

## *Madison Trail Dedication for Dave Houston – September 25*

Dave Houston is coming back to Madison to lead a hike on his very own trail. On September 25, the Rockland Committee of the Town of Madison will host a ribbon cutting and dedication of a trail in Dave's honor. Members of the general public are invited.

Many know Dave for the endless hours he gave to environmental projects and education in Madison. The history of that time includes a course in Ecology at Daniel Hand, work with scouts and youth groups, and projects for the Menunkatuck Audubon Society. As a vital member of MAS, he helped coordinate the first biodiversity inventory of Madison. Dave began the Trails Committee of the Madison Land Conservation Trust and served as its first chair. As a result, trails were accurately mapped for inclusion in the award-winning guide. Dave developed all of the narrative trail descriptions for that guide.

Dave was the Wildlife/Conservation Chair for Menunkatuck for many years. In addition to helping organize Menunkatuck's first Biodiversity Day, he developed and designed the project at Hammonasset to maintain and restore vegetational diversity of Willard's Island by maintaining, enlarging, and in some cases, connecting upland grassy areas that existed between what was then

essentially a red-cedar monoculture.

The dedication will be at the Rockland trailhead adjacent to the public parking area at the end of Renee's Way at 10 A.M.

So plan on coming to see Dave again on September 25. For information, please call Joe Oslander at 421-3369.



**Dave Houston cuts a red cedar at Willard's Island.**

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## Fall Programs Are Set

# 2004 Calendar

Jay Kaplan, Director of Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton, CT, will show us the *LBJs of Connecticut* at the September 8 meeting of MAS. For many birders sparrows are difficult to distinguish. Jay will help us develop techniques to separate seemingly confusing species.

Jenny Dickson, a Non-harvested Wildlife Program biologist for the Department of Environmental Protection's Wildlife Division, will present a pre-Halloween look at the *Bats of Connecticut* on October 13.

"Bats are one of the most misunderstood and underappreciated wildlife species," she said. "Halloween is a good time to confront our fears and learn that bats are an essential and beneficial part of our natural world."

Director of Connecticut Audubon's Fairfield Center and veteran tour leader Milan Bull will present a slide show of the east African wildlife paradise in the *Wildlife of Tanzania*. A veteran of more than a dozen trips to Kenya and Tanzania, Mily led his most recent trip to Tanzania for CAS in June, 2004.

Join Branford author/astronomer Bob Crelin for *Astronomy 101*, an introduction to the heavens. As a follow-up to his presentation on light pollution last June, this program will illustrate what we can see of the heavens when the lights are low.



Artist: Steven D'Amato

<b>LBJs of Connecticut</b>	September 8, 2004	<b>Jay Kaplan</b>
<b>Bats of Connecticut</b>	October 13, 2004	<b>Jenny Dickson</b>
<b>Wildlife of Tanzania</b>	November 10, 2004	<b>Milan Bull</b>
<b>Astronomy 101</b>	December 8, 2004	<b>Bob Crelin</b>

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.

## Saturday Morning Birding at Hammonasset

Saturdays, beginning September 11 through November 20  
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.

For information call 203-245-9056. There is a \$4.00 fee.

## Balloons Can Be Deadly to Wildlife

During a recent community event in Connecticut, dozens of colorful balloons were released into the sky. As everyone around me watched in delight, I looked on in dismay because I knew that not only was this act against the law, but it was also deadly to wildlife. At that moment, I realized that very few people in Connecticut know that it is illegal for anyone or any group to release 10 or more helium balloons in a 24-hour period. This law was passed for a very important reason to protect wildlife, particularly marine animals.

Released helium balloons can ride air currents for hundreds of miles. And, in Connecticut, balloons released in inland areas can make their way to Long Island Sound with the help of a little wind. Once in the ocean, the popped balloons—just like plastic bags and other floating plastic gar-

bage—look like food (mainly jellyfish) to some sea creatures. When marine creatures, particularly sea turtles, eat the balloons and plastic garbage, their digestive systems become blocked and the animals eventually die. Balloons and plastic garbage have been documented as the cause of death of countless sea turtles, whales, porpoises, sea birds, and other animals. Many of these animals are on the federal Endangered Species List. Four species of sea turtles that are found in Long Island Sound are all on Connecticut's Threatened and Endangered Species List, in addition to being on the federal Threatened and Endangered Species List (see article in July / August 2003 issue of *Connecticut Wildlife*).

There are other reasons for not releasing helium balloons besides the threat to marine animals. When balloons are let go for a celebration,

it may not seem like littering. But the fact is, it is littering. What goes up must come down somewhere. The balloons, with their long strings attached, eventually pop or lose their helium and come back to the ground. Even if they don't land in Long Island Sound, the balloons and their strings end up somewhere in our landscape as litter. The strings can cause problems of their own. The long, colorful strings are often picked up by birds as nesting material. Problems arise when the strings get wound around the birds or even nestlings, often causing death by strangulation or starvation.

