

Bird Observer

VOLUME 33, NUMBER 2

APRIL 2005



HOT BIRDS



A **Chestnut-collared Longspur** (left) was a very nice find for Bill Gette and David Weaver (Joppa Flats Wednesday Morning Birding) on the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge on December 15, 2004. David took this photograph of a very rare visitor to the state.

This female **Varied Thrush** (right) was photographed by Tom Murray in Concord on December 30, 2004.



Steve Mirick took this photograph of a **White-winged Dove** (left) on December 31, 2004, on Nantucket.

Frank Gallo and Patrick Dugan found this **California Gull** (right) on January 3, 2005, on Nantucket. Jeremiah Trimble took this great photograph on January 8. Seems like Nantucket had a pretty HOT winter.



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Bird Observer

A bimonthly journal — to enhance understanding, observation, and enjoyment of birds
VOL. 33, NO. 2 APRIL 2005

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CHANGES OF ADDRESS and subscription inquiries should be sent to: Bird Observer Subscriptions, P.O. Box 236, Arlington, MA 02476-0003, or e-mail to John Marsh at <jmarsh@jocama.com>.

ADVERTISING: full page, \$100; half page, \$55; quarter page, \$35. Send camera-ready copy to Bird Observer Advertising, P.O. Box 236, Arlington, MA 02476-0003.

MATERIAL FOR PUBLICATION: BIRD OBSERVER welcomes submissions of original articles, photographs, art work, field notes, and field studies. Please send submissions to the Managing Editor by e-mail: Carolyn Marsh <cmarsh@jocama.com>. Please **DO NOT** embed graphics in word processing documents. Include author's or artist's name, address, and telephone number and information from which a brief biography can be prepared.

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

BIRD OBSERVER (USPS 369-850) is published bimonthly, COPYRIGHT © 2005 by Bird Observer of Eastern Massachusetts, Inc., 462 Trapelo Road, Belmont, MA 02478, a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Gifts to Bird Observer will be greatly appreciated and are tax deductible. ISSN: 0893-463

Birding the Brattleboro Retreat Meadows

Hector Galbraith and Whitney Nichols



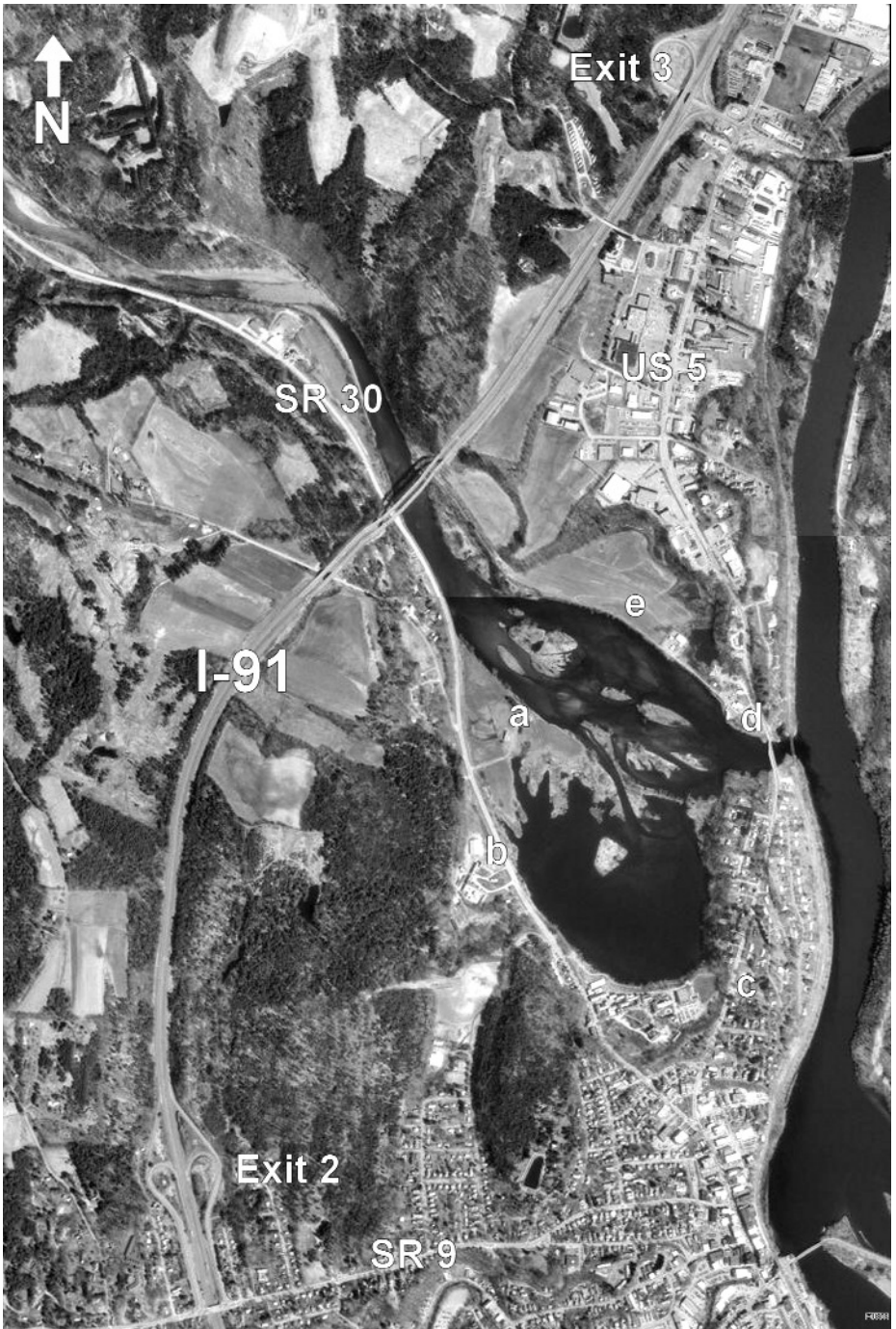
Introduction

Birders from Massachusetts and other southern New England states who are driving north through southern Vermont on Interstate 91 pass close to one of the most consistently productive lowland birding sites in the state. If you glance to your right as you drive over the tall bridge just beyond Exit 2 and before Exit 3, you will see below you an extensive wetland area at the confluence of the West and Connecticut rivers. This is the Brattleboro Retreat Meadows, which, over the years, has consistently produced as many unusual and interesting birds as anywhere else in southern Vermont or western Massachusetts. To take a few examples: there was the Green-tailed Towhee that wintered in 1989-90, the Pacific Loon in 1993, the Tundra Swans in 2003 and 2004, and the Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow and Cackling Goose in 2004.

The Meadows are named for the Brattleboro Retreat, a private psychiatric facility that has been in operation since 1832. Before about 1909 the Retreat Meadows were just that — fields where hay was grown and cattle were grazed. They must have been largely dry at that time because local fairs and other events were regularly held there. In the early days of aviation the Meadows were used as a temporary airfield. During an air show in August 1922, a crash occurred, and three passengers were killed. With the construction of the dam on the Connecticut River at Vernon to generate electricity for local industry, however, the water levels in the West and Connecticut rivers were raised high enough at Brattleboro to inundate the lower-lying pastures. For a time, the local townspeople and farmers fought against the rising water and attempted to reclaim the flooded land, but they soon gave up and let nature take its course. Vestiges of concrete retaining walls that were built to unsuccessfully keep the river out can still be seen. The flooding has resulted in an ecologically rich area of shrub, cattail, and sedge wetlands, riparian woodland, and open shallow water.

Access

To reach the Retreat Meadows from Interstate 91, take Exit 2, and drive east on Route 9 until you intersect Route 5 in downtown Brattleboro (0.9 mile). Turn left on Route 5, and in 0.2 mile you will reach the intersection where Route 30 branches left from Route 5. Continue straight on Route 5 to reach the Marina (d), or follow Route 30 to the left to reach areas (b) (boat ramp) and (a) (Water Filtration Plant). These are the three main access points to the Retreat Meadows (see map on page 82). To scan the most productive areas of open water, marsh fringe, and mudflats (exposed in the fall and at other times of low water and during drawdowns), the access points at the boat launch area on Route 30 (b on map) and the Marina (d) are best. To gain access



to the shrub and sedge meadows, a surfaced single-lane road, becoming a trail, leads along the southern perimeter of the Water Filtration Plant, or WFP (a). If you plan to walk this trail, you better have good waterproof footwear, since the first few yards of it often flood after rains, and it is otherwise usually very muddy. If you chose to park at the Marina side, you can drive down the lane that runs north from the Marina and park at the gravel parking area 100 yards farther (e). This allows you to walk along the continuation of the lane scanning the fields to your right (often good for sparrows, shorebirds, and geese) and the open water, marsh, and mudflats to your left.

Birding in the migration seasons

For us, the wonderful thing about birding on the Retreat Meadows is the sense of uncertainty. Stepping out of your car during the migration seasons, you can never be sure just what you are about to see; if the birding history of the area over the last few decades teaches us anything, it is that the wetlands of the Meadows are often a migrant hot spot. Of course, you can go there on any one day and see little, but those days are more than made up for when something exciting and unexpected pops up.

Fall is often the better of the two migration seasons, especially during inclement weather when it is foggy, or when rain-bearing fronts are moving through. At such times the diversity of species is much higher than in more settled or clearer conditions when the birds fly right over on their ways north or south.

During the migration seasons it is best to scan the open water for waterfowl and shorebirds from the Route 30 (b) or the Marina (d) access points. These areas are where Tundra Swans, Pacific Loons, Cackling Geese, Mute Swans (a rarity in southern Vermont, believe it or not), and Lesser Black-backed Gulls have been seen. During both migration seasons many waterfowl species use the Meadows. In the spring these are mainly dabbling ducks such as Blue-winged and Green-winged teal. In the fall diving ducks such as Common Goldeneye and Bufflehead occur, together with Brant and (occasionally) Black Scoter and Long-tailed Duck. Also in fall, up to fifty or more Hooded Mergansers have been recorded. Red-necked, Pied-billed, and Horned grebes and Common Loons have also been seen during migration, as have Glaucous, Iceland, and Bonaparte's gulls. If the water level is low enough to expose mudflats, Wilson's Snipe, Least Sandpipers, and Greater and Lesser yellowlegs may occur in numbers, together with the occasional Pectoral Sandpiper. One tip worth bearing in mind is that combining kayaking with birding can be very productive and may allow a close approach to many of these species.

Don't neglect the area that you can access via the WFP (a): you might get only your lower half soaked in the long wet vegetation. On the other hand, if you get lucky and are patient and observant enough, you might hit the jackpot. This, after all, is where the Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow turned up in October 2004. Also during passage seasons, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, and Northern Harrier occur in the WFP area.

If you like being confused by little brown jobs, the sedge and scrub area beyond the WFP is the place! During fall it is possible to see up to nine or ten sparrow species

over a day or two (more, if you sneakily include the House Sparrow). Lincoln's Sparrows are fairly common in the fall, and two or three individuals in a day are not unusual. Field and Savannah sparrows are pretty common, with Vesper an occasional visitor. Later in the fall the area is inundated with White-throated and White-crowned sparrows. Swamp and Song sparrows are abundant throughout the migration and breeding seasons.

During migration, the scrub and sedge areas beyond the WFP can also be good for warblers: Wilson's and Palm warblers are regular in small numbers, and all the other common warblers occur, as does Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. Yellow-throated Vireo is occasional on migration. It is also worth checking out some of the damp muddy pools in the grass meadows at the WFP, since up to six Solitary Sandpipers have been seen in a single day in the fall.

Summer and Winter

Given the available habitats, you might expect the Retreat Meadows to support a richer breeding bird community than they actually do. Unfortunately, however, levels of human disturbance are high during the summer months. Numbers of fishermen, canoeists, and kayakers are usually present from dawn till dusk. This may be the reason that typical reed-bed breeders like bitterns and rails are not usually present, although Marsh Wrens, Swamp Sparrows, and Wood Ducks do breed, and Great Egrets occur in late summer.

The scrub and sedge areas are, however, good during the breeding season for some species that are not too common in Vermont. Carolina Wrens, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, and Northern Mockingbirds (attracted by lush multiflora roses), all southern species, are as abundant here as anywhere in Vermont. Other breeders and summer visitors include Great Blue Herons, Canada Geese, hordes of Red-winged Blackbirds, Willow Flycatchers, Warbling Vireos, and Belted Kingfishers.


Most winters, the open water and wetlands freeze over from about late December until March. Then they are frequented only by Ring-billed or Great Black-backed gulls (scavenging from the ice fishermen) and a few lingering Song and Swamp sparrows, Northern Cardinals, and Northern Mockingbirds. At this season, you might want to watch out for Horned Larks, Snow Buntings, and American Pipits in the open fields close to the marina.

Nearby areas

If you have time left over after your trip to the Retreat Meadows and are not fully satiated, it may be worth visiting the nearby Hinsdale Setbacks. This is an area of riparian woodland, cattail marsh, and wetlands on the New Hampshire side of the Connecticut River — actually a recess from the river, joined to it on the north by a channel and separated from it to the south by a mud bar overgrown with alders and willows. To get there from Retreat Meadows, return to Brattleboro center, cross the river, and proceed south on Route 119. After about five miles you will come to a place where the old road forks off to the right. Take this, and park at the boat launch area

fifty yards down. From there, you can explore the woodland and marshes by following the old railroad bed.

The Hinsdale Setbacks are at their best during the migration seasons when they provide habitat for warblers, vireos, orioles, tanagers, and other songbirds. Osprey are also regular at this time. The Setbacks can also be worth checking during the winter: if there is any open water on the river, waterfowl may be numerous. Tundra Swans, numbers of Snow Geese, Long-tailed Ducks, Barrow's Goldeneyes, and Iceland and Glaucous gulls have all been recorded. You might also be lucky enough to see the Bald Eagles that nest a mile or so downriver and regularly harry the waterfowl at Hinsdale.

So, when in southeastern Vermont, consider a visit to the Retreat Meadows and environs. Be sure to record your sightings and send them to the Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS) in Woodstock. Help to formulate and gain a clearer understanding of the nature and occurrence of species and numbers of birds in an often undercovered, but potentially productive part of the state. And, you never know, you might be lucky! 

***Hector Galbraith** moved to the Brattleboro area of Vermont a couple of years ago, after spending twelve years in Boulder, Colorado. Professionally, he is an avian ecologist and ecotoxicologist, doing research into the ecological impacts of climate change and contaminants. He is currently serving as a County Coordinator for the Vermont Breeding Bird Atlas. What spare time he has is spent birding in Vermont or farther afield. **Whitney Nichols**, an experienced and active Vermont birder, has records of his observations at the Retreat Meadows from 1966. He has led trips both locally and abroad, to destinations including the Pribilofs, Sri Lanka, the Amazon, Bhutan, and Tanzania, and has served as well as a member of the Vermont Bird Records Committee. He has been heavily involved in each of the Vermont Breeding Bird Atlas projects — for the first as both a Regional Coordinator and a Species Account Author. Whitney works as an educational consultant/diagnostician.*



SWAMP SPARROW BY DAVID LARSON

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

Marjorie Rines, Secretary

Since the last report of this committee, four additional species have been added to the MARC State List. The addition of Cackling Goose, Red-footed Falcon, Yellow-legged Gull, and Cave Swallow to the official state list brings the state total to 481 species. A copy of this list can be seen at <http://massbird.org/marc/MARCstalist.htm>.

In the past the MARC has occasionally considered reports for which the only documentation was photographs or digital images published on the Internet. The Secretary is pleased to note that for the second year in a row this trend has abated, and there seems to be an increase in the number of written reports being submitted to the committee. An extraordinary exception to this trend was the **Red-footed Falcon** (*Falco vespertinus*), a bird that was not only a first state record but also a first for the Americas. Perhaps its very fame accounted for this lapse, since hundreds of photographs of the bird were published on the Internet, and there was a tremendous amount of discussion about its identification on e-mail Listservs all across the country. In addition, the bird received heavy coverage in the national media, along with the bird's discoverer, Vern Laux, being named "Person of the Week" by ABC News. Despite all this publicity, no written record submission of this high-profile rarity was ever submitted to the MARC!

In the 45th Supplement to *The American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds, Sixth Edition*, Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) was split into two species: Canada Goose (*B. canadensis*) and **Cackling Goose** (*B. hutchinsii*). In the MARC Eighth Annual Report the Committee accepted a report of a "Richardson's" Canada Goose, now more properly called a "Richardson's" Cackling Goose. As a consequence of this past action, Cackling Goose has now been added to the State List.

The by-laws of the MARC require that all reports must receive at least eight "Accept" votes out of nine members voting in order to be accepted. If any other majority of votes to "Accept" other than eight to one is received, the report is re-circulated among the members for up to three rounds before a final decision is made. Large gulls are often controversial, so it is not surprising that the 2002 sighting of a **Yellow-legged Gull** (*Larus cachinnans*) took three rounds of voting before reaching the eight minimum votes for acceptance.

For several years recently **Cave Swallows** (*Petrochelidon fulva*) have been recorded in Connecticut and Rhode Island, most reports coming in late fall. It seemed only a matter of time before a Cave Swallow was recorded in Massachusetts. This happened in 2003, with two independent reports at two different locations on two different dates.

Reports Accepted

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*), #03-24, April 28, 2004, Provincetown (Barnstable), A. Strauss.* This is a regular location and date for this now-annual-in-Massachusetts species. (First ballot)

Yellow-nosed Albatross (*Thalassarche chlororhynchos*), #03-05, June 2, 2003, Eastham (Barnstable), B. Nikula.* During a heavy flight of Northern Gannets observed passing First Encounter Beach in Eastham in the aftermath of a strong low-pressure system that tracked south of Nantucket, two observers were able to study an albatross for several minutes before it disappeared, only to reappear half an hour later, when it was studied for another one or two minutes. Nikula was unable to discern bill color, but believed that it was not pale as in the Shy Albatross (*T. cauta*), the only other small albatross (i.e., mollymawk) species possessing a similar underwing pattern. After a lengthy discussion and evaluation of the description of the underwing pattern, the Committee agreed unanimously to accept the report as a Yellow-nosed Albatross. There are at least five previous occurrences of this south Atlantic mollymawk in Massachusetts waters. (Third ballot)

Albatross species, #03-06, August 29, 2003, Nahant Bay (Essex), L. Pivacek.* An albatross noted without binoculars under good lighting conditions from a bluff exhibited a white body with dark mantle and upperwings, and a striking black-and-white underwing pattern. The observation was submitted to the Committee as a Yellow-nosed Albatross (*Thalassarche chlororhynchos*), and while the Committee accepted the observation as that of an albatross, the description of the bird lacked sufficient details to eliminate other albatross and mollymawk species. (Third ballot)

Reddish Egret (*Egretta rufescens*), #03-10, July 20, 2003, Westport (Bristol), D. Bowen.*† Following a two-week stay in Rhode Island, this first-year bird was eventually seen and photographed just over the Massachusetts state line in Acoaxet. Reddish Egret breeds from Texas to Florida and has been documented in Massachusetts on just three previous occasions. (Third ballot)

White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*), #04-13, May 29, 2004, Mashpee (Barnstable), M. Keleher* et al. This adult White Ibis was spotted foraging among a small group of Snowy Egrets and was described unmistakably. Although the species' range in North America is limited to the southeast, White Ibis is prone to northward dispersal and has been reported previously at least twenty times in Massachusetts. (First ballot)

Red-footed Falcon (*Falco vespertinus*), #04-15, August 8-24, 2004, Katama, Martha's Vineyard (Dukes), V. Laux, J. Trimble† et al. A Eurasian breeder that winters in southern Africa, Red-footed Falcon had never been reported in the Americas prior to this report. The bird was initially identified as a Mississippi Kite but was quickly correctly identified from photographs, which precipitated an onslaught of birders to the Katama Air Park on Martha's Vineyard. For details about the two-week stay of this avian celebrity, see *Bird Observer*, Vol. 32, No. 6. Although captive origin of the bird was considered, it was ultimately dismissed as a factor since the insectivorous Red-footed Falcon is unsuitable for falconry and rarely kept in captivity. As noted

above, no formal details for this report were submitted; however, since it was one the most extensively photographed rarities to ever appear in Massachusetts, the decision of the Committee (most of whom had seen the bird) to accept the report was unanimous. (First ballot)

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), #04-06 (*L. l. baueri*), May 9, 2004, North Monomoy, B. Nikula*. #04-07, May 12, 2004, North Monomoy, B. Nikula*†. #04-08, June 5, 2004, Chatham (South Beach), B. Nikula*. There are approximately two dozen previous records of this species in Massachusetts, so the appearance of three different individuals in the same area within a month of each other is astonishing. Equally surprising was the fact that the first individual was of the subspecies *L.l. baueri*, which breeds in eastern Siberia and western Alaska, and for which there are only two previous records in the Commonwealth. The other two birds were of the nominate race (*L. lapponica*), the race that breeds in northern Europe. The May individual was in alternate plumage and the June bird was in basic plumage. Remarkably, the observer is responsible for no fewer than five previously accepted reports of this species in Massachusetts. (First ballot)

Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus cachinnans*), #02-45, October 6, 2002, Eastham (Barnstable), J. Trimble*†, B. Nikula*†, P. Flood. There is probably no group of birds that occasions greater discussion or controversy among birders and ornithologists than gulls in the genus *Larus*. The taxonomy of this group is often confusing, highlighted by significant geographical variation and regular hybridization among certain species. Yellow-legged Gull is considered conspecific with Herring Gull (*L. argentatus*) in some parts of the world, while in other regions it is considered a distinct species bearing a different Latin name (*L. michahellis*) (See *Gulls of North America, Europe, and Asia* by K.M. Olsen and H. Larsson, Princeton Univ. Press, 2003). Photographs of the Massachusetts individual were published online following the bird's discovery, allowing experts worldwide to comment on its identity. There was consensus that the bird was a Yellow-legged Gull, although there was some disagreement over whether it represented the subspecies *atlantis* or *michahellis*. When discovered the bird was described as slightly smaller and darker than nearby Herring Gulls, with a "blocky" head, thick orange bill with a blunt tip, and bright yellow legs. A hybrid Herring Gull x Lesser Black-backed Gull (*L. fuscus*) was also considered as an identification possibility but was eliminated for structural reasons. The only aspect of the bird's plumage which bothered some Committee members was the delayed state of molt of the primaries. However, aberrant molt is frequently a characteristic of many vagrant species. This represents a first state record for Massachusetts. (Third ballot)

Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata*), #03-28, August 8, 2003, Duxbury Beach (Plymouth), D. Clapp* et al. A birding group watching a flock of terns and Laughing Gulls feeding off Duxbury Beach noted a large, dark tern among the flock. As the bird joined the other terns for about five minutes it afforded excellent looks, and the description by the observer clearly eliminated Bridled Tern (*S. anaethetus*), the most similar species. The appearance of Sooty Terns in Massachusetts is typically associated with severe

tropical storms and hurricanes. Since there was no tropical storm activity in the area, this occurrence was exceptional. (First ballot)

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*), #03-38, November 1-3, 2003, East Sandwich (Barnstable), R. Ayotte†, C. Marantz*. #03-43, November 1-31, 2003, Chicopee (Hampden), V. Glascz†, M. Lynch*, C. Marantz*. As described in the MARC Eighth Annual Report (*Bird Observer* 32 [2]), the fall of 2003 was exceptional for *Selasphorus* hummingbirds, with at least six individuals being reported. The East Sandwich bird was a first-year male, and careful review of high-quality video showed the outer rectrices to be too broad for Allen's (*S. sasin*). The Chicopee hummingbird was banded and determined to be a first-year female. (First ballot)

Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus/sasin*), #03-26, September 10-20, 2003, West Falmouth (Barnstable), S. Fazzino*†. This adult male *Selasphorus* was photographed and submitted as Rufous Hummingbird, but the photos did not reveal back color which would have differentiated it from Allen's, so the Committee accepted it as Rufous/Allen's. (Third ballot)

***Selasphorus* species**, #03-41, October 21-28, 2003, Amherst, P. Brown*†. Excellent photos unambiguously showed a *Selasphorus* hummingbird. (First ballot)

Least Flycatcher (*Empidonax minimus*), #03-35, November 11-December 22, 2003, Marblehead (Essex), R. Heil*. *Empidonax* flycatchers are typically gone from Massachusetts before October, and late sightings are as likely as not to be vagrants. However, an experienced observer was able to view this individual at very close range, and the description indicated that the bird was clearly *minimus*. This is the latest report of this species in Massachusetts. (First ballot)

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*), #03-29, November 7-16, 2003, Melrose, D. Jewell, M. Rines *†. The description and photographs positively eliminated other *Myiarchus* flycatchers, including the very similar (but highly unlikely) Nutting's Flycatcher (*M. nuttingi*). (First ballot)

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*), #03-39, October 13-14, 2003, Wellfleet (Barnstable) D. Manchester*†. #03-40, Wellfleet (Barnstable), November 13-December 4, 2003, B. Elrick*†. A juvenile Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was seen and photographed by a hawk watcher on Morris Island in Chatham, and although it was again found by a few people the following day it subsequently disappeared. A month later a juvenile was discovered fifteen miles away at Marconi Station in Wellfleet. While the Committee accepted these as two separate reports, it seems plausible to think that it may have been the same individual. (First ballot)

Philadelphia Vireo (*Vireo philadelphicus*), #03-37, December 23, 2003, Plymouth (Plymouth), W. Petersen*. Although a regular fall migrant, Philadelphia Vireo has a fairly well-defined window of appearance in Massachusetts and is rarely seen after the first week in October. The previous late date for this species was November 5, 1979. (First ballot)

Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*), #03-31, November 14, 2003, Orleans (Barnstable), J. Trimble*†, B. Nikula* et al. #03-30, November 27, 2003, Chatham (Barnstable), R. Merrill*†. For several years prior to these observations there have been reports of Cave Swallow from elsewhere in southern New England, so a first state record for Massachusetts has been long anticipated. Although photographs were taken of the birds from both sightings, the quality was sufficiently poor to make it impossible to eliminate Cliff Swallow (*P. pyrrhonota*). The report of two birds in Orleans was accompanied by a field sketch and excellent reports by two experienced observers, and the Committee was unanimous in its acceptance of this report. Less than two weeks later a single bird was reported from Chatham, and although the details were sketchier (and might not otherwise have met the standard for a first state record), the report and accompanying photos and video were enough to convince the Committee of its veracity. (First ballot)

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*), #04-02, January 30-February 3, 2004, Nantucket (Nantucket), E. Andrews*, E. Ray†. #04-03, January 25-February 17, 2004, Belchertown (Hampshire), M. Lynch* et al. Both of these western vagrants were well described and photographed. (First ballot)

MacGillivray's Warbler (*Oporornis tolmiei*), #03-34, November 27, 2003, Westport (Bristol), E. Nielsen*. Prior to 1997 there were only four records of this western vagrant in Massachusetts, but this represents the seventh report since then, all in the fall and all but one between October and December. The observer described hearing a call note similar to that of a Common Yellowthroat that he could not identify. After birding the area intensively for several minutes, an *Oporornis* warbler suddenly popped up only five feet away. Careful scrutiny revealed a complete gray hood, light gray throat, prominent eye-arcs, and short undertail coverts that, collectively, clinched the identification as *tolmiei*. (First ballot)

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*), #04-04, January 13-25, 2004, Brewster (Barnstable), R. Everett, P. Brown†. Although no written details were submitted for this western stray, photographs taken showed that the bird was unambiguously a Western Tanager. (First ballot)

Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*), #03-36, December 12, 2003-January 24, 2004, Shrewsbury (Worcester), S. Lucier, M. Lynch*, I. Lynch*, J. Trimble†. An unmistakable male was described and photographed as it visited a feeder in Shrewsbury. Recent appearances of this handsome bird have increasingly been winter visitors at feeders. (First ballot)

Hoary Redpoll (*Carduelis hornemanni*), #03-32, December 27, 2003, Belchertown (Hampshire), G. LeBaron*. #04-09, January 5, 2004, Worcester (Worcester), M. Lynch*. #04-10, January 1-April 7, 2004, Pepperell (Middlesex), E. Stromsted*, P. Terasii†. The winter of 2003-2004 witnessed a major redpoll irruption in the northeast, including Hoary Redpolls. Identification of Hoarys is notoriously difficult, not only because of plumage variations in both Common and Hoary redpolls, but also because there is some taxonomic question about the true status of the two species.

Despite these realities, these reports appeared to represent typical individuals and were consequently accepted by the Committee. (03-32: Second ballot; 04-09 and 04-10: First ballot)


Not Accepted

Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*), #04-12, March 10-30, 2004, Northampton (Hampshire). This swan, whose initial identity was controversial, was seen and photographed by many, and although the Committee was convinced that it was a Trumpeter Swan, there were many questions raised about its origin. This species has long been extirpated from much of its original range, and there are currently a number of programs attempting to re-introduce the species in eastern North America. The Committee decided that it would be impossible to differentiate a swan from one of these introduced populations from a truly wild bird, so the report was not accepted for reasons of its unknown origin. (First ballot)

Eskimo Curlew (*Numenius borealis*), #00-29, August 19, 2000, Wellfleet (Barnstable). The observer described two curlews seen in flight. The Committee unanimously voted not to accept this report, agreeing that there would have to be an exceptional level of evidence to accept a species that is presumed by many to be extinct. (First ballot)

Le Conte's Sparrow (*Ammodramus leconteii*), #02-44, October 13, 2002, Marshfield (Plymouth). Although the description was suggestive of LeConte's Sparrow, the Committee felt it failed to eliminate other *Ammodramus* species. (Third ballot)

Hoary Redpoll (*Carduelis hornemanni*), #03-33, December 29, 2003, Nahant (Essex), #04-01, February 3, 2004, Deerfield (Franklin). As previously mentioned, the identification of Hoary Redpolls is often very critical, and while the Committee agreed these reports may have referred to Hoary Redpolls, the evidence presented was insufficient. (First ballot)

For more information about the MARC, or to see copies of previous MARC reports, see <<http://Massbird.org/MARC/>>. Current members of the MARC are Dennis Abbott, Jim Baird, Davis Finch, Rick Heil, Erik Nielsen, Blair Nikula, Wayne Petersen (Chair), Scott Sumner, and Jeremiah Trimble. Marjorie Rines is Secretary. 

The author thanks Wayne Petersen for editorial assistance.

* Details submitted

† Photographs submitted, or obtained on the Internet.



TRUMPETER SWAN BY GEORGE C. WEST

The Nesting of Several Canadian-Zone Species in Essex County in 2004, Including the First Nest Record of the Common Raven, *Corvus corax*

Jim Berry

The 2004 breeding season in Essex County, Massachusetts, was highlighted by the finding of nests of several Canadian-zone species that may have been regular breeding birds in earlier times, but were rare to absent nesters even half a century ago. The most significant was the first Common Raven nest in the county's history, at least in modern times. Several other northern species are featured, for which one to several nests have been found in the last few years.

The background for the return of these species to a county on the southern or eastern edge of their "normal" ranges begins with the clearing of much of southern New England for farming by the colonial settlers. Agriculture persisted, and by the mid-nineteenth century most of the forests had been cut, resulting in many of the woodland nesters retreating to more northern locations where farming had not taken such a dominant hold on the landscape. By the late 1800s farms began to fail as industrialization took over the New England economy and agriculture headed west.

Forests don't come back overnight, of course, and not all the abandoned farmland was reclaimed; much of it was developed. It took decades for reforestation to occur, and as late as the 1940s the species I cover in this article were still rare to absent nesters in Essex County. They have returned largely in the last fifty years, to the point where some of them have become fairly common breeding birds. The following accounts document some of the recent nesting events of five of these species.

Pileated Woodpecker, *Dryocopus pileatus*

"That the Pileated Woodpecker...was once a common inhabitant of all the primitive forests of this State [Massachusetts] seems to be unquestionable, though absolute proof of the fact may not be available" (Allen 1876). The prolific Joel Allen was talking about a prime example of a species that fell back before the colonial woodsman's axe and was reduced to "accidental visitor" status in Essex County by the early nineteenth century (Townsend 1905). Their recovery commenced with the gradual return of mature forests in the twentieth century (Forbush 1927). But it took awhile, especially in the eastern counties; the annual list of county sightings in the *Bulletin of the Essex County Ornithological Club (BECOC)* for 1931 cited a bird near Crooked Pond in Boxford as only the fifth county record and the first in thirty-five years. The 1934 *Bulletin* has a delightful account by one R. E. Wolfe of Boxford on his three-year quest, ultimately successful, to see one of these birds. From then on reports got more frequent, though they were still rare birds at mid-century.

The date of the first county nest in modern times is open to question. Griscom and Snyder (1955) mention birds "wandering east to Essex County where a pair has

bred in recent years,” but do not say where or when. (An implied tie to a bird collected in Middleton in March 1937, traced back to the source [BECOC 1937, p. 75], does not bear out a nest record, though the birds were becoming regular in Boxford.) I found no confirmed county nestings in any of the published records covering the years 1919-68 (the ECOC *Bulletins*, the *Bulletin of New England Bird Life* [BNEBL], and *Records of New England Birds* [RNEB]), though several were confirmed in the 1950s and 1960s in Middlesex County. The first Essex County nest record I could find was at Crooked Pond in 1974, where a pair was observed at a nest throughout June (*Bird Observer*: Jerry Soucy et al.). This was during the Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas period (1974-79) and was one of three places in the county where nesting was confirmed in that six-year period (Petersen and Meservey 2003).



Male Pileated Woodpecker arriving at nest, South Hampton, MA, May 10, 2004. Photograph by Phil Brown.

In recent years nests have been found somewhat more frequently as the birds have solidified their hold on the county’s larger forests (though not in large numbers) and more birders have started birding these places. I have seen two nests myself, and a third just over the county line in South Hampton, New Hampshire. A pair nested about thirty feet up in a pine snag near the home of Jim and Stina MacDougall in Topsfield in 1997; the nest was active well into June, but the results are unknown. Denise Peloquin has watched Pileateds in Magnolia for many years and believes they have nested almost annually in the grove of mature American beech trees behind her house. In 2001 I spent time observing a nest twenty-four feet up in one of these live beeches. On July 5 both adults fed a single large young that may have been the only one, since it was silent most of the time and did not seem to be in competition with any siblings. The only time it begged was as it was being fed; it remained silent even when a parent had landed outside the cavity and the young was clearly aware that it was about to be fed. My thought at the time was that it was the best-behaved young woodpecker I had ever seen. There was no activity at the nest when I returned on July 16, by which time the young one could have fledged.



Female Pileated Woodpecker looking out of nest hole, South Hampton, MA, May 10, 2004. Photograph by Phil Brown.

On May 10, 2004, Phil Brown informed me that Pileateds were nesting in

an easily visible cavity near the road that goes by a Great Blue Heron colony in a South Hampton beaver swamp with much standing timber. Local birders had been watching a baby Great Horned Owl in one of the heron nests, and Phil noticed the woodpecker nest after I had missed it. This nest was not in Essex County, but was only one mile over the state line and close enough for treatment in this article, especially in view of the odd outcome. Phil observed the male feed the sitting female that day in a cavity sixteen feet up in a deciduous snag in the beaver swamp. I saw the male on incubation duty the next day as he occasionally stuck his head out of the hole. On May 19 both birds flew to the nest tree at 10:20 a.m., the female entering the cavity. To my surprise, the male then started to enter himself. The female, perhaps deciding this wouldn't work, squeezed out under his body as he entered (!) and flew off, allowing him to resume incubation. I saw the male enter again May 29 and stay inside. Since incubation lasts about eighteen days (Baicich and Harrison 1997), and assuming the birds were incubating on May 10, there could have been small young in the nest by May 29.

I did not return until June 12, when I heard both adults near the nest but did not see them approach it in thirty minutes. My next visit was not until June 27. On this date there was no sign of the Pileateds, and to my surprise a female Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) looked out the Pileated nest hole! I had been monitoring a flicker nest very nearby in the same swamp and had already concluded that their nest had failed, and it seemed that they had now taken over the Pileated nest. But had the Pileateds fledged young, or had their nest failed? Both Baicich and Harrison (1997) and Ehrlich et al. (1988) give 26-28 days as the time from hatching to fledging. If the eggs hatched by May 29, the young could have fledged by June 27, but this is only speculation in the absence of more data. I also don't know when the flickers moved in. Thus, the outcome must remain unknown.

Two footnotes on Pileated Woodpecker nests. First, Sibley's first field guide (2000) is helpful in showing that the nest holes are round, rather than oval like the holes drilled for feeding. I have seen several other nest holes elsewhere in the U.S. in addition to those discussed here, and all of them have been round. Knowing this has enabled me not to waste any more time watching oblong holes for birds returning to feed young! Second, Harrison (1975) states that the nest holes typically face east or south. My sample is small, but of the four nests whose approximate orientation I can recall, two faced south, one east, and one west.

Common Raven, *Corvus corax*

I was in Mississippi when I got the call. Actually, it was an e-mail. Rick Heil sent me a message on April 27, 2004, saying he had discovered a nest of Common Ravens (*Corvus corax*) on a ledge of a small cliff in an old rock quarry in Manchester-by-the-Sea. He knew how much I wanted to document the nesting of this species in the county, and we both knew it was only a matter of time. He found it by following up his consistent sightings of ravens along that stretch of Route 128 on his commutes to and from work in Gloucester, as well as from a tip by Denise Peloquin, who works near the nest site and told him she suspected they were nesting in the neighborhood.



Common Raven nest with adult and chicks on (left) April 30, 2004, and (right) May 7, 2004. Photographs by Phil Brown.

His poking around paid off. Once he discovered the quarry, it was only a matter of seconds before the whitewash on the rocks below the large stick nest gave it away. The ledge, sheltered from above, was about thirty-five feet off the dry floor of the pit and perhaps fifteen feet down from the top of the cliff. The sitting adult was clearly visible on the nest.

I returned home on May 2, and Rick showed me the nest the next day. Three small young, blind and featherless, were plainly visible when they stretched up to beg. I made several more visits to the site over the next month, as did a few other local birders. (The nesting had been publicized but not the exact location, to minimize the number of visitors and, presumably, the amount of disruption to the nesting pair.) To my knowledge, all subsequent viewing was done at a considerable distance through telescopes. Consequently, we were often able to observe feedings, and it was instructive to observe the young even when the parents were away, which was most of the time. During these periods the young mostly slept, and one would often use an apparent ball of wool in one corner of the nest as a pillow. (Ravens typically line their nests with animal hair; Heinrich [1999] reported that of over fifty nests he had examined, presumably in northern New England, every one was lined with deer hair, sometimes in combination with fur from other mammals.)

When the young were in their first couple weeks of life and their eyes were still closed or only just open, they often stretched up and gave their loud, raspy begging calls for no apparent reason. On May 6 I watched the young do this seven times over a thirty-six minute period, after which an adult appeared, and they finally had a reason to beg. Each time one of the babies would respond to some stimulus, real or imagined, and set the other two to begging along with it. They did this far less frequently as they got older and could see what was going on around them.

Phil Brown, living nearby in Essex, visited the site every day during the nestling period and took many terrific digital photographs through his scope, some of which accompany this article. He provided valuable information on what the young were fed on May 23, when he saw the parents present them with a frog, a nestling bird, and birds' eggs that appeared to be those of an American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*). That



Common Raven chicks on May 29, 2004.
Photograph by Phil Brown.

premise was given credence by the screaming of a robin as the eggs were delivered. One of the feedings I observed, on May 6, appeared to consist of regurgitated food, which has often been observed (Forbush 1927; Foss 1994). At one point the parent put food in one mouth, then removed it and put it in another! After this feeding the adult ate a fecal sac; the excess was visible on the bird's bill. Heinrich (1999) described and even photographed this phenomenon.

The young gradually feathered out, and by the end of May were getting ready to fledge. Phil observed the oldest young on top of the cliff on June 6, the first fledging date. He saw the second off the nest on June 8. The youngest was in the nest the evening of June 10 and out of it the morning of June 11. So the fledging of these three ravens covered a five-day span. The staggered fledging demonstrates the staggered hatching, which results from incubation beginning before the clutch is complete (Baicich and Harrison 1997). Fledging takes thirty-eight to forty-four days after hatching (Ehrlich et al. 1988), or "at five to six weeks" (Baicich and Harrison 1997). This would put hatching about the last week of April, around the time the nest was discovered. Incubation takes eighteen to twenty-one days (Ehrlich et al. 1988), so the eggs would have been laid in early April. The nesting was successful, as Phil saw all three young with one of the adults near the nest on June 20.

The Common Raven is listed by Townsend (1920) as extirpated from Essex County, as it had been from southern New England generally. Forbush (1927) gives some of its history in Massachusetts and mentions the warfare waged against it by the colonial settlers, for reasons such as predation on newborn lambs and young chickens (which Forbush credited) and various superstitions about these intelligent birds. J. A. Allen (1876) had this to say about the subject: "In scores of the early enumerations of the birds of New England, and of the Atlantic States generally, the Raven, as well as the Crow, is mentioned. This seems to imply that the Raven, at the time of the first settlement of the country, was more or less common from Virginia to Maine, and that persecution, combined with its natural timidity, has caused its expulsion from the more thickly settled parts of the Eastern States."

Whether the birds formerly nested in southern New England is another question. Nesting is widely and reasonably assumed from the birds' commonality in former centuries, but despite much circumstantial evidence, Forbush's comment (1927) was that "we have no absolute proof that the species ever bred within the limits of Massachusetts." This uncertainty is due more to the lack of adequate historical records than anything else (Allen 1876). Whatever the case, ravens were seldom seen in the state through most of the twentieth century, with only a handful of Essex County sightings through the 1960s (Griscom and Snyder 1955; Veit and Petersen 1993). But with bird-protection measures in place, persecution largely over, forests growing back,

and the amount of available roadkill increasing with road-building and traffic, the birds started coming back on their own to western Massachusetts in the late 1970s (Quinlan 1978). In 1982 nesting was assumed from family groups in three locations from the Quabbin Reservoir west to Mount Greylock (Veit and Petersen 1993), and in 1983 a nest was found on Ragged Mountain in Adams, Berkshire County (Flanagan 1993). By 1992 at least sixteen active nest sites were known from Berkshire County alone (Flanagan 1993), with others being monitored in central Massachusetts.

Ravens started showing up with regularity in Essex County in the mid-1990s (*Bird Observer* "Sightings" columns; pers. obs.). Sightings have been clustered near the large state forests—Harold Parker, Boxford, and Willowdale—and on Cape Ann. All these areas are, or contain, large unfragmented forests of from 2000 to 3500 acres. With sightings this regular, finding a nest was only a matter of time, and it finally came in 2004 as described. Not surprisingly, the first nest found was on a cliff ledge, which in many parts of the species' range is the typical nest site. Cape Ann, here broadly defined to include Essex and Manchester, has many granite ledges, quarries, and gravel pits, offering plenty of potential nesting habitat. But the birds will also nest in tall pines and other conifers, meaning that the county's state forests, which do not have much ledge, may still be chosen as nesting locations if they haven't been already.

A third category of raven nesting sites is human structures. These adaptable birds have used a wide variety of them all over the world. I have seen them in Alaska nesting at the top of a tall radio tower a hundred feet in the air and on one of the stanchions supporting the Alaska oil pipeline only ten feet off the ground. This remarkable variety of nest sites has also characterized the ravens that have colonized Massachusetts; Tom French has banded young in these nests for years and has a forthcoming article on the subject. Both the birds' adaptability in choosing nest sites and the consistency of sightings in certain Essex County locations give me hope that several pairs of ravens may already be nesting in the county.

Ironically, the nest site chosen, though typical for its cliff habitat, was not in the large adjacent Manchester-Essex Woods, but apart from it near a small industrial park. The nest itself was only about a hundred yards from the nearest business, an auto repair shop, though it was screened from the buildings by a line of trees growing in the abandoned dry quarry. The noise from the various businesses was rather constant during the weekdays, and close by could be heard the frequent bulldozing at the lower end of the quarry, where a nearby establishment was creating a new playing field. The ravens appeared not to care about these noises, because the people involved did not approach the nest site. A few did know about it, however, and the owners of one business were kind enough to allow a few birders to park in their limited space to view the birds. The son of the owner knew that ravens were around from their calls and responded to Rick's initial request to check the gravel pit with enthusiasm, saying he had enjoyed seeing and hearing them in the neighborhood. He was not sure whether they had been there in previous years, which I asked him about because ravens commonly reuse their nests for several years (Ehrlich et al. 1988; Flanagan

1993). If the old quarry remains undisturbed, he may continue to enjoy them over the next few nesting seasons.

