



Chickadee Chatter



September/October 2022

Litchfield Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 67/Issue 5

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

See Calendar on pages 6-8 for our Upcoming Meetings & Field Trips



Migration Time Again

For as long as I can remember, the sight of migrating birds has nearly moved me to tears, especially in autumn. Feeling bereft as the birds flee south, I silently wish them "Goodbye! Safe journey! And please come back!" Yet migration season is also amazing. In the fall, our eyes scan the skies for soaring raptors — hawks, eagles, ospreys, falcons, and owls — as they head southward by the hundreds of thousands. We marvel over the huge "murmurations" of swallows and starlings swirling in precision aerobatics. And we see "northern" birds, like the White-throated Sparrow, that stop in to rest and feed here before resuming their

southbound journey.

In the spring, we search trees and meadows for northbound warblers and other songbirds. Along the coast, we cheer the return of ospreys, egrets, herons, and peeps. I remember one March, at Rockaway Beach in Queens (yes, I'm a transplanted New Yorker), joyfully yelling "Welcome back, birds!" to a skein of geese coming inland over the water.

Now, however, the breeding season here in the north has ended, and many birds have already left or will leave soon. To help you enjoy the fall migration, LHAS has a number of

(continued on page 3)

Raptors Highlight of Annual Picnic

Bethany Sheffer from Sharon Audubon gave a wonderful raptor presentation on August 1 at the LHAS Annual Picnic at Boyd Woods Sanctuary. She showed us an Eastern Screech Owl (left), an American Kestrel (center), and a Red-tailed Hawk. Photos: Paul G. Edwards



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 **November/December 2022** issue is **October 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

Judy Baldwin Sharon
 Patricia Brabant Goshen
 Carole Brawner Torrington
 Karolene Carlson Sharon
 Steven Caruso Litchfield
 Kenneth Cribley Thomaston
 Paul Cryan* New Hartford
 Rachel D'Ambrosio Torrington
 Donna Davis Winsted
 Franck DeChambeau Lakeville
 Andrew Ferentinos Sharon
 Kathryn Frucher Sharon
 Diane Gooding Bristol
 Donna Graham Thomaston
 Kim & Judy Herkimer Cornwall Bridge
 Adam Higgins Lakeville
 Laurie Anne Hunter-McCue Lakeville
 Daniel Joynt Sherman
 Sandra Kennedy Oakville
 Nicholas Masi Watertown
 Elyn Mittman Lakeville
 Carrie Neill Bristol
 Zach Ness New Milford
 Catherine Noren West Cornwall
 Dale Pinchbeck Roxbury
 Martin Quigley Roxbury
 Carol Rand Sharon
 Susan Read Litchfield
 Bonnie Rosborough Sherman
 Terrence Ryan Sharon
 Carole Shea New Milford
 Deborah Simon Pleasant Valley
 Michele Smedick Winsted
 Joshua Tavlin Falls Village
 William VanVranken New Milford
 George Wallace Falls Village
 James Wilson Terryville

**Welcome back*

LHAS Membership is at 1,134.

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

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

(continued from page 1)

outings lined up over the coming weeks: hawk watches in Torrington and New Haven; Wednesday morning bird walks; a search for sparrows and other mid-fall migrants; and a long weekend of birding at the Northeast's migration mecca, Cape May. (In Cape May you might also see migrating Monarch Butterflies — last year we were stunned to see thousands of them streaming past us over the beach. New Haven's Hawk Watch at Lighthouse Point Park is also a good place to see migrating Monarchs.)

In the coming weeks, you can also join us for an autumn hike, garden visits, or paddling trips. You will find details for all of these outings on pages 6-8.

But back to migration for a minute: This twice yearly phenomenon reminds us of the need to protect bird habitats — their breeding areas, wintering grounds, and all the stopover locations between them — not only in our own backyards, state, and country, but also all along the flyways from Canada down through Central and South America. That's the goal of the Audubon Americas initiative. "Audubon's new strategies in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada represent a new chapter in the evolution of Audubon in which we broaden our focus to protecting birds and the places they need over their entire life cycles," states

Coming Soon: Bird Migration Explorer

National Audubon has a Migratory Bird Initiative that aims to create a more comprehensive picture of bird migration in the Western Hemisphere. Since 2018 Audubon scientists have been compiling records contributed by more than 100 researchers and institutions, including long-term data from Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird and the USGS Bird Banding Laboratory, into a single resource that reflects the movements of thousands of individual birds and more than 450 species. This year MBI will unveil its centerpiece: an interactive online platform, called the Bird Migration Explorer, with visualizations of each of the species' journeys and the risks they encounter throughout the year. "The vision is to secure the future of migratory birds in the Western Hemisphere by identifying the places that they need across the Americas," says MBI Senior Director Jill Deppe.

