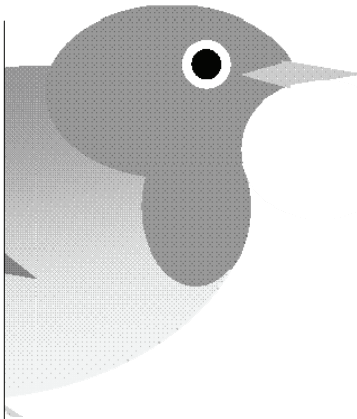
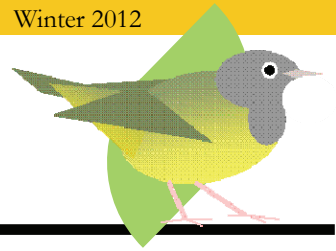


# COA BULLETIN



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These Red and White-winged crossbills, photographed by Frank Gallo at Hammonasset Beach SP, have been reported from several locations in the state this fall. See page 5 .

## 113TH ANNUAL NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT CONNECTICUT CBC SCHEDULE 2012-2013

COMPILED BY STEPHEN P. BROKER

COA encourages its members, friends, and supporters to participate in the annual Christmas Bird Count . Choose an area convenient or attractive to you, and contact the compiler. Participants are always welcome, and your efforts will contribute to a valuable set of scientific data, as well as provide you with the opportunity to meet birders, learn of new places to bird, look for species of note, and generally have a fine time . Plus, this year it's free!

Please contact compilers directly for information about participating in a count.

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2012:

Hartford, CT (CTHA): Compilers: Jay Kaplan, 71 Gracey Road, Canton, CT 06019 [jaybrd49@aol.com](mailto:jaybrd49@aol.com) 860-693-0263 (days), 860-693-0157 (evenings), and Steve Davis, [stevesuedavis@comcast.net](mailto:stevesuedavis@comcast.net) 860-242-2135. ("blizzard date", Sunday, December 16) (Hartford Audubon Society)

New Haven, CT (CTNH) Compiler: Chris Loscalzo, 67 Wepawaug Road, Woodbridge, CT 06525 [closcalz@optonline.net](mailto:closcalz@optonline.net) 203-389-6508 (New Haven Bird Club)

Storrs, CT (CTST) Compiler: Steve Morytko, 288 Varga Road, Ashford, CT 06278 [smorytko@yahoo.com](mailto:smorytko@yahoo.com) (H) 860-429-9600, (M) 860-680-5728

Woodbury-Roxbury, CT (CTWR) Compilers: Renee Baade, 46 Obtuse Road, Newtown, CT 06470 [rbaade@juno.com](mailto:rbaade@juno.com) (H) 203-270-9953, and Ken Elkins, Audubon Center at Bent of the River, 185 East Flat Hill Road, Southbury, CT 06488 [kelnkins@audubon.org](mailto:kelnkins@audubon.org) (Western Connecticut Bird Club)

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2012:

Greenwich-Stamford, CT (CTGS) Compiler: Gary Palmer, 34 Field Road, Cos Cob, CT 06807 203-661-4897 [gejlpalmer@yahoo.com](mailto:gejlpalmer@yahoo.com)

Lakeville-Sharon, CT (CTLS) Contact Audubon Sharon, 325 Cornwall Bridge Road, Sharon, CT 06069, Contact: <http://sharon.audubon.org/>, 860-364-0520 (Audubon Sharon)

Litchfield Hills, CT (CTLH) Compiler: Raymond E. Belding, 1229 Winsted Road #30, Torrington, CT 06790 [hoatzin1@optonline.net](mailto:hoatzin1@optonline.net) 860-482-4046 (Litchfield Hills Audubon Society)

Napatree, RI-CT-NY (RINT) Compilers: Shai Mitra, Biology Department, College of Staten Island, 2800 Victory Blvd, Staten Island, NY 10314 [mitra@mail.csi.cuny.edu](mailto:mitra@mail.csi.cuny.edu) and Glenn Williams, 221 Pequot Avenue, Mystic, CT 06355 [gswilliams9@yahoo.com](mailto:gswilliams9@yahoo.com)

Oxford, CT (CTOX) Compiler: Roy Harvey, 32 Wanda Drive, Beacon Falls, CT 06403, [rmharvey@snet.net](mailto:rmharvey@snet.net), 203-888-5757

Continued on page 2 →

# CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2011-2012

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2012 continued:

Quinnipiac Valley, CT (CTQV) Compilers: Melissa Baston, 860-995-0656 [mbaston@tgimachine.com](mailto:mbaston@tgimachine.com) and Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe, 203-630-9640 [cfolsom-okeefe@audubon.org](mailto:cfolsom-okeefe@audubon.org) (Quinnipiac Valley Audubon Society)