Red-breasted Nuthatch, *Sitta canadensis*

An irruptive species that can range from abundant to absent in migration and winter, the Red-breasted Nuthatch was considered by Townsend (1905, 1920) to be a “rare summer resident” in Essex County. He knew of only a single nest, in Beverly in 1889, which held eggs on May 23. (Many nests were collected in those days.) Forbush (1929) also called this “dumpy” little bird a “rare summer resident” in the eastern counties. By mid-century, Griscom and Snyder (1955) were still calling the species “casual” as a nesting bird in the eastern part of the state. Then comes a curious sentence: “In Essex County, where there have been many decades of continuous observation, there are records for every day in the year.” Despite all that observation, no county nests were reported in the published records from Townsend’s time through the 1960s. The best county birders could do was to find family groups with fledged young in various towns five times between 1954 and 1968 (*RNEB*). Even in the Breeding Bird Atlas period in the 1970s, when scores of nestings were confirmed in the state including six in Essex County, few actual nests were found, and the published atlas (Petersen and Meservey 2003) does not say where they were.

Not surprisingly, in the thirty-two years I have lived in Ipswich I have seen few nests of this species. Until 2002 I had found only one, fifteen feet up in a hemlock snag next to the Ipswich River in Hamilton in 1983. An adult entered the cavity on June 5, apparently with food, and went back out; I did not visit the nest again. The experience taught me that Red-breasted Nuthatches do nest in the county, but I failed to follow up on it and spent little time in subsequent years looking for their nests. That changed for good in 2002, when on May 16 I found a pair — mostly the female — excavating a small hole near the top of a short, thick snag just below the beaver

dam in Willowdale State Forest. (Most of the forest is in Ipswich, but this little wedge of it is in Topsfield.) Nests of Brown Creepers (see below) and Red-bellied Woodpeckers (*Melanerpes carolinus*) were nearby, and it was a pleasure to sit in one place in the shade and watch all three nests. The laying stage for the nuthatches seemed to occur in late May, possibly into early June. On June 20 both adults took food to the young (invisible inside) at irregular intervals and occasionally removed fecal sacs. In one thirty-minute period on June 30 they fed the young once every two minutes on average. By this time the young were coming to the opening and were near fledging. There was no activity on July 4, so fledging probably happened before that date.



Red-breasted Nuthatch nest hole. Photograph by Jim Berry.

Luck was with me again in 2003, this time elsewhere in Willowdale. Linda Cook told me of a pair excavating in mid-April about 28 feet up in a red pine

snag in the northern part of the forest off Linebrook Road in Ipswich. The habitat here was high and dry in a pure red pine grove (many of which were planted in the county by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s), and this pair was on an earlier schedule than the 2002 pair. I found the female tapping away inside the cavity on April 24; on May 15 the male fed the female at the entrance as she was probably incubating. These birds typically smear sap or pitch around the entrance to the nest hole to deter predators, and that was easily visible on this nest; one wonders how they remove it from their bills after spreading it. He was still feeding her on May 23, but by May 28 both adults were taking food to the young. I was unable to return until June 16, by which time there was no activity at the nest. The outcome was apparently happy, however, because on June 21 a family group of nuthatches was feeding in the same pine grove.

A nest in 2004 was less exciting. Jim MacDougall told me of one being excavated near Crooked Pond in Boxford on April 22. I heard nuthatches calling in the vicinity on May 6, but found no activity on four subsequent visits through June 11. Nor had the edges of the hole been smeared with pitch. It was evident that this nest had been abandoned early in the cycle, perhaps in favor of another nesting site. As it is, I have been privileged to see three nests in three years and hope this trend will continue.

Brown Creeper, *Certhia americana*

This was one of the first of the Canadian-zone species to return to eastern Massachusetts when the forests started coming back. Most likely this was because Brown Creepers typically nest behind the loose bark of dead trees. Such trees are more common in swamps, which presumably did not get logged as intensively as upland forests. In addition, many trees were killed in Massachusetts a century ago by outbreaks of gypsy and brown-tailed moths, giving dead-tree specialists plenty of potential nest sites (Tyler 1914). It may have been that a few creepers nested in eastern Massachusetts right through the nineteenth century, since pairs were found nesting “near Lynn,” “in the neighborhood of Boston,” and in Taunton in the 1870s (Kennard and McKechnie 1905). Then, around the turn of the century, nests were discovered in Andover in 1898 (Brewster 1906) and Hamilton in 1904 (Townsend 1905), as well as in three towns near Boston (Kennard and McKechnie 1905). Tyler (1914) studied nesting behavior at sites in Lexington and Concord, Middlesex County, in 1913, but still considered the birds “rare in eastern Massachusetts [where] they have been reported in summer not more than a dozen times in the last thirty-five years.”

No details were published on the Lynn nest, but of the other two Essex County nests, the one in Andover was behind loose bark on a dead oak four feet above the ground and held six eggs on May 13, 1898. The Hamilton nest, similarly situated ten feet up in a leaning dead pitch pine, was under construction on May 11, 1904. After that, however, nest-finding in Essex County came to a halt. Townsend apparently never found another creeper nest (he died in 1934), and called the bird “very rare in summer” (Townsend 1905, 1920). The annual ECOC *Bulletins*, published from 1919

through 1938, only twice mentioned nesting birds, once in Hamilton in 1930 and “a pair with grown young a-wing” in Boxford in 1932. In several other years creepers were “probably nesting.” And by this time the birds were apparently seen with some regularity in the breeding season; the county checklist published in the 1931 *Bulletin* called them “Resident; very rare but rather regular in summer” (Stubbs and Emilio 1931). This was consistent with Forbush (1929), who wrote that “only a few remain [after migration; the species does migrate to some extent] to breed in the cool swamps of eastern Massachusetts.”

The species' status had apparently not changed by mid-century, when Griscom and Snyder (1955) called the bird an “exceedingly local and erratic summer resident, regular only in Berkshire County, sporadically east to the coast.” Regular or sporadic, Brown Creepers did not reveal another county nesting record until three adults with three juveniles were observed in Gloucester in July 1958 (*RNEB*). By this time, however, it was probably a matter of the nests simply not being found, given numbers like twelve creepers reported from Boxford in late April 1960 and ten there in May 1965 (*RNEB*). Brown Creepers begin nest-building in April or early May, and singing birds in suitable habitat at that time are not likely to be migrants.

Brown Creepers were much more in evidence as breeders by the time of the Breeding Bird Atlas in the 1970s, with dozens of confirmations statewide, and at least five in Essex County (Petersen and Meservey 2003), though no actual nests are mentioned from the county. Brad Blodget, who wrote that species account, called the birds “locally common” in the northeastern part of the state in “mature, mixed, swampy forest,” and attributed their increase to the return of the beaver and the birds' ability to exploit “the growing system of [b]eaver flowages and their attendant dead timber.” This is a fair assessment of their status. But his statement that creeper nests “are almost invariably built 5 to 15 feet above the ground” needs amendment, as the following paragraphs will demonstrate. That height range is given in other sources as well, but Hejl et al. (2002) cite nest heights from many parts of the continent ranging from two to seventy-four feet, though nests in western North America tend to be higher.



Brown Creeper nest site, 2002. Photograph by Jim Berry.

My own experience with creeper reproduction began with nests in the Bald Hill Reservation in Boxford in 1992 and 1995, and one in Willowdale State Forest in Ipswich in 1998, the latter under construction as early as April 12. All were behind loose bark on dead trees, at heights of thirteen, six and one-half, and fifteen feet. But I did not revisit those nests, and will devote the rest of this account to more methodical observations of single nests in 2002 and 2003 and four nests in 2004. Again, all nests were behind

loose bark on dead trees. I should add that the bark strips chosen by these birds to nest behind are generally attached at the top and flare out at the bottom. That is, the nests typically have a roof but no floor. The birds prefer this to having a floor but no protection from the rain, not to mention the better protection a roof provides from predatory eyes.

The 2002 nest was about twenty feet up in a large drowned white pine below the dam in the Willowdale State Forest beaver marsh in Topsfield. I discovered it on May 16 and watched the adults make frequent visits to the tree with nest material. (The female builds with help from the male; Baicich and Harrison 1997, Hejl et al. 2002.) The nest could be seen from the side where the end of it stuck out of the crevice; typically, many twigs and bark strips must be jammed into the available space to form a foundation that keeps the nest from falling out, and the birds are anything but tidy in their construction habits. But despite five more visits to the site, I did not see any further activity. For whatever reason, this nest was apparently abandoned.

The 2003 nest was at the edge of the same marsh, perhaps a couple hundred yards away, and conceivably built by the same pair of birds. It also was in a drowned white pine, about thirty-five feet up. The nest site was very well chosen, because the loose bark, though buckling, was firmly anchored both above and below the crevice, which meant that the nest couldn't fall. The entrance was above and to the side; the birds had to crawl through a narrow slit at the edge of the bark and descend to the nest. Both adults were building on April 23. I saw no activity on May 3, but on May 9 the male fed the sitting (or possibly brooding) female, who came to the opening to take the food. Both birds were foraging on May 15; then one returned to the nest and stayed there. I observed them both carrying food to the nest on May 23 and 31, clearly to feed young. Some of the food items appeared to be spiders.

This is where it gets interesting. The nestling period can range from thirteen to twenty days, which means the young would have fledged at the latest by June 9—earlier if the young hatched before May 23. Yet on June 15 I watched an adult enter the nest twice with apparent food items. Were the young still inside, or was the male feeding the female on a second clutch of eggs? (Baicich and Harrison [1997] say that Brown Creepers can be double-brooded, whereas Hejl et al. [2002], while citing frequent renesting attempts, found no confirmed cases of second broods.) One of the pair entered the nest on June 21 and stayed inside, indicating incubation. But I saw no activity on June 26 or on subsequent visits, and so do not know the outcome. It is possible that the pair was raising a second brood, or making a second attempt after the first failed.



Brown Creeper nest, 2003, with both adults.
Photograph by Jim Berry.

The nesting season is the time of my most intensive field work, and 2004 was the Year of the Brown Creeper. My first success came on May 10, when I followed a lead from Jim MacDougall on a creeper nest he had seen beside Crooked Pond in Boxford. I never found that nest, but did find one being built farther down the trail at the back of the pond. This one was a nest-finder's dream: the birds were building behind loose bark on a small maple snag at the edge of the pond, only three and one-half feet above the water. Even better, they paid no attention to me while I watched them take twigs into the crevice. I looked forward to watching them raise a family, but it didn't happen. In four more visits I saw no activity at the nest. On the last visit, in July, long after the nest would have been empty, I waded out to discover what had happened. I looked behind the bark, but the nest was gone. The crevice had been wide from the start, as it flared out considerably at the bottom and there was no floor whatsoever. I knew then that the site had been poorly chosen and the nest had fallen into the water, though I could find no trace of it. I suspect it happened early on and the birds rebuilt, since I heard a male sing nearby on both May 21 and June 2.

A second nest was found five feet above the water in a red maple snag in a beaver swamp in Rowley by Linda Cook on June 6, when she observed both adults feeding young in a nest every couple of minutes. This indicated either large young or a lot of them, or both. That proved to be the case, for when she showed me the site on June 10, the young had fledged and the parents were feeding them out of the nest. We saw at least two of them, though there were probably more. One was following an adult around, while the other had landed in the root structure of a fallen tree and was staying put. Both methods worked, since each was being fed by a parent. "On leaving nest [the] young fly weakly but climb well" (Baicich and Harrison 1997), so it was no surprise that one of them had decided to stay put until it learned to fly better. Fledging had probably occurred that morning or the day before. Two food items we recognized were a large moth and a small spider.

The third and fourth nests were in adjacent drowned white pines and almost certainly belonged to the same pair of birds. The circumstances were so strange as to be astonishing. On May 11 I was sitting at an overlook on the east side of the Willowdale State Forest beaver marsh in Ipswich watching a Great Blue Heron nest and looking for grebes and bitterns. This was the site of the 2003 creeper nest, and eventually I noticed that that nest was being used again! I believe what I saw that day was the male feeding his mate on the nest, but I was not certain. On May 24 both adults were taking food to the nest and sometimes remaining inside, indicating small young. On May 30 the feeding visits were shorter, indicating larger young. My next visit was not until June 13, when there was no activity; with a nestling period of thirteen to twenty days, fledging would almost certainly have occurred by then if the nest had been successful.

At the same time, I noticed what looked like another creeper nest in the next tree, this one only ten feet off the water (the old one was thirty-five feet). I thought that odd, but since there was no activity there either, I left without knowing what was going on. I was not able to return until July 3, when I saw both adults feeding young

in the new nest! And since the lookout was on a hillside, the nest was at eye level. It was fascinating to watch how the adult(s) entered the nest: each time it (they) would creep in horizontally on the outer wall, turn left 270 degrees, and then, facing downward, deliver food to the nestlings. This pattern never varied over eight feedings in twenty-one minutes, or over a dozen feedings two days later. (Once again, many food items looked like spiders.) The young were not visible because of the typical hammock-like structure of the nest, but the adult's head could be seen when it brooded the young. When I returned again July 11, I saw no activity, so either the young had fledged or the nest had failed; I did not have enough data to know when they had hatched.

Several things were remarkable about these two nests. First was the reuse of the same nest from the previous year, presumably by the same pair of birds. Hejl et al. (2002) found no evidence of nest reuse by Brown Creepers, so this may be the first documentation of it. Second was the building and use of two nests in adjacent trees only twenty feet apart in the same season. Were they used by the same pair of birds in a double nesting? Surely the original pair would not tolerate a second pair building so close to them, and the species is one of low density. But the second nest was complete-looking on June 13, very shortly after the first brood would have fledged. Had they built this nest that quickly after the first brood left the nest, or had that nest somehow failed before fledging so that they began the second nest earlier? Or had the second nest been built even while the birds were raising the first brood? And if so, why would they build another nest when the first one had served them so well and did not appear damaged? Do creepers contemplating a second nesting typically build a second nest or use the first one again? For that matter, how often do they nest a second time if the young from the first nest fledge? (Hejl et al. [2002] say, "No confirmed cases of second broods.") Many questions arose in my mind that I hope to find answers to in the coming years. Whether I succeed or not, these birds are fascinating to watch at the nest, and friendly enough to allow cautious humans to observe them at will.

Winter Wren, *Troglodytes troglodytes*

This is a Canadian-zone species whose nest habits were virtually unknown a century ago. Another "very rare summer resident" (Townsend 1905, 1920; Forbush 1929), the species has only gradually come back with the forests, preferring streamside habitats. These authors knew of only one summer record from Essex County, a pair that probably nested "near Lynn" around 1882. Griscom and Snyder (1955) knew of no other county nesting, nor were there any in all the published records from Townsend's time through the 1960s (*BECOC*, *BNEBL*, *RNEB*). As with many other species, the atlas project provided the first comprehensive look at the birds' status statewide and the first three Essex County nesting confirmations of the century (Petersen and Meservy 2003). The atlas account does not say whether any actual nests were found in either the county or the state (implying that none were), but agrees with other sources in describing the favored sites as hollows in the upturned roots of fallen trees or "other nooks and crannies," and the nest as mossy with the entrance on the side.



Winter Wren nest site at Crooked Pond.
Photograph by Jim Berry.

I have found two Winter Wren nests in the county, both in the same location: the outlet stream from Crooked Pond in Boxford. One was in upturned tree roots, the other in a nook that took the form of a tiny rotten stump. The stump nest was the first, in 1989, when I found a female wren carrying moss into a cavity in a hemlock stub only nine inches above the water on the bank of the stream. This was on April 22. I did not return until June 3, when the male wren was still

singing but there was no activity at the nest. After a long wait I carefully felt inside the hole and discovered six rotten eggs; the nest had been deserted.

Jim MacDougall alerted me to the second nest when in late April 2004 he told me that a Winter Wren was repeatedly taking moss into a cavity in the upturned roots of a hemlock that had fallen into the stream. I spent a lot of time watching this site, and managed to see a presumed female wren enter a certain area of the root structure about a foot and a half above the water on May 6, 10, and 20, usually staying inside as if incubating eggs or brooding small young. On none of these occasions did I see the bird carrying food. A male wren was often singing nearby. On June 2, after a long vigil with no activity at the nest, I waded into the stream and felt carefully around the unseen hollow. My fingers found the soft nest, and it was empty. Either the young had fledged or the nest had somehow been raided; I simply did not have enough information to know. (The time between hatching and fledging is long for such a small bird, twenty-nine to thirty-seven days; Baicich and Harrison 1997.) It is also possible that this was a dummy nest, the construction of which is typical for wrens of many species. But the evidence of seeing a bird enter it on three different dates over two weeks, sometimes staying inside, leads me to believe that this nest was the active one.

Thus is the birder challenged to find nests of this enigmatic species. As Martha McClelland wrote in her species account in the *Breeding Bird Atlas*, "The Winter Wren is one of the least-known nesting birds in Massachusetts." I heartily agree. 🐦

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Jim Berry's series of articles on significant nesting records in Essex County continues with this offering, in conjunction with the annotated checklist he is writing on all the birds of that area. Birders are encouraged to send Jim information on county nest records of the less common species, whether current or historical. Details of the nests he finds are submitted to the nest-record database at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, so that they are available to researchers and authors, such as the editors of the various state breeding bird atlases. Contact Jim (jimberry@nii.net) if you are interested in contributing to this valuable program.



BROWN CREEPER BY GEORGE C. WEST

FIELD NOTES

President's Day Special

Brooke Stevens

President's Day weekend. My birding colleagues were heading to Texas to tick Mexican vagrants or north to Canada in the hopes of finding Great Gray Owls and other boreal species. Tom was on the train to New York to take in Jeanne Claude and Christo's "Gates" extravaganza in Central Park. That left me and Nia (our indoor mackerel-tabby cat who loves watching the Yard TV channel).

So Friday, February 18 at around 6:30 a.m. as I put the water on to boil for coffee, I noticed that our entire satellite-big-baffle-and-hook feeder setup was gone. Then I remembered hearing a muffled thump the night before and figured that a raccoon was up and about. In gumboots and fleece bathrobe I walked around to the front of our large kitchen window and there it was, lying on the ground, a bit muddy around the feed hole but intact. I rehung it, shook the sunflower hearts down into the globe, and was rounding the corner when a large bird exploded silently out of our hemlock and landed, skidding, on top of the green hopper feeder that sits on a pole in the small wooded area behind the house. I froze, the bird found a purchase, and we looked at each other. A Barred Owl. It sat. I stood. The feeder birds had swirled off in an instant. Collecting myself, I slipped into the house and ran upstairs for my camera to try and document our one-hundredth yard bird species.

It was gone from the feeder when I grabbed the camera and glanced out of the upstairs window. Returning to the sunroom to search, I found the owl perched in the split trunk of our large cherry tree, but the light was too low for good photos. Silently it swooped again at the feeder, scattering the birds, then flew off. It tried to land on the hopper a third time and was briefly successful, but flew before I could zoom in for a shot. I took the opportunity to send a quick e-mail to local birders Bob Stymeist and Marj Rines, then returned to the sunroom, waiting for the light to improve. While I was sending the note, the owl swooped again on the feeder. A short while later the doorbell rang, and still in my bathrobe I greeted Bob who had come with his video camera in hand. The owl was now perched in clear view on a dead snag in a white pine at the bottom of the slope (my raptor birding friends refer to this as "bird on a stick"). Bob counted, I think he said twenty, cardinals and was almost as excited by them as by the owl. I watched as he walked slowly out into the yard to within less than thirty feet of the perched bird. He got some nice video plus stills. I changed into more reasonable stalking clothes and was able to get quite close for some shots of my own.

The owl stayed all day and was mobbed several times by crows as it sat exposed in my neighbor's apple tree. I was able to show it to the children next door who thought it was pretty cool. The bird's attempts on the feeder surprised me since they seemed clumsy, and it kept trying to perch on the hopper. It was swooping and



Backyard owl photographs by Brooke Stevens

slipping but did not seem adept at targeting its prey. The feeder birds did not disperse in the way they do when a Sharp-shin or Cooper's blasts through; there were no frozen birds in the thicket. When the owl flew, I could see that the underwings had a lemony wash.

Since having a Barred Owl in the yard is not an everyday occurrence, I decided later to log on to my on-line subscription to Birds of North America (BNA). There, following an easy-to-click sidebar, was everything you wanted to know about this species, including its great cacophonous dueting (which quickly got Nia's attention!). Under Food Habits "Microhabitat for foraging" were the words "few data;" but Habitat yielded "thought to prefer old mixed-wood forests." I concluded that our yard and its abutters form a microhabitat of large mixed oak/conifer woods, like a small slice of Mount Auburn Cemetery. The BNA account notes that Barred Owl is "an opportunistic predator, consuming small mammals and rabbits, birds up to the size of grouse, amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates." The woodlot looked promising, and it must have been after the feeder birds, which were the usual mix of titmice, chickadees, and all those cardinals – every one a manageable size for consumption.

Although it is considered a "seminocturnal to nocturnal hunter," the owl was hunting in broad daylight, perched in the sit-and-wait fashion described by the BNA authors, scanning the area for prey. Scanning the bird feeder, or so I thought. However, later when I zoomed in on the digital photos I had taken of the owl on its perch, one showed a milky eye, another both eyes looking blank, and still another one eye open and the other partially so. What I thought at first might be an injury was the



nictitating membrane or “third eyelid” that, according to Chris Leahy in the *Birdwatcher’s Companion*, is “drawn obliquely or horizontally across the cornea to keep it moist and clean... In birds active by day the membrane is transparent, whereas in owls and other nocturnal species it is translucent.” So it was resting too.

Under Migration the BNA account notes that Barred Owls exhibit “strong territoriality where studied, thought to be linked to nest-site limitation. However, winters of low prey availability may result in periodic nomadism in search of prey.” Hence the owl’s attempt at an urban bird feeder. And again, under Behavior, “Daily Time Budget. Not well qualified. Crepuscular/nocturnal hunter, although will hunt in daytime. During daytime sits quite motionless in a tree, often next to the trunk.” Witness the cherry tree early in the morning, the white pine snag a bit later, and my neighbor’s apple tree during the day. Finally, under Behavior, taken from Bent, “. . . light, buoyant, and noiseless; can glide gracefully and skillfully among branches of trees.” Which indeed was the thrilling case.

The Great Horned Owl perched in the beech tree last month, directly in view from my office window, was more successful as a hunter, twice taking and dismembering gray squirrels in the neighborhood. In the case of the Barred Owl, after reading David Sibley’s statistics for the family Strigidae (“1st-year mortality high; adult annual survival 45-90%), I have to confess that it took willpower not to try and find a few frozen mice to tide it over. 🦉

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Love is in the Air — But Not in the Water!

