



THE CHICKADEE

Newsletter of the New Haven Bird Club

February 2014

2014 CALENDAR

(See inside for details)

Thursday, February 13, 7:00 pm **Theresa Feo, Feather Development and Differentiation**

Saturday, February 22, 7:00 am **Sachuest Point NWR and Rhode Island Coast**

Wednesday, March 5, 8:00 am **First Wednesday Walk: Stratford—Shore & Great Meadows**

Thursday, March 13, 7:00 pm **Alejandro Rico-Guevara, Hummingbird Feeding Mechanics: Implications of Ecology and Evolution**

Saturday, March 29, 10:00 am **Gull and Gannet Frenzy, Stratford Seawall, Stratford**

Wednesday, April 2, 8:00 am **First Wednesday Walk: CT Audubon Coastal Center, Milford**

Thursday, April 10, 7:00 pm **Steve Broker, Ravens at Their Nest**

Saturday, April 12, 8:00 am **East Rock Birding and Trail Maintenance, New Haven**

Saturday, April 12, 8:30 am **Beginner's Bird Walk at Milford Point IBA, Milford**

Sunday, April 13, 8:30 am **The Richard English Memorial Field Trip: Lighthouse Point to the English Bird Sanctuary, Killingworth**

BONUS! Double your fun! This field trip is tied in with the speaker's talk given at the club meeting on Thurs., April 10.

Sunday, April 13, 8:00 am **West Rock Ridge State Park: New Haven, Hamden, & Woodbridge**

Saturday, April 19, 8:00 am **Ansonia Nature Center, Ansonia**

Wednesday, April 30, 8:00 am **President's Walk at Lake Chamberlain, Bethany**

Save the Date Annual Banquet

Thursday, May 8, 2014 — 6:00 pm
Amarante's Restaurant, New Haven

Speaker: Richard Crossley, author of The Crossley ID Guides
Topic: "Past, Present, and Future"

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The New Haven Bird Club begins the new year in excellent overall shape. Membership is reasonably stable at approximately 450 members with 31 new members so far this year. The financial condition is also stable with income meeting expenses and with a solid reserve fund for emergencies. We are fortunate to have a wonderful venue for our Indoor Programs that have been very well attended. Our

Outdoor Program is also very active year-round with trips peaking, of course, in the spring season.

The Bird Club is a volunteer organization, and we are fortunate to have a large contingent of capable and generous volunteers to make our activities possible. Larry Bausher, Publicity Chair, keeps us aware of Club activities and spreads awareness of our activities to the larger community with radio interviews and newspaper articles. Craig Repasz, Indoor Programs Chair, continues to orchestrate an interesting and enjoyable schedule of talks. Certainly the refreshments provided by Stacy Hanks are a much appreciated contribution to the success of the Indoor Programs. The Outdoor Program, ably directed by Chris Loscalzo for many years, is an extraordinarily important aspect of our Club's appeal. In addition to organizing the Outdoor Program we are very grateful for Chris's generosity in so capably leading a large number of the trips. There are many other members generously contributing their time to making the New Haven Bird Club the appealing and welcoming organization we know.

John Triana, on a completely voluntary basis, has maintained our website for several years. This website is limited by outdated technology so the Board feels we should update to more current technology with professional input to make the website more interactive and visually appealing. This important effort is being spearheaded by Pat Leahy. As part of this effort suggestions for desired improved visual appeal and functionality from the membership would be most appreciated. Suggestions may be made to any board member or directly to Pat Leahy (ptjleahy@yahoo.com) or myself (william.batsford@yale.edu).

Again I would like to express my appreciation to all (many more than mentioned here) the people whose efforts make the New Haven Bird Club such an attractive, interesting and friendly organization.

--Bill Batsford

NEW HAVEN BIRD CLUB – 2013-2014

OFFICERS

<i>President</i>	Bill Batsford william.batsford@yale.edu	203.787.1642
<i>Vice President</i>	Craig Repasz crepasz@hotmail.com	203.230.1697
<i>Treasurer</i>	Andy Stack ctstacks@optonline.net	203.397.0818
<i>Secretary</i>	Paul Wolter pwolter6@earthlink.net	860.681.5548

BOARD MEMBERS

<i>Conservation C0-Chairs</i>	Craig Repasz crepasz@hotmail.com Winie Wirth wirthwitte@att.net	203.230.1697 203.859.2971
<i>Education Chair</i>	Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe jubilee832001@yahoo.com	203.630.9640
<i>Hospitality Chair</i>	Stacy Hanks flybirdhanks@gmail.com	203.727.1063
<i>Indoor Programs</i>	Craig Repasz crepasz@hotmail.com	203.230.1697
<i>Member-at-Large</i>	Mike Horn mfhorn@att.net	203.288.1891
<i>Member-at-Large</i>	Kris Johnson kriswaxwing99@gmail.com	203.288.3087
<i>Membership Chair</i>	Mike Ferrari mike.ferrari@att.net	203.435.5712
<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
<i>Social Chair</i>	Donna Caporaso donnacap@aol.com	203.895.7669
<i>Yearbook Chair</i>	Betty Zuraw bz4feathers@sbcglobal.net	860.632.1156

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

<i>Birds in Words</i>	Kris Johnson kriswaxwing99@gmail.com	203.288.3087
<i>Christmas Bird Count</i>	Chris Loscalzo closcalz@optonline.net	203.389.6508
<i>Email List</i>	Mike Ferrari mike.ferrari@att.net	203.435.5712
<i>Hawk Watch Lighthouse Point</i>	Steve Mayo rsdmayo@sbcglobal.net	203.393.0694
<i>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	203.288.0621

FROM THE BOARD

The next board meeting is Thursday, February 27, at 6:45 pm at the Regional Water Authority in New Haven.

