

The Connection Between Catalogs and Birds

Longing for spring and the sight and sound of our favorite migrating songbirds, we have long forgotten the mountains of catalogs that passed through our mailboxes to kick off the holiday season. While some may enjoy flipping through the endless glossy pages filled with colorful images of stuff we don't really need, a good number of us consider catalogs another form of junk mail, a supreme

waste of paper. Sadly, these catalogs and birds are competing for the same pristine regions in Canada's boreal forests. necticut, and Tennessee warblers. It is estimated that 5 billion birds, both adults and their offspring, migrate south from the boreal forests each fall. That is a tremendous number of birds that depends on this region for their existence.

Flip side: 20 billion catalogs are produced in America each year, most of them with no recycled-paper content, and much of them logged from



waste of paper. Sadly, these catalogs and birds are competing for the same pristine regions in Canada's boreal forests.

Considered "North America's Amazon," the northern forests of Canada are so rich with life that over 300 species of birds breed there, including Canada, black-throated green, mourning, orange-crowned, Wilson's, Con-

wilderness areas. Aerial views of boreal forests show miles and miles of clear-cut land replacing the lush, verdant forests. Is this an enterprise we really want to support? Where will our spring migrants go when their summer habitat has been destroyed?

Catalogs are not the only disposable products produced from virgin (Continued on page 2.)

INSIDE...

Elections Notice
Page 2

•

Calendar
Page 3

•

"A Sense of Wonder"
Page 5

•

Bio Bits
Page 6

•

Membership Form
Page 7

MENUNKATUCK AUDUBON SOCIETY

is a chapter of National Audubon Society. The newsletter is published bi-monthly by Menunkatuck Audubon Society.
Mailing address:

MENUNKATUCK AUDUBON SOCIETY
PO BOX 214
GUILFORD, CT 06437

President: Suzanne Botta Sullivan
president@menunkatuck.org

Vice-president:.

Treasurer: Connie Mortensen

Secretary Dorothy Holabird

Directors: Cindi Kobak,
Nina Levenduski,
John Picard, Dennis
Riordan, Shannon
Schiesser

Program: Cindi Kobak
program@menunkatuck.org

Wildlife/

Conservation: John Picard
conservation@menunkatuck.org

Field Trips:.....

Audubon Council

Delegate: Suzanne Botta Sullivan

Connecticut Amphibian

Monitoring: John Picard
camp@menunkatuck.org

Publicity:..... Barbara Nugent

Education: Cindi Kobak

Scholarship: Connie Mortensen

Membership: ... Dennis Riordan
membership@menunkatuck.org

Newsletter: Dennis Riordan
(387-2167)

newsletter@menunkatuck.org

Webmaster:..... Dennis Riordan

Catalogs and Birds

(Continued from Page 1.)

timber. Every time you blow your nose, or wipe your mouth (or other areas), you support companies that destroy forest habitat. Kleenex, Puffs, Charmin, Cottonelle, Bounty, Scott, and Viva are made from 100% virgin paper – that means every tissue, napkin, roll of toilet tissue or paper towel helped to fell a forest, and much of it was logged from Canada’s boreal forests. It is unconscionable that single-use paper products continue to destroy vital habitat for birds and other wildlife.

Thankfully, there are paper products available that contain 100% recycled paper, including those from Marcal, Seventh Generation, Earth



Guilford Voters Approve Goss Property Purchase

On Tuesday, January 27, voters in Guilford voted 2645-486 to approve the purchase of the 624-acre Goss property along the East River.

Combined with the Audubon Salt Meadows Sanctuary, Guilford Land Trust property, and other Town-owned land, the woodlands, wetlands, fields, and tidal marshes along the East River are protected and will continue to host the rich diversity of wildlife including the globally important population of nesting Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows.

First, Bella, and Fiesta. Please do your part to support these companies by purchasing their products instead of those from virgin timber.

You can sign a petition to Congress asking for a National Do Not Mail List at www.catalogcutdown.org.

To remove yourself from mailing lists, visit www.catalogchoice.org, which lets you choose the specific catalogs you no longer wish to receive.

www.directmail.com is a site promoting direct mail options to businesses, but you can click on

“National Do Not Mail List” to be removed from direct mail mailing lists.

www.OptOutPrescreen.com allows you to opt out of receiving mailed offers of credit or insurance.

Menunkatuck Audubon Society Annual Meeting

Wednesday, April 8, 2008

–Elections–

President – Suzanne Botta Sullivan
Treasurer – Connie Mortensen
Secretary – Dorothy Holabird
Directors – Judy Knowles, Cindi Kobak, Nina Levenduski, John Picard, Dennis Riordan, Shannon Schiesser

Visit Menunkatuck’s web site: www.menunkatuck.org

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.

