

# MENUNKATUCK March 2005

THE NEWSLETTER OF MENUNKATUCK AUDUBON SOCIETY, A CHAPTER OF NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

## *“Identification and Management of Invasive Plants” Workshop Scheduled for May 21*

Members of land trusts, garden clubs, town conservation and inland wetland commissions; public works employees; landscape architects; scout leaders; and educators are invited to attend a workshop on the identification and management of invasive plants on May 21, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Bauer Park in Madison.

This workshop will focus on invasive, non-native plants in Connecticut. Donna Ellis, from the Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group, will present information on why these exotic intruders are invasive, describe plant traits to identify invasives in the field, discuss management options for control, and suggest alternative non-invasive plants that can be used in the landscape. Dave Roach, from Aquatic Habitat Services in Madison, will give a tour of the work currently being done at Bauer Park to control invasive plants on the property.

The workshop will include a PowerPoint slide show, hands-on demonstrations with live plant materials and invasive references, and an outdoor walk through Bauer Park to witness first-hand these exotic invaders, how they are impacting our natural areas, and the control methods that can be used to eradicate them.

Space is limited to 25 partici-

pants. A fee of \$25.00 will be charged and pre-registration is required. For further information, please contact Cindi Kobak, Education chairperson, at 203-457-1699.



**Purple Loosestrife can overrun wetlands thousands of acres in size. Image from King County, WA Noxious Weed List.**

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## March, April Meetings Are Changed

The March and April indoor meetings have been changed. On March 9 Claudio Vidal will help us *Explore the Birds of Chile*. Claudio lives in Punta Arenas, the most southerly city in Chile. He has been birdwatching since the age of twelve. He has studied marine biology and is very interested in the pelagic birdlife and marine mammals that occur in the Humboldt Current, Patagonia and Antarctica. Claudio leads birdwatching and natural history tours throughout Chile. He is also currently working on a *Field Guide to the Birds of Chile* with other Chilean birders and is author of *Birds of the Beagle Channel and Cape Horn*. He is involved in several nature-based tourism projects and the new editorial challenges of his company, Fantastico Sur.



On April 13 Brendan Hanrahan, author and publisher, will take us through 200 years of astonishing discoveries about Connecticut's own earth history, and talk about day trips we can take to sites close to home to see the geology, paleontology and ecology concepts come to life. The combination of its extraordinary past and small size makes Connecticut one of the best places in the world to discover earth history. Even before Lewis & Clark left on their journey west, local scientists were at work exploring the state. Today, its natural history is known in extraordinary detail. One might drive for days in other states and see just a fraction of what can be found in Connecticut in an afternoon.

A book signing immediately follows for his new Road to Discovery Series on which the talk is based.

# 2005 Calendar

March 9, 2005

*Exploring the Birds of Chile*

Claudio Vidal

April 13, 2005

*Exploring Two Centuries of  
Astonishing Discoveries in Connecticut*

Brendan Hanrahan

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 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 pre-  
serves and watchable  
wildlife.**



# Winter-Spring Field Trips

## 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. Preregistration is required. Call Suzanne Botta at 203-315-4816.



## All Audubon Day Saturday, April 2, 2005 - 9 AM - 3 PM

### Audubon Center in Greenwich

Join other members, chapter leaders, volunteers, Audubon staff and Board members at the first "All Audubon Day." See article on page 5 for details.

## Spring Wildflowers and Early Butterflies

### Sunday, April 24, 2005 - 10 A.M. Giuffrida Park, Meriden

Explore Giuffrida Park, Westfield Road in Meriden for fantastic spring wildflowers and early butterflies of trap rock ridges. This is a joint field trip with the Connecticut Butterfly Association. For complete directions and further information call Bill Yule at 203-457-1326 during the day Monday - Friday 10 A.M. to 3 P.M. If there is any question about the weather, call Bill Yule at 203-457-1326.



## International Dawn Chorus Day Sunday, May 1, 2005 - 5 A.M. North Guilford

Join the early birds of Menunkatuck Audubon Society for a celebration of International Dawn Chorus Day, an annual celebration of the world's oldest wake-up call "the dawn chorus" and the beauty of bird song. The day is an international event, celebrated as far away as France, Italy, Pakistan, South Africa and New Zealand. Meet on Beaver Head Road at the turn-around at entrance to Lane's Pond Road (private gated dirt road) in Guilford at 5 A.M. (sunrise is at 5:48 A.M.). For complete directions and further information

call Bill Yule at 203-457-1326 during the day Monday - Friday 10 A.M. to 3 P.M. If there is any question about the weather, call Bill Yule at 203-457-1326. For more information on International Dawn Chorus Day, go to: <http://www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/urbanwt/idcdsite/>

## Warblers and Neotropical Migrants Saturday, May 7, 2005 -7:30 A.M.

### East Rock Park, New Haven

East Rock Park is one of the premier spots in New England to see the "butterflies of the bird world," wood warblers. It is



possible to see as many as twenty different species of warblers in a single morning here. Meet at parking lot of Eli Whitney Museum. For further information call Bill Yule at 203-457-1326 during the day Monday - Friday 10 A.M. to 3 P.M. If there is any question about the weather, call Bill Yule at 203-457-1326.

