



THE CHICKADEE

Newsletter of the New Haven Bird Club

December 2015

2015 - 16 CALENDAR

(See inside for details)

November 1 through March 31, 2016 **NHBC 23rd Annual Winter Feeder Survey**

Wednesday, December 2, 2015, 8:00 am **First Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset State Park, Madison**

Tuesday, December 8, 7:00 pm **Birds in Words – H Is for Hawk by Helen MacDonald**

Thursday, December 10, 2015, 7:00 pm **Brad Winn - Meeting Shorebirds Halfway: Managing Hemispheric Travelers**

Sunday, December 13, 2015, 8:00 A.M. **Moodus Reservoir, Bashan Lake, Moodus/East Haddam area**

Saturday, December 19, 2015 **116th Annual New Haven Christmas Bird Count**

Wednesday, January 6, 2016, 8:00 am **First Wednesday Walk: Harkness State Park, Waterford**

Note new date

Saturday January 9, 2016, 8:00 am **Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison**

Thursday, January 14, 2016 **Larry Fischer - The Owls of Western Connecticut**

Saturday, January 23, 2016, 8:00 am **Milford Hotspots in Winter**

Wednesday, February 3, 2016, 8:00 am **First Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset State Park, Madison**

Thursday, February 11, 2016 **Members' Night**

Note new date

Saturday, February 27, 2016, 7:00 am **Sachuest Point NWR and Rhode Island Coast**

NHBC website: www.newhavenbirdclub.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Do you remember the Christmas count-downs?

“Only 19 shopping days left!”

These reminders would fill parents with short-breathed anxiety and children in tethered pandemonium caused by their anticipation.

As Birders we have our own countdown.

We are less than a month from the birders' holiday season. The Audubon Christmas Bird Count. It's exciting. The compilers and sector captains pull it off year after year without an anxious grimace. And I think participants contain their excitement under a cool veneer.

I love metaphors and reflect often about symbols and meaning. The Christmas story has the holy family traveling home to be counted in a census. Our modern day holiday traditions have family and friends travelling to get together for their own census. As families get together they take a count of who is present and who is missing. They recount the changes in their lives both good and bad in the past year. They mourn the loss of the departed and celebrate the new arrivals into the family. With family and friends around us, this darkest time of the year is set aglow. We do the same during the CBCs.

As we walk our routes and attend the compilation dinners, we reminisce with our birding companions and feel the loss of members of our birding family who are no longer with us, while at the same time warmly greeting new participants. We run a census of our friends as well as the birds.

The Christmas Count is an activity of friendship.

The moment we indulge our affections, the earth is metamorphosed; there is no winter, and no night; all tragedies, all ennui, vanish, – all duties even; nothing fills the proceeding eternity but the forms all radiant of beloved persons.

From *Friendship* by Ralph Waldo Emerson

The birds, of course are central to the CBC narrative. Species are tallied and notations are made as the current year's results are compared to the past: high count, low count, and new species.

(Continued on next page)

NEW HAVEN BIRD CLUB – 2015-2016

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<i>Winter Feeder Survey</i>	Peter Vitali vitali_peter_e@sbcglobal.net	203.288.0621

(President's Message Continued from first page)

Changes to our area are noticed. Members who have been participating for an extended length of time can describe changes in the landscape. An abandoned orchard that once hosted waxwings is now full of housing units. Land that once was used as a dumping ground is now cleaned up and full of butterbutts in the brush. We also mourn the losses: species counted in the past are now missed, and those that were once abundant are now very rare. For example the second year of the New Haven count in 1907 had a large number of meadowlarks counted.

Counts are held in the snow, rain and often against a bleak landscape. The landscape can appear like a Christmas card; snowy hemlock and pine boughs flashed with red cardinals; or it is bleak -- dominated by twigs and dry leaves all grey and brown. Regardless of the weather as the sun sets on a count day I have always felt aglow.

New Haven's first count was on Dec 25, 1905 with good counts for Tree Sparrow. The CBC this year is Dec 19. I wonder what it will bring. There are also many other counts in Connecticut in which you can participate.

I wish everyone a wonderful Christmas Bird Count Season and Happy Holidays.

--Craig Repasz

FROM THE BOARD

The next board meeting is Wednesday, December 16 at 6:45 pm at the Regional Water Authority in New Haven.

