



Hartford Audubon Society

Volume 83 Issue 2

WWW.HARTFORDAUDUBON.ORG

Spring 2025



White-Eyed Vireo (photo by Sam Fried)

Note from the Editor

Hi Everyone,

Here is the spring issue of the Crest. Spring migration is in full swing and I am hearing more and more warblers. Best of luck on our many upcoming bird walks!

Note: I did have some technical difficulties and lost a portion of my work. Hopefully I recovered everything, but please let me know if I missed anything and I will include it next issue.

As always, feedback is welcome!

President's Message

By Al Gatti

The welcoming of Spring this year is well deserved after a rough winter. If you have not already done so, get outside and take advantage of the many scheduled bird walks. There are birding trips scheduled every weekend through mid-June. See the website or your handbook for the line-up.

I am looking forward to our annual meeting and banquet to be held on Tuesday, May 13 at the Pond House in Elizabeth Park. This is a great opportunity to gather, see old friends and meet new birders. Please note that you must register and pay by Tuesday, May 6. Hope to see you all there.

Presentation Recordings

Missed a speaker presentation at a member meeting? You can now view recorded videos of guest speaker presentations on our website. Thank you to Gary Banks, Mona Cavallero, Donna Summers and Chris Wilcox for making this happen. Click on the link (below) and go to the bottom of the page.

hartfordaudubon.org/trips-events/monthly-meetings/

Community Engagement

We're excited to announce that Ian Brown will now serve as our Community Outreach Coordinator. In this role, Ian will lead our presence at community event tables—including events like Earth Day—and will be the main point of contact for engaging with the general public. This includes connecting with individuals internally and externally such as Whole Foods employees and other volunteers who reach out to lend a hand at our preserves etc.

We need your help. Ian is currently looking for community events where Hartford Audubon can have a presence (a table or other activity). And he is looking for volunteers to represent Hartford Audubon at these events. Ian can be reached at: ibcc@pm.me

Thank you Ian for stepping into this important role!

Nominating Committee

Last November, I appointed the Nominating Committee to identify potential candidates to fill open seats on Board of Directors. Essentially, the Committee's role is one of succession planning for key leadership roles and thereby, ensuring leadership continuity. There are many important roles within Hartford Audubon, but this one is so important to get right.

I am pleased to announce that the Nominating Committee will be presenting a full slate of Board candidates to be elected at the May 13th annual meeting. I want to personally thank each member of the Committee - Fran D'Amico, Annette Pasek and Lisa Lukawicz for their dedicated work over the last several months (the many phone calls and emails to our members).



Canada Warbler (photo by Sam Fried)

Welcome New Members

Sometimes people think of us as an “old” club, but over half our members have joined in the last 5 years! About 44% of club list themselves as seniors - 65 or older (although some senior couples may actually only have 1 senior) which means that more than 56% are not seniors! Only 91 members have been in the club since before 2000 (25 years). The club membership is currently at 611 members in 428 member units.

Mark Janis

West Hartford

Martha Lacrosse

North Granby

Kenneth Nelson

Hartford

Kristy Bellview

New Britain

Alicia and Jordan Multer

West Hartford

Amy Piorkowski

Ellington

Jennifer Blais

Glastonbury

Kathleen Dauria

Bloomfield

Chris Rogers

Enfield

Patricia McCue

Avon

Mary Lou O'Conner

West Hartford

Sonia and Miles Ericson

Simsbury

Jean and Peter Smith

Bloomfield

Sue Dolle

Tolland

Janice Traczyk and Philip Olsson

East Windsor

Cheryl and Michael Marino

Unionville

**Christopher Maury-Harden and
Joycellin Rodriguez**

South Windsor

Jim Pfeifer

Somers



American Woodcock (photo by Sam Fried)

2025 Annual Meeting and Banquet

On behalf of Hartford Audubon you are cordially invited to our Annual Meeting and Banquet to be held at the Pond House Cafe, 1555 Asylum Ave, West Hartford, CT, on Tuesday, May 13th.

Before dinner we will hold our annual meeting including the treasurer's report, awards and the election of officers and directors. Following dinner, Brian Hess, DEEP Wildlife Biologist will speak about the "Connecticut Wildlife Action Plan: State of the Birds Address".