**Diverse Programs
Scheduled for Indoor
Meetings**

Brendan Hanrahan returns with Brian Kleinman to present a special screening of the wildlife documentary *Between Land & Water: Life Stories of Connecticut's Amphibians* at our March 11 meeting.

This exciting new video gives views of the state's frogs and salamanders in their native habitats and follows Connecticut's native amphibians over an annual season. Beginning with the thawing of vernal pools in early spring, the documentary follows native frog and salamander species to depict key aspects of amphibian life cycles including spring migrations, frog calls, breeding seasons, and developmental phases from larval forms, to metamorphs, to adults. It discusses the roles the animals play in local wetland and forest ecosystems as well as conservation needs that must be addressed to preserve amphibian biodiversity.

Following the screening, Brendan and Brian will display a variety of live amphibians and be on hand to answer all your phib queries. On April 8 we present a fascinating program, *Snowy Owls to Saw-whet Owls*. Since 1981, Norman Smith has spent countless days and nights, in every imaginable weather condition, observing, capturing, banding, and color marking snowy owls at Logan International Airport. Data has been collected on owl roosting, hunting, and other be-



2009 Calendar

March 11, 2009

*Between Land and Water -
Connecticut Amphibians*

*Brendan Hanrahan
Brian Kleinman*

April 8, 2009

Snowy Owls

Norman Smith

May 13, 2009

Horseshoe Crabs

Jennifer Mattei

Saturday, June 13, 2009, 3:00 P.M.

Live Birds of Prey

Lisa Monachelli

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.

havior while on their wintering grounds. Most recently, satellite transmitters have been attached to owls to learn more about their movements. Find out what has been learned to date, what questions remain, and how this project developed to include research on saw-whet owls.



Norman Smith is a self-taught naturalist who has worked for the Massachusetts Audubon Society since 1974. His current position is Director of Blue Hills Trailside Museum and Chickatawbut Hill Education Center in Milton, Massachusetts. He has studied birds of prey for over

30 years, including rehabilitating the injured and successfully fostering over 800 orphaned hawk and owl chicks into adoptive nests. He has also traveled to Alaska to study snowy owls in their native tundra habitat. His research work has been published (Continued on page 4.)

Opportunities to Volunteer for Wildlife

Bird Count in Guilford

According to The Nature Conservancy, after development, invasive plants are the second greatest cause of habitat loss. An obvious example is the growth of phragmites in brackish water along the shoreline where bird and other species diversity is being lost.

In an effort to address the root cause of this problem in Guilford, the Town is in the process of preparing a grant proposal to restore tidal marsh habitat in the area around Jacob's Beach and the shoreline of Chittenden Park by re-opening the ditches to allow tidal flow into the marshes. When salinity levels exceed 18 parts per thousand, phragmites does not grow.

Once phragmites is gone, the existing seeds of native grasses will flourish

and the ecosystem will eventually be restored. To demonstrate this effect, volunteers are needed to do bird counts before and after tidal flow has been restored. This is a unique opportunity to demonstrate how the Town, Federal funds and volunteers can work together for the common good! Training can be provided. Please contact Guilford Conservation Commission member Jennifer Allcock at jallcock@att.net or call 453-5041 if you are interested in knowing more about this project.

Native Plant Restoration

We all know how deer and invasive plants are destroying native shrubs upon which meadow-loving birds depend as their habitat. In Guilford's Nut Plains

Park, in 2008, a one and a half acre meadow was enclosed by a deer-fence within which such birds might find a home. This area is being protected for use as a backcross chestnut breeding orchard - part of a national effort to restore the American chestnut to eastern forests. Within this space, native shrubs, grasses and wildflowers can also be planted and be expected to mature as habitat and a food source for several species of birds and butterflies. Volunteers are needed to help plant native plant species and to monitor bird use in the meadow. If you are interested in knowing how you might help bring such birds back to this area, please contact Guilford Conservation Commissioner Jennifer Allcock at jallcock@att.net or call 453-5041.

Programs

(Continued from Page 3.)

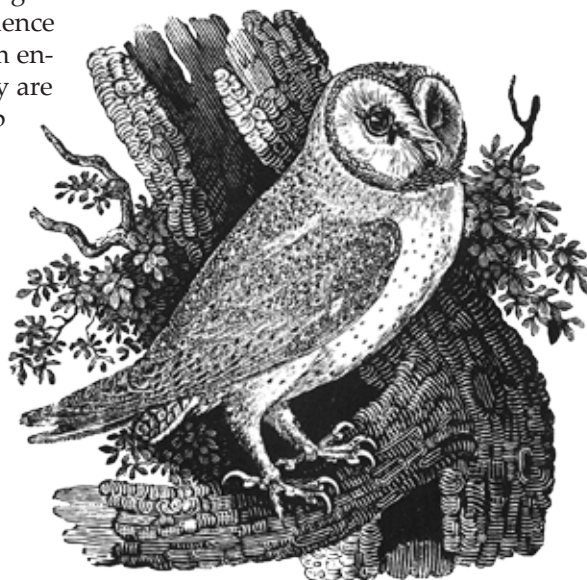
in *National Geographic*, *National Wildlife*, *Ranger Rick*, *Yankee*, *Massachusetts Wildlife*, *Bird Observer*, *Birding*, *Sanctuary*, *Geo*, *Nature*, *Grolier Encyclopedia*, *Owls of the Northern Hemisphere*, and *Owls of the World*.

