



THE CHICKADEE

Newsletter of the New Haven Bird Club

December 2017

2017 - 2018 CALENDAR

(See inside for details)

Daily September to December **Bird Count – Hawk Watch, Lighthouse Point Park, New Haven**

Tuesday, December 5, 7:00 PM **Birds in Words – Mozart's Starling** by Lyanda Lynn Haupt

Wednesday, December 6, 8:00 AM **First Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison**

Saturday, December 9, 7:00 AM **Lake Wintergreen, Hamden**

Sunday, December 10, 8:00 AM **Surveying New Haven's Area K for the Christmas Bird Count**

Thursday December 14, 7:00 PM **Dr. Shary Siksay - Funky Feathered Feet**

Saturday, December 16, all day **118th Annual New Haven Christmas Bird Count**

Wednesday, January 3, 8:00 AM **First Wednesday Walk: Sherwood Island State Park, Westport**

Thursday January 4, 7:00 PM **Chris Elphick PhD - Special Event: Connecticut Bird Atlas Kick-off**

Thursday January 11 **No scheduled meeting**

Saturday, January 20, 8:00 AM **Milford Hotspots in Winter**

Wednesday, February 7 8:00 AM **First Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset State Park, Madison**

Thursday February 8, 7:00 PM **Nick Tiberio - History of Falconry**

Saturday, February 24, 7:00 AM (Snow date – Sunday, February 25) **Sachuest Point NWR and Rhode Island Coast**

Notes from the Board

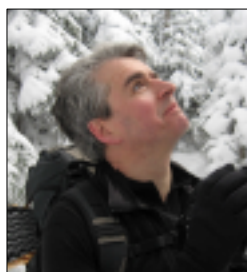
The next board meeting will be Thursday, January 25 at 6:45 at Whitney Center.

Deadline for submissions to the February *Chickadee* is January 28. Send to Newsletter Editor, Donna Batsford, at donnabatsford@gmail.com

Photos Wanted (for a presentation at our annual dinner) – During NHBC events, please take photos of your fellow birders and send them to Donna Batsford (donnabatsford@gmail.com) or Laurie Reynolds (warmstove@hotmail.com).

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS



Kris Johnson has been running our *Bird in Words* program for many years now. Every two months or so she will announce the next book that will be read and discussed in a book club gathering. Until this October I have resisted participating in this activity.

Most birders are bibliophiles, almost to the point of being an addiction. Until now I have resisted Kris' Siren call fearing that it would lure me to my ruin on the stacked tomes and pages of bird literature. Such an indulgence would be the destruction of my birding life odyssey. Isn't it more important to put the book down and pick the binoculars up?

My resistance came to an end at a general meeting when Kris announced that the next book would be Henry David Thoreau's *Cape Cod*.

Cape Cod was published 152 years ago after Thoreau's death and over the decades multiple editions have been published. I am a huge fan of Thoreau and have gone so far as to join the Thoreau Society. After the meeting I dashed home and grabbed my Thoreau anthology and many other books and articles for background material and allowed myself to be shipwrecked on a bookshelf and easy chair for a few nights.

When I arrived for the Birds in Words discussion meeting I immediately had book envy. While I showed up with my black and white tome, a boring looking block of paper, other members arrived with these large coffee table books with stunning pictures of Cape Cod's sandy landscapes and oceans popping with color, richly textured close-ups of cedar shingles and weathered doors. Some members brought editions of the book with compelling introductions and annotations written by literary scholars. I am still fighting the urge to buy these new volumes. It would be hard to justify the acquisition of three new editions of the same book. Bookshelf space is at a premium at my house.

