Bird Observer

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HOT BIRDS

The **Vermilion Flycatcher** that Mark Faherty found in Brewster on October 21 was not in full breeding plumage, but it had more than enough red in its feathers to be one of the most colorful vagrant birds in Massachusetts this autumn. Mary Jo Foti took this photograph.

Mary Jo Foti was the only birder lucky enough to see a **Gray Kingbird** at Gay Head on Martha's Vineyard on November 3. Fortunately for many other birders, it or another appeared eight days later just across Vineyard Sound and Buzzards Bay, where Jeff Offerman found it. Erik Neilsen took this photograph the following day; the bird remained in the area for a few more days.

Almost a month passed between this fall's two reports of a **Cassin's Kingbird** in Massachusetts at locations roughly 10 miles apart. The first appeared on Tuckernuck Island on October 7; the second showed up on November 3 just east of Nantucket's Hummock Pond. Richard Veit took this photograph at the bird's first appearance.

Lost flycatchers stole the show in Massachusetts this fall, with a **Hammond's Flycatcher** joining the Cassin's and Gray kingbirds and the Vermilion Flycatcher. Greg Hirth encountered the Hammond's in Falmouth on November 5 and quickly spread the word. Gonzalo Giribet (@ ggiribet on Instagram) took this photograph.

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Due to circumstances beyond* Bird Observer*'s control, we are postponing the 50th Anniversary Photo, Video, and Writing Contest.

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

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Birding Bolton Flats Wildlife Management Area, Worcester County, Massachusetts

Kevin Bourinot

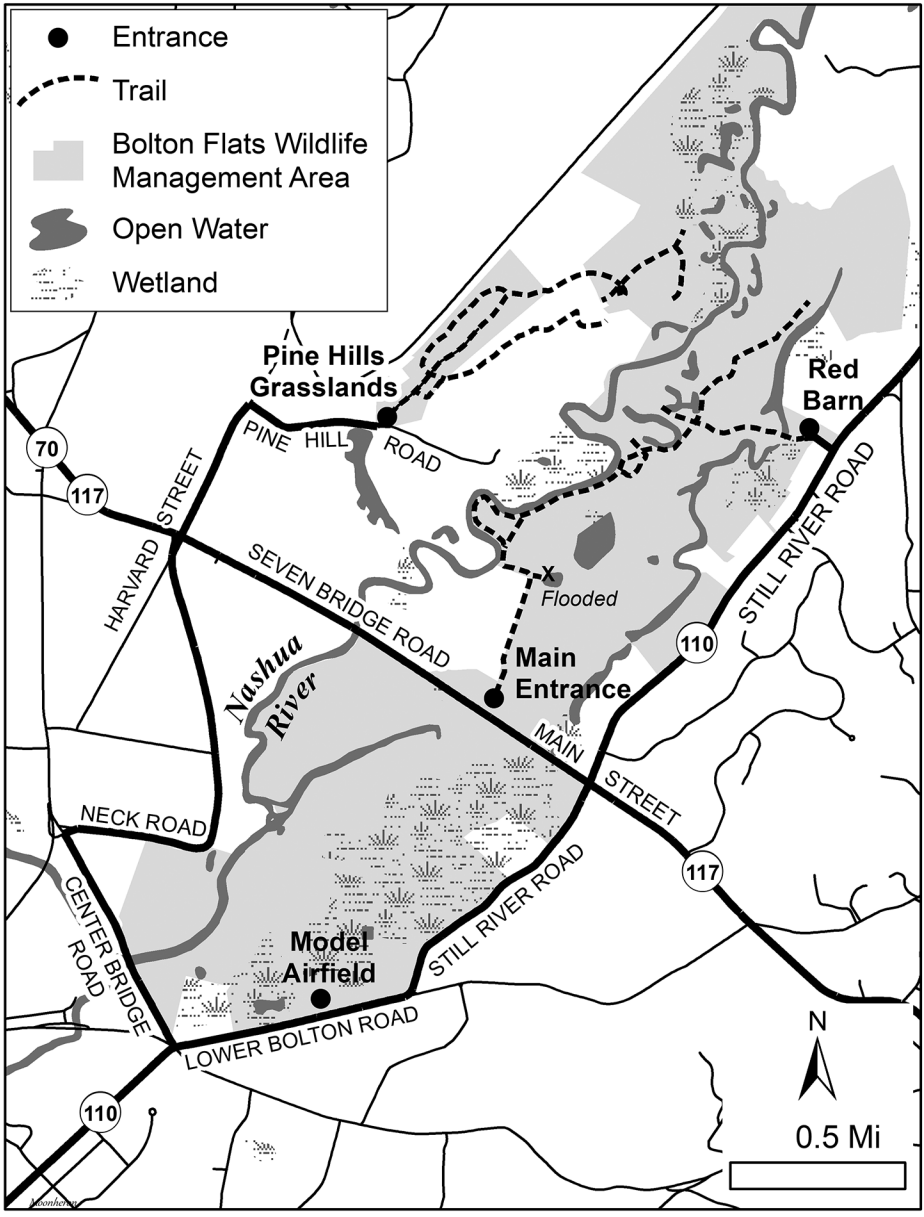
"Ahhh, I love the smell of mudflats in the morning!" This is the phrase I often say to myself as I step out of my car at Bolton Flats Wildlife Management Area during migration. The smell is unique: a combination of warm wet earth, decay, and crisp morning air. The area is prone to flooding, which often creates the perfect conditions for an environment teaming with invertebrates and aquatic plant life. At first you might think I am being sarcastic and that my description of Bolton Flats is intended to put you off making a visit, but when it comes to birding, this situation provides an abundant food source for sometimes thousands of individuals of amazing migrant bird species. So, I do in all seriousness love the smell of mudflats in the morning.

Bolton Flats Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is a portion of the Nashua River Watershed Important Bird Area (IBA), protected land that spans over 1,000 acres and offers visitors a wide diversity of birds, plants, arthropods, amphibians, and reptiles. In addition to being a critical breeding location for state-listed marsh and grassland birds, waterfowl, and passerines, it is also an extremely important migrant stopover and is the breeding ground of many vulnerable species such as the Blanding's turtle and the ringed boghaunter dragonfly.

Bolton Flats has long been one of the most desirable places to go birding in Massachusetts. Even before it became a managed area in the 1970s, it had earned a spot at the top of most Worcester County birders' important places to bird. *The Chickadee*, published by the Forbush Bird Club, is the yearly journal of Worcester County Ornithology and is the second oldest journal of ornithology in Massachusetts. It was first published in 1930. It chronicles all species seen for any given year, including first and last, high and low counts, and Worcester County first records since 1930. Perusing through the volumes, one can easily see why Bolton Flats is a special location that requires special habitat conservation.

To learn about Bolton Flats WMA, I highly recommend taking Massachusetts Audubon courses offered by Mark Lynch and Sheila Carroll. Their courses are as entertaining as they are informative. They are well-respected birders and have been instrumental in my own ornithological education. A great way to get firsthand experience birding this area is to join Forbush Bird Club on one of its free spring and fall migration workshops, woodcock walks, or marsh bird surveys.

As its name implies, this is a Wildlife Management Area and is, therefore, an area open to hunting seasonal game, including Ring-necked Pheasant and white-tailed deer. Bolton Flats is popular with hunters during fall pheasant season. Saturdays can be



Map of Bolton Flats Wildlife Management Area.

especially crazy. I cannot tell you how many times I have stumbled upon a stocked and confused Ring-necked Pheasant or an out-of-place Northern Bobwhite calling from the thickets. Hunters are required by law to wear safety hunter orange in the WMA, and I strongly encourage all visitors to wear hunter orange—such as an appropriate safety orange hat—while visiting Bolton Flats. Even though hunting is prohibited on Sunday, it can never hurt to advertise you are NOT game, especially in the fall.

Getting to Bolton Flats

Although its name suggests it is in the town of Bolton, Bolton Flats WMA spans three Massachusetts towns: Bolton, Lancaster, and Harvard. Two of the entrances are popular and allow for relative ease of parking. The Main Entrance is to the north of Route 117—also called Seven Bridge Road—and provides access to the floodplains on the border of Lancaster and Bolton. The other entrance is at the Pine Hill Road Grasslands section. From eastern Massachusetts, you can access Route 117 from Interstate I-495; from western Massachusetts and the Worcester area, you can access Route 117 from either I-290 or I-190, depending on where you are coming from.

The Main Entrance

The gravel entrance to the parking lot is off Route 117 soon after the intersection with Route 110. If you are driving west, it will be on your right (42.458296, -71.648794). The entrance can easily be overlooked. A helpful hint that I give my trip attendees is to drive slowly and look for the large white "Entering" sign; you will be entering either Bolton from the east or Lancaster from the west. The parking lot entrance is close to this sign.

Proceed with caution when entering, particularly if you have a low-clearance vehicle. Once you make it into the parking lot, there is ample space to leave your vehicle. Bring waterproof knee-high boots in the spring. Although improvements have been made to this parking lot in recent years, it is not uncommon for the entrance to be completely flooded in the spring with knee-deep flowing water.

It may appear like an ordinary dirt parking lot to the layperson, but the second you open the car door, birders should be aware that this parking lot is worthy of careful attention, during migration especially. With the cattail marsh to the east and tall silver maples to the west, this is a great spot to start your trip. In spring, listen for American Bitterns pumping, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers *zeet*-ing, and warblers migrating through the shrubs and silver maples. This can be an exciting start to your trip, so when you are ready to move on, make sure you remember your spotting scope. It bears repeating that wearing some hunter orange cannot hurt. Biting insects and black-legged ticks can be prevalent, so a DEET-based insect repellent is often a good decision.

Strategies for Birding from the Main Entrance

This trail can be an out-and-back trail of approximately 0.5 mile, starting at the gate and turning back at the far end of the floodplains.

The path begins through the yellow gate into a wooded swamp comprising typical New England wetland species of deciduous trees. Towering silver maples predominate,

Red Barn Entrance, Bolton Flats. All photographs by the author.

with lots of undergrowth thickets and alders that create excellent edge habitat for migrant and breeding passerines. With the Still River cattail marsh to the east, this trail consistently produces Worcester County high counts in fall for Swamp Sparrow and Song Sparrow. Counts of these species can sometimes be in the hundreds. Listen for American Bittern and Marsh Wren as you slowly proceed north. There are a few spots that typically flood during spring and where those waterproof boots come in handy at least until May. Connecticut Warblers are often spotted along this trail—check the jewelweed—in the early mornings of mid to late September. The dominant breeding warblers are Yellow Warblers and Common Yellowthroats. Listen for Orchard Orioles and Rusty Blackbirds. Acadian Flycatchers have also been observed in this vicinity during migration.

After about 100 yards the trail opens to vast floodplains and flats to the west. You will notice greenhouses at the far western end of the field, which is an active farm. Visitors must stay on the path because entering the fields is trespassing onto private property. If the seasonal weather conditions are right—not too wet or dry—this location can be spectacular. Much like the Stage Island pools at Plum Island, it can be a magnet for waterfowl and shorebirds during spring and fall migration. I must provide words of caution for this spot during migration—do not be "that person" by moving too quickly or being too loud. Migrant waterfowl and shorebirds are easily flushed by sudden movement or loud noises. It will ruin the experience for the birds, yourself, and your fellow birders if your only good look at all the ducks and shorebirds is when they take off and vacate the area. If you do accidently flush everything, the birds may return in a few hours, but the embarrassment could last days to weeks.

Conditions vary greatly season to season depending on the amount of snow melt and rain that cause the Nashua and Still rivers to crest or not. In some years it is like a large lake, and in some years it is bone dry. In March and April, waterfowl numbers can be outstanding, with flocks of Green-winged Teal often in the hundreds, tons of Wood Ducks, and a mixed variety of other dabblers including Blue-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, and American Wigeon. Eurasian Wigeon, Common Teal, Greater White-fronted Goose, Cackling Goose, and Barnacle Goose have been spotted here. Northern Harriers are a common sighting as they hunt the floodplains for rodents and frogs. A few times, I have observed Peregrine Falcons hunting a flock of teal, which is always exciting. Recently, two Short-eared Owls spent a few weeks hunting here.

Take your time and carefully scan the floodplains with your spotting scope. Look for Wilson's Snipe; the county high counts—sometimes over 100— are typical here every spring. Shorebird numbers can be staggering in the mudflats as well at the right water level. We have had large flocks of Glossy Ibis, Cattle Egret, and even a Willet—possibly a Western. A Wilson's Phalarope in full breeding plumage stopped by for many birders to observe. Lesser Blacked-backed and Bonaparte's gulls are not uncommon. Do not rule out Black and Caspian terns, which are always fun to spot inland.

Slowly and quietly, continue to move up the trail, stopping periodically to scan the fields. The slightly uneven terrain can easily conceal birds, and as you walk, your vantage point may shift just enough to reveal additional birds, especially peeps working the flats. Listen and look for Sandhill Cranes, which are now yearly visitors. We hope that they will breed in the marsh to the east of the trail in the future. When you reach the natural gas pipeline—marked with yellow and white striped pipes—there is an opening in the marshy area that can be great. It is where a LeConte's Sparrow was seen by several birders in October 2017.

The Nashua and Still rivers are a major pathway for migrants, but especially for blackbird species that follow the rivers and feed in these fields. Counts of mixed flocks of Common Grackle, Red-winged Blackbird, and Brown-headed Cowbird have reached over 10,000 in this area. You may even be able to pick out a vagrant Yellow-headed Blackbird in these flocks; it happens.

Winter can be as much fun birding along this trail as spring and fall. It is a great spot to find Northern Shrikes hunting from the snags along the trail, as well as Rough-legged Hawks hunting the flats during irruption years. In winter finch irruption years, check for large flocks of Common Redpolls, Pine Siskins, and Purple Finches.

When you reach the end of the trail, you will find yourself at a location commonly referred to as "the T" by local birders because it resembles the capital letter T. I love this spot. Just off the trail in the flats, there is a lone black willow tree that can be a magnet for migrating passerines; they will often fly into the willow to investigate you if you try pishing. During a Forbush trip, this strategy successfully brought in a Nelson's Sparrow, which perched in the black willow long enough for the entire group to get great looks.

Pine Hill Road Grasslands.

In the past, one could traverse the trail to the east into the cattail marsh to the area known as the farm pond, but beavers have flooded the marsh. Although it remains possible to enter with hip waders, it is best not to disturb the cattail marsh. The cattails are breeding grounds for many secretive and sensitive species: Sora, Least Bittern, Common Gallinule, Marsh Wren, and even King Rail and Pied-billed Grebe. MassWildlife has done a good job managing the area. Control of invasive plants such as purple loosestrife, phragmites, and buckthorn has been critical to maintaining this expansive cattail marsh along the Still River. The best strategy for birding the marsh is to be patient and listen for calls. On rare occasions, you may see a Least Bittern by following the call to its perch or a Sora walking around near the trail. Virginia Rails are abundant, and I have heard legends of Worcester County birders observing Yellow Rails in this vicinity.

Most birders turn back at this point, but if you have more time, continue to bird the trail west and then north along the Nashua River. The trail continues for about two miles with excellent thicket and marsh birding. During passerine migration, one of my favorite spots is a line of birch trees along the trail. That tree line never disappoints as waves of mixed warbler flocks pass through. This general area has good trails in the fall and is another excellent location for species such as Lincoln's Sparrow, Rusty Blackbird, and Olive-sided Flycatcher. My Forbush group once spotted a Red-headed Woodpecker by continuing past the "T" during a fall trip.

You can also try the trails located directly across the street from the Main Entrance parking lot (42.457476, -71.649176), which can be excellent for thicket birding and viewing the southern section of the flats. Gaining a decent vantage point can be difficult, so it is far less visited than the other trails. This trail crosses the Still River and is often impassable in spring and fall, which is when amazing looks at waterfowl and shorebirds are possible. If you have time, check for a passable viewing spot, because the birding here can be wild.

Some important points to consider when visiting the Main Entrance area of Bolton Flats WMA:

If you bird here in fall, brush up on your sparrow identification skills. This section of the flats is a remarkable hot spot for sparrows. Harris's and Henslow's sparrows have shown up in the past and Dickcissels are almost yearly. Learning their call notes and songs makes identification in the field much easier.

The unique habitat increases the chances of finding rarities, so keep your mind open to seeing species you may not expect. Rarities of the flats include: a Northern Lapwing during the 2013 vagrancy event in Massachusetts, and a Franklin's Gull in 2013—both first sightings of these species in Worcester County—Red Phalarope, Hudsonian Godwit, Western Kingbird, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Purple Gallinule, Ruff—3 records—Loggerhead Shrike, and in March 2022, Worcester County's second record of Pink-footed Goose. For acceptance of a rare record into *The Chickadee*, the editorial committee requires confirmation of the sighting with either photographic proof or a minimum of three observers.

The Pine Hill Road Grasslands Entrance

The Pine Hill Road Grasslands, about a mile west of the Main Entrance, is a completely different habitat equally worthy of a birding trip in Lancaster. When you leave the Main Entrance, turn right and head west on Route 117. Turn right onto Harvard Road, which becomes Pine Hill Road. Do not be alarmed if you hear heavy machine gun fire; Fort Devens is nearby, and it is still an active U.S. Army Reserves training area. Park off the road near the first gate on the left, making sure not to block the gate (42.469803, -71.654850). This former sand mine is dominated by open, dry, and sandy environs; it is a unique and rare pitch pine and scrub oak habitat.

Strategies for birding the Pine Hill Road Grasslands Entrance

Having a great experience here is easy. Follow the straight, dirt road for about a mile and bird along the way. You can leave your waterproof boots in the car, but take your binoculars, spotting scope, and a camera. I love watching the many tiger beetles flying along the road as well as the great diversity of butterflies. Nuisance insects such as mosquitoes and black flies are rarely an issue, but deer flies are present in the hot summer months, and tick repellant is always a good idea.

Unique habitat brings unique birds, and Pine Hill Road Grasslands is no exception. Prairie Warbler, Brown Thrasher, Eastern Towhee, Eastern Meadowlark, Bobolink, Indigo Bunting, and Field, Vesper, and Grasshopper sparrows can be easily found on both sides of the road. MassWildlife has been managing this area well with controlled

burns and control of invasive plants such as spotted knapweed and autumn olive. They have also erected a successful kestrel box. Because of the successful protection and management of this land, this area is one of the most reliable spots in the state to observe sensitive breeding grassland species such as Grasshopper Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, and Eastern Whip-poor-will. Learning the different sparrow songs is extremely helpful in identification. If you are interested in learning bird songs and calls, or you are struggling to commit them to memory, I suggest purchasing the Sibley Guide App on your phone. You can quickly bring up songs and calls for reference on your phone while out in the field. Do not venture off the trails, especially during breeding season. You can easily observe these species with your eyes and ears from the dirt road.

If you would like to hear Eastern Whip-poor-wills, park here during breeding season 30 minutes after sunset and you will be rewarded with a mind-boggling cacophony of song. I have witnessed pairs in courtship on the ground only a few feet away. Pine Hill Road Grasslands is also a great location for American Woodcocks and migrating Common Nighthawks. A Chuck-wills-widow was banded here in 2020. The Forbush Bird Club offers Woodcock and Nighthawk Walks here in the spring.

Other Entrances and Trails of Interest

Lesser-known locations within Bolton Flats WMA are in the northernmost section known as the Red Barn Entrance and in the southernmost section.

The Red Barn Entrance

Access this northernmost section of the WMA trail network from Route 110—Still River Road—in Bolton. Drive approximately 1.5 miles north of the intersection of Routes 110 and 117, look for a red barn—owned by MassWildlife—and turn left. The parking area (42.469073, -71.631046) is at the end of this road. This is a great spot for breeding Alder and Willow flycatchers and for a view of a Great Blue Heron rookery along the Still River. Connecticut Warblers have been seen from the parking lot. A small bridge—made mostly of wooden planks that northern water snakes love to bask on—crosses the Still River to the trail beyond. It is not unusual for the bridge to be submerged and impassable in spring. If you make it across, you will have access to a labyrinth of trails winding through fields and thickets. I love walking these trails particularly in fall, where there can be hundreds of leopard, pickerel, and green frogs. If you walk south for a few miles, you will connect with the Main Entrance area off Route 117. This section of the WMA is popular with hunters and their dogs in the fall. I promise, orange is your color.

The Southernmost Section

There are some good trails in the southernmost section of the WMA located off Still River Road in Lancaster, approximately 1.0 mile south of the Route 117 Main Entrance. The parking area (42.445155, -71.658542) is an active radio-controlled airplane flying site, which can complicate birding. This trail is less maintained, full of potholes, and can be wet. If you are willing to take the risk, you can be rewarded with

a serene and isolated walk through a lesser traveled area of the WMA if there is no air traffic.

While you are visiting the southernmost section, take a drive along Neck and Center Bridge roads in Lancaster. You can find a few pulloffs where you can scan the fields with your spotting scope. Waterfowl can be excellent in this section. In March 2022, the Pink-footed Goose spent a lot of time feeding in these fields along with three Sandhill Cranes.

I hope you can make a trip to Bolton Flats WMA soon. Stay on the trails and have fun.

Kevin Bourinot, *a lifelong birding enthusiast with a B.S. in Biology and an M.S. in Bioscience Administration, has lived in Central Massachusetts for about 20 years. He is the current editor-in-chief of* The Chickadee *and is an active member of the Forbush Bird Club. Kevin leads several local Forbush Bird Club birding field trips throughout the year for seasoned and novice birders alike.*

Editor's note: For a historical perspective of Bolton Flats, read the following two articles that ran in past issues of *Bird Observer.*

Blodget, Bradford G. 1974. Birding on the Bolton-Lancaster Flats. *Bird Observer* Volume 2 (3):68–69.

Petersen, Wayne R. and Brooke Stevens. 2006. IBAs—The Central Region. *Bird Observer* Volume 34 (3):158–62.

2022 U.S. State of the Birds

On October 12, 2022, the 2022 U.S. State of the Birds report was released by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and 32 conservation partners and agencies. It's the first update on the nation's birds since the 2019 study by Cornell Lab scientist Ken Rosenberg and colleagues found 3 billion birds had been lost from the U.S. and Canada since 1970.

The trends from this year's report show a stark contrast between wetlands, where breeding birds are increasing overall, and every other U.S. habitat, where birds have declined steeply. The report also identifies 70 Tipping Point species, birds that have lost half their populations in the past 50 years, and that are on track to lose another half in the next 50 years, if nothing changes.

The report calls for bigger conservation solutions by looking to successful wetlands conservation as a model for investments in other habitats; by advancing precision science and conservation to address the causes of declines head-on; and by working at new scales across science, policy, and partnerships with communities to restore and manage habitats to benefit birds, help with climate resilience, and improve quality of life for people.

Visit StateoftheBirds.org, where you can read the new 2022 report or download a copy, including an essay by ornithologist J. Drew Lanham, Shared Ranges, Shared Fates: A Convergent Destiny for Birds and People.

