

MENUNKATUCK May 2000

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

Listen to the Sound 2000

If you care about Long Island Sound, we urge you testify one of the ten "Listen to the Sound" citizens' hearings that National Audubon Society is organizing around the Sound in partnership with Save the Sound and the Regional Plan Association, between Memorial Day and June 29. Menunkatuck Audubon Society is proud to be a local co-sponsor of the New Haven hearing. The hearing will be on Thursday, June 1 at 7:00 p.m. at Jones Auditorium,

Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, 123 Huntington St., New Haven.

The purpose of the hearings is to help create a blueprint for a Long Island reserve system – a comprehensive system of permanently protected

coastal open space and underwater lands around the estuary. Public testimony will help establish a compelling record of citizen concern for decision-makers at every level of government. It will help establish a consensus on what lands to protect and how, and it will focus public awareness on the need for stewardship of our shorelines.

The sponsors will record all proceedings on audiotape and prepare a Citizens Agenda Report on their find-

ings. The Agenda will contain summaries of each hearing, and, based on the testimony received, a list of priority sites and a blueprint for creating the reserve system. The sponsors will then present the report to elected and agency officials in Washington, Albany, Hartford and towns around the Sound. If you testify, you will receive a summary report and an invitation to a conference with key government officials in 2001 to discuss how to translate the reserve into reali-

ty. This process proved extremely successful ten years ago, when Audubon created the first Listen to the Sound campaign. The vision and major recommendations from those

hearings, as articulated in the 1990 Citizens' Agenda, laid the foundation of the long term federal-state Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for the Sound, which was adopted in 1994. They also gave rise to the Long Island Sound Watershed Alliance, the first Sound-wide grass-roots coalition for the restoration and conservation of Long Island Sound.

(Please see Sound Hearings on Page 2.)

Our vision for Long Island Sound

"...is of waters that are clean, clear, safe to swim in and charged with life. It is a vision of waters nourished and protected by extensive coastal wetlands, of publicly accessible, litter-free beaches and preserves, and of undeveloped islands of abundant and diverse wildlife, of flourishing commercial fisheries, of harbors accessible to the boating public, and of a regional consciousness and way of life that protects and sustains the ecosystem."

**Listen to the Sound:
A Citizens Agenda 1990**

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Sound Hearings

MENUNKATUCK AUDUBON SOCIETY

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(Continued from Page 1.)

Long Island Sound urgently needs a comprehensive system of open space protection to safeguard habitat and water quality and to expand and enhance public access to the Sound.

Loss of essential habitat (breeding areas, food sources, and shelter) have diminished the abundance and diversity of the Sound's wildlife and the productivity of its fisheries. Paving the land's surface and hardening the Sound's edges have increased polluted run off and decreased the land's capacity to absorb and breakdown pollutants before they wash into the Sound.

Whether you are a child or an adult, and whether you speak in a private or official capacity, your vision

and concerns for the coastal lands of the Sound, especially those parts of the Sound shore that you know and treasure.

Come speak at the hearing. You will be allowed only five minutes for oral testimony, but may supplement what you say in writing and other documentation. You may also send written testimony (by email, fax, or surface mail) up to June 30.

The address for sending testimony or for more information about the hearings is:

J. K. Moffat, Coordinator
Listen to the Sound 2000
P.O. Box 51, Cos Cob, CT 06807
203 629-1248
F: 203 622-0016,
email: Its@mindspring.com

The Reserve Concept

Priority sites for protection could include:

- critical land and underwater habitat, with limited access;
- research sites, with limited access;
- potential habitat restoration sites;
- important bird habitat;
- coastal watershed buffer lands;
- beaches and coastal park land for public access;
- publicly accessible docks and boat launch areas;
- reclaimable urban waterfronts for public access;
- lookout sites for public access;
- lands integral to public vistas of the Sound;
- historically significant waterfront sites;
- historically and educationally significant coastal lands.

Protective mechanisms could include:

- federal, state, municipal and private funding sources and partnerships;
- public and private stewardship and partnerships;
- purchase of fee title or easements from willing sellers;
- state and local planning and regulatory programs;
- smart growth initiatives.

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.

