



# COA Bulletin

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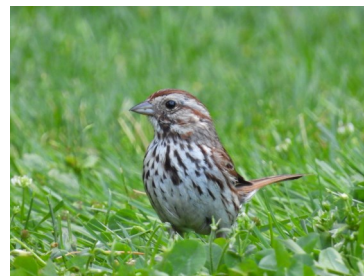
## Connecticut Ornithological Association

### Sparrows in Connecticut Where to Go and What to See

Aidan Kiley

The New World Sparrows are a group that gets much less attention than some of the “popular” groups, such as the New World Warblers. This might be because some sparrows are difficult to identify or don’t have the prettiest colors. However, I believe sparrows should get much more attention than they do. There is so much fascinating variation across the group — few non-birders would guess that a junco or towhee is a sparrow! Sparrows also provide a great opportunity to sharpen our visual and audio identification skills. Plus, there are numerous rare species to look out for that can produce quite a bit of excitement!

For this article, I am dividing Connecticut’s sparrows into three groups: common, uncommon, and rare. The sparrows I would consider common are Song, Savannah, Chipping, Field, White-throated, Fox, American Tree, Dark-eyed Junco, Eastern Towhee, Saltmarsh, and Seaside. Two of our most common sparrows, Song and Savannah, can be a bit tricky in terms of identification, as the overall color, shape, and size are similar. Song Sparrows are small brown birds with fairly thick streaking below that often comes to a central point. Their shape is relatively chunky. Savannah Sparrow on the other hand has finer streaking below, shorter tails, smaller bills, and often shows yellow in the lores, although that can be difficult to see or not present.



Song Sparrow,  
Tolland County  
Jeff Fengler , 8 June 2024

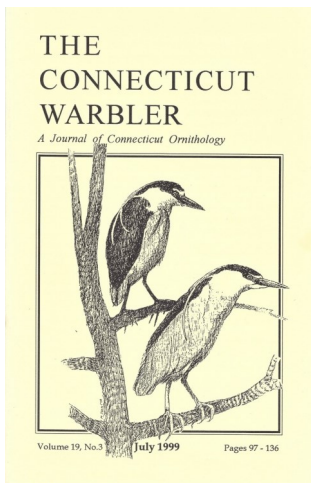


Savannah Sparrow,  
Hartford County  
Jeff Fengler , 2 June 2024

The *spizella* sparrows are much different in shape from Song and Savannah. They are smaller birds that are more attenuated and longer tailed. Our most common *spizella* sparrows, Chipping and Field, can be told apart by facial pattern and bill color. The rest of the common sparrows are pretty straightforward in terms of identification.

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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.

I would consider White-crowned, Vesper, Grasshopper, Nelson's, and Lincoln's to be our uncommon sparrows. White-crowned is quite noteworthy because it can be readily found in the spring, unlike many of our other migrant sparrows. Vesper occasionally shows in the spring or winter but is much



**White-crowned Sparrow,**  
New Haven County  
Donna Lorello, 29 April 2024



**Vesper Sparrow,**  
Fairfield County  
Justin Hamlin, 19 April 2024



**Grasshopper Sparrow,**  
Hartford County  
Barry Marsh, 1 July 2024



**Nelson's Sparrow,**  
Fairfield County  
Joe Pescatore, 9 Nov 2022



**Saltmarsh Sparrow,**  
New Haven County  
Barry Marsh, 2 Aug 2024



**Seaside Sparrow,**  
New Haven County  
Justin Hamlin, 3 Nov 2024



**Lincoln's Sparrow,**  
New London County  
Jo Fasciolo, 20 Feb 2024



**Swamp Sparrow,**  
Fairfield County  
Jo Fasciolo, 19 March 2024



**Clay-colored Sparrow,**  
New Haven County  
Anthony Woodall, 17 Oct 2023

easier in the fall. Grasshopper is an easy bird to find on their breeding grounds, which are unfortunately quite restricted in CT. They are very difficult to find as migrants. Nelson's is a fall bird that is difficult to separate from Saltmarsh. Overall, Nelson's averages as smaller billed, with blurry gray streaking rather than crisp and dark, and more orange on the breast. However, the Interior subspecies group of Nelson's which is annual in CT in small numbers have streaking more like Saltmarsh. Additionally, Saltmarsh and Nelson's hybridize in Maine! Lincoln's is a nice-looking sparrow that is always a pleasure to come across. They are far from common, but if you get a nice sparrow flock in October, there's certainly a chance