Naming Birds: Wherefore Art Thou *Vireo*?

Caitlin L. Miller and Jeffrey Boone Miller

When you see a bird's common English and scientific name in a *Bird Observer* article, e.g., Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), do you skip over the often unfamiliar genus and species names? Or, do you perhaps wonder what the scientific names mean in English, how names are chosen, or whether names can be controversial? In this article, we hope to pique your curiosity by providing a brief introduction to bird naming. Though not experts, we have found that learning about scientific and common English bird names has deepened our engagement with birds, birders, and bird science.

To get started, here are translations of the scientific names of five birds well known to New Englanders—can you identify each bird's common English name? (Answers at the end.)

1. Migrating thrush
2. Rooster rooster
3. Many-colored black-haired bird
4. Blood-colored crimson bird
5. Pure speckled bird

Scientific Names—Not Always Latin, but Always Latinized

Though sometimes referred to as "Latin names," scientific names can be derived from any language. However, the rules for scientific names—more on those later—require the name to be latinized, i.e., put in a form used in Latin including a genus name with a defined gender and a species name in the appropriate Latin form. Your favorite bird's scientific name might come from Ancient Greek, Old English, Tupi (an indigenous language from what is now southeastern Brazil), Malay, or one of many other languages.

Types of Scientific Names

Borrowings. Scientific names are often based on a pre-existing name for a particular bird or type of bird. Following Linnaeus, many such borrowings are from Latin, but other languages are represented. The goose genus *Branta,* for example, is the Old Norse word for Brent Goose; the tern genus *Sterna* is from an old English name for the Black Tern; and *Anhinga* is a Tupi name (Jobling 2010, 2022). A few of the many Latin examples are *Anas* (duck)*, Aquila* (eagle), *Bubo* (owl), *Cygnus* (swan)*, Hirundo* (swallow), *Larus* (gull), and *Passer* (sparrow). Though not always user-friendly, the most comprehensive references for translations of scientific bird names are by Jobling (2010, 2022). For an enjoyable short history of Linnaeus and his naming, see Walton (1986).

A bird's genus and species names need not be from the same language. Two local examples are Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) and Common Raven (*Corvus corax*),

both of which were named by Linnaeus (McAtee 1957). Here the genus names are the Latin words for heron, *ardea*, and raven, *corvus*, and the species names are latinized versions of the Ancient Greek words for heron, *erodios* (*ἐρῳδιός*), and raven, *korax* (*κόραξ*). Thus, the scientific names translate as "heron heron" and "raven raven."

In the quiz, birds #1 (genus) and #2 (genus and species) have names that are direct borrowings from Latin.

Descriptions. Almost any aspect—real or fanciful—of the outward appearance, behavior, or geographical location of a species has been used as the basis of a scientific name. Body parts used for species names range from white head (*leucocephalus* for Bald Eagle) to red foot (*rubripes* for American Black Duck). The scientific name of the American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) translates as short-billed raven, from Latin *corvus* raven and Greek *brakhus* short, *rhunkhos* bill. In an uncommon occurrence, the translated scientific name of the Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*) is the same as its common English name, from Latin *buteo* hawk and Greek, *platus* broad, *-pteros* –winged.

The scientific name of the Red-winged Blackbird, mentioned in our first paragraph, can translate as "gregarious scarlet-wearing bird." The genus *Agelaius* refers to its flocking behavior, from Greek *agelaios* meaning to belong to a herd or to be gregarious, and the species *phoeniceus,* which translates literally as "Phoenician," takes on the meaning of a wearer of "red purple" or "scarlet" because the Greeks associated red and purple dyes with the Phoenicians.

To answer our title question, *vireo* was the Latin name for a "small green migratory bird" (Jobling 2010). Perhaps the association of *vireo* with green plumage led to its use for the genus name, as many vireos do have a greenish plumage.

The genus and species of quiz birds #3, #4, and #5 are descriptive, as is the species for quiz bird #1.

Poetic or Myth-derived. Scientific names that incorporate poetic metaphors or mythical references—though often obscure or perplexing—are at least thought-provoking and, when appropriate, are among the authors' favorites. Consider, as a poetic example, *Numenius,* the genus of Whimbrel and curlews, which is derived from the Ancient Greek for "new moon" and refers to the crescent moon-shaped bill of these birds. Also apt, the hard-to-identify flycatchers of the genus *Empidonax* are "Masters of Mosquitos" or "Lords of Gnats"—from Greek *empis* gnat, mosquito; *anax* lord, master.

For myth-derived names, the Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) is one perplexing example. The species name is straightforward, *haliaetos* is Greek for sea eagle, but the genus is named after the mythical king Pandion II of Athens. The tenuous link to the Osprey is that one of this king's sons, Nisus of Megara, was transformed into a sea eagle. Why Marie Jules-César Lelorgne de Savigny in 1809 chose Pandion rather than Nisus for the genus name is unknown—perhaps a simple misremembering of the myth?

Another puzzle is why the Sandhill Crane (*Antigone canadensis*) was transferred in 2016 from the genus *Grus*—which is Latin for crane—to the genus *Antigone*. Genetic data suggested a new crane genus was needed, but why *Antigone*? First of all,

this Antigone is not the heroine of the play by Sophocles, but rather a daughter of the mythical King Laomedon of Troy. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (book 6, line 96), this Antigone of Troy was transformed not into a crane (*grus*), but into a stork (*ciconia*). But right before her story, Ovid tells of another woman, Gerana (the female form of the Greek word for crane, *geranos*), who was indeed changed into a crane (book 6, line 92). Was this myth also misremembered? In this case, the naming rule of priority—more on that below—specified resurrecting the genus *Antigone,* which had been first proposed for cranes in 1853 (Reichenbach 1853), as the Sandhill Crane's new genus.

People's names. The final large category of bird names is eponyms, i.e., birds named after people. For this section, we will consider common English names as well as scientific names.

Many birds found in New England have eponyms in their scientific names, English names, or both. Species with an eponym in both scientific and common names include Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*) and Bicknell's Thrush (*Catharus bicknelli*). (For latinized names, if the honoree is female, the ending will be *–a* or *–ae*, and if male, it will be *–i* or *–ii*.) In contrast, Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) and Wilson's Warbler (*Cardellina pusilla*) have eponymic English, but not scientific names, whereas Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*) and Olive-sided Flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*) are the opposite. For information about the people behind the eponyms, we suggest consulting Jobling (2010, 2022), Beolens and Watkins (2004), and Beolens et al. (2014).

Scientific and common English names sometimes have bifurcating histories. The Blackburnian Warbler, which was named by Thomas Pennant for the eighteenth-century English naturalist Anna Blackburne (Wystrach 1977), long carried the species name *blackburniae*; but even though the English name has been retained, the species name was changed to *fusca* based on the priority rule. Bonaparte's Gull (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*) has also retained its English name, even though the species name *bonapartii*—given by colleagues of the nineteenth-century French naturalist Charles Lucien Bonaparte (Swainson and Richardson 1831)—was changed, again based on the priority rule.

A bird's scientific name is typically assigned by the author(s) of the first published description of the species, which establishes priority, and new eponyms continue to be used frequently. Between 1950 and 2020, there were 385 new bird species described, and about half (n=193) of their scientific names included eponyms (DuBay et al. 2020). Two birds from Peru, the Cordillera Azul Antbird (*Myrmoderus eowilsoni*) (Moncrieff et al. 2018) and the Inti Tanager (*Heliothraupis oneilli*) (Lane et al. 2021), both named for naturalists, are among the most recent examples.

Although many eponyms cite naturalists, honorees can be proposed for any reason and need not have a professional—or any—connection to the species. Family members of naturalists provided the species eponyms for Grace's Warbler (*Setophaga graciae*), Lucy's Warbler (*Leiothlypis luciae*), and Anna's Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*), as well as the genus eponym for Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*). Greek poets of the seventh century BCE provide eponyms for two genera of hummingbirds: *Archilochus*, which includes our Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*),

and *Sappho*, which has a single South American species, the Red-tailed Comet (*Sappho sparganurus*).

Eponyms also creep into names indirectly. The species name of the Canvasback (*Aythya valisineria*) refers to its favorite food—wild celery (*Vallisneria americana*)—but this plant's genus is named after Antonio Vallisnieri, an eighteenth-century Italian botanist. In addition, locations referenced in English names are often such secondary eponyms, e.g., Carolina Wren, Nashville Warbler, Cape May Warbler. Eponymic locations also occur in scientific names; look for species names such as *carolinensis, hudsonius, georgiana, ludovicianus,* and even *americana*.

One bird with a name of special interest to the authors, the rare Millerbird (*Acrocephalus familiaris*) of Hawaii, has what appears to be, but is not, an eponymic name. Rather, the bird is named for its habit of eating miller moths, which in turn are named after whitish wing scales that bring to mind a miller coated with flour dust.

The Naming Rules

Scientific names, which are meant to be stable and universal, must conform to the more than 300 pages of naming rules from the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature (www.iczn.org). These rules require use of latinized binomial names, unique genus names in each kingdom (non-redundancy), and, as mentioned above, the oldest applicable published name (priority). For common English names, in contrast, there is no uniform code, which is why names in North America and the British Isles may differ, e.g., *Gavia immer* is either Common Loon or Great Northern Diver.

The naming of New England birds is under the purview of the 12-person North American Classification Committee (NACC), which is overseen by the American Ornithological Society (AOS). The NACC "evaluates and codifies the latest scientific developments in the systematics, nomenclature, and distribution of North and Middle American birds" and also "publishes the Checklist of North American Birds and its annual supplements" (AOS 2022a).

A major task for the NACC is to review proposals to change a name, split a species, or "lump" two or more species into a single species. Anyone, professional or not, can submit a proposal. Many proposals are rejected, but proposals that receive a two-thirds positive vote are adopted and published in the annual supplement to the AOS checklist. NACC-approved name changes usually reflect new scientific studies of evolutionary relationships. Sometimes these changes are extensive, as in 2011, when the genus *Dendroica* (Greek, tree-dwelling) was extinguished and more than 20 warbler species were moved to the genus *Setophaga* (Greek, moth-eating).

In 2019, a proposal to rename McCown's Longspur, based on objection to McCown (a Confederate general), was rejected by the NACC with a vote of one yes, seven no, and one abstention (AOS 2019). In response to this proposal, however, the NACC developed a formal statement of policy in 2020 that reads in part,

> …the Committee strives to strike a balance that recognizes the principle of nomenclatural stability while respecting circumstances in which names

should be reconsidered to reflect present-day ethical principles or to avoid ongoing harm. (AOS 2022b)

In 2020, the bird was renamed Thick-billed Longspur after a revised proposal was approved by a vote of 11–0 (AOS 2020). See Driver and Bond (2021) for a history of this AOS decision. Oddly, as of October 2022, the bird's scientific name, *Rhynchophanes mccownii,* has not yet been changed even though it includes the controversial eponym.

Whither Eponyms?

As we have seen, bird names sometimes have been assigned for obscure, even incorrect, reasons, and eponyms are no exception. Many honorees have no link with the bird or with ornithology, and, in addition, the use of eponyms is now under question from multiple viewpoints. To get an idea of the issues with eponyms, we recommend reading the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's summary of the 2021 AOS congress on bird names, as well as the accompanying readers' comments (Axelson 2021). At that congress, a panel of birders, scientists, field-guide authors, and other experts concluded that eponymic names needed to be changed. An article in the Audubon Society magazine provides additional perspective (Remmel 2022).

We will not analyze the range of arguments for and against eponymic bird names, but we will comment on two issues—the perceived stability of bird names and the implications of the current NACC policy on eponyms cited above.

A common argument against changing eponymic names is that name stability should be the first priority. But, really, how stable are bird names? By 1766, Linnaeus had given scientific names to 133 North American species (McAtee 1957), but, by our count, only eight (6%) of those binomials are still in use. Olson (1987) compared AOS checklists from 1957 and 1983 and found that 15% of scientific names had changed over those 26 years, and the 2021 supplement to the AOS checklist listed changes to 13 genera and 20 species, affecting more than 1% of the listed species in that one year. At that rate, 25% or more of bird species will have name changes during one's lifetime, yet birders and scientists have not been daunted by this instability. The NACC has noted that about 15% (n=142) of the species on its list have eponymic English names. Changing those eponyms at a measured pace after community consultations should not be overly onerous.

Based on its eponyms policy, the NACC will now consider "present-day ethical principles" when reviewing proposals for name changes. As a result, committee members, who are chosen for their ornithological expertise, may be required to judge the character and actions of people after whom birds are named. With all the good will in the world, is that a reasonable expectation for this committee? In addition, as the pendulum of history swings, we can imagine future committees might well judge eponymic names based on a different set of values.

Bird names are a human construct—birds are indifferent to what we call them—but does it not make sense that our names should focus on the birds, rather than ourselves? Personally, we may enjoy reading Sappho and Archilochus, think that

particular naturalists should be remembered, or find some eponyms to be pleasingly mellifluous, e.g., Anna's Hummingbird. But an eponym honors a person, not the bird. Might it not be better to do away with eponyms entirely?

Answers to the quiz

1. Migrating thrush is the American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*), the state bird of Connecticut. *Turdus* is Latin for thrush, an old name in use by the time of Emperor Augustus (first century BCE). *Migratorius* is from Latin *migrator,* migrator or wanderer.

2. Rooster rooster is the Chicken (*Gallus gallus*), the state bird of Rhode Island (specifically the Rhode Island Red). *Gallus* is Latin for rooster—note masculine gender.

3. Many-colored black-haired bird is the Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*), the state bird of Maine and Massachusetts. Of relevance to its use as the genus name, the Latin word *Poecile* derives from the Greek *poikile,* which means many-colored, intricately patterned, or highly decorated. *Atricapillus* is a compound word of Atri from Latin *ater/atra,* black or dark, and capillus from *capillus,* hair on the head.

4. Blood-colored crimson bird is the Purple Finch (*Haemorhous purpureus*), the state bird of New Hampshire. *Haemorhous* is from the Greek for bloody-rump or flowing with blood. *Purpureus* is Latin for colored purple or crimson, an old, poetic word used in Vergil, Ovid, and Cicero to describe blood, clothing, the dawn, etc. Until 2021, the Purple Finch was in the genus *Carpodacus*, meaning fruit-biting, from Greek *karpos* fruit and *dakos* bite.

5. Pure speckled bird is the Hermit Thrush (*Catharus guttatus*), the state bird of Vermont. *Catharus* is the Latin form of Greek *katharos,* meaning pure. *Guttatus* is Latin for spotted or speckled, the adjective coming from *gutta,* a drop. Highlighting the perils of translation, a perfectly good English translation for *katharos* is spotless, which would make the Hermit Thrush a spotless spotted bird.

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A Hybrid Barn Swallow x Cave Swallow in South Kingstown, Rhode Island

Bill Thompson

Images 1 & 2. Side view and front view of the hybrid Barn Swallow x Cave Swallow. All photographs by the author.

On April 28, 2022, I was photographing a mixed flock of swallows at Trustom Pond National Wildlife Refuge in South Kingstown, Rhode Island, when I noticed a bird that superficially resembled a Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) but appeared to have a cinnamon rump patch that would not be expected on a Barn Swallow. I took several photos of this bird in flight before it left. I viewed the bird only through a camera, so I was not able to study the details of its appearance until later in the day, when I reviewed the photos on my computer. This bird was associated with several Barn Swallows within a larger mixed flock of swallows, which included Tree Swallows, Northern Rough-winged Swallows, and a Bank Swallow.

My initial inspection of three images—side view, front view, and rear view—revealed a bird that was intermediate in morphological characteristics between a Barn Swallow and either a Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*) or a Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*). Characteristics of the bird that primarily differentiated it from a Barn Swallow were the prominent cinnamon rump patch, the white line down the center of its back, and the only slightly forked tail.

As of October 2022, there were no other examples of a Barn Swallow x Cave Swallow hybrid reported to eBird other than the one I saw (Thompson 2022). I also could not find online images of Barn Swallow x Cave Swallow hybrids, but I reviewed several example photos of Barn Swallow x Cliff Swallow hybrids on the *Bird Hybrids* website (Bird Hybrids 2014), which was the best online resource for these hybrids that I could find.

After reviewing the website images and receiving input from a bird expert, I settled on the bird being a Barn Swallow x Cave Swallow hybrid because of the dark cinnamon rump, the extensive light cinnamon color on the sides and part of the belly,

Image 3. Rear view of the hybrid Barn Swallow x Cave Swallow.

and the light-colored throat. A hybrid with a Cliff Swallow as one parent presumably would have had a lighter cinnamon rump, would have lacked the lighter cinnamon color on the sides and belly, and would have had a darker throat. One also might expect a dark forehead with a Cave Swallow as a parent, as seen in the bird I photographed. The Bird Hybrids website, however, had one example of a suspected Barn Swallow x Cliff Swallow hybrid with a dark forehead, so this characteristic may not be definitive for determining the type of hybrid.

Descriptions of several Barn Swallow x Cave Swallow hybrids have been published (Martin and Selander 1975; Martin 1980, 1982), but those hybrid birds were all from Texas, with the Cave Swallow parents being the Mexican subspecies (*P. fulva pallida*). Given the geographic location of my sighting, the Cave Swallow parent was more likely the Caribbean subspecies (*P. fulva fulva*), but there is no way to confirm this possibility from the available evidence.

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The History of *Bird Observer*

Chapter 5: The Easy Years

William E. Davis, Jr.

[Editor's Note: All of Bird Observer's *content from 1973 to 2015 has been digitized to SORA, the Searchable Ornithological Research Archive at https://sora.unm.edu/. This archive is a resource that is open to the public. You can access all articles through SORA as well as through* Bird Observer's *archives.]*

Following several difficult years, 1993 and 1994 were relatively easy for *Bird Observer,* featuring the completion and publication of *A Birder's Guide to Eastern Massachusetts* and a consolidation of the legal aspects of the organization under the able direction of lawyer Jay Shetterly. At the February 1993 staff meeting, Ted Davis announced that he had signed a contract with the American Birding Association (ABA) to publish the book. The treasurer reported that *Bird Observer* was in the black by approximately $2,000.

The February 1993 issue of *Bird Observer* was the twentieth anniversary issue and featured a variety of historical subjects dealing with *Bird Observer's* first 20 years, including "Birding Memories From Our Readers" and a "Staff Roll Call: Gathering the Flock," which listed the entire all-volunteer staff that made *Bird Observer* a reality during its first 20 years (Figure 1). The cover of this issue was a collage of 11 covers—each contributed by a different artist—over the 20 years. "About the Cover: The First Twenty Years," was a three-page history with brief stories of the cover artists. These included Paula Butler, who contributed the original *Bird Observer* cover art featuring two stylistic Sanderlings that appeared for the first five years of the journal, and Margaret La Farge, whose drawings of two Hudsonian Godwits replaced the Sanderlings for a year until the decision was made to grace the cover of every issue with a different bird.

Bird Observer agreed to maintain 10 complete sets of the journal preserved around the country. Accordingly, Ted Davis contacted the American Museum of Natural History in New York City and reached an agreement that they would receive a set of *Bird Observer* with the stipulation that they would be bound and maintained up to date. A long discussion ensued on how to promote *Bird Observer* on its twentieth anniversary. Alden Clayton strongly argued for the use of the anniversary issue to promote *Bird Observer,* including contacting newspapers and giving new subscribers at the Brookline Bird Club meeting a free copy of the anniversary issue as a bonus. At the April staff meeting it was announced that *Bird Observer* had funds in excess of $32,000.

By October 1993, the seemingly endless process of getting the book into print was nearing conclusion and field testing the various locations in the book was underway. Jay Shetterly agreed to take on the task of liability insurance for *Bird Observer* field trips and meetings. By the February 1994 staff meeting Jay had the insurance problems under control, a new high of 791 *Bird Observer* subscribers was announced, and Ted

The Bird Observer Flock 1973-1997

E/P Staff = Editorial and Production Staff

Gladys Allen (1975-1978) Subscription Manager
Kathleen Anderson (1990-1991) Advisory Board
John Andrews (1982-1984) Field Study Committee Chairman
Dorothy Arvidson (1978-current) Production, Editorial Board, Editor, Editor Emeritus, Board of Directors
Josephine Ashley (1986) E/P Staff
Theodore Atkinson (1976-current) Subscription Manager, Treasurer, Production, E/P Staff, Associate Staff
Fred Atwood (1973) Regional Compiler
James Baird (1990-1991) Advisory Board
Chere Bemelmans (1987-1991) E/P Staff
Jim Berry (1991-current) E/P Staff, Department Head
James Bird (1981-1987) Production, E/P Staff
Mary Bird (1987) E/P Staff
Bradford Blodget (1973; 1975-1976) Regional Compiler
David Brown (1973-1974) Compiler, Regional Compiler
Paula Butler (1973-1980) Editor in Chief, Graphics
Denise Cabral (1983-1986) Production, E/P Staff
Brian Cassie (1986-1990) E/P Staff
Perry Chang (1976-1977) Production
Alden Clayton (1990-current) Advisory Board, Department Head, Board of Directors
William E. Davis, Jr. (1986-current) E/P Staff, President, Department Head
Louise De Giacomo (1973-1983) Production
Glenn d'Entremont (1988-current) E/P Staff, Board of Directors, Clerk
Herman D'Entremont (1973-1974; 1978-current) Subscription Manager, Business Manager, Acting Treasurer, Subscription Manager, Production, E/P Staff, Board of Directors
William Drummond (1974-1976) Regional Compiler
Ruth Emery (1973-1989) Regional Statistical Editor, Statistical Editor, Records, Chairperson of Records, Records Statistician, Records Committee Statistician, Records, Records Staff, E/P Staff
H. Christian Floyd (1981-current) Editorial Board, Clerk, E/P Staff, Board of Directors
Richard Forster (1983-current) Records Committee Consultant, Records, Records Staff, E/P Staff, Board of Directors
Thomas French (1990-1991) Advisory Board
George Gove (1981-1992) Records, Records Committee, Records, Records Staff, E/P Staff, Board of Directors

Michael Greenwald (1985-1987) Editorial Board, E/P Staff
Stephen Grinley (1973-1974) Compiler, Regional Compiler
Bruce Hallett (1986-1989) E/P Staff
Richard Heil (1978-1980) Records

Figure 1. "Staff Roll Call: Gathering the Flock," *Bird Observer,* February 1993.

