



# THE CHICKADEE

Newsletter of the New Haven Bird Club

December 2020

## 2020 CALENDAR

(See inside for details)

Wednesday, December 2, 8–11 a.m. **First Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison.** Follow all Covid precautions. Preregistration required.

Thursday, December 10, 7 p.m. **Mary Ellen Lemay – Pollinator Pathways and The Green Corridor: Improving Biodiversity on Protected Land in Our Own Yards**

Saturday, December 12, 8 a.m. to noon (Rain Date: Sunday, December 13, 2020) **Surveying New Haven's Area K for the Christmas Bird Count.** Follow all Covid precautions. Preregistration required.

Saturday, December 19, all day **121st Annual New Haven Christmas Bird Count**

Wednesday, January 6, 8–11 a.m. **First Wednesday Walk: Sherwood Island State Park, Westport**

January 14, 7:00 p.m. **Al Batt – What are you looking at???**

Saturday, January 16, 8 a.m. to noon **Milford Hotspots in Winter**

Wednesday, February 3, 8–11 a.m. **First Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset State Park, Madison**

Saturday, February 6 **The Fifth Annual Mega Bowl of Birding in New Haven County**

Thursday, February 11, 7 p.m. – **Dr. Sean Williams – Ticks and their Avian Hosts**

Saturday, February 27, 8–11 a.m. **Sparrows and Speculaas, White Memorial Foundation**

Saturday, February 27, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. **Sachuest Point NWR and Rhode Island Coast (Snow date – Sunday, February 28, 2021)**

**NOTE:** Please check the NHBC website and newsletter periodically for updated information on all programs. **Scheduled events may need to be changed or canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic,** and new trips may be added during the year.  
[www.newhavenbirdclub.org](http://www.newhavenbirdclub.org)

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



You already know, if you get The Chickadee electronically, that we've switched from Yahoo to Mail Chimp for our Club email. Yahoo has announced it won't support email-groups after December, but we were already considering a change.

We hope you like the looks and functionality of the Mail Chimp messages. Former board member Mike

Ferrari has stepped up to help us make the transition. He's been working closely with Membership Chair Laurie Reynolds, Outdoor Chair Craig Repasz, and Vice President Chris Howe to design, test, and fine-tune templates for all our emailings.

During this fall's resurgence of Covid-19 infections, email has become more important than ever in communicating about our events and letting you know of additions and changes. They're how we announce the sign-ups for our socially distanced, no-more-than-ten-participant bird walks, and how we send invitations for our monthly Zoom video membership meetings (which have been big successes -- thank you for attending, thanks to our guest speakers, and thank you to Indoor Chair Gail Martino for putting it all together. If you haven't joined us for one yet, please do).

And speaking of successes . . . On Saturday and Sunday, October 10th and 11th, groups of birders got together throughout the US (as well as Guatemala and Costa Rica) to tally as many species of birds as possible within twenty-four hours -- but all from within a 17-foot diameter circle. This was for The Big Sit!®, a semi-competitive event originated by the New Haven Bird Club, now in its 29th annual incarnation.

Why 17 feet? Former NHBC president John Himmelman, who conceived The Big Sit! in 1992 with Bird Club friends, says it was so people would ask, "why 17 feet?"

Whatever the reason, The Big Sit! is a great experience. You pick the most productive birding habitat you can, set out a circle, bring scopes, binoculars, food and drink, and either alone or with a team, you bird for as many hours as are convenient and fun, from midnight to midnight. And what is more fun than birding all day with friends? Or with new friends?

