



Chickadee Chatter



November/December 2025

Litchfield Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 70/Issue 6

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

Christmas Bird Count 2025



Artwork: Rich Martin

The Litchfield Hills Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will be from midnight to midnight on December 14th. The Woodbury-Roxbury CBC will be Saturday, the 20th, and the Barkhamsted CBC will be on Sunday, December 21st.

If you want to help, contact our compiler, Dave Tripp, at dtrippjr@gmail.com, and he will put you in contact with the captain for your area or where help may be required.

The compilation for the LHAS CBC will take place at Patty's Restaurant, 495 Bantam Road (Route 202), Litchfield, immediately following the day's birding; doors open at 4 p.m. Hot food and beverages will be available upon arrival to warm up from the day's chilly weather. (If anyone counts birds until midnight, their numbers will be added to the compilation.)

National Audubon's CBC is the longest-running wildlife

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

census in the Western Hemisphere. This citizen-science event provides vital information about bird populations and trends, data that alerts Audubon to environmental threats not only to birds but to the larger ecosystems we all depend on.

According to Audubon's website, each count takes place in an established 15-mile-diameter circle and is organized by a count compiler. Count volunteers follow specified routes, counting every bird they see or hear all day. It's not just a species tally — all birds are counted all day, giving an indication of the total number of birds in the circle that day.

Birders of all skill levels are involved in the CBC. If your home is within the boundaries of a CBC circle, then you can stay at home and report the birds that visit your feeder on count day as long as you have made prior arrangement with the count compiler.

Note: We will also have a CBC 4 Kids! See the Calendar on page 7 for details about this fun family event.

Co-President's Message

By Diane Edwards



The LHAS Board of Directors recently made two important decisions.

First, a committee of the board updated our by-laws to reflect the use of email rather than snail mail when feasible and to clarify our two different types of members: those

who become members of LHAS because they joined National Audubon and live in our region and those who join LHAS directly. We made a few other minor changes. The full board voted to approve the updated by-laws at its September 16th

meeting. The new version is available on our website, lhasct.org; click on "About" and then on "Constitution & By-laws." A big thank-you to the subcommittee members: Janet Baker, Harry Schuh, Carol Kearns, and Karen Nelson. (I was also on the committee.)

At the same September meeting, the board voted to approve a significant change affecting our Kalmia Sanctuary.

In 1982, former member Mary Elizabeth Cooling donated just under 10 acres of forested land to LHAS for use as a wildlife sanctuary. She continued to live in the adjacent house until she passed away; the house and 2.7 acres were

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LHAS Officers

Co-President	Diane Edwards	860-309-5139
Co-President	Janet Baker	860-567-8427
Vice President	Dave Tripp Jr.	dtrippjr@gmail.com
Treasurer	Dave Tripp Jr.	dtrippjr@gmail.com
Rec. Secretary	Karen Nelson	860-309-9018
Corresp. Secretary	Beverly Baldwin	860-921-7075

Board of Directors

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	860-733-2670
George Stephens	2027	860-921-7150
Ginny Apple	2028	860-655-0007
Logan Connor	2028	860-806-4336
Lynne Williamson	2028	860-689-5961

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	vacant	
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	vacant	
Scholarships	Carol Kearns & Harry Schuh	860-307-0807
Wigwam Brook Sanctuary	vacant	

Research

Summer Bird Count	Dave Tripp	dtrippjr@gmail.com
Christmas Bird Count	Dave Tripp	dtrippjr@gmail.com

Chickadee Chatter is published in January, March, May, July, September, and November. Submission deadline for the **January/February** issue is **December 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

Denise Butwill	Litchfield
Carolyn Cannon	Falls Village
Joanne Collin	Bristol
Alexander Desena	Watertown
Deborah Fedorich	Bristol
Carol Franken	South Kent
Rena Garret	Winsted
Nancy Goldring	Litchfield
Judith Grzywinski	Bristol
Laura Johnson	Lakeville
Barbara Keidel	Watertown
Marcia Laser	Bristol
Judith Lissy	Bristol
Mary Morris	New Milford
Mary O'Neill	Lakeville
Avis Parent	Terryville
Lorraine Sakowski	Bristol
Nadine Thomas	Torrington
Mary Susan Vaill	Torrington
Kathleen Voldstad	Salisbury
Arlene Wallace	Watertown
Jim & Terry Zagryn	Harwinton

LHAS membership is at 1,079.

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

Obituary:

John Marshall, a longtime participant in our Christmas and Summer Bird Counts, passed away in September. LHAS sends our sincere sympathies to his family.

