



# THE CHICKADEE

Newsletter of the New Haven Bird Club

February 2017

## 2017 CALENDAR

(See inside for details)

Thursday, February 9, 7:00 PM **Shary Siksay, VMD - Funky Feathered Feet**

Saturday, February 25, 7:00 AM **Sachuest Point NWR and Rhode Island Coast**

Wednesday, March 1, 8:00 AM **First Wednesday Walk: Stratford Shore & Great Meadows**

Sunday, March 5, 8:00 AM **Fargeorge Wildlife Preserve, Quinnipiac River, New Haven Joint Field Trip with the New Haven Land Trust**

Thursday, March 9, 7:00 PM **Members Night**

Saturday, April 1, 8:30 AM **Gull and Gannet Frenzy, Southport Beach, Southport**

Wednesday, April 5, 8:00 AM **First Wednesday Walk: CT Audubon Coastal Center, Milford Point**

Saturday, April 8, 8:00 AM **East Rock Birding and Trail Maintenance, New Haven**

Saturday, April 8, 8:30AM-5PM **Lighthouse Point to the Richard English Bird Sanctuary The Richard English Memorial**

### **Note date change:**

Thursday, April 20, 7:00 PM **Tom Sayer - Rebuilding Local Populations of the American Kestrel- One Box at a Time**

Sunday, April 23, 10:00 AM **Conservation Activity – East Rock Garlic Mustard Pull**

Wednesday, April 26, 7:30 AM **Lake Chamberlain, Bethany**

Saturday, April 29, 7:30 AM **Ansonia Nature Center, Ansonia**

Saturday, April 29, 9:00 AM **Bird Walk for Families at East Rock Park, New Haven**

Saturday, April 29, 7:00 AM **Birding by Ear at Lufberry Memorial Park**

## BE SURE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE

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

There are now Google Map links for the meeting places of trips.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a great holiday season.

In my household music is always a big part of Christmas. Many gifts are CDs, instruments or music equipment. So, this time of year music is especially on my mind.

I love classical music and opera like many other club members. I like to hear how composers represent birds and bird sounds in their work. There are some pieces that depict mythological birds like Stravinsky's Firebird, a blazing bird that is both a curse and a blessing, and Sibelius' Swan of Tuonela, that swims in a river of the underworld. These tone poems evoke the nature of the birds flaming flight or tranquil glide respectively.

Many composers have used fictitious birds. In Wagner's *Siegfried* there is a magical bird that appears and sings to Siegfried in the woods. The bird sings in leitmotifs and does not sound like a German forest bird to me. Perhaps I need to go birding in the Black Forest. After licking dragon's blood off his mighty sword Nothung, the hero Siegfried is able to speak to the bird and understand everything it is saying. Would we really want to hear everything a bird has to tell us? "Hey the Grackles ate all the sunflower seeds and we're hungry." "That cat showed up again! Do something to keep it out of the yard." or "I want to settle down and raise a family. Do something about all of this habitat loss, will ya?" How about just a flute-like "EE-O-Lay" instead.

Papagano, I feel, is one of the most charming characters in all of opera. This bird catcher from Mozart's *The Magic Flute* dresses in feathers with a large birdcage on his back. Although very enchanting, the music never attempts to capture or portray the nature of any birds or any bird songs.

Mozart had a pet starling in his early life. He taught the bird a simple melody that the bird sang back to him. This starling took it upon himself to change the music by holding a note longer and making a chromatic modulation. Who but a starling would dare change Mozart's music? Mozart incorporated the musical phrase that the starling sang into his *Piano Concerto No. 17 in G, K. 453*.

There are some composers who used musical instruments to try to replicate bird song. One of the most famous examples is Beethoven's Sixth symphony in the 'Scene by the Brook' movement. He replicates a nightingale using flutes, quail using oboes and a cuckoo using clarinets. Beethoven was famous for

(Continued on next page)

## NEW HAVEN BIRD CLUB – 2016-2017

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### SPECIAL PROGRAMS

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NHBC website: [www.newhavenbirdclub.org](http://www.newhavenbirdclub.org)

(President's Message Continued from first page)

his walks through the countryside near his hometown of Bonn and later his adopted home in Vienna. He would pay attention to the trees, plants, and birds around them. When he wrote his Sixth Symphony, Beethoven was deaf and had to reconstruct his bird sounds from distant memories, so the bird sounds in the symphony are not accurate, but the general impression of bird song is established.

One piece that intrigues me the most is *Cantus Articus*, composed in 1972 by the Finnish composer Einojuhani Rautavaara (It took me a few days to learn to pronounce his name). He went to a boreal bog near Oulu, Finland and recorded Horned Larks and then lowered the song recording by two octaves to create a ghost bird. He also recorded Whooper Swans and other bog bids in springtime. The piece weaves slow, rich impressionist themes with the bird recordings. In the last movement Rautavaara uses a crescendo of strings to impart the impression of the swans flying into a blazing sun.

I understand that this president's message is a departure from the usual subjects and musings. As humans, we need to be surrounded by birds either their physical presence or in our art. It's fun to explore all aspects. Happy listening.

--Craig Repasz

### **NHBC Board Updates**

I am pleased to announce that we have filled two open positions on the New Haven Bird Club's Board of Directors. The Conservation Chair position will be shared by Deborah Johnson and Charles Strasser serving as co-chairs.

The Indoor Programs Chair position will be shared by Andrea Kerin (the current chair) and Gail Martino serving as co-chairs.

We are still seeking a Secretary for 2017-2018. We are also looking for someone to serve as a Member-At-Large.

If you have any questions or are interested in a position, please contact Craig Repasz [crepasz@hotmail.com](mailto:crepasz@hotmail.com).

