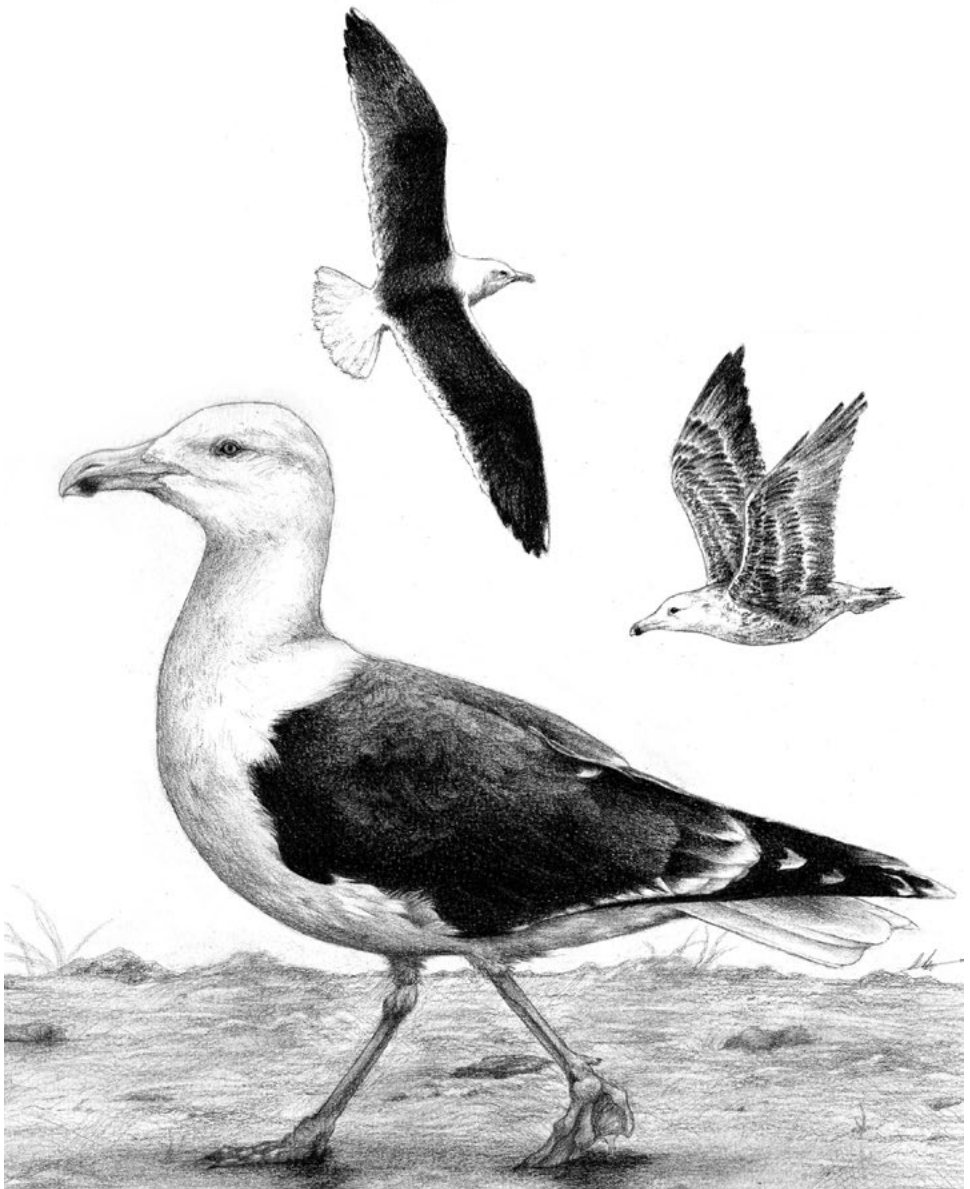


# Bird Observer

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VOLUME 49, NUMBER 1

FEBRUARY 2021



# HOT BIRDS

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**Bullock's Oriole** came east in numbers this fall and winter. The first and longest-staying arrived at the feeders of Ellen Freda and Steven Magnell in Cohasset on November 2, appeared for the Quincy CBC, and has stayed on through press time in mid-January. In Seekonk on November 8, Natalie Gruppuso encountered two orioles eating crabapples together and photographed one of them. The third showed up at Amie Holen's feeders in Haverhill December 4–14. Richard Littauer took the photo on the right



Christine Goddard of Sudbury photographed a **Varied Thrush** near her feeders the day before New Year's Eve. It was the second found in New England in December. It appeared around the same time that one in Rhode Island, about 40 miles to the south, stopped showing up after a week-plus of sightings. The two were clearly different individuals—the Rhode Island bird was male and the one in Massachusetts was a female. Christine's thrush was still visiting just before press time. Sam Zhang took the photo on the right.



The first **Boreal Chickadees** to irrupt into Massachusetts this autumn were uncooperative. Two reported in early November were seen briefly and not photographed. However, a friendlier one appeared in Wellfleet on December 7—only the second found on Cape Cod—and returned to the feeders of Christine and Alan Hight for the next two days. The most recent, visiting Lori van Handel's feeders in Williamstown on December 29, has stayed over two weeks later up through press time. Peter Johnson-Staub took the photo on the left.



Ben Shamgochian came across a western-type *Empidonax* flycatcher near Fresh Pond, Cambridge, on November 24. It remained in the area through December 16, during which time birders were able to record its calls. The recordings pointed to **Pacific-Slope Flycatcher**, only the second state record, coming just over a year after the state's first appeared in Hadley. Bill Millett took the photo on the left.

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# Bird Observer

A bimonthly journal— to support and promote the observation, understanding, and conservation of the wild birds of New England.

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# Birding Burlington, Vermont, along the Island Line Trail

*Nathaniel Sharp*

The city of Burlington, Vermont, is bordered by Lake Champlain to the west and Vermont's highest peak, Mount Mansfield, to the east. To the north lie the Champlain Islands and the Canadian border, and to the south, the rich agricultural lands of the Champlain Valley. The Burlington area and all birding locations described in this article are located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Abenaki Nation and People. As visitors on the land of the Abenaki People, all are encouraged to pay their respects to them, to the wisdom of their elders, and to their culture.

★ Burlington, Vermont



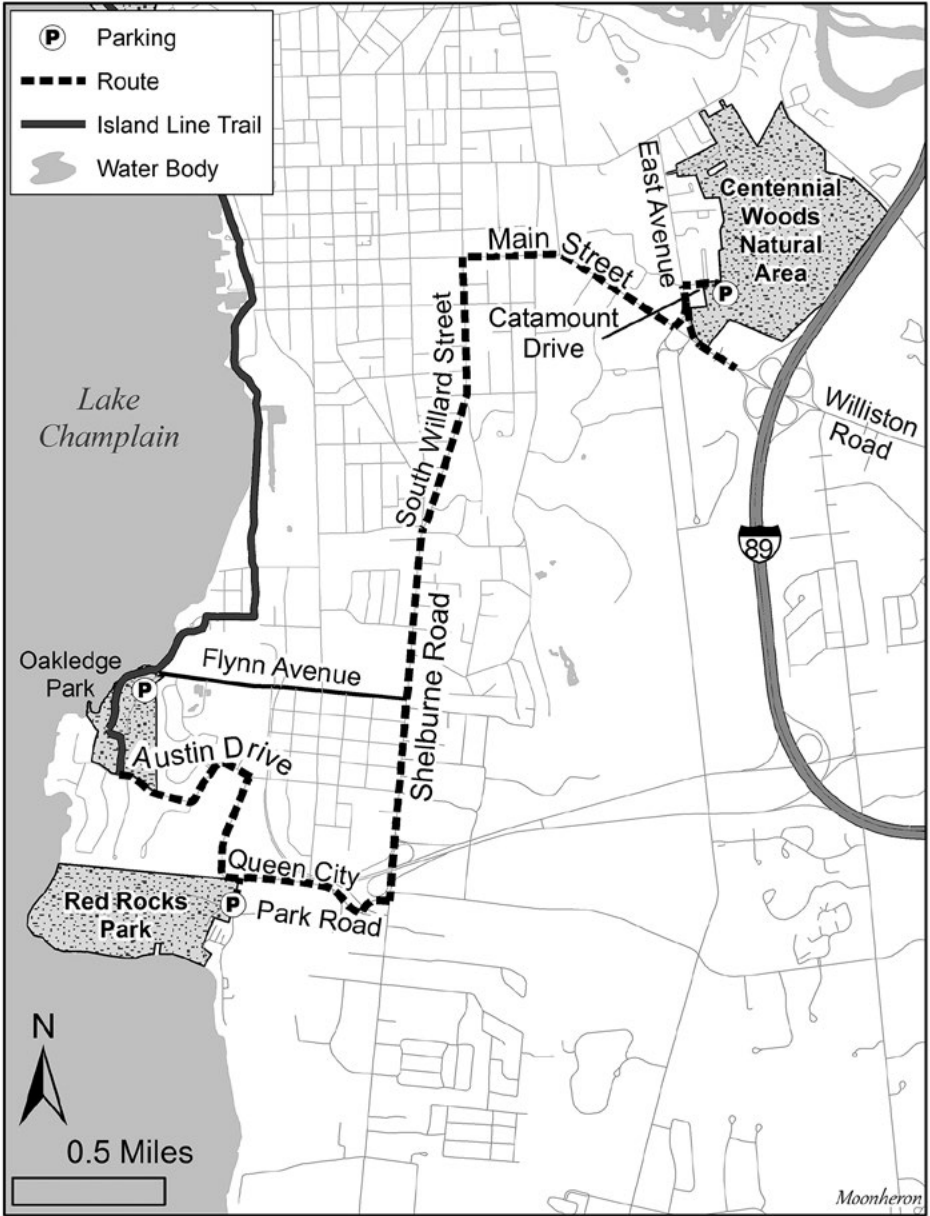
A confluence of birds, wildlife, lands, and people, Burlington has a robust ornithological history spurred on by an active community of longtime local birders and an ever-present group of budding ornithologists and nature-minded students at the University of Vermont. Professors at the Rubenstein School of the Environment and Natural Resources, including but not limited to Allan Strong, Trish O’Kane, and Michael McDonald, are the driving force behind the birding energy that radiates from this campus; they often can be found with binoculars slung over their shoulders and a group of students in tow. As one of those students, I spent several years getting to know the best birding locations within walking, biking, and driving distance of the campus.

Many of the best birding spots in the Burlington area can be accessed along a biking and walking path along the shore of Lake Champlain called the Island Line Trail, so bring your bike or sturdy hiking shoes. Most of this article focuses on birding this trail by bike or on foot. I include several parking areas where drivers can access the bike trail and walk to the hotspots from there. Before exploring the Island Line Trail, I include two locations where you will drive: Centennial Woods Natural Area near the University of Vermont’s campus, then Red Rocks Park, along the shore of Lake Champlain.

Visitors to Burlington coming from the south will head North on Interstate 89 and take Exit 14W US-2/Williston Road (which turns into US-2/Main Street at East Avenue) into the city, where you will see the bustling sidewalks of the university campus. Upon cresting a slight hill, you will catch your first sight of the glimmering waters of Lake Champlain and the Adirondack Mountains towering in the distance.

Before you cruise past the main campus, it is worth checking out a hidden gem well known to students as one of the most diverse and easily accessible birding hotspots in Burlington—Centennial Woods Natural Area. Students and professors love this outdoor classroom due to its close proximity to campus.

After you exit the highway onto Williston Road, turn right in 0.2 mile onto East Avenue. Drive 0.2 mile and turn right at the stoplight onto Catamount Drive. (On some



Map of Burlington, Vermont.

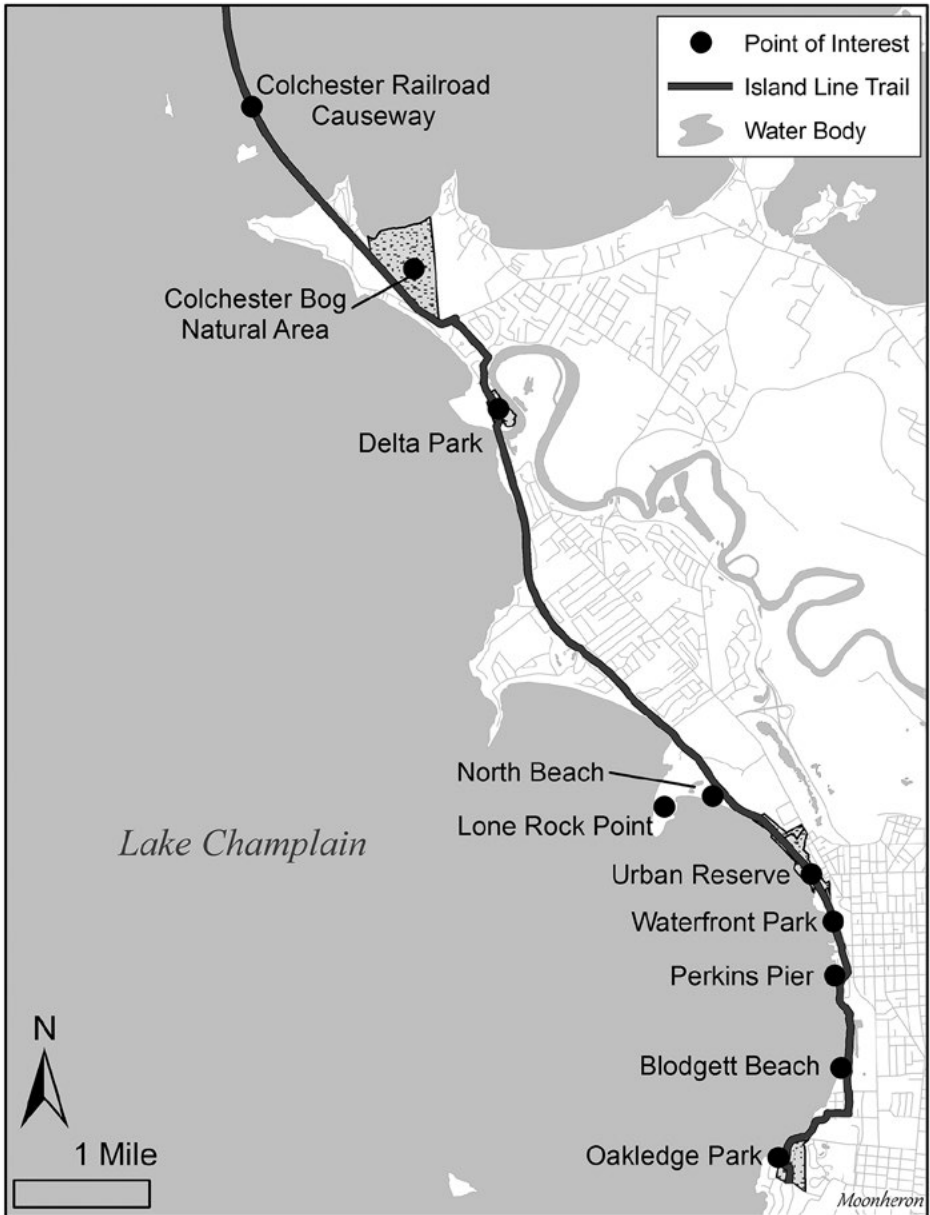
maps, this street is called Carrigan Drive.) In about 350 feet, there is a parking lot on the right directly across from Centennial Court on the left. Turn into this parking lot, and follow it to the end where you will find 4–5 parking spaces allotted to visitors of Centennial Woods. Across the street, the entrance to Centennial Woods Natural Area is marked with a sign.

Instead of entering Centennial Woods at this trailhead, walk south on Catamount Drive to one of a few scattered retention ponds, where Common Yellowthroats and Great Blue Herons hide in the reeds, and mixed flocks of sparrows and warblers sometimes gather in migration. Keeping your eyes to the skies, you may see the local Merlins, Peregrine Falcons, or Common Ravens flying overhead. Continue down the road to a large parking lot, and look for an entrance to the woods in the northwest corner of the lot; this will put you in the middle of a small clearing, where Lincoln’s Sparrows, Wilson’s Warblers, and Nashville Warblers, among others, can be found in the tangles of sumac and goldenrod. Continuing on the well-marked and easily navigable trails, you will enter the heart of the forest. Walk through stands of mature conifers and mixed hardwoods and check the hemlocks for the resident Barred Owls. Northern Saw-whet Owls also have been found roosting in these woods.

Camera trapping studies have revealed that fisher, gray fox, and many other mammals travel through or reside in this forest. Searching for animal tracks in the snow can be an engaging distraction during a slow birding day in winter. No matter which trail you take, you will eventually end up at some portion of Centennial Brook, a meandering trickle of water that broadens into a substantial wetland at certain places. Along the creek and the powerline corridor toward the north end of Centennial Woods, you may find any number of the 20-plus warbler species that have been reported here during spring and fall migration. The wastewater retention pond in the north end of the woods often hosts Mallards, American Black Ducks, and Wood Ducks, and for the last several years has been home to a nesting pair of Eastern Phoebes. Brown Creepers, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Black-capped Chickadees, and Tufted Titmice are a near-constant presence throughout the woods. During migration, the woods often host an interesting mix of warblers, vireos, and other migrants. Here are a couple of links to maps of Centennial Woods: <<https://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/centennial-woods>> and <<https://www.alltrails.com/explore/trail/us/vermont/centennial-woods-loop--2?mobileMap=false&ref=sidebar-static-map&ref=sidebar-view-full-map>>

The rest of the trip focuses on Lake Champlain, the main attraction for birders visiting Burlington. This unofficial Great Lake—120 miles long and 12 miles at its widest—has influenced the birds, the weather, and the people of the Champlain Valley for tens of thousands of years. Home to lake trout and—depending on whom you ask—prehistoric lake monsters, Lake Champlain has hundreds of birding locations along its shores. No matter where you find yourself birding along the lake, be sure to keep your eyes peeled for any sign of Champ, the fabled plesiosaur-like denizen of the deep.

The first stop at Lake Champlain is Red Rocks Park. Located in South Burlington, this park is the first stop on a birding journey along the Burlington coast of Lake Champlain that can be completed on foot, by bike, by car, or a combination. When you leave Centennial Woods, turn left onto East Avenue from Catamount Drive, then



Map of Island Line Trail.



turn right onto Main Street. Follow Main Street for 0.8 mile, then turn left onto South Willard Street. In 0.9 mile, South Willard Street bears left and becomes Route US-7/ Shelburne Road. Continue driving south for 1.3 miles, then turn right onto Queen City Park Road and right again to stay on Queen City Park Road. In 0.5 mile, take a left onto Central Avenue; the parking area for Red Rocks Park is on the right.

Red Rocks Park is named for its sheer cliffs composed of red Monkton quartzite. The cliffs are familiar to local thrill-seekers as prime (though off-limits) cliff-jumping spots, and to Common Ravens and Peregrine Falcons as excellent nesting and perching locations. To get to the overlooks, walk along the wide, well-maintained trails accessible from the roadside parking lot. It is best to arrive early during spring and summer because this location is popular with dog walkers. Here is the link to the trail map: <[http://cms6.revize.com/revize/southburlington/document\\_center/RecsParks/RedRocksTrailMap.pdf](http://cms6.revize.com/revize/southburlington/document_center/RecsParks/RedRocksTrailMap.pdf)>. Follow the trails through mixed hardwood forests and keep an eye and an ear out for warblers and vireos moving through the treetops. Spring migration, in particular, is a great time to bird Red Rocks Park. Year in, year out, I often find many of the first returning migrants of the season here, including Great Crested Flycatchers, Blackburnian Warblers, and Pine Warblers.

As you head toward the cliffs, you will enter one of the more interesting forest communities along Lake Champlain that comprises mainly northern white cedars, which become more stunted and gnarled as you approach the cliffs. If you need to take a break from straining your eyes to look for birds in the canopy, you can ward off warbler-neck by looking out across Lake Champlain and scanning the water for Buffleheads and Double-crested Cormorants, as well as Common Ravens dipping and diving on the air currents. A visit to the park in spring—ideal for seeking migrants—can also yield phenomenal numbers of ephemeral wildflowers, with lush carpets of trout lily, red and large white trilliums, dutchman's breeches, and rock harlequin lining the sides of the trail.

From Red Rocks Park, bike or walk north on Central Avenue for 0.1 mile, turn left onto Queen City Park Road, and travel 0.4 mile, past the headquarters of Burton Snowboards, to Austin Drive. Turn left and continue for 0.5 mile until you reach a bike path on your right. This is the Island Line Trail, a 14-mile rail trail with paved and crushed gravel surfaces suitable for bikers and walkers. It will take you north along Lake Champlain, through the bustling Burlington waterfront, all the way to the Colchester Railroad Causeway, a thin strip of land jutting more than 2.5 miles into the middle of the lake. <<http://www.champlainbikeways.org/pdf/2017-Island-Line-Trail-Map.pdf>> You can access a multitude of birding locations along the trail whether you are traveling by foot or on a bike, or you can drive to several places along the trail where you can park and get out to bird. Whether you bird Burlington in one day or several, the Island Trail Line is a useful route for birding the top spots in Burlington.

Bike or walk along the Island Line Trail for 0.5 mile to the first birding stop at Oakledge Park. If you are driving, parking is available for Oakledge Park on Flynn Avenue (\$2/hour May-October). Oakledge Park features a mixture of open recreational fields and wooded areas, with another large lakeside patch of northern white cedars. The cedars often host mixed flocks of warblers and sparrows in spring and fall



Colchester Railroad Causeway. All photographs by the author.

migration. As you travel through the park, stop to scan the lake from the Oakledge rocks or from Blanchard Beach, just north of the park. You may find a Red-breasted Merganser mixed in with Common Mergansers, or a Barrow's Goldeneye hiding out in the flocks of Common Goldeneye that gather in fall and winter.

Walk or bike north on the rail trail for about 1.0 mile from Oakledge Park, past Blanchard Beach, to Blodgett Beach. Blodgett Beach is another great place to stop and scan the lake, where there are often flocks of gulls, geese, and ducks to pick through for prizes such as Iceland Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Cackling Goose, and Horned Grebe. If you put the beach at your back, you will notice the more industrial side of Burlington's waterfront, where the train tracks and trainyard harken back to a time when lumber and other goods, rather than maple syrup and IPAs, were the major exports shipped up and down the lake.

Go 0.5 mile farther and you will arrive at Perkins Pier. The pier—as well as the surrounding area—is another great location to set up a scope and scan the lake and the breakwater. In summer, you may be lucky enough to spot a flyover Caspian Tern. In winter, peruse the groups of ducks and gulls on the lake and scan the concrete breakwater for a perched Snowy Owl or a flock of Snow Buntings. You can drive to Perkins Pier and park in the lot (\$8 parking fee May-October). There is no parking at Blodgett Beach, so if you want to bird there, you'll have to walk the mile roundtrip between Perkins Pier and Blodgett Beach.

From Perkins Pier, continue north on the bike path for 0.3 mile to Burlington's Waterfront Park and breakwater. Drivers can park at the Pease Lot (\$3/hour in summer, \$2/hour in winter) at the western end of College Street. This is another place to scan



Caspian Tern.

the lake for ducks and gulls. My most memorable sighting at this location was when a stunning drake Harlequin Duck flew into the water just a few feet from where I stood waiting to catch a bus. Perhaps the most scenic part of Burlington, the waterfront boardwalk will provide you with stunning views across Lake Champlain to the Adirondacks. While you are birding your way through the waterfront, a stop at one of the numerous Creemee stands for Vermont's famous maple soft-serve is a must, as is a brief birds-and-beers break from the patio of the incomparable Foam Brewers.

As you bird your way north past Waterfront Park, the trail parallels the train tracks on your right and passes a skate park on your left. A little farther north and you will enter an area known as the Urban Reserve. A parking lot adjacent to the skate park between Penny Lane and Lake Street offers free parking year-round. This area, a piece of land that once was the heart of industry on the Burlington shoreline, hosts a dog park with open fields, many dense tangles of sumac and honeysuckle, and several spots for lake-watching. While completing an undergraduate project, I spent a lot of time documenting the birdlife of this seemingly insignificant spot and was delighted to find it full of migrants in spring. During spring migration, walking the bike path or the well-worn trails and sections of exposed concrete, I found mixed flocks of warblers, including Blackburnian, Wilson's, and Nashville warblers, among others, as well as a Philadelphia Vireo on one occasion. The Urban Reserve is also a great spot for duck-watching in fall and winter, where you can view the lake and expect to find scoters, grebes, mergansers, and more.

Travel about 0.5 mile north on the Island Line Trail from the Urban Reserve, and you will arrive at the entrance to North Beach. To the right of the bike trail is the North Beach campground. North Beach is a bustling summer destination that is often a little quieter during spring and fall. It has several trails, lake vantage points, and a large pond that can host waterfowl and wading birds. North Beach is accessible by car. You can park in the lot at the end of Institute Road (\$8 May-October).



Bohemian Waxwings feeding on crabapples.

Adjacent to North Beach is Rock Point Peninsula, 130 acres of conservation land owned by the Episcopal Church of Vermont that is open to the public. At the end of the peninsula is one of Vermont's hidden gems, Lone Rock Point. Birding Lone Rock Point at any time of year is rewarding, though during mud season in early spring, some of the trails may be closed.

No matter how you arrive, all visitors are required to fill out a visitor pass online before visiting. The pass is free and you can download it from <<https://www.rockpointvt.org/trails>>. If you have parked at North Beach, it is a five-minute drive to a universal access parking lot off Rock Point Road, and you can pick up the trail to Lone Point Rock from there. To walk or bike to Rock Point, exit the Island Line Trail and walk through the campground, head up Institute Road, then turn left onto Rock Point Road.

Walking west on Rock Point Road, you will cross a bridge over the Island Line Trail. Follow the road to the left as it turns to gravel. Towering red pines and shagbark hickories signify a change in forest composition. You can find Brown Creepers and Pileated Woodpeckers scaling the shaggy bark of the hickories. Walk down the road past thick tangles of blackberry, sumac, planted yews, and fruiting trees and search for sparrows, vireos, and warblers, which are often found here in great numbers. After you walk past a private house and garden, you will see an interpretive sign kiosk with a trail map. Follow the trail to the left, which will take you through a forest of maples, oaks, and beech to an area known as the parade ground. This open field of goldenrod can be productive during fall migration, along with the surrounding edge habitat. Lincoln's Sparrows, Tennessee Warblers, Ruffed Grouse, and Philadelphia Vireos are just a few highlights.



Champlain Thrust Fault and Lone Rock Beach.

Make your way across the field and back into the forest and follow the newly revamped trail south along the lakeshore to Lone Rock Point, which juts out into Lake Champlain. Geologically similar to Red Rocks Park, Lone Rock Point is the best place in Vermont to see the Champlain Thrust Fault. Stretching for almost 200 miles, this outcropping of Lower Cambrian Dunham dolostone that projects over the calcite-streaked shale of the Middle Ordovician Iberville Formation is nowhere more visible and stunning than at Lone Rock Point. This impressive geologic formation of older dolostone pushed up over newer shale is only made better by the Peregrine Falcons that nest nearby and often perch on the stunted, centuries-old white cedars hanging off the cliff face. Take one last look across the lake in search of loons and ducks, then return to North Beach, pick up the bike trail, and head to the next stop on this Burlington birding journey—Delta Park.

From the North Beach/Lone Rock Point area, Delta Park is 3.7 miles north along the Island Line Trail and, at mile 7, is the halfway point of the bike trail. If you have been walking the bike path, you may want to hop back in your car and drive to Delta Park, which is in Colchester, the town north of Burlington. The Department of Fish and Wildlife Access Area at Colchester Point is a large parking lot that can be accessed from Windemere Way. It is just north of Delta Park, so walk south along the bike path to explore the park. <<https://www.wvdp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Delta-Park-Trail-Map.pdf>>

Biking or walking to Delta Park from North Beach, you will first see the park's namesake delta from the bridge spanning the outflow of the Winooski River into Lake Champlain. Scan the lake from this vantage point to find Bald Eagles in just about



Pine Warbler.

any season. In summer, there are often Caspian and Common terns perched or flying over the water. Cross the bridge and travel over the forest floor on an elevated path that was installed so bikers and walkers could traverse the delta without impacting the movements of reptiles, amphibians, and mammals. Between spring and fall migration, more than 25 species of warblers have been found at Delta Park, often concentrated in the woods and tangles on either side of the path. Flooded sections along the path are magnets for Wood Ducks and Rusty Blackbirds.