To read more about the Migratory Bird Initiative, go to audubon.org/conservation/migratory-bird-initiative.

their website. You can read all about it at audubon.com/conservation/americas.



Irek Rychlik and Vickie Dauphinais, along with several other LHAS garden enthusiasts, worked hard this summer keeping the butterfly and pollinator garden beautiful at our Kalmia Sanctuary in Harwinton.

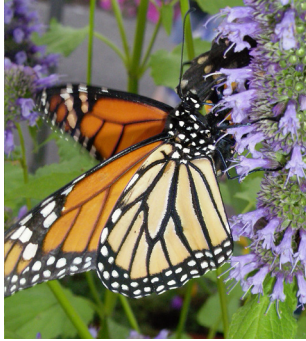
Photo: Anna Buchniwecz

Conservation News

By Diane Edwards, Conservation Chair

Monarch Butterflies Now Listed as Endangered by IUCN (But Not by EPA)

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has now listed the migratory Monarch Butterfly, a subspecies of the Monarch Butterfly, as Endangered on its "red list" of threatened species.



Monarch Butterfly

Photo: Diane Friend Edwards

According to the IUCN, the migratory Monarch population, known for its migrations from Mexico and California in the winter to summer breeding grounds throughout the U.S. and Canada, has shrunk by between 22% and 72% over the past decade. Legal and illegal logging and deforestation to

make space for agriculture and urban development has already destroyed substantial areas of the butterflies' winter shelter in Mexico and California. Pesticides and herbicides used in intensive agriculture across the range kill butterflies and milkweed, the host plant that the larvae of the Monarch Butterfly feed on.

The IUCN also says climate change has significantly impacted the migratory Monarch Butterfly and is a fast-growing threat. Drought limits the growth of milkweed and increases the frequency of catastrophic wildfires, temperature extremes trigger earlier migrations before milkweed is available, and severe weather has killed millions of butterflies.

The western population is at greatest risk of extinction, having declined by an estimated 99.9%, from as many as 10 million to 1,914 butterflies between the 1980s and 2021. The larger eastern population also shrank, by 84% from 1996 to 2014. Concern remains as to whether enough butterflies survive to maintain the populations and prevent extinction.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has *not* yet listed the monarch as endangered.

FWS Wants to Relocate Climate-Imperiled Species

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has proposed a change to Endangered Species Act regulations that would allow threatened and endangered species to be relocated to suitable habitats outside their historical ranges. This will help improve the conservation and recovery of imperiled species, since growing impacts from climate change and invasive species cause habitats within their historical ranges to shift and become unsuitable, the FWS says. Scientists have been seeing wildlife responding to the effects of climate change, with some species and ecosystems losing habitat due to increased temperatures, altered rain and snow patterns, sea level rise, and greater frequency and intensity of drought and wildfires. The result could be disastrous for threatened and endangered species.

An article at [audubon.org](https://www.audubon.org) notes that some experts fear there could be unintended negative consequences from relocating a species outside its historical range. But others feel that it's a gamble worth taking as our planet continues warming. Read the article at [audubon.org/news](https://www.audubon.org/news).

Avian Flu Kills Seabirds in Maine

In June Audubon learned of the first confirmed cases of avian flu at Atlantic seabird colonies in the U.S. after a string of tern deaths at breeding sites in Maine. This indicates that the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) that ravaged wild birds across the country this spring had arrived in New England's dense seabird colonies.

This breeding season, researchers at Pond Island and Stratton Island were finding one to two dead Common Terns every day—with no signs of predation, injury, or starvation. Some death is normal at these colonies. However, certain signs pointed to HPAI: At least two of the victims had been seen compulsively shaking their heads, a symptom of neurological issues associated with avian influenza. Reports of potentially sick birds not flushing when approached were also troubling. Test results confirmed that the disease was present at Pond Island: All four Common Terns from Pond Island sent to a lab tested positive for HPAI. Common Terns and Arctic Terns from other islands tested negative.

