

# Bird Observer

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VOLUME 44, NUMBER 1

FEBRUARY 2016

I am a turkey vulture.



# HOT BIRDS

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A **Tufted Duck**, initially found by Tom Walker on Johnson's Pond in Groveland in mid-November, wandered between there, Kenoza Lake in Haverhill, and Lake Cochichewick in North Andover, through at least early January. Some birders suggested that these might not all be the same bird, but to date no one has seen Tufteds on two of these lakes on the same day. Steve Mirick took the photo on the left of the Kenoza duck.



**Mountain Bluebirds** staged a bit of an irruption to the northeast at the end of the autumn, with this Massachusetts record joined by two birds in Ontario, one in Quebec, and another in New Brunswick, all within about a week and a half! The Falmouth bird, found by Greg Hirth on December 4, was still being seen January 9, over a month after it was first noticed. Erik Nielsen took the photo on the left.



**Ash-throated Flycatchers** practically infested our state this winter! One found in Rockport by Sean Williams led to confirmation of a second individual and even a third in the same vicinity. One also turned up in Manomet December 10 and continued through at least January 4. Another was found on Nantucket on November 27, and one more in Cambridge December 28 through January 3. Sean Williams took the photo on the left.



A group participating in the Greater Boston Christmas Bird Count hit the jackpot with a **Swainson's Hawk**. The state has fewer than 10 records of the species and this was the first during the winter. The location where it was found is a wildlife sanctuary created on top of a capped landfill. Andrew Hrycyna took the photo on the left.

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# Bird Observer

A bimonthly journal—to enhance understanding, observation, and enjoyment of birds  
**VOL. 44, NO. 1 FEBRUARY 2016**

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# Birding Prospect Hill, Waltham, and the Cambridge Reservoir

*Jason Forbes*

## **Prospect Hill Park**

Prospect Hill in Waltham, rising to 485 feet, provides interesting birding for much of the year. Although close to downtown Boston, the change in elevation is enough to give a feel of areas farther to the west. The park covers 252 acres and includes several different habitats. For further details, check the eBird hotspot at <<http://ebird.org/ebird/hotspot/L3926887>> and the Waltham Land Trust's guide at <<http://walthamlandtrust.org/open-space/guide-to-open-spaces/prospect-hill-park-trails>>.

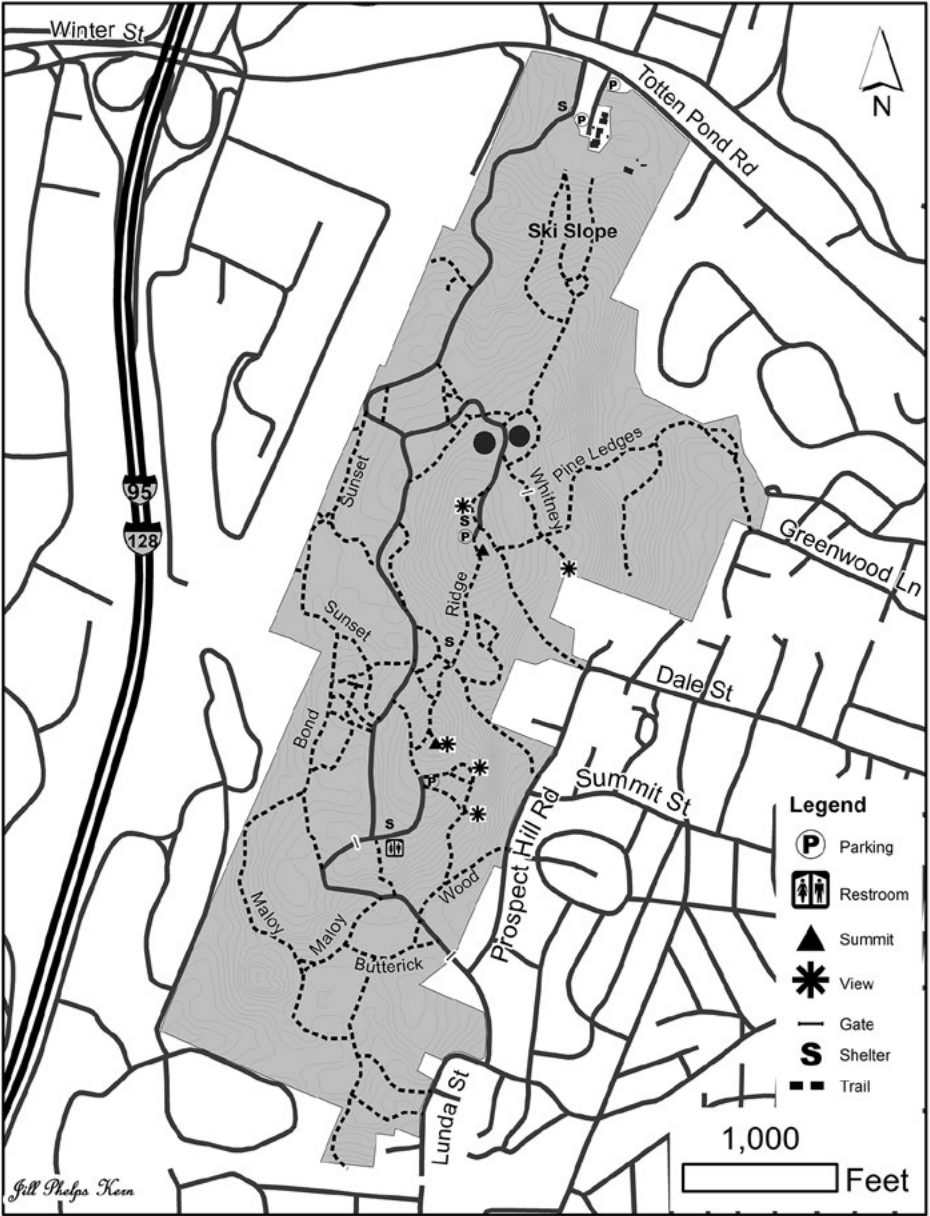


The main entrance is on the north border of the park at 314 Totten Pond Road, about a half-mile east of Exit 27—Totten Pond Road Winter Street on Interstate 95 (Route 128). This entrance is also accessible by bus on MBTA line 70. As you enter, you will see a parking area, then a small playground, and then another parking area next to the road leading up the hill. Unfortunately, the road is open to cars only from April through October, which means you will have to walk up the hill during the colder months. An alternative is to walk in from the southern, back entrance as described later in this article.

In spring and fall, migrant flocks of warblers can be everywhere. Just about every eastern warbler has been found, including several records of Hooded and Connecticut and a fall record of Cerulean. Other regular migrants include cuckoos, most vireos, and several flycatchers. Summer has a good mix of breeders including Great Crested Flycatchers, many Eastern Wood-Pewees, Wood Thrushes, Scarlet Tanagers, Chipping Sparrows, and abundant Pine Warblers, along with a few specialties described below. Winter can be a bit dull, but there is always a chance of winter finches, and it is worth searching for owls.

Because migrant flocks and most of the breeders can be found throughout the park, the loop described here covers only a few exceptional highlights. The full loop will take most of a morning and includes several steep areas. However, by driving up the hill in spring through fall, you can access most of the park with only a short walk. If you work nearby, a 30-minute to an hour stop at lunchtime could be almost as rewarding as a full circuit.

Starting from the rear parking lot at the base of the hill, check the trees and bushes on the right, which pass a small basketball court and lead into a little clearing. This corner had been the most reliable spot for Pileated Woodpecker in the park, but the trees have fallen over, so they are even more hit or miss now. Back to the left, the bushes at the bottom of the former ski slope are also worth checking.



Prospect Hill.

There are three ways up the hill: the ski slope, the road, and the trail by the basketball court. The slope opens and has the best view of the sky for fall hawkwatching about halfway up by a stand of birch trees. The low brush along the slope provides a slightly different habitat from the rest of the park. I will describe the road on the way downhill. We will take the basketball trail to go uphill. This trail splits a short distance up the hill. Staying straight will connect with the ski slope at about the halfway point. Heading right will either make a slightly longer loop to the same spot or, if it isn't overgrown, lead to a trail that you can follow almost to the top of the slope.

Walk straight up the basketball trail to where it rejoins the ski slope, where it is worth walking a short distance back down the ski slope. After checking the clearing just above the birch stand, retrace your steps, then continue up. The top half of the slope normally has several pairs of Indigo Buntings in summer, and you can often find some of the other forest breeders in the taller trees on the edge or hear them singing.

At the top of the slope, you will reach the road as it passes between two large water storage tanks. Check around both tanks. The first juncos of the fall are often here well ahead of other areas, and there are recent records of juncos overwintering. To the left, the paved Whitney Trail leads off to the southeast; follow it through the gate and down about a quarter-mile to the end.

At the end of the trail, there is a large communication tower—possibly to get even larger in the near future. You will find more Indigo Buntings here, and the early morning sun makes this a very good spot first thing in the morning. Slightly below the tower, one of two Worm-eating Warblers in the park set up territory in 2009.

After checking out the tower area, start back up the Whitney Trail. If you are up for a steep climb, look for the sign for the Pine Ledges Trail on the right. Do not take the trail at the sign, but continue to an unsigned trail about 50 feet farther. A small pile of rocks marks this trail, but if you can't find it, take the labeled Pine Ledges Trail and walk along the left side of the stone wall until the trail becomes more obvious after a short distance. This trail leads to a staircase that heads down into a nice area with a stream and some extremely large pines. Black-throated Green Warblers have been on territory and Winter Wrens have been singing here on several occasions. For people who don't want to deal with the stairs, you can drive up Bacon Street to Greenwood Lane, park at the corner of Cowassat Lane and Greenwood Lane, and walk in through there.

Return to the Whitney Trail and either take this trail back to the road or take the Ridge Trail up. Either way, you end up at Big Prospect, the higher of the two hills in the park. Common Ravens have been nesting on the old radio tower here for several



Black-throated Green Warbler, Prospect Hill. All photographs by the author.

years now and are likely to be nearby for most of the year. Also, here is the Sunset Shelter, which offers a decent view to the west, including some of the Cambridge Reservoir. There is room for several cars here, making it a good starting point for a short check when the road is open.

Turn south on the Ridge Trail to make the trip from Big Prospect to Little Prospect. At the low point between the two hills, the Valley Shelter will be on the right. A couple trails head left, but I generally just continue on the Ridge Trail, which heads back uphill toward Little Prospect.

About halfway up the trail, there is an unlabeled trail that leads off to the left and eventually reaches a sharp drop-off. This site gives a nice view of the tops of the trees below and is where the second Worm-eating Warbler set up a territory. Red-breasted Nuthatches have also been found around here in all seasons.

At the top of Little Prospect is a small rocky outcrop. Scan the skies quickly, but better views are found by walking down to the road and then out to the bench below. There is a tiny population of the state-listed red-bellied tiger beetle at this outcrop.

There are two choices here: follow the Boston Rock Trail down to the Wood Trail from the bench or follow the road. We'll follow the road. A short distance down, you'll pass the Summer House shelter on the right and two bathrooms—the only ones in the park—on the left. Just ahead will be the gated road down to the back entrance. Either follow the road or walk off to the left and find the Summer House Trail, which has another steep staircase.

Continuing on the park road will take you past the Wood Trail and then to the southern back entrance to the park, which is on Prospect Hill Road near James Street. Parking is available on the street, but note that parking is prohibited near the gate itself.

From near this back entrance, take the Butterick Trail through an area that has several vernal pools and can be very productive. After about a quarter-mile, the Butterick Trail intersects with the Maloy Trail, which first starts in a southerly direction and then loops northward to follow the western edge of the park.

To return to the north entrance on Totten Pond Road, follow the Maloy Trail, which merges after about a half-mile into the Bond Trail and then a quarter-mile later into the Sunset Trail. An additional one third-mile on the Sunset trail will return you to the park road for the half-mile return to the north entrance and the parking lot. Along this route, there are also a number of smaller trails that lead back to the road between



Common Raven, Prospect Hill.



the Sunset Shelter and Summer House. Just before the Sunset Trail begins to pass some of the buildings from the office park, you can take a little walk off to the left and get another good view of the sky. This spot has been good for raptors. Depending on how far the construction of the shopping center below has progressed, keep an eye and ear out for Prairie Warbler, Brown Thrasher, Killdeer, and swallows.

Once the trail reaches the road, you can follow straight ahead to return to the parking lot. If you turn right instead, the next right leads south to the Valley Shelter and then loops all the way around back to Big Prospect. Going straight instead of right leads back to the water tanks and the ski slope.

Explore the hill. There's always something of interest, whether you're taking a quick trip along the road or hiking to the furthest corners.



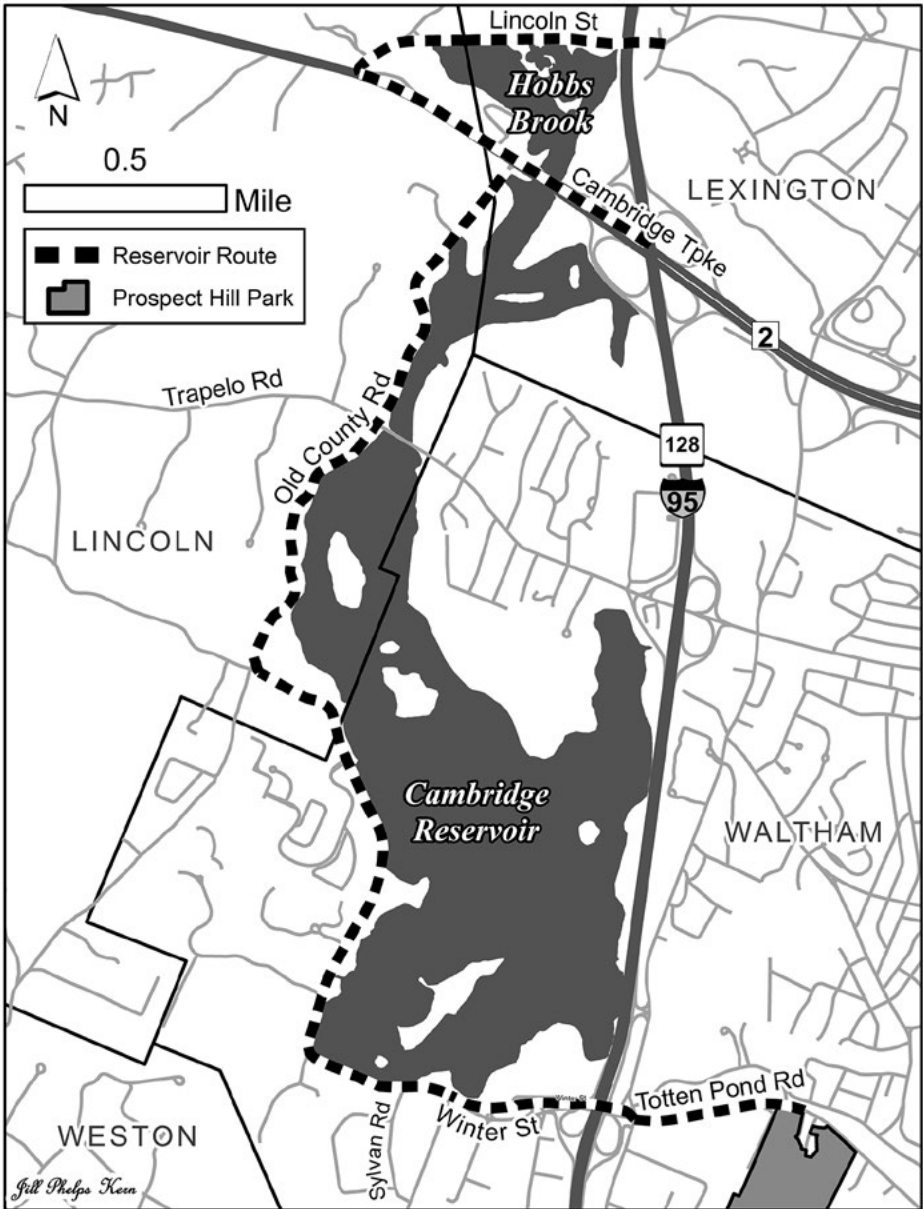
Greater and Lesser Scaup, Cambridge Reservoir.

## Cambridge Reservoir

The Cambridge Reservoir <<http://ebird.org/ebird/hotspot/L465870>> is about a mile west of Prospect Hill and is almost always worth a quick scan. The deep, southern end is one of the best sites around for diving ducks, grebes, and loons, and the northern end often dries out enough to be productive for shorebirds. Views of just about everything are distant, and a scope is a necessity.

The office parks along the reservoir make for quite a bit of traffic, so it can be difficult to bird during the work week, especially around rush hours. Weekends generally have little traffic, which means it is usually easy to pull over just about anywhere. Land off the road is marked no trespassing, so staying on the road is a requirement.

From the main Prospect Hill parking lot, take a left onto Totten Pond Road heading west and get into the right lane after crossing over Interstate 95. From the north, take Interstate 95 south to Exit 27B–Winter Street. From the south, take Exit 27A–Winter Street Totten Pond Road, take a right off the ramp, and then bear right and loop south on Wyman Street to Winter Street, where you should take a right to head west about a half-mile to the reservoir.



Cambridge Reservoir and Hobbs Brook



Pectoral Sandpiper, Hobbs Brook.

As the reservoir appears on the right, pull over opposite Sylvan Road if it is safe to do so. The rocks often have cormorants, and some of the diving ducks can be found here. If there is too much traffic to pull over along the edge, there is a dirt pulloff on the other side of the road, although you will have to drive some distance to find a safe place to turn around.

Follow the road—which goes across the Hobbs Brook dam at this point—as it bends sharply right and begins to head north along the western shore of the reservoir. A scaup flock often likes this corner in fall, but it can be quite difficult to find a safe vantage point. The trees then block your view for a short distance, but it will eventually open up. The recently added bike lane can make it easier to park and avoid traffic at all but the busiest times. However, do keep an eye out for bikes and joggers and do not drive in the bike lane. If stopping for a minute to scan, pull as close to the guardrail as possible to stay out of as much of the bike lane as you can. If you are going to take some time, it is better to park on the other side of the road, where there is a wider shoulder.

As soon as you can see the water again, pull over. The area in front of the island is the best spot for loons, grebes, and scoters. For several years, Bald Eagles roosted in the big dead tree on the island. The tree has mostly fallen now, and the eagles don't have any single roost but they can be found just about anywhere at any time of year. So far, there has been no sign of nesting, but it is expected sooner or later.

Continue north and pull over and scan wherever something catches your attention. The large flock of Ring-necked Ducks that builds over the fall can be anywhere on the reservoir and often attracts other waterfowl, with more than 30 species recorded. A big flock of coots also often builds up in fall. Terns and Bonaparte's Gulls have occurred in spring and during storms in early fall. Spring can also bring in good numbers of swallows, although they often are too far out to see well. The reservoir does eventually freeze in winter, in which case it's worth scanning the ice for ravens and eagles, especially if a deer carcass appears.



Black-crowned Night-Heron, Hobbes Brook.

Winter Street eventually enters woods, crosses into the town of Lincoln, bends left, and becomes one way. Take a right at the stop sign onto Old County Road, which is about a mile from the dam. If you feel like walking, especially in spring, there is room for a single car to park just after turning. Old County Road is narrow and winding, so be very careful if you decide to stop. My recommendation is either to take the spot at the stop sign or continue about three-quarters of a mile to park by Trapelo Road and walk from there if something is worth scoping. On days with bright sun, viewing can be even more difficult.

After going over two speed bumps, there is a gate just before Trapelo Road and enough room to park on the right. The Ring-neck flock sometimes is found here, and there are often good numbers of dabbling ducks around, mostly American Wigeon and occasionally Gadwall. The edges of the road can hold migrants as well.

Turning right on Trapelo Road will take you back to Route I-95, but you can also continue straight on Old County Road and scan more. About a quarter mile north of Trapelo Road, there is enough room to pull over. With the exception of this one spot, it can be difficult to find a good place to stop on this stretch of road, though fortunately there is very little traffic outside of the afternoon rush hour. Old County Road ends at Route 2 where the only option is to turn right for access to the eastbound lanes. Just before reaching Route 2, there is water on both sides that can be quite low and have shorebirds, but be careful when stopping here.

Across Route 2 is the section of the reservoir referred to as Hobbs Brook <<http://ebird.org/ebird/hotspot/L976923>>. To reach it, take Route 2 west from Exit 28 of Route I-95 and turn right at the top of the hill on Lexington Road. After about 0.1 mile,

bear right to continue heading east on Lexington Road, which becomes Lincoln Street at the town line. The reservoir will soon appear on the right, south side of the road. Either stop carefully right here; or drive a short distance farther, turn around at the first driveway, and park as close to the brush as you can; or drive to the overpass and park where the road widens then walk back. Traffic is not as bad as on Winter Street, but much of it is landscaping trucks, and the road is also popular with bicyclists, so be careful.

Walk along the road and check from several vantage points as birds can hide among the rocks. Peeps, Killdeer, and yellowlegs predominate but just about any shorebird is possible. Herons and egrets can also occur in numbers and American Pipits are frequent in fall. If there is more water and less mud, waterfowl can be of interest. Both Cackling and Greater White-fronted geese have occurred, and teal and Northern Shoveler are fairly regular.