Condolences: LHAS extends our condolences to the following people:

- **Rich Martin**, whose brother passed away in September
- **Sandy Bonola**, whose mother, Melanie Bonola, also passed away in September. The Bonola family lives next door to our Kalmia Sanctuary. We thank the family for asking people to make donations to LHAS in Melanie's memory because she had loved walking at Kalmia.
- **Sally Spence**, whose husband, Nicholas Thold, died this past summer.

Congrats to Terri Bianchi and Dave Tripp!

Terri Bianchi



Terri Bianchi, right.

Photo: Courtesy of NWCD

A longtime LHAS volunteer and former board member, Terri received the 2025 Conservation Volunteer Award from the Northwest Conservation District at its annual meeting on October 1. The NWCD award honors a district resident who has been selflessly dedicated to conservation in our region. Terri gives her time and energy bountifully not only to NWCD, but also to the Litchfield Hills Audubon Society and the Harwinton Garden Club.

At NWCD, Terri has volunteered at the Earth Day plant sale

for at least the last 10 years. For LHAS, she most recently was corresponding secretary and is a member of the Program and Volunteer Recognition Committees.

Congratulations, Terri! The honor is well-deserved.

Dave Tripp



Dave Tripp with Torrington Mayor Elinor Carbone.

Photo: Beth Tripp

Our current vice president and treasurer, Dave Tripp was "pinned" as Torrington Fire Chief on September 11. A 29-year veteran of the department, he most recently served as interim chief and before that, deputy chief.

Congratulations, Chief Tripp!

Co-President's Message

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then bequeathed to LHAS in 1992. The house was built in 1880, so it's very old. Over the years, we have spent a significant amount of time and money on the house, which we rented to tenants. Last year, we learned that there was lead paint in the house and were under order by the Torrington Health District to remediate the lead paint because the tenants had children under the age of 6. We applied for funding available through the Connecticut Children's Hospital's "Healthy Homes" program and were accepted. We engaged an environmental remediation company to do an inspection and create a remediation plan. The plan was accepted by the Torrington Health District. However, the money for the Healthy Homes program ran out. To pay for the remediation ourselves would cost about \$50,000.

Meanwhile, the tenants moved out. The board considered whether to go ahead with the remediation and then rent the house out again. But being a landlord has nothing to do with our conservation mission. Dealing with the house and tenants actually detracts from our mission; the time and money



Part of the lawn outside of the Kalmia house, which LHAS plans to turn into wildlife-friendly habitat.

Photo: Diane Friend Edwards

would be better spent on improving our sanctuary.

We then discussed the possibility of selling the house and its 2.7 acres (there's a 2-acre zoning requirement). But that would mean we would lose our butterfly garden, pollinator garden, a

meadow and part of another meadow, and use of the garage (where we store gardening equipment). We also would have no control over what was done with that property.

So, we finally decided to demolish the house, which has no historical value. The approximate cost of demolition would be \$25,000 — versus \$50,000 to remediate the lead paint. We will keep the garage. Right now, the property has about 2 acres of lawn — which is not wildlife habitat. Next spring we can remove a big chunk of that lawn and turn it into a wilflower meadow or some other wildlife-friendly habitat.

Members present at our general meeting on Monday, October 6 voted to approve the board's decision to demolish the house by a 25-4 vote. We look forward to creating new wildlife habitat next year!

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



Scan the QR code at left with your smartphone to go to www.lhasct.org.

Follow us on Facebook:
facebook.com/LitchfieldHillsAudubonSocietyLHAS

Summer Bird Count Results 2025

By Dave Tripp, Jr., Summer Count Compiler

June 7th and 8th marked another summer bird count in the books. I am grateful for the hard work done by everyone who participates. Weather does play a part in the amount of time people spend in the field as well as how active the birds are. Last year we had more individual birds during a lesser amount of time spent in the field (showers and rain). I would recommend to anyone who is on the fence for birding during showers to consider it — it is rewarding as the birds are very active.

This year, species seen in only one or two areas were: Mute Swan, American Black Duck, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Sora, American Bittern, Least Bittern, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Eastern Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl, Common Nighthawk, Acadian Flycatcher, Fish Crow, Purple Martin, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Orchard Oriole, Eastern Meadowlark, Prairie Warbler, and Blackpoll Warbler.

American Woodcock earned the hide-and-seek award this year for not being found.