Conservation News

continued

No, Woodpeckers Don't Have 'Shock Absorbers' in Their Heads

An article on Audubon's website ("New Study Shakes Up Long-held Belief on Woodpecker Hammering," at [audubon.org/news](https://www.audubon.org/news)) describes a recent study trying to find out why woodpeckers don't sustain brain damage from their intense drumming on trees and other hard surfaces. A popular theory has been that woodpeckers have a foamy layer between their bills and skulls that help absorb the impact with wood, protecting their brains. However, the study results revealed the opposite: The birds actually minimize the need for shock absorption. How? Their heads and beaks essentially act like a stiff hammer, striking and stopping in unison. The scientists involved in the study, though, still don't know why the drumming doesn't damage the woodpeckers' brains.



Pileated Woodpecker

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

U.S. House Passes 'Recovering America's Wildlife Act'

The U.S. House of Representatives passed the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) in a bipartisan vote in June. The legislation dedicates \$1.3 billion for state-level conservation and \$97.5 million to Tribal Nations annually for proactive, on-the-ground projects that are projected to create more than 30,000 jobs and over \$93 billion in total economic activity.

"The Recovering America's Wildlife Act will provide much-needed funding to conserve more than 800 species of birds, including the vulnerable Golden-Winged Warbler and Black Tern," said Justin Stokes, deputy chief conservation officer, National Audubon Society. "This is the kind of response we need to help address the loss of 3 billion birds in North America since 1970."

Current funding for state and tribal Wildlife Action Plans, collectively about \$70 million per year, is less than 5% of what is necessary to conserve the species most at risk. The

Recovering America's Wildlife Act aims to help fill the gap. It provides 75% of the cost of the program, which equals the \$1.3 billion per year outlined in the bill. Each state would be responsible for coming up with the other 25%.

"This bill will not only help wildlife; it will also generate jobs in communities across the country," said Stokes.

A version of the bill passed out of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote in April. In August U.S. Senator Chris Murphy added his name as a co-sponsor to the Senate version of RAWA. According to a statement from his office, the bill "would dramatically increase federal investment in Connecticut's efforts to protect endangered species and support conservation work and the long-term health of fish and wildlife and their habitats."

Good and Bad News for Sea Turtles

CNN's website ([cnn.com](https://www.cnn.com)) reported that, thanks to conservation efforts, the state of Georgia had a record number of endangered sea turtle nests in early August: 3,966, beating the previous record of 3,956 nest in 2019. On Jekyll Island alone, more than 6,000 Loggerhead hatchlings emerged from a record 236 nests.

Meanwhile, almost all sea turtles born in Florida over the past four years have been female, notes an article online at [globalnews.ca](https://www.globalnews.ca). The culprit is "increasingly frequent and severe heat waves that are interfering with sea turtle reproduction." The gender of most turtles is determined by the temperature of the developing eggs; the warmer the sand, the higher the ratio of female hatchlings, says the website of the National Ocean Service (oceanservice.noaa.gov).



Girl holds a baby Loggerhead sea turtle

Photo: Walton LaVonda, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Meetings, Bird Walks and Activities

LHAS Calendar — Summer/Fall 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: The following meetings will be hybrid — in person and via Zoom. If you want to participate via Zoom, go to the Calendar section of our website, lhasct.org, to register. You will be sent the meeting login link.

September 12 . . . The Falkland Islands: A Birding Travelogue Monday, 7 PM

The Falkland Islands, in the South Atlantic Ocean off the coast of southern Argentina, are one of the last “off the beaten path” destinations. A British Overseas Territory, the islands are quite remote and are home to colonies of thousands of nesting penguins and albatrosses. Frank Mantlik will present a photo diary of his 10-day cruise there in 2018. It was an adventure of a lifetime. Frank was a founding director of the Connecticut Ornithological Association, served as a past president, and currently serves on its Avian Records Committee. He also currently serves on the Connecticut Audubon Society's Milford Coastal Center Advisory Board. He now works as a sought-after bird guide for Sunrise Birding tours, having travelled through the Americas, Europe, and Thailand. He is an accomplished bird and nature photographer, with numerous publication credits.

October 3 All About Bald Eagles Monday, 7 PM

Bald Eagles were once so endangered that many considered whether to replace them as America's national symbol. The ongoing story of their recovery as a species and Connecticut's healthy eagle population is a comeback story worth hearing. Join Ginny Apple, a Master Wildlife Conservationist (MWC) with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, for a talk about these magnificent birds of prey and their valuable contributions to our ecosystem. Ginny will discuss and give a slideshow presentation on the Bald Eagle and its resurging population in Connecticut. As an MWC, she serves as a Bald Eagle interpreter for the Shepaug Dam Eagle Viewing area in Southbury and the Essex Steam Train's Eagle Flyer, along with many other activities.

