



Chickadee Chatter



May/June 2026

Litchfield Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

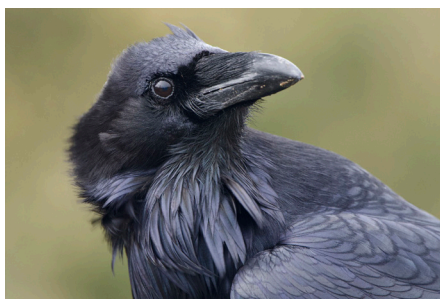
Volume 71/Issue 3

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

Focus on Birds

Our Largest Corvid in America, the Common Raven

By Beverly Baldwin



Common Raven

Photo: Andy Reago & Chrissy McClarren via Wikimedia Commons

A few years after my retirement, I started taking occasional walks at the Thomaston Dam. The dam was built sometime after the flood of 1955, which rerouted a portion of Route 8. A part of the old Route 8 remains, and it is a fascinating place. It contains glimpses of Connecticut history and nature. You do have to time your walks, as weekends in the summertime are filled with off-road vehicles. I eventually learned the dam is a successful nesting area for two Common Ravens. I call them my buddies, and they do show interest in people who take notice of them.

At first, I only walked there occasionally. I really did not pay much attention to them, other than admiring their soaring skills. Then, one year, I noticed in the summer there seemed to be more ravens flying about. The next February, there were just two. Duh! The ravens nest here, but where? I started visiting the dam a little more regularly. I finally discovered the Common Ravens have found the perfect nesting area: under the service bridge that leads to the dam's tower. The bridge is closed off to the public. The ravens have used this same nesting area successfully for a number of years. Usually I only see two raven chicks, but occasionally they fledge three. It is a joy to watch the antics of the family.

American Crows also use the area. How can you easily dis-

tinguish the Common Raven from the American Crow?

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

tinguish the Common Raven from the American Crow?

- **Size** — Common Ravens are larger and have a wingspan of 3 to 4 feet. The American Crow wingspan is slightly under 3 feet. But unless they are flying next to each other, size is not the best way to compare them.



American Crow

Photo: Dario Taraborelli via Wikimedia Commons

- **Tail shape** — Ravens have a wedge-shaped tail; crows' tails are generally fan-shaped.
- **Flying** — Crows' wings have a rowing motion, while the ravens have much slower wing beats, interspersed with gliding. Ravens can soar, similar to raptors.
- **Vocalizations** — The raven's most common call is a "cr-r-r-ruck" call. Deep and guttural. The crow's common call is "caw caw caw."
- **Appearance** — A raven's head is larger and its beak is much thicker than a crow's and it is slightly curved, whereas a crow's beak is straighter and much slimmer. Ravens also have shaggy throat feathers, making the throats look much fatter.

If you want to learn how to distinguish ravens from crows, I suggest you visit the Thomaston Dam. You will surely see a raven near or on the dam tower. If you walk across the dam and follow the road into the natural area, you will most definitely see and hear American Crows. Enjoy! Who knows, you might get to experience the ravens gliding and soaring overhead, akin to a ballet.

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Conservation	Diane Edwards
Education	Vickie Dauphinais
Facebook	Diane Edwards
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Scholarships	Logan Connor
Wigwam Brook Sanctuary	<i>vacant</i>

Research Chair

Summer Bird Count	Dave Tripp, Jr.
Christmas Bird Count	Dave Tripp, Jr.

Chickadee Chatter is published in January, March, May, July, September, and November. Submission deadline for the **July/August** issue is **June 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** or lhasct@me.com.

NEW MEMBERS

By Harry Ainsworth, Membership Records Chair

Katherine Alexander	Terryville
Kate Anello	New Milford
Erin Bongard	Barkhamsted
Craig Brenard	Sharon
Heather Bshara	Bethlehem
Ronald Guralnick	Winsted
Phillip Hathaway	Sharon
Joyce Hinman	New Hartford
Susan Izzo	Bantam
George Kral	Goshen
Coreen Litwin	Litchfield
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Laurie McCue	Lakeville
Holly J. Molinaro	Bridgewater
James Mulhern	Canaan
James Murphy	Sharon
Chester Nason	New Milford
Angela O'Donnell	Northfield
John Sebjan	New Milford
Lillian Woodworth	Sharon

LHAS membership is at 900.

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.

Many thanks to to **Janet Baker, Heidi DeVos, and Lynne Williamson** for proofreading this newsletter.

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Co-President's Message

By Diane Edwards

The Wonders of Spring Migration



I remember one day in March, many years ago when I lived in New York City, excitedly yelling "Welcome back!" to a skein of geese heading northward overhead. Who among us doesn't thrill to the sight or sound of birds returning from their wintering

grounds? For one thing, spring migration brings us many birds we don't otherwise see in Connecticut. For another, many of the birds we see now are garbed in beautiful breeding plumage.

