

## *The Power of Power*

My work on the Board of the Connecticut Energy Council-for Teachers (CONNECT) involves educating teachers about sources of energy so children can learn about how to use resources wisely. I also live in Branford.

Where I live and how I work makes me very concerned about Islander East's proposal to build a natural gas pipeline through Branford to Long Island. If built, the pipeline would follow the Tilcon Railway and cross Branford Land Trust properties, inland wetlands

needs of Long Island, not Connecticut.

Through my work on the Connecticut Energy Council for Teachers, I help educators learn about nonrenewable fossil fuel sources like oil, coal, and gas. These are all of limited supply and can not be replenished. I also help them learn more about renewable energy sources like wind, solar, landfill gas, biomass, and hydroelectric. These sources will replenish quickly and at the very most, within a human lifetime.

**The list of companies proposing crossing Long Island Sound with gas pipelines and electric cables is growing. For those of us that care deeply for the Sound and the land that surrounds it, these proposals are scary, frustrating, infuriating, and disenfranchising. Five thousand five hundred - seventy seven concerned citizens and Menunkatuck Audubon members signed petitions opposing the gas pipeline proposed by Islander East. This show of solidarity and commitment to preserving our natural resources as well as our own energy supply has made an enormous difference in garnering support from local and state officials. So while officials, intervenors, and lawyers do their best to stop these cross Sound proposals many of us are left wondering what we can do besides wait for the other shoe to drop. Throughout this issue of the Menunkatuck newsletter we will highlight a few actions you can take that will make a difference**  
**SuZanne Botta, President, Menunkatuck Audubon Society**

and the Nature Trail between Pine Orchard and Stony Creek, then go through shellfish beds to cross Long Island Sound. Its construction, drilling, dredging, and laying pipe will destroy the natural beauty of a coastal Connecticut town, significantly disturb the marine ecosystem, and permanently damage shellfish beds (a significant part of the CT economy). The worst part is that the pipeline will only serve the energy

What is clear is that if we learn how to use energy more wisely, and teach our children to do the same, there will not be a need for us to even consider whether a pipeline should go across our land and water. The need for more energy would not exist.

Here in Connecticut, most of us are not aware that we have options. The individual electricity consumer  
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# Menunkatuck Files Intervention In Airport Development

## MENUNKATUCK AUDUBON SOCIETY

is a chapter of National Audubon Society. The newsletter is published bi-monthly by Menunkatuck Audubon Society.

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MENUNKATUCK AUDUBON SOCIETY  
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Kobak, Dennis  
Riordan

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**Newsletter:**.....Dennis Riordan

.....(387-2167)

**Webmaster:**.....Brad Garber

The board of Directors of Menunkatuck Audubon Society has voted to file an "Intervention" with the Madison Planning and Zoning Commission regarding the latest application by the Leyland Co. to build 192 housing units on the airport site next to the Natural Area Preserve of Hammonasset Park. All Menunkatuck members who visit the park to enjoy the great birding opportunities will be concerned with the threat that this development poses to the salt marshes, the beaches and the estuary of the Hammonasset River. This massive development will likely pollute these fragile natural resources by sedimentation and erosion and from the discharge of pesticides, road runoff, fertilizers and sewage from such a high-density occupation. Our intervention filing states that "the pro-

posed location of this project is solely profit driven. To build it on a flood plain next to a unique and valuable environmental area where it jeopardizes the public trust in a scarce and important natural resource is an affront to the people of Connecticut" The Intervention under Connecticut's Environmental Protection Act allows the presentation of expert testimony at the hearings for the application and permits a legal appeal of the decision. Because of the importance of this proposed development, Menunkatuck will be one of a number of other groups and individuals filing Interventions. We are still putting together a team of expert witnesses and would welcome suggestions from the membership. Call 203 245-4397 for further information.

### Shoreline Greenway Trail

Shoreline citizens are working to establish a Shoreline Greenway Trail from New Haven to Hammonasset Beach for walkers, bikers, baby-carriage pushers, runners, joggers, commuters, kids, seniors, those who seek a healthy life style, and all who love the outdoors. The campaign for the trail will be formally launched at a big open meeting 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 30, at the Guilford Community Center with presentations on trails across America, discussion of possible trail locations, benefits of trails and tasks to be done. To get on the Trailway mailing or email list, please call or email Jennifer Allcock, phone 203 453-5041 or <jallcock@worldnet.att.net>.