The next board meeting will be Thursday, February 23 at 6:45 at Whitney Center.

### **BIRDS IN WORDS**

Join in on "Birds in Words," NHBC's gathering of people who like reading books on their favorite hobby. Since the group began in 2009, we've read more than 32 books on just about every aspect of birds, birding, birders, and nature and had some lively meetings. Share the fun! We meet at 7 pm at Whitney Center. For details, contact: Kris Johnson: [kriswaxwing99@gmail.com](mailto:kriswaxwing99@gmail.com), 203-288-3087.

We will be discussing *The Wilderness World of John Muir* edited by Edwin Way Teale on Tuesday, March 7, 7-9 at Whitney Center in the 6th floor conference room. Hope to see you there.

--Kris Johnson

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## INDOOR PROGRAMS

Monthly indoor programs start in September and are held on the second Thursday of the month. The social half-hour at meetings begins at 7:00 pm; the meeting and program begin at 7:30 pm. Inclement weather or other emergency may cancel a meeting. Cancellation notices will be sent via the club email, and will be posted on the club website, [www.newhavenbirdclub.org](http://www.newhavenbirdclub.org), and online on [ctbirds](http://www.ctbirding.org/calendar.htm), <http://www.ctbirding.org/calendar.htm>. Meetings are at Whitney Center, Cultural Arts Center, 200 Leeder Hill Drive, Hamden. The facility is wheelchair accessible. Meeting is in WC's South Building, accessed via the main door of the portico that is in view from the parking lot. Turn right down the hallway. Cultural Arts Center is a short distance on the left.

### ***Parking at Whitney Center:***

We may park on the upper level of the parking garage at the Whitney Center in any unmarked parking place. We may not park on the lower level of the parking garage. If no parking places are available please drive to the employee parking lot. Follow the driveway past the front entrances of the building. At the stop sign take a right into the employee parking area. There are no entrances at the side or back of the building so please walk around to the front. This area is well lit.

### ***Directions to Whitney Center (WC):***

From I-95 North or South: Exit to I-91 North in New Haven. Take Exit 6 (Willow St.). At end of ramp go right onto Willow and proceed on Willow to the end (to Whitney Ave.). Turn right onto Whitney; go 1.7 mi. to Treadwell St. (at Citgo Gas intersection) and make SHARP left onto Treadwell. Proceed 0.7 mi. on Treadwell, turn left onto Leeder Hill Drive (traffic light). Whitney Center is shortly on the right. Enter SECOND drive-way (South Entrance) and take immediate left into raised parking lot or continue on to the employee lot.

From I-91 South: Take Exit 6 (Willow St.) in New Haven. At end of ramp, turn right onto Willow and proceed as above.

From Wilbur Cross (Rt. 15-North or South): Take Exit 60. Right at end of ramp (Dixwell Ave./Rt.10). Go about 1 mi. to traffic light at Treadwell St. Left on Treadwell. Go 0.3 mi. to traffic light (Leeder Hill), turn right. WC is shortly on the right. Enter SECOND drive-way (South Entrance), take immediate left into raised parking lot or continue on to the employee lot.

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### **Thursday, February 9 - Shary Siksay, VMD Funky Feathered Feet**

While most bird talks focus on the obvious - gorgeous plumage, the intricacy of mating calls and dances, and other fascinating aspects of birds' lives, Dr. Shary Siksay's lecture will focus on the "funky feathered feet," going through the morphology, form, and function of avian feet. All types of avian feet will be discussed in terms of their evolution, how they help the species to adapt and survive, and why certain species are susceptible to the specific injuries she sees most often. Time permitting, she will also go through some interesting local and recent cases, including a great horned owl with his head "on upside down" and a poisoned bald eagle. Dr. Siksay earned her VMD from University of Pennsylvania and works full time as a small animal and exotics veterinarian. Her work includes treating wildlife brought to her by wildlife rehabilitators.

### **Thursday, March 9 Members Night**

This is always a popular evening. We all love it! It's so much fun to share our prized photographs, stories of exciting encounters with wild birds, and descriptions of those special places where we always find the unique migrants. And those of us who are too shy to present sure enjoy seeing the photos, listening to those stories and planning visits to the perfect birding locations. Both slide and Power Point capability will be

available. Please call Andrea Kerin at 203-331-6067 or email [andrea@kerin.com](mailto:andrea@kerin.com) with details of what you'd like to show.

### ***Note date change:***

### **Thursday, April 20 - Tom Sayer Rebuilding Local Populations of the American Kestrel- One Box at a Time**

Ever since the age of eight, Tom Sayers has spent much of his free time wandering the woods and fields fascinated by the complexity and diversity of the natural world. In 2009, his life-long interest in birds led him to experiment with putting up five American Kestrel nestboxes in northeast Connecticut as a way of trying to help reverse the dramatic decline of the threatened American Kestrel. Those first boxes produced seven nestlings in the first year and resulted in the formation of the Northeast Connecticut Kestrel Project ([www.nectkestrels.com](http://www.nectkestrels.com)). This presentation will take you from that very first year, with all its mistakes and challenges, up through the 2016 breeding season. Tom's presentation includes fascinating video clips of both nestlings and adult birds. Tom will discuss a wide variety of topics: the possible reasons for the American Kestrel's decline; factors which seem to influence the breeding success of the birds; what has been learned about successful nestbox placement; what we have learned from banding, radio telemetry, and geolocator studies with the birds; and the role of the European Starling in the breeding success of kestrels.

