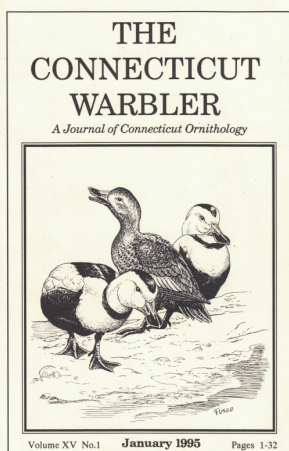


COA Bulletin



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COA is an all volunteer organization with the mission of promoting interest in Connecticut birds, and collecting, preparing, and disseminating the best available scientific information on the status of Connecticut birds and their habitats. While COA is not primarily an advocacy organization, we work actively to provide scientific information and to support other conservation organizations in the state.

Meet the COA Board !

Every other month, the COA Board of Directors gets together to discuss various initiatives, committee reports, and other business. Pictured (clockwise from lower left) are: Steve Broker, Terry Shaw, Kathy Van Der Aue, Patrick Comins, Tina Green, Chris Wood, Chris Loscalzo (President), Maureen Wolter, Nick Bonomo, Paul Wolter (Treasurer), Sharon Dellinger, Craig Repasz,



Larry Reiter, Denise Jernigan (Secretary), Tom Robben (Vice President), Cynthia Ehlinger, Angela Dimmitt, Chris Howe, and Jason Reiger. Not pictured: Miley Bull, Dave Provencher, Andrew Dasinger, Frank Gallo, and Doug Warner.

Inside the ARCC

Frank Mantlik

The Avian Records Committee of CT (ARCC) of the COA met at Yale Peabody on Sunday, Jan 26, 2020. With the help of chief curator Kristof Zyskowski, we examined "Black" Brant specimens to help adjudicate a recent record of one in CT. The meeting itself was very productive, with most recent submitted records being accepted unanimously. This included CT's first Brewer's Sparrow. The next ARCC report will be published in an upcoming issue of The Connecticut Warbler.

Members of the Committee are: Jay Kaplan (Chairman), Greg Hanisek (Secretary), Nick Bonomo, Frank Gallo, Tina Green, Julian Hough, Frank Mantlik, Dave Provencher, Phil Rusch, Dave Tripp, and Glenn Williams (absent)



The ARCC inspects museum skins at Yale



Brant specimens

COA Annual Meeting Featured Speakers

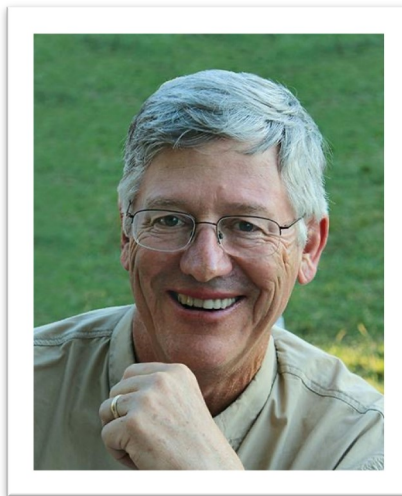


Margaret Rubega, Ph.D.

Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Connecticut.

Hummingbird Tongues

Professor Rubega is an expert in the functional ecology of feeding birds and the anatomy, biomechanics, and performance of wild birds. Hummingbirds drink nectar using tongues that can be stuck out about the same length as their beak and coil up inside their skulls and eyes when retracted. Dr. Rubega will discuss hummingbird tongues and explain how the structure of the hummingbird tongue traps liquid.



