



COA Bulletin

Volume 41, No. 2
Summer 2026

Connecticut Ornithological Association

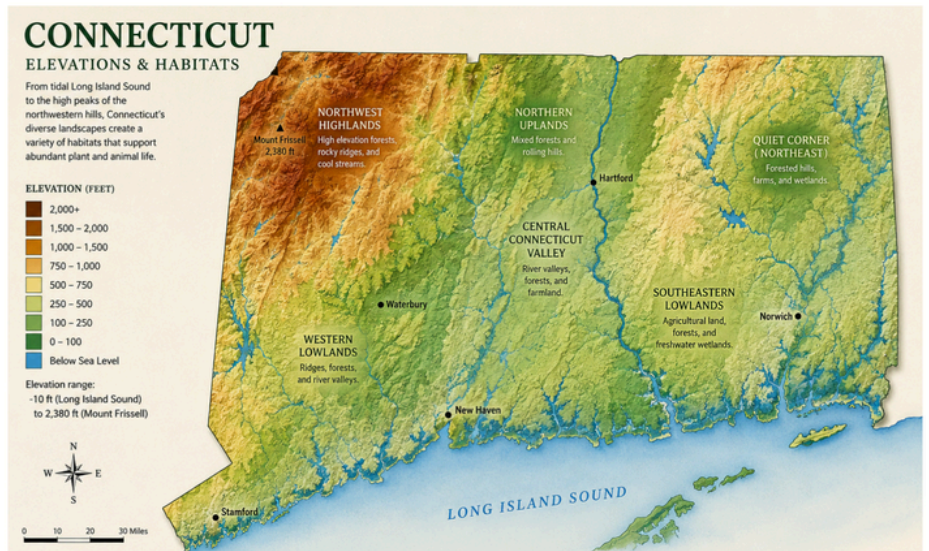
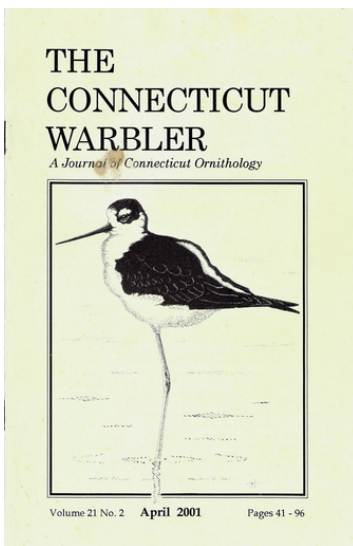
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The Quiet Season: Summer Birding in CT Jo Fasciolo

Often referred to as the “quiet season” by birders, summer birding in Connecticut offers a very different experience from the anticipation and fast pace of spring migration. While migration brings excitement as birders search for passing species, summer encourages a slower approach, allowing time to focus on behavior, habitat, and the day-to-day lives of birds raising young across the state. Although it may seem quieter once migration waves have passed, summer can provide some of the most rewarding and meaningful birding experiences of the year.



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.

Connecticut’s geography makes it an exceptional place for summertime birding. Positioned along the Atlantic Flyway and containing a wide range of habitats including coastal marshes, mature forests, shrublands, rivers, and wetlands, the state supports an impressive diversity of breeding birds. From the shoreline of Long Island Sound to the wooded hills of the northwest corner, summer offers birders the opportunity to experience the full range of species that depend on these varied ecosystems.

One of the highlights of summer birding in Connecticut is the opportunity to observe breeding warblers in forest habitats. While many warblers pass through only during migration, several remain throughout the summer to nest and raise young. While walking wooded trails, it is hard to miss the voices of Ovenbirds, Black-and-white Warblers, Northern Parulas, and American Redstarts.



Blue-winged Warbler

In brushy fields and young forests, Prairie Warblers, Blue-winged Warblers, Chestnut-sided Warblers, and Common Yellowthroats are often common and vocal.

In more specialized habitats across the state, additional species can be found. Pine Warblers nest in mature pine stands, Louisiana Waterthrush are closely tied to clean forest streams, Worm-eating Warblers occupy steep wooded slopes with dense understory, and sometimes Canada Warblers can be found in cool, shaded forests with rich understory vegetation. These species collectively illustrate the importance of habitat diversity in supporting Connecticut's breeding bird community.