November 7 Life History of the Peregrine Falcon Monday, 7 PM

By the mid-1960s, peregrines had become extinct east of the Rocky Mountains. Then in 1998, the Travelers Tower in downtown Hartford hosted a nesting pair. Today there are at least 14 known territorial pairs in Connecticut. Our presenter, Steve Broker, has spent 24 years observing, studying, and photographing peregrines at West Rock Ridge in Woodbridge and East Rock Park in New Haven. Steve will discuss the life history strategies of peregrines, including sexual dimorphism, gender roles, territoriality, nest site selection and preparation, behavior, feeding, mating, egg laying, care of nestlings and fledglings, dispersal of young, site fidelity, and longevity. Steve's illustrated presentation draws on his 24-year experience with superb photographs of the birds in their most natural habitat. Steve worked in science education in Connecticut for 45 years. He is a past president of the New Haven Bird Club as well as the Connecticut Ornithological Association, for which he has also served as secretary and vice-president. He has also been a compiler of the Connecticut Christmas Bird Count for 35 years.

The next Board Meeting will be at 7 p.m., Tuesday, September 20. Contact Diane Edwards at edwardsd68@charter.net to see if the meeting will be in person or via Zoom.

BIRDING EVENTS AND FIELD TRIPS

Sept 11 Hawk Watch in Torrington Sunday, 10 AM - 12 PM

Hawk Watch is an international program to collect data on the migration of hawks. As citizen scientists, we will be looking to the skies to record the different species of hawks and count how many of each are spotted. Ray Belding has been conducting this watch in our area for many years. As Ray would say, some years are better than others. Counts can range from 10 to thousands of migrators — depending on weather conditions for the Atlantic Flyway. If you're interested in joining Ray, bring a blanket or chair, water, snacks, and your binoculars to the Torrington Middle School. **Directions:** From East Main Street, head north on Torrington Street; go 1.4 miles and turn right onto Middle School Drive. **For more information, contact Marie Kennedy at 914-393-6270.**

September 12 . . Paddle the Bantam River. Monday, 9 AM

Join Pamela Hicks and Ann Orsillo for a paddling trip on the Bantam River. Meet at the bridge/boat launch on Alain White Road in Litchfield. In addition to your own kayak or canoe, bring your PFD, water, snack, and binoculars for some fall birding. **Let one of us know if you'd like to join us: Contact Pam at smilemysles@yahoo.com or Ann at spoonbill@optonline.net.** Rain Date: Sept 19.

September 21 . . Hollister House Garden Visit Wednesday, 12:30 PM

Join Pamela Hicks and Vickie Dauphinais for a self-guided tour of this splendid garden in Washington, CT. Meet at the Litchfield Community Center parking lot at 421 Bantam Road (Route 202) in Litchfield to carpool to the garden. If you prefer to meet us at the garden at 1 p.m., the address is 300 Nettleton Hollow Road, Washington, CT. \$5.00 entrance fee. **Kindly let us know if you plan on attending: Contact Pamela at smilemysles@yahoo.com or Vickie at fdauphinais@optonline.net.**

September 24 . . Visit Our Table at White Memorial's Family Nature Day! . . Saturday, 11 AM - 5 PM

Bring the kids or grandkids to visit our table at this fun annual event. Besides activities for the kids, we will also have displays and information about our sanctuaries and activities for nature lovers of all ages.

October 1 Hawk Watching at Lighthouse Point Saturday, 8 AM

Hawk watchers at Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven typically tally more birds than those at any other reporting site northeast of Cape May, NJ, says National Audubon. Thousands of other migrating birds — plus Monarch Butterflies — pass the Point too, many of them stopping to rest and feed in the nearby woods and marsh. Join Angela Dimmitt for a day of watching this annual migration spectacle. **If interested, please contact Angela at 860-355-3429 or angeladimmitt@aol.com.** **Directions:** Take I-95 north through New Haven to Exit 50 and turn right on Woodward Avenue. At the end, past Nathan Hale Park, turn right on Townsend Ave. Watch for signs to Lighthouse Point Park and turn right on Lighthouse Road. Continue into the park; park in the parking lot or drive up to the hawk watch on the hill in front of the lighthouse. **Note:** There might be a non-resident parking fee, but it used to be waived if one said one was going to the hawk watch.

