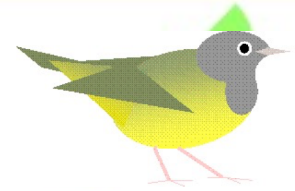


COA Bulletin



COA ANNUAL MEETING

March 19, 2016

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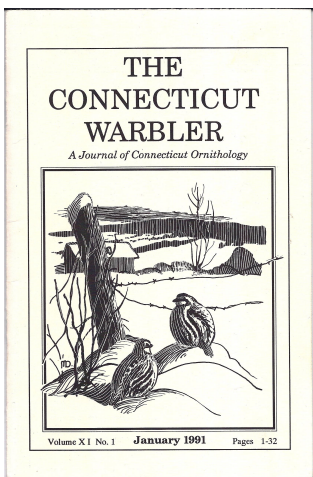
The Connecticut Ornithological Association’s 32nd Annual Meeting is being held on Saturday, March 19, 2016 at Middlesex Community College, Middletown. Our speakers include Brad Winn, Director of Shorebird Habitat Management, Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, Neil Hayward, record-setting Big Year birder from Boston, and Cameron Cox, birding and photography guide for Tropical Birding. The annual meeting also features the presentation of COA’s Mabel Osgood Wright Award, the Betty Kleiner Award, the Association’s annual business meeting and election of officers and board members, vendor exhibits, and the ever-popular COA Raffle.

FEATURED SPEAKERS

Brad Winn: “Understanding Shorebird Migration to Help Direct Conservation Action”

A life-long naturalist and Massachusetts native, Brad Winn has spent most of his career working for the state of Georgia on a wide range of efforts to protect and restore some of the Southeast’s most iconic rare wildlife, including sea turtles, Right Whales, seabirds, and shorebirds. In 2011, he returned to the Northeast and became Director of Shorebird Habitat Management for Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences where, along with other top-notch Shorebird Recovery Program staff biologists, he began pursuing opportunities to work with other organizations throughout the western hemisphere to turn negative population trends around with efforts in site-based habitat protection, wetlands management, and field research.

Brad has participated in Manomet studies of shorebirds on 13 research expeditions on their Arctic and Subarctic nesting grounds, the most recent on the Yukon River Delta in southwestern Alaska in May 2015. His current focus with Manomet is “Habitats for Shorebirds,” with the ambitious goal of improving conditions on 500,000 acres of wetlands and beaches to benefit shorebirds during migration and wintering periods.



COA ANNUAL MEETING (Continued from Page 1)

Brad's presentation will educate us about how rapidly evolving tracking technology is helping us understand the habitat needs of individual long-distance shorebirds. The conservation community is gaining insight into hemispheric sites of importance and uncovering regional threats for shorebirds, leading to the geographic prioritization of conservation activity.

Neil Hayward: "An Accidental Big Year"

Neil Hayward grew up near Oxford, England, where at a young age he first became obsessed with birds. After obtaining a Ph.D. in genetics at Cambridge University, he moved permanently to the United States in 2005 to head up the U.S. operations of the biotech company Abcam. In 2011, he left to pursue a consulting career as owner of Cambridge Blue Consulting. Neil currently is the field trip coordinator and a director of the Brookline Bird Club, one of the largest and oldest in Massachusetts. He lives in Cambridge with his wife Gerri and two cats, Sally and Khiva.



In 2013, Neil suffered a devastating bout of the "Big Year," the temporary insanity resulting in almost 250,000 miles of travel and taking him to remote corners of this continent, including Barrow, Alaska in the frozen north, the Dry Tortugas dangling off the Florida Keys to the south, Newfoundland to the east, and tiny Adak adrift in the volcanic Aleutian chain to the west. By year's end, Neil netted some 750 species of birds and set a new ABA Big Year record. Come hear about exotic birds, remote places, volcanoes, polar bears, Aleutian pluming, and more! Beware: Big Years can be contagious!

Cameron Cox: "Seawatching: The Identification of Waterbirds in Flight"

An avid birder since the age of 13, Cameron Cox spent his late teens and twenties as a professional bird bum, working seasonal bird jobs from Cape May, New Jersey to Alaska's Pribilof Islands. He is the author, along with Ken Behrens, of the *Peterson Reference Guide to Seawatching*. Cameron currently works as a birding and photography guide for Tropical Birding.