Chestnut-sided Warbler

Several eBird hotspots stand out for those seeking breeding forest birds. Audubon Center Bent of the River is one of the state's premier summer birding destinations. Its mix of meadow, forest edge, and mature woodland supports Blue-winged Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Ovenbird, and American Redstart. Early morning visits are especially productive when males are actively singing and defending territories.

In northeastern Connecticut, Boston Hollow offers a more remote forest experience. Its cool ravines and mature woodland support Canada Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, and Louisiana Waterthrush. The shaded stream corridors and intact forest structure make it one of the best locations in the state for northern forest specialists.

Further west, Mohawk State Forest provides a distinctly different forest community. Its higher elevation and northern hardwood forests create conditions similar to northern New England, attracting Black-throated Green Warblers, Blackburnian Warblers, and Northern Parulas. For many birders, Mohawk offers a chance to experience boreal-associated species without leaving Connecticut.

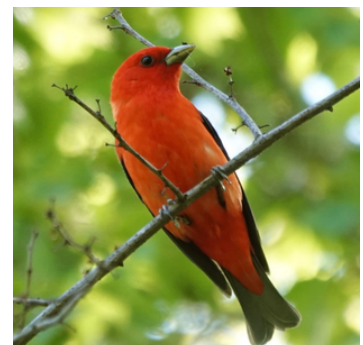
In addition to warblers, Connecticut's forests support a rich community of breeding songbirds during the summer months. Scarlet Tanagers can be seen flashing their beautiful red color high in the canopy, while many Red-eyed Vireos provide an almost constant background of persistent song. Ovenbirds are among the most familiar voices of the forest floor, delivering their loud "teacher-teacher-teacher" call throughout the day. In shaded understories, Veeries and Wood Thrushes contribute some of the most interesting sounds of a Connecticut summer with their flute-like songs. Together, these species define the character of the summer woods and emphasize the importance of protecting large, intact forest habitats.



Black-throated Green Warbler



Wood Thrush



Scarlet Tanager

Connecticut's coastline also becomes especially active during summer as marshes, beaches, tidal flats, and estuaries support a wide variety of nesting shorebirds, waterbirds, and marsh specialists. Hammonasset Beach State Park remains one of the state's most well-known birding destinations. In summer, its shrublands and wooded edges host breeding Yellow Warblers and Common Yellowthroats, while adjacent marshes support Marsh Wrens and Tree Swallows. Along the shoreline, herons, egrets, terns, and occasional early southbound shorebirds can be observed.

Further west, Milford Point is among Connecticut's most important shorebird nesting areas. Piping Plovers, American Oystercatchers, Least Terns, and Willets rely on its beaches and salt marshes during the breeding season. Nearby Stratford Point and Sandy Point also provide essential nesting habitat for coastal species, and in some years may host Black Skimmers, Seaside Sparrows, and Saltmarsh Sparrows. These coastal areas highlight both the richness of Connecticut's shoreline birdlife and the importance of continued habitat protection and responsible observation.

Summer is also one of the best times to observe fledglings and family groups in our backyards, parks, and local natural areas close to home. Young birds who are still learning to forage, fly, and navigate their surroundings can offer a window into the effort and vulnerability involved in raising the next generation. I especially enjoy monitoring our local Peregrine Falcon nest in Norwalk by the Yankee Doodle Bridge along I95 and seeing Wood Duck ducklings trailing behind their parents at 14 Acre Pond and Woods Pond in Norwalk. It always impresses me how much work goes into nesting, feeding, and protecting young.

Perhaps most importantly, summer birding fosters a deeper connection to familiar places. Unlike migration, when birds pass through quickly, breeding birds remain tied to specific habitats for weeks or months. Returning to the same marshes, forests, and shorelines throughout the season allows birders to notice subtle changes, learn individual songs, and better understand how birds use the landscapes around them.

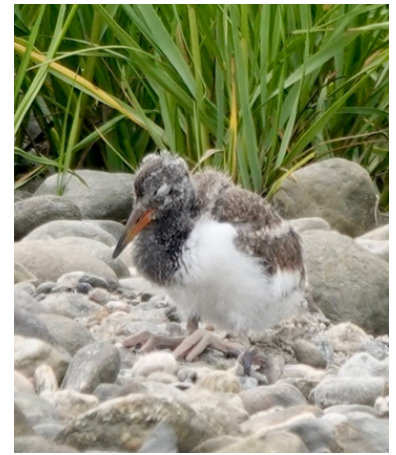
In the end, summer birding in Connecticut is less about chasing new species and more about building familiarity with how the landscape of our geography begins to reveal its patterns. In the quiet season, when the pace slows and the breeding cycle takes center stage, Connecticut's birds offer an opportunity to observe and learn more about the birds that depend on the state's varied ecosystems and how important it is to protect our natural spaces.

