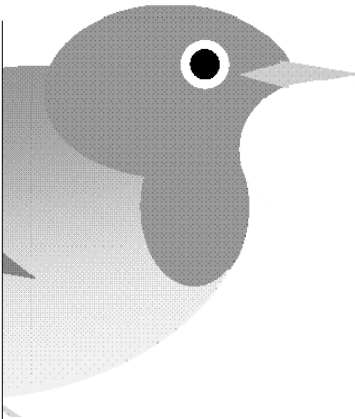
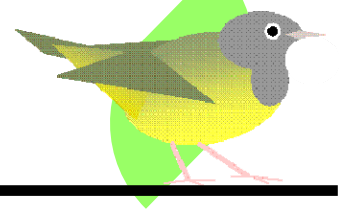


COA BULLETIN



From the editor:

Migration is winding down, but that doesn't mean birding activity should. Opportunities abound for citizen science bird monitoring projects, some of which are mentioned in this issue.

Andrew Dasinger

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HELP PROTECT CONNECTICUT'S GRASSLAND HABITATS: REPORT GRASSLAND BIRD SIGHTINGS!

A statewide group of conservation organizations and agricultural groups including the Audubon Societies have announced a partnership to gather information on dwindling grassland birds and habitat in Connecticut. eBird, an online database, will be used to allow anyone to log sightings of grassland birds and help us better understand their current distribution in the state.

The Connecticut Grassland Habitat Conservation Initiative is the first major statewide action to be addressed under Connecticut's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS). Under the Grassland Initiative, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is teaming up with a wide variety of conservation and agricultural groups in an effort to inventory our existing grassland habitat and the array of wildlife species dependent on it. "This project will provide an important baseline for existing conditions and help us understand where the resources exist so that efforts can be focused on those sites where the conservation impact will be the greatest," said Tom Baptist, Executive Director for Audubon Connecticut.

Birds have been chosen as the primary indicator species for this effort. Several species of grassland-specialist birds occur only in high-quality habitat. "If we know where the grassland birds are, we will know where the best grassland bird habitat is," said Edward Parker, Natural Resources Bureau Chief, "understanding and conserving the best sites for birds will also help to conserve a whole suite of associated wildlife species."

Participants will log their sightings in eBird, the on-line citizen science ornithological database that is a joint project of Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. It allows anyone to log in and enter their sightings of grassland birds and will provide a map of those grassland bird sightings to the DEP. This in turn will help focus more detailed surveys efforts on those areas that are most important to protect and manage as grassland habitat. "This is a perfect example of a public-private partnership," said DEP Commissioner Gina McCarthy. "Birders and other citizen scientists throughout the state can put their knowledge to practical use and help us to better understand and conserve Connecticut's grassland heritage."

(continued on page 2)

GRASSLAND BIRDS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

To participate, simply log on to eBird at <http://www.ebird.org>. You will have to answer a few simple questions and choose a user name and password to be registered as a user. In the "Comments" box, type "CT Grassland Bird Survey." In addition to providing data to this larger effort, you will have the beginnings of an online database of your own bird sightings. There are mapping tools to help locate the spot where your observation occurred and then you simply estimate the numbers of each bird species you observe and enter that information into the checklist.

The following birds have been chosen as the target species:

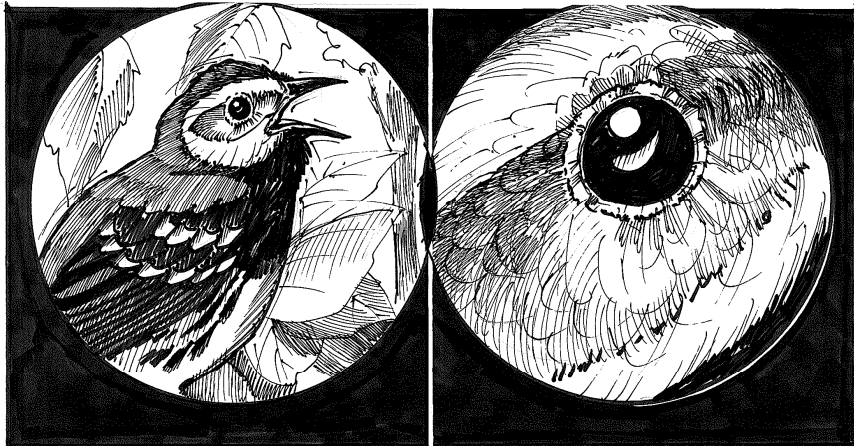
- Upland Sandpiper (Endangered)
- American Kestrel (Threatened)
- Horned Lark (Endangered)
- Vesper Sparrow (Endangered)
- Savannah Sparrow (Special Concern)
- Grasshopper Sparrow (Endangered)
- Bobolink (Special Concern), and
- Eastern Meadowlark (Special Concern)

