

## Menunkatuck Members— Florida Bound?

If you are an active birder heading for Florida's west coast, an often overlooked area is Fort DeSoto Park located on the Pinellas Bayway near St. Petersburg Beach. Fort DeSoto Park is 900 acres in size and has many varied habitats. As you approach Fort DeSoto, a series of three fresh water ponds have wintering Redheads, Ring-necked Ducks, Lesser Scaup, Coot, Blue-winged Teal, Mottled Ducks and Pied-billed Grebes. Edges of the ponds yield Great and Snowy Egrets, Great Blue, Little Blue and Tricolored herons.

Inside the park, the shore areas consistently produce Whimbrel, Wilson's Plover Marbled Godwit (March), Reddish Egret, Red Knot, American Oystercatcher and occasional Long Billed Curlew. The outer sandbar has a resident flock of Black Skimmers, all the plovers including the rare Snowy Plover as well as Caspian, Royal and Sandwich terns. White Pelicans are found feeding in the lagoons.

Kestrels overwinter here and there

is a resident pair of Great Horned Owls usually seen at dusk.

The oak groves at North and East Beaches have a wintering population of warblers including, Yellowthroated, Parula, Pine, Prairie, Palm and Black-and-White. Last year a March 15 fall-out yielded Hooded, Prothonotary, Magnolia, Black-throated Green, Northern Waterthrush, Yellowthroated and White-eyed Vireos in numbers.

A mulberry grove near the park ranger's home attracts waxwings, Orioles, grosbeaks and others (usually late March). Hummingbirds are in this area also.

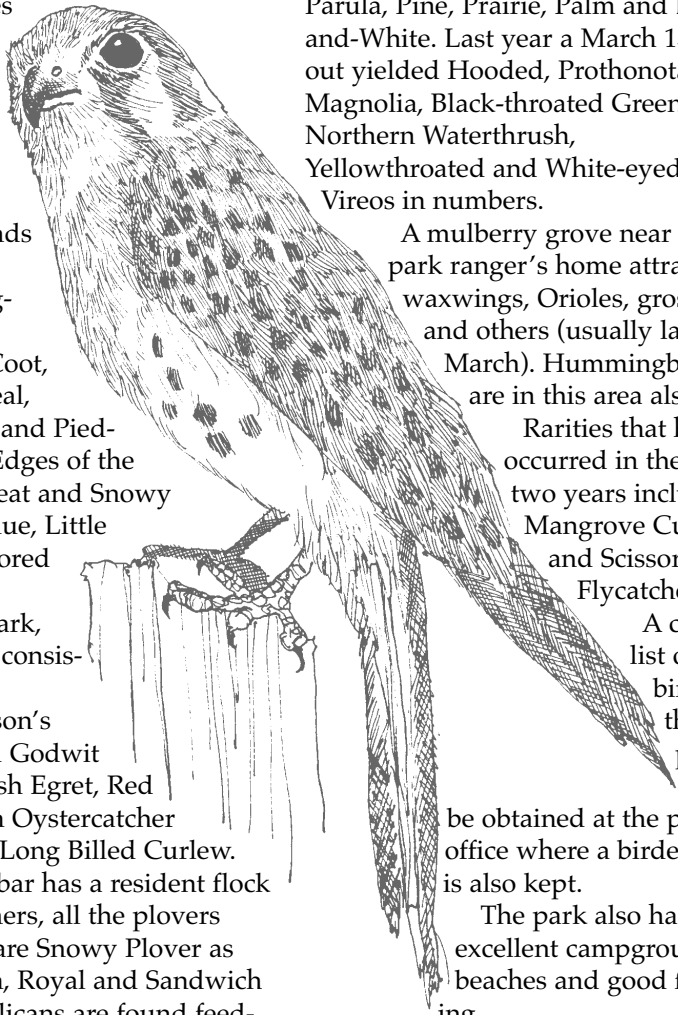
Rarities that have occurred in the past two years include Mangrove Cuckoo and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher.