Thoreau's *Cape Cod* picks up where his *Ktaadn* leaves off. Thoreau's Nature breaks open the pastoral, bucolic cloak from *Walden* and becomes a violent raging force in *Ktaadn*. In *Cape Cod* Nature casts the shadow of death. Many find experiencing nature to be a salvation. Thoreau illustrates nature can just be a mission of salvage. If one watches birds long enough, one will see a Cooper's Hawk pluck a finch off a bird feeder. Or a Redtail swoop down on chipmunk. A turkey vulture eating roadkill. *Cape Cod* is full of death, human and animal lives

(Continued on next page)

New Haven Bird Club Website
www.newhavenbirdclub.org

NEW HAVEN BIRD CLUB – 2017-2018

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SPECIAL PROGRAMS

<i>The BIG SIT</i>	John Triana jtriana1@sbcglobal.net	203.758.7203
<i>Birds in Words</i>	Kris Johnson kriswaxwing99@gmail.com	203.288.3087
<i>Christmas Bird Count</i>	Chris Loscalzo closcalz@optonline.net	203.389.6508
<i>Email List</i>	DeWitt Allen allendatlow@gmail.com	860.949.0995
<i>Hawk Watch</i>	Steve Mayo rsdmayo@sbcglobal.net	203.393.0694
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<i>Summer Bird Count</i>	Steve Mayo rsdmayo@sbcglobal.net	203.393.0694
<i>Winter Feeder Survey</i>	Peter Vitali vitali_peter_e@sbcglobal.net	203.288.0621

(President's Message Continued from first page)

taken by the ocean and their bloated bodies thrown up on to desolate sand dunes.

While "Cape Cod" is often a morose narrative, it is full of nature observations and historical bird riddles; what is a black chinned sparrow? A mackerel gull?

Our next book will be *Mozart's Starling* by Lynda Lynn Haupt. It is a great combination of classical music, history, detective work and ornithology. It just might change the way you look at European Starlings. I am so happy I succumbed to this literary indulgence.

At our last indoor meeting we had our annual Bird Book Tag Sale. Toby Appel has been behind the scenes coordinating this event since I can remember. She collects, sorts and lifts box-loads of books. It is a lovely mix of art, ornithology, field guides and travel literature. Members donate books because they are downsizing their living arrangements or making space on their bookshelves for more books. It is wonderful to see members clustered around the book-laden tables discussing the literature. I can never walk away from this book sale without a few books that will further keep me bound to a chair during the colder months following our November meeting. Perhaps that is the way things should be.

We all read books. However, have you ever thought about writing one or writing part of one? Many authors come to the realization that they need to write a book because the book they need has not been written yet. Gail Martino, our Indoor Chair, has come to that realization.

Gail has observed that the New Haven Bird Club is 110 years old and going strong. We have a legacy of sponsoring many wonderful programs and initiatives and we have had some impressive people come through the club. There have been many changes to our landscape and our birds. Why not capture all of this in a book? We will close our last century and inspire future members in 100 or so years to write the next volume. Watch for announcements.

I wish everyone a happy and safe Holiday season and Christmas Bird Count Season.

--Craig Repasz

Ride Share Program

NHBC is offering a Ride Share Program for members who need a ride to the Indoor Programs. We are also looking for members who would care to pick up a non-driving member.

Contact:

Laurie Reynolds: 203-434-2134, warmstove@hotmail.com

Birds in Words

Join in on "Birds in Words," NHBC's gathering of people who like reading books on their favorite hobby. Share the fun! We meet at 7 pm at Whitney Center. For details, contact: Kris Johnson: kriswaxwing99@gmail.com, 203-288-3087.

We will be meeting from 7-9 at Whitney Center in the 6th Floor Conference Room on December 5th where we will discuss *Mozart's Starling* by Lyanda Lynn Haupt.

Indoor Programs

Indoor programs start in September and are held on the second Thursday of the month. There are no indoor programs in June, July, or August. 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, 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 Whitney Center'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 (WC):

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:

From I-95 North or South: Exit to I-91 North in New Haven. Take Exit 6 (Willow Street). At end of ramp go right onto Willow and proceed on Willow to its end at Whitney Avenue. Turn right onto Whitney; go 1.7 mi. to Treadwell Street (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 driveway (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 Street) in. At the end of the ramp, turn right onto Willow and proceed as above.