The event will begin with a guided bird walk through Elizabeth Park. This walk has been a successful addition to our annual meeting. There is no need to sign up for the walk.

Gather by the Pond House Cafe entrance at 4:30 and the walk leader will take you on your way.

Your cost for the buffet dinner is \$35.00 per person. The balance of the cost is subsidized by Hartford Audubon. There will be a cash bar, appetizers, salad, a buffet and dessert. The food has always been delicious, so please bring your appetite! Doors will open at 5:30.

There is a CUT OFF DATE for registering for this event. If you plan to attend, you must register and pay for your ticket by Tuesday, May 6. Therefore, you are encouraged to make your reservations early. No tickets will be sold at the door. The Pond House needs a firm number of attendees one week prior to the event.

Please consider paying online via the website under "Events" By using the button bellow, or at <https://www.hartfordaudubon.org/trip-event/annual-meeting-banquet-may-13-2025/>

[Register Here!](#)

Alternatively, you can mail your check to Donna Summers, 6 Pond Side Lane, West Simsbury, CT 06092. If you do plan to register by mail, payment must be RECEIVED by Tuesday, May 6. Checks should be made out to "Hartford Audubon Society".

I am looking forward to seeing each of you.

Al Gatti

President, Hartford Audubon Society

2025 Big January Results

By Sarah Faulkner

Our ninth annual Hartford County Big January of Birding challenge was a huge success once again. This yearly quest for individuals to see the most wild bird species in January in Hartford County brought out a large number of entrants this year. A brief warm spell at the start of the month turned into weeks of very cold, windy conditions that challenged many birders. Those able to see many species in January had to work hard for them!

As an organization, we witnessed a wonderful sharing of species sightings – from a Barrow’s goldeneye to a great cormorant, birders used eBird and the CTbirds list-serve to help many others enjoy their sightings. Sharing also helped introduce birders to new locations. We all had a lot of fun!

Our 2025 winners are listed below. HAS awards certificates in these categories: Youth (ages 4-10): 25 species; Teen (ages 11-17): 35 species; Weekend Warrior Adults (ages 18+ whose day jobs ironically interfere with birding): 50 species, and Adult (ages 18+ who can get outdoors during the week): 60 species. It should be noted that finding even 50 species in Hartford County in January is no easy feat. All winners receive a certificate from HAS, and the adult with the most species will be celebrated at the HAS Annual meeting in May, along with the birder who found the most notable bird – our coveted “Golden Grebe” award. Special congratulations go to Sebastian Lawton, aged 15, with 49 species in the Teen category, and to Jamie Meyers for winning the adult category with 103 species. The Golden Grebe award winner will be kept secret until May!

Adults Category

Logan Barnes

Connor Hogan

Riley Sheldon

Laura and Bob Bengtson

Tanya Janeczko

Russ Smiley

Debbie Bishop

Jay Kaplan

Davis Smith

Chris Chinni

William Kelly

Audrey Staropoli

Andrew Dasinger

David Lawton

Brian Toal

Paul Danese

Lisa Lukawicz

John Weeks

Sarah Faulkner

Sophia Marler

Zihan Wei

Jeff Fengler

Barry Marsh

Debi Wheeler

Sue Gowen

Jamie Meyers

Alison Wilcox

John Graham

Annette Pasek

Chris Wilcox

Jacob Gransinger

Maryann Passalacqua

Faith Ann Weidner

Jack Halibozek

Maggie Peretto

Joseph Wojtanowski

Joan Heffernan

Rebecca Rose

Thomas Heffernan

Julia Sheldon

Teen Category

Sebastian Lawton (15 years old), 49 species



Cerulean Warbler (photo by Sam Fried)

HARTFORD AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD NOTES

December 2024 - February 2025

by Jamie Meyers

The final month of the warmest year on record was 1.6 degrees above average. Precipitation was about average but the 5 inches of snowfall was half the norm. Big January birders did their thing in slightly warmer than usual temperatures, again, 1.6 degrees higher, but dealt with some snow at the end of the month. Much of the 5.6 inches that fell for the entire month occurred on January 19 – 20. February saw

historically average temperatures and precipitation. At 11.3 inches, monthly snowfall was still below norms, but it was still more than we've been used to in recent years.

