



Audubon CONNECTICUT

August/September 2008

IN THIS ISSUE

[SAVE THE DATE!](#)

[SHARON](#)

[FOREST CONSERVATION & RESEARCH FORUM](#)

[IBA IDENTIFICATION THROUGH GIS](#)

[FIELD TOUR OF CONTE NFW REFUGE](#)

[RARE BUTTERFLY VISIT](#)

[HARTFORD AUDUBON CENTENNIAL FIELD DAY](#)

[PUBLIC POLICY & ADVOCACY](#)

[GET INVOLVED!](#)

[AUDUBON AT HOME](#)

Save the Date!

What: **Hawk Watch Weekend**

When: Sat. & Sun., September 13th & 14th, 2008

Where: Greenwich Center

Time: 11:00 am - 5:00pm

More Information: http://greenwich.audubon.org/Programs_SpecialEvents.html

What: **New Haven Migration Festival**

When: Sunday, September 21st, 2008

Where: Lighthouse Point Park

Time: 8:00 am to 2:30 pm

More Information: [Click here for a complete schedule of events](#)

What: **Invasive Plant Symposium**

When: Wednesday, October 1, 2008

Where: Uconn Storrs

Time: 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

More Information: Full program and registration information are available at the [CIPWG website](#)
or contact Donna Ellis [email: donna.ellis@uconn.edu; phone (860) 486-6448]

What: **Stratford Birding Festival**

When: Saturday, October 4th, 2008

Where: Stratford, CT

Time: TBD

More Information: The Town of Stratford is planning a town-wide birding festival highlighting the key birding sites present in that town. Stratford is blessed with some of the best birding spots in the state including Long Beach, Stratford Great Meadows and the Mouth of the Housatonic River. Please contact Patrick Comins for additional information pcomins@audubon.org (203)264-5098.

What: **Hartford Audubon Society's 100th Anniversary Family Field Day**

When: Sunday, October 5th, 2008

Where: Northwest Park in Windsor.

Time: 8:30 am - 11:30 am

More Information: See below. <http://www.hartfordaudubon.org>

What: **Organic Lawn Workshop for Homeowner's & Garden Clubs**

When: November 13th, 2008

Where: Greenwich Center , Kiernan Hall

Time: 9:15 am - 11:00 am

More Information: See below or contact Christy Pennoyer at 203-869-5272 x225

What: **Annual Connecticut Forest Conservation and Forestry Research Forum**

When: Tuesday, November 25, 2008

Where: Uconn Storrs, Rome Ballroom

Time: 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

More Information: See below. Please contact Patrick Comins for additional information pcomins@audubon.org (203)264-5098.

Audubon Sharon

It's amazing how fast summer can fly by when you're having fun and keeping busy. Audubon Sharon offered thirteen week-long summer nature program sessions for children ranging in age from 3 to 11 years old. The first sessions began on June 23rd and ran through August 8th. A total of 141 spots were filled and phone calls from parents were still coming in up until the last week of camp asking if there was space available for their child. Sessions filled up quickly and additional counselors were added to some of the sessions so that we could accommodate all children on waiting lists.

Aside from scholarships offered for the second year in a row through the collaboration of Wild Birds Unlimited and Audubon, Audubon Sharon set up a summer camp scholarship fund which gave parents of registering campers the option to provide an extra tax-deductible contribution to help another child attend the programs. A total of \$875.00 was given through this new program and, together with the WBU scholarships, a total of ten children received financial assistance through either partial or full scholarships!

In order to help parents with saving time and gas, and to help lessen our ecological footprint, we also included a carpool list option on the camp registration forms. Those who signed up were sent an email of other parents included on the list so they

could arrange for shared drop-off and pick-ups. We had 21 parents sign up for several different weeks on the carpool list.

Our Camp Counselors, Kim Miedema and Peggy Hash, did an outstanding job of providing a fun and safe atmosphere for the kids. Audubon Sharon would also like to thank our summer camp assistants Sunny Kellner and Jasmine Prokscha, as well as all of our volunteer summer camp assistants: Jane Rossman, Lynn Meehan, Rebecca LaFontan, Kate Eldridge, Elizabeth Rich, Hunter Rainard and Emily Studer for a job well done!

[More On Information on Sharon](#)

Bird Banding Research Going Strong

Last spring, Audubon Sharon Staff and volunteers erected ten American Kestrel boxes throughout Sharon and a few surrounding towns. Over the summer, the boxes were checked and the young were banded with leg tags and recorded. This project is helping to strengthen the population of American Kestrels listed as a Threatened Species in the state of Connecticut. Six of the ten pairs using these boxes produced offspring this spring and Audubon Sharon will be expanding the program next year to include more nest boxes around the area.