You can make a difference for wildlife by spreading the word about the dangers of releasing helium balloons. And, the next time you are celebrating with a helium balloon, don't let it go! Kathy Herz, *Connecticut Wildlife*, July / August 2004

### ***Releasing Helium Balloons is Illegal***

According to the Connecticut General Statutes Section 26-25c, "No person, nonprofit organization, firm or corporation, including the state and its political subdivisions, shall knowingly release, organize the release of or intentionally cause to be released into the atmosphere within a twenty-four-hour period ten or more helium or other lighter-than-air balloons in the state Any violation...of this section shall be an infraction."

*Connecticut Wildlife*, July / August 2004



**State Representative Pat Widlitz (D-98), co-chair of the General Assembly's Environment Committee, received an award from Audubon Connecticut for her outstanding leadership in protecting birds, other wildlife and their habitats, particularly the creation of the Connecticut Invasive Plants Council. Widlitz, a member of MAS, also supported the state's first wildlife conservation license plate, newly available at DMV. Proceeds go toward DEP's wildlife programs.**

# Announcements

## Field Trip

Hawk Watch at Lighthouse Park  
Sunday, September 26

NOTE THE DATE CHANGE.  
8 A.M. – 12 NOON

Lighthouse Park in New Haven is one of the premier hawk watch sites. Join Bill Yule and other Menunkatuck members at what is typically the height of the broadwing and sharp-shinned hawk migration. For further information call Bill (203 457-1326) during the day Mon.-Fri. 10 A.M. to 3 P.M.

## The Watershed Partnership

A new environmental group is coming to the South Central Connecticut Shoreline. The Watershed Partnership (Partnership) located in New Haven is extending its programs to the South Central Coastal Connecticut. Founded in 1998, the Partnership has worked for several years in the Quinnipiac River Watershed. Its programs included aquifer protection, stormwater management, habitat protection and developing a Quinnipiac River Watershed Action Plan.

The Partnership is now launching a new program called the "Freedom Lawn Campaign" to eliminate or reduce the use of lawn pesticides from residences. The Partnership is also working with municipalities to eliminate the use of pesticides around schools, playgrounds, parks, and ball fields.

Jerry Silbert, MD, Executive Director of the Partnership is a former board member of Menunkatuck Audubon and a resident of Guilford. He is very excited about the Partnership's growth. "We feel we have a real opportunity to work with people and other groups to improve and protect

water quality in the South Central Coastal Region. We have had successes in the Quinnipiac Watershed and we are looking forward to extending our programs to a wider area."

The Partnership will be holding a series of get-togethers in the region to get the word out about the Partnership's good work. For further information, call Dr. Silbert at 203 401-2718.

## Wildlife Plates Available

Connecticut has become the 42nd state to offer a license plate where a portion of proceeds are used to fund wildlife programs. Thirty-five dollars from the sale of each wildlife plate will be deposited into the Wildlife Conservation Fund to benefit species in need of conservation. In addition, \$10 of each \$15 plate renewal will be deposited into the fund. Two choices are available, the bald eagle and the bobcat.

Bald eagles, while still an endangered species in Connecticut, are making a comeback due to improvements in the quality of the environment and active management. Bobcats are a symbol of all that is wild in Connecticut. Solitary and secretive, these seldom seen predators are a vital remnant of our natural heritage. Check <http://www.dep.state.ct.us/burnatr/wildlife/geninfo/licplate.htm> for an application form.



## Duck Stamps

Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, commonly known as "Ducks Stamps," are pictorial stamps produced by the U.S. Postal Service for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. They are not valid for postage. Originally created in 1934 as the federal licenses required for hunting migratory waterfowl, Federal Duck Stamps have a much larger purpose today.

Federal Duck Stamps are a vital tool for wetland conservation. Ninety-eight cents out of every dollar generated by the sales of Federal Duck Stamps goes directly to purchase or lease wetland habitat for protection in the National Wildlife Refuge System. Understandably, the Federal Duck Stamp Program has been called one of the most successful conservation programs ever initiated and is a highly effective way to conserve America's natural resources.

In 1989, the first Junior Duck Stamps were produced. Junior Duck Stamps are now the capstone of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Junior Duck Stamp environmental education program, teaching students across the nation "conservation through the arts."

Both Federal Duck Stamps (\$15) and Junior Duck Stamps (\$5) are sold in many post offices across the country. You can also buy both stamps on the internet, and many sporting goods and outdoor stores sell the Federal Duck Stamps.

For more information go to <http://duckstamps.fws.gov/>.



# Biodiversity 2004

## Know your natural neighbors



### Tracking the Monarch's Journey

The beautiful monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), with its bold orange and black wings, is found in our area from late May through November. Those seen early in the summer have arrived from south of us, where they were born. The arriving females lay their eggs here on milkweed plants where the hatching caterpillars grow fat on the leaves. The toxic chemicals from the milkweed plant accumulate in the caterpillars' bodies, making them distasteful

#### BIO BITS

to would-be predators, such as birds. These toxins remain as the caterpillars metamorphose into adult butterflies. The adult's orange and black coloration is a warning to predators that it is not a tasty meal.