This year, Big Sit! teams reported their sightings from 102 circles. A team from Texas put in the most consecutive hours, 16 -- a testament to their stamina. A high-powered Connecticut

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## NEW HAVEN BIRD CLUB – 2020-2021

### OFFICERS

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<i>Treasurer</i>	Andy Stack ctstacks@optonline.net	203-804-6081
<i>Secretary</i>	Alan Malina Alm5565@msn.com	203-248-5754

### BOARD MEMBERS

<i>Conservation Chair</i>	Deborah Johnson deborahleighjohnson@hotmail.com	203-430-5554
<i>Education Chair</i>	Lori Datlow loridatlow@frontier.com	475-227-2820
<i>Indoor Programs</i>	Gail Martino gmm1227@yahoo.com	617-504-7205
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<i>Member-at-Large</i>	Bill Batsford william.batsford@yale.edu	203-787-1642
<i>Membership Chair</i>	Laurie Reynolds warmstove@hotmail.com	203-434-2134
<i>Newsletter Editor</i>	Donna Batsford donnabatsford@gmail.com	203-787-1642
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<i>Outdoor Programs</i>	Craig Repasz crepasz@hotmail.com	203-230-1697
<i>Acting Publicity Chair</i>	Mike Ferrari mike.ferrari@mac.com	203-435-5712
<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>	Craig Repasz crepasz@hotmail.com	203-230-1697
<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 scmayo999@gmail.com	203-551-1707
<i>Lighthouse Point</i>	John Triana jtriana1@sbcglobal.net	203-758-7203
<i>Historian</i>	Stacy Hanks flybirdhanks@gmail.com	203-283-3898
<i>Summer Bird Count</i>	Steve Mayo scmayo999@gmail.com	203-551-1707
<i>Winter Feeder Survey</i>	Peter Vitali vitali_peter_e@sbcglobal.net	203-288-0621

*(President's Message Continued from first page)*

team, the B.W. Surf Scopers, observing from the outer platform at Milford Point, sighted the most species of any circle, 107, winning national and international bragging rights for 2020. Congratulations to the Surf Scopers: Frank Gallo, Frank Mantlik, Tina Green, and Jim and Patrick Dugan, who have for many years conducted their Big Sit! as a fundraiser for CT Audubon's Milford Point Coastal Center.

The full 2020 Big Sit! report is posted on NHBC's dedicated website, [www.thebigsit.org](http://www.thebigsit.org), and on our Club's Facebook page. Be sure to check it out. And then start making plans for your circle in 2021.

Meantime, please stay safe and enjoy the late fall and early winter birding.

--DeWitt Allen

### **Notes from the Board**

The next board meeting will be virtual on Thursday, December 17 at 7 PM.

Deadline for submissions to the February *Chickadee* is January 27. Send to Newsletter Editor, Donna Batsford, at [donnabatsford@gmail.com](mailto:donnabatsford@gmail.com).

Members who are not currently receiving club emails but would like to, should contact the Membership Chair at [membership@newhavenbirdclub.org](mailto:membership@newhavenbirdclub.org).

NHBC Objectives: To make available to members and the general public opportunities for recreation, education, and appreciation in the area of birding and to encourage the conservation of natural resources in New Haven and surrounding areas.

### **Welcome New Members**

Owen Ehrlich  
Mystic

Kathy Kiely  
Branford

Robert Rimkoski  
Wallingford

Pamela Wain  
Woodbridge

**New Haven Bird Club Website:**  
**[www.newhavenbirdclub.org](http://www.newhavenbirdclub.org)**

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## Indoor Programs

We cannot predict how the future course of the coronavirus pandemic will affect our schedule of events. Our first priority is protecting the health and well-being of our members and the general public, and it may become necessary to adjust or cancel some events. The recommendations and policies of local, state, and national health authorities will guide all decisions about our schedule. Please check the NHBC website and newsletter for updated information before planning to attend any event.

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.

**Meetings will be virtual. We will send an email invitation to join the meeting. The meeting link will be sent to the NHBC email list.**

**Remember to check the Club's website for updated information on all programs: [www.newhavenbirdclub.org](http://www.newhavenbirdclub.org).**

Inclement weather or other emergency may cancel a meeting. Cancellation notices will be sent via the club email and will be posted on the club website, [www.newhavenbirdclub.org](http://www.newhavenbirdclub.org), and online on CTBirds. Also check TV channels WTNH (New Haven) and WFSB (Hartford).

