



Chickadee Chatter



July/August 2022

Litchfield Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 67/Issue 4

The mission of the Litchfield Hills Audubon Society is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitat, for the benefit of the community, through conservation, education, and research.

President's Message

By Diane Edwards, President



It was great to see so many people — around 70! — at our Annual Meeting and Dinner on June 6. We met at the Elks Club in Torrington to celebrate the past year's achievements, mingle with friends, elect new officers (including yours truly) and board members (see the list on page 2), award scholarships, and enjoy two wonderful presentations on how we can help pollinators. Many thanks to those of you who helped make the evening a success, including ...

- Harry Schuh and Carol Kearns for contacting the Elks Club and for chairing our Scholarship Committee;
- Rich Martin, for setting up our new projector;
- Debbie Martin, for the beautiful wildflower bouquets;
- Janet Baker, for staffing the registration table;

See Calendar on pages 7-8 for our
Upcoming Meetings & Field Trips

- Angela Dimmitt, for coordinating with our presenters; and
- Our guest speakers, Jim Sirch, education coordinator for the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, and John Markelon, president of the Litchfield Land Trust and a retired high school teacher.

And a huge thanks to our now former President Marie Kennedy for her leadership the past few years.

Among the highlights of the evening were some of our educational efforts. Educating children, young people, as well as adults about conservation is one of the three pillars of LHAS' mission. As you can see below, one way we do that is through the scholarships we offer to graduating high school seniors

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LHAS Awards Scholarships

Three recent high school graduates who will pursue environmental studies in college have each received a \$2,000 scholarship from LHAS. We presented the scholarships at our Annual Meeting and Dinner on June 6 to ...

- Sophie Guillemette (Paul A. Gros Memorial Scholarship), from Shepaug Valley School, who will attend the University of Vermont;
- Martina Jagielski (LHAS Scholarship), from Bristol Central High School, who will be going to UConn; and
- Natalie Fraser Wadsworth (Royal A. Meyers, Jr., Scholarship), from Housatonic Valley Regional High School, who will be going to the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Congratulations, winners! And thank you to our Scholarship Committee members, Harry Schuh and Carol Kearns.

Left to right: Sophie Guillemette, Martina Jagielski, and Natalie Fraser Wadsworth.



LHAS Officers

President	Diane Edwards	860-309-5139
Vice President	Fran Zygmunt	860-689-5001
Treasurer	Mia Coats	817-691-2525
Rec. Secretary	Janet Baker	860-567-8427
Corresp. Secretary	Terri Bianchi	860-489-8821

Board of Directors

Carol Perrault	2023	860-628-1612
Carol Kearns	2023	860-307-0807
Rich Martin	2023	860-736-7714
Beverly Baldwin	2024	860-921-7075
Vickie Dauphinais	2024	860-805-9167
George Stephens	2024	860-921-7150
Michael Audette	2025	860-388-7874
Marie Kennedy	2025	914-393-6270
Karen G. Nelson	2025	860-309-9018

Committee Chairpeople

Boyd Woods Sanctuary Communications & Digital Media	Debbie & Rich Martin Rich Martin	860-819-7462 860-736-7714
Conservation	Diane Edwards	860-309-5139
Education	Vickie Dauphinais	860-361-9051
Facebook	Diane Edwards	860-309-5139
Field Trips	David Zomick	860-513-8600
Fundraising	Janice Jankauskas	203-231-2022
Historian	<i>vacant</i>	
Hospitality	<i>vacant</i>	
Kalmia Sanctuary	Irek Rychlik	860-480-6685
Membership Outreach	Beverly Baldwin	860-921-7075
Membership Records	Doreen Orciari	860-307-3102
Newsletter	Diane Edwards	860-309-5139
Programs	Angela Dimmitt	860-355-3429
Publicity	Shirley Gay	860-482-0819
Scholarships	Carol Kearns & Harry Schuh	860-307-0807
Wigwam Brook Sanctuary	John Baker	860-567-8427

Research

Christmas Bird Count	Ray Belding	860-605-3244
Summer Bird Count	Dave Tripp	dtrippjr@gmail.com
Nest Box Program	Rebecca Purdy	860-485-8530

Chickadee Chatter is published in January, March, May, July, September, and November. Submission deadline for the **September/October 2022** issue is **August 1**.

Please email items to appear in the newsletter to **Diane Edwards** at edwardsd68@charter.net or mail them to her at **68 Shingle Mill Road, Harwinton, CT 06791**.

Send other business to the appropriate chairperson at **LHAS**, **P.O. Box 861, Litchfield, CT 06759-0861** or lhasct@me.com.