Our 14 parties of counters tallied more than 13,500 individual birds, represented by 132 species. The hours of effort it

(continued on page 5)

Birds Tallied

Canada Goose.....	321	Yellow-throated Vireo.....	103	Blackburnian Warbler.....	37
Mute Swan	3	Blue-headed Vireo.....	23	Yellow Warbler.....	545
Wood Duck.....	86	Warbling Vireo.....	138	Chestnut-sided Warbler.....	220
Mallard.....	37	Red-eyed Vireo.....	592	Black-throated Blue Warbler.....	28
Hooded Merganser.....	3	Blue Jay.....	97	Pine Warbler.....	94
Common Merganser.....	6	American Crow.....	232	Yellow-rumped Warbler.....	13
Wild Turkey.....	51	Fish Crow.....	3	Prairie Warbler.....	3
Double-crested Cormorant.....	12	Common Raven.....	33	Black-throated Green Warbler.....	48
Great Blue Heron.....	57	No. Rough-winged Swallow.....	19	Canada Warbler.....	14
Green Heron.....	13	Purple Martin.....	32	Eastern Towhee.....	91
Black Vulture.....	8	Tree Swallow.....	249	Chipping Sparrow.....	263
Turkey Vulture.....	46	Barn Swallow.....	350	Field Sparrow.....	21
Osprey.....	6	Cliff Swallow.....	9	Savannah Sparrow.....	9
Bald Eagle.....	3	Black-capped Chickadee.....	137	Song Sparrow.....	484
Cooper's Hawk.....	6	Tufted Titmouse.....	158	Swamp Sparrow.....	153
Red-shouldered Hawk.....	42	Red-breasted Nuthatch.....	11	Dark-eyed Junco.....	10
Broad-winged Hawk.....	12	White-breasted Nuthatch.....	80	Scarlet Tanager.....	91
Red-tailed Hawk.....	30	Brown Creeper.....	27	Northern Cardinal.....	160
Virginia Rail.....	20	Carolina Wren.....	61	Rose-breasted Grosbeak.....	80
Killdeer.....	4	House Wren.....	192	Indigo Bunting.....	30
Rock Pigeon.....	89	Winter Wren.....	13	Bobolink.....	207
Mourning Dove.....	186	Marsh Wren.....	63	Red-winged Blackbird.....	858
Black-billed Cuckoo.....	2	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.....	24	Eastern Meadowlark.....	3
Yellow-billed Cuckoo.....	6	Golden-crowned Kinglet.....	1	Common Grackle.....	223
Eastern Screech Owl.....	1	Eastern Bluebird.....	99	Brown-headed Cowbird.....	135
Great Horned Owl.....	3	Veery.....	412	Baltimore Oriole.....	72
Barred Owl.....	29	Hermit Thrush.....	28	House Finch.....	109
Chimney Swift.....	69	Wood Thrush.....	152	Purple Finch.....	26
Ruby-throated Hummingbird.....	44	American Robin.....	654	American Goldfinch.....	363
Belted Kingfisher.....	7	Gray Catbird.....	612	House Sparrow.....	181
Red-bellied Woodpecker.....	64	Northern Mockingbird.....	4	Bank Swallow.....	4
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.....	82	Brown Thrasher.....	4	Northern Parula.....	6
Downy Woodpecker.....	59	European Starling.....	397	Sora.....	1
Hairy Woodpecker.....	41	Cedar Waxwing.....	221	Sharp-shinned Hawk.....	2
Northern Flicker.....	41	Ovenbird.....	467	Northern Harrier.....	1
Pileated Woodpecker.....	31	Worm-eating Warbler.....	7	Common Nighthawk.....	2
American Kestrel.....	8	Louisiana Waterthrush.....	31	Orchard Oriole.....	1
Eastern Wood Pewee.....	128	Northern Waterthrush.....	37	Least Bittern.....	1
Acadian Flycatcher.....	4	Blue-winged Warbler.....	16	American Bittern.....	2
Alder Flycatcher.....	91	Black-and-white Warbler.....	116	Spotted Sandpiper.....	1
Willow Flycatcher.....	61	Common Yellowthroat.....	392	Am. Black Duck.....	1
Least Flycatcher.....	58	Hooded Warbler.....	4	Blackpoll Warbler.....	1
Eastern Phoebe.....	156	American Redstart.....	411		
Great Crested Flycatcher.....	80	Cerulean Warbler.....	7		
Eastern Kingbird.....	67	Magnolia Warbler.....	15		

Summer Count

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took to count and find that many: 155 hours of birding in the daylight with an additional 11 hours of birding in darkness.

