



THE CHICKADEE

Newsletter of the New Haven Bird Club

December 2022

2022 - 2023 CALENDAR

(See inside for details)

Postponed to December 14 Wednesday, December 7, 2022, 8–11 a.m. **First Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison**

Thursday December 8, 2022, 7 p.m. **Barbara Lamb – Donald Grant Mitchell and his “Gospel of Beauty”**

Saturday, December 17, 2022, all day **123rd Annual New Haven Christmas Bird Count**

Sunday, January 1, 2023, 9–11 a.m. **New Year’s Hike Lake Bethany**

Cancelled Wednesday, January 4, 2023, 8–11 a.m. **First Wednesday Walk: Sherwood Island State Park, Westport**

Thursday January 12, 2023, 7 p.m. **William Cassidy – Connecticut Wild Turkey Restoration**

Saturday, January 14, 2023, 8 a.m. to noon **Milford Hotspots in Winter**

Saturday, February 4, 2023, 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. **The Seventh Annual Mega Bowl of Birding in New Haven County**

Sunday, February 5, 2023, 5–7 p.m. **Mega Bowl Compilation Dinner**

Wednesday, February 8, 2023, 8–11 a.m. **“First” Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset State Park, Madison**

Thursday February 9, 2023, 7 p.m. **Judith Benka – Armenia: Rich Birdlife in an Ancient Landscape**
(NOTE: This is a virtual presentation)

Saturday, February 25, 2023, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. **Sachuest Point NWR and Rhode Island Coast Snow date – Sunday, February 26**

Sunday, February 26, 2023, 8–11 a.m. **White Memorial Foundation: Birding and Tracking**

We Need Your Help To Continue Our Website

NHBC needs a volunteer or volunteers to help maintain our website, www.newhavenbirdclub.org. You’ll work with webmaster Pat Leahy and our web consultant to enter content, maintain functionality, and update design as needed. If you have experience with website creation and maintenance, please email NHBC president DeWitt Allen at allendatlow@gmail.com.

Volunteers Needed For The Chickadee

NHBC is looking for volunteers to help our newsletter editor, Donna Batsford, publish six issues of *The Chickadee* a year. You’ll help with formatting the issue, editing stories, developing story ideas, and coordinating with our writers. If you’re interested, email NHBC president DeWitt Allen at allendatlow@gmail.com.

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE



I'm writing this in Montana, where Lori and I are visiting our grandchildren and their parents over Thanksgiving week. The weather has been sunny and good by Montana standards. There is crusted snow and ice that won't be melting anytime soon, but it hasn't gotten brutal yet – that's forecast for next week.

I've been checking eBird this morning. We'll be going to some local hotspots hoping to look for winter birds.

Of course it makes me think about what's coming up in Connecticut – the New Haven Christmas Bird Count being foremost.

Taking place this year on December 17th, the New Haven CBC always does well – somewhere around 120 species most years. It's a truly fun event with a long history going back to 1900.

Every year's count is different. Some years are warm and food is plentiful, and the birds may be scattered everywhere. In colder years, most of the ponds and wetlands may freeze, and waterfowl and wetland-loving songbirds may move down to the shore. Some years the wind blows, and in others snow may make footing slippery and the birding tricky. But it's always fun, even when weather makes it a challenge, to be out birding with a group of old, or new, friends.

This year's count is also going to be special in another way. For the first time since the onset of the COVID pandemic we'll be meeting together in person at the end of the day for the count compilation.

We'll gather at the Whitney Center in Hamden and warm up with the hearty soups and pasta that Pat and Cathy Leahy prepare and lay out for us.

There's nothing like sitting with your (often muddy and sometimes grimy, but happy) fellow counters to tell stories about the day's observations and tally the results.

If you haven't joined us before, email our count captain, Chris Loscalzo at clscalz@optonline.net and let him know you'd like to take part. He can suggest a team for you to join.

You won't need to spend the entire day in the field if you have other commitments or if all day is just too long – any amount of time you can give will add to the count. Alternatively, if you live within the count circle, you can submit a report by observing the feeders in your yard. Chris can let you know if your address is in the count circle.

(Continued on next page)

NEW HAVEN BIRD CLUB – 2022-2023

OFFICERS

<i>President</i>	DeWitt Allen	860-949-0995
	allendatlow@gmail.com	
<i>Vice President</i>	Christine Howe	203-389-1175
	clhowe2@yahoo.com	
<i>Treasurer</i>	Andy Stack	203-804-6081
	ctstacks@optonline.net	
<i>Secretary</i>	Mike Ferrari	203-435-5712
	mike.ferrari@mac.com	