The elevated bike trail cuts through the woods for about 0.5 mile and ends at a suburban street, Windemere Way. Take a left down a small gravel road toward a secondary parking lot, where a trail leads to the lake. The wooded upland of Delta Park is a spectacular birding location; however, the wetlands, beaches, and shallow waters of the Delta Park lakeshore have racked up a total of 244 species—higher than any other location in Vermont. This represents more than 60% of the entire state bird list. During 2020, more than 200 species were reported to Vermont eBird from Delta Park.

Birding Delta Park is highly dependent on water levels, and because the wetland and delta system are located on a lake and do not experience tides, birding and access conditions can vary widely by season and year. In drought years when the lake levels are low, vast mudflats are exposed, and visitors can walk from the beach area all the way around the marsh to the base of the Island Line Trail bridge. Caspian and Common terns are frequently found perching on downed trees along the lakeshore. Green Herons, Great Egrets, Virginia Rails, and even Least Bitterns are often found in the marshes. Delta Park is a magnet for local rarities; a few notable records from the last few years include Nelson's Sparrow, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Pomarine Jaeger, and Sabine's Gull.

During late summer and early fall, there is perhaps no place in Vermont where you can encounter a higher diversity of shorebirds. Semipalmated Sandpipers and



Red Knot.

Semipalmated Plovers are common, as are Pectoral Sandpipers and Least Sandpipers. Uncommon but regular shorebirds include Whimbrel, Stilt Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Red Knot, American Golden-Plover, Hudsonian Godwit, White-rumped Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, and Buff-breasted Sandpiper. With such an abundance of shorebirds, predators such as Peregrine Falcons and Merlins will frequently patrol the shores, and Northern Harrier, Short-eared Owl, and even Northern Goshawk hunt the marshes. When birding Delta Park during peak shorebird migration, it is best to wear waterproof footwear or sandals because you may have to do a little wading to access the shorebird flocks farther out on the delta. That being said, footing is steady and sure in most areas. There are few things better than standing barefoot in Lake Champlain scanning flocks of shorebirds on a sunny August day.

In winter, during years when the lake remains unfrozen, Delta Park can be a productive spot for winter ducks and gulls. Flocks of American Pipit, Horned Lark, and Snow Bunting are often found on the beach, along with the occasional Lapland Longspur. During any time of year, you will likely bump into the regulars—birders who frequent Delta Park and are happy to show you around if you are a birder new to the area.

There is one spot a little farther north that is a must-see for any birder visiting the Burlington area, and that is the Colchester Railroad Causeway. When you leave Delta Park and travel north, the Island Line Trail briefly follows the suburban streets of Windemere Way, Biscayne Heights, and Colchester Point Road before it resumes the paved, bikes-and-pedestrians-only path. You will continue through the Colchester Bog Natural Area, where you may find Rusty Blackbirds, Marsh Wrens, a nice mix of warblers and sparrows, and even some ripe blueberries in season. Two miles up the trail from Delta Park, you will arrive at the Colchester Railroad Causeway, a thin strip



Snowy Owl.

of rocks and concrete extending almost three miles out into Lake Champlain, where it abruptly ends at The Cut, a 200-foot gap in the causeway. To connect the Colchester end of the causeway with the end for Grand Isle County and the Champlain Islands, there is a seasonal bike ferry that runs between Memorial Day and Columbus Day. Officially, the Island Line Trail ends in South Hero.

There is a parking lot located on Mills Point Road just south of its intersection with the Island Line Trail. Drivers can park here and walk along the bike path to the Colchester Causeway, the last stop along this birding route. If you want to walk through the Colchester Bog first, you can park at the southern tip of this area off of Colchester Point Road near the Airport Park Playground and ball fields and follow the road to pick up the Island Line trail.

The causeway is another location with variable lake levels, and vast mudflats will emerge from year to year and season to season. A scope is extremely helpful here, though not all birds will be distant. I was startled and thrilled to stumble upon a Northern Shrike hunting from the windblown treetops that line the causeway. You can often flush Wilson's Snipe, Snow Bunting, and Savannah Sparrow from the rocks along the causeway.

The Colchester Causeway is a phenomenal location to find ducks, shorebirds, and gulls. In late fall and winter, flocks of Greater and Lesser scaups numbering in the thousands will often gather just off the causeway, and careful observers may be lucky enough to pick out a Tufted Duck among them. Scan groups of Ring-billed, Herring, and Great Black-backed gulls for Iceland, Glaucous, and Lesser Black-backed gulls. Common and Barrow's goldeneye, Blue-winged and Green-winged teal, and Common, Hooded, and Red-breasted mergansers all can be found on the lake on either side of



the causeway. During irruption years, multiple Snowy Owls have been found on the causeway and surrounding islands. Many of the same species of shorebirds found at Delta Park often can be found along the causeway's mudflats.

Just about any time of year you visit the causeway, you will find a diverse assemblage of birds. Perhaps my favorite time of year to visit is the harshest. Trudging out to the tip of the causeway in February to find a Snowy Owl's piercing yellow eyes staring at me is my idea of the essential experience of birding during a Vermont winter. Visitors should pay close attention to weather and wind conditions and forecasts before venturing out onto the causeway, particularly during winter.

At the end of a long birding day in Burlington, there is no better place to stop than the patio of Zero Gravity Brewery off Pine Street in Burlington's arts district, the South End. While you sip a Bob White Belgian Wit, or a Bobolink Farmhouse Saison, you can scan the skies for Black-crowned Night-Herons or Common Nighthawks. During the winter, Burlington's resident crows come in to their South End roost, swirling in cacophonous flocks of hundreds of birds descending on a single location to spend the night.

Good winter birding spots not included in this birding route are the Burlington Wastewater Treatment Plant on Riverside Avenue and many locations on the campus of University of Vermont. Along East Avenue across from Catamount Drive, there is a large group of birches and fruiting trees that have hosted flocks of Common Redpolls, Pine Grosbeaks, and Bohemian and Cedar waxwings during irruption years. Ornamental crabapples and hawthorns abound across campus and can be magnets for these brash visitors from the north. Walking any of the campus greens in winter, you can find the more common frugivores such as American Robins and Cedar Waxwings; exceptional years have seen high counts of 300 Bohemian Waxwings and 25 Pine Grosbeaks. Perhaps no visitor to campus drew more attention than the Snowy Owl in 2018, a significant irruption year for this species.

Although Burlington may lack the species that draw many birders to Vermont, such as the Bicknell's Thrush of the Green Mountains or the Spruce Grouse of the Northeast Kingdom, it hosts a vast array of bird species in any season and is accessible, stunningly beautiful, fun to explore, and a necessary stop on any birder's trip to the Green Mountain State. When you visit, be sure to report your sightings to Vermont eBird. Consider uploading photos of plants, fungi, insects, and wildlife to iNaturalist where they can be shared with the Vermont Atlas of Life. Whether your visit to Burlington coincides with the peak of spring migration or the coldest day of a Vermont winter, you are sure to find some exciting species. No matter what time of year you visit, the Ben & Jerry's scoop shop will be open to celebrate in the event you found any life birds. 🐦

*Nathaniel Sharp has been a birder and naturalist since the age of nine. Born and raised in the Philadelphia suburbs, he graduated from the University of Vermont in 2018 with a degree in Wildlife Biology. Currently working as a staff biologist at the Vermont Center for Ecostudies, he spends his field seasons banding Bicknell's Thrushes on Mount Mansfield, netting rare bees in Vermont's meadows, and convincing people that "iNaturalisting" and "eBirding" are verbs they should start using.*


## Over 2,000 acres of wildlife lands permanently conserved

### **Major land conservation project opens up new access for outdoor recreation and protects critical wildlife habitat.**

In December, MassWildlife acquired a 2,038-acre conservation restriction in Shutesbury, Pelham, and Leverett. The property will continue to be owned and maintained by W.D. Cowls, Inc. of North Amherst as a sustainable working forest. The conservation restriction, sometimes called a conservation easement, permanently protects the property which is made up of several large forested parcels. The acquisition will conserve critical wildlife habitat, safeguard water resources, and ensure continued public access to the property for hunting, fishing, hiking, wildlife watching, and other outdoor recreation. This major land protection project was made possible through a partnership with the Department of Fish and Game, Kestrel Land Trust, W.D. Cowls, and the federal Forest Legacy Program.

More than 95 percent of the Walter Cowls Jones Working Forest, as the property will be called, is identified as Core Habitat or Critical Natural Landscape by MassWildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program and is essential for ensuring the long-term survival of rare and common wildlife. Two reptiles listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act will benefit from the conservation of this property, as will forest birds like the Scarlet Tanager, Blackburnian Warbler, and Canada Warbler. Visitors may also find common wildlife on the property, such as white-tailed deer, Wild Turkey, porcupine, snowshoe hare, and Ruffed Grouse. This sizeable land acquisition benefits mammals with large home ranges such as black bear, moose, and bobcats. The area also includes headwater tributaries that are valuable habitat to coldwater aquatic wildlife.

Protecting this large block of forested lands will help sequester and store carbon and help mitigate climate change. Parts of the property are near other conserved lands including the Quabbin Reservation, Town of Amherst watershed land, Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area, and the Paul C. Jones Working Forest. Connecting large blocks of wildlife habitat provides plants and animals improved ability to adapt to changing climate conditions. The acquisition adds to the more than 220,00 acres of MassWildlife's Wildlife Management Areas and Wildlife Conservation Easements conserved statewide.

Discover MassWildlife lands near you: <<https://www.mass.gov/how-to/masswildlife-lands-viewer>>. 

# Observations from Several Months Spent on the Island of Tuckernuck in 2020

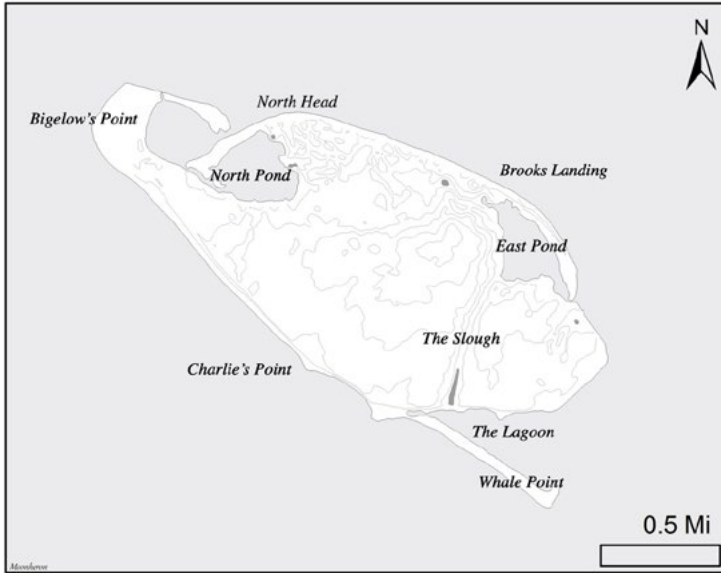
*Skylar Kardell*



The Gray Heron, originally found on September 5 on Tuckernuck, was subsequently refound the next day by a small party of observers on nearby Muskeget. All photographs by the author.

Tuckernuck is a privately-owned, low-lying island just a stone's throw away from the “faraway” land of Nantucket, 28 miles southeast of mainland Massachusetts. A few kilometers north of Tuckernuck lies Muskeget Island, a remote slump of sand with a well-documented breeding history of gulls, terns, skimmers, and ducks written and catalogued by Wetherbee, Forbush, Mackay, and Snow, among others. Renowned naturalist Skip Lazell called Tuckernuck “surely the most remarkable bit of land along our entire Atlantic coast.” (Lazell 1976, p. 36) Various organizations, including the Nature Conservancy and the town of Nantucket, have assumed responsibility for the endangered Roseate Terns that nest there, and actively work to combat the ongoing threats that other avian inhabitants and visiting humans pose toward these birds. Farther still, across the Muskeget Channel, the island of Chappaquiddick can be seen on clear days from Bigelow's Point or North Head on Tuckernuck, and often Cape Poge Lighthouse is visible as well. Nantucket Sound protects this broken archipelago from mammalian predators such as raccoon and otter as well as more sedentary raptors like Barred and Screech owls, all of which are unreported or absent here.

With just 38 residences, Tuckernuck exists without paved roads, an electric grid, or commercial enterprise—and no year-round population. From rare sandplain grasslands to young and stunted maritime oak forests,



Map of Tuckernuck.

Tuckernuck hosts at least 14 unique habitat types with their own specialized communities of vegetation (Brace 2012). Both salt- and freshwater bodies occur on the island. Along the northwest side, minuscule kettle ponds host a sustainable population of snapping and spotted turtles, as well as a diurnal roost for both night-heron species. Where one might find an abundance of pinkletinks—as spring peepers are locally known—on nearby Nantucket, the meadows here are notably quiet; not a single frog can be found on Tuckernuck. Just west of the island's only active runway, a brackish and phragmite-filled outwash pond affectionately known as “the slough” practically slices the island in two. Lazell (1976, p. 35) again sings the praises of this local wonder by claiming it is “one of the prettiest little fossil rivers I know of.” Herring and Great Black-backed gulls nest by the dozens along this morainal divide.

Whale Point stretches out from the southeast side of the island, connected by a tombolo. This is where the majority of the island's Piping Plover nest, as well as a Least Tern colony of moderate size. Although this site has not historically been the best location for shorebirding during the months of August and September, good numbers of *Calidris* sandpipers gathered this year at a putrid and stagnant pond formed by heavy accretion along the south side of the point, instead of at their usual haunts of North Head and East Pond. Bigelow's Point on the island's west end continues to change dramatically, with erosion here occurring at a rate of upwards of 15 feet per year in some spots. This year, its shape took on a particularly stunted form, although this site was still able to host more than a dozen pairs of Great Black-backed Gulls above the cliff face, and at least two pairs of Piping Plover below it. Bigelow's Point reliably provides the best sea watching on the island, especially following southeast



A Hooded Warbler that appeared on August 19 proved to be the first of several birds seen over the course of the fall season on Tuckernuck.

blows when pelagic birds sustained on scraps from squid trawlers offshore are prompted closer to land. Staging terns will loaf at both Whale and Bigelow's points in the thousands on their southbound migration.

North Head overlooks much of the sound and has breathtaking views of surrounding islands. This is the knobby part of Tuckernuck's northwest side, an area owned predominantly by two island families. The main flow of westbound passerine migrants in morning flight almost exclusively departs from this landmass, as proved by my experience performing fall migration morning flight counts at both Bigelow's Point and North Head. Some birds, such as *Setophaga* warblers and Red-eyed Vireo, will take off from this point at a high altitude and can be observed clearly flying out toward Muskeget, presumably with very little return flight. Other migrants, such as Pine Siskin—which began descending in mid-September in 2020—as well as nuthatches, woodpeckers, flycatchers, and orioles, will typically fly much lower. However, none of my encounters with true morning flight occurring on Tuckernuck has been able to rival the eye-level streams of migrants that may occur at other areas, such as Plum Island or Gooseberry Neck, where passerine fall migration can be observed. The exodus flights from Tuckernuck, less dramatic in numbers, are less clearly observable because of this difference in altitude, and flock composition can be much more difficult to discern.

My stay on Tuckernuck lasted from mid-May to mid-October of 2020, when I was employed as a coastal steward by the Tuckernuck Land Trust. I returned to Nantucket about once every two to three weeks to retrieve food and wash laundry items, but ultimately, I was on the island for the majority of my allotted time. In this way, I was able to observe the island's biodiversity and changing avifauna throughout the seasons and during extreme weather phenomena. Hurricane Isaias brought Sooty Terns to



A Yellow-throated Warbler of the southeastern coastal subspecies was observed on October 1, precursing a slew of southerly breeding species that would reach the island.

Tuckernuck, as it did to much of the coastal and inland reservoirs from New York to Massachusetts. Autumnal blows from the northeast resulted in decidedly poor sea watching conditions, but strong west winds would occasionally bring in good numbers of sea ducks from the channel to take cover in the natural lee that Muskeget provides. Days that proved exceptional for the mainland parts of the state wound up being unequivocal busts for Tuckernuck. Other times, incredible migration would descend upon the Outer Lands, while the majority of coastal New England experienced little of the fallout. Interestingly, many of the exceptional days occurred in what would otherwise be so-called unexceptional conditions. Late August and early September proved to be a time filled with unusual potential and promise for all things rare.

A standout example can be shown in the remarkable birding that took place on August 28, detailed in this checklist: <<https://ebird.org/checklist/S72916460>>. High counts on eBird for Purple Martin (10), Warbling Vireo (5), and Baltimore Oriole (24) in Nantucket County were broken that day, as well as unusually early records of Black-throated Blue Warbler, Ovenbird, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, and Veery. Canada Warbler and Blue-winged Warbler remain scarce and undetected migrants on the Outer Lands, listed as very rare vagrant (four records) and casual (one record), respectively, in the 1948 historical anthology *The Birds of Nantucket* (Griscom and Folger 1948). These species may be slightly more abundant on Cape Cod, where the latter is believed to have nested in recent years; however, a lack of dedicated field observers on the islands during peak migration times may account for this disparity. As Griscom and Folger stated in 1948, “the island badly needs more experienced observers who can take the seabirds for granted, and who will be willing to spend their time looking for those birds whose status on Nantucket is not properly known,” (p. 14) and the same is still true today. Collection of long-term, comprehensive data for these trends must



An adult Hudsonian Godwit flies over Whale Point on August 6, after lingering for nearly two weeks.

be ongoing and is necessary to create a complete picture of the true status of songbird migrants on Nantucket and Tuckernuck.

Several vagrants found this season on Tuckernuck highlight the role that small islands adjacent to larger land masses play as natural migrant traps with great potential for finding rarities, in keeping with other famed locales for birding like the Outer Tuskets, or the Heligoland archipelago of the North Sea. The first record of Gray Heron for the lower 48 states was found on Tuckernuck on September 5 and is believed to be the same bird that spent the summer along the north shore of Nova Scotia from June 28 through August 22 <<https://ebird.org/checklist/S70918762>>. The bird was subsequently found the next day on the nearby island of Muskeget, and from there, the bird's whereabouts remain unknown. Two records in November of Gray Heron from coastal Virginia may perhaps be of the same individual but are equally likely to represent documentation of a wholly separate bird, perhaps a reflection of this species's growing population in the Lesser Antilles, especially Barbados (Martínez-Vilalta et al 2020). There is not enough evidence from the photos alone to conclude that the Virginia and Massachusetts records represent the same bird.

This Gray Heron sighting in Tuckernuck and Muskeget is highly significant because it poses only the fifth record for the United States, and a first for the lower contiguous states. There are several recent records from Newfoundland, including one immature bird that landed on an oil rig 230 miles east of St. John's, on September 30, 2018 <<https://ebird.org/checklist/S68445110>>. Subsequent records of young or hatch-year birds in 2018 at Renew's (November 2 to November 13, <<https://ebird.org/checklist/S49638955>>), and Saint Lawrence (December 1 to December 7, <<https://ebird.org/checklist/S52042640>>), are likely to represent two or three separate individuals, but could also represent a single bird working its way west along the



Pine Siskins, which alighted on the island by the hundreds this fall, began arriving as early as September.

southern coast of Newfoundland, although this seems less likely. In Iceland, where this species is now a regular winter resident, birds presumably from Norway arrive in late August or early September and depart by late April or early May, with 2,670 records prior to 2011 (Petursson and Kolbeinsson 2016).

Together with a warming climate and increased cultivation of rice in southern Europe, this species's breeding range is spreading in much of Scandinavia, with some Gray Herons likely colonizing new areas for the first time ever. A population in the Cape Verde islands off the west coast of Africa is also believed to be increasing (Martínez-Vilalta et al. 2020). Taking into consideration that there are several populations of Gray Heron currently undergoing expansion, it would not seem correct to conclude that the Nova Scotia and Massachusetts individual arrived in the Canadian Maritimes from one set direction or the other. Historically, the popular notion has been that Old World wading species that arrive on the East Coast of the United States in springtime are drift migrants from sub-Saharan Africa that have used the transatlantic trade winds along the equator, and therefore have arrived in the Neotropics first before migrating north (Howell 2014). This theory has been applied to records of both Little Egret and Western Reef-Heron, as well as the colonization of Glossy Ibis and Cattle Egret in the Americas.

Tuckernuck also hosted for a brief period this fall a Swainson's Warbler, which, pending acceptance, would make just a sixth state record. The bird was documented in detail on October 3 <<https://ebird.org/checklist/S74378976>>, and then seen again on October 11 in relatively the same area, although this follow-up report has not been submitted.

Five previous records exist for Massachusetts. One account from Dukes County on the island of Naushon, May 11, 2001, to June 6, 2001, (Maloney and Jones <<https://ebird.org/checklist/S4819411>> and <<https://ebird.org/checklist/S48194>>

and one record from Essex County at Plum Island, May 9, 2007, to May 29, 2007,



(Pivacek <<https://ebird.org/checklist/S17196906>>) represent singing individuals during the early breeding season. The Plum Island bird was banded. The other three reports are of Barnstable County birds and include two spring records in early May 1982 (Young <<https://ebird.org/checklist/S33225867>>) and 2018 (Crosson <<https://ebird.org/checklist/S45352134>>) and one fall record of a bird caught in a mist net (September 6, 2010, to September 10, 2010, (Finnegan <<https://ebird.org/checklist/S17524634>>).

New York City reports no more than 20 records for Swainson's Warbler ranging back to 1950, and all occurred during the months of April and May (Buckley et al. 2018). Recent records in our region include those from both northern Vermont <<https://ebird.org/vt/checklist/S56722900>> and Halifax, Nova Scotia, <<https://ebird.org/checklist/S59704394>>, the latter record being similar to the Tuckernuck record in the sense that both were fall occurrences with other southern wood-warbler species present.

Swainson's Warbler is a habitat specialist, inhabiting the dense undergrowth of mixed deciduous woodland in the southeastern United States, where it is known to be a seldom-encountered and reclusive denizen of dead leaf beds and thorny, impenetrable thickets. Undoubtedly, records of this species are likely to go unnoticed during fall migration because of these behavioral factors; spring records consist primarily of singing birds located first by their *ew ew stepped in poo* song. Data from the North American Breeding Bird Survey over a 50-year period (1966–2015) show that the Swainson's Warbler is a steadily increasing breeder over much of its key range, primarily along the Southeastern Coastal Plain that runs through the Carolinas and Georgia, with an average yearly increase of 1.91% in this area. This number is significant because it shows the largest margin of growth compared to other areas within this species' range (cf. 1.48% increase in the Western Gulf Coastal Plain and -0.06% decrease in the Appalachians), and is the area with the greatest credibility interval (95%) and a sample size of 152 different Breeding Bird Survey routes (Anich et al. 2020). If these data are truly representative of an upward trend in these populations of Swainson's Warbler, then a reasonable conclusion is that records in New England will continue to increase. The disparity between the numerous records in the Northeast of singing individuals in April and May compared to the mere five records north of the Mason-Dixon line between September and November indicates that this species is likely far less detectable as a migrant during fall than spring.

Other notable rarities from this season include a White-winged Dove from July <<https://ebird.org/checklist/S71444558>>, several Lark Sparrows ranging from August through October, a Yellow-throated Warbler of the coastal subspecies <<https://ebird.org/checklist/S74287927>>, a Prothonotary Warbler in October <<https://ebird.org/checklist/S74422731>>, and a tie for all-time state late date for Cerulean Warbler <<https://ebird.org/checklist/S74211333>>.

While I have focused much of this piece on my observations of landbird activity on Tuckernuck throughout the latter half of my stay, I should also make note of the increasing numbers of staging terns that can be found on both Whale and Bigelow's points during the doldrums of midsummer. I spent many hours examining the composition of these loafing birds and reading plastic field-readable (PFR) leg and color bands. In all, eight species of tern were recorded on the island this year: Royal,

Sooty, Least, Common, Roseate, Black, Forster's, and Arctic. Although records of Sandwich Tern have been increasing on Tuckernuck, with the most recent record in 2018 (Ella Potenza, personal communication), none was found this year. According to Dr. Richard Veit, who studies tern colonies on Muskeget and Tuckernuck, the number of nonbreeding over-summering terns on the islands' shoals continues to increase (Veit and Perkins 2014), which may be a reflection of declining populations elsewhere. An overwhelming majority of Roseate Terns this season on Tuckernuck were individuals from Buzzards Bay colonies and Great Gull Island, New York.

Future observers on Tuckernuck should not be reluctant to look inland for good birds, rather than automatically following the tried-and-true method of dropping everything and heading for the beach. In my experience, twit birding—a local term for birding for passerines—on Tuckernuck has proved to be far more rewarding than its seawatching. The concentrations of birds per square kilometer here are unparalleled by even Nantucket, and on occasion mixed flocks of 50 or more Neotropical migrants can be found working their way through the low cover of scrub oak and sassafras. However, please note that special permission from a landowner is required for gaining access to the island, and that rules involving camping, loose dogs, and noise are as applicable on Tuckernuck as they are on nearby Nantucket. The Tuckernuck Land Trust takes a key role in protecting and conserving the delicate nature of the island, both through stewardship and education programs. You can visit them online at <<https://www.tuckernucklandtrust.org/>>. 🐦

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## Worldwide Birding Survey

Dear birders,

Covid-19 has influenced our birding and we are doing a worldwide survey study on this. The study is hosted by the University of Tübingen, and is run by a team of people who are also birders.

Here is the link to our previous report:

<<https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/17/19/7310>>

We are doing a short follow-up study about how COVID-19 has changed birding. Please help us and answer a few questions that take a few minutes. You can also forward the link to others.

<<https://www.soscisurvey.de/birdwatchers/>>

The study is in several languages and we would be happy for your participation. The deadline for the survey is March/April.

Stay healthy and good birding,

Christoph Randler (Tuebingen, DE), Jukka Jokimäki (Arctic Centre, Univ.of Lapland, Rovaniemi, FIN) & Piotr Tryjanowski (University of Life Sciences, Poznan, PL) and Maria de Salvo (Univ Catania, IT).

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## Second Report of the Rhode Island Avian Records Committee

*Shaibal S. Mitra, Chair; Doug Wilson, Secretary, Robert Emerson, Rachel Farrell, Richard Ferren, Paul L'Etoile, Peter Paton, Christopher Raithel, and Scott Tsagarakis*



Little Stint, Charlestown Breachway, Washington, July 4, 2012. © Carlos Pedro.

The current report describes the Committee's evaluation of 224 records from 1998 to 2015, involving 80 species, plus the species pair Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird. We extend our deepest appreciation to Richard Ferren and Christopher Raithel for their hard work and expertise on behalf of the Committee, and we welcome Paul L'Etoile and Peter Paton.

Highlights of this multi-year compendium include eight additions to the state list: **Trumpeter Swan, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Calliope Hummingbird, Wood Sandpiper, Little Stint, Band-rumped Storm-Petrel, Zone-tailed Hawk, and Swainson's Warbler**. Also notable are two additions to the list of species documented to breed in Rhode Island: Black Vulture and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.

