

COA Bulletin

Summer 1997 NEWSLETTER OF THE CONNECTICUT ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION Vol. 5 No 2

1997 Summer Bird Counts

by Joe Zeranski

This June, COA's 7th Annual summer bird count will be held. Birders are asked to join in and help staff this event. Your help is invaluable if we are to continue accumulating breeding data for this state and particularly for nine areas of about 174 square miles each.

Besides being invaluable in documenting long term breeding trends, it, in many ways, is the most stimulating of our state-wide birding events. It can be a difficult survey to conduct due to the number of birds present and the amount of territory needing coverage, as well as the dependency on observers who can distinguish bird songs and calls.

At the same time, it can be exciting due to that very number of possibilities, including finding new nesters for a count area, and the challenges of identifying species by their vocalizations. Observers are contributing to a much more methodical understanding of our nesting bird populations. This is at a time when there are many questions and uncertainties about the effects upon our breeders of the rain forest reductions to the south. But perhaps the most personally rewarding aspect of this event for observers is the adventure of going into the field and identifying our native birds by their songs and calls.

During the first year of COA's sponsorship, in 1991, 169 species were observed statewide. In 1992, 178 species were seen. In the next three years, 185 species were totaled in 1993, 189 species in 1994 and 187 in 1995.

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HOTLINE HIGHLIGHTS

Tufted Duck	Old Saybrook	Feb 11-Mar 20
Red-hd Woodpecker	Wallingford	Jan-Apr 9
Little Gull	Old Saybrook	Mar 15-Apr 2
Y-T Warbler	Killingworth	Mar 30- Apr 20
Common Raven	Woodbridge	Apr 7
Iceland Gull	Storrs	Apr 11
Eared Grebe	Stamford	Apr 11
King Eider	Westport	Apr 28
Summer Tanager	Darien	May 5

RARE BIRD ALERT: 203-254-3665

President's Message

by Dave Provencher

I have just returned from a birding trip to Texas and New Mexico. My trips have acquired a reputation for lots of driving, hard-core birding, little sleep, and many missed meals. This trip was no different with 302 species seen in 11 days, 3000 miles on the rental car, a broken windshield, 25 miles hiked, and six pounds lost. Just a typical trip. I usually travel alone, I don't think I need to explain why. I do these things, which for some reason my wife calls obsessive, because I want to get the most out of what I do. This is exactly how I feel about becoming president of COA.

COA's membership includes all levels of birders, from professional ornithologists to beginning birdwatchers. This organization exists for Connecticut birders of all levels and experience. Some of us are perhaps a little too obsessive, and some of us just enjoy watching through our living room windows. Whatever your level of birding, you are an equal partner in this association. Every one of us enriches COA and brings something unique and valuable to the organization. COA is, and has been, a wonderful birding organization. There is a potential for it to be even better. That potential exists in the minds and hearts of all of its members.

As I assume the responsibilities as president, I am mindful of those who have done so much for COA. Many people deserve praise for the marvelous job of building and maintaining it. It has been my privilege to serve as

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Summer Bird Count

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Last year, an all-time high of 193 species was recorded.

This last winter was mild with a late spring compared to the very hard 1995-96 winter. Have low numbers of half-hardies stopped declining? How are the nesters faring which normally winter in the tropics? Are snowballing species continuing to grow? Are others still declining? These are just a few of the questions that SBCs will help answer. In common with other years, this year's SBCs will produce unexpected species and further document continuing population declines and increases. As we speculate which exciting species may be found and who will find them, we can certainly expect a better nesting picture in these nine individual SBCs to emerge.

Every participant contributes to the thoroughness of this survey, and all efforts are very much appreciated. To join us, please call an SBC compiler now, or better yet, two, and offer your help. Here is a list of SBCs and their compilers for the state.