BOARD MEMBERS

<i>Conservation Chair</i>	<i>vacant</i>	
<i>Education Chair</i>	Lori Datlow	475-227-2820
	loridatlow@frontier.com	
<i>Indoor Programs</i>	Gail Martino	617-504-7205
	gmm1227@yahoo.com	
<i>Member-at-Large</i>	Albert Laguna	201-401-2684
	albert.laguna@gmail.com	
<i>Member-at-Large</i>	Vanessa Mickan	203-275-5987
	vmickan@gmail.com	
<i>Membership Chair</i>	Laurie Reynolds	203-434-2134
	warmstove@hotmail.com	
<i>Newsletter Editor</i>	Donna Batsford	203-787-1642
	donnabatsford@gmail.com	
<i>Nominating Committee</i>	NHBC Executive Board	
<i>Outdoor Programs</i>	Craig Repasz	203-230-1697
	crepasz@hotmail.com	
<i>Publicity Chair</i>	Emmeline Kaiser	225-368-7273
	emkaiser03@gmail.com	
<i>Webmaster</i>	Patrick Leahy	203-393-2427
	ptjleahy@yahoo.com	
<i>Yearbook Editor</i>	Christine Howe	203-389-1175
	clhowe2@yahoo.com	

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

<i>The BIG SIT</i>	Craig Repasz	203-230-1697
	crepasz@hotmail.com	
<i>Birds in Words Book Group</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	203-551-1707
<i>Lighthouse Point</i>	scmayo999@gmail.com	
<i>Historian</i>	John Triana	203-758-7203
	j triana1@sbcglobal.net	
<i>Hospitality</i>	<i>vacant</i>	
<i>Summer Bird Count</i>	Steve Mayo	203-551-1707
	scmayo999@gmail.com	
<i>Winter Feeder Survey</i>	Peter Vitali	203-288-0621
	vitgoo39@gmail.com	

New Haven Bird Club Website:
www.newhavenbirdclub.org

(President's Message Continued from first page)

Members of the New Haven Bird Club have been taking part in the CBC since our origin in 1907 (with some of the NHBC founders birding in Edgewood Park as early as 1901, the CBC's second year). Taking part in the count adds to a massive data bank, available for researchers, on the distribution of birds in early winter all over the country.

Just as important, though – taking part in the count is just fun. Come on out December 17 and enjoy some time in the field with your fellow birders. I'll see you there.

--DeWitt Allen

Notes from the Board

The next board meeting will be at 7 p.m. on January 26 at 7.

Deadline for submissions to the next *Chickadee* is January 27. Send to Newsletter Editor, Donna Batsford, at donnabatsford@gmail.com.

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.

If you are not receiving email notifications, contact us at membership@Newhavenbirdclub.org to receive an invitation to join this group. Add nhbirdclub@gmail.com to your contact list to ensure emails arrive in your inbox.

Every effort is made to list member information accurately in the yearbook. Please inform us of errors and update us with any changes during the year. Update via the Club website or send an email to membership@Newhavenbirdclub.org.

Birds in Words Resumes

NHBC's book group, **Birds in Words**, is back in action, and in a new format for the present. The Birds in Words group has been sharing the joy of reading books on birds, birding, birders, nature, and naturalists since 2009. The group suspended its meetings at the start of the COVID pandemic; we are all looking forward to sharing our reading experiences again.

The book we will be reading is the classic, *The Peregrine* by J. A. Baker, originally published in 1967.

If you are interested in reading this book, let me know, kriswaxwing99@gmail.com.

Thanks,
--Kris Johnson

NOTE: Please check the NHBC website and newsletter periodically for updated information on all programs. **Scheduled events may need to be changed or canceled** and events may be added during the year. www.newhavenbirdclub.org

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 continue to 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. This year, we have resumed meeting at the Whitney Center's Cultural Arts Center, 200 Leeder Hill Drive, Hamden CT 06517. The facility is wheelchair accessible. **The social half-hour begins at 7 p.m.; the meeting and program begin at 7:30 p.m. and end about 9 p.m. Whenever the indoor meeting is also presented via Zoom, instructions for joining the meeting are sent to members via the NHBC email group.**

"Birds in Words" Book Group: Join us at "Birds in Words," NHBC's gathering of people who like reading books on their favorite hobby. See article about the current format.

Directions to the Whitney Center: We hold our monthly meetings in the Whitney Center's Cultural Arts Center, in the South Building, 200 Leeder Hill Drive, Hamden. Enter via the main door of the portico that is in the front of the building. Turn right down the hallway. The Cultural Arts Center is a short distance on the left.

From I-95 North or South: Exit to I-91 North in New Haven. Take Exit 6 (Willow Street). At end of ramp turn right onto Willow and proceed to Whitney Avenue. Turn right onto Whitney; go 1.7 mi. to Treadwell Street and make a SHARP left onto Treadwell. Proceed 0.7 mi. on Treadwell; turn left onto Leeder Hill Drive. The Whitney Center is shortly on the right. **PARKING:** Enter the SECOND driveway (Whitney Center's South Entrance). Either make an immediate left into the raised parking lot (park *only* in the upper level and *only* in unnumbered spaces) or follow the main driveway past the front entrance of the building. At the stop sign, make a right into the employee parking area and walk back from there to the front entrance.

