



THE CHICKADEE

Newsletter of the New Haven Bird Club

February 2012

2012 CALENDAR

(See inside for details)

November 1, 2011 through March 31, 2012 **NHBC 19th Annual Winter Feeder Survey**

Thursday, February 9, 7:00 pm **Dr. Sylvia Halkin – Squirrels: Birders' Enemy #1? Or Intriguing Survivors?**

Saturday, February 25, 7:00 am **Sachuest Point NWR and Rhode Island Coast**

Wednesday, March 7, 8:00 am **First Wednesday Walk: Sikorsky Airport & Great Meadows, Stratford**

Thursday, March 8, 7:00 pm **Patrick Comins – Conserving the Nature of the Connecticut River Watershed**

Saturday, March 17, 9:00 am **Family Bird Walk: Brooksvale Park, Hamden**

Sunday, March 25, 8:00 am **Southwest Connecticut Coast**

Wednesday, April 4, 7:30 am **First Wednesday Walk: Cove Island Park, Stamford**

Thursday, April 12, 7:00 pm **Twan Leenders – Build It and They Will Come?**

Saturday, April 14, 8:00 am **East Rock Birding and Trail Maintenance, New Haven**

Sunday, April 15, 8:30 am **Richard English Memorial Field Trip: Lighthouse Point and Killingworth**

Saturday, April 21, 8:00 am **Ansonia Nature Center, Ansonia**

Saturday, April 28, 9:00 am **Bird Walk for Kids at East Rock Park, New Haven**

Thursday, May 10, 6:00 pm **Annual Banquet: Peter Alden – Brilliant: The First Year in the Life of a Scarlet Tanager**

Audubon CT Master Bird Conservationist Program

There is still time to enroll in this 4-day workshop. The program will take place on Feb. 22nd, Mar. 7th, Mar. 21st, and Apr. 4th from 9 – 5 pm. You can get information online at <http://ct.audubon.org/>

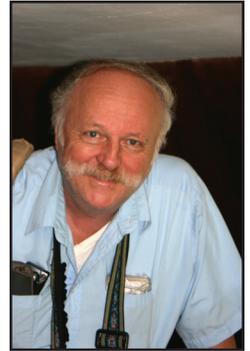
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We have a New Home!!

Hi Folks,

Our quest for a new home for the New Haven Bird Club has ended. Our new home for at least the next two years is The Whitney Center. This is the new addition at 200 Leeder Hill Road in Hamden. The auditorium is opulent. The chairs are padded. It can hold 150 people easily. There will be someone on staff to help us with audio/visual things including power screen and podium. The rest rooms are excellent. We have the use of their pantry and side tables. There is no 9:00 PM deadline to leave. The parking is on the second floor of the parking garage or on the street. This is not totally ideal but is certainly workable. We will be inviting the residents to our meetings. Our meetings have always been open and free. Speaking of free, The Whitney Center is not charging us anything!!

Regards to all,
Mike Horn - President



FROM THE BOARD

Welcome Mike Ferrari as the new Membership Chair.

The box marked BEX on the Sign in Table at the indoor programs is there to collect binoculars and books for Birders Exchange to be distributed to organizations or individuals in Latin America or the Caribbean who are working on behalf of a bird conservation or bird education program. Contact Kris Johnson with questions: krisjohnson99@snet.net or 203.288.3087.

Save the date: The Annual Banquet is Thursday, May 10 at Amaranthe's Restaurant. The program will be Peter Alden on "Brilliant: The First Year in the Life of a Scarlet Tanager."

The next board meeting is Thursday, February 23, at 6:45 pm at the Regional Water Authority in New Haven.

The deadline for submissions to the April newsletter is March 23. Send to Donna Batsford: donnabatsford@gmail.com

New Haven Bird Club - 2011 - 2012

OFFICERS

<i>President</i>	Mike Horn mfhorn@att.net	203.288.1891
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<i>Newsletter Editor</i>	Donna Batsford donnabatsford@gmail.com	203.787.1642
<i>Nominating Chair</i>	Patrick Leahy ptjleahy@yahoo.com	203.393.2427
<i>Outdoor Programs</i>	Chris Loscalzo closcalz@optonline.net	203.389.6508
<i>Publicity Chair</i>	Larry Bausher lpbausher@comcast.net	203.389.5918