Menunkatuck Audubon Society is committed to work locally to preserve our natural ecosystems for the benefit of people and the earth's biodiversity. Through education and conservation activities within our communities, we raise public awareness of environmental issues and connections to the natural world.

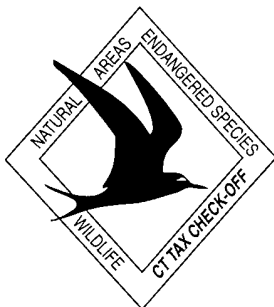
## Spring Speakers Set

The April 10 meeting of Menunkatuck Audubon Society will feature Bill Kolodnicki, Director of the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, talking about *Endangered Least Terns*.

Bill Burt is a naturalist, photographer and writer who has spent the last 16 years chasing down the most elusive North American birds. The results of his passion were published in articles in *Audubon* and *Smithsonian* and finally last October in the book *Rare and Elusive Birds of North America*. On May 8, Bill will describe his travels and show some of the photographs that he took. Copies of Bill's book will be available for purchase and Bill will be signing them.

Frank Mantlik will present a program on *A Year in the Life of a Birder* at the June 12 meeting. Frank is a naturalist and photographer who has led birding field trips for many organizations, including Connecticut Audubon.

**The Endangered Species/Wildlife Income Tax Check-Off Fund is a fund that was created in 1993 by the legislature to allow Connecticut state income taxpayers to voluntarily donate portions of their tax refund to support efforts aimed at helping Connecticut's endangered species, natural area preserves and watchable wildlife.**



# 2001-2002 Calendar

April 10, 2002

*Endangered Least Terns*

*Bill Kolodnicki*

May 4 2002

*Educators' Workshop – The Geology of Connecticut*

May 8, 2002

*Rare and Elusive Birds of North America*

*Bill Burt*

May 11, 2002

*Birdathon*

June 12, 2002

*A Year in the Life of a Birder*

*Frank Mantlik*

**Indoor meetings are at the Nathanael Greene Community Center and begin at 7:30 P.M.**

**Directions to the Nathanael Greene Community Center: I-95 to exit 58 in Guilford. South on Route 77 for 8/10 miles. The Community Center is on the right between Route 1 and the Guilford Green.**

**Refreshments are served.**

**Saturday Morning Birding at Hammonasset**

Saturdays, beginning April 13

7:45 a.m.

Leader: Jerry Connolly

Meet at the Audubon Shop, Madison

Every Saturday morning through June 29, Jerry will lead birders through Hammonasset to see returning sea birds, shore birds, birds of prey, and song birds. There is a \$4.00 fee. For complete details call The Audubon Shop at 203-245-9056.

## The Power of Power

(Continued From Page 1.)

can change their electricity supplier to one that uses renewable sources of energy. CL&P would still carry the electricity homes; the electricity itself would be produced by a different supplier.

The quality of the electricity is unaffected by the change in energy source. The Connecticut Energy Co-op ([www.ctco-op.com](http://www.ctco-op.com) or call 1-888-481-3955) offers a 100 percent renewable energy based electricity option called "Eco-Watt." This product consists of 67 percent small-scale hydropower, 28 percent landfill gases (methane), and 5 percent wind from upstate New York. The cost of this is only slightly higher than the current rate for energy produced by nonrenewable fossil fuels. The rate would increase by one cent per kilowatt-hour (kwh) from 5.5 cents to 6.5 cents per kwh or approximately \$4 per month for the average consumer.

An even cleaner alternative is to install solar panels on homes. In this way, homes produce their own energy. The upfront cost for solar panels can range from \$5,000 to \$30,000 depending on the size of the array. However, since it is not necessary to pay a power company, the solar panels eventually pay for themselves.

An added benefit is that any surplus energy produced by the home can be sold for profit to homeowners and to the power companies. Thus, a homeowner can eventually make money from the panels.

"The only way to bring down the current cost of solar energy," reported Larry Union, CEO of the Connecticut Energy Co-op; "is for (more) consumers to choose it as their power source."

