

Bird Observer

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HOT BIRDS



Pacific Loons are reported from many locations along the Massachusetts coast every winter, but reports backed up by photographic evidence come almost exclusively from one place, Race Point. This year was no exception, with at least two individuals photographed from Race Point in January and February. Ted Bradford took the photo on the left.

An **Eared Grebe** showed up in Marblehead in mid-December and stayed at least until mid-February. It was likely the same individual that spent January through April 2021 in the same neighborhood. Sam Darmstadt took the photo on the right.



Massachusetts hosted two **Townsend's Solitaires** simultaneously this year. Henrietta Yelle was never happier about her heated birdbath than she was on March 1, when one solitaire dropped in for a drink. Kyron Hanson photographed the other solitaire two days earlier on February 27 at the far end of the state at Mass Audubon's Lime Kiln Farm Sanctuary near Sheffield. Both solitaires were last reported on March 2. Henrietta Yelle took the photo on the left.

Pink-footed Goose has come a long way from 2008, when the state had no accepted records. More than 25 have been documented since, with multiple individuals appearing here in each of the past 5 winters. This winter featured a new milestone when a group of four Pink-foots visited the Pioneer Valley. Originally spotted in Longmeadow in early December by Meghadeepa Maity and Jeremy Spool, the quartet spent the rest of the winter in Connecticut, then came back up the Valley to Hadley in early January and Northampton in early March. Ted Gilliland took the photo on the right.



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April 1 Through October 1, 2022
See Details on Page 110**



Bird Observer

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Birding Sandy Neck and the Barnstable Great Marsh, Cape Cod

Peter Crosson



One of the most beautiful spots on the long, straight shoreline of Mid Cape Cod, Sandy Neck Beach Park is an area of superlatives. Along with its associated salt marsh, the park protects 4700 acres of open space, the largest such parcel in the busy Mid Cape. Sandy Neck hosts the highest dunes outside of Provincetown, one of the largest salt marshes in the state, and a dazzling diversity of upland habitats, including wild cranberry bogs that shelter rare orchids or carnivorous plants. The views north into Cape Cod Bay extend all the way to Provincetown; you can see the Pilgrim Monument on a clear day. Sandy Neck is also one of the best overall birding habitats on Cape Cod, with 275 species recorded in eBird—currently in fifth place in the county overall—and the highest-ranked spot on the Upper or Mid Cape. If you include the Great Marsh as well, the total jumps even higher. On a good fall migration day, there are few better birding spots anywhere on Cape Cod.

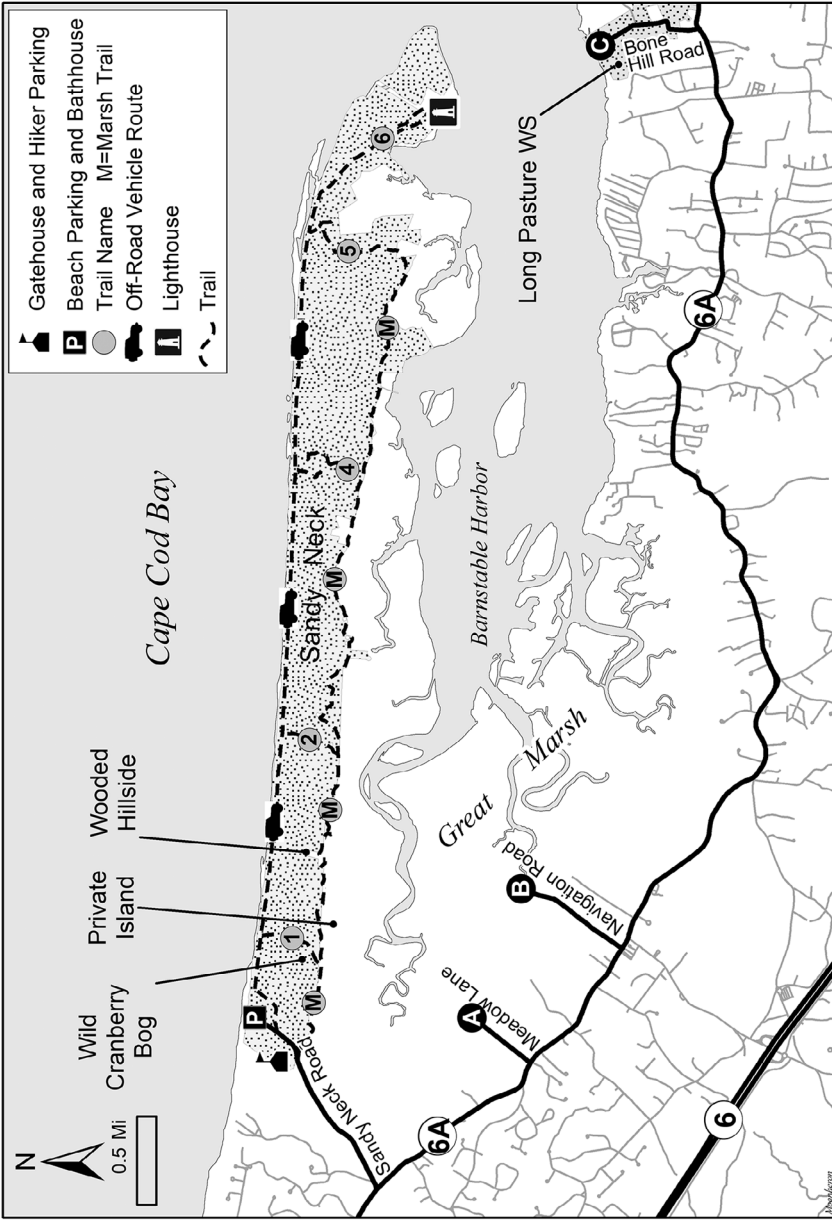
There are avian attractions on Sandy Neck and the Great Marsh in every season. Spring brings good sea watching and modest passerine and shorebird migrations. Summer often finds the beach extremely crowded, but the potential for interesting breeders or storm watching for pelagics may draw intrepid birders. Fall is the most glorious season, when just about anything can show up; day lists over 70 species are not uncommon. Winter can be bleak and unforgiving, but sea watching is often good, and rarer species such as Northern Shrike and Short-eared Owl may add some spice. There is never a bad time to visit.

This article takes a season-based approach to birding Sandy Neck and the Great Marsh, helping visiting birders make the most of their time here. I will cover the trail system on Sandy Neck proper and briefly describe a few other hotspots on the north side of Barnstable that provide access to different vantage points on the marsh.

First, here are a few words about comfort and safety. Walking the trails on the Neck is an arduous endeavor because they are mostly soft sand and often have little to no shade. Bring plenty of water, comfortable shoes, and sun protection.

Portions of the Marsh Trail may be under water at the highest tides, so check the tide chart before you head out, and use caution at these times. Be aware that hunting is permitted on the marsh side, so in season it is highly suggested to wear hunters' orange gear while walking the trails, or else hike them only on Sundays when hunting is prohibited.

It is also prudent to note that ORV travel is permitted on the beach side year-round and can result in a steady parade of trucks, campers, and beach buggies, especially on summer weekends. At these times, consider sticking to trails on the marsh side or



Overview of Sandy Neck and the Great Marsh.



The Marsh Trail. All photographs by the author.

visiting some of the other places mentioned in this article. Finally, a good spotting scope helps make the most of a visit here, particularly for sea watching or working the Great Marsh.

History

Human presence on Sandy Neck and the Great Marsh has been documented from as long as 10,000 years ago, based on archaeological evidence uncovered from the shifting sands. Native peoples used the land for hunting and fishing, and occasionally ancient campsites or artifacts are found in blowouts in the dunes. In the 1640s, European settlers acquired the land and used the marshes for grazing livestock, harvesting salt marsh hay, and hunting and fishing. They cut down the forests on the Neck for a variety of purposes, including processing whale blubber into oil—called trying—and manufacturing salt from sea water. At that time, Sandy Neck was considered “Common Lands” of the town of Barnstable and fully public.

That changed in 1703, when the beach was purchased and subdivided into 60 private parcels. Only the main parking lot area was kept as public land. The famed Sandy Neck lighthouse was erected in 1826, replaced in 1857, and retired from use in 1931. Eventually, hunting cabins were built out in the dunes, and a cottage colony popped up near the tip in the early twentieth century. Today, these structures still greet the intrepid hiker of the Marsh Trail, and they remain private property, being passed down through generations of landowners. New construction has been forbidden in this historic area since the 1960s, but the existing cabins are grandfathered. In 1978, the Massachusetts Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs designated Sandy Neck as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern due to its importance as a breeding location for Piping Plover and Least Tern, and Mass Audubon has named



Western Sandpiper.

Sandy Neck as an Important Bird Area (IBA). Of note, Sandy Neck also harbors healthy populations of the endangered diamondback terrapin and eastern spadefoot toad, adding to its importance as a wildlife preserve.

Driving Directions and Access

Sandy Neck Beach Park is accessible from Route 6A, The Old King's Highway, in Sandwich. Traveling from off Cape, cross the Sagamore Bridge onto Route 6 East. In approximately 6 miles, take Exit

61-Quaker Meetinghouse Road (formerly Exit 3), turn left, and head north for 1.2 miles to Route 6A. Turn right onto Route 6A, and travel east for 3.2 miles, then turn left onto Sandy Neck Road. Follow Sandy Neck Road for 1.3 miles to the gatehouse. At the gatehouse, there is hikers' parking on the left, which does not require paid entry to the park. From Memorial Day until Labor Day, those wishing to park in the main beach lot will either need a Barnstable or Sandwich town beach sticker or will have to pay a fee, which was \$20 for the 2021 season. The rest of the year, parking in the main lot is free. In summer, you can also park for free in the main lot before 8:00 am or after 5:00 pm. Birders with a four-wheel drive vehicle may obtain an ORV permit to drive out on Sandy Neck, though it is quite pricy for nonresidents. In addition, it is possible to access the outer beach by boat or kayak.

Sandy Neck is an enormous area, and birding it is not always easy. Though you can often see good birds from the parking lot, it really pays to explore the trail system—not least so you can truly experience the full beauty of the area. The main trail heading out from the hikers' lot, known as the Marsh Trail, leads approximately 5.5 miles out to Trail 5, which loops back to the beach side. Along the way, Trails 1, 2, and 4—there is no Trail 3—cut across the dunes to the beach. (See the map.) The Marsh Trail offers continuous unobstructed views of the vast Great Marsh. Remember, portions of the Marsh Trail flood at the highest tides. There is no designated trail on the beach side; just walk along the beach back to the parking lot. An excellent loop for birding is to walk from the hikers' lot along the Marsh Trail to Trail 2, follow Trail 2 through the dunes, and walk back to the parking lot via the beach. This is about a 4.5-mile round-trip walk. If you are not up for this, the loop out to Trail 1 is only 1.5 miles round trip, and it is considerably less strenuous. Note that hikers are directed to stay on the trails; there is a \$50 fine for walking in the dunes. Also, please respect private property when you walk the trails.

Birding Sandy Neck in Spring

As winter's cold abates and the promise of spring fills the air, sea watching becomes a major draw at Sandy Neck. Good diversity and numbers of waterfowl winter here or pass by this shore on their way to northern breeding areas. Especially astute observers may spot an endangered North Atlantic right whale or its blow far offshore.

You may see lingering alcids, especially Razorbills, and spot Northern Gannets migrating by or plunge-diving to feed. On the Marsh Trail, large numbers of American Black Ducks may be joined by smaller groups of Mallards, Hooded Mergansers, or Green-winged Teal. A good early spring walk around the Trail 2 loop may turn up 15–20 species of waterbirds, including less common species such as Red-necked Grebe or Northern Pintail.

On the Marsh Trail, early songbirds begin to accumulate in March and into April, as Red-winged Blackbirds stake out territories in the reeds, Tree Swallows return to forage and claim nesting boxes, and the first Pine Warblers begin trilling from the pitch pines. Yellow-rumped Warblers and American Tree Sparrows begin to drop in numbers, most disappearing by mid-May. On the beach, Piping Plovers start to appear in late March or early April, around the same time as Ospreys show up at their platform nests in the marsh.

The bulk of songbird and shorebird migration occurs in May when the flood of neotropical migrants offers an everchanging menu of possible passerine sightings. Although Sandy Neck has never been considered a prime spring migration site, increased coverage by observers in recent years has revealed a good diversity of migrants in the dune vegetation and maritime forest. The low-lying thickets and stunted trees often allow up-close looks at species that can be difficult to see high in the treetops on the mainland. Sandy Neck seems to be a mini migrant trap within the larger coastal migrant trap that is Cape Cod. Under certain weather conditions, impressive fallouts can occur, particularly later in May. A total of 24 species of warbler has been recorded on Sandy Neck, including uncommon species such as Yellow-throated, Mourning, Cape May, and Canada. Empids, which are generally difficult to find on the Cape, are frequently present from mid-May into early June. On a good fallout day, checklists of 70-plus species are possible on the 4.5-mile Trail 2 loop. Shorebird migration tends to be unimpressive in spring, though occasional rarities may show up. A Black-necked Stilt paid a visit in 2021.

The best way to bird spring migration on Sandy Neck is to walk the Marsh Trail out to Trail 2, stopping to check all substantial patches of dune vegetation along the way. On the map, I have indicated a few areas that have been particularly productive in the past: a wild cranberry bog along Trail 1, an island of upland vegetation—private property but you can bird around the base—just past Trail 1, and a wooded hillside about halfway between Trail 1 and Trail 2. The area immediately around the hikers' parking lot is often productive as well. While walking the Marsh Trail, be vigilant for calling Clapper Rails and early Saltmarsh and Seaside sparrows. The vast area of wild land between trails 2 and 4 contains some of the best migrant habitat on the entire Neck, with many wet swales and thickets, and is likely excellent for birding. The significant exertion required to reach this area has left it fairly underbirded, but for those intrepid enough to explore the 9-mile or so loop to Trail 4, this may be an excellent area to bird.

Birding Sandy Neck in Summer

Not surprisingly, summer brings prodigious crowds to Sandy Neck, and birders



Snowy Owl.

may feel that *Homo sapiens* greatly outnumber birds. Nonetheless, there is good birding to be had here in summer. Several interesting and relatively uncommon nesters can be found in the dunes and marsh, pelagics are possible during summer storms, and early shorebird migration provides another avian attraction from mid-July onward.

As noted above, to park in the main lot you will need a town beach sticker from Barnstable or Sandwich, or you will have to pay a fee unless you arrive before 8:00 am or after 5:00 pm. Parking in the hikers' lot remains free. I advise that you arrive early in the morning because the human traffic is minimal and the birds are generally at their most active. You may also want to bird on a weekday in lieu of the busy weekends. Finally, keep in mind that there is little to no shade on the trails, and sun protection and water are a must.

Breeding birds on Sandy Neck include some uncommon to rare species for the Cape. In the dunes and along the marsh trail, you can find Brown Thrasher, Prairie Warbler, and Field Sparrow; in the marsh proper there is a healthy population of breeding Saltmarsh Sparrows that are easy to observe. Seaside Sparrows breed here and you often can find them singing along the Marsh Trail, particularly in the higher marsh close to Trail 1. Clapper Rail is another breeder that you can often hear from the Marsh Trail. American Oystercatcher, uncommon for the mid-Cape, may be found farther out and less accessible to birders. Piping Plovers and Least Terns breed in good numbers on the beach, and ORV access to the outer beach is often closed for parts of the summer when birds are nesting.

Summer storms have the potential to bring in pelagic birds, particularly when strong winds blow from the northeast. The best spot for storm birding is on the lee side of the bathhouse, which provides protection from rain and northeast winds. All four shearwaters—Great, Cory's, Sooty, and Manx—are possible, as well as Leach's Storm-Petrels and Wilson's Storm-Petrels and potentially jaegers or phalaropes. Even during calmer periods, it is occasionally possible to spot a Wilson's Storm-Petrel or Cory's Shearwater offshore, particularly later in the summer. Common Terns are frequent all summer as are Roseate Terns in fewer numbers. They may be joined by Black and Forster's terns in late summer. Large numbers of Laughing Gulls are common. A Franklin's Gull was found in August 2020.

Shorebird migration begins in mid-July with the first southbound Semipalmated Plovers, Least and Semipalmated sandpipers, and Short-Billed Dowitchers arriving from their Arctic breeding grounds. Numbers steadily grow as August rolls around, and less common species such as White-rumped and Pectoral sandpiper and Whimbrel may put in appearances. Heron and egret numbers often ramp up sharply in the mid-to-late summer as well when postbreeding dispersal brings in birds from far-flung breeding locales. Less common species such as Little Blue Heron and Glossy Ibis have been



Glaucous Gull.

documented during this time. Swallows begin to amass in the marsh, with enormous flocks of Tree Swallows and fewer numbers of other species that you can pick out of the crowd.

Birding Sandy Neck in Fall

Longtime Cape Cod birders know that the fall is the best season for birding the Cape, and Sandy Neck is no exception. Both diversity and numbers of birds peak in September, and the potential

for unusual sightings remains high all the way through the season. In recent years, the list of fall rarities has included Brown Pelican, Brown Booby, Sabine's and Little gulls, Caspian and Royal terns, Long-tailed Jaeger, and Pacific Loon. Truly, anything is possible at this time of year.

Shorebird migration becomes a major draw from late July on, and by September has reached its peak. An enormous high-tide roost forms at the tip of Sandy Neck in the fall, and birders who can find a way to get out there can spend hours sorting through the thousands of Black-bellied Plovers, Semipalmated Plovers, Sanderlings, and other sandpipers looking for rare species. Those who cannot make it out to the tip need not despair, because there are often sizable roosts along the front beach, particularly closer to Trail 2. Hundreds of peeps may cluster in these roosts, and it is not uncommon to pick out Western, White-rumped or, rarely, Baird's sandpiper among these groups. Pectoral Sandpiper, Whimbrel, and American Golden-Plover are more common on the marsh side or at the tip but occasionally are seen on the beach. Red Knots, rare on the Mid Cape, are often seen with Black-bellied Plovers near the tip. As fall progresses, most of the peeps thin out, but large flocks of Dunlin and Sanderlings remain. The shorebirds draw in good numbers of raptors: Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks, Merlin, and Peregrine Falcon.

Songbird migration can be impressive in the fall, with at least 15 species of warblers documented, including Mourning, Orange-crowned, and Cape May. Tree Swallow numbers can grow enormous, with a high count in eBird of around 10,000 birds. Yellow-rumped Warblers may form large, busy flocks. The areas of tall spartina grass where tidal creeks approach the marsh trail can be good for Nelson's and Seaside sparrows. American Tree Sparrow numbers climb later in fall. Other interesting passerines recorded in recent years in late fall include White-crowned and Lincoln's sparrows, Red and White-winged crossbills, Common Redpoll, Philadelphia Vireo, and Pine Siskin. In the dunes near the tip of Sandy Neck, Snow Buntings and a few American Pipits or Lapland Longspurs usually join the resident Horned Larks. Although no western vagrants have been recorded on Sandy Neck in the fall, this is likely due to a paucity of observers, since there is much excellent habitat to support them here. It is well worth a walk along the Marsh Trail out to Trail 2 to see if anything interesting has flown in.



Red Knot.

Pelagic birding is also at its best in fall, particularly during nor'easters. During these storms, birds can be blown into Cape Cod Bay from Stellwagen Bank and become trapped by the winds. The longer and stronger the wind has been blowing from the northeast, the better the chances of extraordinary sightings. Birds expected during even minor blows may include all four common shearwaters, Northern Gannet, Wilson's and Leach's storm-petrels, Parasitic Jaeger, and

possibly Red-necked Phalarope. More prolonged storms may bring in Pomarine and Long-tailed jaegers, Red Phalarope, Northern Fulmar, or alcids later in the fall. As a rule, winds generally need to be at least 20 mph from the northeast to bring birds into Cape Cod Bay within scope distance of the land-based pelagic birder. A notable exception is Leach's Storm-Petrel, which is often seen even under less extreme conditions. As an example of the potential here, the bomb cyclone event of October 2021 brought in Red Phalarope, Leach's Storm-Petrel, Pomarine and Parasitic jaegers, and Black-legged Kittiwake among enormous numbers of scoters and gannets.

Birding Sandy Neck in Winter

Winter on the Neck can be extreme—at times brutally cold and windy, and seemingly devoid of avian life other than overwintering waterfowl. However, those intrepid enough to explore a bit may find some fascinating birds here. As you may guess from the park's logo, Snowy Owl is an annual attraction, but less publicized highlights such as Northern Shrike, Short-eared Owl, and Rough-legged Hawk can quicken the pulse of a visiting birder.

You can walk the trails in winter, but the effort required is usually less worth it than in other seasons because the marsh and associated dune vegetation hold few birds at this time of year. Nonetheless, you may encounter winter finches, American Tree Sparrow, "Ipswich" Savannah Sparrow, or overwintering half-hardy species such as Hermit Thrush or Gray Catbird along a loop walk around Trails 1 or 2. The shorter triangular walk from the hikers' parking lot along the ORV trail to the main beach, and back via the main parking lot, covers some excellent habitat and is considerably easier to walk. This has been the best area for Northern Shrike in recent years and sometimes has been good for Snowy and Short-eared owls. You can scope this area from the dune observation platform in the main parking lot. Those particularly keen on finding Snowy Owl may, however, need to find a way out to the tip, where these enigmatic beauties have been much more commonly found in recent years.

Sea watching can be quite rewarding in winter, particularly during or shortly after storms. Razorbills are the most common alcid, but careful perusal may turn up murres, Dovekie, or a Black Guillemot. Less common waterfowl seen occasionally along with the ubiquitous scoters and mergansers include Harlequin Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye,

and King Eider. A nice variety of gulls has been recorded here in winter; Iceland, Lesser Black-backed, Glaucous, and Black-headed are among the most interesting. Shorebirds consist mainly of Dunlin, Sanderling, and occasionally Black-bellied Plover, but rarely Purple Sandpiper has been seen on the beach side, and you may find a late Greater Yellowlegs still haunting the marsh. Raptors often seen in winter include Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Cooper's Hawk, and, rarely, Rough-legged Hawk.

During irruption years, winter finches may be found in numbers here. In winter 2020, the abundant pitch pines attracted flocks of Red Crossbills, and the weedy areas of the dunes brought in large numbers of Common Redpolls. Christmas Bird Counts on Sandy Neck have turned up unusual passerines such as Orange-Crowned Warbler, Rusty Blackbird, and Yellow-breasted Chat. The large thicket bordering the hikers' parking lot near the gatehouse is often productive and well worth working, even if you do not wish to walk the trails.

Birding Barnstable Great Marsh

You can easily bird the Great Marsh from a few interesting vantage points off of Route 6A. (See the map.) These places provide a different perspective on various microhabitats within the marsh and greatly enhance the potential for finding interesting birds. I will briefly review three areas, each with unique views and birding possibilities.

Smith's Dock Sanctuary is a tiny conservation area owned by the Orenda Land Trust. To reach it, follow 6A east 1.9 miles from Sandy Neck Road, and turn left on Meadow Lane (A). Follow this one-lane road 0.3 mile to the conservation area. This spot provides a view of the high marsh with extensive phragmites stands and numerous areas of high spartina grass along tidal creeks. This habitat is good for Nelson's and Seaside sparrows in season. Marsh Wren may overwinter here, and there are often yellowlegs or other shorebirds working the marsh during migration. If you are fortunate, you may be able to clap up some rails or an American Bittern. As a side note, the adjacent Margaret G. Wyman Sanctuary, also owned by Orenda, is an important preserve that protects nesting habitat for endangered diamondback terrapins.

Navigation Road (B) is a celebrated viewpoint that has produced some great sightings over the years; currently 192 species are recorded for this eBird hotspot. To reach it, travel 0.8 mile east from Meadow Lane, and turn left onto Navigation Road. This is a deeply rutted, rough dirt road, but most passenger cars should be able to handle it if you drive cautiously. After 0.3 mile, there is a small parking spot on the right. Do not drive any farther down the road—it enters the marsh and gets very soft. Cars have gotten seriously stuck here. A short walk from the parking area opens to a spectacular view of nearly the entire Great Marsh. Birding potential is tremendous here and includes a wide variety of shorebirds, waterfowl, passerines, rails, waders, and raptors. Snowy and Short-eared owls are annual, and Northern Shrike has been seen several times. Other exciting finds over the years have included Ruff, Rough-legged Hawk, Western Kingbird, and Long-billed Dowitcher. One often-productive strategy is to bird the incoming high tide when many of the more secretive marsh birds may be flushed and emerge into the open. The abundant thickets that line the entire road can be great for passerine birding.