To help you enjoy this migration season, we've scheduled 10 bird walks in and around our area — not counting the impromptu midweek birding trips orchestrated by Pam Hicks. Plus, our annual meeting program this year will feature expert birder Chris Woods, who will tell us all about migration in Connecticut. See the Calendar on pages 6-8 for all the details about these events.

National Audubon also offers a new way to learn about migration: a four-part documentary series called *Birds on the Move*. The series tracks bird migration and the people and places it touches, from Canada to Cali, Colombia. According to Audubon's website, the series will let you meet:

- Scientists tracking birds across hemispheres
- Indigenous and local leaders protecting critical habitats
- Urban communities making cities safer for migration
- Young conservationists shaping the future

"Together, these stories reveal how migration connects us all — and why protecting birds protects the planet."

To learn more about the series, go to audubon.org/get-involved/bird-migration-celebration.

Audubon's website also offers the Bird Migration Explorer, a guide to the annual journeys made by more than 450 bird species and the challenges they face along the way. Go to explorer.audubon.org.

Nominating Committee for 2026/2027

At every annual meeting (the first Monday of June), we elect officers and new board members. The nominating committee this year includes Janet Baker, George Stephens, and Mia Coats. If you want to volunteer for a position or suggest someone else, **please contact Janet at 860-567-8427 or berryledges@gmail.com**. The slate of candidates will be announced at our general meeting on Monday, May 4, and will be voted on at our 71st Annual Meeting on Monday, June 1.

Trip Report

Stood Up By Bog Snipe

By Russ Naylor

On March 29th, 20 winter-weary bird seekers gathered to celebrate spring's arrival with an early evening "concert" at Bent of the River Audubon Center in Southbury. It was supposed to feature that virtuoso of wing-borne melodies, the American Woodcock — aka Bog Snipe or Timberdoodle.

Various members of the avian audience sought out their roosting places in order to attend a nest — a stately Great Blue Heron, 15 funereally robed Turkey Vultures, plus robins and sparrows. The opening acts delivered magnificently — a chorus of Spring Peepers and Wood Frogs in steady background to robins and cardinals in muted evensong. Two pairs of Barred Owls announced themselves in percussive hoots. The Bent's own tom-tom club of Wild Turkeys responded by gobbling roosting tunes.

But alas, like many temperamental artists of the musical ilk, our main act — displaying woodcocks — decided to ghost their scheduled performance by being no-shows, much to the disappointment of their fan club. We'll have to speak to their agent — looks like this is the last time we'll be booking this act at this gig (just kidding!). As compensation, we enjoyed an astronomy class by stargazing under clear skies.

As they say in Hollywood (and birding), that's show biz!

Garden for Birds and Pollinators

When planting in your garden this season, choose as many native plants as you can. Find out which plants will thrive in our region by visiting National Audubon's Native Plants Database — audubon.org/native-plants — and entering your ZIP code. You'll find many plant options, including information about the birds and insects they might attract.

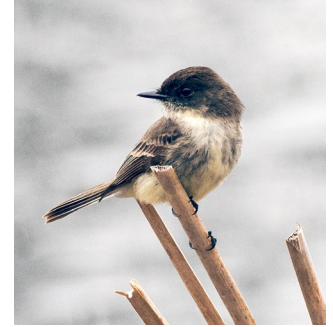
2025 Christmas Bird Count Results

By Dave Tripp, Jr., Compiler

December 14th marked the first day of National Audubon's CBC period, which happened to fall on a Sunday this year. The CBC season ended on January 5th. I want to thank everyone who took part in the 127th CBC. Marie Kennedy arranged this year's compilation at Patty's Restaurant, where nearly 20 of us shared the day's stories over a plethora of food.

Waterfowl was represented this year with some open water on Bantam Lake and Lake Waramaug. The multiple weeks of below freezing temps prior to the count froze the midsize lakes (e.g., Woodridge Lake) and smaller ponds and marshes like Cemetery and Jones Ponds. Days before the count, waterfowl numbers dropped significantly again. Common Mergansers went from 6,500 on Lake Waramaug to only 325 in a matter of two days because of the ice build-up. While the weather hampered some efforts, some amazing species held on to life. Russ Naylor had an American Woodcock, and Marie Kennedy found an Eastern Phoebe. The more uncommon birds, high counts, and areas with "saves" are in bold

below in the list. A "save" is when a common or less common species was found by one area. The "bird of the count" this year goes to Area G, Bob Barbieri and John Anderson, for finding and photographing a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak at a feeder during the morning snowfall in Torrington. The bird could not be relocated the next day.