The deadline for submissions to the April newsletter is March 28. Send to Donna Batsford: donnabatsford@gmail.com

If you take pictures of NHBC events or on NHBC trips, please consider sending one to the newsletter to be included with the report. Send them to Donna Batsford at donnabatsford@gmail.com

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Jamene G. Farrell West Haven	Cathryn M. Holinger North Branford
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PLAN AHEAD!

Donations of art objects, more substantial bird-related items, or other things of relative value for our Annual Banquet Raffle are always welcome. Drop them off at regular Club meetings or contact Raffle Manager Donna Caporaso: donnacap@aol.com

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.

David Sibley at Menunkatuck Audubon Society

Menunkatuck Audubon Society hosts David Allen Sibley for a special March 12 program celebrating the release of the Second Edition of *The Sibley Guide to the Birds*. The talk will be on Wednesday, February 12 at 7 pm at the James Blackstone Memorial Library, 758 Main Street, Branford

BIRDS IN WORDS

Birds in Words is NHBC's book discussion group for people who like to read about their favorite hobby. Meetings are at 7:00 pm in the 6th floor Conference Room at Whitney Center, 200 Leeder Hill Drive, Hamden. *See directions to Whitney Center under Indoor Programs*. Please feel free to attend any of the meetings. All are welcome! If you have any questions, email or call Kris Johnson kriswaxwing99@gmail.com or 203-288-3087.

The next book is *Winter World, The Ingenuity of Animal Survival* by Bernd Heinrich. The date of the discussion has not been decided.

INDOOR PROGRAMS

Monthly indoor programs start in September and are held on the second Thursday of the month. The social half-hour at meetings begins at 7:00 pm; the meeting and program begin at 7:30 pm. 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. Meetings are at Whitney Center, Cultural Arts Center, 200 Leeder Hill Drive, Hamden. The facility is wheelchair accessible.

Directions to Whitney Center (200 Leeder Hill Drive, Hamden)

From I-95 North or South: Exit onto I-91 North in New Haven. Take Exit 6 (Willow St.). Continue with directions from I-91 (next).

From I-91 North or South: Take Exit 6 (Willow St.) in New Haven. At end of ramp, turn right onto Willow and proceed to the end (Whitney Ave.). Turn right onto Whitney. Drive 1.6 miles then turn left onto Putnam Ave. (Note: Playwright Restaurant is on the left). Then follow starred directions (**) below.

From Wilbur Cross (Rte. 15) North or South: Take Exit 61 (Whitney Ave). If southbound, turn right at end of ramp onto Whitney Ave. If northbound, turn left at end of ramp. Drive 2.4 mi., then turn right onto Putnam Ave. (Note: Playwright Restaurant is on the corner). Continue as follows:

**On Putnam, go approximately 0.7 mi, and at the third traffic light turn right onto Leeder Hill Dr. (Note: AT&T bldg at intersection). Go 0.6 mi. on Leeder Hill to Whitney Center on the left. Turn left at the first entrance, which has a big sign "South Entrance." After turning in, take an immediate left onto a raised parking area.

The meeting is in Whitney Center's South Building. Enter the main door, which is under the portico that is in view from the parking lot. Turn right down the hallway. The Cultural Arts Center is a short distance on the left.

Thursday, February 13, 2014 — Theresa Feo "Feather Development and Differentiation"

Clothes may make the man, but feathers make the bird. Birds sport thousands of feathers that come in myriad shapes and sizes for various uses including flying, attracting a mate, and even carrying water. The diversity of feathers is stunning but it is not always clear how the different feather shapes are produced. Yale PhD candidate Teresa Feo will present her ongoing research to uncover how feathers grow into different shapes. She is a 4th year PhD candidate in Richard Prum's Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology at Yale. Her focus is feather development, and she has worked extensively with Chris Clark (a previous speaker for the NHBC) on a project to document hummingbird courtship displays and feather sounds.

Thursday, March 13, 2014—Alejandro Rico-Guevara "Hummingbird Feeding Mechanics: Implications of Ecology and Evolution"

Every animal on earth faces a great challenge every day: It has to find enough food to survive but also because the amount of energy obtained will determine the outcomes of every task it undertakes, from growing to reproducing. In the wild, resources are limited because different kinds of animals have developed ways to rapidly consume them. Alejandro, a researcher in Margaret Rubega's ornithology lab at UConn, investigates an extreme example of this specialization to exploit resources in the quickest way possible: hummingbirds drinking nectar. The ultimate goal of his work is to bridge the gap between our knowledge of how feeding works, why that leads to certain foraging decisions, and how ecological and evolutionary patterns emerge from the relationships between feeding mechanisms and behavior. The research is fascinating. To understand the hummingbird world one needs to slow them down while they do what they have evolved to do better than any other vertebrate: feeding on flowers. Alejandro has studied their drinking mecha-

nism using high-speed cameras, filming over a thousand frames per second at full resolution, and using different cinematography tricks to achieve top quality research information. He has filmed hummingbirds from California to CT and from Canada to Brazil, pursuing different species with bizarre beak shapes. He has even developed and deployed automated systems to trigger high-speed cameras in high-Andean forests, the habitats with the most species of hummingbirds in the world.

