

# SANCTUARY

Newsletter of the  
White Memorial  
Conservation Center

Vol. XXXIII No. 4

Fall 2015

## Museum Hours:

Monday - Saturday 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Sunday 12:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.

## For Information

Phone: 860-567-0857

E-Mail: [info@whitememorialcc.org](mailto:info@whitememorialcc.org)

Website: [www.whitememorialcc.org](http://www.whitememorialcc.org)



Barn Owl *Tyto alba* Photo credit: Edd Deane

## Ghosts in Our Midst

By Carrie Szwed, Education Director, White Memorial Conservation Center

Perhaps it's the hair-raising scream it emits...or its tendency to "haunt" old, dilapidated buildings. Maybe it's the flash of white your eyes catch as it silently swoops by. One way or another, the barn owl (*Tyto alba*) has earned the distinctively eerie title of the "ghost owl." It has been given other nicknames as well, such as the "sweetheart owl" for its heart-shaped face, the monkey-faced owl, and the "screech owl" for its shrieking call that is even more frightening than that of the true screech owl (*Megascops asio*). Whatever name you choose to call it, many people can agree that the barn owl is an intriguing animal to say the least, fascinating people on every continent (except Antarctica) for ages.

Don't confuse the barn owl with the similarly-named barred owl (*Strix varia*). While barn owls are partial to open habitats, barred owls prefer forests. Since much of northwestern Connecticut is comprised of forests, barred owls are our most common owl species, whereas barn owls are quite rare. These two species also look considerably different. A barn owl has an ivory face, a light chest with speckles (more so on a female), and tawny-colored feathers on its back. A barred owl, on the other hand, has gray and brown feathers throughout, with dark bars on its chest (hence the name *barred* owl). A barn owl has a lanky silhouette, while a barred owl appears stout due to its

thick coat of feathers. About the only two external characteristics these two species share are their dark pupils and lack of feather tufts on their heads, which sets them apart from screech owls and great-horned owls (*Bubo virginianus*).



Photo credit: Gerri Griswold

Humans and barn owls have historically lived quite harmoniously together, especially because these owls are nature's best mousetraps! One pair of barn owls and their young can consume several dozen mice in one night, or 1,000 rodents in a nesting period! In America, voles (otherwise known as field mice) are

the single most consumed food item by barn owls. Pastures, hayfields, and meadows are prime grassland habitats to find these small rodents. When "times are tough," barn owls will also consume rats, squirrels, shrews, and small birds. Their supreme hearing ability aids in the detection of prey, even when small animals are concealed by tall grasses. Asymmetrical ears allow the owl to triangulate the source of the softest sound, like a mouse's squeak. On dark cloudy nights, a barn owl can essentially catch its prey using hearing alone.

Only recently have barn owls been facing challenges in the company of humans. These owls need secure roosting and nesting areas in addition to rodent-filled fields; this is a combination that is much harder to come by these days. The state of Connecticut has progressively become *reforested* over the last 150 years, resulting in significant habitat loss for the grassland-loving barn owl. Those fields that still remain are often treated with rodent poisons, severely depleting available food for the barn owl. Old barns, which make ideal nesting sites, have sometimes been leveled and replaced by new metal barns that are impenetrable by any wild creature. This combined loss of hunting grounds and nesting sites has been detrimental to the barn owl population in the Northeast.

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

Barn owls are now listed as an endangered species in Connecticut, with only small populations existing along the coast and within the valleys of our larger rivers. A breeding population is currently being studied in the Middletown area.

Fortunately, the barn owl's fate is certainly not sealed. We can take an active role in their conservation by providing undisturbed grassland habitat (ideally 25+ acres) and putting up specially-designed nest boxes. While they naturally nest in tree cavities, barn owls are inclined to take advantage of human-made structures such as abandoned buildings, chimneys, and of course, barns. In fact, studies of tracked wild populations indicate that they will often choose man-made structures *over* natural tree cavities. So, if you have the right kind of property, but perhaps not a suitable nesting spot, try erecting a nest box. It will certainly increase your chances of attracting this magnificent bird!

The Raptor Trust has published two easy designs for barn owl boxes: <http://theraptortrust.org/the-birds/nest-boxes/barn-owl/> The "box" design works best when hung outdoors, such as on the outside of an existing structure, on a pole, or placed in a tree. The "tray" design is meant for inside a building where a roof already exists. Several other design plans can be

found on the Internet that may suit your sight best. Don't count out your property if it is not "out in the country." Barn owls



Photo credit: Peter Trimming

are sometimes happy to live within city limits as long as there is a plot of grassland nearby, such as a fallow field or cemetery, that has a sufficient amount of suitable prey.

The benefits to having barn owls on your property are numerous. Not only will you have a natural source of rodent control, but you can also enjoy observing

your raptor residents throughout the year, provided they don't migrate as some Northeastern owls do. Unlike other owls, barn owls can nest almost any time of year, and will often produce two broods (litters) in a productive year. Each brood can be composed of between 2 and 13 young! You can also be assured that barn owls pose no threat to chickens or small pets; their appetite is strictly for animals that can fit in the palm of your hand. Perhaps most importantly, providing a home for barn owls can aid in their conservation and provide *you* with a sense of connection to the natural world, which as we all know, can be a priceless feeling. This is one kind of "ghost" you might like to be visited by!

