November / December 2002

Connecticut Wildlife

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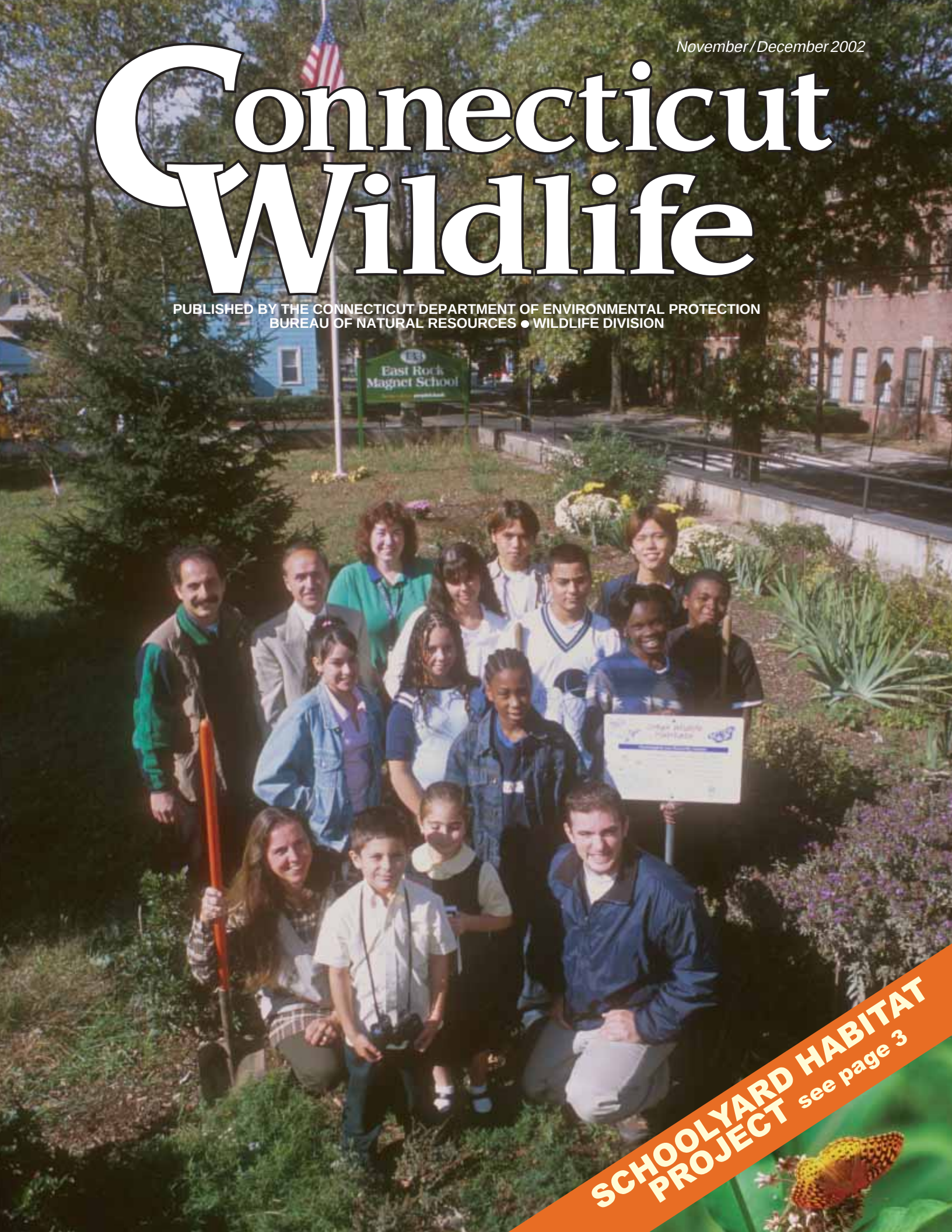
BUREAU OF NATURAL RESOURCES ● WILDLIFE DIVISION



SCHOOLYARD HABITAT PROJECT see page 3

From the Director

According to several national outdoor recreation surveys, we are a nation of "wildlife viewers." The degree to which we participate varies, but many Americans feel that their relationship to nature is enhanced by their ability to see wild animals. The activity ranges from watching birds at a backyard feeder to sitting for hours or days in a blind to observe a secretive or rare species. For many of us, the unexpected glimpse of a wild animal in its natural surroundings can be the highlight of an outing.

Sometimes, we are lucky enough to watch wildlife perform under highly visible circumstances. Winter concentrations of eagles and waterfowl, beavers at an active marsh, nesting ospreys and bluebirds are examples of viewing opportunities that consistently present themselves to Connecticut residents. Our only concern being that we watch inconspicuously so that we do not alter natural behaviors. However, in most cases, wildlife viewing can't be guaranteed with a predictable result like a trip to the mall, theatre or zoo. In this regard, wildlife viewing is not consistent with America's quest for instant gratification. It is the unexpectedness, the rareness, of witnessing an animal in the wild that often makes it memorable.

Perhaps the ultimate wildlife viewing experience occurs when one sits alone or with a quiet companion in the midst of a woods or on the shore of a marsh. Away from the noise of traffic, construction, barking dogs and human voices. Quiet is a rare commodity in our world, but it can be found if sought. After the initial disturbance caused by your arrival at such a site, the theatre of nature slowly resumes. The key word here is slowly. I don't know many people that routinely immerse themselves in nature this way other than certain hunters and serious wildlife photographers – and they must do it in order to be successful. Not many Connecticut residents view nature with such intensity, aware of every flicker of movement or snapping twig. Perhaps more should.

Whether you are one of the rare hard-core wildlife viewers, or one of the more common casual ones, keep three things in mind. First, there are a lot of us. Second, we are a diverse group composed of sportsmen, birders, educators, students, hikers, paddlers, campers and everyday citizens. And finally, if we commit ourselves to taking the steps to loudly proclaim that the abundance and diversity of Connecticut's wildlife is important to us, our voice will be heard. --Dale W. May

Cover:

Students and teachers who participated in the planting of a hummingbird/butterfly garden at East Rock Global Magnet School in New Haven are pictured in the garden. Front row (l to r)--Ms. Pepe Santorelli (teacher), Arthur Natalino, Brianna Marchitto, Joe Barnes (DEP); 2nd row--Jasminda Baez, Ashley Baez, Mokeen Hull, Dannieka Wiggins; 3rd row--Peter Picone (DEP), Principal Salvatore Punzo, Marlinette Pacheco, Jose Perez, Darius Miller; and last row--Ms. Liz Cassidy (teacher), Joon Yeob Lee, Joon Hoon Lee. (See page 3 to learn about schoolyard habitats).

Photo by Paul J. Fusco

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Arthur J. Rocque, Jr. ..... *Commissioner*
David K. Leff ..... *Deputy Commissioner*
Edward C. Parker ..... *Chief, Bureau of Natural Resources*

Wildlife Division

79 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106-5127 ***(860-424-3011)***
Dale May ..... *Director*
Peter Bogue ..... *Assistant Director (Management)*
Greg Chasko ..... *Assistant Director (Assessment)*
Mark Clavette ..... *Recreation Management*
Chris Vann ..... *Technical Assistance Biologist*
Laurie Fortin ..... *Wildlife Technician*
Brenda Marquez ..... *Secretary*
Shana Shafer ..... *Office Assistant*

Eastern District Area Headquarters
209 Hebron Road, Marlborough, CT 06447 ***(860-295-9523)***
Paul Rothbart ..... *District Supervising Biologist*
Ann Kilpatrick ..... *Eastern District Biologist*
Rich Garini ..... *DEP-DOC Crew Supervisor*

Franklin W.M.A.
391 Route 32, N. Franklin, CT 06254 ***(860-642-7239)***
Howard Kilpatrick ..... *Deer/Turkey Program Biologist*
Mike Gregonis ..... *Deer/Turkey Program Biologist*
Julie Victoria ..... *Nonharvested Wildlife Program Biologist*
Min Huang ..... *Waterfowl Program Biologist*
Paul Capotosto ..... *Wetlands Restoration Biologist*
Roger Wolfe ..... *Mosquito Management Coordinator*
Bob Kalinowski ..... *CE/FS Coordinator (East)*
Winnie Reid ..... *Secretary*
Heather Overturf ..... *Program Assistant*

