

Be a Good Neighbor When You Light Your Home

Lighting outside of your home can help to safely navigate walkways, stoops and driveways, while also welcoming guests, or highlighting landscape areas. If some care is taken when choosing light fixtures, bulbs and positioning, outdoor lighting can be a useful way to enhance your residence in the evening hours. In contrast, badly-applied outdoor lighting can be blinding and ugly. Glary lights are a nuisance to your neighbors and also disturb nearby wildlife. The key is to know what the causes of problem lighting are, and to avoid them. Until recent years, there was little knowledge of so called "light pollution."

Today, many communities (including Branford) have written laws to curb poor lighting practices.

Outdoor Lighting Don'ts

Reduce the glare! Outdoor lighting glare comes from seeing the bulb directly, or when a fixture's bulb is too bright for the application. Glare can detrimentally impact our ability to see at night. It is not only ugly, but painful to look at. Lighting with glare can defeat the purpose of your lights in the first place!

Light your home, not your neighbors. Unwanted lights shining beyond your property can detrimen-

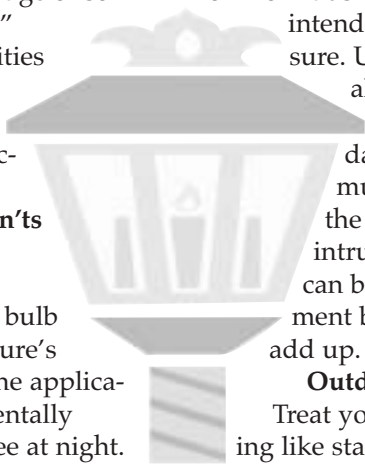
tally impact people, animals and insects living nearby, even disrupt their sleep. Remember that during the fall and winter months, tree leaves have fallen. This puts homes (and home lighting) more in open view of each other.

Don't shine light up into the sky. Light that is shining upward serves no purpose, and is a waste of illumination and energy. Light spilled upward into the night sky makes it difficult to see the stars, because it masks the sky's darkness.

Turn off outdoor lights when retiring to bed. Lighting that is left on from dusk to dawn is usually intended as a security measure. Unless you plan to sit up all night and watch your property, dusk to dawn lighting won't help much. It can instead light the way for any would-be intruder. All-night lighting can be costly too, as replacement bulb and energy costs add up.

Outdoor Lighting Dos

Treat your home outdoor lighting like stage lighting in a theatre. Light the subject without shining light in the audience's eyes. Choose fixtures that direct the light downward onto areas where it is needed. Avoid using wall-mounted flood
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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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The Great Egret (*Ardea albus*) is a member of the heron family with pristine white plumage and a very long neck. Standing on long black legs, this slender, elegant bird is smaller than its cousin, the Great Blue Heron, but quite a bit larger than our other white heron, the Snowy Egret. It can be found feeding in both freshwater and saltwater habitats, from marshes and mud flats, to rivers, ponds and lakes. Active during the day, it searches for fish, crayfish, snakes, frogs and aquatic insects by slowly wading in shallow waters with neck outstretched. You are more likely to observe this egret along our coastal wetlands, but can see it further inland during migration and after the breeding season is over, when it feeds along inland waterways.

In Connecticut, the Great Egret is known to nest only on treed offshore islands in Long Island Sound that are uninhabited by humans. Breeding began in mid-April. A colony of great egrets will join other heron species on these island rookeries, choosing nest sites 20 to 40 feet high in the trees. A great egret nest is a large platform built mainly of sticks and twigs, sometimes lined with plant material. Both parents incubate the three to five blue-green eggs for about 24 days. The gangly nestlings will grow rapidly on a diet of regurgitated fish, frogs and crayfish that the adults bring back to the island from mainland feeding grounds. At three weeks of age the young will leave the nest proper to walk among nearby tree branches. They will not fly for another two weeks or so and will continue to be utterly dependent on their parents for food and protection for several weeks.

During the breeding season adult great egrets don beautiful breeding plumage. The yellow bill turns

orangish, and long, delicate, wispy feathers cascade over the bird's back. In the late 1800s and early 1900s market hunters wiped out whole colonies of nesting great egrets and other bird species in order to collect these showy plumes for the latest fashion craze – elegant feathers on women's hats. Thankfully, laws were passed to protect birds from such slaughter in the early 1900s. The great egret has since made a comeback, though the continuing degradation and loss of wetland habitats in Connecticut has not allowed its populations to return to previous numbers. It is listed as a threatened species in our state.

Despite the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's efforts to educate the boating public with educational signs posted on the islands, disturbance at island rookery sites by humans has proven disastrous in recent years. The birds abandoned several sites in 2002 due to irresponsible human behavior. Visitors had cookouts, allowed their dogs to roam freely, and built a bonfire near a fence enclosing a rookery. Please obey all posted signs this spring and summer and ask your boating friends to do the same. Allow nesting birds an opportunity to successfully raise their young.
Submitted by Cindi Kobak



Photo by Dennis Riordan

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.