Dr. Rob Bierragaard

The Osprey

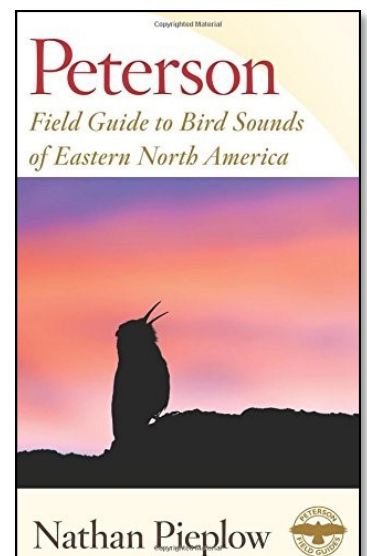
Dr. Bierragaard has been studying Ospreys in southern New England since 1971. Beginning in 1998 he restarted an intensive census of the population on Martha's Vineyard. In 2017 they completed the 20th survey of the island's Ospreys. The population at that time was over 90 pairs. Quite a jump from the 2 pairs that were on the Vineyard back in 1971. His telemetry work relies on satellite telemetry and cell-tower transmitters to track the movements near their nests and their migration to South America and back. Most of his work has been on Martha's Vineyard, but Dr Bierragaard has tagged Ospreys from South Carolina to Newfoundland.



Nathan Pieplow

The Language of Birds

All around us, all the time, the birds are telling us who they are and what they are doing. In this talk, Nathan Pieplow unlocks the secrets of their language. You'll listen in on the pillow talk of a pair of Red-winged Blackbirds, and learn the secret signals that Cliff Swallows use when they have found food. You'll learn how one bird sound can have many meanings, and how one meaning can have many sounds – and how, sometimes, the meaning isn't in the sounds at all. This talk from the author of the Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds is an accessible, entertaining introduction to a fascinating topic.



Connecticut Ornithological Association
36th Annual Meeting
 Saturday, March 21, 2020
 Chapman Hall, Middlesex Community College
 100 Training Hill Road, Middletown, CT

- 8:00-8:45 **Registration/COA Marketplace** – includes continental breakfast and Birds and Beans coffee, plus tea.
- 8:45-9:15 **Welcome/Business Meeting.** Chris Loscalzo, COA President, will present a brief overview of the year's activities, followed by election of officers and board members.
Chris Elphick will present a brief update on the CT Bird Atlas.
- 9:15-10:15 **Margaret Rubega – Hummingbird Tongues**
Hummingbirds can extend their tongues great distances – in some cases the length of their heads – to retrieve nectar. Dr. Rubega will explain how the structure of the hummingbird tongue traps liquid.
- 10:15-10:40 **Presentation of COA Awards.**
Zepko Audubon Camp Scholarship – awarded annually to a young birding enthusiast through a written application process.
COA Mini-grants Award – awarded annually to the applicant(s) whose project most benefits Connecticut birds.
President's Award – awarded at the president's discretion.
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.
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.
- 10:40-11:10 **Break – COA Marketplace** – time to socialize, purchase COA Raffle tickets, and check out vendors' offerings of bird-related items.
- 11:15-12:15 **Dr. Rob Bierragaard – Ospreys**
Dr. Beirragaard will discuss his in depth research on the ecology and migration of Ospreys in Eastern North America. He has deployed satellite or cell-tower transmitters on more than 100 juvenile and adult Ospreys from South Carolina and Newfoundland and spends most of his time watching his flock of Ospreys move back and forth between North and South America.
- 12:20-1:25 **Lunch** at Founders' Hall Cafeteria.
- 1:30-2:30 **Nathan Pieplow – The Language of Birds**
You will learn how one bird sound can have many meanings, and how one meaning can have many sounds – and how, sometimes, the meaning isn't in the sounds at all.
- 2:45-3:30 **COA Raffle** – 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 will be 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 21, 2020 , Middlesex Community College
Chapman Hall, Middletown, CT

PLEASE NOTE: This year your registration fee includes breakfast:
 muffins, scones, & bagels, Birds & Beans coffee, tea and juice,

and a light lunch:
 assorted wrap sandwiches, tossed and pasta salads, (includes vegetarian and
 gluten-free options), cookies, cake, water and iced tea.

Registrations must be **postmarked** by **Tuesday, March 10, 2020**
 for lunch to be included.