Do you struggle with identifying waterbirds such as ducks, gulls, terns, alcids, loons, and grebes in flight? Cameron's talk elaborates on the process of how hawk watching techniques can

be applied to identifying waterbirds and other birds in flight. Techniques such as judging distant wing beats, deemphasizing coloration, and focusing on structure are just as effective in identifying distant flying waterbirds. Cameron will help us sharpen our seawatching skills with photos and tips from the *Peterson Reference Guide to Seawatching*.



Connecticut Ornithological Association
32nd Annual Meeting
Saturday, March 19, 2016
Chapman Hall, Middlesex Community College
100 Training Hill Road, Middletown, CT

- 8:00-8:45 Registration/COA Marketplace – includes continental breakfast, Birds & Beans© coffee, and tea.
- 8:45-9:15 Welcome/Business Meeting. Kathy Van Der Aue, COA President, will present a brief overview of the year's activities, followed by election of officers and board members.
- 9:15-10:15 Brad Winn – **Understanding Shorebird Migration to Help Direct Conservation Action**
The Director of Shorebird Habitat Management at the Manomet Center for Conservation Science explains how rapidly evolving tracking technology allows us to better prioritize conservation efforts.
- 10:15-10:40 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.
- 10:40-11:15 Break – COA Marketplace - time to socialize, purchase COA Raffle tickets, and check out vendors' offerings of bird-related items.
- 11:15-12:15 Neil Hayward – **An Accidental Big Year**
250,000 miles and 750 species... ABA Big Year record-holder talks about exotic birds, remote places, volcanoes, polar bears, Aleutian plumbing and more. Beware: Big Years are contagious!
- 12:20-1:25 Lunch at Founders' Hall Cafeteria (adjacent to Chapman Hall). Hot buffet lunch including a vegetarian option.
- 1:30-2:30 Cameron Cox – **Seawatching: The Identification of Waterbirds in Flight.**
Co-author of the *Peterson Reference Guide to Seawatching* explains how to identify distant ducks, gulls, loons, alcids, grebes and other waterbirds in flight with techniques long-used by hawk watchers.
- 2:45-3:30 COA Raffle and Cameron Cox book signing.
The ever-popular Raffle concludes our day with many prizes including avian artwork and valuable birding equipment donated by generous artists, vendors, and friends of COA. Raffle tickets are available throughout the day.

For map and directions: <http://mxcc.edu/community/directions/> 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>

**REGISTRATION FORM
COA ANNUAL MEETING
March 19, 2016
Middlesex Community College,
Chapman Hall, 100 Training Hill Road
Middletown, CT 06457**

Current COA members will receive priority
if we receive your registration form and payment by February 15, 2016.
After February 15, registrations will be accepted in the order received.
Send your form in now and be sure of a seat this year!

COA Members:	_____ Persons at \$25.00 (pre-pay by Feb. 15)	\$ _____
	_____ Persons at \$30.00 (after Feb. 15)	\$ _____
Non-Members:	_____ Persons at \$35.00 (pre-pay by Feb. 15)	\$ _____
	_____ Persons at \$40.00 (after Feb. 15)	\$ _____
Students:	_____ Persons at \$15.00 (pre-pay or at door)	\$ _____
Hot Buffet Lunch	_____ Persons at \$17.00 (pre-pay only)	\$ _____
Number of vegetarian entrees _____		
Number of COA hats _____	(pre-pay @ \$20.00 by Feb. 15)	\$ _____
With a new, custom designed embroidered Connecticut Warbler!		
TOTAL		\$ _____

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

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

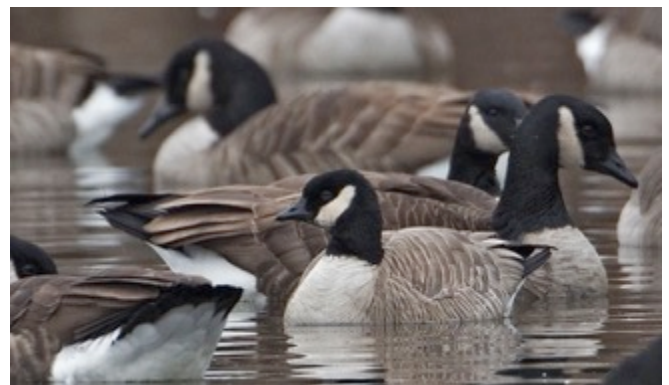
**Send check made out to "COA" & form to:
Connecticut Ornithological Association
314 Unquowa Road
Fairfield, CT 06824**

RECENT SIGHTINGS – WINTER RARITIES



(L) Pink-footed Goose, Fisher Meadows Conservation Area, Avon, January 4, 2016.

