Bird Observer

VOLUME 46, NUMBER 4 AUGUST 2018

HOT BIRDS

Two birders from New Mexico visited Mount Auburn in mid-June and encountered the Yellow-rumped Warbler subspecies that they would normally expect back home, an **Audubon's**! They submitted photos to eBird, and several local birders were fortunate to find the bird still present the following day. Bob Stymeist took the photo on the right.

On the heels of the Tundra Swan that appeared in Carver for many happy Massachusetts birders in March, a **Trumpeter Swan** showed up in May at Orlando's Farm in Charlton. Originally photographed and submitted to eBird on May 26 by David Lusignan, it continued in the same area for nearly a full month. Most opinions suggested that the bird had originated from the recently reintroduced Great Lakes population. Justin Lawson took the photo on the left.

Sean Williams and Maili Waters spent May 30 surveying shorebirds at Monomoy, using a canoe borrowed from Blair Nikula. They were rewarded with the discovery of a Reeve (female **Ruff**) roosting and feeding with a large flock of Semipalmated Sandpipers. Sean Williams took the photo on the right.

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Bird Observer

A bimonthly journal—to enhance understanding, observation, and enjoyment of birds
VOL. 46, NO. 4 AUGUST 2018

SUBSCRIPTIONS: $25 for 6 issues, $48 for two years (U.S. addresses). Inquire about foreign subscriptions. Single copies $5.00, see <www.birdobserver.org/Subscribe>.

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BIRD OBSERVER, P.O. Box 236, Arlington MA 02476-0003. PERIODICALS CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT BOSTON MA.

 ISSN: 0893-463

A Guide to Birding the Manchester-Essex Woods, Massachusetts

Jim Berry

The 3400-acre Manchester-Essex Woods is located in those two towns at the base of Cape Ann in Essex County, Massachusetts. It is a mosaic of parcels of mixed ownership. The Manchester Essex Conservation Trust (the Trust) owns a third of the land, about 1100 acres. Other parcels are protected by the two towns, by the Essex County Greenbelt Association, and by The Trustees of Reservations. The remaining parcels are held privately, but almost all are "landlocked," with no access for development.

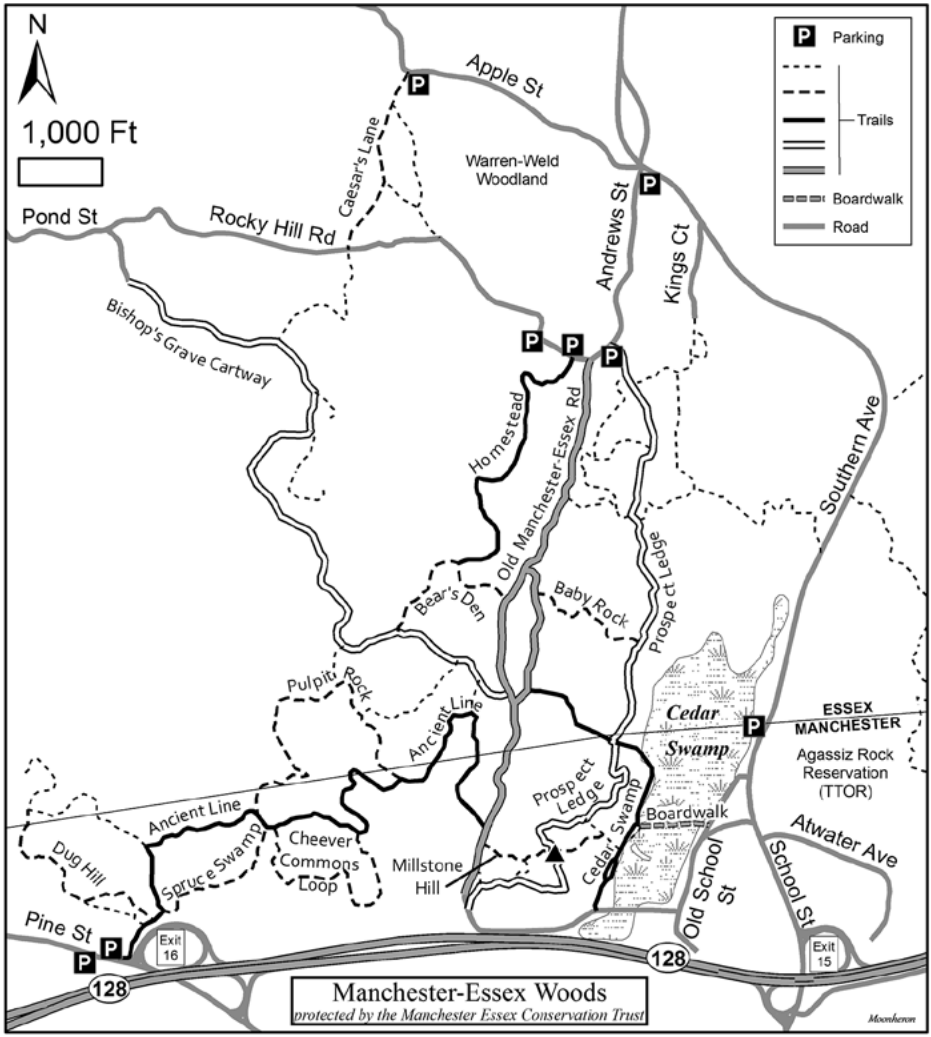
The Trust's goal is to continue researching the sometimes incredibly complicated ownership history of the many parcels and to work with the landowners to protect as many as possible, so that development can never fragment this beautiful woodland. For example, the Trust recently completed the purchase of 23 parcels containing 67 acres of woodland in Essex. That is an average of only three acres per parcel, which gives an idea of how many parcels remain to be protected.

For much more information on the Manchester-Essex Woods, including its history, view the 26-page "Woodland Guide," which you can access under the "Trail Maps" header on the home page of the Trust's website (www.mect.org). It will tell you, among other things, how the trails and other landmarks got their often unusual names.

The trail map reproduced here lays out the many trails by name and is crucial to getting around. The trails are well marked for the most part but can be confusing because of the many twists and turns. There are many parking areas, designated with a "P," but some are better known and thus more popular than others. My objective is not to provide detailed routes, but rather to allow the reader to choose a parking spot and take a combination of the trails in that section of the Woods. I will discuss only the more well-known and easily accessible trailheads at the end of this article.

The Birds

But first, here is a summary of the birdlife of the Manchester-Essex Woods, with a concentration almost solely on the breeding season. The habitat here is deep forest with a lot of ledge. Much of it is swampy, so of course the mosquitoes are welcoming. The spring and summer climate here, like that of Cape Ann in general, is moister and cooler than it is in the interior parts of Essex County, due primarily to the cooling influence of the easterly winds off the ocean. This means that the plants tend to be more northern, including eastern hemlock, yellow birch, striped maple, hobblebush, and other species more commonly found in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. The climate and vegetation are reflected in the mix of birds, with somewhat greater proportions of the


N
1,000 Ft
Parking
Trails
Boardwalk
Road
Apple St
Warren-Weld Woodland
Caesar's Lane
Pond St
Rocky Hill Rd
Andrews St
Kings Ct
Bishop's Grave Cartway
Homestead
Old Manchester-Essex Rd
Southern Ave
Bear's Den
Baby Rock
Prospect Ledge
Pulpit Rock
Ancient Line
Cedar Swamp
ESSEX
MANCHESTER
Agassiz Rock Reservation (TTOR)
Boardwalk
Atwater Ave
Old School St
School St
Dug Hill
Spruce Swamp
Cheever Commons Loop
Millstone Hill
Pine St
Exit 16
Exit 15
128
Manchester-Essex Woods
protected by the Manchester Essex Conservation Trust
Moonheron

Heron Pond, mid-year. All photographs by Mike Dyer.

more boreal species than elsewhere in the county, and correspondingly fewer of the more southern species. But there are exceptions, as noted below.

I reviewed all the birds I have entered in eBird for this property over the years from 1994 to the present, with possibly a few trips before that year that I have yet to enter. During this 24-year period, I have made 66 trips into the Woods and provided 56% of the complete checklists so far entered in eBird, all but three in the months of April through August. Since the Woods are essentially devoid of birds in the cold-weather months, the 63 lists from spring and summer form the basis of my remarks.

The vast majority of the water birds that I have seen were in the Cedar Swamp—also known as Heron Pond, though the pond is only one part of the Cedar Swamp—at the southeast corner of the property. This area, off School Street in Manchester, is the most well-known and heavily birded part of the Manchester-Essex Woods. The water birds I have found with any degree of regularity are Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Egret, Little Blue Heron, Green Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Glossy Ibis, Virginia Rail, and Herring Gull. I have seen about the same number of additional water bird species once or twice each. But the overall attraction of the site is the variety of breeding land birds, of which I will discuss the most interesting in taxonomic order.

The Woods used to be good for Ruffed Grouse, which I have recorded here three times. The last was a bird I flushed on the Bishop's Grave Cartway in April 2005. That decade was the last for this species in Essex County, though I suspect a few have been heard here and there since 2010. But on the whole, the Ruffed Grouse is essentially a bird of the past in much of eastern Massachusetts.

Among the raptors, Turkey Vultures are regular, and with so much ledge are no doubt regular breeders, as they favor rocky crevices and small caves for nesting sites. Jim MacDougall and I came close to finding a nest in spring 2002 when a pair hung around a small wooded cliff along a steep section of the Ancient Line Trail, but the birds refused to go to any putative nest site while we were present. It takes diligence to find their nests, but I still hope to find one in the Woods someday.

Northern Goshawks nested near the Bear's Den on the Homestead Trail in 1999. A botanist named Betty Wright found the nest and told me about it, but when I went to see it, the hawks came out to meet me and asked me to leave the area in no uncertain terms. I returned that fall and located the nest easily enough, but it went unused for several years before falling apart. I have not seen a goshawk in the Manchester-Essex Woods since 2001, though I heard a recent report of one elsewhere on the property. This forest is definitely suitable for nesting goshawks.

Both cuckoo species are regular in the Woods, but more so when there is an outbreak of gypsy moth caterpillars. One such year was 2000, when I saw three Yellow-billed Cuckoos on June 23. In my subsequent eBird entry I wrote: "Cuckoos were common this year due to a gypsy moth outbreak. The trees were raining frass." (Imagine—a special word just for a type of insect excrement!) Cuckoos have many habitats, and this deep forest is one of them. I have found black-bills more often than yellow-bills, seven times to four.

Of the woodpeckers, all five of the species that regularly breed in Essex County also nest in the Woods. (There are no records of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers nesting anywhere in the county.) But one species is not as common here as it is in the rest of the county: the Red-bellied Woodpecker. I was amazed to discover that I have found them on only six of my 66 visits, versus 37–40 times for Downies, Hairys, and Northern Flickers. Elsewhere in the county, I am convinced that Red-bellies are the second-commonest woodpecker after the Downy. This relative scarcity of Red-bellies is the most notable thing about woodpeckers in the Manchester-Essex Woods. Pileateds are uncommon also, but they have large territories and are uncommon everywhere.

In the flycatcher department, Eastern Wood Pewees, Eastern Phoebes, Eastern Kingbirds, and Great Crested Flycatchers are all regular nesters, with the latter being the most numerous in my counts. One species that does not nest here—or anywhere else in Essex County—is the Olive-sided Flycatcher. (There is an old nest record from 1858 in Lynn, and the species may have nested into the early 20th century, per Townsend in his *Supplement to the Birds of Essex County*, 1920). They are rare in this forest, where I have encountered them only twice, both times in the Cedar Swamp. One of these birds sang for three solid hours from some of the many snags in that swamp on the incredibly late date of June 23, 2000. I was excited to think that he may have been a breeder. But he was probably doing all that singing because he had not been able to secure a mate. Sure enough, the next day he was gone.

Of the vireos, I have seen four species here: Red-eyed (30 visits), Warbling (14 visits), Blue-headed (7 visits), and Yellow-throated (1 visit). The Warbling Vireos are the easiest to watch and to see at nests, as they build along the dirt road—Old School Street—that leads into the property at the Cedar Swamp and also along the boardwalk that crosses the swamp from that road. The other species are scattered throughout the Woods, most of which is good habitat for Blue-headed Vireos.

The Common Raven is a boreal species that was first found nesting in Essex County in 2004 by Rick Heil, across School Street from the Cedar Swamp in a quarry near the Manchester Athletic Club. Ravens are often seen and heard flying over the

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.

Cedar Swamp area, though no one to my knowledge has discovered any more nests in the vicinity.

Among the parids and sittids, Black-capped Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, and White-breasted Nuthatches are all common—seen on 57, 55, and 40 of my visits, respectively, with maximum numbers of 51, 30, and 15, respectively. But on only four occasions have I seen Red-breasted Nuthatches, which I should think would thrive in such boreal-flavored habitat. This low number of observations challenges my theory that the habitat favors the more northerly species. Maybe 66 visits are not enough to get a proper sense of these irruptive birds! At any rate, I have no evidence that Red-breasted Nuthatches nest here.

Blue-gray Gnatcatchers nest annually along Old School Street and the boardwalk at the Cedar Swamp, along with the Warbling Vireos. Their nests are, if anything, easier to see than those of the vireos, as they nest a bit lower in bare crotches of saplings or saddle their nests along angled branches, building one side higher to compensate for the angle. They are not that shy of humans and are a treat to watch—most of the time. Several of us monitored one nest in 2004 until fledging on or about June 9, but a day or two later Phil Brown saw one fledgling floating dead in the water and another get caught and eaten by a frog! Life is tough for baby gnatcatchers.

Of the spotted thrushes, Veeries (seen on 39 visits), Hermit Thrushes (35 visits), and Wood Thrushes (33 visits) are all regular breeders. Veeries are the most numerous, judging by my many counts in double digits, with a high of 26 on June 25, 2009. Hermit Thrushes are the least common, but they are the least common breeders of the three in Essex County generally. The Manchester-Essex Woods, however, is where

Yellow Warbler.

I had one of my largest breeding-season counts of Hermit Thrushes, nine birds on June 27, 2003. Most of the Hermits I have found here have been clustered along the Ancient Line and Spruce Swamp trails in the southwestern section off Pine Street, and I remember confirming them breeding on the Millstone Hill Trail farther east.

Breeding warblers include Ovenbird (seen on 42 visits with a high count of 48 birds), Northern Waterthrush (19 visits, high of 6), Black-and-white Warbler (39 visits, high of 10), Common Yellowthroat (34 visits, high of 17), Yellow Warbler (19 visits, high of 8, all in the Cedar Swamp), Pine Warbler (43 visits, high of 8), and Black-throated Green Warbler (35 visits, high of 13). The most memorable nesting event I have had here was finding a Black-and-white Warbler nest on June 28, 2005. I found it by sitting patiently for an hour and watching both adults carrying food to determine exactly where they went. This nest was off the Ancient Line Trail near the Cheever Commons Loop. The nest, containing three young warblers with their eyes open, was tucked into dead leaves on a steep hillside so that the entrance was on the side. The young faced the opening, looking downhill. I did not return to disturb these birds any more. This nest is one of my most cherished birding memories.

Possibly breeding warblers include Louisiana Waterthrush, Nashville Warbler, and Canada Warbler. On May 6, 2002, I heard two singing Louisiana Waterthrushes in the southwest corner of the property off Pine Street, one of them from the swamp along the road and the other across the swamp from the Dug Hill Trail. I have not heard them in the Woods since. I have encountered Nashville Warblers four times in June here and another time on May 29. Nashvilles are rare breeders in Essex County, and these breeding-season birds were found on scrub-oak hilltops where breeding conditions seemed right for them. The hilltops were, as I recall, on the Prospect Ledge and Baby Rock trails, but I never found any direct nesting evidence. Similarly, I found Canada Warblers along the Spruce Swamp Trail—off the Ancient Line Trail—five times in June and July. The closest I came to confirming breeding was on June 27, 2003, when I heard two singing males and saw one of them plus a female. But I didn't see either

Author on boardwalk.

bird carry anything. Canadas are another rare breeder in the county, or possibly an ex-breeder.

Of the remaining species, Eastern Towhees (seen on 37 visits), Scarlet Tanagers (35 visits), Northern Cardinals (37 visits), Baltimore Orioles (40 visits), and American Goldfinches (52 visits) are more common here than Rose-breasted Grosbeaks (11 visits), Indigo Buntings (8 visits), and Purple Finches (9 visits, of which 5 were in June and July). Indigo Buntings are concentrated around a large, mixed grass and shrubby clearing along Rocky Hill Road in the north end of the Woods, where I have found two nests.

The Trails

By now the reader will have become familiar with many of the trails I have named above. To access the Manchester-Essex Woods and its extensive trail network, I recommend any of the following trailheads.

The most frequently accessed trailhead is at the main parking area for the Woods at its southeast corner on School Street in Manchester. This lot is just beyond the Essex town line (unmarked) as one drives south on Southern Avenue from Essex. (This renaming of the road follows the quaint Massachusetts tradition that every road must change names at every town line.) Most field trips meet at this parking area. It is the "P" across the road from the adjacent 101-acre Agassiz Rock Reservation, a Trustees of Reservations holding that is also worth exploring. The lot is obvious and is only a quarter-mile north of exit 15 for School Street off Route 128, making easy access for readers arriving from the south and west of Essex and Manchester.

From this trailhead you must cross the Cedar Swamp on the boardwalk to reach other trails, meaning you will see all the water birds, Warbling Vireos, gnatcatchers, and orioles during your first half-hour. After you cross the swamp you have your choice of the Cedar Swamp Trail, the Prospect Ledge Trail, or the Millstone Hill Trail. If you bear left after leaving the boardwalk and take the first right up the hill and then the first left to continue up the steep hill, you will soon reach the summit of Millstone Hill, offering good views and shrubby hilltop habitat to listen for Nashville Warblers.

You can enter the southwest corner of the Woods from Pine Street in Manchester, just off Route 128 at exit 16. When coming from the west, turn right at the exit to go north on Pine Street, drive under the highway, and park immediately in one of two dirt pulloffs on your left. The trail, on the swamp (right) side, is marked and follows the inside of a barrier fence before turning left into the Woods. From this trail you can choose any of the Dug Hill, Ancient Line, Spruce Swamp, or Pulpit Rock trails, or the Cheever Commons Loop.

The northeast section is accessible from Andrews Street, which starts at the intersection of Southern Avenue and Apple Street in Essex. Drive south on Andrews and park at any of the three "Ps" along Andrews Street or the east end of Rocky Hill Road, which is gated at the westernmost parking spot. From here you can walk the Prospect Ledge Trail from its north end, the Old Manchester-Essex Road—the main trail through the entire Woods—or the Homestead Trail, plus any of the side trails off these, such as the Bear's Den and Baby Rock trails. If you need an Indigo Bunting fix, walk past the gate up Rocky Hill Road until you come to the large complex of clearings on your right. It isn't far.

The north-central entrance to the Woods is on Apple Street, roughly a half-mile west of its intersection with Southern Avenue. From here you enter the Warren-Weld Woodland, which is in essence part of the Manchester-Essex Woods. The trail is called Caesar's Lane. Bear left at the split if you want to get to the aforesaid clearings, or right if you want to continue to the Bishop's Grave Cartway. This trail is the longest in the Woods; it eventually links up to the trails farther south.

Needless to say, carry the map with you, for it will help you keep track of where you are going in this Mirkwood-like forest.

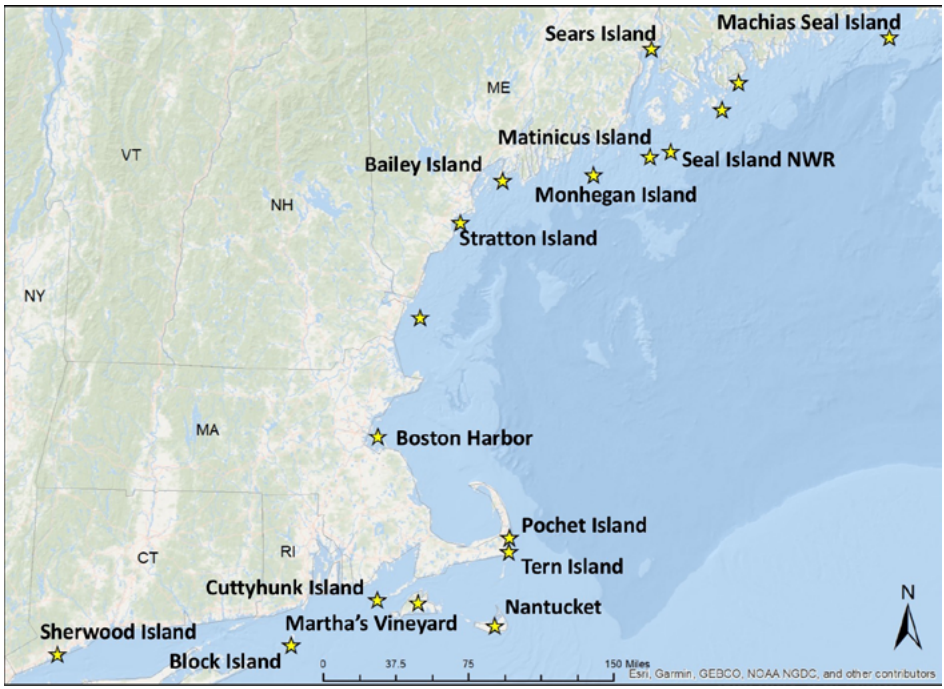
A final word: eBird really helped me write this site guide. Being able to look at my life list of species for the hotspot—mercifully, it is all one hotspot—and seeing how often I had seen or heard each species, with dates and numbers, helped me organize the writing and connect birds with specific trails. It saved me a lot of time, and I recommend it to others writing site guides for their local patches.

