



THE CHICKADEE

Newsletter of the New Haven Bird Club
May 2026

We hope you are pleasantly surprised with our new format. Once the website was refreshed, it seemed fitting to update the newsletter too!

President's Message

I volunteered to be club president last year because I wanted to give my time and energy to this club that has provided my husband and me with so many wonderful birding adventures and greatly increased our knowledge and enjoyment of birding.

It has been eye-opening being President! I used to just go on NHBC guided birding walks that I had marked down on my calendar, not realizing all the work that goes into organizing the hikes. I also had no idea about all the other things the club does.

To start, thank you, **Gail Martino** and your banquet committee for presenting a wonderful evening last week with lots of raffle prizes, a slide show and an awesome speaker, **Gina Nichol**.

Our annual Yearbook which lists all our members names, addresses and phone numbers, as well as information about each of the bird walks is put together each year, currently by **Chris Howe**. Thank you Chris for all your work on this invaluable resource. I believe she's looking for a replacement for next year, correct?

DeWitt Allen had the huge task of scheduling all the club's bird walks, all 51 this year, and writing up the date, time, directions to the location and a brief description of each walk to include in the Yearbook. Thank you Dewitt and all the leaders of the birding walks. This club would not exist at all if it weren't for the generosity of your time and expertise.

I'd also like to thank **Laurie Reynolds**, our Membership Chair, for fielding non-members inquiries about the club, signing up new members, and always engaging anyone she doesn't recognize on a birding walk to make them feel welcome. You're the great ambassador for our club, Laurie!

Until I joined the Board, I didn't even know that we had a monthly series of Indoor Programs about birds which is held at the Whitney Center in Hamden. There are an average of 67 people at each of those events, so we are meeting the needs of birders who might not be able to hike – like me who broke my ankle this winter and had to bird from a wheelchair - as well as those who want to learn more about birds while sitting comfortably. **Gail Martino** has done an outstanding job organizing all these events. *next page...*



Margaret Fikrig

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President's Message *continued*

Members are also gathering at the Whitney Center most months to play Wingspan together and enjoy the social interactions. Thanks to **Peter Grund** and **Ann Meacham**.

Craig Repasz revived the NHBC book club "Birds in Words" this year. They meet about every 6 weeks at Mitchell Library in New Haven. Another way the club provides enjoyment and appreciation of birds.

We sponsored a children's puppet show about birds this year at the Branford Public Library which had 40 attendees, hopefully sparking an interest in birding in those children and their parents.

At the NHBC Annual Meeting, club member **John Himmelman** gave a talk about common birds entitled "Birds: Their Side of the Story". He is the creator of the Big Sit, now an international event (started by our little club!). Eighty people attended the Annual Meeting in person or via Zoom.

We have expanded in many ways this past year to enjoy birds and birding. But the main thing the club accomplished was redesigning our website to make it more useful to current members and to help attract new members. **Cheryl Cape** volunteered to be in charge of this effort, as she has expertise in this area. She had assistance from **Patrick McGovern**, who is also on the Bird Club Board. She interviewed multiple website design firms to find the best one for our needs, at an affordable price for the club. And we are absolutely thrilled with the results of all her work. I hope you have logged on to it already. If not, log on as soon as you can - you'll be amazed by how beautiful it is, how easy it is to use, and how much useful information it contains.

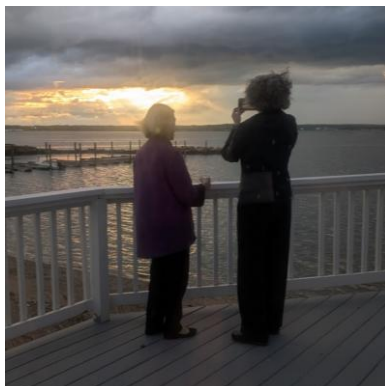
Well done, Cheryl!

