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Connecticut Wildlife

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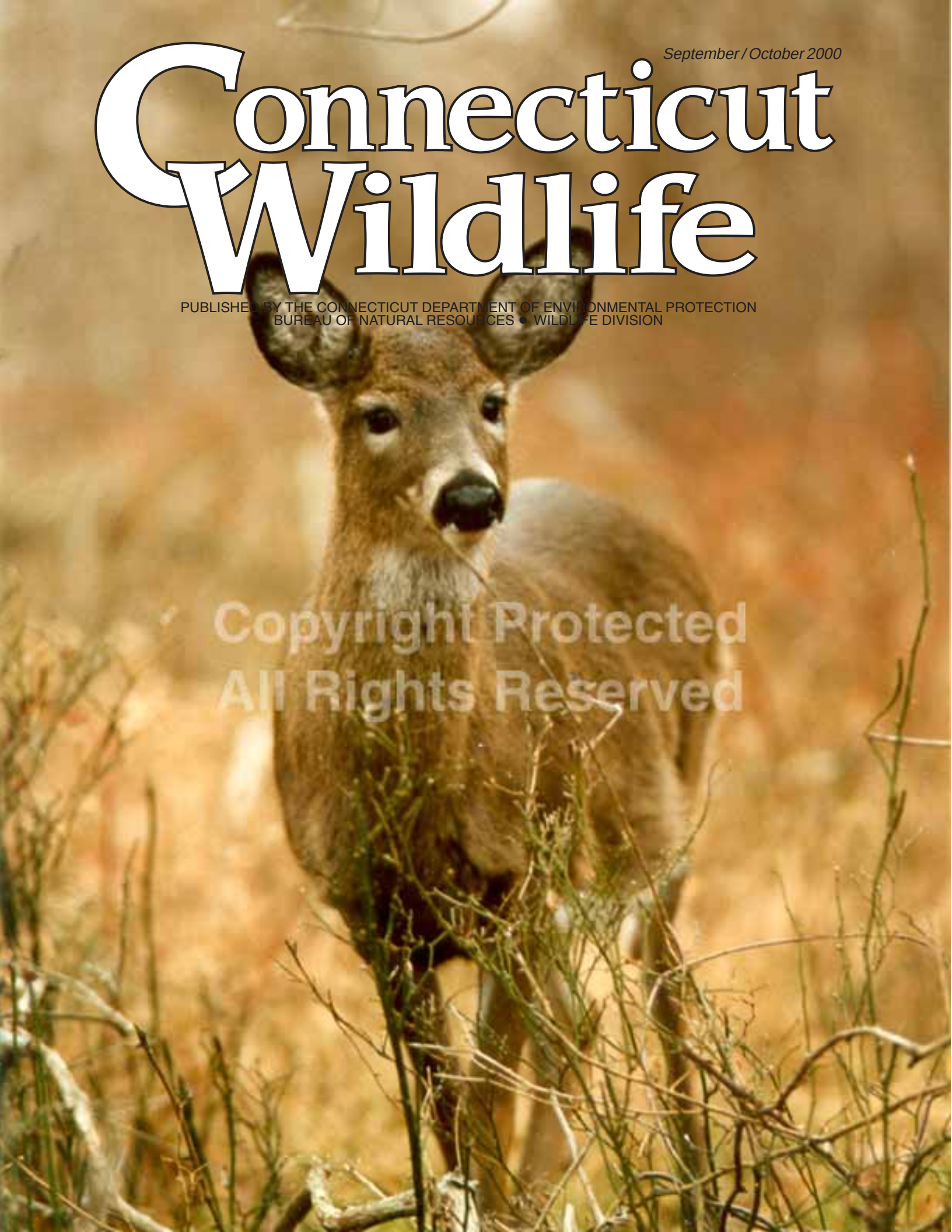

From the Director

As we enter the first hunting season of the twenty-first century, we should pause to take a quick look back and a longer look ahead. Fifty years ago, hunting in Connecticut meant pursuing the small game animals of the early successional habitats (rabbit, pheasant, grouse, quail and woodcock) on the abundant farmlands throughout the state. In addition, nearly every farmer had a trapper or two to take raccoons, muskrats, skunks and foxes. The principle behind these hunting and trapping seasons was relatively simple; to allow humans to make use of surplus animals produced annually by abundant game species.

Today, much has changed. The farmlands have largely given way to woods and suburban development, both of which are used by a new regime of highly adaptable game species. Some of these, such as white-tailed deer, beaver and Canada geese, have the potential to cause serious property damage or pose threats to public safety. Regulated hunting and trapping have become our most effective management tools.

For those who claim, or hope, that hunting and trapping are dying traditions, I suggest they look at the consequences. Not only are deer, Canada geese, beaver, coyote and turkeys at historically high population levels, ***they have not begun to reach their potential****. In the near future, we can also expect rapidly growing bear and moose populations. In the absence of hunting and trapping, how would we control wildlife populations at acceptable levels? These are challenges that cannot be ignored. They must be addressed by implementing management practices that either lower birth rates or increase mortality rates. Knowing that birth control for free-ranging wildlife is not practical now and into the near future, we are faced with lethal control options.*

Can we do this without hunters and trappers? I suggest that we may soon find out. We are stretching the limits of using regulated hunting to address society's problems. While hunters are certainly capable of hunting safely for deer within subdivisions or for geese on golf courses, the question is, are they willing to? For years hunters have been trying to articulate that the hunting experience is much more than simply killing an animal. For many of them, spending a deerless day in the forest is far more preferable than the prospect of shooting a marauding deer from a homeowner's deck.

I believe that hunting will continue as long as the needs of the landowners and hunters are being met. Hunters will continue to hunt and bring home food for the family table while providing the landowner with the ***free*** *service of balancing wild animal with habitat. However, in certain situations, hunters will be unwilling or unable to resolve human/wildlife conflicts. New options, unconventional, controversial and costly, will be required as we enter the uncharted territory of the twenty-first century.*

Dale W. May

Cover:

The Wildlife Division has been studying the movements of female deer in urban/suburban areas (see page 9).

Photo courtesy of Paul J. Fusco

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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. It places an excise tax on firearms, ammunition and archery equipment. Articles reporting on Wildlife Division projects funded entirely or in part with federal aid monies are depicted with the logo of the Wildlife Restoration Program.

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CT Peregrine Falcon Rescued in Maine

Written by Julie Victoria, Nonharvested Wildlife Program Biologist

In early July, an adult female peregrine falcon was rescued from a steam plant in Greenville, Maine, cared for by rehabilitators, flown to Mount Kineo in a private plane and released by Maine Endangered Species Unit biologist Charlie Todd. What makes this story even more interesting is that the bird had been banded as a chick in Connecticut in 1997! This is exciting news for the Wildlife Division because this is the first report of one of Connecticut's peregrine falcon chicks reaching breeding age. Although the peregrine falcon was removed from the federal endangered species list in 1999, it is still listed as an endangered species in Connecticut.

The peregrine apparently flew into a window that is kept open to control the temperature inside the Greenville Steam Company plant. Not being able to find a way out, the bird struggled in the building until it dropped from exhaustion and dehydration. At that time, it was captured and taken to a rehabilitation facility a few hours away from the steam plant. The rehabilitators kept the bird overnight and contacted Maine biologist Charlie Todd, who arranged for a Currier's Flying Service plane to fly the bird to the Mount Kineo area and return it to the wild as quickly as possible. Maine has only five pairs of nesting peregrine falcons and Mount Kineo, an island in Moosehead Lake, is the closest nest site to Greenville. The bird was deemed in excellent condition, despite the previous day's events, and ready to be released.

This peregrine falcon was one of three chicks born on the Travelers Tower in Hartford in 1997. A male chick from that nest died shortly after fledging when it either hit a glass window or a car in the city. The other chick, a female, from that brood has not been seen since it left the nest.

