



“The Mattabesek Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society, is committed to environmental leadership and education for the benefit of the community and the earth’s biodiversity.”

Upcoming Field Trips: Winter 2018/Spring 2019

November 2 and 10, 2018 (Saturday 7:00 p.m.)



Barred Owl

Owl Prowl

Trips meet at Stop and Shop parking lot in Middletown at 7:00 p.m., and caravan through Middletown, ending in Middlefield. Dress warmly, bring a flashlight, and have gas in your car, or carpool—no gas stations along the route. If we are lucky we can

hear screech owls answering our calls—and we may possibly see one or two—and maybe some other larger species, such as a Great Horned.

Please put Owl Prowl in subject line of emails. <joseph.mor@sbcglobal.net> 635-2786

December 16, 2018

44th Annual MAS Salmon River Christmas Bird Count

(See following pages for details.)



February 2, 2019 (Saturday 8 a.m.)

Eagles at Machimoodus Park



Join Larry Cyrulik for a winter trip through the woods to the cliff above Salmon River Cove. In past years, Bald Eagles have swooped over close enough for birders to hear the beats of their wings. Dress warmly (especially shoes or boots). Meet at the parking lot at the corner of Lawn Ave. and High St., Middletown. Call Larry for info 342-4785 or 635-1880.

February 15–18, 2019 (Friday–Monday)

21st Annual Great Backyard Bird Count

This annual four-day event has watchers counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where birds are across the continent. About 160,000 participants submit observations online, creating an instantaneous snapshot of global bird populations recorded. Anyone can participate—as little as 15 minutes on one day, or for as long as you like each day. Enter your list(s) online at www.BirdCount.org. For more info: www.birdsource.org/gbbc/

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Biribá and Jasmin (Im)Migrate into Sanctuary of Native/ist Beaver and Snake

From Alison Guinness, MAS President

Protection of Connecticut Public Lands

The Connecticut legislature has finally acted to protect Connecticut public lands with the passing of Senate Joint Resolution No. 35 (SJ 35), an amendment to the state constitution to protect real property held or controlled by the state. This amendment would end such debacles as the Haddam Land Swap proposal. The amendment will be on the ballot in this year’s election in Nov. Be sure to vote yes to protect public land—your land.

Sec. 19. (a) The general assembly shall not enact any legislation requiring a state agency to sell, transfer or otherwise dispose of any real property or

interest in real property that is under the custody or control of such agency to any person or entity other than another state agency unless a committee of the general assembly has held a public hearing regarding such sale, transfer or disposition of such property or interest and the act of the general assembly requiring such sale, transfer or disposition of real property or interest in real property is limited in subject matter to provisions concerning such sale, transfer or disposition.

<https://www.cga.ct.gov/2018/ACT/ra/pdf/2018RA-0001-R00SJ-00035-RA.pdf>

Morris



No one knew exactly when the orange male cat appeared beside the huge Jamison sound and explosion proof doors that led to the three-stage Dresser Clark compressor, four stories tall including miles of plumbing and five hundred pound pressure stainless steel flanges; all of which huffed and puffed hundreds of atmospheric pounds of air through a labyrinth of pipes channeling this profound energy into the high compression, full annular burner stand, a cog in the complicated field of jet engine propulsion development.

It was spring and the Shadbush that grew at the edge of the asphalt drive behind the fuel farm was past full bloom and dropped its petals to the ground. Large was the first to notice the cat and he began to bring food into work to feed it. The men of the test stand quickly knick-named the cat “Morris” after the famous feline actor in the food advertisements. Morris was feral and no one thought that you could tame him enough to pet him, but Large proved them wrong. Soon after he began feeding Morris, calling him by name and puckering his lips to make soothing, clucking sounds, Large was able to run his thick, rough hands over Morris’ back, ending with a gentle rub of his short, stubby tail. Morris flexed his back with pleasure. He usually had bits of straw or spider webs stuck to his fur or whiskers and this made him seem even more endearing.

Large was paradoxical. Crude and bombastic, he would often get under everyone’s skin by doing the outrageous, or showing off what the rig operator Walters said was his ignorance. When an unfortunate Little Brown bat came to rest on the side of a test building after an evening of feasting on moths attracted to the halogen lamps Large took to it with a pipe and threw its smashed body into the airflow lab where Walters was working. “It was out in the daytime; probably rabid,” Large declared with a smirk playing over his small,

fish-like mouth. And when the starlings, who nested in the nooks and crannies of the test buildings lost some of their chicks to the ground before they were able to fledge, Large came along, insured of an expectant audience, and would stomp the chicks into the asphalt claiming that they were doomed anyway, he was just speeding things up. Everyone chuckled, saying, “That’s Large for you.” Except for Walters, who was appalled. But he knew it was useless to protest. He just grimaced and walked away.