New England Birds Are Subject of Next Meeting

The decline of bird species in a wide range of North American habitats—forests, prairies, shrublands, mountain regions, marshes, and deserts—has inspired two decades of intense scientific study of bird ecology and conservation. Robert A. Askins, professor of zoology and chair of the zoology department at Connecticut College has written a new book, *Restoring North America's Birds, Lessons from Landscape Ecology*, illustrated by Julie Zickefoose, that pulls together recent research on bird species and habitats to show how basic ecological principles apply in seemingly different situations. On June 14, Bob will address some of these issues as they relate specifically to New England.

All meetings are at the Nathanael Greene Community Center on Route 77 in Guilford and begin at 7:30 p.m.

2000 Calendar

Saturday, May 13, 2000

Twelfth Annual Birdathon

June 14, 2000

***Conservation of Open Country
Birds in New England Habitat***

Bob Askins

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.

Volunteers Needed for the Second Annual Horseshoe Crab Spawning Survey

The second annual spawning survey for horseshoe crabs is being organized now by the CT DEP. Last spring 15 volunteer groups counted spawning crabs in May and June at 27 locations, with some locations surveyed more than once. Volunteers ranged from professional biologists to lawyers, school children to retirees. This year 47 locations along the entire Connecticut coast have been targeted. So there is beach for everyone! If you'd like to spend a night or two out on your favorite beach counting crabs, respond by email, mail or phone at the address or numbers given below. You'll be sent a packet of instructions with a map and everything you'll need. The spawning sea-

son begins in early May, peaking at the full moon on May 18 and June 16t, so sign up soon!!

Contact:
Penny Howell;
CT DEP Marine Fisheries Office;
P.O. Box 719; Old Lyme, CT 06412;
Email:
penny.howell@po.state.ct.us

Many thanks go to the volunteers who helped out last year. All the information, however small scale or incomplete, was very helpful in putting together a better picture of



**Horseshoe crabs come ashore to lay and fertilize their eggs.
Photo by Bill Hall, from USGS.**

how the horseshoe crab population is doing in the state. Any information about all possible spawning beaches is still needed. This year's survey will be another step forward in protecting this valuable creature.

Field Trips Are Scheduled Through October

Saturday Morning Birding at Hammonasset

Saturdays, through June
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 song birds. There is a \$2.00 fee.

Horseshoe Crab Spawning

Members only field trip!

Sunday, May 21, 2000

12 noon

Leader: Heather Crawford

Preregistration required

(203) 432-5118 (days)

(203) 421-5670 (evenings)

Fax: (203) 432-5942

Meet at Long Wharf Nature Preserve in New Haven

The full moon in May means the horseshoe crabs are spawning but there is little known about the horseshoe crab population of Long Island Sound. Come join Heather Crawford, Coastal Resources Educator for Connecticut Sea Grant on a field trip to help document spawning locations in the New Haven harbor area. In addition to looking for horseshoe crabs, we will be sampling for other marine life and visiting prime shore-bird habitat, so bring your binoculars

along. We will explore that area around the Long Wharf Nature Preserve, then travel to Sandy Point in West Haven. To register, call Heather Crawford.

Herp Walk

Saturday, May 20, 2000

10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

Meet at the commuter parking lot in Madison off Exit 61.

Leader Chuck Annicelli

Preregistration required

(860) 669-6363

Limited to 20 people.

There will be some hiking in rocky areas and maybe wet areas also. We will look for reptiles and amphibians. We will also hit a small vernal pond. Wear appropriate footwear.

Firetower Nature Walk, Killingworth

Saturday, June 3, 2000

8:30 a.m.–12 noon

Leader: John Himmelman

(860) 663-3225

Meet at the commuter lot at the Routes 80/81 traffic circle in Killingworth.

This walk will bring us through a variety of habitats, mostly in Cockaponsett State Forest; riverine, marsh, vernal pool, coniferous and deciduous forest, and will pass over one of the highest areas that close to the coast from Canada to Mexico. Attention will be paid to the wild-

flowers, ferns, amphibians, butterflies, birds and anything else that strikes our interest. Some areas may be difficult for some people, but we'll be movin' slow! Bring drink. Cancelled if raining.

Wild Mushroom Walk, Timberlands, Guilford

Saturday, October 7, 2000

10a.m.–1p.m.

Leader: Bill Yule (203) 457-1326

Meet at the Archery Range parking lot on Route 80 in North Guilford.

Bring lunch.

