



THE CHICKADEE

Newsletter of the New Haven Bird Club

April 2020

2020 CALENDAR

In light of the Covid-19 pandemic and state and local orders for reducing its spread through social distancing, the New Haven Bird Club is canceling all events through June 30, 2020. This will include all scheduled field trips and walks, indoor meetings, and our annual Banquet in May.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Hello, fellow New Haven Bird Club members:

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to make our lives challenging. I hope that you are safe and well, along with everyone we share the planet with — our families, friends, neighbors, healthcare workers, employees of the businesses we continue to need and use, people who deliver mail, packages, food, and so on. And besides we're all important.

For our Bird Club, helping to keep members and the public safe has meant a decision to cancel the remainder of our scheduled events through June 30.

It's disappointing that we won't be able to share spring migration and the early breeding season as we have in other years. The birds will still be there, of course: warblers and other northern migrants passing through, and given the right weather conditions, falling out in abundance along the coast or near the covered bridge at the Eli Whitney Museum.

Besides all that, we'll miss meeting old and new friends for a bird walk in a lovely habitat, and spending a few hours in each other's company, catching up and swapping stories about birds we saw in that same tree years ago.

Meantime, though, I'm paying much more attention to our backyard feeders and the neighborhood birds. Though we have a suburban yard, there's still a lot of action. I want to see which thicket the pair of cardinals that have been with us all winter will choose for their nest. A pair of mockingbirds has turned up for the first time in several years. Will they stay right here?

What about the titmice, chickadees, nuthatches, song sparrows, goldfinches, and house finches, the woodpeckers that are regulars all year? There are excavated holes in some dead Norway Maple branches that may attract the cavity nesters, and I'll be watching. The scope has come out of the car trunk and is sitting behind an unscreened window with a view of the brush tangles and vines at the back of our lot.

And before all the breeding season behavior, when will the Dark-eyed Juncos and White-throated Sparrows move on? They're still coming out of the old Christmas trees I've accumulated near the feeders. And on and on with questions and interesting things to watch, things that are going on here and at the small pond near the end of our block.

They've been going on every year. But now I have the time and opportunity to pay closer attention. Besides, the parks are still open for walking and birding, albeit while maintaining physical separation. There are also numerous birdcams out there for viewing online, showing entertaining species here and all over the world. (We always watch one with osprey on a river where our family and grandchildren live out west.) Here's wishing you all similar opportunities for attention and joy.

Please stay safe, as the CDC and our national and local experts advise us. But also have fun.

--DeWitt Allen

Mega Bowl IV Results

Wow! We had a great day! Forty-seven birders organized themselves into thirteen teams and participated in the fourth annual Mega Bowl of Birding in New Haven County on Saturday, February 1st, 2020. We birded all over the county, from Southbury to Wallingford and Milford to Madison. Collectively, we recorded 120 species and amassed 272 points. The rarest sighting of the day was the Yellow Warbler found by the CT Young Birders Club Darth Waders at East Shore Park in New Haven. Other rarities included: Great Egret, Clapper Rail, House Wren, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Common Yellowthroat. Uncommon/nearly rare birds that were observed were: Greater White-fronted, Snow, and Cackling Goose, Canvasback, White-winged and Black Scoter, Ruddy Duck, Double-crested Cormorant, Black-bellied Plover, American Woodcock, Long-eared Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Brown Creeper, Marsh Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Brown Thrasher, Lapland Longspur, Pine Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, and Rusty Blackbird. The CYBC Darth



Waders saw the most species and accumulated the most points for the fourth year in a row.

Everyone had a great time and we all enjoyed the fine dinner and celebration at the Kellogg

Environmental Center in Derby after the day of birding. Prizes were awarded to the winning team, the youngest and oldest participants, and the highest scoring team among the first-time participants. We anticipate another great event next year! Mark your calendars: Mega Bowl V will be held on Saturday, February 6th, 2021!