It is not necessary for volunteer birders to have computer access. Grassland bird sightings can be recorded on paper. Include which grassland bird species were seen, how many, where in the state the birds were seen (be as specific as possible) and the date and time of the sightings. Volunteer birders should mail their grassland bird sightings (including their name and contact information) to: Milan Bull, Connecticut Audubon Society, 2325 Burr St., Fairfield, CT 06824

"The Connecticut Audubon Society is thrilled to be a part of this project," said Bob Martinez, Executive Director for the Connecticut Audubon Society, "today's technology will allow us to tap in to the knowledge base of our members and leave no stone unturned in our quest to inventory this endangered habitat in Connecticut."

For more information, contact Milan Bull, (203) 259-6305, ext. 111, mbull@ctaudubon.org, or Patrick Comins, (203) 264-5098, ext. 305, pcomins@audubon.org

DISADVANTAGES of 10X Binoculars



Paul Carrier

"I see a yellow face, 2 white wing bars and Black throat."

"I see a Black eye !"

THE 2007 BETTY KLEINER MEMORIAL AWARD

By Steve Mayo

We were all very saddened when Betty Kleiner passed away last year. She was a personal friend to many of us and a tireless supporter of COA, Hartford Audubon Society and the Connecticut birding community. For 19 years, Betty served as editor of *The Connecticut Warbler*. Betty and Gil Kleiner handled every aspect of production, publication, printing, and mailing. It was an incredible volunteer effort.



Greg Hanisek accepting the 2007 Betty Kleiner Memorial Award from Steve Mayo

The COA has decided to honor Betty by establishing an award for the best article, artwork or other product, published in *The Connecticut Warbler*. It was the Board's intent to review work from the previous year or so, of publications. We have deviated from this guideline for the very first award.

It was obvious to all who should, this year, receive the Betty Kleiner Memorial Award. It was unanimous; it was, if you will, a "no-brainer." "Connecticut Birds by the Season," was published back in January of 2005. This special issue comprised 44 pages and included detailed summaries of the seasonal and geographical occurrence of Connecticut birds. It is amazing how much information is conveyed and how much effort went into this volume's simple, seasonal bar graphs. Its photographs were provided by Connecticut's best bird photographers. A second printing will soon be underway. It will continue to be a very important reference for many years to come.

Greg Hanisek has taken up Betty's role as *The Connecticut Warbler* editor. Now he is putting in the hours, for every edition, every volume. We also know Greg as a talented naturalist, a sage hawk-watcher, an entertaining nature columnist, a brilliant rare records reviewer, a newspaper editor and a friend. But today we recognize him for just one of these accomplishments. We are honored to present the first Betty Kleiner Memorial Award to Greg Hanisek, for his work, "Connecticut Birds by the Season."

LIGHTHOUSE POINT PURPLE MARTIN HOUSE

A pole with 12 polyethylene gourd-shaped Purple Martin homes was erected at Lighthouse Point this spring near the butterfly garden that recently hosted Connecticut's first Calliope Hummingbird. The COA supported this project, which also includes adding signage to the butterfly garden, with a \$1,000 grant. Photos submitted by Dori Sosensky.



COA's 2007 SUMMER BIRD COUNT

Joseph Zeranski & Patrick Comins

This June the 17th Connecticut Summer Bird Count [SBC] will be held. The SBC has been coordinated by the COA since 1991. Roughly 240 observers take part each year in the eight regional count areas. An average of over 95,000 individual birds and 179 species have been recorded on the SBC in recent years.

For anyone not familiar with the SBC it is conducted in a manner similar to the well-known Christmas Bird Count, but it is held over a two day period in much more comfortable conditions. And it tests the skills of Connecticut birders in identifying songs and calls our nesting birds. But aside from the challenge of local summer birding, the information gathered is an increasingly invaluable tool for enriching our knowledge of the population dynamics of our nesters.

Since its inception in 1991, 261 species have been recorded on the count, and we now have enough years' data under our collective belts to uncover some meaningful trends. The population growths and declines of a number of species can now be documented using the numbers generated by the SBC. Because of birders efforts we are able to better understand nesting statewide and regional population changes and regional differences in bird populations within the state.

You too can be a part of this ongoing study of our local nesting birds. Please contact your nearby SBC compiler and offer your services. The regional Counts and coordinators are:

Barkhamsted Summer Bird Count (*founded 1992*)

Count Dates: June 23 - 24 (Sat. & Sun.)

