

Bird Observer

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FEBRUARY 2020



John Gill

HOT BIRDS

Two different **Townsend's Solitaires** appeared in the state on the same day, November 10! One of them, on Nantucket, apparently hung around for only a day after it was found, though the was long enough for several local Vineyard birders to drop in to see it. The other, at Halibut Point State Park, disappeared at first, then was relocated nearly two weeks later, and has disappeared and reappeared erratically since. It was still being reported up until press time. Photo on the right by Neil Dowling.



Painted Bunting, Chatham, by Tom Auer.



Painted Bunting, Sandwich, by Sean Williams.



Painted Bunting, Brewster, by Sue Finnegan.



Painted Bunting, Carver, by Chris Floyd.

One of the many amazing birding phenomena of the fall and winter of 2019 was an influx of **Painted Buntings** into the northeast. Massachusetts, in a roughly 2-month period, apparently had seven of them, all on or near Cape Cod, with birds photographed in Brewster, Dartmouth, Provincetown, Harwich, Sandwich, Carver, and Chatham! The event was not restricted to Massachusetts, with at least four more birds on Long Island NY, and several more around Delaware Bay and Chesapeake Bay. Most of the birds were visiting feeders; the bird in Carver was still being reported up until press time.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|---|--|----|
| WINTER BIRDING IN THE PLYMOUTH-MANOMET AREA (1975) | | |
| | <i>Wayne R. Petersen and Bruce A. Sorrie</i> | 5 |
| BIRDING PLYMOUTH BEACH (1985) | <i>Duncan S. Evered</i> | 10 |
| MARGARET MORSE NICE: THE WOMAN WHO CHANGED AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGY | | |
| | <i>William E. Davis, Jr.</i> | 19 |
| MISSISSIPPI KITES OF SOUTHEASTERN NEW HAMPSHIRE | <i>Stephen Mirick</i> | 29 |
| PHOTO ESSAY | | |
| Mississippi Kites of New Hampshire | | 34 |
| MUSINGS FROM THE BLIND BIRDER | | |
| Helping Birds: What Can I Do? | <i>Martha Steele</i> | 36 |
| GLEANINGS | | |
| Flying High | <i>David M. Larson</i> | 40 |
| FIELD NOTES | | |
| Leucistic Wild Turkey | <i>Nate Marchessault</i> | 42 |
| Deer, Flies, and Eastern Phoebes | <i>Pauliina Swartz</i> | 44 |
| ABOUT BOOKS | | |
| Locally Sourced | <i>Mark Lynch</i> | 46 |
| BIRD SIGHTINGS | | |
| September–October 2019 | <i>Neil Hayward and Robert H. Stymeist</i> | 54 |
| BYGONE BIRDS | <i>Neil Hayward</i> | 68 |
| ABOUT THE COVER: Hooded Merganser | <i>William E. Davis, Jr.</i> | 71 |
| ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST: John Sill | | 72 |
| AT A GLANCE | | |
| December 2019 | <i>Wayne R. Petersen</i> | 73 |

Cover: Hooded Merganser by John Sill © Massachusetts Audubon Society. Courtesy of the Museum of American Bird Art.

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Bird Observer

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[Editors' notes: Bird Observer has been highlighting winter birding since its inception in 1973 as Bird Observer of Eastern Massachusetts with the publication of Herman D'Entremont's classic "A Good Day at Cape Ann" (Volume 1, Number 1), which is still available today as a pocket guide. In 1975, Wayne Petersen and Bruce A. Sorrie headed south a bit in "Winter Birding in the Plymouth-Manomet Area (Volume 3, Number 1, January-February 1975). We are reprinting their succinct recommendation for winter birding followed by Duncan S. Everett's "Birding Plymouth Beach" (Volume 13, Number 2, April 1985), which provides a more detailed account of birding the area, along with a species list of Plymouth Beach through 1984—no Ivory Gull yet. Please note that we are reprinting these articles as they originally appeared and have not edited them for changes in nomenclature, directions, or adherence to the current style guide.



Despite being written 45 and 35 years ago, these two articles provide general winter birding information that is relevant for birders who want to explore the Plymouth area today. And they offer a historical perspective for birders who wish to compare birding Plymouth now with birding in the past.

Boyer's paint store does not exist any more, and this location is now inaccessible to birders. Rocky Hill Road and Edison's Shorefront Road (Pilgrim Nuclear Power Plant) were closed to pedestrians along the road after 9/11. Most areas are marked no parking, but unmarked security vehicles patrol the area and the security people will tell you that you can't bird near the power plant even if you are outside the no parking area.]

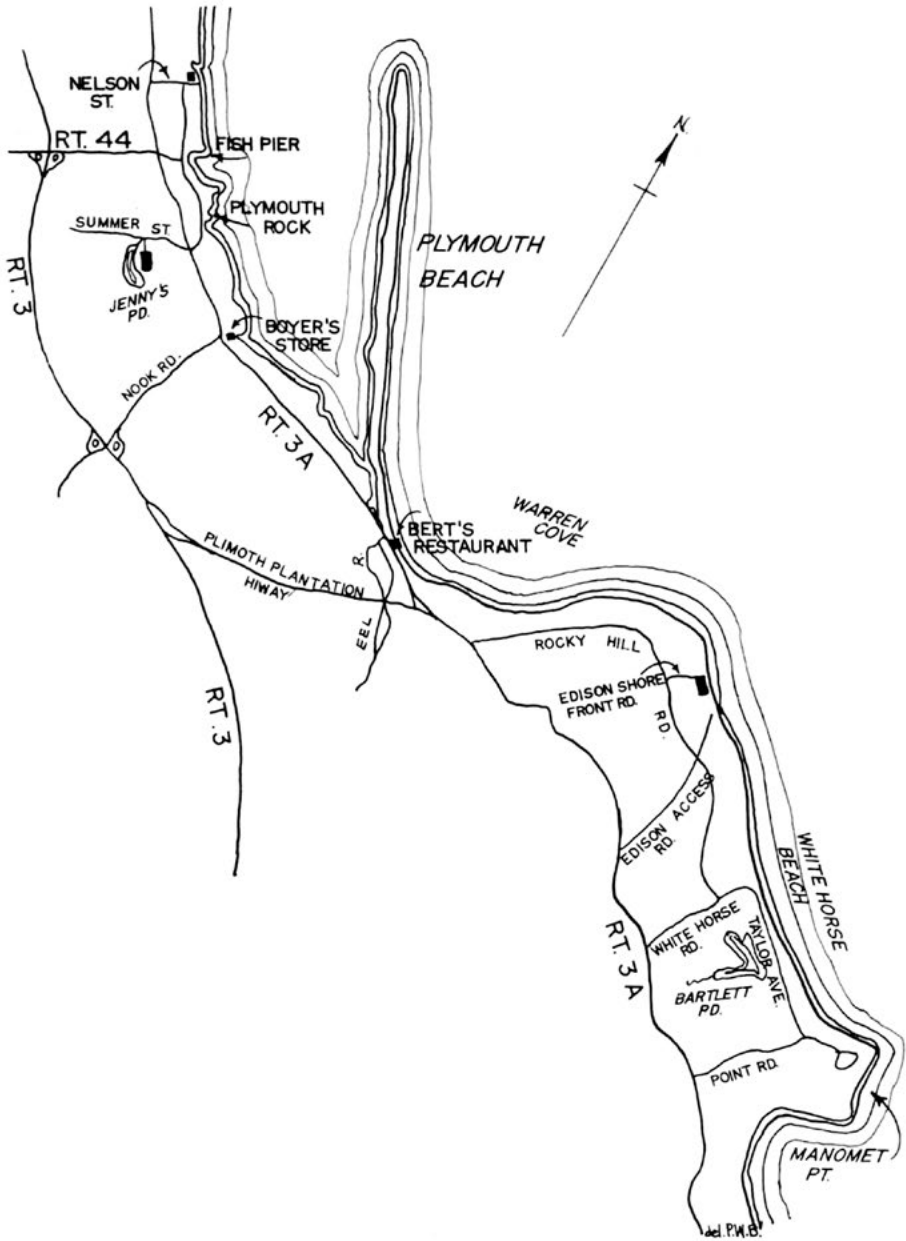
Winter Birding in the Plymouth-Manomet Area (1975)

Wayne R. Petersen and Bruce A. Sorrie

For the Bay State birder who has neither the time nor the inclination to drive to Cape Cod for a day of winter birding, the Plymouth-Manomet area can provide a pleasant substitute. Lying along the southern coastal plain, this region enjoys much the same mild winter climate as the Outer Cape. Add to its location on a fine saltwater bay and harbor fresh ponds, which remain open for much of the winter, and low swampy woods with numerous berry-bearing thickets, and you have an ideal spot in which to find regular winter birds as well as semi-hardy winterers and tardy migrants.

Among seabird species, Red-throated Loon, Red-necked Grebe, Brant, Oldsquaw, and Surf Scoter are all dependable, while such fancies as Barrow's Goldeneye and King Eider are far more regular in this area than in most of the state's other coastal regions. During much of October and into early November impressive diurnal migrations of loons, cormorants, and sea ducks can be witnessed from Manomet Point.

Thicket birding during the colder months will often yield Winter and Carolina wrens, Gray Catbird, American Robin, Hermit Thrush, both kinglets, Cedar Waxwing, lingering blackbirds, House Finch, Rufous-sided Towhee, and Field Sparrow. Although Plymouth Beach peninsula is inaccessible to most winter birders, the area is



Map of Plymouth area.



Red-throated Loon. Photograph © Shawn P. Carey.

attractive to roosting gulls and winter shorebirds, and the hardy dune-hiker will often be rewarded with Savannah (Ipswich) Sparrow, Short-eared Owl, Brant, and Snow Bunting. (Note: see article on Plymouth Beach birding in BOEM May-June 1973).

The following suggested route can be variously worked to suit your own interests, but don't limit yourself just to the winter season, for most of the spots are productive from October through May. If one approaches from the north, take Rte. 44 to the east off Rte. 3. This will take you toward Plymouth and to Rte. 3A. Turn left (north), proceed 1/2 mile, and turn right onto Nelson Street. Go to the parking lot beyond the end of the street. This is a fine spot from which to observe ducks and gulls in the harbor. It is best on half tides as the outer mussel beds and mud flats are becoming exposed or covered. Tremendous strings of eider totaling 40000–5000+ can be seen as they enter or leave the harbor. Brant can often be picked out among the Canada Geese, Black Ducks, and eiders. The shorebird flats are usually good for wintering Dunlin, Sanderling, Killdeer, and occasionally other semi-hardy species. They are also quite productive throughout the fall shorebird migration.

Return to Nelson Street and immediately turn left onto Water Street. Continue along the coast to Plymouth Rock, and park in the semi-circle just beyond. Here is an excellent spot for Buffleheads, Common Goldeneyes, Red-breasted Mergansers, and occasionally Common Mergansers or white-winged gulls. It is the most dependable spot on the South Shore for Barrow's Goldeneye. As the tide recedes, this species favors the rocky shore, and close looks can be had; at lower tides the birds (up to 7 annually) apparently favor mussel beds over toward Plymouth Beach. Town Wharf fish piers, 1/4 mile to the north, are sometimes good for unusual gulls.

Follow Water Street to Rte. 3A. Cross diagonally over 3A, past Friendly's Ice Cream shop, and go left on Summer Street at the Governor Carver Motel. Take a left



Snow Bunting. Photograph by Neil Dowling.

at the sign to Town Brook Park. This millpond is known locally as Jenny's Pond and is where people often come to feed the swans and ducks. Among the tame exotic species will usually be a few Pintails, American Wigeons, American Coots, and Pied-billed Grebes. As other ponds freeze up, an occasional Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Wood Duck, or Redhead will appear. This is an excellent spot to note the finer points of Ring-billed and Herring Gull plumage variation. The swampy thickets bordering the southern end of the pond have yielded towhees, thrashers, Swamp Sparrows, etc. On the west side is a large white house with feeders that have been visited regularly for the past three winters by two Rose-ringed (Ring-necked) Parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*), liberated from an unknown source. One needn't trespass onto private property to see these spectacular birds, for their size, coloration, and voice are easily noted from Jenny's Pond.

Go back to Rte. 3A, and head south about .7 miles to Boyer's Paint Store on the left, and park in the small lot. If you are alone (not with your bird club caravan), ask permission to bird in the marsh and adjacent brook along the north side. Here can be found wintering snipe, rails, and blackbirds, while the thickets are good for lingering wrens, Yellowthroats, and Gray Catbirds. A check along the harbor front should reveal Belted Kingfisher, Mourning Dove, House Finch, and perhaps a Killdeer on the beach itself. The offshore flocks of Black Ducks often contain a few wigeon or Green-winged Teal; Canada Geese are numerous. Diagonally across Rte. 3A, Nook Road follows farther up the same stream and provides nice looks at Field Sparrows, Winter Wrens, Carolina Wrens (occasionally), Cedar Waxwings, and other sparrows. Do not go into the private fish hatchery; the thickets are easily done from the road.

Continue down Rte. 3A a short distance to Bert's Restaurant, and park at the sea wall. If you haven't time to do Plymouth Beach, at least check the fresh and brackish marshes along Eel River at the base of the peninsula. Three species of rails and both saltmarsh sparrows have been found here into January. The broad cove off the sea wall usually produces two or three species of scoters, plus loons, Oldsquaw, and Horned

Grebe. The cattail marsh across from Bert's supports a breeding colony of Long-billed Marsh Wrens, some of which may linger, while the open water often yields Pied-billed Grebes, Mute Swans, various ducks and Great Blue Herons. The thickets and wet pockets on the south side produce rails. Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Swamp Sparrows.

Go southward on 3A and turn left onto Rocky Hill Road opposite the golf course. After some 1.2 miles you will pass through many choice thickets and a deciduous woodland that continues for another .8 miles. Nearly all of it belongs to Boston Edison and is the site of the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Plant. The company is rightfully concerned with trespassers, so stay on paved roads. Here are found Carolina Wren (often singing on bright days). Winter Wren, Tufted Titmouse, Hermit Thrush, sparrows and other thicket dwellers. Spring and summer bring these breeders: Carolina Wren, White-eyed Vireo (try down the shorefront road), Scarlet Tanager, and both cuckoos. A walk along Rocky Hill Road after a migrant wave can be surprisingly productive: one author had in one morning over 60 species including 17 warblers. Edison's shorefront road ends at a parking lot overlooking a rocky coastline where winter seafowl (including Red-necked Grebe) are found. To the right, massive breakwaters flank the discharge canal whose swift waters are attractive to fish, and thus in turn to larids, especially post-breeding birds including Forster's and Black Terns, Laughing, Bonaparte's and Ring-billed Gulls.

Rocky Hill Road ends at White Horse Road. Go left on it, and at the sharp corner pull off into the vacant lot. Sea ducks are usually plentiful here, and King Eiders are surprisingly regular (usually females or young males). This thickly settled area supports a sizable breeding colony of House Finches, plus Mockingbirds and Cardinals. Drive 1/4 mile to Bartlett Pond on the right. The back reaches of this pond remain open and regularly harbor wigeons, Pintails, Pied-billed Grebes, and Coots. This winter three Gadwalls are a feature there.

If you have no luck with King Eiders at White Horse Beach, continue along the coast to Manomet Point and look off from that commanding vantage point. Manomet Point, with its 50-foot bluffs, provides one of the best observation points anywhere along Cape Cod Bay. It is here that fabulous sea duck and loon migrations are seen in October and November. Many of these same species spend the winter in lesser numbers around the extensive, rock-strewn tidal area. The Point has historically been one of the state's most reliable spots for Red-necked Grebes and in late winter or early spring over 25 have been seen at once. During severe northeast storms, Manomet Point should be checked for alcids and pelagics, which often find food and shelter below the cliffs. In migration, anything is possible from the Point, and the writers have seen such interesting species as Cory's Shearwater, Northern Fulmar, Leach's Storm-Petrel, phalaropes, and Little Gull, in addition to the more regular Gannet, Black-legged Kittiwake, and Parasitic Jaeger.

While this is by no means a complete survey of the winter bird life, at least it gives a feeling for the relative potential of the region. We hope it will stimulate others to try what we feel to be a choice winter locality. 🐦

Birding Plymouth Beach (1985)

Duncan S. Evered

Although Plymouth Beach does not enjoy a reputation as a “hotspot” for rare birds, increased coverage by field observers in recent years has produced an impressive list of rarities at all seasons. Plymouth Beach may well be the sleeper of the Massachusetts coast.

Bruce Sorrie wrote the above in summary to an article that appeared twelve years ago in *Bird Observer*, volume 1, May-June 1973. Evidently, for many Massachusetts birders the location of Plymouth Beach (between the Cape and Plum Island, but not close enough to either) and the logistics of getting out there and back (walk six miles or use an off-road vehicle) still prove too much of an effort. Consequently, Plymouth Beach still does not enjoy the recognition it surely deserves. The purpose of this article is to show that Plymouth Beach “sleeps” no more: since Bruce’s prophecy, over fifty additional species have been documented. First, as a testimony to this area’s pedigree, I present a fully researched list of the 243 species reliably recorded from 1945 to 1984 in the area defined in the accompanying figure. A detailed annotation then follows, offering any birder who wishes to discover Plymouth Beach the advantage of better knowing where and when to look. In a broader ecological perspective, leaving rarities like Burrowing Owl and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper aside, Plymouth Beach is of major importance to literally tens of thousands of wintering waterfowl and migratory shorebirds, over a thousand nesting terns, and a valuable few struggling pairs of Piping Plover. How long Plymouth Beach will maintain such an impressive concentration and diversity of avian forms will depend on the amount of future interest taken in this exciting place.

THE SPECIES LIST

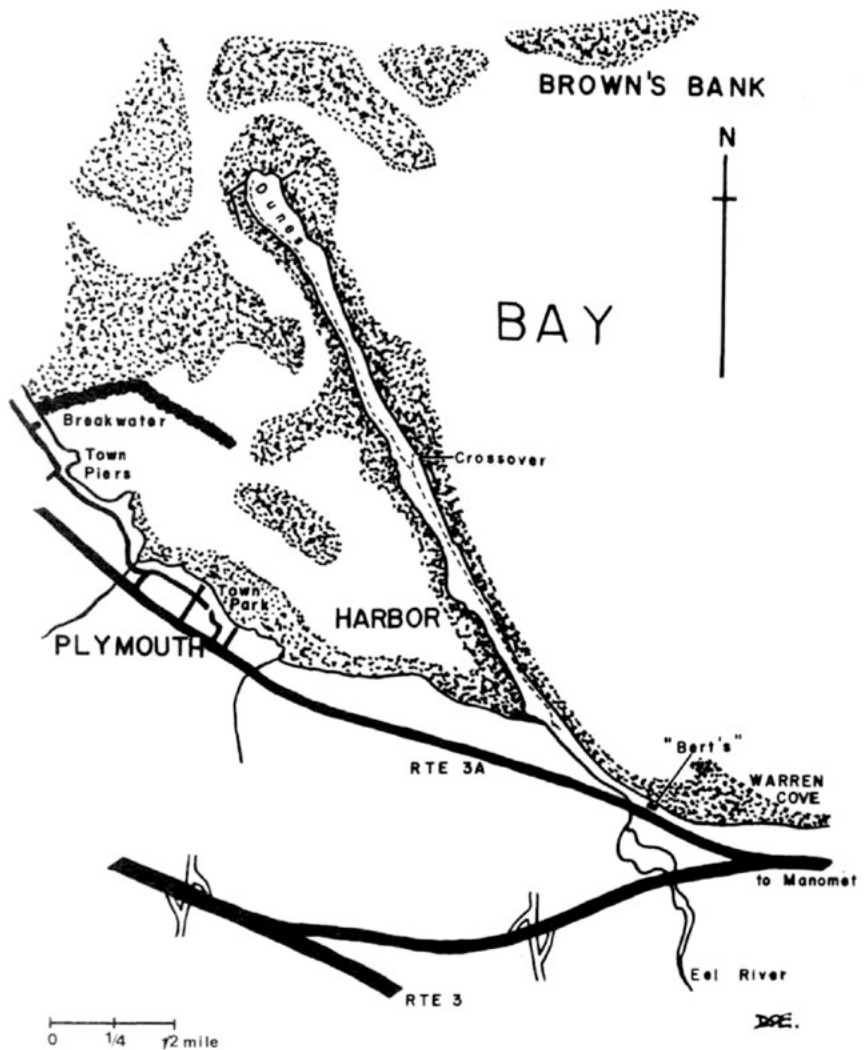
In order to fully understand this bird list, it is necessary to explain some of the arbitrary conventions used in its compilation. Average abundance during the season when the species is most frequent is indicated as follows: C = common (should be seen), U = uncommon (might be seen), R = rare (worth looking for), and V = very rare or vagrant (recorded on one or two occasions, i.e., apparently exceptional). These four simplified categories are used to convey the chances of a species being seen in ideal conditions by a knowledgeable observer. Therefore, the abundance rank selected for each species not only depends on its average numerical abundance, but also on its conspicuousness and the awareness of the observer. Seasonal occurrence is indicated as follows: S = summer, M = migration, and W = winter. A capitalized symbol marks the season of most frequent occurrence (to which the above abundance ranking—C, U, R, or V—refers), and a lowercase symbol indicates a lesser occurrence. The migration period of each species occurring on Plymouth Beach is typical of other southshore locations, and an asterisk denotes proven breeding on Plymouth Beach. [Ed. note: the author has chosen not to use the term “resident” bird, and “migration” is broadly used here to include post-breeding dispersal.]

Species List for Plymouth Beach and Environs

| Species | Status | Seasonal Abundance | Species | Status | Seasonal Abundance |
|----------------------------|--------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------|--------------------|
| Red-throated Loon | C | Mw | Ruddy Duck | V | W |
| Arctic Loon | V | M | Turkey Vulture | V | M |
| Common Loon | C | Mw | Osprey | U | M |
| Pied-billed Grebe | R | mW | Amer. Swallow-tailed Kite | V | M |
| Horned Grebe | C | Mw | Bald Eagle | R | sMw |
| Red-necked Grebe | U | mW | Northern Harrier | U | Mw |
| Western Grebe | V | W | Sharp-shinned Hawk | R | Mw |
| Northern Fulmar | R | M | Red-shouldered Hawk | R | Mw |
| Cory's Shearwater | R | M | Red-tailed Hawk | R | mW |
| Greater Shearwater | R | sM | Rough-legged Hawk | R | W |
| Sooty Shearwater | R | M | American Kestrel* | C | sMw |
| Manx Shearwater | V | S | Merlin | U | Mw |
| Wilson's Storm-Petrel | U | Sm | Peregrine Falcon | U | M |
| Leach's Storm-Petrel | V | M | Gyr Falcon | V | M |
| Northern Gannet | U | sMw | Northern Bobwhite | R | W |
| Great Cormorant | C | smW | Clapper Rail | R | sMw |
| Double-crested Cormorant | C | sMw | King Rail | V | M |
| American Bittern | R | M | Virginia Rail | U | mW |
| Least Bittern | R | M | Sora | U | M |
| Great Blue Heron | U | sMw | American Coot | R | W |
| Great Egret | U | Sm | Sandhill Crane | V | M |
| Snowy Egret | C | Sm | Black-bellied Plover | C | Mw |
| Little Blue Heron | U | Sm | Lesser Golden-Plover | U | M |
| Tricolored Heron | R | Sm | Wilson's Plover | R | M |
| Cattle Egret | R | S | Semipalmated Plover | C | M |
| Green-backed Heron | R | sM | Piping Plover * | U | Sm |
| Black-crowned Night-Heron | C | Smw | Killdeer* | C | sMw |
| Yellow-crowned Night-Heron | R | Sm | American Oystercatcher | R | Sm |
| Glossy Ibis | U | Sm | American Avocet | V | M |
| Mute Swan | C | smW | Greater Yellowlegs | C | M |
| Snow Goose | R | Mw | Lesser Yellowlegs | U | M |
| Brant | C | Mw | Solitary Sandpiper | R | M |
| Canada Goose | C | Mw | Willet | U | M |
| Wood Duck | R | M | Spotted Sandpiper* | C | Sm |
| Green-winged Teal | U | Mw | Upland Sandpiper | R | M |
| American Black Duck | C | mW | Whimbrel | U | M |
| Mallard | C | Mw | Hudsonian Godwit | R | M |
| Northern Pintail | R | Mw | Marbled Godwit | V | M |
| Blue-winged Teal | U | M | Ruddy Turnstone | C | Mw |
| Gadwall | R | Mw | Red Knot | C | Mw |
| Eurasian Wigeon | V | mW | Sanderling | C | Mw |
| American Wigeon | U | mW | Semipalmated Sandpiper | C | M |
| Canvasback | R | W | Western Sandpiper | U | M |
| Redhead | R | W | Least Sandpiper | C | M |
| Ring-necked Duck | R | w | White-rumped Sandpiper | U | M |
| Greater Scaup | U | Mw | Baird's Sandpiper | R | M |
| Lesser Scaup | R | W | Pectoral Sandpiper | C | M |
| Common Eider | c | mW | Sharp-tailed Sandpiper | V | M |
| King Eider | R | W | Purple Sandpiper | R | Mw |
| Harlequin Duck | V | w | Dunlin | C | Mw |
| Oldsquaw | C | Mw | Curlew Sandpiper | R | M |
| Black Scoter | U | Mw | Stilt Sandpiper | R | M |
| Surf Scoter | c | Mw | Buff-breasted Sandpiper | R | M |
| White-winged Scoter | c | Mw | Ruff | R | M |
| Common Goldeneye | C | mW | Short-billed Dowitcher | C | M |
| Barrow's Goldeneye | R | W | Long-billed Dowitcher | R | M |
| Bufflehead | C | mW | Common Snipe | U | Mw |
| Hooded Merganser | R | mW | American Woodcock | V | M |
| Common Merganser | R | mW | Wilson's Phalarope | R | M |
| Red-breasted Merganser | C | Mw | Red-Necked Phalarope | U | M |

Species List for Plymouth Beach and Environs (continued)

| Species | Status | Seasonal Abundance | Species | Status | Seasonal Abundance |
|---------------------------|--------|--------------------|----------------------------|--------|--------------------|
| Red Phalarope | R | M | Black-capped Chickadee | U | Mw |
| Pomarine Jaeger | V | M | Tufted Titmouse | U | mW |
| Parasitic Jaeger | R | M | Marsh Wren | U | sMw |
| Great Skua | V | M | Golden-crowned Kinglet | R | M |
| Laughing Gull | C | sM | Ruby-crowned Kinglet | U | M |
| Little Gull | R | M | Northern Wheatear | V | M |
| Common Black-headed Gull | R | sMw | Swainson's Thrush | R | M |
| Bonaparte's Gull | C | Mw | American Robin | U | sM |
| Mew Gull | V | W | Gray Catbird | U | Mw |
| Ring-billed Gull | C | sMw | Northern Mockingbird | C | sMw |
| Herring Gull | C | sMw | Water Pipit | C | Mw |
| Iceland Gull | R | mW | Cedar Waxwing | R | Mw |
| Lesser Black-backed Gull | R | Mw | European Starling* | C | sMw |
| Glaucous Gull | V | W | Philadelphia Vireo | V | M |
| Great Black-backed Gull | C | sMw | Red-eyed Vireo | R | M |
| Black-legged Kittiwake | U | Mw | Golden-winged Warbler | V | M |
| Sabine's Gull | V | M | Tennessee Warbler | R | M |
| Gull-billed Tern | V | M | Nashville Warbler | R | M |
| Caspian Tern | U | M | Yellow Warbler | U | M |
| Royal Tern | R | Sm | Magnolia Warbler | R | M |
| Sandwich Tern | R | M | Yellow-rumped Warbler | C | Mw |
| Roseate Tern* | C | sM | Black-throated Green Warb. | R | M |
| Common Tern* | C | Sm | Palm Warbler | U | M |
| Arctic Tern* | C | S | Bay-breasted Warbler | R | M |
| Forster's Tern | U | M | Blackpoll Warbler | U | M |
| Least Tern * | C | Sm | American Redstart | R | M |
| Sooty Tern | V | M | Northern Waterthrush | R | M |
| Black Tern | U | M | Connecticut Warbler | V | M |
| Black Skimmer | U | Sm | Common Yellowthroat | U | M |
| Dovekie | R | Mw | Wilson's Warbler | R | M |
| Thick-billed Murre | R | W | Northern Cardinal | U | smW |
| Razorbill | R | W | Rose-breasted Grosbeak | V | M |
| Rock Dove | C | Smw | Dickcissel | V | M |
| Mourning Dove | C | sMw | Rufous-sided Towhee | R | Mw |
| Black-billed Cuckoo | V | M | American Tree Sparrow | U | Mw |
| Great Horned Owl | R | S | Chipping Sparrow | R | M |
| Snowy Owl | R | Mw | Field Sparrow | R | M |
| Burrowing Owl | V | M | Savannah Sparrow | C | sMw |
| Short-eared Owl | U | Mw | "Ipswich" Sparrow | C | mW |
| Common Nighthawk | R | M | Sharp-tailed Sparrow* | U | sMw |
| Whip-poor-will | V | M | Seaside Sparrow | R | Mw |
| Chimney Swift | U | Sm | Song Sparrow* | C | sMw |
| Ruby-throated Hummingbird | V | M | Lincoln's Sparrow | R | M |
| Belted Kingfisher | U | sMw | Swamp Sparrow | U | Mw |
| Yellow-bellied Sapsucker | R | M | White-throated Sparrow | U | Mw |
| Downy Woodpecker | U | smW | White-crowned Sparrow | R | M |
| Northern Flicker | U | Mw | Dark-eyed Junco | U | Mw |
| Yellow-bellied Flycatcher | V | M | Lapland Longspur | C | Mw |
| Acadian Flycatcher | V | M | Snow Bunting | C | mW |
| "Traill's" Flycatcher | R | M | Bobolink | R | M |
| Western Kingbird | V | M | Red-winged Blackbird | C | sMw |
| Eastern Kingbird | R | M | Eastern Meadowlark | R | mW |
| Horned Lark* | C | sMw | Rusty Blackbird | R | M |
| Purple Martin | R | M | Common Grackle | C | M |
| Tree Swallow* | C | sMNo. | Brown-headed Cowbird | U | M |
| Rough-winged Swallow | U | sM | Northern Oriole | R | M |
| Bank Swallow | U | sM | House Finch | C | sMw |
| Cliff Swallow | V | M | Common Redpoll | R | W |
| Barn Swallow | C | sM | Pine Siskin | R | W |
| Blue Jay | U | sMw | American Goldfinch | U | sMw |
| American Crow | C | sMw | House Sparrow | C | Smw |
| Fish Crow | R | Mw | | | |



“Plymouth Beach” refers to the beach north of the parking lot at Bert’s Restaurant and includes only the waters and flats visible from the beach itself, which broadly encompasses the harbor and part of Plymouth Bay.