Sessions Woods W.M.A.
P.O. Box 1550, Burlington, CT 06013-1550 ***(860-675-8130)***
Peter Good ..... *Supervising Wildlife Biologist*
Steve Jackson ..... *Supervising Wildlife Biologist*
Paul Rego ..... *Furbearer Program Biologist*
Jenny Dickson ..... *Nonharvested Wildlife Program Biologist*
Peter Picone ..... *Urban Wildlife Program Biologist*
Judy Wilson ..... *Western District Biologist*
Dave Kubas ..... *CE/FS Coordinator (West)*
Geoffrey Krukar ..... *Wildlife Technician*
Jim Warner ..... *Field Assistant*
Trish Cernik ..... *Program Assistant*
Lisa Gaski ..... *Clerk*

Wildlife Outreach Unit / Connecticut Wildlife
Kathy Herz ..... *Editor*
Paul Fusco ..... *Media Designer/Photographer*
Laura Rogers-Castro ..... *Education/Outreach*

Wetlands Habitat & Mosquito Management Crew Hdqtrs.
51 Mill Road, Madison, CT 06443
Daniel Shaw ..... *Mosquito Control Specialist*
Steven Rosa ..... *Mosquito Control Specialist*

The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program was initiated by sportsmen and conservationists to provide states with funding for wildlife management and research programs, habitat acquisition, wildlife management area development and hunter education programs. Each issue of Connecticut Wildlife *contains articles reporting on Wildlife Division projects funded entirely or in part with federal aid monies.*

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Create Habitat and They Will Come

Written by Peter Picone, Urban Wildlife Program Biologist

Wildlife habitat enhancement can be as simple as putting up a nesting box or as ambitious as planting 221 perennial wildflowers, eight shrubs, a vine and a tree. Last year, the Wildlife Division selected 10 schools (see sidebar) in urban communities from a list of applicants to receive plant materials to create wildlife gardens. Nine of the 10 schools in Connecticut's urban communities rolled up their sleeves and created habitat for butterflies, hummingbirds and songbirds in their schoolyards. This project was made possible through a grant from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program (WCRP). Students, teachers, administrators, parent-teacher groups, Master Wildlife Conservationists, civic organizations, the Connecticut Butterfly Association, municipal staff and DEP Wildlife Division staff joined together to design, dig and plant the gardens for schools scattered throughout the Greater New Haven, Hartford, Bridgeport and Waterbury areas.

The landscaping of each schoolyard was designed and planted with plants of high value to wildlife. These habitat oases now provide nectar for butterflies and hummingbirds and berries and nesting habitat for songbirds. Plants, such as beebalm (*Monarda didyma*), wild bergamont (*M. fistulosa*), cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), wild columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*) and trumpet creeper vine (*Campsis radicans*), will provide deep tubular flowers with nectar for ruby-throated hummingbirds. Other plants, such as red milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) and butterfly weed (*A. tuberosa*), will serve as a potential larval food and nectar source for the monarch butterfly. There will be plenty of nectar to go around for butterflies as purple coneflowers (*Echinacea purpurea*), New England asters (*Aster novae-angliae*) and sweet pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*) were also planted. Songbirds will dine on summer berries from the highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) and fall/winter berries from the northern bayberry (*Myrica pennsylvanica*).

J. BARNES

Students from Quirk Middle School in Hartford plant native flowers in the schoolyard's raised bed wildflower garden.

These wildlife gardens provided students with an opportunity to learn about the connection of wildlife and habitat. The hands-on planting of the garden brought together the communities and the schools. The wildlife attracted to the gardens will help children learn to appreciate nature and take positive steps to make a difference for wildlife in Connecticut. As part of this project, each participating school was also given a set of binoculars and a copy of *Butterflies through Binoculars in the East*, by Jeffrey Glassberg, as part of the WCRP grant. The book by Mr. Glassberg is outstanding and will help generate interest in butterfly identification just as Roger Tory Peterson's guides did for birding.

The Schoolyard Habitat Project required collaboration from a variety of individuals, groups and associations. Special thanks are extended to Christine Cook of the Connecticut Butterfly Association for her assistance during the planning stages of the project. The Wildlife Division hopes to provide more opportunities like this for other schools in the future, depending on funding resources. Contact the Division's Urban Wildlife Program at the Sessions Woods office to obtain more information on other habitat projects and technical assistance available for schoolyard habitat creation.

Schools that participated in the WCRP Hummingbird and Butterfly Garden Project

Bridgeport

- Saint Ann Elementary School
- Central High School

Hartford

- Quirk Middle School
- Hartford Public High School
- Mary Hooker School (spring 2003)

New Haven

- Quinnipiac Elementary School
- East Rock Global Magnet School
- Saint Bernadette School

Waterbury

- Saint Margaret McTernan School
- Carrington Elementary School

Migratory Bird Stopover Habitat Project Finishes First Year

Written by J.T. Stokowski, Research Assistant

The fall of 2002 marked the completion of the first year of the Wildlife Division's three-year Migratory Bird Stopover Habitat Project. Stopover habitats are used by migrating birds as refueling stops where they feed and get the necessary energy to continue their migration. Loss of critical stopover habitats can result in greater distances between "refueling" for migrating birds, which can significantly increase their mortality. This project parallels the previous Silvio O. Conte Stopover Habitat Surveys that were performed along the upper Connecticut River in New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts and Connecticut.

In this new project, areas along the Housatonic, Naugatuck and Thames Rivers, as well as the mid- to lower Connecticut River, are being surveyed. The Division will use the results from these surveys to help identify priority stopover sites and help guide conservation efforts at state and local levels.

The fall surveys did not yield the variety and numbers of species that were seen in the spring. Birds are less inclined to sing in fall, making them much more difficult to detect. Many species do not display the bright, distinctive plumages that are worn in spring. Surveyors need to rely more heavily on their visual identification skills and awareness at this time of year.

A total of 250 points were surveyed by a combination of approximately 16 volunteers and 13 members of the Wildlife Division staff. Although the surveys have been a success thus far, many more volunteers are needed. Future plans for the project include a fall warbler identification workshop for volunteers, as well as an annual banquet with a presentation of the year's findings. The Migratory Bird Stopover Habitat Project is an excellent opportunity for birders to take an active role in conservation research.

P. J. FUSCO (3)

Research Assistant J. T. Stokowski looks for birds, like the blackpoll warbler (pictured below), as part of the Migratory Bird Stopover Habitat Project.

Survey results will help biologists identify priority stopover sites for migratory birds, like the blue-headed vireo.

The spring surveys will begin at the end of April 2003 and will run through mid-June. On the scheduled survey days, volunteers are asked to make one visit to each of 10 points and conduct a 10-minute survey of all birds seen or heard at each point. The surveys require participants who are familiar with bird identification by sight and sound. Once you are assigned to an area, a survey can be conducted by an individual or a small team. You may also choose to split up the surveys of one area between individual surveyors. Those that only have time to do a couple of surveys are also encouraged to take part and fill in for volunteers with other commitments. For more information on this and other volunteer opportunities, visit www.dep.state.ct.us/burnatr/wildlife/geninfo/volunteer.htm or call J.T. Stokowski or Geoffrey Krukar at 860-675-8130.

Grassland Birds Surveyed with Help of Volunteers

Written by J.T. Stokowski, Research Assistant

Beginning in 1998, the Wildlife Division started using volunteers to help complete grassland bird surveys statewide. These surveys are conducted annually in order to monitor populations of grassland dependent bird species, of which many are declining.

Grasslands are one of the most rapidly disappearing habitat types in Connecticut, as well as in many areas of New England. The loss of suitable grassland habitat in Connecticut is mainly due to the large decline in the amount of farmland. Farmland has been lost mostly to reforestation and development. In addition, many of the management practices on the remaining grassland habitat in the state may be unsuitable for grassland bird breeding. Mowing or intensive agricultural practices, if implemented during the grassland bird breeding season (early May through mid-August), can sometimes have a negative impact on the breeding success of these birds. Some of our rarest species, such as the upland sandpiper, require large tracts of grassland habitat for breeding. The grasslands that remain in the Northeast have become smaller and much more isolated since the early 1900s.