A checklist of birds of the park can

be obtained at the park office where a birders log is also kept.

The park also has excellent campgrounds, beaches and good fishing.

Submitted by Dan Cinotti



## INSIDE...

*Controlling Purple Loosestrife*  
Page 2

•  
*Calendar*  
Page 3

•  
*New Members*  
Page 5

•  
*Biodiversity 2000*  
Page 6

•  
*David Sibley*  
Page 7

•  
*Membership Form*  
Page 7

# MENUNKATUCK AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

Mailing address:

MENUNKATUCK AUDUBON SOCIETY  
PO Box 214  
GUILFORD, CT 06437

- President:**.....Henry Ferris  
.....(245-4397)
- Vice-President:** . . Dorothy Holabird
- Secretary:** .....Catherine Ferguson
- Treasurer:**.....Brad Garber
- Secretary:** .....Cindi Kobak
- Directors:** .....Chuck Annicelli,  
Dan Cinotti, Pauline Garber,  
David Houston, Connie  
Mortensen, Bruce Reiber,  
Dennis Riordan
- Program:**.....Jerry Connolly
- Wildlife/**
- Conservation:**.....David Houston
- Connecticut Amphibian**
- Monitoring** .....Gary Cline
- Publicity:** .....Barbara Nugent
- Education:**.....Cindi Kobak  
.....Dorothy Holabird  
.....Dotty Young
- Membership:**.....Bruce Reiber
- Town Reps**
- Branford:**.....Lisa Santacroe
- East Haven:** .....Mary Quinlan
- Guilford:**.....Linda Anderson
- Madison:**.....Dave Houston
- Newsletter:**.....Dennis Riordan  
.....(387-2167)
- Webmaster:**.....Brad Garber
- E-mail:** .....  
.....menunkatuckas@snet.net

## Controlling Purple Loosestrife

After years of testing, the U. S. Department of Agriculture has approved release in the United States of Galerucella beetles that exclusively feed on Purple Loosestrife, that attractive but invasive alien plant that is taking over our wetlands because it has no natural enemies. Donna Ellis, of the Plant Sciences Department at UConn, is an expert and sole source of these beetles in Connecticut. She is looking for volunteers to help halt this invasion.

Donna has developed a simple approach to enable wetland owners to rear a crop of these beetles to release among their own stands of loosestrife, plus instructions on monitoring the progress of the beetles at controlling the invasion.

She has prepared two packets of materials for volunteers of the Connecticut Purple Loosestrife Biological Control Program that will be ready to be distributed in January.

Packet "A" will contain information on site monitoring in wetlands where biological control agents have been (or will be) released, and Packet "B" will

have information on rearing Galerucella leaf-feeding beetles for distribution in your local wetland. At the appropriate time next summer, she will provide the starter kit supply of beetles, free.

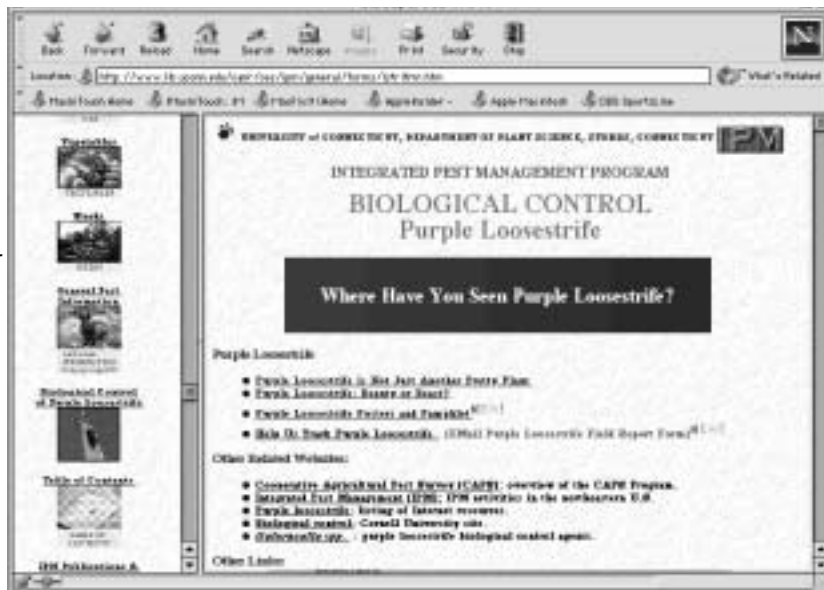
If you would like to receive one or both packets send your mailing address to:

