

# Bird Observer

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VOLUME 33, NUMBER 6

DECEMBER 2005



*Barry L. Vandura*  
1997

# HOT BIRDS

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On August 27, 2005, the Brookline Bird Club's pelagic trip yielded this **Band-rumped Storm-Petrel** (left), after the fact. This and other photographs by Glen Tepke resulted in an identification after the trip.

A much-anticipated first state record (pending MARC review), this **Bell's Vireo** (right) was netted at Manomet in Plymouth on October 24, 2005. Photograph courtesy of the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences.



Al and Lois Richardson found and photographed this immature **Purple Gallinule** (left) at the Ashley Reservoir on November 3, 2005.

Blair Nikula and Peter Trull found two **Townsend's Solitaires** in North Truro on November 5, 2005. This stunning photograph of one of the birds (right) was taken by Blair.

*There were so many recent Hot Birds in Massachusetts that a couple of them spilled over onto the inside back cover.*



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## Editorial Announcement

This December issue marks the last produced under my role as Managing Editor. I retire with mixed emotions: regret that it is time to change my focus, great pride in the caliber of the journal, and unbounded appreciation for the warm support I have found from both *Bird Observer* staff and readers. You have made my job most rewarding!

I am very pleased to let you know that Paul Fitzgerald and Mary Todd Glaser (Toddy) will be assuming the editorial duties as of our February issue, Paul as Editor and Toddy as Associate Editor. Both are highly experienced editors who are deeply involved in the birding community. They are bringing talent and enthusiasm to their new challenge, and I look forward with great anticipation to the results of their collaboration. New material and other communications can be addressed to Paul at paulf-1@comcast.net.

*Carolyn Marsh*



# Bird Observer

A bimonthly journal — to enhance understanding, observation, and enjoyment of birds  
**VOL. 33, NO. 6 DECEMBER 2005**

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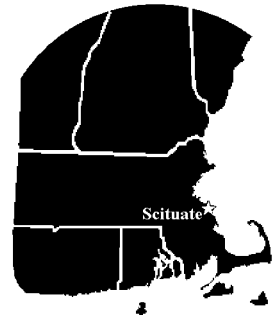
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# Where to Bird in Scituate

*Glenn d'Entremont*

Scituate is located along the coast of Massachusetts in an area commonly referred to as the South Shore. The northern end is a promontory jutting out into the Atlantic at the mouth of Cohasset harbor, and the southern end is bordered by the North River and Marshfield. To the northwest it is bordered by Wompatuck State Park (Picture Pond and the Mount Hope trail are in Scituate) and to the west by Norwell. To the east, the Atlantic Ocean makes its presence known during nor'easters.



There is good birding in Scituate throughout the year with Harlequin Ducks, Purple Sandpipers, and Black Guillemots, along with the more common seabirds in the winter, staging Red-Necked Grebes in April, northbound migrants in May, diverse nesting species such as Piping Plovers and Louisiana Waterthrushes during the breeding season, southbound shorebirds in summer, and numerous landbird migrants during the prolonged southbound migration. Exploring the nooks and crannies of Scituate can produce a diverse and respectable list.

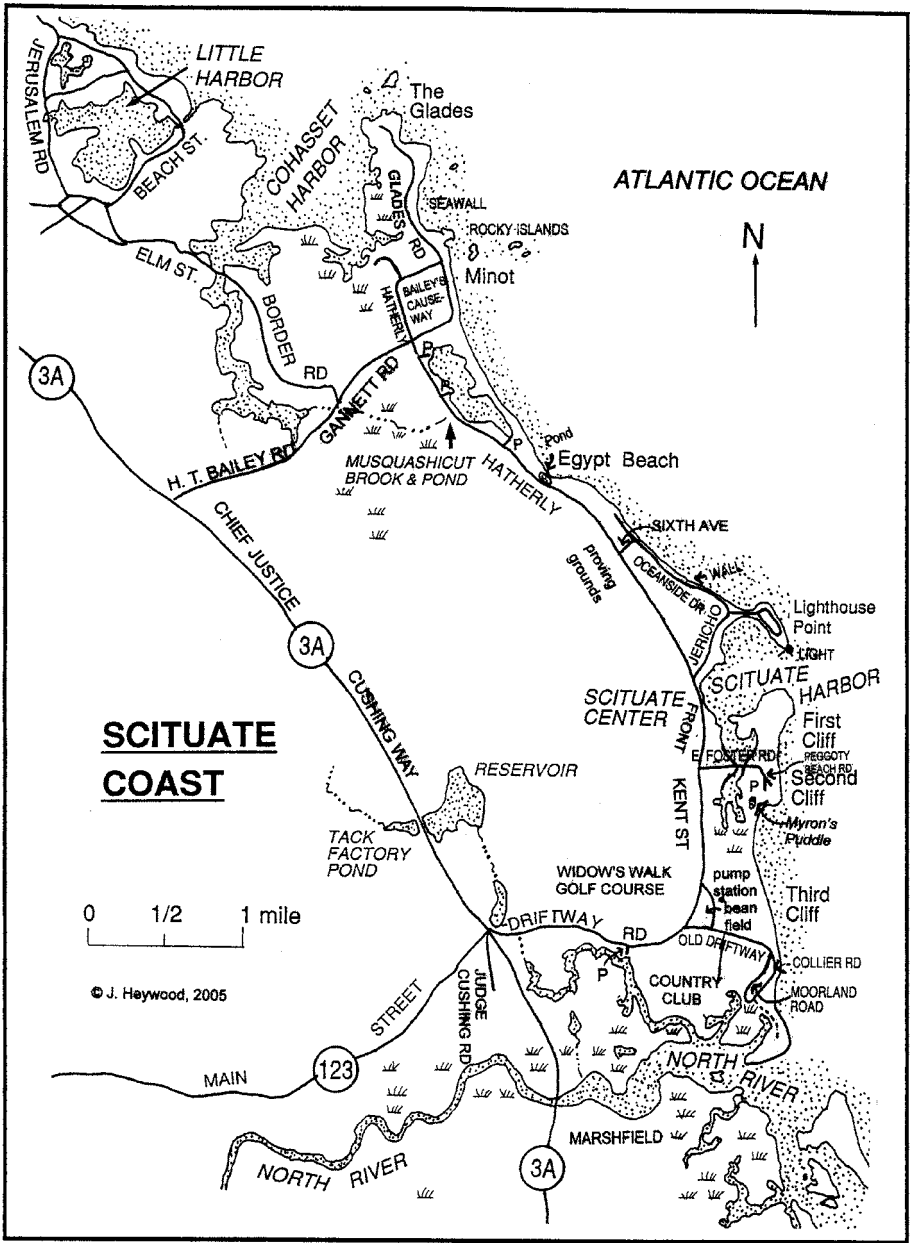
## **The Glades and Minot**

Located on a northward-facing peninsula, the privately owned Glades perhaps offer the most annual bird diversity in the town. Visitors on foot are welcome to walk and go birding there. With a rocky coastline, proximity to both pelagic and inshore feeding areas, estuarine tidal flats, impenetrable coastal thickets, upland oak forest with scattered pine and cedar trees, planted garden plots, and feeders, the place offers any flying waif a number of habitat options. There is even lawn and a rocky washover section.

To get to the Glades, take Henry Turner Bailey Road east from Route 3A in north Scituate. Follow this road through two sets of lights (name changes to Gannett Road at first light) for 2.3 miles. Gannett Road ends at the ocean, and Glades Road begins on the left. Parking is problematic here; birders can live park along this road for short periods of time, but do not leave your vehicle unattended. An excellent view is obtained at the highest point along Glades Road. Look for seabirds here.

From late fall through mid-spring, perusal of the rocky islands and surrounding waters could result in locating Harlequin Duck, Great Cormorant, Purple Sandpiper, Red-necked Grebe, King Eider, and Barrow's Goldeneye as well as the more common seafoal. Red-necked Grebes begin staging here in late March before heading north; counts sometimes total over a hundred individuals.

Continue on Glades Road. During the winter, drive past Bailey's Causeway on the left and live-park at the end of the seawall to scan the water. Harlequin Ducks are usually found from here along the rocky islands and rocky coastline to the north.



Carefully check the same islands for Purple Sandpipers. Look for King Eider and Barrow's Goldeneye. Scanning beyond the rocks as well as toward Minot Light may reveal a Black Guillemot or two.

If you want to walk the Glades, turn left onto Bailey's Causeway. There is a restricted parking area on the right which may offer space. Walk north on Glades Road past the homes on the left. Pay attention to the swallows in spring, since a Cliff Swallow pair nested under the eaves of one of these houses in recent years. Just before the gated entrance to the Glades (many times open, but do not drive beyond this point), look over the rocky beach and outcroppings for shorebirds and terns. A Royal Tern was once seen cruising past this location.

Birding in the Glades is best during fall migration, with such sightings as Philadelphia Vireo, White-eyed Vireo (has nested in years past), Golden-winged Warbler, Hooded Warbler, and Yellow-breasted Chat. Under the right conditions, there can be occasional fallouts in the spring, particularly when a backdoor cold front abruptly stops northward migrants and puts them down along the coast.

Once beyond the gate, the paved road is a private right of way and remains Glades Road. The thickets begin immediately. Gray Catbirds are abundant in season. Walk the road carefully. There are no houses on the left (west) side of the road, and any trail can be taken. The houses on the right side are widely spaced, but do not take any trails since they invariably lead to someone's yard.

Flycatchers, vireos, kinglets, thrushes, warblers, and sparrows can be encountered anywhere. Remaining on the road, continue walking north. After passing several houses on the right, watch for a wider path on the left side (actually an old road) with a chain across the entrance. Take this trail, and carefully bird the area. Continue on this path to an old World War II cement lookout tower. From here there are several paths and trails. Most eventually return to the road, but one or two head toward the adjacent salt marsh. If you are encountering lots of birds to this point, continuing on these paths can be very rewarding. If birds are few or time short, turn back to Glades Road. The section between the road and tower is usually the birdiest.

After returning to Glades Road, continue north. Just beyond the chained road, Glades Road goes down a hill to a rocky, short causeway, or washover spot. At the bottom, but before the causeway, there is an old overgrown road that follows the contour of the hill to the left (west). Along with the chained road, this can be one of the birdiest parts of the Glades. Through the years I have seen two Yellow-breasted Chats at this locale as well as two Hooded Warblers and a Golden-winged Warbler.

Return to the causeway. Crossing the washover area to the west will allow scanning of the marsh and tidal flats which, depending on the tide, might reveal feeding shorebirds. Most will be common species, but there have been sightings of Stilt Sandpipers, Whimbrels, and a Marbled Godwit at the Glades. If one pushes through the thickets on the lower road described above, a closer view of the marsh area can be obtained.

As you continue on the road, the short distance to the next hill can be interesting. The thickets and trees along the hill base can harbor migrants. Beyond these thickets out to the end of the Glades, the landscape has been cleared so that lawns dominate. However, ocean scanning in winter from this point toward Minot Light can reveal Black Guillemots and possibly other alcids. At lower tides, dozens of seals can be seen hauled out on the rocks below the bluff at the end.

### **Hatherly Road and Scituate Harbor**

Return to your car, and turn right (west) out of the parking area onto Bailey's Causeway. At the stop sign, turn right into the golf club parking area. The edge of the road and golf course is marshland. At high tide, the discreet birder can drive the road and access road of the course to scan for birds. Little Blue Heron, egrets, and even a Bald Eagle have been seen from here.

Exit the golf club, and proceed south. This is Hatherly Road, which eventually takes one to Scituate Harbor. Go through the lights, and after a quarter-mile turn left on Musquashicut Avenue. This road borders the north end of Musquashicut Pond (pronounced mus-SQUASH-i-cut). This coastal pond has hosted some interesting birds over the years, including an Eared Grebe, a one-eyed American White Pelican, two American Avocets, Barrow's Goldeneye, and Caspian Tern. The pond freezes completely only during the harshest of winters, with the southern end remaining open longer. Large numbers of Mute Swans plus other common waterfowl can be expected. Be diligent; Belted Kingfishers can often be seen along the shores.

Return to Hatherly Road, and turn left (southeast). Turn left into the small dirt parking area just before crossing a small bridge. Scan the waterway in both directions. This is the southern section of Musquashicut Pond. Walk out on the grass to where a hidden cove can be viewed on the left. In season, look for masses of swallows, and check the rocks for resting Least Terns. This section is the last to freeze, so if the north section is frozen, still pull in here and check for waterfowl.

Continue southeast along Hatherly Road for about 0.8 mile. From late fall through early spring, turn in to the parking area for Egypt Beach. Take the paved path out of the north end of the parking area up the embankment to scan the ocean. Be cautious as you climb, looking left (west). The extreme south end of Musquashicut Pond is here, and ducks can be taking cover along the vegetation, or else will suddenly rise out of the pond.

Return to Hatherly Road, and continue south (left) for 0.1 mile and, if traffic permits, look at the small pond on the left (east). In season, there are often Snowy or Great egrets on the shore. Continue 0.4 mile to Sixth Avenue on the left. During the winter, the thickets along Hatherly and Sixth Avenue can be productive places to locate Northern Flicker, Carolina Wren, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, and Yellow-rumped Warbler, with other winter sprites thrown in. Bohemian Waxwings have been found here mixed in with the Cedar Waxwings. Across Hatherly Road the property is part of the old Scituate Proving Grounds, where the thickets should also be checked for assorted land birds.



If you are looking for wintering ocean birds, continue on Sixth Avenue to the end. Turn right onto Oceanside Drive. After 0.3 mile, there will be a large gravel open area with no houses. Pull off the road on the right (west) side, grab a scope, and walk to the seawall to scan the ocean. One can be rewarded with loons, grebes, and other waterfowl. Western Grebe and King Eider have been seen here.

Return to your car, and continue on Oceanside, which becomes Jericho Road (it joins from the right) after 0.3 mile. At the split in the road, obey the signs, and stay right on Lighthouse Road. Follow to the parking area for Scituate Light. Scope the area around the lighthouse, which marks the entrance to Scituate Harbor. King Eiders have been found here, and in 1977 this was the location of a drake Steller's Eider, the sole record for Massachusetts and only the second for the Atlantic Coast of the United States.

Once back at your car, follow the one-way signs to return to Jericho Road. Stay on Jericho, taking care to turn left to follow the edge of Scituate Harbor. Pass Hatherly Road on the right, and continue up the hill to the traffic light. Turn left onto Front Street. Follow through Scituate center, and turn left into the parking area just south of the center before a small bridge.

Turn right at the first opening in the curb to park in the first parking area. This will offer a view of a creek which empties into Scituate harbor at this point. This section is tidal, but all tide situations should provide an opportunity to sample the birds using the area. Wintering Mallards are fed here, and the occasional Green-winged Teal, American Wigeon, or Northern Pintail may drop in. Once in a while a "white-winged" gull is also found in winter. Other views from the parking area allow one to scan the harbor for Common Goldeneye and Bufflehead in season.

Return to Front Street, and turn left (south) and cross the bridge. Proceed to a busy intersection, and turn left (east) onto Edward Forster Road. Take this causeway over an inlet to the intersection beyond. Turn right onto Peggoty Beach Road, and after 0.1 mile turn right into a large parking area. At the far end of the parking lot, there is a pool known to local birders as Myron's Puddle (named for long-time South Shore birder Myron Litchfield). Even though the highest tides fill this pool, rain will influence its depth as well. In season, a number of interesting ducks and shorebirds have been seen here over the years, such as "Eurasian" Green-winged Teal, Ruff, and Curlew Sandpiper. Viewing is best at high tide when birds from the shore and the tidal creeks are forced into the pan.

### **The Driftway and Third Cliff**

Retrace your steps to Edward Forster Road and the busy intersection. At the stop sign, carefully turn left onto Kent Street. Follow along the marsh, and turn left to remain on Kent Street; it is clearly marked but one can easily pass by if just following the traffic. Continue to a small brick pumping station on the left with a small area to park. From here to the intersection with Old Driftway Road, the thickets along the road and an old bean field on the right can produce a wide assortment of migrants during fall and early winter. A nice mix of warblers and vireos can be coaxed out of

the thickets along with the occasional cuckoo, while the field can produce a nice variety of sparrows, including Field and White-crowned. A Black-throated Gray Warbler and several Clay-colored Sparrows have been found in this area. Across Old Driftway from the bean field is another “waste” area which can hold migrants.

Retrieve your car, and drive to the intersection just described. Turn left onto Old Driftway. One can then turn right into the Scituate Country Club driveway and follow to the clubhouse parking area. Check in at the clubhouse for permission to bird from this spot. From the back of this lot one has a commanding view of the North River marsh. At high tide, egrets and herons, including Little Blue and Tri-colored herons, can be found, plus the occasional American Bittern in fall. Just a short distance south, Yellow-crowned Night-Herons have been seen a few times on the Marshfield side of this marsh, so keep a watchful eye. Raptors can be seen roosting in the trees or soaring over the marsh.

Return to Old Driftway, and turn right (east). Follow the road to where it turns right. Third Cliff is a popular summer bathing beach, and if what few parking spots exist are taken, it is not recommended to park anywhere else unless one does not mind getting a parking ticket. Evenings during the week may offer the best chance to park for shorebirding after a day’s work. If a spot is vacant, park, get the scope, and walk along Collier Road to where it meets with Moorland Road (Moorland and Collier form a circle). Locate the path right-of-way at the apex of the intersection, and walk between the houses. This path ends at the marsh edge and leads to a well-worn path and a boardwalk over the tidal creeks. This walkway ends at a barrier beach.

Third Cliff beach (known locally as the “Spit”) might be the best shorebird spot between Point of Pines in Revere and Duxbury Beach. All commonly occurring Massachusetts shorebirds are present in season plus some localized species as Piping Plover (nesting), Red Knot, Whimbrel, Willet, and Purple Sandpiper. Rarities such as Red-necked Stint, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Lesser Black-backed Gull, and Caspian Tern have been recorded here. High tide is best for viewing because the birds are closer and flocked, but even at low tide the birds are present, so a visit is worthwhile at any point in the tide cycle.

During low tide, there are areas with extensive stones and rocks. Scan these carefully since they could be crawling with shorebirds such as Semipalmated Plovers, Ruddy Turnstones, Red Knots, and peep. Check out the terns in the area; Least Terns nest on the beach, and their nests are monitored and cordoned off. Roseate and Common terns also roost here in late summer.

Once Third Cliff has been thoroughly birded, return to your vehicle. Proceed following the one-way signs around Collier and Moorland Roads, which returns one to Old Driftway. Turn left (west), and continue past the country club, around the bend and up the hill to the stop sign. Turn left onto the Driftway. Continue for about half a mile to a parking area on the left, noting the Purple Martin boxes at the Widow’s Walk Golf Course on the right (north) side of the road. Pull into the parking area on the left.

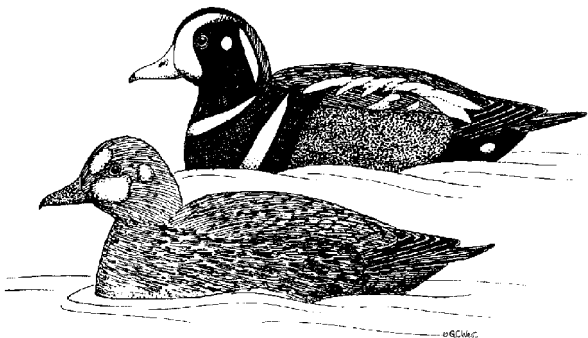
This area is known as the “Driftway” to locals. The pathways and walkways here have recently been upgraded, and the immediate area has been designated the A. J. McEachern Trail. The paths and walkways that crisscross this area are regularly used by people walking dogs. Be alert for vireos, flycatchers, warblers, kinglets, thrushes, sparrows, and blackbirds. Check the sky for a passing raptor or two. A scan along the waterway may produce a Belted Kingfisher as well as more egrets and herons. There is a walkway along the water with thickets on the left. During fall migration these thickets can be especially productive. The path following the watercourse terminates at the marsh where Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows can be found and occasionally a Virginia Rail or Sora.

### Other Areas

Return to the parking lot, and turn left onto the Driftway. At the complex intersection with Route 3A, turn right (north) onto 3A for 0.8 mile until water appears on both sides of the road. There are spots to pull off. In season, this old reservoir can hold either ducks, such as Wood Duck or Hooded Merganser, or sandpipers and plovers, depending upon the level of the water, which seems to change dramatically from time to time. Baird’s Sandpiper has been reported here several times in the past.

Return south to the complex intersection of Route 123, Route 3A, and the Driftway. Just after the light, turn right on Judge Cushing Road just before PJ’s restaurant. Continue past the houses to where the road ends at a tidal pool surrounded by higher land covered with trees and thickets. This small area has produced some interesting birds in the past, such as Great Horned Owl, Baird’s Sandpiper, and Rusty Blackbird. 🦆

*Glenn d’Entremont has been birding the South Shore for over twenty years with a focus on bird distribution and abundance. He is a regular contributor of sightings to Bird Observer and is the current Vice-President of the South Shore Bird Club. He would like to thank Wayne Petersen for reviewing the first draft of this article and offering suggestions for clarity, along with additional bird sightings and records. David Clapp offered suggestions for parking in the Third Cliff area, and Steve Maguire assisted in the getting the proper name for the A. J. McEachern Trail.*



HARLEQUIN DUCKS BY GEORGE C. WEST

# Take a Second Look: 25 Years and Counting

*Maury Hall and Soheil Zende*

Take a Second Look (TASL) Boston Harbor winter bird counts have been a fixture on the Greater Boston birding scene for a quarter century. The counts begin each year in November, when the masses of wintering seabirds arrive in the Harbor, and continue into March. Over the years, countless volunteers have braved frigid conditions to assemble what has become the definitive body of winter bird population data for Boston Harbor.

The year 2005 marks the 25th anniversary of this project, an impressive milestone and appropriate moment to summarize and report on the project and its findings to date. In this article, the first of a two-part TASL retrospective, Maury Hall, the TASL data compiler for the past 17 years, sketches a brief history of the project, explains the basic techniques of the counts, presents summary data for TASL's first quarter century, and provides brief accounts of winter waterfowl population trends.

Part 2, to be published in a subsequent issue of *Bird Observer*, will evaluate factors which explain some of the more obvious population trends.

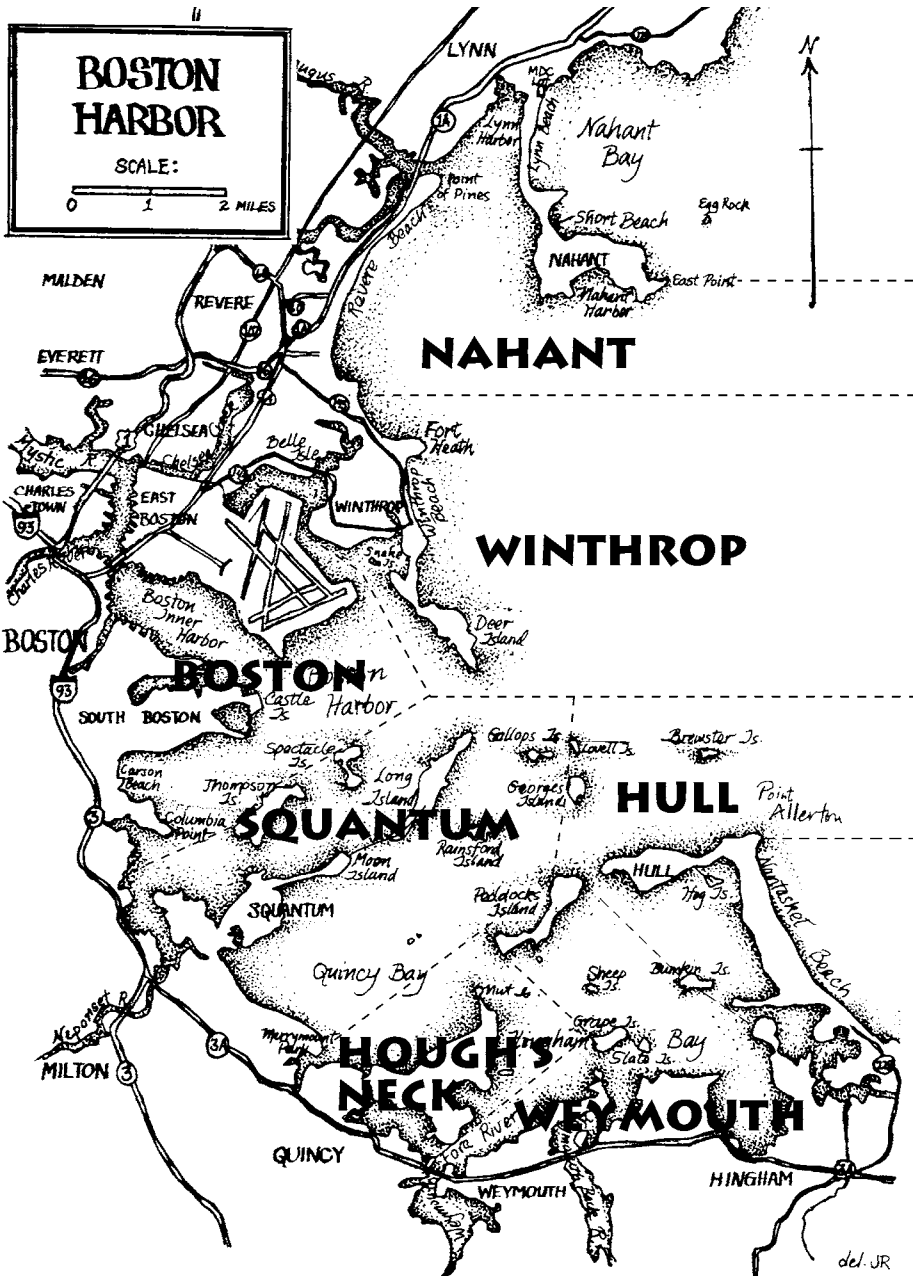
## History

The stimulus for the creation of TASL was "Black Sunday," December 15, 1976. This was the date the *Argo Merchant*, an aging Liberian tanker, went aground on Nantucket Shoals, southeast of Nantucket Island, spilling 7.6 million gallons of industrial heating oil into one of the most important waterbird wintering areas on the East Coast.

The extent of the impact of the spill on avifauna was unclear, however, due to an absence of reliable bird population data. Common Eider, Long-tailed Duck, alcids, and other species were known to winter in Nantucket Sound in large numbers, but precisely how large was not known: 50,000 birds? 500,000 birds? Complicating the damage assessment was the difficulty of estimating total mortality from the number of oiled birds actually found.

Several local birders became concerned that if a similar tragedy occurred in their own backyard, Boston Harbor, the damage could not be accurately assessed. They knew that many birds overwinter in the Harbor but not the numbers of each species or if these numbers stay the same from year to year. A search through *Bird Observer* records beginning with its first issues from 1973 found that, while rarities like King Eider were duly reported, the numbers for more common species like Common Eider were only sporadically reported. In some winters there were no reports of Common Eider in the Harbor at all even though it was widely known that many thousands could be seen every winter in the Inner Harbor and off Deer Island.