The deadline for submissions to the February *Chickadee* is January 28, 2016. Send to Donna Batsford: donnabatsford@gmail.com

If you take pictures of NHBC events or on NHBC trips, please consider sending one to the newsletter to be included with the report. Send them to Donna Batsford at donnabatsford@gmail.com

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Félix J Sangari
New Haven

Vera Ting
Hamden

Sophie Zyla and Jeff Ruhloff
Beacon Falls

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, and online on ctbird. Meetings are at Whitney Center, Cultural Arts Center, 200 Leeder Hill Drive, Hamden. The facility is wheelchair accessible.

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.

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.

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.

Thursday, December 10, 2015 Brad Winn – Meeting Shorebirds Halfway: Managing Hemispheric Travelers

We have the ability to make things better for shorebirds: We know enough, and we are learning more every day, to maintain and rebuild shorebird populations back to healthy numbers. This optimism holds true for shorebirds that nest on our beaches, as well as those that are passing through on their way to and from the Far North. With the recent listing of Red Knot under the Endangered Species Act, public and regulatory attention has been drawn to a shorebird that doesn't nest here, yet whose survival is heavily dependent upon our stewardship and management practices. Brad, Director of Shorebird Habitat Management at the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences in Plymouth, MA, will talk about these long-distance migrants, "wind birds," that rely on finding high quality habitat between the tundra and the tropics. He'll show photographs of the birds and the landscapes these birds need, and will explain some strategies to ensure that these birds are still flying for centuries to come. The shorebirds are strongly in favor of these efforts.

Thursday, January 14, 2016 — Larry Fischer The Owls of Western Connecticut

Currently on the Northeast Hawk Watch Board of Directors, Larry is a federally licensed raptor bander who has been banding hawks, falcons, owls, and eagles for more than 30 years, work-

T-shirts for sale at the December Meeting

As holidays are approaching, please consider purchasing (at a sale price of \$10 each) a New Haven Bird Club t-shirt for your favorite young birder. I will have them at the December meeting. There are also a few large youth sizes that will fit some women.

As Education chair, one of my very first thoughts was how to educate the public about the existence of our club. With over 100 years of history you would think it would be a well-known entity. But I don't believe this is true; among birders, yes. But

ing independently as well as with the CT DEEP and the U.S. Dept. of the Interior. Tonight he talks about owls, those endlessly fascinating birds, and specifically about the owl species found in CT west of the CT River. This program, illustrated with appealing slides of owls and owlets, focuses primarily on the species that breed in our backyards and back woodlots. Larry will talk about how common or how rare each species is and what their habitat requirements are. He'll also discuss nest site selection and how to encourage some species to nest where they might be easily and safely observed with all-important care taken not to disturb the birds. Larry will also talk about the species of owls that are seen only in winter. You'll walk away from the meeting armed with tips he'll share on improving your owl identification skills.

Thursday, February 11, 2016 Members' Night

Don't be bashful! Be sure not to miss this opportunity to add another 15 minutes of fame to your birding memoirs. Remember: You'll be among the best of birding friends. Members' Night is a chance to share your favorite photos, stories, birding haunts, and memories of birds and bird club activities with an appreciative audience. We will have slide and Power Point capability. Please contact Indoor Program Chair Andrea Kerin: 203-331-6067 or andrea@kerin.com with details of what you would like to show. Members' Night is always a lot of fun!

the New Haven Bird Club seems to me an unknown treasure in the city's large jewel box.

With this in mind, I petitioned the Board to create and sell new t-shirts (the standard logo shirts are still available through our website link) We're starting with children's sizes. I used clip art from an on-line print company to create the styles now being offered.

Help spread the word about our wonderful club!

--Lori Datlow

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. You can also check the Club's website: <www.newhavenbird-club.org> for trip information and watch for emails sent by the Club. 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 prior arrangements are made by the Club. 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.

