

COA BULLETIN

**From the editor:**

I have taken the liberty of modifying the format of the COA Bulletin with this issue. Please let me know if you have any comments on the content or the new layout.

Regards,

Andrew Dasinger

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THE 106TH NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Connecticut Christmas Bird Count 2005-2006 Schedule

Compiled by Stephen P. Broker

'Tis the season to visit fields, forests, ponds, beaches, marshes, swamps, parks, cemeteries, rivers, thickets, and wherever else birds may be found to conduct the annual Christmas Bird Count. Contact compilers directly for information on participating in a specific count.

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2005

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kaplan@sciencecenterct.org,
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Woodbury-Roxbury, CT (WR-CT) Compiler: Ed Hagen, 47 Sycamore Avenue, Woodbury, CT 06798

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Sunday, Dec. 18, 2005

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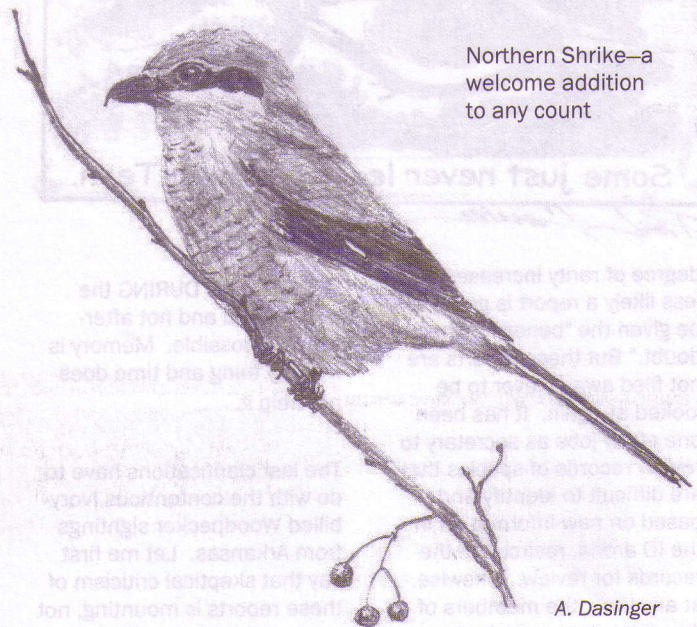
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203-888-5757

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wrst@aol.com (Quinnipiac Valley Audubon Society)

Continued on page 3 →



Northern Shrike—a welcome addition to any count

A. Dasinger

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR: REGARDING THE ARCC ... CLARIFYING A FEW POINTS BY MARK SZANTYR

I want to openly thank Andrew Dasinger for his article in the Autumn 2005 issue of the COA Bulletin, "The Avian Records Committee of Connecticut Needs Your Rare Bird Reports." The article presents very well the mission of the ARCC and the current frustration concerning a lack of interest by observers in submitting documentation for sightings of rare birds.

I want to clarify a few points raised by this article.

Bird records that are not accepted are not accepted for many reasons. The most common reason is that the level of evidence does not support the identification to a level of 100% surety. As the

review a past record. Also, the observer has the right, with new information, to request that the committee review the record again. Also, in each report of the committee, great pains are taken to explain why a record was not accepted and then the writers use this occasion to discuss how this species might be confidently identified in the future.

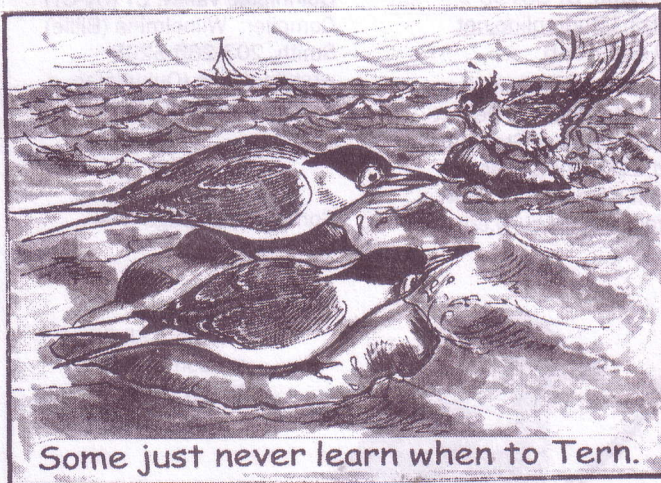
Andrew mentions the kind of documentation necessary for a convincing record and I want to make a minor correction here. He states that a sketch made in the field shortly after the sighting can be helpful. While in some cases it is so, I want to stress that observers should get into the practice of making notes

to be refuted as well. I want to clear up the comment about if this was happening in Connecticut. I said to Andrew that if this were in Connecticut, I would not vote to accept it and did not say that the committee would not accept it. Our committee is made up of ten voting members and a record needs a vote of 9-1 in the positive to be accepted.

