

C.A.M.P. Surveys Local Amphibian Populations

C.A.M.P., the Connecticut Amphibian Monitoring Program, now in its seventh year of a 15-year program, is designed to monitor the populations of amphibians that live in several 2.5 square kilometer areas across the state. One site is located in the area of Opening Hill Rd. in Madison, which is known as the Podunk site. Data is collected from the surveys, submitted to the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, and then used to identify population trends that are affected by nearby roads, housing and development.

The activity peaks in the early spring during migration. A good time to look for evidence of amphibian presence across roadways is at night. During these nighttime migrations, spotted salamanders and wood frogs are on the move, looking for vernal pools in which to breed. Unfortunately, road mortality is always a threat and C.A.M.P. data sheets have a section for DOR, Dead on Road.

The daytime surveys which consist of "cover searches" often reveal other types of amphibians such as dusky, spotted, and two-lined salamanders. Red-backed salamanders are fairly common

and if you are lucky, a four-toed salamander will be found.

If you were to ask Dorothy what her most memorable C.A.M.P. moment was, she would probably recall the day she found a cluster of dusky salamander eggs within an intermittent streambed. Covered by only a few inches of running water, there they were, attached to the topside of a small flat rock, looking very much like pin head sized pearls attached with a slight strand of silk. After hamming it up for a few pictures, she placed them back exactly as they were found in hopes that they would hatch and become the subject of next year's data sheets. Not to be outdone, Cindi found an adult dusky salamander and we again photographed it, this time *(Continued on page 2.)*



Dorothy Holabird and Cindi Kobak show off and adult dusky salamander. Photo by John Picard

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MENUNKATUCK AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

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C.A.M.P. Surveys Continue

(Continued from page 1.)
using a skunk cabbage leaf as a background.

Becoming a C.A.M.P. volunteer is easy, the requirements include the ability to flip objects that lie on the forest floor and along streambeds, and then, carefully return the object to its original position. If you would like to be included on the list of volunteers, contact John Picard at <johnpicardiwc@aol.com>.

Submitted by John Picard



An adult dusky salamander poses on a skunk cabbage leaf. Photo by John Picard

**Support Menunkatuck
Audubon Society**

**Send your contribution to the
annual appeal today.**

**PO Box 214
Guilford, CT 06437**

Visit Menunkatuck's web site: www.menunkatuck.org

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.

Members' Slide Night at January Meeting

The January 12, 2005 meeting will feature *Members' Slide Night*. All members are invited to bring their favorite slides from any subject area, including travel, nature, wildlife or ecology. Each member may bring as few slides as they like up to 15. Here's your chance to show off those photography skills. Please call Bill Yule (203-457-1326) weekdays between 10 A.M. and 3 A.M. to make arrangements.

Also members can bring items for trade or sale as long as they have something to do with the issues of Audubon. These would include nature study books, field guides, art prints, photography, etc. We'll set up a display early and anyone who plans to bring stuff can come at 7:00 instead of 7:30.

At the February 9 meeting, artist, writer, sculptor, teacher and naturalist Robert Braunfield will present a program on the comeback and life history of the *Bluebird*



The March 9 meeting will feature Andy Brand presenting a program on *Butterflies*. He will discuss adults, larva, host plants and nectar sources. Andy is an amateur naturalist with a strong interest in native plants and attracting wildlife to yards. He is past president of the Connecticut Butterfly Association.

2005 Calendar

	<i>January 12, 2005</i>	
<i>Members' Slide Night</i>		
	<i>February 9, 2005</i>	
<i>Bluebirds</i>		<i>Robert Braunfield</i>
	<i>March 9, 2005</i>	
<i>Butterflies</i>		<i>Andy Brand</i>

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.

THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

FEBRUARY 18-21, 2005

Scientists and bird enthusiasts can learn a lot by knowing where the birds are. Now that winter has gripped much of the continent, what are our birds doing? Bird populations are dynamic, they are constantly in flux. We want to take a snapshot of North American bird populations and YOU can help us. Everyone's contribution is important. It doesn't matter whether you identify, count, and report the 5 species coming to your backyard feeder or the 75 species you see during a day's outing to a wildlife refuge. Your data can help us answer many questions:

- How will this winter's snow and cold temperatures influence bird populations?
- Where are the winter finches and other irruptive species?
- Will late winter movements of many songbird and waterfowl species be as far north as they were last year?

Visit <www.birdsource.org/gbbc/> or e-mail Dorothy Holabird at <HOLABI@cs.com> for more details.

