

# BIRD OBSERVER



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JUNE 1995



# BIRD OBSERVER

• a bimonthly journal •

To enhance understanding, observation,  
and enjoyment of birds.

VOL. 23, NO. 3 JUNE 1995

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## INTRODUCTION TO FIELD BIOLOGY:

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A short course on fall shorebird migration will be offered this summer by Manomet Observatory's Field Biology Training Program. Participants become actively involved in Manomet Observatory's ongoing twenty-five-year study of shorebird migration in coastal Massachusetts. Each fall, thousands of migrant shorebirds stop over at key barrier beaches along the Massachusetts coast to rest and gain fat before continuing their flight to wintering grounds in the tropics. The goal of this course is to teach participants the practical applications of studying the migration ecology and population dynamics of shorebirds at staging areas, while collecting data that will be used toward directing future management decisions on coastal areas.

Primary activities involve all aspects of censusing and mist netting shorebirds. After brief introductory classes, field studies begin. Through shorebird censuses, which are taken almost daily, participants learn field identification, how to estimate the numbers of birds in a flock, and read color band combinations on marked birds. Mist nets are set up on barrier beaches at night to capture shorebirds so migration weights can be determined and birds can be uniquely color banded to monitor movements of individuals during censuses. Proper extraction techniques from mist nets, handling methods, color banding, measuring, and aging of shorebirds are all learned through direct involvement with the process. Other skills acquired include sampling invertebrate populations, understanding shorebird molt, quantifying shorebird behavior, and making color bands.

This program is geared toward students, biology teachers, refuge managers, and volunteers. No prior experience with shorebirds is necessary; just a keen interest and enthusiasm to learn about the how-to's of studying shorebird migration.

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**Cost:** \$1750, including room

*For more information about "Fall Shorebird Migration," or any of the other programs offered by the Field Biology Training Program, please call or write:*

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## BARTHOLOMEW'S COBBLE: BIRDING THE SOUTHWESTERN CORNER OF MASSACHUSETTS

by Don Reid

To naturalists and birders of Berkshire County, Bartholomew's Cobble is one of the premier birding spots in the Berkshires. I can assure you that although I am responsible for this property, I make this statement without any bias.

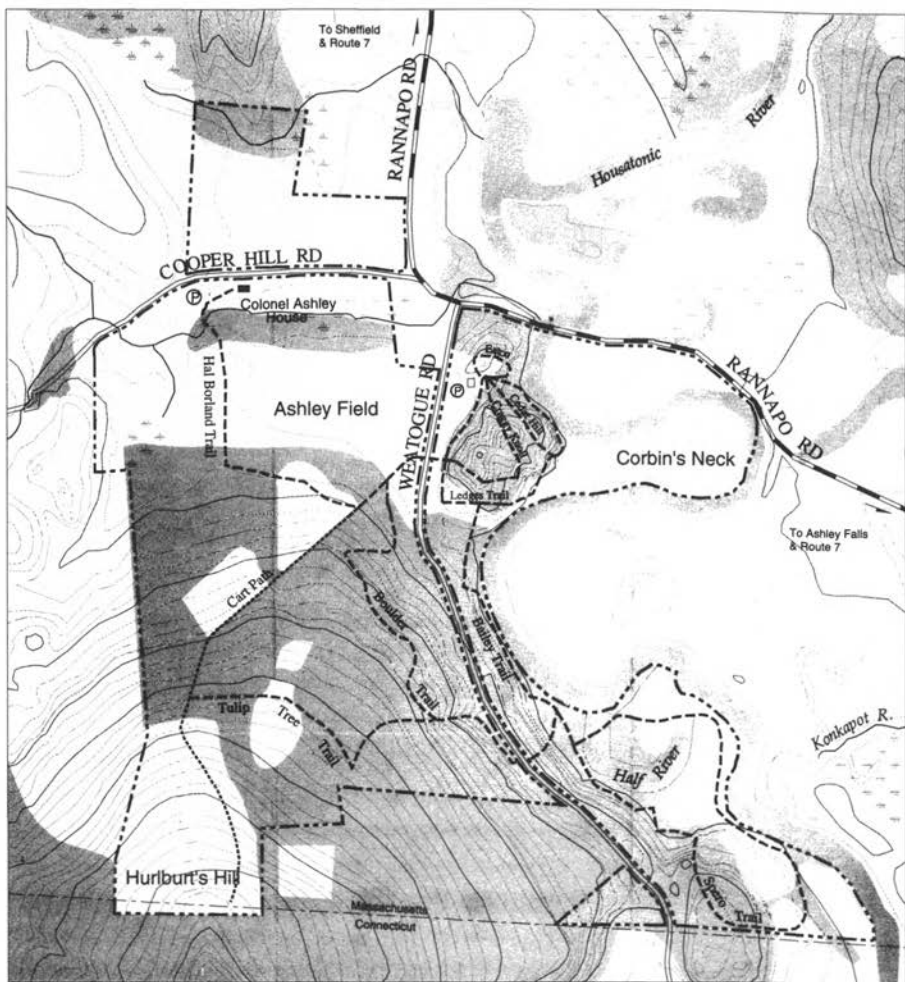
Bartholomew's Cobble Reservation is nestled at the foot of the Taconic Mountains in the Housatonic River Valley along the Housatonic River. Look on your map for the town of Ashley Falls (i.e., the southern part of the town of Sheffield) near the southwest corner of Massachusetts. When you find it, you have found the location of Bartholomew's Cobble. As the raven flies, it is a few feet from Connecticut (actually, a few acres of the Reservation are in Connecticut) and five miles from New York State.

