

## Second Annual New Haven Hawk Festival, September 18

**City of New Haven, Audubon Connecticut, COA and Local Bird Organizations to Celebrate Hawk Migration at the Lighthouse Point Park Important Bird Area**

The City of New Haven's Lighthouse Point Park is one of the best places in the Northeast to see migrating hawks, and a great place to see songbirds, butterflies and dragonflies too. Now you can get to know this area, find fun for the whole family and experience your own "Winged Migration" with the help of local birders and butterfly experts. The New Haven Parks Department, New Haven Bird Club, Menunkatuck Audubon Society, New Haven Land Trust, Audubon Connecticut, Northeast Hawkwatch, the Connecticut Ornithological Association and the Connecticut Butterfly Association are proud to team up to celebrate the phenomenon of hawk migration with the Second Annual New Haven Hawk Festival.

Everyone is welcome to come and witness the wonder of hawk migration and participate in the many programs featuring hawks and other migratory birds. In addition to the migrating wild birds, educators from Wind Over Wings will give a live hawk and owl demonstration. This will give you an opportunity to see live birds of prey up close and to learn about their biology and behavior. Other highlights of the day's events include:

- *"Hawk and Birds in Flight Identification" seminar led by experts from the Connecticut Ornithological Association*
- *Bird walks led by experts from the New Haven Bird Club*
- *Bird banding demonstrations by the Connecticut Audubon Society; great close up looks at wild birds.*
- *Monarch tagging with the Connecticut Butterfly Association*
- *Butterfly and dragonfly walks*
- *A children's bird walk*
- *Close up looks of specimens of hawks and other birds from the Connecticut Museum of Natural History at UCONN*

- *Tours of the historic lighthouse*
- *Carousel rides on the park's historic carousel*
- *Canoe trips led by expert naturalists from the City of New Haven's Parks Department.*

"We are excited about this event," said Patrick Comins, COA Director and Audubon Connecticut's Director of Bird Conservation. "Lighthouse Point Park is one of the places that got me interested in birding and we are thrilled to share this special place with others who love birds and to help

*cont'd on page 2*

### September 25 Sunset Cruise to View Swallow Spectacle on the Connecticut River

COA and the Connecticut Audubon Society are pleased to announce a Connecticut River boat trip on Saturday, September 25, to view the phenomenon of migrating Tree Swallows along the lower Connecticut River. In late summer each year, Tree Swallows migrating south from their breeding locations congregate in large numbers, with roosting sites typically along water bodies. Cattails and phragmites in the lower Connecticut River provide excellent cover for these birds. Please join us for what promises to be an exhilarating trip!

Renowned ornithologist and artist, the late Roger Tory Peterson, was a resident of Old Lyme. Despite his world travels observing birds, he was unaware of what was happening in the equivalent of his backyard, until a fellow birder introduced him to the annual Tree Swallow migration. Awestruck by the birds, numbering in the hundreds of thousands on certain nights, Mr. Peterson declared this to be one of the most amazing events he had ever witnessed. Swallows begin to congregate in the hour before sunset, massing and swirling over the marshes where they will roost. Most evenings end with a funnel of birds, similar in appearance to a tornado, as

*cont'd on page 7*

# COA Bulletin

## New Haven Hawk Festival, September 18

*cont'd from page 1*

people see first hand why this City park has been named one of Connecticut's Important Bird Areas."

Last Year's event was a tremendous success and all of the organizers are looking forward to an even better festival this year. "With the new activities, and word of how much fun last year's event was, we expect another record crowd this year." says Dan Barvir, Park Ranger for the City of New Haven. "It is a great nature outing for families and people of all ages."

Because of the geography of the park, Lighthouse Point Park is a major stopover destination for hawks, some of which are migrating from Canada to Central America. Counts of fall migrating raptors are, on average, higher than at any reporting site northeast of Cape May, with annual numbers of some species, such as Sharp-shinned Hawks,

and American Kestrels running into the thousands. Lighthouse Point Park is also a great place to see some of the less common raptors, such as, Peregrine Falcon, Northern Goshawk and Bald Eagle. Not only is the park a hotspot to see migrating raptors, but the spectacle of migrating songbirds can be just as impressive; thousands of birds such as Bobolinks, Cedar Waxwings, Blue Jays, American Robins, Tree Swallows, blackbirds, and large numbers of many other species pass Lighthouse Point each fall. The same geography that makes Lighthouse Point Park a great place to see birds also makes it a popular destination for butterfly and dragonfly enthusiasts. New Haven Parks and Recreation staff has strategically avoided mowing areas of the park to provide wildflowers to attract butterflies with their nectar, and the Connecticut Butterfly Association has donated Butterfly Bushes and other nectar plants to the City for the Park so the butterflying should be fantastic.