In 1978, at a party celebrating *Bird Observer's* first "Where To Go Birding" book (*Where to Find Birds in Eastern Massachusetts*) the TASL project was conceived.



Boston Harbor and Lynn Harbor shown divided into TASL census sectors or routes. Winthrop and Boston sectors are further subdivided into 4 additional routes. Along each route birds are counted from specified census points. Map by Julie Roberts.

Table 1 A- Results from November TASL censuses.

Date	R.T. Loon	C.Loan	H.Grebe	F.N.Grebe	D.C.Corm	G.Corm	Corn spp	G.B.Heron	Brant	C.Goose	M.Swan	B.Duck	Mallard	Scamp	Elder
11/23/80	7	14	340	1	23	1401	34	12	1237	85	0	1989	71	2356	9350
11/29/81	1	5	60	2	11	425	0	1	1697	0	0	1277	62	679	5908
11/13/82	13	13	184	0	153	3	0	2	378	17	1	789	16	48	2138
11/19/83	118	17	403	16	69	233	77	7	1756	5	0	1752	98	912	9129
11/13/88	2	2	68	0	170	0	5	29	1182	7	0	1174	119	326	295
12/10/89	0	4	58	6	31	39	1	4	1090	205	6	2871	404	796	3657
11/18/90	2	9	64	1	118	34	46	20	1417	31	0	1430	102	176	2419
11/24/91	23	13	169	5	86	61	99	30	1959	67	12	1199	117	1059	8723
11/22/92	11	6	253	28	57	36	9	29	1516	141	9	1297	154	448	5438
11/14/93	57	10	349	14	211	15	83	28	1467	44	4	1288	102	127	264
11/20/94	23	4	195	11	341	25	194	23	1454	332	2	1145	140	95	5908
11/19/95	69	36	189	20	188	10	81	7	1476	135	5	1311	248	54	5431
11/24/96	41	6	158	6	18	85	0	4	945	186	5	651	78	52	10825
11/16/97	75	24	279	16	89	10	30	24	868	422	12	796	199	76	7116
11/22/98	128	22	420	99	40	22	255	13	997	645	9	902	125	753	10802
11/21/99	118	35	619	71	339	25	433	30	1295	436	13	615	130	507	9748
11/12/00	123	43	324	31	1606	34	63	16	1219	432	8	462	147	307	13280
11/18/01	77	17	357	89	69	29	330	11	833	332	7	342	64	504	8025
11/23/03	41	22	287	102	127	26	49	16	2327	577	11	378	107	615	9508
11/21/04	122	46	436	45	69	18	57	15	673	674	8	733	106	917	8014
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1289</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1120</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>6799</b>

Date	Scoter	Gidneye	Bullfinch	R.B.Merg	L.T.Duck	B.B.Plo	Sndrling	P.Sand	Dunlin	Bmpartes	Bl.Hd.Gull	Harb Seal	Total Species	Total Birds	Party Hours
11/23/80	705	504	1612	2596	59	48	23	508	450	55	1	1	38	16920	25
11/29/81	904	157	775	997	0	25	5	87	527	253	1	0	33	10128	25
11/13/82	444	39	1233	903	2	15	4	85	56	230	0	2	28	3755	22
11/19/83	1280	354	2775	2846	261	309	33	80	657	765	1	2	39	14592	25
11/13/88	413	391	2141	767	0	11	10	8	87	712	5	2	28	3379	22.75
12/10/89	504	1316	2552	1235	18	2	153	68	45	26	3	13	29	9172	38.5
11/18/90	397	321	2866	2494	35	45	206	1	95	861	15	2	34	5869	28.75
11/24/91	438	611	1902	2345	23	27	100	25	304	1497	4	4	38	13622	28.5
11/22/92	1848	1017	3162	3039	36	13	324	13	265	863	4	11	30	9432	38.75
11/14/93	828	528	2077	2444	0	66	113	301	33	394	3	18	33	4063	34.75
11/20/94	789	325	2093	2050	0	2	4	4	37	1112	1	15	33	9892	33
11/19/95	2266	263	1836	1899	16	58	525	29	221	1084	5	9	35	9260	34.5
11/24/96	730	174	1416	966	41	31	63	0	2	445	1	9	31	13060	37.75
11/16/97	3922	188	1490	1047	27	13	17	121	8	575	0	4	38	10036	39.25
11/22/98	2725	516	2400	2110	97	8	358	27	0	1179	1	18	37	15232	38.25
11/21/99	2362	461	3021	2876	17	10	245	391	58	528	2	53	37	14414	36.5
11/12/00	2008	53	2177	2285	87	52	366	6	13	208	1	14	40	18095	39.25
11/18/01	715	147	1941	1563	59	10	467	3	82	262	0	8	35	11086	38.5
11/23/03	1372	224	1560	1358	67	25	90	178	188	169	0	4	29	14193	37.75
11/21/04	2835	401	1733	1693	260	4	23	104	365	79	0	64	31	11933	39.25
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>1374</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>2038</b>	<b>1876</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>565</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>10907</b>	<b>33</b>

Craig Jackson, Wayne Petersen, Leif Robinson, Bob Stymeist, Soheil Zende, and others agreed that a series of systematic censuses of the Harbor were needed. Robinson suggested the name Take A Second Look (TASL) and it stuck. The name implies that birding for many, although still a hobby, involves much more than simply listing species. TASLing means looking at birds more closely — studying them with the larger project goals in mind — and that means counting common species, observing behavior, and keeping track of seasonal variations.

**Table 1B - Factors impacting November censuses.**

Date	
11/23/80	Missing approximately 5% of current sites.
11/29/81	Missing approximately 5% of current sites; rough seas.
11/13/82	Missing approximately 5% of current sites; heavy rain; no data from Weymouth or Hull.
11/19/83	Missing approximately 5% of current sites.
11/13/88	No data from Nahant and 75% of Hull; rough seas.
12/10/89	No access to Deer I.
11/18/90	No access to Deer I., rough seas.
11/24/91	Drizzle, rough seas, no data from 85% of Hull.
11/22/92	
11/14/93	
11/20/94	Rough seas.
11/19/95	
11/24/96	
11/16/97	
11/22/98	
11/21/99	
11/12/00	Eastern Wollaston Bay not covered.
11/18/01	
11/23/03	
11/21/04	

Pilot surveys were conducted in 1978 and 1979, but 1980 marked the official beginning of the TASL Boston Harbor bird census project. For the first two years surveys were undertaken in November, February, March, and once in April. In 1982 a January count was added. After five years a decision was made to cut back to just one midwinter census in January. However, in 1988 the Massachusetts Audubon Society's Boston office, with a mandate to monitor the conditions of the Harbor prior to the Harbor cleanup provided an infusion of new volunteers to the TASL project. In subsequent years surveys were made in November, January, February, and sporadically in March.

### **The Counts**

For TASL purposes, "Boston Harbor" extends from the eastern tip of Nahant, south to Allerton Point in Hull. The Harbor is divided into seven count areas: Nahant, Winthrop, Central, Squantum, Hough's Neck, Weymouth, and Hull. There are approximately 130 specific points within these seven areas from which observations are made. The surveys are conducted on Sundays and are typically scheduled to coincide with midmorning high tides so that birds will presumably be closer to the observers. To ensure the synchrony of observations, eight to ten teams, each made up of one to four people, work simultaneously in the seven count areas. Overall, the Harbor is fully covered during approximately a four-hour window. For consistency, teams have been kept together and cover the same areas as much as possible.

Participants count all waterbirds (i.e., ducks, geese, waders, shorebirds, alcids, and gulls (with the exception of Herring, Ring-billed, and Great Black-backed gulls)). Raptors, seals, and relatively rare passerines and terrestrial mammals are also routinely reported. Participants are asked to record the time at each observation point and to note birds flying to or from another team's area or birds that may be observed from another area. This information is evaluated during the compilation in order to minimize obvious double counts.

## Results

Results from the November, January, and February counts can be found in Tables 1A, 2A, and 3A respectively.

There are several factors that have complicated year-to-year comparisons of our data set, beginning with an increase in the number of censuses and participants resulting from the involvement of the Massachusetts Audubon Society. Several areas that had previously been covered by just one team were subsequently divided into two

Table 1C - Birds per party hour-November.

Date	R.T. Loon	C.Loon	H.Grebe	R.N.Grebe	D.C.Corm	G.Corm	Corn spp	G.B.Heron	Branl	C.Goose	M.Swan	B.Duck	Mallard	Scaup	Elder
11/23/80	0.28	0.56	13.60	0.04	0.92	56.04	1.36	0.48	49.48	3.40	0.00	79.56	2.84	94.24	374.00
11/29/81	0.04	0.20	2.40	0.08	0.44	17.00	0.00	0.04	67.88	0.00	0.00	51.08	2.48	27.16	236.32
11/13/82	0.59	0.59	8.36	0.00	6.95	0.14	0.00	0.09	17.18	0.77	0.05	35.86	0.73	2.18	97.18
11/19/83	4.72	0.68	16.12	0.64	2.76	9.32	3.08	0.28	70.24	0.20	0.00	70.08	3.92	36.48	365.16
11/13/88	0.09	0.09	2.99	0.00	7.47	0.00	0.22	1.27	51.96	0.31	0.00	51.60	5.23	14.33	12.97
12/10/89	0.00	0.10	1.51	0.16	0.81	1.01	0.03	0.10	28.31	5.32	0.16	74.57	10.49	20.68	94.99
11/18/90	0.07	0.31	2.23	0.03	4.10	1.18	1.60	0.70	49.29	1.08	0.00	49.74	3.55	6.12	84.14
11/24/91	0.81	0.46	5.93	0.18	3.02	2.14	3.47	1.05	68.74	2.35	0.42	42.07	4.11	37.16	306.07
11/22/92	0.28	0.15	6.53	0.72	1.47	0.93	0.23	0.75	39.12	3.64	0.23	33.47	3.97	11.56	140.34
11/14/93	1.64	0.29	10.04	0.40	6.07	0.43	2.39	0.81	42.22	1.27	0.12	37.06	2.94	3.65	7.60
11/20/94	0.70	0.12	5.91	0.33	10.33	0.76	5.88	0.70	44.06	10.06	0.06	34.70	4.24	2.88	179.03
11/19/95	2.00	1.04	5.48	0.58	5.45	0.29	2.35	0.20	42.78	3.91	0.14	38.00	7.19	1.57	157.42
11/24/96	1.09	0.16	4.19	0.16	0.48	2.25	0.00	0.11	25.03	4.93	0.13	17.25	2.07	1.38	286.75
11/16/97	1.91	0.61	7.11	0.41	2.27	0.25	0.76	0.61	22.11	10.75	0.31	20.28	5.07	1.94	181.30
11/22/98	3.35	0.58	10.98	2.59	1.05	0.58	6.67	0.34	26.07	16.86	0.24	23.58	3.27	19.69	282.41
11/21/99	3.23	0.96	16.96	1.95	9.29	0.68	11.86	0.82	35.48	11.95	0.36	16.85	3.56	13.89	267.07
11/12/00	3.13	1.10	8.25	0.79	40.92	0.87	1.61	0.41	31.06	11.01	0.20	11.77	3.75	7.82	338.34
11/18/01	2.00	0.44	9.27	2.31	1.79	0.75	8.57	0.29	21.64	8.62	0.18	8.88	1.66	13.09	208.44
11/23/03	1.09	0.58	7.60	2.70	3.36	0.69	1.30	0.42	61.64	15.28	0.29	10.01	2.83	16.29	251.87
11/21/04	3.11	1.17	11.11	1.15	1.76	0.46	1.45	0.38	17.15	17.17	0.20	18.68	2.70	23.36	204.18
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>1.51</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>7.83</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>5.54</b>	<b>4.79</b>	<b>2.64</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>40.57</b>	<b>6.44</b>	<b>0.15</b>	<b>36.25</b>	<b>3.83</b>	<b>17.77</b>	<b>203.78</b>

Date	Scoter	Glhenee	Bullfud	R.B.Merg	L.T.Duck	B.B.Plo	Sndrling	P.Sand	Dunlin	Bmpartes	Bl.Hd.Gull	Harb Seal	Total Species	Total Birds
11/23/80	28.20	20.16	64.48	103.84	2.36	1.92	0.92	20.32	18.00	2.20	0.04	0.04	1.52	939.24
11/29/81	36.16	6.28	31.00	39.88	0.00	1.00	0.20	3.48	21.08	10.12	0.04	0.00	1.32	554.36
11/13/82	20.18	1.77	56.05	41.05	0.09	0.68	0.18	3.86	2.55	10.45	0.00	0.09	1.27	307.55
11/19/83	51.20	14.16	111.00	113.84	10.44	12.36	1.32	3.20	26.28	30.60	0.04	0.08	1.56	958.12
11/13/88	18.15	17.19	94.11	33.71	0.00	0.48	0.44	0.35	3.82	31.30	0.22	0.09	1.23	348.31
12/10/89	13.09	34.18	66.29	32.08	0.47	0.05	3.97	1.77	1.17	0.68	0.08	0.34	0.75	392.05
11/18/90	13.81	11.17	99.69	86.75	1.22	1.57	7.17	0.03	3.30	29.95	0.52	0.07	1.18	459.30
11/24/91	15.37	21.44	66.74	82.28	0.81	0.95	3.51	0.88	10.67	52.53	0.14	0.14	1.33	733.26
11/22/92	47.69	26.25	81.60	78.43	0.93	0.34	8.36	0.34	6.84	22.27	0.10	0.28	0.77	516.54
11/14/93	23.83	15.19	59.77	70.33	0.00	1.90	3.25	8.66	0.95	11.34	0.09	0.52	0.95	312.23
11/20/94	23.91	9.85	63.42	62.12	0.00	0.06	0.12	0.12	1.12	33.70	0.03	0.45	1.00	494.21
11/19/95	65.68	7.62	53.22	55.04	0.46	1.68	15.22	0.84	6.41	31.42	0.14	0.26	1.01	506.14
11/24/96	19.34	4.61	37.51	25.59	1.09	0.82	1.67	0.00	0.05	11.79	0.03	0.24	0.82	448.45
11/16/97	99.92	4.79	37.96	26.68	0.69	0.33	0.43	3.08	0.20	14.65	0.00	0.10	0.97	444.43
11/22/98	71.24	13.49	62.75	55.16	2.54	0.21	9.36	0.71	0.00	30.82	0.03	0.47	0.97	644.52
11/21/99	64.71	12.63	82.77	78.79	0.47	0.27	6.71	10.71	1.59	14.47	0.05	1.45	1.01	668.08
11/12/00	51.16	1.35	55.46	58.22	2.22	1.32	9.32	0.15	0.33	5.30	0.03	0.36	1.02	645.89
11/18/01	18.57	3.82	50.42	40.60	1.53	0.26	12.13	0.08	2.13	6.81	0.00	0.21	0.91	424.29
11/23/03	36.34	5.93	41.32	35.97	1.77	0.66	2.38	4.72	4.98	4.48	0.00	0.11	0.77	514.54
11/21/04	72.23	10.22	44.15	43.13	6.62	0.10	0.59	2.65	9.30	2.01	0.00	1.63	0.79	496.66
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>39.54</b>	<b>12.10</b>	<b>62.98</b>	<b>58.17</b>	<b>1.68</b>	<b>1.35</b>	<b>4.36</b>	<b>3.30</b>	<b>6.04</b>	<b>17.84</b>	<b>0.08</b>	<b>0.35</b>	<b>1.06</b>	<b>540.41</b>



Table 2A: Results from January TASL censuses.

Date	R.T. Loon	C.Loon	H.Grebe	R.N.Grebe	D.C.Corm	G.Corm	Corm spp	G.B.Heron	Brant	C.Goose	M.Swan	B.Duck	Mallard	Scaup	Elder
01/10/82	0	0	13	0	0	420	0	0	1133	1	0	1596	51	1350	3263
01/15/83	2	4	31	0	0	506	0	1	933	53	0	1952	93	3564	3577
01/07/84	3	11	65	2	27	287	0	2	4427	65	0	2824	118	2668	8977
01/26/85	1	1	6	0	17	78	0	1	1038	0	0	1309	41	1561	3337
01/12/86	0	1	12	0	25	147	39	3	2121	161	0	1422	241	2016	2848
01/18/87	3	5	171	11	10	96	0	7	2914	349	0	2416	384	1229	3195
01/16/88	2	2	74	3	32	55	18	4	479	19	5	1589	282	760	13357
01/29/89	1	3	54	0	34	40	0	2	1369	159	0	3462	232	1682	4611
01/14/90	4	2	37	4	37	14	1	0	1119	46	1	1796	430	1193	3437
01/20/91	2	5	115	13	67	13	0	26	2128	121	3	3378	325	960	7027
01/19/92	3	1	30	0	65	17	2	2	875	448	2	1543	482	284	3482
01/24/93	4	11	184	3	2	8	0	1	1016	232	13	1422	173	681	10533
01/15/95	0	7	47	95	38	7	0	6	1146	567	6	1589	359	803	7618
01/07/96	4	6	19	0	0	0	0	0	448	722	2	1171	454	743	8970
01/12/97	4	3	40	12	0	4	1	2	692	547	15	1128	295	96	6195
01/11/98	20	10	170	57	0	16	0	7	1334	580	4	1286	182	167	12494
01/17/99	16	19	231	97	1	7	4	1	1092	830	9	1386	361	1031	8863
01/09/00	16	10	197	83	3	25	15	6	1105	778	5	1283	256	728	7302
01/07/01	5	14	73	21	1	5	30	1	1404	1097	7	966	271	961	7760
01/27/02	28	10	357	125	8	22	68	5	1055	784	15	540	217	2123	8829
01/19/03	8	10	80	9	1	7	0	2	423	558	10	1123	383	2405	6692
01/18/04	1	10	15	1	1	15	0	0	191	811	5	700	466	943	5523
01/09/05	34	47	197	8	0	6	8	1	335	1205	6	920	187	1038	5702
AVERAGE	7	8	96	24	16	78	8	3	1251	441	5	1600	273	1260	6678

Date	Scoter	Gidneys	Bullhd	R.B.Merg	L.T.Duck	B.B.Plo	Sndrling	P.Sand	Dunlin	Bipartes	Bl.Hd.Gull	Harb Seal	Total Species	Total Birds	Party Hours
01/10/82	119	326	502	564	1	0	0	0	40	555	3	0	22	7827	22.5
01/15/83	135	580	872	1187	1	0	0	176	0	430	3	0	24	10716	22
01/07/84	377	2060	1380	1662	6	3	97	77	22	151	1	3	33	19476	26.5
01/26/85	249	790	872	778	0	4	78	48	76	2	1	2	29	7390	25.75
01/12/86	254	474	1098	799	0	0	6	0	14	343	2	1	25	9036	27
01/18/87	219	1284	1758	749	6	2	138	3	23	4	8	6	36	10790	28.5
01/16/88	255	1106	1315	1278	25	0	14	20	0	8	8	49	31	16681	25
01/29/89	122	1456	3051	840	0	2	140	78	25	14	0	51	28	11649	37
01/14/90	117	1393	2098	1009	0	0	5	77	0	5	0	3	24	8121	35
01/20/91	364	1634	2231	1467	0	0	87	47	15	13	5	19	33	14183	38.5
01/19/92	46	951	1168	644	0	0	17	8	7	251	5	0	29	7236	29
01/24/93	557	861	1733	1017	0	0	10	237	0	332	7	4	25	14283	36.5
01/15/95	1082	646	1083	730	1	24	408	2	106	101	5	3	33	12288	33.25
01/07/96	2204	1028	1005	573	3	0	20	12	0	150	3	3	22	12539	27.5
01/12/97	270	337	953	524	4	0	208	29	184	32	0	6	26	9034	31
01/11/98	2494	933	1573	745	19	0	30	119	125	420	2	6	32	16327	34.5
01/17/99	1143	1427	1726	899	7	0	45	53	50	3	3	5	36	13948	33.25
01/09/00	524	874	1715	1033	13	0	51	0	0	5	0	6	30	11812	35.75
01/07/01	892	864	1372	677	25	0	142	8	8	69	0	29	34	12616	32.75
01/27/02	932	1168	1589	1091	73	0	4	142	6	0	0	15	32	14186	34.75
01/19/03	2138	953	1488	635	37	0	91	137	26	0	0	6	31	11711	35.75
01/18/04	774	689	1072	368	19	0	8	111	0	0	0	2	27	8682	27.25
01/09/05	1553	774	1133	541	83	0	62	56	0	0	0	12	29	9694	39
AVERAGE	731	983	1426	861	14	2	72	63	32	126	2	10	29	11749	31

or three smaller sections, each with a separate team. This resulted in a substantial increase in party hours over those recorded in earlier surveys (see tables). The data impact should be most pronounced for birds like loons and grebes that are normally seen singly rather than in flocks.

**Table 2B - Factors impacting January censuses.**

**Date**

01/10/82 Missing approximately 5% of current sites and Long I., rough seas.  
01/15/83 Missing approximately 5% of current sites and Long I., rough seas, snow  
01/07/84 Missing approximately 5% of current sites, drizzle  
01/26/85 Missing approximately 5% of current sites and Winthrop shore  
01/12/86 Missing approximately 5% of current sites, rough seas  
01/18/87 Missing approximately 5% of current sites, Long I., and Deer I., snow  
01/16/88 Missing approximately 5% of current sites and Long I., ice in southern harbor.  
01/29/89  
01/14/90 Missing Deer I. and some Winthrop shore sites.  
01/20/91 Missing lower Hull Bay  
01/19/92 Missing Hull, rough seas, ice in southern harbor  
01/24/93  
01/15/95 Missing Deer I., fog and drizzle.  
01/07/96 Ice throughout harbor  
01/12/97  
01/11/98  
01/17/99  
01/09/00  
01/07/01  
01/27/02  
01/19/03 Ice in southern harbor, Winthrop and Lynn Harbors  
01/18/04 Ice in southern harbor, Winthrop and Lynn Harbors; light snow  
01/09/05

Another complicating factor is weather. Some earlier surveys were undertaken during rain or snowstorms: less-than-optimal viewing conditions. In recent years, as our understanding of the best way to collect meaningful data evolved, surveys were postponed if inclement conditions were forecast.

Finally, during the 1980s and early 1990s access to Deer Island in Winthrop and Long Island off Quincy was not possible. Both locations offer extensive views of Boston's Outer Harbor where many birds can be found. While some of these same birds can be observed from other sites, access to these two locations is essential for a full accounting.

A list of weather and accessibility limitations that impact individual counts are provided in Tables 1B, 2B, and 3B.

These factors all contribute to a probable upward bias in the number of birds seen in more recent years. Therefore, apparent increases in species abundance over time must be evaluated closely to validate the increase. Conversely, observed decreases are most likely real and may even under-represent the extent of decline. In order to address this issue, Tables 1C, 2C, and 3C report the data as "per party hour."

### **Intrawinter trends**

In order to investigate intrawinter (seasonal) trends, we have used data only from years when we conducted November, January, and February counts which were unbiased by weather and/or missing sites, or were all biased in the same way (e.g. Deer Island missed in all three censuses). Twelve winters met these criteria. The mean dates for these years were November 20, January 13, and February 9.

The average number of party hours decreased from 35 hours per count in November to 32 in both January and February (Table 4). Likewise, the average number of waterbird species and total number of birds seen each decreased from

Table 2C - Birds per party hour- January.