For more information about breeding birds in Connecticut and breeding safe dates, visit University of Connecticut's *Connecticut Birds* at <https://draft.ctbirdatlas.research.uconn.edu/methods/breeding-atlas/safe-dates/>

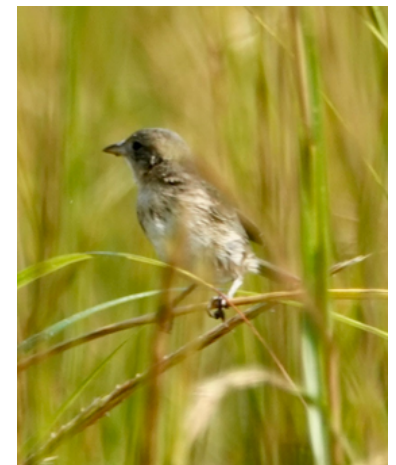
Photo credits: Jo Fasciolo



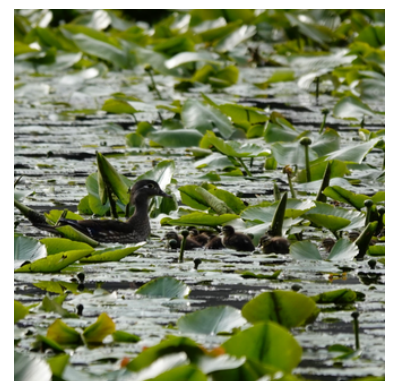
Marsh Wren



American Oystercatcher



Seaside Sparrow



Wood Ducks



Summer Bird Counts 2026 - Get Involved!



Organizer Tom Robben has announced the 2026 Summer Bird Count dates in Connecticut as confirmed by all SBC compilers for this year. The Summer Bird Count is conducted in a similar way as the Christmas Bird Count by counting all the individual birds in a prescribed area. For this count, participants may rely more on hearing birds than seeing them since vegetation can reduce visibility. Most counts also are held over 2 days rather than a single day. Results will be posted in COA's journal *The Connecticut Warbler*. Please contact the area Compiler if you want to participate.

CT Summer Bird Counts 2026

JUNE 06-07

- Woodbury-Roxbury. Contact: Russ Naylor, Woodbury, CT; 203-841-7779.
- Greenwich-Stamford. Contact: Thomas Burke, 914-967-4922, thomaswardburke@gmail.com, and Gary Palmer, 203-661-4897, garyjane4523@gmail.com
- New Haven. Contact: Steve Mayo, 203-551-1707 or 203-772-9842, scmayo999@gmail.com

JUNE 13-14

- Hartford. Contact: Jay Kaplan, 860-693-0157 and cell 860-707-5246, jaybrd49@aol.com
- Litchfield Hills. Contact: David Tripp Jr., dtrippjr@gmail.com

JUNE 20-21

- Storrs. Contact: Steve Morytko, 860-680-5728, smorytko@yahoo.com
- New Milford – Pawling. Contact: Angela Dimmitt, 860-355-3429, angeladimmitt@aol.com

JUNE 27-28

- Barkhamsted. Contact: Dave Rosgen, d.rosgen@outlook.com. This email may change soon, so text messaging to 959-202-8996 is preferred. Participants for Barkhamsted should report all their SBC findings into eBird checklists, where Dave will retrieve them and compile the count.

Remembering Jim Hunter

Courtney Hunter

James Christopher Hunter

November 22, 1975 – March 9, 2026

James (Jim) Christopher Hunter of Woodbury, Connecticut, beloved husband of Courtney Hunter, passed away on March 9, 2026. Jim lived a life rooted in love for his students, his friends, and the natural world that inspired him every day.



Born in Centerville, Ohio, Jim spent his early years exploring the outdoors with his grandparents, Fred and “Sweetie,” whose influence helped spark a lifelong connection to nature. At age eight, he moved to Connecticut with his parents, Fred and Carol (Harper) Hunter, and his older brother Paul. Westport would become the place he called home for much of his life.

