



Chickadee Chatter



September/October 2021

Litchfield Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 66/Issue 5

The mission of the Litchfield Hills Audubon Society is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitat, for the benefit of the community, through conservation, education, and research.

President's Message

By Marie Kennedy, President



This summer was a special time for many of us. We were finally deemed free to enjoy the company of others; to go out in public unmasked and unafraid. I savored a new appreciation for life and liberty.

LHAS has been busy managing our three sanctuaries, maintaining trails, monitoring bluebird nest boxes, and working on pollinator gardens. A big thank you to the Litchfield

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

Garden Club for donating three nest boxes and installation supplies. We also offered many fun and educational walks throughout Connecticut this past spring and summer. Many thanks to our committed leaders: Angela Dimmitt, Debbie Martin, Russ Naylor, Ann Orsillo, David Zomick, Pam Hicks, and Frank Mantlik. We visited Wimisink Preserve in Sherman, Bent of the River Audubon Sanctuary in Southbury,

(continued on page 3)

Soon: No More Printed Chickadee Chatter!

As an eco-conscious organization, LHAS has decided to discontinue mailing printed newsletters to our 800-plus members. So, our next issue (November/December 2021) will be the last one we mail, with a few exceptions. Our newsletter will still be available online at lhasct.org and via email.

To get on our email list, send an email to lhasct@me.com, giving us your full name and email address. (If you already get emails from us, you don't have to do anything.)

To continue receiving the printed version, you must let us know by filling out and mailing the form at right.

Please keep in mind that going green is more important than ever. Eliminating a printed newsletter will ...

- Save trees;
- Avoid the use of ink;
- Reduce the energy used in producing, mailing, and delivering newsletters, as well as the emissions related to that energy use; and
- Give LHAS more resources to devote to our conservation, research, and education efforts.

Please Keep Mailing Me A Printed Chickadee Chatter!

I am a member of National Audubon and/or Litchfield Hills Audubon*, and I would like to continue receiving the printed version of *Chickadee Chatter* by mail.

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

Town/City: _____

State: _____ ZIP Code: _____

** Not a member? Visit lhasct.org/membership.html to join. Or send a check for \$20 made out to LHAS and mail it to Litchfield Hills Audubon Society, P.O. Box 861, Litchfield, CT 06759-0861.*

Cut out and mail this form to LHAS, P.O. Box 861, Litchfield, CT 06759-0861, no later than December 1, 2021.

LHAS Officers

President	Marie Kennedy	914-393-6270
Vice President	Diane Edwards	860-309-5139
Treasurer	Mia Coats	817-691-2525
Rec. Secretary	Karen G. Nelson	860-309-9018
Corresp. Secretary	Terri Bianchi	860-489-8821

Board of Directors

Michael Audette	2022	860-388-7874
Keith Johnson	2022	860-618-5720
Irek Rychlik	2022	860-480-6685
Carol Perrault	2023	860-628-1612
Carol Kearns	2023	860-307-0807
Rich Martin	2023	860-736-7714
Beverly Baldwin	2024	860-921-7075
Vickie Dauphinais	2024	860-361-9051
George Stephens	2024	860-921-7150

Committee Chairpeople

Boyd Woods	Debbie & Rich Martin	860-819-7462
Communications & Digital Media	Rich Martin	860-736-7714
Conservation	Diane Edwards	860-485-9319
Education	Donna Rose Smith	203-706-0474
Facebook	Diane Edwards	860-309-5139
Field Trips	David Zomick	860-513-8600
Fundraising	<i>vacant</i>	
Historian	<i>vacant</i>	
Hospitality	Carol Perrault	860-628-1612
Kalmia Sanctuary	Irek Rychlik	860-480-6685
Membership Outreach	Beverly Baldwin	860-921-7075
Membership Records	Doreen Orciari	860-307-3102
Newsletter	Diane Edwards	860-485-9319
Programs	Angela Dimmitt	860-355-3429
Publicity	Shirley Gay	860-482-0819
Scholarships	Carol Kearns & Harry Schuh	860-307-0807
Wigwam Brook Sanctuary	John Baker	860-567-8427

Research

Christmas Count	Ray Belding	860-605-3244
Summer Count	Dave Tripp	dtrippjr@gmail.com
Nest Box Program	Rebecca Purdy	860-485-8530

Chickadee Chatter is published in January, March, May, July, September, and November. Submission deadline for the **November/December 2021** issue is **October 1**.