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## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

D. Edward and Rosemary K.J. Davis  
New Haven

Andrew Foerster  
New Haven

Amy Hudson  
Bridgeport

Candace Kalmic  
Plantville

Charles Mitchell  
New Haven

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## FIELD TRIPS / OUTDOOR EVENTS

All levels of birders are invited to all field trips, and every effort is made on all trips to help beginners. If you are new to birding or have any special needs, please be sure to let the leader know at the start of the field trip. More details, if required, and/or updates on these trips will be given at the indoor meetings and in the newsletter. Watch for emails sent by the Club. You can also check the Club's website: <[www.newhavenbirdclub.org](http://www.newhavenbirdclub.org)> for trip information and a Google Map link to the meeting place. Or contact trip leaders directly if you have questions about any of their trips. The New Haven Bird Club does not charge any fees for its outdoor programs, but participants are responsible for the cost of their food, transportation, and entrance fees (where charged), unless the Club makes prior arrangements. Carpooling is encouraged to avoid parking problems at some destinations and to promote conservation of natural resources.

*Cancellation Policy:* Inclement weather or another emergency may cancel a field trip. Check the sources listed above or contact the leader of the trip directly if you have any questions about a possible cancellation.

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### **Sachuest Point NWR and Rhode Island Coast**

Saturday, February 25, 7:00 AM

This all-day trip includes stops at Sachuest Point NWR, Beavertail State Park, Moonstone Beach, Trustum Pond, and other great birding sites on the RI coast. We will see lots of sea ducks including all three scoter species, Common Eider, and Harlequin Duck. We'll look for birds of prey, including Rough-legged Hawk and several owl species. We'll also be on the lookout for alcids and rare gulls. Dress warmly—it's likely to be cold and windy on the coast. The walk is a bit strenuous. Bring lunch and a scope, if you have one. Meet at the Branford commuter lot, Exit 55 off I-95. Snow date, Sunday 2/26/17. Leader: Chris Loscalzo, [closcalzo@optonline.net](mailto:closcalzo@optonline.net), cell.203-389-6508.

### **First Wednesday Walk: Stratford Shore & Great Meadows**

Wednesday, March 1, 8:00 AM

Join us on a visit to this excellent birding area. We'll look for oceanic birds such as Long-tailed Duck and scoters, as well as raptors and shorebirds. Meet at the Dunkin Donuts parking lot at 60 Access Rd. near the intersection with Main St. (Rt. 113). We carpool from there. Leader: Frank Mantlik, [mantlik@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mantlik@sbcglobal.net), cell.203-984-9410.

### **Fargeorge Wildlife Preserve, Quinnipiac River, New Haven**

*Joint Field Trip with the New Haven Land Trust*  
Sunday, March 5, 8:00 AM

This is a late winter trip to Fargeorge Preserve. It is always full of surprises. We will see what is overwintering in its many varied habitats. We will also see early spring migrants. This will be a learning experience for all of us. As many times as I have been there, I've never been in early March. Dress warmly. Directions: Go South on Quinnipiac Av from RT 80. Make a right just past the R.R. overpass. Go through the open gate onto the property. Leader: Mike Horn [203-288-1891](tel:203-288-1891), [mfhorn@att.net](mailto:mfhorn@att.net).

### **Gull and Gannet Frenzy, Southport Beach, Southport**

Saturday, April 1, 8:30 AM

Join us as we search for plankton-feeding flocks of gulls, including the rare Little and Black-headed Gulls. We'll also

hope to see Northern Gannets plunge-feeding offshore. Wear waterproof shoes for walking on the tidal mudflats, and dress warmly. We may also carpool to nearby sites. Meet at Southport Beach, 1505 Pequot Ave., Southport, located at the intersection of Pequot and Sasco Creek Road, along the Westport/Fairfield border. Parking spaces along Pequot Ave., near intersection with Sasco Creek Rd. Leader: Frank Mantlik, [mantlik@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mantlik@sbcglobal.net), cell.203-984-9410.

### **First Wednesday Walk: CT Audubon Coastal Center, Milford Point**

Wednesday, April 5, 8:00 AM

Enjoy an early spring trip to one of the best local birding spots. We look out into the marsh and along the shore for waterfowl, shorebirds, waders, and raptors. Meet at Coastal Center parking lot, 1 Milford Point Rd. Leader: Stephen Spector, [charsjs@sbcglobal.net](mailto:charsjs@sbcglobal.net), home.203-876-7461, cell.203-928-8089.

### **East Rock Birding and Trail Maintenance, New Haven**

Saturday, April 8, 8:00 AM

Meet at the Eli Whitney Museum parking lot (915 Whitney Ave., Hamden) for a bird walk from 8-9:30 am. Then join Park Ranger Dan Barvir to help with light trail maintenance along the river until noon. Bring work gloves & pruning shears if you have them. Leader: Dan Barvir, [dbarvir@newhavenct.net](mailto:dbarvir@newhavenct.net), cell.203-946-6086.

### **Lighthouse Point to the Richard English Bird Sanctuary The Richard English Memorial Fieldtrip**

Saturday, April 8, 8:30AM-5PM

Meet at the Lighthouse Point Park hawk watch parking lot (2 Lighthouse Rd., New Haven) and bird the harbor shore for gulls, loons, ducks, and early returning shorebirds. We then proceed to the Richard English Bird Sanctuary at the Deer Lake Scout Camp in Killingworth. We then proceed to Hammonasset Beach State Park. This is an all-day trip; bring lunch and dress warmly. This trip almost always has a high species count. Leader: Mike Horn, [mfhorn@att.net](mailto:mfhorn@att.net), home.203-288-1891.