Jim was a graduate of Southern Connecticut State University and brought passion and purpose to his work as an environmental science teacher at Wilton High School. He had a gift for making the natural world come alive for his students and colleagues alike. He also shared his knowledge and enthusiasm through his work at Wild Birds Unlimited in both Fairfield, Connecticut and Woburn, Massachusetts, and as a Homer Award–winning Garden Department Supervisor at the New Milford Home Depot.

A central part of Jim’s life was his deep connection to Earthplace Nature Center in Westport, where he found not only a sanctuary but a second family. There, he met Grit Ardwin, who became a cherished mentor and a guiding presence, nurturing his love for flora and fauna. Jim, in turn, became a beloved and familiar figure to visitors, known for his warmth, knowledge, and engaging guided walks. Drawing on his experiences at Earthplace and Ambler Farm in Wilton, Jim took great pride in managing the Wilton school greenhouse and garden, and in leading Field Studies at Allen’s Meadows, where he inspired countless students to appreciate and protect the environment.

Deeply curious and remarkably perceptive, Jim had a special talent for wildlife photography and birding. He found joy in quiet observation and shared that joy generously with others. He was especially proud to lead the annual Christmas Bird Count in the Branford territories, following the example of his mentor, Noble Proctor. Continuing that legacy, Jim served on the board of the Connecticut Ornithological Association, helping to foster appreciation for Connecticut’s bird life.

Above all, Jim will be remembered for his kind heart, gentle spirit, and the way he made people feel welcome, whether in a classroom, on a trail, or in everyday conversation. His presence brought comfort, curiosity, and connection to those around him.

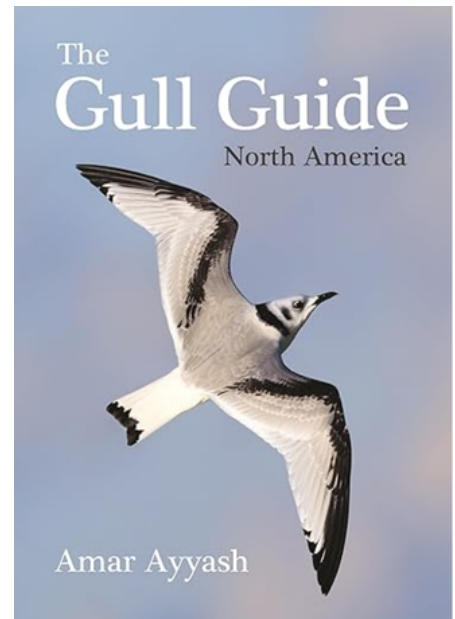
Memorial contributions in Jim’s name may be made to the Connecticut Ornithological Association, 314 Unquowa Road, Fairfield, CT 06824, or online at CtBirding.org. Those wishing to honor Jim’s memory may also consider supporting a cause that reflects his deep love of nature and education, though such gestures are entirely optional.

COA Annual Meeting Wrap Up

Thanks to the hard work of our Annual Meeting Committee and all our members, this year's meeting was another hit! We hosted over 130 people. Sponsorship by Zeiss Optics, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Vortex, Sunrise Birding, and Sound Federal Credit Union ensured the event's success and provided informative displays of their products. Our friends at Audubon Connecticut, The Audubon Shop, The Connecticut Audubon Society, Roaring Brook Nature Center, The Hartford Audubon Society and the New Haven Bird Club also provided support. The success of the day is a testimony to the strength of the birding community in Connecticut. Annual Meeting photo credits: Steve Broker.



Keynote Speaker **Amar Ayyash**
The Gull Guide: North America



Holly Merker
Ornithotherapy: The Power of Birding



Nick Bonomo
Self-found Connecticut Big Year

COA Annual Meeting Award Recipients



Betty Kleiner Award – Greg Hanisek (right) with COA President Cynthia Ehlinger (left)



Mabel Osgood Wright Award – Phil Rusch (center), with presenter Glenn Williams (left) and COA President Cynthia Ehlinger (right)



President's Award – (left to right) Dan Rottino, Mona Cavallero, COA President Cynthia Ehlinger, Corey Leamy