From I-91 South: Take Exit 6 (Willow Street) in New Haven. 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 the end of ramp onto Dixwell Avenue (Route 10). Drive 0.9 miles to the traffic light at Treadwell Street and turn left. Go 0.3 miles to the traffic light at Leeder Hill Drive and turn right. The Whitney Center's South Entrance is second on the right, about 0.3 miles; see parking details above.

Inclement weather or other emergencies may cancel a meeting. Cancellation notices will be sent via the club email. Also check TV channels WTNH (New Haven) and WFSB (Hartford).

Thursday December 8, 2022 – Barbara Lamb Donald Grant Mitchell and his "Gospel of Beauty"

Donald Grant Mitchell was drawn to nature from a very early age. Growing up on a farm in Salem, Connecticut, nature was always close at hand. Educated in the classics, Mitchell had a studied knowledge of the philosophy of beauty, especially the beauty of nature, through his exposure to the great writers and philosophers from an earlier time. His farm, landscape, garden, and park designs reflect that knowledge and his commitment to it. Mitchell lived on his farm, Edgewood, in the village of Westville and was well known by the founders of the New Haven Bird Club. Barbara Lamb is the former Director of Cultural Affairs for the City of New Haven and Chair of the Donald Grant Mitchell Bicentennial Committee. She holds a Master's Degree in Urban & Regional Planning from the London School of Economics.

Thursday January 12, 2023 – William Cassidy Connecticut Wild Turkey Restoration

This presentation will provide the history and management of Wild Turkeys in our state. Topics include the rise and fall of turkey populations, life history, predators, management programs, and vocalizations. William Cassidy will demonstrate turkey-calling devices and show how feathers can be used to tell the age and sex of a bird. Come and discover the nuances of this truly remarkable wildlife species. William Cassidy is a Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Wildlife Biologist.

Thursday February 9, 2023 – Judith Benka Armenia: Rich Birdlife in an Ancient Landscape

(NOTE: This is a virtual presentation; the Zoom link will be sent to members via the NHBC email group)

Armenia is a landlocked country surrounded by Turkey, Iran, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. It has a total area of just under 12,000 square miles, mostly mountainous, and from time immemorial has been a migration route for birds between the European continent and places south of the Transcaucasus. Considering Armenia's small size, its birds are highly diverse. A total of 346 species, resident and migrant, have been observed within its borders. We spent 10 days in Armenia in the summer of 2018. We visited a variety of habitats including semi-desert, forest, lakeshore, and mountain meadow, and encountered 139 species of birds. Often we birded at sites of historical and cultural importance, such as a medieval fortress, a caravanserai on the silk road, and a prehistoric stone circle. Judith Benka is a member of the Minnesota Global Birders.

October 13 Indoor Program

For our second hybrid meeting, Bob MacDonnell presented A Photographer's History of Ospreys in Connecticut. It was well attended with 40 people attending in person and 36 logins on line.

--Gail Martino



Outdoor 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 continue to guide all decisions about our schedule. Please check the NHBC website and newsletter for updated information before planning to attend any event.

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, be sure to let the leader know. The Club welcomes everyone regardless of age, race or ethnicity, sex, gender identification, sexual orientation, or national origin. The ending times of walks are approximate.

More details and/or updates on these trips will be given at the indoor meetings and in the newsletter. You should also check the Club's website, www.newhavenbirdclub.org, for updated trip information, and watch for emails sent by the Club. *Contact trip leaders directly if you have questions about 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 usually is encouraged to avoid parking problems at some destinations and to promote conservation of natural resources, but check current coronavirus recommendations.

NHBC Conservation and Education Activities

The New Haven Bird Club routinely works to preserve and restore bird populations and their habitats and to provide opportunities for learning about birds, where to see them, and how to help ensure their future. Additional environmentally-focused, family-friendly walks may be planned and posted on the NHBC website.

The NHBC has been developing relationships with local public schools and camps to encourage children to embrace birding. We view this activity as directly connected to our Club objectives and usually present a very basic birding skills class followed by a nearby bird walk. The Education Chair also organizes the Club's representation at various public events throughout the year. Volunteers to help at events are always welcome! Please contact Lori Datlow, Education Chair, at lorigatlow@frontier.com.

Postponed to December 14

First Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison
Wednesday, December 7, 2022, 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 area on Boston Post Road, Madison, just east of the park's main entrance road.

Leader: Jerry Connolly, 203-710-2011,
birdshop@sbcglobal.net

123rd Annual New Haven Christmas Bird Count
Saturday, December 17, 2022, all day

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

Leader: Chris Loscalzo, Compiler, 203-389-6508 home or
loscalz@optonline.net

New Year's Hike Lake Bethany
Sunday, January 1, 2023, 9–11 a.m.

Get your new year off on the right foot by joining us on a hike at the Lake Bethany recreation area. Depending on conditions,

we will either do a lap around the lake or take the trail south of the parking lot. Some slopes, but mostly gentle grades. Wear appropriate footwear. Meet at the Lake Bethany recreation parking lot at 200 Hatfield Hill Rd.