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### **Conservation Activity – East Rock Garlic Mustard Pull**

Sunday, April 23, 10:00 AM

Take part in a crucial conservation project. Help remove garlic mustard from East Rock Park, an Important Bird Area that's a vital migratory bird stopover and breeding habitat. This invasive plant is a pernicious, prolific pest that can overrun forested areas, squeeze out native spring flowers, kill butterfly caterpillars, and alter the habitat of our native birds. In 3 years, we've already made a significant improvement at this site! Long pants and sleeves are recommended. Bring work gloves if you have them. Meet at the Eli Whitney Museum, 915 Whitney Ave., Hamden. Leader: Craig Repasz, [czesrasz@hotmail.com](mailto:czesrasz@hotmail.com), home.203-230-1697, cell.203-747-6843.

### **Lake Chamberlain, Bethany**

Wednesday, April 26, 7:30 AM

Join Past-president Bill Batsford to check out this excellent birding area. Lake Chamberlain, a Regional Water Authority property, is surrounded by coniferous forest and it has open fields and thickets. Early spring migrants likely to be seen are Palm and Pine Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-headed Vireo, and Eastern Phoebe. Bluebirds and Tree Swallows nest in bird houses. Meet at the RWA parking lot on Sperry Rd., on the right just past Morris Rd. in Bethany. Leader: Bill Batsford, [william.batsford@yale.edu](mailto:william.batsford@yale.edu), home.203-787-1642, cell.202-494-4325.

### **Ansonia Nature Center, Ansonia**

Saturday, April 29, 7:30 AM

Enjoy a walk at this great birding location. The nature center has a small pond, grassy fields, thickets, wetlands, and woods. The woods have had Northern Goshawk and Great Horned Owls nesting there, and there are often surprises. Meet at the nature center parking lot, 10 Deerfield Lane, Ansonia. Leader: Maria Stockmal, [m.stockmal@snet.net](mailto:m.stockmal@snet.net), cell.203-305-3728.

### **Bird Walk for Families at East Rock Park, New Haven**

Saturday, April 29, 9:00 AM

Eli Whitney Museum

Meet at the Eli Whitney Museum parking lot, 915 Whitney Ave., Hamden.

On this walk by the park's Mill River, children with accompanying adults are invited to help us look for warblers and other spring migrants. Other interested adults are also welcome to join the walk in this famous spring birding place. Bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them.

Leader: Flo McBride, [fmcb\\_warbler@yahoo.com](mailto:fmcb_warbler@yahoo.com), home.203-288-6777.

### **Birding by Ear at Lufberry Memorial Park**

Saturday, April 29, 7:00 AM

Ever wanted to learn to bird by ear? On this walk, we will learn mnemonics for ~25 common bird species and look for early spring migrants at Lufberry Memorial Park, a wooded patch located on a ridge above the Quinnipiac River. From "tree hugger, tree hugger, tree" to "drink your tea," you will learn a number of silly phrases that can help you to identify birds. A

handout with will be provided. This walk is geared to beginners but birders of all levels and families are welcome. More advanced birders not only can enjoy a day out but also provide support and inspiration to the newcomers. Meet at the parking lot by the park baseball field, Lufberry Memorial Park Road, off Cheshire Road in Wallingford. Leader: Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe, [cfolsom-okeefe@audubon.org](mailto:cfolsom-okeefe@audubon.org), home.203-630-9640 (preferred number), cell.203-233-0535 (cell-just morning of trip).

## **Trip Reports**

### **First Wednesday Walk: Harkness Memorial State Park, Waterford Trip Report**

On Wednesday, January 4, with cloudy skies and breezy conditions, we managed to see 48 species, and many of us added some nice birds to our 2017 year list. We had 13 duck species including all 3 scoter species. One elusive Pied-billed Grebe was spotted and 28 Purple Sandpipers gave us up close spectacular looks. Several Northern Gannets were offshore but didn't see any Razorbills. Eastern Bluebirds and American Goldfinches were abundant but Chickadees, Mourning Doves, and Titmice were not to be found. Only one Yellow-rumped Warbler was heard and seen, and there were very few Sparrows anywhere.



*Photo by Christine Howe*

The sun was peeking through the clouds now and then, and it was very comfortable for early January. Thanks to all the day's participants for another enjoyable First Wednesday Walk!

--Tina Green

### **First Thursday Walk at Hammonasset Trip Report**

Because of weather conditions, the February First Wednesday Walk was changed to the First Thursday Walk. On Thursday, February 2, 11 birders joined leader Steve Broker at Hammonasset Beach State Park. It was cool, occasionally breezy



*Photo by Lynne Chase*

weather with eventual emerging sunshine. No sandpipers were seen. Low species diversity was detected, given the rough seas and occasionally chilling breezes. 34 species were seen: Mute Swan, American Black Duck, Mallard, Common Eider, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Black Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Red-throated Loon, Common Loon, Horned Grebe, Northern Gannet, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Fish Crow, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, American Robin, Northern Mockingbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal.

## 117<sup>th</sup> Annual New Haven Christmas Bird Count Report

Hours of steady snowfall resulting in the accumulation of four to five inches of snow on the ground. Several hours of rain turning that snow into slush and ice. And, that was just the weather before noon! The 117<sup>th</sup> annual New Haven Christmas Bird Count was held under difficult conditions, to say the least. But, the birding teams really came through and demonstrated their expertise, resilience, and determination. Everyone covered their areas to the best of their abilities and found birds everywhere they went. They took advantage of the better weather conditions in the afternoon and collectively found an astounding 124 species in the count circle on count day. An additional four species were found during count week. Rarities were found in many locations, including inland and along the coast. The compilation dinner afterwards was delicious and well attended, as usual. It was a just reward for a job well done.

