



Connecticut Ornithological Association

26th Annual Meeting

Saturday, March 20, 2010

Chapman Hall • Middlesex Community College, Middletown, CT

Schedule of Events

8:00 - 9:00 **Registration / COA Marketplace**

9:00 - 9:20 **Welcome / Business Meeting**

Patrick Comins, COA President will present a brief overview of the state of COA, followed by elections of officers and board members. Ken Elkins, Program Chairman will welcome the membership and introduce the first presenter of the day.

9:20 - 10:15 **Alan Brush “Flashy Plumage: Molecules to Message”**

Carotenoids play an important role in bird plumage. Dr Brush has worked with some fascinating species on some of the most basic questions of color and plumage in the field and will take these insights on pigment chemistry and weave them into a larger world of plumage function and evolution to discuss such topics as how did the stunning colors of Scarlet Tanagers evolve? What role does diet play in House Finch pigmentation and what unintended consequences has research into the wax of Cedar Waxwings had?

Alan is Professor Emeritus (Physiology & Neurobiology) at UConn. His research included work on feather pigments described here and the molecular structure and evolution of feathers. He served as Editor of *The Auk*, and was visiting research scientist at several US Universities and in Australia. He writes “Books on Birds” for the CT Warbler.

10:15 – 10:25 **Mabel Osgood Wright Award Presentation**

10:25 – 10:35 **Betty Kleiner Award Presentation**

10:35 – 10:45 **President’s Award Presentation**

10:45 – 11:00 **Break - COA Marketplace**

A time to socialize, purchase COA Raffle tickets and check out vendors’ offerings of bird-related items.

11:00-Noon **Luke Dempsey “A Supremely Bad Idea”**

It began with a weekend house; then weekend trips. Then the occasional meeting rearranged in favor of a morning in Central Park, just while the spring migration was on. Before Luke Dempsey knew it, he had spiraled down into full-on birding mania - finding himself riding along with two like-minded maniacs in a series of disreputable rental cars and even nastier motel rooms, charging madly around the country in search of its rarest and most beautiful birds. *A Supremely Bad Idea* is the story of that search, and those birds, and those maniacs, and that country, and (to a much lesser extent) those rental cars. In Texas, the three obsessives go in search of the deeply endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler, which lives on the side of a hill near a waterfall; in Michigan, they see the pretty-much-extinct Kirtland's Warbler, which insists on short pine trees for nesting and lots of "quiet, please"; in Arizona, they see the very private Elegant Trogon after a very public fight with a birding guide. Along the way, Dempsey narrates an amazing sequence of encounters with nature and humanity, including a man building a 40-foot ark in his Seattle backyard; a beautiful woman who shows him how to kill 4,000 Cowbirds a year; a coyote (and his human smuggler) on the Rio Grande; and everywhere, these incandescent birds flitting across the range of his binoculars, and his heart.

With the casual erudition of a Bill Bryson and the comic timing of a British David Sedaris, Dempsey demonstrates why so many millions of birders care so much about birds - and why, perhaps, the rest of us should, too.

Luke Dempsey is the Editorial Director for Ballantine Books, a division of Random House. A graduate of Oxford University, he moved to the United States in 1995, since when he's held a number of editorial positions in the publishing industry. He is the proud father of twin girls, both of whom love birds, too, and a proud member of the modern beat combo The Railbangers. This is his first book.

12:00 – 1:00 **Lunch at Founder’s Hall Cafeteria followed by dessert (Osgood Cake!) back at Chapman Hall**

1:00 - 2:00 **Dr. Margaret Rubega “Look Up! Chimney Swifts in Connecticut”**
Chimney Swifts are among the species of birds we take for granted; a common sight over any settlement with chimneys, they have adapted with spectacular success to nesting in human-built structures. Chimney swift populations are declining steadily. Our state ornithologist, Dr. Margaret Rubega will present an introduction to their biology and conservation, and describe current projects aimed to help the swifts.

2:00 - 2:15 **Break - COA Marketplace**

2:15 - 3:15 **Greg Hanisek & Mark Szantyr “The Art & Science of Rare Bird Identification”**
Did you finally catch up with Pacific Loon last fall in Middlebury? Sometimes the answer to a tricky identification is a cooperative bird. Mark Szantyr and Greg Hanisek, who have both served as secretary of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut, will lead a panel and audience participation discussion on the art and science of documenting the identification of rarities. The emphasis will be on birds that pose identification problems in Connecticut. Mystery photos on view at the venue will serve as a focus of discussion.

3:15 – 3:30 **COA Raffle and Silent Auction**
The ever-popular Raffle will conclude our day with many prizes including avian artwork and valuable birding equipment donated by artists and vendors. Raffle tickets will be available throughout the day.

For map and directions: www.mxctc.commnet.edu or call: 860-343-5800

REGISTRATION FORM
COA Annual Meeting March 20, 2010
Middlesex Community College • Chapman Hall • Middletown, CT

Early Registration: ___ Persons @ **\$15.00** (pre-pay only) \$ _____
(Must be received by March 8)

[Registration at the door: \$20.00]

Hot and cold buffet lunch: ___ Persons @ **\$14.00** (pre-pay only) \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Please **print** name(s) as you would like to have it appear on name tag(s): _____

Address: _____

Send check (made out COA) & registration form to: Larry Reiter 32 West Mystic Ave Mystic, CT 06355