### Meet the Ghost Owl with Brian Bradley



**Saturday, October 10, 2015**  
**See page 7**  
**for information and registration.**



## **2015 ANIMAL FOOD FUND APPEAL**

**THE CONSERVATION CENTER REACHES OUT TO  
YOU FOR HELP IN DEFRAYING THE  
MONUMENTAL COST OF FEEDING THE WILD  
BIRDS AND OUR ANIMAL  
AMBASSADORS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.**

**THE ANNUAL EXPENSE OF KEEPING OUR  
BIRDS, SNAKES, TURTLES, AND FEEDERS FULL  
IS APPROXIMATELY \$5500.**

**YOUR DONATION, NO MATTER HOW SMALL,  
WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED.**

**Yes! I'd like to help feed wild birds and animal ambassadors at the White Memorial Conservation Center with my gift of:**

( )\$5      ( )\$10      ( )\$20      ( )\$50      ( )\$100      ( )Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make your check payable to WMCC, 80 Whitehall Road, P.O. Box 368, Litchfield, CT 06759*

# The Power of Your Story

By Marlow Shami, Community Outreach Coordinator

A couple from Oxford, CT and their friend from Norwalk, CT recently visited the Conservation Center's Gift Shop. As always, I inquired about their experience at White Memorial and of course invited them all to subscribe to the Habitattler, our weekly e-newsletter. The Norwalk friend said she lived too far to benefit from receiving our e-newsletter. The Oxford couple signed up.

As we talked, I learned kayaking was an activity all three enjoyed. *They'd love to hear about our annual Celebration of Bantam River I thought to myself...* so I described the golden beauty of early morning just off Whites Woods Road in early July, the joy and awe the intrepid group of boaters experienced on their hushed journey down the river to Bantam Lake, the song of wood thrush, crow, splashing fish, frog ...and finally, gleefully, landing at Litchfield Town Beach, enjoying conversation and a scrumptious breakfast prepared by WMCC master chef Gerri Griswold.

The threesome was intrigued, so I offered to show them the video I made documenting the event. After watching the video the Oxford couple asked for a membership brochure and the Norwalk

friend signed up to receive the Habitattler.

Sharing our personal stories about how nature impacts our lives is a wonderful way to inspire others in the discovery of White Memorial's beauty as well as introduce the wonderful programs and events the White Memorial Tribe has to offer the uninitiated. Asking friends and family what it is about the natural world that they enjoy—gazing at billowing cumulous clouds, birding, hiking, canoeing, swimming, or picnicking – is a great way to get to know one another on a deeper level and may also provide an opportunity for you to invite your friend(s) to become members.

If you have yet to join in one of our guided walks, please do. Walks are fun, the terrain beautiful and varied and the other participants are delightful. Guided walks are a great way to introduce your friends and family to White Memorial land, staff, and fellow nature loving members. Make your late summer and autumn resolution as you lay this issue of the Sanctuary down. Participate in one of our guided walks and bring a friend! Help White Memorial grow a

conservation-minded community one new member at a time!

**On an entirely different subject, WMCC has started a Scholarship Fund** to assist schools needing funds for field trips to WMCC and outreach programs. If you're involved in a company interested in helping to grow a conservation-minded community, inquire about our WMCC Corporate Membership. There are a number of levels of membership ranging from \$100 to \$1000 +. 25% of your annual membership goes into this important fund. Help us put Nature back into a child's life. Thank you!

Call or email me if you would like information on Corporate Membership or upcoming walks/programs.

## **CONTACT:**

[marlow@whitememorialcc.org](mailto:marlow@whitememorialcc.org)  
Telephone: 860-567-0857 ext 19  
Thank you!

Now, mosey along and take a walk, bring a friend, be the peace we all seek! Your body and mind will thank you!

## AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

### **NATURE'S NURSERY**

For Ages 2-6 Years  
Second Thursday Every Month  
All Classes 4:00 - 5:00 P.M.  
Members: \$7/session  
or \$25/whole series  
Non-Members: \$10/session  
or \$35/whole series



### **AFTER-SCHOOL ADVENTURES**

For Grades 1-3: Weds., October 7, 14, 21, 28  
For Grades 4-6: Tues., October 6, 13, 20, 27  
All Classes 3:45 - 5:00 P.M.  
Members: \$8/session  
or \$28/whole series  
Non-members: \$12/session  
or \$45/whole series



### **'TIS THE SEASON FOR CRAFTS !**

For Grades K-3:  
Wednesday, December 9  
For Grades 4-6:  
Tuesday, December 8  
3:45 - 5:15 P.M.  
Members: \$10.00  
Non-Members: \$12.00

Advanced registration required. Call 860-567-0857 or visit [www.whitememorialcc.org](http://www.whitememorialcc.org) for more information.



