

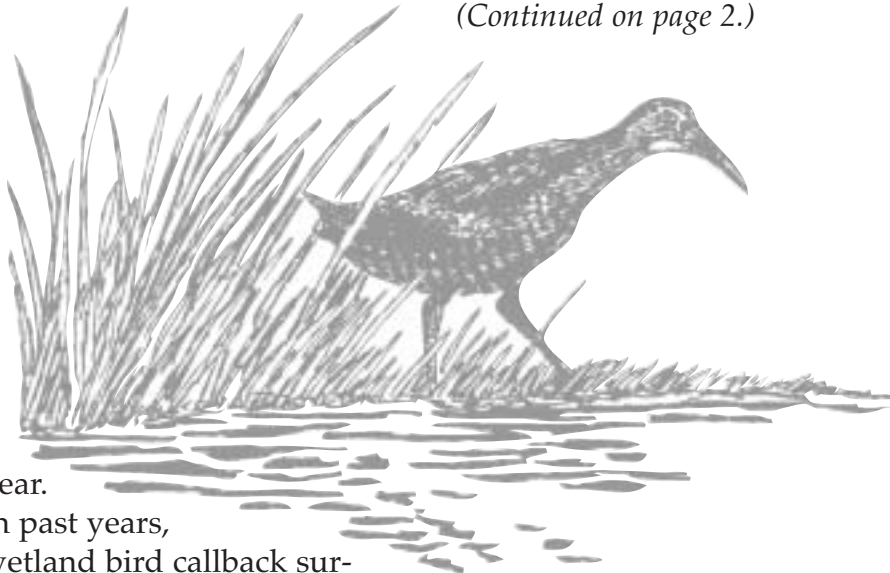
New Sites Checked During Wetland Bird Callback Survey

Volunteers needed for 2004 survey

The 2003 wetland bird callback survey can be considered a success despite the low number of volunteers (8) and sites surveyed (11). Four of the nine target species of wetland birds were observed during surveys, with clapper rails, pied-billed grebes and willets each being observed at three separate locations. Virginia rails were detected at only one site this

species of wetland birds. However, this year, surveys were conducted at six new sites, yielding two new locations of pied-billed grebes. Hopefully, with increased volunteer participation in the future, the surveys can be expanded to other areas and more potential nesting locations for these wetland birds can be found.

(Continued on page 2.)



year. In past years, wetland bird callback surveys were conducted only at sites known to historically contain some of the target

Virginia rails were heard at one of the sites surveyed during the 2003 wetland bird callback survey. Artist: Steven D'Amato

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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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**Wetland Bird
Callback Survey**

(Continued from page 1.)

**What is the Wetland Bird
Callback Project?**

The wetland bird callback project was developed to assist in the inventory of state-listed birds that prefer wetland habitats. These birds are secretive by nature and are often missed by standard surveys. The wetland bird callback project helps pinpoint likely nesting locations for birds like the pied-billed grebe, American and least bitterns, the common moorhen and rails. Knowing where these birds occur will aid in the conservation of their important wetland habitats.

What's Involved?

Participants survey wetland locations statewide, twice in May, twice in June and once in July, during either peak morning or evening activity periods. A recorded tape of wetland bird songs is played and responses to the taped calls are noted. Surveys can be done on foot or by watercraft and by one person or a two or three

person team. Detailed knowledge of wetland birds is not as important as enthusiasm and an enjoyment of wetland areas.

How Can You Get Involved?

If you would like to participate in the wetland bird callback project, please contact Geoffrey Krukar of the Wildlife Diversity Program by calling 860-675-8130 or send email to geoffrey.krukar@po.state.ct.us. Volunteers will be provided with survey materials and with help in selecting survey areas. Having a portable tape player, canoe, kayak or pair of waders for this project is helpful, but not essential.

Written by Geoffrey Krukar, DEP's Wildlife Diversity Program
Reprinted from the DEP's *Connecticut Wildlife*, November/December 2003

<i>Species</i>	<i>Number of survey sites heard at</i>
American Bittern	0
Least Bittern	0
Virginia Rail	1
Sora	0
Clapper Rail	3
King Rail	0
Black Rail	0
Common Moorhen	0
Pied-billed Grebe	3
Coot	0
Willet	3

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.

March April Meetings

Ted Gilman of the Greenwich Audubon Center will describe *The World of Woodpeckers* on March 10.

Menunkatuck Audubon and the Branford Land Trust are sponsoring a special meeting on March 24 to present the findings of last September's *Branford Biodiversity Day*. Suzanne Botta will show photos taken by members of the Coastal Camera Club as she discusses the species found during the 24-hour bioblitz.

On April 14, Paul Rego, DEP's Furbearer Program Biologist will present a program on *The Bears of Connecticut*.

2004 Calendar

March 10, 2004

The World of Woodpeckers

Ted Gilman

March 24, 2004

Branford Biodiversity Report

Suzanne Botta

April 14, 2004

The Bears of Connecticut

Paul Rego

May 8, 2004

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.