--Chris Loscalzo

Mega Bowl Coordinator

Field Trip Reports

First Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset State Park, Madison



Photo by Laurie Reynolds

On Wednesday, February 5th, Greg Hanisek led a group of 26 birders at Hammonasset Beach State Park. The group saw 46 species: Brant, Canada Goose, Mallard, American Black Duck, Surf Scoter, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Red-breasted

Merganser, Ring-necked Pheasant, Horned Grebe, Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon), Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Dunlin, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Red-throated Loon, Common Loon, Great Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Fish Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Horned Lark, Carolina Wren, Northern Mockingbird, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, House Finch, American Goldfinch, Field Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Northern Cardinal.

Rhode Island Coast Field Trip Report



Photo by Lori Datlow

On Saturday, February 22nd, 20+ members of the bird club spent the day birding in the scenic state to our east. We started our day at Beavertail State Park in Jamestown. From the point there, we saw numerous interesting species including a Red-necked Grebe, Razorbill, and Great

Cormorant. We also saw a few of each of the three scoter species (Black, Surf, and White-winged). Of course, there were Harlequin Ducks and Common Eiders, too. When we walked from the point along the east side of the park we were pleased and amazed to see huge rafts of waterfowl, made up of a mixture of Common Eider, Scoters, and a few other species. We also spotted an Iceland Gull on the rocks. Our next stop was Easton and Green End Ponds in Newport. We saw lots of interesting birds there, too, including a drake Tufted Duck, Redheads, American Coots, a Black-crowned Night-heron, and nine (!) Great Blue Herons, several of which were roosting on a low conifer by the shore of the pond. From there, we went to Sachuest Point NWR. We didn't see too many interesting species there, but the most unexpected was a male Ring-necked Pheasant along the trail to Island Rocks. After a brief stop at Third Beach, we made our way to Scarborough Beach in Narragansett. It took a while, but we eventually located the Black-headed Gull that has been wintering there. We then went to Moonstone Beach where our sharp-eyed young birder, Eli Holton, spotted an Eastern Meadowlark in flight. From there, we visited Trustum Pond NWR (but didn't go to the pond as we heard there weren't any unusual birds there, and it's a long

hike!). We did walk around the weedy field and saw Eastern Bluebirds and Yellow-rumped Warblers. We were delighted to see a Brown Thrasher feeding under the suet feeder when we returned to the nature center area. We then went to Perry's Mill Pond where we saw a drake Eurasian Wigeon feeding in a large flock of American Wigeon. Our next stop was at Grassy Point in the Ninigret NWR. We saw our old friend, the Lesser Black-backed Gull there. It's been at the same cove in winter for the past 15 years. Wow! Our last stop for the day was the Weekapaug Breachway. We were delighted to find a drake King Eider riding the surf and feeding with a flock of Common Eider there. It was a fine way to end a fine day of birding. We'll hope for a similarly wonderful day of birding when we return to Rhode Island again next year!

--Chris Loscalzo

Sparrows and Speculaas, White Memorial Foundation and Tour of the Livingston Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy Trip Report



Photo by Lori Datlow

The first of March brought 23 birders and stiff winds to White Memorial for the second Sparrows and Speculaas walk. The trip was co-led by Corrie Folsom O'Keefe and Craig

Repsz. We quickly left the parking lot for Bantam Lake with the hope of seeing the Greater White Fronted Geese that had been seen earlier in the week. There was a dusting of snow on the field and trail. At the lake there were no Greater White Fronted Geese to be found. There were good looks at Common Merganser, Hooded Merganser, Common Golden Eye, Ring-necked Duck, Canada Geese and Bufflehead. There were two adult Bald Eagles and an immature perched in a tree above the water. We walked back exploring the woods and fields with plenty of Red-winged Blackbirds, Eastern Bluebirds, Golden-crowned Kinglets and a duet of Brown Creepers that were singing from undetectable locations. We had 30 species and 116 individual birds.

Some of us then went to buy Dutch cheese and cookies.