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

<i>The BIG SIT!®</i>	John Triana jtriana1@sbcglobal.net	203.758.7203
<i>Christmas Bird Count</i>	Chris Loscalzo closcalz@optonline.net	203.389.6508
<i>Yahoo Group</i>	Ralph Amodei ramodei@att.net	203.467.9515
<i>Hawk Watch</i>	Steve Mayo rsdmayo@sbcglobal.net	203.393.0694
<i>Lighthouse Point Historian</i>	John Triana jtriana1@sbcglobal.net	203.758.7203
<i>Summer Bird Count</i>	Steve Mayo rsdmayo@sbcglobal.net	203.393.0694
<i>Web Master</i>	John Triana jtriana1@sbcglobal.net	203.758.7203
<i>Winter Feeder Survey</i>	Peter Vitali vitali_peter_e@sbcglobal.net	203.288.0621
<i>Yearbook</i>	Betty Zuraw bz4feathers@gmail.com	860.632.1156

The NHBC website is www.newhavenbirdclub.org

BIRDS IN WORDS

Birds in Words is NHBC's book discussion group for people who like to read about their favorite hobby and then discuss the books at casual and thought-provoking sessions. Please feel free to attend any of the meetings. All are welcome! Meetings start at 7:00 pm at The Whitney Center, 200 Leeder Hill Drive, Hamden. If you have any questions, please email or call Kris Johnson krisjohnson99@snet.net or 203.288.3087.

Directions: From Whitney Avenue northbound, turn left on Putnam Avenue, then right on Leeder Hill Drive. Go to main desk, sign in, and get directions to the meeting room. Also available at: <http://www.whitneycenter.com/directions.html>

The Next meeting will be February 28. We will be discussing Peter Matthiessen's book, *The Birds of Heaven*.

NHBC Winter Feeder Survey

We have finished the first 5 weeks of the survey and the counts have been very low as well as the number of species seen so far. This may be due to the fact that we have lost some of the more prolific surveyors due to illness or loss of habitat. The hurricane and the snow storm did devastate the habitat, but more important it brought down feeders and trees that held the feeders. One of our surveyors reported that they were having big problems with squirrels in her trailer park, and management asked them to stop feeding wildlife (birds included) because the squirrels were chewing on the electrical wires.

Some data from the sheets:

We had 33 of the 35 Common Species (Winter Feeder Survey Data) show up so far. Rock Pigeon and Field Sparrow were the only two that have not been seen at the feeders. The number of birds per species has been very low so far.

To the Uncommon List two species were added. Fish Crow (Carol Dunn) and Eastern Kingbird (Edward Sprowson). Ed also had what he identified as a Blue Parakeet at his feeder on 11-2-11 but it cannot be counted since it is probably an escaped exotic bird. We had 8 of 28 Uncommon Species show up at the feeders. Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, and Northern Oriole (Bev Propen), Cedar Waxwing (Jim and Gillian

Rose), and Yellow-rumped Warbler (Dean Rupp, John Triana and Jim and Gillian Rose) were the other 6 that made up the count of 8.



European Starling and House Sparrows

The only Waterfowl that showed was a Great Blue Heron reported by Dean Rupp.

The Animal Column has grown with the addition of a Brown Rat reported by Randi Gentile. We had 7 of 13 animals on the list reported so far with Gray Squirrel (33) and Chipmunk (12) being the largest number with Feral Cats (7) coming in third.

--Pete Vitali 1/8/12

INDOOR PROGRAMS

Monthly indoor programs start in September and are held on the second Thursday of the month in the Jones Auditorium at the CT Agricultural Experiment Station, 123 Huntington Street, New Haven. The social half-hour at meetings begins at 7:00 pm; the meeting and program begin at 7:30 pm. The facility is wheelchair accessible with a ramp and elevator.

Directions: Go north 1.4 miles from the New Haven Green on Whitney Avenue, turn left onto Huntington Street. The entrance to the station is on the right, just past the first cross street.

Cancellation Policy: Inclement weather or another emergency may cancel a meeting. For cancellation notices, check TV channels WTNH (New Haven) and WFSB (Hartford). Cancellation notices will also be posted online on ctbird.

Thursday, February 9 – Dr. Sylvia Halkin Squirrels: Birders' Enemy #1? Or Intriguing Survivors?

