



Hartford Audubon Society

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Tree Swallow (photo by Will Bugden)

President's Message

I hope that all of you have been able to get out in this warmer weather with your binoculars in hand now that spring migration is upon us. Every April and May we get to experience one of nature's most remarkable phenomena. Each night, millions of birds migrate above our homes, guided by the stars and obscured by darkness. It's no secret to birders that light pollution can cause our avian friends to lose their way and it greatly increases the chance of building collisions.

That's where "Lights Out" comes in. By simply turning off or dimming non-essential outdoor and indoor lights from late evening through early morning during peak migration periods, we can dramatically reduce these risks. Even small actions like switching off porch lights, closing blinds, or using motion sensors can make a meaningful difference. In the Hartford area, spring migration typically peaks from April through May, making this a critical window for action. Businesses, office buildings, and homeowners alike all play a role in creating safer skies for birds.

Participating in Lights Out is an easy way to help protect wildlife while also reducing energy use. It's a powerful reminder that conservation doesn't always require grand gestures. Sometimes, it simply means flipping a switch.

As the night sky fills with wings overhead, let's do our part to keep it a safe passage. I hope to see you all at the Annual Banquet in May and Picnic in June as we close out the 2025 – 2026 year for Hartford Audubon Society.

Happy Birding,
Chris Wilcox
President, Hartford Audubon Society

Welcome New Members

Joan Massey

Bloomfield

Shannon Brown

Vernon Rockville

Stephen Tangney

Cromwell

Rick Strunk & "Ann" Xaophenh Nhatavong

Glastonbury

Bruce Ho & Dana Graef

West Hartford

Ruth Hoffman

Simsbury

Karen Hardwick

Carey Downes

Wethersfield

Ruth Vizard

Middlefield

Stefany & Douglas Kahle

Bristol

Lorraine Cosgrove

Simsbury

Daniela Ragusa & Lawrence Foster

Bloomfield

Elaine Reimer

Wethersfield

Robert Roggeveen

Glastonbury
Sue Ellen Larson
Farmington
Martha Murray
Simsbury
Tracy Margiott
West Hartford
Tinker Murphy
Simsbury
Dustin Young & Michelle Forella
Bolton
David and Katie Gilman
Bryan, TX
William Heydt
West Hartford
Robin and Andrew Siegel
West Hartford
Sharon Smith
Simsbury
Jesse Garuti & Barbara Kaminski
Newington
Johnathan Prestley
West Hartford

West Hartford
Sandra Bernstein
West Hartford
Wendy diCortia
Bloomfield
Adam Swift
New Britain
**Corey Williams, Tim Johnson, Sophia
Johnson, Owen Johnson**
South Windsor
Kellie DeCapua
East Hartford
Jo Brown
South Windsor
Brianne Roach
Burlington
Lori Chadwick
Burlington
Alice Russo
Danbury
Cynthia Smith
New Britain

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 12th.

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 \$40.00 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. Before dinner we will hold our annual meeting including the treasurer's report, awards and the election of officers and directors

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 Friday May 1st. 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/annual-banquet/>

[Register Here](#)

HARTFORD SUMMER BIRD COUNT ANNOUNCEMENT JUNE 13-14, 2026

By Jay Kaplan, Compiler
Hartford Summer Bird Count Compiler

The 2026 Hartford Summer Bird Count (SBC) will take place June 13th and 14th, 2026, and looks forward to its 36th year. The SBC provides valuable information on the status of breeding bird populations in the Hartford area. Results of ours and the other Connecticut SBCs are published in an upcoming edition of *The Connecticut Warbler*, quarterly journal of the Connecticut Ornithological Association.

The SBC takes place within the same fifteen mile diameter circle as December's Christmas Bird Count with the Old State House in downtown Hartford serving as the center of the circle. The Count circle includes all of West Hartford, Hartford and East Hartford, and portions of Glastonbury, Manchester, South Windsor, Windsor, Bloomfield, Farmington/Avon, Newington, Wethersfield and thin, but important slices of Rocky Hill and New Britain. The count circle is divided into twelve areas, each with a captain who tallies reports for that area. Captains will be announced closer to the Count dates. The SBC is done over a two day period as opposed to the CBC that is done on a single day. This means that observers have greater flexibility and can bird for but a single hour on one of the weekend days, or go out for longer periods of time on both days.