The annual Big January has grown into a much anticipated and popular event for the club over the years. The birding was a bit more difficult this year but there are highlights aplenty. A Pink-footed Goose was perhaps the most popular target for January birders. First noted at West Hartford Reservoir 6 on January 4, the bird remained in the area through at least January 21, sometimes also appearing at Meadowwood in Simsbury (RS et al.). A Cackling Goose was sometimes in the company of that bird; regionally there were half a dozen reports of that difficult to identify species, which is pretty solid. The Windsor Locks Canal Park area saw quite a bit of traffic as well from birders searching for the annual Barrow's Goldeneye that's often found there. A surprising 3 Barrow's were first noted from nearby Barnes Boat Launch on January 20 (JM), but at least one was there through most of the period. A hen Red-breasted Merganser was well documented on January 6 (SG) but did not remain.

January produced some unexpected species, as usual, none more so than a stunningly hardy Eastern Phoebe first found at Oak Grove Nature Center in Manchester on January 13 (MP). That bird continued through at least January 22 and was seen by several birders. Another Eastern Phoebe was a one person sighting along the Farmington River at Fisher Meadow in Avon on January 9 (BT). Great Cormorant is not even annual in the county. A young bird at Shuttle Meadow Reservoir in Southington from January 19 – 27 was a popular attraction (LL et al.). Another was found at Reservoir 6 on February 26 and remained into March (AS et al.). Separate hardy Marsh Wrens were discovered on January 19 at Station 43 in South Windsor (BT) and Glastonbury Meadows (AD). A Rough-legged Hawk reported from Glastonbury Meadows on January 26 (AD) was elusive. As many of two Rough-legs, one of each color morph, were at Vibert Road and nearby meadows hotspots from February 23 – 26 (DB et al.).

Redhead is a scarce visitor to our area, not always seen each year. It was present at Barnes Boat Launch in surprising numbers – as many as 13 birds – from February 7 – 24 (m.ob.). The Keeney Cove area held as many as 4 Redheads from February 4 through the end of the month (PDa et al.). A maximum of 5 Redheads were in the Connecticut River at the end of Vibert Road in South Windsor from February 24 – 27 (PDe et al.). Birders

searching for those located a Horned Grebe there, a good mid-winter find, on February 26 (LL). Those same South Windsor Meadows produced a solid collection of open field birds, including a maximum of 32 American Pipits, a great number for the season (m.ob.). Many January birders were able to fairly easily add Iceland Gull to their list as there was at least one first winter bird at or near Wethersfield Cove through most of January and February (m.ob.). The same Lesser Black-backed Gull present at West Hartford Reservoir 6 returned on December 26 and continued through at least January 10, though it was far from regular (DS et al.).

December was a bit of a quiet month regionally but birders enjoyed a few quality sightings then. A flock of 35 migrating Sandhill Cranes passing over Rocky Hill Meadows was a great surprise for a lucky birder on December 8 (DB). The Fisher Meadows Redhead noted in the last column remained through December 12. The pond there held a late American Coot in early January despite almost complete ice cover (m.ob.). A Northern House Wren (new name!) was quite late in a Granby yard on December 18 (JW). By the time you read this column, we will be looking forward to seeing and hearing this species once more!

Observers/reporters: Debbie Bishop (DB), Andrew Dasinger (AD), Paul Danese (PDa), Paul Desjardins (PDe), Sue Gowan (SG), Jay Kaplan (JK), Lisa Lukawicz (LL), Jamie Meyers (JM), Maggie Peretto (MP), Russ Smiley (RS), Davis Smith (DS), Audrey Staropoli (AS), Brian Toal (BT), John Weeks (JW)

Please send reports to Jamie Meyers, 4 Sexton Hollow Road, Canton, CT 06019 or e mail them to me at sunnyctredbird@gmail.com. While I review some statewide rare bird reports to augment these notes, the best way to ensure your sightings are recorded and attributed correctly are to send them directly to me. I do not comb through eBird!



