



Mattabesek Audubon Society

A Chapter of NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY



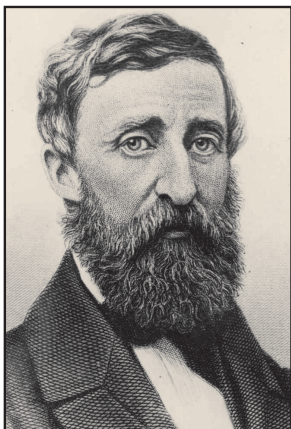
# Wingbeat

Summer / Fall 2017

Volume 44 • Number 2

"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."

## Join us for an Evening with Henry David Thoreau



### Save the Date!—September 28!

To celebrate the bicentennial of Henry David Thoreau's birth this year, Mattabesek Audubon Society and the Rockfall Foundation are co-sponsoring a program, "An Evening with Henry David Thoreau" on Thursday, September 28 at 7:00 pm at the deKoven House Community Center, 27 Washington Street, Middletown. Mr. Thoreau will be portrayed by Richard

Smith, a historian and staff member of the Thoreau Society in Concord, MA. This "living history" experience program should prove to be a dynamic, lively, and educational event!

There is no fee, but please email Luella Landis at [thoreaulu17@gmail.com](mailto:thoreaulu17@gmail.com) to register so that we have an idea of the number of participants. 🌿

Luella Landis, MAS Vice President

## Thoreau Essay Contest

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Henry David Thoreau, naturalist, essayist, philosopher, and author of *Walden*. To mark this event, the Mattabesek Audubon Society is sponsoring an essay contest for high school students in our chapter area that includes Middletown, Middlefield, Cromwell, Portland, Haddam, East Haddam, East Hampton, Colchester, and Marlborough. The theme of the essay: "Is Thoreau Relevant Today?"

### Contest parameters:

- An essay of at least 500 words answering the theme question: "Is Thoreau Relevant Today?"
- The essay must be the student's own work.
- The essay should be typed and double spaced.
- The essay should be emailed by midnight on October 15, 2017 to: [wjguinness@snet.net](mailto:wjguinness@snet.net)

All entrants will receive one of Mattabesek's Identifying Our Backyard Birds card.

Three prizes will be awarded:

1st Place: \$250 2nd Place: \$200 3rd Place: \$150

If you would like to participate, contact Alison Guinness at [wjguinness@snet.net](mailto:wjguinness@snet.net) 🌿

## If you find a baby bird...

If you find a baby bird or other animal, it's best to leave it alone. If you have found a baby, chances are the parent is nearby and will take care of the baby when you leave the area. If you have some other wildlife problem, contact the CT Wildlife Rehabilitators Association at <http://www.cwrawildlife.org/> where you can find a rehabilitator in your area or someone to address your problem. 🌿

## Beware of the Bears

Black Bears are on the move from June to early July.

These Safety Tips are from DEEP:

- Make Noise while hiking • Hike in groups • Leash dogs

If you see a bear:

- Make enough noise so the bear is aware of your presence
- Never approach a bear

If the bear doesn't leave

- Back away slowly • Never run, or climb a tree

If the bear approaches, be offensive

- Make more Noise, wave your arms, and throw objects at the bear • Black bears rarely attack humans.

If you are attacked, Do Not play dead.

- Fight back with anything available. 🌿

Connecticut Wildlife, September / October 2015

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## AUDUBON MEMBERS' CORNER

(Feel free to send us contributions to this column)



Submitted by Alison Guinness, MAS President

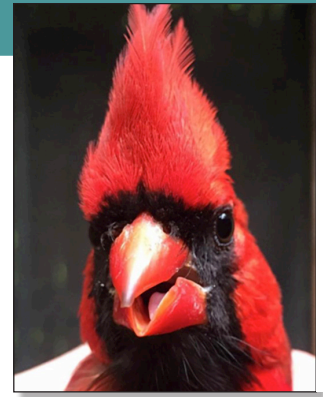
### WILDLIFE REHABILITATION

#### Nursing Birds and Other Animals Back to Health

Thanks to the wildlife rehabilitation team at Audubon Sharon, this handsome devil was released back into the wild on May 26th. After being attacked by a cat, this adult male Northern Cardinal suffered multiple injuries. He required long-term care, but we are thrilled that he recovered and is able to be free once more! Best wishes to you our feathered friend!

Audubon Sharon admitted more than 750 patients in

2016. The clinic provides a much-needed service to the wildlife of northwestern Connecticut, with the ultimate goal of providing care and treatment to injured and orphaned wildlife and releasing them back into the wild as soon as possible. Naturalists are on duty to answer questions and interface with the public



Northern Cardinal

Photo Sunny Bettley

### U.S. Rice Farmers Embrace Sustainable Agriculture and Earn First-Ever Carbon Credits for Rice Production

Seven rice farmers today (June 14, 2017) made history when Microsoft purchased the first ever carbon credits generated from rice farmers, all because these pioneers tested out a radical idea—that by implementing conservation practices on their crops, rice farmers could reduce methane emissions and thereby generate a carbon credit that could later be sold on the carbon market.