Jim Berry *is finally putting the finishing touches to his book on the birds of Essex County. He assures readers that it will be published in this lifetime (with luck, in the next couple years).* *He would also like to thank Mike Dyer and Frances Caudill for helpful comments on the draft, and Mike for the photos used in the article.*

An Overview to Birding New England Islands

Keenan Yakola

[Editor's note: This article was adapted and edited from Keenan Yakola's presentation at the Mass Audubon Birders Meeting on March 11, 2018]



Island overview. All images courtesy of the author.

Islands are intriguing. Different from the mainland, they pique our curiosity. The New England coast is dotted with islands, several of which are magnets for migrating birds and are also accessible to people, making them even more appealing to birders. Island birding covers the spectrum from large, well-known hotspots where birders can explore for days on end to small, sandy or rocky outcrops where visitors may spend only a few hours. This guide provides a brief overview to birding the islands off New England with the exception of the Boston Harbor islands, which merit a birding overview of their own. (See John Nove's "Birding the Boston Harbor Islands" in *Bird Observer* June 2001.)

Southern New England Islands

Sherwood Island State Park, Connecticut

Best time to visit: Best in fall but good year-round.

Sherwood Island State Park is the top eBird hotspot in Connecticut with over 300 recorded species! Lots of rarities have been found on the island including Sprague's

Sherwood Island State Park, Connecticut.

Pipit, Western Meadowlark, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Sabine's Gull, Boreal Chickadee, Ruff, Eared Grebe, Smith's Longspur, Golden Eagle, and Painted Bunting; many of these have been found in the fall. It's also a good place to check for Boat-tailed Grackle. If you are unsuccessful here, you can also take a quick drive up to Stratford Point.

Birders visiting the park should walk the beach and scope Long Island Sound. Also walk the model aircraft field and along the edge of the marsh. Check out the Sherwood Millpond from the west-end viewing platform at any time of year. The spruce grove area can be excellent during spring and fall migration and is certainly worth some time exploring.

Directions: take Exit 18 from Interstate 95 (I-95) North or South to access the Sherwood Island Connector. Follow the connector directly into the park.

Links:

Sherwood Island State Park: <http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2716&q=325260&deepNav_GID=1650>

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L280564?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec>

Block Island, Rhode Island

Best time to visit: spring and especially fall migration.

Block Island is a great spot to enjoy falcon migration in the fall and search for migrating songbirds. Keep your eye out for vagrants as a long list of rarities have been found here including Northern Lapwing, Bewick's Wren, Brown Noddy, Phainopepla, Eurasian Jackdaw, Northern Wheatear, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Say's Phoebe, American White and Brown pelicans, and Mississippi Kite.

Start your birding route at North Light and the thickets around Sachem Pond. Working south, check the Great Salt Pond area for shorebirds, then check roadside thickets and trails for migrants as you work your way back toward the town site. Eventually travel south toward Southeast Light along the roadways above the Mohegan Cliffs, and if time allows explore Lewis-Dickens Farm on the southwest corner of the island. This route affords good coverage and offers plenty of time for lingering at especially birdy spots.

Block Island, Rhode Island.

Access Block Island via the ferry from Point Judith or a flight from Westerly, Rhode Island:

Ferry Service: <https://www.blockislandferry.com/>

Flight Service: <http://blockislandsairline.com/>

Links:

<http://www.blockislandchamber.com/visitor-info/accommodations/>

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L248058?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec>

Check out *Bird Observer's* Block Island (Fox 2000): <https://www.birdobserver.org/Portals/0/PDF_open/bo28-1-web.pdf?ver=2017-02-10-105719-573#view=Fit>

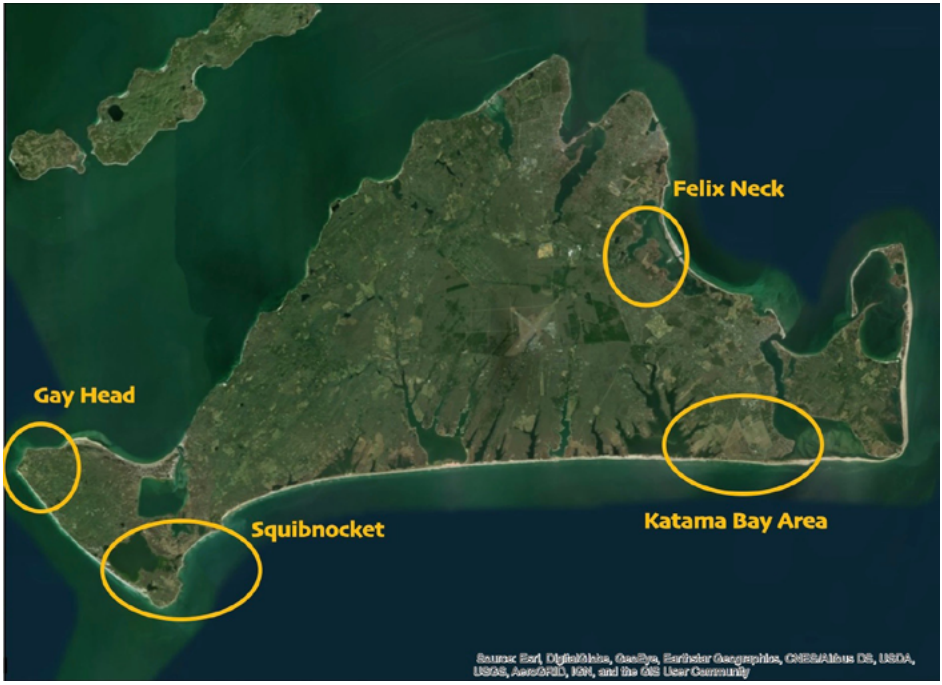
Cuttyhunk Island, Massachusetts

Best time to visit: spring and especially fall migration.

Highlights include Purple Gallinule, Varied Thrush, Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's), and Cave Swallow. According to Ian Davies, "Cuttyhunk is one of those places on the edge of things, where it feels like every step could turn up something incredible."

Cuttyhunk Island, Massachusetts.

After disembarking the ferry, you are already close to some of the island's best birding, which is along the streets that cross through town. Walk up and down all of the streets a few times, and it is worthwhile to spend a bit of time around



Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts.

the small pond, too. From there, go to the top of Tower Road and check the thickets along the raised road, which can be quite productive. A visit to Cuttyhunk would not be complete without visiting the larger marshy ponds at the western end of the island. Take West End Road, which goes through groves of poplars that also can be quite birdy.

Access the island via the ferry from New Bedford: <https://www.cuttyhunkferryco.com/attractions.html>

Link: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L663765?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec>

Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts

Best time to visit: fall migration.

Martha's Vineyard boasts a long list of rarities including Red-footed Falcon, Common Cuckoo, Gray Kingbird, Zone-tailed Hawk, Magnificent Frigatebird, Northern Lapwing, Long-billed Curlew, Eurasian Curlew, Black-tailed Godwit, Curlew Sandpiper, Sulfur-bellied/Streaked Flycatcher, and Bridled Tern.

The suggested birding route starts at the Gay Head cliffs in Aquinnah. This location offers excellent morning flights of songbirds in September and October and is also a good spot to watch falcon migration. Bird the thickets here and spend time scanning the ocean for seaducks. After spending the morning at Gay Head, head east and consider stopping at any good-looking thickets along the way. A nice route to take is through Squibnocket.

Hudsonian Godwit.

Eventually you will want to get to the Katama Bay area. Lots of good places to visit here including the farm institute fields and the airfield (where the Red-footed Falcon was seen in 2004). From Katama Point you can scan the flats of the bay for shorebirds. If you have time, take a walk around Norton Point. Finish the day at Mass Audubon's Felix Neck Wildlife Sanctuary where you may get a chance to see Barn Owls exiting their nest box on the property.

There are several options for getting to Martha's Vineyard but I suggest taking the ferry from Woods Hole: <https://www.steamshipauthority.com/>

The ferry ride is relatively short and good birding can be enjoyed from the boat itself.

Links:

Felix Neck Wildlife Sanctuary: <https://www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/wildlife-sanctuaries/felix-neck>

There are many eBird hotspots on Martha's Vineyard. Here is the link to Duke's County so you can access the ones you want: <https://ebird.org/subnational2/US-MA-007/hotspots>

Check out *Vineyard Birds II* (Whiting and Pesch 2007) for more information.

Check out *Bird Observer's* A Guide to Birding on Martha's Vineyard (Sargent 1979): <https://www.birdobserver.org/Portals/0/PDF_open/bo07-2-web.pdf?ver=2017-02-10-105546-870#view=Fit>

Nantucket, Massachusetts.

Nantucket, Massachusetts

Best time to visit: fall migration and early winter.

The extensive list of rarities is highlighted by Western Reef Heron, Grey-tailed Tattler, Northern Lapwing, Magnificent Frigatebird, Black-backed Woodpecker, Black-chinned and Calliope hummingbirds, California Gull, and Northern Wheatear.

A great place to start the day is at either Smith or Eel point on the west end of the island. It is best to be here early in the morning to observe large migrant flights in the fall (weather dependent) and Long-tailed Duck flights in the winter. Traveling eastward, stop at the Horse Farm lookout at Hummock Pond. American Avocet, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Northern Lapwing, and Cattle Egret have been observed here. Just around the corner, take the road through the Bartlett's Farm fields. **Do not trespass, and observe only from the road**. This is a good location for geese in the winter and for shorebirds in the fall. Ross's Goose, Baird's and Pectoral sandpipers, and Black-necked Stilts have been seen here.

It is always worth stopping along Low Beach Road south of Siasconset. This can be a big hotspot for gulls especially from fall to early spring. Lesser Black-backed Gull can be a relatively common sight among the regulars. Little, Blacked-tailed, and Mew gulls also have been recorded at this location. Finally, if you have some extra time, try to stop by the UMass Boston Nantucket Field Station and check out the small marsh there. This is where the Grey-tailed Tattler and Western Reef Heron were seen.

If you take the slow ferry from Hyannis, you can bird while crossing Nantucket Sound, but the trip takes around 2.5 hours. It's difficult to bird from the fast ferry,

but you'll arrive in Nantucket in an hour. The ferry link is: https://www.steamshipauthority.com/visitors/nantucket

Links:

Like Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket has many eBird hotspots, so here is the link to Nantucket County: <https://ebird.org/region/US-MA-019?yr=all>

Check out *Birding Nantucket* (Andrews and Blackshaw 2014) for more information.

Check out *Bird Observer's* Where to Go on Nantucket (Veit 1976): <https://www.birdobserver.org/Portals/0/PDF_open/bo04-5-web.pdf?ver=2017-02-10-105534-777#view=Fit>

Tern Island, Massachusetts.

Tern Island, Massachusetts

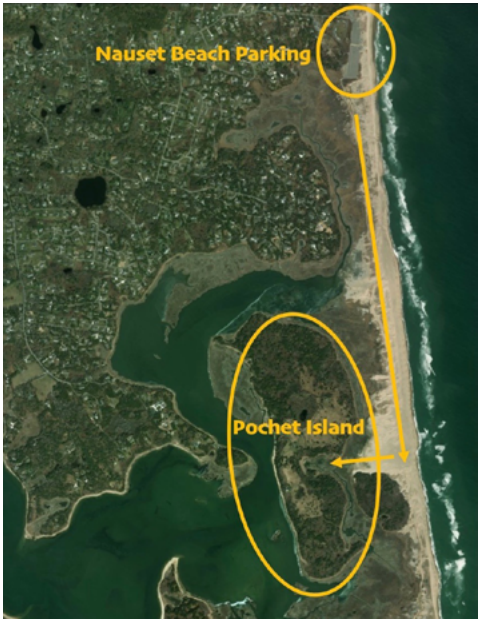
Best time to visit: mid-July through October.

A visit here is highlighted by excellent views of shorebirds of all kinds. Rarities including Curlew Sandpiper, Bar-tailed Godwit, Little Gull, and Black-headed Gull have been recorded at this location. You'll want to be at Tern Island about 1.5–2 hours before or after high tide in Chatham Harbor for the best birding (The mud flats which harbor shorebirds are covered by water during high tide). The goal is to watch the flats just as they are opening or as they close up as this is when the highest concentration of shorebirds gather on the island. I suggest that you arrive just after low tide and enjoy the shorebirds as the flats close up.

The flats on Tern Island will cover up before areas that are farther up in Pleasant Bay. If you can find a good spot (where you are not disturbing any nesting species) look east toward North Beach Island and you can watch shorebirds departing Pleasant Bay and flying south to roost during the high tide. Sometimes these flocks can be quite large and can contain high numbers of Red Knots, Black-bellied Plovers, and Sanderling with many other species mixed in.

While out on Tern Island or anywhere in Chatham it's a good idea to keep your eye out for banded shorebirds, especially Red Knots, which commonly feed on mussel spat. In addition, please respect all symbolic fencing to protect nesting shorebirds, and sensitive habitat. The island is owned and maintained by Mass Audubon.

You can view Tern Island from Cow Yard Lane in Chatham. Or you can park for free at Cow Yard Lane and kayak out to the island, a trip that will take only a few minutes. Occasionally, Mass Audubon's Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary will run planned trips during July and August.



Pochet Island, Massachusetts.

Links:

Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary: <https://www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/wildlife-sanctuaries/wellfleet-bay>

Tern Island: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1280841?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec>

Cow Yard Lane: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L731098?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec>

Pochet Island, Massachusetts

Best time to visit: spring or fall migration.

Highlights include; Cave Swallow, American White Pelican, Yellow-throated Vireo (can be a tricky bird on Cape Cod), Summer Tanager, Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's), and marsh birds such as rails and sparrows when you cross the bridge through the marsh.

Start your birding route at the Nauset Beach parking lot in Orleans, Massachusetts, the earlier the better. Walk south on either the ORV trail or the beach. Keep a close eye on the marshes to west. They often are a good place to see falcons, harriers and occasionally Short-eared Owls. Lots of trails maintained by the Pochet Island Association cover the island and any of the field edges could produce migrant songbirds. Scan the marshes and water west and south of the island for ducks. Additionally, check the small freshwater pond on the island. Skulking migrants such as Yellow-breasted Chat like to haunt the edges of the pond in the fall.

It's a bit of a hike to access the island. Unless you have an off-road vehicle permit for Nauset Beach, you will need to walk from the main parking lot in Orleans, which is about a 45-minute to one-hour long hike in the sand along the vehicle trail or beach. Before you get to the first off-road vehicle cut (the ORV track that provides access to the ocean) walk west at the fork along the right-hand road leading to a small bridge that usually is chained. You should also see a welcome sign for visitors from the Pochet Island Association. Cross the bridge to access the many trails on the island.

Link: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L467708?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec>

Maine Islands

You will find excellent information and further details about birding selected Maine Islands in *Birdwatching in Maine: A Site Guide* (Lovitch 2017).

Atlantic Puffin.

Stratton Island, Maine

Best time to visit: June and July.

Stratton Island is home to a diverse array of nesting waterfowl, herons, and seabirds. In addition it is a magnet for rarities such as Yellow-nosed Albatross, Magnificent Frigatebird, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Sandwich Tern, Little Gull, Franklin's Gull, Eurasian Wigeon, White-faced Ibis, Brown Pelican, and Little Egret. Breeding species include Common, Arctic, Roseate, and Least terns, Glossy Ibis, Little Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Common Eider, Gadwall, Green-winged Teal, Blue-winged Teal, American Black Duck, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, and Sora.

Landing on the island is semi-restricted. Visitors are allowed if you arrive by private boat or kayak. A biologist working for Project Puffin will meet you on the beach, discuss the nesting species and escort you to a bird blind to observe the nesting tern species. However, a better option may be to sign up for trips to the island with Maine Audubon. You can also see many of the breeding species from nearby locations such as Prout's Neck and Pine Point Beach. Many of the

Stratton Island, Maine.

Bailey Island, Maine.

wading species forage at nearby hotspot Scarborough Marsh.

Links:

Stratton Island Project Puffin: http://projectpuffin.audubon.org/conservation/stratton-island

Pine Point Beach: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L594639?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec>

Scarborough Marsh: <https://ebird.org/me/hotspot/L192298>

Bailey Island, Maine

Best time to visit: spring or fall migration.

Rarities here include Willow Ptarmigan, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Cattle Egret, Prothonotary Warbler, Blue Grosbeak, Clay-colored Sparrow, Bell's Vireo, and Red-headed Woodpecker.

There are three suggested birding locations, all of which have public parking and are excellent spots to look for migrants. First, drive to the end of the peninsula to Lands End. Here you can explore the Bailey Island Beach, and check the surrounding thickets. If you arrive early in the morning in the fall, you may have the chance to observe migrants coming in off the water and reorienting themselves with the mainland if they had been blown over the ocean overnight. Next, drive back to the McIntosh Lot Preserve and walk the trail to the Giant's Stairs, a geological structure formed of granite on the edge of the beach. The top of the Giant's Stairs is a great location to scope for sea ducks and alcids in the fall and winter. Driving back north back toward Route 24 and Brunswick, you can stop and bird at Johnson Field Preserve.

You can reach Bailey Island from Route 24 south of Brunswick.

Links:

<https://hhltmaine.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/2015-McIntosh-Lot-and-Giants-Stairs-Brochure-web.pdf>

Bailey Island: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L267994>

Monhegan Island, Maine

Best time to visit: spring or fall migration.

Monhegan's long list of rarities includes Magnificent Frigatebird, Corn Crake, Bridled Tern, Ivory Gull, Band-tailed Pigeon, Calliope Hummingbird, Swallow-tailed Kite, Say's Phoebe, Bell's Vireo, Virginia's, Townsend's and Hermit warblers, Lazuli

Bunting, Shiny Cowbird, Black-throated Sparrow, Brewer's Sparrow, and Lark Bunting.

Monhegan Island, Maine.

Most people stick to birding the southwestern half of the island, where the town is. It is suggested to start your birding route by checking the Ice Pond on the north side of town because it offers the best place to see birds looking for freshwater. When walking through town, go past the large "meadow" where the town water is pumped; it's a great spot for blackbirds, flycatchers and other insectivores. Then you can loop back through town and explore side paths. The Underhill Trail is always a favorite; it includes a slightly wooded area and is dominated by mountain ash. Some places, like the cemetery off Tribler Road, are the best for uncommon birds such as Yellow-billed Cuckoos. If time allows, walk across the island—the quickest route is to go past the lighthouse—to see the spectacular Whitehead Cliffs. They are an excellent vista for sea watching.

You can reach Monhegan Island year-round on the Monhegan Boat Line that departs from Port Clyde. By mid-May, there are also ferries departing from New Harbor and Boothbay Harbor.

Links:

Monhegan Boat Line: <https://monheganboat.com/>

Hardy Boat Cruises from New Harbor: <https://hardyboat.com/monhegan-island-ferry/>

Monhegan Island map: <http://monheganassociates.org/the-trail-map/>

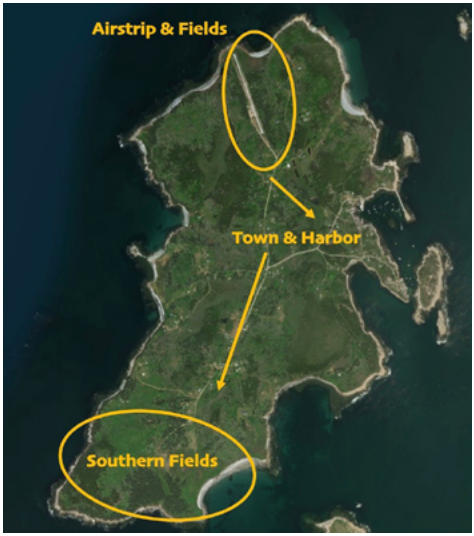
Check out *Bird Observer's* Monhegan: Island of Possibilities (Surner 1992): https://www.birdobserver.org/Portals/0/PDF_open/bo20-4-web.pdf?ver=2017-02-10-105645-620#view=Fit

Monhegan Island: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L251836>

Matinicus Island, Maine

Best time to visit: spring or fall migration.