Thursday, April 10, 2014 — Steve Broker "Ravens at Their Nest"

The Common Raven extended its breeding range into CT in the late 1980s, and it now can be found throughout the state. A breeding pair has been observed closely at West Rock Ridge in Woodbridge since discovery of the nest in 2003. Tonight Steve will discuss raven life history strategies including pair bonding, mating, nest-building, egg-laying, hatching, foraging for and caching of food, feeding and fledging of young, play behavior, defense of territory, and how they get along with their neighboring nesting peregrine falcons. Steve is a member and past president of NHBC and is in his 10th year as secretary of COA. An avid devotee of bird counts, he has participated in 30 Christmas Bird Counts with NHBC, and numerous others in CT and other states. He has served as CT Statewide CBC compiler for 26 years. A devoted participant in Summer Bird Counts too, he was active in the CT Breeding Bird Atlas in the 1980s, and as a life-long summer resident on Cape Cod, he contributed many hours of field work for the recently completed Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas. His birding focus in CT is breeding Common Ravens and Peregrine Falcons at West Rock Ridge State Park. In Massachusetts, his focus is the marsh birds of the Outer Cape. **BONUS!** After tonight's informational lecture, you can further expand your experience of ravens on a field trip that Steve will lead just 3 days later. Don't miss this splendid opportunity. (See Outdoor Trip description for Sunday, April 13).

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. Carpooling 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 www.newhavenbirdclub.org for trip information and watch for emails sent by the Club or contact trip leaders directly if you have questions about any of their trips.

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.

Sachuest Point NWR and Rhode Island Coast Saturday, February 22, 2014, 7:00 am

This all-day trip includes stops at Sachuest Pt., Beavertail State Park, Moonstone Beach, and Trustum Pond, all great RI birding sites. We should see grebes, loons, scoters, eiders, Purple Sandpipers, and Harlequin Ducks. Dress warmly—it's cold and windy on the coast. The walk is a bit strenuous. Bring lunch and a scope, if you have one. Meet at Branford commuter lot, Exit 55 of I-95. Leader: Chris Loscalzo: 203-389-6508 or closcalz@optonline.net

First Wednesday Walk: Stratford—Shore & Great Meadows Wednesday, March 5, 2014, 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 oceanic birds such as Long-tailed Duck and scoters, as well as raptors and shorebirds. Directions: Exit 30 off I-95, follow signs to Sikorsky Airport. Go past airport entrance, follow the causeway, then turn right onto Oak Bluff Ave to the entrance of Long Beach. Leader: Frank Mantlik. Contact: Tina Green: 203-247-2660, tina@renaissancestudios.com.

Gull and Gannet Frenzy, Stratford Seawall, Stratford Saturday, March 29, 2014, 10:00 am

We'll look through potentially thousands of gulls and see dozens of Gannets too as they feast on an annual plankton bloom along the coast. Meet at Lordship Seawall at south end of Washington Pkwy (near Marnick's Restaurant, 10 Washington Pkwy), Stratford. Leader: Frank Mantlik: 203-984-9410 mantlik@sbcglobal.net.

First Wednesday Walk: CT Audubon Coastal Center, Milford Wednesday, April 2, 2014, 8:00 am

Join us on this early spring trip to one of best local birding spots. We'll look out into the marsh and along the shore for waterfowl, shorebirds, waders, and raptors. Meet at the coastal center parking lot. Leader: Steven Spector. Contact person: Tina Green: 203-247-2660 or tina@renaissancestudios.com.

East Rock Birding and Trail Maintenance, New Haven Saturday, April 12, 2014, 8:00 am

Meet at the Eli Whitney Museum parking lot for a bird walk from 8 - 9:30. Then join Park Ranger Dan Barvir to help with

light trail maintenance along the river till noon. Bring pruning shears, work gloves, if you have them. Leader: Dan Barvir: 203-946-6086.

Beginner's Bird Walk at Milford Point IBA, Milford Saturday, April 12, 2014, 8:30 am

The Charles E. Wheeler Marsh at the mouth of the Housatonic River provides valuable foraging habitat for Great and Snowy Egrets nesting on nearby Charles Island. Today we will focus on long-legged waders and their habitat needs. This walk is geared to beginners but birders of all levels are invited. Families are welcome. Birders with more advanced skills can enjoy a day out and help support and inspire the beginners. Meet at CT Audubon Soc. Coastal Center parking lot, 1 Milford Pt. Rd. Leader: Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe: 203-630-9640 or cfolsom-okeefe@audubon.org

The Richard English Memorial Field Trip: Lighthouse Point to the English Bird Sanctuary, Killingworth Sunday, April 13, 2014, 8:30 am

Meet at the Lighthouse Point Park hawk watch parking lot and bird the harbor shore for gulls, loons, ducks, and shorebirds. We will then go to the Richard English Bird Sanctuary on Deer Lake in Killingworth. We finish our birding tour with a visit to Hammonasset State Park. This is an all-day trip; bring lunch and dress warmly. Leader: Mike Horn 203-288-1891 or mhorn@att.net.

BONUS! Double your fun! This field trip is tied in with the speaker's talk given at the club meeting on Thurs., April 10.