Winter Field Trips

Winter Birds

Sunday, December 12, 2004 – 9 A.M.
Lower Connecticut River

Join us to explore areas around Old Saybrook and Old Lyme in search of wintering ducks, loons, eagles, etc. Meet at I-95 Exit 59 commuter lot to carpool at 9 A.M. or at the Dock and Dine parking lot in Old Saybrook at 9:30 A.M. Dress warmly for this half day trip. For further information, contact Gina Nichol at 203-453-6723 or e-mail sunrisebirding@aol.com.



Artist: Steven D'Amato

Eagle Hop

Saturday, January 8, 2005 – 10 A.M.
Lower Connecticut River

Bill Yule will lead a trip along the Connecticut River from Old Saybrook north in search of wintering ducks and eagles. Meet at Dock and Dine in Old Saybrook. For more info call Bill 203-457-1326 weekdays between 10 A.M. and 3 P.M.

The Bird Collection

Saturday, January 15, 2005 – 10 A.M.
Saturday, January 29, 2005 – 10 A.M.
Peabody Museum, New Haven

Kristof Zyskowski, ornithology collection manager at Peabody Museum, will take us behind the scenes to view the bird collection of skins, eggs, nests, and mounted birds. The Peabody collection includes about 70% of the world's species. There is a limit of ten people per session and preregistration is required; call Dennis Riordan 203-387-2167. Park behind the museum in

the lot off Whitney Avenue; meet at the entrance to the right of the new addition as you look at the museum from the parking lot. The collection is kept at 59°F; dress warmly.

Birding the Rhode Island Shoreline

Saturday, January 22, 2005 –
7 A.M. - 6 P.M.

This all day trip will take us to Sachuest Point, Beavertail State Park, Trustum Pond and Moonstone Beach in Rhode Island. We will search for wintering grebes, loons, scoters, scaup, purple sandpipers, harlequin ducks (a Sachuest specialty), gannets, hawks, owls and any rarities that are around. Dress warmly and bring lunch. Meet at 7 A.M. at the I-95 Exit 59 commuter lot to carpool. For further information, contact Gina Nichol at 203-453-6723 or e-mail sunrisebirding@aol.com.



New Haven Harbor Tour

Sunday, February 6, 2005 – 8:30 A.M.

New Haven Harbor to Milford

We will begin at the information booth at Long Wharf and work westward toward Milford with stops at Sandy Point, St. John's by the Sea, Oyster River and Milford Point. Meet at Long Wharf information booth at 8:30 A.M. For further information, contact Gina Nichol at 203-453-6723 or e-mail sunrisebirding@aol.com.

Connecticut River Eagle Festival
February 19-20
Chester Ferry Dock



Once again, Menunkatuck will provide spotting scopes at one of the prime eagle viewing sites during Connecticut Audubon's major winter event. Other activities will take place in Essex. For full Festival information call 1-800-714-7201 or visit <www.ctaudubon.org>.

Seals and other Winter Wildlife

Sunday, March 6, 2005 -- 8 A.M.

Hammonasset Beach State Park

Search for wintering birds as well as harbor seals and other wildlife. Meet at the park entrance at 8 A.M. Dress warmly for this half-day trip. For further information, contact Gina Nichol at 203-453-6723 or e-mail sunrisebirding@aol.com.

Winter Creature Cruise

Saturday, March 19, 2005 --
10 a.m.- 4 p.m

Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk.

This all day trip will include a behind the scenes tour of the aquarium, a boat trip out into Long Island Sound to view wintering seals as they haul out at low tide, and the IMAX movie "ROAR: Lions of the Kalahari."

Meet at Union Station in New Haven at 8:00 or at the Aquarium at 9:45. The cost of this trip will be approximately \$30.

Volunteers Sought for the 2005 Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey

Volunteers are being sought for the 2005 Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey - The DEP Wildlife Division is looking for volunteers to assist with the 2005 Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey in Connecticut. Bald eagles migrate south from the northern states during winter to areas of open water where they are able to catch fish, their main food item. Cold weather conditions, which keep most waterways to the north covered with ice, mean that higher numbers of eagles will be counted here. Each year since 1979, volunteers from private conservation organizations, the DEP, and the general public have helped conduct the Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey by recording all eagles seen at areas traditionally used by eagles, as well as areas of suitable wintering

habitat.

The 2005 survey will be held on Saturday, January 8, from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. In 2004, 92 bald eagles were recorded statewide. The Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey is not a complete census of the entire wintering population in Connecticut, but an index of the species' use of Connecticut, which can be compared year to year. The survey is conducted nationwide during a target time period and is coordinated by the U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey, and Forest and Rangeland Ecosystem

Science Center at the Snake River Field Station in Oregon.