On the north side of the road is a channel that often has Solitary Sandpipers and Green Herons. Also keep an eye on the trees and wires where many warblers, flycatchers, and swallows can perch.

As you continue to travel east on Lexington Road, the first driveway on the left on the north side of the road can be filled with sparrows, and the wooded area east of the houses often has more warblers. On the right, the south side, there is another area of the reservoir that can be filled with shorebirds, although it is very hard to scan without trespassing. Stick your head in at the used path at the concrete blocks on the south side of the road just beyond the houses.

As you near the overpass that carries Route I-95 over Lexington Road, you will have a bit of a view of the water and mud. Besides shorebirds, this area often has ducks. One year, a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was briefly present. The bushes right at the overpass and the woods leading back are very good for warbler flocks at times.

To reach Route 2 westbound, you can return west on Lexington Road. Alternatively, to reach Route 2 eastbound or Route I-95, just continue east on Lexington Road–Lincoln Street. Stay left at the fork and continue on Lincoln Street until you reach Marrett Road–Route 2A. From this intersection, you can either turn left to reach Route I-95, or turn right to follow Route 2A to the intersection with Spring Street, where another right will return you to Route 2.

Both ends of the reservoir are easily accessible and easy to check quickly. There may not be something every time, but conditions can change daily, so frequent visits are rewarding. 🐦

*Jason Forbes is a lifelong resident of Waltham. He'd rather be birding than driving and therefore spends most of his time locally. He is almost at his goal of 300 species within two towns of the Waltham/Lexington line.*

# Fifth Report of the Maine Bird Records Committee

*Trevor B. Persons and Louis R. Bevier*



This beautiful immature male Black-headed Grosbeak, showing its worn and paler brown first-year flight feathers, visited feeders on Monhegan Island May 14-15, 2014. Photograph by Geoff Dennis.

The fifth report of the Maine Bird Records Committee—hereafter ME-BRC, or the committee—details the evaluation of 15 records of 13 species, and includes all decisions made by the committee in 2014. No new species were added to the official state list, which stands at 445 species. Several potential first records for the state are pending. The official list of Maine birds, as well as the list of review species, can be found on the committee's website: <<http://sites.google.com/site/mainebirdrecordscommittee/>>.

The ME-BRC has nine voting members and a nonvoting secretary. Through 2014, seven affirmative votes were needed to accept a record, but starting in 2015 that threshold was increased to eight. Current committee members include Louis Bevier (chair, 2013-2014), Lysle Brinker, Robby Lambert, Becky Marvil (secretary), Pat Moynahan, Trevor Persons (chair), Will Russell, Luke Seitz, Bill Sheehan, and Margaret Viens. Past committee members Kristen Lindquist, Jan Pierson, and Jeff Wells also voted on records presented here, and Doug Hitchcox stepped down as secretary in 2015.

An asterisk (\*) denotes that a written description was provided, and a dagger (†) denotes that a photograph was provided. In the localities, county names are italicized.



This Pink-footed Goose was vocal, giving harsh squawks, when found with a large group of Canada Geese and a few Snow Geese on Collins Pond, Caribou, Maine. It was the first for Aroostook County and fourth for Maine, staying only October 19, 2013. Photograph by Bill Sheehan.

All accepted records were unanimously accepted on the first round of voting unless otherwise indicated.

## RECORDS ACCEPTED



Sagadahoc joined the growing number of counties in Maine with records of Pink-footed Goose when Robin Robinson and her Christmas Bird Count team found this bird on December 14, 2013. It remained one more day. Photograph, December 15, 2013, by Mike Fahay.

### **Pink-footed Goose** (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

**#2013-014:** October 19, 2013, Collins Pond, Caribou, *Aroostook*, Bill Sheehan†. Maine's fourth Pink-footed Goose, and the first for goose-friendly *Aroostook*. **#2013-021:** December 14-15, 2013, Mill Cove, West Bath, *Sagadahoc*, Robin Robinson†, Mike Fahay†. Discovered within a flock of 68 Canada Geese by Robinson and companions during a Christmas Bird Count, Maine's fifth Pink-footed Goose (all since 2009) was relocated by Fahay the next day.



A first for Aroostook County, this Ross's Goose was found September 29, 2013. The caruncles at the base of the bill are especially extensive on this individual. Photograph by Bill Sheehan.

**Ross's Goose** (*Chen rossii*)

**#2013-010:** September 29–October 5, 2013, Limestone, *Aroostook*, Bill Sheehan†. Maine's fifth Ross's Goose, and an overdue first for *Aroostook*, spent a week with up to 1600 Canada Geese at Limestone Mill Pond on the north side of town. There is a novel form of documentation in the form of Google Earth satellite imagery, which captured Sheehan, next to his parked truck, scoping the pond containing one small white dot among hundreds of darker dots: <<https://goo.gl/maps/5yFxA2FyFuP2>>.

**Barnacle Goose** (*Branta leucopsis*)

**#2013-019:** October 29, 2013, Limestone, *Aroostook*, Tanya Byram†. Briefly observed with Canada Geese at the Mill Pond in Limestone.

**Tufted Duck** (*Aythya fuligula*)

**#2014-002:** April 6, 2014, Bowdoinham, *Sagadahoc*, Mike Fahay\*†. Adult male seen with Ring-necked Ducks and a Greater Scaup in Merrymeeting Bay.

**Brown Booby** (*Sula leucogaster*)

**#2013-005:** July 16, 2013, Eastern Egg Rock, *Knox*, Kate MacNamee\*†. Maine's second Brown Booby, a juvenile, was found roosting on rocks with Double-crested Cormorants and flew off after about 20 minutes.



Occurrences of Brown Booby in New England have increased dramatically in recent years. Maine's second, a juvenile, was found on the south side of Eastern Egg Rock by one of Project Puffin's seasonal biologists on July 16, 2013. Photograph by Kate MacNamee.





**Swallow-tailed Kite** (*Elanoides forficatus*)

**#2014-003:** May 7, 2014. Brunswick and Pownal, *Cumberland*, Lois Gerke†, Katrina Fenton. Photographed by Gerke in Brunswick, undoubtedly the same bird was seen later in the day from the nearby Bradbury Mountain hawkwatch in Pownal.

**Northern Lapwing** (*Vanellus vanellus*)

**#2014-001:** April 4-5, 2014, Cape Elizabeth, *Cumberland*, Lysle Brinker†, Doug Hitchcox†, Peter Vickery†, many observers. Maine's fourth Northern Lapwing, discovered in a farm field by Brinker, may have lingered from an incursion of lapwings into eastern North America over the winter of 2012–2013.

Wing tip pattern and primary formula in this and other photos suggest this Northern Lapwing was an immature female (Meissner et al. 2013). Maine's fourth, it was present April 4 to 5, 2014. (Photograph by Peter Vickery.)

**Ash-throated Flycatcher** (*Myiarchus cinerascens*)

**#2013-018:** October 21, 2013, Monhegan Island, *Lincoln*, Travis Mazerall\*†. Monhegan's second Ash-throated Flycatcher was an apparent immature beginning its first prebasic molt.

**Bell's Vireo** (*Vireo bellii*)

**#2013-015:** October 22, 2013, Bailey Island, Harpswell, *Cumberland*, Derek Lovitch\*, Jeanette Lovitch. First round (8-1). Although they were unable to get photographs, the detailed description presented in Lovitch's blog convinced most to accept the report as Maine's fourth record of Bell's Vireo.

**Hermit Warbler** (*Setophaga occidentalis*)

**#2013-020:** November 18–December 13, 2013, Harpswell, *Cumberland*. Charlotte Hewson†, Derek Lovitch†. Maine's second Hermit Warbler, an apparent immature female, frequented a Cundy's Harbor feeding station for nearly a month. Originally reported as a Black-throated Green Warbler, the correct identification was not made until two days before it was last seen, and privacy



Maine's second Hermit Warbler was an immature female present from November 18 to December 13, 2013. Photograph by Charlotte Hewson taken December 12, 2013.



An immature Ash-throated Flycatcher was found on Monhegan Island October 21, 2013. There are many fewer records of this species before early November in the Northeast, except in 2011 when several occurred in a similar time-frame as this bird. A freshly molted in formative central rectrix shows well. Photograph by Travis Mazerall.

concerns for local residents resulted in a belated report of its true identity.

**Black-headed Grosbeak** (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*)

**#2014-004:** May 14-15, 2014, Monhegan Island, Lincoln, Malcolm Burson\*, Geoff Dennis†. Adult male photographed at Donna Cundy's feeding station. One amazing photo included a continuing male Painted Bunting in the background!

### RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

**Mississippi Kite** (*Ictinia mississippiensis*)

**#2014-005:** May 15, 2014, Bradbury Mountain, Pownal, *Cumberland*. First round (2-7). Although likely correctly identified, this report from the Bradbury Mountain hawkwatch lacked details.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove** (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

**#2013-009:** June 7, 2013, Searsport, *Waldo*. Second round (0-9). The details in the written report did not eliminate the possibility of domestic turtle-dove.

**Bell's Vireo** (*Vireo bellii*)

**#2013-016:** October 30, 2013, Phippsburg, *Sagadahoc*. First round (1-8). Although most felt the description of this briefly observed bird was consistent with Bell's Vireo, the possibility of other species could not be eliminated.

### CORRECTIONS

In the previous ME-BRC report (Persons et al. 2015) the initial date for the Little Egret #2012-013 was incorrectly given as July 8 when it should have read August 8. The town and county for record Bridled Tern #2011-006 was incorrectly given as Stratton Island, Old Orchard Beach, *Cumberland*. Stratton Island is actually within the jurisdiction of Saco, *York*. Citations to Stratton Island in previous reports have also incorrectly ascribed it to Old Orchard Beach: Yellow-nosed Albatross #2006-005 and Fork-tailed Flycatcher #2006-007 (Sheehan and Vickery 2007), the latter record mistakenly published again in Sheehan and Vickery 2009a.

Several records in previous reports have placed Seal Island in Criehaven Township, *Knox*, but the island is in the jurisdiction of Vinalhaven, *Knox*: Yellow-nosed Albatross #2008-007 in Sheehan and Vickery 2009b; Red-billed Tropicbird #2005-006,

#2006-013, #2007-005 in Sheehan and Vickery 2007, 2009a, 2009b; and Ash-throated Flycatcher #2007-007 in Sheehan and Vickery 2009b.

The Black-browed Albatross #1978-001 at Lumbo Ledge was published (Persons et al. 2015) as being in *Sagadahoc* but the ledge is actually in *Cumberland*.

The Yellow-billed Loon #2010-013 was published (Persons et al. 2015) as offshore Portland, but it was more precisely 7.3 miles off Cape Elizabeth, *Cumberland* (the headland and town by that name).

Last, a record number was duplicated for two different records, with #2005-007 given to a Plumbeous Vireo at Matinicus Rock (Sheehan and Vickery 2009a) and an Eared Grebe at Roque Bluffs (Persons et al. 2015). The Eared Grebe has been assigned record #2005-008. 🐦

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*The authors can be reached at the following addresses: Trevor Persons, 206 Bigelow Hill Road, Norridgewock, Maine 04957, email: <trevor.persons@nau.edu>; Louis Bevier, 25 Great Meadow Lane, Fairfield, Maine 04937, email: <lrbavier@colby.edu>.*

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Edith F. Andrews:

## Venerable, Influential, Inspirational, and Beloved

*Wayne R. Petersen*



Edith with the Bausch +Lomb scope—eventually held to the tripod with pipe strapping—that her husband Clint bought, in a signature departure from his usual frugality, shortly after they were married in 1953. Photograph by Beverly Hall.

Edith Folger (later Andrews) entered the world in New Jersey on October 29, 1915. For the sake of context, 1915 was three years before the end of World War I and also three years ahead of the signing of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The excesses of market hunting were still in their final throes when Edith was born, and the last Nantucket occurrence of the now extinct Eskimo Curlew was less than 20 years previous. Fortunately, in the years following Edith’s birth, a general interest in birds and ornithology was growing exponentially, and with this growth, so too was Edith’s interest, and eventually her influence.

The daughter of an engineer and a teacher, Edith had a curiosity about all things living that began at an early age. But it wasn’t until high school, when she was captivated by a Black-throated Green Warbler that she identified from a picture in a book about birds, that her passion for birds began. Following her graduation from Pennsylvania State University in 1938, a family excursion brought Edith to Nantucket for the first time. It was then, from Folger Hill—an island feature whose name derived

from her family name—that she first observed a Northern Harrier and visited the home where astronomer Maria Mitchell was born in 1818. This initial exposure to the life of Maria Mitchell was to have lasting ramifications for Edith.

With a newly minted degree from Penn State, Edith decided to take a course in museum work at the Buffalo Museum of Science, which was then under the direction of Chauncey Depew. Thanks to Depew's connection with Margaret Davis, president of the Maria Mitchell Association at the time, Edith landed a summer job teaching nature classes to children there. When Nantucket High School's science teacher was drafted on the heels of the United States' entry into World War II, Edith was offered a job teaching high school biology, chemistry, and physics. Once she became a year-round resident of Nantucket, her interest in the island's birdlife grew stronger. By 1942, Edith assumed a seminal role in organizing the island's first bird club, an entity that quickly added three new species to the Nantucket bird list, including the first specimen record of Scarlet Tanager for the island.



Following World War II, Edith entered graduate school at Cornell University where she received a Master's Degree in Biology, specializing in ornithology under the great Arthur A. Allen, founder of the world renowned Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Upon completion of her graduate degree, she resumed her involvement with the Maria Mitchell Association. Her careful bird recordkeeping soon resulted in an invitation from the prominent Harvard University ornithologist, Ludlow Griscom, to co-author *The Birds of Nantucket* in 1948.

Edith banding at Mothball Pines, Nantucket. Photograph from the Collection of Edith Folger Andrews.

While working with Griscom on *The Birds of Nantucket*, during the academic year she also taught biology and nature study at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. But in 1953, she returned to Nantucket for good in order to marry her long-time sweetheart, Clinton Andrews—a Nantucket native, commercial fisherman, and outstanding field naturalist. One of the young couple's first joint projects was the initiation of the Nantucket Christmas Bird Count, an annual event Edith compiled for many years and which is still in existence today.

In 1963, Edith and her family relocated to the University of Massachusetts Nantucket Field Station. Here the Andrews were able to influence and share their

combined expertise with legions of visiting UMass students through the years. They also hosted and rehabilitated a cadre of orphaned or injured birds including such well-known celebrities as Owlbert the Barn Owl, Mycroft the meadowlark, and a series of murrelets known as Ptolemy One, Two, and Three.

About the time that Edith moved to the UMass Field Station, she began banding birds in earnest. In 1973, she officially became the Maria Mitchell Association's staff ornithologist, although she switched back and forth between staff ornithologist and curator of birds for about a decade. Eventually the Maria Mitchell Association's bird collection, under Edith's curatorship, was moved to Hinchman House; the collection now contains over 1500 specimens and is officially named the Edith F. Andrews Ornithology Collection.

She also served as Curator of the Mitchell House for several terms totaling approximately 20 years. No matter what position she held at the Maria Mitchell Association, she worked on birds the entire time she was involved with the organization, from the 1940s through the 2000s.

In the early 1980s, Edith rented a cottage in the Mothball Pines near Cisco Beach for the purpose of maintaining a bird banding station—something she did for many years thereafter. At the time of her passing, Edith had banded more than 55,000 birds, including individuals she banded at her Madaket home. The Nantucket banding station is also one of more than 400 banding stations all over the country that are part of a national Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) network. Because many of the birds that Edith banded carried ticks, she routinely collected these for the Harvard School of Public Health's Lyme disease research program. Not surprisingly, among the thousands of birds that passed through Edith's hands were a number of local rarities. Few were more unusual than the first Allen's Hummingbird ever to be recorded in eastern North America away from the Gulf of Mexico in 1988.

Through her many years of educating, mentoring, and inspiring beginning and expert birders alike, Edith's insistence on precision in all things ornithological, her warm personality, her engaging laugh, and her gentle demeanor will never be forgotten by all who were privileged to know her. Her extraordinary accomplishments were professionally recognized when she received Mass Audubon's most prestigious award—the Allen H. Morgan Award—in 1994, the Maria Mitchell Association's Women in Science Award, and admission as an Honorary Member into the Nuttall Ornithological Club in 2000—the only woman to be so recognized.

Without a doubt, many outstanding Massachusetts birders have been indebted to Edith Andrews and her numerous contributions. Among these in no particular order are Simon Perkins, Dick Veit, Vern Laux, Edie Ray, Steve Arena, Craig Jackson, Marcia Litchfield, Chris Floyd, Ken Blackshaw, Johnnie Fisk, John Dennis, Ginger Bladen, Larry Jodrey, Jerry Soucy, and certainly a host of others.

Edith, may the wind always be beneath your wings! 🐦

Edith F. Andrews:

October 29, 1915 – October 31, 2015

*Ginger Andrews*



Edith Andrews in Nantucket's State Forest reaching into a cavity containing recently hatched Saw-whet Owls. Photograph by Beverly Hall.

You have to go and look.

If you don't look, you don't see.

– Edith Andrews

Although I grew up completely immersed in birds, I didn't actually become a birder until about ten or eleven years ago. Mom finally got me hooked while I was in what I called the pre-emptive chauffeuring stage—when her sight began to fail and she was looking through, rather than over, the steering wheel of her car. So all those birders whose kids aren't into it, take hope. It took Edith 50 years, but she finally really set the hook!

With sadness for her passing and gratitude for so many years of her company, I want to share a few things about Edith that her birding friends and colleagues might not know.

Edith had many names in her lifetime: “Mom” to me; “Jean” to her family, gone long before her; and “Nan” to many. Doc Allen, at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, christened her “Nan” because she talked so much about NANTucket.

Edith was a smoker for more than 25 years; she quit when the truth came out about cigarettes, and she never smoked at the Field Station.

During World War II, Edith was a spotter, watching for enemy planes from the windmill. She and her friend Grace Brown Gardner once reported the sound of a distant engine; it turned out to be a gas-powered lawnmower, an unusual luxury at the time.

My mother enjoyed target shooting, and was better at it than my father, who hunted to feed the family during the Depression.

As the daughter of a member of the Masonic lodge she belonged to the Order of the Eastern Star, where she took the part of Esther.

She loved going to the theatre, particularly musicals.

She was a good artist, making field sketches and occasionally painting.

Edith loved Nantucket as she loved birds. Whether they were alive or dead, injured or in distant flight, her motto was, “I never refuse a bird.” So many birds passed through her hands, including the Red-throated Loon that was one of my father’s courting gifts while she was preparing study skins at Cornell. It is still in the collection at the Maria Mitchell Association. And some 55,000 birds fell into her nets and were tagged with a small aluminum bracelet from the Bird Banding Office of United States Department of the Interior, aka “U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.”

Edith was a woman of strong passions; we all remember her enthusiasm, her love of life, her sheer excitement at a good bird—alive OR dead—a blooming plant, a butterfly, and the number of inflections she could give the word: “Really?”

My mother had a temper, though it was well controlled in public. Still, she found unique ways of expressing her disapproval. I remember once some people had caught an Evening Grosbeak and were keeping it as a pet. They proudly displayed it to us in a glass box so small it couldn’t even open its wings—this was before animal cruelty laws were enforced—and she pursed her mouth in distaste and said, “Well, can I have it for a specimen when it dies?” My father tried to hustle us out of there in a hurry.

Edith was the first and perhaps the only person on Nantucket (those were the John Birch Society days) to have a “Ban DDT” bumper sticker—bright orange with a skull and crossbones—proudly displayed on her car.

Edith was a hard scientist; she was stickler for details. She cared as lovingly for Maria Mitchell’s antiques as she did for living birds.

Many of these lived in the house with us. Once a garden club lady was visiting when a tern that was spending the winter with us instead of in Tierra del Fuego let loose a good-sized dropping on the Oriental rug. “Doesn’t that, er, BOTHER you,



Edith?” the woman wanted to know. “Oh, no, it comes right up with the vacuum cleaner when it dries,” was the surprised reply. “Just a little whitewash.”

In so long and full a life there are always sorrows as well as joys. Edith’s early life was unhappy in many ways, and Nantucket in the 1950s was a hard place to earn a living. It was a big adjustment, after being on the faculty of a university, to become a housewife. But no matter what was going on, she always found it uplifting to see a bird. She was always ready to go out and look; “If you don’t look,” she would always say, “you don’t see.” Edith saw a lot. And she inspired others to look as well. And she kept on looking, retaining her interest almost to the end; she saw her last life bird, a Calliope Hummingbird, at age 98.

With great age there are many adjustments. Physical abilities diminish. There’s the transition from cane, to walker, to chair. The loss of hearing, diminishing vision, conversation condensed to a single word. But as energy ebbs and the body closes down, love remains, to the last breath. And after the last breath has been taken, that love still exists, in memory, our inspiration. 🐦

**Ginger Andrews** is Edith Andrews’ daughter. Ginger has set up two memorial funds in Edith’s name: the Edith Andrews Ornithology Scholarship Fund and the Edith Andrews Fund for Natural History and Ecology to support several local charities in their efforts to preserve, protect, and study Nantucket’s natural world. Both are administered through the Community Foundation for Nantucket: <<https://cfnan.org>> To donate, click on the “give now” button, select “select a fund” and Edith’s funds will appear in the list.



