



THE CHICKADEE

Newsletter of the New Haven Bird Club

February 2019

2019 CALENDAR

(See inside for details)

Saturday, February 2, 6:00 AM - 5:00 PM; dinner from 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM **The 3rd Annual Mega Bowl of Birding in New Haven County** (Snow Date – Saturday, February 9)

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

Thursday, February 14, 7:00 PM **Member's Night: Love Is for the Birds**

Saturday, February 23, 7:00 AM **Sachuest Point NWR and Rhode Island Coast** (Snow date - Sunday February 24)

Sunday, March 3, 8:00 AM **Sparrows and Speculaas, White Memorial Foundation**

Wednesday, March 6, 8:00 AM **First Wednesday Walk: Stratford Shore & Great Meadows**

Thursday, March 14, 7:00 PM **Dr. Bhart-Anjan Bhullar: The Dragon in the Dove: How Dinosaurs Became Birds and How Birds Remain Dinosaurs**

Saturday, March 16, 7:30 AM **Edgewood Park, New Haven**

Wednesday, April 3, 8:00 AM **First Wednesday Walk: CT Audubon Coastal Center, Milford**

Thursday, April 11, 7:00 PM **Michael DiGiorgio: Illustrating the World of Birds**

Saturday, April 13, 8:00 AM **East Rock Birding and Trail Maintenance**

Saturday, April 20, 8:30 AM **The Richard English Memorial Field Trip: Lighthouse Point to the Richard English Refuge**

Saturday, April 27, 7:30 AM **Beaver Ponds Park, New Haven**

Birds in Words

Join us at "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 41 books on just about every aspect of birds, birding, birders, nature, and naturalists, and had some lively meetings. Share the fun! We meet about once every six weeks or so (on a Tuesday night) at Whitney Center from 7–9 PM. For details, contact Kris Johnson: kriswaxwing99@gmail.com or 203-288-3087.

The next book we will discuss is *The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt's New World* by Andrea Wulf. We will meet at 7:00 on Tuesday, March 5 in the 6th floor conference room at Whitney Center.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



I have become a fan of Birds in Words, a New Haven Bird Club book club started and run by Kris Johnson. Birds in Words gave me an excuse...er...justification to buy more books. Winter is time for reading by the fire. The book that we are currently reading is *The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt's New World* by Andrea Wulf. (The

discussion of the book will be on March 5 at the Whitney Center).

Humboldt's exploits and explorations are the stuff of fantasy and legend. He sailed oceans, climbed volcanoes above 12 thousand feet and traversed the Steppes of Russia. He was loaded with the cutting-edge scientific equipment of the time, meaning he had a lot of heavy and bulky trappings. Humboldt, having no interest in classification and taxonomy which was the rage of the day, looked to the fine details and the interconnectedness of all elements of nature, trying to find themes of form and function from astronomy to lichens. Although Humboldt's travel was global, he saw the universal in the Nature at his feet.

I am sure many birders daydream of going on trips to far away undiscovered places, through jungles, deserts and mountain tops to be the first to see and document a bird species for the first time. Unfortunately, as I write this in the first month of 2019, the globe has been mapped and the world's birds now come to us in field guides and checklists to inspire our goals of world ecotourism. All our discoveries are for ourselves and not for the greater science world.

Every few years I am able to take a birding trip to some far-off place and expand my life list. Usually I am birding in New England, staying within an hour from my house. Yet I am happy to be on a mountain in Vermont with -10°F windchill factor and see three White Winged Crossbills land on a stunted tree in front of me. I will settle for crossbills in any condition. Usually, I am content to see an Eastern Phoebe as an FOY. Lately I feel happy just to record breeding behavior for the CT Bird Atlas.