To reach the Reservation from the north, take Route 7 south from Pittsfield, Lenox, or Stockbridge through Great Barrington to Sheffield. Go 1.6 miles past Sheffield center, and bear right on Route 7A. After one-half mile, go right on Rannapo Road at the railroad tracks. Go 1.5 miles on this road, past Cooper Hill Road, to Weatogue Road on the right. Take this right, and after 100 yards, turn left into the Reservation parking lot.

From Connecticut follow Route 7A north (bear left off Route 7 just before the Massachusetts state line in Canaan) to Ashley Falls. Turn left at the flashing light. Follow signs onto Rannapo Road. After crossing the Housatonic River, turn left onto Weatogue Road and into the parking lot as described above. No matter which way you come from, you will have no problem finding Bartholomew's Cobble. There are so many signs that it is embarrassing.

Bartholomew's Cobble is a 275-plus-acre wildlife reservation owned and managed by The Trustees of Reservations, a statewide Massachusetts land trust. The property acquired its name for two reasons: 1) a family named Bartholomew farmed the land in the mid-1800s, and 2) it has two unique geological formations, or outcrops, composed of limestone and marble. Outcrops like these in New England are referred to as cobbles. Hence, Bartholomew's Cobble. These unusual formations have ribs of much harder quartzite running through them, making them resistant to erosion despite the presence of the limestone. This is why they now dominate the local landscape. Also, the limestone and marble generate more alkaline (sweeter) soil than is typical in New England. Thus, the Reservation has a greater diversity of fern species than almost anywhere in North America.

Bartholomew's Cobble is here for your enjoyment (within reason) and for the protection of a great diversity of habitats and the natural life found within them. The Cobble brings together things birders recognize as crucial to a great



# Bartholomew's Cobble

A Property of THE TRUSTEES OF RESERVATIONS

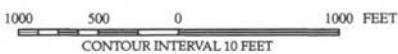
Ashley Falls, Massachusetts



### LEGEND

- Non-forested Reservation Property
- Forested Reservation Property
- Non-forested Private Property
- Forested Private Property
- Cart Path
- Hiking Trails
- Parking
- Visitor's Center

SCALE 1:7 200  
(1 inch = 600 feet)



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET

This map is a product of the Geographic Information System of The Trustees of Reservations.

Data compiled and digitized from 1:24 000 scale USGS topographic maps.

Approximate boundary and trail locations were obtained using Global Positioning System (GPS).

June 1994



**The Trustees**  
of Reservations

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birding experience. Its diversity of ecosystems and habitats is impressive, with an abundance of field, edge, forest, and water. Its location along the Housatonic River puts it on a significant flyway for a great variety of bird species. Over 240 species have been recorded at Bartholomew's Cobble since its acquisition by The Trustees of Reservations in 1946.

Approximately half of the Reservation is managed specifically for grassland species through a combination of pasturing, controlled haying, and mowing. The Reservation's elevation begins at 600 feet along the river and ends in high fields and forest at 1150 feet above sea level.

Due to the Reservation's elevation and location, Bartholomew's Cobble is considered in a warm mesoclimate of the Berkshires. Winters are usually milder and shorter than in other areas of the county. Spring arrives sooner; summer and fall tend to linger. When you consider all these features, plus four miles of well-maintained trails to get you around, it is most certainly an enjoyable, productive, and rewarding place to observe birds and other wildlife.

There is a fee at peak seasons (April through October) if you are not a member of The Trustees of Reservations: \$3 for adults and \$1 for children six to twelve years old. At other times of year a donation is requested.

### **Birding the Cobble**

Birding at Bartholomew's Cobble is good at any time of year. Spring, summer, and fall are certainly the best, but winter brings many surprises and is unfortunately a season often overlooked because birders stay close to the coast. Much of Bartholomew's Cobble Reservation is along the Housatonic River and can be wet in the early spring. Bring suitable footwear at this time of year.

**Spring.** When heading toward the Reservation along Rannapo Road you will have several opportunities to observe the Housatonic River. Stop at locations that offer you clear views, and look for migrating waders, waterfowl, gulls, and terns. The greatest diversity of species occurs in the spring when water may flood the fields along the river. Gull species to expect will be Herring, Great-Black-backed, and Ring-billed gulls. The first record of a Caspian Tern at Bartholomew's Cobble was made just east of the Rannapo Road bridge in the spring of 1993. There are two places on the east side of the bridge to park and observe the river.

Duck species can and will be variable along the river and the oxbows associated with it. Canada Goose, Black Duck, and Mallard are abundant. Wood Ducks are abundant, especially in and around oxbow areas later in the spring. Other species you may see are Blue-winged Teal, Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Ring-necked Duck, Common Goldeneye, and Hooded and Common mergansers.

Early spring (March and April) is a good time to find Bald Eagles along the Housatonic River. Perhaps as more eagles are successfully fledged from the



Quabbin area, they will come along the river in search of proper habitat to feed and (dare I say it?) nest some day. For whatever reason, they are becoming a much commoner sight at any time of year. Osprey is also a common spring migrant. When along the river, keep alert for the occasional Double-crested Cormorant. After checking out the river from the road, enter the Reservation, park your car, and begin to explore the Cobble on foot.