LEAST TERNS BY SANDY SELESKY

# Ronnie Donovan: The Birds Were Where He Found Them

*Paul F. Fitzgerald*



Ronnie once saw two Boreal Owls in the same winter. Photograph by Greg Schechter ([CC BY 2.0](#)).

On November 12, 2015, our birding community lost one of its least conspicuous and most legendary figures. Ronnie Donovan kept a low profile but he was highly regarded for his extraordinary skill as a birder, for his congenial nature, and for his preternatural gift for finding exceptional birds in unlikely places. I have no mental image of Ronnie birding in Mount Auburn Cemetery in May but I can picture him skulking for rails in the Neponset marshes during a flood tide in October, sighting pelagics from the upper deck of a fishing charter in the Gulf of Maine, canoeing out to South Monomoy Island (back when you could still get away with camping on the beach), and compiling one of the most awe-inspiring yard lists of all time from his kitchen window on East 8<sup>th</sup> Street in South Boston.

He liked to say “the birds are where you find them,” a motto he epitomized. For decades, Ronnie seemed to routinely find great birds where no one else was looking: Bar-tailed Godwit in Southie’s Joe Moakley Park, Gyrfalcon on the Boston Design Center, Black Rail (and many Yellow Rails) in the suburban marshes of the South Shore, Ash-throated Flycatcher behind the veteran’s post at Squaw Rock in Quincy, Henslow’s Sparrow at Pope John Paul Park in Dorchester, Boreal Chickadee along the Neponset River, and not one but two Boreal Owls in the same winter—one on Long Island, and the other in his own driveway! Over the course of one fall migration, Ronnie tallied thirty different species of shorebirds in the littered mud flats, parking lots, and construction sites of Squantum. Some of these highlights were collaborative efforts with his longtime—and equally low profile—birding companion, Mike

McWade, but even when it came to solo sightings, Ronnie's word and credibility were unimpeachable.

Ronnie had a superhuman capacity for tolerating discomfort; he seemed oblivious to rain, extreme cold, and waist deep marsh water. Once, decades ago, I was birding with Ronnie and a few others one October day in the Cedar Grove Cemetery in Dorchester. In the failing afternoon light it began to rain, a cold, raw, miserable rain, and everybody headed for their cars—except for Ronnie. He encouraged me to stay a while longer, saying he often had good luck under such conditions. Five minutes later, he showed me my life Clay-colored Sparrow by the MBTA trolley tracks.

Ronnie infrequently chased birds reported by others, and rarely reported his own sightings to more than a select few. He had no ego and little need for validation when it came to birding. I think that was his secret; it's as if the birds sensed it. His friend Frank Desisto recalls a time they were birding along the Neponset River: "Ronnie was the stillest birder ever, he looked like an old bent tree stump, and this Cooper's Hawk just flew in and landed on his shoulder. Ronnie never even flinched and the bird perched there for a while before taking off again."

For Ronnie, birding was its own reward. He loved birds and their constancy. "No matter what else is going on in my life," he once told me, "the birds are always there, like old friends." He was an old-school naturalist at heart, as knowledgeable about reptiles, marine biology, even Cambrian fossils, as he was about birds. Two of his heroes were paleontologist Charles Walcott and Charles Darwin. Ronnie once confessed that he didn't really appreciate *On the Origin of Species* until the third time he read it. I didn't have the heart to tell him I'd barely managed to slug my way through the first chapter. One of his mantras when birding was, "What you don't see can be just as interesting as what you do see." No twitcher would ever utter such a thing.

If there's a takeaway from Ronnie's example, from his life as a birder, it is simply this: put the birds first, enjoy and study them without an agenda or prejudice, stick to your patch, and the birds will be where you find them. 🐦

*Editor's Note: The following article by Simon Perkins about Ronnie Donovan's remarkable back yard appeared in Mass Audubon's Sanctuary magazine in the fall of 2004, and is reprinted here with permission.*

## Ronnie's Back Yard

*Simon Perkins*

For years a man named Ronnie Donovan had been calling me about some of the more extraordinary birds that he'd seen in his backyard—Long-eared Owl, Blue Grosbeak, Summer Tanager, Dickcissel, Clay-colored Sparrow, Townsend's Warbler, MacGillivray's Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, a Yellow Warbler in January (the first and still-only midwinter record for the state), and, the real jaw-dropper, a Boreal Owl, a very rare miniature visitor from the northern spruce forests of Canada.

What made the boreal owl transcendent was the fact that it was the second one Ronnie had found in less than a week. He found the first one while birding on Long Island in Boston Harbor during the No-name Storm (the “Perfect Storm”) in late October 1991. He first saw it on October 28, and he relocated it at the same daytime roost on each of the next two days. But, as though that weren’t enough, the following week he found another or the same individual in the only tree over his driveway!

Ronnie’s yard list is even more astonishing considering that virtually all these species have been seen from his kitchen window in an inner-city yard in South Boston and that the “habitat” in the yard itself contains more concrete than plants. So, what is it about Ronnie’s yard? First of all, Ronnie lives there. I’ve spent many hours trying to figure out what it is that makes a top-flight birder; and, as far as I can tell, like any vocation or avocation, it has more to do with concentration, intensity, passion, a sense of awareness, and a deep desire to learn than with physical attributes such as keen visual acuity. Ronnie probably has all of these because, wherever he is, he always finds birds, not only in his yard but also around his neighborhood. Some of Ronnie’s home turf includes Carson Beach in Southie, the harbor islands (especially Long Island), and the marshes along the Neponset River in Dorchester. His list of avian discoveries from these localities is nearly as impressive as his yard list: Bar-tailed Godwit, Yellow Rail, Mew Gull, and a pair of Manx Shearwaters apparently prospecting for nest sites within a hundred yards of Carson Beach.

But, as good as Ronnie is, as the saying goes, no one can squeeze blood out of a rock. Ronnie’s yard may be mostly concrete, but it’s much more than the proverbial rock. Clearly, something or some combination of things sets his yard apart. First of all, it’s coastally located: just up the hill from Carson Beach on Boston Harbor.

The ocean acts as a barrier to most land birds because, if they can, they do whatever it takes to avoid flying over open sea. Because the prevailing winds in most of the United States blow from the west, many species, especially those that migrate long distances, tend to be deflected eastward during the course of their flights, and many of those that pass through New England eventually bump up against the coast. This results in migrants becoming more concentrated along the shore than they would be farther inland.

Secondly, Ronnie’s yard backs up on a small but well-vegetated vacant lot, an exception in this highly residential neighborhood. From a bird’s perspective, a patch of green within a large expanse of buildings and pavement represents an island—an oasis in an otherwise inhospitable desert.

Thirdly, the lot is on a south-facing slope. This means that this tiny patch of green is not only protected from any cold winds that blow from the north but also angled toward the sun to receive more solar radiation. This exposure creates a relatively warm and attractive microclimate. Of course, the many pounds of birdseed that Ronnie casts into his yard play a part too, but that’s just the table setting.

There are other productive patches of habitat along the coast of Massachusetts that attract birds—for example, Plum Island in Newburyport, Eastern Point in Gloucester, Marblehead Neck in Marblehead, the Thicket in Nahant—but, per square foot, Ronnie’s yard beats them all. 🐦

# The Lists and the Lister of Wolf Trap Hill Farm

*Kathleen “Betty” S. Anderson*



Betty Anderson (right) receives Mass Wildlife’s Francis W. Sargent Conservation Award on September 10, 2007. With Mary Griffin (left), Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game. Photograph by Wayne R. Petersen.

## **The Making of a List-keeping Birder**

My parents were country people. My maternal grandparents were pioneer cattle ranchers in Montana, and my mother grew up in a log house along the Big Elk River in the foothills of the Crazy Mountains in south-central Montana. Wolves, coyotes, elk, antelope, and mountain lions, along with deer, jackrabbits, badgers, and smaller critters, all were part of her childhood.

My father grew up near Boston, Massachusetts, but loved the outdoors from childhood; he was an excellent naturalist. One of his vivid memories as a young man was having climbed Mount Katahdin in Maine for the first time and seeing his first caribou standing on the peak. He was homesteading in southwestern Colorado when he became one of the first forest rangers to be appointed to the newly founded United States Forest Service. He spent the next 15 years working for the Forest Service, during which time he met Gifford Pinchot, Ferdinand Silcox, and President Theodore Roosevelt—the three men responsible for its establishment. When I was a child, it seemed to me that my father knew the names of and information about every plant, animal, bird, and reptile we ever saw.



Wolf Trap Hill and the circa-1735 house photographed in 1881. Photograph courtesy of Kathleen Brissette.

My youngest brother, my sister, and I grew up on 17 acres of gardens, orchards, and cranberry bogs on a large freshwater lake in Massachusetts. My father and our eldest half-brother built us a fine clay tennis court, my father built a rowboat, and Brad—that beloved half-brother—found us a well-used but sturdy sailboat. What a childhood—swimming, sailing, and tennis in summer, and ice-skating and bonfires for hotdogs in winter. It was only many years later that we realized we had so much, for we were not wealthy. But build a better mousetrap and they will come. All of our school friends wanted to share our plenty. Only years later did we realize some people called our home “the country club of Carver.”

As often as our parents could manage it, we drove out west in summer, camping all the way—a matter of economies, I know now. The main destination was our grandparents’ ranch in Montana. Mother grew up there in a family of eight children. My grandparents had four children of their own and raised another four motherless children—showing no favoritism—providing my generation with many aunts and uncles and even more cousins. I have wonderful memories of horseback riding, cattle drives, picnics in Big Timber Canyon, fishing in the creek, butter churning, and dishwashing that seemed to go on for hours. The ranch was a busy place and in the summer all of the children our grandparents had raised came and went. I still marvel that our seemingly tireless grandparents welcomed us all.

My interest in birds kept growing with every year since before I can remember. I still can recall the first trip west when I saw my first adult Red-headed Woodpecker on



The circa-1735 house as it appeared on January 1, 2016. Photograph by Wayne R. Petersen.

a roadside fence post in Iowa. The sighting went into a little trip notebook that I was keeping, followed by those big black and white magpies and Western Meadowlarks with their beautiful song.

The many new birds in that notebook was the spur I needed to hunt for every bird I could find on our home property, and soon I was adventuring into every bit of woodland within walking distance. The list kept growing. My father encouraged me and even as busy as he was, he took me to places such as Plymouth Beach, Manomet Point, and the Cape Cod Canal and the list grew longer. My father had an old pair of 4x field glasses that one of his uncles had carried during the Civil War. As I grew into my teens and became seriously interested in birds, I was permitted to use those glasses. We didn't travel every summer, but in the years we didn't head west, we often spent several days camping in the three northern New England states. The well-loved field glasses were always with me and my bird list was growing.

Years went by, I grew up, married my husband Paul, and lived in Worcester, Massachusetts; Poplar and Roundup, Montana; and moved back to Middleborough, Massachusetts. We had been living in Montana until Paul's mother's health problems convinced him we should return to Massachusetts, where a job was waiting for him. We settled into an apartment in Middleborough, his hometown. Apartment living in "downtown" Middleborough was too noisy and confining after the wide open spaces of Big Sky Country. We turned to Paul's uncle, a realtor, who was soon showing us small houses on small lots uptown or small houses on larger lots along Route 28, ignoring my continuing complaint that we wanted a place in the country.

Eventually he gave in: “Okay, kids, I’ll show you a place in that country! I’ve had it listed for two years but no one will ever buy a place like that!”

We left town, crossed Route 44 and headed north on Thompson Street, turning



Paul Anderson at Wolf Trap Hill Farm in the 1950s. Photograph courtesy of Kathleen Brissette.

right onto a long gravel road, right onto a shorter gravel road, then down a long unpaved driveway with overgrown pastures on either side. Finally, at the end of the lane was a little old Cape Cod house with weathered gray shingles. Even before we entered the house, we knew the location was just what we were looking for. The house had new wallpaper on the first floor, a relatively modern kitchen, a living room with a fireplace, a bathroom, and a large bedroom with a small room beside it, just right for two-year-old Tim. Two small bedrooms were tucked under the eaves at the top of a steep narrow staircase. Naïve as we were, the water pump and furnace in the cellar received only casual glances. Old houses always conceal surprises, but we knew we had found the right place for us.

According to the official history of Middleborough, Massachusetts, the hill just north of our house is called Wolf Trap Hill because early settlers, having problems with wolves that killed their sheep, dug a deep trench across the Indian trail that connected Patuxet (Plymouth) with Nemasket (Middleborough). The legend states that the morning after the trench was dug, they found an Indian at one end and a wolf at the other end—both alive, as implausible as that seems to me. What else could we call our new home but Wolf Trap Hill Farm?

When Paul and I and our two-year-old son moved into the circa-1735 farm house on November 30, 1950, I would not have believed that I would still be living here 65 years later in 2015. At the time, I still hoped I could convince Paul to return to my beloved Montana where I was born. Obviously I failed. I’ve lost Paul, and our two children are married and living in homes of their own. In 2015, Wolf Trap Hill Farm remains an important part of my life. I only occasionally think of living permanently in Montana.

As we were carrying in our few possessions with the help of my brother and brother-in-law that cold November day, I noticed a junco in the lilacs and decided to make a note of it and any other birds I saw while we were living here.

### **Biodiversity at Wolf Trap Hill**

The days and years flew by. We purchased a large wood lot that abutted our 27 acres, then bought 10 additional acres of the adjoining Little Cedar Swamp, bringing





Betty with visitors. Photograph by Kathleen Brissette.

our total to 104 acres. When the Wildlands Trust of southeastern Massachusetts began to acquire Little Cedar Swamp, I added my 10 acres to their acquisitions, leaving Wolf Trap Hill Farm with 94 acres of gardens, pastures, and a woodland of white pines, white oaks, red maples, and a variety of other trees and shrubs. The old stone walls that form squares back in the woods prove that the land had been cleared historically and was once a self-sufficient little farm.

Beginning with that junco, I kept track of every living critter I could identify on Wolf Trap Hill Farm, not just birds but also mammals, amphibians, reptiles, insects, plants—anything I was certain I was naming correctly. And the lists keep growing, categorized by date and place.

The most unusual mammal on the list so far is moose. I didn't exactly see the moose, but my daughter Kathleen found some scat one day that neither of us recognized. I bagged it and brought it to the next meeting of the advisory board of the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, where other members identified it for me as moose scat.

I'm predicting—hoping—that black bear will be the next mammal, because they are increasing all over Massachusetts and spreading into the southeastern part of the Commonwealth. I'm not sure I want to be alone far back in the woods when I see my

first bear. Perhaps I'll see one from the kitchen window some morning as I glance at the birdfeeders.

My most unusual amphibian is a four-toed salamander that I found under sphagnum moss in the Atlantic white cedar swamp. My most recent addition, seen on July 20, 2015, is a tiny butterfly with the imposing name of tawny emperor.

The fanciest, least-expected bird landed on my list on July 8, 2014, as I was sitting out on the lawn with binoculars on my lap—luckily for me—when a shadow passed over. I glanced up to see an all black raptor gliding down across the lawn near me to perch in a white pine along the driveway. We don't have any all black buteos in Massachusetts. My first thought was, "What in hell is that?" I kept my binoculars on it until it lifted off to fly west across the pastures and out of sight. Then I dashed for the field guide on the kitchen table. There was nothing it could be but a Zone-tailed Hawk, "rare in southern California and southern Texas" according to the National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America! I could hardly believe what I had seen. And I still wonder if even my good friend Wayne Petersen would have believed me if anyone but David Ludlow had not been driving through North Carver near the intersection of Route 58 and Route 44 when he saw a large black buteo over the highway. He had already decided that it had to be a Zonetail before he heard about my sighting. We later figured he had probably seen it about 15 minutes earlier, flying northwest toward East Middleborough, which brought it over Wolf Trap Hill.

### **My Wolf Trap Hill List**

The list that began with one junco now stands at:

35 mammals out of circa 50 land mammals known for Massachusetts, approximately three-quarters

193 birds out of approximately 500 known birds of Massachusetts, about two-fifths

25 herps (reptiles and amphibians) out of 46 known for Massachusetts, more than half

47 butterflies of 103 known for Massachusetts, almost half

30 dragonflies of 106 of Massachusetts, over one-fifth

I am all too aware that this is bragging on my part, but my hope is that it may encourage some of the rest of you to look more closely at your "patch," however large or small it may be. You might not find a moose or a Zone-tailed Hawk—my "biggies" so far—but you will find your own special birds and other creatures.

Every day is a gift, and some of the dearest are the nearest. 🐦

***Kathleen "Betty" S. Anderson** was the ornithologist at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Encephalitis Field Station for 11 years. She left to join the Manomet Bird Observatory (now Manomet, Inc.) as the Founding Director, a position she held for fifteen years. She currently chairs the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Advisory Committee. Betty continues to research the biodiversity at Wolf Trap Hill Farm.*

## BIRD SPECIES SEEN AT WOLF TRAP HILL [11/30/1950 TO 6/27/2015]

22 Winter Street, Middleborough, Massachusetts 02346 (Plymouth County)

- Loons**  
Common Loon
- Cormorants**  
Great Cormorant  
Double-crested Cormorant
- Ducks, Geese, Swans**  
Mute Swan  
Snow Goose  
Canada Goose  
Wood Duck  
Mallard  
American Black Duck  
Blue-winged Teal  
Common Goldeneye  
Hooded Merganser  
Common Merganser
- Hérons, Egrets, and Bitterns**  
Little Blue Heron  
Great Blue Heron  
Green Heron  
Black-crowned Night Heron  
American Bittern
- Ibis and Spoonbills**  
Glossy Ibis
- New World Vultures**  
Black Vulture  
Turkey Vulture
- Hawks, Eagles, and Kites**  
Osprey  
Bald Eagle  
Northern Harrier  
Sharp-shinned Hawk  
Cooper's Hawk  
Northern Goshawk  
Red-shouldered Hawk  
Broad-winged Hawk  
Red-tailed Hawk  
Rough-legged Hawk  
Zone-tailed Hawk  
Golden Eagle
- Falcons and Caracaras**  
American Kestrel  
Merlin  
Peregrine Falcon
- Pheasants, Grouse, Quail, Turkeys**  
Ring-necked Pheasant  
Ruffed Grouse  
Northern Bobwhite  
Wild Turkey
- Rails and Coots**  
Virginia Rail
- Sandpipers**  
Spotted Sandpiper  
Solitary Sandpiper  
Greater Yellowlegs  
Lesser Yellowlegs  
Upland Sandpiper  
Least Sandpiper  
American Woodcock
- Plovers and Lapwings**  
Black-bellied Plover  
Killdeer
- Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers**  
Ring-billed Gull  
Great Black-backed Gull  
Herring Gull  
Iceland Gull  
Common Tern  
Caspian Tern
- Pigeons and Doves**  
Rock Pigeon  
Eurasian Collared Dove  
Mourning Dove
- Parrots**  
Monk Parakeet
- New World Cuckoos**  
Black-billed Cuckoo  
Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- Owls**  
Eastern Screech Owl  
Great Horned Owl  
Barred Owl  
Northern Saw-whet Owl  
Long-eared Owl
- Nightjars**  
Common Nighthawk  
Whip-poor-will
- Swifts**  
Chimney Swift
- Hummingbirds**  
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
- Kingfishers**  
Belted Kingfisher
- Woodpeckers**  
Red-headed Woodpecker  
Red-bellied Woodpecker  
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker  
Downy Woodpecker  
Hairy Woodpecker  
Northern Flicker  
Pileated Woodpecker
- Tyrant Flycatchers**  
Olive-sided Flycatcher  
Eastern Wood Pewee  
Acadian Flycatcher  
Least Flycatcher  
Eastern Phoebe  
Great Crested Flycatcher  
Eastern Kingbird
- Crows and Jays**  
Blue Jay  
American Crow  
Fish Crow  
Common Raven
- Vireos and Allies**  
White-eyed Vireo  
Blue-headed Vireo  
Yellow-throated Vireo  
Philadelphia Vireo
- Red-eyed Vireo
- Shrikes**  
Northern Shrike
- Waxwings and Silky-Flycatchers**  
Cedar Waxwing
- Thrushes**  
Eastern Bluebird  
Veery  
Swainson's Thrush  
Gray-cheeked Thrush  
Hermit Thrush  
Wood Thrush  
American Robin
- Mockingbirds and Thrashers**  
Gray Catbird  
Northern Mockingbird  
Brown Thrasher
- Starlings**  
European Starling
- Nuthatches**  
Red-breasted Nuthatch  
White-breasted Nuthatch
- Creepers**  
Brown Creeper
- Wrens**  
Carolina Wren  
Winter Wren  
House Wren
- Gnatcatchers**  
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
- Swallows**  
Tree Swallow  
Purple Martin  
Northern Rough-winged Swallow  
Bank Swallow  
Barn Swallow
- Kinglets**  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
Golden-crowned Kinglet
- Chickadees and Tits**  
Black-capped Chickadee  
Boreal Chickadee  
Tufted Titmouse
- Old World Sparrows**  
House Sparrow
- Siskins, Crossbills, and Allies**  
Pine Siskin  
American Goldfinch  
Common Redpoll  
Purple Finch  
House Finch  
Pine Grosbeak  
White-winged Crossbill  
Evening Grosbeak
- New World Warblers**  
Blue-winged Warbler  
Golden-winged Warbler  
Tennessee Warbler  
Orange-crowned Warbler
- Nashville Warbler  
Northern Parula  
Yellow Warbler  
Chestnut-sided Warbler  
Magnolia Warbler  
Cape May Warbler  
Black-throated Blue Warbler  
Yellow-rumped Warbler  
Black-throated Green Warbler  
Blackburnian Warbler  
Pine Warbler  
Prairie Warbler  
Palm Warbler  
Bay-breasted Warbler  
Blackpoll Warbler  
Black-and-white Warbler  
American Redstart  
Worm-eating Warbler  
Ovenbird  
Northern Waterthrush  
Louisiana Waterthrush  
Connecticut Warbler  
Mourning Warbler  
Common Yellowthroat  
Wilson's Warbler  
Canada Warbler
- Buntings, Sparrows, Tanagers, and Allies**  
Snow Bunting  
Fox Sparrow  
Song Sparrow  
Lincoln's Sparrow  
Swamp Sparrow  
White-crowned Sparrow  
White-throated Sparrow  
Dark-eyed Junco  
Savannah Sparrow  
Grasshopper Sparrow  
American Tree Sparrow  
Chipping Sparrow  
Field Sparrow  
Vesper Sparrow  
Eastern Towhee  
Summer Tanager  
Scarlet Tanager  
Dickcissel  
Rose-breasted Grosbeak  
Northern Cardinal  
Pine Grosbeak  
Blue Grosbeak
- Blackbirds, Grackles, and Orioles**  
Baltimore Oriole  
Orchard Oriole  
Red-winged Blackbird  
Eastern Meadowlark  
Common Grackle  
Rusty Blackbird  
Brown-headed Cowbird
- Species seen – 193**

# PHOTO ESSAY

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## Scenes from Wolf Trap Hill Farm





All photographs by Kathleen Brissette.