Please email items to appear in the newsletter to **Diane Edwards** at edwardsd68@charter.net or mail them to her at **68 Shingle Mill Road, Harwinton, CT 06791**.

Send other business to the appropriate chairperson at **LHAS**, **P.O. Box 861, Litchfield, CT 06759-0861** or lhasct@me.com.

NEW MEMBERS*By Doreen Orciari, Membership Records Chair*

Julie Adams*	New Preston
Gerald Baker	Harwinton
Anna Barnes	Sharon
Patricia Bradshaw	Oakville
Sheila Brasile	Bristol
William Byrd	New Milford
Thomas Chase*	Barkhamsted
Mary Clifford	New Milford
George Craig	Torrington
Michael Cranwell	Torrington
Krystyana Czeiner	Bridgewater
Michael Day	Avon
David Dewitt*	Roxbury
Joan Emerick*	Riverton
Linda Fodiman	Oakville
Marcia Fowler	Litchfield
Marie Galbraith	Thomaston
Benjamin Gianforti	Brooklyn NY
Sophie Gruby	Bristol
Margaret Haller	New Milford
Patricia Haney	Bristol
Patricia Harlow*	Thomaston
Lawrence Johnson	New Milford
Kevin Knapp	Bristol
Steven Landes	Norfolk
Nancy Larsen	Winsted
Jennifer Lawson	Winsted
The Leonka Family	Harwinton
Marsha Mason	Washington Depot
Peter Moodie	Winsted
Reese Morgan*	Watertown
Grace Noyes	Sharon
Mary Peck	Roxbury
Evelyn Perran	Harwinton
Josephine Radocchio	Goshen
Fred Reeder	Litchfield
Anne Ruwet	Torrington
Paul Scherbner*	Torrington
Richard Seiler*	Gaylordsville
Jennifer Smeriglio	New Milford
Janet Smith	Riverton
Maureen Smith	New Milford
Marshal Szyndlar	Plymouth
Alan van Capelle	Sharon
Mary Ann Walsh	Torrington
Marion Wilton	Litchfield

**Welcome back*

LHAS Membership is at 876.

If your newsletter is addressed incorrectly or if you fail to receive one, send a postcard to LHAS, P.O. Box 861, Litchfield, CT 06759-0861 or send an email to Doreen Orciari at doreen.orciari@gmail.com.

President's Message (continued from page 1)

Milford Point, and Mohawk Mountain in Goshen, to name a few. A special shout-out to Ray Belding, who didn't fail to delight his "flock" with his Wednesday morning bird walks in May. And once again, after Ray's final walk of the spring, Patty Pickard graciously hosted another delightful brunch for all. Now, we look forward to Ray's fall birding walks, beginning on Wednesday, October 6 (see page 7).

Our August picnic at Boyd Woods was a great success. Bethany from Sharon Audubon Center delighted over 60 attendees with four beautiful live bird "ambassadors" from their wildlife rehabilitation clinic. Great job, Bethany!



Bethany from Sharon Audubon shows a Red-shouldered Hawk at our August picnic.

Photo: Marie Kennedy

LHAS continued our monthly programs via Zoom throughout the pandemic. We are now (fingers crossed) starting in-person meetings at the Litchfield Community Center on September 13. Check the schedule on page 6 for more information on the guest speakers for upcoming meeting programs. The programs will be offered as a hybrid meeting — in-person and on Zoom.

The Connecticut Bird Atlas survey continues and has kept some of our members busy counting birds in all areas of Litchfield County. This information will document the distribution, abundance, and breeding activities of birds at these sites. The results of the three-year program will be studied and compared with the last survey, in the 1980s, to determine priority areas of conservation for birds.

The summer did bring some distressing news. A deadly disease is affecting birds in the Eastern U.S. This disease remains unidentified. The birds are blinded and suffer neurological damage before they die. It is unknown how it spreads from bird to bird, but National Audubon, CT DEEP, and other organizations highly suggest removing all feeders and bird-baths to prevent birds from congregating closely and thereby help prevent spread of the disease. Sadly this is the only way at this time to help Connecticut's resident birds and those migrating to their wintering grounds. To stay informed you can visit CT DEEP's website, portal.ct.gov/deep/wildlife/wildlife-diseases.

The next LHAS Board Meeting will be at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, September 21, in the Litchfield Community Center.