Unlike our Hartford CBC that usually receives a great response, the Summer Count often conflicts with vacations, graduations and weddings, barbeques, picnics, gardening, golf outings or a trip to the shore. In other words, it can be difficult to find enough observers to adequately cover all the habitats within our circle. Hopefully, this year that will not be an issue.

The Summer Count can also be a bit more difficult. There are many more birds around (not counting crows) and they are also singing. At times, it can be difficult to make note of all birds seen or heard. Observers are encouraged to go into the field in small groups or teams, making it easier to record all sightings.

Last year's SBC totaled 109 species on a somewhat rainy weekend. We hope to better this year! If you would like to participate in this year's Hartford Summer Bird Count, or should you have questions about the Count, please feel free to email me at jaybrd49@aol.com

The SBC is a good excuse to spend time outdoors at a great time of year. I hope you will join me this year!

Big January 2026 Results

By Sarah Faulkner

Our tenth annual Hartford County Big January of Birding challenge was a success once again, but birding this year was particularly difficult due to extremely cold weather, frozen ponds/lakes/streams, and snow! This yearly quest to see the most wild bird species in January in Hartford County brought lots of joy to those who were able to participate. A number of folks wrote to say that they enjoyed searching but just could not make the minimum number for a certificate. A few commented on the challenges of keeping on gloves, suffering the wind, and difficulties walking... yup, a nasty January! It should be noted that finding even 50 species in Hartford County in January is no easy feat, especially this year. Those able to see many species had to work hard for them! But in the end, it's not the final number that matters, but the fun we had in the hunt.

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. All winners will receive a certificate from HAS at the May Annual Meeting or mailed afterward if you cannot attend to receive it in person. 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 Jacob Gransinger, age 16, with an impressive count of 67 in the Teen category, and to Connor Hogan for winning the adult category with 102 species. The Golden Grebe award winner will be kept secret until May!

Adults Category

Sandra Alyssa
Logan Barnes
Laura and Bo
Bengtson
Christine Chinni
Sarah Faulkner
Barry Fasciano
Jeff Fengler
David Funke
Jack Halibozek
Joan Heffernan
Thomas Heffernan

Bruce Ho
Connor Hogan
Dennis Johnston
Jay Kaplan
William Kelly
David Lawton
Lisa Lukawicz
Barry Marsh
Jamie Meyers
Annette Pasek
Maryann Passalacqua
Maggie Peretto

Gillian Smits
Audrey Staropoli
Brian Toal
Sandra Van Vooren
Shori Velles
John Weeks
Alison Wilcox
Chris Wilcox
Blair Wlochowski
Joseph Wojtanowski
Sara Zagorski

Teen Category

Jacob Gransinger, age 16, 67 species (wow!)



Common Loon (photo by Will Bugden)

HARTFORD AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD NOTES

December 2025 – February 2026

by Jamie Meyers

Anyone wishing for an “old school” winter were probably pleased with the weather during this period. Each of the three months featured average mean temperatures that were as much as five degrees below normal. While liquid equivalent precipitation was a bit below average, most of the land was white throughout the winter. A couple large snow events were responsible for January being twice as snowy as usual, and February just added to that snowy surplus.

Winter waterfowl are always popular targets especially for year listers and big January folks. Lots of rare geese were about in December, including a roving Ross’s Goose that was in the East Windsor area from December 5 through at least January 1 (JF et al.). Hardly to be outdone, a Barnacle Goose was in that area from December 3 through January 20 (m.ob). A Pink-footed Goose was also present in that vicinity at the same time (m.ob). A Red-throated Loon, seldom seen locally, was on the river from Glastonbury Meadows on December 4th and 6th (AD). What may have been a different Pink-footed Goose was at West Hartford Reservoir 6 on December 14 (ZW). A Barnacle Goose was there from December 22 – 26 (LL et al.). The first

Barrow's Goldeneye report from the period was of a bird with a Red-breasted Merganser seen from Barnes Boat Launch in Enfield on December 18 (PD). A Long-tailed Duck was at West Hartford Reservoir 6 from December 21 – 23 (DJ).