Date	R.T. Loon	C. Loon	H. Grebe	R.N. Grebe	D.C. Corm	G.Corm	Corm spp	G.B. Heron	Bran	C. Goose	M Swan	B. Duck	Mallard	Scaup	Elder
01/10/82	0.00	0.00	0.58	0.00	0.00	18.67	0.00	0.00	50.36	0.04	0.00	70.93	2.27	60.00	145.02
01/15/83	0.09	0.18	1.41	0.00	0.00	23.00	0.00	0.05	42.41	2.41	0.00	88.73	4.23	162.00	162.59
01/07/84	0.11	0.42	2.45	0.08	1.02	10.83	0.00	0.08	167.06	2.45	0.00	106.57	4.45	100.68	338.75
01/26/85	0.04	0.04	0.23	0.00	0.66	3.03	0.00	0.04	40.31	0.00	0.00	50.83	1.59	60.62	129.59
01/12/86	0.00	0.04	0.44	0.00	0.93	5.44	1.44	0.11	78.56	5.96	0.00	52.67	8.93	74.67	105.48
01/18/87	0.11	0.18	6.00	0.39	0.35	3.37	0.00	0.25	102.25	12.25	0.00	84.77	13.47	43.12	112.11
01/16/88	0.08	0.08	2.96	0.12	1.28	2.20	0.72	0.16	19.16	0.76	0.20	63.56	11.28	30.40	534.28
01/29/89	0.03	0.08	1.46	0.00	0.92	1.08	0.00	0.05	37.00	4.30	0.00	93.57	6.27	45.46	124.62
01/14/90	0.11	0.06	1.06	0.11	1.06	0.40	0.03	0.00	31.97	1.31	0.03	51.31	12.29	34.09	98.20
01/20/91	0.05	0.13	2.99	0.34	1.74	0.34	0.00	0.68	55.27	3.14	0.08	87.74	8.44	24.94	182.52
01/19/92	0.10	0.03	1.03	0.00	2.24	0.59	0.07	0.07	30.17	15.45	0.07	53.21	16.62	9.79	120.07
01/24/93	0.11	0.30	5.04	0.08	0.05	0.22	0.00	0.03	27.84	6.36	0.36	38.96	4.74	18.66	288.58
01/15/95	0.00	0.21	1.41	2.86	1.14	0.21	0.00	0.18	34.47	17.05	0.18	47.79	10.80	24.15	229.11
01/07/96	0.15	0.22	0.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	16.29	26.25	0.07	42.58	16.51	27.02	326.18
01/12/97	0.13	0.10	1.29	0.39	0.00	0.13	0.03	0.06	22.32	17.65	0.48	36.39	9.52	3.10	199.84
01/11/98	0.58	0.29	4.93	1.65	0.00	0.46	0.00	0.20	38.67	16.81	0.12	37.28	5.28	4.84	362.14
01/17/99	0.48	0.57	6.95	2.92	0.03	0.21	0.12	0.03	32.84	24.96	0.27	41.68	10.86	31.01	266.56
01/09/00	0.45	0.28	5.51	2.32	0.08	0.70	0.42	0.17	30.91	21.76	0.14	35.89	7.16	20.36	204.25
01/07/01	0.15	0.43	2.23	0.64	0.03	0.15	0.92	0.03	42.87	33.50	0.21	29.50	8.27	29.34	236.95
01/27/02	0.81	0.29	10.27	3.60	0.23	0.63	1.96	0.14	30.36	22.56	0.43	15.54	6.24	61.09	254.07
01/19/03	0.22	0.28	2.24	0.25	0.03	0.20	0.00	0.06	11.83	15.61	0.28	31.41	10.71	67.27	187.19
01/18/04	0.04	0.37	0.55	0.04	0.04	0.55	0.00	0.00	7.01	29.76	0.18	25.69	17.10	34.61	202.68
01/09/05	0.87	1.21	5.05	0.21	0.00	0.15	0.21	0.03	8.59	30.90	0.15	23.59	4.79	26.62	146.21
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>0.20</b>	<b>0.25</b>	<b>2.90</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>0.26</b>	<b>0.10</b>	<b>41.67</b>	<b>13.53</b>	<b>0.14</b>	<b>52.62</b>	<b>8.77</b>	<b>43.21</b>	<b>215.52</b>

Date	Scoter	Gidneye	Buffle	R.B. Merg	L.T. Duck	B.B. Plo	Sndfling	P. Sand	Dunlin	Bipartes	Bl. Hd. Gull	Harb Seal	Total Species	Total Birds
01/10/82	5.29	14.49	22.31	25.07	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.78	24.67	0.13	0.00	0.98	441.64
01/15/83	6.14	26.36	39.64	53.95	0.05	0.00	0.00	8.00	0.00	19.55	0.14	0.00	1.09	640.91
01/07/84	14.23	77.74	52.08	62.72	0.23	0.11	3.66	2.91	0.83	5.70	0.04	0.11	1.25	955.17
01/26/85	9.67	30.68	33.86	30.21	0.00	0.16	3.03	1.86	2.95	0.08	0.04	0.08	1.13	399.53
01/12/86	9.41	17.56	40.67	29.59	0.00	0.00	0.22	0.00	0.52	12.70	0.07	0.04	0.93	445.41
01/18/87	7.68	45.05	61.68	26.28	0.21	0.07	4.84	0.11	0.81	0.14	0.28	0.21	1.26	525.75
01/16/88	10.20	44.24	52.60	51.12	1.00	0.00	0.56	0.80	0.00	0.32	0.32	1.96	1.24	828.40
01/29/89	3.30	39.35	82.46	22.70	0.00	0.05	3.78	2.11	0.68	0.38	0.00	1.38	0.76	469.65
01/14/90	3.34	39.80	59.94	28.83	0.00	0.00	0.14	2.20	0.00	0.14	0.00	0.09	0.69	366.43
01/20/91	9.45	42.44	57.95	38.10	0.00	0.00	2.26	1.22	0.39	0.34	0.13	0.49	0.86	520.68
01/19/92	1.59	32.79	40.28	22.21	0.00	0.00	0.59	0.28	0.24	8.66	0.17	0.00	1.00	356.31
01/24/93	15.26	23.59	47.48	27.86	0.00	0.00	0.27	6.49	0.00	9.10	0.19	0.11	0.68	521.56
01/15/95	32.54	19.43	32.57	21.95	0.03	0.72	12.27	0.06	3.19	3.04	0.15	0.09	0.99	495.52
01/07/96	80.15	37.38	36.55	20.84	0.11	0.00	0.73	0.44	0.00	5.45	0.11	0.11	0.80	637.71
01/12/97	8.71	10.87	30.74	16.90	0.13	0.00	6.71	0.94	5.94	1.03	0.00	0.19	0.84	373.39
01/11/98	72.29	27.04	45.59	21.59	0.55	0.00	0.87	3.45	3.62	12.17	0.06	0.17	0.93	660.49
01/17/99	34.38	42.92	51.91	27.04	0.21	0.00	1.35	1.59	1.50	0.09	0.09	0.15	1.08	580.57
01/09/00	14.66	24.45	47.97	28.90	0.36	0.00	1.43	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.00	0.17	0.84	448.31
01/07/01	27.24	26.38	41.89	20.67	0.76	0.00	4.34	0.24	0.24	2.11	0.00	0.89	1.04	509.10
01/27/02	26.82	33.61	45.73	31.40	2.10	0.00	0.12	4.09	0.17	0.00	0.00	0.43	0.92	552.26
01/19/03	59.80	26.66	41.62	17.76	1.03	0.00	2.55	3.83	0.73	0.00	0.00	0.17	0.87	481.57
01/18/04	28.40	25.28	39.34	13.50	0.70	0.00	0.29	4.07	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.99	430.20
01/09/05	39.82	19.85	29.05	13.87	2.13	0.00	1.59	1.44	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.31	0.74	356.31
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>22.62</b>	<b>31.65</b>	<b>44.95</b>	<b>28.39</b>	<b>0.42</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>2.24</b>	<b>2.01</b>	<b>1.03</b>	<b>4.60</b>	<b>0.08</b>	<b>0.31</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>521.60</b>

November to February. While there is a 9 percent drop in party hours between November and January, there is a 15 percent drop in species and an 11 percent drop in total birds. However, between January and February party hours were constant, but there was an additional 6 percent drop in species and 10 percent drop in bird

abundance. Very likely much of the decrease in species and abundance is real, accounting for — rather than caused by — the decrease in party hours (it takes less time to count fewer birds). On the other hand, since many of the January and February counts are conducted under frigid conditions, volunteers understandably spend less time at each of their sites than they might in milder temperatures, possibly missing a few birds in the process.

The intrawinter trends fall into three relatively distinct patterns. For most species (Red-throated and Common loons, Horned and Red-necked grebes, Double crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, the scoters, Bufflehead, Red-breasted Mergansers,

**Table 3A- Results from February TASL censuses.**

Date	R.T. Loon	C.Loan	H.Grebe	R.N.Grebe	D.C.Corm	G.Corm	Corm spp	G.B.Heron	Brant	C.Goose	M.Swan	B.Duck	Mallard	Saupp	Elder
02/17/80	0	0	18	0	0	434	0	0	1084	0	0	1440	88	3007	6859
02/08/81	0	0	1	0	1	110	0	0	490	0	0	526	1	6050	2600
02/07/82	0	1	25	0	2	725	0	3	1626	4	0	1869	148	3804	7917
02/05/84	0	0	29	1	8	346	0	1	1580	10	0	1567	157	3656	5901
02/05/89	0	1	50	0	10	23	0	1	1638	195	0	3073	269	1750	3839
02/17/91	1	2	31	1	21	16	0	1	2772	288	0	1896	358	1087	4994
02/02/92	5	3	22	2	10	20	3	0	1059	142	1	1629	133	528	5739
02/21/93	0	11	37	3	4	9	0	0	772	243	6	1148	160	939	7387
02/27/94	0	3	20	2	0	1	1	0	630	53	1	474	170	285	3625
02/12/95	0	0	8	19	2	2	0	1	635	642	2	1112	339	364	5514
02/04/96	0	1	21	2	0	1	0	0	772	176	2	1299	316	947	8606
02/09/97	11	4	81	13	0	7	0	0	873	389	20	1097	255	990	9491
02/08/98	7	8	149	21	1	1	0	0	1070	494	16	967	320	365	9199
02/06/00	6	2	31	12	2	3	1	0	899	714	4	696	216	757	5289
02/04/01	20	13	231	27	0	111	59	1	1437	1004	17	1630	383	1304	8903
02/10/02	22	7	118	87	0	3	66	4	930	921	18	1030	401	657	6643
02/16/03	13	4	37	0	1	1	0	0	72	402	8	480	363	806	6535
02/08/04	0	1	8	2	0	2	0	0	328	184	8	387	250	57	3835
02/06/05	10	26	64	3	0	4	0	0	261	157	16	889	357	1083	5516
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1222</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>1497</b>	<b>6231</b>

Date	Scoter	Gldrewe	Buffhd	R.B.Merg	L.T.Duck	B.B.Plo	Sndrling	P.Sand	Dunlin	Bmparres	Bl.Hd.Gull	Harb Seal	Total Species	Total Birds	Party Hours
02/17/80	33	628	814	702	2	0	2	15	138	7	5	1	25	12930	25
02/08/81	0	728	769	833	0	0	0	75	0	0	0	0	12	9779	14.25
02/07/82	523	982	1006	1542	2	0	0	468	0	0	1	0	27	16124	31.5
02/05/84	265	1632	1497	779	3	0	30	88	2	1	1	2	27	13256	26.5
02/05/89	93	1817	2605	603	0	0	200	135	39	85	14	14	28	10849	31.75
02/17/91	256	1033	1654	757	0	0	19	10	7	11	8	5	28	11468	38
02/02/92	171	1017	1320	845	0	0	41	14	36	131	2	0	26	9296	31.25
02/21/93	345	751	1105	662	4	0	66	0	13	0	2	7	24	10719	30.5
02/27/94	655	531	758	460	0	0	2	23	125	0	5	3	22	5265	25.25
02/12/95	443	469	858	341	0	0	133	2	1	1	7	1	27	8640	28
02/04/96	343	597	744	388	2	0	44	0	0	58	6	2	26	12143	29.5
02/09/97	667	675	1484	716	27	0	72	11	15	13	3	3	29	13231	34.25
02/08/98	775	627	1080	662	34	0	30	90	35	44	0	2	30	12618	36.25
02/06/00	510	573	1225	331	23	0	48	0	0	2	0	4	25	8632	29.75
02/04/01	1045	1095	1619	782	43	0	380	0	92	1	0	77	34	15140	35.75
02/10/02	801	775	1472	749	12	1	4	1	20	0	0	3	31	10907	34.25
02/16/03	1497	1209	1433	413	20	0	4	0	5	0	0	1	26	8722	21.25
02/08/04	441	396	572	314	13	0	1	45	0	48	0	2	24	5062	26.5
02/06/05	1512	909	1499	471	96	0	0	306	0	0	0	1	24	8386	31.25
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>1238</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>10693</b>	<b>30</b>

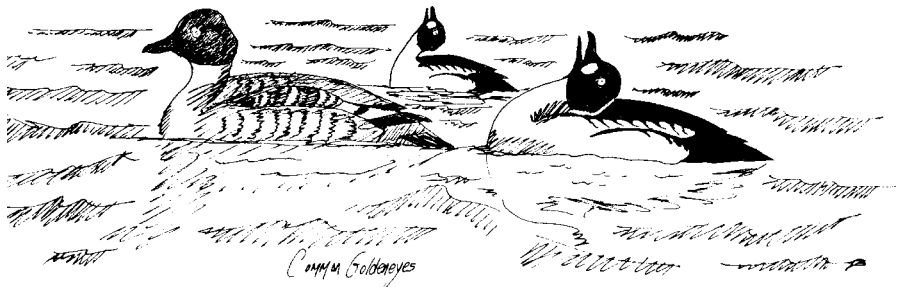
**Table 3B - Factors impacting February censuses.**

Date	
02/17/80	Missing approximately 5% of current sites and Long I., rough seas, ice in southern harbor.
02/08/81	Missing approximately 5% of current sites and Long I., Nahant, Weymouth, Hull.; rough sea
02/07/82	Missing approximately 5% of current sites and Long I.
02/05/84	Missing approximately 5% of current sites and Long I.; drizzle and fog
02/05/89	
02/17/91	
02/02/92	Missing Deer I.
02/21/93	Intermittent snow in late am
02/27/94	Missing Long I., rough seas, ice in southern harbor
02/12/95	Missing Long I., rough seas, ice in southern harbor
02/04/96	
02/09/97	
02/08/98	Rough seas
02/06/00	Ice in southern harbor
02/04/01	
02/10/02	
02/16/03	Missing sites on Long I. and Nahant; ice in southern harbor.
02/08/04	Missing site on Long I., rough seas; ice in southern harbor
02/06/05	Missing site on Long I.; ice in southern harbor.

Long-tailed Duck, Black-bellied Plover, Sanderling, Dunlin, and Bonaparte's Gull there is an approximate 50 percent drop in numbers between November and January and a further but more measured decrease from January to February. If we assume that most of the cormorant species reported are Greats (which is reasonable since most are counted as silhouettes on the Outer Harbor Islands where this species is known to winter), then Great Cormorant falls into this category as well. Seal sightings also are highest in November.

A second pattern, observed in Brant and Common Eider, shows smaller decreases of approximately 10 percent between November and January with a similar additional decrease into February. This decrease, however, may be a result of the comparable 9 percent decrease in party hours across the same period. Clearly, for these two species, abundance in November is a reasonably good predictor of abundance in February. This is also the case for Mute Swan and Purple Sandpiper, which show no particular trend from November to February.

The third pattern observed is for Canada Goose, American Black Duck, Mallard, Common Goldeneye, and Greater Scaup. For these species the highest abundance is in January or (in the case of Greater Scaup) in February. We assume that these birds stay as far north (or inland) as possible until ice covers the inland waters, forcing their flight south and east.



COMMON GOLDENEYES BY DENISE BRAUNHARDT CABRAL

Table 3C - Birds per party hour- February.

Date	R.T. Loon	C.Loon	H.Grebe	R.N.Grebe	D.C.Corm	G.Corm	Corm spp	G.B.Heron	Brant	C.Goose	M.Swan	B.Duck	Mallard	Scaup	Elder
02/17/80	0.00	0.00	0.72	0.00	0.00	17.36	0.00	0.00	43.36	0.00	0.00	57.60	3.52	120.28	274.36
02/08/81	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.00	0.07	7.72	0.00	0.00	34.39	0.00	0.00	36.91	0.07	424.56	182.46
02/07/82	0.00	0.00	0.79	0.00	0.06	23.02	0.00	0.10	51.62	0.13	0.00	59.33	4.70	120.76	251.33
02/05/84	0.00	0.00	1.09	0.04	0.30	13.06	0.00	0.04	59.62	0.38	0.00	59.13	5.92	137.96	222.68
02/05/89	0.00	0.03	1.57	0.00	0.31	0.72	0.00	0.03	51.59	6.14	0.00	96.79	8.47	55.12	120.91
02/17/91	0.03	0.05	0.82	0.03	0.55	0.42	0.00	0.03	72.95	7.58	0.00	49.89	9.42	28.61	131.42
02/02/92	0.16	0.10	0.70	0.06	0.32	0.64	0.10	0.00	33.89	4.54	0.03	52.13	4.26	16.90	183.65
02/21/93	0.00	0.36	1.21	0.10	0.13	0.30	0.00	0.00	25.31	7.97	0.20	37.64	5.25	30.79	242.20
02/27/94	0.00	0.12	0.79	0.08	0.00	0.04	0.04	0.00	24.95	2.10	0.04	18.77	6.73	11.29	143.56
02/12/95	0.00	0.00	0.29	0.68	0.07	0.07	0.00	0.04	22.68	22.93	0.07	39.71	12.11	13.00	196.93
02/04/96	0.00	0.03	0.71	0.07	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00	26.17	5.97	0.07	44.03	10.71	32.10	291.73
02/09/97	0.32	0.12	2.36	0.38	0.00	0.20	0.00	0.00	25.49	11.36	0.58	32.03	7.45	28.91	277.11
02/08/98	0.19	0.22	4.11	0.58	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.00	29.52	13.63	0.44	26.68	8.83	10.07	253.77
02/06/00	0.20	0.07	1.04	0.40	0.07	0.10	0.03	0.00	30.22	24.00	0.13	23.39	7.26	25.45	177.78
02/04/01	0.56	0.36	6.46	0.76	0.00	3.10	1.65	0.03	40.20	28.08	0.48	45.59	10.71	36.48	249.03
02/10/02	0.64	0.20	3.45	2.54	0.00	0.09	1.93	0.12	27.15	26.89	0.53	30.07	11.71	19.18	193.96
02/16/03	0.61	0.19	1.74	0.00	0.05	0.05	0.00	0.00	3.39	18.92	0.38	22.59	17.08	37.93	307.53
02/08/04	0.00	0.04	0.30	0.08	0.00	0.08	0.00	0.00	12.38	6.94	0.30	14.60	9.43	2.15	144.72
02/06/05	0.32	0.83	2.05	0.10	0.00	0.13	0.00	0.00	8.35	5.02	0.51	28.45	11.42	34.66	176.51
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>0.16</b>	<b>0.15</b>	<b>1.59</b>	<b>0.31</b>	<b>0.10</b>	<b>3.53</b>	<b>0.20</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>32.80</b>	<b>10.14</b>	<b>0.20</b>	<b>40.81</b>	<b>8.16</b>	<b>62.43</b>	<b>211.67</b>

Date	Scoter	Giddeye	Buffind	R.B.Merg	L.T.Duck	B.B.Plo	Sndrling	P.Sand	Dunlin	Bparres	Bl.Hd.Gull	Harb Seal	Total Species	Total Birds
02/17/80	1.32	25.12	32.56	28.08	0.08	0.00	0.08	0.60	5.52	0.28	0.20	0.04	1.00	611.04
02/08/81	0.00	51.09	53.96	58.46	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.26	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.84	855.02
02/07/82	16.60	31.17	31.94	48.95	0.06	0.00	0.00	14.86	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.86	655.49
02/05/84	10.00	61.58	56.49	29.40	0.11	0.00	1.13	3.32	0.08	0.04	0.04	0.08	1.02	662.42
02/05/89	2.93	57.23	82.05	18.99	0.00	0.00	6.30	4.25	1.23	2.68	0.44	0.44	0.88	517.80
02/17/91	6.74	27.18	43.53	19.92	0.00	0.00	0.50	0.26	0.18	0.29	0.21	0.13	0.74	400.61
02/02/92	5.47	32.54	42.24	27.04	0.00	0.00	1.31	0.45	1.15	4.19	0.06	0.00	0.83	411.94
02/21/93	11.31	24.62	36.23	21.70	0.13	0.00	2.16	0.00	0.43	0.00	0.07	0.23	0.79	448.10
02/27/94	25.94	21.03	30.02	18.22	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.91	4.95	0.00	0.20	0.12	0.87	309.86
02/12/95	15.82	16.75	30.64	12.18	0.00	0.00	4.75	0.07	0.04	0.04	0.25	0.04	0.96	389.11
02/04/96	11.63	20.24	25.22	13.15	0.07	0.00	1.49	0.00	0.00	1.97	0.20	0.07	0.88	485.59
02/09/97	19.47	19.71	43.33	20.91	0.79	0.00	2.10	0.32	0.44	0.38	0.09	0.09	0.85	493.84
02/08/98	21.38	17.30	29.79	18.26	0.94	0.00	0.83	2.48	0.97	1.21	0.00	0.06	0.83	441.24
02/06/00	17.14	19.26	41.18	11.13	0.77	0.00	1.61	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.00	0.13	0.84	381.31
02/04/01	29.23	30.63	45.29	21.87	1.20	0.00	10.63	0.00	2.57	0.03	0.00	2.15	0.95	564.95
02/10/02	23.39	22.63	42.98	21.87	0.35	0.03	0.12	0.03	0.58	0.00	0.00	0.09	0.91	430.42
02/16/03	70.45	56.89	67.44	19.44	0.94	0.00	0.19	0.00	0.24	0.00	0.00	0.05	1.22	626.02
02/08/04	16.64	14.94	21.58	11.85	0.49	0.00	0.04	1.70	0.00	1.81	0.00	0.08	0.91	260.08
02/06/05	48.38	29.09	47.97	15.07	3.07	0.00	0.00	9.79	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.77	421.73
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>18.62</b>	<b>30.47</b>	<b>42.34</b>	<b>22.97</b>	<b>0.47</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1.75</b>	<b>2.33</b>	<b>0.97</b>	<b>0.68</b>	<b>0.09</b>	<b>0.20</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>492.98</b>

### Interannual trends

Since January TASL counts have been undertaken continuously since 1982, and since by January the wintering waterfowl population is generally established, we use the January counts as the best indicator of interannual trends. Data from the November and February counts can be used to provide support for observed January trends.

A number of species show no indication of long-term change. Great Blue Heron, Black-bellied Plover, Sanderling, and Purple Sandpiper are not common in the Harbor

Table 4 - Monthly average results of selected TASL counts.

Month	R.T. Loon	C.Loon	H.Grebe	R.N.Grebe	D.C.Corm	G.Corm	Corm spp	G.B.Heron	Brant	C.Goose	M.Swan	B.Duck	Mallard	Scaup	Eider
November	41	12	183	17	85	78	66	13	1174	164	5	980	110	359	5975
January	4	5	67	26	22	24	7	4	934	353	4	1357	290	718	5758
February	2	3	30	5	4	101	0	0	943	230	3	1044	187	1007	5427

Month	Scoter	Glidneye	Burhd	R.B.Merg	L.T.Duck	B.B.Plo	Sndrling	P.Sand	Dunlin	Bnpartes	Bl.Hd.Gull	Harb Seal	Total Species	Total Birds	Party Hours
November	1275	327	1726	1649	45	44	136	32	176	720	3	6	29	15394	27
January	522	823	1199	746	4	2	72	21	31	76	3	8	24	13072	26
February	338	601	880	558	6	0	32	52	30	21	3	2	22	11506	25

in January but show much year-to-year fluctuation. In contrast, Common Eider and Bufflehead are two of the most abundant wintering species in the area. Bufflehead populations have always been relatively constant whereas Eider populations appear to be much more variable. This variability appears due in part to observer access (or lack thereof) to Deer and Long Islands, as well as to weather conditions. Since many Harbor birds are found in and around the islands at the mouth of the Harbor, lack of access or poor visibility limits the accuracy of Eider counts.

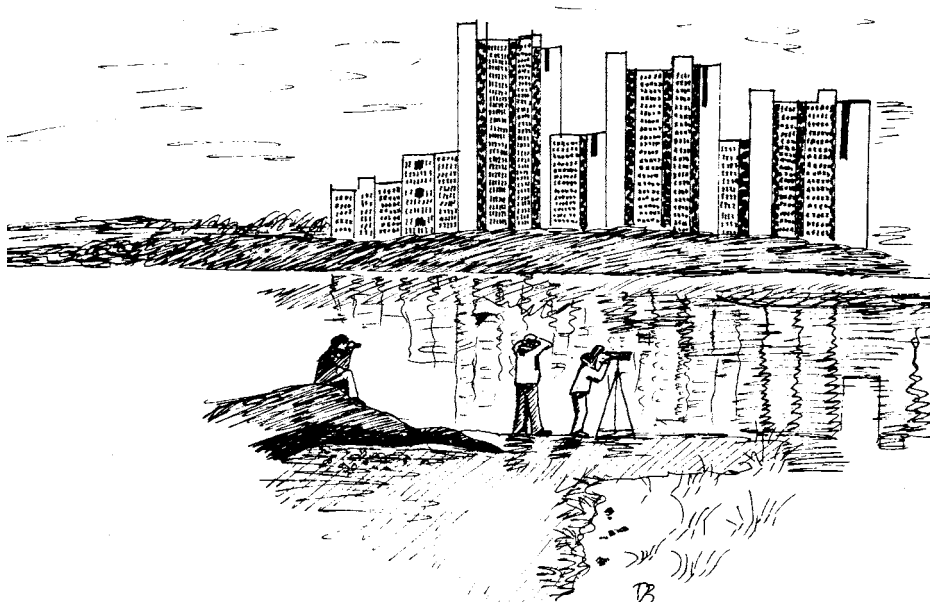
For Dunlin, Red-breasted Merganser, and Common Goldeneye, the only observed population change appears over the past several years, possibly as a result of the comparatively severe winters. Winter conditions may also be responsible for the recent very low numbers of American Black Duck and Brant. However, our data and observations from other areas in the region suggest that these species may be in a longer-term downward trend.

The numbers for Bonaparte’s and Black-headed gulls also show a decrease over the past several years. The decrease of both is linked to the recently completed (2000) pipeline that now transfers Boston’s wastewater effluent discharge from Deer Island nine miles eastward into Massachusetts Bay. Both species were commonly observed feeding in the effluent plume at the tip of Deer Island or at the treatment facility itself but have not been seen at these locations since 2000.

The population of Great Cormorants (identified Great Cormorants as well as birds recorded as “cormorant sp.”) has decreased markedly since the early 1980s. While November counts of Double-crested Cormorants have been highly variable, the number overwintering in the harbor has been very low over the past decade as compared to the 1984-1995 period.

Lastly, Greater Scaup decreased dramatically from the early 1980s to the late 1990s. Over the past several winters the population has been variable but possibly showing an increase.

Not everything has been decreasing. Mallard, Canada Goose, and Mute Swan all are displaying long-term increases. Red-throated Loon, Red-necked Grebe, Long-



LINE ART BY DENISE BRAUNHARDT CABRAL


tailed Duck, White-winged Scoter, and Surf Scoter have been more common in the Harbor since the late 1990s. To some extent the same can be said of Common Loon and Horned Grebe. Harbor Seals also have increased in the harbor since the late 1980s as they have throughout the region. The increase is thought to be a population rebound after a distemper epidemic wiped out many seals in the Gulf of Maine region a decade earlier.

### **Conclusion**

Part one of this report is intended to provide an overview of the history, goals, and methods of the TASL project and a summary of its Boston Harbor waterbird data from 1980 to 2005. In addition, we have identified several possible species population trends.

The TASL Boston Harbor project began as a means of collecting baseline bird abundance data in the event of environmental tragedy. What was unforeseen in 1980 was that the project would bracket the “before” and the “after” of the Harbor cleanup. We now realize, as we enter our next quarter century of monitoring, that our database represents a valuable tool in assessing population changes that may be due to local conditions such as the Harbor clean-up or year-to-year weather conditions, or to global conditions like climate change or other environmental factors. Part two of this report will cover some of the more conjectural aspects of our analysis.



The success of this project is entirely due to the enthusiasm and perseverance of innumerable volunteers counting birds under often inhospitable conditions. Our thanks once again to all the route leaders and participants. 

**Maury Hall**, Project Manager / Environmental Scientist at Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), has been a lifelong birder. He was on the staff of Massachusetts Audubon Society in 1988 when MAS founded its Boston center and became involved in Boston Harbor monitoring. Maury at that time became involved with TASL data gathering and has been project coordinator ever since. Maury lives in South Boston with his wife Kathleen and teen-age daughter Sarah, and is often seen birding along the South Boston shore or along the Charles River in Watertown. **Soheil Zende**, born in Tehran, grew up in Tehran and Tangier, Morocco, arrived in Cambridge in 1961 as a college freshman, and in 1970 started an auto repair shop in Cambridge, later moved to Watertown. He began birding in 1973, never got a good look at the Newburyport Ross's Gull, got sick of driving to the north shore for birds, and began checking out local Boston spots in 1975, finding the "old puddle in East Boston" in 1976. He founded the Friends of Belle Isle Marsh with Craig Jackson in 1978, then co-founded TASL with Craig Jackson, Dave Lange, Wayne Petersen, Leif Robinson, Bob Stymeist, and many others in 1979. He edited and published Belle Isle News until 2004 and published TASL News from 1980 to 1992. In 1996 he started TASL OnLine. He has also assisted Dick Veit and Ian Nisbet with Muskeget Island tern restoration. Soheil lives in Lexington with his wife Christine and teen-age son Alex.

The authors acknowledge the many people whose support and advice helped them carry out the censuses, among them: Janet Heywood and the Bird Observer staff; H Heusman of Massachusetts Fisheries and Wildlife; Ralph Andrews, formerly with US Fish & Wildlife; Brian Taylor and Brian Dineen, former and current director of Long Island Hospital; and, above all, Wayne Petersen, known as the Godfather of TASL.



## TASL Harbor Censuses

# Building a Bird Club in the Digital Age

*Marjorie Rines*

This is the story of a club that just happened, an offshoot of technology that wasn't available when other clubs started. Electronic communication is sometimes criticized for putting distance between people by substituting e-mail for personal contact. This is the story of how it brought people together.



