



CONNECTICUT
ORNITHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

BULLETIN

VOLUME I No. 2 SUMMER 1987

ANNUAL MEETING REPORT:

All who attended the COA's third annual meeting came away with high praise for the program planners, for the workshop leaders, and for our guest speaker, Greg Butcher. Saturday, April 11, was a fine spring day and Connecticut College in New London provided us with a pleasant setting. Thanks to George Zepko and his committee of Bob Askins, Debra Miller, and Stephen Broker.

Thanks to our workshop leaders: Dwight Smith on owls, Robert Askins on Woodpeckers, Dennis Varza on shorebirds, Debra Miller on nests, Greg Chasko on ducks, Julie Zickefoose on warblers, Bob Dewire on finches, and Michael O'Leary on raptors. Thanks to Connecticut College for providing the facilities and the setting. Special thanks to Dr. Greg Butcher, an old friend from Connecticut, the director of the cooperative research program at the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University. Greg's keynote talk highlighted some of the long term studies at Cornell and the contributions amateurs make to these studies. We are only sorry that all of our members could not attend.

At the business meeting all of last year's officers were reelected: President, Neil Currie; Vice President, Fred Sibley; Treasurer, Robert Fletcher; Assistant Treasurer, Carl Trichka; and Secretary, Winifred Burkett. The following were elected to 3-year terms on the Board of Directors: Ray Belding of Harwinton, Jill Rankin, Wethersfield, Chris Wood, Woodbury, and Joe Zeranski, Greenwich.

WISH LIST To the more than 30 Wish List contributors who gave \$1,200, thank you, thank you, thank you. These gifts enabled us to pay for the annual meeting, to begin producing this Bulletin, to pay some extra expenses of the Rare Bird Alert, and to begin improvements in our publication, The Connecticut Warbler.

THE NEW ENGLAND HAWKWATCH

All inland hawkwatch sites should be staffed on September 12 & 13. This is, hopefully, the time when the largest number of Broadwings will pass over inland sites. Also watch on September 19 & 20. Best dates at inland sites are September 12-20.

MAJOR INLAND LOOKOUTS ARE:

Chestnut Hill, Litchfield. Call Ray Belding for details (485-1368).

Huntington State Park, Redding. Call Larry Fischer for details (426-3901).

Pine Mountain, East Hartland. Call Betty Kleiner for details (658-5670) or Joy Kaplan, Roaring Brook Sanctuary, Canton.

Quaker Ridge at Greenwich Audubon Center, Greenwich, staffed daily in Sept. & Oct. Call Bill Macauley (869-5363) or Joe Zeranski (661-9607).

DATES FOR SHORELINE WATCHES: SEPTEMBER 26 & 27 and OCTOBER 3 & 4

Anywhere along the Connecticut shore may be good. Lighthouse Point, New Haven is well-known for heavy flights of hawks. Call Arne Rosengren (248-2903) or Richard English, (965-8610). Here at Lighthouse Point there are watches daily from Sept. 1 to Nov. 30.

CONNECTICUT RARE BIRD ALERT -- UPDATE

The Connecticut Rare Bird Alert is a tape-recorded message, reachable 24-hours a day, that informs interested birdwatchers of recent rarities, giving details and directions to the birds.

This service, now in its eleventh year, is co-sponsored by the COA and the Connecticut Audubon Council, and as of March 31st has been based at its new home in Fairfield at the Birdcraft Museum of the Connecticut Audubon Society. The new phone number is (203) 254-3665.

The "voices" of the Connecticut RBA are those of well-known birders Frank Mantlik and Tom Rochovansky. They report that since April 1st, the service has been utilized 50-100 times per week by birdwatchers. The taped messages are updated weekly, normally on Wednesday evenings, and more often if warranted.

Reports of rarities are funneled in to the RBA via an existing COA network of experienced birders throughout the state. But anyone can report sightings of rare or unusual birds directly by contacting either Frank (838-1694) or Tom (222-7777).

During the period April 1 to June 30, 1987, 145 species have been reported on the tape, many of these being uncommon or locally-rare species. The rarities generating the most excitement have included: Am. White Pelican, Tricolored Heron, Snow Goose (blue form), Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Shelduck (probably escapee), Fulvous Whistling Duck (3), Black Vulture, Bald Eagle, Am. Swallow-tailed Kite, King Rail, Am. Oystercatcher, Am. Avocet, Upland Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Reeve, Wilson's & Red-necked Phalaropes, Little & Com. Black-headed Gulls, Caspian & Black Terns, Black Skimmer, Red-headed Woodpecker, Common Raven, Lawrence's (hybrid), Kentucky and Mourning Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chat, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Hoary Redpoll.

Many people have already realized a number of "life" birds and/or "state" birds due to the existence of this service. Response to the new RBA has been very positive. The key to its continued success depends on the prompt (immediate) reporting of rarities to the RBA, which can then be updated in a matter of minutes.

-- Frank Mantlik

SUMMER BIRD COUNTS

There are two ongoing Connecticut Summer Bird Counts, both fashioned after Christmas Counts. They are the Greenwich-Stamford Summer Bird Count and the Western Connecticut Bird Club Summer Bird Count. Both make important contributions to understanding the state's breeding bird populations. Their totals clearly show which species these areas support and to what degree. As long-term ecological changes occur here and as far away as South America, this data becomes even more valuable.