Another choice all consumers can make is the implementation of energy efficient appliances and other devices. The average incandescent bulb has not changed much since Thomas Edison - it uses only 10 percent of its

## A Call for Armchair Warriors

An Act Concerning the Protection of Long Island Sound is a bill being drafted by the Environment Committee in the CT House of Representatives. This bill, if passed, would put a 6-month moratorium on all cross sound proposals. The 6 months would be used to study the long term economic and environmental impacts threatened by the various gas pipeline and electric cable crossings. Public support for this bill is critical at this time. The bill is likely to be voted on in early April. You can show your support by calling, writing, and/or emailing our local representatives. It is as simple as contacting the representatives office (see contact info below) and stating you are a resident, a Menunkatuck Audubon member, and feel this legislation needs to be passed. It is that simple; if you would like more background information visit the CT Stop the Pipeline website: [www.ctstopthepipeline.com](http://www.ctstopthepipeline.com)

Contacts:

Environment Committee:

Donald E. Williams, Co-Chair

Phone: (860) 240-0447 or 1-800-842-1420

Room 3200, Legislative Office Bldg. - Hartford., CT 06106

email: [Williams@senatedems.state.ct.us](mailto:Williams@senatedems.state.ct.us)

Jessie G. Stratton, Co-Chair

Phone: (860) 240-0440 or 1-800-842-8267

Legislative Office Building, Room 3201 - Hartford, CT 06106-1591

email: [Jessie.Stratton@po.state.ct.us](mailto:Jessie.Stratton@po.state.ct.us)

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Governor John Rowland

Governor's Office - State Capitol

210 Capitol Avenue - Hartford, CT 06106

Phone: (860) 566-4840

email: [Governor.Rowland@po.state.ct.us](mailto:Governor.Rowland@po.state.ct.us)

energy to produce light, and the other 90 percent is wasted as heat.

Consumers can switch from regular light bulbs to Compact Fluorescent Lights (CFLs) and save not only energy but money too - over \$50 per bulb over its lifetime. Although CFLs cost more initially, they last 10 times longer and use 60 percent less energy than a standard incandescent bulb. The quality of light is warm like an incandescent bulb not cold like traditional fluorescent light. Dimmable CFLs are also available. Also, when purchasing new appliances (refrigerators, VCRs, etc) consumers can look for the Energy Star logo. These appliances must meet Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards for efficiency.

Consumer choice is a powerful force. Each person plays an important role in shifting market trends with each decision made. If even half the people who read this article switch to the "Eco-Watt" program, the amount of nonrenewable fossil fuel used in Connecticut could be substantially reduced. And if only two or three people switch to solar panels, a new energy source will gain momentum and make it easier and cheaper for others to follow.

Why are we still using technology that was developed years ago? We should move forward. We need to each do our part to lessen our reliance on fossil fuels. We need to conserve energy and use renewable sources whenever we can. The proposed

pipeline might not be needed if adequate energy conservation and use of renewable energy sources is in place on Long Island.

We can start by using our consumer power here in Connecticut to make a shift in the energy market. Each of us has the power to tell our own energy company what we want - more renewable energy sources for our electricity. Then in five years, we will not have to fight a new pipeline in yet another beautiful Connecticut coastline town.

Chris Sullivan, Connecticut Energy Council for Teachers

## Public Hearing on the Islander East Pipeline

The Connecticut Siting Council will hold a public hearing Tuesday April 2 in Branford, regarding the Islander East proposed gas pipeline. Location and time to be announced. It is unusual for the Siting Council to hold hearings outside their home base in New Britain; this is the perfect opportunity to show the Siting Council and Islander East that the shoreline community stands together in opposition to this pipeline. If you couldn't make the rally on the Green in Branford in October this hearing is the perfect time to come and show your support. When the time and location are announced they will be posted on the [www.ctstopthepipeline.com](http://www.ctstopthepipeline.com) web site.

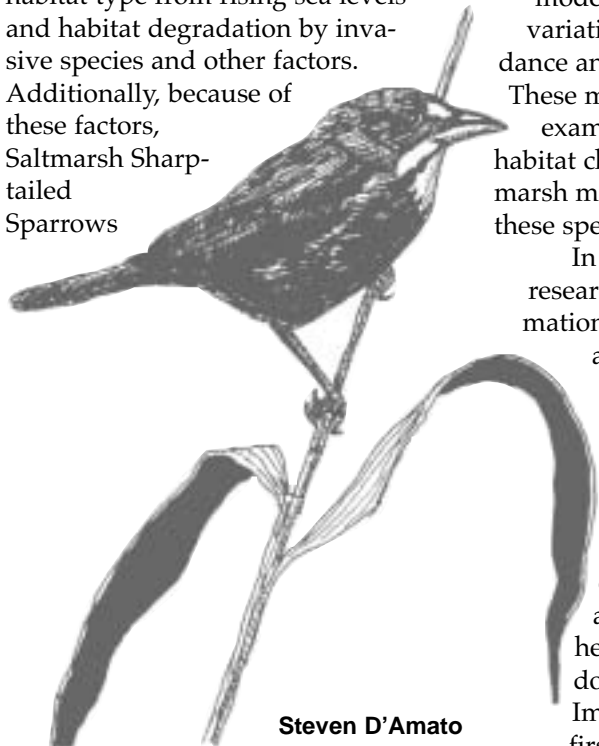
## Saltmarsh Birds

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5000 square miles). This means that when suitable habitat factors are considered, the entire world range of this species is smaller in area than all of Connecticut.