Frank Mantlik (center) helps LHAS birders spot and identify shorebirds at Milford Point in August (see article on page 10).

Photo: Marie Kennedy

The signs of summer coming to a close are all around us — orange tints in the trees, waning daylight hours, and large flocks of birds staging for their long migrations. If you are interested in helping with a hawk watch (counting migrating hawks flying overhead), email Ray Belding at turaco3000@gmail.com, or join Angela Dimmitt on October 2 at Light-house Point Park in New Haven; see page 7 for more details.

Finally, be sure to check out our other field trips and monthly programs described on pages 6–8. Come join us — they are free and open to everyone.

My best,

Marie

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

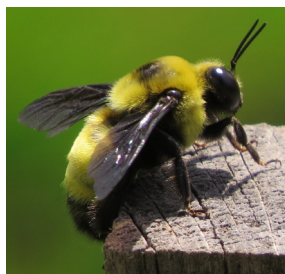
Chickadee Chatter was printed by **Photo Arts Printing Company**, Torrington, CT.

Special thanks to **Doreen Orciari** for proofreading this newsletter!

Conservation News

By Diane Edwards, Conservation Chair

Rare Black-and-Gold Bumble Bee Sighted in Connecticut



Black-and-Gold Bumble Bee

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

The Black-and-Gold Bumble Bee had not been recorded in Connecticut for over 100 years, according to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's August 2021 *Wildlife Highlights* e-newsletter. According to the newsletter, three of the bees were observed in three different parts of the state this year. The Black-and-Gold Bumble Bee is native to

the eastern half of the U.S. It is mostly found in prairies and grasslands but is now uncommon due to the regrowth of forests and loss of grassland habitat.

Connecticut has about 15 species of bumble bees, DEEP says, including the federally endangered Rusty-patched Bumble Bee and the state-threatened Yellow-banded Bumble Bee.

Songbird Illness Update from CT DEEP

We still need to take down bird feeders and put away birdbaths

The CT DEEP's August 2021 *Wildlife Highlights* e-newsletter says the cause of the illness affecting songbirds across the eastern U.S. has not yet been identified, although some known bird diseases have been ruled out. In Connecticut, three birds exhibiting symptoms consistent with the regional illness have been submitted to the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory at UConn for testing. All three tested negative for avian influenza, and other analyses are still pending. DEEP urges: "Please continue to refrain from feeding birds, including hummingbirds, and temporarily remove birdbaths. ... Thank you for helping to keep our songbirds safe."

FWS Report ID's 269 Bird Species of High Conservation Priority

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in June released its "**Birds of Conservation Concern 2021**" report (available online at fws.gov/birds). The publication identifies 269 species

of birds that represent high conservation priorities for the FWS. By publishing this report, the FWS aims to spur cooperative efforts with states, tribal nations, and others to prevent these birds from winding up on the endangered list. The species that appear in the report include bird species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) that the FWS considers to be in greatest need of conservation attention. The FWS' goal is to eliminate the need for additional Endangered Species Act protections for birds by implementing management and conservation actions that keep populations well above thresholds of endangerment.

Meanwhile, Audubon and other groups are urging Congress to reinstate and strengthen the MBTA (see below).

New Federal Bill Will Help Bring Birds Back, Says Audubon

In an effort to strengthen the century-old Migratory Bird Treaty Act, a bipartisan group of co-sponsors in the U.S. House of Representatives introduced the **Migratory Bird Protection Act** in July. The new bill will reinforce bird protections that have been under attack while creating more certainty for businesses and creating incentives for innovation to protect birds. In the last Congress, this bill had passed out of committee and gained more than 90 bipartisan co-sponsors.

The bill would secure protections for birds and direct the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop a permitting process for "incidental take" (the unintentional killing of birds by industrial activities). The permits would require relevant businesses to implement best management practices and document compliance, encouraging innovation in how to best prevent bird deaths.

"Under these changes, we'll be able to reduce avoidable harm to birds from industrial hazards and improve our understanding of impacts to bird populations, all while providing businesses the certainty they want and need from the MBTA," said Erik Schneider, policy manager for the National Audubon Society.

For more information about this and other newsworthy items, click on "Press Room" at audubon.org.