Janet Heywood (1981-current) Production, Production Manager, Associate Editor, Board of Directors
Pamela Higgins (1981) Production
Harriet Hoffman (1981-current) Editorial Board, E/P Staff, President, Board of Directors
Craig Jackson (1982-1983) TASL News
Mark Kasprzyk (1979-1980) Records
Ethel Keefe (1973-1977) Production
John Kricher (1990-current) Advisory Board, Department Head, Board of Directors
David Lange (1981-current) Production, Subscription Manager, Treasurer, E/P Staff, Subscription Manager, Board of Directors
Joseph T. Leverich (1973-1980; 1985-1987) Contributing Editor, Editorial Board, E/P Staff
Marcia Litchfield (1976-1977) Production
Mark Lynch (1986-1987) E/P Staff
Philip Martin (1973-1974; 1977) Production, Contributing Editor, Editorial Board
Eleanor Miller (1978) Production
Gayle Miller (1976-1979) Production, Secretary
Blair Nikula (1974-1976) Regional Compiler
Ian Nisbet (1990-1991) Advisory Board
Robert O'Hara (1975-1976) Regional Compiler
Simon Perkins (1990-current) E/P Staff, Board of Directors
Wayne Petersen (1974-current) Editorial Board, E/P Staff, Department Head, Board of Directors
Barbara Phillips (1982-1985) Production, Editorial Board
Phyllis Regan (1974) Regional Compiler
Marjorie Rines (1992-current) Associate Staff, Board of Directors
Julie Roberts (1978-1982) Graphics, Design and Layout, Production
Paul Roberts (1977-1982) Editorial Board, Editor, Editorial Board
Leif Robinson (1973; 1977-1984) Copy Editor, Editor, Editorial Board
Jay Shetterly (1992-current) Board of Directors
Bruce Sorrie (1975-1977; 1980-1986; 1990-1991) Editorial Board, E/P Staff, Advisory Board
Martha Steele (1990-current) E/P Staff, Editor in Chief, Board of Directors
Robert Stymeist (1973-current) Compiler, Editorial Board, Chief Compiler, Compiler, President, Records, Records Committee, Records, Records Staff, E/P Staff, Department Head, Advertisements, Board of Directors
Claudia Taylor (1990) E/P Staff
Lee Taylor (1981-current) Records, Records Committee, Records, Records Staff, E/P Staff, Treasurer
Martha Vaughan (1978-current) Production, Editorial Board, President, E/P Staff, Associate Staff
Richard Veit (1974-1978) Compiler, Records
Richard Walton (1990-1991) Advisory Board
Shirley Young (1981-1985) Production
Soheil Zendeh (1978-1984) Editorial Board, TASL News

Figure 1 (continued).. "Staff Roll Call: Gathering the Flock," *Bird Observer,* February 1993.

reported that he had enough cover bird pictures for the next five years. He also reported that he and ABA president Daniel Williams had each written a president's piece for the forthcoming and long-awaited book. By May, Jay Shetterly had started work on *Bird Observer*'s bylaws, which needed revision. Sadly, David Lange, the subscription manager, announced that he was retiring from *Bird Observer*.

By July 1994, Wayne Petersen's wetlands program had gone well, and he was committed to fall programs, including a sparrow workshop in October. Ted announced that the book *A Birder's Guide to Eastern Massachusetts* was finished, with a spiral binding, a green cover that on the front featured a photograph of a flight of Short-billed Dowitchers and on the back a Norm Smith photograph of a Snowy Owl at Logan Airport. "By Bird Observer" was printed on the front cover. *Bird Observer* would receive over $1,200 in royalties. By October, the number of subscriptions had surpassed 800 for the first time. Ted was asked to set up a seminar with Dave Lange because after his 13 years as subscription manager, no one knew what was involved in the job and a replacement was badly needed. Jay Shetterly produced a thoroughly revised set of bylaws that was voted into effect on November 10. At the November meeting, Wayne Petersen introduced Steve Arena, who was interested in joining the *Bird Observer* staff. Thus ended a productive and fairly quiet two years.

The articles in the 1993 anniversary issue were outstanding. The lead article was Martha Steele's "Fifty Years of Birding: An Interview with Margaret Argue," followed by Ted Davis's "Ludlow Griscom: The Birdwatcher's Guru." Both dealt with prominent historical figures in Massachusetts birding and ornithology. The historical treatment continued with Jim MacDougall's "Historians of Essex County and the Essex County Ornithological Club of Massachusetts" and Wayne Petersen's "Best Birds in Massachusetts: 1973–1992." The April issue also had some interesting articles, starting with "Bicknell's Thrush: A Northeastern Songbird in Trouble?" by Christopher Rimmer, Jonathan Atwood, and Laura Nagy. The rich Field Notes included Ted Davis's story of the discovery of a poisonous bird in New Guinea, "Never Bite a Pitohui, It's Poisonous," and David Clapp's "American Kestrel Caching Food."

Other articles included Peter Alden's tribute "The Day the Birds Cried: Remembering Ted Parker." Rare bird reports included Blair Nikula's "Sighting of a Black-tailed Godwit in Massachusetts," and reports of ongoing investigations included John Hill, Jr. and Mark Melow's "Lloyd Center Estuarine Winter Waterfowl Census." Where to Go Birding articles included Bob Stymeist's "Birding South Brookline" and Howard Faria's "A Winter Getaway: Guanica State Forest, Puerto Rico," demonstrating the widening range of Where to Go Birding coverage. Book reviews were an important feature of *Bird Observer,* with Frederick Purnell Jr.'s review of Dick Veit and Wayne Petersen's *Birds of Massachusetts* in the December 1993 issue.

In 1994, bird reports included Norman Smith's "A Decade of Snowy Owls at Logan Airport," which incorporated two pages of delightful photographs of Snowy Owls. Ted Davis's "Rain Forest Birding" described his experiences while watching birds for a month from an observation blind near Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Other articles included Dick Forster's "The Great Bohemian Waxwing Flight of 1994"

and Roger Applegate's "Fall Migration of Peregrine Falcons at Coastal and Island Locations in Maine." It had been two relaxing years, but productive ones.

The years 1995–1997 were also quiet and productive. By January 1995, Wayne Petersen's raptor workshop already had 22 people signed up and another set of workshops for the spring were in the planning phase. The subscriber list was up to 845, and sales of *A Birder's Guide to Eastern Massachusetts* had passed 2,000. Jay Shetterly reported that we did not need approval from the Massachusetts secretary of state for bylaw changes. Dave Lange was ready to turn over the *Bird Observer* archival sets to a successor and "Ted expressed a deep dept of gratitude for Dave Lange's 13 years of service with Bird Observer."

There had been some concern expressed during previous years that the Where to Go Birding articles were slipping too far afield, in many cases well beyond the borders of New England. The Kricher-Davis Where to Go Birding (1992) article about Concan, Texas, and the Black-capped Vireo—a resident of Concan—cover bird in 1989 sparked the controversy. By 1995, the general consensus was that cover birds and Where to Go Birding articles should stay regional and limited to New England locations. Examples from 1995 included Jan Smith's "Birding Marblehead: Marblehead Neck Wildlife Sanctuary and Beyond" and Linda Pivacek's "Birding the Nooks and Crannies of Nahant." The rule of thumb for covers was that the cover bird had to have been seen in New England at some point.

In 1995, reports of ongoing bird projects included Paul Robert's "The Fall Hawk Watch Migration—The Eastern Massachusetts Hawk Watch: Twenty Years and Counting" and James Barton's "Ten Years and a Year: The Fall Waterfowl Census at Fresh Pond, Cambridge, 1984–1993, 1994." Rare bird reports included Patricia O'Neill's "Black-tailed Gull Sighting." General papers of interest included John Kricher's "Where Do the Loons Go? A Field Guide to DNA Classification of North American Birds" that discussed the classification of birds based on DNA analysis, and Ted Davis and Wayne Petersen's "Red-breasted Nuthatches and the Winter of 1993–1994." The April 1995 issue was mostly devoted to grassland birds and included Bob Askins "Conservation of Grassland Birds in the Northeast" and Stephen Ells's "Breeding Henslow's Sparrows in Lincoln, Massachusetts, 1994." In subsequent issues were Ted Davis's "An Aberrant Mockingbird," about a leucistic mockingbird that was raising young, and his "Tactile Foraging Behavior in a Vagrant Black-tailed Gull." Wayne Petersen published the "First Annual Report of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (MARC)," which has become an important annual contribution to *Bird Observer*.

In 1996, a lot of problems were solved, including a rate increase to $100 for a full-page ad. There was, however, a lot of fuss about replacing Dave Lange as circulation manager, John Kricher indicated that he would not continue as feature articles department head. Dorothy Arvidson reported that her *Bird Observer* computer died and needed to be replaced, so $5,000 was allocated for the purchase of new equipment. Ted Davis brought up the subject of holding a fundraiser, and once again plugged his wish for *Bird Observer* to develop an endowment to protect the organization against the loss

of subscribers. In September 1996, Manomet Bird Observatory requested a possible exchange of mailing lists.

There was the usual concern for staffing for the coming year. Wayne Petersen had attended the ABA convention in Park City, Utah, in the summer, where he participated in a panel discussion abut local bird journals. He reported that funding and finding volunteers were major problems in all of the state bird journals, and that *Bird Observer* was "well thought of nationally as a local bird journal." Significant staff retirements included those of John Kricher, Martha Steele, and Steve Arena. Carolyn Marsh was the likely candidate to take over subscriptions. Paid subscriptions to *Bird Observer* were down about 5%, and Ted Davis once again suggested an endowment as the way to solve that problem financially. Ted advanced the idea of an appreciation gift for Martha Steele, and the staff decided to give her a painting by Barry Van Dusen.

In 1996, Where to Go Birding articles included Ralph Andrews's "Birding the Nashua, New Hampshire, Area" and Betty Anderson's "Cumberland Farm Fields." Research reports included Michael Resch's "Summary of 1995 North American Migration Count in New England." Other articles were plentiful and included Herb Wilson's "The Impact of Bird Feeding on Wintering Birds," Peter Stangel's "Partners in Flight: Proactive Conservation for Neotropical Migratory Birds and Their Habitats," and Brad Blodget's "Massachusetts Partners in Flight Working Group."

The nominating committee report in January 1997 included Marj Rines as president, Matt Pelikan as editor, Glen d'Entremont as treasurer and clerk, and Carolyn Marsh as subscription and circulation manager. Guy Washburn took over Bob Stymeist's job as advertising manager. The staff gave a round of thanks to Bob and Matt for their service as advertising and circulation managers.

It took a protracted discussion with several demonstrations to set up a *Bird Observer* site on the Internet. *Bird Observer* was clearly moving ahead with the times. Its subscriber list was at an all-time high of 922. Wayne Petersen proposed three workshops, the first titled "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Vagrants and Vagrancy, Records and Rarities." Ted Davis gave a workshop on local ornithological journals at a Wilson Ornithological Society meeting, using *Bird Observer* as a case study. There were staff changes, with Herman D'Entremont resigning and Marj Rines following Ted as president. She sent Ted a letter of appreciation for his six years of service in the role:

> Your contributions during your presidency have been exceptional. You tackled the formidable task of the bylaws, recruited Jay Shetterly's assistance, and somehow managed to achieve consensus among our diverse group. You led us through the necessity of dealing with insurance. But your most enduring legacy will undoubtedly be "The Book." Negotiating with authors and publishers was not an easy task, and the end result we can all be proud of.

With new editor Matt Pelikan in charge, *Bird Observer* moved ahead into 1997. Where to Go Birding articles included Steve Davis's "Birding Rhode Island's East Bay Bike Path." Rare bird reports included Lysle Brinker and Peter Vickery's "First Confirmed Nesting of Clay-colored Sparrow (*Spizella pallida*) in New England."

The February 1997 issue contained a series of articles on birding ethics, featuring the ABA's "American Birding Association: Principles of Birding Ethics," Blake Maybank's "The ABA Code of Ethics: What it Is, What it Does," and Matt Pelikan's "After the Owl: Reflections on Big Birds," which discussed the breaches in ethics surrounding the appearance of a Great Gray Owl in Rowley, Massachusetts, in March 1996. The April issue began on a sad note with Wayne Petersen's "In Memoriam: Richard Alan Forster" that extolled the life of one of *Bird Observer*'s stalwarts. That issue also included Ted Davis and Craig Armstrong's "Killdeer Nest on Gravel Roofs of Office Buildings in Canton Massachusetts." Other articles in 1997 included Marta Hersek's "The Mating Game" about the reproductive biology of birds, and Ted Davis's historical account about "Outram Bangs and the Creation of a World-class Bird Collection at Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology."

The 1993–1997 half decade had been mostly a quiet period for *Bird Observer* but also a highly productive one, with the journal progressing nicely and professionally.

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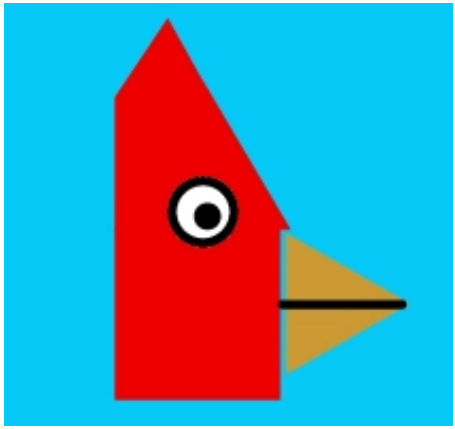

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PHOTO ESSAY

Sparrows of Bolton Flats

Kevin Bourinot

Lincoln's Sparrow. All photographs by Kevin Bourinot.

Grasshopper Sparrow.

Vesper Sparrow.

Swamp Sparrow.

MUSINGS FROM THE BLIND BIRDER

One Small Step for Birders, One Giant Leap for Birds

Martha Steele

As I write this, another fall migration season is in full swing. My thoughts focus on the rigors of the migration itself and my wonderment that small birds, some no bigger than my thumb, are able to survive perilous journeys of thousands of miles. And then my thoughts turn to how I am, in a small but significant way, helping to ensure that they land in a rich and supportive habitat for their wintering home.

I drink coffee every morning. I am not alone—some 150 million Americans also drink coffee, with 25 million of them identifying themselves as birders. But unlike the vast majority of my fellow consumers of our morning brew, I drink organic Bird Friendly® (BF®) coffee certified by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center.

Three-quarters of the world's coffee is sun-grown. Visualize a huge field of corn stalks but instead of corn, there are coffee plants. No shade, no diversity in plants, and nary a bird. That is the coffee that most coffee drinkers buy. The rich, diversified shade-grown habitats where BF® coffee plants grow not only support flora and fauna but also enhance climate resilience in these areas and sequester carbon from the atmosphere to help combat climate change.

With the increasing availability of BF® coffees across the country, we all have the power to take one simple, easy step to help our migratory birds, their habitats, and indeed, the planet. There are few things a consumer can do that has such an enormous impact on bird conservation. Here we are, paying money every day for our daily habit. All we have to do is direct that money to a different product that supports rich habitats for birds instead of buying a product that destroys their habitats.

One of my heroes, Scott Weidensaul, wrote an excellent and educational article for *Bird Observer* in which he described how the BF® program is the gold standard for shade-grown coffee and why the plantations that meet BF® certification are so important to our wintering migratory birds (Weidensaul 2009). While many coffees today are marketed as eco- or bird- friendly, the SMBC Bird Friendly® certification stands out with its rigorous, science- based standards that growers must meet (e.g., canopy height, tree diversity, foliage cover, multiple vegetation strata). The result is that beans mature far more slowly under the shade trees that birds need than coffees grown in habitat-destroying sun plantations. The extended growing process imparts a deeper, richer flavor to the coffee. (Steele 2015)

The urgency of taking whatever steps we can has never been more clear. In 2019, the U.S. Committee of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) issued its *State of the Birds 2019* report detailing the loss of nearly three billion birds, or nearly 30 percent, in the United States and Canada (discussed in Steele 2020). 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. Released on October 12, 2022, the *State of the Birds 2022* report detailed steep population losses in all habitats other than wetlands, with "70 Tipping Point species that have lost half or more of their breeding population since 1970 and are on track to lose another half or more in the next 50 years" (NABCI 2022).

To illustrate how important it is to conserve dwindling wintering habitats, Bridget Stutchbury recently noted how her migration tracking research showed that most Wood Thrushes that breed in the northeastern United States spend their six-month overwinter period in the tropical forests of eastern Honduras and Nicaragua. Their wintering regions are only one-third the size of their breeding range, and so any further forest loss will severely disrupt the population of Wood Thrushes even if we are able to protect their migratory routes and breeding grounds (Bridget Stutchbury, personal communication, October 3, 2022).

In 2015, approximately 7,000 hectares were under cultivation for BF® coffee (Steele 2015). Today, there are over 18,000 hectares in 13 countries, most of which are in Latin America but also in Ethiopia, India, and Thailand. Over 5,400 family farms are involved with the program, which the Smithsonian recently expanded to include cocoa. In 2015, approximately 12.3 million pounds of BF® coffee beans were harvested, but today that number has more than tripled with over 38 million pounds harvested. The number of roasters in the United States is also growing, with 13 new roasters added to the program in 2021.The coffees are available online and are also showing up in more retail outlets, such as Wegmans and Whole Foods, as well as in shops at zoos, aquariums, wildlife sanctuaries, and shops targeted for birders.

The growth of BF® coffee sales across all available brands is encouraging, but at the same time, there is plenty of room for exponential growth. Today, there are potentially 400,000 hectares in Latin America that could easily transition to grow BF® coffees. Farmers get better prices for BF® coffees but there needs to be greater demand to incentivize the farmers to work with the Smithsonian to certify their farms. It is easy to see how United States consumers, and particularly birders and others conservation-minded, could drive that demand and directly conserve forest habitat good for birds and our planet.

Weidensaul and others, such as Stutchbury and Kenn Kaufman, have been pounding the pavement for years on the merits of BF® coffees. Weidensaul said:

The awareness of Bird Friendly® coffee and its importance for migratory birds has grown tremendously, and the impact on bird conservation in Latin America is profound. When I visit areas like the highlands of northern Nicaragua, where hundreds of small family-owned shade coffee farms are protecting quality bird habitat while producing millions of pounds of certified organic Bird Friendly® coffee (as well as generating a premium price that is encouraging farmers to restore grain fields and pastures to forest) the benefits are incredibly clear. We have made a lot of progress but we can do more to protect immeasurably greater areas of bird habitat" (Weidensaul, personal communication). (Steele 2015)

No matter the worthiness of supporting BF® coffee, no one would buy the coffee if it was not also good. My husband Bob Stymeist and I have managed a BF®

buying group since the spring of 2009 consisting mostly of residents in Arlington, Massachusetts, and its contiguous cities and towns. The coffee that we buy online is Birds & Beans, a Boston-based company using New England roasters (www.birdsandbeanscoffee.com). They are the only company in the country that sells nothing but BF® coffees. All their coffees are also certified as fair trade. Over the past 13 years, we have ordered approximately 10,000 pounds of roasted BF® coffee. Our friends who participate in the buying group all love this coffee and feel great satisfaction that they are helping the migrants they so enjoy. Think of it—the individual warbler or thrush you see in the fall may well spend its winter on a BF® farm in Latin America that you are helping to support, a profound and deeply meaningful connection between you and that bird.

I close with a thought from my previous column that still seems relevant today:

In a world that often seems so overwhelmed with negativity, we can take solace in our own positive actions related to what matters the most to each of us. When you sip your morning mug of coffee, you too could take satisfaction in knowing that you are helping your birds, you too could help expand areas of quality habitat in coffee growing regions, and you too, as I do, can talk to your birds, telling them what you are doing for them and wishing them well. You would be joining a growing number of birders and conservationists doing the same, a collective series of small steps making a singular profound impact for migratory bird conservation. (Steele 2020)

Notes

The Bird Friendly® Program Manager at the Smithsonian, Kirstin Hill, points out that anyone can ask their regular coffee shop if they would be willing to offer BF® coffees as an option and work with her to make that happen. For more information on the program and where you can find BF® coffee online or near you, you can contact birdfriendly@si.edu or visit www.drinkbirdfriendly.com.

If anyone who lives in Arlington or contiguous cities or towns is interested in joining our coffee buying group, please contact me at marthajs@verizon.net.

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JOHN'S WORLD OF BIRDS

The Cigar that Flies

John Kricher

Figure 1. This photograph shows detail rarely observed in the moment because Chimney Swifts move so quickly. Photographs by Sean Williams.

After a great day of birding with friends in Michigan this past May, it was dinner time. It was also on the cold side. Aware of the constant risk of Covid, I suggested we dine outdoors on the patio at Mr. Jack'ss (and, yes, the two *s*'s are correct), the local eatery, familiar to me from previous trips. My companions were reluctant, preferring the warmer inside and accepting the Covid risk. That was until I pointed out that this was the best location in Tawas City to observe Chimney Swifts (*Chaetura pelagica*). We ate on the patio and the swifts were active, wonderful dinner companions. Which brings us to Roger Tory Peterson.

I am going to take a risk here and make the brash assumption that 100% of the readers of *Bird Observer* know who Roger Tory Peterson was and why he may be the most important and influential figure in twentieth-century birding. In 1934, Roger wrote and illustrated a book that bore the title *A Field Guide to the Birds* (Peterson 1934). It was not the first field guide devoted to birds, but it was the one that captured the nation, greatly energized birding, and was often called "the birder's bible." Roger was a man of the twentieth century—born in 1908 and passing in 1996—but his field guide lives on in this century, with the seventh edition published in 2020 (Peterson 2020). This latest edition still uses some of Peterson's original text, augmented with input from four other authors. Seven editions. And one descriptive phrase is repeated in every edition from 1934 to 2020. That phrase is: "a cigar with wings." Yep, the

Chimney Swift. You cannot improve on that succinct description. Though the cigar with wings description is commonly attributed to Peterson, he commented that "more than one naturalist" had used the expression before he published it (Peterson 1942).

Peterson was the consummate birder. I recall that when I was a first-year graduate student at Rutgers University in 1967, my professor, Jeff Swinebroad, brought several of us grad students to Crawford House in New Hampshire, which was then hosting the annual meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Society (WOS). Dr. Swinebroad, who was secretary of WOS, was attending an evening council meeting in a spacious room with a stone fireplace. It was June, so the fireplace was not in use, at least not for fires. Roger Tory Peterson, a member of the WOS Council, was present.

As Jeff told it, during the council discussion Roger abruptly put his hand up and asked for silence. He turned and stared at the fireplace and then went over to it. He knelt down, reached up into the fireplace chimney, and soon emerged holding a Chimney Swift. He had heard the bird making a faint twitter as well as a scratching sound on the wall of the chimney. After showing it around, he placed it back in the chimney.

Though tiny of foot—the swift family name, Apodidae, means "without feet"—a swift's feet have needle-sharp claws, and their tails have sharp terminal spikes that prop them. Thus, hanging from a vertical surface comes easily to a Chimney Swift.

