



# COA Bulletin

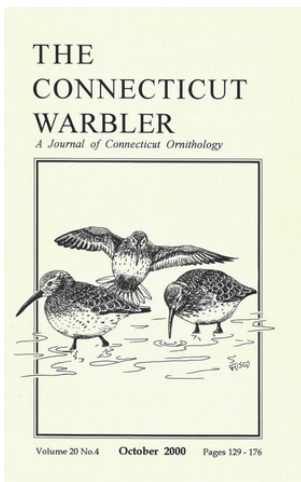
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Connecticut Ornithological Association

[www.ctbirding.org](http://www.ctbirding.org)

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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.

## Two Generations of Bird Conservation: United in the Fight for Flight

Jack Aronian

**Editor's Note:** The author, Jack Aronian, is a high school student in New Canaan, who has made it his mission to spread awareness of the bird flu virus by creating a H5N1 Prevention initiative.

I recently had the opportunity to present the H5N1 Initiative Documentary I created to the Santa Clara Valley Bird Alliance via Zoom. It was amazing to hop online and connect with ardent birders in California about avian influenza, sharing valuable data, insights, and best-practice guidance to combat H5N1. This is the story of how I joined with bird centers and bird enthusiasts throughout the world in an effort to prevent the potential of bird flu as a pandemic.

The saga begins with my grandfather, Dr. John Martin Aronian III. He was a dynamic, multi-talented family man, revered surgeon, writer, fly fisherman, and amateur wildlife rehabilitator. He was also a passionate birder. At New York Hospital Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center, he saved the lives of both humans and peregrine falcons.

The episode from my grandfather's advocacy and action for birds that has always meant the most to me is his involvement in peregrine falcon rescue. A New York *Newsday* story from 1991 sets the scene: "And so, in late 1987 when nurses began noticing a big bird devouring little birds outside a 19th-floor window, Aronian was summoned. He immediately recognized it as a peregrine." The bird was a nesting peregrine who'd taken up residence on the ledge. Though still incredibly rare, the falcon was a testament to the success of Cornell University's Eastern Peregrine Falcon Reintroduction Program, which began breeding falcons for reintroduction into the wild in 1970. My grandfather, recognizing that this was an extraordinary situation, quickly put a makeshift nesting box outside the window and contacted Martin Gilroy, who monitored nests for the Peregrine Fund. Gilroy traveled from Virginia to help build a more permanent nesting box which was installed along with



Peregrine Banding, Chris Nadareski and John Aronian III MD, 2004  
NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center  
Credit: Dr. Aronian

along with 24th-story perches on a ledge overlooking the East River. With binoculars, my grandfather and Gilroy were able to read the banding on the peregrine's foot: she was B-29-B, and had been released from Acadia National Park in Maine on July 7, 1986. My grandfather also contacted the Department of Environmental Protection and avian biologist (now Wildlife Section Chief) Chris Nadareski, known as the "bird whisperer," who arrived on the scene and became a lifelong friend.

My grandfather and Chris Nadareski banded peregrine falcons together for over a decade! Early on, my grandpa recognized that the falcons nesting in tall buildings in New York City was a unique recurrence, since they had not been seen in the city since the 1960s due to their population collapse from DDT pesticide. He believed that their return to New York was nothing short of spectacular.

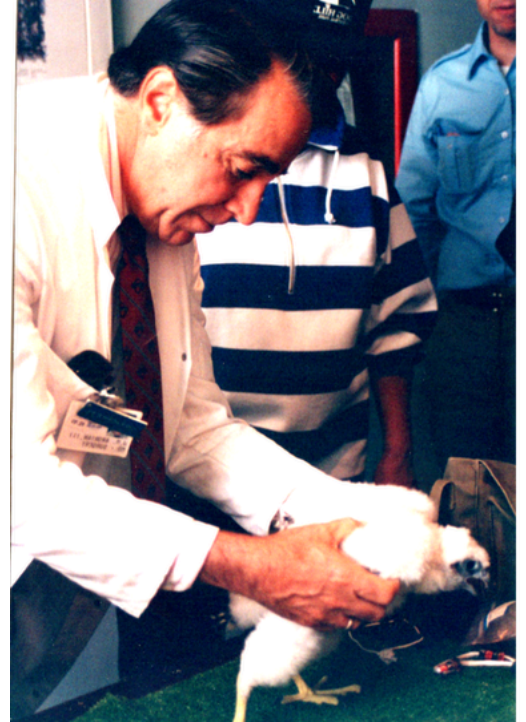
My father once explained to me that my grandpa's office was next to their window ledge, and even though he was bound by the demands of being a full-time surgeon, he always kept one eye on the nest! I found myself asking how it was possible that my grandpa was able to simultaneously be a full-time surgeon, husband, father, and peregrine guardian. His rescues became bedtime stories for me, as heroic as any fictional tale.

