



THE CHICKADEE

Newsletter of the New Haven Bird Club June 2026

◆ PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

June marks the end of the 2025-2026 year of birding events for the New Haven Bird Club, and the end of my first year as president of the Executive Board. I was amazed to learn how many people volunteer their time to make the club’s activities possible. Prior to this year, my only interactions with the club members were on birding walks, where I was always impressed by the leaders’ skills at recognizing birds’ songs and spotting the birds, and accurately describing the birds’ locations in the trees or field so everyone could find them.

Many thanks to **DeWitt Allen**, Chair of the Outdoor Programs committee, who scheduled the walks, generated descriptions and directions for them. NHBC had 51 bird walks this year, led by 32 volunteer leaders. The final walk of the year will be in Barkhamsted on July 19th.

Which leads me to thanking **Chris Howe** for directing the production of the NHBC’s annual Yearbook, listing the information for each of the bird walks and contact information for the club’s members. Chris is hoping someone will take over her role as Yearbook chair after the 2026-2027 one is printed this summer. *If you’re interested in increasing your involvement in this important aspect that the club offers, please let Chris or me know.*

Laurie Reynolds is our Membership Chair, and could have another title: Recruitment Chair as well. She is the friendly face walking up to anyone she doesn’t recognize on a birding walk and after a brief chat with her, they’re ready to become a member of the club.

A major accomplishment for the club this year was redesigning our NHBC website. This effort was led by Website Chair, **Cheryl Cape**, who worked with a developer to create a website full of bird images that also makes it easy to learn about upcoming bird walks, indoor programs and other events, as well as photos of recent events. It is bound to increase the public’s interest in birds and birding.

Gail Martino as Chair of Indoor Meeting Programs coordinated 8 Indoor programs which are held in person at the Whitney Center but can also be seen online. She recorded a total of 500 attendees for those programs. The NHBC’s Annual Meeting was on April 9th at the Whitney Center when John Himmelman, gave a humorous talk entitled Birds: Their Side of the Story. She organized a professional puppet show about birds at the Branford Public library, which was attended by 40 children and parents, hopefully sparking an interest in birding in those families. She also organized, with her committee, the NHBC Annual



next page...

CONTENTS	Page
Upcoming Field Trips	2
Birds in Words Schedule	2
Field Trip Reports	3 - 7
Wingspan Dates	7

Presidents' Message *continued*

Banquet on May 14, 2026. The evening was a huge success with many raffle items available netting about \$950 in proceeds, a delicious dinner, and a fascinating slide show about birding in Borneo by **Club Member, Gina Nichol** of Sunrise Birding.

Craig Repasz has revitalized the NHBC "Birds in Words" book club. Check the NHBC website for the schedule and location.

This year we purchased 20 children's size binoculars for our outreach programs. Club members **Christin Arnini** and **Michelle Keefe**, with the help of other volunteers, have programs for children to teach them about the beauty of birds and the importance of protecting their habitats. They use our new binoculars to show the kids how to use them. The kids are enthusiastic! A parent/child birding walk is planned for September 26, 2026, which will hopefully attract more interest in birding and future club members.

Finally, I had the pleasure of giving the President's Award this year to **Emmeline Kaiser**, who is the NHBC Publicity Chair and has been very effective at informing our members of all the Club's activities.

Thank you to everyone for a wonderful year of birding. *~Margaret Fikrig*

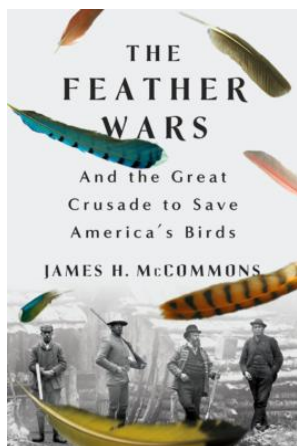
UPCOMING WALKS/FIELD TRIPS Summer 2026

July 19, 2026 7:30 – 11:30 am Peoples State Forest, Barkhamsted – Paul Mahler and Michele McDermott

Meet at the parking lot for Church Pool Park and then carpool over to the entrance for Peoples State Forest.