If you would like to participate in the 2005 survey, please e-mail your name and mailing address to Wildlife Division biologist Julie Victoria - julie.victoria@po.state.ct.us.



Shepaug Eagle Observation Area Now Open

The Shepaug Eagle Observation Area opened on December 26. It will be open to the public for the 20th consecutive winter season and the viewing hours are Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays from December 26, 2004, through March 16, 2005, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. - strictly by advance reservation. (It is closed on January 1.) Make reservations by calling 1-800-368-8954, Tuesday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Possibly the largest concentration of wintering eagles in Connecticut may be seen perching, fishing or flying at this site on the Housatonic River. Other birds seen in the area include red-tail hawks, sharp-shinned hawks, goshawks, great blue herons and a variety of waterfowl

Visitors gather in a blind with spotting scopes set up to provide excellent viewing. NU staff members and volunteers from the Connecticut Audubon will be on hand to assist viewers, provide information and answer questions. Individuals and school groups are welcome.

The Shepaug Dam, on the Housatonic River in Southbury, especially appeals to the wintering birds because the hydroelectric station's operation prevents water from freezing, making it easy to feed on fish below the dam.

Menunkatuck Audubon Society thanks Jerry Connolly for thirteen years of outstanding programs.



Biodiversity 2005

Know your natural neighbors



The Very Vocal Crow

Most people can identify the American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*). A large black bird with a thick bill, the ubiquitous crow walks and flies through our lives on a regular basis. It ranges throughout Connecticut, common in urban, suburban and rural areas. It likes open areas with trees, at home in both farm country and city parks. A member of the corvid family, the crow is considered one of the most intelligent species in the bird world.

BIO BITS

Though its loud cawing call is easily identified, its repertoire of other vocal sounds would surprise many. Springtime crow vocalizations include a rattling call, often accompanied by a bobbing of the head, believed to be a courtship display. Dry clicking, squeaky-hinge noises and other fascinating sounds play a mysterious role in the communications between members of a crow flock. And in captivity crows have been known to imitate human voices.

Another crow species found in our area is the fish crow (*Corvus ossifragus*). This slightly smaller cousin of the American crow inhabits areas along the coast and large rivers. It is extremely difficult to distinguish the two species by sight, but if the crow's cawing call sounds nasal to you, you have probably found a fish crow. (Juvenile American crows have a nasally sound as well, so, depending on the time of year, it could be either species.)

When you hear several crows cawing in one area, pay attention. Their loud, insistent calls may be a sign that an owl is roosting nearby. The crows will call in their brethren from surrounding areas to join them in the harassment of the nocturnal bird of prey. They will perch on adjacent branches and collectively yell at the hidden predator, hoping to encourage it to move on. This behavior, known as "mobbing," often forces the owl to expose itself as it flies off in search of a quieter roost site, providing a great opportunity for us to observe a beautiful, secretive bird. Thank you, crows.



Submitted by Cindi Kobak
Illustration by Mike DiGiorgio

Saturday Morning Eagle Watches

Saturdays, January 15, 22, and 29, and
February 5, 12, and 19

7:45 A.M.

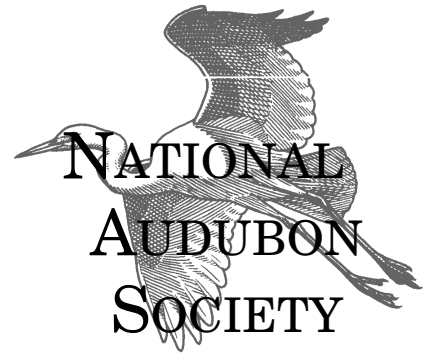


Leader: Jerry Connolly

Meet at the Audubon Shop, Madison

See Bald Eagles from a variety of locations along the Connecticut River. There is a limit of 35 and pre-registration is required. The price is \$20 and includes soup and sandwich lunch at Oliver's Tavern in Essex.

For complete details call
The Audubon Shop at 203-245-9056.



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

LOCAL CHAPTER

Menunkatuck Audubon Society

D63/7XCH

Menunkatuck welcomes new members

Menunkatuck Audubon Society welcomes the following new members:

East Haven: B McCarroll Family

Guilford: Gene Bishop, John Metcalf

Madison: John P Corwin, John K Page

New Haven: J M Dellcave, Marilyn

Kozin, Sherman H Lohnes, Irving

Stolberg, John Weiser, Charles Wood

West Haven: Ms Debra Johnson

Connecticut
Rare Bird Alerts
(203)254-3665

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MENUNKATUCK

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NEXT MEETING

MEMBER SLIDE NIGHT

Wednesday, January 12, 2005
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: _____

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