Northern Parula (photo by Sam Fried)

Essay

The Field Trip

by Abby Wolcott

Living six and a half decades in roughly the same patch of earth might not get you on the A-list for many cocktail parties, but it does have some merits. One of the biggest pluses is that I have been hoofing it in the same classic New England woods and fields for many years and accumulating the stories to go with these places. Living in Suffield, the HAS Lewis Farm sanctuary property has been in steady rotation season after season, year after year. And on those meandering trails that is where I saw my first pileated woodpecker as he undulated from tree to tree while I held my breath to be in such regal

company. I have ticked away at my life list there adding the barred owl as he sat in the pine grove staring at me, and the Louisiana Waterthrush as he called from the tops of the trees. And every year for the past 5 or so I hear the Northern Parula in the swampy area but he has yet to show his face. So, I go back again and again for him and for a lot of other reasons. And when I do I am reminded that when I was a kid, my mom was asked to join my brother's class on a field trip to Lewis Farm sanctuary. That was right in my mom's wheelhouse as she brought us there often. I still recall her talking about it at the dinner table while I was hiding my scalloped potatoes in my napkin. Then my brother added a stipulation to my mom's joining his class on the trip. He insisted that she wear the "fall" that she had recently gotten on her trip to Paris. This was a long black wig-like hairpiece, and it did make her look glamorous. There was quite a repartee between my brother and my mom about this subject.

Eventually, the rest of us were shooed from the table while my dad put his foot down. So my mom won the battle and did not have to look ridiculous chaperoning a bunch of fourth graders around the trails, but the wind was out of both my mom's and my brother's sails. Opting to leave the wig at home seemed like a smart decision, but it also removed a layer of excitement from the field trip. So after the trip there were no stories of my mom's wig getting caught on some branch or washed down the brook. Neither my brother or my mom talked too much about their time. To this day, whenever I am walking those trails, I sometimes think about the exchange between my mom and my brother and what may have happened if my mom had acquiesced. I find my own head of hair challenging enough when I encounter the multiflora rose shoots on the trail. I can honestly say that I rarely wish I had a wig on as I am meandering around those trails by the brook. Though it sure would help in the beauty department.



Black and White Warbler (photo by Sam Fried)

Flickers of Spring

by Sandi Jones

Observing closely the flickers of spring slowly emerge. Before the spring peepers start their spring symphony, the wood frogs can be heard. The males' amusing duck-like quacky calls advertise their availability. Nightly, male woodcocks 'ping' in underbrush as they launch upwards in a sky dance hoping to impress an available partner.

Goldfinch males take their time gradually sprouting their vibrant summer outfit. In March their dark bills show hints of the orange the bill will become. By mid-April they now shine

in their new golden feathery brilliance. When a group of twelve settle among the swamp maples dangling brilliant red samaras the birds are golden drops in the red lace.

Purple finches show up with their raspberry wash, differentiating them from their duller house finch cousins.

Carolina wrens sweetly sing while poking around detritus perhaps left by the back door. The forgotten holiday wreath, a seldom used boot, or small woven basket all look inviting and soon they may build their tiny nest in one of these unusual places outside your door.

Male cardinals sweetly pluck sunflower chips from the feeder and “kiss” their mates passing the treat from one beak to another.

A bluebird couple peruses a new birdhouse much to my excitement, until a ruffian house sparrow darts in, turns around hanging it's head out like a snapping turtle. The bluebirds flutter around the prospective nesting spot. As the bully emerges flying at them, they decide to seek a more pleasant meadow area for housing this spring. Perhaps it's better, because the black bears that tramp across the yard may once again crash another birdhouse to smithereens.

Good news, the osprey couple reclaim their nesting site on a nearby cell tower, adding more sticks and feast on fresh fish from a nearby lake. Hopefully, more babies this season.

I have to drive to a swampy area to spy on the blue herons filling the long dead trees with their spring rookery. Before the leaves appear I can watch the 20 or more nests being built or replenished. The females wait while the busy flight pattern of males taking off and landing bringing new stick for inspection. If she accepts it, eventually a couple may wrap their necks together, rubbing their bills on the other's feathery necks. Within a month there will be little downy heads popping up from the nests. Leaving the swamp, I spy a ubiquitous budding skunk cabbage nestled in the mossy hollow of a tree peeking out showing it's green, white and red spring colors.