Many thanks to the participants (C signifies captains):

John Anderson, Janet Baker (C), Robert Barbieri (C), Carole Brawner, Jay Coles, Melissa Craig, Gina Decker, Buzz Devine

(C), Angela Dimmitt (C), Diane Edwards, Paul Edwards, Eileen Finnan, Kevin Finnan, Ed Goodhouse, Nicki Hall, Greg Hanisek (C), Pam Hicks, Bill Kennedy, Marie Kennedy (C), Paul Mahler (C), Debbie Martin, Rich Martin, Michele McDermott, Scott Mills, Russ Naylor (C), JoAnn Neddermann, Ann Orsillo (C), Kaelynn Palmer (C), Sam Slater (C), Donna Rose Smith (C), David Tripp Jr. (C), John Wagenblatt (C), Kate Wong, and Fran Zygmunt (C).

FOCUS ON BIRDS

The Bufflehead: The Chickadee of the Duck World

By Vickie Dauphinais, Education Committee Chair

As winter approaches, waterfowl start their migration south. They leave their breeding grounds in the very north for the warmer climate, food availability, and open water. As a result, a variety of ducks can be spotted swimming and feeding on our ponds, lakes, and estuaries. One of my favorites is the tiny, chubby Bufflehead. I love watching his antics of bobbing up and down in the water, like a real-life rubber ducky. When I sat down to write the Focus on Birds article for the newsletter, it occurred to me the Bufflehead would be the perfect bird to spotlight. So, let's get to know this itty-bitty duck with a great, big head!

The Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*) is the smallest diving duck in North America. It is easily identified by its behavior and markings. The name refers to the duck's head, which is very large in comparison to its 13-to-16-inch body. The bird weighs in at less than a pound. The Bufflehead's compact size, black and white plumage, and energetic movement on the water is much like the Black-capped Chickadee among the songbirds. Despite their small size, Buffleheads are fast, agile fliers with rapid wingbeats, known to cruise at nearly 50 mph. Unlike most diving ducks, which must run across the water surface to take flight, they can launch directly from the water. Adult males (drakes) have a snowy white patch in back of their dark, puffy head. In bright sun, the head shows iridescent shades of purple and green. Their body is white from the waterline up to the back,

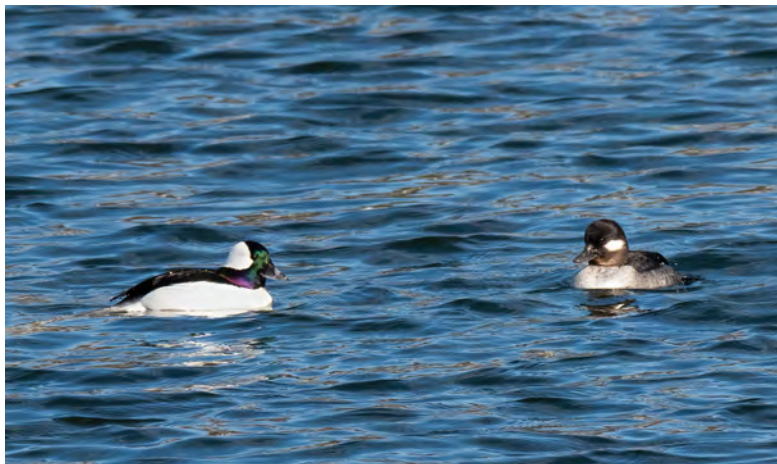
which is black. The females (hens) look quite different. They sport softer tones of brown with a small white patch on the cheek behind the eye. The immatures look like the female until they develop adult plumage in their second year.

Buffleheads nest along the edges of ponds and lakes in the Canadian woodlands. Buffleheads are monogamous, staying with the same mate for many years. Each summer, they hatch broods of six to ten little ducklings usually in abandoned flicker cavities in old trees. The tiny duck fits perfectly in the Northern Flicker cavity. The only improvement the female makes is lining the nest with her own down feathers. The female incubates the eggs for about one month. Once they

hatch, the chicks stay a day or two until the mother persuades them to plop down to the ground and follow her to a nearby body of water. The drop can be anywhere from 9 to 80 feet — amazingly, they usually land unhurt! The ducklings are ready to fly in a couple of months, just in time for the journey south.