My grandfather often recounted how the peregrines would take their first flight, poorly execute the first few flaps, and that he would need to retrieve them from below and bring them back up in the hospital elevator back to their nest. Imagine what the elevator passengers thought about the veterinary clinic they appeared to have entered! Similarly, I still wonder what his patients must have thought about their bird-loving surgeon!

When my grandpa retired in 1999, the *New York Post* did a farewell tribute that began, "The Birdman of New York Hospital has flown the coop." After retirement, he birded even more intensively, fished, and gardened. By the end of his life, my grandpa had birded from Scotland to India, to say nothing of his birding journeys in the United States.

In his golden years, my grandfather also penned a fictional novel, *The Montauk Trilogy*, completed in 2007 and published posthumously in 2021. The trilogy contains the novella "Smew: The Dawn of an Epidemic," which prophetically foretold the emergence of H5N1 in a seaside community. The following is an excerpt from the trilogy: "But if it had died on the beach and a vulture or a black-backed gull had eaten it we

might have begun a wild, endemic viral pool—what we call a sylvatic pool—on the island. Then who knows what might have happened. We know that sylvatic viral pools of H5N1 exist in the Baltic and Eastern European regions and that, to date, they have not caused problems with either the human population or the poultry stocks. But they could and may yet to do so" (Aronian III MD 142-143). After reading it, I was struck by my grandfather's warnings, which have remained with me ever since.



John Aronian III MD Peregrine Banding, Date, 1991  
NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center  
Credit: Dr. Aronian



Photo of New York Presbyterian Hospital female with three young in 2018.

John Aronian III MD Peregrine Archives, 2025  
Credit: Aronian

After my grandfather died, his binoculars, scopes, and bird identification books were left to me, along with correspondence from people around the globe and his trove of files on peregrine rehabilitation and nesting. Around that time, I made myself a birding cap with a nest atop and set out with binoculars and a phone to create "Jack's Quack," a podcast for kids about the world of birds and the outdoors. This was one of my first steps into creating informative content, which I later transformed into videomaking for nonprofits to spotlight their events and facilitate fundraising.



While I was making a promotional film about Greenwich Audubon in August 2024 (Aronian), I got to talking with volunteers and members at the center who told me about the uptick in bird flu mortality, and my grandfather's novels echoed in my mind. I had also heard about the egg shortages and the closure of animal sanctuaries and parks in the surrounding towns. I began to research bird flu more. The statistics are chilling: H5N1 continues to ravage bird and animal populations. Since 2021, the virus has spread to more than 50 mammal species and millions of birds have died globally. I began to transform from being a bird sanctuary visitor to becoming a member and advocating for birds and all creatures to prevent H5N1 through awareness and action. As I became initiated into bird conservation, I felt a growing connection to my grandfather and his avian volunteerism.

Surprisingly, avian influenza does not come up in school. Even more perplexing, my generation, who experienced the COVID-19 pandemic, is not talking about bird flu, not anticipating or preparing for the next zoonotic disease. Recently, a human fatality was reported in the US, due to bird flu, caused by the strain known as H5N5. When I heard about an opportunity to apply to the Global Education Benchmark Group's Student Summit on Conservation last year, I submitted a proposal on the implications and actions of bird flu for both fowl and humanity (@stlukesct).

