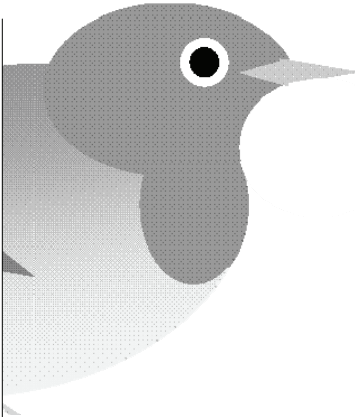
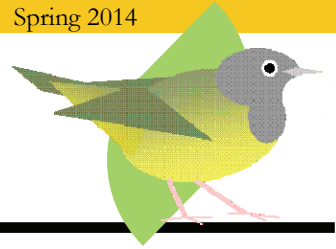


COA BULLETIN



COA ANNUAL MEETING MARCH 22, 2014

COA's 30th Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, March 22 at [Middlesex Community College](#) in Middletown. It will feature three well-known and respected speakers, with the keynote address given by Pete Dunne, world-famous author and long-time Director of the Cape May (New Jersey) Bird Observatory. The meeting will also include the traditional and wildly popular COA Raffle, the annual business meeting and presentation of COA Awards, and vendor exhibits. The program schedule and registration forms can be found on pages 3 and 4, and online at the [COA web site](#)

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One of many Snowy Owls to visit the state this winter was photographed by Josh Kuckens at Long Beach in Stratford on November 24. See pages 4 & 5 for more photos.

FEATURED SPEAKERS



Born in Morristown, New Jersey, **Pete Dunne** has never lost his love for birding in that state. In addition to being the Director of the world-famous Cape May Bird Observatory for 37 years, he is also a prolific and accomplished writer. His "In The Natural State" column ran in the New York Times Sunday section from 1976 to 2001. He has authored more than a dozen books, including *Tales of a Low-Rent Birder*, *The Feather Quest: A North American Birder's Year*, *Hawks in Flight*, and *The Art of Bird Finding*. His articles have appeared in every birding magazine.

In 2001, Pete's work led to his receiving the Roger Tory Peterson Award from the American Birding Association for lifetime achievement in promoting the cause of birding. He created the World Series of Birding, a statewide birding competition in May now entering its fourth decade.

In his new role as "bird watching ambassador" for the New Jersey Audubon Society, Pete still plans to be an advocate for New Jersey's environment, and hopes to introduce birders to the huge wealth of natural treasures to be found in the rest of that state, beyond Cape May.

Twenty-five Things that Changed Birding

Pete began birding at age seven when he was given a pair of binoculars and a book about birds. The rest is history. In his presentation, Pete will share his reflections upon the major social and political events, publications, institutions, and equipment advances that changed and continue to change the face of birding in the post-World War II era. With Pete's legendary wit, keen perception and incisive yet affectionate commentary on human behavior and birders in particular, it is sure to be a memorably entertaining and thought-provoking talk.

Continued on page 2 →

COA ANNUAL MEETING (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Chris Rimmer is Executive Director of the Vermont Center for Ecostudies, a non-profit wildlife conservation group based in Vermont, but working across the Americas. He completed undergraduate studies in Wildlife Biology at the University of Vermont and graduate work in Ecology and Behavioral Biology at the University of Minnesota, where he studied Yellow Warblers on the James Bay coast of Ontario. Prior to his graduate studies, Chris was an itinerant field biologist, with stints in Peru, Ellesmere Island, Manomet Bird Observatory, and Antarctica. Much of his recent work has focused on conservation research of Bicknell's Thrush at both ends of its migratory range, from New York and New England to Haiti and the Dominican Republic.



Bicknell's Thrush: Conserving a Bird of Two Worlds

The Bicknell's Thrush is one of North America's most rare and vulnerable songbirds. Nesting only in mountaintop forests of northern New England and New York, and wintering primarily on the island of Hispaniola (Dominican Republic and Haiti), Bicknell's Thrush faces numerous threats to its long-term survival. On its breeding grounds, these include acid precipitation, ski area development, communications tower construction, wind power development, mercury contamination, and climate change. The species' limited winter habitats are under siege from deforestation, caused by human population pressures. Since 1992, Chris has led efforts to conserve the species and these habitats on which it depends. He will discuss this fascinating and rare songbird, VCE's efforts to study it in New England and the Caribbean, and how Bicknell's Thrush represents a vital conservation link across international boundaries.