George Zepko Audubon Camp Scholarship Winner – Matt Colberg (center) with COA Zepko Chair Jo Fasciolo (left) and COA President Cynthia Ehlinger (right). Not pictured, Arabella Pajoohi

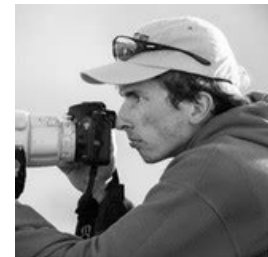
COA Mini-grants Recipients

- *Tom Baptist*
- *CAS: Roger Tory Peterson Estuary Center*
- *Columbia University*
- *Flander's Nature Center & Land Trust*
- *Great Hollow Nature Preserve*
- *H5N1 Prevention Initiative*
- *Old Saybrook Land Trust*
- *Roaring Brook Nature Center*
- *Sacred Heart University*
- *Steep Rock Association*

Welcome New Board Members



Deb Eccleston



Matt Bell

Get to know our board members by visiting <https://www.ctbirding.org/about/coa-board-of-directors-2025-2026/>



President's Message Cynthia Ehlinger

Dear COA Members and Friends,

Now that spring migration is in full swing, it's hard to believe that our Annual Meeting in March already feels so far behind us. It was a wonderful day of learning, connection, and celebration.

Our speakers—Nick Bonomo, Holly Merker, and Amar Aayash—shared fascinating perspectives on topics ranging from a self-found Big Year to ornithotherapy to Connecticut's gulls. The annual raffle once again featured an impressive collection of treasures, thanks to the hard work of our raffle committee and generous friends of COA.

Elsewhere in this newsletter, you'll read about the deserving recipients of COA mini-grants, awards, and teen camp scholarships. These programs are made possible through your memberships and donations, and we are grateful for your support.

We are also excited to announce a new partnership for COA. We are now collaborating on the instant message-based CT Discussion Sub-Group of the Connecticut Birding GroupMe. Aidan Kiley independently manages both the Connecticut Birding GroupMe and the CT RBA GroupMe, which provide timely updates on unusual and rare bird sightings. COA representatives Stefan Martin and Ryan MacLean serve as moderators for the CT Discussion Sub-Group, a new GroupMe discussion platform that offers a space for conversations and updates about Connecticut birds, birding, and conservation. Topics may include migration events, weather patterns, habitat management, public policy affecting birds, birding events, directions to birding sites, and more.

At the same time, COA's CTBirds email listserv—ably moderated by Chuck Imbergamo—continues to serve our community in its longstanding email-based format. By supporting both platforms, COA is providing options for birders who prefer traditional email as well as those who appreciate the immediacy of IM-based communication. Cross-posting between the two is encouraged, creating even more opportunities for engagement within Connecticut's birding community.

To learn more about the CTBirds email listserv, visit [CTBirds Listserv](#).

To learn more about the CT Discussion Sub-Group of the Connecticut Birding GroupMe, visit [CT Discussion Sub-Group Information](#).

For information on Aidan Kiley's other independently administered GroupMe options, including CT RBA and Connecticut Birding GroupMe, visit [Aidan Kiley's GroupMe information](#).

Finally, as migration continues, we encourage everyone to help protect birds on their journeys by turning off unnecessary lights at night and taking steps to prevent bird collisions with windows. COA is proud to partner with [Lights Out Connecticut](#) in protecting migrating birds.

Thank you for all you do for birds and bird conservation.

Warmly,
Cynthia Ehlinger



Spring Photo Gallery



Swainson's Warbler
Mianus River State Park Scenic Reserve
Fairfield County
Cody Limber, 7 May 2026

Congratulations to Ricky Chmielecki on an extraordinary discovery, Connecticut's first state record of a Swainson's Warbler! This secretive songbird is typically found in dense swamps and thick understory forests of the southeastern United States, especially in states like Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina. Because they spend most of their time hidden in heavy vegetation and are rarely seen far north of their normal range, finding one in Connecticut is exceptionally rare. Ricky's observation represents a remarkable contribution to Connecticut birding history and an exciting moment for birders across the state!