Conservation News

Continued

Stratford Marsh Selected for Restoration to Help Saltmarsh Sparrows

The populations of Saltmarsh Sparrows have declined an estimated 80% over the past 15 years, according to National Audubon. These birds are in danger of extinction due to degraded habitats and sea level rise, which leads to nest flooding.

To combat the problem, Audubon CT and Audubon NY have been using a grant from the Long Island Sound Futures Fund to identify area salt marshes primed for restoration. Out of eight potential sites, two were identified as highest priority. **Great Meadows Marsh** in Stratford, Connecticut, rose to the top because of its potential to serve as a demonstration of best practices in restoration, including creating and improving Saltmarsh Sparrow habitat and strengthening the area's resilience to sea level rise. In New York, **Sunken Meadow State Park** on Long Island was chosen.

The restoration projects will address the problems of degraded salt marsh habitats caused by land use changes and development, disposal of dredged soils, invasive plant species, and climate-induced sea level rise that results in a reduction in species dependent on these habitats.

A significant focus of this project is the Saltmarsh Sparrow, which will be aided through the construction of soil hummocks (small, above-ground mounds) and plantings in degrading marsh areas near existing Saltmarsh Sparrow nesting sites.

Great Meadows Marsh, an extensive tidal marsh behind Long Beach, provides critical habitat for an array of wildlife species. The area includes the only remaining population of state-endangered Marsh Pink, supports Connecticut's largest population of state-endangered Diamondback Terrapin, and serves as breeding or feeding grounds for many species of finfish such as Striped Bass, Winter Flounder, and Bluefish. Approximately 270 species of birds use the marsh for nesting, overwintering, and stopover during migration.

From National Audubon:

Bipartisan Bill to Fund Wildlife Recovery Introduced in the U.S. Senate

In July U.S. Sens. Martin Heinrich (D-NM) and Roy Blunt (R-MO) introduced the **Recovering America's Wildlife**

Act. The legislation, introduced in the House of Representatives earlier this year, will dedicate \$1.3 billion for states and territories and \$97.5 million to tribal nations annually for conservation projects, creating more than 30,000 jobs and generating over \$93 billion in total economic activity.

The act "will be an important part of how we respond to the loss of 3 billion birds in North America since 1970," said Sarah Greenberger, National Audubon's senior vice president for conservation policy. "The dedicated funding provided in this bill will help state wildlife agencies proactively conserve vulnerable species, like the Golden-Winged Warbler and Black Tern."

Current funding for state Wildlife Action Plans, collectively about \$70 million per year, is less than 5% of what is necessary to conserve the species most at risk. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act aims to help fill the gap. It provides 75% of the cost, which equals the \$1.3 billion per year outlined in the bill. Each state would be responsible for coming up with the other 25%.

Audubon CT/NY Office Has New Executive Director



Michael Burger, Ph.D., has been named the next executive director of National Audubon's Connecticut/New York regional office. He has served 22 years with Audubon, having served first as forest ecologist, then in a succession of conservation and management roles in

the New York office, and most recently as senior director of conservation for Connecticut and New York.

Burger has been with Audubon since 1999, during which time he conducted forest bird research in the Adirondacks that contributed to the creation of Audubon's Healthy Forests Initiative, co-led a comprehensive assessment of priority areas that culminated in the publication of "Important Bird Areas of New York," and helped bring Audubon's Atlantic Flyway program to life. He is based at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in Ithaca, New York.

Meetings, Bird Walks and Activities

LHAS Calendar — Summer/Fall 2021



NOTES: Unless otherwise indicated, **General Meetings** are held on the first Monday of each month at the Litchfield Community Center, 421 Bantam Road (Rt. 202), Litchfield, CT. When the first Monday of the month falls on a holiday, the meeting is held on the second Monday. **Refreshments are served at 6:45 p.m. The business meeting starts at 7:15 p.m. and the program follows.** The April and October meetings are **Potluck Dinners** starting at 6:30 p.m. The June meeting is the **Annual Meeting and Dinner** held at a local restaurant; it begins at 6 p.m. Our August meeting is the annual **Picnic at Boyd Woods Sanctuary**; it begins at 6 p.m. **Board of Directors Meetings** are held the third Tuesday of every other month at 7 p.m. in the Learning Center at the Litchfield Community Center.

GENERAL MEETINGS

Note: Our monthly meetings will now be held at the Litchfield Community Center, our pre-pandemic venue, as well as via Zoom for those who cannot attend in person.