Since the GEBG Summit (Global Education Benchmark Group), I have doubled my efforts to raise awareness about bird flu and received a grant from The Hershey Company and Youth Service America. With the grant, I created the H5N1 Prevention Initiative documentary for Sharon Audubon, which is part of a multi-layered advocacy effort, aimed at combating avian influenza. The Initiative comprises a documentary, live presentations, a fundraising platform, and a Bird Center H5N1 Hub to support bird centers' efforts. The documentary features experts in ornithology, public health policy, and epidemiology who share their perspectives on bird flu and community preparedness. I have screened this documentary at public community centers and bird and wildlife centers, both in-person and virtually, throughout the United States, highlighting the critical role bird centers play in disseminating avian flu information and raising funds to scale up their H5N1 property protocols. Many volunteers, wildlife rehabilitators, educators, and directors have generously given their valuable time to support the H5N1 Prevention Initiative. After speaking with bird organizations and field experts, I recognized that the property protocols and public communication of bird and wildlife centers varied between counties, states, and nations. While they all had reliable and timely federal, state, and local information, they had differing practices and action plans. A collective hub would be a beneficial resource not only for the bird centers to collaborate and connect, but also a potential site for scientists to consider data for research.

With oversight from university animal science researchers, we have begun establishing the Hub and enlisted founding member centers in CT and NY. We are currently configuring a data platform and enlisting sanctuaries to join. Additionally, I continue to present the H5N1 Prevention Initiative documentary and fundraise for bird centers.

While this effort is soaring, we have encountered challenges. Some organizations do not want to share or publicize their protocols, and some institutions do not want to address or publicize the prevalence of H5N1 as an epidemic, let alone its potential as a pandemic. I had a scheduled interview with a medical professional, who afterward asked me not to be included. Of course, I honored the request, but I was disappointed at how poorly we protect our populations if we are not forthcoming with crucial information.

I've learned so much throughout this discovery—how to navigate a delicate subject matter and how to activate support to what has seemed like a sometimes below-the-surface critical effort for birds and society. Requesting and conducting interviews and speaking engagements, seeking donations, and applying for grants have strengthened my mission, and I feel uplifted by my grandfather's agency and legacy. The outreach to enlist centers in the Hub hasn't been easy; however, it has been fascinating to learn about how U.S. policy and zoonotic disease implementation compare to those of other nations: experts have pointed out that Canada is a better example of a unified protocol and communication. My generation's role is to prepare for crises, for all creatures great and small.

I hope my grandfather would be proud. Ultimately, his wings are the ones I use to fly.



Chris Nadeski, John Aronian III MD 2004; Chris Nadeski & Jack Aronian July 16, 2025  
Peregrine Banding, New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center  
Credit: Dr. Aronian

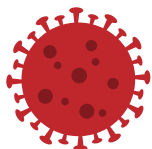
**To get involved or find out more  
email or visit:**

Email: [h5n1prevention@gmail.com](mailto:h5n1prevention@gmail.com)

Instagram: [@h5n1prevention](https://www.instagram.com/h5n1prevention)

GoFundMe: [H5N1 Prevention Initiative](#)

You can watch the [H5N1 Initiative Documentary](#) for a fee of \$3 [here](#). All proceeds will go to the centers and sanctuaries mentioned in the video.



## How Prevalent is Bird Flu In Connecticut? Jo Fasciolo

Bird flu (highly pathogenic avian influenza, H5N1) is present in Connecticut's bird population and has been detected regularly since the national outbreak began around 2022, especially among wild waterfowl such as ducks and geese that migrate through or overwinter in the state. Dozens of cases have been confirmed in wild birds across Connecticut, with experts noting that the virus is most prevalent among waterfowl and is often detected when sick or dead birds are reported. In contrast, infections in domestic birds have been relatively rare, limited mostly to a small number of backyard or non-commercial flocks. Because Connecticut has fewer large commercial poultry operations than many other states, it has avoided the large-scale outbreaks seen elsewhere. Overall, bird flu in Connecticut is considered present and persistent but not rampant, making continued monitoring and public awareness important while avoiding direct contact with sick or deceased birds.

In Connecticut, the risk of bird flu to humans is low, but basic, common sense precautions are still important—especially since the virus is present in wild birds. People should avoid touching sick or dead birds; instead, report them to local animal control or the Connecticut DEEP. Wash hands thoroughly after being outdoors, gardening, or handling bird feeders, and regularly clean feeders and birdbaths to reduce the chance of birds spreading disease to one another.

## 126th ANNUAL NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The Christmas Bird Count began in 1900 when ornithologist Frank Chapman proposed a new holiday tradition to replace the popular “side hunt,” in which groups competed to shoot as many animals as possible. Instead, volunteers would count birds to help protect them. That first year, 27 birders across North America participated, including early counts in Connecticut, laying the foundation for what would become the world’s longest-running community science project.