Eastern Phoebe

Photo: Diane Friend Edwards

A snowy morning followed by a cloudy, cold (a high of 28), and windy day didn't stop 61 participants from participating in the field or at feeders. Thank you to all those captains who recruited or took on new volunteers. Their results produced a total of 11,837 individual birds representing 80 species. A Wood Duck and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet were observed during the three days before the 14th, representing count week species. A total of 130.5 hours was spent owling, watching feeders, and in the

(continued on page 5)

CBC Species Totals (CW = Count Week. Bold = uncommon birds, high counts, saves, areas.)

Canada Goose	1,907	Barred Owl.....	11	Gray Catbird	2
Mute Swan	12	Northern Saw-whet Owl	4	Northern Mockingbird	3
Wood Duck.....cw (Area M)		Belted Kingfisher.....	1 (Area M)	European Starling.....	1,002
American Wigeon	1 (Area M)	Red-bellied Woodpecker.....	102	American Pipit.....	4 (Area J)
American Black Duck	118	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	36	Cedar Waxwing	39
Mallard	357	Downy Woodpecker	88	Snow Bunting	14 (Area J)
Ring-necked Duck	111	Hairy Woodpecker	26	American Tree Sparrow	55
Lesser Scaup.....	2 (Area M)	Northern Flicker	12	Field Sparrow	6 (Area H)
Bufflehead.....	18	Pileated Woodpecker	9	Dark-eyed Junco	1,976
Common Goldeneye.....	16	Merlin.....	1 (Area H)	White-throated Sparrow	311
Hooded Merganser	184	Eastern Phoebe.....	1 (Area M)	Song Sparrow	84
Common Merganser	361	Blue Jay	843	Swamp Sparrow	12
Ruddy Duck	3 (Area M)	American Crow	404	Eastern Towhee	2
Wild Turkey	90	Fish Crow.....	4	Northern Cardinal	146
Great Blue Heron.....	1 (Area M)	Common Raven	35	Rose-breasted Grosbeak. 1 (Area K)	
Black Vulture.....	6	Horned Lark.....	7	Red-winged Blackbird	109
Northern Harrier.....	1 (Area J)	Black-capped Chickadee	329	Rusty Blackbird.....	8
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	Tufted Titmouse	219	Common Grackle.....	293
Cooper's Hawk	5	Red-breasted Nuthatch	13	Brown-headed Cowbird	39
Bald Eagle	11	White-breasted Nuthatch	91	House Finch	167
Red-shouldered Hawk	30	Brown Creeper	7	Purple Finch	1 (Area J)
Red-tailed Hawk	37	House Wren	1 (Area J)	Pine Siskin.....	2 (Area J)
American Woodcock.....	1 (Area N)	Winter Wren	2	American Goldfinch	152
Ring-billed Gull	56	Carolina Wren	13	House Sparrow.....	162
Herring Gull.....	1 (Area H)	Golden-crowned Kinglet	16		
Rock Pigeon.....	107	Ruby-crowned Kinglet.....	cw (Area H)		
Mourning Dove.....	252	Eastern Bluebird	126		
Eastern Screech Owl	3 (Area J)	Hermit Thrush	7		
Great Horned Owl.....	5	American Robin	1,140		
				TOTAL Individuals	11,837
				TOTAL Species.....	80

Christmas Bird Count

(continued from page 4)

field via foot and car, 39 hours fewer than last year. These hours covered a total of 696.5 miles by foot and car, all within a 17-mile diameter circle.

The 61 participants (c = area captain):

John Anderson, Savanna Arcuri, Janet Baker (c), Beverly Baldwin, Bob Barbieri (c), Cindy Barrett, Terri Bianchi, Sara Burnham, Denise Butwill, Nancy Chere, Daniel Clarke, Jay Coles, Eileen Cooper, Doug Craig, Melissa Craig, Vickie Dauphinais, Gina Decker, Angela Dimmitt (c), Michael Doyle, Celeste Echlin (c), Dave Emond, Eileen Finnan, Kevin Finnan, James Fischer, Cathy Glasner, Ed Goodhouse, Nicki Hall, Dennis Hannon (c), Judy Herkimer, Kim Herkimer, Marie Kennedy, Victoria Kocian, Raphaelle Kocian-Ludvigson, Rory Larson, Sydney Ludvigson, Justin Mack, Paul Maher (c), Denise Martha, William Martha, Debbie Martin, Richard Martin, Michele McDermott, Scott Mills, Russ Naylor (c), JoAnn Neddermann, Ann Orsillo (c), Patty Pickard (c), Gary Pitcher,

Birding Is Good for Your Brain — If You're An Expert Birder

According to NBC News, research has shown that seasoned birders — including older adults — have denser tissue in parts of the brain tied to attention and perception. The research was published February 23, 2026 in *JNeurosci*, the Journal of Neuroscience. In the Canadian study of 58 adults — 29 considered "expert" and 29 "novice" birders — the brains of expert birders were denser in areas associated with perception and attention. The study suggests that birding might support brain health. Read more at [nbcnews.com/health/health-news/birdwatching-birding-brain-boost-cognition-research-rcna259945](https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/birdwatching-birding-brain-boost-cognition-research-rcna259945).