The final results (with rare birds in boldface) were: Snow Goose, 6; Brant, 730; Canada Goose, 4332; **Cackling Goose, 3**; Mute Swan, 61; Wood Duck, 44; Gadwall, 95; **Eurasian Wigeon, 1**; American Wigeon, 53; American Black Duck, 396; Mallard, 1818; Northern Pintail, 4; American Green-winged Teal, 9; Canvasback, 10; **Redhead, 1**; Ring-necked Duck, 25; Greater Scaup, 1220; Lesser Scaup, 22; Surf Scoter, 3; White-winged Scoter, 5; Long-tailed Duck, 88; Bufflehead, 198; Common Goldeneye, 193; Hooded Merganser, 358; Common Merganser, 106; Red-breasted Merganser, 64; Ruddy Duck, 5; Wild Turkey, 59; Red-throated Loon, 66; Common Loon, 37; Pied-billed Grebe, 3; Horned Grebe, 8; **Red-necked Grebe, 1**; Double-crested Cormorant, 4; Great Cormorant, 6; Great Blue Heron, 8; Black-crowned Night-heron, 5; Black Vulture, 27; Turkey Vulture, 13; **Osprey, CW**; Bald Eagle, 6; Northern Harrier, 8; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 10; Cooper's Hawk, 10; Red-shouldered Hawk, 10; Red-tailed Hawk, 53; American Kestrel, 2; Merlin, 1; Peregrine Falcon, 4; American Coot, 10; Black-bellied Plover, 1; Killdeer, 1; Sanderling, 64; Purple Sandpiper, 3; Dunlin, 20; Wilson's Snipe, 1; American Woodcock, 4; **Laughing Gull, 5**; Ring-billed Gull, 1275; Herring Gull, 944; **Iceland Gull, 1**; **Lesser Black-backed Gull, 1**; Great Black-backed Gull, 63; Rock Pigeon, 442; Mourning Dove, 542; Monk Parakeet, 51; Eastern Screech Owl, 13; Great Horned Owl, 1; **Snowy Owl, CW**; Long-eared Owl, 1; Belted Kingfisher, 10; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 129; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 10; Downy Woodpecker, 129; Hairy Woodpecker, 21; Northern Flicker, 28; Pileated Woodpecker, 3; Blue Jay, 416; American Crow, 663; Fish Crow, 359; crow, sp., 206; Common Raven, 6; Horned Lark, 45; Black-capped Chickadee, 280; Tufted Titmouse, 212; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 9; White-breasted Nuthatch, 78; Brown Creeper, 2; Carolina Wren, 35; Winter Wren, 2; **Marsh Wren, CW**; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 7; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 2; Eastern Bluebird, 10; Hermit Thrush, 2; American Robin, 934; Gray Catbird, 1; Northern Mockingbird, 68; **Brown Thrasher, 1**; European Starling, 6430; American Pipit, 5; Cedar Waxwing, 24; **Orange-crowned Warbler, CW**; **Nashville Warbler, 3**; Yellow-rumped Warbler, 1; Palm Warbler, 2; **Yellow-breasted Chat, 1**; Eastern Towhee, 8; American Tree Sparrow, 76; Field Sparrow, 11; Savannah Sparrow, 7; Fox Sparrow, 25; Song Sparrow, 354; Swamp Sparrow, 43; White-throated Sparrow, 844; Dark-eyed Junco, 1060; **Lapland Longspur, 1**; Snow Bunting, 7; Northern Cardinal, 243; Red-winged Blackbird, 746;

Rusty Blackbird, 15; Common Grackle, 3670; **Baltimore Oriole, 1**; Purple Finch, 9; House Finch, 119; Pine Siskin, 3; American Goldfinch, 210; and House Sparrow, 783.

The participants were: Marion Aimesbury, Dewitt Allen, Ross Allen, Ralph Amodei, Mark Aronson, Daniel Barvir, William Batsford, Larry Bausher, Steven Bird, Katherine Blake, Andrew Brand, Steven Broker, Lauren Brown, Dana Campbell, Michael Carpenter, Emily Cosenza, Louisa Cunningham, Michael Ferrari, Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe, Frank Gallo, Stacy Hanks, Christine Howe, Michael and Patricia Horn, James Hunter, Lynn James, Kris Johnson, Lynn Jones, Patrick Leahy, Carol and Gary Lemmon, Donna Lorello, Chris Loscalzo, Frank Mantlik, Steven Mayo, Florence McBride, Judy Moore, Gina Nichol, Michael O'Brien, John Oshlick, Paula Pene, Beverly Proppen, Laurie



Compilation Dinner  
Photo by Donna Batsford

Reynolds, William Root, Nancy Rosenbaum, Lee Schlesinger, Paul Smith, Nancy Specht, Charla and Steven Spector, Howard Sternberg, Deborah Tenney, Elizabeth and John Triana, Marianne Vahey, Chris Woerner, Paul Wolter, Kathryn Wood, and George Zepko.

--Chris Loscalzo

## NHBC Political Statement

We find ourselves in a very contentious political climate on the national level. We have already seen a large increase in national political activism in the form of petitions, letters, and protests. What is the role of the New Haven Bird Club in these political times?

The NHBC is a 501 (C) 3 organization meaning that we focus on conservation and education. We are a nonpolitical organization and we will not engage in general lobbying, protests or petitions.

We have contacted state agencies in the past to weigh in on specific policy issues that would impact bird habitat in our area. We sent letters to CT DEEP to voice our support of a balloon ban in the state parks and our concern with the paving of the 'sparrow lanes' at Silver Sands State Park. We will continue to speak out to State and local governments regarding local habitat conservation.

