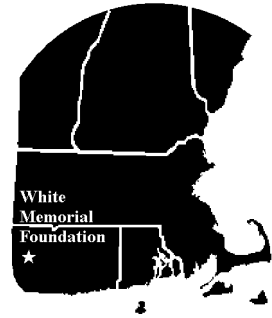


# White Memorial Foundation: Litchfield and Morris, Connecticut

*Buzz Devine and Dwight G. Smith*



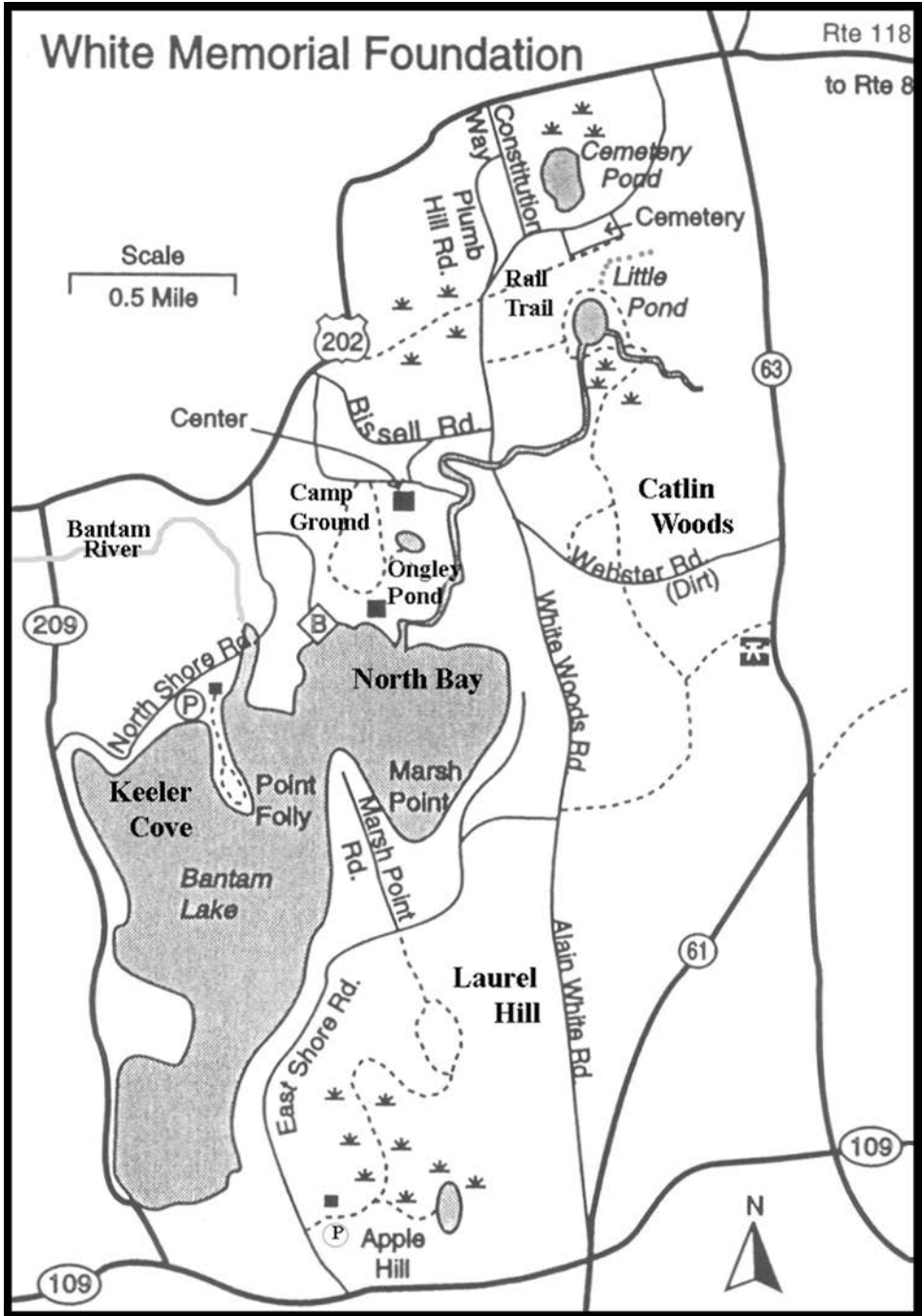
Nestled within the foothills of the Berkshire Mountains in northwestern Connecticut lies one of the state's most beautiful and exciting interior birding locales—the White Memorial Foundation (WMF). This 4000-acre wildlife sanctuary comprises diverse habitats that include acres of hardwoods, mixed woodlands, and conifer plantations intermixed with fields, pastures, clear-cuts, and thickets. Aquatic habitats at the foundation feature wetlands, streams, ponds, and property bordering Bantam Lake. Over thirty-five miles of woodland roads, trails, and boardwalks provide access to habitats at WMF. Most trailheads are clearly marked with signs and trail-map displays. Additionally, Bantam River and Bantam Lake can be birded by canoe or kayak during most seasons.