(R) Snow Goose, Fisher Meadows Conservation Area, Avon, January 4, 2016. Photos by Mark Szantyr.

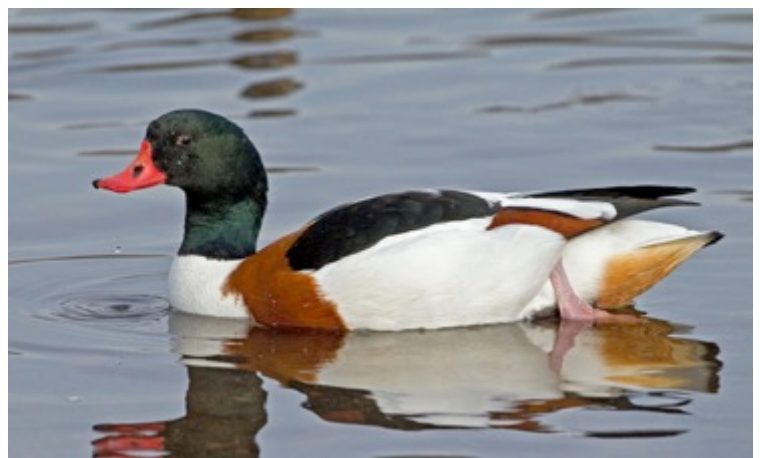


(L) Ross's Goose, Broad Brook Mill Pond, East Windsor, January 15, 2016.

(R) Cackling Goose, Broad Brook Mill Pond, East Windsor, January 17, 2016. Photos by Mark Szantyr.



Tundra Swan, Haddam Meadows, State Park, Haddam, December 11, 2015. Photo by Hank Golet.



Common Shelduck, Hanover Pond, Meriden, January 15, 2016.

Photo by Mark Szantyr.

RECENT SIGHTINGS – WINTER RARITIES



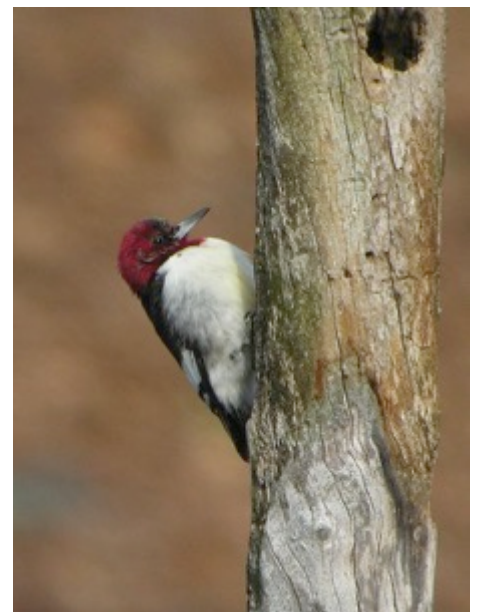
Greater White-fronted Geese,
Broad Brook Mill Pond, East Windsor,
January 15, 2016. Photo by Mark
Szantyr.



(L) Tundra Swan, Haddam Meadows State Park/Connecticut River, December 11, 2015.



(R) Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Connecticut River marshes, November 4, 2015. Photos by Hank Golet.



(L) Red-headed Woodpecker, Old Lyme, November 21, 2015.

(C) Red-headed Woodpecker, Old Lyme, December 11, 2015.

(R) Red-headed Woodpecker, Old Lyme, January 26, 2016.

Sequence of photos of the same bird by Hank Golet.