Mass Audubon's **Long Pasture Wildlife Sanctuary** warrants an entire article itself, but for our purposes, consider it a good spot to view the eastern side of the Great Marsh and adjacent Barnstable Harbor and to scope the tip of Sandy Neck. To reach it, travel 6.2 miles east along Route 6A, and turn left on Bone Hill Road (C). Take Bone Hill Road for 0.2 mile to the sanctuary entrance, where parking is available. There is a small fee for nonmembers. This is an excellent spot to launch a kayak to paddle over to the tip of Sandy Neck. From the end of Bone Hill Road, the harbor opens out before you, with stunning views of the Sandy Neck lighthouse and the cottage colony. Waterfowl, terns, gulls, and shorebirds are abundant in season. Extensive flats are exposed at low tide, allowing the adventurous birder to walk out and explore. Be aware that the tide comes in exceptionally quickly. The best shorebirding tends to be about 0.25 mile east from the end of the road, where a large sandbar emerges at lower tides. Interesting birds found from this vantage point have included Snow Goose, Red and Red-necked phalaropes, Black-headed Gull, Caspian and Arctic terns, and Black Skimmer. In winter, you can scope across the harbor for Snowy Owl on the tip of Sandy Neck.

Summary

Sandy Neck Beach Park and the Barnstable Great Marsh are truly special treasures and some of the most important protected land for birds on Cape Cod. Both areas are accessible and relatively easy to bird, while still retaining a feel of wildness and pristine natural beauty. Though Sandy Neck may get very busy at times, it is not difficult to escape the crowds and find spots where you can feel a blissful solitude, a sense of oneness with the plants and animals of this special place. An intrepid birder has the potential to find a great diversity of species and discover exciting rarities. It is my sincere hope that this article inspires you to explore this majestic area and to continue to add to its impressive birding heritage. 🦅

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Peter Crosson is a physician and avid birder who lives in West Barnstable, Massachusetts. He is passionate about local-patch birding and enjoys discovering new hotspots in and around his town. When not birding, he enjoys time with his wife and two kids and their mini-schnauzer Sara.

Eleventh Report of the Maine Bird Records Committee

Trevor B. Persons, Tom Aversa, Kyle A. Lima, Magill Weber, and Louis R. Bevier



Maine's first confirmed Barolo Shearwater was found in the middle of the Gulf of Maine on August 13, 2021. Photograph by Doug Gochfeld.

The Eleventh report of the Maine Bird Records Committee (hereafter ME-BRC or the committee) summarizes 85 reports involving 43 species that were evaluated and decided during 2021. The committee accepted 72 records for an acceptance rate of 85%. Although many reports were recent, the years of occurrences ranged from 1915 to 2021. The committee continued its quest to review a backlog of historic reports. Nearly half of reviewed reports (41) were birds recorded previous to 2018.

Three new species were added to the state list: Barolo Shearwater (*Puffinus baroli*), Masked Booby (*Sula dactylatra*), and Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*). In addition, the recent split of Mew Gull added one to the state's total, as both Common Gull (*Larus canus*) and Short-billed Gull (*Larus brachyrhynchus*) had previously been accepted as subspecies of Mew Gull. The total number of documented species on Maine's state list is now 467. The official list of bird species recorded in Maine, our review procedures, and the list of members can be found at the committee's website: <<http://sites.google.com/site/mainebirdrecordscommittee>>

Records in this report are grouped by species; records accepted and those not accepted are listed within the same species account. Each record provides the location, county (*italicized*), date(s) of occurrence, names of observers or contributors, and committee record number. Documentation was provided by the observers listed or, in

some cases, was obtained from publicly published websites. All reviewed materials and member comments are archived. If known, the names of finders are listed first and separated from other names by a semicolon. Photographic, video, or audio evidence reviewed is denoted by a dagger (†); written notes are denoted by an asterisk (*). As always, the committee strongly encourages written submissions even when there are photographs. Species accounts follow the current taxonomic classification and sequence adopted as of 2021 by the American Ornithological Society (list available at <<http://checklist.americanornithology.org/taxa/>>).

Species Accounts

Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*). Reports were accepted from Nobleboro, Lincoln, December 22–29, 2014 (Nicole Graffam; John Weinrich†, Louis Bevier†, Margaret Viens†; 2014-019) and Mars Hill, *Aroostook*, October 28–31, 2015 (Bill Sheehan†; 2015-019).

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*). Two older reports were accepted: South Berwick, York, December 15, 2011, to January 11, 2012 (Jason Lambert, Doug Hitchcox, Paul Miliotis; Andrew Aldrich†, Rob Speirst†; 2012-027) and Fort Fairfield, *Aroostook*, October 13–15, 2014 (Bill Sheehan†; Jerry Smith†, John Wyatt, Clay Hardy; 2014-020). NOT ACCEPTED, ORIGIN QUESTIONED: A bird at Machias, *Washington*, June 18 to September 19, 2004 (2004-003) was considered a possible escapee given the unusual summer timing, as well as occurring shortly before the species became a regular fall vagrant to Maine.

Tundra Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*). Three immature birds were at Little Ossipee Pond, Waterboro, York, October 31 to December 11, 2020 (Roland Gendron; Louis Bevier†, Charles Duncan†, Doug Hitchcox†; 2020-045), and another was at Unity Pond, *Waldo*, November 15, 2020 (Tom Aversa†; 2020-048).

Eared Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*). Presumably the same breeding-plumaged bird from 2009 returned to the Sanford sewage lagoons, York, May 17 to August 12, 2010 (David Doubleday, Andy Aldrich; Marie Jordan†; 2010-021).

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*). Maine's fourth accepted record (with about 10 more unreviewed) was photographed off Sears Island, *Waldo*, January 26, 2017 (John Wyatt†; 2017-053).

Chuck-will's-widow (*Antrostomus carolinensis*). Presumably the same singing bird—and possibly half of a breeding pair—from 2018–2020 returned to Orland, *Hancock*, May 15 to July 24, 2021 (Michael Good†; Rich MacDonald†; 2021-011). Another singing bird was voice-recorded at Kennebunkport, York, May 20, 2021 (David Doubleday†; 2021-033).

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*). An adult male visited a residence near Boot Cove, Lubec, *Washington*, September 6–11, 2012 (Juanita and David Pressley; Eileen Clark†; 2012-025). An immature female frequented a yard in Biddeford, York, October 17 to November 10, 2012, and was captured and banded on November 2 (Pat Moynahan, Marian Zimmerman; Doug Hitchcox†; 2012-028)

Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus/sasin*). An adult female *Selasphorus* hummingbird photographed at Pownal, *Cumberland*, July 31 to August 1, 2021 (Derek and Jeanette Lovitch†; Ethan Whitaker†; 2021-028) was likely a Rufous, but details in the photos were insufficient to eliminate Allen's.

Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*). One was at Scarborough Marsh, *Cumberland*, and nearby Stratton Island, York, June 17 to July 24, 2013 (Normand Bonneau†; Louis Bevier†,



This Black-necked Stilt frequented Scarborough Marsh and nearby Stratton Island from June 17 to July 24, 2013. Photograph June 17 by Normand Bonneau.

Mike Fahay†, Margaret Vienst†; 2013-027). This is only the second report accepted by the committee, with eight others (dating back to 1889) pending review.

Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*).

One was at Seawall Beach, Phippsburg, *Sagadahoc*, May 21–22, 1983 (Roger Muskat; Peter Vickery†, Denny Abbot†; 1983-002); this is the earliest record with physical evidence, the committee having accepted a sight report from 1953. Another made a brief appearance in Ogunquit, *York*, May 21, 2021 (Carolyn Grimes†; 2021-014).

Ruff (*Calidris pugnax*). Two older

reports were accepted: one from Scarborough

Marsh, *Cumberland*, July 27–August 4, 2002 (Lysle Brinker*; Howie Nielsen, Charles Duncan; 2002-003), and another from Biddeford Pool, *York*, May 14–26, 2004 (Todd Day; Luke Seitz*; 2004-004). The date ranges reported in Vickery and Duncan (2020) for the above differ: “27 July–3 Aug 2002 or later” (last date of August 4 is correct per C. Duncan *in litt.*); and “1–26 May 2004” (first date of May 1 lacks documentation and is assumed to be an error). An apparent immature female was photographed at Clinton, *Kennebec*, May 5, 2021 (Tom Aversa†; Louis Bevier†, Ethan Whitaker†; 2021-015). NOT ACCEPTED, IDENTIFICATION QUESTIONED: A bird at Scarborough Marsh, *Cumberland*, August 5, 2020 (2020-024) was possibly a Ruff, but the committee agreed that the description was inadequate to completely rule out other species.

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*). The oldest report so far reviewed and accepted by the committee was one at Biddeford Pool, *York*, August 3, 1957 (Rinda-Mary Payne*, Mr. and Mrs. E. Woodard Payne; 1957-001); this was originally published in Payne (1957). One adult was at Seawall Beach, Phippsburg, *Sagadahoc*, June 2–3, 1984 (Peter Vickery, Denny Abbott†; 1984-002). A juvenile, rarely encountered in the Northeast, was at Thomaston, *Knox*, October 3–9, 2002 (Mark Libby; Lysle Brinker†, Curtis Marantz; 2002-002). Although over a dozen historic reports remain to be reviewed, the species has not been seen in Maine since 2008.

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*). One immature bird was photographed from Mount Desert Rock, *Hancock*, August 4, 2021 (Nathan Dubrow†, Levi Sheridan†, Tess Moore, Georgia Lattig; 2021-025).

Ivory Gull (*Pagophila eburnea*). A suite of records was accepted from years past. An immature, originally reported by Norton (1918), was at Portland, *Cumberland*, January 4–7, 1918 (Walter Rich; Arthur Norton*; 1918-001). An adult was captured at Boothbay Harbor, *Lincoln*, January 11, 1952 (Robert Davis; Alfred Gross†; 1952-001). The bird was given to Bowdoin College, where it was photographed and prepared as a specimen after it died on January 27, 1952 (Gross 1952); the current whereabouts of the specimen are unknown. An immature bird at Eastport, *Washington*, stayed from January 1–10, 1971 (Nellie Ross, Arlo T. Bates; David Libby†; 1971-002); a photograph was published in Finch (1971). Another immature enjoyed a Maine winter on Monhegan Island, *Lincoln*, December 30, 1986, to March 4, 1987 (Charles Duncan†; Dave DeReamus†, Peter Vickery; 1986-002). A more recent bird, also an immature, was off Swans Island, *Hancock*, December 21, 2020 (Charles Rabatin†; 2020-052).

Franklin's Gull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*). A breeding-plumaged bird, presumably the same individual, was seen at Cutler and then Machias, *Washington*, May 22 and then June 3–7,



This Kentucky Warbler was at Mount Desert Rock August 24–26, 2021. Photograph August 24 by Nathan Dubrow.

1985, respectively (Charles Duncan†; Peter Vickery*; 1985-003). Two recent fall records of immatures were also accepted: Lamoine, *Hancock*, November 5, 2020 (Nathan Dubrow†; 2020-046) and Sanford Lagoons, *York*, September 9, 2021 (Robert Dixon†; 2021-035).

Common Gull (*Larus canus*). A well-described and sketched first-year bird was found at Martin’s Point, Portland, *Cumberland*, May 20, 2000 (Louis Bevier; Don Mairs*, Linda Woodard, Turk Duddy; 2000-002). The bird showed characters suggesting it was from European or western Asian taxa, probably nominate *L. c. canus* and not east

Asian *L. c. kamtschatschensis*. Only the May 20th date is accepted. The committee does not have documentation to support the published date span of May 20–26 in Perkins (2000). This is Maine’s third and oldest accepted record of Common Gull, which is a recent split of Mew Gull into two species, the other being Short-billed Gull (*L. brachyrhynchus*), which has also occurred in Maine. Some older reports of Mew Gull have yet to be reviewed and the species involved determined.

Gull-billed Tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica*). NOT ACCEPTED, IDENTIFICATION

QUESTIONED: A sight report from Harbor Island, Friendship, *Knox*, August 24, 1949 (1949-001) described the “short thick black bill” and “queer nasal katy-did-like call” as supportive characters but failed to describe the plumage (Cruikshank 1949). Although the observer was highly regarded and experienced with the species, the committee thought the documentation did not rule out the possibility of other species, such as Forster’s Tern (*Sterna forsteri*). Historic published accounts of sightings without physical evidence often do not provide careful details. Even though possibly correct, such sight records are perhaps best treated in a separate category.

Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*). A breeding-plumaged bird was at Biddeford, *York*, July 29, 1994 (Lysle Brinker†, Robby Lambert; 1994-007); the photograph originally published in Despres and Brinker (1994a) does not allow determination to subspecies. One photographed at Mount Desert Rock, *Hancock*, July 6, 2021 (Nathan Dubrow†, Levi Sheridan†; 2021-020) showed characters of Cabot’s Sandwich Tern (*T. s. aculflavidus*).

Red-billed Tropicbird (*Phaethon aethereus*). Maine’s famous and faithful Red-billed Tropicbird returned to Seal Island National Wildlife Refuge, *Knox*, for its sixteenth year from May 17 to August 7, 2020 (Keenan Yakola; Miles Brengle†, Tim Dunn†, Sophia Wong†; 2020-010) and its seventeenth year from May 6 to August 2, 2021 (Keenan Yakola, Elaine Beaudoin, Coco Faber; Ethan Whitaker†; 2021-009).

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*). A stunning breeding-plumage bird was encountered in Boothbay Harbor, *Lincoln*, October 11, 2021 (Derek Lovitch; Ian Carlson†, Ethan Whitaker†, and many others who submitted photos to eBird; 2021-039).

Yellow-nosed Albatross (*Thalassarche chlororhynchos*). An adult photographed from Matinicus Rock, *Knox*, July 6, 1999 (Anthony Hill†, Sue Schubel, and others; 1999-001), was published in Petersen (1999, page 363 and photos page 445). The committee started review but made no decision in 2006 given concerns by some members that Buller’s Albatross (*Thalassarche bulleri*) could not be eliminated. Circulation resumed in 2020, and the record was



This adult male Fork-tailed Flycatcher at Stratton Island September 2–3, 2011, showed the number and extent of notched outer primaries typical of the nominate migratory South American subspecies *Tyrannus savana savana*. Photograph September 2 by Luke Seitz.

accepted in 2021. Current members noted that Buller's shows extensive yellow on the bill that is visible at long range based on their experience. Thus, the all-dark mandible shown in the photos was thought real and supported Yellow-nosed. Minor subtleties of the underwing pattern also better fit Yellow-nosed, showing a slightly narrower black leading edge and broader black trailing edge than Buller's. The gray wash to the head on the Matinicus Rock bird is typical of Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross (*T. c. chlororhynchos*). There are now seven accepted records of this species in Maine, with two older specimen records not yet reviewed.

Barolo Shearwater (*Puffinus baroli*).

Maine's first state record was found in the middle of the Gulf of Maine approximately

160 kilometers south of Bar Harbor, *Hancock*, August 13, 2021 (Doug Gochfeld†; 2021-029). The observer noted the small size as well as rapid and shallow wingbeat low to the water, which is thought to be characteristic of Barolo Shearwater. Photographs show a small black and white shearwater with a thin, short bill, an extensively pale face with the eye almost isolated therein, a limited extension of dark on the hindneck, extensively pale underwings, and a short tail. A few images of this distant bird show an apparent silvery bloom to the outer secondaries and thin white tips to the greater secondary coverts and possibly the median coverts as well. The closest relative and most similar species is Boyd's Shearwater (*P. boydi*). The combination of mostly white face, limited dark in hindneck and two-toned pattern on upperwing along with the distinctive flight style described suggest the bird was a Barolo rather than a Boyd's, which so far has not been documented in the northwest Atlantic (Flood and van der Vliet 2019, Robb and Mullarney 2008). Fresh-plumage Boyd's may show thin white tips to upper wing coverts, but not the two-toned grayish bloom to wing (Flood and van der Vliet 2019). This bird was at the western end of the undersea feature called the Northeast Channel, which is the entry point for most of the Gulf of Maine's pelagic waters between Georges Bank and Browns Bank. The mouth of the Northeast Channel, east of this sighting, is perhaps the epicenter of Barolo Shearwater observations in the western Atlantic Ocean (D. Gochfeld *in litt.*). There are at least nine other recent records from late July to late August spanning the waters south of Nantucket north to the mouth of the Northeast Channel, all since 2007. Two sightings south of Sable Island, Nova Scotia, by Bruce Mactavish, September 23–24, 2003, preceded the above and are seasonally the latest credible reports (Mactavish 2004). A specimen from September 1, 1896, at Sable Island, Nova Scotia, was the first North American record of the species (Lee 1988). Maine has one previous report involving a briefly seen bird located not far from the present record; that bird was reported October 30, 2019, and not accepted given the limited details and late date (Hitchcox et al. 2020).

Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*). An older subadult male with black mottling on the breast was present at Appledore Island, Isle of Shoals, *York*, August 20–21, 2021 (Elizabeth Craig; Jim Coyer†, Heidi Levin†; 2021-030). The committee recognized the difficulty in ruling out Great (*F. minor*) and Ascension Frigatebird (*F. aquila*), but the lack of a white wedge at the base of the humerus on the underwing, which is retained into later plumage cycles on Ascension, probably eliminates that species as well as Lesser (*F. ariel*). Based on photographs



Maine's first Masked Booby was a one-day wonder at Mount Desert Rock, a day after a Brown Booby was last seen on the island. Photograph August 9, 2021, by Nathan Dubrow.

showing the mottling on the breast and distinctive tail wear, this bird was the same individual seen—and better photographed—in Nova Scotia, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts as Hurricane Henri advanced north along the Atlantic coast.

Masked Booby (*Sula dactylatra*).

Researchers on Mount Desert Rock, *Hancock*, documented Maine's first Masked Booby on August 9, 2021 (Nathan Dubrow†; Georgia Lattig, Zach Aiken). Even more noteworthy, the Masked Booby came on the heels of a Brown Booby roosting on the island, putting this week in the record books as “The Rock’s”—and Maine’s—first back-to-back booby doubleheader.

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*). An adult bird was at Great Duck Island, *Hancock*, July 27, 2021 (Jasper White†; 2021-023). This was likely the same bird that frequented Mount Desert Rock, *Hancock*, August 2–8, 2021 (Georgia Lattig; Nathan Dubrow†, Levi Sheridan†; 2021-024). NOT ACCEPTED, IDENTIFICATION QUESTIONED: A compelling sight report from Biddeford Pool, *York*, on July 8, 2021 (2021-021) was likely a Brown Booby, but the limited details observed at the great distance the bird was seen meant other, albeit less likely, species could not be eliminated, for example a dark immature Red-footed Booby (*S. sula*).

Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*). NOT ACCEPTED, IDENTIFICATION QUESTIONED: Three sight reports were intriguing but lacked sufficient detail to rule out the possibility of misidentifications: North Yarmouth, *Cumberland*, May 8, 2020 (2020-055); Deblois, *Washington*, October 10, 2020 (2020-054); and Harrington, *Washington*, May 23, 2021 (2021-017).

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*). A second-year bird was photographed at Sanford, *York*, June 17, 2015 (Josh Fecteau†; 2015-022). NOT ACCEPTED, IDENTIFICATION QUESTIONED: Although committee members agreed that a report from Warren, *Knox*, July 19, 2015 (2015-023) was likely correct given the reliability of the observer, the extremely brief sighting resulted in little reviewable evidence to support the observation.

Eastern Screech-Owl (*Megascops asio*). The committee accepted three reports from the Casco Bay islands off Portland, *Cumberland*. A whinnying bird was recorded on Long Island (John Lortie†; 2021-026) and was present from August 7 to at least September 28, 2021. Two reports from Peaks Island may represent the same rufous-morph bird: May 11, 2020 (Michael LaCombe†, Sam Wainwright, Patty Wainwright; 2020-053) and January 8 to February 26, 2021 (Sam Wainwright†, Patty Wainwright, Michael LaCombe; Michael Boardman†, Matthew Gilbert†; 2021-001). This species remains an enigma outside southern York County, where it is also sparsely reported.

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*). One was at Portland, *Cumberland*, October 23–27, 2015 (Bill Bunn; Gordon Smith†; 2015-025).

Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*). NOT ACCEPTED, IDENTIFICATION QUESTIONED: The committee agreed that a sight report from Harpswell, *Cumberland*, September 27, 2021 (2021-038) by an observer familiar with Neotropical flycatchers was most likely a Sulphur-bellied. However, most members thought that other,



This Magnificent Frigatebird, the same individual seen from Nova Scotia south to Massachusetts, was at Appledore Island in the Isle of Shoals on August 20–21, 2021. Photograph August 20 by Jim Coyer.

albeit less likely species, particularly Streaked Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes maculatus*) and Variegated Flycatcher (*Empidonomus varius*), could not be eliminated and were not considered carefully at the time of observation.

Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*). The committee accepted an October 30–31, 1915, record of an immature male collected at Scarborough, *Cumberland* (George Oliver; 1915-001), originally reported by Norton (1916). Photographs and measurements taken of the specimen by Louis Bevier in 2005 demonstrated the relatively long, thin bill and wing-tip formula considered diagnostic for the species (Traylor 1979, Phillips 1994). Formerly catalogued as Portland Society of Natural History #773, the specimen was, as of 2005, housed in the

collection of the Department of Zoology, University of Maine, Orono. This is a historically important specimen, being one of the oldest examples of long-distance vagrancy in Tropical Kingbird. This bird has been ascribed to the subspecies *T. m. satrapa*, which includes as a synonym *T. m. chloronotus*, under which name this specimen is found in older literature (Palmer 1949, American Ornithologists' Union 1957; see Slipp 1942 for determination of subspecies by Herbert Friedmann). West Mexican populations of the subspecies *satrapa* are sometimes split as *T. m. occidentalis*; Pyle 1997 lists the Maine record under *satrapa* while recognizing *occidentalis*, but diagnosis may not be possible even if these subspecies are recognized.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savana*). Five reports were accepted, bringing the state's total to eight, with about an equal number of historic reports yet to be reviewed. An adult at Kennebunk, *York*, October 1–8, 1976 (Richard Aaronian, Sibley Higginbotham†, Allen Thomas, Denny Abbott; 1976-001) was first reported, with a photograph, by Finch (1977). Photographs of a worn adult at Fort Foster, Kittery, *York*, May 18–31, 1994 (Judy Trull, Lysle Brinker†, Peter Vickery*; 1994-005) originally appeared in Despres and Brinker (1994b). A molting male was at Brunswick, *Cumberland*, June 22, 2012 (Colleen McKenna; Doug Hitchcox†, Louis Bevier*†; 2012-029), and a freshly plumaged adult male was at Stratton Island, *York*, September 2–3, 2011 (Luke Seitz†; 2011-021); photographs of the Brunswick and Stratton Island males showed notched outer primaries consistent with nominate *T. s. savana*. Finally, an immature bird was at Kennebunkport, *York*, May 21–22, 2021 (Laura Zitske; Doug Hitchcox†, Josh Fecteau†; 2021-013).

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*). One was well described from Machiasport, *Washington*, June 10, 1990 (Louis Bevier, Fred Purnell; 1990-004). A regularly occurring species during much of the twentieth century—last confirmed breeding in 1975—but none have been documented from Maine since 2009 (Vickery 2020).

Rock Wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*). Maine's second record remained along the breakwater at Perkins Cove, *York*, from November 27, 2020, to February 1, 2021, where it delighted hundreds of birders (Diana Onacki†; Sean Hatch†, Henry Mauer†, and many others; 2020-051). This provides the first record with physical evidence including photos, videos, and audio recordings. The previous record was a well-described sight record.

Sedge Wren (*Cistothorus stellaris*). One heard at Waldoboro, *Lincoln*, May 22, 1996, led



Apparently the only surviving documentation from an era before digital cameras became common birding accessories is this sketch of a breeding-plumaged male Ruff at Biddeford Pool May 14–26, 2004. Sketch May 22 by Luke Seitz.

(Chris Michaud†*; 2021-004). Another appeared in heavily birded Capisic Pond Park, Portland, *Cumberland*, where it was viewed by hundreds from January 29 to February 22, 2021 (Brendan McKay*; Chris Sayers†*, Louis Bevier*, Charles Duncan†, Henry Mauer†, Laurie Pocher†, Julian Hought†; 2021-005). It appeared to be an Icelandic-breeding *T. i. coburni* based on the overall bulkiness, dark legs, and heavy droplet-shaped spots on the flanks and undertail coverts (Yann Kolbeinsson, *pers. comm.*). The Maine records were part of an irruption that included at least ten reports from the Canadian Maritimes.

Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*). An alternate-plumaged, second-year male made a well-timed visit to Seal Cove, Tremont, *Hancock*, on May 29, 2015 (Edison Buenaño; Craig Kesselheim*, Becky Marvil†, Louis Bevier†*; 2015-024) that coincided with the Acadia Birding Festival. It represented only the second Maine record in the last 15 years for this vagrant to New England, which was formerly more frequent; it is also more typical in fall.