Frank Gallo's gem of a book, *Birding in Connecticut*, gives directions, descriptions and checklists for the hotspots throughout Connecticut. He has done the legwork for us. Yet somehow seeing new places that are well known to others and viewing our common birds does not dampen the thrill. The Humboldts of the world belonged to a different era. His

(Continued on next page)

NEW HAVEN BIRD CLUB – 2018-2019

OFFICERS

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<i>Member-at-Large</i>		
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<i>Webmaster</i>	Patrick Leahy ptjleahy@yahoo.com	203-393-2427
<i>Yearbook Editor</i>	Christine Howe clhowe2@yahoo.com	203-389-1175

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>Hawk Watch</i>	Steve Mayo rsdmayo@sbcglobal.net	203-393-0694
<i>Lighthouse Point</i>		
<i>Historian</i>	John Triana jtriana1@sbcglobal.net	203-758-7203
<i>Hospitality</i>	Stacy Hanks flybirdhanks@gmail.com	203-283-3898
<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

New Haven Bird Club Website:
www.newhavenbirdclub.org

(President's Message Continued from first page)

concept of Nature as a web still holds true in Venezuela, Hammonasset and at the Urban Oasis at West River Urban Oasis / IBA in New Haven.

To a birder, Nature is where the birds are, where they came from, and where they are going. The Tree Sparrows that charm us during the bleak winters, will return to the subarctic, the Red Knots migrating from South America come to the Sound to fuel up on horseshoe crab eggs so they can make it to their nesting ground up north in the arctic. Nature is a place that allows life to happen. That place can be a patch of salt marsh or it could be a pollinator garden at a local school. Importantly, we need to keep sharing these natural spaces with those who will become the stewards in the future.

I am happy to see how our New Haven Bird Club Board members seek to protect and share Nature at our feet. Lori Datlow is working to bring local youth to the birds and New Haven natural places through her efforts with the New Haven Land Trust Schooner Camp and a basic birding program to be piloted in the schools this spring. Deborah Johnson continues to build partnerships with like-minded organizations in our area to do the hard work of stewardship of our natural spaces. Although winter is a time for reading by the fire, it is also a time to plan our next adventure into the Nature at our feet.

--Craig Repasz

NHBC Board Notice

The New Haven Bird Club will hold its annual meeting at the April 11, 2019 Indoor Meeting.

Per the New Haven Bird Club's Constitution and By-Laws an election for new officers, Nominating Committee and Members-at-Large will be held at the annual meeting. The slate of candidates put forth by the NHBC Executive Board is:

President - DeWitt Allen
Vice President - Christine Howe
Secretary - Alan Malina
Members-At-Large - Mike Horn
Bill Batsford

Nominating Committee - NHBC Executive Board.

(the By-Laws stipulate that the Nominating Committee will be elected with officers every two years for a two-year term. There have been no club members who have volunteered to serve on the nominating committee. Therefore, the Executive Board, by proxy is filling this important role.)

We are looking to fill the vacant Publicity Chair role. If you are interested in serving the club in this capacity, please contact a board member. You will have a lot of support to get you up and running with the responsibilities.

Notes from the Board

The next board meeting will be Thursday, February 28 at 6:45 PM at Whitney Center.

Deadline for submissions to the April *Chickadee* is March 29. Send to Newsletter Editor, Donna Batsford, at donnabatsford@gmail.com.

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>. 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 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 (park in upper level *only*), or follow main driveway past front entrances of the building. At stop sign, make a right into employee parking area. Walk from there to the front entrance.

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 Drive) and turn right. WC is shortly on the right. Enter SECOND driveway (South Entrance) and take immediate left into raised parking lot (park in upper level *only*), or follow main driveway past front entrances of the building. At stop sign, make a right into employee parking area. Walk from there to the front entrance.

NHBC is offering a Ride Share Program for members who need a ride to the Indoor Programs. If you are in need of a ride to an Indoor Program, please contact Laurie Reynolds by phone at 203-434-2134, or email warmstove@hotmail.com.

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

Thursday, February 14, 2019 – Member's Night Love Is for the Birds

Sign up with Gail Martino to feature your story for member's night. Each speaker will be allotted ten minutes to show slides or tell a story. The Valentine's Day theme of the night will be "Love Is for the Birds." For those of you participating in the CT Bird Atlas project, this is a great chance to highlight some of your observations, interests, and learning. All media should be emailed to Gail (gmm1227@yahoo.com) at least one week ahead of time so it can be consolidated for the meeting.