The Wildlife Division has banded and examined peregrine chicks hatched in Connecticut since 1997 as part of the protective management program for this state endangered species. Attaching leg bands is a useful tool for wildlife managers because it allows them to trace movements, estimate population changes and determine a species' lifespan. With endangered populations, it is helpful to collect any pertinent data that can be added to the knowledge of the species. Previous to this verified sighting, the chicks that fledged in 1997 had not been seen in Connecticut or reported elsewhere.

This female peregrine had attained adult plumage and was ready to breed this year. Maine biologist Charlie Todd indicated that the released bird did not show an interest in the cliff where a nest with three young, close to fledging, was located. He speculated that this peregrine from Connecticut was a pioneering bird and not a nester this year.

For information on peregrine falcons in Connecticut, visit the wildlife section of the DEP's website at http://dep.state.ct.us/burnatr/wildlife.

Peregrine Falcons Fledge from Hartford Nest

The two peregrine falcon chicks that hatched on the Travelers Tower in Hartford fledged (reached the flying stage) around July 10. One of the young birds flew to a window ledge on an adjacent building on July 12 and called to the adults for four hours, prompting employees at the Travelers Co., who assumed the bird was distressed, to contact the Wildlife Division for assistance. However, once a Division biologist arrived to help, the bird flew back to the Travelers Tower where its sibling and one adult were located.

Shortly after fledging, young birds often remain close to the nest site and beg for food from the adults. In addition, the chicks must develop and perfect their flying skills. For the first few weeks, when perching on a ledge, the young birds are often described as "dragging their wings," "almost toppling over" or "tilting."

The Wildlife Division extends its thanks to the personnel at the Travelers Co. and Trammel Crow Co. (facility manager for the Travelers Tower) for their concern and assistance, in particular Elizabeth Connors, of Travelers Co., and Joe Lagana, of Trammel Crow Co.

Wildlife Area in Old Lyme Dedicated to Roger Tory Peterson

Written by Patrick Spalluto, DEP Communications

Lieutenant Governor M. Jodi Rell, United States Senator Christopher Dodd and DEP Bureau of Natural Resources Chief Edward Parker joined Mrs. Roger Tory Peterson and others on July 24 for the dedication of the Roger Tory Peterson Wildlife Area. The Wildlife Area at Great Island, located in Old Lyme, was dedicated to the memory of Dr. Roger Tory Peterson, an Old Lyme resident and renowned naturalist, educator and artist. In Connecticut, Dr. Peterson is best known for detecting the sharp reduction in osprey numbers at Great Island in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

"Establishing this beautiful Wildlife Area as a permanent memorial for Dr. Peterson is a fitting tribute to this great educator, illustrator and author from Connecticut," said Lieutenant Governor M. Jodi Rell. "Thanks to the work of Dr. Peterson and the many people he has inspired, the public is able to enjoy areas such as this which are home to many important species of plants and animals."

Dr. Peterson, who died in 1996 at the age of 87, was a gifted artist and bird lover whose love for nature and talent for drawing inspired his first guide, *A Field Guide for Birds*, in 1934. The *Guide* launched his international career as author and illustrator of more than 30 publications. His work heightened the public's interest in wildlife and helped make bird watching a national pastime. Dr. Peterson went on to earn 23 honorary degrees and was twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of his role in modern environmental awareness.

"Roger Tory Peterson was a father of the modern environmental movement," said Senator Christopher Dodd. "From his field guides to his advocacy to protect our natural habitats, he led the way in teaching others about the natural world around us. I can think of no better tribute to his legacy than to name this nature area in his honor."

Shortly after Dr. Peterson's death, Mrs. Peterson expressed a desire to find an appropriate way to honor her husband. The idea of naming a wildlife area for Dr. Peterson was agreed upon and several sites were considered. Great Island was ultimately chosen by Governor John G. Rowland because the Peterson's frequently birdwatched in the area.

Due in part to Dr. Peterson's observations of the decline in the number of osprey, the use of the pesticide DDT was banned in Connecticut in 1970. The osprey population recovery was also limited by a lack of natural nest sites. Dr. Peterson erected the first nest platform at Great Island in 1962. By the mid-1970s, osprey populations began to rebound. Because of Dr. Peterson's interest, and the people inspired by him, Connecticut's osprey population maintains its stronghold at Great Island. Today, volunteers cooperating with the DEP's Wildlife Division maintain the numerous nest platforms that are currently on the island.

P. J. FUSCO

The new sign for the Roger Tory Peterson Wildlife Area was unveiled at a recent ceremony. Present at the ceremony were (l to r) Old Lyme First Selectman Timothy Griswold, DEP Bureau of Natural Resources Chief Edward Parker, Lt. Governor M. Jodi Rell, Mrs. Virginia Peterson, Senator Christopher Dodd and Dr. Noble Proctor, of Southern Connecticut State University.

"Watching the decline of osprey populations on Great Island as well as other species in the 1950s and 1960s, Roger sounded the alarm on the devastating effects of DDT on bird populations. Whole colonies of fish-eating birds were disappearing from the Connecticut River," said Virginia Marie Peterson, Dr. Peterson's widow. "Ever since DDT was banned in 1972, the ospreys and other species have

A Closer Look at the Roger Tory Peterson Wildlife Area

The Roger Tory Peterson Wildlife Area, previously known as the Great Island Wildlife Management Area, is a 588-acre parcel located in Old Lyme. It was acquired by the Wildlife Division through numerous purchases starting in the 1930s. The majority of the funding for the land purchases came from the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program. Through this program, sportsmen pay an excise tax on sporting arms, ammunition and bowhunting equipment. The money collected is then allocated back to state wildlife agencies to use for land acquisition, wildlife management and research, hunter safety programs and other related projects.

Well-known to waterfowlers and birders, the Wildlife Area is a tidal marsh, located at the mouth of the Connecticut River, that provides habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, especially birds. Unfortunately, the ecological value of the marsh and the area's use by wildlife had been greatly diminished from the effects of grid-ditching and the encroachment of the invasive plant, *Phragmites*. Virtually all of Connecticut's coastal marshes were "ditched" in the 1930s. That is, ditches were cut into the surface of the marshes in a grid pattern to drain off water and remove mosquito breeding areas. Unfortunately, this process removed the open water habitats most attractive to wildlife, especially waterfowl. Grid ditching also resulted in decreased soil salinity, thus enabling the salt-intolerant plant, *Phragmites*, to become better established and eventually displace more desirable wetland vegetation.

To help remedy this problem, the Wildlife Division applied for a grant from the North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA), which is administered through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and received $224,000 towards a wetland restoration project at the marsh. NAWCA grant funds must be matched by contributions from project "partners." Partners for the Great Island project include the USFWS Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, Ducks Unlimited, the Valley Shore Waterfowlers and the Connecticut Waterfowl Association. The greatest portion of the matching funds was provided by supporters of Connecticut's Duck Stamp Program; that is, the hunters and citizens who purchase state duck stamps.

The goal of the project at the Wildlife Area is to restore 300 acres of degraded marsh habitat to a mixture of brackish meadows interspersed with pannes and ponds, a condition that will approximate the pre-ditched marsh environment. Restoration is being accomplished by plugging and filling ditches and recreating open water habitats. Work is being conducted by the DEP's Wetland Habitat and Mosquito Management Program, with assistance from the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, using specialized wetland restoration equipment. This improvement project will result in greatly increased use of the area by waterfowl and shorebirds and provide deep water habitat for fish that feed on mosquito larvae.

recovered and are now flourishing and healthy," she added. "Great Island meant so much to Roger. Honoring him here is rejoicing in his life. He would be pleased."

"The town of Old Lyme is fortunate to have had Dr. Peterson as a resident and as a concerned citizen," said Old Lyme First Selectman Timothy Griswold. "His research into the negative effects of DDT on our osprey population resulted in the comeback of this wonderful bird. As we look out over Great Island today and see many osprey nests alive with healthy birds, we are grateful to Roger for leaving us this important legacy."

