

# THE CHICKADEE

Newsletter of the New Haven Bird Club

# February 2020

#### **2020 CALENDAR** (See inside for details)

Saturday, February 1, 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.; dinner from 5:30–7 p.m. The Fourth Annual Mega Bowl of Birding in New Haven County

Wednesday, February 5, 8–11 a.m. First Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset State Park, Madison

Thursday, February 13, 7 p.m. Mystic Aquarium's Penguin Team – African Penguins

Saturday, February 22, 7 a.m. (Snow date is Sunday, Feb. 23) Sachuest Point NWR and Rhode Island Coast

Sunday, March 1, 8–11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Sparrows and Speculaas, White Memorial Foundation followed by Tour of Livingston Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy (rsvp to Craig Repasz)

Tuesday, March 3, 7 p.m. **Birds in Words** – *This Fine Piece of Water: an Environmental History Of Long Island Sound* by Tom Anderson

Wednesday, March 4, 8–11 a.m. First Wednesday Walk: Stratford Shore & Great Meadows

Thursday, March 12, 7 p.m. Indoor Program TBA

Saturday, March 14, 7:30 a.m. Edgewood Park, New Haven

Wednesday, April 1, 8 a.m. First Wednesday Walk: CT Audubon Coastal Center, Milford

Thursday, April 9, 7 p.m. Matthew Bell – Magee Marsh and The Biggest Week in American Birding

Saturday, April 11, 8 a.m. to noon East Rock Birding and Trail Maintenance

Saturday, April 18, 8:30 a.m. The Richard English Memorial Field Trip: Lighthouse Point to the Richard English Refuge

Saturday, April 25, 8 a.m. to noon West Rock Ridge State Park: New Haven, Hamden, and Woodbridge

Sunday, April 26, 8 a.m. Birding by Ear at Bent of the River

#### **BE SURE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE**

www.newhavenbirdclub.org

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

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



I, for one, have only just adjusted to the season's cold-weather birding. Though it took me a while, now I have heat packets in my water-resistant gloves, base layers underneath wool shirts and sweaters, a down coat, a thick watch cap, and I'm ready to go.

And appropriately, our Club has some great winter birding events lined up. The Fourth Annual Mega Bowl of

Birding takes place February 1<sup>st</sup>. The all-day event is a teambased scramble to identify the largest number of bird species in New Haven County, and ends with home-cooked food and a comparison of species lists at the Kellog Environmental Center in Derby. If you haven't joined in that yet, you should give it a try. The organizer and master birder, Chris Loscalzo, is registering teams and will place individuals with an existing team. You can reach him at <u>closcalz@optonline.net</u>. Big thanks to Chris and Marianne Vahey for providing the wonderful meal.

Our scheduled February and early March field trips are some of the highlights of the year: Hammonasset Beach State Park February 5<sup>th</sup>, the Rhode Island shore on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, and White Memorial Foundation on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Hammonasset is a great experience all year round, with a wide variety of habitats and species to be found in them, often including some rare visitors.

The trip to the Rhode Island Shore is an all-day event and always turns up great birds, including a number of sea ducks that we don't find in Long Island Sound. Last year our group pulled into the parking lot at Sachuest Point National Wildlife Reserve and saw clusters of people all looking in the same direction. A Snowy Owl was sitting on the peak of the Visitor Center's roof, calmly looking around and taking it all in. We may not get Snowy Owl again this year, but without fail there will be some spectacular birds.

White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield is always fun. There will be ducks on Bantam Lake, sparrows in the brush, woodpeckers in the woods, and plenty of other winter residents to identify. This trip ends with baked goods and cheeses at the nearby Dutch Epicure, perfect for a winter day. And this year, there will be an additional option. After lunch, the Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy will give a tour of their facility to those wishing to continue. Ripley's mission is to conserve and breed rare waterfowl from around the world, and it's a thrilling experience to see these beautiful birds up close.

#### NEW HAVEN BIRD CLUB – 2019-2020

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#### New Haven Bird Club Website: www.newhavenbirdclub.org

(President's Message Continued from first page)

And not to be overlooked, our indoor meeting on February 13<sup>th</sup> will feature members of Mystic Aquarium's Penguin and Education teams. Using live digital technology, they will give us a tour of the aquarium's penguin exhibit, offering us a coldwater experience without the discomfort. This type of presentation and the penguins on view at the Aquarium will be a first for the Club.

So, there's no need to hunker down at home during these colder months of the year. Join us for some or all of these events. Details on each are found elsewhere in the newsletter, in the Club Yearbook, and in the calendar section of our website. The Club has a lot going on. Hope to see you there.

--DeWitt Allen

### Welcome New Members

Sharon Bernd North Branford

Ann Bilotti Ansonia

Ken, Steffanie and Ayla Elkins Shelton

Claudia Marks Madison

> Stephanie and Richard Kollet Hamden

> > Linda Olsen Stratford

Mary and Nicki Frazeur Wethersfield

Jerome and Lisa Speltz Guilford

# **Birds in Words**

Join us at "Birds in Words," NHBC's gathering of people who like reading books on their favorite hobby. Since the group began in 2009, we've read more than 45 books on just about every aspect of birds, birding, birders, nature, and naturalists, and had some lively meetings. Share the fun! We meet about once every six weeks or so (on a Tuesday night) at Whitney Center from 7–9 PM. For details, contact Kris Johnson: kriswaxwing99@gmail.com or 203-288-3087.

The next book we will discuss is *This Fine Piece of Water: An Environmental History of Long Island Sound* by Tom Andersen. We will meet at 7:00 on Tuesday, March 3rd in the 6th floor conference room at Whitney Center.

# Notes from the Board

Our board meetings are open to all members, and we welcome anyone who would like to attend. The next board meeting will be Thursday, February 27 at 6:45 p.m. in the sixth floor Conference Room at Whitney Center.