NHBC 23rd Annual Winter Feeder Survey November 1 through March 31, 2016

This is a yearly census to determine the number and frequency of birds visiting feeders in the greater New Haven area. You are invited to watch and record the activity at your feeder at least once a week for the entire time period. Contact: Peter Vitalii: 203-288-0621 or vitali_peter_e@sbcglobal.net

First Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset State Park, Madison Wednesday, December 2, 2015, 8:00 am

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 song-birds. Meet outside the park at the new Hammonasset parking lot on the Post Rd. New Directions: Take Exit 61 off I-95 (the usual Hammonasset Park exit). At the end of the connector when you face the main park entrance at the traffic light, go left (east) onto Boston Post Rd. (Rt. 1). The new parking lot is the first right, a short distance away. Leader: Jerry Connolly: 203-710-2011 (cell), 203-421-4128 (home) or birdshop@sbcglobal.net

Moodus Reservoir, Bashan Lake, Moodus/East Haddam area Sunday, December 13, 2015, 8:00 am

We travel to a variety of birding hotspots in the Moodus/East Haddam area a week prior to the Salmon River Christmas Bird Count. Since the mid-1980s, our CBC team has developed great familiarity with the fields, forests, farmlands, reservoirs, and wetlands of this section of the Salmon River CBC circle. Our target species will include waterfowl, inland Common Loon, Bald Eagle, Killdeer, woodpeckers, Eastern Phoebe, Palm Warbler, and sparrows. Meet in Moodus at the Nathan Hale Plaza Shopping Center at 26 Falls Road/Rt. 149, (a short distance east of the intersection of Rt. 149 and North Moodus Road/William F. Palmer Rd. and also a little east of the intersection of Rts. 149 and 151). Leader: Steve Broker: 203-747-6843 or Ls.Broker@cox.net

116th Annual New Haven Christmas Bird Count Saturday, December 19, 2015

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 5:00 pm at Whitney Center, 200 Leeder Hill Dr., Hamden. Compiler/contact is Chris Loscalzo: 203-389-6508 or closcalz@optonline.net

First Wednesday Walk: Harkness State Park, Waterford Wednesday, January 6, 2016, 8:00 am

Today we'll explore this beautiful coastline park. It has ponds, fields, shrubs—and lots of shoreline. We will look for raptors, loons, grebes, all three scoters, Eiders (King Eider has been seen here), Bufflehead, and Goldeneye. Snow Bunting and Horned Lark are likely too. Meet in the Harkness parking lot, 275 Great Neck Rd., Waterford. Leader: Tina Green: 203-247-2660 or tina@renaissancestudios.com

Note new date Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison Saturday January 9, 2016, 8:00 am

Rain Date: Sunday, January 10, 2016, Join us as we visit this premier CT birding location for a mid-winter excursion. We'll be looking for sea ducks, shore-birds, grassland species and winter finches as we check several areas in the park, including the campgrounds. Meet at the Nature Center parking lot. To get to the Nature Center, take the third right at the roundabout. Leader: Paul Wolter: 860-681-5548 (cell) or pwolter6@earthlink.net

Milford Hotspots in Winter Saturday, January 23, 2016, 8:00 am

Meet at the commuter lot off Exit 35 of I-95. 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. Leader: Frank Mantlik: 203-984-9410 or mantlik@sbcglobal.net

First Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset State Park, Madison Wednesday, February 3, 2016, 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 the park entrance at 8:00 am. Leader: Greg Hanisek: 203-525-1558 or ctgreg@yahoo.com

Note new date

Sachuest Point NWR and Rhode Island Coast Saturday, February 27, 2016, 7:00 am (Snow date: Sunday, February 28, 2016)

This all-day trip includes stops at Sachuest Point NWR, Beavertail State Park, Moonstone Beach, Trustum Pond, and other great birding sites on the Rhode Island 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 located at Exit 55 off I-95. Leader: Chris Loscalzo: 203-389-6508 or closcalz@optonline.net

Trip Report: First Wednesday Walk at Lighthouse Point Park

On Oct. 7, the New Haven Bird Club 1st Wednesday bird walk at Lighthouse Point Park was led by Frank Mantlik, with 21 others attending. The beautiful weather (55- 65F, clear blue skies, light NW breeze @ 5-8 mph) was delightful for a walk, but did not translate to a big migration day. There were surprisingly few raptors and land birds, given the season and weather.



Even so, we tallied 51 species of birds. Flocks of Blue Jays and Tree Swallows passed overhead, and there was a decent variety (7 species) of sparrows. Other highlights were a Common Loon, 55 Laughing Gulls, 50 Common Terns (late), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 2 Hermit Thrushes, 2 E. Towhees, an Indigo Bunting, and a flyover Rusty Blackbird.