May, June Programs

On May 12 Carol Lemmon will present a program on *Butterflies and the Plants that Attract Them*. Carol recently retired from the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station in New Haven where she was State Deputy Entomologist. She is one of the founding members of the Connecticut Butterfly Association.

Bob Crelin, a lifelong Branford resident, has promoted the abatement of light pollution for years. On June 9, he will present a program entitled *How Light Pollution is Changing Our World*. He has succeeded in getting Branford to adopt regulations controlling light pollution. He is the author of the newly published children's book, *There Once Was a Sky Full of Stars*.

Plug-in To e-Cycling

Tossing once expensive things like your old computer into the trash doesn't feel smart. But reusing or recycling your computer or TV is smart. By reusing or recycling your unwanted electronics, you can provide your old friends with a new lease on life and help ensure that these materials are managed safely.

AT&T Wireless retail stores accept cellular phones and accessories and batteries for recycling at no cost.

Dell, Inc. has a mail service to recycle computers and peripherals and monitors. Fifty pounds can be recycled for \$15. Go to www.dell.com/recycling for complete details.



Source: EPA

2004 Calendar

May 8, 2004

Birdathon

May 12, 2004

Butterflies and the Plants that Attract Them

Carol Lemmon

June 9, 2004

How Light Pollution is Changing Our World

Bob Crelin

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.

Notice to Landowners Regarding All-terrain Vehicles

On July 1, 2003, Public Act #03-276 took effect. This act requires individuals riding all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) to obtain, and carry on their person, written permission from the landowner on whose land he/she is riding. This includes private, municipal and state-owned land. Otherwise, they are trespassing.

Additionally, no person shall operate an ATV that makes excessive noise or causes harassment of any game or domestic animals.

Any person who violates any provision shall be committing a separate infraction for each violation.

Visit the Connecticut General Assembly website at www.cga.state.ct.us to read the entire section on ATV regulations. (Choose "Public Act" and the number "276" and year "2003" in the Quick Search boxes at the top of the web page. Click on the "Public Act 03-276" and scroll down to Section 4.)

As ATVs become more and more of a problem in our neighborhoods and woodlands it is important to remain informed as to Connecticut's regulations. Let your legislators know how you feel about this issue.

Field Trips

Spring Bird Walk Warblers and Neotropical Migrants Saturday, May 15 – 8:00 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. Bill Yule is your leader. Call for information: 203-457-1326 during the day Mon.-Fri. 10 A.M. to 3 P.M.

Paddling the East River Exploring the Guilford Salt Meadow Sanctuary Sunday, June 13, 8 A.M. – Noon Bring Your Own Boat

The Guilford Salt Meadows Sanctuary is located in Guilford, Connecticut along the East River, a tidal river that drains into Long Island Sound. These wetlands support specialized salt marsh vegetation and animal life. The East River is the perfect place for a paddle and exploration of the transition throughout an estuary. From the water we will have a unique perspective of life in the salt marsh. We will launch from the State Boat Launch on Neck Road in Guilford just prior to high tide and progress inland with the tide..

There are several occupied Osprey platforms along the river and bird activity is bound to be plentiful. As the tide wanes, exposing the riverbank, we will gain a new perspective of the salt marsh ecology.

The East River is an easy paddle, but participants should feel comfortable with their own paddling abilities. At high tide the Amtrak line is passable, but those prone to claustrophobia may feel uncomfortable. PFDs

(Personal Flotation Devices) are required. Binoculars, water, a snack, insect repellent and a wide brimmed hat are strongly recommended. Menunkatuck will not provide boats. However, if you need to rent a boat we will happily provide you with information on local rentals.

Directions: I-95 Exit 59, to Goose Lane. Take Route 1 East (North). Follow Route 1 over the East River (you will cross into Madison). Turn Right onto Neck Road. At the stop sign continue on Neck Road by turning right. Follow Neck Road to the state boat launch (approximately two miles). This is a residential area and becomes a gravel road – please drive slowly. Arrive at 8 a.m. For further information contact Suzanne Botta (203) 315-4816. For more information about the Guilford Salt Meadow Sanctuary visit: <www.audubon.org/local/sanctuary/guilford/index.html>.

Butterflies and Dragonflies Sunday, June 27 – 10:00 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.

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 (203 457-1326) during the day Mon.-Fri. 10 A.M. to 3 P.M.

Anne Conover Nature Trail Exploring the Guilford Salt Meadow Sanctuary Sunday, July 18 8 A.M. - 10:00

The Anne Conover Nature Trail at the Guilford Salt Meadow Sanctuary is located off Clapboard Hill Road in Guilford. This one-mile trail passes through an upland grass meadow and a hardwood forest and gives views of the East River salt marsh. Saltmarsh sharp-tailed and seaside sparrows nest in the Sanctuary. Both birds are high conservation priorities in southern New England. For further information contact Suzanne Botta (203) 315-4816.