The entrance to Bartholomew's Cobble will put you on Eaton Trail or Ledges Trail (see map). Eaton Trail will bring you to the top of the north cobble through old field growth such as cedar and young pines. This is not an especially productive birding trail, but House Wrens, occasional Cedar Waxwings, and a beautiful view of the Housatonic River await your enjoyment at the top.

Ledges Trail is a self-interpretive trail that will guide you around the base of the south cobble. Cedar Hill and Craggy Knoll trails bring you over the top of the south cobble and allow you to explore the pine-hemlock forest making up this area. Birds to be expected are Brown Creeper, White and Red-breasted nuthatches, Tufted Titmouse, Hairy and Downy woodpeckers, and Solitary and Red-eyed vireos. The elongated feeding holes of the Pileated Woodpecker begin to make their appearance along this trail. With some luck, you may get a glimpse of a Sharp-shinned or Cooper's hawk. These accipiters use the cobbles as their feeding stations. Feathers along the trails attest to their presence even if you do not get a look. Both of these threatened species have nested at Bartholomew's Cobble and probably still do; juvenile Sharpshins have been seen somewhat regularly.

You may run across what seem to be crazed Black-capped Chickadees pestering you along many of the Cobble's trails. For time immemorial visitors have fed these birds, which will not hesitate to make you aware of that fact.

Off Ledges Trail you will find Corbin's Neck (a fifteen-acre pastured peninsula), Bailey Trail, and Spero Loop. All will bring you along the river. Bailey Trail and Spero Loop are without question the best trails for warblers in mid-May and perhaps for birding in general. Where Bailey Trail and Spero Loop meet, you will find an interesting mixture of habitat. To the east, near the river, is shrub swamp, and on the other side of the trail to the west is mixed deciduous and pine-hemlock forest. Here you will find Yellow Warblers, Common Yellowthroats, and Red-winged Blackbirds within a few yards of Black-throated Green and Black-throated Blue warblers, and Solitary and Red-eyed vireos. This is a good spot for Cape May and Blackburnian warblers.

The warbler migration through Bartholomew's Cobble can be intense, prolonged, and somewhat earlier compared with more northern areas in the Berkshires. Alas, we all know how fickle these little feathered flashes of color and song can be. Bartholomew's Cobble is well known in the area for its diversity and numbers of warbler species. I will not dwell on warblers except to



say that on the right day, at the right place, under the right weather conditions, in the right light . . . well, you know how it goes.

**Summer.** Bartholomew's Cobble has two of the largest Turkey Vulture roosting sites in the Berkshires. Kettles with over fifty birds are not uncommon. From the parking lot at 9:00 AM (you can nearly set your watch to it), they will begin to show themselves. Keep your eyes open for a Black Vulture mixed in with them. The first confirmed sighting of a Black Vulture in southern Berkshire County was made in 1993, with second and third sightings in 1994.

Summer brings with it a great diversity of nesting species to be enjoyed at the Cobble. If you take a walk on Corbin's Neck, you will get close-up views of the hundreds of Bank Swallows that nest in cavities along the steep mud banks on this section of the river. Look them over closely; you can also find Tree Swallows, Barn Swallows, and occasionally Northern Rough-winged and Cliff swallows mixed in with the feeding flocks of Bank Swallows.

An often overlooked way to bird Bartholomew's Cobble is by canoe. A good place to put in can be found at the northwest side of the Rannapo Road bridge. It is a short walk down to the river on a very well-used path. During the late summer, a surprising number of shorebirds feed on the mud flats, especially during low water conditions, when the mud flats become much more accessible. You should look for Least, Solitary, and the very common Spotted sandpiper. Both yellowlegs species are possible as are Semipalmated Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, and Black-bellied Plover. Also look for Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Green Heron, and an occasional Black-crowned Night-Heron or Little Blue Heron in late summer or early fall. Get that canoe in the water! The Housatonic River around Bartholomew's Cobble is flat water and provides some of the most enjoyable canoeing in all of Berkshire County.

Because approximately half the Reservation is managed for grassland species, you will have no problem finding Bobolinks and occasionally Eastern Meadowlarks on Corbin's Neck and Hurlburt's Hill (on the west side of Weatogue Road). Hurlburt's Hill is the Reservation's highest point.

Along Bailey Trail in the summer you can expect to hear if not see Black-billed Cuckoo. But this bird is becoming increasingly rare in the area, and any sighting reports would be very much appreciated. Bailey Trail will also offer you a great diversity of species in the summer: vireos, grosbeaks, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, flycatchers, warblers (including Louisiana and Northern waterthrushes), and occasionally Red-bellied Woodpecker. The latter is not uncommon around Bartholomew's Cobble, and a nest search has begun in earnest. Also look for this species around the Colonel Ashley House along Cooper Hill Road (part of Bartholomew's Cobble Management Unit) and around residences abutting the Reservation.

The Colonel Ashley House can be reached on Hal Borland Trail, which takes you through both forest and field. Along the way look for the now

common Wild Turkey, which can be found nearly anywhere on the Reservation. Also expect Ruffed Grouse, Northern Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, Common Yellowthroat, Gray Catbird, and Rufous-sided Towhee along this trail.