Area covered: Barkhamsted, Burlington (northern 1/4), Canton, Colebrook (south half), Granby (southwest 1/4), Hartland, New Hartford, Harwinton (northern edge), Torrington (northern 1/4), and Winchester.

2006 Total: 126 species,

Contact: *David Rosgen (121 Laurel Way, Winsted, CT 06098-2534; drosgen@optonline.net*

Greenwich-Stamford Summer Bird Count (*founded 1976*)

Count Dates: June 9 & 10 (Sat. & Sun.)

Area covered (Connecticut, 65% of area): Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, & Stamford; (New York, 35% of area) Armonk, Bedford (in part), Port Chester, Rye, and White Plains (in part).

2006 Total: 147 species,

Contact: *Thomas W. Burke (235 Highland Road, Rye, NY 10580; tom.burke@rsmi.com), Gary Palmer (34 Field Road, Cos Cob, CT 06807)*

Hartford Summer Bird Count (*founded 1991*)

Count Dates: June 9 & 10 (Sat. & Sun.)

Area covered: Bloomfield, East Hartford, Farmington (in part), Glastonbury (in part), Hartford, Manchester (in part), Newington (in part), Rocky Hill (in part), South Windsor, Wethersfield, and Windsor.

2006 Total: 99 species,

Contact: *Gil Kleiner (5 Flintlock Ridge, Simsbury, CT 06070; CTWarbler@cs.com), Jay Kaplan (jkaplan@sciencecenterct.org)*

Litchfield Hills Summer Bird Count (*founded 1994*)

Count Dates: June 9 & 10 (Sat. & Sun.)

Area covered: (in whole or in part): Cornwall, Goshen, Kent, Litchfield, Morris, Sharon, Torrington, Warren, and Washington.

2006 Total: 138 species

Contact: *Bob Barbieri (Kalmia Sanctuary, 183 Laurel Lane, Harwinton, CT 06791)*

SUMMER BIRD COUNT (CONT'D)

New Haven Summer Bird Count (*founded 1991*)

Count Dates: June 9 & 10 (Sat. & Sun.)

Area covered: Branford (western), East Haven, Milford, New Haven, North Haven, Orange, West Haven, and Woodbridge (in part).

2006 Total: 114 species

Contact: Steve C. Mayo (27 Tuttle Court, Bethany, CT 06524; SMayo@sikorsky.com)

New Milford/Pawling Summer Bird Count (*founded 2003*)

Count Dates: June 16 & 17 (Sat. & Sun.)

Area covered: (Connecticut, 1/3 of area): Sherman, New Fairfield, New Milford (west of route 7), and portions of Brookfield & Danbury; and (New York, 2/3 of area) Patterson, Pawling, Putnam Lake, Carmel, southern Wingdale, and Poughquag.

2006 Total: 124 species

Contact: Angela Dimmitt (PO Box 146, Sherman, Ct. 06784; BaDimmitt@AOL.com)

Storrs Summer Bird Count (*founded 1990*)

Count Dates: June 16 & 17 (Sat. & Sun.)

Area covered: Andover, Ashford, Chaplin, Coventry, Mansfield, Tolland, Willimantic, West Willington, Willington, and Windham.

2006 Total: 95 species

Contact: Steve Rogers (75 Charles Lane, Storrs, CT 06268; climbroggers@charter.net)

Woodbury-Roxbury Summer Bird Count (*founded 1978*)

Count Date: June 3 (Sun.)

Area covered: Bethlehem, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Middlebury, New Milford, Newtown, Roxbury, Southbury, Washington, and Woodbury.

2006 Total: 122 species

Contact: Russ Naylor (44 Church Street, Woodbury, CT 06798)

LAST CHILD IN THE WOODS: SAVING OUR CHILDREN FROM NATURE-DEFICIT DISORDER, BY RICHARD LOUV **A BOOK REVIEW BY JAMES BAIR**

The Introduction to *Last Child in the Woods* summarizes the author's concern: "Today kids are aware of the global threats to the environment—but their physical contact, their intimacy with nature is fading...A kid today can tell you about the Amazon rain forest—but not the last time he explored the world in solitude."

In the first part of the book, the author, a long time child advocate and editor of *Parents* magazine, examines the question: "Why do the young need nature?" Not only does he describe a disconnect between most North American children and the outdoors, but details why awareness of nature is good for them. Some of the mental health observations the author notes may shed light on why COA members like to be outdoors. Perhaps most significant is the evidence that children who spend time outdoors in natural surroundings are less likely to develop attention-deficit disorder. As the subtitle suggests, a better name for ADD might be *nature-deficit disorder*.