In April of 1998 I got an e-mail message from a woman I didn't know named Renee LaFontaine. She had seen a Long-tailed Duck (then Oldsquaw) near her home, but did not want to post it to the Massbird e-mail Listserv because she was afraid it wouldn't be interesting to all 600 to 700 Massbird subscribers across the state. She knew I lived on Mystic Lake, however, and suggested I might be interested because the bird was in front of my house.

I was interested! I bolted out the door with my binoculars — and there it was. My first (and only) Arlington Long-tailed Duck, and a yard bird to boot.

That night I got thinking about the duck. If Renee hadn't known I lived nearby, I wouldn't have seen it. I knew there were people who felt shy about posting to Massbird when it was only a bird of local interest. I did a bit of research on the web and discovered a server offering free Listservs and created the ArlingtonBirds Listserv. It was incredibly easy. I invited birder friends who lived nearby and posted an invitation to subscribers to the Massbird list to join ArlingtonBirds. The idea, I explained, was to talk about birds in and around the Arlington area. By the end of the week there were thirty subscribers.

People told their friends, friends who were not hard-core birders but were interested in what was seen locally. Backyard birders joined because here was an unthreatening way to ask questions about their feeder birds. Most surprising was discovering how many serious birders whom I had never met lived in the area.

In December 2002 "the" eagle arrived, a fourth-winter female Bald Eagle. After a few days, the eagle settled into a perch in a tree between the Upper and Lower Mystic Lakes on the Arlington/Medford line. She could easily be seen with the naked eye from a large public parking lot between the two lakes. Just before the New Year a second eagle showed up, a fourth-year male. Until the end of February they were almost always seen together — perched in a tree, or feeding on the ice.

All of a sudden e-mail activity picked up enormously. Here there were birds that everyone could identify, with the emotional association of patriotism, as birds you didn't need \$1000 binoculars to view, or birds you could bring your children to see. On weekends birders came almost all day. People mingled and started associating



A Bald Eagle that wintered on the Mystic Lakes was a daily source of discussion and generated a lot of new interest in the club. Photograph by the author.

faces with names. People shared their optics with passersby, and more people discovered the list. By January there were well over 200 list members.

In February of 2003 one of our subscribers, Oakes Plimpton, proposed a social event. Oakes lined up a speaker, arranged for us to use the Community Room of the local library, and promised cookies and cider. To be honest, I was a skeptic. Why would people want to get together with a bunch of strangers they knew only through e-mail? I was sure the audience would be Oakes, myself, and

at best a small handful of others. The poor speaker would face an empty room.

I arrived fifteen minutes early for the 7:30 p.m. meeting and was surprised to see there were already a dozen people there. Oakes had put out about twenty chairs, but as more people streamed in we had to add more. By starting time we had over thirty attendees who were having so much fun chatting that the program didn't start until 8:00. Oakes had each person introduce himself. The group included someone who had bought his first Peterson in 1954 and a woman who had been birding for sixty days (that created a round of applause). At the end of the evening, everyone was excited, and I may have been the most excited one there. This wasn't just an e-mail list, it was a community.

The chat on the list focused on the excitement about the meeting. It felt like a club; why not form a club? Things happened pretty quickly from there. With the infrastructure of the Listserv already in place, we could communicate instantly. The name Arlington Bird Club was rejected when someone suggested the Menotomy Bird Club. Menotomy is the native American name for the Arlington area. It was local without being exclusively Arlington.

An ad hoc Steering Committee met and started putting together a set of goals and a club structure. Ideas swirled as excitement built. We'll give classes in identification of sparrows and warblers and hawks. We'll have dinner meetings, and a newsletter, and a library of reference books for everyone to borrow. We'll have trips to Plum Island and the Berkshires and the Cape; better yet, trips to Vermont and Cape May and beyond! We'll have meetings the third Wednesday of every month. We were going to be the best bird club ever created.

Eventually reality and common sense set in. The more ambitious we tried to be, the more the likelihood of self-immolation, so we set modest goals. We decided on monthly meetings from September to May, but not on a fixed schedule. This policy gave us more flexibility in finding speakers and did not commit us to a schedule that could result in failure. Our field trips would be local, but if someone volunteered to

run a trip outside the surrounding area, so much the better. And we would eliminate mailing costs by using the Listserv as the way to communicate.

We decided not to elect officers or charge dues. Realizing that a more formal structure could lead to failure, we agreed to continue as a Steering Committee, with committees of three to four people to spearhead trips, meetings, and refreshments for the meetings. At meetings we would ask for donations to defray the cost of room rental and to start building a club treasury. Later, we created club T-shirts as another way to raise money.

The first official meeting took place about a month after Oakes's social event, and the forty-plus new members who attended were told about upcoming field trips, informed about the meeting scheduled for the following month, and shown our new web site. For a club logo we decided on a stylized eagle based loosely on Native American drawings, to combine the Native American name of the club with the bird that had generated so much excitement at the time of the club's formation.

More than two years later our "little" club continues to thrive. Forty to seventy people typically attend our meetings, and trips can draw over twenty participants. The Listserv has well over 200 subscribers, with many more reading web archives. In 2005 when the club was asked by Mass Audubon to cosponsor the statewide Birders' Meeting, we realized we had become a "real" club.



At the Mass Audubon Birders' Meeting, club volunteers wearing their Menotomy T-shirts were easily identified by attendees searching for information. Photograph by the author.

And, every winter "the" eagle has returned. On a cold February 5, 2005, in a heavy snow cover, Paul Roberts led a trip to the Mystic Lakes cosponsored by the Friends of the Mystic River, and fifty-five participants enjoyed views not only of the eagle, but of three Merlins perching and bathing.

While the group was there, people in the local area, who had heard about the eagle, dropped by. They shared telescopes and binoculars with the trip participants, and — perhaps — a few new birders were born. 🦅

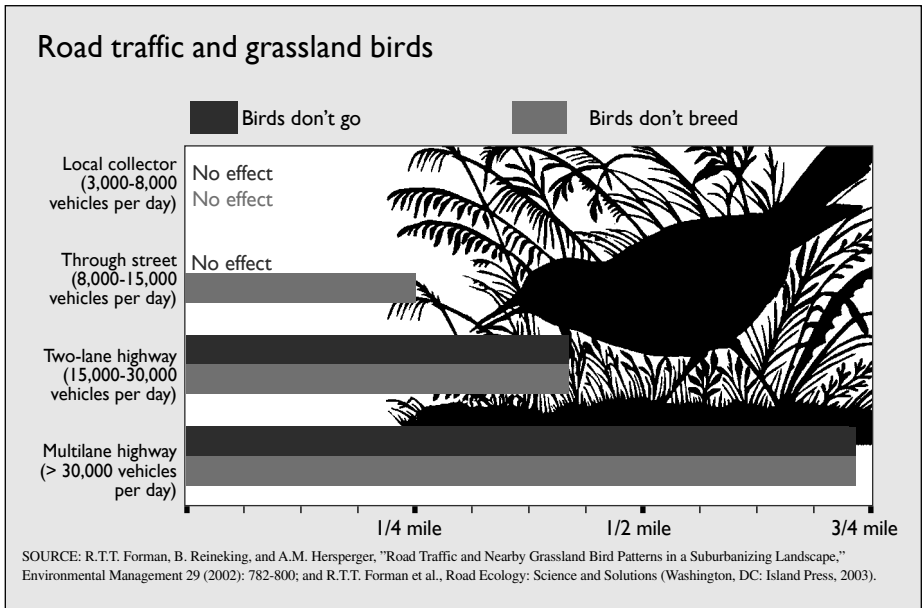
*Marjorie Rines is the editor of Bird Sightings for Bird Observer and a part-time naturalist at Mass Audubon. For more information on the ArlingtonBirds Listserv and the Menotomy Bird Club, visit <<http://mrines.com/birds/Arlington/>>.*

# Driving Birds Away

Christopher Reed

[Editor's note: This article originally appeared in Harvard Magazine and is reprinted here with permission.]

If you were a bobolink thinking about breeding, you would avoid laying your eggs within three-quarters of a mile of either side of a busy four-lane highway that runs by Thoreau's Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts, or within a quarter mile of the through street connecting Lincoln to Concord. The 30,000-plus cars, trucks, and motorcycles speeding along Route 2 each weekday, and the 8,000 to 15,000 vehicles on the through street, make noise. That noise — not exhaust stink or the *sight* of speeding machines — apparently creates the broad avoidance zone on either side of the road, a wide swath of degraded habitat invisible to passing motorists, where certain birds don't go or don't breed.



GRAPH BY STEPHEN ANDERSON

Richard T.T. Forman and colleagues studied the impact of different-sized roads on the behavior of grassland birds in a 150-square-mile area along a 15-mile stretch of Route 2, just to the west-northwest of Cambridge, where Forman is professor of advanced environmental studies in the field of landscape ecology at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. This is a middle- to outer-suburban landscape with expanding residential areas in a landscape of forest, wetlands, ponds, streams, and open agricultural fields.

Many species of birds that thrive in open grasslands are now rare in Massachusetts, and some species — the northern harrier and the horned lark — no longer breed in any of the 84 patches of grassland in Forman's study area. Using data that a team of birdwatchers gathered over five years, he concentrated on the bobolink and the eastern meadowlark. Though still present, these two species have been declining as breeders for decades — the same decades in which vehicular traffic has increased at a rate of 3 percent a year.

A quiet road traversed by no more than 8,000 vehicles a day had no effect on the presence or the regular breeding of his birds (see graph). But the greater traffic of a through street discouraged breeding, and the multilane highway drove the birds away entirely.

The edge species, our common backyard birds — the chickadee, let's say — aren't bothered by the racket of cars unless it is brutally loud; nor are egrets and herons, which one may spot in Cambridge intently fishing along the banks of the Charles River.

Forman doesn't know *why* noise bothers grassland birds, but he hypothesizes that it places them in added danger. "When there are eggs on the nest and a cat shows up, or a snake or a hawk, the adult male or female makes an alarm click or call, and the adults freeze and so are not seen," says Forman. "Those alarms are similarly critical when baby birds are fledged and on the ground. If the traffic noise is loud enough, the birds can't hear the alarms." Species with lower-pitched calls are hit the worst because traffic noise is low-pitched. (Work in progress reported to Forman suggests that where there is traffic noise, birds raise their voices and sing louder.)


Mitigating steps can lessen the roar: pave with a more-sound-absorbing surface; redesign tires, engines, and exhaust systems; reduce the proportion of trucks; build low, shrub-covered berms by the roadside; sink the road.

Forman is a pioneering landscape ecologist who became interested in what has recently come to be called road ecology when he realized that, although people knew a lot about the effect of nature on roads (potholes, for instance), they were largely blind to the effect of roads on nature. He is one of two lead authors of a field-establishing book, *Road*



Road ecologists such as Richard Forman advocate making passages for animals, over and under highways, that can help restore connectivity. This one has just been constructed under Route 2 near Walden Pond for the use of the fox, the coyote, the mink, the fisher, the raccoon, and other inconvenienced suburbanites. It is, says Forman, the first such underpass built in Massachusetts, the first of four planned, and one of very few in North America. Photograph courtesy of Richard Forman.

*Ecology: Science and Solutions*, written by 14 transportation specialists, hydrologists, and ecologists, half from academia and half from government. “It’s a solution-oriented book,” says Forman. “We tried to make it unavoidable by members of the transportation community.”

The network of public roads in the United States is a huge structure: four million miles of it, carrying a quarter of a billion vehicles. When one considers the avoidance zones surrounding many roads, Forman points out, the road network has an environmental impact on 20 percent of the total land surface of the country. Roads also create barriers to the movement of creatures great and small, from bears to salamanders. This reduction of landscape connectivity is the second big impact of the road system on wildlife. We have superimposed on our waving fields of grain and purple mountains a grid of interlocking roads that connect points for people but subdivide nature. We have built what Forman characterizes as a “megazoo.” 

*Richard Forman’s e-mail address is rforman@gsd.harvard.edu.*

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## **FROM MASSWILDLIFE**

### **MUTE SWAN POPULATION EXPANDING INLAND**

MassWildlife recently compiled the results of the [August, 2005] mute swan survey in the Bay State as part of a biological project conducted every three years by eastern seaboard states and the US Fish & Wildlife Service. There were 1046 mute swans counted, consisting of 787 adults and 259 cygnets (young swans). A total of 100 broods (families) were counted, with an average of 2.6 cygnets per brood. The current survey shows a 10 percent increase in population from the last survey period and that the population is significantly expanding its range inland.

Mute swans are an exotic species first introduced to the eastern United States by collectors and estate owners in the early 1900s. Over time, some birds escaped and began nesting on their own. The first record of swans in Massachusetts occurred in 1922 with a flock of 11 birds sighted on Martha’s Vineyard. The majority of swans were originally found in southeastern Massachusetts in coastal areas. Over the years the Mute swan population grew and in the past three decades expanded its numbers and range both north and west in the state to the Berkshires.

Of particular interest was information which showed a 10 percent decrease in the number of birds on the mainland coast, Cape Cod and the Islands. However, more mute swans continue to expand inland with a 44 percent increase in birds in inland areas from the 2002 survey. In their native European habitat, mute swans prefer inland areas. Swans are territorial birds and their decreasing numbers along the coast could be due to territoriality and habitat saturation by established swans; thus swans are moving inland to find more suitable habitat. Swan surveys first began in 1986 with a total count of 585 birds. Numbers of swans counted during surveys from 1986 – 1996 increased 57 percent. From 1996-2005, the number of birds counted during the survey increased by 14 percent.

# Bird Conservation and the Important Bird Area (IBA) Program: It's All About Habitat

Wayne R. Petersen

*Editor's Note: As Important Bird Areas are rapidly becoming the currency for international bird conservation, Bird Observer is committed to the notion that our readers should be encouraged to become familiar with the IBA program. In 2006 we plan to feature several Massachusetts IBAs, their habitats, their special birds, and their conservation needs.*

It has been well established that the single greatest global threat to bird populations, as well as biodiversity in general, is the destruction or degradation of habitat. Although it is true that competition from exotic and invasive species, as well as pollution of the environment, are significant factors, their impact pales when compared to the effect of habitat loss. While this should not come as a surprise to thoughtful readers, sometimes even the obvious proves to be elusive. In this case, however, it is clear that the mandate for effective habitat protection and preservation is imperative for bird conservation.

Not all areas are created equal when it comes to birds. Birders hardly need to be convinced that some places are apparently better for birds than others. Otherwise, why would thousands of birders annually trek to Parker River National Wildlife Refuge (i.e., Plum Island), visit Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge practically every morning in May, or pilgrimage to Cape Cod to spend a day shorebirding at South Beach in Chatham or Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge at least once every summer? These are well-known regional birding hot spots — areas that apparently provide just what many birds seem to require in terms of habitat characteristics, geographical location, food resources, and protection. They represent locations that by any accounting are important to birds. But they are not the only areas in Massachusetts that are important to birds. There are tiny offshore islands that harbor hundreds of pairs of nesting cormorants, herons, or terns; ponds and reservoirs that serve as resting spots for flocks of migrating waterfowl every autumn; and wildlife management areas that support interesting assemblages of breeding birds. In addition, many of us birders probably know of a certain little woodlot, secluded pond, or overgrown pasture that we call our “patch,” that little corner of the planet that we feel we know better than anyone else does. These examples all represent areas important to birds.

Building upon the reality of these various examples, BirdLife International (BirdLife), a British-based bird conservation organization with avian conservation partners all over the world, initiated a program in 1985 called the Important Bird Area (IBA) program. Using established habitat criteria, BirdLife set out to catalogue as many of the areas important to birds in the United Kingdom and Europe as possible. By 2000, BirdLife and its partner organizations had identified 3400 IBAs throughout Europe. In the mid-1990s BirdLife established a partnership with the National



Audubon Society (NAS), with the understanding that the NAS would coordinate a state-based IBA program. In 1995 NAS launched the Pennsylvania IBA program, followed by a similar effort in New York in 1996. Currently forty-six states have IBA programs in various stages of progress in the United States. Globally IBA programs exist in 130 countries, including twenty-one countries in the Americas.

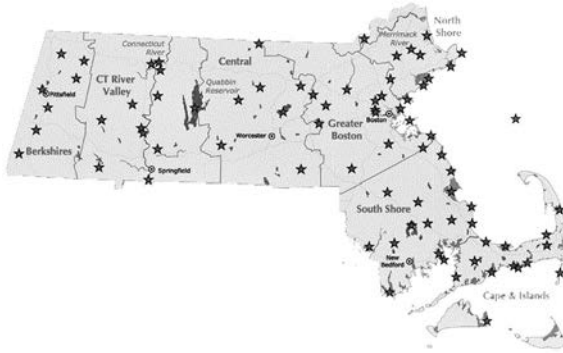
Beginning in 2001 Mass Audubon, working in cooperation with the NAS, launched the IBA program in Massachusetts. By 2002, a technical committee comprised of knowledgeable birders, representatives from state and federal agencies, NGO organizations, and avian scientists successfully worked together with the birding community and the public to identify, nominate, and officially recognize seventy-nine IBAs throughout the Commonwealth. Using internationally recognized criteria established by BirdLife (with slight modifications to accommodate regional differences), Bay State IBA sites were selected “that provide essential habitat for one or more species of breeding, wintering, and/or migrating birds.” In order for a site to qualify as an IBA, a site:

- Must regularly hold significant numbers of an endangered, threatened, vulnerable, or declining species;
- Must regularly hold significant numbers of species of high conservation priority in Massachusetts;
- Must be one where birds concentrate in significant numbers in the breeding season, in winter, or during migration;
- Must contain assemblages of species characteristic of a representative, rare, threatened, or unique habitat with the state or region;
- Must be important for long-term research and/or monitoring projects that contribute substantially to ornithology, bird conservation, and/or education.


Each designated IBA must also conform to various other qualifying attributes, but the essence of the criteria for each site is provided by the definitions above. A site that meets any one of the five criteria may qualify as an IBA, and some sites meet more than one.

It is important to point out that IBAs may be sites that are protected or unprotected, and may exist on public or private land. They may vary considerably in size (e.g., Bird Island vs. Mount Greylock Reservation), but they are usually discrete and distinguishable in character, habitat, or ornithological importance from surrounding areas. In general an IBA should exist as an actual or potential protected area or should have the potential to be specifically managed for bird conservation.

In addition to having value as a way to approach the protection of birds and their habitats in Massachusetts, the IBA program also offers birders a number of opportunities for becoming actively involved in local bird conservation efforts. Now that Mass Audubon has identified seventy-nine key IBAs, the real business of on-the-ground bird conservation can begin.



MAP OF CURRENT IBA SITES, FROM  
<[HTTP://WWW.MASSAUDUBON.ORG/BIRDS\\_&\\_BEYOND/IBAS/SITES.PHP](http://www.massaudubon.org/Birds_&_Beyond/IBAs/SITES.PHP)>.

For readers wishing to obtain more information about the IBA program, IBA site criteria, or other aspects of the Massachusetts IBA program, you are encouraged to visit: <[http://www.massaudubon.org/Birds\\_&\\_Beyond/IBAs/index.php](http://www.massaudubon.org/Birds_&_Beyond/IBAs/index.php)>. 

**Wayne Petersen** is Director of Mass Audubon's Massachusetts Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program. He can be contacted directly at [iba@massaudubon.org](mailto:iba@massaudubon.org).

## SAVE THE DATE 14th Massachusetts Birders Meeting

**March 4, 2006**

**Bentley College, Waltham**

Please join us in March for a day of presentations, workshops and exhibits.

Our keynote address will be "Hot on the Trail of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker" by Tim Gallagher, editor-in-chief of *Living Bird* magazine and author of *The Grail Bird*. Other highlights of the day will include workshops, additional presentations, vendors, and lunch.

Information and registration forms are available online at  
<<http://www.massaudubon.org/>> or send an e-mail to  
[birdersmeeting@massaudubon.org](mailto:birdersmeeting@massaudubon.org).



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# Ten Tips For Maintaining Your Birding Partner

*John Nelson*

It's a common dilemma when you're a serious birder and your beloved spouse or partner is not: you think of travel in terms of birding. You dream of vacationing in the Patagonian outback (ahh...Long-tailed Meadowlark) or a Malaysian swamp (Cinnamon Bittern). Your partner, on the other hand, would rather golf (Canada Goose), tan and tango on a cruise ship (gulls, terns, and a few pelagics), or drink Pinot Grigio in Tuscany (the locals have shot down anything that flies). Compromises like separate or alternating vacations are unappealing. You want more birds but you also desire your partner's enthusiastic company.

At home in Massachusetts my wife Mary rarely goes birding. Locally she's content to enjoy our yard birds, but she is willing to go on birding vacations. Together we've looked for birds from the Everglades to the Pribilofs, from the slopes of Ecuador to the reefs of Australia. I'm a lucky man, I know; just ask my envious birding friends who don't have such accommodating traveling companions.

In fact I'm more than lucky, for Mary is more than an agreeable birding partner, she can really get into it sometimes, and like the spouses of many birders I know, she's got sharper eyes than mine. She's spotted all sorts of birds I would never have seen on my own: Vaux's Swifts high above us on the California coast, a skulking — noiseless — Noisy Pitta in an Australian rain forest. The words: "Honey, isn't this the bird you're looking for?" are music to my ears. She's found birds for other hard-core birders too. On a guided trip to Belize, we were in a group with two experienced birders, one of them a woman with a life list topping 6500. Mary confessed that life lists were alien to her; then we all spent a day in the field during which she often referred to the birds we saw as "little guys." I could see this woman thinking, "My god, what have I gotten myself into?" By trip's end however, Mary had found for us numerous distant raptors and secretive forest birds, and the woman confided that my wife was not only a delightful person but also a "useful" birding companion.

Yes, my spouse is very useful, and I want to keep it that way. I want to keep her happy on our birding vacations — for love, for marriage, and for finding as many birds as possible. Toward that end I've formulated a list of rules for maintaining her good spirits and birding focus. These rules have all been field-tested and refined through trial-and-error. They've served me well; my useful wife is still willing to go on birding vacations. I recommend these rules to other birders with nonbirding spouses or partners. Follow them and you may find birding bliss together. Ignore them at your own risk.

**RULE #1: Don't pressure her to study before a birding trip.** Yes, you can acquire a field guide for the area and encourage some browsing. You can stir up enthusiasm by pointing out a few of the flashier species you might see, but don't turn to a page of South American woodcreepers, or baffling *Phylloscopus* warblers, and ask her to contemplate the minutia of distinguishing field marks. Playing "Where's Waldo?"

with thirty look-alike species may not be her idea of pretravel fun. You're going on vacation: don't assign homework. It's *your* hobby, so it's your job to know what you're looking at in the field.

**RULE #2: Don't get hung up on birding terminology.** If she refers to almost all birds, short of condors and swans, as "pretty little things," you might gently point out, yet again, that such endearing phrases aren't very helpful in field identification. Tease her about birding bloopers, and you'll find yourself birding alone.

**RULE #3: There will be times when you feel you must offer corrections and explanations in the field. That's fine, just don't expect her to remember any of it:** neither the rarity of a bird you both saw two years ago nor the identity of a bird you both saw two minutes ago. "What's that?" she will ask about the eight-hundredth Tropical Kingbird of your trip. Suck it up.

**RULE #4: Birding is one thing; talking about birding is another.** Don't try to engage your partner in birding chat before the third cup of coffee in the morning or after the second glass of wine at night. Also, she may not accept a list of the next day's target birds as a suitable substitute for foreplay. A more stimulating alternative is gossip about the other birders in your group. Remember, your partner is a social animal who's been forced to spend days, perhaps weeks on end trapped in a jungle with fanatics. At the end of a long day in the field, nothing will provide more mutual entertainment than the chance to itemize all the ways in which these companions have whined, obsessed, bragged, malingered, badmouthed others behind their backs, hogged the scope or the food, and made birding fools of themselves.

**RULE #5: Never try to arouse her interest in the identification of New World sparrows, Old World warblers, female ducks, gulls of any kind, *Empidonax* flycatchers, Xantus' vs. Craveri's murrelets, petrels, peeps, or any bird whose name begins with "ant."** A Ross's Gull will not thrill her unless it's a really pink one. Refrain from lectures about the irrationality of her prejudice against whole families of birds. You're not the Lord of Reason; we all have our likes and dislikes. If she ever asks you about the molting patterns of three-year gulls, cherish the moment. It won't last.

**RULE #6: If your partner finds a rarity and you miss it, curb your outrage and envy.** Even if you have to identify a species you didn't actually see, even when she says it was "a boring little brown guy," don't succumb to the overwhelming urge to scream, "Why God? Why her and not me?" Eat your heart out in silence. Blame yourself. It's not her fault you lingered on that hilltop with those Spanish birders who found absolutely nothing, while she got bored and walked back to the blind where she saw the impossible-to-see Common Quail and flushed a Red-necked Nightjar. Show some generosity of spirit, and add the birds to her life list, even if she doesn't keep one.

**RULE #7: Never push your luck.** If your partner is gracious enough to suffer the heat and stench of the Brownsville, Texas, Dump just so you can see a life crow, don't ask her to hang around for another hour so you can sift through ten thousand gulls. If

your partner is loving enough to join you on birding vacations, don't expect her to go birding with you at home as well. Find somebody else to brave the greenheads of Plum Island with you in July.

**RULE #8: Give her some space (or enough is enough).** This rule is a logical extension of Rule #7. After hours in the field, your partner may lose intensity, become impatient with the antbird stakeout, and wander off to look at flowers. Do NOT say, "We're birding! Snap out of it!" Your partner may reach a point where an hour of liberation from birding just won't cut it. She might want a whole day off. She might suspect that Thailand offers other attractions: she may have read something in the brochures about temples, hill tribes, beaches, and Thai food. She might not mind some time alone without you or any other birder in sight. Tell her you'll miss her, wish her a good time, and for God's sake don't try a guilt trip or B.S. her about how much you'll miss her. She's not deserting you for life, and besides, you've got birds to look for.

**RULE #9: Fair is fair.** If your partner can feign enthusiasm for a Peg-billed Finch, you can stand to go shopping for a few hours. When you travel, allow a few days for other activities and give these activities your full attention. Do not look for, listen for, talk, think, or dream about birds without her expressed written consent. If you're wandering through the Louvre and she fails to comment on a goldfinch clenched in the fat fist of baby Jesus, keep your mouth shut. If you exit the museum and a Blue Rock Thrush flies by, observe it surreptitiously. A good birder — like a skilled voyeur — can watch without anyone knowing.

