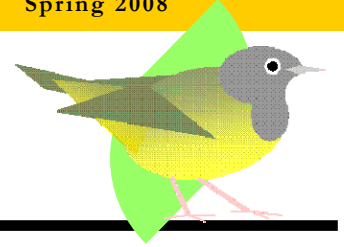


COA BULLETIN



24TH COA ANNUAL MEETING MARCH 29, 2008

The Connecticut Ornithological Association invites you to attend its 24th Annual Meeting on **Saturday, March 29, 2008**, at Middlesex Community College in Middletown, CT. As in past years, the on-campus site will be Chapman Hall (for map and directions, visit www.mxctc.commmnet.edu or call: 860-343-5800). To save on printing and postage costs, no separate announcement will be mailed to membership.

Note: This Bulletin will be your only printed announcement.

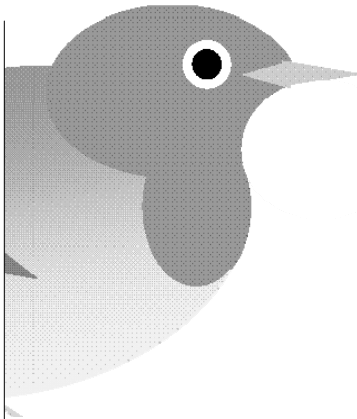
Plan to arrive between 8:00 and 9:00 AM for registration and to visit the COA marketplace. We will begin with a message from COA President Steve Mayo and an introduction to the day's events by COA Program Chairman Jerry Connolly. Our speakers for the day include:

- Kevin T. Karlson, co-author of *The Shorebird Guide* and noted wildlife photographer,
- Dr. Jeff Wells, author of *Birder's Conservation Handbook: 100 North American Birds at Risk*, and Senior Scientist for the International Boreal Conservation Campaign and Boreal Songbird Initiative,
- Julian Hough, journalist, photographer, and illustrator, member of the Avian Rare Records Committee and frequent contributor to *The Connecticut Warbler*, and
- Dr. Robert Askins, Professor of Biology at Connecticut College, where he teaches courses in ecology, animal behavior, and ornithology, and is chair of the Biology Department and Director of the Goodwin-Niering Center for Conservation Biology and Environmental Studies.

Speaker bios and descriptions of their talks are on pages 3 and 4.

The cost for the meeting is \$12.50 for advance registration (received by March 24); walk-in registration on the day of the meeting is \$15.00. A buffet lunch is available for \$12.50, and must be paid for in advance.

The Program of Events can be found on page 3. The registration form is on page 7. Please send your check & registration form to COA Director: Larry Reiter, 32 West Mystic Ave., Mystic, CT 06355



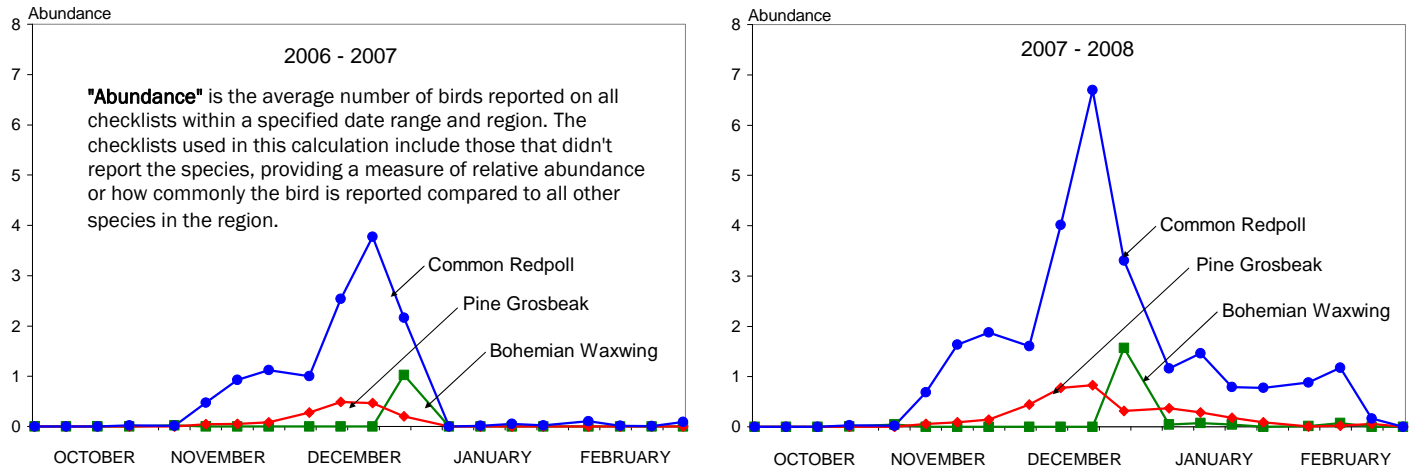
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CANADIAN INVASION: 2007-08