SHRUBLAND BIRDS FINDING HOMES IN COTTONTAIL MANAGEMENT AREAS

BY LISA WAHLE (photos by Paul Fusco, AJ Hand, and Lisa Wahle)

It has been only three or four years since patches of mature forest were cut at several Connecticut wildlife management areas (WMAs) to create New England Cottontail (NEC) habitat. But, shrubland birds already are moving in. Surveys and field work conducted during late May and June in 2014 and 2015 at Roraback, Housatonic River, Goshen, Sessions Woods, and Bear Hill WMAs revealed these areas to be alive with song and activity! Eastern Towhee, Common Yellowthroat, Chestnut-sided Warbler, and either Willow or Alder Flycatcher were heard or seen at nearly every site, and a number of sites also hosted Field Sparrow, Indigo Bunting, Blue-winged Warbler, and Prairie Warbler.

While the projects at all WMAs involved cutting mature forest to allow regeneration, the sites vary in landscape character and patch size. The 12-acre Goshen cut on East Street North abuts a large field. It is somewhat wet, and woody vegetation has bounced back with vigor. Vines and shrubs nearly obscure brush piles that were constructed at the time of the timber harvest. At this site, Willow Flycatcher, Eastern Towhee, Common Yellowthroat, and Chestnut-sided Warbler were common. The much larger 2013 Goshen project, adjacent to grassland nesting fields on North Goshen Road, is also somewhat wet but was still quite open in June 2015. Gray Catbirds, Eastern Towhees, and Song Sparrows sang along the cut's brushy borders, but a wonderful surprise was a hen Ruffed Grouse with four young near a brush pile at the edge of the cut. At both Goshen sites, Bobolinks sang and displayed in adjacent fields.



Photo by Paul Fusco.



Photo by Lisa Wahle.



Photo by Lisa Wahle.

The Housatonic River WMA also has two project sites. Habitat work at the south end involved a 20-acre timber harvest and native shrub planting on 12 acres of old field that were cleared of invasive bush honeysuckle. Eastern Bluebird, Prairie Warbler, Indigo Bunting, Eastern Towhee, and Field Sparrow provided a beautiful vocal and visual show during point counts in 2014. Birders were delighted by a singing male Yellow-breasted Chat for several days that spring at the north end of the property.

At two sites at Roraback WMA in Harwinton we detected differences in songbird communities between different aged cuts. At the South Road site, a total of 10 acres were cut in patches interspersed with wetland, field, and woods. The Laurel (Poland) Road project is a large clearcut composed of 14 acres cut in 2011 and 26 acres cut on a gentle, dry slope in the winter of 2013-14. In June 2015, Field Sparrows were singing in the more open cut but not in the dense shrubby 2011 cut. Chestnut-sided Warblers showed the reverse pattern, common in the dense 5-year-old cut but not observed in the open younger cut. What a difference two years of growth can make!

Immediately after a tree harvest, projects such as the ones described here can appear very raw, bleak, and messy. As land managers, we purposefully leave these areas messy and covered with woody debris to provide cover for wildlife, nutrient replenishment to the soil, and a deterrent to deer browse. But, after just one season of growth these areas become flush with herbaceous vegetation. After 2 to 3 years they are filling

SHRUBLAND BIRDS FINDING HOMES IN COTTONTAIL MANAGEMENT AREAS (Continued from Page 7)

in with shrubs, vines, and young trees, providing the habitat needed by New England Cottontails and many shrubland birds whose populations have been in serious decline for a number of years.

These WMAs are open to the public. See the DEEP website for directions, and come out and enjoy some of these wonderful shrubland birds this spring! There also are several project sites on private lands that allow public access, including Litchfield Hills Audubon Society's Boyd Woods, White Memorial Foundation, Apple Hill, and Great Mountain Forest. See the websites for these organizations for more information.

Oh yes, about the bunny . . . After several years of coordinated and intense conservation efforts by state, federal, academic, and conservation partners in the NEC range (CT, RI, MA, NH, NY, and ME), the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service announced in September 2015 that protecting this species under the Endangered Species Act was not warranted largely because there was a conservation strategy in place that was effective and being implemented. Please visit www.newenglandcottontail.org and its sister pages, www.youngforest.org and www.timberdoodle.org to learn more about young forest and shrubland wildlife.

