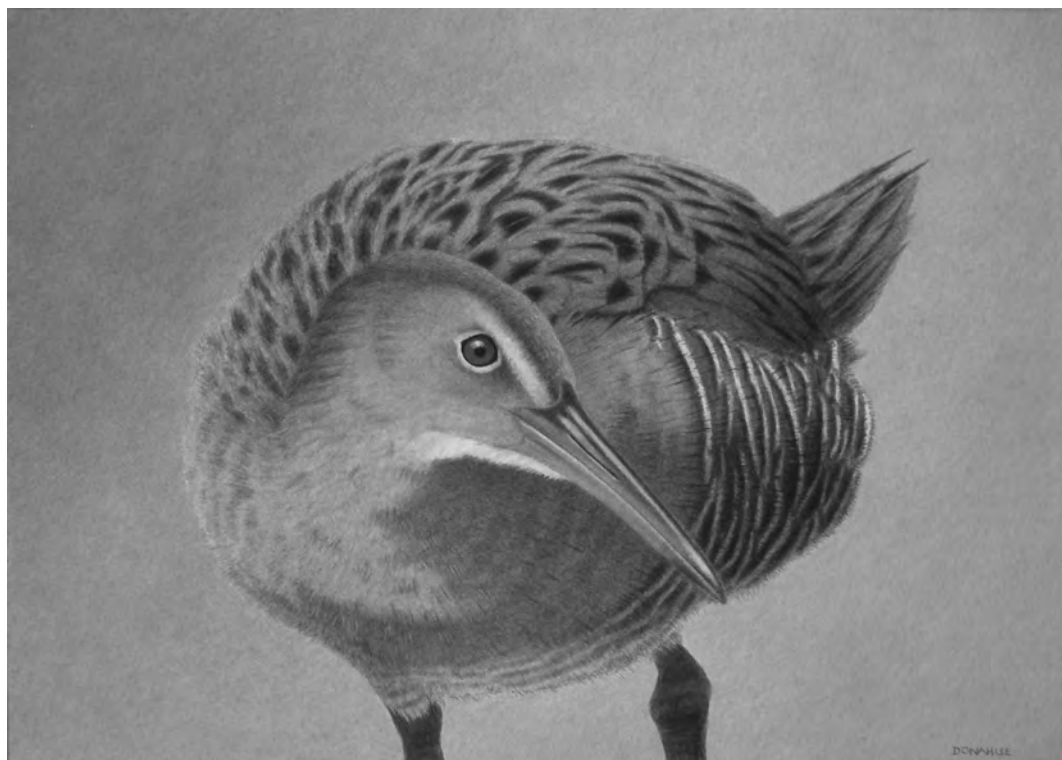


Bird Observer

VOLUME 37, NUMBER 2

APRIL 2009



HOT BIRDS



On January 17, 2009, Jeremiah Trimble found this stunning adult **Ivory Gull** (above) at Eastern Point in Gloucester (photograph by Phil Brown, taken on January 19). And then Barry Burden found another adult Ivory Gull in Plymouth on the 19th. Birders came from far and wide to enjoy this bounty!

Other rare gulls reported this winter included Thayer's and Slaty-backed. This second- or third-cycle **Slaty-backed Gull** (right) was found and photographed by James P. Smith in Turners Falls on February 20, 2009.



Ann and Gary Gurka found a **Common Teal (Eurasian Green-winged Teal - left)** on March 15 at Cold Spring Park in Newton, and Bob Stymeist took this photo late on the same day.

On March 15, 2009, Rick Heil found 7 **Ross's Geese** in Ipswich (photograph at right by Phil Brown, taken that day). Ross's Geese were also seen in Easthampton (8 birds!), Haverhill, and on Plum Island. A fallout of Ross's Geese?



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RED-BREASTED MERGANSER PAIR BY SANDY SELESKY

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Bird Observer

A bimonthly journal — to enhance understanding, observation, and enjoyment of birds
VOL. 37, NO. 2 APRIL 2009

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Finding Breeding Birds in Willowdale State Forest, Ipswich

Jim Berry

Most of my birding life has been in Essex County, Massachusetts, especially in and around Ipswich, my adopted hometown. In the nesting season, which overlaps the spring migration, I prefer the county's state forests and parks and similar habitats preserved by the towns, the Essex County Greenbelt Association, and The Trustees of Reservations, to the more heavily birded hotspots like Plum Island or the coastal migrant traps. I miss some migrants and vagrants as a result, but these properties are special places to me, and I feel a sense of "ownership" of them. (As well I should, as a taxpayer and member of those land trusts.) They are places I can explore at will without interference, and the more I visit them the more I want to keep learning about their natural features, the plants and animals that live in them, and how they all relate to each other. Willowdale State Forest, which lies mostly in Ipswich, is such a place, only a few miles from my house. Willowdale is my "local patch," a place I really feel at home. The trails are all familiar, and there are few parts of it I haven't explored.



Together with Bradley Palmer State Park to the south, Mass Audubon's Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary (IRWS) to the southwest, and Cleaveland Farm and Georgetown-Rowley State Forests to the northwest, Willowdale State Forest constitutes the Eastern Essex County Interior Forest Important Bird Area, or IBA. These five properties are contiguous and total almost 7000 acres, one of the largest tracts of relatively unfragmented forest remaining in Essex County. All five properties have good trail systems with trail maps available, and the maps for the state properties show the numbered markers that are posted at most trail junctions. The birdlife is fairly similar among the properties, with IRWS having by far the most water and therefore the highest number of breeding wetland species. That property was described by Jim MacDougall in *Bird Observer* Vol. 19 No. 6, December 1991.

Willowdale, in my mind equivalent to IRWS for bird-finding, was described briefly in a broader guide to Ipswich that I wrote for the August 1989 issue of *Bird Observer* (Vol. 17 No. 4). Later I updated that article for the Ipswich chapter in the *Bird Observer/ABA Birder's Guide to Eastern Massachusetts* (1994), but Willowdale coverage was brief and limited to the eastern section. This article is an attempt to remedy that situation in three ways. First, I have greatly expanded the earlier material based on considerably more experience. Second, I have added the smaller Hood Pond section, which lies west of Route 1. Third, I have described five loop routes for walking geared to the accompanying trail maps. All the hiking is either easy or moderate, but be advised that some trails may be flooded from beaver activity. Hiking boots should be worn at minimum, and waders are preferable in some places in times of frequent rainfall.

About the property

Both Willowdale State Forest and adjacent Bradley Palmer State Park in Hamilton and Topsfield were given to the state of Massachusetts by Bradley Palmer, a wealthy Boston-based lawyer and landowner of the early 1900s who, according to the park's website, "represented Sinclair Oil in the Teapot Dome Scandal and President Wilson at the Versailles Peace Conference after the First World War." That site gives little additional information, but the Bay Circuit Trail (BCT) website, in addition to describing the glacial origin of the natural features, tells how and when the land transfer happened:

Bradley Palmer loved the North Shore equestrian life. As his fortune grew, he bought land in Hamilton, Topsfield, Boxford, Ipswich, Georgetown, and Rowley; at one point he owned over 10,000 acres. The area that is now Bradley Palmer State Park includes his mansion and was famous for its gardens. Visitors to his estate, known as Willow Dale, included the Prince of Wales and President [William] Howard Taft. In 1923, Bradley Palmer gave the Hood Pond section of Willowdale State Forest to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. He donated the remainder of his lands to the state in 1944, then leased back 107 acres around his mansion. After his death in 1948 at the age of 84, Bradley Palmer lay in state in the conservatory of his beloved Willow Dale <<http://www.naturecompass.org/ipswichbaycircuit/bct/willow-west.html>>.

I must add that the 1923 date may not be accurate; the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) regional forester could not find any record of a donation before 1937 (Harris Penniman, pers. comm.).

The DCR website does have trail maps for the various state forests and parks: <<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/trails.htm>>. The online maps are nicer than the paper maps and, of course, can be printed. The paper maps are also useful; that for Willowdale, on which the two sections are shown on opposite sides, can be obtained free at the headquarters of Bradley Palmer State Park off Asbury Street in Topsfield, as can the maps for most of the other state properties in Essex County. The two maps accompanying this article are adapted from that "official" state map. *Note that these two maps are oriented with north at the right to enable the use of larger type.*

Neither the DCR map nor the DCR website gives Willowdale's land area. The BCT site gives it as 2400 acres, though with two acquisitions since 2000 the total is now about 2450. The DCR website also neglects to clarify that the eastern section is closed to hunting while the western section is open to it in season. That would include spring hunting for tom turkeys starting the fourth Monday of April and lasting four weeks, though in thirty years I recall meeting only one hunter there in spring. There are no facilities in the forest, which reflects a difference in purpose between state forests and state parks. One useful fact on the DCR website is that Willowdale has 40 miles of trails. That total presumably includes several narrow mountain-bike trails recently added and maintained by local mountain-bike clubs with DCR approval; a few of them may have been unauthorized additions by unknown persons. They offer ways to reach singing birds that can't be seen from the main trails. Off-road vehicles are prohibited throughout the forest.

Willowdale State Forest has changed considerably from the 1940s when the various properties were being acquired. In those days, the former farms that had occupied the land were not so forgotten as they are now, and the landscape was mostly cutover and successional forest, in contrast to the more mature forest of today (Harris Penniman, pers. comm.). The gray birches and other successional species have largely been replaced by mature pine-oak forest with trees from 80 to 100 feet tall. The maturation process was well underway when I started birding in there in the late 1970s, covering parts of it for the first Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas project. I am currently covering most of it for the second Atlas, and I can assure you that it hosts far more hikers, joggers, mountain bikers, and horseback riders than birders. At least one person regularly runs his dogsled team through the forest, substituting wheels for runners in the warm months. Yet the place is never crowded and holds a wide array of breeding birds, as well as many certified vernal pools.

Getting there

The larger eastern or Pine Swamp section of the forest, with more trails, more trailheads, and easier parking, is the better part to bird on one's first excursion and is where I have led many field trips oriented to breeding birds. The two major access points are on Ipswich Road in Topsfield (which becomes Topsfield Road in Ipswich) on the south side of the forest and Linebrook Road in Ipswich on the north side. Ipswich/Topsfield Road runs roughly east and west between the two towns. Coming from the south and heading north on Route 1 in Topsfield, go a mile past the traffic light at Route 97 to the next light at the bottom of a long hill. Turn right (east) onto Ipswich Road, and drive about two miles to the Ipswich town line. You can park in dirt pulloffs on either side of the road right at the town-line sign, or in a larger dirt pulloff a few yards to the west where a gated dirt road, formerly called Gravelly Brook Road, leads into the forest. The Ipswich River runs along the south side of Ipswich Road, across which is Bradley Palmer State Park. A footbridge crosses the river here, and as many people park here for the state park as for the state forest. This parking area can be reached from downtown Ipswich by driving west on Topsfield Road for about four miles.

Linebrook Road crosses Route 1 about 2.5 miles north of Ipswich Road. There is a light at this intersection also, and several commercial establishments including Wolf Hill Nursery. If you are driving north, turn right (east) on Linebrook Road, and drive a mile until a farm field appears on the left (north) side of the road. On the south side is Willowdale, and you can park in either of two obvious pulloffs, one across from the beginning of the field and the other no more than 200 yards ahead, across the road from a small farm pond. At the top of the hill just beyond the pond is Marini's farmstand, a great place to buy fruits, vegetables, drinks, and sandwiches in season. Continuing east on Linebrook Road for another two-plus miles will bring you to downtown Ipswich.

The western or Hood Pond section of Willowdale, like the eastern, has many gated trailheads. The best place to enter is from Linebrook Road a little over two miles west of Route 1, shortly before you come to a boat launch on Hood Pond. No

parking place is marked, but there are small dirt pulloffs on both sides of the road and visible trails going off in both directions. You will know you are close to the pulloffs when a road cuts off downhill to the left at a shallow angle. The sign may say Linebrook Road, but ignore it (it is Rowley Road on the map); continue straight here, and watch for the pulloffs in another tenth of a mile or so. If you come to the boat landing where Hood Pond is visible on the left, you have gone a few hundred yards too far, but you can turn around at the boat launch. This section of Ipswich is called "Outer Linebrook," and the road is curvy and narrow for its entire length west of Route 1. Never be in a hurry on this road. If you continue west past the boat launch for a half-mile, you will come to Route 97 in the extreme northwest corner of Topsfield near the Boxford line.

The birdlife

Before starting your walk(s), it is worth knowing what birds to be listening and looking for. The mix of nesting species in the two sections of Willowdale does not differ very much, but the western section has a slightly rougher topography, more extensive red maple swamps, and a corresponding superiority in the numbers of swamp birds. The dominant trees in both sections are eastern white pine, northern red oak, white oak, shagbark hickory, red maple, and various other hardwoods including pockets of hophornbeam. There are also stands of eastern hemlock and, in the Hood Pond section, Atlantic white cedar.

Willowdale does not have nearly the amount of ledge habitat as Boxford State Forest and the Cape Ann area. Red maple swamps are everywhere, but there is generally less hemlock, beech, and yellow birch, and virtually no sugar maple, striped maple, hobblebush, or spruce, making Willowdale more of a transition-zone forest and less of a Canadian-zone forest. The soils of Cape Ann are more xeric (drier) and more acidic than those of Willowdale, while the soils of the Boxford forests are more mesic (moister) and more alkaline (Jim MacDougall, pers. comm.). These differences affect the plant life and hence the faunal mix to some extent, though the differences in birdlife are not stark since the climate and precipitation are similar and the geographic separation is slight.

Two other features are significant. One is that Willowdale is selectively logged under the supervision of the regional forester, making for a more varied habitat. The other is beavers. An old fen lying just east of Route 1 was dammed by beavers in the late 1990s, creating a healthy forty-acre combination of open marsh and shrub swamp. Much of this marsh is visible from Route 1 as you drive by, though there is no shoulder and absolutely no stopping along that highway. Creeks elsewhere in both sections of the forest have been dammed in the current decade, resulting in standing dead timber and more habitat for species oriented to wetlands and cavities.

Consequently, Willowdale is a haven for all the nesting woodpeckers: Red-bellied, Downy, Hairy, Pileated, and Northern Flicker. The other cavity nesters will be found as well, whether in the beaver swamps or elsewhere: Wood Duck, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Bluebird, Tree Swallow, Red-breasted (occasional) and White-breasted nuthatches, Black-capped Chickadee, and Tufted Titmouse. (About the

only cavity nesters I have not found in the forest are Eastern Screech-owl, House Wren, and European Starling.) Dead trees also provide behind-the-bark nesting sites for Brown Creepers, whose nests I have found almost annually since the beavers arrived.

Other reasonably common nesters in and around the beaver ponds are Great Blue Heron (two sites so far), Canada Goose, Mallard, Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Kingbird, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Gray Catbird, Common Yellowthroat, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, and Common Grackle. Rarer nesters in these open wetlands are Pied-billed Grebe (nest found in 2001), Least Bittern (nest found in 2002), Virginia Rail, Belted Kingfisher, Warbling Vireo, Marsh Wren, and Yellow Warbler. The phoebes will sometimes nest in upturned tree roots. These may also be used by Winter Wrens and both waterthrushes, though in these cases probably deep in the red maple swamps rather than in the open beaver ponds.

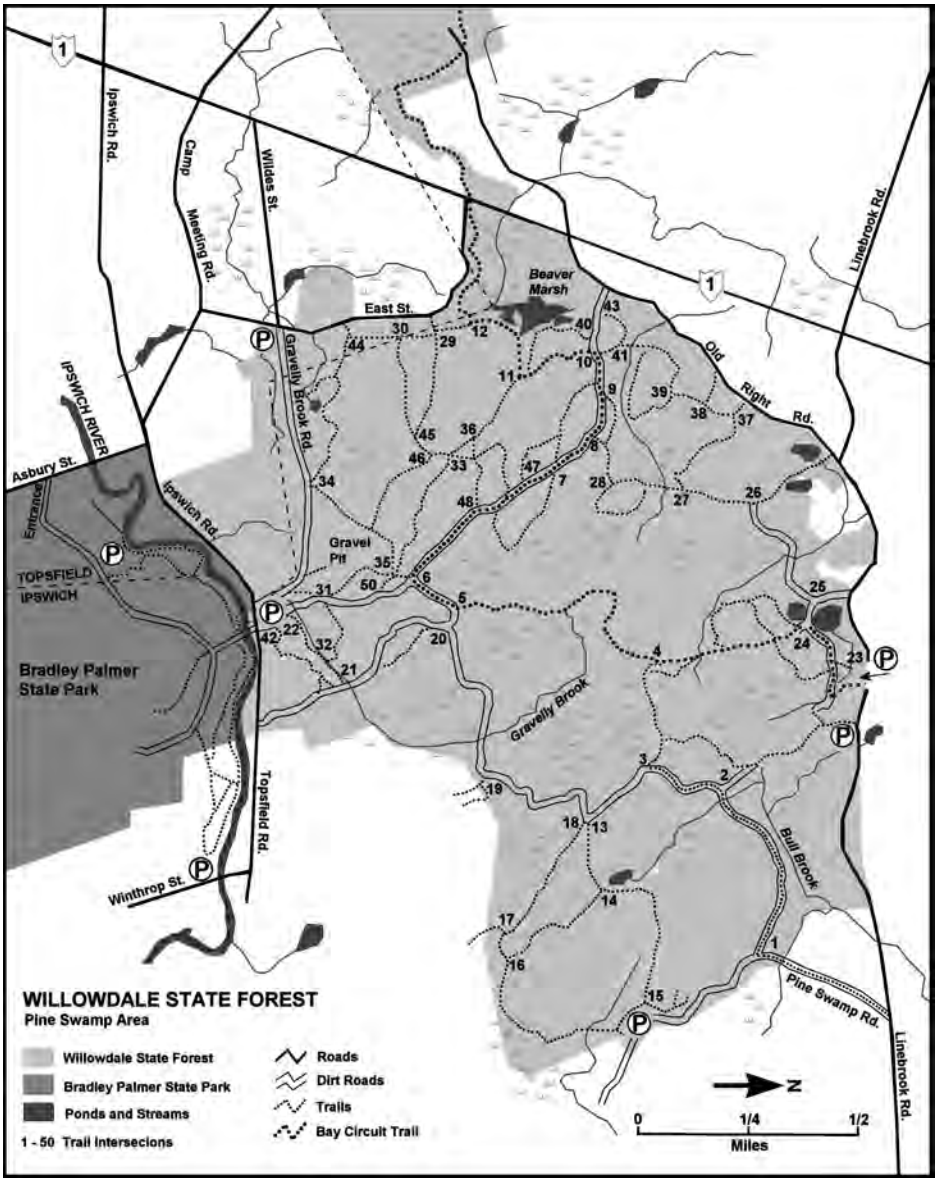
In the red maple swamps and the intermingled upland pine-oak areas are Wild Turkey; Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, and Broad-winged hawks (all occasional); Red-tailed Hawk (perimeter); Mourning Dove; Great Horned Owl; Barred Owl (several territories; one box used multiple times); Eastern Wood-Pewee; Red-eyed,



Nesting Wood Thrush by David Larson

Yellow-throated, and Blue-headed vireos (the latter two rare); Blue Jay; American Crow (perimeter); Winter Wren; Veery, Hermit, and Wood thrushes; American Robin; Cedar Waxwing; Blue-winged (clearings), Chestnut-sided (rare), Black-throated Green, Black-and-white, Blackburnian (rare), Canada (rare), and Pine warblers; Ovenbird; Northern Waterthrush; Scarlet Tanager; Eastern Towhee (declining); Chipping Sparrow; Northern Cardinal; Rose-breasted Grosbeak; Indigo Bunting (clearings); Brown-headed Cowbird; Baltimore Oriole; Pine Siskin (rare); and American Goldfinch. Most of the forest is too mature for American Woodcock, though they certainly live on some of the edges. I have never heard a Whip-poor-will in or near this forest, but that may be for lack of birding there often enough at night.

Species I would like to find nesting in the forest, in addition to some of the rare ones listed above, include American Black Duck (now a rare breeder in Essex County), Hooded Merganser, Ruffed Grouse (seemingly gone), Turkey Vulture, Northern Goshawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Sora, Spotted Sandpiper, Black-billed and Yellow-billed cuckoos, Saw-whet Owl, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, any *Empidonax* flycatchers, Common Raven, Nashville, Black-throated Blue, and Yellow-rumped warblers, American Redstart, Louisiana Waterthrush, White-throated Sparrow, Orchard Oriole, and Purple Finch. These species occur or have occurred in Willowdale, but confirming nesting for most of them is difficult indeed. Some are rarely found there; some are simply too secretive; others sometimes appear during the nesting season but are rare or unknown nesters in the county.



Eastern loop route #1

Park at one of the pulloffs along Ipswich Road at the town line, as marked on the map for the eastern section. *Make sure your car is well off the road*, and if you park in the widest pulloff near the gate on the dirt road, be sure not to block it. Begin at the trailhead at post 42 and walk north to post 22, the first junction you reach. (The “posts” are actually flexible brown vertical markers designed to resist vandalism.) By

now, you will have heard several species singing, such as Pine Warblers and Ovenbirds; the former may be on territory as early as the first week of April. Bear left; just ahead of you is Gravelly Brook, which originates in the middle of the forest and flows south into the Ipswich River where you parked. It passes under the trail, and it is here that I have occasionally heard a Louisiana Waterthrush in migration. Barred Owls also frequent this area and may respond to imitations in daylight. Eastern Phoebes often build their nests inside the culvert, as they do elsewhere in the forest.

Continue several hundred yards past a couple of junctions to post 6, where the main trail you are on joins and becomes the Bay Circuit Trail. (The maps show how this well-marked trail winds through the forest.) Go straight ahead — that is, do not turn right — keeping a red maple swamp on your right and a hillside on your left. Walk past several marked posts until you come to post 10, about half a mile from post 6. By this time, you should have encountered many of the species listed above. Turn left and walk south to post 11, which is just across a small creek. (A trail leading right just before the creek will take you in the wrong direction.) Turn right at post 11, and within a hundred yards you will come to a very wet swamp on the right (think Wood Ducks and Hooded Mergansers) and open water ahead of you. You have now reached the main beaver marsh I described earlier, one of the supreme highlights of Willowdale State Forest. Plan to spend time along this trail as it winds west and south along the east side of the marsh. Be advised that the marsh has much more water than appears on the map, which has not yet been updated by DCR to reflect the beaver activity.

If you leave the main trail and amble along close to the water's edge, which is easy to do, you will find several places to sit and watch the panorama in front of you. One lookout in particular is the best place to sit, and when you find it you will know it instantly because it is on a point with little ground cover and open views to both west and north. In this single small area of no more than an acre or two I have discovered active nests of Brown Creeper, Cedar Waxwing, robin, flicker, Hairy and Red-bellied woodpeckers, Red-eyed and Blue-headed vireos, Eastern Kingbird, Great Crested Flycatcher, Tree Swallow, Eastern Bluebird, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, the two blackbirds, Mallard, Canada Goose, and Great Blue Heron. From here, I have also seen recently hatched Pied-billed Grebes and Least Bitterns, not to mention a plethora of non-breeding birds. (Hérons, ibises, cormorants, and a few shorebirds regularly forage in the marsh, and diving ducks such as Hooded Mergansers, Buffleheads, and Ring-necked Ducks are frequent in spring migration.) A large beaver lodge is visible way off to the right in the north end of the pond, and the occasional beaver may be spotted. Migrant Ospreys sometimes stop by to fish, and resident rails may be heard



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and nest by David Larson

clacking or whistling away. This is my favorite place in the whole forest, and the one I find most difficult to leave.

Continue along the edge, rejoining the trail near the south end of the marsh. At post 12, you can take a diversion to the right where the Bay Circuit Trail crosses the beaver dam on a shaky boardwalk that is subject to serious flooding and is in frequent need of maintenance. There is standing dead timber here, more woodpeckers, and a spot just across the dam where Warbling Vireos, Orchard Orioles, Yellow Warblers, and an occasional American Redstart may be found. I once found a pair of Red-breasted Nuthatches nesting in a stump here, with Brown Creepers and Red-bellied Woodpeckers nesting within yards of them. Down that trail a bit farther, Sharp-shinned Hawks nested in a pine grove three years running. The boardwalk is Dragonfly Central for Willowdale State Forest.