In October, Buffleheads start leaving the cold northland for the more favorable wintering grounds

across the U.S., from the Great Lakes all the way into Mexico. They can be seen congregating in small flocks on lakes, ponds, slow-moving rivers, and marine shorelines. They feed underwater, spending much of their time scavenging for mollusks, insects, and crustaceans before popping back onto the surface like real-life rubber duckies. Buffleheads post guards when submerging for food. While members of the flock go under (which can be as long as 20 seconds), one duck remains above to watch for danger. Being small ducks, they have many predators. Among them are Peregrine Fal-



Male (left) and female Buffleheads.

Photo: Diane Friend Edwards

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Meetings, Bird Walks and Activities

LHAS Calendar — Fall/Winter 2025



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 meetings below will be in person and on Zoom. To participate on Zoom, go to the Calendar section of our website, lhasct.org, to register. You will be sent the login link. The meeting times shown below are when refreshments are available. A short business meeting begins at 7 p.m., followed by the presentation.

November 3. . . . Connecticut's Broad-winged Hawks Monday, 6:45 PM

Broad-winged hawks, once very common, have been experiencing significant population declines throughout their breeding range. In an effort to understand why this is happening, scientists from Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association in Pennsylvania began the "Broad-winged Hawk Project" in 2014. In 2021, Larry Fischer, a federal- and state-licensed raptor bander, began collaborating with the project, providing information on Broad-winged Hawk nests in Connecticut. Larry will talk about Broad-wings nesting in our state and discuss where they go to spend the winter. Larry has been watching and banding hawks and owls for more than 40 years. Besides being the Connecticut collaborator on Broad-winged Hawk research with Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association, he also is a member of the board of directors of the NorthEast Hawk Watch. Larry is a past president of the Western Connecticut Bird Club and has also presented other programs on hawks and owls at LHAS meetings.

December 1 Wildlife Artist Talks about Her Work and Passion Painting Birds . Monday, 6:45 PM

Award-winning artist Dorie Petrochko will talk about her work and life, and her lifelong passion for birds: their plumage, behavior, and adaptability to change. Her work reflects her intense love for birds, and there is nothing she would rather do than travel, observe, and paint birds to benefit conservation and species preservation. There is something intrinsically spiritual and secretive about birds that is untouchable. That is precisely what she likes about them and what she will spend a lifetime trying to capture. Dorie works mostly in watercolor and gouache, and occasionally in acrylic and pastel. She is very careful to research her subjects and tries to work from life sketches and her own photographs as much as possible. Dorie has had many exhibitions around the U.S. A founding instructor of the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History's Natural Science Illustration Program, Dorie teaches classes in drawing and painting birds, and is an active member and exhibitor of the International Guild of Natural Science Illustrators.

EVENTS AND FIELD TRIPS

November 1. . . . LHAS Members Invited to Kestrel Program — Free! Saturday, 10:30 AM

Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy is inviting LHAS members to attend a Sharon Audubon program on kestrels — at no charge! Bethany Sheffer from Sharon Audubon (along with their American Kestrel ambassador) will be present at the Conservancy to talk about the species and the nest box program. The Conservancy will also be open for people to explore afterwards. If you're interested, you can come that day or preregister here: ripleyconservancy.org/events. If you have any questions, email Breanna Fleet at bfleet@ripleyconservancy.org or call the Conservancy at 860-

The next Board Meeting will be held at 7 p.m., Tuesday, November 18, at the LHAS office, 28 Russell Street, Litchfield.

567-2062. The Conservancy is located at 55 Duck Pond Road in Litchfield.

November 9. . . . Annual Duck Ramble Sunday, 1 PM

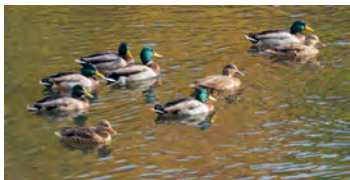
Noted birder Fran Zygmunt will lead LHAS' Annual Duck Ramble to help us identify the various ducks and other birds on Bantam Lake and nearby locales. Meet at the White Memorial museum parking lot. **For more information contact Fran at fzygmunt@charter.net.**

December 14 . . . Christmas Bird Count Sunday, All Day

See page 1 for details about this year's CBC. If you're interested in helping to count birds, either all day or a part of the day, let our compiler, Dave Tripp, know by sending an email to dtrippjr@gmail.com.

LHAS Nature Explorers — Family Fun!