Donna Ellis  
Dept. of Plant Science, U-67  
The University of Connecticut  
Storrs, CT 06269-4067  
phone: (860) 486-6448  
fax: (860) 486-0682

email: dellis@canr.cag.uconn.edu  
There is no charge for the packets.

For more information you can also visit the Purple Loosestrife website at <[www.lib.uconn.edu/canr/ces/ipm/general/forms/lstrifrm.htm](http://www.lib.uconn.edu/canr/ces/ipm/general/forms/lstrifrm.htm)>.

Thanks to  
Frank Haviland  
Hartford Audubon Society



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.

## Live Bats Featured at February Program

The February 9 meeting of MAS will feature *Live Bats of Connecticut* in a presentation by Geraldine Griswold.

On March 8, the ever-popular Sam Fried will return to present a slide-lecture show on Bolivia. Sam is a veteran birder who has led birding tours for many years. His photographs and articles have appeared in many magazines. The November, 1999 issue of *Wildbird* published "A Quiet Place" about birding on the Caribbean island of Bonaire.

The April 12 meeting will have Charles Remington, professor emeritus at Yale University, discussing the 1999 migration of Monarch Butterflies through Connecticut.



# 2000 Calendar

February 9, 2000

*Live Bats of Connecticut*

*Geraldine Griswold*

March 8, 2000

*Bolivia - The Lost World*

*Sam Fried*

April 12, 2000

*Connecticut Migration of  
Monarch Butterflies - 1999*

*Prof. Charles Remington*

Saturday, May 13, 2000

*Twelfth Annual Birdathon*

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.



## SAVE ON YOUR TAXES!

Use your state income tax refund to help save Connecticut's wildlife and plants. Their future is on the line – the "Endangered Species/Wildlife" Fund line on your tax return. Just check the box to make a donation and show your support. Your gift is deductible from next year's federal income tax.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

<http://dep.state.ct.us>

## Organize For Wildlife Diversity

Learn how you can help DEP's wildlife diversity programs survive and expand at a workshop at Dinosaur State Park, Rocky Hill on Saturday, February 12, 2000 from 9:30 - 12:00

The Connecticut DEP's Wildlife programs are facing a serious funding

crisis, due to factors which have been building for several years. If a solution can not be found, impacts on the Wildlife Unit, particularly Wildlife Diversity, (Non-Game) programs will be severe.

Fortunately, funding bills that are now moving through Congress, con-

cerning the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, would offer substantial matching funds for state nongame wildlife programs. Connecticut could gain \$4 million per year IF the state budget includes \$1 million in new matching funds for wildlife diversity programs. We feel that we have a very workable mechanism for creating this state match, but we need those who are concerned about Connecticut's wildlife and plant communities to express that concern to state lawmakers.

New funding for Wildlife Diversity programs would enable the DEP

- to provide better habitats for a wide range of plant and animal species,
- to fund research to better understand many species and their needs, and
- to conduct public outreach and education to foster public support for wildlife protection.

At the February 12th session, speakers will provide information on

- the DEP's Wildlife Diversity programs,
- the federal legislation pending in Congress,
- what we need to accomplish in the Connecticut General Assembly this year, and
- what concerned groups and individuals can do to strengthen wildlife programs.

Please join us on February 12th. Please RSVP to Lisa Santacroce at 860-527-6750 or at <lisactaud@aol.com>.

Directions to Dinosaur S.P.: Exit 23 off of I-91, go east a mile or so on West St (there will be signs).