Yet another Pink-footed Goose, this one at Barnes Boat Launch, attracted lots of gawkers from January 19 – 23 (MP et al.). A drake Harlequin Duck, found on January 29, was a stunning sight and rarity. He remained through February 22 (MP et al.). Birders seeking that duck located a Horned Grebe on January 30 (m.ob). As happens some years, Redheads invaded the upper CT River in February, with as many as 6 of these handsome ducks noted from Barnes Boat Launch starting February 9 through the end of the period (CH et al.).

A Western Meadowlark found on January 21 in Somers was undoubtedly the best passerine of the period. It was present for about a week (DM et al.). A couple of Eastern Phoebes found in January were likely questioning their life choices in the bone chilling cold and snow. One was on private MDC property in East Hartford on January 5 (MP) and another was at Riverside Park in Hartford on the even crazier dates of January 19 – 24 (DL et al.). One wonders if the two Yellow-headed Blackbird reports were of the same bird. The first report was from December 1 in Glastonbury Meadows (AD, MP). While that bird proved difficult to relocate, especially visually, the one from Chapel Road in South Windsor on January 8 – 10 was more cooperative (JF et al.). The Farmington Meadows Lark Sparrow was last reported on December 26 (m.ob). A Common Yellowthroat at Glastonbury Meadows on December 14 was a great Christmas Bird Count addition (AD/AP), as were a couple of Sandhill Cranes at the same location (AD). Snow Buntings and a Lapland Longspur from Ferry Road in South Windsor starting January 8 were appreciated by January people (PD et al.).

A few other birds provided good additions to January checklists, including an Iceland and Glaucous Gull at Wethersfield Cove in mid-January (m.ob). A Great Cormorant was at Windsor Locks Canal park in Suffield on January 8 (JH, TH) but didn't remain. A Rough-legged Hawk at the Hartford Landfill from January 23 – 25 was a bit easier to relocate (MP et al.). Winter irruptives were not particularly numerous, despite promising forecasts. A couple Evening Grosbeaks were reported from McLean Game Refuge in Granby on January 8 (CH). A Canton neighborhood was twice blessed by flyover birds in early December (JM). The best of the unpredictable winter birds was a Snowy Owl that spent a brief hour or so at a busy open area in Windsor on December 30 (CH).

Observers/reporters: Jan Collins, Andrew Dasinger (AD), Paul Desjardins (PD), Jeff Fengler (JF), Joan Heffernan (JH), Tom Heffernan (TH), Connor Hogan (CH), Dennis Johnston (DJ), David Lawton (DL), Lisa Lukawicz (LL), Barry Marsh, David Mathieu (DM), Jamie Meyers (JM), Annette Pasek (AP), Maggie Peretto (MP), Zihan Wei (ZW)

Please send reports to Jamie Meyers, 4 Sexton Hollow Road, Canton, CT 06019 or e mail them to me at sunnycytredbird@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!

Essay



Red-Bellied Woodpecker (photo by Joan Heffernan)

Sharp Dressed Man

By Abby Wolcott

Not too long ago, we moved to a dilapidated house on a sidewalk .We have a small side yard with two gnarled and twisted half dead trees which flank an open space with daylilies, phlox and some grass. On pleasant days we get lots of people walking by, some pushing strollers, some walking dogs. And some of those people stop and ask us about those two giant trees which have seen better days , wondering why we have not had them taken away. Some worry that one of the large remaining branches will break, clonk us on our heads and put us out of misery. Others note that the bark makes a mess. But what they don't see as they hoof-it by is what a wonderful habitat these giants are to lots of insects, birds, and squirrels. And the finest resident and ultimate reason we are chain saw adverse is the presence of our own "sharp dressed man", the red-bellied woodpecker. We gave him the nickname from a ZZ Top song as we watched him fly from the dead tree to our feeder. He may be lacking the gold watch and diamond ring mentioned in the song lyrics, but he sure is lovely. We admire him at the feeder and fall silent . The woodpecker is splendid with a fine herringbone waistcoat, a red chapeau and a soft pale complexion that set off a pair of black soulful eyes. Holy cow! He can't be beat, and we don't care how much bark litters our yard as we only have eyes for the woodpecker. So I guess it is true every girl is crazy about the sharp dressed man. Even if the girl is a geriatric with a pair of binoculars, and the man is a woodpecker. It still works.