A BIRDING GUIDE TO PLYMOUTH BEACH AND ENVIRONS

I again take the liberty of quoting Bruce Sorrie almost verbatim, this time for his description of the logistics of birding Plymouth Beach. The best way to get to the beach is to drive south on Route 3 and take the exit marked "Plimoth Plantation - Manomet." Continue east about a mile and take a sharp left turn onto Route 3A toward Plymouth. Proceed north about one mile to Bert's Restaurant on the right, immediately north of which is the beach parking lot and road. In the summer (Memorial Day to school opening) unless your car has a "Town of Plymouth Facilities" sticker, you will have to pay for parking here. Plan to walk the beach and to set out at low tide (ideally at dawn for land birds at the base of the beach) so that when you reach the tip of the beach, the tide is high for the best viewing of shorebirds and waterfowl.

The height above the beach together with the protection provided by the seawall makes the parking lot next to Bert's the most comfortable and convenient place to scan for loons, grebes, and pelagics. During strong nor'easters, loons and grebes often shelter in Warren Cove, and a walk south along the seawall is then advisable; otherwise they occur along the whole length of the bayside beach. October, from midmonth on, produces both the quantity, e.g., maxima of 80 Horned Grebes and 80 Red-throated and Common loons, and the quality, e.g., three species of loon together (see Field Records of October 1984 in BOEM, 13: 27). Typically only a dozen or so Horned Grebes and Common Loons stay the whole winter, the Red-throats normally leaving in January. During severe storms, on account of the waves that tumble over the seawall making serious seawatching quite futile, it is usually best to go to Manomet Point, returning to the beach after the high winds have diminished somewhat. During such revisits, the outer beach, especially the tip, has produced resting and outward-bound "goodies" like Sabine's Gull, Sooty Tern (after Hurricane David), Leach's Storm-Petrel, and Pomarine Jaeger. Late summer and early fall most predictably produce (in order of frequency): Northern Gannet, Wilson's Storm-Petrel, Parasitic Jaeger, Red-necked Phalarope, and the large shearwaters. Late fall storms produce more gannets. Blacklegged Kittiwake, the odd Northern Fulmar, and the exceptional Great Skua. Less is known of spring storms, but both phalarope species occur fairly regularly.

The large heronry on Clark's Island [see BOEM 10(3): 133], which lies two miles northeast of the beach, is the source of the wealth of waders that pace and stab in the harbor lagoons and channels throughout the summer. Low tide is the time to see good numbers of Snowy Egrets (up to 150 in late summer) and, possibly, Little Blue Heron and Great Egret. The mouth of the Eel River is a good place for close views when tides are intermediate, but the sun tends to produce severe glare here except in early mornings or on overcast days. Because of this, the best viewing sites are from points looking west from the harbor shore. Unfortunately, many roads leading to good vantage points are private, and unless specific permission has been granted in advance, birders should not use them. Those shown in the figure are accessible and worthy of a visit. During both spring and fall migrations, the numbers of waders decrease, but the rarer species occur with greater frequency. The less common waders, such as Cattle Egret and Glossy Ibis, are best seen from the tip of the beach winging their way to (evening) or from (morning) Clark's Island and their feeding grounds.

The established reputation of Plymouth Beach and Harbor as a site for abundant winter waterfowl results in their status being comparatively well known. Brant have increased dramatically over the last decade. The wintering population is now over 1500; swelled with migrants in April and November, the total can exceed 5000. At high tide, truly impressive flocks gather on and around the sand flats at the tip of the beach, affording close study. However, they are easily disturbed; so approach with caution. At low tide the Brant join the eider as blurry dots on the expanses of sand and mussel flats—frustrating to the birder but an apt reminder of the abundant resources Plymouth Harbor offers to waterfowl. Of the ducks, small numbers (maximum of five) of Barrow's Goldeneye and the odd King Eider are the reliable attractions for the birder searching for the unusual. The Barrow's are best viewed from the Breakwater and Town piers at high tides from early December through March. The Kings may be with any of the 15,000 of more Common Eider that frequent the whole estuary. But despair not at the odds, for the Kings that are found tend to stay in the same flock and at the same general location for several weeks at a time. If you fancy streams of eider flying across a glowing sunset, try the tip of Plymouth Beach toward dusk. Mornings produce better, if somewhat less dramatic, lighting, but the spectacle is more likely to be tarnished by sportsmen. Concentrations of other sea and bay ducks in winter are generally modest, occasionally good, with scoter, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser and Oldsquaw dominating. Larger flocks can be seen in the distance from the parking lot during heavy migrations in October and November, but few depart from their course (Saquish Head in Duxbury to Manomet Point) and come to rest in the bay. The rarer puddle ducks occur briefly and sporadically during heavy migration and after the first major freeze-ups in December. The latter is also a time when the rare bay ducks (and American Coot) occasionally occur.

The only raptor nearly omnipresent on Plymouth Beach is the American Kestrel, one or more being seen almost without exception throughout the year. From September through October and into early November, either a Merlin or a Peregrine Falcon can be expected on all but the briefest, or unluckiest, of trips. Often the birds are seen hunting, but on a good number of occasions, especially in the late mornings, the birds are actively migrating. Twice in the last two years, Gyrfalcons have been seen racing along the beach in late fall. August and September are the times to watch for Ospreys fishing over the harbor or the pond across the road from Bert's. (This pond is always worth checking for feeding and resting ducks, gulls and terns, and a large icterid/swallow roost, with the best view from the height of the Pilgrim Sands Motel parking lot next to Bert's Restaurant.) Northern Harriers regularly quarter the harborside salt marshes and dunes in late fall and winter, routinely including Duxbury Beach across the bay to the north on their patrols. All other hawks prove very scarce in migration and irregular in winter. In recent summers and early falls, the Bald Eagle has become more regular.

Flood tides in fall are the best times to search for the ever elusive, but far from impossible, rails. Although the salt marshes on the west side of the harbor are still good despite some filling in, permission is essential to gain access to walk them. Therefore, the mouth of the Eel River at the base of Plymouth Beach, especially around the large clump of reeds, is the site recommended. (Just after leaving the parking lot, a footpath leads from the track down a wash to the river and then follows it to the reed bed.) Sora

is the most common, but Virginia and Clapper rails are often seen too and occasionally “jump up” for the Christmas Bird Count. Although not confirmed, it is possible that Clapper Rail surreptitiously breeds here. Walking this area in fall, or even winter, may also produce Sharp-tailed Sparrow, which nests in some years, and occasionally a Seaside. After nesting in the marshes surrounding the pond across from Bert’s, a Marsh Wren or two might be found among the reeds, often lingering into early winter.

The huge expanses of sand and mud flats and mussel beds of Plymouth Harbor provide a tremendous amount of invertebrate food for shorebirds. Plymouth Beach provides the other essential component of a stopover site, a place for the birds to rest at high tide, making it one of the top ten “fueling” sites on the whole North American Atlantic coast according to the International Shorebird Survey. Intensive shorebird censusing over the last thirteen years by Manomet Bird Observatory staff has produced the following average peak fall migration numbers for the most common roosting species: Semipalmated Sandpiper (5000), Sanderling (1000), Dunlin (800), Black-bellied Plover (650), Semipalmated Plover (500), and Ruddy Turnstone (150). Red Knot and Short-billed Dowitchers now use the beach much less than they used to because of increasing human disturbance. Nevertheless, flocks of up to a thousand and more of both species still feed on the flats and sporadically visit the beach. Thus, despite human and vehicular activity, Plymouth Beach still boasts a great variety of shorebirds. Early October days routinely produce eighteen or nineteen species, and rarities are uncannily frequent, the most notable being the first Massachusetts record of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (1971) and the regularity with which Wilson’s Plover occurs in the shingle and gravelly areas at the tip of the beach in the latter part of April, May, and early June.

A falling tide is the best time to observe the shorebirds at their most dynamic, as they start feeding in the freshly created tidal pools adjacent to roosting sites before moving off to the emerging flats. In the early fall, roosts occur on the shingle stretches and the raised saltmarsh along the harbor side of the beach, and these can be viewed without causing disturbance from several points along the beach road. On the rainier and cooler days of September and through the winter, in the absence of frequent human harassment, shorebirds (mainly Sanderling and Dunlin) are able to establish a regular roost on the comparatively deserted sandy beaches along the bay side and at the tip of the beach.

From late August through October, large gulls start to roost in substantial numbers (routinely a thousand birds and up to ten thousand associated with major fish kills) on the sand flats around the tip of the beach and on the bay side north of the crossover. In recent years Lesser Black-backed Gulls have proved to be regular in small numbers from August to October: four individuals in 1982 and at least five in 1984. (I’m sure nobody looked hard enough in 1983!) Although the size of these gull assemblages declines sharply in late October, gulls often rest on the beach in appreciable numbers during and immediately after storms in late fall and early winter. At such times, careful scrutiny occasionally yields an early Iceland, later perhaps a Glaucous or lingering Lesser Black-backed Gull. In winter, several hundred very approachable Ring-billed Gulls loaf around the Breakwater parking lot behind McGrath’s Restaurant at high tide


and on a receding tide are found in the saltmarshes farther north. (Take a right from McGrath's and after two hundred yards another right as the road bears sharply left.) In early spring when numbers are swelled with northbound migrants, these flocks are worth checking carefully for Mew Gull (of the European race), which has occurred twice. The gulls in late spring and summer are much less numerous, but scanning along the sand flats has produced various larid oddities. A juvenile Common Black-headed Gull in July of 1984 and late spring Iceland Gulls take pride of place, ahead of several summer "white winged" gulls, one of which was probably an albinistic or leucistic bird.

From early May until early August, the dunes at the tip of Plymouth Beach host one of the most important terneries within the Cape Cod "super-colony," both in terms of numbers (1114 pairs of Common Terns bred in 1984) and diversity (four species invariably breed). The colony in the past has suffered declines due to rat predation and natural food shortage, but now neither is significant. There is every reason to believe that with continued monitoring to control human disturbance, Plymouth Beach might assume its former significance (i.e., 7500 pairs in 1954). Indeed, the Plymouth colony is presently expanding, most likely through absorbing birds from the declining colony on Monomoy. Least Terns nest every year in small numbers (15-45 pairs) and in various parts of the beach depending on the location of an undisturbed pebbly substrate and the extent of the high spring tides. Arctic Terns have shown a recent decline, perhaps reflecting climatic change more than anything else as this species is on the southernmost edge of its range. Nevertheless, in 1984, the typical 40 percent of the total Massachusetts population was nesting in the low, mobile dunes and pebbly edges of the Plymouth Beach colony. Roseate Terns nest in variable, but usually small, numbers (5-50 pairs) in the densely vegetated dune "hollows" in the midst of the colony.

Large numbers of terns may be found resting around the northwest jetty at high tide, and in late July and early August very impressive flocks of terns may occur on the sand flats with up to 2000 Common Terns and 800 Roseates. At night roosts may number even more. These birds are mostly adults and probably originate from colonies in southern New England, dispersing north after breeding to fish the productive coastal waters around Cape Cod. At this time, and to a lesser extent in the spring, the rarer "southern" terns occur on the extensive bayside sand flats with surprising regularity, examples being Forster's, Royal, Sandwich, and Gull-billed terns, as well as Black Skimmer, which formerly bred sporadically. At such times, as many as seven species of tern may be seen on Plymouth Beach in a single day.

Snowy Owls, although rare, are well worth scanning the dunes for during the day or the salt marshes in the twilight hours, where they hunt shorebirds. The best times are in November and December and again in March and April when migrants pause a few days. The Short-eared Owl seems to have a strategy similar to its diurnal counterpart, the Northern Harrier, in that it regularly commutes between Plymouth and Duxbury beaches, often in response to disturbance. Although they are not a serious problem to the nesting terns, Great Horned Owls occasionally make hunting forays onto the beach from their surrounding suburban homes.

A cursory glance at the bird list reveals that land birds are rather poorly documented. In part, this is a reflection of Plymouth Beach not being a particularly good land trap for migrants due to its geographical position and the relative paucity of dense (and diverse) vegetative cover. But in some part, it simply reflects the fact that in the past birders have not scrutinized the bushes thoroughly enough. Migrant land birds may be quite numerous in the early morning before, having worked their way south to the base of the beach, they are lost in the relative wealth of cover found on the mainland. The bird list clearly hints at the virtues of giving the loose thickets of saltspray rose and beach plum a “spish” or two—for a Dickcissel, a Golden-winged, or a Connecticut warbler! The weedy patches of goldenrod and dusty miller regularly hold good numbers of Savannah Sparrows and Palm Warblers, so why not the odd Lark or Clay-colored sparrow? This is not to suggest that Plymouth Beach cannot offer anything of interest but the accidental Northern Wheatear or incidental Western Kingbird. The beach provides food and shelter on a regular basis for a number of interesting land birds. Two or more pairs of Horned Larks breed each year north of the crossover. From mid-September on, Water Pipits are regular in their occurrence, with numbers occasionally exceeding fifty. The last days of September may produce early Lapland Longspurs in the dunes and along the harborside at low tide, with up to sixty in late October and November. Soon after the longspurs, the Snow Buntings arrive. But it is not until December that the dunes and bayside upper beach regularly have roving flocks of several hundred or more. Another attraction of the latter habitat is the presence of “Ipswich” Sparrows from mid-October to April, with as many as fourteen seen in one day.

As with all brief birding accounts, this is a fragmentary abstract of a location’s avifauna. However, it is hoped that it will give the flavor of Plymouth Beach and illustrate its importance as a feeding, resting, and nesting place for birds - and, by encouraging a greater awareness of Plymouth Beach’s value to our wildlife, create a stronger concern for its healthy persistence. I thank all MBO staff and interns, past and present, whose notebooks and knowledge have been such an important source of information in the writing of this account. The bird list is a complete revision of one prepared by Bruce A. Sorrie and Paul K. Donahue in 1975. Without their groundwork, and the critical assistance of Lyla R. Messick, the task of its compilation would have been more daunting. For help with specific enquiries and comments on drafts (+), I gratefully thank David E. Clapp, Trevor L. Lloyd-Evans (+), Brian A. Harrington (+), Lyla R. Messick (+), Wayne R. Petersen, P. William Smith, Bruce A. Sorrie, and Peter Trull. 

Duncan S. Evered, a visitor from England whose paper, “Pacific (and Arctic) Loon Identification,” appeared in the February 1985 issue of Bird Observer, completed the work reported here during several periods of residence at Manomet Bird Observatory since 1982. Duncan has now transferred his research efforts to the Long Point Bird Observatory in Ontario, Canada.

Margaret Morse Nice: The Woman who Changed American Ornithology

William E. Davis, Jr.



Figure 1. Margaret Morse Nice peering into a sparrow nest and talking to the young birds. Photograph by Al Ness, *Life*, September 10, 1956.

Margaret Morse Nice was born Margaret Morse on December 6, 1883, in Amherst, Massachusetts, into an academic family. Her father was a professor of history at Amherst College. The year of her birth was the same year as that of the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU), which she was destined to influence heavily. In her early years, Amherst was a rural town and her family took advantage of this by roaming the countryside and mountains of the area. Her mother had learned botany at Mount Holyoke College and her father was fond of the outdoors, so at an early age Margaret learned of the plants and animals of the region.

At the age of nine, she began keeping a written record of the birds she encountered. Her first entry was, prophetically, about a Song Sparrow, a species that eventually brought her fame. In her autobiography she records, "The most cherished Christmas present of my life came in 1895—Mabel Osgood Wright's *Bird-Craft*." (Nice 1979) At Amherst High

School she took courses in mathematics, Latin, Greek, and French, starting her on a path that was to rely heavily on skill in foreign languages. As a teenager, Margaret studied the interactions of a dozen chickens that the family kept and established the concept of 'pecking order' that was not to reach the scientific literature for decades. She began college at Mount Holyoke in 1901, which was interrupted by a year in Europe where she increased her skill in several European languages.

After graduating from Mount Holyoke, Margaret entered graduate school at Clark University in Worcester, which she recalled as very important in her development as a scientist: "It was at Clark University that I found purpose in life. Dr. Hodge, Dr. Hall, and my fellow students showed me that the world was full of problems crying to be solved; at every turn there was a challenge—nature waiting to be studied and understood." (Nice 1979) Her study at Clark of the feeding of a captive population of Northern Bobwhites launched her on a scientific research career with birds. She planned to use an expanded bobwhite feeding study to get a Ph.D. But instead, as

she recalls: “These plans were changed. Instead of raising bobwhites, I was married; instead of working for a Ph.D., I kept house.” (Nice 1979) In 1909, she married Leonard Blaine Nice who was an instructor in physiology. Her parents had opposed her engaging in doctoral studies and the societal norms of early 20th century America were not conducive to women getting Ph.D.s. She did, however, join the AOU in 1907, attending several annual meetings where she met the important ornithologists of the early twentieth century. However at the 1908 meeting, William Brewster gave a reception for the men attending the meeting while the women were invited to a separate reception. Nice commented: “Evidently, the role of the ladies was expected to be largely ornamental.” (Nice 1979)

For the next decade, Nice turned her research activity to the study of speech development in her own five daughters and other children. Her papers on the subject earned her the M.A. from Clark University that she had not gotten for her bobwhite work. This work involved reading literature in French and German and working with mathematical analysis, all skills that would serve her well in her future ornithological work. During this child-raising period she published 18 papers on child development. As the children grew older and Nice became frustrated with the constraints of raising a family, she once again turned her attention to birds: “Relief came through three channels: my finding birds again; Eleanor’s [her youngest child] growing out of babyhood; and in the spring of 1920 our purchase of an ancient car.” (Nice 1979) The Nices had moved to Norman, Oklahoma in 1913, but spent their summers elsewhere. In 1919, they decided to spend the summer in Oklahoma and Nice re-entered the world of birds.

The proximate cause for this shift was her opposing the state changing the date of hunting season to include August, a month in which Nice knew that Mourning Doves were still nesting. She wrote letters and created a ruckus, documenting active Mourning Dove nests in Norman through October. This study of Mourning Dove nesting awakened in Nice an interest in all birds. Throughout her career, Nice wrote letters to editors of newspapers, primarily on conservation concerns. In one case she encountered a hunter with three Franklin Gulls he had shot: “He explained that he thought they were ducks, and that he had to ‘shoot things’ to find out whether or not they were game birds. After reporting this ‘ignoramus,’ Margaret wrote a letter to the *Daily Oklahoman*, ‘What is a Game Bird?’” (Ogilvie 2018)

At the 1920 AOU meeting in Washington, D.C., Nice presented a paper on nesting Mourning Doves in Norman and got substantial encouragement and direction from several prominent AOU members. In 1922, Nice embarked upon writing a book on the birds of Oklahoma and published the first of a series of papers on Mourning Dove nesting in *The Auk* (Nice 1922, 1923), her first papers on birds since her 1910 paper on bobwhite food. These two papers were important because of the large sample sizes. In 1919, she had located 37 nests on the University of Oklahoma campus; in 1920, 124 nests, and in 1921, 122 nests—numbers that were great enough so that statistical analysis could be employed.

In 1924, Nice, together with her husband, published *The Birds of Oklahoma*. They had traveled extensively throughout Oklahoma doing research for this book and the

development of a conservation perspective is evident throughout: "... Such has been the effect of man's occupation—of the tilling of the land, of unwise meddling with nature and most of all, mere wanton destruction." (Nice and Nice 1924) The emergence of her career in ornithology was underway. She expanded the book considerably for a revised edition that was published in 1931 (Nice 1931d).

In the summer of 1925, Nice and her family visited relatives in Amherst, Massachusetts, and she took this occasion to study nesting of the Magnolia Warbler (Nice 1926). She did a survey of the birds of the region and published a paper on the changes that had occurred in the bird population in the 20 years since she had last studied them there (Nice 1925). In 1927, the Nice family moved to Columbus, Ohio, and settled into an undeveloped wild area that proved to be rich in bird life. Nice attended both the AOU and a joint Wilson Ornithological Club/Inland Bird-Banding Club annual meeting that year, renewing friendships and making new friends.

In 1928, Nice banded a Song Sparrow near her house, an individual she appropriately named Uno, and so began the most important study of her career. She also had a flurry of observations of other birds that produced papers on the nesting of Yellow-crowned Night-Herons, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Black-throated Blue Warblers, and Ovenbirds (Nice 1929, 1930a, 1931a, 1932a). Her long hours of observation were paying dividends. Her Song Sparrow nesting studies continued; she used Fish and Wildlife Service aluminum bands supplemented with unique color combinations of celluloid bands making possible individual recognition in the field. The sample sizes in the Song Sparrow research near her home in Ohio were large. In 1930, for example, she banded 47 adult Song Sparrows, found 61 nests, and banded 102 nestlings. Each year she compiled statistics on life histories of these color-banded birds, discovering, for example, that about half the birds migrated south for the winter and about half were year-round residents. She followed her Song Sparrows near home for the better part of eight field seasons compiling a veritable mountain of data. Again the papers began to flow (e.g., Nice 1930b, 1931b, 1932b).

In 1931, Nice attended the AOU meeting in Detroit, Michigan and there met Ernst Mayr, who was attending his first AOU meeting. Their meeting developed into a professional friendship that was to strongly affect Nice's career and enhance the practice and status of American ornithology. I interviewed Ernst Mayr in 1996 and he had a lot say about meeting Nice and the practice of ornithology in America at that time:

I attended my first AOU meeting in 1931 in Detroit ... I was appalled at the program. ... There was hardly a paper in the whole lot that dealt with the details of a life history study, a courtship display, anything like that. ... I was appalled and I remember at that meeting I was so disgusted with the absolute vacuousness of the papers that I went over to the library of the Museum of Zoology in Ann Arbor to read the current literature. There was one other person there, a lady, and I introduced myself. She had a name tag on so I knew she was a member of the AOU It was Mrs. Nice. That's where I first met her. She had the same experience. Appalled at the emptiness of that

program, she also went to the library. That was the nature of the difference between the European and the American ornithology.

That Nice shared Mayr's assessment of American ornithology at the time is indicated by a letter she wrote to West Coast ornithologist Joseph Grinnell in 1932:

Too many American ornithologists have despised the study of the living bird; the magazine and the books that deal with the subject abound in careless statements, anthropomorphic interpretations, repetition of ancient errors and sweeping conclusions from a pitiful array of facts. (quoted in Ogilvie 2018)

By 1933, she had begun to make an impression on her American colleagues and was invited to include a paper on territorialism in the AOU's 50th anniversary volume (Nice 1933a).

The Song Sparrow research is published

In 1932, Nice and her family visited Europe and one of the goals of that trip was for Nice to meet with European ornithologists. The highlight of this effort was meeting perhaps the most prominent European ornithologist of the time, Erwin Stresemann, and his student Ernst Mayr (whom she had met the previous year) who was visiting Stresemann from the United States. She worked for 10 days in Stresemann's library (Nice 1979), putting her language skills to work learning the European ornithological literature. Nice discussed her Song Sparrow study with Stresemann and complained to him about the difficulty of getting long papers published in American journals. Stresemann invited her to send him, as editor of the *Journal für Ornithologie*, the world's oldest ornithological journal, her manuscript on the Song Sparrow research. Nice's long paper was published in two parts, in German, in 1933 and 1934. Nice received a letter from Ernst Mayr that read: "I consider your Song Sparrow work the finest piece of life-history work, ever done."

