

COA Bulletin

Fall 1997 NEWSLETTER OF THE CONNECTICUT ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION Vol 12 No 3

COA Fall Field Day

SEPTEMBER 20th

By Marilyn "Sam" Higgins

The Eighth Annual COA Fall Field Day will be held at Northwest Park in Windsor on September 20th. Northwest Park will be co-sponsor of this year's event. Walk-in registration will be from 7:30 to 11:00 am. A continental breakfast will be provided. There is a full day of indoor and outdoor activities planned for people of all ages. As always, Fall Field Day will be held rain or shine.

Northwest Park is a 473-acre recreational park located on the Farmington River in "Connecticut's oldest town." At the park, there are 450 acres of different habitats, an interpretive nature center, and more than ten miles of trails. This park has had several pairs of nesting Orchard Orioles for the past few years. Indigo Buntings, Grasshopper Sparrows, and Eastern Bluebirds also nest here. The Gordon S. Taylor Connecticut Valley Tobacco Museum which shows "the culture and history of the tobacco industry in the Connecticut Valley" is located in the park. It will be open from 12-4 pm.

Throughout the day there will be bird walks to many different habitats both in the park and to nearby Station 43. Station 43 is a sanctuary of the Hartford Audubon Society, and is located in South Windsor, along the Connecticut River. It contains riparian woods, open fields, and marsh habitats. There will be a bird banding demonstration from 8-10 am, a hawk watch from 10 to 2 pm, and a morning and afternoon walk for children and adults to observe butterflies.

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HOTLINE HIGHLIGHTS

Boat-tailed Grackle Stratford May 10-July 8
White-winged Dove Sterling May 18
Lark Sparrow Windsor May 20
Common Eiders Milford May 26 - June 14
Chuck-wills-widow Southbury June 1
Black Rail Woodbury June 8-9
Peregrine Falcon nest Hartford June 17
Black Skimmers Norwalk June 19, July 2
Black-necked Stilt Greenwich June 23
Cory's Shearwater Madison July 7
Curlew Sandpiper Milford July 20-29

RARE BIRD ALERT: 203-254-3665

Fall Hawk Watches

by Neil Currie

The fall hawk migration is already underway along with that of shorebirds, swallows and some songbirds.

In September the 1997 hawk watching season will be in full swing. Watchers will already, from the last week of August on, be present at Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven. At the Audubon Center in Greenwich, Quaker Ridge, the count and the watch will begin on September first. At both of these lookouts, the watches will go on well into November. At those places, Red-tailed Hawks, Red-shouldered Hawks, and even Golden Eagles will be moving by in late October and early November.

Hawk watchers will want to gear up for the spectacular hawk flights. Perhaps most spectacular are the flights of hundreds of Broad-winged Hawks that usually occur in the middle weeks of September, usually between the 10th and 22nd of the month. These flights occur in kettles that come out of the northeast and can number anywhere from a handful of birds to hundreds. Broad-wings over Quaker Ridge are flying in from Maine, New Hampshire, eastern and central Massachusetts. They funnel into northern and western Connecticut and then down along the ridges to the coast along Connecticut's shoreline as they drift southward. On September 15, 1995, a spectacular flight of Broad-wings numbered 31,988 birds. The best days for Broad-winged flights follow a cold front with winds out of

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Fall Hawk Watches

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the north or northwest, clearing skies, and developing cumulus clouds. Worst days are rainy skies and southerly winds.

HAWK WATCH LOOKOUTS

CHESTNUT HILL--Litchfield.

Take Route 63 north from Watertown to East Morris (junction of Routes 63 and 109). Go north 3.0 miles from this junction to Camp Dutton road on the right. Turn into Camp Dutton. Camp Dutton is also 1.2 miles south of Litchfield Center (from Litchfield Center turn left onto Camp Dutton road). Drive to the top of the hill to a T junction with Chestnut Hill Road. The lookout is ahead of you in the field.

BOTSFORD HILL---Roxbury-Bridgewater Town Line.

