

A sunset over a body of water. The sky is filled with horizontal bands of orange and yellow light, with some wispy clouds. In the distance, a silhouette of a lighthouse is visible on the horizon, along with other buildings. The water in the foreground is dark, with some ripples reflecting the light from the sky.

**Lynde Point Land Trust**  
**Bird Nest Enhancement/Monitoring Project**  
**2022 Start of Season Report**

## Hello Birding Fenwickians!

The **2022 Nesting Season** is in full swing. The Purple Martins have returned from southern wintering grounds as have the Osprey. Adult birds are on eggs and early hatchings have started.

### Purple Martin and Osprey Status

#### Purple Martin

Houses in the 13 locations are all occupied. Expansion of nesting houses at the Walton and Webster sites was done, because of the consistent high occupancy over the last few years. Both sites now have a double house with a new pulley system pole that makes it easier to raise and lower the houses when needing cleaning and for storage.

The Purple Martin is a colonial nesting species, meaning that it nests as a group in close proximity to each other (apartment houses). As a result, one can place multiple houses at each site.

Purple Martins feed on a wide variety of flying insects, including many wasps and winged ants, and some bees; also many true bugs, flies (including house flies and crane flies), beetles, moths, and butterflies. Dragonflies may be an important part of diet. They also eats some spiders.

Males return in spring to nesting areas before the females and establish nesting territories. Males will sometimes have more than one mate. The nest (built by both sexes) is a shallow cup of leaves, grass, twigs, debris, and usually mud. Nests may have raised dirt rims in front to help keep eggs from rolling out.

#### Osprey

With Osprey, you can tell when the hatch has started by the female's behavior of looking under herself at what's going on. Additionally, she'll sit higher than the low posture used when incubating eggs.

As the male brings in food for the hungry young, he'll handoff the headless fish to the female who'll pull off small pieces for the young birds still low in the nest. In just a couple of weeks, the babies will then be seen with their heads just above the nest edge. Soon after they'll be able to stand and move about. Watching and recording sightings is a great activity for all ages.



Image by VJ Anderson

Martin Nests	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21
1. Riggio	3	1	0	3	0	3
2. Walton	3	3	7	5	7	6
3. Keeney	0	2	2	7	6	5
4. 34 Pettipaug	0	0	0	1	4	5
5. Bulkeley	0	1	3	4	0	6
6. 2nd Fairway West	3	3	3	4	2	5
7. 2nd Fairway East	3	3	4	5	5	7
8. Neely	3	2	3	3	2	3
9. Davis	3	3	1	0	5	7
10. Fourth Fairway	0	1	4	1	4	6
11. Gay	3	5	4	1	5	5
12. Webster	5	6	6	7	7	7
13. Patterson	0	0	0	1	0	5
<b>Total Nests:</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>70</b>

Osprey Fledged	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21 Fledged
1. West End	0	1	1	2	2	1
2. Hepburn	3	3	3	1	0	2
3. Neely	3	3	3	2	3	3
4. Staniford	1	1	3	0	2	2
5. Schmitt	NA	NA	NA	0	0	0
6. Sequassen	4	3	3	0	1	2
7. Hastings	0	0	1	3	3	2
8. Webster I	3	3	2	2	1	2
9. Webster II	NA	0	2	0	1	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>

Last fall, a new Osprey platform was installed (by an outside contractor) at the west end of Hepburn's Pond. It is now occupied. The plan is to let the birds establish themselves on this tall platform and then lower the platform in the off season to lessen any view impacts for the borough. Taller platforms are often more attractive to potential occupants, bringing the birds away from surrounding vegetation which may conceal predators. Once established, the occupants should return to the same nest in the following year.

With this new nest, we hope to exceed last year's 16 fledglings, the second highest fledgling count recorded for the borough.

### ***Nest Boxes***

Tree Swallows are the desired species for the traditional blue bird boxes located in a few spots within Fenwick. This species is doing well, as can be attested by the nearly one million birds of this species that gather on the lower Connecticut River in the fall.

House Wrens like to use the small box design, the one near the church being occupied now for six years.

### ***Insecticides, Golf Courses, and Birds***

Timely advocacy on the part of Connecticut Audubon members and others around the state led to passage of a bill in Hartford that will cut the use of an insecticide that's dangerous to birds.

Public Act 22-142 makes it illegal to use chlorpyrifos on golf courses or for any cosmetic or non-agricultural use. It is expected to be signed by the governor.

Chlorpyrifos is a double-threat to birds: it can kill them directly, and it also kills the insects birds rely on for food. With an estimated 8,000 to 12,000 acres of golf courses in the state, plus an untold number of lawns, the statewide effect could be significant.

Almost 850 Connecticut Audubon members sent messages to their elected officials in Hartford last month urging them to vote for the bill, as part of a statewide anti-pesticide coalition.

This bill will also help carry out the recommendations in the 2021 Connecticut State of the Birds report, "Three Billion Birds Are Gone. How Do We Bring Them Back?"