Since 1958, 260 species of birds have been observed within the varied habitats of WMF including 116 breeding species. At least sixteen species of warbler, ten raptor species, and seven species of flycatcher nest on foundation property.

Some of the notable birds observed at WMF in recent years are Eared Grebe, Tundra Swan, Barrow's Goldeneye, Common Moorhen, Black Vulture, Black Tern, Olive-sided and Yellow-bellied flycatchers, Northern Shrike, Townsend's Solitaire, Mourning Warbler, Pine Grosbeak, and Red and White-winged crossbills. Nesting species of interest include Pied-billed Grebe (rare), American Bittern (rare), Least Bittern (rare), Hooded Merganser, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Goshawk, Virginia Rail, Sora, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Marsh and Winter wrens, Blue-headed Vireo, Blackburnian Warbler, and Golden-crowned Kinglet.

The White Memorial Foundation has a Conservation Center with a Visitor Information Booth, a Nature Museum with wildlife dioramas, a gift shop, library (the natural history library of 30,000 volumes is considered one of the best in the state), dormitories, and classrooms. The museum is open Monday through Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday. Nonmembers are required to pay an entrance fee to visit the Nature Museum.

The Holbrook Bird Observatory at WMF overlooks a uniquely landscaped birding area with a bird blind for viewing and photographing birds at close range. Other facilities at WMF include picnic areas, two family campgrounds (Windmill Hill and Point Folly), and a boat launch. Observation platforms placed at several strategic locations on the property offer ideal scenic or wildlife viewing opportunities. For other facility information and reservations visit WMF's website at <http://www.whitememorialcc.org>.



## DIRECTIONS

From the north or south take Route 8 to Exit 42 (Route 118, Litchfield and Harwinton), and then take Route 118 west for 4.8 miles to Route 202 in Litchfield. Follow Route 202 west for about 2.0 miles to Bissell Road on the left. Turn left onto Bissell Road, and immediately turn right onto a road (well marked) which leads to the Visitor Center. **Note:** Directions to most of the other sites within WMF will be given from the Route 202 and Bissell Road junction.

## BIRDING

You can obtain a copy of the *White Memorial Foundation Checklist of Birds* for a nominal fee at the gift shop. This booklet provides information on nesting species and species abundance throughout the year. Additionally, the guide lists twenty-four birding sites on the property and the type of habitats found at each location. A detailed map of the White Memorial Foundation can be purchased for a nominal fee; the map identifies roadways, topographic features, trails, and other pertinent information about the sanctuary. Given the size of the sanctuary and the large number of trails, we recommend purchasing this map.

From late April through May, members of the Litchfield Hills Audubon Society lead free bird walks starting at the museum every Sunday, beginning at 7:30 a.m. Nonmembers are welcome on these bird walks. Free guided tours of WMF are given every Saturday (except in winter), usually starting at 2:00 p.m. from the museum. The afternoon tours often feature bird walks.