September 13 . . . Phantasms and Fallacies: Problems and Pitfalls in Bird ID. Monday, 6:45 PM

Why can a large group of birders look at one species and all will misidentify it? Why do certain people consistently find an inordinate amount of rare birds? Why are some birders seemingly able to identify birds from far away with just a brief view? These questions and more can be answered by looking at the psychology of how we look at birds. Our presenter, Julian Hough, takes a look at the subconscious workings of our brain — and how often it can fail us when birding. Originally from Lancashire, England, Julian has been birding since the age of 6, having spent much time around the British Isles in pursuit of rare birds. He worked at the Cape May Bird Observatory counting neotropical migrants, and now moonlights as a professional bird guide to exotic places for Sunrise Birding. With a background in design and marketing, Julian is also a talented artist, photographer, and published writer. He lives in New Haven.

October 4. Richard Crossley on Creating His Birding Guidebooks Monday, 6:45 PM

An internationally acclaimed birder and creator of *The Crossley ID Guide* series, Richard Crossley will talk via Zoom about his most recent books, *The Crossley ID Guide: Waterfowl* and *Ornithotherapy: For your Mind, Body and Soul*. According to his website, his guidebooks show "a more lifelike and complete picture" than traditional "old-school" book layouts. The guidebooks put more emphasis on habitat, behavior, and other imagery that we can relate to in real life. *Note: We will not have our traditional potluck dinner before this meeting, due to COVID concerns.*

November 1. The Altai Mountains and Eagle Hunters of Mongolia Monday, 6:45 PM

Carole Wiley will dazzle us with her gorgeous photography of a trip she took to Mongolia. She visited the Altai Mountains near the border of Russia and spent time in the homes of traditional eagle hunters. The hunters, on horseback, release trained eagles to hunt. Carole, an LHAS member, has spent many years photographing birds and, in the past few years, has traveled to numerous places to photograph horses. Her trip to Mongolia was a perfect melding of those two passions.

Wednesday Morning Birding with Ray



Once again, Ray Belding will lead his popular bird walks on Wednesday mornings this fall, October 6 through November 3. Times and locations will be decided a day or so before. Participation might be limited to allow for social distancing. **For information on locations and meeting times, email Ray at turaco3000@gmail.com.**

BIRDING EVENTS AND FIELD TRIPS

September 5 . . . Robyn Dinda Memorial Paddle (rescheduled from July 18). Sunday, 10 AM

Join us for this traditional paddle to Wood Creek Pond. Meet at the parking lot on Ashpohtag Road in Norfolk. A PFD is required. Bring lunch for a picnic on-site after the paddle. **Directions:** From Route 44 in Torrington, go north on Route 272, then right onto Ashpohtag Road; take first left to the launch. **Please register in advance with Marie Kennedy: mariekennedy226@gmail.com or cell phone 914-393-6270.**

September 11 . . Tour of Hopkins Vineyard Saturday, 10 AM

This special tour will be guided by Jim Baker, the vineyard manager and wine-maker for the Hopkins Vineyard, a National Bicentennial Farm owned and run by the Hopkins family for over 225 years. The tasting room will be open after the tour, and wine can be purchased by those who wish to. The vineyard is located at 25 Hopkins Road, New Preston. **Contact Marie Kennedy to register: mariekennedy226@gmail.com or 914-393-6270.**

October 2. Hawk Watching at Lighthouse Point. Saturday, 8 AM

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

October 6. Wednesday Morning Birding with Ray Belding Wednesday, time TBA

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

October 10. Fall Sparrow Search at Bent of the River Audubon Center Sunday, 8 AM

We will tour Bent of the River Audubon Sanctuary in Southbury (185 East Flat Hill Road) to scout out and learn how to identify fall migrant sparrows and other species passing by, while enjoying the spectacle of fall migration amid colorful foliage. If time permits, we'll also visit other nearby birding sites, such as Southbury Training School Farm on Cassidy Road. **Note:** Hailstorms, tornadoes, deluges, or other weather tantrums will cancel the trip, so let's hope for clement weather. Meet outside the Canfield Corner Pharmacy at the junction of Main St. North (Route 6) and Route 47 in Woodbury. **For more information, call Russ Naylor at 203-841-7779.**

