



# Chickadee Chatter



July/August 2023

Litchfield Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 68/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

### Bakers, Martins, Belding Honored for Extraordinary Service to LHAS



At our 68th Annual Meeting on June 5, LHAS presented award certificates and thank-you gifts to five members for their many years of extraordinary service to our organization. The recipients were ...

**Ray Belding**, for his 45 years as our Christmas Bird Census compiler. Besides that remarkable record, Ray has been a past president, vice president, recording secretary, and board member of LHAS. He has also led innumerable bird walks over the years — perhaps most notably his popular Wednesday morning bird walks during spring and fall migration seasons — as well as several overseas trips. Ray was not able to attend the meeting, so will receive his award and gift later.

**John and Janet Baker**, for their 30 years as extremely active and influential members of LHAS. **John** served as our treasurer for 18 years! He started and continues to manage our successful Vanguard investment

fund. He and Janet were instrumental in LHAS obtaining both our Boyd Woods and Wigwam Brook sanctuaries. John has been the chairman of Wigwam, where he has worked with the American Chestnut Foundation to plant a grove of hybrid chestnut trees with the goal of finding trees resistant



**Janet and John Baker**

Photo: Michael Audette

See Calendar on pages 6-7 for our  
Upcoming Meetings & Field Trips

to the chestnut blight. **Janet** has worn so many hats! She's a past president, vice president, fund-raising chair, hospitality chair, recording secretary, newsletter editor, and board member, as well as a current member of the Program Committee. A wiz at organizing, Janet for many years orchestrated our Annual Appeal mailing, has created member name tags for our meetings, and manned the reception table at our Annual Meetings. Her phenomenal memory of LHAS history — how and why we've done things — makes her a great mentor for those of us newer members. I've often said I wish I could clone her brain!

**Rich and Debbie Martin**, who for 30 years have been extremely active and invaluable in keeping LHAS running. As co-chairs of Boyd Woods Sanctuary, they continually work to maintain and improve the trails — **Debbie** is

there just about every day! She's one of the best naturalists I know, and has passed along her knowledge and enthusiasm on the many walks she and Rich have led at Boyd Woods and elsewhere. **Rich**, with help from Joe Bianchi, has built footbridges and cleaned up fallen trees to keep the trails in good shape. The Martins applied for and won a grant to create "rabbitat" at Boyd — early successional habitat, which is in short supply in Connecticut but is essential for the



**Rich Martin, with Diane Edwards (Debbie Martin was not at the event).**

Photo: Michael Audette

(continued on page 3)

**LHAS Officers**

President	Diane Edwards	860-309-5139
Vice President	Fran Zygmunt	860-689-5001
Treasurer	Mia Coats	817-691-2525
Rec. Secretary	Marie Kennedy	914-393-6270
Corresp. Secretary	Terri Bianchi	860-489-8821

**Board of Directors**

Beverly Baldwin	2024	860-921-7075
Vickie Dauphinais	2024	860-361-9051
George Stephens	2024	860-921-7150
Michael Audette	2025	860-388-7874
Dave Trip Jr.	2025	
Karen G. Nelson	2025	860-309-9018
Rich Martin	2026	860-736-7714
Pam Hicks	2026	smilemys@yaho.com
Harry Schuh	2026	860-307-0807

**Committee Chairpeople**

Boyd Woods Sanctuary	Debbie & Rich Martin	860-819-7462
Communications		
& Digital Media	Rich Martin	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	Janice Jankauskas	203-231-2022
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	<i>vacant</i>	
Scholarships	Carol Kearns & Harry Schuh	860-307-0807
Wigwam Brook Sanctuary	John Baker	860-567-8427

**Research**

Christmas Bird Count	Dave Tripp	dtrippjr@gmail.com
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** issue is **August 1**.

Please email items to appear in the newsletter to **Diane Edwards** at [edwardsd68@charter.net](mailto: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](mailto:lhasct@me.com).

**NEW MEMBERS**

*By Doreen Orciari, Membership Records Chair*

Dave Beaujon	.....	Canaan
Tom Belanger	.....	Thomaston
George Boulay	.....	Torrington
Lisa Buckley	.....	New Preston
Michael Cicchetti	.....	Litchfield
Irene Coe	.....	Kent
Logan Connor	.....	Torrington
Jessica Erdrich	.....	Sherman
Jill Esterson	.....	Salisbury
Mary Foster	.....	New Milford
D. Gavette	.....	Harwinton
Marian Gawel	.....	Bristol
Licia Hahn	.....	Lakeville
Janice Jacobsen*	.....	Barkhamsted
Meredith Kroeger	.....	Sherman
Paul Krone	.....	Lakeville
Arthur MacConochie	.....	Litchfield
Joan MacVicar	.....	Canaan
Catherine Mathiason	.....	Torrington
William Nietsch	.....	New Milford
Joe Pryor	.....	West Cornwall
Michael Rand	.....	Sharon
Joan Reitz	.....	New Milford
Joyce Scott	.....	New Milford
Alfred Sondrini	.....	Torrington
Robert Teleski	.....	South Kent
Katherine Tong	.....	Barkhamsted
Jacqueline Tougas	.....	New Milford
Mary Wilson*	.....	Barkhamsted

*\*Welcome back*

LHAS membership is at 970.