Pam Rothacker, Tom Schaefer, Sam Slater (c), Donna Rose Smith (c), Carrie Szwed (c), Josh Szwed, David Tripp, Jr. (c), John Wagenblatt (c), Sam Walker, Brody Wierbonies, Stephen Wierbonies, Tom Zissu, and Fran Zygmunt.

Safeguard Your Windows for Spring Migration

By Vickie Dauphinais

Many of our favorite birds are returning from their winter grounds to establish residence in our backyards or stopping to rest and refuel before moving farther north. Let's make sure our homes are safe and ready to welcome them to our neighborhoods.

According to research, more than 1 billion birds are killed from glass collisions every year in the U.S. Most collisions happen at residential buildings. A sad fact, but glass kills!

Fortunately, we can take action by making our windows visible to birds using a range of affordable and effective collision deterrents. Listed below are a few products that have been shown to reduce and even prevent collisions. Check out the websites for a description of the product and directions on proper installation.

- Window Screens (birdscreen.com)
- ABC Bird Tape (abcbirdtape.org) or (collidEscape.org)
- Feather Friendly Bird DIY Tape (featherfriendly.com)
- Acopian Bird Savers (birdsavers.com)
- Window Gems (windowgems.com)
- Bird's Eye View Window film (abirdseyeview.com)
- Tempera Paint

More information on bird-glass collisions can be found at abcbirds.org/solutions/prevent-home-collisions.

Commit to reducing bird mortality by pledging to treat at least one window at your home with one of the suggested deterrents.

CT Bird Atlas Draft Website Now Live; Birders Asked to Review

An initial draft version of the CT Bird Atlas website is now available at <https://draft.ctbirdatlas.research.uconn.edu>. More information will be added as it becomes available. This is a final opportunity to get birder feedback and review of atlas maps to ensure they do not contain errors.

If you surveyed any "blocks," please check the species lists for any blocks you surveyed or know well. Remember that others may have recorded species you didn't find and that the organizers are only mapping species found during the atlas survey period (spring 2018 – February 2022). If you find an error, please use the reporting form to let the organizers know (there's a link in the legend under each map).

If you helped with the atlas, please also check the list of atlas volunteers to make sure you are listed and your name is spelled correctly. If you see other errors on this list, please notify Chris Elphick by email: chris.elphick@uconn.edu.

Meetings, Bird Walks and Activities

LHAS Calendar — Spring/Summer 2026



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 May meeting will be in person and on Zoom. (June will be in-person only.) 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. Usually, a short business meeting begins at 7 p.m., followed by the presentation.

May 4 All About Bats Monday, 6:45 PM

Join Gerri Griswold for a lavishly illustrated talk that touches on the basics of one of the most beneficial and maligned animals on our planet — the bat. How many species of bats are there? Where do they live? Why are they so important to us? What is harming them... and much more will be addressed. Gerri is director of administration and development at The White Memorial Conservation Center in Litchfield. She handled bats for 32 years as a wildlife rehabilitator and educator. Over the years Gerri and her bats delivered hundreds of programs to libraries, classrooms, scout troops, and organizations like the National Park Service and the Yale Peabody Museum. They have appeared on the cover of *The Weekly Reader*, and Gerri produced a segment about bats for *The Late Show with David Letterman*. Gerri was featured in *Seasons of Connecticut* by Diane Smith, published by Globe Pequot Press, released in June 2010.