Thursday, March 14, 2019 – Dr. Bhart-Anjan Bhullar The Dragon in the Dove: How Dinosaurs Became Birds and How Birds Remain Dinosaurs

Birds are living dinosaurs. The legacy of their monstrous forebears remains in the way they walk, fly, eat, and think. It remains in their embryos, which assume a dinosaur-like form before they transform into hatchling birds. New fossil discoveries and new information about embryonic development have overturned some of our previous assumptions about the early history of birds. Dr. Bhart-Anjan Bhullar, a Professor and Curator of Paleontology at Yale University, will show you how the avian body came to be during the age of dinosaurs, and how it is built anew, every generation, within the egg.

Thursday, April 11, 2019 – Michael DiGiorgio Illustrating the World of Birds

Join us as Michael DiGiorgio describes his journey from tracking and observing birds in the wild to learning how to express their beauty—and his feelings about them—in drawings and paintings. Along the way he meets the masters of bird art, finds his voice as an artist, and comes into his own as a nationally-recognized nature artist. The talk also will include discussions of sketching birds from life and becoming a field-guide artist. Michael currently lives in Madison, CT. His paintings and drawings have appeared in a variety of nature books and journals, such as *Birds of Brazil* Volumes 1 & 2, *Birds of Honduras*, *Bird Watcher's Digest*, *Breeding Bird Atlas of Connecticut*, *New York State Breeding Bird Atlas*, *Audubon Field Guide to Birds/Eastern and Western regions*, and *The Narrow Edge* by Deborah Cramer. From 2007 to 2012, Mike was contracted by Houghton Mifflin to completely revise the artwork for the new edition of *Peterson Field Guide to the Birds*. In recognition of his bird illustration work, Mike received the first-ever Don Richard Eckelberry Endowment from the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. Mike's paintings have been exhibited at the Roger Tory Peterson Institute, Jamestown, NY; The Bennington Center for the Arts, Bennington, VT; Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI; The Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, PA; and The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY. Mike currently is illustrating plates for *Birds of South America* Volume 3, with Robert Ridgley and Guy Tudor.

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 and Education Activities

The NHBC routinely works to preserve and restore bird populations and their habitats and to provide opportunities for learning about birds, their habitats, where to see them, and how to help ensure their future. The NHBC provides information and displays at multiple events throughout the year, including Earth Day festivities at Hamden Middle School and at the Lighthouse Point Park Migration Festival in September. NHBC continues to support the Urban Oasis projects of the New Haven Harbor Urban Refuge Partnership. Our work includes restoration and maintenance at Dover Beach on the Quinnipiac River and along the West River at Edgewood Park and West River Memorial Park, along with eBird entries of observations at the Urban Oases.

The 3rd Annual Mega Bowl of Birding in New Haven County

Saturday, February 2, 6:00 AM – 5:00 PM; dinner from 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM.

Snow Date – Saturday, February 9, 2019

Held on Super Bowl Weekend!!! Birders join together in groups of two to five people and go birding wherever they like within New Haven County on the day of the event. The teams will meet at the end of the event and have dinner and share stories. The meeting will be at the Kellogg Environmental Center at 500 Hawthorne Avenue, Derby. A delicious dinner will be served. The Mega Bowl is inspired by the Superbowl of Birding held each January in Northeast New England by Mass Audubon, and the organizers of that event have generously given their consent for us to hold our own, similar event. Participants are encouraged to be creative in coming up with a name for their team. See the NHBC website for more details, www.newhavenbirdclub.org.

Mega Bowl Coordinator: Chris Loscalzo, 203-389-6508 or closcalz@optonline.net.

First Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset State Park, Madison **Wednesday, February 6, 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, ctgregh@yahoo.com.

Sachuest Point NWR and Rhode Island Coast

Saturday, February 23, 7:00 AM

Snow date - Sunday February 24

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, 203-389-6508 or

closcalz@optonline.net.