Taking the Bailey Trail south along the river will bring you onto Spero Loop. This trail will lead you by ponds, floodplain forest, and river edge with cottonwood, black willow, and silver maple. Look for Warbling Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Least Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher, and Pileated Woodpecker. The loop will lead you back to Bailey Trail, from which you can then pick up Tulip Tree Trail, which begins on the west side of Weatogue Road. This trail brings you through dense forest and ultimately to Hurlburt's Hill. Along Tulip Tree Trail you should encounter Hermit Thrush, Veery, American Redstart, and Ovenbird. The Tulip Tree Trail is named after yellow poplar (tulip) trees that grow about half-way up the three-quarter-mile trail. These trees are a rare sight this far north.

When you reach Hurlburt's Hill, you can expect some of the most spectacular views of the Housatonic River Valley found anywhere in southern Berkshire County. You can also expect large numbers of nesting Bobolinks, Eastern Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, and perhaps a few pairs of Eastern Meadowlarks. At the very top of Hurlburt's Hill is a bench on the Connecticut state line from which to enjoy this pastoral setting. Hurlburt's Hill is highly recommended! After a much-deserved rest you can head down the Cart Path Trail with its variety of field and edge habitat. This will take you back to the road and the parking lot, with chances to veer back onto other trails already mentioned.

**Fall.** Bartholomew's Cobble is an exciting place for raptor migration. Many raptors migrate along the Taconic Ridge and Housatonic River Valley, often putting down to rest or feed at or near Bartholomew's Cobble. When temperatures rise in early to mid-morning, these birds use the many thermals generated from fields and pastures located on the Reservation. They are observed most often over Hurlburt's Hill, from Ashley Field across from the entrance to Bartholomew's Cobble, and from the parking lot itself. Respectable kettles of Broad-winged Hawks (a nesting species on the Reservation) can be found around mid-September. Seen with some frequency are Red-shouldered Hawk (another nesting species), Bald Eagle, Osprey, American Kestrel, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, and the less common Northern Goshawk, Merlin, and Peregrine Falcon.

The Housatonic River Valley is also a significant flyway for the Common Nighthawk, and a nighthawk watch to collect data on these birds is held each year from August 21 through September 5, from 6-8 PM. Anybody who wants to volunteer in this count is greatly appreciated.

**Winter.** Birding Bartholomew's Cobble in winter can also be rewarding. Red-tailed Hawks can always be expected along with a large population of

wintering Eastern Bluebirds. Either of these species viewed against a freshly fallen snow makes a visit worthwhile.

The Southern Berkshire Christmas Bird Count is based out of Bartholomew's Cobble at the Colonel Ashley House. It appears that this area produces the greatest number and diversity of wintering birds in the Berkshires.

Bartholomew's Cobble is also well known for rarities in winter, from Northern Shrike and Rough-legged Hawk to an occasional white-winged gull species if the river remains open. Ravens are not uncommon in the area during late fall and winter. This is the season to expect the unexpected.

### Beyond Birds

Bartholomew's Cobble is very well known by botanists. Over 800 species of vascular plants and a diversity of fern species that is perhaps unequaled in North America can be big draws for the look-at-the-ground crowd. The Reservation is perhaps best known to local naturalists for the incredible bloom of spring woodland wildflowers in late April and early May.

If you are a person who enjoys a leisurely exploration of the natural world, you should plan on spending the day in this remarkable place. A Natural History/Visitors' Center onsite contains natural-history exhibits, a fifty-seat lecture hall, and the Regional Ecologist's office.

**DON REID** is Western Regional Ecologist for The Trustees of Reservations. His primary responsibility is the management of Bartholomew's Cobble Reservation and the interpretation of its unique natural history. Before joining The Trustees of Reservation, Don was a teacher and naturalist at the Massachusetts Audubon Society's Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary on Cape Cod. In that position Don led over 100 trips a year to the Monomoy Islands National Wildlife Refuge, interpreting barrier-island ecology, with an emphasis on shorebird identification and their life histories. Prior to that, he was a naturalist with the Nature Conservancy's Arizona Chapter at Ramsey Canyon Preserve and several other sites in the state. Don leads natural-history tours across North America on a freelance basis. His area of specialty is the southwest, and he freely admits to being a "desert rat at heart." For questions or any assistance, call him at 413-229-8600, or write Bartholomew's Cobble Reservation, P.O. Box 128, Ashley Falls, Massachusetts 01222.

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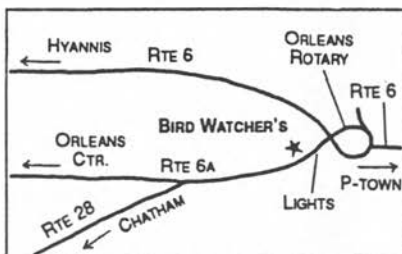
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## PICK UP YOUR BINOCULARS AND RUN!

by Wayne R. Petersen

Recently, birding guru Pete Dunne (i.e., of Cape May fame) wrote a short piece for *WildBird* magazine (May 1995) on the techniques of "bird-a-thoning." Pete's ever colorful coupling of words included an apt description of a bird-a-thon as "the fiscal hybrid of one of birding's most cherished institutions" — the "Big Day."