Roseate Spoonbills (Photos by Sam Fried)

A BIRD PHOTOGRAPHERS'S RENAISSANCE

by Sam Fried

Three years ago, after five decades of photographing birds, hauling around mountains of equipment to get the best shots, I quit. I had captured images of 754 bird species in North America and wasn't interested in running around the country to add to that list. My shoulders were wrecked from years of carrying a heavy tripod topped with a heavier lens. I still loved birding, but the fire that kept me going seemed to have burned out.

Then in late February, while walking our guests around the wonderful Orlando Wetlands in Florida, I came upon an active nest of roseate spoonbills, with a pair of raging pink adults and a pair of downy pink young ones begging for food with their emerging spatulate beaks. The nest was only 30 feet from the boardwalk and perched in a palm tree at eye level. This was simply too good to pass up. After cleaning the dust off my old camera and lens, charging the battery and trying to recall how to use them, I returned the next afternoon. The chicks were actively begging for food, stuffing their beaks down the throats of the adults. The identical parents came and went, returning with both food for their brood and more sticks to better furnish the nest. I raised up my lens and the rest quickly became history - my photo juices had started flowing again. I had so much fun with that spoonbill family that all I wanted was more.

I sold ALL of my old equipment to a budding bird photographer and bought new gear for myself. I wanted to continue to recapture the joy that bird photography brings me, especially the pleasure of sharing my pics with others. I'm back!

Poetry Corner

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

The Orchid Show

They look like glass, plastic or wax. Glowing electric greens, pinks, oranges, and yellows are more vivid than dreams, fruits of a delusional, surrealistic imagination. Colors of candy and eye-catching infant's toys, they are stippled, dotted, striped, blotched and speckled with impossible artistry. These bizarre science fiction shapes of butterflies, winging birds, and dancing women have faces with gaudy, lecherous mouths and beckoning tongues in textures of velvet, silk, and wool.

David K. Leff

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. Their reports will be found elsewhere in this issue. I thank Charlie Bonelli and Alex Moody for continuing to manage Lewis Farm. Paul Margiott and Maggie Peretto have 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 project I worked on is to find an appropriate environmental organization to take over ownership of the Tobacco Valley preserve. We have owned it for 34 years and have not been able to make use of it. The

Board decided to move the preserve on to some other organization who can care for it. I spoke with the local land trust, but they are not interested. I filed an application with DEEP, but they are also not interested.

Another goal I have for this year is to continue 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

Lewis Farm Annual Report 2025

submitted by Charlie Bonelli

I am pleased to report that there is really not much to report regarding Lewis Farm. Trails were maintained this fall with the help of neighbor Mike Robinson.

Due to two large snowfalls, the trails saw little use except for a few brave souls on snowshoes and cross-country skis. Visits are sure to increase as spring arrives and the deep snow melts. With all the snow melting, high water in the brook may cause some water to run over its banks making passage to the back half of the sanctuary difficult. Visitors are advised to come with tick repellent, since there is likely to be a high tick population this spring. There was an interesting article in the March/April issue of Connecticut Gardener magazine about bird feeding authored by Margery Winters, assistant director at Roaring Brook Nature Center. She states that "the favorite food for 96% of songbirds chicks is caterpillars". Just one nest of chickadees requires the adults to supply a staggering number of caterpillars for the chicks.

Greenstone Hollow Annual Report

Submitted by Chris Fisher, Property Stewart

Greenstone Hollow continues to be maintained - the trails mowed and trimmed - with the help of many volunteers and occasional work parties.

The primary maintenance, the mowing, is done by 3 volunteers. Sammy Samuels, who lives in the neighborhood, uses his tractor to mow the open space lawn at the west end of the property and the Old Farm Road trail. The remaining trails are mowed by Doug Beach and Chris Fisher using the DR mower owned by the club and housed in a shed on the property. Chris also tends to the maintenance of that mower with occasional replacement of ignition coils eaten by mice despite various mouse repelling attempts.