Church Pool Park is located at: 10 Pleasant Valley Rd, Barkhamsted, CT 06063

*Click on the date for more details or go [to New Haven Bird Club website](#)



"Birds in Words" book club will meet on Monday, **September 28, 2026**, from 6:30 to 8:00 pm at the Mitchell Library in New Haven.

Feel free to bring snacks to enjoy and share!

The club will discuss [*Feather Wars: And The Great Crusade to Save America's Birds*](#) by James H. McCommons.

"A definitive history of bird conservation in America." (*Kirkus Reviews*, starred)

"Birds in Words" book club will meet on Monday, **November 16, 2026**, from 6:30 to 8:00 pm at the Mitchell Library in New Haven.

Feel free to bring snacks to enjoy and share!

The club will discuss [*The Story of Birds: A New History from Their Dinosaur Origins to the Present*](#) by Steve Brusatte.

TRIP REPORTS – May & June 2026

Lake Chamberlain, Bethany, May 20, It was a warm humid day when 15 happy birders circled one of the Regional Water Authority’s beautiful reservoirs. Much of our morning was spent dawdling up to and over the dam, inspecting the Tree Swallows and Eastern Bluebirds that were in turn inspecting the colony of nest boxes on and below the dam.

Two bluebird pairs had selected their home boxes and were busy defending them against the many Tree Swallows eager to move in themselves. Besides those two species we identified an Eastern Kingbird carrying nesting material, Northern Rough-winged Swallows that use holes in the dam’s spillway as nesting sites, Indigo Buntings, several hawks, and several warbler species, probably all intent on nesting locally rather than migrating onward – Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Chestnut-sided Warbler, and Pine Warbler. On our 2.5 mile circuit of the lake, we were treated to the songs of typical forest birds including Warbling and Red-eyed Vireos, Veery, Wood Thrush, and Ovenbirds.

Pat Leahy

Julius M. Hansen Park, North Haven, May 23, 2026, twenty-five NHBC members and guests explored the fields and the trap-rock ridge in Hansen Park. Several of the former farm fields had become overgrown, so many of the colorful species that used the tree/scrub edges are no longer present. Unless the situation changes this may have been our club’s last visit here for a while. A little sad.

Nevertheless, our nearly three-hour walk encountered some of our old favorites, including Baltimore and Orchard Orioles, Blue-winged Warblers, Common Yellowthroats, Northern Yellow Warbler, and male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. Seven Great-crested Flycatchers kept us happily looking and listening. The highlight for most of us was a Great-horned Owl that flew up and perched in sight long enough for everyone to get good looks at it. Although we thought we were shut out on the always present Indigo Buntings, a singing male turned up on the edge of a tree line just as the rain started to get serious and we headed quickly back to the parking lot. A pretty good ending to our last visit for a while. Thirty-four species in all. Craig Repasz and DeWitt Allen



In search of a
Scarlet Tanager



Great Horned Owl – as majestic
as ever. Photo by Sue Caperino



Photo by Ann Meacham
In search of an Indigo Bunting

Lake Watrous, May 27, 2026, Lake Watrous in Bethany is an enter-by-special-permission-only reservoir in the Regional Water Authority's system. Located just to the west of West Rock Ridge, it makes a beautiful walk of about a mile from the entrance gate to the dam, with special treats at each end.

Near the entrance is a wet, cool microclimate that supports a pair of Acadian Flycatchers and Louisiana Waterthrush. At the dam were nest boxes for Tree Swallows and Eastern Bluebirds. A colony of Cliff Swallows use the walls of a small control building on the dam to attach their mud nests and raise their young. This year



Photo by Ann Meacham

Catching a glimpse of the Spotted Sandpipers in the distance.

there were nine nests, a high number, each with a pair of adults flying back and forth with insects to feed young in the nests. Add to this Tree Swallows and Bluebirds, four Spotted Sandpipers sharing a rock, a Pileated Woodpecker, singing, Yellow-throated, Red-eyed, and Warbling vireos, Ovenbirds and Pine Warblers along with other forest birds. The thirteen of us on the walk had a very pleasant morning. Pat Leahy and DeWitt Allen

Chippens Hill Grasslands, May 31, 2026, An early morning start at Roberts Field in Bristol brought out 8 bird watchers to see if we could find the elusive Grasshopper Sparrow as one had been reported there recently, however the target bird was not encountered that morning.