I'm looking forward to our birding together this year and enjoying all the other activities our club provides. Margaret Fikrig

NEW HAVEN BIRD CLUB ANNUAL BANQUET – May 14, 2026

Nearly 115 people gathered at Amarante's Sea Cliff in New Haven for good food, the beautiful view, terrific raffle prizes, and a great program featuring a visual journey through Sabah, Borneo with **Gina Nichol**, of Sunrise Birding. The entire event was beautifully planned and executed by **Gail Martino** and several volunteer committee members.

One highlight of the evening was when Margaret Fikrig presented The President's Award to **Emmeline Kaiser** for her dedication and Timely communications to members in the Club. (Unfortunately Emmeline was not present.)



Gina Nichol

UPCOMING WALKS/FIELD TRIPS

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

[May 31, 2026 @ 7:00 am - 10:00 am, Chippens Hill Grassland Birds – Jack Swatt](#)

The Chippens Hill area of Bristol has historically been farmland. The Environmental Learning Centers of Connecticut and the city of Bristol are working to save some of the habitat where Bobolinks, Meadowlarks, and Grasshopper Sparrows have been found. Bring plenty of water and be prepared to walk in sunny field habitat that may contain ticks.

Meet at the Bristol Dog Park parking lot at 400 Perkins Street in Bristol, just north of the intersection with Pinehurst Road.

[June 3, 2026 @ 8:00 am - 11:00 am, Mohawk Mountain State Park – Jack Swatt](#)

Join Jack to Explore the birds in this scenic and spacious forest in the northern part of the state. Mostly easy walking, with carpooling between sites.

Meet at the entrance to Mohawk Mountain State Park on Route 4 in Cornwall, four miles west of Goshen.

[June 6-7, 2026, all day, New Haven Summer Bird Count](#)

A wonderful opportunity to work on your song identification skills and see what birds are nesting in your area. For the names of area captains, to join a team, and for other information

Contact Steve Mayo. Meet at various points.

[Map](#) of Christmas and Summer bird count local areas (courtesy of Bill Rankin)

[June 13, 2026 @ 8:30 am - 11:00 am, Ewen Farm Preserve, Orange – Bev Propen and Nancy Clark](#)

A scenic late spring walk around former hay fields, past streams and a pond. The trail crosses wet areas; wear appropriate footwear.

Meet at the intersection of St. John's Drive and Farm River Road in Orange

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UPCOMING WALKS/FIELD TRIPS continued

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

[June 14, 2026 @ 8:00 am - 11:00 am, Mendell's Folly and Van Epps Preserve, Bethany](#) – John Triana and Christin Arnini

REGISTRATION REQUIRED by June 10, 2026. REGISTRATION OPENS on June 4, 2026.

Join us for a vigorous bird walk at Mendell's Folly, one of the gems of the Bethany Land Trust's parcels. Expect some steep and rocky areas with rough terrain and uneven and wet footing. Bring water and wear appropriate footwear, and tick-proof clothing.

Meet at the roadside parking area at 390 Beacon Road (route 42) in Bethany. Off road parking behind the gate is also available. The BLT Trails Chairman will be there to greet participants and to help with parking beyond the gate. NOTE: parking space is limited to 12-14 cars, so carpooling is advised.

[June 20, 2026 @ 8:00 am - 11:00 am Brooksvale Park, Hamden](#) – Alan Malina and DeWitt Allen

Brooksvale is a city park with a small barnyard for children. The rest of the park features a tree-lined pond and streams, deep woods, and field/wood edges. There is also easy access to the Farmington Canal Greenway Trail. Join us to look for raptors and nesting birds that share the various habitats.

Meet in the large unpaved parking lot, just south of the Barnyard main entrance.