Mayr also offered to arrange publication of an expanded and complete version of Nice's voluminous Song Sparrow research by the Linnaean Society of New York. It was published as two volumes (Nice 1937, 1943). The first volume, a population study of the Song Sparrow, was dedicated to Ernst Mayr who had served as an inspiration and friend. The reviews of this volume were laudatory:

In its form, this book is a model of clarity; in its substance, it is perhaps the most important contribution yet published to our knowledge of the life of a species. (Delacour 1937)

... a fundamental and original study of how birds live, worked out in the field in terms of one species, but checked and illuminated by frequent references to work on the same problems with many species in many countries. (Nicholson 1937)

The second volume, which was more theoretical, concentrated on the behavior of the Song Sparrow, compared this behavior to that of other species, and included research that Nice had done on hand-reared birds. When the second volume was

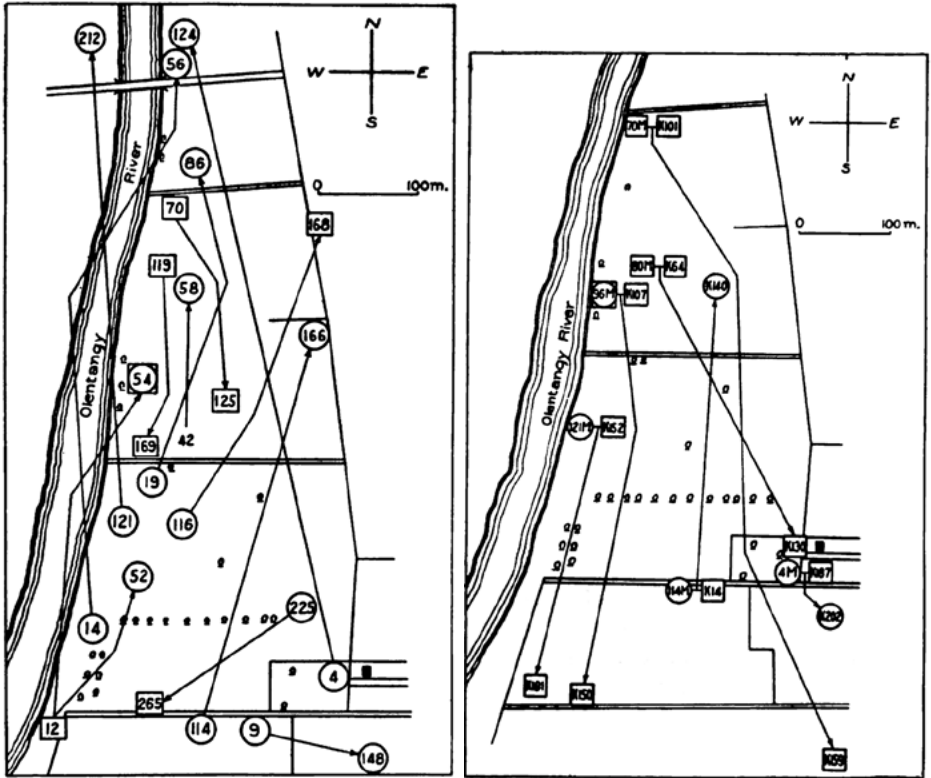


Figure 2. Maps from Nice (1937). Left: Territories of 13 Males in Relation to Birth Place. 9 residents, 4 summer residents. Right: Territories of 6 Females in Relation to Birth Place, 2 residents, 4 summer residents.

published in 1943 the reviews were, if possible, even more laudatory:

The second part of Mrs. Nice's 'Studies in the Life History of the Song Sparrow' is a work of much wider interest and value than the first part, admirable as that one is. ... No one else knows as much about the bird as she does. A large part of the material is new to ornithological literature ... Seven years of intensive, meticulous and intelligent field and aviary studies have yielded a rich harvest of detailed, individualized, observational data both quantitatively and qualitatively incomparably in advance of what we have for any other bird species. Added to this we have in the present book a great number of interpretations and suggestive comments that are themselves a digest of a vast and not always readily assimilable literature. In other words, Mrs. Nice's book presents more information than we have ever had about any single species, more thoroughly analyzed, and more completely integrated with current knowledge and modern concepts of animal behavior. ... Its author and the Linnaean Society are to be congratulated on the publication of the most searching study yet made of any wild bird.

(Friedmann 1943)

A review by Ernst Mayr states:

This treatise is far superior to anything of the kind that has been previously attempted. Many of the chapters ... are complete treatises in themselves with enough meat in them to fill separate volumes. (quoted in Burt 2003)

For her Song Sparrow work, Nice received the Brewster Medal in 1942, the highest award given by the AOU. Margaret Morse Nice had become an internationally celebrated ornithologist.

Writing papers and reviews for *Bird-Banding* (now *Journal of Field Ornithology*)

In her life-history studies, Nice recognized how important it was to recognize individual birds in the field, and her individual banding technique provided her the tools to do so. Thus, she was drawn to *Bird-Banding*, the journal of the Northeastern Bird-Banding Association that began publication in 1930, and she published a number of her papers on life history research in that journal, many of which involved banding (e.g., Nice 1931c, 1933c, 1934a).

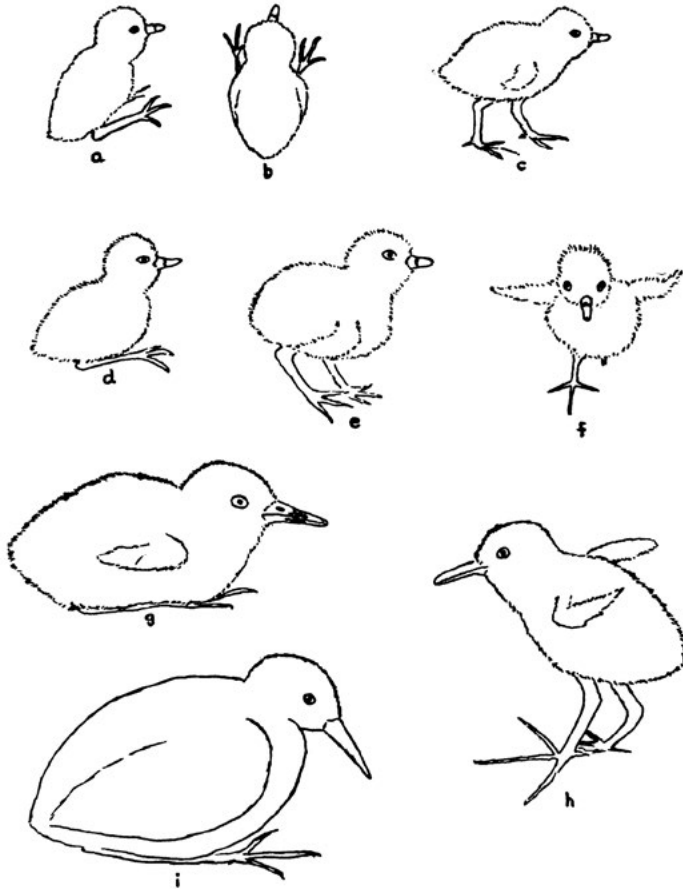
Nice, in her year in Europe in 1932, had become aware of how poorly most American ornithologists understood the European ornithological literature and resolved to do something about it. In her autobiography she states:

Gradually, from reading foreign journals and, in 1932, meeting so many foreign birds and ornithologists, I resolved to try my hand at educating Americans, as to what was being done in other countries in life history studies, and for foreigners as to what was being done in this country in the behavioural field. (Nice 1979)

She chose to do her educating by writing reviews of papers from foreign journals, which she published in *Bird-Banding*. Though most journals published reviews of books only, Nice, for her contributions to *Bird-Banding*, concentrated on succinctly reviewing individual papers. She contributed 18 reviews to the first issue in 1934 and then roughly 50 per issue for the next nine years, a total of approximately 1,800 reviews, until World War II disrupted communications. Subsequently, she continued writing reviews for *Bird-Banding* and her total number of reviews over a 35-year period was an astounding 3,280. In 1935, because of her reviews, she became an Associate Editor of *Bird-Banding*. She also became involved in editorial work for the *Wilson Bulletin*. In August, 1936, the Nice family moved to Chicago where her husband, Blaine, had taken a professorship at Chicago Medical School.

Awards and honors, and the research continues

In 1937, Nice began to reap the rewards of her successful research when she was elevated to Fellow in the AOU, the same year that Ernst Mayr was made a Fellow. She had joined the Wilson Ornithological Club (now Society) in 1921, and presented the first of many papers at the 1927 annual meeting, beginning a long and fruitful relationship with this society. She became the first woman President of



Margaret Morse Nice's sketches of the development of Virginia Rail from 1 to 31 days. Image from Nice (1962).

the Wilson Ornithological Society 1937, and the first woman to be President of any major ornithological organization in the world. The following year, after attending the International Ornithological Congress in France, she spent a month doing research in Austria with Konrad Lorenz, a prominent European ethologist-ornithologist, who had been an inspiration to her. Nice had become friends with Lorenz when she attended the 1934 International Ornithological Congress in Oxford, England. She also became friends with Niko Tinbergen, another prominent ethologist. Ethology, the science of animal behavior, was being developed in Europe in the 1930s and Nice, along with Ernst Mayr, are given credit for introducing this field of study to the United States (Barrow 1998).

During the late 1930s and early 1940s Nice continued her Song Sparrow research, principally with captive birds. She had done research on captive birds in Oklahoma,

including a study of a hand-raised Brown-headed Cowbird (Nice 1939a). In 1939, she published a book, *The Watcher at the Nest*, which was illustrated by Roger Tory Peterson and aimed at a broad audience of birdwatchers as well as ornithologists. It consisted of a popular treatment of her Song Sparrow research and life history work on other bird species. It concluded with a plea for conservation:

This world would be a far lovelier and more wonderful place to live in, if we left some space for the wild creatures, some forests for the beasts and birds, some swamps for the wild fowl, some prairie for the wild flowers. (Nice 1939b, p. 154).

Following her recovery from health problems during the 1940s, Nice spent four summers studying the development of precocial species, mostly ducklings, and this work was published as another book-length monograph by the Linnaean Society of New York (Nice, 1962). Following World War II, Nice was influential in the relief efforts to help European scientists, many of whom were German.

Nice was a soft-spoken person but could respond forcefully if irritated. In my interview with Ernst Mayr he presented an example:

Now let me say a little something about Mrs. Nice. ... she always said ... in conversation that there was nothing that annoyed her worse, that made her more angry, than when somebody referred to her as the housewife Margaret Morse Nice. She said, "that I was a housewife is completely immaterial. I was a professional ornithologist except I didn't have a paid position.

Nice didn't hesitate to express her opinions or outrage about issues of the time. She wrote letters to the editors of magazines, including *Life*, *Time*, and *Reader's Digest*, and to any newspaper whose editorials she found fault with. The subjects she responded to were varied and included responses to proposed changes in hunting regulations, supporting the use of live animals in medical research, imposing fines on the owners of cats that killed birds, and overpopulation by humans as a fundamental world problem. She even wrote President Harry Truman about the dangers of McCarthyism. Most of her letters involved conservation issues. For example, she wrote to the Secretary of the Interior urging him to tighten hunting regulations, prohibit permanently the use of bait or live decoys in hunting, and ban lead shot.

The awards and honors continue to pour in

Margaret Morse Nice received many awards and honors for her brilliant ornithological work. In 1955, she was awarded an honorary Doctor of Science degree by Mount Holyoke College, and she received a second doctorate from Elmira College in 1962. In 1998, the Wilson Ornithological Society established the Margaret Morse Nice Medal "in recognition of her scientific creativity and insight, her concern for education of young and amateur ornithologists, and her leadership as an innovator and mentor. The medal honors a lifetime of contributions to ornithology." (Burt 1998) Recipients of the Medal are invited to give an opening plenary lecture at the Wilson Society's annual meeting.

Niko Tinbergen, one of the world's most prominent ecologists, wrote her a letter on her 75th birthday:

In a long life you have found rewards not only in the home circle for all your cares and sacrifices, but with remarkable creative power you have served science. Through your works you have become known to ornithologists throughout the entire world as the one who laid the foundation for the population studies now so zealously persecuted [sic]. (quoted in Trautman 1977, p. 438)

After her death in June, 1974, the accolades continued. The editor of *Bird-Banding* wrote "We are all saddened by the loss of this friend from the ornithological society, but what a productive and exemplary life she led!" (Editor [David W. Johnston] 1974). In the same Memoriam, Ernst Mayr is quoted: "I have always felt that she, almost single-handedly, initiated a new era in American ornithology ... She early recognized the importance of a study of bird *individuals* because this is the only method to get reliable life history data."

Margaret Morse Nice led a long and fruitful life. Her childhood experiences and higher education in Massachusetts provided a strong foundation for her later research. Nice achieved international recognition both for her research and for bringing American and European ornithology closer together. Also, she was influential in opening ornithology to women, a field that was dominated by men in the early 1930s. The scope and quality of her research and achievements remain an inspiration. 🐦

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Mississippi Kites of Southeastern New Hampshire

Stephen Mirick



Mississippi Kites. Photograph by the author.

The small town of Newmarket, New Hampshire, which lies about 14 miles north of the Massachusetts state line, became famous in the birding world in 1998 with a visit from a Little Egret that stayed for several weeks and entertained hundreds of birders from all across the country. Newmarket is also famous as the former residence of many noteworthy birders including Ben Griffith, Lauren Kras, Kurk Dorsey, Christopher Ciccone, and yours truly. But starting in the early 2000s, the town has become famous for new residents—Mississippi Kites.

The story of Mississippi Kites nesting in New Hampshire is a remarkable one that dates back to 2004. At that time, there had been only two single observer sightings ever for the state and both of those came from the 1980s (Keith and Fox 2013). There were no unambiguous state records, so the species was on the hypothetical list according to the New Hampshire Bird Records committee.

The story began on May 30, 2004, when Robert Roy was fishing from a boat along the Lamprey River in Newmarket. He reported that he saw a Mississippi Kite land in a tree 100 feet away, where it broke off a branch and carried it away as if

building a nest. The record, with good descriptive details, was belatedly submitted to the New Hampshire Rare Bird Committee; however, the committee could not in good conscience accept this record due to the implausible nature of the sighting. After all, how could it be possible that a Mississippi Kite would be building a nest in New Hampshire?

Unfortunately, Roy's record was disregarded and I had just moved out of Newmarket, so there were no birders ambitious enough to try to relocate or confirm this report in subsequent years. The story would grow stale until the spring of 2008.

On June 3, 2008, a birder named Darin Franceschini reported in his first post to NHBirds (the statewide birding email list) that he had seen a pair of Mississippi Kites along the Lamprey River in Newmarket on May 28, 2008 (Donsker 2008). He described them as having "an unmistakable white band across the secondaries and the male had bright fiery red eyes." Once again, the birding world seemed to turn its collective head and deny the implausible. How could anyone see the fiery red eyes of a Mississippi Kite in New Hampshire? Absurd!

Finally, the "cork came out of the bottle" and the story unfolded to the birding world, when birder Ben Griffith, along with Charlie Wright, were driving through Newmarket on June 14, 2008, and spotted two kites flying across South Main Street. Thanks to a few phone calls and the Internet, the entire New England birding community learned of their presence and scores of birders swarmed to Newmarket and saw the birds that day.

The story became more and more amazing almost by the hour. That first day, June 14, the kites were observed gracefully feeding together all afternoon and coming down to roost and spend the night in the same area. The next day they were found again and were seen and photographed copulating. By the third day, they were seen copulating again, and also building a nest. On, or shortly after June 17, it was thought that an egg or eggs had been laid and incubation had started. On July 18, hatching was confirmed when a single chick was seen being fed (Ben Griffith, personal communication). The chick fledged in August.

With an increase of eyes focused on Newmarket, incredibly a second nest was discovered in August of 2008, and a minimum of five adult or subadult Mississippi Kites were confirmed—all in Newmarket. Not only that, each nest successfully fledged a single chick.

The successful nesting of two pairs of kites in 2008, combined with the number of adult and subadult birds in the area that year, all support the 2004 sighting and suggests that kites had been nesting, or at least attempting to nest, in Newmarket since 2004 or earlier.

Between 2008 and 2016, the kites returned to nest each year, and the town of Newmarket continued to be the nexus of all kite activity. In fact, there were only a few scattered reports of individual kites in nearby towns. The primary areas of kite nesting activity were along South Main Street and Gonet Drive, less than two miles apart, and



Rescued Mississippi Kite nestling. Photograph by Steve Bennett.

near the center of town. Each year, no more than one or two nests were found. Birders, however, spent little time in searching for additional territories or nests, which can be surprisingly difficult to find.

The 2017 nesting season was disastrous. Only a single nest was located in Newmarket. A car struck the male of that pair, and after a long period of rehabilitation the bird died when it flew into the wall of a flight enclosure. The female tried to raise a single chick by herself; however, the partly-grown chick fell out of the nest and the female would not feed the baby on the ground. The chick ultimately succumbed despite my best efforts, with help from others, in placing the baby up in a makeshift nest in a nearby tree.

Despite this nest failure and the death of an adult, encouraging reports were received at the end of the 2017 season of additional kite activity from the nearby towns of Durham and Stratham. In 2018, three nests were found with one each in Newmarket, Durham, and Stratham. The two new nest sites in Durham and Stratham were within five miles of downtown Newmarket. All three nests successfully fledged a single chick—the first time that three chicks had ever fledged in the state. During the summer of 2019, New Hampshire again had three known nest territories for Mississippi Kites in the same nest locations; however, only two of the nests were successful and two chicks fledged.

Below are a few observations I've made over the 11 years since the kites were first confirmed as nesting in New Hampshire.

- **Spring Arrival Dates:** Arrival dates at nest territories are generally in mid-May. My earliest recorded date is May 13; however, there appear to be reports from as early as May 9 (eBird).
- **Nest Location:** 100% of the nests found in New Hampshire have been in residential subdivisions with mature trees. Nests almost always have been in the front, side, or rear yards of homes. This has been convenient for monitoring the nests, most of which have been visible from road frontage or sidewalks.
- **Nest Tree:** The type of tree that the kites chose for their nests has varied considerably, and nests have been found in a variety of species including red oak, white pine, sugar maple, and shagbark hickory. The nest is always relatively high in the tree, under the canopy, and often difficult to see. The small scraggly nest of twigs is sometimes located in forks of outer branches and vulnerable to high wind disturbance.
- **Nesting Behavior:** Unlike Mississippi Kites in other parts of the country, these kites are tolerant of human activity. The birds are oblivious to anything going on below them, including dogs barking, lawn mowers blasting, kids screaming, or hordes of birders watching them from the street nearby. Some homeowners have been tolerant as well, with youngsters setting up lemonade stands for visiting birders.
- **Site Fidelity:** Site fidelity is strong, as would be expected, but the birds don't always use the same nest tree. Sometimes they take over the old nest or build a new nest in the same tree, or they may choose a nest tree up to a hundred yards away or even at a different street address.
- **Number of Young:** Only a single chick per nest has ever been confirmed for all of the nests I have observed or heard about over the past 11 years. No one has ever seen a second head sticking up out of a nest. This suggests that the kites in New Hampshire lay only a single egg. This is noteworthy because in their usual breeding range, the normal clutch size is almost always two eggs (sometimes one and rarely three [Parker 1999]). Is this a modification in their egg-laying behavior to accommodate a shorter breeding season this far north? Or could it reflect a scarcity of food when the kites arrive in May and a subsequent lack of resources that the female can put into egg laying?
- **Food:** Food items I've seen brought to the nests have been mostly dragonflies, cicadas, and indiscernible flying insects. One memorable observation was of one of the kites eating a bat that it dropped at my feet, then swooped down to try to catch it (unsuccessfully) before it hit the ground. In 2019, I saw an adult feed a chick a fledged juvenile Eastern Bluebird, which was the first time I saw a kite eating a bird.

- **Post-Fledging Period:** Adult care and feeding of the single chick continues well after fledging. The family group moves around the neighborhood but generally stays in the vicinity of the nest. Parental care is a long process that continues right up into early September, or roughly one month after fledging. The overall reproductive process appears to take roughly three months: one month of incubation, one month until fledging, and one final month until independence.
- **Nest Success:** Nest success seems good considering the northerly latitude for this southern species. Accurate data has not been carefully monitored over the years; however, I think that approximately 14 young kites have successfully fledged and I know of only four nest failures (eBird). Two of the failures seem to have occurred during incubation and two occurred with young in the nest. Other than the young bird that fell out of the nest in 2017, the reasons for the nest failures have been difficult to identify. I suspect at least one or more additional failures have been the result of strong storm activity and young or eggs falling from the nest. However, avian and mammalian predators are always a possibility.
- **Fall Departure Dates:** Successful adult Mississippi Kites care for their young into the first or second week of September and then all birds seem to disappear at once. The latest reported observation I can find for territorial birds is of a family group of three on September 11, 2016 (eBird). 🦅

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Steve Mirick has been birding in New Hampshire since he was in college at the University of New Hampshire in 1981. He served as the fall editor for New Hampshire Bird Records for 20 years, and was as a member of the New Hampshire Rare Bird Committee. He has been active for many years with New Hampshire Audubon and continues to lead field trips for the Seacoast Chapter. Steve moved out of Newmarket, New Hampshire, in 2003 and now lives in Bradford, Massachusetts, but continues to be an avid birder in New Hampshire where he and his wife Jane spend most of their time chasing birds across the state.

PHOTO ESSAY

Mississippi Kites of New Hampshire



Mississippi Kites copulating. Photograph by Stephen Mirick.



Rescue attempt of Mississippi Kite nestling. Photograph by Stephen Mirick.



Adult Mississippi Kite with Juvenile. Photograph by Jason Lambert .



Juvenile Mississippi Kite. Photograph by Stephen Mirick. 

MUSINGS FROM THE BLIND BIRDER

Helping Birds: What Can I Do?

Martha Steele

The recent and widely publicized news of a nearly 30 percent drop in the number of birds in the United States and Canada—or about three billion birds—since 1970 gave me great pause. Think about that: a drop of nearly 30 percent in the number of birds. The study, conducted by researchers at several institutions, including the American Bird Conservancy, the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology, and the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center (SMBC), examined Breeding Bird Atlas and Christmas Bird Count data, as well as international shorebird surveys and weather radar data, for 529 species. The authors did not evaluate reasons for their reported declines but hypothesized that habitat loss may be the primary culprit with other factors that could include pesticides and climate change.

The authors reported on the loss of birds across the broad spectrum of families, with only waterfowl and raptors showing gains, which the authors attributed to the ban of DDT as well as government programs that have conserved large wetland areas. Grassland birds have been particularly hard hit, with a 53 percent decline overall in the number of birds in this habitat.

Beyond giving me pause about the loss of so many birds, it made me focus squarely on my own habits and inclinations on a day to day basis. What can I, one person in a sea of one billion people in the Americas where our birds live, do better to help address such a staggering loss of birds? Or why should I care?

Helping birds is a highly personal issue for me. Simply put, I love birds. I love to bird. I love talking about birds. I love the challenge of identifying birds. I love listening to birds in whatever environment they happen to be. I love the ebb and flow of the seasons, the comings and goings throughout the year, and wishing them well on their journeys that have become increasingly perilous due to diminishing habitat availability.

And why do I love birds? This is sort of like asking why I love my husband, my mother, my brothers, my cousins, my friends. Beyond the profound enjoyment of being in the presence of birds, I am often awed by their beauty, their spectacular courtship displays, their bouncy, buzzy, mournful, or (add your adjective) songs, their diversity, and their otherworldly behaviors and abilities that include biannual migrations spanning thousands of miles.

Reductions in the number of birds—and make no mistake, reductions of nearly 30 percent are staggering—mean that my enjoyment of birds and birding is seriously threatened, and that matters to me. Wandering Mount Auburn Cemetery on a quiet May morning is not a lot of fun, as birders commiserate over the silence and then rush *en masse* to a single tree with a few migrant warblers. Similarly, my heart sinks if the woods around my Vermont home seem much quieter than usual, with fewer thrushes or White-throated Sparrows gracing the air with their melodious songs.

Fortunately, we are in a position to help reverse this trend. The *Science* article describing the study findings (Pennisi, E. 2019. Three billion North American birds have vanished since 1970, surveys show, *Science*, September 19, 2019) was accompanied by recommended policies or actions that can be supported by birders and other conservationists. On the macro scale, government support of such programs as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, funding programs that focus on habitat conservation, enacting the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, and advancing climate solutions would help bird conservation efforts. It is important to pay attention to policies and laws on the local, regional, national, and international level and be engaged and educated about supporting elected officials and policies that speak to our passion for birds and their habitats. Any legislative aide that I have ever spoken with stresses that it makes a difference when we call our elected representatives and advocate for laws and funding for whatever issue it is, and that most certainly can include habitat and bird conservation efforts.

On the micro level, there are well known steps that have long been encouraged, such as keeping your cats indoors, taking steps to prevent collisions with your windows, supporting Smithsonian Bird Friendly® shade grown coffee, minimizing use of plastics that could be consumed by or entrap birds, or avoiding pesticide use on and managing your property for wildlife diversity. We can also financially support nonprofit organizations that focus specifically on habitat or bird conservation strategies here in North America and throughout the hemisphere.

Other steps that I have considered for myself are a little more uncomfortable. For example, I have often pondered the contradictions between my strong support of environmental protection policies and addressing climate change while also riding in vehicles far and wide, thereby leaving a significant carbon footprint, to see birds others have already reported to add to my year list of a county or state. The contradiction, of course, is the contribution I am making to greenhouse gases through my riding in gasoline-powered vehicles that do no favors to our environment, including our birds, all for what can arguably be considered my selfish desire to increase my species list for the year. Sure, my records of birds contribute to the database of bird sightings but chasing a bird that has already been recorded by one or more others in order to add it to my personal list does not add knowledge or particularly useful data. My birding talent, such as it is, may best help the subjects of my passion by a lower emphasis on compiling high species counts and a greater emphasis on documenting birds in my local areas.

While some may make a similar argument regarding our impact on the climate by flying throughout the globe in search of birds, we cannot ignore the fact that ecotourism is a major factor in helping to conserve habitat for flora and fauna. As noted in a recent New York Times editorial,

Among the most important conservation lessons to emerge in the past 25 years is this: When local communities benefit from tourism, they become partners and allies in saving nature. Without that support, conservation will forever be an uphill battle. If the job that feeds your family and sends your kids to school depends on international visitors paying to see a wild elephant

or to experience a coral reef teeming with marine life, that builds a global constituency for saving biodiversity right now. (Christ, C. 2019. What if All that Flying is Good for the Planet? Opinion, *New York Times*, November 19, 2019)

I have for many years made a point of telling locals when I visit a restaurant, store, or lodging facility that I am visiting to see the birds in their community. It is a small but important action that I hope helps to educate local populations of the economic benefit of protecting the environment and its inhabitants.