Rarities include Blue Grosbeak, White-eyed Vireo, Lark Sparrow, Dickcissel and "under-birded" so who knows what else you might find.



Matinicus Island, Maine.

Catch the earliest mail flight out of Owls Head. First bird the edge of the airstrip field and then head down the main road to the fields at the southern end of the island. The main road through the center of the island offers a wide range of habitats including mature stands of trees, and open small field, and some brushy habitat. A couple of bird feeders close to the road may occasionally turn up some interesting birds as well. It is best to stick to the road as much as possible because much of the island is private property.

Getting to Matinicus Island by air is your best option, but there is a seasonal ferry that departs from Rockland. There is currently no lodging on the island unless you book a house rental online before arriving on the island.

Links:

Penobscot Air: <http://www.penobscotislandair.net/regularflights.php>

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L429258?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec>

Seal Island National Wildlife Refuge, Maine

Best time to visit: June and July.

This island is closed to any and all public landings. However, multiple boat tour companies will circumnavigate the island in search of breeding bird species: Atlantic Puffin, Razorbill, Black Guillemot, Common and Arctic terns, Great and Double Crested cormorants, Common Eider, as well as Herring and Great Black-Backed gulls. Many birders come hoping to see the single Red-billed Tropicbird that regularly frequents the island during the summer months. Other spectacular rarities include Great Knot and Ancient Murrelet both of which were first state records! Most boats trips to the island typically spend one to two hours at the island and take one and a half to two hours to travel via boat. Productive birding during the boat trip includes observation of multiple shearwaters, Wilson's Storm Petrels and sometimes jaegers.

Links:

Boat Tours from Vinalhaven (John Drury): <https://www.maineseabirdtours.com/>

Old Quarry Ocean Adventures: <http://www.oldquarry.com/charterboat-tours-trips/#puffin>

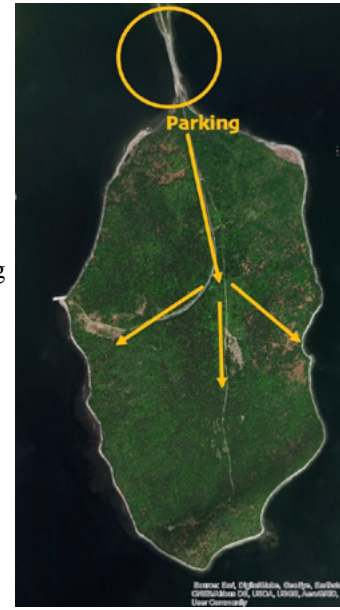
Seal Island NWR: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L840315?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec>

Sears Island, Maine

Best time to visit: spring or fall migration.

Migrant songbirds, shorebirds, and wintering ducks are the highlights of Sears Island. In the spring and fall, the thickets just before and after the causeway can be productive, so stop and bird these first. The causeway is also a great location to check for waterfowl and gulls on the water. Shortly after crossing the causeway, you will need to park your car before the barricade. You can explore many of the island's walking trails, which are maintained by the Friends of Sears Island.

Sears Island is connected to the mainland via a paved causeway that is just off Route 1 before Stockton Springs.



Sears Island, Maine..

Links:

Friends of Sears Island Trail Map: <http://friendsofsearsisland.org/wpnew/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Sears-Island-map-DOT.pdf>

Sears Island: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L602509?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec>

Machias Seal Island, Canada

Best time to visit: June and July. (Plan far ahead as trips fill up quickly.)

Machias Seal Island is home to the largest seabird colony in the Gulf of Maine. Breeding Species are Atlantic Puffin, Razorbill, Common Murre, Common and Arctic terns, and most recently Northern Gannet. You can land on the island only with tour groups out of Cutler and Grand Manan Island. You will get to go into a bird blind and observe seabirds at close range. Rarities include Tufted Puffin, Ancient Murrelet, Red-billed Tropicbird, and Bridled Tern**.** In addition, this island occasionally receives a "fallout" of migrant songbirds during the spring and fall. Photographs by Ralph Eldridge, one of the island's lighthouse keepers, are certainly worth a look.

Bold Coast Tours from Cutler: https://www.boldcoast.com/

Sea Watch Tours from Grand Manan: <http://www.seawatchtours.com/puffins-and-machias-seal-island.html>

Ralph Eldridge's Warbler Fallout Pictures: <http://www.pbase.com/lightrae/fallout>

Check out *Bird Observer's* Machias Seal Island (Butler 1977): <https://www.birdobserver.org/Portals/0/PDF_open/bo05-3-web.pdf?ver=2017-02-10-105540-730#view=Fit>

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This article could not have been completed without the help of all the contributors who provided information and some text for this "quick" guide: Ginger Andrews, Seth Benz, Ken Blackshaw, Ian Davies, Ralph Eldridge, Tina Green, Doug Hitchcox, Marshall Iliff, Lanny McDowell, Wayne R. Petersen, Jeremiah Trimble, and Peter Trimble. Special thanks to Isabel Brofsky, who helped create many of the maps.

Keenan Yakola *is a fellow with the Northeast Climate Science Center, a master's candidate in the Department of Environmental Conservation at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and during the summer months, the Supervisor of Seal Island National Wildlife Refuge with Project Puffin. Keenan is also a native of Cape Cod, Massachusetts; some of his first experiences with birds included working with Mass Audubon's Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, the Cape Cod National Seashore, and local bird bander Susan Finnegan. He has also spent time working with birds in the Peruvian Amazon and Andes, Kenya and Tanzania, as well as several other locations across the United States.*

BLACK GUILLEMOT BY KEENAN YAKOLA

Soaring with Eastern Massachusetts Hawk Watch

Steve Anderson

Mt. Watatic Hawk Watch. All photographs by Shawn P. Carey.

Editor's note: From time to time, Bird Observer *publishes articles from organization in the* Association of Massachusetts Bird Clubs *about their history, accomplishments, or activities. We would like to make this a more regular feature of the journal. If you would like to write an article about your Massachusetts or other New England bird club, query or submit the article to editor@birdobserver.org.*

More than ever these days, I'm finding that some of life's simplest pleasures can also be its most precious. Take birding with a few friends, for example. By simultaneously connecting with people and nature we can create a unique shared experience in space and time that enriches us all. This special bond serves to unify, inspire, inform, instruct, and reward everyone involved. It brings out the best of what makes us human in the wonderful and wondrous world we all call home.

My personal role in such affairs has been and remains largely and strongly sustained by my membership in Eastern Massachusetts Hawk Watch (EMHW). Never heard of it? Haven't even faint awareness of its existence? Not to worry. I'm more than glad to give you a crash course on who we are, what we do, and how we came to be. Please read on.

In a word, EMHW is a club. No, not the sort found slung over the shoulder of Alley Oop or cradled in the skilled hands of Tiger Woods. We're the other type of club: an organization such as a book club or a gardening club, or any other group that has

at its core a mutual passion and purpose. Comprising an eclectic and diverse—though certainly not exclusive—cast of characters, we are brought and bound together by the powerful draw of our common interest in birds of prey. Said interest level can range in intensity and temperature from tepid to nearly thermonuclear, no exaggeration. Some of our number may reach feverish fanaticism in their pursuit of a rare sighting or the elusive "big flight."

The primary mission of our members is the protection and preservation of all avian apex predators, from the diminutive American Kestrel to the colossal California Condor. Efforts to that end take many forms and are manifest in myriad ways. We steer clear of preaching, but we're never too shy or proud to proselytize on the birds' behalf. Their cause is our calling, their destiny our duty, and their future our firm commitment. More than any other single thing, our task is to spread the word—wherever, whenever, and however we can. Much of this aim is accomplished at our formal fall meeting, typically convened on the Friday following Labor Day. That's the high profile event, of course, but we strive to stay productively engaged year-round.

We offer an occasional winter workshop on raptor identification and regularly send a small delegation to participate in the Mass Audubon Birders Meeting and the Eagle Festival at the Joppa Flats Education Center. We also organize and orchestrate outings to various hawk watch sites during the spring and fall migration periods. In addition EMHW gives moral and monetary support to a number of deserving individuals and groups. Recipients have included Tom Sayers and Joey Mason for their tireless work with breeding Kestrels, Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA), NorthEast Hawk Watch, Friends of Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, and HawkCount, to name only a few. In short, we share our love of raptors and our message of concern for their continued wellbeing with anyone who cares to listen.

Who started Eastern Massachusetts Hawk Watch? The credit goes not to a single person, but to a couple who are widely known and highly esteemed in the circle of birding and birders. Many, if not most of you may have already met these fine folks. Perhaps you've stood side by side scanning the skies over Wachusett Mountain or trudged through the dunes of Plum Island in their company, all the while trading tales and swapping stories. If that has been your good fortune, no further introduction is needed. If not, take advantage of any opportunity to make their acquaintance. They may have slowed down a step or two, but they're still going strong.

In case you have yet to figure it out and choose not to venture a guess, their names are Paul and Julie Roberts. He gets the majority of the attention and accolades, but her dedicated work behind the scenes has been of no less value or significance. Together they built the nest, incubated and hatched the egg, fed and reared the chick, and nurtured the fledgling until it flew off on its own. More than four decades later, the bird that was their idea soars on. It thrives and will flourish as long as people like you and me have the courage and conviction to care for this good earth and every creature that inhabits it. Thanks, you guys. Let's do it!

It's my pleasure to offer several sincere invitations. First, join us for our annual meeting (the official indoor gathering). It will be held at the Woburn Elks Club on

Wachusett Mountain Hawk Watch.

Friday September 7, 2018. Fine complimentary refreshments will be provided during the social hour, which begins at 6:00 pm. After we briefly tend to club business matters, we will cheerfully and expectantly surrender the podium, microphone, laser pointer, and remote to the evening's keynote speaker. The roster of presenters over the years reads like a Who's Who in Hawkwatching. Their programs never fail to entertain and educate, captivate, stimulate, and motivate our ranks. We wrap things up with the always-popular raffle.

Next become a member. We're an all inclusive, equal opportunity outfit. If you have an affinity for hawks and are willing to part with the modest $10 cost of yearly dues, you're in! Welcome. For a membership application or renewal form, go to <https://massbird.org/emhw/membership.htm>.

Finally, roust up a couple of friends and get yourselves out to a watch site, where the real action awaits. If the birds are few and far between, you can surely count on the camaraderie. But when the weather, wind, and time of year combine to trigger raptors' irresistible urge to migrate, you may well witness an extraordinary spectacle—thousands of hawks traveling *en masse*. Here's hoping….

PHOTO ESSAY

Raptors in Flight

Shawn P. Carey

Top Left: Bald Eagle; Bottom Left: Osprey; Top Right: Cooper's Hawk; Bottom Right: Peregrine Falcon. All photographs by Shawn P. Carey.

MUSINGS OF THE BLIND BIRDER

By Any Other Name

Martha Steele

Northern Harrier. Photograph by Shawn P. Carey.

My husband Bob and I were recently birding when he quickly brought his binoculars up, and casually said, "What a beautiful gray ghost." "Gray ghost? What is that?" I asked. "Northern Harrier," he replied. I conjured up my memory of watching these sleek, silent birds drifting and teetering with their wings forming a V low over marshes or meadows, the male strikingly beautiful with its steel gray coloring contrasting with a white patch at the base of its tail. I could easily see why these magnificent birds were called gray ghosts.

I wondered what other colloquial names have been given to birds. In some cases, names appear to have been assigned by hunters to more easily identify their targets. In other cases, names were given by ornithologists or other observers of birds, sometimes in ways that may or may not make sense.

The following paragraphs contain some additional colloquial or fun names for specific bird species. To make things more interesting, I wrote the name for the bird along with a brief description for you, the reader, to guess what species the name refers to. The first eleven names below were highlighted in a blog for the American Birding Association by George Armistead, dated June 20, 2012 (http://blog.aba.org/2012/06/

the-top-10-best-colloquial-bird-names.html). The identities of the birds corresponding to the names are revealed near the end of this column.

1) **Forty Quarts of Soup**. Perhaps the name is related to this wader's voluminous whitewash on boat docks or other man-made structures.

2) **The Preacher Bird**. This bird never seems to stop "preaching," regardless of the time of day. Over here, see me? Here I am. Look at me. See me?

3) **Thunder Bumper**. Think of the distinctive territorial vocalization of this otherwise secretive bird and you will likely agree with this colloquial name.

4) **Fool's Hen**. Although I do not like to think of the spectacular male of this highly desirable species of the boreal forest as a fool, it may deserve this name given how tame and tolerant it is of absurdly close views.

5) **Cut-throat**. This name does not make much sense to me, as it normally can be a non-flattering description of someone's behavior. For this bird, however, it appears to have been devised based on the bold black and white pattern of the bird accompanied by a contrasting rose-pink breast.

6) **Nine Killer**. Sometimes known as the butcherbird, this name was devised by some observers who noted the bird's habit of impaling many, let's say nine, prey on thorns or barbed wire before they might consume one poor victim.

7) **Devil Downhead**. Also known as tree mouse, this bird is often seen head down on tree trunks. But the origin of the word, devil, for this bird's behavior remains elusive to me.

8) **Skunkhead Coot**. This name originates from hunters of this duck with its striking head pattern reminiscent of a skunk.

9) **Lawyer Bird**. I imagine this name for a rare but nearly annual visitor to the Northeast derives from its crisp, formal look, ready to dazzle observers not with closing arguments but rather with its stately and head-turning appearance.

10) **Cut-Water**. Say no more, this simple description should immediately narrow the possibilities.

11) **Silk Tail**. This name derives from its Swedish name, "Sidensvans," which refers to the silky look of this nomadic species, which has periodic irruptions into New England.

All of us can also have a lot of fun trying to come up with our own names for our favorite birds. Here are a few of my concoctions:

12) **Bubbling Cascade**. I can hardly contain myself when I hear this long cascading stream of bubbles and trills coming from such a tiny bird.

13) **Nonsense Bird**. How else can you describe the noises coming out of this bird of the bushes? I frequently implore the bird to shut up so that I can hear something else, anything else, please.

14) **Deep Woods Spirit**. If you are alone in the woods with this bird when it sings its haunting song, it can be quite a spiritual experience.

But I am not the only one who has attempted to come up with my own names. Pete Dunne, in his book *Pete Dunne's Essential Field Guide Companion: A Comprehensive Resource for Identifying North American Birds* (2006), has descriptive names for many birds. Here are a few examples:

15) **Lawn Plover**. This name is tailor made for one of our most recognizable birds on rural or urban lawns.

16) **Tiger of the Treetops**. This songbird's yellow chest with thin black streaks lends itself well to this descriptive phrase.

17) **Zebra Creeper**. The word zebra should give this guy away. How many birds might remind you of a zebra?

18) **Flash Dancer**. This bird is coal black with vivid orange patches on its sides, wings, and tail. It sometimes flashes its wings and tail, showing its striking orange colors.

Answers: (1) Great Blue Heron; (2) Red-eyed Vireo; (3) American Bittern; (4) Spruce Grouse; (5) Rose-breasted Grosbeak; (6) Northern Shrike; (7) White-breasted Nuthatch; (8) Surf Scoter; (9) Black-necked Stilt; (10) Black Skimmer; (11) Bohemian Waxwing; (12) Winter Wren; (13) Gray Catbird; (14) Hermit Thrush; (15) American Robin; (16) Cape May Warbler; (17) Black-and-White Warbler; (18) American Redstart.

Undoubtedly, colorful names exist for many other bird species around the world. These descriptive names add an element of whimsy to our observations and experiences with our birds. Perhaps you have your own nickname for "your" birds. It is just another aspect of our obsession with our avian friends, and why not? We spend a lot of time with our familiar birds and it seems entirely appropriate to show our affection by devising names that convey our perspectives on their behaviors and appearances. So, go ahead, come up with your own names. Your imagination has no limits.

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

"LAWN PLOVER" BY WILLIAM E. DAVIS

FIELD NOTES

Observations at an Unusual Urban Tree Swallow Nest: an Iron Snag in an Asphalt Meadow

Michael C. Allen
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Fig. 1. The 'iron snag' in Westport, Massachusetts. Three views of the lamppost that contained a Tree Swallow nest. Left photo: looking northeast, showing the vegetation along the margin of Interstate 195 in the distance. Center photo: looking east, showing the nearest greenery, a hotel courtyard 35 meters away. Right photo: a close-up view of the base of the lamppost showing the drilled cavity entrance. Photographs by the author.

I observed a Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*) nest in Westport, Massachusetts that was unusual in three ways: (1) it was in an iron lamppost; (2) it was surrounded by pavement with no vegetation nearby; and 3) the cavity was near ground level.

The nest cavity entrance was a roughly circular hole 4.0 centimeters tall and 4.1 centimeters wide near the base of an iron lamppost, 15.1 centimeters above the ground (i.e., from the concrete pad to the bottom of the hole; Figure 1). No other posts nearby had a similar hole, which may have been originally drilled to access the electrical wiring. The outer portion of the nest was visible through the opening, and the nest, a mass of fine grasses containing many feathers of a variety of types and sizes, appeared typical of the species (Winkler et al. 2011; Figure 2). The inner cup and contents of the nest were not visible. The nest was apparently built on or very near to the ground (equivalent to the floor of the cavity) within the base of the post, situated among the electrical wires.

The lamppost, with an exact location of latitude: 41.67954 and longitude: -71.11356, was around five meters tall and was one of seven lining the parking lot of White's Regional Hospitality Center along its boundary with Old Bedford Road (Figure 3A). The surroundings were mainly asphalt, concrete, and buildings, with only 10% of the land in a one-hectare (2.5 acre) circle surrounding the nest consisting of vegetation

Fig. 2. A view inside the lamppost cavity nest of a Tree Swallow. The nest was constructed among the wires in the base of an iron lamppost in Westport, Massachusetts. Photograph by the author.

(as measured from aerial photos in Google Earth Pro; Figure 3B). The nearest area of vegetation was a small courtyard at the adjacent Hampton Inn, 35 meters to the east, and the next was the grassy edge of Interstate 195, 46 meters to the north. Watuppa and South Watuppa Pond lie 129 and 113 meters to the north and southwest, respectively.

I first witnessed a Tree Swallow exit the hole at the base of the lamppost around 12:50 pm on May 16, 2018. It then joined a second individual, apparently its mate, perched on an electrical wire across the street (visible in Figure 1). After a few minutes, the first bird reentered the hole. I later performed two extended observation sessions to better understand the status of the nest given that its contents were not visible. My observations were as follows, with notes on the presumed sex of the individual as inferred from behavior in parentheses:

Observation session 1: May 16, 2018, 4:19 – 5:07 pm.

4:36. A single Tree Swallow (the male of the pair) arrives nearby, and alternates perching on the wire, preening, and circling around the lamppost while calling. It leaves the area at 4:50.

4:38. A second individual (the female) briefly joins the first and then enters the nest cavity where it remains for the duration of the observation.

Observation session 2: May 17, 2018, 8:11 – 9:55 am (light rain falling).

8:19. One individual (male) circling the parking lot and occasionally very near the lamppost, then leaves the area at 8:32.

8:33. Second individual (female) exits nest, forages in the general area, and then presumably the same individual reenters the nest at 8:38.

9:30. Tree Swallow arrives (male) circles the post, calling, perches on the wire across the street, circles the post calling again and leaves the area at 9:36.