Deadline for submissions to the April *Chickadee* is March 27. Send to Newsletter Editor, <u>donnabatsford@gmail.com</u>.

# **Indoor Programs**

Indoor programs start in September and are held on the second Thursday of the month. There are no indoor programs in June, July, or August. The social half-hour at meetings begins at 7:00 pm; the meeting and program begin at 7:30 pm. Meetings are held at Whitney Center's Cultural Arts Center, 200 Leeder Hill Drive, Hamden 06517. The facility is wheelchair accessible. Meeting is in Whitney Center's South Building, accessed via the main door of the portico that is in view from the parking lot. Turn right down the hallway. Cultural Arts Center is a short distance on the left.

#### **Directions to Whitney Center:**

<u>From I-95 North or South</u>: Exit to I-91 North in New Haven. Take Exit 6 (Willow Street). At end of ramp go right onto Willow and proceed on Willow to its end at Whitney Avenue. Turn right onto Whitney; go 1.7 mi. to Treadwell Street and make SHARP left onto Treadwell. Proceed 0.7 mi. on Treadwell; turn left onto Leeder Hill Drive (traffic light). Whitney Center is shortly on the right. Enter SECOND driveway (South Entrance) and take immediate left into raised parking lot (park in upper level *only* in any unmarked space), or follow main driveway past front entrances of the building. At stop sign, make a right into employee parking area. Walk from there to the front entrance.

From I-91 South: Take Exit 6 (Willow Street) in New Haven. At the end of the ramp, turn right onto Willow and proceed as above.

<u>From Wilbur Cross (Rt. 15-North or South)</u> Take Exit 60. Turn right at end of ramp (Dixwell Ave./Rte.10). Go about 1 mile to traffic light at Treadwell Street and turn left. Go 0.3 mi. to traffic light (Leeder Hill Drive) and turn right. WC is shortly on the right. Enter SECOND driveway (South Entrance) and take immediate left into raised parking lot (park in upper level *only* in any unmarked space), or follow main driveway past front entrances of the building. At stop sign, make a right into employee parking area. Walk from there to the front entrance.

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

**Remember to check the Club's website for updated information on all programs:** <u>www.newhavenbirdclub.org</u>. Inclement weather or other emergency may cancel a meeting. Cancellation notices will be sent via the club email and will be posted on the club website, www.newhavenbirdclub.org, and online on CTBirds. Also check TV channels WTNH (New Haven) and WFSB (Hartford).

# Thursday, February 13 – Mystic Aquarium's Penguin Team

#### **African Penguins**

This program by an African penguin care team highlights the work that is done both at Mystic Aquarium as well as with their partner institution in South Africa to protect endangered African penguin species. Utilizing the Zoom virtual platform, they will take the group on a virtual tour of the Aquarium's penguin exhibit. Led by members of the Penguin and Education teams, participants in this program will have an opportunity to talk with a penguin trainer and meet a penguin up close and personal.

Thursday, March 12 - TBA

#### Thursday, April 9 – Matthew Bell Magee Marsh and The Biggest Week in American Birding

Join Matt Bell as he talks about his experiences at Magee Marsh and The Biggest Week in American Birding, one of the largest birding festivals in the world. From numerous warblers that surround you at eye-level, to the lifelong friends made each year, the spectacle of The Biggest Week is one all birders should have on their bucket list! Matt has attended the festival for the past four years, and guided for the last three. Get an insider's look on the places to be, what you'll see, and how to avoid the crowds! Matt Bell is a recent graduate from The Ohio State University with B.S. degrees in both Earth Sciences and Evolution/Ecology. Matt started birding in May 2013, and became more seriously involved after a trip to Costa Rica. Since then he helped revive The Ornithology Club at Ohio State and assisted as a volunteer guide for The Biggest Week in American Birding and the Yellow Rails and Rice Festival. Matt absolutely loves participating in citizen science, tour guiding, chasing rare birds in his free time, and meeting fellow birders from around the globe. Most of all, Matt enjoys sharing his passion for birds and conservation with others and never shies away from taking the time to help beginners start their explorations of the avian world. Matt is Sales and Marketing Manager for Connecticut Audubon Society EcoTravel and leads both day trips and overnight trips.

# Annual Banquet – May 14

Julie Zickefoose will speak about her new book, *Saving Jemima: Life and Love With a Hard Luck Jay.* 

The banquet will be at Amarante's Restaurant in New Haven. Banquet reservation and membership renewal forms will be mailed to you in early April.

#### **Raffle Donations and Help for Banquet**

Gail Martino would like help contacting organizations for donations to the raffle. If you have an item for the raffle or would like to help get some, please contact Gail at gmm1227@yahoo.com.

# **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* for updated trip information and a Google Map link to the meeting place. Contact trip leaders directly if you have questions about any of their trips. The New Haven Bird Club does not charge any fees for its outdoor programs, but participants are responsible for the cost of their food, transportation, and entrance fees (where charged), unless the Club makes prior arrangements. Carpooling is encouraged to avoid parking problems at some destinations and to promote conservation of natural resources.

#### **NHBC Conservation and Education Activities**

The NHBC routinely works to preserve and restore bird populations and their habitats and to provide opportunities for learning about birds, their habitats, where to see them, and how to help ensure their future. The NHBC provides information and displays at multiple events throughout the year, including the Connecticut Green Expo and at the Lighthouse Point Park Migration Festival in September. The Club also is building a presence in local public schools and camps to encourage children to embrace birding. We view this activity as a direct connection to our Club objectives and usually present a very basic birding skills class followed by an hour-long bird walk.

