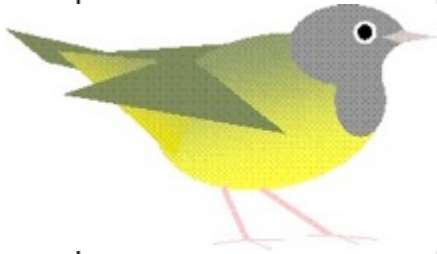


# COA Bulletin



## COA WORKSHOPS

Christopher Loscalzo, COA Workshop Coordinator



COA workshops are structured to provide detailed reviews of families of birds so that participants can learn how to differentiate between similar species and increase their general knowledge of birds. Most workshops begin with didactic sessions on the birds being reviewed. Often, there are prepared handouts, slide shows, or PowerPoint presentations to enhance the discussions. These are followed by several hours of direct observation of the birds in the field. Workshop leaders review the salient features of the birds, including field marks, vocalizations, behaviors and habitats that aid in their identification. The workshop leaders are often members of the COA board of directors who volunteer their time and share their expertise. Typically, the workshops are attended by 10 to 40 birders and are well received.

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Naugatuck State Forest, West Block, Naugatuck, CT.  
This and the following workshop photos by Steve Broker.

## COA WORKSHOPS - Chris Loscalzo

Over the years, COA has offered workshops on shorebirds, sparrows, raptors and gulls. In the past several years, we have added a number of new workshops, focusing on many different species groups. We have had workshops on sea ducks, wading birds, flycatchers, vireos, thrushes, and warblers. We have also offered workshops on birding by ear, ebird and bird log, and, this year, COA joined forces with the CT Botanical Society for a workshop on birds and botany. Next year, we hope to run a joint workshop with the CT Butterfly Association. In addition to offering workshops held in previous years, we plan on covering new groups of birds not studied before. We make an effort to vary the locations of the workshops from one year to the next in order to accommodate birders from all areas of the state and introduce them to new birding hot spots. Of course, workshops are held where the specific birds being studied are most likely to be found.



John Anderson, Executive Director, Aton Forest & Connecticut Botanical Society director.



John Anderson & Sam Saulys, Connecticut Botanical Society.



Andy Brand, Connecticut Botanical Society & New Haven Bird Club member.



Chris Loscalzo, COA Workshop Chair & New Haven Bird Club member.

# COA WORKSHOPS – Chris Loscalzo



Bill Banks checks out some impressive ferns.



Sam Saulys with Maryland Meadow Beauty (*Rhexia mariana*, Family Melastomataceae Melastome or Rhexia Family)

Workshops are free and open to COA members and non-members alike. We hope that participation in the workshops enhances the birding skills of all of the attendees and inspires those who are not yet members to join COA.  
Chris Loscalzo



Lisa Wahle (COA Board Member) and John Anderson put hand lenses to use.

Below: COA Bird/Plant Workshop participants.



## COA WORKSHOPS – Chris Loscalzo

Above right: Patrick Comins begins the Shorebirds Workshop with an attentive audience. A highly informative PowerPoint presentation was given on fall migrant shorebirds passing through Connecticut.



Center left: Frank Gallo, workshop leader, scopes out some interesting species at the Coastal Center at Milford Point.

Center right: Chris Loscalzo, workshop leader, focuses on a Black Tern, found perched on a distant breakwater.



Left: Patrick Comins leads the way from outer sandbars back to the Coastal Center and some searching for migrant passerines in the wooded regions of Milford Point.

# COA WORKSHOPS – Chris Loscalzo



Howie Sternberg and Marc Sternberg (cousins) pause for a moment between Shorebirds Workshop PowerPoint introduction and Milford Point birding.



Long-tailed Duck, Double-crested Cormorant, Snowy Egret, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Osprey, American Oystercatcher, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Piping Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Laughing Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Least Tern, Common Tern. Now to post on eBird!

## REPRESENTATIVE SUMMER SIGHTINGS RARITIES & COMMON SPECIES



Piping Plover, Long Beach, Stratford, May 2013.  
Photo by Bruce Finnan.



Willet, Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison,  
July 2012. Photo by Bruce Finnan.



Pectoral Sandpiper, Hammonasset Beach State  
Park, Madison, July 2012. Photo by Bruce Finnan.