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

Remember to check the Club's website for updated information on all programs: www.newhavenbirdclub.org.

Thursday December 14 - Dr. Shary Siksay 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 January 4 - Chris Elphick PhD Special Event: Connecticut Bird Atlas Kick-off

The New Haven Bird Club and the state birding community will be called on to conduct surveys for the Connecticut Bird Atlas Project starting in 2018. The project will focus on all birds that breed, winter, or migrate in Connecticut. 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. The last atlas was published in 1994 after years of surveys from 1982 to 1986. This effort was supported by many NHBC members. We hope the members can come out again to support the new effort. Depending on Professor Elphick's mood, he considers himself a conservation biologist, an applied ecologist, or an ornithologist, with research interests that span behavioral, population, community, and landscape ecology. Most of his research has focused on aquatic species that occur in wetland or agricultural habitats, but he has also worked in tropical forest, the boreal zone, and the open ocean. Despite this breadth, the overriding goal that unites much of his work is to understand how best ecologists can guide management decisions to reconcile the conservation of biological diversity with other human activities. His current research interests involve studies of birds in tidal marshes, studies of birds in agricultural settings, and studies of past and projected avian extinctions. Professor Elphick has spearheaded several statewide atlas projects.

Thursday February 8 - Nick Tiberio History of Falconry

Nick Tiberio is the Director of Aviculture at the Livingston Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy (LRWC). In addition to breeding and raising endangered waterfowl species, Nick is a Master Falconer and has worked with a number of birds of prey. Prior to joining the Conservancy, Nick worked as a professional abatement falconer in New York. Nick will be speaking on the ancient art of falconry from its early beginnings, to its modern day practice throughout the World. His talk will include live falconry raptors, along with tools and equipment used in the sport.

Outdoor Programs

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> for trip information and a Google Map link to the meeting place. 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.

NHBC Conservation Activities

The NHBC routinely works to preserve and restore bird populations and their habitats, and this year the Conservation Committee will highlight several events in which we partner with city, state and private conservation and education organizations to enhance birding habitats while simultaneously enjoying the birds seen on these properties. Partners include the City of New Haven, local Land Trusts, Friends' organizations (as Friends of East Rock Park and Friends of Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge), and the Urban Oases program. The Conservation Committee also provides information and displays at several local events.

Bird Count – Hawk Watch, Lighthouse Point Park, New Haven; Daily September to December

Lighthouse Point Park on New Haven Harbor is one of the premier locations in southern New England for observing migrating raptors as well as a wide variety of songbirds. The watch starts daily at 7 AM and continues as long as the hawks keep flying. Stop by anytime. Meet at the Hawk Watch parking lot, Lighthouse Point Park, 2 Lighthouse Road, New Haven. Coordinator Steve Mayo, 203-393-0694, rsdmayo@sbcglobal.net.

First Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison

Wednesday, December 6, 8:00 AM

At any time of year, Hammonasset is a true gem. Enjoy a mid-week trip to explore this birding hotspot for fall migrants. The varied habitat attracts shorebirds, waterfowl, raptors, and songbirds. Meet at Hammonasset Beach State Park parking area on Boston Post Road, Madison, just left (east) of main entrance road. Leader: Jerry Connolly, birdshop@sbcglobal.net, 203-421-4128, 203-710-2011(cell).

Lake Wintergreen, Hamden

Saturday, December 9, 7:00 AM

Join us for a pre-CBC walk around Lake Wintergreen in Hamden. Depending on conditions, we may take a walk up to Baldwin Drive to have a look over to Woodbridge and Konold's Pond. Meet at the DEEP parking lot on Main Street, Hamden, at the north end of Lake Wintergreen. Leader: John Triana, jtriana@sbcglobal.net, 203-758-7203.