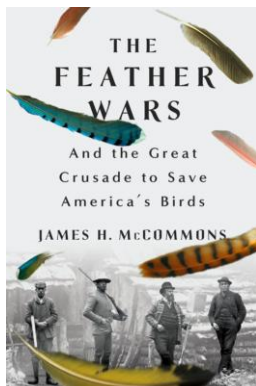
BIRDS IN WORDS BOOK CLUB – UP COMING MEETINGS

[Birds in Words Book Club, Monday, June 29, 2026, 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm](#)

Mitchell Library, New Haven – Craig Repasz (click on the date for more information.)

The club will discuss Lorna Gibson's [Birds Up Close: An Engineer Explores Their Hidden Wonders](#).

Feel free to bring snacks to enjoy and share!



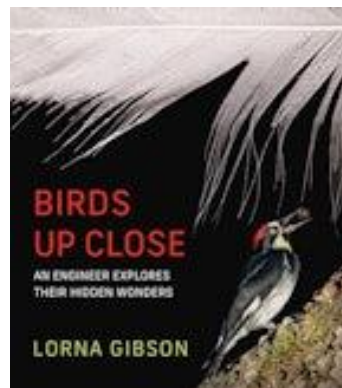
[Book Club – Monday, September 28, 2026, 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm](#)

Mitchell Library, New Haven – Craig Repasz

Discussion: [Feather Wars: And The Great Crusade to Save America's Birds](#)

by James H. McCommons.

Feel free to bring snacks to enjoy and share!



[Click here for November's title.](#)

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Cheshire Hot Spots, March 22 Our first stop, Broad Brook Reservoir, viewed from the Reservoir Road causeway had only Ring-necked Ducks, Common Mergansers and Bufflehead. The highlight of the stop was seeing 6 Great Blue Herons, most of which seemed to have claimed their nests in the rookery on the north side of the reservoir.

Next was the former boat launch off Route 68, where we saw more Ring-necked Ducks and added Hooded Mergansers, American Black Ducks and just one Ruddy Duck. A far cry from the hundreds we typically see there.

As we were leaving, we heard a Brown Creeper and were able to spot it across the street!

Our next spot was Boulder Knoll open space. Most of the time spent there was very quiet, but we managed to get 21 species there. A pair of Hooded Mergansers in the pond. 2 Turkey Vultures and single Sharp-shinned and Red-tailed Hawks were the only raptors for the day. We had a single Eastern Bluebird, with Dark-eyed Juncos and White-throated sparrows in or near the community garden for the busiest part of the morning. Typical year-round songbirds were there as well, along with a solo Downy Woodpecker and a pair of Northern Flickers. Melissa Baston



Photo by Ann Meacham

(We were sneaking up on Ring-necked ducks)

Edgewood Park, Saturday, March 28

Thirty hardy birders started out from the Edgewood Park tennis court parking lot to make the second of our twice-annual explorations of this often-surprising park. At 37 degrees and breezy when we started, the feeling of sun from time to time on our faces and backs made us all happy.

Our circuit from the tennis courts to Edgewood Avenue and around the west-side paths was momentarily blocked by dead trees and impassable thickets of mugwort; we persevered, and were rewarded with 37 species, including early-arriving Ospreys,



Golden-crowned Kinglet

Photo by Darryl Rathbun



Photo by DeWitt Allen

Eastern Phoebes, and Tree Swallows. Highlights were three Brown Creepers, two Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, a Golden-crowned Kinglet, and a loose flock of about 7 Eastern Phoebes that accompanied us all the way as we returned along the west-side path to the parking lot. The many habitats at Edgewood Park can always be counted on for a great three hours or so of birding. Dewitt Allen

FIELD TRIP REPORTS ...continued

Geology and Birds, Branford, April 18 Around 30 birders and geology enthusiasts participated in the Geology and Birds walk at the Branford Quarry Preserve surrounding the active Stony Creek Granite Quarry. The weather was cool and overcast, but no wind. Stony Creek Granite is a beautiful architectural building stone and widely exposed in the preserve. Participants were also able to watch the live mining activity at the quarry as they were working that morning.