Sparrows and Speculaas, White Memorial Foundation **Sunday, March 3, 8:00 AM**

White Memorial Foundation is a 4,000 acre nature preserve. The diverse mixture of habitats includes mature deciduous and evergreen forests, as well as fields of tall grass, weeds, and shrubs that are managed for various stages of succession. One of the best birding sites in the state and an Important Bird Area, White Memorial Foundation has approximately 35 miles of woodland roads, trails, and boardwalks. We should observe a variety of sparrows, woodpeckers, possibly winter finches and more. Bantam lake is famous for a wide variety of ducks during migration and winter. After birding we will warm up at the Dutch Epicure with coffee, homemade baked goods including a variety of Dutch specialties, and Dutch cheeses. Meet in the public parking lot at White Memorial at 80 Whitehall Road in Litchfield.

Leaders: Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe, 203-233-0535 or cfolsom-okeefe@ctaudubon.org; Craig Repasz, 203-745-6683 or crepasz@hotmail.com.

First Wednesday Walk: Stratford Shore & Great Meadows **Wednesday, March 6, 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 Road, Stratford, near the intersection with Main St. (Rt. 113); we carpool from there.

Leader: Frank Mantlik, 203-984-9410 or

mantlik@sbcglobal.net.

Edgewood Park, New Haven
Saturday, March 16, 7:30 AM

Join Bill Batsford for a late winter walk at this urban park with varied habitat including woodlands, fields, streams, and ponds. Wood Duck, Hooded Merganser, Kingfisher, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Brown Creeper are all possible. We will make a side trip to Evergreen Cemetery if the Bald Eagles are again nesting there. Meet at the Edgewood Park parking lot next to tennis courts, entrance off West Rock Avenue, just south of Whalley Avenue, New Haven.

Leader: Bill Batsford, 203-787-1642 (home), 203-494-4325 (cell) or william.batsford@yale.edu.

First Wednesday Walk: CT Audubon Coastal Center, Milford

Wednesday, April 3, 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 the Coastal Center parking lot, 1 Milford Point Road, Milford.

Leader: Jalna Jaeger, 203-246-0885 or jalnabird@gmail.com.

East Rock Birding and Trail Maintenance
Saturday, April 13, 8:00 AM

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

Leader: Dan Barvir, 203-946-6086 or dbarvir@newhavenct.net.

The Richard English Memorial Field Trip: Lighthouse Point to the Richard English Refuge
Saturday, April 20, 8:30 AM

We first 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 next 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. Meet at the Hawk Watch parking lot, Lighthouse Point Park, 2 Lighthouse Road, New Haven.

Leader: Mike Horn, 203-288-1891 or mfhorn@att.net.

Beaver Ponds Park, New Haven
Saturday, April 27, 2019, 7:30 AM

Beaver Ponds Park is excellent habitat, offering fresh water wetlands, forests, and fields. We can hope for Wood Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Common Merganser, and a variety of sparrows and warblers. In the shadow of West Rock Ridge, Raven and Peregrine are also possible. Beaver Ponds Park is one of the many Urban Oasis sites in New Haven. Friends of Beaver Park and the other Urban Oasis partners have maintained an area of rich plantings to offer the birds a food oasis. Meet at the public parking lot on Munson Street across from Hillhouse High School, New Haven.

Leader: Craig Repasz, 203-230-1697 (home), 203-745-6683 (cell), or crepasz@hotmail.com.

Field Trip Reports

First Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset Beach State Park Trip Report

On Wednesday, December 5, a cold, yet pleasant (low wind) morning at Hammonasset Beach State Park yielded: 3 Common Eiders, a Lapland Longspur, as well as numerous Red-throated and Common Loons, Surf Scoters, Red-breasted Mergansers, Ruddy Turnstones, Dunlin, Snow Buntings, Horned Larks, a Sanderling, a Horned Grebe, an American Tree Sparrow, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and a nice leisurely look at a first year Bald Eagle in flight.

Post-tour sightings of American Bittern and White-winged Scoter were also reported.