In addition to the mowing, a second major maintenance issue is trimming back the sides of the trails. This is usually done with one or two work parties, typically in early summer.

The third area of maintenance is the upkeep of the butterfly garden. This is handled by Paul and Vicky Margiott and Roberta Gowing who have done a wonderful job of adding native perennials to the garden.

Finally, the mulch on the trails is holding up well and has not needed updating for the past two years. Also, the trail signage has weathered well and signs continue to look fresh and in good shape. The club continues to run 3 bird walks each year - one in the fall and two in the spring.

Neighbors report frequent use and enjoyment of the property.

The big news is that this spring, after meetings with Al Gatti (past president), Larry Lunden, Vicky Margiott, Cathy Delasco, Sammy Samuels and myself it was agreed to move forward on a project lead by Vicky to use

part of the large grassy area at the west end to plant native species of trees and shrubs to attract native insects and birds. The initial proposal to plant 37 shrubs and trees in a free form area and stop mowing in that area was approved by the board. Sammy Samuels has offered to let us use his outdoor water faucet as a source for watering the new plants. 800 feet of polypropylene pipe has been run on Greenstone property from Sammy's house to the butterfly garden. This will allow for the watering needed for all the new plants without hauling hundreds of gallons of water from distant sources!

Station 43 Annual Report

Submitted by Maggie Peretto and Paul Margiott

The condition of the path continues to be an issue but was improved in 2025 by adding 20 boards at the muddiest portions. There has been positive feedback about this change. At the swamp, water levels can vary greatly and flood over the path, but it was relatively dry for most of 2025. As mentioned in past reports, there are many opinions on how to address the flooding, but no clear long-term plan.

Invasive plant removal continues, without the use of any herbicide. Repeated cuttings will be needed for the major invasives which are Multiflora Rose, Oriental Bittersweet, and Privet. April is a key month to address this. We may organize a work party during this time.

The platform continues to be in good structural condition. Occasional light cleanups are conducted such as scraping off big moss deposits and raking the leaves off.

An adjacent property at 951 Main Street was put on the market. A suggestion was made to acquire the property to expand our holdings and have a better entry to the property. This was discussed by the Board but not approved. The Board does have an action item to inform the realtor (and new owners) regarding the private right-of-way through this property which allows access to Station 43. At the present time, the property is under contract but has not closed.

There are no other significant issues with the property. Very little trash. Some signs of ATV use could become more of a problem if drier conditions continue. Definitely hunting on adjacent properties which is legal. 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. 160 species of birds were recorded in 2025, which is close to the all-time high of 162 recorded in both 2022 and 2024. No new birds were added to the Station 43 all-time list in 2025.

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 Annette Pasek. 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 above who stepped up and led these events.

Field Trip Reports



American Crows (photo by Celeste Echlin)

Hartford Crow Roost Trip Report

December 6, 2025

Trip Leader: Sylvia Halkin

We met at 4 pm on Saturday, Dec. 6, outside the Walmart in the Flatbush Ave. shopping center across from the ramps to Rte. 84. Binoculars around our necks helped us to find one another, a convivial group of about 20, among the Christmas shoppers. Crows were flying over us from the northeast, under a mostly cloudy sky, with the temperature near freezing and not much wind. We circled up to exchange names and decided to drive a couple of blocks south to the Hartford Housing Authority, where the crows seemed to be heading. When we got there, we stood near the back of the building to see crows landing in the nearby trees: thanks to Celeste Echlin for the great photos that follow!

A German shepherd, I thought, walked out along the edge of the lawn (why had someone brought their German shepherd?)

Oh... not a German shepherd! Thank you, Celeste!

We had a good look at the coyote, and vice versa!

