



THE CHICKADEE

Newsletter of the New Haven Bird Club

December 2024

2024-25 CALENDAR

(See inside for details)

Wednesday, December 4, 8–11 a.m. **First Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison**

Saturday, December 7, 8–11 a.m. **Quinnipiac Trail, Prospect**

Thursday, December 12, 7 p.m. **Joseph Zbyrowski – Barn Owls and Barn Owl Restoration**

Saturday, December 14, All day **124th Annual New Haven Christmas Bird Count**

Wednesday, January 8, 8–11 a.m. **Second Wednesday Walk: Sherwood Island State Park, Westport**

Thursday, January 9, 7 p.m. **John Triana –History of the New Haven Bird Club**

Saturday, January 11, 8 a.m. to noon **Milford Hotspots in Winter**

Saturday, February 1, 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. **The Annual Mega Bowl of Birding in New Haven County**

Sunday, February 2, 5–7 p.m. **Mega Bowl Compilation Dinner**

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

Thursday, February 13, 7 p.m. (Virtual only) **Joan Morrison – Crested Caracaras, 32 years later**

This virtual-only meeting will start at 7p.m.

Saturday, February 15, 8–11 a.m. **White Memorial Foundation: Birding and Tracking**

Saturday, February 22, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. **Sachuest Point NWR and Rhode Island Coast** Snow date - Sunday, February 23

NOTE: Please check the NHBC website for updated information on all programs. **Scheduled events may need to be changed or canceled** and events may be added during the year. www.newhavenbirdclub.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



In this column one year ago, I welcomed Celeste Echlin to the New Haven Bird Club Executive Board as our new Treasurer.

This year, the theme is the same but there were TWO vacancies in elected positions that now have been filled by marvelous volunteers. The Board was unanimous in recommending these people to fill the vacancies, and I was honored to make the official appointments at our November Board meeting.

First, please join me in welcoming Bobbie Fisher to the Board as our new Secretary. We had made use of an interim Secretary for many months but needed to fill the position. Bobbie had previously expressed interest in helping us with the NHBC Yearbook, but when informed of the need for a Secretary she graciously agreed to step into that important role. A Hawk Watch compiler and long-time birder, Bobbie is certainly known to anyone who has participated in the Hawk Watch at Lighthouse Point Park and to many others who have been on various NHBC walks with her. Bobbie now has attended two of our monthly Board meetings and is a wonderful addition to the group.

The second person who agreed to fill a previously-vacant elected position was already on our NHBC Board. Meg Bollin had volunteered to be our interim Secretary on top of her role as Chair of our Education and Outreach Committee. With Bobbie now on the job as Secretary (see above) we are very pleased to announce that Meg agreed to take on a new role as Vice President. (Don't tell her, but I've been relying on her good judgment, good humor, and ongoing willingness to help with whatever needs to be done as an unofficial VP. Now she's official!)

Volunteers are essential to our Club: we are all volunteers. If you are reading this newsletter, you are enjoying the ongoing work of our talented and dedicated newsletter editor, Donna Batsford. Donna reminds us to submit articles and photos, uses her copy-editing and proofreading skills to make sure the words make sense, and then assembles everything into the newsletter format. She has been doing this work since at least 2010, and for a while now has been letting us know she is looking forward to a well-deserved retirement! We certainly would like to continue to publish a newsletter and are open to possible alternatives to the current format. So...we need to know if you (yes, YOU!) are interested in a leading role as copy editor, proofreader, production manager, or some combination of those duties. If so, please email volunteer@newhavenbirdclub.org with any relevant

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NEW HAVEN BIRD CLUB – 2024-2025

OFFICERS

<i>President</i>	Christine Howe
<i>Vice President</i>	Meg Bollin
<i>Treasurer</i>	Celeste Echlin
<i>Secretary</i>	Bobbie Fisher

BOARD MEMBERS

<i>Conservation Chair</i>	Craig Repasz
<i>Education/Outreach Chair</i>	Meg Bollin
<i>Indoor Meeting Programs</i>	Gail Martino
<i>Member-at-Large</i>	Glen Cummings
<i>Member-at-Large</i>	(vacant)
<i>Membership Chair</i>	Laurie Reynolds
<i>Newsletter Editor</i>	Donna Batsford
<i>Nominating Committee</i>	NHBC Executive 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>Hawk Watch at</i>	Steve Mayo
<i>Historian</i>	John Triana
<i>Hospitality</i>	Joyce Alton
<i>Summer Bird Count</i>	Steve Mayo
<i>Winter Feeder Survey</i>	Peter Vitali

New Haven Bird Club Website:
www.newhavenbirdclub.org

(President's Message Continued from first page)

background information and include a good way to reach you. Thanks in advance.