Surveying New Haven's Area K for the Christmas Bird Count

Sunday, December 10, 8:00 AM

We survey Area K one week prior to the December 16 New Haven Christmas Bird Count. This highly productive area includes Ora Avenue/Proto Drive/Morris Creek Marshes, Cosey Beach, Lighthouse Point Park, Beacon Hill and the Trolley Line, Furnace Pond, and the lower Farm River. Area K typically produces 75-80 species on count day, including waterfowl, loons, herons, raptors, shorebirds, woodpeckers, and

such songbirds as wrens, thrushes, sparrows, flocking birds, and finches. Meet south of Tweed-New Haven Airport, near the end of Ora Avenue/Proto Drive, off Coe Avenue, East Haven. When you see a fork in the road, take it! (Actually, we meet at the fork.) Leader: Steve Broker, LS.Broker@cox.net, 203-272-5192, 203-747-6843(cell).

118th Annual New Haven Christmas Bird Count Saturday, December 16, all day

Join other NHBC members in this fun event, steeped in tradition. Take part for a few hours or all day. Join birders in the field or report what you see in your backyard (if you reside within the count circle). The results of the count are sent to the National Audubon Society for inclusion in an international census of early winter bird populations. The compilation dinner is at 5 PM at the Whitney Center, 200 Leeder Hill Drive, Hamden. Compiler: Chris Loscalzo, closcalzo@optonline.net, 203-389-6508.

First Wednesday Walk: Sherwood Island State Park, Westport

Wednesday, January 3, 8:00 AM

Join a midweek trip to this outstanding Long Island Sound birding spot. We check for loons, grebes, goldeneye, and other sea ducks. The fields are a good place to look for Snow Buntings, Horned Larks, and sparrows. Meet at Sherwood Island State Park: take Exit 18 off I-95 in Westport and head south on the Sherwood Island Connector. Drive into the park and meet at the main parking lot. Leader: Tina Green, tina@renaissancestudios.com, 203-247-2660(cell).

Milford Hotspots in Winter

Saturday, January 20, 8:00 AM

We'll look for waterfowl, birds of prey, and winter passerines as we visit Milford hotspots that will likely include Milford Point, Mondo Ponds, and Caswell Cove. Dress warmly and plan to carpool. The trip ends by noon. Inclement weather will probably cancel the trip. Check with the leader if you have weather concerns. Meet at the commuter lot, Exit 35 off I-95. Leader: Frank Mantlik, mantlik@sbcglobal.net, 203-984-9410(cell).

First Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset State Park, Madison Wednesday, February 7 8:00 AM

Enjoy a mid-week field trip to Hammonasset Beach State Park, one of the state's best birding locations in any season of the year. We will look for sea ducks, grassland species, and rarities. Meet at Hammonasset Beach State Park parking area on Boston Post Road, Madison, just left (east) of main entrance road. Leader: Greg Hanisek, ctgreg@yahoo.com.

Sachuest Point NWR and Rhode Island Coast Saturday, February 24, 7:00 AM (Snow date – Sunday, February 25)

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. Leader: Chris Loscalzo, closcalzo@optonline.net, 203-389-6508.

Trip and Activity Reports

Kellogg Environmental Center/Osbornedale St. Park Trip Report

We had 5 participants including myself for the New Haven Bird Club walk on October 7th. A foggy morning gave way to some wonderful surprises. We had 32 species in all. The highlights were several, including Wilson's Snipe that gave us a nice aerial view circling the lower pond at Osbornedale State Park, a loud Pileated Woodpecker being chased out by several Northern Flickers, a secretive Green Heron, and a surprise Great Horned Owl. Many usual and expected birds also.

--Maria Stockmal

Hammonasset Beach State Park Trip Report



Photo by Chris Howe

19 hardy birders braved the early morning mist and rain at the NHBC walk at Hammonasset Beach State Park on October 14th, led by Flo McBride and Bill Batsford. A total of 37 species were seen featuring a close and prolonged look at a Clapper Rail and 2 American Golden-plover in a group of Black-bellied Plover at the Meig's point parking area. Several Dunlin accompanied the plovers. We had a brief view of the continuing Tricolored Heron/Little Blue Heron hybrid and prolonged albeit distant scope views of a perched Merlin. Fun to work out a definite ID at a very long distance. About 30 Yellow-rumps provided us with our taste of warblers. Hammonasset, with its varied habitat is always a fun place to bird, and we were happy that the full park was opened for the weekend!