Pectoral Sandpiper (L) & Stilt Sandpiper (R),  
Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison,  
September 15, 2015. Photo by Terry Shaw.



Marbled Godwit, Chaffinch Island Park, Guilford, August 23, 2015. Photos by Bill Batsford.

## REPRESENTATIVE SUMMER SIGHTINGS RARITIES & COMMON SPECIES



Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Silver Sands State Park, Milford, August 25, 2015. Photos by Bill Batsford.

### Reverend James Harvey Linsley, author of the first Check-List of Connecticut Birds



Reverend James H. Linsley published "A Catalogue of the Birds of Connecticut, arranged according to their natural families" in *The American Journal of Science and Arts*, 44(2): 249-275 (Jan-March, 1843). This was the first check-list of the Birds of Connecticut. Linsley's obelisk gravemarker can be found in New Haven's Grove Street Cemetery on the cemetery's "Spruce Road".

Photos by Steve Broker.

**IN MEMORIAM.** Noble S. Proctor (1942-2015).

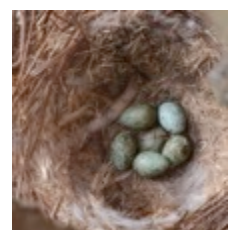
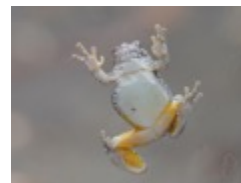
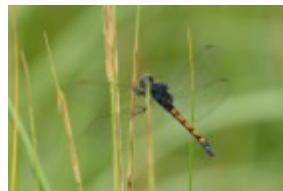
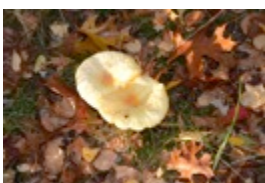
Noble Proctor died on May 28, 2015. He touched the lives of so many of us, and his natural history legacy is rich and deep. The Mabel Osgood Wright Award was presented to Noble at the March 9, 2002 Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Ornithological Association. Fred Sibley and Wayne Petersen's award presentation included the following:

"The Mabel Osgood Wright Award recognizes a person's lifetime contributions to ornithology in its broadest sense. Mabel Osgood Wright was a pioneer in bird conservation in the 1900s, a leader in popularizing birding and an inspiration to thousands. In a similar manner, this year's recipient has, by his presence, his writings, and his teaching, enriched Connecticut Ornithology by much more than the sum of his accomplishments.

"These accomplishments are massive; he is not only a mushroom expert, but a world class birder, a charismatic tour leader and the world's best field natural history teacher. His knowledge of plants and animals, not just in North America, but in the world is staggering. His ability to impart this to students is extraordinary. His ability to find birds is legendary. His former students work in so many nature-oriented jobs in the Northeast that you are surprised when you find someone who is not a former student. This is of course Dr. Noble Proctor. A person who started birding at age 5 and has never quit.

"He received his Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut and has been a professor, teaching numerous biology and natural history courses, at Southern Connecticut State University since the 1970s. His former students number in the thousands. He is an accomplished photographer and writer with numerous books including the latest edition of the Peterson *Field Guide to Eastern Birds* and the outstanding *Manual of Ornithology*. He has been a sought-after tour leader for almost 30 years and has taken groups to over 65 countries.

"It is Noble Proctor the naturalist, teacher, mentor, author, scientist, and conservationist that is being recognized here today. Noble has touched the lives of all who ever had the privilege of knowing or working with him. His list of accomplishments in the field of Connecticut ornithology is too lengthy to recount, and his influence beyond the borders of the Nutmeg State is international in scope. It is only fitting that the Mabel Osgood Wright Award, the Connecticut Ornithological Association's most distinguished tribute, be presented to Noble Proctor, truly one of the greatest North American naturalists of our time."





## CONSERVATION NEWS

### BY KATHY VAN DER AUE, COA PRESIDENT

#### Wildlife Action Plan Update

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) drafts a Wildlife Action Plan every ten years and this spring when the proposed new plan was submitted for public comment, your COA Board took careful note of changes. In particular we felt that some of the bird species targeted for removal from the list of Birds of Greatest Conservation Need should remain on the list. We also felt that some species of concern which had never been on the list, should be added.