Leader: John Triana, 203-758-7203 or jtriana1@rwater.com

***Cancelled* First Wednesday Walk: Sherwood Island State Park, Westport**
Wednesday, January 4, 2023, 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

Milford Hotspots in Winter
Saturday, January 14, 2023, 8 a.m. to noon

We'll look for waterbirds and fowl including Long-tailed Ducks, scoters, and loons, as well as shorebirds, gulls, and raptors as we visit Milford hotspots that will likely include Milford Point, Mondo Ponds, and Caswell Cove. Dress warmly and plan to carpool. The trip ends by noon. Inclement weather will probably cancel the trip. Check with the leader if you have weather concerns. Meet at the commuter lot, Exit 35 off I-95.

Leader: Frank Mantlik, 203-984-9410 or
mantlik@sbcglobal.net

**The Seventh Annual Mega Bowl of Birding
in New Haven County****Saturday, February 4, 2023, 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.
and****Mega Bowl Compilation Dinner****Sunday, February 5, 2023, 5–7 p.m. (Location to be
determined)**

Come join in on a fun and friendly event! Go birding for all or part of the day to see how many species you can observe. Earn points for each species found. The rarer the species, the more points that are earned. Compete against yourself or other birders and win prizes for participating. Birders of all ages and skill levels are welcome to participate. Teams can bird within a circle with a five-mile radius that includes their residence, or in an entire county. As has been the case the past two years, Mega Bowl participants may bird in any county in CT. We will meet the following day for a celebratory dinner to go over the results, share stories and enjoy a fine meal together. The location for the dinner is to be determined. Registration for the event will be required. Checklists will be sent out in advance to all registrants. Participants are encouraged to be creative in coming up with a name for their team.

Leader: Chris Loscalzo, 203-389-6508 home or
closcalz@optonline.net

**“First” Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset State Park,
Madison****Wednesday, February 8, 2023, 8–11 a.m.**

Enjoy a mid-week field trip (on the Second Wednesday!) 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 area on Boston Post Road, Madison, just east of the park’s main entrance road.

Leader: Greg Hanisek, ctgregh@yahoo.com

Sachuest Point NWR and Rhode Island Coast**Saturday, February 25, 2023, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.****Snow date – Sunday, February 26**

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, or contact the trip leader for time and location of the first stop in Rhode Island.

Leader: Chris Loscalzo, 203-389-6508 home, or
closcalz@optonline.net

White Memorial Foundation: Birding and Tracking**Sunday, February 26, 2023, 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. 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 could observe a variety of sparrows, woodpeckers, possibly winter finches, owls and more. We will be joined by experienced trackers Christin Armini and Gail Cameron. Mammals that reside at White Memorial such as otters, beavers, bobcats, foxes, deer, coyotes, and mink are active in the winter and leave clues about their travels and ways of surviving this most difficult time of the year. Meet in the public parking lot at White Memorial at 80 Whitehall Road in Litchfield.

Leader: Craig Repasz, 203-745-6683 or crepasz@hotmail.com

Trip Reports

Hammonasset Beach State Park Trip Report

On Saturday, October 8, the day began with Bobbie Fisher finding a Merlin perched out in the open on a bare branch in the parking lot and ended with finally finding the Clay-colored Sparrow on the third attempt. Twenty plus birders participated in the bird walk. We had a good variety of bird species:

Pectoral Sandpiper, American Pipits, Bald Eagles, American Kestrel, Eastern Wood-peewee, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Blue-headed Vireo, both Kinglets, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Field Sparrow and Winter Wren. Several of us continued on to Cedar Island and added American Golden Plover, Dunlin, Semipalmated Plover, Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. In all we had 57 species and still enjoyed over 5,000 Tree Swallows flying in swarms, over 20 Eastern Phoebe, and of course a modest estimate of 40 Yellow-rumped Warblers.

--Maria Stockmal

Fall Birds and Foliage along the West River Trip Report

On the Lake Bethany and Lake Dawson walk Saturday, October 15, we had about as pretty a fall day as you can imagine. The leaves were about a week short of peak color. We had 30 species of birds plus a couple of birds far enough away we could not make a positive ID. We had an influx of Ruby-crowned Kinglets (15) and Golden-crowned Kinglets (5). We had 15 Wood ducks on route north from Konolds Pond. Warblers included Black-and-white Warbler (1), Palm Warblers (5) and Yellow-rumped Warblers (5). Late departing birds included a Tree Swallow, a Red-eyed Vireo, and a Rufous-sided Towhee. The local birds completed our list including woodpeckers, chickadees, titmouse, catbird, mockingbirds, robins, mallard ducks, Ring-billed Ducks and Canada Geese.



Photo by Laurie Reynolds

The maximum species was eclipsed by the 23 participants in the walk. We had old timers and young folk all enjoying and helping each other. I can’t think of a better way to spend a fall Saturday.