Return to post 12, turn right, and continue south parallel to East Street in Topsfield to post 44. (You are essentially walking along the town line here.) Turn left at post 44 and follow that trail to post 34, where it ends. Along this trail, I have found Great Horned (nesting) and Barred owls, Winter Wrens, Hermit Thrushes, and Northern Waterthrushes. At post 34, walk left on the now gated Gravelly Brook Road, which will take you back to Ipswich Road and your car, a distance of about half a mile. The last section will bring you alongside Gravelly Brook. Where the road bends right, just before you reach the brook, you will notice an abandoned gate on your left. A short diversion up the trail behind the gate brings you to an old overgrown gravel pit where Indigo Buntings, Eastern Towhees, Chipping Sparrows, and other edge birds may be found. This clearing is part of a forty-acre former inholding that was saved from development in 2000 and added to the state forest. Without that effort, a subdivision could have been built in the middle of the forest that would have destroyed its integrity.

There are many additional trails inside the loop I have just described, including some newer ones that are not even on the map. The long trail from post 35 through 33 and 36 to post 11, for example, is Hermit Thrush Alley, where I have found up to six singing males and three of their nests in the last three years. I also had a good view of a fisher crossing this trail one time. The numbered junctions make it easy to explore additional trails without getting lost — you will always run into one of them and be able to reorient yourself — and if you can make repeated visits I recommend varying the route accordingly. This is true for all the routes described in this article.

Eastern loop route #2

Park in the first of the two unmarked pulloffs on Linebrook Road, across from the near end of the farm field as you drive east from Route 1. (Both of these pulloffs are quite large and hold several cars well off the road.) Walk straight into the woods on the obvious trail. A small house used to stand here that served as the former forest headquarters, and it is one of very few areas with spruce trees, though they are introduced Norway spruces. Ignore a trail going left, and you will quickly cross a small creek into a red pine grove, one of many in the county planted in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Twice I have seen Red-breasted Nuthatches nesting

here just across the tiny bridge, both times in the same snag—lower down the second time because the top had fallen off. Check the pines for roosting Barred Owls. At the T-intersection just ahead, turn right, and note a shrub swamp very shortly on your right. Pewees nested just off the trail in a large oak at the edge of the swamp in 2007, and several wetland species may be heard, such as Swamp Sparrow and Common Yellowthroat.

A few steps more will bring you to post 24, where you turn left to begin a long loop through some great swampland. (An alternative shorter loop is mentioned below.) Following a stretch of upland mixed forest, you descend to a small swampy stream. This is a good place to hear Northern Waterthrushes, which are regular in this swamp. Continue straight at post 4 through more upland to the place on the map where the trail makes a big



Barred Owl by David Larson

sweeping double curve. This is where Gravelly Brook begins and where beavers have been hard at work. You may have to get your feet wet here if the trail is flooded, but after the curve the trail ascends onto an esker from which you can view the swamp with ease. Several of the cavity nesters will be obvious here, including Great Crested Flycatchers, which nested beside the trail last year in a knothole. Watch knotholes also for nesting White-breasted Nuthatches or Tufted Titmice.

Continue through upland forest to post 5, then bear left to nearby post 20. Turn left again through another section dominated by white pine. Barred Owls can be encountered almost anywhere in the forest if you keep inspecting the bare branches where they tend to perch. In some cases, the songbirds will help you by their scolding. A couple hundred yards from post 20, you will reach another beaver swamp, downstream on Gravelly Brook from where you were earlier. This swamp is much bigger than the last one and will be full of nesting birds. Standing here for half an hour will net you many of them and probably a few active cavity nests as well. If you haven't found a Tree Swallow nest by now, you haven't been paying attention. In the woods just before the swamp is where I found an agitated pair of Nashville Warblers many years ago, one of only two places in the entire forest I have seen them in the nesting season.

Once across the creek you will leave the beaver swamp and return to a section of upland mixed with red maple swamp that takes you by post 19 (trails from there lead out of Willowdale) to posts 18 and 13, which are only yards apart. Stay on the main trail, which means bearing left, until you get to post 3. The stretch between posts 13

and 3 is good for Scarlet Tanagers, Ovenbirds, and thrushes, but then so is most of the forest. At post 3, turn left to re-cross the seemingly endless swamp. You are now out of the Ipswich River watershed and into the Parker River watershed, which you would never know because there is no ridge dividing them. Again, be prepared for a flooded trail, though the regular hikers and joggers have been good about throwing planks or logs across the wet spots. At post 4 turn right, and retrace the route by which you came in. A couple of side-loop trails between posts 4 and 24 make for interesting diversions if you have the inclination.

A shorter alternative is to turn left at post 4 on your way into the forest, crossing the swamp in the other direction to post 3. From there turn left to post 2, then bear left (i.e., go straight) across the edge of a large cattail marsh, then through two leased farm fields and back to Linebrook Road, where your car will be in sight when you emerge. This section of trail is described in the next loop.

Eastern loop route #3

For this loop, park at the second pulloff on Linebrook Road as you drive from west to east. Like the first, it will be on the right. An obvious gate at the trailhead is hard to miss, and there is plenty of room to park without blocking it. It is across the road from Marini's irrigation pond. There is a trail right-of-way past this pond into town-owned forest behind the farm, so it's OK to walk across the road and look at birds around the pond. It's a good place to see Red-tailed Hawks, Spotted Sandpipers, Killdeer, sparrows, Indigo Buntings, and other field and edge birds.



Baltimore Oriole by David Larson

From the gate where you parked on the Willowdale side, take the trail through the first of two agricultural fields that are leased by the state to the Marini farm. The weedy field on your left is another good place for field and edge birds. You will then pass through a narrow wooded spot where a trail goes off to the right. It is not part of this route, but if you parked in the first pulloff, it will take you back over there via an esker with swamp on either side. But for now go straight through this intersection into another crop field with another great wildflower patch on the left. At the end of the field, the trail descends to the edge of a

huge cattail marsh with blackbirds galore, Swamp and Song sparrows, Baltimore Orioles, Eastern Kingbirds, Common Yellowthroats, and other birds with wet feet. I have heard both Soras and Virginia Rails here, though I suspect I would hear them more often at night. This marsh, the only significant cattail marsh in Willowdale State Forest, is the headwaters of Bull Brook, which flows north into the Parker River watershed.

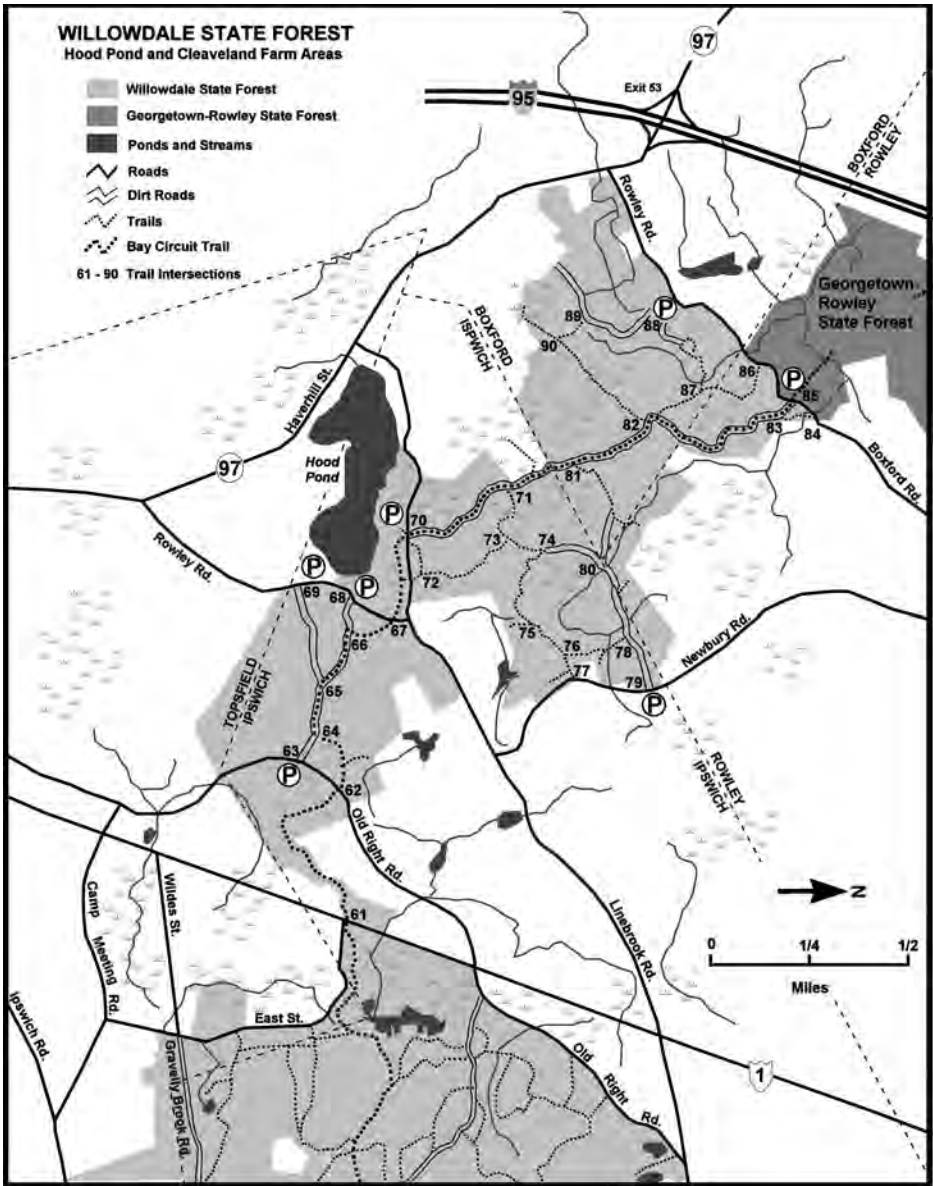
Continue on the trail to post 2, then bear right to post 3. Bear left at post 3 down to posts 13 and 18, previously mentioned. You will now have walked about a mile from your car; the distance through the forest from Linebrook Road to Ipswich/Topsfield Road is about two miles. At this point you have two choices; take the nearer trail at post 13 for a shorter loop or the farther trail at post 18 for a longer loop. The habitat is about the same either way — more mix of upland and red maple swamp. The shorter route takes you to posts 14 and 15, at which point bear left for a short distance to a dirt pulloff on Pine Swamp Road at the east edge of the state forest.

The longer route starting at post 18 brings you close to the relatively new golf course at Turner Hill, formerly a Catholic retreat off Topsfield Road called the La Salette Shrine. (Now it's a different kind of shrine.) Going straight at post 17 offers a slight diversion onto the golf course, where the trails remain open to the public, but with restrictions during the golf season. So, it is best to just look and listen from the edge and retreat into the forest. Turn right at post 17 (or left if you did not divert to the golf course), go straight at post 16, and you will end up passing post 15 to the same dirt pulloff just mentioned. Another option is to turn left at post 16 and walk along the base of a hill to post 14, where you rejoin the shorter route by turning right and proceeding to post 15.

The birdlife along these trails is similar to that elsewhere in the forest. You may hear any of the thrushes in this area. Once I heard a migrant Swainson's Thrush singing from the hill above the trail between posts 16 and 14. The hillside is good for many of the upland species, while the heavily wooded swamp on the lower side of that trail is lush with skunk cabbage, marsh marigold, and other palustrine species. It is excellent habitat for Northern Waterthrushes and Canada Warblers. A large white pine at post 17 is the only place in the forest I have found a Pine Warbler nest, which the male warbler showed me by carrying food to it after scolding me first. The stretch between posts 13 and 14 is the only place in the forest I have heard a singing Yellow-rumped Warbler in June or July. This happened in two consecutive years long ago, but I found no nesting evidence. There are very few nesting records for this species in Essex County.

The dirt pulloff at Pine Swamp Road is at the site of a former abattoir, long overgrown. I mention it for only one reason, the attractiveness of the blackberry brambles beside the pulloff for nesting Chestnut-sided Warblers, a declining species in eastern Massachusetts. This is the only place in the county I have found one of their nests, and the birds are not there every year. When you leave this spot, you can walk left down Pine Swamp Road or take a parallel trail that will be obvious because it goes into a clearing on the left (west) side of the road. (Just be sure you don't go back on the trail you came out of.) The clearing is good for Indigo Buntings, Blue-winged Warblers, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, among others.

Across the clearing the trail rejoins Pine Swamp Road, now dirt and well-rutted. The road is well-named, for this section is wet indeed. There is abundant low swampland on the right, where I once found a singing Hooded Warbler. Proceed to post 1, and turn left at the Jersey barriers that prevent vehicles from illegally entering



MAP BY DOROTHY GRAASKAMP

the state forest. The trail takes you along the north side of Bartholomew Hill, about 200 feet in elevation. So again, you have a hill on one side and swamp on the other, making for a good variety of songbirds. When you come to post 2, turn right, re-cross the cattail marsh, and return through the fields to your car.

Western loop route #1

Park at either pulloff along Linebrook Road as described above, about two miles west of Route 1. Take the Bay Circuit Trail to the north behind the gate at post 70, where you should start to hear Ovenbirds, Eastern Wood-Pewees, Scarlet Tanagers, Veeries, and perhaps Black-throated Green Warblers. (Then again, these species can be heard almost anywhere in Willowdale.) At post 71, turn right, and walk past posts 73 and 74 to post 80. This is a productive half-mile stretch where I have found nests of Ovenbirds, pewees, and Blue-headed Vireos (twice). At post 80, you will see a triangular granite post that marks the spot where the towns of Ipswich, Boxford, and Rowley meet. The first letter of each town is carved on the appropriate side of the marker.

Turn left on the trail from post 80, and walk a hundred yards or so into Boxford until you enter what might best be described as a cathedral of mature eastern hemlocks. This is one of the prettiest spots in the entire forest, albeit one of the darkest for want of much sunlight. It also lacks an understory, so you can move around easily. Black-throated Green Warblers have been declining in Essex County in the last decade, and this spot has the best concentration of them in Willowdale. I always hear at least two singing males, sometimes three or four, though the birds are hard to see in the dense foliage. To the right of the hemlocks is a red maple swamp with the requisite swamp species, including Northern Waterthrush, and at the edge of it I found another Blue-headed Vireo nest one year.

If you are short on time, continue on this trail up a small hill and onto an esker. It takes you between rows of young white pines and back to the Bay Circuit Trail at post 81. Turn left, and take this trail back through post 71 to your car. This route goes through more waterthrush habitat, but so does the longer loop. To take that loop, turn around, and return to post 80 at the town-boundary marker. Turn left, and cross two swampy areas until you get to post 78. The first of these swamps, very near post 80, is where I was stunned to see and hear a singing male Black-throated Blue Warbler each of the last two summers. I am convinced his constant singing meant he had not found a mate, and in fact, I never saw a second bird or the male with anything in his mouth. He just seemed to eat and sing all day. I will continue to visit this spot annually, for this species has never been confirmed nesting in Essex County.

The second wetland is a beaver swamp that often floods the trail, so you will need waterproof footwear. It is also the site of an Atlantic white cedar swamp on the north side of the trail, though the cedars have been drowned by the raised water level. Wood Ducks and Hooded Mergansers are both possible here, as are both waterthrushes. A Red-shouldered Hawk was hunting here in April 2008, which I hope to find again, as it is another declining species in the county. (This area can be reached more quickly by finding the trailhead at post 79 on Newbury Road near the Ipswich-Rowley town line, but parking there is very tight.) Just across this swamp, turn right at post 78, and take a trail along the east edge of the Hood Pond section to post 76. It parallels the swamp, now on your right; a few houses on Newbury Road will be visible to your left. Turn right at post 76 to complete the loop. The first part of

the new trail is still quite swampy, and I have heard both waterthrushes here. Continue past post 75 to post 74; turn left, and proceed to post 73. (You already walked this little stretch on your way to post 80.)

From post 73, instead of returning to the Bay Circuit Trail, turn left, and take a smaller, parallel trail back to Linebrook Road. Much of this trail is esker with swamp below, so most of the forest species are possible here. But the goal is the clearing at the south end, just before you get to post 72. This small field is probably a remnant sand plain grassland, since trees don't seem to grow on it except gray birches, a successional species. It is one of only two places in the forest I have found Blue-winged and Nashville warblers, and the only place in the county I have ever confirmed the latter as breeding. That was June 4, 2000, when I saw a male Nashville carrying food at the edge of the clearing. Bear right at post 72, and take a short trail parallel to Linebrook Road to the trailhead at post 70 where you parked.



Louisiana Waterthrush by David Larson

If you have time, you can also explore the trails on the other side of Linebrook Road in the narrow belt of land between the road and Hood Pond. Bearing right will take you to an attractive viewing place under mature white pines on the shore of the pond. Bearing left will take you through some dense second-growth cover where I used to find Golden-winged Warblers thirty years ago. No more. But when you come to the bridge over a small stream, listen for a Louisiana Waterthrush. I heard one here in 2007, though I was not able to confirm nesting. From this point, you can continue on foot to Rowley Road or return to your car.

Western loop route #2


This route requires you to park on the road named Rowley Road on the map. From the Linebrook Road pulloff, go back east a short way to the first right, which will be a sharp turn coming from that direction. (If the sign says Linebrook Road — which you are on — don't worry about it. The road names get very confusing in this neighborhood, since they all change names when they cross town lines. Only in New England.) Drive south a couple hundred yards to the first gate on the left beside a small pond at post 68. The road is narrow, so find a spot where you can pull completely off the road without blocking the gate. This is best done just ahead on the right side of the road at an obvious pulloff. A short trail to the west will quickly bring you to the shore of Hood Pond, where you can scan for waterbirds and anything else that may be around, but the pond is seldom productive for breeding waterfowl. However, off the east end of the pond and along the road where you parked is a fairly extensive Atlantic white cedar swamp, one of the few around whose trees haven't drowned from beaver activity. I have not heard any species here that I can't find

elsewhere in the forest, but it's another place inhabited by Northern Waterthrushes. I sometimes hear more than one singing as I walk the road.

After (or absent) this diversion, take the trail from post 68 that leads east into the forest. There is essentially one trail through this section, but it splits near each end so that the result is shaped roughly like an X, or, if you prefer, an hourglass. The idea is to take this half-mile trail to the other end on Old Right Road, choosing one of the forks as it nears that road, then walking down the road to the other fork and returning. (All four trailheads, two on each road, are marked with obvious gates.) On your return, take the left fork to hit Rowley Road at post 69 so that you will have covered the entire trail network except the short stretch between posts 66 and 67. Of course you can explore that trail too if you have the time; it crosses a small stream and is yet another place I have heard Northern Waterthrushes. From post 69 walk back up Rowley Road to your car. Note that sections of this trail network coincide with the Bay Circuit Trail, and that from post 62 on Old Right Road you can cross the street and take the BCT back to Route 1 where it hooks up with the trails in the Pine Swamp section near the beaver dam. But this sliver of state forest is narrow and does not offer the birder any additional thrills.

The birdlife here is similar to that in other parts of the forest, but it has its own flavor. First, this stand of timber has more yellow birch than I have found elsewhere in Willowdale, especially between posts 65 and 69. So far, that fact has not netted me any additional birds, but I have found Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers nesting in such habitat in New Hampshire and Maine. There are no nesting records of this species in Essex County, but I have hope that if they are ever found nesting here it will be in this kind of habitat. For this reason alone, I don't like to skip a year on these trails. A second difference is that Sharp-shinned Hawks nested in the pine grove near post 62 in 2008, as discovered by Sissy ffolliott, who lives nearby. Also, note that in the portion of the state forest east of Old Right Road there is more swampland. If you walk south on that road from post 63, you will come upon a beaver swamp on the east (left) side of the road within a tenth of a mile. This is the other site at which Great Blue Herons have recently nested, and with them some of the cavity nesters.

Conclusion

These five routes will take you to many excellent birding habitats. Let the maps and post numbers be your guide, for they are pretty accurate and should prevent you from getting lost. I have had to omit many trails from this article, especially those in the northwestern part of the Pine Swamp section. Those can be explored by driving down Old Right Road from Linebrook Road, finding the gated trailheads, and using the map to explore. This section of Old Right Road is industrially zoned because it is so close to Route 1, but traffic is light, and the road is fairly wide, permitting easy parking at some of the trailheads, especially the southernmost, from which you can reach the north end of the large beaver marsh with little walking. The forest also has many short loop trails off the main trails that offer interesting side trips without much risk of getting lost. It would be great to run into other birders once in a while in my favorite state forest. 

Jim Berry is covering multiple blocks for the second Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas project, now in its third year, and is coordinating all field work in Essex County. The results of that work are providing abundant material for the species accounts in his forthcoming "heavily annotated" checklist of the birds of Essex County, for which Jim now sees light at the end of the tunnel. He thanks Jim MacDougall for valuable ecological and historical information and for a critical review of the draft. Sissy Jfolliott also offered valuable comments on the draft, and Harris Fenniman, the state's regional forester, provided historical information on Willowdale and the other state lands in the IBA.

Widespread Declines in Bird Populations, Partnerships Vital for Conservation

March 19, 2009 Washington, D.C. — Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today released the first-ever comprehensive report on bird populations in the United States, showing that nearly a third of the nation's 800 bird species are endangered, threatened, or in significant decline due to habitat loss, invasive species, and other threats.

"Just as they were when Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring* nearly 50 years ago, birds today are a bellwether of the health of land, water and ecosystems," Salazar said. "From shorebirds in New England to warblers in Michigan to songbirds in Hawaii, we are seeing disturbing downward population trends that should set off environmental alarm bells. We must work together now to ensure we never hear the deafening silence in our forests, fields and backyards that Rachel Carson warned us about."

The report, *The U.S. State of the Birds*, synthesizes data from three long-running bird censuses conducted by thousands of citizen scientists and professional biologists. In particular, it calls attention to the crisis in Hawaii, where more birds are in danger of extinction than anywhere else in the United States. In addition, the report documents a 40-percent decline in grassland birds over the past 40 years, a 30-percent decline in birds of arid-lands, and high concern for many coastal shorebirds. Furthermore, 39 percent of species dependent on U.S. oceans have declined.

However, the report also reveals convincing evidence that birds can respond quickly and positively to conservation action. The data show dramatic increases in many wetland birds such as pelicans, herons, egrets, osprey, and ducks, a testament to numerous cooperative conservation partnerships that have resulted in protection, enhancement, and management of more than 30 million wetland acres.

The report is available at <<http://www.stateofthebirds.org>>.

Thirteenth Annual Report of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (MARC)

Marjorie Rines, Secretary

When the MARC was originally established, the Committee was faced with the daunting prospect of evaluating hundreds of historical bird records. To expedite this task, the Committee provisionally accepted all regularly-occurring Massachusetts bird species, along with a number of occurrences of rare species which were considered to be so readily identifiable, or where evidence was sufficiently incontrovertible, that it was not considered necessary to review them. In the past year the Committee has determined that the “common knowledge” surrounding many of these records of rarities needs to be formalized through the review process. To do this, the Committee searched for existing documentation, photographs, or other evidence for all review list species that had not been formally accepted. This is an ongoing process; the results of the first serious effort at historical review are included below under “Historical Records.”

One historical record has added a new species to the Massachusetts State List. A Willow Ptarmigan collected in 1859 was reviewed and accepted by the Committee. We recommend that readers consult Veit and Petersen’s *Birds of Massachusetts* (1993) for additional details about other records of historical significance (although Willow Ptarmigan is not included in their publication).

Three additional new species have been added to the State List with the current report. Three **Slaty-backed Gulls** discovered practically within two hours of each other in December 2007 provided Massachusetts with its first records of this apparently rapidly increasing larid. A flock of **Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks** in Ipswich in June 2008 was previously seen earlier in Nova Scotia the same season, and a **Broad-billed Hummingbird** visited a feeder in Dennis from August to December of 2008. These additions bring the total state list to 491 species.

The Committee also amended its Bylaws. The Committee now treats pelagic records occurring within the ocean region defined by the median line between Massachusetts and the nearest point outside the state, and extending 200 miles offshore. The previous limit was 100 miles offshore.

Some readers may also notice a change in the numbering protocol for records. In previous years each record was assigned a number beginning with two digits representing the year of the sighting, e.g., “96” for 1996, or “08” for 2008. Since this will eventually lead to confusion, records in this and all future reports will be assigned the full four digits representing the year.