## Birdathon

### Saturday, May 14, 2005

All Menunkatuck Audubon members will receive a mailing describing this important birding and fund-raising activity. Stay tuned for updates on our most important bird watching event of the year.

## Peak of Migration Spring Bird Walk

### Saturday, May 28, 2005 7:45 A.M. Hammonasset Beach State Park

Start Memorial Day weekend with

a morning trip to Hammonasset. We'll look for warblers, songbirds and shorebirds during the high point of migration at one of the most productive bird watching sites in Connecticut. The park charges a parking fee unless you have a season pass. Meet at the I-95, Exit 61 (Route 79) commuter lot (north of the highway) to car pool at 7:45 A.M. or at the park entrance at 8 A.M. If there is any question about the weather, call Gina Nichol at 203-453-6724.



**Butterflies and Dragonflies**  
**June 12, 2005 - 9 A.M. to 11:30 A.M.**  
**Bauer Park, Madison**

Explore the rolling meadows and farm ponds of Bauer Park in Madison with Bill Yule and Cindi Kobak as we search for butterflies and dragonflies. This trip is for beginners, families and children of all ages as well as more advanced naturalists. No special equipment is needed but binoculars are strongly suggested. The emphasis is on field identification and natural history. Nets are optional. Some specimens will be netted and proper handling techniques demonstrated so the insects can be viewed and released unharmed. The trip is from 9 - 11:30 AM with an option to bring a lunch to enjoy by one of the ponds as we watch dragonflies. Bauer Park is located on Copse Rd.

in Madison a short distance off route 95 at exit 61 (Route 79). Go north on Route 79 and take the first left, Hunter's Trail to the end and right onto Copse Rd. For complete directions and further information call Bill Yule at 203-457-1326 during the day Monday - Friday 10 A.M. to 3 P.M. If there is any question about the weather, call Bill Yule at 203-457-1326.



## Don't Miss the Gathering of the Flock on April 2

On April 2, 2005 the first-ever gathering of all of the Audubon family in Connecticut is set to take place at Audubon's new Kimberlin Nature Education Center in Greenwich. This will be an exciting day, filled with interesting and informative speakers, plenty of time to network and share experiences and ideas, and opportunities to join our naturalists in the field. A \$20 registration fee will help cover the costs of organizing the event, including beverages, breakfast items, and a buffet lunch.

The day begins at 8:30 A.M. with coffee and an opportunity to greet old friends; see live bird demonstrations; and view a wide array of exhibits and displays featuring Chapter activities, Connecticut-based Centers and Sanctuaries, and featured Audubon programs. Meet noted author Tom Anderson and have the opportunity for

him to sign your personal copy of his new book about Long Island Sound.

Share your thoughts on issues affecting birds, wildlife, and habitat and/or positioning Audubon for the future as part of an hour-long open mike session. This is your chance to help shape the future of Audubon Connecticut for the next 100 years!

Enjoy a lively and informative keynote address by Tom Anderson—author of "This Fine Piece of Water" about Long Island Sound and a former reporter for the Gannett newspapers. Hear about Audubon's new Long Island Sound Campaign, Important Bird Area Program and from Chapters about some of the activities they are involved in. We'll wrap up the formal sessions at 3:00 P.M. with a panel responding to the thoughts generated in the open mike session. Naturalist-guided walks on the Center grounds

will be available following the formal program for those that would like to stretch their legs, breathe in the fresh spring air and enjoy nature up close at the sanctuary.

Come help us celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Audubon and revel in the grassroots power of this unique organization! We hope to see you there!

To register, please mail a check in the amount of \$20 per person payable to Audubon Connecticut, 613 Riversville Road, Greenwich Connecticut 06831. Include the names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of those attending. In the memo section please write "April 2 All-Audubon event."

For additional information, contact Carolyn Hughes at (203) 264-5098 or [chughes@audubon.org](mailto:chughes@audubon.org).