For most readers the idea of birding for the purpose of raising money for conservation probably is not a difficult concept to accept. However, the reality of asking people for fiscal sponsorship, regardless of the worthiness of the cause, is not the average birder's idea of how to have a good time. There can be little doubt that the increasing number of evening phone calls, requests by mail, and in-your-face solicitations that most of us receive these days do little to improve our attitude toward such activities. But there is another side to bird-a-thoning—the birding side.

My interest and involvement in the subject includes the fact that I have been passionately involved with birds and birding for forty years; have participated in more Big Days, Century Runs, and what have you than I care to recall; have been privileged to be a member of a winning bird-a-thon team in New Jersey Audubon's World Series of Birding; have willingly joined in raising large amounts of money for several well-known and prestigious conservation organizations; have coordinated the Massachusetts Audubon Society's Bird-a-thon for the past five years; and have had more fun and seen more birds in the process of all this than I would ever have thought possible. It is the last point that is the real focus of this commentary.

My intent is not to promote bird-a-thoning per se, but rather to underscore some birding realities, specifically here in Massachusetts—the turf with which I am personally most familiar. To do this, I invite the reader to consider a few statistics that have emerged from the Massachusetts Audubon Society's (MAS) Annual Bird-a-thon during the period 1990-1994. These figures may be particularly useful for new birders who are less familiar with the Bay State's birding possibilities, as well as for more seasoned experts who may be challenged to find creative ways to use the numbers in guiding their future spring birding efforts.

The comments that follow specifically pertain only to single 24-hour periods during the middle two weeks in May. Twenty-four hours is the time allowed for doing the annual MAS Bird-a-thon, as well as for all Big Day events that are officially registered with the American Birding Association—the birding community's answer to the National Olympic Committee. The primary difference between the MAS event and most Big Days, however, is the MAS

Bird-a-thon is held from 6:00 PM to 6:00 PM instead of from midnight to midnight.

The following numbers have been compiled from the MAS Bird-a-thon during the five-year period of 1990-1994:

- the cumulative species total has ranged from 236 to 259 species
- the average cumulative species total is 244 species
- the grand total of bird species recorded is 274
- among the most unusual species recorded are Little Egret, Black-tailed Godwit, and Fork-tailed Flycatcher, along with lesser rarities such as Sandhill Crane, Yellow-throated Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, and Summer Tanager.

Most Massachusetts birders may agree that these totals represent some impressive statewide birding statistics. Indeed, I wish I had seen all the birds compiled during that period! More amazing, however, is the fact that these statistics were compiled in only five 24-hour periods. In just five days, the Bird-a-thon has recorded ninety percent of the 304 species listed as regularly occurring on the MAS Yearly Checklist of Massachusetts Birds. To put these numbers in greater perspective, recall that the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee's (MARC) version of the state bird list stands at approximately 450 species. MAS Bird-a-thoners have recorded nearly sixty-one percent of the bird species on the state list. By any standards, these percentages are impressive.

What, if any, are the practical applications of all these totals and percentages? In terms of science, probably none. But from the standpoint of a person interested in seeing lots of birds, especially lots of birds in a short timespan, the possibilities are considerable. Not coincidentally, the MAS Bird-a-thon is conducted on the Friday and Saturday closest to the third weekend in May, which is generally the peak weekend for spring migration in Massachusetts. Think of the possibilities: eleven species of long-legged waders; twenty-seven species of waterfowl; twenty species of shorebirds; eight species of owls; seven species of thrushes; thirty-four species of warblers; and fourteen species of sparrows. These are actual numbers generated by dedicated Bird-a-thoners during the past five years, although not by single parties of observers.

The MAS Bird-a-thon is predicated on both cooperation and competition. On the one hand, each MAS sanctuary is permitted to field an "official" birding team that may not exceed fifty birders, although there is no limit to the number of people who may get sponsors and go birding on their own for the Bird-a-thon. The members of each "official" sanctuary team may cover the state in parties of two or more and in any way they like, as long as all Bird-a-thon guidelines are adhered to: the cumulative total of their efforts represents the sanctuary's final species total. At the other extreme, each sanctuary competes with all other sanctuaries to record the greatest number of bird species, along with trying to raise as much money as possible. Because the Bird-a-thon is driven by (often



intense!) competition, the final lists are carefully scrutinized. The end result is a compilation that is as accurate as it can be.

Many hard-core birders agree that participating in a well-orchestrated and successful Big Day can be among the high points of a birding year. For example, much of the success of a highly publicized bird-a-thon event like New Jersey's World Series of Birding is driven by the desire of birding zealots to eclipse previous Big Day birding records in New Jersey. Even though the format of the MAS event does not permit MAS Bird-a-thon results to be applied to official Big Day rules, the premise and potential are still the same.

The American Birding Association's published high count for a Massachusetts Big Day record is 161 species. However, in 1975, an especially resourceful birding team managed to locate 175 species in Essex County. Their tally is unofficial because not all ABA Big Day rules and guidelines were met. But that is not the point. A look at the MAS Bird-a-thon stat sheet for the last five years suggests that it is possible to see many more bird species in Massachusetts in a day than 175! So, why doesn't some enterprising team of hot-shot birders use these Bird-a-thon data to devise a route and a schedule that will exceed all previous and venerable Massachusetts Big Day records? Here is a chance to bestow upon the venerable Bay State yet another birding accolade! All it takes is for someone to pick up the binoculars and run with them.