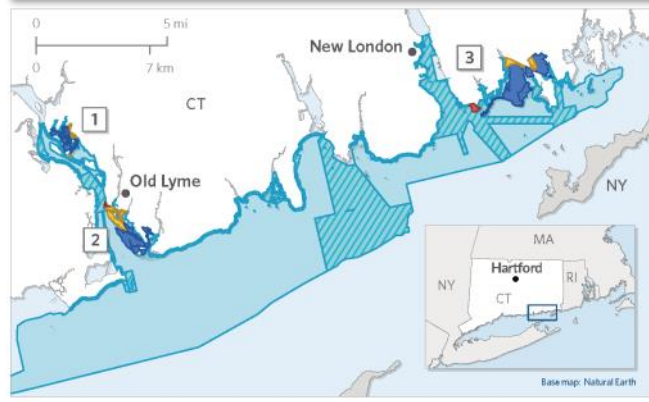
[Link to the Report](#)

### ***National Estuarine Research Reserve***

Three decades of collaborative work culminated on May 21 in an official celebration in Groton of Connecticut's new National Estuarine Research Reserve. The reserve encompasses 52,000 acres of the lower Connecticut River and the Connecticut waters of Long Island Sound east almost to the Rhode Island border.



Image by Andrew Griswold



NOAA oversees the National Estuarine Reserve system. The DEEP, UConn, and Connecticut Sea Grant will be the primary state partners.

The purpose of the reserve is to provide a focus to keep the estuary ecologically healthy; to serve as a site for research to aid conservation; to provide information to local officials and others who make decisions affecting the area; and to provide outdoor education for students.

[Read about the official designation in January here.](#)

[View maps of the Reserve here.](#)

As much as \$1 million a year will be earmarked for the reserve, to be used by scientists engaged in researching issues such as climate resiliency, water quality, habitat quality, and fish and wildlife.

The reserve will also be a source of funding, materials, and field trip locations for local education programs such as Connecticut Audubon's Science in Nature, which has reached more than 75,000 school children in Connecticut and has thrived particularly in Old Lyme and New London, the heart of the estuarine reserve area.

The project has been in the works for three decades. The National Estuarine Research Reserve System, [established by Congress](#) in the early 1970s, is a network of sensitive coastal areas across more than 1.3 million acres in 24 states and Puerto Rico. Connecticut's reserve is the 30th in the nation.

### [\*Birds in the Borough \(and where to find them\)\*](#)

One fine spring sighting was of a male **Orchard Oriole** feeding in the flowering trees that border the seventh hole. The more common Baltimore Oriole is a yearly visitor and likely nester. The less common Orchard Oriole is a good find. Our smallest North American oriole at 7.5 inches and a chestnut red versus the orange of the Baltimore, this very vocal member of the blackbird family can sometimes be mistaken for a warbler.

The borough has a number of great micro-habitats that can offer up some less commonly found species. The damp area between the road and the golf course starter's shack can be a good place to find birds like the colorful Yellow Warbler or American Redstart (also a warbler). Near the marshes, listen for the rattle of the Marsh Wren, usually the first marsh bird to sing each day. In the fall, the weedy area around 4 Nibang can sometimes be a good spot for rarer sparrows. Of course, The Grove is the best spot for woodland species like Wood Thrush, Blue Jay, and Eastern Wood-Pewee. Listen for the Willow Flycatcher at Hepburn's Pond (a burry *RITZbew*). And keep an eye out for Piping Plovers (an endangered species) on the beaches. If you find one, please give us a call or contact the Connecticut DEEP.

The **Black Rail** is one of the most elusive bird species that could show up in the borough's marsh system. This nocturnal



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Image by Alan Wilson



Courtesy of Ciphias

Image by Hector Botra



species is relatively rare and almost never seen. A tiny marsh bird, no bigger than a sparrow, this extremely secretive species walks or runs through the marsh, and is almost never seen in flight. In very dense cover, it may get around by using the runways made by mice. The distinctive short song of the Black Rail is given mostly late at night, so the bird may go unnoticed in some areas. Fairly common at a few coastal points, its status inland in the east is rather mysterious. Its song is a piping *ki-ki-doo*, the last note lower in pitch. Black Rails are somewhat migratory, withdrawing from northern areas in winter.

The **Great Horned Owls** that once nested in The Grove moved over to the White Pines near the eighth tee this winter to raise their young. By now the young birds are out of the nest and looking much like the adults. This species is nocturnal and is best found at dusk as it starts its nighttime hunts. Found almost throughout North America and much of South America, this species is aggressive and powerful in its hunting (sometimes known by nicknames such as 'tiger owl') and takes prey as varied as rabbits, hawks, snakes, and even skunks, and will even attack porcupines, often with fatal results for both prey and predator. Great Horned Owls begin nesting very early in the north, and their deep hoots may be heard rolling across the landscape on mid-winter nights.

You never know what unusual bird might show up in Fenwick! Did you see the Roseate Spoonbill last year?

**Enjoy your wonderful bird garden!**

Cheers,

*Andy*

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Image by Patrick Myers

