

# MENUNKATUCK October 2001

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

## Biodiversity Day in Guilford Is A Day of Discovery

As the Biodiversity Committee and our wonderful volunteers set up our Biodiversity Day headquarters at the Dudley Farm in Guilford on September 6, we wondered if all our efforts would be rewarded as they were last year in Madison. Would we be able to recreate the magic? Would the teams show up happy and ready to get to work? Would exciting species be discovered in the 24-hour survey period? Would there be enough food for everyone? And would the weather behave itself?

Yes to all of the above.

By 3 p.m. on Friday, September 7 we were ready. Teams began arriving. As they signed in at our HQ table they were given packets that included topographical maps and street maps of the town, as well as species checklists, parking passes and name tags. A disk containing last year's database was also provided as a means for them to record and submit their species lists to us.

A marine team lead by Heather Crawford from CT Sea Grant took advantage of low tide to survey various shoreline sites, including Grass Island. Marine algae (sea-

weed), fish and invertebrates would be identified.

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's mammalogists planned to mist net bats and needed to reach their site on the Iron Stream before dark to set up their nets. They would monitor the nets all night and return to HQ in the morning. Another group from their team set up small mammal live-traps, as well as baited tracking pits to record fresh tracks left overnight by curious mammals.

Meanwhile, the entomologists (and moth enthusiasts) set up their own traps at various sites for the *(Continued on Page 2.)*



**Chuck Annicelli and Bart Bruno look for snakes. Photo by Anita Tellier.**

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# MENUNKATUCK AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Mailing address:

MENUNKATUCK AUDUBON SOCIETY  
PO BOX 214  
GUILFORD, CT 06437

**President:**.....Henry Ferris  
.....(245-4397)  
**Vice-President:** .....SuZanne Botta  
**Treasurer:**.....Connie Mortensen  
**Secretary:** .....Catherine Ferguson

**Directors:** .....Dan Cinotti, Cindi Kobak, Dennis Riordan

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**Wildlife/**

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**Connecticut Amphibian**  
**Monitoring:**.....Gary Cline  
**Publicity:** .....Barbara Nugent

**Education:**.....Cindi Kobak  
.....Dotty Young  
<education@menunkatuck.org>

**Membership:**.....Dennis Riordan  
<membership@menunkatuck.org>

**Town Reps**  
**East Haven:** .....Mary Quinlan  
**Guilford:**.....Linda Anderson  
**Newsletter:**.....Dennis Riordan  
.....(387-2167)  
**Webmaster:**.....Brad Garber

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evening – white sheets illuminated with mercury vapor lights to attract flying insects.

The Connecticut Valley Mycological Society (CVMS) couldn't wait to get started. They sent a team into the Timberlands to collect fungi before it became too dark to see. Returning with baskets brimming with colorful mushrooms they set to work identifying their treasures. The schoolhouse at the Dudley Farm had been transformed into a lab, including microscopes loaned to us by Bauer Park in Madison. The CVMS team, consummate record keepers, had brought their own laptop computer with which to record their data.

The DEP Project SEARCH aquatic invertebrate team, which included two home-schooled students from Guilford, collected samples from the West River just across the street from Dudley Farm and brought them back to the lab. They planned to visit sever-



**Bill Hyatt shows his daughters an eel. Photo by Betsy Dean.**

al other sites the next day as well and then spend the next several months identifying the hundreds of specimens.

Dudley Farm was jumping with the comings and goings of humans and other species. The resident oxen, goats and sheep had been fed by their caretakers in the early evening and secured in their pens. Dozens of bats had flown from the barn by 7:30 p.m.

as the DEP mammalogist team remarked that they'd like to come back to study them in the future. But by 11 p.m. on the first day things had quieted down at the farm. Teams working in the lab had eaten all the snacks provided and either gone home for the night or retired to one of the many tents dotting the lawn. As I left to catch a few hours sleep, a lone figure remained, peering intently into a microscope in



**Leo Scholl, SuZanne Botta, and Anne Scholl identify aquatic invertebrates. Photo by Jim Falconer.**

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.

## November Program Postponed—Griswold Development Subject of Presentation

Menunkatuck Audubon's scheduled November meeting with Mike DiGeorgio has been postponed in order that members may attend a special public outreach and information presentation by the Connecticut Fund for the Environment and National Audubon's Connecticut office. T

*Protecting Critical Long Island Sound Habitat: Threats from Griswold Airport Development* will feature a welcome by CFE Board Treasurer Thomas Holloway and a discussion of the permitting process and environmental threats by the CFE staff attorney, Patrick Comins, Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon Connecticut, will describe the potential impacts on Hammonasset Beach State Park and its migratory birds. MAS President Henry Ferris will present a local perspective. The program will conclude with a discussion of the critical elements of success, organization and grass roots support.

