



Chickadee Chatter



July/August 2024

Litchfield Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 69/Issue 4

The mission of the Litchfield Hills Audubon Society is to protect birds, other wildlife and their habitats, through conservation, education, research, and advocacy.

President's Message

By Diane Edwards



Fifty-two LHAS members, friends, and guests attended our 69th Annual Meeting and Dinner on June 6 at the Elks Lodge in Torrington. After enjoying socializing and a tasty buffet dinner, we got down to business. Following my end-of-fiscal-year financial report, Harry Schuh told everyone that he and Ed Goodhouse had audited our bank records on May 16 and found they were accurate. Thank you, Harry and Ed!

Harry then presented our scholarships to two young women who are going to pursue environmental studies and careers. See page 3 for the details.

Next up was voting on our slate of officers and new direc-

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

tors. But first, Ann Orsillo, who was on our nominating committee, thanked outgoing Treasurer Mia Coats, Corresponding Secretary Terri Bianchi, and board members Michael Audette, Beverly Baldwin, and Vickie Dauphinais for their years of service to LHAS.

Here are the newly elected officers and board members (the complete list of board members is on page 2):

Officers

President — Diane Edwards

Vice President — Fran Zygmunt

Treasurer — Dave Tripp, Jr.

Recording Secretary — Marie Kennedy

Corresponding Secretary — Beverly Baldwin

Directors, for terms ending in 2025

Marcia McGowan, completing Michael Audette's term; and Jay Coles, replacement for Dave Tripp who is now Treasurer

Directors, for terms ending in 2027

Mia Coats, Gina Decker, and George Stephens

Special Awards

As you can see from the photo at left, I presented Certificates of Appreciation and gifts to Angela Dimmitt and Ann Orsillo for their many — and I mean *many* — years of volunteering. Both of them joined LHAS more than 45 years ago and have continued to volunteer all these years!

Angela has been a director many times. As our past Historian, she spent hours and



Ann Orsillo (left) and Angela Dimmitt (right) each received an LHAS Certificate of Appreciation and gift from President Diane Edwards (center) for their many years of volunteering.

Photo: Rich Martin

(continued on page 3)

LHAS Officers

President	Diane Edwards	860-309-5139
Vice President	Fran Zygmunt	860-689-5001
Treasurer	Dave Tripp Jr.	dtrippjr@gmail.com
Rec. Secretary	Marie Kennedy	914-393-6270
Corresp. Secretary	Beverly Baldwin	860-921-7075

Board of Directors

Jay Coles	2025	203-788-7560
Marcia McGowan	2025	860-274-2089
Karen G. Nelson	2025	860-309-9018
Rich Martin	2026	860-736-7714
Pam Hicks	2026	smilemysles@yahoo.com
Harry Schuh	2026	860-307-0807
Mia Coats	2027	817-691-2525
Gina Decker	2027	860-379-0332
George Stephens	2027	860-921-7150

Committee Chairpeople

Boyd Woods Sanctuary Communications	Debbie & Rich Martin	860-819-7462
& 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	Angela Dimmitt	860-355-3429
Kalmia Sanctuary	Janice Jankauskas	203-231-2022
Membership Outreach	Beverly Baldwin	860-921-7075
Membership Records	Harry Ainsworth	860-777-8012
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

Summer Bird Count	Dave Tripp	dtrippjr@gmail.com
Christmas 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 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 Harry Ainsworth, Membership Records Chair

Christopher Bren	Sherman
Jeff Buck	Bristol
Mary Guilfoile	Torrington
Jack & Beth Isler	Salisbury
Beth Kanachovski	Bristol
Jill Ksanznak	Sharon
Charlene Liner	Winsted
Jared Look	Litchfield
Priscilla McCord	Lakeville
Aaron Molitor	Torrington
Alice Mulk	Torrington
Arthur Peterson	New Preston Marbledale
Joan Ruppel	Morris
Ann Sartori	Salisbury
Mr. & Mrs. R. Seiler	Gaylordsville
Lisa Sorce	Salisbury
Judith Soule	Kent
Winthrop Wilson	Goshen

LHAS membership is at 936.

If your newsletter is addressed incorrectly, send an email to Harry Ainsworth at hla1@me.com.