The Conservation Center thanks Mark Moorman from Sprain Brook Apiary, Woodbury, for overseeing our Honey Bee Observation Hive again this summer!



THE WHITE MEMORIAL CONSERVATION CENTER  
PRESENTS THE 34TH ANNUAL  
**FAMILY NATURE DAY**  
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2015 11AM - 5PM  
ADMISSION \$6.00  
CHILDREN UNDER 12 & CENTER MEMBERS FREE



**FEATURING**  
**SKYHUNTERS IN FLIGHT**  
**CREATURE TEACHERS: THE NATURE OF MY BACKYARD**  
**RIVERSIDE REPTILES + THE BAT LADY**  
**"NEW ONE" THE NORTH AMERICAN PORCUPINE**  
**MUSIC BY: ROBERT MESSORE**  
**& SWITCH FACTORY**  
**HORSE DRAWN WAGON RIDES + CRAFTS FOR KIDS**  
**GUIDED WALKS + DEMONSTRATIONS**  
**BOOTHS & EXHIBITS + FOOD**  
**LOCAL ARTISANS + SILENT AUCTION**  
**THE POCKET LADY + BAKE SALE**  
**MUSEUM OPEN HOUSE**  
**WIN A TRIP FOR TWO**  
**TO ICELAND IN OUR RAFFLE!**  
**80 WHITEHALL ROAD, LITCHFIELD, CONNECTICUT**  
**LOCATED OFF ROUTE 202**  
**BETWEEN LITCHFIELD AND BANTAM**  
**FOR MORE INFORMATION: 860-567-0857**  
**[WWW.WHITEMEMORIALCC.ORG](http://WWW.WHITEMEMORIALCC.ORG)**



## Before the Whites - Morris Northeast Boundary Marker

By Lee Swift

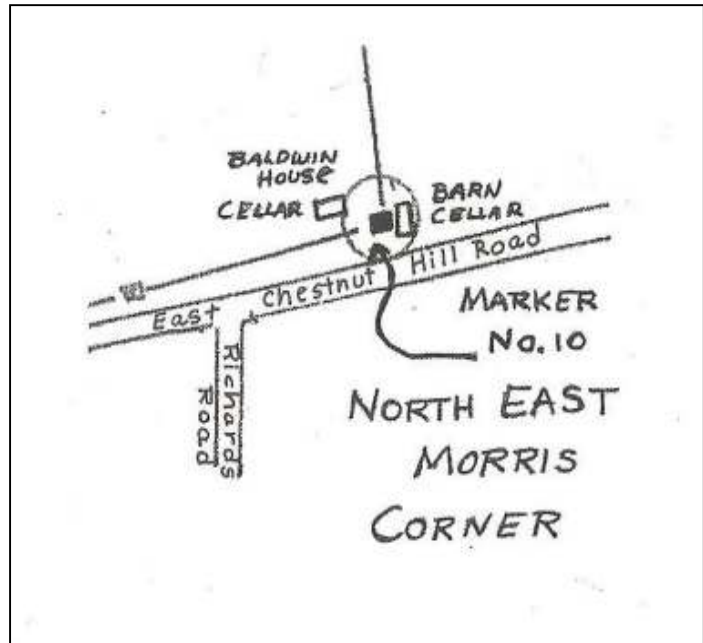
When the boundaries for the town of Morris were laid out in 1859, 86 stone markers were placed, wherever feasible, around the perimeter of the Town, approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile apart. Stones of various shapes and sizes were used, some etched with the letter M on one side, and with an L on the other side when Litchfield was the neighboring town. In 1988, Walter D. France, Morris Town Historian, set out with other history enthusiasts and property owners to locate, photograph and map all 86 markers. Through the years some of the stone markers had been replaced with concrete or granite, lost, moved, or incorporated into stone walls. Not all of them were located. A map of the Morris boundary markers by Mr. France shows 17 markers on White Memorial Foundation property. His complete survey

with maps, photographs and descriptions of the markers, is in the Morris Town Clerk's office.

The northeast corner boundary marker for Morris lies on White Memorial Foundation property, on the west side of East Chestnut Hill Road, northwest of Richards Road. The map drawn by Walter D. France locates it close to the center of the south side of the barn foundation, 32 feet north of the northeast corner of the house foundation on what had been the Henry Baldwin family farm. The Baldwins owned the 40 acre farm, part in Litchfield and part in Morris, from 1847 until 1902 when it passed through various owners before it was purchased by Alain C. White in 1921. This parcel, a lesser known area of the WMF, is bordered on the south by Waterbury reservoir land.

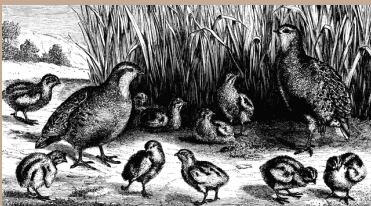


Walter D. France at Marker



Illustrations courtesy of Morris Town Clerk

**A Planned Gift can make  
a difference in your future  
and ours.**



[www.whitememorialcc.org](http://www.whitememorialcc.org)

**Have YOU signed up  
to receive our weekly email newsletter,  
THE HABITATTLER?**



Calendar of Events  
Program Reminders  
Top 10 Notable Sightings  
The Tail End Video  
And more....