**Visitor Center.** During all seasons there is ample bird activity in the fields and gardens surrounding the Visitor Center. Bird feeders are placed throughout the area. Be sure to spend a few minutes at the large bird blind overlooking the feeding station behind the center. This location is bustling with activity during all seasons. Permanent residents typically observed here include Hairy, Downy, and Red-bellied woodpeckers, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Cardinal, House Finch, and American Goldfinch. During migration periods check for Fox Sparrows, blackbirds, and errant wanderers. In colder months (late October-April), winter finches, especially Purple Finch and Pine Siskin, but occasionally Evening Grosbeak, can join the regulars. The siskins and grosbeaks are irregular from year to year. Species nesting in the thickets and trees around the Visitor Center include Northern Mockingbird, Chipping Sparrow, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Baltimore Oriole.

Behind the Visitor Center is Ongley Pond, an area often teeming with wildlife. From the pond, a 0.3-mile long trail leads to an observation platform overlooking Bantam Lake. The trail passes through wet woodland and a shrubby swamp fringed by cattails. From April through September, these wetlands can harbor Black-billed and Yellow-billed cuckoos, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, House Wren, Wood Thrush, Gray Catbird, Red-eyed Vireo, and Cedar Waxwing. Common trailside birds can also include Black-and-white Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, and American Redstart. As the trail approaches Bantam Lake, it makes a sharp right turn; immediately to the left is the Bantam River inlet. Typical

birds nesting in this area are Willow Flycatchers, Marsh Wrens (in the cattails), and Yellow-throated and Warbling vireos. In spring and fall, the shrubs can yield a variety of migrant warblers, vireos, and sparrows.

The trail continues to an observation platform built on the foundation of a former icehouse. The platform provides a nice view of Bantam Lake's North Cove, while the foundation offers ideal roosting sites for cormorants, gulls, and waterfowl throughout the year. From this point you can backtrack to the museum area or continue along on the trail, which skirts Windmill Hill before returning to the museum area.

**Catlin Woods.** To access Catlin Woods from the junction of Route 202 and Bissell Road, follow Bissell Road east to White Woods Road (0.8 mile), bearing right at the little triangle at the end of the road. Turn right, travel south on White Woods Road for 0.3 mile, and turn left onto Webster Road, which is dirt. Follow Webster Road east (0.3 mile) until a dirt road/trail (with barrier gates on both sides of Webster Road) intersects the roadway. Catlin Woods is located on the left side (north) of Webster Road.

The towering hemlocks of this beautiful woodland are majestic reminders of what the mature forests of the Northeast must have looked like to the Native Americans and early European settlers. The dense canopy shadows the gloomy forest interior, illuminated only by light shafts and sun flecks. The deep forest remains cool and damp, even on hot summer days. With luck, this magnificent hemlock stand won't fall victim to the woolly adelgid that now plagues many hemlock woodlands in parts of the Northeast.

In summer, the cold, damp microclimate of Catlin Woods hosts a variety of noteworthy nesting species including Northern Goshawk (rare), Red-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Northern Waterthrush (near the wetland-swamp interface), Blue-headed Vireo, White-throated Sparrow (occasional), and Purple Finch. Other breeders may include Ruffed Grouse (becoming rare), Barred and Great Horned owls, Pileated Woodpecker, Veery, Wood Thrush, Red-eyed Vireo, and Ovenbird.

During spring and fall migration, check the evergreens for Yellow-bellied Flycatchers and boreal nesting warblers (Tennessee, Bay-breasted, Cape May, and Blackpoll), and the wooded understory for Swainson's and Gray-cheeked thrushes.

Catlin Woods can be productive for winter finches during incursion years; Pine and Evening grosbeaks, Red and White-winged crossbills, and Pine Siskins have been found here over the years. Of these, the Pine Siskin is an annual winter visitor. From late October into February, Great Horned Owls can sometimes be heard calling in the late evening and early morning hours. Although less vocal during winter months, Barred Owls can usually be tempted to respond to vocal imitations or tape-recorded playback during most of the year.