*cont'd on page 3*

## Barn Island Protection Celebrated

One year ago, a group of partners were successful in acquiring a 144-acre addition to the State's Barn Island Wildlife Management Area. The COA championed this project, which involved The Nature Conservancy, State Department of Environmental Protection and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. The property, which increases the size of Barn Island by nearly 20%, includes salt marsh, forested swamps, and upland coastal forest.

In celebration of this effort, COA will be one of the groups awarded a 2004 Coastal America Partnership Award for its participation in the recent acquisition in Stonington, CT. The State DEP, USFWS, and other partners will also receive awards for their efforts in this project, and for a nationally-recognized history of successful tidal marsh restoration and research at Barn Island.

The Coastal America Partnership was established in 1992 to protect, preserve and restore our coastal watersheds by integrating federal actions with state and local government and non-governmental efforts. Federal partners include the Departments of Agriculture, Air Force, Army, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Navy, State, Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Executive Office of the President. To recognize outstanding partnership efforts,

Coastal America established a national awards program in 1997. The Barn Island Team is one of ten partnership initiatives nationwide selected to receive the 2004 award.

Each award recipient will be receiving a plaque and letter from President Bush recognizing its efforts. The ceremony was scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on Friday, September 10, 2004, and was held at the boat launch at the Barn Island Wildlife Management Area. Following the ceremony, there was a tour of the Wildlife Management Area.

In his 1972 "Report on Barn Island Marshes," the late Dr. William Niering of Connecticut College recognized the area as the "finest wild coastal area in Connecticut." Barn Island is home to nine birds listed as endangered, threatened or of special concern by the DEP, and has been named an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society. The marshes help sustain the productivity and biological diversity of offshore waters, and support such salt marsh-specialists as the Willet and Clapper Rail.

Prior to its protection, the 144-acre parcel had been approved by the Town of Stonington for development as a golf course.

# COA Bulletin

## Second Annual New Haven Hawk Festival, September 18

cont'd from page 2

### Annual Averages for Migrating Raptors Recorded at Lighthouse Point Park

Species	Average Annual totals	Species	Average Annual totals
Turkey Vulture	264.3	Red-shouldered Hawk	70.7
Osprey	1305.2	Broad-winged Hawk	1314.3
Bald Eagle	41.4	Red-tailed Hawk	519.3
Northern Harrier	577.4	Rough-legged Hawk	1.9
Sharp-shinned Hawk	6840.2	American Kestrel	2136.8
Cooper's Hawk	795.5	Merlin	297.2
Northern Goshawk	14.4	Peregrine Falcon	105

### Schedule of Events

Time	Activity
8am-ongoing-	Hawk Watching (mid-field area) Northeast Hawkwatch
8am-9:30-	Bird Walk, New Haven Bird Club
8am- 10:45 am -	Hawk and Birds in flight ID workshop, lead by the Connecticut Ornithological Association.
9am- 10:15 am -	Children's bird walk with Flo McBride of the New Haven Bird Club.
9am-12noon-	Canoe Rides on Morris Creek, by City of New Haven Parks Staff.
9am-1pm -	Open House at the Ranger Station (featuring Long Island Sound Creatures and Hawk specimens from UCONN's Natural History Museum).
9:30am-11:30am	Bird banding demonstration by the Connecticut Audubon Society
9:30am-10:45 am-	Bird Walk, New Haven Bird Club
9:00am-11:45am-	Tours of the historic lighthouse by City of New Haven Park staff.
9:00am-12:00 noon-	Monarch butterfly banding demonstration, by Connecticut Butterfly Association.
11:00am-1:30pm-	Ride the historic carousel, City of New Haven.
11:00am-12 noon-	Butterfly and Dragonfly Walk, Connecticut Butterfly Association.
1:00pm-2:00pm-	Butterfly and Dragonfly Walk, Connecticut Butterfly Association.
12:15-1:15 pm-	Live Raptor Show presented by "Wind over Wings"

Please park in the paved parking lots and walk to the mid-field pavilion. Information booths, events and walks are located there. This event is sponsored by the New Haven Parks Department, New Haven Bird Club, Menunkatuck Audubon Society, New Haven Land Trust, Audubon Connecticut, Northeast Hawkwatch, the Connecticut Ornithological Association and the Connecticut Butterfly Association.