**UPDATE:** As an update to this article, the 1995 MAS Bird-a-thon eclipsed all previous records. This year the Blue Hills Trailside Museum winning team collectively recorded 236 species, and the statewide total generated by all team lists was 253 species. These numbers further underscore the potential for recording an impressive number of different species in Massachusetts in a single 24-hour period.

**WAYNE R. PETERSEN** is staff ornithologist at the Massachusetts Audubon Society in Lincoln and a member of the board of directors of *Bird Observer*.

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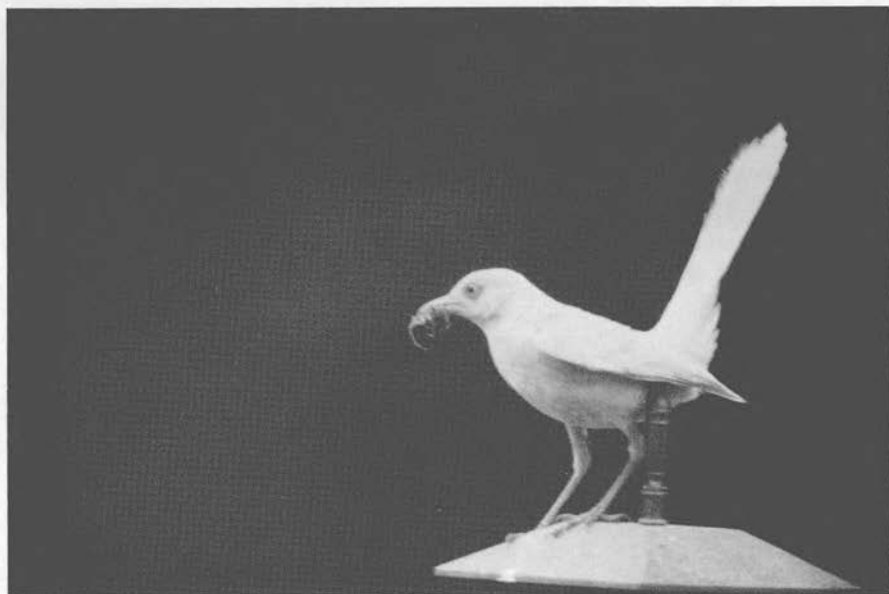
## AN ABERRANT MOCKINGBIRD

by William E. Davis, Jr.

On July 16, 1993, while driving along Summer Street in Foxboro, I saw an all-white bird fly across a garden and land next to the road. When I returned, I found the bird hopping from fence post to fence post along a wire fence. The bird was essentially white, but its shape and behavior—it flicked its wings—identified it as a Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*). I went home to get binoculars and a camera and returned to find the white bird flying across the street in the company of a normally plumaged mockingbird. The white bird landed on the roof of a house at 100 Summer Street. I talked to the owner of the house, William Peveronis, and learned that the bird had been present since mid-April and that it had a nest with young in a yew less than two feet from where I stood. He showed me the nest, which contained four phenotypically (in appearance) normal chicks, several days old, which opened their yellow-lined gapes when we examined the nest. I returned to my car and watched first the normal adult and then the white bird entering the nest shrub carrying food. The white bird was more furtive, approaching the nest from the rear of the shrub after considerable hesitation and looking about, and was also the more attentive of the pair, feeding the young more frequently, suggesting that it was the female.

On close inspection the white bird proved to be actually slightly cream-colored, or off-white, rather than pure white, but showed no hint of normal feather pattern whatsoever. The rectrices (tail feathers) were frowsy. The legs and bill were also abnormal in color—a uniform grayish pink, rather than black—but looked pink in photographs. The eye color was the normal mockingbird bright yellow or orange-yellow. My descriptions of soft-part and feather coloration were corroborated by Brian Cassie on July 24.

This white bird was not an albino because it had normal eye pigmentation. According to Buckley (1982), "albinism is, no more and no less, the complete absence of *all* pigmentation, resulting in white feathers . . . , pink eyes . . . , and light bills and legs/feet. Albinism is all or nothing, and a bird can no more be a 'partial albino' than a female mammal 'partially pregnant.'" Using Buckley's classification, the bird is *leucistic* and hence, a *leucino*. Leucism is the complete loss of a particular pigment, in this case melanin, and hence the bird is properly called a *nonmelanic leucino*. The cause of the abnormal feather, bill, and leg coloration may be genetic (the pigmentation for eyes, soft parts, and feathers may be controlled by different genes or combinations of genes). If the aberrations in this bird are genetic, then the genes are probably recessive, because the young were phenotypically normal. The aberrations could result, however, from ontogenetic (developmental) factors or other congenital



*Aberrant Mockingbird, July 1993*

*Photos by William Peveronis*

problems.