For just one evening, let's give equal time to the clever non-avian creatures that we might as well admit will always be with us. Dr. Sylvia Halkin will tell us about the complex nut-storing behavior of these extremely familiar but not always welcome backyard visitors. Her biology students at CCSU have gotten not only to learn scientific methodology but have had some good fun too in their research on Eastern Gray Squirrels. These animals depend on the nuts that they store for food over the winter and have a remarkable diversity of strategies to protect their stashes from potential thieves. The shrewd tacticians even change their nut-storing behavior in response to recent theft. Enjoy a presentation about the resourceful animals that at times outwit even the professor and her students. Dr. Halkin has published in major science journals on her research on song repertoire use by Northern Cardinals and Black-capped Chickadees and bill-tucking orientation of birds resting in groups, as well as on her work on squirrels. She and her students have appeared on Animal Planet network's *Most Extreme Pirates*.

Notice! Birder Tag Sale at the March Meeting!

Bring bird books and avian art to the February meeting; we'll sell them at the March meeting. Proceeds go to NHBC's Conservation Fund.

Thursday, March 8 – Patrick Comins Conserving the Nature of the Connecticut River Watershed

The Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge was established to conserve the abundance and diversity of native plants and animals and their habitats in the 7.2 million acre Connecticut River watershed in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont. From the sub-boreal forests of Vermont and New

Hampshire to the tidal wetlands of the lower Connecticut River, the Conte Refuge works in partnership to conserve the places that make the Connecticut River Watershed special. Patrick hardly needs an introduction to Connecticut birders. Active in the bird conservation field for 20 years, he currently is with Audubon Connecticut as Director of Bird Conservation. He is president of the COA and chairman of the Friends of the Silvio O. Conte Refuge. He has written articles on bird conservation and identification and is a member of the CT Forestlands Council.

Thursday, April 12 – Twan Leenders Build It and They Will Come?

For better or worse, Connecticut's environment has long been impacted by human actions. Many of our threatened and endangered species have historically declined because of the loss or alteration of their habitat. Some have declined to the point where human action is needed to improve their plight. How do we select the right habitats? What species should be the focus of our conservation and habitat management strategies? And what can realistically be accomplished in these tough economic times? Twan, Connecticut Audubon's Conservation Biologist, will provide an inside look into the habitat management and restoration projects that take place in some of the state's prime birding areas, including Stratford Point, Milford Point, and Goshen's Croft Forest Preserve. A native of the Netherlands where he earned a PhD specializing in Animal Ecology, Twan has researched declining animal populations in Central and South America, he has worked at the Peabody Museum, and taught at Sacred Heart University. He currently oversees habitat conservation and management activities for CT Audubon.

Please Note: As per the Club's by-laws, the April meeting is traditionally the Annual Meeting, which includes presentation of a slate of officers and their election.

WELCOME

NEW

MEMBERS!

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FIELD TRIPS / OUTDOOR EVENTS

The New Haven Bird Club does not charge trip or leader fees for its outdoor programs, but participants are responsible for the cost of their food, transportation, and entrance fees (where charged), unless prior arrangements are made by the Club. Car-pooling is encouraged to avoid parking problems at some destinations and to promote conservation of our natural resources. All levels of birders are invited to all field trips, and every effort is made on all trips to help beginning birders. 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. You can check the Club's website too: <www.newhavenbirdclub.org> for trip information and watch for emails sent by the Club or contact trip leaders directly.

Cancellation Policy: Inclement weather or another emergency may cancel a field trip. Check the sources listed above or contact the leader of the trip directly if you have any questions about a possible cancellation.

NHBC 19th Annual Winter Feeder Survey October 31, 2011 through April 1, 2012

This is a yearly census to help determine the number and frequency of birds visiting feeders in the Greater New Haven area. You are invited to observe and record the activity at your feeder at least once a week for the entire time period. Contact Peter Vitali: 203.288.0621, vitali_peter_e@sbcglobal.net

