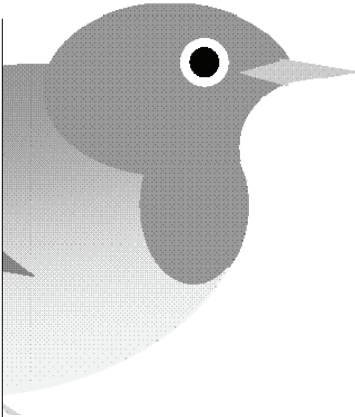
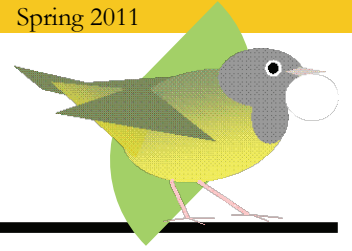


# COA BULLETIN



## COA ANNUAL MEETING APRIL 9, 2011

The Connecticut Ornithological Association invites you to attend its 27th Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 9, 2011, at [Middlesex Community College](#) in Middletown, CT. The program will feature three excellent speakers, the presentation of COA awards, the Association's business meeting and election of officers, vendor exhibits, and the hugely popular COA raffle. A special raffle prize this year will be an original bird carving donated by Keith Mueller. See the [COA website](#) for in-progress photos of the carving.

The complete program schedule is on page 5.

### FEATURED SPEAKERS by Lisa Wahle Alan Brush: Here's the Thing: adventures with plumages and their pigments.

Alan Brush is Professor Emeritus at UConn, where his research focused on the biochemistry and physiology of bird plumage pigments, and the evolution and structure of feather keratin proteins. He has published more than 70 scientific papers and numerous book chapters, and for ten years edited *The Auk*, the journal of the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU). Alan has been the lecturer/naturalist on over 20 cruise ships, and visited China with the 'Dream Team' to study newly discovered feathered dinosaurs. His most recent publications have been on the evolution of feathers. He is a Fellow and Patron of the AOU, and served on the Chapman committee of the American Museum of Natural History. He writes *Books on Birds* for the *CT Warbler*, and is currently working with his wife on a book that revisits the natural history of southern coastal areas first described by Mark Catesby.



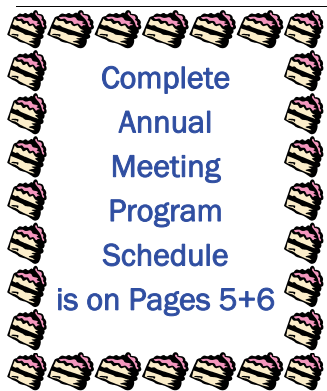
Gouldian finches

Alan will explore questions regarding feather colors and plumage patterns that have intrigued him from his early work, such as: What causes the seasonal changes in the plumage of scarlet tanagers, and the variation in plumage of orioles. What influences shade and intensity of color, and how does color relate to behavior. (i.e., what signals are involved?). What do we understand about pigments in fossil feathers, pigment interactions and the influence of human activities on color? From witnessing the color of a beautiful bird the field, Alan will walk us through the biochemistry, metabolism, and evolution of bird plumage in ways that makes it all that more remarkable.

Continued on page 2 →

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Complete  
Annual  
Meeting  
Program  
Schedule  
is on Pages 5+6

# COA ANNUAL MEETING

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

## Daniel Klem, Jr.: Bird-Window Collisions: Cause and Prevention

Daniel Klem, Jr. is Professor of Biology, and Sarkis Acopian Professor of Ornithology and Conservation Biology in the Acopian Center for Ornithology, Department of Biology, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pennsylvania. He earned his Ph.D. in Zoology at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, specializing in Ornithology, Ethology, and Biostatistics, and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Science degree from Wilkes University in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. For 37 years, beginning with his dissertation and continuing to present, he has studied and published extensively on the relationship between birds and windows. His other research and published works document the anatomy, behavior, ecology, and conservation of birds of prey, waterbirds, and select passerines. He also co-authored three books on the birds of Armenia with Dr. Martin S. Adamian .



Daniel Klem, Jr.