As a result of these habitat stresses, grassland birds are declining at dramatic rates throughout many areas of New England. Grassland dependent species are now considered some of the most severely threatened birds in North America. Connecticut is home to a number of these grassland dependent species, such as the upland sandpiper (state endangered), savannah sparrow (state special concern), grasshopper sparrow (state endangered), eastern meadowlark (state special concern) and horned lark (state threatened).

Volunteers participating in the grassland bird surveys are asked to visit a series of points at each site and conduct a five-minute survey of all birds heard or seen at each point. The number of points at each site varies, depending on the amount of available grassland habitat. Each site is visited twice, once prior to June 15 and again prior to July 15. In 2002, a total of 25 sites were surveyed, consisting of 79 survey points. Many more volunteers are needed for future surveys as nearly all of the sites were surveyed by Wildlife Division staff. Without volunteer help, it becomes difficult to adequately survey the remaining grasslands in Connecticut and assess conservation needs.

In addition to the point-count surveys, visits were made to sites that had been reported by birders statewide to have had grassland birds in the past. A total of 57 sites were visited in an effort to verify the reports. The presence of at least one state-listed species was confirmed at seven of the 57 sites. These seven sites were then reported to the DEP Natural Diversity Database for use in monitoring Connecticut threatened, endangered and special concern species.

For more detailed information on this and other volunteer opportunities, please visit www.dep.state.ct.us/burnatr/wildlife/geninfo/volunteer.htm or call J.T. Stokowski or Geoffrey Krukar at 860-675-8130.

P.J. FUSCO

The grasshopper sparrow is an endangered species in Connecticut. It is only found in a few locations statewide.

2002 Grassland Bird Survey Summary

Number of sites at which species were detected*

Species	East of CT River 12 sites	West of CT River 13 sites
American Kestrel	1	0
Northern Bobwhite	2	0
Upland Sandpiper	0	0
Eastern Bluebird	5	4
Field Sparrow	2	8
Vesper Sparrow	0	0
Savannah Sparrow	1	1
Grasshopper Sparrow	0	0
Song Sparrow	8	13
Bobolink	1	5
Eastern Meadowlark	1	1

*(*excludes sites without public access for point-count survey)*

Make Reservations to View Wintering Eagles at Shepaug

Winter is the perfect time to get a good look at the bald eagles that migrate from more northern locations to the open water areas of Connecticut. And, one of the best places to go see wintering eagles is the Shepaug Bald Eagle Observation Area in Southbury.

The Shepaug Observation Area will be open to the public for its 18th consecutive winter season, as announced by Northeast Generation Services, the project operators. The observation area will be open three days a week--**by advance reservation only**--on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays from December 28, 2002, through March 19, 2003.

All individuals and groups (such as Scout and school groups) wishing to visit the site must make a reservation for a particular date, as there will be a limited number of visitors allowed per day. Those arriving at the site without reservations will not be admitted.

Starting December 10, 2002, reservations may be made from Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, by calling 1-800-368-8954. The reservation system has been very effective in providing a quality educational experience for the general public, while ensuring the welfare of wintering eagles.

P. J. FUSCO

The best place to see bald eagles west of the Connecticut River is along the Housatonic River, including the Shepaug Eagle Observation Area.

Wanted: Volunteers for the Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey

The DEP Wildlife Division is looking for volunteers to participate in the Annual Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey, which is targeted for January 10-11, 2003. Volunteers will be asked to count eagles on the survey date. No eagle viewing experience is necessary. However, knowing how to dress for cold, winter weather is a must and access to open water areas is a plus. This national survey will occur statewide and volunteers will be assigned a convenient area. Interested individuals should contact Wildlife Division biologist Julie Victoria, at (860) 642-7239, and provide a name and mailing address.

Volunteers Needed at Shepaug Eagle Area

Volunteers are being sought to help at the Shepaug Eagle Observation Area when it is open to the public. Volunteer duties include providing information to visitors, helping people to and from the shelter, pointing out the location of eagles and coordinating parking. Prospective volunteers can contact Catherine Urbain of the Connecticut Audubon Society, at 203-878-7440. Volunteers must attend a mandatory training session scheduled for December 7, 2002.

New DEP Fisheries Guide to Lakes and Ponds Available

The DEP has published a new guide that provides the latest information on 113 of the state's public lakes and ponds and 10 locations on the Connecticut River. *A Fisheries Guide to Lakes and Ponds of Connecticut including the Connecticut River and Its Coves* also contains a decade worth of new research information and useful maps.

Topics include: aquatic vegetation, bathymetry (depth contour) maps, fish populations and their habitats, lake and pond ecology, lake and pond fisheries management practices, lake productivity, life histories and identification of common lake and pond fishes, maximum and minimum water depths, thermal stratification and water clarity. Additional information about the guide can be found at the DEP's website: www.dep.state.ct.us/burnatr/fishing/book.htm

The new guide is available from the DEP Book Store, located at 79 Elm Street in Hartford. Store hours are Monday through Thursday, from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM. Paperback editions are priced at $19.95, plus 6% sales tax. A limited number of collector's edition cloth bound volumes are available for $29.95, plus 6% sales tax. For telephone and mail order information, call the DEP Book Store at (860) 424-3555 during their business hours.

Pilot Home Study Hunter Safety Course a Success

Written by Bob Kalinowski, Conservation Education/Firearms Safety Program Coordinator

This past summer, the Conservation Education/Firearms Safety (CE/FS) Program conducted a pilot "home study" firearms safety course for people who have work schedules or some other conflict that makes it difficult for them to attend the evenings and weekends required in the standard 16-hour classroom course. This course is not easier than the standard course and requires students to plan their own schedule in order to successfully complete the home study program.

Two courses were scheduled for 50 potential students. Forty-six students enrolled and were sent training materials and a workbook to complete and return before August 1, 2002. Twenty-six workbooks were returned and corrected and the students were contacted to attend an eight-hour "field day" scheduled at two Wildlife Division facilities. Twenty-five students (13 at Franklin Wildlife Management Area and 12 at Sessions Woods Wildlife Management Area) completed the field activities, passed the written exam and graduated.

R. KALINOWSKI (2)

A volunteer Conservation Education/Firearms Safety instructor speaks to home study students at the field day.

Home study participants had to demonstrate the safe handling and shooting of firearms at the field day portion of the course.

The students appeared to enjoy this method of study and found it met their time schedule. It was determined that the home study program may be beneficial to a portion of the public which has a unique or conflicting work schedule and cannot participate in the standard course. More data will be collected through questionnaires to determine how the home study course may be improved. This teaching technique is a fairly new concept in hunter education. The International Hunter Education Association has been working with hunter education specialists throughout North America in home study methods. Connecticut is one of many states and Canadian provinces that has offered this service to the hunting public.

Additional home study courses in hunting safety will be scheduled in 2003. Information on upcoming courses will be published in *Connecticut Wildlife* and on the DEP's website: www.dep.state.ct.us.

Additional home study courses in hunting safety will be scheduled in 2003. Information on upcoming courses will be published in Connecticut Wildlife *and on the DEP's website: www.dep.state.ct.us.*

New England Cottontail Study Hops Along

Written by Howard Kilpatrick, Deer/Turkey Program Biologist

The New England cottontail is the only native rabbit species in Connecticut and historically was found statewide. Information on the abundance and distribution of New England cottontails is limited, but the little amount of information available suggests that populations are declining in Connecticut and throughout New England. The decline is attributed primarily to habitat loss and habitat fragmentation and partially to increased competition from the more adaptable, non-native eastern cottontail.

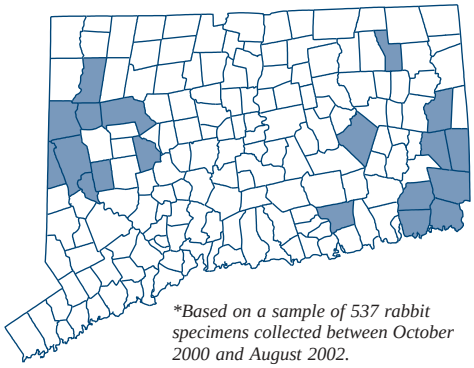
In August 2000, a petition to list the New England cottontail as threatened or endangered and to designate critical habitat under the federal Endangered Species Act was filed by the Biodiversity Legal Foundation, Conservation Action Project, Endangered Small Animals Conservation Fund and Defenders of Wildlife. In October 2000, the Wildlife Division initiated a comprehensive study to better understand the distribution and habitat needs of the New England cottontail in Connecticut.