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

(continued from page 1)

hours creating scrapbooks with news clippings about our activities. Our current Program Chair, Angela has great ideas for the presentations at our monthly meetings. She has led numerous birding field trips, given presentations on her overseas birding trips at our meetings, and written her garden journal article for our newsletter for many years now. Besides chairing our Program Committee, she recently stepped up as Hospitality chair, making sure we have good things to eat and drink at our meetings. Thank you, Angela!

Ann Orsillo has been a director, in addition to being "the best Education Chair one could ever ask for," according to Janet Baker. After recruiting more than 100 classrooms to receive Audubon Adventures, a classroom curriculum, she earned special recognition from National Audubon. Ann has led many bird walks over the years, as well as paddling trips to local ponds and rivers. She is now on our Education Committee, helping out with our Nature Explorers. Many thanks, Ann!

Three other long-time members weren't at the Annual Meeting but have also received Certificates of Appreciation and thank-you gifts.

Fran Zygmunt joined LHAS about 40 years ago, when he was 12 years old! Our current VP, Fran has been President two times in the past — first for five years and later on for three years. He served as the LHAS representative on the Audubon Connecticut Council and became the council's president. Fran has led numerous birding trips, entertaining us with his fabulous bird song imitations and ability to call birds in. He has also given presentations at our meetings, notably on bird migration.

Dave Tripp, Jr. was also just 12 years old when he joined us. He served as Field Trips chair for a number of years. He's led many birding trips, including three-day weekends at Cape May, NJ and Newburyport, MA. He has also given presentations at our meetings on his birding adventures. For years Dave has coordinated our Summer Bird Count and recently took over from Ray Belding as the compiler of the Christmas Count. Dave has been a director several times in the past and has been on our board for the past year. He has now agreed to serve as our Treasurer.

Doreen Orciari joined us in 1989. She and her husband, Bob, were co-chairs of our Kalmia Sanctuary for many years. Doreen also maintained the beautiful butterfly garden there. After years of maintaining our membership records, she has finally relinquished that role, which Harry Ainsworth has agreed to fill. Doreen has also been proofreading our newsletter, along with Janet Baker, for years.

LHAS Awards Scholarships

At our annual meeting, LHAS awarded \$2,000 scholarships to two area young women who are planning to major in environmental studies or a related field.



From left: LHAS Scholarship Committee Co-chair Harry Schuh, Danielle Syrotiak, Dana Sue Saccardi, and LHAS President Diane Edwards.

Photo: Rich Martin

Danielle Syrotiak, who graduated from Nonnewaug High

School and currently attends UConn in Storrs, has received the Paul A. Gros Memorial Scholarship. Danielle, who is from Bethlehem, is majoring in natural resources.

Dana Sue Saccardi, a graduate of Housatonic Valley Regional High School, has received the Litchfield Hills Audubon Scholarship. She will be heading to UConn, where she will also participate in the natural resources program. Dana, who hails from Cornwall Bridge, hopes to get a degree in water and soils.

Judging of the 19 applications we received was held on May 7. Thank you, Scholarship Committee members: Harry Schuh, Carol Kearns, Marie Kennedy, Janet Baker, and Vickie Dauphinais.

A Special Thank-You to All Our Volunteers!

Field trip leaders, sanctuary gardeners, officers and directors, committee chairs and members, bird count captains and birders, sanctuary chairs and helpers, and refreshment-bringers ...

Many, many thanks!

Boyd Woods Sanctuary Update

By Rich Martin, Boyd Woods Sanctuary Co-chair

Beech Leaf Disease

A couple of years ago, during one of LHAS' monthly meetings, a forester from Fairfield County approached me and asked if Boyd Woods Sanctuary was showing any signs of the Beech Leaf Disease. This was the first time I had heard of the disease so I asked him if he could describe it for me. Based on his description, fortunately, the beech trees at Boyd Woods Sanctuary, at that time, were not showing any signs of the disease.

Fast forward to today, I wish I could continue to report that the beech trees at Boyd Woods are healthy, but I can't. I noticed last year that the beech tree leaves were looking a little odd. The leaves were showing some color striping, shades of dark and light green. Little did I know that this was a precursor to what was to follow.

If you take a walk at Boyd Woods today, you will see that the majority of our beech trees are showing signs of the Beech Leaf Disease, striping or curling leaves (see photo below). Additionally, many of the mature beech trees are totally void of leaves.