Connecticut quickly became a steady contributor, with local birders and Audubon chapters embracing the annual count as part of their conservation efforts. Over the decades, count circles spread across the state’s forests, towns, and coastline, and participation grew into a winter tradition. Today, Connecticut’s observations form an important piece of the nationwide dataset that scientists rely on to track bird populations, identify species at risk, and understand how climate and habitat changes are affecting wildlife. The state’s long-running involvement also strengthens community connections to local ecosystems and helps inspire future conservation efforts.

### CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2025-2026 SCHEDULE

For details on compiler contact information, please visit the COA website at <https://www.ctbirding.org/cbc-2025-2026/>

#### Sunday, December 14, 2025

- Greenwich-Stamford, CT
- Hartford, CT
- Lakeville-Sharon, CT
- Litchfield Hills, CT
- Quinnipiac Valley, CT
- Oxford, CT
- Salmon River, CT
- Storrs, CT

#### Saturday, December 20, 2025

- New Haven, CT
- Woodbury-Roxbury, CT
- Westport, CT

#### Sunday, December 21, 2025

- Barkhamsted, CT
- Norwich, CT
- Stratford-Milford, CT

#### Sunday, December 28, 2025

- Bristol, CT
- Hampton, CT
- Napatree, RI-CT-NY

#### Thursday, January 1, 2026

- Pawling (Hidden Valley), NY/CT

#### Saturday, January 3, 2026

- Guilford-Long Island Sound, CT
- New London, CT

#### Sunday, January 4, 2026

- Old Lyme-Saybrook, CT



## Migration Paths: Canada Geese

by Corey Leamy

*Migratory birds connect people, ecosystems, and nations...their epic journeys inspire people of all ages, across the globe...[and are a] symbol of an interconnected planet. -António Guterres*



Banded Canada Goose  
Corey Leamy

After the Rock Pigeon or European Starling, one of the most common and well known birds in the US is the Canada Goose. We might pass by fields filled with geese without giving them a second glance, while others might carefully sort through the flock looking for a rarity hiding in plain sight.

Researchers in Denmark are particularly interested in a small subset of these birds and are asking for our help. If you have found a Canada Goose with a yellow neck collar whose ID number starts with a “G” and/or a tracking device (also has a ID number beginning with a “G”), please send an email to Doug Beach (beachgolfdesigns@att.net) – if you have a photo of the bird, that’s even more helpful.

The Canada Geese that have a “G” collar were banded in Greenland where there has been a population increase in recent decades. There’s a theory that they might be inviting some of their Greenland friends for a fall migration trip to the U.S. Please make note if you see any of these birds with some of our rarities (Pink-footed or Greater White-fronted Geese).

### **Bird Banding – Why Do We Do It?**

Bird banding has been a way for scientists and ornithologists to track bird movements since the early 1800s. For example, an American Herring Gull banded on a rooftop of the Portland Museum of Art in Portland, Maine (where it had hatched) spends its winter in an Old Saybrook, Connecticut parking lot where it has been sighted several times over the course of a few years. Some Black Skimmers are spending their days roosting on a floating dock during the offseason in Charleston, South Carolina just south of where they were banded in North Carolina. Both are examples of how birders have helped scientists fill in the blanks on bird migration.

### **How Can You Help?**

If you see a Canada Goose with a yellow collar that starts with “G”, send an email to Doug Beach at beachgolfdesigns@att.net

If you see a bird with any type of band, report it to the [US Bird Band Laboratory](#).

For more information about the US Bird Banding Laboratory, check out their post: [Overview of its History and Current Practices](#)

If you have any questions, please reach out by emailing [contact@ctbirding.org](mailto:contact@ctbirding.org)



## President's Message

Dear COA Members and Friends,

As we move into another exciting season of birding in Connecticut, I want to thank you for your membership in the Connecticut Ornithological Association and remind everyone that membership renewal is now ongoing throughout the year. Your continued support is what keeps our vibrant birding community thriving. We invite you to renew in a timely manner or early to ensure another year filled with learning, exploration, and conservation. Renewing online before your expiration date will still extend your membership a full year from the original due date and not only saves time for our membership volunteers but also means you won't miss the next stellar editions of *The Connecticut Warbler* and the *COA Bulletin*.