Population Distribution

The first phase of the study involved assessing the relative distribution of New England and eastern cottontails in Connecticut**.** From October 2000 to August 2002, cottontail specimens were collected statewide from hunter harvest, roadkills and DEP livetrapping efforts. Carcasses were identified as New England or eastern cottontails based on differences in skull characteristics. Live animals were identified by using DNA analysis.

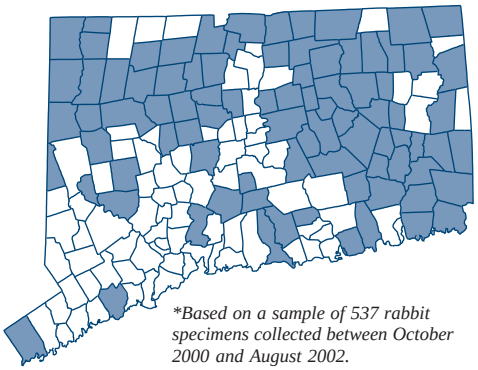
Over this 21-month period, 537 cottontail specimens were collected and analyzed by DEP staff. Cottontail specimens were collected from 97 of 169 (57%) Connecticut towns. New England cottontails were found in 19 of 97 (20%) towns and eastern cottontails were found in 91 of 97 (95%) towns (see maps). These numbers are conservative due to the limited number of specimens collected from many towns. Hunter harvest donations resulted in the most specimens (250) of which 43 (17%) were New England cottontails and 207 (83%) were eastern cottontails. Roadkills accounted for 193 specimens of which four (2%) were New England cottontails and 189 (98%) were eastern cottontails. Trapping resulted in 65 captures in which 13 (20%) were New England cottontails, 44 (68%) were eastern cottontails and eight (12%) have not yet been identified.

Distribution of New England cottontails in Connecticut.*



**Based on a sample of 537 rabbit specimens collected between October 2000 and August 2002.*

Distribution of eastern cottontails in Connecticut.*



**Based on a sample of 537 rabbit specimens collected between October 2000 and August 2002.*

Habitat Needs

The second phase of the study involved livetrapping cottontails from December 2001 to April 2002 at Bluff Point Coastal Reserve in Groton. Anywhere from 30 to 130 box traps were baited with apples and set four nights each week. The traps were set along transects that appeared to be in suitable cottontail habitat. However, they were not set if heavy rains or freezing rains were expected. Traps were checked daily and remained open for three to six consecutive days before being relocated.

Initially, species of cottontail was determined in the field using pelage (fur) characteristics. Species identification will be confirmed using DNA tissue analysis at the University of New Hampshire. Of 52 cottontail captures, 29 were initial captures and 23 were recaptures. Twenty eastern cottontails (10 males and 10 females) and nine New England cottontails (7 males and 2 females) were fitted with ear tags and radio collars after being captured. Eleven of the collared rabbits (3 New England cottontails and 8 eastern cottontails) were killed by predators. Mammalian predators accounted for 64% and avian predators accounted for 36% of the predation. New England cottontails experienced 44% mortality and eastern cottontails experienced 70% mortality within the first seven months of the study. The mortality was either a result of predation or several other factors. As of August 1, 2002, 10 collared rabbits were alive with functioning collars.

Radio-collared rabbits were monitored to assess movements, habitat use and mortality of the two species of cottontails. Since February 2002, six to eight radio telemetry locations have been collected (3-4 day and 3-4 night locations) each week for all animals. Currently, data on habitat use and home range size is being analyzed. In December 2002, additional rabbits will be captured at other sites in eastern Connecticut and fitted with radio collars and ear tags to assess habitat use and movements in a variety of habitat types.

Periodic updates will be provided in future issues of *Connecticut Wildlife*. The Wildlife Division also plans to continue collecting rabbit specimens statewide to document the distribution of New England cottontails in Connecticut. Hunters and the general public can submit cottontail rabbit carcasses or heads to the Wildlife Division's Sessions Woods office in Burlington or the Franklin office in Franklin. This project was partially funded by the Income Tax Checkoff Fund and the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program (WCRP).

Nominate a Site for Connecticut's New Coastal Birding Trail

A new and exciting wildlife watching opportunity is on the horizon for the coastal region of Connecticut. Several wildlife hotspots, both well-known and little-known, will soon be linked together to become the Connecticut Coastal Birding Trail. Sponsored by the Connecticut DEP Wildlife Division, the new birding trail is patterned after the successful "Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail" that stretches along the Gulf Coast and the "Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail." The Texas trail draws thousands of wildlife watchers each year, who drive among its 308 highlighted stops in search of desert and tropical wildlife and plants.

P. J. FUSCO

Ospreys will be a familiar sight along the Coastal Birding Trail currently being planned for Connecticut.

With funding from the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Act Program (WCRP), the Wildlife Division has launched its project to develop a highway-based birding trail through the coastal region.

The Connecticut Coastal Birding Trail will guide visitors to more than 50 different sites, including wildlife refuges, parks, historic sites, rivers, lakes and bike trails, where they can see the nearly 400 species of birds that visit or nest in the state. The Coastal Birding Trail will allow both novice and casual birders to see birds in their natural habitat, as well as provide opportunities to communicate important conservation messages and promote nature activities. The trail also will offer travelers much more than birding, including Connecticut's quaint New England atmosphere and cultural heritage.

The sites along the Connecticut Coastal Birding Trail will be grouped into four unique loops—one in each of the Connecticut shoreline Tourism Regions: Coastal Fairfield County, Greater New Haven, Connecticut River Valley, and Mystic & More (southeastern Connecticut).

Nominate a Site

The birding trail will take form throughout the coastal region by incorporating suggestions for great places to watch birds. Individuals, birding clubs, businesses and other interested parties are invited to nominate sites for inclusion in the new trail.

To nominate a site, just go to the Connecticut Coastal Birding Trail website, www.ctbirdingtrails.org, and fill out the site nomination form.

A state steering committee for the trail will use the following criteria to evaluate the nominations for further assessment:

- Abundance, diversity or richness of bird species and other natural attractions.
- Visitation will not negatively impact the natural or cultural resources of a site.
- Public has safe access to the site.
- Access may be arranged through public ownership or willing private owners.
- Visitor amenities and support services are present, planned or nearby.
- Site has local partners or sponsors to help with management and maintenance.
- Tourism infrastructure (dining, lodging, etc.) nearby.
- Geographic distribution/dispersal.

Volunteers will be the backbone of the development of this new network of birding sites. Birding clubs, chambers of commerce, local business owners, town governments and others are encouraged to not only recommend sites for the trail, but also to adopt sites for on-going maintenance, funding and visitor support, such as on-site nature programs. Local governments are being encouraged to protect open space, support legislation to enhance ecotourism and provide sanitary facilities, drinking water, parking and access to desirable sites.

If you or your organization would like to be a part of this effort to develop a coastal birding trail, email Frank Haviland at: flhaviland@attbi.com, or contact the Wildlife Division's Wildlife Diversity Program, at 860-675-8130.

Information provided on the Connecticut Coastal Birding Trail website was used in this article.

Tiny Royalty

Written by Paul Fusco, Wildlife Outreach Unit

Drab little birds bestowed with crowns of flaming color, kinglets are favorites among many bird watchers. Their tiny size is second only to that of hummingbirds. Short, stubby tails, whitish wing bars and thin bills are identifying characteristics of the kinglets. Their olive plumage blends well into their preferred habitat of conifer trees.

Two species of kinglets are found in North America and, at certain times of the year, both are fairly common in Connecticut. The best times to find them here would be during the spring and fall migrations. At those times of the year, kinglets will use almost any wooded habitat and will join mixed flocks with other small migrating birds, such as warblers and titmice.

P. J. FUSCO

The golden-crowned kinglet can be identified by its yellow crown and the pale stripe over its eye.