The Beech Leaf Disease was discovered a few years ago, and much about it is still unknown. What is known about the disease is that it is associated with a nematode (worm), *Litylenchus crenate mccannii*. It can kill mature beech trees in 6-10 years and young trees in as little as 2-3 years. Currently, there is no known way to manage the disease.

This new disease seems like the one-two punch to our woodlands here in Connecticut and New England, taking into account the recent loss of the ash trees due to the Emerald Ash Borer beetle.

I will miss the stunning golden autumn colors of the American Beech trees at Boyd Woods Sanctuary.

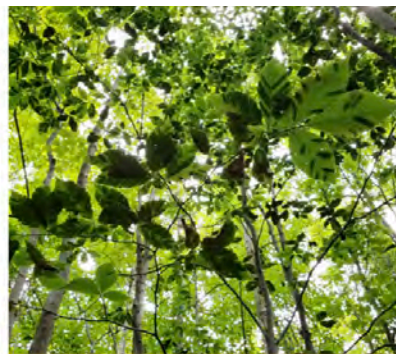
Beech Leaf Disease



Striping



Curling or leathery texture



Darkened stripes in canopy

Better News

On a more upbeat note, for the remainder of the year the following projects are on schedule and have been budgeted for the Boyd Woods Audubon Sanctuary:

- Replacing the temporary footbridge on the Brook Trail with a more permanent one
- Dredging the Plash (the small pond near the bird blind) to remove the vegetation and debris that has been accumulating over the past 18 years
- Invasive plant eradication over a 50-plus-acre area
- Brush hogging of the Monarch Meadow
- Bird feeders will go back up at the bird blind once we know the bears are resting peacefully come winter — no guarantees

The trails are in great shape. Come out for a walk and enjoy the solitude and peacefulness of the sanctuary.

Connecticut Botanical Society Survey at Boyd Woods Sanctuary

By Eileen E. Cooper, Ph.D.

This field trip on May 18 was attended by 17 people. The day was mild and clear. Several hours were spent on the yellow trail shorter loop. Grasses were examined and verified by Lauren Brown. Rich Potter noted that a white oak, unusual to the terrain, was seen on the property. The lichen and bryophyte survey done by Steve Messier also includes the red trail. His observations are as follows. (Common names are from *Common Mosses of the Northeast and Appalachians* by McKnight et al.)

"Noticeably missing were *Leucobryum glaucum* — pincushion moss (although found by the leader during an earlier survey of the upper trail) and *Hypnum imponens* — brocade moss. These are usually common. *Hypnum* prefers swampy woods on fallen logs, and *Leucobryum* likes dry upland soils in oak forests. They are probably in other sections of the

parcel. The most interesting find is the knothole moss, which is considered to be an uncommon species. This list of lichens and bryophytes is only a cursory list comprising two hours of work. I

would expect 100 lichens could inhabit this forest area. Similarly, the bryophytes list could easily double or triple."

Note: To read Eileen's complete report, which includes the list of the plants, trees, lichens, and mosses that were identified during her walk at Boyd Woods Sanctuary, please visit LHAS' website at lhasct.org/blog.

Sprucing Up Our Sanctuary Gardens

By Vickie Dauphinais

LHAS avid gardeners have been busy getting the butterfly garden at Kalmia and the pollinator garden at Wigwam Brook Sanctuaries ready for another season of beautiful flowers to attract and support a variety of pollinators, including bees, beetles, butterflies, and, of course, birds!

In early April, Jane Golding, Lynne Williamson, Debbie Mane, and I braved the elements and spent a few hours at each garden to clean up debris left over from winter and allow new growth to come through.

By mid-May the plants were thriving, but so were the weeds! A planting and weeding work party was sched-

uled for each garden. New plants purchased at the Northwest Conservation District plant sale were put in the ground and weeds controlled. A big thank you to the following volunteers for helping out: Celeste Echlin, Jane Golding, Fabienne Audette, Debbie Mane, Janice Jankauskas, and Gina Decker.