## FIELD NOTE

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### Rainy Day Stopover for a Migrating Northern Waterthrush: Runoff Stream on Pavement

*Jeffrey Boone Miller*



Northern Waterthrush. Photo credit: Joppa Flats Bird Banding Station.

How much habitat does a migrating bird need? If it's a waterthrush and conditions are right, the answer: is not very much.

On June 4, 2008, in Watertown, Massachusetts, I had an unusual opportunity to closely observe a Northern Waterthrush (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) for several hours. My office overlooked a 25-foot-wide strip of asphalt that was bordered by our three-story building on the south and by a 100-foot-wide strip of woods on the north. A four-foot-high wire mesh fence separated the pavement from the trees.

On that day of continuous light rain and a temperature of 70°F, runoff had created a shallow stream, one to two feet wide and less than an inch deep, that flowed on the asphalt parallel to a shallow curb by the fence. At approximately 9:30 am, I was surprised and delighted to find a Northern Waterthrush walking in this flowing water.

For the next six hours, I checked for the waterthrush multiple times, with a cumulative observation time of about 30 minutes. I quickly found the bird every time I looked. It was always walking in or near the runoff or within the first three to five feet of the neighboring woods, and it stayed within a 30-foot segment of the running water. If a car passed, the bird ducked through the fence and into the trees. This bird stayed for several hours within a total area of less than 200 square feet.

Perhaps the waterthrush stayed in this small area because of a high density of prey. When walking in the stream, the bird seldom had to travel more than two or three feet before locating a prey item, most of which were small, light-colored caterpillars less

than a half inch long. Feeding success appeared to be much lower when the bird was in the nearby vegetation.

These prey items likely originated in the overhanging black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) trees that had been in spectacular and aromatic bloom for several days. In previous days, a steady procession of birds had been feeding on larvae among these blooms. The day's rain knocked large numbers of flower petals into the newly formed runoff stream, so it seems likely that prey items arrived with the petals and that additional prey items were washed into the runoff throughout the day.

Northern Waterthrushes have a strong preference for riparian habitat and will defend a territory of one to several acres on their nesting grounds (Whitaker and Eaton 2014). For at least this one day, however, the tiny patch of artificial and ephemeral riparian habitat outside my office apparently provided all this particular bird required. 🐦

## Reference

Whitaker, D. M. and S. W. Eaton. 2014. Northern Waterthrush (*Parkesia noveboracensis*). *The Birds of North America Online* (A. Poole, Ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna/species/182>. Accessed 01/16/2016.

*Jeffrey Boone Miller is a Professor of Neurology and Physiology at the Boston University School of Medicine, a member of the Board of Tutors in Biochemical Sciences at Harvard University, and an Associate Editor of Bird Observer. Jeff is an advocate for birding locally and habitat preservation.*



Golden Eagle, photographed by Craig Jackson on November 14, 2015 while he was hawk watching from Pinnacle Rock in Malden, MA. 🐦

# MUSINGS FROM THE BLIND BIRDER

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## Memorable Winter Birding Moments

Martha Steele



Northern Hawk Owl. All photographs by Bob Stymeist.

Although winter birding generally does not engender the excitement of spring and early summer in New England, it can most certainly produce experiences that remain etched in our memories for life. Such memories for me are not solely about the birds, but also include details on everything about the circumstances of the encounter, including with whom and how we might share those experiences.

Three of my winter birding experiences particularly stick out as extraordinary. In February 2010, Bob and I were lucky enough to enjoy, all to ourselves, a Northern Hawk Owl in North Derby, Vermont, only a football field or two away from the Canadian border. It was a clear, cold, and calm day on a quiet street that ended at the Eagle Point Wildlife Management Area. This is generally open country, managed for grassland and open country birds. Upon arriving, we quickly found the bird perched in the open on a bare tree and facing us. Over the next two hours, we watched the bird's activities as it flew from tree to bush to telephone wire and back to tree, occasionally dropping down to the snow-covered fields. At that time, my vision was better and I found the bird a stunning specimen, with its piercing eyes, black facial features, and heavily barred breast. I could not take my eyes off the bird, so beautiful, so close, and so perfect in the classic winter landscape. This is my kind of bird: cooperative, often still and facing us, and simply gorgeous. Our experience was made all the more powerful by our personal and private connection with the bird.

Then came the crowning moment, captured by the photograph taken by Bob that accompanies this column. The owl perched on top of a stop sign at the end of the road. We were looking at it from about 10-20 yards away along the same side of the road. The bird took off and headed straight for us, flying low over our heads and letting us feel the *whoosh* of its flight mere feet above our heads. These are the indescribable moments that make birding such an adventure and sometimes exhilarating experience.





Snow Buntings at feeding station.

Following the morning in North Derby with the owl, we could have flown ourselves back home, so excited and thrilled we were.

In February 2005, we enjoyed another beautiful winter day while driving from our Vermont home to Montreal, Quebec, to see a spectacular display of winter owls, most notably Great Gray Owls. Reports of large numbers of Great Gray Owls enticed Bob and me, along with Jeremiah Trimble, to head to Montreal to see the spectacle, centered in the L'Île-Bizard–Sainte-Geneviève borough of Montreal and nearby Saint-Eustache. It seemed that every 100–200 yards or so, there would be another Great Gray Owl perched and easily visible near the road. Unlike the Northern Hawk Owl in North Derby, we were not alone in enjoying the scene, as the area was flooded with birders and nonbirders alike. In all, we saw 16 Great Gray Owls that day. But that was not the only species of owl we recorded. We also saw Northern Hawk Owl, Boreal Owl, Great Horned Owl, and several Snowy Owls, along with 260 Bohemian Waxwings; we constantly walked away from whatever bird we were looking at that day, so cooperative were they.

Turning from the more rare winter visitors, I also have many strong images of swirling flocks of Snow Buntings. I most particularly visualize another clear and crisp winter day near our home in Vermont, when we watched a flock of 200-plus Snow Buntings enjoying corn meal at a feeding station by an isolated country road. Below the feeding station, an expansive snow-covered field sloped gently downhill, with a few bare trees in the field. Looking out to the vista, we could see the striking glacially-

formed cliffs of Mount Pisgah and Mount Hor framing the frozen Lake Willoughby. I was completely mesmerized by the swooping and swirling and smooth flight of the Snow Bunting flock, periodically truncated by the frenzied feeding on the corn meal. Their abbreviated landings in one of the bare trees in the field, made it appear laden with Christmas tree ornaments. In this case, we could enjoy the birds from the warmth of our car parked along the side of the road, with windows cracked to listen.

Maybe these exhilarating moments occur less often in the winter than other times of the year, but they are no less real or profound. Up close and personal encounters with our winter visitors, rare or common, can quicken our pulse and bring joy to the season. In the midst of these encounters with extraordinary birds, I really do feel like I am living in the moment, thinking of nothing else, worrying about nothing else, and just truly enjoying and feeling the good of that specific moment. It is yet another reason that birding is so special in the surprises that it holds and the opportunity that it offers to truly live in the moment. 🐦

*Martha Steele, a former editor of Bird Observer, has been progressively losing vision due to retinitis pigmentosa and is legally blind. Thanks to a cochlear implant, she is now learning to identify birds from their songs and calls. Martha lives with her husband, Bob Stymeist, in Arlington. Martha can be reached at <[marthajs@verizon.net](mailto:marthajs@verizon.net)>.*

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# GLEANINGS

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## Did You Hear That?

*David M. Larson*



Black-capped Chickadee. Photograph by Peter Oehlkers.

For tasty morsels like songbirds, being aware of the surroundings and alert to the dangers of predators is a critical skill set. Membership in a mixed feeding flock can be advantageous, since different species with diverse viewpoints can help the group detect danger and sound the alarm. Behavioral, visual, and auditory clues all can help with predator avoidance. Many species respond stereotypically to visual cues of different predators; for instance, Red-winged Blackbirds mount a more vigorous response to a Red-tailed Hawk than to an American Kestrel.

But what about using auditory clues from the predator? Birders know well that vocalizations of potential predators can attract prey species. Presumably knowing the exact location of that screech owl—or the human mimic—provides a level of certainty and safety. The response of birds can often be scolding and mobbing, so keeping the predator in sight and alerting and attracting conspecifics and other species to the threat seems a good defense mechanism.

Do birds react differently to the vocalizations of potential predators and the specific threats they pose? Billings et al. (2015) conducted a series of audio playback and recording experiments in Montana and Washington in winter on mixed flocks containing three species of chickadees: Black-capped (*Poecile atricapillus*), Mountain (*P. gambeli*), and Chestnut-backed (*P. rufescens*). They played vocalizations of three predators: Northern Pygmy-Owl (*Glaucidium gnoma*), Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*), and Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) and one nonpredator control, Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*) and recorded the vocal responses from the chickadees.

The authors made audio recordings during and after playback of the calls of the predators and the solitaire. Analysis of these recordings indicated changes in multiple acoustic variables in response to the calls of predators and control, different responses to each of the predators, and different responses of the chickadee species.

The three species of chickadees all produce *chick-a-dee* calls, made up of *chicka* and *dee* elements in various proportions. They also produce independent *chicka* calls and *dee* calls as well as a variety of high-pitched calls. The variety in these calls suggests additional information content in the structure of the calls and combinations of calls. All three species were recognizable from full *chick-a-dee* calls. The shorter, independent *chicka* calls from Black-capped and Mountain chickadees were not separable but could be distinguished from Chestnut-backed. All three species also produce high-pitched *seet* and other calls that could not be assigned to species from the recordings.

The results of these field experiments indicated that Black-capped Chickadees increased the number of full *chick-a-dee* calls during and especially after playback of Northern Pygmy-Owl, in comparison to the control or the other two raptors. However, they showed only minor variation in the number of *chicka* and *dee* elements within the *chick-a-dee* call.

Similarly, Mountain Chickadees increased the number of *chick-a-dee* calls in playback and post-playback response to Pygmy-owl calls, and they also increased the number of *dee* elements in those calls during playback. Mountain Chickadees also increased the number of *dee* elements during playback—but not post-playback—of Northern Goshawk calls. Both Black-capped and Mountain chickadees increased the number of independent *chicka* calls in response to Pygmy-owl calls both during playback and post-playback.

In contrast to the response of the other two chickadees, Chestnut-backed Chickadees showed little significant change in *chick-a-dee* or *chicka* calls to raptor vocalizations.

All three species of chickadees significantly increased the number of high frequency calls in response to Sharp-shinned Hawk calls during the post-playback period, but not during playback.

These experiments demonstrate that chickadees can distinguish between the calls of different raptors. Black-capped and Mountain chickadees respond more vigorously to smaller—more dangerous—raptors, especially Northern Pygmy-Owl, than to the more remote threat of Northern Goshawk. In response to Pygmy-owl calls, both chickadees produce more complete *chick-a-dee* calls and more independent *chicka* calls during playback and post-playback. Since the Mountain Chickadees responded to Northern Goshawk calls with more *dee* elements, it is possible that their encoding for low- and high-threat species differs from that of Black-capped.

The high-frequency response of chickadees to Sharp-shinned Hawk calls, which was only apparent in the post-playback period, suggests encoding of more threat information based on the type of raptor. Northern Pygmy-Owls are slow fliers that rely on perch-and-pounce hunting tactics, and they can be mobbed and often driven away by a vigorous response. In contrast, Sharpshins are agile, fast fliers that can come out of nowhere to attack. A Sharpshin that just stopped vocalizing could be in flight, nearby, and an acute threat. The increased high-frequency calling from chickadees could signal the heightened risk of a raptor in flight and an imminent danger.

The lack of detected response in *chick-a-dee* and *chicka* calls of Chestnut-backed Chickadees to the auditory threats that triggered responses from the other two chickadees could be a reflection of evolutionary divergence between Chestnut-backed Chickadee and the more closely related sister species, Black-capped and Mountain chickadees.

Clearly, chickadees show graded vocal responses to detection of potential threats, based on a nuanced interpretation of the threat level. And, for birders, listening carefully to the mobbing calls might give a clue as to what raptor is around. 🦅

## Reference

Billings, A. C., E. Greene, and S. M. De La Lucia Jensen. 2015. Are chickadees good listeners? Antipredator responses to raptor vocalizations. *Animal Behaviour* 110: 1-8. (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.anbehav.2015.09.004>). Accessed 1/16/16.

*David M. Larson, PhD*, is the Science and Education Coordinator at Mass Audubon's Joppa Flats Education Center in Newburyport, the Director of Mass Audubon's Birder's Certificate Program and the Certificate Program in Bird Ecology (a course for naturalist guides in Belize), a domestic and international tour leader, Vice President of the Nuttall Ornithological Club, and a member of the editorial staff of Bird Observer.

# ABOUT BOOKS

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## *Quand le Hibou Chante*

Mark Lynch

*Peterson Reference Guide to Owls of North America and the Caribbean.*

Scott Weidensaul. 2015. Boston/New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

“Quand le hibou chante, la nuit est silence.” (“When the owl sings, the night is silent.”) (aphorism by Charles de Leusse)

Early in the morning in mid-September 2009, Sheila Carroll and I were in a car zipping along Route 122 to North Quabbin. As we rounded a curve in the town of Barre, we saw a Barred Owl sitting in the middle of the road. Realizing that the owl was injured, we swerved to the side of the road just beyond the bird, and I ran back to save it before another car could fatally hit it. Another car was indeed heading down the road, so without thinking I grabbed the owl and realized three things in rapid succession:

1. Owls are amazingly light in weight. It is as if there is almost no bird there, only feathers. Of course I had read about this, but it was the first time I had handled a wild Barred Owl.
2. Owls are incredibly soft to the touch. It was like picking up a pile of eider down.
3. I was an idiot. As I grabbed the Barred, in a reflex reaction it dug its talons deep into my left arm almost to bone.

I ran back to the car with the owl firmly attached. I stood there not knowing exactly what I should do. When I tried to pry the owl off my arm, the talons only sank deeper into my flesh. I was also starting to feel a bit queasy. It took us a few painful minutes to come up with an idea of how to get a stressed owl off my arm. Sheila took one of the cloth grocery bags we had in the back, placed it over the owl, and held the owl sideways. Sure enough the bird relinquished its vise-like grip.

Bleeding and in a lot of pain, I headed first to the other side of Worcester to the Tufts Wildlife Clinic in Grafton holding the bagged owl in my lap. I had seen and heard many Barred Owls, but this was the closest I had been to one, and I realized how little I know about a species I thought was familiar. Once at Tufts, one of the staff quickly took charge of the bird. When I showed him my wounds, he smiled and showed me even larger scars that he got from tussling with a wounded Osprey. It may have been his way of politely saying I was a rank amateur. Finally, we headed to an outpatient clinic to deal with my wounds. Here I became the staff’s morning entertainment because no one had ever had a patient who had been wounded by an owl.

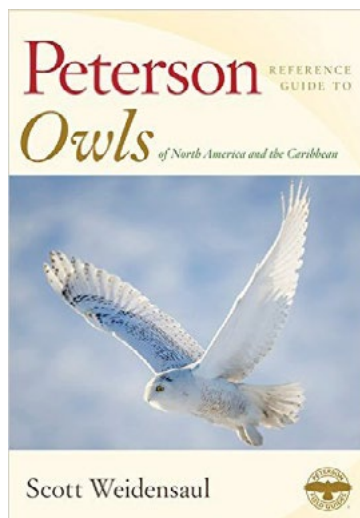
A few days later, I got a note from Tufts informing me that the Barred Owl had to be euthanized because too many bones had been shattered. Sadly, this is a common fate when an owl and automobile collide because of the lightness of its bones.

Birders are so passionate about owls that any day they see one is considered a very good day afield. We get a real thrill if we find a roosting Great Horned Owl deep in a grove of pines or spot a sunning Eastern Screech Owl puffed up in its roost hole. Even species that are often diurnal and therefore easier to spot, like Snowy Owls, are the highlights of any birding day. But most of us don't watch owls exclusively when most species are going about their lives. Owling at night is one of those birding activities that only some of us do, but we rarely enjoy it. Humans are not comfortable in the dark, and frankly many find it a bit creepy being out in forest and field in the dark. Who knows what nocturnal weirdo will find you while owling? It is also a tough activity to explain to the police called by homeowners wondering what that car is doing parked alongside the woodlot down the road. And if all this wasn't discouraging enough, your success rate of just getting to hear an owl, let alone see one, is slim. I have gone owling many times and have struck out more often than not. For all these reasons, while working on the Breeding Bird Atlas II and on Christmas Bird Counts, I have a very hard time convincing participants to do at least some token nocturnal owling. Some birders give it a half-hearted few minutes. More won't even attempt it. Owls are birds that are very tough to get to know on their terms.

"The owl," he was saying, "is one of the most curious creatures. A bird that stays awake when the rest of the world sleeps. They can see in the dark. I find that so interesting, to be mired in reality when the rest of the world is dreaming. What does he see and what does he know that the rest of the world is missing?" (M.J. Rose, *Seduction*)

*Owls of North America and the Caribbean* by Scott Weidensaul is a stunning volume that compiles most of what is known about these nocturnal birds in this region. Weidensaul is a naturalist, researcher, and writer who is passionate about owls. The book is the latest title in the relatively new *Peterson Reference Guide* series. So far this series has included books on molt, birding by impression, gulls, and sea watching. A book on woodpeckers will be published in 2016. These are all large format, content-heavy volumes, well researched and profusely illustrated with color photographs. They are all readable, collectible, and most important, useful.

Owls are a great choice for this series. There is a fascinating variety of species covered in this book. Weidensaul originally pitched the idea of covering all 75 species of owls found in the western hemisphere, but his editor wisely narrowed the focus to



North America, Mexico, and the Caribbean. In a recent interview with Weidensaul, I asked him why he was so passionate about including the species of the Caribbean. He replied that there are a number of species found there that are unique and little known to most birders, including island endemics like the Ashy-faced Owl (*Tyto glaucops*) of Hispaniola, the only Tyto-type owl other than the Barn Owl found in the region covered in this book

This book was four years in the making, and Weidensaul has compiled an outstanding amount of current research from hundreds of wildlife biologists. Sometimes he even resorted to phoning the researchers to ask a specific question not answered in published papers. But despite this effort, it may come as a surprise to most readers that many gaps still exist in our knowledge of owls, even with the common species. As Weidensaul related in our interview, “I have joked that the most challenging aspect of this book was coming up with new and creative ways to say ‘we don’t know.’” Because many owls are secretive as well as nocturnal, they are among the most challenging species for field biologists to study.

*Owls of North America and the Caribbean* opens with sections on owl plumage, molt, topography, and behavior. There is an interesting section on “Reversed Sexual Dimorphism” (p. 3), which means that females of a species are larger on average than the males. The taxonomy of owls is far from clear cut:

In the case of Eastern Screech Owls and Barred Owls, for instance the molecular divisions do not correspond neatly to long-recognized subspecies. Close attention to vocalizations is also revealing many previously cryptic forms hidden within what are now classified as wide-ranging, geographically diverse species-forms that may warrant their own species designations. (p. 7–8)

Barn Owls, which range widely across the globe, may in fact be several different species. More research is needed.

