



## COA President's Message

by Milan G. Bull

On an early fall evening in the late 70's, Dennis Varza, Carl Trichka and I were sitting around a rental room near Hawk Mountain after a day on the north lookout. We had recently discovered that we were not the only licensed bird banders in Connecticut, in fact there were over thirty other active banders in the state. We had a list of who they were, but had no idea of their projects, sites and activities, so we decided to figure out a way to connect with them to share ideas, records, and just plain bird news. We needed a format, some organization and an Advisory Board. As this began to coalesce into an informal newsletter, we soon realized that this kind of information would be of interest to all birders, not just banders. Thus the infant COA was born.

Today, COA has grown into a membership organization that publishes a respected journal and bulletin, is a clearing house for rare records, offers birding workshops, organizes and maintains weekly electronic bird sightings, hosts an entertaining and educational Annual Meeting, supports field work to study at-risk bird populations and partners with organizations and regulatory agencies to protect our avian resources.

These accomplishments are the direct result of a lot of volunteer time and hard work by many people from diverse backgrounds and skills, but with one overriding interest.... sharing their passion for birds and conservation with others. Thanks to all of you who have worked so hard to support this common goal and make COA what it is today, an effective voice in Connecticut bird conservation.

However, I believe there is still much to do. One of my tasks as President will be to help draw the Connecticut birding community closer together, providing a more unified conservation voice for birds as well as support for the agencies that regulate this precious resource.

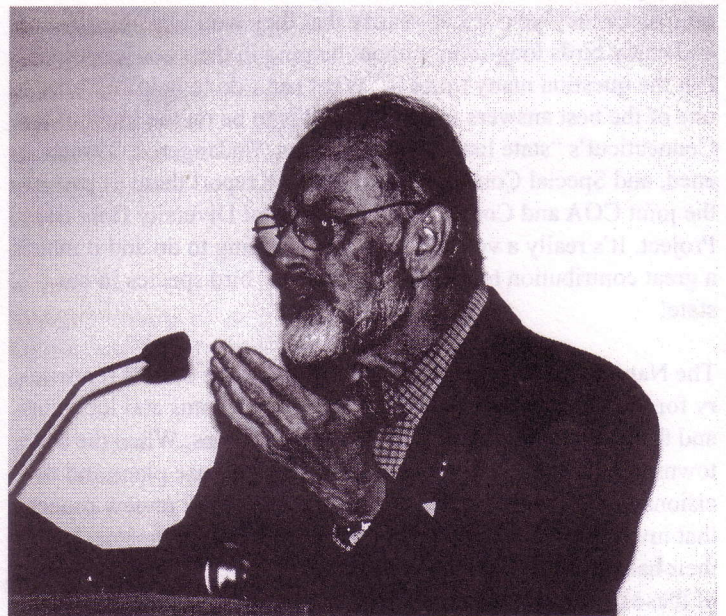
What is the future of bird conservation in Connecticut? What does the road map look like? How can we awaken more of the public to the important issues? How can COA take a more active role in supporting the resource? These are some of the challenges facing us in the near future, and I'm looking forward to working together to reach all of our common goals.

## The 2005 COA Annual Meeting

On March 26, birders from Connecticut and nearby states converged once again on Middlesex Community College to attend the COA Annual Meeting, where they heard excellent presentations on different aspects of migration – the theme of this year's meeting - as well as other bird-oriented topics.

John Kricher, Professor of Biology at Wheaton College, opened the morning session, covering the subject of bird migration in rich detail, and leaving, so it seemed, little for others to talk about. Trevor Lloyd-Evans, however, aptly met this challenge with a data-packed presentation on spring and autumn banding records from decades of mist netting conducted at the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences. He provided a thorough analysis of banding trends, which painted a stark portrait of population declines in a number of familiar songbird species. Wayne Petersen left us hungry after lunch for the next mega-rarity in New England, with a review of vagrancy patterns in the northeast, complete with numerous pictures of tantalizing records to illustrate key concepts.

*cont'd on page 2*



John Kricher addressing the COA Annual Meeting

(photo courtesy of Ellen Bender)



# COA Bulletin

## COA Annual Meeting (continued)

*cont'd from page 1*

We also heard from Karen Zyko of the CT DEP, who showed the new form for submitting reports to the Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB), and reminded us all to record key information necessary to make the data acceptable for entry into the database (see accompanying article on the NDDDB).