Paul Roberts


Historically, my favorite time on the Mystic Lakes and River is in the winter and early spring because you have an opportunity to see so many waterfowl so close and so well. The winter of 2004-2005 was the poorest for waterfowl in my experience (roughly fifteen years) on the watershed. Finally, in mid-March there were signs of

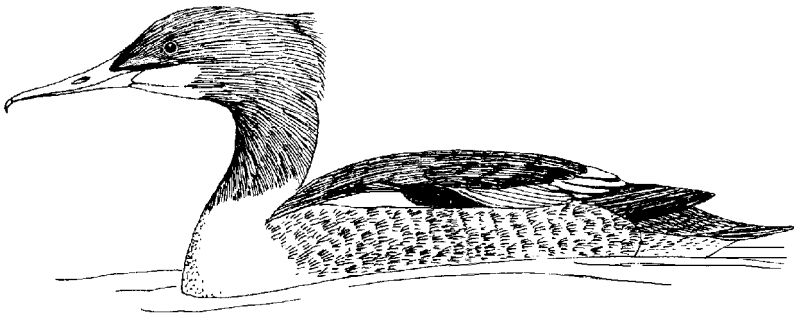
hope. On the 13th, I had five Ring-necked Ducks on the Lake and River, which to me is one of the strongest signs of spring on the way — the great thaw is beginning.

The following weekend there were Wood Ducks, a Green-winged Teal drake in almost inconceivable high plumage, Buffleheads, Ring-necked Ducks, a Red-breasted Merganser, Common Mergansers, and Hooded Mergansers.

What was most enjoyable is that most of these ducks often came quite close, so if one moved slowly, quietly, and then stood still, the views of the intricate plumages were incredible.

The highlight was a spectacular female Common Merganser who herded an equally mind-blowing drake with a tanager-colored bill off from the rest of the flock, driving him towards a corner close to shore where I was standing. Hormones were apparently raging so that they were both oblivious to me. The hen then went supine in the water, stretched out as in a medieval torture chamber, stretched as long as she could possibly be, and submerged just below the surface as would an alligator with a yen for a meal. She, however, was seeking something else. I was expecting to see an intense courtship ritual and mating, such as I had witnessed in the same spot in equally fantastic light two years earlier. As she came coursing by, I saw the finest vermiculation on her flanks and tail as I had never seen it before. She was also clucking, low and repeatedly. A lighthouse is subtle compared to a hen Common Merg on the make.

She swam loops around the drake. She cut him off, like a battleship in front of a destroyer (or is it the other way around?). This went on for minutes. I was almost ready to jump into the water myself, but the drake remained supremely aloof. I couldn't imagine if he was exercising tremendous will power, or just couldn't be bothered, or . . . No. He was so good-looking he must have had hundreds of opportunities like this. He never gave her a nod, not even the slightest. He just kept paddling, beak elevated slightly above the horizontal. She finally bounced to the surface, stood on the water and shook herself off, and then paddled over towards the other twenty-some males swimming on the other side of the lake. I had to leave for an appointment, so I don't know how she — or he — fared. I knew I was lucky to have something like this so close to my home. 



FEMALE COMMON MERGANSER BY GEORGE C. WEST

The Loss of Avocet and Curlew

Steve Grinley

In 2004, Essex County lost two of its most prominent birders, the honorable H. Lawrence Jodrey and Gerald L. Soucy. Larry's CURLEW and Jerry's AVOCET license plates on their respective vehicles were regular sights on Plum Island and anywhere in Massachusetts where birds and birders were found. The two were always together and they were simply known as "Larry and Jerry" or "Jerry and the Judge." I can't say that I ever saw one in the field without the other. Not ever. Back in the sixties, they sometimes had famed birder and author John Keiran riding in their back seat and often a new protégé, Tom Martin, now of Boxford and a great birder in his own right. In later years, it was their loving poodle "Brandy" who accompanied them.

Together, they were "birders extraordinaire" and key mentors for me in my early years of birding. In fact, they encouraged many a novice birder. Jerry gave Tom Martin his first bird feeder and got him hooked onto birding as a lifelong passion, just as their encouragement and guidance had helped me. Larry and Jerry belonged to an era of birding that helped foster its popularity to what it is today. Together with people like Ruth Emery (the Voice of Audubon), Arthur and Margaret Argue, Dick and Dora Hale, and Dick and Mary Lou Barnett, they helped shape the appreciation for birds and the hobby, sport, or pastime now referred to as birding. They were birders before the term was ever popularized. Back then we were all just "bird watchers."

If there was an unusual bird in Massachusetts, they always knew about it and they made sure that others did as well. They kept a year list, but only to compete with their own previous year's list. They were as unselfish birders as there can be. They would stop along the road to tell you of the birds they saw, or of any other bird that they knew about in the area. If there was a "hot" bird, they would make repeated phone calls, including one to Ruth Emery to get it on "the Voice." They always seemed to be in the know, and they were always where the birds were. They shared their birds, and they shared their enthusiasm.

Jerry and Larry led numerous Newburyport and Rockport trips for the Brookline Bird Club, and they were always birding Essex County on their own. I especially remember the Nantucket trips that the Brookline Bird Club would have every year on Columbus Day weekend. Jerry and Larry, who had their cottage "Big Enuf" on the Island, would help lead the group around, showing us specialty birds like oystercatchers and Barn Owls that they had scouted the week before during their vacation stay on the island. You could always feel their love for Nantucket, and anyone attending those BBC trips would know why. I still remember the breathtaking colors of the moors in the autumn sunlight while searching for short-eared owls or other special birds. Jerry and Larry knew the Island intimately, and they could always recommend the best places to eat, like the Jared Coffin House. They helped everyone feel at home on Nantucket.



Jerry (white jacket), Larry (sweater and sunglasses), and other birders enjoying a pelagic birding trip out of Gloucester in 1963. Photograph by Warren Harrington.

Professionally, Larry was a Gloucester District Court judge, and Jerry was an Assistant Registrar of Deeds for Essex County. But the work they are best remembered for by fellow birders is their long tenure as Directors for the Brookline Bird Club. Jerry was the field trip coordinator and editor of the “blue book” — the Brookline Bird Club Bulletin — for what seemed like forever. His charisma helped encourage people to lead trips, which in turn grew the number offered by the club. I don’t remember the first field trip that I led, but I am sure that it was due, at least in part, to Jerry’s persuasion. If you ever received correspondence from Jerry, you would always recognize, and envy, his perfect cursive handwriting. Just as his handwriting was meticulous, so was the accuracy of the BBC Bulletin that he published. He even interspersed his favorite bird poetry in the blue book, to further inspire its readers.

Larry’s two year term as President of the Brookline Bird Club came early in my BBC history. I can remember Larry’s talks while he presided over the club meetings at the Boston Museum of Science. He was truly the Master of Ceremonies. His accounts and slides of BBC trips and members made for great entertainment, and Larry’s dry sense of humor was always a joy. To this day, I still remember one slide of Clara de Windt dressed in a big, red parka, which was accompanied by Larry’s comment “Here is Clara de Windt in winter plumage.” He would always leave us smiling. The past couple of years when he and Jerry would ride in their convertible with the top down, Larry, approaching eighty years old, would still make references to “cruisin’ for chicks.” Larry minced no words. He would refer to someone as an “ol’ battleax” as readily as he would talk about some “sweet young thing.”

Larry had a fantastic store of knowledge and an equally astounding memory. He knew, thoroughly, the law he practiced, but he also had a love of language and literature, of history, especially local history, and of course, birds. His slow, emphatic speech, accenting appropriate words to make his point, always caught the interest of all within earshot. In conversation, he would sometimes pick up on a word or phrase that someone mentioned, and then recite a quote from Shakespeare, or a verse from Kipling's or Dickinson's poetry to emphasize a point. His command of the English language and ability to recall and recite from great authors and poets always captivated my interest and my respect.

But it was Jerry and Larry's knowledge of and fondness for birds that are best remembered. They were two of the top birders in the state, yet they always took the time to share their expertise. They would each take pains to explain details of the birds we were looking at and how a given bird was different from similar species. This helped beginners like me learn more quickly. They would provide historical sighting data on the bird if it was a rarity. Larry's accounts would often be punctuated by an emphatic comment such as "A fine specimen." They would always share their sightings and birding knowledge with all who would listen. And listen we did.

Even in his last weeks, after losing his lifelong companion months before, Jerry found comfort in birds. He watched the birds at his feeders, always hoping for a Dickcissel or other rarity, but still appreciating the cardinals, Blue Jays, and goldfinches that visited. When I tried to talk about his health, he only wanted to know about what birds I had seen or what birds were around.

Curlews and avocets, like the two gentlemen whose license plates bore their names, are highly regarded in the Massachusetts birding community. Now, these birds will always be a reminder of two great birders and dear friends who had a keen appreciation and contagious enthusiasm for the beauty of these, and all birds. 🐦

Steve Grinley is the proprietor of the Bird Watcher's Supply and Gift and the Nature Shop at Joppa Flats, both in the City of Newburyport. A life-long birder, he is a past President of the Brookline Bird Club. He leads birding programs for that club and for Mass Audubon's Joppa Flats Education Center, as well as offering his popular weekly walks sponsored by his stores.



FOGGY ESSEX COUNTY SCENE BY DAVID LARSON

ABOUT BOOKS

Follow That Bird! Magnificent Feathered Obsessions

Mark Lynch

Tracking Desire: A Journey after Swallow-tailed Kites.

Susan Cerulean. 2005. University of Georgia Press. Athens, GA.

On the Wing: To the Edge of the Earth with the Peregrine Falcon.

Alan Tennant. 2004. Alfred A. Knopf. New York.

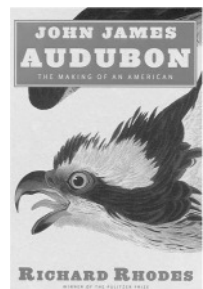
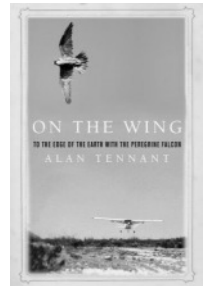
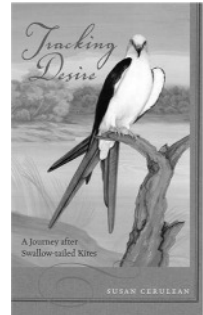
John James Audubon: The Making of an American.

Richard Rhodes. 2004. Alfred A. Knopf. New York.

As years go by, birding can often quickly slip from passionate hobby to a rather silly quest for names on a list. A birder may have some unique experience with the natural world, and may even send a post to Massbird about it, but then it's quickly off to the next new bird, the next new experience, and the next tick. Birding most often happens within the context of our larger, more ordered lives. Birding is for most of us just an avocation. For nonbirders, this same rapt attention is spent on bowling, fly-fishing, NASCAR, or expensive wines. How many of us have truly had our lives radically changed by the birds we watched? Here I am not talking about some deepening of an appreciation and understanding of nature that was already there. That's really just "growth" and should happen fairly often if you are a thoughtful and intelligent adult. Instead, I am talking about birds literally changing the way your day-to-day way life is led, chucking your old routines, jobs, and even love interests, to follow the birds. The following three books are about people who did just that.

Susan Cerulean clearly remembers the first time she saw a Swallow-tailed Kite wafting over South Carolina's Edisto River, and that sighting led to a lifetime of passionate pursuit:

When that first fleet kite shadow darkened my face and I lifted my eyes, astonished, to watch the bird wheel above the river's sunny run, I knew that something essential connecting me viscerally to wildness had come into my life. I wanted that wildness. I wanted to leap out of the boat, to scramble over the abrupt knees of the cypress and climb the insufficient wild aster vines. I wanted to follow that bird (p. 1, *Tracking Desire*).



Though she was trained as a wildlife biologist, Susan's experience with the kite precipitates a virtual peak experience "on the wing," a deep desire not only to get to know the bird better, but to integrate the kite into her life as a personal symbol of her spiritual connection to nature. In 1993 she volunteered to help Dr. Ken Meyer, a biologist for the National Park Service who was working on monitoring and banding nesting Swallow-tailed Kites in southern Florida. In a Cessna 172 Susan flies with Meyer over a communal roost of nearly two thousand kites, a sight most hardcore birders can imagine only with jealousy. Cerulean learns that most of the kite's life is a mystery, but the little that is known only deepens her fascination. Swallow-tailed Kites are amazingly synchronous in their nesting, with most nests in the study area built between March 29 and March 30. Their fragile nests are constructed on the very tops of conifers, making them prone to being blown down in storms. The reason they build nests high atop these wind-exposed trees is that though kites are true "wind masters," they do not maneuver well at low air speeds. Kites need to be where the wind can lift them aloft. At the time Susan begins her work with Dr. Meyer in the early 1990s, very little was known of the postbreeding movements of Swallow-tailed Kites, though some postbreeding dispersal over large areas had been observed. Later it will be found out that kites like to wander when not nesting, sometimes great distances.

All this time spent in close contact with the object of Cerulean's passion is set against the sad reality that the breeding habitat of the kites could not be in a worse location. Cerulean declares that Florida gains 900 new residents each day. Given that alarming statistic, it is therefore not surprising that much of the land of southern Florida is going the way of unbridled sprawl as acre after acre of kite habitat is converted into endless condos, marinas, and golf courses. The citrus industry is another serious threat to kite breeding habitat as corporate farmers seek larger areas farther and farther south in the state to establish citrus groves the better to avoid frosts. And if all that wasn't enough, the very trees the kites nest in are rapidly being replaced by invasive species.

When her time with Dr. Meyer is finished, Susan Cerulean is like a junky needing a fix. She seeks kites on her own by waiting for endless sweaty hours around Lake Okeechobee just for a glimpse of their graceful silhouette. She visits other people involved with kite preservation, like Jennifer and Tom Colson in the Pearl River area of Louisiana, the very edge of the kite's breeding range. Whenever outside, she gazes skyward in the hopes of seeing a kite soaring high above the city.

Within seconds, the kites have outclimbed the vultures in the thermal, as if they were on an independent elevator, their profiles contracting wafer-thin, unsubstantial, to a memory or a dream of a thing that once was here (p. 29, *Tracking Desire*).

Her ceaseless search for these beautiful raptors leads her into a deep meditative consideration of how she might more directly serve the wilderness she craves. For Susan, the kite is ultimately the external representation of that ineffable feeling we get when we experience the natural world on its own terms. For those of you who

traveled to Montreal to look at the Great Gray Owls, you know what I'm writing about. We want to hold on to that feeling for as long as we can, and we will sometimes then seek ways to save that small bit of the world that graced us with that epiphany.

Tracking Desire is part natural history, part memoir, and part poetic meditation on the fate of the kites and their environment. The slim book wonderfully evokes the sights, sounds, and feeling of the Big Cypress region of Florida and the extraordinary raptors that breed there while at the same time looking beyond the kites to what it is we deeply desire from our experience of the natural world.

In *On the Wing*, Alan Tennant's object of desire is also a raptor, but in this case it is the tundra subspecies of the Peregrine Falcon. While helping band Peregrines on Texas' Padre Island, Alan gets an inspired, if rather crazy, idea. Why not fit one of the Peregrines with a radio transmitter and then hop in a plane and follow the bird as it migrates back up to the Arctic? Now if this was your typical nature book, this plan would be discussed at length with the powers that be, elaborate plans would be devised over months, and then with all provisions and supplies in place, the journey would begin.

But the story told in *On the Wing* is really that of one man's unbridled love of the Peregrine and the bird's stunning ability to fly far and fast. This is a book about that man's willingness to immediately drop everything, including his love life, throw common sense into the toilet, and as the ad says: "just do it." This involves breaking laws of course. The Army is in charge of the Padre Island Peregrine project, but that doesn't stop Alan Tennant and his friend and pilot, George Vose, from illegally fitting a falcon with a transmitter, and then with the Army after them, hopping into George's beat-up Cessna and beginning to follow the bird as it made its way north to Alaska. Keep in mind, Tennant and Vose had no flight plan, little food and had no idea where they would be flying from day to day, or, for that matter, where they would land, as they radio tracked Amelia the Peregrine. When Amelia put down for the night, Alan and George would put down wherever they could find a place to land.

As days pass, they amazingly stay with Amelia as she effortlessly wings over mountains and prairies. They learn the peregrine's daily rhythms of flight, which they have to duplicate in order to keep up with her. Soon it dawns on both Alan and George that they themselves have become part of migration:

Vose had spent much of his life in the air, but hearing about the flight strategies of other airborne creatures, he said, still gave him a better feel for what our old Amelia was doing. For now, aloft in its midst, George and I had become part of that ancient river of migration. Most of our companions were too small to see, but below us by the tens of thousands flew godwit and plover, sanderling and knot, wee kinklet and wood warbler-all flung forward, a hundred or a thousand miles a day, by the same flurry of hollow bone and fast-striking heart with which each bird worked its own small miracle of return (p. 119, *On the Wing*).

When Amelia crosses into Canada, it is with only some slight trepidation that Alan and George follow. This border crossing is illegal of course, as they have no permission to enter Canadian air space. They keep tracking Amelia for a while longer but soon run out of suitable places to put the Cessna down and, well...the Mounties do catch up with them.

But this is not the end of the story by any means. Alan Tennant travels to northern Alaska, on his own, in the slim hope of finding Amelia on her nesting cliffs. And if all of that is not enough, George and Alan hop in the rickety Cessna once again, this time dressed in phony “official looking” uniforms and follow wandering Peregrines into Mexico and Belize, illegally of course. This adventure is even more amazing and frantic than the first and involves narrow escapes from authorities, bandits, and plane crashes. Through all of it though, as they learn more about the Peregrine’s life and movements first hand, the two men develop a deep and almost mystical appreciation for these powerful falcons. Part reckless wild caper, part inspired natural history, *On the Wing* is like no other bird book I know of. It is a breathtaking tale of two men so insanely inspired by the majesty and mystery of migrating raptors, that they risk life, limb, and imprisonment in several countries to try to experience for themselves what the falcon experiences.

The real dream, I saw again, had been ours. The vision that by joining our peregrines’ ancient journey we could somehow become part of what Edward Abbey called the heroism and grandeur of life, the hidden struggle of the million of avian lives that, all around us, were enduring what it would seem could not be endured. Pushing on through storm and famine, downpour and sudden predation—always with the homeward-streaming determination that, for some of them, would at last overcome the barrier of inconceivable distance (p. 281, *On the Wing*).

Perhaps no other person dedicated as much of his life to birds, as well as art, as John James Audubon. Audubon risked everything — his family, career, and life — to tromp around early nineteenth century America possessed by the vision of a masterwork of bird art for which there was no immediate public desire or need. *John James Audubon: The Making of an American*, written by Pulitzer Prize winning author Richard Rhodes, is the first major biography of Audubon in decades, and it clearly affirms Audubon’s importance as a great American artist, writer, ornithologist, and environmentalist.

From the moment Audubon emigrated to America from France, this new nation’s birds captivated his artistic imagination. A mostly self-taught artist, he begins drawing the species he finds as he wanders around the country. He marries well-to-do Lucy Bakewell and moves to Kentucky. Though he deeply loves doing his drawings and watercolors of birds, being an artist is no occupation for a family man on the frontier. Audubon keeps trying other forms of work, all of which end up unsuited for his temperament or just as miserable failures. In dire poverty and with a growing family, Audubon makes the fateful decision that he will make a living from art:

After our dismal removal from Henderson to Louisville, one morning, while all of us were sadly desponding, I took you both, Victor and John, from Shippingport to Louisville. I had purchased a loaf of bread and some apples; before we had reached Louisville you were all hungry, and by the riverside we sat down and ate our scanty meal. On that day the world was with me as a blank, and my heart was sorely heavy, for scarcely had I enough to keep my dear ones alive; and yet through these dark days I was being led to the development of the talents I loved. (From a memoir by Audubon to his son, as recounted on p. 143 of *John James Audubon: The Making of an American*.)

Of course, few people in post-Colonial America wanted pictures of birds, so Audubon supports himself by painting portraits, a talent for which he had little previous experience. He travels up and down the Mississippi, leaving his family at home, while he makes some money painting the well-to-do. At the same time, Audubon is still painting birds, birds, and more birds. Gradually the vision of a *Birds of America* takes hold of him.


He had more in mind than simply scientific illustration: he meant to make art. Art, an older discipline than science, would substitute its reverberant verisimilitude for the life the bird had lost, revivifying it just as he had fantasized in childhood (p. 211, *John James Audubon: The Making of an American*).

And thus begins one of the great adventures in natural history and art making. Possessed by his unique artistic idea and a deep love of birds, Audubon travels throughout the wilds of America, painting the birds he finds and becoming an expert on their lives. By the time Audubon arrives in England years later to hawk his magnum opus, *Birds of America*, and to find the right publisher, he himself has become an icon of the New World for the Europeans. Audubon is James Fenimore Cooper's Natty Bumppo come to life. A buckskin-wearing frontiersman, "a real and palpable vision of the New World," ready to imitate a Wild Turkey, Barred Owl or Native American war cry at any gathering of the London elite.

Richard Rhodes' book is a triumph of the art of biography. Rhodes has written a history that is both scholarly and deeply compelling. He does not minimize the troubling aspects of Audubon's life, such as his keeping slaves, but discusses these aspects with an historian's calm and caring perspective. This is very much a biography about Audubon the man, not Audubon the icon. His sometimes-rocky relationship with Lucy often seems teetering on dissolving, especially while Audubon is away being wined and dined in England. Their passionate letters to each other, full of longings, doubts and questions, cross constantly in the snail's pace of correspondence in the early nineteenth century. Who would have imagined that Audubon's life was also the story of a great romance overcoming tremendous obstacles?

Audubon is shown by Rhodes to be not just a great artist and ornithologist, but also an accomplished writer, something that is easy to overlook when gazing at the

magnificent elephant folio prints. Audubon also needs to be understood as an important environmental historian of America. He bore witness to the clearing of the vast and seemingly inexhaustible forests, the taming of a wilderness that once housed the endless flights of Passenger Pigeons and other uniquely American wildlife. Audubon knew it would all change. For Audubon, his work was meant to be a testament of a world that he knew was rapidly vanishing to be forever replaced by cities, railroads, and an ever-burgeoning population. His willingness to leave a safe life behind to follow and paint the birds of early America has left us with a lively and beautiful portrait of an America that will never be again. But as Richard Rhodes writes:

As for the rest of us, wherever there are birds there is Audubon: *rara avis* (p. 435). 