*If your newsletter is addressed incorrectly, send an email to Doreen Orciari at [doreen.orciari@gmail.com](mailto:doreen.orciari@gmail.com).*

**Obituary: Mildred Reed**

Former LHAS member Mildred Reed, 98, of Bristol, passed away on March 25. Her obituary stated, "From her earliest years, Mildred cultivated a deep reverence for the natural world. ... Mildred was a friend and member of the Barnes Nature Center, Sessions Woods, and the Litchfield Hills Audubon Society. Bird watching was a passion for her and she enjoyed the Audubon Society's field trips." LHAS extends our sincere condolences to her family. Donations may be made in Mildred's memory to any of several organizations, including LHAS. Her obituary is online at [montano-shea.com](http://montano-shea.com).

## LHAS Elects Officers and New Board Members

Every year at our annual meeting we elect five officers and several new board members. At this year's meeting, we first thanked all of the officers, board members, and committee chairs for keeping LHAS running so successfully. We expressed our gratitude to Janet Baker, who stepped down as recording secretary, and to outgoing board members Carol Perrault and Carol Kearns. Rich Martin's term on the board also ended, but he agreed to stay on for another three-year term.



**Nominating Committee Chair Fran Zygmont announcing the slate of nominees.**

Photo: Michael Audette

Here are the newly elected officers:

- President — Diane Edwards
- Vice President — Fran Zygmont
- Treasurer — Mia Coats
- Recording Secretary — Marie Kennedy
- Corresponding Secretary — Terri Bianchi

Marie moved off the board in order to accept the recording secretary position. Since she had two more years left to her term, we asked Dave Tripp Jr. to complete her term, and he agreed. So here are the newly elected board members:

- Dave Tripp Jr., for a term ending in 2025
- Rich Martin, 2026
- Pam Hicks, 2026
- Harry Schuh, 2026

If you would like to contact any of us, our phone numbers are on the list on page 2.

## LHAS Awards 3 Scholarships

By Harry Schuh and Carol Kearns

LHAS usually offers two \$2,000 scholarships to high school graduates planning to major in an environmental field in college. Applicants must attend one of the 16 schools in our area of northwest and central Connecticut. This year we received three outstanding applications that we decided were worthy of receiving a scholarship. We recommended to the LHAS Board of Directors that we award a third scholarship this year. The board approved our recommendation. Our 2023 scholarship recipients are:



**Scholarship recipients Noah Green (left) and Joseph C. Velky III. Not present: Sophie Guillemette.**

Photo: Michael Audette

- Joseph C. Velky III from Nonnewaug High School — recipient of the Litchfield Hills Audubon Society Scholarship
- Noah Green from Northwestern Regional High School — recipient of the Paul A. Gros Scholarship
- Sophie Guillemette, a recipient from last year who is now at the University of Vermont — recipient of the Royal A. Meyers Scholarship.

### Awards

*(continued from page 1)*

endangered New England Cottontail as well as certain bird species. Rich also obtained a USDA grant for an eight-year forest improvement program for Boyd Woods and Wigwam Brook. Both Debbie and Rich often use their creative talents to create illustrations, brochures, newsletter articles, and slide shows. Rich has used his excellent graphic and writing skills to create many of our publications. He was our former newsletter editor. He has designed and continues to maintain our website, sends email blasts to members, sets up the laptop and projector at meetings, and is our go-to person for technical things.

***Congratulations and thank you to Ray, John, Janet, Rich, and Debbie!***

**This newsletter and other LHAS features can be seen IN LIVING COLOR at [www.lhasct.org](http://www.lhasct.org).**



Scan the QR code at left with your smartphone to go to [www.lhasct.org](http://www.lhasct.org).

**Follow us on Facebook:**  
**[facebook.com/LitchfieldHillsAudubonSocietyLHAS](https://www.facebook.com/LitchfieldHillsAudubonSocietyLHAS)**

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

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



## LHAS Accomplishments in 2022/2023

At our Annual Meeting last month, we reviewed all that LHAS accomplished during our 2022/2023 fiscal year (May 1-April 30). Here is a summary.