I understand that many of our members feel compelled to speak out on conservation issues. One could join many organizations and venues that are politically active and champion environmental causes. A few of these organizations are:

National Audubon Society: <http://www.audubon.org/>

National Audubon Society, Connecticut Chapter:

<http://ct.audubon.org/>

Sierra Club: <http://www.sierraclub.org/>

Connecticut Ornithological Association:

<http://www.ctbirding.org/> (COA is not necessarily a political organization. They do, however, inform the state birding community about legislation and policy of concern)

--Craig Repasz

New Haven Bird Club President

## NHBC Winter Feeder Report 2016-2017

### End of Week 10



We have finished the first 10 weeks of the survey and during weeks 6 through 10 we had a few Purple Finches and many Red-breasted Nuthatches but no Pine Siskins. Common Grackle flocks are back again with three surveyors

having flocks of over 100. Also, seen by more than one surveyor were Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Fox Sparrows and Red-tailed, Cooper and Sharp-shinned Hawks.

Some data from the sheets for weeks 6 through 10:

#### Common Species:

We had 34 of the 34 show up for a score of 100%. American Goldfinch, Black-capped Chickadees, Dark-eyed Junco and White-throated Sparrow are above last year's numbers (See the charts). Wild Turkey, Rock Dove and Northern Mockingbird were seen by 1 surveyor. Red-tailed Hawks, Chipping Sparrows and Purple Finches were spotted by 2 surveyors. Fox Sparrows and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were seen by 4 surveyors. American Robin and Brown-headed Cowbirds were counted by 5 surveyors and 6 surveyors saw Eastern Bluebirds.

#### Uncommon Species list:

We had 6 for 38 species (16%) during these five weeks. Species seen were: American Tree Sparrow (Maria Stockmal and Ellie Tessmer), Brown Creeper (Philip Pivawer, Laurie Reynolds and Charlotte K. White), Cedar Wax-wing (Tim and Kate Rodgers), Raven by Dean Rupp, Red-breasted Nuthatch (Maris Fiondella, Nancy Morand, Philip Pivawer, Laurie Reynolds, Tim and Kate Rodgers, Edward Sprowson, Pete Vitali, and Charlotte White), and Turkey Vulture by Andy Stack.

#### Waterfowl list:

Two Waterfowl were seen during this five week period: Great Blue Heron and Mallards (Nancy Morand).

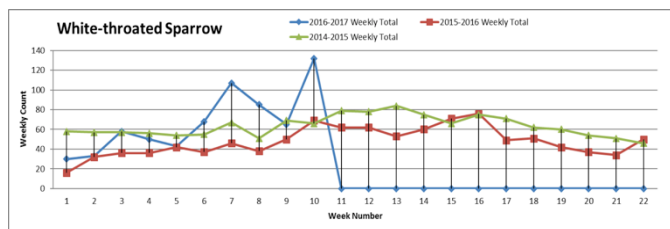
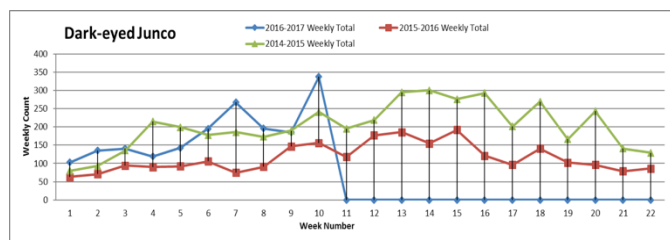
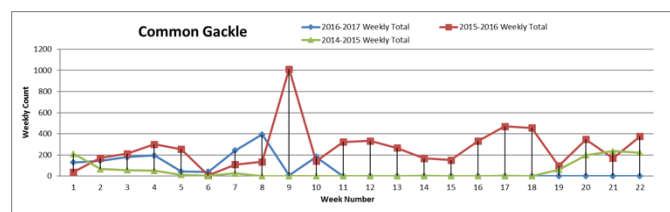
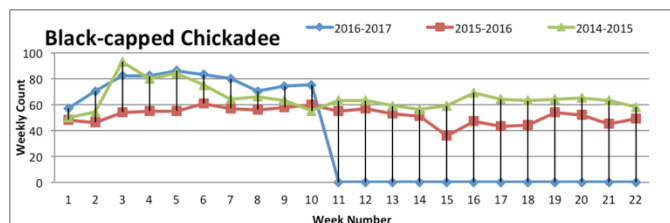
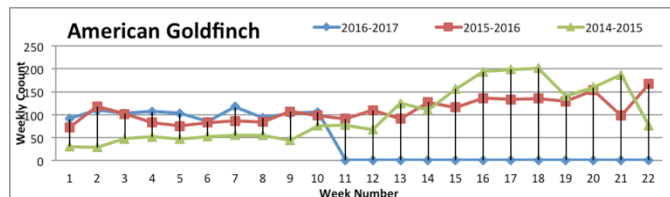
#### Animal List:

From the Animal list the following were seen: Gray Squirrel, Black Squirrel, Chipmunk, Coyote, Feral Cat, Flying Squirrel, Opossum, Rabbit, Red Fox and White-tail Deer. A correction to the first 5 weeks was a Flying Squirrel was seen in week 4.

I have also included the graphs of the 5 species I follow for weeks 1 through 10

Pete Vitali

Chairman: NHBC Winter Feeder Survey



## If You Build It They Will Stay

How many times have you gone to Warehouse Pond at Great Meadow of the Steward B. McKinney refuge in Stratford only to flush out ducks or Yellow Crowned Night Herons only to have them fly away over the marsh?

The US Fish and Wildlife Service would like to help the birding community by building an observation blind at Warehouse pond where the trail from the parking area ends at the pond.

Fish and Wildlife will provide the plans and the materials. We will construct the blind at the refuge headquarters in Westbrook over the winter. It will be disassembled and moved to the site and reassembled in the early spring. We are looking for volunteers to help with all stages of the project: construction, moving, reassembling etc.

