



Audubon CONNECTICUT

A State of the Birds Report Fall 2007

A place on WatchList 2007 is a dubious distinction for 35 of Connecticut's birds. Using the latest research, including the Christmas Bird Count and Breeding Bird Survey, Audubon and the American Bird Conservancy analyzed population size and trends, distribution, and threats to identify the most critically imperiled birds in the U.S. "Red" list species are those at greatest risk of extinction. Birds on the "Yellow" list **need** effective conservation action to avoid slipping closer to "red" list status and eventual oblivion. These species may seem less familiar than the declining "common" birds identified by Audubon in summer 2007, but they need our help even more. Together, we must do more than watch these species disappear from our world. We must act to save them before time runs out.

The following are some of the "Red" and "Yellow" list species that depend on Connecticut habitat and our conservation commitment. For more information about the complete continental and Hawaiian WatchLists, visit www.audubon.org

CONNECTICUT'S PRIORITY WATCHLIST SPECIES

WatchList
Status



LEAST TERN (*Sterna antillarum*)

Least Terns are listed as Threatened by the Connecticut DEP and are under pressure primarily because of human actions, including development and recreational activities. They nest on the ground on beaches and sand bars, making them particularly sensitive to predators, human disturbance and rising sea levels. Least Terns are a new addition to the 2007 WatchList, joining their Piping Plover beach-mates on the red list.



SALTMARSH SHARP-TAILED SPARROW (*Ammodramus cauducutus*)

This species is restricted to nesting in a narrow band of salt marsh along the Atlantic Coast and are threatened on one side by human coastal developments and on the other by rising sea levels. They are particularly vulnerable to changes in sea level from climate change and are threatened by even a small sea-level rise. They are listed as a Species of Special Concern in Connecticut, along with their marsh-mates the Seaside Sparrow.



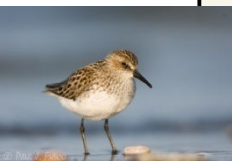
WOOD THRUSH (*Hylocichla mustelina*)

Wood Thrush nests in eastern deciduous forests, primarily within the United States. Their population has declined by 52% over the last 40 years according to the Breeding Bird Survey. They nest in the under-story vegetation and are at risk from forest fragmentation, invasive species, over-browsing by deer and air pollutants such as mercury and acid



BLUE-WINGED WARBLER (*Vermivora pinus*)

Shrubland birds are declining at a faster rate than any other group of birds in North America. Blue-winged Warblers are no exception, having declined by 33% over the last 40 years and by 75% in Connecticut. This is especially of concern because they have a limited distribution, and only nest in the Northeastern US. Prairie Warblers are also on the "Yellow" WatchList and are often found nesting alongside Blue-winged Warblers in Connecticut.



SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER (*Calidris pusilla*)

This species nests in the Arctic and winters in tropics and passes through Connecticut in both the spring and fall. They are under pressure from climate change and increasing numbers of Snow Geese on their nesting grounds, loss of habitat in their wintering grounds and increased disturbance of roosting and feeding flocks along migratory routes.





CONNECTICUT HABITATS AT RISK

Connecticut's WatchList Species represent nearly every habitat in the state, including forest birds, such as Wood Thrush and Cerulean Warbler, shrubland birds like Blue-winged and Prairie Warblers and marsh and beach nesters such as Least Tern and Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow. Our grassland and freshwater wetland birds are under pressure at the local-scale and are thus heavily represented on the Connecticut DEP's list of Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern Species. This means that while our coastal Long Island Sound habitats support the highest number of species of concern and are the highest priority, each of our habitats needs attention. Unplanned development and sprawl are the primary threat to Connecticut's habitats and species, but invasive species, climate change and lack of resources for habitat management also add pressure.



WHAT AUDUBON CONNECTICUT IS DOING

Audubon Connecticut is working with the Connecticut DEP and other partners to inventory key grassland bird nesting areas and developing Important Bird Area (IBA) conservation plans at 13 of our 26 IBAs. We provide assistance to landowners to manage habitats for the benefit of birds and other wildlife.

Audubon helped secure funding for Connecticut's National Wildlife Refuges to protect key habitats along the CT River and Long Island Sound. Our centers and sanctuaries serve as models for habitat management, not only providing significant habitat for birds, but also teaching tools for how to best help species of conservation concern. Our naturalists educate thousands of school children annually in an effort to inspire the land stewards and conservation leaders of tomorrow.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Connecticut residents can help WatchList birds in a variety of ways:

- Practice 'Audubon at Home' principles in your yard; reduce pesticide use and provide native plantings to support birds.
http://www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/
- Support smart growth planning and open space funding to help identify and protect key habitat. Since forests are potent carbon storage banks, protecting open space can also help reduce the state's carbon footprint and reduce our contribution to climate change. Additionally, the more we sprawl, the more we have to drive. Development converts land from a carbon sink to a carbon source.
- Get involved in local planning commissions to ensure sustainable growth with wildlife in mind at the hometown level.
- Buy shade-grown coffee.
- Help track bird population trends and identify key habitats through bird monitoring projects, including Christmas Bird Count, Great Backyard Bird Count, Summer Bird Count and eBird. The more we know the more effective we can be.
- Volunteer at a local IBA, Audubon Chapter, National Wildlife Refuge or the Connecticut DEP.
- Sign up for Audubon Connecticut's Advocacy listserv.
- Buy a wildlife license plate and/or participate in the state Endangered Species Income Tax Check-off Program.
- Support funding for our National Wildlife Refuges, state parks and forests and DEP Wildlife and Forestry Divisions.
- Reduce your energy use by installing CFL light bulbs and purchasing energy efficient appliances.
- Sign up for CTCleanEnergyOptions.
<http://www.ctcleanenergyoptions.com/>
- Reduce light pollution and save energy by installing efficient full cut-off lighting fixtures for your outside lighting needs and motion sensing lights in lieu of lights that are always on.
- Maintain old fields and forest edges in early-successional habitat.