The Committee recognizes its indebtedness to the birders of Rhode Island and gratefully acknowledges their contributions of written descriptions, photographs, and other kinds of information concerning unusual birds in the Ocean State. Reports are always welcome, even long after an observation, but reports prepared promptly after an observation tend to be more detailed and more reliable. Guidelines for preparation

of reports are presented at our website. A report should express clearly who saw the bird, where and when it was seen, exactly what features were observed and which of these were regarded as diagnostic, whether photographs, audio recordings, or drawings document the observation, and how similar species were ruled out. Although the Committee welcomes reports in any format, Microsoft Word documents and jpeg images are the most convenient and can be sent to Doug Wilson, Secretary of RIARC, at [Secretary@RI-AvianRecords.org](mailto:Secretary@RI-AvianRecords.org).

Unlike the first report (Mitra et al. 2010), which was organized by year of occurrence, the current report is organized by species in the following format:

**Common name (*Scientific name*) (a, b, c) RIARC Record Number (RIARC Committee members vote: Accepted-Not Accepted-Natural Status Uncertain), # of birds reported; location; date(s); reporters (I = initial observer, R = report submitted, P = photograph submitted).**

The definitions of the numbers in parentheses following the species names are as follows:

**a** the number of historical records accepted for the period 1900–2002. This number is derived principally from the *Checklist of Rhode Island Birds* (RIOCI 2002), which represents a synthesis of information from Ferren (*in litt.*), Conway (1992), and records accepted by a pre-RIARC committee of reviewers for *Field Notes of Rhode Island Birds* through 2002 (Raithel 2001, 2002). The historical totals are imprecise but presented here to summarize each species's history of occurrence in Rhode Island. A “+++” is used to represent relatively frequent historical occurrence where it is not possible to estimate the total number of records.

**b** the number of accepted records from 2003 to 2007, including those published in the first report of the RIARC (Mitra et al. 2010), plus additional records from this period published here. None of these records pertains to 1900–2002.

**c** additional accepted records published in the current report from 2008 to 2015. Records published here but dating from 1900 to 2002, or from 2003 to 2007, are counted under categories “a” or “b,” above. Thus, the sum of these three numbers represents the total number of accepted records from 1900 to 2015.

## Reports Accepted

### **Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*) (1, 0, 2)**

**2011-4 (7-0):** One; Bristol; March 8–12, 2011; Joe Koger (I,R), Dan Finizia (P), Sue Talbot (P), Bob Weaver (P).

**2013-21 (6-0):** One; Exeter; November 23 to December 1, 2013; Sue Talbot (I,R), Dan Finizia (I,R,P), Rey Larsen (P), Danielle Crudden (P).

These records reflect this species's ongoing increase in occurrence in the Northeast. Ross's Goose was removed from the Review List in New York State in 2005 (Wilson et al. 2005) at a time when Massachusetts had only three accepted records (MARC 2019).

### **Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*) (5, 1, 1)**

**2014-2 (6-0):** One; Middletown; January 9–19, 2014; Paul Champlin (I), Dan Finizia (P).

Like other Greenland-breeding geese, this species continues to increase in our region. Continued review is justified to assess the potential for escapes from captivity and to clarify the numbers of individuals involved when there are multiple reports from different sites within a given season.

**Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii*) (0, 1, 3)**

**2008-3 (7-0):** Four; Hundred Acre Pond, South Kingstown; February 2, 2008; Paul L'Etoile (I,R), Scott Tsagarakis (R).

**2009-1 (7-0):** Five; Newport Country Club, Harrison Road, Newport; January 18, 2009; Jeanette and Derek Lovitch (I,R,P).

**2012-1 (7-0):** One; Gardiner's Pond, Middletown; January 7, 2012; Jim Sweeney (I,R,P).

Although "Richardson's" Cackling Goose (*B. h. hutchinsii*) has been proven to be a regular visitor to the Northeast, distinguishing it from Canada Goose, and especially from other potentially occurring forms of Cackling Goose, is a challenge. Thus, the Committee will continue to collect data on its occurrence.

**Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*) (0, 0, 1)**

**2014-1 (6-0):** One; Seekonk River, Providence; May 11–20, 2014; Ben Shamgochian (I,P), Dan Finizia (P), Barbara Sherman (P), Hans Bucht (P).

This bird appeared on the Seekonk River on May 11 and is the first accepted record of Trumpeter Swan in Rhode Island. Nesting populations in New York State have been regarded as established in the wild since 2013 (NYSARC 2013).

**"Eurasian" Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca crecca*) (++, 1, 4)**

**2008-12 (7-0):** One; Quonochontaug, Charlestown; April 5, 2008; Scott Tsagarakis (I,R), Carlos Pedro (P).

**2011-3 (7-0):** One; Weekapaug, Westerly; February 15–19, 2011; Jan St. Jean (I), Phil Rusch (R), Glenn Williams (R).

**2013-7 (6-0):** One; Weekapaug, Westerly; March 23–24, 2013; Dan Finizia (I,R,P), Sue Talbot (I,R).

**2013-8 (6-0):** One; Braman's Lane farm pond, Portsmouth; April 7 to May 7, 2013; Tom Auer (I,R,P), Rey Larsen (P).

Rhode Island has many records of this taxon since the first record in 1946, some pertaining to long-lived individuals returning repeatedly to traditional wintering sites.

**Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) (10, 1, 6)**

**2003-8 (6-0):** One; February 15 to March 9, 2003; India Point, Providence; Mark Lynch (I,R,P).

**2008-2 (7-0):** One male; East Providence Reservoir, East Providence; January 21, 2008; Rachel Farrell (I,R,P).

**2008-15 (7-0):** One male; Ten Mile River Greenway, East Providence; December 30, 2008, to January 8, 2009; Ed Slattery (I,R,P).

**2009-3 (7-0):** One male; Apponaug Cove, Warwick; January 11 to February 2, 2009; Jan St. Jean (I), Mark Lynch (R), Sheila Lynch (P).



Ross's Goose, Bristol, Bristol, March 11, 2011. © Dan Finizia.

**2011-2 (7-0):** One; Conimicut Point, Warwick; January 15, 2011; Doug Wilson (I,R).

**2014-4 (6-0):** One; Seekonk River, Pawtucket; January 27 to February 3, 2014; Mark Lynch (I,R,P), Sheila Carroll (I,R), Michelle St. Sauveur (P), Tom Auer (R).

**2015-4 (6-0):** One; Seekonk River, Providence; February 19–28, 2015; Dan Finizia (I,P), Sue Talbot (I).

Reports have been almost annual in recent years. Some records may involve individual birds returning to favored sites from year to year.

**Eared Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*) (28, 0, 1)**

**2013-18 (6-0):** One; Bullock Cove, East Providence; September 27, 2013; Harriet Moore (I,R,P).

**Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) (8, 0, 2)**

**2012-3 A,B (7-0):** One; A: Beavertail State Park, Jamestown; February 18, 2012; Chris Loscalzo (I,R). B: Narragansett; April 8–15, 2012; Buffalo, New York, Group (I), Shai Mitra (P), Robert Weaver (P).

**2013-2 (6-0):** One; Sachuest Point, Middletown; January 15, 2013; Geoff Dennis (I,R,P).

The Committee concluded that the reports from Jamestown and Narragansett in 2012 were consistent with a single individual that moved between these nearby sites.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) (0, 0, 1)**

**2012-5 (7-0):** One; Matunuck Schoolhouse Road, Charlestown; April 14, 2012; Nancy Harvey (I,R), Jim Harvey (P).

At about 8:00 am Nancy Harvey noticed a large, chunky dove feeding on the ground with several Mourning Doves in the backyard of her home. Between 8:00 am and noon the bird was observed on the ground, in flight, and perched in a tree. Jim Harvey's photos, along with a



written description that ruled out similar-looking domesticated turtle doves, established this first record of Eurasian Collared-Dove for Rhode Island.

**White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) (1, 1, 0)**

**2004-2 (6-0):** One; Block Island; June 18, 2004; Michael Wagner (I,R,P).

This White-winged Dove photographed by Michael Wagner was just the second documented record for the state.

**Chuck-will's-widow (*Antrostomus carolinensis*) (++, 0, 2)**

**2010-4 (6-0):** One; Little Compton; May 11, 2010; Kirsten Fletcher (R,P).

**2012-23 (6-1):** Two; Ministerial Road, South Kingstown; May 12–29, 2012; Hope Leeson (I,R), Geoff LeBaron (R), Chris Raithel (R).

The 2010 bird was found injured at the base of a chain-link fence on Old Stone Church Road in Little Compton. It was brought to Kirsten Fletcher for rehabilitation, and Kirsten photographed the bird. In 2012, Hope Leeson reported a Chuck-will's-widow calling nightly along Ministerial Road in South Kingstown. Based on birders' subsequent reports, the Committee accepted two individuals, although one member accepted only one.

**Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) (1, 2, 3)**

**2005-5 (7-0):** One; West Warwick; November 20, 2005, to April 20, 2006; Carole Simas (I), Geoff Dennis (P).

**2006-4 (6-1):** One; Snug Harbor, South Kingstown; October 27, 2006, to January 26, 2007; Wayne Davis (I,R,P), Geoff Dennis (R,P), Chris Raithel (P).

**2009-16 (5-1):** One; Wakefield; October 17, 2009; Geoff Dennis (P).

**2011-23 (6-1):** One; Hopkinton; late October to December 30, 2011; Denise Gautreu (I), Dan Finizia (P), Sue Talbot (P), Rufus Abdullah (P), Alan Straus (P), Grace DaSilva (P), Robert Weaver (P).

**2012-20 (7-0):** One; Jamestown; November 14, 2012 (banded); Tom Mackie (I), Anthony Hill (R,P).

See discussion below, under Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird.

**Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus/sasin*) (0, 5, 6)**

**2003-11 (6-0):** One; Little Compton; November 1, 2003; Geoff Dennis (I,R,P).

**2004-3 (6-0):** One immature male; Little Compton; October 15, 2004; Geoff Dennis (I,R,P).

**2004-4 (6-0):** One immature female; Little Compton; November 10, 2004; Geoff Dennis (I,R,P).

**2005-4 (6-0):** One; Warwick Neck, Warwick; November 1, 2005, to January 17, 2006; Henry Coupe, (I), Geoff Dennis (P).

**2005-6 (6-0):** One; Wakefield; November 4, 2005; Barbara Chaves (I), Geoff Dennis (P).

**2012-21 (7-0):** One; Kingston; October 25 to November 9, 2012; Linda Gardrel (I,R), Carlos Pedro (P).

**2012-24 (7-0):** One; Jamestown; November 27, 2012, to January 15, 2013; Homeowner (I), Paul L'Etoile (R,P).

**2012-25 (7-0):** One; Newport; November 28, 2012, to March 14, 2013; Charles Carlson (I,R,P).

**2012-26 (7-0):** Two; Little Compton; October 10–16, 2012; Geoff Dennis (I,R,P).

**2015-21 (6-0):** One; Little Compton; October 18, 2015; Geoff Dennis (I,R,P).

**2015-22 (6-0):** One; Little Compton; October 19, 2015; Geoff Dennis (I,R,P).

Given Rhode Island's small size and the fact that its first Rufous Hummingbird record was documented as recently as 1995, an astonishing number of *Selasphorus* hummingbirds were reported here from 2003 to 2015. Most of these records came through the efforts of Geoff Dennis. The Committee has taken a conservative approach by accepting reports of these birds as Rufous/Allen's, with a subcommittee charged with researching criteria that might allow determination of species.

**Calliope Hummingbird (*Selasphorus calliope*) (0, 0, 1)**

**2013-23 (7-0):** One; Little Compton; October 21, 2013; Geoff Dennis (R,P).

First state record.

**Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) (14, 2, 0)**

**2006-9 (6-0):** One; Succotash Marsh, South Kingstown; October 7, 2006; Phil Rusch (I,R), Glenn Williams (I), Scott Tsagarakis (I), Doug Wilson (R).

A majority of Rhode Island records of this difficult-to-detect species were shot by hunters and collectors, but this record was the product of a purposeful search.

**Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) (3, 0, 1)**

**2015-7 (6-0):** One; Weekapaug, Westerly; May 29 to June 10, 2015; Glenn Williams (I), Phil Rusch (I), Tom Auer (I, Audio).

Three birders detected a Black Rail calling from a marsh at the east end of Maschaug Pond in Westerly on the evening of May 29. Tom Auer's recording is on the website: xeno-canto.org, under the number XC247260, supporting this first documented record of a Black Rail in Rhode Island since 1988.

**Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinicus*) (9, 0, 0)**

**1998-2 (6-0):** One; Little Compton; June 11, 1998; Stephen Merriman (I), Geoff Dennis (P).

Unlike many species whose rates of occurrence in Rhode Island have changed markedly over time, Purple Gallinule has been rare throughout the historical record. Pioneering Rhode Island field ornithologist Newton Dexter collected the first two specimens in 1857 and 1875, and added a third in 1889, among a total of seven pre-1900 specimens (Howe and Sturtevant 1899). This record from 1998 joins two from 1991 and another from 1993, marking the 1990s as an unusually productive decade for this species.

**Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis*) (14, 2, 7)**

**2005-8 (6-0):** One; Schartner Farms, Exeter; February 1, 2005; Doug Wilson (P).

**2009-14 (7-0):** One; Route 77, Little Compton; December 19, 2009; Carlos Pedro (I,R,P).

**2010-2 (7-0):** Two; Block Island; April 2, 2010; Kim Gaffett (I,R,P).

**2012-4 (7-0):** Two; Tiverton; March 26, 2012; Geoff Dennis (I,R,P).

**2013-4 (6-0):** One; Seapowet, Tiverton; January 27 to February 28, 2013; Marjorie Bradley (I,R), Jim Spears (P), Robert Weaver (P).

**2013-15 (6-0):** One to Two; Cottrell Farm, West Kingston; June 17, 2013, to March 5, 2014; Susan Boyce (P), Dan Finizia (P).

**2014-20 (6-0):** One; Great Swamp Management Area, South Kingstown; September 26, 2014; Shai Mitra (I,P).

**2015-16 (6-0):** One; Seapowet, Tiverton; October 10, 2015, to March 17, 2016; Multiple Observers.

As Sandhill Cranes continue to expand their breeding range into the Northeast, the species has been occurring annually in Rhode Island. This trend will probably continue, but records remain few enough to warrant review.

**Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*) (8, 1, 1)**

**2003-6 (6-0):** One; Charlestown Breachway, Charlestown; May 22, 2003; Jan St. Jean (I), Curtis Marantz (R).

**2008-9 (7-0):** One; Jamestown; June 9–10, 2008; Chris Powell (I,R,P), Wayne Munns (P).

The dates and coastal locations of these rare occurrences in Rhode Island are consistent with the species's pattern of occurrence in nearby states.

**Northern Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) (2, 0, 1)**

**2013-5 (6-0):** Two; Treaty Rock Farm, Little Compton; February 1–7, 2013; John Park (I,R,P), Robert Weaver (P).

John Park found the two Northern Lapwings on a private farm. A major incursion of this species to northeastern North America occurred in late fall 2012 following Hurricane Sandy.

**Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) (++, 3, 2)**

**2003-14 (6-0):** One; Napatree Point, Westerly; May 4, 2003; Blair Nikula (R,P).

**2006-5 (7-0):** One; Great Swamp, South Kingstown; April 12, 2006; Dan Finizia (I,P), Sue Talbot (I).

**2011-11 (7-0):** One; Quicksand Pond, Little Compton; August 16, 2011; Bob Emerson (I,R).

**2012-10 (7-0):** One; Rhode Island Country Club, Barrington; October 23–27, 2012; Ben Shamgochian (I,R,P), Robert Weaver (P), Rufus Abdullah (P), Jan St. Jean (P).

Less than annual in Rhode Island and deserving of review, this species has occurred regularly in the state since Newton Dexter collected the first at Sakonnet Point on July 3, 1900 (R. L. Ferren, *in litt.*).

**Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*) (8, 1, 1)**

**2004-5 (6-0):** One; Charlestown Breachway, Charlestown; July 15, 2004; Jan St. Jean (I), Pete Capobianco (P).

**2011-6 (7-0):** One; Charlestown Breachway, Charlestown; May 21–22, 2011; Paul L'Etoile (I,R,P), Barbara Sherman (P).

Curlew Sandpipers have long histories of occurrence on Long Island, New York, and in



Mountain Bluebird, Fort Getty, Jamestown, Newport, November 10, 2012. © Chris Powell.

Massachusetts, but all eight Rhode Island records prior to these two occurred in the relatively short period 1973–1992.

**Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*) (0, 0, 1)**

**2012-7 (7-0):** One; Charlestown Breachway, Charlestown; July 4, 2012; Carlos Pedro (I,R,P).

On July 4, Carlos Pedro noticed this small, bright-reddish sandpiper in a group of shorebirds on the mudflats at Charlestown Breachway. Carlos suspected Little Stint because he was familiar with this species, though not in this bright breeding plumage. His photographs documented this first record of Little Stint for Rhode Island.

**Long-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) (++, 0, 4)**

**2009-11 (6-1):** One; Sachuest Marsh, Middletown; December 1–8, 2009; Rey Larsen (I,R,P).

**2011-19 (7-0):** One; Quicksand Pond, Little Compton; September 13, 2011; Barbara Gearhart (I,R), Dan Finizia (I), Sue Talbot (I), Rey Larsen (P).

**2015-13 (6-0):** One, Scarborough, Narragansett; October 3, 2015; Carlos Pedro (I,R,P), Dylan Pedro (I,R,P), Barbara Sherman (I), Linda Gardrel (I).

**2015-14 (6-0):** Two; Trustom Pond, South Kingstown; October 6, 2015; Rey Larsen (I,R,P).

Although Long-billed Dowitcher occurs regularly in the Northeast, it is difficult to distinguish from Short-billed Dowitcher and prefers habitats that are scarce in Rhode Island. The small number of documented records justifies retention on the Review List.

**Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*) (0, 0, 1)**

**2012-9 (7-0):** One; Marsh Meadows, Jamestown; October 13–30, 2012; Carlos Pedro (I, R, P), Dan Finizia (P), Hank Golet (P), Rey Larsen (P), Keith Mueller (P), Robert Weaver (P).

Carlos Pedro detected an unusual shorebird behind a tuft of grass at Marsh Meadows in Jamestown. He called other birders over and they eventually determined it was a Wood Sandpiper, the first state record and one of few documented in eastern North America. It remained for two and a half weeks, and many birders from around the country observed it. The bird was last reported on October 30, the day after Hurricane Sandy struck Rhode Island.

**South Polar Skua (*Stercorarius maccormicki*) (++, 1, 3)**

**2009-7 (7-0):** One; Mud Hole; August 4, 2009; Scott Tsagarakis (I), Doug Wilson (I), Carlos Pedro (P).

**2013-14 (6-0):** One; Cox's Ledge; May 27, 2013; Carlos Pedro (R,P).

**2013-25 (7-0):** One; Cox's Ledge; August 4, 2013; Paul L'Etoile (P).

These photo-documented records are welcome contributions to our knowledge of large skuas in the western North Atlantic. In Rhode Island waters, South Polar Skua occurs rarely but regularly in late spring and summer, whereas there are very few proven records of Great Skua.

**Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) (++, 0, 2)**

**2010-9 (7-0):** One; Block Canyon; September 10, 2010; Nick Bonomo (R), Scott Tsagarakis (R), Tom Auer (R), Carlos Pedro (P), Paul L'Etoile (P).

**2013-27 (7-0):** One; 50 miles south of Point Judith, Narragansett; September 3, 2013; Paul L'Etoile (P).

It is a testament to the difficulties posed by jaegers and skuas that Howe and Sturtevant (1899) knew the family in Rhode Island from just two specimens of Pomarine Jaeger and a statement from Newton Dexter that Pomarine Jaegers were "rather common offshore in the summer." These two records of Long-tailed Jaeger are valuable in documenting the species's status in the state.

**Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia*) (++, 1, 5)**

**2005-9 (6-0):** One; Weekapaug, Westerly; January 30 to February 27, 2005; Brian Sweisford (I,R).

**2014-17 (6-0):** One; pelagic, Cox's Ledge; December 14, 2014; Keith Mueller (I,R,P).

**2014-18 (6-0):** One; pelagic, Cox's Ledge; December 31, 2014; Keith Mueller (I,R,P).

**2015-1 (6-0):** One; pelagic, Cox's Ledge; January 14, 2015; Keith Mueller (I,R,P).

**2015-2 (6-0):** One; Cliff Walk, Newport; February 4–5, 2015; Matt Grimes (I), Robert Weaver (P), Rey Larsen (P), Jack Kelly (P).

**2015-23 (6-0):** One; pelagic, 20 miles southeast of Block Island; December 30, 2015; Keith Mueller (I,R,P).

Whereas Common Murre is a regular winter visitor to Rhode Island's offshore waters, very few Thick-billed Murres have been documented in that context; therefore, these reports from Keith Mueller are significant. Records from Weekapaug in 2005 and Newport in 2015 are more consistent with the species's status as an irruptive visitor to our rocky shores.

**Atlantic Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*) (10, 1, 4)**

**2003-2 (6-0):** One; Block Island; March 22, 2003; Alex Von Arx (I,R,P).

**2009-2 (7-0):** One; six miles south of Block Island; March 28, 2009; Jan St. Jean (I), Phil Rusch (R).

**2013-3 (6-0):** Two; seven miles southeast of Block Island, Cox's Ledge; January 21, 2013; Paul L'Etoile (I,R,P).

**2013-13 (6-0):** One; Second Beach, Middletown; January 31, 2013; Chris Raitel (R,P).

**2015-19 (6-0):** One; 20 miles southeast of Block Island; December 30, 2015; Carlos Pedro (I,P), Keith Mueller (P).

The Middletown bird of 2013 was found alive but weakened on Second Beach. It was brought to a rehabilitation facility, but subsequently died. The skin was prepared and submitted to the American Museum of Natural History.

### **Ivory Gull (*Pagophila eburnea*) (1, 1, 1)**

**2010-1 A,B (7-0):** One; A: Quicksand Pond, Little Compton; January 23, 2010; Geoff Dennis (I,R,P). B: Easton's Pond, Newport; January 26–27, 2010; Matt Grimes (I), Robert Weaver (P), Rey Larsen (P).

Geoff Dennis found this adult Ivory Gull at Quicksand Pond in Little Compton late in the afternoon near sunset. The gull spent much of its time on the Massachusetts side of the pond but moved to the Rhode Island side. What was probably the same bird was found on Easton's Pond three days later by Matt Grimes.

### **Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*) (12, 1, 1)**

**2005-7 (6-0):** One; 25 miles south of Block Island; September 11, 2005; Paul L'Etoile (P).

**2012-8 (7-0):** One; Napatree Point, Westerly; September 6, 2012; Dan Finizia (I,R,P), Sue Talbot (I,R,P).

Dan Finizia and Sue Talbot found a juvenile Sabine's Gull at Napatree Point in Westerly resting with a group of terns on the northwestern corner of the spit. It remained for only about two minutes starting at 10:55 am and then it flew away toward the ocean. This species is very rarely detected from land on the East Coast.

### **Little Gull (*Hydrocoloeus minutus*) (++, 1, 3)**

**2011-5 (7-0):** One; Sakonnet Point, Little Compton; May 16, 2011; Bob Emerson (I,R).

**2011-20 (7-0):** One; Easton's Beach, Newport; September 29, 2011; Jack Kelly (I,R,P).

**2011-27 (6-1):** One; Cox's Ledge; March 19, 2011; Thomas Dorazio (I,R,P).

Bob Emerson was scoping fishing traps off the Sakonnet Point parking lot when he picked this bird out of a group of eight or so Common Terns feeding 100 to 200 yards offshore. Jack Kelly observed this unusual small gull on Easton's Beach in Newport. He photographed the bird and Rey Larsen identified the bird as a Little Gull from the photographic prints.

### **Franklin's Gull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*) (5, 1, 3)**

**2005-10 (6-0):** One; Succotash Marsh, South Kingstown; November 3, 2005; Jan St. Jean (I,R).

**2009-5 (6-1):** One; North End, Block Island; July 8, 2009; Tom Magarian (I,R).

**2015-17-1 (6-0):** Four; Block Island; November 13, 2015; Shai Mitra (I,R,P), Pat Lindsay (I,R).

**2015-17-2 (6-0):** One; Quonochontaug, Charlestown; November 14, 2015; Dan Finizia (I,R,P), Sue Talbot (I,R), Carlos Pedro (P), Robert Weaver (P).

A major incursion of Franklin's Gulls reached the Northeast November 13–14, 2015 (Reed 2017).

**Bridled Tern (*Onychoprion anaethetus*) (5, 0, 3)**

**2011-14 (7-0):** Two (one adult, one juvenile); Briggs Beach, Little Compton; August 28, 2011; Bob Emerson (I,R,P), Geoff Dennis (P).

**2011-15 (7-0):** Two; Narragansett; August 28, 2011; Drew Wheelan (I,R,P).

**2015-10 (6-0):** Five; pelagic, Block Canyon; September 3, 2015; Carlos Pedro (P), Paul L'Etoile (P).

Hurricane Irene displaced many *Onychoprion* terns, including two Bridled Terns found by Bob Emerson at Briggs Beach and two found by Drew Wheelan near the entrance to Point Judith Pond, all on the day of the storm. Offshore, five Bridled Terns were found perched on pieces of driftwood near Block Canyon on September 3, 2015.

**Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) (23, 1, 5)**

**2006-6 (7-0):** One; Green Island, Warwick; August 2, 2006; Doug Wilson (I,R).

**2008-8 (7-0):** One; Sachuest Point to Third Beach, Middletown; July 5–6, 2008; Rey Larsen (I,R,P).

**2011-16-1 (7-0):** Two; Narragansett; August 28, 2011; Richard Ferren (I,R,P).

**2011-16-2 (7-0):** One; Succotash Marsh, South Kingstown; August 29, 2011; Robert Weaver (I,R,P).

**2011-16-3 (7-0):** Three; Charlestown Breachway, Charlestown; August 29, 2011; Carlos Pedro (I,R,P).

**2013-12 (6-0):** One; Third Beach, Middletown; May 23, 2013; Rey Larsen (I,R,P).

Three of these records occurred during Hurricane Irene, August 28–29, 2011, which displaced many Sandwich Terns to neighboring Long Island (Mitra 2011), but oddly none to Massachusetts (MARC 2019). Most remarkable was one found by Doug Wilson in a large group of terns roosting on Green Island in Warwick, far from the ocean coast.

**Red-billed Tropicbird (*Phaethon aethereus*) (2, 0, 1)**

**2008-7 (7-0):** One; off of Little Compton; May 30, 2008; Richard Ferren (I,R,P), Chris Raithel (I,R).

During their annual Narragansett Bay Colonial Seabird Survey, Richard Ferren and Chris Raithel found this bird flying about one-half mile east of East Island, off Sakonnet Point. It then flew east toward Goosewing Beach and Westport, Massachusetts. It was different from the one at Matinicus Rock in Maine four days later, which had a tail over twice as long as the Rhode Island bird. Two previous records in Rhode Island were from downtown Providence in 1973 and at Green Hill Beach, South Kingstown, in 1975, both of which are now preserved as specimens, leaving this bird as the only one that got away.



Red-billed Tropicbird, off Little Compton, Newport, May 30, 2008. © Richard L. Ferren.

**Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*) (++, 1, 11)**

**2008-5 (7-0):** One; Great Salt Pond, Block Island; November 7, 2008; Patricia Lindsay (I), Shai Mitra (R,P).

**2009-8 (7-0):** Four; southwest corner of Block Island; April 30 to May 6, 2009; Tom Magarian (I), Dan Finizia (P).

**2009-15 (7-0):** Four; western shore of Block Island (West Beach Road, Dorrie's Cove, Grace's Cove); November 12–14, 2009; Robert Emerson (I,R), Patricia Lindsay (I), Shai Mitra (I,R).

**2010-15 (7-0):** Four; Block Island; November 12–13, 2010; Shai Mitra (I,R,P), Patricia Lindsay (I).

**2011-29 (7-0):** One; Block Island; November 9, 12, 2011; Shai Mitra (I,R,P), Patricia Lindsay (I).

**2012-29 (7-0):** One; Block Island; November 11, 2012; Shai Mitra (I,R,P), Patricia Lindsay (I).

**2012-30 (7-0):** Two; Block Island; December 20, 2012; Shai Mitra (I,R).

**2013-6 (6-0):** One; Newport; February 15 to March 6, 2013; John Magill (I,R), Dan Finizia (P), Rey Larsen (P), Paul Champlin (P).