The section on extinct owls of the area is really fascinating. During the Pleistocene there were several species of truly gigantic owls living in the Caribbean that stood several feet high and weighed an “estimated 20 lbs” (p.19). These massive flightless owls dwarfed all living species and likely survived by preying on “juvenile ground sloths” (p. 19). There is even a possibility that some of these monster owls survived to the period of human colonization of the region. Owling would have been more than a bit challenging with beasts like that about.

The thorough species accounts take up the bulk of the book. For each species there are details on size, longevity, systematics and taxonomy, distribution (including good maps), identification, vocalizations, habitat and niche, nesting and breeding behavior, and a bibliography for each species. One of the nice perks of this book is that it includes a link to a downloadable album of 86 representative vocalizations of the 39 species covered. Weidensaul also includes a general introduction for each species, a paragraph or two in length. There are several good quality photographs of each species.





Short-eared Owl. Photograph by Sandy Selesky.

What really separates *Owls of North America and the Caribbean* from other identification guides is Scott Weidensaul's writing. Most identification guides are horribly dry and jargon driven. Though this book is definitely packed with data and facts, Weidensaul gives the species accounts a more personal and idiosyncratic quality, thus making this book enjoyable to read. He describes the Stygian Owl (*Asio stygius*) this way:

Striking and more than a little eerie, with its sooty plumage and dramatic tangerine eyes, the Stygian Owl resembles a wraith in more ways than one. Although found from Mexico to Argentina, as well as two islands in the Greater Antilles, it is nowhere common, and its presence is often more a case of rumor and conjecture than hard fact. (p. 262)

With those two sentences, the reader has a sense of the experience of seeing this species and why it is one of the most wanted owls for many birders' lists. Weidensaul is clearly fascinated by owls and enjoys finding them, and he conveys that enthusiasm to the reader in every species account. Weidensaul's writing sets a standard for future books of this genre.

To date, *Owls of North America and the Caribbean* is the definitive volume about the owls of this region and an outstanding addition to the Peterson Reference Guide series. Reading the species accounts ought to inspire more birders to leave the safety of their homes, venture into the darkness, and try their luck at finding some of our local children of the night. 🦉

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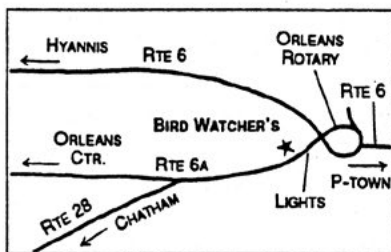
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# BIRD SIGHTINGS

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## September-October 2015

*Seth Kellogg, Marjorie W. Rines, and Robert H. Stymeist*

September was exceptionally mild with four days in the 90s and a high of 96° on September 8. Rainfall was almost nonexistent until the very last day of the month, when a torrential storm dropped 2.46 inches of rain in Boston. The total for the month was 3.93 inches, the first month since June with more rainfall than normal.

October was another warm month. There were six days in the 70s, and the high in Boston was 76° on October 12. No killing frost was recorded. The low for the month was 42° degrees on Halloween. Rainfall totaled 1.74 inches, 2.2 inches below average for October.

*R. Stymeist*

### WATERFOWL THROUGH ALCIDS

On September 10, a fishing boat captain photographed a **Masked Booby** over West Atlantis Canyon on the edge of the continental shelf about 90 miles south of Nantucket. On October 15, a Masked Booby was seen off Cape May, New Jersey, likely the same bird. Although regularly seen off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, this bird is exceptionally rare north of there and a first record for Massachusetts. A **Brown Booby** was seen through the period off outer Cape Cod. It is undoubtedly the same individual seen off and on as long ago as June 20.

A **Brown Pelican** was seen on Nantucket on September 2, shortly after one was reported off South Beach in Chatham on August 31. Although the observer of the Nantucket bird did not age it, the South Beach bird was an adult, and it is fair to assume it was the same bird. Inland in Southborough an immature Brown Pelican was found dehydrated and malnourished hiding under a tractor-trailer and was taken to the Tufts Wildlife Clinic for rehabilitation.

A **Purple Gallinule** was discovered at the Westboro Wildlife Management Area on October 21, where it lingered for two days allowing many birders to enjoy it. Common Gallinule has been reported fairly regularly at Great Meadows NWR, but a sighting of two in Westport was interesting for that location. An **American Avocet** spent two days in Edgartown.

Two adult **Sabine's Gulls** were seen off Provincetown on September 12, and sightings of a single bird continued through September 20. On September 13, an observer on Tuckernuck Island photographed a **Bridled Tern**. There were sightings on July 11 and August 19 in this same area, which undoubtedly represented the same individual.

*M. Rines*

<b>Greater White-fronted Goose</b>	10/5-31	Turners Falls	1	E. Huston + v.o.	10/25-31	E. Gloucester	1 m	C. Haines
	10/9	Sheffield	1	J. Pfeifer	<b>Ring-necked Duck</b>			
<b>Snow Goose</b>	9/26	Quabbin	2	C. Allen#	9/5	Camb. (F.Pd)	2	M. Filosa
	9/26	Barre Falls	1	D. Schilling#	10/10	W. Newbury	58	J. Berry
	10/9	Gill	5	J. Smith	10/21	Haverhill	200	S. Mirick
	10/17	Paxton	1	R. Jenkins	10/24	Waltham	250	J. Forbes
<b>Brant</b>					10/24	Pittsfield (Mud)	540	S. Kellogg
	9/26, 10/18	Quabbin Pk	2, 72	L. Therrien	10/30	Marlboro	70	J. Lawson
	10/9	Duxbury B.	68	R. Bowes	<b>Greater Scaup</b>			
	10/12	Revere (POP)	70	L. Ferraresso	9/26	Randolph	2	G. d'Entremont#
	10/18	Gill	7	J. Smith	10/21	Haverhill	2	S. Mirick
	10/27	P.I.	50	D. Adrien	10/29	Wachusett Res.	44	M. Lynch#
<b>Cackling Goose</b>					10/31	Waltham	3	J. Forbes
	10/3	Lee	1	I. Davies	10/31	Turners Falls	2	J. Rose
	10/5-13	Turners Falls	1	E. Huston + v.o.	<b>Lesser Scaup</b>			
	10/21-31	Acton/Concord	3	D. Sibley#	9/10	Westport	1	L. Waters
<b>Mute Swan</b>					10/4	Sterling	2	S. LaBree
	9/7	Ipswich	2 ad	J. Berry	10/18	Pittsfield (Onota)	4	J. Pierce
	10/9	Waltham	11	J. Forbes	10/20	Groveland	10	D. Chickering#
	10/11	P.I.	2 ad	J. Berry#	10/29	Turners Falls	3	J. Rose
	10/12	Acoaxet	226	M. Lynch#	<b>King Eider</b>			
	10/24	Westboro	83	M. Lynch#	9/26	N. Truro	1 f	M. Iliff#
<b>Wood Duck</b>					<b>Common Eider</b>			
	9/17	Wayland	132	B. Harris	9/13	Westport	41	M. Lynch#
	9/27	Ware R. IBA	33	M. Lynch#	10/4	Rockport (A.P.)	959	B. Harris#
	10/1	GMNWR	80	A. Bragg#	10/21	N. Truro	1500	B. Nikula
	10/18	Lexington	55	J. Forbes	10/31	E. Gloucester	107	J. Berry#
	10/21	Woburn (HP)	27	D. Williams	<b>Harlequin Duck</b>			
<b>Gadwall</b>					10/28	Rockport (A.P.)	26	R. Heil
	9/29	P.I.	7	J. Berry	<b>Surf Scoter</b>			
	10/thr	Longmeadow	3	v.o.	10/4	Rockport (A.P.)	608	B. Harris#
	10/15	Truro	7	M. Lynch#	10/9	Turners Falls	3	S. Motyl
	10/24	Cheshire	3	C. Blagdon	10/19	P.I.	200	T. Wetmore
	10/31	E. Gloucester	3	J. Berry#	10/21	N. Truro	1500	B. Nikula
<b>Eurasian Wigeon</b>					10/26	Wachusett Res.	3	B. Kamp
	9/19	Plymouth	1 m	D. Peacock	<b>White-winged Scoter</b>			
	9/27-10/30	P.I.	1 m	T. Wetmore#	10/4	Rockport (A.P.)	171	B. Harris#
<b>American Wigeon</b>					10/8	Wachusett Res.	14	J. Lawson
	9/10	Westport	4	L. Waters	10/18	S. Quabbin	48	L. Therrien
	9/13	Acoaxet	11	M. Lynch#	10/19	P.I.	400	T. Wetmore
	10/14	P.I.	96	L. Ferraresso	10/21	N. Truro	1000	B. Nikula
	10/24	Waltham	45	J. Forbes	<b>Black Scoter</b>			
	10/31	Turners Falls	2	J. Rose	10/18	Wachusett Res.	96	K. Bourinot#
<b>American Black Duck</b>					10/18	S. Quabbin	29	L. Therrien
	9/29	P.I.	470	J. Berry	10/19	P.I.	100	T. Wetmore
<b>Blue-winged Teal</b>					10/26	Orange	12	B. Lafley
	9/1-10/17	P.I.	20 max	v.o.	10/28	Rockport (A.P.)	1000	R. Heil
	9/1	Lynn	9	R. Heil	<b>Long-tailed Duck</b>			
	9/10	Turners Falls	4	J. Smith	10/26	Waltham	7	J. Forbes
	9/12	Westport	23	L. Waters	10/26	Wachusett Res.	21	B. Kamp
	9/12	Lynn	15	R. Heil	10/28	Rockport (A.P.)	425	R. Heil
	9/13	Acoaxet	9	M. Lynch#	10/31	S. Quabbin	38	L. Therrien
	9/24	Whately	7	J. Rose	10/31	P.I.	35	T. Wetmore
<b>Northern Shoveler</b>					<b>Bufflehead</b>			
	9/16	GMNWR	2	C. Cook	10/28	Gloucester (E.P.)	26	L. Ferraresso
	10/14	P.I.	4	D. Chickering	10/29	Wachusett Res.	29	M. Lynch#
	10/18	Foxboro	2	B. Cassie	10/31	Southboro	25	M. Lynch#
	10/22	Westboro	10	S. Arena	10/31	P.I.	40	T. Wetmore
<b>Northern Pintail</b>					<b>Common Goldeneye</b>			
	thr	P.I.	125 max	v.o.	10/29	Wachusett Res.	4	M. Lynch#
	10/1	GMNWR	1	A. Bragg#	10/29	Lincoln	3	J. Forbes
	10/12	Acoaxet	1	M. Lynch#	10/30	Marlboro	35	J. Lawson
<b>Green-winged Teal</b>					10/31	Southboro	48	M. Lynch#
	9/8	Lynn	41	R. Heil	<b>Barrow's Goldeneye</b>			
	9/13	Acoaxet	17	M. Lynch#	10/30	Southboro	1	J. Lawson
	9/14	P.I.	160	R. Heil	<b>Hooded Merganser</b>			
	10/4	Saugus	21	S. Zende#	10/22	Ipswich	14	J. Berry
	10/16	Longmeadow	39	M. Moore	10/24	Winchester	12	J. Garp
	10/25	Quabog IBA	16	M. Lynch#	10/25	Quabog IBA	41	M. Lynch#
<b>Redhead</b>					10/28	Chestnut Hill	25	P. Peterson
	10/25	Randolph	2	V. Zollo	<b>Common Merganser</b>			
					9/19	Quabbin (G35)	12	B. Zajda
					10/26	Waltham	14	J. Forbes

Common Merganser (continued)			9/13 Ipswich (C.B.)	1 dead	J. Berry#
10/27 Worcester	15	L. Hennin	9/16 Stellwagen	90	B. Nikula#
10/29 Wachusett Res.	34	M. Lynch#	10/11 E. of Chatham	8	B. Nikula#
Red-breasted Merganser			10/28 Rockport (A.P.)	3	R. Heil
10/10 Wachusett Res.	1	M. Lynch#	Wilson's Storm-Petrel		
10/13 Turners Falls	2	J. Coleman	9/3 Stellwagen	65	S. Moore#
10/19 P.I.	55	T. Wetmore	9/6 waters off M.V.	50	S. Whiting#
10/24 S. Quabbin	2	L. Therrien	9/22 P'town	2	B. Nikula
Ruddy Duck			9/27 off P'town	16	B. Nikula#
10/1, 28 Chestnut Hill	1, 75	P. Peterson	Leach's Storm-Petrel		
10/5, 20 Groveland	6, 125	D. Chickering	9/26 P'town	4	B. Nikula
10/22 Melrose	21	D. + I. Jewell	10/2 Sterling	1	N. Paulson#
10/23 W. Newbury	116	J. Nelson	10/4 Barnstable (S.N.)	23	M. Malin
10/24 Waltham	30	J. Forbes	10/4 Rockport (A.P.)	33	B. Harris#
Northern Bobwhite			10/4 Manomet	50	B. Zuzevich
9/26 Cumb. Farms	2	V. Zollo	<b>Masked Booby</b>		
10/31 Eastham (F. H.)	5	G. d'Entremont#	9/10 Atlantis Canyon	1 ph	J. Huckemeyer
Ruffed Grouse			<b>Brown Booby</b>		
9/27 Falmouth	5	M. Malin	9/1-10/3 P'town	1 ad	R. Schain + v.o.
10/5 Quabbin (G5)	1	B. Zajda	9/22 N. Truro	1	S. Mirick
10/29 Manomet	1 b	T. Lloyd-Evans	9/24 Orleans	1	P. Trull
Red-throated Loon			Northern Gannet		
10/18 Quabbin Pk	1	L. Therrien	10/19 P.I.	150	T. Wetmore
10/26 Wachusett Res.	1	B. Kamp	10/23 P'town (R.P.)	3000	B. Nikula
10/28 Rockport (A.P.)	52	R. Heil	10/28 Rockport (A.P.)	2060	R. Heil
10/28 E. Brookfield	1	J. Lawson	Double-crested Cormorant		
10/30 P.I.	35	T. Wetmore	9/9 Winthrop	141	R. Stymeist
<b>Pacific Loon</b>			9/13 Acoaxet	410	M. Lynch#
10/28 Rockport (A.P.)	1	R. Heil	10/1 Chestnut Hill	150	P. Peterson
Common Loon			10/25 Essex	7800	D. Brown
9/28 Wachusett Res.	24	M. Lynch#	10/31 E. Gloucester	660	J. Berry#
10/10 N. Quabbin	22	S. Surner	Great Cormorant		
10/10 Russell	10	T. Swochak	9/19 P.I.	1	G. d'Entremont#
10/19 P.I.	20	D. Adrien	9/30 Wilmington	1	S. Sullivan
10/28 Rockport (A.P.)	107	R. Heil	10/10 Quabbin (G43)	1	S. Surner#
Pied-billed Grebe			10/12 Acoaxet	3	M. Lynch#
9/19 P.I.	4	N. Landry	<b>Brown Pelican</b>		
10/8 GMNWR	3	A. Bragg#	9/2 Nantucket	1	T. Levine
10/17 Burrage WMA	6	L. Ferraresso#	9/21 Southboro	1 imm	D. Ford#
10/20 Groveland	3	D. Chickering#	American Bittern		
10/30 Waltham	3	J. Forbes	10/13 P.I.	1	L. Ferraresso
Horned Grebe			10/17 Newton	1	BBC (L. Ferraresso)
10/18 Wachusett Res.	4	K. Bourinot#	10/17 Chestnut Hill	1	B. Hodson#
10/22 P.I.	5	T. Wetmore	Great Egret		
10/29 Quabbin (G52)	5	B. Zajda	9/13 Longmeadow	3	M. Moore
Red-necked Grebe			9/21 P.I.	250	D. Adrien
10/12 Quabbin (G5)	4	B. Zajda	10/10 Westport	100	P. Champlin#
10/15 Pittsfield (Onota)	3	J. Pierce	10/14 E. Boston (B.I.)	16	R. Stymeist
10/18 Wachusett Res.	2	K. Bourinot#	10/31 Woburn (HP)	1	M. Rines
10/28 Rockport (A.P.)	19	R. Heil	Snowy Egret		
Northern Fulmar			9/25 Hadley	1	L. Therrien
9/23 Manomet	17	M. Iliff	9/26 P.I.	150	T. Wetmore
9/24 Eastham(F.E.)	65	B. Nikula	9/29 Chatham	26	R. Prescott#
9/26 P'town	280	B. Nikula	10/14 Ipswich	3	J. Berry
10/11 E. of Chatham	55	B. Nikula#	Little Blue Heron		
10/28 Rockport (A.P.)	5	R. Heil	9/17 Ipswich	1	J. Berry
Cory's Shearwater			9/20 Revere	1	A. Trautmann
thr P'town	700 max	B. Nikula	9/21 Gloucester	2	P. Brown
9/16 Stellwagen	800	B. Nikula#	9/24 Squantum	1	M. Iliff
10/8 Eastham(F.E.)	75	B. Nikula	Cattle Egret		
10/25 P.I.	15	E. Nielsen	10/23 P.I.	1	E. Labato
10/28 Rockport (A.P.)	347	R. Heil	Green Heron		
Great Shearwater			9/3 GMNWR	2	A. Bragg#
thr P'town	15000 max	B. Nikula	9/10 Woburn (HP)	2	M. Rines
9/16 Stellwagen	5000	B. Nikula#	9/26 Northboro	2	M. Lynch#
10/11 E. of Chatham	700	B. Nikula#	10/10 Cuttyhunk	1	E. Lipton
10/28 Rockport (A.P.)	2850	R. Heil	Black-crowned Night-Heron		
Sooty Shearwater			9/2 P.I.	20	T. Wetmore
thr P'town	160 max	B. Nikula	9/28 Eastham	25	R. Prescott#
9/16 Stellwagen	60	B. Nikula#	10/21 Worcester	3	R. Quimby
10/28 Rockport (A.P.)	2	R. Heil	Yellow-crowned Night-Heron		
Manx Shearwater			9/5 Dartmouth	3	A. Morgan
thr P'town	155 max	B. Nikula	9/10 P.I.	13	D. Prima