From MassWildlife

LOOK OUT FOR LOONS

The haunting wail of the common loon (*Gavia immer*) evokes a sense of wild and remote areas which may be why some people are surprised to learn Massachusetts is home to a small, but growing number of nesting loons. MassWildlife Biologists Bridgett McAlice and Carolyn Mostello recently summarized common loon nesting activity for 2004 and will be working with other cooperators this spring to document loon nesting sites across the state. In 2004, 28 territorial pairs on 12 waterbodies were documented with 19 attempting to nest. A total of thirteen chicks were produced and presumed fledged. In 2003, 24 pairs of territorial loons were observed with 19 pairs nesting on 6 waterbodies.

“The Quabbin and Wachusett Reservoirs are home to the majority of Massachusetts’ nesting loons,” said McAlice. “Other nests have been documented in relatively quiet water supplies and private ponds in Worcester County, but it’s entirely possible there are nests in other parts of the state which haven’t been reported to us.” McAlice noted that cooperators and volunteers played a vital role in gathering field data for MassWildlife. She acknowledged the efforts of the Department of Conservation Recreation, Massachusetts Aquatic Conservation Society, Biodiversity Institute, Forbush Bird Club, and other volunteers.

As soon as pond ice melts, loons sporting their striking black and white breeding plumage will be returning to their territorial waters. Egg laying begins at the end of May. McAlice encourages anyone to report sightings of loons, specifically pairs of birds, seen from mid-April through May. Be sure to include the name of the town, location and name of waterbody to her at the Central District Wildlife Office at 508-835-3607.

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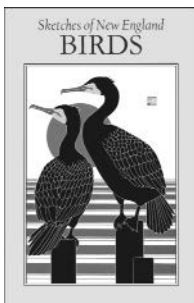
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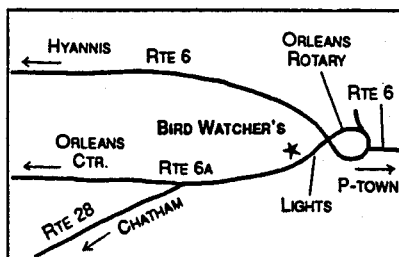
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BIRD SIGHTINGS

November/December, 2004

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

November was on the cool side with the average temperature in Boston 44.4°, just 0.5° below normal. It was an extremely cold day on November 10 that made for an early start to winter. A new record low temperature was set with a reading of 25°, breaking the previous record of 26° set in 1992. Only five of the first seventeen days of the month were above normal. The last half of the month was a bit warmer than normal, and on Thanksgiving Day the mercury rose to a warm 65°, 9° above the norm for that date. Rainfall totaled 2.91 inches in Boston, 1.07 inches below average for November. Of the four weekends, two Saturdays and two Sundays had rain, with the most rain for the month on Sunday, November 28th. Snowfall measured 3.9 inches in Boston, 2.5 inches over normal. A heavy early snow fell throughout eastern Massachusetts on November 12-13, with amounts ranging from three to eight inches. It was the second heaviest snowfall this early in the season since 1892.

December was a bit warmer than usual, with near normal rain but above average snow. The temperature averaged out at 35° in Boston, just 0.2° above normal. The first thirteen days averaged 3.5° above average, but many cold days followed in the second half of the month. Precipitation in Boston totaled 3.66 inches, just under normal, with measurable rain falling on eleven days. Snowfall measured 7.2 inches in Boston, with somewhat higher amounts in eastern Massachusetts and the most on Cape Cod. The weather for most of the Christmas Bird Counts was favorable except for those counts on December 26, a day with strong northeast winds, heavy fog, and rain changing to heavy wet snow. *R. Stymeist*

WATERFOWL THROUGH ALCIDS

A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was found on the Northampton CBC in the Hadley/Amherst area. This species is getting to be more and more routine in the state. For example, there are over 110 records in Massachusetts in the last fifteen years compared to fewer than fifty in the preceding 150 years! A species that is showing the opposite trend, **Tundra Swan**, was found in Egremont in early November, where a single bird stayed until the end of December. As many as six Eurasian Wigeon, all males, were reported from around eastern Massachusetts. Although great care needs to be taken in identifying the fairer sex of this species, it's amazing how few females are reported in Massachusetts in relation to males.

Only a total of 138 Canvasback were reported throughout all of Massachusetts during the two month reporting period! A typical Massachusetts count in the 1970s may have numbered in the thousands. As many will recognize from personal experience, this species and many of the prairie breeding ducks have undergone severe population declines over the last few decades. The Chesapeake Bay wintering population of Canvasbacks numbered nearly 250,000 in the 1950s, roughly half of the North American breeding population. Currently fewer than 50,000 Canvasbacks are found in Chesapeake Bay during the winter.

Nantucket Sound and surrounding waters produced their usual incredible concentrations of waterfowl. Over 50,000 scoters were estimated there at the end of November. The totals from all other sites in Massachusetts totaled less than 20,000. The largest count of Long-tailed Ducks came from Tuckernuck Island, where 200,000 were estimated crossing between Nantucket

Sound and the Atlantic Ocean. This compares to a total of less than 2500 reported from all other locations in eastern Massachusetts during the period.

Barrow's Goldeneyes were well reported during the period, especially at traditionally good areas such as Buzzards Bay and Nantucket. The third week of November was *the* time to see **Pacific Loons** in the state during the reporting period. Four reports of single individuals were received from November 21-27 at four different localities in southeastern Massachusetts.

The period saw a rather diverse reporting of tubenoses including Northern Fulmar, three species of shearwaters, and Leach's Storm-Petrel. However, all of these were reported as single individuals except for Northern Fulmar.

Andrew's Point produced a count of 588 Red-throated Loons on December 7, one of the highest December counts for Massachusetts. There was a rash of sightings of **American White Pelicans** in early December, starting with a flock of five circling the Provincetown Monument on December 5. There were a few interesting herons lingering into December. An American Bittern was found at Plum Island on December 12. Little Blue Herons, most often immatures, occasionally remain in Massachusetts into early winter. This year, an immature was observed from December 1-19, just long enough to be counted on the Cape Cod CBC. More interesting was the Green Heron that lingered through the same date in Amherst. There are only eight previous December records and two January records in Massachusetts.

Ospreys were widely reported through the month of November from throughout the state. Two were reported in December, including a very late migrant at the Barre Falls Hawkwatch on December 5 and a lingerer at West Tisbury from December 16-18. The most interesting raptor sightings of the period were probably the two dark morph Red-tailed Hawks reported from the Great Marsh in Barnstable. One of these was seen well several times and was identified as a dark adult *calurus* **Red-tailed Hawk** with beautiful, almost entirely blackish brown plumage and a full adult red tail. There are few records and no well-documented records of any subspecies of western Red-tailed Hawks in Massachusetts.

This year's lingering shorebirds included a Semipalmated Plover at Eastham on December 19, two American Oystercatchers on Christmas Eve in Fairhaven, a Spotted Sandpiper on November 12 in Boston, and a Marbled Godwit and Semipalmated Sandpiper at South Beach on December 19. Two exceptionally late shorebird records this year from western Massachusetts were a Greater Yellowlegs at West Springfield on December 18 and a Wilson's Snipe on the Cobble Mountain CBC in Westfield the day after Christmas.

Several storms in November produced decent numbers of jaegers at coastal locales. Some of the higher counts included twenty-one Pomarine Jaegers on November 12 and another thirty-seven on November 28 at Andrew's Point in Rockport, and eighteen at First Encounter Beach in Eastham on November 13. Little and Black-headed Gulls were well reported during the second half of November, with as many as ten Little Gulls and fourteen Black-headed Gulls. An amazing 106 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported on Nantucket at the end of November. This is probably the highest count ever recorded in Massachusetts. On November 28, 288 Common Murres were counted at Andrew's Point. This species continues its incredible increase in Massachusetts over the last few years with this, the second highest count ever in Massachusetts.

J. Trimble



Greater White-fronted Goose				11/6, 22	Pittsfield (Pont.)	30, 2	Kellogg, Packard
12/19	Hadley/Amherst	1	Northampton CBC	11/11, 12/11	P.I.	230, 12	Heil, Wetmore
Snow Goose				11/13	Arlington Res.	65	K. Hartel
thr	Newbypt/P.I.	3-7	T. Wetmore	11/14-30	Chilmark	25	A. Keith
11/8, 14	Granville	60, 290	J. Weeks	11/20	S. Monomoy	225	B. Nikula#
11/16	P'town	1	A. Curtis	11/21	Egremont	37	E. Neumuth
12/18-19	Boston	1 imm	A. Joslin#	11/24	Plymouth	30	J. Trimble
12/19	Amherst	2	Northampton CBC	12/23	Scituate	5 m	D. Furbish
12/26	Ipswich	1 ad	Newbypt CBC	Canvasback			
12/26	Marshfield CBC	7	v.o.	11/1, 23	Cambr. (F.P.)	1, 46	Rines, Spalding
12/29	Hadley	1	P. Yeskie	12/2	Marlboro	6 m	L. Nachtrab
Small Canada Goose				12/6	Nantucket	62	E. Ray
11/8-30	Waltham	1	J. Forbes + v.o.	12/8	Falmouth	1	M. Keleher
Brant				12/11	Hudson	7	T. Spahr
11/6	Plymouth H.	75	BBC (GdE)	12/18	Randolph	13	Quincy CBC
11/7	Cheshire	1	T. Gagnon	Redhead			
11/8	Nahant	80+	L. Ferraroso	12/9-31	Chilmark	1 m	A. Keith#
11/21	Boston H.	673	TASL (M. Hall)	12/19	Nantucket	2	E. Ray
12/6	Nantucket	304	E. Ray	Ring-necked Duck			
Tundra Swan				11/2	W. Newbury	657	R. Heil
11/9-12/28	Egremont	1	K. Reed + v.o.	11/2	Brockton	91	M. Faherty
Wood Duck				11/2	Lakeville	180	K. Anderson
11/6	Brookfields	2	M. Lynch#	11/6	Melrose	51	D. + I. Jewell
11/6	Chilmark	2	A. Keith	11/7	N. Quabbin	125	H. Allen
12/2	Waltham	2	J. Forbes	11/11	Amesbury	450	R. Heil
12/19	Northampton	2	Northampton CBC	11/20	S. Monomoy	45	B. Nikula#
12/27	Hadley	2	P. Yeskie	11/28	Duxbury	300	R. Bowes
Gadwall				12/19	Marion	7 m	M. Maurer
11/1, 23	Marstons Mills	27, 35	M. Keleher	12/24	Medford	6	J. Sutherland
11/11	P.I.	47	R. Heil	Greater Scaup			
11/18, 12/12	Seekonk	137, 118	R. Farrell	11/2	Lakeville	58	K. Anderson
11/20	S. Monomoy	50	B. Nikula#	11/13, 25	Clinton	25, 33	M. Lynch#
11/24	Plymouth	26	J. Trimble	11/14	Acoaxet	98	M. Lynch#
11/29	Woburn	16	M. Rines	11/16	Harwich	40	D. Silverstein#
12/9	Ipswich	100+	J. Berry	11/20	Westport	41	E. Nielsen
12/23	Newbypt/P.I.	28	S. Perkins#	11/21	Boston H.	917	TASL (M. Hall)
12/30	Gloucester (E.P.)	16	R. Heil	11/27	Falmouth	756	M. Lynch#
Eurasian Wigeon				11/27	Holyoke	1	C. Gentes
11/2	Ipswich	2 males	R. Heil	12/7	Rockport (A.P.)	71	R. Heil
11/27	Tuckernuck	1	R. Veit	12/8	Turners Falls	1	H. Allen
11/27	Somerset	1 m	R. Farrell#	12/25	Winthrop	42	P. + F. Vale
12/9-12	Ipswich	1 m	J. Berry	Lesser Scaup			
12/31	Osterville	1 m	M. Keleher#	11/4	Holyoke	1	C. Gentes
American Wigeon				11/11	Marlboro	2	L. Nachtrab
11/thr	Marstons Mills	122 max	M. Keleher	11/13	Sterling	3	M. Lynch#
11/2, 12/9	Ipswich	275, 50	Heil, Berry	11/14	Acoaxet	17	M. Lynch#
11/6, 22	Pittsfield (Pont.)	6, 4	S. Kellogg	11/20	Westport	108	E. Nielsen
11/9	Lanesboro	4	H. Allen	11/20	Bourne	10	BBC (Stymeist)
11/13	Arlington Res.	20	K. Hartel	11/20	S. Monomoy	125	B. Nikula#
11/20	S. Monomoy	105	B. Nikula#	11/24	Scituate	12	D. Furbish
11/27	Somerset	87	R. Farrell#	11/27	Falmouth	12+	M. Lynch#
12/18	Springfield	1	A. + L. Richardson	12/14	Nahant	61	L. Privacek
12/26	Mid Cape CBC	79	v.o.	King Eider			
Blue-winged Teal				11/12	Rockport (A.P.)	1 m	R. Heil
11/1, 23	Marstons Mills	4	M. Keleher	11/21	Boston H.	1	TASL (M. Hall)
Northern Shoveler				12/29	Rockport (H.P.)	1 m 1W	G. Williams#
11/8	Arlington Res.	4	J. Sharp	Common Eider			
11/20	S. Monomoy	1	B. Nikula#	11/12	Rockport (A.P.)	1690	R. Heil
11/26, 12/24	P.I.	3, 1	Lynch, Wetmore	11/20	Westport	9200	E. Nielsen
12/4	Newbypt	11	S. Mirick#	11/20	Bourne	510	BBC (Stymeist)
12/5	Pittsfield (Onota)	1	E. Neumuth	11/21	Fairhaven	620	BBC (Stymeist)
12/9	Nantucket	1	T. Loring	11/21	Boston H.	8014	TASL (M. Hall)
12/26	Southwick	1	C. Blagdon	11/27	Plymouth	500+	ABC (Furbish)
Northern Pintail				11/29	Eastham (F.E.)	6000+	B. Nikula
thr	P.I.	152 max	11/16 v.o.	Harlequin Duck			
11/1	Deerfield	4	H. Allen	thr	Rockport	50-60	v.o.
11/4, 24	GMNWR	38, 88	USFWS	11/2-30	S. Boston	1 m	R. Donovan#
11/7	Cheshire	6	M. Lynch#	11/7	Scituate	19	R. Donovan#
11/20	Westport	18	E. Nielsen	11/14	Acoaxet	2	M. Lynch#
11/20	S. Monomoy	8	B. Nikula#	11/28, 12/19	Nantucket	11, 19	E. Ray
12/12	Bolton Flats	6	T. Murray	12/30	Newbypt H.	1 f	R. Heil
12/18	Springfield	1	A. + L. Richardson	Surf Scoter			
12/19	Easthampton	1	B. Bieda	11/7	Hinsdale	1	T. Gagnon
12/21	Marlboro	2 m	T. Spahr	11/12, 12/7	Rockport (A.P.)	131, 82	R. Heil
12/26	Marshfield	2 m	Marshfield CBC	11/13	Eastham (F.E.)	2800	B. Nikula#
Green-winged Teal				11/13	Dennis	950	P. Flood
11/2	Ipswich	30	R. Heil	11/20	Westport	3200	E. Nielsen
11/4, 12/3	GMNWR	291, 16	USFWS	11/21	Boston H.	337	TASL (M. Hall)

Surf Scoter (continued)									
11/21	Fairhaven	220	BBC (Stymeist)	11/14	Northampton	164		C. Gentes	
12/31	Nant. Sound	1600	G. d'Entremont#	11/17, 12/12	Pittsfield	52, 150	Neumuth, Kellogg		
White-winged Scoter				11/19	Lincoln	148		M. Rines	
11/12, 12/7	Rockport (A.P.)	71, 205	R. Heil	12/7	Southwick	800		S. Kellogg	
11/13	Dennis	215	P. Flood	12/9	Gardner	132		T. Pirro	
11/13	Wachusett Res.	1 m	M. Lynch#	12/14	Westboro	650		E. Morrier	
11/20	Westport	700	E. Nielsen	12/16, 24	Medford	120, 25		M. Rines	
11/21	Boston H.	2465	TASL (M. Hall)	Red-breasted Merganser					
11/27	Manomet	55+	ABC (Furbish)	11/9	Hadley	1		H. Allen	
11/30	Granville	3	J. Weeks	11/12	Wareham	170		G. Gove#	
12/31	Nant. Sound	300	G. d'Entremont#	11/13	Dennis	457		P. Flood	
Black Scoter				11/16	Falmouth	144		G. Gove#	
11/2	Ware	20	W. Laflay	11/20	Westport	280		E. Nielsen	
11/11	P.I.	28	R. Heil	11/21	P'town	800		B. Nikula#	
11/12, 12/7	Rockport (A.P.)	64, 423	R. Heil	11/21	Boston H.	1693		TASL (M. Hall)	
11/13	Dennis	60	P. Flood	11/27	Waltham	3		P. + F. Vale	
11/20	Westport	5700	E. Nielsen	11/27	Mashpee	850+		M. Lynch#	
12/31	Nant. Sound	50	G. d'Entremont#	12/7	Rockport (A.P.)	185		R. Heil	
Scoter Species				Ruddy Duck					
11/13	Dennis	720	P. Flood	thr	Melrose	67 max		D. + I. Jewell	
11/18	Nant. Sound	50,000+	G. Sadoti#	11/thr	Gay Head	120-150		A. Fischer#	
Long-tailed Duck				11/8	W. Newbury	180		P. Brown	
11/6	Pittsfield (Pont.)	1	S. Kellogg	11/11, 12/6	Marlboro	100, 140		Nachtrab, Parker	
11/7	Pittsfield (Onota)	1	T. Gagnon	11/12	Boston	45+		B. Mayer	
11/7	Holyoke	1	C. Suprenant	11/13, 12/9	Ludlow	18, 20		Kellogg, Allen	
11/13	Cheshire	2	C. Dutille	11/14	Jamaica Plain	35		BBC (R. Mayer)	
11/13	Wachusett Res.	2	M. Lynch#	11/20	S. Monomoy	15		B. Nikula#	
11/13	Dennis	486	P. Flood	12/11	Hudson	150+		T. Spahr	
11/20	S. Monomoy	400	B. Nikula#	12/18	Cambr. (F.P.)	28		A. Fan	
11/21	Boston H.	260	TASL (M. Hall)	Ruffed Grouse					
11/27	Mashpee	490+	M. Lynch#	11/21	E. Quabbin	4		T. Gagnon	
11/28, 12/7	Rockport (A.P.)	530, 610	R. Heil	Wild Turkey					
11/28	Tuckernuck	200,000	R. Veit	11/10, 12/25	Becket	42		E. Neumuth	
12/5	Quabbin Pk	3	M. Lynch	11/13	Sterling	21		M. Lynch#	
Bufflehead				11/23	Lincoln	14		J. Forbes	
11/7	Gloucester (E.P.)	72	J. Nelson	11/24	W. Newbury	37		D. Larson	
11/9	Pittsfield	5	H. Allen	12/7	Winchester	16		P. Devaney	
11/10	Lakeville	22	K. Anderson	12/18	Lancaster	16		S. + L. Sutton	
11/20	Bourne	215	BBC (Stymeist)	12/18	Washington	19		E. Neumuth	
11/20	Westport	170	E. Nielsen	12/thr	Sherborn	15		E. Taylor	
11/21	Boston H.	1733	TASL (M. Hall)	Red-throated Loon					
11/25	Sterling	12	M. Lynch#	11/7	P.I.	269		D. Larson	
11/26	Newbypt	130+	M. Lynch#	11/12, 12/7	Rockport (A.P.)	117, 588		R. Heil	
12/5	Scituate	151	D. Furbish	11/13	Dennis	70		P. Flood	
12/12	Cotuit	200	D. Furbish	11/13	Eastham (F.E.)	55		B. Nikula#	
12/17	Richmond	2	D. St. James	11/20	Westport	33		E. Nielsen	
Common Goldeneye				11/21	Boston H.	122		TASL (M. Hall)	
11/20	Westport	30	E. Nielsen	11/21	P'town	50		B. Nikula#	
11/20	Bourne	55	BBC (Stymeist)	11/27	Barnstable (S.N.)	69		M. Lynch#	
11/21	Fairhaven	110	BBC (Stymeist)	Pacific Loon *					
11/21	Boston H.	401	TASL (M. Hall)	11/21	P'town	1 ad ph		B. Nikula#	
12/7	Rockport (A.P.)	152	R. Heil	11/24	Plymouth	1		J. Trimble	
12/16	Stockbridge	25	Hoffmann Club	11/27	Mashpee	1 ad		M. Lynch#	
12/17	Richmond	25	D. St. James	11/27	Barnstable (S.N.)	1		M. Lynch#	
12/19	P.I.	50	T. Wetmore	Common Loon					
12/19	Nantucket	220	E. Ray	11/6	Plymouth	27		BBC (GdE)	
12/30	S. Hadley	36	H. Allen	11/11	P.I.	34		R. Heil	
Barrow's Goldeneye				11/12, 28	Rockport (A.P.)	32, 41		R. Heil	
11/20	Bourne	1 m	BBC (Stymeist)	11/13	Dennis	48		P. Flood	
12/4, 19	Nantucket	1, 4	E. Ray	11/17	Pittsfield	3		E. Neumuth	
12/5-8	Turners Falls	1	H. Allen	11/20	Westport	42		E. Nielsen	
12/8-31	Cotuit	1-2	M. Keleher	11/20	Falmouth	79		R. Farrell	
12/18	Buzz. Bay	CBC	v.o.	11/21	Boston H.	46		TASL (M. Hall)	
12/29	Newbypt	1 m	MAS (B. Gette)	11/21	E. Quabbin	27		T. Gagnon	
Hooded Merganser				11/21	P'town	45		B. Nikula#	
11/8	Arlington Res.	71	K. Hartel	12/31	Nant. Sound	29		G. d'Entremont#	
11/17, 12/17	Pittsfield	179, 100	Neumuth, Kellogg	Pied-billed Grebe					
11/20	Leicester	68	M. Lynch#	11/2	Brockton	2		M. Faherty	
11/20-21	Worcester	179	F. McMenemy#	11/7	Cheshire	4		M. Lynch#	
11/20-21	Northbridge	54	B. Walker#	11/8	Cambr. (F.P.)	2		J. Crystal#	
11/21	E. Quabbin	48	T. Gagnon	11/9	Richmond	3		H. Allen	
11/27	Falmouth	91	M. Lynch#	11/10	GMNWR	2		USFWS	
12/9	Ipswich	70	J. Berry	11/11	Amesbury	4		R. Heil	
12/12	Westboro	58	M. Lynch	11/20	S. Monomoy	3		B. Nikula#	
12/19	Marion	54	M. Maurer	11/23	Falmouth	3		M. Keleher	
Common Merganser				11/29	Woburn	2		M. Rines	
11/6	Brookfields	34	M. Lynch#	Horned Grebe					
				11/14	Westport	31		M. Lynch#	