**Bill Yule goes after a dragonfly at Bauer Park.
Photo by Cindi Kobak**

Menunkatuck Audubon Society



Sixteenth Birdathon

2004

Saturday, May 8

Your Birdathon contribution helps support the projects of
Menunkatuck Audubon Society

- Education
- Monthly Slide Programs
- Habitat Enhancement
- Land Trusts
- Long Island Sound Watershed Alliance
- Faulkner Island Tern Project

To support the 2004 Menunkatuck and New Haven Bird Club Birdathon teams on their 24-hour search for birds, please mail the form with your pledge or donation.

For more information, call 245-3272 or 488-7533. Your support is greatly appreciated.

E-mail your May 8 bird list to HOLIB@cs.com

Menunkatuck Birdathon Pledge Form

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

I want to help financially. (Choose one.) Phone: _____

Enclosed is my donation of: \$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$____

I am happy to pledge \$____ per species 10¢ 25¢ 50¢ \$1.00 \$____

(The average number of species found is about 175.)

I want to bird watch on May 8. Please call me with more information about joining a team.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE MENUNKATUCK BIRDATHON.

YOUR GIFT IS TAX DEDUCTIBLE AS ALLOWED BY LAW.

Mail to : Menunkatuck Audubon Society

PO Box 214

Biodiversity 2004

Know your natural neighbors



Finding Arrowheads

BIO BITS

The arrowhead spiketail (*Cordulegaster obliqua*) is a large, impressive dragonfly found in the eastern United States and up into southeastern Canada. It can be seen in our area from June to July. Measuring in at just over three inches long, it is the largest of our four local spiketail species. Typical of dragonflies in the family *Cordulegastridae*, the arrowhead spiketail has a dark body with bright yellow markings that help you to distinguish one species from another. Two yellow diagonal stripes down the sides of the thorax coupled with yellow arrowheads running along the top of the abdomen identify this species. Juveniles have grayish eyes, but the adults have lovely bright green eyes here in the North and bright blue eyes in the southern states.

Spiketail dragonflies don't hang out in your typical dragonfly haunts, so you won't see them patrolling along the sunny surfaces of ponds or lakes. Look for them in wooded habitats along seeps and muddy-bottomed streamlets. The arrowhead spiketail is one of a few species that will patrol low over a small stream, following the course of the water. If you notice a large dragonfly buzz past your knees to disappear downstream, give it a moment and it will surely be back. It is likely to be a male spiketail that has claimed this section of trickling water as its territory. If the dragonfly holds its body vertically above the shallow water while dipping the tip of its abdomen into the muck below, it is a female laying her eggs. She will remind you of a sewing machine needle as she repeatedly plunges her ovipositor into the mud.

The arrowhead spiketail can also be encountered feeding along forest edges. While many species of dragonflies will swarm together when feeding, the arrowhead spiketail has a more solitary nature. It feeds alone and when disturbed it is known to fly straight up over the trees and disappear. But it will also perch on low vegetation and twigs, giving you an opportunity to see its arrowheads for yourself.

Submitted by Cindi Kobak



Photo by Cindi Kobak

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 \$4.00 fee.



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

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Outdoor Lighting

(Continued on page 2.)

lights, and if you must, re-aim or shield them to keep glare out of the viewer's line-of-sight. In fixtures that have a bulb in plain view, try using lower wattage/lower brightness bulbs. Remember, at night we can see quite well in lower light levels when it is applied well.

Get outside at night and look at your home lights from the neighbor's perspective. Check to make sure that you are not unintentionally shining lights into other homes or natural areas. If you notice lights on your home that could be a nuisance to others, try shielding, re-aiming or replacing these to minimize light trespass.

If you have security concerns and wish to deter theft or vandalism at night, lighting will serve you best when it is motion sensor-activated. As recommended by security profession-

als, a sudden change of environment like a light turning on, or alarm sounding will not only startle intruders, but it can also alert the homeowner or neighbors nearby. Integrated alarm systems are considered a more reliable security measure than lighting and they use less energy too. Because of growing public awareness to light pollution issues, new and improved homeowner lighting products are currently available. Good outdoor lighting can enhance the appearance of your property, welcome you home at night, save you money and help you be a good neighbor too. Let the stars shine!

[You can find out more about the value and effectiveness of quality nighttime lighting at the website of the International Dark Sky Association <www.darksky.org>.]

By Bob Crelin

Connecticut Rare Bird Alerts (203)254-3665

Menunkatuck Audubon Society
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MENUNKATUCK

May **2004**



Birdathon Pledge Form Inside

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

NEXT MEETING

CAROL LEMMON BUTTERFLIES AND THE PLANTS THAT ATTRACT THEM

*Wednesday, May 12, 2004
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