Current members of the MARC are Dennis Abbott, David Clapp, Davis Finch, Richard Heil, Marshall J. Iliff, Erik Nielsen, Blair Nikula, Robert H. Stymeist, and Jeremiah Trimble (Chair). Marjorie Rines is Secretary. For more information on the

Massachusetts Avian Records Committee, including a complete state list, go to:
<<http://massbird.org/marc/>>.

HISTORICAL RECORDS

Fulvous Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna bicolor*), #1974-01, July 21, 1974, Rowley (Essex), W. Petersen et al., R. Forster (ph), (First Ballot. 9-0). This record was accompanied by a photograph depicting three birds and was the first such record accepted by the Committee.

Willow Ptarmigan (*Lagopus lagopus*), #1859-01, May 10, 1859, Manchester (Essex). (Second Ballot. 9-0). This bird in winter plumage was collected in Manchester and the specimen is at the Peabody Museum in Salem; the original collector is unknown. It is cited as “an escaped bird brought from Labrador” with a later addition “or Newfoundland.” Brewster questions this (Minot, 1876): “No one . . . is aware that this supposition rests on any substantial ground, and it was perhaps based wholly on the seeming improbability that a Ptarmigan would wander so far south of its usual range . . . it must have come from somewhere on the mainland of North America for it is a perfectly typical *Lagopus lagopus*, a form not known to occur in Newfoundland.” Based on this, Townsend (1905) accepted its natural occurrence, but Griscom and Snyder (1955) stated “it is not known why Brewster made the mistake of calling this bird an accidental straggler . . . on such an incredible date,” and Veit and Petersen (1993) do not even treat this record. Davis Finch drafted a report for the Committee in support of natural vagrancy, citing five records from Maine between late April and mid-May. After two rounds of debate, the Committee felt there was compelling evidence of a pattern of vagrancy. As one member stated, “We now know much more about Willow Ptarmigans than Griscom and Snyder did fifty years ago. The birds are strong flyers, routinely accomplishing long-distance seasonal movements.”

White-tailed Tropicbird (*Phaethon lepturus*), #1985-03, September 27, 1985, S. Chatham (Barnstable), B. Nikula, P. Trull. (First Ballot. 9-0). #1985-04, September 28, 1985, Byfield (Essex), L. Abusamara. (First Ballot. 8-1). There are at least seven records of this species, including these two 1985 records discovered one day apart. The Chatham bird was a well-described bird (*Bird Observer*, Vol. 13, No. 6) seen flying past during a storm vigil, while the Byfield bird was discovered in distress, photographed in captivity, rehabbed, and flown to Bermuda for release.

“Great White” Heron (*Ardea herodias occidentalis*), #1996-28, July 10, 1996, Nauset Marsh (Barnstable), (First Ballot. 8-1). The “Great White” Heron is currently believed to be a distinctive subspecies of Great Blue Heron occurring in southernmost Florida, Cuba, the Isle of Pines and the Yucatan Peninsula (AOU 1998). The well-photographed Orleans bird was widely observed and represents not only the first state report of this form, but also the northernmost in North America.

- Western Reef-Heron** (*Egretta gularis*), #1983-05, April 26-September 13, 1983, Nantucket (Nantucket), Andrews et al. (First Ballot. 9-0). First identified as a Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*), this first North American record was definitively identified in July, when it was clearly photographed and seen by many over its five-month stay.
- Mountain Plover** (*Charadrius montanus*), #1916-01, October 28, 1916, Chatham (Barnstable), A.E. Crowell. (First Ballot. 9-0). The single occurrence of this species in Massachusetts involves this bird, which was “collected fortuitously” and is now a mounted specimen at the Boston Museum of Science. Committee members have viewed photographs of the specimen (MOS X03.159).
- Spotted Redshank** (*Tringa erythropus*), #1981-03, July 28, 1981, Plum Island (Essex), J. Cloughley. (First Ballot. 9-0). #1990-06, July 31-August 19, 1990, Wellfleet (Barnstable), M. Smith, P. Kaufman. (First Ballot. 9-0). Both records involved adults in pre-basic molt. The Plum Island bird was seen for only one day but was well photographed. The bird discovered at Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary lingered for over two weeks and was seen by many observers and identifiably photographed. These are the only two accepted records of this Eurasian species for Massachusetts.
- Eskimo Curlew** (*Numenius borealis*), #1885-02, September 7, 1885, Chatham (Barnstable), J. Thayer. (First Ballot. Vote 9-0). A MCZ specimen (301738) was photographed and accepted by the Committee to formalize the placement of the species on the state list. Historically regular in Massachusetts at localities such as Nantucket following protracted Nor’easters in the fall, there have been no credible Massachusetts records since 1913, and many believe the species to be extinct.
- Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** (*Calidris acuminata*), #1971-02, June 30, 1971, Plymouth Beach (Plymouth), K. Hartel. (First Ballot. 9-0). This unseasonal adult in alternate plumage was collected by J. A. Hagar, and Committee members were able to examine the specimen (MCZ 329444), which was also photographed for the archives. There are two other records of this species (both in fall).
- Great Skua** (*Stercorarius skua*), #2004-42, August 28, 2004, Nantucket Shoals, R. Heil, J. Trimble (ph). (First Ballot. 9-0). This species occurs occasionally, if not regularly, offshore of Massachusetts, but documentation had never been submitted to the MARC. The Committee acted on a recent record of two individuals that were well photographed.
- Ivory Gull** (*Pagophila eburnea*), #1976-04, December 22, 1975-March 5, 1976, Salisbury (Essex), Strickland et al. (First Ballot. 9-0). Prior to 2009 there were only nine records of Ivory Gulls in Massachusetts, none more recent than 1985. The first-winter bird in Salisbury was widely seen and well photographed during its lengthy visit.
- Brown Noddy** (*Anous stolidus*), #1957-02, August 27-September 3, 1957, Nantucket (Nantucket), P. Heywood. (First Ballot. 8-1). Mason and Robertson identified this

individual from photographs as a first-summer Brown Noddy. Although these photographs have not been discovered, eight members were willing to accept this record based on the identification by experts at the time.

Long-billed Murrelet (*Brachyramphus perdix*), #1982-05, September 17, 1982, Middleborough (Plymouth), J. Harrison, K. Anderson. (First Ballot. 9-0). An adult in alternate plumage that was brought by a housecat to the home of John Harrison located near Black Brook Swamp in Middleborough was identified as *Brachyramphus perdix*, which at that time was considered a subspecies of the Marbled Murrelet (*B. marmoratus*). Photographs of the preserved specimen (USNM 599498) taken by Phil Davis have been examined by the Committee.

Common Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*), #1981-04, May 3, 1981, Vineyard Haven (Dukes), A. Brown et al. (First Ballot. 9-0). This impeccably documented record was mist-netted, measured, and photographed in the hand, thus differentiating it from the similar Oriental Cuckoo (*C. optatus*). Although a rare migrant in western Alaska (AOU 1998), the only other New World records away from Alaska pertain to individuals at Barbados, November 5, 1958 (Bond 1993) and Greenland, June 16, 1968 (Boertmann 1994).

Northern Hawk Owl (*Surnia ulula*), #1958-01, November 29, 1958-January 21, 1959, Concord (Middlesex), Holden et al. (First Ballot. 9-0). #1965-01, January 17-March 3, 1965, Hinsdale (Berkshire), Fitzes et al. (First Ballot. 9-0). Both records were well documented with photographs. Prior to 1890 there were numerous credible reports of this species, but since that time it has been found less frequently. The most recent report pertains to a sight record by a single individual in South Wellfleet, February 11, 1970.

Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*), #1980-03, July 12-October 1, 1980, Katama (Dukes), V. Laux et al. (First Ballot. 9-0). This long-staying individual was well photographed. There are a surprising number of records of Burrowing Owls in the East, including six others from Massachusetts.

Great Gray Owl (*Strix nebulosa*), #1973-03, January 22-March 31, 1973, Gill (Franklin), Vose, C. Leahy (ph). (First Ballot. 9-0). This record was documented by a number of diagnostic photographs. Great Gray Owls are rare and irregular visitors to Massachusetts but are considerably more regular than Northern Hawk Owls. A single bird widely seen in Rowley throughout February and March 1996 represents the most recent occurrence.

Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus sasin*), #1988-03, August 26, 1988, Nantucket (Nantucket), E. Andrews, A. Bennet. (First Ballot. 9-0). Only the second occurrence of a *Selasphorus* hummingbird in Massachusetts, this bird was mist-netted but expired during its brief stay in captivity (MCZ 332830). The Committee was able to re-examine the specimen, and photographs are on file. It is ironic that only two decades later, dozens of Rufous Hummingbirds (*S. rufus*) have been documented, yet there have been no additional records of Allen's.

- Lewis's Woodpecker** (*Melanerpes lewis*), #1966-01, May 2-23, 1966, Naushon Island (Dukes), Frotheringham et al. (First Ballot. 9-0). Diagnostic photos on file taken by Wallace Bailey confirm this first Massachusetts record. A second Bay State occurrence was a bird well documented by many at West Newbury, June 2-4, 1969.
- Cassin's Kingbird** (*Tyrannus vociferans*), #1962-02, October 21, 1962, Eastham (Barnstable), W. Bailey, collected by R. Clem. (First Ballot. 9-0). This species has occurred three times in the state. The first individual was discovered among a group of four Western Kingbirds (*T. verticalis*). The Committee examined the specimen (MCZ 331367) and archived photos of this individual. Of the other two Massachusetts records, the most recent is November 1-2, 2002 in Hadley (MARC Report 7).
- Loggerhead Shrike** (*Lanius ludovicianus*), #1872-01, October 31, 1872, W. Newton (Middlesex), H. A. Prudie. (First Ballot. 9-0). Although this species was formerly a regular migrant and rare breeder in the state, there are few documented records. A specimen (MCZ 237989) was photographed and examined by members of the MARC. This species has declined drastically throughout the Northeast and is now an extreme rarity in Massachusetts.
- Brown-chested Martin** (*Progne tapera*), #1983-04, June 12, 1983, Monomoy Island (Barnstable), Petersen, Nikula, Holt. (First Ballot. 9-0). The first Brown-chested Martin to occur in North America was definitively photographed; however, it eventually succumbed (USNM 699678). It was confirmed to pertain to the migratory southern subspecies *P. t. tapera* and was discussed in full by Petersen et al. (1986). The four subsequent United States sight records hail from New Jersey, Florida, Connecticut, and Arizona.
- Fieldfare** (*Turdus pilaris*), #1986-04, April 4-14, 1986, Concord (NAC) (Middlesex), R. Richards. (First Ballot. 9-0). Over a ten-day period this sole state record was seen by scores of observers. Although no photographs have been located, a field sketch and description were published in *Bird Observer* (14: 78).
- Sprague's Pipit** (*Anthus spragueii*), #1988-04, December 17, 1988-February 12, 1989, Provincetown (Barnstable), J. Smith, R. Heil, R. Everett (ph). (First Ballot. Vote 9-0). The first of only two state records of this species was seen by many observers over a two-month period. A photograph provides clear documentation.
- Painted Redstart** (*Myioborus pictus*), #1947-01, October 18-19, 1947, Marblehead Neck (Essex), C. de Windt. (First Ballot. 8-1). The Painted Redstart was present for two days and was seen by many. It was photographed with a motion-picture camera; however, it has not been possible to locate this film. Nonetheless, eight Committee members concurred that given the number of observers (including Ludlow Griscom), it merited acceptance.
- Brewer's Sparrow** (*Spizella breweri*), #1873-01, December 15, 1873, Watertown (Middlesex), W. Stone. (First Ballot. 9-0). The only Massachusetts record for this species was collected and is archived at the MCZ (MCZ 200968). Members had

the opportunity to personally examine this specimen, and photographs were taken for the official MARC record, establishing one of very few records for the East.

“White-winged” Junco (*Junco hyemalis aikeni*), #1994-25, April 1, 1994, Marion (Plymouth), R. Harlow, B. Evill. (First Ballot. 8-1). This individual was mist-netted, measured, and photographed. Although some “Slate-colored” Juncos (*Junco hyemalis hyemalis*) may have wingbars, this bird also exhibited the tail pattern, body color, and dark lores of *aikeni*, convincing eight Committee members of the correctness of the identification. This represents a unique and surprising record for Massachusetts, since there are no other records of this race east of Michigan (AOU 1998).

McCown’s Longspur (*Calcarius mccownii*), #1977-03, January 9-26, 1977, Bridgewater (Plymouth), W. Petersen et al. (First Ballot. 9-0). The sole East Coast record of McCown’s Longspur pertains to this bird that was seen by many, photographed, captured, banded, and released in Bridgewater.

Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*), #1962-01, December 6-8, 1962, Weston (Middlesex), Baird et al. (First Ballot. 9-0). Although there are many Massachusetts reports of this species, only a few are well documented. This immature male was trapped and photographed in the hand.

NOT ACCEPTED

Fulvous Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna bicolor*), #1983-06, August 7, 1983, Monomoy (Barnstable), R. Everett. (First Ballot. 1-8). Two birds were photographed and initially identified as Fulvous Whistling-Ducks; however, it was not until 2007 that they were re-determined to be Northern Pintails (*A. acuta*). The Committee acted on this report to clarify the published record.

White-tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), #1914-01, November 14, 1914, Nantucket (Nantucket), fide L. S. Crandall. (Second ballot. 1-8). This record pertains to an immature bird that landed on a ship near the Nantucket Lightship and was captured and taken to the New York Zoological Park. Unfortunately, there is no evidence of how this bird was differentiated from an immature Bald Eagle, and the zoo has no record of what happened to it. The Committee is continuing to seek supporting evidence of the other two reports of this species, both of which were sight records by Ludlow Griscom. It is curious that Griscom himself states (1955) “While probably correct, lack the proof desirable for such a rare vagrant.”

Cassin’s Vireo (*Vireo cassinii*), #1991-08, November 16, 1991, Rockport (H.P.) (Essex), T. Leukering. (First ballot. 1-8). Although Blue-headed (*Vireo solitarius*) and Cassin’s vireos were still considered conspecific with Solitary Vireo (*Vireo solitarius, sensu lato*) at the time of this report, a vireo bearing the characteristics of this form was identified as *Vireo solitarius cassinii* (now *Vireo cassinii*) at the time of observation. This sighting was carefully described, but more has been learned about identifying this species since the original sighting. Important field marks such as throat color, the strength of the blue-white throat division, the width of tertial fringes, and rectrix edging were not mentioned, nor were they

apparent in poor-quality photos taken at the time of the observation. In recent comments to the Committee, the observer himself no longer considers the identification to be certain.

NEW RECORDS

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*), #2008-20, June 6, 2008, Ipswich (Essex), J. Style et al. P. Brown (ph), R. Heil (ph) (First ballot. 8-1). This is the first accepted record of this species in Massachusetts. This flock of nine was first discovered in a series of small ponds at 240 County Road, Ipswich. Apparently, the same flock of nine was observed at Country Harbor, Nova Scotia May 24-June 4, including one bird with a recognizable large growth on its forehead, proving that the two flocks were one and the same. These birds were seen and well photographed by many in the short time that they were present. Records of vagrant waterfowl are difficult for the Committee to assess due to the possible occurrence of escaped captive birds. However, the timing of this record fits well with an emerging pattern of vagrancy in this species, and none of the birds showed signs of captive origin, such as bands, damaged legs, feet, or feathers. Black-bellied Whistling-Duck populations have been increasing and expanding in the south-central United States in recent years, and instances of vagrancy have increased in the Midwest and other eastern states.

Black Brant (*Branta bernicla nigricans*), #2006-61, October 30, 2006, Plymouth (Plymouth), M. Iliff (ph). (First ballot. 9-0). #2007-53, November 6-December 7, 2007, Plymouth (Plymouth), M. Iliff (ph). (First ballot. 9-0). Both records pertain to adults from Nelson Street Field in Plymouth and likely represent the same bird returning in a subsequent year. Both records were documented with diagnostic photographs.

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*), #2008-10, March 22, 2008, N. Amherst (Hampshire), D. Peake-Jones. (First ballot. 9-0). #2007-41, December 31, 2007-January 12, 2008, Sharon (Norfolk), M. Iliff, G. Leganza et al.. (First ballot. 9-0). #2007-20, one adult, October 11-23, 2007, Concord (Middlesex), W. Hutcheson et al., many photos (First ballot. 9-0). All of these individuals were well photographed adults. A strong pattern of occurrence has emerged throughout northeastern North America in recent years, with multiple additional records coming from all six New England states.

Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii*), #2007-40-B, November 27, 2007, Turners Falls (Franklin), H. Galbraith. (First ballot. 9-0). This report of nine individuals represents the largest flock yet recorded in Massachusetts. "Richardson's" Cackling Goose (*B. h. hutchinsii*) has proven to be an annual visitor to Massachusetts in recent years, although this apparently drastic increase in reports probably does not represent a true change in status so much as increased vigilance and competence in finding and identifying this species since being split from Canada Goose in 2004.

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*), #2008-01, February 25, 2008, Rockport (Essex), R. Heil. (First ballot. 9-0). A detailed field sketch eliminated the possibility of any other species. Although this species has no doubt been an annual visitor throughout the Northeast for at least half a century, much confusion surrounds its actual status because misidentification has often been proven.

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*), #2007-36, November 25-26, 2007, Plum Island (Essex), I. Davies. (First ballot. 8-1). A well-photographed bird on the ocean off Plum Island eliminated the possibility of the very similar Clark's Grebe (*A. clarkii*). Since Clark's Grebe has now been confirmed in Maine and Virginia, it must be considered in any *Aechmophorus* report.

Band-rumped Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma castro*), #2007-42, August 25, 2007, Hydrographer Canyon, M. Iliff (ph). (First ballot. 9-0). This well-photographed bird was discovered on a pelagic trip to the Continental Shelf waters south of Nantucket (40.12667° N, 69.09333° W). This species has been found on four out of the ten annual trips to this area in July and August and is very probably regular here in small numbers.

White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*), #2008-15, May 2-19, 2008, Newbury (Essex), W. Petersen, R. Heil (ph). (First ballot. 9-0). This adult in breeding plumage was well described and photographed. White-faced Ibis has been reported in this same area on three previous occasions since 2003. Records have increased markedly in the Northeast in recent decades, and since many White-faced Ibises have been found near, or among, breeding colonies of Glossy Ibises (*P. falcinellus*), birders should watch for potential hybridization in the northeast.

Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*), #2008-03, March 10, 2008, Edgartown (Dukes), W. Marks, L. McDowell (ph). (First ballot. 9-0). Originally seen on March 10, this adult was discovered dead four days later. Although rare in Massachusetts, Swallow-tailed Kites typically occur in the spring from mid-April to mid-June, so this record represents an exceptionally early date. The only earlier appearance was March 8, 1991, at Great Island, West Yarmouth.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), #2007-26, September 26-October 2, 2007, Cumberland Farms fields, Middleboro/Halifax (Plymouth), C. Nims et al. (First ballot. 9-0). This dark-morph juvenile was seen and photographed by many during its extended stay. Of five previous records accepted by the MARC, this is the third from this location.

"Kamchatka" Mew Gull (*Larus canus kamtschatschensis*), #2007-02, January 2-3, 2007, Gloucester (Essex), E. Enbody, R. Heil. (many photos). (First ballot. 8-1). This well-documented adult represents the first Massachusetts record for this subspecies. *L. c. kamtschatschensis* is the largest Mew Gull subspecies, a form that is native to eastern Asia and only casual in the western Aleutians and Pribilof Islands of Alaska (AOU 1998). Although all Committee members agreed on the identification as *Larus canus*, one dissenting member expressed concern that, although this individual was larger than a typical *L. c. canus*, the intermediate-

sized *L. c. heinei* could not be eliminated. Nearly all prior well-documented records of Mew Gull in Massachusetts have pertained to the nominate European race, *L. c. canus*, known in Europe as Common Gull.

Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*), #2007-54, one adult, December 23, 2007-March 9, 2008, Gloucester (Essex), D. Sibley, H. Galbraith (details). (First ballot. 9-0). #2007-48, one adult, December 23, 2007, Eastham (Barnstable), W. Petersen, D. Larson. (First ballot. 9-0). #2007-55, one fourth-winter, December 24-25, 2007, Gloucester (Essex), R. Heil. (First ballot. 9-0). Although only the Gloucester birds were photographed, the Eastham bird was well-described. Over the past five years, the incidence of Slaty-backed Gull away from Alaska has increased markedly. The California Bird Records Committee accepted its first Slaty-backed Gull in 2005 and had seventeen accepted records by its 2007 report (Heindel and Garrett 2008). New England has followed a similar pattern, with its first record in New Hampshire in December 2003 and seven subsequent reports through December 2008.

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*), #2008-19, June 02, 2008, Tuckernuck (Nantucket), R. Veit. (First ballot. 8-1). A brief description of this flyby sighting satisfied eight Committee members. Twelve of Massachusetts' twenty-six reports have come from Nantucket and Dukes Counties.

Broad-billed Hummingbird (*Cynanthus latirostris*), #2008-21, August 23-December 8, 2008, Dennis (Barnstable), M. Murphy, C. McGibbon, S. Finnegan (banded), many photos. (First ballot. 9-0). The distinctive plumage of this adult male hummingbird is what first caught the attention of the homeowners, who invited a bander to trap and photograph the bird, thus documenting the first report for this species for Massachusetts. They kept a warm, sheltered feeder for the bird and welcomed birders to their home to see it well into December. A widespread resident in Mexico breeding north to Arizona and New Mexico, Broad-billed Hummingbird has only been recorded in the eastern United States on a few occasions. Remarkably, an adult male was also photographed in Connecticut on August 13, 2008, just ten days before the discovery of the Massachusetts bird.

Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*), #2007-22, imm. male, October 22-29, 2007, W. Tisbury (Dukes), L. McDowell, S. Finnegan (photos). (First ballot. 9-0). #2007-30, imm. female, November 7, 2007, Nantucket (Nantucket), V. Laux (photos). (First ballot. 9-0). Since the second state record for this species was in 2005 (see Report Eleven), it was extraordinary to have two more records less than five years later, both within days of each other. Both birds were well photographed, and the West Tisbury bird was also measured and banded.

Calliope Hummingbird (*Stellula calliope*), #2008-18, August 1-2, 2008, Deerfield (Franklin), R. Ranney-Blake (details, photos). (First ballot. 9-0). This adult male that visited a feeder and was photographed and well described left no doubt about its identification. It represented the first Massachusetts occurrence in August and the first away from southeastern Massachusetts. The state's first Calliope

Hummingbird occurred in December 2002, and remarkably, three individuals were documented in fall 2007.

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*), #2007-34, ad. female, November 16-December 31, 2007, Eastham (Barnstable), S. Finnegan (banded). (First ballot. 9-0). #2007-32, imm. female, November 10, 27-December 21, 2007, N. Falmouth (Barnstable), I. Nisbet, S. Finnegan (banded). (First ballot. 9-0). #2007-35, imm. male, November 19, 2007-January 12, 2008, Marshfield (Plymouth), H. Koelsch, S. Finnegan. (First ballot. 9-0). #2007-31, imm. male, September 28-November 14, 2007, Pittsfield (Berkshire), T. Collins, A. Hill (banded), S. Surner ph. (First ballot. 9-0). Rufous Hummingbirds have become almost routine occurrences in the fall, although most reports tend to come from southeastern Massachusetts. All four of the current reports were banded and photographed.

Apus species, #96-21R, July 14, 1996, Chappaquiddick (Dukes), resubmitted by W. Petersen. (Third ballot. 8-1). This controversial record involved a large swift seen and photographed at the lighthouse on Chappaquiddick Island in the wake of Hurricane Bertha. The bird was originally accepted as a “Large, fork-tailed swift species” (see Report Four), but further analysis of the photographs revealed a tail shape that eight Committee members believed could only be that of an *Apus* swift. Common Swift (*Apus apus*) has been recorded from St. Pierre et Miquelon and quite likely was represented by this record; however, the Committee could not rule out Pallid Swift (*Apus pallidus*).

Black-backed Woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*), #2004-41, September 24, 2004, Barnstable (Barnstable), S. Vince (ph.). (First ballot. 9-0). This sighting was discovered when it was submitted to eBird <www.ebird.org> and on follow-up the observer submitted excellent, diagnostic photos of an adult male.

