler and browner than males.

As if fall sparrows are not complicated enough, subspecies identification adds another challenge to our birding routine. Good luck!



Summer Rarities



Brown Pelican,
Stratford Point,
Frank Mantlik, 5 Jul 2023



Marbled Godwit,
Hammonasset State Park,
Ed Haesche, 4 Aug 2023



Roseate Spoonbill,
Short Beach,
Mary Walsh, 26 Aug 2023

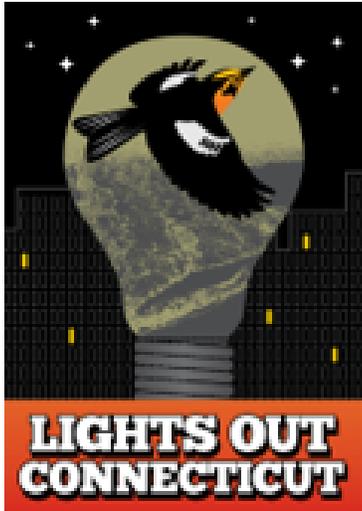


Long-tailed Jaeger,
Hammonasset State Park,
Monica Nichols, 26 Aug 2023

**So Close,
Yet So Far Away**



**Brown Booby, Little Gull
Island,
Southold US-NY,
Frank Mantlik, 20 Jul 2023**



Gov Lamont Signs Bill to Protect Connecticut Migrating from Light Pollution

Craig Repasz

On June 15, Gov. Ned Lamont signed a bill into law aimed at protecting birds and the night sky in Connecticut from the harmful effects of light pollution. **Act 23-143** requires all state-owned buildings to shut off nonessential outdoor lights after 11pm year-round for birds. It also directs the CT Code and Standards Committee to consider a change to the lighting requirements in the State Building Code.

The bill, first introduced as HB 6607 passed unanimously through all stages of the legislative life cycle, the Environment Committee, the State House and then the State Senate. Initially the bill sought to have lights turned off during peak migration periods. The bill was amended to be in effect year-round.

Connecticut joins only a couple of states in the nation, including Illinois and Minnesota, to have a comprehensive Lights Out law to protect migratory birds from light pollution.

“This law is a major step forward in protecting birds ~ and all of us ~ against light pollution,” said Craig Repasz, Co-Chair of **Lights Out Connecticut**. “We’re very fortunate to live in a state that values our natural resources, our birds, our health, and the night sky by taking steps to combat light pollution.”

After a similar bill failed last year to get out of committee, it was reintroduced by Rep. Ann Hughes (D-Easton, Weston and Redding) and then carried by the Environment Committee, with 10 of its members co-sponsoring the bill. This year, the bill passed both chambers unanimously.

“I not only applaud the passage of this bill as Co-Chair of the CT Animal Advocacy Caucus, but also as a volunteer that worked under federal permit ‘herding’ endangered sea turtle hatchlings distracted by artificial light back to sea. Limiting to the utmost the human factor is crucial to protect biodiversity,” said Rep. **David Michel** (D-Stamford), an early co-sponsor of the bill.

The state Office of Fiscal Analysis estimates the bill will save the state of Connecticut at least \$1.3 million per year. And Lights Out Connecticut estimates it could prevent as much as 4.4 million pounds of CO2 from being released unnecessarily into the environment. (That’s the equivalent greenhouse gas emissions of over 440 gas-powered cars driven for one year.)

“This law is unique. It simultaneously addresses two of the biggest threats facing our environment today, biodiversity loss and climate change,” said Meredith Barges, Co-Chair of Lights Out Connecticut.

Organizing to pass the bill was a combined effort of Lights Out Connecticut bringing together organizations across the state, including Audubon Connecticut, Connecticut Audubon Society, Connecticut Ornithological Association, CT Chapter of Dark Sky, New Haven Bird Club, Pollinator Pathway, and CT chapter of the Sierra Club Foundation, and many others.

Lights Out Connecticut will continue its educational campaign throughout the State to raise awareness of the issue of light pollution’s harmful impact. The focus will be to initiate and support efforts on the municipal level.

Read more at [LightsOutCT](#) and [CGABillStatus](#)

Legislative Wrap Up

There was a lot of environmental legislation introduced in the 2023 spring session that would have an impact on the State's bird populations.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE HAND-HARVESTING OF HORSESHOE CRABS IN THE STATE.

Hand-harvesting of horseshoe crabs or the eggs of horseshoe crabs from the waters of this state is now illegal.