Our May 13 meeting is the perfect opportunity to learn how you can volunteer to protect a living fossil, the horseshoe crab. *The Horseshoe Crab Conundrum: Can We Harvest and Conserve?* will be presented by Dr.

Jennifer Mattei, Ph.D., an Associate Professor and Chair of the Biology Department at Sacred Heart University. She teaches ecology and evolution, and currently studies horseshoe crabs residing in Long Island Sound. With support from CT Sea Grant and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation she and her colleague Dr. Mark Beekey, developed a science literacy and research program entitled "Project Limulus." They are looking for volunteers to help with their research, which includes walking beaches in search of horseshoe crabs, then counting and tagging specimens.

Please note! Our special June program will be held on Saturday, June 13, at 3 P.M. rather than our usual Wednesday evening meeting. Lisa Monachelli, Director of Youth and Family Programs at the New Canaan Nature Center, will

bring several of her feathered friends, including a falcon, a hawk, and an owl for a *Live Birds of Prey* program. Join us in the large first floor room at the Nathanael Greene Community Center in Guilford to learn about these magnificent birds. Kids are welcome, so bring the whole family.



Horseshoe crabs with tag.
Photo by Jennifer Mattei.

A Sense of Wonder - A Film about Rachel Carson

Sunday, March 29, 2009, 5:00 P.M., Madison Art Cinemas

Using many of Rachel Carson's own words, actress Kaiulani Lee embodies this extraordinary woman in a documentary style film, beautifully shot in HD by Oscar-winning cinematographer Haskell Wexler at Carson's cottage on the coast of Maine. The film is an intimate and poignant portrait of Carson's final year of life as she emerges as America's most successful advocate for the natural world.

In 1962, Carson wrote the best-seller *Silent Spring*, which alerted the world to the dangers of chemical pesticides and launched our modern environmental movement. The backlash from her critics thrust her into the center of a political maelstrom. Despite her love of privacy, Carson's convictions and her foresight regarding the risks posed by chemical pesticides forced her into a very public and controversial role. Struggling with cancer, Carson recounts with both humor and anger the attacks by the chemical industry, the government, and the press as she focuses her limited energy to get her message to Congress and the American people.

Rachel Carson has been called the "patron saint" of the modern environmental movement. The *Atlantic* has listed her as one of the 40 most influential figures in American history. As a scientist, a writer, and a woman, Rachel Carson has inspired generations. She also reminds us that we each have not only the ability to make a creative difference in this world, we also have the responsibility to do so.

Carson's legacy lives on. Her determined labors led directly to the passage of such important laws as the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act and the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act. These laws remain the pillars of U.S. environmental law today.

This special, "100-City Tour: March 2009" film screening is being shown in an effort to raise awareness about Carson's enduring legacy of environmental stewardship, and in celebration of National Women's History Month.

Following the one-hour film, you will have the unique opportunity to hear from and ask questions of a panel of local environmental leaders.

Hosted by the Madison Historical Society, and co-sponsored by Menunkatuck Audubon Society, Friends of Hammonasset, Madison Land Conservation Trust, and The Audubon Shop

Reservations are recommended (but not required):

Doe Boyle 203-245-4987, or shannon@menunkatuck.org

Web sites: www.madisoncthistorical.org, www.menunkatuck.org, www.hammonasset.org

Please mark your calendars and join us.

Biodiversity 2008

Know your natural neighbors



The Return of the Fisher

BIO BITS

The fisher (*Martes pennanti*) is a mammal normally found in mature coniferous or mixed forests, from Canada to northern California and the Rocky Mountains in the West, and New England and New York in the eastern United States. A member of the weasel family, the fisher is considered a secretive carnivore, rarely observed in the wild. Folk names include “fisher cat” and “polecat” and may reflect the myth that the fisher is a hybrid of a weasel and cat. About the size of a large housecat, a male fisher usually weighs about eight to ten pounds, while the female is considerably smaller. The fisher’s long, agile body and bushy tail are a deep, dark brown, while the head and shoulders are often lighter in color. Some fishers have a white chest patch.