Yet Large built bird houses and nailed them to trees all around the back of the test facility, and now his affection for Morris surprised everyone.

After he was fed Morris would stroll into the compressor room and lie in one of the surplus office chairs formed around a makeshift lounge called “Large’s Lounge” because Large had gathered up all of the accoutrements: a desk; shelves for a radio and speakers; a hot plate to heat the coffee pot; a desk; lamps; file cabinets filled with newspapers and magazines. Huge full length beer advertisements with pretty models holding bottles in their hands were discreetly plastered between the steel I-beams holding up the walls and ceiling of the compressor room.

The development programs were numerous that spring and summer. One rig test followed another incessantly. The crew worked overtime. When the compressor was lined up—pre-starts completed, valves opened—water, air and steam inexorably flowed through the system and the decibels began climbing. Through it all, during the day, Morris slept in a chair in Large’s Lounge unaffected by the machinations and cacophony surrounding him. For it was, in spite of everything, a safe haven. And Morris needed his rest, having spent the black nights heaven knows where.

Once, in between runs, when another rig was being installed and Morris lay sleeping, Walters walked by and noticed a large tick attached to his lip. This worried Walters so much that he put on rubber gloves and dared to pull the tick off this feral lion, not knowing what Morris’ reaction would be.

Walters was successful. After he gently pulled the tick away he showed it to Morris and exclaimed, “See what you had on your lip?” Morris, sleepy, looked indifferently at the tick, but also appreciatively, Walters thought.

“I pulled a tick off of Morris,” Walters said to Large, in a way assuaging some of their past differences. And Large nodded accommodatingly.

One morning Morris came to his food bowl with a ghastly injury. Something, perhaps a raccoon, had torn part of a cheek away. Everyone calculated Morris’ chances of making it. Large was the most concerned. He leaned

Continued on back page

MAS Officers:

President: Alison Guinness (860-873-9304)
 Vice-President: Luella Landis
 Recording Sec.: Sharon Dellinger
 Treasurer: Elaine Payne

2017 Committee Chairs:

Conservation: Larry Cyrulik (860-342-4785)
 Education: Kim Antol (860-347-6442)
 Publicity: Alison Guinness (860-873-9304)
 Sanctuary: Rodrigo Pinto (301-768-8807)
 Wingbeat: Pat Rasch (860-635-1880) <pat_rasch@mac.com>

Rare Bird Alert: 203-254-3665

On the web: www.audubon-mas.org



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The 44th Annual MAS Salmon River Christmas Bird Count Sunday, December 16, 2018



For 119 years, the National Audubon Society has been surveying bird populations at Christmas time. This will be the 44th year MAS has been part of this effort.

There is no fee for participating. Stats and stories will be available online for this and previous years.

MAS team captains will distribute magnetic signs for our cars (and arm-bands for walkers) to identify ourselves as Audubon Bird Counters. Our teams will scour the countryside in our 15-mile diameter circle centered on the Old Comstock Bridge on the Salmon River (see map) to tally our feathered friends, who invariably provide us with some surprises.

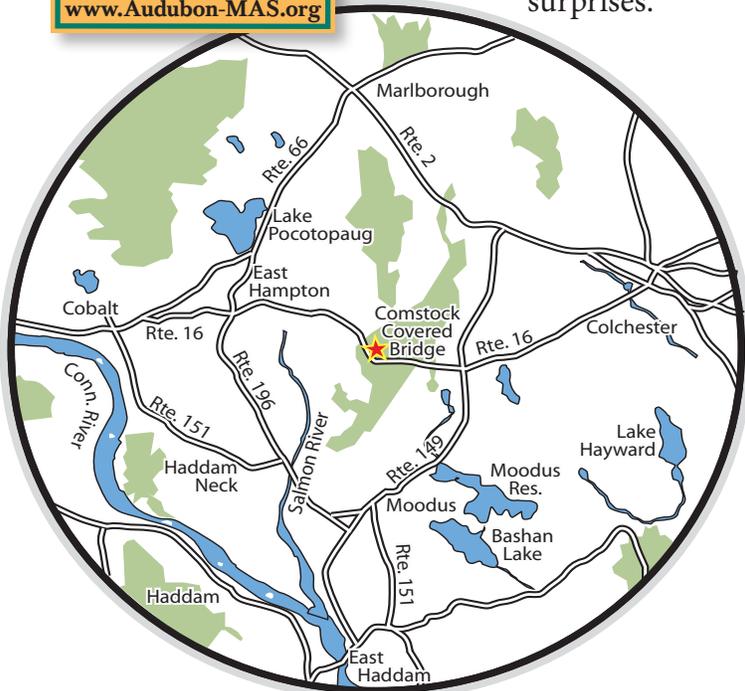
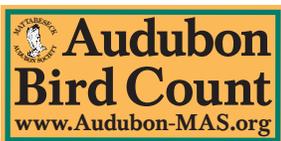
We encourage anyone to participate with us in this oldest citizen-led science project in the world, whether or not you are an experienced birder.