For years now, we have been worried about negative bird population trends and this latest study just puts an exclamation point on these trends. As I dig deeper into my own actions, I urge anyone interested in birds to also think about what you might do at any macro or micro level beyond what you are doing now. Readers of this column are certainly already making enormous contributions to bird conservation by the simple act of birding and documenting what you see, as well as participating in annual bird surveys. Still, it is fair to ask ourselves if there is anything else we may do, however small it may seem to us. Serious birders are not alone in the potential impact we can make on bird conservation efforts. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reported that about 43 million Americans watch birds around their homes or elsewhere. This means that many Americans could take simple but effective steps that together could make a significant impact on reversing the downward population trend. If the people who are most interested in birds do not help, then who will?

It matters that birds are protected because in so doing, we help protect ourselves. Birds are pollinators, they disperse seeds, they help control agricultural or other pests, and more. They inhabit just about every corner of the earth, including our vast oceans and the most inhospitable environments, perhaps more widely dispersed than any other life form short of microorganisms (Franzen, J. 2018. Why Birds Matter and Should be Protected, *National Geographic*, January 2018).

Despite everything we have thrown at them, birds still grace our daily lives. As Jonathan Franzen writes in “Why Birds Matter and Should be Protected:”

The radical otherness of birds is integral to their beauty and their value. They are always among us but never of us. They’re the other world-dominating animals that evolution has produced, and their indifference to us ought to serve as a chastening reminder that we’re not the measure of all things. The stories we tell about the past and imagine for the future are mental constructions that birds can do without. Birds live squarely in the present. And at present, although our cats and our windows and our pesticides kill billions of them every year, and although some species, particularly on oceanic islands, have been lost forever, their world is still very much alive. In every corner of the globe, in nests as small as walnuts or as large as haystacks, chicks are pecking through their shells and into the light.

We should not take for granted what we can still enjoy. The birds deserve our help in seeing the light for many millennia into the future. And, I would argue, we humans

would benefit not just economically but also in our souls. Think about the times where you have experienced pure joy as you watched or listened to a particularly memorable bird or birding experience. It did not matter what was going on with your life or around you, it only mattered that you too were living in the moment, oblivious to everything except your uplifted heart and soaring spirits. For me, these rare moments of all-consuming joy occur most often in the presence of birds. This is fundamentally why birds matter so much to me and why I hope I can help ensure these moments for the rest of my life and in the lives of others that follow me. 🐦

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>

2020 marks 30 years of the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act

The year 2020 marks the 30th anniversary of the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA). Through the implementation of MESA, MassWildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) conserves and protects the most vulnerable native animal and plant species of Massachusetts and the habitats upon which they depend. Currently, there are more than 400 native plants, vertebrates, and invertebrates that are officially listed as Endangered, Threatened, or of Special Concern.

Many rare species have benefited from the protection afforded under MESA and the work of NHESP over the years, including the restoration and conservation of several notable species such as the peregrine falcon, bald eagle, and northern red-bellied cooter. However, there is still a lot to do and in the face of habitat loss, emerging diseases, invasive species, climate change, and other threats, this work is more important than ever!

NHESP staff are diligently working to recover rare species and their habitats. NHESP's conservation efforts include targeted restoration and active management of habitats; collection, management, and analysis of statewide biological data; conducting regulatory reviews; and the development of educational programming, publications, and conservation tools to connect residents with nature and help guide state and partner conservation priorities.

NHESP's work is primarily funded through grants, regulatory review fees, and donations from supportive citizens. Donations to NHESP are received through a voluntary check-off on the state income tax form and direct donations throughout the year. NHESP donations go directly into the Endangered Wildlife Conservation Fund, which can only be used for administering NHESP programs. These donations are critical to ensure the dedicated NHESP staff can continue to perform important conservation work, including field research and surveys, regulatory review, habitat management, land protection, and education. Without such support, NHESP cannot protect, manage, and restore the Commonwealth's most imperiled animals and plants and the sensitive communities and habitats on which they depend. In addition to donations, citizens can help by reporting the location of a rare species or vernal pool to help NHESP keep its database current.

Join the celebration! Go to Mass.gov/30MESA throughout the year to learn about MESA and how you can support NHESP.

GLEANINGS

Flying High

David M. Larson

Every year in Mass Audubon's Birder's Certificate Program, when I am presenting information about avian physiology, I mention the amazing phenomenon of the migration of Bar-headed Geese. These birds migrate between their wintering and nesting grounds over the Himalayan Mountains and Tibetan Plateau, at 5000–6000 meters (approximately 16,000–20,000 feet), and have been seen in flight at almost 7300 meters (24,000 feet). In comparison, human mountain climbers commonly use bottled oxygen above 7000 meters. Combining the metabolic demands of flapping flight (already metabolically expensive), the greater exertion required to fly in the lower air pressure at altitude (thinner air requires faster flight to maintain lift), and the decreased oxygen concentration at altitude, makes flying to this level pretty impressive.

So how do these geese manage? One key is the efficiency of the avian respiratory and cardiovascular systems. Birds can extract more oxygen from the air they breathe and get rid of more carbon dioxide than mammals can, due to the anatomy of their respiratory system. Avian hearts empty more fully upon contraction and are thus more efficient. Against this backdrop, Meir, et al. (2019) tested respiratory and cardiac parameters in Bar-headed Geese that had been trained to fly in a wind tunnel while hooked up to a hose and mask that supplied air of normoxic (21% oxygen = sea level), moderately hypoxic (10.5% oxygen = 5,500 meters), and severely hypoxic (7% oxygen = 9,000 meters) conditions. The breathing masks contained sensors to measure oxygen and carbon dioxide levels in inspired and expired air. In-dwelling catheters measured arterial and mixed venous dissolved oxygen at rest, pre-flight, and steady-state flight under the three oxygen concentrations.

Birds flying in normoxic conditions extracted more oxygen and released more carbon dioxide than birds at rest. This means that under increased demand, the respiratory system worked at a higher level in flying birds. Heart rate (<150 beats per minute at rest and >300 beats per minute in flight) and wing beat rate (five times per second) did not differ significantly in flight under the three atmospheric oxygen concentrations.

The amount of dissolved oxygen in venous blood in steady-state flight dropped rapidly at the start of flight. It decreased in all atmospheric conditions, but was lower in hypoxia than in normoxia. This result suggests increased oxygen extraction by working muscle. Under preflight conditions, arterial blood oxygen levels decreased with hypoxia. During flight, similar arterial oxygen levels were maintained at each of the three air supply concentrations. This result suggests that the geese have excess respiratory gas exchange capacity.

In conjunction with the available literature, the authors conclude that their study geese increased their metabolic rate 16-fold in flight over resting levels. This increase

is supported by an increase in oxygen transported per heartbeat and a modest 2.5-fold increase in heart rate. Clearly, this species has significant cardiac reserves, because heart rates during hypoxic flight were not increased over normoxic flight. The authors conclude that hypoxic flight is supported by a general decrease in metabolic rate during flight compared to normoxic flight. The mechanisms for decreased metabolic rate in hypoxic flight remain untested. Possibilities include oxygen limitation (unlikely), suppression of metabolism in nonflight-related tissues (likely), increased mechanical efficiency of flight (likely), or a switch to anaerobic metabolism (unlikely during the duration of these flights).

An interesting finding of this study was the decrease in venous temperature during flight. This blood temperature change could be due to evaporative cooling in the respiratory system. Cooled blood would have a higher oxygen loading capacity in the lungs. As the blood warms in the active flight muscles, it would release that oxygen where it is needed for the working tissue. This is an interesting hypothesis worthy of further study.

This project provides a fascinating window on the physiology of Bar-headed Geese when flying at high altitudes under hypoxic conditions. There are, of course, several caveats of note. These geese were imprinted on humans and trained to fly under decidedly odd conditions (rubber mask, hose, catheters, wind tunnel). Given the conditions and despite their training, their flights with instrumentation lasted only a few minutes before they, presumably, decided to stop. In contrast, it takes wild geese eight hours to fly over the Himalayan Mountains, so the physiological demands and response would certainly change during a flight of that duration. And those wild geese face low air pressures (hypobarica) at altitude, in addition to hypoxia. Hypobaric conditions make the birds work harder to maintain altitude and forward motion due to reduced lift at low air pressures. Indeed, the stress of hypobarica could be more physiologically significant than that of hypoxia. So the experiments in this study shed incremental light on the question of how geese fly at high altitudes. In addition, only one of their geese was willing to fly consistently in severe hypoxic conditions, and then only briefly. As the authors point out, this bird could have had unusual characteristics, so the severe hypoxia data are hanging from a thin thread.

The development of backpack instrumentation capable of measuring oxygen and carbon dioxide levels in arterial and mixed venous blood, blood temperature, and heart rate, combined with transmitting the data to a satellite system, could go a long way toward explaining the physiological demands and the response of the geese to migratory flight under hypoxic and hypobaric conditions. 🦋

Reference

Meir, J.U., J.M. York, B.A. Chua, W. Jardine, L.A. Hawkes, and W.K. Milsom. 2019. Reduced metabolism supports hypoxic flight in the high-flying bar-headed goose (*Anser indicus*). eLife 8:e44986. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7554/eLife.44986>.

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FIELD NOTES

Leucistic Wild Turkey

Nate Marchessault



Wild Turkeys. Photograph by the author.

One of these does not look like the others.

As a child growing up in the 90s Pokémon was one of my favorite video games, and I use it as an analogy for birding to friends my age who show no interest in the hobby. The Pokémon slogan of “Gotta catch ‘em all!” probably has an air of familiarity to those in the birding world. In addition to the regular Pokémon creatures one collects in the game, there are “shiny” Pokémon, very rare and differing from others of the same kind only in appearance. Leucism and albinism provide us with “shiny” birds. Seeing a bird with one of these characteristics can be quite a treat; I can’t say I can remember every robin or bluebird in my life but I do have vivid memories of the where, the when, and the appearance of leucistic birds I’ve encountered.

Leucism is a loss of pigment in some—or all—feathers on a bird. Albinism is a loss of melanin in all tissues, and both are rare occurrences in nature. Although it can occasionally be difficult to discern leucism versus albinism in an all-white individual, the key is to look at the eyes; if they appear normal in color for that species, the individual is leucistic, but if they are pink or red then the individual is an albino. Although albinism is typically associated with all-white individuals, not all albinos are



Leucistic Wild Turkey. Photograph by Chris Williams.

completely white as other pigments are still expressed.

Leucism generally doesn't have a negative impact on the health of the individual. Albinism, on the other hand, prevents the production of melanin in all tissues, including that which is essential for the structural integrity of feathers, and the lack of melanin in the eye leads to ultraviolet radiation damage resulting in poor eyesight. Because of this, few albino individuals in the wild make it to adulthood.

Both conditions can also have a negative impact on the biological fitness of an individual by increasing the chances of it being caught by a predator. An albino or leucistic individual in a flock would be more easily singled out. Birds that use camouflage as a means of defense are especially at risk as their behaviors will remain the same but their ability to blend in does not. Picture an all-white woodcock standing in place to hide from a predator, not ideal!

The 'all-white meat' turkey in the accompanying photo was seen on Cape Cod in the Yarmouth area around Thanksgiving. Most, if not all, of the feathers appear completely white, the skin is pale, and even the nails are white. The eye, however, appears dark, which would suggest that this bird is leucistic rather than albino.

With luck this one will be able to live out a long and prosperous life, and many people will get to enjoy the oddity. As for me, I'll take the dark meat for now. 🦃

Deer, Flies, and Eastern Phoebes

Pauliina Swartz



White-tailed deer and Eastern Phoebe. Photograph by the author.

In late summer, white-tailed deer are drawn to our orchard in West Newbury, Massachusetts, happily feasting on peaches and apples. Our resident Eastern Phoebe pair also enjoys perching on the orchard branches.

Over several years of careful observation, I discovered an unexpected connection between them. In some of my photos of the deer, a phoebe can also be seen. Surely, this was just a coincidence, I thought, given that both creatures simply enjoy visiting the orchard. It was not until I witnessed a phoebe flying directly at a deer that I started wondering about a connection between the two. The deer did not seem to mind this dive-bombing attention. Was the phoebe perhaps catching insects off the deer? I hoped to capture this behavior with my camera.

My photo opportunity came this past August when I noticed a phoebe and a deer together again. I shot through a window to avoid disrupting the occasion. The phoebe made several flights right at the deer. I also observed that the deer closed its eyes as the bird got close to it. It certainly looked like a cooperative endeavor. After five or so encounters, the deer seemed to give the phoebe a look as if to say “Thank you very much,” and walked away.

So, it looks as if the draw of the orchard includes more than the fruit for the deer, but an opportunity for the flycatchers as well. 🐦

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ABOUT BOOKS

Locally Sourced

Mark Lynch

Flight Calls: Exploring Massachusetts through Birds. John R. Nelson. 2019. Bright Leaf, University of Massachusetts Press.

Voyagers, Visitors, and Home. Dale Monette. 2020. Highland Press. Athol, Massachusetts.

Birding travel teaches that exoticism—applied to birds, places, or people—is all about perspective. (p. 7, *Flight Calls*)

Massachusetts is quite a small state, squeaking in at number 45 in a list that starts with the behemoth of Alaska, the largest state. Alaska clocks in at a whopping 1,477,953 square kilometers. If Alaska is a Great Cassowary, then Massachusetts is a mere American Robin. You could theoretically drive from Provincetown to Pittsfield in about six hours or less, providing there were no lights, traffic, or “staties.” Granted the Bay State may cover only 20,202 square kilometers, but jammed in that relatively tiny area is a wealth of natural attractions, and that means a wide variety of birds and other wildlife. Below are two books about the birds of Massachusetts, each from a very different geographical perspective. One author calls the rocky shores of Cape Ann his home turf, while the other author’s home patch is based in the forests of North Quabbin. Both authors have very different styles of expressing their love of Massachusetts wildlife; one is a writer and essayist, the other is a photographer. Taken together, they create a loving portrait of the state’s remaining wild areas.

“Through the gulls, owls, and warblers of Cape Ann, I’ve found the cultural history of this place called home.” (p. 51, *Flight Calls*)

John R. Nelson is a professor emeritus at North Shore Community College. He is a published writer, typically of essays, and *Flight Calls* is a fine collection of his pieces that focus on the birds and birders of Massachusetts. A number of these have appeared previously in publications like the *Antioch Review*, *Harvard Review*, *Birdwatcher’s Digest*, and, of course, *Bird Observer*.

Nelson came to birds rather late in his life, and this gives him a different perspective than one reads in work penned by hard-core birders obsessed since their childhood.

“I turned to birding only after a midlife run of orthopedic insults ended my amateur careers in basketball, touch football, and tennis.” (p. 3)

It was while he was recuperating from the surgeries in Monteverde, Costa Rica, that on a whim he decided to try a professionally led bird walk. He enjoyed it and something clicked. When he returned to his home on Cape Ann, he took up bicycling as exercise and began to notice all the birds he passed on his outings. A birder was born.

But Nelson's writing is never just about the birds.

After I returned, I looked to combine my newfound love of birds with my long-standing love of literature. I hatched a plan to write a grand book tracing the history of American literature from a birder's perspective. After several editors persuaded me I'd never find a publisher, I kept reading anyway, partly as research for essays, but mostly out of curiosity. (p. 113)

Because of this passion for literature, Nelson's essays are filled with references to other writers. Sometimes these become the focus of the essay itself, and there are wonderful sections in *Flight Calls* about Melville, Emily Dickinson, and Ralph Waldo Emerson and their connections to birds and birding. Sometimes it may be just an offhand reference that adds color and interest to the essay: "Eastern Point is where T.S. Eliot spent his summers from 1895 through 1909, the last of these in a house his father built by the moors above Niles Beach." (p. 57)

John Kieran, surely the only member of the Baseball Hall of Fame (as a sportswriter) with a bird sanctuary (in Rockport) named after him, described one 'dignified' gull standing aboard a floating ice cake like 'a ferryboat captain in command of his gallant craft.' (p. 53)

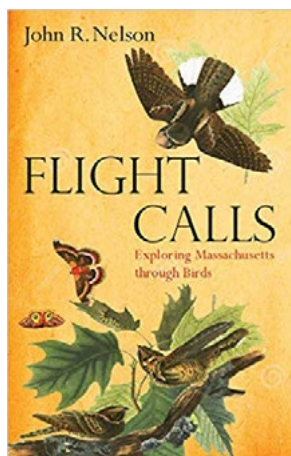
This "love of lit" means that Nelson is curious about the human side of birding and what motivates birders to have such a singular passion. The depths of a birder's obsession can seem a bit crazy to a nonbirder. "Beyond birds themselves, I'm fascinated by what people make of birds—the ways various species have been envied, spiritualized, imitated, and reviled in human myths and literature and painstakingly studied by both professionals and amateurs." (p. 9)

Even though I lived in Worcester for my entire birding life, when I began birding in the mid 1970s, I was immediately drawn to the North Shore and the birders who could be found on Plum Island and Cape Ann. Through the 1980s, I learned the basics of birding, identification, and how to lead a trip from a welcoming crew of hard-core East Coast birders. Many of these prominent birders, who influenced young birders at the time, make an appearance in Nelson's essays. For an entire generation of birders, spotting Bill Drummond leading a classic Plum Island BBC trip, or getting the latest bird news from Judge Larry Jodrey and Jerry Soucy, was as expected as finding Purple Sandpipers on the rocks of Andrew's Point in winter. Sadly, many of these people have passed on, and Massachusetts birding is the poorer for it. Reading a number of Nelson's essays, as a birder of a "certain age," I found myself feeling nostalgic for what now seems a Golden Age of state birding.

Getting old and how that affects you as a birder is a topic that Nelson embraces in several essays. In "Convalescence" (p. 245–49), Nelson writes about the birds he experiences under the influence of serious pain killers. After yet another surgery, he writes about what it's like to be laid up recovering when your heart and mind yearn to be outside looking at birds. In "Further Adventures in Four-legged Birding" (p. 250–53), Nelson describes getting out into the field with crutches. It is somewhat comforting to read that he has been as reckless as I have been when recovering from an injury: "One winter's day I crutched the full length of the granite slabs of the Dog Bar

breakwater. Mary walked with me to make sure I didn't go over the edge." (p. 250)

As you approach and then pass 70 years of age, you realize you are no longer the spry "anything for the bird" lister you were in your youth. If you have suffered a catastrophic illness or serious accident, your birding may be similarly affected but at a much earlier age. With luck you have developed interests other than birding as the decades have passed, and these inevitably temper your youthful single-mindedness. As a senior, you may think twice about bugging out of a friend's wedding because a Brambling has just shown up in Massachusetts. You may still think about it, but you won't actually do it. The reason may be that just ticking a bird on a list is no longer the main reason you enjoy watching birds. But it's not just your mind that matures. Your body is also now a lot creakier than it was 40 years back. Getting up at 3:00 am to make a run to the coast at dawn may not be the easy decision it once was. These are all common issues that are unfortunately rarely written about in the birding literature. In "Geezer Birding" (p. 254-58), Nelson is brutally honest about how ageing really affects your birding acumen and how to live gracefully with the realities of becoming a bona fide geezer with binoculars.



"I don't have this problem with another topic: birding while old. As a certified geezer birder, I know I have plenty of company." (p. 255)

Though *Flight Calls*' main focus is on the North Shore, a number of Nelson's essays range over the entire state and describe visits to other locations like Quabbin and Cape Cod. Nelson's subject matter is as varied as the species mentioned. There are essays on birding by bicycle, the odd street and place names of Cape Ann, and historical pieces on people like Edward Howe Forbush. One piece describes John's being mistaken in the field for another John Nelson who is also a birder. "For Birds and People: The Brookline Bird Club" (p.134-55) is a must read history of Massachusetts' oldest and most popular bird club. This endlessly fascinating essay describes the grand old days of birding in Massachusetts, back before the Internet, smartphones, and digital photography. The BBC would arrange 3-day excursions to such exotic locations as Cape Ann or New Salem. Club members would travel by train en masse to "far flung locations like Newburyport" (p. 141). There were even club trips to Martha's Vineyard to view the last remaining Heath Hen. By describing these activities of one bird club, Nelson also traces the evolution of birding in all of Massachusetts.

Throughout each essay in *Flight Calls*, Nelson is interesting and erudite company. It is a book to dip into and enjoy whenever you have some quiet time. His knowledge of literature is matched by his passion for local history and art history. This makes *Flight Calls* a book that is never just about the birds, but also about the people who have written about birds and the places where those birds are found. His last chapter, "The Birds After Us" (p. 293-307), addresses the elephant in the room of environmental degradation and global climate change. It's happening all around us and affecting the

birds we seek, yet many birders often act like nothing is happening.

The “sorry truth”, says Scott Weidensaul, is that “birders as a community have been woefully neglectful of the conservation side of the birding equation.” In 1962, Roger Tory Peterson told a friend that birders had been “playing at conservation.” People who didn’t care about birds were aggressively destroying the country he loved. “We have to get to be far more militant,” Peterson said. (p. 305-6)

Though Nelson is justifiably alarmed by the current dire situation, he refuses to succumb to a paralyzing depression, and his final paragraph offers up a slight glimmer of hope. *Flight Calls* is the perfect book to enjoy while you defrost by a fire after a winter’s morning birding.

Photographing birds offers a way to share my passions for our modern-day dinosaurs.” (p. 8, *Voyagers, Visitors, and Home*)

It is surprising to realize that just 20 years ago very few birders carried cameras. Film was expensive and you wasted so much of it on the often uncooperative birds. You had to depend on professionals to develop your photographs. If you wanted to develop your own color photography, that was another extremely complicated and expensive enterprise involving creating a darkroom, getting special papers, and lots of chemicals. Thanks to the digital revolution, we all can now photograph birds, if only just for the “record shot.” All you need is a decent camera (or just a phone!) and a computer, and you can fine tune and edit your shots in the comfort of your home. No middleman, no chemicals. Because of this proliferation of cameras, serious photography for potential publication is an avocation many more people are now taking up. Very good photographs of wildlife seem to be everywhere, so the field of wildlife photography has become crowded and very competitive. Birders with bulky cameras crowd around every rarity found, as they jostle each other for that perfect shot. Sometimes they become an annoyance to other birders. Sometimes they actually harass the bird. It’s the birding world we now live with.

Massachusetts has a number of very fine wildlife photographers, but one of my favorites is Dale Monette. He has been passionate about birds since he was in high school. “My discovery of birds came in the 1960s during the spring as a fourteen-year-old, eighth-grade science student of Robert Coyle.” (p. 8)

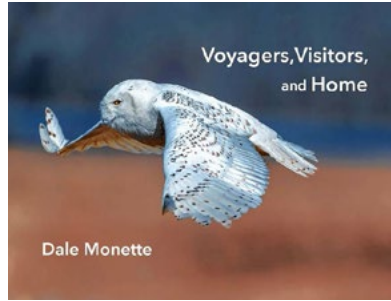
Eventually Monette worked for the Metropolitan District Commission, now known as the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and Quabbin Reservoir became his workplace. It was at this time Monette got to know William (Bill) C. Byrne Jr., state wildlife biologist and wildlife photographer, the person to whom *Voyagers, Visitors, and Home* is dedicated. Through Byrne, Monette learned the basics of photographing wild subjects.

For years now, Monette has been wandering the wilds of North Quabbin, often sitting unobtrusively in some quiet spot he loves, for hours, waiting for some mammal or bird to put in an appearance. Over the years he has learned where some of the best spots to watch wildlife are located, information he only shares with close friends.

Several times a week, through the entire year, Monette makes a trek into Quabbin just to sit and watch and hopefully photograph the wildlife he loves. His patience is inspiring.

Voyagers, Visitors, and Home is his second published collection of his photographs. His first book of photographs was *Secret Lives of the Quabbin Watershed*, published in 2017 by Haleys. *Secret Lives*' focus was the wildlife of only the Quabbin watershed. *Voyagers, Visitors, and Home*

features a number of photographs taken in places other than Quabbin. At the Turners Falls Power Canal in Montague, a well-known birding destination in winter, Monette photographed the 19 Tundra Swans that put down there one day. There are also several stunning shots of the postbreeding Great Egrets that fed along the canal. Monette raced out to photograph the 10 Sandhill Cranes that dropped in for just a few hours at the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust Eagle Reserve in Royalston. Farther afield, there are photographs of a Great Gray Owl found in New Hampshire, beautiful shots of a Snowy Owl on Plum Island, and some impressive photographs of a bull moose from Cape Breton Island.



Nesting Great Blue Herons © Dale Monette.

But the north Quabbin area remains Monette's home base and the location of some his best, most personal, photography. Monette has participated in several of the official loon counts there and has amassed an amazing collection of shots of pairs of loons through their breeding season. He also documents the activities of a small rookery of Great Blue Herons found at one of his favorite beaver ponds. Besides birds, he is particularly passionate about watching and photographing the signature mammals of north Quabbin,

including eastern coyote, bobcat, beaver, and particularly the river otter.

In *Voyagers, Visitors, and Home* every photograph is captioned with several sentences that detail how Monette got the shot as well as describing some aspect of the bird or mammal's behavior that is seen in the shot. "The beaver cruised by the heron, turned around and went back. As soon as he got beside the heron, the beaver smacked his tail hard in the water and scared the daylights out of the heron. I chuckle every time I look at the image." (p. 33)

There are longer introductory essays to sections of photographs dedicated to a single species that describe their behavior and occurrence in Massachusetts. This makes *Voyagers, Visitors, and Home* not just a collection of beautiful and entertaining color photography, but also a fine introduction to the ecology of the wildlife of Central Massachusetts. An important feature of this book is the centerpiece photo-essay "Reintroduction of the Bald Eagle as a nesting species in Massachusetts, 1982-1988"

(p. 62-77). Through a series of full page annotated photographs taken by Monette as well as Bill Byrne, readers are shown the long process of how the Bald Eagle was successfully reintroduced to Massachusetts thanks to the considerable efforts of a dedicated team that included Monette.



Barred Owl © Dale Monette.

Bald Eagles imprint on the area where they grow up and mature sexually between the ages of four and five years.

Experts theorized that they would return to nest, raise young, and call Quabbin home, becoming the first nesting bald eagles in Massachusetts since 1906. The first year, MassWildlife brought two six-week-old eaglets from Michigan and released the chicks into the wilds of Quabbin after they lived for six weeks in the thirty-foot-tall hacking tower. (p. 64)

This Quabbin-based hacking program has to rate as one of New England's most spectacularly successful wildlife reintroductions. Today, Bald Eagles breed in a number of locations across the state and are regularly seen by even casual observers thanks to this program.

All of Monette's contemporary photography is beautifully and crisply reproduced in *Voyagers, Visitors, and Home*. This is a beautiful collection of photos, taken by a dedicated and indefatigable photographer. But this is more than just another coffee table book. Through his photography, writing, and lectures, Dale Monette has become a passionate advocate for the remaining wild areas of Central Massachusetts. *Voyagers, Visitors, and Home* shows the reader why these places are so special and need to be preserved. 🐦



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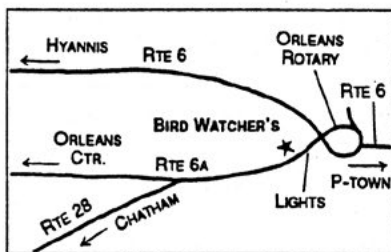
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BIRD SIGHTINGS

September–October 2019

Neil Hayward and Robert H. Stymeist

Abstract: This period features one new bird for the state list, another that got away, a slew of pelagic goodies from an “extreme pelagic,” well-chased plovers, and a purple yard bird.