#### The Fourth Annual Mega Bowl of Birding in New Haven County

# Saturday, February 1, 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.; dinner from 5:30–7 p.m.

Held on Super Bowl Weekend! Come join in on a fun and friendly event! Compete with other birders and win prizes and get your team's name inscribed on the prestigious Mega Bowl Trophy! We will bird New Haven County from Milford to Madison and north to Waterbury and Meriden, CT, and have fun birding and socializing with other birders. Birders join together in groups of three or four people and go birding wherever they like within New Haven County on the day of the event. The teams will meet at the end of the event and have dinner and share stories. The meeting will be at the Kellogg Environmental Center at 500 Hawthorne Avenue, Derby. A delicious dinner will be served. The Mega Bowl is inspired by the Superbowl of Birding held each January in Northeast New England by Mass Audubon, and the organizers of that event have generously given their consent for us to hold our own, similar event. Anyone interested in participating in the Mega Bowl will need to register in advance. The deadline for registration is Sunday, January 26th. Participants may sign up as a team, or individuals can submit their names and they will be put in contact with other individuals looking to become members of a team. Participants are encouraged to be creative in coming up with a name for their team. See the NHBC website for more details, www.newhavenbirdclub.org. Contact: Chris Loscalzo, 203-389-6508 or closcalz@optonline.net.

# First Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset State Park, Madison Wednesday, February 5, 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 at Hammonasset Beach State Park parking area on Boston Post Road, Madison, just left (east) of main entrance road.

Leader: Greg Hanisek, ctgregh@yahoo.com.

#### Sachuest Point NWR and Rhode Island Coast Saturday, February 22, 7 a.m. Snow date is Sunday, February 23

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 Roughlegged 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. Meet at the Guilford commuter lot, Exit 57 off I-95. Leader: Chris Loscalzo, 203-389-6508 or closcalz@optonline.net.

#### Sparrows and Speculaas, White Memorial Foundation Sunday, March 1, 8–11 a.m. Tour of the Livingston Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy, 1 p.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 at 80 Whitehall Road in Litchfield.

Leaders: Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe, 203-405-9116 (office), 203-233-0535 (cell), or <u>cfolsom-okeefe@audubon.org</u>; Craig Repasz, 203-745-6683 or <u>crepasz@hotmail.com</u>

After the walk at White Memorial and the trip to the Dutch Epicure and lunch, the New Haven Bird Club has been invited for a tour of the Livingston Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy at

1:00, hosted by Dr. Colleen Peters. Colleen gave a wonderful presentation recently at a NHBC indoor meeting and brought some of her birds. We now have a chance to see the waterfowl in person. Please contact Craig Repasz

crepasz@hotmail.com and let him know if you are planning on going.

#### First Wednesday Walk: Stratford Shore & Great Meadows Wednesday, March 4, 8–11 a.m.

Join us on a visit to this excellent birding area. We'll look for oceanic birds such as Long-tailed Duck and scoters, as well as raptors and shorebirds. Meet at the Dunkin Donuts parking lot at 60 Access Road, Stratford, near the intersection with Main Street (Rt. 113); we carpool from there. Leader: Frank Mantlik, 203-984-9410 or mantlik@sbcglobal.net

#### **Edgewood Park**, New Haven Saturday, March 14, 7:30 a.m.

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

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

# First Wednesday Walk: CT Audubon Coastal Center, Milford

#### Wednesday, April 1, 8 a.m.

Enjoy an early spring trip to one of the best local birding spots. We look out into the marsh and along the shore for waterfowl, shorebirds, waders, and raptors. Meet at the Coastal Center parking lot, 1 Milford Point Road, Milford. Leader: Jalna Jaeger, 203-246-0885 or jalnabird@gmail.com

#### **East Rock Birding and Trail Maintenance** Saturday, April 11, 8 a.m to noon

Meet for a bird walk from 8-9:30 a.m., then join Park Ranger Dan Barvir to help with light trail maintenance along the river until noon. Bring work gloves and pruning shears if you have them. Meet at the Eli Whitney Museum parking lot, 915 Whitney Avenue, Hamden.

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

#### The Richard English Memorial Field Trip: Lighthouse Point to the Richard English Refuge Saturday, April 18, 8:30 a.m.

We first bird the harbor shore for gulls, loons, ducks, and early returning shorebirds. We then proceed to the Richard English Bird Sanctuary at the Deer Lake Scout Camp in Killingworth. We then proceed to Hammonasset Beach State Park. This is an all-day trip; bring lunch and dress warmly. This trip almost always has a high species count. Meet at the Hawk Watch parking lot, Lighthouse Point Park, 2 Lighthouse Road, New Haven.

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

#### West Rock Ridge State Park: New Haven, Hamden, and Woodbridge

#### Saturday, April 25, 8 a.m. to noon

We focus on just two breeding species for this trip to West Rock Ridge State Park: Peregrine Falcon and Common Raven. A pair of Peregrine Falcons selected West Rock as their home base in 1999, thereby becoming one of the first breeding pairs in Connecticut in the post-DDT era. Since then, seven different females and seven different males (tiercels) have occupied the ridge in a collage of combinations. We observe their cliff site from an appropriate distance with the expectation of seeing flying, perching, preening, feeding, agonistic interactions with the nearby nesting ravens, and incubation of eggs. Common Ravens were confirmed as breeders at West Rock in 2002, and the presumed same pair (at least the male) has nested there annually since then, producing 4 to 5 young in most years. We observe them from unusually close range as they soar, perch, bring in cached food, fight with the peregrines, and attend young in the cliff nest. Bring binoculars, cameras, and two extra layers of clothing (really!). The wind and cold at cliff top often bear no relation to conditions 450 feet below in the West River valley. Meet at the gated entrance to West Rock Ridge State Park on Wintergreen Street, Hamden/New Haven border. We have automobile access to Baldwin Drive along the ridge top.