When the trees start to push out this year's leaves, the flickers of spring have been there awhile already an evolving parade. Now, in this week as the leaves prepare to pop, the northern flickers, not to be outdone emerge with loud ringing calls and bursts of ratta-tat-tat drumming. The other woodpeckers are still present, downy, hairy, red-bellied and pileated but the flicker, officially known as the yellow shafted northern flicker taking center stage in the spring parade.



American Goldfinch (photo by Sandi Jones)

Poetry Corner

Gusto

*In this cool May afternoon sun,
such a majestic tall tulip tree
stands before me, its leaves a-flutter.*

*Bird song and flight fill the spaces,
getting ready for another chilly night,
unexpected by us - and them too?*

*Such a generative time, full of energy
and excitement. Territorial assertions,
nest building and passionate rituals.*

*Oh! The joy to sit in the presence
of so much liveliness and gusto,
burgeoning green, ceiling blue.*

-Ernie Harris

The Crest's Poetry Corner will feature bird and nature- related work by Connecticut poets. To submit your own poetry or recommend a local poet, email Gabrielle Bugden at gvonp27@gmail.com.

Sanctuary Reports

This has been a very successful year for our sanctuaries. The stewards have maintained them well and have a good crew to do the work. I have met with them several times to discuss the challenges they face and possible solutions. Their reports will be found

elsewhere in this issue. I thank Charlie Bonelli and Alex Moody for stepping up to manage Lewis Farm after the passing of long-time steward Bob Winter. Paul Margiott has been stewarding Station 43 and Chris Fisher and Cathy Delasco are continuing to manage Greenstone Hollow. I thank all of them for their dedication.

One discussion has been the invasives that are everywhere. This has been an ongoing problem across the country. Our preserves are not immune. Several of our stewards went to a seminar on invasives in October. We had a special work party at Greenstone Hollow to try some eradication, but that is just a temporary fix.

We had a meeting with the South Windsor Meadowlands Protective Association about possible improvements to the Station 43 road. This is the first contact we have had with them in many years. They are very cooperative and share many of our concerns. It is unsure if any results will come of it.

One project I will be working on this coming year is to find an appropriate environmental organization to take over ownership of the Tobacco Valley preserve. We have owned it for 33 years and have not been able to make use of it. Along the way our volunteers have dealt with problems as they crop up. The Board decided to move the preserve on to some other organization who can care for it.

Another goal I have for this year is to review our insurance to make sure all our risks are covered. We have several pieces of equipment and structures that could be damaged or cause liability.

Larry Lunden, Sanctuary Coordinator

Station 43, 2024 Annual Report

Submitted by Maggie Peretto and Paul Margiott

The primary new activity to occur at Station 43 has been the removal of invasive plants. This activity is proceeding on all HAS properties. At Station 43, there has been a significant reduction of Multiflora Rose, Oriental Bittersweet, and Privet. Eradication is only via cutting; no herbicides are used. As expected, there is some regrowth, but there is much more space to allow native plants to replace the invasives. A secondary benefit is that the path is much wider, there are no long rose canes encroaching on the path. An invasive which has not been addressed is Phragmites on the North side of the path. This is very difficult to remove; most of it is technically not on Station 43 property.