NEW MEMBERS

By Doreen Orciari, Membership Records Chair

S. BearnsLakeville
 Andrew Brady Winsted
 Freda CarreiroOakville
 Catherine Ciullo Watertown
 Nancy DeCrisantis New Hartford
 Sandra Falzone New Milford
 Barbara FriedmanLakeville
 George Gnull..... Terryville
 Elizabeth Greak..... New Hartford
 Doug Hart Roxbury
 Ted Heavenrich..... Watertown
 Betty Kaine Bristol
 Eileen Kindl New Hartford
 Gisele Letourneau* New Milford
 Betty Mandler New Milford
 Margaret Martinez.....Sharon
 Katharine Molnar*..... Winsted
 Charles NierlingSouth Kent
 Lori Paniati New Hartford
 Gabrielle Sindorf..... Bridgewater
 Beth Wallace..... Falls Village
 Elizabeth Wilbur..... Goshen
 Dawn Wilkes* Goshen

**Welcome back*

LHAS Membership is at 1,074.

If your newsletter is addressed incorrectly, send an email to Doreen Orciari at doreen.orciari@gmail.com.

Condolences: LHAS extends our sincere condolences to **Rich Martin** and his family on the recent death of his mother, and to **Fran Zygmunt** and his family on his mother's passing in May.

This newsletter and other LHAS features can be seen **IN LIVING COLOR at www.lhasct.org.**



Scan the QR code at left with your smart-phone to go to www.lhasct.org.

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Chickadee Chatter was printed by **Photo Arts Printing Company**, Torrington, CT.

Special thanks to **Doreen Orciari** and **Janet Baker** for proof-reading this newsletter!

President's Message

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Harry Schuh and Carol Kearns

Photo: Paul Edwards

planning to major in an environmental field in college. Usually, we offer two scholarships, but we had so many awesome candidates this year that we decided to provide a third one, named in honor of the late Royal A. Meyers, Jr., from whose estate we had received a bequest.

We also announced we had donated a little over \$2,000 this past fiscal year to enable Sharon Audubon staff to provide nature classes to Torrington schoolchildren. (See two thank-you notes we received, below.)

Finally, our two presenters showed us how we can all help bees and other pollinators by creating "pollinator pathways" that feature lots of native plants and a lot less lawn. They quoted landscape designer Annie White: "Think of your lawn as an area rug or as a hallway, not as wall-to-wall carpeting."

Speaking of gardens ... please join us at our meeting July 11 to hear about gardening with frogs and toads. Then bring your kids or grandkids to our annual picnic at Boyd Woods Sanctuary, when Sharon Audubon staff will show us live birds or animals. (See the Calendar on page 7.)

Best wishes for a wonderful summer,

Diane



Art and Donna Potwin (left) and Heather and Henry Perrault (right) at the Annual Meeting.

Photo: Paul G. Edwards



Left to right: Marie Kennedy, Diane Edwards, and Angela Dimmitt at the Annual Meeting.

Photo: Paul G. Edwards

Two of the Thank-you Notes from the Torrington School

Dear Marie and The Litchfield Hills Audubon Society,
 Thank you very much for sponsoring "Winter on Bog Meadow" presented by Wendy Miller with the Sharon Audubon.
 It was a great opportunity for our students and they talked about it for days. ☺
 Thank you again!
 Kristen Fern - Kindergarten Teacher



Conservation News

By Diane Edwards, Conservation Chair

DEEP to Replace Trees Removed at Park

Last fall, the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection cut more than two dozen trees at Housatonic Meadows State Park that the agency thought might be a danger to the public. Controversy ensued, as some conservationists decried the mass tree removal. Fortunately, the state legislature has passed a bill (SB 238, amended) that requires DEEP to conduct a tree replacement pilot project to restore the area where trees had been removed.

State Legislature Votes to Ban Non-agricultural Use of Chlorpyrifos

A bill approved by the legislature bans the use of the pesticide chlorpyrifos, which is toxic to birds and pollinators, on golf courses and for cosmetic and non-agricultural uses.

New Website to Help Bumblebee Conservation

Bee researchers, with help from CT DEEP and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, have created a new online resource, *bumblebeeflowerfinder.info*, to help you determine which plants will help our native bumblebees.

Morris Bans Baiting Wildlife

A new ordinance in the town of Morris prohibits intentionally feeding and attracting wildlife. The ban was inspired by residents baiting bears and other wildlife for viewing purposes. The ban includes bird feeders, which now may not be used from April 1 through November 30.

Proposed Bill to Protect 41 Miles of Housatonic River

In May U.S. Sen. Chris Murphy and Rep. Jahana Hayes introduced the **Housatonic Wild and Scenic River Act of 2022**, which would create a U.S. National Park Service protective designation for 41 miles of the Housatonic River, running through Sharon, Canaan, Cornwall, Salisbury, New Milford, Kent, and North Canaan. The designation would bring federal resources to the towns along the river to support conservation efforts, especially as recreation use has increased since the start of COVID-19.