West Rock Ridge State Park: New Haven, Hamden, & Woodbridge - "Aves Agonistes: The Intertwined Lives of Peregrines and Ravens" Sunday, April 13, 2014, 8:00 am

We focus on just two breeding species for this trip to West Rock Ridge: 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 CT in the post-DDT era. Since then, 5 different females and 5 different males (tiercels) have occupied the ridge in various combinations. We observe their cliff site from an appropriate distance with the expectation of seeing flying, perching, preening, feeding, and 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 has nested

here 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 West Rock Nature Center parking lot on Wintergreen St, Hamden/New Haven border. Leader: Steve Broker: 203-272-5192 (cell: 203-747-6843), or ls.broker@cox.net

**Ansonia Nature Center, Ansonia
Saturday, April 19, 2014, 8:00 am**

Enjoy a walk at this fine birding location. The nature center has a small pond, grassy fields, thickets, wetlands, and woods. The woods have had Northern Goshawk and Great Horned Owls nesting there and there are often surprises. Meet at the nature center parking lot on Deerfield Lane (off Benz Road.) in Ansonia. Leader, Maria Stockmal: 203-488-3876 or m.stockmal@snet.net.

**President's Walk at Lake Chamberlain, Bethany
Wednesday, April 30, 2014, 8:00 am**

Join current club president Bill Batsford to check out this excellent birding area. Lake Chamberlain, a Regional Water Authority property, is surrounded by coniferous forest and it has open fields and thickets. Early spring migrants likely to be seen are Palm and Pine Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Phoebe, and Blue-headed Vireo. Bluebirds and Tree Swallows nest in bird houses. Meet at RWA parking lot, Sperry Rd. Leader: Bill Batsford: 203-787-1642 or william.batsford@yale.edu

Lake Gaillard November 16 Owl Prowl Trip Report

On a cold moonlit night in mid-November, about 75 people showed up at Lake Gaillard in North Branford to see if we could hear or observe any owls. We played recordings of screech, barred, and great horned owls. We tried the recordings at 3 different locations. We did not see any owls, but did hear a barred owl calling in the distance towards the Tilcon quarry. It was quite a distance away and not really responding to the recordings but hooting on its own. The later locations didn't provide any results; however, we did hear several songbirds in the nearby woods (alarmed by the owl calls?) and several ducks that were on the lake.

--John Triana

**January First Wednesday Walk: Sherwood Island State Park
Trip Report**

The bitter cold did not deter twelve intrepid birders from covering almost all of Sherwood Island SP with me on Wednesday, January 8. The temperature was 9 degrees when we began, and it was a balmy 19 degrees when we finished up at noon. Highlights of the 46 species seen today included Northern Harrier, Common Raven, Brown Thrasher, and 3 male Eastern Towhees. We actually saw the thrasher and the towhees at the same time, and we heard the towhees calling as well. It was a great day to be out birding with a great, fun group. Thanks to everyone who came. Species list: Canada Goose, Gadwall, American Black

Duck, Mallard, Long-tailed Duck, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Common Loon, Horned Grebe, Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon), Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Common Raven, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Brown Thrasher, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Snow Bunting, Eastern Towhee, American Tree Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco (Slate-colored), Northern Cardinal, American Goldfinch.

--Tina Green

Stratford/Milford Birding Tour Field Trip Report

On Sunday, January 12th, twenty-five club members spent the morning visiting birding hot spots in Stratford and Milford. We saw lots of good birds, and especially quite a few Snowy Owls! We started the day at Mondo Pond in Milford. The pond was only partially open, but in that small area there were several waterfowl species, including American Wigeon, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, and American Coot. Our next stop was Long Beach in Stratford. As we approached the beach, we spotted the first Snowy Owl of the day, sitting on a tuft of grass in the Great Meadow Marsh. Later, when we were viewing the marsh from the beach, we saw two more Snowy Owls, so there were three there at the same time! Other notable species seen at Long Beach were: Iceland Gull, Long-tailed Duck, Common Goldeneye, Sanderling, and Dunlin. Our next stop was the Stratford Seawall. We saw a few Greater Scaup there. Then, we went to Stratford Point where we saw several interesting birds. We spotted a Red-necked Grebe in the sound as well as two Surf Scoters, Great Cormorant, a large flock of Greater Scaup, and Red-throated Loon. Also by the point, there was a male Eurasian Wigeon, an odd-looking and possibly hybrid American Wigeon, and an Iceland Gull on the breakwater. From across the way, we could see another Snowy Owl at Milford Point, our fourth owl of the day. We visited Short Beach next. There, we saw another Eurasian



Photo by Donna Batsford

Wigeon, Gadwall, a male Bufflehead out of the water roosting on a rock, and Red-breasted Merganser. We then went to Frash Pond where we saw a Great Blue Heron, a Belted Kingfisher, and a flock of Canvasback.

After a brief stop to see a roosting Black-crowned Night-Heron, we went to the Sikorsky Airport where we saw yet another Snowy Owl. Our last stop was the Birdseye Boat Ramp where we saw some American Coot and another Snowy Owl flying over the Milford marsh in the distance! We had an amazing total of seven sightings of at least five different individuals. They really are beautiful birds, and we were fortunate to see so many of them. This is a historic irruption year for this species. All in all, we had a great day and a very memorable trip.