Sachuest Point NWR and Rhode Island Coast Saturday, February 25, 2012, 7:00 am

This all-day trip includes stops at Sachuest Point, Beavertail State Park, Moonstone Beach, and Trustum Pond, all outstanding Rhode Island birding locations. We should see grebes, loons, scoters, eiders, Purple Sandpipers, and lots of Harlequin Ducks. Highlights on last year's trip included Black Guillemot, Red-necked Grebe, and Eurasian Wigeon. Dress warmly—it's cold and windy on the coast. The hiking is a bit strenuous in places. Bring lunch and a spotting scope if you have one. Meet at the Branford commuter lot at Exit 55, I-95. We carpool from there. Leader—Chris Loscalzo: 203.389.6508, loscalz@optonline.net

First Wednesday Walk: Sikorsky Airport and Great Meadows, Stratford Wednesday, March 7, 2012, 8:00 am

Join us on a visit to this fine birding area. We will meet at the Long Beach parking lot and bird the marsh and beach and then visit Sikorsky Airport and Frash Pond. We'll look for sea birds such as Long-tailed Duck and scoters, as well as raptors and shorebirds. Directions: Follow signs to Sikorsky Airport from Exit 30 off I-95. Go past the airport entrance and follow the causeway to the end. Take the first right onto Oak Bluff Avenue and follow it to the Long Beach entrance. Leader—Charlie Barnard. Contact—Tina Green: 203.247.2660, tina@renaissancestudios.com

Family Bird Walk: Brooksvale Park, Hamden Saturday, March 17, 2012, 9:00 am

This walk is oriented toward families interested in learning about birds and other wildlife. The park is home to a variety of local bird species and has varied habitat. Bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them, appropriate clothing, and a little bit of curiosity about birds and the natural world. All ages are welcome. Meet at the smaller parking lot next to the barn. Leader—Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe: 203-630-9640, jubilee832001@yahoo.com

Southwest Connecticut Coast Sunday, March 25, 2012, 8:00 am

We'll explore the various habitats of Stratford's shoreline in search of raptors, ducks, gulls, and early migrants. If time permits, we may also visit surrounding towns. We'll finish by noon or 1:00 pm. Carpooling is encouraged. Meet at Dunkin Donuts shopping center lot at the corner of Main St. and Access Road in Stratford. Leader—Frank Mantlik: 203.984.9410, mantlik@sbcglobal.net

First Wednesday Walk: Cove Island Park, Stamford Wednesday, April 4, 2012, 7:30 am

Join us at this fine birding location in southwestern CT as we look for early spring migrants and lingering winter residents. The park is an excellent place to see rare gulls, waterfowl, sparrows and other species. Leaders—Patrick Dugan and Mike Moccio. Contact—Tina Green: 203.247.2660, tina@renaissancestudios.com

East Rock Birding and Trail Maintenance, New Haven Saturday, April 14, 2012, 8:00 am

Meet at the Eli Whitney Museum parking lot for a bird walk from 8 to 9 am. Then join Ranger Dan and help with light trail maintenance along the river from 9 am to noon. Bring pruning shears and work gloves if you have them. Leader—Dan Barvir: 203.946.6086

Richard English Memorial Field Trip: Lighthouse Point and Killingworth Sunday, April 14, 2012, 8:30 am

Meet in the Lighthouse Point Hawk Watch parking lot and bird the harbor for gulls, loons, ducks, and early returning shorebirds. We will then proceed to the Richard English Bird Sanctuary on Deer Lake in Killingworth and then finish our birding tour with a visit to Hammonasset State Park in Madison. This is an all-day trip so bring lunch and dress warmly. Leader—Mike Horn: 203.288.1891, mhorn@att.net

Ansonia Nature Center, Ansonia Saturday, April 21, 2012, 8:00 am

Join our past-president as she leads a walk at this fine birding site. The nature center has a small pond, wetlands, thickets, grassy fields, and woods. The woods have had Northern Gos-

hawks and Great Horned Owls nesting there and there are often other surprises. Meet at the nature center parking lot on Deerfield Lane (off Benz Road) in Ansonia. Leader—Maria Stockmal: 203 488-3876, m.stockmal@snet.net