**Office:** Moved in February into our first office, in a building owned by Litchfield Land Trust at 28 Russell St., Litchfield. All furniture and cabinets (used) were donated except for one new cabinet that we purchased. Brings our files and supplies into one location and provides meeting space.

**Field Trips:** 42

**Scholarships:** 3 (\$2,000 each)

**Programs:** 12 (Brazil's Pantanal, Creating Pollinator Pathways, Gardening with Frogs and Toads, Birding in the Falklands, Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, Bins & Scopes, Bitterns, Birding in Ecuador, Waterfowl Conservation, Lights

Out CT!, Ungardening)

**Newsletters:** 6 issues (some mailed, most emailed)

**Education:** Revived Junior Audubon — now called LHAS Nature Explorers — with several hikes for children and families. Education Committee staffed tables at Nature Day in September, Earth Day celebration in Litchfield, and Flanders Nature Center's 60th anniversary celebration in May; at each event, we offered information on bird-friendly practices and let children use binoculars to identify some birds. A major project: Birding Backpacks for kids, to be donated to five libraries so patrons can check them out, like books; costs covered by donations from Torrington Saving Bank, Litchfield Bancorp, Ace Hardware of Litchfield, Wild Birds Unlimited of Brookfield. LHAS gave \$2,000 to Sharon Audubon to provide nature education classes to Torrington schoolchildren.

**Sanctuaries:** Completed Year 6 of 8-year forest improvement plan at Boyd Woods and Wigwam Brook. Installed

*(continued on page 5)*



**Above: Move-in day at the office.**

**Below: Birders chillin' at Newburyport!**



**Above: Bird migration walk at Boyd Woods.**

**Below: Adding pollinator plants at Kalmia Sanctuary.**





## Accomplishments

(continued from page 4)

anti-slip surfaces on footbridges at Boyd Woods. Added more plants to pollinator gardens at Kalmia and Wigwam Brook. Continued effort to develop blight-resistant chestnut trees at Wigwam; about 50 non-resistant trees cut down this year. Continued searching, unsuccessfully, for the beneficial Chestnut Bee. Nest boxes repaired and some relocated at each sanctuary.

**Fund-raising:** Another record-breaking Annual Appeal — \$17,312. Give Local — \$1,872. **Thank you, donors!**

**New grant:** \$1,000 Audubon Collaborative Grant to work with Litchfield Land Trust to create a pollinator garden with educational signage outside our shared office.

**Administrative:** Began working on a strategic plan, with goals and action steps, to guide our work over the next three years.

## Scenes from Spring

### Celebrating Earth Day

LHAS members Ann Orsillo, Karen Geitz, Vickie Dauphinais, and Janice Jankauskas represented LHAS at the Earth Day Celebration in Litchfield on April 23. Children and adults



**Ann Orsillo (left) helps a boy learn to use binoculars.**

Photo: Vickie Dauphinais

visited our table to learn about bird-friendly practices, including gardening with native plants, making windows safer for migrating birds, and lights out for birds. Ann Orsillo set up a bird ID station outside where children got a chance to practice using binoculars. Inside, children sowed sunflower seeds to take home and watch them grow. They earned special prizes for taking a quick quiz on bird trivia. We promoted the coming of birding backpacks to area libraries, as well as upcoming events by LHAS Nature Explorers. Overall, it was refreshing and encouraging to see the community's interest in honoring our Earth.

### Spring Celebration at Boyd Woods, May 7

A group of adults joined the LHAS Nature Explorers at Boyd Woods Sanctuary on a lovely spring day to check out all the birds and pond creatures coming to life. There were lots of birds at feeders, including a beautiful Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Red-winged Blackbirds, House Finches, phoebes, and a flock of Wild Turkeys! Bluebirds were seen flitting around the open field, and White-throated Sparrows were heard singing in the shrubbery. There wasn't much activity at the vernal pool but it was a different story at Margery's Pond. There we found Green Frogs, Red-spotted Newts, dragonfly nymphs, lots of Wood Frog tadpoles, and whirligig beetles. Someone spotted a Red-backed Salamander under a log. Once everyone got a chance to look at it, we carefully returned it to its home. We took some time to admire the spring wildflowers along the trail, including the lovely trilliums. We slowly headed back to our cars grateful to have experienced all that spring has to offer at Boyd Woods!