Join us as we stroll along the woodland trails of the Timberlands town open space in search of wild mushrooms. Bill will discuss the natural history of our local fungi, as well as any interesting flora and fauna we may find along the way. Walk ends at the archery range picnic area where we will have lunch.

Menunkatuck Welcomes New Members

Menunkatuck Audubon Society welcomes the following new members:

Branford: Bill Carpenter, Louis Free, Mrs Nancy Sutton

East Haven: Mr George C Coulombe, Mrs William F Kruschka Sr

Guilford: Elizabeth Evarts, William Green, Michael Ivy, Jane C Lange, Joan Logan, Richard F Nace Jr

Madison: Mrs H E Ones

New Haven: Mr-Mrs Robert Berner, Shivaji Chatterjee, Eric Palkovacs, Rosanne Raccio

West Haven: Louise Cabral, Sylvia Farrell, Evamarie Halbrook, Mr Raymond F Heenie, J Hershman, Ms Ruby H Melton

Chapter Election to Be Held at June Meeting

The annual election of officers and directors of Menunkatuck Audubon Society will be held at the June meeting.

Candidates are:

President, Henry Ferris

Vice-President, Dorothy Holabird

Treasurer, Brad Garber

Recording Secretary, Catherine Ferguson

Corresponding Secretary, Cindi Kobak

Directors: Chuck Annicelli, Dan Cinotti, Pauline Garber, David Houston, George Lemieux, Shirley McCarthy, Connie Mortensen, Dennis Riordan



Scientists Call for Ban on Dursban

WASHINGTON, DC, April 13, 2000 (ENS) - Twelve prominent scientists, including two former EPA officials, have sent a letter to EPA Administrator Carol Browner urging tighter restrictions on the pesticide chlorpyrifos, sold as Dursban. The EPA is expected to issue its final risk assessment for chlorpyrifos, the nation's most widely used pesticide, in the next few weeks.

"For the protection of current and future generations of children in the United States, we urge that you take deliberate action in this last year of the Clinton-Gore administration to tightly restrict the agricultural use of chlorpyrifos and to ban outright all applications of chlorpyrifos in the residential setting, schools and childcare facilities," the scientists wrote. The EPA's own preliminary assessment of chlorpyrifos, released late last year, found evidence that the chemical can affect the nervous system in humans.

The pesticide is found in more than 800 products, including pet collars, pest control products, and lawn and garden insecticides. Recent studies indicate that exposure may cause severe and lasting nerve damage in infants and children.

The authors of the letter hail from major universities and medical schools. The lead authors on the letter are both former EPA officials. Dr. Phil Landrigan, director of the Center for Children's Health and the Environment at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City, served as senior advisor on children's health for the EPA in 1997 and 1998. Dr. Lynn Goldman, adjunct professor at Johns Hopkins University, School of Hygiene and Public Health, served as assistant administrator for the EPA's Office of Prevention, Pesticides

and Toxic Substances from 1993 to January 1999.

From *Grassroots*

Write your own letter or email to Carol Browner with copies to your legislators.

As many of you know:

- 1) Even when used as directed, according to the EPA's own data, overexposure occurs with the application of Dursban (chlorpyrifos).
- 2) Dursban causes sometimes subtle, sometimes severe and permanent, damage to the brain

and nervous system.

- 3) There is not a single reason for this chemical to remain on the market, since safer and more effective alternatives exist for every application.

Let's back these scientists that are trying to protect US and give another surge of letters for the ban on Dursban!

Write to:

Carol M Browner
1101A USEPA Headquarters
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N. W.
Washington, DC 20460
or email: browner.carol@epa.gov

**Your Birdathon contribution
helps support the projects
of
Menunkatuck Audubon
Society.**



Biodiversity 2000

Know your natural neighbors



Horseshoe Crabs Are Not Crabs

The familiar horseshoe crab is not a true crab but more closely related to spiders and mites. While crabs are members of the class crustacea, horseshoe crabs are the only living members of the ancient class merostoma that was once widespread and abundant. Fossil remains show us that during the last 200 million years little has changed about them and they are considered to be “living fossils.”