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (cont.)				10/12	Granville	1	Hawccount (JW)
9/28	Eastham	16	R. Prescott#	10/13, 15	Shatterack Mt.	1, 1	T. Swochak
10/1	P'town	2	M. Faherty#	10/21, 24	Barre Falls	1, 1	Hawccount (DS)
Glossy Ibis				10/23	Methuen	1	K. Wilmarth
9/3	Gloucester	1	S. Moore#	10/27	Granville	1	Hawccount (JW)
Black Vulture				Clapper Rail			
9/12, 10/8	Mt. Wachusett	1	Hawccount	10/8-10	Fairhaven	1	L. Waters
9/29	Carlisle	1	D. Brownrigg	Virginia Rail			
Turkey Vulture				9/10	GMNWR	2	A. Bragg#
9/1	Wachusett Res.	25	S. Olson	9/19	Belchertown	1	L. Therrien
9/10	Granville	180	Hawccount (JW)	9/19	Quabbin Pk	3	L. Therrien
9/10, 10/10	Shatterack Mt.	157, 70	Hawccount (TS)	10/25	Quabog IBA	1	M. Lynch#
9/17	Mt. Watatic	27	B. Rusnica	Sora			
10/7	P.I.	20	MAS (B. Gette)	9/15	W. Roxbury (MP)	5	M. Iliff
10/19	Worcester	100	P. Dufault	9/17	GMNWR	2	M. Stone#
10/22	Barre Falls	52	Hawccount (DS)	<b>Purple Gallinule</b>			
Osprey				10/21-23	Westboro	1	J. Lawson + v.o.
9/1-28	Mt. Wachusett	186	Hawccount (SO)	<b>Common Gallinule</b>			
9/5-26	Mt. Watatic	71	Hawccount (TP)	9/2-25	GMNWR	1	v.o.
9/11-27	Barre Falls	50	Hawccount (DS)	9/10	Westport	2 imm	L. Waters#
Bald Eagle				American Coot			
9/1-29	Mt. Wachusett	118	Hawccount (SO)	9/16	Easthampton	1	D. Pritchard
9/5-26	Mt. Watatic	55	Hawccount (TP)	9/27, 10/15	GMNWR	2, 21	K. Dia#
9/11-26	Barre Falls	26	Hawccount (DS)	10/18	Pittsfield (Onota)	29	J. Pierce
10/2-30	Mt. Wachusett	27	Hawccount (SO)	10/20	Groveland	116	D. Chickering#
Northern Harrier				10/21	Haverhill	30	S. Mirick
9/4-26	Mt. Wachusett	15	Hawccount (SO)	10/29	Jamaica Plain	15	J. Novak
9/10	Shatterack Mt.	14	Hawccount (TS)	Sandhill Crane			
9/10	Granville	23	Hawccount (JW)	9/7	Worthington	4	P. & D. Paul
9/15-25	Barre Falls	10	Hawccount (DS)	9/15	Hadley	2	B. Thompson
10/10	P.I.	5	P. + F. Vale	10/8	Cumb. Farms	1	S. Williams
10/12	Cumb. Farms	5	G. d'Entremont	10/12	Hudson	1	G. Freedman
Sharp-shinned Hawk				10/21	Burrage WMA	2	D. Chandler
9/1-29	Mt. Wachusett	302	Hawccount (SO)	Black-bellied Plover			
9/5-26	Mt. Watatic	263	Hawccount (TP)	thr	P.I.	50 max	v.o.
9/12-26	Barre Falls	105	Hawccount (DS)	9/19	Quabbin (G35)	6	B. Zajda
10/thr	Barre Falls	150	Hawccount (DS)	9/26	N. Monomoy	1700	K. Yakola#
10/2-30	Mt. Wachusett	94	Hawccount (SO)	10/4	Edgartown	126	J. Nelson
10/9-24	Malden (PR)	39	Hawccount (CJ)	10/21	GMNWR	4	R. Stymeist
Cooper's Hawk				American Golden-Plover			
9/1-27	Mt. Wachusett	63	Hawccount (SO)	thr	P.I.	4 max	v.o.
9/5-26	Mt. Watatic	77	Hawccount (TP)	9/8	Holden	4	M. Lynch#
9/11-26	Barre Falls	14	Hawccount (DS)	9/12	Easthampton	12	B. Zajda#
10/1-30	Barre Falls	35	Hawccount (DS)	9/12	Orleans	4	J. Trimble#
10/4-30	Mt. Wachusett	17	Hawccount (SO)	9/25	PRNWR	7	B. Harris
Northern Goshawk				9/27	Orange	4	B. Lafley
9/17	Ware R. IBA	1	M. Lynch#	10/4	Saugus	4	S. Zende#
9/18	Mt Tom	1	Hawccount (TG)	Semipalmated Plover			
9/19	Quabbin (G35)	1	B. Zajda	thr	P.I.	102 max	v.o.
9/29, 10/6	Longmeadow	1, 1	Hawccount	thr	Lexington	20 max	v.o.
10/7, 30	Shatterack Mt.	1, 1	Hawccount (TS)	9/8	Lynn	38	R. Heil
10/19	Wilbraham	1	Hawccount (DS)	9/13	Ipswich (C.B.)	300	J. Berry#
10/22	Barre Falls	1	Hawccount (DS)	Piping Plover			
10/26	Granville	1	Hawccount (JW)	9/8	P.I.	2	BBC (D. Williams)
Red-shouldered Hawk				9/13	Chatham (S. B.)	11	S. Williams
9/1-23	Mt. Wachusett	10	Hawccount (SO)	10/22	Orleans	2	P. Trull
9/10	Shatterack Mt.	8	Hawccount (TS)	Killdeer			
9/20	Mt. Wachusett	4	Hawccount (SO)	9/7	Lynn	120	R. Heil
Broad-winged Hawk				9/10	Newbury	50	D. Larson
9/3-27	Mt. Wachusett	11171	Hawccount (SO)	10/14	GMNWR	40	J. Forbes#
9/5-26	Mt. Watatic	5692	Hawccount (TP)	10/18	Newburyport	64	P. + F. Vale
9/10, 24	Shatterack Mt.	3009, 1483	Hawccount	American Oystercatcher			
9/10, 21	Granville	1694, 301	Hawccount	9/9	E. Boston (B.I.)	6	R. Stymeist
9/11-27	Barre Falls	3127	Hawccount (DS)	9/19	Wellfleet	3	BBC (R. Stymeist)
9/15, 17	Mt. Wachusett	2027, 5433	Hawccount	9/23	Squantum	2	D. Brown
9/16, 26	Barre Falls	1089, 601	Hawccount	10/7	Winthrop B.	1	P. Peterson
9/17, 26	Mt. Watatic	2475, 769	Hawccount	10/11	Squantum	2	V. Zollo
Rough-legged Hawk				<b>American Avocet</b>			
10/18	Mt. Wachusett	4	Hawccount (SO)	9/16-17	Edgartown	1	C. Leuchtenburg#
10/26	P.I.	1	J. Eleanor	Spotted Sandpiper			
Golden Eagle				9/1	Lynn	7	R. Heil
9/15, 24	Mt. Wachusett	1, 1	Hawccount (SO)	9/20	Leicester	4	M. Lynch#
10/7	Mt. Wachusett	2	Hawccount (SO)	9/26	Ipswich	5	J. Berry

Spotted Sandpiper (continued)			9/10	Westport	2	L. Waters
10/21	Hingham	1	S. Williams	9/13-10/18	P'town (R.P.)	1 v.o.
Solitary Sandpiper						
9/10	Lexington	2	M. Rines	9/19	S. Monomoy	1 E. Orcutt#
9/11	Mt.A.	2	M. Sabourin#	9/22	Squantum	1 T. O'Neil
9/26	Ipswich	3	J. Berry	10/3	Winthrop	1 P. Peterson
10/3	Leicester	4	M. Lynch#	10/8	Fairhaven	1 L. Waters
10/14	Pittsfield	1	G. Hurley			
Greater Yellowlegs						
thr	P.I.	60 max	v.o.	9/8	Wayland	16 B. Harris
9/6	Lynn	63	R. Heil	9/19	Nantucket	45 V. Laux#
10/7	Winthrop	50	P. Peterson	10/7	P.I.	12 D. Chickering
10/22	GMNWR	13	G. Gove#	10/22	Easton	13 K. Ryan
10/31	Lincoln	7	J. Forbes	10/22	GMNWR	13 G. Gove#
				10/24	Lexington	10 J. Forbes
Willet						
9/5	P.I.	30	BBC (N. Hayward)	Dunlin		
9/26	Duxbury B.	1	R. Bowes	9/26	N. Monomoy	1800 K. Yakola#
10/11	Nantucket	3	S. Kardell	10/17	Newbypt H.	150 MAS (D. Weaver)
10/20	Turners Falls	1	T. Bullock	10/18	GMNWR	1 R. Doherty
				10/22	E. Brookfield	1 R. Jenkins
Lesser Yellowlegs				10/30	P.I.	275 T. Wetmore
9/7	Lynn	24	R. Heil	10/30	Pittsfield (Pont.)	1 R. Wendell
9/7	GMNWR	9	J. Forbes			
9/17	Lexington	14	M. Rines	Stilt Sandpiper		
10/28	Newburyport	24	MAS (B. Gette)	9/1-10/7	P.I.	6 max v.o.
Whimbrel				9/3	Longmeadow	1 S. Motyl
9/thr	P.I.	7 max	v.o.	9/7	Lynn	3 R. Heil
9/1	Winthrop B.	1	S. Zende#	9/7	Holden	1 J. Bourget
9/11	Hadley	1	L. Therrien	9/10	Westport	2 L. Waters
10/3	Wellfleet	2	SSBC (GdE)	9/24	GMNWR	1 K. Dia#
10/3	Pittsfield (Pont.)	1	I. Davies	9/24	Holden	1 B. Kamp
10/15	Revere	2	M. Resendes			
Hudsonian Godwit						
9/11	Plymouth B.	7	J. Young	Buff-breasted Sandpiper		
9/26	N. Monomoy	1	K. Yakola#	9/1	Winthrop B.	1 S. Zende#
10/3	P'town (R.P.)	1	B. Harris	9/2	Longmeadow	1 L. Richardson
10/17	P.I.	6	MAS (D. Weaver)	9/4	P.I.	1 J. Berry#
Marbled Godwit				9/6	Chatham	2 M. Goldenberg
9/2	Nantucket	1	L. Dunn	9/7	GMNWR	1 J. Forbes#
9/8	Westport	3	G. Gove#	9/7	Nantucket	2 L. Dunn#
9/16	N. Monomoy	5	D. Berard#	9/8	Wayland	1 B. Harris
Ruddy Turnstone						
9/13	Westport	6	M. Lynch#	Short-billed Dowitcher		
9/22	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore	9/12	Orleans	67 J. Trimble#
Red Knot				9/22	P.I.	6 T. Wetmore
9/3	Revere (POP)	4	P. Peterson			
9/14	P.I.	12	J. Berry#	Long-billed Dowitcher		
9/26	N. Monomoy	700	K. Yakola#	thr	P.I.	1 v.o.
Sanderling				9/13	Lynn	4 R. Heil
9/13	Ipswich (C.B.)	270	J. Berry#	9/19	Chatham	1 B. Harris
9/26	N. Monomoy	2500	K. Yakola#	10/3	Winthrop	2 P. Peterson
10/15	P'town	148	M. Lynch#	10/11	Revere	2 S. Riley
Semipalmated Sandpiper						
9/2	P.I.	350	M. Lynch#	Wilson's Snipe		
9/13	Ipswich (C.B.)	300	J. Berry#	10/4	Saugus	3 S. Zende#
10/22	GMNWR	5	G. Gove#	10/18	Saugus	2 S. Zende#
Western Sandpiper						
9/1	P.I.	10	S. Miller#	American Woodcock		
9/12	Orleans	7	J. Trimble#	9/12	P.I.	5 T. Wetmore
9/13	Ipswich (C.B.)	5	J. Berry#	10/24	Northboro	2 M. Lynch#
Least Sandpiper						
9/5	Holden	19	M. Lynch#	Wilson's Phalarope		
9/9	Longmeadow	12	S. Kellogg	9/7	Lynn	1 R. Heil
9/12	P.I.	35	T. Wetmore	9/9	P.I.	1 B. Murphy#
9/20	Quabog IBA	12	M. Lynch#	Red-necked Phalarope		
White-rumped Sandpiper				9/3	Stellwagen	2 S. Moore#
thr	P.I.	35 max	v.o.	9/6	waters off M.V.	300 S. Whiting#
10/3	Eastham (F. E.)	3	SSBC (GdE)	10/3	Barnstable (S.N.)	14 M. Malin
10/7	Winthrop	2	P. Peterson	10/6	P'town (R.P.)	13 T. Spahr#
10/8	Fairhaven	11	L. Waters			
10/25	Essex	2	D. Brown	Black-legged Kittiwake		
Baird's Sandpiper				9/22-10/31	P'town	550 max B. Nikula#
9/1	Lynn	1	R. Heil	9/24	Boston (Deer I.)	2 M. Garvey
9/1-13	P.I.	3 max	v.o.	10/28	Rockport (A.P.)	77 R. Heil
				Sabine's Gull		
				9/12-20	P'town	1-2 ad B. Nikula#
				9/13	Stellwagen	1 ad, 1 imm E. Dalton
				Bonaparte's Gull		
				10/2, 31	S. Quabbin	1, 7 L. Therrien
				10/8	Brookfield	2 J. Lawson
				10/8, 21	Wachusett Res.	2, 2 J. Lawson
				10/15	P.I.	90 T. Wetmore
				10/22	Ipswich	250 J. Berry
				10/31	P'town	300 B. Nikula



<b>Black-headed Gull</b>				9/8	Westport	100	G. Gove#
9/23	P'town (R.P.)	3	H. Breder	9/20	P.I.	14	J. Keeley#
<b>Little Gull</b>					Forster's Tern		
9/13	Essex	1 ad	D. Brown	9/13	Westport	3	M. Lynch#
9/20-10/30	N. Truro/R.P.	5 max	v.o.	10/3	Eastham (F. E.)	100	SSBC (GdE)
<b>Laughing Gull</b>				10/16	P'town (R.P.)	10	M. Lynch#
9/7	E. of Chatham	600	B. Nikula#		<b>Black Skimmer</b>		
9/12	P'town	700	B. Nikula	9/17	Vineyard Haven	16	C. Leuchtenburg
9/13	Acoaxet	84	M. Lynch#	9/29	WBWS	4	M. Faherty
10/14	Revere B.	96	R. Stymeist	10/4	Edgartown	9	J. Nelson
<b>Iceland Gull</b>				10/12	Revere (POP)	1	E. Harrison#
10/31	P'town (R.P.)	1	B. Nikula	10/17	Wansea	1	M. Eckerson
<b>Lesser Black-backed Gull</b>					<b>South Polar Skua</b>		
9/6	waters off M.V.	1	S. Whiting#	9/13	Stellwagen	1	E. Dalton
9/9-10/31	Pittsfield	1	J. Pierce + v.o.	10/3	P'town (R.P.)	1 ph	S. Arena#
9/14	Northampton	1	B. Bieda		<b>Pomarine Jaeger</b>		
9/14	P.I.	2	R. Heil	thr	P'town	24 max	B. Nikula
9/19	S. Monomoy	107	K. Yakola#	9/6	waters off M.V.	2	S. Whiting#
<b>Least Tern</b>				9/16	Stellwagen	7	B. Nikula#
9/2	P.I.	2	M. Lynch#	10/6	Dennis (Corp. B.)	6	P. Flood#
9/20	Nantucket	2	L. Dunn	10/11	E. of Chatham	3	B. Nikula#
<b>Bridled Tern</b>				10/28	Rockport (A.P.)	9	R. Heil
9/13	Tuckernuck	1 ph	R. Veit		<b>Parasitic Jaeger</b>		
<b>Caspian Tern</b>				thr	P'town	125 max	B. Nikula
9/9-10-22	Reports of 1-2 indiv. from 13 locations			10/4	Dennis (Corp. B.)	12	P. Flood#
9/9	Quincy	3	M. Iliff	10/28	Rockport (A.P.)	1	R. Heil
9/13	Ipswich (C.B.)	3	M. Brengle#		<b>Long-tailed Jaeger</b>		
9/23	Squantum	4	D. Brown#	9/6	Stellwagen	4	P. Flood#
9/24	P.I.	5	S. Miller	thr	P'town	1-3	B. Nikula
9/26	Randolph	3	G. d'Entremont#		<b>Jaeger species</b>		
9/26	Newbury	3	B. Harris#	9/22	P'town	48	B. Nikula
10/4	Sandwich	4	M. Keleher#	10/2	Dennis (Corp. B.)	34	B. Nikula
<b>Black Tern</b>				10/4	P'town (R.P.)	107	B. Nikula
9/3	P'town	25	S. Williams	10/21	P'town (R.P.)	20	B. Nikula
9/6	Nantucket	100	L. Dunn#		<b>Dovekie</b>		
9/10	Westport	4	L. Waters	10/28	Rockport (A.P.)	2	R. Heil
9/13	Ipswich (C.B.)	1	M. Brengle#		<b>Razorbill</b>		
9/18	Westport	1	M. Iliff	10/25	Duxbury B.	1	R. Bowes
<b>Roseate Tern</b>				10/25	P.I.	1	E. Nielsen
9/2	Nantucket	300	L. Dunn#	10/28	Rockport (A.P.)	113	R. Heil
9/7	E. of Chatham	100	B. Nikula#	10/31	P'town (R.P.)	30	B. Nikula
9/12	Orleans	400	J. Trimble#		<b>Black Guillemot</b>		
9/16	Stellwagen	100	B. Nikula#	9/6	Gloucester	2	J. Standley
9/20, 10/10	P'town (R.P.)	600, 2	Davies, Nikula	10/24	off P'town	1	B. Nikula#
<b>Common Tern</b>					<b>Atlantic Puffin</b>		
thr	P'town (R.P.)	3000 max	B. Nikula	10/24	off P'town	3	B. Nikula#
9/7	E. of Chatham	1500	B. Nikula#				

## CUCKOOS THROUGH FINCHES

Although Eastern Screech-Owls may be the most abundant owl in Massachusetts, their cryptic habits make them difficult to find. Perhaps the best strategy is to draw them in by imitating them in the dark. Brian Cassie used this strategy to tally 32 Screech-Owls in five days just in the town of Foxboro. The first Snowy Owl of the season was sighted at Sandy Neck in Barnstable on October 25, two more were seen at Logan Airport on October 26, and one was sighted in Wellfleet on the 27th. A Long-eared Owl was a surprise find at Marblehead Neck, and a Short-eared Owl was noted at Rumney Marsh in Revere. This period coincides with the peak movement of Northern Saw-whet Owls. The best conditions for movement occur during a new moon with cold temperatures and a light wind from the north or northeast. Although this season was relatively mild with no big cold front, the banding station at Drumlin Farm did net 104 Saw-whets.

Hummingbirds that show up in October always need special scrutiny as they may be vagrants; this year there were three carefully documented reports of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. In Great Barrington a **Rufous Hummingbird** was found on October 11.

Another *Selasphorus* type hummingbird showed up in Medford on October 12 in the same yard where one was seen on October 17 last year. Hawk watchers on Wachusett Mountain tallied 94 American Kestrels, 25 Merlins, and 31 Peregrines during the month of September. **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were reported from four locations, including two adults and two juveniles from Longmeadow.

The fall passerine migration should have been well underway during this period, but most birders felt it was lackluster, especially in eastern Massachusetts. It was a bit better in western sections of the state. October did see significant movement in mid-month with good numbers of Blackpolls, Palm, and of course Yellow-rumped warblers. There were some exceptional late records: an Acadian Flycatcher banded at Wellfleet on September 29, a Warbling Vireo on Cuttyhunk on October 10, a Louisiana Waterthrush in Southwick on September 11, a Tennessee Warbler in Chatham on October 30, and a Prairie Warbler in Lexington on October 29. At Manomet, late records included a Gray-cheeked Thrush on October 19 and a Swainson's Thrush on October 27, both banded.

Highlights of sparrow migration included a total of **24** Clay-colored, eight Lark, five Grasshopper, and 11 Nelson's sparrows. Many observers commented on the scarcity of Lincoln's and White-crowned sparrows, both noted in lower numbers this year than last year.

Success stories included a record 370 fledged Purple Martins in Rehoboth, and on Plum Island 35 fledged, two better than in 2014. At Manomet a total of **322** Tufted Titmice were banded during October; Manomet's 47 years of banding data have suggested a northward range shift for several species, one of which is the Tufted Titmouse. This was a banner season for vagrants and less common birds. Nine **Western Kingbirds** were seen during the period as compared to just two in 2014. Although there were reports of **Say's Phoebe** from four locations, the two reported on September 7 were undoubtedly the same bird, fortuitously discovered by two different birders on Tuckernuck Island and nearby Esther Island. The bird seen in Chilmark the next day could easily have been the same bird. **Bell's Vireo** has become an almost annual vagrant since 2005; Manomet banded its fourth this year, and others seen in Newbury and Eastham remained for several days. A **Northern Wheatear** took up residence at Wachusett Reservoir in Clinton for six days, and a **Green-tailed Towhee** paid a brief visit to Hatfield on October 27. Rounding out this exciting period were a **Western Tanager** on Plum Island, and four Summer Tanagers, eight reports of Blue Grosbeaks, two **Bohemian Waxwings**, and a **Yellow-headed Blackbird**.