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*), #2007-52, November 8-28, 2007, Carlisle (Middlesex), M. Iliff (details, ph.), (First ballot. 9-0). Homeowners who initially reported this bird welcomed the many birders who came to enjoy it.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savana*), #2008-17, April 12-15, 2008, Brighton (Suffolk), D. Kierdorf, J. Dunlavy, P. Kinnally (details) many photos. (First ballot. 9-0). This record-early bird was enjoyed and photographed by dozens. Photographs of the spread wing showed deeply emarginated outer three primaries characteristic of an adult male of the nominate southern South American subspecies, *T. s. savana*.

Gray Jay (*Perisoreus canadensis*), #2007-44, October 28-November 24, 2007, Mount Watatic (Worcester), S. Blanchard, D. Fischl, many photos. (First ballot. 9-0). Over its one month stay, this northern visitor remained faithful to the monument at the summit and delighted scores of birders who were able to feed it by hand. This was probably the most extensively photographed submission of the year, and it presented no issues for the Committee.

Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*), #2007-50, November 23, 2007, Chatham (Barnstable), M. Iliff. (First ballot. 9-0). Three Cave Swallows were heard and

poorly seen as they moved southwest from the base of South Beach towards Morris Island. Since the first state records in 2003, Cave Swallows have been recorded annually in November.

Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*), #2007-28, October 24, 2007, Gay Head Lighthouse, Aquinnah (Dukes), L. McDowell. (First ballot. 9-0). #2007-47, December 24, 2007-February 23, 2008, Rockport (Essex), M. Duffy, J. Berry, M. Iliff (details), many photos. (First ballot. 9-0) The Aquinnah bird was probably in active migration since it was seen only on a single day; the Rockport bird lingered for two months and was seen by many.

Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Dendroica nigrescens*), #2007-23, September 22, 2007, Manomet (Plymouth), M. Faherty. (First ballot. 9-0). A female individual was observed for a total of five minutes over a twenty-minute period and was well described by an experienced observer.

MacGillivray's Warbler (*Oporornis tolmiei*), #2007-25, October 22, 2007, Brewster (Barnstable), S. Finnegan. (First ballot. 9-0). This bird was fortuitously captured and photographed by a bird bander. Although there are fewer than twenty-five total records for the East Coast north of Georgia, a remarkable fourteen of these have occurred in Massachusetts.

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*), #2008-05, January 31-February 11, 2008, Brewster (Barnstable), Maddock, D. Berard (photos). (First ballot. 9-0). A homeowner reported this bird to Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, and an employee there was able to photograph it. A second bird was alleged to be present at the same location; however, no documentation was submitted to the Committee.

Henslow's Sparrow (*Ammodramus henslowii*), #2007-24, October 6, 2007, Tyringham (Berkshire), M. Lynch. (Third ballot. 9-0). Two experienced observers only briefly observed this bird over several minutes; however, their description was sufficiently compelling to convince the Committee. Although this species historically nested in Massachusetts, it has become so rare that there are only seven reports in the last fifteen years.

Hoary Redpoll (*Carduelis hornemanni*), #2007-45, December 30, 2007-January 1, 2008, Gloucester (E.P.) (Essex), J. P. Smith (photos), M. Garvey (details). (First ballot. 9-0). #2008-09, January 19-February 3, 2008, Readville (Suffolk), S. Jaffe, S. Walker (details). (First ballot. 9-0). #2007-51, December 23, 2007, Plum Island (Essex), L. Seitz. (First ballot. 9-0). #2008-06, January 5-February 25, 2008, Wellfleet (Barnstable), M. Faherty, D. Berard (ph). (First ballot. 9-0). In the winter of 2007-2008 thousands of redpolls descended on New England, including at least a few Hoaries. Although this species is notoriously difficult to separate from Common Redpoll, the Gloucester, Readville, and Wellfleet birds were well photographed, and excellent details were submitted for the bird on Plum Island.

NOT ACCEPTED

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*), #2007-13, May 19, 2007, East Pt, Nahant (Essex).

(Third ballot. 4-5). This bird was seen under extremely poor viewing conditions, and the Committee felt that the description did not eliminate other possible species.

Eared Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*), #2008-11, March 21, 2008, Dorchester (Suffolk).

(Second ballot. 2-7). The Committee felt that the description lacked sufficient details, and several members specifically commented on the difficulties involved in distinguishing between transitional Horned (*P. auritus*) and Eared grebes at that season of the year.

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*), #2007-29, November 2, 2007, Quabbin

Park, Belchertown (Hampshire). (First ballot. 2-7). Three birds were reported, but this would have represented the first inland record and an exceptional report of multiple birds. The observers had never seen this species before, and Committee members were concerned that bill color was not noted.

Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*), #2007-37, October 1, 2007, N. Monomoy

(Barnstable). (Second ballot. 3-6). Although the report was suggestive, the bird was seen only in flight and the observer failed to observe any white in the wing.

Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*), #2005-59, December 31, 2005, Quaise,

Nantucket (Nantucket). (Third ballot. 1-8). This bird was seen at 4:45 p.m., and the observer admitted that his view was "not ideal." Given the species' extreme rarity and unprecedented date in Massachusetts, the Committee conservatively opted not to accept this record.

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*), #2007-27, September 1, 2007, Blueberry

Hill, Granville (Hampden). (Third ballot. 4-5). This species is extremely rare inland in the fall, and because of the distance and poor lighting conditions under which this bird was seen the Committee conservatively opted not to accept the report.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*), #2007-21, August 26, 2007, Duxbury

Beach (Plymouth). (First ballot. 1-8). The observer was candid about his lack of experience with this species, and although the description was consistent with Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, it was not complete enough for the Committee to accept.

Franklin's Gull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*), #2008-14, June 5, 2008, Plum Island

(Essex). (First ballot. 4-5). The observers did not make this identification at the time of the observation in the field. Although Committee members found the description interesting, it was felt that the identification after the fact created sufficient doubt not to accept it.

Gray/Dusky Flycatcher (*Empidonax oberholseri/wrightii*), #2006-48, October 9,


2006, Tuckernuck Island (Nantucket). (Third ballot. 1-8). This bird was identified by structure and plumage, but it was never heard vocalizing. The Committee felt

that there is simply too much possibility for error in identifying fall *Empidonax* flycatchers to accept this report.

Carolina Chickadee (*Poecile carolinensis*), #2008-13, May 14-June 8, 2008, Boston (Suffolk). (First ballot. 1-8). This identification was made primarily on the basis of the odd song of this bird. Accompanying song recordings seemed more consistent with an aberrant Black-capped Chickadee (*P. atricapillus*).

Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*), #2007-16, May 9, 2007, Plum Island (Essex). (Third ballot. 3-6). Two weeks before a Swainson's Warbler was mist-netted and photographed on Plum Island, an observer had a brief view of what was identified as a Swainson's Warbler. Dissenting members felt that the description was not complete enough to accept the report, and several mentioned surprise that the observer had not made the sighting public.

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*), #2007-33, November 2, 2007, Falmouth (Barnstable). (Second ballot. 4-5). The description of this bird could not rule out an aberrant Scarlet Tanager with faint wing-bars.

Lesser Goldfinch (*Carduelis psaltria*), #2006-62, September 3, 2006, Harvard (Worcester). (First ballot. 4-5). Although intriguing photographs were provided, they were of poor quality. Also, the accompanying written description said that the bird had no wing-bars and that it was larger than the American Goldfinches (*C. tristis*) with it. 

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Breeding Bird Atlas — Tips for Finding Some of Those Elusive Species

The Editors of Bird Observer

As Massachusetts birders enter the third year of the Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas II (BBA) project, a number of species and certain entire categories of birds have emerged as surprisingly difficult to confirm. Mass Audubon Atlas Coordinators and the editors of *Bird Observer* have compiled the following tips and strategies to improve your chances of confirming some of these species.

Naturally, many of our nesting species — from inaccessible marsh birds to tiny wood-warblers — can be quite difficult to confirm, and there is simply no substitute for time spent in the field, careful, patient observation, and knowledge of a species' breeding habits. Atlas volunteers are encouraged to consult the many print and online resources describing courtship, nest size, location, and construction, etc., and consult the MassAudubon website <http://www.massaudubon.org/birdatlas/bba2/methods/index.php> for Atlas methodology, confirmation codes, and safe dates, and to learn which Atlas blocks still require coverage.

Pied-billed Grebe, Common Moorhen, bitterns, and rails: Confirmation is tough unless you see broods in the marshes. The best way to find them is by canoe or kayak. Remember that the half-hour just before sunrise and after sunset are the best times to hear rails.

Green Heron: These are secretive, non-colonial nesters. Nests will likely be in some isolated copse of trees, even a small one, such as a birch thicket in dunes or around a pond. The stick nest is tiny for the size of the bird, and eggs can sometimes be seen through the bottom.

Turkey Vulture: Despite their conspicuousness, this is one of the more difficult species to confirm. They tend to favor small caves or crevices among boulders in ledge habitat for nesting. Also check hollow trees (standing or fallen) and the ruins of deserted buildings. Vultures coming to the ground in the dense forest may be approaching a nest, so observe them carefully since they tend to be very wary near a nest site.

Osprey: In blocks where there are Osprey towers, this can be an effortless bird to confirm, but with the ongoing recovery of this species there is now a housing (platform) shortage, so look on every duck blind, since they are now using them. Osprey also use channel markers and power poles.

Northern Harrier, Short-eared Owl: Both are relatively rare breeders in Massachusetts and are difficult to confirm, but watch for them in wet meadows, marshes, and fields within safe dates. Both nest on the ground, so staking out a place they frequent may pay off. Male and female harriers engage in aerial food transfers,

and these transfers are virtual proof of nesting, but watch where the female goes after receiving food from the male, even if you are unable to access the spot (which is just as well anyway).

Other hawks and owls: Check every large stick nest before leaf-out for a sitting hawk or owl. Great Horned, Long-eared, and sometimes Barred Owls typically use an old hawk or crow nest, while Barred, Screech, and Saw-whet Owls prefer cavities. (Barred will also use the exposed tops of broken-off snags, so check those, too.) Check all large woodpecker holes by rapping on trees containing cavities; with luck, a small owl may pop out to see who is knocking. Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks are seemingly becoming increasingly used to humans and are often found nesting near houses. Learn their alarm notes, which are the best clues to nesting. All of our accipiter species utter some form of *kek-kek-kek*, although sometimes Blue Jays may imitate these calls, so beware. Cooper's Hawk vocalizations somewhat resemble one of the common calls of a Pileated Woodpecker. Northern Goshawks will attack an intruder if one gets too near a nest, so it's often a matter of a goshawk finding you before a nest is located. Sharpshins prefer conifer groves; the other two species are less picky. However, Cooper's Hawks particularly favor white pines.

Common Nighthawk: This bird's numbers are in local freefall, probably due to the wholesale shift from gravel to rubber as a surface for flat-topped urban rooftops. Listen for nighthawks calling or displaying after dusk, particularly in areas where there are old mills and industrial complexes. Try to identify potentially suitable nest sites and then seek permission from the owners or building managers to inspect the roof. Keep in mind that nighthawks and their eggs are extremely well-camouflaged, since they build no nest and lay their eggs directly on the gravel surface; use caution. Nesting nighthawks will also sometimes exhibit a wing-spread distraction display.

Chimney Swift: As the name implies, this bird nests almost exclusively inside urban and suburban chimneys, but careful (or fortuitous) observation beginning in late May can reveal swifts in flight breaking off small dead twigs or carrying them as nesting material into nesting chimneys. Be vigilant of swifts flying low over beaver and other small ponds.

Swifts nest one pair per chimney, even though a nesting pair may tolerate other non-nesting birds nearby. If you see swifts actually entering a chimney, obviously that's pay dirt. However, if you can even narrow a likely nest chimney down to one of a few houses or commercial buildings, try knocking on some doors, explain what you're doing, and ask if the owners have heard bird noises coming from their fireplace or chimney. With luck you might even gain access to a roof and peer down into some chimneys. Be careful!

With three seasons remaining in the Breeding Bird Atlas, there is even time left to be proactive and erect a swift tower. Swifts are losing nest sites quickly as metal replaces old masonry chimneys and as homeowners cap chimneys with screens. There are several good resources for building swift nest structures. For information and details for construction, visit <http://www.chimneyswifts.org/> and <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/chimswtower.html>.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Females do the nest-building and feeding of young in this species, so focus your attention on them. Look for them when they are gathering spider webs to bind together tiny lichen-based nests from May to June. Nests are often (but not always) placed on downward-sloping branches of deciduous trees, frequently over water. Females observed hovering beneath the eaves of houses and outbuildings are likely to be gathering spider webs for nest-building.

If you observe a female repeatedly going to the same spot, and she has young, she will be feeding them insects, and sometimes the food may be visible in her bill. Note the predominant direction female hummers fly when they leave a feeder, but be aware that they often nest quite a distance from a feeder. Don't assume that the first tree where a female lands after feeding is the nest tree.

Belted Kingfisher: Kingfishers regularly forage up to a mile or more from their nest, so determining the actual location of a nest is often a challenge. However, if you see a kingfisher carrying a fish, it is almost certainly on its way to feed young, so note which direction it flies and check a map to see if it's flying toward a nearby block boundary. But don't let that keep you from confirming it in one block or the other — it's nesting in one of them! Kingfishers are typically burrow nesters, so check any sandbanks, gravel pits, or large dirt piles — especially abandoned and overgrown ones — for suitable holes. The nest won't necessarily be near water. (Check your local DPW yard for dirt piles.)

Fish Crow: Using the Fish Crow's distinct nasal call as a guide, try to isolate a likely nesting location (typically at the top of a conifer) in the weeks leading up to their safe dates, since they become maddeningly silent while nesting. Observe suitable areas closely for crows carrying nesting material. Note: The begging call of the Fish Crow is sufficiently similar to that of an American Crow to be an unreliable indicator of nesting in and of itself. It is best to use a combination of evidence to confirm this local breeder.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: These are burrow nesters but tend to be far less communal than other swallows. Check for them at the periphery of Bank Swallow colonies, or look for isolated pairs using dry drainpipes sticking out of masonry walls, or even in crevices in seaside rock retaining walls. If you see a solitary rough-wing in an unlikely place, such as over the parking lot of a shopping mall during its safe dates, there is a good chance it will eventually lead you to a drainage pipe in a nearby building.

Marsh Wren: These wetland breeders are typically cattail nesters, with males building numerous dummy nests, with females ultimately lining the chosen nest and using it for egg-laying. Either from a canoe or kayak or from shore, look for masses of dead grass woven into globular nests among cattails, usually three or four feet off the water.

Winter Wren and waterthrushes: These species have a propensity for nesting in upturned tree roots. Make a habit of keying in on these root systems in swamps and beaver ponds whenever possible, and if a bird enters such a site more than once, it

probably has a nest. The nest may be hidden inside the roots, or carefully camouflaged. As is often the case, seeing an adult carrying food or feeding young is easier than finding a nest.

Veery, Hermit Thrush, and Ovenbird nest on the ground, sometimes adjacent to a woodland trail. A medium-sized brown bird flushing from ground cover beside a trail can be a clue. Look at the spot it flushed from, and you may find a nest, but do not tramp around too much off the trail since you may actually damage a nest or leave a scent that may later attract predators. Instead, retreat and wait at some distance until the bird returns so you can see what species flushed. Wait long enough and you may see it carry food to the nest, unless it is still incubating.

Eastern Towhee: Watching for the young is the easiest way to confirm this species because the young vocalize almost as much as the parents, and unlike the parents, they are spotted, making them easy to recognize.

American Goldfinch: Notoriously late nesters, goldfinches can be readily confirmed by searching for their used nests when the leaves are off the trees. Their nests are very conspicuous and tend to be located in small (often less than twenty feet tall) isolated trees and large shrubs located along roadsides, in front yard lawn plantings, or in small trees planted as ornamentals in mall parking lots, industrial parks, and even schoolyards. Goldfinch nests are open cups (approximately three inches in outside diameter, two inches inside), almost always placed in a small fork or crotch, generally about two-thirds of the way up in a tree and generally well away from the trunk. A close examination will reveal a well-constructed nest of plant fibers, often lined with thistle or cattail down. Used goldfinch nests tend to have a rim of excrement left by the young. With practice, goldfinch nests can be found simply by looking at appropriate trees while driving around in your car.

Warblers and other migratory songbirds: The first birds back are often the breeders, with the migrants to parts farther north usually passing through later. So start looking for nesting evidence as soon as the first birds arrive. 🐦



Aren't baby Turkey Vultures cute? Photograph by Marj. Rines

FIELD NOTES

Editor's note: The following account was submitted by nine-year-old Rachel Glova of Duxbury, who discovered what was almost certainly a young Bald Eagle in her chicken coop. Her experience with chickens and their anatomy enabled her not only to react appropriately and handle the eagle without injury to either of them, but also to quickly examine the bird and describe it with remarkable accuracy. At the next meeting of the local 4H Club, Rachel led the other members in a game of twenty questions to see if they, too, could identify the bird. Her account is reprinted here without revision.

There was an Eagle in the Chicken Coop!

Rachel Glova

It was late morning on what you could call an ordinary winter day. It was the 1st day of February 2009. It was nice and sunny and the snow that had fallen for weeks before was finally melting. I had put on my coat and boots and went out to the coop, where we have our large chickens and our silkies. I let out the silkies first by opening the door to their chicken yard. The youngest silkie, Splash, ran out with the other hens. Keep in mind that Splash hates going outside. She's already become a very broody girl. I was surprised to see Splash run out so quickly. I heard loud squawking from the big chickens coop. I immediately went back into the coop to check on the rest of the chickens. I opened the door to the large chicken coop. One of the Americaunas jumped down from its roost to the floor. The oldest Plymouth Rock hen, Henny Penny, stared down from the nesting box. Chandler the rooster was hiding his head in a corner. There on the roost to the nesting boxes was, what I thought was, a hawk hanging by its talons on the roost of a nesting box.

I just reacted thinking immediately that I better get it unstuck and out of there or it may die or a hen may die. The hawk gave me a look kind of like it was saying "help me, help me please." Luckily, having a lot of experience handling chickens, I automatically with one hand grabbed the hawk by its tail while the other hand removed his talons grip from the roost. It was so heavy. It looked about two foot tall. It was so heavy I couldn't believe it could fly. I could only drag it to the coop door, barely lifting it over the piece of wood in the doorway. I carried it by its tail all the way to the driveway, trying to get to the house to get help.

The hawk started flailing and screeched. I finally had a moment to really look at it while it kept trying to lift its head to right itself. Its beak was black and about four inches long with the top of the beak overlapping the bottom. I could see its tongue was white. Its eyes were deep yellow, with very small black pupils. Its eyes kept looking back and forth this way and that without ever blinking. Its feathers were all black, not iridescent at all, just flat black/brown all over, including its tail feathers and chest. Its secondary feathers were all in a row with no gaps. There were only a few white spots on its neck feathers. It had one very unique spot on the back of its head that looked like an infinity sign. Its legs were yellow as well as its toes, but its talons

were black, with five total, four to the front and one to the back. Each talon was about two inches long! One of its claws had grabbed hold of my pink jacket around my elbow, like a chicken's foot grabs a roost. It grabbed me lightly. The other foot was free.

Finally I just couldn't hold it anymore. It was pushing off of my arm and it was just too heavy. When I let go, it dropped to the ground and landed on its back. It rolled over, stood up, took three steps towards one of the cars in the driveway. When it noticed the car, it took one big hop, and spread its HUGE wings and up it flew. The wings had about a four-foot wingspan and were solid. The hawk pushed off and flew to the back of the property and flew to the top of a big tree and stared at me. I turned my back for a moment to look at the silkies which I remembered were still out in the yard. I went and put them back in the coop. When I turned around I took one last glance at it and it flew away.

I ran, out of breath, up to the house and into the kitchen where my mom was. I was shaking and was still in shock over what had just happened. My mom said it sounded like a juvenile eagle not a hawk. Once I calmed down, my mom had me tell her exactly what happened and wrote it down. Later that day I wrote this story, not wanting to forget any of the details. The next day I had a school project to work on for homework. I had to compare and contrast two animals. I chose an eagle and a hawk. My mom and I searched the internet for over an hour, looking at tons of pictures and descriptions. When we found a good picture of a young Bald Eagle, I shouted "that's it! that's it exactly!" If only I had had a camera, it would have put all my dad's fishing pictures to shame. 🐦



Rachel with her chickens in a photograph by her mother

A Prothonotary Warbler Nesting Attempt in the Middlesex Fells, Medford (Middlesex County), Massachusetts

Marjorie Rines

In the spring of 2008 beavers built a dam on the Whittemore Brook in the Middlesex Fells, with the result that the adjacent trail became flooded. Since this was one of my favorite trails, I continued to bird along the edges of the newly created swamp from nearby trails.




Middlesex Fells Prothonotary Warbler with nesting material on May 24, 2008. Photograph by the author.

On May 5, 2008, Renee LaFontaine reported to me that she had heard a Prothonotary Warbler singing in the Middlesex Fells just above this new beaver swamp. On May 20, both Renee and I heard and observed a Prothonotary singing about 300 yards from the location of her original sighting. Over the next few days the bird continued to sing from various points around the swamp, including the original May 5 location. On May 24 Alan Ankers, Renee, and I had bushwhacked off-trail to observe the bird

and were thrilled to see it peeling pieces of moss off trees and carrying them into a hole about two feet above the water level. According to the literature, the male of this species typically places moss in several different cavities, but the female ultimately selects the final nest site and completes building the nest (Petit, 1999). The male continued to vigorously sing around the cavity through May 28; however, repeated visits after that date failed to locate the bird.

Prothonotary Warblers normally breed in the southeastern parts of the United States, regularly occurring north only as far as southern New Jersey. In Massachusetts, the only previous confirmed nesting attempt was that of a pair in Sharon in 1982, where the eggs were apparently destroyed by a House Wren and the pair subsequently disappeared. William Brewster also collected a juvenile in Concord in August, 1886, suggesting a successful breeding nearby, but Brewster himself hesitated to consider this breeding confirmation.

There are, in addition to the latest occurrence, more than a half dozen records of male Prothonotary Warblers singing persistently over extended periods in Massachusetts, but not until recently have there been reports of birds carrying nesting material into cavities (e.g., Hingham in 2002 and Gloucester in 2007). As with the Medford bird, however, there was never any evidence of a female at these other locations. 

References

Petit, L. J. 1999. Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*). *The Birds of North America*, No. 408 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.

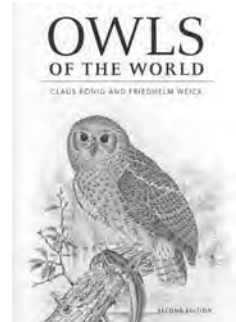
ABOUT BOOKS

A Guide To The Feathered Symbols of Twilight, Wise Counsel, and Drunken Nincompoops

Mark Lynch

OWLS OF THE WORLD (second edition). Claus König and Friedhelm Weick. 2008. Yale University Press. New Haven, CT.

“Wat baet er kaers en bril, alsden uyl niet zien en wil.”
(“What need does the owl have for candles or spectacles if he cannot or will not see?” – 16th and 17th century
Flemish and Dutch proverb)



What is it with owls and people? Offer an “owl prow!” program through your local sanctuary, and you will be beating participants off with a stick. A rare gull from Siberia can be resting on the ice in front of the same locals, and they couldn’t care less, because it’s “just a gull.” But find a perched Barred Owl nearby, and the throngs will gather before you can say “who cooks for you?” No other group of birds (other than penguins) seems to fascinate birders and nonbirders alike more than owls. Representations of owls are all around us. People fill their homes with owl tchotchkes; owls appear on countless logos, tee shirts, and star in many fairy tales and animations...and don’t even get me started on Harry Potter! Let’s face it: humans are owlstruck.

(*Nota bene*: exceptions to this include Christmas Bird Counts and Breeding Bird Surveys, at which time you need a gun leveled at the cranium to get birders to owl. Go figure.)