--Frank Mantlik

Trip Report: Beginners' Bird Walk at Griswold Point

The weather was warm but breezy for the beginner's bird walk at Griswold Point on Sunday Oct. 11th. Despite the wind, 16 people participated. Griswold Point, a Nature Conservancy Preserve located at the mouth of the Connecticut River, is a nesting area for piping plover and terns in the summer. It is closed to foot



traffic until after Labor Day and is only accessible at low tide, so it was a special treat to share this unique location with others. On the hike, we scanned mudflats and rocky intertidal areas, looked for sparrows in the saltmarsh, and kept an eye on the sky for birds flying overhead. We observed 17 species. The highlight

was a very cooperative pair of horned larks. We also saw: Double-crested Cormorant, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, American Oystercatcher, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Greater Yellowlegs, Laughing Gulls, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gulls, American Kestrel, Blue Jay, Tree Swallows, Nelson's Sparrow, Saltmarsh Sparrow, and Savannah Sparrow. It was a good time had by all.



Horned Lark
Photo by Joe Sina

--Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe

Trip Report: Hammonasset

18 birders took advantage of a spectacular fall day for a walk through a number of Hammonasset spots Saturday, October 17. A total of 42 species were seen on a birdy day. Highlights included a cooperative Pied-billed Grebe on Swan Pond with several Killdeer on the field across the road. Willard's Island held many



Photo by Donna Batsford

Kinglets, both Golden and Ruby-crowned as well as a plethora of Yellow-rumped Warbler. Seeing two cooperative Brown Creeper was a treat. Some birders got photos of a Brown Thrasher as well. The walk along the edge and trail to Cedar Island had many of the common sparrow species as well as a Hermit Thrush. As a special treat to finish the walk two Royal Tern were seen from the platform at the end of Cedar Island. The day was beautiful and was enjoyed by all. It was especially fun to have some newer birders along, adding some new species to their lists.

--Bill Batsford

Trip Report: Beacon Cap, Bethany

On Saturday, October 18th, several members of the Club visited the block of Naugatuck State Forest that sits north of Rt. 42 in Bethany. We hiked the Naugatuck Trail from its eastern most terminus, up to the Beacon Cap spur, which ends at a large glacial erratic boulder that marks the boundary between Naugatuck and Bethany. I've picked this site for a walk before during the fall, since if you don't see any birds, at least you get to enjoy the fall foliage.

When starting at the trailhead, the cold night had started to cause many of the leaves above us to fall. Even though there was no wind, the rate of falling leaves was remarkable and mesmerizing.

The walk started off by seeing several common species including blue jays, chickadees, and robins. A red-tailed hawk was observed flying overhead. Flitting among some of the conifers was a pair of golden-crowned kinglets. Still on our ascent, we

(Continued on next page)

spotted the first of several hermits thrushes that we would see during the morning. The last interesting bird seen on the way up was a single blue-headed vireo. All along the way, we made note of the incredible amount of acorns that all oak species produced this year.

At Beacon Cap, we rested a bit and got good views in all directions. There we heard bluebirds flying overhead. Woodpeckers were noticed including flickers, downies, and hairies. Many ash trees, exhibiting the symptoms of Emerald Ash Borer infestations, were testament to even more woodpeckers inhabiting the area. A raven called overhead as we continued down the trail. We hit a little pocket of activity in a small hollow where multiple hermit thrushes were feeding along with yellow-rumped warblers and a black-throated green warbler.

Totals – 21 species (in order as seen) – Red-tailed Hawk, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, American Crow, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Common Flicker, Blue-headed Vireo, Dark-eyed Junco, American Goldfinch, Eastern Bluebird, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Common Raven, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Red-bellied Woodpecker.

--John Triana

Trip Report: Branford Supply Ponds

There were 15 participants at the NHBC bird walk led by Maria Stockmal at Branford Supply Ponds on Saturday, October 24th.



Photo by DeWitt Allen

Species seen: Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Herring Gull, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, American Crow, Common Raven, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Palm Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Northern Cardinal, American Goldfinch

--Maria Stockmal

Trip Report: Fargeorge Wildlife Preserve

There were 11 of us that braved the Beautiful Fall Weather on Saturday, October 31, and went on the joint trip with the New Haven Land Trust and our Bird Club. The big features were lots and lots of Cedar Waxwings and Loads of Robins plus a roosted up American Bald Eagle. The tide was dead low so Hemingway Creek was empty, so no ducks. It was, however, a really fun trip with a great time had by all.