Studies of "albinism" (including albinos, leucinos, and a broad spectrum of other pigment abnormalities) in North American birds dates back at least to Ruthven Deane's first paper on that topic (1876); a subsequent paper of his (Deane 1879) on "albinism" reported a pair of pure white mockingbirds from Alabama and a nearly white mockingbird from Florida. He does not mention whether the pure white birds had pink or normally colored eyes. More recently, Ross (1963) found nearly 500 "albino" birds in a survey of many of the east's major museums and the literature. Of the 500, he records thirty-two mockingbirds—one "dilute" specimen, five pure white birds, and twenty-six in "partial albino plumage." Ross states that of the latter, eighteen were the progeny of a single pair originally reported by McIlhenny (1940). However, in that 1940 paper McIlhenny states that the eighteen birds were full albinos, and specifically notes the absence of any pigmentation in the eyes. McIlhenny also noted that none of the albino mockingbirds survived to maturity; they seemed particularly vulnerable to predation, at least partially because of their defective eyesight. They were inactive during the bright part of the day, and, as nestlings, apparently could not see well enough to take food from the parents. One flew into a wire screen, seriously injuring itself. Four were severely injured or killed by the adult birds. When the adult female died, the male secured a new mate, and all further offspring were phenotypically normal, leading to the following conclusions: (1) this particular albinism was genetic and recessive, and (2) both original parents were heterozygous (carried dominant normal and recessive albinistic alleles). These conclusions are further supported by the fact that none of the phenotypically normal young produced any albino offspring in subsequent years.

McIlhenny's study suggests that loss of eye pigment is severely debilitating, and the fact that the white mockingbird in Foxboro was able to survive to maturity and find a mate may reflect the fact that its eye pigmentation was normal. It is difficult to determine from published reports whether the presence or absence of eye color plays such a significant role, because museum study skins often are not annotated for eye color, and most reports of "albino" birds similarly fail to report on this important character. Buckley (1982) notes that leucism in its various manifestations is far more common than albinism.

Arrangements to color band the young birds were finalized on July 27, but a nest check that day revealed that the young had fledged or been predated. Neither the white bird nor the young were seen again. Mockingbirds fledge in about twelve to fourteen days. Because eight days elapsed between the initial and July 24 nest inspections and because the chicks may have been four to six days old when first observed, it seems probable that the young fledged.

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WILLIAM E. DAVIS, JR., is president of Bird Observer. He wishes to thank Brian Cassie for assistance in field work and Paul A. Buckley and John C. Kricher for helpful suggestions on the manuscript. Special thanks are extended to William Peveronis for his help and for permission to print his two photographs of the leucistic mockingbird.

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## THE BALD EAGLE IN MASSACHUSETTS: A PERSPECTIVE

by William J. Davis

The Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) is arguably the best known and most highly regarded wild animal in North America. Not only is it the national symbol of the United States, it is also featured as an emblem for countless organizations, businesses, and agencies. Few animals are as immediately recognizable as an adult Bald Eagle with its bright white head and tail, bright yellow beak and feet, and dark brown wing and body plumage. The six-and-a-half to seven foot wingspan only adds to the awe-inspiring appearance of the bird. Up close, the piercing eyes, furrowed brow, menacingly hooked beak, and talons instantly command attention and respect. Small wonder that in 1782 the Founding Fathers selected the Bald Eagle as our national bird. Its size and appearance personify the qualities of strength, tenacity, and independence, all of which were important values for a new nation.

Sadly, the Bald Eagle fell victim to a combination of America's growing pains and ignorance. As the colonies expanded and grew, the eagle's habitat was destroyed to make way for increasing agricultural demands. With the farmland came people and livestock. Eagles were shot on sight, bounties were paid, and the regal birds were driven out of their once native haunts, following the eastern mountain lion and timber wolf toward extinction. In Massachusetts the scenario was much the same. Colonization was followed by westward expansion, land-clearing, and exploitation of wildlife resources. Gone were the Wild Turkey and beaver, while Bald Eagles maintained a tenuous hold to the land, saved, in part, by their fondness for remote and inaccessible places. Eighty-five percent of the land area in Massachusetts was cleared for farming, with only steeper slopes and poorer soils spared by the plow.

The Civil War interrupted the human progress and expansion that had occurred over nearly 100 years. Attention shifted from agriculture to industry, and many farms were abandoned for wage-paying jobs in city factories. Nature began reclaiming much of the agricultural land, and wildlife received a reprieve from human encroachment. Eagles were still persecuted, however, and many birds were shot in the interest of "protecting" animals and small children.

In the early 1900s suburban expansion encroached again into existing wildlife habitat. A swelling human population and more interest in outdoor recreation put increased pressure on waterfront property, driving wetlands-dependent animals away from many of the larger drainages and water bodies in the state. The last suspected eagle nesting, suspected because none of the historic nesting reports were ever properly documented, is believed to have occurred at Snake Pond in Sandwich in 1905. After that time, the Bald Eagle

was considered extirpated from Massachusetts as a breeding bird.

As the saying goes, what followed next was "some good news, and some bad news" for the Bald Eagle. The good news was the creation of Quabbin Reservoir, 25,000 acres of water surrounded and interspersed with 55,000 acres of watershed lands and islands. This man-made reservoir represented the largest unbroken tract of wildlife habitat in southern New England and should have been naturally occupied by Bald Eagles seeking new nesting territories.

Unfortunately, the bad news was the advent and widespread use of organochlorine pesticides, most infamous among them dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane, or DDT. The post-World War II era saw extensive aerial spraying of pesticides to control agricultural and forestry insects and for mosquito control in populated areas. As the chemicals entered the food chain, they quickly built up to dangerous levels in the tissues of larger animals and top-of-the-food-chain predators.