**Above: Red-backed Salamander**

**Below: Green Frog**

Photos: Vickie Dauphinais



### Flanders Nature Center Farm Festival, May 21

Vickie Dauphinais and Beverly Baldwin from the LHAS Education Committee staffed a table at Flanders' 60th anniversary celebration. Nicole Wolff helped with the children's activities in the afternoon. Traffic was light, but we did have a number of families stop by and learn about native plants



**Vickie Dauphinais, left, talks to a man about bird-friendly practices.**

for pollinators and bird-friendly windows. The children had fun naming birds, creating mosaic butterflies, and learning about bee houses. They especially enjoyed the honey sticks donated by John and Janet Baker.

## Meetings, Bird Walks and Activities

### LHAS Calendar — Summer 2023



**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. at 28B Russell St., Litchfield, CT.

## GENERAL MEETINGS

*Note: The July and September meetings will be in person and on Zoom. If you want to participate on Zoom, go to the Calendar section of our website, [lhasct.org](http://lhasct.org), to register. You will be sent the login link.*

### July 10. . . . . **Developing the Arts and Crafts House and Garden. . . . . Monday, 7 PM**

Jeanne Farewell will discuss the Arts and Crafts Garden with photos of her own garden in Brewster, NY, and those of British gardens, referencing architecture, design, and the artistic origins of the movement. Jeanne brings her arts background to the garden and has been a speaker for groups such as the Garden Conservancy's Digging Deeper program. She is co-host of the "Parsley and Sage" podcast. *Note:* Jeanne will also lead a tour of her garden in Brewster on July 15; see below for more details.

### August 7. . . . . **Annual Picnic at Boyd Woods Sanctuary, with Christine's Critters! . . . Monday, 6 PM**

Christine Peyreigne will bring some of their raptors to the picnic! There will be four or five live birds of prey (hawks, owls, and falcons), her permanent resident ambassadors, in addition to one or two live reptiles. The birds of prey were all injured in the wild and could not be healed enough for release. Both Christine and her mother are Master Falconers and licensed rehabilitators. They are also Avian Ambassadors, visiting schools and giving educational programs to further their cause. They take in over 200 raptor patients a year at their facility in Weston, CT. Boyd Woods 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.

### September 11 . . **"Murmurations of the Heart: Swallows and Other Birds that Swarm" . . Monday, 7 PM**

Mark Seth Lender will show us the fantastic forms of a murmuration, something that has fascinated humanity for thousands of years. What holds a murmuration together? What forces design and initiate its form? Mark will share his answer to these questions with his photographs of our much beloved Connecticut River Tree Swallow Funnel. Mark is a producer for wildlife content and the Explorer in Residence for the Public Radio program "Living on Earth." He conducts original fieldwork, does his own photography, writes and edits copy to present on air. He and his wife created the children's books, *Smeagull the Seagull, A True Story*, and *Smeagull's Guide to Wildlife*.

## EVENTS AND FIELD TRIPS

### July 15. . . . . **Visit the Arts and Crafts House and Garden — Rumford Hall . . . . . Saturday, 11 AM**

This field trip follows Jeanne Farewell's talk at the July 10 monthly meeting. Tour at 11:15. Lunch will be served. Please carpool if possible. **Address:** 20 Deans Corner Road, Brewster, NY 10509. Directions on request. Rumford Hall is a 15-acre property with mature plantings and monumental boulders in the foothills of the Appalachians. The Arts and Crafts house was built in 1879, and the gardens have been developed to integrate house and garden in that style.

**The next Board Meeting will be at 7 p.m., Tuesday, July 18 at the LHAS office located at 28B Russell Street, Litchfield.**

The tour includes an extensive wisteria pergola, parterre garden, wildflowers, pool garden with succulents, enclosed vegetable house, viburnum room, ruins, a yellow bank, and many native plants. The forested trails in the hills include a footbridge by massive, mossy rocks. **For further information and to register (limit 12 people), please contact Angela Dimmitt at 860-355-3429 or angeladimmitt@aol.com.**

**July 19. . . . . Robyn Dinda Memorial Paddle on Wood Creek Pond . . . . . Wednesday, 9 AM**

Our beloved, late member Robyn Dinda used to lead this popular trip. This year we'll paddle in her memory, led by Ann Orsillo and Pam Hicks. The trip may offer an abundance of wild blueberry foraging along the banks of the lake. Bring a container as well as all the necessities for kayaking or canoeing. Meet in the parking lot at 9 a.m. **Directions:** From Route 44 in Torrington, go north on Route 272, then right onto Ashpohtag Road; take first left to the launch. Heavy rain/t-storms cancel. **Please let Pam (203-922-2684) or Ann (910-880-1518) know if you plan to attend.**

**July 22. . . . . Paddling on Winchester Lake . . . . . Saturday, 9:30 AM**

Join Paul and Diane Edwards for a leisurely paddle on this lovely lake. Bring your kayak or canoe, PFD, hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, 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.**