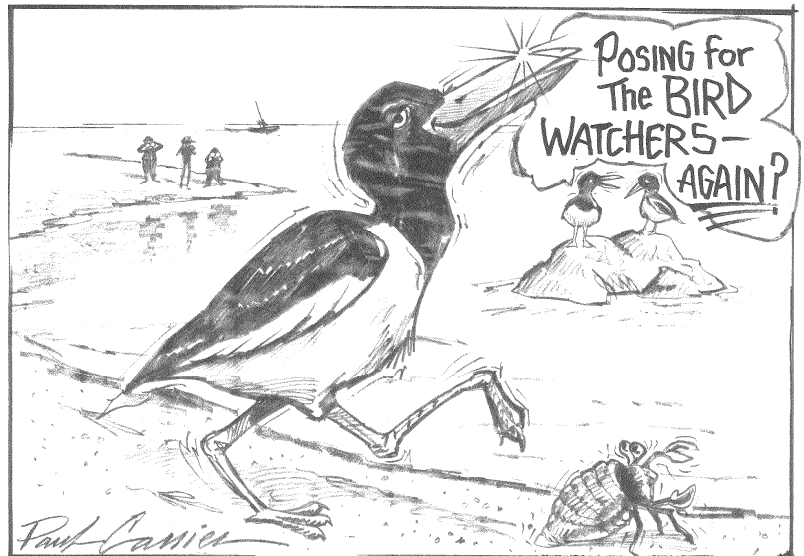
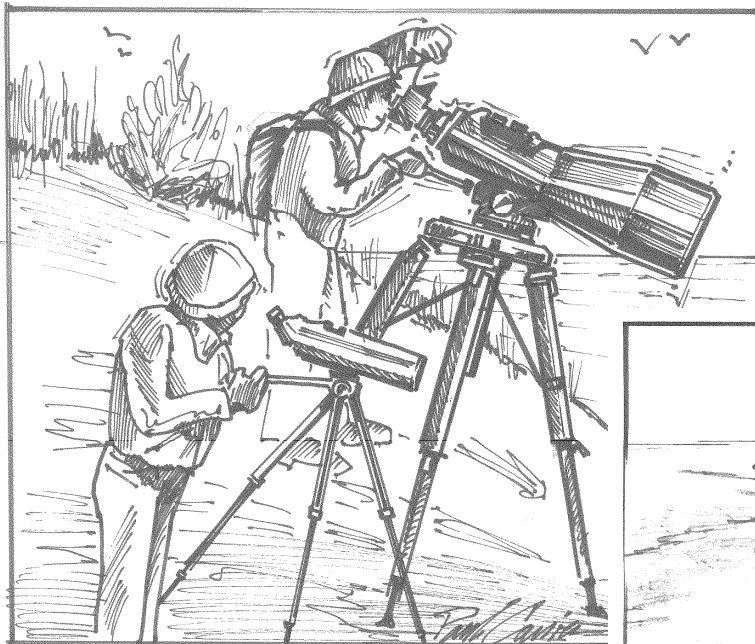
ANDREW DASINGER

Predictions made by Ron Pittaway of Ontario Field Ornithologists in the fall of 2007 suggested that poor food crops in the Canadian boreal zone would result in the irruption of a number of species. Using the data contained in eBird, Cornell's on-line repository that many birders contribute to, I plotted abundance data for three species - Common Redpoll, Pine Grosbeak, and Bohemian Waxwing - in southern New England (CT, RI, and MA)



to see how the two winters compare. No surprises here, although I would have expected a stronger difference for Pine Grosbeak based on all of the sightings reported on Connecticut and Massachusetts listservs this winter. When using eBird to visualize data, it's important to note that it is displaying raw, unfiltered data. Consequently, it reflects certain biases created by the patterns in which birders make observations.

For example, the peaks on these graphs may simply reflect the fact that many observers went out in December to seek out these species (with the added possibility of multiple reports of the same bird(s)), making them appear more abundant in the data. In any case, we're not likely to see a winter like this one in a long time, so enjoy - and enter your sightings in eBird.



ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

MARCH 29, 2008

8:00–9:00	Registration/COA Marketplace	12:00–1:00	Lunch at Founder’s Hall Cafeteria; return to Chapman Hall for dessert
9:00–9:20	Welcome / Business Meeting Steve Mayo, COA Vice President Jerry Connolly, Program Chairman	1:00–2:00	Searching for the ‘Mega’ Julian Hough
9:20–10:15	The Shorebird Guide: A Different Approach to Field Identification Kevin T. Karlson	2:00–2:15	Break—COA Marketplace
10:15–10:25	Mabel Osgood Wright Award Presentation	2:15–3:15	Conservation of Birds in New England and Japan: Different Birds, Similar Problems Dr. Robert Askins
10:25–10:35	Betty Kleiner Award Presentation	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.
10:35–10:55	Break—COA Marketplace (socialize, purchase COA raffle tickets, and check out vendors)		
10:55–11:55	Bird Conservation Secrets Everyone Should Know Jeff Wells		

COA ANNUAL MEETING SPEAKERS BIOS AND PRESENTATION DESCRIPTIONS

Kevin T. Karlson

The Shorebird Guide: A Different Approach to Field Identification

Kevin Karlson’s program highlights a new and exciting approach to field identification, *Birding by Impression*, and how it specifically relates to shorebirds. This approach focuses on impressions of the non-changeable field characters of size, shape, and behavior/body language to form a fast, yet surprisingly effective picture of every bird seen.

Kevin’s *The Shorebird Guide* (with co-authors Michael O’Brien and Richard Crossley; Houghton Mifflin, 2006) takes this “holistic” approach to shorebird ID. Several difficult species (dowitchers, Semipalmated and Western Sandpipers, Willet subspecies) previously thought near impossible to identify with certainty in the field, will be reviewed and separated in photos using basic impressions of shape and structure as well as plumage analysis. Throughout the program, Kevin shares the stunning beauty and incredible migratory journeys of shorebirds using photos that capture the essence of these global travelers.

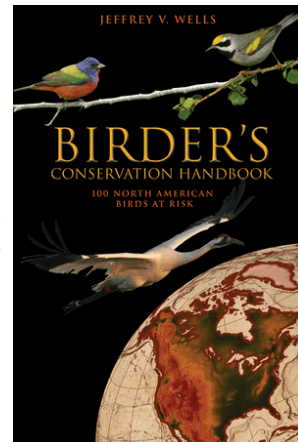


Jeff Wells

BIRD CONSERVATION SECRETS EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW

Jeff Wells, author of the Princeton University Press publication *Birder's Conservation Handbook: 100 North American Birds at Risk*, will talk about his views on the state of birds and bird conservation in North America. In a wide-ranging presentation covering everything from global warming to lingerie, Kleenex, donut holes, and the Argentinean economy, Dr. Wells will describe the best-kept secrets of bird conservation and tell about some amazing conservation opportunities that still exist, including protection of Boreal Forests - North America's Great Bird Nursery.

Dr. Jeff Wells is the Senior Scientist for the Boreal Songbird Initiative, dedicated to understanding and protecting the land where North America's birds are born and raised, the boreal forest of Canada and Alaska.



Julian Hough

SEARCHING FOR THE 'MEGA'

The Scilly Isles are an archipelago of islands, situated off the southwestern tip of the UK. For British twitchers, they are a birder's mecca, renowned for the number of rarities which are found here, particularly vagrants from America. Tired and lost, the Scillies are the first point of landfall for these tired waifs. In October, hundreds of birders descend on the islands for the rare and unusual. Familiar North American birds such as Black and White Warbler, Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Red-eyed Vireo send the British twitchers into a frenzy when they are sighted. It is not just birds from the west. Siberian strays such as Radde's Warbler and Olive-backed Pipit, as well as exotic species such as Bee-eater and Hoopoe from Europe may all be found on these islands. Nowhere else in the world would you be able to see a Siberian Pallas's Warbler in the same bush as a Scarlet Tanager! For many, this is what the "Scilly Season" is all about.



Dr. Robert Askins

CONSERVATION OF BIRDS IN NEW ENGLAND AND JAPAN: DIFFERENT BIRDS, SIMILAR PROBLEMS

The deciduous forests of Japan and eastern North America are surprisingly similar, dominated by the same types of tree and closely matched in general appearance and structure. Both regions have spectacular changes in foliage in autumn and attractive displays of woodland wildflowers in the spring. Even the small plants of the forest floor are closely related. The forest birds of these two regions are distinctly different, however. Ecologically similar species in the two regions often belong to unrelated families.