Salmon River, CT (CTSR) Compiler: Joe Morin, 8 West Street Terrace, Cromwell, CT 06416, 860-635-2786 [joseph.mor@sbcglobal.net](mailto:joseph.mor@sbcglobal.net) (Mattabeseck Audubon Society)

Westport, CT (CTWE) Compilers: Mardi and Townsend Dickinson, 20 Blake Street, Norwalk, CT 06851-3007, [mardi1d@gmail.com](mailto:mardi1d@gmail.com) 203-846-0359 and <http://kymrygroup.com>

## SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2012:

Barkhamsted, CT (CTBA) Compiler: David Tripp, Jr., 63 Dyer Avenue, Canton, CT 06019-3233, [dtrippjr@comcast.net](mailto:dtrippjr@comcast.net), 860-693-6524

Stratford-Milford, CT (CTSM) Compiler: Steve Mayo, 27 Tuttle Court, Bethany, CT 06524, [rsdmayo@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rsdmayo@sbcglobal.net), 203-393-0694

## SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2012:

New London, CT (CTNL) Compiler: Robert Dewire, 9 Canary Lane, Pawcatuck, CT 06379, [robertdewire9@comcast.net](mailto:robertdewire9@comcast.net), 860-599-3085

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2012:

Edwin Way Teale, Trail Wood Sanctuary, Hampton, CT (CTEW) Compiler: Sue Harrington, 28D Anton Road, Storrs, CT 06268, [hoopoe@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hoopoe@sbcglobal.net), 860-429-6257

Old Lyme-Saybrook, CT (CTOL) Compiler: Barbara Hawes, 310 Boston Post Road, Unit #71, Waterford, CT 06385 860-710-5811 [bhawes71@gmail.com](mailto:bhawes71@gmail.com) (Potapaug Audubon Society)

## TUESDAY, JANUARY 1, 2013:

Pawling (Hidden Valley), NY/CT (NYHV) Compilers: Carena Pooth, 22 Brothers Road, Poughquag, NY 12570, [carena@prodigy.net](mailto:carena@prodigy.net), 845-724-3236 and Angela Dimmitt, P.O. Box 146, Sherman, CT 06784, [angeladimmitt@aol.com](mailto:angeladimmitt@aol.com), 860-355-3429 (snow storm date Wednesday, January 2, 2013)

## RECENT COA WORKSHOPS



LEFT: COA Workshop Chair Chris Loscalzo (foreground) with trip leaders Joe Bear (with field guide), and Luke Tiller (not pictured here), led a very successful Sparrow Workshop at Allen's Meadow, Wilton, on October 20. Numerous White-crowned and Vesper sparrows were seen, along with a Clay-colored, for a total of 9 sparrow species.

RIGHT: On November 17, Chris Loscalzo, with help from Frank Mantlik, led a Sea Duck Workshop at Hammonasset Beach SP.

In addition to scoters and other waterfowl, highlights included a Black-headed gull and a Grasshopper sparrow. Photo by Frank Mantlik.

NEXT UP: GULL WORKSHOP on February 13, 2013 at Windsor-Bloomfield Landfill. See page 7 for more details.

## HOW MANY DOWNY WOODPECKERS COME TO MY FEEDER?

BY

KATHY VAN DER AUE

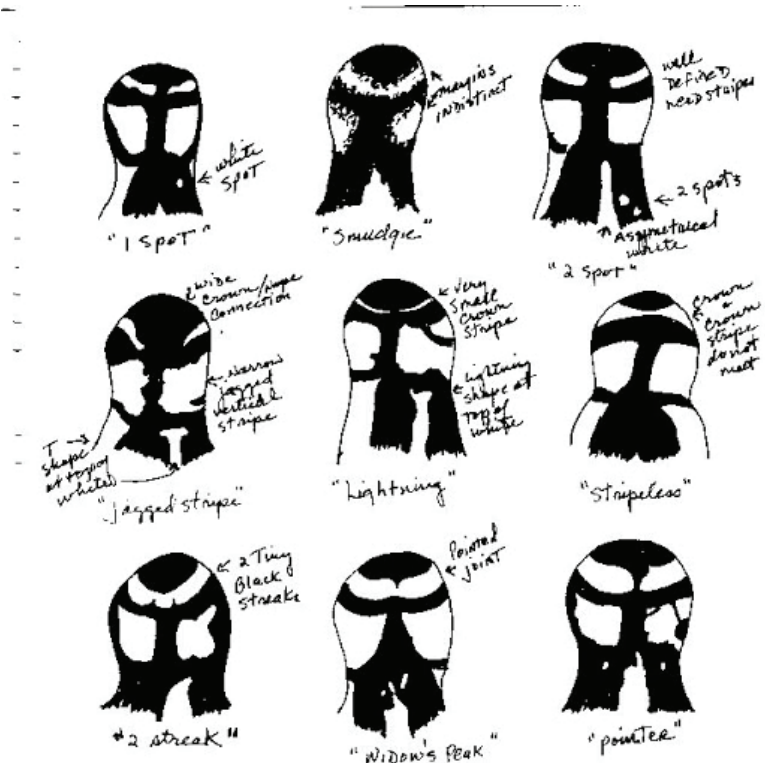
This might be a good family project. It involves real scientific research and will lead to a better understanding of the birds who share your yard.