# COA Bulletin

## News From the American Bird Conservancy and Bird Conservation Alliance

*The Connecticut Ornithological Association is a member of the American Bird Conservancy and Bird Conservation Alliance. Together, these two groups put out the Bird Calls newsletter, featuring bird-related articles on conservation and policy. The COA Bulletin will feature items from this newsletter that may be of interest to birders in Connecticut and the northeast.*

### Researchers Find Cozumel Thrasher

A remarkable discovery by biologists on the island of Cozumel, off the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico, has restored hope for a species that was feared by many to be extinct. Previous recent expeditions to find the Cozumel Thrasher had proved unsuccessful, but in early June 2004, a single bird was sighted by a team of field biologists working in conjunction with Villanova University and the Mexican counterpart of the Island Endemics Institute.

"This is terrific news for this species," said Dr. George Wallace, Vice President for International Programs at ABC, which has sponsored the project to relocate the species under its William Belton Small Grants program, along with Conservation International. "It opens a door to a range of possibilities that might eventually even see the establishment of a protected area or breeding program if more birds are found."

Despite the heartening news, the reason for the species' decline remains a mystery. Hurricanes, particularly Gilbert in 1988, have clearly taken their toll, but given that the thrasher evolved with this natural phenomenon (frequent in this region), they are likely only to be a contributory factor rather than the primary cause. Predation by boa constrictors, introduced on Cozumel in 1971 and now abundant throughout the island, is an additional potential threat. Fortunately, large tracts of deciduous and semi-deciduous forest, thought to be the species' preferred habitat, still remain, and the birds are not hunted or trapped for the cage-bird trade.

The team will try to determine the size and range of the population represented by this single bird, and then return in

January 2005, when the birds are known to sing more frequently, to attempt further surveys. To protect this and potentially other birds from disturbance, the exact location of the discovery is not being disclosed to the public. For more information, visit <http://oikos.villanova.edu/cozumel>.

### East Coast Red Knots Plummet, Recovery Starts Here

The Red Knot is a widely distributed shorebird that breeds in the high Arctic in both the old and new worlds. One important population breeds in the North American Arctic and migrates to the coast of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego each year - a round-trip journey of approximately 20,000 miles. Recent data show that this population has crashed since the mid-1980s, the principal reason being a paucity of horseshoe crab eggs on the beaches of Delaware Bay, upon which a large proportion of this population relies for food during spring migration.

A study published in *The Condor* in February 2004, shows that in 2003, numbers of Red Knots at their principal wintering site, Bahia Lomas in Chile, had fallen by more than 50% from mid-1980s levels to approximately 30,000. Declines at peripheral sites were even more dramatic: down 98% over the same period. Another study, published on March 22 in the online version of the *Journal of the Royal Society of London*, shows that an increasing number of Red Knots are failing to reach normal body weight for migration during their stopover in Delaware Bay. Both of these alarming trends are linked to over-harvesting of horseshoe crabs, leading to a shortage of crab eggs.

There is good news for the Red Knot, however. A recent ban on harvesting of crabs around Delaware Bay during the critical spawning period - pressed for by ABC and its partners - will help to allow crab numbers to climb, and contribute to the restoration of Red Knot populations along the East Coast flyway.

Also, on May 14, a Red Knot that had been banded in Brazil by researchers with Manomet Center for Conserva-

*cont'd on page 5*

# COA Bulletin

## News From the American Bird Conservancy and Bird Conservation Alliance

cont'd from page 4

tion Sciences more than 20 years ago was photographed on the coast near Jacksonville, Florida. This is the world's oldest known Red Knot, showing that the species is even longer lived than previously thought. A longer average life span indicates a higher potential for the population to rebound after temporary food shortages have ended. For more information, see: [www.cooper.org/cos/condor.html](http://www.cooper.org/cos/condor.html), [www.manomet.org/WHSRN/redknotstory.htm](http://www.manomet.org/WHSRN/redknotstory.htm), and [www.pubs.royalsoc.ac.uk](http://www.pubs.royalsoc.ac.uk).

### Expedition Seeks Critical Cerulean Warbler Stop-off Habitat

This spring, ABC, The Nature Conservancy, and a Belizean partner, the Toledo Institute for Development and the Environment, mounted a successful expedition into the forests of Belize in an effort to confirm and review Cerulean Warbler migration stop-over sites.

It is clear that Cerulean Warbler populations are declining, but the forces driving this decline are less evident. One aspect of the species' life history that is virtually unknown is what these birds require during migration. Unlike many neotropical migrants, there are few records of Ceruleans between their breeding grounds in eastern North America and their wintering grounds in northern South America.