LeConte’s Sparrow (*Ammospiza leconteii*). A molting juvenile found at a working farm in Unity, *Waldo*, completed its molt to basic plumage from September 14 to 28, 2021 (Tom Aversa†*; Louis Bevier†*; 2021-040). It was the fifth record accepted by the committee, with several more yet to be reviewed. Because the arrival date is earlier than most regional records, this individual may have originated from a population in southern Quebec.

Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*). A singing male that was photographed and audio-recorded at Norridgewock, *Somerset*, May 25 to June 14, 2001, was the first report reviewed and accepted by the committee (Wally Sumner; Louis Bevier†*, Peter Vickery; 2001-

to the discovery of four or more individuals and potential breeding at that site July 15 to August 25, 1996 (Ted and Delia Mohlie; Don Reimer*; 1996-005). A singing bird audio recorded at Northeast Creek, Bar Harbor, *Hancock*, June 8–10, 1996, soon led to a pair on July 8 with a nest located July 23; these birds remained to at least August 1, 1996 (Chris Witt; Charles Duncan†; 1996-006). Both records were summarized by Despres and Brinker (1997). A migrant was photographed at Monhegan Island, *Lincoln*, on May 18, 2005 (Steve Walker; Geoff Dennis†; 2005-012). The only accepted record since 2015 was one at Searsport, *Waldo*, from June 22 to July 10, 2020 (Charlie Todd†; Tenzin Jampa†, Louis Bevier†; 2020-022). Although some reported two individuals, this was not definitively proven. This species has declined from uncommon breeder to rare vagrant over the last 40 years. In the future, the committee will only review historic records after 2000.

Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*). This Eurasian thrush was added to the state list with two accepted records of first-winter birds. The first at Pigeon Hill, Steuben, *Washington*, on January 8, 2021, was seen by a single observer who fortuitously photographed it

005). This report was previously published (Petersen 2001). Other older published reports await review. Coincident with the decline of Eastern Meadowlark (*S. magna*) in Maine over the past few decades (Joyce 2020), this western counterpart has become a less frequent vagrant to the state, with only one other report this century in 2002.

Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*). Two accepted records were part of an autumnal mini irruption into New England in 2020. An adult male in Freeport, *Cumberland*, remained from November 8 to 23 (Heather Baker†; Henry Mauer†, and many others; 2020-047), with another in nearly identical plumage photographed at Thomaston, *Knox*, on November 22, 2020 (Angela Osnoe†; 2020-049). At least one member thought that plumages of the two birds differed, and with the two sites approximately 30 miles distant, the committee accepted two orioles.

Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*). A phenotypically pure second-year female was banded and measured at Falmouth, *Cumberland*, May 15, 2021 (Andrew Gilbert, Evan Adams, Patrick Keenan†*; 2021-010). NOT ACCEPTED, IDENTIFICATION QUESTIONED: The description of a bird seen by a single observer at Falmouth, *Cumberland*, September 29, 2021 (2021-036) was possibly correct but supported by a generic description insufficient to confirm this sight report.

Kentucky Warbler (*Geothlypis formosa*). A first-year male was at Mount Desert Rock, *Hancock*, on August 24 and 26, 2021 (Nathan Dubrow†*; 2021-031). A majority of accepted records of this warbler are from offshore islands, with almost all reports coming from coastal locales. NOT ACCEPTED, IDENTIFICATION QUESTIONED: A report of a singing bird heard but not seen at Brunswick, *Cumberland*, June 1, 2021 (2021-019) was not accepted because it was not recorded and the description did not effectively rule out other species.

Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Setophaga nigrescens*). Two records were endorsed, bringing the total accepted by the committee to five. One at Pond Cove, Cape Elizabeth, *Cumberland*, October 29–November 3, 2005 (Charlie Governali; Louis Bevier†*, Bryan Pfeiffer†; 2005-011) that was reported by Ellison and Martin (2006) was either an adult female or, more likely, a first-fall male. A first-year bird, probably a female, was found at Biddeford Pool, *York*, November 21, 2020 (Tara Yeackel†; 2020-050).

Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*). A first-year male was at Capisic Pond Park, Portland, *Cumberland*, from January 14 to at least March 14, 2021 (Frank Paul*; Tom Foley*, Tom Aversa†, Charles Duncan†*; 2021-002). The bird was reported April 13 but was undocumented; thus, March 14 is the last accepted date. The bird's molt progressed to more mature plumage during its stay.

Dedication

The Maine birding community suffered a loss when Patricia (Pat) Moynahan passed away on December 15, 2021. Pat served as a member of the ME-BRC from 2016 to 2019.

Acknowledgments

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Notes on the Birds of Hull, 1896

John Galluzzo

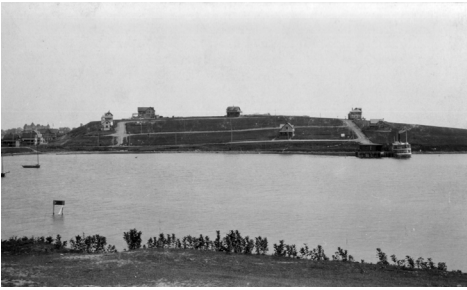


Hull had already started to become a seasonal tourist destination by 1865, but the beach remained wild at that time. All photos courtesy of the Hull Historical Society.

“This list, for it is but little more than a list,” wrote Everett W. Ricker in the introduction of his 36-page *Notes on the Birds of Hull, Massachusetts* in 1896, “I have made up of birds that have either been seen by myself or by my friend Mr. B. and his son, both of whom are well acquainted [sic] with our birds, while a very few have been reported to me by gunners. I have however, only given those in this list that I feel quite sure occur, as I know that it is very easy to make mistakes and the temptations are strong to make as large a list as possible.”

With those words, Ricker dove into a project that has left us, a century and a quarter later, with information not only about the everyday birdlife around Hull in the 1890s, but also a little more than we knew about the everyday human life around town at the time.

So, let us set the scene. Hull, a sandy seven-mile-long peninsula in Boston Harbor, was in its heyday in 1896. Hotels had been in place since the Worrick Inn opened as The Sportsman in 1826, but the clientele had certainly changed through the years. In the early days, Hull was visited for its wildness. Daniel Webster came to the shore to shoot shorebirds. One local entrepreneur, Moses Binney Tower, welcomed Boston



Hull, although never an agricultural hub, was practically treeless in the early 1900s, as evidenced by this postcard of Sagamore Hill.

visitors in the 1840s to his Hull Village “Nantasket House” hotel with many potential adventures, including the opportunity to shoot porpoises from the shore. Hull was indeed a sportsman’s paradise. Henry David Thoreau passed through on his way to Cape Cod, marveling at the wild and natural features of the town.

By the end of the century, such pursuits were fading, for several reasons. Improved steamboat travel, the opening of rail service in 1880 and 1881, a broadened

acceptance of the perceived salubriousness of both the ocean air and saltwater bathing, more hotels, and the acceptance of the idea of idle time for even the common worker led to greater visitation to the peninsula. Where Daniel Webster once rode in a horse-drawn buggy up and down the peninsula looking for plovers, a train line now moved summer visitors among a series of stations from Nantasket, the southern end of the town, to Pemberton, at the northwestern-most tip. The 1870 addition of Nantasket Avenue, the main thoroughfare through town, increased access to the beauty of Hull Village and points beyond, for those still traveling by buggy and barge. Hull just was not as wild in 1896 as it was in 1826.

There also was by 1896 a growing change in the way that Americans interacted with wildlife. Shooting birds had long been a tradition for numerous reasons, including sport, fashion, and even ornithological study. No artist alive could hope to accurately capture a bird in pencil or paint if it was hopping about; to get a still life representation in the age before affordable cameras, a dead bird in the hand was worth more than two flitting around in a bush. It would just be four years later, though, in 1900, that the national Christmas Day tradition of shooting and piling up as many dead birds as possible to determine a winner transformed from the Side Hunt to the Bird Count.

Still, though, as Ricker took to the field in the gentlemanly pursuit of birdwatching in the 1890s, gunners remained, seeking upland gallinaceous birds like quails and pheasants, and ducks of all kinds, mostly for consumption. Hull’s hotels battled through the *Hull Beacon*’s pages in the late 1890s for the title of best coot-stew maker in town. Gun Rock, a prominent outcrop jutting eastward into the ocean at the southern end of the town, allegedly got its name as a “gunning rock,” from which gunners could bag passing Surf, White-winged, and Black scoters, the “coots” of coot stew.

We do have to wonder whether Ricker was the right man for the job. He stated from the beginning that “My chances for observing birds have been rather limited, as I have had only some afternoons and Sundays, during the summer months, thus I have no doubt overlooked some species.” So we have a seasonal snapshot, instead of a year-round one. But Ricker did have a membership to the Boston Natural History Society, so no doubt had some passion for the subject and, quite frankly, he is all that we have as far as chroniclers of late-nineteenth-century Hull birdlife go.



By the 1920s, Hull was overrun with sightseers and beachgoers in summer.

The Hull he knew is almost impossible to envision today. “Hull,” he said, “as every one knows, is a peninsular [sic] with five hills and stretches of level, sandy soil sparsely covered with rather coarse grass. There are very few trees, except those that grow near the hills.” According to the locals, he related, Point Allerton was once covered in trees, and he fully believed that Native Americans had used the land extensively, “as I have found Indian relics all over the hills.” He noted that this scarcity of trees was the reason most of the bird species that bred locally did so in grasslands or in low bushes.

His species accounts, most of which consist of single sentences or half-sentences, shed a little more light on the available habitat. Under his listing for “Cowbirds” (today known as Brown-headed Cowbirds), he stated, “A few small flocks have been seen here lately tagging at the heels of cattle in the pastures.” Under “Meadow Lark” (today’s Eastern Meadowlark), he said, “These larks are very common on the meadows on both sides of Strawberry Hill, in fact several may be heard singing at once while flying around, but they seem as shy as elsewhere in New England.”

Strawberry Hill, a drumlin about halfway up the peninsula, seemed to be a hotspot of the day, as Ricker regularly referenced it. He procured a specimen of a Red Knot that had been “shot on the plains or marshes” near the hill. A friend, “Mr. N.,” reported seeing three Eskimo Curlews—now extinct—near the hill. One Marsh Hawk (today a Northern Harrier) was shot near the hill and brought to Ricker for study. On September 29, 1887, reported Ricker, Mr. F. H. Brackett shot a female European Kestrel at Strawberry Hill. Later, on “July 19, 1892, while I was walking up Strawberry Hill with a friend, we saw a pair of Bobolinks,” he wrote. “The male was very tame and we approached within ten or twelve feet of him...” On May 27, 1893, Ricker personally witnessed a Black Polled Warbler (now known as a Blackpoll Warbler) near the hill.

The wetlands around the hill made for a fantastic wildlife preserve. In the 1960s, the town, county, and state paid for the construction of an extensive concrete seawall on the bayside, reaching southward from Strawberry Hill, after three devastating coastal storms flooded the area in the 1950s. We can now only imagine the way the bay must have occasionally rolled up into the low area south of the hill prior to the wall’s construction.

Point Allerton, the prominent headland at the peninsula’s northernmost point—before the land turns west to head to Pemberton—also revealed its share of wildlife. In June 1894, the infamous Mr. B. took his son fishing off the beacon that stood on the point in those days and witnessed a small flock of Wilson’s Storm-petrels. The same Mr. B. once saw a Night Heron (Black-crowned Night Heron) near the beacon and claimed to have seen a Marbled Godwit nearby as well. As for the Yellow Shafted



Hull's only well-known trees were in the Hull Cemetery. These American Elms ultimately succumbed to Dutch elm disease, leaving the cemetery treeless as the rest of the peninsula reforested.

Flicker (today known as the Northern Flicker), "I have seen several of these birds," Ricker wrote. "Our cat caught a young one, but it was promptly taken from her and flew off apparently all right. I have no doubt that they breed here, on or near Point Allerton." On June 4, 1893, standing at the top of Allerton Hill, Ricker saw a Chimney Swift. At other times, he saw Bronzed Grackles (Common Grackles). He'd seen Snow Buntings and Bank Swallows as well, which nested in holes dug into the eroding seaward-facing cliffs.

"I have spent many an afternoon," he waxed romantically, "lying down in the sweet grass on top of the hill looking out to sea and watching these swallows going and coming."

Of all the locales in Hull that Ricker found appealing, it was the most remote that fascinated him. He called the Shagrocks, so named for the cormorants, or "shags," that long inhabited them, "one of the wildest places in Massachusetts." There it was, it had been reported to him, that an American Bittern had been sighted. It was there that he personally shot a Turnstone (today a Ruddy Turnstone) on Labor Day, 1895.

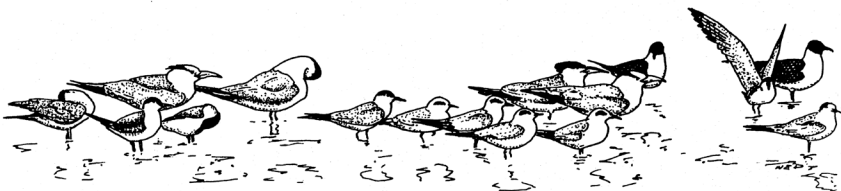
"I shall always remember my first visit to these rough and shaggy rocks when with my friend Philip, I spent several hours exploring them," he wrote:

There were a number of beautiful little grottoes, festooned with various colored sea weed, dripping with water, shining and sparkling wherever the sunlight touched them.

Above the high water mark, were the rough, shaggy rocks, looking beautiful in the sunlight of a fine September day, making it all like a scene from fairy land.

I saw a tin box on a ledge above me, and I could imagine it filled with some musty papers giving the last message from some ill-fated ship. I could not help thinking how these same grand castled rocks would look in a winter's storm with the waves dashing and surging against them; there would be little chance for the poor ship and her crew that were unfortunate enough to be wrecked on these sharp and cruel ledges.

And so at least that bit of the wildness Everett W. Ricker knew in Hull remains. 🐦



The History of *Bird Observer*

Chapter 1: The First Five Years

William E. Davis, Jr.

In 1968, Massachusetts Audubon Society ceased its publication of bird sighting records, *Records of New England Birds*, which, according to many of the more ardent birders of Massachusetts, left a vacuum. To fill this troublesome void, Bob Stymeist asked Steve Grinley of the Brookline Bird Club whether it would be interested in expanding its publication, *Brookline Bird Club Blue Book*, to include Where to Go birding articles and other birding-related material. This led to a meeting in the summer of 1972 at Paula Butler's house in Belmont, attended by Massachusetts Audubon's Jim Baird, Leif Robinson, Bob Stymeist, Wayne Petersen, Steve Grinley, Philip Martin, and perhaps several others. They initiated the idea of a bimonthly newsletter that would fill the void left by the absence of *Records of New England Birds* by providing an opportunity for the birders of eastern Massachusetts to report and preserve in print their sightings along with Where to Go and other bird-related articles. Bob circulated the idea and in February 1973, the first issue of *Bird Observer of Eastern Massachusetts* (*Bird Observer, BO*), a bimonthly publication, went to press with Paula Butler designated as the editor-in-chief. The first page of the first issue offered clues about what was eventually to become of this "newsletter":

WHY BIRD OBSERVER OF EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

Many birders, newcomers and old-timers, have expressed an interest in and a need for an informative regional publication of purely bird news.

This bi-monthly newsletter plans to cover: where to go for 'hard to find' species and seasonal species complete with maps, fine points of identification of confusing species, tips to backyard birders and for those using public transportation, statistics of previous two months plus a two-month forecast, occasional book reviews and conservation notes. . . .

In order for this publication to serve you and succeed, all clubs and individuals are asked to give support by reporting species, submitting articles, writing letters and questions to the editors, sharing bird interest stories, and giving criticism and suggestions for future expansion.

This sums up the goals of the founders of the newsletter that was to become the premier regional bird journal of New England and, some would argue, the United States. Articles in that first issue included "Feeding Winter Birds" by Eliot Taylor, "A Good Day at Cape Ann" and "Wintering Bald Eagles at Quabbin Reservoir" by Herman D'Entremont, "Winter Gulls in Massachusetts" by Philip Martin, and "Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning in the North Shore Area of Massachusetts" by William Forward. There were also two book reviews and the summaries of the 1972 bird sightings for November and December—not a bad start toward a comprehensive new journal about birds, birding, and ornithology.

Other issues in 1973 contained articles including detailed maps about where to find birds in Massachusetts—Where to Gos—e.g., Bruce Sorrie's "Birding on Plymouth

Beach,” birding articles, and monthly summaries of recent bird sightings. Of particular note were two articles by Joseph T. Leverich: “What is a Bird Species?” and “On the Multiplication of Bird Species,” scientifically based articles that portended a shift in later journal years toward including refereed scientific papers that would eventually give *Bird Observer* scientific as well as birding credibility. The first year of six issues totaled 154 pages—about 26 pages per issue—a really good start for a birding newsletter.

As might be expected of a nonpaid staff with minimal background in producing a professional publication, there were many details to talk about at staff meetings and many decisions to be made. For example, at the meeting on March 14, 1973, with Paula Butler, Leif Robinson, Ruth Emery, Steven Grinley, Philip Martin, Bob Stymeist, Herman D’Entremont, Louise De Giacomo, and Ethel Pearson present, the major topic of discussion was “job analysis,” in which the various duties of the staff members were discussed and formalized by a vote. This included defining the various staff positions such as editor in chief, copyeditor, regional statistical editor, subscription manager, etc. Also discussed were the sequence of dates and deadlines for the on-time production of *Bird Observer* and the possibility of *Bird Observer*’s sponsorship of pelagic trips.

At the April meeting, it was suggested that the *Bird Observer* content be divided into 50% for articles and 50% for the records, and there was discussion of increasing the size of the magazine. The budget was discussed at length; \$800 in the bank and 251 paid subscribers apparently produced financial stability for the year. The search for, and inclusion of, paid ads was discussed; then as now, it has become an ongoing source of discussion. Items discussed at later meetings during 1973 included the possibility of *Bird Observer* incorporating as a nonprofit organization to facilitate tax breaks. Also discussed in the financial realm was the need to advertise *Bird Observer* to increase circulation. By the August meeting, Leif Robinson submitted a draft of an announcement for the Massachusetts Audubon Society Birders Kit that began, “*Bird Observer* is a new bi-monthly magazine written by birders for birders. . . .” *Bird Observer* was no longer a newsletter. Jim Baird of Massachusetts Audubon became a frequent consultant as did local bird guru Wayne Petersen, who, by the end of 1973, had agreed to serve on the staff in an advisory capacity. By year’s end, 1973 had been a busy and successful first year for the fledgling publication. *Bird Observer* was here to stay.

Over the following two years, *Bird Observer* solidified its financial situation, stabilized its production schedule, increased its circulation, made changes in its staff, and generally settled into its role as New England’s premier bird journal. The flow of good articles continued with four more scientifically based reports by J. T. Leverich: “Sibling Species,” “Blue- and Golden-winged Warblers and Their Hybrids,” “Polymorphism,” and “Isolating Mechanisms.” A number of articles focused on eastern Massachusetts, or the entire Commonwealth, for example, Richard Forster’s “Uncommon Massachusetts Sparrows,” Philip Martin’s “What Future for the Osprey?” Bruce Sorrie’s “Probable Nesting of Yellow-breasted Chats in Sandwich,” Deborah Howard’s “Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas Project—1974–1978,” Leif Robinson’s “Hairy Woodpeckers in Weston,” Nancy Claflin’s “The Dawn Chorus at Boxford,” and

Brian Harrington's "1975 Census of Waders at Clark's Island." Some articles dealt with all of New England, for example, Leif J. Robinson's "Cardinals and Titmice," Wayne Petersen's "A Note on Brewer's Blackbird in New England," and Bruce A. Sorrie's "Boreal Chickadee Invasion." These articles signaled a growing interest in including articles beyond eastern Massachusetts.

As usual, shake-up continued among the *Bird Observer* staff with the resignation of Herman D'Entremont as business manager and the addition of Bruce Sorrie to the editorial board. Postcards were regularly sent out as renewal reminders—this being precomputer times—which required significant time and expense. In 1975, *Bird Observer* received a Certificate of Incorporation from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and as of March 11, 1975, had become a nonprofit corporation named "Bird Observer of Eastern Massachusetts, Inc." The treasurer Gladys Allen reported that *Bird Observer* had nearly \$1,500 in the bank. Depending on whether bills for a particular issue had been paid yet, the balance was usually in the \$1,000–2,000 range.

The September 25, 1975, minutes announced a major shake-up in personnel:

Ethel Pearson because of the pressure of her job has decided that she will be unable to type the records as of January 1, 1976. Gladys Allen will be going back to work and so will not be able to continue as Subscription Manager after the first of the year. Paula Butler announced that she will still continue to do maps, etc., and put the magazine together but not wish to be Editor-in-chief beyond the end of this fiscal year. These announcements were met with considerable dismay....

Clearly, things were not going as well as hoped, yet another example of the difficulties of running an organization with people who had other jobs and lacked professional training for the jobs they were doing for *Bird Observer*.

The business meeting of January 14, 1976, followed the rather dark pattern of those at the end of 1975, with a request by Paula Butler for discussion of the following:

Mrs. Butler opened the meeting with an agenda calling for a general discussion of Bird Observer's present problems and insecure future:

Costs of publishing the September/October and November/December issues, and the fact that there are insufficient funds in the treasury to cover these costs.

What can be done to increase the number of subscribers in order to produce more income.

The delay in getting Bird Observer to the subscribers on time, and should we consider publishing on a quarterly instead of bimonthly basis.

We have not yet obtained our postal permit and increased postage rates are adding to our burden.

These issues were discussed, but nothing was resolved.

At the annual meeting of the board of directors on January 16, 1976, an organized vote was taken on the various positions necessary to run *Bird Observer*. J. T. Leverich was reelected as president, Theodore H. Atkinson as treasurer, and Robert H. Stymeist as clerk. Elected to the board of directors were Theodore H. Atkinson, Paula Butler, Ronald Clayton, Louise De Giacomo, Ruth P. Emery, J. T. Leverich, Wayne Petersen, Bruce Sorrie, and Robert Stymeist. Clearly, by this point in time, *Bird Observer* had organized its staff in a functioning manner.

Distributing the magazine was a different matter. At the February 1976 meeting, the mailing permit woes for the newly incorporated *Bird Observer* were detailed at length:

In order to change permits it's necessary to fill out a form. It has all the information on the status of the organization. 2nd class permit is the best for this size organization.

Return to the Boston office.

They will send their field representative to check out the books. I'll give a verbal OK.

Then [we] will receive a letter giving temporary authorization. But [we] must continue to use the 3rd class rate. [we] Must keep accounts, then later [we] will get the money back retroactively.

The final Ok must come from Washington. It may take 2-6 months before a final permit arrives.

There's a hitch: In order to qualify for 6c/lb non-profit 2nd class rates rather than the standard 10c/lb 2nd class rates we need a tax-exempt number from IRS that qualifies us for the lower rates. We don't have the tax-exempt status now and must fill out a 4 page form and wait for IRS to rule on it. So this must be completed first before the post office work can go through.

Six months later, it was announced that *Bird Observer* was "now exempt from Federal Income Tax" and could file with the Post Office and state for relief on postage and sales tax. The *Bird Observer* folks had a lot to learn about the federal quagmire with anything having to do with money.

The problems with regional compilers of sightings came to a head, as reported in the March 1976 minutes. State Ornithologist Brad Blodgett declined to be a regional compiler and Blair Nikula, who compiled the sighting records for Cape Cod, was leaving for a trip to Arizona. Ruth Emery and Bob would take charge of keeping records. In yet another shake-up, president Terry Leverich submitted his letter of resignation due to a work schedule overload, but it was decided that he would remain president anyway. At the September meeting, Wayne Petersen suggested that *Bird Observer* needed new people and that it might be possible to get people from professional bird groups such as Manomet Bird Observatory (now Manomet, Inc.) to contribute articles and help the organization in other ways.

Despite these difficulties, *Bird Observer* was progressing nicely in 1976. The Where to Gos included Bennett Keenan's "Birding the Lynnfield Marsh" and Wayne Petersen's "Pelagic Birding for Landlubbers." Feature articles included Bruce Sorrie's "Symbiotic Starlings" and Bob Stymeist's "Owls in Massachusetts." The latter was accompanied by a drawing at the bottom of the last page; drawings and occasional black-and-white photographs—although initially sparse—had become a regular part of *Bird Observer*. Also of interest were Paul Donahue's "Field Identification of Western Sandpipers in Massachusetts" and S. Sanders's "Seventy Years of Breeding Birds on Milton Hill [Massachusetts]".