Membership in COA comes with a wide range of benefits. This fall and winter we offered a rich lineup of workshops and programs, including the always-popular Hawk Watch Identification workshop at Lighthouse Point, perfect for sharpening your raptor ID skills during the height of migration. For more advanced birders, we were excited to feature a new specialized session on Avian Hybrids and Subspecies, deepening our understanding of some of the most subtle identification challenges in the field. Coming up, members can look forward to in-depth presentations on ecological connections in bird conservation and the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (ARCC) and the important role it plays in documenting and evaluating rare bird occurrences in our state.

Community involvement continues to be a cornerstone of COA. Our recent Community Garden Harvest brought members together to discover some lesser birded areas with great potential, and we are already gearing up for the friendly competition of Big January, when birders across the state kick off the year with enthusiasm and energy. Meanwhile, our COA Conservation Committee has been active making sure that bird life is considered in plans for a number of parks. One of the highlights of our calendar each year is the COA Annual Meeting, which features inspiring speakers, a lively raffle, and a delicious lunch. It's an event that brings together birders of all levels to share discoveries, deepen knowledge, and enjoy camaraderie. We are working with CT State Community College Middlesex in Middletown to secure a date, tentatively March 7, and hope you can join us.

Your membership dues directly support a range of COA initiatives, including bird-friendly mini-grants, two teen scholarships to the Hog Island Audubon Camp, the CTBirds listserv, our website with its comprehensive birding calendar, and our active presence on Facebook and Instagram. These resources help foster communication, education, and community among birders statewide. And of course, we are now entering the beloved Christmas Bird Count season—a tradition that unites birders across the hemisphere in the longest-running citizen-science project in the world. Whether you are joining a count circle for the first time or are a seasoned participant, we encourage everyone to take part in this meaningful annual effort.

Thank you for being part of the Connecticut Ornithological Association. We hope you will renew your membership when it is due and continue supporting our shared mission: to celebrate, study, and conserve Connecticut's birdlife.

Warm wishes and good birding,  
Cynthia Ehlinger, President, Connecticut Ornithological Association



## Winter Photo Gallery



*Cassin's Kingbird*

*Flanders Nature Center, Woodury*

*Found by former COA President, Chris Wood on November 24, 2025.*

*"white-tipped tail, sharply delineated white chin not extending beyond the eye, pale outer rectrices, yellow belly and grayish chest."*



*Parasitic Jaeger*

*Sasco Beach, Fairfield*

*Aidan Kiley, 25 Sept 2025*



*Western Kingbird*

*Horsebarn Hill, Tolland*

*Joanne Morressey, 8 Nov 2025*

## Winter Photo Gallery



*Ruff*  
Barn Island Wildlife Mgmt Area, Stonington  
Shori Velles, 9 Nov 2025



*Cave Swallow*  
Old Saybrook, Old Saybrook  
Russ Smiley, 12 Nov 2025



*Evening Grosbeak*  
Greenwich Audubon, Greenwich  
Ian Teaell, 14 Nov 2025



*Red Crossbill*  
Forest Office, Norfolk  
Joan Smyth, 28 Nov 2025



*Black-legged Kittiwake*  
Cove Island, Stamford  
Patrick Dugan, 23 Nov 2025



*Lark Sparrow*  
Farmington Meadows, Farmington  
Alison Wilcox, 29 Nov 2025



*Townsend's Warbler*  
Hammonasset Beach SP, Madison  
Julien Amsellem, 6 Dec 2025

## Wild Goose Chase Winter Photo Gallery



*Barnacle Goose*  
Gardners Fields, Windsor  
Jeff Fengler, 4 Dec 2025



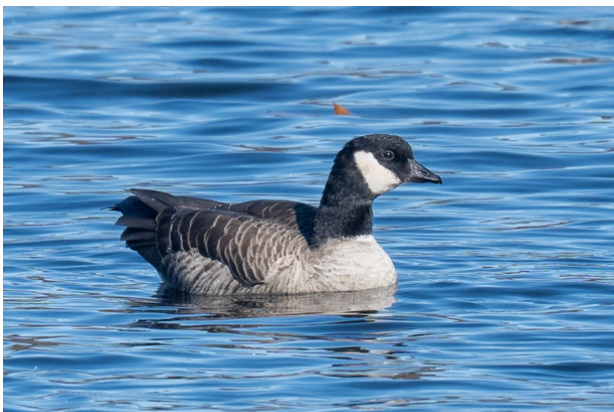
*Ross's Goose*  
Short Beach Park, Stratford  
Linda Ancherstjerne, 3 Dec 2025