15 of us then took the short drive to Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy (formerly Livingston Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy) where we were greeted by Dr. Colleen Peters. She had recently given a talk at the Club's December Indoor meeting. She took us on a tour past the ponds and fields and pens to look at exotic waterfowl from across the globe. We saw: King, Common and Spectacled Eiders; Whooper, Black, Tundra and Trumpeter Swans; 16 different geese; and many duck species. Dr Peters discussed Ripley's ongoing efforts to breed rare and exotic birds to re-introduce them back into their natural habitats.

--Craig Repasz



First Wednesday Walk: Stratford Shore & Great Meadows Trip Report

An enthusiastic group of 21 birders gathered on March 4 to be led by Frank Mantlik around the Stratford shoreline. Timing was good, as an overnight rainstorm cleared out by dawn. It was mild (46-49°F), and mostly sunny, but a steady west wind gusting to 30+ mph all day. At Frash Pond, an adult Bald Eagle flew over, and we scoped a variety of ducks, including 2 Canvasbacks, a single Ruddy Duck and Greater Scaup, 2 Hooded Mergansers, and a few flocks of Buffleheads. A Pied-Billed Grebe also showed well. Next we visited the McKinney NWR, where it was fairly quiet, but we took an enjoyable walk through the salt marsh edge. En route to the next stop, a wintering Great Egret was seen near the airport by those in Frank's car. At Long Beach, the winds and waves were delivering washed up slipper shells on the beach, to the delight of hundreds of gulls. We managed views of several Long-tailed Ducks and Common Goldeneyes. Bracing into the wind, the group found an immature Glaucous Gull among the frenzy; a life bird for some. (Unfortunately we couldn't find the recent Horned Lark flock that has contained a Lapland Longspur). The Lordship Seawall offered us nice views of Red-throated Loons, Long-tailed Ducks, and Greater Scaup. Next, all were delighted by the walk along the coastal bluff at Stratford Point, where we saw Common Loon, Surf Scoters, and American Wigeons. Standing near the lighthouse, all were thrilled to



watch an adult Bald Eagle fly directly overhead. Lastly, the wintering 4 American Coots and Gadwall flock afforded good views at the Birdseye boat ramp. In all we tallied 41 species of birds. It was a great gathering of old friends and newcomers.

--Frank Mantlik

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

Birding on Your Own



There are 5 to 7 Blue Heron Nests south of the Waite Street Bridge in Hamden. I took this photo on Sunday, March 15. Birders can walk the street and see the birds without a group.

--Pete Vitali

I would like to let our members know that we do have a "Coronavirus free" social event that we can all take part in. We have 20+ bird houses on Lake Chamberlain that have just begun their spring occupancy. The Bluebirds began "house-hunting" last week and the Tree swallows arrived on Thursday, March 26 with a corresponding arrival of lots of bugs hatching. Most of the bird homes are centralized in the fields near the dam. It is quite a learning experience to observe the behaviors of nest site choosing, nest building, and egg laying through hatching to fledge. It is a short flat walk and keeping safe with proper social distancing is quite easy.

--Pat Leahy

Birds in Words

Birds in Words is NHBC's gathering of people who like reading books on their favorite hobby. Since the group began in 2009, we've read more than 45 books on just about every aspect of birds, birding, birders, nature, and naturalists, and had some lively meetings. 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.

We are currently reading *Saving Jemima, Life and Love with a Hard-luck Jay* by Julie Zickefoose.

Welcome New Members

Anne McNulty
Cheshire

Amy Hopkins
Guilford

Andrew Spry
Oxford

Abby Sesselberg

Al Agostinelli
Hamden

Fairfield

Membership Renewal Notes

Because we have canceled all scheduled activities for the most active months on our calendar, we have made another decision:

The Bird Club will automatically extend the membership of current Club members until the end of the 2020-2021 Club year, with no charge to you. We hope that you will continue to join us for indoor meetings and field trips as soon as it is safe to do so.