Amazingly, the butterflies that emerge here in late summer will survive the winter by migrating thousands of miles to southern Mexico. There, they will overwinter by the millions at specific roosting sites of only twenty to thirty acres in size. (Though the Mexican government protects these sites, deforestation continues in the area.) In the spring they will journey north again to lay eggs in Texas and other southern states. Having passed on the torch to the next generation, the winter monarchs will die.

The monarchs that reach Connecticut in early summer are the children or grandchildren of the overwintering population in Mexico. Each successive generation heads further north, following the vital nectar sources of native flowers and cultivated gardens, which are in full swing at the time. Goldenrod, coneflower, milkweeds (including butterfly-weed) and butterfly bush are but a few of the nectar sources attractive to monarchs.

This year's last generation of monarchs is getting ready for its long trip south. But their parents have since died and there is no one to show them the way. Studies have found that a monarch navigates by an internal clock; the butterfly's exposure to the sun while it is a caterpillar and then an adult sets the clock.

The Connecticut Butterfly Association participates in a monarch tagging program sponsored by Monarch Watch. (The tagging of individual monarchs helps us to better understand their migration routes and how to protect them.) CBA will be at Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven on Saturday, September 18, from 9 A.M. to noon to tag migrating monarchs. They also plan to set up a tagging station at the Meigs Point Nature Center at Hammonasset State Park in Madison on Sunday, September 19 at 9 A.M. Hammonasset is a great place to see migrating monarchs, as it is a coastal site with plenty of nectar sources (in its butterfly garden and surrounding natural areas). The public is invited to participate in both of these tagging events. Bring a butterfly net and help catch the monarchs for tagging, or simply come to observe these majestic insects up close.



A Monarch Watch tag helps track migration.  
Photo by Cindi Kobak.

Submitted by Cindi Kobak

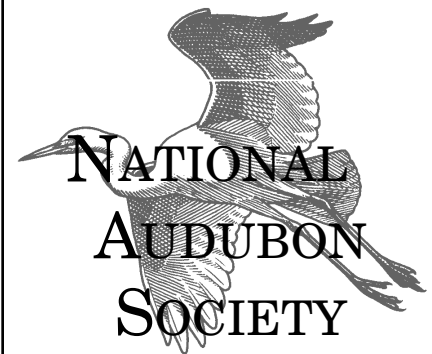
## Help Menunkatuck Save Money

One of the most significant recurring costs to Menunkatuck is the printing and mailing of the Newsletter. One alternative is to produce an electronic color version of each issue, in addition to the black and white version for mailing. The electronic version would be available to MAS members with access to an online computer. It would be sent to them as a pdf (portable document format) file attached to an e-mail - pdf files can be read by both PCs and Macs, providing they have Acrobat Reader installed. This software can be downloaded free of charge. Members can then save the Newsletter on their computer and print a copy if required.

Developing an electronic version has a number of advantages to members and the club. First, it would be available to members before the mailed version. It would be forwarded on the day it is sent to Royal Printing. Second, the quality would gradually improve with the addition of color photos. Third, it is hoped that members who opt for the electronic version will decide they can do without the mailed version, so saving the club postage and production costs.

If you are interested in receiving the electronic version for this trial period, please let me have your e-mail address as soon as possible. This will enable me to send you the electronic version of this issue, so you can see the improvement over the mailed version and to ensure that you can access the pdf file. E-mail me at <newsletter@menunkatuck.org>.

Dennis Riordan



### 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

## Menunkatuck welcomes new members

Menunkatuck Audubon Society welcomes the following new members:

**Branford:** Harvey W Bakerita, Robert Hamilton, Edna M Johnson, Rhoda McKiernan

**East Haven:** Zennon Broughton, Harry V Hodges, Linda Oliva, Beulah Peterson

**Guilford:** Joseph Cardinale, Joan Hemenway, P Jones, Richard Levin,

James Perlotto, Chris Vaiuso, John Weber, Lynne Zullo

**Madison:** Theodore Leffler, Ned Macomb, Audrey Ritter, Susan Schumann-Skehan, John R Westerfield

**New Haven:** Kenneth A Adriani, Mr Yves Capretz, Betty Lockhart

**West Haven:** John Cloud, Mrs Clifford Trembley, Alan Manware

Thanks to Lenny and Joe's  
Fishtale Carousel for helping  
MAS raise \$531.

Menunkatuck Audubon Society  
PO Box 214  
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# MENUNKATUCK

September  
**2004**



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## NEXT MEETING

JAY KAPLAN

LBJs OF CONNECTICUT

Wednesday, September 8, 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.

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