Leader: Steve Broker, 203-272-5192 (home), 203-747-6843 (cell), or LS.Broker@cox.net

#### **Birding by Ear** Sunday, April 26, 8 a.m.

Bird song can be wonderfully confusing and terrifyingly daunting for beginners. Join us for a seminar presentation in the Barn at the Audubon Connecticut's Bent of the River to begin learning bird song. After the presentation we will practice our new skills with a bird walk through a prime birding location along the Pomperaug River. More than 100 species of birds have been observed in a single day at the Bent. I'm willing to bet that >75% of those were heard. On the walk we will listen for birds and use our newfound skills to locate some of our favorite feathered friends. Meet at Bent of the River Wildlife Sanctuary, 185 East Flat Hill Road, Southbury, CT. Take Exit 14 off of Rte. 84. Go north on Rte. 172, then turn left onto East Flat Hill Road (church on corner). Continue to sanctuary entrance on left.

Leader: Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe, 203-405-9116 (office), 203-233-0535 (cell), or cfolsom-okeefe@audubon.org

# **Field Trip Reports**

#### December First Wednesday Walk at Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison Trip Report

On Wednesday, December 4, Jerry Connolly led a walk at Hammonasset. 41 species of birds were seen as well as 3 seals and a coyote.

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

On Saturday, December 7, Steve Broker and 6 others birded New Haven's Area K. At Proto Drive they saw 25 species. At the Brazos Road site they had 19 species.

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

On Wednesday, January 8, Tina Green led a group of 16 participants on a walk at Sherwood Island State Park. 45 species were seen. The highlights included an adult Bald Eagle, the continuing American Pipit flock, a vocal but hidden Fox Sparrow, and 2 male Eastern Towhees.

Several of us went to see the continuing Tree Swallow at Sherwood Mill Pond/Mill Brook after the walk, and in the afternoon around 3pm I saw the Snow Goose fly into the Longshore Park golf course. No sign of the Eurasian Wigeon.

--Tina Green

NHBC First Wednesday Walk Coordinator

#### Winter Bird Walk at Lake Saltonstall Trip Report



On Saturday, January 11, John Triana led a joint NHBC and Regional Water Authority bird walk at Lake Saltonstall. On the 55° day 23 species were seen. John also shared some of the background of Lake Saltonstall when it was a popular park.

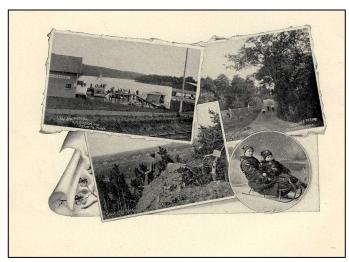


Image supplied by John Triana

#### Milford Hotspots in Winter Trip Report

On Saturday, January 18 Frank Mantlik led a walk to hotspots in Milford and Stratford. The group started at Mondo Ponds in Milford where they saw 26 species. The group then went to Milford's Caswell Cove where they saw 11 species. At Milford Point by the CT Audubon Center they found 21 species. At the Dock Shop Center in Stratford they saw 11 species. During the morning they saw a total of 46 different species.

# Winter Block-Busting

I took a slow hike in the snow to the summit of Mt Tom in Litchfield County, on one of the coldest mornings this winter. I was covering one mile an hour on a trail that was crisscrossed with deer, possum, and mouse tracks. I did not have the time to investigate them. I passed by a wet area that will probably become a vernal pool in a few months, but I did not stop to think about singing wood frogs, I had no time. Once at the top I heard high- pitched musical notes and 'hank, hank, hank' calls. Now I stopped. I started to tally all the birds I could see and hear: White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Tufted Titmouse, Blue Jay and a Pileated Woodpecker. I recorded everything in my eBird app that I would later share with the CT Bird Atlas.

I was performing a one-hour timed survey for the CT Bird Atlas Winter protocol. Sixty minutes goes by so quickly leaving little time to contemplate mammals and amphibians. From the 1,325-foot summit of Mt Tom I looked out over Morris, Litchfield and Washington, Connecticut. Below me other block-busting teams from the New Haven Bird Club were slowly moving through the winter landscape of forest and fields, frozen pond shorelines and cold riverbanks at the same 1 to 1.5 mph pace tallying the birds. That morning we would tally Cedar Waxwings, Eastern Bluebirds, Eastern Meadowlarks, Cooper's Hawks and Red-tails.

Two days before, members of the NHBC were block-busting in the Pachaug State Forest and adjacent areas. Many of the NHBC birders had mentioned that they would never have considered birding these areas that are unknown to them and are thankful for the opportunity to discover new areas. And, there are so many more like this across our beautiful state!! So, what is it about these areas in New London and Litchfield Counties that would draw birders out of the New Haven Area? Simply, the members were happy to support the CT Bird Atlas now in its second of three years. These winter blocks have not been adopted by volunteers, or they have received very little or no coverage. Coverage of a block could be completed by a group of volunteers breaking up into teams in a group effort over a short period of time; such an event is called blockbusting.

This past June the NHBC conducted a block-busting event in the Pachaug State Forest area for the Breeding Season, fulfilling the minimum 20-hour survey requirement. Now we returned in early winter to fulfill the 10-hour minimum, and we will return in either January or February for the 10 hours of late winter surveys to complete the block survey for winter.

Ideally, a volunteer would adopt a block and assure that they will log in 20 hours of survey time in the breeding season and 20 hours in the winter. The winter season is divided into early winter (November to December) and late winter (January and February) each requiring 10 hours. The protocol for the winter surveys is to conduct one-hour surveys in ten sites that represent all the habitat types in the block. The same sites should be used for both early and late winter surveys. However, 21% of all blocks throughout the state have not been adopted for the winter surveys. Furthermore, 34% of all the blocks throughout the state have not had any winter surveys conducted. The Winter Atlas effort does need more support from the block volunteers and the birding organizations to meet the coverage goals

In addition to adopting a block, volunteers can support the Winter Atlas by conducting surveys of (a) inland lakes and ponds, (b) coastal shorelines, major rivers, and large lakes, and (c) nocturnal and high tide roosts.