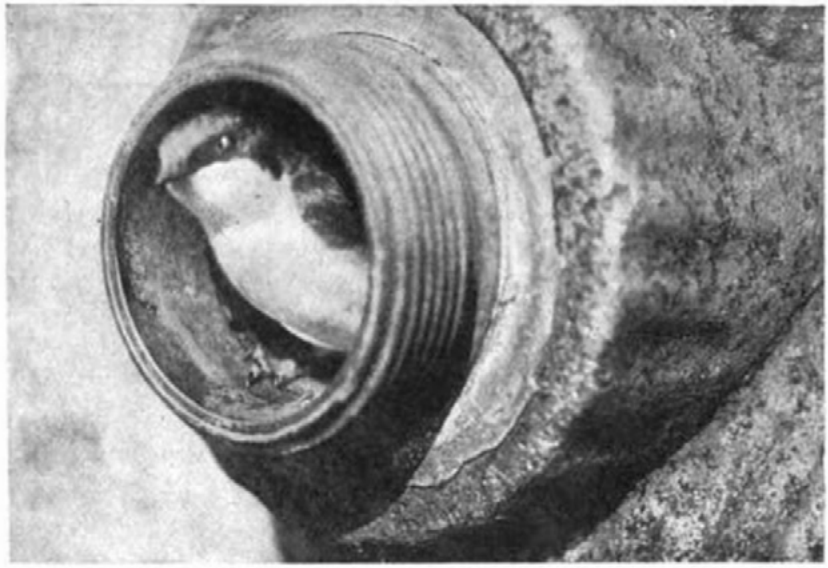
9:40. Tree Swallow (female) exits the nest, forages around the hotel courtyard and then flies out of sight.

9:48. Four Tree Swallows (the nesting pair and a rival pair) appear at the nest post, and engage in an aerial confrontation (at least two chases occur). One individual (the incumbent female) lands at the cavity entrance three times, then enters the nest. Two birds (the rival pair) disperse.

Fig. 3. Aerial views of the surroundings of a Tree Swallow nest discovered in a lamppost in Westport, Massachusetts. The arrows point to the nest. A one-hectare circle is superimposed on the bottom photo for scale. The hotel courtyard (the nearest vegetation) is visible in the right side of the circle, and Interstate 195 is at the top. Watuppa Pond is visible in the top of the oblique (top) photo. Aerial images from Google Earth Pro.

9:49. A second individual (the incumbent male) enters the nest, and then presumably the same bird leaves the nest and the area at 9:50.

The above observations are suggestive of an active nest in the incubation stage. Female Tree Swallows typically do all the incubating, and males frequently perch nearby, occasionally visiting the entrance or briefly entering the cavity (Winkler et al. 2011). The two complete 'off bouts' I observed were five and eight minutes long, comparable to the published averages of seven to nine minutes (ibid.). The one complete incubation bout I observed was 62 minutes, considerably longer than the published averages of 11 to 15 minutes. This may have been due to the rainy conditions. Nests in the nestling stage are typically visited much more frequently and by both parents (ibid.).



TREE SWALLOW AT THE ENTRANCE TO ITS HYDRANT NESTING SITE

Fig. 4. A Tree Swallow at the entrance to its nest in an abandoned fire hydrant in Long Island, circa 1920. From Nichols (1920).

Tree Swallows readily use nest-boxes, but documented nesting in other human infrastructure has been infrequent. Examples in the literature are (1) a disused fire hydrant (Nichols 1920; Figure 4); (2) a steel drum (Dring 1981, cited in Winkler et al. 2011); (3) pipes on an active ferry boat (Common 1942); and (4) cracks in the eaves of roofs (Tyler 1942). Many other cavity nesting species readily or even preferentially nest on human structures, and the fact this behavior is relatively rarely documented in Tree Swallows may reflect a general avoidance. The mechanisms of cultural and genetic adaptation in birds to nesting on human structures are worthy of further study, especially in cavity nesting species, which tend to be nest-site limited (Newton 1994). A North American congener, the Violet-green Swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*), is not known to nest on human infrastructure, aside from nest boxes attached to houses (Brown et al. 2011). Comparative studies of related groups of species, for example the eight *Tachycineta* swallows, or the broader group of 30 or so cavity-nesting "core martins" of the Hirundininae subfamily, (Sheldon et al. 2005), would shed light on these behaviors.

Tree Swallow nesting habitat is typically open wetland or grassland with dead trees, including beaver swamps and the edges of marshes and old fields. However, a great deal of flexibility has been noted in the surroundings of the nest site as long as open water for foraging is available (Winkler et al. 2011). The surroundings of the lamppost were remarkably barren: 90% of the area within a one-hectare circle (2.5-acres) around the nest is paved. However, its broader location between two large ponds likely adds to its attractiveness. There is little information on the foraging range

of this species, but most nesting material is gathered within 30 meters of the nest and birds typically defend a radius of approximately 15 meters from other swallows (ibid.).

The height of natural nest cavities averaged 3.4 meters in Ontario (n = 48; Rendell and Robertson 1989) and 4.6 meters in Oregon (n = 31; Dobkin et al. 1995). While no studies state the minimum nest height, Dr. Wallace Rendell (personal communication) provided me with that number for his sample of 48 nests in Ontario: 0.75 meters. This is roughly the same height as the fire hydrant nest in Long Island, based on the photograph in Nichols (1920). Therefore, the lamppost nest at only 0.15 meters appears to be the lowest Tree Swallow nest documented. Otherwise, the measurements of the lamppost nest, including "tree" height, "tree" diameter, and cavity entrance dimensions, are within normal bounds (Winkler et al. 2011).

I thank Jamie Morgan and Mike Newhouse for inviting me to Westport, Massachusetts, Daisy Morgan Allen for accompanying me in the field, and Wallace Rendell for swiftly replying with his nest height data from the 1980s.

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Pileated Woodpecker Surprise

Sandy Selesky

Pileated Woodpecker at feeder. Photograph by the author.

The Pileated Woodpecker has always been a favorite bird of mine. I have lived in a condominium development in Westford, Massachusetts, for over 32 years. My upper deck overlooks a private backyard with an open grassy area and some gardens that my neighbor planted, but also borders a mixed pine and deciduous forest that attracts a lot of wildlife. Over the years, I have often seen Pileated Woodpeckers land on the trees or fly across the backyard. This winter I infrequently began hearing or seeing a pair in the area. I've always thought how wonderful it would be if one of them would come to the suet feeder I hang on my upper back deck but it has only attracted the usual—Downys, Hairys, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, and also titmice, nuthatches, chickadees, an occasional Carolina Wren. I rarely, if ever, heard of anybody attracting Pileated Woodpeckers to their suet feeders so it wasn't really anything I expected. One could only hope of course.

Then it happened. My husband Don was sitting on the sofa watching television in our living room on April 12, 2018. He sat right near our sliding doors that look out over our outside deck where my suet and seed feeders hang. He yelled for me to come slowly but quickly toward him because there was a Pileated Woodpecker at our suet feeder! I didn't have time to run to the basement for my camera bag so I just grabbed my cell phone and looked in awe as a female Pileated clung to the suet feeder. Both Don and I were shocked and delighted to say the least. My hands were shaking but I managed to get a few awful images as proof that it actually happened. Don saw her come again later that day but I missed it. I made sure my good camera was ready if she came the next day but I wasn't around most of that day. However, two days later on April 14, just as I returned from an exercise class, I came into the living room and saw a flash of black and white. I grabbed my camera. The female Pileated had just been chased away by a squirrel but perched nearby. After I chased the squirrel away, sure enough she returned, stayed more than five minutes, ate lots of suet, and I got lots of good pictures this time through the glass doors. I posted a link to a few pictures on Massbird and got quite a few responses from birders, some of whom I knew, who

wanted to know how I attracted her to my suet, what type of suet I used, etc. Well, it was just a regular nutty suet cake from Market Basket and it only took 32 years to get a Pileated to finally appear on one. And I did find out that a few people have had Pileated Woodpeckers come to their suet, but it's a rare event.

Unfortunately, neither she nor her mate (who appeared in my backyard in May) ever came to the suet again. I had to replace the suet with my hummingbird feeder as of May 4 anyway. The squirrel was eating it all up and making quite a mess. Maybe I will luck out again next year.

A Strange Eastern Phoebe Tale

Judy Brown

At the end of April 2018, my husband was getting ready to repair and paint the columns on our back patio. For the last three years, Eastern Phoebes have returned to a nest that sits at the top ledge of one of the columns. This year, my husband removed the nest in preparation and the next day the phoebes showed up.

They began to build a new nest on the ledge of an adjacent column and it seemed to us that they were in a big hurry. There was a flurry of activity and the nest seemed to progress rapidly. When the nest was only partially done, we watched as one bird sat on the nest. We thought that was odd since the nest was incomplete but what was stranger still is that the other bird continued to build the nest around the sitting bird! We really could not believe what we were seeing. The bird continued to build the nest around and over the sitting bird, leaving only its tail sticking out of the nest.

Two days later, the nest was complete and the tail of the sitting bird was still sticking out of the side of the nest with the rest of its body was hidden under nesting material. The other bird was perched on top of the nest. We kept waiting for the first bird to make its way out of the middle of the nest, but soon we sadly realized that it was dead.

When I called Marj Rines at Mass Audubon, she suggested that we take the nest down, which we did. I took the nest apart to see if there was a clue to this odd occurrence, but all I found was the poor dead bird with all but its tail buried in the nest.

As soon as we took the nest down, the other phoebe began to build another new nest back on the original ledge. Now, more than a month later, we are thrilled to see five tiny fuzzy heads popping up from the nest. I guess the painting will have to wait!


Above left: Eastern Phoebe tail sticking out of left side of nest; Above right: Eastern Phoebe perched on top of nest. All photographs by the author.


Above left: View from side of Eastern Phoebe tail sticking out of left side of nest; Above right: Eastern Phoebe chicks on new nest. All photographs by the author.

Help State-listed Birds

MassWildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program is requesting observations of breeding state-listed birds into the Vernal Pool and Rare Species (VPRS) Information System. Submitting observations to VPRS is one of the most effective ways of protecting and managing rare bird species. To be accepted into VPRS, observations must be in suitable nesting habitat and fall within the specific date range listed below.

Endangered	Threatened	Special Concern
Pied-billed Grebe (5/10–8/1)	Bald Eagle (4/15–8/15)*	Common Loon (6/1–8/15)*
Leach's Storm-petrel (6/1–8/15)*	Northern Harrier (5/10–8/20)*	Common Moorhen (5/25–8/25)
American Bittern (5/15–8/1)	Peregrine Falcon (5/15–8/1)*	Common Tern (6/1–8/5)*
Least Bittern (5/25–8/1)	King Rail (5/15–8/1)	Arctic Tern (6/1–8/5)*
Upland Sandpiper (5/20–7/15)	Piping Plover (5/15–8-15)**	Least Tern (6/1–8/15)*
Roseate Tern (6/1–8/5)*	Northern Parula (6/1–8/10)	Barn Owl (4/1–8/1)*
Short-eared Owl (4/15–7/15)	Vesper Sparrow (5/10–8/5)	Long-eared Owl (4/1–8/1)
Sedge Wren (6/1–8/1)	Grasshopper Sparrow (5/25–8/10)	Blackpoll Warbler (6/5–8/10)
Golden-winged Warbler (5/20–8/1)		Mourning Warbler (6/5–8/10)
		Eastern Whip-poor-will (5/25–7/15)

*The presence of an adult at an active nest is required.
**Pair demonstrating breeding behavior is required.

Visit **mass.gov/vprs** to register an account and to record rare bird breeding observations.

Have questions about VPRS?
Please email VPRSAdmin@state.ma.us.

MASS.GOV/MASSWILDLIFE

ABOUT BOOKS

Cities Go Wild

Mark Lynch

Darwin Comes to Town: How the Urban Jungle Drives Evolution. Menno Schilthuizen. 2018. Picador: New York, New York.

> What strange phenomena we find in a great city, all we need do is stroll about with eyes open. Life swarms with innocent monsters.—Charles Baudelaire, "Miss Scalpel"

Observing wildlife in an urban setting often grabs our attention. It is thought to be something odd or unique. Seeing a swallowtail fluttering down a busy city street or watching Red-tailed Hawks nesting on the ledge of a multi-story concrete and steel structure can bring a smile to the observer. We are looking at something that we believe belongs outside the crowded din of a busy city. Yet here is a little bit of the natural world making a "go" of it in this human, and therefore "unnatural" place. On the other hand, sightings of urban coyotes, bears, or other carnivores can cause a panic, a feeling that nature is creeping in where it doesn't belong, invading "our" space. Even though intellectually we may know better, unconsciously we tend to draw an imagined border between the realm of wild, chaotic nature and the ordered world of humanity where we live.

But cities can be great places for certain plants and animals. Many species of invasive plants, and a few native ones, can find places to grow and propagate in parks and even smaller niche habitats in cities. City parks and graveyards attract numbers of migrant birds, and a smaller number find space to nest there. Some birds like Rock Pigeons and Peregrine Falcons thrive by nesting on city skyscrapers, bridges, and underpasses. Species formerly considered wilderness species have learned to adapt and have become diehard city slickers. In the last few years, Common Ravens have started to nest under railroad overpasses in the city of Worcester.

I live in Worcester and have a small backyard. Yet I have recorded 161 species of birds there in the last decade. That list includes such forest-loving species as Barred Owl, Pileated Woodpecker, and several Wild Turkeys. Red fox, skunks, raccoons, and possums are regular visitors. Black bears have appeared at a friend's house a short distance away, and last year a moose walked down the street a short block away to end up at Salisbury Pond across from Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Whether we realize it or not, that imagined barrier between the natural world and the world of human activity is porous at best.

So what are these animals and plants doing in our cities? Are they just outliers, struggling to survive, barely holding on? Are they just passing through? Accidental trespassers? Or are some species actually thriving in cities? Not long ago, if you were a natural historian, a biologist, or botanist, you typically chose a place to study far from throngs of people: a desert, forest, jungle, or deep under the sea. In recent decades

though, a growing number of researchers are choosing urban habitats as their study areas. There are many reasons for this, among them that access is much easier. You can live and work in the same area. But a lot is happening in cities too that may offer clues to how plants and animals are adapting to a future on an overcrowded, climate-changed planet. "The notion that our impact on the environment is so great that 'wild' animals and plants are actually adapting to habitats that were originally created by humans for humans, makes us aware that some of the changes we are enforcing on the earth are irreversible." (p. 5, *Darwin Comes to Town*)

> It's a clear sign that something has changed over recent decades. Rather than using the city as a comfortable base camp from which to explore the wild hinterland beyond the city limits, the city itself has become urbanite naturalists' chief interest. (p. 48, *Darwin Comes to Town*)

Darwin Comes to Town by Menno Schilthuizen reviews some of the new findings by these urban naturalists and details the authors' belief that cities can actually promote relatively rapid evolutionary changes. It is a book that is both fascinating and controversial. Menno Schilthuizen is a senior research scientist at Naturalis Biodiversity Center in the Netherlands and professor of evolutionary biology at Leiden University. Some of his ideas have garnered angry criticisms because his writings about some exotics fly in the face of what most of us have been taught. Not all invasives are bad and should be expunged on sight.

Darwin Comes to Town begins with the author's observations of "London Underground mosquito," *Culex pipiens molestus*. Certain populations of this insect now breed only in the vast caverns that are the London Underground, feeding on the commuting passengers. These mosquitoes may be beginning to separate from the wild-breeding *Culex pipiens pipiens* to become a new species. This begins Schilthuizen's roll call of species that are now calling dense cities home. These include some surprising species like the Australian Brush Turkey, which can be found nesting in small parks and gardens in many Australian east coast cities.

Why are some animals and plants attracted to cities? Schilthuizen offers a few ideas. Many of the species we find in cities are invasive already, and the city is just another place to colonize. But Schilthuizen also points out that many modern cities have a real diversity of habitats. These include obvious green islands, but also smaller personal gardens, playgrounds, and human-made structures that may approximate a species' preferred habitat like that subway nesting mosquito. Schilthuizen sees cities as new vacant niches, waiting to be exploited by the natural world outside the city.

> By calling *Homo sapiens* nature's ultimate ecosystem engineer, I used the word 'nature' deliberately, because a crowded, noisy, polluted, concrete metropolis is not what we normally think of when we hear the term 'nature.' (p. 24)

In order to thrive, urban wildlife can develop unique behaviors. Schilthuizen cites many examples, but my favorites are the massive catfish (*Silurus glanis*) that live in the

French city of Albi. They have learned to throw themselves out of the water to grab the feet of city pigeons that have come to drink from the river. Schilthuizen describes this behavior in detail, and it reminds the reader of the films that have been taken of killer whales in southern Argentina throwing themselves on the beaches in order to grab basking seals. Cities are heat islands, offering wildlife a less hostile environment in winter. Schilthuizen cites recent studies of urban populations of the European Blackbird (*Turdus merula*), a common thrush. Typically, this species is migratory, but in recent decades certain urban populations have become sedentary, taking advantage of the warmth and the feeders found in cities.

Urban gardens have typically been uncounted, but Schilthuizen describes several studies that show that these pocket green areas can be chock full of biodiversity. One such project is called BUGS, Biodiversity in Urban Gardens in Sheffield. Several biodiversity studies of typical small gardens were done in an urban environment. Sixty-one gardens were included with fascinating results. "In these sixty-one garden-size field sites 1,166 different plant species were found. As is to be expected from planted gardens, the majority of those species (70 percent) were exotic. But still, 344 species (a quarter of the entire British flora!) were native species. The 30,000 or so invertebrates they found belonged to roughly 800 species." (p. 60) "And when the team made an 'accumulation curve,' which showed how the overall tally increased with every new garden added to the list, the curve showed no signs of leveling off. In other words, every garden has an almost completely different flora and fauna." (p. 60)

But what about vertebrate species? Which animals or birds are most likely to succeed in a city? After citing a number of studies, Schilthuizen concludes that the animals that thrive in cities are creatures with high problem-solving intelligence. This is not surprising when you think about the challenges of finding food and shelter in a human-made environment. These urban species also need to be neophilic, attracted to unknown, unfamiliar objects and situations and willing to explore new spaces. Finally, and perhaps most obviously, urban wildlife need to be fairly tolerant of people.

Typical urban breeding animals or birds should be fearless problem-solvers.

Where *Darwin Comes to Town* becomes controversial is when Schilthuizen pushes these ideas to posit that cities are becoming engines of evolution. After a thorough crash course in evolutionary genetics in *Darwin Comes to Town*, Schilthuizen proposes what he ultimately labels HIREC: "Human-induced Rapid Evolutionary Change." He calls humans a "hyperkeystone, eco-system-engineering supertramp species" (p. 246). He believes that that the natural chaos of life in urban habitat will actually accelerate small evolutionary changes in certain species. "As we have seen before, cities are like mad scientists, creating their own crazy ecological concoctions by throwing all kinds of native and foreign elements into the urban melting pot." (p. 158)

> The urban loom weaves food webs from weft and warp that are thrown together by chance, linking species in new and exciting patterns. Since such ecological interactions are marriages of convenience, rather than matches made in heaven, the species thus linked may evolve adaptations to deal with their new ecological counterparts. (p. 158)

The reader is left to ponder if what we are witnessing is actual long-term evolution or momentary adaptations by flexible species.

Schilthuizen is fond of invasive species, to a limited extent. He is arguing for "a more pragmatic approach to conservation in which there is a place for exotic species, urban nature, and more attention to the smooth running of the ecosystem, rather than to the exact species therein." (p. 8) He believes that invasive species are some of the most successful urban species and are key players in urban ecosystems. He favors building "green buildings," for instance, but he insists that we have to let invasives have their place in those spaces. He is adamant that we should do all we can to preserve the few remaining pristine pockets of wild nature that exist outside our cities. But Schilthuizen believes that in urban habitats, so-called invasives are critical to maintaining a rich urban biodiversity. He states, rightly, that the vast majority of people around the world will never get to visit those saved pockets of truly wild nature. What they will know of nature will be what breeds and grows in cities, and that biodiversity will include invasives. He even ponders whether so-called "wildlife corridors," green areas that connect urban green areas with larger more natural areas, are always a good thing (p. 237). Schilthuizen believes that the "splendid isolation" of urban areas is what fuels the evolution within cities.

Later, he admits that certain invasive species, like the House Crow, are showing up in a growing number of cities around the world. The implications for the future seem to indicate that many cities will have the same roster of urban breeders after some decades. "What all this means is that ecosystems of cities around the world are growing more alike; their communities of plants and animals, fungi, single-celled organisms, and viruses are slowly inching toward a single globalized, multi-purpose urban biodiversity." (p. 224) This will be "a globally homogenized, dispersed ecosystem, inhabited by a dynamic but shared set of organisms that is constantly evolving, exchanging species and genes and innovations to deal with the new technologies with which humans equip their cities." (p. 226)

Because of these controversial sentiments, *Darwin Comes to Town* is a thought-provoking book. Most of it is an interesting and entertaining survey of what researchers have discovered about species that dwell in urban environments and how that environment can change them. But there are other points in the book in which Schilthuizen seems to relish violating core concepts many of us hold dear about preserving natural spaces. Because of this love of urban ecosystems, he has garnered lots of criticism, but most of it is misplaced.