Take Route 67 north from Southbury center. Follow the road to Roxbury center. Just north of Southbury center Route 67 turns left. At Roxbury center leave Route 67, going straight onto Weller's Bridge Road. Take Weller's Bridge Road 1.4 miles to a bridge crossing the Shepaug River. Turn left, rejoining Route 67 coming from the right. Go 0.2 miles around a right curve on Route 67 to Botsford Hill Road on the left. Turn left onto Botsford Hill Road. Go about 1.3 miles to Keeler Road on the right. Continue past Keeler Road. The lookout will be anywhere on the right for the next 1.3 miles. This varies because of the corn fields. Look for cars and/or watchers. Call Neil Currie for further details at 860-426-9861.

HUNTINGTON STATE PARK---Redding-Bethel-Newtown

Take Route 58 south from Bethel center about 4 to 4.5 miles to Sunset Hill Road. Or take Route 58 north from Exit 45 on the Merritt Parkway about 11 to 12 miles past Redding Ridge center to Sunset Hill Road. From the south bear right onto Sunset Hill. From the north turn sharply (almost 180 degrees) to the left. Go about 0.75 miles to the entrance to

C. P. Huntington State Park on the right. The lookout is in the field to the left. For other details, call Larry Fischer at 203-426-3901.

WHIPPOORWILL HILL---Newtown.

Take Route 25 and Route 6 north from the flagpole in Newtown center. Go 2.0 miles to Whippoorwill Hill Drive on the right. The street sign for this road is usually well hidden by the foliage so as you approach 2.0 miles go slow. Take Whippoorwill Hill Road on the right. This is a short S-shaped cul-de-sac. Park at the end and walk straight past some trees and by a wall to the lookout. For further details call Polly Brody at 203-267-6880

QUAKER RIDGE---Audubon Center in Greenwich.

Take Exit 28 off the Merritt Parkway and follow Round Hill Road north for 1.4 miles to John Street on the left. Take John Street 1.5 miles to the stop sign at Riversville Road. The entrance to the Audubon Center is immediately to the right. The Quaker Ridge Hawk Watch site is just inside, to the left. A continuous watch is maintained from late August well into November. This is the best spot in Connecticut to see large numbers of Broad-wings and very reliable for Golden Eagle.

LIGHTHOUSE POINT PARK---New Haven.

Northbound on Interstate 95 take Exit 50 (southbound take Exit 51) and travel south on Townsend Avenue for 2.3 miles to Lighthouse Road. Turn right onto Lighthouse Road to the park entrance. The hawk watch site is inside the park in the lot to the left. This is a good locale for Sharp-shins, Ospreys and Kestrels. For further information call Ron Bell at 203-387-3815.

EAST SHORE PARK---New Haven.

This is a sister lookout to Lighthouse Point, but not a continuous watch throughout the fall. Counters and watchers are on hand following cold fronts when usually the winds will be northerly. East Shore is just two miles north of Lighthouse on the east shore of New Haven Harbor. For information on this site call Neil Currie at 203-426-9861.

Some other Connecticut sites that bear hawk watchers include Grassy Hill (also called Good Hill) in Woodbury and Booth Hill in West Hartland, on Route 20. Call Neil Currie for further information on these and other possible additional sites. There is also a need for other sites, even in your back yard. Any counts that you may make are welcome. The more reports we receive, the more complete the information about hawk migration through the state of Connecticut.

Please report your count information to Neil Currie at 10 Mountain Laurel Lane, Sandy Hook, CT 06482.

**The Newsletter of the
Connecticut Ornithological Association
is published quarterly in
February, May, August, and November.**

**Please submit materials for the next
issue by November 1, 1997 to
Dwight G. Smith, Editor,
241 Shepard Avenue, Hamden, CT 06514.**

COA Bulletin

"Expresso Brazil" with Field Guides, Inc.

March 6 to March 21, 1997

by Polly Brody

This was my second trip to South America with Field Guides. Our leader was Jan Pierson. We were fourteen days in the field. Total species seen: 302, lifers; 174. This compares modestly with northern Ecuador, where 19 field days produced 500 species and 330 life birds!