September was warm and dry—about as perfect as could be and quite the opposite of the same month last year. The high temperature for the month was 92 degrees recorded on September 23, the first day of fall. This was actually 10 degrees higher than the first day of summer earlier in the year. The average temperature for the month was 76 degrees, four degrees above the historical average. There were seven days when temperatures exceeded 80 degrees and it was not until the last day of the month before the temperature in Boston dropped to a high of 62 degrees. Rainfall totaled 2.16 inches, more than an inch below normal. Rain was recorded on just eight days during the month, with the highest single day rainfall of 1.11 inches falling on September 2.

October continued on the warm side with the temperature averaging 63.8 degrees in Boston, nearly three degrees above normal for the month. The high was 81 degrees on October 7. It was a wet month with rain noted on 20 days and totaling 4.45 inches, about two inches above the average. Much of the area north and west of Boston had significantly more rain, especially on the last days of the month, which resulted in many communities postponing Halloween.

R. Stymeist

WHISTLING-DUCKS THROUGH IBISES

A **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck**, photographed on Nantucket on September 8, may well be the same bird that was seen there back in June this year. If so, one wonders where has it been hiding all this time? The June sighting constituted the first record of this southern species for the island. **Greater White-fronted Goose** is an annual winter visitor to the state with the first arrival generally appearing in October, except for an early bird in September 2017. This year’s earliest bird—an immature in Rochester, Plymouth County, on October 19—was a day later than last year’s arrival. **Cackling Geese** were reported from three counties in October, which is about average.

A **Rufous Hummingbird** was banded in New Ashford in the northwest corner of the state in late October. It was determined to be a hatch year bird and probably a female based on the presence of only one iridescent feather in the gorget. Photographs taken by the homeowner indicated that the bird had actually been present since August. Rufous Hummers have been reported in the state every year this century with the exception of 2009.

The winner of the “most surprising yard bird of the period” award goes to an immature **Purple Gallinule** that was found strutting around a yard in Milton in mid-October. It was seen by many visiting birders, most of whom were surprised at how tame the bird was. That surprise, however, soon gave way to concern as the bird appeared to be suffering from a leg injury. It was taken to Tufts Wildlife Clinic in North Grafton where x-rays revealed multiple leg and wing fractures, likely the result of a collision with a vehicle. Based on a poor prognosis, the veterinary team decided on October 23 to euthanize the bird. Purple Gallinules have been reported in 14 years this century with October being by far the most common month in which to find one. **Common Gallinules** were reported from six counties this period, including the first fall eBird

record from Hampshire County. Perhaps the most jaw-dropping report on the rallid front came from a canoe trip in Marshfield on September 28 on which Nate Marchessault recorded 81 Soras. That's over four times the previous state high count this century (18 recorded on Monomoy in July 2018). This is but a fraction of those seen historically in the fall; in the 1960s this species was recorded in the hundreds in the rice marshes along the Merrimack River in West Newbury (Veit and Petersen, 1998).

Sandy Point, Plum Island, was the place to be for rare shorebirds this period. An adult **Common Ringed Plover**, the sixth record for the state, was present September 13–15. Except for one May record, also at Sandy Point, the other records date from August and September. This year's bird set a new late date for the state, beating the September 12 record in 2017. Hot on the heels of this rare plover from the north came one from the south: a **Wilson's Plover** delighted many at Sandy Point from September 20–23. Despite appearing on average every two years, this was the first record since 2014. Given that most historical records have been one-day wonders from the Monomoy and South Beach area, this year's bird was one of the most accessible and chaseable in recent memory. **American Avocets** were recorded from three locations, with a bird at Belle Isle Marsh on October 1 being the first Suffolk County record since September 2007. Twenty-five Western Sandpipers at Monomoy on October 13 is a new eBird high count for October, eclipsing the 20 birds recorded there in 1983.

After a weather cancellation in August, the Brookline Bird Club (BBC) finally made it offshore on September 21–22. The overnight "Extreme Pelagic" is famous among continental birders for being the most reliable way to see **White-faced Storm-Petrels** in North America. Most Massachusetts sightings of this antipodean-breeding seabird occur in August, with late September representing the tail end of the season. And the lateness of this year's trip proved to be a real nail-biter; it was only as the captain was about to turn the Helen H. around and head back to port that a single kangaroo-hopping storm-petrel, the only White-faced of the trip, appeared at the bow. By that point, though, most participants were already feeling heady with an excellent trove of sightings including the state's second **Bermuda Petrel**, a **South Polar Skua**, **Sabine's Gull**, immature **Brown Booby**, and 19 **Audubon's Shearwaters**. While it's difficult to make generalizations about status and distribution of pelagic species with such limited exploration of our pelagic waters, it certainly seems that **Black-capped Petrel** numbers are on the rise; the BBC recorded a total of five birds in two days. Last period we reported 50 birds from a cetacean survey vessel with a high of 15 in one day. The previous high count for the state was just one bird.

October saw good numbers of our less common alcids. The 23 Dovekies that flew past Andrews Point, Rockport, on October 27 was the highest October count in Essex County since 1988. Ten **Atlantic Puffins**, also at Andrews Point, was the second-highest October count after the 104 that flew past Andrews Point on October 12, 2002. A stalled Nor'easter mid-month produced high numbers of Pomarine Jaegers off Cape Cod, with single **South Polar Skuas** past Race Point on October 11 and 12 and then four at Eastham on October 12. The same storm produced an adult **Brown Booby** flying past Eastham. Together with another booby on the BBC pelagic, this period saw an exceptional six Brown Booby reports including a first for Bristol County at Westport on October 28.

Cruise ships on the West Coast, especially when "repositioning" between seasons, have become popular ways for birders to see some of the deep-water Pacific seabirds such as Hawaiian, Cook's and Murphy's petrels. Birders are now finding similar opportunities in the northeast. The Princess Cruise line offers a five-day return trip in October from New York to the Canadian Maritimes that may well be one of the best ways to (comfortably) see **Great Skuas**. This year five birds were seen in Massachusetts waters on October 27.

In other coastal news, this was a good fall for Manx Shearwaters, with counts of 1,400 and 860 in September and October, respectively, setting new month highs. This was also a good year for **Gull-billed Terns** with birds reported in April, May, June, and September, with a bird at Plum Island lingering until September 30, setting a new late date for the state. The year's third **Brown Pelican** record came from Salem Harbor on September 7.

White-faced Ibis is a regular spring visitor to the state and probable breeder, albeit by hybridizing with Glossy Ibis. A record of a bird in Sterling this year on October 19–21 was not only wildly late—beating the previous late date of July 25 by almost three months—but only the second inland record for the state. The other inland record came from the neighboring town of Holden in 1990.

Let's end this section with the story of the one that got away. On the morning of September 19, Rick Heil noticed a diminutive cormorant in a flock of Double-crested Cormorants that was migrating past parking lot one on Plum Island. While the flock lazily winged its way through the sky, Rick ran back to his car, retrieved his scope, set up his scope, re-found the flock, opened his iPhone, and snapped three digiscoped photos, which predictably showed three extremely distant and blurry birds flying away. It could have been the state's first **Neotropic Cormorant**—a small, long-tailed cormorant ranging from the tip of South America through Central America into Texas and the Southwest. The species, once known as Olivaceous Cormorant, has recently been expanding to the north with vagrants turning up across the Great Lakes. Canada recorded its first in Ottawa in April 2018 and New England its first in Gorham, New Hampshire, in August 2018. While the documentation on this recent sighting might not conclusively add the species to the state list, it is surely only a matter of time before one does. Readers are reminded to be on the lookout for small, long-tailed cormorants.

N. Hayward

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|--------------------|----------------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|------------------|
| Black-bellied Whistling-Duck | | | | | | | | |
| 9/8 | Nantucket | 1 ph | K. Griswold# | Gadwall | 10/7 | PI | 32 | R. Heil |
| Snow Goose | | | | | 10/25 | Plymouth | 12 | C. Whitebread# |
| 10/20-26 | Rochester | 1 blue ph | L. Schibley + v.o. | | 10/29 | Fall River | 7 | L. Abbey |
| 10/30 | Newbury | 1 blue ph | T. Graham# | Eurasian Wigeon | 10/20-27 | Somerset | 1 imm m ph | M. Eckerson |
| Greater White-fronted Goose | | | | | 10/20-30 | PI | 1 ad m ph | T. Wetmore+v.o. |
| 10/19-21 | Rochester | 1 imm ph | A. Kneidel + v.o. | | 10/23 | S. Monomoy | 1 | N. Ransom# |
| Brant | | | | American Wigeon | 9/23 | Turners Falls | 1 | J. Smith |
| 10/9 | Quabbin Pk | 22 | L. Therrien | | 10/23 | PI | 35 | T. Wetmore |
| 10/23 | Fairhaven | 30 | N. Brown | | 10/26 | Westport | 30 | M. Eckerson# |
| 10/25 | Plymouth | 41 | T. MacAskill | American Black Duck | 10/11 | Quabbin Res. | 23 | M. Lynch# |
| 10/31 | Stockbridge | 12 | J. Pierce | | 10/14 | PI | 570 | R. Heil |
| Cackling Goose | | | | Northern Pintail | 9/15 | S. Monomoy | 10 | J. Drucker# |
| 10/9 | N. Adams | 1 ph | C. Johnson | | 10/3 | GMNWR | 4 | A. Dudley |
| 10/11-18 | Middleton | 1 ph | S. Sullivan + v.o. | | 10/25 | PI | 140 | T. Wetmore |
| 10/24 | Williamstown | 1 ph | M. Morales | Green-winged Teal | 9/8-10/17 | Longmeadow | 42 max | M. Moore |
| 10/26 | Lunenburg | 1 ph | B. Robo, N. Tepper | | 9/13 | S. Monomoy | 64 | J. Drucker# |
| Mute Swan | | | | | 10/7 | PI | 1380 | R. Heil |
| 9/14 | Westport | 48 | J. Eckerson# | Canvasback | 10/24 | Nantucket | 12 | T. Pastuszak |
| 9/27 | Gill | 31 | J. Smith | Redhead | 10/1 | Turners Falls | 3 | P. Gagarin |
| Wood Duck | | | | Ring-necked Duck | 9/14-10/15 | Pittsfield | 22 max | J. Pierce |
| 9/8 | Wayland | 180 | B. Harris | | 9/16-10/23 | S. Monomoy | 65 max | J. Junda# |
| 9/28 | Petersham | 91 | M. Lynch# | | 10/26 | Westport | 85 | M. Eckerson# |
| 10/9 | Medfield | 224 | J. Bock | | 10/30 | Haverhill | 125 | K. Wilmarth |
| 10/16 | PI | 7 | T. Wetmore | Greater Scaup | 10/30 | Cambr. (FP) | 94 | W. Millett |
| Blue-winged Teal | | | | | 9/27 | Gill/Turners Falls | 4 | D. McLain + v.o. |
| 9/6-9/8 | Somerset | 4 | M. Eckerson# | | | | | |
| 9/15 | PI | 12 | T. Bradford# | | | | | |
| 10/8 | E. Boston (BI) | 4 | DCR (S. Riley) | | | | | |
| 10/9 | Burrage Pd WMA | 6 | M. Iliff | | | | | |
| 10/26 | Orleans | 4 | P. Crosson | | | | | |
| Northern Shoveler | | | | | | | | |
| 9/24 | S. Monomoy | 12 | J. Junda# | | | | | |
| 10/2 | Northboro | 3 | M. Lynch# | | | | | |
| 10/28 | PI | 5 | W. Tatro | | | | | |

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|---------------------------|-----------------|--------|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--|
| Greater Scaup (continued) | | | | | | | | | |
| 10/9 | Quabbin Pk | 22 | L. Therrien | Ring-necked Pheasant | 9/2 | Newton | 1 | A. Gurka | |
| 10/20 | S. Monomoy | 30 | N. Ransom# | 9/5-9/28 | MBWMA | | 1 | R. Ross + v.o. | |
| 10/22 | Wachusett Res. | 15 | M. Lynch# | 9/30 | Arlington | | 1 | A. Gurka | |
| 10/24 | Nantucket | 120 | T. Pastuszak | Ruffed Grouse | 9/15 | Ashby | 2 | J. Forbes | |
| Lesser Scaup | | | | | | | | | |
| 10/20 | S. Monomoy | 50 | N. Ransom# | 9/29 | MBWMA | | 1 | A. Steenstrup# | |
| 10/26 | Westport | 38 | M. Eckerson# | 10/19 | Falmouth | | 1 | J. Hoye# | |
| 10/28 | Pembroke | 22 | B. Vigorito | Wild Turkey | 9/27 | Sandisfield | 11 | M. Lynch# | |
| Common Eider | | | | | | | | | |
| 10/12 | Eastham (FE) | 3000 | G. d'Entremont# | 10/2 | Grafton | | 22 | M. Lynch# | |
| 10/12 | Orange | 1 ph | J. Johnstone | 10/11 | Quabbin Res. | | 8 | M. Lynch# | |
| 10/22 | Rockport (AP) | 1380 | R. Heil | Pied-billed Grebe | 9/16 | S. Monomoy | 6 | J. Drucker# | |
| 10/26 | S. Monomoy | 7508 | N. Ransom# | 9/25-10/12 | Chestnut Hill | | 3 max | T. Bradford+v.o. | |
| Harlequin Duck | | | | | | | | | |
| 9/14 | P'town (RP) | 1 | P. Flood# | 9/26 | Shutesbury | | 4 | K. Weir | |
| 10/3, 27 | Rockport (AP) | 1,47 | R. Heil | 9/29 | Fairhaven | 5 | 1ad+4imm | C. Longworth | |
| 10/28 | Westport | 2 | M. Iliff | 10/9 | Burrage Pd WMA | | 4 | M. Iliff | |
| 10/29 | Scituate | 2 | L. Norton | 10/20 | Canton | | 5 | W. Sweet | |
| Surf Scoter | | | | | | | | | |
| 10/12 | Cohasset | 250 | V. Zollo | 10/26 | Westport | | 5 | M. Eckerson# | |
| 10/19 | Stockbridge | 8 | J. Pierce | 10/26 | Camb. (FP) | | 3 | E. Wyld# | |
| 10/20 | Wachusett Res. | 6 | K. Bourinot | 10/29 | W. Newbury | | 4 | C. Henderson | |
| 10/24 | S. Monomoy | 13125 | N. Ransom# | Horned Grebe | 10/14 | MBO | 4 | A. Kneidel# | |
| 10/27 | Rockport (AP) | 4280 | R. Heil | 10/15 | Quabbin Pk | | 7 | J. Johnstone, R. Flematti | |
| White-winged Scoter | | | | | | | | | |
| 10/12 | Cohasset | 125 | V. Zollo | 10/20 | Quincy | | 8 | J. Cushman# | |
| 10/15 | Wachusett Res. | 1 | M. Lynch# | 10/25 | Fairhaven | | 17 | B. King# | |
| 10/18 | Pittsfield | 13 | J. Pierce, R. Wendell | Red-necked Grebe | 10/9 | Rockport (AP) | 6 | R. Heil | |
| 10/18 | Quabbin (G8) | 7 | M. Lynch# | 10/25 | MBO | | 13 | E. Lipton | |
| 10/27 | Rockport (AP) | 770 | R. Heil | 10/27 | Pittsfield | | 6 max | Z. Adams + v.o. | |
| Black Scoter | | | | | | | | | |
| 9/1 | Westport | 22 | M. Iliff | 10/30 | Westborough | | 7 | M. Lynch# | |
| 10/19 | Littleton | 54 | D. + T. Swain | Yellow-billed Cuckoo | 9/1-10/14 | Indiv. reported from | 16 | locations | |
| 10/19 | N. Adams | 22 | N. Henkenius | 9/23, 9/24 | MBO | | 1,1 b | T. Lloyd-Evans# | |
| 10/20 | Wachusett Res. | 45 | K. Bourinot | 9/26 | PI | | 2 | S. Sullivan | |
| 10/24 | S. Monomoy | 5200 | N. Ransom# | Black-billed Cuckoo | 9/1-9/16 | PI | 1 | F. Bouchard + v.o. | |
| 10/27 | Rockport (AP) | 1230 | R. Heil | 9/2 | Stow | | 1 | N. Tepper | |
| Long-tailed Duck | | | | | | | | | |
| 10/27 | Rockport (AP) | 126 | R. Heil | 9/11 | Billerica | | 1 | J. Huestis | |
| 10/27 | Cohasset | 12 | V. Zollo# | 9/15-9/21 | Warwick | | 1 | S. Dee | |
| 10/28 | MBO | 9 | E. Lipton | 9/16 | Amherst | | 1 | M. Maity | |
| Bufflehead | | | | | | | | | |
| 10/20 | Otis | 4 | D. Holmes | Common Nighthawk | 9/1-9/8 | Northampton | 516 | T. Gagnon | |
| 10/21 | Quincy | 25 | G. Hantsbarger | 9/1 | Leicester | | 40 | M. Lynch# | |
| 10/27 | Rockport (AP) | 16 | R. Heil | 9/1 | Lynnfield | | 13 | M. Sovay | |
| Common Goldeneye | | | | | | | | | |
| 10/18 | Pittsfield | 1 | J. Pierce, R. Wendell | 9/5 | Northampton | | 201 | T. Gagnon | |
| 10/28 | Westport | 2 | M. Iliff | 9/8 | Wayland | | 83 | B. Harris | |
| Hooded Merganser | | | | | | | | | |
| 9/30 | Quaboag IBA | 2 imm | M. Lynch# | 10/21 | Nantucket | | 1 | T. Pastuszak | |
| 10/25 | Spencer | 2 | M. Lynch# | Eastern Whip-poor-will | 9/2-9/16 | Quabbin Pk | 2 max | L. Therrien | |
| Common Merganser | | | | | | | | | |
| 10/17-10/23 | Holyoke | 35 max | | 9/8 | Truro | | 1 | L. Neish | |
| S. Derosier + v.o. | | | | | | | | | |
| 10/19 | Holden | 40 | M. Lynch# | 9/15 | MSSF | | 2 h | T. Lloyd-Evans | |
| 10/20 | Danvers | 5 | R. Heil | Chimney Swift | 9/16 | Hadley | 10 | H. Lappen | |
| Red-breasted Merganser | | | | | | | | | |
| 10/18 | Richmond | 1 | J. Pierce, R. Wendell | 10/13 | Longmeadow | | 5 ph | M. Moore | |
| 10/27 | Rockport (AP) | 136 | R. Heil | 10/25 | Nantucket | | 50 | L. Dunn# | |
| 10/29 | Quabbin Pk | 2 | L. Therrien | Ruby-throated Hummingbird | 9/1-10/5 | 1-2 indiv. reported from | 27 | locations | |
| Ruddy Duck | | | | | | | | | |
| 10/20 | Danvers | 41 | R. Heil | 9/1 | Huntington | | 18 | M. Lynch# | |
| 10/20-31 | Richmond | 13 | G. Hurley + v.o. | 9/7 | N. Andover | | 4 | J. Parrot-Willis | |
| 10/20 | S. Monomoy | 7 | N. Ransom# | 9/14 | Westport | | 3 | J. Eckerson# | |
| 10/30 | Chestnut Hill | 93 | R. Doherty | 9/29-10/5 | Whately | | 1 | B. Benner, J. Wicinski | |
| Northern Bobwhite | | | | | | | | | |
| 9/2 | Quincy | 1 | J. Bock | Rufous Hummingbird | 10/20-31 | New Ashford | 1 imm f ph b | B. Phelps+v.o. | |
| 9/15 | Saugus | 1 | S. Zende# | Clapper Rail | 9/1-9/10 | Fairhaven | 1 | C. Longworth# | |
| 9/17 | W. Roxbury (MP) | 1 | M. Iliff | 9/21 | PI | | 1 h | J. Smith# | |
| 10/16 | Brewster | 6 | S. Finnegan | 10/26 | Orleans | | 1 | P. Crosson | |
| 10/29 | Eastham (FH) | 6 | N. Tepper | Virginia Rail | 9/1-9/10 | Pittsfield | 2 | S. Townsend | |
| | | | | 9/6 | Quaboag IBA | | 4 | M. Lynch# | |

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| Virginia Rail (continued) | | | | Upland Sandpiper | | | |
| 9/9-9/11 | Canton | 2 | D. Burton + v.o. | 9/8 | P'town (RP) | 1 | T. Bradford# |
| 9/15 | Ware R. IBA | 4 | M. Lynch# | Whimbrel | | | |
| 10/3 | GMNWR | 2 | K. Dia# | 9/13 | P'town (RP) | 28 | S. Arena |
| 10/19 | Cuttyhunk I. | 6 | L. Waters# | 9/14 | WBWS | 18 | M. Faherty# |
| Sora | | | | 9/24 | Duxbury B. | 12 | G. Lynch |
| thr | Indiv. reported from 8 locations | | | Hudsonian Godwit | | | |
| 9/5 | Northampton | 2 | D. McLain | 10/1 | PI | 3 | E. Labato |
| 9/28 | Marshfield | 81 | N. Marchessault# | 10/4-10/10 | Belmont | 1 | C. Cook + v.o. |
| Purple Gallinule | | | | 10/7 | Nbpt H. | 5 | R. Heil |
| 10/19-23 | Milton | 1 | imm ph J.+T. Kelly + v.o. | Marbled Godwit | | | |
| Common Gallinule | | | | 9/1-9/30 | Chatham | 6 | maxB. Nikula + v.o. |
| 9/11 | Longmeadow | 2 | L. Richardson# | 9/2 | New Bedford | 1 | A. Rainville |
| 9/16 | S. Monomoy | 2 | J. Drucker# | 9/3 | Plymouth B. | 5 | L. Schibley |
| 9/24-9/27 | Burrage Pd WMA | 1 | ph S. French + v.o. | 9/10-9/16 | Edgartown | 2 | W. Looney# |
| 10/12 | Northampton | 1 | L. Therrien | Ruddy Turnstone | | | |
| 10/26 | Westport | 3 | ph M. Eckerson# | 9/2, 10/28 | Westport | 17.1 | R. Johnson, M. Iloff |
| American Coot | | | | 9/10 | Scituate | 10 | L. Norton |
| 10/12-31 | Longmeadow | 36 | max C. Stern + v.o. | 10/18 | Winthrop | 4 | S. Zende# |
| 10/27 | Westport | 125 | B. King# | Red Knot | | | |
| 10/30 | Chestnut Hill | 33 | R. Doherty | 9/1 | PI | 11 | G. d'Entremont# |
| Sandhill Crane | | | | 10/19 | Duxbury B. | 14 | L. Schibley |
| 9/1 | Worthington 5 | 1pr+2yg | K. Dietlin | Stilt Sandpiper | | | |
| 9/8 | Cummington | 1 | J. Hansell | 9/11 | PI | 11 | MAS (D. Larson) |
| 9/15-10/9 | Burrage Pd WMA | 4 | L. Schibley + v.o. | 9/17 | Harvard | 2 | N. Tepper |
| 9/15 | Tolland | 2 | 1pr D. Holmes | 10/29-31 | E. Boston (BI) | 1 | A. Sanford + v.o. |
| 10/12-24 | Hardwick | 2 | A. Barnes + v.o. | Sanderling | | | |
| American Avocet | | | | 9/12 | Everett | 2 | C. Monaco |
| 9/1-9/25 | Chatham | 1 | ph v.o. | 9/13 | Longmeadow | 1 | A & L Richardson + v.o. |
| 9/1-9/4 | PI | 1 | ph M. Watson + v.o. | 9/25 | P'town (RP) | 500 | B. Nikula# |
| 10/1 | E. Boston (BI) | 1 | DCR (S. Riley) | 10/13 | Monomoy NWR | 1550 | B. Harrington# |
| American Oystercatcher | | | | Dunlin | | | |
| 9/7 | Plymouth B. | 12 | L. Schibley# | 10/9 | Scituate | 33 | M. Iloff |
| 9/10 | Winthrop | 18 | S. Zende# | 10/19 | Duxbury B. | 50 | L. Schibley |
| 9/14 | Quincy | 17 | V. Zollo | 10/26 | PI | 175 | P. + F. Vale |
| 10/13 | Monomoy NWR | 12 | B. Harrington# | Baird's Sandpiper | | | |
| 10/22 | Rockport (AP) | 2 | B. Burke | 9/9-9/15 | Plymouth | 2 | E. Vacchino + v.o. |
| Black-bellied Plover | | | | 9/11 | PI | 2 | MAS (D. Larson) |
| 10/1 | Sheffield | 1 | G. Ward | 9/15-9/17 | S. Monomoy | 2 | L. Fried# |
| 10/1-10/3 | Longmeadow | 1 | L.& A. Richardson + v.o. | 10/30 | P'town (RP) | 1 | J. Smith# |
| 10/7 | Plymouth B. | 100 | T. Evans | Least Sandpiper | | | |
| 10/12 | Quabbin (G43) | 1 | M. Lynch# | thr | Northfield | 3 | maxE. Huston + v.o. |
| 10/13 | Winthrop | 87 | J. Offermann | 9/2-9/20 | October Mountain | 5 | max J. Pierce + v.o. |
| 10/25 | PI | 150 | R. Gette | 9/7-10/2 | Longmeadow | 6 | maxT. Gilliland+v.o. |
| American Golden-Plover | | | | 9/7-9/13 | Hadley | 4 | maxL. Therrien+v.o. |
| 9/1-10/26 | 1-2 indiv. reported from 13 locations | | | 9/8 | Leverett | 12 | L. Waters |
| 9/9-9/11 | Quabbin Pk | 3 | max J. Johnstone, B. Kanash | 9/8 | Petersham | 9 | M. Lynch# |
| 9/12-9/14 | Northampton | 8 | maxT. Gilliland+v.o. | White-rumped Sandpiper | | | |
| 9/13-9/14 | PI | 5 | T. Wetmore + v.o. | 9/3-9/7 | Plymouth B. | 3 | L. Schibley + v.o. |
| 9/13 | Boston (Logan) | 4 | J. Smith | 9/8 | Revere B. | 4 | M. Mulqueen |
| 9/19, 9/28 | P'town (RP) | 3 | T. Bradford#, W. Klockner | 9/10,10/26 | PI | 27,10 | T. Wetmore, N. Tepper |
| 9/23-9/29 | Orange Airport | 3 | J. Johnstone + v.o. | Buff-breasted Sandpiper | | | |
| 9/30-10/9 | Winthrop | 6 | max S. Jones + v.o. | 9/6-9/25 Indiv. reported from 9 locations | | | |
| 10/14 | Newbury | 4 | R. Heil | Pectoral Sandpiper | | | |
| Killdeer | | | | 9/11 | PI | 12 | T. Wetmore |
| 10/14 | Newbury | 120 | R. Heil | 9/16 | S. Monomoy | 10 | J. Drucker# |
| 10/29 | Sharon | 58 | J. Glover# | 9/29-10/11 | Northfield | 6 | maxE. Huston + v.o. |
| 10/29 | Deerfield | 48 | P. Gagarin | Semipalmated Sandpiper | | | |
| Common Ringed Plover | | | | 9/2-9/20 | October Mountain | 4 | max J. Pierce + v.o. |
| 9/13-9/15 | PI | 1 | ad phS. Sullivan+v.o. | 9/25,10/22 | PI | 145,3 | D. Prima, T. Wetmore |
| Semipalmated Plover | | | | 10/31 | Ipswich | 1 | L. Manzi |
| 9/13-9/14 | Longmeadow | 15 | M. Moore + v.o. | Western Sandpiper | | | |
| 9/30 | PI | 350 | T. Wetmore | 9/3 | Winthrop B. | 3 | S. Jones |
| 10/19 | Marshfield | 20 | C. Johnson | 9/9 | Ipswich (CB) | 4 | N. Dubrow |
| Piping Plover | | | | 9/15 | PI | 10 | S. Williams# |
| 9/7 | Plymouth B. | 12 | A. Kneidel | 9/16 | Barnstable (SN) | 12 | B. Nikula |
| 9/9 | Ipswich (CB) | 12 | N. Dubrow | 10/13 | Monomoy NWR | 25 | B. Harrington# |
| 9/14 | PI | 6 | N. Jacob | Short-billed Dowitcher | | | |
| 10/26 | Nantucket | 1 | S. Fea | 9/5 | Quincy | 10 | K. Rawdon# |
| Wilson's Plover | | | | 9/29,10/10 | PI | 40,1 | S. Apte, T. Wetmore |
| 9/20-9/23 | PI | 1 | ph T. Murray + v.o. | | | | |