Memorial Garden Bench Installed at Wigwam Brook Sanctuary

The children of Arthur and Linda Smith donated a garden bench in memory of their parents, who used to own the property that is now our Wigwam Brook Sanctuary. The land was sold to LHAS in 2008. It was decided to place the bench



From left: John Baker, chair of Wigwam Brook Sanctuary, and Jim, Pam and Dave Smith setting up the bench.

Photo: Vickie Dauphinais

by the pollinator garden under the beech tree so visitors could sit and enjoy the garden and the surrounding flora. The area was overgrown with invasive vines. Rich Martin got to work with his chain saw and cleared it in no time. Wood chips were brought in by Joe and Terri Bianchi just in time for the arrival of the bench. The Smiths were grateful for all the help in getting the project done. They will plan a memorial dedication at a later date.

Letterboxing at Kalmia Sanctuary

According to Dictionary.com, letterboxing is defined as "a type of treasure hunt in which a box, known as a letterbox, is hidden in a remote rural location and clues are provided as to its whereabouts."

There are now two letterboxes at LHAS' Kalmia Audubon Sanctuary in Harwinton. The names of our letterboxes are It's a Bird's Life 1 and It's a Bird's Life 2. One contains a notebook and an owl stamp; the other has a notebook and a generic bird stamp. Someone who searches for the locations brings a pen, ink pad, their own stamp, and their notebook. When they locate a letterbox, they stamp their own notebook with our owl or bird stamp, and then place their own stamp in our notebook.

Clues to our locations can be found at letterboxing.org. In the box labeled "Search by location" enter "Kalmia Sanctuary, Harwinton."

If you participate, please make sure you securely put everything back in the box and bags and put it back in the hiding spot.



Jane Golding (left) and Fabienne Audette planted a new crabapple tree at Wigwam Brook.

Photo: Vickie Dauphinais

Meetings, Bird Walks and Activities

LHAS Calendar — Summer 2024



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 28 Russell St., Litchfield, CT.

GENERAL MEETINGS

Note: The July 1 meeting will be in person and on Zoom. If you want to participate on Zoom, go to the Calendar section of our website, lhasct.org, to register. You will be sent the login link.

July 1 **An Intro to Shorebirds, Their Migration, and Identification Monday, 6:45 PM**

Nick Bonomo, one of Connecticut's leading birders and well-known to many, will share his knowledge of shorebirds with us — from the basic question "What is a shorebird?" through different types of shorebird, where they migrate, when and where to view them in Connecticut, and of course how to identify them. They are some of the most numerous (in their thousands in migration along the shore) and most challenging birds that nest in or pass through our state. Nick is an accomplished photographer, and his presentation will help us to enjoy and identify these fascinating birds. A birder since the age of 13, Nick was born and raised in Connecticut, where he now practices orthopedic surgery as a physician assistant. He spends much of his free time traveling the globe in search of birds. He currently sits on the Connecticut Ornithological Association's Avian Records Committee of Connecticut, and he loves to share tips and tricks in the field.

August 5 **Annual Picnic at Boyd Woods, with Sharon Audubon's Raptors Monday, 6 PM**

Various species of hawks and owls will accompany Sharon Audubon Center staff to demonstrate their beauty, power, and connection with the natural world. Similarities and differences of these amazing birds of prey will be discussed and several props will also be on hand for viewing. Please join us for an evening of fun. Boyd Woods is located on Route 254, about 1 mile south of the junction with Route 118. Bring a chair or blanket, your picnic food and beverage, and insect repellent. Rain or thunderstorms cancel this event.

EVENTS AND FIELD TRIPS

July 2 **Paddling at Charles E. Wheeler Wildlife Area, Milford . . . Tuesday, 9:30 AM**

Join Pam Hicks and Marie Kennedy for a gentle paddle through the marsh waters in Milford, on the Long Island Sound. We'll look for shorebirds, Ospreys, and waterfowl while we take in the beautiful waterways. Pack a picnic lunch and bring something to share with others. Meet us at 69 Court Street, Milford. Please have your kayak or canoe and your PFD. *Contact Marie at 914-393-6270 or Pam at smilesmyles@yahoo.com for more information.*

July 30 **Paddling at Wood Creek Pond Tuesday, 9 AM**

Join Pam Hicks and Ann Orsillo for paddling around this lovely pond in Norfolk. Bring your own kayak or canoe, PFD, water, snacks, binoculars, sunscreen, and a towel. **Directions:** Take Route 44 to Route 272 northbound. Turn right onto Ashpohtag Road, then take first left to the launch. (Address is 428 Ashpohtag Road, Norfolk.) *For more information, contact Pam at 203-922-2684 or Ann at 910-880-1518.*

The next Board Meeting will be held at 7 p.m., Tuesday, July 16 at the LHAS office, 28 Russell Street, Litchfield.