In December, Bill Yule will provide us with an *Introduction to the Ecology of Wild Mushrooms*.

January will feature the return of Sam Fried discussing a unique island off the northern coast of South America in *Bonaire: A Quiet Paradise*.



# 2001 Calendar

November 14, 2001

*Protecting Critical Long Island Sound Habitat: Threats from Griswold Airport Development* CFE and NAS

December 12, 2001

*Introduction to the Ecology of Wild Mushrooms* Bill Yule

January 9, 2002

*Bonaire: A Quiet Paradise* Sam Fried

**\*\*Note: November meeting is at the Memorial Town Hall on the Green in Madison.\*\***

**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.**

## Stop Griswold Over-Development

To support a suit against the Madison Planning and Zoning Commission and Leyland Development Corporation to overturn the Commission's decision to permit up to 250 dwelling units on the Griswold Airport property, send your contribution to

Stop Griswold Over-Development

PO Box 1298

Madison, CT 06443

Please include your name, address, town, state, zip, phone number and email address.

(Continued from Page 2.)

the lab. Noble Proctor would spend the night identifying algae that he had collected earlier in the day. He planned to participate for the entire 24 hours as he had done in Madison last year. (No wonder his team tallied over 1300 species.)

Shade-grown coffee was brewing and warm bagels were delivered to HQ by 6:30 a.m. The early morning fog had started the spring peepers and gray treefrogs singing. We can count that! The dampness had also brought out other amphibians overnight – wood frogs and four-toed salamanders. Noble had had visitors at the farm as well - a raccoon, an opossum and a flying squirrel.

The Sound School in New Haven sent two teams - four teachers and 14 students - to survey Guilford's coastline and Long Island Sound. One team visited beaches and intertidal zones while another worked from a boat. (We hear that the kids had a hard time getting up so early on a Saturday morning but enjoyed them-

selves immensely once they hit the sites.)

A team from the DEP's Fisheries Division surveyed freshwater fish in Guilford's rivers and streams. They will be able to compare these data with their previous surveys of these waterways.

The birding teams were out in force, covering the shoreline as well as forests and meadows deeper in town. We were lucky that Jeff Spindel was at the Faulkner's Island Open House that day, educating the public about the ongoing tern project on the island. He and Patrick Comins, Audubon's Director of Bird Conservation, contributed a list of birds seen from the island.

Yale's botany team split up to cover more sites since they could only stay for part of the day. We were fortunate that our generalist teams were proficient at identifying species in the plant kingdom in addition to all their other areas of expertise.

Noble Proctor's generalist "know everything" team included staff from the Nature Center for Environmental Activities and a crew of young "Junior Naturalists." Jonathan Rosen, a freelance writer from New York City joined the group to observe their methods and get a feel for what a Biodiversity Day is all about. We hope one day soon to find an article on Biodiversity Day with his byline in some prominent publication.

An innocent competition always seems to form



Connie Borodenko and Harley Stoleson go through mushrooms in the on-site lab. Photo by Anita Tellier.

between Noble's team and the "COD Squad." Another generalist team, the COD Squad is a group of naturalist friends who like to hang out together and identify all the biological life they encounter. Although they haven't finished tallying their many lists, they estimate a team total of about 900 species. Pretty impressive.

The Connecticut Herpetological League team brought a musk turtle back to HQ for a short visit. Also known as stinkpot, the musk turtle gives off a musky smell. This small turtle was found in a river and, like most musk turtles, had algae growing on its dark shell. Perfect camouflage,

Noble Proctor walks through golden-rod. Photo by Jim Falconer.



Students from the Sound School survey Guilford's waters from their boat. Photo by Joanne Vollage.

yet these reptile enthusiasts found it. (It helps to know where to look.)

The Connecticut Butterfly Association discovered a population of checkered skippers in the Dudley Farm meadow. These diminutive butterflies were a real find; this is a southern species that rarely strays into our area.

What else was found? Red bats, fisher (tracks), black sea bass, orange-striped green anemone, American oystercatchers, glossy ibis, copper underwing moths, fork-tailed bush katydid, black-horned tree cricket, American chestnut, round-leaved sundew, dwarf ginseng, Indian pipe, bird's nest fungi, puffball fungi – this is just a sampling of the biodiversity of Guilford.