November 16.....Family Duck Ramble.....Sunday, 1 PM



Bring the kids to learn how to sight and identify waterfowl on Bantam Lake. After scanning the lake for waterfowl, we will walk around White Memorial's Point Folly, located on North Shore Road in Bantam. Bring binoculars, if you have them (LHAS will provide if needed). Dress for the weather conditions. Meet by the entrance to Point Folly. **Any questions, call Vickie Dauphinais at 860-805-9167.**

December 14.....CBC 4 Kids!.....Sunday, 11 AM-12:30 PM



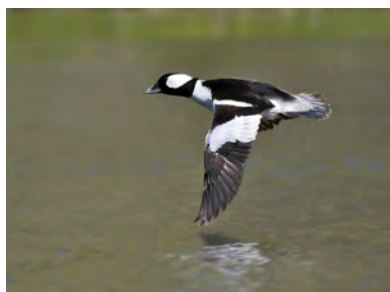
Children and parents are invited to experience this wholesome family-centered citizen science adventure. We will meet at the White Memorial A.B. Ceder Room (lower floor of the museum building) for a brief orientation. Then we will walk to the feeders outside the museum and around Ongley Pond to count birds by sight, using binoculars, and by sound, using the Merlin app. Afterward, we will gather in the Ceder Room to tabulate the results and enjoy pizza, cookies, and hot chocolate. A great way to spend a winter day and help scientists capture vital information about bird populations. Wear warm

jackets and boots. Binoculars will be provided. Bring your own, if you have a pair. **Any questions, call Vickie Dauphinais at 860-805-9167. Pre-registration is appreciated at lhasjunior@gmail.com.**

The Bufflehead

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cons, Snowy Owls, Bald Eagles, Red-Tailed Hawks, Cooper's Hawks, and Great-horned Owls. Due to their many predators, Buffleheads have a short lifespan of 2.5 years. However, one



Bufflehead drake.

Photo: Bill Bouton, Wikimedia Commons

lucky duck lived over 18 years; it was caught and rereleased by a bird bander in New York in 1993. While Buffleheads are susceptible to predators and habitat loss, Ducks Unlimited surveys indicate they seem to be holding their own. The total population is estimated at approximately

1.4 million, and surveys suggest they have increased since the 1950s.

Buffleheads can generally be found in Connecticut from November to April. They are common visitors to the state's ponds, rivers, and lakes, including our familiar Bantam Lake. So, take some time this winter to enjoy these delightful little ducks!

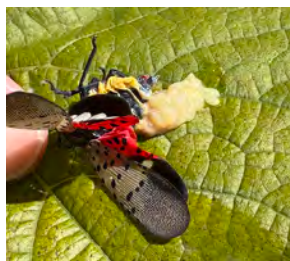
Editor's note: You might see Buffleheads on our annual Duck Ramble on November 9. For details, see the Calendar listing above.

References:

allaboutbirds/guide/bufflehead/overview
ducks.org/hunting/waterfowl-id/bufflehead
audubon.org/field.guide/bird/bufflehead

Conservation News

Destroy Spotted Lanternfly Eggs!



Spotted Lanternfly with newly laid egg mass at Hopkins Vineyard in Warren, CT.

Photo: Jim Baker



Older Spotted Lanternfly egg mass.

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

The highly invasive and destructive Spotted Lanternflies have been spotted in Fairfield, Litchfield, Hartford, New London, and New Haven counties. Although the adults die off by November, their eggs survive the winter. The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station's website says, "The spotted lanternfly eggs masses are laid on practically any surface including trees, stones, trash cans, side of a house, etc. during the fall. Egg masses are yellowish-brown in color, and most are covered with a gray, waxy coating prior to hatching. ... They may appear wet or sticky when fresh. You will see egg [masses] from September to May."

The Cornell Integrated Pest Management website tells how to destroy the egg masses:

"Scrape egg masses using scraper cards or anything else that is hard, tapered, and/or flat. Kill the eggs by putting them into doubled bags, alcohol/hand

sanitizer, or by smashing or burning them. Because spotted lanternflies lay many egg masses high up in tree canopies, removing egg masses within reach will not eliminate all of them, but because each egg mass contains up to 50 eggs, it can reduce the numbers, especially early in the season."

Horseshoe Crab Numbers Plummet in Long Island Sound

Research by the Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk has shown a severe population decline for Atlantic Horseshoe Crabs in the Sound. Although these crabs have existed for millions of years, they face significant human-related threats — habitat loss and degradation, overharvesting, and climate change. The crabs' eggs serve as a food source for migratory birds — including Red Knots, Semipalmated Sandpip-



Horseshoe Crab eggs.

Photo: USFWS, Wikimedia Commons

Reports and *The Biological Bulletin*, emphasize the need for immediate, coordinated action to prevent further population decline and potential local extinction. For more information, visit maritimeaquarium.org/newsroom.