**Little Pond.** From the junction of Bissell Road and Route 202, follow Bissell Road for 0.8 miles east and turn left onto White Woods Road. (In this case you would bear left at the triangle.) The trail to Little Pond is located on White Woods Road, just

north of this junction. To access this area, park along White Woods Road about 100 yards north of the junction. A barrier gate on the right (east) with a trail map identifies the start of the trail to Little Pond.

Little Pond features an outstanding elevated boardwalk trail about a mile in length that winds through cattail and shrub marsh edging the perimeter of the pond. Wetland communities along the boardwalk offer wonderful opportunities for birding and wildlife observation.

The trail to Little Pond enters Scotch pine-hemlock woodland with an edge understory of knotweed and berry bramble thickets. Along the trail, watch and listen for Pileated Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Brown Creeper. The Brown Creeper nests beneath the loose bark of the dead and diseased pines. In spring and summer, Pine, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, and occasionally Yellow-rumped warblers also nest in the tall conifers. From May into July, the organ-like song of the Veery can be heard as he proclaims his breeding territory along the trail.

About 200 yards along, the trail emerges along the left edge of an overgrown field of goldenrod, bramble, knotweed, and pine sapling. Check the thickets and field for Brown Thrasher (uncommon from April through September) and Field Sparrow. Nest boxes in the field may host broods of Eastern Bluebirds, House Wrens, or Tree Swallows. In past years, a red fox denned in the sandy soils beneath the grassy and scrubby undergrowth. Fall sparrow migration (October and November) can yield an impressive variety in the field and thickets — Chipping, White-throated, Swamp, Savannah, and Song sparrows are most common, while Lincoln's, White-crowned, and Fox sparrows are uncommon but regular.

The trail ends in a "T" at the loop trail around the pond. Turn right, and take the trail a short distance (seventy-five yards) through cattail and reedgrass to an iron footbridge crossing the Bantam River. From the footbridge you can view the marsh and the open waters of Little Pond in the distance. During the proper season, scan the vegetation along the river's edge for American Black Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Wood Duck, and waders such as the American Bittern (rare), Least Bittern (rare), and Green Heron. Shorebirds are regular from April to June, and again in August and September. Shorebirds commonly found include Least, Semipalmated, Solitary, and Spotted sandpipers and Greater and Lesser yellowlegs. American Woodcocks are seen or heard at dusk in spring, whereas Common Snipes are somewhat regular but elusive migrants.

Early spring migrants to the marsh (March and April) include Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, and Eastern Phoebe, all of which nest here. The Rusty Blackbird is a regular spring (March and April) and fall (October through November) migrant. Migrating Barn, Bank, Northern Rough-winged, Tree, and Cliff swallows are often spotted just over the vegetation or along the river. All nest on or near the WMF property.

In spring and summer, the Swamp Sparrow is a common breeding species that places its nest in the cattails or bushes, directly over the water, while Marsh Wrens

nest intermittently in the nearby cattails or reedgrasses. Several flycatchers including Eastern Kingbirds and Willow and Alder flycatchers also breed in the marsh and swamp near the footbridge and along the north end of the boardwalk trail.

After scanning the Bantam River and Little Pond from the bridge, return to the “T” junction but continue straight, so that you will be walking around the pond loop-trail in a clockwise direction. The trail soon puts you on the boardwalk around Little Pond and the adjacent marsh where much of the birding activity takes place. The elevated boardwalk threads through marsh and low shrub swamps of silky dogwood, alder, willow, and arrowwood as it makes its way around Little Pond.

Birding along this extensive stretch of boardwalk can be a fascinating dawn adventure, especially in May or June when the breeding season is in full swing. The marsh and shrub swamp come alive with the calls of avian, amphibian, and insect inhabitants. The ruckus raised by this myriad of vocalists leaves the visitor with a long-lasting impression of wildlife at WMF.

