



BULLETIN

The Newsletter of Connecticut Ornithological Association

VOLUME 3

NO. 1

WINTER/SPRING 1989

MEMBERSHIP REPORT JANUARY 1989

COA has come a long way in about two and a half years. In June 1987, we had a problem with late paying members and had less than 200 members in good standing. That wasn't even enough for a bulk mailing. We came to terms with the delinquent problem and have grown to where we are nearly 400 strong.

Over the past few years, the Membership Committee has been very active in aggressively pursuing new members and in keeping members in good standing. Carl Trichka, Steve Broker, Fred Sibley, Neil Currie, George Zepko, and Roland Clement have served on the committee and contributed toward its success.

There is a great feeling of accomplishment each time we welcome a new member to COA. However, in 1988, 25 of our members did not renew. Each non-renewing member is a loss -- a hard fought loss, which is difficult to accept when we are working and inching along to increase our membership. It is our goal in 1989 to recover those 25 memberships and grow beyond the 400 mark.

The most successful means we have found for signing up new members has been giving out flyers, a handshake and a smile, when we are out in the field, at meetings and such. Neil Currie, George Zepko, Frank Mantlik, George Clark, Ray Schwartz and many others have distributed flyers all over Connecticut and have "beat the bushes" finding new members. Thank you.

As we start a new year, it is interesting to take a look at our membership list to see where our members are from. COA has members in 129 cities and towns across Connecticut, from Danbury to Woodstock, and from Avon (06001) to Stratford (06897).

Surprisingly, there are sixty-three towns represented by only one member. These include places like Forestville, Easton, Stony Creek, Washington, Orange and Higganum. Only seventeen towns have five or more members, and of these only six have ten or more members. Lyme and New Canaan come in with ten, Guilford with eleven, and Fairfield with twelve. The two towns with the most members are Storrs with fourteen and Greenwich with fifteen.

We have members from Brooklyn, New York. One member lives in Bliss -- New York that is. Our range extends from Topsham, Maine to Los Angeles, California and on to Vero Beach, Florida. In all, we have thirty-three members residing in twelve states outside of Connecticut. Wherever St. John, USVI is, we have a member there too.

Good tidings and good birding to all.

Debra Miller, Chairman, Membership Committee

ANNUAL MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The Program Committee -- Winifred Burkett, George Zepko and Debra Miller -- has planned a full day's activities for COA's annual meeting, March 11, 1989, at Fairfield University, Fairfield, Connecticut. The previously mailed announcement for the meeting gave just a brief schedule of events. The following gives you complete details.

Those of you who have joined us at the previous two annual meetings will notice that the schedule has changed just a bit. We are offering six workshops in the morning in two time periods. There will be fewer workshop periods to attend, but we have lengthened each period so that each topic may be discussed more fully.

Another change this year is that we have moved the Business Meeting to the morning, followed by lunch, a field trip and The Marketplace. Also new this year, the afternoon session will begin with a quiz. We will present slides for identification and then give you the answers with explanations and tips. This should be an entertaining way to sharpen our skills.

The afternoon's Special Program, Restoration in Pine Creek Salt Marsh, covers a topic that birders are acutely aware of -- habitat destruction. There is light at the end of the tunnel as Salvatore Bongiorno and Milan Bull will show us.

We hope that you will be able to join us on March 11th. You may pre-register for a fee of \$5 per person, or register at the door for \$8.

Following are descriptions of the workshops and the special program. For those of you who are unable to attend, we hope that you will enjoy reading these and are encouraged to attend next year.

LEARNING BIRD FAMILIES: THE KEY TO FIELD IDENTIFICATION Robert A. Askins, Dept. of Zoology, Connecticut College

Most beginning birders focus on the color patterns of birds, but this is not the best method to learn bird identification. Experienced birders have learned to identify major groups of birds (families and subfamilies) using characteristics such as bill shape, body shape, posture, and movement patterns. Recognition of the family to which a bird belongs usually provides guidance about which particular field marks are important for distinguishing species. This two-step process is much more efficient than memorizing the characteristics of each species.

This presentation is appropriate for beginners or those who are instructing beginners in field identification.

JIZZ

Betty S. Kleiner, Editor, The Connecticut Warbler
Jay B. Kaplan, Director, Roaring Brook Nature Center

Often we are able to get only a fleeting glimpse of a bird as it disappears from our field of view. Yet in that brief instant, there is a flicker of recognition. Something about the bird allows us to make a

reasonably accurate identification. This is Jizz. In this workshop we will test your observation skills. See how many you can identify!