All I was saying is that if this were the case in Connecticut, I would be the negative vote. Also, in mentioning the documentation needed to accept a contemporary Eskimo Curlew report in Connecticut, Andrew says that high quality photos or videos might be the only way it would be accepted. I want to say, again from my personal viewpoint, that the photos would need to be miraculously clear and show exactly the right aspects of the bird and even then would need to be accompanied by notes and description that absolutely eliminate any ID contenders beyond all doubt and then it would still need to be corroborated by other observers providing documentation of the same quality...but that would just be what I would need to be convinced.

This may be my last official act as secretary of the ARCC. Due to growing personal commitments in other areas of my life, I am stepping down as secretary effective immediately and wish the future committee and secretary good luck and hope records come more easily than has been my experience.

Mark S. Szantyr
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degree of rarity increases, the less likely a report is going to be given the "benefit of the doubt." But these reports are not filed away, never to be looked at again. It has been one of my jobs as secretary to review records of species that are difficult to identify and based on new information in the ID arena, recirculate the records for review. Likewise, at any time, the members of the committee can elect to

and sketches DURING the observation and not afterwards if possible. Memory is a funny thing and time does not help it.

The last clarifications have to do with the contentious Ivory-billed Woodpecker sightings from Arkansas. Let me first say that skeptical criticism of these reports is mounting, not waning, and the audio is likely

"... observers should get into the practice of making notes and sketches DURING the observation and not afterwards if possible. Memory is a funny thing and time does not help it."

SAVE THE DATE; COA ANNUAL MEETING SET FOR MARCH 25, 2006

Only a little over 100 days until the 2006 COA Annual Meeting! The annual meeting promises to be another memorable one, with the following speakers currently planned:

- **Tim Gallagher**, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology (author of *The Grail Bird*) - "Search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker"
- **Richard Prum**, Curator of Ornithology, Yale University—"Color Vision in Birds"

- **Michael Male & Judy Feith**, natural history filmmakers—"Watching Western Warblers" (with raw footage of same)
- **Louis Bevier**, editor of Connecticut Breeding Bird Atlas (topic to be announced)

Stay tuned for further details on the annual meeting. Registration forms will be included in the next issue of the COA Bulletin. The event will once again be held at Middlesex Community College in Middletown, CT.



106TH CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

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Compiler: Joe Morin, 8 West Street Terrace, Cromwell, CT 06416 morinjor@aol.com, 860-635-2786; Contact: Alison Guinness, 418 Tater Hill Road, East Haddam, CT 06423, 860-873-9304

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Barkhamsted, CT (BA-CT)
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Monday, Dec. 26, 2005

Stratford-Milford, CT (SM-CT)
Compiler: Steve Mayo, 27 Tuttle Court, Bethany, CT 06524, smayo@sikorsky.com, 203-393-0694

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2005

New London, CT (NL-CT) Compiler: Robert Dewire, 9 Cary Lane, Pawcatuck, CT

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Sunday, Jan. 1, 2006

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Pawling (Hidden Valley), NY-CT (HV-NY) Compilers: Carena Pooth, 22 Brothers Road, Poughquag, NY 12570, carena@prodigy.net, 845-724-3236; Angela Dimmitt, 48 Candlewood Mountain Road, New Milford, CT 06776, angeladimmitt@aol.com

860-355-3429

NOTE: The Edwin Way Teale, Trail Wood Count seeks participants to help in getting this count back in the yearly schedule. The count will be scheduled for the most convenient day on the weekend of Saturday, December 31 - Sunday, January 1. Please contact Marilynn (Sam) Higgins for information about participation: Sam Higgins, Hammond Hill, Hampton, CT 06247, msamh@charter.net, 860-455-0063

Bufflehead -
common on
coastal counts



A. Dasinger

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS FROM THE NEW HAVEN BIRD CLUB



Upcoming field trips offered by the New Haven Bird Club (NHBC) are listed below. The NHBC does not charge trip or leader fees; however, participants are responsible for the cost of their own food, lodging, transportation, and entrance fees (where charged), unless prior arrangements have been made by the club. Car-pooling is encouraged on some trips, as parking may be limited at some destinations. Please visit the New Haven Bird Club web site at www.newhavenbirdclub.org for additional information.