**August 8. . . . . Paddling on Burr Pond . . . . . Tuesday, 9 AM**

Meet at the Burr Pond State Park boat launch parking lot. **Directions:** From Torrington travel north on Winsted Road. Take left turn onto Burr Mountain Road. After 1 mile go past the state park entrance and take the next left for the boat launch area. Rain cancels. **If you have any questions, call Ann Orsillo at 910-880-1518 or Pam Hicks at 203-922-2684.**

**Trip Report**

**Appalachian Trail Revisited**

By Russ Naylor

Our LHAS crew joined gifted bird whisperer Donna Rose Smith on May 9th for a follow-up visit to Sharon's Cornwall Bridge section of the Appalachian Trail, along the Housatonic River, to sample a potpourri of new spring arrivals, now that the recent rainy spell had broken. Big birds were few — Canada Geese, Turkey Vulture, Wild Turkey, Pileated Woodpecker, and mist-seeking Common Mergansers.

Songbirds were the order of the day. Robins and cardinals sang all over, accompanied by Chipping and Song Sparrows, to the background beat of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers.

Early-season migrants were few — the last straggling White-throated Sparrows with late Palm and Yellow-rumped Warblers. First arrivals of later-migrant species treated us to song and plumage fresh-primed for breeding activities — Least and Great-crested Flycatchers, Yellow-throated Vireos, Veeries, Indigo Buntings, and several wood warblers (Northern Waterthrush and Blue-winged, Magnolia, Blackburnian, and even northward-colonizing Hooded Warblers). Other, slightly earlier, migrants strutted their stuff in vigorous

competition for territories or courtship of prospective mates. We witnessed both love and war among arboreal breeders — Warbling Vireos, Yellow Warblers, Baltimore Orioles, Eastern Towhees, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Red-winged Blackbirds, Tree Swallows, House Wrens, Wood Thrushes, and others. A Gray Catbird posed and preened while serenading a prospective mate with clear imitations of a White-eyed Vireo — notes learned on winter vacation in Florida, perhaps.

We enjoyed the flash and dash of a rainbow of warblers — Ovenbirds, Louisiana Waterthrushes, American Redstarts, and Chestnut-sided, Pine, Blackburnian, and Black-and-white Warblers. Some ambitious lovers even started nest-building activities — Tree Swallows, Warbling Vireos, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, and Baltimore Orioles. And all during this time, steady streams of northbound Blue Jays swept by overhead — our most migratory local corvid.

While birding, we basked in the green-gold glow of forests bursting with new growth — leaf and bloom in rich profusion — extolled by a chorus of American Toads celebrating their own spring fling.

Here's a hearty huzzah to Donna Rose for a healthy woodland hike into a day of at least 75 bird species enjoyed by all!



## Conservation News

By Diane Edwards, Conservation Chair

### Lights Out Bill Passes!

The Connecticut General Assembly has approved a bill requiring state-owned buildings or buildings the state leases to turn out non-essential lights from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m., not just during migration seasons as originally proposed, but year-round. This new law, expected to be signed by Gov. Lamont, will help prevent migrating birds from being attracted to lights and crashing into buildings at night.

### Legislature OK's Shorebird Protection Bill and Ban on Horseshoe Crab Fishing

The state legislature also approved a bill allowing CT DEEP to designate areas to be roped off on public beaches to prevent people, off-road vehicles, and pets from disturbing beach-nesting birds such as Piping Plovers, American Oystercatchers, and Least and Common Terns from March through September. Legislators also voted to ban commercial fishing of horseshoe crabs, which will protect not only the crabs but also endangered Red Knots, which feed on horseshoe crab eggs during migration.

**From National Audubon:**

### Supreme Court Weakens Protections for Wetlands that Birds (and People) Need



**Green Heron in a wetland.**

Photo: Diane Friend Edwards

In May a U.S. Supreme Court ruling limited the ability of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers to regulate “waters of the United States.” While the Clean Water Act includes regulatory definitions for most large bodies of water and rivers, smaller waterways that may be seasonal or disconnected are not as clearly defined. The court’s ruling means that unregulated development can occur in many of these smaller waterways.

With the loss of 3 billion birds in the past 50 years — in part due to dwindling wetlands and significant development of natural spaces — and Audubon science showing that two-thirds of North American bird species are at risk of

extinction from climate change, action is needed to protect the water bodies and habitat that birds need to survive. Waters throughout the U.S. like seasonal streams and isolated wetlands serve as essential habitat for birds and other wildlife. These water bodies provide crucial sources of drinking water, food, and nutrition for birds. Birds also use lakes, streams, and wetlands for breeding and nesting, as well as for rest stops during long migratory journeys.