--Chris Loscalzo

Hammonasset State Park Field Trip Report

On Saturday, February 1st, about fifty (!) people met at Hammonasset State Park in Madison for a mid-winter bird walk. The weather was surprisingly mild and pleasant, with little or no wind and temperatures in the 30s. We started at the Nature Center parking lot where we observed a large mixed flock of birds feeding in the grassy lot. There were Horned Larks, Snow Buntings, and a few Lapland Longspur. We also observed a female Northern Harrier perched on a stick in the marsh. We then walked over to the Meigs Point jetty where we watched for birds for nearly an

hour. We saw two Purple Sandpiper on the rocks and a large flock of Sanderling on the shore. Waterfowl in the calm sound included: Long-tailed Duck, Greater Scaup, Horned Grebe,



Photo by Donna Batsford

Red-breasted Merganser, and Common and Red-throated Loon. We were all pleased when a Bonaparte's Gull flew along the shore for all of us to see. We then made our way over to the West Beach. We walked out to the water and saw several more Horned Grebes and loons, as well as Common Goldeneye in the distance. Our next and last stop was in the campgrounds. We walked from the main parking lot to the swan pond and back. Along the way, we saw Hooded Merganser, Black Duck, Great Blue Heron, Northern Flicker, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and a Fox Sparrow. On the day, we recorded a total of 45 species. We all enjoyed the day and appreciated the better than average weather conditions for this time of year.

--Chris Loscalzo and Paul Wolter

Milford Point Cleanup

Winie Wirth reports that several people helped clean up Milford Point on Saturday, December 7. Their efforts were greatly appreciated. When the group was finished, the area was free of debris.



Volunteer Opportunities with Audubon

Volunteering is a great way to improve your bird identification skills, meet new people, and gain experience in field biology. Audubon and its partners are looking for volunteers to participate in the following activities:

Bird Banding and Territory Mapping:

The Audubon Center at the Bent of the River has been conducting shrubland bird monitoring in order to adaptively manage its fields and meadows.

Bird Banding: We will be conducting bird banding on Thursdays, starting May 1st, 2014, from May through June and again from September through October. Important Bird Area Program Coordinator and Master Bander Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe will provide training and hopes to eventually sub-permit volunteers to assist in running the Bent's bird banding station.

Territory Mapping: We are also looking for 4-6 volunteers to assist with territory mapping for Prairie Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Field Sparrow and Indigo Bunting. Good hearing is required. Territory mapping volunteers will need to commit to visiting to the Bent of the River and walking a route through the meadows five times between mid-May and the end of June. Keep in mind that both bird banding and territory mapping are early morning activities (6-10am).

International Shorebird Surveys:

What: Threats to shorebirds have become more diverse and widespread in recent decades. Also as a result of Hurricane Sandy, forage habitat for shorebirds along the CT coastline has likely shifted and assessment of shorebird activity is needed. As part of a hemisphere-wide effort to understand the declining trends of migratory shorebirds, International Shorebird Surveys are planned to occur along the coastline of Connecticut.

When: International shorebird surveys take place 1-3 times a month (depending on participant availability) from April to mid-June, and from mid-July to the end of October. Participants visit a survey sites at high tide and record which shorebird species are present and the number of birds of each species. The data is entered into e-bird using the ISS portal and training will be provided via a webinar.

Piping Plover and Least Tern Monitoring:

The Piping Plover is a small migratory shorebird that breeds on beaches in Connecticut from late March through August. The Least Tern nests on select beaches and islands in Connecticut in May through July. Piping Plover and Least Tern monitors are needed to survey for nests and young, help ensure their protection against predators and human disturbance, and to educate the public about the birds.

When: March through August. Volunteers need only commit to monitoring once per month. Monitor Training will take place from 10:30am-1pm on Mar. 15th, 2014 at Kellogg Environmental Center in Derby, CT.

To volunteer or for more information, contact Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe, Important Bird Area Program Coordinator, at 203-264-5098 ext. 310 or cfolsom-okeefe@audubon.org.

MEET THE BOARD

Paul Wolter: Secretary

Paul Wolter, NHBC's Secretary, would make a good "poster boy" for *The Fast Track to Becoming a Skilled Birder*. Though he had his first encounters with birding as a teen, he didn't take it up seriously till about four years ago. Coincidentally (or maybe not coincidentally!) that's when he also joined NHBC. He's been "on a roll" ever since. In that relatively short time, he's become an outstanding birder, and his story can serve as an encouraging example for beginners or others wanting to improve their birding skills. Paul is quick to say that it requires study and dedicated field work but the motivating point is that it doesn't have to take endless years to achieve excellent levels of expertise.



Born in England, Paul grew up in an area northeast of London, an agricultural region known as East Anglia. It is a fertile and expansive coastal flatlands jutting out into the North Sea. Paul's introduction to birding came with his discovery of mist nets and a bird banding station while he was hiking through farm fields behind his house. The Golden Oriole he was given to hold made a strong impression on him. He started looking for other species in the area, by himself and on occasional school nature trips, and recalls how thrilled he was to find a stunningly plumed Hoopoe one day while out walking alone.

But serious birding was still in the future. First came college. Paul attended Cambridge University where his birding was, as he puts it, "shelved in favor of an active sporting and social life." An avid sportsman all his life, he played rugby, soccer, and cricket. Academically, he earned a degree in history, then moved to London where he became a commodities trader. Six months later he was transferred to his company's New York office—that was 35 years ago, and he's been in the U.S. ever since. In more recent times Paul switched careers and is now with a financial services company in New York. He previously lived in New York and New Jersey but moved to Branford seven years ago. It's a long commute to his job but he gets a break by working at home one day a week.