112th Annual New Haven Christmas Bird Count Report

The 112th annual New Haven Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, December 17th, 2011. Eighty-nine birders participated. A total of 128 species were seen on count day, with two more found during the count week. The warm weather in the weeks leading up to the count led to the finding of several lingering fall migrants, including House Wren, Brown Thrasher, Nashville Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Baltimore Oriole. A number of rare and unusual birds were found along the coast such as Razorbill, 5 additional alcid species (likely Razorbills, but seen at too far of a distance for definitive identification), Northern Gannet, Laughing Gull, Barrow's Goldeneye, and Common Eider. Other noteworthy finds included Snow Goose, Great Egret, Black-crowned Night-Heron, American Kestrel, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Clapper and Virginia Rail, American Oystercatcher, Greater Yellowlegs, Iceland Gull, Barred and Short-eared Owl, Pileated Woodpecker, Horned Lark, Marsh Wren, Chipping Sparrow, the Ipswich race of Savannah Sparrow, and Eastern Meadowlark. As one can see from this lengthy list of unusual species, there were many interesting birds seen, with something remarkable reported from every area within the count circle. There weren't many species that could be considered "bad misses." Species that have been seen on more than half of the past ten counts but were not seen on this count include: Northern Pintail, Common Snipe, Snow Bunting, and Purple Finch. Overall, we did very well. The count results demonstrate just how many birds can be found with a determined effort and thorough coverage of the New Haven count circle. Congratulations and gratitude should be extended to all of the participants, and most especially to the area captains for all of their hard work and dedication. Our species total may be the highest in New England this year and, if not, will be nearly so. Not bad for a highly developed, metropolitan area!

The final results were (with rare birds and high counts in boldface and low counts in italics): Snow Goose, 1; Brant, **2648**; Canada Goose, 3903; Mute Swan, 333; Wood Duck, 6; Gadwall, 168; American Wigeon, 61; American Black Duck, 570; Mallard, 1196; Black Duck/Mallard hybrid, 1; American Green-winged Teal, 79; Canvasback, 2; Redhead, CW; Ring-necked Duck, 88; Greater Scaup, 3181; Lesser Scaup, 4; **Common Eider, 1**; Surf Scoter, 10; White-winged Scoter, 41; Long-tailed Duck, 81; Bufflehead, 218; Common Goldeneye, 331; **Barrow's Goldeneye, 1**; Hooded Merganser, 309; Common Merganser, 13; Red-breasted Merganser, 228; Ruddy Duck, 6; Wild Turkey, 80; Red-throated Loon, **82**; Common Loon, 46; Pied-billed Grebe, 6; Horned Grebe, 34; Northern Gannet, 1; Double-crested Cormorant, 23; Great Cormorant, 22; Great Blue Heron, 34; **Great Egret, 2**; **Black-crowned Night-Heron, 2**; Black Vulture, 7; Turkey Vulture, 70; Bald Eagle, 8; Northern Harrier, 9; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 9; Cooper's Hawk, 14; Red-

shouldered Hawk, 11; Red-tailed Hawk, 68; American Kestrel, 1; Merlin, 2; Peregrine Falcon, 3; Clapper Rail, 3; Virginia Rail, 2; American Coot, 38; Black-bellied Plover, 8; *Killdeer, 1*; American Oystercatcher, 1; Greater Yellowlegs, 2; Ruddy Turnstone, 2; Sanderling, 166; Purple Sandpiper, 23; Dunlin, CW; American Woodcock, 1; **Laughing Gull, 1**; Ring-billed Gull, 2059; Herring Gull, 1788; **Iceland Gull, 1**; Great Black-backed Gull, 119; **Razorbill, 1**; **alcid sp., 5**; Rock Pigeon, 1210; Mourning Dove, 714; Monk Parakeet, 127; Eastern Screech Owl, 26; Great Horned Owl, 12; Barred Owl, 2; Short-eared Owl, 2; Belted Kingfisher, 27; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 90; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 7; Downy Woodpecker, 156; Hairy Woodpecker, 33; Northern Flicker, 43; Pileated Woodpecker, 3; Blue Jay, 360; American Crow, 7018; Fish Crow, 107; Common Raven, 8; Horned Lark, 77; Black-capped Chickadee, 281; Tufted Titmouse, 353; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 1; White-breasted Nuthatch, 141; Brown Creeper, 6; Carolina Wren, 79; **House Wren, 1**; Winter Wren, 4; Marsh Wren, 2; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 14; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 10; Eastern Bluebird, 26; Hermit Thrush, 11; American Robin, 484; Gray Catbird, 8; Northern Mockingbird, 96; Brown Thrasher, 1; European Starling, 4418; American Pipit, 20; Cedar Waxwing, 36; **Nashville Warbler, 1**; Yellow-rumped Warbler, 4; Palm Warbler, **5**; **Common Yellowthroat, 2**; **Yellow-breasted Chat, 1**; Eastern Towhee, 8; American Tree Sparrow, 108; Chipping Sparrow, 14; Field Sparrow, 5; Savannah Sparrow (Ipswich race), 2; Fox Sparrow, 17; Song Sparrow, 343; Swamp Sparrow, 23; White-throated Sparrow, 682; Dark-eyed Junco, 541; Northern Cardinal, 276; Red-winged Blackbird, 148; Eastern Meadowlark, 4; Rusty Blackbird, 5; Common Grackle, 9; Brown-headed Cowbird, 10; **Baltimore Oriole, 1**; House Finch, 342; American Goldfinch, 388; and House Sparrow, 875. Total species: 128, plus 2 count week. Total individuals: 37,982.