Horned Grebe (continued)				Cattle Egret			
11/17	New Salem	11	W. Lafley	11/6	Oak Bluffs	1	D. Swanson
11/20	Bourne	13	BBC (Stymeist)	Green Heron			
11/21	Boston H.	436	TASL (M. Hall)	11/1-12/19	Amherst	1	v.o.
11/21	E. Quabbin	19	T. Gagnon	Black Vulture			
11/21	Fairhaven	28	BBC (Stymeist)	thr	Granville	1-3	J. Weeks
11/24	Plymouth	25	J. Trimble	Turkey Vulture			
11/27	P.I.	17	D. Chickering	11/thr	Chatham (M.I.)	10	D. Manchester#
12/4	Falmouth	54	G. d'Entremont#	11/thr	Barre Falls	6	Hawkcount (Kamp)
Red-necked Grebe				11/1	Granville	4	Hawkwatch
11/5, 20	New Salem	2, 1	W. Lafley	11/4	Barre Falls	3	Hawkcount (Kamp)
11/18, 12/11	Dennis	15, 14	M. Tuttle#	11/7	P.I.	3 ad	P. Roberts#
11/21	Boston H.	45	TASL (M. Hall)	11/14	Westport	24	M. Lynch#
11/24	Plymouth	9	J. Trimble	12/4	Wellfleet	2	B. Nikula#
11/27	P.I.	30	D. Chickering#	12/4	P'town	1	B. Nikula
11/28	Rockport (A.P.)	12	R. Heil	12/8	Essex	4	P. Brown
Eared Grebe				12/13	P.I.	3	P. Brown
11/14-12/30	Gloucester (E.P.)	1	v.o.	12/18	Buzzards Bay CBC	34	v.o.
Northern Fulmar				Osprey			
11/14	Dennis	1 juv	M. Dettrey#	11/5	Brewster	1	R. Ayotte
11/19	14 m S of Nomans I	1	A. Keith#	11/11	Lakeville	1	J. Sweeney
11/28	Rockport (A.P.)	5 lt	R. Heil	11/14	Barre Falls	3	Hawkcount (Kamp)
12/27	Eastham (F.E.)	1+	B. Nikula#	11/20	Norton	1	K. Sejkora
Greater Shearwater				11/20	Barnstable	1	CCBC (Furbish)
11/14	Eastham (F.E.)	1+	B. Nikula#	11/21	W. Tisbury	1	W. Griswald
Sooty Shearwater				11/26-27	Wrentham	1	R. Emerson
11/13	Dennis	1	P. Flood	11/30	Norton	2	K. Ryan
Manx Shearwater				12/5	Barre Falls	1	Hawkcount (Grant)
11/21	P'town	1	P. Flood#	12/16-18	W. Tisbury	1	T. Scott#
Shearwater species				Bald Eagle			
11/26, 29	Eastham (F.E.)	1, 1	B. Nikula	11/thr	Granville	26	Hawkcount (Weeks)
Leach's Storm-Petrel				11/8	Barre Falls	2	Hawkcount (Kamp)
12/27	Eastham (F.E.)	1+	B. Nikula#	12/4-24	Granville	10	Hawkcount (Weeks)
Northern Gannet				12/5	Quabbin Pk	5	M. Lynch
11/11	Chatham (S.B.)	4500+	B. Nikula	12/12	Granville	7	J. Weeks
11/12, 28	Rockport (A.P.)	980, 3050	R. Heil	12/14	Southboro	2 ad	E. Morrier
11/13, 14	Eastham (F.E.)	2800, 4500	B. Nikula#	12/29	Newbypt H.	3	P. Cozza#
11/13	Dennis	2800	P. Flood	Northern Harrier			
11/26, 12/24	Nantucket	1500, 1500	E. Ray	11/3-27	Barre Falls	9	Hawkcount (Kamp)
11/29, 12/27	Eastham (F.E.)	2700, 530	B. Nikula	11/7, 20	Barnstable	3, 2	D. Furbish
American White Pelican *				11/7, 12/4	P.I.	6, 7	Roberts, Wetmore
12/5	P'town	5 ph	S. Landry#	11/10	Sandwich	2	MAS (Silverstein)
12/9	Woburn	1 (details)	M. Rines#	11/16	Dorchester	2	R. Donovan
12/9	Belmont	1	B. Ramsey	11/20	S. Monomoy	5+	B. Nikula#
12/12	Eastham	1	C. Goodrich	11/24	Plymouth	2	J. Trimble
Double-crested Cormorant				11/thr	Granville	14	Hawkcount (Weeks)
11/4	Chatham (M.I.)	1500	D. Manchester	12/16	DWWS	3	D. Furbish
11/7	P.I.	200	T. Wetmore	Sharp-shinned Hawk			
11/21	Boston H.	69	TASL (M. Hall)	11/thr	Chatham (M.I.)	100	D. Manchester#
11/30	Northampton	1	H. Allen	11/thr	Granville	19	Hawkcount (Weeks)
12/4	Wellfleet H.	5	B. Nikula#	11/1-16	Barre Falls	19	Hawkcount (Kamp)
12/12	P'town H.	6	B. Nikula#	11/9	Gay Head	14	S. Anderson
Great Cormorant				11/11	P.I.	4	R. Heil
11/17	Ludlow	2	H. Allen	11/14	Westport	2	M. Lynch#
11/20	Westport	31	E. Nielsen	Cooper's Hawk			
11/21	Boston H.	18	TASL (M. Hall)	11/thr	Barre Falls	9	Hawkcount (Kamp)
11/24	N. Scituate	42	D. Furbish	11/1-15	Granville	5	Hawkcount (Weeks)
12/12	P'town	420	J. Young	11/thr	Chatham (M.I.)	18	D. Manchester#
American Bittern				12/28	Concord	2	S. Clark
11/thr	Edgartown	1	A. Keith#	Northern Goshawk			
12/12	P.I.	1	S. Leonard	11/3, 7	Northboro	1 imm	B. Volkle
Great Blue Heron				11/4	Gay Head	1	V. Laux#
11/7	P.I.	6	T. Wetmore	11/4	Pittsfield	1	G. Shampang
11/14	Westport	5	M. Lynch#	11/4	Barre Falls	1	Hawkcount (Kamp)
11/20	Bourne	5	BBC (Stymeist)	11/6	E. Orleans	1	J. Trimble#
11/21	Boston H.	15	TASL (M. Hall)	11/7	Shutesbury	1	K. Weir
12/11	Hudson	4	T. Spahr	11/21	Ipswich	1	BBC (I. Girinuas)
12/12	Cotuit	5	D. Furbish	11/21	E. Quabbin	1	T. Gagnon
Great Egret				11/thr	Chatham (M.I.)	7	D. Manchester#
11/9	Ipswich	1	J. Berry	12/2, 3	E. Middleboro	1	K. Anderson
11/11	P.I.	1	R. Heil	12/12	Granville	1	J. Weeks
11/14	Westport	2	M. Lynch#	12/18	Lenox	1	C. Berkshire CBC
11/26	Gloucester	1	F. Bouchard#	12/18	Orange	1	Athol CBC
12/14	Nantucket	1	N. Van Voorst	12/18	Granby	1	Springfield CBC
Little Blue Heron				12/24	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore
11/3	Wellfleet	1 imm	fide M. Lowe	12/31	Wayland	1 imm	H. Norwood#
12/1-19	Eastham	1 imm	v.o.	Red-shouldered Hawk			
				11/3-10	Barre Falls	16	Hawkcount (Kamp)

Red-shouldered Hawk (continued)				12/18	Cambr. (F.P.)	4	A. Fan
11/6	Eastham	1 imm	J. Trimble#	Black-bellied Plover			
11/8-15	Granville	10	Hawkcount (Weeks)	11/1, 14	Eastham (F.E.)	40, 4	Gove, Franklin
11/14	Stoughton	1	G. d'Entremont	11/2	Essex Bay	210	R. Heil
11/14	Acoaxet	1	M. Lynch#	11/2	Cumb. Farms	3	K. Anderson
12/2	Salisbury	1 ad	O. Spalding	11/6, 25	P.I.	54, 15	T. Wetmore
12/2-3	Groveland	1	L. Cooper	11/6, 24	Plymouth	14, 5	GdE, Trimble
12/12	Cotuit	1 ad	D. Furbish	11/11, 27	Chatham (S.B.)	1700, 900	B. Nikula
12/24	DWWS	1 ad	D. Furbish	11/20	Westport	9	E. Nielsen
Red-tailed Hawk				11/27	Duxbury B.	6	ABC (Furbish)
11/thr	Barre Falls	197	Hawkcount (Kamp)	American Golden-Plover			
11/thr	Granville	402	Hawkcount (Weeks)	11/7	P.I.	1	P. Cozza#
Red-tailed Hawk				11/8	Newybpt	1	P. Brown
11/26	Barnstable	1 western	J. Trimble#	11/16	Orleans	1	D. Silverstein#
11/27	Barnstable	1 dark	M. Lynch#	Semipalmated Plover			
Rough-legged Hawk				11/6, 24	Plymouth H.	6, 3	GdE, Trimble
11/3, 9	Granville	1, 1	Hawkcount (Weeks)	11/7	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore
11/15	Boston (Logan)	2 dk	N. Smith	11/11, 27	Chatham (S.B.)	24, 4	B. Nikula
11/18	Scituate	1 lt	D. Furbish	12/2	Eastham (CGB)	1	S. Riley
11/21	Boston (Logan)	2 dk	N. Smith	12/19	Eastham (F.E.)	1	Cape Cod CBC
11/24, 12/29	P.I.	1 dk	Gette, Wetmore	Killdeer			
11/26	Barnstable	2 dk	J. Trimble#	11/1	Waltham	16	J. Forbes
12/14, 15	Granville	1, 1	Hawkcount (Weeks)	11/7	Wrentham	7	R. Emerson
12/21	DWWS	1	D. Furbish	11/13	Arlington Res.	4	K. Hartel
12/26	Cumb. Farms	1 dk	K. Anderson	11/13	Northampton	1	C. Gentes
Golden Eagle				12/12	Westboro WMA	1	M. Lynch
11/14	Granville	2	Hawkcount (Weeks)	American Oystercatcher			
12/5	Pelham	1 ad	M. Lynch	11/11, 29	Chatham	21, 2	Nikula, Manchester
American Kestrel				11/27	N. Monomoy	2	B. Nikula
11/4	Gay Head	1	V. Laux#	11/27, 12/24	Fairhaven	2, 2	C. Longworth
11/8-24	Melrose	1 m	D. + I. Jewell	12/7	Edgartown	1	M. Pelikan
11/21	Boston H.	4	TASL (M. Hall)	Greater Yellowlegs			
12/12	Medford	1	A. Ankers#	11/3	Salisbury	1	MAS (D. Weaver)
12/15	Salisbury	1 f	MAS (B. Gette)	11/6, 26	P.I.	15, 1	T. Wetmore
12/16	Amherst	1	H. McQueen	11/7	Barnstable	3	D. Furbish
12/19	Waltham	1	J. Forbes#	11/9	Chatham (M.I.)	31	D. Manchester
12/19	P.I.	1 m	T. Wetmore	11/14	Eastham (F.E.)	8	C. Franklin#
Merlin				11/16	W. Harwich	2	D. Silverstein#
11/thr	Chatham (M.I.)	13	D. Manchester#	11/20	Westport	4	E. Nielsen
11/3	Gay Head	3	L. Reese	11/21	Fairhaven	3	BBC (Stymeist)
11/4	Salisbury	2	S. Grinley	12/18	W. Springfield	1	Springfield CBC
11/6	Orleans	1	J. Trimble#	Lesser Yellowlegs			
11/10	Waltham	1	J. Forbes	11/17	P.I.	1	MAS (B. Gette)
11/14	Falmouth	1	J. Liller#	Willet			
11/19	Mt. A.	1	J. Forbes#	11/27	Chatham (S.B.)	1	B. Nikula
12/8	Bourne	1	M. Keleher	Spotted Sandpiper			
12/9	Richmond	1	T. Collins	11/12	Boston	1	B. Mayer
12/13	S. Quabbin	1	H. Allen	Hudsonian Godwit			
12/22	Rockport	1	P. Brown#	11/4, 29	Chatham (M.I.)	5, 3	D. Manchester
12/30	S. Dartmouth	1	A. + D. Morgan	11/6	P.I.	2	T. Wetmore
12/31	Boston	1	K. + R. Barnes	Marbled Godwit			
12/31	Nantucket	2	G. d'Entremont#	11/11, 12/19	Chatham (S.B.)	5, 1	Nikula, Trimble
Peregrine Falcon				Ruddy Turnstone			
11/thr	Chatham (M.I.)	31	D. Manchester#	11/13	Dennis	1	P. Flood
11/1	Amherst	2	R. Packard	11/14	Acoaxet	1	M. Lynch#
11/21	Boston H.	4	TASL (M. Hall)	11/17	Cape Ann	1	B. Volkle
11/21	Fairhaven	2 ad	BBC (Stymeist)	11/20	Barnstable	1	CCBC (Furbish)
12/22	Hadley	2	C. Gentes	12/16	Osterville	6	A. Curtis
12/23	Newybpt/P.I.	2	S. Perkins#	12/18	New Bedford	CBC19	fide M. Boucher
Virginia Rail				Red Knot			
11/2	Ipswich	2	R. Heil	11/7	Duxbury	30	R. Bowes
11/27	Falmouth	2	M. Lynch#	11/7	P.I.	60	T. Wetmore
Common Moorhen				11/8	Plymouth	125	E. Neumuth
11/1-4	Chilmark	1	A. Keith	11/11, 27	Chatham (S.B.)	550, 160	B. Nikula
12/14	Nantucket	1	N. Slavitz	12/11	Dennis (Corp.B.)	12	M. Tuttle
American Coot				12/19	Chatham (S.B.)	2	Cape Cod CBC
11/2	Ipswich	6	R. Heil	Sanderling			
11/7	Cheshire	2	T. Gagnon	11/1	Eastham (F.E.)	150	G. Gove#
11/8	W. Newbury	16	P. Brown	11/7, 26	P.I.	40, 10	Hoye, Wetmore
11/9	Southwick	2	S. Kellogg	11/11	Chatham (S.B.)	650	B. Nikula
11/10, 12/3	GMNWR	87, 91	USFWS	11/14	Westport	47	M. Lynch#
11/11	Amesbury	92	R. Heil	11/30	Scituate	18	S. Maguire#
11/11, 12/2	Marlboro	8, 8	L. Nachtrab	12/12	P'town	65	J. Young
11/13, 29	Woburn	3, 6	M. Rines	12/26	Mid Cape	CBC 421	v.o.
11/14	Acoaxet	76	M. Lynch#	Semipalmated Sandpiper			
11/20	Westport	46	E. Nielsen	11/11, 12/19	Chatham (S.B.)	1	B. Nikula
11/20	Wakefield	15	P. + F. Vale	Western Sandpiper			
12/11	Hudson	4	T. Spahr	11/20	Chatham (S.B.)	13	B. Nikula

White-rumped Sandpiper				11/6, 24	Plymouth 600, 85	GdE, Trimble
11/1	Eastham (F.E.)	3	G. Gove#	11/7	Oak Bluffs 150	V. Laux#
11/9	Chilmark	1	A. Keith	11/11	P.I. 200	R. Heil
11/11	P.I.	30	R. Heil	11/13, 26	Eastham (F.E.)125, 150	B. Nikula#
11/20	Chatham (S.B.)	3	B. Nikula	11/20	Westport 60	E. Nielsen
Baird's Sandpiper				11/24	Dennis 80	G. Gove#
11/11	P.I.	1 juv	R. Heil	11/25	Newbypt 128	P. + F. Vale
Pectoral Sandpiper				12/4	Ipswich (C.B.) 40 ad	J. Berry#
11/7	P.I.	1	J. Hoye#	12/7, 29	Rockport (A.P.)1454, 75	R. Heil
11/20	S. Monomoy	1	B. Nikula#	12/14, 24	Nantucket 1050, 350	E. Ray
Purple Sandpiper				Iceland Gull		
11/7	Scituate	50+	R. Donovan#	11/11	Amesbury 2 1W	R. Heil
11/17, 12/22	P.I.	10, 12	MAS (B. Gette)	11/12	Rockport (A.P.) 2 1W	R. Heil
11/20	Barnstable	4	CCBC (Furbish)	11/14	Eastham (F.E.) 1 1W	J. Trimble#
11/20	Westport	60	E. Nielsen	11/21	P'town 1 ad	B. Nikula#
11/21	Boston H.	104	TASL (M. Hall)	11/26, 12/24	Nantucket 9, 16	E. Ray
11/28, 12/29	Rockport (A.P.)	19, 47	R. Heil	11/26, 12/30	Gloucester 6, 12	Mirick, Heil
12/12	Gloucester (E.P.)	30	T. Pirro	12/11	Truro 1	J. Young
12/31	Nantucket	2	G. d'Entremont#	12/11	P'town (R.P.) 1	J. Young
Dunlin				12/18	Pittsfield 1	C. Berkshire CBC
11/1	Eastham (F.E.)	150	G. Gove#	12/26	Newbypt 3	R. Heil
11/2	Essex Bay	400+	R. Heil	Lesser Black-backed Gull		
11/7, 12/11	P.I.	304, 15	T. Wetmore	thr	Plymouth 1 ad	v.o.
11/11	Chatham (S.B.)	3400	B. Nikula	11/1-12/11	Brewster 1-2	v.o.
11/20	Westport	190	E. Nielsen	11/11	Chatham (S.B.) 2	B. Nikula
11/21	Boston H.	365	TASL (M. Hall)	11/11	Amesbury 1ad	R. Heil
11/27	Plymouth	150	ABC (Furbish)	11/13	Eastham (F.E.) 2 ad	B. Nikula#
11/27	Duxbury B.	400	ABC (Furbish)	11/18	Merrimac R. 1	MAS (D. Larson)
12/29	Rockport (A.P.)	24	R. Heil	11/22	Rockport 1	O. Spalding#
Long-billed Dowitcher				11/26, 12/24	Nantucket 106, 27	E. Ray
11/6	P.I.	10	T. Wetmore	12/14	W. Brookfield 1 ad	Sturbridge CBC
11/11	Chatham (S.B.)	1	B. Nikula	12/14-31	Boston 1 ad	v.o.
Wilson's Snipe				Glaucous Gull		
11/7	Barnstable	2	D. Furbish	11/6	P.I. 1	D. Chickering
12/3	Chilmark	1	D. Prowten	11/19	Nomans Land 1	A. Keith#
12/18	Buzzards Bay CBC	3	fide J. Trimble	12/thr	Nantucket 2	E. Andrews
12/26	Westfield	1	Cobble Mountain CBC	12/11, 29	Gloucester (E.P.)2, 1	Mirick, Heil
American Woodcock				12/11	P.I. 1 1W	T. Wetmore
12/18	New Bedford CBC	1	fide M. Boucher	12/15	Gardner 1	C. Caron
12/18	Quincy CBC	1	fide GdE	12/26	Newbypt 2	Newbypt CBC
12/28	Chatham	1	B. Clem	12/26	Westminster CBC 1	fide J. Williams
Red Phalarope				Black-legged Kittiwake		
11/29	Eastham (F.E.)	5	B. Nikula	11/12, 28	Rockport (A.P.)53, 1225	R. Heil
Pomarine Jaeger				11/13, 26	Dennis 146, 110	Flood, Dalton
11/12, 28	Rockport (A.P.)	21, 37	R. Heil	11/14, 26	Eastham (F.E.)1400, 370	Trimble, Nikula
11/13, 29	Eastham (F.E.)	18, 9	B. Nikula#	11/27	Chatham (S.B.) 500	B. Nikula#
11/13	Dennis	3	P. Flood	11/29, 12/2	Eastham (F.E.)650, 250	B. Nikula
11/19	14 m S of Nomans	1	A. Keith#	12/7, 10	Rockport (A.P.)435, 226	R. Heil
12/2, 8	Eastham (F.E.)	3, 5	B. Nikula	12/31	Nantucket Sound 14	G. d'Entremont#
12/7	Rockport (A.P.)	7	R. Heil	Common Tern		
Jaeger species				11/1	Brewster 10	G. Gove#
11/13, 14	Eastham (F.E.)	12, 20	B. Nikula#	11/7	Barnstable 5 1W	D. Furbish
11/21, 12/12	P'town	4, 1	Flood, Nikula	11/10	Egartown 2	A. Keith
11/29, 12/27	Eastham (F.E.)	17, 4	Nikula, Goodrich	11/13, 28	Eastham 75, 1	Nikula, Brown
12/2	Eastham (F.E.)	5	B. Nikula	11/21, 12/12	Wellfleet H. 20, 1	B. Nikula#
Laughing Gull				11/26	Dennis 1	C. Dalton
11/6	Plymouth B.	1	BBC (GdE)	11/27	Tuckernuck 1	R. Veit
11/14, 28	P'town H.	6, 2	B. Nikula#	11/27	Falmouth 3	M. Lynch#
Little Gull				Forster's Tern		
11/7	Oak Bluffs	1	V. Laux#	11/13	Eastham (F.E.) 8+	B. Nikula#
11/13	Eastham (F.E.)	2 ad	B. Nikula#	11/14, 12/12	Wellfleet H. 3, 6	B. Nikula#
11/23	Gay Head	1	V. Laux#	Dovekie		
11/24	Plymouth	1 ad	J. Trimble	11/21, 28	P'town 1, 2	B. Nikula#
11/25	Newbypt	2 1W	P. + F. Vale	11/28, 12/7	Rockport (A.P.) 8, 1	R. Heil
11/26-12/28	Nantucket	1-3	E. Ray	11/29, 12/8	Eastham (F.E.) 20, 2	B. Nikula
Black-headed Gull				Common Murre		
11/11	P.I.	1 ad	R. Heil	11/28	Rockport (A.P.) 288	R. Heil
11/20	Acoaxet	1 1W	E. Nielsen	11/30	Nantucket 1	L. Morgan
11/20, 12/11	Gloucester	1, 1	Wetmore, Mirick	11/30	Wellfleet H. 12	C. Franklin
11/22	Milford	1 ad	G. Gove#	12/7, 10	Rockport (A.P.)43, 30	R. Heil
11/27	Tuckernuck	1	R. Veit	Thick-billed Murre		
11/27	Dennis	1	G. Gove#	11/12, 28	Rockport (A.P.)2, 24	R. Heil
11/28, 12/7	Rockport (A.P.)	1 1W, 2 ad	R. Heil	12/3	Barnstable 1	G. Gove#
12/thr	Nantucket	1-3	v.o.	12/10	Rockport (A.P.) 1	R. Heil
12/4-12	Wellfleet H.	1 1W	B. Nikula#	Razorbill		
12/26	Mid Cape CBC	1	fide P. Trimble	11/12, 28	Rockport (A.P.)13, 975	R. Heil
Bonaparte's Gull				11/20	Acoaxet 4	E. Nielsen
11/6	Pittsfield (Pont.)	1	S. Kellogg	11/21, 12/12	P'town 100, 300	B. Nikula#

Razorbill (continued)				11/18	Dennis	1	M. Tuttle#
11/24	Dennis	350	G. Gove#	11/18	PI.	1	G. Leet#
11/27	Manomet	60+	ABC (Furbish)	11/21	Boston H.	5	TASL (M. Hall)
11/27	Mashpee	25	M. Lynch#	11/27	Manomet	3	ABC (Furbish)
11/27	Tuckernuck	100	R. Veit	11/28, 12/10	Rockport (A.P.)	11, 12	R. Heil
11/27	Barnstable (S.N.)	26	M. Lynch#	12/29	Cape Ann	25	R. Heil
11/29, 12/2	Eastham (F.E.)	2200, 20	B. Nikula	Atlantic Puffin			
12/3	off Edgartown	75+	A. Keith	11/28, 12/10	Rockport (A.P.)	5, 1	R. Heil
12/5, 31	PI.	25, 70	T. Wetmore	11/29, 12/27	Eastham (F.E.)	24, 3	B. Nikula
12/7, 10	Rockport (A.P.)	1410, 490	R. Heil	Large alcid species			
12/12	N. Truro	50+	B. Nikula	11/13	Eastham (F.E.)	4	B. Nikula#
12/31	Nantucket Sound	27	G. d'Entremont#	11/13	Dennis	8	P. Flood
Black Guillemot				11/21, 12/12	P'town	600, 900	B. Nikula#
11/7	Scituate	9	R. Donovan#	11/29, 12/2	Eastham (F.E.)	3000, 440	B. Nikula
11/12	Rockport (A.P.)	8	R. Heil	12/12	N. Truro	130	B. Nikula

DOVES THROUGH FINCHES

A very cooperative **White-winged Dove** was found on Nantucket on November 23, where it remained through the end of the year.