The U.S. produced not only employment for Paul, but also a wife, Maureen. They've been married for 30 years and have

one son, a Dartmouth grad currently living and working in Manhattan. Although Paul's wife is not a birder, she played a part in his decision to return to his childhood pastime. Four years ago she started a business tied in with her special interest in heirloom sewing and embroidery. With the prospect of greater free weekend time and a wife increasingly occupied with her new venture, Paul decided the time was perfect for firing up his dormant birding gene. Since then, he has participated in every NHBC Christmas Bird Count. He's a faithful regular on field trips offered by our club as well as other birding groups, and by now even has begun co-leading walks for NHBC as well as Rhode Island Audubon. Paul has cheerfully stepped up to the full-service plate too. Not only is he Secretary of NHBC, he's also on the board of the CT Ornithological Association.

In his few years of birding, Paul hasn't done much international bird travel, "yet," he says, but a trip to Namibia and Botswana last year netted 342 species, and Florida is becoming an annual excursion. He regrets not having been a birder during his many years of business travel but admits he did get to see quite a few birds on the trips to 30 countries and 35 U.S. states; he just didn't ID the species. As for local birding, his own Branford patch is a favorite; his town list is just under 200 species. Hammonasset is another preferred spot, but often on weekends, the only time he has time to bird, he heads for other East Coast states as well as the many corners of our own CT.

What birding advice can this "fast track" birder offer? "Practice, practice, practice," he says with a characteristic chuckle, acknowledging that that's hardly novel advice. He quickly adds that he conveniently has a special "fast track" trick: His daily commute to work. During the four-hour round trip train ride between Branford and New York, he admits, he reads "an awful lot" of bird books and guides. Of course not many people have such long trips to work, but luckily for non-long-commuting birding devotees, bird books and guides can be read and studied anywhere.

--Betty Zuraw

Forest Bird Habitat Assessments

Audubon Connecticut's Forest Bird Initiative is integrating science, education, public policy, and land management expertise to ensure that abundant high-quality breeding habitat for forest songbirds exists in our region. One of the primary ways we work toward achieving this goal is to collaborate with and provide technical assistance, via Habitat Assessments, for landowners, land managers, and communities who wish to protect and enhance habitat for breeding forest birds on the properties they own and/or manage.

A habitat assessment is a rapid field inventory of current

songbird habitat conditions on your property conducted by an Audubon conservation biologist and a CT Agricultural Experiment Station certified forester during the spring or summer months. The assessment and accompanying report are meant to be resources to help inform forest management if bird habitat is of interest. Landowners are under no obligation to implement recommendations.

For additional information or to sign-up for a Habitat Assessment, please contact Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe (cfolsom-okeefe@audubon.org) or Patrick Comins (pcomins@audubon.org) at (203)-264-5098.

New Haven Christmas Bird Count Report

The 114th annual New Haven Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, December 14th, 2013. It will be remembered best for the inclement weather on the day of the count. There was a steady snow fall from dawn to dusk, there was a strong wind, and the temperature was in the teens to low twenties for most of the day. Despite the difficult weather conditions, many good birds were seen and most of the expected species were recorded. The participants deserve a huge amount of credit for going out on a cold and snowy day and covering their areas so well. Everyone did a great job and there were no injuries or accidents. We're going to hope for better weather next year, but we will always be able to take pride in what we accomplished this year.

The species list, with rare birds in boldface, is as follows:

Snow Goose, 7; Brant, 1216; Canada Goose, 5686; **Cackling Goose, 1**; Mute Swan, 97; Wood Duck, 1; Gadwall, 217; **Eurasian Wigeon, 1**; American Wigeon, 93; American Black Duck, 725; Mallard, 1681; Black Duck/Mallard hybrid, 6; American Green-winged Teal, 96; Ring-necked Duck, 20; Greater Scaup, 1302; Lesser Scaup, 300; **Harlequin Duck, 1**; Surf Scoter, 1; White-winged Scoter, 1; Long-tailed Duck, 13; Bufflehead, 138; Common Goldeneye, 367; **Barrow's Goldeneye, 1**; Hooded Merganser, 207; Common Merganser, 68; Red-breasted Merganser, 187; Ruddy Duck, 78; Wild Turkey, 51; Red-throated Loon, 9; Common Loon, 23; Horned Grebe, 6; Double-crested Cormorant, 2; Great Cormorant, 11; Great Blue Heron, 14; Black Vulture, CW; Turkey Vulture, CW; Bald Eagle, 2; Northern Harrier, 13; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 5; Cooper's Hawk, 6; accipiter, sp., 1; Red-shouldered Hawk, 5; Red-tailed Hawk, 28; Peregrine Falcon, 2; Clapper Rail, 2; **King Rail, 1**; American Coot, 1; Killdeer, 4; Greater Yellowlegs, 1; Ruddy Turnstone, 1; Sanderling, 29; Purple Sandpiper, 33; Dunlin, 5; Wilson's Snipe, 1; American Woodcock, 2; Bonaparte's Gull, 1; Ring-billed Gull, 2417; Herring Gull, 1255; **Iceland Gull, 1**; Great Black-backed Gull, 76; Rock Pigeon, 452; Mourning Dove, 289; Monk Parakeet, 29; Eastern Screech Owl, 27; Great Horned Owl, 5; **Snowy Owl, 1**; Barred Owl, 2; Belted Kingfisher, 15; **Red-headed Woodpecker, 1**; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 89; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 17; Downy Woodpecker, 120; Hairy Woodpecker, 13; Northern Flicker, 39; Pileated Woodpecker, 2; Eastern Phoebe, 1; Blue Jay, 288; American Crow, 1274; Fish Crow, 31; crow, sp., 92; Common Raven, 10; Horned Lark, 85; Black-capped Chickadee, 195; Tufted Titmouse, 170; White-breasted Nuthatch, 89; Brown Creeper, 11; Carolina Wren, 51; Winter Wren, 9; Marsh Wren, 1; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 31; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 6; Eastern Bluebird, 34; Hermit Thrush, 4; American Robin, 1136; Gray Catbird, 10; Northern Mockingbird, 23; European Starling, 2211; American Pipit, 78; Cedar Waxwing, 111; **Orange-crowned Warbler, CW**; **Nashville Warbler, 1**; Yellow-rumped Warbler, 10; Pine Warbler, 4; Palm Warbler, 13; Eastern Towhee, 4; American Tree Sparrow, 137; Chipping Sparrow, 6; Field Sparrow, 10; **Vesper Sparrow, 1**; Savannah Sparrow, 38; Savannah Sparrow, Ipswich race, 1; Fox Sparrow, 11; Song