Sharon Dellinger rsdell@comcast.net and Doreen Jezek dajeze@gmail.com are our MAS co-compilers. Download and print Christmas Count Tally Sheet at www.audubon-mas.org. Please provide details for any rare, strange, or unusual bird—a photo helps verify the sighting.

Those of you within Count Circle who have feeders are urged to use the **Backyard Tally Sheet** to report birds that come to your feeder. Feeder watchers not only contribute to the total bird tally, they have almost always tallied birds that those of us in the field have not found. Send feeder information to Sharon: rsdell@comcast.net. Be sure to put CBC in the subject line. Even if you don't wish to report, please be sure to fill your feeders for participants in the field. Sometimes, feeders are the only places to see birds.

- Please keep bird lists in **taxonomical** order.
- A blank list form is available on www.audubon-mas.org.
- Please provide details for any rare, strange, or unusual bird—a photo is always good.

NOTE: From 5:00 p.m. on, we will congregate at **Farrell's Restaurant** on Route 66 in Portland for fellowship and the excitement of the tally. Every year has produced a few spectacular sightings—either for the count day or the count week—and sometimes unusual numbers of species.



Mattabesek Audubon Society Count Circle

State Parks/
Forests

Scale of Miles 0 1 2

Backyard Bird Count

Sunday, December 16, 2018

Open to anyone within the count circle:

Please tally all bird visitors (the highest number at any given time of each species — do not add birds cumulatively during the day) to your backyard feeder, and mail this form to:



Sharon Dellinger, 930 Middletown Rd, Colchester, CT 06415 rsdell@comcast.net

_____ Mourning Dove

_____ Brown-headed Cowbird

_____ Yellow-shafted Flicker

_____ Cardinal

_____ Red-bellied Woodpecker

_____ House Finch

_____ Hairy Woodpecker

_____ Goldfinch

_____ Downy Woodpecker

_____ Slate-colored Junco

_____ Blue Jay

_____ Tree Sparrow

_____ Crow

_____ White-throated Sparrow

_____ Black-capped Chickadee

_____ Fox Sparrow

_____ Tufted Titmouse

_____ Song Sparrow

_____ White-breasted Nuthatch

Others

_____ Red-breasted Nuthatch

_____ Mockingbird

_____ Starling

_____ House Sparrow

_____ Red-wing Blackbird

_____ Purple Grackle

HOURS AND MINUTES WATCHING YOUR FEEDER: _____

YOUR NAME: _____

YOUR ADDRESS: _____

YOUR TELEPHONE: _____



(Invasive) Biribá and Jasmin (Im)Migrate into Sanctuary of Native/ist Beaver and Snake

El Chapulín Colorado (or the Red Grasshopper) plays his part of Latin(o) American savior again in cleaning up the litter left at the border of a sanctuary as the winter snow melts and reveals the trash that was

hidden under the white surface.

After some can(n)ed and other picking (up), he feels the weight of a bag full of trash, heavy as if they were coconuts loaded along the saddle of a cross between a horse and a donkey who works as an assistant to a coconut salesman.

Hence, El Chapulín Colorado falls into post-winter daydreams of his tropics and decides to look at some tropical plants such as the biribá and jasmin that might have been inside the sanctuary. Never mind the changes in latitude, which would not lead him to find any of these plants invading from the tropics. At the end of the day and as the story turns out, he would keep up his heroic attitude claiming about his misplaced search, “lo hice intencionalmente para el final feliz” (or, “I did it on purpose to end up on a happy note”).