We observed 23 species here, including Pileated Woodpecker, Hermit Thrush, Chipping Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Pine Warbler and Louisiana Waterthrush. Some in the group also observed a Great-horned Owl getting harassed by crows.



The second location of the trip was in the small urban preserve of Quarry Park in New Haven. Around 10 birders continued from there, and we explored the hand-dug pits from the 1600s through the 1800s that are scattered throughout the park.

The New Haven Sandstone from this quarry was widely used as a building stone across New Haven. Quarry Park is also the discovery site for an ancient reptile fossil now on display at the Peabody Museum. Here we observed 12 species, including Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, and Eastern Phoebe. Many thanks to Craig Repasz for managing identification and the eBird list. Cheryl Cape and Dan May

Kellogg Environmental Center and Osbornedale State Park, Derby, April 26, Fifteen New Haven Bird Club members and visitors set out to tour the Kellogg Environmental Center Grounds and the trails across the street in Osbornedale State Park.

Though it wasn't a super-birdy day, we got good looks at a male Common Merganser in the Housatonic River below, a couple of male Eastern Towhees (by virtue of extreme patience), and failed to entice a Northern House Wren out of the bushes by our path at the Kellogg Center.

Across the street we had great looks at male Wood Ducks, found a male Orchard Oriole, a Northern Yellow Warbler, an early Eastern Warbling vireo, and for about twenty-minutes stalked a singing Louisiana Waterthrush up a rocky stream, though without achieving a sighting. A Blue-winged Warbler sang but also evaded us. There was plenty to keep our attention, though, between the numerous Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles around the ponds, and the nestbox-holding Tree Swallows and Eastern Bluebirds, among others. Several Canada Geese were on eggs beside the pond. It was a good morning in great company.
DeWitt Allen

FIELD TRIP REPORTS ...continued

Farm River Trolley Trail - Farm River Estuary, May 3rd.

With assistance from the Shore Line Trolley Museum, the New Haven Bird Club and the Friends of Farm River Estuary held a joint birding and trolley-riding field trip on May 3. Two antique trolley cars carried our huge group of forty-two from the museum to the end of the line in the East Haven Marsh Wildlife Area.



We walked back the 1.3 miles along the tracks, stopping to train our binoculars and scopes on the wading birds, shorebirds, and passerines on the way. Highlights included the large number of Ospreys circling the marsh and sitting on the many nest platforms, an exceptional group of at least 12 Yellow-crowned Night Herons feeding or just hanging out in the marsh, a couple of Turkey vultures sunning themselves with wings spread on a cliffside by the tracks, a Pectoral Sandpiper feeding with several Greater Yellowlegs, Marsh Wrens in the reeds, and a last-bird of the day, a male American Kestrel by the parking lot.

We'll be birding the trolley trail again with the Friends of Farm River Estuary this coming October. You should come along. Everyone's welcome. DeWitt Allen

FIELD TRIP REPORTS ...continued

East Rock Park, New Haven, May 6.

We did not have many migrants. We did have about 44 species of birds. The main highlight was excellent views of several Orchard Orioles across the street on the Water Company Property. John Oshlick



Photo by DeWitt Allen

River Road, Kent, May 10.

A predicted day of bad weather moved NHBC's much-anticipated River Road field trip forward from Saturday to Sunday. Nevertheless, twelve birders arrived at Railroad Street in Kent before 7 a.m. on a beautiful Sunday morning, where a Cape May Warbler produced itself near the parking lot. A stop at the Kent Bridge gave us nice views of Cliff Swallows feeding and returning to their mud nests under the bridge.

On River Road itself, highlights included a soaring Broad-winged Hawk, an unusual-for-the-area Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, singing Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, male and female Cerulean Warblers at almost eye-level, Hooded Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Magnolia Warblers, Louisiana Waterthrush, the usual Yellow Warblers and American Redstarts, along with numerous other warblers heard distinctly but which we were unable to get eyes on – Northern Parula, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Green, and Northern Waterthrush among them.