Lodges and tree stumps testify to the presence of the American beaver. With patience, the quiet birder may observe these industrious mammals at work. Many of the bird species seen by the footbridge will also be seen along the boardwalk, where they can often be studied at closer quarters. Scan the area for Virginia Rail, Sora, and other elusive shrub-swamp species. Yellow-billed and Black-billed cuckoos (cuckoo populations are irregular) are occasionally seen or heard. Songbirds found among the wetland shrubs can include Common Yellowthroats and Yellow, Chestnut-sided, and Blue-winged warblers. Both Alder and Willow flycatchers are regular summer breeders, nesting in upright forks of shrubs and small trees. Alder Flycatchers have declined in abundance but can still be found along the north part of the loop in the vicinity of a spur boardwalk trail on the left leading to a parking area on South Lake Street. In fall and early spring, this stretch of boardwalk can frequently yield Rusty Blackbirds and American Tree Sparrows.

Waterbirds spotted on Little Pond during the breeding season include Pied-billed Grebe (occasionally nests), Wood Duck, and Hooded Merganser, while Great Blue and Green herons hunt and hide in the emergent vegetation. Migrant waterfowl can include Blue-winged Teal, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, and Common Merganser. Just beyond the spur trail leading to the left, the boardwalk ends for a short distance. The trail continues through a scrubby red maple swamp, crosses a small footbridge, and eventually winds back to the first footbridge overlooking the Bantam River. From here it is a short distance to the “T” and back to the car.

**Cemetery Pond.** Located just east of the junction of White Woods Road and Constitution Way, the pond takes its name from the small cemetery nearby. To reach Cemetery Pond from the junction of Bissell Road and Route 202, follow Bissell Road east to White Woods Road (0.8 mile). Turn left, and continue to Constitution Way (0.7 mile), then turn left, and park alongside the pond.

Cemetery Pond is fringed by an extensive cattail and reedgrass marsh, and willow, alder, and maple shrubs, the whole forming a diverse and thriving wildlife

community that supports many nesting species as well as migrants. Scope the wetland edge for waterbirds. Waders and waterfowl often forage and take shelter within the cattails and periodically come into view. Some species encountered from early spring through fall may include Pied-billed Grebe, Least Bittern (rare), Green Heron, Wood Duck, and occasionally Blue-winged Teal. Great Egret occurs regularly during postbreeding dispersal (late July into August). A local birding highlight was the occurrence of a rare Eared Grebe that spent several days on the pond in September 1994. Migrant waterfowl seen here can include Green-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler (occasional), Gadwall, American Black Duck, Ring-necked Duck, and Hooded Merganser. Virginia Rail and Common Moorhen (rare) have nested at the pond. Several passerines nesting in the scattered shrubs and trees surrounding the pond include Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Kingbird, Tree Swallow, Eastern Bluebird, Gray Catbird, Cedar Waxwing, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler, and Baltimore Oriole. A small Marsh Wren population breeds in the cattail and reedgrass marsh along the northern shore.

**Railroad Bed Trail.** This stop takes only a few minutes but provides access to extensive wetland habitats. From Cemetery Pond, follow White Woods Road south just beyond its junction with Plumb Hill Road (0.2 mile), and park near the trail, which is visible on either side of the road.

This cinder trail is actually an old railroad bed. On the right (west of the road), the trail overlooks Mallard Marsh, an extensive marsh community. Virginia Rails nest in the marsh and possibly Common Moorhen and American Bittern (both species have occurred during the breeding season).

After checking Mallard Marsh, cross the road, and follow the cinder bed trail that bisects the shrubby wetlands. During the spring season, the water level to the left is artificially maintained for the propagation of Northern Pike. Following hatching and a period of growth, the sluice gates are opened, and the young pike follow the waterways to Bantam River. April is a good month to observe the spawning behavior of the pike within this shallow, weedy impoundment.