--Pat Leahy

Fargeorge Wildlife Preserve Trip Report

On Saturday October 29, The New Haven Bird Club (NHBC) and Gather New Haven (Land Trust) (GNH) ran a joint fieldtrip to Fargeorge Wildlife Preserve. There were 28 people in attendance. They were broken into two groups – Mike Horn led one group and Dewitt Allen led the other.

The weather was fine but chilly, with the starting temp around freezing. There wasn't a cloud in the sky and there was a light breeze.

We started in the Meadow trail, and Dewitt's group started on the River trail. Even though there were lots of people, the birding was still great. The two groups saw a total of 38 individual species. The highlights included lots of Yellow-rumped Warblers, Chickadees, Swamp and Song Sparrow. As the day warmed up, the birds became more and more active.

I would like to thank GNH and Brent Peterkin for hosting the NHBC.

--Mike Horn

Farm River Trolley Trail with Friends of Farm River Sunday, October 30, 8–11 a.m.

On Sunday, October 30, Mike Horn led a trip to the Farm River Trolley Trail. It was a Joint Trip with the Friends of Farm River Estuary (FFRE) and the New Haven Bird Club. We had



Photo by Laurie Reynolds

14 people on the trip and lots of birds (Roughly 40 species). For some of the attendees this was a brand new location for them. The weather was fine and the trees were at their most colorful and fun was had by all.

--Mike Horn

Branford Supply Ponds Trip Report

On Sunday, October 30, seven of us, in unusually cold temperatures reminiscent of Christmas Counts past, searched Branford Supply Ponds for species. The ponds were very active early this morning. A Pied-billed Grebe, Wood Ducks, American Black Ducks, Mute Swans, 40 Mallards as expected, and a seldom seen in the ponds Bufflehead. Also seen were a Great Blue Heron, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, two singing Winter Wrens (heard), Hermit Thrush, Purple Finches, Yellow-rumped Warblers and Chipping Sparrows. We had a total of 36 species.

--Maria Stockmal

Welcome New Members

Linda Goodman
New Haven

Sherry Gould
Clinton

Lisa Glidden
New Haven

Philip Lister
Clinton

Kelly Meineke
Ansonia

The New Haven Bird Club Is Happy To Announce The Impromptu Bird Walk Program.

Members now can submit an announcement that will be sent to the NHBC membership for an impromptu bird walk. These are "last-minute" walks with no formal trip leaders. This is a way to find new friends and fellow birders to go on a walk. The program may be revised as we gain experience.

Simply send a request to BirdWalks@NewHavenBirdClub.org that lists the date, time, location, and any important details. The details could be about the level of difficulty or that you are chasing a rarity. Include a good description of the meeting location. Consider using Google Maps to drop a pin and include the pin's URL link in the email announcement.

A few rules and guidelines:

After review, an announcement will be sent to the membership through our club email system only.

If you propose the walk, you should make EVERY attempt to show up for the walk yourself.

Trips must be on property open to the public such as: state and municipal parks, state forests, USFW Wildlife Refuges, and land trust properties. Members proposing the announcement may also host a trip on their own property. If a location requires access fees, the NHBC members will need to pay their own fees and acquire their own permission (e.g., a pass for Regional Water Authority Properties).

The property must be large enough to accommodate a group of unknown size and their parking.

The impromptu trip will not be posted on our NHBC website, Facebook page, or newsletter, nor on the COA Calendar. Please do not forward the email announcements but feel free to invite your friends.

The request to send out an announcement for an impromptu walk should be made approximately 3 to 7 days in advance of the walk. This timeline will enable you to have a better idea of the weather forecast but give the NHBC time to prepare and send out the club email.

Only one email per trip. We do not want to create a flurry of emails to discuss carpooling or start time or place to meet. Otherwise, there will be an undue burden on our Publicity Chair and the NHBC members will have a flurry of emails. Let's keep it very simple.

We will follow proper birding etiquette and obey any posted signage.

These trips will not have a formal leader. There is no need to announce weather cancellations and no need to establish an itinerary. Just go birding. Take photos. Have fun!

--Craig Repasz

New Haven Bird Club Outdoor Chair

BE SURE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.newhavenbirdclub.org

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

NHBC Winter Feeder Survey 2022-2023 – End of Week 2



This year we started with 20 surveyors, 5 via Postal Mail and 15 via email. Since then, we have added 2 new surveyors. We are located all over New Haven County with one surveyor in Fairfield County and two in

Middlesex County. We have finished the first 2 weeks of the survey with 10 of 22 surveyors reporting.

10 Email surveyors have reported (the others send their reports in after the 6th week). We saw 22 of 22 of the Common Species, 8 of 12 Semi-Common, 2 of 42 Uncommon, and 1 Waterfowl. Of the 22 Common winter species, the maximum number seen in any one week is 18 (week 1) for Dark-eyed Juncos and 7 (week 1) for White-throated Sparrows. We also saw an Immature Red-headed Woodpecker in week 2.