Although habitat management has been done on a small scale here, there has not been any evidence of breeding in quite a few years. A brown thrasher that breeds here was heard only briefly. The birds of the day were a surprising Alder Flycatcher, which must have been migrating through, and short looks at a cuckoo flying through, but without any vocalizations or good looks at the bill, it entered our checklist as a Yellow-billed/Black-



Photo by Laurie Reynolds

billed Cuckoo. Colorful Blue-winged Warblers, Prairie Warblers and Indigo Buntings were plentiful and are the staples for this habitat.

From Roberts Field, we traveled over to the hay fields opposite the Chippanee Golf Club where Bobolinks flew across the fields and even perched close to the gate that served as our observation point. The western half of these fields are being managed for Bobolinks with delayed mowing allowing the grassland birds nesting there a chance to successfully breed.

Jack Swatt

Mohawk Mountain State Park, June 3 It was a brisk spring morning in June at the start of our Walk at Mohawk Mountain. We started the trip at nearby Coltsfoot Valley in Cornwall where Bobolinks and other meadow habitat birds were encountered. A few participants, including Merlin, were able to pick out a singing Eastern Meadowlark, but it never perched out in the open for everyone to observe.

We next ventured to the ski area parking lot pond where a Green Heron first vocalized, then flew out of the thicket on the opposite shore. Four species of flycatchers foraging the wetland included Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Phoebe, Willow Flycatcher and Least Flycatcher.

Heading into the state forest trails, we encountered very vocal Scarlett Tanagers,

Black-throated Blue Warblers, Black-throated Green Warblers and Veeries, but only a Black and White Warbler came close enough for everyone to see. The secretive Canada Warbler was giving vocalizations, but true to its nature, remained hidden in the thick underbrush. The black spruce bog was relatively quiet as the time slipped away into the later morning and the warming temperatures usually do. The last stop at the mountain peak gave good views of the surrounding mountains, and a singing Prairie Warbler and Indigo Bunting finalized our checklists.

Jack Swatt



Ewen Farm Preserve, June 13 A fun and enlightening bird walk on a sunny morning. 13 Avid birders walked the trails, as we enjoyed hearing and seeing many Red-winged Blackbirds and Warbling Vireos. A highlight for many of us was seeing 2 active Baltimore Oriole nests and an active Robin nest. We also viewed 2 active Tree swallow nests.

We had beautiful views of a brilliant blue Indigo Bunting, a Tufted Titmouse delivering food into a nest hole and nesting Eastern Phoebes carrying out a fecal sac. We heard many Cedar Waxwings, but views eluded us.

At the Purple Martin gourds, we observed 2 Purple Martins visiting and inspecting the gourds for the first time. Hopefully, they will decide to nest there in the future!

Nancy Clark & Beverly Propen



Brooksvale Park, Hamden, June 20, 2026, 14 enthusiastic and supportive birders joined us for a bird walk in Hamden's Brooksvale Park. The weather was beautiful on this last day of spring and 43 species were noted. Although several species were only heard, many participants did get good looks at a few of our local breeding birds, including nesting Eastern Kingbird, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Eastern Bluebirds and a Broad-winged hawk. Thank you to Darryl Rathbun for keeping the eBird list.

Alan Malina and DeWitt Allen

Eastern Kingbird and nest Photos by Darryl Rathbun



Photo by Laurie Reynolds



Photo by Alan Malina



Great Spangled Fritillary by Darryl Rathbun

Mendell's Folly and Van Epps Preserve, Bethany, June 14, 2026

It was a clear, balmy morning with eight birders exploring this beautiful property. 45 species were seen and/or heard, including Baltimore Oriole, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellow-throat, Brown Thrasher, Black-and-white Warbler, Eastern Bluebird, Worm-eating Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Tree, Rough-Winged and Barn Swallows, Green Heron, and Great Blue Heron.