In spring, Blue-winged Teal is an uncommon but regular visitor to the marsh. Other wetland-associated species noted at Little Pond and Cemetery Pond may be observed along the trail as well.

**Laurel Hill and Apple Hill.** This site is most productive during the nesting season from May into August. A number of bird species difficult to locate elsewhere at WMF can usually be found here. To get to Laurel Hill from the junction of Route 202 and Bissell Road, follow Bissell Road east to White Woods Road (0.8 mile), turn right, and continue south to East Shore Drive (1.5 miles). Turn right, and continue on East Shore Drive until the trailhead (with bar-gate) to Laurel Hill is seen on the left (0.5 mile). Laurel Hill trailhead is immediately opposite Marsh Point Drive.

Park and survey the deciduous woodland before hiking up the trail. Laurel Hill consists primarily of old-field habitat reverting to shrub fields and second-growth woodlands with an extensive mountain-laurel understory.

Scout the area for warblers, especially Black-throated Blue, Canada, Hooded (irregular), Blue-winged, Chestnut-sided, American Redstart, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Ovenbird. The hardwoods support the usual variety of woodland nesting species including Eastern Wood-Pewee, Scarlet Tanager, Wood Thrush, Veery, Red-eyed Vireo, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Eastern Towhee.

To bird Laurel Hill, follow the trail to the hilltop, and continue to the bottomland beyond (about 0.6 mile from the trailhead). A short boardwalk bisects a wooded wetland reminiscent of a southern bald-cypress swamp. In spring and summer, the swamp and adjacent woodland are usually bustling with bird activity. Watch and listen for Red-shouldered Hawk, Ruffed Grouse (becoming rare), Barred Owl, Pileated Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Great Crested Flycatcher, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, Northern Waterthrush, and numerous other species.

Once you cross the boardwalk, the trail continues through deciduous woodland and breaks out into an old-field habitat at Apple Hill (another 0.7 mile) before terminating on East Shore Drive near an old barn (lumber mill). The fields and thickets support Wild Turkey (vocal early morning in April and May), Black-billed Cuckoo, Willow Flycatcher, Eastern Bluebird, Prairie Warbler, Eastern Meadowlark, Bobolink, Field Sparrow, and Indigo Bunting. In fall, the viewing platform on top of Apple Hill provides a panoramic view of the northwestern highlands and Bantam Lake and offers good hawk-watching. If you want to explore Apple Hill but do not want to take the entire hike, return to your car, and drive 1.0 mile farther along East Shore Drive. Turn left (diagonally across road from Harrison Lane) just beyond the old barn, and follow the driveway to the small parking area on the right. Follow the trail uphill and behind the house to Apple Hill.

**Bantam Lake - Point Folly.** To access Point Folly from the junction of Route 202 and Bissell Road, follow Route 202 west, and turn left onto North Shore Road (0.5 mile). Follow North Shore Road south, and park on the left near the lake (1.0 mile).

Point Folly is a narrow peninsula projecting about 0.4 mile southward into Bantam Lake. East of the peninsula is the outlet to the Bantam River. Keeler Cove forms the inlet along Point Folly's western shoreline. During summer, camping is allowed at Point Folly for a fee. In autumn (mid-October into December) and again in spring, Point Folly can be exceptionally productive for waterbirds, including grebes, loons, swans, geese, dabbling and diving ducks, and gulls. During midwinter, the lake usually freezes, and birding is limited to scouting the lake's outlet and the Bantam River, which normally remain open and can concentrate waterfowl. In summer, Bantam Lake is crowded with boaters, swimmers, and water-skiers, so opportunities for birding are drastically curtailed.