The continued efforts to learn more of the magnitude of the fall migration of Northern Saw-whet Owls in New England are beginning to shed some answers. Now in its second year, a banding station in Northbridge run by Strickland Wheelock has netted 383 Saw-whets, including recaptures in the two years. A total of 196 birds were banded this year from October 8 until November 27, not including eleven same-night recaptures. This season they discovered that 83% of the owls were caught on winds from the west to north-northeast. They did not spend the night beyond midnight, so the number of owls moving in after that is still unknown. One thing that surprised the team was not catching any of their banded owls from last season. The only recapture of an owl they banded last season was caught on Plum Island this fall. The discussion of site fidelity with Saw-whets is interesting in that most Saw-whet banders find that they rarely recapture their owls from previous seasons, an indication that they are more nomadic in migration than previously supposed.

The first Snowy Owl of the season was noted from Logan Airport on November 6, and four were noted at the airport on December 19 during the Greater Boston CBC. This was a much better year for Snowies, with individuals reported from at least sixteen locations; last year they were noted on just a few occasions from the Newburyport-Plum Island area and Logan Airport. A **Rufous Hummingbird** was banded in Ashfield in December. This is the first fall since 1999 that multiple *Selasphorus* hummingbirds have not been reported.

It was a good period for Red-headed Woodpeckers: at least nine individuals were reported from a wide area from the Berkshires to Nantucket. Last year there was only a single report for the same period. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were noted from many areas, a trend now for several years of extending their winter range in southern New England. An **Ash-throated Flycatcher** took up residence for nearly a month at Halibut Point in Rockport. This species in recent years has become a frequent vagrant to our area each fall; there were two reports for the same period last year. Western Kingbirds were noted from four locations, including the first December report ever for western Mass; last year during the same time there were no reports. Northern Shrikes had a good late fall flight for the sixth year in a row.

For the second year in a row **Cave Swallows** were found on Cape Cod. It was just last November when the first sighting of Cave Swallow was noted in Massachusetts. On November 26 at least one Cave Swallow was found at Loop Beach in Cotuit; on the next day the same observers located and photographed two Cave Swallows flying around over the marshy area of Mill Pond in Chatham. During the past few years this species has been almost routine from New Jersey to Connecticut during the late fall and should be looked for more carefully along our coast during this period.

November is a great month for the unexpected. This fall there were two reports of **Townsend's Solitaire**, one in Eastham and another in Gloucester; there were two reports of **Varied Thrush**, one in Newburyport and one in Concord; also reported were a **Black-throated Gray Warbler** in Nahant, a **Townsend's Warbler** in Rockport, and a **Hermit Warbler** in Holyoke. December saw reports of a **Western Tanager** photographed in Westwood and a **Chestnut-collared Longspur** photographed on Plum Island. All these western Nearctic vagrants are rare and infrequent late fall and early winter visitors to the East Coast, the rarest of which were the Hermit Warbler (third state record) and the Chestnut-collared Longspur (fifth state record). Both are pending MARC approval.

Despite the number of vagrants, the numbers of our more common birds appeared to be way down. Several observers commented on this scarcity, especially those that are considered hardy lingerers such as Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, and Eastern Towhee. Other birds in short supply included Red-breasted Nuthatches and winter finches. These species are considered irruptive in their appearance and this is not their year. In the first ten days of November there were many reports of flocks of migrating Pine Siskins and after that just a few scattered reports of just a few birds from a wide area. Common Redpolls were also noted in very small flocks, with the highest group noted with only eight individuals.

The Neponset Marsh in Dorchester proved to be a pleasant stopping spot for a **Sedge Wren**. This bird spent nearly a month along with two Marsh Wrens in the *Phragmites* within a few hundred feet of the Southeast Expressway. A **Summer Tanager** visited a feeder in Eastham for 10 days in November. Other late departures included a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, a Blue-headed Vireo, Tennessee, Chestnut-sided and Hooded warblers, a Blue Grosbeak in Northampton, and an Indigo Bunting in Arlington.

Surprises on Christmas Bird Counts included **three** Nashville Warblers on the Buzzards Bay CBC, a Black-throated Green Warbler on the Cape Cod CBC, and a Blackpoll Warbler on the Greater Boston CBC.

R. Stymeist

White-winged Dove (details submitted) *	12/31	Essex	1	J. Berry#
11/23-12/31 Nantucket 1 ph F. Karttunen + v.o.		Long-eared Owl		
Eastern Screech-Owl	11/10	Edgartown	1	A. Keith
thr Reports of indiv. from 13 locations	11/19	DWWS	5	N. Smith
11/14 Westport 2 M. Lynch#	12/28-29	P.I.	1	T. Murray
12/31 Maynard 2 L. Nachtrab	12/30	Holland	2	I. Lynch
Great Horned Owl		Short-eared Owl		
thr Mt.A 2 R. Stymeist	11/7	Barnstable	1	D. Furbish
11/14 Norfolk 2 R. Emerson	11/7	Scituate	1	R. Donovan#
12/9 Millis 2 J. Hoye#	11/10	Cumb. Farms	2	K. Anderson
12/18 Lancaster 2 S. + L. Sutton	11/15, 12/2	DWWS	1, 1	D. Furbish
12/22 Maynard 2 L. Nachtrab	11/21, 12/19	Logan	1, 1	N. Smith
12/24 Newbury pr L. Leka	11/25, 12/29	Salisbury	3	Gurka, Gette
12/24 Marshfield pr D. Furbish	11/25, 12/29	P.I.	1, 1	D. Chickering
Snowy Owl	11/30	WBWS	1	A. Thomas
11/6, 21 Boston (Logan) 1, 4 N. Smith	12/4	Duxbury B.	1	R. Bowes
11/11-12/31 P.I. 2 v.o.	12/29	Nantucket	1	W. Hutcheson
11/12-12/4 Duxbury 1-3 v.o.		Northern Saw-whet Owl		
11/14 Salisbury 1 G. Purcell	11/thr	DWWS	113 b	N. Smith
11/20, 27 Chatham (S.B.) 1 B. Nikula#	11/thr	Blue Hills	28 b	N. Smith
11/21 Winthrop 1 T.A.S.L. (P. + F. Vale)	11/1	P.I.	4 b	M.A.S. (B. Johnson)
11/27 Rockport 1 J. Doppler	11/1-27	Northbridge	109 b	S. Wheelock
12/1 Chilmark 1 P. Whiting#	12/1	Hadley	1	A. Magee
12/1 Barnstable (S.N.) 1 fide M. Lowe		Rufous Hummingbird (details submitted) *		
12/5 Wellfleet 1 fide M. Lowe	12/1-15	Ashfield	1 imm m b	E. Stewart + v.o.
12/9-26 Nantucket 1 v.o.		Belted Kingfisher		
12/9 S. Boston 1 R. Donovan	11/20	Bourne	3	BBC (Stymeist)
12/10 MNWS 1 R. + L. Bowman	11/27	Falmouth	2	M. Lynch#
12/16 Newbypt 2 D. Larson	12/31	Hyannis	2	G. d'Entremont#
12/20-30 Gay Head 1 A. Fischer		Red-headed Woodpecker		
12/26 Edgartown 1 J. Cressy#	11/8	Gay Head	1	A. Keith
Barred Owl	11/8-9	Chilmark	1	A. Keith
12/21 Lexington 1 J. Sutherland	11/10	Chappaquiddick	1	A. Keith

Red-headed Woodpecker (continued)				11/6	Egremont	80	J. Johnson
11/11, 19	N. Falmouth	1 ad	Baptiste, Howe	11/21	Fairhaven	44	BBC (Stymeist)
11/22-12/31	Leverett	1	H. Allen	11/22	Northampton	300	A. Magee
11/27	Danvers	1 ad	D. + I. Jewell	12/4	Ipswich (C.B.)	28	J. Berry#
12/5	Nantucket	1 imm	E. Ray	12/22	Chatham	15	S. Perkins#
12/8	W. Tisbury	1	S. Silva	Tree Swallow			
12/9-31	Tyringham	1	R. Laubach	11/1, 7	Chatham	200, 12	Manchester, Nikula
Red-bellied Woodpecker				11/1, 28	PI.	1, 1	Haydock, Sutton
11/6	Marshfield	3	BBC (GdE)	11/9-16	Chilmark	25	A. Keith
11/6	Brookfields	3	M. Lynch#	11/14, 12/11	N. Truro	3, 1	Nikula, Young
11/29	Pepperell	2	E. Stromsted	11/20	Nantucket	1	S. Langer
12/18	Lancaster	6	S. + L. Sutton	11/28	Tuckernuck	25	R. Veit
12/29	Harwich	2	A. Curtis	11/28	Orleans	1	G. Gove#
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker				Cave Swallow (details submitted) *			
thr	Mt.A.	1-3	R. Stymeist + v.o	11/26	Cotuit	1	J. Trimble#
11/2	Essex	2	R. Heil	11/27	Chatham	2 ph	J. Trimble#
11/6	PI.	1	A. Gurka#	Barn Swallow			
12/4	Falmouth	1	J. Young	11/7-08	Chilmark	3	A. Keith
12/18	Worcester CBC	2	J. Liller compiler	11/18	Gay Head	1	V. Laux#
12/19	Northampton CBC	1	J. Ortiz compiler	Red-breasted Nuthatch			
12/19	Amherst	1	Northampton CBC	11/4	Salisbury	3	S. Grinley
12/20-31	Nantucket	1	K. Pochman	11/11	PI.	3	S. Sutton
12/22	W. Tisbury	2	S. Silva	11/19	Lexington	3	M. Rines
Hairy Woodpecker				12/18	Washington	3	E. Neumuth
11/thr	Maynard	3	L. Nachtrab	12/28	Concord	4	S. Clark
11/20	Leicester	4	M. Lynch#	12/29	Harwich	3	A. Curtis
12/18	Washington	6	E. Neumuth	Brown Creeper			
12/28	Concord	4	S. Clark	11/20	Leicester	4	M. Lynch#
12/28	Harwich	4	E. Banks	12/12	Medford	2	A. Ankers
Northern Flicker				12/18	Mattapoisett	2	F. Smith
11/2	Chatham (M.I.)	28	D. Manchester	12/18	Lancaster	3	S. + L. Sutton
11/27	Falmouth	2	M. Lynch#	12/31	Mt.A.	2	R. Stymeist
12/26	Mid Cape CBC	39	fide P. Trimble	Carolina Wren			
Pileated Woodpecker				11/6	Marshfield	11	BBC (GdE)
11/29	Pepperell	2	E. Stromsted	11/14	Stoughton	13	G. d'Entremont
12/24	Wayland	2	G. Long	11/14	Acoaxet	20	M. Lynch#
Eastern Phoebe				11/16	Marblehead	13	R. Heil
11/11	Nahant	1	L. Pivacek	11/20	Bourne	27	BBC (Stymeist)
11/19	Southwick	1	S. Kellogg	11/21	Fairhaven	49	BBC (Stymeist)
11/24	Plymouth	1	J. Trimble	11/24	Plymouth	32	J. Trimble
11/26-29	Chilmark	1	A. Keith	12/18	Longmeadow	10	Springfield CBC
12/15	Chilmark	1	A. Keith	Winter Wren			
12/19	N. Falmouth	1	B. Good	11/16	Marblehead	7	R. Heil
Ash-throated Flycatcher (details submitted) *				11/21	Fairhaven	6	BBC (Stymeist)
11/26-12/19	Rockport (H.P.)	1 ph	T. Burke + v.o.	11/24	Plymouth	3	J. Trimble
Western Kingbird				Sedge Wren			
11/2	Gay Head	1	V. Laux#	11/23-12/19	Dorchester	1	R. Donovan#
11/28	Nantucket	1	E. Andrews	Marsh Wren			
12/17	Northampton	1	L. Therrian	11/2	Ipswich	1	R. Heil
12/21-22	Rockport	1	S. Hunt#	11/20	E. Sandwich	1	CCBC (Furbish)
Northern Shrike				11/22, 30	Harwich	1	B. Nikula
Thr	Reports of indiv. from 21 locations			11/24	Dorchester	1	R. Donovan#
11/1-12/5	Granville	1-2	J. Weeks	12/11	Salisbury	1	E. Neilsen#
12/3, 25	Wayland	1, 1	Long, Hoye	12/12	GMNWR	1	T. Pirro
12/19	Amherst	3 total	Northampton	12/31	Nantucket	2	G. d'Entremont
Blue-headed Vireo				Golden-crowned Kinglet			
11/22	Becket	1	R. Laubach	11/2	Essex	7	R. Heil
11/22-23	Mt.A.	1	A. Perkins#	11/7	Moran WMA	11	M. Lynch#
12/7	Wayland	1	H. Norwood	11/7	Cheshire	7	M. Lynch#
Red-eyed Vireo				11/16	Marblehead	7	R. Heil
11/4	Chilmark	1	A. Keith	11/20	Bourne	13	BBC (Stymeist)
Fish Crow				11/20	Leicester	9	M. Lynch#
11/11	Dorchester	35	J. Young	11/21	Fairhaven	18	BBC (Stymeist)
11/18	Seekonk	6	R. Farrell	11/21	Woburn	6	M. Rines
12/16, 19	Wellfleet	12, 24	R. Clem	11/27	Falmouth	8	M. Lynch#
12/18	W. Springfield	2	Springfield CBC	12/12	Cotuit	6	D. Furbish
12/19, 25	Waltham	31, 40	J. Forbes#	12/18	Lancaster	6	S. + L. Sutton
12/30	Framingham	1	E. Taylor	Ruby-crowned Kinglet			
Common Raven				11/19, 12/23	Lexington	1	M. Rines
11/8	Essex	1	P. Brown	11/21	E. Quabbin	1	T. Gagnon
11/11	Becket	55	R. Laubach	11/21	PI.	1	P. Meleski#
12/5	Pelham	6	M. Lynch	11/24	Plymouth	3	J. Trimble
12/11, 18	Sudbury	1	McAdow, Mauer	11/25	Gloucester (E.P.)	1	P. + F. Vale
12/12	Concord	1	D. Walton	12/13	Amherst	1	C. Allen
12/24	Granville	21	J. Wojtanowski	12/18	Westboro	1	T. Spahr
Horned Lark				12/19	Salem	1	J. Young
thr	PI.	52 max	v.o.	12/29	Melrose	1	D. + I. Jewell
thr	Salisbury	22-28	v.o.	12/29	Groton	1	T. Pirro

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher			11/17	Cambr. (F.P.)	1	R. LaFontaine#	
11/25	Arlington	1		11/21	Brookline	1	M. Garvey
Eastern Bluebird				11/27	Falmouth	1	M. Lynch#
11/6	Woburn	7			Nashville Warbler		
11/17	Middleboro	15+	K. Anderson	11/10	Sandwich	1	MAS (Silverstein)
11/20	Barre Falls	8	B. Kamp#	12/18	Buzz. Bay CBC	3	fide J. Trimble
11/20	Northampton	18	R. Packard		Chestnut-sided Warbler		
11/23	Concord	12+	S. Ferbert	11/10	Medford	1	R. LaFontaine
12/9	Westboro	7	T. Spahr		Black-throated Blue Warbler		
12/13	Amherst	15	C. Allen	11/13	Nahant	1 m	D. Wilkinson
12/19	Falmouth	7	B. Good	11/23	Boston	1m	M. Jensen
Townsend's Solitaire (details submitted) *				11/26	Mattapoisett	1 f	M. Sylvia
11/27	Eastham	1	J. Hoye#		Yellow-rumped Warbler		
12/19	Gloucester	1	CBC: S. Hedman#	11/14	Acoaxet	2	M. Lynch#
Hermit Thrush				11/20	Westport	14	E. Nielsen
11/14	Acoaxet	3	M. Lynch#	11/20	Barnstable	6	CCBC (Furbish)
11/16	Marblehead	6	R. Heil	11/24	Plymouth	5	J. Trimble
11/19	Nahant	2	F. Vale#	11/27	Falmouth	11	M. Lynch#
11/20	E. Sandwich	3	CCBC (Furbish)	12/4, 24	P.I.	9, 3	T. Wetmore
11/21	Fairhaven	4	BBC (Stymeist)	12/28	Harwich	2	E. Banks
11/24	Plymouth	4	J. Trimble	12/30	Deerfield	1	D. Minnear
12/28	P.I.	3	T. Murray		Black-throated Gray Warbler (no details) *		
American Robin				11/14-19	Nahant	1	D. Wilkinson + v.o.
11/13	Clinton	200+	M. Lynch#		Black-throated Green Warbler		
12/6	Groton	250+	T. Pirro	11/10	Medford	1	R. LaFontaine
12/11	Hadley	300	L. Therrian	11/19	Nahant	1	J. Hoye#
12/12	Bolton Flats	350	T. Murray	12/19	Orleans 1 ph		CC CBC (J. Trimble)
12/28	Amherst	300	L. Therrian		Townsend's Warbler (details submitted) *		
12/30	P.I.	200+	R. Heil	12/19	Rockport	1	CBC: M. Goetschkes#
Varied Thrush					Hermit Warbler (details submitted) *		
12/21-31	Newbypt	1	R. Laite + v.o.	11/29-30	Holyoke	1	A. + L. Richardson + v.o.
12/29-31	Concord	1 f	M. Rubel + v.o.		Pine Warbler		
Gray Catbird				11/8	Northampton	1	I. Lynch
11/1	Longmeadow	1	R. Titus	11/15	Woburn	1	M. Rines
11/14	Westport	6	M. Lynch#	11/15	Mt.A	1	J. Forbes
11/19	Osterville	2	M. Keleher	12/4	Melrose	1	K. + R. Barnes
11/21	Fairhaven	6	BBC (Stymeist)	12/11	Mashpee	1	M. Keleher
11/24	Plymouth	2	J. Trimble	12/12	Medford	1	A. Ankers#
11/27	Falmouth	2	M. Lynch#	12/29	N. Andover	1	D. Duxbury-Fox
11/29	Woburn	1	M. Rines	12/29	Harwich	1	A. Curtis
12/9	Rockport (H.P.)	1	J. Barber		Prairie Warbler		
12/18	Westboro	1	T. Spahr	11/6	Cambridge	1	J. Shetterly
12/29	P.I.	1	T. Murray	11/7	Wellfleet	1	A. Thomas
Brown Thrasher					Palm Warbler		
11/7	Chilmark	1	J. Young#	11/4, 7	Medford	3, 2	R. LaFontaine
11/8	Nahant	1	L. Pivacek#	11/7	Gloucester (E.P.)	1	J. Nelson
11/16	Marblehead	1	R. Heil	11/7	P.I.	1	J. Hoye#
11/21	Fairhaven	1	BBC (Stymeist)	11/19	Newbypt	1	MAS (D. Larson)
12/9	Rockport (H.P.)	1	J. Barber	11/21	Fairhaven	3	BBC (Stymeist)
12/19	Amherst	1	Northampton CBC	11/28	Nantucket	4	fide E. Ray
American Pipit					Blackpoll Warbler		
11/4	Granville	1	J. Weeks	11/4	Chilmark	1	A. Keith
11/4	Ware	6	W. Laflay	11/17	Mt.A	1	R. Stymeist
11/4	P.I.	15	T. Spahr	12/19	Arlington 1	Gr	Boston CBC (L. Taylor)
11/7	Moran WMA	1	M. Lynch#		Black-and-white Warbler		
11/9	Granville	2	J. Weeks	11/24	Plymouth	1 f ad	J. Trimble
11/11	Halifax (C.F.)	70	J. Young	11/28	Boston	1 f	G. Tepke
11/22	Northampton	1	A. Magee	12/19	W. Tisbury	1	E. Hierta
11/27	P.I.	1	S. Moore#		American Redstart		
12/18	Worcester CBC	1	J. Liller compiler	11/6	Marshfield	1	imm m BBC (GdE)
12/18	Marion	1	Buzzards Bay CBC	11/21	Scituate	1	J. Young
Cedar Waxwing					Ovenbird		
11/20	Barnstable	40	CCBC (Furbish)	11/28	Tisbury	1	P. Uhlerdorf
12/3	Townsend	350+	T. Pirro	12/11-16	Boston	1	B. Sherwood
12/6	Groton	100+	T. Pirro		Northern Waterthrush		
12/12	Bolton Flats	60	T. Murray	11/20	Bourne	1	BBC (Stymeist)
12/18	Lancaster	58	S. + L. Sutton		Common Yellowthroat		
12/23	Ipswich	25	J. Berry	11/16	Marblehead	1 ad m	R. Heil
12/30	Gloucester (E.P.)	35	R. Heil	11/20	Bourne	1	BBC (Stymeist)
12/31	P.I.	25	T. Wetmore	12/11	Eastham (F.H.)	1	J. Young
Tennessee Warbler				12/18	Buzzards Bay CBC	1	J. Trimble compiler
11/2	Gay Head	1	V. Laux#	12/18	Athol	1	Athol CBC
11/17	Edgartown	1	S. Anderson#		Hooded Warbler		
Orange-crowned Warbler				11/30-12/5	Cambr. (F.P.)	1 m	P. Peterson
11/7	P.I.	1	J. Hoye#		Wilson's Warbler		
11/8	Nahant	1	L. Ferraresso	11/7	Jamaica Plain	1	A. Joslin
11/10	Springfield	1	E. Rutman	11/15	Mt.A	1	J. Forbes
11/17	Gay Head	1	V. Laux#	11/26	Hingham	1 m	J. Liller