**2013-22 (6-0):** One; Point Judith, Narragansett; December 21, 2013; Phil Rusch (I,R), Glenn Williams (I,R).

**2013-31 (7-0):** One; Block Island; November 9, 2013; Shai Mitra (I,R), Patricia Lindsay (I).

**2014-21 (7-0):** One; Block Island; November 20, 2014; Shai Mitra (I,R,P), Patricia Lindsay (I).

The regular occurrence of Pacific Loons in Rhode Island generally, and off Block Island in particular, concurs with or exceeds the patterns noted for this species off Long Island, New York, and Massachusetts, where one to two records per year have been documented recently.



**White-faced Storm-Petrel (*Pelagodroma marina*) (4, 0, 1)**

**2013-29 (7-0):** Four; Block Canyon; August 18, 2013; Angus Wilson (R,P).

Photos of all four individuals were provided, offering excellent documentation. These observations were made in waters at depths of 800–1,200 feet and temperatures of 70.1–71.9 degrees F.

**Leach's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) (++, 0, 2)**

**2011-28 (7-0):** Nine; south of Rhode Island; July 16, 2011; Steven Whitebread (R,P).

**2013-30 (7-0):** 12; near Block Canyon; August 18, 2013; Angus Wilson (R,P).

Dedicated trips placing observers near the continental shelf break near sunrise have proven this species to be regular in summer off of Long Island, New York, and Massachusetts.

**Band-rumped Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma castro*) (0, 0, 2)**

**2010-7 (7-0):** One; pelagic, Block Canyon; September 10, 2010; Nick Bonomo (I,R), Paul L'Etoile (P), Frank Mantlik (P).

**2015-9 (6-0):** Two; pelagic, Block Canyon; September 3, 2015; Carlos Pedro (P), Paul L'Etoile (P).

The 2010 observation constitutes the first state record. Found by observers on a pelagic trip out to the continental shelf, it was first seen by Nick Bonomo as it sat on the water in the vicinity of Block Canyon. As the boat slowly approached, this Band-rumped Storm-Petrel took flight and flew directly away from the observers. Nick studied it in detail, while Paul L'Etoile and Frank Mantlik took photos. Nick's written description of the bird and its flight pattern complemented the still photos taken by Paul and Frank to produce thorough documentation for this report.

**Black-capped Petrel (*Pterodroma hasitata*) (2, 0, 2)**

**2010-8 (7-0):** One; Block Canyon; September 10, 2010; Scott Tsagarakis (I,R), Blair Nikula (I), Nick Bonomo (R), Tom Auer (R), Carlos Pedro (P).

**2015-11 (6-0):** One; Block Canyon; September 3, 2015; Paul L'Etoile (P).

These records are consistent with recent data from neighboring states, where dedicated trips to deep water near the continental shelf break in late summer have yielded many records of this species from New Jersey, New York, and Massachusetts in recent years.

**Audubon's Shearwater (*Puffinus lherminieri*) (++, 0, 4)**

**2009-9 (7-0):** 26; south of Block Island; August 19, 2009; Doug Wilson (R), Paul L'Etoile (P).

**2011-12 (7-0):** One; 70 miles south of Block Island; August 20, 2011; Doug Wilson (I,R,P).

**2013-26 (7-0):** 10; pelagic, 70 miles south of Block Island; September 3, 2013; Paul L'Etoile (P).

**2015-12 (6-0):** 47; pelagic, Block Canyon; September 3, 2015; Carlos Pedro (R), Paul L'Etoile (R,P), Wayne Munns (R).

The large numbers of Audubon's Shearwaters involved in three of these records indicate regular occurrence far offshore, but the overall infrequency of records, as well as the possibility of confusion with other small black and white shearwaters, justifies reviewing all reports of this species.

**Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*) (10, 0, 2)**

**2011-9 (7-0):** One; Old Harbor, Block Island; June 9, 2011; Doug Wilson (I,R,P), Laura Taylor (P), Brent Robitaille (P).

**2012-11 (7-0):** One immature; Little Compton; October 30–31, 2012; Geoff Dennis (I,R,P).

A few minutes before departure of the 3:00 pm ferry from Block Island, Doug Wilson spotted a Magnificent Frigatebird approaching the boat. He and his high school group were able to obtain photographs and video.

On the morning of October 30, 2012, following the passage of Hurricane Sandy, Geoff Dennis photographed a Magnificent Frigatebird at South Shore Beach in Little Compton. Observations from Dartmouth, Massachusetts, later that day and nearby on October 31 likely pertained to the same bird.

**Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*) (3, 0, 1)**

**2001-1 (7-0):** One; Cox's Ledge; May 5, 2001; Keith Mueller (I,R,P).

**2012-19 (7-0):** One; three miles south of Sakonnet Point, Little Compton; July 27, 2012; Michael Schrimpf (I,R,P).

Aboard the *Gail Francis* cod-fishing boat, Keith Mueller was able to slowly approach and closely photograph a juvenile Brown Booby at Cox's Ledge. In addition to the photos, Keith submitted a detailed written report.

At 2:40 pm on July 26, 2012, a subadult Brown Booby landed on the bow of the sailing school vessel *Corwith Cramer*; on an educational research cruise a couple of hundred miles south of Martha's Vineyard. Michael Schrimpf kept detailed notes as the boat traveled north, and by 11:30 am on July 27, their position was in Rhode Island waters, about three miles south of Sakonnet Point. The bird was last seen as it flew off at 7:40 am on July 28, as the ship sailed into Vineyard Sound.

**American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) (8, 1, 7)**

**2004-1 A,B (7-0):** One; A: Prudence Island; December 13–19, 2004; Matt Rehor (I,R,P). B: Winnapaug Pond, Westerly; December 29, 2004, to January 20, 2005; Jeff Gardner (I), Hank Golet (P).

**2008-16 (7-0):** One; Palmer River, Barrington; September 18, 2008; Butch Lombardi (I,R,P).

**2010-5 (7-0):** One; Pawcatuck River, Westerly; June 16, 2010; Kate Pisano (I,P), David Prescott (R).

**2010-6 (7-0):** One; Trustom Pond, South Kingstown; July 24, 2010; Bob Dewire (I,R,P); Alan Brush, Cam Bertsche, Ruth Waller, and Sylvia Fournier (I).

**2011-1 (7-0):** One; Prudence Island, and Fort Getty and Beavertail State Park, Jamestown; January 4–5, 2011; Pam Long (I,R), Carol Trocki (I), Heather Hopkins (I), Michelle St. Sauveur (P).

**2012-17 (7-0):** One; Trustom Pond, South Kingstown; November 20–23, 2012; Jim Murphy (I,R), Dan Finizia (P), Tom Tetzner (P), Shai Mitra (P).

**2014-3 (6-0):** Three; Trustom Pond, South Kingstown; January 19, 2014; Hans Bucht (I,R,P).

**2015-24 (6-0):** Two; Providence; December 10, 2015; Peter Green (I,R,P).

Seven American White Pelicans from 2008 to 2015 nearly equaled the nine recorded previously, illustrating the species's marked increase in the Northeast in recent years.

**Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) (14, 0, 7)**

**2011-17 (7-0):** One; Galilee, Narragansett; August 30, 2011; Rey Larsen (I,R,P).

**2012-12a-e (7-0):** Five; Rhode Island coast; October 31 to November 18, 2012; Mike Tucker (I,R), Drew Wheelan (I,R), Wayne Davis (I,P), Jim Sweeney (P), Bruce Kindseth (I,R).

**2014-10 (6-0):** One; North End, Block Island; June 20, 2014; Christian Amaral (I,R,P).

The 2011 and 2012 records followed tropical cyclones, whereas the 2014 record was likely a bird that moved northward from Long Island, New York, where 10 individuals were recorded that summer (Lindsay and Mitra 2014).

**White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) (6, 1, 3)**

**2011-10 (7-0):** One; Weekapaug, Westerly; August 2–10, 2011; Mike Tucker (R), Bob Weaver (P), Mike Resch (P), Keith Mueller (P).

**2012-15 (7-0):** One; Narrow River, Narragansett; November 9–12, 2012; Neil Anthes (I,R), John McNamara (P), Carlos Pedro (P), Greg Sargeant (P).

**2014-11 (6-0):** One; Block Island; August 25 to September 30, 2014; Nigel and Cathy Grindley (I,R,P), Don Heitzmann (P).

White Ibises have occurred more frequently in Rhode Island in recent years, a trend also noted in New York State, where at least 12 records have been accepted since 2008 (NYSARC 2020).

**White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) (2, 1, 5)**

**2005-2 (7-0):** One; Weeden Lane, Jamestown; May 2–3, 2005; John Magill (I,R).

**2009-4 (7-0):** One; Fort Getty Road, Jamestown; May 3–5, 2009; Dan Finizia (I,R,P), Sue Talbot (I,R,P).

**2012-6 (7-0):** One; Great Swamp Management Area, South Kingstown; April 22–26, 2012; Leslie Bostrom (I,R), Tom Auer (P).

**2013-16 (6-0):** One; Beavertail Road at Fort Getty, Jamestown; May 1, 2013; Carlos Pedro (I,R,P).

**2014-7 (6-0):** Two; Middletown; April 26 to May 3, 2014; Wayne Munns (R), Carlos Pedro (R,P), Robert Weaver (P).

**2015-5 (6-0):** One; Middletown; April 18–27, 2015; Christine Sidler (I), Carlos Pedro (P), Robert Weaver (P).

**Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) (breeding)**

**2014-9 (6-0):** Two+; Exeter; May 25, 2014; Chris Raithel (I,R,P).

Evidence for this first recorded nesting of Black Vultures in Rhode Island, included mewing noises from the nest and an adult hissing in defense.



Cave Swallow, Point Judith, Washington, December 8, 2012. © Paul L'Etoile.

**Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) (6, 0, 4)**

**2010-3 (7-0):** One; Succotash Marsh, South Kingstown; April 7, 2010; Robert Weaver (I,R,P).

**2012-22 (7-0):** One; West Kingston and Hopkinton; April 25–29, 2012; Iris Dewhurst (I,R), Lori Bouchard (I,R,P).

**2013-11 (6-0):** One; Swan Point, Providence; May 15, 2013; Sue Talbot (I,R), Dan Finizia (P).

**2015-6 (6-0):** Two; Hope Valley, Hopkinton; April 22–24, 2015; Lynn Thompson (I), Chris Raithel (R), Dylan Pedro (P), Don Heitzmann (P).

The observations in April 2012 were from widely spaced sites, but timing was deemed consistent with a single individual.

**Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) (++, 1, 3)**

**2005-11 (6-0):** One; Misquamicut, Westerly; December 3, 2005; Dan Finizia (I,R,P).

**2011-26 (6-0):** One; Wakefield, South Kingstown; October 7, 2011; Paul L'Etoile (P).

**2014-13 (6-0):** One; Narragansett; October 25, 2014; Dylan Pedro (I), Carlos Pedro (R,P), Paul L'Etoile (P).

**2015-20 (6-0):** One; Trustom Pond NWR, South Kingstown; November 8, 2015; Lori Kurlowicz (R,P).

With four records 2003–2015, Golden Eagle remains rare in Rhode Island, justifying review.

**Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) (6, 1, 4)**

**2003-13 (6-0):** One; Swan Point Cemetery, Providence; May 14, 2003; Sue Talbot (P).

**2010-13 (7-0):** Two; Kent County; 2009 and 2010; Homeowner (R,P).

**2011-8 (7-0):** Two; Charlestown; May 31, 2011; Dan Finizia (I,R,P), Sue Talbot (I,R).

**2011-13 (7-0):** One; Potowomut, Warwick; August 24, 2011; Bryan and Sarah Glemboski (I,R,P).

**2013-28 (6-1):** One; Block Island; June 14, 2013; Brendon Murtha (I,R).

The increase in records since 2010 is notable in view of occurrences of pairs of birds and second-hand reports of breeding in Kent County in 2010.

**Zone-tailed Hawk (*Buteo albonotatus*) (0, 0, 1)**

**2015-8 (6-0):** One; Switch Road, Richmond; August 15, 2015; Wayne Munns (I,R), Barbara Sherman (I), Carlos Pedro (I,P).

Three birders scanning the turf fields for shorebirds saw what at first appeared to be four Turkey Vultures. They noticed one that looked different and realized that it was a Zone-tailed Hawk. Photos documented this first state record for Rhode Island.

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*) (breeding)**

**2008-10 (7-0):** Three, adult feeding young; Johnston; April, June 2008; Jim Murphy (I,R).

In April, Jim Murphy observed a male and female Yellow-bellied Sapsucker chasing each other in his yard. This noisy behavior lasted a few days. In June, Jim once again heard chattering in the woods, only this time it was a fledgling sapsucker. He observed the young bird being fed by its mother. According to one Committee member this nesting is a long-overdue occurrence. The species has been documented breeding in central Massachusetts, and west of the Berkshire Mountains it is a common breeding species.

**Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) (6, 0, 2)**

**2011-22 (7-0):** One; Middletown; December 4–12, 2011; Paul Champlin (I,R,P), Rey Larsen (P), Robert Weaver (P).

**2014-14 (6-0):** One; Sachuest Point, Middletown; November 5–13, 2014; Matt Schenck (I), Mark Pagliarini (I,P), Robert Weaver (P), Carlos Pedro (P).

Paul Champlin found the 2011 bird near Tank Farm 5 in the Newport Naval Complex. It was subsequently relocated at the Saint Columba Cemetery adjacent to the complex. The bird at Sachuest Point in November 2014 stayed for more than a week and was photographed by many observers mostly east of the Park Headquarters.

**Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*) (++, 1, 5)**

**2009-10 (7-0):** One; North End, Block Island; September 25 to October 4, 2009; Scott Tsagarakis (I), Doug Wilson (R,P).

**2010-10 (7-0):** One; Weekapaug, Westerly; November 3, 2010; Dan Finizia (I,P), Sue Talbot (I).

**2011-21 (7-0):** One; Beavertail State Park, Jamestown; November 8, 2011; Jason Colby (I,R,P).

**2012-14 (7-0):** One; Pardon Gray Preserve, Tiverton; November 1–4, 2012; Jan St. Jean (I,R,P).

**2014-19 (6-0):** One; Napatree Point, Westerly; June 21, 2014; Tom Auer (I,R,P).

Review of Western Kingbird reports in Rhode Island is warranted, given the small number of records, fewer than several decades ago, and the proven occurrence of Cassin's, Tropical, and Couch's kingbirds in adjacent states.

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*) (5, 1, 0)**

**2003-5 (6-0):** One; Richmond; June 18–20, 2003; Sarah Carr (R).

**Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savana*) (3, 1, 0)**

**2003-10 (6-0):** One; Heaton Orchard Road, Richmond; September 7, 2003; Dan Finizia (R), Rachel Farrell (P).

**Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*) (4, 0, 1)**

**2011-18 (6-1):** One; Ninigret NWR, Charlestown; September 9, 2011; Patrick Blake (I,R).

Patrick Blake observed the Say's Phoebe from a vehicle at a distance of approximately 50 feet for about 10 minutes. His detailed written report described the bird and its behavior.

**Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*) (2, 4, 4)**

**2005-12 (7-0):** One; Block Island; November 11, 2005; Shai Mitra (I,R), Patricia Lindsay (I).

**2008-13 (7-0):** Four+; Napatree Point, Westerly; November 10, 2008; Chris Raithe (I,R).

**2010-11 (7-0):** Six; Black Point, Narragansett; November 24–27, 2010; Tom Auer (I,R), Carlos Pedro (P).

**2012-13 (7-0):** Five+; Scarborough Beach, Narragansett; Point Judith, Narragansett; Rhode Island coast; November 1 to December 12, 2012; Dan Finizia (I,R,P), Paul L'Etoile (I,R,P).

**2015-18 (6-0):** Four; Scarborough Beach, Narragansett; November 14, 2015; Dylan Pedro (I,P), Carlos Pedro (P), Robert Weaver (P).

Enumerating records rather than individuals obscures this species's tendency to occur in multiples, but this approach emphasizes the species's overall rarity—occurring in Rhode Island less than annually.

**Sedge Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*) (++, 2, 1)**

**2005-1 (7-0):** Three+ breeding; Little Compton; June 25 to August 22, 2005; Rachel Farrell (I,R), Bob Emerson (R), Geoff Dennis (P).

**2014-12 (6-0):** One; Trustom Pond NWR, South Kingstown; September 17–19, 2014; Tom Auer (I), Tom Tetzner (P), Don Heitzmann (P).

Rachel Farrell heard two Sedge Wrens singing in a field on private property, and Geoff Dennis was able to get photographs. One individual was observed repeatedly carrying food to the base of a clump of grass, providing the first confirmed nesting in Rhode Island since the 1940s (R. L. Ferren, *in litt.*).

**Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) (5, 3, 3)**

**2003-3 (6-0):** One; Fogland, Tiverton; September 16, 2003; Eben Oldmixon (I,R,P).

**2006-7 (6-0):** One; Route 3, West Greenwich; May 28, 2006; Dan Cooper (I,R,P).

**2008-14 (7-0):** One; Slocum, North Kingstown; September 15–29, 2008; Paul L'Etoile (I,R,P).

**2012-27 (7-0):** One; Block Island; September 30 to October 5, 2012; Sue Talbot (I,R), Dan Finizia (I,R), Scott Tsagarakis (R).

**2013-20 (6-0):** One; Peckham Farm, South Kingstown; October 19–25, 2013; Carlos Pedro (I,R,P), Rey Larsen (P), Robert Weaver (P).

The recent uptick in records is notable, particularly the inland spring record and the three others at sites away from the outer coast. Historically, the vast majority of records in the Northeast have been from the outer coast, September–October.

**Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*) (1, 0, 1)**

**2012-16 (7-0):** One; Fort Getty, Jamestown; November 10–22, 2012; Marcie Lindsay (I), Candy Powell (R,P), Chris Powell (R,P), Multiple Photographers.

Marcie Lindsay found this Mountain Bluebird at the campground at Fort Getty in Jamestown. She called Candy and Chris Powell, who then photographed the bird and notified other birders.

**Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*) (2, 0, 1)**

**2011-24 (7-0):** One; Burrillville; December 31, 2011; Steve Dziadosz (I,R).

While participating in the Uxbridge Christmas Bird Count, Steve Dziadosz spotted this bird at the top of a cedar tree. The bird was observed for about five minutes at close range, both perched and in flight.

**Bohemian Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulus*) (2, 1, 1)**

**2008-4 (7-0):** One; Genesee Swamp, South Kingstown; April 11–12, 2008; Paul L'Etoile (I,R), Chris Sidler (R,P), Carlos Pedro (R).

While running along the bike path through Genesee Swamp, Paul L'Etoile heard a Bohemian Waxwing call. Daylight was fading, so Paul went back the next day with a few others and they located the bird feeding on rose hips. Chris Sidler provided photographs, and Paul and Carlos Pedro provided written reports. Only the fourth documented record for Rhode Island, and this site is just a few miles from where one was seen on December 22, 2007. Previous records were in 1973 and 1995.

**Pine Grosbeak (*Pinicola enucleator*) (++, 1, 1)**

**2012-18 (7-0):** Nine; Pascoag, Burrillville; December 24, 2012, to January 11, 2013; Jan St. Jean (I,R,P), Dan Finizia (P), Robert Weaver (P), Alan Straus, (P), Carlos Pedro (P).

Jan St. Jean found seven Pine Grosbeaks in a crabapple tree next to a building on South Main Street, Route 100, in Burrillville. Over the next couple of weeks many birders saw and photographed up to nine birds. Though always irregular, this species formerly occurred more often, sometimes in large numbers.

**Hoary Redpoll (*Acanthis hornemanni*) (11, 0, 2)**

**2008-1 (7-0):** One to two; Bold Point, East Providence; February 19 to March 18, 2008; Luke Seitz (I,P), Ian Davies (I), Greg Sargeant (R,P), Glenn Williams (R), Andy Boyce (R), Matt Garvey (R,P), Linda Croce (P), Dan Finizia (P).

**2013-24 (7-0):** Two; Little Compton; January 3, 2013; Geoff Dennis (I,R,P).

Found by Luke Seitz and Ian Davies, the 2008 bird (or two birds) stayed for a month, allowing many birders to see the bird and take photographs. Detailed reports were sent by Greg Sargeant, Glenn Williams, Andy Boyce, and Matt Garvey.



Ash-throated Flycatcher, Middletown, Newport, December 12, 2011. © Robert Weaver.

**Green-tailed Towhee (*Pipilo chlorurus*) (1, 0, 1)**

**2010-14 (7-0):** One; Second Beach Campground, Middletown; December 18, 2010, to January 31, 2011; Paul L'Etoile (I,R,P), Carlos Pedro (P), Dan Finizia (P).

This Green-tailed Towhee, the second for Rhode Island, was found by Paul L'Etoile at the Second Beach Campground in Middletown during the Newport–Westport Christmas Bird Count.

**LeConte's Sparrow (*Ammospiza leconteii*) (1, 2, 2)**

**2003-7 (6-0):** One; Napatree Point, Westerly; November 26, 2003; Chris Raithe (I,R).

**2006-10 (6-0):** One; Avondale Farm, Westerly; November 4, 2006; Carlos Pedro, Scott Tsagarakis, Paul L'Etoile (P).

**2009-13 (7-0):** One; Sakonnet Point, Little Compton; December 19–23, 2009; Bob Emerson (I), Ed Stedman (I), Geoff Dennis (P).

**2012-28 (6-0):** One; Tiverton; December 16, 2012; Rachel Farrell (I,R), Geoff Dennis (P).

Increasing in frequency in Rhode Island, following the first record in 1993.

**Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) (++, 3, 5)**

**2003-9 (6-0):** One; Block Island; August 19–21, 2003; Christian Nunes (I,R,P).

**2008-11 (7-0):** One; Block Island; September 30, 2008; Dan Finizia (I,R,P), Sue Talbot (I,R,P).

**2011-25 (6-0):** One; Little Compton; April 14, 22, 2011; Geoff Dennis (P).

**2012-2 A,B (7-0):** One; A: Warwick; January 22, 2012; Betty Walsh (I,R,P). B: Oakland Beach, Warwick; February 10, 2012; Sherry Carlson (I,R).

**2013-17 (6-0):** One; Cox's Ledge; August 10, 2013; Carlos Pedro (R,P), Keith Mueller (P).

**2013-19 (6-0):** One; Block Island; October 5, 2013; Sue Talbot (I,R), Dan Finizia (P).

Reports average almost one per year in recent decades.

**Boat-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus major*) (2, 1, 3)**

**2006-1 (7-0):** One; Charlestown Breachway, Charlestown; June 2, 2006; Richard Veit (I,R), Carolyn Mostello (I).



**2013-9 (6-0):** One; Charlestown Breachway, Charlestown; May 11–12, 2013; Tom Auer (I,R), Carlos Pedro (P), Dan Finizia (P), Sue Talbot (P).

**2013-10 (6-0):** Two; Andy’s Way, Block Island; May 12 to June 2, 2013; Scott Tsagarakis (I,R), Sean Camillieri (I,P), Dan Finizia (P).

**2014-6 (6-0):** One; Succotash Marsh, South Kingstown; April 12–14, 2014; Carlos Pedro (I,R,P).

These records are consistent with a gradual increase in the numbers and dispersion of the populations breeding on eastern Long Island, New York.

**Swainson’s Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*) (0, 0, 1)**

**2011-7 (7-0):** One; Block Island Banding Station; May 22, 2011; Kim Gaffett (I,R,P).

Kim Gaffett reported that, of 50 birds banded at the Block Island banding station, the outstanding highlight was this Swainson’s Warbler, the first record for Rhode Island.

**Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*) (7, 2, 1)**

**2002-2 (6-0):** One; Block Island; November 11, 2002; Bob Emerson (I,R), Dan Finizia (I,P), Sue Talbot (I).

**2002-3 (6-0):** One; Ninigret Park, Charlestown; December 26, 2002, to January 18, 2003; Carlos Pedro (I), Mike Tucker (P).

**2013-1 (6-0):** One; Block Island; January 10, 2013; Maggie Komosinski (I,R), Don Mawhinney (I,R,P).

During the 2002 Veterans Day Bird Count on Block Island, Bob Emerson, Dan Finizia, and Sue Talbot found this Western Tanager at the north end of the island. They had good looks through a scope, and Dan got photos. Maggie Komosinski observed the 2013 Western Tanager on Block Island in the area of Dorrie’s Cove Road. Later that day Don Mawhinney independently found and photographed a Western Tanager in his yard about a mile from Maggie’s sighting.

**Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) (4, 0, 1)**

**2008-6 (7-0):** One; Charlestown; December 7–19, 2008; Michelle St. Sauveur (I,R,P), Walter Bosse (P), Alan Straus (P), Robert Weaver (P).

Michelle St. Sauveur found this bird at a feeder near the Charlestown Breachway. She took photos of this rare visitor, which stayed for over a week. This record was the fifth for the state and the first since an October 1985 record at a feeder in Tiverton.

**Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) (8, 0, 3)**

**2009-12 (7-0):** One; Matunuck, South Kingstown; December 12–18, 2009; Linda Gardrel (I), Bob Jones (I), Kathy Patric (I), Chris Sidler (I), Paul L’Etoile (P), Sue Talbot (P), Dan Finizia (P).

**2014-5 (6-0):** One; Newport; February 21 to April 1, 2014; Bobbi Smith (I), Robert Weaver (P).

**2015-3 (6-0):** One; Middletown; February 11–19, 2015; Jim Clarkson (I), Don Heitzmann (P), Robert Weaver (P), Carlos Pedro (P).

Whereas all three of these records occurred in winter—which is consistent with the pattern

of occurrence in coastal Massachusetts— six of the eight records prior to 2003 occurred in May and the others in September and October.

Identification Accepted but Natural Status Uncertain

**Ruddy Shelduck (*Tadorna ferruginea*) (0, 0, 0)**

**2006-8 (0-0-6):** One; Charlestown Breachway, Charlestown; August 8, 2006.

The popularity of this species in captivity and the existence of unrestrained individuals as nearby as Block Island at the time of this observation (S. Mitra, pers. obs.) make it difficult to accept individual records as naturally occurring vagrants, even in cases like this, where the bird was wary and showed no bands or tags. That said, Howell et al. (2014) recognized this species as a potential vagrant to eastern North America and urged the preservation of documentation in cases like this where signs of captivity are lacking.

**Cinnamon Teal (*Spatula cyanoptera*) (0, 0, 0)**

**2003-12 (0-0-6):** One; Tiogue Lake, Coventry; November 25, 2003.

This species is potentially a natural vagrant to Rhode Island, but the Committee was unanimous in judging that the possibility of captive origins could not be excluded in this case.

Reports Not Accepted

**Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) (13, 0, 0)**

**2009-6 (2-5):** One; Block Island; July 21, 2009.

This report was of a bird seen head-on for a short duration, by a single observer. No photos were obtained. The description focused mostly on the bird being smaller and having shorter legs than the Common Terns nearby and lacked critical details concerning primary and rectrix patterns necessary to exclude Common Tern and other species conclusively. Furthermore, the date would be exceptional in our region, south of Cape Cod, where Arctic Terns have been shown to occur almost exclusively from late May through early July (Mitra 2009).