The registration fee for “walk-ins” will be the same as below
but will NOT include lunch.

Send your form in now to be sure of a seat (and lunch) this year

COA Members: _____ Persons @ \$37.00 \$_____

Non-Members: _____ Persons @ \$47.00 \$_____

Students: _____ Persons @ \$27.00 \$_____

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” and form to:

Connecticut Ornithological Association

314 Unquowa Road, Fairfield, CT 06824

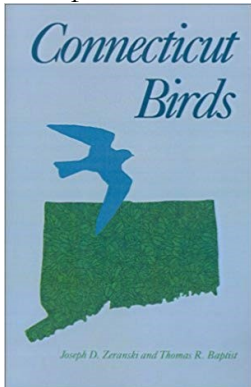
In Memory of Joe Zeranski

Joseph D. Zeranski, an important figure in Connecticut ornithology for the past 50 years, died in Greenwich on December 8, 2019. He was 78 years old. Joe began birding in the 1960s in Greenwich and was strongly influenced by William Bolton Cook and Ces Spofford, two long-time birders and friends of Roger Tory Peterson.

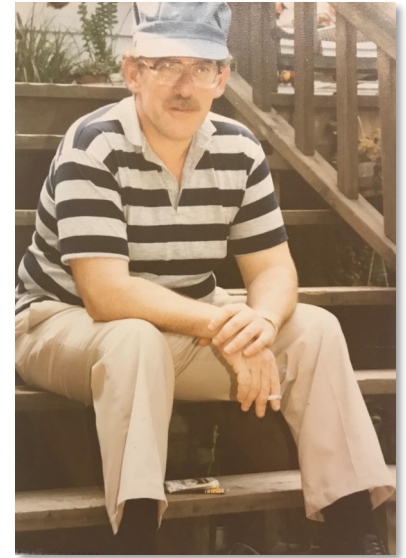
Joe was a founding director of the Connecticut Ornithological Association, and he served on its Board for many years. Joe's dedication to the COA was in part due to his desire to establish and grow a statewide birding organization to contribute to the body of knowledge of birds. For his many efforts, Joe received the COA Mabel Osgood Wright Award in 2010.

He co-compiled the Greenwich-Stamford Christmas Bird Count from 1972 to 1983. He was a board member of Greenwich Audubon Society for many years, and several of its programs and activities, including establishing the Quaker Ridge Hawk Watch at the Audubon Center in Greenwich, were among Joe's initiatives. Quaker Ridge has become one of the premier hawk watch sites in southern New England.

Joe co-authored *Connecticut Birds*, published in 1990 by the University Press of New England, the first compendium of Connecticut bird populations, distribution and trends, since 1913. Joe served on the Greenwich Conservation Commission from 1978 to 1996 and played a leadership role in shaping the conservation movement in Greenwich, including advocating conservation zoning and publishing numerous natural resource and historical booklets and papers. Joe travelled with his birding friends throughout the country and his trips to Texas, Arizona, California, Washington and Oregon were among his favorites. He was a serious lister and he enjoyed the competition among his friends. Joe was a constant source of ideas and suggestions, and he influenced and counseled conservation leaders throughout Connecticut. He will be missed.



- *Tom Baptist*



Reflections about an Old Friend: Remembering Neil Currie

While searching for saw-whet owls the other day I reflected on Neil's passing and thought how this would have been a tough spot for him to access in his later years. I first met Neil in 1976 when he gave a talk about hawk migration at the Naugatuck Valley Audubon's monthly meeting. We didn't become friends, however, until after the inception of the Western Connecticut Bird Club in 1978. Neil and I had some common interest: the NY Mets and raptors; although he was primarily a hawk guy and I was studying owls. We always had a lot of laughs and fun whenever we got together.