From the overlook in front of the building, we could see a very long line of crows continuing to fly in from the northeast. Large groups of crows were also flying in from the south and west to land in trees west of Newfield Avenue. We moved on to our next stop, at the intersection of Dexter and Reed Avenues, a block west of Newfield. Crows from the east, south, and west landed by the hundreds on the ground next to industrial buildings, and by the thousands in the tops of trees along the length of Reed Avenue. Periodically, large groups of crows started cawing loudly in the trees, and then flew up, cawing, to circle overhead, only to land again in the same trees, joined by newly arriving crows. Crows were still flying into the area as dusk fell; our count along Reed Ave. was about 7,500 crows. When we left, crows were gone from the Hartford

Housing Authority trees; some may still have been in trees along the South Brook Park River, but it was too dark to have seen them.

Many thanks to everyone who joined us and helped to enjoy the spectacle!

A little background, and updates from the Christmas Bird Count and yesterday (Feb. 6):

Crows assemble from dispersed foraging locations to sleep (roost) in large groups in winter, in part for protection from predators like Great Horned Owls. A large group has many sets of eyes and ears to detect predators, groups may harass predators and chase them away, and even if the conspicuous group attracts predators that eat a few crows, most will escape predation: crow predators have large territories and are not very social, so there won't be a nearby waiting group of hungry predators! The exact roost area may shift from night to night, so it is likely that incoming crows look and listen for where other crows seem to be gathering, and the crows that fly up calling from trees and circle the roost area near dusk are signaling incoming crows to join them. Roosting in groups may also help hungry crows to find food the next morning, by following other crows that leave the roost rapidly, flying in a consistent direction.

Since I began watching Hartford crows in the early 2000s, the winter roost has been near Rte. 84, in locations between downtown Hartford and eastern West Hartford. Large numbers of crows are roosting together between about mid-November and mid-March, when crows that migrated from farther north start to head back to their breeding areas. Jay Kaplan leads the crow roost count for the Hartford Audubon Christmas Bird Count, and has a wealth of historical knowledge, including that the roost has been as far from its current location as the Copaco Shopping Center/Plaza in Bloomfield. I thank Jay for teaching me crow-counting techniques: 1) it's helpful to count a flying flock as they pass an easily defined location like a light pole; and 2) to estimate large numbers of crows in flight or in trees, first count crow by crow to figure out what 10 crows looks like; then count by groups of 10 to know what 100 looks like; and then count by 100s to know what 1000 looks like. Over the last 20 years, the estimated number of crows in the Hartford roost has ranged from 6,000 (in 2007) to 28,000 (in 2012); numbers often fluctuate considerably from year to year. In 2024 we estimated 21,000 crows in the roost, while in 2025, only 12,000 (more than on December 6, likely in part because more observers at more vantage points were watching crows flying into the roost). There may have been a second roost in 2025 that included some of the crows we counted in 2024, perhaps near Newington; on early mornings in January 2026, I saw groups of crows flying over Newington both from the east, the direction of the Hartford roost, and from the west, possibly from another roost.

In recent weeks, the roost seems to have moved southwest, closer to New Britain Avenue and New Park Avenue. On the night of February 6, many thousands of crows were flying back and forth across New Britain Avenue after sunset. Many settled along Brixton Street on rooftops of low West Hartford Public Works buildings, and in nearby trees, but hundreds to thousands were still in the air when it got too dark to see them.

Hoping you can join us on the crow roost trip, and on the Christmas Bird Count crow count, next December: all are welcome!



Coyote (photo by Celeste Echlin)

Cape Ann/Newburyport, Massachusetts Trip Report

January 17-18, 2026

Trip Leader: Wendy Parsons

Attendees Wendy and Roy Parsons, Deana Smith, and her mother Carol, Erin Mahoney, Bill Kelly and his daughter Tilly, Sarah Faulkner, Will and Gabrielle Bugden, Annette and Bill Pasek.

Saturday morning started off cold and cloudy 30°. It warmed up to 34°. We started our morning in Rockport Massachusetts. We went back to the hotel for lunch then off to Gloucester Massachusetts, the afternoon. We had light rain starting around 2 o'clock in the afternoon. We continued around Gloucester until around 3:30. We saw the following Birds.