MUSEUM RESOURCES AS AN AID IN IDENTIFICATION

Fred Sibley, Peabody Museum

This workshop will give an overview of how one resolves questions of identification. Starting with a specific problem, we will follow this through library resources, skin collection, and finally sources for a final expert's opinion on the problem. The presentation will attempt to show not just the limitations of field guides, but the tremendous help a good library and a reference collection can be to any serious birder with or without a particular problem in identification.

There will be an abundance of reference material and specimens for examination by participants. The direction of the workshop will depend mainly on the feedback from participants.

FIELD IDENTIFICATION OF LOONS AND GREBES

Louis Bevier, Editor, Connecticut Breeding Bird Atlas

This workshop will cover field identification of all species of loons and grebes that have occurred in Connecticut. This will include some difficult species such as Eared Grebe, Horned Grebe and Western Grebe, along with tips on basic identification. In addition, we will discuss some species which have not occurred in Connecticut, such as Pacific and Arctic Loons and Clark's Grebe.

SPARROWS FOR THE CONFUSED BIRDER

Winifred Burkett, Naturalist, Connecticut State Museum
of Natural History

This workshop will attempt to make sparrow identification easier by instructing participants on how to use the process of elimination, habitat and behavior as well as field marks.

THRUSHES

George A. Clark, Jr., Connecticut State Ornithologist

This workshop will examine characteristics useful for distinguishing ten species of thrushes that are known from Connecticut. In addition to considering plumages of both adults and young, attention will be given to seasonal abundance, habitat and behavior.

RESTORATION IN PINE CREEK SALT MARSH, FAIRFIELD, CT

Special Program

This program will be presented in two segments by Salvatore F. Bongiorno and Milan Bull. Dr. Bongiorno will discuss the study he and John Trautman have made of the restoration in Pine Creek Salt Marsh.

In the fall of 1969 the Town of Fairfield, Connecticut erected a dike across Pine Creek, dividing the marsh into two parcels. The 7 hectare east marsh remained connected to normal tidal flow and continues to the present as a viable salt marsh of Spartina alterniflora, S. patens, and Distichlis spicata. The 30 hectare marsh to the west of the dike was cut off from normal tidal flow and underwent eleven years of change and

invasion by upland plants, uncharacteristic for a lower slope tidal marsh. In winter of 1980, after eleven years of succession, the dike was opened, reestablishing full tidal flow to the affected area. This study documents the changes in the flora from before the dike was opened (1980) to the following eight growing seasons (1981-88). Invertebrates were also studied from 1983 onward.

Given the rapid recovery of the marsh with tidal flow restored, it is Bongiorno and Trautman's opinion that salt marshes in the Long Island Sound region need not be written off as "lost" even though covered by dense stands of Phragmites or alien vegetation. About 10% of Connecticut's coastal marshes may now be pure stands of Phragmites resulting from impeded tidal action. This study suggests that restoration can provide an environmentally sound response to the threat of a vanishing habitat.

Milan Bull, Director of Field Studies and Ornithology for Connecticut Audubon, will discuss the effects the restoration has had on the bird life at the Pine Creek Salt Marsh. Among the species to be discussed are the Sharptailed Sparrow and the Seaside Sparrow.

FIELD TRIP

We will close the day's activities with a field trip to the Pine Creek Salt Marsh.

NEW ADDITION TO THE ANNUAL MEETING: COA MARKETPLACE

A new feature will be added to the 1989 Annual Meeting, the "COA Marketplace." COA members are invited to display and sell bird related items. The Marketplace will be held March 11, 1989, at Birdcraft Museum in Fairfield, which is close to the meeting location and the site of one of the day's field trips. It will be open during the lunch break and after the meeting has ended.

So if you are a carver, photographer, painter, collector of old books, crafts person, etc., get in touch with Winnie Burkett (429-3194), 17 Southwood Road, Storrs, CT 06268.

COA will also display and sell items donated to support the activities of the association.

Just in case you have misplaced your pre-registration form, another is attached. Please pass it along to a friend if you don't need it. Thank you.

1989 ANNUAL MEETING
MARCH 11, 1989
FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY, FAIRFIELD, CT 06430

The fee for pre-registration is \$5 for each adult attendee. Children are admitted free.

Please mail this form by February 28, 1989, so we will receive it in time.

Number of persons attending: _____

Total amount enclosed: _____

Please make your check payable to the **Connecticut Ornithological Association.**

MAIL TO: CONNECTICUT ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
314 UNQUOWA ROAD
FAIRFIELD, CT 06430

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Should you have any questions regarding the annual meeting or pre-registration, please contact any of the following Program Committee members:

Winnie Burkett (203) 429-3194
George Zepko (203) 347-1133
Debra Miller (508) 520-1289

Thank you. We hope to see you at the meeting.

COA DIRECTORY

COA OFFICERS AND CHAIRPERSONS

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