Margaret Rubega of UConn closed the day with a fascinating discussion of feeding mechanisms in the Scolapacidae (sandpiper) family. Who would have thought that a Red-necked Phalarope could simultaneously (1) spin rapidly in place to create its own local upwelling of water from up to 2-feet deep, (2) efficiently locate and capture zooplankton entrained in this circulation, and (3) consume its prey by capitalizing on the surface tension of a water droplet to transfer an item up its bill? Her frame-by-frame shots of this process were eye-opening.

If you missed this year's meeting, you can be assured of another excellent program at next year's annual meeting in March 2006.



Visiting at the COA Annual Meeting

(photo courtesy of Ellen Bender)

(more photos on page 7)

## GO BIRDING TO HELP CONNECTICUT'S THREATENED BIRDS!

### The Joint COA – CT DEP Natural Diversity Database

Every year more and more birders are interested in bird conservation, since they've come to realize that they won't be able to see and enjoy birds long-term without helping in their conservation. But the question many times is "What can I do to help?" Well one of the best answers in Connecticut is to be on the lookout for Connecticut's "state listed" avian species (Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern categories) and report them as part of the joint COA and Connecticut DEP Natural Diversity Data Base Project. It's really a very simple and easy thing to do and it makes a great contribution to conserving "at risk" bird species in our state!

The Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDDB) is the central repository for information on the biology, population status and locations, and threats to Connecticut's "state listed" species. When the state, towns and private landowners are making land-use plans and decisions, they need to go through an environmental review process that involves consideration of protecting threatened species and their habitats. The NDDDB is the official source on the locations of these threatened species in this environmental review process. If there isn't any data in the NDDDB about a threatened species at

a particular location, then this fact isn't considered in the review and the threatened species and its habitat could end up being harmed.

So this is where we, as COA members and Connecticut birders, can really help. By going out birding during the breeding season and reporting our "state listed" species findings back to the NDDDB, we can really help protect the homes and habitats of these important birds. All the details on how to do this can be found in the NDDDB section of the COA website ([www.ctbirding.org](http://www.ctbirding.org)).

I personally have participated in this project over the last three years, but I learned a few new things this year as the COA Conservation Committee worked with the DEP to improve the project, report forms, etc. I thought it would be helpful if I passed these on to you:

- The importance of looking for the highest level of breeding evidence. In the past, I just would report a "state listed" species to the NDDDB if I saw it once and I would include the bird's activities such as singing, chasing another bird of the

*cont'd on page 3*



# COA Bulletin

## COA – CT DEP Natural Diversity Data Base Project (continued)

*cont'd from page 2*

same species, etc. I assumed that this was enough information given my sighting and that was all that needed to be done. I didn't realize how important it was to try and confirm that this species was, in fact, breeding at that specific location or in the area...since the level of "breeding evidence" is critically important in the environmental review process. It really would have been very valuable for me to spend more time at the site to gather additional information to help confirm possible breeding. It also would have helped to return at future dates to put together more complete information for a breeding confirmation. So, in the future, I will try to do this if at all possible and I hope that you will as well. (Note: The "Reporting Instructions" in the NDDDB section of the COA website include the specifics on the various levels and types of breeding evidence.)

- The importance of having a topographical map for the bird's location. Earlier, I had not realized that the NDDDB was based on topographical maps and that a bird's location without the appropriate topo map could not be entered into the data base. Therefore, the data that I had provided in the past with just my hand-drawn map, with street locations, was not valuable and not getting entered into the data base. Now I understand this and will be using the [www.topozone.com](http://www.topozone.com) website for my maps. I've found that it's easy to locate a particular site and then just print out the topo map from their website. (Note: There also are other topo map websites to use, as is outlined in the "Reporting Instructions" for the NDDDB project on the COA website.)

- The DEP is particularly interested this year in gaining information on breeding locations of CT "state listed" species where they have very little data: Alder Flycatcher, Northern Parula, Pied-billed Grebe, King Rail, and Sharp-shinned Hawk. Therefore, it really would be a big help if you could make a special effort to locate these species in the state, if you have the time, and can confirm their breeding locations.

The COA Conservation Committee hopes that you can join with us this year to make 2005 the best year ever for this extremely important joint COA-CT DEP NDDDB project! It really is one of the top things that we all can do to conserve Connecticut's threatened birds. As an additional incentive for COA members to participate this year, we are offering \$50 gift certificates to the four COA members who submit the highest number of acceptable reports to the NDDDB project in the upcoming breeding season. These gift certificates will be redeemable at both the Audubon Shop in Madison and Fat Robin in Hamden.