The Roger Tory Peterson Wildlife Area is a 588-acre parcel located at the mouth of the Connecticut River. Its tidal brackish (mixture of salt and freshwater) marsh is home to numerous varieties of plant life and animal species, including osprey, sora and king rails, blue-winged teal, gadwall, willets, American bittern, American black duck and other coastal species. The Wildlife Area provides a state boat launch accessing the lower Connecticut River and Long Island Sound. A handicapped accessible wildlife viewing platform overlooking the marsh, river and Long Island Sound is also located at the boat launch area.

ConneCT Kids *Website Linked to Wildlife Division Kid's Pages*

This past June, an official State of Connecticut "kid's" website was launched to serve as a counterpart to the state government's award-winning ConneCT *website.* ConneCT Kids*, located at www.kids.state.ct.us, offers age specific information on Connecticut's history and state government, educational games and more. Young visitors to the website can discover facts about Connecticut's history, its people and its land.*

Among many other features, the website has helpful links to additional sources of information for both children and parents. One of those links is the Wildlife Division's Kid's Page Section on the DEP website. Visit the ConneCT Kids *website and link over to the Division's Kid's Pages. They will look familiar because they have all appeared in issues of* Connecticut Wildlife.

Don't Miss The Southbound Train

Written by Paul Fusco, Public Awareness Program

Because of the diversity of habitats and the physical characteristics of the landscape in Connecticut, fall bird migration can be impressive. From the northwest hills with their large stands of forest and freshwater wetlands to the central Connecticut River valley, fall migrants stream through our state in large numbers.

Then there is the coastline, which serves as both an attraction and a barrier to migrating birds. Many species of songbirds and hawks prefer not to cross over open water and will move along the shoreline on their way south. As southbound birds reach the coast, their numbers will sometimes build, making viewing opportunities optimal at such places as Bluff Point Coastal Reserve, Hammonasset Beach State Park and Lighthouse Point Park. This is the best time of year to see some species that are uncommon for Connecticut, including the golden eagle, Baird's sandpiper and Lincoln's sparrow.

Fall migration in Connecticut actually begins in mid-July when adult shorebirds start to filter in from their northerly breeding grounds. Adult semi-palmated sandpipers are among the first to arrive en mass and by early August the huge flocks are gone, having continued their journey south. Their migration won't stop until they reach South America for the winter.

Other southbound shorebird species will continue to arrive and depart through most of October. Juvenile shorebirds generally have arrival and departure dates later in the season than adults of the same species.

During August and September most of the warbler species move through. The passage of a cold front followed by clear night skies and a northwesterly tail wind make conditions ideal for them to migrate. They can be present in good numbers one day and completely gone the next. Their flights are made under the cover of darkness and they can sometimes be heard calling back and forth to each other as they travel in loose flocks.

There are a number of theories on why warblers, thrushes and many other long distance migrants have evolved to travel at night. Most small birds that are night migrants are normally active during the day. By doing their traveling at night, they are able to refuel by feeding during the day.

There are many other advantages to night migration for small birds. There is less pressure from predators, such as hawks, that prefer to travel the same route by day. Also, calmer atmospheric conditions at night make flying for long periods of time easier than during the day. In addition, some birds are known to navigate by the stars. Perhaps among the most important reasons for traveling at night are that the night air is cooler and damper. Most small migratory birds will start to fly soon after sundown and cease between midnight and 2:00 a.m. For these birds to travel hundreds of miles in a five or six hour continuous flight, they must beat their wings constantly, thus building up tremendous body heat. By flying in the cooler air of night, the birds can fly farther without overheating. Having some moisture content in the air also helps by keeping the hardworking birds from becoming dehydrated.

During the night flight, these birds typically will stop to rest within a couple of hours after midnight. Once the sun starts to rise, the birds instinctually start to move again. They will continue southbound for a few more hours before settling down for the rest of the day. In this segment of their migration, they cover less area and stay lower to the ground, moving through vegetation and feeding as they go. This is termed morning flight and, in Connecticut, it occurs on a significant scale at Bluff Point Coastal Reserve in Groton.

After a night in which these small birds have flown a long distance, they will sometimes spend a number of days at a "stopover" site to feed, rest and wait for favorable weather conditions before making the next leg of their journey.

High quality stopover sites can be a magnet for migrating birds. With many of the shorebirds, their numbers can gradually build to form huge flocks. These stopover sites provide space for resting and an ample food supply for the birds to rebuild their fat

The Amazing Flight of the Blackpoll

At five inches in length, the tiny blackpoll warbler travels a different route than most other warblers. Its fall migration path takes it over the open water of the western Atlantic, from the coast of the Canadian Maritime provinces and New England to the shores of northern South America. Blackpolls travel in small flocks, beating their wings nonstop for some 50 or more hours, covering a distance of 2,000 miles. They do not feed, rest or drink water for the entire trip.

Blackpoll warblers are able to make this long flight by taking advantage of the winds. Soon after the passage of a cold front on a night with stiff northerly winds, the small birds depart. They are carried by the winds out over the open ocean, gaining speed and altitude, in the beginning of a giant arc that will take them toward South America. About halfway there, the wind direction changes and the birds come under the influence of northeasterly subtropical trade winds that will complete the arc carrying them to the northern shores of South America.

Fat reserves play a critical part in the ability of these small land birds to make this journey. They must double their body weight by storing energy in the form of fat deposits to fuel their trip. Those birds that are not prepared will not arrive at their destination.

Many will not make it. Inexperienced birds, especially immature ones, are most at risk. If their fat reserves are not built up, the wind direction is wrong or they take a wrong turn, the birds will eventually be overtaken by

P. J. FUSCO

The blackpoll warbler (male, pictured in spring plumage) makes one of the most remarkable fall migrations for a small bird.

reserves and give them the energy they need for continuing their migration. Such places are otherwise known as staging areas and are considered to be very important for bird conservation. In Connecticut, important shorebird staging areas include Sandy Point in West Haven, Griswold Point in Old Lyme and Milford Point in Milford.

Some birds, like the familiar barn swallow, along with other swallows and swifts, prefer to migrate during daylight hours. They are strong fliers and will feed in flight on insects while making their way south.

Daytime is also the preferred time for hawks, falcons, eagles and ospreys to migrate. These raptors are experts in conserving energy and using rising warm air thermals and the wind to carry them over long distances. Normally, the movements of these birds spike after the passing of a cold front that is followed by northwest winds. Most raptor migration in our area takes place from late August through early November, with some species migrating earlier than others. For instance, broad-winged hawks are virtually gone from Connecticut by the end of September while most red-tailed hawks do not start to move through until mid-October.

Among the shorter distance migrants are the herons, egrets and rails. Most will retreat to the southern United States, Mexico or the West Indies. In Connecticut, herons and egrets can concentrate in large numbers at coastal locations that offer a bounty of food resources in the form of small fish. Rails will also concentrate at favored marshes, mostly along major rivers and the coastline.

In October and November, Connecticut's thickets and weedy fields are invaded by many species of sparrows that breed to our north. White-throated and American tree sparrows will spend the winter here, while other species, like the Lincoln's and clay-colored, continue migrating farther south.

Adult semi-palmated sandpipers are among the first southbound migrants to move through Connecticut. Large flocks gather at favored staging areas along the shoreline in mid- to late summer.

Fall migration is the time of year when bird populations are at their highest. Adults and juveniles from Connecticut join with those arriving from farther north, flocking and staging as they prepare to head south for the winter. When the survivors return in the spring, they will be bursting with life, ready to claim breeding territories and start the cycle all over again.

Places to See Fall Migrants in Connecticut

Fall migrants can be observed at many locations throughout the state, including your own backyard. This list highlights some of the better areas that are open to the public. Some site specialties are indicated in italics.