When a teenaged me got himself into birding I was desirous of seeing the cigar with wings. In the summer of 1959, I was with my parents having dinner at the R&S Diner on Route 309, not far north of Philadelphia. I was in my frantic collection stage of birding, keen to find many new bird species to add to my nascent life list. As I left the diner, satiated, and was walking toward our car, I heard a clear and rapid twittering in the air above and there they were, out of the cigar box, coursing overhead, unmistakable winged cigars, my first Chimney Swifts. My joy was palpable, it was thrilling, such a vivid memory. Just as Peterson described, cigarlike tubular bodies with wings beating frantically, birds engaged in continuous twitterings, some having the decency to fly sufficiently low that a boy who left his binoculars behind could still identify them.

Every bird species is, each in its own way, unique. But the Chimney Swift takes uniqueness to a whole new level. It, as well as its brethren swift species, spends more time aloft than any other bird species. Swifts fly, well, swiftly, cruising at about 45 mph, easily accelerating to over 70 mph. And they tend to fly high, higher on average than swallows. Chimney Swift flight is sometimes confused with that of a bat or, more often, a swallow. Indeed, an early common name for Chimney Swift was Chimney Swallow. Though there is a similarity between swifts and swallows, anatomically, the two families are distinct, especially if you examine the skeleton (van Grouw 2013).

A Chimney Swift arm—the wing—is composed of an unusually short, thick humerus (upper arm bone), a disproportionally short radius and ulna (forearm bone where secondary feathers attach), and disproportionally long wrist and finger bones (the hand, where primary feathers attach). Swifts are all hand and almost no forearm, and thus swifts manage both lift and power by continuously beating their large primary feathers, with little lift added by the few short secondaries compressed together on the forearm. The stubby but strong humerus is heavily muscled and attaches to tendons of the massive pectoral muscles on the heavily keeled sternum that keep the wings beating.

Swifts sometimes glide, and when they do it is often for display and is of brief duration. Their wings beat with a rapidity that occasionally gives the illusion that the right and left wings are beating alternately rather than synchronously. That impression,

Figure 2. This Chimney Swift flying low over a pond resembles a stealth bomber in shape.

however, is false, as numerous films and photographs have shown that the wings always move in synchrony. The overall impression is of bow and arrow shape with the long sweeping primaries forming the bow and the body—the cigar—forming the arrow. Swallows, in contrast to swifts, have more evenly proportioned wings that allow for a stronger airfoil at low speeds, and they often fly low and almost leisurely compared with swifts.

Another skeletal distinction between swifts and swallows is found at the mandibles, the bony support for the mouth. Swallows have a wide gape, but swifts have a wider gape. The upper and lower mandibles are thin but immense in swifts, allowing for a wide maw that acts as a net to scoop up insects and for collection in an expansive crop.

The aerial lifestyle of swifts means that the vast majority of us birders have never really gotten a close and lingering look at a Chimney Swift. You can go to the beach and study the eyes of Herring Gulls. You can bask in the plumage details of backyard cardinals, catbirds, robins, goldfinches, you name it. But swifts? Be prepared to keep looking up and move your neck constantly as they go streaking by, sometimes in lined formation, most times not. Sure, occasionally they fly low and you get a fair to middling good but always quick view. Thus, the advances in digital bird photography have arguably provided us with the absolute best looks, albeit in two dimensions, we can ever hope to have of a Chimney Swift.

For a group of birds that really has to fly with purpose, continuous flight does not seem to bother swifts one jot. Their motto should be "Flying is us." The Common Swift (*Apus apus*) of Europe and Asia has been shown to remain aloft for up to ten months during its nonbreeding months (Hedenström et al. 2016) as it migrates to and winters in Africa. Chimney Swifts are not such devoted aviators and do take a breather from flight to roost after dark, clustering in a chimney of their choice. This roosting behavior remains consistent during their long migrations to and from northwestern Amazonia, where Chimney Swifts roost in hollow trees as well as chimneys (Steeves et al. 2020). Swift roosts may contain well in excess of a thousand birds, each facing upward, cozily overlapping each other rather like scales on a fish.

Watching swifts come to a roosting chimney is a must for birders. As dusk yields to darkness, the enlarging flock of swifts will converge to circle the roost chimney, almost all swirling in the same direction, some momentarily hovering over the chimney opening and then shooting off to continue among the increasing throngs as more birds join in the ritual. Finally, they will actually enter the chimney, several at a time, wings

up, stalling, and literally dropping into their sooty motel. Within minutes, only a few are still coursing over the chimney, and soon they will enter too.

The uniqueness of Chimney Swifts hardly ends with their prowess in the air. Their reproduction cycle is also amazing but must be the subject of a future article. For those who are interested, you could not do better than to consult two books by Julie Zickefoose (2012, 2016).

Chimney Swifts are in decline in many places, including Massachusetts. Some of their problems may have to do with real estate. Fewer dwellings are built with traditional chimneys, and more chimneys are capped in existing buildings, preventing swifts from entering. Only one pair of swifts breeds per chimney. The breeding pair often tolerates roosting swifts, but only one active nest exists. Some studies, however, suggest that in many places chimney number is not the limiting factor (Steeves et al. 2020). Perhaps more important is the ongoing decline of aerial insects. And, along with so many other bird species, Chimney Swifts are all too often victims of window collisions (Watts and Levenson 2019), as well as other mortality factors, including the occasional hurricane (Dionne et al. 2008) they encounter as they migrate.

I close by offering a personal shout-out to those Chimney Swifts who nested in the chimneys at Wheaton College during the decades when I was on the faculty. Our May graduation was held outdoors, usually on a hot Saturday morning, sun blazing on us faculty members draped in our medieval heat-absorbing academic regalia. As the hours-long ceremony slowly proceeded, speech after speech followed by the methodical reading of the names of several hundred graduates, it was a relief, indeed a joy, just to look up and see and hear a dozen or so flying cigars continuously circling and chasing one another overhead.

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TRICKY BIRDS

Winter Geese

Sebastian Jones

Figure 1. Left to right: Cackling and Canada Goose. Photograph by Sebastian Jones.

For the inaugural edition of this semiregular column, we will be tackling a staple of winter birding in Massachusetts, the separation of pairs of tricky geese: Canada (*Branta canadensis*) versus Cackling (*Branta hutchinsii*), Snow (*Anser caerulescens*) versus Ross's (*Anser rossii*), and Greater White-fronted (*Anser albifrons*) versus Pink-footed (*Anser brachyrhynchus*).

What follows is one way to go about identifying these birds. It is one of the most useful methods and one potentially least likely to result in error. When faced with a golf course or agricultural field littered with hundreds of mostly Canada Geese, there are some helpful ways to winnow out the pool of possible candidates, even when a single trait may be insufficient to ultimately make a positive identification.

A good way is to start with size, because generally most unusual and sought-after geese tend to be smaller than our more common species. Looking for noticeably smaller birds within a large flock is a great way to figure out which ones may require careful attention. Additionally, since Canada Geese are usually the dominant species in the flock you are examining, differences in leg color or birds with patches of white or chocolate brown plumage are worthy of additional attention.

Seldom can any of these features by themselves seal an identification. In many cases, size is misleading because birders' notions of relative size often differ, and the geese themselves can be extremely variable. Canada Geese can show distinct

differences in size based on which geographic breeding population they hail from. Domestic and hybrid geese can also exhibit odd plumage patterns or leg color. Individual geese can show aberrant plumage patterns, as can oiled birds. In other words, a goose that seems different is not necessarily something unusual—despite how exciting it may be to see. Keep in mind that many domestic and escaped geese tend to be larger than superficially similar species. For example, many birders regularly get tripped up by gargantuan "Snow Geese" that reside along the Charles River between Boston and Cambridge; they are, in fact, domestic geese that in some ways resemble their wild cousins.

These caveats bring us to what I believe is the best way to evaluate your interesting candidates and emerge with a solid identification—always focus on the neck, head, and bill of the suspect goose.

Canada Goose (CANG) versus Cackling Goose (CACG)

Figure 2. Canada Geese. Photograph by Sebastian Jones.

Figure 3. Cackling Goose. Photograph by Sebastian Jones.

Canada Goose versus Cackling Goose is possibly the most difficult of the tricky goose combinations, not because Cackling Geese are necessarily the rarest, but because Canada Geese are extremely variable in size. Also, the subspecies of Cackling Goose most frequently seen in Massachusetts, formerly called Richardson's Goose (*Branta hutchinsii hutchinsii*), was historically considered a Canada Goose subspecies. These birds can be remarkably similar to Canada Geese, especially where "Lesser" Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis parvipes*) and Cackling Geese are found together. In general, Cackling Geese will stick out in a flock of Canada Geese because they are small. Sometimes they will be obvious, as in Figure 1. Other times it will not be as clear-cut, and with many more small Canada Geese around than Cackling Geese, overall size of the bird is often not a reliable method for identification. If you cannot make out other field marks, it may make sense to call the bird a Cackling/Canada Goose or goose sp. (in eBird lingo) and move on.

If you can get close enough to the goose in question or get an adequate scope view, you can proceed. Look closely at the birds in Figures 2 and 3. Both are small, so it makes sense to examine them carefully. Only one—the bird in Figure 3—is a Cackling Goose. Look closely at the bird's head in Figure 3 and you can see three key features: an overall "smushed-face" look, a stubby, triangular bill, and a short neck. The bill is both short and proportionally small compared with the head. You will want to confirm the presence of all three of these traits in a bird before calling it a Cackling Goose. The bird in Figure 2 is petite and the neck is relatively short, but the bill is a little too long for a Cackling Goose and the overall look of the head does not seem smushed as much. It appears smaller but proportionally similar to a larger Canada Goose. The bird in Figure 2 is, indeed, a relatively small Canada Goose.

Always approach bird identification with caution. Sometimes you will encounter birds that are just plain confusing. Take photographs if you can. Even images taken while holding your smartphone up to your binoculars can be useful to potentially make an identification down the road. In some cases, however, you might have to write off birds as impossible to sort out in the field, especially when faced with challenging observation conditions. David Allen Sibley has described this conundrum on his website and calls these in-between birds "Cackling-ish Geese," raising the possibility that some especially ambiguous birds may be hybrids or backcrosses (Sibley 2014). Ultimately, by staying focused on the neck, head, and bill of a small Canada Goose, you should be able to identify the vast majority of such geese correctly.

Snow Goose (SNGO) versus Ross's Goose (ROGO)

For most Massachusetts birders, finding either of these species is a pleasant surprise, though Ross's is likely to be the more exciting of the two and is listed as a review species by the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (MARC). By following a similar approach for distinguishing between Canada and Cackling Geese, you can also confidently identify most white geese in the field.

When you scan through a large flock of Canada Geese, either of these look-alike species should jump out immediately in terms of their size and plumage. They are our only mostly white geese—although both have dark morphs that are generally rare or uncommon in Massachusetts and neighboring states—and both, especially Ross's Geese, are smaller than Canada Geese. Once you have located a smaller, mostly white goose with black primaries, shift your focus to the neck, head, and bill.

The bird in Figure 4 is a Snow Goose. Both the head and bill are longer than those of a Ross's Goose, and the bill shows a grin patch— a noticeable gap between the upper and lower mandibles. Often Snow Geese will show some rusty or yellowish tones on their heads because they forage in marshes with a lot of iron in the water. Figure 5 is a Ross's Goose. Look for a "smushed-face" appearance with a small, more rounded head, much like the face of a Cackling Goose. The bill has no gap between mandibles, is small and triangular, and at close range often has small bumpy caruncles at the base. The bill is also proportionally shorter relative to the head. Snow Geese generally have a pinkish orange bill color; Ross's Geese have a bluish hue to the pink of their bills, often most obvious at the base.

A caveat to identifying white geese is the frequency with which they hybridize. Distinguishing hybrids, particularly Ross's Goose-sized hybrids, can be difficult, and in some cases impossible. The most critical features to note are the shape and size of the bill and the relative degree of curvature of the interface between the white facial feathering and the pinkish base to the bill. In hybrid Ross's Geese, this interface area is typically concave, not straight. Because of the difficulty in determining this feature accurately, such geese are often best considered possible or probable rather than confirmed genetic hybrids.

Greater White-fronted Goose (GWFG) versus Pink-footed Goose (PFGO)

Finally, consider our two mostly chocolate brown rare geese. Like Snow and Ross's geese, these are exciting to find, with Pink-footed Goose the significantly rarer of the two species. Once a bona fide vagrant species in the United States, Pink-footed Geese are becoming practically regular winter visitors in New England and neighboring states. They are definitely worth watching out for. A couple of useful field marks are leg color and tail pattern. As the name suggests, Pink-footed Goose has pink feet and legs that markedly contrast with the orange legs and feet of Greater White-fronted Goose. Additionally, Pink-footed Goose has a mostly white tail in contrast to the Greater White-fronted Goose's dark tail with only white tips to the tail feathers.

Figure 4. Snow Goose. Photograph by Sebastian Jones.

Figure 5. Ross's Goose. Photograph by Marshall Iliff.

Figure 6. Adult Greater White-fronted Goose. Photograph by Sebastian Jones.

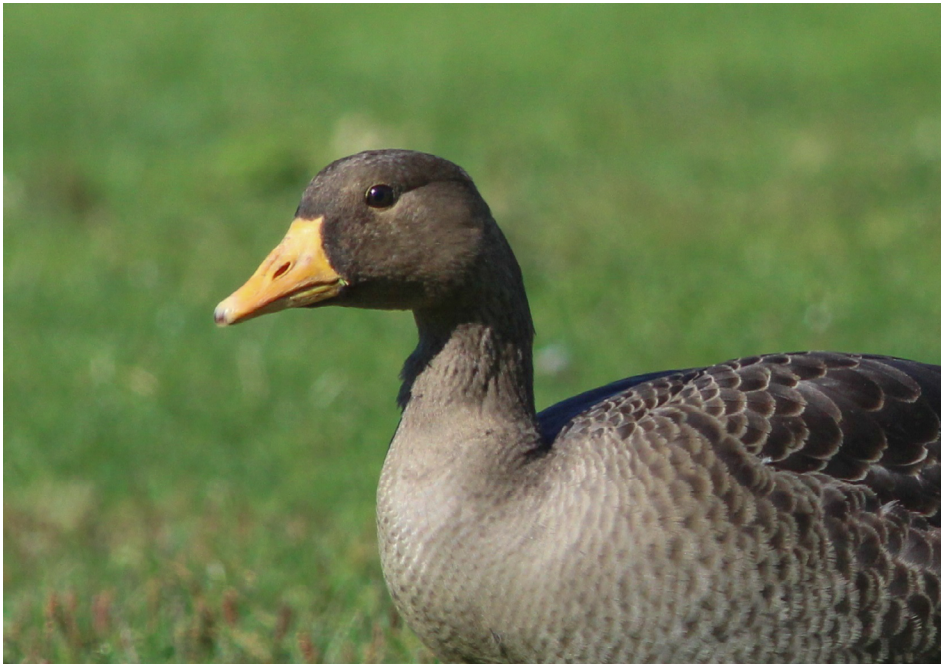

Figure 7. Juvenile Greater White-fronted Goose. Photograph by Lily Morello.

Figure 8. Pink-footed Goose. Photograph by Sebastian Jones.

As with the other geese pairings, the best method for ruling out Pink-footed Geese is to look at the subject bird's neck, head, and bill. Easiest to identify are adult Greater White-fronted Geese (see Figure 6), which sport a white facial patch that can immediately rule out Pink-footed Goose**.** However, if faced with a juvenile Greater White-fronted Goose (see Figure 7), things sometimes become a little trickier. The juvenile's bill can vary in color between orange and lighter shades of yellow to orange. In contrast, Figure 8 shows a Pink-footed Goose. In this species, the bill tends to be small and stubby, with some color combination of dark and pink, with dark usually at the base, pink at the tip, and some variability in between. The head and neck are notably darker when compared with the back and breast, and the bird generally looks smaller-headed and smaller-billed than Greater White-fronted adults or juveniles. Although there is variability in the precise color of the bill and the extent of black belly markings in Greater White-fronted Geese depending upon the subspecies involved, the features listed above should remove any difficulty in distinguishing Greater White-fronted Geese from Pink-footed Geese.

Tundra Bean-Goose

Finally, it seems prudent to mention one additional species: Tundra Bean-Goose (*Anser serrirostris*). As of this writing, this species has not been documented in Massachusetts or New England, but in the winters of 2021 and 2022 it has appeared in New York—not far from Western Massachusetts—Pennsylvania, and Quebec. It seems almost inevitable that one will arrive in Massachusetts at some point, so it makes sense for birders to be on the lookout, especially when scrutinizing Pink-footed or juvenile Greater White-fronted geese, which bear a superficial resemblance to this variable species.

Figure 9. Tundra Bean-Goose. Photograph by Pedro Nicolau.

Unlike the other unusual geese discussed in this article, this is a chunky bird closer in size to a Canada Goose. As can be seen in Figure 9, the Tundra Bean-Goose sports a big head and a large bill that combines orange and black in a similar fashion to how Pink-footed Geese have variable black and pink bills. Like Snow Geese, Bean-Geese also have a grin patch, a feature you would not expect to see on either a Greater White-fronted or a Pink-footed goose. Be aware, however, of the domestic Graylag Goose (*Anser anser*), which—like the Tundra Bean-Goose—is similarly chunky and large but has a completely orange bill and a paler head. The juvenile Greater White-fronted Goose (Figure 7) also sports a completely orange bill and is smaller than Graylag and Tundra-Bean geese.

For all these species—and others not covered in this article, such as Barnacle Goose and Graylag Goose—checking your local athletic and agricultural fields, golf courses, reservoirs, and ponds from late fall through winter may occasionally generate some exciting discoveries. Taking your time to sift through large flocks of Canada Geese and keeping focused on the appropriate field marks can help ensure that you correctly identify the geese you find.

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ABOUT BOOKS

A Pelagic Audubon

Mark Lynch

> ***Audubon at Sea: The Coastal and Transatlantic Adventures of John James Audubon***. Edited by Christoph Irmscher and Richard J. King. 2022. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.
>
> "*Audubon At Sea* shows us an Audubon who is truly at sea, physically and emotionally." (p. 313)

When we think about the world-renowned bird artist John James Audubon, we likely conjure up an image of a pioneering ornithologist of America with rifle, paint, and paper, bushwhacking it through humid forests and swamps, procuring specimens for his watercolors that would later become the elephant folio sized prints in his *The Birds of America*. Most of us would not envision Audubon also on the deck of a ship, riding out a storm, seasick as all hell. But that image of Audubon is precisely what Irmscher and King present to the reader in *Audubon at Sea.*

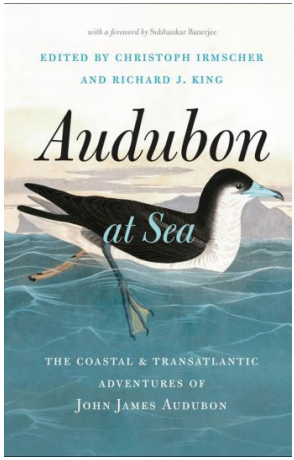
> In the popular imagination, Audubon's art and science are shaped by landbirds, not waterbirds. *The Birds of America* begins with the American turkey, a bird made part of his personal seal. (p. 13)

The editors and authors of *Audubon at Sea*, by carefully editing and selecting certain materials, create a more complex image of the bird artist. This book will likely change forever how you think about John James Audubon. Recall how you felt on your first pelagic bird trip with the vast expanse of rolling sea and sky. Birds just didn't fly to the next bush or tree—at sea they could easily disappear over the distant horizon. The sea can be a very unforgiving habitat in which to study birds, as Audubon learned.

> In this volume we are asking the reader to imagine this different kind of Audubon, one challenged, on a deeply existential level, by an environment where he couldn't rely on the instincts that normally made him such an effective observer and hunter of birds. (p. 14)

Christoph Irmscher directs the Wells Scholars Program at Indiana State University, where he is also distinguished professor of English. Richard J. King is a visiting associate professor of maritime literature and history at the Sea Education Association in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. Both of them are scholars of Audubon's writings. Together they have edited sections of Audubon's *Ornithological Biography* that were written when Audubon was aboard a ship or describing seabirds or shorebirds. Irmscher and King also have written extensive introductions to Audubon's text as well as important footnotes for each section. Audubon's *Ornithological Biography* comprises written accounts of the birds featured in the collection of plates that is *The Birds of America*. These written species accounts feature Audubon's detailed observations of how each bird lived, bred, flew, and migrated, as well as details of the places he visited

and the people he met. Though many people are familiar with Robert Havell Jr.'s prints of Audubon's art, few people have read these written accounts.



In *Audubon at Sea*, these excerpts from the *Ornithological Biography* are divided into geographical areas: "Southern Waters" (p. 86–167), "Mid Atlantic Waters" (p. 168–87), "Western Waters" (p.188–93); and finally, "New England and Atlantic Canada" (p. 194–266). The "Western Waters" section is by far the shortest section because Audubon never made it to the Pacific, and his descriptions of species like "Dusky Albatross" (perhaps Sooty Albatross) are based on accounts or specimens sent to him.

The species described in this midsection of *Audubon at Sea* include Black Skimmer, the "Frigate Pelican" (Magnificent Frigatebird), Sooty Tern, American Oystercatcher, "Little Auk" (Dovekie), Gannet, "Foolish Guillemot" (Common Murre), "Wandering Shearwater" (Great Shearwater), "Razor-billed Auk" (Razorbill), and many others. *Audubon at Sea* also includes color plates from *Birds of America* that feature these species.

If you have never read Audubon's writings, his evocative texts will be a revelation. For instance, he loved to watch birds fly and described a species flight in excited details:

> The flight of the Black Skimmer is perhaps more elegant than that of any waterbirds with which I am acquainted. The great length of its narrow wings, its partially elongated forked tail, its thin body and extremely compressed bill, all appear contrived to assure it that buoyancy of motion which one cannot but admire when he sees it on the wing. It is able to maintain itself against the heaviest gale; and I believe no instance has been recorded of any bird of this species having been forced inland by the most violent storm. (p. 126)

> The flight of the American-Oystercatcher is powerful, swift, elegant at times, and greatly protracted. While they were on the wing, their beauties are as effectively displayed as those of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker of our woods, the colours of which are somewhat similar. (p. 170)

All together, these biographies in *Audubon at Sea* capture an Audubon we are unfamiliar with—a field ornithologist used to shooting birds in a forest, taken aback by the vast flocks of birds along the shore or on breeding islands.

Many of the biographies of seabirds evoke the vastness of the regions they inhabit, the immense, shimmering canvas of the water and wide canopy of the sky, traversed effortlessly by birds who are out of human reach. "How beautifully they performed their broad gyrations;" writes Audubon about thousands of white pelicans he sees flying past him at the entrance of the St. Johns River, "and how matchless, after a while, was

the marshalling of their files, as they flew past us." (p. 17)

It was not just birds he wrote about. Audubon noted the mesmerizing color changes that passed over the body of a dorado brought aboard the deck of the ship:

> It was a magnificent creature. See how it quivers in the agonies of death! Its tail flaps the hard deck, producing a sound like the rapid roll of a drum. How beautiful the changes of its colours. Now it is blue, now green, silvery, golden, and burnished copper; but alack! It is dead, and the play of its colours is no longer seen. (p. 89)

Besides these lengthy sections, Irmscher and King have also included large excerpts from two of Audubon's journals that were originally not meant for publication.