Connecticut River Valley & Eastern Shore

Saturday, February 11, 2006, 8 AM

Meet at the entrance to Hammonasset State Park (I-95 Exit 62) in Madison. We'll search the shore from Madison to the Connecticut River Lower Valley for wintering shorebirds and hawks as well as the trip specialty, eagles. Please bring a spotting scope if you have one. Co-leaders—Arne Rosengren: 203 248-2903 and Nancy Rosenbaum: 203 288-8997, nancy.rosenbaum@yale.edu

Sachuest Point NWR (east of Newport, RI) and Rhode Island Coast

Saturday, Feb. 25, 2006, 7 AM. (Snow date: Sun., 2/26)

This all-day trip includes stops at Sachuest, Beavertail State Park, Moonstone Beach, and Trustom Pond, all prime RI birding locations. We should see grebes, loons, sea ducks, Purple Sandpipers, and Harlequin Ducks. We'll look for alcids & gannets and could find some rarities. Dress warmly. Bring lunch and a spotting scope if you have one. Meet at 7 AM at the I-95 Exit 55 commuter lot for the 2-hour drive to Rhode Island. Leaders—Andy Brand: 203 230-1718, biobrand@comcast.net or Chris Loscalzo: 203 389-6508, closcalz@optonline.net

Southwestern Connecticut Coast

Sunday, March 12, 2006, 8 AM

Meet at Sikorsky Airport in Stratford in the large parking lot next to the terminal. We will then visit all of the current hotspots along the shore, paying special attention to the latest rare bird sightings.

Leader—Frank Mantlik: 203 377-5829, mantlik@sbcglobal.net

East Rock Birding and Trail Maintenance

Saturday, April 8, 2006, 8 AM

Meet at the Eli Whitney Museum parking lot for a bird walk from 8 to 9 AM. Then join Park Ranger Dan Barvir and help with light trail maintenance for about 2 hours along the river. Bring work gloves and pruning shears if you have them. Leader—Dan Barvir: 203 946-6086

Lighthouse Point to the Richard English Refuge

Saturday, April 15, 2006, 8:30 AM

Meet in the Lighthouse Point Hawk Watch parking lot and bird the harbor shore for gulls, loons, ducks, and early returning shore-birds. We will then proceed to the Richard English Refuge on Deer Lake in Killingworth, and after that, to Hammonasset State Park. This is an all-day trip, so bring lunch and dress warmly. Leaders—Dick English: 203 865-8610 and Mike Horn: 203 288-1891, mhorn@rcn.com

Beginners' Bird Walk

Saturday, April 22, 2006, 8:00 AM

This trip takes us to the Lake Wintergreen / Main Street section of West Rock Ridge State Park. We meet at the parking lot/park entrance at the south end of Main Street in Hamden and walk the trails to the lake and along the stream. The area has a fine variety of habitats, including fields, wooded hill-sides, and wetlands. We'll see early spring migrants. (Directions: From Dixwell Avenue in Hamden, take Benham Road until it ends at Main Street. Turn left and the park entrance is 1/10 mile on the right.) Leader—Chris Loscalzo: 203 389-6508, closcalz@optonline.net

West Rock Ridge, New Haven

Saturday, April 29, 2006, 7:30 AM

Climb the winding abandoned road to the top of West Rock Ridge for awesome views of ravens and of Konold's Pond. You can find early warblers, woodland birds, & a variety of woodpeckers. Meet at West Rock Nature Center parking lot on Wintergreen Avenue. Leader—Pat Leahy: 203-393-2427, ptjleahy@yahoo.com



UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS FROM THE HARTFORD AUDUBON SOCIETY



Upcoming field trips offered by the Hartford Audubon Society are listed below. There is no charge for Hartford Audubon trips; however, attendees are responsible for their own meals, travel expenses, and overnight accommodations. Members and non-members can contact Hartford Audubon by phone at 860-282-BIRD (2473) or by e-mail at hartfordaudubon@yahoo.com. Specify your name, telephone number, and the name of the trip. The trip leader will call you back to answer your questions. Please visit the Hartford Audubon Society web site at www.hartfordaudubon.org for more information.

