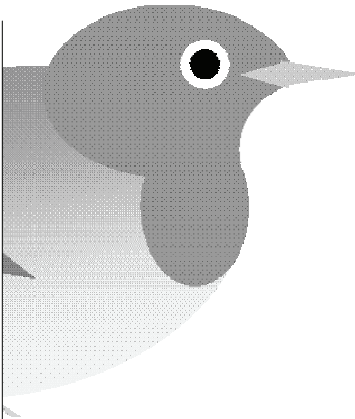
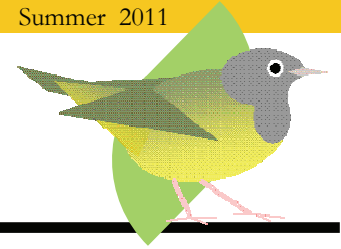


# COA BULLETIN



## 2011 SUMMER BIRD COUNT JOE ZERANSKI, COMPILER

The annual Summer Bird Counts are a terrific opportunity for you to contribute to the body of ornithological science while having a great time looking for birds in your favorite spots close to home. Please contact one of these area captains for more information on how you can participate in a short, rewarding and fun experience:

**Barkhamsted Summer Bird Count** 6/25-26, David Rosen [dave@whitememorialcc.org](mailto:dave@whitememorialcc.org). Area covered: Colebrook, Winchester, Hartland, Barkhamsted, and New Hartford, plus the northeast quarter of Torrington and the northern quarters of Harwinton and Burlington.

**Greenwich-Stamford Summer Bird Count** 6/11-12, Thomas W. Burke [tom.burke@mcgladrey.com](mailto:tom.burke@mcgladrey.com). Area covered: in Connecticut (65% of area)- Greenwich and Stamford, and western Darien and New Canaan, and in New York (35% of area)- Armonk, Bedford (in part), Port Chester, Rye, and White Plains (in part).

**Hartford Summer Bird Count** 6/11-12, Jay Kaplan [jaybrd49@aol.com](mailto:jaybrd49@aol.com). Area covered: Bloomfield, East Hartford, Farmington (in part), Hartford, Manchester (in part), Newington (in part), Rocky Hill (in part), South Windsor, Wethersfield, and Windsor.

**Litchfield Hills Summer Bird Count** 6/11-12, Dave Tripp [dtrippjr@comcast.net](mailto:dtrippjr@comcast.net) 860-693-6524. Area covered (in whole or in part): Cornwall, Goshen, Kent, Litchfield, Morris, Sharon, Torrington, Warren, and Washington.

**New Haven Summer Bird Count** 6/11-12, Steve Mayo [rsdmayo@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rsdmayo@sbcglobal.net). Area covered: (15-Mile diameter circle) Branford (western), East Haven, Milford, New Haven, North Haven, Orange, West Haven, and Woodbridge (in part).

**New Milford/Pawling Summer Bird Count** 6/18-19, Angela Dimmitt [angeladimmitt@aol.com](mailto:angeladimmitt@aol.com). 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 Pouquag.

**Storrs Summer Bird Count** 6/18-19, Steve Morytko [smorytko@yahoo.com](mailto:smorytko@yahoo.com). Area covered: Andover, Ashford, Chaplin, Coventry, Mansfield, Tolland, Willimantic, West Willington, Willington, and Windham.

**Woodbury-Roxbury Summer Bird Count** 6/5-6, Russ Naylor 203 263-2502. Area covered: Bethlehem, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Middlebury, New Milford, Newtown, Roxbury, Southbury, Washington.

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# DEFENSES OF THE JUNCO IN A DANGEROUS WORLD

TEXT AND ILLUSTRATION BY  
PAUL CARRIER

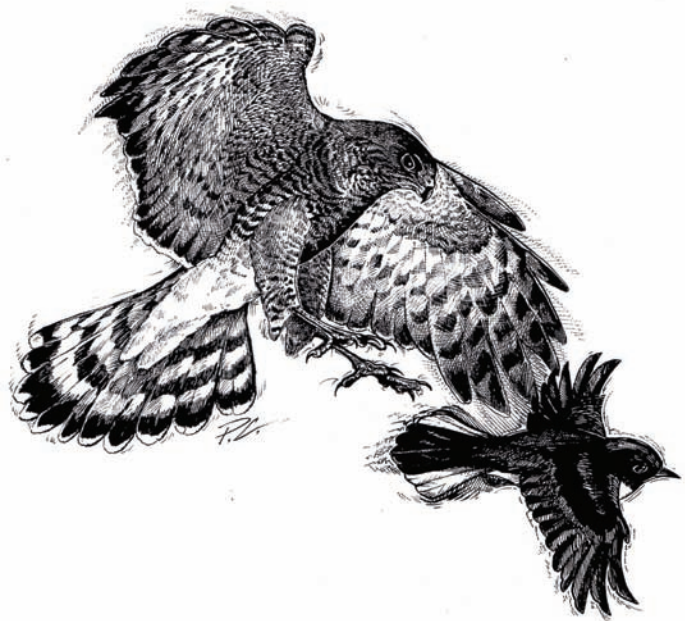
Through the years, the lives and habits of the Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) have always intrigued me. For over 40 years, I have lived within the Juncos' breeding grounds here in northwest Connecticut, and have observed much about their lives and survival habits. One of the most interesting factors about the Junco is how it survives so well under the pressures of severe weather and constant predator harassment. Though I have written several articles in the past on their survival during the cold snowy winters, I will here describe some observations I have noted about their survival techniques against predation pressures, primarily from avian sources such as Accipiters and other Hawks.