August 14. Paddling at Burr Pond State Park Wednesday, 9 AM

Pam Hicks and Ann Orsillo will lead this paddling trip at Burr Pond State Park in Torrington. Meet at the boat launch parking lot. **Address:** 699 Burr Mountain Road, Torrington (it's past the main park entrance, on the left). Bring your own kayak or canoe, PFD, water, snacks, binoculars, sunscreen, and a towel. **For more information, contact Pam at 203-922-2684 or Ann at 910-880-1518.**

Nature Explorers Out and About

By Vickie Dauphinais, Education Committee Chair

Earth Day

Members of the LHAS Education Committee welcomed spring by participating in the annual Earth Day celebration. The event was sponsored by Sustainable Litchfield on April 20 at the Litchfield Community Center. Families stopped by our table to learn about bird-friendly plants to include in their gardens, options to make windows safer for birds, hikes to join and experience the migration bonanza. Children enjoyed several activities, including seed sowing, bird ID challenge, and practice spotting birds through binoculars. Each participant went home with a potted sunflower seed to nurture and other fun prizes.



Spotting birds at the Litchfield Earth Day Celebration.

Photo: Josh Szwed

Spring Migration

Ann Orsillo and Vickie Dauphinais presented a program on spring migration at Beardsley Library in Winsted on May 8. Ann gave a brief presentation explaining migration to the children and their parents, followed by a field trip to Forest View Cemetery to practice spotting birds using binoculars.



Ann Orsillo explains how to use binoculars to spot birds.

Photo: Vickie Dauphinais

Birding Backpacks

The birding backpack project continues to grow. Two other libraries have requested one, Cornwall and Burlington. Oliver Wolcott Library in Litchfield requested a second one due to high demand. They covered the cost. So far 10 libraries in the state's Northwest Corner have received a birding backpack from LHAS.

Know Any Potential 'Nature Explorers'?

If you have any young children, grandchildren, nieces, or nephews who might like to learn more about nature, please give your email address to our Education Chair Vickie Dauphinais so she can add you to our contact list. **You can reach her at fdauphinais@optonline.net or 860-361-9051.**

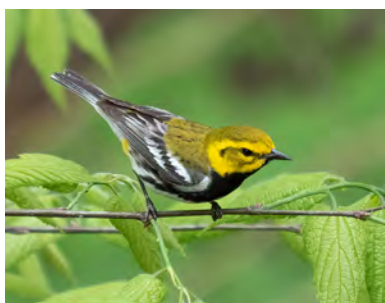
Trip Reports

By Russ Naylor

A Nest-Hunting We Will Go, Spring's Sprung, Don't Tarry-o!

A merry band of wingchasers from LHAS visited Bent of the River Audubon Center in Southbury on April 28 to sample a mid-spring wing-fling. Despite showers and migration being a tad slow, we captured some first-of-season sightings: Chimney Swift, Eastern Kingbird, Warbling Vireo, Baltimore Oriole, and a few warblers (Ovenbird, Yellow, Black and White, and Black-throated Green).

But the overall themes of the day were nest-searching and territory-claiming. Along the Pomperaug River, Canada Geese, Wood Ducks, Mallards, Common Mergansers, Louisiana Waterthrushes, Red-shouldered Hawks, Barred Owls,



Black-throated Green Warbler

Photo:Wikimedia Commons

the woods, a few Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Broad-winged Hawks scouted out potential claims.

Other migrants drifted through all this hullabaloo — most notably bands of fresh-plumaged White-throated Sparrows singing wistful farewells as they proceeded northward.

It was a vibrant intro to mid-spring, accented by blossoming dogwoods and an ephemeral flush of bluets, violets, Bloodroot, Marsh Marigold, and Dutchmen's Britches, all in peak bloom.

Here's to more encounters with springtime's beauty!