Because less is known about breeding bird distribution and densities on this scale than is known about wintering birds, the results of these summer counts are more significant than those from the respective Christmas counts. The populations of many nesting species throughout much of the state are so poorly known that they can only be guessed.

The Twelfth Annual Greenwich-Stamford Count was held on June 13th and 14th. A new high of 141 species was counted, seven more than the previous record. This year's new species were Common Moorhen, Cooper's Hawk (the first nesting in over 30 years), and Semi-palmated Plover. Of note were Least Bittern, 14 Brant, 5 Greater Scaup, 3 Ruddy

Ducks, 2 pairs of Nesting Goshawks, 2 Red-shouldered Hawks, a Skimmer, 46 Screech Owls, 5 Acadian and 5 Alder Flycatchers, 2 Winter Wrens, and 3 Hermit Thrushes. Also observed were 49 Yellow-throated and 4 Solitary Vireos, while the Warblers included 4 Chats, 4 Kentuckys, 12 Hoodeds, 7 Pines (first nested locally in 1984), 8 Black-throated Greens, Northern Waterthrushes, and 83 Worm-eating Warblers. In addition, 2 Grasshopper and 2 Savannah Sparrows were reported, as were the hybrids Brewster's and Lawrence's Warblers. It will be difficult to duplicate this total next year.

The TENTH ANNUAL WESTERN CONNECTICUT BIRD CLUB JUNE COUNT/CENSUS was held on Sunday, June 7th. It was an exceptional count, setting many new records. The species total of 131 -- excellent for an inland count -- exceeded the previous count total high of 129 set in 1984. The cumulative species total for the 10-year count is 153. Ed Hagen, of Woodbury, serves as the count coordinator/compiler.

The highlights of the 1987 count were: Common Loon (new for the count), Double-crested Cormorant, Common Merganser, Sharp-shinned, Cooper's and Goshawks, Solitary Sandpiper, Marsh Wren (new), Swainson's and Hermit Thrushes, Lawrence's, Wilson's and Mourning Warblers. There were also new high totals for 31 species.

Other highlights, over the years, for this rural inland count, include: Am. Bitten, Snow Goose, Hooded Merganser, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Wild Turkey, No. Bobwhite, Sora, Greater Yellowlegs, Dunlin, N. Saw-whet Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Golden-winged, Tennessee, Black-throated Blue and Kentucky Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chat, White-throated Sparrow, and Pine Siskin.

Participation has been quite good, with an average of 35 participants per year. The June count utilizes the same 15 mile diameter count circle as the annual Christmas Bird Count. It includes the towns of Woodbury, Roxbury, Southbury, Washington, New Milford.

June counts/censuses are as much fun as the more popular Christmas Bird Counts, but are even more valuable in that they monitor the health of an area's breeding bird populations. If conducted long-term, these counts help identify declining species (such as Am. Kestrel or Whip-poor-will) or increasing species (such as Red-bellied Woodpecker).

A most worthwhile undertaking for local birding groups would be the establishment of Summer Bird Counts where Christmas Bird Counts now exist. It greatly simplifies these breeding censuses to use the existing CBC rules, territories, and organizations, although they will vary somewhat from the traditional mid-winter counts.

The preferred counting period, the second and third weeks of June, is a time when most species are on their nesting territories, singing is largely undiminished, and migrants are infrequent. The results may be broken down into breeders, possible breeders, and non-breeding lingerers and migrants. From these totals a much better understanding of our native nesting bird populations will be gained.

CBC participants, please consider this activity for next year. You will find it very challenging.

-- Frank Mantlik, Joe Zeranski

BARN OWL INFORMATION WANTED

George Zepko is still interested in receiving information on sightings or nesting locations of the Common Barn Owl in Connecticut. If you have any information, please send it to: BARN OWL NESTING PROJECT, BOX 966, MIDDLETOWN, CT 06457

TRIP ANNOUNCEMENT:

The Hartford Audubon Society is offering a birding trip to California from September 4-14, 1987. The primary focus will be on pelagic birds as this is an excellent time of year to observe Storm Petrels (up to 6 species); Black-footed Albatross; up to 5 species of Shearwaters; a variety of Alcids; and perhaps a West Coast rarity.

The itinerary will include pelagic trips to the Farallon Islands off San Francisco, Monterey Bay and Seavallej, and offshore Monterey. In addition, about half the time will be spent landbirding in the Monterey area. Participants will stay in motels and eat primarily in restaurants. Approximate total cost for the trip is \$750 (includes round trip air fare from Hartford), plus all meals. The number of participants for the trip is limited to 16, so making your reservations promptly is essential.

For reservations for this exciting trip or for future information, call trip leader Sam Fried at 232-6763.

NOTICE:

To all COA members who received the April issue of The Connecticut Warbler that had mixed up and missing pages, please let Carl Trichka know and he will send you another one. His address is 314 Unquowa Road, Fairfield, CT 06430 -- phone 259-2623.

WANTED:

Someone with an Apple-MacIntosh computer who would be willing to type manuscripts for The Connecticut Warbler. If interested, contact Betty Kleiner, 658-5670.

COA WINDOW STICKERS AVAILABLE:

Extras of our yellow COA "Connecticut Warbler emblem" are available at \$1 each for anyone who would like them. Contact: CARL TRICHKA (259-2623).

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