39 species were seen: American Black Duck, Turkey Vulture, American Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Woodcock, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Fisk Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing - Lots, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Palm Warbler, Song Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

--Mike Horn

Trip Report: First Wednesday Walk at Sherwood Island State Park



Photo by Donna Batsford

New Haven Bird Club First Wednesday Walk on November 4 with 17 participants including myself. Spectacular day, especially for the time of year. We had a nice mix of birds and covered about only half of the park, but did quite well considering there was very few species of waterfowl and very few sparrow species as well.

57 species were seen: Brant, Canada Goose, American Black Duck, Mallard, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Wild Turkey, Red-throated Loon, Common Loon, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret -- F flyover, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Laughing Gull, Herring Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon), Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Horned Lark, White-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Marsh Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, American Pipit, Cedar Waxwing, Snow Bunting, Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle), Dark-eyed Junco (Slate-colored), White-throated Sparrow,

Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Dickcissel -- Heard, F flyover, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow



Blue Grosbeak
Photo by Bill Batsford

After completing the Sherwood Island walk, 7 participants came with me to the Connecticut Audubon Society Tree Farm to see the Blue Grosbeak.

8 species were seen: Turkey Vulture, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, European Starling, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Blue Grosbeak
--Tina Green

Trip Report: Lake Chamberlain and Cooper Farm

Our Saturday, November 14 trip to Lake Chamberlain and the Cooper farm was a splendid fall day. 25 People, including a number of new birders, gathered by the marshy field to watch robins, cedar waxwings and white throated sparrows. Our trip across the dam was rewarded with a flock of 5 bluebirds posing on a bush so that we all got a great look at this beautiful bird. To top off our walk across the dam a mature bald eagle spent several minutes circling above the lake and took a couple of attempts at having duck for lunch! There were mallards and buffleheads on the lake. There is also a large flock of ringneck ducks in the area but not visible this morning. The hike up to the top of the Cooper farm was a little quieter than usual, but a red shouldered hawk and red tailed hawk gave us good views. We found several



Photo by Craig Repasz

woodpeckers including a pair of Yellow bellied sapsuckers. We did review some of the new material covered in Tom Wessels' presentation at the indoor meeting. We were looking for evidence of the history of the farm lands as Tom had explained. The views from the upper fields of the West River valley and Long Island Sound are breathtaking. The wind had picked up on the way back across the dam to speed up the pace.

We had a total of 29 species: Mallard, Bufflehead, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Cedar Waxwing, Dark-eyed Junco, White-throated Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Common Grackle, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow

--Pat Leahy

Trip Report: Sherwood Island State Park

What a beautiful day it was for a bird walk! I led a walk for the New Haven Bird Club on Saturday, November 21, at Sherwood Island State Park with 30 plus participants. Some folks came specifically to see the Ash-throated Flycatcher but were treated with a few more rare birds than they expected. I decided to start by scoping Long Island Sound for waterfowl and gulls, all the time knowing the flycatcher was still around and wanting the sun to warm things up and allow the bird to warm up too. Our



Dickcissel
Photo by Bill Batsford

"resident" Lesser Black-backed Gull was roosting on the east beach shore and everyone had good looks at our first "good" bird of the day. We walked back to the main parking lot after seeing loons, ducks, and grebes to try for the Dickcissels that had been seen earlier this week, and there they were, feeding in front of the hedgerow with several House Sparrows.

While almost all of us were focused on the Dickcissels, Jim Clinton from Kingston NY, yelled "What's that big bird up high?" All eyes looked skyward and the group was treated to an American White Pelican! Wow!

We were all smiles and moved on to the spruce grove where the Ash-throated Flycatcher was being seen. I was hoping I had not made a mistake by not going for the flycatcher at the beginning of the walk. Other birder's said the flycatcher had flown way to the back of the park towards the Mill Pond and I opted for the group to stay put near the cork tree and wait for the bird to appear to what has been it's favorite feeding area rather than chase it around the park. Sure enough, it flew in to give us and many other hopeful visitors who were waiting, excellent views and photo ops. Who knew that this bird would stick around for five days and have so many birders add it to their life and/or state list!



Ash-throated Flycatcher
Photo by Bill Batsford

At the end of the walk, we tallied a total of 51 species and added two new species to the New Haven Bird Club field trips list of all time.

Thank you to all the participants for making it one of the best and most enjoyable days of birding I've ever had. And thank you Goddess of Birding for sending the birds to Sherwood Island!

--Tina Green

BE SURE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.newhavenbirdclub.org

The website is organized to provide a comprehensive listing of our activities as well as useful resources for new and experienced birders in Connecticut.