Except for habitat destruction, collisions with clear and reflective sheet glass and plastic windows cause more bird deaths than any other human-associated avian mortality factor. From published estimates, one billion annual kills in the U.S. alone is likely conservative; remarkably, the worldwide toll is likely billions. Comparison of annual bird mortality in the U.S. from other human-associated causes are: 120 million from hunting, 60 million from vehicle road-kill, 10,000 – 40,000 from wind turbine strikes, and potentially hundreds of millions by domestic cats. Over three-and-a-half decades of detailed observations and controlled experiments confirm that birds behave as if clear and reflective windows are invisible to them. Dr. Klem will explain the factors that influence increased mortality at specific sites, threats to particular species, promising prevention techniques and the challenges to their implementation.

## Blair Nikula: Storm Birding and The Cape Cod Bay Seabird Trap



Storm birds photo by Blair Nikula

Blair Nikula, a native Cape Codder and life-long birder, is a former regional editor for *American Birds* (now *North American Birds*), a past-president of the Cape Cod Bird Club, a former associate member of the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program Advisory Committee, and currently serves as a member of the Mass Avian Records Committee. When not looking at birds, Blair has also been studying and photographing dragonflies and damselflies for about 15 years. He co-authored the *Stokes' Beginner's Guide to Dragonflies and Damselflies*, and *A Field Guide to the Dragonflies and Damselflies of Massachusetts*, and formerly co-edited *Ode News*, a newsletter about the odonates of southern New England. He currently claims to be working on a revision of *The Birds of Cape Cod*.

Cape Cod Bay has long been known to be a trap for marine mammals and more recently has received much attention for the southbound sea turtles that strand on its shores in the late fall. Largely unknown to the general public, but no secret to the birding cognoscenti, is that the bay is equally effective – though generally far less lethal – a trap for storm-blown seabirds. This phenomenon occurs most frequently during and immediately following northeasterly storms when large numbers of shearwaters, storm-petrels, gannets, phalaropes, jaegers, and other pelagic species are blown shoreward and become “trapped” by the bay’s confusing geography. In this talk Blair will describe these avian spectacles, offer an historical perspective, outline the circumstances that produce these events, pose some questions that remain unanswered, and describe the trials and tribulations of storm birding.

Complete COA Annual Meeting Program is on Pages 5 & 6

## AMERICAN MIGRANTS BECOME EUROPEAN VAGRANTS BY JULIAN HOUGH

A woman in Southern England phoned the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds on the morning of 24th January 2011 to inform them of a very odd dead Moorhen that was hanging in a Cotoneaster bush in her garden on the edge of Dartmoor, Devon. A local birder visited the house and photographed the bird and found to her amazement that the bird was a dead, first-winter, **American Purple Gallinule** — only the 2<sup>nd</sup> for Britain. The first was a moribund immature picked up in a street gutter in Hugh Town, on St Mary's, on the Isles of Scilly, on 7th November 1958. It survived in care for two days but died on the 9th, the corpse being sent to the British Museum. Its appearance on Scilly followed a particularly violent storm in the Gulf of Mexico which later tracked over the Atlantic.

Transatlantic vagrancy is a testament to a bird's amazing ability to make long migrations across the Atlantic to make landfall in Western Europe. In fall, weather patterns typically track from the west to east, often transporting wayward Nearctic passerines to expectant English and European 'twitchers'. Although the vagrancy potential of rallidae, particularly American Purple Gallinule and Sora is well-known, the American wood-warblers in particular are especially well-prized. Their day-glow plumages and charismatic appeal are not lost when compared to 'dowdy' European warblers. In some winters, prolonged easterly winds and cold continental weather may bring certain European vagrants susceptible to such conditions to the eastern USA, a phenomenon illustrated by the recent spate of Northern Lapwings in the north-east

So, how do these birds, weighing just a few grams, find themselves in Europe? In fall, neotropical migrants moving south behind a cold front, set off in

calm conditions, only to be caught out in fast changing weather off the coast. These fast moving low pressure systems (known as 'wave' depressions) quickly envelope, disorient and displace migrants and carry them west across the Atlantic. The speed at which these low-pressure systems track across the Atlantic and the strength of the associated gales enable birds to reach western outposts of England in as little time as 24-48 hours. With enough fat stored, they can fly non-stop for 30-50 hours (Nisbet, 1963) and can easily survive such a crossing. Of course some use ships as "lifeboats" while many undoubtedly perish. Durand (1972) recorded 58 species of land birds on ships making trans-atlantic crossings.