**Yellow-nosed Albatross (*Thalassarche chlororhynchos*) (3, 0, 0)**

**2014-15 (0-6):** One; Point Judith, Narragansett; November 28, 2014.

The report of a Yellow-nosed Albatross came from an experienced and reliable observer who has observed thousands of albatross in the southern hemisphere on several trips. The challenge was that the conditions of this observation were extremely poor. The bird was seen through binoculars at a distance of 200 to 300 yards from shore, in rain, fog, and 25–35 mph southwest winds. There were large numbers of gannets in the area, flying out of Narragansett Bay and into the wind. The reported bird was flying with the wind, “engaging in a towering, shearing flight, approaching 75–100 feet of altitude at the high points and skimming the waves at the low point.” Because the observed bird was flying in the opposite direction of the gannets, there was no possibility for direct comparison of the two species’s flight patterns.

Evaluating this report was challenging for the Committee. The credentials of the observer were excellent, and the description was good. However, there were foul weather conditions, a long-distance observation, and the lack of direct comparisons with the Northern Gannets (a species known to be confused with Yellow-nosed Albatross). Non-acceptance was due largely to the conditions of the sighting; however, the Committee recognizes that this record may have been an albatross that “got away.”

**Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) (4, 0, 0)**

**2015-15 (1-5):** One; Narragansett; October 19, 2015.

Two observers detected this soaring raptor as they were driving down Route 1 in Narragansett. They pulled over and observed the bird for several minutes and submitted a thorough written report. During Committee review, it was noted that the description also fit a second-year Bald Eagle, a species not considered in the original write-up. Furthermore, the state of molt described would be consistent with second-year Bald Eagle, and not expected in a juvenile Swainson's Hawk as reported. Although there was some feeling on the Committee that this may have been a good sighting, most felt that there was not enough here to accept the bird as Swainson's Hawk, a species that has not been recorded in Rhode Island since 1992.

**Phainopepla (*Phainopepla nitens*) (1, 0, 0)**

**2010-12 (0-7):** One; Wickford; November 22, 2010.

Although possibly correct, this report did not meet the exceptionally stringent standards of documentation required to support such an extremely rare species.

**Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) (8, 0, 3)**

**2003-4 (0-6):** Two; West Greenwich; August 16, 2003.

The level of detail in this report was not adequate to document what would be an extraordinary occurrence of two individuals in August at an inland site. 🐦

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## PHOTO ESSAY

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### Birds of the Second RIARC



Wood Sandpiper, Marsh Meadows, Jamestown, Newport. © Hank Golet.



Pine Grosbeak, Pascoag, Providence, December 25, 2012. © S. S. Mitra.



Swainson's Warbler, Block Island, Washington, May 22, 2011. © Kim Gaffett.



South Polar Skua, Cox's Ledge, May 27, 2013. © Carlos Pedro. 🐦

# MUSINGS FROM THE BLIND BIRDER

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## Finding One's Place

*Martha Steele*



Common Yellowthroat. Photograph by Sandy Selesky.

Think of all the times that you bird a particular location, be it your own property or a favored birding haunt, and see, year after year, a species return to its breeding area. A Common Yellowthroat, for example, shows up annually in our Vermont yard, often singing in the early morning from a specific thicket, and has been doing so for well over a decade. It seems likely that some individuals returned for consecutive years. Still, it is also clear that many individuals occupied this territory in succession, somehow choosing to sing from the same thicket as their predecessors.

Plenty of other inviting and appropriate habitats for the Common Yellowthroat exist in our area, but our yard appears to be a favored place to set up shop and begin courting. I often wonder why here and not some place down the road or on other nearby properties. Several houses with similar habitats of thickets, fields, and forest edges exist within a few miles of us, but not all of them feature Common Yellowthroats. Whatever the reasons, I am so happy that we are privileged to host this bird year after year.

So many species seem to return to certain spots near our Vermont home: the Wood Thrush along our road, Wood Warbler Way; multiple Winter Wrens within earshot of the house; the Veery down by the mailbox; the Blue-headed Vireo in our sugar maple trees in the front yard; the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds flitting among the bee balm; and the Blackburnian Warbler at the tip of the red pines outside our bedroom window. Omnipresent every year are Ovenbirds, answering each other in a cascading chorus of song from all around us.

It will never cease to amaze me how these birds repeatedly find their way back to their breeding homes following their migratory journeys over thousands of miles. It is something I think about every time I hear a new arrival of an old friend in the spring, relieved that they made it and fervently wishing them well.

I also think about my connection to place and why a place may beckon me to return time and again. Unlike the birds, I do not return because the place offers abundant food, superb nesting habitat, and protection from predators. Instead, I connect to a place because of its beauty, its floral and animal inhabitants, and perhaps most of all the memories it conjures up. Thinking of our family seasonal home on Lake

Champlain in Burlington, Vermont, where we have returned every summer since the 1950s, brings a flood of memories of carefree childhood days in the water, summer reading on the beach, capture-the-flag games with neighborhood kids, brilliant sunsets over the Adirondacks across the lake, baseball games on the radio, pajama evenings at the drive-in movie theater, wild card games of Pounce on the floor during rainy days, hikes up Camel's Hump, August outings to pick wild blackberries, and so much more.

Likewise, for birders there is no shortage of meaningful places, to which we return over and over: Mount Auburn Cemetery in the spring, Mount Wachusett in the fall, Cape Ann in the winter, and Race Point in Provincetown after any storm. Each time we return, we seek to create new memories while old memories boil to the surface. Places carry so many memories and so many emotions. Every time Bob and I return to Marconi Beach in the Cape Cod National Seashore in Wellfleet, we point to the tree along the bike path where we saw Bohemian Waxwings more than 20 years ago when we first started our courtship. We return year after year to specific spots to find species difficult to find elsewhere, such as the Bicknell's Thrush on the summit of Jay Peak in northeastern Vermont or Vesper, Grasshopper, and Field sparrows in the Pine Hill Road Grasslands area of central Massachusetts. We are intertwined, the birds and birders, one returning to suitable habitat and hardwired for breeding success, the other making annual pilgrimages to specific places to satiate a bottomless appetite for the presence of birds.

Our house in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont has proven to be a magnet for birds, birders, and nonbirders alike. Beyond family, this place lures many friends visiting from five continents across the globe to return time and again. They have come in all seasons to hike, bird, bike, ski, swim, work alongside us, and visit over drinks and dinners often featuring produce from our gardens. Avian visitors, most recorded every year, now include 122 species on our property. 2020 has been a notable year, with Tufted Titmouse, Northern Cardinal, House Wren, Connecticut Warbler, and Willow Flycatcher all joining our property list for the first time ever.

Yes, we humans, like birds, are drawn back to our meaningful places time and again. For the birds, it is a practical return to a place that usually has meant successful breeding. For us, our return is far more esoteric. These places rejuvenate our spirits, continue long-standing traditions, or repeatedly provide experiences that bring joy or contentment. Sure, the places special and unique to each one of us represent memories of wonderful birds. But they may also invite contemplation of whatever we are facing in the moment and thus are places that many of us return to not just for the birds but for a beauty, serenity, and ambiance that encourage reflection. 🐦

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

# FIELD NOTES

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## Use of Sapsucker Wells by Passerines

David M. Larson and Susan L. Carlson



**Figure 1.** Immature Yellow-bellied Sapsucker excavates and drinks from wells. Photographs by David Larson.

In October 2018, we observed an immature Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*) excavating and drinking from wells in a gray birch (*Betula populifolia*) next to the boardwalk on the Hellcat Interpretative Trail at the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, Rowley, Massachusetts (Figure 1). We observed this bird for a half hour and watched it defend its sap wells against the intrusion of another immature sapsucker. On that day, we also noticed a Black-throated Blue Warbler (*Setophaga caerulescens*) and at least one Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*) in the general area.

When we arrived at the location on the next day, the sapsucker was not present. In succession, a female Black-throated Blue Warbler, a Red-breasted Nuthatch, and a male Black-throated Blue Warbler (Figure 2) visited the obvious sapsucker wells, probing the wells and apparently consuming sap. After ten minutes or so, a sapsucker appeared,





**Figure 2.** Black-throated Blue Warbler at sapsucker wells.

worked the wells, and remained during the rest of our visit. We saw the sapsucker make sallies to chase off the male warbler and a Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*) who got a bit too close. The male warbler then visited a nearby birch, and we noted that there were new sapsucker holes in that tree as well. Perhaps the lure of the wells overcame any reticence of the warbler to a close approach to humans.

A week later, we visited the same location. The wells were significantly larger and being visited by a Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Setophaga coronata*, Figure 3). Shortly after we arrived, an immature sapsucker arrived to feed. After a few minutes, an adult Yellow-bellied Sapsucker displaced the immature bird and fed (Figure 4). As we walked on other parts of the trail, we noticed fresh sapsucker wells on several other birches, with additional species in attendance—Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*) and Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*, Figure 5). Certainly, in 2018 we saw more sapsuckers than usual, and other species seemed to be taking advantage. In all cases, the intruders were partaking of sap, not insects, as far as we were able to discern.

When the reconstructed Hellcat boardwalk opened in the fall of 2020, there was a stir in the local birding community over a Cape May Warbler (*Setophaga tigrina*) that was frequenting sapsucker wells in that same area at Hellcat. Cape Mays are a great example of a species that breeds in the breeding range of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and may be well acquainted with using this food source during the summer months. In contrast, it may be that Red-bellied Woodpeckers, well known to take sap from sapsucker wells as a minor diet item (Miller et al. 2020), are exhibiting a learned behavior that reflects the non-breeding season sympatry of these two woodpeckers.



**Figure 3.** Yellow-rumped Warbler visits enlarged sapsucker wells.



**Figure 4.** Adult Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at the wells.



**Figure 5.** Ruby-crowned Kinglet drinks from a sapsucker well.

There are many reports of other species making use of sapsucker workings, supplementing their diet with sap or with insects attracted to the sap (Walters et al. 2020). These authors note a close association between Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (*Archilochus colubris*) and sapsuckers. In his chapter on Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Kilham (1983) notes the use of sapsucker wells by “paper wasps, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Black-throated Blue Warblers, Downy Woodpeckers, and chipmunks.” Clearly, sapsucker wells are an important food source in their communities. 🐦

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# Shallow-Water Foraging Behavior by Double-crested Cormorants

*William E. Davis, Jr.*



**Figure 1.** The foraging cormorant, moving left, has its head and body nearly submerged. Photographs by the author.

On April 7, 2020, I was watching Double-crested Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) forage near the dock at our rental house at 1455 Long Beach Drive, Big Pine Key, Florida, and noticed shallow-water foraging behavior that I had not seen before. As low tide approached, a rocky, algae-covered substrate emerged around the dock, the usual resting place for 20–30 cormorants. I noticed that as low tide approached, cormorants would swim in very shallow water along the edges of the emergent substrate with their heads and bodies nearly submerged.

I decided to look at this foraging more closely because it superficially resembled the head-underwater, early phase of bathing that I had been observing. It soon became clear that the bathing and foraging were distinct. My notes read, “At 5:58 pm., a cormorant was in close to shore in shallow-water foraging, body and head nearly submerged, swimming along. Suddenly its head shot up, a fish wiggling in its bill. There was no doubt that it had been foraging.” Low tide that afternoon was at 3:59 pm.

The following day, low tide was at 4:51 pm, and I was out on the porch watching the cormorants. At 4:28 pm, I noticed a cormorant shallow-water foraging with its head and body nearly submerged and swimming along near the tide-exposed substrate to the right of the dock. When it swam to deeper water, it dove and disappeared from sight while foraging, the normal foraging behavior for cormorants (Dorr et al. 2020). At 4:42 pm, another cormorant foraged in shallow water with its head and body mostly submerged, bringing its head up about every five seconds (Figure 1). Another cormorant did the shallow-water foraging routine, raising its head every five to seven seconds as it swam along. This bird made an apparent foraging strike but came up, it appeared, with a piece of algae. The water was still and the wind was nearly nonexistent. At 4:52 pm, two more cormorants shallow-water foraged, raising their heads every five to seven seconds. At 5:08 pm, a sixth cormorant did the shallow-water



**Figure 2.** Two cormorants forage in shallow water with heads mostly submerged.

foraging routine. On April 10, I was able to photograph two shallow-water foraging cormorants to the right of the dock (Figure 2).

Structural features of the cormorant eye suggest that cormorants can see with precision underwater, a condition helped by a thick and flattened cornea and well-developed muscles within the eye (Dorr et al. 2020, Sivak et al. 1977). This explains why it is possible for cormorants to forage in shallow water with their heads submerged or nearly submerged. The Double-crested Cormorant account in *Birds of the World* (Dorr et al. 2020) makes no mention of the shallow-water foraging behavior I watched, although they do report, “Swimming cormorants occasionally hold their heads under water before diving, apparently looking for prey.” What I witnessed was a common and persistent behavior in shallow water that did not require diving. 🐦

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EVENING GROSBEEK BY SANDY SELESKY

# ABOUT BOOKS

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## An Owl Like a Beautiful Thought

Mark Lynch

***Owls of the Eastern Ice: A Quest to Find and Save the World's Largest Owl.***

Jonathan C. Slaght. 2020. New York, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

For me, fish owls were like a beautiful thought I couldn't quite articulate. They evoked the same wondrous longing as some distant place I'd always wanted to visit but didn't really know much about. I pondered fish owls and felt cool from the canopy shadows they hid in and smelled moss clinging to riverside stones. (p. 4 *Owls of the Eastern Ice*)

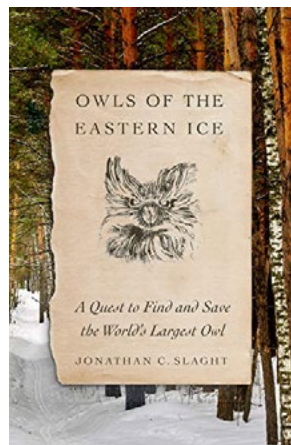
It is not a stretch to say that any day you see an owl is a good day. Even spotting a common owl such as a Great Horned or Eastern Screech makes us catch our breath. Part of the reason for an owl's oversized charisma quotient is that we do not see them that often because most species are nocturnal. But their nocturnal habits cannot be the sole reason for our deep fascination with owls. Since Ancient Greece and Egypt, owls have been the subject of countless myths, stories, and beliefs of cultures around the world. They have been seen as symbols of wisdom, drunkenness, silliness, harbingers of death, evil spirits, and thanks to the Harry Potter novels, as magical mailmen. So popular are owls in Massachusetts today that birding websites refuse to post the location of a roosting owl of any species lest throngs of birders and photographers harass the bird.

Some of my most memorable birding experiences have to do with seeing an owl. Once, while birding the Wyoming Rockies several decades back, we came across a large open field in dense forest as the sun set. In the gloaming, a large herd of elk emerged from the forest opposite us, and a male began to bugle loudly. Just then, a Great Gray Owl perched high in a tree near the elk. It was as if a part of the forest suddenly coalesced and became the owl. After about five minutes, the Great Gray made a long, low, totally silent flight across the field and vanished. We just stood there, mouths open. We never saw that bird again, even though we returned to that field the next evening. I am sure all of you have had encounters with owls as memorable.

Have you determinedly looked for owls during a CBC or a Breeding Bird Survey and totally struck out seeing or hearing an owl time and again? Have you ever led an owl prowl and seen the hopes of the excited participants dashed when no owls even called after spending hours in the cold darkness? Imagine how challenging it is to scientifically study owls in the field. Jonathan C. Slaght spent five years studying one of the world's rarest owls in one of the most remote forests in the world. This is a place with few human residents and many fewer roads. The story of his experiences makes *Owls of the Eastern Ice* one of the most fascinating natural history books of the year.

Jonathan C. Slaght is the "Russia and Northeast Asia coordinator for the Wildlife Conservation Society. He manages research projects on endangered species and

coordinates avian conservation activities along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway from the Arctic to the tropics.” (book jacket) After completing a Master of Science project at the University of Minnesota studying the impacts of logging on the songbirds of the Primorye province of Russia, he found himself immediately wanting to go back. It is no wonder, because the Primorye is a natural historian’s perfect choice for field research. It is part of eastern Russia on the Sea of Japan—a location most Americans have never heard of. The Primorye is a vast area of dense mixed forests that are still largely pristine. The few scattered small towns hold a small number of residents, some of whom are subsistence hunters. “Primorye is, more so than most of the temperate zone, a place where humans and wildlife still share the same resources.” (p. 310)



Because of its remoteness and lack of facilities, it is rarely visited, even by Russian scientists. It is home to moose, wild boar, musk and red deer, and the Amur tiger. It was here in the year 2000 that Slaght had a sighting that would change the course of his research: “I saw my first Blakiston’s Fish Owl in the Russian province of Primorye, a coastal talon hooking south into the belly of Northeast Asia.” (p. 3) As he describes his first look at the owl: “It was clearly an owl, but bigger than any I’d seen, about the size of an eagle, but fluffier and more portly, with enormous ear tufts.” (p. 3)

Logging had started to make impacts on the forests here when Slaght first visited the area, and Russian business interests were beginning to eye the natural resources of the area. Technically the owls are protected by Russian law, and it is illegal to kill them or destroy their habitat. But before Slaght’s research, there was no concrete knowledge of the owl’s needs or where they nested. You cannot protect what you know nothing about. Slaght makes it clear: “Conservation is different from preservation.” (p. 9), and his goal is conservation. Preservation would mean lengthy lobbying of the Russian government to simply wall off the entire huge area and close it to all business interests. This is something that it would be difficult if not impossible to get the Russian government to do. Conservation begins with a scientific understanding of the owls’ needs and working out a plan that best suits human and owl needs.

Blakiston’s Fish Owls are among the world’s largest owls and one of the rarest. Globally the population has been estimated at fewer than 2,000 individuals and 500–850 pairs. They are a low-density, slow-reproducing species. Slaght estimates the Russian population at 300–400 for the entire country. In the Primorye, Slaght estimates that one pair of owls raise one chick every other year. In Japan, the same species of fish owl breeds every year and raises two chicks. They are nonmigratory and long-lived. Wild birds have been found that are more than 25 years old: “A hearty creature in an inhospitable environment.” (p. 8)

Many aspects of these owls are unique. Their appearance is like an owl with severe “bed head,” with feathers popping out all over the body. This gives the owl a disheveled, fluffy appearance. In the Primorye, in winter these owls look for salmonid

species of fish along open patches of largely frozen rivers. Because they walk along these stretches of river looking for the fish, Blakiston's Fish Owls are one of the few flying birds that you track. Finding their large K-shaped prints is one of the sure ways to know you are in one of their territories. Fish owls, unlike other owl species, are noisy fliers, and you can hear them taking off and soaring over the landscape. Unlike other owls, fish owls regurgitate a very loose collection of scales and small bones. These are pellets in name only.

For Slaght there are many challenges to determining the population of these owls. They call most frequently in February, a time in the Primorye when temperatures dip below minus 22 degrees. Like the Great Gray Owl, fish owls hoot in the low two hundred hertz range. So low are these calls, they are difficult to record. "On the tapes I'd later make, the owls always sounded far away, muffled, lost, even if they were close by." (p. 45) The female's calls are even lower than the males. They duet, but early on in the field, Slaght could hear only the male distinctly.

Getting around anywhere in the Primorye in February at night is a challenge because of the snow and cold. There are few roads. Snowmobiles take Slaght and his Russian guides along the shores of the rivers. But even this is difficult because the peak of the fish owls calling coincides with the start of ice melt on the rivers. This means that there are patches of the frozen rivers covered in frazil, or slush. Since they are out at night, Slaght and his companions cannot quite see if the frazil is just a six-inch coating on top of more stable ice or frazil with open water underneath. There are a few roads, but they are muddy and covered in deep snow, so you need special vehicles to drive any distances. Walking with skis or snowshoes through the forest is also difficult. "The days' struggle turned out to be the standard rather than the exception: there are poking thorns, prodding branches, and unexpected falls in the future of anyone who chooses to study fish owls." (p. 79) Slaght is helicoptered in on his visits there.

The few towns that exist in the Primorye are inhabited by hearty, independent, and sometimes slightly eccentric Russians. Luckily, Slaght is conversant in the language. Accommodations early on in his research are pretty basic.

The rooms were separated from one another by filthy, patterned sheets that hung unevenly in the door-frames. There was so much plaster on the floor in the back room that it crunched constantly underfoot, and there were small bits of what appeared to be frozen meat and fur against one of the walls under the window. (p. 21)

Trying to conduct research while accommodating the Russian customs of your compatriots was a bit of a challenge.

Russian social customs typically dictate that once a bottle of vodka is on the table for guests, it is not removed till empty. Some vodka distillers don't even put caps on their bottles—opting for a thin layer of aluminum to puncture instead—because what do you need a cap for? (p. 29-30)

In the end, Slaght had to just give up and go to bed early while the drinking went on and on. But he mastered other important customs:



There are two reliable ways to get a Russian man to respect you: the first is to consume voluminous amounts of vodka and bond over the honesty exposed by subsequent drunkenness, and the other is to go toe-to-toe in a banya. I had long ago stopped trying to keep pace with Russian men and their drinking, but in those days, I could steam with the best. (p. 59)

*Owls of the Eastern Ice* follows Slaght through the years as he gets to know these birds' habits and habitats. On his first year while visiting the northern parts of the Primorye, he simply wants to prove the owls are still here and that it is possible to determine their territories. His first sighting of an owl during this time is memorable.

We were a few hundred meters shy of the tributary by dusk when a massive form dropped from a tree. Despite the failing light, its shape was pronounced against the river's frozen surface near the cliffs opposite the tributary's mouth. I'd seen other owls in shadow before, so I knew immediately that's what this was, only this was much bigger than any other owl species I'd ever seen. It was a fish owl. I found myself holding my breath as this truth washed over me. The bird did not make any unnecessary movements; it floated on extended wings at a descending angle over the water, then disappeared up the tributary where it had hunted the night before. (p. 65)

Gradually over his yearly visits, Slaght discovers that the owls have certain trees they will nest in. These are forest giants like old-growth Japanese poplar or Manchurian elm, trees that stand out from the rest of the forest. Looking out across the hilly landscape, Slaght is able to pick out those trees that are most likely be the site of a nest. Finally, through much trial and error, Slaght learns how to trap and attach geolocators to the owls, allowing him to track owls' movements through the year.

*Owls of the Eastern Ice* is simultaneously an exotic travelogue and a fine account of how field research is done in remote places. Slaght's writing perfectly captures the sense of this unique place. The Primorye is a land at once forbidding in winter yet inhabited by people determined to live outside of the chaos of city life no matter what gets thrown at them. It is a tough, sometimes violent life, and Slaght's writing allows us at least a peek into the challenges they face and how they cope. He also works with several determined Russian researchers who are trying to document Russia's wildlife that are endangered by rapid and unrelenting development in the search for natural resources to exploit. This is a unique place few of us will ever visit, yet Slaght's prose brings us along with him on every trip to the shores of the frozen rivers and into the snow-clad forests of the Primorye. Best of all, he lets us share in his excitement of hearing and seeing these magnificent owls.

With proper management we'll always see fish in the rivers here, and we'll continue to follow tracks of tigers that weave among pine and shadow in search of prey. And, standing in the forest under the right conditions, we'll hear the salmon hunters too—the fish owls—announcing like town criers that all is well: Primorye is still wild. (p. 310) 🦉

# Staff Changes for 2021

*Marsha C. Salett*

After six years as a copyeditor, Melinda S. LaBranche has retired from *Bird Observer*. Mindy worked at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology before she moved back to southeastern Massachusetts, where she taught biology at several local colleges. Her combination of experience, sharp eyes, and attention to detail served *Bird Observer* well. Mindy also wrote about “Atlantic Coastal Pine Barrens: a Globally Rare Habitat in Southeastern Massachusetts” (*Bird Observer* August 2016, Volume 44, Number 4) and “Evening Grosbeaks: Winter Jewels of My Childhood” (*Bird Observer* October 2019 Volume 47, Number 5). Thank you, Mindy, for the professionalism and expertise you brought to the journal.

David Larson wrote his final *Gleanings* column in October 2020. For six years, he provided readers with fascinating, unusual, and sometimes just plain odd tidbits about birds that he gleaned from current ornithological literature. Before Dave became a columnist and associate editor in 2014, he was the production editor of *Bird Observer* for 15 years. I am happy to report that Dave is not leaving *Bird Observer*. He will stay on as an associate editor, contributing his invaluable scientific knowledge and continuing to peer review articles. I hope that Dave will keep writing articles for the journal because he is an articulate, erudite, and entertaining writer—a rare combination—and I always learn something new from him.

*Bird Observer* welcomes three new members to the editorial staff: proofreader Mary McKittrick and copyeditors Mary Beth Barilla and Jeffrey Gantz.

Mary McKittrick grew up birding in New York City, but her Massachusetts birding roots are deep—she is a former Manomet, Inc. intern. She taught at the University of Michigan where she was Curator of Birds. Mary now lives in Northampton, teaches at Smith College, and birds every day around Hampshire County.

Mary Beth Barilla was a mostly casual birdwatcher until she moved to Greater Boston, where she realized that birding is a great outdoor activity to enjoy during a long, cold New England winter. She and her husband like to spend weekends finding new places to bird on the South Shore. She has master’s degrees in English and TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and has spent her professional career working in the scholarly publishing industry.

Jeffrey Gantz has a doctoral degree in Celtic Languages from Harvard University and was arts editor at the *Boston Phoenix* for 20 years. He currently is a *Boston Globe* correspondent and a freelance proofreader. His mother was a lifelong birder, but he and his wife Ann did not begin birding until 2010, when they were inspired by all of the ducks they saw on their walks around Fresh Pond in Cambridge. 🦆

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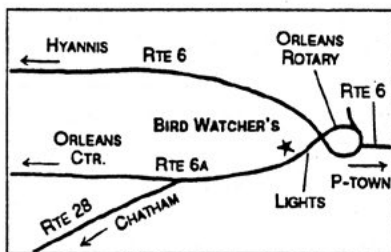
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# BIRD SIGHTINGS

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## September–October 2020

*Neil Hayward and Robert H. Stymeist*

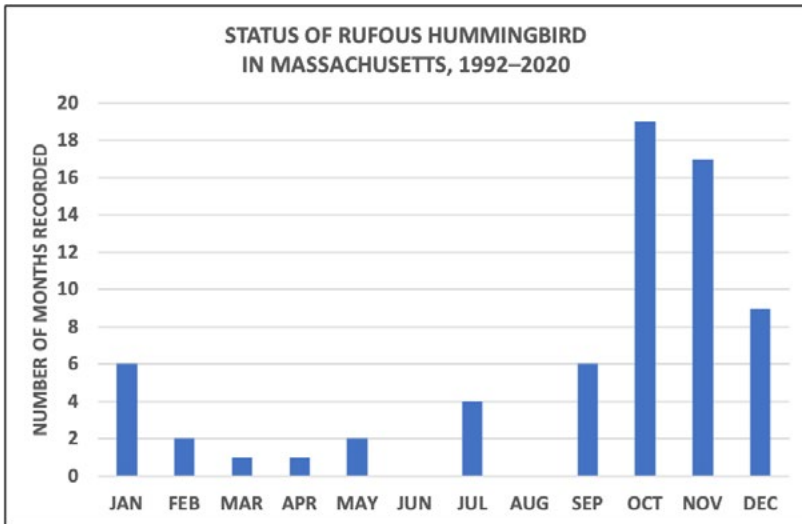
September's weather was as good as it gets with comfortable temperatures, dry air, and lots of sunshine. Labor Day weekend saw the mercury hit the mid-70s, perfect for birding. The first frost advisory was issued on September 20 for much of our area—though not in Boston—and marked the first unseasonably cool weather of late summer and early autumn. Hurricane Teddy passed well to the east of Massachusetts on September 22 but still had an impact on coastal communities producing very high seas in Bristol, Dukes, and Nantucket counties. Strong winds up to 72 miles per hour were noted on the last day of the month, resulting in many downed trees and widespread power outages.

Most of October was seasonable. The high for the month in Boston was 78 degrees on October 10, and the low was a chilly 28 degrees on Halloween. There were 16 days during the month with some precipitation. Boston recorded 4.98 inches of rain, just over an inch above average for the month. The big weather story this month was the snowstorm on the last day of the month; Halloween looked more like Christmas Day, with 4.3 inches of snow measured in Boston. This set an October snowfall record, breaking the previous record of 1.1 inches, set on Halloween 2005. Some areas saw more than half a foot of snow; Natick had six inches, Worcester 6.5 inches, and Braintree 7.5 inches—the highest total in the state.