June 1 Bird Migration & Connecticut — LHAS Annual Meeting & Dinner . . . Monday, 6 PM

Bird migration is easily observed and studied in Connecticut due to the state's location, geography, and habitat diversity. Chris Wood will present an overview of bird migration, with particular consideration of where Connecticut fits into the big picture of bird conservation and the enjoyment of birding. With a state list of over 450 birds, many of which are migrants through the state, Connecticut birders have the opportunity to see well over one-quarter of all the bird species found in the U.S. This presentation discusses efforts and strategies to sustain necessary habitats for breeding birds and migrants in our highly developed state. Chris is a past president of the Connecticut Ornithological Association and also served as chair of the first Connecticut Breeding Bird Atlas steering committee. He is also a founding member of the Western Connecticut Bird Club. Chris has been a birder and photographer for over 50 years. He has a master's degree in biology and studied under famed ornithologist Dr. Noble Proctor. Chris is retired after a career as a state government executive, a land conservation and management planner with The Nature Conservancy, a municipal planner, and a private land-use consultant. Chris now spends much of his time photographing birds and nature, traveling to the neotropics and southwest U.S. to see and photograph as many different hummingbirds as possible. *Note: This program will be preceded by our Annual Meeting & Dinner. The evening will kick off with socializing at 6 p.m., followed by a buffet dinner at 6:30, a short business meeting (including the election of officers and new board members) at 7:15, and the presentation at 7:45. To register, see page 11.*

The next Board Meeting will be held at 7 p.m., Tuesday, May 19, at the LHAS office, 28 Russell Street, Litchfield.

EVENTS AND FIELD TRIPS

May 8 Bird Walk at Bent of the River Audubon Center Friday, 8 AM

We will bird along the Pomperaug River to the historic barn and beyond. The Bent of the River is managed for shrub-land birds including Prairie and Blue-winged Warblers, Field Sparrows, and Indigo Buntings. The river has nesting Common Mergansers and Eastern Kingfishers. Meet at the parking lot at 185 East Flat Hill Road in Southbury. *Questions? Contact Donna Rose Smith at 1ffastbird@gmail.com.*

May 9 Spring Swift Swirl Saturday, 7:30 PM

Come to the Mitchell School in Woodbury to see Chimney Swifts return to their spring roost site — a recognized IBA (Important Bird Area) — from winter sojourns in Brazil. Swirling swaths of twittering swifts will come to roosting chimneys for the night in aerobatic splendor; some eventually to nest. This will be a sweet Mother's Day treat, so come to enjoy this rite of spring! Other possible treats: early nighthawks or roosting bats. Meet at 7:30 outside the Canfield Corner Pharmacy at the junction of Route 6 (Main Street North) and Route 47 in Woodbury. *For more information, call Russ Naylor at 203-841-7779; leave a message for a return call.*

May 12 Birds and Botany Walk at White Memorial Tuesday, 8:30 AM

Ann Orsillo and Eileen Cooper will lead this walk to find birds, wildflowers, and other interesting plants. Meet in the White Memorial Conservation Center museum parking lot. Bring binoculars, a magnifying glass (we have some loaners), and insect repellent. Heavy rain cancels. *For questions, call Ann Orsillo at 910-880-1518. Please register for the walk at www.whitememorialcc.org.*

May 15 Bird Walk on the Appalachian Trail in Cornwall Bridge Friday, 8 AM

We will start under the bridge on River Road in Cornwall Bridge. We will carpool to the end of the road to bird the Appalachian Trail. Past migrants found were Worm-eating, Black-thoated Green, Hooded, and Wilson's Warblers. It's always fun to see Eastern Phoebes nesting on the rock overhangs along the trail. *Questions? Contact Donna Rose Smith at 1ffastbird@gmail.com.*

May 16 Bird Walk with Goshen Land Trust Saturday, 7:30 AM

Join Ann Orsillo for this walk on a Goshen Land Trust property. Meet at 193 Pie Hill Road (one end of Pie Hill Road is across from the Goshen Fairgrounds). Bring binoculars (some loaners are available) and insect repellent. Heavy rain cancels. *For questions, call Ann Orsillo at 910-880-1518.*

May 17 Bird Walk at Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy Sunday, 8 AM

Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy has invited us to join them for a morning bird walk through Ripley fields. Spring migration will bring back Bobolinks, Eastern Bluebirds, American Kestrels, warblers, and more. Bring your binoculars and enjoy a morning hoping to see many amazing species! LHAS member Marie Kennedy will lead the walk. Meet at Constance B. Ripley (CBR) Field, 69 Brush Hill Road, Litchfield. *Registration is required: <https://ripleywaterfowl-conservancy.ddockforms.com/?form=7ed508ea-ec5b-4cb5-9b0e-8bbf9f6626d2>.*

May 22 Bird Walk in Mohawk State Forest Friday, 8 AM

We will bird by foot and car, looking for Northern Waterthrushes and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, and listening for orioles, flycatchers, and vireos. Meet at the entrance parking area, 20 Mohawk Mountain Road (Route 4) in Goshen. *Questions? Contact Donna Rose Smith at 1ffastbird@gmail.com.*

(continued on page 8)