Breeding

The springtime migration takes ruby-crowned kinglets through Connecticut and into northern New England to the expansive boreal forests of mid-latitude Canada, where they typically breed in black spruce bogs and stands of balsam fir. Ruby-crowned kinglets are not known to breed in Connecticut. The golden-crowned kinglet is a rare breeder in Connecticut, with most records coming from the higher elevations of the northwest hills. Its breeding range does not extend as far north into Canada as does the ruby-crowned's.

Both species construct hanging globular nests, normally in mature conifers, especially spruces. The intricately woven nests are made of mosses, lichens, spider webs and bark strips, with a lining of rootlets, spider webs, hair and feathers. Kinglets have large clutch sizes, with seven to nine eggs usually being laid; although some nests may hold up to a dozen eggs.

Kinglets are smaller than warblers and their presence during the breeding season may be hard to detect. Birders and researchers conducting surveys should be aware of the possible presence of golden-crowned kinglets in Connecticut during the breeding season, especially at higher elevations and around stands of mature spruce.

The loud, warbling song of the ruby-crowned kinglet has been described as remarkably fluid and pure in tone. Singing *liberty, liberty, liberty*, at a volume hard to believe comes from such a little bird, the ruby-crowned kinglet is considered to be one of the best songsters of any bird. The full richness of song is best experienced on the breeding ground.

Kinglet Food

Extremely active birds, kinglets are constantly on the move to fuel their high energy needs. Their typical behavior while foraging is to steadily flit back and forth, up, down and around a tree's foliage, making it difficult for an observer to keep up with the bird. Unlike other small birds, like warblers and vireos, kinglets have a habit of flicking their wings as they move from branch to branch. They will frequently hover in front of the tip of a conifer sprig looking for insects that may be hidden in hard to reach places. Kinglets are also skilled at foraging for insects by flycatching.

Kinglets are almost entirely insectivorous, even in winter. Their food consists of arthropods, such as bark beetles, plant lice, aphids, scale insects, flies, ants, moths and spiders. Important winter food sources are the eggs and young stages of these invertebrates, which are gleaned off

P. J. FUSCO (3)

The ruby-crowned kinglet is separated from its golden-crowned relative by the broken eye ring and lack of a stripe over the eye.

the trunks and foliage of coniferous trees. At times, they may also consume small fruits and tree sap.

Kinglets in Winter

In winter, the golden-crowned kinglet remains farther north than its ruby-crowned cousin. Having less tolerance to cold weather, the ruby-crowned is at the northern limit of its winter range in Connecticut. Both species are considered to be uncommon to rare in the state during winter, but the golden-crowned is hardier and the more likely kinglet to be encountered.

In order to survive subfreezing temperatures on winter nights, golden-crowned kinglets are known to huddle together in sheltered areas that are protected from the elements. Although they are hardy little birds, when winter conditions become too severe, their populations may suffer casualties. Winter die-offs typically occur due to food shortages coupled with, or caused by, extreme cold and wet weather.

Observation data from the National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count in Connecticut indicate an increasing trend for the golden-crowned and stable trend for the ruby-crowned kinglet over the past 30 years. Christmas Bird Counts have been conducted in early winter each year for over 100 years and give an indication of bird populations in winter.

How Small Is Small?

A kinglet's enemies are few. Only the smallest hawks and owls will bother trying to make a meal of the tiny kinglet. Those avian predators include sharp-shinned hawks, boreal owls and screech owls.

Because of their small size, kinglets have been known to succumb under some odd circumstances. They have been documented being caught in spider webs, unable to get out. They've also been known to die by getting stuck on burdock heads while foraging for insect larvae within the plant.

The male ruby-crowned kinglet raises its bright red crest as a warning when a competing male comes too close.

The Namesake Crown

The male ruby-crowned kinglet has a bright red crown patch that is usually concealed by other head feathers unless the bird becomes agitated or there is another male nearby. The crown patch is raised and lowered in courtship and in territorial disputes between competing males. When raised, the bright red patch looks similar to a king's crown. Females do not have the red crown patch.

A male golden-crowned kinglet's crown stripe showing the orange patch.

Both sexes of the golden-crowned kinglet have a bright yellow central head stripe. The male has an orange patch within the yellow crown stripe that is used in courtship and territorial disputes in the same manner as the ruby-crowned uses its red patch.

Where Can I See Kinglets?

Kinglets can be found in almost any wooded area during migration times and in winter, although both species favor conifer trees for foraging and shelter. They will join roving bands of chickadees, titmice and other small birds as they forage in woodlands. Keep an eye out in your backyard. Even though kinglets do not normally come to bird feeders, they are frequently in association with birds that do. Your backyard may be the easiest place to see them.

During the summer nesting season, both species are strongly associated with spruce/fir forest habitat and only the golden-crowned kinglet would be found in Connecticut.

Most state properties and local parks will host kinglets at one time of year or another. Some of the better places to look include shoreline parks, like Hammonasset Beach State Park and Sherwood Island State Park. Good inland locations include Devil's Hopyard State Park, People's State Forest and White Memorial Conservation Area.

More on the Christmas Bird Count

If you are interested in participating in a Christmas Bird Count in your area, please contact Patrick Comins, Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon Connecticut, at 203-264-5098, or pcomins@audubon.org for more information.

The Wildlife Observer

Moose are Making their Mark

Reader Andrew Pelletier submitted the following wildlife observation and photograph of a moose and calf that were seen in West Hartland:

"These photos were taken on the last Saturday in August. The week before, my girlfriend Cindy and I were picking blackberries in the state forest in West Hartland when we came across some moose tracks. I asked to borrow her digital camera and told her I'd like to try to get some shots of the moose.

A. PELLETIER

That Saturday was chilly for late August and I got there before it got light. It had rained the night before, so whatever tracks I would run across would surely be fresh. At first I sat quietly to see if the moose would show up where we saw the tracks earlier that week. After about an hour it was light enough to look for tracks and it wasn't long before I came across some. I slowly followed the tracks for two hours, until they eventually led to an old clearcut lot with lots of new growth of poplar and birch. Some of the young trees were snapped at a level of about eight feet, their leaves stripped to the tips. Then I came across large piles of droppings that looked to be hours (if not minutes old). I knew I was close. So close, in fact, that after walking about 50 more feet, a large cow weighing about 550-600 pounds jumped up about 15 feet from me. She stood just long enough for me to snap a shot, her mane stood on end. That's when I noticed movement to my right and saw her calf getting up. That's when we all decided to put some space between us, me backing up slowly, and the cow, stepping effortlessly over tangled brush with her calf close behind.

As I walked back to the car I was so excited to have had a wildlife encounter like this. But what was more bewildering is that it happened in Connecticut, four miles from where I live! Cindy and I usually do our moose watching in Pittsburg, New Hampshire, hundreds of miles away!"

Kevin Powers, from Westfield, Massachusetts, also observed and took photographs of three different moose in Tunxis State Forest in late September:

"September 30th, early autumn, cool evening, with the sun setting. I climbed into a group of trees with my tree stand for deer hunting with a bow. After getting set in a clearcut, I made a soft cow call with my hands cupped, "mooooo." I knew moose were in the area and hoped to call one in. Within three to five minutes, I hear the same call. So, I make three short "huffs" (bull call) and out steps a female moose, standing with the sun setting on her. Right behind her steps out a young bull and then a button bull. I'm glad I brought my camera with me. I watched them from 5:00 PM until 6:15 PM--nice evening! I saw a moose on the last day of the late bow season last year and I saw a moose trot by me opening day this year. Plus, I've seen a lot of moose sign--droppings, bark chewed from saplings and lots of tracks."

K. POWERS

Do you have an interesting wildlife observation to report to the Wildlife Division?

Please send it (and any photos) to:

Wildlife Observations
DEP - Wildlife Division
P.O. Box 1550
Burlington, CT 06013

Email:
katherine.herz@po.state.ct.us

(submitted photos will be returned at your request)

Have You Seen a Moose in CT?

If yes, the Wildlife Division would like to know. In an effort to keep track of the state's moose population, the Division is encouraging residents to report observations of moose. Moose sightings should be reported to the Division's Franklin Wildlife office, 391 Route 32, N. Franklin, CT 06254; 860-642-7239; howard.kilpatrick@po.state.ct.us. Desired information is the number of moose seen, location and date.

The Wildlife Division advises those who observe moose to keep a safe distance and not approach the animals, particularly a female with a calf or calves. Moose are territorial and protective of their young and they have been known to charge when threatened.