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### Thursday, December 10, 7 p.m. – Mary Ellen Lemay Pollinator Pathways and The Green Corridor: Improving Biodiversity on Protected Land in Our Own Yards

Join us for an evening with Mary Ellen Lemay, Landowner Engagement Director for the Aspetuck Land Trust and Pollinator Pathway Facilitator for the Hudson to Housatonic partner network. With over 85 towns in CT and NY in various stages of launching Pollinator Pathways, this landowner-outreach strategy has taken the region by storm in only two years. By planting natives, avoiding pesticides, and reducing lawn, this very scalable initiative has the potential to create healthy, connected habitats for pollinators and wildlife as they move across the landscape.

### January 14, 2021, 7:00 p.m. Al Batt – What are you looking at???

Join us for an evening with Al Batt, *Bird Watcher's Digest's* beloved humor columnist who will be speaking about “spark birds.” What is your spark bird? Did a little birdie tell you to watch it or it would treat you like a statue in the park, did a penguin singing like a winter wren fly over your head, or did something weird happen? A spark bird is magic in feathers. It changes lives.

### Thursday, February 11, 7 p.m. – Dr. Sean Williams Ticks and their Avian Hosts

Join us for an evening with Dr. Sean Williams, professor of Behavior, Ecology, and Ornithology at College of the Holy Cross, as he discusses his most recent research.

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## Winter Feeder Survey 2020-2021 – End of Week 3



This year we started with 18 surveyors. We are located all over New Haven County and one surveyor in Fairfield County and two in Middlesex County.

10 surveyors have reported by email out of 18 (the others send their reports in after the 5<sup>th</sup> week). We saw 22 of 22 from the Common list, 10 of 12 from the Semi-Common list, 9 of 42 from the Uncommon list, 1 Waterfowl and 5 of 26 Animals. We had 2 attacks of feeders by Black Bears, one in Hamden (week 2) and one in Monroe (week 1).

Some of the birds on the semi-common list seen were: Chipping Sparrow, Eastern Blue Bird, Fox Sparrow, Northern Flicker, Purple Finch, Red-winged Blackbird, Rock Dove, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Wild Turkey, and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.

Birds seen on the Uncommon list were: Brown Creeper, Eastern Towhee, Hermit Thrush, Pine Siskin, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Red-shouldered Hawk, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Swamp Sparrow, and Yellow Rumped Warbler.

There is still time to join. The survey runs from Sunday, November 1, 2020 thru Saturday, April 3, 2021. It is a weekly

survey, but the number you report can be from a few minutes on one day or from many sightings on several days of the week. It is very flexible.

We have 3 types of Surveyors: Postal Surveyors, Email surveyors, Email/Postal surveyors (I send the forms to you via Postal Mail, and you send them back via Postal Mail. All other communication is via email.)

We record the highest number of **individual birds** seen of that species in that week.

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

The email address is: [vitali\\_peter\\_e@sbglobal.net](mailto:vitali_peter_e@sbglobal.net).

Happy Birding,  
Pete Vitali  
Survey Coordinator  
Chairman NHBC Winter Feeder Survey

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## Outdoor Programs

Birders of all levels are welcome on all field trips, and every effort is made to help beginners. If you are new to birding or have any special needs, please be sure to let the leader know at the start of the field trip. More details, if required, and/or updates on these trips will be given at the indoor meetings and in the newsletter. Watch for emails sent by the Club. You can also check the Club's website: [www.newhavenbirdclub.org](http://www.newhavenbirdclub.org) for updated trip information and a Google Map link to the meeting place.

The New Haven Bird Club needs to take precautions to make our Outdoor Trips safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. The walking format of our events will make social distancing exceedingly difficult with a large group of people. We will limit the group size to ten or fewer.

All trips must conform to the following:

- No carpooling to or during the trip. People who live together can share a ride.
- Masks are required at all times.
- Social distancing will be followed. (The wingspan of a bald eagle.)
- Group size will be capped at ten people or less.
- Preregistration for the trip will be required.
- Trip participants must follow State quarantining guidelines with regard to recent travel and the health status of members in their household.