CONNECTICUT SBCS

Barkhamsted SBC	Dave Rosgen	860-283-8378
Greenwich-Stamford SBC	Tom Burke	914-967-4922
Hartford SBC	Kathie Felice	860-582-5802
Litchfield Hills SBC	Bob Barbieri Ray Belding	860-489-8672 860-482-4046
New Haven SBC	Steve Mayo	860-393-0694
Quinnipiac SBC	Wilford Schulz	203-265-6398
Salmon River SBC	Joseph Morin	860-635-2786
Storrs SBC	Steve Rogers	860-429-1259
Woodbury-Roxbury SBC	Russ Naylor	860-263-2502

**The Newsletter of the
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**Please submit materials for the next
issue by August 1, 1997 to
Dwight Smith, Editor,
241 Shepard Ave, Hamden, CT 06514.**

President's Message

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vice-president under Jay Kaplan for the past two years. I learned much from Jay. That knowledge will help me greatly during the next two years. Jay set a good example to follow and I hope that I can serve the organization as well as he has.

The new vice-president is Mark Szantyr, who has a long history of ably serving COA and is well known for his extensive birding experience and knowledge of things avian. Mark's service to the birding community deserves much praise and he is a credit to COA. He will be a great help to me in carrying out my role as president. There is much to do and I shall be busy.

I have always been fascinated by nature and I have always been in awe of the natural world's beauty. I became interested in birds because of the mystery of their lives and the beauty they possess. This is something we all share, it is what binds us all together in this association. The beauty and the magic. That's why we do this, that's why COA exists. We all share in the excitement, whether we are looking through our living room window or walking in some far-off land. The flash of a feather can take the breath away. Our lives are enriched by birds, and our association is enriched by each member. It's all about birds and birders.

I remember one fall morning at Bluff Point in Groton. The now well known morning flight was occurring and Jay Hand and I were watching the feathered missiles sail by. Suddenly, Jay spotted a Red-headed Woodpecker heading away and started yelling to me and jumping up and down. I won't forget Jay's excitement because I shared it. We should all share in it. Go ahead, jump up and down! Birding should always be that way!

Boreal Owl at Bear Mountain

At The Fat Robin Nature Store on Whitney Avenue in Hamden, Jim Zipp has a great 8 x 10 xerox glossy of a Boreal Owl on Bear Mountain, near Salisbury. The original photo was taken with a 50 mm lens at a distance of about two feet. As the story goes, one of Jim's customers, an amateur birder and nature photographer and her husband were hiking up Bear Mountain this past winter and spotted the very tame owl, sitting on a branch with a little patch of snow on its head. They took several photos and showed them to Jim, who promptly took off for Bear Mountain. Jim couldn't find the bird, but the photos of the bird sure do look great. For more details and a look, stop in to say hi to Jim.

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Raccoon Rabies Risk

Birders should be aware that the risk of raccoon rabies remains strong and take suitable precautions whenever any warm blooded animal acting strangely is encountered during field birding. Incidents of animals---raccoons, cats, and opossums, with rabies have been reported in a number of Connecticut towns so the problem remains especially worrisome for those of us that spend a lot of time in the field.

Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey

The 1997 midwinter Bald Eagle survey obtained some 114 sightings in Connecticut. These included statewide sightings of 64 immatures and 50 adults. While somewhat down from the high count 128 Bald Eagles sighted in Connecticut in 1996, the numbers still are vastly improved from the 11 winter sightings that were recorded almost 20 years ago in 1980. The Connecticut numbers are in sync with the nationwide rise in Bald Eagle numbers. Consistent with their population increase, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reclassified the Bald Eagle from an endangered to a threatened species.

For more information on this topic, please consult Julie Victoria's article in the May/June issue of Connecticut Wildlife.

Articles Needed for the COA Bulletin

The May 1 deadline came and went for the summer issue (this issue) of the *COA Bulletin* and I found nothing, absolutely nothing, in my mailbox or in my files. I desperately need articles. Local sightings, birding events, forthcoming field trips, reports of field trips past, birding events, nature events that include birding opportunities, book reviews, poetry, anything at all that can reasonably be included. I am sure that the readers get tired of reading my own op-ed pieces which I include in each issue to "flesh" them out. Go ahead, drive me right out of the extemporaneous writing club to which I subscribe.

Believe me, it is your contributions that make the COA Bulletin lively and interesting. Don't let this slide into a one person diatribe. You have interesting birding experiences that others want to hear about!!