there's one there! Juvenile Song and Swamp Sparrows are often confused with Lincoln's, but that issue can easily be solved by determining the bird's age. Lincoln's does not breed in CT and loses its juvenile plumage shortly after leaving the breeding grounds. You will never see a juvenile Lincoln's Sparrow in CT, so a juvenile looking like one here isn't!

The rare sparrows which are not megas are Clay-colored, Gambel's White-crowned, and Lark. All of these are notable but annual. Clay-colored is annual in very small numbers. They are often located in flocks of Chipping and/or Field Sparrows but can be found with other species. White-crowned Sparrow has five subspecies. Our eastern subspecies is *leucophrys*, but one of the western subspecies, *gambelii*, occurs regularly in the eastern US. Compared to *leucophrys*, the bill is carrot orange, sometimes with yellow tones, rather than the pink bill of *leucophrys*. The loreal area is clean in both adults and immatures, lacking the dark lores of *leucophrys*. This identification is far from easy though, and a claim of a good Gambel's must be well-supported. I find it interesting that Gambel's tends to show up later after the peak of White-crowned migration here.

On December 10th, 2022, I was lucky enough to find a Clay-colored Sparrow and a Gambel's White-crowned sitting in the same bush at the warehouse pond in Stratford. Both birds stuck around into April!

Lark Sparrow is another rare but pretty annual sparrow in the state. They are easy to identify based on the bold facial pattern, which is stronger on adults. On August 21st, 2023, Kate Wong found an immature at Hoyden's in Fairfield.

Let's move on to review list sparrows. Spotted Towhee has not been seen in CT since our first record in 2006. Green-tailed Towhee has three records, most recently a fantastic find by James Purcell at Veterans Park in Fairfield. LeConte's Sparrow has had a sharp increase in records over the last few years, although still very rare. Jo and Adam Fasciolo found one in January of this year at Sherwood Island State Park. Harris' Sparrow is a rare but distinctive species. There are recent records from Allen's Meadows and Hammonasset. A fun fact about this species is that it breeds entirely in Canada!

There is one CT record of Brewer's Sparrow, from Hammonasset found on November 23rd, 2019. It was misidentified by multiple birders as a part of a bird walk as well as individually as a Clay-colored. While in Ohio, Jory Teltser reviewed the photos of the reported Clay and immediately noted that they seemed very good for Brewer's Sparrow! Thanks to him, we have a record of this extraordinarily rare species in the east.

Golden-crowned, another *zonotrichia* like White-throated and White-crowned, has two CT records from the 90s. There are multiple recent records in New York, so I would not let the lack of records discourage anyone from scanning White-throat and junco flocks in late fall or winter! Fortunately, this bird is distinctive and should be immediately identified if seen well.

Henslow's Sparrow is an interesting case. Many years ago, it was a common breeding species in New England, including CT. But as its habitat steadily declined, it has become extirpated as a breeder. Notably, there are two recent summer records just outside of New England on Staten Island, but it is unknown if they were attempted breeders or just wandering individuals. This bird's current breeding range is not that far away from CT, so it seems unusual that there are so few recent New England records. New York City, a rarity haven, has had multiple records in the past few years, so it's certainly a good possibility to find here. I think we're very overdue with the last record being from Greenwich just over 20 years ago, according to eBird.



**Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow,**  
Fairfield County  
Craig Heberton, 24 Mar 2023



**Lark Sparrow,**  
Fairfield County  
Jo Fasciolo, 27 Oct 2023



**LeConte's Sparrow,**  
Fairfield County  
Jo Fasciolo, 13 Jan 2024



**Brewer's Sparrow,**  
New Haven County  
Bob MacDonnell, 25 Nov 2023



**Green-tailed Towhee,**  
Fairfield County  
Craig Heberton, 17 Mar 2023



**White-throated Sparrow,**  
Fairfield County  
Frank Mantlik, 13 Mar 2023



**Chipping Sparrow,**  
Middlesex County  
Kristine Mika, 23 June 2024



**Dark-eyed Junco,**  
New London County  
Shori Velles, 24 Jan 2024

Four of the most famous sparrow spots in the state are Sherwood Island (Westport), Silver Sands (Milford), Allen's Meadows (Wilton), and Hammonasset SP (Madison). While these are seen as "the" spots, a rare sparrow could show up just about anywhere. Any backyard feeder, small park, or open meadow could hold something interesting. As I've suggested in a general sense many, many times, I would highly encourage people to check random spots that rarely or never get checked. I can guarantee that if we somehow found out what the percentage of rare sparrows that are found is, it would be extraordinarily low. If people stick to Silver Sands, Sherwood, Allen's, and Hammo, many rare sparrows will be missed. I would encourage people to explore new areas in their town, or re-check places that they rarely try. James Purcell's Green-tailed Towhee was a direct result of that strategy — his hard and carefully thought through plan to cover random spots in Fairfield really paid off. There are many ways to get started with this, but the easiest may be looking at a satellite map of your area.

Sparrows provide a great opportunity to sharpen your identification skills, not just by sight but also audio. Getting to know the flight or chip calls of some sparrows will greatly reduce the time you spend tracking down birds that are really not interesting. Song, White-throated, Dark-eyed Junco, and Chipping have distinctive calls that are easy to learn. Field Sparrow gives a high, descending call that's also good to have in the back of your mind. Doing Vesper, White-crowned, Clay-colored, and Lark by audio is much more difficult, but certainly worth trying to learn.

Additionally, something I've found useful is trying to visually identify sparrows in flight, whether to species if possible, or to narrow it down to a few possibilities. If you are at Silver Sands and flushing dozens of sparrows, it's very helpful to know what birds flushing away from you are clearly Song, White-throated, and Swamp. That way you will significantly reduce the times you put your bins on birds that are not what you're looking for. Shape in flight can help narrow the genus down. *Spizella* sparrows are narrow and very long tailed. Vesper Sparrows have white outer tail feathers, which can be useful for separating them from other brown sparrows. However, any sparrow can have a pigment issue, so that should be used with caution.

Overall, sparrows are an exciting bunch of birds in my opinion. With many different genera, we have a great variation in coloration, shape, size, and vocalization. Studying sparrows can sharpen all our identification skills and possibly lead to a very

nice rarity! Sparrows do not get the attention they deserve. I think that if birders study and look for them more diligently, they may become bigger fans! Hoping for a great sparrow fall this year. Find that Henslow's...



© Jeff Timmons / Macaulay Library  
Indiana, April 23, 2017

## Hog Island Zepko Award Gratitude!

Cristina Buccieri and Jo Fasciolo



It is essential that we involve our youth and engage them to become stewards of our environment. The COA is fortunate to be able to promote this through the Zepko Audubon Camp Scholarship for Teens. This year, Cristina Buccieri was the award recipient and her gratitude shines through in her thank you letter and pictures. Thank you, Cristina, for embracing the natural world and for your spirit of responsibility, gratitude and wonder! You are an inspiration to your peers and will no doubt grow up to make a difference in what ever you choose to do!