Most of what is known comes from a paper written by the late, renowned ornithologist Ted Parker, who reported seeing at least 100 Cerulean Warblers in April 1992, while completing a biological assessment in the Columbia River Forest Reserve in the Maya Mountains of southwestern Belize. He speculated that the reason there are so few reports of Ceruleans during migration is that they make two over-water flights. The first leg of their journey is over the western Caribbean Ocean and the second over the Gulf of Mexico, stopping for a few days or weeks in mid-elevation forest (2,000–2,500 feet) in Belize and perhaps other Central American countries to gain weight prior to their onward migration. If this is indeed their migration route,

then these mid-elevation forests are highly important habitat for the global population of Cerulean Warblers and perhaps other species that use a similar migration path.

The recent expedition, led by biologist Melinda Welton of the Tennessee Ornithological Society, was timed to coincide with same time of year as Parker's observations. The primary objective was to confirm that Ceruleans were still using the forest around Union Camp in the Columbia River Forest Reserve after the devastating effects of Hurricane Iris in October 2001. The expedition was a success, not only finding Ceruleans in numbers similar to those found by Parker, but finding them to be the most common neotropical migrant in the area.

A follow-up expedition is planned for next year, to include surveys in four or five mid-elevation forested sites in Belize (and possibly Honduras and Guatemala), and simultaneous migration monitoring studies. Efforts will then be made to work with local land managers to develop conservation plans to secure long-term protection for Cerulean Warbler stop-over habitat.

### Condor Update

Five pairs of California Condors are currently incubating eight eggs in both the Arizona and California reintroduction populations. Last season's chick, the first to be hatched in the wild in more than 20 years is doing well and socializing with other birds. The total condor population, both wild and captive, now stands at 245 - a remarkable achievement given that at one point the species was down to just 21 birds. For more information, visit [www.peregrinefund.org](http://www.peregrinefund.org).

# COA Bulletin

## COA Shorebird and Tern Identification Seminar

On Saturday, August 21, approximately 40 participants joined COA at Sandy Point, in West Haven, for its annual Shorebird and Tern identification seminar. COA's seminars are designed to educate birders of all skill levels on the diagnostic features of a certain group of birds, or even a type of birding. In June, the Birding By Ear seminar provided participants the chance to hone their listening skills, broadening horizons beyond the customary reliance on ones binoculars.

Because the southern migration for shorebirds and terns begins by mid-July, and intensifies for the next 6 - 8 weeks, the August timeframe is perfect for a seminar highlighting these birds along our coastal waterways. COA Directors Patrick Comins and Greg Hanisek were the trip leaders, eager to share their knowledge with the group. Despite warm and humid weather, the cloudy conditions and extremely low tide (prime foraging time) were ideal for observation.

Throughout the day, the stars of the show were the terns, with large numbers of Common Terns and, happily, good numbers of Least Terns. Least Terns are a threatened species in Connecticut, and their population has been declining for the last 20 years in our state. An overview of this problem and a look at recommended research and management practices was a focus of a COA report published in its journal, the Connecticut Warbler, this past year.

To help provide good comparisons between tern species, the group was also treated to good looks at both Forster's Terns and Roseate Terns throughout the day. Despite its name, the pinkish hue unique to Roseate Terns is a field characteristic rarely seen by birders, even less so than the red belly of the Red-bellied Woodpecker, or ruby crown of the Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Fortunately, the overcast conditions created enough contrast, and seminar participants were able to observe this coloring quite nicely.

Some excitement came when a juvenile Peregrine Falcon stirred things up a bit by making a few passes at a flock of terns. It was even able to knock a juvenile Common Tern to the water, but the Peregrine was not successful in

grabbing it. Another species of interest during the day were the more than 20 Black Skimmers observed. Not only were there good looks at adults, but seminar participants also observed fledglings and chicks of this species. Skimmers are still an uncommon breeding species in Connecticut, with Sandy Point being one of a handful of sites where this species has attempted to breed. It was 1982 when the first confirmed breeding pair was observed in Connecticut, in the Town of Greenwich.

While the shorebird numbers were not at peak this day, several interesting birds were present between the 9:00 AM - noon timeframe of the seminar. A small flock of more than 20 Red Knots were present, and a good challenge was had with the western subspecies of the Willet, a surprise visitor. A typical eastern bird has its breasts and flanks barred extensively with black, while the barring on the western bird is more subtle and consists of narrow dark bars.

A single American Golden Plover was present, adding another good species for the day. All participants enjoyed the show at Sandy Point and learned how to better identify these often frustrating birds in the process. Please consider joining the COA for an upcoming seminar, where you can enjoy the camaraderie of fellow birders and learn more about the birds that breed in or migrate through our state. Highlight of the Shorebird and Tern seminar? Those Roseates.