Western Cattle Egret
Bluff Point SP, New London County
Aaron Leland, 12 May 2026



Wilson's Phalarope
Upper Ash Creek, Fairfield County
Jo Fasciolo, 7 May 2026



Ruff
Guilford-Shell Beach, New Haven County
Julien Amsellem, 28 April 2026



Summer Tanager
Tunxis Meade Athletic Fields, Hartford County
Connor Hogan, 8 May 2026

Twenty-Five Years Ago in *The Connecticut Warbler*

**Compiled by Steve Broker
Volume 21, No. 2 (April 2001)**

The Mabel Osgood Wright Award - 2001

“The following is the presentation by Jay Kaplan of the Mabel Osgood Wright Award at the Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Ornithological Association on March 17, 2001.”

The Mabel Osgood Wright Award was established in 1991, to recognize individuals who have made significant contributions to the study and conservation of birds in Connecticut. The recipient of this year's Mabel Osgood Wright Award is Betty Kleiner. I cannot think of any one person who has done more to promote the study of birds in Connecticut over the past generation. I am particularly impressed with the time [Betty] spends with beginners, helping new birders to improve their identification skills and to expand their horizons. [She] also recognizes that birds cannot survive without healthy and substantial habitat in which to breed and successfully raise their young, and has invested much time and effort to improve habitat for birds and other wildlife.

Betty is a founding member of COA and served as this organization's first vice-president. She has been active with the Hartford Audubon Society for many years and served as President from 1971-73. She also served as the [Hartford Audubon Society] Chair of the Wildlife Lecture Series and as long-time Chair of the Sanctuary Committee. The study and conservation of birds has been more than a hobby for Betty. It has been a passion, and she has been and continues to be a leading advocate for bird conservation in Connecticut.

[Editor's Note: Betty Kleiner served as editor of *The Connecticut Warbler* for twenty years. Following Betty's death in November 2006, the Connecticut Ornithological Association established the annual Betty Kleiner Award for the best article published in *The Connecticut Warbler* each year. In addition to her many contributions to birds and birding, Betty was very active in the Simsbury Garden Club and the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut.]

Tenth Report of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut

by Greg Hanisek, Julian Hough, and Mark Szantyr

The tenth report of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (ARCC) of the Connecticut Ornithological Association (COA) summarizes the latest cooperative effort of the state's birders to maintain an accurate record and historical archive of the state's avifauna. This report contains 49 records of 42 species reviewed by the ARCC. The majority of them are from 1999 and 2000. The roster includes four new state records - Red-necked Stint, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Cave Swallow, and Brambling. Other notable records include: the state's second Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Sandwich Tern; its third Anhinga and Chestnut-collared Longspur; its fourth Franklin's Gull; and its fifth Rufous Hummingbird and Wood Stork. The Rufous Hummingbird represents an especially strong recent trend of western hummers appearing in the east in autumn, a phenomenon that has continued in Connecticut beyond the period covered by this report.

[Editor's Note: The accepted records also included well written reports for Anhinga, Swallow-tailed Kite, Swainson's Hawk, Ruff, Red-necked Phalarope, Loggerhead Shrike, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Summer Tanager, Chestnut-collared Longspur, and Brewer's Blackbird. Birders who have been active in the state over the past year or so have had opportunities for seeing several of these species.

Summarizing the committee work of ARCC, Greg, Julian, and Mark wrote that “the State List now stands at 405 species.” Over the course of the past 25 years, the Connecticut State List has increased by approximately 50 additional species. When ARCC members hold their next meeting to review the latest batch of species reports, one will be of the Swainson’s Warbler discovered on May 6 of this year.]