Although the weather has turned cold, Christmas Bird Counts will keep us active in the field or watching our feeders, and before we know it the days will be getting longer. Good birding to you all!

--Chris Howe

Welcome New Members

Rebecca Johnson
New Haven

Joseph Stawiarski
Summit Hill, PA

Faye Dion and Michael Feldman
Madison

Amy Plapp
Stratford

Emma Myers
West Hartford

Tom Czarniak
West Haven

Notes from the Board

The next board meeting will be at 7 p.m. on Thursday, January 23 via Zoom.

Deadline for submissions to the next *Chickadee* is January 24. Send to Newsletter Editor, Donna Batsford, at donnabatsford@gmail.com.

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

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.

Indoor Programs

Please check the NHBC website and newsletter for updated information before planning to attend any event.

Indoor programs start in September and are held on the second Thursday of the month except for June, July, and August. Monthly program meetings are held in the Whitney Center's Cultural Arts Center, 200 Leeder Hill Drive, Hamden CT. The facility is wheelchair accessible. Enter via the main door of the portico at the front of the building. Turn right down the hallway. The Cultural Arts Center is a short distance on the left. **The social half-hour begins at 7 p.m.; the meeting and program begin at 7:30 p.m. and end about 9 p.m.**

Some indoor programs are held only as virtual, online presentations and noted as such in the descriptions. The online presentation starts at 7 p.m.

Cancellation Policy: Inclement weather or other emergency may cancel in-person meetings. Cancellation notices will be sent via the Club email and posted on the CTBirds listserv when possible.

Bird Book Sales now will be held at EACH indoor meeting in the "Book Nook" area using the honor system and with no set prices. Sort through your bird- and nature-related books (kids' books too). Bring them to each indoor meeting for donation, or call Chris Howe, 203-389-1175, to make special arrangements.

PARKING: Enter the Whitney Center's South Entrance, marked with a sign. Either make an immediate left into the raised parking lot (park *only* in the upper level and *only* in unnumbered spaces) or follow the main driveway past the front entrance of the building. At the stop sign, turn right into the visitor and employee parking area and walk back from there to the front entrance.

NOTE: Please check the NHBC website and newsletter periodically for updated information on all programs. Scheduled events may need to be changed or canceled and events may be added during the year. www.newhavenbirdclub.org

Thursday, December 12 – Joseph Zbyrowski Barn Owls and Barn Owl Restoration

Join us for a presentation by local raptor specialist, Joseph Zbyrowski, during which he will emphasize barn owl characteristics, physical features, and behavior. He will also discuss restoration methods to encourage owls to nest and reproduce. Joseph has been working with hawks and owls for more than 30 years. He is a retired teacher of environmental science; master bird-bander; and former raptor rehabilitator and volunteer with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, and the Audubon Society of Rhode Island. He conducts an annual hawk migration count in Rhode Island and is currently involved with Peregrine Falcon and Barn Owl restoration projects.

Thursday, January 9, 2025 – John Triana History of the New Haven Bird Club

The NHBC was organized on April 3, 1907. In the lead-up to the Club's centennial in 2008, John did extensive research on NHBC's history. This included stories about the women and men who have contributed to the Club's success over the last

century. John will review the highlights of those 100 years and bring us up-to-date with additions to the archives over the last 17 years.

Thursday, February 13, 2025 – Joan Morrison Crested Caracaras, 32 years later

****This virtual-only meeting will start at 7p.m.****

Dr. Joan Morrison will share highlights from her research on the federally threatened Crested Caracaras in Florida, uncovering new insights into their breeding biology, diet, social behavior, and spatial ecology. Her work has been pivotal in understanding these birds; their intelligence and gregarious nature makes them challenging to study. The primary threat to their population is habitat loss, necessitating collaboration with federal and state agencies and private landowners. She will also touch upon her recent research on Caracaras in Arizona. Dr. Morrison holds a Ph.D. in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation from the University of Florida, with extensive teaching and research experience in avian ecology, particularly raptors, at Trinity College and elsewhere. Now retired in New Mexico, she continues her impactful research on Caracaras across different states.

Outdoor Programs

Cancellation Policy: Inclement weather or other emergencies may cancel a field trip. Cancellation notices will be sent via the Club email and also posted on the CTBirds listserv when possible. Check the NHBC website *or contact the leader of the trip directly* if you have any questions about a possible cancellation.