We visited three distinct ecological regions: Itatiaia National Park---mountain forests ranging from 3500 to 7000 feet; Iquacu Falls, both the Argentine and Brazillian sides---these cataracts with associated bamboo forests, are unique in South America; the Pantanal---vast, low-elevation, seasonally flooded savanna of southwestern Brazil.

A few negative impressions before the raves. Forests were notably quieter than I expected. No dawn choruses. Fewer hummingbirds and fewer tanagers. Only four colorful Tangara species but of these three were new and lovely; Green-headed, Gilt-edged, and Brassy-breasted. I was greatly frustrated by the absence of an adequate field guide (not yet published). I used Birds of Argentina and Uruguay. It covered about 65 percent of our birds. Its color drawings are awful. Not true to life, some not even close!

Now, here come the goodies!

Our last stop was First in satisfaction. Pousada Caiman---the ranch at which we stayed while in the Pantanal---was exquisitely comfortable, and birds abounded. Three glorious Hyacinth Macaws roosted nightly in the courtyard tree. What a delight to watch pairs of these huge, long-tailed, royal purple birds flying wingtip to wingtip. More thrilling than the Blue Angels! Their *basso-profundo* vocalizations mixed with the shrill screeches of their numerous cousins each morning.

Psittacidae were everywhere; Nanday Parakeets---stunning, lime-green bodies with velvety black heads and carmine thighs; Peach-fronted Parakeets; Blue-crowned Parakeets; Blaze-winged Parakeets, a species highly local and found in only this area; Monk Parakeets; a pair of gorgeous Red-and-Green Macaws; Yellow-collared Macaws; and a flock of Red-shouldered Macaws (first time recorded on the ranch by our group).

In addition, there were Rheas, South America's answer to the Ostrich; shaggy-crested Red-legged Seriemas which called Africa's Secretary Bird to mind; ibises galore, including the handsome Bluff-necked Ibis and, a new one for me, the Plumbeous Ibis, both of which roosted along with the Hyacinth Macaws about our courtyard! Daily we saw

Jabiru Storks, up close and wonderful to photograph. To top this all off, we had unbeatable, leisurely views of a pair of Black-and-white Hawk Eagles at their nest tree!

The tour's first stop was Itatiaia---four hours by van from Rio. We stayed at Hotel Do Ype---a good restaurant with pool/patio complex and about 20 Swiss chalet cottages perched on a very steep hillside. Every step was up or down---calf muscles were well exercised! Four days here, strolling forest trails.

Avian highlights; Giant Antshrike! The male is black-crested and barred slate with white below. The female is barred with cinnamon. These birds are large as *stout cuckoos*. Brought to the forest edge by our leader's tape were; Bertoni's and Ferruginous Antbirds, Streak-capped Antwren and Variable Antshrike. A lovely White-collared Foliage-bgeaner showed up, and a tiny White-barred Piculet. However, 40 minutes of tape seduction won us no more than the voice of a Such's Anthrush, who made his comments from a yard away, invisible behind impenetrable foliage.

Our first day's star bird was a Blue (swallow-tailed) Manakin. The male was vocalizing from a perch fifteen feet within the forest, and fortuitously spotlighted in a sunbeam!

Each morning we saw Safron Toucanets and Red-breasted Toucans in the trees around the hotel. The trip's two most dramatic hummers visited feeders there: the Brazilian ruby and Black Jacobin. But Itatiaia's most exciting hummingbird was the Plovercrest. This mountain species is not common. We were lucky to see three---a female, immature male, and a fine adult male sporting his long, slender crest which curved forward much in the manner of a Gambel's Quail.

At Iquacu Falls, birds competed with the mighty, multiple cataracts for our attention. The Parana River, which drains the lower Pantanel, pours all of its volume over a series of headwalls into a chasm of volcanic origin. Clouds of misty spume rise over the forest canopy, giving the impression of a forest fire, when seen from an airplane.