### You're Invited to Participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count 2000! February 18-21, 2000

BirdSource received some 42,000 bird checklists during the second annual Great Backyard Bird Count last February. These reports came in from bird enthusiasts all across North America who "counted for the birds" by tallying those they saw at their feeders, local parks, and natural areas.

Great Backyard Bird Count 2000 marks the third year of the count. This concentrated bird-censusing effort creates immense snapshots of winter bird distribution and population status. From Alaska to Florida, Newfoundland to Hawaii, backyards "appear" on state-of-the-art BirdSource

maps displaying the whereabouts of our winter birds. This represents tremendous conservation potential as we soar into the new millennium. Reports from this year will be com-

bined with previous findings, allowing us to determine how different species have moved across the landscape over the last few years. This year's reports will also add to a tremendous long-term database that will allow us to detect broad-scale changes in bird populations. Please join us and citizen scientists across the continent as we count birds for Great Backyard Bird Count 2000!

Participation is encouraged for any and all of the count days. Directions are provided at the BirdSource website. Just go to <www.birdsource.org> and click on the "great Backyard Bird Count" button.

There is no fee and no registration. For more information, call the Cornell Lab of Ornithology toll-free 1-800-843-BIRD (2473).



## **“Hunters of the Sky” at Science Center of Connecticut Through June 14**

Discover the wonder of eagles, hawks, falcons, owls, ospreys and other birds of prey. The new Hunters of the Sky exhibit at the Science Center of Connecticut gives you a bird’s-eye view of a wildlife adventure and a rare, close-up look at high-quality raptor specimens. See the amazing diversity of raptors - where different species live and how they have adapted to their environments. Find out how they navigate and fly, how they nest and rear their young, and how they find and capture their prey. You can examine dissected owl pellets, investigate raptor injuries and treatments, and mimic an owl in the “hooting booth.” Hunters of the Sky is produced by the Science Museum of Minnesota.

The Gengras Planetarium is showing Learning to Fly through April 14, 2000 Let your spirits soar as Robin, a bird with many famous feathered friends, introduces you to the world

of flight in Learning to Fly. From the earliest myths to the Wright Brothers to the space shuttles, this laser show highlights almost everything that flies.

seniors, children and students with valid ID; Planetarium and laser shows are extra. Combination packages are available.

The Science Center of Connecticut



The Science Center hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday 10-5; Thursday 10-8; Sunday 12-5. The Science Center is also open Mondays during school holidays. It is closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter.

Admission is \$6 for adults; \$5 for

is located at 950 Trout Brook Drive, West Hartford, CT 06119-1407, Exit #43 (Park Road) off I-84.

For additional information call the Science Center at (860)231-2824 or visit the Web at <[www.sciencecenter-ct.org](http://www.sciencecenter-ct.org)>.

## **Volunteers Needed for MAS Board**

Menunkatuck Audubon Society needs you to become a member of the Board of Directors. We particularly need directors from East Haven, New Haven, and West Haven.

If you are interested, call Henry Ferris  
245-4397

## **Menunkatuck Welcomes New Members**

**Branford:** Sandra Cesa, Ms Graciela A Dunn, Jeffrey Mendenhall

**Guilford:** Harry Feinberg, Thomas V Sawtell, James Speth, Robert S White

**Madison:** Karen L Anderson, Joseph M Coates, Greg Haines, Patricia Meunier

**New Haven:** Erin Eberhardt, Eric DiMartino, Rachel Fertik, Drew McDermott, Karen Schnitzer, Joan Smith

**West Haven:** Ms Cynthia A Berry, George Curtin Jr, Ron Hofrichter, Georgianna Jette, Mrs Joan Montesi, Sonya Wulff

# Biodiversity 2000

## Know your natural neighbors



### ***Wandering Red Efts and Beaver Ponds***

The Red-spotted Newt (*Notophthalmus viridescens*) has what some would consider an unusual life cycle, even for a salamander. Many salamanders lay their eggs in water and once the larvae mature they leave their aquatic nursery to continue their lives on land. Some salamanders are completely terrestrial, living their entire lives, from egg to mature adult, on land. And some salamanders are completely aquatic, spending their lives in water. But the red-spotted newt is a different story.