Bird with LHAS on Weekday Mornings

Join us for weekly jaunts to birding hotspots this spring. Depending on birder schedules and the weather, you will be notified of the day, meeting place, and time. If you would like to participate, *contact Pam Hicks with your email or texting number at smilesmyles@yahoo.com or 203-922-2684.*

Calendar

(continued from page 7)

May 29 Birding on Lower River Road, West Cornwall Friday, 8 AM

On past visits to this under-birded spot, we have had Ruffed Grouse, Blackburnian Warbler, Acadian Flycatcher, and other northern species. To get there from Route 7, cross the West Cornwall covered bridge and turn right down River Road. If coming from the east, turn left onto River Road (do not cross the covered bridge). Meet at the parking area past the Trinity Retreat Center at the end of the road. **Questions? Contact Donna Rose Smith at 1ffastbird@gmail.com.**

May 31 Picnic and Birding at Shepaug Dam Sunday, 9 AM

Russ Naylor will lead us on a bird walk to the Shepaug Dam to find breeding birds — warblers (Pine, Prairie, Blue-winged, etc.), edge and field species (Eastern Towhees, Field Sparrows, American Bluebirds), plus some special treats: a Cliff Swallow colony, Spotted Sandpipers, ravens, Common Mergansers, Osprey, perhaps even a Bald Eagle or two. Some of these birds will be nesting, and we're apt to be serenaded by Orchard Orioles and Warbling Vireos. After our walk, we'll enjoy an informal picnic (bring your lunch and beverage) and swap bird or outdoor tales in the late-spring warmth (we hope!). Meet outside the Canfield Corner Pharmacy at the junction of Route 6 (Main Street North) and Route 47 in Woodbury; we'll drive from there to the dam area. **For more information, call Russ Naylor at 203-841-7779; leave a message for a return call.**

June 13-14 Summer Bird Count Saturday & Sunday

Calling all captains, members, and anyone willing to lend a hand for a great LHAS/COA event, the Summer Bird Count. The count can be done on one day or spread over both days. The results are sent to the Connecticut Ornithological Association. **If you want to participate this year, send an email to Dave Tripp at dtrippjr@gmail.com.**

June 20 Bird Walk with Goshen Land Trust Saturday, 7:30 AM

Ann Orsillo will lead this joint walk for LHAS and the Goshen Land Trust. Meet at the Mountain View Trailhead on Route 63 north of the Goshen roundabout, 6 miles north of Hageman Shean Road just north of the red Art Barn. Heavy rain cancels. **For questions, call Ann Orsillo at 910-880-1518.**

June 23 Paddling Trip Tuesday, 9 AM

Ann Orsillo and Pam Hicks will lead this trip at Mohawk Pond in Cornwall. Bring your kayak or canoe, binoculars, water, and snack. Meet at the Mohawk Pond boat launch. **Directions:** Take Milton Road north from Route 202 in Litchfield. After 4-5 miles, turn right at the YMCA camp sign for the boat launch before the YMCA camp. **Call Ann Orsillo at 910-880-1518 or Pam Hicks at 203-922-2684 to register or with questions.**



LHAS Nature Explorers Upcoming Events

Discover Spring at Boyd Woods Sanctuary

Sunday, May 3, 3 – 5 PM

Join LHAS Nature Explorers for a hike at Boyd Woods Sanctuary to enjoy all that spring has to offer. Our adventure begins at the sanctuary's bird blind, where we'll get a front-row seat to migrating birds as they stop to rest and refuel. Once we've had our fill of close-up views, we'll head out to scout the meadows and deep woods for orioles, vireos, and towhees. We'll stop by Margery's Pond to catch the "spring symphony" of croaking frogs and get a glimpse of all the critters and plants coming to life. Come ready to get your hands dirty. Wear waterproof footwear for pond exploration. Fun for all ages! Meet at the Boyd Woods parking lot on Route 254 in Litchfield. **Pre-registration is appreciated at lhasjunior@gmail.com.**

Cape Ann/Newburyport Trip Report

Birding Despite a Brutal Blast of Winter

By Russ Naylor



The Cape Ann birders, from left: Dave Tripp, Fran Zygmunt, Denise Butwill, Hany Aziz, Diane Edwards, JoAnn Neddermann, Paul Edwards, and Russ Naylor.

Our brazen bird-finding brigade bounded afield between blizzards and polar clippers to search for birds around Cape Ann and northeast Massachusetts, led by chief ornithophile Dave Tripp, on a whiteout February weekend. We encountered a wintry wasteland of snow mounds and ice sheets. Overall, birds were sparsely scattered about limited open water or food sources — waterfowl, grebes, songbirds, raptors, and gulls. Even roadside Red-tails were notably scarce.