**The Newsletter of the Connecticut Ornithological Association is published quarterly in February, May, September, and December. Please submit materials for the next issue by November 15, 2004 to Manny and Teri Merisotis at [manny@merisotis.com](mailto:manny@merisotis.com) or at 93 Ripley Hill Rd., Coventry, CT 06238**

# COA Bulletin

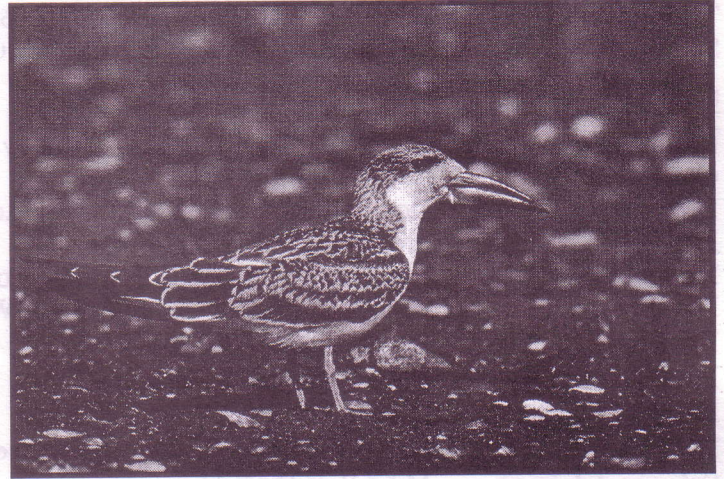
cont'd from page 1

they all but disappear into the marshes in an instantaneous rush to find cover.

The boat trip will leave the dock at the end of Main Street, in Essex, promptly at 5:00 p.m. Participants are encouraged to arrive by 4:30. Note: Refunds will only be given if the Captain cancels the boat due to weather. Please remember that I-95 can have considerable traffic on a Saturday afternoon.

The cost of the trip, which includes the price of dinner, will be \$47.00. (dinner will be your choice of stuffed chicken with herbs or roasted flank steak with horseradish sauce; all dinners will include potato salad, garden salad, roasted vegetables and dessert).

To register for this trip, please call CAS toll free at 800-996-8747 to reserve your spot.  
Visa or MasterCard accepted.



Black Skimmer (juvenile) Photo by A.J. Hand

Directions will be provided to participants.

## JOIN COA FOR THE BEST OF BIRDING IN CONNECTICUT!

New Member  Renewal  Gift

Please Print or Type

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone\* \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address\* \_\_\_\_\_

*COA is always in need of volunteer help. If you are interested please check the areas below that you would like to know more about:*

Computer skills  Events  Field Trips  Finance  Workshops  Science

Membership Category Individual \$18  Family \$25  Contributing \$30  Sustaining \$50

Send this application with your check or money order 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 by law.

# COA Bulletin

## COA OFFICERS

**President** Steve Oresman, 49 Sunswyck Rd., Darien, CT 06820 (203) 656-3907  
**Vice President** Greg Hanisek, 175 Circuit Avenue, Waterbury, CT 06708 (203) 754-4401  
**Treasurer** Peter Bono, P.O. Box 1047, Niantic, CT 06357  
**Secretary** Steve Broker, 50 Hidden Place, Cheshire, CT 06410-3723

## COA COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

**Bulletin** Manny and Teri Merisotis, 93 Ripley Hill Road Coventry, CT 06238, manny@merisotis.com  
**Conservation** Ben Olewine, Redding, CT  
**Electronics** Dori Sosensky, dori.sosensky@yale.edu  
**Finance** Fred Schroeder, West Redding  
**Membership** Roy Harvey, 32 Wanda Drive, Beacon Falls, CT 06403 (203) 888-5757  
**Nominating** Greg Hanisek, 175 Circuit Avenue, Waterbury, CT 06708 (203) 754-4401  
**Program** Jerry Connolly, Madison  
**Publication** Dave Gumbart, Killingworth  
**Rare Records** Dave Provencher, Preston  
**Refuge Relations** Dori Sosensky, dori.sosensky@yale.edu  
**Science Advisory** Milan Bull, Fairfield

## CONNECTICUT ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

314 Unquowa Road  
Fairfield, CT 06430  
www.ctbirding.org

Address correction requested

Non-Profit  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
New Haven, CT  
Permit #415



T2 P1  
Stephen Broker  
50 Hidden Pl  
Cheshire CT 06410-3723

DATED MATERIAL...PLEASE DO NOT DELAY