Birders of all levels are welcome on all field trips, and every effort is made to help beginners. If you are new to birding or have any special needs, be sure to let the leader know. The Club welcomes everyone regardless of age, race or ethnicity, sex, gender identification, sexual orientation, or national origin. The ending times of walks are approximate.

The New Haven Bird Club does not charge any fees for its outdoor programs, but participants are responsible for the cost of their food, transportation, and entrance fees (where charged), unless the Club makes prior arrangements. Carpooling is usually encouraged to avoid parking problems at some destinations and to promote conservation of natural resources.

NHBC Conservation and Education Activities

The New Haven Bird Club routinely works to preserve and restore bird populations and their habitats and to provide opportunities for learning about birds, where to see them, and how to help ensure their future. Additional environmentally-focused, family-friendly walks may be planned and posted on the NHBC website.

The NHBC has been developing relationships with local public schools and camps to encourage children to embrace birding. We view this activity as directly connected to our Club objectives, and usually present a very basic birding skills class followed by a nearby bird walk. The Education Chair also organizes the Club's representation at various public events throughout the year.

First Wednesday Walk: Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison

Wednesday, December 4, 8–11 a.m.

Meet outside the park at the Shoreline Greenway Trail parking area on Boston Post Road, Madison, just east of the park's main entrance road.

At any time of year, Hammonasset is a true gem. Enjoy a mid-week trip to explore this birding hotspot for fall migrants. The varied habitat attracts shorebirds, waterfowl, raptors, and songbirds.

Leader: Jerry Connolly, birdshop@sbcglobal.net or 203-710-2011.

Quinnipiac Trail, Prospect

Saturday, December 7, 8–11 a.m.

Meet at the end of the cul-de-sac on Boardman Drive, Prospect. We'll carpool to Cornwall Avenue and walk back to Boardman Drive.

Join us for a vigorous walk along the Quinnipiac Trail from Cornwall Avenue in Prospect through Regional Water Authority and Prospect Land Trust property off of Boardman Drive. Expect many steep areas with rough terrain. Wear appropriate footwear and bring water. Inclement weather cancels.

Leader: John Triana, jtriana1@rwater.com, 203-758-7203.

125th Annual New Haven Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 14, All day

Join other NHBC members in this fun event, steeped in tradition. Join birders in the field or report what you see in your backyard (if you reside within the count circle). Take part for a few hours or all day. The results of the count are sent to the

National Audubon Society for inclusion in an international census of early winter bird populations. The compilation dinner is at 5 p.m. at the Whitney Center, 200 Leeder Hill Drive, Hamden. To join in, contact the Compiler.

Compiler: Chris Loscalzo, closcalz@optonline.net or 203-389-6508 home.

Second Wednesday Walk: Sherwood Island State Park, Westport

Wednesday, January 8, 8–11 a.m.

Meet at Sherwood Island State Park: take Exit 18 off I-95 in Westport and head south on the Sherwood Island Connector. Drive into the park and meet at the main parking lot.

Join a midweek trip to this outstanding Long Island Sound birding spot. We check for loons, grebes, goldeneye, and other sea ducks. The fields are a good place to look for Snow Buntings, Horned Larks, and sparrows.

Leader: Tina Green, tina@renaissancestudios.com or 203-247-2660.

Milford Hotspots in Winter

Saturday, January 11, 8 a.m. to noon

Meet at the commuter lot, Exit 35 off I-95.

We'll look for waterbirds and fowl including Long-tailed Ducks, scoters, and loons, as well as shorebirds, gulls, and raptors as we visit Milford hotspots that will likely include Milford Point, Mondo Ponds, and Caswell Cove. Dress warmly and plan to carpool. The trip ends by noon. Inclement weather will probably cancel the trip. Check with the leader if you have weather concerns.

Leader: Frank Mantlik, mantlik@sbcglobal.net or 203-984-9410.

**The Annual Mega Bowl of Birding in New Haven County
Saturday, February 1, 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

and

**Mega Bowl Compilation Dinner
Sunday, February 2, 5–7 p.m. (Location to be announced)**

Birders of all ages and skill levels are welcome to participate in a fun and friendly event! Go birding for all or part of the day to see how many species you can observe. Earn points for each species found. The rarer the species, the more points earned. Birders can participate alone or in a group of up to five people. Compete against yourself or other birders and win prizes for participating. Teams can bird within a town, an entire county, or a circle with a five-mile radius that includes their residence. We meet the following day for a celebratory dinner to go over the results, share stories and enjoy a fine meal. Registration for the event will be required. Checklists will be sent out in advance to all registrants. Participants are encouraged to be creative in coming up with a name for their team.