Fishers do not fish. Their common name may be derived from “fitch,” the name for the European polecat, another mammal in the weasel family. Or it may stem from early naturalists’ observations that the fisher’s feet are webbed, like its fishing cousin, the otter. (Its webbed feet actually serve as snowshoes during the winter months.) The fisher is one of a few carnivores known to prey on porcupines, but also dines on snowshoe hare, rabbits, rodents, birds, carrion, fruits and nuts. Adept at climbing trees, it can prey on arboreal species such as flying, red and gray squirrels.



Photo by Terry Thomas

Historically, fishers disappeared from Connecticut in the mid-1800s due to over-trapping and habitat loss. But, remarkably, these denizens of deep forests have returned to our state in the last 20 years. They have moved back into eastern Connecticut from Massachusetts, and were reintroduced into northwestern Connecticut about 15 years ago by the Dept. of Environmental Protection. Populations in our state are doing extremely well, feeding mainly on gray squirrels. Using forested “corridors” they have even made it to the wilder places in our overdeveloped shoreline towns.

Many recent sightings of fishers during daylight hours include one climbing a tree to catch a gray squirrel in North Guilford, as well as one seen ambling along a forested slope one morning while three crows followed it in the tree-tops above. (My guess is that the crows were waiting to claim the scraps left from the fisher’s next meal.) Both these observances were happy coincidences as a fisher passed through a yard and a homeowner was fortunate enough to be gazing out a window. Never underestimate the ability of your home to become the perfect wildlife observation blind. If the animal is unaware of your presence, it is much more likely to behave in a natural manner, and you are much more likely to see some fascinating stories unfold.

Submitted by Cindi Kobak

Saturday Morning Birding at Hammonasset

Saturdays, April 4 through June 13

7:45 A.M. - 12:00 Noon

Leader: Jerry Connolly

Meet at the Audubon Shop, Madison

Every Saturday morning through June, Jerry will lead birders through Hammonasset to see returning sea birds, shore birds, and other migrants. There is a \$4.00 fee.

For information call 203-245-9056.

125 Volunteers Help "Free Willy"

Sunday, January 4, was a cold and breezy day in Madison. The winter weather did not stop 125 volunteers from showing up to help "Free Willy" by cutting back the invasive species that have been choking native species on Willards Island at Hammonasset Beach State Park.

For two hours they cut oriental bittersweet and autumn olive to free native trees that provide food and nesting for resident and migrant birds.

Following the work a light lunch of chili and chowder was served at the Nature Center.

After lunch a drawing was held with Menunkatuck tote bags and tee-shirts being awarded. Autographed copies of Ted Williams' book, Wild Moments, were also awarded.

Thanks are given to the following people and businesses for their generous donations of food and beverages for lunch.

Bishop's Orchards
Boston Post Rd.
Guilford, CT 06437

The Coffee Break
27 E. Main St.
Clinton, CT 06413

Cohen's Bagel Company
1347 Boston Post Rd.
Madison, CT 06443

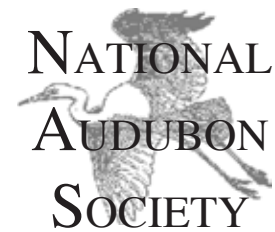
Don and Nancy Rankin
8 Warpas Rd.
Madison, CT 06443

Friends & Company
11 Boston Post Rd.
Madison, CT 06443

Jean Picard & family
56 Cream Pot Rd.
Clinton, CT 06413

Lenny & Joe's Fish Tale
1301 Boston Post Rd.
Madison, CT 06443

Malone's Coffee House
10 W. Main St.
Clinton, CT 06413



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
P.O. Box 422250
Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250

LOCAL CHAPTER

Menunkatuck Audubon Society
C9ZD630Z

Connecticut Rare Bird Alerts

www.virtualbirder.com/bmail/ctbird/200508/w2/index.html

Menunkatuck Audubon Society
PO Box 214
Guilford, CT 06437

Non-Profit Org
US POSTAGE
PAID
Guilford, CT
Permit No. 22

MENUNKATUCK

March 2009



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

NEXT MEETING

BETWEEN LAND AND WATER - CONNECTICUT AMPHIBIANS

BRENDAN HANRAHAN

Wednesday, March 11, 2009

7:30 PM

Guilford Community Center

Route 77

Guilford

*Become a member of Menunkatuck Audubon Society.
Send in this form with your \$20.00 annual fee to help
support our projects and activities.*

Please add me to your mailing list. Enclosed is \$20.00
to support Menunkatuck Audubon Society.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ ZIP: _____

E-mail address: _____

___ Save paper and postage - send me the newsletter
by e-mail.

(Menunkatuck Audubon Society will not sell or share
your e-mail address with any other party.)

Mail to:

Menunkatuck Audubon Society
PO Box 214
Guilford, CT 06437