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|-----------------------|-----------------|----------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Long-billed Dowitcher | | | | Razorbill | | | |
| 9/13-9/18 | S. Monomoy | 1 | J. Drucker# | 10/9, 27 | Rockport (AP) | 12,77 | R. Heil |
| 9/21 | Quincy | 2 | D. Burton# | 10/19 | Stellwagen Bank | 7 | P. Monacell |
| 9/21 | E. Boston (BI) | 1 | DCR (S. Riley) | 10/27 | Cohasset | 2 | V. Zollo |
| 10/20 | PI | 21 | E. Labato | Black Guillemot | | | |
| American Woodcock | | | | 10/5 | Duxbury B. | 1 | N. Henkenius |
| 9/17-10/8 | Easthampton | 3 max | L. Therrien | 10/9, 27 | Rockport (AP) | 1,10 | R. Heil |
| 9/20 | PI | 3 | D. Prima | Atlantic Puffin | | | |
| Wilson's Snipe | | | | 10/9,10,22,27 | Rockport (AP) | 10,2,1,1 | R. Heil |
| 9/13 | Burrage Pd WMA | 3 | J. Sweeney | Black-legged Kittiwake | | | |
| Spotted Sandpiper | | | | 10/12, 21 | MBO | 1,2 | A. Kneidel#, E. Lipton |
| 9/3 | W. Roxbury (MP) | 5 | M. Iliff | 10/25 | Jeffreys L. | 21 | S. Bennett# |
| 9/23 | Sharon | 5 | W. Sweet | 10/26 | P'town (RP) | 45 | B. Nikula# |
| 9/27 | Rockport | 5 | S. Sullivan | 10/27 | Rockport (AP) | 168 | R. Heil |
| 10/1-10/29 | Winthrop B. | 1 | S. Zende# + v.o. | 10/28 | Eastham (FE) | 786 | J. Bourget# |
| Solitary Sandpiper | | | | Sabine's Gull | | | |
| 9/21 | Winchendon | 3 | M. Lynch# | 9/7 | Eastham (FE) | 1 | M. Eckerson# |
| 10/2 | Arlington Res. | 5 | B. Lee | 9/21 | Nantucket Sound | 1 juv ph | BBC |
| 10/4 | Belmont | 3 | J. Layman | Bonaparte's Gull | | | |
| Lesser Yellowlegs | | | | 9/7 | Winthrop B. | 225 | S. Zende# |
| 10/4 | PI | 15 | N. Tepper | 9/23 | Lynn | 200 | S. McDonald |
| 10/7 | Nbpt H. | 18 | R. Heil | 10/18 | Quabbin (G8) | 5 | M. Lynch# |
| 10/8,10/30 | Arlington Res. | 6,3 | M. McCarthy#, J. Forbes | 10/19-25 | Wachusett Res. | 1 ad J. Bourget, E. Kittredge | |
| 10/16 | Lexington | 3 | C. Gras | 10/25 | Plymouth B. | 71 | C. Whitehead# |
| Willet | | | | 10/26 | P'town (RP) | 500 | B. Nikula# |
| 9/7-9/15 | Plymouth B. | 3 | L. Schibley# | Black-headed Gull | | | |
| 9/9 | PI | 2 | T. Wetmore | 10/27 | Lynn H. | 1 ad ph | S. Sullivan |
| 9/10-9/13 | Winthrop | 2 | S. Zende# + v.o. | Little Gull | | | |
| 9/30 | Chatham | 5 | B. Nikula | 10/6 | P'town (RP) | 1 1W | P. Flood# |
| 10/21 | Nbpt H. | 1 | R. Heil | Laughing Gull | | | |
| Willet (Western) | | | | 9/4 | Kingston | 1500 | A. Kneidel |
| 9/30 | Chatham | 17 | B. Nikula | 10/12 | BHI (Deer I.) | 150 | J. Forbes |
| 10/1 | Winthrop | 1 ph | S. Jones# | 10/17 | Waltham | 7 | J. Forbes |
| 10/13-25 | Quincy | 1 ph | V. Zollo + v.o. | 10/17 | WWMA | 1 ad ph | T. Spahr |
| Greater Yellowlegs | | | | Lesser Black-backed Gull | | | |
| 9/8 | N. Scituate | 50 | G. d'Entremont# | 9/4-9/12 | PI | 2 ad T. Wetmore + v.o. | |
| 10/14 | PI | 168 | R. Heil | 9/7 | Plymouth B. | 2 | L. Schibley# |
| 10/23 | Quincy | 29 | M. Dunham | 9/14,10/28 | Westport | 2,2 | J. Eckerson#, M. Iliff |
| 10/24 | E. Boston (BI) | 30 | DCR (S. Riley) | 9/16,10/31 | Ipswich (CB) | 3,2 | I. Pepper, N. Dubrow |
| Red-necked Phalarope | | | | Gull-billed Tern | | | |
| 9/7 | Eastham (FE) | 25 | N. Tepper# | 9/14-9/30 | PI | 2 max ph T. Wetmore + v.o. | |
| 10/4 | P'town (RP) | 10 | B. Nikula# | 9/17-9/18 | S. Monomoy | 1 ph | J. Drucker# |
| Red Phalarope | | | | Caspian Tern | | | |
| 9/8 | Eastham (FE) | 1 | J. Trimble# | 9/21 | Plymouth | 5 | E. Lipton# |
| 10/14 | Jeffreys L. | 7 | S. Mirick# | 9/23 | Winthrop B. | 8 | P. Peterson |
| Phalarope sp. | | | | 10/14 | Newbury | 6 | R. Heil |
| 10/5 | P'town (RP) | 2 | SSBC (G. d'Entremont) | Black Tern | | | |
| Great Skua | | | | 9/1 | Westport | 1 | M. Iliff# |
| 10/27 | Mass. waters | 5 | D. + J. Lovitch | 9/2 | Tuckernuck I. | 40 | D. Veit# |
| South Polar Skua | | | | 9/2 | PI | 1 | S. Grinley# |
| 10/11,10/12 | P'Town (RP) | 1,1 ph | B. Nikula# | Roseate Tern | | | |
| 10/12 | Eastham (FE) | 4 ph | J. Offermann# | 9/2, 9/29 | P'town (RP) | 400,20 | B. Nikula# |
| Pomarine Jaeger | | | | Common Tern | | | |
| 9/7,10/9,17 | Rockport (AP) | 1,1,3 | R. Heil | 9/2, 10/26 | P'town (RP) | 4600,225 | B. Nikula# |
| 10/12 | P'town (RP) | 51 | B. Nikula# | 9/4 | Kingston | 80 | A. Kneidel |
| 10/12 | Eastham (FE) | 50 | J. Offermann# | 9/7 | P'town (RP) | 4100 | S. Arena |
| 10/12 | MBO | 2 | L. Schibley | 9/15 | Rockport (AP) | 208 | R. Heil |
| Parasitic Jaeger | | | | Forster's Tern | | | |
| 9/6,10/17,27 | Rockport (AP) | 5,1,4 | R. Heil | 9/7 | Plymouth | 6 | L. Schibley# |
| 9/6 | PI | 1 | T. Wetmore | 10/1 | Dennis | 630 | P. Flood# |
| 9/22, 10/6,26 | P'town (RP) | 40,45,19 | B. Nikula# | 10/3 | Wellfleet | 125 | A. Kneidel# |
| 10/12 | Eastham (FE) | 35 | J. Offermann# | 10/26 | P'town (RP) | 425 | B. Nikula# |
| Long-tailed Jaeger | | | | Royal Tern | | | |
| 9/7 | Eastham (FE) | 1 imm ph | A. Eckerson#, J. Bourget# | 9/10-9/16 | PI | 1 ph MAS (D. Larson) + v.o. | |
| 9/18,28,29,10/12 | P'town (RP) | 1,1,1,1 | B. Nikula# | 9/14, 9/29 | P'town (RP) | 1,1 | B. Nikula, P. Flood |
| Dovekie | | | | 9/14 | Sandwich | 1 ph | M. Keleher# |
| 10/8, 27 | Rockport (AP) | 1,23 | C. Charlesworth, R. Heil | 9/15 | Ipswich (CB) | 2 ph 1b | I. Pepper |
| 10/12 | P'town (RP) | 3 | B. Nikula# | 9/15 | Gloucester (EP) | 1 ph | S. Williams# |
| Common Murre | | | | Black Skimmer | | | |
| 9/1 | S. Dartmouth | 1 | L. Abbey# | 9/5 | Edgartown | 35 | S. Allen# |
| Thick-billed Murre | | | | 9/23 | Ipswich (CB) | 65 | I. Pepper |
| 10/27 | Rockport (AP) | 1 | R. Heil | 9/24 | Dennis | 25 | Anonymous |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Black Skimmer (continued) | | | | | | | | | |
| 10/1 | Quincy | 23 | | D. Burton | 10/28 | Westport | 1 subad ph | M. Iliff | |
| 10/9 | Dennis (Corp. B.) | 3 | | B. Nikula | Northern Gannet | | | | |
| Red-throated Loon | | | | | 9/7 | P'town (RP) | 2750 | S. Arena | |
| 10/2 | Winthrop | 4 | | S. Jones# | 10/17 | Rockport (AP) | 4400 | R. Heil | |
| 10/19-21 | Quabbin Pk | 1 | | D. Allard + v.o. | 10/28 | Eastham (FE) | 2415 | J. Bourget# | |
| 10/27 | Rockport (AP) | 89 | | R. Heil | 10/28 | Westport | 45 | M. Iliff | |
| Pacific Loon | | | | | Neotropical Cormorant!* | | | | |
| 10/22-27 | Rockport (AP) | 1 ph | | R. Heil, B. Burke | 9/19 | PI | 1 ph | R. Heil | |
| Common Loon | | | | | Double-crested Cormorant | | | | |
| 10/1 | Quabbin Pk | 5 | | M. McKittrick + v.o. | 10/5 | Mt Wachusett | 400 | J. Kovner | |
| 10/2-10/8 | MBO | 18 | | M. Gray | 10/20 | DFWS | 250 | P. Sowizral | |
| 10/2 | Wachusett Res. | 10 | | M. Lynch# | 10/29 | PI | 500 | S. Grinley# | |
| 10/27 | Rockport (AP) | 104 | | R. Heil | 10/29 | Westport | 350 | B. King# | |
| Wilson's Storm-Petrel | | | | | Great Cormorant | | | | |
| 9/1 | E. of Chatham | 125 | | B. Nikula# | 9/25-10/4 | Holden | 1 imm | M. Lynch# | |
| 9/7 | P'town (RP) | 887 | | S. Arena | 10/8 | Dartmouth | 8 | M. Sylvia | |
| White-faced Storm-Petrel | | | | | 10/9 | Rockport (AP) | 6 | R. Heil | |
| 9/22 | S. of Nantucket | 1 ph | | BBC | 10/14 | Scituate | 30 | S. Williams | |
| Leach's Storm-Petrel | | | | | Brown Pelican | | | | |
| 9/7, 10/5 | P'town (RP) | 7,1 | | S. Arena, SSBC (G. d'Entremont) | 9/7 | Salem H. | 1 subad ph | A.Fowlie+v.o. | |
| 9/14 | Wellesley | 1 | | A. Webber | American Bittern | | | | |
| 9/30 | Quaboag IBA | 1 | | M. Lynch# | thr | Indiv. reported from | 7 locations | | |
| 10/3, 10/9 | Rockport (AP) | 18,10 | | R. Heil | 10/9 | Cuttyhunk I. | 2 | M. Sylvia# | |
| 10/11 | BHI (Deer I.) | 4 | | S. Jones# | Least Bittern | | | | |
| 10/12 | MBO | 5 | | L. Schibley | 9/15-9/18 | Ipswich | 1 | S. Williams# | |
| 10/12 | P'town (RP) | 3 | | B. Nikula# | 9/21 | GMNWR | 1 h | C. George | |
| 10/12 | Eastham (FE) | 3 | | G. d'Entremont, J. Offermann# | Great Blue Heron | | | | |
| 10/12 | Cohasset | 1 | | V. Zollo | 9/1 | Everett | 16 | R. Stymeist | |
| Northern Fulmar | | | | | 9/17 | Easthampton | 16 | L. Therrien | |
| 9/21 | S. of Nantucket | 78 | | BBC | 9/29 | Saugus | 17 | S. Zende# | |
| 10/9 | Rockport (AP) | 46 | | 1t+15 dk R. Heil | 10/11 | Dartmouth | 16 | A. Morgan | |
| 10/11 | Cohasset | 1 | | D. Burton | Great Egret | | | | |
| 10/12 | P'town (RP) | 127 | | B. Nikula# | 10/4 | E. Boston (BI) | 15 | DCR (S. Riley) | |
| 10/14 | Mass. waters | 7 | | S. Mirick# | 10/5 | Eastham (FH) | 29 | SSBC (G. d'Entremont) | |
| 10/17 | Melrose | 1 | | P. Low | 10/15 | PI | 50 | T. Wetmore | |
| Bermuda Petrel | | | | | Snowy Egret | | | | |
| 9/21 | S. of Nantucket | 1 ph | | BBC | 9/1-9/4 | Northampton | 1 | C. Allen, M. McKittrick + v.o. | |
| Black-capped Petrel | | | | | 9/1-9/11 | Quabbin Pk | 1 | J. Johnstone, B. Kanash | |
| 9/21-22 | S. of Nantucket | 5 ph | | BBC | 9/14 | N. Scituate | 29 | G. d'Entremont# | |
| Cory's Shearwater | | | | | 9/17-9/22 | Easthampton | 1 | L. Therrien + v.o. | |
| 9/6 | MBO | 1 | | A. Kneidel | 9/26 | PI | 30 | T. Wetmore | |
| 9/28 | Westport | 1 | | B. King# | 10/2 | Eastham (CGB) | 36 | S. Barnes# | |
| 10/9 | Rockport (AP) | 3 | | R. Heil | 10/20 | Quincy | 14 | J. Bock# | |
| 10/11 | P'town (RP) | 190 | | B. Nikula# | Little Blue Heron | | | | |
| Sooty Shearwater | | | | | 9/1-10/11 | Indiv. reported from | 8 locations | | |
| 9/6, 9/22 | P'town (RP) | 250,60 | | B. Nikula# | 9/28 | Gloucester | 8 | C. Howe | |
| 9/6 | MBO | 3 | | A. Kneidel | Tricolored Heron | | | | |
| 9/6 | Rockport (AP) | 2 | | R. Heil | 9/1-9/5 | Chatham | 1 | P. Thompson + v.o. | |
| 9/12 | PI | 1 | | T. Wetmore | Cattle Egret | | | | |
| Great Shearwater | | | | | 10/29-31 | Cheshire | 1 | J. Pierce | |
| 9/6, 10/12 | P'town (RP) | 2000,265 | | B. Nikula# | Green Heron | | | | |
| 9/6, 10/27 | Rockport (AP) | 106,165 | | R. Heil | 9/1 | Fairhaven | 4 | C. Longworth | |
| 9/6 | MBO | 4 | | A. Kneidel | 9/1 | W. Roxbury (MP) | 3 | M. McMahon | |
| 9/7 | P'town (RP) | 2750 | | S. Arena | 9/8 | Wayland | 5 | B. Harris | |
| Manx Shearwater | | | | | Black-crowned Night-Heron | | | | |
| 9/6,22,10/11 | P'town (RP) | 1400,800,70 | | B. Nikula# | 9/2 | PI | 10 | D. Adrien | |
| 9/6, 10/9 | Rockport (AP) | 8,5 | | R. Heil | 10/8 | Nbpt | 6 | N. Forestell | |
| 9/6 | MBO | 5 | | A. Kneidel | 10/15 | Gloucester (EP) | 6 | S. Ross# | |
| 9/17 | PI | 2 | | T. Wetmore | Yellow-crowned Night-Heron | | | | |
| 10/25 | E. of Chatham | 860 | | P. Trull# | 9/2-9/13 | S. Dartmouth | 6 | A. Morgan | |
| Audubon's Shearwater | | | | | 9/2 | Tuckernuck I. | 5 | D. Veit | |
| 9/3 | S. of Nantucket | 10 | | P. Lehman# | 9/13 | Marshfield | 3 | E. Vacchino | |
| 9/21-22 | S. of Nantucket | 19 ph | | BBC | 9/21 | PI | 8 | T. Wetmore | |
| Brown Booby | | | | | Glossy Ibis | | | | |
| 9/3 | S. of Nantucket | 1 ad ph | | P. Lehman# | 9/1 | Chatham | 7 | P. Crosson | |
| 9/9 | Nantucket Shoals | 1 juv ph | | A. Gilbert | 9/16 | Ipswich | 2 | G. Power | |
| 9/21 | S. of Nantucket | 1 subad ph | | BBC | 9/21-9/22 | PI | 1 | S. Grinley + v.o. | |
| 10/12 | Eastham (FE) | 1 ad ph | | J. Offermann# | White-faced Ibis | | | | |
| 10/16 | P'town (RP) | 1 juv | | B. Nikula | 10/19-21 | Sterling | 1 ph | Job Dekker + v.o. | |

VULTURES THROUGH DICKCISSEL

The fall hawk migration in our region gets underway in earnest during this period. Hawkwatchers congregate at favorite sites, such as Mount Watatic in Ashburnham and Wachusett Mountain in Princeton, where they hope for a big flight, especially of Broad-winged Hawks. This year was yet another disappointment; Wachusett totaled only 2,832 Broad-wings, which was 2,210 less than last year and just barely above the lowest seasonal count of 2,364 in 2011. The hawkwatch at Mount Watatic reported 2,069 Broad-wings for the period and the Russell hawkwatch logged 2,565. Other noteworthy reports from Wachusett included 125 Bald Eagles, 136 American Kestrels, and 26 Peregrine Falcons. A new record count of 52 Merlins was tallied, surpassing the previous high of 42 set just last year. **Golden Eagles** were noted from four locations, including two different individuals from the hawkwatch site in Russell.

The big birding story this season, which made national headlines, was the disappearance of three billion birds. This disturbing report, published in the September issue of the journal *Science*, found that wild bird populations in the United States and Canada have declined by almost 30 percent since 1970 (Rosenberg et al, 2019). That certainly felt true this fall, when many of my birding friends and I commented that this year's migration was lackluster, particularly the numbers of warblers. Trevor Lloyd-Evans of Manomet noted that new bandings of Neotropical migrants were down significantly, with this fall producing the lowest total since Manomet first started banding in 1966. Mark Blazis, a birdbander in Auburn, reported that for the first time in over 30 years of banding, he did not mist-net a single warbler during the fall migration. The wet weather that prevailed over much of October may have also contributed to lower numbers.

Despite all this gloom, birders around the state did find some interesting birds. The fall migration typically brings more surprises than the spring migration, and this fall was exceptional for its surprises. Topping the list was the first state record of **Pacific-slope Flycatcher**, discovered in Hadley on October 23. The bird was conclusively identified by its diagnostic calls and remained in the area throughout the period to the delight of many birders. Only one other record for this species exists in New England, an individual discovered on the New Haven, Connecticut, Christmas Bird Count on December 19, 2015. That bird was identified based on a fecal sample collected at the site. A **Yellow-green Vireo**—the second record for the state and only the fifth record north of Florida—was found and banded on South Monomoy on October 15. The first state record was of a bird banded at Plum Island on September 5, 2011. A **Tropical Kingbird**, the fourth state record and the first record for Middlesex County, took up residence for a week at Rock Meadow in Belmont giving quite a performance for photographers. A **Bell's Vireo** was photographed in Westport on October 26, the thirteenth state record and the second for Bristol County. Rounding out the rarities this period included six **Western Kingbirds**, two **Sedge Wrens**, a **Lark Bunting** that was photographed in Salisbury, a **LeConte's Sparrow** that spent five days in Deerfield, and **Summer Tanagers** from Fort Hill, Eastham, and from Chatham. During the period, 33 warbler species were noted, including two **Black-throated Gray Warblers**, two **Townsend's Warblers**, a **Yellow-throated Warbler**, and two **Golden-winged Warblers**. Other exceptional observations included the number of Connecticut Warblers, which were noted in nearly 50 different locations.

R. Stymeist

References

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|------------------------------|----------------|---------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------|------------------------------|
| Black Vulture | | | | Belted Kingfisher | | | |
| 9/1-10/31 | Mt Wachusett | 6 | Hawkcount (P. Roberts) | 9/21 | Winchendon | 5 | M. Lynch# |
| 9/7 | Amherst | 8 | T. Gagnon | 10/1 | Woburn (HP) | 3 | D. Williams# |
| 9/28 | Westport | 18 | J. Offermann | Red-headed Woodpecker | | | |
| 10/12 | Sheffield | 9 | J. Pierce, R. Wendell | 9/2 | Millville | 1 | J. Costigan |
| Turkey Vulture | | | | 9/7 | Natick | 1 juv | G. Long |
| 9/1-10/31 | Mt Wachusett | 231 | Hawkcount (P. Roberts) | 9/15-9/17 | Wellfleet | 1 juv ph | T. Broker, L. Chow |
| Roberts) | | | | 9/23 | Amherst | 1 ph | S. Griesemer |
| 9/6-10/23 | Russell | 194 | HawkCount (T. Swochack) | 9/29 | Nantucket | 1 ad ph | K. Blackshaw# |
| 10/19 | S. Dart. (APd) | 55 | A. Kneidel | 9/30 | New Braintree | 1 juv | R. Jenkins |
| Osprey | | | | 10/12-30 | Ayer | 1 juv ph | S. Wilson+v.o. |
| 9/1-10/31 | Mt Wachusett | 130 | Hawkcount (P. Roberts) | 10/14 | Cuttyhunk I. | 1 | M. Sylvia# |
| 9/1-10/31 | Mt Watatic | 33 | Hawkcount (B. Rusnica) | 10/20 | Haverhill | 1 juv ph | K. Wilmarth |
| 9/6-10/23 | Russell | 32 | HawkCount (T. Swochack) | 10/23-25 | S. Monomoy | 1 juv b | N. Ransom# |
| 10/3 | Stow | 9 | MAS (N. Tepper) | Yellow-bellied Sapsucker | | | |
| Golden Eagle | | | | 9/27 | Sandisfield | 12 | M. Lynch# |
| 9/16 | Uxbridge | 1 ad | A. Loveless | 10/3 | Rockport (AP) | 4 | R. Heil |
| 9/18,10/10 | Russell | 1,1 | HawkCount (T. Swochack) | 10/8 | PI | 9 | S. Sullivan |
| 9/18 | Quabbin Pk | 1 | B. Laflay | 10/18 | WBWS | 3 | J. Bourget# |
| 10/26 | Westminster | 1 ad | C. Caron | Northern Flicker | | | |
| Northern Harrier | | | | 9/10 | Easthampton | 16 | A. Kallenbach |
| 9/10 | PI | 6 | P. + F. Vale | 9/27 | Sandisfield | 14 | M. Lynch# |
| 10/6-10/14 | DWWS | 3 | L. Grimes | Pileated Woodpecker | | | |
| 10/9 | Burrage Pd WMA | 3 | M. Iliff | 9/25 | Ware R. IBA | 4 | M. Lynch# |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk | | | | 9/29 | MBWMA | 3 | A. Steenstrup |
| 9/1-10/31 | Mt Wachusett | 315 | Hawkcount (P. Roberts) | 10/20 | DFWS | 3 | K. Dia# |
| 9/1-10/31 | Mt Watatic | 201 | Hawkcount (B. Rusnica) | American Kestrel | | | |
| 9/6-10/23 | Russell | 210 | HawkCount (T. Swochack) | 9/1-10/31 | Mt Wachusett | 136 | Hawkcount (P. Roberts) |
| 9/15 | Granville | 14 | HawkCount (J. Weeks) | 9/1-10/31 | Mt Watatic | 46 | Hawkcount (B. Rusnica) |
| 10/13-23 | Malden (PR) | 13 | Hawkcount (C. Jackson) | 9/6-10/23 | Russell | 61 | HawkCount (T. Swochack) |
| 10/19 | Cuttyhunk I. | 11 | L. Waters# | Merlin | | | |
| Cooper's Hawk | | | | 9/1-10/31 | Mt Wachusett | 52 | Hawkcount (P. Roberts) |
| 9/1-10/31 | Mt Wachusett | 98 | Hawkcount (P. Roberts) | 9/6-10/23 | Russell | 13 | HawkCount (T. Swochack) |
| 9/1-10/31 | Mt Watatic | 23 | Hawkcount (B. Rusnica) | Peregrine Falcon | | | |
| 9/6-10/23 | Russell | 36 | HawkCount (T. Swochack) | 9/1-10/31 | Mt Wachusett | 26 | Hawkcount (P. Roberts) |
| 10/19 | Cuttyhunk I. | 13 | L. Waters# | 9/7 | Plymouth B. | 2 | L. Schibley# |
| Northern Goshawk | | | | 9/19-9/24 | PI | 5 | R. Heil + v.o. |
| 9/2 | Middleton | 1 | J. Keeley | 10/7 | Woburn (HP) | 2 | B. Lee |
| 9/20 | Mt Watatic | 1 ad ph | Hawkcount(B.Rusnica) | Great Crested Flycatcher | | | |
| 9/22 | Holden | 1 | M. Lynch# | 9/2 | Tuckernuck I. | 7 | D. Veit# |
| 10/14 | Northampton | 1 ad m | F. Bowrys | 9/8 | N. Scituate | 2 | G. d'Entremont# |
| Bald Eagle | | | | 10/13 | Woburn (HP) | 1 | D. Fruguglietti# |
| 9/1-10/31 | Mt Wachusett | 125 | Hawkcount (P. Roberts) | Tropical Kingbird | | | |
| 9/1-10/31 | Mt Watatic | 64 | Hawkcount (B. Rusnica) | 10/19-26 | Belmont | 1 phJ. | Battenfeld + v.o. |
| 9/6-10/23 | Russell | 62 | HawkCount (T. Swochack) | Western Kingbird | | | |
| Red-shouldered Hawk | | | | 9/25 | Mt Wachusett | 1 | K. Ryan |
| 9/5 | Ware R. IBA | 3 imm | M. Lynch# | 9/29 | Cumb. Farms | 1 ph | J. Carlisle# |
| 10/19 | S. Dart. (APd) | 3 | A. Kneidel | 10/4-10/19 | WBWS | 1 ph.J. | Sweeney + v.o. |
| Broad-winged Hawk | | | | 10/15 | Cuttyhunk I. | 1 ph | M. Sylvia# |
| 9/1-10/31 | Mt Wachusett | 2832 | Hawkcount (P. Roberts) | 10/16 | Chatham | 1 ph | P. Trimble |
| 9/1-10/31 | Mt Watatic | 2069 | Hawkcount (B. Rusnica) | 10/25 | MBO | 1 ph | A. Kneidel# |
| 9/6-10/23 | Russell | 2565 | HawkCount (T. Swochack) | Eastern Kingbird | | | |
| 9/13 | Pittsfield | 200 | Z. Adams | 9/1 | PI | 12 | G. d'Entremont# |
| 9/15 | Granville | 485 | HawkCount (J. Weeks) | 9/1 | Shutesbury | 10 | M. Maity |
| Red-tailed Hawk | | | | 10/6 | Rowley | 1 | I. Boardman |
| 9/1-10/31 | Mt Wachusett | 32 | Hawkcount (P. Roberts) | Olive-sided Flycatcher | | | |
| Eastern Screech-Owl | | | | 9/6 | Marlborough | 1 | S. Miller# |
| 9/15 | Burrage Pd WMA | 2 | L. Schibley# | 9/8 | Cuttyhunk I. | 1 | C. Walz# |
| 9/17 | Billerica | 2 | S. van der Veen | 9/14, 9/20 | PI | 1,1 | E. Lipton#, B. Drummond |
| 9/28 | Essex | 2 | P. Brown | 9/19 | Nahant | 1 | S. McDonald |
| Great Horned Owl | | | | 9/21 | Easthampton | 1 | E. Light, D. McLain |
| 9/22 | Easthampton | 3 | D. Allard | Eastern Wood-Pewee | | | |
| 9/28 | Cumb. Farms | 3 | G. d'Entremont | 9/5 | Ware R. IBA | 7 | M. Lynch# |
| Barred Owl | | | | 9/9 | Sandisfield | 7 | D. Rosgen |
| 9/2 | W. Barnstable | 3 h | P. Crosson | 9/15 | Lexington | 2 | R. Hodson |
| 9/14 | Wompatuck SP | 4 | G. d'Entremont# | 10/25-26 | Hadley | 1 | N.Tepper, J. Bourget# + v.o. |
| 9/15 | Dighton | 2 | M. Eckerson | Yellow-bellied Flycatcher | | | |
| Short-eared Owl | | | | 9/1-10/10 | Indiv. reported from 8 locations | | |
| 10/31 | E. Boston (BI) | 1 | S. Jones# | 9/2, 9/13 | PI | 1,1 b | B. Flemer# |
| Northern Saw-whet Owl | | | | Alder Flycatcher | | | |
| 9/14-9/22 | Wompatuck SP | 1 | L. Schibley + v.o. | 9/24 | Deerfield | 1 | D. Sibley |
| 9/16-9/18 | Quabbin Pk | 1 | L. Therrien + v.o. | Willow Flycatcher | | | |
| 9/18 | PI | 2 h | T. Wetmore + v.o. | 9/27 | MBO | 1 | E. Lipton |