Compiler: Chris Loscalzo, loscalz@optonline.net or 203-389-6508 (home).

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

Meet outside the park at the Shoreline Greenway Trail parking area on Boston Post Road, Madison, just east of the park's main entrance road.

Enjoy a mid-week field trip to Hammonasset Beach State Park, one of the state's best birding locations in any season of the year. We will look for sea ducks, grassland species, and rarities.

Leader: Greg Hanisek, ctgregh@yahoo.com

**White Memorial Foundation: Birding and Tracking
Saturday, February 15, 8–11 a.m.**

Meet in the public parking lot at White Memorial at 80 Whitehall Road in Litchfield.

White Memorial Foundation is a 4,000-acre nature preserve. The diverse mixture of habitats includes mature deciduous and evergreen forests, as well as fields of tall grass, weeds, and shrubs that are managed for various stages of succession. One of the best birding sites in the state and an Important Bird Area, White Memorial Foundation has approximately 35 miles of woodland roads, trails, and boardwalks. We could observe a variety of sparrows, woodpeckers, possibly winter finches, owls and more. We will be joined by experienced trackers Christin Arnini and Gail Cameron. Mammals that reside at White Memorial such as otters, beavers, bobcats, foxes, deer, coyotes, and mink are active in the winter and leave clues about their travels and ways of surviving this most difficult time of the year.

Leader: Craig Repasz, crepsz@hotmail.com or 203-745-6683.

**Sachuest Point NWR and Rhode Island Coast
Saturday, February 22, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Snow date - Sunday, February 23**

Meet at the Branford commuter lot, Exit 55 off I-95, or contact the trip leader for time and location of the first stop in Rhode Island.

This all-day trip includes stops at Beavertail State Park, Moonstone Beach, Trustum Pond, and other great birding sites along the Rhode Island coast. We will see lots of sea ducks including all three scoter species, Common Eider, and Harlequin Duck. We'll look for birds of prey, including Rough-legged Hawk and several owl species. We'll also be on the lookout for alcids and rare gulls. Dress warmly—it's likely to be cold and windy on the coast. The walk can be a bit strenuous. Bring lunch and a scope, if you have one.

Leader: Chris Loscalzo, loscalz@optonline.net or 203-389-6508 (home).

Trip Reports

Lighthouse Point Trip Report

On Wednesday, October 2, Frank Gallo led twenty-three New Haven Bird Club members on a highly anticipated walk around New Haven's Lighthouse Point Park. Standing in the parking lot, Frank and the group spotted a Red-Headed



Photo by Paul Smith

Woodpecker flying into the woods, a medium-sized flock of Cedar Waxwings, a low-flying Peregrine Falcon, a Sharp-shinned Hawk, and numerous Brown-headed Cowbirds, Northern Flickers, Bluejays, and lots of Tree Swallows overhead. Later on, the group found six Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers in close proximity, a Blackpoll Warbler, a Palm Warbler, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, a Blue-headed Vireo, **and** . . . the briefly-seen Red-headed Woodpecker, which turned out to be a juvenile, working back and forth between several oak trees until everyone in the group had gotten good views. As we all turned and headed back toward the parking lot, a Whimbrel calmly appeared just over a low rise in the grass. Thirty-five species in all, and a very satisfying morning.

Hammonasset Beach State Park Trip Report

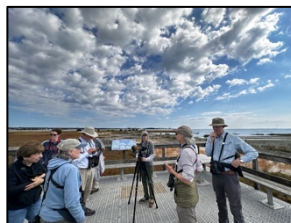


Photo by Lori Datlow

Twenty-four people participated in the bird walk at Hammonasset Beach State Park on Saturday, October 5. Several members extended the walk to survey Boulder Pond, Meig's Point Jetty, and the Moraine Trail adding to the species list. At the start of the walk at the west end we were

treated with a flock of Pipits that flew in almost on cue. Also, there we found a perched Bald Eagle. At the back parking lot across from Cedar Island a Clay Colored Sparrow was spotted. At the end of the walk a few of us saw a white morphed Blue Heron. Other notables: American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, Belted Kingfisher, Brown Creeper, Eastern Phoebe, Common Raven, Red-eyed Vireo, Spotted Sandpiper, Sanderling and Semipalmated Plovers. The only warblers were Palm and Yellow-rumped Warblers. In all 53 species were sighted.

