



“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.”

Mattabesek/Franklin Academy Bluebird Box Project

After a Franklin Academy student contacted the Mattabesek Audubon Society looking for a potential project for his community service class, Doreen Jezek and Alison Guinness made a presentation on Birds and Birdwatching at the Academy. (Franklin Academy is located in East Haddam.) The presentation was well received and generated student discussion. Following the talk, Doreen, Alison, and the class went on a bird walk through their campus.

There are now plans for Franklin Academy and Mattabesek Audubon Society to build bluebird

boxes jointly and to create a bluebird trail on the Academy campus in May. 🌿

Doreen Jezek

Annual Meeting May 16

Mattabesek Audubon will hold our Annual Meeting on May 16, 2018 at 7 p.m. at the DeKoven House to elect new members to the Board of Directors.. If you would like to serve, please contact Nominating Chairperson Luella Landis at GWLA620@yahoo.com. 🌿

Topsmeade Bobolinks

Interested in viewing bobolinks this spring and summer? My favorite place to see them is at Topsmeade State Forest in Litchfield. These special birds usually arrive during the end of May. Early summer is an excellent time to watch them in the fields, and there are usually opportunities to see bluebirds, as well. Occasionally, meadowlarks and savannah sparrows are also in the fields. Please walk on the mowed paths, instead of in the fields during spring through fall, in order to reduce disturbances to the birds, as well as your chance of picking up ticks.

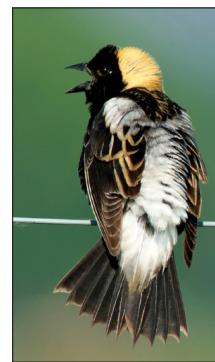
Topsmeade is located on Chase Road, off Buell Road in Litchfield, and is the former summer home of Edith Morton Chase, who built the English Tudor Revival house on her property. Attractive

gardens are found at each end of the home, and the property consists of more than 600 acres.

Ms. Chase bequeathed this estate to the people of Connecticut upon her death in 1972, along with an endowment for its maintenance.

While in the area, you might also like to visit the White Memorial Conservation Center, located at 80 Whitehall Road in Litchfield. It has 40 miles of trails, an environmental education center, and a nature museum. 🌿

Luella Landis, MAS Vice President



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Upcoming Field Trips: Spring/Summer 2018

May 5 (Saturday 8 a.m.)

David Titus Memorial Warbler Walk

Meet at River Highlands State Park parking lot, Field Road, Cromwell. We'll be looking for neo-tropical migrants—warblers: Pines, Blue-wings, Ovenbirds, and more, as well as other recent Spring arrivals like Rose-breasted grosbeak and Scarlet tanager—and often some surprises. Call Larry Cyrulik 342-4785 or 635-1880 for information.

June 2 (Saturday 8 a.m.)

Canoe Trip—Mussel Hunt

Launching from Haddam Meadows State Park, we will look for mussels along the Connecticut River and ID them. Bring canoe or kayak, lunch, and supplies for a day on the water. Wear water-shoes. Meet in the parking lot at the corner of Lawn Ave. and High St., Middletown. Call Larry Cyrulik for details 342-4785 or 635-1880. 🌿

Field Trip Reports

Eagle Walk, February 10, 2018

Since the first of the year, the Old Patriarch walked among us, and with his silver scepter flashing, turned the land into a frozen form of his likeness. He tossed his robes aside as he tread, turning ponds and rivers into sheets of steel capable of withstanding the weight of automobiles. Few ventured out into the wind without trepidation. That wind was the Patriarch's breath spewed out onto the cowering earth. But He has unexplained whims, and with icy compressed lips He returned to his frosted throne, sat down and slept, leaving the stage to milder actors.

Four participants made their way along a brown, snowless gravel path on a still and thaw-enhanced morning. Bluebirds danced on the wizened apple trees. Juncos and White-throated sparrows scratched the ground underneath multiflora rose. In the distance a Common raven's distinctive clicking voice reverberated.

After an uphill trek, past fields of bluestem, a park-like oak and hickory forest arose, and then the summit overlooking Salmon river cove. There was a sheen of sparse ice slush gathered in the shadowy curves of the river, but most of the cove was free of a stainless steel burden.

Mute swans, like bright white apostrophes, tossed on the surface of the cove. The sun off tiny wavelets. A thin

blue-black peninsula in the distance separated the cove from the Connecticut river.

A moment of scrutiny. Then in a hemlock jutting up from a point along the shore: a mature Bald eagle. Its back was turned towards the observers but the white crown of its head was visible and mobile. One could imagine the sharp, intense eyes, those self-assured, inscrutable orbs.

A Golden-crowned kinglet appeared, intent on vying with the eagle for our interest, so near in the threads of a cedar that binoculars were unnecessary.

Another eagle broke away from its earthen perch, an immature that majestically fluttered over the water like a huge brown butterfly. Then the "white head" decided to exercise its wings. The cove suddenly seemed bereft of its regality when the two eagles departed.

Later, along Cove Road at eye level to the confluence of the Moodus and Salmon rivers, a gathering of Black and Mallard ducks was noted as well as the bickering Canada geese waddling in the chocolate muck of low tide.

4 participants; 2 eagles; 20 bird species total.

LC



Let's Go A-Ducking, March 17, 2018



.... here shall he see, no enemy but winter and rough weather.
Shakespeare

0835 Research Parkway

After a still evening draped across the sky like a blue-black velvet cape studded with sequins, the grey light of morning

had no intention of acknowledging the tentative change of season. Like a rapier, a cold wind thrust its honed edge into the faces of the two who "went a-ducking".