Have you ever noticed the way Downy Woodpeckers visit your birdfeeder? One comes for a seed and you may notice another, or rarely two others, waiting on nearby branches. If I am doing a count for a Citizen Science Project like Project Feeder Watch, the most I can claim as daily visitors would be two or perhaps three individuals, as the Cornell Lab of Ornithology allows me to count only those birds I can see at one time. Yet, the frequency of their visits caused me to believe that more than three Downy Woodpeckers were regular visitors to the feeder.

In the Wild Bird Guides monograph on the Downy Woodpecker, [Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, PA, 1999] Gary Ritchison states that each downy has an individualized plumage pattern on the nape of the neck, much like a fingerprint. I read this and decided to experiment. Setting up a suet feeder close to a window and moving over a comfortable chair, I spent several hours over the next two weeks photographing downy woodpecker neck nape patterns.

Each night I analyzed the photos, making drawings of the different neck patterns, emphasizing the differences. I gave them nicknames to help me recognize that pattern the next time its owner visited the suet feeder, such as One Spot, Smudge, Two Spot, Lightning and Widow's Peak.

After the two weeks were done, I had identified nine females and six males as regular visitors. Fifteen in all, five times as many as are readily visible at one time.



You likely have many more Downies than you think!

Kathy Van Der Aue is a COA Board member. She lives in Southport, and is a volunteer bird bander for the Connecticut Audubon Society's Birdcraft Museum and Sanctuary in Fairfield.

## 5,000 BIRD TRIPS AND COUNTING: PAUL DESJARDINS CELEBRATES HIS 5,000<sup>TH</sup> TRIP RECORD

BY SARA ZAGORSKI

Paul Desjardins of Windsor Locks recently announced to the Connecticut birding community that he had reached a milestone when he reported his bird sightings from Broad Brook Mill Pond in East Windsor on November 6, 2012: it was his 5,000<sup>th</sup> recorded bird trip. An impressive statistic, but how did he know that he had reached that lofty number? I recently had a conversation with him about his birding life.

It all started 56 years ago when Paul was ten years old. He grew up in West Hartford and attended Webster Hill School. There was an Audubon Club in the school and the teacher would pass around pictures of Roger Tory Peterson's bird paintings. Paul particularly remembers the picture of the Northern Cardinal, which to a Connecticut boy was rather exotic. This interest in birds was continued when he was twelve years old and joined what was then called the Hartford Bird Study Club, now Hartford Audubon Society. A field trip to the coast on February 21, 1959 was his first recorded bird trip, and he has kept count of them ever since.

What constitutes a bird trip? A bird trip for Paul is any day that he goes birding. He records all the birds that he sees that day at all the locations he visits, and it is all one birding trip. A favorite birding day was one when he birded in two states, Connecticut and Arizona. He uses a printed checklist in the field to record numbers of birds that he sees, and then transfers the information to notebooks which he keeps bound by year. He also keeps separate note cards on each species so that he can keep track of arrival and departure dates. Many birders have encouraged Paul to record his information in eBird, but so far he prefers to stay with his original notations.

Paul first learned to bird using just his eyes, as he did not get binoculars until he was twelve years old. He was walking to his junior high school on May 19, 1961 with-

out his binoculars and heard a woodpecker tapping away at a tree. Something about the sound of it made him leave his usual route and go locate that woodpecker. It turned out to be a Black-backed Woodpecker, the second one seen in the state that month. It was so tame that he could walk right up to it and stare intently as it kept pecking away. Another time his eye training was useful was when he was in basic training in the Air Force in San Antonio, TX. While doing marching drills he noticed a Western Meadowlark in the field, a life bird. He wasn't allowed to move his head but he followed the bird with his eyes as it moved around the area.