A trip may be canceled at the discretion of the Trip Leader; they also need to protect themselves and their family members.

**Preregistration** – In order to control group size, all trips will require preregistration. This change contrasts with our Club's previous policy but will be needed to maintain safety during the pandemic. As Outdoor Program Chair, Craig Repasz will handle the preregistration. A link to the event sign-up will be sent to the NHBC email group before each trip. There will be a wait list. Craig will make sure that a few individuals do not dominate the registration process, limiting the opportunities of others. ***Expect an email via the NHBC email group for each trip with a link to preregister or instructions to contact the Trip Leader directly.***

**Multiple Groups** – A trip may also be broken up into multiple groups with each led by a co-trip leader, possibly with each group following different departure times. These details will be disclosed for each trip separately.

**Future Changes** – There is no telling what the future will bring. We may go into another shutdown or the situation may improve. We will continue to monitor the situation; future adjustments and changes may be needed to protect Club members' safety.

Please contact Craig Repasz if you have any questions or concerns, 203-230-1697 or [crepasz@hotmail.com](mailto:crepasz@hotmail.com).

### 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. The Club also is building a presence in local public schools and camps to encourage children to embrace birding.

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#### First Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison

**Wednesday, December 2, 8–11 a.m.**

At any time of year, Hammonasset is a true gem. Enjoy a mid-week trip to explore this birding hotspot for fall migrants. The varied habitat attracts shorebirds, waterfowl, raptors, and songbirds. Meet outside the park at the Shoreline Greenway Trail parking lot on Boston Post Road. Directions: Take Exit 62 off I-95. At the end of the connector (traffic light), go left onto Boston Post Road. The parking lot is the first right, a short distance away. Leader: Jerry Connolly, 203-710-2011 or [birdshop@sbcglobal.net](mailto:birdshop@sbcglobal.net).

*Follow all Covid precautions. Preregistration required.*

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

**Saturday, December 12, 8 a.m. to noon** (Rain Date: Sunday, December 13)

We survey Area K the weekend prior to the Saturday, December 19, 2020 New Haven Christmas Bird Count. This highly productive area includes Ora Avenue/Proto Drive/Morris Creek Marshes (where most of our field time is spent), Cosey Beach, Lighthouse Point Park, Beacon Hill and the Trolley Line, Furnace Pond, and the lower Farm River. Area K typically produces 75–80 species on count day, including waterfowl, loons, herons, raptors, shorebirds, woodpeckers, and such songbirds as wrens, thrushes, sparrows, flocking birds, and finches. Moderate, level walking on a paved road, covering a quarter mile. One foray to the marsh edge over a dry, weedy stretch for Marsh Wren and Virginia Rail. Meet in East Haven at Ora Avenue/Proto Drive south of Tweed-New Haven Airport. When you see a fork in the road, take it.

[Actually, we meet at the fork.]

Leader: Steve Broker, 203-747-6843 or

[stephenpaulbroker@gmail.com](mailto:stephenpaulbroker@gmail.com).

*Follow all Covid precautions. Preregistration required.*

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**121st Annual New Haven Christmas Bird Count  
Saturday, December 19, all day**

Join other NHBC members in this fun event, steeped in tradition. Take part for a few hours or all day. Join birders in the field or report what you see in your backyard (if you reside within the count circle). The results of the count are sent to the National Audubon Society for inclusion in an international census of early winter bird populations.

There will be a few modifications to this year's Count in order to ensure the health and safety of the participants in light of the Coronavirus pandemic. Participants are advised to avoid carpooling and to maintain social distancing and facial covering protocols while birding. The traditional compilation dinner will be replaced by a Zoom compilation meeting beginning at 6 pm on the night of the event.

Birders who have participated in past counts should contact the Captain of the area in which they have birded before in order to coordinate their efforts. Birders who are new to the New Haven CBC who wish to participate should contact me at [closcalz@optonline.net](mailto:closcalz@optonline.net) or 203 389-6508 so that I may direct them to an area and captain that can accept them onto their team.

