

Connecticut Bird Atlas Kick-off
Chris Elphick, Ph.D

The state of Connecticut birding community will be called on to conduct surveys for the Connecticut Bird Atlas Project starting in 2018. The project will focus on all birds that breed, winter or migrate in Connecticut.

The scope of the atlas is to understand breeding bird distribution and abundance, to document the changes since the last atlas, to understand wintering distribution of the birds in the state, to identify stopover habitat during migrations, to establish predictive relationships where species occur on the landscape and to use the results and data to create an interactive website.

Such a large effort will yield an abundance of data that could be used by many agencies. The reasons for the project is to contribute meaningful data for the State Action Wildlife Plan, to contribute to conservation planning and, to establish Environment Health Metrics.

The last atlas was published in 1994 after years of surveys from 1982 to 1986. This effort was supported by many NHBC members. We hope the members can come out again to support the new effort.

Depending on Professor Elphick's mood, he considers himself a conservation biologist, an applied ecologist, or an ornithologist, with research interests that span behavioral, population, community and landscape ecology. Most of his research has focused on aquatic species that occur in wetland or agricultural habitats, but he has also worked in tropical forest, the boreal zone, and the open ocean. Despite this breadth the overriding goal that unites much of his work is understanding how best ecologists can guide management decisions to reconcile the conservation of biological diversity with other human activities. His current research interests involve studies of birds in tidal marshes, studies of birds in agricultural settings, and studies of past and projected avian extinctions. Professor Elphick has spearheaded several statewide atlas projects.