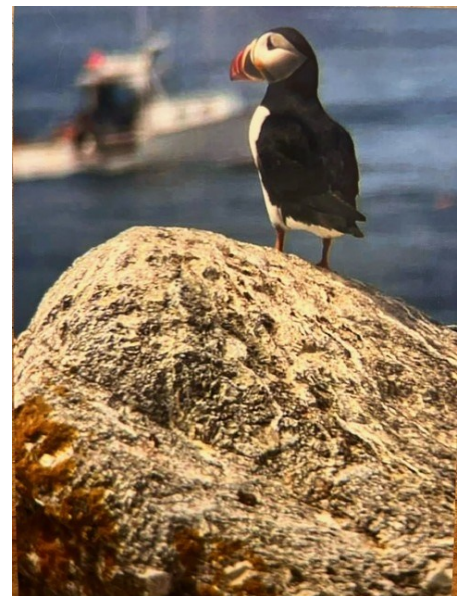
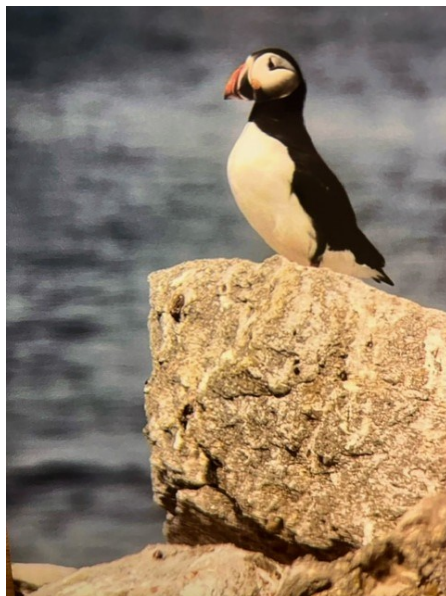
Cristina writes...

*Thank you so much for selecting me to attend the Hog Island Coastal Maine Studies Bird Camp. It was truly the most incredible place I have ever been. I had incredible instructors, amazing activities and so much more, from bird banding to traveling to "Eastern Egg Rock!"*

*I was completely amazed. The terns and puffins were astonishing. And I still can't believe I was so lucky. Over this trip, I made so many friends. I learned so much, and I witnessed gorgeous birds. It is so cool to see that one person can create such a difference, and that because of some people and hard work puffins were brought back to Eastern Egg. Thank you again so, so much.*

*Sincerely,*

*Cristina Buccieri*





## Thinking About Taking Up Bird Photography?

Abby Sesselberg

On social media, people often post some version of "I want to start taking photos of birds, what camera should I get?" It's a great question with no simple answer. A frequent response to the gear question is people telling them to get the same system they use. It's great if that system works for the person offering advice, but how can the gear question be answered effectively when the person offering up an opinion lacks information about the needs of the person looking for help?



Below are some things for both the person looking to get into photography and the folks who want to assist them to consider or ask:

1- Goals. Everything comes back to this. Are you looking to work your way towards professional level results, or do you want to post photos for your own enjoyment on social media or maybe to use as models for artwork? Are you looking to improve your birding ID skills and document your sightings? Or, some combination of the above?

2- Budget. No one likes to talk about money, but it is usually a determining factor in what someone is able to purchase. If someone wants to get into a professional level system or a system that can grow by way of adding additional lenses of higher quality but have a budget of \$450, that would be a real challenge. Some suggestions if the goal and budget don't meet in the middle: hold off and save up, go the used gear route, or reevaluate goals for that particular point in time. Someone brand new to photography may find it difficult to jump right into a complex high-end system, so a different, less expensive starter camera may actually be a good thing. You will see big fancy cameras out there that make you swoon, but there may actually be options that better fit your goals and budget.

3- Physical Capabilities. Cameras can get heavy and challenging to carry around, so how do you plan to use your camera? Some individuals may have restrictions on what they can comfortably lift and tote, so knowing if there are limits can guide the gear discussion. Will you be hiking and want something light, or are you able to carry anything out there? Will you be primarily shooting backyard birds and plan to use a tripod so size and weight are not issues? Will a big system work if you plan to travel?

4- Computer Skills. Are you willing and able to manage the photo editing process? Certain camera systems take up a lot of data on someone's hard drive, and the files may be a handful. Have you ever edited photos before? Is your computer up to the task? Are you comfortable trying? Phone cameras are awesome and have lots of editing options, but the experience is different from editing images from a dedicated camera.