While Paul birds all over Connecticut and also Massachusetts and Rhode Island, his favorite spot to bird is Station 43 in South Windsor. He likes it for the variety of habitat that can be found in a small area that doesn't require a great deal of hiking. As he notes, there are not too many spots where you can see rails and Marsh wrens and Bobolinks within the same vicinity, and he has seen half of his state bird list there. In 1980 he saw a Sandhill Crane there, which was a very rare sighting at the time. On March 3, 1985 he discovered both a Eurasian Wigeon and a Yellow-headed Blackbird on the same trip. He would see Loggerhead Shrikes all the time and wish for a Northern Shrike to appear.



Paul Desjardins at Station 43

There have been changes that Paul has noticed over the years. His favorite birding spot was Camp Courant Woods in the Elmwood section of West Hartford, which was demolished to make way for I-84. He had his life birds of Connecticut Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Philadelphia Vireo there. Paul never thought he would see Raven, Black Vulture, or Mississippi Kite in the state. He remembers when the first Northern Mockingbird was recorded on a CBC back in the early 1960's, and welcomed reports of nesting Cerulean Warblers in 1973.

Continued on Page 7 →

## AUTUMNAL RARITIES 2012

This year's fall weather brought us "Super Storm Sandy" at the end of October, followed by a roller-coaster variety of warm and cold days and nights, erratic wind patterns, and little precipitation following the storm.

Could those conditions have helped to bring us some of these visitors?



A parade of Crossbills, both Red and White-winged, enjoyed the pine cones along the coast line for several weeks. This White-winged crossbill was photographed by Bill Asteriades at Hammonasset Beach SP on November 10.



Cave swallows, once a true rarity in the state, have become almost expected by birders in November. This year there seemed to be even greater numbers than previously noted. This handsome line was photographed by Julian Hough at Lighthouse Point Park.



This Black-headed gull at Hammonasset Beach SP, first reported by Russ Smiley on November 10, was present until at least November 18. It proved elusive at times, and quite tame at others.

Photo by Paul Fusco



This Ash-throated flycatcher was discovered and identified by Greg Hanisek at the Lighthouse Point Hawk Watch on November 12. It only stayed for that one day, but numerous birders were able to get to New Haven to see it.

Photo by Frank Gallo



A Cattle egret in Avon seemed to be another one-day wonder, reported and photographed by Steve Grant on November 5.

## TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO IN *THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER*

COMPILED BY STEPHEN P. BROKER

*THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER, VOLUME VII, NUMBER 4 (FALL 1987)*

### Three Fulvous Whistling Ducks in North Stonington, by Robert C. Dewire

“On Saturday, May 16, 1987, Nancy Weismuller, a teacher at the North Stonington Elementary School, took a number of her students to Assekonk Swamp, a State of Connecticut game management area of several hundred acres bordering the school property. At approximately 8 A.M., they came upon 3 ducks standing on a rock about 150 yards off shore. Using the Peterson Field Guide, they identified the birds as Fulvous Whistling Ducks (*Dendrocygna bicolor*) despite the range indication. At approximately 9 A.M., Weismuller called The Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center to report the sighting. When I arrived at about 10:30 A.M., the ducks were still present and we watched them at leisure as they sat, swam and flew briefly. The birds were unmistakable. Later that day, I sent out the word both locally and to the Connecticut Rare Bird Alert. On Sunday, the birds were most cooperative for a large number of people and good photographs for verification were taken. The birds were present through the week, however they began to move deeper into the extensive swampland and became more difficult to observe. They were last seen on Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>. I canoed into much of the area but was unable to locate them after that date.” [Note: this is the only record of Fulvous Whistling-Duck in Connecticut.]

### Another Barn Owl Banding, by Carl J. Trichka and Milan G. Bull

“Mysterious and unique as owls are, it is no wonder that the sight of one evokes special and lingering memories. Although eight species of owls can be seen in Connecticut, one has to search long and far for the Common Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*). As a breeding species in this state, its range is very restricted and its numbers are few. There are probably less than a handful of known nesting sites in Connecticut.

“In mid-July of 1987, Milan Bull, Director of Field Studies and Ornithology for the Connecticut Audubon Society, received a phone call from the Connecticut Department of Transportation-Bridge Inspection Division in Milford. DOT supervisor Don LaFrancois reported a nest of Barn Owls located under a bridge on I-95 over the Indian River. His description sufficed to convince Bull that the birds were indeed Common Barn Owls.

“A date was arranged and we pulled onto the shoulder of the I-95 bridge along with the bridge crew, their cherry-picker, two television station crews and a local newspaper reporter. Dangling over the side of a Milford, CT bridge some fifty feet above the Indian River may seem foolhardy to some, but this was an opportunity to band a rare bird in Connecticut and the data would be of significant value.