Still, as we fared north we found hardy Black Ducks, Common Ravens, Bald Eagles, and Mute Swans roving afield for new food reserves. On February 20th, our day got off to a tardy start as our peerless leader and part of our group, enroute to

meet the rest of us in Amesbury, digressed to Fitchburg hoping to find a rumored Chestnut-collared Longspur. This ended up being a lark of a chase when seven of the Horned variety turned up instead. Put it down to twitchers' luck — like Pokemon, you just can't catch them all!

But once we got underway, Salisbury Beach proved productive — Gadwalls, rafting Greater Scaup, two Bald Ea-



Juvenile Bald Eagle.

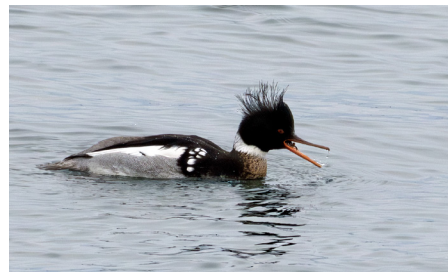
Photo: Dave Tripp, Jr.

gles claiming an Osprey nest while bracketed on either side by a mated raven pair — an excellent photo op of two early breeders. In addition, a young Bald Eagle posed close by on pilings for photo ops, and American Tree Sparrows gleaned snowy ground for seeds.

Plum Island harbored Razorbills, a distant Snowy Owl, and an Eastern Towhee weathering wintry rigors with at least 19 American Tree Sparrows. Early snow blowing in stopped us all too soon.

The next morning's snowy scene soon cleared out with improved birding. Jodrey State Fish Pier in Gloucester produced melliflously cooing Common Eiders wooing brown-barred beauties, plus a Cooper's Hawk.

At Eastern Point Wildlife Sanctuary we enjoyed flocks of



Red-breasted Merganser.

Photo: Diane Friend Edwards

Long-tailed Ducks, Brant, Great Cormorants, a delegation of winter-hungry White-tailed Deer, and a swift marauding Fisher chasing a rodent dinner. Later, a hardy local beachcomber passed us as he took a frigid "penguin

plunge" into choppy waters — even his dog didn't want to chill out by following his master's example!

The Gloucester Elks Club held Red-necked Grebe and a mockingbird. Next, the Granite Pier satisfied as always with



Horned Grebe.

Photo: Paul G. Edwards

close views of Harlequin Ducks diving amidst a dramatic seascape of spume-splashed waves and dark blue surf crashing and flowing wildly up onto massive rocks — too rough for finding any



Two juvenile male Common Eiders and one female.

Photo: Dave Tripp, Jr.

(continued on page 10)

Cape Ann/Newburyport

(continued from page 9)

Purple Sandpipers.

Our sunset stop at Halibut Point brought us Carolina Wren, flocks of robins, rafts of Harlequin and Long-tailed Ducks, plus alcids — Black Guillemot, Razorbills, and a photogenic Dovekie — working the waves.

The next day, we ended our trip back at Plum Island, where we saw towhees, Myrtle Warblers, and Cedar Waxwings by the dozen, spiced by close views of a Bohemian Waxwing scarfing down native fruits.

In the end, we decamped early to get home just ahead of the blizzard of 2026.



Bohemian Waxwing.

Photo: Dave Tripp, Jr.



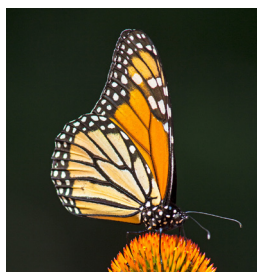
Cedar Waxwing.

Photo: Diane Friend Edwards

Let's give a big shout-out to Dave for giving us a much-needed break from cabin fever. Well done!

Conservation News

Eastern Monarchs Doing Better, But Still Need Help



Monarch butterfly.

Photo: Diane Friend Edwards

The National Wildlife Federation says the number of Eastern Monarch butterflies overwintering in Mexico increased last winter by 64% from the previous winter. But that is still less than needed to achieve a stable population. The NWF says we need to continue addressing threats posed by pesticides, climate change, and habitat loss, and protecting the Monarch

butterfly under the Endangered Species Act. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed listing the Monarch as threatened under the ESA.

Cornell Lab: Scientists Can Now Identify Individual Night-flying Migratory Birds

In a study published March 5 in *Ornithology*, researchers describe how they used thermal imaging optics, flashlights, and high-speed photography to detect and photograph birds in flight after dark. This allowed scientists to identify low-flying species — including thousands that would have gone undetected by other monitoring tools. The method could substantially expand scientists' understanding of nocturnal bird migration. Until now, researchers have depended on acoustic monitoring and weather radar to track

nocturnal migration. Radar can detect broad movements of birds but cannot distinguish individual species and often doesn't capture those flying low to the ground. Acoustic monitoring only records birds that call while they migrate, something not all birds do. For more, go to birds.cornell.edu/home/new-tech-to-id-night-migrating-birds.