As I was moving to my next site for a one-hour survey, five Common Mergansers flew overhead. I was happy to see some ducks. The frozen water assured us that no waterfowl was to be expected. However, I could not count these birds as there was no way to assure that they took off from or would land within



the block. A couple of days earlier we had open water after lunch with Canada Geese, Mallards, Green-winged Teal, Black Ducks,

Bufflehead and Greater White Fronted Geese.

We got together for lunch to warm up, re-organize ourselves, swap stories and to play the game of understated oneupmanship ("...in this field we didn't get much except some great looks at Eastern Meadowlarks").

At the end of each day we were cold, tired and content. All totaled we had 13 participants, 9 teams, 43 survey hours. We completed 4.3 Early Winter Blocks and covered approximately 6.5 miles.

The New Haven Bird Club is returning to do Late Winter surveys in CT Bird Atlas block areas that were done in Early Winter. Other birders are welcome to join in but must RSVP for planning purposes.

The Winter Atlas surveys are done in one-hour segments. We will return to the same ten areas in each block. (They represent the main habitat types on the block.)

We will split up into teams and run a few one-hour surveys, then group for lunch and hot beverages.

We could then go back out for another hour or two and complete the ten-hour late winter requirement. For details and to participate, contact Craig Repasz at crepasz@hotmail.com.

--Craig Repasz

# **BIRDERS' EXCHANGE**

The New Haven Bird Club is collecting binoculars, scopes or Neotropical field guides that we will donate to the Birders' Exchange Program, which is part of ABA. This organization donates all binoculars and other equipment to worthy individuals involved in crucial bird conservation projects and education work in Central and South America.

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

# The 120<sup>th</sup> Annual New Haven Christmas Bird Count Summary

On December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019, 73 members and friends of the New Haven Bird Club set out to record all of the birds within the boundary of the New Haven Christmas Count circle. The birders had to contend with a persistent light rain and intermittent fog. Finding birds was a challenge, but we birders are a hardy and determined lot and, collectively, we found lots of interesting and unusual species and performed the annual census thoroughly and well. We found a total of 124 species in the count circle on count day and added five more during the count week period. As always, our survey reveals trends in populations of the birds in our area in early winter. Unfortunately, there are more species that are in decline compared to species that are increasing in abundance. Species that are in decline include: Mute Swan, American Black Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Eastern Screech Owl, Monk Parakeet, American Crow, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Northern Mockingbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Field Sparrow, and Rusty Blackbird. Remarkably, we didn't record a single Monk Parakeet on this year's Christmas Count. About 20 years ago, our count had the distinction of recording more Monk Parakeets than any other count in the United States. The causes for this introduced species' decline in our area are not known completely. Species that are increasing in abundance in our area include: Black Vulture, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Carolina Wren, and White-throated Sparrow. Notably, this year we recorded more Red-bellied Woodpeckers than Downy Woodpeckers for the first time in the history of the count. Sincere thanks are extended to all of the participants. Going out in the rain was a real show of dedication and perseverance. Hopefully, we'll have better weather for the 2020 New Haven Christmas Count. It will be held on Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup>. Mark your calendars!

The final results were (with rare birds in **boldface**): Greater White-fronted Goose, 1; Snow Goose, 1; Brant, 435; Canada Goose, 3136; Mute Swan, 41; Wood Duck, 47; Gadwall, 112; American Wigeon, 29; American Black Duck, 365; Mallard, 771; Northern Pintail, 1; Green-winged Teal, 20; Ring-necked Duck, 81; Greater Scaup, 1140; Lesser Scaup, 33; Common Eider, 1; Surf Scoter, 8; White-winged Scoter, 4; Black Scoter, 1; Long-tailed Duck, 115; Bufflehead, 231; Common Goldeneye, 114; Hooded Merganser, 220; Common Merganser, 22; Red-breasted Merganser, 118; Ruddy Duck, 1; Wild Turkey, 123; Red-throated Loon, 24; Common Loon, 35; Pied-billed Grebe, 1; Horned Grebe, 16; Great Blue Heron, 34; Black-crowned Night-heron, 1; Black Vulture, CW; Turkey Vulture, 8; Northern Harrier, 6; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 5; Cooper's Hawk, 16; Bald Eagle, 5; Red-shouldered Hawk, 9; Red-tailed Hawk, 38; Clapper Rail, 3; Virginia Rail, 1; American Coot, 1; Killdeer, CW; American Oystercatcher, 1; Greater Yellowlegs, 1; Ruddy Turnstone, 3; Sanderling, 85; Dunlin, 16; Purple Sandpiper, 6; American Woodcock, 2; Ring-billed Gull, 1415; Herring Gull, 1438; Iceland Gull, 3; Great Black-backed Gull, 53; Rock Pigeon, 461; Mourning Dove, 567; Eastern Screech Owl, 2; Great Horned Owl, 2; Barred Owl, 3; Belted Kingfisher, 19; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 131; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 7; Downy Woodpecker, 116; Hairy Woodpecker, 22; Northern Flicker, 59; Pileated Woodpecker, 2; Eastern Phoebe, 2; Blue-headed