We made a formal response, lobbying for seven species to remain and three to be added. The final draft WAP has just been released and we are pleased to see that five of our suggestions were heeded. These three that were targeted for removal remain:

**Black Rail:** The rationale for removing it was that it is extirpated in Connecticut. COA is conducting an exhaustive search of all probable or historical locations for this bird in hopes that premise is false.

**Black-crowned Night Heron:** Although birders still see this bird and may consider it common, it has undergone significant decline. The reasons are poorly understood, perhaps due to insect attacks on their rookeries, but keeping it on the list may be an impetus to seek out the reason for the decline, down 71% from its 10-year average, according to the COA Summer Bird Count. There is also a negative trend nationally as shown in the USGS Breeding Bird Survey.

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** This species has been in moderate decline in Connecticut and was the only bird species on the list that is an indicator or sentinel for the health of the Hemlocks.

The following two species have been added:

**Rusty Blackbird:** This bird is in precipitous decline for unknown reasons, down from an estimated 13 million in 1965 to a current 2 million individuals. Connecticut provides a winter range and therefore has responsibility for this species.

**Bicknell's Thrush:** We asked that this bird be added to replace the Gray-cheeked Thrush which is targeted for removal. The Northeast has a high responsibility for Bicknell's Thrush, the status of which is listed as vulnerable by the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature). It is also on the Audubon "Watch List." Connecticut provides a migration respite for this bird.

You can review the plan at this link:

[2015 Wildlife Action Plan](#)



Kathy and George Van Der Aue at the COA Bird/Plant Workshop, Naugatuck State Forest, August 1, 2015.

## Twenty-Five Years Ago in *The Connecticut Warbler* Compiled by Steve Broker

Volume X, No. 3 (July 1990)

### **The Tundra Swan in Connecticut, by James Bair.**

The feral Mute Swan, plump and showy, reminds us that it descended from elegant, well-fed swans of parks and estates. It is a Louis XIV or a Vanderbilt. The lean and angular Tundra Swan is more like a Daniel Boone or a Chingachgook. It has spent generations running the gauntlet from the Arctic to the Caroline capes. Though now protected throughout the U.S., it was a victim of the nineteenth century feather hunters.

Although swans were known in colonial times, the first authenticated record is from December 1841 when Connecticut pioneer naturalist James H. Linsley shot one off Fairfield. The bird was still alive, so Linsley sold it to some men in an attempt to domesticate it. The bird died in two weeks and Linsley mounted it (Linsley 1843). This bird is now on display at the Barnum Museum in Bridgeport. It is one of the oldest extant bird specimens from the state.

Th[e] 1919 swan from Branford is the only specimen of the Tundra Swan from the state besides the Barnum bird which I could locate. It is in the collection of the James Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford. The 1927 sighting was the latest spring record (29 May-4 June). It was photographed by Thornton Burgess who drove from Cape Cod to see it and is thereby probably the first photographic record of the bird for the state. It was also the last sighting in which the Mute Swan was not an issue (see Burgess 1927). Wild Mute Swans were nesting in New York and New Jersey by 1920 (Urner 1921). I could locate no records between 1951 and 1965, but since then there have been numerous sightings.

[Ed's Note: This thoroughly researched article is as fascinating an historical account of the status of a Connecticut bird species as has occurred in the pages of *The Connecticut Warbler*. Combining analytical and lyrical presentation of information (the paragraphs on Native American and geographic use of swan names from colonial times being particularly interesting), James Bair provides narrative and a distribution map of the occurrence of Tundra Swan in the state, bar graphs of dates swans were first noted and known to be present (November through May), an appendix listing 44 reports of Tundra Swan in Connecticut from 1841 through 1990, and a comprehensive list of literature cited.]



Tundra Swan, Mono Pond,  
Columbia, March 4, 2012.  
Photo by Mark Szantyr.