Who and what is COA?

by Dave Provencher

I have come to realize over the last few years that there are a few misconceptions concerning who and what this organization is. Let's cover a few things it is not. COA is not centered in any particular part of the state. Historically, COA's membership was biased a little to the southwest and still has its postal address there. It now is well represented across the entire state. Indeed, both the president and vice-president reside well east of the Connecticut River. It is not an exclusive club for very experienced birders, or those who at least think they are! The members who are beginning and intermediate birders are the lifeblood of COA and its future. It is not the only birding organization in Connecticut, just one dedicated to birds and birders throughout the entire state. It is not a group that only goes creeping about laconically ticking off birds like an accountant nor is it a group that always rushes about frantically ticking off species as part of some competition. These, at times, have their roles in COA but are only a small part of what we are.

So let's talk about who and what COA really is. The very simple answer to that question is its membership, each and every one of us. Our membership really has only one thing in common across the board. That is a common interest in birds and the natural world. This common interest is why COA was created and why it still exists today. It is open to anyone who wishes to join regardless of experience level, geographical location, age, sex, race, or political orientation. Anyone with an interest in birds and birding is qualified. Every member is equal in the organization and has a voice in it. Every member brings something special with them and enriches the association. This gives us the ability to do many things. We are active in conservation throughout Connecticut and beyond its borders. We are aggressively building a program to teach our membership about birds and habitat. We welcome opportunities to work with other groups for conservation and education. We encourage, support, and assist in research in ornithology and critical habitat. We publish both a journal and bulletin for the membership with quality articles on birds and birding.

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HOTLINE REPORTS

To report sightings of rare, unusual, or migrating birds, call one of the following:

Milan Bull 203-259-6305 or 203-255-8837

Mark Szantyr 860-429-4038

Frank Gallo 203-966-6756

COA Bulletin

What is COA?

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We operate and co-sponsor the rare bird alert and we keep the official species list for our state. These are just some of the things that we do.

The horizon for COA is only limited by the talents of its membership, and, therefore, appears limitless. Our mission is simple, to promote an interest in birds and birding, to promote education in ornithology, and to help in the conserving of our natural heritage. I find it immensely rewarding to share with other birders a good bird I have found. If I can pass on a little knowledge to other birders I feel very fortunate. Over the years I have learned a great deal from other birders, and I have discovered that very often I can learn something from someone with much less birding experience than I. We have a lot we can teach one another. How well we do this depends on how active our membership chooses to be. We have much to do and many opportunities for members to help with the various committees of COA. Please feel free to contact me if you wish to help or if you have any concerns about COA.

Sharing the cool air of the dawn and the song of a Wood Thrush with someone---can there be a more important reason for COA to exist? I, personally, think not!

Times, they are a changing at McKinney Refuge

by Patty Pendergast

Widely experienced wildlife administrator, Bill Kolodnicki has been named manager for the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge. Bill succeeds Paul Casey, who left McKinney to manage Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge in Northern New Hampshire.

Kolodnicki was primary assistant refuge manager at the Long Island National Refuge Complex. Prior to that he was the executive director of National Audubon's Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary in Oyster Bay, NY, where he ran the raptor rehabilitation program. At the Long Island Complex, Bill worked with colonial waterbirds, oiled waterfowl and a variety of coastal issues relating to Long Island Sound. He oversaw nine refuges covering more than 6,000 acres along coastal Long Island and management programs for wetlands restoration, piping plover, roseate tern, wild turkey, sandplain gerardia and grassland restoration. Bill will be a valuable complement to the excellent partnerships Paul Casey worked so vigorously to establish.

The McKinney Refuge has coastal 'units' along

much of the Connecticut coast: Salt Meadow, Sheffield Island, Chimon Island, Falkner Island, Milford Point, Goose Island and Great Meadows Marsh. The refuge serves of significant value to wildlife in areas of expanding human population and land development, providing important resting, feeding, nesting and wintering habitat for many species of migratory birds and waterfowl.

This year also marks a change in the administration of the Refuge. McKinney was initially under the aegis of the USFWS in Rhode Island's Ningret Wildlife Refuge. At this time Larry Bandolin of the Silvio O. Conte National Wildlife Refuge now has oversight for the McKinney Refuge. Since the Conte Refuge has a long stretch in Connecticut and the 2 refuges almost abut, this arrangement will be advantageous to furthering the programs in progress at McKinney.