Owls have appeared in art and mythology around the world throughout history and are found in some of the earliest Neolithic cave painting. We are all familiar with owls being symbols of wisdom and wise counsel. The origins of this belief go back to the ancient Greeks and their association of the Little Owl (*Athene noctua*) with Athena, goddess of wisdom. Little Owls are at least partially diurnal and are often seen perched on stone buildings and ruins. In Ancient Greece, the phrase “to send an owl to Athens” was the equivalent to “carrying coals to Newcastle.” In the city named after Athena, it seemed only natural that many Little Owls would reside there among the stones of the Acropolis. But nocturnal owls had no such positive cachet for the Greeks. Creatures of the night were associated with evil, bad omens, and the powers of darkness. In many cultures, to hear an owl cry was a warning that a disaster was about to happen. In *Historia Animalium*, Aristotle described how many birds viciously hate owls, and this is why birds fly around an owl to pluck at its feathers, an ancient description of mobbing behavior. Less familiar and darker Greek myths concerning owls include:

Ascalaphus was the son of a river god. He often spied on Persephone, watching her eat pomegranate seeds, and this prevented her from leaving the Underworld. Demeter turned him into an owl.

Nyctimene was the daughter of the King of Lesbos. She was raped by her father and was changed into an owl by Athena.

Harpalyce was the daughter of Clemenus. She continued an incestuous relationship with her father even after she was married to Alastor. When she served the child of this relationship to her father as a meal, he killed her, and she became an owl.

In the Late Middle Ages, owls were symbols of sin and vice because of their nocturnal habits, while the diurnal birds were symbols of Christian souls and positive spiritual values. This dark aspect of owl lore continued well into the eighteenth century. For the Dutch and Flemish, owls were the personifications of spiritual darkness, stupidity, drunkenness, and debauchery. The Flemish term for a nest of owls, "*uilskuiken*," was also a slang term referring to a group of nincompoops.

A common practice for many centuries in Europe was to tether a live owl to a pole placed in a field. The hunter would then shoot all the songbirds that came to mob the owl or gather the birds that became trapped in the birdlime the hunter would set around the owl. Accounts of this practice can be found in sources as diverse as Aesop and Forbush. In Edward Howe Forbush's 1905 *Useful Birds and Their Protection* (p. 359), he writes: "An Italian sportsman will secure a small live Owl, fasten it to a pole to attract the birds, take his station nearby, and shoot every small bird that appears."

In the sixteenth century, emblemists often depicted an owl being mobbed by small songbirds with the motto: "The ignorant hate the arts." This is interpreted as meaning the birds are ignorant, and as they draw near the owl, representing the Athenian ideals of arts and knowledge, they will be caught by the hunter. But in seventeenth century Holland, an owl tethered to a pole additionally came to symbolize the enticement to sin and vice. Even today owls have a strange fascination for people because they are still perceived as creatures of the night, which brings us to a newly published guide to owls.

Owls of the World by König and Weick is by no means a new book; it is a revised version of *Owls: A Guide to Owls of the World* by König, Weick, and Becking originally published in 1999 by Princeton University Press. Claus König is the author, and Friedhelm Weick the illustrator. The reason this book is being republished after only a decade is because of the "revised taxonomy" of the author. König emphasizes vocalizations in determining owl taxonomy and separating one species from another.

For owls the taxonomic evidence may be summarized as follows. (1) Clearly distinguishable vocal patterns such as distinct songs suggest different species, especially for sympatric taxa. (2) In allopatric, no-migratory species (allospecies) many vocal patterns may be similar or even identical; but this may not be evidence of closer relationship and perhaps only indicates common ancestry. Allospecies are normally separated by large distances and

are unlikely to come into contact with each other; thus, isolating mechanisms between them may not be necessary. This holds true for morphological as well as vocal characteristics. Convergence may explain any similarities. (3) In parapatric species (paraspecies), whose range may sometimes overlap, specific vocal parameters may be recognized in all studied cases. These may be barely distinguishable to the human ear, but are obviously different to the owls. Hybridization may occasionally occur, but, in general, natural selection will not favor hybrids and populations of such birds will never be established. (p. 35)

In other words, in determining species of owls, voice is as important as DNA evidence according to König. While I will leave that theory to be debated by taxonomists, I will say that the above paragraph was revised considerably from the version that appeared in the earlier guide in an attempt to make the language less stilted. Unfortunately, the writing is still quite technical and dry and can be slow going for birders who are unaccustomed to reading ornithology journals and texts.

The upshot of all this taxonomic finagling is that the number of owl species according to König has increased from the 212 species in his 1999 book to a breathtaking 250! Many of the new species are the result of classic “splits.” For instance, the Madagascar Scops Owl (*Otus rutilus*) has been split into the Torotoroka Scops Owl (*O. madagascariensis*), the Malagasy Scops Owl (*O. rutilus*) and the Mayotte Scops Owl (*O. mayottensis*). Previously *rutilus* and *mayottensis* were thought to be subspecies, and *madagascariensis* was thought to be a color morph. All this will be a cause for celebration among the hardcore global listers who will likely rush to purchase this book. But for those of us trying to find out more about the owls in our own local patch, *Owls of the World* is not necessarily a “must buy.”

As I started to research Massachusetts breeding owls in *Owls of the World*, I was struck by how little detailed information there was about “our” species. For instance, here is what is written under “Movements” for Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*):

Partially migratory, especially northern populations. Short-distance migrant, appearing outside breeding season in regions or habitats where never known to breed; in winter may therefore be found in Louisiana, Georgia and Florida. In certain years, especially in autumn (September), many may be observed on passage, probably blown off course by strong winds. (p. 444)

Compare that with just this first paragraph of a very lengthy piece on Saw-whet migration to be found in *The Birds of North America On-Line*:


Many Northern Saw-whet Owls migrate south in fall, but some remain year-round on breeding grounds in eastern (Mueller and Berger 1967, Holroyd and Woods 1975, Weir et al. 1980, Duffy and Kerlinger 1992, Whalen and Watts 2002) and western (Contreras 2000) North America. Those occurring at higher elevations generally migrate to lower elevations during winter (Cannings 1993). *Brooksi* is sedentary (Sealy 1998). Variation in the numbers

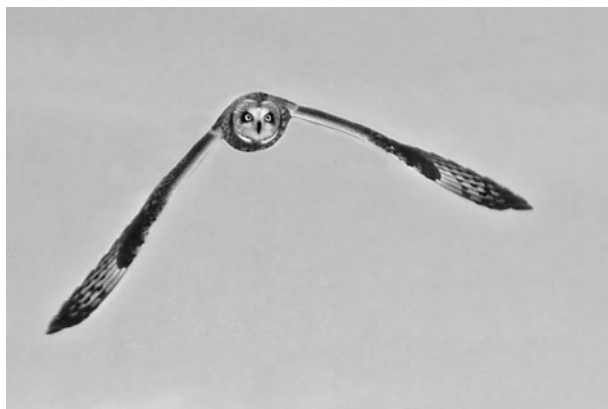
migrating each fall seems to be related to the number of hatching-year individuals, with high juvenile-to-adult ratios recorded during irruptions (Iliff 2000, Whalen and Watts 2002). On the Delmarva Peninsula (near Cape Charles, Virginia), 82% of all individuals caught during the 1995 and 1999 irruptions were immature, whereas during nonirruptive years only 33% were immature (Whalen and Watts 2002). Cannings (1993) and Iliff (2000) suggest that variation in the annual numbers of migrating Saw-whets is the result of annual variation in breeding success, although nomadic movements caused by a decline in prey densities on the breeding grounds would produce the same pattern (see Marks and Doremus 2000).

If you want to know something about the behavior of Massachusetts owls, *Owls of the World* is not a comprehensive resource and is unlikely to answer many of your questions. *Owls of the World* does include introductory chapters on topics like behavior and breeding, but these are necessarily general overviews, although well illustrated with black and white drawings. The 1999 volume also came with a double CD set of owl calls, but this is not offered with the current edition.

Finally, a few words about Friedhelm Weick's plates. They have been reworked to a certain extent since the first printing, and a number have been darkened. But I am struck by the diagrammatic and stiff look to most of the species, even on the cover. This is especially evident in the larger *Bubo* owls, particularly the fishing owls. Each feather is shown in unnatural detail, there is little or no use of shadow in the plates, and many are depicted in awkward stances. The barn owls fare much better, as do some of the smaller owls, but overall the birds in these plates do not appear alive and look like they belong in books from earlier in the twentieth century or before.

Owls of the World is still an important addition to the literature, especially about the lesser known species of owls. However, if you want to actually get to know a local owl species, how it lives, hunts, and migrates, I would recommend other resources like *The Birds of North America On-Line*.

“The owl of ignorance lays the egg of pride.” – Old proverb 



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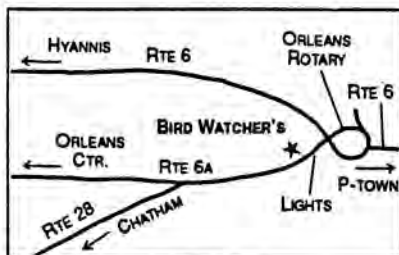
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BIRD SIGHTINGS

November/December 2008

Seth Kellogg, Marjorie W. Rines, Robert H. Stymeist, and Jeremiah R. Trimble

November was unusually cold, with an average temperature in Boston of 43.4°, making it 1.5° colder than average. A high of 70° was reached on November 15, and the low of 22° occurred on November 20, 22, and 23. The first killing frost in Boston was on November 18. The first half of the month averaged 3.3° above normal, but after the middle of the month temperatures plunged, averaging 6.2° below average. Rainfall totaled just under five inches, and measurable amounts fell on twelve days. Many suburban communities reported much more rain.

December was very wet with frequent rain and snow, but a bit warmer than average. The temperature averaged 35.7° in Boston, about 1° above normal and 3.3° warmer than last December. The temperature reached 60° or better on five days. Rainfall was measured at 7.10 inches, 3.37 inches above normal. The weekend of December 20 and 21 was a complete washout for many of the scheduled Christmas Bird Counts, with heavy rain changing to snow and strong north winds. Snowfall totaled 25.3 inches, most of which fell on the weekend of December 19-21.

R.H. Stymeist

WATERFOWL THROUGH ALCIDS

The status of **Greater White-fronted Goose** in the state is somewhat clouded by our understanding of the field identification of the various subspecies. The majority of records on the east coast of the United States seem to involve the “Greenland” Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*). There are, however, a few confirmed reports of birds of the North American subspecies (*frontalis/gambelli*) and large numbers of records that remain unassigned to subspecies. An observer in Amherst was able to photograph two geese together, one of which clearly was a Greenland Greater White-fronted Goose, while the other bird appeared to correspond to one of the North American subspecies. Identification of these subspecies is very difficult, with the main differences involving variations in bill coloration, head and neck coloration, and width of white flank lines and pale edges of wing coverts and tertials. At least two other reports in the state during this period were accompanied by photographs that seemed to identify them clearly as Greenland birds.

A **Barnacle Goose** was discovered at Charlton on December 3, where it lingered for ten days. This species remains an accidental in the state, although it is increasing with eleven records in the last eight years. **Cackling Geese**, while annual in the state, are still worthy of extra attention. The Canada/Cackling Goose species group is very complex, and proper documentation of occurrences of Cackling Geese will help us understand the status of these species and their subspecies. There were three reports from western Massachusetts during November and December.

Reports of single male **Eurasian Wigeon** were received from five different locations in southeastern Massachusetts. A remarkable winter count of twenty-six Northern Shovelers was made in Salisbury on December 30.

The only report of **Redhead** for the period came in late December from Nantucket, probably the best location for this species in the state in recent years. While they can be reliably

seen on any given day in the winter, Harlequin Ducks are amazingly specialized on certain rocky habitats, and one must visit these areas in order to see them. On Cape Cod and the Islands where rocky coastline is scarce, this species is very local. On Cape Ann, the species is numerous, with a high count this season of seventy-six individuals.

The first two days of November saw an unusual inland flight of Black Scoters. White-winged and Surf scoters were also recorded at inland locations at this time, but in much smaller numbers. There were an unusual number of reports of Barrow's Goldeneye from inland locations during this period.

Stocking practices make the status of Northern Bobwhite difficult to understand. Naturally sustainable populations are likely only found in a few discrete areas and mostly on Cape Cod. Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary seems to be one of the most reliable and accessible locations for this species in the state at present.

It is with great sadness we report that, for the first time in 13 years, the Gloucester **Eared Grebe** was not reported. This bird was enjoyed by hundreds of birders since 1995 and will most certainly be missed! However, an Eared Grebe was discovered in Falmouth on December 29. All four species of regularly occurring shearwaters were found during the period, as well as Northern Fulmar and Leach's Storm-Petrel. After a banner year, it was not surprising that at least a few Cory's Shearwaters lingered fairly late this year. Most impressive, however, was the aggregation of shearwaters encountered on Nantucket Shoals on December 6, including 162 Greater Shearwaters, 2 Sooty Shearwaters, and 48 Manx Shearwaters. While Greater Shearwaters are occasionally encountered in the state during December, these represent perhaps the second December records for Sooty and Manx shearwaters.

Lingering herons were highlighted by a Cattle Egret that remained on Nantucket through December 27. There are only three records for December or later in the state in the last fifteen years, two of these from the islands and the other from Cape Cod. A count of five American Bitterns at Fort Hill in Eastham and a mid-December Great Egret in South Orleans were noteworthy. Black-crowned Night-Herons continue to decrease in the state, especially as overwintering birds. Several individuals toughed it out at Niles Pond in Gloucester through mid-December.

A total of fifteen Black Vultures in Sheffield was noteworthy for this ever-increasing species. Turkey Vultures have become routine in winter, even on the North Shore. A count of twenty-one in Ipswich on December 28 is indicative of this trend. Ospreys were widely reported through the end of November, though an individual in Westfield on December 27 was only the fifth December report for western Massachusetts since 1982.

Immature Northern Goshawks may be over-reported in the state due to their similarity to Cooper's Hawk. Subtle plumage characters such as the shape of streaking on the breast, presence or absence of streaking on undertail coverts, and tail pattern should be carefully examined. Most reports of this species during this period came from hawkwatch sites in western Massachusetts. Most noteworthy was an adult on Nantucket on December 26. This species has been recorded only three times on the island in the last fifteen years. While **Golden Eagles** are regular migrants in the central and western parts of the state, they are rare on Cape Cod. Amazingly, an immature Golden Eagle spent at least the first half of December between Eastham and Wellfleet, representing the first documented record for Cape Cod in at least 20 years. A dark **Gyr Falcon** was reported on Plum Island on several days between November 27 and December 15. Unfortunately, this bird was very elusive and was seen only by a few observers.

A **Common Moorhen** at Longmeadow was an uncommon November visitor. A **Sandhill Crane** was reported on a single day in mid-November in New Braintree. Three American Golden-Plovers lingered in Hadley until November 16. While this species is often found in coastal areas through mid-November, it is fairly unusual at inland locations. A Semipalmated Plover was seen throughout much of November inland at Arlington Reservoir. This is the latest inland record for the state over the last 20 years. Interestingly, the last two November records for inland Massachusetts were also from this site. Other lingering shorebirds included a Western Willet at Eastham as late as December 7 and single well-photographed Long-billed Dowitchers at Chatham and Eastham as late as December 14.

Pomarine Jaegers are fairly routine in late fall/early winter in Massachusetts. Coastal storms, especially on Cape Cod, can bring numbers of these seabirds close to shore. This year a storm on December 20 brought twenty Pomarine Jaegers to First Encounter Beach. In contrast, Parasitic Jaegers are extremely rare in the state after October and practically unheard of after November. This year several Parasitic Jaegers were observed into December from the outer Cape. A **Sabine's Gull** at Andrew's Point in Rockport on November 1 was unexpected given the late date. Sabine's Gulls have only been recorded a handful of times in October, and this is only the second November record for the state. A **Franklin's Gull** at Plum Island on November 15 was an excellent record. As many as three different **Thayer's Gulls** were found during December in Gloucester. This species remains extremely rare in the state and is one of the most difficult-to-identify. Aside from the record discussed below, perhaps the most exciting larid record for the period was the **Little Gull** found inland at Turner's Falls on December 21. This is only the second time this species has been found in western Massachusetts.

The most impressive avian show of the season transpired at Provincetown in early November. Thousands of gulls were attracted by an amazing concentration of mysid shrimp that covered the beaches and filled the nearshore waters. The highlight of the show was the third winter **Black-tailed Gull** found on November 1 and seen through November 5. If accepted by the MARC, this will be only the second state record for this species. Also present among the thousands of more common gulls were 4 Black-headed Gulls, 3 Little Gulls, 10 Lesser Black-backed Gulls, 5 Iceland Gulls, a Glaucous Gull, 2 Roseate Terns, over 500 Common Terns, and 5 Forster's Terns! Low Beach, on Nantucket, stole the Lesser Black-backed Gull show, as usual, with a high count of 181 birds on November 16. While this species continues to increase in the state, this represents the highest count ever!

Alcids were very well reported during November and December. Dovekies can be one of the more difficult alcid species to see in the state, but under the right conditions, they can be quite numerous at traditional locations. Impressive counts this season came from Andrew's Point on November 25, at Nantucket Shoals on December 6, and First Encounter Beach, Eastham, on December 20. The most impressive alcid show of the season occurred on December 13, when over 15,000 large alcids were counted flying past First Encounter Beach. This represents the largest single-day count ever for the state. Observers conservatively identified 5000 of these as Razorbills. They were also able to pick 75 Common Murres and 12 Thick-billed Murres out of the chaos.

J. R. Trimble

Greater White-fronted Goose				11/23	Granville	540	J. Weeks
11/5-12/7	Acton/Concord	1	D. Sibley + v.o.	12/11	Pittsfield (Onota)	21	T. Collins
11/13	GMNWR	1	USFWS (J.S.)	12/14	Hatfield	25	S. Hammerschmidt
11/16-12/22	Sharon	1	J. Baur + v.o.	12/29	Concord	30	C. Corey#
11/23-28	Amherst	2	J. Smith + v.o.	Brant			
12/6	Middleboro	1	P. Gaines	thr	Revere B.	440 max	P. Peterson
12/21	Foxboro	1	B. Cassie	11/2	Plymouth	312	I. Davies#
Snow Goose				11/4-15	Pittsfield	1	G. Shampang
thr	P.I.	16 max	v.o.	11/16	Nahant	430	L. Pivacek
11/1	Mt. Watic	65	T. Pirro#	11/27	Eastham (F.H.)	200	M. Keleher#

Brant (continued)				11/11	Salisbury	42	S. McGrath
12/13	Swansea	500	S. Davis	11/13	Norfolk	35	T. Yeager
Barnacle Goose (details submitted) *				11/14	DWWS	28	MAS (J. Galluzzo)
12/3-13	Charlton	1	T. French, M. Lynch	11/18	GMNWR	11	USFWS (J.S.)
Cackling Goose				12/6-7	Cape Cod	8	CCBC survey
11/8-12/14	Hadley/Amherst	1	J. Smith	12/30	Salisbury	6	S. McGrath
11/26-29	Sharon	1	B. Cassie + v.o.	Canvasback			
12/8	Turners Falls	1	J. Smith	thr	Cambr. (F.P.)	17 max	v.o.
Wood Duck				11/9	W. Boxford	1	T. Walker
11/2	Sheffield	15	J. Drucker	11/29	Braintree	1	T. Factor
11/6	IRWS	20+	S. McGrath	12/6-7	Cape Cod	1	CCBC survey
11/7	Waltham	30	J. Forbes	12/19	Nantucket	65	V. Laux#
11/11	Marshfield	19	J. Galluzzo	Redhead			
12/6-7	Cape Cod	3	CCBC survey	12/21	Nantucket	8	V. Laux#
12/23	Hadley	3	H. Allen	Ring-necked Duck			
Gadwall				thr	Cambr. (F.P.)	138 max	v.o.
thr	P.I.	68 max	v.o.	11/thr	W. Boxford	175 max	T. Walker
11/2	Plymouth	70	I. Davies#	11/thr	Randolph	220 max	v.o.
11/30	Arlington Res.	17	J. Forbes	11/2	Monterey	136	D. St. James
12/2	Ipswich	54	R. Heil	11/2	W. Newbury	284	J. Berry
12/6-7	Cape Cod	15	CCBC survey	11/9	Pittsfield	725	T. Gagnon
12/23	Gloucester (E.P.)	66	R. Heil	11/18	Southboro	150	G. Gove#
Eurasian Wigeon				11/18	Duxbury	149	J. Galluzzo
11/2	Plymouth	1 m	I. Davies#	Greater Scaup			
11/3-8	W. Barnstable	1	M. Keleher	thr	P.I.	180 max	v.o.
11/8-23	Falmouth	1	M. Keleher#	11/1	Falmouth	250	SSBC (D. Clapp)
11/12-16	Swansea	1	L. Abbey	11/9	Wachusett Res.	39	K. Bourinot
11/30-12/7	Eastham	1 m	M. Salett#	11/25	Rockport (A.P.)	435	R. Heil
American Wigeon				11/29	Braintree	11	T. Factor
thr	P.I.	200 max	v.o.	12/6	Mashpee	12	M. Keleher
11/2	Plymouth	27	I. Davies#	12/14	Southwick	2	S. Kellogg
11/3	W. Barnstable	36	M. Keleher	12/20	P'town	35	P. Flood
11/7	Arlington Res.	33	P. Peterson	Lesser Scaup			
12/6-7	Cape Cod	15	CCBC survey	11/1	Quabbin Pk	6	J. Smith
12/11	E. Boston (B.I.)	5	P. Peterson	11/9	Lynnfield	32	P. + F. Vale
12/23	E. Gloucester	1 f	R. Heil	11/23	Canton	24	SSBC (V. Zollo)
American Black Duck				11/27	Acoaxet	35	E. Nielsen
thr	P.I.	1650 max	v.o.	12/6-7	Cape Cod	8	CCBC survey
11/2	Plymouth	165	I. Davies#	12/18	Lynn	62	T. Factor
11/26	Eastham (F.H.)	165	J. Trimble#	King Eider			
11/27	Acoaxet	130	E. Nielsen	11/17-12/30	Gloucester (B.R.)	1 m	v.o.
11/28	Revere	84	P. Peterson	12/6	Wellfleet	1 imm m	B. Zajda
12/6-7	Cape Cod	94	CCBC survey	12/19	P'town	1 m	B. Nikula
12/20	P'town	220	P. Flood	Common Eider			
Mallard				11/2	Manomet	219	I. Davies#
11/30	Boston	217	BBC (R. Stymeist)	11/7	Wellfleet	900	M. Faherty
12/6-7	Cape Cod	188	CCBC survey	11/8	N. Truro	1800	B. Nikula
12/13	Charlton	400	M. Lynch#	11/23	Chatham	2400	B. Nikula
12/27	Newbyp H.	750	R. Heil	11/25	Rockport (A.P.)	1650	R. Heil
Blue-winged Teal				12/6	W. Dennis	500	B. Zajda
11/1-5	P.I.	2	N. Landry	12/13	Eastham (F.E.)	1750	B. Nikula
11/7	Waltham	1	J. Forbes	12/20	P'town	1100	P. Flood
11/12	Barnstable	4	E. Hoopes	Harlequin Duck			
Northern Shoveler				thr	Rockport	76 max	v.o.
11/1-12/6	P.I.	9 max	v.o.	11/12	Duxbury B.	1 f	R. Bowes
11/1	E. Boston	5	A. Birch	11/13	Nantucket	17	V. Laux#
11/20-22	Melrose	3	D. + I. Jewell	11/22	N. Scituate	8	SSBC (C. Nims)
11/30	Arlington Res.	4	J. Forbes	11/27	Acoaxet	7	E. Nielsen
12/12	Eastham	3	M. Faherty#	12/12	Plymouth	2	MAS (J. Galluzzo)
12/30	Salisbury	26	S. McGrath	12/18	Mashpee	1	M. Malin
Northern Pintail				Surf Scoter			
thr	P.I.	332 max	v.o.	thr	P.I.	150 max	v.o.
11/3	W. Barnstable	2	M. Keleher	thr	Revere B.	645 max	P. + F. Vale
11/5	GMNWR	6	USFWS (J.S.)	11/1	Manomet	596	I. Davies
11/9	Duxbury	2	MAS (J. Galluzzo)	11/7	Wellfleet	200	M. Faherty
11/27	Acoaxet	58	E. Nielsen	12/3	W. Gloucester	200	J. Nelson
12/6-7	Cape Cod	3	CCBC survey	12/6	Eastham	2000	B. Zajda
12/14	Hadley	4	CBC (S. Sumner)	White-winged Scoter			
12/28	Turners Falls	6	CBC (R. Packard)	thr	Gloucester	900 max	v.o.
Green-winged Teal				thr	Revere B.	480 max	P. + F. Vale
11/1-12/6	P.I.	460 max	v.o.	thr	P.I.	1400 max	v.o.
11/1	Quabbin Pk	12	J. Smith	11/2	Pittsfield (Onota)	2	T. Gagnon
11/3	W. Barnstable	31	M. Keleher	11/2	Manomet	299	I. Davies#