**RULE #10: If your partner feels like going birding, and you don't, go anyway.** This eventuality may seem unlikely. After all, *you're* the fanatic. Supposedly, she's just along for the ride. Nevertheless, there may come a day when you're feeling birded out, and your partner says, "Honey, aren't we going birding today?" The answer to this question is always "yes!" Her impulse to bird may be a passing whim, but a whim can be nurtured into habit and with luck into full-fledged addiction. Ten years ago, my wife would envision us on holiday, lounging romantically with margaritas on a tropical beach. Now she's puzzled if we travel somewhere without birding the local dump or waste treatment facility. In fact, she researches dump locations before a trip. I call that progress. 🐦

*John Nelson has recently retired after more than three decades as an English professor at North Shore Community college. He now dedicates himself to writing fiction and going birding, not necessarily in that order. He has published a book on teaching, Cultivating Judgment: Teaching Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum, and volunteers as a property monitor for Essex County Greenbelt. He makes his home in Gloucester.*

# FIELD NOTE

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## Food for Later

*David Larson*


Sometimes I lose things. I'm always forgetting my coffee in the microwave at work. I forget to pick things up at the store; I lose track of time; I still can't find that half-donut from two weeks ago. So I'm amazed by the reports of birds caching seeds or nuts only to unerringly retrieve them months later. Clark's Nutcrackers, for instance, routinely cache tens of thousands of food items and can recover them up to nine months later. (Tomback 1998).

I'm going to be watching carefully in the upcoming year, to see if one of our White-breasted Nuthatches ever retrieves the sunflower seeds he cached today. We had just put out our feeders for the season and, within hours, they were hopping with several species of birds. Two male nuthatches were feeding from the sunflower feeder. One took his seeds to a nearby tree and shelled and ate them; the other bird cached his seeds. We watched him land on the back of our house and probe around between and under the white cedar shingles. He was very picky, rejecting several locations before hammering in a seed. He cached more seeds with shells than without, but only just. He planted his hoard there, around the gutters, and even up by the chimney. If you look carefully in the accompanying photographs, you can see where he hammered an unshelled black oil sunflower seed into a seam in the lead flashing.



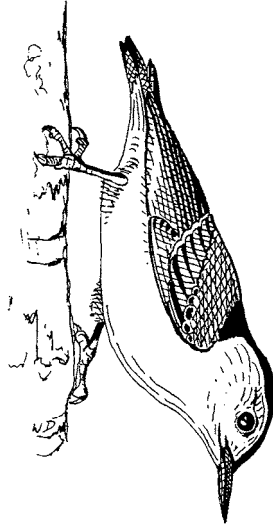
PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR

Nuthatches scatterhoard individual food items throughout their territories in the fall and winter (Pravosudov and Grubb 1993). They usually choose crevices in tree bark, and males are more likely to use tree trunks, while females choose limbs and other locations. While I can see the cedar shingles as a tree trunk-equivalent, the gutter and chimney seem a bit of a stretch.

If this nuthatch's memory is no better than mine, perhaps I'll have sunflowers growing on my house next summer. 

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WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH BY WILLIAM E. DAVIS, JR.

### FROM MASSWILDLIFE

#### 2005 PIPING PLOVER NUMBERS DOWN

MassWildlife has compiled figures for piping plovers with data gathered through the cooperation of nearly 70 biologists and beach managers from state and federal agencies, local municipalities, and private conservation groups. A total of 475 pairs of Piping Plovers nested at 109 sites on Massachusetts coastal beaches. This represents a 3 percent decline from last year's 490 pairs. Dr. Scott Melvin, Senior Zoologist for MassWildlife, noted that the average number of chicks fledged per pair was only 1.0, below the minimum reproductive success needed to sustain Massachusetts' breeding population of Piping Plovers. "This year's low reproductive success is due in part to two spring coastal storms that destroyed many nests," said Melvin. He also said that loss of eggs and unfledged chicks to a variety of avian and mammalian predators continues to be a primary factor limiting productivity. Beach management practices to safeguard beach-nesting birds from disturbance, mortality, and habitat degradation still remain effective conservation tools. Piping plovers are classified as "Threatened" on both the federal and state endangered species lists.

# ABOUT BOOKS

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## Tools

Mark Lynch

**A Field Guide To Sprawl.** Dolores Hayden. 2004. W.W. Norton & Company. New York.

**Birding Cape Cod.** Cape Cod Bird Club and the Massachusetts Audubon Society. 2005. On Cape Publications, Inc. Yarmouthport, MA.

**Identify Yourself: The 50 Most Common Birding Identification Challenges.** Bill Thompson III and the editors of *Bird Watcher's Digest*. 2005. Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston, MA.

**Handbook Of The Birds Of The World: Volume 10 Cuckoo-Shrikes To Thrushes.** Josep del Hoyo, Andrew Elliott, and David Christie. 2005. Lynx Edicions. Barcelona, Spain.

**Shorebirds Of North America: The Photographic Guide.** Dennis Paulson. 2005. Princeton, University Press. Princeton, NJ.

**Bird Guide: The Most Complete Field Guide To The Birds Of Britain And Europe.** Lars Svensson and Peter Grant. 1999. HarperCollins Publishers. London, United Kingdom.

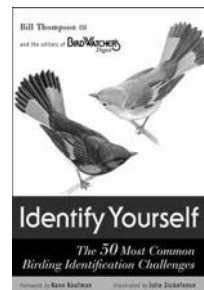
So many bird books! So little time — and money! Although most birders are also rabid bibliophiles, it is tough to keep up with all that's published. Bird books for me typically fall into one of two broad types. There are the books I really look forward to reading, and then there are the books I feel I should own regardless. I have to confess that 90% of the bird titles I own are not books I would curl up with in a big comfy chair and savor, not in the same way I enjoyed reading, say, the new biography of John James Audubon by Richard Rhodes. Most books I buy about birds are not written nearly as well as that one, and they have no pretensions at literary greatness. Most of the bird books I buy are more like tools to me: devices to help me do something better: specifically, to better identify and understand birds. They may not read like Proust or Pynchon but they get the job done.

With that in mind I've come up with a few random issues or problems that different birders might have to contend with and some recently published tools that can help address them.

**“I am a beginner birder and I want to be a better one.”**

Solution: *Identify Yourself* by Bill Thompson III.

Many new birders immediately feel the pressure to be an expert as quickly as possible, and therein lies trouble. Bill Thompson III is the Editor of *Bird Watcher's Digest*. He has an easygoing, conversational writing style that makes this a perfect book for





neophyte birders wishing to ditch that epithet. This book takes the beginner beyond the cut-and-dried presentation of a field guide by dealing with many common field identification problems at length. These include many well-known and documented challenges such as: female ducks, hawks in flight, the basics of aging and identifying gulls, and confusing spring and fall warblers. Other chapters address problems less commonly discussed: like telling cuckoo species apart in flight, ID'ing female blackbirds, and separating Black-capped and Carolina chickadees.

Our goal is to provide beginning and intermediate-level bird watchers with a clear and logical path by which to navigate each identification challenge. (p. 15).

Although Thompson likes a corny joke and bad pun (just look at the book's title), he is always on message: encouraging the beginner to take time to really look at the bird and thereby slowly and steadily improve field identification skills. This guide is illustrated by Julie Zickefoose, an artist well known to long-time *Bird Observer* readers. In this book she focuses on illustrating similar species, showing the basic differences discussed in the text. However, *Identify Yourself* could have used more of Zickefoose's work to illustrate many identification points that are now only described in the text. Her paintings are clear and simple, capturing the essence of each species, although I was far less impressed with her few illustrations of *Calidris* sandpipers — which remain many an artist's downfall.

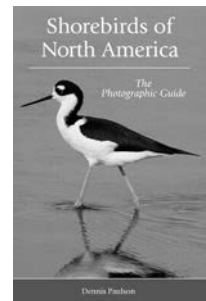
*Identify Yourself* is crammed with useful birding tips and information for beginning and medium-level birders. To any advanced birders who may turn their nose up at a book perceived as beneath their skill level, I can only say, "Get over yourself! We all find ourselves at some point not sure of what we are looking at. Even you."

#### **"How do I tell a Least Sandpiper from a Long-toed Stint?"**

Solution: *Shorebirds of North America* by Dennis Paulson (in part).

I say "in part" because no single portable book will ever contain all you need to know about identifying shorebirds. That book has yet to be written, but *Shorebirds of North America* is a good step in that direction. It's an improvement over the earlier *Facts on File Field Guide to North Atlantic Shorebirds* by Richard Chandler, which became a minor classic for shorebird mavens when it was published in 1989. The photographs are of far better quality in Paulson's book, and his text contains many more identification details and tips for telling similar species apart.

Paulson is probably best known to New England birders for his *Shorebirds of the Pacific Northwest*, a voluminous and authoritative identification guide that uses both photographs and illustrations of species. *Shorebirds of North America* boils down the extensive plumage details of *Shorebirds of the Pacific Northwest* to the essentials. Even so, it still contains more plumage details than you will find in any general field guide. A suite of fine photographs illustrating a variety of plumages accompanies each written species account. In addition to the expected

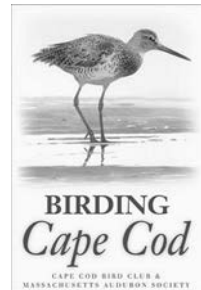


species, the book includes and gives full treatment to exotics, some with only a single North American record like Slender-billed Curlew. The debate over photographs vs. illustrations aside (I like to look at both), this book is the best photographic shorebird guide to the species of our area currently in print. The sturdy paperback edition is almost compact enough to consider it a “field guide.” *Shorebirds of North America* is certainly a book to keep in the car during shorebird season.

**“So, where can I go to see some of those shorebirds mentioned above?”**

Solution: *Birding Cape Cod* by the Cape Cod Bird Club and Massachusetts Audubon Society.

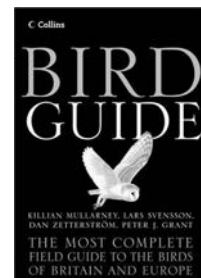
This is the revised and updated version of the wonderful “where to go” guide that was originally published in 1990 but has been out of print for years. Much of this edition contains the same locations and information as the original. I am happy to report that this means *Birding Cape Cod* still includes Janet Heywood’s sublimely clear and easy-to-understand maps, as well a smattering of delightful illustrations by Barry van Dusen. That said, Cape Cod is an area under constant attack from the relentless onslaught of developers as well as numerous natural forces, so minor changes in the status of certain locations was inevitable. Also included now is a 317-species checklist noting breeding status and abundance on a month-by-month basis. If you want to bird the Cape, this slim volume will get you to where you need to go and tell you what to expect when you get there. It is always in the back of my car. This book is a fine example of a locally written and published regional guide and should be in the possession of anyone who has ever birded the windblown and wave-ravaged coast of the long arm of the Cape.



**“Is that a Fieldfare out there among that big flock of robins?”**

Solution: *Bird Guide: The Most Complete Field Guide To The Birds Of Britain And Europe*.

North America gets a surprising number and diversity of European birds annually, and it is always handy to have a decent European field guide in your arsenal for that special moment when someone calls, “Garganey!” Although many North American guides cover at least the most regular European vagrants, you should also own a guide from where those species are seen regularly for additional information on field marks and behavior clues. There are many European guides to choose from, all of them light-years ahead of the original version of the European guide by Peterson, Mountfort, and Hollum. (Oddly, I own a very old Dutch-language version of that guide, and not so oddly, I don’t use it much). I am still partial to Lars Jonsson’s *Birds of Europe* because I like his large painterly artwork that features birds in positions not typically found in most field guides. I also refer to Beaman and Madge’s more scholarly *Handbook* often, though its large size prevents it from being used in the field with any ease. This brings us to the handy Collins *Bird Guide*. The paperback is perfect to keep in the car and bring out into the field at that next stakeout of a Red-footed Falcon or

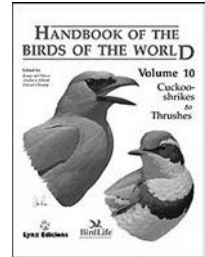


Eurasian Kestrel. The illustrations are crisp, clean, and show all the pertinent field marks. The text has a wealth of information on identification, almost too much for a typical field guide. Some folks have recommended buying the large-type version because everything is expanded and easier to read, even the illustrations. But I find the paperback fits the bill perfectly.

**“What exactly are the differences between Prigogine’s and Falkenstein’s Greenbul?”**

Solution: *Handbook of the Birds of the World Volume 10.*

On a cold, gray Massachusetts day, when you’re counting starlings flying into an evening roost for your local CBC, it may seem hard to believe that somewhere in the world people can have such a concern...but they do, and this is one of the few books that can answer that question as well as about a googolplex more. This “handbook” is nothing less than the most ambitious natural history publishing project ever. Its goal is to illustrate and give all the particulars, including range maps, for every single species of bird in the world. But this series is much, much more than just a big list. Each volume is brimming with state-of-the-art photography — of birds common and rare — most of which has never been seen before, by leading photographers from around the world. There is also detailed text about each family and group of birds written by some of the world’s leading ornithologists. Reviewers struggle to come up with new superlatives to declare the wonders of this series. Here’s my two cents: If this book series was a film it would be “The Lord of the Rings” (I, II, II) AND “Citizen Kane” AND “The Godfather” (parts 1 and 2 at least, forget part 3). I could go on, but you get the point: the *Handbook* series is that good and important. Of course any book with 80 color plates and 400 color photographs, and that is heavy enough to stun a cassowary, is expensive, but various payment plans for purchasing the entire series are now offered by Lynx Edicions. Go to <http://www.hbw.com> for details. This latest published volume takes us from Cuckoo-shrikes through the many thrushes of the world. A new volume comes out about every other year, and the end of the series is definitely in sight. Whether you are only an armchair traveler or a Phoebe Snetsinger wannabe, the *Handbook* will have you in awe at the marvelous diversity of bird life on our fragile planet.



**“Never mind Prigogine’s Greenbul, what happened to my favorite local birding spot?”**


Solution: *A Field Guide To Sprawl* by Dolores Hayden.

The phenomenon of suburban sprawl is why we are losing so much wild habitat every year in southern New England. It is one of the leading causes for the steady decrease in bird variety and the numbers of so many species. A housing development here, a shopping mall there, and before you know it, what was once a great place to bird is now the parking lot of a Bob’s Superstore. Conservation-minded birders often feel



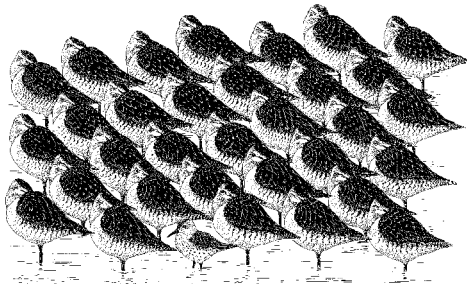
overwhelmed by the pace of this development, but Dolores Hayden, architectural critic and poet, has written this simple guide to help us grasp the big picture of what exactly is going on. Using the outstanding aerial photography of Jim Wark, Hayden shows us the effects of what happens when short-term greed meets a lack of regional planning.

It's all alphabetically categorized using developers' own terminology: from "Alligator," a sprawling development with far too many subdivisions, to an explosively growing "Zoomurb" like Sun City, Arizona. Hayden's goal is to rattle us out of our complacency in accepting the ugly as inevitable and to provoke us into taking an active part in the discussion of how our larger living spaces will be created, how they will look and function, and how much open space will be left for our children and grandchildren. The alternative to reading this book may ultimately be to have nothing to look at but starlings, Rock Pigeons, and House Sparrows. (Nota bene: if you want to better understand how sprawl came to be our modus operandi, read *Twentieth-Century Sprawl* by Owen Gutfreund).

Stay tuned: In the next issue of *Bird Observer*, I will review what I consider to be THE most essential informational birding tool for Massachusetts birders to own. And it's not exactly a book! 

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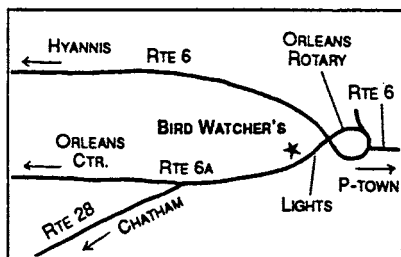
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# BIRD SIGHTINGS

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## July/August 2005

*Seth Kellogg, Robert Stymeist, and Marjorie Rines*

July had near-normal temperatures, with an average of 73.3° in Boston, 0.6° below average. The high for the month was 94° on July 26 and 27, and there were an additional five days with temperatures reaching 90° or higher on July 10, 11, 19, 20, and 22. Oppressive humidity levels, averaging 70 percent or higher, accompanied these warm days. The low for the month was 56° on July 8 and 9. Two low daily maximum temperature records were set. The peak temperature for July 7 reached only 63°, tying with 1935, and the 61° on July 8 was well below the 68° of 1946. Rainfall totaled 3.37 inches in Boston, just 0.31" above average. Measurable amounts fell on just five days, avoiding all weekend days except Saturday, July 9. The Blue Hill Observatory in Milton recorded 61 percent of possible sunshine.

August was hot, wet, and sunny. The temperature averaged 74.3°, 2.0° above normal for Boston. This August tied for the ninth hottest in 134 years, though no records were broken. Just three days recorded temperatures above 90°. The high was 97° on August 5, and the low of 60° was recorded on August 16 and 25. Precipitation totaled 2.88 inches, about a half inch below average, with twelve days of measurable rain. Thunder was heard on seven days, four more than normal. Just south of Boston, very heavy thunderstorms on July 14 produced locally severe winds which downed many trees, along with damaging lightning strikes and flooding rains. In Hingham, for example, 5.35 inches of rain fell in just three hours, a new daily record!

*R. Stymeist*

### WATERFOWL THROUGH ALCIDS

In 2004 the American Ornithologists' Union split Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) into two species: Canada Goose (*B. canadensis*) and Cackling Goose (*B. hutchinsii*). Because birders often do not report subspecies, the occurrence of this new species in Massachusetts is not well known. An individual identified as a "Richardson's" **Cackling Goose** was discovered at Great Meadows NMW in early August and lingered through the end of the month.

On July 12 a probable **albatross** of unknown species was reported from Lynn Beach, and on July 26 another report came from Nantucket. Although no details were submitted by either observer, the two reports are intriguing, since the very few reports of albatrosses in the northeast United States occasionally come in clusters, suggesting either the same individual being reported multiple times, or mini "invasions" of the same species. Only Yellow-nosed and Black-browed Albatrosses have been confirmed in Massachusetts.

Tube-noses were well reported this summer, including good numbers seen from shore. An August 27 pelagic trip to Hydrographer and Veatch's canyons provided a bonanza of pelagic sightings, including a **Band-rumped Storm-Petrel**, which was unfortunately only identified after the trip as a photographer was reviewing his digital images. There are only three previous records of this species, all from this same area, the most recent one being on the same pelagic trip in 2004. Other excellent sightings from the trip included three **Audubon's Shearwaters**, four **Long-tailed Jaegers**, and a "seemingly small whitish Sulid with blackish primaries and secondaries over" (Rick Heil) which escaped identification.

A **Magnificent Frigatebird** was seen and photographed on July 22 at South Beach in Chatham (and reported the same day by another party from nearby North Monomoy). With

sightings of other frigatebird species recorded in North America, the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (MARC) has looked particularly carefully at submissions of any frigatebird; they reviewed both description and photographs presented in this instance and were convinced that this sighting was of a Magnificent.

Turkey Vultures typically nest in isolated locations such as crevices in rocks or in a hollow log or tree, but a pair in Williamstown chose a two-story barn, and the homeowner described “two young turkey vultures running around inside the barn hissing at anyone who comes near.”

**Common Moorhens** have been anything but common in recent years, but reports of individuals from four locations were encouraging. A report of **Sandhill Crane** on August 18 at the Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary is intriguing now that this species has been confirmed breeding in Maine.

South Beach in Chatham takes the shorebird prize this summer, with a **Wilson’s Plover** there from July 10 through the end of August, *two Little Stints* at the end of July, and a **Curlew Sandpiper** at the end of August.

On August 24 Rick Heil reported, “Currently large schools of bluefish scattered all along immediate coastal North Shore are driving ‘baitfish,’ perhaps herring or sand eels, to the surface. As a result tremendous flocks of terns, and attendant jaegers, have rapidly appeared in these waters to exploit this ready food supply.” Associated with this were high counts of Parasitic Jaegers, Roseate, Common, and Black terns.

**Franklin’s Gull** is a rare visitor to Massachusetts, and the two reports in August are exceptional. These sightings from Chatham and Buzzard’s Bay are unlikely to represent the same individual. The August 20 report of a **Sabine’s Gull** was noteworthy, particularly since this rare migrant is most typically reported later in the fall. **Caspian Terns** are seen regularly in fall, but summer reports are decidedly uncommon. However, an observer reporting one from Chatham gave a careful description which seemed to rule out the more probable Royal Tern. **Sandwich Terns** reported from Chatham and Edgartown were unusual finds.

Summer Razorbills are rare, but a single bird spent the summer on a tidal pond on Martha’s Vineyard. In 2001 three Razorbills summered in a pond on the other end of the Island.

*M. Rines*

Brant				Green-winged Teal			
8/13	Duxbury B.	2	R. Bowes	thr	P.I.	21-55	R. Heil
“Richardson’s”	<b>Cackling Goose</b>			7/9	Amherst	2	H. Allen
8/6-31	GMNWR	1 ph	D. Scott + v.o.	7/14-8/31	GMNWR	4-8	v.o.
Wood Duck				8/7, 26	N. Monomoy	3, 9	Nikula, Silverstein
7/4	Wakefield	39	P. + F. Vale	8/13	Duxbury B.	2	R. Bowes
7/7	GMNWR	54	USFWS	8/20	Acoaxet	2	M. Lynch#
8/13	Stockbridge	62	M. Lynch#	8/22	Magnolia	6	R. Heil
8/22	Magnolia	42	R. Heil	8/24	P’town	4	B. Nikula
8/24	Longmeadow	150	R. Titus	8/24	S. Monomoy	40	MAS (S. Ellis)
8/26	Agawam	35	S. Kellogg	Ring-necked Duck			
Gadwall				8/24	S. Monomoy	40	MAS (S. Ellis)
thr	P.I.	138 max	7/12	Greater Scaup			
American Wigeon				8/9, 16	P.I.	1 m, 4	R. Heil#
7/30, 8/9	P.I.	1 m	R. Heil	Common Eider			
Blue-winged Teal				7/10, 8/7	Duxbury B.	160, 70	R. Bowes
thr	P.I.	5-6	v.o.	7/22	Chatham (S.B.)	19	R. Merrill
8/20	GMNWR	1	S. Perkins#	7/23, 8/20	Westport	19, 44	M. Lynch#
8/20	Acoaxet	9	M. Lynch#	8/6	Stellwagen	43	M. Lynch#
8/22	Hadley	14	J. Smith	8/9	Gloucester	60+	R. Heil#
8/22-26	Agawam	1	S. Kellogg	8/13	P’town H.	70+	B. Nikula
Northern Shoveler				Surf Scoter			
8/24	S. Monomoy	2	MAS (S. Ellis)	7/4	P.I.	1 m	T. Wetmore
Northern Pintail				7/10, 8/1	Chatham (S.B.)	1, 5	Trimble, Nikula
8/10	Northampton	1	J. Smith	7/18	Nantucket	7	E. Ray
8/24	S. Monomoy	2	MAS (S. Ellis)	7/23	P’town	1	P. Flood
8/27	P.I.	1 f	M. Lynch#	White-winged Scoter			
				thr	Chatham (S.B.)	7+	v.o.



White-winged Scoter (continued)				8/16	P.I.	30+	R. Heil
8/20	Westport	1 m	M. Lynch#	8/18	Rockport (A.P.)	13	R. Heil
8/23	P.I.	4	R. Heil	Sooty Shearwater			
8/24	Rockport (A.P.)	4	R. Heil	7/9, 8/27	Stellwagen	16, 20	Emmons, Masterson
Black Scoter				7/11, 8/12	P'town	50, 8	Carlson, Nikula
7/18	Nantucket	1	E. Ray	7/17	Nantucket	500	B. Perkins#
7/21, 8/13	Chatham (S.B.)	7, 8	R. Merrill	7/23, 8/13	Chatham (S.B.)	12, 9	Wheelock, Merrill
8/20	Westport	5	M. Lynch#	7/23	Stellwagen	11	SSBC (Gd'E)
Common Goldeneye				7/31, 8/21	E of Chatham	350, 200	B. Perkins#
thr	Turners Falls	1	H. Allen	8/7	Jeffries L.	10	J. Wallius
Hooded Merganser				8/15	E. Gloucester	42	R. Heil
thr	P.I.	1 f + 2 juv	v.o.	Manx Shearwater			
7/4	GMNWR	4	J. Forbes	7/3, 8/21	Jeffries L.	1, 10	A. + G. Gurka
7/5	Hardwick	1 w/2yng	C. Buelow	7/10, 8/16	P.I.	1, 3	McGrath, Heil
7/10	DWWS	1 imm	D. Furbish#	7/15, 8/12	P'town	16, 1	B. Nikula#
7/31	Lenox	4	R. Laubach	7/17	Nantucket	2	B. Perkins#
8/24	Paxton	13 juv	M. Lynch#	7/31, 8/21	E of Chatham	1, 4	B. Perkins#
Common Merganser				7/31	Stellwagen	2	D. Scott
7/14	Northampton	24	T. Gagnon	8/9, 15	Gloucester	5, 29	R. Heil#
7/18	Turners Falls	6	R. Packard	8/18	Chatham (S.B.)	8	C. Dalton
8/20	Longmeadow	1	T. Gagnon	8/19, 24	Rockport (A.P.)	21, 20	R. Heil
8/30	S. Hadley	3	H. Allen	Audubon's Shearwater			
Red-breasted Merganser				8/27	Hydrographer/Veatch Canyon	3	BBC (Heil)
7/3	P.I.	1 m	T. Wetmore	Wilson's Storm-Petrel			
7/26	Mashpee	1 f	M. Keleher	7/1, 8/18	P'town	70, 120	B. Nikula#
8/26	Falmouth	1	R. Farrell	7/3, 8/21	Jeffries L.	50, 120	A. + G. Gurka
Ruddy Duck				7/9, 8/16	P.I.	10, 25	Wetmore, Heil
8/26	S. Monomoy	12	R. Merrill	7/23, 8/29	Stellwagen	225, 350	Gd'E, Nisbet
Ruffed Grouse				7/31	10 m E of Chatham	1000	B. Perkins#
7/3	Hardwick	4	C. Buelow	8/9, 15	Gloucester	340, 2000	R. Heil#
7/5	W. Boxford	2	J. Berry	8/13	10 m NE of P'town	6000	B. Nikula
7/6	Goshen	2	R. Packard	8/18	Chatham (S.B.)	50	C. Dalton
7/19	Mt. Greylock	1 w/8yng	C. Buelow	8/19	Rockport (A.P.)	160+	R. Heil
7/29	Quabbin (G12)	9	J. Smith	8/21	Duxbury B.	30	R. Bowes
Wild Turkey				8/27	Hydrographer Canyon	2500	BBC (Heil)
7/30	Quabbin Pk	6	M. Lynch#	Band-rumped Storm-Petrel			
8/20	Leicester	20	M. Lynch#	8/27	Hydrographer Canyon	1 ph	BBC (Tepke)
8/29	Lexington	12 juv	J. Sutherland	Northern Gannet			
Northern Bobwhite				7/thr	P.I.	1-2	T. Wetmore
7/27	Rosindale	1	M. Kaufman	7/1, 8/13	P'town	38, 3	B. Nikula#
8/6	Falmouth	1	R. Farrell	7/17	Tillies Bank	4 imm	J. Wallius
8/7	Nauset Marsh	2	M. Lynch#	7/31	Stellwagen	6	D. Scott
Red-throated Loon				8/6	Stellwagen	5	M. Lynch#
7/10	Duxbury B.	1	R. Bowes	8/9, 30	Gloucester	12, 3	R. Heil#
7/10	Chatham (S.B.)	1	J. Trimble#	8/16	P.I.	3 imm	R. Heil
7/10	P.I.	1	S. McGrath	8/19	Rockport (A.P.)	3	R. Heil
Common Loon				8/21	Duxbury B.	2 ad	R. Bowes
7/2	Falmouth	23	R. Farrell	Sulid species			
7/28, 8/16	P.I.	4, 16	R. Heil	8/27	Nantucket Shoals	1 ad	BBC (R. Heil)
8/14	Plymouth B.	7	C. Dalton	Double-crested Cormorant			
8/18	Chatham (S.B.)	4	C. Dalton	7/12	New Salem	31	C. Buelow
8/24	S. Monomoy	10	MAS (S. Ellis)	7/30	S. Monomoy	200	B. Nikula
Pied-billed Grebe				8/6	Stellwagen	306	M. Lynch#
7/3	GMNWR	1	J. Hills	8/12	DWWS	420	D. Furbish
7/10, 8/27	P.I.	1	McGrath, Lynch	8/13	P'town H.	175	B. Nikula
8/10	Northampton	1	J. Smith	8/20	Westport	355	M. Lynch#
8/26	S. Monomoy	1	R. Merrill	8/28	Monomoy	1500+	B. Nikula
8/29	Scituate	1	D. Furbish	8/30	Nahant/Lynn	400	R. Heil
Horned Grebe				Great Cormorant			
7/30-31	Gloucester	1	R. Heil	7/29	Rockport islands	2 imm	J. Berry#
8/7	Chilmark	1	M. Pelikan	Magnificent Frigatebird (details submitted) *			
Albatross species (no details) *				7/22	Chatham (S.B.)	1 ph	G. Hirth, R. Merrill
7/12	Lynn B.	1 "probable"	J. Quigley	Magnificent Frigatebird (no details) *			
7/26	Nantucket	1	D. Southerland	7/22	N. Monomoy	1 subad	E. Banks
Northern Fulmar				American Bittern			
7/17	Tillies Bank	1	J. Wallius	7/2-17	P.I.	1	v.o.
Cory's Shearwater				7/2	Amherst	1	D. Minnear
7/21, 23	Chatham (S.B.)	1, 2	Merrill, Wheelock	7/4	Moran WMA	1	M. Lynch#
8/22	Nantucket	1	P. Flood	7/10	Quabog IBA	1	M. Lynch#
8/23	Jeffries L.	2	R. Haaseth	8/11	GMNWR	1	D. Sibley
8/23-26	Gay Head	50	S. Stephens#	8/13	Stockbridge	1 ad	M. Lynch#
Greater Shearwater				8/15	Easthampton	1	C. Gentes
7/2, 8/13	Chatham (S.B.)	1, 2	R. Merrill	8/21	Merrimack R.	1	S. McGrath
7/17	Nantucket	500	B. Perkins#	Least Bittern			
7/23, 8/29	Stellwagen	8, 35	Gd'E, Nisbet	thr	P.I.	1 f	v.o.
7/31, 8/21	E of Chatham	400, 200	B. Perkins#	7/1, 13	GMNWR	1, 2	Floyd, USFWS
8/7	Jeffries L.	40	J. Wallius	7/17	IRWS	1	D. Hill
8/15	E. Gloucester	235	R. Heil				