Walking the Green Mile

The month of May swept in on a tide of vernal green, with plant life — from moss to stately sycamores — blooming and foliating into a riot of greenness over but a few days' time. To celebrate this burst of awakening life, wildlife whisperer Donna Rose Smith led us on a Cornwall Bridge cornucopia of spring bounty along the Appalachian Trail above the Housatonic River on May 3.

We savored a melange of migrant birdlife, with at least 14

species of wood warblers topping the list. Some first arrivals were American Redstart, Northern Parula, plus Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Blue, Nashville, and Tennessee Warblers. Other firsts-of-the-season were Least Flycatchers, Veery, Wood Thrush, and Brown Thrasher. A few late Ruby-crowned Kinglets and White-throated Sparrows were among the last early-spring departees, headed toward their nesting grounds up north.



Northern Parula

Photo: Dan Pancamo, Wikimedia Commons

Backed by a musical fugue of trilling American Toads, a melodious orchestra of birdsong accompanied our avian neighbors as they nested and courted, from nest-building gnatcatchers to Wild Turkeys.

As a bonus, we saw ephemeral blooms with such spritely names as Sweet Cicely, Herb Robert, Blue Cohosh, and Meadow Rue.

Kudos once again to Donna Rose for leading this festive foray into the wonders of spring. We look forward to her further adventures into this seasonal addiction.

A Sunset Sky Asweep With Swifts

On the evening of May 12, a joint group of LHAS and Western Bird Club "swifties" (not to be confused with the flocks following Taylor Swift!) came to Mitchell School in Woodbury to marvel at the return of our acrobatic aerialists from their winter sojourn in Brazil. To the tune of robin and Wood Thrush evensong, in a delicately pastel-hued sunset, we stood enthralled as streams of Chimney Swifts slalomed in to circle and glide over us atwitter on nimble wings, ere descending adroitly into the safety of their chimney roost.

At least 135 newly returned birds gathered at this site to rest from their day's airborne sorties. In deepening dusk, after the last stragglers had vanished into the roost, our outing



Common Nighthawk

Photo:Andy Reago & Chrissy McClarren, Wikimedia Commons

ended with a flourish as a Common Nighthawk swept by over our heads prior to doubling back to land atop the school roof, where this quick-winged bird would spend the night. So finely ended a twilight flight!

Breeding Birdlife Abustle at the Bent

Donna Rose Smith's bird ramble at Bent of the River Audubon Center in Southbury on May 13 was abuzz with breeding birdlife in full song and color.

On the Pomperaug River, Wood Ducks and Common Mergansers came and went from arboreal nest holes. On a steep bank below, Bank Swallows and Belted Kingfishers excavated nesting burrows. Birdhouses were alive with nesting bluebirds and Tree Swallows, with a few House Wrens competing for space.

Field and edge habitats not only had Song Sparrows and cardinals but also the Bent's four species of special interest: Indigo Buntings, Field Sparrows, and Prairie and Blue-winged Warblers, staking out territories.

Forest habitat held courting Wood Thrush, Ovenbird, Hooded Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Baltimore Oriole, and others. Local ravens, Red-tailed Hawks, Pileated Woodpeckers, and

Osprey all foraged for growing nestlings.

We enjoyed some migrants, too: Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Northern Parulas, and Black-throated Green Warblers. As an extra perk, we enjoyed some new butterflies for the spring, such as Pearly Crescents and Eastern Tiger Swallowtails, plus mid-spring wildflowers — Ladies' Slippers, Canada May Flower, Golden Ragwort, and others.

Kudos to Donna Rose for an invigorating immersion into a bounty of awakening wildlife!



Field Sparrow

Photo: Andrew Weitzel, Wikimedia Commons

Scenes from Other Birding Walks



Marie Kennedy (left) led a warbler walk at the Litchfield Land Trust's Prospect Mountain Preserve on May 25.

Photo: Paul G. Edwards



Fran Zygmunt (third from right) led a beginning birder walk at White Memorial on May 26.

Photo: Terri Bianchi



Left: Checking out an abandoned mine on the warbler walk at Prospect Mountain Preserve.