Northern Fulmar (continued)				Black-crowned Night-Heron			
12/6	Nant. Shoals	7 lt	P. Rusch#	11/1-12/17	Gloucester (E.P.)	7 max	v.o.
Cory's Shearwater				11/1	Cambr. (Alewife)	1	R. Stymeist
11/1, 8	N. Truro	18, 18	B. Nikula	11/23	Falmouth	1 ad	CCBC (Malin)
11/4, 9	P'town	11, 19	R. Heil#	11/29	Eastham (F.H.)	2 imm	G. Gove#
11/8	Wellfleet	1	M. Faherty	12/12	Plymouth	1	MAS (J. Galluzzo)
11/28	P'town (R. P.)	2	G. d'Entremont#	12/14	Winthrop	1	P. Peterson
Greater Shearwater				Black Vulture			
11/4, 8	P'town	570, 180	Heil, Nikula	11/2	Sheffield	15	J. Drucker
11/6, 25	Rockport (A.P.)	5, 1	Spahr, Heil	11/3	Gr Barrington	2	J. Morris-Siegal
11/7	Wellfleet	25	M. Faherty	Turkey Vulture			
11/8, 16	N. Truro	220, 180	B. Nikula	11/1-12/14	P.I.	10 max	v.o.
11/9, 12/7	P'town	400, 1	B. Nikula	11/3-29	Chatham (M.I.)	21	D. Manchester
11/16	Gloucester (E.P.)	250	B. Harris#	11/23	N. Easton	15	K. Ryan
11/29	Truro	2	A. Strong	12/2	Essex	4	J. Nelson
12/6	Nant. Shoals	162	P. Rusch#	12/14	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	3	E. Nielsen
Sooty Shearwater				12/28	Ipswich	21	J. Berry#
11/4	P'town	4	R. Heil#	Osprey			
11/25	Rockport (A.P.)	1	R. Heil	11/12, 17	Barre Falls	1, 1	Hawkcount (BK)
11/28	Truro	1	G. d'Entremont#	11/16	Woburn (HP)	1	C. Gibson
12/6	Nant. Shoals	2	P. Rusch#	11/16	S. Peabody	1 juv	R. Heil
Manx Shearwater				11/17	Chestnut Hill	1	C. Dalton
11/4, 8	P'town	14, 1	B. Nikula	11/24	Saugus	1	F. Vale
11/8, 16	N. Truro	1, 1	B. Nikula	12/27	Westfield	1	CBC (J. Orcutt)
11/25	Rockport (A.P.)	1	R. Heil	Bald Eagle			
11/28	P'town (R. P.)	1	G. d'Entremont	11/9	Barre Falls	2	Hawkcount (BK)
12/6	Nant. Shoals	48	P. Rusch#	11/9	Wachusett Res.	2 ad	K. Bourinot
Leach's Storm-Petrel				11/16	Lakeville	2	P. Gilmore#
11/25	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore	11/21, 29	Granville	6, 7	J. Weeks
Northern Gannet				11/22	Gardner	3	T. Pirro
thr	P'town	3000 max	v.o.	11/23	Quabbin	9	T. Gagnon
thr	P.I.	220 max	v.o.	12/26	P.I.	2	J. Hoyer#
thr	Rockport (A.P.)	1925 max	v.o.	Northern Harrier			
11/1	Manomet	196	I. Davies	thr	P.I.	10 max	v.o.
11/7, 12/1	Wellfleet	140, 400	M. Faherty	thr	Revere	1-2	v.o.
11/27	Acoaxet	30	E. Nielsen	11/2	Barre Falls	2	Hawkcount (BK)
12/13, 20	Eastham (F.E.)	570, 160	B. Nikula	11/23	Falmouth	2	CCBC (Malin)
12/21	Nantucket	6000	V. Laux#	11/26	Eastham (F.H.)	5	J. Trimble#
Double-crested Cormorant				11/28	Ipswich (C.B.)	2	J. Berry
11/8	Orleans	50	G. d'Entremont	11/29	Chatham (S.B.)	3	B. Nikula
11/11	P.I.	154	R. Heil	11/30	W. Dennis	2	C. Gibson
11/16	Fairhaven	38	BBC (R. Stymeist)	12/20	P'town	2	P. Flood
11/28	Revere B.	70	P. Peterson	12/26	Wayland	2	J. Hines
11/30	P'town H.	25	B. Nikula	Sharp-shinned Hawk			
12/6	Medford	3	R. LaFontaine	11/1	Revere	3	A. Birch
12/18	Jamaica Plain	4	M. Garvey	11/1	Falmouth	3	SSBC (D. Clapp)
Great Cormorant				11/1	Mt. Watatic	6	Hawkcount (TP)
11/1	Manomet	17	I. Davies	11/1, 2	Barre Falls	8, 11	Hawkcount (BK)
11/8	Salisbury	22	C. Caron#	11/1-29	Chatham (M.I.)	60	D. Manchester
11/13	Cape Ann	70	BBC (B. Volkle)	11/11	Malden (PR)	5	Hawkcount (CJ)
11/30	P'town	75	B. Nikula	11/22	Bourne	4	BBC (R. Stymeist)
12/18	Hull	52	G. d'Entremont	Cooper's Hawk			
American Bittern				11/1	Mt. Watatic	4	Hawkcount (TP)
thr	P.I.	1-2	v.o.	11/2, 19	Malden (PR)	2, 2	Hawkcount (CJ)
11/26	Eastham (F.H.)	5	J. Trimble#	11/9	Wachusett Res.	2	K. Bourinot
12/14	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	1	E. Nielsen	11/9-30	Chatham (M.I.)	14	D. Manchester
Great Blue Heron				11/11	W. Roxbury (MP)	3	M. Iliff
11/3	WBWS	6	C. Franklin	11/15	Lexington	2	M. Rines#
11/7	P'town	5	R. Stymeist#	11/24	Cape Ann	5	R. Heil
11/12	Duxbury B.	5	R. Bowes	11/30	E. Boston (B.I.)	2	S. Zende#
11/16	Fairhaven	6	BBC (R. Stymeist)	Northern Goshawk			
11/26	Eastham (F.H.)	10	J. Trimble#	11/1	Russell	1	T. Swochak
12/5	P.I.	7	P. + F. Vale#	11/1	Mt. Watatic	1	Hawkcount (TP)
12/6	Mashpee	10	M. Keleher	11/2	Granville	4	J. Weeks
Great Egret				11/9	Boxford	1	T. Martin
11/1-12/6	P.I.	7 max	v.o.	11/17	Barre Falls	2	B. Kamp#
11/9	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	18	E. Nielsen	11/22	Gardner	1 imm	T. Pirro
11/10	Wayland	1	B. Harris	11/24	Chatham (M.I.)	1	D. Manchester
11/16	Newbypt	2	S. Grinley#	12/13	Byfield	1 f ad	P. Roberts
12/14	S. Orleans	1	K.+ R. McGinley	12/19	Brimfield	1	B. Platenik
Cattle Egret				12/26	Nantucket	1 ad	J. Trimble
12/5-27	Nantucket	1	B. Miller	Red-shouldered Hawk			
				11/1, 29	Mt. Watatic	5, 2	Hawkcount (TP)

Red-shouldered Hawk (continued)				Black-bellied Plover			
11/11, 18	Barre Falls	3, 3	Hawkcount (BK)	11/1-12/6	Duxbury B.	58 max	v.o.
11/17, 12/2	Granville	5, 2	J. Weeks	11/1-12/14	P.I.	315 max	v.o.
11/21	Scituate	1	MAS (J. Galluzzo)	11/1	Ipswich (C.B.)	315	J. Berry
11/24	E. Middleboro	1	K. Anderson	11/3, 12/20	P'town	22, 2	Heil, Flood
11/29	Fairhaven	1 ph	E. Nielsen	11/8	Sandwich	26	M. Keleher#
11/30	Mashpee	1	M. Keleher	11/9	W. Gloucester	20	J. Nelson
12/6	Sturbridge	1	M. Lynch#	11/16	Essex	47	D. Brown#
12/8-9	Millis	1	S. Jaffe	12/3	Chatham (S.B.)	27	B. Harris
12/26	DWWS	1	MAS (J. Galluzzo)	American Golden-Plover			
Red-tailed Hawk				11/1	P.I.	1	J. Nelson
11/1, 9	Mt. Watatic	37, 8	Hawkcount (TP)	11/2-16	Hadley	3	H. Allen
11/7	Russell	28	T. Swochak	Semipalmated Plover			
11/9	Mt. Watatic	13	Hawkcount (TP)	11/1-12/3	P.I.	5 max	v.o.
11/11, 16	Malden (PR)	11, 10	Hawkcount (CJ)	11/1, 12	Duxbury B.	8, 1	R. Bowes
11/12, 18	Barre Falls	23, 29	Hawkcount (BK)	11/1	Ipswich (C.B.)	46	J. Berry
11/12, 17	Granville	30, 30	J. Weeks	11/3	P'town	2	R. Heil
12/2	Ipswich	12	R. Heil	11/7-30	Arlington Res.	1	v.o.
Rough-legged Hawk				11/16	Scituate	1	P. Brown
11/2	Pittsfield	1	T. Tynning	11/29	Chatham (S.B.)	1	B. Nikula
11/11-12/30	P.I.	1-3	v.o.	Killdeer			
12/20	Longmeadow	2	S. Svec	11/3	Hadley	50	H. Allen
12/25	Sudbury	2 dk	J. Hines	11/5	Carlisle	40	T. Brownrigg
12/29	Gr. Barrington	2	J. Drucker	11/16	Acton	14	S. Perkins
Golden Eagle				11/16	Hadley	35	J. Smith
11/1, 17	Barre Falls	1, 1	Hawkcount (BK)	11/30	Arlington Res.	3	J. Forbes
11/9	Mt. Watatic	1	Hawkcount (TP)	12/24	E. Falmouth	2	G. Hirth
11/12, 20	Granville	1, 1	J. Weeks	American Oystercatcher			
11/16	S. Quabbin	1	M. Lynch	11/16	Fairhaven	2	BBC (R. Stymeist)
11/29	Mt. Watatic	1	Hawkcount (TP)	Greater Yellowlegs			
12/1	Eastham	1	Thomas	11/thr	P.I.	77 max	v.o.
12/13	WBWS	1 imm ph	B. Nikula#	11/1, 9	Duxbury B.	13, 8	R. Bowes
12/29	Mt. Washington	1	J. Drucker	11/3	WBWS	15	C. Franklin
American Kestrel				11/9	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	29	E. Nielsen
11/3	Waltham	2	J. Forbes	11/28	Dennis	3	G. d'Entremont#
11/23, 12/23	Revere	2, 2	P. + F. Vale	12/14	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	3	E. Nielsen
Merlin				12/18	Mashpee	1	M. Malin
11/1-7	Chatham (M.I.)	7	D. Manchester	Western Willet			
11/6	P.I.	2	T. Wetmore	11/29, 12/7	Eastham (F.H.)	1	Gove, Iliff
11/22	Chatham (M.I.)	2	D. Manchester	Lesser Yellowlegs			
12/14	Hadley	3	CBC (v.o.)	11/3	WBWS	2	C. Franklin
12/24	P.I.	3	R. Heil	11/11	P.I.	1	R. Heil
12/28	Ipswich	2	J. Berry#	Hudsonian Godwit			
12/28	Greenfield	2	CBC (D. Potter)	11/1	P.I.	1	P. Cozza#
Gyrfalcon				11/8	Salisbury	1	J. Restivo
11/27	P.I.	1 dk	D. Chickering#	Marbled Godwit			
12/3, 15	P.I.	1	Wetmore, Offerman	11/1-2	P.I.	1	S. Grinley# + v.o.
Peregrine Falcon				Ruddy Turnstone			
thr	P.I.	2-3	v.o.	11/3	W. Barnstable	19	M. Keleher
11/1	Chatham (M.I.)	2	D. Manchester	11/16, 24	Gloucester	18, 8	Heil, Flood
11/16	Revere B.	2 imm	P. + F. Vale	11/23	Quincy	11	SSBC (V. Zollo)
Virginia Rail				11/29, 12/3	Chatham (S.B.)	3, 1	B. Nikula
11/3	W. Barnstable	1	M. Keleher	12/12	Osterville	18	A. Curtis
11/9-11/18	Wayland	1	B. Harris	12/18	Mashpee	6	M. Malin
11/27	Eastham (F.H.)	1	M. Keleher#	12/29	Revere	5	P. Peterson
11/30	Mashpee	4	M. Keleher	Red Knot			
Sora				11/3	Quincy	20	J. Poggi
11/6	P.I.	1 imm	R. Heil	11/9	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore
12/29	N. Truro	1	CBC (M. Lynch)	12/3	Chatham (S.B.)	13	B. Harris
Common Moorhen				Sanderling			
11/11, 20	Longmeadow	1	Eaton, Olsen	thr	P.I.	135 max	v.o.
11/29	W. Barnstable	1	K. Miller	11/1-12/6	Duxbury B.	185 max	R. Bowes
12/7	E. Boston	1	S. Zende	11/1, 28	Ipswich (C.B.)	350, 23	J. Berry
American Coot				11/4	P'town	900	R. Heil#
thr	Woburn (HP)	21 max	M. Rines	11/16, 12/4	Nahant	230, 72	L. Pivacek
11/1-12/7	GMNWR	85 max	v.o.	11/26	Eastham (F.H.)	450	J. Trimble#
11/15	Randolph	15	P. Peterson	12/12	Osterville	100	A. Curtis
11/29	Braintree	19	T. Factor	12/13	Plymouth B.	12	K. Doyon
11/29	Eastham	20	M. Faherty	12/18	Mashpee	15	M. Malin
11/30	Boston	42	BBC (R. Stymeist)	Semipalmated Sandpiper			
Sandhill Crane				11/1, 8	P.I.	6, 3	S. Grinley#
11/16	New Braintree	1 ad	M. Lynch#	Least Sandpiper			
				11/9	P.I.	1 juv	R. Heil

White-rumped Sandpiper	12/21	Nantucket	2	V. Laux#
11/1-25 P.I.	18 max	v.o.		
11/1 Gloucester (E.P.)	1	E. Nielsen		
11/6 P'town	9	J. Smith		
11/9 Duxbury	1	MAS (J. Galluzzo)		
Baird's Sandpiper	11/9	Nantucket	1 juv	V. Laux#
Pectoral Sandpiper	11/9	P.I.	1	R. Heil
Purple Sandpiper	11/16	Nahant	18	L. Pivacek
11/30	E. Gloucester	100	J. Berry	
12/1	Scituate	150	P. Cozza	
12/3	P.I.	30	MAS (D. Weaver)	
12/10	Hull	30	C. Nims#	
Dunlin	11/1, 12/14	Ipswich (C.B.)	485, 102	J. Berry
thr	Duxbury B.	486 max	R. Bowes	
11/1	P.I.	1020 max	v.o.	
11/12	Duxbury B.	288	R. Bowes	
11/16	Essex	281	D. Brown#	
11/26	Eastham (F.H.)	2000	J. Trimble#	
11/29	Chatham (S.B.)	1500	B. Nikula	
12/20	Eastham (F.E.)	275	B. Nikula	
Long-billed Dowitcher	11/7	P.I.	4	S. Grinley
12/6-14	Chatham	1 ph	B. Nikula#	
12/7	Eastham (F.H.)	1 ph	M. Iliff	
Wilson's Snipe	11/4	P'town	1	R. Stymeist#
11/7	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	M. Iliff#	
12/2	Ipswich	1	R. Heil	
American Woodcock	11/6	P.I.	3	T. Wetmore
11/9	Sudbury	3	B. Harris	
11/14	Amherst	1	H. Allen	
12/24	Mashpee	1	M. Keleher	
Pomarine Jaeger	11/1	N. Truro	2	B. Nikula
11/1-12/11	Rockport (A.P.)	19 max	R. Heil	
12/6	Nant. Shoals	3	P. Rusch#	
12/13, 20	Eastham (F.E.)	1, 20	B. Nikula	
Parasitic Jaeger	11/1-12/7	P'town	16 max	v.o.
12/6	N. Truro	2	J. Young	
Black-legged Kittiwake	11/1-12/11	Rockport (A.P.)	250 max	R. Heil
11/1-12/20	P'town	800 max	B. Nikula	
11/1	N. Truro	150	B. Nikula	
12/6	Nant. Shoals	1300	P. Rusch#	
12/13, 20	Eastham (F.E.)	1065, 225	B. Nikula	
12/21	Nantucket	4000	V. Laux#	
Sabine's Gull	11/1	Rockport (A.P.)	1 juv	E. Nielsen
Bonaparte's Gull	thr	Gloucester	250 max	v.o.
11/1	P.I.	225 max	v.o.	
11/1-12/7	P'town	5000 max	B. Nikula	
11/8, 16	Hadley	1, 2	J. Smith	
11/15	Turners Falls	24	H. Allen	
11/16	N. Truro	400	B. Nikula	
12/9	Nantucket	2500	E. Ray	
12/11	Rockport (A.P.)	159	R. Heil	
Black-headed Gull	11/3	W. Barnstable	1	M. Keleher
11/4	P'town	4	R. Heil#	
11/7	Osterville	1	A. Curtis	
11/16, 23	Wellfleet	1 ad, 1 1W	B. Nikula	
11/16	N. Truro	1 1W	B. Nikula	
11/16-12/30	Gloucester (E.P.)	1-2	v.o.	
12/1	Scituate	1	P. Cozza	
12/20	Eastham (F.E.)	1 1W	B. Nikula#	
11/1	N. Truro	1 1W	B. Nikula	
11/4-12/7	P'town	3 max	v.o.	
12/9	Nantucket	2	E. Ray	
12/11	Rockport (A.P.)	1 2W	R. Heil	
12/21	Turners Falls	1 ph	J. Smith	
Laughing Gull	11/1	Manomet	8	I. Davies
11/15, 30	P'town	300, 2	B. Nikula	
11/16	Fairhaven	1	BBC (R. Stymeist)	
11/30	Rockport (A.P.)	1 ad	R. Heil	
Franklin's Gull (details submitted) *	11/15	P.I.	1 ph	R. Heil#
Black-tailed Gull (details submitted) *	11/1-5	P'town	1 1W ph	B. Nikula# + v.o.
Thayer's Gull (no details) *	12/5-17	Gloucester (E.P.)	1-4 ph	R. Heil
Iceland Gull	thr	P'town	5 max	v.o.
11/8-12/31	P.I.	4 max	v.o.	
11/9	Duxbury B.	1 1W	J. Restivo	
11/16-12/31	E. Gloucester	45 max	v.o.	
11/26-12/31	Turners Falls	4 max	J. Smith	
12/8	Hadley	3	J. Smith	
12/21	Nantucket	18	V. Laux#	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	thr	P'town	10 max	v.o.
11/15	P.I.	2	R. Heil	
11/16, 12/9	Gloucester (E.P.)	9, 14	Spahr, Heil	
11/16	Nantucket	181	E. Ray	
11/26, 12/29	Turners Falls	1, 2	J. Smith	
11/27	Acoaxet	2	E. Nielsen	
12/3	Chatham (S.B.)	3	B. Harris	
12/6	Wellfleet	2	B. Zajda	
Glaucous Gull	11/6-12/31	P'town	1 1W	v.o.
11/15	Pittsfield (Pont.)	1	C. Jones	
11/15-12/31	Gloucester	7 max	v.o.	
11/16	Nantucket	1	E. Ray	
12/2-15	P.I.	1	D. Chickering	
12/11	Turners Falls	1	H. Allen	
12/30	Truro	1	B. Zajda#	
Nelson's Gull	12/9	Gloucester (E.P.)	4	R. Heil
Roseate Tern	11/6	P'town	2 juv	J. Smith
Common Tern	11/1	Duxbury B.	1 imm	R. Bowes
11/3, 16	P'town	520, 70	Heil, Nikukla	
11/11	Wellfleet	12	V. Laux#	
12/7	P'town (R.P.)	1	J. Young#	
Forster's Tern	11/6	P'town	5	J. Smith
11/11	Wellfleet	2	V. Laux#	
Sterna species	11/9	P'town	150	B. Nikula
Dovekie	11/1	Rockport (A.P.)	2	E. Nielsen
11/25, 12/11	Rockport (A.P.)	340, 8	R. Heil	
12/6	Nant. Shoals	122	P. Rusch#	
12/7	P'town	7	B. Nikula	
12/13, 20	Eastham (F.E.)	34, 126	B. Nikula	
12/20	P'town	30	P. Flood	
12/21	Nantucket	30+	V. Laux#	
12/27	P.I.	5	R. Heil	
12/30	Truro	3	B. Zajda#	
Common Murre	11/8	W. Barnstable	1	M. Keleher#
11/30, 12/11	Rockport (A.P.)	16, 98	R. Heil	
12/6	Nant. Shoals	8	P. Rusch#	
12/13	Eastham (F.E.)	75	J. Trimble#	
12/14	Wellfleet	1	J. Hoye#	

Thick-billed Murre				Black Guillemot			
11/6-12/31	Rockport (A.P.)	14 max	v.o.	11/8, 16	N. Truro	1, 1	B. Nikula
12/13	Eastham (F.E.)	12	J. Trimble#	11/25	Rockport (A.P.)	9	R. Heil
12/14	Wellfleet	1	J. Hoye#	11/29	Duxbury B.	8	R. Bowes
12/16	P'town	1	B. Burden#	12/10	Hull	2	C. Nims#
Razorbill				12/16	P'town (R.P.)	3	B. Burden#
11/25, 12/11	Rockport (A.P.)	435, 410	R. Heil	12/23	Gloucester (B.R.)	23	R. Heil
11/30, 12/7	P'town	80, 110	B. Nikula	12/26	Marshfield	25	MAS (J. Galluzzo)
12/1	Wellfleet	300	M. Faherty	Atlantic Puffin			
12/6	Nant. Shoals	134	P. Rusch#	12/11	Rockport (A.P.)	2	R. Heil
12/13	Eastham (F.E.)	5000	B. Nikula	12/13, 20	Eastham (F.E.)	2, 8	B. Nikula
12/16	P'town (R.P.)	1600+	B. Burden#	Large alcid species			
12/21	Nantucket	1500	V. Laux#	11/30, 12/7	P'town	330, 350	B. Nikula
12/24, 27	P.I.	173, 103	R. Heil	12/11	Rockport (A.P.)	290+	R. Heil
12/29	N. Truro	671	CBC (M. Lynch)	12/13	Eastham (F.E.)	10,400	B. Nikula#

CUCKOOS THROUGH FINCHES

This winter saw a modest incursion of Snowy Owls, with reports from many areas in addition to their frequent hunting areas of Plum Island-Salisbury, Logan Airport, and Duxbury Beach. One was seen flying over Mount Watatic during a hawk watch, and there were other inland reports from Chicopee, Natick, and Lincoln. There were few reports of Barred Owls. Just three were received, compared with nearly thirty last year. Northern Saw-whet Owl totals were down from last year. Twenty-three were netted and banded at Lookout Rock in Northbridge during November, and only sixty-four were banded in Northbridge this year, compared to 259 during the same period in 2007. The **Broad-billed Hummingbird** first noted in East Dennis on August 20 was last seen on December 13. The homeowners graciously hosted hundreds of birders during the entire time the bird was coming to their feeder and even installed a heat lamp to keep the nectar from freezing. An adult female **Rufous Hummingbird** was present at a feeder in Hyannis from early December and was present during the Mid Cape CBC. In recent years, the number of overwintering Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers has increased, and they were reported from thirteen locations this season. Christmas Bird Counts demonstrated the explosion of Red-bellied Woodpeckers in the state, with over a thousand reported and only Tuckernuck Island coming up empty.