Lower Connecticut River Valley

Sunday, January 8, 2006, 8:30 AM

This trip could take most of the day searching the lower Connecticut River Valley from East Haddam to Old Saybrook looking for wintering eagles and ducks. So make sure to dress warmly and bring a lunch. Some of our stops down the river are Gillette Castle State Park, Saybrook Point and North Cove in Essex. This trip has produced Bald Eagles, loons, scoters, Long-tailed Ducks, and Pied-billed Grebes. Meet at the Goodspeed Opera House parking lot. Leaders: Adrian & Beth Nichols

Station 43 Beginner's Walk II, South Windsor

Saturday, January 14, 2006, 9 AM

This will be a cold one probably, but don't let that discourage you. We award a blue nose to anyone showing up if the temp is below 10 degrees, and coffee hour is usually earlier when it's that cold. Anyway, Bald Eagles, Rough-legged Hawks and Northern Shrikes await us on this winter jaunt so come on out. Meet at the corner of Newberry Rd. and Main St.. Leaders: Roger Preston, Jon Ward

Hartford Gull Hotspots

Saturday, February 4, 2006, call leader for time & location

This is a trip searching Hartford area gull hotspots for those wintering gulls such as: Glaucous, Iceland and Lesser Black-backed. Call leader for meeting time and location. Leader: Paul Cianfaglione

Shepaug Dam/ Bent of the River

Saturday, February 11, 2006, 8:30 AM

We will start off at the Eagle Watch at Shepaug Dam in Southbury and then it's on to Bent of the River, a National Audubon sanctuary, to look for Purple Finches, kinglets and other wintering birds. Meet at the commuter parking lot at Fienemann Rd. Exit 37, Route 84. Leader: Carl Ekroth

Station 43 Beginner's Walk III, South Windsor

Saturday, March 11, 2006, 8 AM

The ice should be mostly gone and birds begin to return just in time for this walk. We may also have a few leftovers from the winter- hopefully. The water level will be even higher so don't forget your boots. Meet at the same spot - the corner of Newberry Rd. and Main St. Leaders: Roger Preston, Jon Ward

Sachuest Point, RI

Saturday, April 1, 2006, 8:30 AM

Sachuest Point is home to the largest wintering flock of Harlequin Ducks in New England. Other ducks and seabirds are common, and we may see Northern Gannets and Razorbills and other birds that are harder to find in Connecticut. Bring lunch for this all-day trip. Meet at the Sachuest Point parking lot. Call leader for directions. Leader: Paul Desjardins

Natural History Walk, People's And American Legion Forests

saturday, april 8, 2006, 9 AM

This trip will explore two vernal pools and the area around them. It will cover how vernal pools are formed, their importance in the forest ecosystem, unique organisms, salamanders, frogs, insects, and those birds and mammals that take advantage of the feast. Meet at Matthies Grove Recreation Area at 9:00 AM. The Grove is on East River Road about 3/4 mile above the metal bridge in Pleasant Valley where Rts. 181 and 318 cross the Farmington River. Coming out Rt.44 from Hartford and Avon you pass through New Hartford and turn right on Rt. 181, at the stop sign in Pleasant Valley turn right across the Farmington River, then left on East River Road. Later, perhaps a visit to the Stone Museum or Squire's Tavern if there is interest. Leader: Walt Landgraf



Hartford Audubon Field Trips (continued from page 5)

Western CT Shoreline

Sunday, April 9, 2006, 8 AM

We will drive to Sherwood Island Park and work our way back towards New Haven. We will be looking for late wintering birds and early spring migrants. 2005 had Gannets, Gannets and more Gannets. Dress warmly and bring lunch. Meet at the Long Wharf Information Center (Liberty Belle Ticket Sales), New Haven. Leader: Carl Ekroth

Great Pond, Simsbury

Saturday, April 22, 2006, 7:30 AM

What better way to start the Spring count than on a walk with us at our favorite spot. There should be a nice assortment of birds with some about to leave and others returning to nest or at least to hang around for a spell. Meet at the parking lot off Great Pond Rd. Leaders: Roger Preston, Jon Ward

Granby/Suffield Area

Saturday, April 29, 2006, 7 AM

Let's see if the Upland Sandpipers are back. So far they always have been. Last year we had Grasshopper Sparrows by the airport fields, plus Meadowlarks and Savannah Sparrows. Maybe this year we'll have more warblers in to chase. Meet at the corner of Rtes 187 & 20 in the Dunkin' Donut parking lot. Leader: Stephanie Lovell