# Biodiversity 2005

## Know your natural neighbors



### *Coffee – It's for the Birds*

Many of our gorgeous woodland birds have migrated south to spend the winter in tropical forests. The scarlet tanager, Baltimore oriole, rose-breasted grosbeak, wood thrush and American redstart (pictured here) have returned to their favorite wintering grounds in Central and South America to feast among the lush vegetation of the forest understory and canopy. What did they find upon their arrival?

### **BIO BITS**

It is estimated that Americans drink about 300 million cups of coffee a day. As demand for this morning kick-start grows, demand for coffee farmlands in Central and South America continues to grow as well. What does this have to do with our beloved woodland birds? Read on.

Thirty years ago, farmers across the world cultivated arabica coffee beans (*Coffea arabica*), an Ethiopian species that loves shade. Grown under a canopy of forest trees, arabica coffee, known as shade-grown coffee, is farmed in harmony with the natural landscape. Though a shade-grown coffee farm is disturbed land managed by humans, its practice of planting the coffee plants under the native tropical forest trees ensures that leaf litter continues to enrich the soil and that a variety of tree species provides birds with a rich array of insects, fruits and nectar. And the forest holds onto the soil, preventing erosion on mountainous slopes.

Today, higher yields are required to meet the demands of our caffeine-dependent, latte-sipping society. Intensive coffee farming now requires that the lush tropical forests be clear-cut to grow miles and miles of sun-tolerant coffee varieties. This monoculture (single species) crop requires huge amounts of chemical fertilizers to feed the barren soil, as well as toxic pesticides to control insects. With the trees gone, soil erosion is prevalent and a dry season may require the replacement of much of the coffee crop. Needless to say, this type of cropland offers nothing to birds or other wildlife. In fact, studies in Mexico and Colombia show that sun-grown coffee plantations harbor almost 97 percent fewer bird species than shade-grown coffee farms.

Thankfully, shade-grown coffee farms still exist, as independent farmers, determined to produce a sustainable product on healthy lands, continue to protect vital habitat for our migratory birds. It is up to us to support their efforts by purchasing their products and forgoing coffee that is grown on clear-cut forestland. Request that your local coffee shop, specialty or grocery store carry shade-grown coffee certified by the Rainforest Alliance or Bird Friendly programs. These programs ensure that the coffee is shade-grown (Rainforest Alliance also requires fair wages for workers and soil conservation practices, while Bird Friendly standards require crops to be organically grown).

Our actions today will determine whether our beautiful migratory birds find a place to stay next winter and every winter thereafter.

Submitted by Cindi Kobak



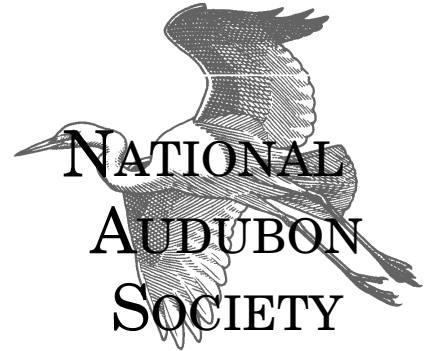
Photo courtesy of Mike Danzenbaker [www.avesphoto.com/website/NA/home.htm](http://www.avesphoto.com/website/NA/home.htm)

Saturday Morning Birding at Hammonasset  
Saturdays, starting April 16  
7:50 A.M.

Leader: Jerry Connolly  
Meet at the Audubon Shop, Madison  
Every Saturday morning through June,  
Jerry will lead birders through  
Hammonasset to see returning sea birds,  
shore birds, birds of prey, and songbirds.

There is a \$4.00 fee.

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

MAS Scholarship Offered to High School Seniors

MAS will again be giving out a scholarship to a deserving high school senior. 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. See your guidance counselor or write for an application to Menunkatuck Scholarship, PO Box 214, Guilford, CT 06437.

The Menunkatuck Board of Directors thanks  
Catherine Ferguson for her years of service to  
MAS as Secretary of the Society.

Menunkatuck welcomes new members

Menunkatuck Audubon Society welcomes the following new members:

**Branford:** Mike Kavanaugh, Beatrice Wallerstein

**Guilford:** Ann Adams, L Marvin Levine, Margaret W Smith

**Madison:** Mr-Mrs Robert J Bastian, Kelly Festo, Christine L Howe, Clifford Peterson

**New Haven:** Asha L Bhandary, Andrea Johnson, Lisa Santiago

Connecticut  
Rare Bird Alerts  
(203)254-3665

Menunkatuck Audubon Society  
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# MENUNKATUCK

March **2005**



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## NEXT MEETING

EXPLORING THE BIRDS  
OF CHILE  
Claudio Vidal

Wednesday, March 9, 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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