The small inlet directly in front of the parking area is Keeler Cove. In fall, this is an excellent spot to find flocks (sometimes a hundred or more individuals) of Ruddy Ducks and American Coots, which feed on invertebrates and aquatic vegetation in the quiet waters of the cove. After checking Keeler Cove, walk toward the point, and stop



at the observation platform to view North Bay and the Bantam River outlet along the eastern side of Point Folly. Scan the emergent vegetation along the river's outlet carefully since many species forage within the vegetation and only occasionally come into view. Great Blue and Green herons can be found here from spring through fall. Species regularly encountered during migration include Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Gadwall, Northern Pintail, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, and Common Merganser. Rarer birds include Red-throated Loon, Red-necked Grebe, Tundra Swan, Snow Goose, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Northern Shoveler, Redhead, Long-tailed Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, Osprey, and Bald Eagle. An Eared Grebe and some Barrow's Goldeneyes were recent birding surprises at Point Folly.

**Bantam Lake Outlet and Litchfield Town Beach/Boat Launch.** After birding Point Folly, check the Bantam River from the bridge on North Shore Drive. To get to the bridge and eventually the town beach and boat launch, backtrack along North Shore Drive, and park on the right immediately before the bridge (0.2 mile). Scan the river on either side of the bridge for waterbirds. This area is most productive in the winter once the lake freezes; ducks often concentrate in impressive numbers. In 2004, three Barrow's Goldeneyes spent the entire winter along the oxbows of the river in this area.

To reach the Litchfield Town Beach and boat launch, continue along North Shore Drive, and turn right on a dirt road just before a gray barn (0.2 mile). Follow the dirt road about 100 yards, and take a sharp right turn (the first right with the stone pillars is a private drive) after passing the barn on your left. Follow the road to the lake (0.2 mile), and then park and explore the area (see symbol on map). Access to this area is restricted to town residents during summer months but is open the remainder of the year. North and west of the boat launch is a shrubby growth of buttonbush and willow intruding into the water. Waterbirds, especially herons, ducks, and coots, may be spotted feeding among the vegetation and open water edge, while the rocks to the left, the remnants of a former icehouse, frequently host roosting cormorants and gulls. Diving ducks, loons, and grebes are regularly spotted in the open water of North Bay.

**Route 63 Picnic Area.** Stands of white pine, mixed hardwoods, hemlock, upland and bottomland woods, clear-cuts, and forest edge predominate at the picnic area located on Route 63, south of the center of Litchfield (see symbol on map). To reach this site from the junction of Bissell Road and Route 202, follow Bissell Road east to White Woods Road (0.8 mile), turn right, and continue on White Woods Road south to Webster Road (0.3 mile). Turn left, and follow Webster Road to Route 63 (0.9 mile). Turn right, and continue on Route 63 to the small picnic area on the right (0.4 mile). The picnic area lacks tables but does have a pull-off in which to park on the west side of Route 63. Species usually encountered throughout much of the year are Barred Owl, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, and Golden-crowned Kinglet.

From May to August, nesting species include all the species noted above plus Broad-winged Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Great Crested Flycatcher, Winter Wren

(represented by a small breeding population that may be absent some years), Veery, Hermit Thrush, Wood Thrush, Blue-headed Vireo, Scarlet Tanager, and a host of warblers including Pine, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Black-and-white, and Yellow-rumped (occasional). The White-throated Sparrow intermittently nests in the denser woody undergrowth, usually beneath a log or tree stump, or in a thick growth of blueberry stems. Both Louisiana and Northern waterthrushes may be found in late spring hiding their moss-lined nests in holes beneath tree stumps or under overhanging stream banks. Look for the Louisiana Waterthrush along the small streams and the Northern Waterthrush in and around swampy bottomlands.

In winter, Dark-eyed Juncos and White-throated Sparrows forage in the forest understory while Golden-crowned Kinglets search the canopy for food. Winter finches are generally represented by Purple Finches and Pine Siskins. During winter-finch years, Evening Grosbeaks, Pine Grosbeaks, and Red and White-winged crossbills are sometimes observed here. Of these, Pine Siskins and Purple Finches have nested in these woods among the branches of the mature pines.