Menunkatuck Audubon Society Annual Meeting Wednesday, April 14 2003 —Elections—

President – SuZanne Botta
Vice-president – Bill Yule
Treasurer – Connie Mortensen
Secretary – Catherine Ferguson
Directors – Henry Ferris,
Dorothy Holabird, Cindi Kobak,
John Picard, Dennis Riordan

MAS Scholarship Offered to High School Seniors

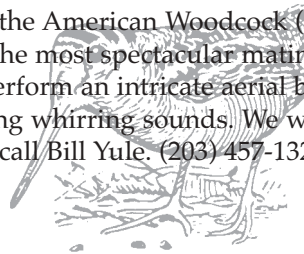
MAS will again be giving out one or two scholarships to deserving high school seniors. We are looking for students who have, during their school years, shown an interest in nature studies and intend to make a career out of acquiring knowledge about nature, the environment, ecology – in short, life on earth – and put that knowledge to good use.

Timberdoodle Courtship Display

March 21 – 6:00 PM

McKinney National Wildlife Refuge
Salt Meadow Unit, Westbrook

The courtship display of the American Woodcock (sometimes called the Timberdoodle) is one of the most spectacular mating rituals of all North American birds. Males perform an intricate aerial ballet all the while making a series of whistles and wing whirring sounds. We will have to limit this trip to 12 people. For more info call Bill Yule. (203) 457-1326.



Special Birding Spots in Florida

Birders heading for Orlando or Daytona Beach, Florida have two quite interesting habitats to visit in west Volusia County, Lyonia Preserve and Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge. At Lyonia Preserve Florida scrub jays are an almost guaranteed species. Lake Woodruff is excellent for raptors, herons, wintering ducks, limpkin, and nesting bald eagles and sandhill cranes. Alligators are abundant.

The Florida Scrub Jay is a 12-inch long crestless blue and gray jay. Extremely gregarious (they will readily perch on the heads of human visitors), they are a threatened species because of habitat destruction. Lyonia Preserve is being restored to scrub habitat for the jays.

The Preserve is in Deltona,

about 25 miles west of Daytona Beach and 30 miles east of Orlando. It is a 380-acre parcel that Volusia County is restoring from overgrown pine and oak habitat, that limited the movement of most animals, to a valuable scrub plant community similar to that which existed before human intervention. The restoration project began about 12 years ago with the removal of sand pines and oaks, opening the area for scrub plants to grow. In a natural scrub ecosystem, fire maintains the ecosystem and prevents any one plant from dominating. Because the preserve is surrounded by homes and businesses, fire would be unsafe. Therefore, a variety of other methods are used to minimize the regrowth of the sand pines and oaks.

The result is a more diverse area with some pines and scrub oaks and much open area. This open area has meant that Florida scrub jays now find Lyonia Preserve a suitable habitat. Twelve years ago there were no scrub jays in the preserve; now there are around one hundred. The areas that have been opened up are used by the scrub jays for feeding, nesting, and refuge. In the summer the jays gather oak acorns, bury them, and retrieve them during the winter. Other birds that can be seen at the preserve include red-headed woodpeckers, great-horned owls, barred owls, and wood ducks.

Lake Woodruff NWR is near DeLeon Springs, about 15 miles from Deltona. The refuge contains more than 21,500 acres and is comprised of 12,100 acres of freshwater marsh, 5,800 acres of hardwood swamp, 2,400 acres of upland, and more than 1,000 acres of lakes, streams, and canals. The St. Johns River forms the western boundary. Numerous waterways allow you to travel within all of these water bodies. John James Audubon visited this area in 1832. The bird count at the refuge is 215 species.

The Public Use Area of Lake Woodruff includes three impoundments that that are



During the winter Florida scrub jays eat acorns that they buried earlier.
Photo by Dennis Riordan

maintained for migratory waterfowl and wading birds. The eight miles of trails along the levees offer views of water birds such as ducks, moorhens and coots, wading birds such as egrets and heron, and shore-birds, including black-necked stilts.

The West Volusia Audubon Society has constructed an observation tower that provides an excellent overview of the refuge. The area around the tower is frequented by black vultures that are reluctant to move for people walking by. Limpkin are almost surely to be seen in the pools beyond the tower. At the far end of the impoundments a trail leads through pine woods with pine warblers and, in winter,

American robins.

Other areas of the refuge are accessible only by boat. Canoe rentals are available from nearby DeLeon Springs State Recreation Area.

Lyonia Preserve is behind the Deltona Public Library, 2150 Eustace Ave., Deltona. Take exit 53C (Saxon Blvd.) off of I-4 and travel 3.1 miles east to Providence Blvd. (CR 4155). Turn left and go north 3 miles to Eustace Ave. Turn left again onto Eustace and pull into the parking lot of the Deltona Public Library on the left side of the road. The trailhead is located behind the library. Great Florida Birding Trail signs lead the way to the preserve. The best time to visit Lyonia Preserve is before 10

a.m.

Lake Woodruff is located 25 miles west of Daytona Beach, and 7 miles north of DeLand on U.S. Highway 17 near DeLeon Springs. From Highway 17 in DeLeon Springs, turn west and go one block to Grand Avenue. Turn south on Grand and go approximately 3 blocks to Mud Lake Road. The refuge is sign-posted on both U.S. 17 and Grand Ave. to direct the way to the refuge and headquarters office. Lake Woodruff is best visited in the early morning or late afternoon.

Submitted by Dennis Riordan



Limpkins can be seen feeding at Lake Woodruff NWR.
Photo by Dennis Riordan

Menunkatuck
Audubon Society
Sixteenth Annual
Birdathon
Saturday, May 8