Signed by Gov Lamont June 7, 2023

AN ACT PROHIBITING THE USE OF SECOND-GENERATION ANTICOAGULANT RODENTICIDES.

Reduces the lethal effect that second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides can have on hawks and other raptors. Introduced by: SEN. COHEN, 12th Dist. Did not pass out of the Environment Joint Committee

AN ACT PROHIBITING THE SALE AND USE OF ANTICOAGULANT RODENTICIDES.

Prohibits the sale and use of anticoagulant rodenticides in the state. Statement of Purpose: To protect wildlife in the food chain by prohibiting anticoagulant rodenticides. Introduced by: REP. LINEHAN, 103rd Dist. Did not pass out of the Environment Committee.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE SALE AND USE OF SEEDS COATED WITH NEONICOTINOIDS.

Prohibits the sale, use and possession of seeds coated in neonicotinoids. Statement of Purpose: To halt the decline of pollinators, other insects, and insect-eating birds that results from the use of neonicotinoid-coated seeds. Introduced by: REP. MUSHINSKY, 85th Dist, SEN. COHEN, 12th Dist. Did not pass out of the Environment Committee.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF NEONICOTINOIDS IN THE STATE.

Decreases the use of pesticides like neonicotinoids, which affect human health and pollinators. Introduced by: REP. ARZENO, 151st Dist. Did not pass out of the Environment Committee.

AN ACT STRENGTHENING POLLINATOR HEALTH AND REGULATING NONAGRICULTURAL PESTICIDE USE.

Requires the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to ban the use of neonicotinoids for non-agricultural purposes and ban the use of certain seeds treated with pesticides. Introduced by: REP. DATHAN, 142nd Dist. REP. HUGHES, 135th Dist. REP. DOUCETTE, 13th Dist. REP. PORTER, 94th Dist. REP. MICHEL, 146th Dist. Did not pass out of the Environment Committee.

AN ACT CONCERNING A WORKING GROUP FOR THE RESTORATION OF EEL GRASS.

Introduced by: SEN. KELLY, 21st Dist. Establish a working group to develop strategies for the restoration of eel grass along the state's shoreline. Statement of Purpose: To establish a working group to develop strategies for the restoration of eel grass along the state's shoreline. Approved June 26, 2023

AN ACT REQUIRING THE RESUBMISSION OF THE LONG ISLAND SOUND BLUE PLAN.

Introduced by: SEN. SOMERS, 18th Dist. Requires the resubmission of the Long Island Sound Blue Plan to the General Assembly for approval because such plan has been modified to include cables running onshore from Long Island Sound. Did not pass out of the Environment Committee.

AN ACT PROHIBITING THE RELEASE OF HELIUM BALLOONS

Introduced by: REP. HAINES I., 34th Dist. To limit the harm to Long Island Sound and other state waterways from the release of helium balloons. Did not pass out of the Environment Committee.

New Fall and Winter COA Workshops

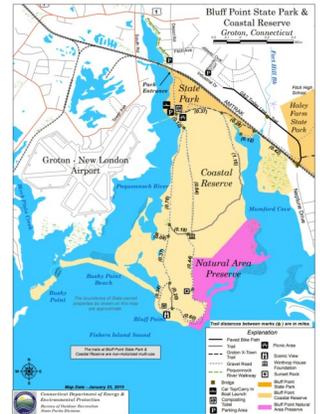
Allison Black

COA is pleased to announce TWO new workshops in the coming months!

Bluff Point’s “Hot Corner” (Fall 2023)

COA will be offering a guided familiarization to the spectacle that is migration through Bluff Point State Park’s famous “hot corner”. The “hot corner” (a certified eBird hotspot) is known for its morning flights where hundreds, sometimes thousands, of warblers and other migrants take off early and pass overhead after cold fronts, giving quick glimpses at a variety of species, as well as the chance to spot potential rarities in the mix.

We will have an evening mid-week online orientation in early fall to introduce the location, its history, and what to expect on morning flights. For a few weekends following the orientation COA will announce when someone will be at the “hot corner” to help spot birds during ideal conditions, via posting to the CTBirds listserv.



Please join us for the chance to witness an incredible early diurnal migration right here in Connecticut. These field trips will take place *very* early in the mornings, with cameras and binoculars being the best help for spotting these fast-moving migrants.

A Wild Goose Chase: Connecticut’s Wintertime Geese (Jan/Feb 2024)

Connecticut has recorded a number of different geese species, with wintertime being the best time of the year for rare and unusual species such as Pink-footed, Greater White-fronted, Cackling, Barnacle, Snow, And Ross’s Goose.