Great Blue Heron				7/23, 8/20	Westport	91, 59	M. Lynch#
7/5	W. Boxford	20+	J. Berry	7/24	Grafton	pr + 2 yg	M. Lynch#
7/7	GMNWR	30	USFWS	7/26, 8/16	P.I.	6, 7	R. Heil
8/7	Nauset Marsh	23	M. Lynch#	8/24	Barre Falls	7	Hawkcount (BK)
Great Egret				Bald Eagle			
thr	GMNWR	17 max	v.o.	7/thr	W. Newbury	pr n	J. Berry#
thr	P.I.	130 max	v.o.	7/9	Brookfield	pr n + 3 yg	M. Lynch#
7/18	Nantucket	15	E. Ray	7/10	Quabog IBA	pr n + 3 yg	M. Lynch#
7/23, 8/20	Westport	75, 104	M. Lynch#	7/18	Nantucket	1 imm	M. Aguiar
7/23	Longmeadow	2	C. Gentes	8/19	Palmer	1 ad	V. Yurkunas#
7/30	Falmouth	21	R. Farrell	8/25	Chilmark	1	S. Bowman
8/7	Barnstable	11	M. Lynch#	Northern Harrier			
8/13	S. Egremont	8	M. Lynch#	thr	P.I.	1-4	v.o.
8/28	S. Monomoy	10	B. Nikula#	7/4	Moran WMA	1 f	M. Lynch#
Snowy Egret				7/29	Eastham	1 f	P. Flood
thr	P.I.	450 max	v.o.	7/31, 8/29	Northampton	1, 3	J. Smith
7/2	E. Boston (B.I.)	5	J. Sardell	8/4	E. Boston (B.I.)	1 juv	J. Miller
7/23	Westport	27	M. Lynch#	8/5	DWWS	3	D. Furbish
7/30, 8/28	S. Monomoy	35, 60	B. Nikula	8/7	Duxbury B	1 f	R. Bowes
7/31	GMNWR	3	M. Rines	8/18	Chatham (S.B.)	3	C. Dalton
8/18	Chatham (S.B.)	2	C. Dalton	8/21	N. Monomoy	2 juv	B. Nikula
8/26	Essex	25	D. Brown#	8/25	Leicester	2 imm	M. Lynch#
8/26	W. Gloucester	50	S. Hedman	8/27, 29	GMNWR	1, 1	M. Rines
Little Blue Heron				Sharp-shinned Hawk			
thr	P.I.	1-3	v.o.	7/10	New Braintree	1 ad	M. Lynch#
7/10	Harwich	1 ad	M. Tuttle	7/23	Barre F.D.	1	S. Sutton
7/10	DWWS	1 ad	D. Furbish#	7/30	P.I.	1NHAS	(S. McGrath)
7/10	Boston	1	P. Petersen	8/19	Groveland	1	D. Chickering
7/16	S. Monomoy	1	R. Merrill	8/23	P'town	1	A. Strauss
7/23	Westport	1 ad	M. Lynch#	8/23	Ipswich (C.B.)	1	J. Berry
7/31	GMNWR	1 imm	M. Rines	8/24	Paxton	2 imm	M. Lynch#
8/26	W. Gloucester	5	S. Hedman	8/24, 25	Barre Falls	2, 1	Hawkcount (BK)
Tricolored Heron				8/27	Leicester	3	M. Lynch#
7/15	P.I.	1	S. McGrath	8/28	Ware R. IBA	3	M. Lynch#
Cattle Egret				Cooper's Hawk			
7/5	Ipswich	1	G. Sadoti	thr	Reports of indiv. from 15 locations		
7/17-21	Edgartown	1	L. McDowell	Northern Goshawk			
Green Heron				7/2	Hawley	1 ad	M. Lynch#
7/9	Amherst	4	H. Allen	Red-shouldered Hawk			
7/16, 8/6	Falmouth	4, 7	R. Farrell	7/2	Colrain	1	M. Lynch#
7/29	WBWS	14	D. Silverstein	7/2	Hawley	1 ad	M. Lynch#
8/18	Palmer	5	V. Yurkunas#	7/18	Oakham	1	C. Buelow
8/20	GMNWR	4	S. Perkins#	7/24	Georgetown	1	P. + F. Vale
8/24	Longmeadow	6	R. Titus	8/19	Northfield	1	R. Packard
8/24	W. Gloucester	5	S. Hedman#	8/26	Boxford (C.P.)	1	MAS (Weaver)
8/26	Lexington	4	M. Rines	Broad-winged Hawk			
8/26	S. Lancaster	4	S. Sutton	7/3	Becket	3	R. Laubach
Black-crowned Night-Heron				7/4	Moran WMA	2	M. Lynch#
thr	P.I.	5-10	v.o.	7/10	Quabog IBA	2	M. Lynch#
7/4, 8/23	Wakefield	5, 4	P. + F. Vale	7/23	Barre F.D.	3	S. Sutton
7/8	Watertown	4	J. Sharp	8/13	Stockbridge	2 imm	M. Lynch#
7/14, 8/16	GMNWR	6, 8	USFWS, Ferraresso	8/28	Ware R. IBA	2	M. Lynch#
7/24	Worcester	2 ad	M. Lynch#	American Kestrel			
8/6	Stellwagen	11	M. Lynch#	7/1	Amherst	3	H. Allen
8/24	Newbypt	2	MAS (B. Gette)	8/6	Montague	4	R. Packard
Glossy Ibis				8/12	DWWS	3	D. Furbish
7/11-8/11	GMNWR	3-5	v.o.	8/27	Leicester	3	M. Lynch#
7/11	Lexington	1	J. Sutherland	Merlin			
7/13, 30	P.I.	28, 34	R. Heil	7/14, 8/20	P.I.	1, 1	Wetmore, Vale
7/30	Wompatuck SP	2	G. d'Entremont	7/24	Sandwich	1	M. Keleher
7/30	Rowley	65+	R. Heil	7/31-8/28	Northampton	4 sightings	v.o.
8/26	N. Monomoy	1	MAS (Silverstein)	8/26	Leicester	1	M. Lynch#
8/28	S. Monomoy	8	B. Nikula#	8/29	Scituate	1	D. Furbish
Black Vulture				8/30	GMNWR	1	J. Nelson
7/12	Alford	2	T. Gagnon	Peregrine Falcon			
Turkey Vulture				7/17	Worcester	3	M. Lynch#
7/6	Williamstown	pr n	fide T. French	7/24	Deerfield	1	H. Allen
7/12	Alford	30	T. Gagnon	7/27	Eastham (CGB)	1 juv.	B. Nikula
7/17	Salisbury	6	R. Heil	7/30	Leicester	1 imm	M. Lynch#
7/22	Turners Falls	17	R. Packard	8/18	Chatham (S.B.)	1	C. Dalton
7/23	Springfield	43	P. + F. Vale	8/23	P.I.	2	R. Heil
7/23	Westfield	35	P. + F. Vale	8/24	Longmeadow	1	R. Titus
8/7	Becket	17	R. Laubach	8/24	Duxbury B.	1 f b	R. Bowes
8/21	Ware	16	M. Lynch#	8/26	Northampton	1	T. Gagnon
Osprey				8/30	Holyoke	2	H. Allen
7/thr	Ayer	pr n	P. Vales	Clapper Rail			
7/15	Sandwich	6	M. Keleher#	7/30	Chatham	1	B. Nikula
7/16	Falmouth	9 nests	R. Farrell	8/5-13	P.I.	1	S. McGrath

King Rail				7/29, 8/26	Eastham	90, 20		P. Flood
7/3	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore	7/30, 8/21	Duxbury B.	60, 40		R. Bowes
Virginia Rail				7/31	GMNWR	10		M. Rines
7/5	Hardwick	2	C. Buelow	8/7	Nauset Marsh	280+		M. Lynch#
7/12	Bolton Flats	1 ad, 3 juv	R. Haaseth	8/26	Leicester	4		M. Lynch#
7/17	GMNWR	5	M. Lynch#	Lesser Yellowlegs				
7/28	P.I.	5	R. Heil	7/13, 8/16	P.I.	62, 120		R. Heil
7/30	S. Quabbin	5	M. Taylor	7/17	GMNWR	21		M. Lynch#
8/13	Stockbridge	6	M. Lynch#	7/25	Newbypt H.	760 ad		R. Heil
8/21	Bradford	1 ad, 2 juv	D. + S. Larson	7/30, 8/28	S. Monomoy	120, 40		B. Nikula
Sora				8/4	Chatham (S.B.)	30		M. Keleher#
thr	P.I.	2-3	v.o.	8/7	Nauset Marsh	55+		M. Lynch#
7/3	Newbypt	1	S. McGrath	8/14	Longmeadow	6		C. Gentes
7/4	Boxford	2	R. Messer#	8/26	Lexington	6		M. Rines
7/13	IRWS	2	J. Berry#	8/28	Agawam	66		J. Smith
7/13	GMNWR	2	USFWS	Solitary Sandpiper				
7/16	Bolton Flats	2	M. Lynch#	7/7, 15	Deerfield	3, 7		R. Packard
8/20	Amherst	1	J. Smith	7/16	Bolton Flats	6		M. Lynch#
8/21	Quabbin Pk	1	M. Lynch#	7/31	GMNWR	5		M. Rines
Common Moorhen				8/2	Worc. (BMB)	4		J. Liller
7/2-10	P.I.	1-2	T. Wetmore	8/13	S. Egremont	5		M. Lynch#
7/31	E. Boston	1	D. + I. Jewell	8/26	Lexington	5		M. Rines
8/13	Stockbridge	1 ad	M. Lynch#	Willet				
8/26	S. Monomoy	1	R. Merrill	7/10, 8/21	Duxbury B.	16, 19		R. Bowes
Sandhill Crane				7/17	N. Monomoy	180		B. Nikula
8/18	DWWS	1	D. Ludlow	7/17, 8/16	P.I.	81, 3		R. Heil
Black-bellied Plover				7/23, 8/20	Westport	23, 24		M. Lynch#
7/2, 28	Chatham (S.B.)	267, 475	Merrill, Nikula	7/28, 8/21	Chatham (S.B.)	300, 225		B. Nikula
7/23, 8/27	Duxbury B.	6, 335	R. Bowes	8/6	WBWS	30+		M. Lynch#
7/27	Sandwich	30	D. Furbish	Western Willet				
7/28, 8/23	P.I.	3, 180	R. Heil	7/15-31	Chatham (S.B.)	15+		B. Nikula
7/29, 8/26	Eastham	40, 650	P. Flood	Spotted Sandpiper				
8/14, 25	Chatham (S.B.)	2600, 3100	B. Nikula	7/16	Duxbury B.	4		R. Bowes
8/24	Paxton	1	M. Lynch#	7/17	Winthrop (Snake)	4		S. Zende#
American Golden-Plover				7/18	Turners Falls	4		R. Packard
8/19, 31	P.I.	1	H. D'E. Berry	7/19	Noman's Land	14+		A. Keith
8/24-26	Chilmark	2	A. Keith	7/23	Acoaxet	5		M. Lynch#
8/26	Chatham (S.B.)	1	L. Ferraresso	7/28	P.I.	2 ad, 8 juv		R. Heil
8/26	Northampton	2	J. Smith	8/21	Quabbin Pk	4		M. Lynch#
8/26	GMNWR	1	J. Forbes	8/26	Lexington	4		M. Rines
8/27	Hadley	2	C. Gentes	8/26	Agawam	4		S. Kellogg
8/28	S. Monomoy	2 ad	B. Nikula#	Upland Sandpiper				
Wilson's Plover (details submitted) *				7/7-8	Hanscom	6		G. Sadoti
7/5	S. Monomoy	1 ph	R. Merrill	7/23	Northampton	1		A. Magee
7/10-8/29	Chatham (S.B.)	1 ph	J. Trimble + v.o.	8/19-21	P.I.	1		H. D'Entremont#
Semipalmated Plover				Whimbrel				
7/10, 8/14	Chatham (S.B.)	125, 4800	B. Nikula	thr	P.I.	1-3		v.o.
7/13, 8/16	P.I.	61, 1400	R. Heil	7/14	Dennis	1		D. Furbish
7/16, 8/7	Duxbury B.	626, 1332	R. Bowes	7/18	Nantucket	18		D. Lang
7/16, 8/18	Scituate	240, 1749	S. Maguire#	7/18, 8/18	Newbypt H.	2, 2		S. Grinley
7/23, 8/20	Acoaxet	111, 920	M. Lynch#	7/19	MV	2		L. Johnson
7/25, 8/21	Northampton	4, 2	Magee, Smith	7/23	Westport	1		M. Lynch#
7/29, 8/26	Eastham	800, 2500	P. Flood	7/28, 8/14	Chatham (S.B.)	150, 100		B. Nikula
8/5	Ipswich (C.B.)	800	J. Berry	8/6	WBWS	79		M. Lynch#
8/11	GMNWR	22	USFWS	8/26	Eastham	1		P. Flood
Piping Plover				8/30	E. Gloucester	1		R. Heil
7/10, 8/14	Chatham (S.B.)	18, 75	Trimble, Garvey	Hudsonian Godwit				
7/15	Sandwich	10	M. Keleher#	thr	Chatham (S.B.)	85 max 8/14		v.o.
7/16	Duxbury B.	8 ad, 4 yg	R. Bowes	7/4	S. Monomoy	27		R. Merrill
7/22	P.I.	11 pr, 27 yg	K. McGuire	7/10-8/13	Newbypt H.	1-4		v.o.
7/29	Eastham	8 ad, 4 yg	P. Flood	7/16, 8/5	P.I.	1, 3		Grinley, McGrath
8/5	Ipswich (C.B.)	3 ad, 3 yg	J. Berry	7/17	Winthrop (Snake)	1		S. Zende#
Killdeer				Marbled Godwit				
7/16	Bolton Flats	46	M. Lynch#	7/10-8/31	Chatham (S.B.)	1 max 8/29		v.o.
7/25	Newbury	54	R. Heil	8/29-31	W. Tisbury	8		M. Silbert#
8/6	W. Springfield	44	T. Gagnon	Ruddy Turnstone				
8/11	GMNWR	42	USFWS	7/25, 8/9	P.I.	4, 27		R. Heil
8/29	Hatfield	50	H. Allen	7/28, 8/14	Chatham (S.B.)	275, 325		B. Nikula
American Oystercatcher				7/29	Rockport islands	35		J. Berry#
7/17	Winthrop (Snake)	10	S. Zende#	7/30, 8/22	Duxbury B.	28, 107		R. Bowes
7/17	Squantum	2	L. Tyrala#	8/9	Hadley	1		C. Gentes
7/23	Westport	20	M. Lynch#	8/14	Plymouth B.	53		C. Dalton
7/28, 8/14	Chatham (S.B.)	95, 170	B. Nikula	8/18	Scituate	46		S. Maguire#
7/30	Falmouth	2	R. Farrell	8/20	Westport	62		M. Lynch#
8/29	N. Monomoy	157	R. Merrill	8/23	Longmeadow	1		L. Therrien
Greater Yellowlegs				Red Knot				
7/3, 8/20	P.I.	8, 102	P. + F. Vale	7/20-8/31	P.I.	1-2		v.o.
7/10, 8/14	Chatham (S.B.)	25, 225	J. Trimble#	7/20	Edgartown	2		L. McDowell

<b>Red Knot (continued)</b>				7/18-8/28	S. Monomoy	8 max 8/28	v.o.
7/28, 8/14	Chatham (S.B.)	1100, 1600	B. Nikula	8/21	GMNWR	1	M. Rines#
7/29, 8/26	Eastham	16, 90	P. Flood	8/28	Agawam	2	J. Smith
8/26	Essex	8 juv	D. Brown#	<b>Buff-breasted Sandpiper</b>			
8/27	Duxbury B.	25	R. Bowes	7/10	Bolton Flats	1	K. Hartel
<b>Sanderling</b>				8/9-31	P.I.	4 max 8/31	v.o.
7/16, 8/7	Duxbury B.	59, 488	R. Bowes	8/18	Hadley	1	H. McQueen
7/19	Sandwich	25	M. Keleher	8/18-23	Chatham (S.B.)	1 juv	v.o.
7/23	Acoaxet	33	M. Lynch#	8/26	Essex	1	D. Brown#
7/25, 8/23	P.I.	45, 100	R. Heil	8/27	Duxbury B.	1 juv	R. Bowes
7/28, 8/14	Chatham (S.B.)	3500, 4000	B. Nikula	8/27	Chilmark	2	S. Whiting#
8/5	Ipswich (C.B.)	400	J. Berry	8/28	S. Monomoy	7+	B. Nikula#
8/6, 22	Revere	277, 163	P. + F. Vale	8/28	Longmeadow	2	J. Smith
8/14	Plymouth B.	1080	C. Dalton	8/28	GMNWR	1	C. Floyd
8/22-26	Longmeadow	1	J. Buesdel	8/29-30	Hatfield	8	J. Smith
8/30	Nahant/Lynn	1700	R. Heil	<b>Short-billed Dowitcher</b>			
<b>Semipalmated Sandpiper</b>				thr	P.I.	1288 max 7/25	v.o.
7/2, 22	Chatham (S.B.)	46, 1700	R. Merrill	thr	Chatham (S.B.)	4200 max 7/28	v.o.
7/13, 8/16	P.I.	280, 4200	R. Heil	thr	Duxbury B.	121 max 8/21	R. Bowes
7/16, 8/18	Scituate	210, 1223	S. Maguire#	7/7	S. Monomoy	350+	R. Merrill
7/18	Turners Falls	4	R. Packard	7/17	GMNWR	10	M. Lynch#
7/23, 8/13	Duxbury B.	16, 2669	R. Bowes	7/17	Nantucket	55	E. Ray
7/28, 8/14	Chatham (S.B.)	5500, 4800	B. Nikula	7/22	N. Monomoy	300+ MAS (Silverstein)	
7/29, 8/26	Eastham	3200, 3000	P. Flood	7/25	Newbypt H.	456+	R. Heil
7/31, 8/22	Revere	604, 252	P. + F. Vale	7/29, 8/26	Eastham	600, 120	P. Flood
8/6-14	Longmeadow	2-3	C. Gentes	<b>Long-billed Dowitcher</b>			
8/20	GMNWR	15	S. Perkins#	7/25-8/31	P.I.	21 max 8/16	R. Heil
<b>Western Sandpiper</b>				7/30, 8/18	Newbypt H.	1, 2	McGrath, Grinley
7/3, 8/24	S. Monomoy	1, 3	Merrill, Ellis	8/20	Westport	1 ad	M. Lynch#
7/4-8/25	Chatham (S.B.)	7 max 7/19	v.o.	8/26	Essex	1	D. Brown#
7/10	Duxbury B.	1	R. Bowes	<b>Wilson's Snipe</b>			
7/17-8/31	P.I.	8 max 8/23	v.o.	8/10	P.I.	2	MAS (B. Gette)
7/29, 8/26	Eastham	3, 2	P. Flood	8/20	GMNWR	5	S. Perkins#
7/30	N. Monomoy	7	B. Nikula	<b>American Woodcock</b>			
8/14	E. Boston (B.I.)	1	S. Zende#	7/10	Shutesbury	2	K. Weir
8/27	Agawam	2	S. Kellogg	7/12	New Braintree	3	C. Buelow
<b>Little Stint (details submitted) *</b>				8/8	P.I.	2	T. Spahr#
7/20-23	Chatham (S.B.)	1	R. Clem + v.o.	<b>Wilson's Phalarope</b>			
7/24-25	Chatham (S.B.)	2 ph	J. Trimble + v.o.	7/1	P.I.	3	T. Wetmore
<b>Least Sandpiper</b>				8/4-22	Chatham (S.B.)	2	v.o.
7/7, 8/20	GMNWR	8, 60	USFWS, Perkins	8/24-28	S. Monomoy	1-2	v.o.
7/15, 8/14	Chatham (S.B.)	600, 100	B. Nikula	<b>Red-necked Phalarope</b>			
7/16, 8/13	Duxbury B.	189, 29	R. Bowes	7/2	Chatham (S.B.)	1	R. Merrill
7/17, 8/16	P.I.	240, 160	R. Heil	7/17	Tillies Bank	1	J. Wallius
8/14	Longmeadow	81	C. Gentes	8/16-21	P.I.	1 juv	R. Heil
8/26	Lexington	33	M. Rines	8/19, 24	Rockport (A.P.)	2, 2	R. Heil
8/27	Hadley	45	C. Gentes	8/27	Hydrographer Canyon	200	BBC (Heil)
<b>White-rumped Sandpiper</b>				<b>Red Phalarope</b>			
7/17	E. Boston (B.I.)	1	J. Sardell	8/27	Hydrographer Canyon	15	BBC (Heil)
7/28, 8/23	P.I.	2, 200	R. Heil	<b>Pomarine Jaeger</b>			
7/28, 8/21	Chatham (S.B.)	12, 400	B. Nikula	8/4	Chatham (S.B.)	1	M. Keleher#
7/29, 8/26	Eastham	1, 140	P. Flood	8/26	Edgartown	3	A. Keith
7/31, 8/22	Revere	3, 17	P. + F. Vale	<b>Parasitic Jaeger</b>			
8/18	Longmeadow	1	J. Buesdel	7/2, 22, 8/13	Chatham (S.B.)	1, 2, 7	R. Merrill
8/28	S. Monomoy	90	B. Nikula#	7/22, 8/2	P'town	2, 2	B. Nikula#
<b>Baird's Sandpiper</b>				7/22	Marion	2	B. Kennedy
7/23, 8/18	Chatham (S.B.)	1, 1	Harrington, Brown	7/30	N. Monomoy	1	B. Nikula
7/23, 8/24	Northampton	1, 4	Magee, Gentes	8/4	Wellfleet	1	K. Holmes
7/23, 8/17-22	P.I.	1, 1-3	McGrath, v.o.	8/15, 24	E. Gloucester	2, 1	R. Heil
8/17	Muskeget	1	R. Veit	8/24	Rockport (A.P.)	16	R. Heil
8/20	Northfield	1	H. McQueen	8/29	Stellwagen	2	I. Nisbet
8/26	S. Monomoy	1	R. Merrill	<b>Jaeger species</b>			
8/27	Chilmark	6	A. Keith#	8/21	Jeffries L.	2	A. Gurka#
8/28	S. Monomoy	2	B. Nikula#	8/30	E. Gloucester	5	R. Heil
<b>Pectoral Sandpiper</b>				<b>Long-tailed Jaeger</b>			
thr	P.I.	5 max	v.o.	8/27	Hydrographer/Veatch Canyons	4	BBC (Heil)
7/17-8/31	GMNWR	6 max	v.o.	<b>Laughing Gull</b>			
7/26, 8/28	S. Monomoy	2, 8	Merrill, Nikula	7/15	Sandwich	25	M. Keleher#
8/23	Northfield	2	J. Smith	7/19	Chatham (S.B.)	250+	R. Heil
8/26	Agawam	2	S. Kellogg	7/28, 8/31	P.I.	8, 18	Heil, Berry
<b>Dunlin</b>				7/29, 8/26	Eastham	250, 50	P. Flood
thr	Chatham (S.B.)	2-4	v.o.	8/20	Acoaxet	73	M. Lynch#
7/1-8/17	P.I.	1 ad	v.o.	8/24, 30	E. Gloucester	9, 6	R. Heil
8/7	Nauset Marsh	20	M. Lynch#	8/28	Falmouth	123 migr	R. Farrell
<b>Curlew Sandpiper</b>				8/30	Nahant/Lynn	110	R. Heil
8/17-29	Chatham (S.B.)	1 ph	R. Maclean# + v.o.	<b>Franklin's Gull (details submitted) *</b>			
<b>Stilt Sandpiper</b>				8/6	Chatham (S.B.)	1 ph	V. Laux#
7/7-8/31	P.I.	34 max 8/31	v.o.	8/20	Acoaxet	1 ad basic	M. Lynch#