New Study Shows How Conservation Can Help Birds, Communities, and Climate

The National Audubon Society recently announced the publication of a new study in *Scientific Reports* that "identifies places in the continental U.S. where conservation efforts would provide a triple benefit to protect bird habitat, naturally store carbon, and improve the well-being of local communities that have been under-represented in conservation efforts. This novel study represents an important opportunity to direct conservation toward efforts that are likeliest to succeed and secure a healthy future for birds and communities." Read more about the study at audubon.org/press-room.

Tracking 'Backpacks' on Rehabilitated Chimney Swifts Will Provide Essential Data for their Species' Conservation

Each year, the Sharon Audubon Center's wildlife rehabilitators raise 70-100 Chimney Swifts, brought in from across the region. In mid-August, they release the rehabilitated chicks into a "staging" flock — a massive flock of wild Chimney Swifts gathering for migration. This year's release was extra special, thanks to tracking devices added onto about 20 of the released birds as part of Audubon's Migratory Bird Initiative. Through this monitoring effort, Audubon aims to learn more about important migratory roost sites and South American wintering grounds to better protect this declining species and the resources they rely

ers, Ruddy Turnstones, Sanderlings, and Dunlin — during migration. Regions that are important stop-over points for the birds, such as Delaware Bay, have received a lot of conservation attention, but New England waters have not. The findings, published in *Scientific*

Conservation News

on — and potentially provide valuable post-release survival data for the rehabilitated birds.

New Bird-Glass Collisions Website

The Cornell Lab, Birds Canada, and a number of other entities have formed the Bird Collision Prevention Alliance. The alliance's website, stopbirdcollisions.org, is filled with information about bird-glass collisions and what you can do the help prevent them. This alliance will be working with the Project FeederWatch team to continue the research started last season collecting and analyzing observations of bird-glass collisions from FeederWatch participants.

Project FeederWatch Kicks Off November 1

The Cornell Lab and Birds Canada have collaborated for years on Project FeederWatch, a citizen-science survey of winter birds. According to the project's website, feeder-watch.org, "Project FeederWatch turns your love of feeding birds into scientific discoveries. FeederWatch is a November–April survey of birds that visit backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. While most people focus on birds coming to bird feeding stations, you don't even need a feeder! All you need is an area from which you like to watch birds. Plus, the schedule is completely flexible: you can count every week or once all winter, for as much or as little time as you like."

When you sign up to participate, you receive tools to track and learn about birds, a year-end summary, a poster of common feeder birds, and digital access to Cornell Lab's *Living Bird* magazine.

The cost for U.S. participants is \$18. The fees collected cover website and database maintenance, data analysis, participant support, printing and shipping project materials, and disseminating information learned from FeederWatch data.

Bent of the River Audubon Center Nets 11-Year Old Blue-winged Warbler

Earlier this year, a bird bander at the Bent of the River Audubon Center in Southbury made an impressive find: a Blue-winged Warbler who was at least 11 years old!

Bird banding is an important tool in conservation. Licensed



Blue-winged Warbler.

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

professionals set up "mist nets" to temporarily capture birds flying through an area. After being retrieved from the gentle nets, captured birds are identified, measured, and banded.

This particular Blue-winged Warbler was originally banded at the Bent in 2016 as an "after second year" bird, meaning that our bander was able to determine it had hatched at least two years prior.

"The return of [this warbler] to the Bent speaks to the quality of habitat at the sanctuary," said Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe, Audubon Connecticut's director of bird conservation, and the bander who made this exciting find. "This bird has used the early-successional cedar fields at the Bent as nesting habitat during at least four springs and summers of its life."

Early successional habitat is the only habitat Blue-winged Warblers nest in. It's also hard to find in Connecticut, where it makes up less than 5% of the state's landscape.

Merlins Nested in CT This Year — a First!



Merlin.

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

A pair of Merlins nested in a cemetery in Winsted this past May and successfully fledged four chicks. This was the first recorded nesting pair in our state. Merlins usually breed in Canada. But according to Cornell Lab's allaboutbirds.org website, "In 1995, they started expanding into New York and northern New England and

now breed across Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine." And we can now say Connecticut!

Kayaking on the Housatonic River

By Ann Orsillo

Our group of six kayakers and canoeists launched our vessels just above the Great Falls of the Housatonic River in Falls Village on August 12. This portion of the Housatonic is tranquil, in contrast to the rushing waters downstream.