--Bill Batsford

Lake Chamberlain; Cooper and Calabrese Farms Trip Report

There are days with great birds and days with beautiful weather but quiet birds. Today (October 21) was a picture perfect day with great birds. 19 people met at the parking lot of lake Chamberlain to bird the south end of the lake and the adjacent farms owned by Peter Cooper and Guido Calabrese. These two families have preserved a 106-acre farm actively worked for the last 150+ years. The farmland stretches from the Sargent river valley to the next set of hills. From the top of the farm you have a panoramic view of the West Rock Ridge and the West River valley. If you look due south, you get an amazing view of Long Island sound. Although the late summer drought has muted this year's foliage, everyone was impressed with the leaf peeping.



Photo by Chris Howe



Photo by Chris Howe

Our walk started with a flock of 16 bluebirds as we crossed the dam. We turned our eyes from the bluebirds when a second year eagle flew into the area and was quickly chased away by a cooper's hawk. I manage 20 bluebird/tree swallow nesting boxes on Lake Chamberlain. I was able to show the group a few nests, explaining the differences between Tree Swallow, Bluebird and House Wren construction.

Also how a single box can have several layers of nests. The other noteworthy event was a great show including a fly-by and interaction between two Pileated Woodpeckers on the Cooper farm.

The day's list of 40 birds included Eagle, Red Shoulder, Red Tail, Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks. The farm is always a good place for woodpeckers including Pileated, Red bellied, Flicker, and Downy. In the grasses we saw Field, Chipping, Vesper, Song, Savanna, White Throat, Swamp and House sparrows. On our way back from the farm we spotted some waterfowl on Lake Chamberlain including Double-crested Cormorant, Canada Geese, American Wigeon, and a lone Pied-billed Grebe. There were a few other ducks on the lake, but they were at the extreme north end and were not identifiable. We are seeing the beginnings of the winter duck population make its way down to Connecticut. This walk was moved this year from mid-November to mid-October to take advantage of the fall foliage. The birds were quite cooperative in making this a great change.

--Pat Leahy

Branford Supply Ponds Trip Report

On October 28th nine of us walked the Branford Supply Ponds and found 32 species. Highlights include an Indigo Bunting, both kinglets, Sharp-shinned and Red-shouldered Hawks, House Wren, Pileated Woodpecker, and a tie between

American Robins and Blue Jays seemingly everywhere. I am giving them a 50/50 split with 50 birds apiece and this is not generous!

--Maria Stockmal

Fargeorge Wildlife Preserve Trip Report

11 people attended the New Haven Land Trust - New Haven Bird Club joint fieldtrip on Saturday, November 4, 2017 to the New Haven Land Trust's Fargeorge Wildlife Refuge off of Quinnipiac Avenue in New Haven. The weather was chilly and a little cloudy to start. Temperature was 40°F to 50°F, beginning to end. The tide was half in to start. We had a light northwest wind. We got 54 species. A great thank you goes to the good folks at the New Haven Land Trust.

And now, "The Case of the Juggling Eagle": We had just finished up a truly successful walk around the 2 major loops at the Fargeorge Refuge and decided to go out to the old steel yard to try for some turkeys, (this close to Thanksgiving they are in hiding). Looking up, we saw an adult bald eagle with a

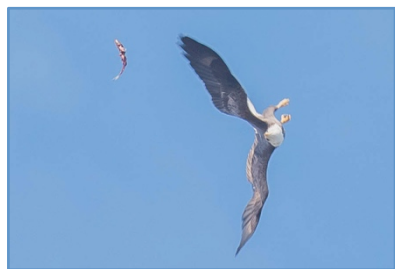


Photo by Bill Batsford

small silvery fish. As we watched, it flew up slightly and let go of the fish. It then dropped down and grabbed it again. A few seconds later, it let go of the fish again. This time it didn't even bother to try to catch it again; it just let it go. Several attendees

caught it with their cameras. They got great shots of the eagle and the fish in the same frame. We stood there awe-struck for a while and then started to speculate. Was it playing with the fish or just trying to get a better grip? We then ended the trip as we all agreed that we were not going to be able to top that.