Wetlands and seasonal streams provide more than just critical bird habitat — they also provide us with nature’s filters to clean our drinking water and protect us from storms, floods, and other climatic stressors.

Audubon will continue working with state and local decision-makers to strengthen protections for wetlands.

### Seabird Recovery Efforts Seeing Success



**Atlantic Puffins**

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

third of all seabirds worldwide.

Seabirds are one of the most threatened bird groups on the planet. Approximately 30% of seabird species are at enhanced risk of extinction, mostly due to threats from invasive predators at breeding sites, habitat loss, and harmful fishing practices. Climate change poses yet another challenge, as sea-level rise and increasing storms can flood low-lying seabird breeding habitat. These threats have prompted conservationists to relocate or restore nesting seabirds by physically translocating birds from one nesting site to another, or attracting them using seabird social cues to more secure breeding sites. Using social attraction methods like decoys and broadcasted bird sounds, conservationists can create the appearance of a thriving seabird colony at key locations, attracting

*(continued on page 9)*



## Conservation News

continued from page 8

new pairs of birds to safely nest together in large numbers. This strategy allowed Audubon's Project Puffin to re-establish puffin colonies in the Gulf of Maine.

The researchers found the outcomes of these seabird projects largely positive — within an average of 2 years from the project's start, 80% of seabird projects resulted in birds visiting the site, and 76% achieved breeding. Terns, gulls, and auks are among the seabird groups seeing the most success, as these groups are among the most commonly restored. The most highly threatened seabird group — petrels, shearwaters, and albatrosses — have also been common targets for active restoration, typically using social attraction or a combination of social attraction and translo-

cation, both of which have also had high success rates.

### Bill Addresses Bear-Human Conflicts

A bill passed by the state legislature aims to reduce some bear-human conflicts in Connecticut. While it does not allow a bear hunt, it does allow farmers whose crops or livestock are destroyed by a bear to get a permit from CT DEEP to kill the bear. It also clarifies residents' existing right to kill a bear that's attacking a person or a pet. The bill bans intentionally feeding bears. Unintentionally feeding a bear, for example with a bird feeder, will not be penalized unless the person has been warned to stop but continues. In that case, the feeding will be considered intentional.

### Expanding the Pollinator Garden at Wigwam Brook Sanctuary

An energetic group of volunteers — John Baker, Vickie Dauphinais, Ann Orsillo, Debbie Mane, Fabienne Audette, Celeste Echlin, and Jane Golding — spent a lovely spring



**Expanding the pollinator garden.**

afternoon on May 18th planting about 30 perennials and shrubs in the newly enlarged pollinator garden at Wigwam Brook Sanctuary. We were grateful to Jane for bringing four 5-gallon containers full of water for the watering, and to John and Debbie for spreading mulch before the soaking rain storm. John, along with Vickie, got two truckfuls of mulch from the recycling center. Teamwork at its best! Watering the new plants will be a challenge, especially if we have a dry summer. John suggested cutting a path to the stream next to the garden and collecting water from there. Perhaps John Remeika can help us with that next time he is in the area. If you are able to help with weeding and watering during the summer, contact Vickie Dauphinais at [fdauphinais@optonline.net](mailto:fdauphinais@optonline.net). The pollinators need you!

### Sprucing Up Kalmia's Butterfly Garden

A small but mighty group of gardeners — Debbie Mane, Vickie Dauphinais, and Judy and Kim Herkimer — spent the afternoon of May 25th at Kalmia Audubon Sanctuary



**Weeding and mulching.**

doing much-needed weeding and mulching of the butterfly garden. Debbie, Vickie, and Karen Geitz returned on June 1st to finish the mulching. The brown mulch looks great! Most of the perennials from last year made it through the winter. But there were way too many Buddleia bushes, five or six! Kim took on the task of unearthing three of the bushes and replanting them in the raised bed by the garage. Hopefully they will take; we added water. If they don't, no great loss! The butterfly garden could use additional perennials. We will plan to add some after the current dry spell. Water remains a challenge at Kalmia. Michael, the tenant in the Kalmia house, has offered the water in his rain barrel for now. If you are able to help with weeding and watering at Kalmia during the summer, contact Vickie Dauphinais at [fdauphinais@optonline.net](mailto:fdauphinais@optonline.net). The butterflies need you!

**Focus on Birds****Spotted Sandpiper**

By Ann Orsillo

**Spotted Sandpiper.**

Photo: Ann Orsillo

It was an early spring morning, cool and windless with sunshine mixed with clouds — beautiful weather for kayaking on Woodridge Lake.