Lisa Wahle works with the Wildlife Management Institute and CT DEEP Wildlife Division to create habitat for New England Cottontail and other young forest/shrubland-dependent wildlife.



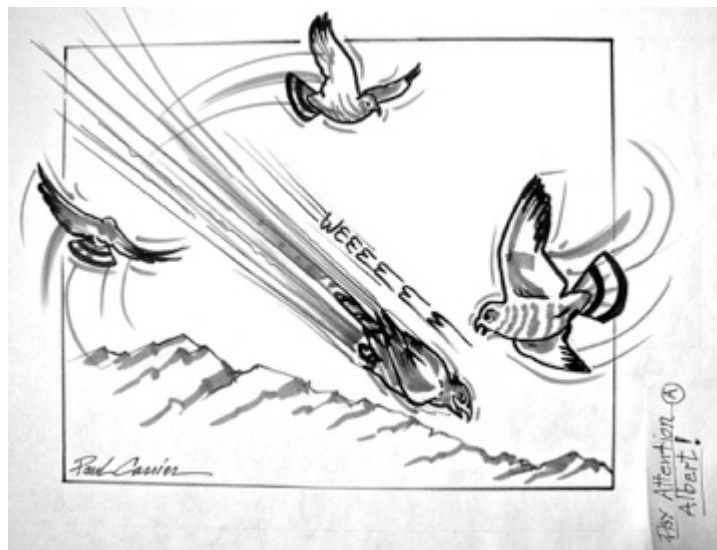
Photo by AJ Hand.



Photo by Lisa Wahle.



Photo by Paul Fusco.



“Pay attention, Albert!”
Cartoon by Paul Carrier

EDGAR C. STILES

BY JOHN TRIANA

Every day we go by bridges, benches, and buildings that are named for individuals of some esteem. After the dedications, their names remain, but many details of their lives fade with the memory of those who knew them personally. There is one such building in West Haven, the former Edgar C. Stiles School, which holds a connection to the early years of ornithology in Connecticut.

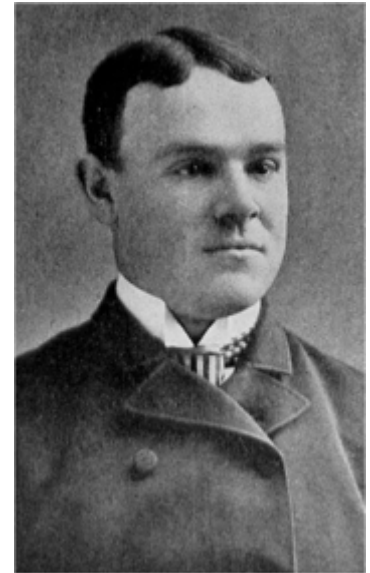
Edgar Crane Stiles was born in Hartford on October 9, 1863, the son of Frances (Thresher) and Levi Stiles, a harness maker. Edgar attended local schools and graduated from Hartford Public High School in 1882, placing second in his class. After high school, he matriculated to Yale College in the Class of 1886.

Now closed for a decade, the Edgar C. Stiles School served as a vessel for educating thousands of students over seventy years. The man himself served at the helm of a school system for more than 30 years, including spreading the importance of birds and our natural world. That is how a former school in West Haven is linked to ornithology in Connecticut.

Edgar started working in education right out of college. He served as a principal in Norwalk, Litchfield, and Seymour for the next dozen years. In 1898, he took the position of Superintendent of Schools in West Haven, and he would hold that position until his death in 1933. Edgar served his community in many ways, including participating on the board to establish West Haven's first library.

At the turn of the 20th century, ornithology was transitioning from a science that was dominated by those who collected birds to those who observed birds. One of his Yale '86 classmates, Dr. Louis Bishop, would definitely fall into the "collector" category. Edgar would count himself as more of an observer.

With more and more observers looking at birds in and around New Haven, a call went out to anyone interested in birds to come to a meeting in March 1907. On April 3, 1907, Edgar was one of 60 people who established the New Haven Bird Club. Also attending that meeting were a few teachers from New Haven schools,



several students from Yale, and Dr. Louis Bishop. That night, Edgar was elected President of the Club and would serve in that capacity until 1925, with the exception of one year.