BirdLife International lists the Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows as a special concern species, due to this restricted range, and threats to this habitat type from rising sea levels and habitat degradation by invasive species and other factors.

Additionally, because of these factors, Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows



Steven D'Amato

are given a Watchlist score of 29 by Audubon, which is among the highest of any North American Species.

This project will focus on the vast salt meadow marsh in Guilford, the salt marsh at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison, and Great Island Marsh, near the mouth of the Connecticut River. The study will provide information about the sizes and densities of these populations, their habitat associations, and develop models to explain and predict the variation that are seen in the abundance and occurrence of these birds.

These models will allow managers to examine the consequences of habitat change, such as open water marsh management (OMWM) for these species.

In a broader context, this research will provide critical information needed to evaluate the global and regional importance of Long Island Sound to Saltmarsh sharp-tailed and Seaside Sparrows. As such, this study will lay the groundwork for protecting this species in the face of changing habitat, pollution and sea-level conditions, and help with Audubon's efforts to document North America's Important Bird Areas, a crucial first step to comprehensive pro-

tection of the continent's avifauna. Stay tuned for information on opportunities to volunteer to assist with this important study.

Threats and conservation issues facing the Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow include:

- Restricted breeding and wintering ranges.
- Very specific habitat needs.
- Degradation of nesting habitat by invasive plant species including Phragmites.
- Habitat degradation and loss due to draining and diking of salt marshes for development in some parts of its range.
- Development of the upland edges of salt marshes, which are important buffers to the nesting habitat for this species.
- Increased predation by introduced species, including cats, in proximity to human development.
- Small, localized populations of this species make surveying with Breeding Bird Survey and other conventional methods problematic.
- Research is required, as there is little known about species' demography.

Patrick Comins, National Audubon Society

# Biodiversity 2002

## Know your natural neighbors



### *Salt Marsh Birds Are Subject of Study*

We are all aware of the importance of conservation of the federally threatened Piping Plovers in Connecticut, but did you know there is another species that is considered equally as important in terms of conservation in Connecticut, the Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow. It may seem surprising that conservation of a fairly

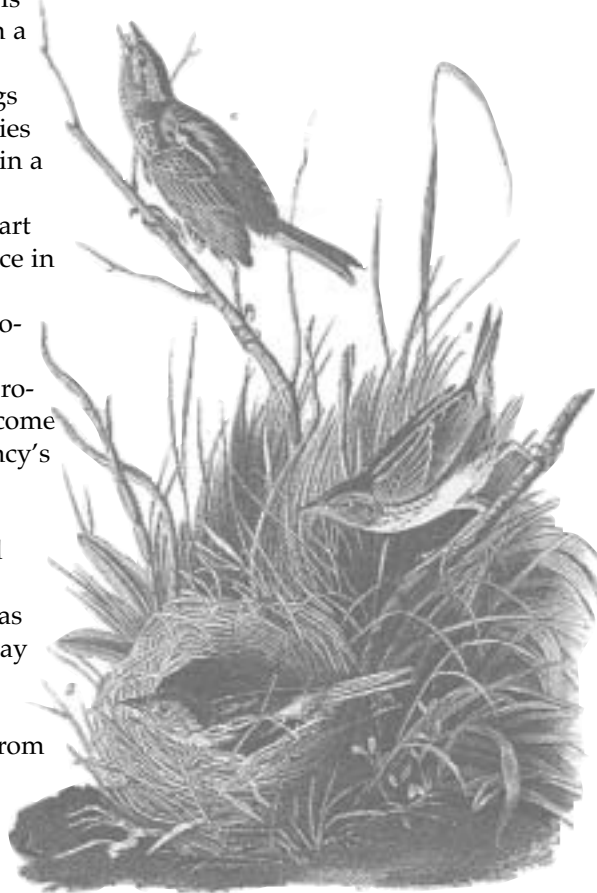
#### **BIO BITS**

common, albeit very localized, species is considered as important as that of such a rare and localized breeder as Piping Plover. The reason is that these rankings

consider the relative importance of a geographical area to a species in addition to the overall size of the population and threats within a given area.