Compiler: Chris Loscalzo, 203-389-6508 or [closcalz@optonline.net](mailto:closcalz@optonline.net).

*Follow all Covid precautions. Preregistration required.*

**First Wednesday Walk: Sherwood Island State Park,  
Westport  
Wednesday, January 6, 8–11 a.m.**

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

Leader: Tina Green, 203-247-2660 or [tina@renaissancestudios.com](mailto:tina@renaissancestudios.com)

*Follow all Covid precautions. Preregistration required.*

**Milford Hotspots in Winter  
Saturday, January 16, 8 a.m. to noon**

We will 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. The trip ends by noon. Inclement weather will probably cancel the trip. Check with the leader if you have weather concerns. Meet at the commuter lot, Exit 35 off I-95.

Leader: Frank Mantlik, 203-984-9410 or [mantlik@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mantlik@sbcglobal.net)

*Follow all Covid precautions. Preregistration required.*

**First Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset State Park, Madison  
Wednesday, February 3, 8–11 a.m.**

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 outside the park at the Shoreline Greenway Trail

parking lot on Boston Post Road. Directions: Take Exit 62 off I-95. At the end of the connector (traffic light), go left onto Boston Post Road. The parking lot is the first right, a short distance away.

Leader: Greg Hanisek, [ctgreg@yahoo.com](mailto:ctgreg@yahoo.com)

*Follow all Covid precautions. Preregistration required.*

**The Fifth Annual Mega Bowl of Birding in New Haven  
County  
Saturday, February 6**

Held on Super Bowl Weekend! Come join in on a fun and friendly event! 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.

Leader: Chris Loscalzo, 203-389-6508 or [closcalz@optonline.net](mailto:closcalz@optonline.net)

*The Mega Bowl will be revised this year because of the pandemic. Watch for an announcement after the holidays*

**Sparrows and Speculaas, White Memorial Foundation  
Saturday, February 27, 8–11 a.m.**

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. As 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 homemade baked goods including a variety of Dutch specialties, and Dutch cheeses. Meet in the public parking lot at White Memorial Foundation, 80 Whitehall Road, Litchfield.

Leaders: Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe, 203-233-0535 or [cfolsom-okeefe@audubon.org](mailto:cfolsom-okeefe@audubon.org);

Craig Repasz, 203-745-6683 or [crepasz@hotmail.com](mailto:crepasz@hotmail.com)

*Follow all Covid precautions. Preregistration required.*

**Sachuest Point NWR and Rhode Island Coast  
Saturday, February 27, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Snow date –  
Sunday, February 28)**

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 commuter lot, Exit 57 off I-95, or contact the leader for the planned first stop in Rhode Island.

Leader: Chris Loscalzo, 203-389-6508 or [closcalz@optonline.net](mailto:closcalz@optonline.net)

*Follow all Covid precautions. Preregistration required.*

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## Trip Reports

### October First Wednesday Walk: Lighthouse Point Park, New Haven Trip Report

On Wednesday, October 7<sup>th</sup> our nice group of eight convened at the hawk watching area at 8 a.m., where we met both the hawk watchers and strong southwest winds, with gusts of 25 mph. Sadly, this is not weather conducive to a good migration day at the Lighthouse Point. Winds out of the north, especially the northwest, bring the highest numbers of migrants. That said we still managed to tally a nice mix of raptor species, including a Red-shouldered Hawk perched in the woods, both Cooper's and Sharp-shinned, Osprey, a Kestrel, 2 Merlins, and 4 Peregrines, including close views of a large female kiting in the breeze at the edge of the harbor. We also watched a Merlin take a shot at a Cooper's Hawk and a Peregrine – quite a cheeky bird. We saw two Belted Kingfishers along Morris Creek and spied 5 Eastern Phoebe's, a couple of kinglets, but only a couple of warblers, an American Redstart, and a Black-throated Green Warbler in the woods. Highlights included a Red-breasted Nuthatch, and a flyover Common Loon. Although the winds were against us, we managed a total of 34 species during our walk around the park.