"The growing band of people who try to generate an appreciation for nature in the urban environment are often accused of providing excuses for developers to destroy wild nature—or even of getting into bed with the enemy, and stabbing nature conservation in the back." (p. 8) If you carefully read this book, you will discover that this just isn't so. Still, there is a lot to think about and argue about in *Darwin Comes to Town*. We don't often come across books that may change the way we think about nature. This is one of them. It is well worth your time.

Mark Lynch's interview with Menno Schilthuizen about Darwin Comes to Town *can be found at <https://www.wicn.org/podcasts/audio/menno-schilthuizen-darwin-comes-town>*

The Betty Petersen Conservation Fund

BirdsCaribbean, the international network committed to conservation of the region's birds, is thrilled to launch the Betty Petersen Conservation Fund to advance the conservation status of birds and habitats in the Caribbean region. The Fund provides competitive grants to groups or individuals who will engage and empower communities and stakeholders to both protect and sustainably benefit from their birds. The Fund and its grants will be administered by a designated advisory group within BirdsCaribbean.

Betty Petersen (1943-2013), a lifelong resident of Massachusetts, was, in her own way, a wizard. With nothing more than donated birding equipment, books, and a bit of cash, she turned local communities and school kids into committed conservationists, struggling NGOs into recognized players on the inter-American scene, and "paper parks" into real protected areas. And in the process she reminded us how rewarding it is to lend a hand when none is expected.

In March of 1989, Betty and a few others met with leading bird conservationists and researchers from Latin America. The Latin Americans raised the issue of how challenging it was in their home countries to get adequate optics and field guides needed to advance their work. Soon, Betty and her colleagues had responded by creating Birders' Exchange, first housed at the (then) Manomet Bird Observatory and later at the American Birding Association. Betty led the project for practically its entire history. In the process, despite not being fluent in the local languages, she not only helped with the equipment needs but empowered, and made lasting friendships with, many recipients and in-country partners. Her sincerity and warmth were unmistakable. In 2006 she was honored by an Argentine conservation group for "Ideas that Change the World."

Betty's connection to the Caribbean was strong. Birders' Exchange provided equipment to people and projects in a number of islands and even had a special Cuba fund initiated by National Book Award-winning author, Phillip Hoose. Nils Navarro's wonderful book, *Endemic Birds of Cuba*, was also dedicated to Betty. The condolence notes sent by Caribbean ornithologists upon Betty's death were simultaneously heart-warming and heart-breaking.

Betty's spirit continues to guide and inspire us in the way she:

- embodied the joy of birding and never lost track of the goal to make a difference in the lives of birds and the people who cared for them
- believed in the power of education, changing hearts and minds, one person at a time
- advocated for others looking to do great deeds for birds
- was great at organizing and allocating resources for the greatest impact
- delivered on the promises she made, both professionally and personally
- was as comfortable in the office of senior officials as in a poor village
- taught others to care deeply for birds and the natural world through her own love and actions, and she
- knew both her birds and her fellow birding communities well.

For more information, go to https://www.birdscaribbean.org/the-betty-petersen-fund-for-conservation.

BIRD SIGHTINGS

March–April 2018

Neil Hayward and Robert H. Stymeist

March came in like a lamb. The first of the month registered 60 degrees, which would end up being the high for the whole of March. A nor'easter on March 2, coming on the heels of one in late February, brought heavy rains and cold temperatures to eastern Massachusetts together with significant snowfall at higher elevations in Worcester, Franklin, and Berkshire counties. Wind gusts exceeding 50 mph felled many trees, and approximately 67,000 homes were without power. This storm was followed by another nor'easter on March 7–8 that dumped over six inches of snow on Boston and up to 18 inches on parts of Worcester County. Another nor'easter, the third in less than two weeks, brought another 14 inches of snow to Boston on March 13–15. Heavy, wet snow fell in Bristol County, the South Shore, and Cape Cod. Combined with high winds in these areas (gusts of 81 mph were recorded in Falmouth), many power lines and trees were knocked down leaving thousands without power for several days. The average temperature in Boston for March was 37 degrees, just one degree below normal. Total rainfall was 5.07 inches, almost an inch above normal. Snowfall in Boston for the month was 23.3 inches.

April weather was a great improvement over that of March with no major storms. The average temperature for the month was 45 degrees in Boston, three degrees cooler than normal. The high was 70 degrees on April 28, and the low was 29 degrees on April 6. Rainfall for the month in Boston was 4.62 inches, nearly an inch above normal, and snowfall totaled 1.3 inches, with most of that falling on April 6. Strong southwest winds aided migration at the end of the month.

R. Stymeist

WATERFOWL THROUGH HERONS

Numbers after dates reflect the number of days early (-) or late (+) compared to average arrival date. Thus, Piping Plover (March 24, +10) *means the earliest record this year was March 24, 10 days later than the average arrival date (i.e., March 14). Average arrival dates are calculated from eBird data for the period 2000-2017 inclusive.*

Wild geese were still being chased this period as they started to make their return journeys north. The highlight was a **Pink-Footed Goose** at Rehoboth on March 26. Based on the coloration and pattern of the bill, this is likely the same individual that was present at nearby Dighton between January 28–February 1, and at Swansea on February 21. With earlier records at Hadley, Westfield and Turner's Falls, this has been a good winter for this now annual visitor. **Greater White-fronted Geese** were reported from seven locations and **Cackling Geese** from six different counties.

Tundra Swan is an uncommon spring visitor to the state. This year's long-staying individual at Carver is the ninth eBird record for Plymouth County and the first since 2007.

Duck highlights this period were mostly of the Green-winged Teal variety. The Eurasian subspecies *crecca* was reported from an impressive six counties. American x Eurasian hybrids, or intergrades, have been reported annually in March and April since 2009. This year a high of three individuals were found distributed among Hampshire, Essex and Plymouth counties. More unusual was the continuing Green-winged Teal x Gadwall hybrid at Marion on the South Coast.

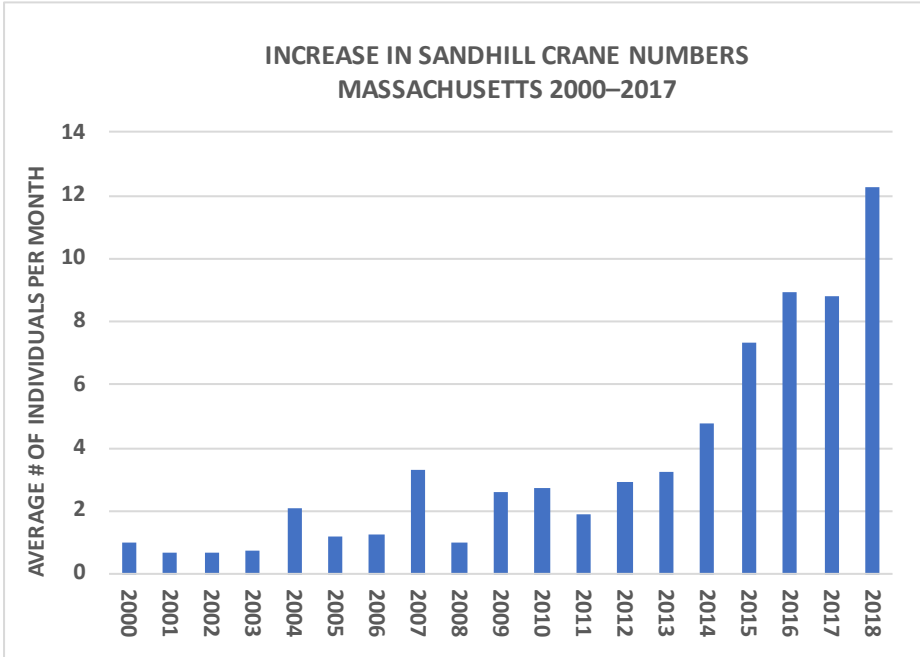

Figure 1. Sandhill Crane numbers in Massachusetts, 2000–2017. The average number of individuals per month are shown for each year. The average for 2018 is calculated for the months January–April. Data based on Bird Observer records.

This bird was found by Nate Marchessault on December 20, 2017 and described by him in *Bird Observer* 46 (2): 113–115. Despite geographic overlap of the (presumed) parents, this hybrid offspring is rare with only four other North American records documented by eBird.

The male **Tufted Duck** first reported on December 10 successfully over-wintered on Nantucket, continuing through at least the end of April. **King Eiders** were found up and down the North and South Shore, with a count of three birds at Plum Island on April 30 tying the previous April high count set in 1998. Large counts of Black Scoter (2,310) and Long-tailed Duck (2,440) were reported in April from Rockport and Plum Island, respectively. Three reports of the northern *borealis* subspecies of Common Eider were received from Cape Cod.

A Black-billed Cuckoo photographed at Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary in Marshfield on April 17 is the earliest record this century–by a long way. This species typically arrives around May 6. The only other April record for the 2000s was last year on April 30. Historically, though, such an early record is not without precedent; in 1973, following coastal storms, birds appeared on April 4 and April 7.

Common Gallinule is a rare breeder and uncommon migrant in the state, typically appearing around May 2. This year, three early birds were found in April.

In 1973, at the inception of this publication, **Sandhill Cranes** were rare visitors to the state. Historically, however, the species may have been a common migrant and regular nester in New England. Indeed, some of the colonists at Plymouth reported that on February 21, 1621 they ate "a very fat goose...a fat crane, and a mallard" (Bradford and Winslow 1622). Other historical texts, where the authors seem able to discriminate between cranes and herons, suggest that cranes arrived *en masse* in Massachusetts in early March, in numbers sufficient to be hunted and sold

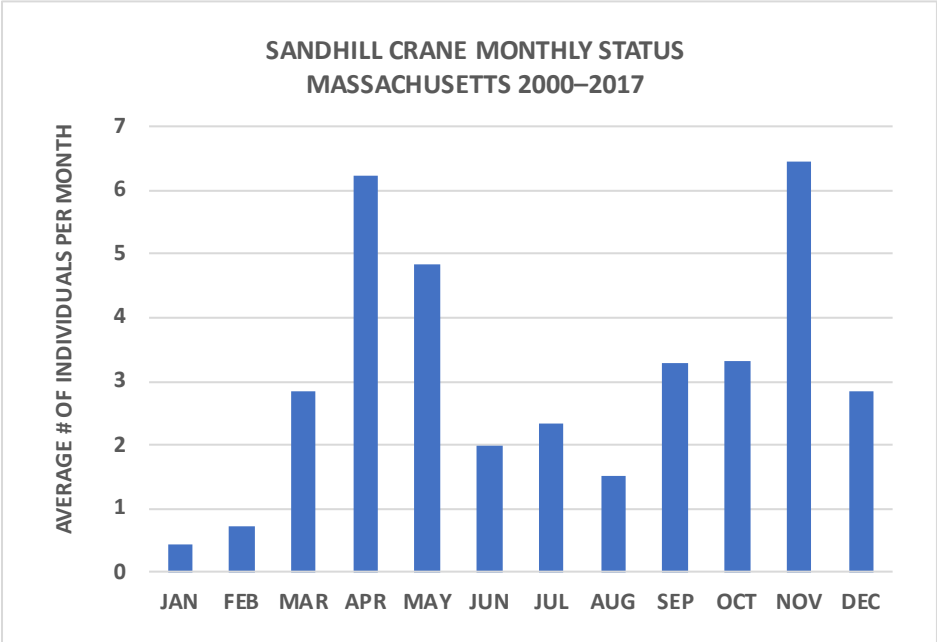

Figure 2. Sandhill Crane monthly status in Massachusetts. Average number of individuals per month are shown for the years 2000–2017 inclusive. Data based on Bird Observer records.

for food. (In 1634 a crane would have cost you two shillings.) But such bounty didn't last long. Edward Howe Forbush, Massachusetts State Ornithologist, wrote of them, "The great Sandhill Crane once roamed the Atlantic coast in migration, and probably was the only crane that was ever common in any part of New England. Like the wild turkey, it disappeared with the coming of settlement and civilization." (Forbush 1925)

The past couple of decades have seen a marked uptick in New England sightings of Sandhill Cranes (see Figure 1). This is likely a result of range expansion of a population based in the midwestern United States and Ontario. The first confirmed breeding record for New England in post-colonial times was Maine (2000) followed by: Vermont (2002); New York (2003); Massachusetts (New Marlboro, 2007); and New Hampshire (2014). In March and April this year Sandhill Cranes were reported from a record 18 locations, and the species can now be considered a regular spring and fall migrant with peaks in April and November, summer visitor or rare breeder, and occasional winterer (see Figure 2). As such, after this reporting period, the species will no longer warrant the bold type in the listing section that is typically reserved for rarer birds. We hope this action won't spell the kiss of death for these majestic birds.

Shorebirds were slow to return to the region this year. Piping Plovers appeared on March 24, 10 days after the average arrival date this century. Other late-returning shorebird species included: Lesser Yellowlegs (March 31, +6); Pectoral Sandpiper (April 1, +8); American Oystercatcher (March 17, +9); and Least Sandpiper (April 29, +13) with the latter two logging the latest arrival records for these species this century. Meanwhile, 50 Purple Sandpipers were still hanging out at Plum Island on April 29.

Shorebird highlights included three reports of American Golden-Plovers in April. This species is typically recorded only once or twice in the spring, as the majority of migrants fly much farther west of the state than they do in the fall when they are more frequently reported.

Whimbrel has a similar pattern of occurrence in the state, and the one spring record this year, in East Boston on April 19, is about average. The shorebird highlight was arguably a Western Willet that was carefully documented at Yarmouth on April 14. This subspecies is a rare spring migrant for Massachusetts, with only five previous spring records: April 1933, March 2003, May 2013, April 2016 and March 2017 (an overwintering bird). With the exception of the March 2003 bird at Salisbury, all records are from Cape Cod and the Islands.

Strong northeasterly winds on March 2–3 brought good numbers of seabirds close to shore with Race Point scoring: 47 Dovekies, an Atlantic Puffin (with two others reported from Orleans), and 620 Black-legged Kittiwakes.

For the second consecutive period **Mew Gull** stole the front page in gull news. This time, though, there was a twist: the action moved from Lynn Beach to the South Shore and the subspecies mix was shaken up. As well as the nominate European "Common Gull," *Larus canus canus,* reported from Cohasset and Provincetown, there was an adult of the North American subspecies, *L. c. brachyrhynchus*. The latter, perhaps surprisingly, is considerably rarer than either the European subspecies, or the East Asian *kamtschatschensis* form. A *brachyrhynchus* adult seen and photographed at Cohasset on April 15–16 (confusingly at the same time as a European *canus*) would constitute only the second photographic record for the state. The first was probably an adult photographed at Race Point last year, also on April 15, that had initially been identified as the Kamchatka subspecies. There are two historical reports of *brachyrhynchus* noted by Veit and Petersen (1993) which have yet to be reviewed by MARC, both first-cycle birds at Nantucket Harbor in October 1980 and September 1981.

Almost as rare for the state as American Mew Gulls are inland sightings of **Little Gull**. Despite multiple reports every year for Massachusetts, there are only four records away from the coast. Two of these were spring migrants, with the first being found by Ludlow Griscom at Pittsfield on April 20, 1946 and the second on April 29, 2016, also at Pittsfield. The two other inland records were from Turner's Falls in December 2008 and November 2016. Remarkably, there were three reports this spring from these same two sites. Iceland Gulls were well represented along the coast, including 19 reported from Deer Island. An adult of the Thayer's subspecies was photographed at Provincetown on March 15.

With the exception of Common Tern (April 26, +3), terns returned to the state about a week earlier than average: Caspian Tern (April 14, -6), Roseate Tern (April 27, -6), and Least Tern (April 28, -5). The first tubenoses of the year were even earlier in their return, some considerably so: Manx Shearwater (March 24, -23), Leach's Storm-Petrel (April 16, -35) and Sooty Shearwater (April 26, -5).

Up to three **Pacific Loons** were present at Race Point and Herring Cove Beach through March and April. Provincetown has become the most reliable place to find this species, and birds have been reported there throughout this winter since late December.

A Least Bittern discovered at West Harwich on April 14 was the earliest record this century, a full three weeks ahead of its average arrival date. Snowy and Great egrets were three or four days later than average, and Little Blue Herons were a week late. Prior to this century, there were only three or four records of **White-faced Ibis** for the state. Since then the species has expanded its range into the Great Plains and up the Atlantic Coast as far north as Maine and Nova Scotia. Since 2007 White-faced Ibis has been recorded annually in Massachusetts, most reliably in Essex County. This year the pattern continued, with up to three birds roaming the marshes of Ipswich and Essex. Breeding has yet to be confirmed, although a bird was seen tending a nest at Kettle Island in 2009.

N. Hayward

Snow Goose

3/4-3/24	DWWS	4	S. Avery + v.o.
3/10-3/21	Edgartown	3	L. Johnson#
3/12	Concord (NAC)	3	D. Williams
3/25-4/30	Hyannis	1	S. Matheny
3/31	Newbury	50	D. Chickering
4/2	Ipswich	44 12 blue	J. Berry#

Greater White-fronted Goose

3/1-3/30	Lexington/Arlington	1 ph	J. Forbes + v.o.
3/1-3/6	Paxton	1 ph	C. Bailey + v.o.
3/19-3/23	Amherst	1 ph	K. Yakola + v.o.
3/24-3/31	Essex/Ipswich	1 ph	M. Goetschkes + v.o.
3/28	Lancaster	1 ph	B. Robo + v.o.
4/14-4/22	W. Newbury	1 ph	C.Leuchtenburg + v.o.
4/15-4/17	Rutland	1 ph	T. Purcell

Pink-footed Goose

3/26	Rehoboth	1 ph	J. Sweeney#

Brant

3/20	BHI (Deer I.)	900	P. Peterson
3/26	PI	100	T. Wetmore
4/7	S. Harwich	290	B.Nikula
4/17	Plymouth B.	250	T. Evans
4/24	Barre Falls	30	D. Schilling#

Cackling Goose

3/3-3/24	Amherst Area	1 ph	
3/5	Amherst	2 ph	K. Yakola
3/6-4/1	Boston (FPk)	1 ph	S. Jones + v.o.
3/10	Topsfield	1 ph	S. Sullivan
3/10-3/15	Turner's Falls	1 ph	J. Layfield + v.o.
3/11-4/3	Concord (NAC)	1 ph	S.Lakshminarayanan+v.o.
3/19	Montague	1	M. Lynch#
3/28-3/31	Lancaster	1 ph	E. Kittredge + v.o.

Mute Swan

3/9	Westport	46	C. Molander
4/7	Acoaxet	77	M. Lynch#
4/27	Framingham	43	J. Forbes

Tundra Swan

3/10-3/26	Carver	1 ph	B. Zajda + v.o.

Wood Duck

3/18	Northampton	120	M. Lynch#
3/23	Carlisle	40	J. Keeley
4/8	Bolton Flats	67	R. Lockwood
4/26	W. Newbury	27	P. + F. Vale

Blue-winged Teal

3/31	PI	3	N. Landry
4/8	Cumb. Farms	2 1m,1f	AthBC (E. LeBlanc)
4/15	Arlington Res.	2	D. Williams
4/23	S. Monomoy	2	Y. Laskaris#

Northern Shoveler

3/27	Salisbury	13	J. Berry#
4/1	Nantucket	5	S. Kardell#
4/8-4/22	PI	19	T. Wetmore + v.o.
4/12	GMNWR	8	A. Bragg#
4/23	S. Monomoy	3	Y. Laskaris#

Gadwall

3/1	PI	70	M. Goetschkes#
3/11	Wareham	33	M. Lynch#
3/18	Seekonk	167	A. Eckerson
4/23	S. Monomoy	12	Y. Laskaris#

Eurasian Wigeon

3/4-4/22	Newbury	1 m ph	K. Elwell + v.o.
3/7	Yarmouth	1 m ph	P. Kyle
3/12-3/24	Salisbury	1 m ph	H. Burns + v.o.
4/22	Nantucket	1	T. Pastuszak#

American Wigeon

3/1	PI	12	M. Goetschkes#
3/26-4/4	Newbury	30	J. Berry + v.o.
4/22	Bolton Flats	15	R. Hodson

American Black Duck

3/26	Stockbridge	61	M. Lynch#
4/7	Westport	162	M. Lynch#
4/24	PI	40	R. Heil

Northern Pintail

3/4	Acton	18	J. Forbes
3/5	PI	45	T. Wetmore
3/26	Newbury	40	J. Berry
4/23	S. Monomoy	14	Y. Laskaris#

Green-winged Teal

3/4	Bolton Flats	60	J. Forbes
3/5	PI	50	T. Wetmore
3/17	Concord (NAC)	51	C. Cook
3/31	Newbury	225	D. Williams
3/31	Burrage Pd WMA	125	SSBC (N. Marchessault)
4/1	Ashley Falls	18	K. Schopp

Green-winged Teal (Eurasian)

3/10-3/18	Concord (NAC)	1 ph	T. Swain + v.o.
3/15-3/19	Topsfield	1 ph	J. Hoye + v.o.
3/16	W. Boxford	1	N. Walker#
3/18-4/5	Seekonk	1 ph	A.Eckerson+ v.o.
3/23-3/31	Burrage Pd WMA	1-2 ph	J. Sweeney + v.o.
3/25	Bridgewater	1 ph	N.Marchessault#
3/29-3/31	Newbury	1 ph	D.Prima + v.o.
4/thr	Bolton Flats	1 ph	N.Dowling + v.o.