Although the bamboo forests were relatively quiet, we did see some noteworthy birds. The Blond-crested Woodpecker was splendid. It is the size of a Pileated, has a long, shaggy golden crest and head, with a scarlet malar in the male. Its belly is jet black, its wings and back are barred

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HOTLINE REPORTS

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

Frank Mantlik 203-846-8601

Mark Szantyr 860-429-4038

Frank Gallo 203-966-6756

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Expresso Brazil

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black with cream and it has a golden rump. Another great bird was the Red-ruffed Fruitcrow---actually a large cotinga, not a corvid. Its deep-pitched calls sounded like those of Africa's Ground Hornbill---sonorous yet mysteriously muted.

On the Argentine side of the Falls, we received a delightful surprise on the early morning we stepped into the hotel garden. Two great Black-fronted Piping-guans were clambering about in an ornamental tree. We had grand views of these usually hard-to-come-by birds before they flushed and flew into the forest.

Our stroll along the forest paths rewarded us with the uncommon Chestnut-headed Tanager, which is a "bamboo specialist." Hard work with the tape finally lured a Spot-backed Antshrike into view and a dear little Ochre-collared Piculet showed up as well.

The Brazilian side of the forest seemed very slow---quiet and low in bird activity. The only new species were: Rufous-breasted Leaf-tosser, Southern Antpipit, and a Southern Bristle-tyrant.

The bird which Jan Pierson counted most rewarding of all seen in these bamboo forests was a Rusty-breasted Nunlet---a passive little number discovered by Beverly (one of our group). It sat demure, brown and silent. Jan said it was one of the most reclusive and hard to spot birds on our tour.

On our final afternoon, we climbed down to a viewing platform at the base of a thunderous cascade called the Devil's Throat...why do people choose names like that for such magnificent phenomena? Great Dusky Swifts zoomed in through the curtain of water. We saw ranks of these birds crowded flank-to-flank, like a clotted *hive of birds*, grasping the rock wall under the roaring water. Newcomers arrowed in, precisely penetrating the thinnest screen of the torrent, and attaching themselves headlong to the vertical wall. What a show!

Articles--Articles

Are always needed for the *COA Bulletin*. I appreciate very much your response to this issue---lots of good stuff sent to me in a timely fashion, so I don't have to tear out my hair, or rather, remaining hair, worrying about where I can obtain articles. Seriously, I am always interested in articles on a wide range of birding topics from virtually anywhere in the world. Your birding experiences are of interest to the COA members---they want to hear about them so they can dream of birding events, places, and happenings and work on getting their own birding experiences going. Please share them with our readers.

President's Message

by Dave Provencher

Nearly every week we read newspaper accounts of someone who has acted in a way that we feel is heroic. A passerby pulls someone from a burning building, or jumps into a river to save a drowning child, or takes some other bold action to help someone. We publicly celebrate these heroes and widely praise their actions. We proclaim that surely this is humanity at its very best. The fact is, however, that these heroes are just ordinary people who responded to a crisis. They simply did what they felt had to be done and they often are uncomfortable with the attention they receive. "How could I stand by and do nothing?" they ask.

There is another group of people doing things that they feel need to be done, only this group receives little attention. These are the people who volunteer their time and energy to important issues. These volunteers often achieve a great deal while their only personal regard is the knowledge of having done the right thing. Virtually every spectrum of our society has volunteers and the COA is no exception. There are many areas in the world of birding that rely on volunteers. Everything from breeding bird surveys to leading field trips to monitoring endangered species breeding sites and much more. These volunteers are heroes in their own right, heroes without the hoopla, stealth heroes. One such hero is Hank Golet.

The 1996 Osprey breeding season at Great Island Marsh in Old Lyme was a virtual disaster and this was the third straight bad year. A number of possible causes were discussed, including predation, human disturbance, environmental degradation, and prey shortages, among others. A number of people and organizations responded, including a neighbor of Roger Tory Peterson's, Hank Golet. It had been noted that some of the nesting platforms showed signs of raccoon predation. To combat this, Hank designed, fabricated, and installed new predator guards on the platform poles. He has also assisted in the monitoring of nests, which include inspecting the nests and eggs as well as observing human activities and eventually helping to band the young birds. Hank has put in many hours on this project and the assistance he has given has been invaluable. His predator guards have proven very effective and his keen observations have brought a number of other problems to light. Thanks to the work of Hank and other dedicated volunteers and professionals, many more young Ospreys from Great Island will be heading south this fall than last year. This is an excellent example of how caring volunteer birders can help such organizations as DEP make a difference.