--Mike Horn

NHBC "2nd" Wednesday Walk Highlights: Sherwood Island State Park



Photo by Chris Howe

On October 8, 24 birders joined me for the rescheduled New Haven Bird Club First Wednesday Walk at one of the best all around birding locations in CT, Sherwood Island State Park in Westport. The morning began with cool temperatures, cloudy conditions, and 5-10 mph

northerly winds. We covered about half of the park in four and a half hours and saw or heard 61 species and a nice variety. Our highlights included outstanding views of a stunning Nashville Warbler and a "posing" Vesper Sparrow, 2 Brown Thrashers, nice looks at our resident Great Horned Owls, a 1st winter and an adult Bald Eagle, 5 shorebird species, and our "old faithful" Lesser Black-backed Gull.

Thank you to all who attended and helped make it another great morning of birding!

--Tina Green

NHBC Winter Feeder Report – End of Week 3



This year we started with 20 surveyors reporting, 7 via Postal Mail and 13 via email. We are located all over New Haven County and one surveyor in Fairfield County. We have finished the first 3 weeks of the survey.

What a year this has started out to be. With 8 surveyors reporting by email out of 20 (the others send their reports in after the 5th week) some of the early winter species we have seen are Carolina Wrens, Dark-eyed Junco and White-throated Sparrows. We saw all 22 of the Common Species, 6 of 12 Semi-Common (New Category), 1 Uncommon (Cedar Waxwing by Tim Rodgers) and 5 of 25 Animals. Dean Rupp had a flock of 45 Dark-eyed Junco during the first week, and then it dropped off to 1 in the second and 5 in the third week. Bev Proppen had a flock of 15 turkeys show up in week 2 and 3.

There is still time to join. The survey runs from Sunday, October 30th, 2017 thru Saturday, March 31st, 2018. It is a weekly survey, but the number you report can be from a few minutes on one day or from many sightings on several days of the week. It is very flexible.

We have 3 types of Surveyors:

1. Postal Surveyors: Those who use Postal Mail to send and receive. I send you the forms via Postal Mail and you send them back via Postal Mail. No email capability.

2. Email surveyors: Those who use email to send and receive.

3. Email/Postal surveyors: Those of you who can receive email but cannot download the forms and print them or cannot use email to send the data. I send the forms to you via Postal Mail and you send them back via Postal Mail. All other communication is via email.

We record the highest number of individual birds seen of that species in that week. For example: for the daily count if you see 5 Juncos at 8:00 AM, 10 at noon, and 6 at 3:00 PM, count 10 Juncos as your count for the day. For the weekly count if on the first day of a week you have 1 Blue Jay, and on another day, you have 5 Blue Jays, record 5 in the cell for that week. In cases where individual birds can be differentiated, record the total counted for both sexes for the week. For example, if you have a female Cardinal on one day of the week and a male on another, then record 2 for the week, since you know that 2 different individuals were seen.

Any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me via email. My home phone number is in the NHBC Year book, but my new phones have "Call Blocking" on them, and if we do not recognize the caller name or number the call is blocked. Instead call my cell phone: 203 988-1841 and leave a message. I will get back to you as soon as possible.

The email address is: vitali_peter_e@sbcglobal.net.

Happy Birding,
--Pete Vitali

Help with the Book of Essays

After 110 years, the NHBC has a lot of contributions to crow about - there are so many that we want to capture them in a book of essays on birds, birding and birdwatching. If you are interested in getting involved in any way or just want more information, please contact Gail.Martino@yahoo.com or call or text to [617-504-7205](tel:617-504-7205).