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, we’ve read more than 25 books on just about every aspect of birds, birding, and birders and had some lively discussions. Share in the fun. We meet at 7 pm at Whitney Center. For details, contact: Kris Johnson: kriswaxwing99@gmail.com, 203-288-3087.

We are next reading *H Is for Hawk* by Helen MacDonald and will discuss this book on Tuesday, December 8 from 7-9 at Whitney Center in the 6th floor conference room. Hope to see you there.

--Kris Johnson

Books Read by Birds in Words

Attenborough, David *Life of Birds* 10/09

Burroughs, John *The Birds of John Burroughs* 11/13

Carson, Rachel *Silent Spring* 6/13

Dempsey, Luke *A Supremely Bad Idea* 6/14

Dunne, Pete *The Feather Quest* 11/10

Dunne, Pete *Tales of a Low-Rent Birder* 3/13

Gentile, Olivia *Life List* (Phoebe Snetsinger) 6/10

Gessner, David *Return of the Osprey* 7/12

Greenberg, Joel *A Feathered River Across the Sky* 1/15

Heinrich, Bernd *Mind of the Raven* 5/09

Heinrich, Bernd *Winter World* 4/14

Hoose, Phillip *Moonbird* 1/14

Kaufman, Ken *Kingbird Highway* 2/09

Leopold, Aldo *A Sand County Almanac* 10/12

Matthiessen, Peter *The Birds of Heaven* 2/12

Montgomery, Sy *Birdology* 6/11

Obmascik, Mark *The Big Year* 11/11

O’Brien, Stacey *Wesley the Owl* 7/10

Pepperberg, Irene *Alex & Me* 7/10

Peterson, Roger T. & James Fisher *Wild America* 2/09

Raffin, Michelle *The Birds of Pandemonium* 3/15

Rosen, Jonathan *Life of the Skies* 3/10

Teale, Edwin Way *Journey into Summer* 9/15

Teale, Edwin Way *A Naturalist Buys an Old Farm* 4/12

Teale, Edwin Way *North With the Spring* 5/15

Teale, Edwin Way *Wandering Through Winter* 2/11

Trudge, Colin *The Bird* (Read only parts) 9/14

Weidensaul, Scott *Living on the Wind* 11/09

Weidensaul, Scott *Of A Feather* 10/08

A Job Opening

Do you like having some fun with a computer?

Do you like having fun and being involved with other people who love birds and birding?

Would you like being right in the middle of what’s going on in NHBC?

And doing that by volunteering some time during just a couple of months each year?

If you’ve answered “yes” to any (or all!) of the questions above, Yearbook Editor just might be the perfect job for you. The current editor, Betty Zuraw, is retiring after 11 years of producing the yearbook. In her own words, she’s saying good-bye with sadness and reluctance because it’s been a wonderfully interesting job and a lot of fun to be at the heart of club activities, but her time has come to move on to the next chapter of her life.

Some computer skills are required for the job, and a program with the yearbook format already exists although knowledge of more advanced desktop publishing might make the job even

easier. The work involved is just inputting information provided by the various club committees and transmitting the document to the printing company. Yearbook production is limited basically to two summer months, with inputting done at the editor’s leisure during that time period. Volunteers are available to proof-read; and Betty has agreed to stay on for another year to guide the new editor in the production of the next yearbook. If you’re interested or have any questions, please contact either Betty Zuraw directly (860.632.1156, bz4feathers@sbcglobal.net) or Pat Leahy, Nominating Chair (203.393.2427, ptjleahy@yahoo.com)

BIRDERS’ EXCHANGE

The New Haven Bird Club is collecting binoculars, scopes or Neotropical field guides that we will donate to the Birders’ Exchange Program, which is part of ABA. This organization donates all binoculars and other equipment to worthy individuals

involved in crucial bird conservation projects and education work in Central and South America.

At each indoor meeting there will be a box on the sign-in table where you can place your equipment donation.

Noble Proctor (4/10/1942 – 5/28/2015), a member of the New Haven Bird Club for 46 years, was a an award winning ornithologist and conservationist. His life list was over 6,000 species worldwide with 814 species in North America. Frank Gallo spoke at the memorial service at the Peabody Museum on June 9.

Hello, my name is Frank Gallo. I’m one of Noble’s many ex-students and a friend. I’ve traveled and shared many stories with Noble, and Carolyn asked me if I’d share a few thoughts and stories with you.