[info@whitememorialcc.org](mailto:info@whitememorialcc.org)

# Fall Calendar of Events

For more information on any of our programs, please call us at 860-567-0857 or visit [www.whitememorialcc.org](http://www.whitememorialcc.org)

## SEPTEMBER



### SEPTEMBER 26th 34th ANNUAL FAMILY NATURE DAY

*Sky Hunters in Flight*  
*Riverside Reptiles*  
*Creature Teachers + The Bat Lady*  
*"New One" the Porcupine*  
*Music: Switch Factory*  
*& Robert Messoré*

11:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.  
See page 4 for details.

28-Oct. 4 Museum Kids Free Week \*  
Courtesy of Joan and Jack Benham

## OCTOBER

3 *Fungus Among Us with Dave Paton*  
See page 7 for details.



6 - 28 *After School Nature Adventures*  
For grades 1 - 6  
See page 3 for details.

7 *Hiking & Healthful Eating*  
with Gerri Griswold  
See page 7 for details.



*Nature's Nursery*  
September 10, October 8, November 12,  
December 10  
See page 3 for details.

10 *Early Walk to Laurel and Apple Hill*  
with Gerri Griswold  
7:00 A.M., Meet at the A. B. Cedar Room.

10 *Tree Identification Walk*  
with Lukas Hyder  
10:00 A.M., Meet in the Museum parking lot.

10 *Meet the Ghost Owl*  
with Brian Bradley  
See page 7 for details.



12 **COLUMBUS DAY**  
Museum Closed



16 *Star Party*  
Astronomy program with star  
gazing to follow, weather permitting.  
7:00 P.M., A. B. Cedar Room



17 *A Quiet Sensory Nature Walk*  
with Marlow Shami  
10:00 A.M.  
Meet in front of  
the A. B. Cedar Room.



24 *Celebrating Connecticut's*  
*Apples with the New England*  
*Apple Association*  
2:00 P.M., A. B. Cedar Room  
Pre-registration is required.



24 *Supernatural Tales of*  
*Connecticut*  
with David Leff  
See page 7 for details.



31 *Super Spooky Halloween Walk*  
with Gerri Griswold  
and Bradley the Wonder Dog  
Dress yourself and your pooch up in  
Halloween finery! 12:00 P.M., Meet in front of  
the A. B. Cedar Room

## NOVEMBER

4 *Hiking & Healthful Eating*  
with Gerri Griswold  
See page 7 for details.



7 *Lazy Birding on the Boardwalk*  
with Carrie Szwed  
9:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.,  
Stop by on the north shore of Little Pond.

7 *Vulture Culture*  
with Mary Beth Kaeser  
*Horizon Wings Raptor Center*  
See page 7 for details.



9 - 15 **Museum Kids Free Week\***  
In honor of Louise W. Willson

11 **Wildlife in Winter**  
**Veterans Day Program**  
See page 9 for details!

14 **Nepal Odyssey:**  
**Plight of a Remote Village**  
with Carol Williams  
2:00 P.M., A. B. Cedar Room

20 *Star Party*  
Astronomy program. Star gazing  
will follow, weather permitting.  
7:00 P.M., A. B. Cedar Room



21 **MUSEUM OPEN HOUSE ALL DAY!**  
*An Afternoon with Wendell Minor*  
*Reading and Book Signing*  
*Daylight Starlight Wildlife*  
See page 10 for details.

26 / 27 **THANKSGIVING**  
Museum Closed



\* Free admission to Children ages  
12 and under when accompanied by an adult.

28 *Walking the Cranberry Pond Trail*  
with Gerri Griswold  
2:00 P.M. Meet in the Museum.

## DECEMBER

2 *Hiking & Healthful Eating*  
with Gerri Griswold  
See page 7 for details.



5 *All About Trees! Watercolor Workshop*  
with Betsy Rogers-Knox  
See page 7 for details.



8 / 9 *'Tis the Season for Crafts!*  
For grades K - 6  
See page 3 for details.



11 **Museum Open House**  
Stroll through the Museum.  
Sip Mulled Cider.  
Wrap up your holiday shopping.  
Take 10% off all purchases!  
6:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.



12 **Crack o' Dawn Owl Prowl**  
and **Lazy Bones Nature Walk**  
with Fran Zygmunt and Gerri Griswold  
Prowl: 4:00 A.M., Walk: 8:00 A.M.  
Meet in front of the A. B. Cedar Room.

19 **Five Ponds on the Cusp of Winter**  
with Gerri Griswold  
10:00 A.M., Meet at the A. B. Cedar Room.

20 **Litchfield Hills Audubon Christmas**  
**Bird Count.** To volunteer, email Ray  
Belding: [hoatzin1@optonline.net](mailto:hoatzin1@optonline.net)

21-27 **Museum Kids Free Week \***  
Courtesy of Tara and Arthur Diedrick

25 **CHRISTMAS**  
Museum Closed



26 **Film: People of a Feather**  
2:00 P.M., A. B. Cedar Room



December 29 - 31  
**Wild & Wacky Winter Camp!**  
See page 9 for details.