**Bantam River Canoe or Kayak Trip.** A canoe or kayak trip at daybreak along the Bantam River offers a unique birding experience. This trip puts you in the midst of otherwise inaccessible habitat and potentially provides a close look at a variety of wetland birds. The bridge at the junction of White Woods and Bissell Roads makes an ideal location to access the river midway between Little Pond and Bantam Lake. A trip from here to Bantam Lake and back is about three miles in length while a trip to Little Pond and return is approximately two miles.

Paddle slowly and quietly down the river, checking the natural nooks and crannies of the bank and vegetation for birds and wildlife. Beavers and muskrats are normally seen along this route and the alert naturalist may catch a glimpse of a mink or river otter. This is a great way to observe elusive marsh dwellers (herons, rails, and possibly bitterns), several species of waterfowl, and shorebirds during the appropriate season.

During spring (mid- to late May) and early fall migration (mid-August into September), look for an Olive-sided Flycatcher perched atop dead snags. The waterside thickets can be bursting with songbird activity in May. Two noteworthy birds that regularly occur but can be somewhat difficult to find are Wilson's Warbler (uncommon) and Mourning Warbler (rare late May into early June). Both species favor the shrubby alder and willow thickets along the river. Incidentally, the stretch of river between White Woods Road and the iron footbridge over the Bantam River (part of the Little Pond loop trail) is one of the best locations for Sora.

To adequately enjoy the beauty and wildlife of White Memorial Foundation, you may want to spend several days or visit during different seasons. If you like camping, we would recommend staying at the Windmill Hill Campground. This small campground is located in the midst of a mature conifer woodland and close to the museum area. At night the hooting of Great Horned or Barred Owls frequently serenades you. Although the campground at Point Folly is very nice, it can be crowded with recreational users. If you don't like to rough it, Litchfield has two inns,

and there are several small motels in the nearby towns of Goshen, Plymouth, and Torrington. 🦋

*Arnold “Buzz” Devine worked for twenty years as a Hazardous Waste Inspector with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and recently completed three years managing the Environmental Programs at the state’s Department of Correction. He is currently employed by GeoDesign, Inc., an environmental consulting firm in Middlebury, and also works as a free-lance consultant on endangered bird species in Connecticut. Buzz is a member of the Connecticut Ornithological Association’s Avian Records Review Committee and Connecticut’s Endangered Species Advisory Committee for Birds. He and Dwight Smith coauthored the Connecticut Birding Guide (1996) and numerous other scientific papers on the ecology and behavior of birds, especially owls. Dwight Smith is currently professor and chair of the biology department at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven, where he has taught ecology, ornithology, and mammalogy for 36 years. He has studied the ecology of birds and other wildlife in Siberia, Alaska, South America, South Africa, and, of course, New England. He has published about 500 papers and fifteen books, many of them in coauthorship with Buzz Devine.*

### From Mass Wildlife:

**Autumn Safety Reminders** — Fall is a fantastic time to be outdoors with dazzling colors, crisp air and wildlife activity galore. Whether your passion is hiking, hunting, fishing, birding or just taking in the scenery, a few common sense safety reminders will add to your enjoyment during a day afield.

**Know your limits.** Don’t take off on a long hike, hunt or bike ride if you’re not physically ready. Tell someone where you’re going and when you expect to return.

**Watch the weather.** New England weather is notorious for quick changes. Be ready with an extra layer of clothing, warm hat and gloves.

**Expect the unexpected.** No one expects problems while spending a day outdoors, but having a fanny pack with a few first aid items, matches, water, Swiss army knife, cell phone, map, compass, whistle, extra food and flashlight can help prevent small problems from becoming big ones.

**Respect the water.** Canoeists and kayakers are required to wear life jackets from September 15 to May 15 but all water enthusiasts, especially anglers who wade our larger rivers, would be wise to wear floatation devices now that water temperatures are low.

**Share the outdoors.** Mountain biking, horseback riding, wildlife watching, hunting and hiking are not mutually exclusive activities. Know the seasons and who is likely to be sharing the woods and waters with you. Wear blaze orange for visibility, keep dogs under control and respect others’ rights to enjoy our open spaces.