Photo by Lynette Clemens

Fifty-seven species in all on a great morning with trip leader Allan Welby.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS ...continued

Sleeping Giant State Park, May 16.

Our annual “three amigos Sleeping Giant walk” up the Carriage Trail began in the parking lot with lots of birds singing and fine views of an Orchard Oriole and a raucous pair of Eastern Kingbirds made their presence known from a large pine tree.

We had a respectable showing of raptors, including an aerial combat between Red-tailed and Broad-winged Hawks. The Broad-winged may have been nesting nearby. Flyovers included an Osprey and immature Bald Eagle; a pair of Peregrines flew near the cliffs.

Also flying near the cliffs were three Common Ravens. The four chicks that had been on the nest on the Chin the week before had fledged and flown the coop.

A highlight was an Eastern Wood Pewee singing away just 75 feet away from the crowd and everyone got to see it.

Indigo Buntings can usually be counted on in the secondary successional blowdown area where the tornado passed through. One was seen and five were heard.

The group got looks at a Scarlet Tanager and Black and White Warbler, both nesters in the Park, but Ovenbirds, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Great-crested Flycatchers, American Redstarts, and Wood Thrushes didn't show themselves through the thick canopy and were only heard.

Although winds were from the north and there wasn't a huge push of migrants, we saw and heard a nice variety. It was a great group of 25 folks who saw and heard 36 species. Jim Sirch, DeWitt Allen, and Craig Repasz



Orchard Oriole
Photo by Alan Malino

FIELD TRIP REPORTS ...continued

Naugatuck State Forest, May 17. 28 interested birders hiked along several footpaths as well as the gravel section of Hunter's Mountain Road. The hike took us through brushy fields and forested habitat and past scenic woodland ponds, and a power line cut. We observed a nice variety of birds at each location.

The highlights were an Acadian Flycatcher that we observed singing above the stream at the beginning of the ravine trail, a Solitary Sandpiper on a log in the woodland pond and a Hooded Warbler singing on territory from deep in the woods. Other notable species observed were: Great Blue Heron, Broad-winged Hawk, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Pileated Woodpecker, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Veery, Louisiana Waterthrush, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Prairie Warbler, and Scarlet Tanager.

Over 50 species were observed in total. We all had a wonderful time hiking in this expansive forest with varied habitat. We're looking forward to going back there again next year! Chris Loscalzo



Chris giving an overview



Photos by Frank Mantlik



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.

Upcoming dates at the Whitney Center in Hamden:

June 28

July 26

Watch your email for details.

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

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

- ❖ Aimee Meiman
- ❖ Beth O'Brien
- ❖ Deb Taubner
- ❖ Doug Schlink
- ❖ Elizabeth Occhipinti
- ❖ Ellen & John Nutter
- ❖ Glenda Callender and
Jeff & Evelyn Roszkowski
- ❖ Griffin Radulski
- ❖ Jeff Saerys-Foy
- ❖ Patrice Delaney
- ❖ Michele Harrison Sears
- ❖ Sally & Joseph Schettino
- ❖ Yvette Ciarcia
- ❖ Robert Ortiz & Anita Wakim
- ❖ Romain Willemet & Angelina Vernetti
- ❖ Tami Kniffen
- ❖ Tom & Lindsey Anderson
- ❖ Tracy Blanford & Rob Palmer

Field trips/walks are free to anyone interested in learning more about birds.
Members receive information about all our activities.

BECOME A MEMBER!

[Click here](#) to sign up.

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

Our mission: 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 the surrounding areas.

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

Please send articles, suggested topics and/or photos for inclusion in the newsletter to: annm@newhavenbirdclub.org Deadline for August newsletter submissions is **August 1st**

The NHBC website, newhavenbirdclub.org, offers information about the Club, its programs, and member news.