There is more need now for volunteers than ever.

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President's Message

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The opportunities are many and varied. Chances are you will receive a great deal of personal satisfaction if you chose to help. You won't be getting a parade down Main Street, USA, in your honor, unfortunately, but you will make a difference. I, for one, deeply appreciate your efforts.

As president of a wonderful organization, and as one who deeply cares about the natural world, let me say thank you from the bottom of my heart to all those who have volunteered their time and energy to such worthy causes. And to those who have not yet joined the ranks, I would simply say, why not be like Hank? This winter, the warm waters to our south will be home to quite a few more Ospreys, thanks to his efforts. Hank's Ospreys!!

Fall Birding Opportunities

By the time you receive this issue of the *COA Bulletin* the fall migration of shorebirds, swallows and songbirds will be in full swing. From mid-July through August and into September coastal birding sites such as Milford Point, Hammonasset Beach State Park, Bluff Point Coastal Reserve, Greenwich Point Park, Griswold Point, and Sandy Point will be some of the featured birding hot spots in the state. The woods and thickets at these sites and also at inland sites such as Osborndale State Park and Station 43 will also host great concentrations of migrating songbirds. Late August heralds the start of the evening migration of Common Nighthawks which can be seen during late evening hours at Naugatuck State Forest, West Rock Ridge State Park, Sherwood Island State Park, and many other locations.

The fall migration of shorebirds and swallows peaks as the hawk migration begins. Connecticut locales for hawk watching are featured by Neil Currie in this issue of the COA Bulletin, so take your choice. Lighthouse Point Park, Hammonasset Beach State Park, and Quaker Ridge are probably the most popular of the fall hawk watching sites, but they can also be the busiest. Perhaps you might try one of the alternate sites this year? The overlooks at East Rock Park, West Rock Ridge State Park and the ridgetop at Mt Baldy are used for watching hawks at eye level.

For many birders, October is a favorite month. Cool temperatures cause a sharp drop in the number of visitors to parks and other good birding locales just at the time when lots of birds are moving through. Inland, birders may want

to schedule a visit to Bantam Lake in Litchfield for Ruddy Duck, American Coot and other waterbirds. October is also a good month for fall sparrows. Savannah, Lincoln's, White-throated, White-crowned, and the rarer Lark, Clay-colored, and Henslow's Sparrows may occur at coastal birding sites such as Barn Island Wildlife Management Area, Bluff Point Coastal Reserve, Lighthouse Point Park, and Sherwood Island State Park. Inland birders can try the fields and pastures at Farmington Meadows, Horse Barn Hill, White Memorial Foundation or Station 43.

Late autumn is relatively quiet following the excitement of fall migration, but this is also the time when many rarities show up, such as Tropical Kingbird, Gray Kingbird and Black-throated Gray Warbler. Waterfowl concentrations can still be found at many lakes, rivers and coastal sites. This is also the season to keep tabs on the Rare Bird Alert.

Late fall also offers the potential for sea ducks, errant migrants or storm blown species. The coastal waters off Harkness Memorial State Park, Griswold Point, Hammonasset Beach State Park and other coastal localities offer some good possibilities.

For information on birding these and other sites in Connecticut, check your copy of *Connecticut Birding Guide* by Arnold Devine and Dwight Smith.

Ornithological News from UCONN

After 32 years on the faculty of the University of Connecticut, George A. Clark, Jr., is retiring at the end of the spring 1997 semester. His address is now Box 1226, Norwich, VT, 05055, telephone 802-649-2305. Although he is to be living out of state, George hopes to maintain his connections with Connecticut birders. His successor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Storrs is Margaret A. Rubega. A graduate of Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven, she received her Ph.D. from the University of California at Irvine and is scheduled to join the faculty at Storrs for the fall semester of 1998, after she completes a current postdoctoral appointment at the University of Nevada in Reno. She is widely known for her studies of phalarope biology and her achievements in avian conservation. Oversight of bird specimens, photographs, and other holdings of the UConn ornithological collections is now provided by Dr. Les Mehrhoff, who became manager of the vertebrate collections over a year ago following the retirement of Robert Dubos. Dr. Mehrhoff can be reached at the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT, 06269-3042.

