

# Hockanum River Bird Documentation

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## INTRODUCTION

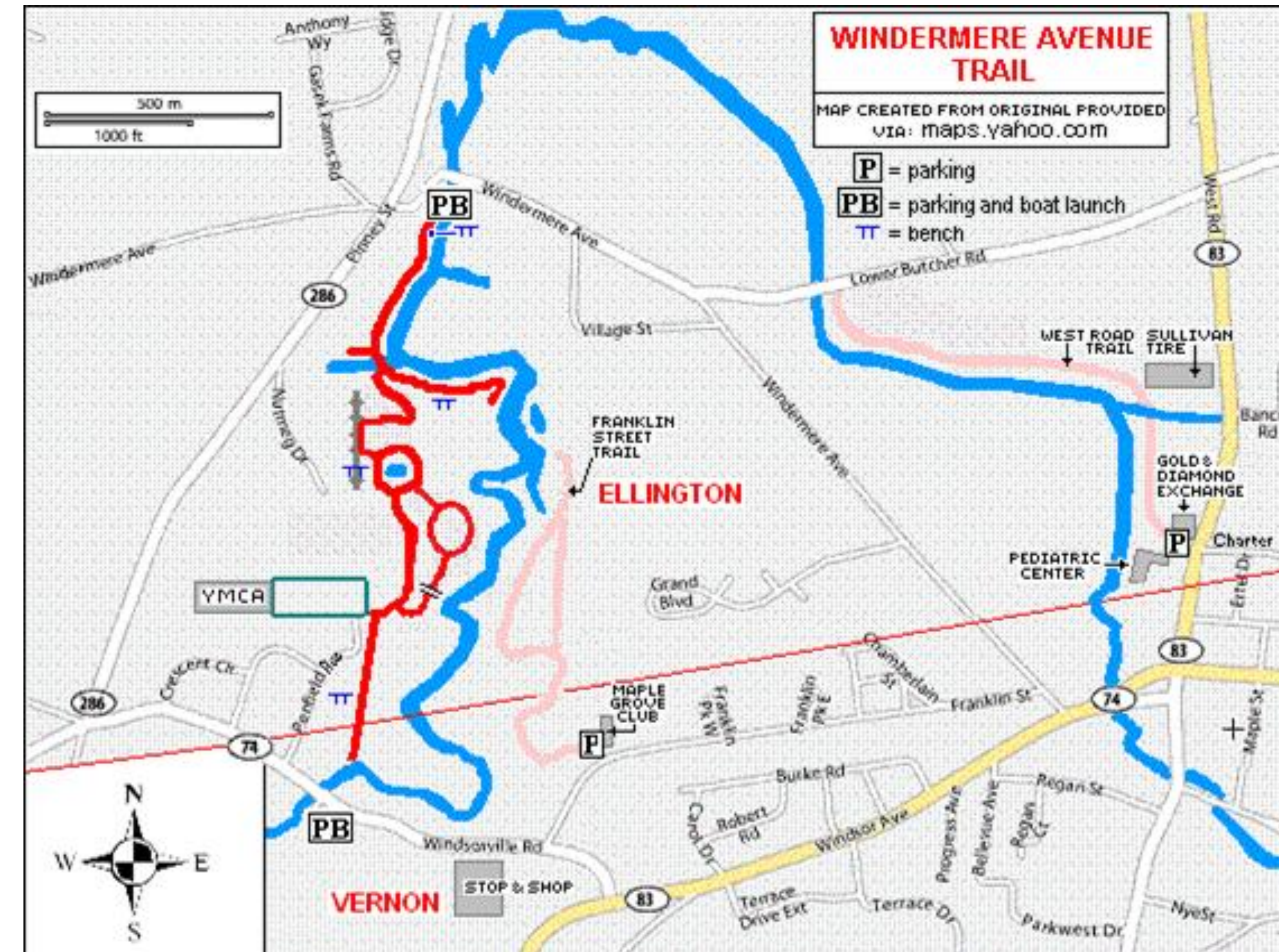
The goal of this study was to identify bird species in the Ellington Hockanum River Trail system in Ellington, CT. This is the first formal bird count on this property. It is important to monitor the relative abundance and population trends of bird species to learn more about them. If bird counts are regularly done over time, changes in populations may indicate a shift in environmental conditions.



Hockanum River Trail System - Windermere Trails (Windermere Avenue)

Left: Small freshwater marsh with nearby human development

Right: Freshwater stream through open field



This is a map of the Windermere Avenue Trail of the Hockanum River System, where we performed the bird count. The red line on the map marks the trail which consists of a variety of habitats ranging from forests to marshes.

## FIELD STUDY PROCEDURE

### ➤ Ellington Hockanum River Trail bird walk

- **Date:** Field study took place on October 26, 2019
- **Weather:** Foggy day in the morning made it a bit difficult to observe the birds, but it eventually cleared
- **Habitats:** forest, brush, open fields and field edges, freshwater wetlands and ponds
- **Data:** Observed different species of birds visually with binoculars or audibly in each of the habitats
- Recorded findings in a field notebook and used a bird identification field guide to verify
- **Reporting:** Produced a short report on the bird species we found, to be included in the Ellington Annual Report

## RESULTS

### Observed the following species of birds:

- ❖ American robin - most abundant; near low bushes
- ❖ Golden crowned kinglets
- ❖ Yellow rumped warblers
- ❖ White throated sparrows
- ❖ Canada geese
- ❖ Downy woodpeckers
- ❖ Song sparrows
- ❖ Blue jays
- ❖ White breasted nuthatches
- ❖ Red winged blackbirds
- ❖ Black capped chickadees
- ❖ Red tailed hawk



Source:  
[http://www.naturespicsonline.com/Nature15/\\_mg\\_6197.htm](http://www.naturespicsonline.com/Nature15/_mg_6197.htm)

Some of these species, like Canada geese, migrate south for the winter, but other species like the downy woodpecker stay here for the winter. Overall, we had a successful trip, finding 16 different species of birds on our trail walk.

### Heard, but did not see, the following birds:

- ❖ Carolina wrens
- ❖ Red bellied woodpeckers
- ❖ Nuthatches
- ❖ American crows



Red-bellied Woodpecker

Source: Department of Energy & Environmental Protection  
[www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2723&q=416874#Red-bellied](http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2723&q=416874#Red-bellied)

## CONCLUSION

- Field studies to identify and record bird species and their relative abundance should be repeated on a regular basis to learn more about the birds and their habitats and to determine if bird populations are being impacted by factors such as climate change.
- The report will help the Ellington Conservation Commission in their efforts to track native bird species in Ellington, CT. Bird counts are important for the conservation of local bird populations.
- Bird watching is a fun and educational experience that the public can engage in while walking on the trails. This was the first time I officially went bird watching and I learned a lot about the different species of birds and different ways to identify them. I developed a new fascination with these amazing creatures.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project would not have been possible without the help of my community partners, Denise Anamani and Ann Harford, who taught me so much and helped me every step of the way.

I also want to thank the UConn NRCA Conservation Ambassador Program team for teaching me so much in one week of field work. This experience has ignited a newfound interest in environmental conservation within me. I want to thank the team for a fun-filled experience that I thoroughly enjoyed.