5 - Goals. Again. Circle back to your goals. By going through the above list and learning more about prices of different cameras and systems along with what may be involved in physically using it, re-evaluate your goals and see where you land.

For folks looking to get a camera, a very strong suggestion is to handle the gear before buying. Years ago, having done my research, I headed off to the store determined to buy a certain camera. I was ready to make my purchase when I noticed an intriguing camera display. I picked up one of the display cameras and instantly knew it was a better fit for me. Actually handling a camera that interests you can answer a lot of questions.

If you're someone who wants to get into bird photography, think about your goals. YouTube offers countless videos with camera reviews, instructions on how to set-up your new camera for birds and wildlife, and tips for editing. Find some photographers whose work you enjoy and see what they have to say.

If you are someone looking to guide someone getting into photography, take time to learn about their needs and other factors that may play a role in determining the best set-up for them. Enter into the discussion with an open mind, and let their answers guide the discussion.

Whatever camera or system you as a new photographer may choose, be prepared for a steep learning curve. You will also want to familiarize yourself with photography field etiquette as photographing birds can create a different group dynamic than birding strictly with bins. With patience and the right gear in hand, hopefully you'll find bird photography a rewarding hobby that lets you explore, observe, and appreciate birds and the world around you in new ways.





## President's Message

### Communications Resources for Birders in Connecticut

The CT Birds listserv began as a tool to report rarities and notable birds some 20 years ago, using the email technology that was new at the time. It replaced a system where birders could report rarities (or call in to find out about them) using the telephone. Today, there are instant message technologies to get alerts out quickly and these have the added benefits of location and photo sharing.

Unfortunately, a proliferation of these new technologies led to some fragmentation and confusion in our Connecticut birding community and at the same time, reports of notable birds on CT Birds have declined as many of the listers and chasers have adopted the new instant message tools.

Recognizing this reality, and since birding is about more than chasing rarities, we would like CT Birds to become more than an additional alert resource. We hope that future posts on CT Birds will emphasize migration trends and patterns, discussion of birds and birding issues, notify birders of events and activities, raise questions and seek assistance, and generally serve as a birding community discussion forum for birders at all levels of expertise. We hope and expect that Connecticut's more experienced and active birders will continue to contribute discoveries, expertise, and assistance to the birding community via CT Birds.

Below are some birding communications resources available - each is listed with its primary purpose:

- **CT Birds** will be an open discussion group as described above. A new set of guidelines is being developed and will be released soon. The CT Birds listserv will continue to be moderated by Chuck Imbergamo under the new guidelines which will include the standard rules of civility and relevance. Sign up for CT Birds here: <https://www.ctbirding.org/birds-birding/ct-birds-email-list/>
- **CT RBA GroupMe** group is an instant message application for your smartphone. This tool is intended for reporting truly RARE birds for our state. Examples would be vagrant birds from other regions and birds considered rare on migration. There is a limited list of birds which should be reported using this tool. You can join the CT RBA group here: [https://groupme.com/join\\_group/83300607/1yz3Vwak](https://groupme.com/join_group/83300607/1yz3Vwak)
- **eBird**, from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, is widely considered to be the best place to record sightings of any and all birds, rare or not. We encourage all Connecticut birders to create eBird reports to contribute valuable data to the eBird database. eBird also provides hourly or daily alerts of rare birds in a given area, statewide or countywide, among many other useful features. You can sign up for eBird at <https://ebird.org/home> and then manage alerts for specific areas here: <https://ebird.org/alerts>



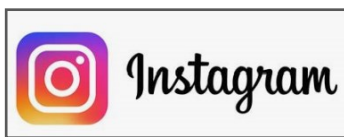
Among COA's organizational objectives are to:

- ✍ promote an interest in and an appreciation of birds
- ✍ disseminate accurate scientific information about birds and their habitats
- ✍ help facilitate understanding and cooperation between the ornithological community and the general public

We intend to further these objectives in part through the existing CT Birds listserv and we hope all Connecticut birders will participate, with thanks to those that do.