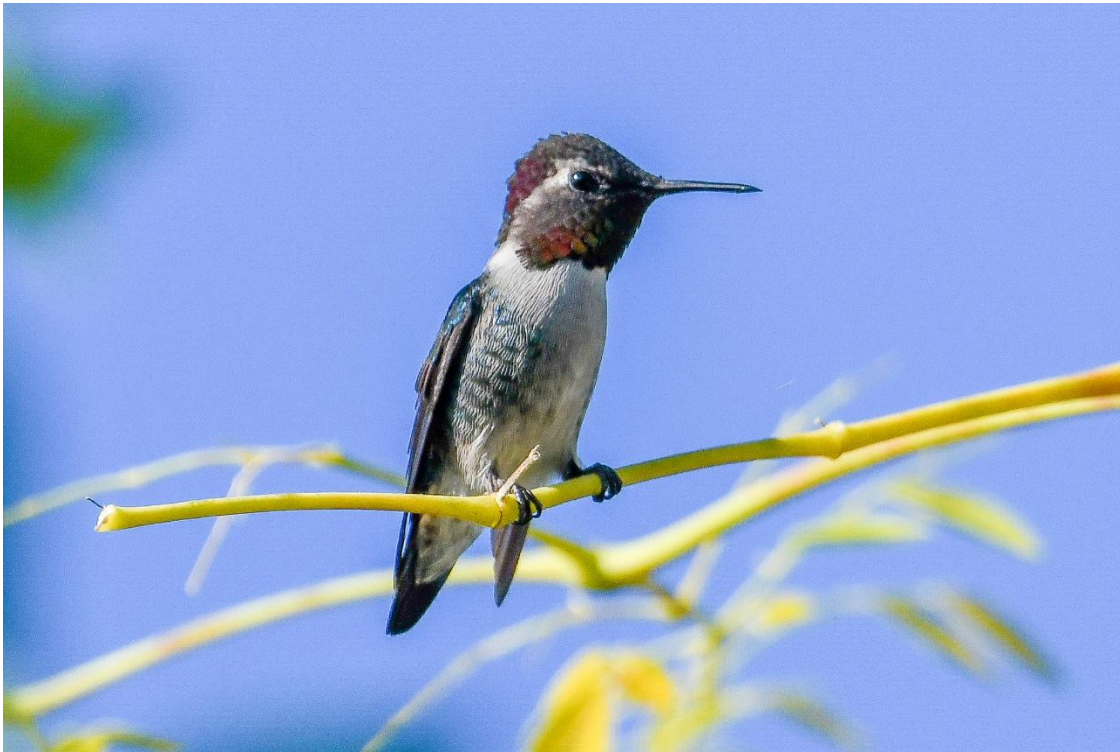
The condition of the path continues to be an issue. There are many muddy spots along the way. At the swamp, water levels vary greatly, up to 12 inch deep at times. As mentioned in past reports, there are many opinions on how to address the flooding, but no clear long-term plan. Near-term, there is a plan in place to purchase a few boards to cover the muddiest spots on the path.

The platform was inspected and found to be in very good structural condition. A minor issue is the build-up of moss and lichen. Simple scraping will be conducted to remove this. Also possible is the use of an environmentally friendly 'cleaners', perhaps horticultural vinegar.

There are no other significant issues with the property. Very little trash. No signs of ATV use (the flooding helps with this). Definitely hunting on adjacent properties which is legal except on Sundays. Maybe some hunting on Station 43 property, but this is difficult to address. All visitors are encouraged to wear orange vests when birding the property, especially October- March.

Regarding birding activity, Station 43 is by far the most visited of the four HAS properties. Using EBird data there were over 300 visits, with many more not recorded in EBird. The most popular month is May, with 46 visits. Over 120 species of birds were recorded in 2024, with a high count of 56 on June 1. Two new birds were added to the Station 43 all-time list in 2024: a Cape May Warbler on May 4, and a Sanderling on Nov. 2.

Station 43 hosted 6 different HAS sponsored bird walks. Four Beginners Walks led by Jon Ward, a Wetlands Birds Walk led by Paul Cianfaglione, and a Big Sit led by Maggie Peretto. As expected, Station 43 was also surveyed in both the Hartford Summer Bird Count and the Hartford Christmas Bird Count, by Paul Desjardins. Thanks to all the above who stepped up and led these events.



Bee Hummingbird (Cuba, photo by Bill Asteriades)

Field Trip Reports

Cape Cod, MA Trip Report

February 8-9, 2025

Trip leader: Peter Stephan

The Cape Cod trip had 15 participants on Saturday with many doing their own thing on Friday and Sunday.

The Friday trip to the Cape proved interesting for some, as we had great views of a Red-shouldered hawk, TUNDRA BEAN GOOSE, Great cormorants, Harlequin ducks, Horned larks, Greater and Lesser Scaup, and a NORTHERN LAPWING, to name a few.