Report Wild Turkey Brood Sightings

DEEP's Wildlife Division conducts an **Annual Wild Turkey Brood Survey** to estimate the average number of turkey poults (young-of-the-year) per hen statewide and to assess annual fluctuations in the turkey population. When reporting your sightings, record all the hens and poults observed during your normal travel from June 1 through August 31. Each observation is categorized by total number of hens observed, total poults, and total number of hens with poults. Observations of male (tom) turkeys by themselves are not requested for this survey. To report your sightings, go to <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Wildlife/Report-a-Wild-life-Sighting>.

Woodpeckers, Plus Introduced Wasps, Can Help Control Emerald Ash Borer

Over the past 20 years, the non-native, invasive Emerald Ash Borer has been devastating ash trees across the country, including here in Connecticut. While it's too late to eradicate this pest, there are signs we can keep ash borer numbers low enough to give ash forests a chance to regenerate, according to an article at audubon.org. Researchers have found that woodpeckers, as well as Brown Creepers and Red- and White-breasted Nuthatches, eat insects, including ash borers, found in or on tree bark. Downy, Hairy, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers are especially prolific insect predators. Along with parasitoid wasps that have been introduced in the U.S. by scientists as a form of "biocontrol," the woodpeckers will be "key in bringing equilibrium to borer populations and giving ash a chance," said Joe Elkinton, an entomologist at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. To read the article, go to audubon.org/news/birds-have-role-play-confronting-notorious-tree-killing-beetle.



Red-bellied Woodpecker

Photo: Diane Friend Edwards

New CT Law Protects Forage Fish

Audubon Connecticut reports that Governor Ned Lamont has signed House Bill 5141, **An Act Concerning the**

Conservation News

continued

Protection of Certain Fish Species, into law. The new law limits harvest of the forage fish species listed in the bill (including Atlantic Silverside, Sand Lance, and others) to no more than 200 pounds per day. These limits will help ensure that sustainable levels of these forage fish species will be available for birds like the Least Tern, Great Blue Heron, egrets, and other predators in the ecosystem who rely on these species for sustenance. The law will allow for the continued use of these fish species for bait but restricts the potential for their use in an industrial or reduction fishery. To read more, go to ct.audubon.org/news.

CT Could Gain 5,200 Acres of Protected Coastal Areas

If Congress updates the **Coastal Barrier Resources Act** (CBRA), as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is recommending, it would help birds that depend on our shoreline, wetlands, and estuaries, says Audubon Connecticut. The CBRA protects millions of acres of pristine, undeveloped beaches and wetlands across much of the country. By preventing wasteful federal spending in sensitive coastal areas, it saves taxpayers billions of dollars, provides birds a safe habitat, and buffers nearby communities against storms and sea-level rise. The USFWS is calling for Congress to add more than 277,000 acres to the CBRA system in nine states most affected by Hurricane Sandy, including Connecticut. Audubon CT is urging Congress to act so our state can gain new protections for more than 5,000 acres of undeveloped shoreline, wetlands, and estuaries on Connecticut's coast along Long Island Sound and the Atlantic Ocean. To read more about this, go to ct.audubon.org/news.

New Legislation Will Help Bring Birds Back Across the Western Hemisphere

National Audubon says increased U.S. funding through the **Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act** will benefit more than 350 bird species.

Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) have introduced legislation to enhance the NMBCA. The law is an innovative and cost-effective approach to the conservation of the more than 350 neotropical bird species in the U.S. that travel to Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Canada every year, such as the Scarlet Tanager, Purple Martin, and Baltimore Oriole. It supports the conservation of bird habitat as well as research, monitoring, outreach,

and education.

As a matching grant program, it catalyzes funding from sources beyond the U.S. government. Since 2000, the U.S. has invested \$80 million, which has sparked an additional \$310 million in matching funds from public-private partnerships. These funds have supported 658 projects in 36 Latin American and Caribbean countries, 40 U.S. states and territories, and provinces and territories across Canada.

The **Migratory Birds of the Americas Conservation Enhancements Act** (S. 4187) specifically aims to:

- More than triple the authorized annual funding for the program.
- Increase the available match of federal funds that can result in more, larger proposals and fewer barriers to participation by partners.
- Provide greater capacity to implement the grant program by raising the amount the Fish and Wildlife Service can allocate toward managing it.

New Name for the Gypsy Moth

The Entomological Society of America recently announced that *Lymantria dispar* has been renamed as the Spongy Moth because the old name used a derogatory term for the Romani people. The new name — derived from the common name used in France and French-speaking Canada, *spongieuse* — refers to the moth's sponge-like egg masses. A primary way the moth spreads is via these egg masses when transported on firewood, outdoor equipment, and vehicles.