Faculty members currently involved in ornithological
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News from UCONN

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studies at UConn include Dr. John Barclay (Department of Natural Resources Management and Engineering), who has been conducting extensive studies on the conservation of the declining Greater Scaup. Dr. David Miller (Department of Psychology) is especially interested in the development of calls in young ducks. He is also editor of the international journal *Bird Behavior*. Dr. Andrew Moiseff (Department of Physiology and Neurobiology) has been studying the remarkable hearing ability of Barn Owls, which can locate their prey in total darkness.

[We will all miss George Clark's innumerable contributions to Connecticut ornithology and birding]

The White Hawk

by Greg Hanisek

I think I've described this scenario before: looking down for butterflies, glancing up in time to see something else. Last week it was a group of great blue heron nests in a dead tree towering over a swamp.

This time a friend and I were searching a dry field in Plymouth for swallowtails, skippers and hairstreaks. A loop around the Greater Waterbury area had produced a nice array of butterflies, and we were close to wrapping up our census.

Earlier, at a flower-filled field in Middlebury, we'd heard a red-tailed hawk screaming at the edge of nearby woods. My friend answered with a very acceptable imitation. In fact his rendering was so good that he shook up a pair of Indigo Buntings nesting somewhere around the border of the field.

The heart-breaking blue male and the drab brown female chipped and chatted in high dugeon, erecting their crests and wagging their tails as the bogus hawk encroaching on their domain.

The red-tail is the most common hawk in our region, and we saw several during the course of the day. On our way to the field in Plymouth, I showed my friend a spot where I'd been entertained by a less common nester, a Cooper's hawk, just a day or two earlier. I related how the bird had circled above an evergreen grove, clucking excitedly as I walked along the edge of an adjacent pond.

Then we got on with the business of the survey. I was looking down, trying to focus my binoculars on a grass-hugging southern cloudywing, when my friend sputtered something about hawks. White hawk. Look up. Over there. Hurry up. When he mentioned white, my first thought turned to the ever-present Red-tails. Red-tailed Hawks in

aberrant white plumage show up every now and then. They're certainly not common, but it happens often enough that it's not unexpected.

But when I looked up I didn't see a Red-tail. I saw two smaller hawks cavorting in the air. One was a standard issue Broad-winged Hawk, a species that nests sparsely in Connecticut woodlands. The other was a ghostly wraith of a bird, pale and glowing as it caught the afternoon sun. After some close scrutiny, we determined the size, shape and what few markings it showed, that by this too was a Broad-winged Hawk. In fact, they probably were a local breeding pair.

Leucism, as this aberrant pale condition is known, can occur in any bird, but I hadn't heard of it before in Broad-wings. We left the butterflies at our feet as we watched, mesmerized by a form that turned gracefully above our head and then floated away, a brief apparition adrift on a July breeze.

COA Fall Field Day

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Flo McBride, a COA member who has developed a program for introducing children to birding in the Hamden School System, will lead a children's bird walk early in the day. Elayna Grody, the naturalist at Northwest Park has many exciting activities planned for children. An outdoor program on animal tracking is planned, where children will be able to make their own field observations. Participants will be able to make casts of animal tracks that they can take home. There will also be a program for children to "meet the animals of the park"; the frogs, snakes, turtles, and resident farm animals.

There will be indoor programs (more if it rains!). Dave Provencher, president of COA will present a slide lecture entitled, "Identifying Sparrows: It Doesn't Have to Hurt." Jenny Dickson, wildlife biologist with the Connecticut DEP, will present "Connecticut's Grassland Birds." Northwest Park is one of the state's finest examples of grasslands, and the importance of this habitat for specific birds will be discussed.