Green-winged Teal (Eurasian x American hybrid)

3/27-3/28	Hadley	1 m ph	L.Therrien+v.o.
3/15-3/19	Topsfield	1 m ph	J. Hoye + v.o.
3/31	Burrage Pd WMA	1 m	N. Marchessault + v.o.

Gadwall x Green-winged Teal (hybrid)

3/29-4/11	Mattapoisett/Marion	1 m ph	N.Marchessault+v.o.

Canvasback

3/1-3/26	Braintree/Randolph	1	P. Peterson + v.o.
3/1-3/3	Sharon	1 m	W. Sweet
3/23, 4/29	Nantucket	18,2	T. Pastuszak, E. Rudden

Redhead

3/11	Nantucket	16	J. Blyth#
3/16-3/26	Eastham	2	R. Debenham + v.o.

Ring-necked Duck

3/9	New Salem	110	B. Lafley
3/10	Boxborough	70	R. Grossman
3/23	Burrage Pd WMA	322	J. Sweeney
3/25	Northboro	100	M. Lynch#
4/29	Pittsfield	15	K. Schopp

Tufted Duck

thr	Nantucket	1 m ph	T.Pastuszak+v.o.

Greater Scaup

3/11	Bourne	62	M. Lynch#
3/17	Randolph	50	G. d'Entremont
4/21	Fairhaven	33	M. Lynch#

Lesser Scaup

3/17	Wakefield	5	B. Lee
4/7	Acoaxet	13	M. Lynch#
4/22	PI	6	T. Wetmore
4/23	Sharon	22	L. Waters

King Eider

3/1	PI	1 imm m ph	M. Goetschkes#
3/1-4/22	Cohasset	1 ad m ph	D. Burton + v.o.
3/3	Winthrop B.	1 f ph	M. Iliff
3/4	Rockport (AP)	1 imm m ph	D. Walters
3/7-3/29	Sandwich	1 ad m ph	J. Glydon + v.o.
3/16-3/29	Scusset B.	1-2 ad m ph	R. Stowe + v.o.
3/18	Winthrop B.	1 imm m ph	S. Williams
3/20-4/2	Bourne	1 ad m ph	K. Amaral + v.o.
3/26-3/27	Gloucester (EP)	1 imm m	N. Dubrow + v.o.
4/30	PI	2 1m imm, 1f	D. Adrien

Common Eider

3/11	Bourne	3950	M. Lynch#
3/31	Winthrop	90	C. Cook
4/3	Ipswich	210	J. Berry

Common Eider (Northern, *borealis*)

3/1-3/24	P'town (RP)	1 f ph	S. Williams#
3/17	Chatham	1 f ph	K. Yakola#
4/7	Sandwich	2 m,f ph	S. Williams#

Harlequin Duck

3/1	Orleans	4	D. Gray

Harlequin Duck (continued)

3/17	Nantucket	12	F. Gallo#
3/19	Cohasset	13	D. Burton
3/25	Rockport (AP)	54	R. Heil#
4/19	Westport	2	M. Iliff
4/21	Aquinnah	5	A. Lin-Moore

Surf Scoter

3/11	Sandwich	230	M. Lynch#
4/16	Rockport (AP)	560	R. Heil

White-winged Scoter

3/11	Sandwich	170	M. Lynch#
3/31	Winthrop	18	C. Cook
4/29	Pittsfield	2	K. Schopp

Black Scoter

3/11	Sandwich	310	M. Lynch#
4/16	Rockport (AP)	2310	R. Heil
4/26	Scituate	60	D. Peacock

Long-tailed Duck

4/24	PI	2440	R. Heil
4/29	Pittsfield	2	K. Schopp
4/29	Orange	4	B. Lafley
4/29	Quabbin Pk	53	L. Therrien

Bufflehead

4/7	Westport	98	M. Lynch#
4/8	PI	32	T. Wetmore
4/14	Wakefield	55	P. +F. Vale
4/29	Pittsfield	19	K. Schopp

Common Goldeneye

3/4	Gill	32	M. Lynch#
3/10	Nbpt	23	J. Berry#
3/11	Bourne	17	M. Lynch#
3/25	Wachusett Res.	52	M. Lynch#

Barrow's Goldeneye

3/1-4/5	Sharon	1 m	L. Waters + v.o.
3/6-3/20	Mashpee	1 m ph	M.Keleher+v.o.
3/17	Halifax	2 m ph	J. Sweeney
3/19	Cohasset	4 1m, 3f ph	D. Burton#

Hooded Merganser

3/6	GMNWR	15	M. Stone#
3/10	W. Newbury	16	J. Berry#
3/10	Quabog IBA	36	M. Lynch#
3/11	Sharon	66	W. Sweet

Common Merganser

3/10	W. Newbury	106	J. Berry#
3/18	Southwick	350	M. Lynch#
3/18	Arlington	129	K. Hartel
3/23	Quabog IBA	160	M. Lynch#

Red-breasted Merganser

3/6	Gloucester	14	J. Berry
3/11	Bourne	83	M. Lynch#
3/31	Winthrop	15	C. Cook

Ruddy Duck

4/1	Waltham	18	J. Forbes
4/1	Pembroke	13	G. d'Entremont
4/18	W. Newbury	20	MAS (D. Moon)
4/28	Chestnut Hill	6	R. Doherty

Ring-necked Pheasant

3/31	Quabog IBA	1 m	M. Lynch#
4/18-4/22	Nbpt	1	MAS (D. Moon) + v.o.
4/22	Norfolk	1	B. Sullivan

Ruffed Grouse

3/31	Ashby	1	J. Forbes
4/4-4/28	Freetown	1	L. Abbey + v.o.
4/8	Barre	7	L. Allen
4/11	Worc. (BMB)	1	J. Liller
4/21	Wompatuck SP	1	D. Peacock
4/29	Quabbin (G45)	1	S. Schwenk

Wild Turkey

3/10	W. Newbury	28	J. Berry#
3/17	Canton	34	G. d'Entremont
3/23	Charlton	54	M. Lynch#

Pied-billed Grebe

3/26, 4/13	Randolph area	1	P. Peterson, E. Nielsen
4/6	Fairhaven	1	N. Marchessault
4/8	Hamilton	1	J. Berry
4/11	Lincoln	2	M. Rines
4/17	Sudbury Res.	3	M. Lynch#
4/18-4/23	W. Newbury	1	P. + F. Vale + v.o.
4/19	Pelham	1	B. Lafley
4/26	GMNWR	2	A. Bragg#

Horned Grebe

4/21	Fairhaven	37	M. Lynch#
4/29	Pittsfield	21	K. Schopp
4/29	Quabbin (G5)	12	A. Hulsey
4/29	Wachusett Res.	14	M. Lynch#
4/30	Manomet	36	A. Kneidel

Red-necked Grebe

3/7	Rockport (AP)	11	R. Heil
4/8	N. Scituate	13	AthBC (E. LeBlanc)
4/29	Pittsfield	17	K. Schopp

Black-billed Cuckoo

4/17	DWWS	1 ph	L. Norton

Eastern Whip-poor-will

4/29	Plymouth	5	P. Briggs

Chimney Swift

4/14	Norfolk	1	J. Alberta
4/26	PI	1	R. Secatore#

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

4/25	Uxbridge	1 m	J. Huntington
4/29	Easton	1 m	K. Ryan
4/29	Plympton	1 m	T. Lloyd-Evans

Virginia Rail

4/21	Hamilton	2	J. Berry
4/24	Stockbridge	3	M. Lynch#
4/25-4/28	Bolton Flats	2	B. Kamp + v.o.
4/27	Marshfield	2	D. Peacock
4/28	Ashley Falls	4	K. Schopp
4/29	Quabog IBA	6	M. Lynch#
4/30	Cambr. (Danehy Pk)	2	R. Stymeist

Sora

4/1	GMNWR	1	K. Dia
4/26	Brookfield	1	R. Jenkins
4/30	Cotuit	1	P. Crosson

Common Gallinule

4/20-4/29	Nantucket	1 ph	T. Pastuszak#
4/27-4/30	Hatfield	1 ph	T. Gessing
4/28	Gloucester	1	B. Harris

American Coot

3/23	Marlborough	1	D. Williams
4/2	Woburn (HP)	3	D. Williams
4/3	GMNWR	1	C. Martone
4/5	PI	1	D. Prima

Sandhill Crane

3/9, 3/13	Amherst	2,1	J. Jorgensen#, M. Cushing
3/26	W. Roxbury (MP)	2	T. Bradford#
3/29-thr	Burrage Pd WMA	2	E. Vacchino + v.o.
3/30	Lee	3	G. Hurley
3/31	Tolland	2	D. Holmes
3/31, 4/22	Bolton Flats	6,2	J. Bourget + v.o.
4/2	DWWS	1	J. Chisolm
4/7	Concord	2	G. Dupont
4/8-4/27	New Marlborough	1	K. Schopp
4/8	Newbury	3	D. Moon#
4/8	Rutland	4	C. Bailey
4/12	Ashley Falls	1	K. Schopp
4/14	Gill	2	J. Smith#
4/19	Plymouth	3	C. Jackson
4/20	Quabbin (G46)	2	W. Howes
4/21, 4/26	Worthington	1	E. Lewis, L. Therrien
4/28	Westhampton	3	M. Lynch#
4/28	Dover	3	E. Nielsen

American Oystercatcher

3/17	Tisbury	1	R. Culbert
3/28-3/31	Winthrop	8	P. Peterson + v.o.
4/8	Quincy	3	D. Burton#
4/21	Fairhaven	10	M. Lynch#

American Oystercatcher (continued)
4/23 S. Monomoy 5 Y. Laskaris#
Black-bellied Plover
4/28 Duxbury B. 2 W. Lackey
4/29 Essex 8 C. Marchant
American Golden-Plover
4/14 P'town (RP) 1 ph P. Flood
4/14 Fairhaven 1 ph S. Walas#
4/29 Edgartown 2 ph L. Johnson#
Semipalmated Plover
4/28 PI 1 C. Morgan
4/29 Ipswich (CB) 1 I. Pepper
Piping Plover
3/24, 4/22 PI 1,26 T. Wetmore + v.o.
4/8 Hull 12 M. McInnis
4/21 S. Dart. (APd) 4 B. King
4/29 Ipswich (CB) 10 I. Pepper
Killdeer
3/29 PI 12 T. Wetmore
4/1 Rutland 12 M. Lynch#
4/2 Ipswich 9 J. Berry#
Upland Sandpiper
4/16 W. Roxbury (MP) 1 ph T. Bradford#
4/28 Edgartown 1 R. Culbert#
4/28 Bedford 2 P. + F. Vale
Whimbrel
4/19 E. Boston (BI) 1 B. Burke
Sanderling
3/11 Sandwich 8 M. Lynch#
4/24 PI 20 R. Heil
Dunlin
4/7 Westport 40 M. Lynch#
4/17 PI 150 T. Wetmore
Purple Sandpiper
3/11 Rockport (AP) 12 J. Miller
3/13 S. Boston 10 T. Bradford#
4/7 Westport 2 M. Lynch#
4/8 N. Scituate 125 AthBC (E. LeBlanc)
4/29 PI 50 A. Steenstrup
Least Sandpiper
4/22 Bolton Flats 2 R. Hodson
4/29 W. Harwich 4 M. Keleher#
Pectoral Sandpiper
4/1 PI 2 R. Heil
4/4-4/22 Newbury 3 S. Babbitt + v.o.
4/6 Fairhaven 4 C. Molander
Short-billed Dowitcher
4/21 W. Harwich 1 A. Eckerson#
American Woodcock
3/1-3/3 Washington 3 E. Neumuth
3/9 Salem 3 L. Ferraresso
3/20 Ipswich 3 J. Berry
3/23 Stoughton 3 G. d'Entremont
3/25 W. Roxbury (MP) 6 J. Battenfeld
4/1 Rutland 22 M. Lynch#
4/7 MSSF 4 G. d'Entremont#
Wilson's Snipe
3/31 W. Bridgewater 9 SSBC (N. Marchessault)
4/2 Fairhaven 27 G. Gove#
4/7 Newbury 67 J. Offermann
4/8 Saugus 15 S. Zendeh#
4/21 Ipswich 21 N. Dubrow
4/28 Bolton Flats 12 M. Sovay#
Spotted Sandpiper
4/17 Somerville 1 E. Goodrich
4/18 Burlington 1 J. Keeley
4/28 Huntington 2 M. Lynch#
4/28 Bolton Flats 2 M. Sovay#
4/29 Saugus 3 S. Zendeh#
Solitary Sandpiper
4/13-4/15 Arlington Res. 1 K. Hartel + v.o.
4/14 Waltham 1 J. Forbes + v.o.
4/14 Dover 1 E. Nielsen
Lesser Yellowlegs
3/31, 4/21 W. Harwich 1,15 Villone, Eckerson#
3/31, 4/29 E. Boston (BI) 2,4 A. Trautmann, P. Peterson
4/9 PI 1 K. Seymour
4/14 Nbpt 11 P. + F. Vale
4/22 Bolton Flats 3 B. Abbott
4/30 Fairhaven 4 C. Molander
Willet
4/14 Mashpee 1 K. Fiske
4/22 Fairhaven 3 J. Barrett
4/29 Ipswich (CB) 8 I. Pepper
4/30 PI 12 T. Mara#
Willet (Western)
4/14 Barnstable 1 ph M. Iliff#
Greater Yellowlegs
3/4-3/5 Bridgewater 1 T. Lupien
3/17-3/18 Marion 1 J. Barrett
3/30 Mattapoisett 6 C. Molander#
4/2 Duxbury B. 8 R. Bowes
4/27 PI 18 P. + F. Vale
4/28 Ipswich 5 J. Berry
Parasitic Jaeger
4/26-4/28 P'town (RP) 5 max S. Arena + v.o.
4/27 P'town (RP) 5 S. Arena
Dovekie
3/4 P'town (RP) 47 P. Flood#
3/4 Orleans 34 P. Crosson
3/25 Rockport (AP) 11 R. Heil#
Common Murre
3/10 Salisbury 1 d D. Burton
3/11 Stellwagen 40 B. Thompson
3/21, 3/25 Rockport (AP) 68,38 N. Dubrow, R. Heil#
3/29 Stellwagen Bank 2 R. Batterson
4/17 Plymouth 1 d J. Rofe
4/27 P'town (RP) 8 S. Arena
Thick-billed Murre
3/9-3/11 Gloucester 5 J. Keyes + v.o.
3/11 Stellwagen Bank 4 Z. Coeman
3/11 Rockport (AP) 1 d J. Miller
3/15, 3/24 P'town 36,43 S. Williams#
3/15 Winthrop B. 1 d C. Jones
3/21 Rockport (AP) 17 N. Dubrow
Razorbill
3/25, 4/16 Rockport (AP) 54,24 R. Heil#
3/29 Stellwagen Bank 10 R. Batterson
4/2 PI 10 T. Wetmore
Black Guillemot
3/6 Gloucester 7 J. Berry
3/10 Barnstable 1 M. Iliff#
3/11 Gloucester (EP) 18 K. Hartel
Atlantic Puffin
3/3 Orleans 2 B.Nikula
3/4 P'town (RP) 1 P. Flood#
3/7 Rockport (AP) 1 R. Heil
Black-legged Kittiwake
3/3 Orleans 620 B.Nikula
3/11 Stellwagen 150 B. Thompson
3/25 Rockport (AP) 101 R. Heil#
Bonaparte's Gull
4/27 P'town (RP) 425 S. Arena
4/29 Pittsfield 29 K. Schopp
4/29 Quabbin Pk 54 L. Therrien
Black-headed Gull
3/11-4/12 Hyannis 1-2 1W, ad phS.Matheny#
4/27 P'town (RP) 1 S. Arena
Little Gull
4/11 Turner's Falls 1 ad ph J. Smith
4/15, 4/29 Pittsfield 1 ad phK.Schopp+v.o.
Laughing Gull
3/29 P'town (RP) 1 S. Williams#
4/1 Vineyard Haven 1 R. Bierregaard
4/4 Plymouth 14 D. Furbish
4/28 P'town (RP) 450 B.Nikula

Mew Gull
3/9 Scituate 1 ad ph MAS(D.Ludlow)
Mew Gull (European, *canus*)
4/14-4/26 P'town (RP) 1 ad ph N.Marchessault#
4/15-4/16 Cohasset 1 ad ph M. Iliff + v.o.
Mew Gull (American, *brachyrhynchus*)
4/15-4/16 Cohasset 1 ad ph M. Iliff + v.o.
Iceland Gull
3/3 Wakefield 4 T. Swain#
3/4 Cohasset 5 D. Burton
3/9 Scituate 5 MAS (D. Ludlow)
3/9 BHI (Deer I.) 19 T. Bradford#
3/21 Gloucester 5 MAS (D. Moon)
4/14 Lawrence 4 D. Duxbury-Fox#
4/18 Westport 3 M. Iliff
4/27 P'town (RP) 37 S. Arena
Iceland Gull (Thayer's)
3/15 P'town (RP) 1 ad ph S. Williams#
Lesser Black-backed Gull
4/16 Cohasset 7 L. Waters#
4/27 P'town (RP) 17 S. Arena
4/28 Cape Ann 3 B. Harris
Glaucous Gull
3/4-3/26 Cohasset 2 D. Burton
3/11 Gloucester 3 B. Thompson
4/17 New Bedford 2 L. Waters
4/30 Revere B. 2 T. Bradford#
Least Tern
4/28 Winthrop B. 6 S. Zendeh
4/29 E. Boston (BI) 1 T. Bradford#
Caspian Tern
4/14 GMNWR 1 ph B. Harris#
4/17 Scituate 1 D. Peacock
4/22-4/25 Burrage Pd WMA 1-2 ph D. O'Brien
4/23 Mashpee 1 ph K. Fiske
4/23 Plymouth 1 B. Winn
Roseate Tern
4/27 Marshfield 2 M. Waters
4/28 P'town (RP) 2 J. Johnson
Common Tern
4/26 P'town (RP) 15 M. Waters#
4/29 Saugus 4 S. Zendeh#
4/29 Revere B. 3 L. Ferraresso
4/30 Revere 35 B. Burke
Red-throated Loon
3/5 Medford 5 P. Roberts
3/19 Hull 96 D. Burton
4/15 Rockport (AP) 90 R. Heil
Pacific Loon
3/1-4/28 P'town (RP) 2 max ph M.Waters+v.o.
3/1-4/27 P'town (HCB) 1 ph S. Williams + v.o.
Common Loon
3/24, 4/29 PI 24,16 J. Keeley#
4/7 Westport 32 M. Lynch#
4/8 Wachusett Res. 19 M. Lynch#
4/27 Marshfield 20 M. Waters
Northern Fulmar
3/3 Orleans 92 B.Nikula
3/4 P'town (RP) 9 P. Flood#
3/6 Barnstable 1 P. Crosson#
Sooty Shearwater
4/26, 4/27 P'town (RP) 1,5 S. Williams# + v.o.
Manx Shearwater
3/24, 4/27 P'town (RP) 1,13 B.Nikula#, S. Arena
3/30, 4/29 Revere B. 6,16 P. Peterson + v.o.
4/16 Rockport (AP) 1 R. Heil
Leach's Storm-Petrel
4/16 Rockport (AP) 2 ph R. Heil
Northern Gannet
4/16 Rockport (AP) 227 R. Heil
4/27 Marshfield 230 M. Waters
Double-crested Cormorant
4/7 PI 18 T. Wetmore
4/17 Sudbury Res. 34 M. Lynch#
4/21 Fairhaven 166 M. Lynch#
4/30 Medford 64 M. Rines
Great Cormorant
3/17 Arlington 8 J. Forbes
3/23-3/24 Cambridge 1 J. Ferrari
3/24 PI 3 J. Keeley#
3/24, 4/16 Medford 31,4 P. Roberts
4/8 N. Scituate 22 AthBC (E. LeBlanc)
American Bittern
3/25-thr Reports of indiv. from 7 locations
3/31 Bolton Flats 2 J. Bourget
4/22 W. Newbury 2 J. Hoye#
4/26 Brookfield 2 R. Jenkins
Least Bittern
4/14-4/24 W. Harwich 1 ph E. Hoopes + v.o.
4/27 Marshfield 1 D. Peacock
Great Blue Heron
3/29 Danvers 17 n P. + F. Vale
3/31 Stoneham 7 n D. Olivaria
4/7 W. Bridgewater 6 n K. Ryan
4/14 GMNWR 21 B. Harris
4/23 Quabog IBA 24 M. Lynch#
4/26 Peabody 7 n P. + F. Vale
Great Egret
3/20 Marblehead 2 E. Smith
3/20 Gloucester 1 C. Marchant
3/20 Scituate 2 J. Feeney
3/31, 4/3 PI 9,25 D. Williams, T. Wetmore
Snowy Egret
3/30 N. Dighton 4 A. Eckerson
3/30, 4/30 Ipswich 1,25 N. Dubrow + v.o.
3/31 Sandwich 5 S. Paventy
4/18 Newbury 29 P. + F. Vale
4/29 PI 7 E. Labato
Little Blue Heron
4/7-4/14 Plymouth 2 max L.Schibley+v.o.
4/13 E. Boston (BI) 1 ad J. Richards#
4/24 Gloucester H. 6 C. Haines
Tricolored Heron
4/20-4/24 Barnstable 1 S. Matheny + v.o.
Green Heron
4/14 Malden 1 G. Richards
4/14 Plymouth 1 J. Offermann
4/20 Carlisle 1 J. Keeley
4/23 DWWS 1 M. Noiseux
Black-crowned Night-Heron
3/25 Milton 2 L. Meyer
3/29, 4/8 W. Harwich 3,60 P. Kyle, P. Trimble
4/8 Watertown 10 M. Sterling
4/9 Plymouth 9 G. Gove#
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron
4/24 Nantucket 1 T. Pastuszak
Glossy Ibis
3/30 PI 3 P. + F. Vale
3/31 Dartmouth 1 L. Waters
4/3 Bolton Flats 3 E., Kittredge
4/13 N. Dighton 9 J. Eckerson#
4/19 Manomet 18 A. Kneidel
4/20 Ipswich 105 K. Elwell
4/20 DWWS 3 R. Bowes
4/21-4/23 Concord 1 J. Grant + v.o.
White-faced Ibis
4/18-4/30 Ipswich/Essex 3 max ph P.Brown+v.o.
4/21 Rowley/Newbury 1 L. Waters# + v.o.