Spongy Moth

Photo: Diane Friend Edwards

The CT DEEP and the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station expect a heavy presence of Spongy Moth caterpillars to cause widespread defoliation of hardwood trees in northwestern Connecticut this year, unless wet spring conditions activated a naturally occurring soil-borne fungus, *Entomophaga maimaiga*, which is lethal only to Spongy Moth caterpillars and normally keeps their populations in check. Time will tell how the trees in our county fare.

Trip Reports**I'd Walk a Mile for a Warbler***By Russ Naylor*

On Sunday, May 8, boundlessly birding Brit Angela Dimmitt led a band of LHAS members on a windswept tour of the White Memorial woods, on alert for warblers and other winged wonders. Despite blustery breezes, the migrants did not disappoint. Wetlands produced Northern Waterthrush, Swamp Sparrow, Gray Catbirds, plus Yellow Warblers lustily battling for territory. In the mid-canopy of the pine forest, kept down from the treetops, hungry warblers foraged — Pine, Black and White, Blackburnian, and Yellow-rumped — plus sweet-songed Blue-headed Vireos and those tiny woodland sprites — Brown Creepers.

Then, acting on a hot birding tip from Ann Orsillo, we took the plunge and walked the Little Pond route in its entirety. Bingo! In the old sewer bed field, birds popped up like magic in sheltered shrubs while gleaning tiny insects — Savannah Sparrow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, American Redstart, and Black-throated Blue Warbler. Next, the boardwalk was a show of wetland avifauna — Wood Ducks, Great Blue Herons, Swamp Sparrows, plus vigorously singing Marsh Wrens posing for photos. Broad-winged Hawks and various swallows surfed the winds overhead. Local resident birds also put in an appearance — curious chickadees, lazily nesting Mute Swans, algae-harvesting Canada Geese, our local breeding raven pair, and White-breasted Nuthatches renovating nest holes. Our mile-long stroll was capped at the end by a melodic farewell from a territorial Brown Creeper staking his claim.

Kudos to Angela for a pleasant peregrination, a great cardio workout, and a splendid mix of vernal birdlife in full nuptial colors!

Chimney Swift Swirl*By Russ Naylor*

Not rain, nor storm, nor temper fits by the fickle gods of fate can deter us from our mission! No, this isn't the USPS but the work of several doughty bird addicts who defied tempestuous winds and looming storm clouds to watch our local Chimney Swifts gather in an avian tornado of their own, just prior to pouring into their roosting chimney at Mitchell School in Woodbury.

Fie on Mother Nature for her churlish attempts to stonewall our field trip activities — once again, much to her displeasure, we pushed onward through this tempest to watch and admire her wonders. Several breeding pairs of swifts whirled together in twittering aerial duets before settling into their roost site. Other birds were whisked off the chimney top by strong wind gusts, but in a show of aerobatic sleight of wing, slalomed upwind into position, then dove into the roost with pinpoint accuracy. Some 175-200 birds gathered and slipped into safety — a steady trickle of deftly fluttering wings — before sheets of rain came sloshing in. It was a spectacle by master aerialists not to be missed, no matter what the fickle whims of the fates try to toss our way!

If the fall swift flight is good, depending on migration status and weather, I will host another Swift Swirl on Sunday, August 14 (tentative). See page 8 for more details.

Wigwam Brook Wildlife Sanctuary Report*By John Baker, Wigwam Sanctuary chair*

We had two major accomplishments this past month.

Kendra Collins, The American Chestnut Foundation's Northeast science coordinator, visited the sanctuary and flagged 147 chestnut trees in our breeding orchard that were not blight resistant. These trees will be removed.

Vickie Dauphinais organized a planting party with Ann Orsillo's plan. They planted about 30 plants in our pollinator garden; now to keep them watered and weeded, and we'll be off to a great start — thanks to you all!

The water levels of the beaver ponds appear low. Where did all you beavers go?

Photo: (Left to right) Jane Golding, Vickie Dauphinais, and John Baker planting in the Wigwam Sanctuary pollinator garden.



Meetings, Bird Walks and Activities

LHAS Calendar — Summer 2022



NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, **General Meetings** are held on the first Monday of each month. When the first Monday of the month falls on a holiday, the meeting is held on the second Monday. Meetings are held at the Litchfield Community Center, 421 Bantam Road (Route 202), Litchfield, and/or via Zoom. **Board of Directors Meetings** are held the third Tuesday of every other month at 7 p.m.

GENERAL MEETINGS

Note: Some of our meetings will be hybrid: in person and Zoom. If you want to attend via Zoom (if available), go to the Calendar section of our website, lhasct.org, to register.

July 11 Gardening with Frogs and Toads (in person) Monday, 7 PM

A garden filled with the peeps, trills, quacks, or croaks from our native frogs and toads is one of the fastest ways to judge the health of your local ecosystem. Learn how to garden to help the amphibian populations in your yard and beyond. Our presenter, Margery Winter, is the assistant director and instructor at Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton, where she shares her passion for earth science and nature with students of all ages. She manages the Nature Center’s native plant gardens and is an advocate for the role of natives in our designed landscapes. She is a Master Landscape Design Consultant. Margery also is chair of the Simsbury Inland Wetland/Conservation Commission, a member of the town’s Open Space Committee, and president of the Simsbury Land Trust.