If interested in helping please contact Craig Repasz [crepasz@hotmail.com](mailto:crepasz@hotmail.com).



## All Things Electronic in Birding

There are now databases of bird species that provide detailed articles about each species, having distinct advantages to web-based databases as opposed to the print editions:

1. They contain video and sound recording and more paintings/photographs than print editions,
2. Incredibly fast search functions that can be customized for individual users,
3. Articles can be constantly updated with the latest information,
4. Species can be categorized geographically, allowing customized check lists to be generated,
5. Links can be provided to other sources of information,
6. It is possible to access the database from anywhere there is an internet connection,
7. The cost to buy the print version would prohibit most personal ownership, while the subscription cost for the web-based database is quite reasonable.

I am familiar with two such databases, both of which originally starting as printed volumes and now have migrated to the web.

### HBW Alive - Handbook of the Birds of the World

<http://www.hbw.com/>

The print version of the HBW series was launched in 1992 and was completed in 2013, with a total of 13,367 pages written by 277 authors in 17 volumes, published by Lynx Editions in Spain. The book and now the internet database covers in detail every species of bird in the world, currently numbering 10394. This database also contains IBC – Internet Bird Collection, consisting of videos, photos and sound recordings.

In HBW, you can access the search function on the home page, allowing a search for family, genus, species or common names in several languages. You can also search by geographical regions, allowing you to generate country or other region checklists.

When you bring up an individual bird, you find the following sections: current taxonomy, including lumps and splits along with subspecies with distribution; descriptive notes with painted color plates; voice description; habitat; feeding; breeding; movements and migration; and conservation status. In the right column, you find a distribution map, and a collection of videos, photographs and voice recordings. You scroll down the page to access the different sections.

There are two levels of membership. Basic allows one access to the basic database and costs 29.95 euros/year; supporting allows one to keep a personal diary of sightings and costs 44.95 euros/year.

### The Birds of North America

<https://birdsna.org/>

The Birds of North America was initiated in 1992 as a collaboration between the Academy of Natural Sciences and the American Ornithological Society. Initially produced in hard copy, but now on the web, BNA provided an encyclopedic coverage of the biology of North American breeding birds, with species accounts written by recognized experts. The Cornell

Lab of Ornithology and the BNA's first editor, Alan Poole, spearheaded the second generation of the project by establishing BNA Online in 2004, and account revisions have been ongoing since that time. It is currently run by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, using the resources of the Macaulay Library and ebird and has over 760 articles on individual species.

The search function is less detailed than HBW and does not allow geographic searches. When you bring up a species, the information is presented in individual pages linked together rather than a scrolled page. The detail and comprehensiveness of the content is much greater in BNA than in HBW. The following pages can be accessed: appearance, including details on alternate plumages and molts; systematics, including subspecies and related species; distribution, including summer and winter ranges; timing and routes of migration and habitat in ranges; diet and foraging; sounds and vocal behaviors; behavior; breeding and parental care; demography and populations; and conservation and management. There is also a multi-media section with videos, photographs and songs but there are no painted plates.

The yearly subscription is \$42.

### An example

I will use our Osprey to illustrate the two databases. In HBW, you quickly get a sense of the world-wide distribution of the bird while in BNA, the distribution map shows only the western hemisphere while its world-wide distribution is buried in the text. Both databases recognize four subspecies and both note that species splits have been proposed. BNA starts with an introduction that details the remarkable resurgence of the Osprey due to banning of DDT and the wide-spread placement of artificial nesting sites. HBW has a bare-bones description while BNA is stuffed with interesting facts. Did you know that Osprey have been observed catching flying fish? In fact, they can only catch fish in shallow water less than 2 m from the surface. Pairs are generally monogamous but rarely polygynous (1 male and 2 females). Often in that case, the primary female gets most of the attention and feeding; the secondary female may not receive any feeding and rarely successfully raises a chick. Males will defend a nest but not a territory. In southern New England, Ospreys tend to arrive mid to late March, the male arriving several days before the female. Pairs with established nests can lay eggs as early as 7 days after arrival. Clutch size is generally 3, rarely 4. Incubation averages 37 days. The oldest sibling is typically larger and quickly establishes dominance among the siblings. If food is not abundant, then the younger siblings may starve to death.

### Recommendations

If you do international birding, HBW is invaluable. I use it before a trip as a preview and after a trip to learn more about what I have seen. The search function is state of the art and it can be used to generate checklists. The articles, as compared with BNA, seem sketchy. The taxonomy is perhaps their strongest point, getting the latest on lumps and splits that are constantly changing. The basics are certainly covered, but the writing style is not inviting, perhaps because it is European based and English may not always be the first language.



If, however, you are mainly interested in North American birds, BNA is a better choice. The search function is more basic but the level of detail in each of the articles is amazing with page after page presenting the latest research. They have a more conversational writing style. Photos, videos and songs are equally robust in both databases. The cost for each database is reasonable and well worth the price for anyone who is more than an occasional birder.

I hope to make this a regular column and review other websites, software and phone apps related to birding. I would welcome ideas for further reviews.

--Robert White  
[robertswhite@comcast.net](mailto:robertswhite@comcast.net)

## **Announcing Connecticut Bird Atlas**

Mark your calendars, the state birding community will be called on to conduct surveys for the Connecticut Bird Atlas Project starting in 2018. Please note the project is not a Breeding Bird Atlas like its predecessor "The Atlas of Breeding Birds of Connecticut." The project will focus on all birds that breed or winter in or migrate through Connecticut, not just on the breeding populations.

The last Connecticut Atlas was published in 1994 and all of the surveys were completed in the mid 1980's. This atlas relied on citizen scientists throughout the state to perform block surveys. The data that was collected for this first atlas will be used as a baseline for the new project.