- **Bluff Point Coastal Reserve, Groton - *waterfowl, raptors, warblers and other songbirds***
- **Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison - *herons, egrets, raptors, shorebirds, warblers and other songbirds***
- **Lighthouse Point Park, New Haven - *waterfowl, raptors and songbirds***
- **Mansfield Hollow State Park, Mansfield and Chaplin - *waterfowl, swallows, vireos, warblers and sparrows***
- **Milford Point, Charles Wheeler Wildlife Management Area, Milford - *egrets, waterfowl, raptors, shorebirds and terns***
- **Newgate Wildlife Management Area, East Granby - *raptors and songbirds***
- **Osbornedale State Park, Derby - *raptors and songbirds***
- **Rocky Neck State Park, East Lyme - *waterfowl, raptors and songbirds***
- **Roger Tory Peterson Wildlife Area, Old Lyme - *waterfowl, raptors, shorebirds and swallows***
- **Roraback Wildlife Management Area, Harwinton - *raptors and songbirds***
- **Sandy Point, West Haven - *raptors, shorebirds, gulls and terns***
- **Sessions Woods Wildlife Management Area, Burlington - *waterfowl, raptors, woodpeckers, vireos, warblers and sparrows***
- **Sherwood Island State Park, Westport - *waterfowl, shorebirds and songbirds***
- **Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, Stratford and Westbrook - *herons, egrets, waterfowl, shorebirds and songbirds***
- **White Memorial Conservation Area, Litchfield - *herons, waterfowl, raptors, woodpeckers and songbirds***

Bears Know No Boundaries

Written by Paul Rego, Furbearer Program Biologist

Wild animals pay no heed to political boundaries whether on the town, state or national level. When referring to a state population of relatively immobile animals, biologists will often say something like "Connecticut's turkey population is 30,000." Other species travel far and wide and are viewed as multistate or regional populations. Examples include woodcock and migratory waterfowl, which have "flyways" that extend from Canada to the southern United States. In recent years, the phrase "Connecticut's growing bear population" has been used more and more often. But, Connecticut bears are not isolated from bears in the states around us and recent events have reminded us of this fact.

P. J. FUSCO

Before this female black bear was captured in Litchfield in May 2000, it had caused problems in Massachusetts and had also be seen in Vermont. The female had two cubs with her at the time she was captured.

Wandering Bears

- This past July, New York Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) officials contacted the Wildlife Division to report a roadkilled bear in Schodack, a small town five miles south of Albany. The bear's ear tag identified it as a young male that had been handled and released in Goshen in April 2000. In approximately three months, the bear had moved 60 miles and grew from 138 pounds to 165 pounds.
- A second ear-tagged male bear, observed roaming Goshen in April was later seen near New Marlborough, Massachusetts. In May, it was seen again in Goshen, and later reported back in Massachusetts in the vicinity of Great Barrington.
- A male bear, handled, ear-tagged and released in the north Litchfield-Cornwall area in May 1999, was subsequently reported in Russell, Massachusetts.
- Also in May 1999, Wildlife Division and Conservation Law Enforcement personnel were called to West Haven where a bear found brief sanctuary by climbing an isolated tree surrounded by city concrete. After the 175-pound male bear was tranquilized, its ear tags were examined. The bear had been handled and ear-tagged one year earlier near the New York/New Jersey border by New York DEC personnel. The two locations are separated by approximately 100 miles and two major rivers.
- In 1996, DEP conservation officers tranquilized a 150-pound bear in Avon. Its ear tags indicated that it had been handled in the northeast corner of Pennsylvania.

Mysterious Bear

Young male bears are notorious roamers and are the most common sex/age category involved in nuisance situations. A recent exception was a female bear captured in Litchfield in May of this year. This sow was equipped with ear tags and a radio-collar that revealed an eventful history. The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MDFW) had captured her as early as 1997 in central Massachusetts. The MDFW handled this bear several times as it was prone to causing problems. The bear was last reported in southern Vermont in 1998. Then, in 1999, a mysterious radio-collared bear was reported in Harwinton and Litchfield, most often in association with problems, such as destroying bird feeders and raiding garbage cans. The mystery was solved when this 200-pound sow was captured and identified in May.

Although adult bears tend to remain in territories ranging from five to 80 square miles, young bears and even an occasional adult will move longer distances. The tendency of bears to be so mobile leads to shuffling within a bear population and it is not uncommon for these movements to cross state boundaries.

Research on Deer Movements Provides Insight on Habitat Use of Urban Deer

Written by Howard Kilpatrick, Deer/Turkey Program Biologist

The Wildlife Division receives many inquiries from communities on how to control or reduce the number of deer in residential areas. Because of this, the Division initiated a study to learn more about deer movements and activity in urban/suburban areas. Knowledge of deer movements is important in developing and assessing effective management strategies and programs.

From March 1995 to March 1997, 39 does were immobilized with a dart gun in a residential community in Groton and equipped with radio collars and ear tags. Deer were monitored for a 24-hour period each week using radio telemetry. Deer home ranges and core areas of activity (areas of high use) were delineated. Movements were examined during four seasons: winter (January 1-March 14), winter/spring transition (March 15-May 14), fawn rearing (May 15-August 30) and breeding (September 1-December 31). Using a Geographic Information System, deer movements were plotted.

The annual home range size of deer in the study area averaged about 106 acres. This is small compared to deer living in forested or agricultural areas, but is similar to results from other studies conducted in urban/suburban areas. Seasonal home ranges reported in urban/suburban landscapes averaged about 80 to 85 percent smaller than home ranges reported in forested and agricultural landscapes. The relatively small size and configuration of home ranges may be attributed to habitat fragmentation and the insular characteristics of urban/suburban landscapes. For example, three large water bodies and a train rail system that operates in the study area every one to two hours during the day and half the night formed over 80 percent of the home range boundaries for many deer. Deer core areas of activity were about 18 acres, or only 17 percent of their annual home ranges.

During the fawn rearing season, does used patches of cover as small as a half-acre for fawning sites. One patch was an undeveloped house lot with overstory cover and a dense understory surrounded by residential development. Another patch consisted of dense understory with no overstory, and was surrounded by residential development on three sides and open salt marsh on the remaining side. Observations of ear-tagged does and female offspring indicated that herds were comprised of matrilineal groups (groups of females that are genetically related). Little overlap occurred among matrilineal groups or herds, suggesting suburban landscapes combined with the social nature of these groups may result in deer herds being isolated from one another. This result indicates that localized management activities, such as hunting in a portion of the community, can provide local relief from overabundant deer herds.

During the winter season, deer shifted closer to residential areas and used these areas more. This may be related to limited food availability in forested areas. Radio telemetry documented an average of 63 houses and as many as 275 houses in annual deer home ranges. Most home ranges encompassed at least 20 houses. Deer often were observed bedding and feeding in homeowners' yards. Residential areas appear to serve as important feeding sites for deer, based on the frequency of deer damage to landscape plantings and the high use of these areas. Groups of deer were also observed feeding routinely at bird feeders during the winter and winter/spring transition seasons. In this study area, there was an average of one bird feeder every five acres and deer were observed eating at most feeders. Bird feeders in residential areas may provide urban deer with a supplemental food source, possibly causing deer to visit these areas more often. Half of the residents with bird feeders were unaware that deer were using them and most preferred to see fewer deer in their community. Reducing deer access to bird feeders by increasing feeder height, placing feeders over shrubs or a deck or removing feeders from yards at night may lessen deer use of the community.

Deer traveled as far as one-half mile from patches of cover into residential development, suggesting that patches of cover close to residential areas may contribute to urban deer problems. Patches of undeveloped land at least 40 or more acres in size, associated with more than 32 acres of residential development were adequate to support urban deer on an annual basis. Dense patches of cover less than one acre provided adequate cover for deer during the day. At night, patches of cover were less important as deer commonly were seen foraging and bedding in homeowners' yards.

Deer traveled as far as one-half mile from patches of cover into residential development, suggesting that patches of cover close to residential areas may contribute to urban deer problems.

During the day, only 33 percent of each deer's home range was beyond the 500-foot legal minimum distance required to hunt with a firearm in Connecticut. This would limit the potential effectiveness of firearms hunting for controlling populations in urban areas. No legal minimum distance from a house is required to shoot a bow. Using bowhunting rather than firearms hunting to control urban populations would increase hunter access to deer home ranges from 33 to 100 percent. In addition, bowhunting has proven to be a safe and effective tool to manage urban deer populations.