Photo: Paul G. Edwards

Conservation News

By Diane Edwards, Conservation Chair

More Plants Listed As Invasive

Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont has signed a law adding to the list of invasive plants that are banned from sale here. Effective October 1, six more plants will be added to the list: Japanese Angelica Tree, Mugwort, Porcelain Berry, Quack Grass, Japanese Wisteria, and Chinese Wisteria. In addition, Bradbury Pear will be listed as of October 1, 2027. The law bans importing, moving, selling, purchasing, transplanting, cultivating, or distributing any of these plants.

Freshwater Challenge

National Audubon has joined a national effort to conserve and restore freshwater resources. The *America the Beautiful Freshwater Challenge: A Partnership to Conserve and Restore America's Rivers, Lakes, Streams, and Wetlands*, was announced in April by the White House. Its goal is to protect, restore, and reconnect 8 million acres of wetlands and 100,000 miles of our nation's rivers and streams.

"This new partnership leverages a variety of tools and resources to support local goals and projects for restoring and protecting our freshwater resources," said Julie Hill-Gabriel, Audubon's vice president for water conservation. "Healthy freshwater ecosystems are critical for people and birds throughout the hemisphere, and Audubon is committed to protecting these areas as critical habitat for birds but also as solutions to address the threats of climate change — like drought, flooding, and severe storm impacts."

New Law Supports Migratory Birds Across the Hemisphere, says Audubon

President Biden has signed a bipartisan bill reauthorizing and enhancing a program that provides funding throughout the Americas for partnerships to benefit migratory birds and their habitats. The **Migratory Birds of the Americas Conservation Enhancements Act** reauthorizes critical funding for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA) program and lowers the cost-share requirement for partners.

In addition to benefitting habitats and communities, conserving migratory birds is important to the 96 million Americans who engage in birdwatching, contributing \$100 billion to the U.S. economy each year.

Since 2002, the NMBCA has funded more than 700 projects in 35 countries throughout the Western Hemisphere. The program has benefitted more than 5 million acres of habitat

across the nesting, stopover, and wintering grounds for more than 350 species that migrate each year between the U.S. and Canada, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

EPA Issues New Climate Pollution Standards

In April the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released a final rule to limit pollution from coal and new natural gas-fired power plants, which will help slow the rise in global temperatures and reduce harmful air pollution. Combined with the buildout of clean energy that is being accelerated through the investments in the Inflation Reduction Act, climate pollution from the electric power sector could be cut in half by 2030, delivering important benefits to communities, birds, and other wildlife, according to National Audubon.

Heavy Downpours Threaten Loon Reproduction

Excerpted from an article on National Audubon's website

Common Loons build nests near the water's edge, making them vulnerable to flooding after severe rainfall. That's what happened last year across the Northeast. As a result, "loon productivity was not great last year all around the Northeast," says Lucas Savoy, director of the loon program at the Biodiversity Research Institute in Portland, Maine.

One bad year would not be a problem, according to Carrie Gray, a boreal conservation specialist with National Audubon. But if researchers see reduced productivity year after year, Gray says, "that's another matter."

Unfortunately, for the past 20 or so years nesting loon success has suffered because of high water and other hazards in the Adirondacks, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and parts of Canada.

Because the birds don't start breeding until they are around six years old, it will take a while for population numbers to reflect recent declines in reproductive success, said Mark Pokras, a wildlife veterinarian at Tufts University who has studied loons for around 40 years. But in the meantime, conserving healthy shorelines where possible, and offering the birds nest rafts where needed, can help to give them a fighting chance.

To read the entire article, visit audubon.org/magazine/heavy-downpours-are-growing-threat-common-loons.

In My Garden — A Journal — April/May/ Early June 2024

By Angela Dimmitt

Every month I say this, but it's usually true: "This month was amazing/incredible/best ever," etc. But this spring really seems special!

Birds: Migrants seemed to arrive early, but some never reached my garden or passed through very quickly. Sweet little Ruby-crowned Kinglets came April 16, twittering quietly to themselves. The first Gray Catbird arrived April 20. A couple of days later the first House Wren broke into song, and April 28 the first hummingbird appeared, hovering once again where last year's feeder had been. At 5 a.m. on April 29 a Wood Thrush woke me serenading near my open bedroom window — he continued for a couple of weeks, then sang only in the evening, that glorious haunting song when



Tennessee Warbler

Photo: Cephas, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons
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everything else is quiet. A week later a Veery joined him. Into May, an unusual Tennessee Warbler stayed for nearly a week; a singing American Redstart and a Red-eyed Vireo are still here, along with a Great-crested Flycatcher, a Scarlet Tanager, and now an Eastern Wood-Pee-wee.