Teaming with Wildlife and the CT DEP Nongame Division

by Patty Pendergast

As you may know, the COA has signed on with the Teaming with Wildlife coalition. This initiative would establish dedicated funding through the creation of a user fee which would never exceed 5% of the manufacturer's price on outdoor recreation products. The revenues from this modest excise tax are estimated at \$350 million annually and are to be disbursed out to the state nongame wildlife programs.

A 1992 study by the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies showed that Connecticut ranked dead last for funding for Nongame and Endangered Species programs at \$34,000. Since that study, a state income tax check off has been established. It is split among Endangered Species, Natural Area Preserves and Watchable Wildlife Programs. The 1996 money from this source amounted to 77,656, which will probably still be dead last in the country.

This is why the Teaming with Wildlife Initiative is so important. Connecticut stands to get in the neighborhood of 2 million dollars dedicated to nongame wildlife programs if this goes to Congress. The following is a brief list of programs that have been planned and are awaiting funding: Partners in Flight research projects and related songbird conservation programs, raptor nesting surveys and a kestrel nestbox project, monitoring trends in heron and egret colonies on offshore islands and the promotion of urban wildlife grants. To support this initiative contact your congressional representative.

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TRIPS & EVENTS

Connecticut Audubon Society

The Connecticut Audubon Society announces the following field trips. Field trips are open to all for a nominal fee. For more information on these and other CAS field trips and events, call Andy Griswold, Eco-Travel Office at Centerbrook, Connecticut, 860-767-0660 or FAX 860-767-7296 or E-mail: CTAUDUBON@AOL.COM.

SPRING WALK ON THE NAYANTAQUIT TRAIL, on Saturday, May 31 at 9:00 am. Considered one of the best spring warbler spots, this blue trail runs through Nehantic State Forest in the town of Lyme. Meet at 9:00 am at CAS Glastonbury or at Nehantic State Forest at 9:45 am. Bring lunch and drink. Rain cancels trip. CAS members \$8, nonmembers \$10.

BEGINNING BIRDING BY SIGHT AND SOUND, on Saturday, June 7, at 8:00 am. Join CAS Educator Jim Sirch to learn birds through their songs, field marks and behavior. Meet at the Connecticut Audubon Center at Fairfield with binoculars and field guides. CAS members \$8, nonmembers \$10.

GREAT ISLAND CANOEING THE MARSHES, in Old Lyme on Saturday, June 14, from 8:00 am to noon and also 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Birding and exploring the channels of Great Island Wildlife Management Area, the Blackhall and Duck Rivers. Canoes and paddling instructions will be provided. Bring binoculars, field guides, camera and light snack. Leaders are George Platt and Clay Taylor. CAS members \$18, nonmembers \$21.

EXPLORING COASTAL FORESTS: SUMMER SOLSTICE, on Saturday, June 21, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Birding and nature explorations at Bluff Point State Park in Groton led by Annie Guion and Jeff Weiler. Bring binoculars, field guides, lunch and drink. Meet at the parking lot at Bluff Point. Call Annie or Jeff at 860-455-0759 for more info. Limited to 25. CAS members \$10, nonmembers \$12.

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE ARBORETUM, on Saturday, July 12, from 9:00 am to noon. Join CAS trip leader Hunter Brawley in search of flowering plants and summer birds in the arboretum's plant collections and natural areas. Meet at the arboretum main gate on Williams Street at 9:00 am. Bring binoculars and field guides. CAS members \$8, nonmembers \$10.

EVENING CRUISE TO FALKNER ISLAND, on Sunday, July 13, from 6:00 to 9:00 pm. Visit the nesting site of the Roseate Tern and other birds with Jeff Spendelow. Circle the island and cruise back through the Thimble Islands. Bring a picnic supper. CAS members \$25, nonmembers \$30.

BREEDING BIRDS OF THE SHORE, on Saturday, July 20, from 9:30 am to noon. Milford Point to Sandy Point with trip leader Pat Wilson for a look at the birds of Connecticut's sandy beaches and coastal marshes. CAS members \$8, nonmembers \$10.