Reducing the number of deer in urban/suburban areas is a complex issue. However, this study on deer movements seems to indicate that by modifying the landscape, such as removing patches of cover and reducing access to backyard bird feeders, deer use of residential areas may be reduced. Also, suburban deer herds have small, restricted home ranges, which may provide more local control of the population.

2000 CT Duck Stamp: *Wood Ducks at the Cornwall Bridge*

The colorful wood duck is the featured species on Connecticut's 2000 Migratory Bird Conservation Stamp (duck stamp). Entitled, "Wood Ducks at the Cornwall Bridge," the stamp depicts a group of wood ducks "pitching in" near the Cornwall Bridge. This historic bridge has spanned the Housatonic River since it was built in 1842. The Housatonic River, well known for its white water canoeing and excellent trout fishing, is also an important migratory corridor for waterfowl like the wood duck.

The vivid artwork for the stamp was painted by noted duck stamp artist, George Lockwood. Mr. Lockwood designed both the 1994 and 1997 Alaska duck stamps and has been the Alaska Ducks Unlimited Artist of the Year twice, Foundation for North American Wild Sheep Artist of the Year, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Artist of the Quarter, California Ducks Unlimited Artist of the Year, Ducks Unlimited International Artist, Vermont Duck Stamp Artist and has had work selected for the Birds In Art International Art Exhibition.

Sportsmen, art collectors and wildlife conservationists alike are encouraged to purchase full-color prints and stamps of the 2000 Connecticut duck stamp. Why? For one, our state duck stamps are collectible works-of-art which feature native waterfowl and Connecticut landmarks. Most importantly, the proceeds collected from the sale of stamps, prints and other duck stamp memorabilia can only be used to finance wetland habitat restoration and enhancement projects in the state.

Duck stamp funds have been used to finance a long and impressive list of projects throughout Connecticut, in state forests like Cockaponset, Housatonic, Natchaug and Pachaug, as well as in wildlife management areas like Cromwell Meadows and Higganum Meadows. Duck stamp funds also enabled the DEP to purchase a specialized amphibious mulching machine that is used to create openings in vegetation-choked wetlands.

Although waterfowl hunters are required to purchase the state duck stamp, anyone interested in wetland and wildlife conservation should buy a stamp. Stamps are available for $5.00 from any Connecticut town hall. Collector's editions of stamps and prints can be purchased from local art dealers.

CT's Only Eagle Chick Flies from Nest

The single bald eagle chick banded in the only active eagle nest in Connecticut this year, located along the Connecticut River, fledged at the end of July. The male chick remained with the adults for several more weeks, relying on them for food and refining its hunting skills.

In late May, the chick was lowered from the nest and fitted with aluminum federal identification leg bands. It was also examined by a veterinarian from the University of Connecticut Northeast Disease Research Laboratory, who took blood samples. Blood test results indicated that the chick was healthy. If the chick had been in poor physical condition or the blood analysis showed a high toxic level, state biologists could have intervened to help the bird. It is encouraging to welcome another eagle chick to Connecticut.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher Spotted During Bird Survey

Written by Jane Seymour, Resource Assistant for the Wildlife Division

On July 3, 2000, a fork-tailed flycatcher was spotted at Windham Airport during a grassland bird survey being conducted by the Wildlife Division. This insect-eating bird is rare in North America, but has been recorded as far north as Maine and eastern Canada. *The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds* reports "at least 17 records in N. America."

Access to the Windham Airport is restricted and special permission was obtained to conduct the survey. Following the observation of the bird on July 3, no other sightings have been reported.

With its long tail, a fork-tailed flycatcher measures from 10 to 16 inches. Its normal habitat and range are open country and lowland areas of South and Central America and Mexico. Part of the population migrates from northern South America to breed as far north as Mexico during the northern summer. Southern breeders migrate south as far as central Argentina to breed during the austral (southern) summer.

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Birds navigate using one or a combination of factors, such as the sun, stars, landmarks and the earth's magnetic field. Night-migrating birds may use the position of the stars, but on cloudy nights they may depend more on the earth's magnetic field. Occasionally, a bird may become disoriented when it is blown off course or makes a navigational error. Fork-tailed flycatchers that have been found in eastern North America have been reported as austral migrants, which makes this stray flycatcher's journey even more remarkable.

Keeping Track Event to be Held in November

On the evening of Thursday, November 9, four conservation groups will bring *Keeping Track, Inc.*, to northeast Connecticut to present a wildlife event. Connecticut Audubon at Pomfret, the DEP's Goodwin Conservation Center, the Audubon Society of Northeast Connecticut and the Cooperative Extension System of the University of Connecticut want to generate interest in volunteer wildlife monitoring in the northeast corner of the state. Susan Morse, Director of *Keeping Track, Inc.*, will present an introductory slide show and talk, highlighted by a 17-table exhibit of animal skins, skulls and tracks representing every mammal of North America.

Information about wildlife species and habitat preferences is critical for making decisions about open space preservation. Everyone in the community, including hikers, hunters, skiers, farmers, loggers, naturalists and business people, has a vested interest in the continuing health of wildlife habitat. Town conservation agencies and land trusts are encouraged to sponsor teams of two to three volunteers who would attend the event and be trained to monitor wildlife in their communities. Data collected through the *Keeping Track Project* will be made available to towns in the Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor region. This introduction to the *Keeping Track Project* promises to be an exciting evening for people of all ages. A small donation, collected at the door, will help fund the volunteer training program. For more details on this event, call Connecticut Audubon at Pomfret, at (860) 928-4948.

Youth Waterfowl Hunter Training Day -- October 7

Connecticut will hold its youth waterfowl hunter training day on October 7, 2000. Participants must be 15 years of age or younger, possess a valid small game hunting license and a HIP permit and be accompanied by an adult at least 18 years of age. Adults must possess a valid hunting license; however, they are not allowed to hunt waterfowl. Ducks, geese, mergansers and coots may be hunted. Bag limits and shooting hours are the same as for the regular duck and goose hunting seasons.

"An Act Concerning Hunting Safety . . ." Becomes Law

The overwhelming majority of hunters are law-abiding and extremely careful while enjoying their sport in Connecticut's fields and forests. However, there have been incidents when a careless act has been committed by a hunter that jeopardized public safety. Unfortunately, arresting and convicting careless persons for these offenses was difficult because legal definitions of these crimes were unclear or nonexistent. Therefore, the state legislature recently passed "An Act Concerning Hunting Safety . . .," which becomes effective on October 1, 2000. This new law makes an act of negligent hunting or hunting while under the influence of alcohol or drugs a definitive crime, punishable with some severe consequences for individuals who behave irresponsibly. The law also imposes enhanced penalties for persistent offenders and, in most cases, requires the person arrested for these crimes to surrender his weapon.

By current law, a hunter whose license has been suspended for safety-related violations of hunting laws must complete a DEP remedial hunter education course designed by the DEP before his license can be reinstated. The new law additionally requires the hunter to demonstrate that he has passed a Conservation Education/Firearms Safety course or its equivalent, as specified by the DEP.

Negligent Hunting

"An Act Concerning Hunting Safety . . ." establishes four degrees of negligent hunting. It also establishes, as *prima facie* evidence, that someone was hunting when in possession of a loaded hunting weapon while at, entering or leaving an area where a reasonable person would believe the objective was to take wildlife.

However, the law allows a person to possess a loaded long gun one hour before sunrise during deer and turkey firearms seasons if it does not have a live round in the chamber of the rifle or shotgun.

A loaded hunting weapon is:

1. a long gun with a live round in the chamber or magazine attached to the gun,
2. a muzzle-loaded gun with a percussion cap in place,
3. a flintlock firearm with powder in the pan,
4. a bow with an arrow nocked on it,
5. a drawn crossbow with a bolt in place, or
6. a high velocity air gun charged with a projectile in the chamber or in an attached magazine.