Kevin Karlson is an accomplished birder, professional tour leader and wildlife photographer who has published numerous articles on bird identification and natural history for many magazines, books, and journals. A former photo editor for *North American Birds*, he also wrote the *Birder's ID* column for *Wild Bird Magazine* from 1992 - 2012. Kevin is a co-author of *The Shorebird Guide* (Houghton Mifflin Co. 2006) and is currently completing a new book called *Birding by Impression: A Different Approach to Knowing and Identifying Birds*. He is the author and photographer of *The Birds of Cape May* (Schiffer Publishing, 2010), which celebrates the birds of this special location through the four seasons, and a new nature photography book called *Visions: Earth's Elements in Bird and Nature Photography*, which was released in 2012. He is working on a new comprehensive e-book on shorebirds.

Birding by Impression: A Different Approach to Knowing and Identifying Birds

This interactive indoor workshop shares a different approach to field identification that Kevin calls *Birding by Impression, A Different Approach to Knowing and Identifying Birds*, the title of his forthcoming book. Covering shorebirds and other bird families, digitized photos from his new book encourage the audience to spot differences between similar species in direct side-by-side comparison. This exciting ID approach concentrates initially on basic impressions of size, shape and body motion to form a surprisingly accurate mental picture of every bird seen in the field. The first half of the program concentrates on shorebirds, while the second half covers other bird family groups. Test your birding and observation skills in this workshop by guessing the correct species using pertinent ID tips that contribute to your opinion.

REGISTRATION FORM

COA Annual Meeting March 22, 2014 Middlesex Community College • Chapman Hall • Middletown, CT

Early Registration: _____ Persons @ **\$20.00** (pre-pay only) \$ _____
 (Must be received by March 15) **[Registration at the door: \$25.00]**

Hot buffet lunch: _____ Persons @ **\$17.00** (pre-pay only) \$ _____
 Number of vegetarian entrées _____

TOTAL \$ _____

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

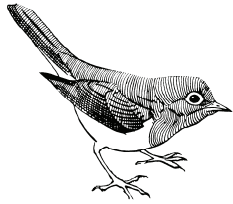
Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Send check made out to "COA " & form to:

Larry Reiter, 32 West Mystic Ave, Mystic, CT 06355



PROGRAM SCHEDULE
COA 30TH ANNUAL MEETING
SATURDAY MARCH 22, 2014
MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- 8:00-9:00 Registration/COA Marketplace – includes continental breakfast and Birds and Beans® coffee!
- 9:00-9:30 Welcome/Business Meeting. Tina Green, COA President, will present a brief overview of the year's activities followed by election of officers and board members
- 9:30-10:30 Chris Rimmer - **Bicknell's Thrush: Conserving a Bird of Two Worlds**
 Learn about this rare songbird and how it represents a vital conservation link across international boundaries
- 10:30-10:50 Presentation of COA Awards
- Mabel Osgood Wright Award – presented annually to a person or persons in Connecticut who have made a significant contribution to the knowledge, study and conservation of birds
 - Betty Kleiner Award – honors the memory of Betty Kleiner, whose name is synonymous with *The Connecticut Warbler*, COA's flagship publication. The award recognizes a deserving author or artist in the field of ornithology
 - COA Mini-grants Award – awarded annually to the applicant(s) whose project most benefits Connecticut birds
- 10:50-11:05 Break - COA Marketplace
 A time to socialize, purchase COA raffle tickets, and check out vendors' offerings of bird-related items
- 11:05-12:35 Kevin Karlson – **Birding by Impression: A Different Approach to Knowing and Identifying Birds**
 Test your birding and observation skills with this exciting ID approach which concentrates on basic impressions of size, shape and body motion of shorebirds and other bird families from Kevin's photos
- 12:40-1:45 Lunch at Founder's Hall Cafeteria
 Hot buffet lunch including baked lemon & herb chicken, garden salad, oven roasted potatoes, vegetable medley, pasta with marinara sauce (vegetarian option)
- 1:50-2:50 Pete Dunne – **Twenty-five Things that Changed Birding**
 Come hear Pete reflect on the social and political events, publications, institutions and equipment advances that changed and continue to change the face of birding in the post-World War II era
- 2:55-3:15 COA Raffle
 The ever-popular raffle will conclude our day with many prizes, including avian artwork and valuable birding equipment donated by generous artists, vendors, and friends of COA.
 Raffle tickets will be available throughout the day.