Common Loon, red breasted merganser, long tailed duck, black scoter, common Eider, surf scoter, rock doves, American Black Ducks, purple sandpipers, mallards, Canada geese, American Crow, turkey, double crested cormorant, greater Cormorant, white wing scoter, Harlequin, Cardinals, Blue Jays, song sparrow, Ruddy duck, white throated sparrow, Towhee, greater black back gull, lesser black back gull, Bufflehead, common golden eye, Gadwalls, northern Mockingbird, Carolina wren, herring gull, ring bill gull, bald eagle, Brant, dark eyed Junco, black cap chickadee, white breasted nuthatch.

Sunday we went to Newburyport, Massachusetts. It was cold and cloudy like Saturday 34°. we we saw the following Birds.

House finch, mourning dove, northern Harrier, Sanderlings, starlings, razorbill, robin, Cedar waxwing, yellow rump warbler, American Widgeon, Eurasian Widgeon, tree, sparrow, bald eagle and a snowy owl.

Due to the weather forecast, people decided to leave around 2 PM. Bill Kelly and his daughter Tilly decided to go to Salisbury Beach to look for the long eared owl that was being reported there. They were successful! Great birding weekend, a total of 51 species.

Silver Sands Trip Report

March 26, 2026

Trip Leader: Maggie Peretto

On Sunday, March 29th twelve birders joined Ernie and me on a beautiful morning bird walk.

We slowly walked about three miles enjoying the birds and the fresh ocean air. We missed many of the common local birds but the miss that surprised me the most was the Clapper rail. Every year we see them or at least hear them. Maybe the hard winter is to blame. Some of the spots that we normally enjoy and find birds were blocked by phragmites.

The most celebrated birds were a pair of Oyster catchers that were feeding by the shore next to the boardwalk. The group also enjoyed the call of the Brant's.

We totaled 39 species, but we always wish for more.

Farmington River Trip Report

April 18, 2026

Trip Leader: Larry Lunden

A sunny day, mild and no wind, greeted us as we started out. Clouds covered the sky by the end. Twenty-two of us turned out to see what was in the park. Also joining us was Sharon Mann, the chair of the Bloomfield Beautification Committee. She told us about the efforts the town is putting in to improve the park.

The parking lot had the usual suspects. Across the river we heard a loud Pileated Woodpecker. Flying up river was a Common Merganser. In the field we heard and saw our first warbler, a Pine Warbler. It was at the top of a pine and jumped out of sight. On the way back we also saw a late White-throated Sparrow.

As we returned a small group stayed back and found more interesting birds. In the field they found our second warbler, a Palm Warbler, also a Belted Kingfisher, Brown Creeper, and Wood Duck.

Overall, we had 27 species, and 2 warblers.

Roaring Brook Nature Center Trip Report

April 26, 2026

Trip Leader: Jay Kaplan

The forecast for clearing skies did not materialize, and the morning of April 26th dawned gray, dreary and drizzly. Nevertheless, at 7 am, 14 hardy birders met in the Roaring Brook Nature Center to see what the spring migration had to offer. Sadly, it was not much as the cool, damp conditions were not favorable to birdsong, and a week-long period of winds from the north had not spurred small songbirds to move against the wind. The few birds around the Nature Center building were keeping low in the brush, not wishing to expose themselves to the less than ideal weather conditions, and by the time we reached the fields, our list was but half of what had been seen on a bird walk the previous day. Other than a few breeding-plumaged goldfinches chasing each other around, and a couple of bright crimson male cardinals, there was not much movement. A vocal gray catbird was our first real migrant, but things did not improve much as we were unable to find the bluebird pair seen the previous day. Leaving the fields and entering the woods, we finally began to hear and even see a few birds as a singing blue-headed vireo and a group of brightly-plumaged male yellow-rumped

warblers were found high in the trees. As we approached the pond, the sky finally began to brighten just a tiny bit, and we were able to add belted kingfisher, brown creeper and blue-gray gnatcatcher to our list.

Our nicest observation, and a nice way to end our walk, was a very obliging male yellow-bellied sapsucker, who posed for photos while he drummed away at close range on a dead standing tree. A meager 28 species was seen/heard during the trip, far below what would be expected on this date.