First Degree: A person is guilty of negligent hunting in the first degree when, with criminal negligence, he shoots a loaded hunting weapon and kills someone while hunting. Negligent hunting in the first degree is a class D felony subject to imprisonment of one to five years, of which one year may not be suspended or reduced, a fine of up to $5,000, or both. In addition, the DEP can suspend the hunter's license indefinitely.

Second Degree: A person is guilty of negligent hunting in the second degree when, with criminal negligence, he violates the law against jacklighting deer or shoots another person with a hunting weapon and causes serious physical injury. The offense is a class A misdemeanor. The offender must be fined between $400 and $2,000 and can be imprisoned for up to one year. In addition, the DEP can suspend his license for up to 10 years.

Third Degree: A person is guilty of negligent hunting in the third degree if, while hunting, he:

1. fires a weapon at a time of day when hunting is prohibited;
2. hunts on Sundays or outside of the hunting season;
3. shoots a firearm from a vehicle;
4. hunts with a suspended license;
5. or discharges a firearm into a building occupied by people or animals or used to store flammable or combustible material.

This crime is a class B misdemeanor. The offender can be fined $200 to $1,000 and imprisoned up to six months. In addition, the DEP can suspend his license for up to five years.

Fourth Degree: A person is guilty of negligent hunting in the fourth degree if, while hunting, he:

1. hunts without buying the license, permit, stamp or other permission required by law (i.e., written landowner consent for deer or turkey hunting; landowner permission for small game or waterfowl hunting);
2. possesses a loaded hunting weapon during a time of day when hunting is prohibited;
3. or hunts from or fires a hunting weapon across a public highway.

A person is also guilty of this crime if he hunts with or fires a firearm:

1. within 250 feet of a building occupied by people or domestic animals or used to store flammable or combustible material;
2. or within 125 feet of any of these buildings while hunting in tidal water. This provision does not apply if the hunter is carrying written authorization from the building's owner.

This crime is a class C misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for up to three months, a fine of up to $500, or both. The DEP can also suspend the hunter's license for up to three years.

Hunting While Under the Influence

"An Act Concerning Hunting Safety . . ." prohibits hunting while under the influence of or impaired by alcohol or drugs. A person is considered impaired if his blood alcohol content at the time of the offense is 0.07% to 0.10%. A person is considered under the influence if his blood alcohol content is above 0.10%. If he has been previously convicted of hunting under the influence the threshold is 0.07%. A person can also be found to be under the influence independent of his blood alcohol content.

Hunting while under the influence or impaired is a class A misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment for up to one year, a fine of up to $2,000, or both. The DEP can also suspend the hunter's license indefinitely.

Persistent Offenders

Under the new law, a person convicted of negligent hunting in the first, second or third degree or hunting while impaired or under the influence within five years of a conviction of negligent hunting is considered a persistent negligent hunter. A persistent negligent hunter must be fined at least twice the

minimum provided for the second violation; that is, $400 for a conviction of negligent hunting in the third degree and $800 for a conviction of negligent hunting in the second degree. The hunter is also subject to the penalties for the next, more serious degree of negligent hunting or hunting while impaired or under the influence.

Surrender of Weapon

The law also requires anyone arrested for negligent hunting in the first, second and third degree or hunting while under the influence or impaired to surrender any weapon in his possession. The police or conservation officer must confiscate the weapon at the time of the arrest. If the hunter is acquitted or the charge is dismissed or nulled, the weapon must be returned in the same condition as when it was confiscated.

If the hunter is convicted, the weapon must be turned over to DEP, which can either retain the weapon for agency use, convey it to the Department of Administrative Services for sale at auction or destroy it.

State residents should know that Connecticut sportsmen have an excellent hunting safety record. In addition, the DEP reminds citizens that every person has the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors, whether it's for birding, hiking, hunting or any other outdoor activity. Safety is the responsibility of all outdoor users. Enjoy Connecticut's resources while respecting the rights and privileges of others.

Connecticut Celebrates 20 Years of Successful Coastal Management

The year 2000 marks the 20th anniversary of Connecticut's Coastal Management Program. Over the last two decades, DEP has worked hard to balance protection of fragile coastal resources with sustainable economic uses of the shoreline. Since the Connecticut Coastal Management Program's inception in 1980, it has been a pioneer on a national level in its efforts to balance protection and management of coastal resources and in the implementation of fully coordinated coastal resource based decision-making at all levels of government. The program has also led the way in the restoration of tidal wetlands, the use of geographic information systems as a tool to enhance the efficiency of coastal regulatory programs and the designation of the lower Connecticut River as a "Wetland of International Importance" under the Ramsar Convention.

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The osprey is one species that has benefitted from the protection and management of Connecticut's coastal resources.

DEP's Office of Long Island Sound Programs administers the coastal management program which is approved by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration under the federal Coastal Zone Management Act. For more information on DEP's Coastal Management Program, please request the new brochure, "Connecticut's Coastal Management Program" by calling (860) 424-3034 or send a request via email to laurie.makowski@po.state.ct.us.

Celebrating Connecticut Coastal Resource Management: 1980 - 2000

25th Anniversary of Connecticut's Wild Turkey Program

Written by Michael Gregonis, Deer/Turkey Program Biologist

On January 28, 1975, with the release of eight hens, the Wildlife Division began the restoration of wild turkeys to Connecticut. During that winter, an additional 14 (9 females, 5 males) birds trapped in Alleghany State Park in New York were released on Canaan Mountain in northwest Connecticut. As this introduced population grew and expanded, an instate trap and relocation effort was initiated and over 356 turkeys were released throughout the state over the next 17 years. Today, 25 years later, the wild turkey population has expanded to over 30,000 birds documented in all 169 Connecticut towns. Connecticut's past and present Wild Turkey Program leaders, including Steve Jackson (1973-1983), Brian Miller (1983-1988), Dale May (1988-1994), Howard Kilpatrick (1994-present) and Michael Gregonis (1995-present), have played key roles in this remarkable wildlife management success story.

Wild turkeys had disappeared from Connecticut by the early 1800s, primarily due to habitat loss. However, by the 1970s, because of the decline of farming and the change in land uses, forests had regrown and suitable turkey habitat once again existed in our state. That's when Steve Jackson, regarded by many as the "father" of Connecticut's Wild Turkey Program, stepped into the picture. Steve initiated the wild turkey restoration effort by obtaining birds from New York for an initial release. Steve monitored population growth and, by 1977, he began trapping turkeys with rocket nets to relocate birds to other parts of Connecticut. The turkey population flourished and, by the spring of 1981, the first modern day turkey hunting season was established. Steve continued to restore wild turkeys throughout the state and monitor population growth with sighting cards, harvest data and hunter surveys. As the population continued to grow, so did turkey hunting opportunities.

Brian Miller took charge of the Program in 1983 and initiated various research projects to learn about turkey population dynamics and abundance in Connecticut. During his five years as Program Leader, he established a snow-tracking study, brood call-back survey, brood baiting survey, spring gobble counts and a parasite inventory study. This information provided insight about turkey productivity, winter habitat preference and breeding patterns. Brian continued restoration efforts in eastern Connecticut, established a fall archery turkey hunting season and increased spring turkey hunting opportunities by increasing the bag limit and opening new areas to turkey hunting.

CTDEP-WILDLIFE

Connecticut's successful Wild Turkey Restoration Program began in 1975 with the release of 22 wild-trapped birds from New York. One of the first turkeys to be reintroduced in Connecticut is released by Steve Jackson, the "father" of Connecticut's Wild Turkey Program (and current Wildlife District Supervisor).

Dale May, the current Director of the Wildlife Division, led the Turkey Management Program from 1988 to 1994. During this six-year period, he completed the statewide restoration efforts, established a fall firearms hunting season, extended fall hunting season lengths and opened new areas to spring and fall turkey hunting. Dale also initiated a radio telemetry research project to study hen turkey nesting success, causes of mortality, nest site selection, nest attentiveness and productivity in southeast Connecticut. Prior to implementation of this project, he obtained funding from the National Wild Turkey Federation and developed cooperative agreements with the University of Maine to have a graduate student conduct the research.