Vireo, 1; Merlin, 2; Peregrine Falcon, CW; Blue Jay, 553; American Crow, 648; Fish Crow, 283; crow, sp., 33; Common Raven, 12; Horned Lark, 48; Black-capped Chickadee, 153; Tufted Titmouse, 208; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Whitebreasted Nuthatch, 73; Brown Creeper, 3; Winter Wren, 7; Marsh Wren, 3; Carolina Wren, 156; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 5; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 9; Eastern Bluebird, 26; Hermit Thrush, 3; American Robin, 304; Gray Catbird, 11; Northern Mockingbird, 89; Brown Thrasher, 3; European Starling, 5007; Cedar Waxwing, 80; Orange-crowned, Warbler, 1; Yellow-rumped Warbler, 1; Pine Warbler, 3; Palm Warbler, 1: Common Yellowthroat, 1: Yellow-breasted Chat, 1: American Tree Sparrow, 75; Chipping Sparrow, 10; Field Sparrow, 17; Fox Sparrow, 9; Dark-eyed Junco, 581; Whitethroated Sparrow, 1044; White-crowned Sparrow, 3; Savannah Sparrow, 41; Song Sparrow, 564; Swamp Sparrow, 59; Eastern Towhee, 9; Lapland Longspur, 3; Northern Cardinal, 252; Red-winged Blackbird, 219; Eastern Meadowlark, 1; Rusty Blackbird, 23; Common Grackle, 657; Brown-headed Cowbird, 56; Baltimore Oriole, CW; House Finch, 156; Purple Finch, 2; Pine Siskin, CW; American Goldfinch, 162; House Sparrow, 656. Total Individuals: 24,120. Total Species: 124 + five count week species.

The participants were (with area captains in boldface): Marian Aimesbury, Dewitt Allen, Ralph Amodei, Christin Arnini, Mark Aronson, Dan Barvir, Bill Batsford, Larry Bausher, James Broatch, Stephen Broker, Lauren Brown, Michael Carpenter, Nancy Clark, Louisa Cunningham, John Farley, Michael Ferrari, Bobbie Fisher, Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe, James Froenza, Frank Gallo, Ed Haesche, Stacy Hanks, Eli Holton, Michael and Pat Horn, Gladys Horowitz, Christine Howe, James Hunter, Nord Isaacson, Lynn Jones, Tom Kelly, Acadia Kocher, Bernice Lattanzi, Pat Leahy, Carol and Gary Lemmon, Cody Limber, Alex Lin-Moore, Donna Lorello, Chris Loscalzo, Alan Malina, Frank Mantlik, Gail Martino, Steve Mayo, Flo McBride, Linda Meyer, Judy Moore, Gina Nichol, John Oshlick, Bev Propen, Frank and Nancy Ragusa, Daryl Rathburn, Brendan Reilly, Craig Repasz, Laurie Reynolds, Jason Rieger, Nancy Rosenbaum, Lee Schlesinger, Abby Sesselberg, James Sirch, Paul Smith, Nancy Specht, Charla and Steve Spector, Howie Sternberg, Maria Stockmal, John Triana, Severin Uebbing, Marianne Vahey, Lisa Wahle, Chris Woerner, Paul Wolter, and George Zepko.

Thanks to all of the participants!

--Chris Loscalzo, NH CBC Compiler

# **CBC** Day



Photo by Laurie Reynolds

The Lemmons treated Area G to a lovely luncheon which included 3 homemade soups. What a great break from a day in the rain! The day of birding ended with the Compilation Dinner where everyone shared their results of the day. A delicious dinner buffet was prepared by Cathy Leahy. Marianne Vahey baked scrumptious desserts. It was a wonderful end to a very full day.



Compilation Dinner Photo by Donna Batsford

# **Conservation News**



# Bird Food: as in, Federal Legislation on Fisheries

The health and well-being of all birds that rely on fish for food will be affected by the several bills awaiting submission to congress. Please pay attention to this upcoming legislation. Now is the better time to write or call your congressional representatives; best not to wait 'til after the bills are introduced. Congress needs to hear that we consider this to be important legislation and that we are watching....

Here's a bit more background: The House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife will be submitting several fisheries bills, including the Forage Fish <u>Conservation Act</u>. The National Audubon Society has taken a lead on following this legislation, and has routinely provided updates to NHBC and other environmental organizations on the progress of the renewal of the FFCA. Audubon will keep us informed on when Senators Blumenthal and Toomey will introduce the senate version of these bills. Information and background has been posted to the NHBC website under Conservation News. There are several fisheries bills under consideration; all will help protect our seabirds and the fish they rely on as seabirds face the growing threat of climate change. See websites listed below for more information.

The Forage Fish Conservation Act will include the needs of seabirds in our federal fisheries management law. Examples of birds in need of this legislative protection include Atlantic Puffins, Least Terns and Black Skimmers, as all rely on these little fish to survive, but they often can't find enough to eat for themselves and newly hatched chicks, which are particularly vulnerable when parents have to travel greater and greater distances to find food for their young. And, The Climate-Ready Fisheries Act will help our fisheries prepare and adapt to the impacts of climate change. As the ocean becomes warmer and more acidic, seabirds will struggle to find food for their chicks.

Here are the bill numbers and their lead legislator: • H.R. 2236 (Rep. Debbie Dingell, D-MI) To improve the management of forage fish. "Forage Fish Conservation Act."

• H.R. 4679 (Rep. Joe Cunningham, D-SC) To require the Comptroller General of the United States to submit to Congress a report examining efforts by the Regional Fishery Management Councils, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the National Marine Fisheries Service to prepare and adapt United States fishery management for the impacts of climate change, and for other purposes. "Climate-Ready Fisheries Act of 2019."

• H.R. 4723 (Rep. Jared Huffman, D-CA) To require the identification of salmon conservation areas, and for other purposes. **"Salmon Focused Investments in Sustainable Habits Act of 2019"** or **"Fish Act of 2019."** 

• H.R. 5126 (Rep. Garret Graves, R-LA) To require individuals fishing for Gulf reef fish to use certain descending devices, and for other purposes. "Direct Enhancement of Snapper Conservation and the Economy through Novel Devices Act of 2019" or "DESCEND Act of 2019."