## JANUARY

January 1, 2016  
**HAPPY NEW YEAR! Museum Closed**

2 **Winter Walk Along the Lake Trail &**  
**Butternut Brook Trail with Marlow Shami**  
1:00 P.M., Meet in the Museum.



## Adult Nature Study Workshops and Saturday Programs: Fall 2015



**Fungus Among Us with Dave Paton**  
**October 3, 2015, 10:00 A.M., A. B. Cedar Room**  
**Members: \$10.00 Non-Members: \$15.00**

Sharon Audubon's Dave Paton is giddy about mushrooms and wishes to share his enthusiasm with you! Spend a couple of hours in the classroom and forest with Dave learning do's, don'ts, basic identification, and anecdotes surrounding the fungus among us.



**Supernatural Tales of Connecticut with David Leff**  
**October 24, 2015 7:00 P.M., Keinholz Fire Pit**  
**DINNER INCLUDED!**  
**Members: \$25.00 Non-Members: \$30.00**

Poet and essayist David Leff delivers dramatic readings about the ghostly and weird around us. Meet the headless Horseman of Canton, the vanishing hitchhiker of Chester, the Jewett City vampires, and more! SPOOKY!



**Hiking & Healthful Eating with Gerri Griswold**  
**October 7, November 4, December 2, 2015**  
**6:00 P.M., A. B. Cedar Room**  
**Members: \$15.00 Non-Members: \$25.00 Per Session**

Take a brisk walk and tuck into a delicious, healthful, and easy to prepare meal. It's all about YOUR health and well being! Sign up early! Space is limited to 20 per session.



**Vulture Culture with Mary Beth Kaeser**  
**November 7, 2015, 2:00 P.M., A. B. Cedar Room**  
**Members: \$20.00 Non-Members: \$25.00**

Mary Beth exposes us to the beautiful world of vultures with her Turkey Vulture and Black Vulture. Learn about the plight of vulture species worldwide, natural history and more. More avian surprises will be on hand!



**Meet the Ghost Owl with Brian Bradley**  
**October 10, 2015, 2:00 P.M., A.B. Cedar Room**  
**Members: \$10.00 Non-Members: \$15.00**

Our favorite birds of prey specialist returns with his Barn Owl, E.T. in a one hour program that begins with a short film. Brian will then share his lovely owl with you and answer your questions about the species and owls in general. Bradley and his feathered friends are always full of surprises!



**All About Trees!: Watercolor Workshop**  
**December 5, 2015, 1:30 P.M., A. B. Cedar Room**  
**Members: \$35.00 Non-Members: \$45.00**

Learn how to create a beautiful painting perfect for holiday giving with Betsy Rogers-Knox. From realism to abstract, learn different watercolor techniques to portray trees in winter including a fun, whimsical holiday tree! All skill levels are welcome. All supplies are included. For ages 10 and up.

### Clip and Mail

___ <b>Fungus Among Us</b> .....	Member: \$10.00	Non-Member: \$15.00
___ <b>Hiking &amp; Healthful Eating</b> ...Oct 7__Nov 4__ Dec 2__.....	Member: \$15.00	Non-Member: \$25.00
___ <b>Meet the Ghost Owl</b> .....	Member: \$10.00	Non-Member: \$15.00
___ <b>Supernatural Tales of Connecticut</b> .....	Member: \$25.00	Non-Member: \$30.00
___ <b>Vulture Culture</b> .....	Member: \$20.00	Non-Member: \$25.00
___ <b>All About Trees in Watercolor</b> .....	Member: \$35.00	Non-Member: \$45.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle one: member non-member

Payment enclosed: Program fee: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Membership fee: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to White Memorial Conservation Center and mail to:  
 White Memorial, P.O. Box 368, Litchfield CT 06759

Become a member of the White Memorial Conservation Center and take advantage of the member discount, along with free admission to the Nature Museum, a discount in the Gift Shop, and receipt of the quarterly newsletter and calendar of events. Your tax-deductible fee will help sponsor programs like these. A family membership is \$50.00 per year and individual is \$35.00.

For more information call 860-567-0857.



A touch of cold in the Autumn night --  
 I walked abroad,  
 And saw the ruddy moon lean over a hedge  
 Like a red-faced farmer.  
 I did not stop to speak, but nodded,  
 And round about were the wistful stars  
 With white faces like town children.

~ Thomas Ernest Hulme





## Volunteer Spotlight: John Spaziani

Story and photograph by Gerri Griswold

Usually our Volunteer Spotlight focuses on an individual or individuals who make life at the Conservation Center so much more enjoyable. We rarely (and apologetically) think about the legions of volunteers who answer to White Memorial Forest Superintendent, Lukas Hyder. These people work tirelessly at invasive plant removal, trail maintenance, among myriad other tasks required to keep our Sanctuary looking the way it does! In this issue we celebrate one of these stellar individuals.