Christopher Wood, COA President

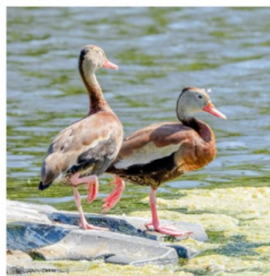
Chuck Imbergamo, CTBirds Moderator



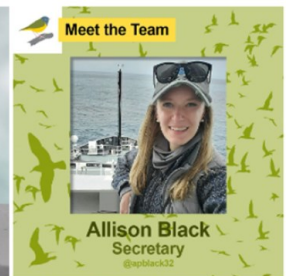
COA has become more social! Board Member Corey Leamy has taken the lead in developing our new [Instagram](#) account, @ct\_birds. Follow us to get

the latest news on upcoming workshops, COA-led and co-sponsored events, personalities, special birds, and more! Whether you're interested in learning who helps to run the COA, hear about the local events, or just to see photos of some beautiful birds, we would love for you to give us a follow - and shout us out to your friends!

We would also love to share some of your photos! Tag @ct\_birds in your images to be featured in our stories or shoot us a DM to be featured on our main feed.



Litchfield Hills Audubon Society invites you to join them for  
**An Introduction to Shorebirding in Connecticut**  
 presented by Nick Bonomo  
 July 1 @ 6:45pm  
 Litchfield Community Center  
 411 Eastern Road  
 Litchfield, CT



## Summer Rarities



**Great Shearwater,**  
New London Ferry to Orient Point, CT side,  
Jo Fasciolo, 24 July 2024



**Cory's Shearwater,**  
New London Ferry to Orient Point, CT side,  
Russ Smiley, 24 July 2024



**Black-bellied Whistling Duck,**  
West Haven,  
Barry Marsh , 11 July 2024



**Yellow-throated Warbler,**  
Bent of the River Sanctuary, Southbury  
Jo Fasciolo, 18 June 2024



**Black-necked Stilt**  
Hammonasset Beach SP, Madison,  
Jeff Fengler, 7 June 2024



**Franklin's Gull (one of 3 seen),**  
Short Beach Park, Stratford,  
Frank Mantlik, 6 June 2024

## Summer Rarities, Continued



**Black Tern**  
Hammonasset Beach SP, Madison,  
Jean Adamus, 28 May 2024



**Gull-billed Tern**  
Silver Sands State Park, Milford,  
John Oshlick, 21 May 2024



**American White Pelican**  
Stewart B. McKinney NWR, Stratford,  
Ed Bailey, 17 May 2024



**Wood Stork**,  
Danbury, CT  
John Sarles, 28 Aug 2024



**White Ibis**  
Hammonasset Beach SP, Madison  
Jo Fasciolo, 24 Aug 2024

## Harder to ID Rarity



**Long-billed Dowitcher**  
Glastonbury Meadows  
(restricted access), Hartford,  
Bill Asteriades, 18 July 2024

## **Twenty-Five Years Ago in *The Connecticut Warbler*** **Compiled by Steve Broker**

Volume 19, No. 3 (July 1999)

**Site Guide: Crook Horn Road, Southbury (Strawberry Patch Road), by Arnold Devine and Dwight G. Smith**

The crop fields, brush, and river edge habitat of this privately owned farm located near the Southbury-Woodbury town line has proven a consistently excellent site for fall migrants, especially sparrows. Other times of year are less productive, although a quick trip through the varied farm and field habitats can be rewarding for the more common species.

Locally known as the "Strawberry Patch," Crook Horn Road is situated along the floodplain of the Pomperaug River and is adjacent to the Heritage Village Golf Course. . . Birding can be rewarding during migration periods and frequently excellent from late September into November when a variety of flycatchers, swallows, thrushes, vireos, warblers, and sparrows can be found. The fields and edge thickets are especially prime habitats for sparrows which, at times, can occur in impressive numbers. Noteworthy species observed here include Western Kingbird, Connecticut Warbler, Blue Grosbeak, Lark Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Le Conte's Sparrow, and Dickcissel. Notable among the rarities found at this site was a Golden-crowned Sparrow discovered in October 1998.