Even during the summer months, the Junco's coloration helps in avoiding predation dangers. During their nesting season, the Junco will often choose a dark sunless area to nest in. Here in Connecticut, that dark area is often the sunless understory of dense hemlock groves. Here, the dark back of the ground feeding individual Junco is seldom noticed by a predator from above. More often, the Junco will notice the flying predator first, then become motionless until the danger departs.

However, if the Junco does happen to be noticed by the predator, the constant twisting and turning in flight of the Junco's escape, using its flashing technique (opening and closing of its black and white tail feathers), will often confuse the predator in the moment of its grasping the bird. This will allow the Junco to escape into dense cover, with only an occasional missing tail feather. (see illustration).

During winter months, the Junco seems to have evolved not the best coloration for predation defense. A solid dark-backed bird does not appear to be the best cryptic coloration for a ground bird that often feeds on top of white snow. However, Juncos have adapted to this in a unique way. We often see Juncos during the winter feeding all together on the ground or snow as opposed to being alone. There is a very good reason for this as will be described below.

During wintertime feeding, a group of Juncos is very noticeable to predators to be sure, and they are aware of this. Avian predators often use the technique of choosing just one bird within the group and centering their attention on that one bird. (note: Often they will detect a potentially sick or wounded bird, making for an easier capture). As the predator approaches the group and they become aware of its approach, all birds take flight at the same moment, flying in all different directions. This causes confusion for the predator who will often take its focus off the one bird it had chosen, and thus give the group precious time to escape into nearby cover. The Juncos will display while in flight, and through their black and white coloration further distract the predator, especially as they disperse as a group, twisting and turning in all directions.



One further defense for Juncos is their constant group attention to their surroundings. More eyes make for better awareness and faster danger alerts, with particular attention given to nearby cover for escape and safety. - end

**GETTING THE LEAD OUT :**  
**REMEDIATION AND RESTORATION AT STRATFORD POINT**  
 BY MILAN BULL, COA CONSERVATION CHAIR  
 PHOTOS BY TWAN LEENDERS

As a kid roaming the tidal marshes at the mouth of the Housatonic River in my rowboat, the incessant rattle of gunfire from across the river was a daily, year-round occurrence, especially loud on a northwest breeze, and any thought of fishing near that Stratford shore was suicidal.

From 1927 until 1986 Remington Arms Co. operated one of the most popular and respected clay target shooting clubs in the country. With Pebble Beach-like vistas overlooking the Housatonic River and Long Island Sound, and equipped with modern trap and skeet fields, the club was renowned shooters. From movie stars enthusiasts of target shoot-Sikorsky Memorial Airport. A amenities plus a great view of the home of the Great East-shooters.



Stratford Point

for attracting the jet set of clay target ing, conveniently flying in and out of nearby large clubhouse and dining hall provided the fields and waters. In fact, the club was ern, the world series of trap and skeet

The gun club was open seven and all shooting stations River. Considering this, plus of 25 shots from 24 positions lead pellets), an estimated been deposited in this estu-

days a week from about 10 am until 6 pm faced Long Island Sound or the Housatonic the fact that each shooter fired an average (each shot comprising about one ounce of three million pounds of lead may have ary over the 60 or so years of its operation.

In 1977, in response to Federal regulations, Connecticut prohibited the use of lead shot for waterfowl hunting in areas that received the most hunting pressure (since that time, of course, the use of lead shot for all waterfowl hunting has been banned nationwide). In an effort to discover "hot spots" of lead shot ingestion by waterfowl, the Connecticut Audubon Society and DEP received a grant in 1977 to investigate lead shot ingestion by waterfowl throughout Connecticut. Not surprisingly, those studies led, in part, to the discovery of lethal levels of lead in the blood of waterfowl (specifically Black Ducks) in the vicinity of the gun club. Ducks from other areas showed no such concentrations.