Wilson's Warbler (continued)				Fox Sparrow			
11/29	Edgartown	1	R. Culbert	11/7	Moran WMA	3	M. Lynch#
12/2-03	Boston	1	J. Offermann	11/13	Waltham	3	D. Finch#
Yellow-breasted Chat				11/13	Northampton	4	J. Young
11/14	Falmouth	1	J. Liller#	11/15	Shutesbury	11	K. Weir
11/14	Westport	1	M. Lynch#	11/21	Lexington	3	G. d'Entremont
11/24	Plymouth	1	J. Trimble	11/26	Falmouth	3	J. Hoye#
11/27	Orleans	1	J. hoye#	11/26-27	Groveland	2	D. Chickering
12/28	Nantucket	1	B. Vigneau	12/5	Norton	2	K. Sejkora
Summer Tanager				12/7	Gay Head	2	A. Fischer
11/7-17	Eastham	1 ph	M. Zbel#	12/12	Carlisle	2	S. Emmons
Western Tanager (no details) *				12/14	Amherst	1	H. McQueen
12/31	Westwood	1 f ph	R. Saunders#	12/26	E. Middleboro	1	K. Anderson
Eastern Towhee				Lincoln's Sparrow			
11/14	Acoaxet	5	M. Lynch#	11/1	Northampton	1	D. McLain
11/14	Barnstable	2	D. Furbish	11/16	S. Boston	1	R. Donovan
11/20	Westport	5	E. Nielsen	Swamp Sparrow			
11/21	Fairhaven	5	BBC (Stymeist)	11/7	Jamaica Plain	3	A. Joslin
12/3	Northfield	1 m	M. Basset	11/16	Marblehead	4	R. Heil-M
12/13	Lexington	1	R. LaFontaine#	11/21	Fairhaven	4	BBC (Stymeist)
12/25-31	Concord	1 f	S. Perkins#	11/24	Plymouth	7	J. Trimble
12/31	P.I.	1 f	T. Wetmore	11/29	Woburn	2	M. Rines
American Tree Sparrow				12/31	Wayland	2	G. Long
11/13	Wachusett Res.	21	M. Lynch#	White-crowned Sparrow			
11/27	Cumb. Farms	17	G. d'Entremont	11/4	Salisbury	1	S. Grinley
12/4	Ipswich (C.B.)	40	J. Berry#	11/12	Northampton	3	C. Gentes
12/4	P.I.	35	T. Wetmore	11/13	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore
12/12	Bolton Flats	75	T. Murray	12/5	Nantucket	1	B. Vineau
12/18	Westboro	50+	T. Spahr	Oregon Junco			
12/20	Washington	18	E. Neumuth	12/1	Nantucket	1	M. Aquier
Chipping Sparrow				Lapland Longspur			
11/7	Lincoln	1	M. Rines	thr	P.I.	4-6	v.o.
11/9	Gay Head	60+	S. Anderson	11/10	Salisbury	1	D. + I. Jewell
11/13	Salisbury	1	D. Chickering	11/10	Gay Head	1	A. Keith
11/13	Mashpee	1	M. Keleher	11/22	Northampton	1	A. Magee
11/30	Medford	1	A. Ankers	12/18	Athol	1	Athol CBC
Clay-colored Sparrow				Chestnut-collared Longspur (details submitted) *			
11/6	Truro	2	J. Hoye#	12/15	P.I.	1 ph	B. Gette + D. Weaver
11/7	Gay Head	1	V. Laux#	Snow Bunting			
11/12-13	Cambr. (F.P.)	1	B. Stevens	11/1-12/15	Granville	65 max	J. Weeks
12/18	N. Falmouth	1	Buzzards Bay CBC	11/1-12/16	P.I.	285 max	S. Haydock
12/19	Hadley	1	Northampton CBC	11/2, 12/23	Hadley	35, 2	C. Gentes
12/26	Deerfield	1	Greenfield CBC	11/3	Salisbury	250	MAS (D. Weaver)
Field Sparrow				11/9	Chilmark	65+	A. Keith
11/2	Gay Head	10+	V. Laux#	11/11	Chatham (S.B.)	250+	B. Nikula
11/20	Westport	8	E. Nielsen	11/16	Nahant	50	R. Heil
11/24	Plymouth	3	J. Trimble	11/19	Eastham (F.E.)	200	M. Tuttle
11/27	Rockport (H.P.)	1	P. Brown	11/21	Boston (Logan)	1500	N. Smith
12/12	Medford	1	A. Ankers#	11/21	P'town	80+	B. Nikula#
12/18	Lancaster SF	2	S. + L. Sutton	11/22	Northampton	200	A. Magee
12/28	Mashpee	1	M. Keleher	12/4	Ipswich (C.B.)	110	J. Berry#
Vesper Sparrow				12/26	Nantucket	55	E. Ray
11/1	Granville	1	J. Weeks	12/31	Hyannis	75	S. Mirick#
12/18	Athol	1	Athol CBC	Rose-breasted Grosbeak			
12/19	Northampton	1	Northampton CBC	11/1	Marlboro	1 f	T. Spahr
Lark Sparrow				Blue Grosbeak			
12/2-3	Edgartown	1	L. Reese#	11/4-7	Northampton	1	B. Bieda#
Savannah Sparrow				Indigo Bunting			
11/21	Fairhaven	12	BBC (Stymeist)	11/16	Arlington	1	R. LaFontaine
11/27	Cumb. Farms	20+	ABC (Furbish)	Dickcissel			
12/18	P.I.	1	G. + L. Long	11/4	Ipswich	1	J. Berry
12/28	Mashpee	1	M. Keleher	12/29	Plymouth CBC	1	T. Lloyd-Evans
Ipswich Sparrow				Red-winged Blackbird			
12/4	Ipswich (C.B.)	2	J. Berry#	11/2	Gay Head	250+	V. Laux#
12/29	P.I.	3	T. Murray	11/2	Rowley	300	R. Heil
Grasshopper Sparrow				11/20	Leicester	30	M. Lynch#
11/1	Northampton	1	D. McLain	11/27	Cumb. Farms	125	G. d'Entremont
11/4	Gay Head	1	V. Laux#	12/18	Westboro	9	T. Spahr
11/13	P.I.	1	BBC (S. Grinley)	12/21	DWWS	120	D. Furbish
11/13-17	Belmont	1	K. Hartel + v.o.	12/24	Wakefield	15	P. + F. Vale
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow				12/31	Nantucket	30	G. d'Entremont#
11/14	Eastham (F.H.)	1	J. Trimble#	Eastern Meadowlark			
11/20	Acoaxet	1 ad	E. Nielsen	11/4	DWWS	3	D. Furbish
Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow				11/16	Chatham (M.I.)	6	D. Manchester
11/14	Eastham (F.H.)	4	J. Trimble#	11/20	Barnstable	4	CCBC (Furbish)
Seaside Sparrow				12/2	DWWS	4	D. Furbish
11/14	Eastham (F.H.)	1	B. Nikula#	12/18	Millis CBC	1	E. Landre compiler
12/25	Newbypt	3	R. Heil	12/24	DWWS	2	D. Furbish

Rusty Blackbird				Pine Grosbeak			
11/4	Edgartown	2	A. Keith	11/2	Cummington	8	B. Spencer
11/7	Moran WMA	4	M. Lynch#	11/7	Moran WMA	2	M. Lynch#
11/14	Stoughton	2	G. d'Entremont	Purple Finch			
11/24	Brighton	1	O. Spalding	11/7	Jamaica Plain	3	A. Joslin
12/9	Westboro	2	T. Spahr	11/7	Moran WMA	8	M. Lynch#
12/13	Southwick	1	S. Kellogg	11/10	Falmouth	4 m	G. Gove#
12/17	DWWS	2	D. Furbish	11/10	DWWS	4	D. Furbish
12/19	Wayland	3	G. Long	11/10	Nahant	4	L. Pivacek
12/24	Lexington	2	J. Forbes#	11/11	Williamsburg	6	R. Packard
12/29	Waltham	1	J. Forbes#	11/13	Pepperell	7	M. Resch
Common Grackle				12/5	Peru	6	T. Gagnon
11/2	Gay Head	1000+	V. Laux#	12/6	Windsor	6	B. Banner
11/7	Southwick	5000	S. Kellogg	12/22	Lenox	6	R. Laubach
11/13	Clinton	180+	M. Lynch#	Common Redpoll			
11/14	S. Lancaster	350+	S. Sutton	11/6	Eastham	4	J. Trimble#
12/5	Leicester	4	M. Lynch	11/15	Mt.A.	3	R. Stymeist
12/24	Wakefield	4	P. + F. Vale	11/16	Dorchester	2	R. Donovan
Brown-headed Cowbird				11/19	Newbyp	2	MAS (D. Larson)
11/1	Waltham	50	E. Taylor	12/14	DWWS	2	D. Furbish
11/2	Rowley	1000	R. Heil	12/14	Nahant	8	L. Pivacek
11/5	Natick	100	E. Taylor	12/15	Amherst	6	H. McQueen
11/10	DWWS	3	D. Furbish	12/29	P.I.	6	T. Wetmore
11/11	P.I.	350	R. Heil	12/30	Lexington	8	M. Rines
11/27	Cumb. Farms	3	G. d'Entremont	12/31	Everett	7	M. Rines#
Baltimore Oriole				Pine Siskin			
11/1	Chatham (M.I.)	1	D. Manchester	11/1-12	Reports of 1-8 indiv. from 17 locations		
11/2	Gay Head	6	V. Laux#	11/1-9	Reports of 11-50 indiv. from 9 locations		
11/6	Eastham	1	J. Trimble#	11/4	P.I.	100+	T. Spahr
11/7	N. Truro	1	B. Nikula	11/16	Salisbury	6	J. Offermann#
11/13	Cambr. (F.P.)	1	B. Stevens	11/18, 12/20	Amesbury	2, 1	D. Sevigny
11/15	Amesbury	1 f	D. Sevigny	11/21	New Salem	2	B. Lailey
11/27	S. Dartmouth	1	D. +A. Morgan	11/22	Amherst	2	H. McQueen
12/8-20	Cambridge	1	N. Wheatley	11/23	Mt.A.	3	R. Stymeist
12/13	Lexington	1	M. Rines#	11/27	Rockport (H.P.)	2	P. Brown
12/18	Falmouth	1	Buzzards Bay CBC	12/8-31	E. Middleboro	6-13	K. Anderson



TREE SWALLOWS BY DAVID LARSON

ABBREVIATIONS FOR BIRD SIGHTINGS

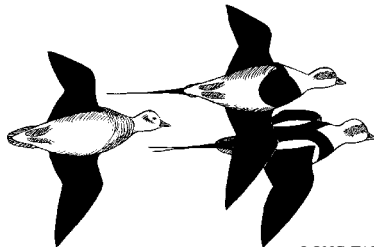
Taxonomic order is based on AOU checklist, Seventh edition, 44th Supplement, as published in *The Auk* 117: 847-58 (2000); 119: 897-906 (2002); 120: 923-32 (2003).

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

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE BIRD SIGHTINGS TO BIRD OBSERVER

Sightings for any given month must be reported in writing by the eighth of the following month, and may be submitted by postal mail or e-mail. Send written reports to Bird Sightings, Robert H. Stymeist, 94 Grove Street, Watertown, MA 02172. Include name and phone number of observer, common name of species, date of sighting, location, number of birds, other observer(s), and information on age, sex, and morph (where relevant). For instructions on e-mail submission, visit: <<http://massbird.org/birdobserver/sightings/>>.

Species on the Review List of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (indicated by an asterisk [*] in the Bird Reports), 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 Marjorie Rines, Massachusetts Audubon Society, South Great Road, Lincoln, MA 01773, or by e-mail to <marj@mrines.com>.



LONG-TAILED DUCKS BY GEORGE C. WEST

ABOUT THE COVER

Northern Mockingbird

The Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) is well named, with both its genus and species names reflecting its ability to mimic and produce a bewildering assortment of sounds. This medium-sized songbird is monomorphic in plumage: both sexes are bluish-gray above, pale below, with prominent white wingbars, and large white wing patches that are prominent in flight. Mockingbirds have long, white-edged tails, and moderately long, slightly decurved bills. Their wings are broad, and they have a thin dark eye line. Juveniles have lightly spotted breasts. They tend to favor high, exposed perches, and may be confused with Northern Shrikes in winter — many “mocking-shrikes” are reported each year. Northern Mockingbirds are polytypic, with two subspecies recognized, and are closely related to the Tropical Mockingbird.

Northern Mockingbirds are found throughout the United States to southern Canada, and south to southern Mexico, the Bahamas, and Greater Antilles. Most mockingbirds are sedentary, but northern populations may be partially migratory. In Massachusetts, some migration occurs, but the mockingbird is considered a common resident, with substantial numbers overwintering; e.g., 324 were reported on the Concord Christmas Bird Count in 1980. They are most numerous in fall and winter on the outer coast.


Northern Mockingbirds are usually monogamous and often produce two broods. They may mate for life. Their preferred habitat is suburban thickets and dense shrubbery, parks, and edges of cultivated land. Males usually sing from the tops of trees in spring and summer, and their song is thought to function mainly to attract mates. Both males and females sing, typically in bouts consisting of repetitions of single song types. Males may have 150 or more song types, a number that increases with age as new songs are learned. Their songs may mimic other bird species or other environmental sounds such as a creaking gate. Their spring and fall repertoires are sometimes entirely different.

Courtship displays include an acrobatic flight in which the male chases the female; an aerial display in which the male flies up from a perch and parachutes back to it, prominently displaying his white wing patches; and a display in which the male runs along a branch as he sings. Some pairs of Northern Mockingbirds remain on their breeding territory year-round, while others have distinct breeding and wintering territories. They are pugnacious in their defense of their territory, particularly against other mockingbirds; fighting often occurs. Males perform a “boundary dance” during which males face each other on a territorial boundary and hop laterally, first in one direction and then in another. This sometimes leads to fighting with grappling and bill jabbing. These encounters are very intense, and they may even extend up and over buildings or shrubs. Females defend their territory against other females. As an edge species, they are subject to nest predation by jays, crows, and cats, but they will mob and strike intruders. Anecdotes involving attacks on mailmen, dogs, neighbors, and other interlopers abound.

Nest sites are selected by the male, and he builds one to three nests before eggs are laid. The nest is typically a cup of twigs lined with grass, rootlets, leaves, and


often human refuse such as paper, aluminum foil, plastic, or cigarette filters. The nest is usually placed from three to ten feet up in shrubs or small trees. The usual clutch is three to five bluish-green eggs, splotched brownish-red. The female does all of the incubation during the twelve to thirteen days until hatching. As new hatches, the nestlings are nearly naked, blind, and helpless. The female does most of the brooding until the young fledge in about twelve days. They then hop and run about the shrubbery, flying about a week later. Both parents feed insects and some fruit to the young. The male continues to feed the young for about two weeks after fledging.

Northern Mockingbirds forage mostly on the ground, walking, running, hopping, and flashing their white wing panels — presumably to scare up insects. They will hawk insects near the ground and will pounce on prey from low perches. They are omnivorous, eating arthropods of all sorts, spiders, fruit, berries, and even small lizards.

During the nineteenth century mockingbirds were heavily procured as cage birds, leading in some instances to local extinctions. During the past century they have declined somewhat in the southern part of their range but have expanded their range northward considerably. In Massachusetts, mockingbirds were considered a “very rare summer resident” in 1901, but are currently common. Earlier northern populations were probably limited by severe winters and starvation. Their increase in the north coincides with a gradual warming trend in New England since the mid-1950s, but they have also benefited significantly from suburban plantings of ornamentals, especially multiflora rose. Mockingbirds’ suburban habitat preferences allow people to commonly hear and enjoy their wonderful song repertoire, even if the song commences a little earlier in the morning than some might wish. 

William E. Davis, Jr.

About the Cover Artist

Bird Observer is pleased to again welcome Barry Van Dusen as our cover artist. Barry’s fine work has appeared as a cover feature more times than that of any other artist, and we are grateful for his continuing contributions. Barry was trained as an artist, but his association with Massachusetts Audubon Society, which began in 1982, first provided him with the opportunity to work with nature subjects on a professional basis. Subsequently, he discovered the work of European wildlife artists, with their emphasis on direct field sketching, a technique which has become part of his own methodology. Barry’s skills as a field artist have afforded him the opportunity to work and travel with other nature artists on projects sponsored by the Artists for Nature Foundation. He has traveled to Ireland, Spain, India, and Peru with the ANF. Barry has regular exhibitions in New England and participates as well in national exhibitions such as *Birds in Art* (Wausau, Wisconsin) and *Art of the Animal Kingdom* (Bennington, Vermont). He regularly exhibits with the Society of Wildlife Artists (London) and his work has been shown in France, Holland, Ireland, and Scotland. He also is a contributor to *Bird Watcher’s Digest* and *Birder’s World* magazines. Barry resides in the central Massachusetts town of Princeton. Further information and examples of his work can be found at his website: <<http://www.barryvandusen.com>>. 

AT A GLANCE

February 2005



ROGER S. EVERETT

If something “looks like a duck and swims like a duck, it’s probably a duck!” With this wisdom in mind, it is possible to attack the identification of this month’s mystery bird with considerable confidence, so long as it is not forgotten that there are other birds that look and swim like ducks. It is probably obvious to most readers that a simple examination of the bird’s bill is enough to eliminate nearly all of the other waterbirds that are capable of swimming. Most other swimming species possess bills that are either sharply pointed or hooked at the tip (e.g., loons, grebes, alcids, cormorants), are visibly laterally compressed (e.g., gulls, Razorbill), or else possess conspicuous nasal tubes on the upper mandible (e.g., shearwaters). A swimming bird’s bill that is broad at the base and relatively flattened throughout its length almost certainly belongs to a duck.

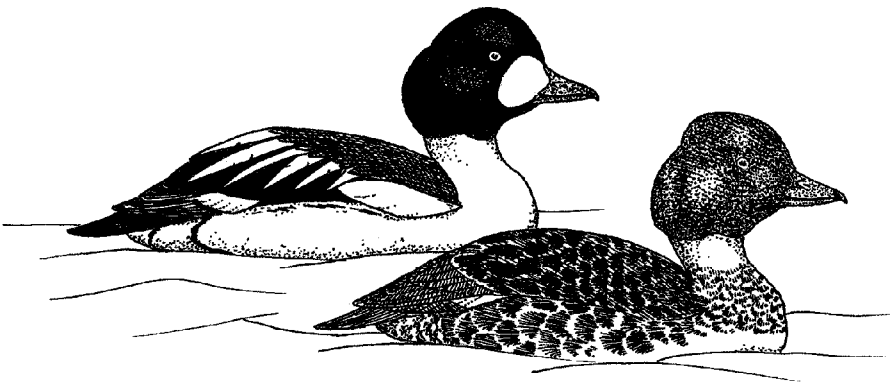
Believing that the pictured bird is a duck, a next step is to consider whether it is a diving duck or a puddle duck. Generally puddle ducks tend to have longer, slimmer necks than divers and, with the exception of the Gadwall, do not exhibit white wing patches when sitting on the water. Furthermore, and of particular importance, puddle ducks do not have prominently white or yellow eyes. Clearly the mystery duck has light-colored eyes, as well as a noticeable white wing patch.

Given that the duck in the photo appears to be more or less gray or brown, and is obviously lacking in distinctive markings on the head or body, indications are that it is either a female or juvenile, or else a drake in eclipse plumage. If the bird belonged in the genus *Aythya* (e.g., scaup, Ring-necked Duck, etc.) its bill would be longer and more slender (as well as paler in coloration and marked at the tip), and there would typically be white feathering, either at the base of the bill or around the eye and running back from the eye as a thin pale line. By way of comparison, the mystery duck has a relatively thick, short bill that is uniformly dark in color, along with an obvious white collar around the neck.

Knowing that the bird is not in the genus *Aythya*, even though it is sporting a strikingly light eye like ducks in that group, one should at once turn to one of the two goldeneye species as a leading identification contender. The absence of a white spot or a white crescent in front of the eye indicates that the bird is not a male in breeding plumage of either goldeneye species, meaning that by default the bird is a female, juvenile male, or an adult male in eclipse plumage. The fact that the head is uniformly dark, with absolutely no suggestion of white between the eye and the base of the bill, no white mottling in the body plumage, and a gray chest in contrast with a white collar, strongly indicates that the bird is an adult female. Since the bill is not light-colored (i.e., yellowish-orange), and the forehead is not steep and abrupt, the evidence suggests that the mystery duck is not a female Barrow's Goldeneye. By process of elimination the bird is a female Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*). The fact that its bill is completely dark indicates that it is not in full breeding condition, a state in which the bill would possess a yellow tip.

Common Goldeneyes are common to locally abundant migrants and winter visitors along the coast and are regular in smaller numbers on ponds and lakes in the interior. Roger S. Everett photographed the female Common Goldeneye in the picture on Cape Cod. 🦆

Wayne R. Petersen



COMMON GOLDENEYES BY GEORGE C. WEST

AT A GLANCE



DON REIMER

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

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VOL. 33, NO. 2, APRIL 2005

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