The *Journal of a Sea Voyage from New Orleans to Liverpool aboard the Delos* (p. 32–75) was written in 1826. Audubon had been working on his watercolors for two decades, and this trip to England and Scotland would result in his "long partnership with the world's best engraver, Robert Havell Jr. (1793–1878) in London, who became the co-creator of Audubon's *The Birds of America*" (p. 12). This journal is in the collection of the Field Museum in Chicago. The trip aboard the brig Delos took 64 days at sea, and that is why his journal often finds Audubon bored or grumpy or both. Furthermore, he "never overcame his fear of travel on the high seas." (p. 11) Audubon occupied his time drawing and noting bird species like petrels and noddies. Included in this section of *Audubon at Sea* are several of his evocative drawings of sailors working or just hanging out. He also drew a number of the species of fish caught on the trip.

Irmscher and King decided to include all of Audubon's weird punctuation, spelling, and inconsistent capitalization that is found in this journal. For example: "-the weather was Thick foggy and as Dull as myself, Not a sound of rejoicing did reach my ear, Not once did I hear the sublime 'Hail Columbia happy Land' No Nothing." (p. 54)

The second journal excerpted for *Audubon at Sea* is *The Journal of a Collecting Voyage from Eastport to Labrador aboard the Ripley* in 1833 (p. 267–308). The original journal is lost, but long sections of the journal were copied by his wife Lucy Audubon in her book *The Life of John James Audubon the Naturalist* (New York: G.P. Putnam and Sons 1869). This voyage found the artist traveling north to the great colonies of alcids, cormorants, and gannets. He was much older by then and feeling his age—the cold, wind, and seemingly endless foul weather bothered him and hindered his drawing. Grimly prescient is Audubon's encounter with the now extinct Eskimo Curlew. While in Labrador he shot seven "Esquimaux" Curlew but found he could not draw them properly, so the image of this species in Audubon's book is the only one shown dead, "a dead bird that's not another bird's meal but simply dead." (p. 21)

This journal account is also a grim voyage for readers because of the wanton destruction of birds and animals that Audubon witnessed. "Humans, in Audubon's Labrador essays are no longer observers but active participants in the destruction of avian lives." (p. 25)

When reading *Audubon at Sea*, one finds that in addition to all of Audubon's wonderfully detailed descriptions of life along the coasts of North America, a far darker

reality emerges. Throughout his travels he comes across people whose impact on the wildlife is nothing short of devastating, bordering on ecocide. These people include eggers, turtlers, raiders of bird colonies, fishermen, and sealers. The sheer numbers of creatures killed by these people as captured in Audubon's writings is jaw dropping. One example:

> At bird key we found a party of Spanish Eggers from Havannah. They had already laid in a cargo of about eight tons of this Tern and the Noddy. On asking them how many they supposed they had, they answered that they never counted them, even while selling them, but disposed of them at seventy-five cents per gallon. (p. 147)

Things are no better in the northern regions he visits. In Labrador he comes across a hellish sight: a stinking pile of 1500 seal carcasses, rotting on the shore, being torn apart by dogs. To the sealers this was a good day's work. At times it seems that no matter where he travels, Audubon comes across examples of humanity wreaking havoc on the birds and animals of that area. You realize that there used to be flocks of thousands of breeding birds in a number of places, thousands of seals, dense schools of fish. Bird and animal life was abundant along the coasts of North America before the coming of the Europeans. Reading Audubon's accounts, you learn how quickly this natural world was violently wasted and mourn for the loss of what used to be here. But the most disturbing aspect of Audubon's texts is that the reader comes to realize that Audubon was very much a part of this raping of the wild.

As Irmscher and King note: "To Audubon, the fishermen who killed thousands of guillemots in a day, plucking their feathers and throwing the bodies into the sea (July 23), must have seemed a monstrous caricature of himself and his pursuits." (p. 268–69) Audubon shot many hundreds of birds in a day, much more than he needed to procure specimens. And these examples of mass slaughter are exciting to him. Here are a few examples from his Labrador journal:

> The discharging of their guns produced no other effect than to cause the birds killed or severely wounded to fall into the water, for the cries of the countless multitudes drowned every other noise. The party had their clothes smeared with the nauseous excrements of hundreds of gannets and other birds, which in shooting off from their nests caused numerous eggs to fall, of which some were procured entire. The confusion on and around the rock was represented as baffling all descriptions; and as we gazed on the mass now gradually fading on our sight, we all judged it well worth the while to cross the ocean to see such a sight. (p. 202)

> One place, in particular, was full of birds; it was a horizontal fissure, about two feet in height, and thirty or forty yards in depth. We crawled slowly into it, and as the birds affrightened flew hurriedly past us by hundreds, many eggs were smashed. The farther we advanced, the more dismal cries of the birds sound in our ears. Many of them, despairing of effecting their escape, crept into surrounding recesses. Having collected as many of them and their eggs as we could, we returned, and glad were we once more to breathe

> fresh air. No sooner were we out than the cracks of the sailors' guns echoed among the rocks. Rare fun to the tars, in fact, was every such trip, and, when we joined them, they had a pile of Auks on the rocks near them. The birds flew directly towards the muzzles of the guns, as readily as in any other course, and therefore it needed little dexterity to shoot them. (p. 242)

In Labrador particularly, the slaughter of birds seemed never ending. As Irmscher and King note:

> Thus, we see them stumbling through a landscape littered with the smelly carcasses of birds, many of them not killed by poachers, but by his own party. Audubon's lyrical landscape descriptions become mere bookends to ornithological kill-fests, rendered in often excruciating detail. (p. 19)

The reader realizes, as Irmscher and King note: "No amount of contextualizing will allow us to airbrush Audubon into the St. Francis of the animal world." (p. 310) At least during his Labrador trip, it seemed he began to realize what was happening. While talking about the disappearance of the indigenous people of an area, he notes:

> I replied, I think not, they are disappearing here from insufficiency of food and physical comforts, and the loss of all hope, as he loses sight of all that was abundant before the white man came, intruded on his land, and his herds of wild animals, and deprived him of the furs with which he clothed himself. Nature herself is perishing. (p. 290–91)

Yet despite writing that, in what seems like an extreme example of cognitive dissonance, Audubon continues his mass harvesting of specimens. What was he thinking? Irmscher and King wonder too. "If he was genuinely concerned about nature perishing, why then did he represent himself, on so many occasions, as contributing to the problem?" (p. 310)

But this killing is by no means the only serious problem that Audubon presents the modern reader. "Confronting Audubon's complicity in white supremacy is essential, a prerequisite for diversifying a field still dominated by white naturalists." (p. 313)

The person we know today as John James Audubon was born "Jean Rabin" in Saint-Dominique, what is now known as Haiti. At the time of his birth, Saint-Dominique was "the greatest individual market for the European slave trade, a place of incomprehensible brutality." (p. 9) His father, Capitaine Jean Audubon, participated in the "business of selling and buying human beings." (p. 9) His family owned slaves, and Audubon as an adult owned slaves. When the slaves in Haiti began to revolt, Jean Rabin was sent to live with his sisters in Nantes, France, and later returned to America. As an adult, he would lie about his birthplace.

Throughout his writings, he maintained racist ideas about black Americans and indigenous people. Read his own writings in *Audubon at Sea* to get a sense of this bigotry. Irmscher and King confront this issue head on and present the facts. There is no avoiding the evidence about Audubon and John Muir, who also held racist and demeaning ideas about blacks and indigenous people, and it is time we look again and re-evaluate how we write about and reconsider these figures of American conservation

and natural history. It is time to start a conversation about whether "Audubon" is an appropriate name for any conservation organization. In some parts of the country, this conversation has already begun:

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/27/us/seattle-audubon-society-name-change-reaj/index.html>

Apologists will harp that Audubon was simply a man of his time, a time when people owned slaves and shot thousands of birds. But as Irmscher and King quote Drew Lanham from his piece *in Audubon Magazine:*

> Sure enough, Muir and Audubon were "men of their time," as the usual exculpatory narrative goes, but they failed to be "men ahead of their time." (p. 313)

It is those men and women who were "ahead of their time" that we should hold in high esteem and name organizations after. *Audubon at Sea* is an outstanding contribution to the vast literature about John James Audubon because it presents his own voice. The two long sections from his private journals are a revelation to read and will be new for most readers. Irmscher and King's introductions and footnotes add the needed commentary to Audubon's writing. This book will forever change the way you think about the legendary artist/naturalist. Perhaps the best you can say about Audubon is only this:

> As an artist, he sought to preserve birds for eternity; as a naturalist, he hunted them, killed them (by the barrelful), and often ate them too. (p. 2)

To listen to my interview with Christoph Irmscher and Richard J. King, go to:

<https://www.wicn.org/podcast/christoph-irmscher-richard-j-king/>

Corrigendum: *Birds of Maine*

The "About Books: Four Short Reviews of Four Large Books" column in *Bird Observer* 50(4): 354-9, neglected to note that the Nuttall Ornithological Club (nuttallclub.org) copublished *Birds of Maine* by Peter Vickery, et al. with Princeton University Press. Peter was a valued member of the Nuttall from 1984 until his death in 2017, and the club invested heavily in the development and publication of this culmination of his years of devotion to the birdlife and records of Maine. *Bird Observer* regrets the omission.

BIRD SIGHTINGS

July–August 2022

Neil Hayward and Robert H. Stymeist

Weather

July 2022 was one of Boston's hottest and driest on record. The average temperature for the month was 77.5 degrees, which tied the record for the third-hottest July since 1872. Our summers are getting hotter consistent with climate change; the hottest July on record was in 2019. There were nine days during the month with temperatures reaching 90 degrees or higher, including seven straight days from July 19 to 25. Boston reached 100 degrees on Sunday July 24 for the first time since June 30, 2021. There were 11 days of precipitation during the month that totaled a meager 0.62 inch in Boston. The average July precipitation for Boston is 3.27 inches.

The heat and lack of rain continued into August. Boston experienced 11 days with temperatures of 90 degrees or higher, tying a record for the number of such days for the month. The high for August was 98 degrees, which was reached on four days during the month, including three consecutive days from August 7 to 9. There were 12 days with rainfall producing a total of 1.47 inches. The average precipitation for Boston in August is 3.23 inches. Precipitation for the year to date is only 17.93 inches, which is 10.1 inches below normal.

R. Stymeist

GEESE THROUGH IBISES

The summer was a quiet time for waterfowl in Massachusetts, with a few winter lingerers. A male Harlequin Duck, reported at Rockport until July 30, was the only July eBird record for Essex County. It was also the only Harlequin Duck spotted on the East Coast of the United States this July. A male **King Eider** at Nauset Beach on July 6 was the first Barnstable County record for this species in July and only the fifth July record for the state this century. Blue-winged Teal were recorded in 11 counties—a period high for eBird—including the first June record for Nantucket. Pied-billed Grebes appear to have bred at Stockbridge. In 2021, young were spotted at nearby Lenox and Richmond. The species is listed as endangered by the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA).

A **White-winged Dove** was photographed in Eastham on July 14. The species is almost annual to the state, with most records coming from Cape Cod between May and October.

A count of 1,804 Common Nighthawks in Northampton on August 24 is the fourth-highest count this century (see Figure 1).

A **King Rail** was heard calling in Newbury in July. Essex County is the most reliable county for this species, with records from 11 years this century—compared to 7 and 6 years for Middlesex and Barnstable counties, respectively.

A pair of **Common Gallinules** nested in Richmond, Berkshire County, producing four young. An intriguing flock of up to seven immature gallinules spent 13 days at Raymond Reservation in Sudbury, and an adult gallinule in Walpole is the only eBird period record for Norfolk County. A count of six American Coots on Monomoy on August 10 is the highest period count per eBird since 1977.

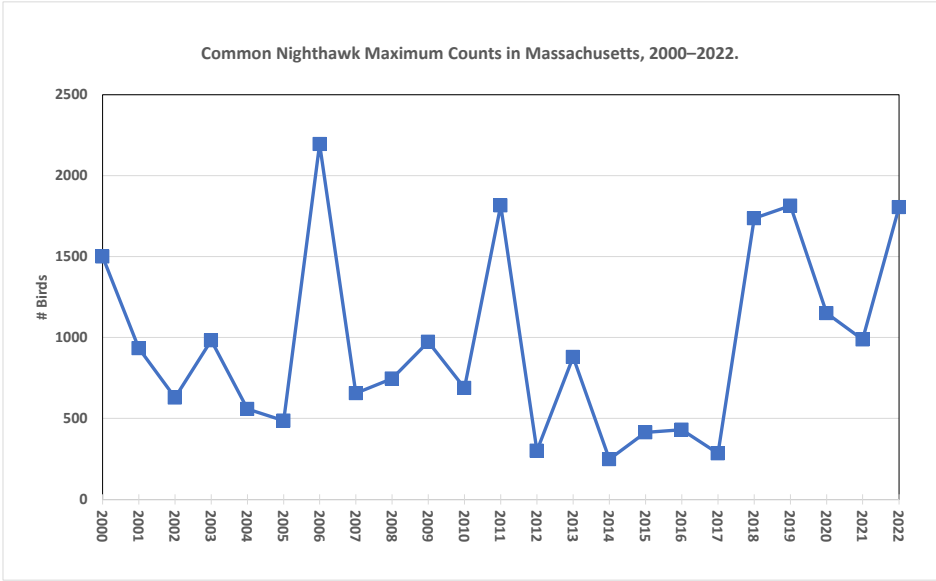


Figure 1. Maximum counts of Common Nighthawks in Massachusetts between 2000 and 2022. Data from eBird.org.

Sandhill Cranes continue their population expansion in the state, with breeding confirmed this year in at least four locations.

An **American Avocet** spent most of the period at Plum Island. Single **Black-necked Stilts** were reported from Nantucket and Duxbury Beach—the latter only the third record for Plymouth County this century. A count of 21 Pectoral Sandpipers on Muskeget Island is a new high count for the period for Nantucket County, beating the previous high of nine. A Stilt Sandpiper, seen on a boat tour of Quabbin Reservoir on August 22, is the first August record for Worcester County since 1974. A single Red Knot reported from Quincy on July 25 is the first July record for eBird for Norfolk County, and only the seventh record for the county this century.

The first **Little Gull** of the year—a "ratty" first summer bird—was seen from Race Point, Provincetown, on July 10. This is the latest arrival date this century—a record previously held by Plum Island on June 3, 2012. In most years, the species is recorded by March. A **Franklin's Gull** at Longmeadow is the second record for Hampden County. The first record—also from Longmeadow—was on September 22, 1986.

A conservative count of 3,091 Roseate Terns in Edgartown on August 8 is the highest single count for the state this century and the fourth highest eBird count ever for the state. The record count was also on August 8—in 1997—with 4,500 Roseate Terns on Monomoy. This continues to be a good year for **Sandwich Terns**, with records this period coming from Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard, adding to the June record from Gooseberry Neck.

Pacific Loons no longer raise eyebrows in Massachusetts the way they once did. Indeed, for much of the year you have a reasonable chance to spot one of these Arctic nesters at Race Point, although summer records are still rare. Birds photographed at Race Point and North Truro this July are the first July records since 2017.

The bird of the period—a **Cape Verde Shearwater**—was observed and photographed by five lucky birders from a boat off Chatham on August 12. It was first picked out from a flock of

shearwaters by Jeremiah Trimble, who noted:

> small size (similar to Great), dark-headed appearance, and thin dusky bill—quite different from other *Calonectris* taxa (Cory's/Scopoli's). Took off and flew right in front of boat, showing same characteristics in flight as well dark underside of primaries, long thin wings, long tail, and flight style more similar to Great Shearwater: snappier wingbeats and less ponderous flight than Cory's.

If accepted, this would represent the first record for Massachusetts and the second record for North America—the first coming from a pelagic trip off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, on August 15, 2004 (Patteson and Armistead 2004). There are also two records from the Lesser Antilles in April and October. Cape Verde Shearwaters were originally described in 1883, then later lumped with the very similar but slightly larger Cory's Shearwater before being split again more recently. The species is an endemic breeder to its namesake islands off the coast of West Africa, dispersing in the boreal winter to the South Atlantic. Pelagic trips off the coast of Mar del Plata in Argentina occasionally log this taxon. For more on this incredible first record for Massachusetts, please read the article in the October issue of this publication (Trimble et al. 2022).

The Brookline Bird Club (BBC) ran two successful back-to-back overnight pelagic trips to the continental shelf on August 27–28 and August 29–30. The star of the show was the **White-faced Storm-Petrel**—an attractive southern storm-petrel (family *Oceanitidae*) that pogo-sticks on the surface of the water like a tiny kangaroo. A count of 589 White-faced Storm-Petrels on August 27 is unprecedented in United States waters. In just a single hour from 4:00 to 5:00 pm along a nine-mile track, BBC pelagic spotters logged 425 birds. Participants were rewarded with sightings each day on both trips, with an astonishing minimum daily count of 42. The previous highest day count was 17 birds on August 29, 2010—also on a trip run by the BBC. The species has been recorded from coastal waters in every Atlantic state from North Carolina to Massachusetts, with the lion's share coming from the latter. There are also records in Canadian waters off Nova Scotia.

Band-rumped Storm-Petrels and **Audubon's Shearwaters** are both expected in the warm waters of the Gulf Stream at this time of year. Both species were observed each day by the BBC participants, with highs of 15 Band-rumpeds on August 29 and 29 Audubon's on August 27. A **Black-capped Petrel**, spotted on August 28, is rare not only for Massachusetts—recorded now for the tenth year this century—but also globally. Rated by BirdLife International as endangered, the population of this charismatic seabird is estimated to be about 5,000 birds and in decline. The species breeds on steep forested cliffs. Habitat loss, introduced predators, and human predation have reduced its historical distribution throughout the West Indies to a handful of nesting sites on Hispaniola and Dominica. While largely silent at sea, the bird does not hold back during courtship, when its eerie nocturnal calls have earned the species the local nickname *diablotín*—Spanish for "little devil."

The BBC pelagic trips also recorded the nominate subspecies of Cory's Shearwater—*Calonectris diomedea diomedea,* more commonly known as **Scopoli's Shearwater**. This is a likely future split from the *C. d. borealis* subspecies regularly encountered by birders on the East Coast. Indeed, some taxonomic authorities, including the IOC, have already split Cory's and Scopoli's shearwaters into separate species based on distribution and morphological differences. Scopoli's breed in the Mediterranean, whereas *borealis* breed in the eastern Atlantic. The extent of white in the underside primaries can be used to separate the two taxa (Sutherland 2022).

An immature **Brown Booby** was spotted on Stellwagen Bank on the last day of August. Records of this species in the state have increased significantly over the past decade, and birds

have been seen annually since 2017, with most records falling between July and September. **Brown Pelicans** were recorded from Barnstable, Nantucket, and Plymouth counties this period—although most, if not all, could be the same immature bird. These are the only records north of Long Island this period.

A remarkable count of 44 Little Blue Herons at Niles Pond in Gloucester on August 20 is the second-highest eBird count for the state, eclipsed only by 48 birds seen at Kettle Island on June 24, 2001. The very low water levels at Niles Pond created an ideal habitat of lily pads, from which the herons were observed catching frogs. This year saw another incursion of young **White Ibises** into the Northeast, starting in August. Wells, Maine, hosted at least 30 birds. In Massachusetts, ibises were reported from Essex, Middlesex, and Plymouth counties as well as the first record for Norfolk County.

N. Hayward

Brant
- 7/7-8/26 Wellfleet 1 v.o.
- 7/29 Pittsfield (Pont.) 1 M. Kelly

Mute Swan
- 8/16 Acoaxet 160 J.+M. Eckerson

Wood Duck
- 8/10 Petersham 92 M. Lynch#
- 8/22 Burrage Pd WMA 335 J. Sweeney
- 8/28 Longmeadow 476 M. Moore

Blue-winged Teal
- 7/20 Nantucket 6 S. Kardell
- 8/18 Monomoy NWR 7 J. Junda#
- 8/24 Turners Falls 7 max S. Surner + v.o.
- 8/24 Sharon 4 W. Sweet
- 8/29 Longmeadow 3 M. Moore
- 8/31 Quaboag IBA 4 M. Lynch#

Northern Shoveler
- 7/26 Nantucket 5 S. Kardell
- 8/24 PI 4 M. Price
- 8/27 Monomoy NWR 10 M. Ondo#

Gadwall
- 7/1-7/12 PI 41 max R. Heil + v.o.
- 7/8 Nantucket 32 S. Kardell
- 8/18 Monomoy NWR 114 J. Junda#

American Wigeon
- 7/4-7/11 PI 5 max D. Prima + v.o.
- 8/13 Sudbury 1 ph J. Skinner# + v.o.

Northern Pintail
- 7/10 Nantucket 15 S. Kardell
- 8/17 Concord 1 S. Perkins
- 8/27 Monomoy NWR 8 M. Ondo#

Green-winged Teal
- 7/17 PI 14 3ad+11yg G. d'Entremont#
- 7/20-7/30 GMNWR 6 max v.o.
- 8/5-8/29 Lenox 7 max J. Pierce + v.o.
- 8/18-8/29 Longmeadow 6 max M.Moore+v.o.
- 8/21 Muskeget I. 10 S. Kardell
- 8/27 Monomoy NWR 42 J. Junda

Ring-necked Duck
- 7/16 Easton 1 J. Forbes
- 7/16-8/5 Brockton 2 R. Scott + v.o.

King Eider
- 7/6 Orleans 1 m ph P. Kyle

Common Eider
- 7/10 Westport 70 J. Offermann

Harlequin Duck
- 7/3-7/30 Rockport 1 m D. Peterson#

Surf Scoter
- 7/24 Westport (GN) 12 A. Burstein

White-winged Scoter
- 7/7 Westport (GN) 13 P. Coravos

Black Scoter
- 7/1-7/8 Rockport (AP) 2 R. Heil
- 7/8 Westport (GN) 31 C. Molander

Long-tailed Duck
- 7/5 Gloucester H. 1 S. Wong
- 7/9 Westport (GN) 2 C. Ekholm + v.o.
- 7/21 Duxbury B. 1 L. Schibley#

Bufflehead
- 8/29 PI 1 T. Wetmore# + v.o.