VULTURES THROUGH FINCHES

The town of Sheffield, in Berkshire County, has always been the place to go to see Black Vultures. Fifty-two of them were counted on March 26, although this is still short of the record 77 Black Vultures recorded in Sheffield on January 1, 2016.

The Plum Island hawkwatch at Lot 1 was well covered for the month of April. Some of the more impressive totals included: 167 Northern Harriers, 76 Merlins and 378 American Kestrels. Two **Golden Eagles** were recorded at the Barre Falls hawkwatch: an adult on April 5 and a sub-adult on April 11.

Snowy Owls were reported from over 30 localities, with five individuals present at Nantucket on March 25. A Barn Owl was noted in Harwich and another was found dead in Chatham. Records of Barn Owls away from the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket are unusual. A Barred Owl was found at the Sheriff's Meadow Sanctuary in Edgartown on March 9. This is the first sighting of Barred Owl on Martha's Vineyard since 1948.

Favorable winds on April 12–14 delivered the first push of migrants. Good numbers of Eastern Phoebes were noted in several locations including a count of 30 on Plum Island on April 13, when the temperature was a balmy 69 degrees. The first Purple Martins returned on April 13 to Rehoboth. This year an additional 12 gourds were added to the existing 84 at the Crestwood Country Club, making this the largest colony in Massachusetts. Other traditionally early April migrants arriving in high numbers during this period were: Blue-headed Vireo, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush and Pine Warbler. A Northern Parula found in Truro on April 14 was notably early.

Significant waves of migrants also arrived during the last week of April. Following a stretch of cool temperatures and easterly winds, the mercury shot up on April 22. Temperatures stayed in the 60s through the end of the month, with a high of 70 on April 28, providing favorable conditions for migration.

The highlight of the period was a **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** found in East Sandwich on April 13. This is only the second April record for the state, with the first being from Brighton on April 12–15, 2014. Among the other vagrant and noteworthy sightings was the long-staying **Townsend's Solitaire** at Demarest Lloyd State Park in South Dartmouth. This bird was first found on November 12, 2017. With the last sighting on April 22 this bird was present for over five months! A **Bullock's Oriole** visited a feeder at a Nahant home adjacent to the Mass Audubon Sanctuary, delighting many birders during its two–day stay. Two male **Painted Buntings** were reported from Marstons Mills and nearby Cotuit.

Reports of Red Crossbills nesting in Berkshire County this spring are particularly exciting. In the Montague Wildlife Management Area as many as nine individuals were reported and nest building was documented on March 15. Other Red Crossbills were noted in Washington and Windsor.

R. Stymeist

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Black Vulture
3/26 Sheffield 52 M. Lynch#
3/29 Essex 16 P. Brown
3/31 Stoneham 4 D. Olivaria
4/9 Hingham (WE) 2 L. Schibley
4/14 W. Newbury 2 K. Elwell
4/22 Westport 2 L. Waters#
Turkey Vulture
3/1, 3/3 Ipswich 2,3 J. Berry
3/1 Cohasset 4 W. Sweet
3/5 Middleton 3 P. + F. Vale
4/1-4/22 PI 86 Hawkcount (T. Mara)
Osprey
3/10 Orleans 1 C. Bates
3/19 Westport 1 J. Macomber
3/23 Burrage Pd WMA 1 J. Sweeney
4/thr PI 51 Hawkcount (T. Mara)
4/5-4/28 Barre Falls 39 Hawkcount (D. Schilling)
4/7 Acoaxet 37 M. Lynch#
4/17 PI 11 Hawkcount (M. Schoene)
4/21 W. Harwich 25 A. Eckerson#
4/21 S. Dart. (APd) 24 B. King
Bald Eagle
3/18 Northampton 3 2ad, 1imm M. Lynch#
3/18 Arlington 3 K. Hartel
3/19 Turner's Falls 6 imm M. Lynch#
3/26 Sheffield 4 3ad, 1imm M. Lynch#
4/1-4/22 PI 7 Hawkcount (T. Mara)
4/11-4/21 Barre Falls 4 Hawkcount (D. Schilling)
Northern Harrier
3/12 Cumb. Farms 8 E. Nielsen
4/thr PI 167 Hawkcount (T. Mara)
4/24 Tyringham 4 3m, 1f M. Lynch#
Sharp-shinned Hawk
4/thr PI 33 Hawkcount (T. Mara)
4/3-4/24 Barre Falls 15 Hawkcount (D. Schilling)
4/14 GMNWR 3 B. Harris
Cooper's Hawk
4/6-4/22 PI 9 Hawkcount (T. Mara)
4/9-4/28 Barre Falls 5 Hawkcount (D. Schilling)
4/14 Topsfield 1 d P. +F. Vale
Northern Goshawk
4/28 Barre Falls 1 D. Grant#
Red-shouldered Hawk
3/23 Wales 2 M. Lynch#
3/28 Ipswich 2 J. Berry
4/1 PI 1 Hawkcount (T. Mara)
4/14 GMNWR 4 B. Harris
Broad-winged Hawk
3/31 Upton 1 N. Paulson
4/12-4/28 Barre Falls 94 Hawkcount (D. Schilling)
4/14 GMNWR 2 B. Harris
4/21 Douglas 2 M. Ess-Why
4/22 New Salem 5 B. Lafley
Red-tailed Hawk
4/1 W. Roxbury (MP) 18 M. Iliff
4/3-4/28 Barre Falls 19 Hawkcount (D. Schilling)
4/6-4/30 PI 5 Hawkcount (T. Mara)
4/14 GMNWR 20 B. Harris
Rough-legged Hawk
3/thr-4/9 Indiv. reported from 7 locations
3/24 PI 3 1 lt, 2 dk N. Landry
4/3 Cumb. Farms 4 3 lt, 1 dk D. Furbish
Golden Eagle
4/5 Barre Falls 1 ad Hawkcount(D.Schilling)
4/11 Barre Falls 1 subad Hawkcount(D.Grant)
Barn Owl
3/10 Chatham 1 d fide M. Faherty
4/23 E. Harwich 1 M. Faherty
Eastern Screech-Owl
4/7 DFWS 2 MAS (J. Benson)
4/28 Cape Ann 2 B. Harris
Great Horned Owl
3/7-4/29 Cambr. (FP) 3 pr, 1 yg v.o.
3/22 W. Roxbury (MP) 2 P. Peterson
3/27 Essex 2 P. Brown
4/1 Rutland 2 M. Lynch#
Snowy Owl
thr Reported from 28 locations
3/24 P'town (RP) 3 S. Williams#
3/24-3/29 PI 4 N. Landry + v.o.
3/25 Nantucket 5 S. Fee
4/1-4/7 PI 3 R. Heil + v.o.
4/27-4/29 P'town (RP) 2 max S. Arena + v.o.
4/29 Nantucket 1 B. Balkind
4/30 Wellfleet 1 K. Burke
Barred Owl
3/9 Edgartown 1 ph L. McDowell#
3/12 Washington 2 E. Neumuth
4/22 Wompatuck SP 2 BBC (E. Giles)
4/23 N. Dighton 5 A. Eckerson
4/23 Reading 2 D. Williams
Long-eared Owl
3/1-3/3 Lexington 1 J. Andrews + v.o.
3/9 Cumb. Farms 1 D. Furbish
3/31 PI 1 B. Flemer
Short-eared Owl
3/9 Cumb. Farms 3 D. Furbish
3/15, 4/21 PI 1,1 M. Halsey
3/19-3/23 Mashpee 1 J. Carroll
4/8 Saugus 1 d S. Zendeh#
4/14 P'town (RP) 1 J. Coleman
4/22 Saugus 1 S. Zendeh#
Northern Saw-whet Owl
4/7 DFWS 1 MAS (J. Benson)
Belted Kingfisher
4/13 Rehoboth 4 M. Eckerson
4/14 GMNWR 3 B. Harris
Red-headed Woodpecker
3/1-4/22 Northampton 1 ph v.o.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
4/13 Boston 3 P. Peterson
4/14 Tolland 29 M. Lynch#
4/20 Petersham 3 M. Lynch#
4/24 Stockbridge 7 M. Lynch#
4/30 Quabbin Pk 17 B. Zajda
Northern Flicker
4/14 PI 72 N. Landry
4/14 GMNWR 41 B. Harris
4/23 Quabog IBA 17 M. Lynch#
Pileated Woodpecker
3/12 Medford 2 1m, 1f R. LaFontaine
3/20 Arlington 2 D. Bean
4/8 IRWS 2 W. Tatro
4/14 Tolland 3 M. Lynch#
4/21 Wompatuck SP 2 D. Peacock
4/23 Boxford 2 J. Berry
4/30 Quabbin (G54) 5 B. Zajda
American Kestrel
4/thr PI 378 Hawkcount (T. Mara)
4/4 Hanscom 18 M. Rines
4/8 Saugus 6 S. Zendeh#
4/8 Amesbury 5 S. McGrath#
4/11-4/24 Barre Falls 12 Hawkcount (D. Schilling)
4/14 Orange Airport 5 B. Lafley
4/14 GMNWR 7 B. Harris
Merlin
4/1-4/28 PI 76 Hawkcount (T. Mara)
Peregrine Falcon
3/thr Woburn 2 1pr n M. Lewis + v.o.
3/18 Worcester 2 1pr M. Larson#
4/1-4/28 PI 13 Hawkcount (T. Mara)
4/1-4/30 Watertown 2 1pr n R. Stymeist + v.o.

Eastern Phoebe
4/1-4/24 PI 19 b B. Flemer#
4/13 PI 30 T. Wetmore
4/13 Quabog IBA 22 M. Lynch#
4/14 Tolland 16 M. Lynch#
4/14 Duxbury B. 19 R. Bowes
Great Crested Flycatcher
4/21 Southwick 1 A. Robblee
4/29 Boxford (CP) 1 D. Larson
Eastern Kingbird
4/17 Nantucket 1 S. Fee
4/28 W. Newbury 1 J. Berry#
4/28 Arlington Res. 1 J. Forbes, M. Rines#
Fork-tailed Flycatcher
4/13 Sandwich 1 ad ph W. Newstead#
Northern Shrike
3/12 Westboro 1 B. Robo
3/22-3/30 Medfield 1 E. Nielsen + v.o.
4/3 PI 1 R. Murphy#
Blue-headed Vireo
4/13 Worc. (BMB) 1 B. Robo#
4/14 Boxford (CP) 1 A. Bean#
4/14 Quabbin Pk 1 J. Young
4/23 Boxford 6 J. Berry
4/28 Chester 4 M. Lynch#
Warbling Vireo
4/24 Pittsfield 1 L. Master
4/27 Framingham 1 J. Forbes
4/28 Arlington Res. 2 M. Rines#
4/28 W. Warren 1 B. Zajda
Red-eyed Vireo
4/22 E. Brookfield 1 D. Lusignan
Fish Crow
3/1 Milton 140 P. Peterson
3/11 Bourne 31 M. Lynch#
3/30 Needham 75 M. Iliff
4/7 Plymouth 50 L. Schibley
4/10 Lawrence 30 D. Duxbury-Fox#
Common Raven
3/6 P'town (RP) 6 K. Sutherland#
3/18 Ware 4 M. Lynch#
3/23 Burrage Pd WMA 3 N. Marchessault
4/22 Arlington 3 1pr, 1juv A. Golden
4/24 Milton 5 P. Peterson
4/28 W. Warren 4 B. Zajda
4/30 Easton 6 1pr, 4yg K. Ryan
Horned Lark
3/10 Acton 50 G. d'Entremont#
3/18 Saugus 150 S. Zendeh#
3/23 PI 20 S. Sullivan
4/2 Cumb. Farms 45 J. Sweeney
Purple Martin
4/13 Rehoboth 1 R. Marr
4/23 Norfolk 5 4m, 1f M. Linck
4/30 PI 10 T. Mara#
Tree Swallow
3/1 Fall River 1 L. Abbey
3/27 PI 3 A. Steenstrup
3/31 W. Bridgewater 150 SSBC (N. Marchessault)
4/8 IRWS 75 W. Tatro
4/18 Quabog IBA 604 M. Lynch#
Northern Rough-winged Swallow
3/30 Northampton 1 D. Pritchard
3/31 Fitchburg 4 R. O'Hara
4/10 Freetown 6 L. Waters
4/18 Manomet 6 A. Kneidel
4/29 Quabog IBA 8 M. Lynch#
Bank Swallow
4/14 Sheffield 1 J. Pierce
4/17-4/19 Manomet 1 E. Dalton + v.o.
4/19 E. Falmouth 2 S. Williams#
4/25 W. Newbury 1 MAS (D. Moon)
Cliff Swallow
4/5 W. Newbury 1 M. Densmore
4/8 IRWS 1 W. Tatro
4/10 Wayland 1 J. Forbes
4/23 Quabog IBA 1 M. Lynch#
4/25 W. Newbury 1 MAS (D. Moon)
4/29 New Salem 1 B. Lafley
Barn Swallow
3/31 Barnstable 3 S. Matheny
3/31 Edgartown 2 L. Johnson#
4/28 PI 20 T. Wetmore
4/29 Quabog IBA 31 M. Lynch#
Red-breasted Nuthatch
3/28 PI 2 T. Wetmore
4/1 Harvard 4 M. Lynch#
4/24 Stockbridge 3 M. Lynch#
4/28 Fall River 3 G. d'Entremont
Brown Creeper
3/29 Hamilton 10 J. Berry#
4/13-4/23 PI 12 b B. Flemer#
4/14 Wompatuck SP 8 G. d'Entremont
House Wren
3/28 Watertown 1 A. Gurka
4/12 Dartmouth 1 B. King
4/12 Hingham 1 K. Rawdon
4/26 Scituate 2 D. Peacock
Winter Wren
4/1 PI 1 b B. Flemer#
4/14 Wompatuck SP 2 G. d'Entremont
4/23 Boxford 4 J. Berry
4/23 MBO 1 b T. Lloyd-Evans #
4/24 P'town 2 B.Nikula
4/28 Boxford 2 J. Berry#
4/28 Huntington 3 M. Lynch#
Marsh Wren
4/2 Marshfield 1 D. Furbish
4/13 Rehoboth 3 M. Eckerson
4/29 PI 4 J. Keeley
Carolina Wren
4/7 Westport 7 M. Lynch#
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
4/13 Weston 1 J. Forbes
4/15 Burlington 1 M. Rines
4/18 MBO 1 m bT. Lloyd-Evans#
4/27 Westboro 5 P. Gilmore#
4/28 Cape Ann 6 B. Harris
4/29 Medford 6 M. Rines
Golden-crowned Kinglet
3/9 Hamilton 2 J. Berry
4/1-4/22 PI 54 b B. Flemer#
4/14 PI 55 T. Wetmore
4/14 Duxbury B. 18 R. Bowes
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
3/3 Natick 1 M. Locher
3/6 Nantucket 1 T. Pastuszak
3/7-3/28 Lexington 1 K. Hartel + v.o.
4/13-4/28 PI 90 b B. Flemer#
4/14 Medford 20 M. Rines#
4/22 Boston (Olmsted Pk) 7 C. Cook
4/23 Quabog IBA 23 M. Lynch#
4/24 MNWS 18 J. Smith#
Eastern Bluebird
3/18 W. Newbury 8 S. McGrath#
4/12 DFWS 10 MAS (P. Sowizral)
4/28 W. Warren 12 B. Zajda
Townsend's Solitaire
3/1-4/22 Dartmouth 1 ph v.o.
Veery
4/18 Nantucket 1 T. Pastuszak
Hermit Thrush
3/11 Sandwich 1 M. Lynch#
4/thr PI 56 b B. Flemer#