*R. Stymeist*

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Yellow-billed Cuckoo			9/10	Russell	19	Hawkcount (TS)
9/8 Longmeadow	1	M. Moore	10/thr	Barre Falls	8	Hawkcount (DS)
10/14 P.I.	1	B. Cleavy#	Peregrine Falcon			
10/15 Fairhaven	1	L. Barteau	9/1-23	Mt. Wachusett	31	Hawkcount (SO)
10/17 Framingham	1	J. Hoye#	9/10	Russell	4	Hawkcount (TS)
Black-billed Cuckoo			9/10	Granville	4	Hawkcount (JW)
9/10 Quabbin Pk	1	B. Zajda	9/12-21	Mt. Watatic	8	Hawkcount (TP)
10/6 Winchester	1	R. LaFontaine	9/17	Mt. Wachusett	4	Hawkcount (SO)
10/11 Nantucket	1	V. Laux	10/thr	Barre Falls	7	Hawkcount (DS)
10/18 Brewster	1 b	S. Finnegan	10/1	P.I.	4	T. Wetmore
Eastern Screech-Owl			<b>Red-headed Woodpecker</b>			
10/17 Halifax	5	SSBC (V. Zollo)	9/29-10/31	Longmeadow	2 ad + 2 juv	M. Moore#
10/18-22 Foxboro	32	B. Cassie	9/30	Ipswich	1 ad	W. Tatro
Great Horned Owl			10/26-27	P.I.	1 imm	S. Babitt#
10/11 P.I.	2	T. Wetmore	10/30-31	W. Roxbury (MP)	1 imm	M. Iliff#
10/17 Halifax	4	SSBC (V. Zollo)	Red-bellied Woodpecker			
10/18-22 Foxboro	2	B. Cassie	9/26	Braintree	6	G. d'Entremont#
Snowy Owl			10/8	Ipswich	6	J. Berry#
10/25 Barnstable (S.N.)	1	D. Bragg	10/31	Southboro	5	M. Lynch#
10/26 Boston (Logan)	2	N. Smith	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker			
10/27 Wellfleet	1	A. Schroeder	9/15	Quabbin (G12)	3	B. Zajda
Barred Owl			9/25	Salisbury	2	S. McGrath
9/29 Berlin	3	R. Langer#	9/25	Sandisfield	4	M. Lynch#
10/11 Ipswich	2	J. Berry#	10/6	Weston	2	J. Forbes
Long-eared Owl			10/7	Winthrop	2	P. Peterson
10/17 MNWS	1	E. Nielsen	Northern Flicker			
Short-eared Owl			9/17	Ware R. IBA	16	M. Lynch#
10/23 Revere	1	M. Resendes	9/25	Malden	10	P. + F. Vale
10/31 P'town	1	L. Waters#	9/25	Sandisfield	24	M. Lynch#
Northern Saw-whet Owl			10/31	Eastham (F. H.)	6	G. d'Entremont#
9/10 Lenox	1	J. Pierce	Pileated Woodpecker			
9/26 Quabbin	2	T. Gagnon#	9/6	Ware R. IBA	5	M. Lynch#
10/thr DFWS	104 b	K. Seymour	9/7	Wendell	5	M. Lynch#
10/thr Northbridge	29 b	B. Milke	9/20	Bolton Flats	2	K. Bourinot#
Common Nighthawk			<b>Olive-sided Flycatcher</b>			
9/9 Pittsfield	66	K. Hanson	9/6	Pittsfield	1	G. Hurley
9/15 Mt. A.	5	A. Parker	9/9	Southwick	1	S. Kellogg
9/24 Westford	1	P. Guidetti	Eastern Wood-Pewee			
10/10 Cambridge	1	G. Dupont	9/5	Waltham	4	J. Forbes
Eastern Whip-poor-will			9/17	Ware R. IBA	6	M. Lynch#
9/6 Townsend	1	R. Templeton	10/11	Nahant	1	K. Dia#
9/12 P.I.	2	T. Wetmore	10/18	Nantucket	1	J. Trimble#
9/15 S. Quabbin	2	L. Therrien	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher			
Chimney Swift			9/3	Pittsfield	1	J. Pierce
9/5 Melrose	18	D. + I. Jewell	9/4, 20	P.I.	1 b, 1 b	B. Flemer#
9/9 Mt. Wachusett	2	S. Olson#	9/6	S. Quabbin	1	L. Therrien
9/23 W. Roxbury (MP)	2	P. Peterson	9/12	Easthampton	1	B. Zajda#
Ruby-throated Hummingbird			9/17	Nahant	1	L. Pivacek
9/5 Mt. Watatic	6	T. Pirro	9/19	Cuttyhunk	1	I. Davies#
9/12 Mt. Wachusett	5	R. Chase	9/22	Squantum	1	T. O'Neill#
9/16 Huntington	7	M. Lynch#	Acadian Flycatcher			
10/1 Brewster	1	D. Clapp#	9/29	WBWS	1 b	J. Junda
10/2 Wayland	1	G. Long	Alder Flycatcher			
10/4 Worcester	1	S. LaBree	9/22	Cambr. (Daneyh)	1	T. Spahr
<b>Rufous Hummingbird</b>			Traill's Flycatcher			
10/11 Gr Barrington	1	G. Ward	9/14	Easthampton	1	L. Therrien
<b>Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird</b>			Least Flycatcher			
10/12 Medford	1	M. Rines#	9/12	Westport	1	L. Waters
Belted Kingfisher			9/15	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	M. Iliff
9/11 P.I.	3	N. Landry	10/8	Brewster	1 b	S. Finnegan
9/17 Ware R. IBA	3	M. Lynch#	Empidonax species			
American Kestrel			10/22	Westport	1 ph	S. Martin
9/1-27 Mt. Wachusett	94	Hawkcount (SO)	Eastern Phoebe			
9/10 Granville	111	Hawkcount (JW)	9/20	Bolton Flats	24	K. Bourinot#
9/10 Shatterack Mt.	47	Hawkcount (TS)	9/25	Sandisfield	41	M. Lynch#
9/15-27 Barre Falls	17	Hawkcount (DS)	10/15	Nahant	12	L. Pivacek
9/16-26 Mt. Watatic	38	Hawkcount (TP)	10/20	Burlington	9	M. Rines
10/2-24 Barre Falls	19	Hawkcount (DS)	<b>Say's Phoebe</b>			
10/4-23 Mt. Wachusett	19	Hawkcount (SO)	9/7	Tuckernuck	1 ph	R. Veit
Merlin			9/7	Esther I.	1 ph	L. Dunn#
9/3-25 Mt. Wachusett	25	Hawkcount (SO)	9/8	Chilmark	1 ph	A. Keith#
9/5-26 Mt. Watatic	45	Hawkcount (TP)	10/10	Eastham	1 ph	B. Lagasse#
9/10 Granville	13	Hawkcount (JW)				

Great Crested Flycatcher				10/24	P.I.	1	E. Labato
9/4	Newton	1	J. Forbes	Northern Rough-winged Swallow			
9/10	P.I.	1	R. Stymeist	9/17	Wayland	55	B. Harris
9/12	Lynn	1	R. Heil	9/29	Longmeadow	8	S. Motyl
9/16	Lexington	1	C. Cook	9/30	Wayland	20	J. Forbes#
<b>Western Kingbird</b>				<b>Bank Swallow</b>			
9/16-17	W. Roxbury (MP)	1 ph	M. McMahon#	9/6	P.I.	3	J. Keeley#
9/25	Eastham (F.E.)	1	E. Hoopes	9/13	Ipswich (C.B.)	1	J. Berry#
10/15	Truro	1	M. Lynch#	10/16	Nantucket	1	J. Trimble#
10/16	Nahant	1	S. Hepburn	<b>Cliff Swallow</b>			
10/21-28	P.I.	1 ph	H. Zimmern#	9/15	P.I.	2	R. Heil
10/27	Nantucket	1	V. Laux#	9/19	Nantucket	2	T. Pastuszek#
10/30	N. Truro	1	D. Reynolds	<b>Barn Swallow</b>			
10/30	DWWS	2	J. McCoy#	9/1	Brookfield	17	M. Lynch#
<b>Eastern Kingbird</b>				9/13	Ipswich (C.B.)	2	J. Berry#
9/2	P.I.	7	M. Lynch#	9/26	Cumb. Farms	5	S. Sullivan
9/10	Chatham	13	M. Faherty	10/18	Nantucket	3	P. Trimble
9/11	Medford	2	N. Robertson	10/24	GMNWR	1	J. Trimble
9/16	Sharon	2	V. Zollo	<b>Tufted Titmouse</b>			
9/27	Northboro	1	N. Paulson	10/thr	Manomet	322 b	T. Lloyd-Evans
<b>White-eyed Vireo</b>				<b>Red-breasted Nuthatch</b>			
9/1-10/21	Reports of indiv. from 15 locations			9/6	Ware R. IBA	17	M. Lynch#
<b>Bell's Vireo</b>				9/19	Quabbin (G41)	4	B. Zajda
9/19-21	Newbury	1 ph	S. Sullivan + v.o.	9/27	P.I.	3	T. Wetmore
10/9	Manomet	1 b ph	T. Lloyd-Evans	<b>Brown Creeper</b>			
10/30	Eastham (F.H.)	1 ph	S. Williams	10/thr	P.I.	22 b	B. Flemer#
<b>Yellow-throated Vireo</b>				10/10	Plymouth	2	G. d'Entremont#
9/12	Orleans	2	J. Trimble#	10/17	Wachusett Res.	3	M. Lynch#
9/15	P.I.	1	R. Heil	10/24	Westport	2	G. d'Entremont#
9/23	Ware R. IBA	1	M. Lynch#	<b>House Wren</b>			
<b>Blue-headed Vireo</b>				9/6	Woburn	10	M. Rines
9/27	Ware R. IBA	14	M. Lynch#	9/16	Huntington	11	M. Lynch#
9/28	Quabbin (G10)	3	B. Zajda	9/24	Burlington	5	M. Rines
10/10	Plymouth	3	G. d'Entremont#	10/14	Jamaica Plain	2	P. Peterson
10/15	Nahant	6	L. Pivacek	10/21	Woburn (HP)	1	D. Williams
10/15	Burlington	3	M. Rines	10/26	Quincy	1	S. Avery
10/29	W. Barnstable	1	S. Matheny	<b>Winter Wren</b>			
<b>Warbling Vireo</b>				10/8	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore
9/17	Belchertown	4	B. Zajda	10/19	Boston	1	L. Nichols
9/21	Watertown	2	R. Stymeist	10/31	Southboro	2	M. Lynch#
10/10	Cuttyhunk	1	E. Lipton#	<b>Marsh Wren</b>			
<b>Philadelphia Vireo</b>				9/2	P.I.	4	M. Lynch#
9/thr	Reports of indiv. from 13 locations			9/3	GMNWR	8	A. Bragg#
9/8, 17, 18	Manomet	1 b, 1 b, 1 b	T. Lloyd-Evans	9/10	Westport	1	L. Waters
9/18	Brewster	6 b	S. Finnegan	9/19	Northfield	2	E. Huston
<b>Red-eyed Vireo</b>				9/28	Amherst	1	L. Beltran
9/6	Ware R. IBA	15	M. Lynch#	<b>Blue-gray Gnatcatcher</b>			
9/19	P.I.	9	G. d'Entremont#	9/6	Waltham	3	J. Forbes
10/20	Burlington	2	M. Rines	10/12	N. Truro	1	J. Young
10/31	P.I.	1	S. Miller	10/21	Woods Hole	1	M. Schanbacher
<b>Fish Crow</b>				10/24	Rockport	1	B. Harris
9/12	Hadley	3	B. Zajda#	<b>Golden-crowned Kinglet</b>			
10/30	Boston (BNC)	80	P. Peterson	10/9	Burlington	10	M. Rines
<b>Common Raven</b>				10/10	Wachusett Res.	8	M. Lynch#
9/16	GMNWR	14	C. Cook	10/10	Plymouth	5	G. d'Entremont#
9/23	Mt. Wachusett	25	S. Olson	10/15	P.I.	10	D. Chickering#
9/26, 10/18	Mt. Watatic	24, 12	T. Pirro	<b>Ruby-crowned Kinglet</b>			
<b>Horned Lark</b>				9/27	Ware R. IBA	15	M. Lynch#
10/4	Saugus	25	S. Zende#	9/28	Quabbin (G10)	4	B. Zajda
10/12	P.I.	20	H. Wales	10/11	Burlington	5	M. Rines#
10/12	Winthrop B.	2	S. Riley	10/14	Mt.A.	9	C. Cook
10/15	P'town	19	M. Lynch#	10/15	Nahant	8	L. Pivacek
10/25	Saugus	4	S. Zende#	10/23	Cambr. (Daneyh)	4	K. Hartel
<b>Purple Martin</b>				10/24	Fall River	3	G. d'Entremont#
9/thr	Rehoboth	88 pr, 370 fl	R. Marr	<b>Northern Wheatear</b>			
9/9	P.I.	35 fl	S. McGrath	10/1-06	Wachusett Res.	1 ph	J. Lawson + v.o.
9/15	Westport	1	M. Iliff	<b>Eastern Bluebird</b>			
<b>Tree Swallow</b>				9/12	Easthampton	21	B. Zajda#
9/13	Acoaxet	1200	M. Lynch#	10/10	Wachusett Res.	16	M. Lynch#
9/19	S. Monomoy	20000	E. Orcutt#	10/14	DFWS	18	P. Sowizral
10/3	Truro	750	SSBC (GdE)	10/31	Barre Falls	12	D. Schilling#
10/12	Cumb. Farms	250	G. d'Entremont	<b>Veery</b>			
10/20	Southwick	20	S. Kellogg	9/12	Lexington (DM)	2	M. Rines#

Veery (continued)								
9/22	P.I.	1 b	B. Flemer#	Black-and-white Warbler	9/7	Wendell	4	M. Lynch#
Gray-cheeked Thrush					9/11	Mt.A.	3	M. Sabourin#
9/13, 21	P.I.	1 b, 1 b	B. Flemer#		9/17	Nahant	3	L. Pivacek
9/26	Wayland	8	A. McCarthy#		9/19	Quabbin (G35)	4	B. Zajda
10/14	Brewster	1 b	S. Finnegan		9/20	P.I.	3	J. Keeley#
10/19	Manomet	1 b	T. Lloyd-Evans		10/27	Boston (RKG)	1	R. Doherty
Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's Thrush				Tennessee Warbler	9/3	Pittsfield	2	J. Pierce
9/19	P.I.	1	G. d'Entremont#		9/19	Quabbin (G35)	2	B. Zajda
9/20	Chatham	1 ph	B. Harris		10/1	Pittsfield	3	J. Pierce
9/20	Ipswich (C.B.)	1	N. Dubrow		10/30	Chatham	1	S. Paventy#
9/26	Quabbin	1	T. Gagnon#	Orange-crowned Warbler	10/6	Northampton	2	T. Gagnon
Swainson's Thrush					10/8	Nahant	2	L. Pivacek
9/12-21	P.I.	7 b	B. Flemer#		10/18	Squantum	2	G. d'Entremont
10/27	Manomet	1 b	T. Lloyd-Evans		10/24	Lanesville	2	B. Harris
Hermit Thrush				Nashville Warbler	10/11	Cambridge	2	J. Forbes
9/6	Ware R. IBA	8	M. Lynch#		10/14	Jamaica Plain	2	P. Peterson
10/12	P.I.	12 b	B. Flemer#		10/17	P.I.	3	T. Wetmore
10/18	Squantum	6	G. d'Entremont		10/19	Winchester	2	R. LaFontaine
10/18	Medford	8	R. LaFontaine		10/20	Boston (Fens)	2	P. Peterson
10/21	Quabbin (G5)	10	B. Zajda	Connecticut Warbler	9/1-10/7	Reports of indiv. from 12 locations		
10/22	Lexington (DM)	8	M. Rines	Mourning Warbler	9/11	Lexington	1	B. Stevens#
Gray Catbird					9/16, 18	P.I.	1 b, 1 b	B. Flemer#
9/12	Framingham	21	J. Hoye#		9/17	Ware R. IBA	1	M. Lynch#
9/21	Watertown	10	R. Stymeist		9/21	Wayland	1	B. Harris
9/26	Westboro	46	M. Lynch#	Common Yellowthroat	9/16	Huntington	56	M. Lynch#
10/24	P.I.	3	E. Labato		9/17	Framingham	14	J. Hoye#
Brown Thrasher					9/20	Bolton Flats	17	K. Bourinot#
9/16	P.I.	8	D. Chickering		9/23	Ware R. IBA	15	M. Lynch#
9/19	Aquinnah	1	P. Gilmore#		10/21	Boston (RKG)	3	L. Nichols
10/15	Burlington	1	M. Rines	Hooded Warbler	9/4, 10/10	MNWS	1, 1	Filosa, Taggart
American Pipit					9/7	Nahant	1 m	L. Pivacek
9/19	P.I.	30	P. + F. Vale		9/14	Manomet	1 b	T. Lloyd-Evans
9/26	Northfield	75	E. Huston		9/18	Russell	1	T. Swochak#
10/9	Longmeadow	50	M. Moore		10/8	Salisbury	1 m	E. Labato
10/21	Groton	40	R. Templeton		10/9	Milton	1	E. Lipton
10/22	Gill	100	J. Rose		10/11	P.I.	1	C. Riehl
10/30	Lincoln	26	M. Rines		10/16	Fall River	1	P. Champlin
<b>Bohemian Waxwing</b>					10/23	Mt. Wachusett	1	S. Olson#
10/24	N. Truro	1	J. Kricher#	American Redstart	9/7	Wendell	5	M. Lynch#
10/26	Salisbury	1	T. Spahr		9/11	Mt.A.	16	M. Sabourin#
Cedar Waxwing					9/12	Cambr. (Daney)	4	K. Hartel
9/4	P.I.	35	J. Berry#		9/16	Lexington	5	C. Cook
9/17	Ware R. IBA	51	M. Lynch#		10/18	Nantucket	3	J. Trimble#
10/25	Ipswich	30	J. Berry#		10/31	Eastham (F. H.)	1	G. d'Entremont#
Lapland Longspur				Cape May Warbler	9/7	Granville	2	D. Holmes
10/5	P.I.	2	T. Wetmore		9/9	Pittsfield	3	J. Pierce
10/10	P'town (R.P.)	2	M. Faherty#		9/11	Lenox	4	J. Pierce
10/27	Gloucester	1	J. Nelson		9/11	Mt.A.	2	M. Sabourin#
Snow Bunting					9/13	Boston (PG)	4	R. Stymeist
10/25	Saugus	18	S. Zende#		9/13, 10/31	Winchester	3, 1	R. LaFontaine
10/26	Granville	2	J. Weeks		9/17	Ware R. IBA	3	M. Lynch#
10/27	Gloucester	17	J. Nelson		10/18	Westport	12	P. Champlin
10/30	P.I.	10	T. Wetmore	Magnolia Warbler	9/6	Ware R. IBA	2	M. Lynch#
10/31	S. Quabbin	10	L. Therrien		9/16	Lexington	2	C. Cook
Ovenbird					9/16	Huntington	3	M. Lynch#
9/7	Wendell	2	M. Lynch#		9/20	P.I.	2	S. Williams
9/12	Lexington (DM)	2	M. Rines#		10/18	Nantucket	2	J. Trimble#
10/8	P.I.	2 b	B. Flemer#					
10/26	Boston (RKG)	1	L. Nichols					
Worm-eating Warbler								
9/1	Sudbury	1	T. Spahr	Cerulean Warbler	9/1	Sudbury	1 ph	T. Spahr
9/25	Brewster	1 b	S. Finnegan#					
Louisiana Waterthrush				Northern Parula	9/13	Boston (PG)	4	R. Stymeist
9/11	Southwick	1	S. Kellogg		9/13, 10/31	Winchester	3, 1	R. LaFontaine
Northern Waterthrush					9/17	Ware R. IBA	3	M. Lynch#
9/1	P.I.	2	S. Miller#		10/18	Westport	12	P. Champlin
9/1-10/7	Reports of indiv. from 14 locations							
10/19	Westport	1	L. Waters					
Blue-winged Warbler								
9/17	Wayland	1	B. Harris					
9/17	Nahant	1	L. Pivacek					
9/20	Westboro	1	J. Lawson					

Magnolia Warbler (continued)			9/17	Nahant	2	L. Pivacek	
10/26	S. Hamilton	1	D. Walters	9/20	P.I.	2	J. Keeley#
Bay-breasted Warbler				10/11	Worcester	1	J. Lawson
9/6	Pittsfield	1	J. Pierce	10/13	Winchester	1	R. LaFontaine
9/19	Granville	1	S. Kellogg	Yellow-breasted Chat			
9/19	Quabbin (G35)	3	B. Zajda	thr	Reports of indiv. from 13 locations		
10/10	Winchester	1	A. Gurka	9/8	Manomet	2 b	T. Lloyd-Evans
Blackburnian Warbler				10/24	Rockport	2	B. Harris
9/6	Ware R. IBA	4	M. Lynch#	<b>Green-tailed Towhee</b>			
9/19	Quabbin (G35)	4	B. Zajda	10/27	Hatfield	1	D. Pritchard
10/5	Quabbin (G52)	4	B. Zajda	Eastern Towhee			
10/9	Nantucket	1	V. Laux#	9/7	Wendell	43	M. Lynch#
Yellow Warbler				9/10	P.I.	22	R. Stymeist
9/2	Melrose	3	D. + I. Jewell	9/27	Ware R. IBA	13	M. Lynch#
9/15	P.I.	4	R. Heil	10/15	Burlington	5	M. Rines
9/16	Huntington	2	M. Lynch#	10/23	Westboro	4	T. Spahr
10/21	Salisbury	1	T. Spahr	American Tree Sparrow			
Chestnut-sided Warbler				10/11	E. Brimfield	1	B. Zajda
9/6, 17	Ware R. IBA	11, 1	M. Lynch#	10/21	Salisbury	1	T. Spahr
Blackpoll Warbler				10/23	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore
9/11	Mt.A.	2	M. Sabourin#	10/25	Boston (Fens)	1	R. Schain
10/1	Brighton	16	P. Peterson	10/27	GMNWR	1	W. Martens#
10/4	Winchester	10	R. LaFontaine	Clay-colored Sparrow			
10/10	Westport	22	P. Champlin#	thr	Reports of indiv. from 24 locations		
10/30	Boston (BNC)	3	P. Peterson	Field Sparrow			
Black-throated Blue Warbler				9/26	Weymouth	6	G. d'Entremont#
9/7	Wendell	19	M. Lynch#	10/6	P.I.	10	T. Wetmore
9/19	Quabbin (G35)	2	B. Zajda	10/16	Boston (BNC)	4	P. Peterson
10/4	Winchester	2	R. LaFontaine	10/21	Woburn (HP)	4	D. Williams
10/11	Salisbury	2	J. Berry#	10/24	Gloucester	7	B. Harris
10/12	Belmont	2	J. Forbes	Vesper Sparrow			
10/24	Rockport	2	B. Harris	9/24	Hadley	4	L. Therrien
10/25	Chestnut Hill	1	M. Garvey	9/27	Orange	2	B. Lafley
Palm Warbler				10/25	Saugus	2	S. Zende#
9/13	Westport	1	M. Lynch#	Lark Sparrow			
9/20	Bolton Flats	11	K. Bourinot#	9/6	Quincy	1	S. Whitebread
10/6	S. Amherst	27	B. Zajda	9/7	Concord	1	R. Jilek
10/6	Northampton	66	T. Gagnon	9/11	P.I.	1	K. Elwell
10/18	Paxton	45	R. Jenkins	9/12	Concord	1	S. Heinrich
10/21	Groton	30	R. Templeton	9/12-16	Falmouth	1	K. Fiske#
10/31	Longmeadow	2	M. Moore	10/15	Peabody	1	J. McCoy
Pine Warbler				10/15	Lincoln	1	MAS (B. Lawson)
9/13	P'town (R.P.)	32	J. Trimble#	10/22	Winthrop	1	P. Peterson
9/19	Wellfleet	15	BBC (R. Stymeist)	Savannah Sparrow			
9/23	Ware R. IBA	44	M. Lynch#	9/25	Sandisfield	19	M. Lynch#
Yellow-rumped Warbler				9/26	Lexington (DM)	10	M. Rines#
9/7	Aquinnah	1	P. Gilmore#	10/10	Easthampton	52	B. Zajda
10/12	Westport	48	M. Lynch#	10/10	Framingham	43	J. Hoye#
10/15	Nahant	80	L. Pivacek	10/18	Saugus	55	S. Zende#
10/16	DFWS	80	P. Sowizral	Ipswich Sparrow			
10/18	Wachusett Res.	54	K. Bourinot#	10/14	Yarmouth	1	P. Crosson
10/18	Paxton	150	R. Jenkins	10/22	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore
10/22	P.I.	175	P. + F. Vale	Grasshopper Sparrow			
Prairie Warbler				9/16	Hadley	1	L. Therrien
9/6	Ware R. IBA	4	M. Lynch#	9/19	Mt Tom	1	T. Gagnon
10/12	P.I.	1	M. Filosa	10/20	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore
10/29	Lexington	1	R. Stymeist	10/27	Marstons Mills	1	P. Crosson
Black-throated Green Warbler				10/30	Truro	1	S. Williams
9/16	Lexington	4	C. Cook	Nelson's Sparrow			
9/17	Ware R. IBA	22	M. Lynch#	9/19	Hadley	1	J. Coleman
9/19	Quabbin (G35)	6	B. Zajda	10/6	S. Amherst	1	B. Zajda
10/5	Jamaica Plain	4	P. Peterson	10/7	Northampton	1	D. Schell
10/27	Fall River	1	L. Abbey	10/8	Fairhaven	2	L. Waters
10/30	Boston (BNC)	1	P. Peterson	10/13	Ipswich	4	M. Brengle#
Canada Warbler				10/15	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore
9/6	Lexington	1	M. Rines	10/16	Salisbury	1	B. Harris
9/9	Pittsfield	1	J. Pierce	Saltmarsh Sparrow			
9/13	Boston (PG)	1	R. Stymeist	9/22	P.I.	8	T. Wetmore
9/14	P.I.	1 b	B. Flemer#	10/12	Westport	2	M. Lynch#
9/18	Hingham (WE)	1	S. Williams	10/13	Ipswich	15	M. Brengle#
9/19	Shutesbury	1	B. Emily	10/25	Squantum	1	V. Zollo
Wilson's Warbler				Seaside Sparrow			
9/12	Boston (PG)	2	P. Peterson	10/24	Squantum	1	M. Garvey