Little Gull				8/18, 24	Rockport (A.P.)	230, 1800	R. Heil
thr	P.I.	3-7	v.o.	8/23	Ipswich (C.B.)	500	J. Berry
7/6	Salisbury	1	S. McGrath	8/29	Stellwagen	400	I. Nisbet
7/7-21	Nantucket	1 IS	R. Veit	8/30	Nahant/Lynn	3200	R. Heil
7/11	Nahant	1 2S	L. Pivacek	Common/Roseate Tern			
8/8	Newbypt	2 IS	M. Lynch#	8/21	Chatham (S.B.)	10,000	B. Nikula
Bonaparte's Gull				8/25	Rockport (H.P.)	1300+	J. Berry
7/25, 8/18	Newbypt H.	146, 300	Heil, Grinley	Arctic Tern			
8/15	Rockport (A.P.)	50	D. Larson	7/5	S. Monomoy	2 IS	R. Merrill
8/22	Revere B.	750+ BBC	(P. + F. Vale)	7/24	Chatham (S.B.)	10 IS	B. Nikula
8/23	Jeffries L.	200	R. Haaseth	8/14	Plymouth B.	2 ad	C. Dalton
8/28	Gloucester	100+	P. + F. Vale	8/30	Nahant/Lynn	1 IS	R. Heil
8/30	Nahant/Lynn	1150	R. Heil	Forster's Tern			
Lesser Black-backed Gull				7/1	GMNWR	1	C. Floyd#
7/14-8/31	Chatham (S.B.)	10 max	8/14 B. Nikula#	7/23, 8/20	Acoaxet	4, 3	M. Lynch#
7/18	Nantucket	6	E. Ray	7/28-30	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore
8/26	Eastham (CGB)	1 ad	B. Nikula#	8/6	Stellwagen	2	M. Lynch#
8/28	S. Monomoy	2	B. Nikula#	8/23	Ipswich (C.B.)	1	J. Berry
8/31	P.I.	2	MAS (B. Gette)	8/25	Chatham (S.B.)	4	B. Nikula#
Sabine's Gull				8/26	Eastham	3	P. Flood
8/20	Stellwagen	1 ad	F. Atwood	8/28	S. Monomoy	3	B. Nikula#
Black-legged Kittiwake				8/30	E. Gloucester	1	R. Heil
7/28	Chatham (S.B.)	1	R. Merrill	Least Tern			
8/27	P'town (R.P.)	1 juv	E. Masterson	7/13, 8/16	P.I.	19, 45	R. Heil
Caspian Tern				7/15, 8/7	Sandwich	50, 70	M. Keleher#
8/18	Chatham	1	T. + N. Walker	7/23, 8/20	Westport	17, 14	M. Lynch#
Royal Tern				7/29, 8/26	Eastham	50, 30	P. Flood
7/11, 18	S. Monomoy	1	R. Merrill	7/31	Chatham (S.B.)	100+	D. Furbish#
7/14, 19	Chatham (S.B.)	1	Merrill, Heil	8/5	Ipswich (C.B.)	50	J. Berry
8/6	Stellwagen	1	M. Lynch#	8/6	Stellwagen	15+	M. Lynch#
Sandwich Tern (details submitted)*				Black Tern			
7/21	Chatham (S.B.)	1 ph	N. Bonomo#	thr	Chatham (S.B.)	1-4	v.o.
Sandwich Tern (no details)				7/10-24	Nantucket	1-5	E. Ray
8/13	Edgartown	1	J. Alderfer#	7/18	Edgartown	2	D. Swanson
Roseate Tern				7/30, 8/28	S. Monomoy	3, 100	B. Nikula
thr	Chatham (S.B.)	20-50	v.o.	8/14	Plymouth B.	1 ad, 2 juv	C. Dalton
7/17, 8/23	P.I.	8, 3	R. Heil	8/15	Barnstable	5	D. Silverstein
7/21	Nantucket	185	J. Dekker, E. Ray	8/20	Westport	3	M. Lynch#
8/5, 23	Ipswich (C.B.)	2, 5	J. Berry	8/24	Rockport (A.P.)	14	R. Heil
8/14	Plymouth B.	46	C. Dalton	8/31	P.I.	16	J. Berry
8/24	Rockport (A.P.)	225+	R. Heil	Black Skimmer			
8/26	Eastham	200+	P. Flood	7/15, 8/14-27	Chatham (S.B.)	2, 1	B. Nikula#
8/30	Nahant/Lynn	10+	R. Heil	7/22	off Saquetucket H.	1	E. Banks
Common Tern				8/27	Boston H.	2	R. Donovan
7/17, 8/23	P.I.	145, 560	R. Heil	Razorbill			
7/21	Nantucket	348	J. Dekker, E. Ray	7/1-8/7	Menemsha Pond	1	v.o.
7/22	Chatham (S.B.)	15,000+	R. Merrill	Black Guillemot			
7/29, 8/26	Eastham	30, 1800	P. Flood	7/10	Dennis	1 ph	S. Finnegan
7/31	S. Monomoy	5000	D. Furbish#	7/29	Rockport islands	2	J. Berry#
8/14	Plymouth B.	425	C. Dalton	Atlantic Puffin			
8/15, 30	E. Gloucester	73, 1170	R. Heil	8/19	Rockport (A.P.)	3	R. Heil

## CUCKOOS THROUGH FINCHES

This year was especially good for caterpillars and the cuckoos that feast on them. During May, observers noted their best numbers of both Black-billed and Yellow-billed cuckoos since 1981 (this continued right through summer). Quite encouraging was the report of six Short-eared Owls on Tuckernuck Island, perhaps one of the last areas with habitat suitable for this species.

The annual migration of the Common Nighthawk is one of the highlights of late August, but numbers were down from last year, and the hawks were several days late in arriving. The night of August 25 provided the first significant numbers, especially in central Massachusetts and in the Connecticut River valley. Mark Lynch and friends tallied a total of 1522 from August 25-27 at a site at the Worcester Airport. This total was just shy of the 1545 recorded last year at this location. Reports from eastern sections were poor, with the highest number of about 200 birds from Needham on August 29.

Olive-sided Flycatchers have a narrow window for fall migration, from late August through early September. Recent breeding records of this species are sparse, and exclusively

from the western part of the state. This makes the reports in early July and early August from western Massachusetts encouraging.

Another August event is the great masses of swallows that gather on Plum Island, a sight not to be missed; the estimated count, mostly Tree Swallows, reached over 50,000 at mid month. Another massive flock of Tree Swallows gathered at the East Meadows in Northampton, where the total number of birds was estimated at nearly 30,000 individuals! Other high counts include over 6200 Tree Swallows in Westport and over 400 Barn Swallows at Great Meadows in Concord. At a dairy farm in Cheshire over 120 Cliff Swallows were noted on July 4. Although the farmer had counted 152 nests, some may not have been active, and some were occupied by House Sparrows. The status of the Purple Martin in Massachusetts is certainly of concern, and this spring's rain and cold weather was undoubtedly responsible for the poor showing at Plum Island and Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary in Marshfield. A single Purple Martin in Hadley was only the second period record in western Massachusetts since 1992. Yet another great gathering is that of the American Robin, a bird that roosts in large numbers starting in late summer and continuing often into early January. These birds spread out in large roaming flocks, concentrating at food sources. At Bolton Flats, Steve Sutton has been monitoring an evening roost over the past four years. In 2002, 3700 were noted, in 2003, 4200 were tallied, and last year, Steve carefully estimated over 11,000 birds coming into the roost. This year, nearly 6700 were tallied on August 27.

Sedge Wrens were found in three areas, one at Moran Wildlife Management Area in Windsor, another in Stockbridge, and a third that was present along the dike at Great Meadows NWR from August 11 to 30. A total of twenty-nine warbler species plus two Lawrence's hybrids were noted during this period. Among the more interesting were two Golden-winged Warblers, an early Palm Warbler, a Prothonotary Warbler from Plum Island, four Hooded Warblers, and a Yellow-breasted Chat from Chilmark. The only Cerulean Warblers noted were from Mt. Holyoke; the Quabbin birds were not reported. No Cape May Warblers were reported. Clay-colored Sparrows were noted from three areas during the summer, but no confirmed breeding was noted. A **Lark Sparrow** was noted from Northampton on August 17; the only other August records from western Mass are August 14, 1963, and August 13, 1982. A single Blue Grosbeak was noted in Northampton on the unusually early date of August 8. In the past ten years there have been only five August sightings of Blue Grosbeak, three of which also were in the Connecticut River Valley. Blue Grosbeaks are breeding as close as Windsor, Connecticut, less than fifteen miles south of the Massachusetts border, so these sightings might be post-breeding dispersal. Dickcissels were found in four locations. Interesting also is the single Red Crossbill noted from Montague on July 4, and scattered reports of both Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks.

*R. Stymeist*

Black-billed Cuckoo				7/31	Quabbin (G35)	2	C. Buelow
7/thr	Reports of indiv. from	11	locations	8/1	Lincoln	1	M. Rines
7/4	Moran WMA	2	M. Lynch#	8/16	Medfield	1	J. O'Connell
7/4	Montague	3	R. Packard	8/27	Petersham	4	R. Packard
Yellow-billed Cuckoo					Short-eared Owl		
7/1-8/17	Reports of indiv. from	10	locations	7/10	Tuckernuck	6	R. Veit
7/4	Cheshire	2	M. Lynch#		Northern Saw-whet Owl		
7/4	Mashpee	2	M. Keleher	8/4	Amherst	1	H. Lappen
7/23	Barre F.D.	3	S. Sutton		Common Nighthawk		
Eastern Screech-Owl				8/18, 25	HRWMA	35, 127	T. Pirro
thr	Reports of indiv. from	10	locations	8/19, 25	Leicester	18, 222	M. Lynch#
8/14	N. Middleboro	2	K. Holmes	8/21	Southwick	105	S. Kellogg
8/16	Medfield	2	J. O'Connell	8/21, 25	Northampton	359, 487	T. Gagnon
8/24	Mt. A.	2	R. Stymeist#	8/23, 24	Mt. A.	20, 27	R. Stymeist#
8/28	Arlington	pr	D. Diggins	8/25	Worcester	381	J. Shea
Great Horned Owl				8/26	Westfield	207	L. Therrien
thr	Reports of indiv. from	6	locations	8/26	Auburn	230	T. Pirro
Barred Owl				8/26, 27	Leicester	800, 482	M. Lynch#
7/6	Lenox	1	R. Laubach	8/29	Needham	200+	D. Gibson#

Common Nighthawk (continued)				8/13	Stockbridge	2	M. Lynch#
8/29	W. Townsend	425	T. Pirro	8/28	Ware R. IBA	1	M. Lynch#
8/29	Westminster	175	T. Pirro		Great Crested Flycatcher		
Whip-poor-will				7/2-4	Ipswich	13	J. Berry
7/10, 15	Montague	1	R. Packard	7/3	Quabbin (G10)	6	G. d'Entremont
7/15	Southwick	2	S. Kellogg	7/30	Hingham	5	G. d'Entremont
Chimney Swift				8/20	Woburn	3	M. Rines#
7/18	Wakefield	54	P. + F. Vale	8/20	ONWR	3	S. Sutton
8/13	Fitchburg	85	S. Sutton		Eastern Kingbird		
8/21	Williamsburg	44	R. Packard	thr	P.I.	62	max 8/16 v.o.
8/22	Magnolia	35	R. Heil	7/16	Bolton Flats	17	M. Lynch#
8/27	Bolton Flats	38	S. Sutton	7/23	Barre F.D.	10	S. Sutton
Ruby-throated Hummingbird				8/13	Stockbridge	22	M. Lynch#
7/3	Hardwick	3	C. Buelow	8/20	Northampton	11	T. Gagnon
7/30	S. Quabbin	9	M. Taylor	8/20	Woburn	10	M. Rines#
7/30	Bolton Flats	3	S. Sutton	8/23	Northfield	22	J. Smith
8/5	N. Middleboro	10	K. Holmes		White-eyed Vireo		
8/7, 24	Northampton	5, 6	T. Gagnon	7/23	Westport	1	M. Lynch#
8/21	Marshfield	5	D. Furbish		Yellow-throated Vireo		
Red-bellied Woodpecker				7/3	Quabbin (G10)	1	G. d'Entremont
7/10	Quabog IBA	3	M. Lynch#	7/23	Barre F.D.	2	S. Sutton
8/20	Woburn	3	M. Rines#	7/30	Bolton Flats	3	S. Sutton
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker				7/30	Quabbin Pk.	6	M. Lynch#
7/2	Colrain	4	M. Lynch#	8/19	Northfield	1	R. Packard
7/3	Quabbin (G10)	27	G. d'Entremont		Blue-headed Vireo		
7/6	Goshen	2	R. Packard	7/2	Colrain	9	M. Lynch#
7/17	Barre	3	C. Buelow	7/3	Quabbin (G10)	4	G. d'Entremont
7/24	Williamsburg	4	R. Packard	7/9	Petersham	3	C. Buelow
Hairy Woodpecker				7/23	Barre F.D.	4	S. Sutton
7/3	Quabbin (G10)	10	G. d'Entremont	8/28	Ware R. IBA	3	M. Lynch#
Pileated Woodpecker					Warbling Vireo		
7/1	Newbypt	pr n	J. Berry#	7/16	Bolton Flats	12	M. Lynch#
7/3	Quabbin (G10)	2	G. d'Entremont	8/18	Woburn	10	M. Rines
7/5	W. Boxford	2	J. Berry		Philadelphia Vireo		
7/9	Amherst	2	H. Allen	8/24	Southwick	1	S. Kellogg
8/21	Quabbin Pk.	4	M. Lynch#	8/25	Amherst	1	J. Smith
Olive-sided Flycatcher				8/27	Bolton Flats	1	S. Sutton
7/2	Hawley	1	M. Lynch#		Red-eyed Vireo		
8/3	Mt. Holyoke	1	J. Smith	7/2-4	Ipswich	25	J. Berry
8/6	Montague	1	D. Furbish	7/3	Quabbin (G10)	69	G. d'Entremont
8/19	Northfield	1	R. Packard	7/10	Quabog IBA	29	M. Lynch#
8/20	Woburn	1	M. Rines#	7/23	Barre F.D.	58	S. Sutton
8/21	W. Brookfield	1	M. Lynch#	7/30, 8/21	Quabbin Pk.	52, 31	M. Lynch#
8/23	Northampton	1	T. Gagnon	8/28	Ware R. IBA	36	M. Lynch#
Eastern Wood-Pewee					Fish Crow		
7/2-4	Ipswich	13	J. Berry	7/1	Hadley	2	H. Allen
7/3	Quabbin (G10)	10	G. d'Entremont	7/7	Scituate	6	D. Furbish
7/30, 8/21	Quabbin Pk.	11, 12	M. Lynch#	7/27	Seekonk	8	R. Farrell
8/24	Boxford	7	J. Berry#	7/28	Westford	1	S. Sutton
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher				7/28	Marshfield	14	D. Furbish
8/17	Springfield	1	R. Titus	8/1	Lee	1	R. Laubach
8/19, 27	Northfield	1, 2	Packard, Taylor		Common Raven		
8/21	Quabbin Pk.	4	M. Lynch#	7/4	Moran WMA	2	M. Lynch#
8/24	Amherst	1	H. Allen	7/11	Milton	1	O. Spalding
8/26	S. Monomoy	1	R. Merrill	7/23	Barre F.D.	4	S. Sutton
8/28	Sudbury	1	T. Spahr	7/30	Quabbin Pk.	5	M. Lynch#
8/28	Ware R. IBA	1	M. Lynch#	8/12	Becket	13	R. Laubach
Acadian Flycatcher				8/13	Stockbridge	2	M. Lynch#
7/3	Quabbin (G8)	1	G. d'Entremont	8/28	Rutland	1	M. Lynch#
7/28	W. Quabbin	2	J. Smith		Horned Lark		
Alder Flycatcher				7/4-8/20	Chatham (S.B.)	3-8	v.o.
7/2	Hawley	1	M. Lynch#	7/24	Sandwich	6	M. Keleher
7/4	Moran WMA	7	M. Lynch#	7/29	Eastham	3 juv	P. Flood
7/13	Southwick	1	S. Kellogg	8/21	Northampton	9	J. Smith
7/16	Bolton Flats	2	M. Lynch#	8/24	S. Monomoy	2	MAS (S. Ellis)
7/30	P.I.	1	S. McGrath		Purple Martin		
Willow Flycatcher				thr	P.I.	36	max 8/16 v.o.
7/9, 8/25	Amherst	6, 1	H. Allen	7/3	Tuckernuck	1	R. Veit
7/16	Bolton Flats	11	M. Lynch#	7/21	Scituate	3	D. Furbish
7/17	GMNWR	7	M. Lynch#	8/1	DWWS	8	D. Furbish
7/30	Bolton Flats	7+	S. Sutton	8/20	Hadley	1	J. Smith
8/2	P.I.	9	R. Heil		Tree Swallow		
8/10, 18	Northampton	4, 3	J. Smith	thr	P.I.	25,000	max 8/23 R. Heil
8/23	Southwick	2	S. Kellogg	7/17	Essex	100	D. Brown#
Least Flycatcher				7/31	Northampton	30,000	A. Magee
7/3	Quabbin (G10)	3	G. d'Entremont	8/20	Westport	6210	M. Lynch#
7/10	New Braintree	1	M. Lynch#	8/28	S. Monomoy	500+	B. Nikula#
8/8	P.I.	1	T. Spahr#				

Northern Rough-winged Swallow

7/4	Wakefield	2	P. + F. Vale
7/23	Falmouth	8	R. Farrell
7/30	S. Peabody	3	R. Heil
8/7	Melrose	2	P. + F. Vale
8/26	Agawam	1	S. Kellogg

Bank Swallow

thr	P.I.	20-80	v.o.
7/9	Bolton Flats	60	S. Sutton
7/10	Quabog IBA	15+	M. Lynch#
7/16	Falmouth	41	R. Farrell
8/5	Ipswich (C.B.)	5+	J. Berry
8/7	N. Monomoy	8+	B. Nikula
8/22	Agawam	120	S. Kellogg
8/26	GMNWR	1	J. Forbes

Cliff Swallow

7/thr	Concord (NAC)	pr n	S. Perkins
7/4	Cheshire	120	M. Lynch#
7/4	Newbury	5	J. Nelson
7/24	Fitchburg	5	S. Sutton
7/25	Williamsburg	2	R. Packard
7/31, 8/23	Northampton	5, 1	Magee, Surner
8/1	Craigville	2	R. Hodson
8/3	Mt. Holyoke	1	J. Smith
8/13	Stockbridge	2 juv	M. Lynch#
8/17	DWWS	1	D. Furbish
8/23	Northfield	12	J. Smith

Barn Swallow

7/23, 8/20	Westport	50, 180	M. Lynch#
7/23, 8/6	Falmouth	75, 135	R. Farrell
7/26, 8/23	P.I.	35, 50	R. Heil
7/27	Sandwich	30	D. Furbish
7/30, 8/26	Leicester	30, 149	M. Lynch#
8/7	Nauset Marsh	200	M. Lynch#
8/11	GMNWR	400	D. Sibley
8/26	Leicester	35	M. Lynch#

Swallow species

8/9	Newbypt H.	100,000++	R. Heil#
8/17	P.I.	50,000++	R. Heil

Red-breasted Nuthatch

7/2	Colrain	8	M. Lynch#
7/2-4	Ipswich	10	J. Berry
7/4, 8/7	Mashpee	6, 5	M. Keleher
7/4	Moran WMA	9	M. Lynch#
7/8	Montague	4	R. Packard
7/9, 8/26	Petersham	4, 6	Buelow, Packard
7/18	Oakham	5	C. Buelow
7/23	Barre F.D.	23	S. Sutton
8/16, 23	P.I.	3, 9	R. Heil
8/24	Paxton	6	M. Lynch#
8/26	Boxford (C.P.)	4	MAS (Weaver)
8/28	Rutland	7	M. Lynch#
8/28	Groton	5	J. Berry#

Brown Creeper

7/23	Barre F.D.	11	S. Sutton
7/24	Williamsburg	4	R. Packard
8/28	Ware R. IBA	7	M. Lynch#

Carolina Wren

7/23	Acoaxet	3	M. Lynch#
7/24	Southborough	2	L. E. Taylor
7/30	P.I.	2	T. Wetmore
8/3	Craigville	6	R. Hodson
8/21	Williamsburg	2	R. Packard
8/28	Wakefield	2	P. + F. Vale

House Wren

7/10	Quabog IBA	6	M. Lynch#
8/24	Burlington	11	M. Rines
8/27	Gloucester (E.P.)	5	S. Hedman

Winter Wren

7/2	Colrain	8	M. Lynch#
7/2-4	Ipswich	1 m	J. Berry
7/5	Richmond	3	C. Buelow
7/9	Petersham	2	C. Buelow
7/10	Mt. Greylock	6	R. Laubach
7/10	Stoughton	1	G. d'Entremont
7/12	Southwick	3	S. Kellogg
7/16	Mt. Washington	3	R. Laubach
8/26	Petersham	6	R. Packard

Sedge Wren

7/4	Moran WMA	1	M. Lynch#
8/11-30	GMNWR	1	D. Sibley + v.o.
8/13	Stockbridge	1	M. Lynch#

Marsh Wren

7/1-8/16	P.I.	42 max 8/2	R. Heil
7/3-8/9	Amherst	1	H. Allen
7/4	Wakefield	11	P. + F. Vale
7/4	Mashpee	6	M. Keleher
7/10	Quabog IBA	8	M. Lynch#
7/13	IRWS	12+	J. Berry#
7/17	GMNWR	23	M. Lynch#

Golden-crowned Kinglet

7/2	Colrain	14	M. Lynch#
7/3	Quabbin (G10)	2	G. d'Entremont
7/4	Cheshire	6	M. Lynch#
7/4	Moran WMA	5	M. Lynch#
7/9, 8/24	Petersham	4, 2	Buelow, Packard
8/8	Mt. Greylock	2	R. Laubach

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

7/17	Longmeadow	15	S. Surner
7/17	W. Newbury	3	D. Chickering
7/17	GMNWR	5	M. Lynch#
7/30	Bolton Flats	5	S. Sutton
7/31	Quabbin (G35)	10	C. Buelow
7/31, 8/20	Woburn	4, 3	M. Rines
8/23	Southwick	2	S. Kellogg

Eastern Bluebird

7/2-4	Ipswich	40	J. Berry
7/3	Quabbin (G10)	28	G. d'Entremont
7/4	Moran WMA	13	M. Lynch#
7/9	Holliston	12	J. O'Connell
7/10	Quabog IBA	36	M. Lynch#
7/13	Southwick	22	S. Kellogg

Swainson's Thrush

7/2	Hawley	1	M. Lynch#
7/21	Mt. Greylock	1	R. Laubach
8/26	Amherst	1	J. Smith

Hermit Thrush

7/2	Colrain	5	M. Lynch#
7/4, 8/7	Mashpee	3, 3	M. Keleher
7/18	Oakham	6	C. Buelow
7/19	Mt. Greylock	6	C. Buelow
7/22	Montague	6	R. Packard
7/23	Barre F.D.	10	S. Sutton
8/1-18	Sherborn	5	E. Taylor
8/13	Stockbridge	5	M. Lynch#
8/24	Southwick	5	S. Kellogg

Wood Thrush

7/2-4	Ipswich	34	J. Berry
7/10	Quabog IBA	8	M. Lynch#
7/31	Canton	4	G. d'Entremont
8/27	Medford	6	M. Rines#

American Robin

7/30, 8/27	Bolton Flats	2805, 6625	S. Sutton
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Gray Catbird

7/4, 8/7	Mashpee	24, 35	M. Keleher
7/10	Quabog IBA	63	M. Lynch#
7/23	Westport	86	M. Lynch#
7/24	Brewster	41 b	S. Finnegan#
7/30	Lynnfield	30+	P. + F. Vale
8/2, 23	P.I.	155, 62	R. Heil
8/2, 27	Worc. (BMB)	21, 20	J. Liller

Brown Thrasher

7/3	Hardwick	2	C. Buelow
7/24	Wakefield	4	D. + I. Jewell
8/2	P.I.	18	R. Heil
8/20	Woburn	4	M. Rines#

Cedar Waxwing

7/23	Barre F.D.	37	S. Sutton
8/2, 23	P.I.	130, 95	R. Heil
8/13	Stockbridge	46	M. Lynch#
8/20	Bolton Flats	33	S. Sutton
8/26	Leicester	81	M. Lynch#
8/28	Ware R. IBA	65	M. Lynch#