A diverse group of like-minded partners guided the farmers through the process, with funding from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service under the Conservation Innovation Grants program and other investors.

Meet four of those farmers—collectively known as Nature's Stewards—through the NRCS interactive story: <http://arcg.is/2sIKHYp>.

### Purchase Migratory Bird Conservation Stamps and Protect Our Cherished Wildlife Habitat!

Migratory Bird Conservation Stamp dollars deliver results for wildlife and habitat! Connecticut stamps can be purchased for \$17 each wherever hunting and fishing licenses are sold: participating town clerks, participating retail agents, DEEP License and Revenue (79 Elm Street in Hartford), and through the online Sportsmen's Licensing System. Upon

request, stamps can be sent through the mail.

Federal Duck Stamps are sold at many sporting goods stores and other retail locations—both large and small—that sell sporting and recreation equipment. You can also buy them at many national wildlife refuges, and online through Amplex. As an added convenience, especially for hunters, the E-Stamp program allows you to buy a Duck Stamp online and instantly obtain a printable receipt good for 45 days, within which time a physical Duck Stamp is mailed to you.



#### MAS Officers:

President: ..... Alison Guinness (860-873-9304)  
Vice-President: .... Luella Landis  
Recording Sec.: ..... Sharon Dellinger  
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Education: ..... Kim Antol (860-347-6442)  
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Wingbeat: ..... Pat Rasch (860-635-1880) <pat\_rasch@mac.com>

Rare Bird Alert: ..... 203-254-3665

On the web: ..... [www.audubon-mas.org](http://www.audubon-mas.org)



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waste) and vegetable-  
based ink

# Upcoming Field Trips: Summer/Fall 2017



Mud flats, Lieutenant River, Old Lyme

August 19 (Saturday 10:00 a.m.)

## **Shore Birds Canoe Trip**

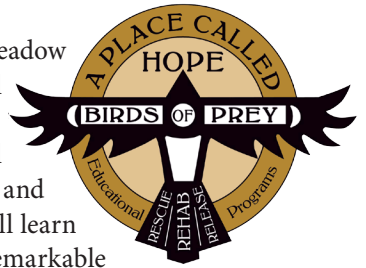
Bring canoe or kayak, lunch, and supplies for a day on the water (bathing suit optional). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Lieutenant River boat launch site on Rt. 156, Old Lyme. We will paddle towards Great Island and the remains of Griswold Point. Call Larry Cyrulik for details 860-342-4785 or 860-635-1880. Note later meeting time.

September 24 (Sunday 1 p.m.)

## **A Place Called Hope**

MAS is offering a special behind the scenes tour to A Place Called Hope (APCH) on Sunday September 24 at 1 pm. The tour will last approximately 45 minutes. APCH is a raptor rehabilita-


tion facility located at 154 Pond Meadow Road in Killingworth, CT. We will meet resident birds within their designated aviary spaces. We will get to see Bald Eagle, Black Vulture and a variety of hawks and owls. We will learn about the birds and about this remarkable facility, whose main goal is to rehabilitate sick or injured birds and return them to the wild. APCH is a non-profit organization run entirely by volunteers. We are limiting this trip to 20 people and request a fee of \$10 be paid by each participant ahead of time. All proceeds will be donated to APCH. Parking is limited, so carpooling is strongly encouraged. Please send your check/cash to Sharon Dellinger 930 Middletown Road Colchester, CT 06415 by September 10th. This will reserve your spot. Feel free to send an email to [sdell1964@gmail.com](mailto:sdell1964@gmail.com) or call 860-803-1626 for any questions.



October 7

(Saturday 8:00 a.m.)

## **Sparrow Crawl**


Join Larry Cyrulik in visiting an old field on Long Hill Road, Middletown Nature Gardens (off Randolph Road), and Guida Farm nature preserve. Five species of sparrows may be noted, as well as other fall migrants. Meet at the parking lot at the corner of Lawn Ave. and High St. Call Larry for info 860-342-4785 or 860-635-1880. 