A Reprieve for Hemlock Trees?

Hemlock Woolly Adelgids, invasive insects that attack hemlock trees, die when temperatures drop below zero. We had plenty of below-zero temps this past winter. Does that mean our hemlocks are now safe? Not necessarily — for one thing, snow piled up on hemlock limbs protects some adelgids from freezing. And hemlock scale has spread throughout hemlock forests, according to the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. CAES has been managing the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid with a biological weapon: the Japanese Ladybeetle, which preys on the adelgids. Read more at portal.ct.gov/caes/publications/publications/hemlock-woolly-adelgid.

Help Monitor Nesting Birds

If you spot nesting birds, you can submit your observations to NestWatch (nestwatch.org) at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, a free participatory science project focused on breeding birds. For each nest you spot, you can report the location, the species, the number of eggs laid, and other important milestones as the adult birds incubate eggs and raise nestlings.



Litchfield Hills Audubon Society's 71st Annual Meeting & Dinner

Monday, June 1, 2026

At Torrington Elks Lodge

70 Litchfield Street, Torrington, CT

6 p.m. Social • 6:30 Buffet Dinner • 7:15 Annual Meeting • 7:45 Program

Special Events: Election of Officers and Board Members • Scholarships • Awards

Menu: Baked ham, salmon, vegetable lasagna, apple salad, asparagus, dessert, coffee and tea

PROGRAM

Bird Migration and Connecticut

Presenter: Chris Wood, former president of the Connecticut Ornithological Association



The phenomenon of bird migration is easily observed in Connecticut due to the state's location, geography, and habitat diversity. Chris Wood will present an overview of bird migration and where Connecticut fits into the big picture of bird conservation and the enjoyment of the hobby of birding. With a state list of over 450 birds, many of which are migrants through the state, Connecticut birders have the opportunity to see well over one-quarter of all the bird species found in the United States. Sustaining necessary habitats for breeding birds and migrants in our highly developed state is an important goal for land conservation efforts. This presentation discusses efforts and strategies to attain that goal. Chris Wood has been a birder and photographer for over 50 years. He has a master's degree in biology and studied under famed ornithologist Dr. Noble Proctor. Chris is retired after a career as a state government executive, a land conservation and management planner with The Nature Conservancy, a municipal planner, and a private land-use consultant. He is a past president of the Connecticut Ornithological Association, a founding member of the Western Connecticut Bird Club, and served as chair of the first Connecticut Breeding Bird Atlas steering committee. Chris now spends much of his time photographing birds and nature.

Make your reservations now! The deadline is Monday, May 25th.

Please clip and mail this form with your check to LHAS - AGM, P.O. Box 861, Litchfield, CT 06759.

LHAS June 1, 2026 Annual Meeting & Dinner Registration

Total Number of Reservations ___ @ \$45 per person = **Total enclosed: \$**_____

Your Name: _____ **Phone Number:** _____

Address: _____ **Email Address:** _____

For name tags, please list each attendee's name:



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Trip Report

To Spite the Ogress of Snows ...

By Russ Naylor

An octet of LHAS ornithophiles defied this wrathful winter by slipping into a narrow gap between storms to bird the Shepaug Dam in Southbury in March. Bald Eagles starred in the show, with various age groups fishing and gliding about all over Lake Zoar — perhaps nine birds altogether.

Not to be outdone, duck migration proceeded with stalwart determination as flocks of Common Mergansers, Ring-necked Ducks, Black Ducks, and Mallards flew northwards upriver above the legions still staging at the Shepaug Dam. Common Mergansers on stopover put on



Ring-necked Duck.

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

displays of amatory fervor as bands of drakes posed, swirled, and splashed before potential mates. A sprinkling of other ducks mixed into the multitudes — Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Lesser Scaup, Hooded Merganser, and a pair of Redheads.

Mated raven pairs indulged in aerobatic play, while four unmated adolescents blew off some steam by playing aerial tag with a young Bald Eagle. Local Red-tailed Hawks hovered and undulated in territorial sky dances.

Smaller birds also put in their contribution — singing blue birds, chickadees, cardinals, Song Sparrows, and a Pileated Woodpecker, all pleading for spring. As juncos trickled by in passage to boreal abodes, a special treat was a smartly streaked Savannah Sparrow feasting at feeders between flirting cardinals.

All the birds have spoken, voting "yes" for spring, just ahead of the next day's "arctic clipper" and subsequent ice storm.

We witnessed 40 bird species, seeking an end to this wintry balderdash!