Saturday began with a feeder watch where a flock of 16+ turkeys greeted us. Nauset beach had Black, Surf and White winged scoters along with Common eider and Long-tailed ducks. The Cove Motel had a Coot, Great blue heron, Mallards, Black ducks, Gadwall, Bufflehead, Red-breasted and Hooded mergansers, and Mute Swans. We continued to Fort Hill, the National seashore headquarters, Coast Guard beach and LeConte Hollow Rd. Eastern meadowlark, Common and Red-throated loons and Horned grebes were seen and we headed to Race Point and Provincetown airport with visions of a SPOTTED TOWHEE (which was being reported), dancing in our heads. A prowling red fox, however, kept the bird hidden and it took a visit by a couple of participants on Sunday, to see the bird. We did get Northern mockingbird, flicker, and cardinals, along with 2 Field sparrows. Provincetown Harbor produced a beautiful drake Harlequin duck and Common eider very close to the pier. Our last stops of the day were First Encounter Beach and Herring Pond. Brant, American widgeon, a Belted kingfisher, Ringed-necked ducks, 7 Great blues, all 3 Merganser species, and a Red-tailed hawk being harassed in flight by 3 Crows, ended the day.

A snowfall that night started us off later than usual but stops at Mill Pond, the cranberry bog at John Parker Road, and Falmouth center provided us with a very good look at a flock of over 70 American robins feeding on a crabapple, a perched female Belted kingfisher, and a drake White-winged scoter. Our trip ended with a pre-Super Bowl lunch in Falmouth center.

A total of 64 species made the trip list.

Birding with Your Phone

March 6, 2025

Trip leader: Sarah Faulkner

HAS was delighted to welcome Ken Elkins, Director of the Coastal Center at Milford Point for the Connecticut Audubon Society, for our fifth year presenting Birding With Your Phone. In this virtual workshop, Ken presented and demonstrated numerous birding apps, answered questions, and guided the large group of birders in how to improve our birding skills using apps on our phones and computers. He included the Audubon bird guide, the Warbler guide, and Birdnet, and spent considerable time teaching about the ways to make Merlin's spectrographs, photographs, and links to eBird more productive in the field. He gave tips for recording sound and how to link to eBird's lists. He also described a variety of other apps of interest, such as Seek, iNaturalist and Windy.com

Silver Sands State Park

March 30, 2025

Trip Co-leaders: Ernie Harris and Maggie Peretto

14 birders gathered on March 30th at Silver Sands State Park in Milford.

The wind was at times over 20 mph and cold but that did not discourage this group from enjoying the birds.

We saw 36 species including a few lively clapper rails that continuously delighted us with their calls. Also at sea were Red breasted mergansers, Long tailed ducks and more.

Back inland were a few birds including a Coopers Hawk, Golden crown kinglet and Field sparrows calling consistently.

Congratulations to this brave group of birders!

Farmington River Park

April 19, 2025

Trip leader: Larry Lunden

A sunny and warm day greeted us for the second HAS walk at this location. Sixteen of us turned out to see what was in the park. This was an unusually warm day for early spring; highs were expected in the 80's.

The trail led along the river, where we got the usual suspects. We arrived at the open field where the house used to be and found a great variety of species. Starting with Eastern Bluebirds, we heard a Red Shouldered Hawk and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. Then the warblers came out. Palm, Yellow Rumped, Pine, Black-throated Green, and Louisiana Waterthrush appeared. White-throated Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos reminded us that winter is not yet over.

Continuing along the river we got Wood Duck, Common Merganser and Great Blue Herons. On the way back we all got a good look at a cooperative Hermit Thrush. Some of us clearly heard a Barred Owl in the woods.

Overall, we had 34 species, and five warblers.

Farmington River Park

April 27, 2025

Trip leader: Jay Kaplan

We had hoped that the previous day's rains would usher in new migrants, but alas, Sunday, April 27th dawned cold and gray with a stiff northwest breeze. Not ideal for spring songbird migrants. Nevertheless, 20 members and friends of the Hartford Audubon Society met trip leader Jay Kaplan in the Roaring Brook Nature Center parking lot at 7 am to see what might be found.