• H.R. 1834 (Rep. Francis Rooney, R-FL) To direct the Secretary of Commerce to issue regulations prohibiting the use of sunscreen containing oxybenzone or octinoxate in a National Marine Sanctuary in which coral is present, and for other purposes. "Defending Our National Marine Sanctuaries from Damaging Chemicals Act of 2019."

• H.R. 5548 (Rep. Jared Huffman, D-CA) To improve the Fishery Resource Disaster Relief program of the National Marine Fisheries Service, and for other purposes. "Fishery Failures: Urgently Needed Disaster Declarations Act."

Ask your U.S. Representatives to support the Forage Fish Conservation Act, and the Climate-Ready Fisheries Act. National Audubon has an on-line site for making this easy: #SaveTheSeabirds: <u>http://ow.ly/vvpt30oURML or</u> act.audubon.org/onlineactions

Here is some of what you can say: Today, there are three hundred million fewer seabirds in the world than there were in 1950, a population decline of seventy percent. These magnificent birds such as Atlantic Puffins, Least Terns, and Black Skimmers rely on fish as their primary food source, but they often can't find enough to eat. A new bill in Congress would help these essential fish populations to rebound and become more stable for the seabirds and other marine wildlife, people, and economies that depend on them.

For even more information about how the oceans are changing and the consequences for birds, see the report at: #SaveTheSeabirds: https://www.audubon.org/news/climatechange-already-affecting-ocean-and-birds-rely-it. The report at this site makes clear three particular effects of climate change on the ocean and its wildlife: <u>First</u>, the ocean absorbs excess heat and carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, and that increase in temperature causes declines in oxygen and plankton, both crucial to seabirds' main source of food: forage fish like herring and anchovies. As a result, forage fish populations are declining and moving. <u>Second</u>, sea ice and other frozen areas around the world have begun to melt, and as sea levels rise, beaches and barrier islands are at risk of disappearing, and with them the bird species that nest in those low-lying areas. <u>Third</u>, the acidification caused by excess dissolved carbon dioxide in the ocean is debilitating to plankton growth, which results in a decline of forage fish populations, leaving seabirds without adequate food to ensure chicks grow into adults.

Contact Audubon's Coastal Communications Manager, Rachel Guillory for even more information, 504-708-5873. And, watch for more information when the bills are introduced to congress, in early February, we hope.

--Deborah Johnson NHBC Conservation Chair

# NHBC Winter Feeder Report 2019-2020 End of Week 10



We started the survey with unstable weather, hot one day and cold the next. We had temperatures in the 60s and temperatures way below freezing, (10° to 14°F). The start of week 5 saw ice and the first

major snowstorm of the season (we did not get much), but the upper parts of the state got from 10 to 16 inches.

New to the Uncommon List is Ring-necked Pheasant, seen by Dean and Maryanne Rupp. Also seen by them were a Great Blue Heron and a Herring Gull. Nancy Specht reported a flock of over 1000 Common Grackles. Other surveyors saw large flocks of Brown-headed Cowbirds and European Starlings in the first few weeks. So far, we have not had any problems with Black Bears, but Charlotte White of Guilford delayed her installation of feeders until the 3rd week of the Survey.

This year we started with 18 surveyors reporting, 4 via Postal Mail and 14 via email. We are located all over New Haven County, with one surveyor in Fairfield County and two in Middlesex County.

One of the things that I noticed over the years is that we have surveyors who only report House Sparrows, others that report only House Finches and others that report both. There are also some that do not report either species. I wonder why we all do not see both species at our feeders.

We have finished the weeks 6 thru 10 (all of December and early January) of the survey and we had NO Red-breasted Nuthatches, Purple Finches and Pine Siskins. Common Grackles are here but with numbers from 1 to 100. I have replaced the Common Grackle graph with a Northern Cardinal graph as I did for the first 5 weeks.

Last year, Surveyor Carol Dunn, asked me: "Have other people noted a diminishment in the number of birds at their feeders?" This year we have approximately the same number of surveyors as the previous two years with the majority having been reporting for the last 5 years or more. So why do we have such low numbers this year? Was it the weather? The temperature ranged from a high of 60° F to a low of 10° F (Average 35.7° F) and snow, ice storm, and rain. It can be seen from the graphs at the bottom of the report that the White-throated Sparrow was the only species to be greater than the previous two years. American Goldfinch, Black-capped Chickadee, Dark-eyed Junco, and Northern Cardinal are either below or between the last two years.

Are there many more people feeding the birds in our neighborhood so they do not come to our feeders at the time of day we normally would see them? I also noticed that when we had snow or ice, I had an increase in the Dark-eyed Juncos from 2 to 11. One day I had 10 Mourning Doves when I normally have about 3, but the flock was only there for about 10 minutes. So far this year I have only seen 1 Titmouse and 1 Black-capped Chickadee when normally I would have 3 or more. Some days I go without seeing Northern Cardinals, but I know they are about.

Some data from the sheets for weeks 6 through 10:

#### Common Species:

We had 22/22 or 100%. American Crow, American Robin, Brown-headed Cowbird and Cooper's Hawk were seen by less than 4 surveyors while the rest of the species had 10 or more surveyors see them. I wonder if the decline in American Crow is due to the new type of recycling containers. I always had crows at the trashcans I used before, which would bring them to my feeders.

#### Semi-Common Species:

Surprisingly, we had 10/12 or 84% of the semi-common species seen. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Purple Finch were not seen. Northern Flicker was seen by 13 surveyors. Chipping Sparrow, Fox sparrow, Red-tailed Hawk, Rock Dove and Wild Turkey were seen by one surveyor. Northern Mockingbird, and Sharp-shinned Hawk were seen by 2 surveyors and 3 surveyors saw a Red-winged Black Bird. 4 surveyors saw Blue Birds.