October 13. Wednesday Morning Birding with Ray Belding Wednesday, time TBA

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

October 16. Hike to the Summit of Prospect Mountain. Saturday, 10:30 AM

Join Marie Kennedy for a robust hike on Litchfield Land Trust's crown jewel, steeped in history with vistas sure to please. Sturdy shoes are recommended. Meet at the kiosk on Cathole Road, Litchfield (1.7 miles north from Route 202 in Bantam). **For more information contact Marie Kennedy at mariekennedy226@gmail.com or 914-393-6270.**

October 20. Wednesday Morning Birding with Ray Belding Wednesday, time TBA

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

October 22–24. . Birding Weekend at Cape May, NJ Friday–Sunday

Cape May, NJ, is one of the most well known East Coast birding destinations. We will go to some well-known and not-so-well-known birding sites throughout the county with two stops at the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge

(continued on page 8)

Calendar (continued from page 7)

to net around 130 species. On past trips, we have seen some great birds and had some great experiences. The Hyland Motor Inn in Cape May Courthouse is honoring the same price as in past years and looking forward to LHAS's stay. Ten rooms have been reserved for Friday and Saturday nights at \$195 (total). To reserve a room, share a room, need a ride, want a basic itinerary, and/or payment instructions, **contact Dave Tripp at dtrippjr@gmail.com**. **Note:** This year's trip does *not* coincide with the Cape May Bird Observatory Bird Festival.

October 27 Wednesday Morning Birding with Ray Belding Wednesday, time TBA

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

November 3 . . . Wednesday Morning Birding with Ray Belding Wednesday, time TBA

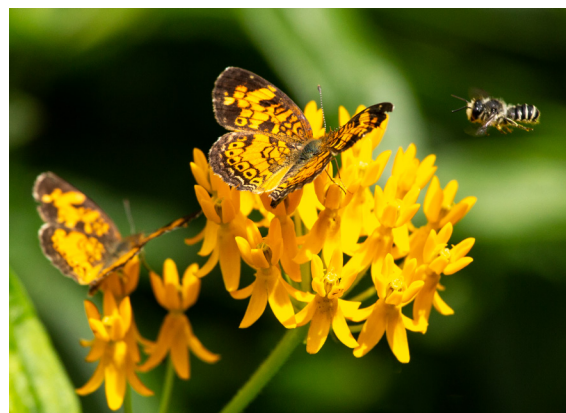
For meeting time and location, **email Ray at turaco3000@gmail.com** and ask him to put you on his email list.

Seeds 'n' Suet**Feast or Drought, Flood, or Famine**

By Russ Naylor

As summer waxes, we've gone from bone dry to torrentially wet all at once in our fickle weather — record floods on the Farmington River (over a foot of rain within two weeks), and the Shepaug Dam on the Housatonic River roaming with wide-open floodgates, drawing Bald Eagles and Great Blue Herons by the dozen to a fishy feast, plus summering Common Mergansers and a pair of Black-crowned Night Herons with just-fledged offspring in tow.

Monarch butterflies are gliding into our region in numbers, with one laying eggs on July 20 on my patch of blooming Swamp Milkweed. Hope to see some candy-striped caterpillars soon!



Pearl Crescent Butterflies (and bee!).

Photo: Diane Friend Edwards

cent (aka Pearly Crescentspot) butterflies as I write this in mid-July. These are foraging amidst Monarchs and skippers, swallowtails, sulphurs, Spring Azures, and angel-wings — a Disneyesque fantasia of butterflies to delight the eyes.

At the same time, we are witnessing an abundance of newly independent bird fledglings trying their wings — Mallards and other ducks in sibling groups; Great Blue Herons wandering footloose and fancy free like parents newly freed from nest duty; just-fledged Chimney Swifts cleaving the air as they get the feel of wind on their wings; young Red-tails and other Buteo hawks casting about and complaining to parents no longer provisioning them with furry tidbits.

Fall migration is getting underway as Orchard Orioles, Louisiana Waterthrushes, early swallows and warblers, plus the first trickles of twittering Chimney Swifts pass by southward.

At the same time, I haven't been feeding birds since early June, well before the outbreak of sickened birds began showing up in other states. I had too many starlings fouling up the birdbath and spreading bittersweet seeds all about my gardens, plus a 200-pound Black Bear casing the neighborhood for food it could filch. Don't want it to gobble up the Mayapple fruits and Redbud seed pods ripening for harvest, destined for a local native-plant propagator selling these species on the native-plant market. I'm waiting for winter to resume feeding — let the squirrels, Deer Mice, and chipmunks cadge free handouts somewhere else for a change!