[Editor's Notes: This article by Buzz Devine and Dwight Smith includes directions and a map of the area. Cornell's eBird site shows two hotspots here with nearly identical pin placements: (1) Crookhorn Road-Southbury, with a small number of species reported by a few birders; (2) Settlers Park, New Haven (County), with 162 species reported on 322 checklists. These two hotspots should be merged into one.

Golden-crowned Sparrow is one of the most rare sparrow species occurring in Connecticut. The Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (ARCC) recognizes only two records for this species. According to ARCC, Connecticut's first record for Golden-crowned Sparrow is from the Oxford Christmas Bird Count held on 15 December 1991 (Fifth ARCC Report, 1993; see also American Birds, Ninety-Second Christmas Bird Count - 1991, "excellent details-ED"). The Golden-crowned Sparrow was found and identified by Mark Szantyr and reported to Oxford CBC Compiler Buzz Devine. The second record of Golden-crowned Sparrow is from 24-25 October 1998 when "an immature was seen at Crook Horn Road in Southbury" and reported by Buzz Devine, Chris Wood, and Tom Kilroy (Ninth ARCC Report, 2000).

Frank Gallo's Birding in Connecticut (2018) recognizes two records of Golden-crowned Sparrow, the December 1991 and October 1998 reports. Gallo writes of this sparrow species, "very rare in field edges with other sparrows" and "sight records only" for Connecticut.]

Zeranski & Baptist 1990 (Connecticut Birds - Appendix A List of Miscellaneous Reports page 278) does not include Golden-crowned Sparrow on the Connecticut list. These authors of Connecticut's most recent comprehensive checklist of birds write, "One was reportedly seen at Glastonbury on April 25, 1929 . . . this report lacks sufficient corroboration. Also, one was reported at South Windsor on April 21, 1933 . . . but was not verified by any active observer." I apparently ignored these words when I wrote my article "The 1991-1992 Christmas Bird Count" published in the April 1992 issue of *The Connecticut Warbler*.

**25 Years Ago Cont'd.**

I wrote then, "The Golden-crowned Sparrow found in Oxford represents the third sight report for this species of *Zonotrichia* in Connecticut but is importantly the first with written documentation. While its principal populations reside west of the Cascade Mountains, it occurs casually to very rarely in winter to eastern North America. Golden-crowned Sparrow is documented or hypothetical in Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania."

Bagg & Eliot 1937 (*Birds of the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts*, page 673) cites the two early reports of Golden-crowned Sparrow, an adult at Glastonbury on April 25, 1929 ("record-keepers for the Hartford region are skeptical of this", but do accept a record by C.W. Vibert and two companions who on April 21, 1933, watched a bird at South Windsor for half an hour." Forbush 1929 (*Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States, Part III*, page 443, *Distribution in New England*) has the original 1929 Glastonbury report.

**The Roseate Tern, by Patrick Comins**

The medium sized terns—Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*), Roseate Tern (*S. dougallii*), Forster's Tern (*S. forsteri*), and Arctic Tern (*S. paradisaea*) which breed in Eastern North America, are a notoriously difficult group of birds to identify in the field. However, with a little experience the Roseate Tern can be readily identified by several unique features. Some of these field marks can be apparent at longer distances. . . Given even decent views of a Roseate Tern, they eventually will "pop right out" of a group of Common Terns. . . The Roseate Tern is a very rare, to locally uncommon coastal summer resident and rare migrant.

[Editor's Note: Patrick Comins lists the following field marks of Roseate Tern: "an upwardly inflective 'jhiv-ik' call; quick, stiff, shallow, snappy wingbeats; longer tail; narrower and shorter wings; Roseates hover less often and often search in flight; little hesitation before diving; deeper dives and staying down longer; paler back; little or no contrast between the rump and the rest of the upper parts; nearly all white underwings; the appearance of a translucent window from the inner primaries and along the secondaries; a black leading edge to the outer primaries on the upperwing; an all black bill; a slimmer, more streamlined appearance. Mark Szantyr and Paul Carrier provided art work for the article.]