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

Please bring this copy of the program with you to the Annual Meeting.

Additional copies may be accessed online at <http://www.ctbirding.org/2014docs/MeetingSchedule2014.pdf>

Annual Meeting Registration Form is online at <http://www.ctbirding.org/2014docs/RegForm2014.pdf>

SNOWY OWLS IN CONNECTICUT WINTER 2013-2014

The extraordinary irruption of Snowy Owls throughout North America this winter brought birds as far south as Florida and even Bermuda. The ones seen in Connecticut were largely along the coastline, but they were also reported from Hartford, East Hartford, and Bloomfield, among other places. This is a sampling of many fine photographs submitted to the *COA Bulletin* to document this remarkable event. Thanks to all the photographers for their talent and generosity in sharing their work.



November 16, 2013, East Haven
Photo by Keith Mueller



November 30, 2013, Long Beach, Stratford
Photo by Duncan Stewart



November 26, 2013, Old Saybrook
Photo by Hank Golet



November 30, 2013, Long Beach, Stratford
Photo by Paul Fusco



(Left) December 30, 2013, Hartford
Photo by Roy Zartarian

SNOWY OWLS IN CONNECTICUT WINTER 2013-2014



December 18, 2013, Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison
Photo by Jack Faller



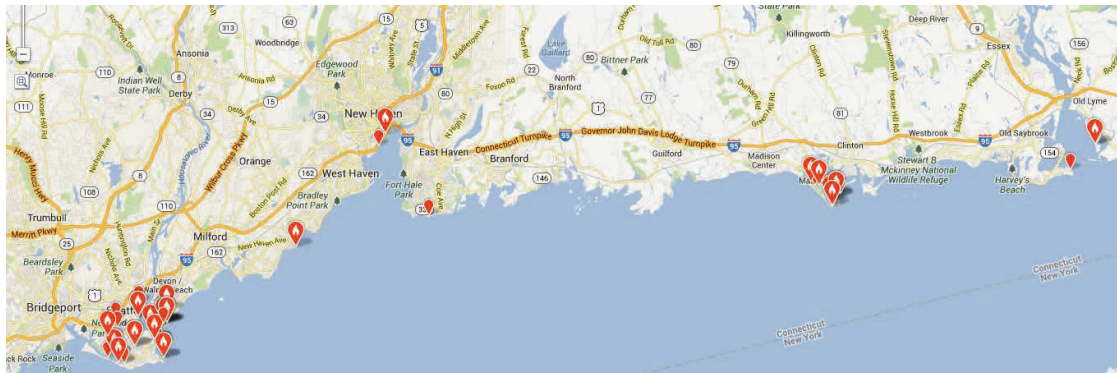
December 21, 2013, Long Beach, Stratford
Photo by Sophie Zyla



December 3, 2013, Milford Point
Photo by Joseph Cala



December 22, 2013, Long Beach, Stratford
Photo by Paul Fusco



eBird map for coastal reports of Snowy Owl in Connecticut, 2013-2014
Image provided by eBird (www.ebird.org) and created 1/21/2014

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO IN *THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER*
 COMPILED BY STEPHEN P. BROKER
THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER, VOLUME IX, NUMBER 1 (JANUARY 1989)

Editor's Note: Twenty-five years ago, Roland Clement, then a man of 76 years, published "An Editorial on the Evolution of Birding" in *The Connecticut Warbler*. In this current, Spring 2014 issue of the *COA Bulletin*, we diverge from our usual pattern of providing short glimpses of *Warbler* articles from a quarter century ago to reprint Roland's entire editorial. As the reader sees, Roland drew on a personal and professional lifetime of experience in field ornithology, conservation biology and education to consider "the very different cultural environments" of the early Connecticut ornithologists and the birders of the post-World War II period.