--Frank Gallo

### Hammonasset Beach State Park Trip Report

On October 10, a windy fall day, 11 members had a very productive day birding Hammonasset Beach State Park. A total of 38 species were seen, including Cooper's and Red Tailed Hawk, Merlin, and both Kinglets. Highlights included Bobolinks seen at the west end in the cattail patch. Nice to get good views of Bobolink but overshadowed by two fly-by Eastern Meadowlarks! A pleasant day of COVID-19 safe birding.

--Bill Batsford

### October 17 Birding Trip to Lake Watrous and Lake Dawson Report

After a stormy October 16th we were lucky to see the sun rise for our walk at these two lakes. This property, which abuts West Rock Ridge, is normally closed to the public. We started on Lake Dawson, entering below the dam. The trees were quite busy with Palm and Yellow-rump Warblers, House Finch, Purple Finch, Bluebird and some Cedar Waxwings. As we worked our way to the area above the dam we also had Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks working the up-currents by the ridge. The setting of this area with the lake, the ridge and open field is one of the prettiest places I know in greater New Haven. With several of the usual woodpeckers and residents we had 32 species.

The trail behind lake Watrous yielded many of the same birds. We added Kingfisher, a Green-winged Teal and one Mute Swan. The species count at Lake Watrous was 21. For many of us this was one of the few walks we have been able to participate in since the pandemic started. We all commented how much we miss the collegiality of bird watching. It is fun to bird alone, but it is more fun to share the experience with old

and new friends. Next year hopefully we can do it again with a big group.

--Pat Leahy

### Cheshire Hotspots, October 25 Trip Report

In a pre-coronavirus world, the Cheshire Hotspots field trip has been led by Melissa with her superior birding skills, and me with my story telling ability. This year, adhering to NHBC guidelines, we divided the birders into two groups of ten, with Melissa starting at Boulder Knoll and me at Broad Brook Reservoir. We traded locations halfway through the morning.

Broad Brook was a bit of a challenge, as several very large White Pine trees with clinging poison ivy vines had fallen across the leaf-covered access road to the reservoir's former boat launch. This would not do, so an hour before our start time I put my Stihl chain saw to use cutting passageways through the wind throw. My birders arrived at 8:00 to find their leader brushing wood chips off pant legs. The birding experience got underway with a nice view of a Pileated Woodpecker contemplating its own wood chipping activities.

Once we reached our observation points at the edge of the reservoir, we used binoculars and the occasional spotting scope to locate rafts of ducks – lots of ducks. We tallied the following waterfowl: Mute Swan 7, Mallard 12, Ring-necked Duck 300, Bufflehead 12, Hooded Merganser 2, Ruddy Duck 300. Broad Brook is a known hotspot for late fall rafts of Ruddies numbering 400 to 500. In addition, we recorded 6 Double-crested Cormorants, a Great Blue Heron, a full adult and very entertaining Bald Eagle, a male Belted Kingfisher, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and a Gray Catbird.

The story-telling dominated our time at Boulder Knoll, with Carol Lemmon and Glen Cummings providing much valued color commentary. We coasted through 27 species, emphasizing habitat preferences over bird finding. Boulder Knoll and the associated power line make a great spot for a variety of bird species, particularly sparrows. We most enjoyed seeing and hearing Swamp Sparrow, but we also tallied numbers of Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Cedar Waxwing, Palm Warbler, and Yellow-rumped Warbler. Nice day, nice group.

--Steve Broker



Our morning started out cold but clear and calm. Starting at the Boulder Knoll parking lot Eastern Bluebirds were the first birds I heard as I got out of my car. There were numerous robins taking off from their small roost south of the parking lot.