Explore a Wildlife Management Area: *Bishop Swamp*

Compiled by Greg Kuhr, Resource Assistant

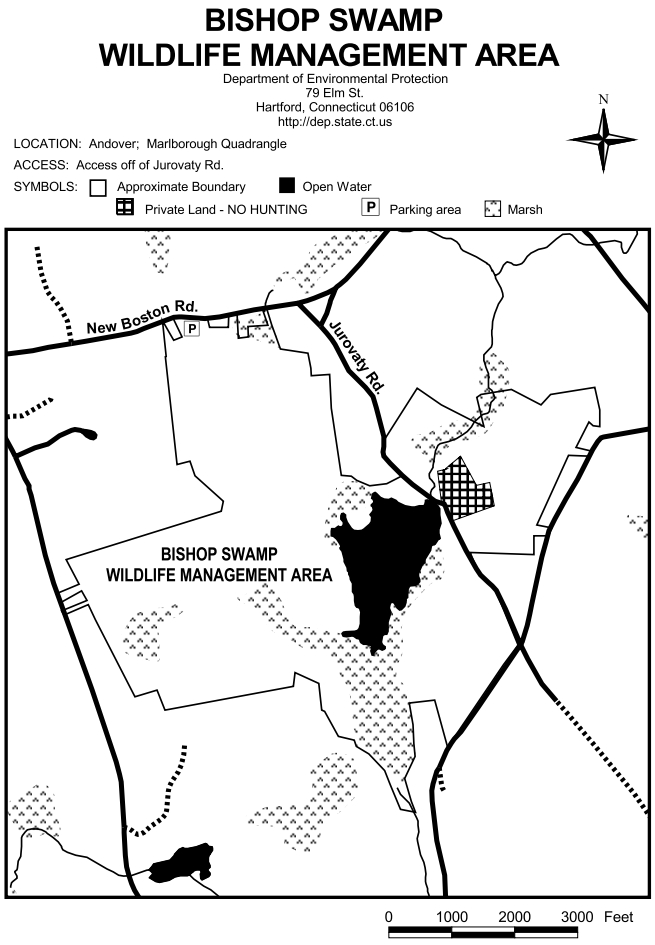
The 692-acre Bishop Swamp Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is located in Tolland County in the town of Andover. This area was acquired for the conservation of wildlife habitat and associated recreational activities, including hunting, fishing and wildlife observation.

The first purchase of land (531 acres) at Bishop Swamp WMA occurred in 1977 with funds from the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program (Pittman-Robertson Act). Subsequent land purchases in 1978 and 1998, using funds from the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program and the Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust funds, completed the 692 acres. The DEP is currently negotiating the purchase of 200 acres of forest that will be added to the management area.

The property is actively managed by the Wildlife Division in cooperation with the Forestry Division. The primary management objective for the area is to develop and maintain a diversity of habitats, such as various stages of forest growth, old fields and agricultural fields. This objective is accomplished through the use of forestry operations, heavy-duty brush mowing and agricultural agreements with local farmers.

Game species, such as deer, grouse, turkey and woodcock, as well as nongame wildlife species, like scarlet tanager, red-eyed vireo, black and white warbler, wood thrush, ovenbird and various raptors, use the forested areas. Nineteen acres of fields provide habitat for cottontail rabbits, bluebirds, catbirds, swallows, bobolinks and various butterflies, dragonflies and other insects. The wetland areas provide valuable habitat for migratory waterfowl (black ducks, wood ducks, mallards), furbearers, reptiles and amphibians.

Bishop Swamp is open to fishing and hunting. The 105 acres of open water support a warm water fishery (largemouth bass, black crappie, sunfish and brown bullhead). Car-top boat access (electric motors only) is available along Jurovaty Road, which bisects the property. Bishop Swamp is one of 37 state areas designated as a "bowhunting only" area for deer hunting during the fall firearms hunting season. Small game, waterfowl, fall firearms turkey and spring (no-lottery) turkey hunting also are permitted.



The 692-acre Bishop Swamp WMA was acquired for the conservation of wildlife habitat and associated recreational activities, including hunting, fishing and wildlife observation. The DEP is currently negotiating the purchase of 200 acres of forest that will be added to Bishop Swamp.

FROM THE FIELD

4th Annual Connecticut River Eagle Festival

February 15-16, 2003, in Essex, CT

The Connecticut Audubon Society will present the 4th Annual Connecticut River Eagle Festival on February 15 and 16, 2003, in Essex. The first of its kind in the eastern United States, the Connecticut River Eagle Festival features a wide variety of free environmental education activities for people of all ages, including an opening parade, land-based eagle viewing tours, environmental lectures and live birds of prey demonstrations. (DEP Wildlife Division biologists will be presenting some of the environmental lectures.) There will also be free nature programs for children, Native American presentations, nature exhibits, music, ice carvings and other entertainment.

A complete Eagle Festival Program Guide (which should be available in December) can be obtained by calling 1-800-714-7201. Information can also be found on Connecticut Audubon's website: www.ctaudubon.org.

Educator Workshops and Events at Kellogg Environmental Center

Educator Workshops: The DEP's Kellogg Environmental Center, in Derby, is offering two educator workshops in January. Please register by calling (203) 734-2513.

Agriculture and the Environment, Tues. Jan. 14, 2003, 8:30 AM-3:00 PM, grades 4-8, 0.5 CEUs, $35.

Project Learning Tree (PLT) Facilitator Training, Fri. Jan. 17-Sun., Jan. 19, 2003. Held at Camp Hazen in Chester. Facilitators should have attended a PLT workshop prior to training. Free; call to be placed on the mailing list for this training.

Programs and Events: The Kellogg Environmental Center and Osborne Homestead Museum offer special programs and events to the public throughout the year. Following is a list of upcoming events. Call (203) 734-2513 for more information.

Wreath Workshop, Sat. Nov. 30, 10:30 AM-12:00 PM

Children's Victorian Ornaments Workshop, Sat. Dec. 7, 10:30 AM-12:00 PM

Victorian Ornament Workshop & Tea, Sun. Dec. 8, 2:00-4:00 PM

Solstice Hike, Sat. Dec. 21, 6:00-8:30 PM

Volunteers Build Viewing Blind at Goshen WMA

Volunteers from the Northwest Connecticut Sportsman's Council have recently completed the construction of a wildlife viewing blind at the Goshen Wildlife Management Area. Council president Chris Marino brought together a team of volunteers, which, in a matter of weeks, erected the blind. Mike O'Connell, the crew leader, took charge of the supervision and construction of the viewing blind. Not only volunteering time and tools, the council also donated some of the materials needed to bring the project to completion. Once again, members of the Northwest Connecticut Sportsman's Council have volunteered their time to help the Wildlife Division manage and maintain state wildlife management areas. The Wildlife Division would like to thank all of the volunteers for their help on this project and their continued support.

J. WARNER

This new wildlife viewing blind was built at Goshen WMA by volunteers from the Northwest Connecticut Sportsman's Council.

James Warner, Field Assistant

Wildlife Division Educator Workshops

The Wildlife Division's Public Outreach Unit has scheduled several educator workshops for the upcoming months. All of the workshops will be held at the Division's Sessions Woods Conservation Education Center, in Burlington. The workshops are free but a preregistration application is required (call 860-675-8130 and ask for Laura or send email to laura.rogers-castro@po.state.ct.us). The registration deadline is two weeks prior to the workshop. Space is limited so register early to avoid disappointment! School teachers can earn CEUs by attending these workshops.

Bears in Connecticut will be held on Tuesday, December 3, from 3:30 to 5:30 PM. Participants will discover why bears are back in Connecticut and find out about Wildlife Division research projects on bears.

Wildlife Outreach Kits for Educators will be held on Tuesday, January 14, from 3:30 to 5:30 PM. This workshop provides an introduction to the Wildlife Division's traveling educational kits. Participants will learn about common wildlife through the kits' slide shows and printed materials and conduct activities for use in the classroom by using wildlife-related props.

How the Master Wildlife Conservationist Program Can Help You! will be held on Tuesday, January 21, from 3:30 to 5:30 PM. This workshop will provide information on how educators can enlist the assistance of volunteers trained through the Wildlife Division's Master Wildlife Conservationist Program.