The author is very gentle and rarely criticizes anyone in particular, but he does point out some institutional and social problems that may be difficult to overcome. Sometimes well-

(continued on page 6)

LAST CHILD IN THE WOODS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

meaning preservationist regulations prohibit playing. Louv recalls a conversation with a park ranger who was excitedly describing a new nature reserve. Louv asked the ranger if kids could build tree houses and otherwise range freely in the new reserve. Of course not. He then asked the ranger how he got interested in wildlife. The ranger sheepishly replied, "I built forts and tree houses." Nature is beautiful and educational, Louv says, but it is also *fun*.

He notes that the growth in lawsuits and changes in tort law inhibit both parents and property owners. Fifty years ago if a kid broke her arm playing in the woods, that was simply seen as a rite of childhood. Now we look for someone to sue. It becomes simplest to prohibit any activity that might bring on a lawsuit or cause insurance rates to rise.

He also notes that college biology departments emphasize biochemistry and cellular biology. Along with legal and insurance concerns, this means that America's schools have little incentive to teach about nature. I teach high school English, and I find myself having to explain a lot of the descriptions of nature in the texts we read. I once complained to our school's advanced placement biology teacher that even the AP biology students reading these texts did not know certain things about animals I thought everyone knew. She understood my concern but reminded that none of those things are on the AP Biology Test or in first-year college biology courses, and that is what she has to prepare her students for.

Last Child in the Woods also brings out statistics to show that the rate of crimes against children really has not changed that much in the United States in the last sixty years. Still, news reports make many parents fear for children who play outdoors without adult supervision. One widely circulated statistic from the Children's Defense Fund stated that "every year since 1950, the number of American children gunned down has doubled." If you recall the riddle about doubling pennies every day for a month, then you realize that if that were true then by the mid 1980's the entire population of the world would have been shot to death!

The final portion of *Last Child in the Woods* is not only a call to action, but a call for reconciliation. The author points out that there are many groups and individuals who are fishermen, hunters, religious believers, and campers that also have an earnest interest in the preservation of nature. These allies have often been marginalized by other activists because they eat meat, discredit Darwinism, or take "politically incorrect" stands on other issues. He believes and hopes more people can work together.

The book does not really take any political stand—other than noting a need for tort reform. It tries to show us that a love for nature transcends other issues. It is something that can unite rather than separate, inspire awe rather than cause fear. At the same time it encourages adults to let children enjoy nature and help them do it. As Louv says, the young can love nature "not just as a matter of ideology, or even survival, but because they see the potential joy that they and their own children could share some day...if we act quickly."

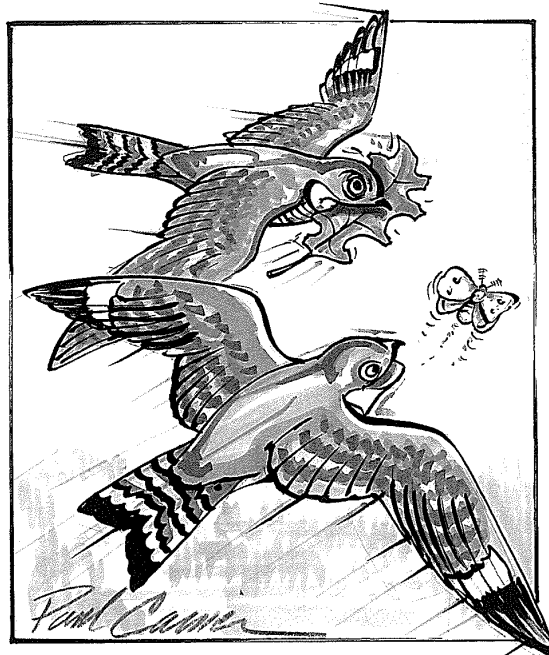
SUMMER WORKSHOPS

As in past years, COA is sponsoring two summer workshops:

Birding by Ear, June 2, Bent of the River Sanctuary, Southbury, CT

Look for additional details at the COA Web site

Shorebird Workshop, August, date and locations tbd; past trips have started at Sandy Point, West Haven, CT (see COA web site for additional details as they become available)



COA MEMBERSHIP FORM

JOIN COA FOR THE BEST OF BIRDING IN CT

New Member Renewal Gift

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ E-mail address* _____

COA is always in need of volunteer help. If you are interested, please check the areas below that you would like to know more about::

Computer skills Events Field trips Finance Workshops Science

Membership Category:

- Student (\$15)
 Individual (\$25)
 Family (\$35)
 Contributing (\$50)
 Donor (\$75)
 Benefactor (\$100)
 Lifetime (\$1000; payable in 3 annual installments)

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 21 Beechwood Lane
 South Glastonbury, CT 06073,
 or

Larry Reiter
 Reiter.mystic@snet.net
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