Fox Sparrow				10/11	Sharon	1	V. Zollo
10/17	Newton	1	M. Garvey	10/18	Nantucket	2	J. Trimble#
10/18	Medford	1	R. LaFontaine	10/21	Brewster	1	J. Hoye#
10/25	Quabog IBA	4	M. Lynch#				
Lincoln's Sparrow							
9/16	Huntington	6	M. Lynch#	9/12	Easthampton	15	B. Zajda#
9/20	Bolton Flats	5	K. Bourinot#	9/16	Huntington	39	M. Lynch#
10/7	Cumb. Farms	4	J. Sweeney	9/26	Lexington (DM)	7	M. Rines#
10/11	Burlington	4	M. Rines#	10/15	Nahant	6	L. Pivacek
10/14	DFWS	3	P. Sowizral				
Swamp Sparrow							
10/3	GMNWR	26	BBC (B. Volkle)	9/2	P.I.	2	B. Harris
10/10	Plymouth	20	G. d'Entremont#	9/16	Westboro	2	N. Paulson
10/15	GMNWR	20	K. Dia#	9/26	Newbury	3	B. Harris
10/25	Quabog IBA	53	M. Lynch#	10/11	Nantucket	4	B. Harris#
White-throated Sparrow							
9/1	Nantucket	1	T. Pastuszak	Bobolink			
9/13	Boston (RKG)	1	R. Stymeist	9/7	Framingham	26	J. Hoye#
10/6	S. Amherst	36	B. Zajda	9/19	Lexington	20	J. Forbes
10/8	Framingham	21	J. Hoye#	9/20	Saugus	42	S. Zende#
10/11	Quabog IBA	43	M. Lynch#	9/20	Bolton Flats	15	K. Bourinot#
10/18	Boston	114	BBC (R. Stymeist)	10/18	Cumb. Farms	3	B. Harris
White-crowned Sparrow							
9/26	Boston (Fens)	1	P. Peterson	Eastern Meadowlark			
10/10	Easthampton	9	B. Zajda	10/11	S. Weymouth	3	SSBC (GdE)
10/10	Westport	3	P. Champlin#	10/19	Boston (BNC)	1	P. Peterson
10/15	Nahant	4	L. Pivacek	10/24	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore
Dark-eyed Junco							
9/15	Mt. Wachusett	6	S. Olson	<b>Yellow-headed Blackbird</b>			
9/21	Waltham	1	J. Forbes	9/21	Chatham	1	E. Orcutt#
10/15	W. Newbury	40	S. McGrath	Rusty Blackbird			
10/18	P.I.	24	P. + F. Vale	10/5	Belmont	4	J. Forbes
10/26	Quabbin (G5)	42	B. Zajda	10/11	Quabog IBA	11	M. Lynch#
<b>Summer Tanager</b>				10/18	Paxton	6	R. Jenkins
9/15	Mashpee	1	M. Keleher#	10/21	Lynnfield	5	C. Lapite#
9/17-20	P.I.	1	C. Dengler#	10/21	Wayland	4	G. Dysart
10/7	Chatham	1	M. Malin	10/21	Groton	4	R. Templeton
10/11	Nantucket	1	T. Pastuszak#	10/31	Northboro	10	M. Lynch#
Scarlet Tanager							
9/6	Ware R. IBA	3	M. Lynch#	Orchard Oriole			
9/23	P.I.	2	P. + F. Vale	9/19	P.I.	1	D. + T. Swain
10/7	Nantucket	2	V. Laux#	10/20	Boston (BNC)	1	P. Peterson
10/29	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore	Baltimore Oriole			
<b>Western Tanager</b>				9/11	Mt.A.	3	M. Sabourin#
9/19-23	P.I.	1	E. Lipton#	9/17	Nahant	2	L. Pivacek
Rose-breasted Grosbeak				9/26	Boston (Fens)	2	P. Peterson
9/3	Wayland	7	B. Harris	10/15	P.I.	1	D. Chickering#
9/16	Huntington	4	M. Lynch#	Purple Finch			
9/17	Newton	3	J. Forbes	10/18	Westport	1	P. Champlin
10/14	Nantucket	1	T. Pastuszak#	10/24	P.I.	5	E. Labato
<b>Blue Grosbeak</b>				10/27	Burlington	1	M. Rines
9/19	Harwich	1	B. Harris	10/31	Southboro	4	M. Lynch#
9/20	Cumb. Farms	1	V. Zollo	Pine Siskin			
10/6	Northampton	1	L. Therrien	9/6	Shutesbury	1	B. Emily
10/11	Holland	1	B. Zajda	9/15	Westwood	1	E. Nielsen
				10/22	Lexington (DM)	1	M. Rines
				10/25	Quabog IBA	42	M. Lynch#
				10/27	P.I.	25	T. Wetmore
				Evening Grosbeak			
				9/6	P.I.	1	W. Tatro#
				10/30	Greenfield	2	J. Smith

## ABBREVIATIONS FOR BIRD SIGHTINGS

Taxonomic order is based on AOU checklist, Seventh edition, up to the 53rd Supplement, as published in *Auk* 129 (3): 573-88 (2012) (see <<http://checklist.aou.org/>>).

<b>Locations</b>		Newbypt	Newburyport
Location-#	MAS Breeding Bird Atlas Block	ONWR	Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge
A.A.	Arnold Arboretum, Boston	PG	Public Garden, Boston
ABC	Allen Bird Club	P.I.	Plum Island
A.P.	Andrews Point, Rockport	Pd	Pond
A.Pd	Allens Pond, S. Dartmouth	POP	Point of Pines, Revere
B.	Beach	PR	Pinnacle Rock, Malden
Barre F.D.	Barre Falls Dam	P'town	Provincetown
B.I.	Belle Isle, E. Boston	Pont.	Pontoosuc Lake, Lanesboro
B.R.	Bass Rocks, Gloucester	R.P.	Race Point, Provincetown
BBC	Brookline Bird Club	Res.	Reservoir
BMB	Broad Meadow Brook, Worcester	RKG	Rose Kennedy Greenway, Boston
BNC	Boston Nature Center, Mattapan	S.B.	South Beach, Chatham
C.B.	Crane Beach, Ipswich	S.N.	Sandy Neck, Barnstable
CGB	Coast Guard Beach, Eastham	SRV	Sudbury River Valley
C.P.	Crooked Pond, Boxford	SSBC	South Shore Bird Club
Cambr.	Cambridge	TASL	Take A Second Look, Boston Harbor Census
CCBC	Cape Cod Bird Club	WBWS	Wellfleet Bay WS
Corp. B.	Corporation Beach, Dennis	WE	World's End, Hingham
Cumb. Farms	Cumberland Farms, Middleboro	WMWS	Wachusett Meadow WS
DFWS	Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary	Wompatuck SP	Hingham, Cohasset, Scituate, Norwell
DWMA	Delaney WMA, Stow, Bolton, Harvard	Worc.	Worcester
DWWS	Daniel Webster WS		
E.P.	Eastern Point, Gloucester	<b>Other Abbreviations</b>	
F.E.	First Encounter Beach, Eastham	ad	adult
F.H.	Fort Hill, 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	fide	on the authority of
H.	Harbor	fl	fledgling
H.P.	Halibut Point, Rockport	imm	immature
HP	Horn Pond, Woburn	juv	juvenile
HRWMA	High Ridge WMA, Gardner	lt	light (morph)
I.	Island	m	male
IRWS	Ipswich River WS	max	maximum
L.	Ledge	migr	migrating
MAS	Mass Audubon	n	nesting
MP	Millennium Park, W. Roxbury	ph	photographed
M.V.	Martha's Vineyard	pl	plumage
MBWMA	Martin Burns WMA, Newbury	pr	pair
MI	Morris Island	S	summer (1S = 1st summer)
MNWS	Marblehead Neck WS	v.o.	various observers
MSSF	Myles Standish State Forest, Plymouth	W	winter (2W = second winter)
Mt.A.	Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambr.	yg	young
NAC	Nine Acre Corner, Concord	#	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 email. Send written reports to Bird Sightings, Robert H. Stymeist, 36 Lewis Avenue, Arlington MA 02474-3206. 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 email submission, visit: <<http://www.birdobserver.org/Contact-Us/Submit-Sightings>>.

Species on the Review List of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee, 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 Matt Garvey, 137 Beaconsfield Rd. #5, Brookline MA 02445, or by email to <[mattgarvey@gmail.com](mailto:mattgarvey@gmail.com)>.



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I am a turkey vulture.



Yes indeed.



My head is bare to prevent rotting flesh from adhering to it.



To keep cool, I poop on my legs and feet.



My main defense is



projectile vomiting.



I am so awesome.



©Rosemary Mosco

# ABOUT THE COVER

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## Turkey Vulture

In recent decades, the sight of Turkey Vultures (*Cathartes aura*) teetering across the New England sky has become a commonplace event. Turkey Vultures are large, long-winged birds, soaring with their wings set at a slight V or dihedral. They weigh only about two and a half pounds, not much for a bird that looms so large. The feathering is dark brown or black except for the undersides of the primaries and secondaries, which are silvery-gray or gray. The long tail is also gray below. In adults the head is red and the beak is ivory; in juveniles the head is black and the bill is dark and tipped in black. Turkey Vultures can be separated in flight from Black Vultures (*Coragyps atratus*) by the latter's short tail and propensity for alternating burst of rapid wingbeats with gliding flight. Up to six subspecies are recognized for the wide-ranging Turkey Vulture; *C. a. septentrionalis* is the subspecies breeding in the eastern United States. Its closest relatives are the Lesser and Greater Yellow-headed Vultures of Central and South America.

The common name “Turkey” comes from the red head of the adult that supposedly resembles the head of a Turkey. The name “Vulture” comes from the Latin word “vultur,” which means “to pluck or tear,” an obvious reference to the feeding habits of vultures. The generic name *Cathartes* comes from the Greek “kathartes,” which means “purifier,” referring to the scavenger habits of the species.

The lack of feathering on the head is an adaptation for sanitation, as vultures frequently poke their heads into putrid carcasses. As an adaptation for hot climates, Turkey Vultures often invoke a process known as urohydrosis, where the birds defecate on their legs and feet, which together with high vascularization of their legs, allows temperature reduction by evaporative cooling—how charming. Spreadwing and delta wing postures probably also serve in temperature control, warming the birds in the early morning sunlight and cooling them later in the day. In cold conditions they may retract their bare necks into their feathers to reduce heat loss. Turkey Vultures have been reported to repel predators by projectile vomiting material that smells foul—lovely.

The Turkey Vulture has a vast breeding range. In Canada, breeding distribution is patchy from Southern British Columbia in the west across southern Canada and the Great Lakes to southern Maine in the east. They breed in all of the territorial United States except for a few northern and central states. Farther south, they range throughout the Caribbean and Central and South America to Tierra del Fuego and the Falkland Islands. In Massachusetts, the Turkey Vulture is considered an uncommon but increasingly regular breeder, but it is a common migrant that has been steadily increasing in numbers in recent decades. Its cryptic nesting habits may lead to underestimation of the actual number of breeders. The first breeding record for Massachusetts was in 1954. The Turkey Vulture is a partial migrant. Birds from Massachusetts west to Oklahoma and most western birds migrate south in winter; the eastern birds wintering in the southern United States and the western birds in Central and South America. In our area, migrant Turkey Vultures arrive in March and leave mainly during September in the fall. With their changing breeding status, however, small numbers of Turkey Vultures increasingly winter in Massachusetts

Turkey Vultures prefer forested areas for nesting where rock outcrops, caves, abandoned buildings, and hollow logs occur, and they are isolated from human disturbance. They exhibit strong breeding-site fidelity. Nests tend to be widely spaced but the birds may be territorial around the nest. Agonistic encounters at roosts and carcasses involve extending and lowering the head, opening the bill or biting, and kicking.

Turkey Vultures are monogamous and probably mate for life. During courtship flight, one bird follows the other closely with more than the usual flapping and includes swoops, dives, and evasions. There is no nest building and the female lays the usual clutch of two creamy white eggs on bare substrate. Both parents have brood patches and share incubation duties about equally for the four weeks until hatching. The chicks hatch covered with down, their eyes either open or closed, and they are immobile. Both parents brood the chicks and feed them by regurgitating well-digested food. First flights may occur in eight weeks but ten to twelve weeks is more common. Parents continue to feed chicks until they are around 12 weeks old when they may also join communal roosts.

Turkey Vultures prefer mixed farmland and forest which provide native and domestic animal carcasses and habitat for communal roosting. Turkey Vultures locate carrion both visually and by smell. Unlike most birds, they have well developed olfactory organs. They are opportunistic foragers that will eat carrion from just about any animal group, although they prefer small mammals. They also will eat fish, reptiles, birds, and insects. They sometimes take plant material from a carcass' intestines, and occasionally even eat fruit. They prefer fresh carcasses but for thick-skinned mammals and reptiles they wait for putrefaction in order to gain access. They may enter large carrion through the anus, and sometimes through the mouth or nostrils. They pluck or tear tissue from the bones. They rarely take live prey unless it is trapped or injured.

Turkey Vultures in many areas are in competition with the more aggressive Black Vulture for carcasses, but sometimes also benefit from Black Vultures opening large prey. Black Vultures, which lack the olfactory sense, often use Turkey Vultures to locate carrion, follow them in, and displace their less aggressive relatives. Often, when a Turkey Vulture locates a carcass it will be followed in by other Turkey Vultures—a variation on the “invite a friend for dinner” behavior. Usually, only one bird feeds at a time on a carcass. Roadkills are an important source of carrion, and in Massachusetts it has been noted that migrating Turkey Vultures sometimes follow major railroad lines, presumably to harvest train-killed animals.

Turkey Vultures are subject to mammalian nest predation and, as adults, to poisoning from lead shot or bullets. Other problems stemming from human interactions include collision with vehicles, electrocution on power lines, shooting, and trapping. But the Turkey Vulture has expanded its range in the Northeast since the 1960s, and Breeding Bird Survey data indicate continent-wide population increases. The stable or increasing populations together with its enormous range ensures the future of this highly successful, if not endearing, species. 🦅

*William E. Davis, Jr.*

# AT A GLANCE

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December 2015



DAVID CLAPP

We end the 43<sup>rd</sup> volume of *Bird Observer* with a long-legged wading bird as the mystery species. It is easy to establish that the featured species represents a long-legged wader—heron, bittern, egret, ibis, and so forth—and not a shorebird because shorebirds, which also have long legs, have pointed, falcon-shaped wings rather than the wide, rounded wings exhibited by the mystery bird. Sandhill Crane, an even longer-legged species, would also appear larger, lankier, and have a much longer neck, a thinner and more pointed bill, and would hold its neck straight in flight, not in a crook like that of the mystery bird.

Having established that the photo represents a heron-like bird, we can at once eliminate Glossy Ibis as a candidate by the bird's straight, not curved, bill. Similarly, none of the white egret species—Great, Snowy, and Cattle, as well as juvenile Little Blue Heron—are possibilities. Great Blue Heron could be a candidate, except that a Great Blue Heron's legs would be noticeably longer, particularly the tarsi, that portion of the legs visible below the knee joints. A Tricolored Heron would appear notably slimmer and would show striking white wing linings and more extensive, neatly defined white underparts, and an adult Little Blue Heron would be entirely dark underneath without any streaking on the neck or upper breast. The crow-sized Green Heron's legs would not be nearly as visible beyond the tail tip as they are in the mystery heron, nor would the bill be as stout or the belly as white.

With many of the long-legged wading birds now eliminated, readers are left only with American and Least bittern and Black-crowned and Yellow-crowned night-heron as viable identification candidates. We can dismiss Least Bittern by its tiny size, more delicate proportions, and much shorter legs. On the other hand, the American Bittern is a serious contender, as are the juveniles of the two night-heron species. Adult

night-herons of both species have unstreaked necks and underparts, so clearly the mystery wader is not an adult night-heron. An American Bittern would show longer and more pointed wings than either night-heron species. Its neck, head, and bill would be significantly longer and thinner and its legs would be unlikely to appear as long in flight than those of a night-heron. Although not visible in the photo, an American Bittern's wings display prominent black primaries contrasting with paler, buff-colored wing coverts when seen from above, providing another useful means of differentiation from the night-herons.

Having narrowed the possibilities to one of two night-heron species, identification is now straightforward. Because the legs of the Yellow-crowned Night-Heron are so much longer than those of the Black-crowned Night-Heron, their feet and some of their tarsi are readily seen extending beyond their tail in flight, not just a portion of the feet and none of the tarsi as would be the case with a Black-crowned Night-Heron. Even in the soft light of dusk as night-herons leave their daytime roosts and are visible only as silhouettes, these differences in leg length may serve to distinguish the two species. The mystery heron is a juvenile Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*).

Yellow-crowned Night-Herons are rare spring and fairly uncommon fall migrants in Massachusetts, seen most often along the coast. As breeders they are rare and local, nesting only irregularly in the state. David Clapp photographed this juvenile Yellow-crowned Night-Heron as it left its Eastham roost in early fall 2015. 🐦

Wayne R. Petersen

## ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST

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**Rosemary Mosco** is a naturalist and science communicator. She has created educational stories and graphics about nature for organizations such as the National Park Service and Mass Audubon. Her nature cartoons have an international following and have appeared in various print and web publications. They were also the subject of a 2015 exhibit at the Paleontological Research Institution's Museum of the Earth in Ithaca, New York. Rosemary has never been vomited on by a Turkey Vulture, but she has been pooped on by various rare birds. Her website is <[birdandmoon.com](http://birdandmoon.com)>. 🐦

# AT A GLANCE

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DAVID M. LARSON

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

# MORE HOT BIRDS

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A hummingbird visiting Doug Meyer's feeder in Harwich in late November was caught, banded, and photographed on December 1 by Sue Finnegan, and confirmed to be a hatch-year female **Black-chinned**, the 6th state record. Sean Williams took the photo on the right.



An Empidonax flycatcher, found on New Year's Day in Fairhaven by Dan Zimmerlin, was determined by photos, recordings, and detailed field notes to be a **Hammond's Flycatcher**, second record ever for Massachusetts! Erik Nielsen took the photo on the left.

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