The 12th year of the M.A.P.S. bird banding program was also just completed this summer, and now researchers from other organizations such as Yale University, CT DEP and the Institute for Bird Populations are using Audubon Sharon's long-term data to conduct other bird related studies such as Lyme disease and avian influenza.

[More Information on Bird Banding Research](#)



Reduction of Presence of Water Chestnut on Bog Meadow Pond

Last year consultant Bill Moorhead found the beginnings of an infestation of water chestnut in Bog Meadow Pond. Since this is a very aggressive invasive species, we were alarmed to see it in the pond. In 2007, over 100 plants were manually removed. In late July of this year, Mike Dudek, Land Manager, and Sandy Elson Slemmer, Habitat Chair, paddled on Bog Meadow Pond in search of water chestnut florettes. Twenty-nine plants were manually removed. While it would have been preferable to not find any plants, we were pleased to find so few. Another survey will be done later in the summer. These searches will continue for many years until the water chestnut is completely eradicated.

Delightful Weather for Sharon Audubon Festival

While thunderstorms loomed all around us creating a darkened, threatening sky to the west, it managed to stay rain-free for the 41st Annual Sharon Audubon Festival held on August 9th and 10th. Approximately 800 visitors attended the event over the course of two days, not including the 100+ volunteers who helped with all aspects of the festival including presenting programs, running the front gate admissions, parking, food booth, information, and much more.

As always, visitors had a great selection of programs to choose from each day, including bird and tree identification walks, pond and stream ecology, geology of CT, nature writing workshops, shortened programs for children and much more. A new addition this year featured giant dove and hawk puppets from Mortal Beasts & Deities, who "soared" amongst the crowd each afternoon much to the delight of the festival-goers.

Audubon Sharon extends a warm thank you to all of the program presenters, volunteers, exhibitors, vendors, musicians and featured performers who participated in this year's event.

Green Herons

by Margaret Szubra, Rehabilitation Volunteer at Audubon Sharon



Summer time is always the busiest season in our rehab department. And this year is not different. The season continues to be abundant in variety of orphaned and sick birds. So far, we have been successful in returning back to nature hordes of ever curious American Robins, plethora of Sparrows, several elegant Wood Ducks, Blue Birds, Blue Jays, and irresistibly handsome Barn Swallows.

In addition, this year, nature bestowed upon us three orphaned Green Heron nestlings. They were brought to us from Torrington on the second day of July. Huddled in a small nest, they resembled pterodactyl rather than any other bird we could all relate to. Luckily they did not suffer any injuries and were found in relatively good health.

From the early days in our care, all three birds were exhibiting profuse curiosity and almost human-like playfulness. It is worth to mention that the Green Heron is one of very few species that uses tools when hunting. In the wild they drop insect, food, and other small object on the water's surface to attract the fish. This might explain why at such an early age the birds are always very alert and curious of their surroundings. Only after a week with us, they started eating on their own and were able to fetch live fish from a small bowl offered to them during the feedings.

We have been very happy with their progress. Each day they are becoming stronger and healthier birds. We hope that soon all three of them will be ready to fly away and start their life in the wild. Thank you for all your dedication and your help to bring those beautiful birds back to where they belong.

[More Information on Rehabilitation](#)

Forest Conservation and Forestry Research Forum

Audubon Connecticut is helping to organize the Annual Connecticut Forest Conservation and Forestry Research Forum to be held November 25, 2008 at the Rome Ballroom, UConn Storrs. We are especially excited about the combined Forest Ecosystem Health and Research panel scheduled for the afternoon, which will feature talks on natural resource inventory projects, featuring Dr. Chris Elphick of UCONN on bird inventory efforts, Dr. Jane O'Donnell of UCONN, head of the Connecticut Butterfly Atlas Project, Dr. John Silander of the Invasive Plants Atlas of New England and UCONN speaking about predictive modeling for invasive species distribution, and the DEP's Ken Metzler about mapping of Connecticut's key habitats. Audubon's Leslie Kane, Patrick Comins and Chris Field will also be helping out with the event.

[More Information](#)

Important Bird Area Identification through GIS

Geographic information systems (GIS) technology has become an integral part of landscape ecology and modern conservation biology over the last decade. At its core, the IBA program blends principles from both disciplines in an effort to reduce Connecticut 's landscape into manageable chunks (IBAs) which then become the focus of local

stewardship and on-the-ground action.

Now, thanks to a generous gift from the Jeniam Foundation, Connecticut 's IBA Program is equipped with the latest GIS software, allowing us to keep pace with the latest advancements in conservation biology. This will ensure that our state's IBA program remains a credible, science-based conservation program, and that our resources are directed where they will achieve the greatest conservation results.

Over the next year, we will be embarking on another round of IBA identification using GIS-based methodology that will eventually serve as a model for other state IBA programs. We'll also be helping other IBA leaders to expand their GIS capabilities by making some of our custom-programmed GIS tools available via the web. It's going to be an exciting year for the IBA program, and many of our future success will be built on this grant from the Jeniam Foundation.