October 5 Wednesday Morning Birding with Ray Belding Wednesday, time TBA

For meeting time and location, **email Ray at turaco3000@gmail.com** and ask him to put you on his email list.

October 8 Autumn Hike at Boyd Woods and Wigwam Brook Saturday, 2:30 PM

Enjoy the fall colors and interesting habitats at two of our LHAS wildlife sanctuaries on this 2 1/2 mile hike led by Boyd Woods Sanctuary Chairpersons Rich and Debbie Martin. We'll visit the woodlands, pond, and brook at Boyd Woods before following a "secret trail" to the Wigwam Brook Sanctuary. The power-line habitat there may provide a look at some fall migrants. We'll check out three beaver dams where we just might just see one of the residents! There are a few short hills on this walk, but nothing too difficult. Wear sturdy walking shoes. The hike will take about 2-2 1/2 hours to complete, but there will be several places along the way to return to your car, should you decide to. Rain date: October 9. Meet at the Boyd Woods parking lot on Route 254 in Litchfield. No dogs! **For additional infor-**

Calendar

(continued from page 7)

mation, contact *Debbie Martin at barnowl524@hotmail.com or 860-819-7462.*

October 9. Sparrow Search Saturday, 8 AM

We will seek fall sparrows, finches, and other mid-fall migrants at Bent of the River Audubon Center in Southbury, the Southbury Training School farm, and possibly other local hotspots. Meet at the Bent of the River visitor parking lot (185 East Flat Hill Road). *For more details, call Russ Naylor at 203-841-7779 and leave a message.*

October 12. New York Botanical Garden Wednesday, 7:30 AM

This National Historic Garden Landmark comprises 250 acres — the largest botanical garden in any city in the United States. Join Pamela Hicks and Vickie Dauphinais as we enjoy the fall garden. We will depart from the Litchfield Community Center at 7:30 a.m. sharp to carpool and catch the train in White Plains. The train (about 30 minutes) will bring us very close to the garden. Train tickets can be purchased at the station for \$7-\$10 (off peak), \$10-12 (peak). The train leaves hourly. If we take the 9:43 a.m. train, we'll get to our destination stop at 10:12 a.m. Free admission to the gardens before 11 a.m. The conservatory and tram are an additional cost. Expect to return to Litchfield in the early evening. **Please let us know well in advance if you are interested: Contact Pamela at *smilemysles@yahoo.com* or Vickie at *fdauphinais@optonline.net*.** Rain Date: Oct. 19.

October 12. Wednesday Morning Birding with Ray Belding Wednesday, time TBA

For meeting time and location, *email Ray at turaco3000@gmail.com* and ask him to put you on his email list.

October 14-16. . Birding In and Around Cape May Friday-Sunday

Cape May, NJ, is one of the most well known East Coast birding destinations. We will go to some well-known and not-so-well-known birding sites throughout the county and stop at the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge on the way home to net around 130 species. On past trips, we have seen some great birds and had some great experiences. Ten rooms have been reserved at the Hyland Motor Inn in Cape May Courthouse for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights; cost: \$304. We will begin birding early Friday morning. Unlike last year, this year's trip *does* coincide with the Cape May Bird Observatory Fall Bird Festival, which we will visit on Saturday afternoon. **To reserve a room, share a room, need a ride, want a basic itinerary, and/or payment instructions, contact Dave Tripp at *dtrippjr@gmail.com*.**

October 19. Wednesday Morning Birding with Ray Belding Wednesday, time TBA

For meeting time and location, *email Ray at turaco3000@gmail.com* and ask him to put you on his email list.

October 22. Paddling on Burr Pond, Torrington 10 AM

Let's catch the last of the autumn colors with an easy paddle around this lovely pond at Burr Pond State Park. We can explore the islands and rock outcroppings before we put away our kayaks and canoes for the season. There is also a great trail that runs along the shoreline for those who want more activity after lunch. Bring water, lunch, and your PFD. Rain or very cold or windy weather will cancel. **Directions:** Take Route 8 to Exit 46. Make left onto Pinewoods Road. Make left at traffic light onto Winsted Road. In about 1 mile, make right onto Burr Mountain Road. Go past the main park entrance and make a left into the boat launch parking lot. **For more information, contact Marie Kennedy at *mariekennedy226@gmail.com* or 914-393-6270.**

October 26. Wednesday Morning Birding with Ray Belding Wednesday, time TBA

For meeting time and location, *email Ray at turaco3000@gmail.com* and ask him to put you on his email list.