--Maria Stockmal

Bauer Farm, Madison Trip Report

On October 9th, almost two dozen birders visited Bauer Farm in Madison to look for sparrows and other migratory birds. We started near the community gardens and saw a late Scarlet Tanager make a brief stop at the park. Exploring the field edges, we found a slightly late Red-eyed Vireo, numerous skulking Gray Catbirds and a group of chattering Eastern Bluebirds. The woods yielded both Ruby and Golden-crowned Kinglets and great looks at a Blue-headed Vireo. Most of the group saw a Nashville Warbler, and more than a dozen Palm Warblers were seen in the fields and along the field edges. Some of the Palms were the drab Western type, but most were the colorful yellow and rusty-capped Eastern variety. The eastern side of the park was rather quiet, but a group of three Cooper's Hawks were seen perched together and a Red-tailed Hawk showed off overhead. The highlight of the raptor show happened high over the community gardens: We watched a Bald Eagle chase an Osprey carrying a fish. Despite working hard to get away, the Osprey was eventually badgered enough that the Eagle came away with the fish. Our search for sparrows was rewarded with 8 species, including Field and Swamp sparrows. 6 warbler species were seen; a good number for October! In around 3 hours, we tallied just short of 50 species, and one birder commented that they saw more birds per square foot at Bauer Farm than any place in recent memory.

--Chuck Imbergamo

Lake Chamberlain Walk Trip Report

The morning of Tuesday, October 15, was quite cold (35 degrees) with a bit of a wind on the dam. 10 people were ready to enjoy the fall colors and birds. The big highlight of the walk was a flock of 10 bluebirds! I think it beats my all time high count of these beautiful birds. We had 24 species with notables of a Palm Warbler and an Eastern Towhee.



Photo by Sue Caperino

We were early for the winter migrants with just a few Mallards, Double-crested Cormorants, and Canada Geese on water. We opened a few of the nesting boxes, and I gave a short lesson on "nest forensics." The leaves were turning, the sky was a brilliant blue with billowy clouds and the temperature encouraged us to find sunny places to stop, sheltered from the wind across the lake. All in all, a wonderful morning. Thanks to Chavie Sandman for keeping an ebird list and Sue Caperino for her photography.

--Pat Leahy

Branford Supply Ponds Trip Report

On Sunday, October 20, seven of us scoured the ponds for bird species. We gathered 38 species on this less than spectacular migration season. But, we were able to capture these notables: Red-breasted Nuthatch, Wood Duck, Mallard hybrid, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Belted Kingfisher, Hairy Woodpecker, both Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, Swamp Sparrow, and Yellow-rumped Warbler.

--Maria Stockmal

Fargeorge Wildlife Preserve Trip report

On Saturday, October 26, 8 of us joined the folks from Gather New Haven (Formerly The New Haven Land Trust), for a really lovely trip to the Fargeorge Wildlife Preserve. We got about 38 species including lots of Woodpeckers, several fly-over raptors and a Hermit Thrush and a big bunch of Robins who didn't get the memo about flying south for the winter. This is always a fun trip. See you next time.

--Mike Horn



Photo by Chris Howe

Farm River Trolley Trail Trip Report



Photo by Chris Howe

On Sunday, October 27, about 20 of us joined the good folks from Friends of Farm River Estuary (FFRE) for a lovely trip along the Trolley Museum tracks. We had a wonderful time looking at water birds, woodland birds and migrating raptors. FFRE also arranged a Trolley ride back from the end of the line which was great fun. See you next time.

--Mike Horn

Cheshire Hot Spots Trip Report

On Sunday, November 3, we started our walk at Broad Brook Reservoir from the Route 68 Cheshire/Wallingford line. Temperature was chilly to start but the clear sky and little winds made for a pleasant morning. From the old boat launch we were greeted with a few rafts of ducks; most of them were Ruddy Ducks at an estimated 140+ viewed from multiple locations. We were lucky to spot one Pied-billed Grebe amongst one of the Ruddy groups, and found 50 Ring-necked Ducks! Other ducks were Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Wood Duck and Mallard. Very early on, while we were still at the boat launch, a Pileated Woodpecker announced his appearance as he flew over and cooperated by landing in a tree maybe 30 feet away for about a minute. Within a minute of that sighting someone spotted a Brown Creeper not too far from where the woodpecker was. Just on the other side of that we were treated by about a dozen Golden-crowned Kinglets who were very vocal, flitting around towards the tops of the tall trees. There was one Pine Warbler who kept going back to the same shrub along the shoreline to glean insects off branches, and give our necks a break. As you know we were in quite the drought last month which is what likely brought 4 deer to the

opposite shoreline to have a drink of water for a bit before they retreated back into the woods.