**Locating Roost Sites and Nest Sites of the Eastern Screech-Owl - Tests of Alternative Methods, by Dwight G. Smith and Arnold Devine**

The Eastern Screech-Owl (*Otus asio*) is a widespread and locally common permanent resident of Connecticut's mixed and deciduous woodland communities. Ecologically, this owl functions as a higher order consumer, often a top carnivore in these communities and is thereby considered a key species within the communities that it inhabits (reference given). However, due to its nocturnal activity patterns much basic information regarding its population status and ecology is difficult to obtain (references given). This is especially true with respect to its basic roost site or nest site habitat requirements. While this owl responds readily to playback of tape recorded song, the habitats from which the owl is responding, however, do not necessarily represent the habitat selection requirements of the species. Individual owls may move to the periphery and even outside of their immediate home range to drive off a would-be intruder. Yet, the conservation and management of this owl requires obtaining information about critical resources of their habitat that center on their roost site and nest site selection (reference given).

***25 Years Ago Cont'd.***

[Editor's note: Dwight Smith and Buzz Devine discuss "four methods that we have tested and used to locate nest sites and roost sites of Eastern Screech-Owls in Connecticut during the course of a 20 year study of these and other owls."]

**Books on Birds, by Alan Brush**

The appearance of new field guides, handbooks and other directories to birds in various parts of the world continues unabated. . . I have two books on hand that are part of the welcome abundance, but inhabit quite different spots within the broad spectrum. Coincidentally, they cover foreign countries, but ones easily accessible to many local birders.

[Editor's Note: Alan Brush reviews two books published in 1998: (1) *The Birds of Mexico and Adjacent Areas*, by E.P. Edwards (University of Texas Press) "The book is not especially user friendly"; (2) *Pocket Guide to the Birds of Britain and Northwest Europe*, by C. Knightly and S. Midge (Yale University Press). "Overall, the book is extremely easy to use . . . this guide impressed me as the authors speak directly to the reader and their enthusiasm for birds and birding is clear."]

**Connecticut Field Notes, Winter, December 1, 1998 to February 28, 1999, by Greg Hanisek**

This was another mild winter overall with little snow and ice. As expected, the unchallenging weather allowed many half-hardy species to linger in the state in unusually high numbers. The presence of open water accounts for a number of interesting waterfowl reports, and the continuing presence of mounds of garbage at the Manchester landfill sparked an ongoing gull identification festival amid the rumbling trucks and heavy aromas. There was no significant incursion of northern finches, but Northern Shrikes staged a good flight, and Rough-legged Hawks were in better numbers than in recent winters.

[Editor's Note: notable bird species discussed by Greg Hanisek include American Bittern, Tundra Swan, Harlequin Duck, Golden Eagle, Purple Gallinule, Black-headed Gull, Barn Owl, Northern Shrike, Scarlet Tanager, "Oregon" Junco, Bobolink, Bullock's Oriole, and Evening Grosbeak. Of considerable interest to me, based on my birding in Winter 2023-24, are Greg's references to Northern Shrike "in early January at Miller Road in Middlefield" and "up to 20 Rusty Blackbirds [that] wintered at fields near Lyman Orchards in Middlefield".]

See also in this issue of *The Connecticut Warbler*: *Vigilance Behavior of Wintering Band Eagles in Connecticut*, by Howard I. Russock; *Noose Capturing and Marking Northern Saw-whet Owls*, by Dwight G. Smith and Ken Petit; *Bird Behavior Notes - Sharp-tailed Sparrows*, by Patty Pendergast; *Bird Behavior Notes - Broad-winged Hawks*, by Glenn Williams; *Photo Challenge*, by Julian Hough. Cover art of *Black-crowned Night-Herons* is by Mark Szantyr. The July 1999 issue of *The Connecticut Warbler* can be seen in its entirety at the following link to the COA website: <https://ctbirding.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/CTWarblerVolume19.pdf?x92901> Download Volume 19, and view pages 97-136.



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