At the January 1977 staff meeting, Bob Stymeist was elected president, Ted Atkinson treasurer, and Gayle Miller clerk. Paula Butler's "Machias Seal Island" once again demonstrated *Bird Observer*'s growing focus on New England, as did Paul Robert's "The Hawk Watch in Eastern Massachusetts and New England." There

continued to be articles about sightings of rare birds, such as Robert C. Vernon's "The Steller's Eider" and more scientifically based articles such as Leif Robinson's "Some Thoughts About Counting Birds." An article seemingly published without an author introduced the "Take a Second Look" (TASL) Program. The article explained that TASL was fundamentally a series of field trips and seminars, mostly run by *Bird Observer* people, that would appeal to birders with an interest beyond listing. The program focused on the interrelationships between the birds and their environment. This article reinforced a growing relationship between *Bird Observer* and the TASL organization and supported the growing number of birders who wanted to learn about birds instead of just being listers.

At the meeting of June 23, 1977, Dick Veit initiated a discussion about changing the *Bird Observer* cover, suggesting that it would be nice to have a typical Massachusetts bird on it. It was decided to search for an artist and to make the change in covers starting in 1978 with volume 6. Connecticut artist Margaret La Farge's illustration of two Hudsonian Godwits was chosen for this issue. As 1977 drew to a close, there was much discussion of the possibility of purchasing a new typewriter, and a long discussion about the acute shortage of Where to Go birding articles. The year concluded with Philip Martin's thoughtful and penetrating letter to the staff re "general Operation and Production of Bird Observer":

Having been present at the creation of B.O. and having rejoined the staff after a long absence I believe I have a unique perspective on the development of the magazine and some possibilities for its evolution.

It is obvious that we have come a long way. B.O. has proved itself in terms of its viability and its value to at least some segment of the 'birding community.' I see a danger, however, in allowing the magazine to stagnate. In some ways it seems to have become too easy and it is just a matter of doing the chores to grind it out. This is not to say that I think that things are horribly amiss. Rather that the magazine is maturing beyond its infancy stage and some thought should be given to the best ways of allowing it to reach a healthy adolescence. I have a few suggestions which I would like the staff to consider:

I find the lines of authority and responsibility rather confused. As I understand it, the elected President is the chief executive ultimately responsible for production and responsible for chairing meetings. For a variety of reasons this role seems often obscured. I believe meetings would be much more productive if one person really took on the task of 'keeping things rolling.' ...

There seems to be a problem with inactive staff members. ...

Much more effort should be directed to recruiting new staff members. New members would bring new life, new ideas, new directions. We need more good writers, more people with editing skills, artists, photographers, etc. If we are serious about keeping up the quality and quantity of Where to Go articles maybe we should try to find someone to serve as a local Pettingill....

I think we need a little better sense professionalism about what we publish. ... We should make every effort to have records edited by Forster or Petersen before publication and corrigenda should be complete.

We need more illustrations and photos. Our last issue is almost devoid and consequently has a rather drab and uniform look to it. In general, more attention could probably be given to lay-out and general attractiveness of the magazine.

A B.O. boat trip would be a good step. Not only as a profitable undertaking, but as a

way of making B.O. more of an active entity in the birding community. ... We would have better visibility and more positive identity if we could get into active projects à la nighthawk counts, breeding bird surveys, etc. Perhaps another way to go would be to offer workshops and programs from our staff and other interested people.

Our 'pelagic' issue, vol. 4, no. 3, is an example of some of our best work. There are nice photos, illustrations, a good 'where to go', a sprinkling of more scientific and more causal material, a valuable map, and a theme that makes everything work. Even the fillers contribute valuable information to the whole. ...

A final, more mundane point. It would be nice if an agenda for the up-coming meeting could be sent along with minutes from the previous. Then epistles like this one could be read and mulled over before the meeting and it could save a lot of time.

Clearly, *Bird Observer* had made substantial progress during its first five years, but clearly, it also had a long way to go. 🐦

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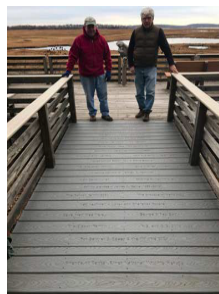
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PHOTO ESSAY

Birds of the 11th Maine Bird Records Committee Report



Maine's second—and first photographed—Rock Wren was at Perkins Cove in Oqunquit from November 27, 2020, to February 1, 2021. Photograph December 4, 2020, by Doug Hitchcox.



This Redwing, showing characters of the Icelandic-breeding subspecies *Turdus iliacus coburni*, was present at Portland's Capisic Pond Park from January 29 to February 22, 2021. Photograph January 30, 2021, by Sam Zhang.



This stunning alternate-plumaged male Lark Bunting was a one-day wonder at Seal Cove, Mount Desert Island, on May 29, 2015. Photograph by Louis Bevier.



This LeConte's Sparrow molted from juvenal (left) to basic plumage (right) during its stay in Unity September 14–28, 2021. Photographs September 16 by Louis Bevier and September 28 by Tom Aversa. 🐦

Enter Bird Observer's Fiftieth Anniversary Photo, Video, and Writing Contest April 1 Through October 1, 2022

Contest Details & Rules: *Bird Observer* is celebrating our fiftieth anniversary in 2022 with the publication of Volume 50 of our journal. We invite our subscribers to join the celebration by entering the *Bird Observer* Fiftieth Anniversary Photo, Video, and Writing Contest. We welcome submissions from photographers, videographers, and writers of all skill levels, except for *Bird Observer* staff, board members, and their immediate family members.

The contest is open only to *Bird Observer's* current subscribers. Subscribe now and be eligible to enter.

Contest Dates: The *Bird Observer* Fiftieth Anniversary contest runs from April 1, 2022, to October 1, 2022. Winners will be announced in our December 2022 issue.

Prizes for Entering: There will be one grand prize winner in each of three categories: photo, video, and writing. Each grand prize winner will receive a \$100 gift card to Bird Watcher's General Store, Orleans, MA; a \$100 gift card to Bird Watcher's Supply and Gift, Newburyport, MA; a \$100 gift card to Birds and Beans Coffee; and a two-year extension of his or her subscription to *Bird Observer*, in addition to being featured in the December 2022 issue of *Bird Observer* in print and on our website, www.birdobserver.org.

At least 12 honorable mentions will win a one-year extension of his or her subscription to *Bird Observer*. Additional honorable mentions may be awarded at the discretion of the judges.

In addition to the winners, all contest entries have a chance to appear on our website.

What to Enter: You may submit original, previously unpublished digital photographs, digital videos, or nonfiction, fiction, or poetry that highlight the many facets of wild, native New England birds or birding in New England. Photographs and videos must be taken in New England. If you write about a birding experience, it must occur in New England. Submissions from your backyard or home patch bear equal weight with those from conservation lands, wildlife refuges, or wilderness areas.

We would like to see content that reflects our mission: *to support and promote the observation, understanding, and conservation of the wild birds of New England*. All submissions must align with the right of all people to enjoy birding and nature in a safe and welcoming environment free from discrimination and harassment, be it sexual, racial, or barriers for people with disabilities. You must not infringe upon the rights of any other person to obtain any photo or video. Your photos or videos must not be obtained by capturing, moving, feeding, harassing, or disturbing wildlife, or by altering or damaging the environment in any way.

How To Enter: For the photo and video contests, you may submit a maximum of two entries. They can be entered at the same time or at any time during the contest. For the writing contest, you may enter one submission. You must submit all entries electronically, regardless of original format.

Specifics for Photo and Video Submissions: Your original photos or videos can be digital files, digital prints, slides, transparencies, color prints, black and white prints, or any other format that you are able to digitize for submission. You must submit your entries electronically via our online submission tool.

People in your photos or videos: You must obtain written permission (via print or email) from any recognizable people in your photos or videos to 1) submit these images to the contest, 2) publish the images in our print journal and electronically on our website, and 3) allow us to identify them by name. You must get permission from a parent or guardian for children under the age of 16. You must be able to show these consents to *Bird Observer* upon request.

File Types: Video entries must be in MP4 format. Photo entries must be in JPG (aka JPEG) format.

Screen Captures: Please submit original materials only. We will not accept any screen captures of images, including those from social media platforms.

Digital Alterations: You may freely alter or compose photographs or videos to suit your artistic vision. All birds present in an image or video must have been photographed somewhere in New England.

Photo Image Size: The winning image will be featured in *Bird Observer's* print journal as well as online. Please use the highest setting on your camera. Entries should have a resolution of at least 2272 x 1704 pixels (i.e., 4 megapixels or greater).

Video Size: The winning video will be featured in *Bird Observer's* online journal, and the print journal will provide a link to our website. The submission form limits file submissions to a maximum of 20MB. For video that is larger than 20MB, we will provide an alternate method for providing the file to us.

Specifics for Writing Submissions: You may submit one short work of nonfiction, fiction, or poetry of any type, so long as it is your original work. Entries may include—but are not limited to—observations, reflections, personal experiences, essays, natural history pieces, stories, and poems. Submissions must be in English and not contain material that is defamatory, obscene, offensive, infringing, indecent or otherwise unlawful or inappropriate as determined by the judges in their sole and absolute opinion.

Space is limited in *Bird Observer*; therefore, we require that your submission be between 500–1500 words, give or take a few, which equals about 1–3 type-written pages. Entries that run over the limit will automatically be disqualified. You must submit your entries electronically via our online submission tool.

File Types: Writing entries must be submitted in PDF format.

Judging: There will be one grand prize winner in each of three categories: photo, video, and writing. Winners will be selected by a panel of *Bird Observer* staff. Entries will be judged based on qualities such as originality, creativity, artistic/literary merit, and technical expertise/writing skill. Judges shall determine eligibility with sole and absolute discretion. All decisions of the judges are final.

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Questions: If you have a question, contact contest@birdobserver.org.

Legal Conditions: By submitting content to the contest, participants agree to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless *Bird Observer*, its respective officers, staff, volunteers, and representatives, from any and all third party liability for any injuries, losses, claims, actions, demands or damages of any kind arising from or in connection with the contest (collectively, “Losses”), including without limitation any third party claim for copyright infringement or a violation of an individual’s right to privacy and/or publicity right. The contest is void where prohibited by law. Each participant in the contest is responsible for ensuring that he or she has the right to submit entries in accordance with these rules.

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FIELD NOTES

Turkey Vultures Nest in Tree House

Wendy Howes and Alan Rawle



Turkey Vulture chicks on tree house balcony, August 13, 2021. All photographs by Alan Rawle.

It was mid-July of 2021 before neighborhood gossip about an unusual bird-related discovery reached us. A homeowner in a quiet, forested location in Hardwick, Massachusetts, reported that a Turkey Vulture pair was nesting in an old, now-unused tree house in his yard. Although two vultures had been seen around the tree house since early spring, it never entered the owner's mind that the birds could be nesting there. But he and his daughter looked outside one day and saw two white nestlings appear at the open front door of the tree house as the parent birds returned with food. The homeowner was happy to allow us to make visits to document this interesting find.

On our first monitoring visit on July 23, we found one adult perched close to the nest site, but the chicks stayed out of sight. A few days later, a GoPro camera placed by one of the homeowners captured footage of two white chicks being fed by an adult.



Juvenile Turkey Vulture explores the homeowners' yard, August 27, 2021.

The chicks were by then well developed, mobile enough to waddle quickly to the door when a parent bird arrived, and able to maneuver their already-long wings. They were probably four to six weeks old.

By the beginning of August, the homeowners were seeing the two young birds more frequently venturing out of the tree house and sitting on its exposed balcony. We hoped to find the chicks outside when we visited on August 6, but instead our first glimpse was of one chick peering at us through a narrow opening

alongside the door. Noting the angle of the tree house balcony, we returned the next day and approached quietly from a less intrusive direction. We found one chick sitting at the front of the balcony; the second was behind it in the open doorway. This was our first good look at the incongruous combination of stern-looking, homely, dark faces and



One of the juvenile Turkey Vulture perches on the tree house roof, September 3, 2021.



The second juvenile Turkey Vulture perches on the tree house roof, September 3, 2021.

beaks contrasting sharply with the soft and fluffy white down covering their bodies.

The homeowners observed one adult arriving back at the tree house around midafternoon to feed the chicks. However, our personal schedules made it impossible to monitor for any regular feeding schedule. Both adults were returning to spend the night at the nest site.

On August 13, we noticed that the young birds were starting to develop black feathers on their wings. No vultures were seen on an August 20 visit.

We usually did not encounter either parent on our visits, so when we arrived on August 27, the sudden appearance of an adult flying up from on or near the ground took us by surprise. It remained perched in the crook of a tree while we concentrated on watching the tree house, but we soon realized that one robust juvenile had fledged and was on the ground near the foundation of the owner’s house. When that bird saw us, it hastily walked back to the nest site and made its way toward the dense vegetation at the back of the structure. Within seconds we saw the youngster hitched itself up the trunk of one of the trees supporting the tree house, either climbing to a branch or returning to the tree house. We did not detect the second young bird. The homeowner reported that he had not

yet seen the second juvenile leave the tree house, but he was sure it was still present, judging by the now-familiar sounds coming from within.

On September 3, we observed both juveniles perched on top of the tree house. They appeared healthy and well developed.

Our final observation, on September 6, was of one juvenile perched on a bough about 20 feet high, close to the tree house.

It is highly likely that these Turkey Vultures survived, thrived, and soon soared among the high numbers of their species present in this predominantly agricultural community abutting Quabbin Reservation. 🦅

Radio-tagging a Black Vulture Hatched in Massachusetts

Thomas W. French



The Black Vulture chick, with its patagial wing tag and radio transmitter, is ready to go. Photograph by Thomas W. French.

Black Vultures (*Coragyps atratus*) are still an uncommon sight across most of Massachusetts, but their numbers are increasing. The first documented sighting of a Black Vulture in Massachusetts occurred in Swampscott in November 1850, but it was not until 148 years later, in 1998, that Norman Smith found the first documented nest on a rocky ledge in the Blue Hills in Milton. Since then, the summer range of Black Vultures has continued to spread north, but nests have been difficult to locate in Massachusetts. To date, MassWildlife has become aware of only six nesting locations: the Blue Hills in Milton; the Palmer Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Palmer just west of the Warren town line; the attic of an abandoned building in Sunderland; two locations in the southern Berkshires, including at least one in Sheffield; and, as described here, Mount Tekoa in Montgomery. All these nest sites, except the one in Sunderland, have been in cave-

like shelters created by boulders. Undoubtedly there are additional nest sites across the state, especially in the southern Berkshires, where 77 Black Vultures, a state record, were counted in Sheffield on January 1, 2016 (Hayward and Stymeist 2018).

At Mount Tekoa, we had expected to find Black Vultures nesting for the past six to eight years, but it was not until 2021 that we located a nest. On June 2, 2021, while banding four Peregrine Falcon chicks at a cliff nest on Mount Tekoa, the author and MassWildlife staff members Dave Paulson, Andrew Madden, Brian Hawthorne, Jacob Morris-Siegel, and Nathan Buckhout, along with our volunteer climber and former staff member Jesse Caney, observed a Black Vulture soar past the cliff three times in two hours. The third time, I saw an adult bird drop in behind a boulder on a ledge part way down a nearby cliff.

That observation was notable, but we had no plans to find the actual nest until we met with Paul Roberts of Eastern Mass Hawk Watch a few days later. When Paul came to see the Peregrine Falcon banding in Newburyport on June 7, he asked Dave Paulson and me if we might be able to help biologists from Hawk Mountain, Pennsylvania,



A well-grown Black Vulture chick hunkers in its cave-like nest that had once housed a porcupine, as evidenced by an accumulation of mostly decomposed porcupine poop and beer cans collected by the porcupine. A molted adult Black Vulture feather is in the foreground. Photograph by Jesse Caney.

find one or two Black Vulture chicks in Massachusetts. The Hawk Mountain staffers hoped to add chicks near the northern edge of their nesting range to their Black Vulture study. Eager to help, Jesse and I went back to Mount Tekoa, where we made the steep 45-minute hike up the mountain in an effort to relocate the cliff and to find a location directly above the nest where we could tie off to a tree for the 60-foot rappel. Eventually, I had to hike back to my original observation spot and direct Jesse via cell phone conversation to a location above the presumed nest site. Once on the ledge, part way down a larger cliff, Jesse searched for a solid 10 minutes before using his cell phone as a flashlight to look far back into a “cave” created by large broken rocks.

There, on a floor thick with porcupine poop accumulated over many years and surrounded by at least a dozen beer cans pulled into the cave and chewed ragged by the porcupine, Jesse found a single, well-grown, Black Vulture chick.

With a chick confirmed, Hawk Mountain’s Senior Research Biologist, David Barber, and Biologist, Bracken Brown, made plans to come to Massachusetts on July 8. The day before, Jesse and I visited the historic Palmer WMA nest site found by MassWildlife ecologist Chris Buelow in 2012 (Buelow 2012), and we confirmed it had not been used in recent years. Back at Mount Tekoa on July 8, Jesse rappelled down to the nest site and then brought the chick up to the top of the cliff, where David and Bracken weighed and measured the chick, drew a blood sample which will reveal the bird’s sex, and attached both a patagial wing tag and a satellite transmitter.

The wing tag is bright yellow with the number 394 in bold black. The single tag is on the left wing and is visible from both the underside of the wing when the bird is soaring and from the top when the bird is perched. The relatively short antenna for the satellite transmitter may be visible on the back. A form to report sightings of this vulture is available at <<https://www.hawkmountain.org/vulture-sightings~default.aspx>>. In addition, the travels of this young vulture can be monitored at <www.tinyurl.com/MABlackVulture>. A big question is whether this Massachusetts-hatched chick will migrate farther south for the winter or remain in New England to join one of the winter-feeding groups that have been reported in *Bird Observer*. In addition to the traditional concentration in Sheffield, winter concentrations have been seen in Ashley Falls (28 on February 28, 2018), Blackstone (28 on January 1, 2020), Dartmouth and Westport (27 on December 15, 2019), and Deerfield (13 on March 24, 2020).

Looking at the map of this chick’s travels, a pattern is already developing which



Close up view of the patagial wing tag and radio transmitter attached to the Black Vulture Chick. Photograph by Thomas W. French.



Ventral view of the Black Vulture chick's patagial wing tag. Photograph by Thomas W. French.

appears to pinpoint several locations that this bird is visiting repeatedly. Some sites may be night roost trees and others may be favorite food sources. One favored location appears to be the Hartford Landfill between Interstate 91 and the Connecticut River just north of Hartford, Connecticut. The map being created by this vulture's travels should make it possible to identify the other frequently visited sites and why they are of interest to the bird. Identifying these sites would be a worthy challenge for the birding community. 🐦

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Great Blue Walkabout

Jeffrey Boone Miller

What the heck? On July 6, 2021, as I was driving slowly toward the back exit of Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts, I was flabbergasted when a Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) flew just a foot or two over the hood of my car. The bird landed 20 feet away and began walking on the grass among the cemetery's headstones. In decades of birding, I had never seen a Great Blue walking anywhere other than along the edges of ponds and marshes, but we were at least 500 feet from Willow Pond, the nearest body of water. *What*, I thought, *is that bird doing?* I resolved to see if could find out.

I first encountered the bird at 12:40 pm and for the next 25 minutes, I was able to follow and observe at a respectful distance. During this time, the heron walked a winding route within a roughly square space—about 100 yards on a side—bounded by Crystal Avenue, Bigelow Avenue, and Bradlee Road.

I suspected that the heron was hunting, but, if so, it was not behaving like birds seeking prey in water do. The bird walked steadily at about one step per second, and I never saw it stop walking for more than a moment. Finally, after 20 minutes, I saw the heron jab its bill at high speed several inches deep into the earth amid the greenery at the base of a headstone—an odd sight. After a few seconds of probing and twisting its bill in the hole, the heron withdrew, preyless, and resumed strolling. I thought it notable that the bird struck directly from its upright walking posture, rather than from the crouching, stealthy pose typically seen at ponds.

What was the heron seeking? At the time, I surmised that chipmunks might be the target. During my earlier walk through the cemetery, I had heard and seen large numbers of chipmunks—many appearing to be young and unwary. When I examined the site where the bird struck, I found a hole the right size for a chipmunk. Further supporting the chipmunk idea, Regina Harrison told me that she had once seen a Great Blue Heron land at Auburn Lake in the cemetery with a chipmunk in its bill and that the heron first soaked the chipmunk in water before eating it.

Upon later investigation at home, I found that Great Blues have been reported to eat small mammals and that they can adopt extraordinary hunting strategies. When discussing the diet of Great Blues, Vennesland and Butler (2020) noted that “although small fish and amphibians are typical, they are generalists, and will take birds, mice, snakes, and other vertebrates.” Reports from Oregon, Idaho, and British Columbia, cited by Vennesland and Butler (2020), describe Great Blues stalking and eating voles in grassland habitats. Also, a YouTube search for “Great Blue Heron chipmunks” turned up a few videos, including from Massachusetts, showing Great Blues preying on chipmunks, sometimes even at bird feeders or in suburban backyards. Finally, as another example of an unusual hunting strategy, Frechette (2009) described a Great Blue using an ice floe as a perch from which to launch attacks at mergansers in an attempt to pirate prey.

Though previously documented, the type of hunting behavior that I saw seems to be used relatively rarely by Great Blues in our area, so I still had some questions. How does a heron learn this hunting strategy? Does it take a high prey density to activate such a land hunt? Is there an energetic or nutritional advantage to this hunting method? Fortunately for me, birding remains full of surprising observations and unanswered questions—good reasons to keep at it. 🦢

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ABOUT BOOKS

GYR!

Mark Lynch

Gyrfalcon: The One Who Stays All Winter. Norman Barichello. 2019. Victoria, British Columbia: Friesen Press.

“Gyrfalcons are the polar bears of the bird world, at the top of the food chain in a stark environment.” (p. 21)

Here in southern New England, we are fortunate to occasionally see birds of prey that breed in the Arctic. The sightings of these sought-after species occur most often in late fall or winter. Everyone is familiar with the Snowy Owl, the target for every photographer and would-be photographer. Thanks to the Harry Potter movies, this owl species has achieved celebrity status, which means it is also one of the most harassed species. Birders and nonbirders alike often try to get too close to get a calendar-worthy shot of this charismatic bird. In southern New England, Snowys are the most often encountered Arctic bird of prey. Less well known to the general public are Rough-legged Hawks. They are a true Arctic species, breeding in tundra habitat around the world and only periodically moving in winter to more southern areas. Probably the least known Arctic bird of prey to occur in New England is the Gyrfalcon. This impressive, large and powerful falcon is every bit as charismatic and dramatic as a Snowy Owl. We just don't see them here as often.

Veit and Petersen list Gyrs as a “rare, but regular migrant or winter visitor.” (p. 144 *Birds of Massachusetts*) That may have been true 20 years ago, but in recent years Gyrs have become a decidedly less regular migrant to our area. Most of my handful of sightings were in the 1980s, with a few at the beginning of this century. Most of the birds I saw were ones that stayed for a few days. Even if they do stay, Gyrs typically range over a large area and can be tough to find at any one time.

I can remember all my Gyr sightings in detail; this falcon makes that kind of impression. My first was at Quabbin Park in the winter of 1982. We drove in and, at the spillway, perched right across from us, was a large gray Gyrfalcon with a Red-tailed Hawk perched on either side of it. The Redtails were screaming at it. That bird ranged all over Quabbin for a few weeks, apparently eating gulls. On February 8, 1983, I was able to get Nancy Clayton on a Gyr that was on Cross Farm Hill, Plum Island, perched on a goose that it was determinedly plucking. To say that Nancy loved raptors is an understatement. Nancy and her husband Alden, who used to write this column before me, were well known in the birding community at the time and wonderful people to bird with. To watch Nancy be thrilled by this sighting was as great a treat for me as seeing the Gyr itself. On November 15, 1987, I had my birding class out on Halibut Point, Cape Ann, when suddenly all the gulls began to swarm in the air, agitated and calling. A dark Gyr burst right through the ball of gulls and flew on in the direction of Plum. I was so excited that I let out with a loud and long burst of expletives, which

quite surprised my class. My point is that Gyrfalcons get that kind of reaction from birders. It is a spectacular falcon, the world's largest, holds your attention, and seeing one is always a memorable event.

Probably no bird has been more admired and sought after since prehistoric times than the magnificent Gyrfalcon, living illusively in some of the remotest and difficult landscapes of the circumboreal subArctic and Arctic regions of the world. (p. iii, Tom J. Cade in his forward to *Gyrfalcon*)

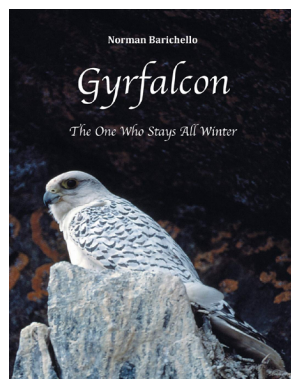
Gyrfalcon is a monograph about what we currently know about this little-known species. Because of the remoteness of the Gyrfalcon's nesting range, few ornithologists have spent years studying this species as Barichello has. In fact, some of what is known about Gyr behavior comes not from field ornithologists, but from falconers who own Gyrfalcons. *Gyrfalcon* is also a history of that bird in human cultures in North America, Asia, and Europe.