We would like to add that to help us meet ongoing expenses in the coming year, we would welcome all donations of any

amount through our New Haven Bird Club website:

<https://www.newhavenbirdclub.org> (select "donate" on home page). The club is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization.

If you have any updates to your contact information that should be reflected in our next Yearbook, by June 15th please email changes to membership@newhavenbirdclub.org, or report changes online at our web site:

<https://www.newhavenbirdclub.org> (select join, update membership information).

NHBC Winter Feeder Report 2019-2020 End of Week 15



We have finished weeks 11 through 15 of the survey.

As one of the surveyors wrote to me this has been a very **boring** 5 weeks. Only 5 of 42 Uncommon Species were seen, and that is a very low number.

I do not know if the numbers tend to decline in weeks 11 to 19 (months of January and February) because we have 2 surveyors who go south during these weeks or is it due to the warmer weather we seem to be having these last few years despite ice and snow storms and quick very cold snaps? We are starting to see large flocks of Common Grackles, but not European Starlings and Brown-headed Cowbirds during these five weeks. The weather may have played a part in that it changed daily as it did last year.

From the **Common List** we had **22 of 22** (100%) species. The maximum number of **Common Grackles** seen for any day of the 5 weeks was 1 to 125, with only 6 surveyors reporting them. **Carolina Wrens** were seen by 14 surveyors and the **American Goldfinches** totaled between 82 to 108, down from 136 and 158 last year.

The **Semi-common List** had **10 of 12** species show up. No surveyor reported seeing **Chipping Sparrows** or **Purple Finches**. One surveyor saw **Fox Sparrows** (Martha Asarisi), one saw **Red-tailed Hawks** (Biswajit Mukherjee) and Dave Rauch saw **Rock Doves**.

There were no new species added to the **Uncommon List**, and we had **5 of 42** species during this five-week period for 12% which is very low. Species seen were **Black Vulture** (Martha Asarisi), (**Brown Creeper** (Laurie Reynolds – regular visitor this time of year), **Cedar Waxwing** (Martha Asarisi), **Pileated Woodpecker** (Martha Asarisi) and **Red-shouldered Hawk** (Martha Asarisi).