JAMAICA BAY WILDLIFE REFUGE, LONG ISLAND, on Saturday, July 26, from 7:00 am to late afternoon. Join trip leader Curtis Smith for a day of birding East and West Ponds for waders and early shorebirds. Dress for wading and bring insect repellent. Bring lunch and meet at the Bird Craft Museum for van transportation. CAS members \$17, nonmembers \$20.

SOUTHBOUND SHOREBIRDS AT MILFORD POINT, on Sunday, July 27, from 3:00 to 6:00 pm. Join Frank Mantlik for the fall migration kickoff. CAS members \$8, nonmembers \$10.

BARN ISLAND, on Saturday, August 23, from 9:00 am to noon. Join trip leader Hunter Brawley for a morning walk through the coastal marshes of this important wildlife management area in search of marsh birds; sparrows, waders and waterfowl. Wear long pants, waterproof boots, take adequate protection against sun and deer ticks. CAS members \$8, nonmembers \$10.

THE ADIRONDACKS, from June 5-June 8. Nesting birds of this huge park in upstate New York, led by master birder Jay Hand. CAS members \$445, nonmembers \$480. Single supplement \$120. Includes luxury van transportation from Connecticut, accommodations, most meals, admission fees and leaders. Small group size. Assistant leader is bird artist Rob Braunfield.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

COA encourages local bird clubs to send announcements of field trips and other events to Dwight Smith, Editor
241 Shepard Ave, Hamden, CT 06514

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Trips and Events

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BAXTER STATE PARK AND KATAHDIN LAKE CAMPS, in Maine, from July 27 to August 2. Five nights in the Katahdin Lake Camps birding and nature exploring with Jim Sirch and botanist Hunter Brawley. Space is limited for this trip. Please call the 800 number for more info.

PLUMISLAND NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, from August 21 to August 24. Join Frank Gallo and Mark Szantyr for this coastline trip in search of migrant shorebirds, pelagic birds and marine mammals. CAS members \$460, nonmembers \$495. Single supplement \$180. Includes luxury van transportation, accommodations, most meals, entry, boat fees and guides.

CAPE MAY NEW JERSEY FALL MIGRATION, from September 19 to September 21. Join leader Greg Hanisek and Mark Szantyr for migrant raptors especially, but also shorebirds, warblers and other migrants at this famous birding spot at the southern tip of New Jersey. CAS members \$345, nonmembers \$380. Single supplement is \$120. Cost includes coach transportation from Glastonbury and Fairfield, hotel, most meals, admissions, and leadership fees.

CALIFORNIA: POINT REYES TO MONTEREY, from September 21 to September 28. Join CAS director Andy Griswold and British birder and author Julian Hough to visit this one of the "10 best birding spots" in search of spectacular birds and marine mammals. Birds, scenery and wine tasting in Sonoma Valley for \$1660 CAS members, \$1695 for nonmembers. Single supplement is \$400. Cost includes luxury van transportation, lodging, admissions, pelagic boat ride, some meals and expert guides. Airfare not included. Limited to 14.

The Fat Robin

Located at 3000 Whitney Avenue, in Hamden, Connecticut, The Fat Robin offers a variety of birding events throughout the year. Call Jim and Carol Zipp at 203-248-7068 for more info on these and other activities.

BUILD A BIRD HOUSE, on Saturday, June 7. Meet at The Fat Robin at 9:00 am, end at 11:00 am. Space is limited so please preregister. Cost is \$11.

REGIONAL HOTLINES

Connecticut (203) 254-3665
Rhode Island (401) 231-5728
Eastern Massachusetts (617) 259-8805
Western Massachusetts (413) 253-2218
Vermont (802) 457-2779
New Hampshire (603) 224-9900
Maine (207) 781-2332
New York Metro (212) 979-3070
Northern New Jersey (908) 766-2661
Cape May, New Jersey (609) 884-2626

HUMMINGBIRD WALK, in August. Date to be announced. Call Jim for more details.

New Haven Bird Club

LAKE CHAMBERLAIN, BETHANY, on Saturday, May 17. Spring migrants, bluebirds, turkeys and more. Meet at the hiking parking area lot at 8:00 am. From Litchfield Turnpike (Route 69) turn left onto Morris Road. Take a left onto the dirt portion of Sperry Road. Parking is on the right. Trip leader is Pat Leahy, at 203-393-2427.