*The **Wildlife Challenge** will return in the January/February 2003 issue. Look for a new question, as well as the winner and answer from the September/October 2002 issue.*

Your Help May Be Needed to Protect Nesting Bald Eagles

Volunteers being sought to monitor disturbance at eagle nest site

Many have heard the unfortunate story (Wildlife Are Harmed By Thoughtless Actions - July/August 2002 *Connecticut Wildlife)* about a pair of bald eagles that built a nest along the Connecticut River in Rocky Hill and was the center of much media attention. Human disturbance at the nest site was so intense that the eagles finally left the area, leaving the young to die in the nest. The first year that a bald eagle pair begins to nest is a very critical and tentative time. If human attention is drawn to the area and the adults are continually disturbed off the nest, the nest will probably fail and the pair may not return to the site. The landowner, as well as town officials and departments from both Rocky Hill and Wethersfield, recognized the need to restrict access to this highly sensitive area and blocked the roadway to the nest tree. However, people did not respect the posted areas or the eagles' habitat and they did not keep their distance.

This experience has demonstrated that more precautions must be taken at the site to assure nesting success. If the eagle pair returns to nest in this area, the Wildlife Division will be looking for volunteers who are willing to sit in their cars at the barrier and educate potential trespassers about the consequences of their actions. The critical monitoring period will be everyday, sunrise to dusk, from March through June.

Those who are interested, should **mail or email** their name, address, daytime phone number and a rough idea of when they would be available to Julie Victoria, Franklin WMA, 391 Route 32, N. Franklin, CT 06254, julie.victoria@po.state.ct.us. **Please no phone calls**. If there is a need to set up the volunteer monitoring program, those who have expressed interest will be contacted by January 24.

P.J. FUSCO

No access signs posted at a bald eagle nesting site in Rocky Hill in 2002 were repeatedly ignored. The adult eagles eventually abandoned their nest due to excessive human disturbance.

Urban Deer Booklet Published by Wildlife Division

Written by *Andrew M. LaBonte, Research Assistant*

It is undeniable that Connecticut's deer population has been growing over the past 25 years, especially in many residential communities. This population increase is due to changes in land use patterns, limited hunter access to private land and the ability of deer to coexist with humans. The most commonly asked question is "What is being done to control the deer population?"

To help explain the history, status and management of deer in urban areas, the Wildlife Division has recently published *Managing Urban Deer in Connecticut.* This booklet was designed for residents and community leaders concerned about local deer populations.

Today, conflicts between white-tailed deer and humans have become a prominent wildlife management concern, especially in urban and suburban areas. High deer populations in urban areas are associated with high rates of deer-vehicle accidents (6,000-8,000 estimated deer killed each year on state roadways), increased risk of contracting Lyme disease (3,500 reported cases in CT in 2001) and damage to landscape plantings.

High deer densities negatively impact native plant communities and landscape plantings in residential areas. Because deer can eat five to 10 pounds of forage per day, even a small deer herd can eliminate native plant species and change the structure and diversity of native plant communities. Changes in structure and diversity of plant communities affect the diversity and abundance of other wildlife species, such as shrub-nesting birds. In residential areas, deer can impact flower and vegetable gardens, and may completely defoliate landscape plantings.

Many communities have struggled with the difficult task of selecting a publicly-acceptable management strategy to safely and effectively reduce overabundant deer populations. *Managing Urban Deer in Connecticut* provides answers to some of the most commonly asked questions about controlling and managing deer populations. The booklet also contains several examples from special deer management programs that have been successful in Connecticut. There is a section on facts about deer and deer management and recommendations on how homeowners, neighborhood groups, homeowner associations and communities can develop a deer management program.

Free copies of the 16-page color booklet can be obtained from the Connecticut Deer Program, Franklin WMA, 391 Rt. 32, N. Franklin, CT 06254; 860-642-7239; howard.kilpatrick@po.state.ct.us.

Be on the Lookout for Bears with Ear Tags

A project initiated by the Wildlife Division in 2001 that involves trapping, marking and releasing black bears resumed this past June and extended into the fall. This project, which is being funded by the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program (WCRP), should provide a more accurate estimate of Connecticut's growing bear population.

As the black bear project headed into the fall, trapping efforts continued in the north-central and northwestern parts of the state. In 2002, 27 individual bears were captured. Of those, 24 (8 females and 16 males) were unmarked. The largest bear captured this year was a male that was trapped in July and weighed 272 pounds. The smallest bear captured was a yearling female that weighed 70 pounds. Bears have been trapped in several state forests located in the northwestern corner of the state, including Tunxis, Peoples, Alquonquin and Enders State Forests. Bears also have been trapped at Sessions Woods (Burlington) and Goshen Wildlife Management Areas.

When an unmarked bear is caught (trapped), biologists sedate the bear to remove it from the trap. The bear is measured and weighed and its overall physical health is assessed. Every trapped bear is tagged with bright yellow or orange ear tags, one in the front of one ear and one on the rear of the other ear. Each bear's tags have numbers unique to that bear. Adult female bears also are fitted with radio collars around their necks. The radio collars allow biologists to track the movements of the females. The collars also will enable biologists to locate the females' winter dens to determine if any of them have given birth to cubs. If there are cubs in a den, they will be examined, weighed and measured. Male bears have not had radio collars attached because they tend to have much larger home ranges than females and are prone to wandering much farther, making it very difficult to track them.

P. J. FUSCO

Wildlife Division Research Assistants Mark Freeman (left) and Henri Woods II pose with a bear captured in Barkhamsted in October 2002. The young male bear, which weighed 110 pounds, was fitted with ear tags and released.

Bears are being tagged so that biologists can estimate the number of bears in the state through a *mark-recapture* technique. The tags the biologists attach to the bears are the *mark*, while the sightings of marked bears reported by the public are used as the *recapture* data. The data collected will then be analyzed to estimate population size. Bear sighting reports from the public are an important part of this study. Bear sightings can be reported by phone to the Division's Sessions Woods office (860-675-8130) or by filling out a postage-paid sighting card that can be obtained from DEP offices throughout the state.

In Connecticut, bears enter their winter dens from November to December, depending on temperature and weather conditions. During this winter denning period, Division biologists will be able to review the data collected from the past two trapping seasons and work towards a more accurate population estimate. Trapping and tagging will end during the winter denning period and resume sometime in April 2003.

Master Wildlife Conservationist Training to Begin in February

The next Master Wildlife Conservationist Program series will begin in February 2003. This volunteer program provides 40 hours of training in wildlife ecology, management, conservation and interpretation. Volunteers then perform 40 hours of service in the first year, including outreach and assistance with Wildlife Division projects. Interested individuals can apply for this free training program by contacting Laura Rogers-Castro at 860-675-8130 or laura.rogers-castro@po.state.ct.us.

Thousands Learn About Wildlife at Durham Fair Exhibit

An informational exhibit at the Durham Fair in September gave Wildlife Division staff members and volunteers with the Master Wildlife Conservationist Program the perfect opportunity to interact with fair visitors. Those who took a trip through the Discovery Tent and stopped at the Division's exhibit table had a chance to take a wildlife quiz, obtain informational handouts and learn more about the Master Wildlife Conservationist Program. In addition, staff members and Master Wildlife Conservationists gave several mini demonstrations on such topics as bats, snakes, turtles, secretive predators, wildlife myths, invasive exotics, secretive marsh birds and wild turkeys.

P. J. FUSCO (3)

Visitors, especially children, enjoyed the hands-on display.

Master Wildlife Conservationist Bill Sahlmann interacts with fair visitors.

Division biologist Paul Rego gave a feature presentation on the black bear.

Part of the Division's public outreach effort is having exhibits at various fairs and events throughout the state. These exhibits give the public a chance to meet staff members and volunteers and to talk about their ideas, concerns and experiences with wildlife. We hope to attend more events and fairs in the future now that several trained Master Wildlife Conservationists are on board and ready to volunteer. If you are interested in having a Master Wildlife Conservationist bring an exhibit or make a presentation on wildlife at your event, school or other activity, contact Laura Rogers-Castro, at the Sessions Woods office, (860) 675-8130; laura.rogers-castro@po.state.ct.us.