Good birding and many thanks in advance for all your help!

Ben Olewine  
COA Conservation Committee Chairman

(Please send completed reports to Buzz Devine and Dave Provencher, the COA NDDDB Project Coordinators. See the "Reporting Instructions" section on the COA website for more details.)

---

## THE SUMMER BIRD COUNT

The Summer Bird Count is the breeding season equivalent of the Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Birders record all birds observed within a 15-mile diameter circle over the course of 2 days (unlike the 24-hour limit imposed on the CBC). The count circles listed below are the same as those used on the CBC, although not all CBC count circles are represented. Please note that the dates shown are based on the traditional timing of past counts, and may be different this year. Contact the respective compilers for information on how to participate and the actual dates of the count.

Barkhamsted Summer Bird Count - David Rosgen 860-283-8378; [drosgen@optonline.net](mailto:drosgen@optonline.net), June 25 & 26(?). Area covered: Barkhamsted, Burlington (northern 1/4), Canton, Colebrook (south half), Granby (southwest 1/4), Hartland, New Hartford, Harwinton (northern edge), Torrington (northern 1/4), and Winchester.

Greenwich-Stamford Summer Bird Count - Thomas W. Burke co-compiler, 914-967-4922; [tom.burke@rsmi.com](mailto:tom.burke@rsmi.com), & Gary Palmer co-compiler, 203-661-4897, June 11 & 12(?). Area covered (Connecticut, 65% of area): Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, & Stamford; and (New York, 35% of area) Armonk, Bedford (in part), Port Chester, Rye, and White Plains (in part).

Hartford Summer Bird Count - Betty Kleiner compiler, 860 658-5670; [CTWarbler@cs.com](mailto:CTWarbler@cs.com), June 11 & 12. Area covered: Bloomfield, East Hartford, Farmington (in part), Hartford, Manchester (in part), Newington (in part), Rocky Hill (in part), South Windsor, Wethersfield, and Windsor.

Summer Bird Count *cont'd on page 5*



# COA Bulletin

## The North American Breeding Bird Survey

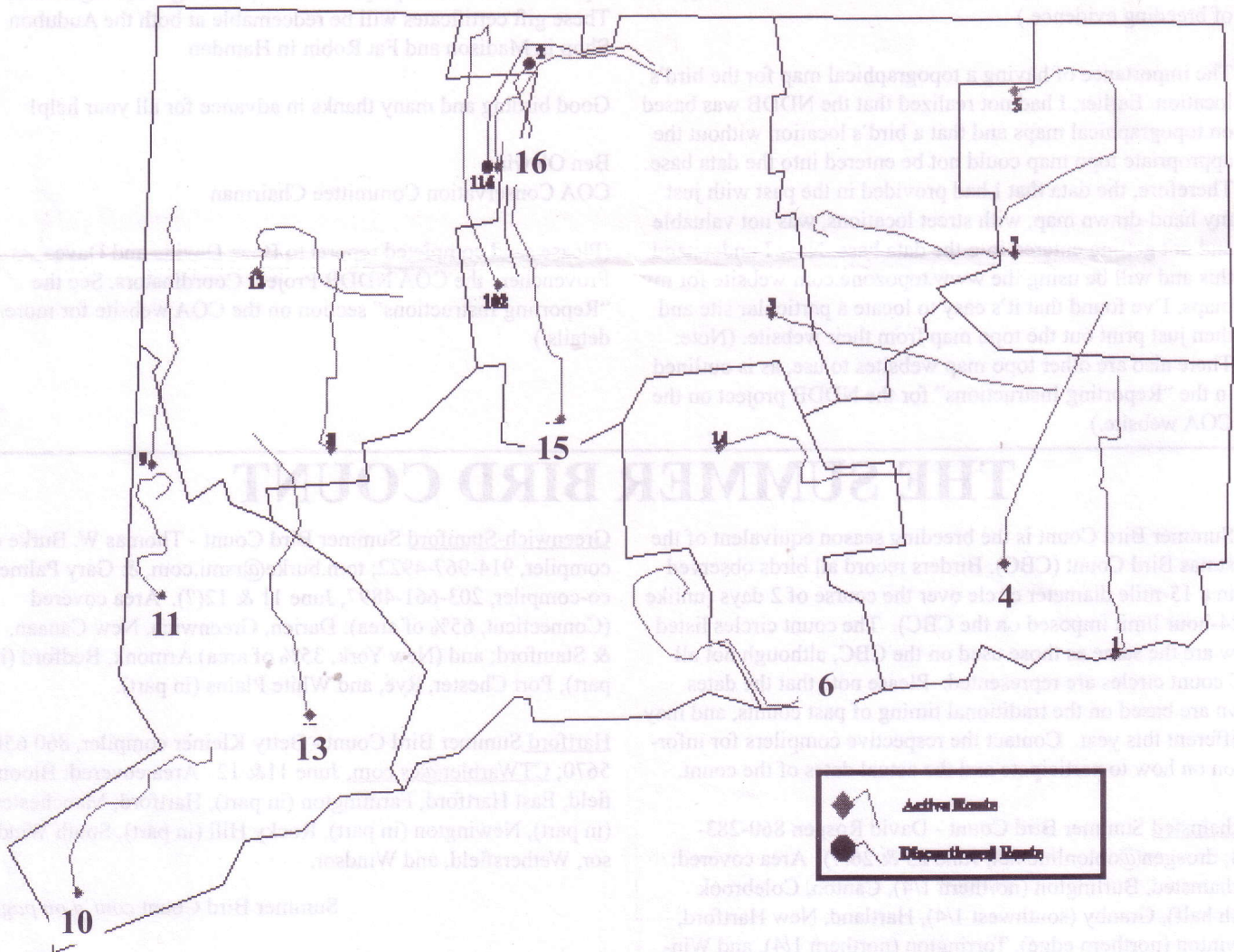
### Volunteers Needed to Help Monitor the Distribution and Population Dynamics of Connecticut's Nesting Birds