Throughout the years I've been on numerous field trips and several noteworthy rarity excursions with Neil. Three such trips are notable: In August 1983, we made a one-day trip to Nantucket Island to see the Western Reef Heron--that was a long, but successful, day's outing; a weekend jaunt in February 1992, to Ocean City, MD, with

Remembering Neil Currie (continued from previous page)

Ed Hagen and Jeff Kirk, was memorable in more ways than one, as we took a pelagic trip 70 miles offshore to look for Great Skua---a fleeting glimpse of a distant bird was our only view; however, the third trip to Kingston, ON and Amherst Island in February 1988 was the most interesting and fun.

In the winter of 1987-88, there was an irruption of northern owls into southern Canada and Amherst Island became one such hot spot. One night Neil called and wanted Bill Root and me to go with him looking for a Boreal Owl that was reported there. At that time, Bill and I had both been chasing owls for a decade or more. On Feb. 28, we ventured out on a very long, two-day excursion to Kingston. We left well before dawn and drove all day arriving in the Kingston area by mid-afternoon. After birding for a few hours we located a cheap hotel room with two beds. As Neil was the elderly statesman, Bill and I let him have one bed and we split the second bed into a mattress--that Bill put on the floor and the box spring which I slept on that night. We all had a "wonderful" rest that night and the next morning were ready to go. After breakfast, we took the early ferry to the small island and began our search. Driving around we eventually spotted a Snowy Owl, several Rough-legged Hawks, and then the Hawk Owl--that was on Neil's hit list. Later while walking toward a mixed coniferous woodland we accidentally flushed a large group of about 20 short-ears roosting in or amongst spruce saplings, and shortly thereafter found a long-eared in a cedar. It took several long, cold, hours before I finally located the Boreal well hidden in a white cedar.



Neil was ecstatic as were Bill and I. Ironically, according to my notes, we didn't encounter any saw-whets that day.

For many years following our journey to Canada, Neil would call in early winter to ask me if I found any saw-whets yet---as he was always trying to beef-up his year list. I would always share what information I had and/or show him the owl(s). In 1992, I beat him to the punch and called him one January afternoon and said: "hey Neil, we don't have to go to ON this year! " In later years, as his mobility became more restricted due to several hip and knee replacements, Neil no longer called in winter to inquire about owls. Still, on days I go searching and occasionally find a bird, I frequently think back to Neil and assess if he could make it to this spot.

Now that Neil has passed on to a higher place, I'm sure he will find a fine vantage point to scan for hawks and maybe a Boreal! RIP Neil.

- *Buzz Devine*



Some 2019/2020 Notable Winter Birds



Brewer's Sparrow at Hammonasset Beach State Park (Jim Carr, 23 Nov 2019) (first state record!)



Le Conte's Sparrow at Savin Lake, Canterbury (Patrick Comins, 25 Nov 2019)



Western Tanager at Torrington yard (Chris Wood, 30 Nov 2019)



Ovenbird at 1 Science Rd., Norwalk (Ed McCabe, 2 Jan 2020)



Painted Bunting at New Canaan Country School (Frank Mantlik, 15 Feb 2020)



Thick-billed Murre at St. Mary's Cemetery, Stonington (Nick Bonomo, 25 Jan 2020)