A Least Flycatcher was photographed on Plum Island on November 2, one of only four records for November. Many other birds lingered in our area longer than usual, including a Yellow-billed Cuckoo on November 12, TWO Blue-headed Vireos in Medford December 14-16, and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in Boston on November 30. In December, there were three reports of Nashville Warblers, two reports of Northern Waterthrushes, and one report of an Ovenbird on the Cape Cod CBC.

The appearance of **Cave Swallows** is now almost to be expected in mid November, and this year saw record numbers from many locations. After two days of westerly winds on November 9-10, Cave Swallows appeared in seven locations, and westerly winds on November 16-17 brought sightings of Cave Swallows to seven additional communities. Most of the individuals noted were identified as the pale southwestern race, *pelodoma*.

Other rare birds noted during the period included a **Boreal Chickadee** in Windsor. The bird of the month, however, was a very cooperative female **Mountain Bluebird** that was found at the Fort Hill Area in Eastham on November 23 and remained through at least December 7. This is just the sixth record for the state, the last from Concord in November 2000. Single **Bohemian Waxwings** were noted in Gloucester and North Truro. A **Summer Tanager** was photographed at an East Orleans feeder, and a **Bullock's Oriole** was found and photographed at the Chestnut Hill Reservoir in Brighton.

There were indications of a good winter finch flight. Numerous Pine Siskins were reported, with many flocks in excess of a hundred individuals. There were also many reports of

White-winged Crossbills, with over one hundred in Wayland, and a scattering of reports of Red Crossbills and Common Redpolls. Evening Grosbeak reports were confined to Franklin and Berkshire counties.

Space in these records limits the inclusion of the Christmas Bird Counts (CBC). There are 33 counts in Massachusetts, and all of the results are on line at <<http://www.audubon.org/Bird/cbc/>>. The data that is collected shows the status of bird populations not only in Massachusetts, but also across North America. Over the years, we have seen increases in Red-bellied Woodpeckers and Carolina Wrens and decreases in American Kestrels, Eastern Meadowlarks, and Rusty Blackbirds. The CBCs help to identify threats to birds and habitat, and the results promote an awareness of what species may need special attention.

R. H. Stymeist

Yellow-billed Cuckoo				Northern Saw-whet Owl			
11/1	P.I.	1	BBC (I. Giriunas)	11/1-19	Northbridge	23 b	S. Wheelock
11/15	Concord	1	J. Dekker	11/4	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore
Eastern Screech-Owl				11/12	WBWS	1	M. Faherty
11/18	SRV	7	B. Harris	12/3	Eastham (F.H.)	2	B. Harris
11/24	Cape Ann	3	R. Heil	12/19	Ipswich	1	S. Spangenberg#
12/15	Marblehead	2	R. Heil	12/20	Athol	2	B. Fregeau#
12/23	E. Gloucester	3	R. Heil	12/27	Quabbin CBC	4	fide SK
12/26	Mashpee	3	M. Keleher	Broad-billed Hummingbird (details submitted) *			
Great Horned Owl				11/1-12/13	Dennis	1	Murphy# + v.o.
11/23	W. Bridgewater	2	D. Cabral	Rufous Hummingbird			
11/27	Eastham (F.H.)	2	M. Keleher#	12/7-30	Hyannis	1 ad f b	S. Finnegan
12/5	Mattapoisett	3	M. LaBossiere	Belted Kingfisher			
12/13	Woburn (HP)	pr	M. Rines	11/9	Wachusett Res.	3	K. Bourinot
12/27	Chatham	2	F. Atwood	11/18	Falmouth	3	R. Heil
12/28	P.I.	2	N. Landry	12/6	Mashpee	4	M. Keleher
Snowy Owl				12/26	Wayland	1	J. Hines
thr	P.I.	2-3	v.o.	12/31	P.I.	1	S. McGrath
11/1	Mt. Watatic	1	T. Pirro#	Red-headed Woodpecker			
11/2	Chicopee	1	M. Allen	11/8	Southbridge	1 ad	M. Lynch#
11/18	Natick	1	J. Normanden	11/17-12/30	Carlisle	1 imm	L. Thomas + v.o.
11/19-12/31	Duxbury B.	4 max	v.o.	Red-bellied Woodpecker			
11/21	Lincoln	1	P. Kaplan#	11/5	Manomet	5	I. Davies
11/22-12/7	W. Dennis	1-2	v.o.	11/18	Falmouth	4	R. Heil
11/23	Revere B.	1	TASL (K. Griffis#)	11/24	Hingham	14	S. Williams
11/26-12/31	E. Gloucester	1	v.o.	11/24	Cape Ann	7	R. Heil
11/26-12/3	Nahant	1	L. Pivacek	11/30	Boston	6	BBC (R. Stymeist)
11/28, 12/9	Ipswich (C.B.)	1	J. Berry	12/14	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	4	E. Nielsen
11/29	Chatham (S.B.)	2	B. Nikula	12/28	N. Marshfield	11	G. d'Entremont
11/29	Springfield	1	T. Lautzenheiser	12/28	Ipswich	16	J. Berry#
11/29	M.V.	1	L. McDowell	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker			
11/29	S. Monomoy	1	P. Trull#	11/7	Truro	1	G. Gove#
11/30	Boston	2	S. Walker#	11/14	Newton	1	P. Peterson
11/30	Rockport	1	P. + F. Vale	11/18	Falmouth	1 m ad	R. Heil
11/30	Plymouth B.	1 ph	K. Doyon	11/20-12/31	Ipswich	1 ad m	J. + N. Berry
12/13	Orleans	2	C. + S. Thompson	11/22	Mt.A	1 m, 1 f	E. Smith
12/19	Scituate	1	MAS (J. Galluzzo)	11/23	Boston (A.A.)	1	M. Garvey#
12/21	Nantucket	1	V. Laux#	11/30	Gloucester	1	D. Sandee#
12/22-26	Mashpee	1	N. Church	12/3-8	Chestnut Hill	1	M. Iliff + v.o.
Barred Owl				12/6	IRWS	1	J. Berry#
11/1	Maynard	1	J. Lothian	12/14	Northampton CBC	8	fide M. Wilson
11/23	Windsor (Moran)	1	B. Zajda#	12/20	Agawam	1	S. Perreault
11/29	E. Middleboro	1	K. Anderson	12/20	N. Berkshire CBC	2	fide SK
Long-eared Owl				12/26	Hamilton	1	J. MacDougall#
11/9	Newbypt	1	B. Drummond	Hairy Woodpecker			
12/14	Essex	1	CBC (D. Peterson)	11/2	Lincoln	3	M. Rines
12/20	Athol	1	B. Fregeau#	11/18	Falmouth	4	R. Heil
Short-eared Owl				12/26	Mashpee	6	M. Keleher
11/16	Revere B.	1	P. + F. Vale	Northern Flicker			
11/17-12/31	P.I.	2	S. McGrath#	11/12	Chatham (M.I.)	19	D. Manchester
11/20	Halifax	2	W. Petersen	11/18	Falmouth	8	R. Heil
11/29	Duxbury B.	1 ph	R. Bowes	11/26	Eastham (F.H.)	9	J. Trimble#
12/25	Chatham (S.B.)	1	F. Atwood	12/2	Ipswich	9	R. Heil
12/25	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	M. Iliff	12/6	Mashpee	6	M. Keleher
				12/24	Brookline	6	P. Peterson

Pileated Woodpecker				12/13	P.I.	1	S. Grinley#
11/5	Carlisle	1	T. Brownrigg	12/20	Wellfleet H.	3	M. Faherty
11/6	IRWS	1	S. McGrath	Cave Swallow			
12/13	W. Brookfield	1	M. Lynch#	11/11	Nahant	1	L. Privacek
12/29	Wayland	1	D. Gould	11/11	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	M. Garvey
12/29	Ware	1	M. Martin	11/11	P.I.	4	T. Spahr# + v.o.
Least Flycatcher				11/11, 12	Mashpee	1, 1	M. Malin
11/2	P.I.	1 ph	S. Grinley#	11/11, 12	Salisbury	6, 3	McGrath, Grinley
Eastern Phoebe				11/11, 19	Nantucket	2, 14	Faherty, Laux
11/2	Boston (PG)	1	T. Factor	11/11	P'town (R.P.)	2	V. Laux
11/3	Rowley	1	S. McGrath	11/16	Scituate	2	P. Brown
12/27	Quabbin (G40)	1	CBC (M. Lynch)	11/16, 18	Fairhaven	1, 5	Stymeist, Maurer
Northern Shrike				11/16	Dorchester	1	R. Donovan
thr	P.I.	1	v.o.	11/17	Rockport	7	R. Heil
11/5	Carlisle	1	T. Brownrigg	11/17	Wellfleet	1	M. Faherty
11/10	Russell	1	T. Swochak	11/17	Osterville	4	M. Malin#
11/13	Falmouth	1	M. Malin	11/18	Falmouth	3+	R. Heil
11/16, 12/14	Amherst	2, 2	Allen, Read	Barn Swallow			
11/17	Bradford	1 imm	D. + S. Larson	11/11	P'town	1	V. Laux#
11/24	Barre Falls	1	B. Kamp#	11/11, 18	Chatham (M.I.)	3, 2	D. Manchester
11/30	Windsor (Moran)	1	B. Zajda#	11/12	Boston	2	B. Zuzevich
12/7	Groton	1	T. Murray#	11/17	Rockport	1	R. Heil
12/13	Orleans	1	C. + S. Thompson	11/17	Wellfleet	1	M. Faherty
12/14	ONWR	1	B. Principe	Swallow species			
White-eyed Vireo				11/8	P.I.	3	S. Grinley#
11/3	Brewster	1 b	S. Finnegan	11/11	Nahant	1	L. Privacek
11/8	Rockport	1	BBC (Drummond)	11/26	Newbypt	1	P. + F. Vale
11/8-9	Rockport (H.P.)	1 ad	P. + F. Vale	Boreal Chickadee			
Blue-headed Vireo				11/23	Windsor	1	M. Lynch
11/1	Salisbury	1	BBC (I. Giriunas)	11/30	Windsor (Moran)	1	B. Zajda#
11/1	M.V.	1	L. McDowell	Red-breasted Nuthatch			
11/2	Randolph	1	P. Peterson	11/3	W. Barnstable	4	M. Keleher
11/8	P.I.	1	C. Caron#	11/7	P'town	5	R. Stymeist#
11/23	Newton	1 ph	M. Garvey	11/12	P.I.	8	MAS (B. Gette)
11/24	W. Roxbury	1	M. Iliff	11/21	E. Quabbin	16	L. Therrien
12/15-16	Medford	2	R. LaFontaine	11/23	Boston (A.A.)	6	M. Garvey#
Red-eyed Vireo				11/30	Windsor	16	H. Allen
11/4	Truro	1	R. Heil#	12/5	Duxbury	8	MAS (J. Galluzzo)
11/5	Manomet	1 imm b	T. Lloyd-Evans#	12/26	Mashpee	18	M. Keleher
11/22	Mt.A.	1 ph	C. Livingston	Brown Creeper			
American Crow				11/1	P.I.	2	S. Grinley#
11/1	Mt. Watic	1634	T. Pirro#	11/9	Wachusett Res.	3	K. Bourinot
Fish Crow				11/10	Wayland	4	B. Harris
11/1-5	Manomet	2	I. Davies	11/29	Waltham	3	J. Forbes
11/9	Pittsfield	1	T. Gagnon	11/29	Fairhaven	3	E. Nielsen
11/18	Sharon	10	P. Peterson	12/14	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	6	E. Nielsen
11/24	Hingham	2	S. Williams	12/26	Mashpee	5	M. Keleher
11/27	Framingham	70	B. Harris	Carolina Wren			
11/30	Boston	30	BBC (R. Stymeist)	11/8	Rockport	11	P. + F. Vale
12/4	E. Sandwich	10	D. Manchester	11/18	Falmouth	40	R. Heil
Common Raven				11/22	Bourne	17	BBC (R. Stymeist)
11/1	Mt. Watic	9	T. Pirro#	11/24	Cape Ann	26	R. Heil
11/12	Becket	48	R. Laubach	12/15	Marblehead	19	R. Heil
11/13-27	W. Roxbury (MP)	2	M. Iliff	12/27	Fairhaven	41	G. d'Entremont
11/18	Barre Falls	11	B. Kamp#	12/28	Ipswich	27	J. Berry#
11/26	Dunstable	4	C. Sheridan	12/28	Lexington	10	M. Rines
12/10	Winthrop H.	2	P. Peterson	House Wren			
Horned Lark				11/29	Fairhaven	1	E. Nielsen
11/8	Hadley	300	J. Smith	12/14	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	1	E. Nielsen
11/12	Sharon	60	B. Cassie	12/28	Ipswich	1	J. Style
11/15	P.I.	80	S. Grinley#	Winter Wren			
11/15	Acton	100+	S. Perkins	11/9	Wayland	2	B. Harris
11/24	Deerfield	75	J. Smith	11/24	Cape Ann	6	R. Heil
11/29	Fairhaven	52	E. Nielsen	11/29	Fairhaven	13	E. Nielsen
12/5	Amherst	100	H. Allen	12/1	Lexington	2	M. Rines
12/12	Pittsfield	100	N. Mole	12/6	Charlton	2	M. Lynch#
12/29	Sheffield	80	J. Drucker	12/15	Marblehead	6	R. Heil
Tree Swallow				12/26	Mashpee	6	M. Keleher
11/3	Chatham (M.I.)	52	D. Manchester	Marsh Wren			
11/6	P'town	200+	J. Smith	11/3	Byfield	1	S. McGrath
11/7	Russell	2	T. Swochak	11/9	Wayland	5	B. Harris
11/12	Mashpee	5	M. Malin	11/12	GMNWR	6	A. Bragg#
12/9	Ipswich (C.B.)	1	J. Berry	11/18	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore

Marsh Wren (continued)			11/2	Sheffield	100	J. Drucker	
11/19	Gloucester (E.P.)	1	S. McGrath	11/14	Hadley	125	J. Smith
12/1	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	M. Iliff	11/16	Acton	120	S. Perkins
12/2	Ipswich	2	R. Heil	11/28	Sharon	12	J. Baur
12/26	Mashpee	1	M. Keleher	12/3	Granville	1	J. Weeks
Golden-crowned Kinglet			12/16	P'town (R.P.)	1	B. Burden#	
11/1	Gloucester (E.P.)	22	E. Nielsen	Bohemian Waxwing			
11/2	Randolph	13	P. Peterson	12/17	Gloucester (E.P.)	1 ph	R. Heil
11/9	Lakeville	12	SSBC (Sweeney)	12/29	N. Truro	1	CBC (M. Lynch)
11/18	Falmouth	11	R. Heil	Cedar Waxwing			
11/22	Wayland	16	B. Harris	11/1	Falmouth	140	SSBC (D. Clapp)
11/29	Fairhaven	14	E. Nielsen	11/2	Lincoln	51	M. Rines
12/13	Brookfield	20	M. Lynch#	11/16	Fairhaven	72	BBC (R. Stymeist)
12/26	Mashpee	15	M. Keleher	11/24	Hingham	180	S. Williams
Ruby-crowned Kinglet			11/26	Dunstable	45+	C. Sheridan	
11/1	Gloucester (E.P.)	4	E. Nielsen	11/26	Chatham (M.I.)	87	D. Manchester
11/2	Randolph	6	P. Peterson	12/6	Charlton	215	M. Lynch#
11/9	Lexington	4	M. Rines#	12/17	Gloucester	200	R. Heil
11/18	Falmouth	5	R. Heil	Orange-crowned Warbler			
11/30	Boston	2	BBC (R. Stymeist)	thr	Reports of indiv. from 16 locations		
12/15	Marblehead	2	R. Heil	11/9	Westport	2	E. Nielsen
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher				Nashville Warbler			
11/9	Ipswich	1	K. Hartel	11/2	Gloucester (E.P.)	1	S. Hedman
11/30	Boston (BNC)	1	BBC (R. Stymeist)	11/3	Woburn (HP)	1	M. Rines
Eastern Bluebird				11/9	Lexington	1	R. LaFontaine#
11/1	Wayland	21	B. Harris	11/21-12/3	Chestnut Hill	1	S. Simpson#
11/2	S. Quabbin	11	L. Therrien	12/11	Beverly	1	W. Tatro
11/8	Falmouth	18	M. Keleher#	12/12	Bradford	1	S. Baeslack
11/23	Brewster	20	P. Trull	12/18	Wakefield	1	D. + I. Jewell
11/24	Concord	15	S. Perkins	Northern Parula			
11/26	Dunstable	15+	C. Sheridan	11/21	Scituate	1	MAS (J. Galluzzo)
12/2	E. Middleboro	12	B. Lessard	Yellow Warbler			
12/23	Amherst	24	H. Allen	11/7	P'town	1	K. Hartel#
Mountain Bluebird (no details) *				11/15	Plymouth	1 ph	J. Trimble
11/23-12/7	Eastham (F.H.)	1 ph	B. Parker + v.o.	Magnolia Warbler			
Hermit Thrush				11/5	Boston (PG)	1	M. Garvey
11/1	Boston (PG)	7	T. Factor	11/21	E. Sandwich	1 f	D. Manchester
11/4	Medford	6	M. Rines#	Cape May Warbler			
11/18	Falmouth	8	R. Heil	11/4	Truro	1 m	R. Heil#
11/22	Bourne	9	BBC (R. Stymeist)	Yellow-rumped Warbler			
11/24	Cape Ann	9	R. Heil	thr	P.I.	31 max	v.o.
11/27	Acoaxet	8	E. Nielsen	11/1	Revere	12	A. Birch
12/14	Northampton CBC	7	fide M. Wilson	11/4	Salisbury	10	P. + F. Vale
12/14	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	9	E. Nielsen	11/5	Manomet	65	I. Davies
12/15	Marblehead	5	R. Heil	11/12	Chatham (M.I.)	67	D. Manchester
12/27	Fairhaven	5	G. d'Entremont	11/16	Fairhaven	38	BBC (R. Stymeist)
American Robin				11/22	Bourne	91	BBC (R. Stymeist)
11/1	Russell	400	T. Swochak	11/23	Gloucester	11	B. Harris
11/1	Malden (PR)	1000	C. Jackson#	11/24	Hingham	17	S. Williams
11/2	Metheun	100,000+	MAS (D. Larson)	11/27	Acoaxet	45	E. Nielsen
11/8	Hadley	500	J. Smith	12/14	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	31	E. Nielsen
11/9	Wachusett Res.	509	K. Bourinot	Black-throated Green Warbler			
11/11	W. Roxbury	725	M. Iliff	11/1	Gloucester (E.P.)	1	E. Nielsen
11/26	Chatham (M.I.)	400	D. Manchester	11/4	P.I.	1	S. Pierce
11/27	Eastham (F.H.)	400	M. Keleher#	11/5	Manomet	1 ph	I. Davies
12/14	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	350	E. Nielsen	11/7	Wellfleet	1	R. Stymeist#
Gray Catbird				11/30	Boston (PG)	1	BBC (R. Stymeist)
11/18	Falmouth	16	R. Heil	Pine Warbler			
11/27	Acoaxet	12	E. Nielsen	11/2	Salisbury	2	P. + F. Vale
12/14	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	14	E. Nielsen	12/6	Mashpee	4	M. Keleher
12/15	Marblehead	3	R. Heil	12/21	Littleton	1	G. Marley
12/27	Hardwick	1	S. Sumner, J. Smith	Prairie Warbler			
12/27	Fairhaven	2	G. d'Entremont#	11/2	Gloucester (E.P.)	1	S. Hedman
Brown Thrasher				11/3	Salisbury B.	1	MAS (Brownrigg)
11/1	Scusset	1	G. d'Entremont#	11/27	Acoaxet	1 ph	E. Nielsen
11/16	Fairhaven	1	BBC (R. Stymeist)	Palm Warbler			
11/18	Falmouth	2	R. Heil	11/7	W. Roxbury (MP)	3	M. Iliff#
12/9	Ipswich (C.B.)	1	J. Berry	11/21	Gloucester (B.R.)	2	J. Rycenga
12/14	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	1	E. Nielsen	11/26	Eastham (F.H.)	7	J. Trimble#
12/18	P.I.	1	W. Tatro	12/20	Rockport	1	J. Robinson
American Pipit				Western Palm Warbler			
11/2	Lincoln	35	M. Rines	12/20	Wellfleet	1	M. Iliff
11/2	Newbury	20	J. Berry				

Blackpoll Warbler				11/1	P.I.	3	S. Grinley#
11/2	Randolph	2	P. Peterson	11/9	Revere	4	A. Birch
11/4	Arlington Res.	1	M. Rines	11/9	Wachusett Res.	4	K. Bourinot
11/9	Marshfield	1	MAS (J. Galluzzo)	11/16	Fairhaven	16	BBC (R. Stymeist)
11/12	Manomet	1 imm b	T. Lloyd-Evans	12/7	Sharon	3	P. Peterson
11/30	E. Boston	1	S. Walker#	12/25	W. Roxbury (MP)	4	M. Iliff
American Redstart				12/26	Wayland	2	J. Hines
11/7	Easthampton	1	D. McLain	Vesper Sparrow			
11/17	Westport	1 imm	M. Sylvia	11/2	Sharon	1	J. Baur
Ovenbird				11/7	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	M. Iliff#
11/21	Boston (PG)	1	T. Factor	11/9	Wayland	1	B. Harris
12/14	E. Orleans	1 ph	CBC (M. Iliff)	11/9	Hadley	1	J. Smith
Northern Waterthrush				11/21	Scituate	1	MAS (J. Galluzzo)
12/14	Medford	1 ph	CBC (P. Vale)	12/14	DFWS	1	V. Durso
12/28	Lexington	1	M. Rines	Savannah Sparrow			
Common Yellowthroat				11/1	Arlington Res.	10	M. Rines#
11/2	Pittsfield	1	T. Tynning	11/2	Gloucester (E.P.)	20	S. Hedman
11/9	Wayland	2	B. Harris	11/6	Concord	10	D. Sibley
12/1	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	M. Iliff#	11/7	W. Roxbury (MP)	40	M. Iliff#
12/6	Dorchester	2	M. Garvey#	11/8	Bourne	25	M. Keleher#
12/15	Marblehead	1 m	R. Heil	11/9	Hadley	45	J. Smith
Wilson's Warbler				12/14	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	3	E. Nielsen
11/1	Boston (PG)	1 f	T. Factor	12/25	Hadley	2	H. Allen
11/1	Gloucester (E.P.)	1	E. Nielsen	Ipswich Sparrow			
11/17	Rockport	1 f imm ph	R. Heil	11/2-12/6	P.I.	1-2	v.o.
11/24	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	M. Iliff	11/5	Salisbury	1	MAS (B. Gette)
11/30	E. Boston	1	S. Walker#	11/8	Bourne	1	K. Doyon
Yellow-breasted Chat				11/30	Revere	1	S. Walker#
thr	Gloucester (E.P.)	1	v.o.	12/14	Ipswich (C.B.)	4	CBC (J. Berry)
11/4-12	Brookline	1	C. Dalton	12/25	Chatham (S.B.)	2	F. Atwood
11/7	Easthampton	1	D. McLain	Grasshopper Sparrow			
11/8	Rockport (H.P.)	1	P. + F. Vale	11/4	P'town	1	R. Heil#
11/16	Fairhaven	2	BBC (R. Stymeist)	11/9	Westport	1 ph	E. Nielsen
11/16-17	Plymouth	1	K. Doyon#	12/20	Wellfleet	1 ph	M. Iliff
11/18	Falmouth	8	R. Heil	Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow			
11/22	Bourne	1	BBC (R. Stymeist)	11/3	WBWS	2	C. Franklin
11/23	Nahant	1	TASL (Ferraresso#)	11/17	Gloucester	2	P. Brown
11/29	Eastham (F.H.)	2	B. Zajda	11/29	Eastham (F.H.)	3	G. Gove#
11/30, 12/13	Boston (Fens)	1	BBC (R. Stymeist)	12/14	P.I.	1	J. Nelson
12/2	Ipswich	1	R. Heil	Seaside Sparrow			
12/3	WBWS	1	M. Faherty	11/29	WBWS	1	B. Zajda
12/14	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	1	E. Nielsen	12/12	Eastham (F.H.)	2	M. Faherty#
12/15	Marblehead	1	R. Heil	12/20	Wellfleet	1 ph	J. Trimble
Summer Tanager				Fox Sparrow			
12/24-31	E. Orleans	1 ph	A. and E. Hultin	11/1, 12/22	Wayland	5, 1	Harris, Hines
Eastern Towhee				11/9	Wachusett Res.	4	K. Bourinot
11/14	P.I.	2	N. Landry	11/17	Carlisle	7	J. Keskulla
11/18	Falmouth	4	R. Heil	11/26	Eastham (F.H.)	5	J. Trimble#
11/24	Rockport (H.P.)	4	R. Heil	12/6	Squantum	2	M. Garvey#
12/5-21	E. Sandwich	6 max	D. Manchester	12/12	Nantucket	2	G. Andrews
12/9	Ipswich (C.B.)	2	J. Berry	12/21	Littleton	1	G. Marley
12/9-30	Acushnet	3	K. Langevin	12/22	Wayland	1	D. Hatfield
12/22	Fall River	2	L. Abbey	12/25	Williamsburg	1	A. Mueller
American Tree Sparrow				Song Sparrow			
thr	P.I.	23 max	v.o.	11/7	W. Roxbury (MP)	65	M. Iliff#
11/16	Concord	50	D. Sibley#	11/16	Concord	50	D. Sibley#
11/23	Hadley	17	B. Zajda#	11/16	Fairhaven	41	BBC (R. Stymeist)
11/27	Wakefield	18	P. + F. Vale	11/18	Falmouth	93	R. Heil
12/6	Charlton	17	M. Lynch#	Lincoln's Sparrow			
12/7	N. Brookfield	41	M. Lynch#	11/2	Sheffield	2	J. Drucker
12/28	Lexington	22	M. Rines	11/2	Gloucester (E.P.)	1	S. Hedman
Chipping Sparrow				11/5	WBWS	1	M. Faherty
11/1	Arlington Res.	3	M. Rines#	11/14	Boston	2	M. Garvey
11/3	Gloucester	5	B. Harris	Swamp Sparrow			
11/6	Concord	5	D. Sibley	11/7	W. Roxbury (MP)	30	M. Iliff#
11/9	Wachusett Res.	2	K. Bourinot	11/8	Concord	14	M. Rines
11/29	Medford	2	A. Birch	11/9	Lexington	14	M. Rines#
12/20	Orange	4	R. Scherer#	11/30, 12/26	Mashpee	29, 16	M. Keleher
12/24	Mashpee	3	M. Keleher	12/2	Ipswich	16	R. Heil
Clay-colored Sparrow				12/25	W. Roxbury (MP)	15	M. Iliff
11/21-25	Boston (PG)	1	T. Factor	White-throated Sparrow			
Field Sparrow				11/18	Falmouth	147	R. Heil
11/1	Manomet	3	I. Davies	11/24	Hingham	45	S. Williams