Hooded Merganser
- 7/7 Barnstable 1 C. DiPiazza
- 7/15 N. Attleboro 5 Anon.
- 8/2 Sterling 6 V. Burdette
- 8/2 Lexington 1 J. Forbes
- 8/21 Randolph 1 V. Zollo

Common Merganser
- 7/12 P'town (RP) 1 W. Goss
- 8/25 Quabbin Res. 25 B. Robo#

Ruddy Duck
- 8/18 Monomoy NWR 7 J. Junda#

Northern Bobwhite
- 7/2-8/17 Eastham (FH) 1 v.o.
- 7/9 Westport 1 L. Miller-Donnelly
- 7/10 Truro 2 E. Landre

Wild Turkey
- 7/20 Westminster 37 C. Caron
- 8/7 Fairhaven 15 C. Longworth
- 8/31 Quaboag IBA 21 M. Lynch#

Ruffed Grouse
- 7/4 Ware R. IBA 1 M. Lynch#
- 7/15 Petersham 2 M Tillinghast

Pied-billed Grebe
- 7/6-7/23 Stockbridge 3 juv max J.Felton+v.o.
- 7/9-7/20 Richmond 2 ad M. Iliff + v.o.
- 7/27-29,8/15 PI 1,1 T. Wetmore# + v.o.
- 8/3 IRWS 1 S. Santino
- 8/10-8/27 Monomoy NWR 5 max P. Trimble#
- 8/13 Sudbury 2 J Wiley
- 8/17 Brookfield 1 R. Jenkins
- 8/17 Quaboag IBA 1 M. Lynch#
- 8/24 Woburn (HP) 1 T. Sackton

Red-necked Grebe
- 7/31 Gloucester 1 alt J. Keyes
- 8/15 Dennis 1 R. Debenham
- 8/17 Pittsfield (Pont.) 1 J. Pierce + v.o.

White-winged Dove
- 7/14 Eastham (FH) 1 ph J. Santo

Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- 7/3 Freetown 3 N. Marchessault#
- 7/9 Birch Hill WMA 6 E. LeBlanc#
- 8/2 MSSF 2 G. d'Entremont

Black-billed Cuckoo
- 7/3 Freetown 2 B. Vigorito#
- 8/26 Hardwick 1 M. Lynch#

Common Nighthawk
- 8/15-8/30 Northampton 3947 T. Gagnon
- 8/20-8/31 Williamstown 331 A. Werner# + v.o.

Common Nighthawk (continued)
8/21-8/31 Pittsfield 879 T. Tyning#
8/24 Northampton 1804 T. Gagnon
Chuck-will's-widow
7/15 Falmouth 1 au A. Piccolo
Eastern Whip-poor-will
7/1-8/10 Montague 2 max P. Gagarin + v.o.
7/1-8/24 Quabbin (G8) 4 max J. Yanko
7/5 Chappaquiddick 2 S. Fee
8/6 Mount Tom 3 D. Allard
8/10 Lancaster 3 V. Burdette
Chimney Swift
8/25 Freetown 196 G. Chretien#
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
7/1-8/31 Granby 15 max C. Mardeusz
8/25 Westport (GN) 15 J.+M. Eckerson
Clapper Rail
7/1 Fairhaven 8 C. Longworth
7/2-7/3,7/28 PI 1 S. Grinley# + v.o.
7/30 Wellfleet 4 S. Broker#
King Rail
7/1-7/7 Newbury 1 v.o.
Virginia Rail
7/1 Quaboag IBA 7 M. Lynch#
7/1-7/31 PI 3 v.o.
7/1-8/22 Belchertown 6 max L.Therrien+v.o.
7/6-7/26 Lenox 4 max J. Felton + v.o.
7/15 N. Attleboro 2 Anon.
Sora
7/3 Charlton 1 S. Wilson + v.o.
7/5-7/16 Belchertown 1 L. Therrien + v.o.
7/9 Hadley (Fort R.) 1 N. Senner#
7/11 PI 1 T. Wetmore#
7/25 Burrage Pd WMA 1 S. Surette#
8/20 Longmeadow 1 J. Blue
8/22 W. Roxbury (MP) 1 M. Dunham + v.o.
Common Gallinule
7/1-8/19 Richmond 6 n 2ad+4yg M. Iliff + v.o.
8/12-8/24 Sudbury 7 imm max R.Cruz+v.o.
8/14 Monomoy NWR 4 S. Dresser#
8/24 Walpole 1 V. Zollo
American Coot
8/10 Monomoy NWR 6 P. Trimble#
Sandhill Crane
thr Burrage Pd WMA 5 4ad+1yg M. Iliff + v.o.
thr Hardwick 4 W. Howes + v.o.
7/1-8/20 Plainfield 2 1pr S. Griesemer + v.o.
7/1-8/21 New Marlborough 3 1pr+1yg So. Auer + v.o.
7/1-8/23 Worthington 4 1pr+2yg T. Gessing + v.o.
8/16 Plympton 2 D. Furbish
8/21-8/28 E. Bridgewater 4 1pr+2yg M. Shaw
8/26 Mt Wachusett 1 P. Vanderhoof
8/28 New Braintree 2 D. Lusignan
Black-necked Stilt
7/13 Duxbury B. 1 ph M. Murphy
7/20-7/31 Nantucket 1 ph S. Kardell# + v.o.
American Avocet
7/11-8/31 PI 1 ph S. Grinley# + v.o.
American Oystercatcher
7/8 PI 1 S. Babbitt
8/12 Rockport (AP) 1 R. Heil
8/14 Chappaquiddick 19 R. Gold
8/18 New Bedford 9 N. Mealey
Black-bellied Plover
8/1-8/31 PI 62 S. Sullivan + v.o.
8/12 Hadley (Honeypot) 2 L. Therrien
8/24 Barnstable (SN) 800 P. Crosson
8/27 Nbpt 160 G. d'Entremont#
American Golden-Plover
8/10 Quincy 1 K. Rawdon + v.o.
8/22 S. Dartmouth 1 B. King
8/25 Uxbridge 1 Anon.

Killdeer
8/6 Dartmouth 37 A. Novak#
8/15 Mashpee 74 J. Carroll
8/16 Clinton 41 J. Skinner
Semipalmated Plover
7/14-8/31 Longmeadow 13 max T. Gilliland# + v.o.
7/25-8/31 October Mountain 2 max J. Pierce + v.o.
8/1-8/31 PI 865 max R. Heil + v.o.
8/11 Chatham 3800 A. Kneidel
8/12 Scituate 2000 M. Tillinghast#
Piping Plover
7/1-7/16 PI 21 J. Barcus + v.o.
7/12 Quincy 1 M. Pierre-Louis
7/15 Monomoy NWR 42 J. Davidson
7/15 Edgartown 22 W. Looney
7/17 Cohasset 1 V. Zollo
7/22 Nantucket 50 M. Chalfin-Jacobs
7/23 Ellisville 9 BBC (G. d'Entremont)
7/24 S. Dart. (APd) 35 L. Miller-Donnelly
8/1-8/27 Ipswich (CB) 38 I. Pepper + v.o.
Upland Sandpiper
7/1-7/10 Westover AFB 5 max J. Lafley + v.o.
Whimbrel
7/22-7/29 PI 12 T. Wetmore + v.o.
7/26 Plymouth B. 10 J. Garrison
8/4 Chatham 95 A. Kneidel
8/5 BHI (Georges I.) 4 S. Jones
Hudsonian Godwit
8/12 Monomoy NWR 10 F. Atwood#
8/23 Westport 32 J.+M. Eckerson
Marbled Godwit
7/30-8/10 Monomoy NWR 2 J. Davidson + v.o.
8/10 Quincy 1 J. Pollock + K. Rawdon
8/12 PI 1 M Goetschkes# + v.o.
8/23 Tuckernuck I. 1 L. Morello
8/30 Chatham 3 I. Reid + v.o.
Ruddy Turnstone
7/24 Quincy 1 D. O'Brien
7/25 PI 10 M. Goetschkes#
8/1 Longmeadow 1 A. Hulsey# + v.o.
8/12 Westport (GN) 48 Anon.
Red Knot
7/25 Quincy 1 N. Nye
8/7 Duxbury B. 11 L. Schibley
8/10 Monomoy NWR 350 N. Bonomo#
8/15-8/27 PI 3 max R. Heil + v.o.
8/24 Barnstable (SN) 20 P. Crosson
8/26 Dennis 19 S. Finnegan#
Stilt Sandpiper
7/12 Monomoy NWR 3 J. Trimble#
7/14-7/31 PI 15 max T.Wetmore+v.o.
7/24 S. Dart. (APd) 2 L. Miller-Donnelly
8/7 WBWS 3 C. Dalton
8/21 Randolph 1 V. Zollo + v.o.
8/22 Quabbin Res. 1 E. LeBlanc
Sanderling
7/18-8/16 Longmeadow 3 max T. Gilliland
7/22,8/22-25 Quabbin Res. 2,2 T. Gilliland, B. Kanash
8/19 Westport (GN) 250 A. Cembalisty
8/24 Barnstable (SN) 1100 P. Crosson
Dunlin
8/10 Quabbin Res. 1 W. Howes
8/21 S. Dart. (APd) 2 A. LeBlanc
Baird's Sandpiper
8/12-19,8/28 PI 1,1 S. Sullivan + v.o.
8/12 Lexington 1 C. Cook
8/15 Quabbin Res. 1 E. LeBlanc
8/21-8/22 Randolph 1 V. Zollo + v.o.
8/22-8/23 Muskeget I. 1 S. Kardell#
8/25 Dartmouth 1 S. Lott
8/26-8/27 Wakefield 1 M. Sovay#

Least Sandpiper
7/1-7/31 PI 225 R. Heil + v.o.
7/14 S. Dart. (APd) 113 J. Eckerson
8/15-8/25 N. Quabbin 35 J. Johnstone# + v.o.
White-rumped Sandpiper
8/1-8/31 PI 42 R. Heil + v.o.
8/22 Muskeget I. 84 S. Kardell#
8/25 Holden 6 J. Skinner#
8/27 Nauset 30 B. Nikula#
8/27 S. Dart. (APd) 4 M. Sylvia
Buff-breasted Sandpiper
8/7, 8/31 PI 1,1 R. Murphy + v.o.
8/22-8/23 Muskeget I. 1 S. Kardell#
Pectoral Sandpiper
7/23 Worc. 1 B. Abbott
8/5 S. Dart. (APd) 4 J.+J. Eckerson
8/6-8/10 E. Boston (BI) 1 R. Doherty + v.o.
8/13-8/31 PI 3 max v.o.
8/22 Muskeget I. 21 S. Kardell#
8/27 W. Roxbury (MP) 1 T. Bradford
Semipalmated Sandpiper
7/1-7/31 PI 1500 T. Wetmore + v.o.
8/1-8/25 N. Quabbin 10 max J.Johnstone#+v.o.
8/10 Monomoy NWR 4000 B. Harrington#
8/21 Squantum 800 BBC (G. d'Entremont)
8/24 Barnstable (SN) 1600 P. Crosson
8/27 Nbpt 1000 G. d'Entremont#
8/28 Lexington 60 J. Forbes
Western Sandpiper
8/1 P'town (RP) 1 E. Dziedzic
8/10 Monomoy NWR 1 N. Bonomo#
8/21 Quincy 1 K. Zhang
8/27, 8/29 PI 1,1 M. Hibberd, A. Sanford
Short-billed Dowitcher
7/1-7/31 PI 220 D. Chickering + v.o.
7/7-8/13 Longmeadow 1 T. Gilliland + v.o.
7/14 S. Dart. (APd) 122 J. Eckerson
7/30 Monomoy NWR 2200 D. Bates
8/6 Plymouth B. 182 L. Schibley
8/15-8/25 N. Quabbin 1 J. Johnstone# + v.o.
8/24-8/25 October Mountain 1 J. Pierce + v.o.
8/26 Wakefield 2 M. Sovay
Long-billed Dowitcher
7/21-thr PI 9 max A.Sanford+v.o.
8/8 WBWS 1 C. Dalton
8/14 Monomoy NWR 1 P. Johnson-Staub
8/18 S. Dart. (APd) 1 C. Hartshorn#
Wilson's Snipe
7/28-7/30 GMNWR 1 H. Min + v.o.
8/2 Sterling 1 G. Ellison
8/22 Northampton 1 J. Harrison
8/22 Orange 1 B. Lafley
Spotted Sandpiper
7/9 Wachusett Res. 7 B. Millett
7/24 Westport (GN) 10 A. Cembalisty#
8/6 Holden 10 M. Lynch#
8/13 PI 5 G. d'Entremont#
Solitary Sandpiper
7/24 Plymouth 17 L. Schibley
8/7 Sterling 24 J. Trimble
8/19 New Bedford 6 M. Eckerson
Lesser Yellowlegs
7/14 S. Dart. (APd) 32 J. Eckerson
8/1-8/31 PI 100 v.o.
8/15-8/25 N. Quabbin 15 J. Johnstone# + v.o.
Willet
7/1-7/31 PI 55 S. Babbitt + v.o.
8/3 Rockport (AP) 4 migr R. Heil
8/23 Westport 15 J.+M. Eckerson
Willet (Western)
8/11-13,8/28 PI 1,1 S. Babbitt# + W. Kirby#
Greater Yellowlegs
7/30 Chatham 45 G. d'Entremont#
8/1-8/31 PI 190 max v.o.
8/5 S. Dart. (APd) 23 J.+J. Eckerson
8/22 Quabbin Res. 5 E. LeBlanc
Wilson's Phalarope
7/30-8/29 Monomoy NWR 1 B. Harrington#, J. Junda#
8/25 Eastham 1 T. Marvel
Red-necked Phalarope
8/3 Rockport (AP) 8 R. Heil
8/24 Plymouth Co. (offshore) 1 L. Schibley#
8/27, 8/29 S. of Nantucket 103, 261 BBC
Red Phalarope
7/23 Jeffreys L. 5 A. Lamoreaux#
8/24 Plymouth Co. (offshore) 1 ad L. Schibley#
8/27 S. of Nantucket 4 BBC
Pomarine Jaeger
8/12 E. of Chatham 1 J. Trimble#
Parasitic Jaeger
7/26,7/28,8/9 PI 6,1,1 T. Wetmore#, R. Heil
7/30, 8/27 P'town (RP) 2,8 G. d'Entremont#, P. Flood
8/13 Rockport (AP) 2 R.Heil
8/14 Truro 8 J. Young
8/23 Muskeget I. 3 S. Kardell#
Long-tailed Jaeger
8/28, 8/29 S. of Nantucket 7,6 BBC
Common Murre
7/8 Rockport (AP) 1 alt R. Heil
Razorbill
7/26-8/3 P'town (RP) 1 J. Kielb + v.o.
8/6 PI 1 J. Smith#
Black Guillemot
7/3 Rockport (AP) 3 R. Heil
8/7-8/28 PI 2 max O.Wilder+v.o.
Atlantic Puffin
8/15 Jeffreys L. 1 ph L. McKillop#
Black-legged Kittiwake
7/26, 8/23 PI 1,1 W. Tatro#, S. Haydock
8/17 BHI (Georges I.) 1 S. Jones
8/17, 8/23 Rockport (AP) 7,1 M. Sovay + v.o., R. Heil
Bonaparte's Gull
8/7-8/28 Quabbin (G35) 4 max J. Skinner + v.o.
8/7-8/29 Lynn B. 200 C. Floyd + v.o.
8/10 Wachusett Res. 5 V. Burdette
8/12 Pittsfield (Pont.) 1 J. Pierce
8/27 Nbpt 110 G. d'Entremont#
Black-headed Gull
7/30 Brewster 1 ph H. Holbrook
Little Gull
7/10-16,8/24 P'town (RP) 1,1 1S, juv ph P.Flood+v.o.
Laughing Gull
8/10 Monomoy NWR 2000 N. Bonomo#
8/23 Westport 350 J.+M. Eckerson
8/23 Rockport (AP) 12 R. Heil
Franklin's Gull
7/25 Longmeadow 1 ph T. Gilliland
Lesser Black-backed Gull
7/2 Nantucket 52 S. Kardell
8/12 Dartmouth 1 S. Lauermann#
8/27, 8/31 PI 1,1 S. Sullivan#, S. Babbitt#
Least Tern
7/3 Muskeget I. 600 R. Veit
7/14 S. Dart. (APd) 120 J. Eckerson
8/1-8/27 PI 100 v.o.
8/11 Chappaquiddick 500 M. Luce
Caspian Tern
7/8-7/9 Quincy 1 J. Bock + v.o.
7/14 P'town (RP) 1 G. Kornbluh
7/14 S. Dart. (APd) 1 J. Eckerson
7/25 Wachusett Res. 1 V. Burdette
8/15 PI 2 T. Wetmore
8/21 Randolph 3 D. Burton + v.o.
8/26 Essex 3 L. Manzi
Black Tern
7/10 Monomoy NWR 10 J. Davidson

Black Tern (continued)

7/30	P'town (RP)	11	P. Flood
8/10-8/25	PI	3 max	R. Heil + v.o.
8/16	S. Dart. (APd)	5	J.+M. Eckerson
8/21	Huntington	16	K. Jones, D. McLain
8/22	Pittsfield (Pont.)	3	G. Hurley# + v.o.
8/23	Quabbin (G35)	2	J. Johnstone#

Roseate Tern

7/6	Westport (GN)	150	M. Iliff
7/25	PI	10	M. Goetschkes#
8/8	Edgartown	3091	S. Fee
8/13	P'town (RP)	200	B. Nikula#

Common Tern

7/6	Westport (GN)	1200	M. Iliff
7/7	PI	480	R. Heil
7/15	Monomoy NWR	12000	J. Davidson
8/13	P'town (RP)	1350	B. Nikula#

Arctic Tern

7/9	Nantucket	4	S. Kardell

Forster's Tern

8/6-8/24	PI	3 max	D. Bates + v.o.
8/17	Quincy	1	M. Perrin
8/23	Westport	3	J.+M. Eckerson

Royal Tern

7/2	Nantucket	1 ad	S. Kardell
7/2-7/6	Westport (GN)	2	J. Eckerson + v.o.
7/2-7/18	P'town (RP)	1	T. Bradford
7/3-7/13	Nantucket	1	M. Chalfin-Jacobs, S. Kardell
8/9	WBWS	1	K. Burke
8/10-8/24	PI	6,6	R. Heil, T. Wetmore
8/17	Quincy	1	M. Perrin
8/20	Eastham (CGB)	1	N. Herbert#

Sandwich Tern

7/20	Nantucket	1 ph	S. Kardell#
7/23	Chilmark	1 ph	B. Shriber#

Black Skimmer

7/3-7/15	Wellfleet	2	J. Hillsley
7/16	Monomoy NWR	2 n	B. Harrington#
7/20	Wareham	4	T. Myers
8/23	Edgartown	53	S. Fee

Red-throated Loon

7/20	Chatham	1	DVK
7/30-7/31	Eastham	1	E. Hoopes#

Pacific Loon

7/1-7/14	N. Truro	1 ph	T. Bradford + v.o.
7/26	P'town (RP)	1 ph	J. Kielb

Common Loon

7/16	Westport (GN)	1	J. Skinner
7/23	Wachusett Res.	17	Forbush Bird Club
8/1	Lincoln	1	J. Forbes
8/2-8/14	Woburn (HP)	1	v.o.

Wilson's Storm-Petrel

7/2	Westport (GN)	1	J. Eckerson
7/18, 8/10	BHI (Georges I.)	1,1	S. Jones
8/23	Rockport (AP)	3	R. Heil

White-faced Storm-Petrel

8/27, 8/28	S. of Nantucket	589,42 ph	BBC
8/29, 8/30	S. of Nantucket	65,48 ph	BBC

Leach's Storm-Petrel

8/27, 8/28	S. of Nantucket	78,58	BBC
8/29, 8/30	S. of Nantucket	80,58	BBC

Band-rumped Storm-Petrel

8/27, 8/28	S. of Nantucket	12,1 ph	BBC
8/29, 8/30	S. of Nantucket	15,5 ph	BBC

Black-capped Petrel

8/28	S. of Nantucket	1 ph	BBC

Cory's Shearwater

7/2	Westport (GN)	30	J. Eckerson
7/3	P'town (RP)	3900	S. Dresser#
7/28	Stellwagen Bank	3000	L. Waters
8/10	Manomet Point	188	L. Schibley
8/10	BHI (Georges I.)	2	S. Jones

Cory's Shearwater (*Scopoli's*)

7/9	P'town (RP)	1 ph	P. Flood
7/24	Wellfleet	1 ph	J. Negreann
8/12	E. of Chatham	2 ph	J. Trimble#
8/27,29,30	S. of Nantucket	1,1,2 ph	BBC

Cape Verde Shearwater*

8/12	E. of Chatham	1 ph	J. Trimble#

Sooty Shearwater

7/3, 8/10	Rockport (AP)	1,1	R. Heil, A. Sanford
7/28	Stellwagen Bank	250	L. Waters
7/29	P'town (RP)	4697	L. Morello

Great Shearwater

7/2-7/12	Westport (GN)	4 max	J.Eckerson+v.o.
7/28	Stellwagen Bank	10000	L. Waters
8/3,8/23	Rockport (AP)	3,7	R. Heil
8/10	BHI (Georges I.)	5	S. Jones
8/12	E. of Chatham	1600	J. Trimble#
8/13	P'town (RP)	1500	B. Nikula#

Manx Shearwater

7/28	Stellwagen Bank	70	L. Waters
8/3,8/23	Rockport (AP)	4,2	R. Heil
8/13	P'town (RP)	50	B. Nikula#
8/21	BHI (The Graves)	1	K. Wade

Audubon's Shearwater

8/27, 8/28	S. of Nantucket	29,9 ph	BBC
8/29, 8/30	S. of Nantucket	5,11	BBC

Brown Booby

8/31	Stellwagen Bank	1 imm	L. Waters

Northern Gannet

7/3	Rockport (AP)	79	R. Heil
7/6	Westport (GN)	3	M. Iliff
8/13	P'town (RP)	43	B. Nikula#
8/17	BHI (Georges I.)	4	S. Jones

Great Cormorant

7/7-14,8/25	Westport (GN)	1,1	A. Cembalisty + v.o.
7/12-8/27	P'town	1	T. Bradford + v.o.
8/13	Rockport (AP)	1	R. Heil

Double-crested Cormorant

7/20	P'town	4300	T. Bradford
8/19	Wachusett Res.	45	M. Lynch#
8/21	S. Dart. (APd)	250	A. LeBlanc

Brown Pelican

7/23	Nantucket	1 imm ph	S. Kardell
7/27-7/28	Muskeget I.	1 ph	S. Kefferstan
8/5	P'town (RP)	1	L. Hintz
8/6	Truro	1 imm	E. Goodman
8/8-8/14	Wellfleet	1 imm	J. Negreann
8/10	Eastham (FE)	1 imm ph	F. Atwood
8/25	Scituate	1 ph	J. Norton + v.o.

American Bittern

7/25-8/23	GMNWR	1 min	A.Stone,A.Bostick+v.o.
8/1-8/5	Woburn (HP)	1	L. Sisitzky
8/10	Petersham	1	M. Lynch#

Least Bittern

thr	PI	3 max	v.o.
7/1-7/19	Longmeadow	2 max	M. Moore + v.o.
7/1-7/22	Hatfield	2 max	M. Fairbrother+v.o.
7/1-7/29	Richmond	2	S. Townsend + v.o.
8/1-8/29	GMNWR	1	v.o.