I climbed into my kayak and pushed off from the boat launch. A few American Crows cawed at

each other as they flew over my head. I paddled slowly and steadily across the cove. Close to the water's edge were two small brown birds walking among the rocks. Their tails were constantly teetering as they crouched over and pecked at insects with pointy beaks. Using my binoculars I could clearly see the brown spots that ran from the throat down the chest to the belly on a white background. That field mark and their continuous tail bobbing confirmed the identification as Spot-

ted Sandpipers (*Actitis macularius*).

Fairly common along inland lakes and streams, this species of sandpipers prefers fresh water. As my kayak drifted silently closer, the two birds "peeted" and suddenly flew around the point. Their flight was close to the water on shallow wingbeats coupled with stiff glides. The wings marked with a white stripe bent slightly downward as I paddled behind them and they landed on a downed log parallel to the shoreline. Not wanting to disturb their pursuit of a tasty breakfast of insects, I paddled slowly and kept a respectable distance. Again they flushed and flew a farther distance toward the dam. They seemed to be playing tag with me as they flew ahead, landed and once again flew ahead.

Suddenly a larger bird swooped down, scattering the two sandpipers in opposite directions. They emitted loud peets of distress as they flew. The larger bird, a Cooper's Hawk, chased one sandpiper over the water. The panicked sandpiper flew erratically to avoid the ominous talons of the hawk. Then something extraordinary happened that I had never before witnessed. The sandpiper dove into the water and completely submerged itself! (Sandpipers do not like their whole bodies to become submerged in water.) The hawk's talons skimmed the water surface right behind the submerged sandpiper. The hawk swooped upward with his talons empty. The sandpiper popped up and flew back to the shoreline again. It was a close call for this sandpiper.

**Trip Report****Swifts Aswirl, in Diminuendo**

By Russ Naylor

On May 21, our eager crew of swift-seekers gathered to watch these twittering aerialists sweep into their customary roost chimney at Mitchell School in Woodbury. The previous week, 77 birds had swarmed into the chimney ere darkness fell. But the day of our field trip only about 20 birds showed off their aerobatic prowess when normally there would have been a peak flight of well over a hundred birds. Where have they gone? Has a weather anomaly of some sort sent them to other roosts? More ominously, perhaps avian flu or some other hazard might be affecting our local population.

Still, we were able to see pairs in double-dihedral, V-wing flights, twittering side by side as they claimed breeding chimneys. Other birds swept back and forth in trios and quartets as they sorted out potential pairings, prior to locating nest sites.

It is always refreshing to see these little aviators successfully returning from winter vacations in Brazil. A small flight

swept and swirled into chimney roosts.

Other treats enjoyed by our crew were two local ravens gliding about on family errands, Wood Ducks dashing by in flight, a Great Blue Heron lumbering past on pterodactyl-like wings to feed its young after a day of gathering fishy food, and a Common Nighthawk bouncing aloft to scoop up night-flying insects.

All this activity went on to a steady chorus of Gray Tree Frogs in full voice at Flanders Nature Center's Manville Kettle — a postglacial wetland that hosts this amphibian songfest each year, after the Spring Peepers have retired for the season.



**Chimney Swifts cling vertically to the inside of a chimney to roost.**

Drawing: Wikimedia Commons

**Trip Report****From the Mists of Spring —  
A Migratory Tide**

By Russ Naylor

Our April 16th excursion to Milford Point started at high tide in mist and fog, to a chorus of White-throated Sparrows, mockingbirds, and House Finches. At the salt marsh observation platform, Tree Swallows swept up insects, an amorous male Purple Martin tried to tempt a reluctant hen into choosing potential nest sites, and an Osprey sat her nestful of eggs while her mate stood sentinel nearby.

Various birds patronized feeders as we wended our way through brushy woods into the beach on a falling tide. Here action abounded. Flocks of Dunlins and Sanderlings wheeled in premigratory test flights — once joined by a wayward Bonaparte's Gull. Oystercatchers called out in a flight gabfest of sociality as one of their own sat on her nest. Everywhere, Brant fed and fraternized with kith and kin by the hundred, prepping for their next big flight north. At least a dozen Piping Plovers chased and bounced one another about in territorial disputes like highly wound-up mechanical toys. One overeager female tried to attach herself to two pairs at a time only to be chased about for her pains. No homewrecking Jezebels allowed here!

Scattered sea ducks and cormorants flew past Common Loons decked out in full breeding finery. As fog cleared, we went back to the marsh platform to see what low tide brought in. A 21-cormorant fly-by salute welcomed us to a diversity of recent arrivals. Egrets and Greater Yellowlegs patrolled watery edges. A scattering of dabbling ducks went about their business, including a demure Northern Shoveler sweetheart with four handsome, hopeful swains. A ground-nesting Osprey sat on her nest on an old muskrat nest mound. Best of all, two Purple Martins suddenly bloomed into a flight of 10 birds with a band of brand-new arrivals. These all at once inspected nest gourds while regaling us with a richly musical repertoire of courtship concertos of unforgettable melliflence.