John Spaziani has been living in New Hartford for thirty-five years. John Spaziani is unstoppable. This retired former owner of The Body Shop in Pine Meadow, a five year prostate cancer survivor, fills his days with odd jobs and a very interesting hobby which I'll address in another paragraph. It is evident from the get-go that John needs to be kept busy to be happy.

Several years ago Spaziani was reading an article in a local paper which stated, "Americorps Comes to White Memorial!" John said, "WOW! The lightbulb went on!" He was always aware of White Memorial but did not know how vast and complicated an organization it is.

Spaziani can be found in his jack-of-all-trades mode on Tuesdays and Thursdays. He freely admits he will do anything but weeding. "I'll clean the toilets, but I won't weed!" DEAL!

John and his wife Patricia, a retired school teacher who taught at St Anthony's School in Winsted for 25 years, have three children; two boys and a girl. In his spare time John loves turning wood, something his supervisor at the Foundation, Lukas Hyder, knows a thing or two about. Spaziani became interested in the craft about a decade ago. He set up a small woodworking shop at his home (his man cave),

bought a lathe and started playing around. A friend inspired John to join the Central Connecticut Wood Turners Club. He attends monthly meetings. "Only problem is ... we're all old! We need new blood! Turning wood is not a young man's sport. It's something you do when you want to play around." Spaziani donated several of his beautiful pieces to the Conservation Center to sell at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Family Nature Day.

John is also a big Dunkin' Donuts fan! "I'm still up at 5:00 A.M. At 6:00 A.M. I solve the world's problems with the guys. No matter where you go you'll always find a bunch of old farts to talk to!"

Spaziani concludes, "I've had a good life... a good career... and I think it's time to give back." John hopes he can inspire others like him to come over to White Memorial and have fun!



*Handy Man! John Spaziani*



## What is iNaturalist?

White Memorial has joined *iNaturalist* as a way to see what our visitors are observing on the property and give them an opportunity to network with other people who visit the property at no charge.

### ***What is iNaturalist?***

*iNaturalist* is an online social network of people sharing biodiversity information to help each other learn about nature.

It's also a *crowdsourced species identification system* and an *organism occurrence recording tool*. You can use it to record your own observations, get help with identifications, collaborate with others to collect this kind of information for a common purpose, or access the observational data collected by *iNaturalist* users.

However, despite the fact that *iNaturalist* can be a bit technical and seems scientific, our *primary* goal in operating *iNaturalist* is to **connect people to nature**, and by that we mean getting people to feel that the non-human world has personal significance, and is

worth protecting. We have a pretty nerdy way of doing that, of course, but we really believe that recording information about nature in a social context is a tre-



mendous way to understand the awesome depth and breadth of life on Earth.

Our *secondary* goal is to generate scientifically valuable biodiversity data

from these personal encounters. We believe *iNaturalist* can achieve both of these goals simultaneously - in fact they reinforce one another - but when we get pulled in conflicting directions, we measure success by our primary goal. If we connect people to nature without contributing to any specific scientific outcomes or quantifiable conservation results, then we're still doing our job, but if we *just* contribute to science without helping people care about the natural world, we'll be on the wrong track.\*

Visit [www.inaturalist.org](http://www.inaturalist.org) to record your observations, view field guides designed with White Memorial in mind, and hear what your friends see. You can make observations from any computer whether it is a desktop, laptop, ipad/notebook, or smartphone. Free smartphone apps can be downloaded from several providers.

\*Reprinted from <http://www.inaturalist.org/pages/what+is+it> website visited August 25, 2015.



A kestrel can and does hover in the dead calm of summer days, when there is not the faintest breath of wind. He will, and does, hover in the still, soft atmosphere of early autumn, when the gossamer falls in showers, coming straight down as if it were raining silk.

~ Richard Jefferies

Photo credit: Rob Palmer [www.falconphotos.com](http://www.falconphotos.com)

## SCHOOL VACATION PROGRAMS

### **WILDLIFE IN WINTER**

November 11

(Veteran's Day)

Grades 1-3: 9:30am-12:30pm

Grades 4-6: 1:30pm-4:30pm

Members: \$18.00

Non-Members: \$25.00

### **WILD & WACKY WINTER CAMP**

December 29-31

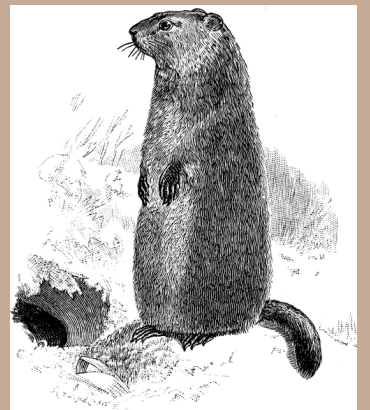
Grades 1-3: 9:30am-12:30pm

Grades 4-6: 1:30pm-4:30pm

Members: \$18/session or \$50/series

Non-Members: \$25/session

or \$70/series





## WHITE MEMORIAL THANKS

Northwest Community Bank + Litchfield Bancorp  
Krummi Travel LLC

and

An Anonymous Donor

for making our 34th Annual Family Nature Day possible.