Edgar remained a bachelor until fairly late in life. At some point, he started courting an English teacher at the high school, Edna L. Morgan. A native of Enfield, New Hampshire, Edna had a passion for birds and natural history. She, like Edgar, became a Charter Member of the New Haven Bird Club. On June 15, 1908, they were married in Enfield. Edgar and Edna would often lead the indoor programs at New Haven Bird Club meetings. Outdoor walks also were led at many places with which we are familiar today – Edgewood Park, East Rock Park, and the West Haven Sand Spit (Sandy Point). The New Haven Bird Club archives include a set of Mrs. Stiles notebooks from walks during 1920. Edgar promoted the study of birds through the New Haven Bird Club, and among educators in the New Haven and West Haven school systems.

EDGAR C. STILES (Continued from Page 9)

Edgar and Edna shared 24 years together. Each summer they retreated to her hometown in New Hampshire. It was there in August 1932 that she fell ill. Admitted to a hospital in Hanover, her condition deteriorated rapidly, until she passed away on September 12, 1932. Two days later, she was interred with her parents in Enfield's Oak Grove Cemetery.

After Edna's death, Edgar returned to West Haven to manage the business of the school system. By this time, the system had four times as many schools as when he started as Superintendent. It included the new Edgar C. Stiles School, which was built and dedicated not only when he was still alive, but also when he was still working as Superintendent. Edgar was at his summer home in Enfield on August 1, 1933 when he began to feel ill. He was rushed back home and admitted to New Haven Hospital to undergo two serious operations. The initial prognosis was good and the patient seemed to be recovering well. However, Edgar's health took a turn for the worse by month's end. Edgar Crane Stiles died on August 29, 1933. Two days later, one of the largest funerals in the history of West Haven occurred, paying homage to a man who was truly a pillar of the community. After the funeral, Edgar's body was brought to Enfield, New Hampshire and laid to rest next to his beloved wife.

John Triana is the historian for the New Haven Bird Club and a past-president of the club. A native of West Haven, he currently resides in Prospect. He is employed as the Real Estate Manager for the Regional Water Authority where he oversees land management on the Authority's 27,000 acres.

Edgar C. Stiles/Edna M. Stiles
gravestone, Oak Grove Cemetery,
Enfield, New Hampshire.
Photo by John Triana.



TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO IN THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER VOLUME XI NO. 1 (JANUARY 1991) COMPILED BY STEVE BROKER

Letter to the Editor, by Jay Kaplan.

"Jim Bair's excellent article, "Tundra Swan in Connecticut" (CW 10:49-61), should provide a beginning rather than an end, for research into the occurrence of this rare migrant in Connecticut. Having always wondered about two specimens of this species on display at the Science Museum of Connecticut in West Hartford, I recently asked the Museum's Director of Environmental Sciences, Hank Gruner, to pull the collection records for the specimens. The swans were given to the Museum in 1966 by a Mr. C.M. Pond. Of greater interest was the fact that these birds were collected in Elizabeth Park, Hartford in 1887. The specimens are not listed in Bair's table and should be an addition to the state's ornithological records for this species.

"Connecticut is blessed with a number of private, non-profit museums and nature centers. One wonders what other ornithological finds may await those researchers who may care to look for their 'rare birds' on a museum shelf rather than in the field. Articles such as Bair's may serve to stimulate other such discoveries in the future."

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO IN THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER (Continued from Page 10)

Site Guide: The Southwestern Connecticut Shoreline, by Frank W. Mantlik

“The shoreline of southwestern Connecticut is one of the state’s outstanding birding areas. The varied environments of shallow bays, salt ponds, harbors, salt marshes, mudflats, sand spits, beaches, rocky outcroppings, grassy parks, coastal thickets, forests and offshore islands found along this part of Long Island Sound, attract a wide diversity of water and landbirds. In addition, the unique islands off Norwalk and Westport serve as important nesting colonies for many waders, gulls, terns and shorebirds. During peak migration periods, a birding trip to the Fairfield County coast may produce 120+ species, and a winter jaunt may result in 60+ species. This area also has a reputation for attracting rarities, and many ‘first’ state bird records have been documented by birders in this area.”