Other species of note seen: Semi Common Category: Eastern Blue Bird, Fox Sparrow, Northern Flicker, Purple Finch, Red-winged Blackbird, Rock Dove, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Uncommon Category: Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-rumped Warbler. Waterfowl Category: Wood Duck.

There is still time to join. The survey runs from Monday, October 31st, 2022, thru Sunday, April 2nd, 2023. 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.

There will be 2 Sessions this year due the increasing presence of Black Bears and their taking down of feeders. The First Session started on Monday, October 31, 2022, and will finish off Sunday, April 2, 2023. This is for those who have not had any reports of bears in their area and is 22 Weeks long. The Second Session will start on Monday, December 5, 2021, and end on Sunday, March 5, 2023. This is for those who fear bears

attacking their feeders. During this period the bears should be in hibernation and no threat to the feeders. It will be 13 weeks long.

We have 3 types of Surveyors:

1. Postal Surveyors: Those who use Postal Mail to send and receive. I send you the forms via Postal Mail and you send them back via Postal Mail. No email capability.
2. Email surveyors: Those who use email to send and receive.
3. Email/Postal surveyors: Those of you who can receive email but cannot download the forms and print them or cannot use email to send the data back to me. I send the forms to you via Postal Mail and you send them back via Postal Mail. All other communication is via email.

How the recording works: In each cell, only record the highest number of individual birds seen of that species in that week. For example: for the daily count if you see 5 Juncos at 8:00 AM, 10 at noon, and 6 at 3:00 PM, count 10 Juncos as your count for the day. For the Weekly count, if the daily counts are 10, 2, and 15, for the same species, then the count for the Week is 15 and not 27. In cases where individual birds can be differentiated, record the total counted for both sexes for the week. For example, if you have a female Cardinal on one day of the week and a male on another, then record 2 for the week, since you know that 2 different individuals were seen.

Any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me via email. My home phone number is in the NHBC 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: vitgoo39@gmail.com.

--Pete Vitali

Survey Coordinator

Chairman NHBC Winter Feeder Survey

Candlelight Vigil for Migratory Birds at Yale

A Candlelight Vigil for Migratory Birds was held at Yale University's Edward P. Evans Hall on November 15, at 5pm. Co-organized by Yale Divinity School students Kelli Hata (MAR '25) and Meredith Barges (MDiv '23), the event was well attended, with over 30 people gathered to commemorate and honor the birds whose lives were cut short at Yale. The vigil featured a roll call of the 55 bird species affected by window collisions on Yale's campus, commemorative bird song, poetry by Noah Humphrey (MDiv '23), and live music by Henri Santelman (MDiv '25).

"I was touched to see so many gather in solidarity with the birds," remarked Hata.

This year during peak fall bird migration (Aug 15-Nov 15), over 500 birds representing at least 60 species were found dead, stunned, or injured on Yale's campus due to window strikes, according to publicly available data from carcass surveys conducted by the Yale Bird Friendly Building Initiative and community science observations. This number, which is

most probably a dramatic undercount, includes at least 55 birds found at Evans Hall.

Organizers selected Evans Hall as the vigil site because of the



Photo by Craig Repasz

building's unfortunate role in causing window collisions but also the important steps that Yale School of Management administrators have taken recently to help prevent collisions. Feather Friendly film was installed on a portion of the back of the building in October.

To learn more about how to make your home or business bird-friendly, see Audubon's "[Simple Solutions to Prevent Collisions](#)."

--Meredith Barges

Lighthouse Park Hawk Watch Update

We've had another excellent year, with plenty of avian (and human) visitors. September brought NW winds and good cloud cover. Broad-winged Hawks came to Connecticut early and often, and Lighthouse had its share for the second year in a row. Most came later for us. Our big push on 9/23 and 9/24 made up most of September's 3,657 Broadies. There was also a good uptick in Accipiter numbers. September totals for Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks were 1,033 and 512, respectively. Typical (and atypical) September migrants included Blue-winged Teal, Common Nighthawks, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Solitary Sandpipers, Pileated Woodpecker, Cliff Swallow, Mourning Warbler and Dickcissels.

October weather was a real mix of favorable (northerly) and southerly winds. The traditional peak at mid-month never really happened. But earlier, and especially later in the month, we had some really good totals. The rarities also started to show. On 10/27 the crowd was entertained with both a Swainson's Hawk and a Northern Goshawk. A second Goshawk showed up two days later. The Accipiter numbers recovery continued in October, but 2022 will be remembered for that buteo flight on 10/28. The 78 Red-shouldered Hawks that day supported a new October record for this species. It was a real challenge trying to count the 'Shoulders as they moved timidly back to the NE. In the afternoon, at least the Red-tailed Hawks started to behave and stream past us, E to W. An amazing 171 'Tails were ticked that day. Nighthawks, Dickcissels and hummingbirds continued to be spotted from the watch site. We even got to watch an American Woodcock get chased around the Park by a Cooper's Hawk! Other fun sightings included Black-headed Gull,



Cooper's Hawk
Photo by Abby Sesselberg



American Bittern
Photo by Abby Sesselberg

American Bittern, late Green Heron and Eastern Kingbirds, Evening Grosbeak, Vesper Sparrow, Rusty Blackbird and at least 16 species of migrant warblers.