Summer Bird Count Results

By Dave Tripp, Jr.

June 11–12 was another great weekend for birding, especially in the mornings. Birds were active, calling and moving around feeding their young. It was another great year for Yellow-billed Cuckoos; they are an easily heard bird. The Spongy Moths (formerly called Gypsy Moths) devastated the Housatonic River valley. It looked like winter! I thought it was raining when I was night birding in Mohawk State Forest. Well, it was raining all right, just not precipitation.

Other great birds that are often hard to find in our count circle were American Bittern and Pied-billed Grebe. We had

very localized species with specific habitats like Mute Swan, American Kestrel, Acadian Flycatcher, Purple Martin, Cliff Swallow, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Thrasher, a number of warblers, Eastern Meadowlarks, and Orchard Orioles.

This year's "bird of the count" goes to Mississippi Kite! An adult bird that was very well observed and documented was found in Litchfield. Mississippi Kite sightings are increasing in Connecticut yearly. A close runner-up was a drake Blue-winged Teal that has been hanging out at White Memorial's Little Pond. Though our teams did not see this bird, it was recorded by an observer who listed it in eBird on the 11th.

Frustrating misses from the list this year are Great-horned Owl, Killdeer, and Golden-crowned Kinglet (absent from all

(continued on page 10)

Birds Tallied

Canada Goose.....	359	Great Crested Flycatcher.....	62	House Finch.....	133
Mute Swan	7	Eastern Kingbird	95	Purple Finch.....	22
Wood Duck.....	69	Eastern Wood Pewee.....	159	American Goldfinch	324
Blue-winged Teal.....	1	Acadian Flycatcher	13	Chipping Sparrow.....	333
Mallard.....	73	Alder Flycatcher	61	Field Sparrow	15
Hooded Merganser.....	39	Willow Flycatcher	49	Dark-eyed Junco	12
Common Merganser	2	Least Flycatcher.....	43	Savannah Sparrow.....	8
Wild Turkey.....	43	Eastern Phoebe.....	208	Song Sparrow.....	399
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	Yellow-throated Vireo.....	112	Swamp Sparrow	130
Pied-billed Grebe.....	1	Blue-headed Vireo.....	45	Eastern Towhee	126
Rock Pigeon.....	108	Warbling Vireo	100	Bobolink.....	177
Mourning Dove.....	224	Red-eyed Vireo.....	742	Eastern Meadowlark	3
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	96	Blue Jay.....	141	Orchard Oriole.....	1
Black-billed Cuckoo.....	17	American Crow	244	Baltimore Oriole.....	112
Chimney Swift.....	62	Fish Crow.....	4	Red-winged Blackbird	753
Ruby-throated Hummingbird.....	50	Common Raven	25	Brown-headed Cowbird.....	124
Virginia Rail.....	13	Black-capped Chickadee	203	Common Grackle.....	176
American Woodcock.....	1	Tufted Titmouse.....	266	Ovenbird.....	442
Common Loon.....	1	Bank Swallow.....	1	Worm-eating Warbler	4
Double-crested Cormorant.....	27	Tree Swallow.....	214	Louisiana Waterthrush.....	29
American Bittern.....	2	No. Rough-winged Swallow.....	15	Northern Waterthrush.....	18
Great Blue Heron.....	51	Purple Martin	10	Blue-winged Warbler	20
Green Heron	10	Barn Swallow.....	360	Black-and-white Warbler	121
Black Vulture.....	9	Cliff Swallow.....	7	Common Yellowthroat.....	292
Turkey Vulture	69	Cedar Waxwing.....	228	Hooded Warbler	8
Osprey.....	6	Red-breasted Nuthatch	10	American Redstart.....	436
Sharp-shinned Hawk.....	1	White-breasted Nuthatch.....	71	Cerulean Warbler.....	9
Cooper's Hawk	6	Brown Creeper.....	8	Northern Parula.....	4
Bald Eagle.....	5	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	22	Magnolia Warbler	9
Mississippi Kite.....	1	House Wren.....	243	Blackburnian Warbler.....	43
Red-shouldered Hawk	34	Marsh Wren.....	42	Yellow Warbler.....	419
Broad-winged Hawk.....	14	Winter Wren	22	Chestnut-sided Warbler.....	183
Red-tailed Hawk.....	33	Carolina Wren.....	47	Blackpoll Warbler	2
Eastern Screech Owl.....	4	Gray Catbird	568	Black-throated Blue Warbler	26
Barred Owl.....	48	Brown Thrasher	3	Pine Warbler	109
Belted Kingfisher.....	12	Northern Mockingbird.....	6	Yellow-rumped Warbler.....	17
Red-bellied Woodpecker.....	72	European Starling.....	384	Prairie Warbler.....	2
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.....	96	Eastern Bluebird	91	Black-throated Green Warbler	63
Downy Woodpecker.....	72	Veery.....	329	Canada Warbler	13
Hairy Woodpecker.....	46	Hermit Thrush.....	36	Scarlet Tanager	128
Northern Flicker.....	46	Wood Thrush.....	108	Northern Cardinal.....	207
Pileated Woodpecker	37	American Robin	633	Rose-breasted Grosbeak.....	91
American Kestrel.....	5	House Sparrow.....	232	Indigo Bunting.....	84