Savannah Sparrow

Thus, in 1986 the Remington Gun Club, owned by DuPont Corp. was closed and a remediation plan was developed with DEP to begin recovering the lead from the estuary. Large scale remediation including spatial mapping, removing, cleaning and restoring the sediment to its original location and contour began in May, 2000 and ended in July 2001, when 23 acres were treated. In effect, 45,000 cubic yards of sediment from the intertidal and subtidal zone and 26,000 cubic yards of upland soil was mined for lead shot and over 400 tons of shot have been recovered and recycled.

Following the large scale remediation, spot removal of lead shot "hot spots" were conducted in 2003, 2004 and 2005 and intertidal shot removal of the northern low-wave energy zone of the beach was completed in 2008-2009. The higher energy, Long Island Sound side of the beach is currently being remediated and should be completed in June.

The Connecticut Audubon Society was contracted to conduct avian studies on the site in November, 2008 and we continue to monitor habitat and resource use by waterfowl on the site's intertidal and subtidal zones and an upland bird inventory on a daily basis.



Common Eider

Currently the site list includes 209 species.



# COA ANNUAL MEETING ROUNDUP

## PHOTOS BY STEVE BROKER



Outgoing COA President Patrick Comins honors Association member Richard English (above) with the President's Award for lifelong contributions to birding in Connecticut, particularly in the New Haven area. Richard has maintained records of bird sightings at East Rock Park and the Lighthouse Point Park hawk watch for decades, and has discovered some notable state rarities, including a first state record Hermit Warbler in 1977, the earliest record of Boat-tailed Grackle in the state (1985), and Tropical Kingbird in 1990. He established the Richard English Bird Sanctuary on Deer Lake in Killingworth, and leads annual bird walks to this lovely nature preserve and conservation area.

Dr. Alan Brush (below) delivered a fascinating account of avian plumage, discussing how birds get their feather coloration, and how it affects their behavior and lives. The 2011 program also included presentations by Daniel Klem on bird-window collisions, and Blair Nikula on Storm Birding and the Cape Cod Seabird Trap.



Patrick Dugan and Mike Moccio, accept the President's Award on behalf of the Cove Island Wildlife Sanctuary, Stamford. Patrick and Mike, along with David Winston, and a large group of very hard-working volunteers, conceived and carried out a visionary plan to turn the Stamford town "brush dump" into a bird sanctuary. Their efforts paid off so well that the site has become an Important Bird Area as well. To date over 280 species of birds have been reported from this "best truck stop on the migratory highway."

# COA ANNUAL MEETING ROUNDUP

## PHOTOS BY STEVE BROKER



Photo by Patrick Comins

Steve Broker (right), with his Betty Kleiner award. Steve was recognized for the out-standing quality of his Christmas Bird Count summaries. The reports are notable for careful analysis, research, and fact-checking of decades of data, as well as for Steve's wry wit and wisdom.



**Please thank and support these COA Raffle donors:**

Dr. Robert Askins  
 Audubon Greenwich  
 The Audubon Shop & Jerry Connolly  
 Rob Braunfield  
 Shawn Carey  
 Paul Carrier  
 Buzz Devine  
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 Tolland Star Hardware  
 Vortex Optics  
 Scott Weidensaul  
 Jack Wells  
 Willard's Lumber, Mansfield  
 Jim Zipp



Awards Chair Steve Mayo (left) presents the prestigious Mabel Osgood Wright Award to Buzz Devine for his "significant contributions to the study and conservation of birds in Connecticut." Buzz is a founding member of COA, has served multiple terms on its Board of Directors, and 15 years on the Avian Records Committee. He is the co-author of *The Connecticut Birding Guide*, and has written dozens of articles and birding site guides for the *Connecticut Warbler* and other ornithological journals. More details about this honor will be published in the next *Warbler*.

## CITIZEN SCIENCE OPPORTUNITIES

Citizen Science projects give birders in Connecticut the chance to contribute to the body of knowledge that scientists can use to develop an accurate picture of population trends and distributions of our local bird populations. COA members are encouraged to join these and other efforts to share our knowledge of our local birds:

### [Oystercatcher Stewardship Program:](#)

Volunteers are needed to help inventory American Oystercatchers. With support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and in partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Audubon Connecticut is embarking on a coastal bird stewardship program in

Connecticut. The focus of the first year of the project will be on an inventory of nesting American Oystercatchers in Connecticut and Rhode Island. Additional, more in-depth volunteer opportunities will be available this field season and next.

Contact [Michelle Frankel](mailto:mfrankel@audubon.org) [mfrankel@audubon.org](mailto:mfrankel@audubon.org) for more details on how you can help protect American Oystercatchers and other beach nesting birds.