August 1 LHAS Annual Picnic at Boyd Woods Sanctuary (in person) Monday, 6 PM

Once again, Audubon Sharon will provide us with an interesting and exciting mystery program with one of their very knowledgeable staff presenting an animal/bird program. This program will be especially geared toward families, as we will be able to see the animals and/or birds very closely. Boyd Woods Audubon Sanctuary is on Route 254 about 1 mile south of the junction with Route 118. The picnic starts at 6 p.m., the program at 6:30. Bring a chair, your picnic food and beverage, and insect repellent. Rain or thunder storm cancels. *If you have any questions, please call Janet Baker at 860-567-8427.*

September 12 . . The Falkland Islands: A Birding Travelogue (in person) Monday, 7 PM

Frank Mantlik will present a birding travelogue of a cruise to these remote islands in the South Atlantic Ocean. Frank is a leading Connecticut birder, photographer, and speaker.

BIRDING EVENTS AND FIELD TRIPS

July 9 Pollinator Parade: A Family Program at White Memorial . . . Saturday, 10-11:30 AM

With beautiful flowers blooming comes a parade of pollinators! Join members of the LHAS Education Committee in the Litchfield Garden Club’s pollinator and rain gardens beside Ongley Pond at White Memorial Conservation Center. We will learn about the role of pollinators, some common pollinator species, community conservation efforts, and how to make your lawn more pollinator-friendly. We’ll also hike the short trail around Ongley Pond and have some fun games on the lawn for our young naturalists! Meet in White Memorial’s museum parking lot. Rain cancels. *For more information, contact Marie Kennedy at 914-393-6270 or mariekennedy226@gmail.com.*

The next Board Meeting will be at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, July 19. Contact Diane Edwards at edwardsd68@charter.net to see if the meeting will be in person or via Zoom.

July 16. Paddling on Lake Winchester Saturday, 9:30 AM

Join Diane and Paul Edwards for a paddling trip on the lake. Bring your kayak or canoe, PFD, hat, sunglasses, sun-screen, bug spray, snacks or lunch, and water. Meet in the parking lot. **Directions:** From Winchester Center take Route 263 west, then West Street to the state boat launch. Heavy rain/t-storms cancel. Please let Diane know IN ADVANCE if you plan to join them; *contact her at 860-309-5139 or edwardsd68@charter.net.*

July 19 Berkshire Botanical Garden Tuesday, 8 AM in Torrington or 8:30 in Goshen

The Berkshire Botanical Garden covers 15 acres in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Its collections contain over 3,000 species and varieties, with an emphasis on plants that thrive in the Berkshires. Join Pamela Hicks and Debbie Martin on a garden tour. We can walk around on our own or perhaps take a tour. Entrance to the garden is free on Tuesdays! Bring a picnic lunch. Meet Debbie at 8 a.m. at the commuter parking lot near Burger King in Torrington off Route 8 exit 44 or Pam at 8:30 a.m. at the Goshen Congregational Church lot for a carpool to the Berkshires.

August 14 (tentative). . . Chimney Swift Swirl. Sunday, 7:30 PM

If the fall swift flight is good, depending on migration status and weather, Russ Naylor will reprise his spring outing, but in reverse — watching swifts as they leave for their southward migration. This time, the group will go to Woodbury Middle School. Meet at Canfield Corner Pharmacy at the junction of Route 6 (Main Street North) and Route 47 in Woodbury. *For details and updates, call Russ at 203-841-7779 and leave a message.*

August 23. The Mount Tuesday, 8 AM in Torrington or 8:30 in Goshen

The Mount is a country house in Lenox, Massachusetts, the home of noted American author Edith Wharton, who designed the house and its grounds and considered it her "first real home." Meet Debbie Martin at 8 a.m. at the commuter parking lot near Burger King in Torrington off Route 8 exit 44 or Pam Hicks at 8:30 a.m. at the Goshen Congregational Church lot for a carpool to the Berkshires. Bring a picnic lunch. General Admission tickets offer the option of either Self-Guided or Guided Tours. Guided Tour Adults Ages 19-64 — \$20. Guided Tour Seniors Ages 65+ — \$18. Self-Guided Tours begin when you arrive and proceed at your own pace. There is interpretative material throughout the house. Guided Tours are held at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 12 p.m., 2 p.m., 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. and last about an hour. These docent-led tours have limited availability; please make reservations in advance at edithwharton.org. Guided Tours begin on time, so please arrive at The Mount at least 15 minutes prior to your tour time. The house is a 1/4 mile from the main parking lot. Please check in at the admission booth when you arrive. Face coverings are required indoors regardless of vaccination status. Grounds are free and open to the public from dawn to dusk unless otherwise posted.