**BIO BITS** Adult red-spotted newts are aquatic (though some will overwinter on land, especially if their pond dries up in the winter). They can live up to 15 years. They mate underwater and the females lay hundreds of eggs, one at a time, on submerged plant stems and leaves. The tiny larva that hatches from an egg matures in a few months, and its skin transforms from a smooth yellow-green to a rough-textured orange-red with small red spots encircled with black. It leaves the water to live in moist woodlands. Behold, a Red Eft is created! But wait. This is only the juvenile stage.

Unlike most other land-dwelling salamanders, the red eft is not a secretive creature and can often be seen walking along the forest floor during the day, especially after a summer rain. Its bright orange coloration warns predators that secretions in its skin are toxic and they had better leave it alone. It will spend two to five years, possibly up to nine years, living on land in this red eft stage, feeding on small invertebrates on the forest floor. And then another transformation begins.

As the red eft matures into an adult red-spotted newt, its coloration changes once again. What was once a brilliant orange juvenile becomes an olive-green adult. (It keeps the red spots encircled in black.) And, it heads back to the water.



If the larval and adult stages of the red-spotted newt are aquatic, why on earth does its juvenile stage move onto land? Well, an eft can travel great distances, by salamander standards, in the many years it spends as a juvenile. Its wanderings allow it to discover and colonize new bodies of water, such as beaver ponds. Some believe that the red-spotted newt has evolved this unusual life cycle to take advantage of changes in the landscape, especially those created by the North American beaver.

Submitted by Cindi Kobak

## David Sibley Attended Guilford H. S.

David Sibley, author of the soon to be published book *National Audubon Society Sibley Master Guide to Birds* was a student at Guilford High School from 1977 to 1979. Even then, David was planning to be an artist specializing in birds.

David participated in the Guilford High School Community Service Project as an artist to enhance schools in Guilford. If you wish to see David's early work, visit the high school library where he has painted a seaside mural.

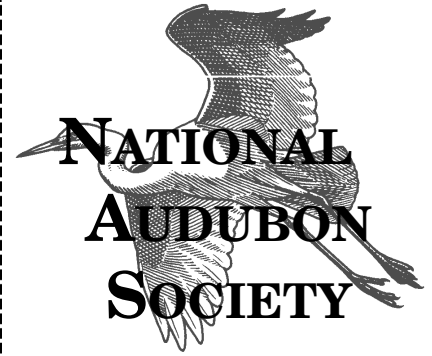
David, a master birder, was also a leader in the first annual Menunkatuck student Birdathon at Guilford High School and the funds raised were donated to the Faulkner Island Roseate Tern project. He also taught a current board member the basics of birding.

Don't miss this new publication!

Submitted by Dan Cinotti



Young David Sibley paints a mural of a seascape at Guilford High School. Dan Cinotti watches.



### 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.
- As a senior citizen or a student, I am eligible to join for only \$15.

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  
 Chapter Membership Data Center  
 P.O. Box 51005  
 Boulder CO 80323-1005

### LOCAL CHAPTER

Menunkatuck Audubon Society

D63 / 7XCH

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

**Menunkatuck on the Web:**

**[www.audubon.org/chapter/ct/mas/](http://www.audubon.org/chapter/ct/mas/)**

Menunkatuck Audubon Society  
PO Box 214  
Guilford, CT 06437

Non-Profit Org  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Guilford, CT  
Permit No. 22

# MENUNKATUCK

January **2000**



**PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER**

---

---

## **NEXT MEETING**

### **GERALDINE GRISWOLD**

### **LIVE BATS OF**

### **CONNECTICUT**

*Wednesday, February 9, 2000*  
*7:30 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Mail to:

Menunkatuck Audubon Society  
PO Box 214  
Guilford, CT 06437