Bent of the River Audubon Center in Southbury is hosting a wide-spread hatch of Pearl Cres-

Trip Reports

By Angela Dimmitt

Wimisink Marsh, Sherman – July 11



Green Herons galore decked the fog-shrouded trees.

Photo: Diane Friend Edwards

spring but did not stick around. What we did see were a lot of Green Herons, two families with their newly fledged young flying back and forth, the chicks capable of feeding them-

Wood Duck babies huddle together flanked by hens.

Photo: Diane Friend Edwards



Wimisink Preserve is a legendary marsh where a couple of American Bitterns nested successfully a few years ago, seen and enjoyed by many people, birders and non-birders alike. On July 11 this year, a party of LHASers drove down on a misty morning hoping to find such exciting birds again. Least Bitterns were here last year but not this; Soras nested in 2020 and were heard this



A Green Heron catching a very large frog!

Photo: Diane Friend Edwards

selves but still hoping their parents would continue doing it. They were so comic and entertaining!

We also saw the resident Belted Kingfishers but not their young. Dozens of teenage Wood Ducks were visible around the edges of the south pond, a few adults, some already molting, and a surprising little family of Mom and eight fluffballs, possibly a very late third brood. Other locals included kingbirds, Swamp Sparrows, grackles, Red-winged Blackbirds, Tree and Barn Swallows, a family of Cedar Waxwings, and a couple of visiting Great Blue Herons.

Dragonflies also entertained us, and the frogs — oh the frogs! Huge yellow-headed bullfrogs boomed away hoping

(continued on page 10)

Wimisink (continued from page 9)**Bullfrog enjoying the duckweed.**

Photo: Diane Friend Edwards

still to attract a mate or perhaps just enjoying the duckweed in which they hung out. Every now and then one would suddenly leap up

and cross a few feet of pond in several long bounds. Are they territorial, perhaps chasing off a rival? In another part of the marsh, a chorus of Green Frogs created quite a din.

Painted turtles sunned themselves on logs, as we could see once the mist cleared — this marsh is a magical spot, full of life and surprises.

Painted Turtles sunned themselves on logs, as we could see once the mist cleared — this marsh is a magical spot, full of life and surprises.

Milford Point – August 1

An early start on a foggy morning brought us to famed Milford Point to meet Frank Mantlik, one of Connecticut's foremost birders and an expert on shorebirds. Eight of us started on the platform overlooking the marsh at high tide and were hugely entertained by four Osprey hanging out and fishing, one pair from the new nest platform, the other sitting on a log nearby. Sadly, the nest had failed due to predation from gulls (the old platform was destroyed by storms this past winter). In the ditch to our right, three Yellow-crowned Night-herons and one Spotted Sandpiper offered good looks. Also, almost within arm's reach, was a stand of active Purple Martin nest gourds — 24 birds whirled around, many newly fledged after a very successful breeding season. They flew back and forth, clucking their heads off with their distinctive calls, completely oblivious of the crowd watching.

We then wandered through the woodland hoping for warblers — none — thence out to the shore. After briefly scanning the scene as the tide began to drop, we walked around the stony shingle to the outer bar and witnessed about 800 Semipalmated Sandpipers feeding or resting along the tide line, among them some Ruddy Turnstones, Black-bellied Plo-

vers, Semipalmated Plovers, a few Sanderlings and — yes! — Piping Plovers. There were about a dozen, mostly young ones, the parents having already left, but there were also a few little “fluffballs,” still in downy plumage, too young to fly but perfectly able to feed themselves.

We saw some 30 Oystercatchers scattered around (noisy birds!). Apparently their nests here had all been destroyed by storms and one extra high tide, which also wiped out the Piping Plovers' and Least Terns' nests. Luckily, the plovers were able to lay again and fledge.

Common and Least Terns were also working the area, while gulls were mostly sitting on the sandbars: Herring, Ring-billed, and Great Black-backed; however, one unusual Bonaparte's Gull also flew by as did a couple of Laughing Gulls already in molt. A Common Loon was fishing (successfully) offshore, and a Peregrine Falcon whizzed past. We also saw one Brant, a few Snowy and Great Egrets, one Black-crowned Night-heron, Double-crested Cormorants, Marsh Wrens (heard), plus all the usual suspects, for a total of 49 species.