[Ed’s Note: Frank Mantlik lists some of the specialties of this portion of the Connecticut shoreline, including grebes, storm-petrels, pelicans, murre, Snowy Owl, Northern Wheatear, and Painted Bunting, as well as rare waterfowl and shorebirds. Sites mentioned include Holly Pond and Cove Island Park (Stamford), Veteran’s Park, Manresa, Taylor Farm Park, Calf Pasture Park, and Canfield Island Marsh, and the Norwalk Islands (Norwalk). His “birding tour” includes maps of Norwalk and Stamford-Darien with directions for best bird viewing areas.]

Preferred Habitat of Northern Barred Owls in Litchfield County, Connecticut, by Leonard C. Yannielli

“The preferred habitat of the Northern Barred Owl (*Strix varia*) was studied by broadcasting tape recorded calls and by measurements of topography and vegetation at nests and randomly selected sites. The study area was in the northwest corner of Connecticut which is characterized by a hilly landscape of mostly mixed coniferous and deciduous forest. Owls responded significantly more on nights with cloud cover and with low illumination by the moon. The most responses per time were in May, June and July. Barred Owls selected sites in forest blocks of substantial size, near open water, wetlands, and trails, and away from hills. Although Barred Owls prefer nearby wetlands, conifers within 100m of the nest site, and trees with cavities for nesting, these features are apparently not absolutely essential; however, the absence of these features renders the owls more susceptible to adverse changes in their environment.”

Unusual Bird Specimens From Connecticut at the Birdcraft Museum, by George A. Clark, Jr. and Milan G. Bull

“Preserved specimens and the information attached to them provide important documentation for the historical status of birds in Connecticut. Although the Birdcraft Museum of the Connecticut Audubon Society (CAS) in Fairfield did not open until 1915, the bird collection contains many older specimens including a major group from the late 1800s owned by George Bird Grinnell and donated by his widow. Even older are specimens acquired by the Reverend John Linsley before 1844. The Linsley specimens formerly were at the Barnum Museum in Bridgeport but were transferred to Birdcraft through the efforts of former CAS employee Dennis Varza. As far as we are aware, the only Linsley specimen remaining at the Barnum Museum is an exhibited mount of a Tundra Swan from Connecticut. Linsley’s specimens are apparently the oldest extant ones known from Connecticut.”

[Ed’s Note: Clark and Bull list a number of “especially noteworthy” specimens, including Black-capped Petrel (“only state record”), White-faced Storm-Petrel (“only state record”), Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (“apparently the first state record”), Gyrfalcon (Rocky Hill, 17 Oct. 1935), 3 Yellow Rails, Atlantic Puffin (“16 Nov. 1949; only state record”), Passenger Pigeon, and Black-backed Woodpecker (“mounted male, Bridgeport, 19 Nov. 1934”). See also Bob Askins’ book review of *Connecticut Birds*, by Joseph D. Zeranski and Thomas R. Baptist, Bruce Dasinger’s article (“The Taste of Freedom”) about a Lesser Yellowlegs seen near the Blackhall River in Old Lyme and then found to have one toe ‘held tightly by a sizeable oyster’. “We had to free the bird immediately,” thought Bruce and fellow canoeist Ik Icard. The following link directs you to this issue of TCW, pages 1-32: <http://www.ctbirding.org/Warbler/CTWarblerVolume11.pdf>

CONNECTICUT ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

314 Unquowa Road
Fairfield, CT 06824
www.ctbirding.org



COA OFFICERS

President	Kathy Van Der Aue, 762 Mill Hill Road, Southport, CT 06890
Vice President	Stephen P. Broker, 50 Hidden Place, Cheshire, CT 06410
Secretary	Denise Jernigan, 618 Hopewell Road, South Glastonbury, CT 06073
Treasurer	Paul Wolter, 8 Sybil Creek Place, Branford, CT 06405

COA CHAIRPERSONS

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Conservation	Patrick Comins
Finance	Paul Wolter
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Avian Records	Jay Kaplan
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COA Bulletin	Steve Broker
Christmas Bird Count Compiler	Steve Broker
Summer Bird Count Compilers	Joe Zeranski & Patrick Comins
Great Backyard Bird Count	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, 2016 to Stephen P. Broker
COABulletin@gmail.com
50 Hidden Place
Cheshire, CT 06410-3723