--Jerry Connolly

First Wednesday Walk: Sherwood Island State Park Trip Report

On Wednesday, January 2, twenty-six birders joined me for the first of the year New Bird Club 1st Wednesday Walk at Sherwood Island State Park in Westport. The weather cooperated with sun, moderate temperatures for January and very light winds. We saw 49 species on the three hour walk, including 2 late Nelson's Sparrows which are rare for this time



Photo by Laurie Reynolds

of year and 2 Saw-whet owls. Thanks to all the participants and Bill Banks for doing the eBird checklist.

--Tina Green
NHBC 1st
Wednesday Walk
Coordinator

Stratford Point Trip Report

On Saturday, January 12, Genevieve Nuttall led a group of 15 birders on a walk at Stratford Point and Long Beach in Fairfield County. 28 species were seen: Brant, Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, American Black Duck, Surf Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Mourning Dove, Sanderling, Dunlin, Ring-billed



Photo by Chris Howe

Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Common Loon, Great Blue Heron, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Merlin, American Crow, European Starling, Song Sparrow, House Sparrow.

Milford Hotspots in Winter Trip Report

Despite cold, gray weather with a forecast of a winter storm, a large, enthusiastic group of 28 birders enjoyed exploring several Milford hotspots on Saturday, January 19. Carpooling from a commuter lot, we visited Milford Point, Costa Azzurra,



Photo by Laurie Reynolds

Walnut Beach, Silver Sands, and Mondo Ponds. We tallied 54 species of birds, a very respectable mid-winter total.

At the Point, in addition to the usual wintering ducks and Common Loons, we found a Barred Owl, Bald eagle,

Northern Harrier, Red-shouldered Hawk, Peregrine Falcons, Snow Buntings, Yellow-rumped Warblers, singing Carolina wren, and an "Ipswich" Savannah Sparrow.

A check of Long Island Sound from the Costa Azzurra seawall netted an unusual tight flock of 24 Horned Grebes, spotted by Alan Welby. The woods at Walnut Beach provided some uncommon winter species, including a male Eastern Towhee, Gray Catbird, and a Brown Creeper. We witnessed interesting behavior of several species (Northern Flicker, Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers, Carolina Wren) investigating a large old nest high in a tree. Fish Crows called from the fishing pier.

A walk around the upland area of Silver Sands SP netted a variety of sparrows (Song, American Tree, Savannah, Swamp), but efforts to relocate a wintering Eastern Meadowlark and Palm Warbler went unrewarded.

Our last stop was a quick check of the mostly-frozen Mondo Pond. Here we saw a variety of ducks (Ring-necked, Hooded Merganser, American Wigeon) and two Great Blue Herons.

--Frank Mantlik

"Hart to Hart: New Hartford to Hartland" Trip Report



Photo by Lori Datlow

On Sunday, January 27, Steve Broker led a group of 19 birders on the New Haven Bird Club "Hart to Hart" field trip (Maple Hollow, New Hartford, Farmington River, Saville Dam, around Barkhamsted Reservoir, side trip into Massachusetts for CCC signage, East Hartland, and back to New Hartford). 22 species were seen.

Welcome New Members

Deb Lovely
New Haven

Randy Carboni
Bethel

BE SURE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.newhavenbirdclub.org

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

BIG SIT 2018

The Big Sit! was the idea of a past New Haven Bird Club president, John Himmelman, back in the early 1990s. The Big Sit! has become an annual, international, noncompetitive birding event now hosted by *Bird Watcher's Digest*.

The Big Sit! is like a Big Day or a bird-a-thon in that the object is to tally as many bird species as can be seen or heard within 24 hours. The difference lies in the area limitation from which you may observe.

Some people have called it a "tailgate party for birders." Find a good spot for bird watching—preferably one with good views of a variety of habitats and lots of birds. Next, create a real or imaginary circle 17 feet in diameter and sit inside the circle for 24 hours, counting all the bird species you see or hear. That's it. Find a spot, sit in it, have fun. Then submit your findings. Participants are allowed to come and go from the circle—especially for the purpose of bringing food back into the circle—and the circle need not be occupied for the entire 24 hours.