This new field trip will stop at a few known spots to look for flocks of Canada geese, mostly throughout central Connecticut, to search for rarer geese within the flocks. Binoculars, cameras, and especially scopes are recommended to best enjoy this trip.

Details to come on traveling specifics. Stay tuned!



Ross’s Goose (left) and Snow Goose (right), Seaside Park, Jo Fasciolo, 25 Feb 2023



Pink-footed Goose, Silver Sands, Alan Malina, 2 Feb 2022



Greater White-Fronted Goose, Fairfield County Hunt Club, Edward Grzeda, 14 Jan 2023



Cackling Goose (Richardson’s), Wooster Park, Aidan Kiley, 5 Mar 2023



Barnacle Goose, Broad Brook Mill Pond, Laurel Barnhill, 22 Oct 2020

Twenty-Five Years Ago in *The Connecticut Warbler*

Compiled by Steve Broker

Volume 18, No. 3 (July 1998)

A Connecticut Birding Year - Part 3, by David Provencher

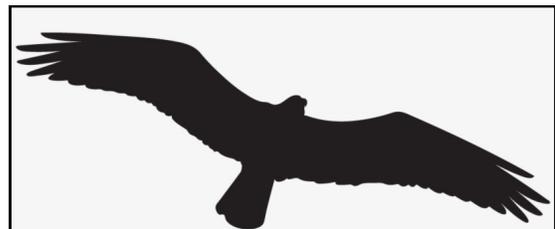
This installment covers the period July through September. Four events are the primary focus of this period. They are the shorebird migration, the start of fall 'landbird' migration, hawk migration, and the post-breeding appearance in Connecticut of a number of species. We will discuss the phenomena of fall migration of shorebirds and landbirds, first in general and then in greater detail. This three month period may be the most important time of the birding year to apply a logical strategy to your efforts. The occurrence of the different shorebird species in Connecticut is quite predictable to where and when. Therefore, to improve your ability to find the greatest species list of these impressive migrants it is essential to understand this predictability. The songbird migration peaks during the months of September and October.

[Editor's Note: Dave Provencher discusses the protracted fall migration with emphasis on shorebirds. He considers feeding habitat preferences, including sand bars, salt marshes, freshwater marshes, airports, fields, breakwaters, and rain puddles. Cold fronts and hurricanes produce common and rare fall migrants. Tide charts are essential to finding coastal shorebirds. Dave lists species to watch for in July, August, and September. He concludes the article with some advanced birding tips about storm-blown birds.]

Reproductive Success of Ospreys at Two Sites in Connecticut, by Donna Christine O'Neill and Robert A. Askins

The Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) became a symbol of the environmental movement during the 1960s and 1970s. Several studies at that time showed that this once abundant fish hawk had declined radically in numbers. In the Connecticut River estuary and surrounding areas, more than 200 active Osprey nests were documented in 1940, but by 1970 only eight active nests remained (Spitzer 1980). [Paul Spitzer's 1980 publication is: Dynamics of a discrete coastal breeding population of Ospreys in the northeastern USA, 1969-1979. Ph.D. thesis, Cornell University.] The Osprey's decline was eventually traced to the chemical DDT and other organochlorines that were commonly used as pesticides and routinely sprayed on marshes to control mosquitoes during the 1940s and 1950s (reference given). Since the use of DDT and other insecticides was banned in the 1970s, Osprey numbers along the East Coast have been increasing (Spitzer et al. 1978). [This reference by Spitzer, et al. is: Productivity of Ospreys in Connecticut-Long Island increases as DDE residues decline. Science 202:333-335]

[Editor's Note: the article states, "This study focused on comparing the diets of Ospreys at Great Island [Old Lyme] and Groton Reservoir [Groton]". O'Neill and Askins consider how nest success is affected by predation (Raccoons, Great Horned Owl), food shortage, sibling aggression, storms, human disturbance, and infectious disease. The two study sites each had from 12 to 16 nesting pairs of Ospreys during the 1996 and 1997 breeding seasons.]