After Broad Brook we drove to Fresh Meadows on Cook Hill Road in Cheshire. We were not expecting the parking lot to be mostly full and found that a Boy Scout group was installing 2 bat boxes in the meadow that morning. All was well; we parked on a nearby street. On our walk on the path towards the meadow we were greeted with the typical songbirds you'd expect: White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, American Goldfinch, American Robin, Black-capped Chickadee and Tufted Titmouse. Once we got to the meadow, we found 2 Hermit Thrush who were working cedar trees for quite a while. Shortly after that we had our first female Purple Finch at the top of a tree soaking up the sun, while a few Northern Flickers were nearby. We also had Red-bellied, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers added to our list. When we got to the dried-up creek there was a Great-blue Heron who stayed for some time. Flyovers throughout the walk were the three corvids, Blue Jay, American and Fish Crows, both vultures, Red-tailed Hawk, either a Cooper's or Sharp-shinned Hawk and the last bird for the day, seen from the parking lot as we were going over counts, was a fly-by Peregrine Falcon. Great bird to end a great morning/bird walk.

--Melissa Baston

November First Wednesday Walk: Sherwood Island Trip Report

On November 6 nineteen enthusiastic birders joined me on a glorious sunny and unusually warm November day at Sherwood Island State Park. Due to very mild temperatures for autumn, very few winter birds had arrived but we saw or heard a total of 47 species. The reliable Lesser Black-backed Gull was present at its usual location just east of the 911 Memorial and our resident Bald Eagle pair showed nicely at the north end of the Mill Pond. Seven Eastern Meadowlarks have settled in to the model airplane field, probably for the season. The entire list can be seen at the eBird checklist below.

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S201609717>

--Tina Green

NHBC at LEAP's Halloween Party



The NHBC hosted a table at LEAP's Halloween party event on October 25th. Gail Martino, Meg Bollin, and Meg's niece, Breanna, ran the table. The event was a huge success with hundreds of children from the New Haven area dressed in costumes, playing games, trick-or-treating and having a wonderful time. The event was held at the Q

Community Center, and the space was decked out with colorful balloons, blow-up creatures, and Halloween music. The children started inside and visited tables set up with games, contests, activities and more. At



Breanna

the NHBC table, we handed out candy, provided bird coloring pages and did bird "tattoos" for each child that visited with us. At 6pm, the kids moved outside to trick or treat in the local area. The coordinators of the event did an amazing job and we really look forward to participating in this joyful event next year. Thank you Gail, Breanna and all the LEAP coordinators.

--Meg Bollin



Gail Martino

The Big Sit!® 2024 Report



Male Yellow-throated Euphonia
Photo by Heidi Pasch

It has been five years since the New Haven bird club took over the administration of The Big Sit!® from Birdwatchers Digest. The event was started by the New Haven Bird Club in 1992, was soon taken over by Birdwatcher's Digest, and grew to be the international event that it is today. We have had circles in six different countries.

Connecticut always has a strong showing.

This year Zeiss sponsored the Golden Bird Award by donating a pair of Conquest HDX 8x 42 binoculars. The Golden Bird is drawn from all of the bird species reported for the Big Sit!®. Next, the winning circle is drawn from all of the circles that reported the Golden Bird Species.

The Golden Bird this year is the Yellow-throated euphonia (*Euphonia hirundinacea*). [Yellow-throated euphonia - Wikipedia](#). It is found in southeastern Mexico and throughout Central America with its range stretching from Belize south to western Panama. It inhabits primarily both humid and dry regions where it prefers the forest edge, open woodland, and shaded plantations.

This year the winning circle is The Lost Tinamou, Finca La Gracia's birding center, [Inicio | The Lost Tinamou](#), located in Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa, in the municipality of Escuintla, Guatemala. This sanctuary on land that was previously used for coffee cultivation is today occupied by very humid subtropical (warm) forest. The Finca Gracia sanctuary is a refuge among a sea of intensive cattle ranching, pineapple, rubber, and sugarcane fields. The native flora and fauna have found refuge in this relatively small preserve.