*Snow Goose (Blue Morph on right)*  
Hammonasset Beach SP, Madison  
Jeanne Adamus, 2 Dec 2025



*Greater White-fronted Goose*  
9th District Road, Somers  
Jo Fasciolo, 29 Nov 2025



*Cackling Goose*  
Fisher Meadows Rec Area, Avon  
Barry Marsh, 14 Nov 2025



*Pink-footed Goose*  
Broad Brook Mill Pond, East Windsor  
Jack Swatt, 18 Oct 2025

## Announcements

### *Opportunity for Young Birders! Zepko Audubon Camp Scholarship*



The Connecticut Ornithological Association is pleased to announce that we will once again offer TWO Zepko Audubon Camp Scholarships to nurture interest in bird study and conservation among young birders. The 2026 Scholarship will cover the full cost for Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens during one of two sessions in June. The cost includes housing, boat travel and all meals. Scholarship recipients will be responsible for transportation costs to and from camp.

This intensive 6-day, 5-night program on Hog Island allows enthusiastic young birders to work with some of the country's best known birders and ornithologists on field identification, bird ecology and conservation. Occurring concurrently with the adult Field Ornithology and Hands-on Bird Science sessions, and sharing many of the same instructors, this program includes the unique opportunity to see Audubon's seabird restoration work in action.

Applicants must be a resident of Connecticut or active in a Connecticut birding organization, ages 14-17, and must submit a written application along with two letters of reference. Preferences will be given to applicants with individual or family COA memberships. Completed applications and references must be received by the COA via [jofasciolo@gmail.com](mailto:jofasciolo@gmail.com) by January 31, 2026.

If you know a young birder who may be interested, please pass this information along!

Visit <https://hogisland.audubon.org/bird-studies-teens> for more information about Hog Island.

Visit <https://www.ctbirding.org/zepko-audubon-camp-scholarship-for-young-birders/> for COA Scholarship information.

Contact Jo Fasciolo at [jofasciolo@gmail.com](mailto:jofasciolo@gmail.com) for more information.

### **Congratulations**

**to Lighthouse Point, Quaker Ridge, and Hoyden's Hill  
for another successful hawkwatch season!**

Visit <https://www.hawkcount.org/> for data detail.



### **COA Big January Returns!**

Get ready for the traditional format of a friendly competition based on the total number of species seen during the month of January 2026 within a specific area within our state. Details will be shared on the the [COA Website](#) and the Listserve.

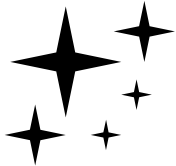
# COMING SOON THE COA ANNUAL MEETING



## SAVE THE DATE!

COA's 42nd Annual Meeting will tentatively be held on March 7, 2026 at CT State Community College, Middlesex

Check our website for upcoming details along with other Calendar events at <https://www.ctbirding.org/events/>



## Get Your COA Mini Grant Application In!



The purpose of the COA Mini-Grant committee is to help fund and support initiatives within the state of Connecticut which specifically benefit the avian wildlife in our state and opportunities for public observation and enjoyment of those natural resources.

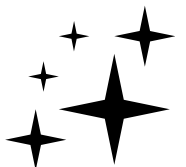
Submit your application by January 15, 2026. All award decisions will be finalized by March 1, 2026. Any applications received after January 15, 2026 will not be eligible for consideration for the March 1, 2026 awards. Those received after January 15, 2026 will be added to the pool of applications for March of 2027.

For details and application forms see <https://www.ctbirding.org/coa-mini-grant/>

## New!

The first draft of the CT Bird Atlas is available at <https://elphick.lab.uconn.edu/connecticut-bird-atlas/>

It is still a work in progress, but contributors are welcome to check for any errors and enjoy the content that is now available.