Seeds 'n' Suet, May 2022

By Russ Naylor

At last, spring is greening up and soon will be hot in more ways than one. Hope we don't go into a drought. Blooms are bursting out all over — I've just had a profusion of Bloodroot, Hawthorn, and Wild Ginger holding forth with violets and honeysuckle. May Apples are budding vigorously; I hope to get fruit from 75-80 plants for a local native nursery to propagate. Hope no late frosts do damage.

Cardinals and Chipping Sparrows are nesting in my shrubs, three chipmunks vie for seed spilled from feeders, and just this morning I found newly weaned bunnies in the viburnum and yew thicket in the backyard — ma rabbit has had them hidden carefully until now. Good thing our Red Fox hasn't

been around in quite some time. It seems he's been hunting on the other side of the Pomperaug River; maybe there's better pickings there for his vixen and her sizable litter of kits.

Meanwhile, our local raven pays daily visits, perching atop his favorite spruce while "shopping" for his own nestful of feathering chicks. Hope he brings his family over once they fledge!

As we ease into summer, I'm looking forward to nesting bluebirds and Carolina Wrens in the neighborhood fledging young — already they are on their first-round nests. Time will tell.

Where Are the Beavers?

A Report on the Wigwam Brook Watershed at LHAS' Wigwam Brook Wildlife Sanctuary

By Rich Martin

The wetland landscape at Wigwam Brook Wildlife Sanctuary (WBWS) continues to change while there is beaver activity. The illustration on page 11 identifies the significant sources of water that contribute to the wetlands at the sanctuary and, collectively, that flow into Wigwam Brook, which ultimately flows into the Wigwam Reservoir.

There are three main sources of water that make up Wigwam Brook. They all start across the road from Wigwam Brook Sanctuary (on the east side of Route 254) and run through culverts under the roadway into the sanctuary.

Culvert 1 is fed by a brook (no name) that appears to be coming from the pond at the horse farm on Route 118. It flows into beaver pond 1 at WBWS, and heads further south from there.

Culvert 2 is fed by **Wigwam Brook**, whose headwaters are in Topsmead State Forest. A couple years ago my wife, Debbie, and I walked the course of the brook into Topsmead (which was quite difficult with all the invasives), where it begins, surprisingly, as a trickle. It flows into and meets up with the brook (no name) that runs into WBWS from the north.

Culvert 3 is fed by a brook that crosses over and under the power line. This brook enters into the wetland area at the southernmost tip of WBWS and enters into Wigwam Brook below beaver pond 5.



Culvert 1



Culvert 2



Culvert 3

As of early June, all three culverts have water running through them. Culvert 2 (Wigwam Brook feed) is flowing very well.

(continued on page 10)



Beaver Pond 5

Where Are the Beavers?

(continued from page 9)

Beaver Ponds and Their Current Status

There are five noticeable beaver ponds at Wigwam Brook Wildlife Sanctuary that one can see from various points on the property.

Beaver pond 1 receives its water from the brook/pond (no name) that originates above Route 118. There is water flowing through culvert 1 feeding into this pond. The beavers have abandoned this area for now. The dam is intact, for the most part, maintaining a certain water level. Some water is leaving the pond and flowing south to beaver pond 2.

Beaver pond 2 receives its water from beaver pond 1. The beavers have also abandoned this pond at this time. The dam, not being maintained by the beavers, has been breached in many areas and whatever water flows into this pond quickly flows out. Beaver pond 2 is considerably drier compared to all the other beaver ponds.

Beaver pond 3 receives water flowing out of beaver pond 2 and Wigwam Brook. There is a good amount of water flowing through culvert 2 feeding in part into beaver pond 3. The beavers appear to be maintaining the dam at this pond, and the water level is quite high.

Beaver pond 4 receives water from runoff from beaver pond 3 and tertiary water coming in from various runoff areas. There is a good amount of water feeding into this pond. The dam is in great condition and the water level at this pond is extremely high. The beavers appear to be maintaining the dam at this pond but have abandoned the lodge that is here — they'll be back!

Beaver pond 5 receives water from various locations, overflow from pond 4 and wetland runoff. The beavers are maintaining the dam at this pond, and the water level is also quite high. There is no beaver lodge at this pond.

Seeing shrubs freshly gnawed on beside the water, and several new dams being built and old dams being maintained, it's obvious that beavers currently reside along the Wigwam waterways. The actual whereabouts of these dam builders and where their current lodge is has been difficult to determine. We have a



strong hunch that they reside in the wetland areas to the west of beaver ponds 3 and 4, but there are a lot of invasive plants impeding access to this area. But for now, the beavers are safe and busy continuing their work in their effort to create a new and wonderful habitat for wildlife.