Mohawk Pond Kayak Trip

By Ann Orsillo

Mohawk Pond is a beautiful, pristine, deep pond located in Mohawk State Park in Cornwall. Pam Hicks and I scheduled a kayak trip there on June 14. Mountain Laurel and Sheep Laurel were in full bloom. Yellow and white water lilies adorned the pond edges. Birds such as Chestnut-sided Warblers, Song Sparrows, Goldfinches, Alder Flycatchers, Scarlet Tanagers, Red-winged Blackbirds, and Red-eyed and Yellow-throated Vireos provided musical accompaniment as we glided around the pond. A Double-crested Cormorant splashed down next to us. Over our heads Turkey and Black Vultures soared against a bright blue sky. On a rotting old log, a Black Rat Snake slept peacefully. If you missed this spectacular paddle, perhaps you will join us next year.



Mohawk Pond

Photo: Ann Orsillo



Sheep Laurel

Photo: Ann Orsillo



Spatterdock

Photo: Ann Orsillo

Summer Count

(continued from page 9)

previous known breeding locations this spring).

Our 17 parties of counters tallied more than 13,755 individual birds, representing 129 species. Here is the effort it took to count and find that many: 152.5 hours of birding in the daylight with an additional 7.25 hours of birding in darkness.

Many thanks to the participants (C signifies captains):

John Anderson, Fabienne Audette, Michael Audette, Janet Baker, John Baker (C), Robert Barbieri (C), Marcia Barker, Ray Belding (C), Jay Coles, Buzz Devine, Angela Dimmitt (C), Mary Donaldson, Eileen Finnan, Kevin Finnan, Evelyn Gelert-er, Cathy Glaser, Ed Goodhouse, Nicki Hall (C), Greg Hanisek,

Dennis Hannon, Allen Herkimer III, Judy Herkimer, Bill Kennedy, Marie Kennedy (C), Jim Kolesar, Jerry Marcellino, Debbie Martin, Rich Martin, Scott Mills, Russ Naylor (C), Ann Orsillo (C), Sam Slater, Donna Rose Smith (C), David Tripp, Jr. (C), Kate Wong, and Fran Zygmunt (C).

In My Garden — A Journal — July 2022

By Angela Dimmitt

First the intense birding during May: the excitement as migrants arrive, dashing out looking for what's new, checking favorite areas, chasing rarities, unusual warblers, joining walks on weekends, and generally birding oneself to a standstill! Then came June, offering a slight respite as some migrants moved on, but June brought the Summer Bird Counts every weekend, absolutely not to be missed! The first was Woodbury-Roxbury on June 5, followed by our own Litchfield Hills count on June 11. That day I met Jay Coles and Fabienne Audette at 7 a.m. hoping to catch Wood Ducks on the pond before they retreated into the reeds. June 18 was the count around my house in New Milford (two-thirds of this count circle is in New York state, and Marie Kennedy and I cover some of that too). Then there was Barkhamsted on June 26, possibly my favorite count because of the "northern" birds like magical Hermit Thrushes and Winter Wrens. One always sees a few bears too. Jay and Fabienne plus Michael Audette joined me for that one — we are quite a team and always do one or two counts together, having great fun, Michael with his camera often catching fabulous shots. We enjoy looking at the birds, really seeing them, as much as finding exciting ones.