Purple Gallinule  
Photo by Julian Hough

Some birds are more predisposed to vagrancy than others. Species such as Red-eyed Vireo, Blackpoll Warbler and Grey-cheeked Thrush that migrate later in the fall when weather patterns are stronger are three species frequently recorded in Europe. These long-distance migrants are often the "poster-child" for American vagrants, especially the former, which often opt to take the shorter, seafaring route to their South American wintering grounds. They are thus more prone to being ensnared by malevolent weather systems than those species that migrate earlier and have shorter flights to their wintering grounds.

So, as you ponder these amazing journeys, spare not just a thought for the poor gallinule, that was apparently alive the day before, but also the legions of UK twitcher's committing hari-kari at the thought of missing another bite at the cherry. Now, where's that rotten Fieldfare!!!!

Citizen Science Opportunities

## MIGRANT SONGBIRD SURVEY

Audubon CT is seeking **citizen scientists** (volunteer birdwatchers) to participate in surveys of Neotropical migrant songbirds during spring migration, one morning per week from April 20 – June 1, 2011. Volunteers should have strong bird identification skills and at least a basic ability to identify common plants. Our priority sites for the surveys are coastal sites from Greenwich to New Haven, but people interested in conducting the surveys at other sites in CT are welcome to participate as well. To volunteer or for more information, contact Michelle Frankel at [mfrankel@audubon.org](mailto:mfrankel@audubon.org) or 203-869-5272, ext.225.

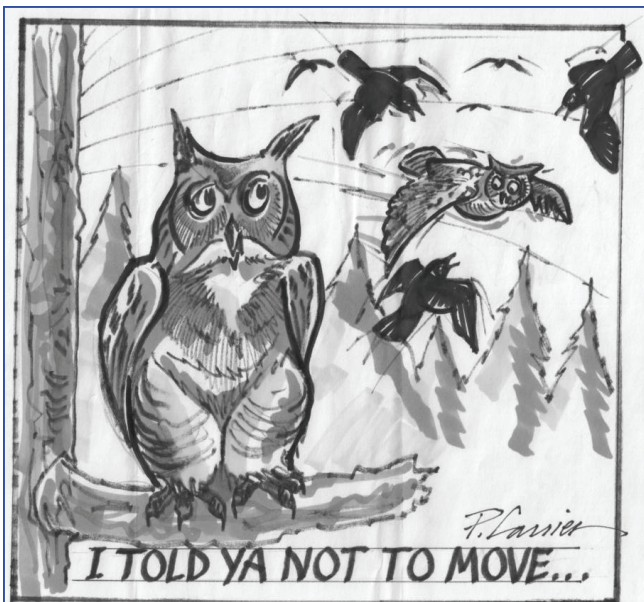
The songbird surveys are part of Audubon's new **Habitat Oases for Migrating Songbirds program**, which seeks to identify, improve and conserve important stop-over habitat for migrating songbirds all along the Atlantic migratory flyway, focusing where there is limited quality habitat.

The program, performed in colonial gardens, state and municipal parks, urban green spaces and rural areas, engages citizen scientists in migratory songbird surveys of forest remnants. The surveys help us to determine the characteristics of high quality stop-over habitat and most beneficial as food sources for migrating songbirds. Audubon and its partners are using the results of this study to:



Baltimore oriole photo by Frank Mantlik

- ◆ **Promote the protection of critical stop-over habitats** by helping government agencies, corporations, land trusts, and other landowners make informed land use and land protection decisions
- ◆ **Improve the quality of public and private lands as stop-over habitat** for migrating birds by guiding the management and landscaping practices of natural resource managers, private landowners and professional landscapers
- ◆ **Develop regionally-specific lists of "bird-friendly" native plants** that may be used to guide landscaping practices in parks, gardens and backyards



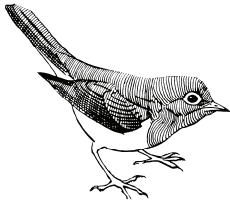
### GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT IS FEBRUARY 18-21

One of the easiest way to contribute to the body of ornithological science is to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). This year the count is Presidents' Weekend, Friday Feb. 18 through Monday Feb. 21. You only have to count for a minimum of 15 minutes, for any or all of the days, in whatever place you'd like to. It doesn't have to be your backyard. Try it!