Finally, this is a book about Arctic ecology. *Gyrfalcon* is a detailed account of the interconnected lives of two Arctic species: Gyrfalcons and ptarmigans, both species that have "boom and bust" cycles in their populations. Norman Barichello is a "northern ecologist. His knowledge is derived from over 44 years in Canada's Arctic and subArctic, as a biologist, naturalist guide, and advisor to the Kaska Dena." (from back cover to *Gyrfalcon*) His hard-earned knowledge of Gyrfalcon behavior is invaluable, and much of it will be a revelation for birders.

Gyrfalcons are large, heavy-bodied falcons. Females are much larger than males. The large size is an advantage to Arctic nesting birds. Their down is very dense, helpful in the brutal, long winters. Their talons are very large and enable them to grasp and hold the ptarmigan.

The wings are long and pointed but not as exaggerated as those of the peregrine, its smaller and well-known cousin. This heavier "wing-loading" enables the Gyr to sustain speed over a longer distance and maintain speed when climbing. It is well known among falconers that Gyrfalcons on the attack can climb and maintain speed at a steeper angle than most birds. Compared to other falcons, their range of attack is said to be two or three times greater (Nelson 1956). The Gyr also has a longer tail than most falcons, serving as a rudder. The superb engineering of the falconidae then is further adapted in the Gyrfalcon for sustained speed and agility. This airframe makes the Gyr one of the most formidable avian predators, capable of hunting both birds and mammals, large and small. (p. 3)

Their plumage can be gray, almost black, or white to silver. A few tawny individuals have also been noted. Feathers are patterned with varying degrees of black contrasting bars, stripes, or spots. The densest breeding population is in northeast



Iceland. In the northern Yukon, Barichello found Gyrfalcon nests about 12 kilometers apart.

Wherever they have been found, they have impressed human cultures, and there are many regional names for Gyrfalcons, such as Labrador Falcon, Iceland Falcon, Greenland Falcon, Snow Falcon, Winter Falcon, and Ptarmigan Hawk.

Those in the eastern Arctic refer to the Gyr as *Kigavic*, meaning “the grasper” (Hohn 1969). In the western Arctic, the Inupiat have three names for Gyrfalcons depending on its age, possibly because the feathers were of great value (Irving 1953). Youngsters were called *Atkuaruak*, meaning “like caribou mittens”, juveniles were named *Kitgavikroak*, and adult Gyrfalcons were referred to as *Okiotak*, “the one who stays all winter.” (p. 13)

Barichello’s favorite area to study Gyrfalcons is the Yukon’s Ogilvie Mountains in northern Canada. This is an extremely remote area of mountains and tundra. Swarming with mosquitoes in the short summer, cold and barren in the long winter. In winter, the temperature may get as low as -45 degrees C! It is hard to believe that any active creature survives the winter here:

Living in the far north in the winter is indeed a challenge. Daylight is reduced to a few hours, temperatures are severe, and much of the land is blanketed by snow. Of no surprise, there is little evidence of life. Many northern creatures escape the rigors of the cold and insufficient food by hibernating or migrating. Of about eighty species of birds that nest in the area, only eight overwinter. Most of the small mammals are below an insulating cover of snow, either sleeping in dens or concealed by snow cover.

Yet, here lives the Gyrfalcon. (p. x)

On page 85 there is a photograph of Barichello’s small basic study blind set against a vast background of frozen tundra and mountains. This is what it takes to study Gyrfalcons. Most of us could not do this. Around the globe, Gyrfalcons are found north of the 16th parallel. Gyrfalcons need two things to survive the seasons in the Yukon: suitable nesting cliffs and plenty of ptarmigan.

I suspect the basic criterion to explain Gyrfalcon distribution is simple: where there are enough ptarmigan and adequate nest cliffs in open subArctic and Arctic environments, there will be Gyrfalcons. Indeed the crucial factors for persistence of Gyrfalcon populations in Russia, according to Vladimir Morozov (2011), are high numbers of prey and available nest structures. (p. 17)

Like the Gyrfalcon, ptarmigan stay all winter. In winter they are often found in willow draws along streams in the mountains. They are not easy for Gyrfalcons to catch. Typically, they remain still and are cryptically plumaged. They may even plunge deep into the snow to escape predators. Rock and Willow ptarmigan are the species most common in Barichello’s study area. Ptarmigan is the dominant prey item of Gyrfalcons, but in summer they can expand their diet by preying on Arctic ground

squirrels (that hibernate in winter), nesting shorebirds such as Upland Sandpipers, and even some waterfowl such as Harlequin Ducks.

Gyrfalcons hunt by soaring great distances, especially along ridges. They will also perch on some prominent point and “still hunt.” Gyrs will carefully watch other animals in the area, such as foxes, to see if they flush ptarmigan or other prey species. Once they hit the ptarmigan and mantle it on the ground, or attempt to carry it to a nest, they must be careful of Golden Eagles. Golden Eagles are another important species in this Arctic ecology. They will take the ptarmigan from the Gyrfalcons, and if the Gyrfalcons refuses to give up its prey, Barichello discovered that the Gyrs were often injured in the dispute. Ravens and Snowy Owls are also a challenge for nesting Gyrs.

Ptarmigan populations have what is called boom and bust years. Some years there are lots of ptarmigan around, and Gyrs have a higher success rate of fledging young. In other years, populations dip, and there are far fewer ptarmigan in winter. This pattern seems to be cyclic, but the factors that cause these cycles are not well understood. Gyrfalcons breeding success closely follows the ptarmigan cycles, and Gyrs have their own boom and bust years that echo those of ptarmigans.

Gyrfalcons need cliff faces higher than 50 meters on which to nest. Ideal nesting locations are recessed into the rock face and have some kind of a roof to protect them against wind and precipitation. It is not known if Gyrfalcons compete for these limited perfect nesting locations. Barichello has studied the long and complex mating and nesting behavior of the Gyrfalcons. It begins with courtship flights at the end of March or early April, a time when it is still very much winter in the Arctic.

The typical nesting schedule for Gyrfalcons works as follows. The breeding pair engages in courtship activities for at least four weeks, then lays three to four eggs at two to three day intervals, incubates the clutch after the second egg for thirty-five days, then spends the next forty-seven days feeding youngsters in the nest. After the young leave the nest, the adults continue to feed the young, albeit less frequently, for another five weeks. Adding up the days, nesting Gyrfalcons invest well over 140 days (almost five months) to produce independent youngsters. How do they accomplish this feat when winter prevails in the north from October through April, and summer lasts at best three months? (p. 55)

Gyrfalcons is a fascinating book that brings the reader into those wild and isolated mountains of the northern Yukon and into the life of a rarely observed bird of the Arctic. We so rarely see this bird, it has always been a challenge to grasp what its life is about, how it lives and hunts. The last chapters of *Gyrfalcons* trace these falcons' importance to northern hemisphere cultures, particularly for falconry. Naturally, Gyrfalcons were prized by many countries and cultures, even though their members never ventured far enough north to catch Gyrfalcons on their nesting grounds. Apparently, since medieval times or before, expeditions would be sent north to procure these birds for royalty. It is possible that Vikings used Gyrfalcons in trade. Even today, Gyrfalcons are the prized hunting birds of modern falconers.

The elephant-in-the-room question is, “How will these magnificent birds survive global climate change?” Barichello addresses this issue in his last chapter. Unsurprisingly, it does not look good.

Recent findings have also found disturbing changes in the dynamics of the ptarmigan cycle, including disruptions in its regularity, wider amplitudes, a dampening of peaks, and in one case, the disappearance of the cycle itself (Newton 2011). In some areas of the Yukon, the ptarmigan cycle seems to be faltering, and the peaks are disappearing, depriving Gyrfalcons of that periodic surge in food supply (Mossop 2011). Although climate change is thought to be the cause, the agents of these adjustments in the ptarmigan cycle, and its corresponding effects on Gyrfalcons, are unknown. Are these changes the outcome of random, unpredictable weather events that are modulating the cycle? If catastrophic weather events affect ptarmigan population dynamics and if these weather events are occurring more often, can this account for changes in the ptarmigan cycle, including the dampening of its peaks? (p. 136)

Gyrfalcon is liberally illustrated with color photography, most of it by the author. The scenes of the near pristine landscape of the north Yukon are breathtaking to the point of seeming surreal. Besides many photographs of Gyrfalcons in every stage of development, as well as flying, perched, and hunting, there are also photos of the other denizens of this Arctic landscape. Also included are a number of full-page color reproductions of the art of Vadim Gorbatov, a Russian-born painter who is interested in exploring the relationship of humans and nature. In *Gyrfalcon*, Barinchello reprints several of Gorbatov’s extraordinary paintings of falconry through the ages, each one featuring a Gyrfalcon. My favorite is a wild painting of Genghis Khan hunting Great Bustards with a Gyrfalcon.

Gyrfalcon is a must-read for any birder interested in birds of prey or Arctic ecology. If you have never seen a Gyrfalcon, this book will make you hope that another Gyr wanders down to the saltmarshes of Plum Island sometime soon. 🦅

NB: Mark Lynch would like to thank Paul Roberts for alerting him to this book and helping him get in touch with the author.

Reference

Veit, Richard R. and Wayne R. Petersen. *Birds of Massachusetts*. 1993. Lincoln, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Audubon Society.

To listen to Mark Lynch’s conversation with Norman Barichello, go to: <<https://www.wicn.org/podcast/norman-barichello/>>

Alive with Birds: William Brewster in Concord

A special exhibition opening at the Concord Museum

Carol Thistle, Concord Museum, and Michael P. O'Connor, Mass Audubon

The Concord Museum is pleased to collaborate with Mass Audubon on the special exhibition, *Alive with Birds: William Brewster in Concord*, opening in the Museum's Wallace Kane Gallery on March 4, 2022, through September 5, 2022. *Alive with Birds* is the first and most comprehensive exhibition on William Brewster (1851–1919), the first president of Mass Audubon and one of the country's earliest advocates for the protection of birds and their habitats.


The exhibition also showcases 20 paintings and sculptures from Mass Audubon's Museum of American Bird Art by acclaimed artists, including John James Audubon, Frank Weston Benson, Anthony Elmer Crowell, Charley Harper, David Sibley, Leonard Baskin, and Barry Van Dusen, each of whom depicted birds formerly or currently native to Concord's landscape.

In 2019, Mass Audubon received a gift of 143 acres of the October Farm property, which has been renamed Brewster's Woods Wildlife Sanctuary. A centerpiece of the show is a meditative exploration of Brewster's Woods in a 10-minute media presentation. William Brewster's own words, taken from his journal entries, guide the visitors in discovering the wonders of this natural landscape.

Alive with Birds will showcase items drawn from the wide-ranging collection of artwork, photography, and historical objects from Mass Audubon's Museum of American Bird Art, and from the Concord Museum, accompanied by manuscript materials from the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University and the Chesterwood Archives at Williams College.

Alive with Birds also explores the contributions of Robert Gilbert, a Black ornithologist who served as Brewster's assistant for over twenty years, as well as Brewster's lifelong friendship with the sculptor Daniel Chester French, for whom Brewster's work served as an inspiration for his art.

PROGRAMS

The Concord Museum, in collaboration with Mass Audubon, is providing a wide range of related programming, informative and engaging to a broad range of audiences, including birders, environmentalists, land preservationists, and art lovers. For a full list of programs visit www.concordmuseum.org 

About Mass Audubon: *Mass Audubon is the largest nature-based conservation organization in New England. Explore, find inspiration, and take action at www.massaudubon.org.*

About the Concord Museum: *Founded in 1886, the Museum is a gateway to historic Concord for visitors from around the world and a vital cultural resource for the town and region. www.concordmuseum.org.*

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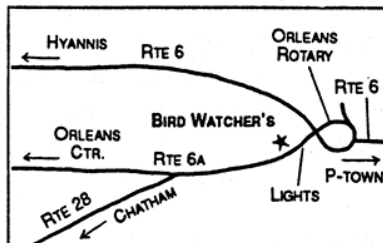
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BIRD SIGHTINGS

November–December 2021

Neil Hayward and Robert H. Stymeist

Weather

November was a wet month. Boston had 11 days with precipitation totaling 13.4 inches compared with a normal for the month of 3.6 inches. A major storm on November 12 brought most of the month's rain, resulting in severe flooding along the coast and wind gusts in excess of 50 miles per hour. The high temperature for the month in Boston was 70 degrees recorded on November 9 and November 18. That brought the total number of days for the year when the temperature in Boston reached 70 degrees or higher to 149—surpassing the previous record of 141 days set in 2010.

December began with a temperature of 60 degrees in Boston but soon dropped to a morning low of 28. Winter arrived on Saturday December 5 with a nor'easter that brought a mix of rain and snow to the state. As much as a foot of heavy, wet snow was noted in central Massachusetts. Cape Cod and the Islands recorded several inches of rain; Chilmark, on Martha's Vineyard, reported 3.68 inches. Communities in Metro Boston experienced snow turning to rain with little accumulation. Framingham recorded 3.0 inches of snow and Lexington had 1.8 inches, while Boston recorded only a trace of snow. The temperature averaged 39.1 degrees in Boston for the month. Rainfall totaled 2.45 inches with 18 days of precipitation. Boston normally has 9 inches of snow in December but only 0.04 inch fell during the month this year.

R. Stymeist

GEESE THROUGH IBISES

This period presented birders with ample opportunity for a wild-geese chase or two. **Pink-footed Geese** were reported in three counties including four birds at Longmeadow on December 11—a new high count for the United States (beating the previous high of three birds). Four birds—presumably the same flock—were spotted eight days later in South Windsor, Connecticut, 15 miles to the south as the geese flies. Canada beat its previous high of three birds this year with up to six geese being reported together in Quebec Province in October. Pink-footed Geese breed in Greenland and Iceland and winter in Great Britain and northern Europe. Over the past two decades, they have become increasingly more common as winter visitors to our own continent. The shift in wintering distribution is thought to be a combination of population expansion in their breeding grounds together with a range expansion of Canada Geese into those breeding areas, birds with whom they likely associate and follow west in the fall to North America.

Greater White-fronted Geese were reported from an impressive seven counties this period and **Cackling Geese** were in a record nine counties. A count of 150 Snow Geese in Pittsfield on November 28 is the highest November count for Berkshire County. The western subspecies of Brant, **Black Brant** (*Branta bernicla nigricans*), was found at New Bedford at the end of the year. It is the second record for Bristol County after the first was found last year on the other side of the Acushnet River at Fort Phoenix State Reservation. The geese have a darker belly and a more prominent white neck collar than our regularly wintering *hrota* subspecies. Black Brant breed in northwestern Canada and Alaska and winter on the Pacific coast. While currently a subspecies, Black Brant may be a future candidate for full-species status; genetic analysis suggests that *hrota* and *nigricans* are more distinct from each other than, for example, Ross's and

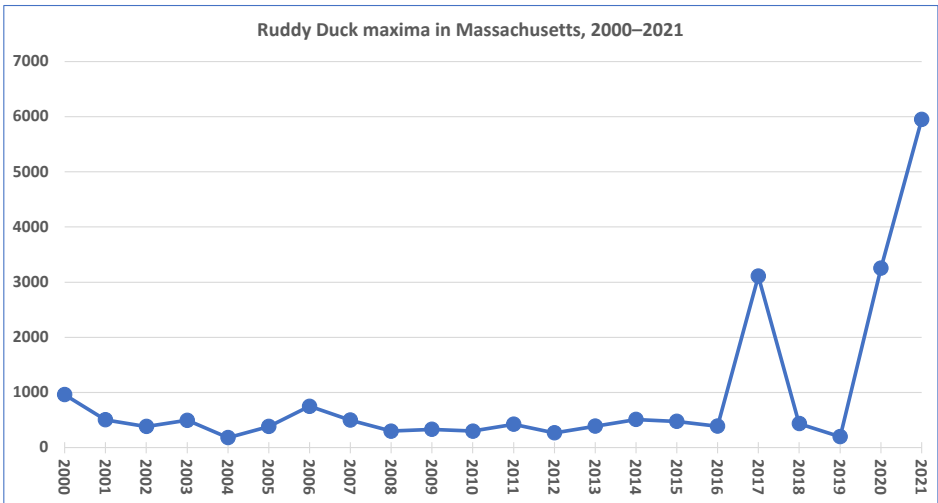


Figure 1. Annual high counts of Ruddy Duck in Massachusetts, 2000–2021. Data from eBird.org.

Snow geese are from each other.

An immature **Trumpeter Swan** on Nantucket from December 22 until the end of the year is a new species for the island and the first for the state since February 2019. This is the fourth record for Massachusetts; the first record came from Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge on October 25, 2013. These birds originate from an expanding population centered in the Great Lakes, into which wild Trumpeters were introduced from the Copper River, Alaska, in the 1960s. Also on Nantucket, a pair of **Tundra Swans** found on the last day of the year gave island birders a chance for a three-swan day. It was only the fourth year this century that Tundra Swans have been reported from Nantucket.

Duck headlines this period were mostly of the high-count variety. A report of 54 Wood Ducks at Barnstable on December 4 is a new high count for Cape Cod, and a count of 83 Redheads on Nantucket on December 22 is the highest count for the state this century. Redheads were much more abundant last century, reaching a peak in 1975–1976, when up to 800 could be found on Nantucket (Veit and Petersen, 1993). A pair of **Tufted Ducks** on Nantucket at the end of the period set a new high count for the island and tied only a handful of state records of two birds. The island is now the most reliable place in the state to find this handsome Eurasian *Aythya* duck, it being annual there since 2013. Wintering numbers of Ruddy Duck in the state have been consistent for the past few decades, with maximum counts of 400–500 birds. This December, South Watuppa Pond in Fall River hosted an unprecedented high count of 5,945 birds—roughly 10 times the average high count for the state. This increase may be part of a recent trend, with larger numbers reported in 2017 and 2020 (see Figure 1). The Eurasian subspecies of Green-winged Teal is an annual taxon to the state. This period, a male returned to Truro for the second year in a row. This species is considered by many, including the International Ornithological Congress (IOC), as a separate species from our North American Green-winged Teal. Barrow’s Goldeneyes were recorded from eight counties, including only the second record for Berkshire County this century. The rarer hybrid taxon, Common x Barrow’s Goldeneye, was recorded in two counties, including a first record for Bristol County in Somerset on December 22. The taxon is annual to the state, most commonly found on Cape Cod.

The pair of **Eared Grebes** discovered at Cohasset Cove last period continued until November 3, with the birds crisscrossing the Norfolk-Plymouth county line. Another bird appeared in Marblehead at the end of the period—presumably the same bird returning to the area from the previous winter.

One of the more remarkable records of the period was a **Chuck-will's-widow** photographed at Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard, on the very late date of December 9. The previous late date for the state was a dead bird found in a driveway in Dartmouth on November 15, 1975 (Veit and Petersen, 1993).

Two **Rufous Hummingbirds** were reported coming to feeders: the continuing bird in Brookline from October 28, and another bird banded in Hampden County that also first appeared in October. Both birds continued throughout the period into the new year.

A **Yellow Rail** was photographed at Nauset Beach on December 19. The bird was flushed from the *Spartina* grass in the salt marsh. According to eBird, it was the only period record north of Texas and Louisiana. A late Sora continued at Millennium Park, West Roxbury, until the end of the year. It is only the second December record for Suffolk County.

The shorebird rarity of the period was **American Avocet**, with individuals present in November on Plum Island and Monomoy NWR. Several more-common shorebirds were late in their departure from the state. This is the third year in a row that Marbled Godwit has stayed until December. The species will occasionally linger through January in an attempt to overwinter, which one bird successfully managed in Wareham in the winter of 2005–2006. A Western Sandpiper hung out on Race Point until December 26, the first December record for the state since December 2, 2013. A count of six White-rumped Sandpipers on Plum Island in early December is a new high count for the month, with birds present on the refuge until December 6. A Solitary Sandpiper found in Springfield on November 1 was the only November record on the East Coast north of Florida. Although rare for the month, last year a bird lingered until November 5, and the latest date for the state is November 24, 2002. A count of 355 Red Knots on North Monomoy on November 13 is the highest November count since 2011.

A count of 1,575 Razorbills past Gooseberry Neck, Westport, on December 10 smashed the previous high count for Bristol County of 75 birds set on December 15, 2018. It is also the third-highest count for the state away from Cape Cod, where counts of 10,000 have been recorded. Twenty-eight **Atlantic Puffins** on Jeffreys Ledge on December 8 is the second-highest count for December, and the fourth-highest for the state. The record goes to a remarkable 104 puffins flying past Andrews Point, Rockport, on October 12, 2002.

The gull-of-the-period award goes to an adult **Franklin's Gull** that was photographed at Race Point in November—the only sighting of this western gull from Cape Cod this year. Also at Race Point, a **Sabine's Gull** was photographed in early November for the fourth month this year. Race Point is arguably the best place on the East Coast to see this stunning Arctic-nesting gull—as well as Pacific Loon, which also was recorded there this period in December. More unusual was the sighting of a Sabine's Gull from Nantucket on November 13—only the fourth record this century for the island. A count of five **Little Gulls** on Nantucket in mid-November is the highest period count since 2008. Immature **Thayer's Gulls**—now considered a subspecies of Iceland Gull—were photographed at Salisbury and Gloucester, the first records since May 2019.

Observers at Race Point this period were rewarded with lingering terns. A Black Tern photographed there on November 13–15 is the only eBird record for November for the state. There are historical records, however, from as late as December, including a juvenile killed by a Northern Harrier on Nantucket on December 18, 1980 (Veit and Petersen, 1993). A Caspian Tern was found in Salisbury on November 3, only the fourth year this century with a November

record. An Arctic Tern at Race Point on November 25–28 beat the only other November record for the state—November 13, 2005—for a new late date. That was until the following month, when a suspected Arctic Tern was photographed at Race Point on December 13.

This year's invasion of **Wood Storks** to the Northeast brought more sightings to Massachusetts this period. An immature was found at Horn Pond, Woburn, on the evening of November 4. The following day it was captured by volunteers from the New England Wildlife Center, who were concerned that the bird had been standing in the same spot for 17 hours and not feeding. The rehabilitation team determined that the bird was emaciated, dehydrated, and was suffering from a significant wound to one of its feet, which had since become necrotic. The bird did not survive long after its capture. Two days later, another immature was found in Gloucester. Initially difficult to locate, the bird settled down into a routine of feeding near the rotary at Green Landing. The bird was last seen on November 24. Five days later, on November 29, a Wood Stork was photographed flying over Fairhaven—a first record for Bristol County. Presumably the same bird was spotted there again on December 3. The Horn Pond and Gloucester birds represented the most northerly records of the species in the country this period. By the end of the year, the only reminder of the invasion was a pair of birds in Sandy Hook, New Jersey.

Cattle Egrets were recorded from a record 10 counties this period, including four birds on Martha's Vineyard, which tied the high count for the month. A Little Blue Heron in Gloucester until December 10 is the first December record since 2015.