The participants were: Marion Aimesbury, Ralph Amodei, Toby Appel, Margaret Ardwin, Christin Armini, Mark Aronson, Phil Asprelli, Bill Banks, Dan Barvir, Bill Batsford, Larry Bausher, Carol Bedworth, Barney Bontecou, Peter Borgemeister, Andy Brand, Stephen Broker, Lauren Brown, Kevin Burgio, Michael Carpenter, Daniel Cinotti, Nancy Clark, Roland Clement, Jonah Cohen, Louisa Cunningham, Eli Debenham, Barbara DeRienzo, Beth Dock, Jane Dougherty, John Farley, Michael Ferrari, Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe, Frank Gallo, Barbara Gillette, Stacy Hanks, Christine Haley, Michael Horn, Kate Hubbard, Jim Hunter, Kris Johnson, Richard and Shirley Johnson, Lynn Jones, Susan Klein, Bernice Lattanzi, Pat Leahy, Carol and Gary Lemmon, Donna Lorello, Chris Loscalzo, Frank Mantlik, Steve Mayo, Florence McBride, Vanessa Mickan, Judy Moore, Brendan and Sean Murtha, Michael O'Brien, John Oshlick, Noble Proctor, Beverly Propen, Frank and Nancy Ragusa, Linda Rediker, Nancy Rosenbaum, Arne Rosengren, Paul Rubino, Sam Saulys, Lee Schlesinger, Jeff Severino, Arthur Shippee, Nancy Specht, Charla and Steve Spector, Ed Sprowson, Andy Stack, Maria Stockmal, Marge Thomas, Khem Tonsnkulrungrang, Tony Tortora, Jennifer and John Triana, Marianne Vahey, Peter Vitali, Bob White, Chris Woerner, Paul Wolter, George Zepko, Andrea Zullo, and Betty Zuraw.

Thanks to everyone for their participation!

--Chris Loscalzo, CBC Compiler

Family Bird Walk at Silver Sands State Park Report

Twenty-five participants varying in age from ~six to sixty assembled at Silver Sands State Park for a Family Bird Walk led by Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe on December 3. Warmish weather and just a slight breeze made for a comfortable walk. Thirty-one bird species were observed; highlights include 40 Brant, 2 American Wigeon, 5 Buffleheads, a very vocal Red-shouldered hawk (which all participants were able to get nice looks of



Red-shouldered Hawk
Photo by Mike Horn

through scopes), a late Tree Swallow, Northern Harrier, Savannah Sparrow, and a Palm Warbler. Thank you to Mike Horn and Ross Allen for bringing scopes and helping younger participants observe birds. The next Family Bird Walk is scheduled for March 24th at Brooksvale Park in Hamden.

--Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe

January First Wednesday Walk Report

It was a cold morning at Sherwood today, but 18 brave, warmly dressed participants joined Tina Green, Leader to start this year of birding on the New Haven Bird Club 1st Wednesday walks. The 41 Species seen are listed here below:

Brant, Canada Geese, Mute Swan, Gadwall, American Black Duck, Mallard, Long-tailed Duck, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Common Loon, Horned Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Northern Harrier, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Dunlin, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, American Robin, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Common Grackle, American Goldfinch.