For the first time in many years, no phoebe has nested — one is around but maybe can't find a mate. The heron and kingfisher come by looking for trout and crayfish in the stream. Unfortunately, House Sparrows are nesting in a bluebird box — I fear the bluebirds' nest in a nearby box has failed, although they are still here, often sitting on the telephone wires. I've seen a Wood Duck and a female Common Merganser on the stream, and near the house, heard more than seen, there's a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers.

Birds missing this spring: Common Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler, Ovenbird, Indigo Bunting, Wild Turkey. Chimney Swifts and a Blue-grey Gnatcatcher finally arrived June 2.

A pair of Barred Owls might be living in the white pines across the road. They call in the early evening or at 11 p.m. or 1 a.m. doing that cacophony thing which sounds like half a dozen birds declaring war but is apparently just a pair re-bonding. At 7 p.m. recently the crows were whooping up a racket. I traced them to a tree near the road and found a

Great Horned Owl pretending to be part of the trunk. Dusk saved its sanity.

Animals: A couple of deer visit, the rabbit is back, a family of coyotes hollers joyfully in broad daylight as well as at night, ominously close to the house. Could they have a den with young on the hillside? A black Gray Squirrel! Rare



Black Gray Squirrel

Photo: Angela Dimmitt

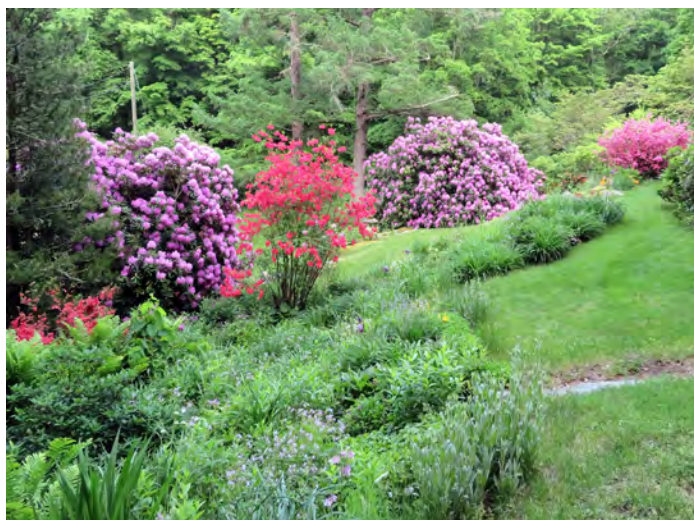
but slowly becoming more common, certainly the first one seen here — such a pretty little creature! It fed under the feeders just long enough to be photographed, then vanished. Fingers crossed — the mother bear with three yearling cubs seen March 20 have not returned.

Reptiles: A couple of Garter Snakes; a large Snapping Turtle tried to lay its eggs on the bridge.

Caterpillars: YUK! Thousands are feasting on oak trees right over the house; you can hear the droppings fall, see chewed leaves drifting down. Gross! I fear they are Gypsy — er, *Spongy* — Moths, but there are also other colorful caterpillars I've never seen before outside of Doug Tallamy's talks, so maybe we are in for some gorgeous butterflies.

And the Garden: This was truly the year for rhododendrons and azaleas. In my 38 years here, the at-least-50-year-olds

(continued on back page)



Rhododendrons and azaleas in Angela's garden

Photo: Angela Dimmitt



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Journal

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have never looked more magnificent, every inch of them covered with huge clusters of flowers, the azalea colors exquisite. The ancient kolkwitzia bowed to the ground with so many blossoms. Irises also have been fabulous, though mostly over now, bashed by the heavy rain which also spoiled the rhodies and azaleas. Hostas are not flowering yet, but again are absolutely magnificent (love 'em — have many!). Lots of wildflowers too — ragged robin, columbine, buttercup, clover, native anemones, white daisies; also astilbe, early phlox, old-fashioned coral bells, and sage attracting swallow-tailed butterflies. Whew!

June gardens promise to be spectacular, and with a Summer Bird Count somewhere every weekend, never a dull moment!