Blue-winged Warbler

7/30	Bolton Flats	3	S. Sutton
8/21	Quabbin Pk.	4	M. Lynch#



Blue-winged Warbler (continued)			7/10	Stoughton	7	G. d'Entremont
8/26 Southwick	1	S. Kellogg	7/22	Montague	6	R. Packard
8/29 Lincoln	1	M. Rines	8/24	Paxton	10	M. Lynch#
Golden-winged Warbler			8/28	Rutland	11	M. Lynch#
8/6-8 Quabbin (G12)	1	C. Kwong#		Prairie Warbler		
8/23 E. Orleans	1	C. Goodrich	7/3	Wakefield	2	P. + F. Vale
Lawrence's Warbler			7/7	Montague	8	R. Packard
7/14 Norfolk	1 m	M. Martinek	7/24	Brewster	2 b	S. Finnegan#
8/20 Tuckernuck	1 f	R. Veit	7/30	Quabbin Pk.	4	M. Lynch#
Nashville Warbler			8/21	Marshfield	1	D. Furbish
7/2 Hawley	2	M. Lynch#	8/24	S. Monomoy	1	MAS (S. Ellis)
7/3 Quabbin (G10)	2	G. d'Entremont		Palm Warbler		
7/7 Montague	1	R. Packard	8/29	Northampton	2	J. Smith
8/25 Granville	1	S. Kellogg		Blackpoll Warbler		
8/26 P.I.	1	J. Berry	7/19	Mt. Greylock	5	C. Buelow
8/27 Worc. (BMB)	1	J. Liller#	7/30, 8/21	P.I.	1 m	Spahr, McGrath
Northern Parula			7/31	Georgetown	1	S. McGrath
8/2-5 P.I.	1	R. Heil		Cerulean Warbler		
Yellow Warbler			7/4	Mt. Holyoke	2	T. Gagnon
7/10 Quabog IBA	15	M. Lynch#		Black-and-white Warbler		
7/30 Bolton Flats	21	S. Sutton	7/3	Quabbin (G10)	8	G. d'Entremont
8/2, 16 P.I.	51, 49	R. Heil	7/19	P.I.	2	T. Wetmore
8/20 Westport	5	M. Lynch#	7/23	Barre F.D.	4	S. Sutton
8/24 Burlington	3	M. Rines	7/30	Wompatuck SP	4	G. d'Entremont
Chestnut-sided Warbler			7/31	Quabbin (G35)	4	C. Buelow
7/2 Colrain	6	M. Lynch#	8/27	Gloucester (E.P.)	3	S. Hedman
7/3 Quabbin (G10)	24	G. d'Entremont	8/28	Ware R. IBA	8	M. Lynch#
7/4 Moran WMA	7	M. Lynch#	8/28	Sudbury	3	T. Spahr
7/23 Barre F.D.	10	S. Sutton		American Redstart		
8/8 Quabbin (G12)	10+	J. P. Smith	7/3	Quabbin (G10)	9	G. d'Entremont
8/27 P.I.	2	M. Garvey	7/30	Bolton Flats	7	S. Sutton
8/27 Medford	2	M. Rines#	8/2	P.I.	21	R. Heil
8/28 Ware R. IBA	4	M. Lynch#	8/20	Arlington	4	K. Hartel
Magnolia Warbler			8/20	Woburn	7	M. Rines#
7/2 Colrain	3	M. Lynch#	8/24	Paxton	8	M. Lynch#
7/4 Moran WMA	3	M. Lynch#	8/27	Medford	9	M. Rines#
7/6 Goshen	3	R. Packard	8/28	Ware R. IBA	10	M. Lynch#
7/18 Oakham	7	C. Buelow		Prothonotary Warbler		
7/23 Barre F.D.	4	S. Sutton	7/18	P.I.	1	S. McGrath
8/27 Medford	2	M. Rines#		Worm-eating Warbler		
Black-throated Blue Warbler			7/11	Greenfield	1	C. Buelow
7/2 Colrain	7	M. Lynch#	7/28	Mt. Holyoke	1	S. Surner
7/3 Quabbin (G10)	27	G. d'Entremont		Ovenbird		
7/4 Cheshire	2	M. Lynch#	7/2	Colrain	22	M. Lynch#
7/21 Mt. Greylock	8	R. Laubach	7/2-4	Ipswich	53	J. Berry
7/23 Barre F.D.	5	S. Sutton	7/3	Quabbin (G10)	35	G. d'Entremont
8/24 Paxton	1 f	M. Lynch#	7/4	Mashpee	7	M. Keleher
Yellow-rumped Warbler			7/4	Cheshire	5	M. Lynch#
7/4 Moran WMA	4	M. Lynch#	8/8	Quabbin (G12)	3	J. P. Smith
7/18 Oakham	4	C. Buelow	8/28	Sudbury	3	T. Spahr
7/19 Mt. Greylock	15	C. Buelow	8/29	Lincoln	3	M. Rines
7/23 Barre F.D.	9	S. Sutton		Northern Waterthrush		
7/24 Williamsburg	4	R. Packard	7/2	Hawley	2	M. Lynch#
7/30 Quabbin (G15)	1 ad + 3 yg	M. Lynch#	7/2-4	Ipswich	3 m	J. Berry
8/28 Ware R. IBA	8	M. Lynch#	8/2	P.I.	2	R. Heil
Black-throated Green Warbler			8/16	Boston	3	M. Garvey
7/2 Colrain	9	M. Lynch#	8/25	Amherst	6	J. Smith
7/2-4 Ipswich	3 m	J. Berry	8/30	Arlington	3	M. Rines
7/3 Quabbin (G10)	9	G. d'Entremont		Louisiana Waterthrush		
7/7 Sandisfield	5	R. Laubach	7/4	Southwick	3	S. Kellogg
7/10 Mt. Greylock	8	R. Laubach	8/17	Northampton	1	T. Gagnon
7/18 Oakham	5	C. Buelow		Mourning Warbler		
7/23 Barre F.D.	24	S. Sutton	7/4	Moran WMA	1 m	M. Lynch#
7/31 Quabbin (G35)	6	C. Buelow	8/6	Montague	1	D. Furbish
8/28 Ware R. IBA	7	M. Lynch#		Common Yellowthroat		
Blackburnian Warbler			7/2-4	Ipswich	20	J. Berry
7/2 Colrain	28	M. Lynch#	7/3	Quabbin (G10)	36	G. d'Entremont
7/3 Quabbin (G10)	1	G. d'Entremont	7/4	Wakefield	32	P. + F. Vale
7/4 Moran WMA	3	M. Lynch#	7/4	Moran WMA	42	M. Lynch#
7/7 Sandisfield	3	R. Laubach	7/10	Quabog IBA	79	M. Lynch#
7/18 Oakham	6	C. Buelow	7/23	Barre F.D.	23	S. Sutton
7/23 Barre F.D.	1 f	S. Sutton	8/2, 23	P.I.	27, 24	R. Heil
8/24 Boston	1	M. Garvey	8/13	Stockbridge	21	M. Lynch#
8/27 P.I.	1	M. Garvey		Hooded Warbler		
Pine Warbler			8/17	Nahant	1 m	L. Pivacek
7/1 Newbypt	7 m	J. Berry#	8/20-21	Chatham (MI)	1 f	G. d'Entremont#
7/2-4 Ipswich	14	J. Berry	8/24	Paxton	1 f	M. Lynch#
7/4, 8/7 Mashpee	9, 3	M. Keleher	8/29	Chappaquiddick	1 m	S. Miller

Wilson's Warbler				Lincoln's Sparrow			
8/28 N. Middleboro	1	K. Holmes		8/23 Southwick	1	S. Kellogg	
8/30 Northampton	1	J. Gawienowski		Swamp Sparrow			
Canada Warbler				7/4 Wakefield	17	P. + F. Vale	
7/2-4 Ipswich	2 m	J. Berry		7/4 Moran WMA	15	M. Lynch#	
7/9 Petersham	1	C. Buelow		7/10 Quabog IBA	29	M. Lynch#	
7/19 Mt. Greylock	1	C. Buelow		8/13 Stockbridge	13	M. Lynch#	
7/23 Barre F.D.	3	S. Sutton		White-throated Sparrow			
8/14 Arlington	1	R. LaFontaine		7/2 Colrain	4	M. Lynch#	
8/20 Woburn	1	M. Rines#		7/4 Moran WMA	20	M. Lynch#	
8/21 P.I.	1	S. McGrath		7/19 Mt. Greylock	4	C. Buelow	
8/25 Southwick	2	S. Kellogg		7/23 Barre F.D.	1	S. Sutton	
8/27 Gloucester (E.P.)	1	S. Hedman		Dark-eyed Junco			
8/27 Medford	2	M. Rines#		7/2 Colrain	1	M. Lynch#	
8/31 Montague	1	H. Allen		7/4 Moran WMA	1	M. Lynch#	
Yellow-breasted Chat				7/19 Mt. Greylock	20	C. Buelow	
8/19-21 Chilmark	1	A. Hartman		8/19-30 Boston	1	M. Garvey	
Scarlet Tanager				Rose-breasted Grosbeak			
7/2-4 Ipswich	17	J. Berry		7/3 Quabbin (G10)	7	G. d'Entremont	
7/3 Quabbin (G10)	16	G. d'Entremont		7/4 Moran WMA	4	M. Lynch#	
7/10 Stoughton	5	G. d'Entremont		7/5 W. Boxford	5	J. Berry	
7/17 Barre	3	C. Buelow		7/31 Quabbin (G35)	3	C. Buelow	
7/18 Oakham	4	C. Buelow		7/31 Carlisle	6+	D. Brownrigg	
7/23 Barre F.D.	7	S. Sutton		8/2 P.I.	3	R. Heil	
7/30, 8/31 Quabbin Pk.	10, 4	M. Lynch#		8/13 Stockbridge	4	M. Lynch#	
8/28 Ware R. IBA	2	M. Lynch#		Blue Grosbeak			
8/28 N. Middleboro	2	K. Holmes		8/9 Northampton	1	P. Yeskie	
Eastern Towhee				Indigo Bunting			
7/3 Quabbin (G10)	36	G. d'Entremont		7/4 Moran WMA	5	M. Lynch#	
7/23 Barre F.D.	15	S. Sutton		7/19 Mt. Greylock	5	C. Buelow	
7/30 Wompatuck SP	33	G. d'Entremont		7/23 Barre F.D.	4	S. Sutton	
8/2, 16 P.I.	36, 31	R. Heil		7/30 Quabbin Pk.	4	M. Lynch#	
Chipping Sparrow				7/30 Bolton Flats	5 m	S. Sutton	
7/23 Barre F.D.	57	S. Sutton		8/5 Northampton	15	J. Smith	
7/30 Quabbin Pk.	27	M. Lynch#		8/8 Quabbin (G12)	7	J. P. Smith	
8/20 ONWR	35+	S. Sutton		8/27 Bolton Flats	6	S. Sutton	
Clay-colored Sparrow				Dickcissel			
7/1-5 P.I.	1	T. Wetmore + v.o.		7/30 N. Monomoy	1	B. Nikula	
7/1-7 Edgartown	2 m	J. Liller + v.o.		8/18 Tuckernuck	1	R. Veit	
8/17 Northampton	1	J. Smith		8/28 DWWS	1 f	D. Furbish	
Field Sparrow				8/28-29 Northampton	1	A. Magee	
7/3 Hardwick	3	C. Buelow		Bobolink			
7/3 Wakefield	3	P. + F. Vale		7/4 Moran WMA	21	M. Lynch#	
7/10 Montague	16	R. Packard		7/5, 8/16 P.I.	25, 57	R. Heil	
7/19 Mt. Greylock	6	C. Buelow		7/7-8 Hanscom	163	G. Sadoti	
8/1 Craigville	4	R. Hodson		7/10 DWWS	120	D. Furbish	
Vesper Sparrow				7/30, 8/23 Leicester	20, 197	M. Lynch#	
7/2 Plainfield	2	M. Lynch#		8/15 HRWMA	50	T. Pirro	
7/10 Hatfield	4	H. Allen		8/23 Amherst	800	S. Surner	
7/12 Sunderland	2	H. Allen		8/28 Northampton	550	T. Gagnon	
8/5, 21 Northampton	1	J. Smith		Red-winged Blackbird			
Lark Sparrow				7/10 Quabog IBA	155+	M. Lynch#	
8/17 Northampton	1	J. Smith		7/30, 8/27 Bolton Flats	210, 1260	S. Sutton	
Savannah Sparrow				Eastern Meadowlark			
7/4 Cheshire	13	M. Lynch#		7/7-8 Hanscom	64	G. Sadoti	
7/7-8 Hanscom	762	G. Sadoti		7/12 New Braintree	5	C. Buelow	
8/14 Chatham (S.B.)	15	M. Garvey#		7/16 Amherst	2	H. Allen	
8/26 S. Lancaster	36	S. Sutton		7/23 Westport	2	M. Lynch#	
Grasshopper Sparrow				7/30, 8/26 Leicester	15, 3	M. Lynch#	
7/2 N. Falmouth	5	R. Farrell		8/8 P.I.	2 juv	T. Spahr#	
7/7-8 Hanscom	3 m	G. Sadoti		8/26 S. Lancaster	7	S. Sutton	
7/10 New Braintree	1	M. Lynch#		Common Grackle			
7/12 Sunderland	2	H. Allen		8/14 Wakefield	200+	P. Vale	
7/19 Turners Falls	2	R. Packard		8/15 HRWMA	400+	T. Pirro	
8/21 Northampton	1	S. Surner		8/20 Bolton Flats	271	S. Sutton	
Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow				8/25 Leicester	173	M. Lynch#	
7/2, 17 E. Boston (B.I.)	1, 4	J. Sardell		Orchard Oriole			
7/2 W. Barnstable	15	G. Hirth		7/2 Duxbury	pr	D. Furbish	
7/17 Winthrop (Snake)	2	S. Zende#		7/4 Groveland	3	D. Chickering	
7/17 Falmouth	6	R. Farrell		7/4 Melrose	1 m	D. + I. Jewell	
7/23, 8/20 Westport	36, 9	M. Lynch#		7/24 Uxbridge	1 ad f	M. Lynch#	
7/30 Chatham (S.B.)	2	CCBC (Silverstein)		8/6 WBWS	1 imm	M. Lynch#	
8/2 P.I.	15	R. Heil		8/20 P.I.	1 m ad	P. + F. Vale	
8/21 N. Monomoy	10	B. Nikula		8/21 Marshfield	2	D. Furbish	
Seaside Sparrow				Baltimore Oriole			
7/23 Westport	2	M. Lynch#		7/2-4 Ipswich	21	J. Berry	
7/23 P.I.	3	T. Wetmore		7/22, 24 Brewster	10 b, 14 b	S. Finnegan#	
8/7 Barnstable	1	M. Lynch#		8/17 Mt.A.	17	R. Stymeist	

Baltimore Oriole (continued)			Red Crossbill		
8/18 Marlboro	30	T. Spahr	7/4 Montague	1	T. Gagnon
8/23 P.I.	26	R. Heil	Pine Siskin		
8/27 Medford	11	M. Rines#	7/2 Hawley	1	M. Lynch#
Purple Finch			7/4 Moran WMA	1	M. Lynch#
thr P.I.	2-10	v.o.	8/6-15 Stow	1 f ad	D. Stewart
7/2 Hawley	3	M. Lynch#	Evening Grosbeak		
7/4, 8/15 Gloucester	2, 2	J. Nelson	7/2 Colrain	2	M. Lynch#
7/4 Moran WMA	7	M. Lynch#	7/2 Leverett	3	H. Allen
8/13 Stockbridge	6	M. Lynch#	7/3 W. Quabbin	2	G. d'entremont
8/18 Amherst	2	H. Allen	7/11 Deerfield	2	R. Rancatti
8/28 Ware R. IBA	2	M. Lynch#	8/6 Hawley	6	T. Collins

## ABBREVIATIONS FOR BIRD SIGHTINGS

Taxonomic order is based on AOU checklist, Seventh edition, 44th Supplement, as published in *The Auk* 117: 847-58 (2000); 119: 897-906 (2002); 120: 923-32 (2003).

ABC	Allen Bird Club	ONWR	Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge
A.P.	Andrews Point, Rockport	P.I.	Plum Island
A.Pd	Allens Pond, S. Dartmouth	Pd	Pond
B.	Beach	P'town	Provincetown
Barre FD	Barre Falls Dam,	Pont.	Pontoosuc Lake, Lanesboro
	Barre, Rutland	R.P.	Race Point, Provincetown
B.I.	Belle Isle, E. Boston	Res.	Reservoir
B.R.	Bass Rocks, Gloucester	S. Dart.	South Dartmouth
BBC	Brookline Bird Club	S.B.	South Beach, Chatham
BMB	Broad Meadow Brook, Worcester	S.N.	Sandy Neck, Barnstable
C.B.	Crane Beach, Ipswich	SRV	Sudbury River Valley
CGB	Coast Guard Beach, Eastham	SSBC	South Shore Bird Club
C.P.	Crooked Pond, Boxford	TASL	Take A Second Look
Cambr.	Cambridge		Boston Harbor Census
CCBC	Cape Cod Bird Club	WBWS	Wellfleet Bay WS
Cumb. Farms	Cumberland Farms,	WMWS	Wachusett Meadow WS
	Middleboro	Wompatuck SP	Hingham, Cohasset,
DFWS	Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary	Worc.	Scituate, and Norwell
DWMA	Delaney WMA		Worcester
	Stow, Bolton, Harvar		
DWWS	Daniel Webster WS	<b>Other Abbreviations</b>	
E.P.	Eastern Point, Gloucester	ad	adult
EMHW	Eastern Mass. Hawk Watch	alt	alternate
F.E.	First Encounter Beach, Eastham	b	banded
F.P.	Fresh Pond, Cambridge	br	breeding
F.Pk	Franklin Park, Boston	dk	dark (morph)
G40	Gate 40, Quabbin Res.	f	female
GMNWR	Great Meadows NWR	fl	fledgling
H.	Harbor	imm	immature
H.P.	Halibut Point, Rockport	juv	juvenile
HRWMA	High Ridge WMA, Gardner	lt	light (morph)
I.	Island	m	male
IRWS	Ipswich River WS	max	maximum
L.	Ledge	migr	migrating
M.V.	Martha's Vineyard	n	nesting
MAS	Mass. Audubon Society	ph	photographed
MBWMA	Martin Burns WMA, Newbury	pl	plumage
MNWS	Marblehead Neck WS	pr	pair
MSSF	Myles Standish State	S	summer (1S = 1st summer)
	Forest, Plymouth	v.o.	various observers
Mt.A.	Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Cambr.	W	winter (2W = second winter)
NAC	Nine Acre Corner, Concord	yg	young
Newbypt	Newburyport	#	additional observers

### HOW TO CONTRIBUTE BIRD SIGHTINGS TO BIRD OBSERVER

Sightings for any given month must be reported in writing by the eighth of the following month, and may be submitted by postal mail or e-mail. Send written reports to Bird Sightings, Robert H. Stymeist, 94 Grove Street, Watertown, MA 02172. Include name and phone number of observer, common name of species, date of sighting, location, number of birds, other observer(s), and information on age, sex, and morph (where relevant). For instructions on e-mail submission, visit: <http://massbird.org/birdobserver/sightings/>.

Species on the Review List of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (indicated by an asterisk [\*] in the Bird Reports), as well as species unusual as to place, time, or known nesting status in Massachusetts, should be reported promptly to the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee, c/o Marjorie Rines, Massachusetts Audubon Society, South Great Road, Lincoln, MA 01773, or by e-mail to <marj@mrines.com>.

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**AT A GLANCE**

*Wayne R. Petersen*

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A RED-TAILED HAWK WITH A GRAY SQUIRREL ATOP THE FAMOUS POMODORO SCULPTURE IN THE COURTYARD OF THE WORCESTER ART MUSEUM. PHOTOGRAPH BY HONEE HESS, CURATOR OF EDUCATION.

# ABOUT THE COVER

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## Red-breasted Nuthatch

The tin-horn *yank-yank* sound of the Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*) is commonly heard in spruce and fir forests. This tiny, short-tailed nuthatch has a slate gray back, wings, and tail, and a black cap and black line through the eye, separated by a streak of white. Its white lower face grades into underparts of rusty red. As is characteristic of nuthatches, the Red-breasted Nuthatch forages on tree trunks, sometimes with head down, probing the bark for insects with its sharp, sturdy black bill. Despite its broad geographical distribution it has no subspecies and is considered part of a superspecies together with five Eurasian nuthatch species.

Red-breasted Nuthatches are resident breeders in an area that extends from southern Alaska across Canada to Newfoundland. They are found in much of the western third of the United States and in the Northeast. In the Appalachians they are seen as far south as southern North Carolina. They are resident through most of their range, although some northern populations are at least partly migratory. Red-breasted Nuthatches are an irruptive species. Every two to four years large numbers move south in winter, presumably because of food shortages on their breeding grounds. They show up at bird feeders, join mixed-species foraging flocks, and may get as far south as the Gulf Coast. In Massachusetts they are considered uncommon and local breeders and are also uncommon spring migrants, arriving in late April and the first two weeks of May. The fall migration begins in late July and lasts until December, with peak numbers in October and November. During irruption years large numbers may winter in Massachusetts.


A monogamous species, Red-breasted Nuthatches produce a single brood each year. Their preferred habitat is mature coniferous forest, particularly fir and spruce, but also pine and hemlock, and mixed coniferous/deciduous forest. They are found from the seacoast to high elevation montane forest. These nuthatches are highly territorial, especially during the breeding season, when they chase conspecifics entering their territory and all species near the nest. Resident birds are territorial year round. In an aggressive display, males hold their heads upward, crest raised, and flutter their wings, or raise their wings above the head, tail cocked and feathers puffed. They utter *hn-hn-hn* or *grrs* and *churs*. Both sexes have a variety of calls besides the basic *yank-yank*. The male's courtship song has been described as a series of *waa-aa-ns* given with head up and body swaying side to side. Males also engage in courtship flights, fluttering or gliding on outstretched wings. When courting males feed females, the latter receive the food with bill up and wings quivering.

Red-breasted Nuthatches excavate nest cavities in soft, decaying tree snags. The female selects the nest site and does most of the excavation, and the male brings her food while she excavates. The cavity is lined with grass, barks strips, feathers, or fur. Both sexes bring conifer resin to the nest, either in the bill or on fragments of bark. They then smear the resin around the opening of the cavity, sometimes using a piece of bark. Red-breasted Nuthatches are thus one of the few tool-using bird species. The resin presumably deters nest predators and discourages other birds from competing for

the nest site. Experiments with nest boxes have demonstrated that resin deters House Wrens from using the boxes and discourages squirrels and mice. The parent birds fly and dive directly into the nest cavity, thus avoiding resin on their feathers. Females also engage in an aggressive display toward marauding squirrels. They face down toward the squirrel with wings spread and body swaying. This behavior is reported to be successful in driving squirrels away.


The usual clutch is six white or pinkish eggs, spotted red-brown. The female has a well-developed brood patch and does most or all of the incubation until the chicks hatch in about twelve days. Although the young fledge in 18 to 21 days, the adults feed them for several weeks, a diet exclusively of arthropods.

Red-breasted Nuthatches feed mostly on arthropods during the breeding season and on conifer seeds the remainder of the year. Common items include adult beetles, beetle larvae, caterpillars, flies, spiders, and ants. They forage mostly by probing bark on tree trunks and limbs and often probe the base of needle clusters and cones as well. Pounding it into place with their bills, they cache food in bark crevices and in sapsucker holes.

A variety of hawk and owl species prey upon Red-breasted Nuthatches. Nest predators include squirrels, weasels, and jays. During migration many are killed in collisions with buildings or towers. Logging practices that remove snags adversely affect them, as does logging that produces even-aged stands. Their breeding range has expanded, however, in the South and East, where conifer plantations have increased the available habitat. Overall, the species appears to be doing well. We can all look forward to hearing the *yank-yank* of these delightful little birds and enjoying seeing them at our bird feeders in winter. 

*William E. Davis, Jr.*

## About the Cover Artist

Barry Van Dusen's drawings are well known to *Bird Observer* readers. His work has appeared on its cover more often than that of any artist. Barry has also provided illustrations for several nature books and pocket guides, including publications by the American Birding Association, HarperCollins, and Princeton University Press. His articles and paintings have been featured in *Birder's World* and *Bird Watcher's Digest*. Barry was trained as an artist but became drawn to nature subjects through the Massachusetts Audubon Society, an association which began in 1982. Shortly thereafter, he discovered the work of European wildlife artists and adopted their methodology of direct field sketching. His skill as a field artist has enabled Barry to participate abroad in projects sponsored by the Netherlands-based Artists for Nature Foundation. Working with other ANF artists to raise money for conservation of threatened habitats, he has traveled to India, Peru, Ireland, and Spain. Barry was elected a full member of London's Society of Wildlife Artists and is a frequent contributor to its exhibitions. His work has been shown also in Ireland, Scotland, France, and Holland. In the U.S. Barry frequently exhibits in New England and at prestigious national shows such as *Birds in Art* in Wausau, Wisconsin, and *Art of the Animal Kingdom* in Bennington, Vermont. Barry resides in the central Massachusetts town of Princeton. His website is <<http://www.barryvandusen.com>>. 



# AT A GLANCE

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October 2005



DAVID LARSON

Contortion! That's the name of the game this month . . . but remember John James Audubon became famous by featuring just such improbable poses in his epic artistic renditions of North American birds. Besides, despite the somewhat contorted posture of October's mystery bird, all the information needed to identify the "twisted" creature is present in the picture.


Let's start by noting that the primaries are obviously long and pointed. Even though only one leg is visible under the stretched right wing of the bird, the distance that the bird's tail and body are above the ground makes it obvious that the legs are also long. Since a heron or other long-legged wader would typically stand noticeably taller, the fact that it appears to be standing near the edge of the water makes it reasonable to assume that the bird is probably a shorebird. Although juvenile Black-crowned Night-Herons are somewhat similarly speckled on the dorsum, they have significantly broader and more rounded wings and do not have barring on their stubby tails.

The only other identification possibilities, other than a shorebird, that might be considered would be something like a juvenile Herring Gull, or possibly a female duck of some sort. Once again the finely barred tail, combined with the broad, pale

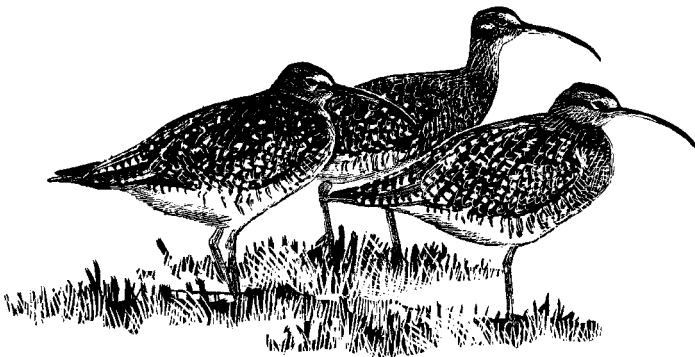
stripe over the eye (i.e., supercilium) and the pale median crown stripe at once removes all gulls and ducks from the running.

So, we're back to shorebirds. From every indication the bird is fairly large and is clearly not a peep or any of the other small to medium-sized species (e.g., Red Knot, Ruddy Turnstone). The striking head pattern and lack of very long, slim legs combine to take all of the *Tringa* species (i.e., yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, etc.) out of the picture, as well as the long-tailed Upland Sandpiper. Although a dowitcher might at first seem like a possibility, a dowitcher would not have a pale median stripe on the crown, and the scapulars and tertials would not be so obviously dotted and notched with white or buff. Instead, those feathers would be broadly fringed with buff, and the greater primary coverts would not be heavily patterned the way they are on the mystery shorebird. Finally, a dowitcher should display a white stripe running up the back above a black-and-white barred tail — a feature apparently lacking in the pictured shorebird.

With all of the small and medium-sized shorebirds eliminated, we are left only with Marbled Godwit and Whimbrel as viable options. While a Marbled Godwit is relatively plain-colored (i.e., lacking a wing stripe or distinctive tail pattern), a Marbled Godwit does not have the broad supercilium and pale median crown stripe shown by the mystery bird. The combination of features exhibited by our mystery shorebird is only displayed by a Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*). If we could see the pictured bird's bill, I have no doubt that it would be long and prominently decurved. Due to the fresh appearance of the plumage and the extensive white spotting and notching, especially on the scapulars and tertials, it is safe to say that the bird in the picture is a juvenile.

Whimbrels are scarce spring migrants and uncommon to locally common fall migrants in Massachusetts in areas with extensive salt marshes, such as Plum Island and outer Cape Cod. David Larson captured this image of a preening juvenile Whimbrel during fall migration at the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge on Plum Island. 

Wayne R. Petersen



WHIMBRELS BY DAVID A. SIBLEY

## AT A GLANCE

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DAVID LARSON

Can you identify this bird?  
Identification will be discussed in next issue's AT A GLANCE.

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## MORE HOT BIRDS

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On November 6, 2005, Phil Brown found and photographed this **Ash-throated Flycatcher** (left) on the Parker River NWR on Plum Island.

Also on November 6, Tim Spahr found this second-state-record **Sage Thrasher** (right) at the Parker River NWR, and David Larson took this photograph late that afternoon. The first state record also came from the refuge, forty years ago in 1965.



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**VOL. 33, NO. 6, DECEMBER 2005**

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