June ended — whew! Now I could spend quality time in my garden, much neglected despite the urgency of tending one too large and too ambitious! I decided not to do a vegetable

Angela's garden.

Photo: Angela Dimmitt



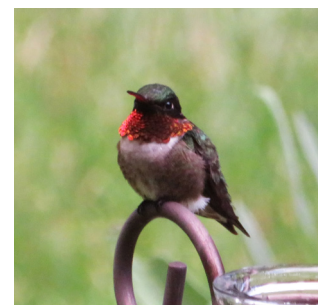
Ooh, this is exciting — sitting here typing away, three hummingbirds (or one bird three times) came and hovered where a feeder hung on the window last year . . .

garden this year (soil needs amending) but of course had to plant my father's heirloom beans, and snap peas, and a few tomatoes, basil, and perhaps some peppers. And those beans a friend gave me last year. So, there we were — you get the picture. I remember when we first moved here in the mid-80s (with a tad more energy!), I planted rows of carrots, beets, bush beans, parsnips, cabbages, kale, lettuce, etc., and watered them with a hose from a pump in the stream — and

all on weekends. The stream is no longer deep enough the past few summers for the pump to work. Now I fill buckets, but only when it is actually low

enough to reach a trench under the bank — one crosses a dry shingle which would normally carry about 2-4 inches, not deep enough to fill a bucket.

Oooh, this is exciting — sitting here typing away, three hummingbirds (or one bird three times) came and hovered where a feeder hung on the window last year — I promptly filled it and now, sure enough, a young male is drinking. Now I know for a fact that hummers remember feeders from year to year (one always comes to this feeder in early May), but this was a young male with a few red spots on his throat — was he following Mom? Maybe yes, as a female arrived shortly after. Another feeder has been hanging on the porch since May 1, used daily by the resident pair, so these are probably migrants.



Male Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Photo: Angela Dimmitt

Back to the garden — many friends agree this has been a remarkable year in the garden, maybe because of the mild winter or the weather in May, but plants grew suddenly and filled all the spaces before the weeds could thug their way in, making life much easier while looking spectacular. Come July, some day lilies opened early and hostas were prize-worthy. I love my garden! Hydrangeas were also doing beautifully, although the deer did nibble them a bit. I sprayed with a home brew and also Bobbex eco-friendly deer repellent and all was well — until the last couple of weeks, when a herd of seemingly 20 or 30 deer moved in and sampled everything, even just after I had sprayed (and no rain to wash it off). I am once again contemplating getting a blunderbuss. Why were deer put on this earth, to recycle our prize plants as fertilizer?

(continued on back page)



Litchfield Hills Audubon Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 86 I
Litchfield, CT 06759-086 I

Address Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 30
Torrington, CT 06790

Like Us On Facebook!

www.facebook.com/LitchfieldHillsAudubonSocietyLHAS

Visit Our Website!

www.lhasct.org

Follow Us On Instagram

https://www.instagram.com/litchfield_hills_audubon/

Printed on Recycled Paper

DATED MATERIAL — PLEASE DO NOT DELAY

Journal (continued from page 11)

Now the garden is just full of young birds still with their parents, often feeding in the grass. Three families of House Wrens fledged, a fourth is about to — they are screaming their little heads off. The second bluebird nest also succeeded, as did the Tree Swallows and titmice in other boxes.

Cardinals and catbirds

also have young. I have kept a couple of feeders up on the high wire, and parent titmice, House Finches, Chipping and

Song Sparrows, Downy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers are all teaching their young very bad habits. It's all my fault, but I can't resist. Several male goldfinches squabble over the feeders, their brides hopefully on eggs now. Last year's Barred Owls were back again, hooting away literally morning, noon, and night, particularly about 11 as I was going to bed. The two called back and forth and made that marvelous bond-

ing cacophony, but I had no actual evidence of young. The Red-shouldered Hawks also raised two young, and the birds are once again screaming around the woods and property, often pursued by crows — which I saw harassing the owls as well.

Red-shouldered Hawks also raised two young, and the birds are once again screaming around the woods and property, often pursued by crows . . .

At least two bears are visiting rather too frequently, though not necessarily checking under the feeders — mercifully no cubs.

One came up on the porch the other day and found a peanut tube (it's been there untouched for over a year). I now wonder if it will sometime smell "kitchen" and simply enter through the screen door. My cat, Star, sat and watched it from nearby but did nothing to protect me. Just as well he is so good looking!