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|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Trail's Flycatcher (Willow / Alder) | 9/11 | Uxbridge | 2 ad ph | C. Martone |
| 9/6, 9/24 | PI | 1,1 b | B. Flemer# | |
| Least Flycatcher | 9/1 | Westport | 50 | M. Iliff# |
| 9/1-10/3 | Indiv. reported from 22 locations | 9/2 | BHI (Lovells I.) | 50 S. Jones |
| 9/8 | N. Scituate | 2 | 9/7 Sterling | 50 M. Lynch# |
| Pacific-slope Flycatcher* | 9/20 | Scituate | 16 | D. Furbish |
| 10/23-31 | Hadley | 1 ph au | J. Oliverio + v.o. | |
| Eastern Phoebe | 9/1 | Burrage Pd | WMA 2 | E. Leduc |
| 9/15 | Ware R. IBA | 51 | 9/3 Pittsfield | 4 1ad+3ygd L. Merry |
| 9/26 | Granville | 14 | 9/20 Scituate | 1 D. Furbish |
| 9/27 | Sandisfield | 37 | M. Lynch# | |
| 9/28 | Lexington | 12 | M. Rines# | |
| Northern Shrike | 10/22-26 | PI | 1 D. Chickering + v.o. | |
| White-eyed Vireo | 9/8-10/25 | Indiv. reported from 12 locations | | |
| 9/14 | Westport | 2 | J. Eckerson# | |
| 10/25 | Gloucester | 2 | J. Keeley# | |
| Bell's Vireo | 10/26 | Westport | 1 ph | M. Eckerson# |
| Yellow-throated Vireo | 9/1 | Huntington | 3 | M. Lynch# |
| 9/10 | WWMA | 3 | J. Forbes | |
| 9/27 | Sandisfield | 2 | M. Lynch# | |
| Blue-headed Vireo | 9/27 | Sandisfield | 63 | M. Lynch# |
| 10/14 | MBO | 9 b | T. Lloyd-Evans# | |
| 10/16 | Quincy | 7 | V. Zollo | |
| 10/19 | Cuttyhunk I. | 13 | L. Waters# | |
| 10/26 | Orleans | 5 | P. Crosson | |
| Philadelphia Vireo | thr-10/29 | Indiv. reported from 23 locations | | |
| 9/21 | Chatham | 9 | J. Trimble# | |
| 10/4 | PI | 4 | D. Chickering | |
| Warbling Vireo | 9/8 | Petersham | 3 | M. Lynch# |
| 9/19 | GMNWR | 3 | K. Dia# | |
| 10/14 | MNWS | 1 | J. Smith | |
| Red-eyed Vireo | 9/1 | Huntington | 49 | M. Lynch# |
| 9/16 | Quabbin Pk | 17 | L. Therrien | |
| 9/27 | N. Truro | 22 | R. Heil | |
| 10/2-10/21 | PI | 8 b | B. Flemer# | |
| Yellow-green Vireo | 10/15 | S. Monomoy | 1 ph b | J. Junda# |
| Fish Crow | 9/7 | Turners Falls | 30 | D. Sibley |
| 10/12 | Somerseset | 5 | J. Eckerson# | |
| 10/20 | Quincy | 180 | J. Bock# | |
| Common Raven | 9/1 | Nantucket | 2 | S. Kardell |
| 9/2 | P'town (RP) | 7 | B. Nikula# | |
| 9/29 | Medfield | 6 | J. Bock | |
| 10/4-10/11 | Deerfield | 57 max | J. Smith | |
| Horned Lark | 9/29 | Saugus | 21 | S. Zende# |
| 10/19 | PI | 20 | C. Lapite | |
| 10/25 | Plymouth B. | 11 | P. LoCicero | |
| 10/30 | Newbury | 26 | D. Chickering | |
| Bank Swallow | 9/11 | Hadley | 11 | C. Elowe |
| Tree Swallow | 9/4 | PI | 25000 | M. Watson |
| 9/16 | S. Monomoy | 6000 | J. Drucker# | |
| 9/29 | Westport | 2900 | J. Eckerson# | |
| 10/14 | Plymouth | 2600 | L. Schibley# | |
| 10/19 | Weymouth | 2500 | G. d'Entremont | |
| Northern Rough-winged Swallow | 10/1,14 | Wayland | 30,3 | B. Harris, G. Nassiopoulos |
| 10/18 | Middleton | 1 | W. Tatro | |
| 10/20 | Westport | 2 | B. King# | |
| Purple Martin | 9/10 | Brookline | 1 | M. Garvey |
| Barn Swallow | 9/1 | Westport | 50 | M. Iliff# |
| 9/2 | BHI (Lovells I.) | 50 | S. Jones | |
| 9/7 | Sterling | 50 | M. Lynch# | |
| 9/20 | Scituate | 16 | D. Furbish | |
| Cliff Swallow | 9/1 | Burrage Pd | WMA 2 | E. Leduc |
| 9/3 | Pittsfield | 4 1ad+3ygd | L. Merry | |
| 9/20 | Scituate | 1 | D. Furbish | |
| Red-breasted Nuthatch | 10/5 | Winchendon | 38 | M. Lynch# |
| 10/5 | Eastham | 8 | SSBC (G. d'Entremont) | |
| 10/13 | Belmont | 3 | R. Sommers | |
| Brown Creeper | 9/24 | PI | 1 b | B. Flemer# |
| 10/6 | Shutesbury | 5 | E. Lipton | |
| House Wren | 9/13-9/27 | Easthampton | 11 max | L. Therrien |
| 9/27 | Sandisfield | 6 | M. Lynch# | |
| 10/19 | Cuttyhunk I. | 11 | L. Waters# | |
| Winter Wren | thr | 1-2 indiv. reported from 18 locations | | |
| 10/2-10/26 | PI | 4 b | B. Flemer# | |
| 10/19 | Cuttyhunk I. | 4 | L. Waters# | |
| Sedge Wren | 9/19 | PI | 1 h | R. Heil |
| 9/21 | MBO | 1 ph | L. Schibley# | |
| Marsh Wren | 9/3 | Lynnfield | 3 | L. Ireland# |
| 9/12 | GMNWR | 10 | A. Bragg# | |
| 9/27 | Ipswich | 12 | S. James | |
| 9/28 | Marshfield | 9 | N. Marchessault# | |
| 10/26 | Westport | 3 | M. Eckerson# | |
| Carolina Wren | 9/19 | Easthampton | 7 | L. Therrien |
| 9/21 | Braintree | 8 | G. d'Entremont# | |
| 10/6 | Harvard | 8 | C. Cook | |
| 10/13 | Lexington (DM) | 9 | M. Rines# | |
| Blue-gray Gnatcatcher | 9/19 | Stow | 2 | N. Tepper |
| 9/27 | Rockport (HPt) | 2 | S. Williams | |
| 9/29 | Rockport (AP) | 3 | R. Heil | |
| 10/29 | Orleans | 1 | N. Tepper | |
| Golden-crowned Kinglet | 10/3-10/29 | PI | 29 b | B. Flemer# |
| 10/5 | Nahant | 15 | S. Williams# | |
| 10/14 | MBO | 3 imm b | T. Lloyd-Evans# | |
| 10/18 | Newton | 12 | M. Chalfin-Jacobs | |
| Ruby-crowned Kinglet | 10/3-10/25 | PI | 15 b | B. Flemer# |
| 10/5 | Nahant | 25 | S. Williams# | |
| 10/12 | Amherst | 36 | J. Eckerson | |
| 10/26 | Wayland | 22 | B. Harris | |
| 10/26 | Westport | 18 | M. Eckerson# | |
| Eastern Bluebird | 10/2 | Northboro | 24 | M. Lynch# |
| 10/20 | Easthampton | 30 | B. Finney | |
| 10/26 | GMNWR | 18 | D. + T. Swain | |
| Veery | 9/1-9/27 | PI | 3 b | B. Flemer# |
| 9/12 | Concord | 20 nfc | C. Winstanley | |
| 9/16 | Stow | 2 nfc | N. Tepper | |
| 9/17 | Dighton | 6 | J. Eckerson | |
| 10/5 | Gloucester (EP) | 1 | S. Williams# | |
| 10/5 | Nahant | 1 | S. Williams# | |
| Gray-cheeked Thrush | 9/5, 9/28 | Essex | 2,1 nfc | P. Brown |
| 9/13 | Lenox | 3 nfc | Z. Adams | |
| 9/22 | Stow | 2 nfc | N. Tepper | |
| 10/2 | MBO | 1 bE. | Lipton, M. Gray | |
| Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's Thrush | 10/13 | Brimfield | 1 ph | D. McLain# |

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|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|
| Swainson's Thrush | | | | Clay-colored Sparrow | | | |
| 9/12 | Concord | 61 nfc | C. Winstanley | 9/7-10/26 | Indiv. reported from 23 locations | | |
| 9/14 | Northfield | 20 | J. Johnson | 10/12 | Dighton | 2 | J. Eckerson# |
| 9/15-9/18 | PI | 3 b | B. Flemer# | Field Sparrow | | | |
| 9/18 | Pittsfield | 10 | S. Townsend | 9/1 | Lancaster | 26 | N. Tepper |
| 10/5-10/16 | PI | 3 b | B. Flemer# | 10/5 | Eastham | 8 | SSBC (G. d'Entremont) |
| 10/20 | MNWS | 1 | J. Smith | 10/9 | Medfield | 7 | J. Bock |
| Hermit Thrush | | | | 10/14 | Montague | 9 | L. & M. Waters |
| 10/6-10/29 | PI | 18 b | B. Flemer# | Fox Sparrow | | | |
| 10/13 | Huntington | 12 | M. Lynch# | 10/10 | Lenox | 1 | J. Pierce |
| 10/19 | Cuttyhunk I. | 12 | L. Waters# | American Tree Sparrow | | | |
| Wood Thrush | | | | 10/1 | PI | 1 | M. Watson |
| 9/9 | Dighton | 6 | M. Eckerson# | 10/29 | Hatfield | 3 | T. Gessing |
| 9/11 | Waltham | 3 | R. Jilek | Dark-eyed Junco | | | |
| 9/13 | Dighton | 3 nfc | M. Eckerson# | 10/5 | PI | 2 | J. Keeley# |
| 9/21 | Amherst | 4 | L. Therrien | 10/18 | Quabbin (G8) | 6 | M. Lynch# |
| 10/22 | Norfolk | 1 | D. Williams | 10/20 | DFWS | 7 | K. Dia# |
| Gray Catbird | | | | White-crowned Sparrow | | | |
| 9/2 | Tuckernuck I. | 125 | D. Veit | 9/27-10/30 | Easthampton | 17 max | L. Therrien+v.o. |
| 9/3-10/25 | MBO | 151 b | T. Lloyd-Evans# | 10/5 | Salisbury | 4 | P. + F. Vale |
| 9/thr | PI | 126 b | B. Flemer# | 10/8 | PI | 4 | S. Sullivan |
| Brown Thrasher | | | | 10/9-10/29 | Deerfield | 18 max | A. Hulsev, J. Oliverio+v.o. |
| 9/2-9/29 | PI | 7 b | B. Flemer# | 10/9 | Middleton | 4 | R. Ross |
| 10/5 | Salisbury | 2 | S. Miller# | White-throated Sparrow | | | |
| Cedar Waxwing | | | | 10/5-10/14 | Easthampton | 138 max | L. Therrien |
| 9/30-10/30 | Easthampton | 320 | M. McKittrick + v.o. | 10/5-10/25 | PI | 31 b | B. Flemer# |
| 10/6 | Warren | 63 | M. Lynch# | 10/13 | Huntington | 270 | M. Lynch# |
| American Pipit | | | | 10/14 | Montague | 114 | L. & M. Waters |
| 9/26 | PI | 25 | S. Sullivan | 10/28 | Pittsfield | 75 | C. Walz |
| 10/11 | Northfield | 50 | J. Smith | Vesper Sparrow | | | |
| 10/14 | Montague | 66 | L. & M. Waters | thr | Indiv. reported from 8 locations | | |
| 10/20 | Middleton | 36 | J. Keeley# | 9/20 | Orange Airport | 2 | P. Gagarin |
| 10/22 | Saugus | 30 | S. Zende# | 10/15 | Burrage Pd WMA | 2 | J. Carlisle |
| 10/23 | Bolton | 40 | B. Abbott | 10/24 | Middleton | 2 | S. Sullivan |
| Evening Grosbeak | | | | LeConte's Sparrow | | | |
| 9/6 | Worcester | 1 ad au | S. Williams | 10/13-17 | Deerfield | 1 ph | C. Caron + v.o. |
| 9/14 | Windsor | 1 | N. Dowling, M. Sovay | Seaside Sparrow | | | |
| 9/25 | Essex | 1 nfc | P. Brown | 9/15 | Scituate | 1 | M. Iliff |
| Purple Finch | | | | Nelson's Sparrow | | | |
| 9/14 | Windsor | 8 | B. Robo# | 10/13 | Quincy | 5 | V. Zollo# |
| 9/21 | PI | 8 | D. + T. Swain | 10/26 | Orleans | 3 | P. Crosson |
| 10/13 | Huntington | 9 | M. Lynch# | 10/27 | Northampton | 1 | T. Gilliland |
| Red Crossbill | | | | 10/30 | E. Boston (BI) | 8 | P. Peterson |
| 9/5 | Tolland | 6 | D. Holmes | Saltmarsh Sparrow | | | |
| 9/8, 10/13 | October Mountain | 1,2 | S. Townsend, G. Hurley | 9/22 | Newbury | 12 | S. Sullivan# |
| 9/14 | Windsor | 6 au Type10 | B. Robo# | 9/26 | PI | 6 | S. Sullivan |
| Pine Siskin | | | | 10/16 | E. Boston (BI) | 6 | DCR (S. Riley) |
| 9/22 | Pittsfield | 4 | A. Pasek | Savannah Sparrow | | | |
| 10/4 | Salisbury | 5 | S. Sullivan | 9/27-10/14 | Easthampton | 76 max | L. Therrien |
| 10/19 | Sunderland | 3 | S. Auer, K. Barnes | 9/29 | Saugus | 75 | S. Zende# |
| 10/28 | PI | 2 | P. Wood | 10/14 | Montague | 177 | L. & M. Waters |
| Lapland Longspur | | | | 10/15 | Northampton | 60 | G. d'Entremont# |
| 9/19 | WBWS | 1 | B. Hillman | Savannah Sparrow (Ipswich Sparrow) | | | |
| 9/27 | Rockport (HPt) | 1 | S. Williams# | 10/26 | PI | 3 | C. Michaud |
| 9/30 | Ipswich (CB) | 1 | I. Pepper | 10/31 | Ipswich (CB) | 18 | N. Dubrow |
| 10/11-12 | Wachusett (G36) | 1 | E. Kittredge + v.o. | Lincoln's Sparrow | | | |
| 10/11 | E. Boston (BI) | 1 | S. Jones# | 9/17-10/5 | Easthampton | 19 max | L. Therrien+v.o. |
| 10/18 | Westborough | 1 | C. Martone | 9/27 | Sandisfield | 7 | M. Lynch# |
| 10/26-30 | PI | 1 | G. d'Entremont, T. Wetmore | 9/28 | Cumb. Farms | 8 | G. d'Entremont# |
| 10/31 | Ipswich (CB) | 10 | N. Dubrow | 10/15 | Cuttyhunk I. | 3 | M. Sylvia# |
| Snow Bunting | | | | Swamp Sparrow | | | |
| 10/6 | Montague | 1 | J. Smith | 9/28 | Cumb. Farms | 50 | G. d'Entremont# |
| 10/19, 31 | Ipswich (CB) | 4,45 | D. Young, N. Dubrow | 10/4 | Lenox | 50 | Z. Adams |
| 10/29 | Westport | 3 | B. King# | 10/14 | Montague | 128 | L. & M. Waters |
| Grasshopper Sparrow | | | | 10/14 | Easthampton | 76 | L. Therrien |
| thr | Indiv. reported from 6 locations | | | 10/20 | Winchendon | 84 | M. Lynch# |
| 9/1 | Bolton | 4 2ad+2juv | N. Tepper | Eastern Towhee | | | |
| 10/19 | Cuttyhunk I. | 2 | L. Waters# | 9/2 | Tuckernuck I. | 200 | D. Veit# |
| Lark Sparrow | | | | 9/16-9/24 | Quabbin Pk | 22 | L. Therrien |
| 9/1-10/19 | Indiv. reported from 10 locations | | | 10/19 | Cuttyhunk I. | 26 | L. Waters# |
| Lark Bunting | | | | Yellow-breasted Chat | | | |
| 10/3-10/4 | Salisbury | 1 ph | J. Keeley + v.o. | thr | Indiv. reported from 10 locations | | |

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| Yellow-breasted Chat (continued) | | | | 9/17 | Dighton | 2 | J. Eckerson |
| 9/17 | PI | 1 b | B. Flemer# | 9/20 | Huntington | 4 imm | M. Lynch# |
| 10/19 | Orleans | 2 | J. Trimble# | 9/24-10/1 | Hadley | 2 max | L. Therrien+v.o. |
| Bobolink | | | | 9/25 | Ware R. IBA | 4 1ad m | M. Lynch# |
| 9/2 | Lexington (DM) | 40 | R. Stymeist | 10/5 | Lexington (DM) | 3 | M. Rines# |
| 9/13 | Easthampton | 48 | L. Therrien | Mourning Warbler | | | |
| 9/14 | W. Newbury | 7 | E. Lipton# | 9/4-9/28 | Indiv. reported from | 11 | locations |
| 10/1-10/26 | Middleton | 1 | P. + F. Vale + v.o. | 9/4 | PI | 1 b | B. Flemer# |
| Eastern Meadowlark | | | | 9/8 | Rockport (HPt) | 2 | S. Sullivan# |
| 9/28 | Hadley | 6 | L. Therrien | 9/12 | Concord | 1 nfc | C. Winstanley |
| 10/10 | Wachusett Res. | 10 | M. Lynch# | 9/18 | Amherst | 3 | L. Waters, J. Eckerson |
| 10/24 | Middleton | 2 | S. Sullivan | Common Yellowthroat | | | |
| Orchard Oriole | | | | 9/thr | PI | 25 b | B. Flemer# |
| 9/1 | Rockport (AP) | 2 | R. Heil | 9/9 | Lexington (DM) | 16 | M. Rines |
| 10/23 | Fairhaven | 1 ph | C. Longworth | 9/13-9/27 | Easthampton | 27 max | L. Therrien |
| Baltimore Oriole | | | | 9/20 | Huntington | 69 | M. Lynch# |
| 9/1 | Huntington | 3 | M. Lynch# | 9/28 | Cumb. Farms | 12 | G. d'Entremont# |
| 9/2 | PI | 3 | T. Wetmore | Hooded Warbler | | | |
| 9/27 | Rockport | 7 | S. Sullivan | 9/1 | Great Barrington | 1 | G. Ward |
| Brown-headed Cowbird | | | | 10/13-14 | Nahant | 1 ad m | L. Pivacek+v.o. |
| 9/14 | DWWS | 33 | G. d'Entremont# | American Redstart | | | |
| 10/14 | Newbury | 500 | R. Heil | 9/16 | Quabbin Pk | 24 | L. Therrien |
| Rusty Blackbird | | | | 9/17-9/21 | Amherst | 18 max | L. Waters + v.o. |
| 10/9-10/21 | Ware | 29 max | M. McKittrick+v.o. | 10/13 | Gloucester (EP) | 4 | S. Williams |
| 10/9-10/27 | Medfield | 15 | J. Bock | 10/21 | MBO | 2 b | T. Lloyd-Evans# |
| 10/11-23 | Quabbin Pk | 37 max | L. Therrien | Cape May Warbler | | | |
| 10/23 | Harvard | 16 | N. Tepper | 9/5 | MBO | 1 imm f b | T. Lloyd-Evans# |
| 10/30 | MBO | 1 imm f b | T. Lloyd-Evans# | 9/14,15,10/8 | PI | 2,2,1 b | B. Flemer# |
| Common Grackle | | | | 9/14 | Nantucket | 6 | S. Kardell |
| 9/21 | Holbrook | 11000 | G. d'Entremont# | 9/16 | S. Monomoy | 14 b | L. Fried# |
| 10/13 | Huntington | 1000 | M. Lynch# | 9/25 | Amherst | 14 | L. Waters |
| Ovenbird | | | | 9/29 | Westport | 12 | J. Eckerson# |
| 9/5 | Ware R. IBA | 6 | M. Lynch# | Northern Parula | | | |
| 9/21, 9/24 | PI | 1,1 b | B. Flemer# | 9/17-9/25 | Amherst | 57 max | L. Waters + v.o. |
| 9/27 | Sandisfield | 3 | M. Lynch# | 9/26 | Granville | 25 | D. Holmes |
| Worm-eating Warbler | | | | 9/27 | Sandisfield | 27 | M. Lynch# |
| 9/1 | Westport | 1 | J. Eckerson# | 9/29 | Westport | 22 | J. Eckerson# |
| 9/5-9/16 | Hadley | 1 | S. Griesemer + v.o. | Magnolia Warbler | | | |
| 9/11 | Easthampton | 1 | L. Therrien | 9/6-9/24 | PI | 6 b | B. Flemer# |
| Northern Waterthrush | | | | 9/27 | Dighton | 5 | J. Eckerson |
| 9/1 | Westport | 2 | M. Iliff# | 10/3-10/13 | PI | 3 b | B. Flemer# |
| 9/2-9/23 | PI | 5 b | B. Flemer# | 10/13-21 | Gloucester (EP) | 1 | S. Williams + v.o. |
| 9/7 | Woburn (HP) | 2 | M. Rines | Bay-breasted Warbler | | | |
| 9/13 | MNWS | 2 | A. Sanford | 9/2-9/21 | PI | 6 b | B. Flemer# |
| 9/17-9/22 | Easthampton | 2 max | L. Therrien | 9/14 | Marblehead | 8 | S. Williams# |
| Golden-winged Warbler | | | | 9/16 | Boston (FPk) | 3 | S. Jones |
| 9/21 | Gloucester (EP) | 1 ph | S. Sullivan# | 9/29 | Westport | 5 | J. Eckerson# |
| 9/27 | MBWMA | 1 ph | J. Keeley | 10/14-22 | Boston (PG) | 1 | L. Nichols |
| Blue-winged Warbler | | | | Blackburnian Warbler | | | |
| thr-10/5 | Indiv. reported from | 10 | locations | 9/8 | Petersham | 5 | M. Lynch# |
| Lawrence's Warbler (hybrid) | | | | 9/22 | PI | 2 | R. Ross |
| 9/5 | Newton | 1 ph | H. Miller# | 10/1 | Waltham | 1 | F. Morello |
| Black-and-white Warbler | | | | 10/14 | Boston | 1 | A. Trautmann# |
| 9/4-9/28 | PI | 9 b | B. Flemer# | Yellow Warbler | | | |
| 9/20 | Huntington | 12 | M. Lynch# | 9/13-9/30 | PI | 3 b | B. Flemer# |
| 9/27 | Sandisfield | 25 | M. Lynch# | 9/14 | W. Newbury | 5 | E. Lipton# |
| Tennessee Warbler | | | | 9/21 | Westport | 5 | M. Erickson |
| 9/26 | Granville | 10 | D. Holmes | 10/7-10/26 | Middleton | 1 | S. Sullivan + v.o. |
| 9/27 | Sandisfield | 21 | M. Lynch# | Chestnut-sided Warbler | | | |
| 10/5 | Gloucester (EP) | 5 | S. Williams# | 9/1 | Huntington | 6 | M. Lynch# |
| Orange-crowned Warbler | | | | 9/6 | Quaboag IBA | 9 | M. Lynch# |
| 10/24 | MBO | 1 imm m b | T. Lloyd-Evans# | 9/16 | Quabbin Pk | 4 | L. Therrien |
| 10/26 | Orleans | 4 | P. Crosson | 10/1-10/21 | Waltham | 1 | F. Morello + v.o. |
| 10/26 | Middleton | 3 | J. Keeley# | 10/11 | Newton | 1 | M. Chalfin-Jacobs |
| Nashville Warbler | | | | Blackpoll Warbler | | | |
| 10/5 | Nahant | 8 | S. Williams# | 9/2-9/29 | PI | 11 b | B. Flemer# |
| 10/8 | Easthampton | 3 | L. Therrien | 9/12 | MBO | 2 b | T. Lloyd-Evans# |
| 10/15 | MBO | 3 | L. Schibley | 9/25 | Ware R. IBA | 39 | M. Lynch# |
| Connecticut Warbler | | | | 9/25 | Amherst | 29 | L. Waters |
| 9/9-10/28 | Indiv. reported from | 25 | locations | 10/13 | Westport | 39 | B. King# |
| 9/15 | PI | 1 b | B. Flemer# | 10/27 | Medford | 4 | M. Rines# |
| 9/16-9/17 | MBO | 1 imm b | T. Lloyd-Evans# | Black-throated Blue Warbler | | | |
| 9/17-10/5 | WWMA | 5 3ad+2imm ph | T. Spahr+v.o. | 9/1 | Tolland | 9 | J. Forbes |