For full details, see the [GBBC website](#)



**CONNECTICUT ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION  
27TH ANNUAL MEETING  
SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 2011**



**8:00 - 9:00 Registration / COA Marketplace**

**9:00 - 9:30 Welcome / Business Meeting**

Patrick Comins, COA President will present a brief overview of the COA followed by elections of officers and board members.

**9:30- 10:30 Here's the Thing: Adventures with Plumages and Their Pigments. Alan Brush.**

Dr. Brush will explore topics of feather color and pattern that have intrigued him over a lifetime of research, including what causes the seasonal changes in scarlet tanager plumage and the pattern variation among oriole species. How does color influence bird behavior and how did various plumage patterns evolve? From witnessing the beautiful colors of a bird in the field, he will walk us through some of the remarkable biochemistry, metabolism, and evolution of bird plumage .

**10:30 – 10:40 Presentation of the Mabel Osgood Wright Award**

The Mabel Osgood Wright Award was established in memory of one of the most influential conservationists of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, who with a handful of Connecticut women activists, helped change the fashion industry to promote one of the first bird conservation movements of our time. The COA Board gives this award annually to a person or persons in Connecticut who have made a significant contribution to the knowledge, study, and conservation of birds.

**10:40 – 10:50 Presentation of the Betty Kleiner Award**

This COA award honors the memory of Betty Kleiner, whose name is synonymous with *The Warbler*, COA's flagship publication. The award recognizes a deserving author or artist in the field of ornithology.

**10:50 – 11:00 Presentation of the President's Award**

The President's award is given from time to time to recognize outstanding service to the COA and birding community.

**11:00 – 11:15 Break - COA Marketplace**

A time to socialize, purchase COA Raffle tickets and check out vendors' offerings of bird-related items.

**11:15 – 12:15 Bird-Window Collisions: Cause and Prevention. Daniel Klem, Jr.**

Except for habitat destruction, collisions with clear and reflective sheet glass and plastic windows cause more bird deaths than any other human-associated avian mortality factor. Prof. Klem will compare window-strike mortality to other causes of avian death and explore the factors that increase mortality at particular sites, the threats to certain species, promising collision prevention techniques and challenges to their implementation.

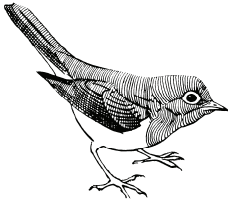
**12:20 – 1:20 Lunch at Founder's Hall Cafeteria.**

[Program continued on next page ]

# CONNECTICUT ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

## 27TH ANNUAL MEETING

### SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 2011



#### 1:30 - 2:30 Storm Birding and The Cape Cod Bay Seabird Trap. Blair Nikula.

Cape Cod Bay has long been known to be a trap for marine mammals and more recently for southbound sea turtles that strand on its shores in the late fall. The bay is an equally effective, though generally far less lethal, trap for storm-blown seabirds, most often during and after northeasterly storms. Shearwaters, storm-petrels, gannets, phalaropes, jaegers, and other pelagic species are blown shoreward and become “trapped” by the bay’s confusing geography. Blair NIKula, a native Cape Codder and life-long birder, as well as a former regional editor for *American Birds*, and a past-president of the Cape Cod Bird Club, will describe these avian spectacles, offer an historical perspective, outline the circumstances that produce these events, pose some questions that remain unanswered, and describe the trials and tribulations of storm birding.

#### 2:30 - 2:45 Break - Osgood Cake! Final COA Marketplace.

#### 2:45 - 3:00 COA Raffle

The ever-popular Raffle will conclude our day with many prizes including avian artwork and valuable birding equipment donated by generous artists and vendors. This year’s raffle includes a carving of a fork-tailed fly-catcher by Keith Mueller. Raffle tickets will be available throughout the day.

For map and directions: [www.mxctc.commnet.edu](http://www.mxctc.commnet.edu) or call: 860-343-5800



**REGISTRATION FORM**  
**COA Annual Meeting April 9, 2011**  
**Middlesex Community College • Chapman Hall • Middletown, CT**

**Early Registration:**      \_\_\_ Persons @ **\$15.00** (pre-pay only)      \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Must be received by March 31)      **[Registration at the door: \$20.00]**

**Hot and cold buffet lunch:**      \_\_\_ Persons @ **\$15.00** (pre-pay only)      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Address:

Send check (made out to COA) & form to: Larry Reiter 32 West Mystic Ave Mystic, CT 06355

**TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO IN**  
**THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER**  
 COMPILED BY STEPHEN P. BROKER

*The Connecticut Warbler*, Volume VI, Number 1 (January 1986)

**A Retrospective, by Carl J. Trichka, Associate Editor**

It seems so short a time since I wrote the editorial for Vol.1, No. 1 of this journal, but a glance at my bookshelf shows that this issue marks the beginning of our sixth year – a third year under the aegis of the Connecticut Ornithological Association (COA).