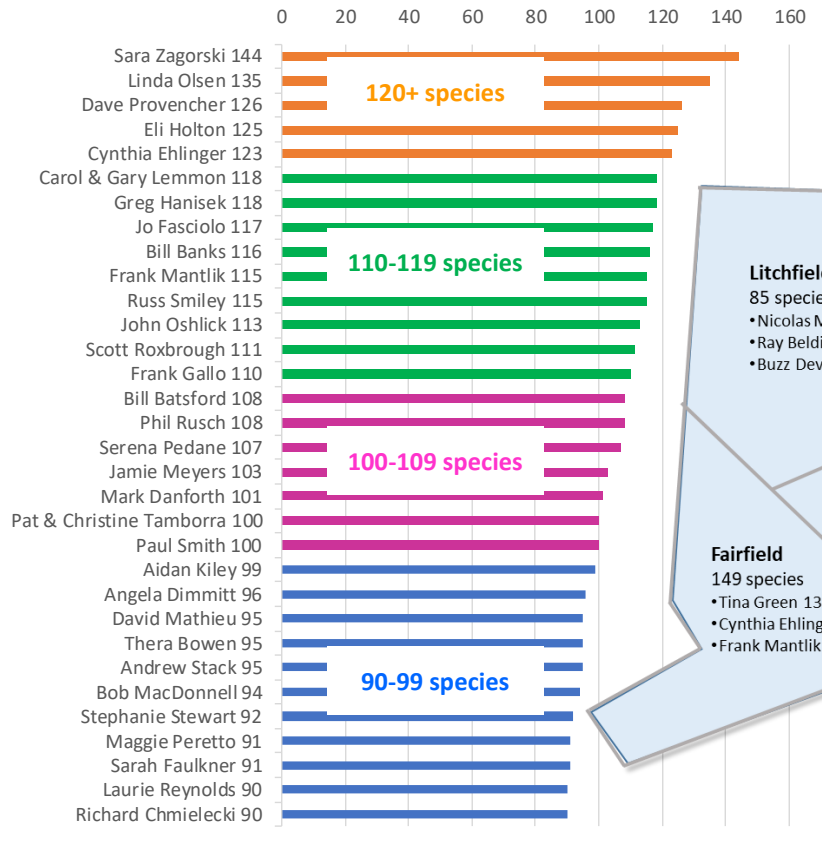
Connecticut Big January 2020

Results compiled by Dave Provencher

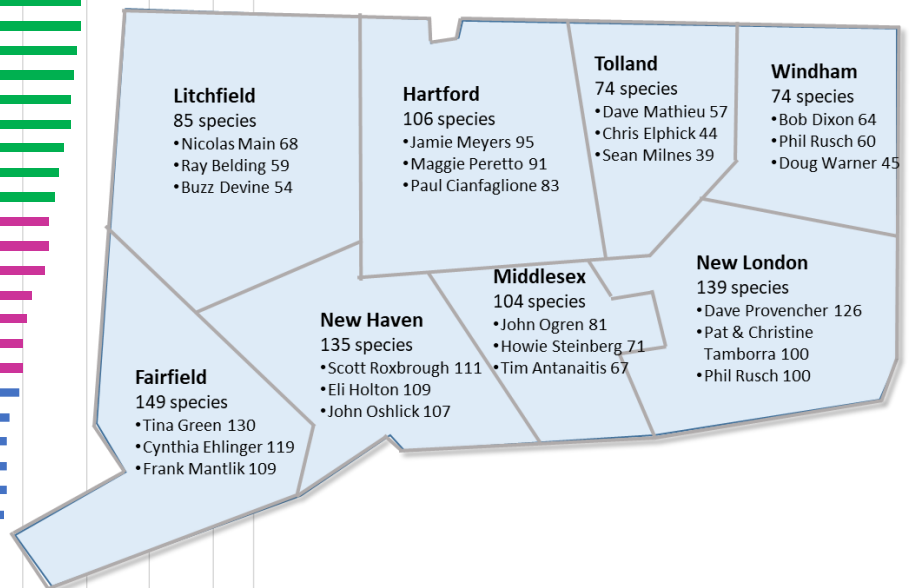
Shown in the bar chart below are the birders who identified 90 or more species in the state, according to eBird records, during January, 2020. A total of 165 species were reported during the month (3 species fewer than last year). Sara Zagorski topped the state-wide rankings, followed by Linda Olsen then Dave Provencher

Below are the results by county, showing the total number of species and the top three birders and their species totals for each county. Congratulations to all CT birders!

State-wide Results



County Results



COA Gull Workshop

Sunday, March 22, 2020, at 8:00 am, Stratford Point, Stratford



Join us as we look for and learn about the gulls of Connecticut.