Photo by Barney Bontecou

Stratford/Milford Birding Tour, Field Trip Report

On Sunday, January 15, 2012, fifteen hardy club members braved the cold and wind to see what birds we could find at several locations in Stratford and Milford. We started our day at Mondo Ponds in Milford. There, we saw an American Coot, two Pied-billed Grebes, and several Ring-necked Ducks, American Wigeon, and Hooded Mergansers. There was a Great Blue Heron hunkered down by the pond edge. From there, we went to Long Beach Park in Stratford. The highlight there was an adult Iceland Gull feeding at the shore with other gulls. We also saw Common Goldeneye and Greater Scaup in the sound and a few Sanderlings on one of the jetties.

We weren't able to access Stratford Point (I'll work on that for next year) so we moved on to Frash Pond. There, we found 30

Canvasback as well as numerous Bufflehead and Red-breasted and Hooded Merganser. We also saw a Double-crested Cormorant and a Great Egret. Our next stop was the Birdseye boat ramp. We saw several good birds there, including American Coot, another Great Egret, a Common Loon, and most exciting of all, an adult Bald Eagle. The egrets are rarely seen this time of year along our coast, but have been lingering this year, given the mild fall and early winter.

We left Stratford and headed back to Milford, stopping at the Audubon Coastal Center first. The notable sightings there included a Sharp-shinned Hawk taking shelter from the wind, and several Dunlin along the shore. Our last stop was Silver Sands State Park where the highlight was a Peregrine Falcon. We spotted it perched on the rocky causeway that leads from the beach to Charles Island, then watched as it flew along the shore, scattering all the birds in its path. Our species total for the morning was 38. I think we all spent the rest of the day warming up from the cold. Hopefully, the weather will be a bit warmer for the other field trips we have planned for the winter!

--Chris Loscalzo

February First Wednesday Walk Report

Magically the rain stopped just at 8:00 am as we started. 24 participants joined our leader, Greg Hanisek on this February 1st, New Haven Bird Club 1st Wednesday Walk at Hammonasset Beach State Park. We saw 43 species: Canada Goose, American Black Duck, Mallard, Greater Scaup, Common Eider, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Red-throated Loon, Common Loon, Horned Grebe, Great Cormorant, Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Sanderling, Purple Sandpiper, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, Carolina Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, American Robin, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Common Grackle, House Finch.

--Kris Johnson, Scribe

Hammonasset Beach State Park Field Trip Report

On Saturday, February 4th, 20+ new and experienced birders visited this prime birding location along the CT coast. We enjoyed warmer than average temperatures for this time of year, clear skies, and relatively calm seas. We also benefited from the lack of snow cover, as it made hiking easy and allowed us views of a number of interesting species. In fact, the first birds we saw were a flock of Horned Larks and Snow Buntings feeding in the grassy parking lot behind the nature center. From there, we went to the Meig's Point jetty where we saw a large flock of shorebirds. There were dozens of Sanderlings as well as several Purple Sandpipers, Ruddy Turnstones, and Dunlin, all feeding along the shore. Two male Common Eider were in the water by the jetty as were several Red-throated Loons and Common Goldeneye. We then hiked the Moraine Trail to its end. As soon as we arrived, we noticed a large seal with its head out of the water.

(Continued on bottom of next page)

MEET THE BOARD

Craig Repasz: Indoor Program Chair

Craig Repasz, NHBC's Indoor Program Chair, was born and raised in Vermont. That state's wilderness and broadly natural character likely played a part in making him the outdoor person that he is. Craig has been a trail adopter/maintainer with the Appalachian Mountain Club, and he's monitored alpine vegetation for that organization. He snowshoes, skis cross-country, and backpacks in all seasons, and is currently working on his goal of hiking all of the 100 highest peaks in New England and all of the Adirondacks' High Peaks—in winter.



And then there's birding, an interest that started when Craig was in the third grade. A local radio station played a bird song before giving the weather report each morning. Craig always rushed to hear it and soon was making feeders out of bleach bottles, hoping to attract some birds of his own. He also started going on nature walks offered by the Natural History Museum in his home town of St. Johnsbury.

Craig has participated in official programs in VT that monitor the Bicknell's Thrush and other montane species. He has also participated in and is a compiler for the White Mountains (of NH) Christmas Bird Count (CBC) which covers old growth forest and 9 mountains higher than 4,000 ft. These areas can be accessed only by ski and snowshoe, but such intensive labor usually produces no more than about 20 species. Craig admits that Connecticut's relatively easily-gotten CBC counts are a welcome change.