November had several quick frontal passage events with favorable northerly winds. Most were of short duration and weren't preceded by "blocking weather."

A pile of Turkey Vultures (166) helped bring the 11/8 hawk total to 381. For the most part hawk numbers and coverage hours were down. We ended up with 756 diurnal raptors for the month, the lowest November total since 2015 (615). There were many other highlights throughout the month, including 3 juvenile Golden Eagles. Migrant rarities included Bonaparte's Gull, another really late Eastern Kingbird, Cave and other Swallows, Pine Siskins, Rusty Blackbirds, and Orange-crowned Warbler. And on those early November mornings, the tens of thousands of blackbirds, Robins, Bluebirds, Cedar Waxwings and finches never ceased to amaze us.

It's now early December, but we'll still head down on a

favorable (bitter cold) day or two to see if we can catch a Red-tailed Hawk flight. Our season total is currently at 11,520, bolstered by Turkey Vultures (525), Broad-winged Hawks (3,721), Sharp-shinned Hawks (2,164) and Cooper's Hawks (840). Many of the other species were down compared to recent years, but not remarkably so. For further information check out hawkcount.org. Its drop-down menus make monthly and seasonal comparisons simple. From the site, you can also check out the revised Raptor Population Index, with its trend graphs and well-researched hypotheses regarding the population fluctuations of our migrant raptors. And finally, thanks to all the volunteers, observers and visitors who made this season so memorable.

--Steve Mayo

Old Woodbridge Country Club Golf Course Could Provide Links to Nature

On an autumnal Saturday in mid-October birders of all levels flocked to the old Woodbridge Country Club to frustrate themselves with the "little brown jobs." These "jobs" are sparrows and finches that pose special identification challenges to birders. They pop up out of the high weeds and shrubs to only disappear back in the brush never to be seen again, all before binoculars could be raised and focused. Ranging from tan to beige to brown, these problem birds are identified by subtleties: bill color, streaks or no streaks, crown stripes or faint eye rings. The field trip was part of the Connecticut Ornithological Association's (COA) Sparrow Workshop, led by Woodbridge resident, expert birder and New Haven Bird Club past president, Chris Loscalzo.

Chris has been visiting that property frequently over the past several years and has watched it become better and better for birds and other wildlife. He has led a sparrow workshop there the past two years in the fall. He also has visited the property for the Christmas Bird Count and for the CT Bird Atlas. The Woodbridge Country Club is listed as an eBird Hotspot [Old Woodbridge Country Club site-2018 CT Bird Atlas Block 95C, New Haven County, CT, US - eBird Hotspot](https://www.ebird.org/hotspot/old-woodbridge-country-club-site-2018-ct-bird-atlas-block-95c-new-haven-county-ct-us-ebird-hotspot). 64 bird species have been recorded at this Hotspot including the American Kestrel. The American Kestrel has been helped in the State of Connecticut by a large nesting box installment initiative. Such a nest box initiative at the Woodbridge Country Club could be met with similar success.

The group of 12 Sparrow Workshop participants included mostly New Haven Bird Club (NHBC) members, and moved slowly along old, paved golf cart paths. Grasses and weeds have broken through the pavement. The birders searched through the native and invasive brush and weeds growing over fairways and putting greens. The 150-acre golf course has not been mowed since 2015. The birders may not have been aware that this property has largely stayed intact since the days of New Haven Colony. The property, once called Clover Hill Farm, was owned by Roger Sherman, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution. The birders could easily overlook the historic significance of the site as they encountered a Great Horned Owl, both kinglets and a Nashville Warbler and 35 other bird species.

I visited the site a few weeks after the Sparrow Workshop. The Wilber Cross Parkway hissed and hummed behind me as I

entered from the south side of the property, passing the grand, wide staircase that leads to the clubhouse with its windows boarded or broken. To my right were overgrown tennis courts and netting that hung from tight cables on high poles. I was walking past a Yankee Tara, the ill-fated plantation from *Gone with the Wind*. Having escaped the parkway noise I soon was standing on a height of land, in the distance where wailing sirens and a brush chipper broke the serenity for me and two other visitors that morning.



Besides birding, the old golf course is a popular spot for walks and cycling. The hills on the golf course provide the best winter sledding in the area. But the property provides much more than just a recreational outlet for the

locals and regional. As I walked the land I saw large stands of dead milkweed, asters and goldenrod among the oaks and white pine, a perfect blend of plants for pollinators. The Woodbridge Land Trust is advocating to develop the property to be part of the Pollinator Pathway.

The habitat on this abandoned golf course is called successional shrubland. Much of Connecticut was once this habitat type, and we have been losing it at an alarming rate. The loss is mainly due to development. 80% of the total species that rely on shrubland habitat are experiencing a regional or national decline. New England populations of eastern towhee and brown thrasher have declined by over 90% since the 1960s according to the Connecticut DEEP. The shrubby unkempt property could also serve as a sanctuary for the endangered New England Cottontail Rabbit according to Cathy Wick of the Woodbridge Land Trust, adding more to its conservation value.