N. Hayward

Snow Goose				11/17 Nahant	1 ph	M. Watson
11/7, 12/4-13 Amherst	1	S. Sumer, L. Farlow, S. Winn + v.o.		12/9-12/23 Somers	2 max ph	J. Eckerson + v.o.
11/8-11/19 PI	2 max	T. Wetmore# + v.o.		Mute Swan		
11/9-12/30 Nantucket	1 ad	T. Pastuszek + v.o.		11/14 Acoaxet	208	B. King
11/28 Pittsfield	150	S. Townsend		Trumpeter Swan		
12/3-12/5 PI	2 max	M. Iliff + v.o.		12/22-12/31 Nantucket	1 imm ph	S. Kardell + v.o.
12/4-12/18 Orange	1	B. Lafley + v.o.		Tundra Swan		
12/5 New Braintree	1 imm	M. Lynch#		12/31 Nantucket	2 ph	T. Pastuszek#
12/11 Westwood	1 imm	E. Nielsen + v.o.		Wood Duck		
12/13-31 S. Deerfield	1	L. Rivais + v.o.		11/1-11/10 Amherst	23 max	M. Maity + v.o.
12/20 Weymouth	1	J. Galluzzo		11/1-11/20 Pittsfield (Onota)	16 max	K. Hanson# + v.o.
12/21-27 Hingham	1	K. Rawdon		11/3 Wachusett Res.	16	M. Lynch#
12/31 Fairhaven	1	V. Burdette + v.o.		12/4 Barnstable	54	P. Bono#
				12/19 Boston	1 m	G. d'Entremont#
Greater White-fronted Goose				Blue-winged Teal		
thr Concord area	2 ph	max J. Forbes + v.o.		11/4 GMNWR	4	I. Reid
11/6 Fairhaven	1	J. + M. Eckerson + v.o.		11/11 Arlington Res.	1	K. Dia#
11/7-11/10 Hampden	1 ph	L. Richardson# + v.o.		12/4 Barnstable	3	P. Bono#
11/12 Longmeadow	1 ph	T. Gilliland		12/19 Chatham	2	A. O'Neill#
11/20-12/5 Rochester	1 ph	H. Levesque + v.o.		Northern Shoveler		
12/9-12/22 Somerset	1 ph	J. Eckerson + v.o.		thr PI	19 max	T. Wetmore# + v.o.
12/12-15 Lynnfield	1 ph	M. Dovay + v.o.		11/13-12/19 Longmeadow	5 max	J. Young + v.o.
12/15-16 Richmond	1 ph	C. Dutelle + v.o.		11/18 Randolph	7	L. Eyster
Pink-footed Goose				11/30-12/3 Fall River	5 max	L. Briggs + v.o.
12/11 Longmeadow	4 ph	J. Spool, M. Maity		12/4 Harwich	3	B. Albro#
12/14-17 Fairhaven	1 ph	D. MacKinnon + v.o.		12/5-12/15 Hadley	2 max	S. Winn + v.o.
12/14-18 Westfield	2 ph	C. Carpiest + v.o.		12/6 Boston (CHRes.)	3	R. Doherty + v.o.
12/21 Somerset	1 ph	J. Sweeney + v.o.		12/26-12/31 Jamaica Plain	2	K. Wade + v.o.
Brant				12/29 Nantucket	15	B. Balkind
11/2-11/11 Quabbin Pk	327 max	T. Gilliland + v.o.		12/30 New Bedford	2 1pr	J. + M. Eckerson
11/4-11/12 N. Adams	1	So. Auer + v.o.		Gadwall		
Brant (Black)				thr PI	42 max	T. Wetmore + v.o.
12/30-31 New Bedford	1 ph	J. + M. Eckerson + v.o.		12/6 Quincy	4	I. Grosner
Cackling Goose				12/12 Seekonk	168 max	S. Reinert + v.o.
11/1-11/3 GMNWR	1 ph	J. Hennessey#		12/21 Plymouth	41	G. d'Entremont#
11/1-11/6 Topsfield	1 ph	J. Hannafee + v.o.		Eurasian Wigeon		
11/1-12/29 Concord area	2 max	ph W. Hutcheson + v.o.		11/9-12/31 Nantucket	2 1pr	max ph S. Kardell + v.o.
11/4-11/24 S. Egremont	1 ph	G. Ward + v.o.		11/15-12/31 Acushnet	1 m	ph C. Longworth + v.o.
11/10-12/30 Amherst	3 max	ph M. Eckerson + v.o.		11/17-11/21 Rowley (RMWS)	1 m	ph R. Heil
11/11-12/22 Plymouth	1 ph	V. Burdette + v.o.		12/7 Plymouth	1 m	ph N. Blake
11/12 Longmeadow	3 ph	T. Gilliland				

American Wigeon				12/21	Manomet	17	G. d'Entremont#
11/1-11/30	PI	30 max	S. Miller + v.o.	Surf Scoter			
11/2	Quabbin Pk	12	T. Gilliland	11/5	Cheshire	1	G. Hurley
11/13	Nantucket	87	J. Trimble#	11/11	Wachusett Res.2	1m+1f	M. Lynch#
11/25	Seekonk	65	P. Capobianco	11/12	Rockport (AP)	1435	R. Heil
12/5	Cohasset	3	V. Zollo	White-winged Scoter			
12/21	Plymouth	49	G. d'Entremont#	11/2-12/15	Quabbin Pk	29 max	T. Gilliland + v.o.
American Black Duck				11/12	Rockport (AP)	490	R. Heil
11/8-11/17	Rowley	210,265	R. Heil	12/19	Westport	121	S. Miller#
12/19	Westport	120	E. Nielsen	Black Scoter			
12/27	Barnstable	1397	J. Trimble#	11/2-11/20	Quabbin Pk	84 max	L. Therrien + v.o.
Northern Pintail				11/4	Waltham (Cambr. Res.)	60	J. Forbes
11/1-11/30	PI	150 max	T. Wetmore# + v.o.	11/4	Orange	55	J. Johnstone + v.o.
11/16	Pittsfield (Onota)	11	G. Ward	11/12	Rockport (AP)	1310	R. Heil
12/5	Acoaxet	16	R. Baum#	11/21	Wrentham	2	J. Bock + v.o.
12/6	Falmouth	17	M. Keleher	12/12	Westport	142	M. + J. Eckerson
Green-winged Teal				Long-tailed Duck			
11/1-11/30	PI	450 max	T. Wetmore# + v.o.	11/2-12/14	Quabbin Pk	12 max	T. Gilliland + v.o.
11/1-12/12	Longmeadow	71 max	E. Quirk + v.o.	11/11	Wachusett Res.	4 m	M. Lynch#
11/5	Holden	39	M. Lynch#	11/12	Rockport (AP)	660	R. Heil
11/13	Nantucket	64	J. Trimble#	11/17-12/4	Pittsfield (Pont.)	6 max	J. Pierce + v.o.
11/21	P'town (RP)	50	B. Nikula#	12/7-12/13	Somerville	2	J. Layman + v.o.
Green-winged Teal (Eurasian)				12/12	Westport	57	M. + J. Eckerson
12/23	Nantucket	1 m ph	T. Pastuszek	Bufflehead			
12/30	Truro	1	P. Crosson#	11/5	Holden	18	M. Lynch#
Canvasback				11/20	Lakeville	99	G. d'Entremont#
12/10	Acoaxet	2	M. Eckerson	12/19	Acoaxet	120	E. Nielsen
12/12-12/31	Haverhill	1	A. Sanford + v.o.	Common Goldeneye			
12/22	Nantucket	125	S. Kardell	11/6-12/31	Turners Falls	47 max	L. Farlow, S. Winn + v.o.
Redhead				11/20	Lakeville	48	G. d'Entremont#
11/21	Wrentham	1	V. Zollo + v.o.	12/22	Somerset	192	M. Eckerson
11/28	Clinton	1 f	M. Lynch#	12/23	Wachusett Res.	71	M. Lynch#
11/29	Jamaica Plain	2	R. Mayer + v.o.	Barrow's Goldeneye			
11/30-12/26	Boston (CHRes.)	2	B. Stymeist + v.o.	11/6	Agawam	1 m L.	+ A. Richardson
12/22	Nantucket	83	S. Kardell	11/7-12/10	Richmond	1 f	R. Wendell# + v.o.
12/26	Haverhill	1	P. Daigle + v.o.	11/18-12/10	Randolph	1 ad m	T. O'Brien + v.o.
Ring-necked Duck				12/18-12/31	Sherborn	1	E. Landre, K. Winkler
11/6	Waltham (Cambr. Res.)	125	J. Forbes	12/19	Boston	1 f	G. d'Entremont#
11/7	Sudbury Res.	292	M. Lynch#	12/27-12/30	Fairhaven	1 m	J. Farwell + v.o.
11/16-12/31	Lee	161 max	J. Felton + v.o.	Common X Barrow's Goldeneye (hybrid)			
11/20	Lakeville	65	G. d'Entremont#	11/21	Falmouth	1 m ph	J. Saitz
11/27-12/31	Stockbridge	180 max	L. Farlow, S. Winn + v.o.	12/22	Somerset	1 m ph	M. Eckerson
Tufted Duck				Hooded Merganser			
12/5	Acoaxet	1 imm ph	D. Burton#	11/5-12/31	Stockbridge	143 max	J. Pierce + v.o.
12/22-12/31	Nantucket	2 1pr max ph	S. Kardell + v.o.	11/29-12/19	Holyoke	69 max	F. Bowrys
Greater Scaup				12/4	Quaboag IBA	178	M. Lynch#
11/4-12/1	Pittsfield (Pont.)	13 max	J. Pierce + v.o.	12/4	Wareham	163	G. d'Entremont#
11/13	Nantucket	880	J. Trimble#	12/19	Boston	87	G. d'Entremont#
11/20	Lakeville	85	G. d'Entremont#	12/24	Waltham (Cambr. Res.)	60	J. Forbes
12/23	Wachusett Res.	139	M. Lynch#	Common Merganser			
12/30	New Bedford	245	M. + J. Eckerson	12/4	Quaboag IBA	1179	M. Lynch#
Lesser Scaup				12/11	Arlington	235	J. Forbes
11/10-12/10	Quabbin Pk	30 max	M. McKittrick + v.o.	12/29	Fall River	125	L. Abbey
11/20	Lakeville	15	G. d'Entremont#	Red-breasted Merganser			
12/10	Wachusett Res.	10	M. Lynch#	11/12	Rockport (AP)	400	R. Heil
King Eider				11/13, 12/4	Quaboag IBA	1,1 f,m	M. Lynch#
11/6-12/28	Hull	1 m ph	H. Cross + v.o.	11/21	P'town (RP)	1500	B. Nikula#
11/7	Gloucester	1 ph	S. Hedman	12/23-12/27	Pittsfield (Onota)	1 f	J. Pierce + v.o.
11/15-12/5	Gloucester (EP)	1 ad ph	v.o.	Ruddy Duck			
11/20	Manomet	1 f	I. Davies	11/7	Sudbury Res.	136	M. Lynch#
12/6-12/29	Gloucester (AP)	1 imm m ph	S. Miller + v.o.	11/13	Nantucket	69	J. Trimble#
12/9	Cohasset	1 ad m ph	M. Blaze	11/20	PI	1	J. Barcus
12/10-12/26	Ipswich	1 f	N. Dubrow#	11/24	Fall River	5945	M. Iliff
12/26-12/27	Scituate	1 f ph	L. Schibley, B. Vigorito + v.o.	12/18	Brewster	48	J. Bryant
12/29	Marshfield	1 imm m	K. Rosenberg	12/18	Randolph	17	G. d'Entremont#
Common Eider				Northern Bobwhite			
11/12	Rockport (AP)	395	R. Heil	11/6	Eastham (FH)	15	SSBC
12/19	Westport	90	E. Nielsen	Wild Turkey			
Harlequin Duck				12/18	Dartmouth	39	J. + M. Eckerson
11/3, 12/14	PI	1,1 f	T. Wetmore#, S. Babbitt	Ruffed Grouse			
11/9	Westport	26	L. Abbey	11/10	Freetown	1	B. King#
12/1-12/31	Rockport (HPt)	55 max	v.o.	Ring-necked Pheasant			
12/5	Cohasset	7	V. Zollo	11/19	Sutton	1 m	M. Lynch#

Ring-necked Pheasant (continued)									
11/21	Dartmouth	1		B. King#	11/1-11/28	PI	40 max		v.o.
Pied-billed Grebe					11/13	N. Monomoy	415	B. Harrington#	
11/1-21,12/23	PI	2,1	v.o.,	T. Wetmore#	12/14	Gloucester	2	M. Iliff	
11/7	Westborough	5		M. Lynch#	12/27	Westport	6	D. Rett	
11/21	Acoaxet	4		D. Burton	American Golden-Plover				
12/12	Quaboag IBA	1		M. Lynch#	11/7-11/8	Edgartown	1	L. Johnson#	
12/17	Somerset	4		M. Eckerson	11/8	S. Boston	1	L. Markley	
12/25	Brewster	5		J. Young	Killdeer				
12/30	Wellfleet	4		M. Faherty	11/5	Holden	10	M. Lynch#	
Horned Grebe					11/6	Fairhaven	59	J. + M. Eckerson	
11/3-12/31	Quabbin Pk	9 max	L. Farlow,S. Winn+v.o.		11/16	Weston	8	J. Forbes	
11/11	Wachusett Res.	1		M. Lynch#	12/9	Worc.	2	M. Lynch#	
12/4	Fairhaven	56		M. Eckerson	12/26	Fairhaven	1	C. Longworth	
12/12-12/31	Stockbridge	1		G. Ward + v.o.	12/26	Hadley (Honeypot)	1	Q. Nial, S. Schwenk	
12/21	Manomet	19		G. d'Entremont#	Semipalmated Plover				
Red-necked Grebe					11/1-11/23	PI	15 max		v.o.
thr	PI	12 max		v.o.	11/3	Dartmouth	1	J. Sweeney	
12/19	Westport	2		S. Miller#	12/23	Nantucket	1	S. Kardell	
12/26	Gill	1		B. Lafley	Piping Plover				
Eared Grebe					11/1	Nantucket	1	T. Pastuszak#	
11/1-11/3	Cohasset/Scituate	2 ph	A. Donovan + v.o.		11/19	PI	1	D. Williams	
12/16-12/30	Marblehead	1 ph	A. Damiano# + v.o.		11/19-11/20	Ipswich (CB)	12,4	I. Pepper	
Yellow-billed Cuckoo					Marbled Godwit				
11/1	Quincy	1		C. George	11/1-12/19	Chatham	2		v.o.
11/3	Dartmouth	1		B. King	12/28-12/30	Chatham	1		DVK
11/7	Falmouth	1		R. Olshansky	Ruddy Turnstone				
11/7	Sandwich	1		N. Marchessault#	12/27	Fairhaven	9		J. Barrett#
Chuck-will's-widow					Red Knot				
12/9	Oak Bluffs	1 ph		K. Stafford	11/5	PI	1		T. Wetmore#
Rufous Hummingbird					11/9	Chatham (SB)	180		B. Harrington#
thr	Brookline	1 imm f ph		M. Garvey+v.o.	11/13	N. Monomoy	355		B. Harrington#
thr	Hampden Co.	1 b		A. Hill#	Sanderling				
Clapper Rail					11/1-11/30	PI	180 max		J. Layman# + v.o.
11/1-12/5	Fairhaven	2 max		C. Longworth + v.o.	11/9	Chatham (SB)	950		B. Harrington#
Virginia Rail					12/28	Westport	117		P. Galvin
11/2-12/31	W. Roxbury (MP)	2		M. Iliff + v.o.	Dunlin				
12/14-12/31	Concord	3 max		W. Hutcheson	11/1-11/30	PI	500 max		T. Wetmore + v.o.
12/18	Dartmouth	3		J. + M. Eckerson + v.o.	11/2	Quabbin Pk	1		T. Gilliland
12/18	Quincy	1		D. Burton	11/8	Rowley (RMWS)	315		R. Heil
12/19	Chelsea	1		J. Layman	11/9	Chatham (SB)	2050		B. Harrington#
12/21	Plymouth	1		G. d'Entremont#	Purple Sandpiper				
12/22-12/31	PI	1		M. Halsey + v.o.	11/25	Cohasset	2		R. Littauer
12/26	Ipswich	1		N. Dubrow#	12/27	Westport	10		B. Rapoza
12/27	Barnstable (SN)	15		J. Trimble#	11/27-11/29	PI	13 max		T. Wetmore#
12/30	N. Truro	39		N. Tepper	Least Sandpiper				
Sora					11/5	PI	1		T. Wetmore#.
11/2	Middleton	1		S. Sullivan	White-rumped Sandpiper				
11/5-12/30	W. Roxbury (MP)	1		M. Iliff + v.o.	11/12, 12/4	P'town	1,1		B. Fogarty#, P. Flood
12/27	Barnstable (SN)	1		J. Trimble#	11/3-11/30	PI	15 max		T. Wetmore+v.o.
12/28	PI	1		S. Babbitt# + v.o.	12/1-12/6	PI	6 max		M. Iliff + v.o.
12/30	N. Truro	1		N. Tepper	Pectoral Sandpiper				
Common Gallinule					11/8	Rowley (RMWS)	1		R. Heil
11/1-11/7	Hatfield	1 ph		L. Farlow,S. Winn+v.o.	Semipalmated Sandpiper				
12/27-12/31	Nantucket	1 ph		J. Vohs, v.o.	11/21-11/23	PI	2 max		T. Wetmore#
American Coot					Western Sandpiper				
11/1-11/21	PI	5 max		v.o.	11/24-12/26	P'town (RP)	1		S. Arena + v.o.
11/10	Franklin	1		J. Bock	Long-billed Dowitcher				
12/19	Acoaxet	110		E. Nielsen	12/19	PI	1		T. Wetmore + v.o.
Yellow Rail					American Woodcock				
12/19	Orleans	1 ph		N. Tepper#	11/8-11/21	Rowley (RMWS)	2,1		R. Heil
Sandhill Crane					12/18	Mashpee	2		A. Burdo#
11/2-12/12	Cumb. Farms	7		J. Sweeney + v.o.	12/30	Truro	4		CBC
11/25	GMNWR	3		S. Perkins + v.o.	12/30	Tuckernuck I.	4		S. Kardell#
12/26	Lancaster	3		M. Lynch#	Wilson's Snipe				
American Avocet					11/4-11/16	Fairhaven	4 max		C. Longworth+v.o.
11/1-11/3	PI	1 ph		S. Babbitt + v.o.	11/18	Cohasset	1		M. Blaze
11/9	Monomoy NWR	1		B. Harrington	12/9	E. Boston (BI)	1		S. Riley
American Oystercatcher					12/19	Neponset	1		R. Schain + v.o.
11/4	Marblehead	3		S. Duncklee	12/23	Nantucket	1		S. Kardell
11/13	N. Monomoy	1		B. Harrington#	Spotted Sandpiper				
11/21	Quincy	1		A. Trautmann	11/1	Burlington	2		J. Keeley
12/19	Edgartown	1		R. Culbert	11/6	Fairhaven	1		B. King#

Spotted Sandpiper (continued)				11/17	P'town (RP)	280	B. Nikula#
11/20	Danvers	1	D. Williams#	11/18	Nantucket	1000	L. Dunn
Solitary Sandpiper				11/26	Acoaxet	1	V. Burdette
11/1	Springfield	1	I. Messbauer	Franklin's Gull			
Lesser Yellowlegs				11/12, 11/20	P'town (RP)	1 ad ph	P. Morris#, P. Flood
11/1	Swansea	3	K. Martin	Iceland Gull			
11/1-11/19	Arlington Res.	7 max	v.o.	11/7, 12/23	Westport	1	L. Miller-Donnelly, D. McLain#
12/26	Rowley	1	N. Buchman#	12/14	Sharon	2 1ad+1imm	W. Sweet
Willet (Western)				12/28	P'town (RP)	15	K. Yakola#
11/3-11/17	Chatham	1	v.o.	12/29	Nantucket	15	D. Bates
11/5-12/4	Yarmouth	1	A. Burdo + v.o.	12/30	South Hadley	1	1 cy T. Gilliland + v.o.
12/26	W. Dennis	1	K. Johnson#	Iceland Gull (Thayer's)			
Greater Yellowlegs				11/21	Salisbury	1 1W ph	S. Sullivan
11/8	Rowley (RMWS)	62	R. Heil	12/7-12/10	Gloucester (EP)	1 1W ph	S. Zhang#
11/23-12/29	E. Boston (BI)	2	S. Riley + v.o.	Lesser Black-backed Gull			
12/5-12/28	Fairhaven	2 max	M. Iliff + v.o.	11/9	Winthrop B.	2	M. Lynch
12/19	S. Dart. (APd)	4	J. Negreann#	11/20	Nantucket	148	T. Pastuszak#
12/22	PI	1	M. Halsey	12/14-12/21	Sharon	1 ad	W. Sweet
Red-necked Phalarope				12/19	Acoaxet	1	E. Nielsen
11/16-11/18	PI	1	T. Graham + v.o.	12/24-12/28	Wilmington	2 1ad+1imm	S. Sullivan#+v.o.
Pomarine Jaeger				Glaucous Gull			
11/11, 11/12	Rockport (AP)	1,7	J. Hoye#, R. Heil	12/19	BHI (Deer I.)	1	CBC (S. Sullivan#)
12/27	Stellwagen Bank	1	P. Flood#	12/20	Bridgewater	1	K. Ryan
Parasitic Jaeger				12/28	Lowell	1	S. Miller#
11/7, 11/14	P'town (RP)	3,4	B. Nikula#	Caspian Tern			
11/14, 11/20	Nantucket	19,15	J. Trimble#, L. Dunn	11/6	Salisbury	3	C. Cook#
Dovekie				Black Tern			
11/12	Rockport (AP)	341	R. Heil	11/13, 11/15	P'town (RP)	1	S. Arena#, R.+B. Irwin
12/26	P'town (RP)	93	P. Flood	Arctic Tern			
12/27	Stellwagen Bank	17	P. Flood#	11/25-11/28	P'town (RP)	1	B. Nikula#
Common Murre				Red-throated Loon			
12/23	P'town (RP)	217	S. Arena	11/2	Pittsfield (Pont.)	1	J. Pierce + v.o.
12/27	Stellwagen Bank	104	P. Flood#	11/12	Rockport (AP)	314	R. Heil
Thick-billed Murre				11/18	PI	50	T. Wetmore#
11/12	Rockport (AP)	2	R. Heil	11/24	Westport	42	V. Burdette
12/28	P'town (RP)	3	K. Yakola#	11/27	Truro	30	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
Razorbill				Pacific Loon			
11/27	Truro	400	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	12/18, 12/29	P'town (RP)	1,1 ph	P. Flood, K. Yakola#
12/1-12/31	PI	26 max	J. Layman + v.o.	Common Loon			
12/10	Westport	1575	M. Iliff	11/11	Wachusett Res.	13	M. Lynch#
12/18	P'town (RP)	1348	P. Flood	11/12	Rockport (AP)	55	R. Heil
12/18	Quincy	3	J. Young	11/21	Fairhaven	46	A. Cembalistry
12/19	BHI (Spectacle I.)	3	R. Vincent + v.o.	Sooty Shearwater			
Black Guillemot				12/12	P'town (RP)	1	P. Flood
12/1-12/31	Gloucester (BR)	4 max	v.o.	Great Shearwater			
12/24	P'town (RP)	1	P. Flood#	11/1	Westport	1	B. King
12/29	PI	1	M. Gooley	11/12	Rockport (AP)	1	R. Heil
Atlantic Puffin				11/14	P'town (RP)	55	B. Nikula#
11/2, 12/19	P'town (RP)	1,1	B. Nikula#, G. Apte	Manx Shearwater			
11/12	Rockport (AP)	2	R. Heil	12/19	P'town (RP)	1	G. Apte
12/8	Jeffreys L.	28 ph	S. Wrisley#	Wood Stork			
12/27	Stellwagen Bank	4	P. Flood#	11/4-11/5	Woburn (HP)	1 imm ph	J. Thomas+v.o.
Black-legged Kittiwake				11/7, 11/18-24	Gloucester	1	imm ph v.o.
11/12	Rockport (AP)	225	R. Heil	11/29-12/3	Fairhaven	1 ph	C. Longworth + v.o.
11/13	Nantucket	3150	J. Trimble#	Brown Booby			
12/19	P'town (RP)	405	G. Apte	11/11-11/14	Nantucket	1 imm ph	R. Veit#
Sabine's Gull				Northern Gannet			
11/6-11/7	P'town (RP)	1 ph	B. Nikula#	11/12	Rockport (AP)	435	R. Heil
11/13	Nantucket	1	J. Trimble#	11/20	P'town (RP)	900	P. Flood
Bonaparte's Gull				Great Cormorant			
11/12	Rockport (AP)	230	R. Heil	11/6	Westport	28	L. Miller-Donnelly
11/13	Nantucket	7215	J. Trimble#	Double-crested Cormorant			
11/14	P'town (RP)	360	B. Nikula#	11/6	Fairhaven	712	J. + M. Eckerson
12/21	Somerset	2	L. Howard#	12/12	P'town	25	B. Nikula#
Black-headed Gull				American Bittern			
11/13-12/8	Duxbury	1 1W ph	F. Bowes	11/6	Acoaxet	1	L. Miller-Donnelly
12/15-12/16	Plymouth	1 1W ph	F. Bowes + v.o.	11/8-11/17	Rowley (RMWS)	3,1	R. Heil
Little Gull				11/16-12/4	E. Boston (BI)	2	R. Doherty + v.o.
11/5, 11/20	P'town (RP)	1 1W ph	B. Nikula, P. Flood	12/5, 12/29	W. Dennis	1	J. Bryant
11/8	P'town (RP)	1 ad ph	A. Hulsey, J. Oliveira	12/19	Orleans	3	D. Bates
11/13-11/24	Nantucket	5 max	J. Trimble# + v.o.	12/29-12/30	PI	1	v.o.
Laughing Gull				Great Blue Heron			
11/12	Rockport (AP)	9	R. Heil	11/6	Quabog IBA	6	M. Lynch#

Great Blue Heron (continued)				Cattle Egret			
11/16-12/31 Lee	6 max	R. Green + v.o.		11/1	PI		1 ph D. Larson + v.o.
11/23, 12/19 Westport	22,9	L.Miller-Donnelly,S.Miller#		11/1	Southwick		1 phD. Holmes# + v.o.
Great Egret				11/1-11/3	Westport		2 ph B. King + v.o.
11/1-11/23 PI	9 max	v.o.		11/1-11/5	Plymouth		1 ph v.o.
11/18-12/22 E. Boston (BI)	3	J. Francis + v.o.		11/1-11/17	W. Newbury		2 max phM.Watson+v.o.
11/24-12/26 Nantucket	2	T. Pastuszek#		11/2	S. Hadley		1 ph T. Gessing + v.o.
11/25-12/31 P'town	1	W. von Herff		11/2-11/11	Whately		1 ph V. Miller + v.o.
12/2-12/22 Quincy	2	E. Ross		11/2-11/14	Sterling		1 phV. Burdette + v.o.
12/27 Fairhaven	1	A. Rainville#		11/3-11/7	DWWS		1 ph M. Hall + v.o.
12/27 Winthrop	1	D. Nyochio		11/4	Falmouth		1 ph R. Olshansky
Snowy Egret				11/5-11/7	Edgartown		4 ph v.o.
11/4-11/14 Nantucket	1	T. Griswold#		11/9-11/14	Nantucket		2 ph T. Pastuszek#
11/19 Salisbury	1	J. Nathan		Black-crowned	Night-Heron		
11/21-11/23 Wareham	1	Anonymous		11/7-11/8	PI		1 G. Coffey#
Little Blue Heron				12/7	Westport		2 G. Stuck
11/18-12/10 Gloucester	1	v.o.		12/29	Plymouth		1 L. Schibley
Tricolored Heron				Yellow-crowned	Night-Heron		
11/6 Essex	1	D. Brown		11/7	Quincy		1 E. Ross

VULTURES THROUGH DICKCISSEL

The astonishing appearance of a **Steller's Sea-Eagle** made this sighting the undisputed birding highlight in Massachusetts so far for the twenty-first century. It was first noted in Dighton on December 12. Nearly 400 birders flocked there on Monday December 20 to see the bird, with nearly as many missing this rarity after it disappeared in the early afternoon. Photographic evidence indicates that this individual has been traveling throughout North America for more than a year, wandering from its home in Asia and the Russian Far East. It was first spotted in Alaska on August 30, 2020, then in Victoria, Texas, on March 7, 2021, and in the Canadian Maritimes between June and November 2021, before its appearance here along the Taunton River. This individual was the first of its species to be recorded in the lower 48 states. *Bird Observer* devoted nearly half of the February 2022 issue—Volume 50, Number 1—to this mega-rarity.