There are Big Sit! circles all over the world, including Guatemala, India, the Netherlands, England, Vietnam, and New Zealand.

Each year a species is selected to be the "Golden Bird." Every team that observes the year's "Golden Bird" has a chance to win \$500 towards a conservation project or program of their choosing. The prize is sponsored by Swarovski Optik.

The Caroline Blue Birds from Maryland was selected as the winner of the 2018 Big Sit! Golden Bird Prize from Swarovski Optik. The Golden Bird species (chosen at random from among all species seen by U.S. Big Sit teams) was the black-and-white warbler. All circles in the U.S. that saw the black-and-white warbler were entered into a hat at the winter meeting of the New Haven Bird Club in Connecticut (owners of the Big Sit! trademark).



The Caroline Blue Birds are a team from the Caroline County Bird Club, a chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society. The Club plans to use this prize money to work

on some local projects. One project, which is still in the planning stage, is to work on upgrading the trails of the MOS Myrtle Simon Pelot Sanctuary, located near Greensboro, MD. Another is to continue support of the Youth MOS Club. The YMOS was established to make the world of birds accessible to school age youth, facilitating communication among youth birders throughout Maryland, providing opportunities for young birders to get started in birding and to help develop their skills, and to provide educators with resources and opportunities to implement programs.

--Craig Repasz

The 119th Annual New Haven Christmas Bird Count Summary

On December 15th, 2018, 83 members and friends of the New Haven Bird Club set out to record all of the birds within the boundary of the New Haven Christmas Count circle. This year, we lucked out with the weather. Leading up to count day, the forecast was dismal, predicting rain for most of the day. But, the rain held off until Sunday (for the most part), giving us all a chance to cover our areas in relative comfort and ease. The results of the count were interesting. For the most part, species were seen in similar numbers as in recent years, with the notable exception of the raptors which were seen in lower numbers overall. This was most likely due to the overcast conditions and absence of wind. Otherwise, species followed recent trends. Some species appear to be in a precipitous decline, including Mute Swan, American Black Duck, Greater Scaup, American Crow, Field Sparrow, Rusty Blackbird, and House Finch. A few species that were seen in high numbers this year were Barred Owl and Carolina Wren. The former has been doing well in CT for several years (possibly at the expense of Eastern Screech Owl) and the latter may be the beneficiary of warmer winters and the abundance of feeders in our area. Thinking about it, the owl may be benefitting from the warmer winters and presence of bird feeders, too!

We welcomed more than a dozen new birders to our ranks this year. A special thank you goes out to all of the new participants. We hope you enjoyed participating in the New Haven Christmas Bird Count and will join us again next year!

The final results were (with rare birds in **boldface**): **Greater White-fronted Goose, 1**; Brant, 393; **Cackling Goose, 2**; Canada Goose, 4,389; Mute Swan, 50; Wood Duck, 9; Gadwall, 65; American Wigeon, 78; American Black Duck, 299; Mallard, 1,081; Northern Pintail, 1; Green-winged Teal, 24; Ring-necked Duck, 136; Greater Scaup, 514; Lesser Scaup, 85; **Common Eider, 5**; Surf Scoter, 18; White-winged Scoter, 4; Black Scoter, 2; Long-tailed Duck, 105; Bufflehead, 203; Common Goldeneye, 353; Hooded Merganser, 628; Common Merganser, 53; Red-breasted Merganser, 122; Ruddy Duck, 1; Wild Turkey, 77; Red-throated Loon, 12; Common Loon, 43; Pied-billed Grebe, 1; Horned Grebe, 34; Great Blue Heron, 29; Black-crowned Night-heron, 2; Black Vulture, 9; Turkey Vulture, 16; Northern Harrier, 1; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 5; Cooper's Hawk, 11; Bald Eagle, 12; Red-shouldered Hawk, 11; Red-tailed Hawk, 50; Clapper Rail, 5; Virginia Rail, 1;