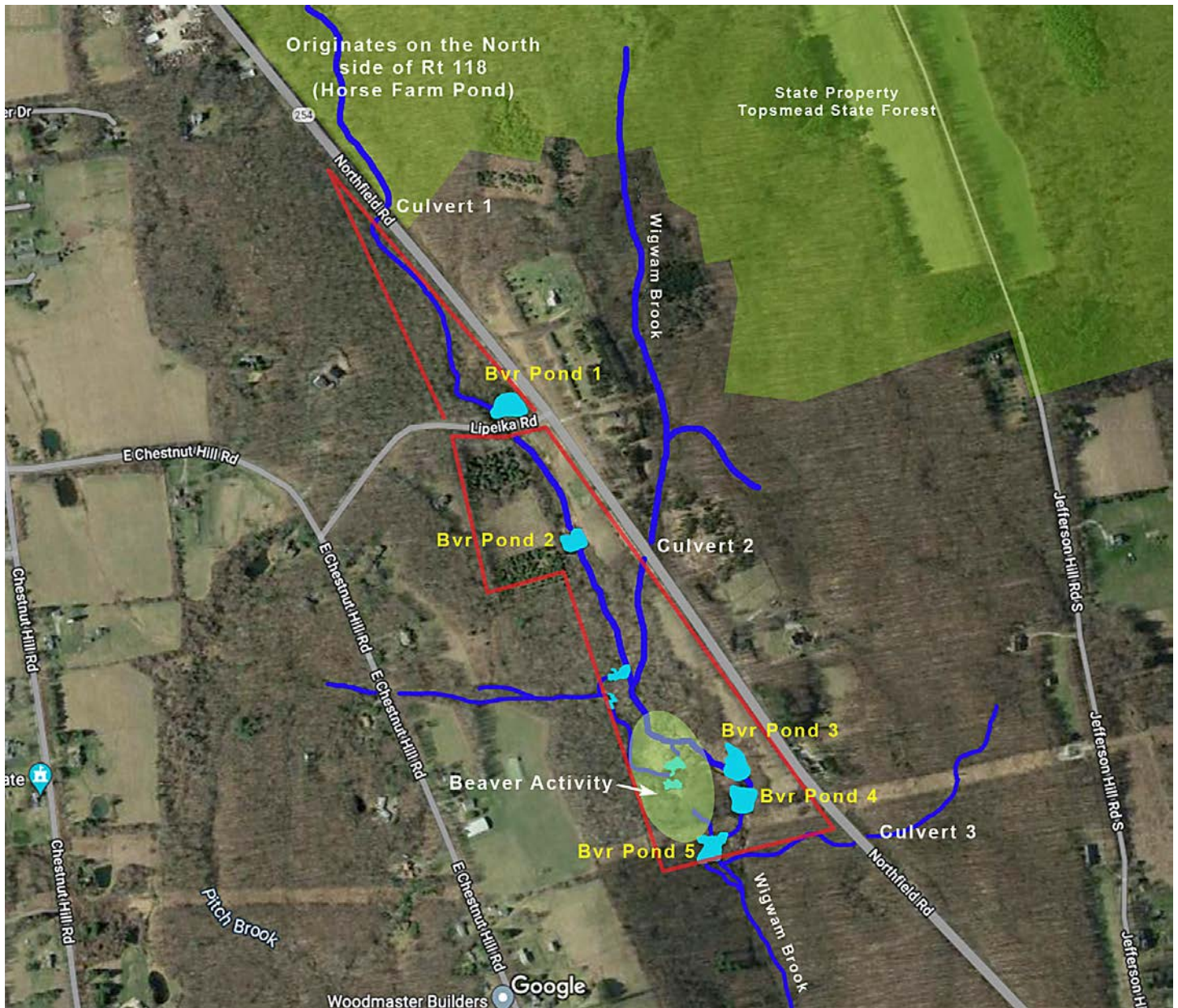


Illustration of the beaver ponds and water feeds at Wigwam Brook Wildlife Sanctuary

A May Morning at Macricostas Preserve

By Diane Edwards

Dragging my bones out of bed in time to go on Ray Belding's bird walk on May 25 was well worth it. We saw some fabulous birds at Macricostas Preserve in New Preston — including Bobolinks, Alder Flycatchers, bluebirds, Tree Swallows, a Baltimore Oriole, a kingbird, Red-winged Blackbirds, an Osprey, and many others. Best of all was a woodcock that feigned a broken wing to distract us from its nest! Below are a few of the photos I was able to get.

Thanks for a wonderful walk, Ray! And thank you for leading the Wednesday morning bird walks all season.



