

Spring Council Meeting, April 24th – 26th, 2026
The Heritage Hotel, Southbury, CT

Hemispheric Partnerships and Forest Bird Conservation

Meeting objectives:

- Create new connections within our Audubon Network, including with the CT/NY Advisory Board, and fellow chapter leaders, and meet Jess Hoey, Audubon's new VP for Conservation Action, Chapters.
- Enjoy the Bent of the River Audubon Center, learn about Audubon CT/NY's developing Wood Thrush and forest project, and brainstorm chapter involvement.
- Continue conversations and learning related to hemispheric conservation and connecting with international partners.
- Lay the foundation for international partnerships and next year's chapter grants, to be continued at the fall retreat.

Friday, April 24, 2026

- 4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. **Audubon Council Board Meeting** (*only council board leaders*)
(Congress Room)
- 4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. **Registration/Check-in for all attendees** (*Conference Hallway*)
Please look for the nametag instructions for Friday's dinner and find out your group number/directions for Saturday's Bent of the River field trip.
- 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. **Wood Thrush Networking party: Cocktails and Conversations**
(Garden Room)
- 7:00 p.m. **Chapter Council and CT/NY Advisory Board Buffet Dinner**
Dennis Riordan: Paul Winter, The Well-tempered Wood Thrush.
Mike Burger, Audubon's VP for CT/NY: Welcome and opening remarks,
introducing Jess Hoey, Audubon's new VP for conservation action, chapters.

Saturday, April 25, 2026

- TBD/6:30 a.m. TBD: optional earlybird bird walk
Decided/announced at Friday evening dinner if there's interest
- 6:45 a.m. – 7:45 a.m. **Breakfast & Networking** (*Garden Room*)
All attendees: Chapter leaders and CT/NY advisory board leaders
- 8:00 a.m. **Carpooling to leave hotel by 8:00 a.m.** (*meet in hotel lobby*)
- 8:30 a.m.– 11:30 a.m. **Morning Program and Field Trip – Bent of the River Audubon Center**
Field trip to view Bent of the River forest habitats and discuss management; and indoor discussion about hemispheric forest bird conservation project and chapter involvement.
- 11:30 a.m. **All attendee group photo** outside the barn before heading back for lunch
- 12:00 p.m. **Buffet Lunch at the Heritage Hotel for all attendees** (*Garden Room*)
(This concludes the formal CT/NY board meeting portion of the event, though many advisory board leaders are staying for the full meeting.)

- 1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. **Council Meeting welcome: Review objectives, meeting norms, and more!**
(Lincoln Room)
Susan O’Handley and Dennis Riordan, Audubon Council Board leaders
Mike Burger, VP Audubon CT/NY, and Laura McCarthy, Sr. Manager Network
Engagement
- 1:30 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. **What is Bird Friendly Forestry?**
Suzanne Treyger, Forest Program Manager Audubon CT/NY
- 2:15 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. **Policy Potlucks: Moving from Engagement to Action!**
Robert LaFrance, Audubon’s CT Policy Director, and Rochelle Thomas,
Greenwich Audubon Center Director
- 3:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. **Break (coffee/refreshments)**
- 3:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m. **Birds of a Feather Chapter Roundtable**
A new take on our chapter sharing time, moderated by Susan O’Handley, Chair,
Audubon Council of CT/NY
- 4:15 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. **Next Gen: working with college students and campus chapters**
Chapter roundtable breakout topics
- 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. **Free Time**
- 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. **Cocktail Reception – (Garden Room)**
(TBD, including singer/songwriter, Walter Jahn)
- 7:30 p.m. **Plated Award Dinner & Quiz**
Emcee: Susan O’Handley, Council Chair
Quizmaster: Dennis Riordan
Norman I. Stotz Award Presentation

Sunday, April 26, 2026

- TBD/6:30 a.m. TBD optional earlybird bird walk
Decided/announced at Saturday evening dinner if there’s interest
- 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. **Breakfast & Networking (Garden Room)**
- 8:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. **International Partnerships (Lincoln Room)**
Chapter presentations, pilot matching program, and brainstorming breakout groups
- 10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. **Break (coffee/refreshments)**

10:15 a.m. – 10:45 p.m. **Closing activity**

10:45 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. **Raffle drawing**

11:00 a.m. **Final announcements and Meeting Adjournment**

*Fall Retreat: Sept 25-27 White Eagle Conference Center, Hamilton, NY.
Call for volunteers for the fall retreat planning team.*

Thank you!