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|------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------------|----------|-----------------|------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Black-throated Blue Warbler | 9/16 | Stow | 2 nfc | N. Tepper | 9/27 | Sandisfield | 47 | M. Lynch# |
| | 10/18-20 | MNWS | 3 | J. Smith | 10/5 | Nahant | 11 | S. Williams# |
| | 10/19 | Cuttyhunk I. | 6 | L. Waters# | 10/29 | Belmont | 1 | J. Rose |
| Palm Warbler | 9/21 | Winchendon | 20 | M. Lynch# | Canada Warbler | thr-10/8 | Indiv. reported from 12 locations | |
| | 10/13 | Gloucester (EP) | 15 | S. Williams | | 9/12 | Concord | 1 nfc C. Winstanley |
| | 10/14 | Easthampton | 15 | L. Therrien | | 9/15 | PI | 1 b B. Flemer# |
| | 10/15 | Barnstable | 34 | P. Crosson | Wilson's Warbler | thr-10/26 | Indiv. reported from 13 locations | |
| Palm Warbler (Western) | 9/22-10/29 | 1-2 indiv. reported from 15 locations | | | | 9/13 | PI | 1 b B. Flemer# |
| | 9/22 | Stow | 4 | N. Tepper | | 9/14 | Marblehead | 2 J. Smith |
| | 10/21 | Belmont | 3 | M. Iliff | Summer Tanager | 9/20 | Eastham (FH) | 1 C. Bates# |
| | 10/26 | GMNWR | 3 | D. + T. Swain | | 10/16 | Chatham | 1 ph P. Trimble# |
| Pine Warbler | 9/16 | Quabbin Pk | 23 | L. Therrien | Scarlet Tanager | 9/25 | Deerfield | 6 D. Sibley |
| | 9/21 | Winchendon | 95 | M. Lynch# | | 9/27-10/2 | Easthampton | 4 maxL. Therrien+v.o. |
| | 9/30 | Stow | 16 | N. Tepper | | 10/19 | Orleans | 3 J. Trimble# |
| Yellow-rumped Warbler | 10/3-10/26 | PI | 23 b | B. Flemer# | | 10/26 | Barnstable | 1 P. Crosson |
| | 10/5-10/14 | Easthampton | 243 max | L. Therrien | Rose-breasted Grosbeak | 9/5 | Ware R. IBA | 8 M. Lynch# |
| | 10/12 | Somerset | 175 | J. Eckerson# | | 9/27 | Sandisfield | 2 M. Lynch# |
| | 10/19 | Cuttyhunk I. | 217 | L. Waters# | | 10/19 | Dartmouth | 1 T. DeGange |
| | 10/26 | Westport | 285 | M. Eckerson# | Blue Grosbeak | 9/8-10/26 | Indiv. reported from 10 locations | |
| Yellow-throated Warbler | 10/13 | Rockport | 1 juv ph | S. Williams# | | 10/18 | Dennis | 2 N. Villone |
| Prairie Warbler | thr-10/29 | Indiv. reported from 16 locations | | | Indigo Bunting | 9/17-10/5 | Easthampton | 25 maxL. Therrien+v.o. |
| | 9/15 | Ware R. IBA | 5 | M. Lynch# | | 9/28 | Groton | 16 T. Murray |
| | 9/16 | Quabbin Pk | 3 | L. Therrien | | 10/19 | Cuttyhunk I. | 9 L. Waters# |
| Black-throated Gray Warbler | 9/16 | S. Monomoy | 1 ph | J. Drucker# | | 10/30 | Dartmouth | 1 A. Rainville |
| | 10/15-26 | Falmouth | 1 ph | K. Fiske + v.o. | Dickcissel | 9/30-10/1 | Middleton | 3 S. Sullivan + v.o. |
| Townsend's Warbler | 9/14 | Marblehead | 1 ph | S. Williams# | | 10/13 | Dighton | 3 A. Eckerson |
| | 10/19 | Cuttyhunk I. | 1 ph | L. Waters# | | 10/14 | Eastham (FH) | 4 T. Spahr |
| Black-throated Green Warbler | 9/25 | Amherst | 52 | L. Waters | | | | |



GREAT HORNED OWLS BY SANDY SELESKY

ABBREVIATIONS FOR BIRD SIGHTINGS

Taxonomic order is based on AOS checklist, Seventh edition, 60th Supplement, as published in *Auk* 136: ukz042 (2019) (see <<http://checklist.aou.org/>>).

| | | | |
|--------------|--|---------------------|--|
| Locations | | PI | Plum Island |
| AA | Arnold Arboretum, Boston | Pk | Park |
| ABC | Allen Bird Club | Pont. | Pontoosuc Lake, Lanesboro |
| AP | Andrews Point, Rockport | POP | Point of Pines, Revere |
| APd | Allens Pond, S. Dartmouth | PR | Pinnacle Rock, Malden |
| AthBC | Athol Bird Club | P'town | Provincetown |
| B. | Beach | R. | River |
| Barre FD | Barre Falls Dam | Res. | Reservoir |
| BBC | Brookline Bird Club | RKG | Rose Kennedy Greenway, Boston |
| BFWMA | Bolton Flats WMA, Bolton & Lancaster | RP | Race Point, Provincetown |
| BHI | Boston Harbor Islands | SB | South Beach, Chatham |
| BI | Belle Isle, E. Boston | SF | State Forest |
| BMB | Broad Meadow Brook, Worcester | SN | Sandy Neck, Barnstable |
| BNC | Boston Nature Center, Mattapan | SP | State Park |
| BR | Bass Rocks, Gloucester | SRV | Sudbury River Valley |
| BRI Co. seas | Bristol County, offshore | SSBC | South Shore Bird Club |
| Cambr. | Cambridge | TASL | Take A Second Look, Boston Harbor Census |
| CB | Crane Beach, Ipswich | WBWS | Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary |
| CCBC | Cape Cod Bird Club | WE | World's End, Hingham |
| CGB | Coast Guard Beach, Eastham | WMA | Wildlife Management Area |
| Co. | County | WMWS | Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary |
| Corp. B. | Corporation Beach, Dennis | Wompatuck SP | Hingham, Cohasset, Scituate, Norwell |
| CP | Crooked Pond, Boxford | Worc. | Worcester |
| Cumb. Farms | Cumberland Farms, Middleboro | WSF | Willowdale State Forest, Ipswich |
| DFWS | Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary | WWMA | Westborough WMA, Westborough |
| DM | Dunback Meadow | Other Abbreviations | |
| DWMA | Delaney WMA, Stow, Bolton, Harvard | * | first state record (pending MARC review) |
| DWWS | Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary | ! | subject to MARC review |
| EP | Eastern Point, Gloucester | ad | adult |
| FE | First Encounter Beach, Eastham | au | audio recorded |
| FH | Fort Hill, Eastham | b | banded |
| FP | Fresh Pond, Cambridge | br | breeding |
| Fpk | Franklin Park, Boston | cy | cycle (3cy = 3rd cycle) |
| G# | Gate #, Quabbin Res. | d | dead |
| GMNWR | Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge | dk | dark (morph) |
| H. | Harbor | f | female |
| HCB | Herring Cove Beach, Provincetown | fl | fledgling |
| HP | Horn Pond, Woburn | h | heard |
| HPt | Halibut Point, Rockport | imm | immature |
| HRWMA | High Ridge WMA, Gardner | inj | injured |
| I. | Island | juv | juvenile |
| IBA | Important Bird Area | lt | light (morph) |
| IRWS | Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary | m | male |
| L. | Ledge | MARC | Massachusetts Avian Records Committee |
| MAS | Mass Audubon | max | maximum |
| MBO | Bird Observatory, Manomet | migr | migrating |
| MBWMA | Martin Burns WMA, Newbury | n | nesting |
| McW | McLaughlin Woods | nfc | nocturnal flight call |
| MI | Morris Island | ph | photographed |
| MNWS | Marblehead Neck Wildlife Sanctuary | pl | plumage |
| MP | Millennium Park, W. Roxbury | pr | pair |
| MSSF | Myles Standish State Forest, Plymouth | r | rescued |
| MtA | Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambr. | S | summer (1S = first summer) |
| MV | Martha's Vineyard | subad | subadult |
| NAC | Nine Acre Corner, Concord | v.o. | various observers |
| Nbpt | Newburyport | W | winter (2W = second winter) |
| ONWR | Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge | yg | young |
| Pd | Pond | # | additional observers |
| PG | Public Garden, Boston | | |

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE BIRD SIGHTINGS TO *BIRD OBSERVER*

Sightings for any given month should be reported to *Bird Observer* by the eighth of the following month. Reports should include: name and phone number of observer, name of species, date of sighting, location, number of birds, other observer(s), and information on age, sex, and morph (where relevant). Reports can be emailed to sightings@birdobserver.org or submitted online at <<http://www.birdobserver.org/Contact-Us/Submit-Sightings>>, or sent by mail to Bird Sightings, Robert H. Stymeist, 36 Lewis Avenue, Arlington MA 02474-3206.

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 Sean Williams, 18 Parkman Street, Westborough MA 01581, or by email to seanbirder@gmail.com.

BYGONE BIRDS

Historical Highlights for September–October

Neil Hayward

5 YEARS AGO

September–October 2014



The Brookline Bird Club’s “Extreme Pelagic” trip (September 27–28) delivered a record-high 189 **Audubon’s Shearwaters**, as well as one **White-faced Storm-Petrel** and two **Band-rumped Storm-Petrels**. A Leach’s Storm-Petrel was found at Mystic Lakes in Medford on October 25. **American White Pelicans** were reported from Eastham on October 25 and Plum Island the following day. An immature **Ruff** lingered at Bear Creek Sanctuary in Saugus from October 26–29. **LeConte’s Sparrows** were reported from Nahant and Danehy Park, Cambridge. A **Rufous Hummingbird** visited a feeder in Brewster for most of October. **Sedge Wrens** were in found at Plum Island and Lexington. A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** was photographed in Westport on September 23 and a **Painted Bunting** turned up in Brighton at the end of October.

Best sighting: **White-tailed Tropicbird** photographed at Hydrographer Canyon on September 4.

10 YEARS AGO

September–October 2009



The BBC pelagic (September 3–4) set new highs with 28 **Audubon’s Shearwaters** and six **White-faced Storm-Petrels**. Also seen were eight **Band-rumped Storm-Petrels** and five **Bridled Terns**. The shorebird highlight was an **American Avocet** on October 11 at Plum Island. A female **Allen’s Hummingbird** visiting a feeder in Scituate was the third record for the state. Vagrant flycatchers included a **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** in Wellfleet September 29–October 5, a **Say’s Phoebe** at Chilmark in mid-September, and a **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** at the Orange Airport for two days in October. A juvenile **LeConte’s Sparrow** was seen by a large number of muddy birders at the Cumberland Farm fields in Halifax between October 20–29. Other good passerine rarities included an adult **Summer Tanager** at a feeder in North Falmouth, a **Yellow-headed Blackbird** on Nantucket, and a **Sedge Wren** at Bolton Flats.

Best sighting: **Brown-chested Martin** at the Cumberland Farm Fields in Middleboro, October 12–14, representing the second record for the state. The first record in Massachusetts—a bird on Monomoy Island on June 12, 1983—was also the first record for the United States and Canada.

20 YEARS AGO

September–October 1999



Returning rarities included the Niles Beach **Eared Grebe** and the Sterling **Tufted Duck** both back for their fifth consecutive year. Rare October geese included a **Greater White-fronted Goose** at Plum Island and West Newbury and three **Cackling Geese** (at the time considered a subspecies of Canada Goose) at Great Meadows NWR. An adult **Red-necked Stint** at South Beach, Chatham, September 5–13, was the third record for the year while an immature **Ruff** was at Fort Hill, Eastham on September 12. Eleven Black-legged Kittiwakes were at Arlington Reservoir on October 30 following a night of heavy fog. Passerine rarities included a **Boreal Chickadee** banded at Manomet, a **Henslow's Sparrow** in Newbury, a **Brewer's Blackbird** in Orange, three different **LeConte's Sparrows**, and a cooperative **Lark Bunting** in North Weymouth.

Best event: Tropical Storm Floyd, September 17–18, brought at least ten **Sandwich Terns** to Edgartown, three **Bridled Terns** to Edgartown and Eastham, and six **Sooty Terns** to Cape Cod.

40 YEARS AGO

September–October 1979



A **Yellow Rail** was flushed at Sandy Neck, Barnstable, in mid-September. Ten skuas, including one identified as **South Polar Skua**, were spotted between September 12–16 in the Cultivator Shoals–West Georges Bank area on Manomet Bird Observatory cruises. Cattle Egrets reached a high of 25 in Ipswich on September 1. An immature **Swainson's Hawk** was the highlight of a hawkwatch in Framingham on September 15. Vagrant flycatchers included an excellent 20 **Western Kingbirds** throughout the state and a **Say's Phoebe** at Plum Island on September 8. Many long-time birders will remember visiting Herman Weissberg's yard between October 18–24 to see his adult **Summer Tanager**. Nantucket was the place to be for sparrows and buntings: **Black-headed Grosbeak** on October 27, **Henslow's Sparrow** on October 11, and **Chestnut-collared Longspur**, October 25–27. Elsewhere in the state there were three different **Lark Buntings**.

Best event: Hurricane David, September 6–9, the fallout of which produced more than 85 **Sooty Terns** scattered around Cape Ann, Cape Cod and the Islands, with three inland reports including an adult being pursued by a Pomarine Jaeger at Lake Quabog, East Brookfield. 🐦

A Birder's Quick Guide to HUNTING SEASONS

Hunting in Massachusetts ramps up in the fall, but that doesn't mean that birders and hunters can't share the outdoors. Learn where and when hunting may be taking place and review these safety tips to enjoy a more relaxed time outside!

2019 Seasons*

| | | |
|--------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Deer | Youth Deer Hunt | Sept. 28 |
| | Archery (Zones 10–14) | Oct. 7–Nov. 30 |
| | Archery (Zones 1–9) | Oct. 21–Nov. 30 |
| | Shotgun | Dec. 2–Dec. 14 |
| | Primitive Firearms | Dec. 16–Dec. 31 |
| Turkey | Youth Turkey Hunt | Apr. 25, 2020 |
| | Fall | Oct. 21–Nov. 2 |
| | Spring | Apr. 27–May 22, 2020 |
| | Coyote | Oct. 19–Mar. 27, 2020 |
| | Bear | Sept. 3–21; Nov. 4–23; Dec. 2–14 |
| | Pheasant | Oct. 19–Nov. 30 |
| | Waterfowl† | Sept. 2, 2019–Feb. 15, 2020 |

*Season dates change annually. Full regulations and seasons can be found at mass.gov/hunting.

†These dates are all-inclusive of waterfowl species. Species-specific regulations are found at mass.gov/hunting.

Tips

- Do what the hunters do! Wear a bright orange vest or hat to stay visible. If your dog is venturing out with you, put bright orange on him or her too!
- If you see someone hunting or hear shots, call out to let them know you're there.
- Hunters and birders both want to reduce unnecessary noise. Once you've made your presence known, avoid making excessive noises.
- MassWildlife-owned lands—Wildlife Management Areas and Wildlife Conservation Easements—allow hunting.
- Most state parks and forests are open to hunting, and many towns allow hunting on municipal lands.
- Hunting is not permitted on Sundays throughout Massachusetts.

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ABOUT THE COVER

Hooded Merganser

The Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) is the smallest, and arguably the most beautiful, of the North American mergansers and the only one endemic to North America. Because of its secretive nature and widely dispersed population, its biology is poorly known. Males are identified by their small size; their black face, neck, and back; orangey-brown flanks; and a white fan-shaped crest that is edged in black. The crest appears as a white line extending back from the eye when it is depressed. The bill is long and narrow. The female's small size, brownish crest, and dark bill with a yellowish lower mandible separate it from other mergansers. Juveniles resemble females but the crest is not as prominent and the bill is dark. There is little geographic variation among Hooded Mergansers and there are no subspecies recognized. Originally described as belonging to the genus *Mergus* together with the other North American mergansers, in 1983 it was split off into its current genus because certain behavioral and skeletal features suggested that it was intermediary between the *Mergus* species and the goldeneyes of the genus *Bucephala*. Currently, the proper genus for Hooded Mergansers is still under debate.

The breeding range of migratory Hooded Mergansers extends from south-central Canada east to Nova Scotia and south across the northern Great Lakes, dipping into the central United States west to North Dakota and south to Missouri. Migratory birds winter in the Northwest from northern British Columbia south to Washington and California. They winter from Kansas through Texas and also in the Southeast along the Gulf Coast and into Florida. Some birds also winter in Arizona and scattered across the Rocky Mountain states. In the Pacific Northwest, year-round residents breed from British Columbia south to northern California and eastern Montana. Year-round populations in the eastern United States breed almost as far south as the Gulf Coast from Texas to north Florida. In Massachusetts, the Hooded Merganser is considered an uncommon and local breeder. It is a fairly common and increasingly numerous migrant, with the largest numbers occurring in the fall, and leaving before the lakes and ponds freeze over. They also regularly winter in increasing numbers, especially on Cape Cod and the Islands.

Hooded Mergansers are seasonally monogamous, but the timing of pair formation is not totally clear. They first breed at age two and produce a single brood per season. Females tend to be faithful to a breeding site. Hooded Mergansers are usually silent but both sexes may make frog-like noises during courtship, especially in late fall and early winter. Courtship displays often involve several males and a single female. Male displays—which always involve an erected crest—include head-shaking, a head throw in which the male tosses his head back until it touches his back, head pumping in which the head is extended upward and the bill rotated, a ritualized drinking display with head pointed upwards, and an upward stretch with head shaking and wing-flapping. Females bob their heads with the bill pointed downwards, and head pump.

Hooded Mergansers nest in a wide range of forested wetlands, including beaver ponds, emergent marshes, rivers, creeks, ponds, and swamps. They tend to avoid deep water lake shores. The nest is usually in a natural cavity in a living or a dead tree, near or over water, or even in a nest box. The female selects the nest site and no materials are added to the cavity except for a lining of down. Only the female has a brood patch and she alone incubates the up to a dozen white, near spherical, and thick-shelled eggs for about a month until hatching. The male deserts the female once incubation begins. There is considerable nest parasitism among Hooded Mergansers, Wood Ducks, and Common Goldeneyes, each often laying eggs in the others' nests. Hooded Mergansers may even lay eggs in the nests of other pairs of their own species as well. If the nest appears threatened, the female may drop to the water and give a broken-wing distraction display. The precocial chicks leave the nest within a day after hatching when the female calls to them from the water below. They drop from the nest, join the female, and can forage almost immediately on their own, primarily for invertebrates. Little is known about the growth, development, or survival rate of the chicks.

Hooded Mergansers forage on a broad range of food types, which is uncharacteristic of other merganser species. Their main prey is fish, but they also take substantial numbers of crustaceans and insects, along with a few amphibians, mollusks, and vegetation. Their serrated bill is used for grasping prey. As shallow water specialists, they tend to be visual foragers.

During nesting, Hooded Mergansers are preyed upon by raccoons, snakes, and the usual spectrum of avian predators. Hunters take an estimated quarter of the population each year. Habitat alteration, especially the destruction of cavity-bearing trees, doubtless has had a negative effect on their population. The effects of acid rain in their breeding areas are unknown but suspect. The population of this enigmatic species is not accurately known; however, numbers in Massachusetts are definitely increasing even if overall population trends are unknown. Hunting harvest data suggests that the population is stable and possibly even increasing, so perhaps there is hope for this lovely little merganser species. 🐦

William E. Davis, Jr.

ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST

John Sill

John Sill is a freelance wildlife artist living in the mountains of North Carolina. He was the illustrator for the Bird Identification Calendar for Mass Audubon for many years. His work has appeared in *Birds In Art* at the Leigh-Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, Wisconsin, and in *Art of the Animal Kingdom* at the Bennington Center for the Arts in Vermont. He continues to illustrate the "About" and "About Habitats" series of natural history books for children written by his wife Cathryn. 🐦

AT A GLANCE

December 2019



WAYNE R. PETERSEN

This issue's mystery species is obviously a shorebird. The bird's long, slender, and pointed bill suggests that it is a sandpiper of some kind. A plover, in contrast, would have a short, blunt bill. The bird's heavily patterned and spotted underparts further suggest that the bird is a sandpiper, because a plover would have either plain or banded underparts.

Sandpipers in the Family *Scolopacidae* are typically small and slim shorebirds, often streaked below, and frequently with streaked or strongly patterned upperparts, especially in breeding plumage. The legs may be either dark or light in color. Many sandpiper species also exhibit fine bills that are straight and uniformly dark in color. The mystery sandpiper's characteristics differ from most sandpipers in that it has a relatively long, slightly curved bill that appears bicolored at the base, and it also has a robust, chunky shape. Especially notable on the pictured sandpiper are prominent dark spots on the white lower belly. Few sandpipers other than the atypical Spotted Sandpiper have such prominent spots on their underparts in combination with light-colored legs and a strongly colored bill. A Spotted Sandpiper, however, would present a more even-textured appearance to the back and its longer tail projects beyond the folded wing tips. A Spotted Sandpiper also would not have the dark-centered and pale-fringed scapulars and back feathers, streaked appearance of the throat, or pale fringes to the greater coverts on the wing shown by the mystery bird.

The overall appearance and impression (jizz) of the mystery shorebird is that of a somewhat long-billed, chunky sandpiper with pale-colored legs. When these features are combined with the fact that the shorebird is standing on what appears to be a granite rock, the collective impression points to an adult Purple Sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*) in breeding plumage. Massachusetts birders don't often get to see Purple Sandpipers at close range and see them even less often in breeding plumage. Most Purple Sandpipers are seen on offshore, wave-washed rocks in midwinter where obtaining good looks at close range is often challenging.

Purple Sandpipers are essentially winter shorebirds that prefer offshore, algae-covered rocks where they forage in the barnacle zone between waves, which often require them to frequently fly about to avoid being washed off their favored feeding rocks. Exclusively a coastal species, they usually arrive in late October at their favored wintering localities around Cape Ann, the outer islands in Boston Harbor, Cohasset and Scituate on the South Shore, and rocky islands off the South Coast. The birds depart by mid-May, which is the month when local observers have the best chance of seeing them in breeding plumage.

The author photographed this Purple Sandpiper in breeding plumage in Plymouth, Massachusetts, on May 15, 2011. 🐦

Wayne R. Petersen



Black Vultures, Somerset, Mass. Photograph by Neil Dowling.

AT A GLANCE



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



At the same time that the two Townsend's Solitaires and the first of the seven Painted Buntings showed up, so did the first of at least five **Western Tanagers**! As with the buntings, most of the birds were visiting feeders in private yards, some of which did not allow visitors. Birders did manage to catch up with a couple of them, including one at Gloucester's Eastern Point Wildlife Sanctuary. Suzanne Sullivan took the photo on the left.

The rarest bird of the period was sadly also perhaps the least cooperative. Carolyn Longworth (her photo is on the right) discovered a **Northern Lapwing** along a road through the marshes in Fairhaven just after Thanksgiving, but despite chases by numerous other birders, she was the only one who ever saw it.



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**PERIODICALS
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AT
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VOL. 48, NO 1, FEBRUARY 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| WINTER BIRDING IN THE PLYMOUTH-MANOMET AREA (1975) <i>Wayne R. Petersen and Bruce A. Sorrie</i> | 5 |
| BIRDING PLYMOUTH BEACH (1985) <i>Duncan S. Evered</i> | 10 |
| MARGARET MORSE NICE: THE WOMAN WHO CHANGED AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGY <i>William E. Davis, Jr.</i> | 19 |
| MISSISSIPPI KITES OF SOUTHEASTERN NEW HAMPSHIRE <i>Stephen Mirick</i> | 29 |
| PHOTO ESSAY | |
| Mississippi Kites of New Hampshire | 34 |
| MUSINGS FROM THE BLIND BIRDER | |
| Helping Birds: What Can I Do? <i>Martha Steele</i> | 36 |
| GLEANINGS | |
| Flying High <i>David M. Larson</i> | 40 |
| FIELD NOTES | |
| Leucistic Wild Turkey <i>Nate Marchessault</i> | 42 |
| Deer, Flies, and Eastern Phoebes <i>Pauliina Swartz</i> | 44 |
| ABOUT BOOKS | |
| Locally Sourced <i>Mark Lynch</i> | 46 |
| BIRD SIGHTINGS | |
| September–October 2019 <i>Neil Hayward and Robert H. Stymeist</i> | 54 |
| BYGONE BIRDS <i>Neil Hayward</i> | 68 |
| ABOUT THE COVER: Hooded Merganser <i>William E. Davis, Jr.</i> | 71 |
| ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST: John Sill | 72 |
| AT A GLANCE | |
| December 2019 <i>Wayne R. Petersen</i> | 73 |

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