Public outreach is one of many important roles undertaken by the Wildlife Division. *Connecticut Wildlife*, the wildlife section of the DEP website, publications, informational displays and public speaking engagements are several ways in which the Division tries to inform Connecticut residents about wildlife in our state and the many projects the Division is involved with.

Natural resource educator Laura Rogers-Castro presents a mini demonstration on fisher and bobcat to an enthralled audience.

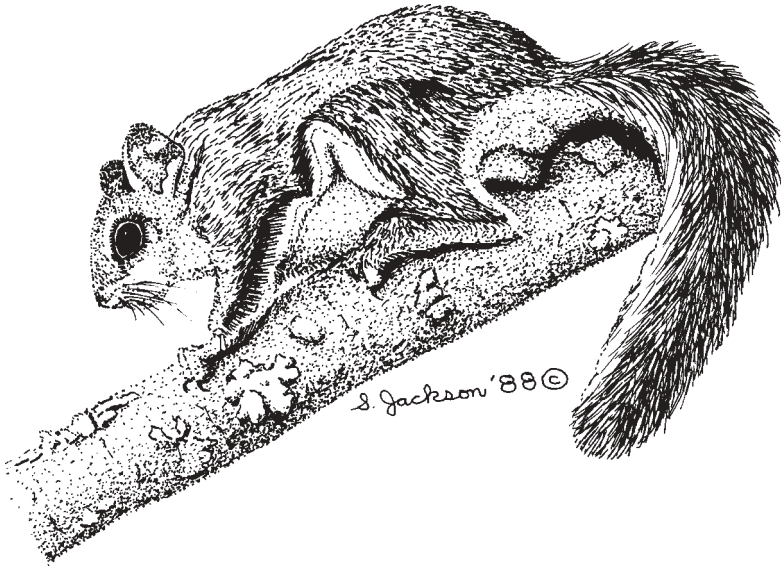
Just for Kids

Flying Squirrels

Flying squirrels should really be called "gliding" squirrels because they cannot fly. They can glide through the air because they have extra, loose skin on the sides of their bodies called a patagium. Flying squirrels can change the direction they are gliding by using their tail as a rudder.

North and South

There are two types of flying squirrels in Connecticut: the southern flying squirrel and northern flying squirrel. Southern flying squirrels are quite common in Connecticut, though seldom seen. Northern flying squirrels are uncommon. Both have soft, gray-brown fur on the back and sides and white fur underneath their bodies. The northern flying squirrel, though, is a little darker and redder than the southern flying squirrel.



What big eyes you have!

Flying squirrels have large, dark eyes. They need big eyes to help them see at night. Flying squirrels are *nocturnal* animals, which means they are active at night.

Nuts!

Flying squirrels are hard to see because they are out at night. You can find evidence, though, that they have been around. Look for nuts (acorns and hickory nuts) with one smooth-edged opening in the shell and the nut meat gone. That's the way flying squirrels open the nuts they eat. Other squirrels and chipmunks break the nuts into many pieces to get at the nut meat. Northern flying squirrels eat mostly mushrooms and lichens.

Not in my house!

Flying squirrels sometimes enter homes through small openings leading to the attic. They like to nest where there is shelter. Usually, they nest in a tree hole or even a bird house, but sometimes they think our houses make the best squirrel homes! If people close up the holes in their house, then flying squirrels will stay out. Be sure there are no baby squirrels inside before the holes are patched up!

Wildlife Calendar Reminders

Dec. 1 ..... Beaver trapping season opens.

Dec. 3 ..... **Educator Workshop: Bears in Connecticut** (see page 14 for more information).

Dec. 11-24 ..... Deer muzzleloader season.

Mid-Dec ..... 2003 Connecticut Hunting and Trapping Guide available at town clerks' and Wildlife Division offices. The guide can also be accessed at the DEP's website: www.dep.state.ct.us.

Dec. 25-31 ..... Second part of the fall turkey bowhunting season on state and private lands.

Dec. 28-Mar. 19 ..... Shepaug Bald Eagle Viewing Area open for the 2002-2003 eagle viewing season (see page 6 for information on how to make reservations).

January ..... Donate to the Endangered Species/Wildlife Income Tax Check-off Fund on your 2002 CT Income Tax form.

..... Spring turkey hunting and state land deer lottery applications available at town clerks' and Wildlife Division offices.

Jan. 10-11 ..... Volunteers needed for the Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey (see page 6).

Jan. 11 ..... **Winter Tracking and Animal Signs**, starting at 9:30 AM, at the Sessions Woods Wildlife Management Area, in Burlington. Many birds migrate south, some mammals hibernate and several other wildlife species remain active during winter. DEP Wildlife Division biologists Steven Jackson, Peter Picone and Paul Rego will lead walks through the habitats of Sessions Woods in search of evidence of wildlife. Snow is desirable, so dress for the weather. Call 860-675-8130 to preregister and for more information.

Jan. 14 ..... **Educator Workshop: Wildlife Outreach Kits** (see page 14 for more information).

Jan. 15-Feb. 15 ..... Special late Canada goose hunting season in the south zone only. For more details, consult the 2002-2003 Migratory Bird Hunting Guide, available at town clerks' and DEP offices. The guide can also be found on the DEP's website at: www.dep.state.ct.us.

Jan. 21 ..... **Educator Workshop: How the Master Wildlife Conservationist Program Can Help You!** (see page 14 for more information).

Feb. 8 ..... **Connecticut Birding Surveys**, starting at 1:30 PM, at the Sessions Woods Wildlife Management Area, in Burlington. The spring of 2002 marked the beginning of the Wildlife Division's three-year Migratory Bird Stopover Habitat Project. Join Geoffrey Krukar and J. T. Stokowski to learn more about this project and other volunteer opportunities with the Wildlife Division. Call 860-675-8130 to preregister and for more information.

Feb. 14-16 ..... Visit the Wildlife Division's exhibit at the 5th Annual Hunting and Fishing Expo, at the Connecticut Expo Center in Hartford. For more information on the Hunting and Fishing Expo, visit the website for North East Promotions, www.fishingandhuntingexpo.com.

Feb. 15-16 ..... 4th Annual Connecticut River Eagle Festival (see page 14).

March 1 ..... **Bird House Workshop**, starting at 9:30 AM, at the Sessions Woods Wildlife Management Area, in Burlington. Bring your hammer and screwdriver to construct a bluebird/chickadee/nuthatch house. Assisted construction will follow a slide presentation on bird houses, size, placement and habitat. A donation of $4.00 to the Friends of Sessions Woods will cover the cost of the birdhouse. Call 860-675-8130 to preregister and for more information.

"Give a Gift to Wildlife" *this holiday season by donating to the* ***Wildlife Division's Nonharvested Wildlife Fund*** *and help finance projects to conserve bluebirds, bats, ospreys, least terns and other nongame and endangered wildlife. Send tax-deductible donations to the DEP Nonharvested Wildlife Fund, P.O. Box 1550, Burlington, CT 06013.*

Connecticut Wildlife

Subscription Order

Please make checks payable to:
Connecticut Wildlife, P.O. Box 1550, Burlington, CT 06013

Check one:

☐ 1 Year ($6.00) ☐ 2 Years ($11.00) ☐ 3 Years ($16.00)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ *State:* _____

Zip: _____ *Tel.:* _____

Check one:

☐ Renewal
☐ New Subscription
☐ Gift Subscription

Gift card to read:

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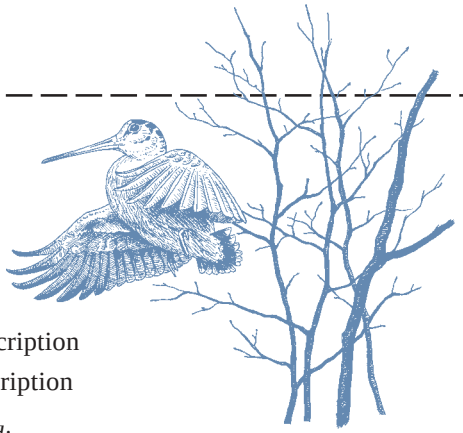

The best time to see wintering canvasbacks in Connecticut is during December through January. Look for these colorful ducks in brackish waters and marshes at the mouths of tidal rivers.

Bureau of Natural Resources / Wildlife Division
Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

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