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

Compiled by Steve Broker  
Volume 20, No. 4 (October 2000)

**The Mabel Osgood Wright Award**, presented to Mark Szantyr by Betty Kleiner.

Mark is an artist, photographer, teacher, and author, and his contributions to Connecticut ornithology have been outstanding. He is a founding member and past Vice President of the Connecticut Ornithological Association. As a long-time bird-bander, he has contributed meaningful data to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Mark has authored numerous articles for *The Connecticut Warbler* and other publications. His many identification articles, enhanced by his excellent drawings, have added greatly to our knowledge of birds and birding. Mark's colored renditions of female tanagers and orioles in the October 1998 (Vol. 18, No. 4) issue were especially helpful in separating those species, as well as significantly enhancing that special issue of "*The Warbler*." He has also provided illustrations for other texts and for numerous ornithological journals.

[Editor's Note: Betty Kleiner wrote this article when she was editor of *The Connecticut Warbler*. She also wrote about Mark Szantyr's work on the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (ARCC), and his committee work with Connecticut DEEP and his habitat survey work with the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge.

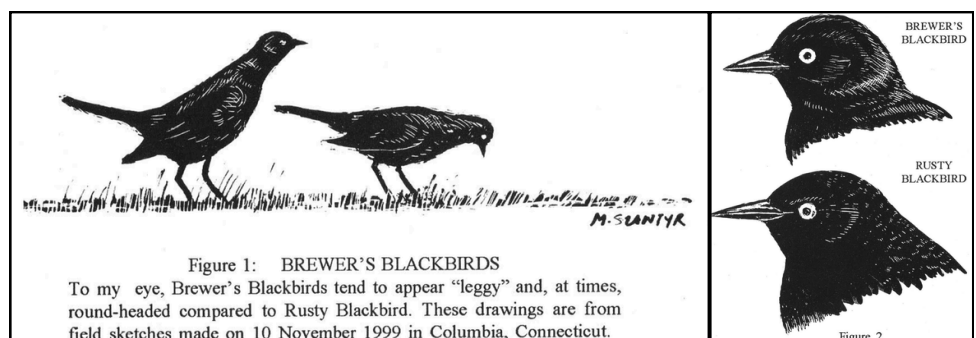
### Hints to the Identification of Rusty Blackbirds in Connecticut, by Mark Szantyr.

Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) is a common icterid of western United States and southern Canada. Its normal summer range extends from the west coast to the western edge of the central plains and across the northern tier of the United States and southern Canada to about the Great Lakes. It winters across the southern states and Mexico from northern Florida westward. Brewer's Blackbird is an uncommon vagrant to the east coast, mostly occurring in the fall and winter, with reports increasing in recent years. As the bird's range moves eastward, we should expect more sightings. In fact, it may be more common in our area than currently accepted records show. Most Brewer's reports received by the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut are of individual birds at a feeder, or, rarely, in the field. This presents the first problem in convincingly identifying this species. Brewer's Blackbird is very similar to the more expected Rusty Blackbird (*Euphagus carolinus*) and, in fact, Rusty Blackbird can show characters of plumage that superficially resemble Brewer's Blackbird.

Brewer's Blackbird has a small, round-headed appearance, with a longer tail, seemingly longer legs (Figure 1), and a very different bill shape than Rusty Blackbird. Rusty Blackbird's bill is long, or finely pointed and narrower at the base than that of Brewer's Blackbird. Brewer's has a shorter bill, not as finely tipped and broader at the base.

[Editor's Note: Mark Szantyr's drawings illustrate those key characters that help distinguish Brewer's Blackbird from Rusty Blackbird. Today, he encourages field observers to search for agricultural fields with large, mixed flocks of grackles, cowbirds, and blackbirds. Brewer's Blackbirds are more likely to forage on the margins of these flocks. The 17th ARCC Report (2011) states of Brewers Blackbird, "It will probably take, at minimum an extensive description of all plumage and structural details extracted from a lengthy observation to provide sufficient evidence. A series of good photographs would be better."

In addition to being the recipient of the 2000 Mabel Osgood Wright Award and his many contributions to Connecticut ornithology, Mark Szantyr has produced the art work for 47 separate covers of *The Connecticut Warbler*, far more than anyone else.]



### **Northern Goshawk Nesting Ecology in Connecticut,**

by Trevor Becker and Dwight G. Smith

Long-term (1973-2000) studies of Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) nesting in Connecticut are summarized. Despite its occurrence as a breeding species within the state, surprisingly little is known about its nesting ecology and distributional status. Studies in other parts of their North American range indicate that Northern Goshawks typically nest in mature and old growth woodlands mostly in more remote and rugged locations of their range. A concern of our long-term study is how Northern Goshawks adapt to smaller and more restricted woodlands and what level of human activities can they tolerate in Connecticut's much modified landscapes.