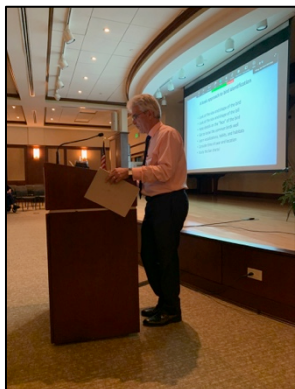
The New Haven Bird Club's Big Sit! committee is looking forward to some exciting developments for 2025. We are entering into a partnership with World Migratory Bird Day so that The Big Sit!® will be promoted as an activity for their international event. World Migratory Bird Day usually falls on the second Saturday of October. Also, we have heard that eBird has been working on some changes in their data reporting functionality that will make eBird checklists easier to submit and will capture more information. We are also looking forward to a new look on our website that will feature mapping capabilities.

--Craig Repasz

Indoor Programs Report

October 2024 Indoor Meeting

On October 10, 2024, Dr. Chris Loscalzo, former President of the New Haven Bird Club and Connecticut Ornithological Association, delivered an insightful presentation on "The Sparrows of Connecticut." The program highlighted the species commonly observed during migration with practical identification tips & intriguing facts.



The event drew 90 participants, with 42 attending in person and 48 joining online. Chris also organized a raffle for the in-person participants, with five lucky winners taking home bird-related items.

As always, Joyce Alton provided delicious treats.

Thank you to all who joined us, whether in person or online.



November 2024 Indoor Meeting

Our November 14th Indoor Program marked a milestone as we hosted the first Member's Night since before the pandemic. A heartfelt thank you goes out to all seven speakers who made the night memorable by sharing their unique insights and experiences.

The evening's agenda included the following presentations, highlighting a diverse range of topics:



Bobbie Fisher, Mark Seth Lender, Meg Bollin, Cheryl Cape, Ross Lanius, Kristin Biatowas, Gail Martino, and Emmeline Kaiser (inset)

- Bobby Fisher – *Hawk Watching at Lighthouse Point Park*
- Cheryl Cape – *Enders Ornithology Collection*
- Kristen Biatowas – *First Year of Birding 2024*
- Mark Seth Lender – *“Viking Explorer” - Masada*
- Meg Bollin – *Without Having to Ask*
- Ross Lanius – *Where to Bird*
- Emmeline Kaiser (virtual) – *Birding in Taiwan*

Each presentation brought something special to the evening, whether it was exploring birding adventures abroad, sharing personal journeys in birding, or offering practical advice and resources for the birding community.

The Book Nook returned, featuring a selection of gently used birding-related books contributed by members. Attendees were invited to choose books they found interesting in exchange for donations to the club.

The program had a good turnout, with 56 members attending. Of these, 28 joined us in person, while 28 participated online, demonstrating the club's ongoing commitment to inclusivity and accessibility.

Thank you to all who contributed to this wonderful evening!

--Gail Martino

Wingspan Game Events

The New Haven Bird Club will once again hold free *Wingspan* Game Events at the Whitney Center's Cultural Arts Center, 200 Leeder Hill Drive, Hamden CT (the same room where NHBC Monthly Meetings are held). These events are for anyone who plays or is interested in learning how to play *Wingspan*.

Friday, January 17, 2025 from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 9, 2025 from noon to 3 p.m.

Friday, March 21, 2025 from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Wingspan is a board game that debuted in 2019 that uses bird behavior and characteristics to control the flow of the game. An article in *Audubon* summed it up best: “*Wingspan* players take on the role of bird enthusiasts aiming to attract avian visitors to their wildlife preserve. The heart of the game is its deck of 170 illustrated bird cards, each depicting a North American species. Up to five players take turns placing these cards into their appropriate habitat, collecting food, laying eggs, or drawing new cards, with each action unlocking new resources. It’s what’s known in board game parlance as an engine-building

game – one in which players try to create an increasingly effective system for generating points. The game lasts about an hour, and the player with the most points wins.”

If you own a *Wingspan* game set and would like to bring it so that we have enough sets for all to play, please let me know at jswattbirds@gmail.com. We anticipate up to 20-25 players so that we would need up to 5 game sets. To learn more about *Wingspan*, its rules, or to watch a tutorial video, go to <https://stonemaiergames.com/games/wingspan/rules/>. The many different actions and variables to each round may seem very complex at first, but become easier to remember with each round. We will set up tables with players of different skill levels. For those who have never played before, we will have a learning session. To learn the game, we will play a demonstration round at first, then break up into groups playing open-handed rounds giving participants a chance to learn and ask questions.