Craig moved to CT and later attended Yale where he earned a degree in the history of science and medicine. He also did some graduate work in Ecology and is now employed as a clinical lab technician. The birding continued when Craig moved to our state. A member of NHBC for 9 years, he has begun his second year as Indoor Program Chair. He's a dedicated participant in CBCs in CT and VT/NH as well as the CT Summer Bird Count. He's worked on the New Haven County Breeding Bird Survey.

Craig's favorite bird is the Evening Grosbeak, a fondness going

(Trip Report continued)

It had a fish in its mouth that it seemed to be trying to swallow with some difficulty. From the large size of the head and long snout, we decided that it was a Gray Seal and that the fish was a skate. Birds of interest at this location included Horned Grebe, a male Surf Scoter, Red-breasted Merganser, and Common Loon.

Our next stop was Willard's Island. Along the trail there we came upon a juvenile Cooper's Hawk perched low in a deciduous tree. It allowed us to get very close to it, so we all had excellent views of this accipiter. Other sightings from the trail included Bufflehead, Northern Harrier, Red-breasted Nuthatch,

back to his childhood. On many mornings when, in his words, "the air was so cold it could shatter," flocks of the grosbeaks appeared at his bleach bottle feeders, creating a great commotion and an irresistible display of color. Craig's love for birds was sealed forever. In CT, his favorite birding spot is the Naugatuck State Forest which he discovered while working on the Breeding Bird Survey. Naugatuck is full of Veery and Wood Thrush, he reports, and always has Louisiana Waterthrush in its streams. Beyond New England, Craig has birded in Canada, Alaska, the American Northwest,

and Arizona. His most memorable birding experiences include getting a side-by-side view of a Hoary Redpoll and Common Redpoll in Alaska and seeing a "chicken-like" bird pointed out by his non-birding wife as they taxied on a Wyoming airstrip. The "chicken" turned out to be a Greater Sage Grouse. And while bicycling from Maine to Texas (oh yes, bicycling is yet another favorite activity of outdoorsman Craig), he had a close—no more than about a foot away—encounter with a Ruby-crowned Kinglet. It was on a cold November day in the Smokies in North Carolina. Craig and the kinglet kept looking at each other as they shivered and huddled down. They both had miles to go; Craig remembers hoping the little bird would make it.

Currently residing in Hamden, Craig is married to epidemiologist Jane Brokaw (yes, she's distantly related to newsman Tom). She's not strictly a birder but can easily spend a goodly amount of time observing the behavior of a single bird. Craig has one son, Nathan, a Wesleyan student studying music and environmental sciences. Whatever Nathan's future in birding will be, he at least got a good early introduction: When he was at an age when other kids are memorizing the names of dinosaurs, he memorized large chunks of the Peterson Bird Guide and he has participated with his dad in a CBC. And to round out this outdoorsman's domestic scene, even Craig's cookie jar reflects a "natural" tie-in: His favorite cookies are the Joe Frogger (a molasses/ rum treat he's been known to whip up himself). Hermit Cookies (as in Hermit Thrush?) come in a very close second.

--Betty Zuraw

Yellow-rumped Warbler, and a possible pair of early Tree Swallows. We then made our way over to the west beach. We didn't see any new species at that location, but we did get good looks at several Horned Grebe and Surf Scoter in the water there. Our last stop of the day was the campgrounds area. There, we saw Cedar Waxwings, American Robins, more Yellow-rumped Warblers, and a Sharp-shinned Hawk. Other noteworthy species seen on this trip included Great Blue Heron and Green-winged Teal. We saw a total of 46 species over the course of the morning. Not bad for a mid-winter's day!

--Chris Loscalzo



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Harris's Sparrow in Lebanon
 Photo by Bill Batsford



Turkey Vultures in Woodbridge
 Photo by Biswajit Mukherjee



Brant at Silver Sands State Park
 Photo by Mike Horn



Common Eider at Hammonasset
 Photo by Mike Horn



Snow Goose at Hammonasset
 Photo by Mike Horn

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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 also for the following membership year.

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

Moving? If your address, phone or email change, please send that information to the Club address given on the form to the left or contact the Membership Chair, Mike Ferrari: mike.ferrari@att.net or 203.435.5712.

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