It will be months before all the species lists are collected and compiled into a database, but we estimate

that over 2000 species will be documented.

(Not bad for a 24-hour period in September.)

Once complete, we will publish the data and distribute it to all participants and contributors, as well as the DEP's Natural Diversity Data Base,

Guilford's commissions, environmental organizations, library and schools. Copies will also be made available to interested individuals. Stay tuned. We



**At the end of the day, team members shared their experiences over dinner at the Dudley Farm Headquarters. Photo by Pat Anderson.**

invite you to join us in discovering Guilford's biodiversity.

Submitted by Cindi Kobak

The Biodiversity Committee – Cindi Kobak, Catherine Ferguson, Jim McDougal, Connie Mortensen, Dennis Riordan, Jerry Silbert and Roberta Silbert – would like to thank the following individuals, organizations and businesses for helping us to make Biodiversity Day a success. We couldn't have done it without you.

### THANKS TO...

The Directors of the Dudley Farm, for graciously allowing us the use of their wonderful property as our headquarters. Janet Dudley, especially, for helping to coordinate our event around the farm's programs.

Bauer Park in Madison, for lending us microscopes for use in our lab.

The Coastal Camera Club members, Pat Anderson, Paula Chabot, Betsy Dean, Jim Falconer, Anita Tellier and Joanne Volage, for capturing the day for us on slide film.

Hans, Astrid, Leo and Anne Scholl, Menunkatuck members, for volunteering at headquarters, helping us to set up and break down, as well as guiding teams to various sites throughout the day.

Leslie Kane, Guilford Environmental Planner, and Carolie Evans, Land Acquisition Committee, for advice and guidance in determining sites, for obtaining landowner permission to survey properties, as well as their assistance in guiding teams to specific locations.

Bill Johnson, Conservation Commission, for guiding a team to various sites along Guilford's rivers. Also Fred Hill, Guilford Salt Meadow Sanctuary warden, and Susan Kukle, Guilford Land Conservation Trust, for remaining on call in case we needed them.

Harbor Publications in Madison, for a donation of Guilford town maps; the Regional Water Authority for donating cases of bottled water; and Bishop's Orchards for a donated bushel of apples.

The Regional Water Authority and other private landowners for allowing access to their properties.

The Guilford Land Conservation Trust, for their generous donation, as well as their helpful suggestions and moral support throughout.

The Guilford Foundation, for underwriting the compilation and publication of the data collected.

Other donors to our cause: the Guilford Conservation Commission, the Jane Marcher Foundation, the Audubon Council of Connecticut, the Guilford Garden Club and the Leete's Island Garden Club.

Special thanks, of course, go to the 100 or so biologists, naturalists and students who actually performed the biological survey of Guilford. It was a pleasure working with all of them, individually and collectively.

# Biodiversity 2001

## Know your natural neighbors



### Red Bats Found in Guilford

The discovery of red bats (*Lasiurus borealis*) flying above the Iron Stream in Guilford on Biodiversity Day was an exciting find for the mammalogist team from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. The DEP team was encouraged by the presence of this species because red bats are listed as a “species of special concern” in the state. DEP wildlife technician, Geoffrey Krukar, explained that a species of special concern is “any native plant species or any native non-harvested wildlife species, documented by scientific research and inventory, to have a naturally restricted range or habitat in the state, to be at a low population level, to be in such high demand by man that its unregulated taking would be detrimental to the conservation of its population, or has been extirpated [exterminated] from the state. Red bats in Connecticut are faced with a loss of habitat (they are a tree roosting species).”

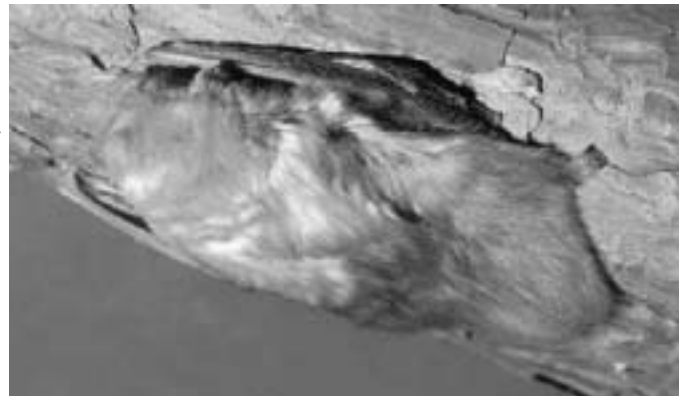
#### **BIO BITS**

The red bat ranges through southern parts of Canada, most of the United States and Latin America. Those in the northern part of their range will migrate to warmer climates for the winter.