Nick Bonomo will share his considerable knowledge about how to identify members of this extraordinarily challenging group of birds. We'll have a sit down session where we'll go over the finer points of gull ID and then look for gulls at several locations along the coast. We may visit sites such as Long Beach in Stratford, Seaside Park in Bridgeport, and Southport Beach, depending on where the gulls are congregating. This is a good time of year to find rarities, such as Black-headed, Little, and Mew Gulls. Meet at Audubon Connecticut's Habitat Management Area at 1207 Prospect Drive, Stratford. The workshop is free and open to COA members and non-members.

Leader: Nick Bonomo.

Contact person: Chris Loscalzo at: closcalz@optonline.net or 203 389-6508



Confusing Winter Warblers

With varying degrees of yellow, olive, and gray, subtle variations in tone, faint streaking (sometimes), and other weakly defined features, these 6 species of warblers photographed this winter can be challenging to identify!



Tennessee Warbler at William Wolfe Park, East Haven (Janet Holt, 5 Dec 2019)



Yellow Warbler at East Shore Park, East Haven (Nick Bonomo, 9 Nov 2019) (found here into Feb)



Orange-crowned Warbler at Pleasure Beach, Waterford (Bob MacDonnell, 20 Jan 2020)



Wilson's Warbler at Beaver Brook Preserve, Milford (Frank Mantlik, 29 Nov 2019)



Palm Warbler at Pitkin Street, East Hartford (Maggie Peretto, 21 Jan 2020)



Pine Warbler at Hammonasset Beach State Park (Howie Sternberg, 30 Jan 2020)

Twenty-Five Years Ago in *The Connecticut Warbler*

Compiled by Steve Broker

Volume XV, No. 1 (January 1995)

A Lost Heritage: Labrador Duck, by Louis R. Bevier

The entity we called the Labrador Duck was last known alive 120 autumns ago somewhere on the south shore of Long Island. We knew of them for a mere 87 years after the first description to science in *Systema Naturae* by Linnaeus. Their food and feeding habits are little known, and the [fictional narrative] above is based on accounts by Wilson and Audubon, who themselves knew the species from limited experience. Only 54 skins and some miscellaneous skeletal parts remain of the Labrador Duck. These were collected from southern “Labrador” (of broader reference then) to southern New Jersey.



Connecticut holds but a small claim to this species. In 1785, Thomas Pennant published the first illustration of the “Pied Duck” based on a specimen from Connecticut; a specimen said to have been sent to Mrs. Blackburn in England. Befitting the mystery of the Labrador Duck, this specimen is now lost along with any knowledge about the species’ haunts and habits in Connecticut. The only other reference to the species in the state is the Reverend Lindsey’s in 1843. The entry reads as follows: 255. F. Labrador, Bonaparte, Pied Duck, Stratford.” Surely there was more to them than that.

[Ed’s Note: Ornithologist William Dutcher published the article, “The Labrador Duck:-A Revised List of the Extant Specimens in North America, With Some Historical Notes”, in *The Auk*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (April 1891). He writes of the ornithological collection of the American Museum of Natural History, “This collection of Labrador Ducks is by far the finest in the world, not only in point of numbers but in the quality and condition of the specimens.” Most of these A.M.N.H. specimens were collected at Long Island, while one immature bird was purchased in Fulton Market, NY.]

Connecticut’s 1994 Fall Hawk Migration, by Neil Currie

Following a year that saw impressive numbers of eagles, ospreys, and Broad-winged Hawks, “None of the Above” might be an appropriate title for Connecticut’s 1994 fall hawk migration. . . During the fall, a rapid succession of cold fronts moved west to east through Connecticut. These weather fronts are almost always followed by northerly winds and a push of migrants, to delight hawk watchers. The large number of these fronts was one of fall’s surprises. Another was the clear, blue skies that followed the fronts. Usually, the day following such a front produces fair weather cumulus clouds, a good background for spotting high-flying hawks. Without the clouds, watchers felt that they may have missed many hawks.