We were happy to see signs of successful breeding: an Ovenbird carrying food; an adult Veery protectively hovering near a short-tailed fledgling low in a shrubby edge; and an active Baltimore Oriole nest with nestlings in it.

This outing was an invitation to begin to introduce the NHBC to the trails of some beautiful Bethany Land Trust Properties. *next page ...*

Mendell's Folly continued

Here's a list of BLT parcels (including Mendell's) you might like to bird. Check them out/share what you see on e-Bird. Each one represents one of the Notable Bethany Land Trust Preserves with Hiking Trails. Trail maps are available on the Bethany Land Trust's website: <https://bethanylandtrust.org/>

1. Hein Trails (Bethany Land Trust)
2. Whispering Pines Preserve (Bethany Land Trust)
3. Bethany Farms Trails (Bethany Land Trust)
4. Mendell's Folly-Grobe-Woodward Nature Preserves (Bethany Land Trust)
5. Van Epps Preserve (Bethany Land Trust)
6. Ida Carrington Lowell Property (Bethany Land Trust)

–Christin Arnini and John Triana



Photos by Christin Arnini



Wingspan is a relaxing, award-winning strategy card game about birds for 1 to 5 players. Each bird you play extends a chain of powerful combinations.

For players new to *Wingspan*, we will offer an introduction to the game and a guided playing experience. Players already familiar with *Wingspan* are welcome to set up independent games.

If you are interested in learning more about the rules, you will find more information [here](#).

Upcoming date at the Whitney Center in Hamden: **July 26**. Watch your email for details.

(September – November dates will be announced in August.)

NEW HAVEN BIRD CLUB 2026 – 2027

OFFICERS

<i>President</i>	Margaret Fikrig
<i>Vice President</i>	
<i>Treasurer</i>	Celeste Echlin
<i>Secretary</i>	Bobbie Fisher

BOARD MEMBERS

<i>Annual Banquet Chair</i>	Gail Martino
<i>Conservation Chair</i>	Craig Repasz
<i>Indoor Meeting Programs</i>	Gail Martino
<i>Member-at-Large</i>	Glen Cummings
<i>Member-at-Large</i>	Patrick McGovern
<i>Membership Chair</i>	Laurie Reynolds
<i>Newsletter Editor</i>	Ann Meacham
<i>Nominating Committee</i>	NHBC Exec. Board
<i>Outdoor Programs</i>	DeWitt Allen
<i>Publicity Chair</i>	Emmeline Kaiser
<i>Website</i>	Cheryl Cape
<i>Yearbook</i>	Christine Howe

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

<i>The BIG SIT</i>	Craig Repasz
<i>Bluebird Trail</i>	Pat Leahy
<i>Christmas Bird Count</i>	Chris Loscalzo
<i>Education/Outreach Chair</i>	Christin Arnini
<i>Hawk Watch at Lighthouse Point</i>	Steve Mayo
<i>Historian</i>	John Triana
<i>Hospitality</i>	Joyce Alton
<i>Summer Bird Count</i>	Steve Mayo

NOTES FROM THE BOARD

The next board meeting will be at 7 p.m. on **Thursday Aug. 27th** on Zoom.

If you are not receiving email notifications, contact us at membership@newhavenbirdclub.org to receive an invitation to join this group.

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

New Haven Bird Club is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. All dues and donations are fully tax-deductible.

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

Visit the New Haven Bird Club website! newhavenbirdclub.org Learn about the Club, its programs, and member news.

Email your comments, suggestions, and photos you'd like to share in the newsletter to:
annm@newhavenbirdclub.org Deadline for August newsletter submissions is **August 1st**

***Come to an outdoor walk or an indoor program and check us out .
We'd love to see you in the field.***