Within ten years this messy, overgrown golf course will disappear as it is either developed for housing or is overgrown into a young forest. As it disappears it takes the endangered species with it. The shrubland birds that are already threatened with declining populations will disappear along with the recreation opportunities for the public.

The country club was first developed from an old farm into a nonprofit golf course in 1931. It closed during World War II and reopened in 1948. In later years, it struggled financially due to competition of other golf courses in the area and the declining popularity of golf. In 2009 the Woodbridge First Selectman Ed Sheehy proposed as part of his reelection bid that the town purchase the property as open space, stating: "The Board of Selectmen carefully analyzed the proposed purchase and recognized the importance of maintaining the property as open space." "If the purchase is approved the town will acquire 150 acres of beautiful open space to be enjoyed by residents for generations. It would be irresponsible for the Board to allow the property to fall into the hands of developers."

Sheehy was reelected by a large margin. By August the Town of Woodbridge owned the old 150 acre Country Club Property. By 2020 there had been three proposals presented to the town to develop the property; each was shot down by the public. The

Town of Woodbridge has since been approached with another proposal.

The Woodbridge Town News reported Dec 16, 2021, that The Arbor Haven proposal would build approximately 145 homes of different sizes on the bulk of the Country Club of Woodbridge property, along with bike paths and a number of public recreational amenities, such as pool and playground. About 20% of the units would be income restricted. The developer offered to purchase the property from the town for \$9 million and deed back 50 acres primarily between Woodfield Road and the Route 15 highway.

The Woodbridge Land Trust and the Park Association, represented by Chris Dickerson and Bryan Pines, offered to pay \$250,000 in return for a conservation easement on 140 acres of the property, carving out the clubhouse and surrounding acreage for possible commercial use. The offer was refused by the town.

According to Cathy Wick the Arbor Haven proposal has since been withdrawn. Lawsuits have been filed against the town over its zoning regulations and lack of fair housing. The fate of the old Woodbridge Country Club is intertwined with the lawsuit. Also tied in with the question of what to do with the Country Club property are issues such as a stagnant Grand List, the need for housing opportunities, the preservation of open space, and recreational opportunities.

The Town of Woodbridge was to hire a consultant to make a proposal determining the best use of the property and ways to decrease the town's debt obligation. Opponents claim that the land was originally acquired to be open space for the community. Cathy Wick states that the property would serve as important open space needed for conservation, not just for the town of Woodbridge, but for the greater New Haven Area that could give nature recreation and education beyond town borders. The Woodbridge Country Club could be a regional resource.

The situation with the old golf course is unique. The Town of Woodbridge already owns it. Most struggles to protect land involve land purchases from landowners who would sell to developers. Federal and state funding only covers property acquisition, not fees and expenses incurred by organizations trying to keep the land as open space. The Town only needs to decide the future of the property. Maintaining the property as shrubland habitat will also pose additional challenges of funding and land use debates.

I finished my walk through the old golf course by going past the ponds hoping for early winter ducks. There were bluebirds and yellow-rumps along the way. At the pond there were only a few Mallards. Then a little brown job popped out into view and didn't disappear immediately. It was a Field Sparrow. One would think that they had migrated by now. I had not heard this species' ping-pong ball song since late spring. This species is in decline due to the loss of successional meadow habitat they need to breed. Will the Woodbridge Country Club be a link to the preservation of this species?

(I wish to thank Cathy Wick, Chris Loscalzo,, and DeWitt Allen for their contributions to this article.)

--Craig Repasz



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

December 2022

NHBC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

_____ New Member _____ Renewal

Membership Levels (check appropriate category):

- ☐ Individual - \$15
☐ Family - \$20
☐ Supporting - \$50
☐ Student under 18 - Free
☐ Life Membership - \$300 for 1 or 2 people at same address.

Additional gift to support NHBC programs: \$ _____

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

You can also join or renew membership at the NHBC website with credit card or PayPal.

The NHBC membership year is from July 1 to June 30. New members joining between January 1 and June 30 are given full membership for the rest of the current year and for the whole next membership year.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

New Haven Bird Club is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. All dues and donations are fully tax deductible. If you work for a company that gives matching grants, please take advantage of the offer. It's free and helps NHBC's program budget.

The Club welcomes everyone irrespective of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin.

If your address, phone or email change, please send that information to: New Haven Bird Club, PO Box 9004, New Haven CT 06532-0004 or membership@newhavenbirdclub.org.

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@newhavenbirdclub.org.

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.

The NHBC is also on Instagram as [newhavenbirdclub](https://www.instagram.com/newhavenbirdclub).

CTBirds is an open discussion email list provided by the Connecticut Ornithological Association (COA) to discuss birds and birding in the state, www.ctbirding.org.