White-crowned sparrow

## Total Eclipse

Up on the knob, an unobstructed view,  
The horizon fortuitously sharp and clear.  
The crowd gathered, tittering lightly,  
Passing 'round wines and hors d'oeuvres.  
Suddenly a stealthy greyness creeps  
Across the distant hills like a sheet of lead;  
A robin begins warbling its evening song;  
From a bush comes the chir-rup of a katydid.  
Laughter subsides into awed silence;  
Necks crane, binoculars rise up, dark glasses donned;  
Standing motionless like trees  
In a twilight forest  
As the tidal surge of blackness proceeds  
And a black eye is surrounded by  
A bright glimmering corona,

A chill dances up the spine,  
Though the hour is as warm as cow's milk  
Fresh from the udder.  
Someone conjectures on our ancestor's beliefs;  
All are relieved by their own knowledge of science.  
An imperceptible lightening of the landscape:  
The robin vocalizes once more  
At second break of day.  
Soon a golden haze reflects  
On leaves of bush and tree.  
Cheerfully, the crowd hurrahs!,  
Toasts the parting curtain,  
And all disperse contentedly.  
Somewhere, in a displaced hollow,  
The shade gathered there bides its time... 

LC



# Field Trip Reports

## Wildflower Walk, April 22, 2017

It is the unpredictability of the season that lures one into the field in Spring. Regenerating verdure wafts an aroma that awakens the senses, giving one a feeling of hopefulness and serenity.

It was just that unpredictability that met four participants of the wildflower exploration: a chill overcast morning with showers threatening. Yet the hopefulness wasn't diminished.

As we walked along the root-studded path beneath the white pines, scanning the understory, Pine warblers competed for our attention. They flashed high up in the canopy, and their trills always gave a sense of continuity, a confirmation that all is well in Nature, if not so in the human world.

We passed by monocultures of Dog-toothed violet, most of which had already bloomed. Only the nodding, flaccid remnants of yellow blossoms remained.

Wild oats with swollen buds stood between Asters that awaited patiently for the spring and summer to pass before they came out on stage.

Walking beneath the pine canopy we anticipated and found stands of trillium busy competing with each other to see who had the loveliest flower. Many were in bud: "Just you wait another week; with a warming sun I'll out-do my companions", they seemed to sigh. False solomon seal nearby reticently folded over at the waist, their flowering a month or so into the future: "All in



Red trillium grows from a knot-hole in a tree trunk along the trail.



A Spring beauty in the talus rock

due time, don't rush us."

Rue-anemone, Dutchman's breeches, Blood-root and ramps (wild leeks), gathered around trees and protruded amongst the rocks of the talus slope. Only the basal leaves of the Hepatica remained evident, having blossomed earlier in the spring. Unpredictability!

A path beside the trap rock reservoir was punctuated with Spring beauty. Blue cohosh stood out darkly, its color obvious as to the origin of its moniker. Plentiful Ginger with their secretive and exquisite bell-shaped purple flowers were discovered all along a rising trail.

Climbing now, upwards towards Lamentation Mountain, sporadic moisture threatened but never reached a crescendo. Early saxifrage grew between the rocks, and plentiful Rue-anemone spread amongst the understory below hickory and oak trees.

Upon reaching the summit the Holy Grail of rarity was observed: the Yellow corydalis. So subtle, so easily overlooked! With satisfaction we proceeded to search for Pale corydalis but it was in bud stage. A subsequent trip would reward one with a view of this plant's red and yellow tubular display.

We descended Lamentation Mountain. In this, the most un-Romantic of ages, "We were there when the flowers bloomed!"

**22 wild flowers species; 4 participants**

## Dave Titus Memorial Warbler Walk, May 6, 2017

*Rough winds do shake the buds of May...* Shakespeare Gathered together beneath the spreading leaves and flowering oak and hickory trees, four participants of the warbler walk remarked on the "dark and stormy night" preceding. Nevertheless, beneath murky skies, the walk commenced down the broad and endless rail line.

Moving slowly, scanning the canopy, listening for the voices of spring, the group quickly discerned several resident avians such as the Chickadees and Titmice, as well as Red-bellied and Downy woodpeckers. But it was the neotropical specimens that all wanted to find.

Soon enough a Northern oriole's familiar undulating song came from the edge of a red oak. Neotropicals judge when it is best to begin flooding a topography in spring just when the leaves emerge and flowers of trees begin to bloom. That is when the caterpillars proliferate, making easy pickings for birds replenishing the energy spent in migration.

But what is science compared to the siren voice of the Wood thrush? Upon first hearing those mellifluous trills after a winter scoured by silence would it be possible not to go mad with the ineluctable sense of that bird's song?

The group passed a golf course whose obsessive obeisance

## Field Trip Reports Continued

to orderliness made Nature simply sigh with skepticism. Yet even there Tree swallows swooned and Chipping sparrows vocalized their namesake staccato rhythms.

Below the rail line lay the Connecticut river floodplain. The floodplain is so important to migrating and resident birds. Yet human society arrogantly considers this habitat as nothing more than a dumping ground. A reconnoiter here produced a masked denizen: a common yellowthroat.

Retracing their steps the group walked the pitching pathways of Highland Park above the Connecticut river. Worm-eating warblers enjoy these steep slopes and at least six individuals were counted. The incomparable voice of

the rose-breasted grosbeak made everyone pause. Robins, take note!