Fall Field Day fees are \$5.00 for adults (under 16 free) If you preregister, the fee must be received by September 12. Send checks to Joann Meyers, 4 Sextons Hollow Road, Canton, CT 06019. Registration on the day of the event is \$7.00. Children must be accompanied by adults. However, adults don't have to stay with children during sponsored events.

If you would like to car pool, remember "it's not only

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cheaper, its greener! You can plan to bring your lunch or you can purchase sandwiches and other goodies from the friends of Northwest Park. There are several sheltered picnic areas on the grounds where you may be able to eat and watch birds and butterflies at the same time. Members will receive registration materials in the mail. Should you have any questions, call Fran D'Amico at 203-237-2734.

DIRECTIONS TO NORTHWEST PARK

From Interstate 91 North, take Exit 38. From Interstate 91 South, take Exit 38A. Go right and continue north on Poquonock Avenue. Look for the yellow COA directional signs. Turn left onto Prospect Hill Road. Continue to traffic circle (1 mile). Turn right onto Lang Road. The park is located at the end of Lang Road. There is ample free parking.

The Fifth Annual National Big Sit! October 19, 1997

by John Himmelman

Choose a spot anywhere within Connecticut, or the state and county that you wish to represent. Draw an imaginary 17 foot circle in the spot and count how many birds you, or you and your teammates, can see or hear within 24 hours while you are within the circle. Last year, 21 states, 158 individuals in 48 circles counted 296 species while competing for the most birds seen within a circle, the most birds seen from combined circles within a state, and the most seen within an inland circle in Connecticut.

Last year, Connecticut came in second to California for the second year in a row. We need more people out there! Do your backyard, do your favorite birding area, bring a lawn chair, have a barbeque, fall asleep, and watch the patterns of nature from your stationary vantage point. Call John Himmelman at 860-663-3225 for more info and to register your spot (we don't want two people showing up in the same place).

Or send E-mail to jhimmle@connix.com.

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

Trips and Events

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The Audubon Shop in Madison

BIRD WALKS AT HAMMONASSET BEACH STATE PARK, every Saturday, from September 13 to Thanksgiving. Meet at the Audubon Shop at 7:50 am. Fee: \$2. Call Jerry Connolly at 203-245-9056 for details.

Menunkatuck Audubon Society

MORNING FLIGHT; BIRDING BLUFF POINT IN FALL, on September 10, Wednesday, at 7:30 pm. Talk and discussion by Dave Provencher, Nathaniel D. Greene Community Center, Guilford, Route 77, south of Exit 58 off I-95. Call Jerry Connolly at 203-245-9056 for details.

The Fat Robin, Hamden

BIRD WALKS AT FARMINGTON CANAL GREENWAY, SLEEPING GIANT, OTHER LOCALES, offered by Jim and Carol Zipp. Call or drop by The Fat Robin nature store on Whitney Avenue in Hamden for more details on these and other events sponsored by the Zippes. Call at 203-248-7068 for details.

COA Bulletin

TRIPS & EVENTS

COA Workshops

COA Identification Workshops are geared for birders at all levels of experience. These instructional field trips are designed to improve identification skills and are led by experienced birders. Workshops are open to all. For information, call Dave Provencher at 860-885-1239, or E-mail him at Nightjar@Compuserve.com. The following workshops are scheduled for 1997.

SHOREBIRD WORKSHOP, on Sunday, August 31st, from 8 am to noon. Learn the basics of shorebird identification as well as look for uncommon and rare shorebirds for our area. The workshop will be held at Milford Point, one of Connecticut's most important migratory shorebird staging areas. Other coastal bird species will be discussed as opportunity allows. Meet at the new coastal center at Milford Point, Milford.

HAWK WORKSHOP, on Sunday, October 12th, from 9 am to noon. Identifying the species of hawks migrating over Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven will be the main thrust of this workshop. Lighthouse Point Park is known throughout New England as one of the premier coastal hawk watch sites. Observers will be on the site starting at dawn when the morning songbird flight occurs. Meet at the hawk watch site in the parking area.