Robert Askins, who has done field work on forest birds in both Connecticut and Japan, will describe how some of the same problems affecting birds in New England are important in Japan. Although Japan is a densely populated, highly industrialized country, it has a surprising high diversity of plants and animals, and much of the interior of the country is heavily forested. As in New England, however, two of the major threats to birds are forest fragmentation and loss of open, early successional habitats. The conservation themes are similar, but the cultural responses are distinctly different in the two regions.



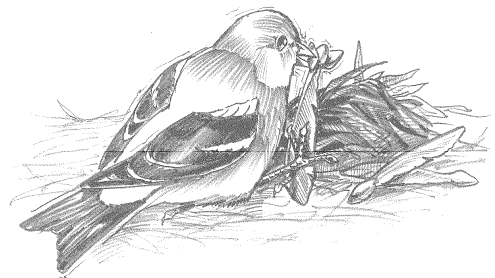
TWO EXAMPLES OF AMERICAN GOLDFINCH DEXTERITY

By Paul Carrier

Learned skills and their adaptation play an important role in the survival and perpetuation of any species. Here are two examples that might be a part of this learned adaptation which works for the American Goldfinch.

March 30th, 2006: The day was sunny and warm, with the last of winter's snow melting fast, exposing open patches of matted down grass here and there. Within one of these open patches were six American Goldfinch who appeared to be feeding. Through binoculars I observed the following:

I noticed one male Goldfinch seize a winged, White Ash seed pod with its bill. While holding the pod's wing with one foot, he placed it against a clump of grass, positioning the seed end pointing up. From this position he worked the seed pod with his bill until it opened, then extracted and ate the seed within. This one male and the other five repeated this act several times demonstrating how this practice appears to be a learned skill, not just one of chance. (See illustration.)



November 1st, 2007: Today, I spotted and studied an American Goldfinch feeding from a branch of an Eastern Hemlock tree. Through binoculars I observed the following:

While perched on a horizontal branch, the Goldfinch reached down with its bill, grasping a hemlock cone that was attached to the end of a short twig, pulling the cone up to its branch, then holding the cone in an upright position with one foot. When the cone was secured, the bird proceeded to pick at the cone, extracting seeds from within the scales. With the cone facing upward, the bird had no trouble extracting each seed, with none falling to the ground. (See illustration.)



It was also observed that cones which were not reachable from above were approached from below, with the bird hanging upside down, extracting seeds. However, with the cones facing down, spending time working the scales open often resulted in the seeds dropping to the ground, thus not as efficient as holding a cone upright as described previously.

These two examples of Goldfinch dexterity are only a slice of what we might learn about wildlife survival in what is often perceived as a harsh and sometimes inhospitable environment.

HAPPENINGS

Exhibition—"Ornithology: Looking at Birds"

February 11–April 3, 2008, UConn

Symposium and artist reception on April 3 @2:30, Konover Auditorium, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center

The Contemporary Art Galleries (CAG), in collaboration with the University of Connecticut's Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, is organizing an interdisciplinary, multi-media exhibition titled *Ornithology: Looking at Birds*. The exhibition opened at the CAG, located in the School of Fine Arts building, on February 11, and runs through April 3. The symposium on April 3 will feature a panel of internationally renowned artists and ornithologists, contemporary artists and UConn faculty, with the aim of fostering dialogue on the importance and symbolic value of birds in art production, scientific research and human psychology.

The show presents a diverse mix of images, videos, sound clips and other works, featuring birds as its common underlying theme. The exhibition's artists raise provocative questions about the human condition and the actions of humankind. Through the deceptively simple figure of the bird, the works on display explore themes of race and gender relations, emerging and evolving global politics, economics and environmental change.

<http://www.foundation.uconn.edu/basepage.asp?page=0379>

16th Annual Mass Audubon Birder's Meeting

Saturday, March 15, 2008

Bentley College, Waltham, MA

A full day of workshops, speakers, wildlife updates, vendors, and more! Lunch included. The morning features a roster of speakers talking about such things as global climate changes effects on New England birds and the how's and why's of recording nature sounds. The afternoon has a series of parallel workshop sessions with something for everyone.

For more information go to: <http://www.massaudubon.org/news/index.php?id=917&type=news>

Exhibition: "Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang -- Bird Extinctions Around the World Since 1600"

The Watkinson Library of Trinity College's major exhibition on bird extinctions features beautiful ornithological publications from the 18th century to the present and original paintings to illustrate a selection of 31 extinct birds from around the world with a brief discussion of each bird and an explanation of its extinction when ascertainable. Arranged geographically, it begins on the coast of Africa, continues in Australasia, Asia and Hawaii and finishes in North American and the North Atlantic. Also on display is a small exhibition on endangered felines.