The North American Breeding Bird Survey is a long-term, large-scale, international avian monitoring program initiated in 1966 to track the status and trends of North American bird populations. Each year during the height of the avian breeding season, typically in June, skilled birders collect bird population data along roadside survey routes. Each survey route is 24.5 miles long with

stops at 0.5-mile intervals (25 stops). At each stop, a 3-minute point count is conducted. During the count, every bird seen within a 0.25-mile radius or heard is recorded. Surveys start one-half hour before local sunrise and take about 5 hours to complete.

Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data were critical in the development of the recent State of the Birds report (<http://www.audubon.org/bird/stateofthebirds/index.html>), and they also provide the foundation for many of the Partners-In-Flight bird population estimates. The BBS represents a valuable database for measuring patterns and trends in CT bird populations, which can be used to help identify and justify specific conservation needs in the state.

Breeding Bird Survey *cont'd on page 5*



For a high resolution image of this map go to: <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/results/routemaps/connecticut.cfm?StateNumber=18>



# COA Bulletin

cont'd from page 3

## Summer Bird Count

Litchfield Hills Summer Bird Count - Bob Barbieri compiler, 860-495-1236, June 11 & 12(?). Area covered (in whole or in part): Cornwall, Goshen, Kent, Litchfield, Morris, Sharon, Torrington, Warren, and Washington.

New Haven Summer Bird Count - Steve C. Mayo compiler, 860-393-0694; [SMayo@sikorsky.com](mailto:SMayo@sikorsky.com) June 4 & 5(?). Area covered: Branford (western), East Haven, Milford, New Haven, North Haven, Orange, West Haven, and Woodbridge (in part).

Pauling/Hidden Valley Summer Bird Count - Angela Dimmitt compiler, [BaDimmitt@AOL.com](mailto:BaDimmitt@AOL.com) June 18 & 19(?). Area covered (Connecticut, 1/3 of area): Sherman, New Fairfield, New Milford (west of route 7), and portions of Brookfield & Danbury; and (New York, 2/3 of area) Patterson, Pawling, Putnam Lake, Carmel, southern Wingdale, and Poughquag.

Storrs Summer Bird Count - Steve Rogers compiler, 860-429-1259; [sdrogers@snet.net](mailto:sdrogers@snet.net) June 18 & 19(?). Area covered: Andover, Ashford, Chaplin, Coventry, Mansfield, Tolland, Willimantic, West Willington, Willington, and Windham.

Woodbury-Roxbury Summer Bird Count - Russ Naylor compiler, 860-263-2502 June 5(?). Area covered: Bethlehem, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Middlebury, New Milford, Newtown, Roxbury, Southbury, Washington, and Woodbury.