The new project which will kick off starting in 2017 will be directed by Min Huang of the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) and Chris Elphik of the University of Connecticut. There is a steering committee comprised of the state's birding organizations including the COA, NHBC, Audubon CT, CT Audubon and various land trusts among others. Funding for the project has been procured through CT DEEP. Additional funding will be needed to bring the atlas project to completion.

The scope of the atlas is to understand breeding bird distribution and abundance, to document the changes since the last atlas, to understand wintering distribution of the birds in the state, to identify stopover habitat during migrations, to establish predictive relationships where species occur on the landscape and to use the results and data to create an interactive website.

Such a large effort will yield an abundance of data that could be used by many agencies. The reasons for the project are to contribute meaningful data for the State Action Wildlife Plan, to contribute to conservation planning and to establish Environment Health Metrics. It has been close to thirty years since the last surveys. The atlas project will be able to track changes since last atlas and give a fresh look at regional bird distribution patterns. The atlas project will also supply concrete data to support the acquisition of future IBA sites.

Atlas projects are reported to increase the number of birders in a state and allow all birders to see the status of the birds firsthand. An atlas project galvanizes the conservation community that could advocate more passionately for bird habitat conservation.

In general birders are very passionate about atlas projects.

More information about the survey protocols will be coming. In general, however, the state will be partitioned on a grid. Volunteers will survey blocks on the grid, observations of a species' presence or absence will be recorded. The grid will then be layered on top of corresponding habitat maps. The method will enable predictions about similar habitat patterns and the presence of bird species. These species predictions will later be confirmed by pre-established teams.

The proposed schedule for the project is: Year one, starting in 2017 models will be built using available data. These models will use focal species surveys to make predictions that will be confirmed by the larger surveys. Years two, three and four will be citizen science block work when most of the data will be collected. Some areas and species will require extra effort and confirmation that will be addressed by hired technicians to perform point counts according to a strict protocol. During this time winter surveys will also be conducted. Also, as funding allows, migration surveys may be performed. Further habitat surveys will be conducted as needed. Years four and five will entail a lot of data verification, data entry, modeling and predictions, confirmatory surveys to test predictions. This stage of the project will rely on the sponsor organizations, CT DEEP and UConn, and will require advanced level scientists, computer programmers and statisticians.

The atlas project is a huge undertaking that will require effort from the NHBC members. Again, we will be asked to go birding in Connecticut. It will be a great time to be a birder in Connecticut.

--Craig Repasz

## **The Golden Bird Award 2016**

Every year Bird Watchers Digest relies on the New Haven Bird Club to pick a national winner for the Golden Bird award as part of the Big Sit. To determine the winner, first a bird species is randomly picked, then from all the circles that reported the bird a winner is randomly drawn. Swarovski will donate \$500.00 to the winner to be used for a conservation project or organization of the winner's choice.

This year the Golden Bird is Mallard and Scott Laurence of Port Huron, Michigan had the winning circle. He chose to have the donation go to Pine River Nature Center in St Claire County Michigan.

## **Connecticut's Amazing Birds at Wallingford Library**

The New Haven Bird Club will participate in the Wallingford Public Library's program, "Connecticut's Amazing Birds" on Saturday, February 18, 10 AM to 2 PM. All are welcome.

--Lori Datlow

## **Fun Fact**

Our club was founded under Theodore Roosevelt's term, and we now find ourselves existing in our 20<sup>th</sup> presidential administration.



**NEW HAVEN BIRD CLUB**  
**P.O. BOX 9004**  
**NEW HAVEN, CT 06532-0004**

## Newsletter February 2017

*The date on address labels is your membership expiration date.*

### NHBC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Area Code / Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal

Membership Levels (check appropriate category):

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual - \$15

\_\_\_\_\_ Family - \$20

\_\_\_\_\_ Supporting - \$50

\_\_\_\_\_ Student under 18 - Free

\_\_\_\_\_ Life Membership - \$300 for 1 or 2 people at same address.

Additional gift to support NHBC programs: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to New Haven Bird Club and send to:  
New Haven Bird Club,  
PO Box 9004  
New Haven CT 06532-0004

You can also join or renew membership at the NHBC website with credit card or PayPal.

The NHBC membership year is from July 1 to June 30. New members joining between January 1 and June 30 are given full membership for the rest of the current year and for the whole next membership year.

### FOR YOUR INFORMATION

New Haven Bird Club is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. All dues and donations are fully tax deductible. If you work for a company that gives matching grants, please take advantage of the offer. It's free and helps NHBC's program budget.

The Club welcomes everyone irrespective of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin.

If your address, phone or email change, please send that information to: New Haven Bird Club, PO Box 9004, New Haven CT 06532-0004 or contact the Membership Chair, DeWitt Allen: 860.949.0995 or [allendatlow@gmail.com](mailto:allendatlow@gmail.com).

NHBC does not release its membership list or email addresses to other organizations.

The NHBC website offers information about the Club, its programs, and other Club and member news. The web address is [www.newhavenbirdclub.org](http://www.newhavenbirdclub.org). If you have any questions about the Club, you can send an email to: [ask.nhbc@gmail.com](mailto:ask.nhbc@gmail.com).

The New Haven Bird Club is on Facebook. Please like the page "New Haven Bird Club." You can upload your photos, discuss Club events, and post your recent sightings.

CTBirds is an open discussion email list provided by the Connecticut Ornithological Association (COA) to discuss birds and birding in the state. To subscribe, go to: [lists.ctbirding.org/mailman/listinfo/ctbirds\\_lists.ctbirding.org](http://lists.ctbirding.org/mailman/listinfo/ctbirds_lists.ctbirding.org)