### PARENTS & TEACHERS,

### CHECK OUT WHAT WE CAN OFFER YOUR CHILDREN!

#### GROUP / SCHOOL PROGRAMS

POND PROWL  
TAKE A HIKE  
SENSE-SATIONAL STUDY  
AMAZING ADAPTATIONS  
THE POWER OF PLANTS  
OUR LOCAL ECOSYSTEMS  
CLASSIFY THIS  
WAY TO GROW  
HABITAT CHAT

...PLUS MANY MORE!



VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR A  
COMPLETE LIST OF  
PROGRAMS AND MORE  
INFORMATION.

MANY PROGRAMS CAN BE  
CONDUCTED AT  
YOUR FACILITY!

PROGRAMS CAN BE  
BOOKED BY CALLING:  
860-567-0857

#### VACATION PROGRAMS (SEE PAGE 9 FOR DETAILS)



WILDLIFE IN WINTER  
NOVEMBER 11 (VETERAN'S Day)



WILD AND WACKY WINTER CAMP  
DECEMBER 29 - 31

#### AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS (SEE PAGE 3 FOR DETAILS)



AFTER SCHOOL ADVENTURES  
TUESDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS IN OCTOBER

NATURE'S NURSERY  
SECOND THURSDAY EVERY MONTH

'TIS THE SEASON FOR CRAFTS  
DECEMBER 8 & 9

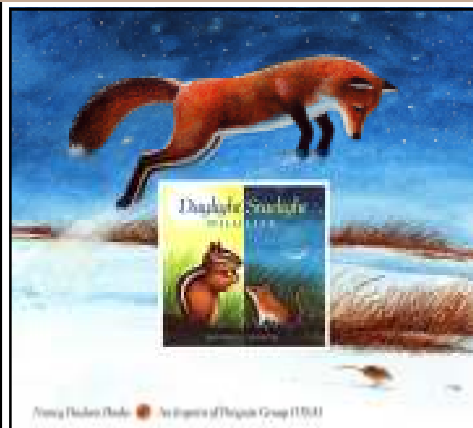
#### SCOUT PROGRAMS



CUSTOM-DESIGNED PROGRAMS FOR CUB SCOUTS AND  
GIRL SCOUTS TO HELP FULFILL BADGE REQUIREMENTS!  
WE ALSO OFFER FREE CAMPING TO ALL YOUTH NON-PROFITS!

### WHITE MEMORIAL CONSERVATION CENTER PROUDLY PRESENTS

### AN AFTERNOON WITH WENDELL MINOR



Saturday, November 21, 2015

3:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.

In the Museum

Spend some quality time with your family  
meeting and greeting internationally  
acclaimed artist and author Wendell Minor  
as he reads and signs his latest book for  
children, *Daylight Starlight Wildlife*.

Enjoy cider and cookies  
during the book signing.

Museum Open House

9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.



# Barn Owl Fact Sheet

Courtesy of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

**Identification:** The barn owl has a white, heart-shaped facial disk, no ear tufts and long legs. The bird appears white from below and golden-brown from above, with black specks all over. The long wings fold beyond the tail and the legs are feathered. The sexes can be distinguished by differences in coloration and weight. Males usually have whiter breasts with fewer and smaller dark specks. Females are typically heavier and have more and larger dark specks. Chicks are covered with down when born, but 8 to 10 weeks later they acquire adult-like plumage.

**Range:** The barn owl is found on every continent except Antarctica. The species is considered partly migratory in the northeastern United States, although many individuals remain there throughout the winter. Band recoveries indicate that some northeastern barn owls winter in Texas and the southeastern part of the country.

**Reproduction:** Barn owls are monogamous (one mate). They are not aggressive toward other barn owls and can nest within a half mile of other pairs. Barn owls are sexually mature at 1 year of age and, because they have a short lifespan, they breed only once or twice. Both natural and human-made sites are used for nesting and they are generally used repeatedly by other barn owls throughout the years. Nest sites include tree cavities, barns, abandoned and occupied buildings, and chimneys. Males use a courtship call to show the female the nest site. Barn owls do not construct a nest; the eggs are laid in a dark space surrounded by pellets. These brownish-black pellets, which are the regurgitated fur and bone fragments of each meal, average about 2 inches in size and are produced twice a day.

The 5-11 eggs (average 4-6) are laid every other day. The female incubates the eggs for 30-34 days, starting when the first egg is laid. Hatching occurs in the same order as the eggs were laid, so a gradation of ages and sizes can be observed in a brood. In



Photo credit: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/59323989@N00/3160394170>

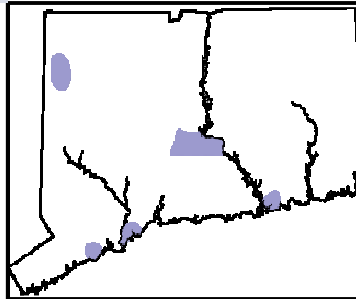
times of scarce food, the older and stronger young have a better chance of survival. Stronger, first-hatched nestlings have been observed eating and trampling younger, later-hatched owls. The young are fed by both adults for approximately 2 months. The adult male does most of the hunting and feeding.