The exhibit runs through June 9. The Watkinson Library is open Monday-through Friday 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. (starting mid-May, the Library closes at 1 p.m. on Fridays); from March 29-May 3, Saturday hours are 12:30-4:30 p.m. On March 26 at 4:45 p.m., a joint talk entitled "Conservation of Imperiled Birds and Felines: Notes from the Field" will be given by Trinity College's conservation biologist and ornithologist Professor Joan Morrison and feline expert Dr. Jim Sanderson in the Joslin 1823 Room in Trinity College's Library and Information Technology Center. Located at 300 Summit Street in Hartford. Admission is free.

Connecticut State of the Birds: Specific Conservation Complexities & Challenges (2008 report)

Released by Connecticut Audubon on February 11, the 2008 *Connecticut State of the Birds* report describes possible conservation strategies for six bird species that are in serious trouble – and for which their Connecticut habitat is critical to their global survival – to illustrate how complex the problems and solutions are. Learn more and download the report at <http://www.ctaudubon.org/SOTB/2008.html>



COA ANNUAL MEETING REGISTRATION FORM

Early Registration: _____ persons @ **\$12.50/person** (pre-pay only) \$ _____
 (must be received by 3/24; registration at the door: \$15/person)

Buffet lunch: _____ persons @ **\$12.50/person** (pre-pay only) \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

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

Address: _____

Send check payable to COA & registration form to: **Larry Reiter, 32 West Mystic Ave.
 Mystic, CT 06355**

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)

Send this form with your check or money order to:

Connecticut Ornithological Association

314 Unquowa Road

Fairfield, CT 06824

* COA does not release its membership list to other organizations

Dues are tax deductible as allowed by law

The COA Bulletin is the quarterly newsletter of the Connecticut Ornithological Association, published in February, May, September, and December. Please submit materials for the next issue by April 15, 2008, to:

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 Dasingerfamily@cox.net
 21 Beechwood Lane
 South Glastonbury, CT 06073,
 or

Larry Reiter
 Reiter.mystic@snet.net
 32 West Mystic Ave.
 Mystic, CT 06355

Download a pdf version of the COA Bulletin (in color!) at:

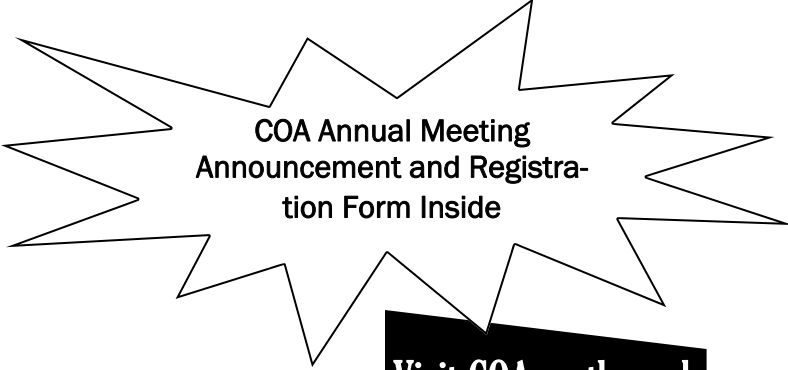
www.ctbirding.org

COA OFFICERS

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<i>Vice President</i>	Patrick Comins, 185 East Flat Hill Road, Southbury, CT 06488, 203-264-5098
<i>Secretary</i>	Steve Broker, 50 Hidden Place, Cheshire, CT 06410, 203-272-5192
<i>Treasurer</i>	Fred Schroeder, 215 Lonetown Road, West Redding, CT 06896, 203-938-9165
<i>Assistant Treasurer</i>	Jack Wells, 103 Sheephill Road, Riverside, CT 06878

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<i>Conservation</i>	Milan Bull
<i>Electronics</i>	Dori Sosensky
<i>Finance</i>	Steve Oresman
<i>Membership</i>	Roy Harvey
<i>Workshops</i>	Randy Domina
<i>Annual Meeting</i>	Jerry Connolly
<i>Connecticut Warbler</i>	Greg Hanisek
<i>COA Bulletin</i>	Andrew Dasinger
<i>Rare Records</i>	Jay Kaplan
<i>Refuge Relations</i>	Dori Sosensky
<i>Science Advisory</i>	Milan Bull



**COA Annual Meeting
Announcement and Registra-
tion Form Inside**




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at www.ctbirding.org**

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