Great Blue Heron

7/4	Upton	25	T. Dodd
8/8	Fairhaven	14	C. Longworth

Great Egret

8/1-8/31	PI	130	v.o.
8/13	S. Dart. (APd)	56	A. Cembalisty#
8/15	Nbpt	216	R. Heil + v.o.

Snowy Egret

8/1-8/29	PI	125	v.o.
8/15	Nbpt	128	R. Heil + v.o.
8/16	S. Dart. (APd)	92	J.+M. Eckerson

Snowy Egret (continued)
8/27 Nauset 40 B. Nikula#
Little Blue Heron
7/31 Gloucester 15 J. Keyes
8/3 Nantucket 3 1ad+2imm K.Blackshaw#
8/5-8/12 Mashpee 5 P. Crosson + v.o.
8/16-8/31 GMNWR 4 max D.Nyochio+v.o.
8/25 Gloucester (NPd) 44 15ad+1x1S+28juv R. Heil
Tricolored Heron
7/1-7/9, 8/13 PI 1,1 v.o.
Green Heron
8/4 Chappaquiddick 11 I. Davies
8/6 Waltham 10 J. Forbes
8/20 Sterling 19 T. Pirro
8/25 N. Attleboro 10 J. Perry
Black-crowned Night-Heron
7/1-7/31 PI 12 max v.o.
7/17 Quincy 4 J. Bock
7/25-8/26 Sterling 3 max S.Handler+v.o.
8/14 Fairhaven 7 C. Longworth
8/15 Nbpt 10 R. Heil
8/27 Eastham 67 S. Surner
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron
7/1-7/31 PI 5 max v.o.
8/8 Dartmouth 2 A. Morgan#
8/18 Barnstable 7 L. Waters
8/27 Eastham 12 S. Surner
8/27 Nbpt 6 2ad+4imm G. d'Entremont#
White Ibis
8/2-8/5 Quincy 1 subad ph K.Rawdon+v.o.
8/12-8/27 Nbpt 2 imm max ph E.Peirce+v.o.
8/15 Scituate 1 imm ph S. Browne# +v.o.
8/27 GMNWR 1 imm W.Martens+v.o.
Glossy Ibis
7/14 S. Dart. (APd) 48 J. Eckerson
7/19-8/20 GMNWR 3 max J. Forbes + v.o.
8/5 MtA, Belmont 5 J. Kluft, E. Ghitelman
8/16 Chatham 9 S. Johnson#
8/20 Wakefield 3 M. Sovay

VULTURES THROUGH DICKCISSEL

Without a doubt, the raptor highlight of the period was the remarkable documentation of a pair of **Swallow-tailed Kites** copulating. The pair was photographed in Sandwich on July 30. A single bird had been reported at the site since early July. A **Mississippi Kite** was photographed at Race Point in Provincetown on July 16—the fourth period record for this species in Massachusetts. Previous reports were from Marshfield on July 26, 2003, Falmouth on July 19, 2011, and Plum Island on August 10, 2015. Reports of Northern Harriers breeding inland from the coast are rare, but this year two young harriers were reported at October Mountain in Lee. Merlins have historically been rare breeders in the state; when the first *Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas* was published in 2003, covering the period 1974–1979, there were no breeding pairs of this diminutive falcon (Petersen and Meservey 2003). The first documented breeding in the state was on Chappaquiddick Island in 2008. This year, Merlins bred successfully in Stockbridge, Orange, and Nantucket.

Breeding songbirds are still active in early July, a perfect time to conduct a bird survey. Every July for the past 17 years, Glenn d'Entremont has led a South Shore Bird Club/BBC trip to Quabbin Reservoir. This year, Glenn reported some impressive numbers from Gate 10 in Pelham: 64 Red-eyed Vireos, 24 Veeries, 34 Ovenbirds, 12 Black-throated Blue Warblers, 16 Black-throated Green Warblers, one Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and one Acadian Flycatcher. In the town of Warwick on July 12, Mark Lynch and Sheila Carroll counted 198 Red-eyed Vireos, 39 Common Yellowthroats, and 15 Scarlet Tanagers.

It was a successful year for Purple Martins in Mashpee; a total of 105 young fledged by July 4 at one colony**. Clay-colored Sparrows** were suspected breeders at the Frances Crane Wildlife Management Area in Falmouth. For the last four years, **Blue Grosbeaks** had been reported from the Honey Pot in Hadley. They were again reported this year and, for the third consecutive year, were documented breeding. Reports of Olive-sided Flycatchers in early August in Hatfield and Hardwick were of note. Were they breeders or very early migrants?

By mid-August we start to notice the beginning of fall migration. One event that never fails to impress is the annual gathering of thousands of Tree Swallows on Plum Island. This year, 50,000 were estimated on August 19. Twenty-eight species of warblers were reported during the month. Among the boreal forest nesters to arrive early was a Tennessee Warbler found in Ware on August 8, a Blackpoll Warbler on Plum Island on August 25, and a Bay-breasted Warbler on Plum Island on August 30. A **Prothonotary Warbler** was seen at sea on the BBC pelagic trip on August 28.

Some of the more unusual birds noted during the period included a **Loggerhead Shrike** found at Orange Airport on July 19. Was it the same bird that was seen on June 6 at Fitchburg Airport, a little over 30 miles away? A **Lark Sparrow** was photographed on Plum Island on August 24. A **Nelson's Sparrow** banded on June 30 in Newbury was present through July 11. Dickcissels were noted from six locations.

R. Stymeist

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Black Vulture
- 7/13 Medway 2 J. Bock
- 7/17 Wareham 2 C. Molander
- 7/22 Hardwick 4 W. Howes
- 8/19 Orleans 1 K. Dec
- 8/20 Dartmouth 8 L. Miller-Donnelly

Turkey Vulture
- 7/4 Dartmouth 27 M. Ess-Why
- 8/13 Fitchburg 35 B. Sharp

Osprey
- 7/24 Squantum 10 4ad+6yg G. d'Entremont
- 7/30 Quaboag IBA 8 M. Lynch#
- 8/1-8/17 PI 35 R. Heil + v.o.
- 8/13 S. Dart. (APd) 41 A. Cembalisty#

Swallow-tailed Kite
- 7/4-7/29 Sandwich 1 J. Miller Buntich
- 7/8 Mashpee 1 Anon.
- 7/30 Sandwich 2 1pr J. Miller Buntich

Northern Harrier
- 7/3-8/5 October Mountain 4 1pr+2yg M.Watson#+v.o.
- 7/26 Chilmark 3 yg R. Bierregaard
- 8/15 N. Quabbin 2 J. Johnstone#
- 8/28 Leicester 2 M. Lynch#

Sharp-shinned Hawk
- 7/10-7/22 Sharon 3 V. Zollo + v.o.
- 7/24 Quabbin (G5) 2 L. Therrien

Cooper's Hawk
- 7/28 Northborough 3 S. Miller
- 8/14 Warren 5 imm M. Lynch#
- 8/15 Fairhaven 2 C. Longworth

Bald Eagle
- 7/10 Freetown 2 A. Cembalisty#
- 7/26, 8/24 Mashpee 2 ad M. Keleher
- 8/20 Quabbin Res. 9 J. Skinner
- 8/21 Chatham 3 imm R. Gervais
- 8/24 Edgartown 2 S. Allen
- 8/26 Quabbin (G43) 3 2ad+1imm M. Lynch#

Mississippi Kite
- 7/16 P'town 1 ph A. Piccolo#

Red-shouldered Hawk
- 7/3 Quabbin (G10) 2 SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
- 7/10 Freetown 2 C. Floyd
- 8/18 Canton 3 G. d'Entremont
- 8/20 Petersham 2 M. Lynch#

Broad-winged Hawk
- 7/12 Mansfield 3 Anon.
- 7/27, 8/11 Boston (CHRes.) 1,1 R. Doherty
- 8/13 Ashburnham 9 B. Rusnica
- 8/20 Petersham 3 M. Lynch#
- 8/20 Winchester 2 J. Forbes

Barred Owl
- 8/1 Ashburnham 4 H. Holbrook
- 8/10 Petersham 3 M. Lynch#

Belted Kingfisher
- 7/6 Leominster 5 J. Skinner

Red-headed Woodpecker
- 7/2-7/6 Quabbin Pk 1 ph ad L. Therrien
- 7/20 Springfield 1 ph ad M. Moore
- 8/25 Erving 1 ad N. Erickson
- 8/27 Hatfield 1 F. Bowrys

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- 7/3 Quabbin (G10) 6 SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
- 7/4 Ware R. IBA 6 M. Lynch#
- 7/27 Royalston 7 E. LeBlanc

Northern Flicker
- 7/9 Warren 4 M. Lynch#
- 8/31 Quaboag IBA 4 M. Lynch#

Pileated Woodpecker
- 7/3 Quabbin (G10) 2 SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
- 7/16 Bolton 4 S. Wilson

American Kestrel
- 7/2 Rutland 6 T. Purcell
- 7/4, 7/10 Falmouth 3,3 G. d'Entremont, V. Zollo
- 7/5 Quincy 2 v.o.
- 8/27 Worc. 19 P. Morlock

Merlin
- thr Williamstown 3 max T. Kirby + v.o.
- 7/1-8/4 Lenox 2 1pr max J. Petre
- 7/3-8/6 Stockbridge 3 1ad+2yg M.Blaze+v.o.
- 7/26-7/29 Orange 4 max 2yg T. Pirro
- 7/29 Nantucket 4 2ad+2yg T. Sackton

Peregrine Falcon
- 7/21 Holden 1 imm M. Lynch#
- 8/11 Somerset 2 A. Downing
- 8/13 P'town (RP) 1 B. Nikula#

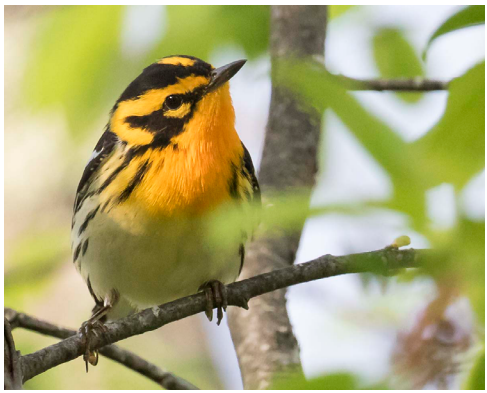
Great Crested Flycatcher
- 7/23 DWMA 5 M. Moore
- 8/19 New Bedford 4 M. Eckerson
- 8/26 WWMA 5 C. Peña

Eastern Kingbird
- 8/1-8/29 PI 30 max T.Wetmore#+v.o.
- 8/19 New Bedford 23 M. Eckerson

Eastern Kingbird (continued)
8/23 Hardwick 25 B. Robo
Olive-sided Flycatcher
8/7 Hatfield 1 F. Bowrys
8/9 Hardwick 1 W. Howes
Eastern Wood-Pewee
7/3 Freetown 6 N. Marchessault#
7/3 Quabbin (G10) 6 SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
7/23 Wachusett Res. 11 Forbush Bird Club
8/10 Petersham 13 M. Lynch#
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
8/21-8/31 Egremont 1 b B. Nickley + v.o.
8/27 Boston (FPk) 1 S. Jones
8/31 Quaboag IBA 1 M. Lynch#
Acadian Flycatcher
7/1-7/4 Sandwich 1 P. Hunt#
7/1-7/6 Quabbin (G8) 2 max M. McKitrick + v.o.
7/1-7/23 Egremont 1 B. Nickley
7/1-8/11 Granville 4 1pr+2yg D. Holmes
7/24 Westport 1 M. Iliff
Alder Flycatcher
7/1-8/20 Pittsfield 2 max S. Townsend
7/12 Barnstable 1 J. Clark#
7/27 Royalston 6 E. LeBlanc
8/10, 8/21 PI 1,1 R. Heil, J. Barcus
Willow Flycatcher
7/13 BFWMA 5 J. Skinner
7/17 PI 11 G. d'Entremont#
7/17 Fairhaven 7 C. Longworth
Least Flycatcher
7/4 Ware R. IBA 8 M. Lynch#
7/4 Rutland 5 D. Wipf
8/25 Westport (GN) 2 M.+J. Eckerson
Eastern Phoebe
7/3 Freetown 15 B. Vigorito#
8/6 Birch Hill WMA 20 G. d'Entremont#
Loggerhead Shrike
7/19 Orange Airport 1 ph B. Lafley + v.o.
White-eyed Vireo
7/4 S. Dart. (APd) 3 L. Miller-Donnelly
8/15 Falmouth 1 G. Hirth
Yellow-throated Vireo
7/3 Quabbin (G10) 2 SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
7/9 Warren 4 M. Lynch#
7/11 Westport 1 L. Miller-Donnelly
7/16 Ware R. IBA 5 M. Lynch#
7/31 Medfield 1 K. Winkler
8/24 Boston (FPk) 1 S. Jones
8/31 Concord 1 W. Hutcheson
Blue-headed Vireo
7/16 Ware R. IBA 6 M. Lynch#
7/27 Ashburnham 5 S. Miller#
Philadelphia Vireo
8/13-8/24 Hadley (Fort R.) 1 F. Bowrys + v.o.
8/19 PI 1 M. Sovay
8/30 Egremont 1 B. Nickley
Warbling Vireo
7/2 WWMA 7 A. Humann#
7/9 Warren 10 M. Lynch#
Red-eyed Vireo
7/3 Quabbin (G10) 64 SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
7/12 Warwick 198 M. Lynch#
Fish Crow
7/30 Wellfleet 22 G. d'Entremont#
8/6 Mansfield 35 J. Eckerson
8/26 Sturbridge 22 F. Manklik
Common Raven
7/12 Warwick 11 M. Lynch#
8/5 Freetown 3 G. Chretien
8/13 Ashburnham 18 B. Rusnica
8/15 P'town (RP) 10 Z. Adams
Horned Lark
7/1-8/9 Orange Airport 5 max T. Pirro + v.o.
7/7-8/31 Northampton 11 max L.Therrien + v.o.
Bank Swallow
7/5 Freetown 50 L. Abbey#
7/21-8/17 BHI (Georges I.) 24 S. Jones + v.o.
8/10 PI 60 R. Heil
Tree Swallow
thr PI 50000 max v.o.
8/17 Brookfield 425 R. Jenkins
8/20 Westport (GN) 1200 J. Offermann
Northern Rough-winged Swallow
7/7 Oxford 10 E. Kittredge
7/12 Freetown 10 L. Abbey#
8/1 Agawam 24 A. Hulsey#
Purple Martin
7/1 PI 24 v.o.
7/5 Mashpee 135 M. Keleher
7/10 Seekonk 13 J. Perry#
7/18 Barnstable 55 C. Walz
7/24 WBWS 30 K. Lauer
7/31 Norfolk 5 M. Pierre-Louis
Barn Swallow
thr Hadley (Fort R.) 93 max M. McKitrick + v.o.
7/11 Barnstable 50 J. Clark#
7/21 Westport (GN) 239 J. Eckerson
8/17 Brookfield 425 R. Jenkins
Cliff Swallow
7/13 Walpole 2 V. Zollo
7/31 BHI (Georges I.) 1 S. Jones + v.o.
8/1 Sterling 1 V. Burdette
8/13 PI 2 S. Zhang
Red-breasted Nuthatch
7/3 Quabbin (G10) 9 SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
7/16 MSSF 6 G. d'Entremont
8/15 Freetown 6 G. Chretien
8/17 Boston (AA) 6 D. Sullivan
8/23 Hardwick 30 B. Robo
Brown Creeper
7/7 HRWMA 4 E. Zilinek
7/19 Freetown 3 G. Chretien#
House Wren
7/9 Warren 14 M. Lynch#
7/17 Seekonk 11 A. Rohrman
7/29 HRWMA 13 W. Durkin
Winter Wren
7/12 Warwick 2 M. Lynch#
7/16 Ware R. IBA 2 M. Lynch#
7/27 Royalston 4 E. LeBlanc
Marsh Wren
7/1 Quaboag IBA 3 M. Lynch#
7/1-8/3 Richmond 9 max S. Townsend# + v.o.
7/1-8/7 Hatfield 4 max M. McKitrick + v.o.
7/11 Barnstable 4 J. Clark#
7/18 Somerset 4 C. Molander
7/30 Wellfleet 14 S. Broker#
8/1-8/17 PI 10 T. Wetmore + v.o.
Carolina Wren
7/9 Clinton 8 D. Ammerman
7/11 Seekonk 6 A. Teixeira
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
8/20-8/21 PI 1 M. Watson + v.o.
8/29 Williamstown 1 D. Schaller
Eastern Bluebird
7/11 Grafton 15 E. Kittredge
8/6 Birch Hill WMA 15 G. d'Entremont#
8/19 Dighton 17 M. Eckerson
Veery
7/3 Freetown 25 N. Marchessault#
7/3 Quabbin (G10) 24 SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
7/4 Ware R. IBA 28 M. Lynch#
8/28 PI 1 J. McCoy
Swainson's Thrush
8/21 Sterling 1 L. Markiewicz
8/27 Newton 1 N. Komar

Hermit Thrush
7/13 Freetown 5 N. Casimir
7/16 Ware R. IBA 33 M. Lynch#
7/16 MSSF 11 G. d'Entremont
Wood Thrush
7/3 Freetown 4 D. O'Brien#
7/4 Ware R. IBA 6 M. Lynch#
Gray Catbird
7/3 Freetown 36 B. Vigorito
7/15 Hardwick 43 M. Lynch#
8/1-8/29 PI 96 max R. Heil + v.o.
Brown Thrasher
7/22 Barnstable (SN) 5 P. Crosson
8/1-8/17 PI 11 R. Heil + v.o.
Cedar Waxwing
7/3 Freetown 18 B. Vigorito#
8/19 Birch Hill WMA 38 E. LeBlanc
Evening Grosbeak
7/1-7/30 Williamsburg 2 max M. McKitrick + v.o.
8/5 Royalston 6 E. LeBlanc
8/20 Hadley (Fort R.) 1 f/imm C. Sokoloski
Purple Finch
7/3 Freetown 5 L. Abbey#
7/9 Birch Hill WMA 10 G. d'Entremont#
Red Crossbill
thr Williamsburg 9 max L. Farlow, S. Winn
7/1-8/30 Quabbin (G8) 10 max D.+T. Swain
7/9 Milton 2 au C. Dalton
7/13 Princeton 5 Anon.
7/16 MSSF 4 min B. Nikula#
8/11-8/18 Conway 40 max J. Yanko
Pine Siskin
8/9 Northampton 3 T. Gessing
Grasshopper Sparrow
7/1-7/26 Shirley 5 max v.o.
7/1-8/21 Southwick 5 max M. Moore + v.o.
7/4 Lancaster 8 C. Cook
7/8 Weymouth 4 N. Swirka
7/10 Falmouth 25 V. Zollo
Lark Sparrow
8/24-8/25 PI 1 O. Wilder + v.o.
Chipping Sparrow
8/6 Birch Hill WMA 35 G. d'Entremont#
8/24 Easton 28 M. Eckerson
Clay-colored Sparrow
7/3-8/10 Falmouth 1 G. Hirth + v.o.
Field Sparrow
7/3 Freetown 10 B. Vigorito#
7/9 Birch Hill WMA 7 G. d'Entremont#
7/10 Falmouth 25 V. Zollo
7/13 Lancaster 14 D. Swain
Dark-eyed Junco
8/28 Ashburnham 8 Anon.
White-throated Sparrow
7/9 Birch Hill WMA 7 E. LeBlanc#
Vesper Sparrow
7/1-8/8 Orange Airport 4 max P. Gagarin + v.o.
7/1-8/12 Hadley (Honeypot) 3 max L. Therrien + v.o.
7/13 Lancaster 6 D. Swain
Seaside Sparrow
7/1-7/31 PI 3 max v.o.
7/12 Barnstable (SN) 1 P. Crosson
7/14 S. Dart. (APd) 12 J. Eckerson
Nelson's Sparrow
7/1-7/11 Newbury 1 v.o.
7/11 Barnstable 1 b J. Clark#
Saltmarsh Sparrow
7/5 PI 33 R. Heil
7/10 Squantum 6 G. d'Entremont
7/11 Barnstable 20 J. Clark#
7/14 S. Dart. (APd) 26 J. Eckerson
Savannah Sparrow
7/2 Wachusett Res. 3 M. Lynch#
7/3 S. Dart. (APd) 2 A. Cembalisty#
7/15 Lancaster 17 J. Skinner#
Swamp Sparrow
7/4 Ware R. IBA 17 M. Lynch#
7/12 Warwick 15 M. Lynch#
7/12 Barnstable 4 J. Clark#
8/19 New Bedford 6 M. Eckerson
Eastern Towhee
7/3 Freetown 121 D. O'Brien#
7/5 Birch Hill WMA 21 E. LeBlanc
7/16 MSSF 31 G. d'Entremont
Bobolink
7/1 PI 28 max v.o.
7/25 Spencer 120 P. Vanderhoof
8/5 BFWMA 112 P. Vanderhoof
8/24 Easton 13 M. Eckerson
8/27 ONWR 150 BBC (D. MacFarlane)
Eastern Meadowlark
7/6 Waltham 1 J. Forbes
7/26-8/8 Wachusett Res. 6 J. Skinner#, V. Burdette
Orchard Oriole
7/1-7/27 PI 6 max v.o.
7/30 Woburn (HP) 2 A. Flynn
8/3 WWMA 3 C. Rockwell
8/5 Beverly 2 C. Nehrkorn
Baltimore Oriole
8/13 Uxbridge 9 Anon.
8/25 Westport (GN) 4 J.+M. Eckerson
Ovenbird
7/3 Freetown 79 D. O'Brien#
7/3 Quabbin (G10) 34 SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
7/4 Ware R. IBA 44 M. Lynch#
Worm-eating Warbler
7/5-8/6 Mount Holyoke 1 L. Therrien + v.o.
7/7-7/17 Mount Tom 4 max T. Gessing + v.o.
7/11-8/18 Hadley 4 max M. McKitrick + v.o.
7/22-8/19 Hadley (Fort R.) 1 C. Elowe + v.o.
Louisiana Waterthrush
7/1-8/21 Williamsburg 5 max M. McKitrick + v.o.
8/15-8/27 Egremont 2 max B. Nickley + v.o.
Northern Waterthrush
7/13 Attleboro 3 J. Perry
8/6 Harwich Port 1 B. Nikula
8/8 Watertown 1 J. Forbes
Blue-winged Warbler
8/13 Westport (GN) 2 A.+J.+M. Eckerson
8/14 Warren 4 M. Lynch#
8/15 Mashpee 1 M. Keleher
Brewster's Warbler (hybrid)
7/1-7/27 Amherst 1 C. Elowe + v.o.
8/19 Lexington (DM) 1 ph J. Layman
Lawrence's Warbler (hybrid)
7/1-7/23 Belchertown 1 1m+2 hybrid yg L. Therrien
8/10-8/13 Hadley (Fort R.) 1 m ph T. Gilliland+v.o.
Black-and-white Warbler
7/3 Freetown 9 D. O'Brien#
7/21-8/2 W. Roxbury (MP) 4 M. Iliff + v.o.
8/11 Ware R. IBA 9 B. Robo
Prothonotary Warbler
8/28 S. of Nantucket 1 ph BBC
Tennessee Warbler
8/8 Ware 1 L. Therrien
8/10-8/11 Hadley (Fort R.) 2 T. Gilliland
8/28 PI 1 T. Wetmore#
Mourning Warbler
7/9 Mount Greylock 2 M. Iliff
8/10 Quabbin (G8) 1 J. Yanko
8/13 Hadley (Fort R.) 1 L. Therrien
Common Yellowthroat
7/3 Freetown 46 D. O'Brien#
7/5 Birch Hill WMA 28 E. LeBlanc
7/12 Warwick 39 M. Lynch#
7/16 MSSF 17 G. d'Entremont