Foraging Tactics of the Black-bellied Plover, by John P. Roche

Unlike many sandpipers, which search for tactile cues by moving their bills through a substrate (e.g., sand), plovers search for visual cues on the surface of a substrate (reference). Black-bellied Plovers have a simple foraging repertoire familiar to all shoreside bird watchers. They run rapidly to a spot on the substrate, stop, and scan visually from a standing position for cues associated with prey. If they sight a prey item, they run to it and peck at it, and if they capture it they pull it from the substrate and consume it. If they scan from one location for a prior of time without spotting signs of a prey item, they run to a new location (references). This sequence of behaviors appears stereotyped and unvarying, but quantitative studies have revealed that plovers adjust the components of this sequence to environmental conditions in sophisticated ways. In the present paper, I summarize some of these findings on the foraging tactics of Black-bellied Plovers and discuss the relationship these tactics have to foraging efficiency and environmental conditions.

[Editor's Note: John Roche discusses the Black-bellied Plover's generalist diet (polychaete worms, crustaceans, bivalves), its postural changes (Up, Down) during foraging, poor insulation and high metabolism, search patterns, and seasonal environmental conditions. "Detailed comparative studies on the similarities and differences among different plover species offer particularly rich potential to increase our understanding of not only the habits of plovers, but also of the evolution of feeding adaptations and how such adaptations provide fine-tuning between an animal and its environment." The text is accompanied by Ron Taly'n's illustrations of Up and Down postures, Black-bellied Plovers running, and capturing prey items.]

Black-legged Kittiwake at a Distance, by Mark Szantyr

Identifying gulls is difficult under the best circumstances. Add a stiff ocean breeze and temperatures approaching the freezing mark and it is no longer fun. Now put the birds a quarter mile out over the shimmering surface of Long Island Sound. This is probably the scenario you will face if you want to see a Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*) in Connecticut waters.

[Editor's Note: Mark Szantyr discusses the field marks of an adult kittiwake in winter and the gull species most commonly confused for a kittiwake, a second winter Ring-billed Gull, illustrated by his excellent line drawings.

See also in this issue of *The Connecticut Warbler: Connecticut Ornithological Literature*, compiled by James M. Zingo; Books on Birds ("Songbirds. Celebrating Nature's Voices"), by Alan H. Brush, Connecticut Field Notes, by Greg Hanisek (Winter, December 1, 1997 to February 28, 1998); Photo Challenge, by Julian Hough. Cover art of Eastern Screech-Owl with a Polyphemus moth is by Brian Kleinman. The July 1998 issue of *The Connecticut Warbler* can be seen in its entirety at the following link to the COA website: <https://ctbirding.org/wp-con->



COA Membership

The Connecticut Ornithological Association is the only statewide organization devoted to birds and birding in Connecticut. Since its founding in 1984, its membership has grown to well over 500 people who range from beginning birders to professional ornithologists. COA does not release its membership list to other organizations. Contributions and donations are tax deductible as allowed under law. COA is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization.

The only requirements for membership in COA are interest in birds and an ability to enjoy yourself. Does that sound like you? Then join us!

To join COA or renew online visit: <https://www.ctbirding.org/account-help/>

The link will take you to a page describing the account creation process with a link to start it. You will need to use a credit card, debit card, or PayPal account to purchase a membership.

After purchasing a membership option, your COA account reflects your level of membership. COA members receive copies of COA's two quarterly publications, *The Connecticut Warbler* and *COA Bulletin*. Members enjoy access to our growing Members-Only content. Membership funds support many [COA services and activities](#).

NOTE: COA has converted all accounts from calendar year to **1yr duration memberships** (from the date you join or renew). For example, if you joined/renewed Jan 15, 2023 your current membership expires on Jan 15, 2024 (fairer when joining after Jan 1). Login to your COA account to check your membership status and expiration date.

Membership Levels:

.....

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Individual | \$25/yr |
| Student | \$15/yr |
| Family | \$35/yr |
| Contributing | \$50/yr |
| Donor | \$75/yr |
| Benefactor | \$100/yr |
| Life | \$1000 (payable in three annual installments) |



Opportunities for Young Birders!

Zepko Audubon Camp Scholarship for Young Birders

The Connecticut Ornithological Association is pleased to offer one Zepko Audubon Camp Scholarship to nurture interest in bird study and conservation among young birders. The Scholarship will cover the full cost for Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens. The cost includes housing, boat travel and all meals. Scholarship recipient will be responsible for transportation costs to and from camp. If you know a young birder who may be interested please pass this information along. Visit this [website](#) for more information.



Connecticut Ornithological Association

314 Unquowa Road

Fairfield, CT 06824

www.ctbirding.org

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 | Abby Sesselberg |
| Conservation | Emily Keating |
| 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 November 20, 2023 to the editor at jo_fasciolo@msn.com

Thank you Andrew Dasinger and Steve Broker.