#### Uncommon Species list:

We had 2/42 species (5%) during these five weeks. Species seen were: Brown Creeper (Laurie Reynolds), and Red-shouldered Hawk (Martha Asarisi).

#### Waterfowl list:

Three waterfowl species were seen during these 5 weeks: Herring Gull (Andy Verderame), Mallard (Andy Verderame, Nancy Morand) and Wood Duck (Nancy Morand).

#### Animal List:

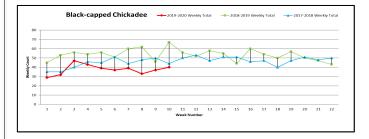
7/26 (27%) from the Animal list the were seen: Gray Squirrel, Brown Rat, Chipmunk, Opossum, Raccoon, Red Squirrel, and White-tail Deer.

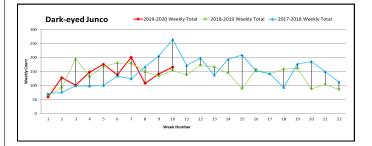
I have also included the graphs of the 5 species I follow for weeks 1 through 10. The RED line is this year.

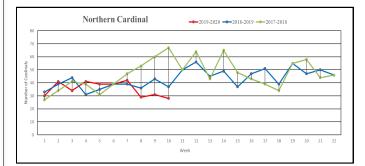
--Pete Vitali

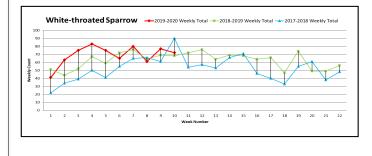
Chairman: NHBC Winter Feeder Survey











# **MEET THE BOARD**

#### **Alan Malina: Secretary**

Alan Malina is ideally qualified for the position of Club Secretary. His personal style is to be organized, methodical, meticulous, quick to observe what's happening, and quick to decide on appropriate action. It's not a coincidence that these are the very qualities he uses every day in his career. He's a physician.

The same talent for skilled observation also made him an excellent candidate for birding, an activity he discovered about 18 years ago. He and his wife Lisa happened to be taking a leisurely springtime walk on the Farmington Canal Linear

Park Trail when they were stopped in their tracks by the captivating song of a bird. It took them a while to locate the mystery songster, but once they returned home, they researched and were thrilled to determine the delightful bird's identity. They'd seen a Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Not bad for a novice sighting and more than enough incentive to get on the birding bandwagon. By a handy coincidence, Alan's birthday fell very shortly after that experience. Convenient hinting produced gifts of a birdfeeder and pair of binoculars that year.

At first the couple went out by themselves, but Alan's birding career jumped to a new level about 5 years later when he and Lisa decided to expand their horizons by going on a CT Audubon trip to Arizona. They vividly recall seeing many dazzling hummingbirds but just as significant—as they tell it was their experiencing the tremendous friendliness, congeniality, willingness to help, and all-around camaraderie of the birders on the trip. Birding was looking like an awful lot of fun. Oh, by the way, most of the other people on that trip were NHBC members! Sounds just like an NHBC member profile.

With eyes opened wide to the numerous pleasures of being in a birding community, the Malinas soon joined NHBC. Alan goes on a fair number of Club walks where he both shares the birding expertise he's gained through the years and displays the organizational skills that make him a valuable participant on field trips. He has a great eye when it comes to spotting birds,



and though his demeanor is reserved, Alan can get pretty excited and vocal when finding birds and enthusiastically helping others locate them. Lisa is a birder too, though as a busy and longhours dedicated elementary school teacher, she doesn't get out as often as Alan.

Born and raised in New York State, Alan attended Brandeis University and received his medical degree from UConn School of Medicine. He currently is a primary care physician at the VA Hospital in West Haven. A 24-year resident of Hamden, he's been married to Lisa for 20

years. On their joint birding excursions, they especially enjoy visiting their favorite patch, Hamden's Brooksvale Park, but Fresh Meadows Preserve in Cheshire and West Haven's Sandy Point are among their other favored destinations. Alan doesn't keep or pay attention to a life list per se, but he's meticulous about reporting to eBird. As he puts it, he guesses that eBird is keeping his life list for him.

Though the Arizona adventure is the only dedicated longdistance birding trip they've taken so far, the Malinas think about what might be their next foray. Alan has done some other interesting cultural travel, to destinations including Canada, Belgium, the Netherlands, Israel, England, and Ireland.

Alan rounds out his avian interests by pursuing the hobby of bird photography. Beyond birding, he also enjoys hiking and snowshoeing, and in the summer, gardening. He and Lisa faithfully tend a plot every year in Hamden's Community Gardens.

When queried about a favorite bird, Alan can't bring himself to commit to a single favorite, with so many possibilities out there. Lisa does vote for "Indigo Bunting." But when it comes to the idea of "favorites," both of them, with one excited voice, are uniformly and loudly insistent that one important "favorite" **not** be left out of this bio: Their absolute delight and undying support of UConn Women's Basketball! No argument there. --Betty Zuraw



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

#### **Newsletter February 2020**

NHBC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION	FOR YOUR INFORMATION	
Name(s)   Address   City	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.	
State Zip Code Area Code / Phone	The Club welcomes everyone irrespective of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin.	
Email New Member Renewal Membership Levels (check appropriate category): Individual - \$15	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.	
Family - \$20 Supporting - \$50 Student under 18 - Free Life Membership - \$300 for 1 or 2 people at same address.	NHBC does not release its membership list or email addresses to other organizations. The NHBC website, www.newhavenbirdclub.org, offers	
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	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.	
You can also join or renew membership at the NHBC website with credit card or PayPal.	CTBirds is an open discussion email list provided by the	
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.	Connecticut Ornithological Association (COA) to discuss bird and birding in the state. To subscribe, go to: lists.ctbirding.org/mailman/listinfo/ctbirds_lists.ctbirding.org	