In the springtime after snow melt or heavy rains when the Falls Village hydroelectric dam cannot handle the volume of water, the river flows over the dam and the rocks below in an impressive display. On this day the flow was barely a trickle.

We observed beautiful Cedar Waxwings hawking insects as they flew over the river. Two Green Herons ignored us as they fished along the shore. We drifted close enough to snap some photos. In spite of the hot temperatures, we were able to keep cool by paddling under the shade of trees. It was another great day on the water for LHAS paddlers.



LHAS paddlers at the Housatonic River in Falls Village.

Photo: Pam Hicks (with self-timer)

Enjoying Connecticut Waterways

This past summer, LHAS offered several paddling trips. Thank you, Pam Hicks and Ann Orsillo, for leading trips on Hall Meadow Brook Reservoir in Torrington (July 15) and the Housatonic River in Falls Village (August 12). Diane and Paul Edwards led a trip on the Bantam River in Litchfield (August 16). Also, thank you, Ginny Apple, for offering to lead a beaver-related paddling trip on the Bantam River (September 28).

Below: Paddlers head downstream on the Bantam River toward Bantam Lake.

Photo: Celeste Echlin



Above: Putting in on the Bantam River in Litchfield.

Photo: Paul G. Edwards





Litchfield Hills Audubon Society

Strategic Plan 2025 - 2027



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

Goal 1: Increase Member Participation in LHAS

Key Strategies:

- Survey members on their LHAS interests
- Increase PR
- Recognize volunteer time and efforts

Goal 2: Attract Younger Members to Maintain a Vibrant Chapter

Key Strategies:

- Define age demographics and target for “younger” membership
- Increase school outreach
- Offer more citizen science opportunities

Goal 3: Improve LHAS Board Effectiveness

Key Strategies:

- Evaluate and inventory present Board’s skill sets to identify future needs
- Develop a “Board Handbook” for each board member
- Develop a succession plan
- Create an operational and yearly planning calendar for board and committee members

Goal 4: Promote Birding, Conservation and Nature Education

Key Strategies:

- Find more field trip leaders for bird outings
- Create signage and literature about conservation activities going on involving LHAS
- Increase publicity for outings and programs
- Expand/communicate citizen science opportunities
- Emphasize digital aids to reduce fear of learning about birds
- Conduct talks and programs regarding the need for conservation

Goal 5: Better Manage our Sanctuaries to Conserve Habitat and Provide Nature Recreation for the Community

Key Strategies:

- Have more people involved on sanctuaries
- Form a sanctuary committee to manage and oversee all sanctuaries
- Articulate a management plan for each sanctuary
- Create a habitat plan for each sanctuary
- Have a single point resource/member for each sanctuary (stewardship chair)
- Hold management meetings to identify yearly projects and goals

Goal 6: Increase Community Outreach and Publicity

Key Strategies:

- Improve and update digital platforms to promote outreach, education and publicity
- Identify and utilize outlets for outreach and publicity, such as Facebook, Litchfield Chatter, Litchfield BZ, YouTube and Instagram
- Publish our accomplishments (e.g., Annual Report)
- Identify one or two people to manage our publicity/activities

Goal 7: Improve the Role of Partnerships

Key Strategies:

- Evaluate current partnerships for effectiveness
- Identify additional organizations that LHAS can partner with
- Establish criteria for partnerships that help LHAS achieve our mission
- Develop an advisory council/committee



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

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Our 'Snowy Owls' a Hit at Family Nature Day

By Vickie Dauphinais, Education Chair



LHAS once again joined in the annual celebration of Mother Nature organized by the White Memorial Conservation Center on September 27. It was a glorious fall day. A lot of families took advantage of the nice weather and came out to check out the information booths, nature-themed crafts, and live animals. Quite a few families stopped by our table to get information on

our sanctuaries, programs, and outings. There was lots of activity at our children's table. The snowy owl craft — stuffing cotton puffs into pinecones and pasting on eyes, nose, and wings — was very popular. The older kids enjoyed spotting



LHAS member JoAnn Neddermann helps a friend's son make a 'snowy owl.'

Photo: Vickie Dauphinais

birds with binoculars. And of course, most everyone wanted a chickadee tattoo.

A big thank you to all the volunteers who helped staff the table: Diane Edwards, Ann Orsillo, Josh Szwed, Justin Mack, Marcia McGowan, Carol Perrault, and Marie Kennedy. And thank you, Dave Tripp, for setting up the tent. Great teamwork!

Editor's note: A big thanks to Vickie for organizing the children's activities!