Since 1995, Howard Kilpatrick and Michael Gregonis have been responsible

for the Turkey Management Program. With wild turkeys well established in the state, new challenges have developed in Connecticut's turkey management efforts. Howard and Mike have continued evaluating nesting success, hen survival, seasonal home range use and roost site selection. Recently, a radio telemetry study was initiated to monitor effects of hunting on gobbling activity and movements of gobblers. These studies have begun to provide information regarding factors that affect annual productivity, habitat preferences and the impacts of spring hunting on gobbler behavior. In addition, these individuals have liberalized fall season bag limits, opened new areas to fall firearms hunting, redelineated Turkey Management Zones, modified data collection methods and begun addressing nuisance turkey concerns.

Although past and present Turkey Program Leaders have played major roles in restoring and managing wild turkeys in Connecticut, a host of individuals has assisted the Turkey Program. Private landowners are of paramount importance because they provide the majority of the best turkey habitat and have allowed biologists access to their properties to trap and move birds. Numerous seasonal employees have provided assistance in nearly all aspects of the Program. Volunteers, specifically members of the Connecticut Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, have assisted with habitat management, generated funding for research projects and conducted seminars to promote safe and ethical turkey hunting practices. Without the assistance of many individuals and the adaptability of the wild turkey over the past 25 years, Connecticut's Wild Turkey Program would not be the success it is today.

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As Connecticut's wild turkey population began to grow, birds from the reintroduced population in northwest Connecticut were live-captured with rocket nets and released in other areas of the state.

News from the Present: Spring Turkey Season Results

Written by Michael Gregonis, Deer/Turkey Program Biologist

During the 2000 spring wild turkey season, hunters reported a record harvest of 2,040 birds, an increase of almost 7 percent over the 1999 harvest of 1,910. A total of 7,154 turkey hunting permits were issued, with 1,598 hunters harvesting at least one bird. Statewide hunter success was 22 percent. In others words, approximately one in five hunters that received a spring turkey hunting permit harvested a bird.

At least one bearded turkey was harvested in 154 of Connecticut's 169 towns, with Lebanon reporting the highest harvest at 59 birds, followed by Sharon (56) and Woodstock (50). State land turkey hunters reported the highest harvest in Cockaponset State Forest with 25 birds. On a regional basis, the highest harvest was reported in the northeast, southeast-central and northwest regions of Connecticut.

Highest harvest levels were consistent with areas of Connecticut containing the best quality turkey habitat.

Reported harvest consisted of 805 jakes (39%), 1,228 toms (60%) and seven bearded hens (1%). The juvenile to adult ratio indicates that the previous spring nesting season was successful. Recruitment of juvenile turkeys may have been good in 1999 due to the relatively warm and dry conditions during the spring nesting period.

After 25 years of wild turkey management, Connecticut's turkey population continues to grow and expand, offering some of the best spring wild turkey hunting in New England.

What's Ahead for the 2000-2001 Hunting Season

New Hunting Opportunities

There are two new hunting areas available to Connecticut sportsmen that are not listed in the 2000 Connecticut Hunting and Trapping Guide. Portions of the Trout Brook Valley Area in Easton will be open to archery deer and turkey hunting. Archery hunters with valid deer or turkey tags will be required to obtain special multiple-day access permits, available from Greiser Store in Easton on a first-come, first-serve basis until the designated quota is reached.

In addition to the Trout Brook Valley Area, archery deer and turkey hunters will welcome the opening of the newly-acquired Goshen Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Goshen during the upcoming season. The Goshen WMA will also be open for small game hunting under the Permit-required Hunting Program, with daily (morning and afternoon) permits required from October 21 through December 2, 2000. Autumn Gun Works, on Route 63 in Goshen, will act as the authorized agent for the DEP in issuing permits for the area. Goshen WMA will be open this fall for archery deer/turkey hunting and fall firearms turkey hunting during the established seasons.

White-tailed Deer Season

Connecticut's deer population is healthy and harvest rates are expected to be high during the 2000 deer hunting season. Aside from the size of the deer herd, the abundance of acorns and weather conditions during the hunting season will influence hunter success. The hunter success rate in 1999 matched the record high of almost 19 percent in 1995.

Since 1995, a replacement antlerless tag system has been used to increase the harvest of antlerless deer in specific areas of the state where deer populations continue to increase. In 1998, the replacement antlerless tag system was expanded to include deer management zone 12 and the archery deer hunting season. **During the 2000 season, hunters who harvest an antlerless deer on private land and have permission to hunt in deer management zones 11 and 12** (see page 10 of the 2000 Connecticut Hunting and Trapping Guide) **will be eligible to obtain a free replacement antlerless tag for use during the appropriate season only**. A limited number of replacement antlerless tags will be available at designated vendor locations on a first-come, first-serve basis. Archery hunters who harvest a deer are still required to complete and submit a kill report card to the vendor.

Regulatory changes have extended bowhunting opportunities in designated areas of the state. During the three-week shotgun/rifle deer hunting season, archery hunting for deer will be permitted on private land in deer management zones 11 and 12, which include most of Fairfield County and the shoreline towns. This change provides landowners more flexibility and opportunities to reduce local deer populations in some of the more developed areas of the state where little firearms hunting currently occurs and deer populations are relatively high.

In addition, about 37 state-managed areas open to archery deer hunting, but closed to firearms deer hunting are open to bowhunters during the firearms deer seasons. These areas have traditionally been closed during the five-week shotgun and muzzleloader deer hunting seasons; however, they are now open to bowhunting during that time period.

During the 2000 deer hunting season, the antlerless only deer tag on private land shotgun and muzzleloader permits will not be valid in deer management zone 4. This restriction was implemented in

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Wildlife Division Field Assistant Lew Hale releases a pheasant at one of the many state-owned, state-leased and permit-required hunting areas in the state.

1999 due to a decreasing trend in the harvest in zone 4 over the past few years and concerns expressed by deer hunters in that area of the state.

Wild Turkey Season

Hunting opportunities during the fall wild turkey season are expected to be good despite the relatively cold and wet conditions experienced during the turkey hatching and brood-rearing period. The Wildlife Division has received mixed reports from the public of hens with poults during the summer, indicating moderate productivity and survival. Although productivity may have been less than past years, Connecticut's wild turkey population continues to be healthy throughout the state and hunters should be able to find sizeable flocks this fall.

The fall bowhunting and firearms seasons continue to be open statewide. During the bowhunting season, the bag limit is two birds of either-sex taken on either state or private land. During the firearms season, the bag limit will be one bird of either-sex on state land or two birds of either-sex on private land. Archers are reminded to mail in a kill report card within 24 hours of harvesting a bird. All wild turkeys harvested during the firearms season must be checked on the same day of harvest at one of many check stations located throughout the state.

Waterfowl Season

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), in conjunction with the Atlantic Flyway Council, of which Connecticut is a member, has recommended setting duck season regulations in the Atlantic Flyway based on the status of the eastern mallard population. This effectively separates this flyway from the other three flyways which must set their regulations based on the mid-continent mallard population (prairies). The eastern mallard population declined in 2000 from the previous year but remains well above the population objective. The USFWS again offered the liberal harvest option. Connecticut will have a 60-day season with a six-bird daily bag limit, the same as last year. Individual species' bag limits remain unchanged. The USFWS also recommended that states maintain harvest restrictions on the black duck. No black ducks can be harvested in Connecticut in the early split season in both the north and south zones. The early season will open on October 11, 2000. The early opening has increased harvest on green-winged teal, which is an early season migrant.