BIO BITS Horseshoe crabs roam the shallow seas below the low water mark along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts from Maine to Mexico. Horseshoe crabs grow up to 20 inches long with a slender tail, a broad abdomen, and a still broader foresection. They have two pairs of eyes, one set large and separated and the other set somewhat inconspicuously close together near the front of the shell. The abdomen is edged by movable spikes which protect the gills. The tail is not a stinger or a poisonous barb but a tool that horseshoe crabs use to right themselves.

Horseshoe crabs mate in May and June when females use the highest tides—associated with the new or full moon—to crawl up on the beach. They drag the smaller males around until the eggs are laid in a depression in the sand. The males fertilize the eggs and both the males and females return to the sea. The eggs hatch in mid-summer and the young horseshoe crabs make their way to the sea where they remain until they breed at nine or ten years of age.

Horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay provide a critical food source for about a million migratory shorebirds that pass through that region every spring. After spending the winter in South America, species such as the red knot, ruddy turnstone, semipalmated sandpiper and sanderling feast on protein-rich horseshoe crab eggs before moving on to their Arctic breeding grounds. For most of these birds, Delaware Bay is the most important stopover on a migratory journey of up to 10,000 miles.

Though horseshoe crabs are found along the Atlantic coast, the Delaware Bay population is the world’s largest. USGS biologist and statistician Dr. David Smith, of the Leetown Science Center, says the bay’s long stretches of protected, sandy beaches provide ideal habitat for spawning. “What has evolved is a dependence of migratory shorebirds on the superabundance of horseshoe crab eggs in Delaware Bay,” Dr. Smith says.

Unfortunately, the shorebirds may find this crucial food source disappear in the near future as humans continue to overharvest the adult horseshoe crabs to use as fishing bait.

Horseshoe crabs of Long Island Sound are less well known and are the subject of ongoing research.



Horseshoe crabs laying and fertilizing eggs. Photo by Bill Hall, from USGS.

Indiscriminate Killers in Your Yard!

The weather is warming, spurring a host of flora and fauna back into action. While most are welcome, some are not, and one species in particular is downright dreaded. The mosquito. Our dislike for this insect is evident in all of those glowing blue lights we see hanging in our neighbor's yards. Bug zappers.

But we have been duped. While these devices are sold to rid our yards of these pests, they do nothing of the kind. Mosquitoes are not attracted to light; ultraviolet, incandescent, mercury vapor, none of it. They are attracted to carbon dioxide expelled by animals, and body heat. What may be confusing us is that piled up at the bottom of these devices are insects that appear very similar to mosquitoes. Midges, which are attracted to light, and do not bite, are major victims of this attraction. A close look will reveal that these midges are missing the piercing long nose (proboscis) that mosquitoes have.

In one study, cited in an article by Eirik Blom, only 31 of almost 14,000 insects killed by bug zappers were female (the ones that bite) mosquitoes. In another, of 10,000 insects killed, eight were mosquitoes. What these bug zappers do attract are many of the insects that prey upon mosquitoes. In yet another study, nearly 2,000 of the dead insects were species that preyed upon mosquitoes. For every mosquito

that got zapped, 250 of mosquito predators were taken out of action. Think of this, throughout our history of battle with the mosquito, in which entomologists have been called upon for a solution, have you ever seen the "authorities" employing bug zappers?

In addition to mosquito predators, we are killing off members of a group of important flower and tree pollinators, the moths. Less than one percent of moth species are pests to humans (Clothes and Meal Moths, Gypsy Moths, Tomato Hornworm). The rest of the balance are greatly beneficial to our fauna. Over the years I have been photo-documenting the moths of Connecticut for a book on the moths of the Northeast. In my yard in Killingworth, I have attracted over 700 species of the 2,300 species of moths in this state. I use a bug zapper in which I've disabled the electrifying grid by clipping and closing off the wires connected to it. Had it been working as the manufacturer intended, it would have killed tens of thousands of beneficial moths over the years. And that's just one zapper in one yard.

If you have one of these zappers, I urge you to unplug it. If you continue to run it, you do so with the gratitude of the 'skeeters!

John Himmelman
Connecticut Butterfly Association



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**
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(860)599-5195

Menunkatuck on the Web:
www.audubon.org/chapter/ct/mas/

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MENUNKATUCK

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NEXT MEETING

BOB ASKINS

CONSERVATION OF OPEN COUNTRY BIRDS IN NEW ENGLAND HABITAT

Wednesday, June 14, 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:

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