They approached the pond off of the industrial parkway gliding over frosted clumps of fescue. Grey slush formed over the surface of the water. Yet there was enough openness to allow for the several Black ducks, Hooded mergansers and a Bufflehead couple to peruse the coagulated vegetation, or submerge after scaled tidbits. Mute swans placidly extended elegant necks beneath frothing waters. The wind gouged the "ducker's" eyes, streaming with tears as they strained through scope and binoculars.

0900 North Farms

Rafts of geese gabbled and argued along the shore.

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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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New Exhibit of Michael DiGiorgio Paintings

Mike DiGiorgio has a new exhibit of his bird paintings at the Connecticut River Museum, 67 Main Street, Essex. The show, *From Field to Frame*, will be on display from Thursday, March 15 to Thursday, May 3, with an artist's talk on Friday, April 13 at 5:30 p.m. at the Museum.

Mike is a world-renown bird artist from Madison. He created all of the art on the Mattabesec's *Identifying Our Backyard Birds* card, and many years ago when he was a member of our club, he also drew our *Wingbeat* Osprey logo. 🌿



Field Trip Reports

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Between them, studded throughout the surface of the pond, white Ring bill gulls floated patiently. A pair of claustrophobic Mallards tripped away from the gaggle of geese. Like a large grey head studded with spikes of hair an island in the pond was decorated with a Great blue heron rookery, a Bald eagle nest lurking among them.

And the northern wind continued to probe the forehead with its icy needles.

1000 Broad Brook Reservoir

Serendipity led the "duckers" to Broad Brook Reservoir in Cheshire. Muffled against the persistent wind raking over open water, toting a scope on a tripod like a combat infantryman, hugging close to highway guard rails, stepping over winter-ravaged pine tree limbs and the detritus of civilization, the quest for waterfowl sightings continued.

The roadway split the reservoir. On one side, Bufflehead dove and reappeared like white and black semaphores. On the other side, a seemingly open expanse of tossing waves.

Then, perhaps noticing the equipment, a passing truck with an intuitive driver stopped and asked: "Birding?"

"Looking for ducks," was the reply.

"On the other side of the reservoir," the burly driver rejoined, "rafts of Scaup, Mergansers, Ring necks and "Woodies".

"Thank you, we'll find them."

"By the way, there's an eagle on the nest just a bit from here. This is my hunting grounds. Here's how to find it..."

Hail fellow, well met. The nest with its eagle was just where it was pointed out to be. Then, bringing the automobile 'round to a different vantage point, the "duckers" found the several species of ducks bobbing stoically on the chilled surface of the reservoir.

The sun shined unadorned with clouds but the wind owned the day and spring seemed like a distant hope.

2 participants; 8 duck species. 🌿

LC

Spring Imagery

White birch branches,
Black bird landing,
Lurching in the wind.

Softened in the shadows,
Brown earth greening,
Beneath the rotting snow.

Dark pools vernal,
Stream beds overflowing,
Flooding forest floors.

Oak leaf litter,
Mourning cloak flutters,
Seeking out the sun.

Crimson crown swollen,
Clear sap seeping,
Trickling from maple tree.

Breath of leaf and flower,
Through the woodland wafting,
Exhalations sylvan scented.

Spring sings of impermanence,
Like the last ephemeral notes
From a rubbed crystal bowl. 🌿

LC

Connecticut Breeding Bird Atlas Update

There's still time to sign up to bird for the new Connecticut Bird Atlas. The Atlas will map all species found in the state during both nesting and non-nesting seasons. For more info or to sign up to volunteer, go to <http://www.ctbirdatlas.org> 🌿



AUDUBON MEMBERS' CORNER

(Feel free to send us contributions to this column)

Giant Hogweed: Invasive and Dangerous—From Alberta Mirer, MAS Member

First documented in Connecticut in 2001, giant hogweed is an invasive, federally-listed noxious weed. Its toxic sap poses a threat to human health and to its surrounding environment. The sap causes large painful blisters on human skin and acts as an anti-sunscreen.

Mowing, cutting and weed-whacking are not recommended because the plant will soon send up new growth. Those tactics are risky because they increase chances of contact with the plant's sap. Seeds can be windblown several feet, or may be carried by water to invade new areas.

If you suspect giant hogweed on a property, go to the Ct. Invasive Plant Working Group website <http://cipwg.unconn.edu/giant-hogweed-in-connecticut/> for



photos and descriptions of giant hogweed and of plants often mistaken for it. If you believe giant hogweed is present, report your finding to the CIPWG at 860-486-6448 or <http://cipwg.unconn.edu/report-giant-hogweed/>. If giant hogweed is confirmed on a property, management options will be provided.

Connecticut Wildlife May / June 2017

Earthquake

It's highly unlikely in the northeast, but that doesn't mean it can't happen. Here is a list to put in your memory bank:

- If indoors, stay there: Drop down, get under a sturdy table and hold on. Keep (or get) away from exterior walls and windows. If you are in bed, stay there. Cover your head and neck with a pillow.
- If outside: Move to an open area where nothing will fall on you.
- If in a car: Stay in the car. Pull over, but not near trees, buildings, utility wires, or an overpass. 🌊

The deadline for items to be included in the Summer/Fall issue is June 26, 2018. We expect subscribers to receive their copies about July 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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