Lewis Farm Trip Report

April 29, 2026

Trip Leader: Abby Wolcott

A dozen birders gathered at the top of Hill street poised to explore the HAS Lewis Farm. Abby led them down the hill to the sounds of silence. Fortunately, that changed as bird calls filled the air. We took the time to discuss the Merlin app and Doug Beach's email about best practices. Red-bellied woodpeckers called from across the preserve throughout the morning, and the ever-vocal tufted titmice seemed to be everywhere, calling out. We heard pine warblers from the canopy but they did not reveal themselves. The group paused after the Billy Goat Gruff Bridge to bask in the morning sunshine. We were rewarded by a pair of yellow warblers which were kind enough to light on several low branches in the sun allowing us to "oooh and ahh" at their splendor. Eagle-eyed Joan Heffernan spotted a dark silhouette in the brambles and we identified the bird as a rusty blackbird. He proved to be a "lifer" for few birders and he stayed posted on his branch for quite a spell.

The vernal pool area was calling our name so we continued on. We admired the understory and all the beautiful hues of green prompting a debate whether the color was spring green or leaf green or Granny Smith apple green. Regardless, the woods were a vision. We circled back again, taunted by the pine warblers but they refused to be seen. We heard a wood thrush and a white breasted nuthatch and started our way back. We detoured around the pine tree loop and admired trillium on either side of the path.

As we climbed the Hillary Step, human banter took over for the birds. One wonderful by-product of birding is meeting so many lovely people and getting acquainted as we wrestle with our binoculars. All these folks are drawn to birds and this group in particular had it all; patience, kindness, knowledge and humor. I missed both the birds and the birders as I headed home.



Barred Owl Chick (Photo by Will Bugden)

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

HAS Trip Reports

Upcoming Events

May 2 Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge Bird Walk

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

May 3 Elizabeth Park Bird Walk

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

May 4 Greenstone Hollow Bird Walk

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

May 5 Farmington River, Barkhamsted Bird Walk

Gina Decker grodckr21@gmail.com 860-733-2670 T
Cathy Delasco cathy_cosgrove@yahoo.com (860) 324-4709 T

May 6 Auerfarm State Park Scenic Reserve Bird Walk

Al Gatti algatti22@gmail.com 860-916-7142 T
Jack Halibozek mjmal@comcast.net 860-978-4890

May 7 Dismal Brook Wildlife Preserve Bird Walk

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

May 7 Town Forest Road, West Simsbury Bird Walk

Donna Summers donnasummers@hartfordaudubon.org 860-966-1642 T
Sarah Faulkner sffaulkner@comcast.net 860-543-1280 T

May 8 Simsbury River Walk Bird Walk

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

May 9 Mount Auburn & Plum Island, MA – Bird Trip

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

May 10 Machimoodus Bird Walk

Alberta & Rob Mirer twomirers@comcast.net 860-891-8364
Ernie Harris pdlqit@mac.com 860-603-2655

May 11 Bike and Bird

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

May 12 – Annual Meeting & Banquet

Audrey Staropoli Audrey@hartfordaudubon.org 860-961-6330 T

May 13 Manchester Mystery Trip Bird Walk

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

May 14 Tanager Hill Bird Walk

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

May 15 Longo Farms Open Space Bird Walk

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

May 16 Fisher Meadows Bird Walk

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

May 17 Addison Bog and Woodlands Bird Walk

Laura and Bob Bengtson rlbengtson@cox.net 860-882-4285 T

May 20 Cedar Hill Cemetery Bird Walk

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

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

May 22-24 Central NY and the Adirondacks Bird Trip

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

Jun 6 Station 43 & Vibert Rd Bird Walk

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

Jun 6 Reservoir # 3, Bloomfield Bird Walk

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

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

June 7 Trails Day Family Bird Walk – Mary Conklin Preserve Bird Walk

Sarah Faulkner sffaulkner533@gmail.com

Jun 9 Annual Picnic and Bird Walk

Audrey Staropoli Audrey@hartfordaudubon.org 860-961-6330 T

Jun 13-14 Annual Summer Bird Count

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

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
Summer issue by July 4, 2026
E-mail them to Will Bugden at
william.bugden@gordon.edu



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