*R. Stymeist*

### GEESE THROUGH IBISES

Since the first accepted record of **Barnacle Goose** to the state list in 2002, the species has become somewhat of a regular year tick. It has been missed in only three of the past 20 years and has been recorded in every county except those of Cape Cod and the Islands. The first bird of the 2020–21 winter appeared in the Northampton area on October 12, one day shy of the earliest fall record. This was also the first Barnacle Goose found in the United States this winter, with others reported from as early as September 10 in Canada (Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia). Even rarer than this year's Barnacle Goose were the bird's fellow travelers: four geese that appear to be **Barnacle X Cackling Goose** hybrids. Young geese are known to migrate with their parents, and this may represent a family group. Indeed, the "Carnacle" or "Barkling" hybrids were still with the Barnacle Goose at the end of the month when they were re-found in Connecticut. What the non-Barnacle parent might be is debatable. Hybridization is more likely between similar-sized birds, which would make Cackling Goose or Lesser Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis parvipes*) the best matches for the diminutive Barnacle. Indeed—and perhaps surprisingly—Cackling Goose has been shown to be genetically closer (i.e., more related) to Barnacle Goose than it is to Canada Goose (Paxinos et al. 2002). Where these birds were born is also a mystery. While numbers of Barnacle Geese are increasing in Greenland, the smaller white-cheeked geese are extremely rare there. More likely, perhaps, is a vagrant Barnacle Goose that wintered in North America and stayed to breed, pairing with a Cackling or Canada goose. More about this fascinating taxon can be found in Johnson, 2014. In other goose news this period, **Cackling** and **Greater White-fronted geese** were reported from an above-average six and three counties, respectively. Berkshire County scored its first September record of Snow Goose, with a single bird at Pittsfield on September 19.



**Figure 1.** Number of months in which Rufous Hummingbird has been recorded in Massachusetts for the period 1992–2020. Data from eBird.org.

A hybrid also dominated the duck news this period. A **Bufflehead X Common Goldeneye**, which one observer described as an “upside down Bufflehead,” was found in North Adams on October 27. This bird shared the entire continent this period with only one other such hybrid near Denver, Colorado. This is the second record of this taxon for Massachusetts, after a returning bird in Orleans (spring 2018 and the winter of 2019–20), and the third for New England (a bird wintered near Keene, New Hampshire, in 2015–2018). A male **King Eider** off Revere Beach on October 31 is the earliest winter record for Suffolk County. This was a good season for Black Scoter, with new high counts for the period for Bristol (356), Plymouth (3,022), and Suffolk (60) counties. An **Eared Grebe** was photographed at Wellfleet Town Pier on September 24. This is the second record for this year, after a bird was present for over two weeks off the coast of Beverly in February.

Early September saw a strong passage of Common Nighthawks. A high of 1,100 birds was reported in Northampton on September 3, the highest count for the month since September 1, 1995. **Rufous Hummingbirds** were photographed in October visiting backyard feeders and flowering plants in Mendon and North Dartmouth. This western species has been annual to the state since 1994, with one miss in 2009. October is the most likely month in which to find one (see Figure 1). Rufous Hummers were reported throughout the Northeast this period including Maine, Vermont, Connecticut, New York, and New Brunswick.

A family of **Common Gallinules** with young was found in Richmond, Berkshire County, in September. This is the second successful breeding this year, after young were discovered at Monomoy NWR this summer. Common Gallinule is listed as a Species of Special Concern under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act.

An **American Avocet** had been present on and off at Plum Island this year since June 16. That streak ended on October 7. Another bird was at Yarmouth for the middle of September. A Purple Sandpiper was photographed at Holyoke Dam on October 30. It is the first record for Hampshire County and only the third significantly inland record for the state, after birds in Pittsfield in 1953 and 1963 that also appeared in the last week of October (Veit and Petersen, 1993). A Buff-breasted Sandpiper at Race Point Beach in Provincetown on October 2 and another at Martha’s Vineyard on October 10 are the first October records for the state for a decade.

A **South Polar Skua** was photographed at Race Point on October 3. This is only the fourth October record for the state per eBird, with the late date being October 12 set last year. The first Common Murre of the winter was spotted off Rockport on October 13. This is the earliest October record, but not the earliest winter record; in 2017 and 2019, single birds were recorded on September 23 and September 1 respectively.

“The” Race Point **Sabine’s Gull** continued throughout the period. This bird has been present in Provincetown and outer Cape Cod since July 12. Bonaparte’s Gulls are uncommon away from the coast, and this period Worcester and Hampden counties scored their first September and October records respectively. This has been a good year for **Franklin’s Gull**, with records in June, July, and August. This period, an adult was found at Easthampton on October 26, the third record of this attractive hooded gull for Hampshire County.

There were some notable late records of terns this period. A count of 250 Forster’s Terns at First Encounter Beach on September 23 is a new high for the month, while Nantucket scored its second October record with 12 birds on Tuckernuck Island on October 10. A Royal Tern found in Acoaxet on October 24 is the first October record for Bristol County, and the second latest for the state this century after a bird at Plum Island on November 4, 2005. Veit and Peterson, 1993, note four November records of Royal Tern last century with the latest being November 25–27, 1979. Up to 14 Black Skimmers were at Point of Pines in Revere from September 30–October 12, which represents a new high count for Suffolk County (the previous record was nine birds in 2013).

Race Point hosted up to three **Pacific Loons** this period, with individuals donning alternate (breeding) and basic (winter) plumage, as well as a molting bird wearing something in between. Single alternate-plumaged birds flew by Andrews Point in Rockport on October 12 and 13. On September 22, 107 Leach’s Storm-Petrels were recorded flying past Corporation Beach in Dennis, the highest September count since 2001. On the same day, a **Brown Booby** was observed flying past Andrews Point on September 22. Three **Audubon’s Shearwaters** were photographed south of Nantucket on September 6. These are the only records this year, which is more a reflection of cancelled pelagics in a pandemic year than the scarcity of the species.

A candidate for Massachusetts Bird of the Year—a **Gray Heron**—was discovered by Skyler Kardell on Tuckernuck Island on September 5. It was relocated at neighboring Muskeget Island by the same observer the following day. And then it was gone. This represents the first record for the Lower 48, and the fifth record for the United States, with the previous four records all coming from western Alaska (Howell et al, 2014). There are at least seven records for Canada, including the first record for North America—a moribund bird discovered in Newfoundland in 1996. Based on flight photos, the Massachusetts bird appears to be the same Gray Heron that was present in Nova Scotia from June 28–August 22 earlier this year. A month after the bird was found in Massachusetts, a Gray Heron was photographed at Chincoteague NWR and then at Cheriton Landfill, both in Virginia. While none of the photos showed that bird in flight, the consensus seems to be that the Massachusetts and Virginia birds are different individuals.

A **Cattle Egret** was present at Hadley on October 16. It was only the fourth record of the egret this year, which makes this the quietest year this century for the species. Horn Pond and Mystic Lakes hosted the first October record of Snowy Egret for Middlesex County, with a bird lingering until October 17. Revere recorded a new Suffolk County high of 32 Snowys on October 2. The 17 Yellow-crowned Night-Herons found at Barnstable on October 4 represent a state new high for the month.

*N. Hayward*





Northern Bobwhite				
9/3	Eastham (FH)	15	N. Yusuff	
Wild Turkey				
9/2	Holden 25 13ad+12yg		M. Lynch#	
10/24	MtA	3 m	N. Hayward	
Ruffed Grouse				
9/5	Ashby	1	J. Forbes	
10/9	Winchendon	1	M. Lynch#	
10/11	Mt Watatic	1	C. + C. Winstanley	
10/17	Quabbin (G8)	1	M. Lynch#	
Ring-necked Pheasant				
10/29	Egremont	6	J. Pierce	
Pied-billed Grebe				
9/8	Dedham	3	M. Iliff	
10/1-10/31	PI	2 max	v.o.	
10/9-10/30	Turners Falls	7 max	E. Huston	
10/11	Acoaxet	5	G. d'Entremont	
10/14	Quaboag IBA	5	M. Lynch#	
10/20-26	Cheshire	5 max	J. Morris-Siegel+v.o.	
Horned Grebe				
9/1-10/2	Marblehead	1	J. Smith	
9/14	Danvers	1	R. Heil	
10/1	PI	1	T. Wetmore#	
10/2	Pittsfield (Onota)	2	J. Pierce	
10/17-31	Ludlow	2	L. + A. Richardson + v.o.	
10/24	Quaboag IBA	1	M. Lynch#	
Red-necked Grebe				
10/10-17	Waltham	1	J. Forbes	
10/12	Quabbin Pk	4	L. Therrien + v.o.	
10/13	Rockport (AP)	2	R. Heil	
10/24	Quaboag IBA	1	M. Lynch#	
<b>Eared Grebe</b>				
9/24	Wellfleet	1 ph	M. Jones	
Yellow-billed Cuckoo				
10/7	Sharon	1	E. Ganin	
10/10,18	PI	1,1	N. Landry, T. Wetmore	
Black-billed Cuckoo				
10/3	Nahant	1	M. Iliff	
10/9	Scituate	1	S. Maguire#	
10/14	Hadley	1	S. Surner	
Common Nighthawk				
9/1-9/30	Northampton	1485	T. Gagnon + v.o.	
9/3	Northampton	1100	T. Gagnon + v.o.	
9/3	Hampden	753	A. Downey	
10/6	Wayland	2	M. McKenna	
Chimney Swift				
9/5	Longmeadow	250	M. Moore	
9/16	Mount Tom	300	S. Winn & L. Farlow	
10/7	Longmeadow	11	T. Gilliland	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird				
9/1-10/17	Woods Hole	1	D. Remsen	
10/3	Melrose	1	D. Hefferon	
10/5	Newton	1	D. Bailey	
<b>Rufous Hummingbird</b>				
10/5	Mendon	1 ph imm m	C. Carnovale	
10/31	N. Dartmouth	1 ph ad f	M. Iliff#	
Clapper Rail				
9/5	Ellisville	1	L. Schibley	
9/8-9/10	PI	1	C. Decker + v.o.	
9/10-9/11	WBWS	1	D. Muth#	
9/25	Orleans	2	K. Yakola#	
9/28	Rumney (Revere)	1	F. Morello + v.o.	
10/24-26	Mashpee	1	K. Fiske#	
Virginia Rail				
9/5	Warren	3	M. Lynch#	
10/4	Franklin	5	N. Marchessault	
10/27	Cuttyhunk I.	17	J. Offermann#	
Sora thr	Reported from 31 locations			
9/26	Hanover	35	N. Marchessault#	
10/2	Deerfield	1 nfc	D. Sibley	
10/4-10/15	W. Roxbury (MP)	2	M. Kaufman + v.o.	

## Common Gallinule

9/11-10/10	Richmond	6 3ad+3yg	J. Felton + v.o.
9/16	Hatfield	1	B. Finney + v.o.
10/11-14	Eastham	1 ph	T. Marvel, v.o.
10/23-25	Tidmarsh WS	1 ph	L. Kras + v.o.
10/26	Nantucket	1 ph	T. Pastuszak#
American Coot			
10/11	Acoaxet	22	G. d'Entremont
10/21	Randolph	27	D. Burton
10/25	Hatfield	4	K. Schroeder
10/27	Longmeadow	12	T. Gilliland
Sandhill Crane			
9/5-10/18	Burrage Pd WMA	9 max	v.o.
9/6	Ashfield	2	J. Miller
9/12	Tolland	2	D. Holmes
9/13-9/15	Edgartown	1	R. Culbert#
9/14	Worthington5 4ad+1juv		T. Gessing
9/19	Quabbin (G43)	2	M. Lynch#
10/31	Easton	8	K. Ryan
10/31	Wayland	3	B. Harris
<b>American Avocet</b>			
9/12-9/24	Yarmouth	1 ph	v.o.
9/18-10/7	PI	1 ph	D. Chickering + v.o.
American Oystercatcher			
9/14	Gloucester	2	D. Allard
9/23	Tuckernuck I.	16	S. Kardell
10/20	Quincy	5 ad	D. Burton
Black-bellied Plover			
9/28	PI	335	R. Heil
10/15	Barnstable (SN)	750	P. Crosson
10/26	Easthampton	4	D. McLain
10/30	Northfield	4	J. Smith
American Golden-Plover			
9/17	Holden	4	M. Lynch#
9/20	P'town (RP)	3	A. Burdo
9/21-9/26	Turners Falls	3	J. Smith + v.o.
9/28-9/30	Sheffield	2 max	G. Ward
10/2	Northampton	18	T. Gilliland
10/6-10/20	Winthrop B.	6	S. Zende# + v.o.
10/19	PI	6	T. Wetmore + v.o.
Killdeer			
9/1	Great Barrington	46	J. Pierce
9/17	Deerfield	47	P. Gagarin
10/28	Hadley	56	T. Gilliland
Semipalmated Plover			
9/7	PI	750	R. Heil
10/15	Barnstable (SN)	250	P. Crosson
10/15	PI	140	T. Wetmore + v.o.
10/15-22	Quabbin (G35)	6 max	J. Johnstone + v.o.
Piping Plover			
9/30	Ipswich (CB)	2	I. Pepper
10/6	PI	1	S. Babbitt + v.o.
Upland Sandpiper			
9/3	Boston (FPk)	1	J. LeBel + v.o.
9/15	Dedham	1	M. Iliff
Whimbrel			
9/7	Muskeget I.	9	S. Kardell#
9/13	Quincy	4	E. Nielsen
9/17	WBWS	13	A. Kneidel#
9/24, 10/17	Eastham (FE)	15,3	A. Kneidel, P. Trimble#
9/24	PI	11	L. Waters
Hudsonian Godwit			
9/19	Duxbury B.	1	R. Bowes
9/26	Nantucket	1	K. Blackshaw
10/2	PI	8	S. Sullivan
10/16-18	E. Boston (BI)	2	C. Long + v.o.
10/18	Monomoy NWR	1	B. Harrington#
Marbled Godwit			
9/1-9/9	PI	2 max	L. Smith# + v.o.
9/5,9/19	Duxbury	1,1	L. Holmes
9/14	Scituate	1	S. Sullivan
9/15-10/19	Chatham	5	J. Pratt+ v.o.

Ruddy Turnstone				9/6	Mashpee	1		D. Burton#
9/1	Rockport	15	C. Floyd	9/6-9/7, 9/19	Quincy	1,1		E. Nielsen + v.o.
9/1-9/15	Marblehead	12 max	J. Smith + v.o.	9/7	Tuckernuck I.	1		S. Kardell#
9/2	Longmeadow	1	T. Gilliland	9/12	Salisbury	1		C. Marchant
9/9	P'town (RP)	30	K. Hanson	9/25	Ipswich (CB)	2		C. Disney
Red Knot				10/18	Monomoy NWR	4		B. Harrington#
9/25-10/2	PI	14,20	G. d'Entremont#	Short-billed Dowitcher				
10/15	Barnstable (SN)	11	P. Crosson	9/7, 9/11	PI	11,27		R. Heil
Stilt Sandpiper				9/7	October Mountain	3		L. Hertzog
9/1-9/7	Quincy	2	E. Nielsen + v.o.	10/15	Quabbin (G35)	1		J. Johnstone
9/28, 10/1	PI	11 juv	R. Heil	10/29	Ipswich (CB)	1		I. Pepper
9/30	Agawam	2	T. Gilliland	Long-billed Dowitcher				
10/2	Acoaxet	1	D. Zimberlin	9/6	E. Boston (BI)	1		T. Marsan-Ryan
Sanderling				9/11, 9/28	PI	16,15		R. Heil
9/2-9/3	Longmeadow	2 max	L.+A. Richardson#	American Woodcock				
9/11	GMNWR	1	J. Forbes	9/4	Hardwick	1		M. Lynch#
10/1-10/29	PI	85 max	S. Babbitt + v.o.	10/5-10/27	Easthampton	3 max		L. Therrien
10/4	Monomoy NWR3000		B. Harrington	10/27	PI	3		T. Wetmore
10/15	Barnstable (SN) 500		P. Crosson	Wilson's Snipe				
Dunlin				10/20-24	PI	1		T. Wetmore + v.o.
10/1-10/31	PI	575 max	J.Layman + v.o.	10/29	Sheffield	5		J. Pierce
10/4	Longmeadow	4	T. Gilliland	Spotted Sandpiper				
10/18	Monomoy NWR2080		B. Harrington	9/11	Holden	3		M. Lynch#
10/26-27	Northampton	22 max	A.Hulsey + v.o.	10/29	Medford	1		J. Kovner
10/29	Montague	8	K. Barnes	10/31	Woburn (HP)	1		J. Price#
Purple Sandpiper				Solitary Sandpiper				
10/26	Rockport (AP)	2	D. Sibley	9/14	Mashpee	15		M. Perrin
10/30	Eastham (FE)	2	L. Waters#	9/27	Southampton	7		M. McKittrick
10/30	Holyoke	1 juv	T. Gilliland + v.o.	10/31	Medford	1		D. Littauer
Baird's Sandpiper				10/31	Woburn (HP)	1		J. Thomas
9/1-9/3	Northfield	1	J. Smith + v.o.	Lesser Yellowlegs				
9/5	Northampton	1	A. Hulsey#	9/11	PI	85		R. Heil
9/7	Tuckernuck I.	1	T. Griswold	9/30	Agawam	14		T. Gilliland
9/7	Muskeget I.	1	S. Kardell	Willet				
9/8	Nantucket	1	S. Fee	9/1-9/20	PI	3 max		v.o.
9/10	Holden	1	B. Robo + v.o.	9/19	Quincy	1		D. Burton
9/12	Petersham	1	M. Lynch#	Greater Yellowlegs				
9/14	Orleans	1	D. Harrison	9/11	PI	125		R. Heil
9/19	Longmeadow	1	T. Gilliland	10/15	Quabbin (G35)	5		J. Johnstone
9/25	PI	2	E. LeBlanc + v.o.	10/31	Holyoke	4		S. Moreno
10/4	Lexington	1	C. Cook	Wilson's Phalarope				
Least Sandpiper				9/1-9/12	Falmouth	1		M. Keleher + v.o.
9/11, 10/18	PI	100,1	R. Heil, B. Burke	9/11, 9/24	PI	1,1		S. Grinley#, L. Waters
9/11	Holden	6	M. Lynch#	Red-necked Phalarope				
10/29	GMNWR	1	A. Bragg#	9/20, 10/4	P'town (RP)	50,15		B. Nikula#
White-rumped Sandpiper				Red Phalarope				
9/7, 10/15	PI	23,23	R. Heil, S. Zhang + v.o.	9/11	Huntington	1		P. Wilcox
10/25	P'town (RP)	3	L. Waters	9/11	Quabbin Pk	1		D. Lounsbury + v.o.
10/27	Hadley	3	A. Kahn#	9/12-9/14	October Mountain	2 max		J. Pierce + v.o.
Buff-breasted Sandpiper				9/19	P'town (RP)	1		B. Nikula#
9/4	Boston (FPk)	1	L. Markley + v.o.	10/24-26	Cheshire	1		M. Boschetti
9/7	Northborough	1	N. Dowling + v.o.	South Polar Skua				
9/8-9/13	PI	4 max	M. Watson + v.o.	10/3	P'town (RP)	1		phB. Nikula, P. Flood
9/8	Dedham	1	M. Iliif	Pomarine Jaeger				
9/9	Gloucester	1	J. Keyes	10/13	Rockport (AP)	1		R. Heil
9/10-9/11	Whately	1	T. Gilliland + v.o.	10/31	P'town (RP)	5		B. Nikula#
9/11	Holden	1	M. Lynch#	Parasitic Jaeger				
10/2	P'town (RP)	1	N. Hayward	10/7, 12	PI	3,2		T. Wetmore
10/10	Katama, MV	1	T. Gilliland	10/12-13	Rockport (AP)	5 max		R. Heil
Pectoral Sandpiper				10/12	Cohasset	1		V. Zollo
9/7	PI	4	R. Heil	10/17, 30	P'town (RP)	12,26		B. Nikula#
9/10	Longmeadow	22	T. Gilliland	Long-tailed Jaeger				
10/3	P'town	3	BBC (G. d'Entremont)	9/19	P'town (RP)2	1juv+1S		B. Nikula#
10/21	Dedham	2	J. Meigs	Dovekie				
Semipalmated Sandpiper				10/19	P'town (RP)	2		L. Waters#
9/7	Everett	75	J. Forbes	Common Murre				
9/10	Longmeadow	52	T. Gilliland	10/13	Rockport (AP)	1		R. Heil
9/11	PI	1300	R. Heil	10/31	P'town (RP)	1		L. Grimes#
10/21	Dedham	2	J. Meigs	Razorbill				
Western Sandpiper				9/20, 10/31	P'town (RP)	1,51		B. Nikula#
9/1-9/22	PI	1	v.o.	10/12	Rockport (AP)	54		R. Heil
9/3	Ipswich	1	N. Dubrow	10/15	PI	3		T. Wetmore#
9/4	Rockport	1	C. Marchant					

large alcid sp.	10/31	P'town (RP)	206	B. Nikula#	Royal Tern	9/8	Ipswich (CB)	1 ph	I. Pepper
Black Guillemot	9/19-9/22	PI	1	J. Levy# + v.o.		9/8	PI	1 ph	J. Carey#
	9/22	Rockport (AP)	1	J. Hoye#	Black Skimmer	9/9	Edgartown	24	R. Culbert
<b>Atlantic Puffin</b>	10/12,13	Rockport (AP)	2,5 ph	R. Heil		9/30-10/12	Revere (POP)	14	L. Ferraresso + v.o.
Black-legged Kittiwake	10/12	Rockport (AP)	9	R. Heil		10/1-10/8	Nahant	10	max M. Goetschkes + v.o.
	10/31	P'town (RP)	1000	B. Nikula#		10/1-10/3	Quincy	3	M. McWade + v.o.
<b>Sabine's Gull</b>	9/1-10/31	P'town (RP)	1 1S ph	v.o.	Red-throated Loon	10/13	Pittsfield (Pont.)	1	Z. Adams
	9/9	Brewster	1 1S ph	R. Debenham		10/26	Rockport (AP)	250	D. Sibley
Bonaparte's Gull	9/24	Wachusett Res.	1	H. Siener		10/29-31	Wachusett Res.	1	B. Abbott
	10/6	Lynn	150	J. Quigley	<b>Pacific Loon</b>	10/30	Stockbridge	2	K. Hanson
	10/17	Quabbin (G35)	6	E. LeBlanc		10/31	P'town (RP)	85	B. Nikula#
	10/27-28	Stockbridge	8 max	J. Pierce		9/1-9/5	P'town (RP)	1 basic ph	T. Green#
	10/30	P'town (RP)	530	B. Nikula#		10/7-10/25	P'town (RP)	1 basic/alt ph	D.Burton+v.o.
<b>Black-headed Gull</b>	9/1-10/14	Nbpt H.	1 ph	B. Murphy + v.o.	Common Loon	10/12, 13	Rockport (AP)	1,1 alt ph	R. Heil, S. Sullivan
	9/20-10/31	Plymouth B.	1 ph	J. Young + v.o.		10/16	P'town (RP)	1 alt	B. Nikula#
	9/26-10/12	Gloucester (EP)	1 ad ph	J. Barcus, S. Sullivan		10/12	Rockport (AP)	40	R. Heil
	10/1-10/6	Quincy	1 ad ph	M.McWade+v.o.		10/12	Quabbin Pk	11	L. Therrien + v.o.
	10/23	Salisbury	1 ad ph	J. Keeley		10/21	Wachusett Res.	21	M. Lynch#
	10/25	P'town (RP)2	1ad+1W ph	B. Nikula#		10/30	Pittsfield (Onota)	21	G. Ward
<b>Little Gull</b>	9/19-10/31	P'town (RP)	1 lcy ph	L.Waters + v.o.	Wilson's Storm-Petrel	9/17	Jeffreys L.	1	S. Mirick + v.o.
Laughing Gull	9/8	Agawam	2	L. + A. Richardson	Leach's Storm-Petrel	9/22	Dennis (Corp. B.)	107	P. Flood
	9/13	Eastham (CGB)	600	B. Nikula#		9/23	Eastham (FE)	19	J. Trimble#
	10/10	PI	90	T. Wetmore		10/12	Manomet Point	1	D. Burton
	10/12	Rockport (AP)	325	R. Heil		10/13	Rockport (AP)	7	R. Heil
<b>Franklin's Gull</b>	10/26	Easthampton	1 ad ph	A.Hulsey+v.o.		10/31	P'town (RP)	1	B. Nikula#
Lesser Black-backed Gull	9/7	PI	2 juv	R. Heil	Northern Fulmar	9/22	P'town (RP)	72	P. Trimble
	9/11	P'town (RP)	7	B. Nikula#		9/23	Eastham (FE)	8	J. Trimble#
	9/16	Monomoy NWR	68	A. Kneidel		10/13	Rockport (AP)	7	R. Heil
	10/2	PI	2 1ad+1juv	S. Sullivan	Cory's Shearwater	9/12, 10/12	Cohasset	2,1	V. Zollo
	10/10	Lynn	1 ad	J. Quigley		10/13	Rockport (AP)	112	R. Heil
	10/12	Rockport (AP)	1	R. Heil, S. Sullivan		10/27	P'town (RP)	835	B. Nikula#
	10/30	Quabbin Pk	1	L. Therrien	Sooty Shearwater	10/31	P'town (RP)	2	B. Nikula#
Glaucous Gull	9/5	Revere B.	1 2W	C. Kaynor	Great Shearwater	10/12	Rockport (AP)	247	R. Heil
	9/22-10/19	Gloucester	1	C. Haines + v.o.		10/31	P'town (RP)	800	B. Nikula#
Least Tern	9/2	Quincy	1	J. Mott + v.o.	Manx Shearwater	9/19, 10/11	P'town (RP)	318,49	P. Flood, B. Nikula#
Caspian Tern	9/8, 9/19	Quincy	3,8	D. Burton + v.o.		10/13	Rockport (AP)	46	R. Heil
	9/11,10/6	PI	3,4	R. Heil, T. Wetmore#	<b>Audubon's Shearwater</b>	9/6	S. of Nantucket	3 ph	N. Bonomo#
	9/12-9/15	E. Boston (BI)	2	S. Riley + v.o.	<b>Brown Booby</b>	9/22	Rockport (AP)	1 ad	S. Perkins
	9/13	Lynnfield	2	M. Sovay	Northern Gannet	10/13	Rockport (AP)	720	R. Heil
	9/19	Randolph	3	E. LeBlanc + v.o.		10/27	P'town (RP)	3700	B. Nikula#
	9/26	Orleans	1	N. Tepper	Great Cormorant	9/15	Rockport (AP)3	1ad+2imm	R. Heil
	10/4	P'town (RP)	8	B. Nikula#		10/3	PI	2	S. Zhang
	10/19	BHI (Deer I.)	3	J. Layman		10/23	South Hadley	1	T. Gilliland + v.o.
Black Tern	9/8	Nantucket	250	L. Dunn#	Double-crested Cormorant	9/27	Longmeadow	245	L. + A. Richardson
	9/8	Quincy	1	D. Burton + v.o.		10/4	Northampton	110	K. Krishna
Roseate Tern	9/1	Quincy	2	E. Nielsen		10/9	Orleans	6000	W. Banks
	9/11, 10/6	P'town (RP)	600,1	B. Nikula#, M. Harris	American Bittern	10/12	PI	1350	V. Burdette
Common Tern	9/11, 10/27	P'town (RP)4	100,350	B. Nikula#		9/17	GMNWR	1	W. Martens#
	9/17	Pittsfield (Onota)	2	Z. Adams# + v.o.		10/9	PI	1	S. Babbitt#
	10/1,25	PI	9,1	T. Wetmore, J. Lorenc		10/11	Deerfield	1 nfc	D. Sibley
	10/31	Quincy	1	V. Zollo		10/16	Richmond	1	Z. Adams
Forster's Tern	9/22	Eastham (FE)	250	B. Nikula#		10/19	Eastham (FH)	6	L. Waters#
	10/2	PI	8	S. Sullivan		10/25	Williamstown	1	M. Morales
	10/10, 31	P'town (RP)	360,65	T. Bradford, L. Grimes					

Great Blue Heron				<b>Cattle Egret</b>			
10/19	PI	23	S. Babbitt#	10/16	Hadley	1	ph L. Therrien + v.o.
10/27	Yarmouth	55	C. Riehl	Green Heron			
<b>Gray Heron*</b>				9/8	Deerfield	12	P. Gagarin
9/5	Tuckernuck I.	1 ph	S. Kardell	10/2	PI	2	S. Babbitt
9/6	Muskeget I.	1 ph	S. Kardell, T. Taylor	Black-crowned	Night-Heron		
Great Egret				9/7	Barnstable	23	C. Bates
9/7	Barnstable	95	C. Bates	10/1-10/18	PI	2	max v.o.
9/21	Scituate	53	M. Iliff	10/1	DWMA	2	N. Tepper
9/22-9/27	Longmeadow	36	max M. Moore + v.o.	10/3	Tuckernuck I.	22	S. Kardell#
10/6	PI	240	T. Wetmore	Yellow-crowned	Night-Heron		
10/29	Lexington	1	S. Miller#	9/1-9/19	Nbpt	12	max C. Disney + v.o.
Snowy Egret				9/1-9/28	PI	8	max S. Babbitt + v.o.
9/7	PI	120	J. Hoye#	9/3-9/28	E. Boston	4	S. Jones + v.o.
9/7	Barnstable	83	C. Bates	9/23	Marshfield	13	K. Rawdon
10/25	Gloucester	3	C. Haines	9/25	Rowley	3	imm R. Heil
10/30	Nantucket	1	K. Blackshaw	10/1	Eastham (FH)	15	T. Marvel
Little Blue Heron				10/3	Tuckernuck I.	10	S. Kardell#
9/1	Agawam	1	A. Kapinos	10/4	Barnstable	17	P. Bono
9/1	Quincy	1	C. Whitebread	Glossy Ibis			
9/29-10/8	Ipswich	1	I. Pepper	9/13	GMNWR	1	J. Levy + v.o.
10/3	Gloucester	2	S. Williams				

## VULTURES THROUGH DICKCISSEL

The fall migration of raptors is at its best in September. The most popular sites for hawkwatchers in Massachusetts are Mount Wachusett in Princeton and nearby Mount Watatic in Ashburnham. Broad-winged Hawks are the big attraction. The ideal weather for a good flight is a northeasterly wind. September 18 was the day to be out with good weather conditions, when 12,087 Broad-winged Hawks were cumulatively tallied from five hawkwatch locations. Other noteworthy sightings for the period included 10 reports of **Golden Eagles** with three noted from Shatterock Mountain in Russell, two immature **Mississippi Kites** on Mount Wachusett on September 4, and the first Rough-legged Hawk of the fall also at Mount Wachusett on October 31.