SEVENTH ANNUAL SUMMER BIRD COUNT, on Saturday and Sunday, June 7-8. Bird the same area as the Christmas bird count. Many of the Christmas Bird Count captains work the same areas. Call Steve Mayo at 203-393-0694 for more details.

Audubon Shop in Madison

When in Madison, stop in and see Jerry Connolly or call at 203-245-9056 for the very latest info on Hammo birds.

EAST ROCK PARK, on Sunday, from 8:30 am to 11:15 am. Carpool from The Audubon Shop at 7:45 am or meet at the Eli Whitney Museum on Whitney Avenue at 8:30. Stop in or call for directions. Co leader is Park Ranger Dan Barvir. Fee \$2. Binocular rentals available.

BIRDING HAMMONASSETT, on Saturdays, May 24, 31, June 7, 14, 21, 28, from 8:00 to 10:30 am. Meet at The Audubon Shop at 7:50 am. Binocular rentals available. Beginners welcome. Fee \$2.

COA Bulletin

Field Reports Requested

Birding observations by COA birders form the basis for the seasonal reports on the status of resident and migrating birds in the state which appear in *The Connecticut Warbler* and *Audubon Field Notes*. COA members are encouraged to report their sightings by filling in Species Report Forms. The forms can be obtained by calling Greg Hanisek at 203-574-3636.

Report periods and due dates are; Fall period from August 1 through November 30, report due December 10; Winter from December 1 to February 28, report due March 10; Spring from March 1 to May 30, report due June 10; Summer from June 1 to July 30, report due August 10. Please submit reports to Greg Hanisek, 15 Circuit Ave., Waterbury, CT 06708. Contributors should complete separate forms for each species observed. Sort the forms into phylogenetic order, using the COA *Connecticut Field List* as a guide. Detailed descriptions should be given for species on the *Field List* denoted by * (rare) or # (hypothetical) or for species not on the *Field List*. All reports will be preserved. Comments are welcomed.

Joining COA

The Connecticut Ornithological Association welcomes new members. COA is the only statewide organization devoted exclusively to birds and birding, and its members range from beginning birders to professional ornithologists. Joining COA is guaranteed to improve your knowledge of Connecticut birds and increase your enjoyment of Connecticut birding.

Membership costs as little as \$12.00 per year and includes a copy of *The Ten Best Birding Sites in Connecticut*, the quarterly *COA Bulletin*, the quarterly *Connecticut Warbler*, and invitations to COA events such as field trips and field days. Membership dues also support COA's rare bird hotline, conservation initiatives, and research projects. New members receive a copy of the official *Connecticut Field List* and a COA decal.

Present COA members who have not yet renewed for the current year can use the form below. Check the mailing label on the other side of this page to see whether your membership is current. If not, please send in the form today.

JOIN COA FOR THE BEST OF CONNECTICUT BIRDING

Please print or type

New Member Renewal Gift

Name _____ Name 2 _____

(Memberships above the individual level can include a spouse or partner)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ - _____

Telephone* _____ Occupation* _____

Bird Club or Audubon Chapter* _____ Christmas Count Name* _____

Level of Birding Experience* Beginner Novice Intermediate Advanced Expert

Membership Category Individual (\$12) Family (\$18) Contributing (\$25) Sustaining (\$40)

*Optional

Send this application with your check to:

Connecticut Ornithological Association, 314 Unquowa Road, Fairfield, CT 06430

COA does not release its membership list to other organizations. Dues are tax deductible as allowed under the law.

MEMBERS: PLEASE GIVE THIS FORM TO A BIRDING FRIEND

COA Bulletin

COA OFFICERS

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Secretary Andrew Brand, 59 Brooksvale Ave, Hamden, CT 06518 203-230-1718

COA COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

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Conservation Paul Fusco, 4 Old Country Road, Oxford, CT 06484 203-584-9830
Field Trips Steve Mayo, Tuttle Court, Bethany, CT 0606525 203- 874-1860
Membership Lise Hanners, Devil's Den Pres, Box 1162, Weston, CT06883 203- 226-4991
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Rare Records Frank Mantlik, 261 Chestnut Hill Rd, Norwalk, CT 06851 203-846-8601
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