Here are three easy ways you can get involved in this project TODAY:

1. **Title it!** Submit an idea for a working title. A working title is what we will call the project while we are working on it. For example, "From Tuft to Tail: Essays on Birds, Birding and Birdwatching." We will vote on all the submissions in the next couple weeks.

2. **Get Involved:** One of the essays will include stories of "first loves" - the bird(s) that led to your love of birding. If you have an anecdote for this chapter, please send it along. Gail is collecting anecdotes NOW.

3. **Take the Lead:** Propose an essay for the book that you would like to write either yourself or with others. Here are some story ideas to get your creative juices flowing.

- Personal acts, nature reacts - Stories of how an individual can positively impact a bird's world for the better
- Truth stranger than fiction - Essays that highlight bird abilities to be better appreciated by laypeople
- History speaks - Essays that offer a historical perspective on birders, birdwatching or birds; Personal reflections on birds and birding; Personal perspectives about the change in environment
- Connecticut connects - Essays that highlight how groups can work together for a broader purpose to the benefit of birds
- Finding birds, finding myself - Going on a bird tour and finding birds and a whole lot more!

Draft essays will be due at the end of January and should be a maximum of 3000 words (don't worry if your essay is shorter!)

Look forward to your ideas!

--Gail Martino

Welcome New Members

Sierra Ciak
North Haven

Ross Lanius Jr.
North Haven

Peter & Diana Cooper
Bethany

Thomas Sayers
Tolland

Brian Secskas
Stratford

Basic Birding Programs in New Haven Schools

The New Haven Bird Club is teaming up with the Urban Refuge Partnership and the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge to launch a Basic Birding program into a few select schools in New Haven. The focus is to introduce students to the nature around them within New Haven and connect NH birders to NH students. The program will be piloted in a grade school, a middle/high school and college.

Ivette Lopez USFW Urban Coordinator interfacing with the New Haven School system, Kris Vagos Wildlife Biologist with USFWS Stewart B. McKinney NWR, and Katie Blake with Audubon Connecticut and Urban Oasis have been instrumental in developing the program. They are joined by Flo McBride, who has helped by providing suggestions based on her 27 years of experience in bird/science education, and by sharing her education material from the 'Take Flight!' program.

The programs will have classroom sessions and a field trip to a local New Haven Park. Although the programs will have an age specific focus on binocular and spotting scope use, the use of field guides, and other birding basics, they will also cover safety, outdoor conduct, and scientific methods of observation and recording. The programs will be deployed at: Conte West Hills Magnet School on 511 Chapel St for the first-grade group with a field trip to Wooster Square Park focusing on the easier to see urban birds; JUNTA for Progressive Action on 169 Grand Ave for the middle and high school students as an after-school activity with a field trip to Quinnipiac Meadows Fargeorge Preserve; and Southern Connecticut State University with a trip to Beaver Ponds and Cherry Ann Parks.

We are asking the New Haven Bird Club for a few volunteers to be on the field trip teams to the local parks. The schools will provide transportation and teacher chaperones. The Club volunteers will guide the students to the spots with the best birds within the parks and give guidance on spotting birds. Volunteers should enjoy working with students.

Please contact Craig Repasz crepasz@hotmail.com if you are interested in helping with a trip.



6th grade students from Fair Haven School searched for birds at Quinnipiac Meadows Preserve with USFWS staff
Photo by Ivette López/USFWS

Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

Starlings! Most of us don't want to find them, yet these birds have several qualities that make them interesting. The common chunky black adult birds probably need no introduction. The young are brown but in mid-summer you may see them beginning to sport handsome black and white spotty waistcoats as they molt into their adult plumage. In another couple of months they will all look the same.