Notwithstanding the appearance of the sea-eagle, there were many raptor highlights during this period. **Golden Eagles** were noted from eight locations, nearly all with confirmatory photographs. Birders in Bristol County recorded 43 Black Vultures in Westport and 17 Bald Eagles in Berkley, both of which were new high counts for the county. Late Ospreys were noted in Winchester and another in Holyoke on December 12. Snowy Owls were reported from 15 areas, including a high count of 13 birds at Logan Airport on the Greater Boston Christmas Bird Count (CBC). On the Truro CBC, birders tallied 37 Northern Saw-whet Owls: 25 in Truro and 12 in Wellfleet.

Late fall and early winter can produce exciting vagrants along our coast. This year, the sixth and seventh state records of **Tropical Kingbird** were found at Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary in November and in Waring Field in Rockport in December, the latter also a first record for Essex County. The first state record for this species was in 2000 at World's End in Hingham. The **Bell's Vireo** first found at Fort Hill in Eastham on October 16 continued throughout the period. Bell's Vireo has been reported from Fort Hill in 2015, 2016, 2018, and now 2021. Are these misoriented birds one and the same? **Ash-throated Flycatchers** were found at Belle Isle Marsh in East Boston, and another was present for 10 days in the Hingham-Cohasset area. This western flycatcher has now been found in the state in November or December in 8 of the last 10 years. Three **Western Kingbirds** were noted during the period. The individual found on Plum Island on November 5 was present for a month, being last noted on December 4.

Halibut Point State Park in Rockport has played host to **Townsend's Solitaire** during the November–December period in 2014, 2015, and 2019. One was photographed again this year on November 3. Like the Bell's Vireo at Fort Hill, could this Townsend's Solitaire be the same

individual returning year after year?

The Honey Pot area in Hadley is a bird magnet in all seasons but is especially good in late fall and winter. A **Western Meadowlark** was located there on November 11 and continued into the new year. Prior to this report, the three most recent reports in the state were from Cuttyhunk in October 2020, Plum Island in November 2017, and Fort Hill, Eastham, in February 2014. Veit and Petersen (1993) reported the status of this species as “Rare and erratic visitor: 25 records between 1957 through 1974; scarce or absent before and since.”

Several other unusual birds were noted, many of which we come to expect each year. There were 4 reports of Lark Sparrow, 12 reports of Clay-colored Sparrow, 8 reports of Yellow-breasted Chat, 5 reports of Dickcissel, and 5 reports of **Painted Bunting**. Other species that appear almost every year during this time include Summer and Western tanager and—less frequently—**Sedge Wren**.

Nineteen species of warbler were noted during the period. Noteworthy was a **Yellow-throated Warbler** visiting a feeder in Ipswich from November 29 to December 7. A lot of excitement was generated by the appearance of a brightly colored European Goldfinch that was present throughout the period in Lexington. The European Goldfinch is a widely kept cage bird and the assumption is that this individual is most likely an escaped bird. Winter finch reports were few and far between, unlike the same period last year when we were enjoying flocks of 50–100 Red Crossbills. This year there were reports from just six locations, with a high count of five individuals in Savoy. 🐦

R. Stymeist

References

- Schibley, Lisa and Marshall J. Iliff. 2022. Steller’s Sea-Eagle (*Haliaeetus pelagicus*) Visits Massachusetts for a First State Record. *Bird Observer* 50 (1):6–22.
- Veit, R. R. and W. R. Petersen. 1993. *Birds of Massachusetts*. Lincoln, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Audubon Society.

Black Vulture				Cooper’s Hawk			
11/2	Hadley	4	L. Therrien	12/4	Quaboag IBA	2	M. Lynch#
12/3	Franklin	2	M. Ess-Why (?)	Northern Goshawk			
12/11-12/22	Great Barrington	38 max	G. Ward	12/7	Barnstable	1	P. Crosson
12/16	Westport	43	M. Iliff	12/29	Duxbury B.	1	K. Rosenberg#
12/19	Medford	2	CBC (R.LaFontaine#)	Bald Eagle			
Turkey Vulture				12/4	Quaboag IBA	8 3ad+5imm	M. Lynch#
12/16	Westport	35	M. Iliff	12/14	W. Brookfield	4 2ad+2imm	M. Lynch#
12/22-12/29	Great Barrington	8 max	R. Green	12/20	Berkley	16	A. Lamoreaux#
Osprey				Steller’s Sea-Eagle!			
11/25	Winchester	1	P. Devaney	12/10-12/20	Dighton/Somerset	1 ph	D. Ennis + v.o.
12/12	Holyoke	1	J. Harrison + v.o.	Red-shouldered Hawk			
Golden Eagle				11/5-11/25	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	C. Boisseau + v.o.
11/1	S. Easton	1 imm ph	K. Ryan	12/21	Plymouth	1	G. d’Entremont#
11/2	Richmond	1 imm ph	J. Pierce + v.o.	Rough-legged Hawk			
11/5	DWWS	1 imm ph	S. O’Shea	11/4	Williamstown	1	K. Hanson, J. Jew
11/5	Mt. Watatic	1 imm ph	Hawkcount (T. Pirro)	11/20-11/30	PI	1	T. Wetmore#
11/6	Scituate	1 imm ph	L. Norton	12/24	Worc.	1	M. Lynch#
11/20	Wachusett Mt.	1 ad	Hawkcount (P. Vanderhoof)	12/30-12/31	Sudbury	1	D. Swain# + v.o.
12/5	Wachusett Mt.	1	Hawkcount (E. Mueller#)	Eastern Screech-Owl			
Northern Harrier				11/6	Taunton	3	D. Burton#
11/8, 11/17	Rowley (RMWS)	7,5	R. Heil	12/18	Randolph	3	G. d’Entremont
12/5	Westport	3	D. Burton	Great Horned Owl			
12/19	Orleans	7	D. Bates	11/20-12/1	N. Attleboro	2	M. Cook#
12/19, 12/26	GMNWR	1,1	W. Kirby#, S. Perkins	12/14	W. Brookfield	3	M. Lynch#
12/23-12/30	Sunderland	2 1pr max	J.Jorgensen+v.o.	Snowy Owl			
Sharp-shinned Hawk				11/16-11/21	PI	2 max	M. Halsey + v.o.
11/5	Wachusett Res.	1	M. Lynch#	11/21-11/29	Chatham	2	P. Trimble, A. Belford
12/18	PI	1	N. Landry	11/22	Greenfield	1	T. Holbek

Snowy Owl (continued)				12/18	Quincy	1		J. Young
11/23, 12/30	Brewster	1	E. Schwam, J. Corrente	12/19	Westport	1		P. Paton#
11/28	Orleans	2	K. Burke	12/27	Barnstable	1		G. Hirth#
11/28-12/12	Barnstable (SN)	1	P. Crosson + v.o.	12/27	Sandwich	1		N. Tepper#
12/4	Sandwich	2	P. Trimble	12/31	Lexington	1		C. Cook
12/4	Westport	1	M. Ess-Why#					
12/10-12/31	W. Dennis	2	v.o.	Northern Shrike				
12/18	Quincy	2	J. Young	11/7-11/21	Freetown	1	L. Abbey + v.o.	
12/19	Boston (Logan)	13 max	CBC (N. Smith)	11/8	Rowley (RMWS)	1 ad		R. Heil
12/24	Concord (Hanscom)	1	C. Winstanley#	11/16	Quabbin (G33)	1 imm		B. Lafley
12/26	Nantucket	2	G. Andrews#	11/17-12/29	Orange Airport	2 1ad+1imm	max	G. Watkevich + v.o.
12/29	Fairhaven	2 max	J. Sweeney + v.o.	11/8	Bedford	1		J. Forbes
12/30	Tuckernuck I.	2	S. Kardell#	12/19	Eastham (CGB)	1		CBC
Barred Owl				12/26-12/31	PI	1		S. Babbitt# + v.o.
11/7	Dighton	2	M. Eckerson	12/27	Barnstable (SN)	2		J. Trimble#
12/14	W. Brookfield	2	M. Lynch#	12/27	P'town	1		E. Diedzic#
12/18	Mashpee	4	J. Trimble#	White-eyed Vireo				
Long-eared Owl				11/3, 11/10	WBWS	1		M. Miller
12/19	Saugus (Bear Ck)	1	CBC (G. Wood#)	11/18	Tidmarsh WS	1		S. Avery
12/30	N. Truro	1	N. Tepper	Bell's Vireo				
Short-eared Owl				11/2-12/31	Eastham (FH)	1 ph		v.o.
11/26	Randolph	1	J. Francis + v.o.	Blue-headed Vireo				
12/16	Edgartown	2	S. Williams#	12/2	Brewster	1		T. Spahr
12/19	PI	1	fide M. Halsey	12/31	Tuckernuck I.	1		S. Kardell#
Northern Saw-whet Owl				Red-eyed Vireo				
11/3-11/10	Sharon	2	J. Bock + v.o.	11/3	Sheffield	1		P. Zucco
11/4-11/6	Amherst	15 b	A. Hill, C. Volonte#	11/5	Dartmouth	1		B. King
12/14-12/31	Boston (RKG)	1	v.o.	11/5-11/8	PI	2 max		T. Wetmore# + v.o.
12/17	Freetown	1	J.+J.+M. Eckerson	Fish Crow				
12/28	Quabbin (G35)	2	M. Horman	11/23	Westport	400		C. Molander
12/30	Truro	25	CBC	12/21	Pittsfield	4		P. Zucco
12/30	Wellfleet	12	CBC	12/27	Worc.	4		M. Lynch#
12/30	Montague	2 au	J. Smith	Common Raven				
Belted Kingfisher				11/3	Nantucket	1		S. Fee#
11/11	Wachusett Res.	4	M. Lynch#	11/29	Dennis	2		A. Bedford#
12/21	Somerset	2	R. Buckert#	12/2	Carver	49		D. Furbish
12/26	Marshfield	2	G. d'Entremont	12/13	Somerset	43		M. Eckerson
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker				12/31	N. Truro	3		P. Henson
thr	PI	2 max	v.o.	Horned Lark				
11/16	Fairhaven	2	C. Longworth	11/14	Saugus (Bear Ck)	25		G. Wilson + v.o.
Hairy Woodpecker				12/16	Dighton	46		J. Eckerson
12/14	W. Brookfield	3	M. Lynch#	12/24	Worc.	6		M. Lynch#
12/26	N. Marshfield	4	G. d'Entremont	Tree Swallow				
Northern Flicker				12/10	Westport	225		M. Iliff
11/6	Quaboag IBA	4	M. Lynch#	12/19	Westport	9		E. Nielsen
Pileated Woodpecker				12/21	Chilmark	38		C. Bloomquist
11/6	Quaboag IBA	2	M. Lynch#	Barn Swallow				
American Kestrel				11/11	Easton	1		K. Francis#
12/13	Dartmouth	2	K. Wylie#	11/20	Chatham	3		A. Bolbrock
Merlin				Brown Creeper				
11/16	Worc.	1	M. Lynch#	12/18	Braintree	3		G. d'Entremont#
11/17	PI	1	W. Klockner	12/19	Westport	2		P. Paton#
12/15	Shrewsbury	1	M. Lynch#	House Wren				
12/17	Freetown	6	J.+J.+M. Eckerson	12/12	Cumb. Farms	2		N. Tepper#
12/26-12/30	Turners Falls	1	J. Rose + v.o.	12/18	Mashpee	1		J. Trimble#
Peregrine Falcon				12/18-12/31	Dartmouth	2	J. + M. Eckerson + v.o.	
12/19	Dartmouth	2	E. Lipton#	12/26	Ipswich	1		N. Dubrow#
Ash-throated Flycatcher				Winter Wren				
11/15-11/16	E. Boston (BI)	1 ph	M. Lynch + v.o.	11/3	Dedham	1		M. Iliff
12/7-12/21	Cohasset / Hingham	1 ph	S. Avery	11/6	Fairhaven	5	J. + M. Eckerson	
Great Crested Flycatcher				12/14	W. Brookfield	1		M. Lynch#
11/20	Harwich	1	J. Mott	12/18	Braintree	1		G. d'Entremont
Tropical Kingbird				12/26	N. Marshfield	1		G. d'Entremont
11/13-11/18	WBWS	1 ph au	M. Miller# + v.o.	12/30	Greenfield	2		J. Smith
12/5-12/8	Rockport	1 ph au	S. Heinrich + v.o.	12/30	Sheffield	1		R. Green
Western Kingbird				Sedge Wren				
11/4-11/6	Nantucket	1 ph	M. Faherty	11/25-12/27	Nantucket	1 min au		S. Kardell
11/5-12/4	PI	1 ph min	M. Halsey + v.o.	Marsh Wren				
11/14	New Braintree	1 ph	W. Howes	11/4	Amherst	1		L. Therrien
11/25	Plymouth	1 ph	S. van der Veen	11/6	Fairhaven	4	J. + M. Eckerson	
12/2-12/4	Wellfleet	1 ph	C. Hight, S. Burke#	11/10-12/31	W. Roxbury (MP)	2		M. Iliff + v.o.
Eastern Phoebe				12/21	Manomet	1		G. d'Entremont#
11/1-12/28	Hadley	1	L. Therrien + v.o.	12/22	PI	1		M. Halsey
				12/26	Westport	1		K. Martin

Snowy Owl (continued)				12/26	Nbpt	1	J. Smith
12/30	N. Truro	19	N. Tepper	12/27	Heath	4	S. Hardy
Carolina Wren				12/29	Windsor	5	K. Hanson
11/6	Fairhaven	23	J. + M. Eckerson	12/30	Wellfleet	1	A. Sterling
12/18	Braintree	17	G. d'Entremont#	White-winged	Crossbill		
12/26	N. Marshfield	23	G. d'Entremont	12/5	Savoy	8	J. Pierce
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher				European	Goldfinch?		
11/1-11/24	Cambr. (Alewife)	1	B. Shamgochian + v.o.	11/4-12/31	Lexington	1	J. Forbes + v.o.
11/14-11/21	Winthrop	2	S. Jones + v.o.	Pine Siskin			
12/19	Chatham	1	P. Trimble#	11/7	Lexington	1	J. Forbes
Golden-crowned Kinglet				11/17	PI	2	W. Klockner
11/20	Lakeville	8	G. d'Entremont#	11/23	Westport	12	L. Miller-Donnelly
12/14	W. Brookfield	4	M. Lynch#	Lapland Longspur			
Ruby-crowned Kinglet				12/4-12/5	New Bedford	1	M. Eckerson + v.o.
12/26	Turners Falls	1	Sa. Auer	12/8	Acton	1	M. Kaiser
12/27	Hadley	1	L. Therrien	12/24	Deerfield	3	J. Smith
12/30	Lexington (DM)	2	J. Forbes	12/24	Northampton	3	B. Finney + v.o.
Eastern Bluebird				Snow Bunting			
11/9	Freetown	23	H. Zimmerlin	thr	PI	100 max	v.o.
11/27	Eastham (FH)	20	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	11/12	P'town (RP)	80	B. Fogarty#
12/14	W. Brookfield	18	M. Lynch#	11/14, 12/26	Saugus (Bear Ck)	120.60	G. Wilson + v.o.
Townsend's Solitaire				11/16	Salisbury	50	M. Heydt
11/3	Rockport (HPt)	1 ph	D. Young	11/30	Dartmouth	100	A. Wilson
12/4	Mount Tom	1 ph	D. Allard	12/18	Wellfleet	50	G. Apte
Swainson's Thrush				12/26	Worc.	5	M. Lynch#
11/9	Rockport (HPt)	1	M. Watson	12/27	Hyannis	60	L. Waters#
Hermit Thrush				Grasshopper Sparrow			
12/14	W. Brookfield	2	M. Lynch#	11/4	Harwich	1	M.J. Foti
12/18	Dartmouth	7	J. + M. Eckerson	11/11-11/18	Boston (AA)	1	P. Peterson + v.o.
12/21	Manomet	3	G. d'Entremont#	Lark Sparrow			
12/31	Great Barrington	1	J. Morris-Siegel	11/30	Aquinnah	1	C. Bloomquist
Gray Catbird				12/1	Cumb. Farms	1	D. Furbish
12/8	Cambr. (Alewife)	1	J. Levy	12/2	Wareham	1	J. Sweeney
12/19	Chatham	11	P. Trimble#	12/5	Orleans	1	N. Tepper
12/19	S. Dart. (APd)	8	E. Lipton#	Chipping Sparrow			
12/19	Orleans	7	D. Bates	11/14-11/20	PI	4,1	G. Giribet, E. Labato
12/19	BHI (Thompson I.)	1	R. Schain + v.o.	11/24	Westport	4	M. Iloff
12/26	N. Marshfield	3	G. d'Entremont	12/1-12/6	Malden	2 max	C. Barnes + v.o.
12/30	N. Truro	12	N. Tepper	12/20	Easton	1	B. Keough
12/31	Easthampton	1	K. Doe	12/25	Lynnfield	1	G. Ellison
Brown Thrasher				12/26	Concord	3	J. Barcus
11/6	Fairhaven	5	J. + M. Eckerson	Clay-colored Sparrow			
12/17-12/21	Burlington	1	J. Keeley	11/1	Ipswich	1	M. Brengle
12/18	Dartmouth	2	J. + M. Eckerson	11/1-4, 11/15	Waltham	1 ph	W. Klockner, K. Bailey#
12/18	Marion	1	M. Iloff	11/2	PI	1	R. Sirull
12/19	Orleans	3	N. Tepper#	11/4-11/6	Boston (FPk)	1	S. Jones + v.o.
12/26	Rowley	1	R. Heil	11/5	Gloucester (EP)	1	M. Sovay#
Bohemian Waxwing				11/8-12/4	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	G. Denton + v.o.
12/29-12/30	N. Truro	1 ph	A. Karighattam#	11/9-11/11	Hadley	1	S. Griesemer + v.o.
Cedar Waxwing				11/10-12/27	Longmeadow	1	T. Gilliland + v.o.
11/19	Waltham	100	J. Forbes	12/11-12/31	Easthampton	1	J. Lafley
12/19	Westport	25	J. Eckerson#	12/18	Sandwich	4	P. Trimble
American Pipit				12/18	Mashpee	2	J. Trimble#
11/5	Wachusett Res.	35	M. Lynch#	12/18	Fairhaven	1	M. Molander#
11/17	Dartmouth	25	B. King	Field Sparrow			
12/19	BHI (Spectacle I.)	1	CBC (M. Garvey)	11/6	PI	1	S. Laks#
12/23	Wachusett Res.	1	M. Lynch#	11/14	Dartmouth	9	J. Sweeney
12/24	Fairhaven	15	J. Glover	11/18-12/22	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	M. Iloff + v.o.
Evening Grosbeak				12/12	Freetown	8	D. O'Brien
11/4	Amherst	2	L. Therrien	12/15-12/18	Boston (FPk)	1	S. Jones + v.o.
11/13	Shutesbury	1	K. Weir	12/17	Cambr. (FP)	1	E. Rudden
12/26	Leyden	7	K. Fiske	12/26	Concord	1	J. Barcus
Purple Finch				Fox Sparrow			
11/2-11/3	W. Roxbury (MP)	13	M. Iloff	11/5-11/18	PI	1,2	#
11/7	Dighton	13	M. Eckerson	11/13	Medfield	5	J. Bock + v.o.
11/24	Lexington (DM)	1	J. Forbes	12/18	Dartmouth	5	J. + M. Eckerson
Common Redpoll				12/27	Barnstable	9	J. Trimble#
11/9	Easton	1	M. Staab	American Tree Sparrow			
12/27	Dennis	1	M. Faherty#	12/5	New Braintree	11	M. Lynch#
12/30	Wellfleet	2	M. Faherty#	12/5	N. Brookfield	4	M. Lynch#
Red Crossbill				12/27	Freetown	25	G. Chretien
12/4	Belmont	1	J. Layman	White-crowned Sparrow			
12/5	Savoy	5 au	J. Pierce	thr	Sheffield	6 max	G. Ward + v.o.