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Special early and late seasons for resident geese will again be offered. The early September season, which targets local resident Canada geese prior to the arrival of the migrant geese, will be September 1 and 5–25 in the north zone and September 18–25 in the south zone. The daily bag will be five geese. The late season will be held in the south zone only from January 15 to February 15, 2001. Special late seasons can only be offered in zones where more than 80 percent of the geese are resident Canada geese. The north zone does not meet this criteria in January and February because too many migrant geese winter in this zone. Therefore, a special late season cannot be offered in the north zone. The special late season permit is no longer needed to hunt geese during the January 15-February 15 season. However, a Harvest Information Program (HIP) permit is required.

The North Atlantic Population (NAP) of Canada geese, which nests in Labrador, declined this year from last year. Therefore, the USFWS recommended maintaining the moderate harvest regulations of a 40-day season with a two-bird daily bag limit. In Connecticut, the NAP unit includes all counties except Litchfield and Hartford Counties west of the Connecticut River. The Atlantic Population (AP), which nests in northern Quebec, increased this year but production of young was poor, prompting the USFWS to recommend remaining with a 15-day season and a one-bird daily bag limit. The AP unit in Connecticut includes Litchfield and Hartford Counties west of the Connecticut River. For a more detailed definition of the boundaries for the AP and NAP units, consult the 2000-2001 Waterfowl Hunting Guide, available at town clerk's offices, Wildlife Division offices and on the DEP's website at http://dep.state.ct.us.

All waterfowl hunters are reminded that, in addition to obtaining a hunting license, they are required to purchase a federal duck stamp, a Connecticut duck stamp and a HIP permit. Federal duck stamps are available from local post offices for $15.00. State duck stamps ($5.00) and HIP permits ($2.00) can be purchased at local town clerks' offices.

Small Game and Upland Bird Seasons

The Wildlife Division will purchase 20,180 adult ring-necked pheasants for distribution on public

Continued on next page

Hunting Season, Continued

hunting areas during the 2000 pheasant season. Because this is a significant reduction from last year's purchase of 22,200 birds, allocations for most hunting areas will be reduced on a proportionate basis.

The Division's Pheasant Program is self-supporting. The annual budget for the purchase of pheasants is determined by the net revenue collected from the sales of pheasant tags and hunting licenses to sportsmen pursuing stocked pheasants on public lands. The number of pheasant hunters has been declining each year, while the cost of purchasing pheasants has continued to increase over the long-term. In 1999, 10,024 hunters purchased pheasant tags, compared to 10,934 hunters in 1998, resulting in a loss of supporting revenue for the purchase of pheasants.

Pheasants will be released regularly at designated state-owned, state-leased and permit-required hunting areas prior to October 21 and continuing through Thanksgiving Day. Approximately 28 percent of the pheasants will be stocked by opening day; the remaining allotment of pheasants will be released during five different distribution periods. Several changes in major areas to be stocked are anticipated. Additions include the Goshen WMA in Goshen, which will be stocked with pheasants this fall and administered under the Permit-required Hunting Program. Deletions include several marginal areas, including Sucker Brook Flood Control Area in Winchester. To obtain a complete list of major stocking areas, contact the Wildlife Division at (860) 424-3011.

The opening day for hunting woodcock will again be delayed this year. Opening day will be Saturday, October 28 and the season will run through Saturday, November 25. The season was first moved back last year in response to requests from woodcock hunters who were interested in setting Connecticut's hunting season to coincide with the time when woodcock migration reaches its peak. In Connecticut, peak migration usually occurs sometime during the first three weeks of November. Spring surveys of breeding woodcock in the Northeast did not show improvement so it is expected that this year's hunting season will be similar to last year. Woodcock hunters need to remember that a HIP permit is needed in addition to a firearms license. HIP permits are available at all town clerks' offices.

Ruffed grouse hunters should experience similar results to last year as populations remain at a low level. Gray squirrel populations have declined from the highs experienced over the last several years, but the hunting opportunity still remains good. There is good news from the field regarding cottontail hunting. There were reports of better cottontail hunting last fall and people have reported seeing more cottontails this summer than in the recent past.

Wildlife Calendar Reminders

Sept. 1 ..... 2000 pheasant tags available at town clerks' offices ($10.00 for 10 tags).

Sept. 15-Nov. 14 ... First portion of archery deer and turkey seasons.

Sept. 18-25 ..... September resident Canada goose hunting season in the south zone.

Sept. 30 ..... Deadline for returning Bat House Survey Cards.

October ..... Adult mosquitoes disappear after the first hard frost.

..... Bats begin to travel to winter hibernaculas early in the month.

Oct. 3 ..... **Teacher Workshop: Wildlife Management**, at the Sessions Woods Conservation Education Center, in Burlington, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. Call Laura Rogers-Castro at (860) 675-8130 for more information and registration details.

Oct. 7 ..... Youth Waterfowl Hunter Training Day (see page 11 for more information).

Oct. 11 ..... Waterfowl season opens (see the 2000-2001 Waterfowl Hunting Guide for specific season dates and other important information).

Oct. 21 ..... Small game hunting season opens.

Oct. 21-Nov. 4 ..... Fall firearms turkey hunting season (open statewide).

Oct. 22 ..... **Fall Foliage Wagon Rides**, at the Sessions Woods Conservation Education Center, in Burlington, from 12:00 noon until 4:00 p.m. The Friends of Sessions Woods and Boy Scout Venture Crew 748 will be teaming up to provide wagon rides around the three-mile Beaver Pond Trail (cost: $3.00 per person). In addition, DEP Forester David Irvin will take participants on a short tree identification walk. Call (860) 675-8130 to preregister.

Oct. 28-Nov. 25 .... Woodcock hunting season.

Nov. 4 ..... **Managing Your Small Woodlot**, at the Sessions Woods Conservation Education Center, in Burlington, from 10:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. This four-hour seminar is designed to assist property owners and managers in the process of beginning to work with their woodland resources. DEP Forester Larry Rousseau will lead the seminar and discuss what DEP resources are available. Call (860) 675-8130 to preregister.

Nov. 6 ..... **Teacher Workshop: Bears in Connecticut**, at the Sessions Woods Conservation Education Center, in Burlington, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. Call Laura Rogers-Castro at (860) 675-8130 for more information and registration details.

Nov. 9 ..... **Keeping Track** event (see page 11 for details).

Dec. 5 ..... **Teacher Workshop: Connecticut's Endangered Species**, at the Sessions Woods Conservation Education Center, in Burlington, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. Call Laura Rogers-Castro at (860) 675-8130 for more information and registration details.

Just for Kids

HABITAT

An animal's habitat is the place where it lives. A habitat has food, water and shelter. In Connecticut, there are many different types of habitats. Take a look and see.

Forest

Over half of Connecticut is forested. Trees, shrubs, wildflowers, ferns and fungi are some of the plants found here. The plants are food and shelter for different animals, like songbirds, wild turkey, deer, squirrel, bear, box turtle and red-backed salamander.

Field

Many different types of plants and wildflowers that need lots of sunlight to grow are found in fields. These plants are a source of food for insects and other animals, such as rabbits, woodchucks and voles. The animals that feed on plants are also food for predators like hawks, coyotes and foxes.

Wetland

There are many wetlands in Connecticut, such as ponds, lakes, marshes and swamps. Beavers, otter, turtles, frogs, insects, ducks and other birds live in wetlands.

Coast

Connecticut has over 98 miles of coastline made up of salt marsh and sandy and rocky beaches. The coast is home to crabs, fish, shorebirds, osprey and more.

Traprock Ridge

In the center of Connecticut and into Massachusetts lies a special habitat called a traprock ridge. This ridge slopes on the east and rises sharply on the west and has several plants and animals found nowhere else in the state. Some areas on the ridge are sunny and dry while others are shady and cool, providing different places for animals to live.

Try doing a habitat survey!

Visit a habitat and draw a map of the area. Then look for animals and animal signs (nests, feathers, droppings, etc.) and mark where you find them on the map.

Did you find more animals in one spot?

Which animals did you find the most of?

Does your habitat have enough food, water and shelter for animals?

Connecticut Wildlife

The official bimonthly publication of the DEP Wildlife Division

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