Sparrow, 659; Swamp Sparrow, 16; White-throated Sparrow, 694; White-crowned Sparrow, 6; Dark-eyed Junco, 1263; Northern Cardinal, 255; Red-winged Blackbird, 812; Rusty Blackbird, 127; Common Grackle, 1489; Brown-headed Cowbird, 304; Purple Finch, 2; House Finch, 146; American Goldfinch, 267; and House Sparrow, 551. Species Total: 119 + 3 CW.

The participants were:

Ross Allen, Ralph Amodei, Margaret Ardwin, Christin Armini, Mark Aronson, Phil Asprelli, Dan Barvir, Bill Batsford, Larry Bausher, Carol Bedworth, Andy Brand, Stephen Broker, Lauren Brown, Michael Carpenter, Louisa Cunningham, Beth Dock, Aaron Dollar, John Farley, Mike Ferrari, Daniel Field, Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe, Frank Gallo, Christine Haley, Stacy Hanks, Mike and Pat Horn, Christine Howe, Richard Huck, Deborah Johnson, Kris Johnson, Lynn Jones, Tom Kelly, Lorenzo Kleine, Pat Leahy, Carol and Gary Lemmon, Christine Liu, Donna Lorello, Chris Loscalzo, Frank Mantlik, Stephen Mayo, Flo McBride, Don McGregor, Dan and Karen Mercurio, Vanessa Mickan, Bob Mitchell, Judy Moore, Brendan and Sean Murtha, Jacob Musser, Gina Nichol, Michael O'Brien, John Oshlick, Philip Pivawer, Noble Proctor, Beverly Propen, Craig Repasz, Jason Rieger, Brian Roach, Nancy Rosenbaum, Arne Rosengren, Paul Rubino, Sam Saulys, Jeff Severino, Arthur Shippee, James Sirch, Paul Smith, Dan Spakowitz, Nancy Specht, Charla and Steven Spector, Andy Stack, Maria Stockmal, Margaret Thomas, Jesus Tirado, John Triana, Marianne Vahey, Peter Vitali, Lisa Wahle, Robert White, Chris and J.E. Woerner, Paul Wolter, George Zepko, and Amy Zvonar.

Thanks to all who participated.

--Chris Loscalzo, NH CBC Compiler



*Christmas Count Day at Branford Supply Ponds
Photo by Maria Stickmal*

NHBC Winter Feeder Report 2013-2014

End of Week 5

This year we have 21 surveyors reporting, 6 via Postal Mail and 15 via email. We are located all over New Haven County and one surveyor in Fairfield County.

We have finished the first 5 weeks of the survey and the counts are low. There were 0 Pine Siskins reported this year whereas last year we had 147 in the first week. This year we have one 1 Common Redpoll during week 5. There have been 0 Red-breasted Nuthatches reported so far whereas last year we had quite a few.

Some data from the sheets:

We had 34 of the 34 Common Species show up for a score of 100%. A few of these were seen only in the first week and not in the other four weeks so I expect this number to change in the next five weeks.

We had 11 of 32 Uncommon Species show up at the feeders for a percentage of 34%. The uncommon species were: Brown Creeper (Maris Fiondella, Bev Propen, Tim Rodgers, Jane Scully, Charlotte K. White, Helen Wilson); Common Redpoll (Helen Wilson); Eastern Phoebe (Helen Wilson); Eastern Towhee (Bev Propen, Charlotte K. White, Winie Wirth); Hermit Thrush (Jane Scully); Monk Parakeet (Winie Wirth); Baltimore (Northern) Oriole (Amy Hopkins); Red Shouldered Hawk (Tim Rodgers); Rusty Blackbird (Jane Scully); Winter Wren (Deborah Johnson); Yellow Rumped Warbler (Bev Propen).

The only Waterfowl that showed were Mallards reported by Dean Rupp and Nancy Morand.