Penwood State Park

Sunday, April 30, 2006, 7 AM

This location, which can be good for hawk migration in the fall, is well worth going to for spring birds at this time. Warblers, tanagers, orioles and others will be the targets for this walk. There will be some long walking so wear hiking boots. Meet in the parking lot. Leader: Linda Clancy



COA SPARROW WORKSHOP BY FRANK MANTLIK

On October 16, COA held a sparrow identification workshop led by Frank Mantlik and Milan Bull at Silver Sands State Park in Milford, CT. A sizeable crowd of 40 birders attended the workshop. The weather was seasonal, sunny and blue, with northwest winds that increased during the morning, gusting to 40mph by noon. During Frank's introduction in the parking lot, flocks of Savannah Sparrows were flying overhead. The sparrow viewing was ideal right from the lot, as flocks of sparrows lined up on the nearby chain link fence in excellent light. Many scopes were shared, for excellent views.

We then walked the roadside back towards the entrance, finding masses of birds, especially sparrows, everywhere. One grassy path was loaded with sparrows of 8 different

species. Upon return to the lot area, we assisted banders Charlotte Weston, Stacy Hanks, and Frank Gallo catching a number of birds in the nets.

The in-hand views of a variety of species was a treat, especially the direct comparison of Song and Savannah Sparrows. We'd hoped to find Nelson's Sharp-tailed sparrows in the salt marsh along

Continued on next page →



Workshop Participants Scoping Sparrows on the Fence

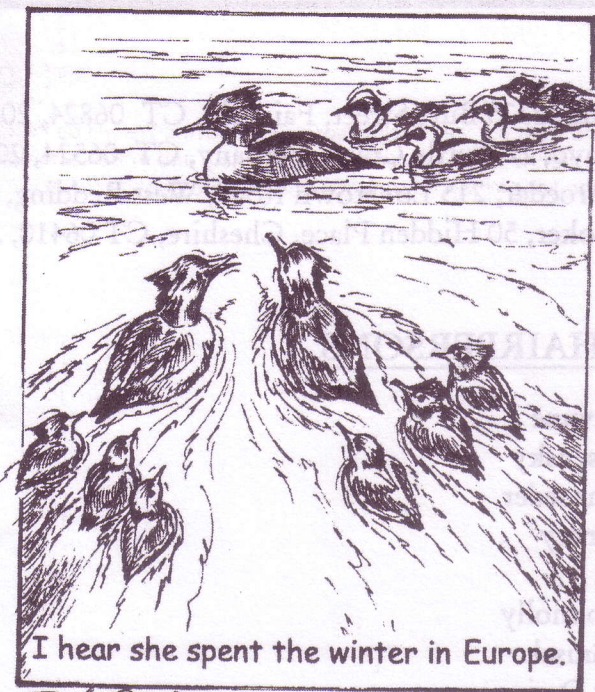
Sparrow Workshop

Continued from prior page

the boardwalk, but by then the gusty winds kept the birds under cover.

Highlights were 70 bird species, including 11 species of sparrows (600 Savannah, 200 Song, 3 Lincoln's, 10 White-crowned, 1+ Salt-marsh Sharp-tailed), a Short-eared Owl, Merlin, Wilson's Snipe, 2 Forster's Terns, 28 American Pipits, 4 species of warblers, 2 Bobolinks, and 3 Eastern Meadowlarks.

Silver Sands was an ideal location, with tons of sparrow habitat, and the weather and birds cooperated.



I hear she spent the winter in Europe.

Paul Carver

GIVE A GIFT OF COA MEMBERSHIP

New Member [] Renewal [] Gift []

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ E-mail 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)
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- Lifetime [] (\$1000; payable in 3 annual installments)

Send this form 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

The COA Bulletin is the quarterly newsletter of the Connecticut Ornithological Association, published in February, May, September, and December. Please submit materials for the next issue by February 15, 2006, to:

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 or

Larry Reiter
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Download a pdf version of the COA Bulletin (in color!) at:

<http://homepage.mac.com/reiter.mystic/COA/FileSharing23.html>

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Membership Roy Harvey
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Program Jerry Connolly
Connecticut Warbler Greg Hanisek
COA Bulletin Andrew Dasinger
Rare Records Dave Provencher
Refuge Relations Dori Sosensky
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