Paul Carter

The Newsletter of the Connecticut Ornithological Association is published quarterly in February, May, September, and December. Please submit materials for the next issue by July 31, 2005, to: Andrew Dasinger at [dasingerfamily@cox.net](mailto:dasingerfamily@cox.net) 21 Beechwood Lane, South Glastonbury, CT 06073 or Larry Reiter at [reiter.mystic@snet.net](mailto:reiter.mystic@snet.net) 32 West Mystic Ave., Mystic, CT 06355

Download a pdf copy of the COA Bulletin at: <http://homepage.mac.com/reiter.mystic/COA/FileSharing22.html> to see color photos/graphics and access hyperlinks.

cont'd from page 4

## Breeding Bird Survey

The value of BBS data, however, depends on routes being surveyed consistently year after year. Recently, support for the BBS in CT has been low. Only 6 of the routes (38%) were actually covered last year, resulting in CT having the second lowest sampling rate of all 50 states. (In contrast, MA had 71% actual coverage in 2004.) Some progress has been made in adding new observers; however, the following five routes are still in need of coverage (location indicates the starting point of the route):

- |           |                              |
|-----------|------------------------------|
| Route #6  | Westbrook                    |
| Route #10 | Greenwich                    |
| Route #11 | Danbury                      |
| Route #13 | Long Hill (Fairfield County) |
| Route #16 | Granby                       |

If one of these routes is near your home, please consider signing up so that the discontinuity of coverage is not prolonged any further (there's still time, but since the breeding season is upon us, time is of the essence). Connecticut lost its State Coordinator with the retirement of Jan Mitchell last year; therefore, I have agreed to fill this role going forward. Please contact me (see below) to arrange for a route assignment. Training is simple and takes about 30 minutes over the Internet. Further information on BBS basics can be found at: <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/>.

Thank you for considering this important volunteer opportunity! Also, let me know if you're not able to take on a route this year, but would like to start participating in next year's survey.

Andrew Dasinger  
21 Beechwood Lane  
South Glastonbury, CT 06073  
860-652-8521  
[dasingerfamily@cox.net](mailto:dasingerfamily@cox.net)



# COA Bulletin

## CTBirds:

### “Coverage You Can Count On”

If this slogan sounds like it's from one of our local TV news organizations, that's because it is, but it's also an appropriate description for the electronic bird alert service known as CTBirds, which is skillfully managed by members of COA's e-committee. CTBirds is a listserv that anyone can sign up for to receive information via e-mail messages on recent sightings of noteworthy birds (for instructions on how to sign up for this service, go to [www.ctbirding.org/e-committee\\_page.htm](http://www.ctbirding.org/e-committee_page.htm)). Alternatively, if you are not inclined to sign up for automated delivery, you can view the most recent postings of CT bird sightings on web sites such as [www.virtualbirder.com](http://www.virtualbirder.com) and [www.birdingonthe.net](http://www.birdingonthe.net). Also included in postings are announcements to help remind the birding community of upcoming COA-sponsored activities.

When particularly unusual species are discovered, the service goes into overdrive, with frequent updates based on observer reports. A great example of the value provided by CTBirds is illustrated by the Swallow-tailed Kite sightings this spring. No fewer than 15 updates were issued, at times several in a day, allowing birders from Connecticut and surrounding states to gauge the probability of finding the bird and decide whether to make the trip. More often than not, appearances of Swallow-tailed Kites in New England are fleeting, witnessed by a few lucky birders who happen to be in the right place at the right time, but the frequent reports in this case convinced many to give it a try.

Of course, the bird alert service depends entirely on the frequent reports provided by field observers. In the case of the kite, well over 40 individuals gave reports (beyond which it was not possible to acknowledge the numerous contributors), permitting us to document the location of the bird at various dates and times. Presumably, the same bird was seen in the towns of Salem, East Lyme, Chester, and Deep River over the course of 2 weeks, ultimately becoming a fairly dependable and spectacular viewing opportunity in Deep River by Exit 5 on Route 9.

As Paul Carrier's cartoon illustrates, we'll sometimes use extraordinary measures to see a rare bird. In doing so, however, all of us must behave ethically and set a good example for the Connecticut birding community on those occasions when a rare bird shows up and attracts throngs of eager birders to an unexpected location. Birders observing the Swallow-tailed Kite, by all reports, did not generate any negative reactions from the local residents; a few reminders issued through CTBirds on proper behavior probably helped contribute to a peaceful situation in this instance.



“ CODE RED ? -  
BUT I SAW A BAIRD'S SANDPIPER ”

*Paul Carrier*

Finally, we owe a great deal of thanks to Roy Harvey and Dori Sosensky for their voluntary efforts in making CTBirds such a dependable source of information. Judging by the date stamps on many of their report postings, these two individuals, like many other birders, must be seriously sleep-deprived at times.