The parking lot provided the usual residents including chickadees, titmice, white-throated sparrows and cardinals. The nesting red-shouldered hawks made their presence known by calling, and then, flying overhead. We headed for the trails and up to the fields, where the cool breeze made it a much quieter day than we had hoped. We heard yellow-bellied sapsucker and got a brief glimpse of a song sparrow. Across the road, at the forest edge, it became more active with a few warblers. One would expect that yellow-rumped warbler would be the warbler we would hear and see, but that would not be the case. In spite of poor lighting as we were looking into a sun that was attempting to break through the clouds, many in our group were able to see the field marks of a northern parula that was identified at first from its ascending, buzzy song. We were not as lucky with the singing black-throated green warbler, the blue-headed vireo or the Louisiana waterthrush. A trip highlight was an ovenbird singing conspicuously from an exposed hemlock branch. This was the first sighting of ovenbird for 2025 on the property, and two others could be heard singing in the woods. A short time later, we viewed another highlight, as a pair of pileated woodpeckers were seen at relatively close range and low to the ground as they hunted for insects on tree trunks.

Returning to the parking lot, we had a nice look at a brown creeper spiraling up a tree, saw a black vulture high in the sky, and heard a barred owl, one of several pairs that nest on the property. Total species was 31, and that was probably ten below what was anticipated, but not bad, considering weather conditions. At the conclusion of the walk, several of the participants remained for a short tour of the Nature Center's permanent birds.



Cuban Grassquit (Cuba, photo by Bill Asteriades)

For more info on trip reports, click the button below!

[HAS Trip Reports](#)



Bare-Legged Owl (Cuba, photo by Bill Asteriades)

Upcoming Events

May 3 Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge Bird Walk

Jon Ward: jward88787@aol.com 860-416-3958 T

May 4 Keney Park Bird Walk

Annette Pasek: apasek@cox.net 860-614-8281 T

Al Gatti: algatti22@gmail.com 860-916-7142 T

May 5 Greenstone Hollow Bird Walk

Larry Lunden: larrylunden@hartfordaudubon.org 860-953-1847

May 7 Auerfarm State Park Bird Walk

Al Gatti: algatti22@gmail.com 860-916-7142 T

Jack Halibozek: mjmal@comcast.net 860-978-4890

May 8 Dismal Brook Wildlife Preserve Bird Walk

John Weeks: aerie.john@cox.net 959-222-9978 T

May 8 Town Forest Road Bird Walk

Donna Summers: donnasummers@hartfordaudubon.org 860-966-1642 T

Sarah Faulkner: sffaulkner@comcast.net 860-543-1280 T

May 9 Simsbury River Walk Bird Walk

Jon Ward: jward88787@aol.com 860-416-3958 T

May 10 Penwood State Park Bird Walk

Paul Cianfaglione: pgcianfaglione@gmail.com 860-836-3443 T

May 10 Mount Auburn & Plum Island, MA Trip

Jon Ward: JWard88787@aol.com 860-416-3958 T

May 11 Machimoodus Bird Walk

Alberta & Rob Mirer: twomirers@comcast.net 860-891-8364

Ernie Harris: pdlqlt@mac.com 860-603-2655

May 13 Annual Meeting & Banquet

May 14 Manchester Mystery Bird Walk

Maggie Peretto: wings.mp@gmail.com 860-604-4903 T

May 16 Longo Farms Open Space Bird Walk

Annette Pasek: apasek@cox.net 860-490-8357

May 17 Fisher Meadows Bird Walk

Brian Toal: BrianToal@SBCGlobal.net 860-999-2733 T

May 24-25 Catskills and Hudson Valley, NY Bird Trip

Peter Stephan: stephraf@aol.com 860-729-8374 T

Jun 1 Station 43 Wetland Birds Walk

Paul Cianfaglione: pgcianfaglione@gmail.com 860-836-3443 T

Jun 7-8 Annual Summer Bird Count

Jay Kaplan: jaybrd49@aol.com 860-693-0157 or 860-707-5246

Jun 7 Reservoir #3 Bird Walk

Chris Fisher: ChrisF001@aol.com 860-967-5976 T

Jim Watso: jcwphotos@cox.net 860-519-8306 T

Jun 10 Annual Picnic and Birdwalk

Sydnee Foster: fostersydnee@gmail.com 203-913-8380 T

Keep an eye on the HAS calendar for more upcoming events by clicking the button below!

[HAS Events Calendar](#)

SUBMIT YOUR TRIP REPORTS

Field trip leaders: please email your reports to

Sandi Jones at frogcop@gmail.com

THANK YOU FOR YOUR NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS!

Please send newsletter submissions for the

Spring issue by July 12, 2025

E-mail them to Will Bugden at

william.bugden@gordon.edu



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