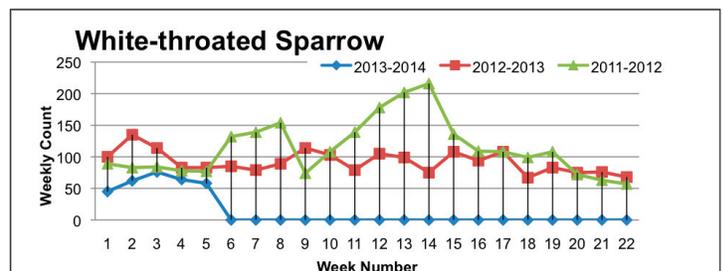
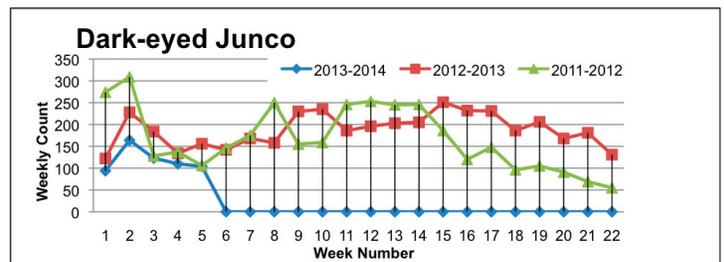
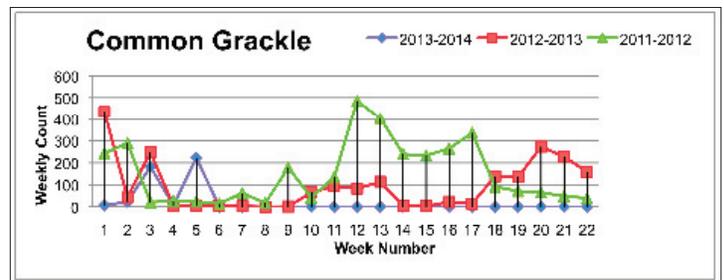
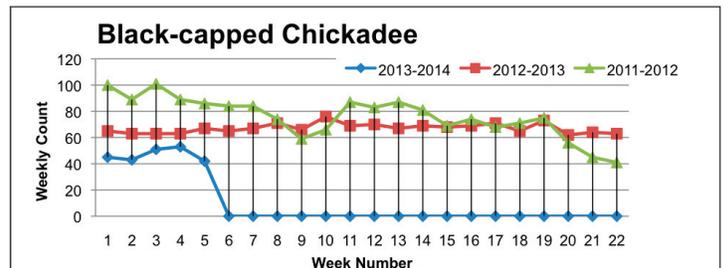
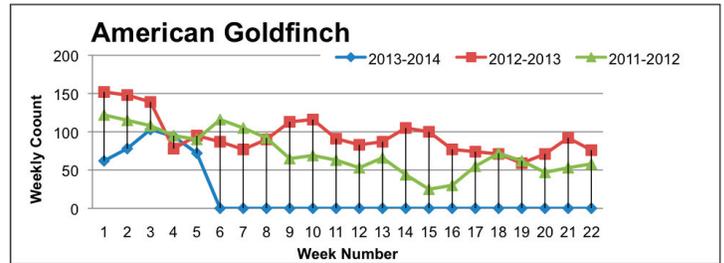
Animals reported during the first five weeks were: Gray Squirrel (majority); Chipmunk (some); Black Squirrel (Helen Wilson); Coyote (Jane Scully); Opossum (Nancy Morand, Ellie Tessmer); Raccoon (Nancy Morand, Tim Rodgers); Skunk (Tim Rodgers); White Tail Deer (Dean Rupp, Jane Scully).

I have also added to the report this year the graph of the first 5 weeks of the 5 species that I follow. If anyone wants a graph of a species not shown please let me know and I will be happy to make it up for you.

A surveyor wrote: "Week 5 – Huge number of Red-winged Blackbirds, grackles, and starlings flocked to birdfeeders and suet to such a prolonged period that I covered the feeders for the rest of the day. Scarier than Hitchcock's movie!"

Have a Healthy and Happy New Year

--Pete Vitali, Chairman: NHBC Winter Feeder Survey





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

Newsletter February 2014

The date on address labels is your membership expiration date.

NHBC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____

State, Zip +4 _____

Phone _____

Email _____

(Please print clearly in block letters)

Dues:

Individual - \$15

Couple/Family - \$20 # of family members _____

Supporting - \$50 # of family members _____

Student under 18 - Free

Life Membership: A one-time payment of \$300
for 1 or 2 people at same address.

Additional gift to support the NHBC \$ _____

I would like to volunteer to help the club.

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

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.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

New Haven Bird Club is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. **All dues and donations are fully tax deductible.** If your employer 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 preference, or national origin.

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.

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

The New Haven Bird Club is now on Facebook. So log onto facebook and like the page "New Haven Bird Club." You can post your photos, see other photos, participate in a discussion and check out the upcoming events.

CTBirds is an open discussion email list to discuss birds and birding in the state. To Subscribe, go to:

http://lists.ctbirding.org/mailman/listinfo/ctbirds_lists.ctbirding.org

The CTDailyReport list is used to distribute summaries of rare and uncommon bird sightings. To Subscribe, go to:

http://lists.ctbirding.org/mailman/listinfo/ctdailyreport_lists.ctbirding.org

NHBC website: www.newhavenbirdclub.org