The big news this period was the invasion of winter finches into our area. The first indication that this could be a big flight year was the explosion of Red-breasted Nuthatches back in mid-August. Counts in excess of 40 individuals were noted in many areas throughout the state; Mark Lynch tallied 172 birds in Winchendon on September 6. By the end of September and the first week of October, it became obvious that this would be a very good year for an irruption of boreal birds. A severe spruce budworm outbreak was certainly a key in bringing these finches south. Purple Finches and Pine Siskins were the first to arrive in big numbers; more than 1,000 siskins were estimated on Nantucket and another 950 on nearby Tuckernuck Island on October 9, and counts exceeding 125 were common throughout the state. High counts of Purple Finches include an estimated 100 at Horn Pond in Woburn and 85 at Dunback Meadow in Lexington. By mid-October, Evening Grosbeaks started to show up in modest numbers and were joined in the last 10 days of October by Common Redpolls. Red Crossbills have almost taken up residence in the state, being reported continuously since early July. Flocks of 20-plus crossbills were reported in a number of areas during this period. The last days of October saw the first White-winged Crossbills move into our area.

Some of our more common migrants were reported in good numbers including 18 Olive-sided Flycatchers, 20 Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, 23 Philadelphia Vireos, 40 Clay-colored Sparrows, and 12 Dickcissels. **Thirty-six species** of warbler were noted during the period, with highlights including one **Golden-winged**, 3 **Prothonotary**, 33 **Connecticut**, one **Kentucky**, 10 **Hooded**, and 4 **Yellow-throated**. Two vagrant species were reported: one **Black-throated Gray Warbler** photographed on Plum Island and three **Townsend's Warblers**.

September and October birding in Massachusetts can be exciting, given the historical precedent of vagrants showing up. This period in 2020 was exceptional, with reports of three Western Kingbirds, a Say's Phoebe on Martha's Vineyard, a Bell's Vireo in Barnstable, a very cooperative Northern Wheatear on Plum Island, a Western Meadowlark on Cuttyhunk, four Yellow-headed Blackbirds, a Brewer's Blackbird, a Summer Tanager, and a Painted Bunting in East Falmouth. 🐦

R. Stymeist

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<b>Black Vulture</b>				<b>Cooper's Hawk</b>			
9/14	MBWMA	2	D. Salt	9/1-9/30	Mt Wachusett	67	Hawkcount (R. Chase)
9/19	Milton	2	C. Walz + v.o.	9/4-9/24	Mt Watatic	55	Hawkcount (B. Rusnica)
9/21	Chatham	1	E. Titcomb	10/1-10/31	Mt Wachusett	88	Hawkcount (R.Chase)
10/3-10/27	Mt Wachusett	11	max Hawkcount (R.Chase)	10/1-10/27	Russell	32	Hawkcount (T. Swochak)
10/7	GMNWR	2	W. Hutcheson	10/3-10/31	Blueberry Hill	26	Hawkcount (J. Weeks)
10/11	Marion	4	N. Marchessault	10/4-10/25	Malden	59	Hawkcount (C. Jackson#)
10/12	Sheffield	26	J. Pierce	<b>Northern Goshawk</b>			
<b>Turkey Vulture</b>				9/17	WWMA	1	imm P. Morlock
9/19	Skinner SP	21	Hawkcount (R. Weiss)	9/20	Blueberry Hill	1	imm Hawkcount (J. Weeks)
10/1-10/31	Mt Wachusett	763	Hawkcount (R.Chase)	9/26	Quabbin (G37)	1	ad R. Lockwood
10/1-10/27	Russell	252	Hawkcount (T. Swochak)	9/27	Easthampton	2	J. Harrison
10/3-10/31	Blueberry Hill	117	Hawkcount (J. Weeks)	10/22	Blueberry Hill	1	Hawkcount (J. Weeks)
<b>Osprey</b>				<b>Bald Eagle</b>			
9/1-9/30	Mt Wachusett	90	Hawkcount (R. Chase)	9/1-9/30	Mt Wachusett	77	Hawkcount (R. Chase)
9/4-9/24	Mt Watatic	74	Hawkcount (B. Rusnica)	9/4-9/24	Mt Watatic	100	Hawkcount (B. Rusnica)
9/11-9/26	Blueberry Hill	16	Hawkcount (J. Weeks)	9/11-9/26	Blueberry Hill	36	Hawkcount (J. Weeks)
10/1-10/31	Mt Wachusett	23	Hawkcount (R.Chase)	9/11-9/24	Russell	22	Hawkcount (T. Swochak)
10/1-10/27	Russell	8	Hawkcount (T. Swochak)	10/1-10/31	Mt Wachusett	55	Hawkcount (R.Chase)
10/4	Malden	40	Hawkcount (B. Rusnica)	10/1-10/27	Russell	16	Hawkcount (T. Swochak)
<b>Golden Eagle</b>				10/4-10/17	Malden	5	Hawkcount (C. Jackson#)
9/5	Mt Wachusett	1	subad Hawkcount (R. Chase)	<b>Mississippi Kite</b>			
10/17	Russell	1	imm Hawkcount (T. Swochak)	9/4	Mt Wachusett	2	imm Hawkcount (R.Chase)
10/17	DWMA	1	imm ph S. Dresser	<b>Red-shouldered Hawk</b>			
10/24,25	Russell	1,2	Hawkcount (T. Swochak)	9/1-9/30	Mt Wachusett	17	Hawkcount (R. Chase)
10/25, 31	Mt. Everett	1	imm ph G.Ward, J. Pierce	10/1-10/31	Mt Wachusett	38	Hawkcount (R.Chase)
10/25	Blueberry Hill	1	imm Hawkcount (J. Weeks)	10/1-10/27	Russell	21	Hawkcount (T. Swochak)
10/31	Quabbin Pk	1	imm A. + N. Kahn	10/3-10/31	Blueberry Hill	42	Hawkcount (J. Weeks)
10/31	Mt Wachusett	1	Hawkcount (R.Chase)	<b>Broad-winged Hawk</b>			
<b>Northern Harrier</b>				9/1-9/30	Mt Wachusett	6869	Hawkcount (R. Chase)
9/1-9/30	Mt Wachusett	15	Hawkcount (R. Chase)	9/4-9/24	Mt Watatic	5972	Hawkcount (B. Rusnica)
9/11-9/26	Blueberry Hill	12	Hawkcount (J. Weeks)	9/11-9/24	Russell	2946	Hawkcount (T. Swochak)
10/1-10/31	Mt Wachusett	24	Hawkcount (R.Chase)	9/11-9/26	Blueberry Hill	2455	Hawkcount (J. Weeks)
<b>Sharp-shinned Hawk</b>				9/18	Skinner SP	1910	Hawkcount (R. Weiss)
9/1-9/30	Mt Wachusett	214	Hawkcount (R. Chase)	<b>Red-tailed Hawk</b>			
9/4-9/24	Mt Watatic	266	Hawkcount (B. Rusnica)	10/1-10/31	Mt Wachusett	157	Hawkcount (R.Chase)
9/11-9/24	Russell	88	Hawkcount (T. Swochak)	10/1-10/27	Russell	59	Hawkcount (T. Swochak)
9/11-9/26	Blueberry Hill	80	Hawkcount (J. Weeks)	10/3-10/31	Blueberry Hill	48	Hawkcount (J. Weeks)
10/1-10/31	Mt Wachusett	197	Hawkcount (R.Chase)	<b>Rough-legged Hawk</b>			
10/1-10/27	Russell	120	Hawkcount (T. Swochak)	10/31	Mt Wachusett	1	Hawkcount (R.Chase)
10/3-10/31	Blueberry Hill	91	Hawkcount (J. Weeks)	<b>Barn Owl</b>			
10/4-10/25	Malden	117	Hawkcount (C. Jackson#)	10/3	Tuckernuck I.	3	S. Kardell#

Eastern Screech-Owl				10/5-10/7	Boston (AA)	1	D. Sullivan
9/2	Hadley	4	L. Therrien	Olive-sided Flycatcher			
Great Horned Owl				9/1-9/24	Quabbin Pk	12 max	12 locations
9/21	Hampden	4	A. Kapinos	9/3	Amherst	2	S. Griesemer
10/26	PI	2	T. Wetmore + v. o.	9/5	Warren	2	M. Lynch#
Barred Owl				9/17	Washington	2	M. Watson
9/6	Deerfield	10	D. Sibley	Eastern Wood-Pewee			
9/15-9/17	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	M. McMahon + v.o.	9/1-9/4	Quabbin Pk	12 max	L. Therrien
10/9	Winchendon	3	M. Lynch#	9/1-9/25	PI	3 max	v.o.
10/19	Boston (FPk)	1	S. Jones	9/4	Hardwick	7	M. Lynch#
10/20	PI	1	D. Prima	10/18	Cuttyhunk I.	1	L. Waters#
Short-eared Owl				10/18	Cambr. (FP)	1	T. Michel#
10/10	Brewster	1	K. Dec#	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher			
10/12-16	Sheffield	1	J. Pierce	thr	Indiv. reported from	14 locations	
10/26	Rockport (AP)	1	D. Sibley	9/11	Northfield	3	J. Smith
10/26-31	Hadley (Honeypot)	1	C. Elowe + v.o.	9/22	N. Truro	1	D. Clapp#
10/30	E. Boston (BI)	1	S. Riley	10/6	Tuckernuck I.	1	S. Kardell
Northern Saw-whet Owl				10/31	E. Falmouth	1	K. Friel#
10/8	Sharon	2	V. Zollo + v.o.	Acadian Flycatcher			
10/11	Deerfield	6	D. Sibley	9/6	Brewster	1 b	S. Finnegan#
10/24	Littleton	1 inj	J. Zaborowski	Alder Flycatcher			
10/27	PI	1	S. Zhang	9/13	Cambr. (Daney Pk)	2 au	J. Trimble#
10/31	Lexington (DM)	1	F. Morello	9/16-9/17	Boston (FPk)	2	S. Jones + v.o.
10/31	E. Boston (BI)	1	S. Riley	9/23	Lexington (DM)	1	J. Levy
Belted Kingfisher				9/23	Franklin	1	M. Perrin
9/19	Randolph	2	G. d'Entremont#	Willow Flycatcher			
10/14	Quaboag IBA	3	M. Lynch#	9/4	Fairhaven	1	C. Longworth
Red-headed Woodpecker				9/5	Monomoy NWR	1	A. Burdo
9/1	Montague	1 ad	A. Magel	9/13	Northampton	1	A. Hulsey
9/26	GMNWR	1	R. Tyers	Least Flycatcher			
10/3	Orleans	1 imm ph	N. Marchessault	10/6	Woburn (HP)	1	J. Levy
10/4	Wayland	1 imm ph	B. Harris	10/14	Whately	1	F. Morello, D. Sibley
10/11	Burrage Pond WMA	1	J. Frost	10/26	Boston (AA)	1	P. Peterson + v.o.
10/11	Hardwick	1	M. Lynch#	Eastern Phoebe			
10/20	Sharon	1 imm ph	V. Zollo	9/26	Warren	26	M. Lynch#
10/21	E. Brimfield	1 ad	B. Zajda	10/1	Deerfield	18	D. Sibley
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker				10/3	Cuttyhunk I.	77	J. Offermann#
9/20	Deerfield	15	D. Sibley	Say's Phoebe			
10/9	Tuckernuck I.	10	S. Kardell	10/3	Aquinnah	1 ph	B. Shriber
10/9	Orleans	6	K. Yakola#	Northern Shrike			
Northern Flicker				10/25	N. Truro	1	S. Williams#
9/20	PI	42	L. Waters#	10/31	Nantucket	1	L. Buck
9/20	Pittsfield	22	S. Townsend	White-eyed Vireo			
9/21	Northfield	28	J. Smith	9/15	Longmeadow	1	M. Moore
9/26	Warren	27	M. Lynch#	9/16	Westwood	1	E. Nielsen
Pileated Woodpecker				9/25	Granville	1	D. Holmes
9/12	Petersham	4	M. Lynch#	9/26	Orleans	3	N. Tepper
American Kestrel				10/4	Rowley	1	R. Heil
9/1-9/30	Mt Wachusett	164	Hawkcount (R. Chase)	10/9, 24	MNWS	1	J. Smith
9/4-9/24	Mt Watatic	82	Hawkcount (B. Rusnica)	10/24	Nahant	1	M. Padulo
9/11-9/26	Blueberry Hill	97	Hawkcount (J. Weeks)	10/25	Salisbury	1	A. Steenstrup
9/11-9/24	Russell	14	Hawkcount (T. Swochak)	Bell's Vireo			
Merlin				10/3	Barnstable	1 ph	P. Johnson-Staub
9/1-9/30	Mt Wachusett	34	Hawkcount (R. Chase)	Yellow-throated Vireo			
9/4-9/24	Mt Watatic	13	Hawkcount (B. Rusnica)	9/1-9/4	Quabbin Pk	5 max	L. Therrien
9/11-9/26	Blueberry Hill	15	Hawkcount (J. Weeks)	9/8	Northfield	5	J. Smith
9/18	Skinner SP	7	Hawkcount (R. Weiss)	10/26	Franklin	1	M. Perrin
10/1-10/31	Mt Wachusett	26	Hawkcount (R. Chase)	Blue-headed Vireo			
Peregrine Falcon				10/3	Cuttyhunk I.	24	J. Offermann#
9/1-9/30	Mt Wachusett	16	Hawkcount (R. Chase)	10/9	Orleans	10	K. Yakola#
10/1-10/22	Mt Wachusett	6	Hawkcount (R. Chase)	10/27	Stockbridge	1	C. Blake
10/23	S. Deerfield	4	S. Griesemer	Philadelphia Vireo			
Monk Parakeet				9/20	PI	3	L. Waters
9/7	PI	1	S. Babbitt + v.o.	9/24	Tuckernuck I.	6	S. Kardell
Great Crested Flycatcher				9/25	Hadley	2	L. Therrien
9/24	Newton	1	I. Reid	9/27	Sandwich	4	P. Trimble
10/3	N. Andover	1	J. Parrot-Willis	9/27	Northfield	3	J. Smith
Western Kingbird				9/27	Longmeadow	3	C. Volker
10/20-22	Sandwich	1 ph	B. Olshansky#	10/9	Orleans	2	K. Yakola#
10/31	Dartmouth	2 ph	J. Eckerson + v.o.	Warbling Vireo			
Eastern Kingbird				10/3	Williamstown	1	M. Morales
10/1	DWMA	1	N. Tepper	10/18	Brewster	1	S. Finnegan, A. Burdo
10/1	Rowley	1	R. Heil	10/31	Orleans	1	N. Tepper#

Red-eyed Vireo				10/22	Warren	6	M. Lynch#
9/1	Quabbin Pk	29	L. Therrien	Golden-crowned Kinglet			
9/20	PI	28	L. Waters#	9/20	PI	19	L. Waters#
9/24	Orleans	64	A. Burdo#	10/10	New Marlborough	21	G. Ward
10/31	Woburn	1	A. Brown	Ruby-crowned Kinglet			
10/31	Newton	1	C. Dalton	9/20	PI	22	L. Waters#
Fish Crow				10/9	Deerfield	35	D. Sibley
10/1	Pittsfield	50	T. Collins	10/9	Hadley	31	S. Sumner
10/18	Dedham	350	M. Iliff	10/9	Tuckernuck I.	16	S. Kardell
10/27	Lawrence	500	C. Gibson	<b>Northern Wheatear</b>			
Common Raven				9/21-9/22	PI	1	phD.+S.Larson+v.o.
9/5	Tuckernuck I.	4	S. Kardell	Eastern Bluebird			
9/15	Mt Watatic	55	B. Rusnica	9/25	WBWS	54	M. Harris
10/8	Quabbin Pk	17	L. Therrien	10/2	Rutland	64	M. Lynch#
Horned Lark				10/22	Deerfield	55	D. Sibley
9/4, 10/31	Northampton	1,110	L. Therrien, D. Peake-Jones	Veery			
10/12	Medfield	12	J. Bock	9/13	Hadley	5	L. Therrien
10/25	P'town (RP)	35	L. Waters	9/18	Medford (Tufts)	2	J. Levy#
Bank Swallow				10/18	Cuttyhunk I.	1	L. Waters#
9/2	Longmeadow	175	T. Gilliland	10/19	Newton	1	P. Gilmore
9/8	Northampton	250	S. Sumner	Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's Thrush			
Tree Swallow				9/11	Concord	1 nfc	W. Hutcheson
9/6	Rowley	15000	W. Freedberg	9/15	Assabet R. NWR	2 nfc	N. Tepper
10/17	P'town (RP)	5000	T. Bradford	9/25	Quincy	1	J. Young
10/20	Longmeadow	2	M. Moore	9/29	WWMA	2 ph	T. Spahr
Northern Rough-winged Swallow				10/1, 10/2	Deerfield	33,15 nfc	D. Sibley
9/6	Longmeadow	13	J. Blue	10/4	Concord	4 nfc	W.Hutcheson
Purple Martin				10/12-14	Falmouth	1 ph	M. Kasprzyk#
9/5	Aquinnah	3	N. Bonomo	Bicknell's Thrush!			
9/21	PI	1	S. Grinley#	9/25	Marlborough	1 nfc	T. Spahr
2020 season	Mashpee	48 pr+187yg	M. Keleher	Swainson's Thrush			
2020 season	Falmouth	24 pr+116yg	M. Keleher	9/19	October Mountain	6	J. Pierce
2020 season	Barnstable	23 pr+81yg	M. Keleher	9/25	PI	7	G. d'Entremont#
2020 season	WBWS	12 pr+30yg	M. Keleher	10/1, 10/2	Deerfield	200,100 nfc	D. Sibley
Barn Swallow				10/24	Melrose	1	E. Labato
9/4	Hardwick	26	M. Lynch#	Hermit Thrush			
10/4	Longmeadow	2	T. Gilliland	10/11	Deerfield	40 nfc	D. Sibley
10/17	Eastham (FH)	1	K. Yakola#	10/15	Petersham	24	M. Lynch#
Cliff Swallow				10/23	Lexington (DM)	5	M. Rines
9/5	Hadley (Honeypot)	1	S. Sumner	Wood Thrush			
9/8	Northampton	3	S. Sumner	9/5	Warren	3	M. Lynch#
10/3	PI	1	J. Bourget#	9/13-9/14	Hadley	9 max	L. Therrien
10/10	P'town (RP)	2	T. Bradford	10/11	Deerfield	1 nfc	D. Sibley
Red-breasted Nuthatch				Gray Catbird			
9/1-9/7	Quabbin Pk	134 max	L. Therrien	9/25	PI	38	G. d'Entremont#
9/6	Winchendon	172	M. Lynch#	9/26	Warren	110	M. Lynch#
9/7	Clarksburg	42	So. Auer	10/3	Cuttyhunk I.	98	J. Offermann#
9/17	Assabet R. NWR	75	D. Williams#	Brown Thrasher			
9/24	Tuckernuck I.	75	S. Kardell	10/3	Cuttyhunk I.	8	J. Offermann#
9/24	PI	54	L. Waters	10/5	Arlington	1	B. Widorski
10/10	Wellfleet	61	M. Keleher#	10/11	Acoaxet	1	G. d'Entremont
10/23	E. Brimfield	45	B. Zajda	10/11	Reading	1	D. Williams
10/27	Marion	40	C. Molander	Cedar Waxwing			
Brown Creeper				9/5	Aquinnah	310	N. Bonomo
9/24	Petersham	5	M. Lynch#	9/26	Warren	107	M. Lynch#
10/31	Ludlow	8	J. Young	American Pipit			
House Wren				9/25	P'town (RP)	70	N. Hayward
9/13	Hadley	13	L. Therrien	9/26	Hadley (Honeypot)	120 max	B. Finney + v.o.
9/20	Deerfield	15	D. Sibley	10/13	Northfield	220	J. Smith
10/3	Cuttyhunk I.	29	J. Offermann#	10/16	Sheffield	100	G. Ward
Winter Wren				10/27	Templeton	75	T. Pirro
9/27	Carver	1	M. Lynch#	Evening Grosbeak			
10/27	PI	1	S. Zhang	10/19	Cape Ann	11	B. Harris
Marsh Wren				10/21	Wellfleet	2	C. High#
9/6	Needham	1	J. Thompson	10/22	Blueberry Hill	23	Hawkcount (J. Weeks)
9/13-10/11	Pittsfield	3 max	S. Townsend, K. Hanson	10/22	Warren	6	M. Lynch#
9/26	Quincy	1	V. Zollo	10/23	Leverett	19	B. Normark
9/30-10/15	Hatfield	1	K. Jones, D. McLain + v.o.	10/25	Lee	40	J. Pierce
10/1-10/27	PI	1	v.o.	10/25	Amherst	25	S. Sumner
10/7	Cambr. (Danehy Pk)	1	BBC (M. Rosenstein)	10/27	PI	9	J. Layman
Carolina Wren				10/29-31	Newton	12	M. Chalfin-Jacobs#
9/5	DWWS	6	BBC (G. d'Entremont)	10/31	Falmouth	3	S. Williams
10/11	Acoaxet	17	G. d'Entremont	10/31	Nantucket	2	S. Kardell



Purple Finch				10/5-10/6	Boston (Fens)	2	P. Peterson + v.o.
9/26	Warren	77	M. Lynch#	Field Sparrow			
10/1-10/9	Deerfield	140 max	D. Sibley	9/13	Hardwick	3	M. Lynch#
10/12	Woburn (HP)	100	J. Levy	9/17	Ware	8	L. Therrien
10/18	N. Truro	15	K. Yakola#	9/19	Weymouth	6	G. d'Entremont#
10/19	Amherst	40	S. Williams	10/1-10/19	PI	4 max	v.o.
10/23	Lexington (DM)	85	M. Rines	10/18	Monterey	9	P. Banducci
10/24	Cuttyhunk I.	14	J. Offermann#	Fox Sparrow			
Common Redpoll				10/9-10/27	Northampton	4 max	L. Therrien
10/24	P'town (RP)	34	S. Williams#	American Tree Sparrow			
10/25-30	W. Roxbury (MP)	3	J. Forbes + v.o.	10/14-19	Groton	1	S. Miller#
10/26-27	PI	4 max	T. Wetmore + v.o.	10/15	GMNWR	2	A. Bragg#
10/26	Boston (FPk)	3	S. Jones	10/24-25	PI	1	M. Massa# + v.o.
10/27	Truro	50	E. Goodman	Dark-eyed Junco			
10/31	Williamstown	7	C. Johnson + v.o.	9/6-9/12	Quincy	1	J. Offermann + v.o.
10/31	GMNWR	4	J. Forbes	9/20	PI	65	L. Waters#
10/31	Weymouth	3	V. Zollo	10/22	Warren	111	M. Lynch#
Red Crossbill				10/28	Turners Falls	160	J. Smith
9/1-10/19	Quabbin Pk	20 max	au L. Therrien + v.o.	10/31	Ludlow	120	J. Young
9/3-10/18	Montague	30 max	S. Miller# + v.o.	White-crowned Sparrow			
9/4-9/27	Gloucester	12 max	J. Keyes	10/3-10/20	PI	16 max	J. Layman + v.o.
10/10	October Mountain	6	Z. Adams	10/4	Athol	25	D. Small
10/21-23	E. Brimfield	10	B. Zajda	10/8-10/17	Easthampton	55 max	F. Morello#
10/22	Petersham	28	W. Howes	10/9	Orleans	5	K. Yakola#
10/31	Newton	20	M. Chalfin-Jacobs	10/11	Deerfield	32	E. Huston
10/31	Mashpee	3	N. Marchessault	10/11	Pittsfield	25	S. Townsend
White-winged Crossbill				White-throated Sparrow			
10/30	P'town	1	J. Bragger	9/10	WWMA	300	T. Spahr
10/31	Newton	1	M. Chalfin-Jacobs#	9/20	PI	180	L. Waters#
Pine Siskin				10/4	Ashley Falls	125	Z. Adams
9/7-10/21	Quabbin Pk	172 max	L. Therrien	10/9	Deerfield	350	D. Sibley
10/3-10/29	PI	600 max	T. Wetmore + v.o.	10/9	Hadley	121	S. Surner
10/9	Nantucket	1000	L. Dunn	10/11	Hardwick	632	M. Lynch#
10/9	Tuckernuck I.	950	S. Kardell	Vesper Sparrow			
10/9	Orleans	372	K. Yakola#	9/17-9/18	Nantucket	1	T. Pastuszak#
10/9	Northborough	220	N. Dowling	9/26	Barnstable	1	P. Crosson
10/10	October Mountain	150	Z. Adams	10/2	Quincy	1	J. Scott + v.o.
10/10	Medfield	89	J. Bock	10/15	PI	1	S. Zhang
10/11	Waltham	130	J. Flagg	10/17	Hadley (Honeypot)	4	F. Morello
10/12	Pittsfield (Pont.)	250	J. Pierce	Seaside Sparrow			
10/15	P'town	150	E. Brooke#	9/10-9/11	WBWS	1	D. Muth#
10/15	Barnstable (SN)	137	P. Crosson	9/24, 10/3	PI	1	L. Waters, J. Frost
10/18	Cuttyhunk I.	447	L. Waters#	10/19	Eastham (FH)	1	L. Waters#
10/24	Brimfield	280	J. Bourget	Nelson's Sparrow			
10/24	Quabog IBA	153	M. Lynch#	9/18-9/29	PI	4 max	S. Grinley# + v.o.
Lapland Longspur				9/19	Quincy	1	J. Bock
9/23	Rockport (HPt)	1	D. Nyzio	9/25	Great Barrington	1	V. Vega#
10/4	PI	2	S. Zhang	9/27-10/18	Rumney (Revere)	4	R. Doherty
10/11	GMNWR	2	W. Hutcheson	10/11	Wareham	14	N. Marchessault
10/12-15	Duxbury B.	4	G. Lynch + v.o.	10/19-21	E. Boston (BI)	4	S. Jones + v.o.
10/25	Barnstable (SN)	6	N. Marchessault	Saltmarsh Sparrow			
10/30	Williamstown	2 ph	M. Morales + v.o.	9/21	Rowley	29	R. Heil
10/31	Northampton	15	D. Peake-Jones	10/1-10/27	PI	50 max	v.o.
Snow Bunting				10/2	Groton	13	T. Murray
10/26-30	PI	11 max	v.o.	Savannah Sparrow			
10/31	Wachusett Res.	55	R. Spedding	9/24	Deerfield	95	J. Smith
10/31	P'town (RP)	32	B. Nikula#	10/9	Northborough	82	N. Dowling
Grasshopper Sparrow				10/15-17	Easthampton	350 max	L. Therrien
9/4-10/9	Falmouth	2 max	K. Fiske + v.o.	Savannah Sparrow (Ipswich Sparrow)			
9/12-10/22	Northampton area	1 min	L. Therrien + v.o.	10/23	Salisbury	1	J. Keeley
10/31	Dartmouth	1	J. + M. Eckerson	Lincoln's Sparrow			
Lark Sparrow				9/19-10/15	Northampton	16 max	L. Therrien + v.o.
9/1-10/24	Indiv. reported from	12 locations		9/21	Northfield	12	J. Smith
9/5	Tuckernuck I.	2	S. Kardell	9/24	New Braintree	28	R. Jenkins
Chipping Sparrow				9/24	Williamstown	10	M. Morales
9/10	WWMA	80	T. Spahr	10/2	Groton	10	T. Murray
9/27	Greenfield	60	J. Layfield	Swamp Sparrow			
9/27	Carver	48	M. Lynch#	10/5-10/17	Easthampton	150 max	L. Therrien + v.o.
10/3	Eastham	20	BBC (G. d'Entremont)	10/9	Northborough	127	N. Dowling
10/12	Great Barrington	80	N. Jo	10/23	E. Brimfield	45	B. Zajda
Clay-colored Sparrow				Eastern Towhee			
9/13-10/31	Indiv. reported from	36 locations		9/4	Hardwick	21	M. Lynch#
9/17	Cohasset	2	C. Johnson	9/25	PI	18	G. d'Entremont#