American Coot, 3; Killdeer, 1; Sanderling, 67; Dunlin, 7; Purple Sandpiper, 39; Wilson's Snipe, 2; American Woodcock, 1; Ring-billed Gull, 2,199; Herring Gull, 1,710; Iceland Gull, 1; **Glaucous Gull, 1**; Great Black-backed Gull, 68; Rock Pigeon, 1,148; Mourning Dove, 842; Eastern Screech Owl, 15; Great Horned Owl, 6; Barred Owl, 8; Belted Kingfisher, 17; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 90; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 10; Downy Woodpecker, 150; Hairy Woodpecker, 25; Northern Flicker, 54; Pileated Woodpecker, 5; Merlin, 5; Peregrine Falcon, 11; Monk Parakeet, 11; **Eastern Phoebe, 2**; Blue Jay, 486; American Crow, 630; Fish Crow, 578; crow, sp., 31; Common Raven, 22; Horned Lark, 4; Black-capped Chickadee, 351; Tufted Titmouse, 225; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 10; White-breasted Nuthatch, 144; Brown Creeper, 14; **House Wren, 1**; Winter Wren, 9; Marsh Wren, 6; Carolina Wren, 177; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 7; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 1; Eastern Bluebird, 32; Hermit Thrush, 3; American Robin, 265; Gray Catbird, 15; Northern Mockingbird, 79; European Starling, 3,913; Cedar Waxwing, 70; Snow Bunting, 8; Yellow-rumped Warbler, 9; **Palm Warbler, 4**; American Tree Sparrow, 98; Field Sparrow, 12; Fox Sparrow, 20; Dark-eyed Junco, 602; White-throated Sparrow, 549; White-crowned Sparrow, 8; Savannah Sparrow, 17; Song Sparrow, 467; Swamp Sparrow, 36; Eastern Towhee, 3; Northern Cardinal, 277; Red-winged Blackbird, 95; Rusty Blackbird, 1; Common Grackle, 115; Brown-headed Cowbird, 83; House Finch, 137; Purple Finch, 8; Pine Siskin, 3; American Goldfinch, 479; House Sparrow, 768. Total Individuals: 26,298. Total Species: 121.

The participants were (with area captains in boldface): Marian Aimesbury, **Dewitt Allen**, Ross Allen, **Ralph Amodei**, Toby Appel, Christin Arnini, Phil Asprelli, **Dan Barvir**, Bill Batsford, **Larry Bausher**, Anooj and Ranjit Bhawe, Ann Bilotti, **Stephen Broker**, Lauren Brown, Cheryl Cape, Michael Carpenter, Diane Chodkowski, Nancy Clark, David Collier, Louisa Cunningham, Steve Curtis, Lori Datlow, John Farley, Michael Ferrari, Bobbie Fisher, Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe, **Frank Gallo**, Ed Haesche, **Stacy Hanks**, Michael Hanson, Michael and Pat Horn, Christine Howe, **James Hunter**, Nord Isacson, Deborah Johnson, Kris Johnson, Emmelie, Kaiser, Tom Kelly, Acadia Kocher, Bernice Lattanzi, **Pat Leahy**, **Carol and Gary Lemmon**, Alex Lin-Moore, Donna Lorello, **Chris Loscalzo**, Alan Malina, Frank Mantlik, Steve Mayo, Pat McCreless, **Flo McBride**, Judy Moore, Gina Nichol, Genevieve Nuttall, Michael O'Brien, Maureen O'Connor, John Oshlick, Bev Proppen, Frank and Nancy Ragusa, Jason Rieger, Laurie Reynolds, Brian Roach, William Root, **Lee**

Schlesinger, Arthur Shippee, Nancy Specht, Charla and Steve Spector, Andy Stack, Maria Stockmal, **John Triana**, Severin Uebbing, Marianne Vahey, Lisa Wahle, Bruce and Jean Webber, Chris Woerner, Paul Wolter, George Zepko and Betty Zuraw.

Thanks to all of the participants!

--Chris Loscalzo,
NH CBC Compiler



Compilation Dinner Photo by Frank Mantlik



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Newsletter February 2019

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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

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