This strikingly beautiful animal has bright orange fur with white shoulder patches. A solitary creature, the red bat will roost among the leaves of a deciduous tree by day, hanging by one foot. Looking for all the world like a curled up dead leaf, the red bat remains hidden in plain sight. Taking flight in early evening, it will hunt along forest edges for flying insects, such as moths, beetles, leafhoppers and flies.

While most bats rear a single young per year, the red bat female commonly has three or four! They will hang from the same perch as the mother, clinging to her with their wings. She will leave them there at night while she flies off to feed. Within four weeks the young are flying and by the sixth week they are weaned.

The DEP team used mist nets to capture several red bats on the evening of September 7 in Guilford. Based on the time of year, they believe that these bats may have been migrants passing through the area. Further studies at other times of year will help to determine whether we have a breeding population of red bats in Guilford.



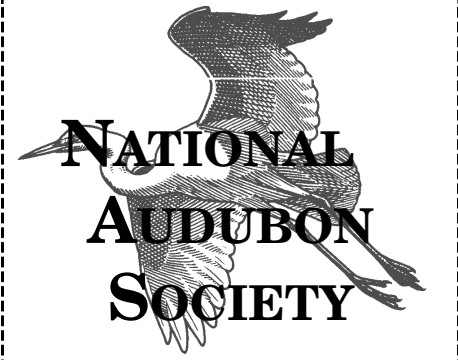
Red Bat (*Lasiurus borealis*) R. Altig <[http://ndis.nrel.colorado.state.edu/escop/photos/mammals\\_sorted.htm](http://ndis.nrel.colorado.state.edu/escop/photos/mammals_sorted.htm)>

### Lisa Santacroce Was Passionate Environmentalist

September 7 was the day we lost a friend. Lisa Santacroce, Menunkatuck's Branford town representative passed away at Connecticut Hospice. Lisa was a committed environmentalist, working tirelessly on local and statewide open space issues, including co-chairing the Land Conservation Coalition of Connecticut. The coalition ran a successful campaign that resulted in the

passage of landmark open space funding in the state. Among her many other accomplishments, Lisa helped found the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters, as well as Citizen's for Branford's Environment.

Though her life was short, Lisa's tremendous contributions to the preservation of Connecticut's environment will live on as her legacy.



#### 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

### Saturday Morning Birding at Hammonasset

Saturdays, through November 17  
7:50 A.M.

Leader: Jerry Connolly  
Meet at the Audubon Shop, Madison

Every Saturday morning through November, Jerry will lead birders through Hammonasset to see migrating shore birds, hawks, and song birds. There is a \$4.00 fee.

## Menunkatuck Welcomes New Members

Menunkatuck Audubon Society welcomes the following new members:

**Branford:** Diane E Howe, Blake-Lois Lehr, James M Link  
**East Haven:** Mary Frazeur, Bill Rose, Ann Salomon

**Guilford:** Harry Feinberg, Mr John Herold, Frederick Hill, Norma Lahainer, Linda Thomas

**Madison:** Ken Burkinshaw, Heidi H Campbell, Ruth M Feldman, Gary

Naegel, Barbara C Nies, Horton R Prueoen, Ms Cheryl Rosa, Mark Trailsmith

**New Haven:** Ms Linda L Anderson, Hope Crescione, Jerry A Dickel, Bruce C Fichandler, Mrs John Ginnetti, Daniel Levitch, Linda Mc Creless, Elizabeth Pollock, Barbara A Puzycki

**West Haven:** Mr A Locascio, Hilda E Mursko, Martin Northam, Katherine Potter

**Connecticut  
Rare Bird Alerts**  
(203)254-3665  
(860)599-5195

**Menunkatuck on the Web:**

[www.menunkatuck.org](http://www.menunkatuck.org)

Menunkatuck Audubon Society  
PO Box 214  
Guilford, CT 06437

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**MENUNKATUCK**

October **2001**



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**NEXT MEETING**  
**PROTECTING CRITICAL**  
**LONG ISLAND SOUND**  
**HABITAT: THREATS FROM**  
**GRISWOLD AIRPORT**  
**DEVELOPMENT**

*Wednesday, November 14, 2001*  
*7:00 PM*  
*Memorial Town Hall*  
*The Green*  
*Madison*

*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.  
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