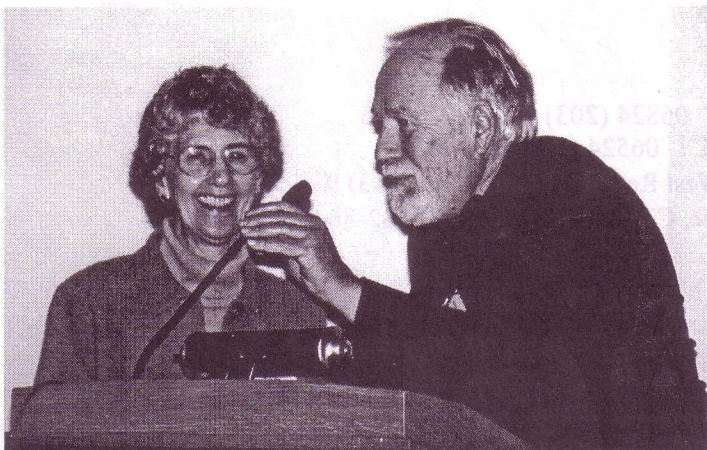
## Upcoming Workshops

- August 13: Shorebird & Tern Workshop, Sandy Point, West Haven (an examination of skins at Yale-Peabody may be scheduled in the 2 weeks prior to the workshop)
- September 17 (rain date September 18): Lighthouse Point Hawk Festival
- September 24: COA-CAS Swallow Cruise, Essex
- October (tbd): Sparrow Workshop

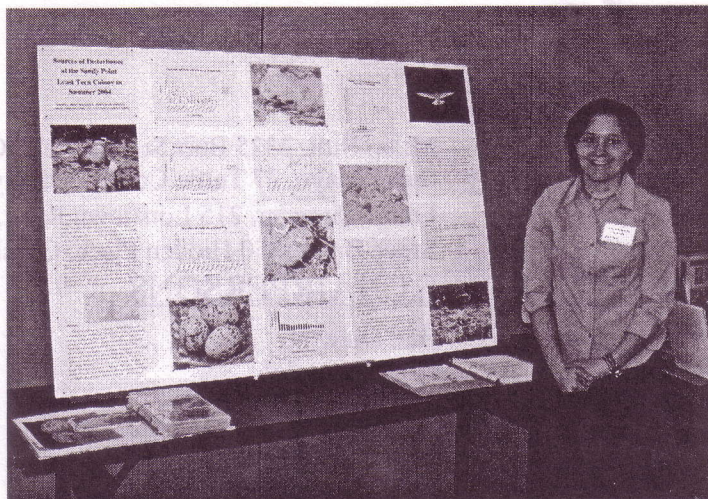
(see COA webpage for more details)  
[www.ctbirding.org](http://www.ctbirding.org)



# COA Bulletin



Steve Oresman presenting the President's Award to Betty Kleiner  
at the COA Annual Meeting  
(photo courtesy of Ellen Bender)



Jennifer Healy presenting her work on least terns  
at the COA Annual Meeting  
(photo courtesy of Ellen Bender)

## COA MEMBERSHIP FORM

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** Student \$15  Individual \$25  Family \$35  Contributing \$50

Donor \$75  Benefactor \$100  Life \$1000 (payable in 3 annual installments)

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** Milan Bull, 2325 Burr St., Fairfield, CT 06824 (203) 259-6305 x113  
**Vice President** Steve Mayo, 27 Tuttle Court, Bethany, CT 06524 (203) 386-6979  
**Treasurer** Fred Schroeder, 215 Lonetown Road, West Redding, CT 06896 (203) 938-9165  
**Secretary** Steve Broker, 50 Hidden Place, Cheshire, CT 06410-3723 (203) 582-8646

## COA COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

**Conservation** Ben Olewine  
**Electronics** Dori Sosensky  
**Finance** Fred Schroeder  
**Membership** Roy Harvey  
**Nominating**  
**Program** Jerry Connolly  
**Connecticut Warbler** Greg Hanisek  
**COA Bulletin** Andrew Dasinger  
**Rare Records** Dave Provencher  
**Refuge Relations** Dori Sosensky  
**Science Advisory** Milan Bull

## CONNECTICUT ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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

First Class Postage  
Pre-sort  
U.S. Postage Paid  
New Haven, CT  
Permit Number 415

Address correction requested

\*\*\*\*\*SNGLP  
STEPHEN BROKER  
50 HIDDEN PL  
CHESHIRE CT 06410-3723