Hermit Thrush (continued)
4/13 E. Boston (BI) 10 P. Peterson
4/15 Rockport (AP) 9 R. Heil
4/20 Petersham 11 M. Lynch#
4/23 Boxford 8 J. Berry
Wood Thrush
4/20 Hadley 1 M. Locher
4/21 PI 1 A. Steenstrup
4/21 MNWS 1 J. Smith
4/22 Ipswich 1 M. Watson
Gray Catbird
3/13-3/20 Boxborough 1 A. Bailey
4/1 Boston 1 K. Hudson
4/14 Boston (PG) 1 J. Cushman
Brown Thrasher
3/4-4/7 Nantucket 1 T. Pastuszak
3/24 Falmouth 1 K. Miller
3/31 Dartmouth 2 L. Waters
Cedar Waxwing
3/15 Quabog IBA 30 M. Lynch#
4/7 Hingham 75 SSBC (H. Cross)
American Pipit
3/16-4/8 Mashpee 1 W. Knowlton + v.o.
3/17 Concord (NAC) 1 C. Cook
3/24 Cumb. Farms 30 N. Marchessault
4/10 Wachusett Res. 6 G. Gove#
Evening Grosbeak
3/19 Royalston 3 E. LeBlanc
4/23 Quabbin Pk 1 L. Therrien
4/30 Windsor 6 3pr Type 3 au T. Spahr
Purple Finch
3/14 Athol 3 D. Small
4/24 PI 39 R. Heil
4/28 Huntington 7 M. Lynch#
Red Crossbill
3/9-4/9 Montague 9 max Type 1,2 au J. Rose+v.o.
3/27 Essex 1 Type 2 au P. Brown
4/30 Washington 10 Type 1,2,3,10 au T. Spahr
4/30 Windsor 4 Type 2,10 au T. Spahr
White-winged Crossbill
3/25 Westwood 1 E. Nielsen
Lapland Longspur
3/4, 4/22 Saugus 2,3 S. Zendeh#
Snow Bunting
3/16 P'town 45 D. Weber
3/24 PI 20 J. Keeley#
4/18 P'town (RP) 3 A. Green
Eastern Towhee
3/1 Newton 1 m H. Miller
3/1-3/17 Needham 1 F. Lehman
4/13 MBO 1 m bT. Lloyd-Evans#
4/28 Fall River 34 G. d'Entremont
4/28 PI 25 T. Wetmore
American Tree Sparrow
4/22 Nbpt 6 J. Trimble#
4/23 Sudbury 6 B. Black
4/30 Norwell 1 W. + A. Childs
Chipping Sparrow
4/23 Quabog IBA 53 M. Lynch#
4/30 Ipswich 16 J. Berry
4/30 Quabbin Pk 14 B. Zajda
Field Sparrow
4/1 PI 2 b B. Flemer#
4/13 Worc. (BMB) 4 B. Robo#
4/14 MSSF 4 G. d'Entremont
4/25 PI 7 T. Wetmore
Vesper Sparrow
4/8-4/24 Ashley Falls 1 K. Schopp
4/14 Orange Airport 2 B. Lafley
4/14 Dover 1 E. Nielsen
4/14 Grafton 2 N. Paulson
4/18 W. Roxbury (MP) 3 A. Trautmann#
Lark Sparrow
4/14 N. Truro 1 ph M. Iliff#
4/22 Boston (PG) 1 ph D. Hunneman#
Savannah Sparrow
4/17 W. Roxbury (MP) 90 P. Peterson
4/24 PI 59 R. Heil
4/29 Saugus 40 S. Zendeh#
Savannah (Ipswich) Sparrow (*princeps*)
4/3 PI 1 T. Wetmore
4/19 Westport 1 M. Iliff
Grasshopper Sparrow
4/30 Ashley Falls 1 K. Schopp
Saltmarsh Sparrow
4/19 E. Boston (BI) 1 B. Burke
Seaside Sparrow
4/30 PI 2 T. Wetmore
Fox Sparrow
3/4 Saugus 4 S. Zendeh#
3/4 Lexington (DM) 4 M. Rines#
3/17 Merrimac 3 B. + B. Buxton
4/1-4/22 PI 3 b B. Flemer#
4/11 Worc. 11 M. Lynch#
4/18 MBO 1 b T. Lloyd-Evans #
Swamp Sparrow
3/9 Hamilton 1 J. Berry
4/13 PI 2 b B. Flemer#
4/23 Quabog IBA 64 M. Lynch#
4/24 Stockbridge 23 M. Lynch#
4/28 GMNWR 17 C. Cook
White-throated Sparrow
4/23 Quabog IBA 27 M. Lynch#
4/24 MBO 13 b T. Lloyd-Evans #
4/30 Quabbin (G54) 13 B. Zajda
White-crowned Sparrow
3/24-4/3 Cumb. Farms 1 N. Marchessault + v.o.
4/29 PI 1 A. Steenstrup
Bobolink
4/28 Andover 1 N. Jacob
Eastern Meadowlark
3/4 DWWS 6 S. Avery
4/2 Ipswich 4 J. Berry#
4/16 Bolton Flats 2 A. Bitzel
4/17 Nbpt 2 D. Moon
4/21 S. Dart. (APd) 4 B. King
4/28 Plymouth Airport 2 G. d'Entremont
Orchard Oriole
4/28 Boston (AA) 1 K. Broks
Bullock's Oriole
4/20-4/21 Nahant 1 ph V. Patek + v.o.
Baltimore Oriole
thr Brewster 1 D. Gray
4/26 Merrimac 1 B. + B. Buxton
Rusty Blackbird
3/1 N. Andover 2 B. + B. Drummond
3/5 Lynnfield 24 C. Martone
3/26 Sheffield 11 M. Lynch#
3/29 Nantucket 9 S. Kardell
4/1 W. Roxbury (MP) 9 M. Iliff
4/18 Lexington 15 M. Rines
Ovenbird
4/23 N. Dighton 1 A. Eckerson
4/28 Fall River 9 G. d'Entremont
4/30 Ipswich 4 J. Berry
Worm-eating Warbler
4/27 Wompatuck SP 2 P. Edmundson
Louisiana Waterthrush
4/5 Marion 1 S. Williams
4/12 Princeton 1 S. LaBree
4/13-4/14 Sharon 1 M. Waters + v.o.
4/21 Wompatuck SP 2 D. Peacock
4/28 Chester 14 M. Lynch#

Northern Waterthrush			
4/13	Dedham	1	M. McCarthy
4/27	Ipswich	2	J. Berry
4/28	Fall River	6	G. d'Entremont
Black-and-white Warbler			
4/21	Wompatuck SP	2	D. Peacock
4/28	Freetown	8	G. d'Entremont
4/28	PI	1 b	B. Flemer#
4/28	W. Warren	9	B. Zajda
Orange-crowned Warbler			
3/10, 4/14	Eastham	2,1	M. Iliff#
Common Yellowthroat			
3/10	Eastham	2	M. Iliff#
4/14	N. Truro	1	M. Iliff#
4/24	MNWS	1	J. Smith#
4/26	W. Newbury	2	P. + F. Vale
4/28	Nahant	1	L. Pivacek
Hooded Warbler			
4/22	Chilmark	1	L. Johnson#
4/30	PI	1 b ph	B. Flemer#
American Redstart			
4/28	Pepperell	1	M. Resch
Cape May Warbler			
4/29	Nantucket	1	K. Blackshaw#
Northern Parula			
4/14	Truro	1	S. Williams#
4/26	Scituate	1	D. Peacock
4/28	W. Warren	1	B. Zajda
Yellow Warbler			
4/22	Byfield	1	R. Stevenson
4/23	Uxbridge	1	N. Demers
4/28	Fall River	3	G. d'Entremont
4/28	Brighton	2	R. Doherty
Chestnut-sided Warbler			
4/28	W. Warren	1	B. Zajda
Palm Warbler			
4/1	PI	20 b	B. Flemer#
4/1	IRWS	2	L. Manzi
4/1	Middleton	1	S. Sullivan#
4/15	Woburn (HP)	32	P. Ippolito#
4/21	Arlington Res.	50	J. Childs
4/24	MBO	7 b	T. Lloyd-Evans #
Palm Warbler (Western)			
3/25-3/28	Belchertown	1 ph	D. Winckler#
4/22	Wompatuck SP	1	G. d'Entremont#
Pine Warbler			
3/7-3/20	Belchertown	1	D. Griffiths + v.o.
3/9-3/31	Milton	1	D. Burton + v.o.
3/31	Walpole	1	B. Lawless
4/2	Newton	2	P. Gilmore
4/3	Malden	2	P. + F. Vale
4/4	Ipswich	4	J. Berry
4/14	Quabbin Pk	18	J. Young
4/22	Wompatuck SP	25	G. d'Entremont#
Yellow-rumped Warbler			
3/1-3/27	PI	3	W. Tatro + v.o.
4/1	PI	5 b	B. Flemer#
4/19	GMNWR	15	A. Bragg#
4/23	Quabog IBA	37	M. Lynch#
4/28	W. Warren	33	B. Zajda
Prairie Warbler			
4/23	Plymouth	1	D. Furbish
4/28	Plymouth Airport	1	G. d'Entremont
Black-throated Green Warbler			
4/21	Wompatuck SP	1	D. Peacock
4/23, 4/29	Boxford	1,2	J. Berry, D. Larson
Scarlet Tanager			
4/17	Essex	1 f	P. Brown
4/18	Eastham	2	M. Faherty
4/18	Southboro	1	M. Garvey
Rose-breasted Grosbeak			
4/15	Andover	1 f	D. Cooper
4/18	Lexington	2	R. Rotberg
4/19	WBWS	3	M. Faherty
4/28	Nantucket	3	K. Blackshaw
Blue Grosbeak			
4/23	Nantucket	2	R. Newman
4/28-4/30	Arlington Res.	1 imm m ph	J. Forbes + v.o.
4/29-4/30	MBWMA	1 ad m ph	G.Power+v.o.
Indigo Bunting			
3/1-4/3	Washington	1 m	E. Neumuth
4/18	Nantucket	1	T. Pastuszak#
Painted Bunting			
3/28-4/1	Marston Mills	1 m ph	K.Amaral+v.o.
4/18-4/25	Cotuit	1 m	J. Spence

BYGONE BIRDS

Historical Highlights for March–April

Neil Hayward

5 YEARS AGO

March–April 2013

The last of the Nantucket **Northern Lapwings** held on until April 1, although a bird was later spotted from a canoe at Bolton Flats on April 27. Williamstown, in the far northwest corner of the state, hosted a male **Mountain Bluebird**, April 27–May 2.

Best sighting: **Fieldfare**, Carlisle, March 17–23. This was the second record for Massachusetts, the first being at Nine Acre Corner in April 1986.

10 YEARS AGO

March–April 2008

Flocks of **Tundra Swans** were observed in Longmeadow and Sheffield. Manx Shearwaters were copulating on the water at Revere Beach! A **Swallow-tailed Kite** seen on Martha's Vineyard on March 10 was found dead four days later at Chappaquiddick. A **Townsend's Solitaire** at Rockport successfully survived the winter. A feeder in Brewster attracted two **Western Tanagers**. Massive numbers of **Bohemian Waxwings** invaded the state, with a high count of 300 in Northfield.

Best sighting: adult male **Fork-tailed Flycatcher**, Chandler Pond, Brighton, April 12–15.

20 YEARS AGO

March–April 1998

Gyrfalcons were reported from Hanscom Field in Concord, Edgartown, and Logan Airport. Two photogenic **American Avocets** spent ten days in Scituate in March. Up to three **Monk Parakeets** were reported in South Dartmouth in April. A **Black-backed Woodpecker** was a one-day wonder in Uxbridge on March 18. A **Golden-crowned Sparrow** spent a week in April in Weston, and the **Bullock's Oriole** that had spent the winter at a feeder in Reading was last seen on April 19.

Best sighting: the **Hermit Warbler** that overwintered on Martha's Vineyard was last seen on March 4.

40 YEARS AGO

March–April 1978

A male **Garganey** was found at Marshfield on April 1 and stayed until April 18. An adult **Golden Eagle** spent April 5–10 in the West Newbury area. An immature gray **Gyrfalcon** devouring a Black Duck was watched for an hour and a half in Newburyport on March 12. A dead **Black Rail** was picked up on Nantucket on March 31. The **Eurasian Curlew** from the previous period lingered on Martha's Vineyard until March 18. Two **Reeves** and up to two male **Ruff** were in Newburyport Harbor at the end of April. A **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** was spotted in Rochester on May 3. There were reports throughout the state of 17 Northern Shrikes and four **Loggerhead Shrikes**. Three adult male **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** were found in Newburyport, Melrose, and Medford, all in mid-April.

Best sighting: a male ***Selasphorus*** hummingbird appeared in a yard in Newton, April 15–17. This was the first record of a hummingbird of this genus in the state. It was thought to be a Rufous Hummingbird, but photographs couldn't rule out Allen's Hummingbird. The first definitive records of Allen's and Rufous appeared in 1988 and 1992, respectively.

ABBREVIATIONS FOR BIRD SIGHTINGS

Taxonomic order is based on AOS checklist, 7th edition, 58th Supplement, as published in *Auk* 2017, vol. 134(3):751-773 (see <http://checklist.aou.org/>).

Locations

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

Other Abbreviations

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

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE BIRD SIGHTINGS TO *BIRD OBSERVER*

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

Species on the Review List of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee, as well as species unusual as to place, time, or known nesting status in Massachusetts, should be reported promptly to the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee, c/o Sean Williams, 18 Parkman Street, Westborough MA 01581, or by email to seanbirder@gmail.com.

ABOUT THE COVER

Tricolored Heron

The Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*), a common coastal resident of our southern states but only a casual visitor to New England, is one of the best studied and most interesting of the herons. A medium-sized heron, it has dark blue upperparts tinged with maroon and white underparts in all plumages from juvenile to adult of both sexes. The mostly blue neck and head is offset with white and reddish highlights below. The contrasting color patterns separate the Tricolored Heron from all other heron species. In breeding plumage, both sexes sport white cranial plumes, white throats, and red to violet neck and back feathers with buff-colored scapular plumes. The legs become pink and the base of the bill bright blue—pretty spectacular. Two subspecies are currently recognized with *E. t. ruficollis* the resident United States subspecies.

Tricolored Herons breed along the East Coast from Long Island south through Florida, along the Gulf Coast to northern Mexico, and in the Caribbean. They also breed along the Pacific Coast from northwestern Mexico south through Central America and in South America along the coast to northeastern Brazil and southern Peru. Tricolored Herons in the Northeast are migratory as, apparently, are the birds of northern Florida, wintering from central Mexico south to Panama. Most populations are year-round residents. In Massachusetts, the Tricolored Heron is considered a rare breeder and an uncommon visitor and migrant. In the mid-1970s, four pairs nested and fledged young in Manchester, but the species has not become a regular breeder. The first reported sighting was in 1940, and since the mid-1950s sightings have been reported nearly annually from April to September, mostly along the coast, but occasionally also from the Connecticut Valley.

Tricolored Herons are monogamous and usually produce a single brood per season. Male Tricolored Herons have several courtship displays. In the snap-stretch display, when the female approaches, the male erects all plumes as he holds out his wings, lowers his head, picks up a twig and then points the bill and neck upward while swaying, accenting the cobalt-colored skin around his eyes and his white throat. In the circle flight, he holds his bill upward and with deep wingbeats produces a *whomp-whomp* sound. Aggressive displays include an upright stance with feathers sleeked back and the bill pointed upward or held horizontal. Another aggressive stance includes extending the neck upwards, with feathers of the neck and head crest erected, and wings drooped. Males aggressively defend the vicinity of their nest and sometimes their feeding sites. They give *aaah* calls in aggressive situations. At the nest, both sexes greet each other with *cuhl-cuhl* sounds during nest relief, which may aid in individual recognition.

Tricolored Herons prefer coastal habitat such as mangroves, salt marshes, and estuaries, but also occur in freshwater environments such as the Florida Everglades. They prefer to nest on islands where they gain some protection from mammalian predators. They typically nest in mixed-species colonies, but more often within small groups of their own species. The male choses the territory and nest site, usually in

tall shrubs or small trees up to about 12 feet above the water. Before pairing, the male builds the nest, a loose platform of sticks and twigs. After pairing, both sexes share in finishing the nest with a lining of fine twigs and grass. The male closely guards the territory, nest, and female through the egg-laying stage. The usual clutch of three or four greenish blue eggs are incubated by both parents for about three weeks until hatching. The chicks are semi-altricial: nearly covered with down, their eyes partly open, and the ability to hold their heads up and *peep*. By day 11 they can leave the nest, climbing about using their wings, bills, and feet. When they are two weeks old, they can regulate their own body temperature and need no further brooding. They can fly by one month of age. Both parents feed the young, initially by regurgitation of well-digested food, but within a week they bring the chicks small, undigested fish. The young are independent at 7–8 weeks.

Tricolored Herons usually forage alone or at the edge of mixed-species flocks. They forage mostly in wetlands, usually in more open areas. They are versatile foragers and use several techniques: stand-and-wait, walk slowly, walk quickly, and run. They often use foot stirring to chase up prey. In disturb-and-chase manoeuvers, they typically crouch low, neck tucked into the breast feathers, and lunge for any fish they've disturbed. Chasing fish in active pursuit, they may flap their wings or pirouette with an open wing. Or they may form a tent over head and body with extended open wings. They may also strike at fish while they hover over the water surface. More than 90% of their diet is composed of fish but they will occasionally exploit other abundant food resources such as grasshoppers, frogs, or lizards. This versatility in foraging behavior and prey allows Tricolored Herons to exploit a wide variety of habitats.

Tricolored Herons have many predators. Crows, grackles, blackbirds, and night-herons are egg predators; hawks, eagles, and vultures prey on young. Raccoons are especially keen nest predators. During nesting, rain and wind can also cause mortality. Historically, Tricolored Herons were not heavily affected by plume hunters and for much of the first half of the twentieth century were the most abundant North American heron species. They expanded their range and population numbers during the 1950s–1980s, possibly due to the construction of man-made dredge spoil islands, which they readily used for breeding. Populations have since declined, due partly to the proliferation of fish farms and resulting permits issued to kill intruding herons, and partly to coastal habitat degradation. However, Tricolored Herons are widespread geographically and are versatile foragers, which with luck will ensure them a stable future.

William E. Davis, Jr.

NORTHERN GANNET BY WILLIAM E. DAVIS

AT A GLANCE

June 2018

WAYNE PETERSEN

As a departure from the usual AAG photo challenge, in this issue readers are invited to identify four different individuals in a single image. At the expense of assuming too much, I suspect most readers will recognize that all four mystery species are gulls—a fact that may not thrill some, given that gulls are rightfully perceived as sometimes challenging to identify. To solve this identification puzzle, one of the first things to note among these gulls is that there are two large individuals and two smaller individuals.

Though there are different ways to attack a gull identification problem, one way is to assess the age of the gulls. Because the large gull on the far left has a solid light gray mantle, it is fair to assume that this individual is an adult. Immature gulls typically show some degree of two-toning, patterning, or mottling on the back and wings as the result of a contrast between feathers of different ages. This phenomenon is one reason why gulls often exhibit a high degree of variability from one individual to the next. The large gull on the left also has a pure yellow bill with an orange spot near the tip—another indication that it is an adult. In fact, it is an adult Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*).

A close look at the smaller gull at the extreme right of the photograph shows a darker gray mantle than any of the others, extensive black on its folded wings, a black bill, dark legs, and a dusky mark behind the eye that runs around the back of the head. With these characteristics, the smaller gull on the extreme right is an adult Laughing Gull (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) in nonbreeding plumage.

Considering the plumage comments above, the two gulls in the center are clearly immatures (subadults). The immature bird on the right is about the same size as the adult Laughing Gull to its right, but is noticeably smaller than the immature bird to its left. Compared to the bird on its left, it also has a smaller and more rounded head, a much shorter, dark-tipped bill, and long and slender folded wings, all of which identify the bird as a young Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*).

The final identification mystery is for the immature bird in the left center of the photograph. A close look at this bird shows a solid black bill, a whitish upper breast with light streaks that blend into a darker upper belly, a prominently masked

appearance to its face, and noticeable white tips to the dark tertial feathers showing above the folded wing tips. The black bill and whitish chest that gives way to the lightly streaked appearance of the underparts when combined with the bird's long and slender folded wings all point to this gull being a young Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)—a species now regular in Massachusetts but often overlooked because of its close similarity to immature Herring Gulls.

Herring and Laughing gulls commonly nest in Massachusetts at various coastal locations, however Laughing Gulls migrate south in the winter. Ring-billed Gulls are common to locally abundant migrants and nonbreeding visitors practically throughout the year and throughout the state. Lesser Black-backed Gulls are scarce to uncommon visitors and migrants throughout Massachusetts but are most numerous on outer Cape Cod and Nantucket from late summer through the winter. The author photographed the mystery gulls in Manomet, Massachusetts, on October 7, 2007.

Wayne R. Petersen

ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST

Ikki Matsumoto

Born in Tokyo, Japan, internationally-acclaimed artist Ikki Matsumoto (1935–2013) came to the United States in 1955 to study art first at the Herron School of Art and Design in Indianapolis, Indiana, and then at the Art Academy of Cincinnati, Ohio, under wildlife artist Charles Harper. Ikki worked in advertising, illustration, and design until 1975. One of his commissions was to illustrate the 1975 edition of *Joy of Cooking*.

Ikki embarked on a new career as a printmaker and painter, using native birds as his subjects, when he and his wife Polly moved to Sanibel Island, Florida, in 1975. For many years, they ran an art gallery in Sanibel. After retiring from the gallery business in 2006, Ikki continued to paint and exhibit his work. He died on December 31, 2013, one day before his 79th birthday. For more information, go to: http://www.ikkimatsumoto.com

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE AND CANADA GOOSE BY DAVID CLAPP

AT A GLANCE

DON FREIDAY

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

MORE HOT BIRDS

A couple of hours of late May hawk-watching from Bearberry Hill near Truro rewarded Sean Williams and Blair Nikula with a **Mississippi Kite** sighting. They saw a second one at almost exactly the same time on the following day. The species was also spotted from Provincetown on the same two days, but although the sighting on May 25 took place later and was presumed to be the same bird, the May 26 sighting happened a few hours *earlier* than the one near Truro, so was likely a different individual. A report came in from the Pilgrim Heights hawkwatch near Truro on May 26 as well. Sean Williams took the photo on the right.

BIRD OBSERVER (USPS 369-850)
P.O. BOX 236
ARLINGTON, MA 02476-0003

PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT BOSTON, MA

VOL. 46, NO 4, AUGUST 2018

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