Eastern Towhee (continued)									
10/3	Tuckernuck I.	175		S. Kardell#	10/27	Longmeadow	3		M. Moore
<b>Yellow-breasted Chat</b>									
9/14	Lexington (DM)	1		C. Cook	10/9	Tuckernuck I.	3		S. Kardell
9/23	Hadley	1		L. Therrien	10/14	Northampton	2	max	L. Therrien+v.o.
9/28-10/5	WWMA	1		T. Spahr + v.o.	10/31	Williamstown	1		M. Morales
9/29	Brookline	1		M. Garvey	<b>Nashville Warbler</b>				
10/3	Cuttyhunk I.	2		J. Offermann#	9/20	PI	12		L. Waters#
<b>Yellow-headed Blackbird</b>									
9/5-9/6	P'town (RP)			T. Bradford#	10/9	Deerfield	4		D. Sibley
9/24	Westport			J.+J.+M. Eckerson	10/27	Lexington (DM)	1		R. Stymeist
9/26-9/27	Burlington			H. Samuels + v.o.	<b>Connecticut Warbler</b>				
10/5	Truro			J. Mayo	9/10-10/9	Indiv. reported from	24		locations
<b>Bobolink</b>									
9/1-9/5	Longmeadow	85	max	L.+A.Richardson+v.o.	9/10-10/1	WWMA	3	max	T. Spahr + v.o.
9/5	Aquinnah	145		N. Bonomo	9/16	Quaboag IBA	2		M. Lynch#
9/25	Groton	9		T. Murray	9/19-10/3	Paxton	2	max	R. Jenkins+v.o.
10/5	Easthampton	3		L. Therrien	9/27	New Braintree	2		R. Jenkins
<b>Eastern Meadowlark</b>									
9/20	Hadley	15		S. Surner	<b>Mourning Warbler</b>				
10/14	Dover	1		E. Nielsen	9/10	Lexington (DM)	1		J. Barcus
10/18	PI	1		B. Burke	9/18-9/21	MNWS	1		A. Sanford + v.o.
<b>Western Meadowlark!</b>									
10/24	Cuttyhunk I.	1	ph	S. Williams#	9/18-10/6	Northfield	1		J. Smith
<b>Baltimore Oriole</b>									
10/24	PI	1		B. Hillman, N. Landers	9/20	PI	4	max	L. Waters#+v.o.
10/24	Cuttyhunk I.	1		S. Williams#	9/20	Hadley	1		L. Therrien
10/25	Boston (FPk)	1		C. + S. Jones	9/24	Nantucket	1		L. Dunn
10/31	Harwich	4		M. J. Foti	9/26	Rowley	1		S. Sullivan#
10/31	P'town	1		S. Fee, J. Olney	9/26	Burlington	1		J. Layman
<b>Red-winged Blackbird</b>									
9/19	Holbrook	2000		G. d'Entremont	10/12	Turners Falls	1		G. Watkevich
10/23	E. Brimfield	2000		B. Zajda	<b>Kentucky Warbler</b>				
<b>Rusty Blackbird</b>									
10/3	P'town	2		BBC (G. d'Entremont)	9/26	Newton	1	ph	M. Chalfin-Jacobs#
10/12	WWMA	45		S. Miller	<b>Common Yellowthroat</b>				
10/18	Stow	30		J. Hoyer#	9/19-10/15	Northampton	37	max	L. Therrien
10/19	Bernardston	65		J. Smith	9/20	PI	67		L. Waters#
10/21-23	E. Brimfield	80	max	B. Zajda	9/20	Boston (RKG)	10		R. Stymeist
10/22	Sheffield	94		J. Pierce	<b>Hooded Warbler</b>				
<b>Brewer's Blackbird</b>									
10/11	Hadley	1	ph	S. Surner	9/5	Nahant	1		F. Morello
<b>Common Grackle</b>									
9/18	Harwich	2800		D. Clapp	9/12,23,10/3	Tuckernuck I.	1,1,2		S. Kardell#
9/19	Holbrook	10000		G. d'Entremont	9/17-9/18	MNWS	1		S. Heinrich#
<b>Ovenbird</b>									
9/6	Winchendon	2		M. Lynch#	10/2	Newton	1		M. Chalfin-Jacobs
10/15	Longmeadow	1		M. Moore	10/4	Brewster	1	b	S. Finnegan#
10/31	Topsfield	1		I. Pepper	10/4	MBWMA	1		G. Power
<b>Worm-eating Warbler</b>									
9/19	Holyoke	1		K. Jones, D. McLain	10/24	Cuttyhunk I.	1		J. Trimble#
9/22	PI	1		D. + D. Cooper	<b>American Redstart</b>				
9/23	Medford	1		R. + J. Osborne	9/5	Lexington (DM)	27		M. Rines#
<b>Louisiana Waterthrush</b>									
9/1	Belchertown	1		L. Therrien	9/20	PI	88		L. Waters#
9/4	Hadley	1		C. Elowe	10/19	Easthampton	1		A. Hulsey
<b>Northern Waterthrush</b>									
10/4-10/18	MtA	2	max	M. Moysen+v.o.	<b>Cape May Warbler</b>				
10/10-25	Newton	1		T. Holtz + v.o.	9/5	Aquinnah	48		N. Bonomo
10/23	Woburn (HP)	1		J. Layman	9/5, 9/24	Tuckernuck I.	13,16		S. Kardell
<b>Golden-winged Warbler</b>									
9/6	Lexington (DM)	1		A. Ankers	9/20	PI	21		L. Waters#
<b>Black-and-white Warbler</b>									
9/5	Lexington (DM)	3		M. Rines#	<b>Cerulean Warbler</b>				
9/20	PI	82		L. Waters#	9/29	Tuckernuck I.	1		S. Kardell
10/18	Wrentham	1		A. Pericolo	<b>Northern Parula</b>				
<b>Prothonotary Warbler</b>									
9/6	Rowley	1		R. Heil	9/20	PI	79		L. Waters#
10/4	Tuckernuck I.	1	ph	S. Kardell	9/24, 10/4	Tuckernuck I.	24,14		S. Kardell
10/8-10/11	IRWS	1	ph	N. Werth + v.o.	10/27	Dedham	1		M. Iliff
<b>Tennessee Warbler</b>									
9/19-10/15	Northampton	13	max	L. Therrien+v.o.	<b>Magnolia Warbler</b>				
9/30	Northfield	12		J. Smith	9/20	PI	63		L. Waters#
					9/24	Tuckernuck I.	10		S. Kardell
					10/17	Quabbin (G35)	1		E. LeBlanc
					10/17	Easthampton	1		D. Allard
					<b>Bay-breasted Warbler</b>				
					9/14	Ware R. IBA	1		M. Lynch#
					9/20	PI	4		L. Waters#
					<b>Blackburnian Warbler</b>				
					9/20, 10/1	PI	5,1		L. Waters#, MAS (D. Moon)
					10/1-10/4	MNWS	1		A. Sanford + v.o.
					10/4	Rowley	1		R. Heil
					<b>Yellow Warbler</b>				
					9/20	PI	13		L. Waters#
					10/11	Lowell	1		M. Baird
					10/21	N. Adams	1		M. Morales, So. Auer
					<b>Chestnut-sided Warbler</b>				
					9/1	Quabbin Pk	6		L. Therrien
					9/20	PI	10		L. Waters#
					10/27	Carver	1		D. Furbish

Blackpoll Warbler	9/24, 10/4	Tuckernuck I.	37,42	S. Kardell	10/1	Woburn (HP)	3	M. Rines
	9/24	PI	42	L. Waters	10/30	Northfield	1	J. Smith
	10/1	Deerfield	19	D. Sibley	Canada Warbler			
Black-throated Blue Warbler	9/20	PI	29	L. Waters#	9/5	Lexington (DM)	2	M. Rines#
	10/26	MNWS	1	J. Smith	9/19-9/25	PI	2	v.o.
	10/31	Quincy	1	V. Zollo + v.o.	10/2	MNWS	1	J. Layman#
Palm Warbler	9/9-10/15	Northampton	51 max	G. Brown + v.o.	Wilson's Warbler			
	10/8	Brookfield	45	R. Jenkins	9/5-9/7	Pittsfield	2 max	S. Townsend
	10/12	Sheffield	80	N. Jo	9/20	PI	9	L. Waters#
Pine Warbler	9/8	Montague	35	J. Smith	10/23	Rockport (HPt)	1	S. Sullivan
	9/23	Amherst	50	J. Oliverio	<b>Summer Tanager</b>			
	10/2	Holden	36	M. Lynch#	9/3	Tuckernuck I.	1 ph	S. Kardell
Yellow-rumped Warbler	9/24	PI	128	L. Waters	Scarlet Tanager			
	10/9	Tuckernuck I.	180	S. Kardell	9/26	Warren	4	M. Lynch#
	10/17	Sheffield	234	G. Ward	9/27	Deerfield	14	D. Sibley
<b>Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's)</b>	10/4	Franklin	1	N. Marchessault#	10/11-12	E. Harwich	1	M. Faherty
<b>Yellow-throated Warbler</b>	10/1	MNWS	1	J. Smith	Rose-breasted Grosbeak			
	10/1	Tuckernuck I.	1 ph	S. Kardell	9/16	North Hadley	15	J. Smith
	10/4	Hardwick	1	W. Howes	9/26	Warren	5	M. Lynch#
	10/7	Nantucket	1 ph	B. Gooch	10/31	Medford	1	A + A. Karighattam
Prairie Warbler	9/6	Winchendon	3	M. Lynch#	Blue Grosbeak			
	10/3	Barnstable	1	BBC (G. d'Entremont)	9/1-9/3	Hadley area	3 max	M. McKittrick + v.o.
	10/5	Northampton	1	L. Therrien	9/7	Rowley	1 juv	R. Heil
<b>Black-throated Gray Warbler</b>	9/15	PI	1 ph	J. Layman + v.o.	9/24	PI	1	L. Waters
<b>Townsend's Warbler</b>	9/19	Winchester	1 ph	R. LaFontaine + v.o.	10/3	Cuttyhunk I.	1	J. Offermann#
	10/27	Sandwich	1 ph	Anonymous (eBird)	10/9	Sudbury	1	B. Harris
	10/27	Belmont (Habitat)	1 ph	W. Kostick	Indigo Bunting			
Black-throated Green Warbler	9/20	PI	47	L. Waters#	9/thr	Northampton	32 max	M. McKittrick + v.o.
					9/25	Groton	12	T. Murray
					9/27	Northfield	22	J. Smith
					10/2-10/6	Groton	4	T. Murray
					<b>Painted Bunting</b>			
					10/26	E. Falmouth	1 m ph	E. Joyce
					Dickcissel			
					9/5	Aquinnah	2	N. Bonomo
					9/11	Northampton	2	S. Winn, L. Farlow
					9/24	PI	7	L. Waters
					10/29	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	M. Illiff



COMMON CUCKOO BY SANDY SELESKY

# BYGONE BIRDS

## Historical Highlights for September–October

Neil Hayward

### 5 YEARS AGO

*September–October 2015*

A **Brown Booby** continued off outer Cape Cod throughout the period, and an adult **Brown Pelican** was on Nantucket on September 2. Inland, an immature Brown Pelican was found malnourished in Southborough and was rescued on September 21. A **Purple Gallinule** was at the Westboro WMA on October 21–23. An **American Avocet** spent two days in Edgartown in mid-September. Two adult **Sabine's Gulls** were reported off Provincetown on September 12. The following day, an observer on Tuckernuck Island photographed a **Bridled Tern**. Great Barrington hosted a **Rufous Hummingbird** on October 11. Western flycatchers were well represented with nine **Western Kingbirds** and at least two **Say's Phoebes**. Single **Bell's Vireos** were reported from Newbury and Eastham, and another one was banded at Manomet. A **Northern Wheatear** spent the first six days of October at Wachusett Reservoir. A **Green-tailed Towhee** was a one-day wonder at Hatfield on October 27.



Best sighting: **Masked Booby**, West Atlantis Canyon, 90 miles south of Nantucket, September 10. This represents the first record for Massachusetts.

### 10 YEARS AGO

*September–October 2010*

A **Barnacle Goose** was in Acton and Concord from October 20 into mid-December. An adult **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** was photographed on South Beach, Chatham on October 9, a week after one was reported from nearby Minimoy Island. Prior to this, there had been only three records of this species, the last in Newburyport on October 15, 1989. A **Curlew Sandpiper** delighted many by spending three weeks on Plum Island in October. A **Gull-billed Tern** divided its time between Plum Island and Ipswich for a week in mid-September. A largely silent **Tropical/Couch's Kingbird** continued in Falmouth to November 2 yet failed to be identified to species. The Plum Island **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** disappeared just days short of a 3-month stay. Another was seen at Oak Bluffs on Martha's Vineyard on October 27. A **Bell's Vireo**, the fourth state record, was found in Nahant on October 17–18. Warbler highlights were two **Black-throated Gray Warblers** (Middlesex Fells and Martha's Vineyard), and a **Swainson's Warbler** banded in Brewster, only the fourth record for the state. Great Meadows NWR hosted three species of *Ammodramus* sparrows (**LeConte's**, Grasshopper and Nelson's).



Best sighting: a juvenile **Common Ringed Plover**, South Beach, Chatham, on September 11. This represents the second record for the state after a bird seen on September 5, 1990, on nearby North Monomoy Island.

## 20 YEARS AGO

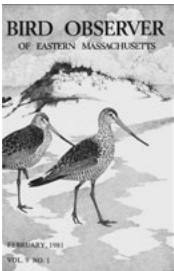


### *September–October 2000*

Gloucester's **Eared Grebe** and Sterling's **Tufted Duck** were both back for their sixth winter, while Agawam's female **Rufous Hummingbird** was back at the same feeder for her fourth year in a row. A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was at Great Meadows NWR in Concord on October 10. A **Purple Gallinule** was found dead in Westboro in late October. A **Boreal Owl** was discovered in Boston's Back Bay on the corner of Commonwealth Avenue and Gloucester Street, just across the road from where one had spent the winter of 1996–1997. Gay Head hosted a **Townsend's Warbler** on September 28 and a **Brewer's Blackbird** on October 22. A male **Mountain Bluebird** was in Concord at the end of October. A **Northern Wheatear** was on the Longmeadow sandbar in the Connecticut River on September 20–21. At least one **LeConte's Sparrow** was present in Northampton in October.

Best sighting: a male **Black-throated Gray Warbler**, Mount Auburn Cemetery, September 27–October 2. Despite foraging over a wide area, the bird was seen by many birders.

## 40 YEARS AGO



### *September–October 1980*

An out-of-place immature Northern Gannet was observed in Concord and Lincoln on October 16. A **Golden Eagle** was a surprise at Great Meadows on October 30. Two **Yellow Rails** were found on Cape Cod: one roadkill at Provincetown and another spotted during high tide at Fort Hill, Eastham. On Nantucket, a **Mew Gull** of the American race, *brachyrhynchus*, was found on October 10. The continuing **Burrowing Owl** on Martha's Vineyard flew into a picture window and was taken to Felix Neck Wildlife Sanctuary where it was treated and released. Manomet banded its first Red-bellied Woodpecker on October 17. A **Black-backed Woodpecker** was seen for two days in a Needham yard. A **Say's Phoebe** was on Nantucket, September 24. **Loggerhead Shrikes** were found on Monomoy, Essex and Salisbury, the latter appearing on September 13 and staying for over two months. **Brewer's Blackbirds** were found in South Peabody and Truro. A **Lark Bunting** was in Newburyport on September 20, single **LeConte's Sparrows** were on Nantucket and Monomoy, and a **Henslow's Sparrow** was found in Truro, mid-October.

Best sightings: the appearance of two **Fork-tailed Flycatchers**, at Chatham from September 22–October 4, and at Orleans from September 27–October 7 drew birders from across the continent. 🐦

## ABBREVIATIONS FOR BIRD SIGHTINGS

Taxonomic order is based on AOS checklist, Seventh edition, 61st Supplement, as published in *Auk* 137: ukaa030 (2020) (*see* <<http://checklist.americanornithology.org/>>).

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

### HOW TO CONTRIBUTE BIRD SIGHTINGS TO *BIRD OBSERVER*

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

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

# ABOUT THE COVER

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## Great Black-backed Gull

The Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) is the world's largest gull species and the most aggressive gull in North America. Adults are a striking contrast of black and white. Their heads, bodies, and tails are white, their backs are black, and their black, white-tipped wings have a ribbon of white along the trailing edge. The legs are pale pink. The heavy bill is yellow with a red spot on the lower mandible. The sexes are similar in plumage, and males are slightly larger than females. First-year birds have whitish heads, black bills, and barred or checkered backs, wings, and bodies. They have a black terminal band on the end of their white tails. Second-year birds are mottled but lighter in color. Third-year birds begin to morph into adult plumage, which is attained in the fourth year. Great Black-backed Gulls can be confused with Western Gulls, but the latter are slightly smaller, have brighter pink legs, and their ranges do not overlap. Yellow-footed and Lesser Black-backed gulls have yellow legs, and the latter are smaller overall with longer and slimmer wings. Great Black-backed Gulls are monotypic, having no subspecies. They are closely related to the Kelp Gull of the Southern Hemisphere.

Great Black-backed Gulls breed along the coast and offshore islands from Labrador, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia south along the East Coast of the United States to North Carolina. They also breed inland along the St. Lawrence River to the Great Lakes. They winter from Newfoundland south along the coast to central Florida and inland throughout the Great Lakes area. In Massachusetts, Great Black-backed Gulls are considered a locally abundant breeder along the coast and islands and are locally common in winter on the coast and inland. Spring migrants are active in March and April, and the fall migration and dispersal occur in September and October.

Great Black-backed Gulls are monogamous; pairs remain together for multiple seasons and, in some cases, for life. They breed for the first time in their fourth or fifth year and have a single brood per season. They are aggressively territorial; the male selects the territory and both male and female defend it. The calls of Great Black-backed Gulls are similar to those of other large gulls but lower in pitch. The "long call," a series of repeated notes that is variable and elaborate, serves as a greeting call between mated birds. It also plays a role in courtship, with males giving the call with neck stretching and head tossing. Males may give a flight display with slower-than-usual wing beats and may also regurgitate food for females. There are several other calls that are associated with courtship or alarm and a variety of displays that are associated with territoriality and nesting. Fighting is common in defense of territory. For example, bill jabbing is common, or a gull will use its bill to grab an opponent's tail, wing or neck. Grass pulling is also common in territorial disputes, as are half-running, half-flying charges at opponents. An aggressive upright display involves stretching the neck upwards with head pointed downwards. A crouching posture may sometimes include bill jabbing at a neighbor.

Pair formation begins in March or April. Nesting occurs in April or early May mostly on offshore islands on sand dunes, grassy areas, rocky outcrops, or in salt marshes. Great Black-backed Gulls nest in loose colonies, often with Herring Gulls or terns, but they may also nest solitarily. Early arrival—compared to other gulls and terns—insures access to the best nesting territories. Nests are scrapes that are filled with vegetation, feathers, and sometimes pieces of plastic or other refuse. The pair may make several scrapes but choose one for the final nest. The nest is often placed next to a rock or shrub that may offer some protection from the wind. The usual clutch is three greenish or buff eggs spotted or blotched with brown. Both parents develop incubation patches and both incubate the eggs. The incubation period is about a month. The chicks are semiprecocial; their eyes are open, they are covered in down, and they leave the nest in one or two days. Both parents feed the chicks by regurgitation. The chicks fledge after another month and may continue to be attended by the parents for up to six months.

Great Black-backed Gulls are generalist predators on a wide variety of marine fish, marine invertebrates, squid, insects, and the eggs, chicks, and adults of other gulls and marine birds, including terns, storm-petrels, and puffins. They are also scavengers on carrion and human refuse. Their foraging behavior is highly varied, from following the outgoing tide in pursuit of worms and crustaceans to pelagic diving one to two meters in depth, to floating on the surface and dipping into shallow water. They swallow small prey items whole but tear larger prey into pieces they can swallow. They often follow fishing vessels and join foraging flocks with other species such as shearwaters, other gull species, and cormorants. They have salt glands that remove the salt from seawater, but frequently search out fresh water for drinking.

Atlantic coast populations of Great Black-backed Gulls were severely depleted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by egg and plume hunters, and they were not recorded breeding in the United States again until the 1920s. They have since recovered to the point that, particularly on islands, control measures that include poisoning, nest destruction, and shooting adults have been instituted by state agencies and individuals to protect breeding habitat for other species such as terns from this large and aggressive gull. Adults have few natural predators, although eggs and chicks are taken by other gulls, Bald Eagles, Common Ravens, and the usual mammalian predators such as rats, raccoons, and coyotes. Great Black-backed Gulls mob predators and may even attack and strike humans. The world population is reportedly declining slightly, but the survival of Great Black-backed Gulls appears assured. 🐦

*William E. Davis, Jr.*



# AT A GLANCE

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December 2020



CARL GOODRICH

December is a month when many birds regularly begin coming to backyard bird feeders, so it is a good season to keep a sharp eye on your feeders. It is also the season when unexpected visitors may occasionally appear among the more regular feeder clientele. With this in mind, a careful look at the background in this issue's mystery photograph shows the mystery bird on the ground and surrounded by bird seed—a good clue that the bird was photographed at a feeder.

Although the mystery bird can be identified from the black and white magazine photograph, the printed image is darker than might be desirable, so readers are encouraged to also view the online photograph for a brighter color image. Upon examining the image, it is easy to see that the large pale bill of the mystery species is conical and shaped like that of a finch or a sparrow. In addition, the bird has a fairly broad supercilium over and extending well beyond the eye. The online color image also shows a trace of light yellow on the finely streaked breast and a hint of rusty color on the median wing coverts.

The mystery bird bears a superficial resemblance to a female House Sparrow, especially the back pattern, which has at least one bold buffy brace visible in the photograph. However, the bird also has prominent malar streaks and rusty wing coverts, as well as a finely streaked breast and crown—both of which are a solid dingy gray brown in a female House Sparrow. These features eliminate this otherwise similar-looking bird from the abundant and familiar House Sparrow. Regardless of the superficial resemblance of the mystery species to a female House Sparrow, its streaked breast with its wash of yellow should by itself remove the House Sparrow as an identification candidate and clinch the mystery species as an immature female Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*).

The Dickcissel is a rare spring visitor in Massachusetts and an uncommon fall migrant, appearing in thickets and weedy fields near the coast from late August through early November. Dickcissels also frequently show up at bird feeders in winter, where they can easily be overlooked among flocks of House Sparrows.

Carl Goodrich photographed this Dickcissel at his feeder in Eastham, Barnstable County, October 14, 2020. 🐦

*Wayne R. Petersen*

## **ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST**

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### **Avery Whitlock**

Avery Whitlock is a freelance illustrator based in Massachusetts. They are a Brookline Bird Club featured artist, a volunteer bird banding assistant, and a parent to two boisterous finches. Avery is largely inspired by the illustrations of Louis Agassiz Fuertes, and aims to depict birds with realism and an essence of their character.

To see more of Avery's illustrations, go to <[www.averywhitlockart.com/birds](http://www.averywhitlockart.com/birds)> 🐦



RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD BY SANDY SELESKY

# AT A GLANCE

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DAVID CLAPP

Can you identify the bird in this photograph?

Identification will be discussed in next issue's AT A GLANCE.

## MORE HOT BIRDS

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On December 13, Theresa Gessing photographed a **Sage Thrasher** near Great Pond in Hatfield. Subsequent birders have found it in the same location through press time. Bizarrely, there were two others just outside of our state this fall and winter. Another Sage Thrasher spent the first half of November in a conservation area in eastern New York state, about 65 miles west of Hatfield. The third was found in the Hinsdale Setbacks of New Hampshire, about 35 miles north of Hatfield, during the Brattleboro CBC and, like the Massachusetts bird, is still present at the time of this writing. Julie Blue took the photo on the right.

**Hoary Redpoll** does not seem like a MARC review-list species this winter, with at least seven individuals reported in our state between mid-November and mid-January. Bob Stymeist found the first and most cooperative one on November 22 at the Rose Kennedy Greenway. It stayed in the area for four days, to the enjoyment of many area birders. Other Hoarys were photographed in Fitchburg December 7–10, Warwick on December 11, Plymouth on December 22, and Bolton Flats on December 24. The longest-staying bird, on Lieutenant Island in Wellfleet, showed up on December 30 and stayed until January 8. The most recent Hoary was seen on January 8 in Sandwich. Kevin Schwartz took the photo on the left.



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