## Twenty-Five Years Ago in *The Connecticut Warbler* (continued)

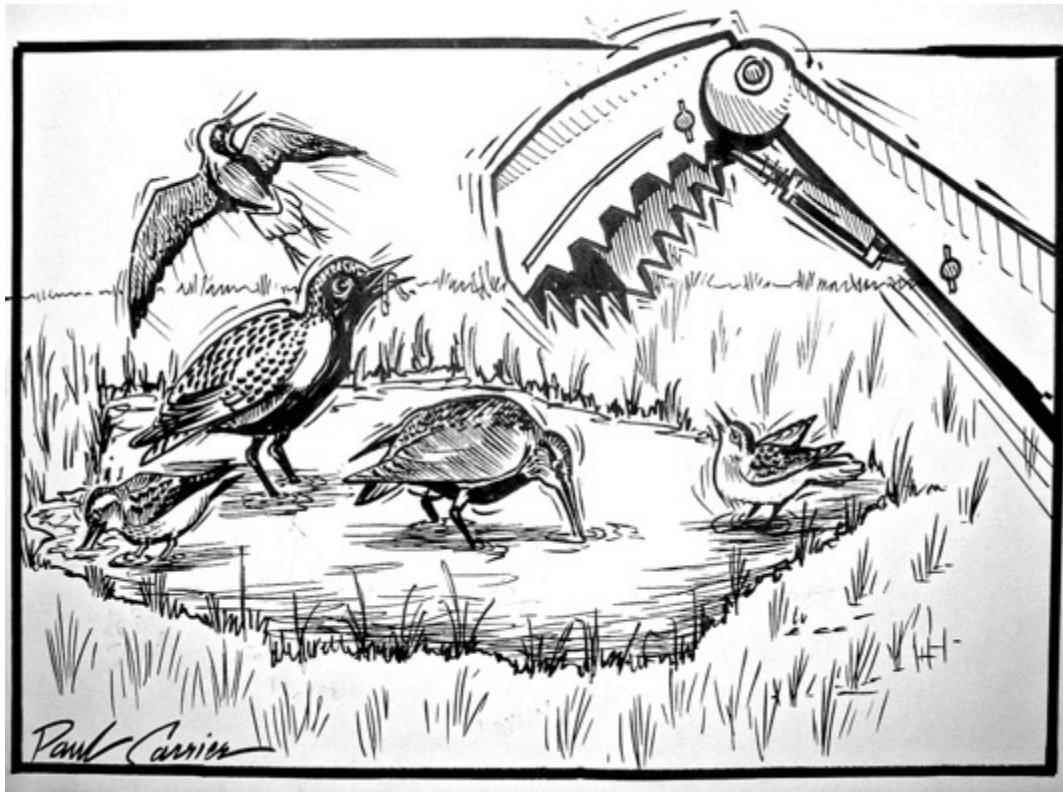
### Surprising Contest, by Roland Clement.

“One does not often think of American Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) and Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) as competitors for food. I watched such a contest taking place under a row of Russian Olive (*Elaeagnus unbellata*) shrubs that were dropping their bright red berries. November 12, 1989 was a bright, crisp morning in Norwalk, Connecticut. The four crows involved could, and did, feed in the shrubs themselves, but since the limbs were too slender to provide secure footing, the birds often picked fallen fruit from the ground. This put them in competition with three Mallards – two of them drakes – who had left the pond to feed on its bank.

[Ed’s Note: Roland Clement further describes ten minutes of observation of this contest, which “remained mere threat, with no actual violence.” He concludes, “this report may be of interest to future compilers of behavior in these birds.”]

[This issue of *The Connecticut Warbler* also carries a Site Guide to Greater New Haven Harbor, by Arnold Devine and Dwight G. Smith, the “birding tour” covering Merwin Point, Oyster River, Saint John’s By the Sea, Bradley Point, Sandy Point, West River, Long Wharf, Nathan Hale Park and Morris Cove Seawall, Lighthouse Point Park, and New Haven Harbor. These and other articles from the July 1990 issue of *The Connecticut Warbler* may be seen in their entirety at the following link to the Connecticut Ornithological Association website. Download Volume 10, and view pages 49-80.]

<http://www.ctbirding.org/Warbler/CTWarblerVolume10.pdf>



*“Fall Flight at Hammo”*

Paul Carrier Cartoon

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## COA OFFICERS

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## COA CHAIRPERSONS

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Conservation Patrick Comins  
Finance Paul Wolter  
Membership Larry Reiter  
Avian Records Jay Kaplan  
Research Tom Robben  
Workshops Chris Loscalzo  
Connecticut Warbler Greg Hanisek  
COA Bulletin Steve Broker  
Christmas Bird Count Compiler Steve Broker  
Summer Bird Count Compilers Joe Zeranski & Patrick Comins  
Great Backyard Bird Count Patrick Comins

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