[More Information](#)

Come Be A Friend Of Silvio Conte NFWR!

We are hopeful that Audubon Members will join the Friends of Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge for an exciting field tour and 2008 Annual Meeting on Wednesday, October 15. The Friends have a great day planned, with all activities centered in Hadley, MA , site of the refuge's newest lands.

We will start with an optional morning field tour of the brand new additions to the Fort River Division in Hadley. This area has remarkable grassland bird habitat and scenic beauty just minutes away from the fast-growing communities in the Pioneer Valley . After the tour, we will move to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Headquarters, where we will provide lunch around noon. Our Annual Meeting will follow, beginning at 1 PM and finishing no later than 4 PM. The Annual Meeting will cover a number of important and timely topics, including new refuge additions, the Comprehensive Conservation Plan update process, and the Friends' plans for 2009. It will be a great opportunity to learn how you can help support the refuge in 2009.

Directions, logistics, and a detailed agenda will be coming in early October. We hope that you can join us for a great day!

With questions, please feel free to contact:

Jad Daley, Chair jad.daley@tpl.org

Friends of Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

Please contact Patrick Comins for additional information pcomins@audubon.org(203)264-5098.

[More Information](#)

Rare Butterfly Visits Director of Bird Conservation's Meriden Yard

Patrick Comins, our director of bird conservation had taken Friday, August 15th off to take care of some chores, upon returning from the store he noticed a large black butterfly visiting one of his backyard butterfly gardens. "I said to my wife 'holy cow, that's a Giant Swallowtail; I've never seen one of those before.'" He ran into the house and grabbed a digital camera and snapped a few shots and sent out word to some butterfly experts about this rare sighting. As it turns out, there hadn't been a sighting of a Giant Swallowtail in Connecticut since 2001! Further research had uncovered reports of a small colony in the vicinity of Meriden from 1990s. Patrick is now working with Andy Brand from Broken Arrow Nurseries to secure a specimen of the host plant to put in his yard. Giant Swallowtails lay their eggs primarily on prickly ash (*Zanthoxylum americanum*) in Connecticut and also wafer ash or hoptree (*Ptelea trifoliata*). If the Meriden colony still persists, perhaps additional host plants will help the population of this beautiful and regionally rare butterfly. This goes to show, you never know what might show up if you provide nectar flowers and don't use pesticides in your yard.



Patrick

HAS Centennial Family Field Day Celebration

Sunday, October 5th, 2008

Northwest Park in Windsor.

8:30 am - 11:30 am

Rain or Shine! Bring a picnic lunch and stay for all or part of the day. Hartford Audubon is 100 years old and we're throwing a party for the club and the general public. The emphasis is on the family - a great day for adults and children alike. Events include:

-Bird and nature walks led by experts from the club

-Bird banding demonstration Carol Millard* and Larry Lunden;

-Activities for children - Children are welcome to participate in all of the day's events, and are invited to join some of the programs that were designed just for them including a Migration Game, Bird Quest, display where they can build a feeder.

Children should stop by the information table when they arrive to pick up their Passport, where they can record all of the events and exhibitions that they have attended.

Live animal demonstrations:

Skyhunters in Flight is an action filled educational program designed to increase awareness and enhance appreciation of birds of prey in the wild. The program explains the essential role these birds play at the top of the food chain in our environment, and outlines the skills they have for survival. Brian Bradley has been a falconer and animal trainer for over 20 years.

Riverside Reptiles - Explore the wonderful world of reptiles and amphibians! Meet various examples from these two similar, yet different groups of animals. Learn about their natural history and the importance of their conservation. You will also have a chance to pet a lizard, stare into the eyes of a giant toad, and touch a huge python! This program will be presented by Brian

Kleinman is a naturalist who is passionate about giving quality educational programs about reptiles, amphibians, and other fascinating creatures of the animal world.

Teresa Kramer founder of Canton Raptor Care will talk on raptor rehabilitation, talking about raptors living in suburban and urban environments and how we can work together to ensure that birds of prey continue to live in New England. The birds that accompany her cannot be released back to the wild because of the nature of their injuries.

Gerri Griswold is the director of administration and development at the White Memorial Conservation Center in Litchfield. But she might be better known as the "Bat Lady." The Bat Lady will bring a big brown bat, a little brown bat, and a red bat. Each bat has injuries that prevent them from being released into the wild. Gerri Griswold will dispel many of the myths and teach us the truth about bats and how important these flying mammals are to our lives.

There will be exhibits featuring information from a broad group of nature and conservation groups including land trusts, nature centers, Audubon Connecticut, invasive species, archeology, and alternative energy possibilities.