The insights from Roland's editorial are as interesting today as they were in 1989, especially in light of the ongoing evolution in birding. Some of the more recent alterations of our cultural environment include the digital revolution and the development of the Internet, smart phones with birding Apps, the appearance and expansion of eBird, renewed attention to birding your "local patch", the willingness of the motion picture industry to release a star-studded "The Big Year", a national epidemic in obesity, and the continuing urgency of conservation measures to protect land, water, atmosphere, and wildlife resources. Pete Dunne will add to the discussion at the March 22, 2014 Annual Meeting of COA with his scheduled talk, "Twenty-five Things that Changed Birding." Two months ago, Roland Clement celebrated his 101st birthday at his residence in Hamden, Connecticut, where he continues to enjoy the world of birds through his watercolor art. **-SPB**

An Editorial on the Evolution of Birding

Roland C. Clement

An advance glimpse of status reports on rare birds in Connecticut (COA Bull.2:1) from Zeranski and Baptist's manuscript of a forthcoming book on the birds of our state reminds one – or at least suggests – how different the bird students of the turn-of-the-century were when compared to those of today.

Although fewer in number, the early Connecticut ornithologists – professional and amateur – were often more assiduous afield and covered smaller areas more thoroughly on foot and by small boat; or they used bicycles and horse and buggy, and the new railroad to conduct "expeditions" further afield. They did more camping on study sites because getting home for supper was much less easy than it is for us. Most important as a distinguishing characteristic, they were collectors of bird specimens because this was a necessary aspect of field ornithology prior to the advent of good optical equipment. Elliot Coues' *Key to North American Birds*, in six editions between 1872 and 1927, was the "field guide" of its day. It began with the forthright advice: "First, shoot your bird." Identification was then accomplished by running the specimen through the keys until all questions were answered.

Serious field ornithologists thought it a test of mettle to collect ten to fifty specimens a day and many rare birds were reduced to possession and preserved for posterity in various collections. It may be just as well, some of us may feel, that there were few ornithologists during this first phase of birding's history. There was a great deal of shooting of wildlife by almost everyone in those days; the frontier mentality still held sway. As a consequence, unusual or puzzling acquisitions were more often referred to the community's expert in the identification of such things, and the net was drawn tighter on rarities. The Corn Crake shot in Saybrook in 1887 is illustrative. Only one other example of this European visitor has been found in Connecticut since that time. This era ended with the migratory bird treaty with Canada in 1918. Sage and

Bishop's *The Birds of Connecticut* (1913) is our document of that period.

Ludlow Griscom – first at the American Museum of Natural History, then at Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology – whom Roger Peterson once called "the court of last recourse," made it possible for amateurs to get to know birds without shooting them. There was a long hiatus between the collecting era and the new birding strategies of the present, and it shows in the record, I believe. Griscom published *Birds of the New York City Region* in 1923, and Peterson's first *Field Guide to the Birds* appeared in 1934, but The Great Depression of the 1930's and World War II in the 1940's scattered our interests. World War II technology provided good binoculars for almost everyone interested in owning them. By 1960, the advent of jet aircraft and a national network of good highways, not to mention rising incomes, set the stage for the modern explosion of interest in birds. We are now well into a new era when few rarities escape the binoculars, telescopes and telephoto lenses of the birding community.

When in April, 1984, a Ross' Gull was spotted in Connecticut at Oyster River, West Haven, I broke with my custom of not chasing rarities and went to see this bird. It was a revelation to me – not the bird, but the birders. I soon saw the bird well enough to accept the record and mark my life list, although it was not to me a truly exciting specimen. But the people! I sidled up to a group of fifty or so birders on the beach – mostly appended to a telescope, including a big-barreled Questar or two – and suddenly realized that I knew absolutely none of these people. This was a real shock because I had once edited the *New England Bulletin of Bird Life* under Griscom's tutelage and had later come to know thousands of birders while staff biologist for the National Audubon Society during the sixties and seventies, not to mention more recent Connecticut contacts as president of the

Continued on p. 7 ►

Connecticut Audubon Society and COA. One leather-suited lady at West Haven had come from outer Long Island on a motorcycle! The banter was mostly one-upmanship about who had seen or missed other rarities in Florida, California or Alaska. Was I on the right planet? At last Dennis Varza and Ray Schwartz appeared and I relaxed. Yet in those first, insecure moments in the midst of that small mob of strange modern birders, I suddenly realized how Roger Peterson must feel about the advent of the National Geographic Society's team-produced *Field Guide to the Birds of North America!*

Did the field ornithologist of early century really differ so much from today's birder? Perhaps the differences are merely by-products of a different perspective and fading memories? Recapturing the motivations and responses of an earlier generation or century is no easy task. Perhaps we might do better to look at the very different cultural environments we have occupied, each in our turn.