One of my favorite Noble stories was from when he was in Kenya. His tour group was in a Maasai village, and Noble thought he would impress them by walking up to one of the warriors and talking with him in Maa. So he left the group and walked up to a red-sashed warrior standing outside a hut with his spear, and said “hello” in Maa. The guy looked at him and said, in perfect English, “So, how’re the Yankees doing?” Noble almost fell over. Turns out the guy went to Yale. Noble asked “What are you doing here?” The guy responded, “Oh, my dad likes it when I come by for a visit.” They chatted for a while before Noble proudly sauntered back to his group, who, of course, now stood in awe. I don’t think he told them the truth until much, much later.

I was standing with Ed Shove, the hawk compiler, at Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven. We were staring with our binoculars trying to identify a distant bird (either an Eagle or an Osprey) that was gliding west well out over Long Island Sound, when Noble pulled up in his old rusty Nova. He rolled down the window, stuck his head out and said, “Oh great, you’ve got an eagle.”

On a Cape Cod summer class, I watched Noble jump up and grab a parakeet out of the air - you can’t make this stuff up. There are so many stories. We all have them, and we are so fortunate. We are the lucky many.

When you were on tour with Noble, he rarely slept. Whenever I tried to stay out longer or get up earlier, he was up later or always there first in the morning. As he used to say, “You can sleep when you get home... or when you’re dead.” He never slept then and I doubt he’s stopped now. I bet a dollar his afterlife list is already higher than Roger Peterson’s.

I was walking up to the Branford hospice in the afternoon on the day Noble died when I noticed that all the upper windows of the hospice where whitewashed with bird droppings, and sitting on the railings and all over the roof of the building were pairs of Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls. They were nesting on the roof. I started to laugh. I thought, “Well look at that, Noble you old fox, you’re going to die in a gull colony.” How perfect - you really can’t make this stuff up.

We all know that Noble was special. I’m not just talking about him being a walking Natural History encyclopedia with amazing eyesight, an incredible memory, with a talent for finding things and making maps.

There was a certain something about Noble, a joie de vivre. It wasn’t just his kindness or impish grin, his often dry sense of humor or his wonderful stories. It’s hard to describe, but you all know what I’m talking about. It was his spark. Noble was comfortable with who he was, and you could see it in his twinkling eyes.

When Vanessa and I arrived at the hospital the day after Noble lost his right arm. We walked in the room and Noble looked up with his impish grin and said. “Hey Frank, want to see me move my right arm? Look at that. Pretty good, ha?”

Joan and Dave were visiting when his cannula fell out of his nose. Adam reached down and said, “Let me help you with that pop,” and placed it back in. Noble looked up and said smiling, “Thanks Adam, you saved my life.”

At the hospital, after so many people had visited him over the weekend, one of the nurses came up and asked, “So, what is he, a major or something?” I thought, Yup, the major of bio town.

I was leaving the hospital a bit choked up when Noble looked at me and said, “Don’t cry Frank. It’s much better to laugh than to cry.”

Even at the end he was our teacher. And this time what he taught me was how to die with dignity.

Noble saw a spark in many of us, the people in this room, and he fanned that spark and gave us a direction and clearer purpose. I thank him for that.

There was one thing he did and he wanted us all to do and that was to Find the humor and ring all the joy possible out of life.

He lived his name - Noble Proctor.



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

Newsletter December 2015

The date on address labels is your membership expiration date.

NHBC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____

State, Zip +4 _____

Phone _____

Email _____

----- New Member ----- Renewal

Dues:

____ Individual - \$15

____ Couple/Family - \$20

____ Supporting - \$50

____ Student under 18 - Free

____ Life Membership: A one-time payment of \$300
for 1 or 2 people at same address.

____ Additional gift to support the NHBC \$ _____

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

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
also for the following 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 your employer 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 preference, 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, Mike Ferrari: mike.ferrari@att.net or 203.435.5712.

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

The New Haven Bird Club is now on Facebook. So log onto facebook and like the page "New Haven Bird Club." You can post your photos, see other photos, participate in a discussion and check out the upcoming events.

CTBirds is an open discussion email list to discuss birds and birding in the state. To Subscribe, go to:
http://lists.ctbirding.org/mailman/listinfo/ctbirds_lists.
ctbirding.org

NHBC website: www.newhavenbirdclub.org