American Woodcock



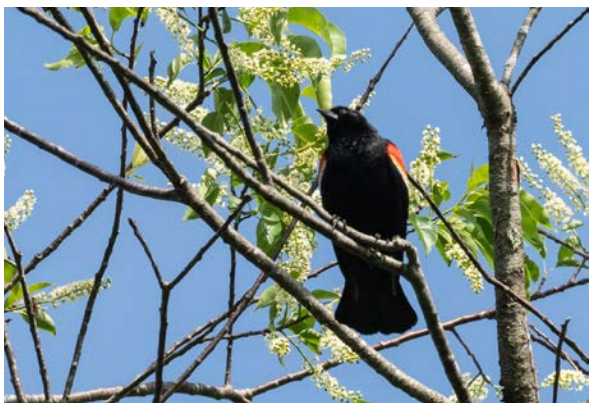
Eastern Bluebird



Baltimore Oriole



Tree Swallow



Red-winged Blackbird



House Sparrow

In My Garden — A Journal — June 2, 2022

By Angela Dimmitt



An unwelcome visitor!

Photo: Angela Dimmitt

A bear came by again this morning. I say *a* bear because photos show there are at least two — not big but one much fatter than the other, maybe year-olds or young females — mercifully no cubs. Two just sauntered across the back lawn; one previously crashed through a hydrangea bush, eating some of it en route. Today's visitor also crashed through a bush and knocked down a sapling then rooted in a pile of dead leaves, leaving big footprints to confirm its presence. A boy? And this one came unseen on a very busy morning here — a guy came to replace my car's windshield, a friend dropped by, my lawn guy came with his monster mower (I've got him pushing a push-mower instead of weed-whacking a tricky steep part) — and I was of course walking to and fro and suddenly noticed the latest rearrangement of the shrubs along the drive!

Sadly, there was another visit, also in broad daylight. One morning I was gone for a short while and returned to find the bluebird box with six babies about ready to fledge lying on the ground open and empty, the parents flying back and forth in great agitation. One baby may have survived — I found it that evening, just able to fly 5 or 6 feet, parents nearby. Apparently, this is not an isolated incident, a most unfortunate result of bears coming amongst us.

Now the parents are back and hopefully will nest again. Five of six boxes are occupied! Tree Swallows (six eggs a few days ago), House Wrens in two boxes (with a third filled with sticks), and a House Sparrow in the fifth. The only one empty is the restored one the bluebirds used before, which most years is their favorite.

You won't believe this, but as I write, that no-good bear has returned — walked past this window, then the kitchen (I shooed it off), into the woods and down — now I can hear it splashing in the stream! Not sure, but I think the fat one. What audacity!

And yes, there are a few birds here! The dawn chorus around 5 a.m. has Wood Thrush, Veery, Wood Pewee, Yellow-throated Vireo, House Wren, Louisiana Waterthrush, and the craziest catbird, as well as the usual locals, loudest among them the cardinal and Carolina Wren. Later, others begin to sing — American Redstarts, Common Yellowthroat, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Red-eyed Vireo, Great Crested Flycatcher, and the other evening a Barred Owl (being mobbed by crows). Chimney Swifts delight with their aerobatics before dusk, and the hummingbirds come in for a drink then too (although with so many real flowers available, they don't need our help). The phoebe is using the same nest under the barn eaves as last year.

Then there was my hen turkey — she came every day and if I went out with corn, she came running for it, a trick she apparently learned before she met me. The last time she came was May 1, so hopefully she's been sitting on eggs (incubation is 28 days, all by herself) and will return shortly with her entourage of fluffballs — did you know they can actually fly within a few days of hatching?

And the garden is beyond fabulous, even if I say so myself! Dogwood over and rhododendrons bashed by last night's rain, but azaleas in various stages of brilliant red, orange, pink; red weigela, pink and white kolkwitzia (Beauty Bush), physocarpus, all full and amazing. Then irises, first scented

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Kolkwitzia — aka Beauty Bush

Photo: Angela Dimmitt



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early daylilies and peonies, giant orange poppies, foxgloves, columbine, ragged robin everywhere! And hostas (which I collect) — all are just unbelievably gorgeous! With the recent rain and then heat, most flowerbeds filled out before I had a chance to remove winter's mess of leaves, etc., so hopefully that will work as mulch. Ha — we shall see!

Trees leafed out so suddenly, almost overnight after that rain and heat — one day one could see the birds, the next not. Now with the June summer bird counts upon us, we need to listen to those tapes again, and not just the warblers, get our

ears attuned and focused!

So many rare birds came to Connecticut last month, mostly along the coast, but a few inland. I missed the extraordinary Arctic Terns on Bantam Lake, which many LHASers probably saw. But I've been on many walks locally and it was a wonderful month — the Least

Bitterns and Soras are back in Wimisink Marsh in Sherman and hopefully this year will show us their babies!

May all the nests in your gardens fledge their young safely!

"It was a wonderful month — the Least Bitterns and Soras are back in Wimisink Marsh in Sherman and hopefully this year will show us their babies!"