Regular readers of *The Connecticut Warbler* have seen many interesting articles in this period. The significance of these articles will grow, just as Roger Tory Peterson anticipated when he editorialized in Vol. IV, No. 1: “1984 will be a milepost in the history of ornithology in our state.”

**First Report and Inquiry for the Rare Records Committee, by George A. Clark, Jr.**

Note: The full text of this first report is available at the COA website, [ctbirding.org](http://ctbirding.org), under [Avian Records Committee of Connecticut](#).

**The 1985-1986 Christmas Count, by Fred C. Sibley**

This is the fifth year for which I have analyzed the results of this annual birding extravaganza, and I'm still looking for meaning with only partial success. The vast array of numbers generated by the numerous watchers are really overwhelming. Many thanks to all of you producers of numbers.

New to the state was White-fronted Goose at Westport, the only one of several in the state to be “caught” by counters. The European subspecies of the Green-winged Teal seen at Stratford-Milford was also new although an annual bird in the state. Boat-tailed Grackles were first recorded for Connecticut shortly after Hurricane Gloria, and 3 of the 6 that took up residence at Lordship Marsh were still surviving when the Stratford-Milford count took place. . . An incredible 4 King Eiders showed up along the coast, as well as a Tundra Swan, Barrow's Goldeneye and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. The Oregon Junco, western subspecies of the Dark-eyed Junco, found on the Woodbury-Roxbury count was new to the mid-state counts.

Where are the winter finches? Once again a prediction of a super finch year failed to materialize. . . Greater Scaup came back with a vengeance this year. The 18,000 seen at New Haven exceeded the previous state record while the 5,000 seen on the other coastal counts exceeded the total for the last three years. . . Hawks were the brightest of the bright spots this year. After several years of ups and downs with a seeming upward trend, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk and Red-tailed Hawk all set records in each of the three sectors. Red-shouldered and Goshawk were at very high although not record levels. Only the American Kestrel, close to its lowest levels and on a long decline, ruined the picture. . . Tufted Titmouse and Carolina Wren numbers were at record highs. Are these highs and those of a number of other land birds the result of several mild winters?

**The Ornithological Chronicles of George T. Griswold, by George A. Clark, Jr., Associate Editor**

The Museum of Natural History at the University of Connecticut in Storrs has acquired the set of original notebooks compiled by Mr. George T. Griswold, covering 43 years of birding, principally in north-central Connecticut. In 1911 at 36 years of age Griswold began his notebooks. He lived then in Hartford, where for many years he worked for the Aetna Insurance Company. His notebooks contain many newspaper clippings that provide insights about birds and public attitudes. A newspaper article from 1912 urges readers to beat the high cost of living by eating House Sparrows! In the early years Griswold's birding trips were mainly by foot and trolley, but starting in the 1920s he increasingly used automobiles.

The entire span of his notebooks includes references to other active ornithologists whom he encountered, e.g., J.H. Sage, W.E. Treat, H.K. Job, J.B. May, A.M. Bagg, and S.A. Eliot.

As a specific example of Griswold's notes, his entry for the afternoon of January 12, 1938, provides details on the route followed by a Great Gray Owl as it moved over a series of tree perches from Farmington Avenue to Asylum Avenue in Hartford. . . Griswold birded through a time during which Connecticut became progressively less agricultural and mainly before the widespread use of chemical pesticides. Furthermore, his birding spanned the time from widespread shotgun collecting of specimens to the modern era with its improved optics and more reliable field guides. . . Griswold's notes provide an important and unique view of Connecticut ornithology in the first half of this century.

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## COA OFFICERS

<i>President</i>	Patrick Comins, 185 East Flat Hill Road, Southbury, CT 06488, 203-264-5098
<i>Vice President</i>	Ken Elkins, 43 Park Street, Shelton, CT 06484
<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>	Ken Elkins
<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

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, 2011 to:

Denise Jernigan  
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South Glastonbury, CT 06073



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