A superb birder, Frank is also an excellent teacher, pointing out things to look for, giving comparisons between sexes, ages, and plumages. We all appreciated his sharing his knowledge and expertise. Unusually cool with sun, clouds, and a gentle breeze, it was a successful and very enjoyable morning!

P.S. A Ruddy Turnstone was noticed with a green band on its left leg. Frank checked and apparently it was banded May 25, 2018 by Kathleen Clark near Kimbles Beach, Cape May County, NJ. It is a male, at least 5 years old now.

**A juvenile Semipalmated Sandpiper (left) and an adult Semipalmated Plover.**

Photo: Diane Friend Edwards (taken at Hammonasset Beach on a different trip.)

IN MY GARDEN — AND BEYOND!

A Journal — July 2021

By Angela Dimmitt

What a funny summer — not the right word, but it will have to do. Heat, drought, flooding. Repeat. The garden loved it! Now at the end of July, everything is lush, with many plants looking better than ever before — daylilies more colorful and luscious than ever (spraying has kept the deer at bay, at least some of the time); my prize hostas are beyond gorgeous; hydrangeas are outshining themselves (infatuated, I started buying them three years ago) — Little Quick Fire, my favorite, now turning from pure white to pink to soft maroon; Annabelles falling onto the ground, their heads so fat and heavy; others flowering properly for the first time, pleasing me no end. Picking a bouquet is easy, with lots of other flowers — delicately scented old-fashioned phlox, spikey white *veronicastrum*, black-eyed Susans, white Marguerites — I want to run outside and pick some more right now!

Trees were stressed — a lot of limbs and whole trees fell, not necessarily during storms, of which we had plenty. My stream, Bullymuck Brook, was either dead low or flowing fast and full (sometimes without rain — how could that happen? But it did). When the Housatonic River is too high, the Great Blue Heron and kingfisher come to my brook (they are here today), finding lots of little trout and crayfish.

A Barred Owl which was here all winter, then left, is back again. It calls during the day as well as evening and even at 3 a.m. last night, following a shriek I presume was its prey, a rabbit perhaps. The dawn chorus is no more — at 5 a.m. maybe a cardinal or catbird, robin or Carolina Wren. The days are quiet except for a family of very noisy titmice,

scolding chickadees, perhaps the Red-bellied Woodpecker (one baby came to the feeder today); and a family of House Wrens, the third brood screaming lustily. And the zip-zip of hummingbirds! There are three or four females/young and one adult male, drinking incessantly from two feeders and the flowers round the patio — they love tubed salvias, coral bells, any of the petunia family.

One interesting plant is thriving near the bird feeders — growing 6 inches a day and now more than 11 feet tall: Great Ragweed. Even my gardening friends are not familiar with it, although it is native to Connecticut. It must have arrived in bird seed — I dare not let it flower or go to seed, but I am very curious! Ragweed is what makes people sneeze in August, along with mugwort, though goldenrod is often blamed. Imagine the ragweed taking hold and spreading — sadly, it must go.

No bears have visited since the last scare when Mom charged me. (Update: "Charlene" visited on August 8!) Star, my Siamese cat, goes out and patrols his turf, and I'm happy to report has killed absolutely nothing, not even a vole. Big trouble if he does, of course. But he is delightfully curious about everything and is a joy to watch, a very sweet and rewarding little rescue. A kingfisher is rattling away by the stream — I must go and enjoy the garden!



Great Ragweed, aptly named: This uprooted specimen soars to a height of 7'11"!

Photo: Angela Dimmitt



A bear Angela has dubbed Charlene strolls through her garden on August 8.

Photo: Angela Dimmitt



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

Address Service Requested

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

Like Us On Facebook!

www.facebook.com/LitchfieldHillsAudubonSocietyLHAS

Visit Our Website!

www.lhasct.org

Follow Us On Instagram

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



Printed on Recycled Paper

DATED MATERIAL — PLEASE DO NOT DELAY

Kalmia Sanctuary Update

Come Walk the New Trail!

A new trail has been created winding through the woods at Kalmia Sanctuary. The yellow-blazed trail is a little more than a half mile long and intersects and coincides with the older green trail in several places.

A new map is posted on the kiosk in the parking lot and is also available on our website (in color!) at lhasct.org/kalmia-sanctuary.html.

Many thanks to Irek Rychlik for overseeing the creation of this new trail and the trail map.