We had a Blue-headed Vireo perched on top of a small shrub who stayed long enough for most of us to get good looks at him. On our walk down to the trail we had Chipping and Field Sparrows, but sadly a beautiful Lincoln's Sparrow was discovered in the road, likely just hit by a car. Due to the overgrowth of mugwort on the north side of the property we decided to bird the south side trail. We had a decent variety of songbirds that gave us very good looks. Many Yellow-rumped Warblers, Palm Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, 1 Nashville Warbler, 1 Purple Finch and a couple of Pine Siskins, among other common songbirds. We did have a distant look at 18

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cormorants flying south. By the time we got to the reservoir, winds had picked up significantly. With the lack of spotting scopes we were only able to ID small numbers of American Coot, Mallard, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser and 70 Ruddy Duck. Our highlight was a very cooperative Black-throated Green Warbler who was gleaning insects off leaves of a low, close shrub for well over 5 minutes – we didn't need binos for that beauty. With everyone getting quite cold with the wind, we decided to end our morning with our wonderful looks at the warbler. It was a very enjoyable walk with a wonderful group of birders.

--Melissa Baston

### **Fargeorge Wildlife Refuge Trip Report**

17 people attended the Gather New Haven - New Haven Bird Club joint double fieldtrip on Saturday Oct 31, 2020 to the Gather New Haven's Fargeorge Wildlife refuge off of Quinnipiac Ave. The weather was chilly and clear. Temperature = 27°F to 44°F, beginning to end. The tide was half in to start. We had a light northwest wind. We got 50 Species. A great thank you goes to the good folks at Gather New Haven. The Social Distancing, the Mask Requirements and the 10 People Max all worked fine on both walks. We had 7 people on the 8:00 AM walk and 10 folks on the 10:30 walk. We all had a fine time.

--Mike Horn

### **First Wednesday Walk: Sherwood Island State Park, Westport Trip Report**

It was hard to believe that just four days ago we were freezing and bundled up in winter clothes and today we were in need of sunscreen and shedding our jackets due to it being too warm!

I was joined by 9 participants on today's walk which I added so no one had to be turned away. We tallied 63 species with nice diversity. Highlights included the large mixed flock of Pine Siskins and American Goldfinches feeding on the lawn and the continuing large number of Common Loons on Long Island

Sound, many very close to shore and very vocal!

Click on the link below to view our eBird checklist with the birds seen and heard today. Thank you to all that attended.

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S75905349>

--Tina Green

### **Lake Hammonasset, Killingworth and Madison Trip Report**

On Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>, we held a jointly sponsored bird walk at Lake Hammonasset with the Regional Water Authority recreation program. The lake is one of the RWA's reservoirs and straddles the town line between Madison and Killingworth. We started at the parking lot just off of Rt. 80 and walked north along the trail parallel to North Chestnut Hill Rd. Typical fall residents were seen, such as titmice, chickadees, and Downy Woodpeckers. We heard Golden-crowned Kinglets above us in the canopy, but they never got down low enough for a good look. We got to the exposed lake shore to see what was on the water. The lake was down many feet so there was little water but much exposed shoreline. Waterfowls seen included Mallards and Common Mergansers. There were scant few Canada Geese at the start of the walk, but more flew in before the end. While at the lakeshore, an unknown accipiter made a dive-bomb on a Greater Yellowlegs on the other side of the water which flushed it to within 100' of us for much better views. We continued up to Abner Lane Rd. seeing and hearing more birds like a robin flying over and bluebirds in the distance. We walked the old road through the lakebed to the old bridge abutments. The highlight of the day occurred while standing there when a Northern Harrier flew 270 degrees around us, hunting over the herbaceous plants in the exposed lakebed. We headed back to the parking lot and picked up a couple more species including Carolina Wren. In total, we had 24 species. It was notable that the temperature rose about 30 degrees during our walk – starting around a chilly 40 and ending at a very warm 70.

--John Triana

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**BE SURE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE**

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

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



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

**Newsletter December 2020**

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#### **Membership Levels (check appropriate category):**

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☐ 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:**

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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 notify us at our website under "Join, Update Information Online."

Alternatively, email the update to the Membership Chair ([membership@newhavenbirdclub.org](mailto:membership@newhavenbirdclub.org)), or send changes by mail to: New Haven Bird Club, PO Box 9004, New Haven CT 06532-0004.

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

The NHBC website, [www.newhavenbirdclub.org](http://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](mailto:ask.nhbc@gmail.com).

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

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