White-crowned Sparrow (continued)				12/30	Truro	1	P. Crosson#
thr	Hadley (Honeypot)	3 max	L. Therrien + v.o.	Red-winged Blackbird			
11/2-12/31	W. Roxbury (MP)	6	M. Iliff + v.o.	11/4	Westport	880	L. Miller-Donnelly
12/10-12/20	Fairhaven	2 imm	C. Longworth	11/5	Rutland	1000	M. Lynch#
12/15-12/31	Sunderland	4 1ad+3imm	S.Griesemer+v.o.	11/6	Quaboag IBA	69	M. Lynch#
12/19-12/26	Saugus (Bear Ck)	3 max	CBC (G. Wood#)	12/26	N. Marshfield	50	G. d'Entremont
Vesper Sparrow				Brown-headed Cowbird			
11/4	Nantucket	2	T. Sackton	11/22	Concord (NAC)	75	J. Forbes
11/21	Dartmouth	1	A. Rainville	12/14	Westwood	25	E. Nielsen
12/3-12/18	Falmouth	1	A. Bedford#	12/17	Taunton	35	R. Baum
12/18	Mashpee	1	P. Trimble#	12/26	N. Marshfield	80	G. d'Entremont
Seaside Sparrow				Rusty Blackbird			
11/7-11/9	E. Boston (BI)	1	T. Bradford + v.o.	11/1	Egremont	25	J. Morris-Siegel
12/19	Orleans	1	P. Flood#	11/4	Westport	11	L. Miller-Donnelly
12/27	Nbpt H.	1	R. Heil	11/13	Sandwich	7	P. Crosson
Nelson's Sparrow				12/24	Dartmouth	1	B. King
11/5-11/9	E. Boston (BI)	2	M. Iliff + v.o.	12/31	Lexington	2	J. Barcus#
11/6	Fairhaven	2	J. + M. Eckerson	Common Grackle			
11/13	Westport	1	M. Eckerson	11/5	Rutland	60	M. Lynch#
12/19	Orleans	1	Atlantic P. Flood#	12/29	Quaboag IBA	120	M. Lynch#
12/27	Barnstable (SN)	1	J. Trimble#	Northern Waterthrush			
12/30	Eastham (FH)	1	E. Diedzic#	12/30	N. Truro	1	N. Tepper
Saltmarsh Sparrow				Black-and-white Warbler			
12/27	Barnstable (SN)	1	J. Trimble#	11/3	Boston (McW)	1	L. Grimes
Savannah Sparrow				11/7	E. Boston (BI)	1	L. Markley
11/14	Saugus (Bear Ck)	20	G. Wilson + v.o.	12/5	Everett	1	J. Forbes
12/1-12/31	Saugus (Bear Ck)	25 max	G. Wilson + v.o.	Tennessee Warbler			
12/20	Dartmouth	9	J. Sweeney	11/3	Greenfield	1	A. Fiske-White
Ipswich Sparrow				11/11	Gloucester	1	S. Hedman
11/29-12/26	PI	1 min	T.Wetmore#, S. Zhang	11/13	Florence	1	C. Stern
12/21	Ipswich (CB)	1	I. Pepper	Orange-crowned Warbler			
12/26	Saugus (Bear Ck)	1	G. Wilson + v.o.	11/5-11/8	Woburn (HP)	1, 1	J. Layman#, A. Flynn
Lincoln's Sparrow				11/7	Lexington	2	J. Forbes
11/16	E. Boston (BI)	1	R. Doherty	11/13	Cambr. (Alewife)	2	B. Shamgochian
11/21	Boston (RKG)	1	M. Kaufman	12/4, 12/18-20	Fairhaven	1	M. Eckerson, C. Longworth
11/21	Dartmouth	1	B. King#	12/19	Orleans	3	J. Trimble#
12/4	Belmont	1	J. Layman	12/19	S. Dart. (APd)	1	E. Lipton
12/5	Sharon	1	D. O'Brien	12/21	Somerset	1	L. Howard#
Swamp Sparrow				Nashville Warbler			
12/4	Fairhaven	11	M. Eckerson	11/2	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	M. Iliff
12/18	Wachusett Res.	1	M. Lynch#	11/20	Boston (McW)	1	L. Grimes
12/30	N. Truro	39	N. Tepper	11/21-12/21	Boston (Fens)	1	J. Trimble + v.o.
Eastern Towhee				11/24	Fall River	1	M. Iliff
12/19	S. Dart. (APd)	7	E. Lipton#	12/6-12/13	Newton	1	M. Sabourin
12/19	BHI (Thompson I.)	1	S. Jones + v.o.	Common Yellowthroat			
12/19	Sharon	1	D. Levenson	11/1-12/26	Boston (Fens)	2	F. Guenther + v.o.
12/20-12/26	Boston	1	D. Bohrer	12/1	Somerville	1	v.o.
12/22-12/27	Shelburne Falls	1	E. Lavin	12/16-12/19	Groton	1	T. Murray
Yellow-breasted Chat				12/18-12/26	Winthrop	1	E. Szczypek + v.o.
11/21	Acoaxet	2	D. Burton	12/29	Dartmouth	1 m	J. Sweeney
11/25-12/1	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	J. Hanson + v.o.	Cape May Warbler			
11/29-12/7	Boston (Fens)	1	J. Young + v.o.	11/16-11/19	Salisbury	1	M. Heydt + v.o.
12/1-12/31	Somerville	1	E. Goodrich + v.o.	11/21	Dover	1 ad m	T. Coldebella
12/4-12/24	Fairhaven	1	M. Eckerson + v.o.	Northern Parula			
12/10	Randolph	1	P. Peterson	11/19	Wakefield	1	M. Sovay
12/19	Chatham	7	L. Waters#	12/4	Eastham	1	M. Faherty
12/19	BHI (Thompson I.)	1	C. Dalton + v.o.	12/19	BHI (Thompson I.)	1	CBC (S. Jones)
Eastern Meadowlark				Magnolia Warbler			
11/6-12/4	E. Boston (BI)	1	S. Riley + v.o.	11/8	Rowley (RMWS)	1	R. Heil
11/7	Weymouth	1	M. McKenna	Yellow Warbler			
11/8	Boston (FPk)	1	S. Jones	11/18	PI	1	D. Chickering#
11/17	Rowley (RMWS)	1	R. Heil	Blackpoll Warbler			
11/27	Eastham (FH)	1	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	11/8	MtA	3	J. Barcus
12/16-12/19	S. Dart. (APd)	15	S. Browne, E. Lipton#	11/10-11/14	Melrose	1	C. Barnes# + v.o.
Western Meadowlark				12/1	Fairhaven	1	G. Gove
11/11-12/31	Hadley (Honeypot)	1 au ph	S.Griesemer#+v.o.	12/2	Somerville	1	J. Layman#
Baltimore Oriole				12/18	Mashpee	1	J. Trimble#
12/18	Falmouth	2	D. Clapp#	Black-throated Blue Warbler			
12/20	Marlborough	1	L. Lane	11/2	MNWS	1	J. Smith
12/22-12/23	Somerset	1 f	K. Jones#	Palm Warbler			
12/23-12/26	N. Attleboro	1 m	Anonymous + v.o.	11/6	PI	1	N. Landry
12/27	Dennis	5	M. Faherty#	11/16	Lexington	1	A. Bean
12/30	Acoaxet	1 imm	L. Miller-Donnelly	12/5	New Bedford	1	J. Young

Palm Warbler (continued)			12/4-12/31	Boston (McW)	1	L. Grimes + v.o.
12/16-12/27 Westport	1	M. Iliff + v.o.	Summer Tanager			
Palm Warbler (Western)			12/7-12/31	Sunderland	1 ph	A. Samson + v.o.
12/19-12/30 Westport	1	E. Nielsen + v.o.	Scarlet Tanager			
Pine Warbler			11/6	PI	1	M. Emmons
12/8 Waltham	1	J. Forbes	11/7	Middleton	1	S. Sullivan
12/16 Dartmouth	6	M. Iliff	Western Tanager			
12/18 Braintree	1	G. d'Entremont#	11/13	Manomet	1 ph	M. Gray#
12/23 Taunton	1	E. Simmons	11/21-12/3	Chilmark	1	A. Keith#
12/30 Boston (AA)	1	S. Mrozak	12/16-12/23	N. Attleboro	1 ph	Anon.
Yellow-rumped Warbler			12/26	N. Marshfield	1	G. d'Entremont
11/1-11/9 PI	14 max	v.o.	Rose-breasted Grosbeak			
11/30-12/31 Longmeadow	8 max	M. Moore + v.o.	11/21	Lexington (DM)	1	J. Barcus
12/18 Dartmouth	44	J. + M. Eckerson	Indigo Bunting			
12/19 Orleans	120	N. Tepper#	12/14	Concord	1	D. Williams#
12/27 Barnstable	256	J. Trimble#	Painted Bunting			
Yellow-throated Warbler			11/19	Mashpee	1 m ph	M. Brecher
11/29-12/7 Ipswich	1 ph	S. McDonald# + v.o.	11/21-11/30	Nantucket	1 m ph	T. Pastuszak#
Prairie Warbler			12/2	Sheffield	1 m ph	K. Schopp + v.o.
12/7-12/23 Scituate	1	E. McBrien	12/11-12/31	Sandwich	1 m ph	E. Dewar
12/19 Chatham	1	L. Waters#	12/18-12/31	E. Sandwich	1 m ph	C. Gale
12/21 Nantucket	1	T. Pastuszak#	Dickcissel			
Black-throated Green Warbler			11/1	Weston	1	J. Meigs
11/3 Falmouth	1	M. Tucker	11/4	Westport	1	L. Miller-Donnelly
11/6 Rockport (HPT)	1	S. Sullivan	11/7-11/13	Boston (AA)	1	J. Hanson + v.o.
Wilson's Warbler			11/11-11/28	Williamstown	1	So. Auer
12/1-12/6 Brookline	1 ad m	L. Bix + v.o.	12/11-12/30	Nantucket	1	T. Pastuszak



AMERICAN KESTREL 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	Pd			Pond
ABC	Allen Bird Club	PG			Public Garden, Boston
AFB	Air Force Base	PI			Plum Island
AP	Andrews Point, Rockport	Pk			Park
APd	Allens Pond, S. Dartmouth	PLY Co. seas			Plymouth County, offshore
AthBC	Athol Bird Club	Point.			Pontoosuc Lake, Lakesboro
B.	Beach	POP			Point of Pines, Revere
Barre FD	Barre Falls Dam	PR			Pinnacle Rock, Malden
BBC	Brookline Bird Club	P'town			Provincetown
BFWMA	Bolton Flats WMA, Bolton & Lancaster	R.			River
BHI	Boston Harbor Islands	Res.			Reservoir
BI	Belle Isle, E. Boston	RKG			Rose Kennedy Greenway, Boston
BMB	Broad Meadow Brook, Worcester	RP			Race Point, Provincetown
BNC	Boston Nature Center, Mattapan	SB			South Beach, Chatham
BR	Bass Rocks, Gloucester	SF			State Forest
BRI Co. seas	Bristol County, offshore	SN			Sandy Neck, Barnstable
Cambr.	Cambridge	SP			State Park
CB	Crane Beach, Ipswich	SRV			Sudbury River Valley
CCBC	Cape Cod Bird Club	SSBC			South Shore Bird Club
CGB	Coast Guard Beach, Eastham	TASL	Take A Second Look, Boston Harbor		Boston Harbor Census
Ck	Creek	WBWS			Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary
Co.	County	WE			World's End, Hingham
Corp. B.	Corporation Beach, Dennis	WMA			Wildlife Management Area
CP	Crooked Pond, Boxford	WMWS	Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary		
CPd	Chandler Pond, Boston	Wompatuck SP	Hingham, Cohasset, Scituate, Norwell		Worcester
C. Res.	Cambridge Reservoir, Waltham	Worc.			Wildlife Sanctuary
CSpk	Cold Spring Park, Newton	WS			Willowdale State Forest, Ipswich
Cumb. Farms	Cumberland Farms, Middleboro	WSF			Westborough WMA, Westborough
DFWS	Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary	WWMA			
DM	Dunback Meadow	Other Abbreviations			
DWMA	Delaney WMA, Stow, Bolton, Harvard	*	first state record (pending MARC review)		
DWWS	Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary	!	subject to MARC review		
EP	Eastern Point, Gloucester	?	Questionable provenance / possible escape		
FE	First Encounter Beach, Eastham	ad			adult
FH	Fort Hill, Eastham	alt			alternative plumage
FHC	Forest Hills Cemetery, Boston	au			audio recorded
FP	Fresh Pond, Cambridge	b			banded
Fpk	Franklin Park, Boston	basic			basic plumage
G#	Gate #, Quabbin Res.	br			breeding
GMNWR	Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge	cy			cycle (3cy = 3rd cycle)
GN	Gooseberry Neck, Westport	d			dead
H.	Harbor	dk			dark (morph)
HCB	Herring Cove Beach, Provincetown	f			female
HP	Horn Pond, Woburn	fl			fledgling
HPt	Halibut Point, Rockport	h			heard
HRWMA	High Ridge WMA, Gardner	imm			immature
I.	Island	inj			injured
IBA	Important Bird Area	juv			juvenile
IRWS	Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary	lt			light (morph)
JPd	Jamaica Pond, Boston	m			male
L.	Ledge	MARC	Massachusetts Avian Records Committee		
MAS	Mass Audubon	max			maximum
MBO	Bird Observatory, Manomet	migr			migrating
MBWMA	Martin Burns WMA, Newbury	min			minimum
McW	McLaughlin Woods	n			nesting
MI	Morris Island	nfc			nocturnal flight call
MNWS	Marblehead Neck Wildlife Sanctuary	ph			photographed
MP	Millennium Park, W. Roxbury	pr			pair
MSSF	Myles Standish State Forest, Plymouth	r			rescued
MtA	Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambr.	S			summer (1S = first summer)
MV	Martha's Vineyard	subad			subadult
NAC	Nine Acre Corner, Concord	v.o.			various observers
Nbpt	Newburyport	W			winter (2W = second winter)
ONWR	Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge	yg			young
		#			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, c/o Sean Williams, 18 Parkman Street, Westborough MA 01581, or by email to seanbirder@gmail.com.

BYGONE BIRDS

Historical Highlights for November–December

Neil Hayward

5 YEARS AGO

November–December 2016

Single **Pink-footed Geese** were reported in West Newbury, Cape Cod (flyover), Concord, Cambridge Reservoir in Waltham, and Hadley. On December 28, Plum Island hosted a **Ross's Goose** and a Snow x Ross's Goose hybrid. **White-winged Doves** were reported from Nantucket and Edgartown, as well as a pair found in the Fenway Victory Gardens in Boston. A **Franklin's Gull** was photographed off Truro on December 4. A **Hammond's Flycatcher** in the Middlesex Fells Reservation in Medford was the fifth record for the state. The well-watched **Gray Kingbird** continued in Hyannis until November 2. The **Bell's Vireo** banded at Manomet in October continued at nearby Holmes Farm until November 25. Single **Sedge Wrens** were at Fort Hill, Eastham, and Sandwich. **Townsend's Solitaires** were found in Somerset and Essex. A **Mountain Bluebird** was discovered at Turners Falls on November 13. **Harris's Sparrows** were at feeders in Westboro and Dalton, while **Painted Buntings** were in Melrose and Nantucket.

Best sighting: an **Elegant Tern** off Wellfleet on November 19 was the third record for the state.

10 YEARS AGO

November–December 2011

Rare geese included a **Pink-footed Goose** in Saugus and Lynn, with a second in Rutland, and a **Barnacle Goose** in West Newbury. A **Brown Booby**—presumed to be the same individual discovered in Dennis on August 31—continued through the end of the year in Provincetown. Two female **Rufous Hummingbirds** were banded in Wareham and in Lunenburg. There was an “invasion” of **Ash-throated Flycatchers** with five individuals throughout the state. Other rare flycatchers included a **Cassin's Kingbird**—the fourth for the state—discovered in West Newbury in late November, and **Scissor-tailed Flycatchers** on Nantucket and in Orleans. A **Henslow's Sparrow** was found in Dorchester. More usual suspects included a cooperative **Western Tanager** in Falmouth and **Painted Buntings** in Eastham, Nantucket, and Methuen,



with a **Yellow-headed Blackbird** on Nantucket.

Best Christmas present: a **Townsend's Warbler** appeared on Christmas morning at the feeder of Jim and Nat Berry in Ipswich. Their hospitality in sharing the bird was appreciated by hundreds of local birders.

20 YEARS AGO

November–December 2001

A **Barnacle Goose** was found in Gloucester on December 7. An adult **Thayer's Gull** was photographed on Nantucket on the last day of the year. Logan Airport in Boston hosted as many as eleven Snowy Owls in a single day. **Ash-throated Flycatchers** were found in Cohasset, Gloucester, and Edgartown. As many as four **Canada Jays** (or **Gray Jays** as they were then known) were reported from around the state, including a long-staying bird in Windsor that was seen by many observers. At least five **Boreal Chickadees** were also noted. A **Townsend's Solitaire** was found in Essex, and a **Variied Thrush** was in Southwick. A Connecticut Warbler seen on Long Island in Boston Harbor on November 25 set a new late date for the species. A **Townsend's Warbler** was visiting a feeder in Centerville, while a feeder in Chilmark hosted a **Lark Sparrow** and a **Harris's Sparrow**. A Nelson's Sparrow was seen by a BBC group in the Boston Public Garden on November 4.

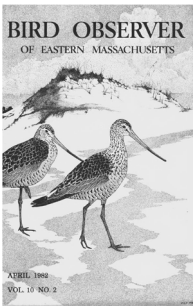


Best sighting: An adult dark morph **Gyr Falcon** photographed in South Boston on December 16–17 was the highlight of the Christmas Bird Count.

40 YEARS AGO

November–December 1981

Three **Tundra (Whistling) Swans** were found at Acoaxet on November 11, and an adult was on Martha's Vineyard on December 28. A **Gyr Falcon** was reported in East Orleans on November 27. Outer Cape Cod hosted flocks of at least 15,000 Great Shearwaters in the first week of November, and 50,000 Black-legged Kittiwakes on November 22. A **White-winged Dove** was reported from Barnstable. Single **Variied Thrushes** appeared during the last week of December in Framingham and Manomet, and a **Townsend's Solitaire** spent the period on Martha's Vineyard. An immature **Bullock's Oriole** was observed in Manchester on November 19–30, and **Western Tanagers** were reported from Manomet and Wellesley.



Best dead bird: The state's first **Black Brant** (a western subspecies of Brant) was shot by a hunter in Chatham on December 23. The specimen was deposited at Massachusetts Audubon Society in Lincoln. 🦅

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ABOUT THE COVER

Northern Parula

The Northern Parula (*Setophaga americana*) is one of the smallest and most widely distributed of eastern North America's wood warblers. They are easily identified by the blue gray upperparts with a greenish yellow patch on the upper back, two white wing bars, and a broken white eye ring. The sharp bill has a yellow lower mandible. The male is white below and has a vivid yellow throat and breast, and the upper breast has a band of black with chestnut flecks. The sexes are similar, but the female's colors are somewhat muted; the breast band is not as intense and may be lacking. Juveniles resemble the adults but lack the chestnut breast band.

Although Northern Parulas exhibit subtle regional variation in size, color pattern, and song, no subspecies are recognized. They breed in two separate areas of eastern North America. Their northern breeding range extends in a band from the southeasternmost edge of Manitoba east across Canada to Nova Scotia, and across the upper United States from Minnesota through the Great Lakes to northern New England. A second area includes the eastern half of the United States from East Texas to Florida north through Ohio and New York State. They have been extirpated or are absent breeders from most of southern New England, eastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland.

Northern Parulas spend the winter in small numbers in the Gulf states, but most winter in eastern and southern Mexico, mostly near the coast of northeastern Central America and the Caribbean Islands south to Trinidad. Most migrate through Florida when headed for Caribbean destinations. They tend to join mixed-species flocks and may be winter-site faithful. In Massachusetts, Northern Parulas are rare and local breeders and are a state-listed Threatened species primarily confined to areas where *Usnea* lichens are present on the trees, mostly in a few localities on Cape Cod and the Islands. They are common migrants, arriving in Massachusetts in late April with a peak in numbers in mid-May. They pass through Massachusetts in fall with peak numbers in mid-September.

Song is largely confined to the breeding season. The buzzy, ascending trill followed by a single note is given by the male only. A second, less common song type is more complex. Northern Parulas usually sing from mid to upper canopy. Territorial males may defend their territory by chasing and may confront opponents with wings drooping or held out to the sides and uttering chip notes.

Northern Parulas are usually found in mature riparian forest and, in the southern part of their range, in forests with Spanish moss associated with swamps, ponds, and rivers. In the northern part of their range, they prefer swampy, coniferous forests as well as mixed hardwood forests. They are generally canopy or subcanopy nesting birds. In winter they become generalists, using pastures, scrubland, and many types of forest.

Northern Parulas are generally monogamous breeders and may produce two broods per year. Nesting occurs in the south as early as April and in northern areas through

June. The nest is usually high in a tree and hidden by epiphytic and lichen growth, so the Northern Parula's nesting habits are poorly known. There is no information on nest site selection. In northern areas, the hanging nests are constructed principally of lichens, and in the south, of Spanish moss. The nest is constructed primarily by the female. The entrance is in the side of the nest, which is lined with grass or other plant fibers and may be used for several seasons. Only the female develops a brood patch, and she alone incubates the usual clutch of four creamy white eggs, spotted on the large end with a variety of colors, for about two weeks until hatching. If the nest is threatened, she may give an injury-feigning distraction display. The young are helpless at hatching, with eyes closed, and they are naked except for patches of down. The female broods the chicks for 10–11 days until fledging. Although both parents participate, the female does most of the feeding of the young birds. The time to independence is unknown.

During breeding season, Northern Parulas forage primarily on insects and spiders, mostly by gleaning the outer leaves of mid and upper forest canopy, with males foraging higher than females. They also forage by hovering and hawking. In winter, they are habitat generalists and may take seeds, berries, and even nectar in addition to their usual arthropod food.

Red Squirrels, snakes, and Blue Jays are known nest predators, and adults are taken by hawks and owls. Collision with structures during migration also causes substantial mortality. Habitat destruction, such as the draining of bogs or cutting of forests, poses problems and may be responsible for local population declines. Because the Northern Parula has a fairly robust population with broad distribution and Breeding Bird Census data suggest that the population is stable, it appears that the Northern Parula has a secure future. 🦉

William E. Davis, Jr.

ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST

Anna Stunkel

Anna Stunkel is an artist, naturalist, and environmental educator. She grew up in eastern Massachusetts where she developed a love of birding, nature, and art. In her childhood, Anna volunteered with Mass Audubon and enjoyed exploring the many diverse habitats of New England in search of birds. Anna creates art for publications, environmental education materials, websites, T-shirt designs, and personal commissions. She creates art to inspire people, to spark an interest in nature and animals, and to tell stories informed by our planet's rich biological diversity. Anna received a BA in Human Ecology with a concentration in Wildlife Biology from College of the Atlantic. She is the author and illustrator of *An Illustrated Natural History Guide to Birds of Mount Desert Island, Maine*. < annastunkelart.squarespace.com/ > 🦉

AT A GLANCE

February 2022



DAVID CLAPP

This is an interesting mystery bird! Not only is it somewhat mysterious in appearance, it is also one of the fastest declining species in North America. While this may be an obvious clue for some readers, if not, the mystery species has more than one interesting story to tell. First, let's identify the bird. Obvious features of this cryptic individual include a prominent pale supercilium, a conspicuous light eye, dark underparts finely peppered with pale speckles, and pale buffy barring on the upper breast and sides of the neck just below a conspicuous black area between the eye and the base of its sharply pointed, stout bill. As always, take advantage of the colored image on the *Bird Observer* website to make your task easier.

As is often the case, the bill offers a useful starting point. This bird's bill is too heavy to belong to a tiny bird such as a warbler despite its sharply pointed shape. The configuration is more like the bill of a species such as an oriole, although there is nothing else about the mystery bird to suggest an oriole. However, if we remember that orioles, Bobolinks, and meadowlarks are all blackbirds, that widens the field of possibilities.

Continuing with the possibility that the bird is a blackbird, we are left with only a couple of viable blackbird choices—a female Red-winged Blackbird or a meadowlark species. We can eliminate a meadowlark because meadowlarks display a conspicuous black V-shaped marking on a yellow breast. A female Red-winged Blackbird would show a prominent pale supercilium like the mystery bird, but it would also display heavy dark vertical stripes on its breast. So, what is left?

This is where the conspicuous pale eye and the prominent supercilium offer definitive clues. The only blackbird in our area that shares these features is the Rusty Blackbird in nonbreeding plumage. This mystery species is almost certainly a male Rusty Blackbird (*Euphagus carolinus*) coming out of its rusty nonbreeding winter plumage. The strong sprinkling of grayish white flecks on the tips of the lower breast feathers, and the hints of buff on the upper breast and sides of the neck below the conspicuous black lores—only visible in the color photograph—when combined with the blackbird’s obvious supercilium are diagnostic of a winter-plumaged Rusty Blackbird. The frontal view of the photograph makes it difficult to determine with certainty whether the bird is a male or a female, but the prominence of the supercilium and the darkness of the color of the underparts suggest it is a male still wearing much of its nonbreeding winter plumage. Much of what would be rusty colored on the bird in this plumage is not visible in the photo.

Rusty Blackbirds are uncommon spring migrants in March and April in areas such as the Sudbury River Valley and at favored locations in Worcester County. In fall, they often join other blackbirds in autumn wetland roosts at localities such as Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge in Concord and Lynnfield Marsh in Lynnfield. Small numbers occur where wetland thickets may remain open in winter, which is when Rusty Blackbirds typically resemble the pictured individual. As noted above, Rusty Blackbirds are far less common than they once were in our area due to a significant decline in overall population. Reasons for this steep decline are uncertain but are generally attributed to habitat degradation issues in their boreal breeding range and loss of southeastern bottomland forest. Losses due to avicide poisoning are likely another reason for the species’ decline; avicide sprays are used at mixed blackbird roosts in winter because of concerns over large numbers of blackbird species as agricultural pests. David Clapp photographed this Rusty Blackbird in Truro, Barnstable County, on March 21, 2021. 🐦

Wayne R. Petersen

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AT A GLANCE



JOHN KRICHER

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

MORE HOT BIRDS



No fewer than four **Western Tanagers** appeared in Massachusetts in January. The bird in Yarmouthport was the most cooperative, staying around for at least a month. The human host initially invited birders onto their property to observe the tanager, but unfortunately a few birders trespassed on neighbors' property, and the invitation was retracted. Other tanagers visited North Attleboro, North Truro, and Edgartown. Ross Sormani took the photo on the left.

The Cape and Islands harbored no fewer than four **Tufted Ducks** this winter. Nantucket, probably the state's most consistent area for the species, had a male and a female together, and there were females in Harwich and Mashpee. Sue Finnegan took the photo on the right.



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