At the turn of the century, birding was still looked upon as frivolous, if not positively inimical to the work-ethic of a country caught up in a production mania that started about 1850 and still drives many of us. Thus, it was useful to masquerade one's interest in birds as a contribution to science. This was honest enough because specimens usually ended up in some museum or university and there was still lots of describing and distributional mapping to do. Indeed, ornithology was more descriptive than analytic in those days and the amateur could still understand the professionals. Birders were, almost by definition, more "serious" about their hobby than we need to be today, when birding has achieved nearly the popular legitimacy of golf and tennis. It is true that the "population sample" used in characterizing the early birder is a skewed one, because those who were less assiduous in collecting, observing and reporting, left little trace and cannot be included in our measurements. Also, fewer people birded due to the lack of the requisite education, leisure and surplus income.

It is no accident that I can compare birding's popularity to golf and tennis. It has become a sport like these others. Sport (as David Sansone suggested recently in *Greek Athletics and the Genesis of Sport*) is "the ritualistic sacrifice of physical energy." It seems obvious that in our day, birding is just one among many outdoor activities that have become specialized forms of recreation or sport. By sheer power of participation, birding won legitimacy. More of us can pursue this hobby because we are part of that large critical mass of Westerners who have achieved higher personal incomes. That

fewer minorities participate, as yet, attests to a subordinate economic status. Ironically, the achievement of higher incomes also often involves stresses that cause people to seek out the therapy afforded by outdoor sports; others need this catharsis to balance a too-sedentary existence. Birding provides an extra bonus because it helps make us feel at home on the planet – an important contribution during a period in human history when technological change is so rapid that it imposes debilitating disorientation.

The ritualistic side of birding is exemplified by its listing competitions: life list, continental list; U.S. list, State list, yard list; by the Christmas Count, the Spring Big Day and the fall Hawk Watch. Competitiveness has been a favorite American trait, is fun up to a pint and can spur us to accomplishments we might otherwise not make the effort to achieve. It can also get in the way of what little scientific contribution our sport can make if "the Score" becomes more important than the enjoyment and the perceptions it encourages. I am sometimes dismayed, but the euphoria that a phalanx of high-altitude migrating Broad-winged Hawks creates among hawk-watch observers: "two-hundred birds!" "no, three hundred!" or five hundred, or a thousand, all guesstimates made by excited amateurs. Some of the sponsors of these ritualistic events seem to think they have failed if the daily September count of Broadwings does not achieve five figures.

It may be well to reflect on Alvin Toffler's observation (in *Future Shock*, 1970) that the larger a subcult like birding becomes, the more likely it is to fragment and spawn new subcults. The multiplication of birders has helped sell more Peterson field guides, and has also created a demand for new kinds of bird books. Our friend and neighbor, Roger Peterson, the apostle of this birding revolution, finds it dismaying that one guru's offerings are no longer enough to satisfy the new multiplicity of interests. For many birders the American Birding Association now supplants the Audubon Society which gave them their start.

Subcults tend to be ephemeral, so although we can hardly rein in the sporting enthusiasms involved, those of us who hope to advance conservation causes and ornithological science by piggy-backing them on the new interest in birding should not fan the emotional flames. Banked fires last longer.

71 Weed Avenue, Norwalk, CT
06850

In Memoriam

DENNIS VARZA
1954–2013

Birder, Scientist, Charter Member of COA

COA OFFICERS

<i>President</i>	Tina Green, 188 Imperial Avenue, Westport, CT 06880
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<i>Assistant Treasurer</i>	Jack Wells, 103 Sheephill Road, Riverside, CT 06878

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<i>Finance</i>	Fred Schroeder
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<i>Summer Bird Count Compilers</i>	Joe Zeranski and Patrick Comins
<i>Great Backyard Bird Count</i>	Patrick Comins

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, 2014 to:

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