This event is FREE and open to all! Invite your family, friends and neighbors to celebrate with us. You will need to bring food and drink - picnic tables available. For more information and directions, contact Hartford Audubon Society online at - www.hartfordaudubon.org or by phone (860)-282-BIRD (2473), or contact Fran D'Amico at 203-237-2734.

Hartford Audubon Society's Family Field Day is supported by Audubon Connecticut.

Public Policy & Advocacy

Connecticut Important Bird Area Wins Protection by Patrick Comins

Twenty acres along Connecticut's Menunketesuck River that includes pristine tidal marsh has been added to the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge's Salt Meadow Unit. Recognized as an Important Bird Area by Audubon, the region threatened by development was bought by The Trust for Public Land.

Audubon's director for IBAs, John Cecil, said "This is a fantastic acquisition that will benefit globally rare Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows and many other migrant songbirds. This success represents the power of partnerships in the ongoing quest to conserve Important Bird Areas. Audubon recognized the high bird value the site offers and lobbied for Land and Water Conservation Funding, the Trust for Public Land carried out the property acquisition and the NWR will manage and hold the property for public enjoyment, true conservation at work."

"Audubon is thrilled to have partnered with the Trust for Public Land, federal lawmakers and U.S. Fish & Wildlife in this effort to protect additional acreage at this Important Bird Area," said Patrick Comins, Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon Connecticut. "This key parcel adds significantly to Connecticut's NWR system and helps safeguard water quality in the river that flows into the Menunketesuck. We are grateful to our congressional delegation for their support in making this acquisition a reality," said Sandy Breslin, Audubon Connecticut's Director of Governmental Affairs.

Senator Christopher Dodd said, "Untouched, unspoiled land is becoming increasingly rare, and we must always be vigilant in

protecting our environmental treasures."

Senator Joseph Lieberman said, "I join my friends at the Trust for Public Land and the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife refuge in celebrating the preservation of this ecological jewel on Long Island Sound."

Congressman Joseph Courtney said, " Connecticut is fortunate to have such unique and pristine natural areas remaining and they must be preserved for the future. Endeavors such as this, or my successful effort to protect the Eightmile River , deserve federal assistance and I am proud to have worked with my colleagues to give the Menunketesuck land a bright, clean future."

Located on the Atlantic Flyway, the refuge provides important habitat for many species of wading birds, shorebirds, songbirds, and terns, including the endangered roseate tern. In addition to increasing habitat protection, the refuge has new opportunities for scientific research and environmental education.

[More Information](#)

Get Involved!

When It Is Time to Vote: Choose Environmental Champions!

On Tuesday, November 4, 2008, we will cast our ballots for President, U.S. Congress, State Senate, and State Representative. These decisions will affect the future of our environment here in our state, throughout the nation, and across the globe. Take the following steps to ensure your vote helps support a healthy environment for our families and our future:

- Join the flock! Become a member of Audubon's Advocacy Network email at: AudubonActCT-subscribe@yahoogroups.com to get up-to-date information on environmental issues affecting birds, other wildlife, and their habitats.
- Register and get counted! Connecticut does not allow same-day voter registration, so ensure your vote counts by registering in your community well before Election Day on November 4th. Check with your local Registrar of Voters for information on relevant deadlines and voting locations.
- Go public! Commit to attending one candidate forum or debate in your community. Ask the candidates to state their positions on environmental issues publicly. Work with debate sponsors in advance to ensure that questions about the environment are included.
- Check their credentials! Audubon Connecticut is a nonpartisan organization. We do not support or oppose any political party or candidate for office. We do, however, encourage you to be an informed voter. Be sure to learn about the candidates' positions and/or actions on important environmental issues before you vote! One source: the September-October 2008 issue of *Audubon Magazine* contains an article entitled titled "Face-Off" in which both John McCain and Barack Obama discuss their environmental policies.

For updates about Audubon Connecticut's public policy and advocacy efforts, contact Sandy Breslin, Director of Governmental Affairs at (203) 264-5098 x307 or sbreslin@audubon.org.

Audubon at Home In Greenwich

In our ongoing quest to reduce the use of synthetic chemicals that are so bad for birds, wildlife, humans and the environment, Audubon Greenwich will host another workshop on Organic Lawns with expert Chip Osborne on Thursday November 13th at 9:30 AM. This event is intended for home owners and garden clubs, but is open to the public and all are welcome. There is a \$10.00 suggested contribution.

[More Information on Audubon at Home](#)

Tip of the Month

Early Fall is the ideal time to do lawn renovation. Core aeration, topdressing with compost and overseeding will get new grass established and build stronger turf to out compete those weeds

[More ways to go organic](#)

If you would like to unsubscribe from this newsletter please e-mail ct@audubon.org with the subject REMOVE.
For more information on Audubon Connecticut and any of our programs go to www.audubonct.org or e-mail ct@audubon.org