As always, accolades to Angela Dimmitt for leading us to experience a spring bounty of breeding and itinerant birdlife — a sweet sampler of the vernal season's splendor!

*Various birds patronized feeders as we wended our way through brushy woods into the beach on a falling tide. Here action abounded.*

**Trip Report****Holy Tree Cavity, Robin — They're Nesting!**

By Russ Naylor

On our April 20th birding excursion to Bent of the River Audubon Center in Southbury, led by avid booster of birding and biophilia Donna Rose Smith, we were treated to a melange of both breeding and migrating birdlife. Savannah Sparrows and Killdeer welcomed our arrival at the north field parking lot. Fluttering Tree Swallows visited bird boxes to lay claim to roost and nest sites. A healthy cross-section of cavity-nesting birds strutted their stuff while attending natural cavity nest sites — Wood Ducks, Common Mergansers, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, White-breasted Nuthatches,

Eastern Bluebirds, and others — thank Providence for the sycamore tree!

A variety of other species got down

to breeding business — Canada Geese, Belted Kingfishers, Common Ravens, Red-shouldered Hawks, Louisiana Waterthrushes. The local Osprey paid us a visit while foraging for a meal for its mate on a nest. Turkey Vultures teeter-tottered on dihedral wings overhead as we wended through rapidly greening habitats, sampling a mixture of spring wildflowers — Dutchman's Britches, Spring Beauties, dogwoods, May Apples, violets, and others — while savoring a melodic symphony of vernal visitors. We had Eastern Phoebes, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, White-throated Sparrows, and five species of early-arriving wood warblers. These were accompanied by lustily singing Carolina Wrens, cardinals, Tufted Titmice, and a drumming section of various woodpeckers.

We finished off a 50-species bird bonanza with a kettle of soaring Broad-winged Hawks just back from winter vacations in Latin America — much to the displeasure of a local Red-shouldered Hawk.

**Spring Beauty wildflowers.**

Photo: Diane Friend Edwards

Thanks and kudos to Donna Rose for springing us into the time of neotropical migrants with such finesse.





Litchfield Hills Audubon Society, Inc.  
P.O. Box 861  
Litchfield, CT 06759-0861

Address Service Requested

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

**Like Us On Facebook!**

[www.facebook.com/LitchfieldHillsAudubonSocietyLHAS](https://www.facebook.com/LitchfieldHillsAudubonSocietyLHAS)

**Visit Our Website!**

[www.lhasct.org](http://www.lhasct.org)

**Follow Us On Instagram**

[https://www.instagram.com/litchfield\\_hills\\_audubon/](https://www.instagram.com/litchfield_hills_audubon/)



**Printed on Recycled Paper**

**DATED MATERIAL — PLEASE DO NOT DELAY**

## **It's a Passenger Pigeon — It's a Heath Hen — It's a Carolina Parakeet!**

*By Russ Naylor*

No, our first bird on Donna Rose Smith's visit to Lower River Road in West Cornwall on May 23rd was, of all things, a Ruffed Grouse, flying up out of the parking lot as we arrived. Yes, fortunately, there is still such a bird in our Northwest Hills, however scarce. Luckily, this rare find flew off into safe cover before a Cooper's Hawk swept into the trees to inspect our group.

All the while, we were greeted by singing warblers by the dozen — Magnolia, Canada, Blackburnian, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Overbird, Redstart, Northern Waterthrush, and others. Other woodland birds joined the songfest — Eastern Wood-Pewee, Baltimore Oriole, Red-eyed Vireo, Rose-breasted Grosbeak among them.

Nesting Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Eastern Phoebes, and Louisiana Waterthrushes courted mates and attended young as we watched. Common Mergansers fished in the nearby Housatonic, Turkey Vultures soared aloft to ride the wind, and various swallows harvested a fresh mayfly hatch.

Special treats of the day, aside from the grouse, were a singing Hooded Warbler — a pioneer of a southern species

venturing into boreal habitat — and four Purple Martins sweeping above the flowing water — recently arrived and not yet ready to nest.



**Ruffed Grouse**

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

As we thrilled to the music of more than 16 warbler species, we studied a bounty of late-spring wildflowers — Canada Mayflowers, Wild Geraniums, native sedums, Golden Alexanders, and sundry other riparian woodland blooms.

Let's salute naturalist extraordinaire Donna Rose Smith for immersing us in a late-spring wonderland of northwoods wildlife!