The early morning clouds began to dissipate and the sky at last glowed with sunshine. At trip's end a quick compilation was made: **four warbler species; thirty-one species total.**

An afternoon foray was decided upon by one unrequited. At the Cromwell Meadows **four more warbler species** were compiled as well as several additional neotropical birds; **eighteen neo's** were tallied for the day.

Of these fleeting bits of life one might well say: "They are such stuff as dreams are made..."

### Canoe Expedition: A Chronology, June 10, 2017

**0830:** Mouth of the Salmon River; tide peaking. The canoe tracks easily over the flat, dark water. The low flood plain sprouts tussock sedge and yellow flag, a prolific garden escape. The green ash are perforated with the nest holes of tree swallows. Raspberry brambles are in full bloom.

**0900:** Paddling rapidly up river. Water chestnut, an insidious aquatic invasive is discovered. Its location is documented, with a follow-up trip planned to remove it.

Golden club, a species of conservation concern, their namesake flowering "cudgels" exposed by the diminishing tidal surge, gently wave next to clusters of sweet flag. When broken the succulent sword-like blades of the sweet flag emit an intense, soothing lemon scent.

**0945:** At the confluence of the Moodus river with the Salmon. Slowly moving upstream. The clear gravel bottom of the Moodus exposes mussel shells in dark bas-relief. Eliptios are most abundant; a Tidewater mucket is found, then a Pond mussel, with its pointed, narrow beak is collected.

The sinuous banks of the Moodus are bursting with splendid verdure, tussock sedge and spotted alder. Submerged in the crevasse of a muddy log is a musk turtle, its domed shell green with algae.

**1030:** Return to the opaque waters of the Salmon. Moving steadily upstream to Leesville dam. The June day becomes like a restless, sleeping dog with troubled dreams, its eyes fluttering open and closed, eyebrows twitching. A sheen of steel grey clouds; a chilling wind and sporadic, leaden rain drops. The canoeists drape their ponchos close about them.

**1145:** Put some muscle into it! A brief, strenuous passage through rock-strewn rapids lands the canoe at a sand bank down stream of the

roaring dam. Scaled passengers queued up in the orange-tinged pool next to the fish ladder. Great blue herons perch on rocks, a towering oak, and a on concrete ice breaking platform. Osprey wheel and dive for prey. The clouds have been scissored; their shredded bodies reveal the azure blue firmament and the golden king on his throne. The grass beside the dam and the leaves of the trees all sparkle with a welcoming emerald green light.

**1600:** And return. Passing beneath a kingbird nest just as the parents exchanged positions on their rustic, woven labyrinth.

The wind in late afternoon blows upstream from the Connecticut river like exhalations from the throat of some water god. Our own respirations completed the eternal cycle.

**Two participants; 5 mussel species; 26 bird species; plants of note: golden club, sweet flag, blue flag** 🌿

LC



Alison Guinness and Luella Landis represented MAS at the Earth Day fair which was held at the Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine in Farmington on April 21, 2017.





## AUDUBON MEMBERS' CORNER

(Feel free to send us contributions to this column)

Submitted by Albert Mirer

### A Cool Hot-Weather Birdbath

To keep a birdbath cool and full even in extreme heat, add a large chunk of ice each morning (freeze water in a plastic bowl or bag the night before). As it melts, the ice will refill and refresh the bath. Make sure to keep the bath clean for the health of the birds.

*National Wildlife Federation, October / November 2009*

### Feeding Birds the Natural Way

Nectar-rich flowers like bee balm, salvia and lupine are magnets for hummingbirds.

Seed-bearing blooms, including coneflowers and cosmos, attract finches, sparrows, doves and quail.


Jays are partial to nuts provided by trees such as hickories, pecans and walnuts.

Fruit-loving birds from orioles to waxwings flock to sumacs, serviceberries, junipers and other berry bushes.

Larger fruit trees, including crabapples and hollies, are top draws for grosbeaks, tanagers, catbirds and mockingbirds.

*National Wildlife, December / January 2017*

### Citizen Researchers in Cities

According to Google Trends, the citizens of Albany NY surpassed all other US city dwellers in gathering facts about bird calls, while the residents of Phoenix, AZ were investigating bird droppings. More people in Jakarta, Indonesia have been reading up on global warming that in any other city on Earth (Brooklyn, NY ranked top among US communities). Las Vegas residents conducted more online searches about great white sharks than any other US city. 

*National Wildlife Federation December—January 2009*

The deadline for items to be included in the Fall/Winter Issue is September 26, 2017. We expect subscribers to receive their copies about October 20. Please send items to Pat Rasch, 24 Elm Road, Cromwell, CT 06416, or email to <[pat\\_rasch@comcast.net](mailto: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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