[Ed’s Note: Neil Currie’s article includes a list of site locations and five tables presenting field data on the Fall 1994 Broad-winged Hawk Flights, the full results of all 19 lookout sites, monthly totals for 15 species of raptors at Lighthouse Point Park and East Shore Park, hawkwatches in New Haven and Quaker Ridge Hawkwatch in Greenwich, and 17 years of results at Lighthouse Point Park, 1978-1994. Neil also pays tribute to veteran hawkwatchers Elsbeth Johnson (Quaker Ridge) and Ed Shove (Lighthouse Point Park).]

Behavioral Differences Between Taxonomic Groups, by George A. Clark, Jr.

An appealing aspect of watching birds is looking for the differences in behavior of different taxonomic groups such as species, genera, or families. Behavior includes (1) movements, (2) postures when perched or

standing, (3) choice of sites for feeding, nesting, and other activities, and (4) vocalizations/sounds. Unless one watches and listens carefully, many behavioral differences between taxonomic groups may be easily missed. Indeed, little is known about many of the behavioral differences. Careful and patient observation in the field can potentially reveal previously unreported differences in behavior, even among common species in Connecticut. In some cases, awareness of behavioral differences may help to identify birds in the field. Handbooks and field guides summarize many of the known aspects of behavior for particular species, but often fail to point out differences. In this article I provide examples of taxonomic differences in behavior and indicate possible directions for future discoveries. Because behavior as a whole is quite complex for even a single species, this brief account can do no more than summarize selected cases (based upon my personal observations).

[Ed's Note: George Clark discusses food handling, foraging in litter, hanging by the feet, bill cleaning, head scratching, dust bathing, folding of wings, tail motions and bobbing, and mechanical sounds, and he gives informative species comparisons. "As the above examples indicate, field inventories of the behaviors of Connecticut birds are still far from complete. The opportunities for new discoveries are great."]

Book Review, SHADOWBIRDS - A Quest for Rails. 1994. William Burt. Published by Lyons & Burford, New York, NY. 192 pages, by Frank W. Mantlik

SHADOWBIRDS is a vivid and compelling story about one man's search for the rare and fleeting beauty he finds in rails. It is also about lonesome, lovely places on strange summer nights, unexpected discoveries, and the magic of chasing a dream that flickers just beyond reach. The book is visually beautiful, with a pleasing layout, large readable type, and the generous use of illustrative photographs. An eight page block of stunning and rare photographs of rails is complemented with 17 black-and-white images interspersed throughout the text.

[Ed's Note: Bill Burt writes, "Rails are curious characters. Unbirdlike, they are fleet on foot and clumsy in the air; they keep to the thick of marshes, where they live their lives unseen. Chicken-like - 'mud-hens,' or 'marsh hens,' they are called colloquially - they are awkward, undeveloped-looking creatures that nonetheless are the very wiliest of birds. Rails are prowlers in places of mud and shadow, slinkers in the reeds and grass, jittery nondescripts that shrink from view and slip silently away."]



Black Rail on nest. Photo by Bill Burt, reprinted with permission

[See also articles on Coasting Gulls Offshore, by Roland C. Clement; Connecticut Field Notes: June 1-July 31, 1994, by Jay Kaplan, and; Answer to Photo Challenge 11, by Louis R. Bevier. Cover art of Labrador Duck is by Paul J. Fusco. The January 1995 issue of *The Connecticut Warbler* can be seen in its entirety at the following link to the COA website. Download Volume 15, and view pages 1-32.

<http://www.ctbirding.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/CTWarblerVolume15.pdf>

CONNECTICUT ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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The Connecticut Warbler	Greg Hanisek
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Christmas Bird Count Compiler	Steve Broker
Summer Bird Count Compilers	Joe Zeranski, Tom Robben
Great Backyard Bird Count	Patrick Comins
Mini-Grants	Kathy Van Der Aue

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, 2020 to:
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amdasinger@gmail.com