As soon as the Latin(o) American begins to walk the trail around the beaver-dammed pond at the center of the sanctuary, he sees a water snake swimming away from him on top of the pond. With a sense of wonder and his heroic courage, he keeps walking along the trail while thinking to himself his motto of “¡siganme los buenos!” (“let the good ones follow me”). A dozen minutes or so later, El Chapulín Colorado spots another water snake swimming farther off toward one of the beaver lodges in the pond. At that point, the savior encourages himself with the thought that the day is good in that the water snakes remind him of dolphins at the seashore, a thought that delivers him to his other motto of “que no panda el cúnico” (“nobody panic”). The Latin(o) American also finds the water that he keeps walking around to be lively with loud noises sounding like those of the berimbau from the biribá plant. The lively sound is adrift thanks to a lot of large birds looking like duck-like species that he would love to have the luxury to learn how to identify. He wonders about any of his tropical equivalents across the pond: Are the birds migratory and are the water snakes nativist obstacles to the flotation part

of their avian (im)migration?

About another dozen Latin(o) American minutes later, El Chapulín Colorado stops on his tracks and watches out some more as soon as he makes out two small snakes well ahead next to the trail. He watches the snakes vigilantly while postponing for a later focus any of his wonder as to:

Are the snakes simply small adults or are they as young as the saplings that he has been heroically clipping to clear the trail for those who may follow him in hiking the sanctuary? Without panic at snakes on dry land now as much as across (on) the pond, once the savior then chose to turn around he did so in a way that El Chavo Del Ocho (or The Boy from the Eighth) would say: “fue sin querer queriendo” (or, “it was wanting without want to do so”).

It was in the same ambivalently mixed way cultural to Dona Flor or to a Doña Jasmin that El Chapulín Colorado would accidentally scavenge out of the trash a

reward in his private interest while looking out for the public interest during another heroic pickup of some more trash under the whiteness on his way out of the sanctuary. Still, the savior would take heroic credit for discovering a bottle of Coca-Cola that was both at least 50 years old and an icon from the days when a nativist beaver might say the United States was nationally great, coming across (from) the snakes’ pond water onto dry land to say so.

As usual, the Latin(o) American would say as if he intended to unearth the bottle, “no contaban con mi astucia” (or, “you weren’t counting on my shrewdness”). Then the hero finds a more certain reward in a reflection that is a genie out of the bottle. Is his reward an U.S. national icon or an immigrant beyond borders when the coca is native to Latin America and the kola to Africa even without mentioning the more recent globalization of the mixed product? Is the bottle an iconic reward of greatness or trash when whichever among the four corners of the pond might be most native for the product, the consumption it epitomizes is degrading the planet, including northern sanctuaries like the one where he and the birds are (im) migrating? Concluding the latter twice, El Chapulín Colorado is happy to end his hike as his small grasshopper self of a worldwide or universal being and as his quixotic red self of a disinterested or civic hero after all.

R.G.P., Ph.D.



Source: clipartxtras.com

Morris *continued from page 2*

his squat, powerful body over the cat and stroked its back in commiseration. But Morris gradually, by some miracle, healed and survived. During the day he assumed his position in the chair in Large's Lounge. And Large would glance over affectionately at Morris as he went about doing pre-starts: spinning the wheels open to get water to the coolers; switching the fans on; jerking valves in line. Steam hissed, water pulsed, vibrations commenced. Morris slept through it all.

Summer's heat gradually began to wane. The rising sun struggled to dispel the nocturnal fog, and the wasps swarmed their last hurrahs around the eaves of the test buildings. Soon dry leaves began to blow into the compressor room and the auxiliary high pressure fuel and water pump rooms. The Jamison doors were kept closed more often against the cold. And there was one other discernible change: Morris' visits ceased. Each morning Large looked for Morris beside the Jamison doors to no avail.

Several weeks passed. Walters had made peace with Large

and regretted Morris' absence. "What happened to your friend?" he asked.

Large simply lifted his thick arms with their powerful forearms in an expression of helplessness. "I guess he's gone south."

The test-stand ran insatiably throughout autumn and into barren December. The men were numbed by the non-stop routine. One morning with white frost bristling on the exposed metal in the facility, Large listlessly entered the compressor room, the behemoth Jamison doors slamming definitively behind him. As he absently turned one of the wheels letting water surge forcefully into the first stage cooler, Large happened to glance over at one of the chairs by the desk in the Lounge. Orange hairs still clung to the seat where Morris had slept so casually all summer. Now there was nothing left but shadows.

Large finished his pre-starts and shuffled back to the control room, the decibels rising about his ears. He yawned with fatigue and boredom. 🌿

LC

The deadline for items to be included in the Winter/Spring issue is December 26, 2018. We expect subscribers to receive their copies about January 20. Please send items to Pat Rasch, 24 Elm Road, Cromwell, CT 06416, or email to <pat_rasch@comcast.net>

The Board of Directors will meet at 7:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month at deKoven House, 27 Washington Street, Middletown.

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