Our long-term studies from 1973 to the present suggest that the nesting population of Northern Goshawks is slowly but steadily increasing and spreading throughout Connecticut. This increase may be due to extensive reforestation, the maturation of state woodlands which Northern Goshawks prefer for nesting, and the protection of this species.

[Editor's Note: Trevor Becker and Dwight Smith's insightful article summarizes the status of the American Goshawk (*Astur astricapillus*) in Connecticut during the twentieth century. (Common name and taxonomic classification have been changed in recent years.) They describe the methods of their field surveys, and they discuss seasonal phenology, nest site history, nest construction and productivity, their preference for nesting in coniferous or deciduous trees, and management issues. Literature cited includes key historic references, their 1996 "Connecticut Birding Guide" and the *Breeding Bird Atlas of Connecticut* (1982-1986). Remarkably, the 1980s CT BBA documented 82 Atlas Blocks with breeding evidence for goshawk, including 38 Confirmed blocks, 15 Probable blocks, and 29 Possible blocks (13.8% of all state blocks). Tentative results of the 2017-2022 Connecticut Bird Atlas show a grand total of 2 Possible Atlas blocks. American Goshawk is all but extirpated as a breeding raptor in Connecticut. The Birds of the World entry for American Goshawk states that "Currently, the species is not listed as Endangered in U.S. but there are concerns that timber harvests and human encroachment are reducing some populations."]

### **Separating Fall Plumaged Northeastern Wood Warblers, Using Head Pattern Only,** by Paul Carrier

North American wood warblers of the genus *Dendroica* become more difficult to identify during fall migration because most adults molt into a fresh, but duller plumage. The more abundant young of the year wear a similar and even duller plumage at that season.

The bright colors of spring plumage often make identification easier, but in the autumn, colors become less important, and we tend to rely more on patterns and tones. One of the first clues to an autumn warbler's identification is its face pattern. Though variable in intensity, color and sharpness, face patterns are still apparent, and are one of the best field marks we can use during the autumn migration.

[Editor's Note: Paul Carrier provides very helpful black-and-white drawings and commentary for fourteen species of the more common northeastern warblers. Recent phylogenetic re-classifications have moved all fourteen of these warbler species into genus *Setophaga*. Regardless, the article remains very useful for aiding field identifications in autumn.]

See also in this issue of *The Connecticut Warbler*: The 2000 Connecticut Summer Bird Count, by Joseph Zeranski; Books on Birds, by Jamie Meyers. "Restoring North America's Birds, Lessons from Landscape Ecology," by Robert A. Askins. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 320pp.; Connecticut Field Notes, Spring, March 1 through May 31, 2000, by Greg Hanisek; Photo Challenge, by Julian Hough. Cover art of Dunlin is by Paul Carrier. The October 2000 issue of *The Connecticut Warbler* can be seen in its entirety at the following link to the COA website:

<https://ctbirding.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/CTWarblerVolume20.pdf?x80175>.

Scroll down to pages 129-176.

## 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!

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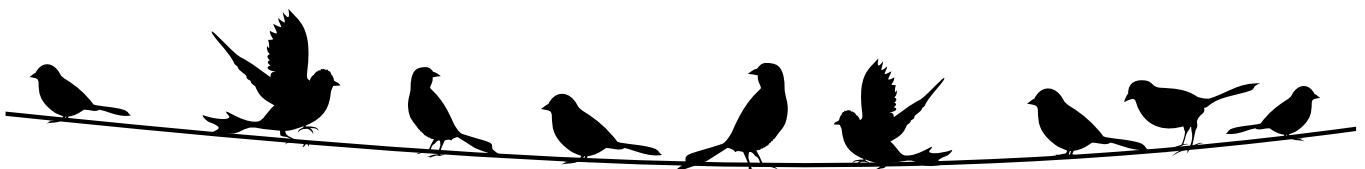
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### **Seeking Authors and Ideas for the COA Bulletin!**

Do you have an idea for a COA Bulletin article you would like to have published? Or, is there something related to birds you would like to learn about and wish there was an article about it? If so, reach out to me at [jo\\_fasciolo@msn.com](mailto:jo_fasciolo@msn.com) and let me know your thoughts!





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