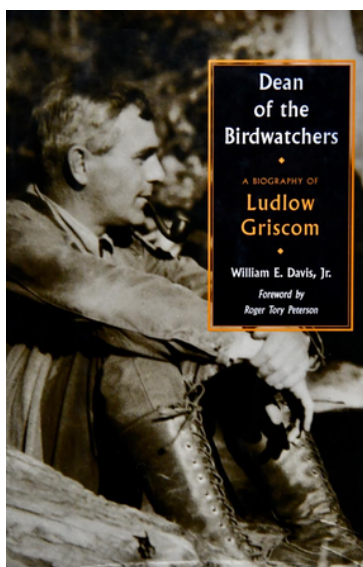
Great Horned Owl Preys on Domestic Cat

by William E. Davis, Jr. and Craig Armstrong

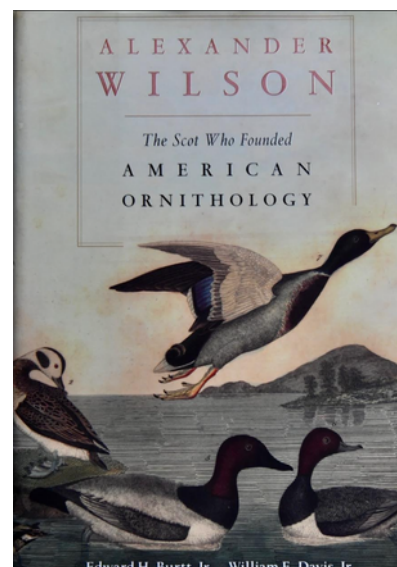
Great Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*) are fearsome predators. They are primarily nocturnal and crepuscular perch-and-pounce hunters that have acute hearing and vision, and wing feathers adapted to produce silent flight. Their diet in most areas is about 90% mammals, some of which are astonishingly large. In addition to rabbits and hares, they take squirrels, skunks, raccoons, porcupines, small dogs, and cats (reference given). We report here an account of a “successful” Great Horned Owl attack on a half-grown domestic black cat.

[Editor’s Note: This brief article by Davis and Armstrong describes a remarkable mid-January 2001 incident in Westwood, Massachusetts that ended with the demise both of the owl and the cat. Several clues were used by the authors to reconstruct a rather grizzly nocturnal event. The article’s co-author, William “Ted” Davis, Jr., died in August 2024 at age 87 years. In the 1990s, he served as president of *Bird Observer of Eastern Massachusetts*. This important journal, published six-times-a-year, now is called *Bird Observer*. The *In Memoriam* for Ted Davis (*Bird Observer*, Vol. 52, No. 5) notes that he served as cover bird art editor and wrote the corresponding natural history narratives of birds for nearly 200 issues, as well as contributing more than 60 personal field notes on avian behavior. Some of us have enjoyed reading his 1993 book, *Dean of the Bird Watchers: A Biography of Ludlow Griscom* and his coauthored 2013 book *Alexander Wilson: The Scot Who Founded American Ornithology*.]

See also in this issue of *The Connecticut Warbler*: The 2000-2001 Connecticut Christmas Bird Count, by Stephen P. Broker; Connecticut Field Notes, Fall, August 1 through November 30, 2000, by Greg Hanisek; Photo Challenge, by Julian Hough. Cover art of Black-necked Stilt is by Julian Hough. The April 2001 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/CTWarblerVolume21.pdf?x24940>. Scroll down to issue number 2 for pages 41-96.



Ludlow Griscom book
(William E. Davis, Jr.)



Alexander Wilson book
(William E. Davis, Jr.)

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 nearly 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/join-us/>

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 also enjoy early notification of events and access to our growing Members-Only content (mostly instructional videos). Membership funds support COA's many services and activities (CTBirds, workshops, mini-grants, annual meeting, etc.).

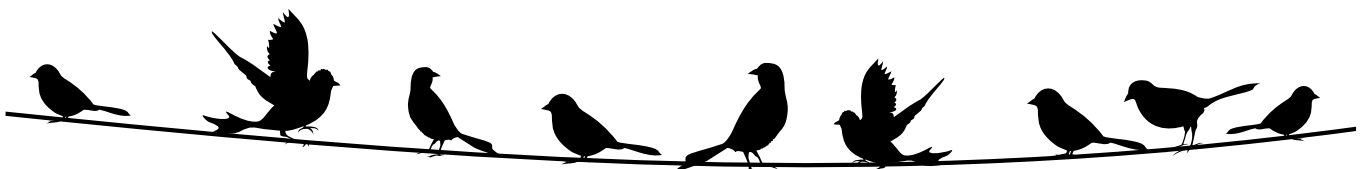
Membership Levels:

Individual	\$35/yr
Student	\$15/yr
Family	\$45/yr
Contributing	\$50/yr
Donor	\$75/yr
Benefactor	\$100/yr
Life	\$1000



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 jofasciolo@gmail.com and let me know your thoughts!





Connecticut Ornithological Association

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www.ctbirding.org

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<i>Mini-Grants</i>	Allison Black
<i>The Connecticut Warbler</i>	Greg Hanisek
<i>COA Bulletin</i>	Jo Fasciolo

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, 2025 to the editor at jofasciolo@gmail.com