WATERFOWL WORKSHOP, on Saturday, November 22nd. The southwestern Connecticut coastline will play host to this workshop that will cover whatever waterfowl we can find, from grebes to ducks. Identification and natural history will make for a pleasant late fall outing. Call for further details.

Hartford Audubon Society

Wildlife Series: Held at the McAuley Residence Auditorium, 275 Steele Road, West Hartford, CT

BIRD HABITATS AND BIRD DISTRIBUTION, on Tuesday, October 21 at 7:30 pm. Paul Lehman will take you on a slide show journey through North America, describing the major habitat types and the characteristic and speciality birds found in each habitat. Paul is a trip leader for Wings, and has been editor of ABA's Birding magazine for the past nine years. Fee: \$4. For more information call Fran D'Amico at 203-237-2734.

THE INTIMATE GALAPAGOS--A PERSONAL ADVENTURE, by Sam Fried, on Tuesday, November 18, at 7:30 pm at the McAuley Center. From Darwin's enigmatic finches, giant tortoises, and lizards, to sea lions, penguins, iguanas, flamingos and fish. Sam Fried, birder, naturalist, and photographer will be premiering his newest program, based on his trip there in February, 1997. Fee: \$4. For more information call Fran D'Amico at 203-237-2734.

FIELD TRIPS

HAWK WATCH AT BOOTH HILL, on Saturday and Sunday, September 13 & 14. Bring a chair, food, and drink, and spend the day watching for Broadwings, Ospreys, ravens, perhaps an eagle. Meet at 8:30 am. Call leader Paul Carrier at 860-485-9654 for info.

STATION 43, SOUTH WINDSOR, on Sunday, October 12. A good area for sparrows and raptors. Meet at the corner of Newberry Road and Main Street at 7:30 am. Call leader Carl Ekroth at 860-972-6372 for details.

HAMMONASSET FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS, on Sunday, October 19. These trips will offer opportunity to sharpen birding skills. Meet at 8:00 am at the entrance. Take Exit 62 off I-95, head south to the park entrance. Call leader John Gaskell at 860-669-1862 for details.

RHODE ISLAND SHORELINE, on Saturday, October 25. Check out Rhode Island's south shore from Point Judith west towards Connecticut for waterfowl, gannets, hawks, and wintering birds. Meet at Point Judith at 8:00 am. Call leader Paul Desjardins at 860-623-3696 for details.

BANTAM LAKE AREA, LITCHFIELD, on Saturday, November 15. Explore the White Memorial Foundation and Bantam Lake area in search of migrating ducks, coots, and other early winter birds. Bring warm clothing and lunch. Meet at the Litchfield Green at 8:00 am. Call leader Paul Carrier at 860-485-9654 for info.

(more trips and events on page 7)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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

President Dave Provencher, 43 Branch Hill Rd, Preston, CT 06360 860-885-1239
Vice President Mark Szantyr, 2C Yale Road, Storrs, CT 06268 860-429-4038
Treasurer Carl Trichka, 65 Glover Street, Fairfield, CT 06430 203-259-2623
Secretary Andrew Brand, 59 Brooksvale Ave, Hamden, CT 06518 203-230-1718

COA COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Bylaws Joseph Zeranski, 163 Field Point Rd, Greenwich, CT 06830 203- 661-9607
Conservation Paul Fusco, 4 Old Country Road, Oxford, CT 06484 203-584-9830
Field Trips Dave Provencher, 43 Branch Hill Rd., Preston, CT 0606360 860-885-1239
Membership Lise Hanners, Devil's Den Preserve, Box 1162, Weston, CT 06883 203- 226-4991
Program Fran D'Amico, 508 Preston Avenue, Meriden, CT 06450 203-237-2734
Publications Betty Kleiner, 5 Flintlock Ridge, Simsbury, CT 06070 860-658-5670
Rare Records Frank Mantlik, 261 Chestnut Hill Rd, Norwalk, CT 06851 203-846-8601
Research Robert Askins, CT College/Biology, New London, CT 06320 860-439-2149

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