--Jack Swatt

NHBC Winter Feeder Survey 2024-2025



This year we started with 19 surveyors, 2 via Postal Mail and 16 via email and myself. We are located all over New Haven County with one surveyor in Fairfield County and two in Middlesex County. We finished

the first 2 weeks of the survey with 8 surveyors reporting (the others send their reports after the 5th week). 3 surveyors delayed starting because bears have taken down their feeders in the past, so they elected to start on Monday December 9. This year the Survey started a little later than usual, due to November 1 falling on a Friday.

We reported 22 of 22 of the Common Species, 8 of 12 Semi-Common, 1 of 42 Uncommon, and 3 Waterfowl. Of the 22 Common Winter Species that we track, the largest numbers seen were 8 Dark-eyed Juncos and 8 White-throated Sparrows, seen in Week 1 by Tim and Kate Rodgers, and 5 Purple Finches (week 1) seen by Dean and Maryanne Rupp.

Other species of note seen: Semi-Common Category: Eastern Blue Bird, Fox Sparrow, Northern Flicker, Northern Mockingbird, Purple Finch, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-winged Blackbird, Rock Dove. Uncommon Category: Red-shouldered Hawk. Waterfowl: Canada Goose, Hooded Merganser, and Mallard were seen.

There is still time to join. The survey runs from Monday, November 4, 2024, and goes thru Sunday, April 6, 2025. It is a weekly survey, but the number you report can be from a few minutes on one day or from many sightings on several days of the week. It is very flexible.

There will be 2 Sessions this year due the increasing presence of Black Bears and their taking down of feeders. The First Session will start on Monday, November 4, 2024, and finish on Sunday, April 6, 2025. This is for those who have not had any reports of bears in their area and is 22 Weeks long. The Second Session will start on Monday, December 9, 2024, and end on

Sunday, March 9, 2025. This is for those who fear bears attacking their feeders. During this period, the bears should be in hibernation and no threat to the feeders. It will be 13 weeks long.

We have 3 types of Surveyors:

1. Postal Surveyors: Those who use Postal Mail to send and receive. I send you the forms via Postal Mail and you send them back via Postal Mail. No email capability.
2. Email surveyors: Those who use email to send and receive.
3. Email/Postal surveyors: Those of you who can receive email but cannot download the forms and print them or cannot use email to send the data back to me. I send the forms to you via Postal Mail and you send them back via Postal Mail. All other communication is via email.

In each cell, you only record the highest number of individual birds seen of that species in that week. For example: if you see 5 Juncos at 8:00 AM, 10 at noon, and 6 at 3:00 PM, count 10 Juncos as your count for the day. For the Weekly count, if the daily counts are 10, 2, and 15 for the same species, then the count for the Week is 15 and not 27. In cases where individual birds can be differentiated, record the total counted for both sexes for the week. For example, if you have a female Cardinal on one day of the week and a male on another, then record 2 for the week, since you know that 2 different individuals were seen.

Any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me via email. My home phone number is in the NHBC Yearbook, but my new phones have "Call Blocking" on them and if we do not recognize the caller's name or number the call may be blocked. Instead call my cell phone: 203-988-1841 and leave a message. I will get back to you as soon as possible. The email address is: vitgoo39@gmail.com.

Happy Birding,
--Pete Vitali
Survey Coordinator
Chairman NHBC Winter Feeder Survey



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

December 2024

NHBC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name(s) _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip Code _____
Area Code / Phone _____
Email _____

_____ New Member _____ Renewal

Membership Levels (check appropriate category):

____ Individual - \$15 ____ Family - \$20
____ Supporting - \$50 ____ Student under 18 - Free
____ Life Membership - \$300 for 1 or 2 people at same address.

Additional gift to support NHBC programs: \$ _____

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

You can also join or renew membership at the NHBC website with credit card or PayPal.

The NHBC membership year is from July 1 to June 30. New members joining between January 1 and June 30 are given full membership for the rest of the current year and for the whole next membership year.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

New Haven Bird Club is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. All dues and donations are fully tax-deductible. If you work for a company that gives matching grants, please take advantage of the offer. It's free and helps NHBC's program budget.

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

If your address, phone or email change, please send that information to: New Haven Bird Club, PO Box 9004, New Haven CT 06532-0004 or membership@newhavenbirdclub.org.

The NHBC website, www.newhavenbirdclub.org, offers information about the Club, its programs, and other Club and member news. If you have any questions, please email us at ask@newhavenbirdclub.org.

CTBirds is an open discussion email list provided by the Connecticut Ornithological Association (COA) to discuss birds and birding in the state, <http://www.ctbirding.org>.