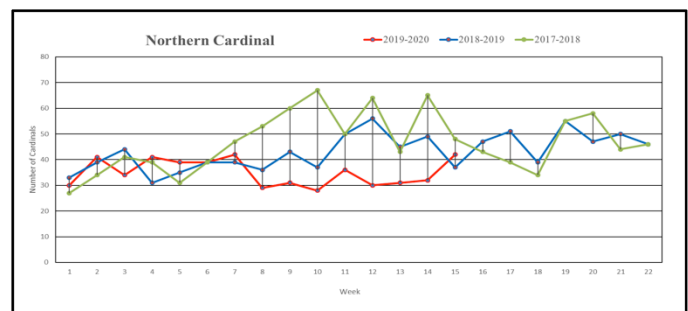
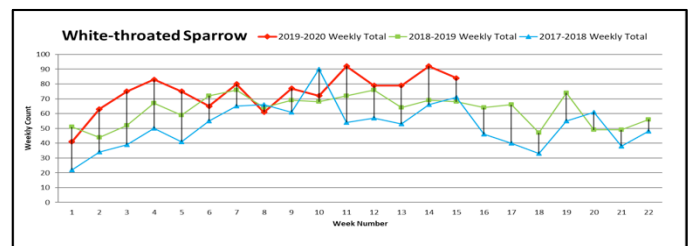
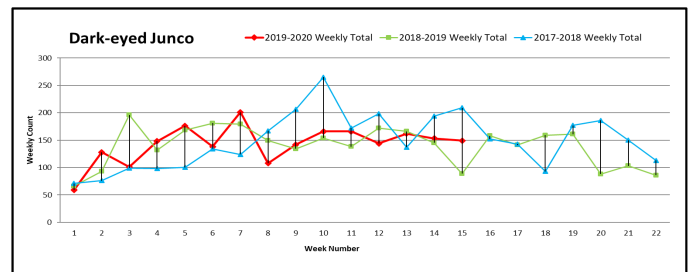
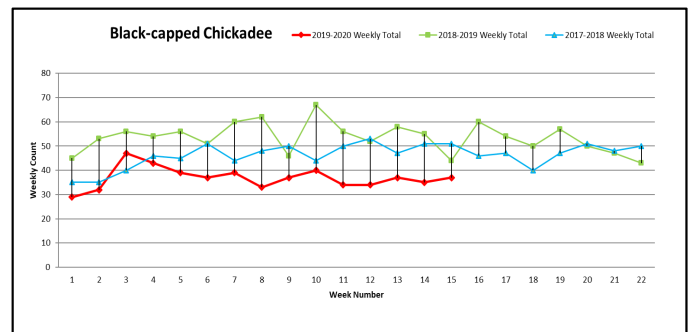
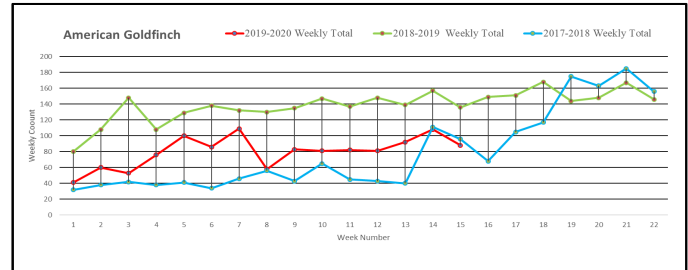
In the **Waterfowl** category **3 of 9** for 33% were seen. **Herring Gull** (Andy Verderame), **Hooded Merganser** (Nancy Morland - First ever seen on her property), **Mallard** (Nancy Morland, Andy Verderame).

7 of 25 Animals were seen during these five weeks. They were **Gray Squirrel**, **Brown Rat**, **Chipmunk**, **Opossum**, **Raccoon**, **Red Squirrel** and **White-tailed Deer**.

The **graphs of 5 Species** are included for weeks one to fifteen. The Red line is 2019-2020. **American Goldfinch** Numbers are below the last two years. **Black-capped Chickadee** are below last year. **Dark-eyed Junco** between the two previous years. **White-throated Sparrows**, our other winter species, are above the last two years. I have replaced the **Common Grackle** graph with a graph of the **Northern Cardinal**, but they are also running below the previous two years.

--Pete Vitali

Chairman: NHBC Winter Feeder Survey



NEW HAVEN BIRD CLUB – 2019-2020

OFFICERS

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<i>Secretary</i>	Alan Malina	203-248-5754 Alm5565@msn.com

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<i>Yearbook Editor</i>	Christine Howe	203-389-1175 clhowe2@yahoo.com

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

<i>The BIG SIT</i>	John Triana	203-758-7203 jtriana1@sbcglobal.net
<i>Birds in Words</i>	Kris Johnson	203-288-3087 kriswaxwing99@gmail.com
<i>Christmas Bird Count</i>	Chris Loscalzo	203-389-6508 closcalz@optonline.net
<i>Hawk Watch</i>	Steve Mayo	203-393-0694 rsdmayo@sbcglobal.net
<i>Lighthouse Point Historian</i>	John Triana	203-758-7203 jtriana1@sbcglobal.net
<i>Hospitality</i>	Stacy Hanks	203-283-3898 flybirdhanks@gmail.com
<i>Summer Bird Count</i>	Steve Mayo	203-393-0694 rsdmayo@sbcglobal.net
<i>Winter Feeder Survey</i>	Peter Vitali	203-288-0621 vitali_peter_e@sbcglobal.net

NHBC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name(s) _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip Code _____
Area Code / Phone _____
Email _____

_____ New Member

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

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

The NHBC website, www.newhavenbirdclub.org, offers information about the Club, its programs, and other Club and member news. 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