American Oystercatcher by A..J. Hand

### [Pilot Bird Atlas Project in New Haven Area](#)

Audubon CT, with support from the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, is in search of volunteers to help conduct a pilot breeding bird atlas for greater New Haven. Volunteers can participate at a variety of commitment and bird identification skill levels and perform survey at locations close to home or farther in the field.

To volunteer or for more information, contact Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe at 203-264-5098, ext.307

[cfolsom-okeefe@audubon.org](mailto:cfolsom-okeefe@audubon.org)



Photos of Grasshopper Sparrow, American Goldfinch, and Great Egret (eating muskrat!) by Bruce Finnan

### [Summer Night Bird Surveys:](#)

The summer surveys will be conducted 2 times. Potential survey dates and times are limited by lunar conditions. Surveys will be conducted using a callback recording (provided) of the Northern Saw-whet Owl. Surveys will target Whip-poor-wills and Saw-whet Owls. This project is recommended for paired birders. You will be provided with survey materials and DEP Wildlife Diversity Program staff will assign you an appropriate survey location in your area.

Contact: Shannon Kearney, DEP Sessions Woods WMA PO Box 1550, Burlington, CT 06013  
(860) 675-8130 [shannon.kearney@ct.gov](mailto:shannon.kearney@ct.gov)



## COA WORKSHOPS—SAVE THESE DATES

### Birding by Ear June 5, Bent of the River, 7:00 am



Hooded warbler photo by  
Patrick Comins

Join COA Presidents Ken Elkins and Patrick Comins at the Audubon CT Bent of the River Sanctuary in Southbury on Sunday, June 5 at 7:00 am for this popular workshop. Learn how to listen to and identify birds by song and call. The varied habitat of the beautiful Bent sanctuary hosts warblers, thrushes, vireos, woodpeckers, and occasional surprise visits from cuckoos and owls. Birders of all experience levels are welcome to attend. The sanctuary is located at 185 East Flat Hill Road, Southbury, CT. Driving directions are at

[http://bentoftheriver.audubon.org/AboutUs\\_Directions.html](http://bentoftheriver.audubon.org/AboutUs_Directions.html)

### Shorebird Workshop August 14, 2011

Mark your calendars, smart phones, iPads or whatever you use to remember important dates! The annual COA Shorebird workshop will begin at Sandy Point in West Haven on Sunday, August 14, and move on to the CT Coastal Center at Milford Point in search of migrating shorebirds. Stay current with COA's CT Birding Events Calendar at <http://www.ctbirding.org/calendar.htm>

### GETTING THE LEAD OUT AT STRATFORD POINT - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

More recently, we have been contracted by DuPont to conduct coastal habitat restoration projects here including the restoration of the tidal marsh fringe that historically spanned the entire low-energy shore but was removed with the excavation of the peat matrix during the large scale remediation. Scouring and erosion here results in the loss of nearly 100 horizontal feet of shoreline every 10 years and attempts at re-establishing *Spartina* growth have failed repeatedly in the past. In 2010 we conducted a *Spartina* reintroduction feasibility study that also addresses bank stabilization using novel, soft erosion-control structures and we have bank stabilization work planned for this summer.

A recent grant from The Nature Conservancy is enabling us to develop a coastal habitat assessment and adaptive management plan that involves detailed microhabitat data collection and inventory of flora and fauna of upland and intertidal zones of this site as well as reference sites at nearby Milford Point and Stratford Long Beach.

Thus far, remediation efforts have cost the DuPont Corp. over \$15M but the company is determined to complete the job and restore the habitat to a pristine condition. The entire site is now protected from development with a conservation easement and planning is underway to ensure the land remains in the public trust. Currently, the site is open for passive recreation and fishing and can be accessed via the main gate during business hours or by a perimeter path along the north fence at other times.

The guns are silent now at the former Remington Arms gun club, and the future looks brighter for one of the most spectacular coastal grasslands in the state.

The fishing is not bad either.



## COA OFFICERS

<i>President</i>	Ken Elkins, 43 Park Street, Shelton, CT 06484
<i>Vice President</i>	Randy Domina, 248 Mansion Road, Cheshire, CT 06420
<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

## COA COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

<i>Conservation</i>	Milan Bull
<i>Finance</i>	Fred Schroeder
<i>Membership</i>	Larry Reiter
<i>Workshops</i>	Tina Green
<i>Annual Meeting</i>	Tina Green, Lisa Wahle
<i>Connecticut Warbler</i>	Greg Hanisek
<i>COA Bulletin</i>	Denise Jernigan
<i>Rare Records</i>	Jay Kaplan
<i>Refuge Relations</i>	Milan Bull
<i>Science Advisory</i>	Milan Bull

Visit COA on the web  
at [www.ctbirding.org](http://www.ctbirding.org)



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