**Reason for Decline:** Land use changes, particularly the decrease in the number of farms, have contributed to the decline of this species. Not only has foraging habitat been reduced, but the increased use of rodent poisons has resulted in a smaller food base. Natural nest sites in hollow trees are often limited, and human disturbance of the nest during incubation may cause nest abandonment. One common

cause of mortality is predation of young barn owls by raccoons. Other mortality factors include exposure to harsh weather, electrocution by power lines, predation by dogs and great-horned owls, and accidental entanglement in farm and industrial machinery.

**History in Connecticut:** The barn owl occurs in low numbers in Connecticut, probably because grasslands and farmlands are declining. The historic population status of the barn owl in Connecticut is unknown because the species is difficult to locate. Barn owls are principally found along the coast and within the large river valleys of the state. Breeding has been confirmed in coastal areas and near Middletown, where there is an active monitoring and nest box program.

**Interesting Facts:** The barn owl has exceptionally keen hearing and eyesight, making it a very



Connecticut Range

effective hunter. It can see during the day, but its relatively small eyes (for an owl) are directed forward and are better adapted for night vision. The ears are asymmetrical; one is level with the nostril and the other is higher, nearer the forehead. They are covered with feathered flaps that close for loud noises and open for soft sounds. The barn owl's hearing is so sharp that it can easily hunt for voles and shrews, which

are often concealed from view as they travel in runways beneath the grass. A family of 2 adults and 6 young may consume over 1,000 rodents during the 3-month nesting period.

Barn owls make a wide variety of sounds. The most common adult sounds are alarm shrieks, conversational calls (shorter, less intense shrieks), and a rapid squeaking or ticking, which is associated with the pair. The rasping, food-begging call of the young can be heard almost continuously from soon after sunset until just before sunrise. The young also hiss and bill-click when disturbed.

While perched, the barn owl has a habit of lowering its head and swaying from side to side. The bird sleeps so soundly during the day that it is difficult to wake it up until darkness arrives.

Other names for the barn owl are golden owl, white owl, monkey-faced owl and white-breasted barn owl.

**Protective Legislation:** *Federal* - Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. *State* - Connecticut General Statutes Sec. 26-311.

**What You Can Do:** Learn more about owls by consulting references at your local library. Enjoy owls from a distance; do not disturb adults or young, especially during the nesting season. If you live near suitable foraging habitat, provide nest boxes for barn owls. Box plans are available from the Wildlife Division. Most important, encourage the protection of large areas of dense grass foraging habitats (at least 24-105 acres).



ENDANGERED



**Habitat:** Open areas, such as grassy fields, old fields, wet meadows and wetland edges, around farms and rural towns. Daytime roost is usually an evergreen tree, belfry or barn.

**Weight:** Males, 14-19 ounces; females, 17-25 ounces.

**Length:** Males, 13-15 inches; females, 14-20 inches.

**Wingspan:** Males, 41-45 inches; females, 43-47 inches.

**Life Expectancy:** Few adults live beyond 3-4 years; high mortality the first year.

**Food:** Meadow voles, mice and shrews; also bats, skunks and various birds; frogs and large insects only if necessary.

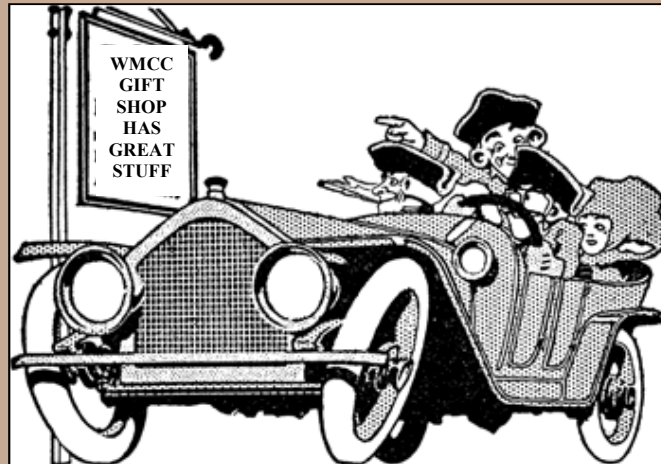
**Status:** State endangered.

The production of this Endangered and Threatened Species Fact Sheet Series is made possible by donations to the Endangered Species-Wildlife Income Tax Checkoff Fund.  
(rev. 12/99)



## **DON'T GET MALLED!**

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HANDCRAFTED IN CONNECTICUT.**

**SAVE TIME, GAS, AND AVOID THE MASSES!**

**MUSEUM OPEN HOUSE DECEMBER 11, 2015  
6:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.!**



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**I trust in nature for the stable laws  
of beauty and utility.  
Spring shall plant and autumn garner to the end of time.**

**~ Robert Browning**

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