“Miley and I entered the cherry-picker with the idea that we could reach the owlets, place them into a large bucket and bring them topside to band them, thus allowing the media to record the entire event. There were three owlets on the ledge but we were able to capture only two. The third appeared much larger and older and scampered out of reach along the ledge. We returned topside and affixed the two owlets with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service bands 1377-00252 and 53 and returned them to the nest site.”

[Editorial Note: I have the lingering memory from 1995 of discovering a family of Barn Owls nesting in a hollow I-beam in the upper reaches of the incinerator building at the New Haven Landfill at I-91 Exit 8. I devoted several weeks to climbing up girders to the I-beam and recording data on the nesting Barn Owls. Then in early June, George Zepko, Fred Sibley, and I visited the site to band the nestlings. We set up a tall ladder, and George climbed 25' up to the 4" diameter hole in the I-beam. George had to stretch his arm deep into the hollow beam, grab a nestling, and pull it out for banding. This process was repeated until four nestlings were located and banded. Seventeen years later, the landfill is capped, and the incinerator building has been declared a toxic waste site. SPB]

## 5000 BIRD TRIPS, CONTINUED

Birding is three things for Paul: a hobby, a science, and a sport (Big Day, Big Year, Big January). His Connecticut state list is at 364 plus one heard bird, Black Rail. His ABA list is at 715. He holds the second state record for Smith's Longspur, seen at Hammonasset State Park in Madison on May 2, 1992. Does he have any nemesis birds? Mountain Quail in California; Franklin's Gull and Brown Pelican in Connecticut. His biggest total of species seen on a birding trip in Connecticut was 138 in May.

"No birding trips are exactly alike, which is interesting" said Paul. "Things are different each day. It never gets boring. I appreciate the birds; I don't care how many times I have seen them. One day I was stopped at a red light by Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven and had a Sandhill Crane fly by. Expect the unexpected!"

Congratulations to Paul Desjardins on his 5,000 bird trips achievement.

*Sara Zagorski is a member of the COA Board of Directors, and also of the Hartford Audubon Society Board of Directors. She lives in Wethersfield.*

### SAVE THE DATE: COA GULL WORKSHOP

Thursday, February 21, 2013 at the Windsor-Bloomfield Landfill, 10:00am  
Snow/rain date is February 22

Leaders: Patrick Comins and Mark Szantyr

See the [COA Events Calendar](#) and the next [COA Bulletin](#) for full details, coming soon

#### SAVE THE DATE

The **2013** COA  
**Annual Meeting**

is Saturday,  
**March 23** at  
Middlesex Community  
College, Middletown.

Featuring:

Marshall Iliff, eBird  
The Birdchick (Sharon  
Stiteler)  
Steve Kress, Project Puffin

Watch for details in the next  
*COA Bulletin*,  
on the [COA Website](#),  
and in your membership  
renewal letter, coming soon.

#### COA Mini-Grants Available! Application Deadline is January 15, 2013

COA is soliciting grant applications for projects that will support initiatives within the State of Connecticut which specifically benefit the avian wildlife of our state. It has always been part of COA's mission to reach out to all those in Connecticut who appreciate our state's birds and to support bird management and conservation initiatives whenever possible.

Grants will be awarded in amounts up to \$1500.00. Applications are due on or before January 15, 2013. Project selection will be made by the COA Mini-grant subcommittee, and awards will be announced at the COA Annual Meeting on March 23, 2013.

Guidelines and an application are available on the  
[COA website](#) or at  
<http://groups.google.com/group/coa-minigrants>

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## COA OFFICERS

<i>President</i>	Ken Elkins, 43 Park Street, Shelton, CT 06484
<i>Vice President</i>	Tina Green
<i>Secretary</i>	Steve Broker, 50 Hidden Place, Cheshire, CT 06410, 203-272-5192
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<i>Assistant Treasurer</i>	Jack Wells, 103 Sheephill Road, Riverside, CT 06878

## COA CHAIRPERSONS

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<i>Finance</i>	Fred Schroeder
<i>Membership</i>	Larry Reiter
<i>Workshops</i>	Chris Loscalzo
<i>Annual Meeting</i>	Tina Green , Kathy Van Der Aue, Lisa Wahle
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<i>Rare Records</i>	Jay Kaplan
<i>Christmas Bird Count Compiler</i>	Steve Broker
<i>Summer Bird Count Compilers</i>	Joe Zeranski and Patrick Comins
<i>Great Backyard Bird Count</i>	Patrick Comins
<i>Hawk Watch Compiler</i>	Steve Mayo

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 January 5, 2013 to:

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