Hooded Warbler
7/1 Westfield 1 J. Hutchison + v.o.
7/1-7/17 New Marlborough 2 m G. Ward + v.o.
7/10 Freetown 1 A. LeBlanc
8/16 Egremont 1 juv b B. Nickley
8/20 MNWS 1 J. Smith
American Redstart
7/2 Sterling 6 D. Ammerman
8/13 Westport (GN) 5 A.+J.+M. Eckerson
8/14 Warren 7 M. Lynch#
Cape May Warbler
8/16 Becket 1 K. Karlberg
8/16 Chappaquiddick 1 S. Kardell
8/23 Muskeget I. 1 S. Kardell#
8/25 Amherst 1 T. Gilliland
8/25 Westport (GN) 1 J.+M. Eckerson
Cerulean Warbler
7/1-8/5 Mount Holyoke 2 max M. McKitrick + v.o.
7/25 Boston (FPk) 1 S. Jones
Northern Parula
7/2 Boston (McW) 1 L. Grimes
7/9-7/19 Brookline 1 M. Garvey
8/27 Ware R. Watershed 3 M. Lynch#
Magnolia Warbler
8/25 Westport (GN) 1 J.+M. Eckerson
Bay-breasted Warbler
8/25 Amherst 1 T. Gilliland
8/25 Granville 1 D. Holmes
8/30 PI 1 T. Wetmore
Blackburnian Warbler
7/3 Quabbin (G10) 4 SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
7/4 Ashby 2 J. Forbes
7/10 Ashburnham 7 J. Trimble
8/18 Sharon 1 V. Zollo
Yellow Warbler
7/3 S. Dart. (APd) 10 A. Cembalisty#
7/17 Sterling 7 R. Doherty
Chestnut-sided Warbler
7/2 Sterling 8 D. Ammerman
7/3 Quabbin (G10) 8 SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
7/15 Hardwick 11 3ad+8yg M. Lynch#
Blackpoll Warbler
8/25 PI 1 M. Horman
8/29 Brewster 1 b S. Finnegan
Black-throated Blue Warbler
7/3 Quabbin (G10) 12 SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
Pine Warbler
7/3 Freetown 30 D. O'Brien#
7/16 MSSF 16 G. d'Entremont
8/23 Hardwick 16 B. Robo
Yellow-rumped Warbler
7/10 Ashburnham 8 J. Trimble
Prairie Warbler
7/3 Freetown 25 D. O'Brien#
7/9 Birch Hill WMA 10 G. d'Entremont#
7/16 MSSF 6 G. d'Entremont
Black-throated Green Warbler
7/3 Quabbin (G10) 16 SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
7/9 Petersham 8 A. Loveless
7/12 Warwick 5 M. Lynch#
Canada Warbler
7/4 Ware R. IBA 1 ad m M. Lynch#
7/29 Ashburnham 4 S. Miller#
8/7 Pepperell 1 M. Sanda
8/9, 8/29 PI 1,1 D. Chickering
8/19 Waltham 1 J. Forbes
8/25 S. Dartmouth 1 D. Merski
Wilson's Warbler
8/13 Amherst 1 T. Gilliland
8/14 Williamstown 1 M. Morales
Scarlet Tanager
7/3 Freetown 7 N. Marchessault#
7/3 Quabbin (G10) 6 SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
7/12 Warwick 15 M. Lynch#
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
7/1 Quaboag IBA 4 M. Lynch#
7/3 Quabbin (G10) 5 SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
8/26 Worc. (BMB) 5 M. Gach
Blue Grosbeak
7/1-8/12 Hadley (Honeypot) 5 n 2m+2f+1yg M.McKitrick+v.o.
7/7 Southwick 2 1pr A.+L. Richardson
7/27 Falmouth 3 G. Hirth
Indigo Bunting
7/3 Freetown 4 B. Vigorito#
7/9 Birch Hill WMA 15 G. d'Entremont#
7/12 Warwick 5 M. Lynch#
8/14 WWMA 9 T. Spahr
Dickcissel
8/20-21, 8/26 PI 1,1 J. Layman#, T. Wetmore#
8/21-8/28 Hadley (Honeypot) 1 L. Therrien + v.o.
8/23 Holden 1 J. Skinner
8/25 Westport (GN) 1 J.+M. Eckerson
8/26 Uxbridge 1 V. Burdette + v.o.
8/27 Wakefield 1 J. Forbes#



BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER BY SANDY SELESKY

ABBREVIATIONS FOR BIRD SIGHTINGS

Taxonomic order is based on AOS checklist, Seventh edition, 62nd Supplement, as published online at <http://checklist.aou.org/taxa> (see also <http://checklist.americanornithology.org/>).

Locations

AA	Arnold Arboretum, Boston
ABC	Allen Bird Club
AFB	Air Force Base
AP	Andrews Point, Rockport
APd	Allens Pond, S. Dartmouth
AthBC	Athol Bird Club
B.	Beach
Barre FD	Barre Falls Dam
BBC	Brookline Bird Club
BFWMA	Bolton Flats WMA, Bolton & Lancaster
BHI	Boston Harbor Islands
BI	Belle Isle, E. Boston
BMB	Broad Meadow Brook, Worcester
BNC	Boston Nature Center, Mattapan
BR	Bass Rocks, Gloucester
BRI Co. seas	Bristol County, offshore
Cambr.	Cambridge
CB	Crane Beach, Ipswich
CCBC	Cape Cod Bird Club
CGB	Coast Guard Beach, Eastham
Ck	Creek
Co.	County
Corp. B.	Corporation Beach, Dennis
CP	Crooked Pond, Boxford
CPd	Chandler Pond, Boston
C. Res.	Cambridge Reservoir, Waltham
CSpk	Cold Spring Park, Newton
Cumb. Farms	Cumberland Farms, Middleboro
DFWS	Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary
DM	Dunback Meadow
DWMA	Delaney WMA, Stow, Bolton, Harvard
DWWS	Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary
EP	Eastern Point, Gloucester
FE	First Encounter Beach, Eastham
FH	Fort Hill, Eastham
FHC	Forest Hills Cemetery, Boston
FP	Fresh Pond, Cambridge
FPk	Franklin Park, Boston
G#	Gate #, Quabbin Res.
GMNWR	Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge
GN	Gooseberry Neck, Westport
H.	Harbor
HCB	Herring Cove Beach, Provincetown
HP	Horn Pond, Woburn
HPt	Halibut Point, Rockport
HRWMA	High Ridge WMA, Gardner
I.	Island
IBA	Important Bird Area
IRWS	Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary
JPd	Jamaica Pond, Boston
L.	Ledge
MAS	Mass Audubon
MBO	Bird Observatory, Manomet
MBWMA	Martin Burns WMA, Newbury
McW	McLaughlin Woods
MI	Morris Island
MNWS	Marblehead Neck Wildlife Sanctuary
MP	Millennium Park, W. Roxbury
MSSF	Myles Standish State Forest, Plymouth
MtA	Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambr.
MV	Martha's Vineyard
NAC	Nine Acre Corner, Concord
Nbpt	Newburyport
ONWR	Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge
Pd	Pond
PG	Public Garden, Boston
PI	Plum Island
Pk	Park
PLY Co. seas	Plymouth County, offshore
Pont.	Pontoosuc Lake, Lanesboro
POP	Point of Pines, Revere
PR	Pinnacle Rock, Malden
P'town	Provincetown
R.	River
Res.	Reservoir
RKG	Rose Kennedy Greenway, Boston
RP	Race Point, Provincetown
SB	South Beach, Chatham
SF	State Forest
SN	Sandy Neck, Barnstable
SP	State Park
SRV	Sudbury River Valley
SSBC	South Shore Bird Club
TASL	Take A Second Look, Boston Harbor Census
WBWS	Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary
WE	World's End, Hingham
WMA	Wildlife Management Area
WMWS	Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary
Wompatuck SP	Hingham, Cohasset, Scituate, Norwell
Worc.	Worcester
WS	Wildlife Sanctuary
WSF	Willowdale State Forest, Ipswich
WWMA	Westborough WMA, Westborough

Other Abbreviations

*	first state record (pending MARC review)
!	subject to MARC review
?	Questionable provenance / possible escape
ad	adult
alt	alternative plumage
au	audio recorded
b	banded
basic	basic plumage
br	breeding
cy	cycle (3cy = 3rd cycle)
d	dead
dk	dark (morph)
f	female
fl	fledgling
h	heard
imm	immature
inj	injured
juv	juvenile
lt	light (morph)
m	male
MARC	Massachusetts Avian Records Committee
max	maximum
migr	migrating
min	minimum
n	nesting
nfc	nocturnal flight call
ph	photographed
pr	pair
r	rescued
S	summer (1S = first summer)
subad	subadult
v.o.	various observers
W	winter (2W = second winter)
yg	young
#	additional observers

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 at <https://maavianrecords.com/submit-sighting/>, or by email to Peter Crosson at capecodbirder@gmail.com.

BYGONE BIRDS

Historical Highlights for July–August

Neil Hayward

5 YEARS AGO

July–August 2017

An **Audubon's Shearwater** was reported from Gooseberry Neck on July 21 during an unprecedented incursion of Cory's Shearwaters into Buzzards Bay. An adult **Brown Booby** was spotted from Herring Cove Beach on July 14. This period was good for pelicans: **Brown Pelicans** were spotted in July along the North Shore and on Nantucket, and an **American White Pelican** was in Scituate on August 25 and on Martha's Vineyard at the end of the month. Two immature **White Ibises** spent over two weeks at Wellfleet Bay. The *baueri* subspecies of **Bar-tailed Godwit** continued on the Lower Cape until August 21. An adult **Little Stint** was found at Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) on August 9. At least two different **South Polar Skuas** took up residency on the beaches of Provincetown. An adult **California Gull**—the sixth for the state—was found at Westport on the last day of August. **Franklin's Gull**s were reported from Ipswich and Chatham, and up to three **Sabine's Gulls** were in Provincetown in mid-August. Passerine highlights included the first August record of **Say's Phoebe** in Wellfleet on August 31 and a **Yellow-headed Blackbird** on Nantucket on August 23.

Best nesting bird: **Blue Grosbeaks** nested at the Frances Crane Wildlife Management Area in Falmouth. This nesting record was the second for the state after a pair bred the previous year at Cumberland Farms in Middleboro.

10 YEARS AGO

July–August 2012

A single **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** spent most of the period at Great Meadows NWR. Additional birds were seen at the Fenway in Boston on July 22 and on Plum Island on August 4. A **White-winged Dove** was photographed as it flew over Gooseberry Neck, Westport, on August 23. There was an unprecedented number of summer records of *Selasphorus* hummingbirds visiting feeders: **Rufous Hummingbirds** were in Randolph and in Orleans and an **Allen's / Rufous Hummingbird** was present in Chatham. A one-day Brookline Bird Club (BBC) pelagic trip to the Continental Shelf on July 21 produced a **Black-capped Petrel**. An immature **White Ibis** was photographed flying over the hawkwatch at Morris Island on August 29. South Beach, Chatham, hosted a **Sandwich Tern**, a **Bar-tailed Godwit**, and a **Little Stint**—the latter being the first for the state since 2005. A **Curlew Sandpiper** spent the last week of August on nearby Tern Island in Chatham.

Best trip not to be missed: the BBC overnight pelagic on August 25–26 yielded a **Barolo Shearwater**, a **Red-billed Tropicbird**, seven **White-faced Storm-Petrel**s, nine **Band-rumped Storm-Petrels**, and one **Bridled Tern**. The Barolo Shearwater was the third record for the state. The first was found on the same BBC trip on August 25, 2007.

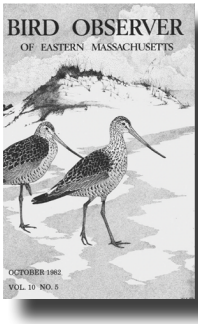
20 YEARS AGO

July–August 2002

Northern Harriers again produced young at the North Pool freshwater marsh on Plum Island this summer—the only breeding pair in Essex County. **American Avocets** were seen at four locations. South Beach, Chatham, was the place to be this period with two different adult **Red-necked Stints** present on August 1–2 and a **Curlew Sandpiper** staying for the latter half of August. An adult **Gull-billed Tern** was also present at South Beach from July 16 to August 2, and an immature bird was found on Nantucket on August 8. Out-of-place warblers included a Cerulean Warbler in Brewster, a Prothonotary Warbler in Pepperell, and a Hooded Warbler in South Boston.

Best sighting: a first summer **Elegant Tern** was present at South Beach, Chatham, from August 4–28, during which time it was seen by dozens of birders. The identification was problematic and not resolved until August 17. It was the first record for the state and only the third record for the East Coast.

40 YEARS AGO



July–August 1982

A **White Ibis** was discovered on Nantucket on August 19. **Ruffs** were reported from Monomoy, Wellfleet Bay, and Bridgewater in July. Up to 30 Upland Sandpipers were present on Martha's Vineyard in August. Hudsonian Godwit numbers peaked at 150 on Monomoy and at 50 at Newburyport-Plum Island. Four **Little Gulls** were seen in Newburyport in July with an immature bird also reported in Scituate. One **Sandwich Tern** was on Nantucket and two were seen at Nauset in July. Up to one hundred "*portlandica*" Arctic Terns were counted on Monomoy. A male **Kentucky Warbler**, first reported in Carlisle in May, was still singing in July, although no female was ever detected. A high count of 75 Cape May Warblers was logged at Plum Island on August 22. Single adult male **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** appeared at Newburyport and Brewster in August.

Most disappointing number: Red Knot numbers were low in August with maxima of "just" 1,500 at Monomoy and 900 at Scituate compared to 2,800 the previous year.

ABOUT THE COVER

Purple Finch

The Purple Finch (*Haemorhous purpureus*) is a stocky, large-headed, sexually color-dimorphic finch species. Males have a rich raspberry red face, head, neck, and breast, grayish to white belly, and white undertail feathers. Saturated with red, their backs are streaked brown, their wings are brown, and the lower half of the tail is brownish. The gray flanks are also streaked or spotted with red. The wings have two indistinct reddish wing bars. Females are drab brown with streaked brown backs; the gray flanks, breast, and belly are also streaked with brown. They have a prominent white eyebrow, a gray ear patch, and a dark stripe on either side of the throat. Juveniles closely resemble females.

Males are separated from male House Finches by the latter's brownish gray cheek and rear of head, and females by a plain head pattern. The western Cassin's Finch poses more of a problem, but Cassin's males have a distinctive bright red crown and the female's head pattern is less distinct. Two subspecies are generally recognized, *H. purpureus purpureus* in the east and *H. purpureus californicus* in the west, and three other subspecies have been proposed.

Purple Finches breed in an irregular swath from near the Canadian border with Alaska across Canada to southern Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, and south in a narrow strip to southern California. They are year-round residents from Minnesota east through the Great Lakes to Maine and south through Pennsylvania and the Appalachians into Virginia. Most of the Canadian population is migratory, wintering in southern California and in the eastern half of the United States from North Dakota south to central Texas and in the east from Virginia to northern Florida and the Gulf States.

In Massachusetts, Purple Finches are resident throughout the state and uncommon to fairly common breeders; they tend to be more numerous in the western part of the state. They are variably common to uncommon migrants, passing through in spring from late April through May, and in fall from late September to early November. Migratory numbers are highly variable and occasionally irruptive, with large numbers sometimes remaining throughout the winter. Purple Finches often join mixed-species foraging flocks during winter.

Breeding biology and behavior is poorly documented. Purple Finches are presumed to be monogamous, with a pair producing one and in some cases two broods per season. The male's song is a leisurely and variable warble, usually given from the top of a tree and presumably functioning primarily to attract females. First-year males, which closely resemble females, also routinely sing. The territorial song begins with a series of same-pitch notes. Degrees of aggressive posture include the body held horizontally with neck extended; body upright, the neck extended with bill open; or the body stretched to maximum height with bill pointed downward. During courtship, the male sings a warbling song, hops, and flutters its wings, with its breast forward, tail

cocked, and crest raised, sometimes while holding nesting material in its bill. It then flies about a foot into the air and returns with wings drooped, tail spread, back straight, and body tilted backward.

Purple Finches nest primarily in coniferous forests, although they also nest in a wide variety of other habitats, including mixed coniferous and deciduous forests and edges, orchards, and areas that have been more developed by humans. Both male and female are involved in choosing the nest site, usually on a conifer branch, but often on other types of trees as well. Only the female constructs the nest. The nest is a cup of sticks and twigs lined with fine grasses and animal hair. The usual clutch is four pale bluish green eggs, spotted on the large end with brown or black. The female has a brood patch and does most of the incubation for the 12–13 days until hatching. Male birds feed incubating females. Both parents feed the young birds for the 13–16 days until fledging. Young birds remain near the nest for about a week after fledging.

Purple Finches feed mostly on seeds, fruit, and buds, and less frequently on insects. They also readily take sunflower and other seeds from bird feeders. Sometimes they will crush the base of flowers with their strong bills to extract the nectar. They may even occasionally hawk flying ants and other insects.

Known predators of adult Purple Finches include falcons, Blue Jays, and cats. Jays, grackles, and squirrels may also predate their eggs and nestlings. Purple Finches will accept cowbird eggs among their own, but apparently still usually manage to fledge nearly normal broods. Cowbird chicks in Purple Finch nests do not fare well because the finches feed their young mostly a seed diet, and cowbirds require predominantly insect food. Breeding Bird Census (BBS) data indicate population declines of 50% in northeastern Canada and the United States, apparently at least partially caused by the invasion of, and subsequent competition with, House Finches. The population is stable in western North America. Despite these declines, the broad and in part isolated breeding range of Purple Finches bodes well for their long-term survival.

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

October 2022

SUSAN BROWNE

Readers will no doubt recognize these mystery species as raptors —most likely hawks of some kind. Because there is a noticeable difference in size between the two birds, there are alternative identification possibilities to consider. One possibility is that there are two different species in the picture. The other is that the birds are different genders of the same species. Noticeable difference in gender size is not uncommon in certain raptor species, e.g., Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, and Peregrine Falcon.

In hawk identification, a useful first consideration is to place an unidentified individual into one of several distinct taxonomic categories. The overall shape and length of the wings and tail, the relative size of the head in front of the wing, and the feather pattern of the underparts, wings, and tail are especially important to notice. In the field, characteristic flight behavior is also a useful identification aid, and sometimes vocalizations can be helpful in distinguishing high-flying or distant individuals, but none of these are useful to the mystery raptors in print.

In the photograph of the mystery hawks on the *Bird Observer* website, another noticeable feature is that the birds are strongly backlit—something that clearly highlights the pattern of their wings and tails that might otherwise be more difficult to precisely ascertain against darker sky conditions.

Because shape is important in hawk identification, several useful features are evident in the photograph. Neither of the birds has sharply pointed wings or relatively narrow, rounded tails; the absence of these features removes falcons and Mississippi Kite as possibilities. Both hawks lack particularly broad wings, and their tails are long

and somewhat narrow—not short and fan-shaped—which suggest that they are not buteos such as Red-tailed or Red-shouldered hawk. Instead, their wings are not wide and broad like those of a buteo but are relatively short and rounded, and their tails are long and tapered at the base, suggesting that they are accipiters, e.g., Northern Goshawk, Cooper's Hawk, or Sharp-shinned Hawk. Although Northern Harriers have long slim tails, they also have longer and slimmer wings than the birds in the photograph.

Having determined that the mystery raptors are accipiters, the next step is to determine whether we are looking at two different species or a pair of one species exhibiting significant sexual dimorphism. Let us concentrate on the larger of the two birds. It is obvious in the color photograph and even the black and white version that there are conspicuous white terminal spots on the broadly rounded tail of the larger individual. The larger bird has a more prominent and longer-necked appearance than the smaller accipiter, which is also proportionately smaller-headed and has a more square-tipped tail. Also, the smaller bird gives the impression of having "shoulders" at the bend of its wings, while the larger individual has a nearly straight leading edge to its wings. Consequently, although we cannot see any helpful coloration on either of these two birds, this combination of features makes it clear that we are looking at two species, not a male and a female of a single species.

Indeed, this photograph offers a wonderful comparison of two otherwise similar species, a Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*) below and a Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*) above. Despite noticeable sexual dimorphism in these two species, in this photograph it is possible to use additional features to distinguish between the species so that size alone does not confuse identification.

Cooper's Hawks are widespread breeders and year-round residents in Massachusetts, and their population has increased dramatically in the state in the past 25–30 years. Sharp-shinned Hawks are uncommon residents, with much of their breeding population located in western parts of the state. Sharpshins are significantly more common than Cooper's Hawks during migration. Both species winter in the state and regularly terrorize songbirds at backyard birdfeeders. Susan Browne captured this remarkable photograph of both species at the Eel River Preserve in Plymouth, Massachusetts, on August 14, 2022.

Wayne R. Petersen

AT A GLANCE

CARL GOODRICH

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

MORE HOT BIRDS

Anthony Laquidara came across a **Townsend's Solitaire** along the Rose Kennedy Greenway on October 28. It was refound the following day roughly five miles away at Belle Isle Marsh. Observers in both locations noted the solitaire being harassed by a mockingbird; there is no word on whether the same mockingbird was responsible. Most birders saw the solitaire at Belle Island Marsh, including Laura Markley, who took this photograph.

In November 2012, Cherry Hill Reservoir hosted a Cassin's Kingbird. Almost a decade later, when another Cassin's was lurking around Nantucket, a **Townsend's Warbler** showed up at Cherry Hill. Rick Heil found the warbler on November 8; Cameron Johnson took this photograph the next day. The warbler stayed for at least a week.

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