Due to the high conservation priority of this species and as part of the effort to identify Important Bird Areas of global significance in Connecticut, the University of Connecticut (UCONN) and Audubon Connecticut have received funding for an in-depth two-year study of Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow and Seaside Sparrow usage of Connecticut's coastal habitats. Funds will be provided through the State of Connecticut's Endangered Species Income Tax Check-off fund, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Long Island Sound Study program. Dr. Chris Elphick and Dr. Margaret Rubega from UCONN, and Patrick Comins, Audubon Connecticut's Director of Bird Conservation will be the principal investigators for this project.

Connecticut's coastal marshes are very important nesting areas for these two secretive species of birds. These coastal marshes may have some of the highest densities of nesting Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows found anywhere in the world. This species is found nesting only in a narrow strip of high salt marsh habitat from southern Maine south to Maryland, with as much as 50% of the world population being found from Maine to Long Island. Its geographical range is estimated to be only on the order of 7,800 square miles, but with considerably less suitable habitat within that range (by comparison, the total area of Connecticut is around  
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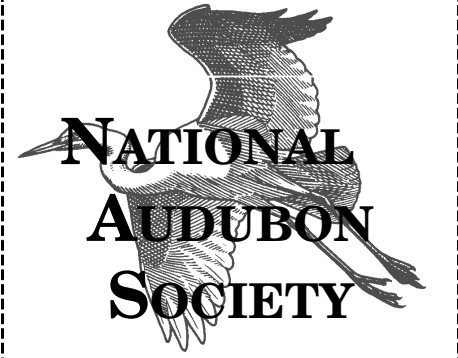


## Seventh Educators' Workshop Planned

Menunkatuck's seventh annual Educators' Workshop will take place May 4th, from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M. Ralph Lewis, State Geologist, will present a program on the geology of Connecticut. A slide presentation and question and answer period will be followed by a field trip that includes a hike through Chatfield Hollow State Park in Killingworth. The day will

end with a visit to the glacial moraines at Hammonasset State Park in Madison.

Teachers of all grade levels and nature center staff are invited to join us as we explore our local geology. For more information, or to register for the workshop, contact Cindi Kobak, Education Chairperson, at 203-457-1699.



### Chapter Membership Application

Yes, I'd like to join.

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send AUDUBON magazine and my membership card to the address below.

My check for \$20 is enclosed.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make all checks payable to the National Audubon Society.*

Send this application and your check to:

National Audubon Society  
700 Broadway  
New York, NY 10003

## Menunkatuck Audubon Society Annual Meeting Wednesday, April 10 —Elections—

President - SuZanne Botta  
Vice-President - Dan Cinotti  
Treasurer - Connie Mortensen  
Secretary - Catherine Ferguson  
Directors - Henry Ferris, Dorothy Holabird,  
Cindi Kobak, Dennis Riordan, Bill Yule

## Menunkatuck Welcomes New Members

Menunkatuck Audubon Society welcomes the following new members:

**Branford:** Jean Galli, Mrs M J Hamer, Ellen Morris, Edwin Selden, Truman Sherk

**East Haven:** Josephine Bradley, Grace Bysiewicz, Elizabeth Dilabio, Lena Fry, Stephen Holland, Eric Pinney, Phyllis Ruiggiero

**Guilford:** Chip Angle, Ellen De Forest, Linda Fuller, Robert Light, Joanna Noble, Emma Proto, Stephen Victor, Judith Volpe, Martha West  
**Madison:** Hdley Austin, Stewart Hudson

**New Haven:** Saul Bell, Steven Gworek, Candace Hartmann

**West Haven:** Danielle Egervari, Mark Woolsey

**Connecticut  
Rare Bird Alerts  
(203)254-3665  
(860)599-5195**

**Menunkatuck on the Web:**

**[www.menunkatuck.org](http://www.menunkatuck.org)**

### LOCAL CHAPTER

Menunkatuck Audubon Society

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March **2002**



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## **NEXT MEETING**

### **BILL KOLODNICKI ENDANGERED LEAST TERNs**

*Wednesday, April 10, 2002  
7:00 PM  
Guilford Community Center  
Route 77  
Guilford*

*Are you on our mailing list?  
If not, send in this form with \$10.00 to cover  
costs to be sure that you are informed about  
our activities.*

Please add me to your mailing list.  
Enclosed is \$10.00 to cover the costs of the  
newsletter for one year.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

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Guilford, CT 06437