Native to Europe, they came to this country in 1890, brought by Shakespeare enthusiasts who wanted every bird mentioned by Shakespeare to have a home in the New World. Sixty birds were released in Central Park and from that modest beginning have now grown to an estimated population of 200 million birds covering the United States and most of Canada. Many people consider them pests, especially when large flocks of them empty our bird feeders in short order. We may have seen them take over nest boxes or drive woodpeckers from their newly excavated nest holes so they can use them for their own nests. Such behavior puts them low on the list of bird favorites but consider the following facts:

Related to Mynas, starlings are great songsters and able mimics. Mozart kept a pet starling and, although who used whose song is a matter of mystery, one of the bird's songs opens the third movement of his Piano Concerto #17 in G (K. 453). The bird was a little off key, singing G sharp instead of Mozart's G natural. Another piece, Mozart's "Musical Joke" (K. 522), is thought to be based on the way his pet bird put together snatches of song.

Their molt pattern is unusual. While most passerines molt twice a year, European Starlings keep the fresh spotted plumage we see in the fall all year. The glossy black plumage of summer results from the white feather tips having worn off the spotted plumage. Scientists call this "wear molt."

They can form huge flocks called "murmurations" in which they swirl in acrobatic unity, usually to avoid and confuse a predator. An internet search will yield a number of videos showing these mind boggling displays.

They alter the length of their digestive tracts seasonally to accommodate their change in diet; shorter in the summer (more protein from the large numbers of insects eaten) and longer in the winter (when they eat more carbohydrates from seeds).

They have an unusual bill structure in which the muscles work "backwards" allowing the bill to spring open, prying open seed pods, etc.

Although they nest in cavities, they build a nest inside the cavity and line it with green plants having fumigatory capabilities which help to keep down mites and other infestations.

Starling populations have experienced a 50% decline since the mid 1960's.

Despite their unique attributes, they are invasive species here and as such are not protected by the International Migratory Bird Act Treaty. If you find a starling attempting to take over one of your nest boxes, humane activity to try and prevent them from doing so is allowed. Once they raise a brood in your yard,

they have strong nest site fidelity and are known to return to successful nest sites year after year. We may consider the starling a nuisance, but he is an interesting one.

--Kathy Van Der Aue

Connecticut Bird Atlas Update

The Connecticut Bird Atlas will map all species found in the state during both nesting and non-nesting seasons. Starting in the spring next year, the project will be seeking the help of birdwatchers to document the distribution, abundance, and breeding activities of birds at sites throughout the entire state. The resulting data will be used to document changes since the last comprehensive survey of the state's birds, which happened in the early 1980s; to inform the State Wildlife Action Plan; and to determine priority areas for bird conservation and land protection.

The CT Bird Atlas Project is progressing nicely and is on target to begin in the Spring of 2018. The web site <http://ctbirdatlas.org/> is currently under construction and should be launched by the end of the year. Volunteer Block adopters will use the website to sign up for blocks. Until the site is launched, people who are interested can go through the website and sign up to be on an email list to keep updated on the project. Volunteers could also contact ctbirdatlasvol@gmail.com

The CT Bird Atlas will call on volunteers to cover a block or two of the 496 blocks that cover the state of Connecticut. Volunteers will need to spend at least 20 hours on their blocks over the three-year period. There will also be chances for volunteers to cover winter birds.

There will be 12 project kickoff meetings throughout the state including the COA Annual Meeting and at the NHBC on January 4, 2018.

Bird clubs may be asked to organize block-busting parties. Block busting is a group of birders to spend time on an orphaned block to collect data helping to guarantee that the Atlas has total coverage.

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) will hire field technicians to perform point count protocols that will record species abundance.

CT DEEP has procured funding for the project; however, additional funding is needed. The NHBC has donated \$500 this year to support the project and will consider donations in the future.

Connecticut Duck Stamp

We have finally found out how to buy a CT Duck Stamp to help conservation efforts. If you are interested in purchasing a Connecticut Migratory Bird Conservation Stamp, you will need to mail the \$28.00 payment to:

DEEP Licensing and Revenue
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT. 06106

Be sure to include your return address so the stamp can be mailed to you.



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

Newsletter December 2017

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.

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. If you have any questions about the Club, you can send an email to: 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