White-throated Sparrow (continued)				11/8	Belchertown	1	S. Surner
11/24	Cape Ann	76	R. Heil	11/29	Eastham (F.H.)	18	M. Faherty
11/27	Acoaxet	48	E. Nielsen	12/14	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	42	E. Nielsen
12/2	Ipswich	62	R. Heil	12/26	Falmouth	2	M. Malin
12/14	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	85	E. Nielsen	Rusty Blackbird			
White-crowned Sparrow				11/1	Wayland	65	B. Harris
thr	Concord	10 max	M. Rines	11/8	Concord	21	M. Rines
11/2	Gloucester	4	S. Hedman	11/11	W. Roxbury (MP)	13	M. Iliff
11/8	Salisbury	2	C. Caron#	11/28	Hadley	45	J. Smith
11/9	Hadley	5	J. Smith	12/14	Hadley	40	CBC (S. Surner)
Dark-eyed Junco				12/14	Northampton	60	CBC (J. Green)
11/9	Wachusett Res.	152	K. Bourinot	Common Grackle			
11/19	Duxbury B.	100	R. Bowes	11/1	Wakefield	67	P. + F. Vale
12/5	Dunstable	100	C. Sheridan	11/9	Mt. Watatic	2000	T. Pirro
12/7	N. Brookfield	179	M. Lynch#	11/9	Wachusett Res.	91	K. Bourinot
Lapland Longspur				12/20	Westfield	45	S. Svec
thr	P.I.	23 max	v.o.	Blackbird species			
11/8	Hadley	7	J. Smith	11/2	Methuen	300,000+	MAS (D. Larson)
11/8	Salisbury	2	J. Restivo	Brown-headed Cowbird			
11/12	Sharon	8	B. Cassie	11/8	Concord	120	M. Rines
11/13	Acton	3	D. Sibley	11/24	Chatham (M.I.)	90	D. Manchester
11/24	Deerfield	2	J. Smith	12/13	N. Falmouth	4	I. Nisbet
11/29	Chatham (S.B.)	12	P. Trull#	Bullock's Oriole (no details) *			
12/26	Northfield	3	M. Taylor	12/3	Chestnut Hill	1 f ph	M. Iliff
Snow Bunting				Baltimore Oriole			
thr	P.I.	295 max	v.o.	11/8	P.I.	1 m	S. Grinley#
thr	Duxbury B.	80 max	R. Bowes	11/8	Rockport (H.P.)	1	P. + F. Vale
11/1	Ipswich (C.B.)	175	J. Berry	11/8	Gloucester	2	BBC (Drummond)
11/5	Salisbury	200	MAS (B. Gette)	11/27	Acoaxet	1 ph	E. Nielsen
11/15	Randolph	100+	P. Peterson	12/4	Mashpee	1	M. Keleher
11/27	GMNWR	80	S. Perkins	12/7-22	Lincoln	1 imm	G. Loud#
11/30	P'town	230	B. Nikula	12/11-31	S. Easton	1 imm	J. Mitchell
12/2	N. Carver	80+	B. Conway	12/20	Uxbridge	1 imm	B. Milke
12/13	Plymouth B.	100	K. Doyon	Pine Grosbeak			
12/14	Amherst	163	C. Read	12/28	Montague	2	CBC (K. Spencer)
12/27	S. Quabbin	80	D. Spector	Purple Finch			
Northern Cardinal				thr	Reports of 1-9 indiv. from 30 locations		
11/18	Falmouth	118	R. Heil	11/1	Wayland	65	B. Harris
11/24	Cape Ann	57	R. Heil	11/2	Lincoln	10	M. Rines
Rose-breasted Grosbeak				11/9	Lexington	12	M. Rines#
11/15	P.I.	1	S. Grinley#	12/28	Ipswich	22	J. Berry#
11/18	Rockport	1 imm m	J. Berry	Red Crossbill			
11/19	Sunderland	1	H. Allen	11/9	Wachusett Res.	1 f	K. Bourinot
11/21	Amherst	1	J. Ortiz	11/11	P.I.	1	T. Spahr
Dickcissel				White-winged Crossbill			
11/1	Eastham	1 imm	C. Ciccone#	thr	Reports of 1-25 indiv. from 30 locations		
11/2	Lincoln	1	M. Rines	11/9	Mt. Watatic	33	T. Pirro
11/2-27	W. Roxbury	1 f ph	M. Barber#	11/22	Gardner	33	T. Pirro
11/3	Waltham	1	J. Forbes	11/23	P.I.	35	S. Grinley
11/16	Concord	1 m imm	L. Hale#	11/23	Rockport	32	B. Harris
11/17-12/30	Deerfield	2	D. Mako	11/23	Windsor	45	M. Lynch
12/6-9	Mt.A.	1 imm	T. Sayers#	11/24	Lexington	26	M. Rines#
12/17	Essex	1 imm ph	P. Brown	11/24	Hingham	28	S. Williams
12/18	Wakefield	1	D. + I. Jewell	12/14	Boston	35	CBC (A. Joslin)
12/27	Fairhaven	1	G. d'Entremont#	12/19	Wayland	100	B. Harris
Bobolink				Common Redpoll			
11/3	Newbury	1	S. McGrath	11/2	P.I.	1	S. Grinley#
11/9	Hadley	1	J. Smith	11/2	Westport	10	M. Lynch#
Red-winged Blackbird				11/2	MNWS	15	D. Noble#
11/9	Lakeville	225	SSBC (Sweeney)	12/26	Groveland	1	D. Chickering#
11/11	Concord	75	J. Forbes	12/30	W. Barnstable	1	J. Trimble
11/12	GMNWR	200	A. Bragg#	Pine Siskin			
11/16	Salisbury	35	S. Grinley#	thr	Reports of 1-75 indiv. from 62 locations		
11/24	W. Roxbury (MP)	15	M. Iliff	11/1	Russell	300	T. Swochak
11/30	Mashpee	26	M. Keleher	11/1	Mt. Wachusett	250	P. Roberts
12/7	IRWS	15	MAS (W. Tatro)	11/3	S. Quabbin	187	L. Therrien
12/13	W. Brookfield	16	M. Lynch#	11/5	Granville	300	J. Weeks
Eastern Meadowlark				11/9	Mt. Watatic	100	T. Pirro
thr	P.I.	9 max	v.o.	11/10	Boston (A.A.)	90	M. Garvey
11/3	W. Barnstable	11	M. Keleher	11/10	Wayland	77	B. Harris
11/8	W. Roxbury (MP)	4	T. Factor#	11/25	Lakeville	76	M. Sylvia
11/8	Marstons Mills	12	M. Keleher#	12/29	Duxbury B.	200	R. Bowes
11/8	Windsor	1	S. Surner	12/30	Easton	85+	K. Ryan

Pine Siskin (continued)				12/28	Lexington	120	M. Rines
12/31	Pepperell	100	E. Stromstead	Evening Grosbeak			
American Goldfinch				11/5	Granville	6	J. Weeks
11/11	W. Roxbury	220	M. Iliif	12/17	Washington	4	E. Neumuth
11/11	P.I.	410	R. Heil	12/18	Wayland	1	B. Harris
12/6	Eastham (F.E.)	150	B. Zajda	12/20	Royalston	41	J. Morris-Siegel
12/9	Ipswich (C.B.)	150	J. Berry				

ABBREVIATIONS FOR BIRD SIGHTINGS

Taxonomic order is based on AOU checklist, Seventh edition, 42nd through 49th Supplements , as published in *The Auk* 117: 847-58 (2000); 119:897-906 (2002); 120:923-32 (2003); 121:985-95 (2004); 122:1026-31 (2005); 123:926-936 (2006); 124(3):1109-1115, 2007; 125(3):758-768, 2008 (see <<http://www.aou.org/checklist/north/index.php>>).

Location-#	MAS Breeding Bird	NAC	Nine Acre Corner, Concord
	Atlas Block	Newbypt	Newburyport
ABC	Allen Bird Club	ONWR	Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge
A.P.	Andrews Point, Rockport	P.I.	Plum Island
A.Pd	Allens Pond, S. Dartmouth	Pd	Pond
B.	Beach	P'town	Provincetown
B.I.	Belle Isle, E. Boston	Pont.	Pontoosuc Lake, Lanesboro
B.R.	Bass Rocks, Gloucester	R.P.	Race Point, Provincetown
BBC	Brookline Bird Club	Res.	Reservoir
BMB	Broad Meadow Brook, Worcester	S.B.	South Beach, Chatham
C.B.	Crane Beach, Ipswich	S.N.	Sandy Neck, Barnstable
CGB	Coast Guard Beach, Eastham	SRV	Sudbury River Valley
C.P.	Crooked Pond, Boxford	SSBC	South Shore Bird Club
Cambr.	Cambridge	TASL	Take A Second Look
CCBC	Cape Cod Bird Club		Boston Harbor Census
Corp. B.	Corporation Beach, Dennis	WBWS	Wellfleet Bay WS
Cumb. Farms	Cumberland Farms, Middleboro	WMWS	Wachusett Meadow WS
		Wompatuck SP	Hingham, Cohasset,
DFWS	Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary		Scituate, and Norwell
DWMA	Delaney WMA	Worc.	Worcester
DWWS	Stow, Bolton, Harvard		
E.P.	Daniel Webster WS	Other Abbreviations	
F.E.	Eastern Point, Gloucester	ad	adult
F.P.	First Encounter Beach, Eastham	b	banded
F.Pk	Fresh Pond, Cambridge	br	breeding
G40	Franklin Park, Boston	dk	dark (morph)
GMNWR	Gate 40, Quabbin Res.	f	female
H.	Great Meadows NWR	fl	fledgling
H.P.	Harbor	imm	immature
HRWMA	Halibut Point, Rockport	juv	juvenile
I.	High Ridge WMA, Gardner	lt	light (morph)
IRWS	Island	m	male
L.	Ipswich River WS	max	maximum
MAS	Ledge	migr	migrating
M.P.	Mass Audubon	n	nesting
M.V.	Millennium Park, W. Roxbury	ph	photographed
MAS	Martha's Vineyard	pl	plumage
MBWMA	Mass. Audubon Society	pr	pair
MNWS	Martin Burns WMA, Newbury	S	summer (1S = 1st summer)
MSSF	Marblehead Neck WS	v.o.	various observers
	Myles Standish State Forest,	W	winter (2W = second winter)
	Plymouth	yg	young
Mt.A.	Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Cambr.	#	additional observers

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE BIRD SIGHTINGS TO *BIRD OBSERVER*

Sightings for any given month must be reported in writing by the eighth of the following month, and may be submitted by postal mail or e-mail. Send written reports to Bird Sightings, Robert H. Stymeist, 36 Lewis Avenue, Arlington, MA 02474-3206. Include name and phone number of observer, common name of species, date of sighting, location, number of birds, other observer(s), and information on age, sex, and morph (where relevant). For instructions on e-mail submission, visit: <<http://massbird.org/birdobserver/sightings/>>.

ABOUT THE COVER

Clapper Rail

The Clapper Rail (*Rallus longirostris*) is largely a bird of the salt marshes and, in the south, the mangroves. These birds have laterally compressed bodies that give meaning to the expression “thin as a rail.” They seldom fly, except during nocturnal migrations, and swim well. Eastern birds are a drab gray with dark gray stripes on the belly and a long, slightly decurved bill. They are much larger than the similarly shaped Virginia Rail and are slightly smaller than the more brightly colored King Rail. The sexes are similar in plumage, but males on average are heavier than females. Along the Gulf Coast Clapper Rails are brighter in color and look more like the King Rails with which they hybridize in the limited areas of range overlap.

Because most populations are sedentary, and many are isolated, it is no surprise that the species is polytypic, with about twenty-five subspecies generally recognized by taxonomists. The breeding range in the East extends from Massachusetts along the entire East Coast and Gulf Coast to northern Mexico, as well as the Caribbean. In the West, where suitable habitat is more restricted, Clapper Rails are found in disjunct populations from California to Baja California and Western Mexico. A few populations occur in Central America, and in South America they are found as far south as Brazil and Peru. The subspecies *R. l. crepitans* occurs from Massachusetts south to North Carolina and is the only subspecies that is at all migratory, spending the winter on the southeast Atlantic Coast. In Massachusetts the Clapper Rail is considered a rare breeder and an uncommon visitor, with most records occurring in fall and early winter. Erratic dispersal movements before and after breeding probably account for some of these occurrences.

Clapper Rails are monogamous breeders. In the East their nesting is restricted largely to coastal wetlands dominated by *Spartina* spp. They also occur in mangroves in the south, and one southwestern subspecies actually frequents freshwater marshes. Clapper Rails are territorial during breeding season, and males defend their territory against other males and frequently even fight with gulls over nest sites. Both sexes have an extensive vocal repertoire. Males have an advertising call consisting of a series of *kek* notes, and females attract males with *kek-burrrr* calls. The clapper or clatter calls, *chock-chock-chock-chock*, given during breeding season, serve as a means of communication between mated birds and sometimes includes duets. They also produce *wheat*, *purr*, *gip*, and *kak* calls. Male displays include flattening and spreading the tail with the bill pointing downwards and the head swaying from side to side and a display with neck stretched and bill open. Males also courtship-feed females.

Clapper Rails tend to nest in loose colonies. Their choice of habitat may be based on the quality of the patch rather than sociality. Nest sites are above the high tide line on clumps of vegetation or in shrubs and are usually hidden by grass. The nest, constructed mostly by the male, consists of a bulky platform of dry grasses and may be domed. If flooding occurs, the pair may increase the height of the platform. The

male brings in grass, which the incubating female tucks under the eggs. Nests may also have ramps leading up from the water. As many as a half-dozen brood nests may be constructed, which float at high tide, and upon which the adults brood chicks. The clutch size is highly variable, consisting of seven to eleven cream-colored and dark-blotched eggs. Both parents incubate for three weeks until hatching. Adults will give broken-wing distraction displays if the nest is approached. The chicks are semiprecocial, covered with down, with eyes open. They are incapable of leaving the nest for at least an hour and are brooded on brood nests for several days. The chicks receive food fragments from the adults, forage in family groups, and receive some degree of parental care for up to six weeks. Adults may carry chicks to safety from tidal flooding.

Clapper Rails are opportunistic feeders, and though they prey mostly on fiddler crabs, they will also take aquatic insects, polychaete worms, snails, slugs, grasshoppers, amphipods, isopods, clams, minnows, and the eggs of gulls. They swallow small crabs whole but dismember larger ones. Clapper Rails have salt glands, which allow them to drink salt water, and they regurgitate pellets of crustacean and insect exoskeletons and mollusk shells. Foraging is mainly visual by gleaning and shallow probing, but the birds have large olfactory lobes and may use them to locate prey. They forage mostly in emergent vegetation and at the edge of mudflats.

Clapper Rails are preyed upon by Fish Crows, owls, eagles, hawks, and even Great Blue Herons. They are nocturnal migrants that fly low and frequently strike towers. Occasionally one will starve when a bivalve has clamped onto its bill or toes. Historically hunted for food and by market hunters, they are still legally hunted for sport in most states along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. Clapper Rails face a limited threat from pesticides and habitat degradation. Losses have been severe in California. Storm tides can have a devastating effect during nesting season. Nevertheless, in the East populations appear to be stable, although three western subspecies are federally Endangered. Given proper habitat management and protection, most populations of this resilient species seem secure. 🐦

William E. Davis, Jr.




CLAPPER RAIL BY DAVID LARSON

About the Cover Artist: Paul Donahue

Paul Donahue is a bird artist, bird recordist, environmental activist, and tree climber. He has been painting and drawing birds since he began watching them during his early teens. Paul occasionally works in pencil or pen and ink, but most of his work is done in acrylics and watercolor. His favorite subjects are shorebirds, raptors, and tropical birds.

Paul divides his time between California, Maine, and South America. He made his first trip to South America in 1972 and has since spent much time in the tropics, particularly in the rainforests of the western Amazon Basin. There Paul birds, paints, tape-records, and leads natural history trips. Since 1988, his time in the tropics has been concentrated in the rainforest canopy, where he and his wife, Teresa Wood, have constructed two canopy walkways and dozens of observation platforms. They have taught over two thousand people to climb safely into the forest canopy on ropes. They also work with the environmental organization Tropical Nature to train its ecotourism guides in Peru and Brazil.

Back in the U.S., Paul works with the Maine environmental organization Forest Ecology Network, editing its newspaper, *The Maine Woods*. Paul can be contacted through his website at <<http://www.pauldonahue.net>>. 

Birds of Conservation Concern 2008

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Division of Migratory Bird Management has just announced the availability of its publication, *Birds of Conservation Concern 2008*. As many of you know, this publication identifies species, subspecies, and populations of migratory and non-migratory birds most in need of additional conservation actions.

This list was created because Congress — when it enacted amendments to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act in 1988 — directed the USFWS to: “identify species, subspecies, and populations of all migratory nongame birds that, without additional conservation actions, are likely to become candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act [ESA] of 1973” (The first list was published in 1995 and the next in 2002.)

Clearly, *Birds of Conservation Concern 2008* should help focus and inform the conservation efforts of birders and help make the public more aware of bird-conservation priorities. The highly useful 91-page publication can be viewed and downloaded at <<http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/reports/BCC2008/BCC2008m.pdf>>.

AT A GLANCE

February 2009




WAYNE R. PETERSEN

Once again readers are treated to a south-end view of a northbound mystery bird, only this time the bird is swimming instead of flying or perched. The fact that the north end (a.k.a. the head) of the mystery species is under water would suggest that it is a diving bird. This assumption is reinforced by the bird's forward-leaning posture and the fact that its left leg is out of the water. Both suggest that the fowl is about to dive rather than simply dabble in shallow water. The rear placement of the bird's legs further indicates that it is a diver, rather than a species that merely tips up in shallow water when feeding (e.g., Mallard), or one that spends a lot of time moving around on dry land (e.g., Green-winged Teal).

Other than ducks, there are only a few diving birds that are predominately white below. Among these are loons, grebes, and alcids. None of these birds have tails as long and pointed as that of the mystery diver, other than possibly a Razorbill. A Razorbill, however, has a black tail without white at the edges as shown in the photograph. Also, a close look reveals that the dorsal surface of the bird in the picture is not entirely black, the case with most eastern alcids; instead, it shows a contrasting color in the area of the scapulars — feathers that are uniformly black in a Razorbill.

With this information in mind, it is fair to assume that the pictured diver is a duck. The posterior placement of the mystery bird's legs suggests a sea duck (e.g., eider, scoter, Long-tailed Duck, etc.) rather than a member of another diving duck group (e.g., scaup, goldeneye, merganser, etc.). These are species with more centrally

placed legs, which allow them to take flight more readily than sea ducks. Having narrowed the field to this point, the only species of sea duck with white underparts, a dark (black) back, and contrasting colored (brown) scapulars is the Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*). The absence of obviously long pointed tail feathers indicates that the pictured individual is a female.

Long-tailed Ducks concentrate both in sheltered bays and on the open sea when visiting Massachusetts waters in the fall, winter, and spring. During migration they occasionally appear on large inland lakes, and in summer a few non-breeding birds may appear at scattered locations along the coast. The greatest concentration of Long-tailed Ducks in North America occurs in the shoal waters around Nantucket in mid-winter, where hundreds of thousands can regularly be observed flying out to the Nantucket Shoals to feed during the daytime, only to return in the afternoon to Nantucket Sound to spend the night. The author photographed the pictured female Long-tailed Duck in Plymouth on January 21, 2009. 

Wayne R. Petersen

Contribute to Bird Observer

Bird Observer gladly considers for publication manuscripts or article proposals from any member of the birding community. We are also interested in considering quality photographs with avian themes. The only requirement is that material be relevant to New England birds and birders.

Among the types of material we'd like to see:

- Articles presenting original scientific research
- Documentation of significant records
- "Hot Birds" photographs of rare or unusual birds in New England
- Field notes describing interesting encounters with birds
- Biographies of ornithologists or birders with regional ties
- Results of surveys and censuses
- "Where to Go" articles describing good birding locales
- "Pocket Places," brief descriptions of small hotspots
- Articles on birding equipment or methods
- Notices and news items

Send manuscripts or proposals to the Editor: Paul Fitzgerald, 54 Whitcomb Ave., Hingham, MA 02043, or via email attachments in Word doc or txt or rtf formats to paulf-1@comcast.net. Send photographs (prints or slides) to the Production Editor: David Larson, 736 Salem Street, Bradford, MA 01835, or for digital images, via email at redpoll@comcast.net.

AT A GLANCE



WAYNE R. PETERSEN

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

IF YOU CARE, LEAVE THEM THERE!

LATE SPRING TO SUMMER IS BABY BIRD TIME.

REMEMBER:

- Only people who are licensed rehabilitators, or veterinarians who occasionally treat wildlife on an emergency basis, may legally care for wildlife.
- Many backyard birds leave their nests days before they can fly. The parent birds will continue to care for their young, even away from the nest, so leave the young birds alone.
- If you find a bird and have already handled it, place the bird back in the nest or in a tree or shrub close by. Birds lack a sense of smell and will not reject a youngster placed back in the nest.
- To protect the young birds, keep cats and dogs away or move the chick to the nearest shrub or natural cover. Then leave the area and allow the parent birds to respond to the food-begging calls of their young.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE:

<http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/wildlife/rehab/wildlife_rehab.htm> and
<<http://www.massaudubon.org/printwildlife.php?id=42>>

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