In the Bald Eagle, DDT was ingested after having accumulated in the tissues of fish and other prey that the eagle fed upon. DDT was metabolized within the eagle's system, and the resulting metabolite interfered with the eagle's ability to produce calcium, a main ingredient in the formation of eggshells. The resulting eggs, therefore, were thin-shelled and brittle, unable to withstand the rigors of incubation. The eggs broke under the weight of the incubating adult birds, killing the developing chick within. Bald Eagles are naturally slow breeders, producing an average of one chick per nesting pair annually. In many areas of the eagle's range, the introduction of DDT reduced chick production to zero, as no young were being successfully fledged from traditionally active nests. With no young eagles being recruited into the population and with the established adults aging beyond their reproductively viable years, overall populations began to decline. Eagles became absent or their numbers greatly reduced in some areas, resulting in endangered status being declared over the southern U.S. range (below the 40th parallel) of the eagle in 1967.

DDT was banned from use in the United States on December 31, 1972. The Endangered Species Act was passed in 1973. The Act allowed certain distinct populations of a species to be listed as Endangered or Threatened. Surveys in the early 1970s revealed critically low populations of eagles in areas over much of the northern part of the bird's range. In 1978 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) listed the Bald Eagle as Endangered in forty-three of the lower forty-eight states and Threatened in the remaining five (Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Washington, and Oregon).

With the Endangered Species Act in place, the goal of restoring Endangered populations of animals and plants became a priority with the USFWS. In 1976 the nation's Bicentennial Year, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) began the first Bald Eagle reintroduction project in the country using the technique of hacking. Hacking,

adopted from the sport of falconry, is a process of releasing birds of prey to the wild. As applied by the NYSDEC, hacking involved bringing young Bald Eagles to New York from active nests in Alaska and raising the birds on a man-made platform, in man-made nests, overlooking an area of suitable habitat. The birds would be cared for by human attendants, who would have minimal contact with their charges. When able to fly, at the age of ten to twelve weeks, the eagles would be released to the wild; presumably at this point they would have an attachment to their new home. The NYSDEC project reached a preliminary goal when in 1982 the first two eagles, which had been released in 1976, were found nesting in New York.

Following this early success, other states, in cooperation with the USFWS, began hacking projects of their own. The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife actively hacked eagles at Quabbin Reservoir from 1982 through 1988, receiving single chicks from two-chick nests in Michigan, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia. A total of forty-one young birds were released to the wild from a tower situated on the Prescott Peninsula. The Massachusetts project had its first success in 1989, when two pairs of nesting eagles at Quabbin produced a total of three chicks. Since that time the Massachusetts nesting eagle population has grown to nine pairs, five of which are found at Quabbin, three on the Connecticut River, and one at the Assawompsett Pond system in Plymouth County. A total of thirty-six wild chicks have fledged from these nests and represent the next generation of eagles in Massachusetts, a generation that we hope will mature, pair off, establish territories, and nest on their own. The goal is to achieve a self-sustaining population of Bald Eagles in Massachusetts, throughout the Northeast, and across the bird's entire range.

This goal is being realized as witnessed by the growing Massachusetts eagle population and increases in numbers of nesting eagles in Maine, New York, and in the Great Lakes states. Connecticut and New Hampshire have benefited from eagle restoration projects, and each has recently established nesting pairs. The Connecticut eagles are believed to have originated from the Massachusetts hacking effort, and the New Hampshire pair comprises a New York hacked bird and a bird produced from a wild nest in Maine.

On the national level the Bald Eagle population has recovered dramatically. A 1963 survey of the lower forty-eight states revealed 417 pairs of Bald Eagles. A similar survey conducted in 1993 counted 4016 pairs, indicating that the Bald Eagle is doubling its breeding population every six to seven years! Here in the northern states region, of which Massachusetts is a part, the numbers are equally encouraging. As recently as 1984, there were 682 known pairs of eagles. That number has jumped to 1602 pairs as of 1993.

As of this writing, eight of the nine known Massachusetts pairs of nesting Bald Eagles are tending their nests and incubating their clutch of eggs. Mechanisms are in place to protect and monitor each site in cooperation with the

respective landowners and managers. When chicks are approximately five weeks of age, each nest will be visited, and the nest tree climbed so that the young can be banded and given a brief physical exam by veterinarians from the Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine. This is the only human contact the young eagles should have over a lifetime that could span thirty years.

Problems persist in the environment: heavy metals and chemicals are present, habitat is at a premium, and thoughtless and unknowing people still shoot and harass eagles and other protected species of wildlife. Fortunately, however, there is a growing environmental awareness, and with it, growing support for the conservation of wildlife and the habitat that sustains it. People realize that we too are a part of the environment, and while we are the most adaptable inhabitant on earth and have the greatest ability to alter the land, water, and air that surround us, we are no less dependent on these resources for our very existence than are less highly evolved forms of life. The Bald Eagle shows us what can happen when we display careless disregard for the environment and shows us that we have the ability to make amends for past mistakes. The lesson of the Bald Eagle should be passed on and well remembered.

**WILLIAM J. DAVIS** is a wildlife biologist and the eagle project leader for the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife in Westboro.

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## BOOK REVIEW: *Shadowbirds: A Quest for Rails*

by Wayne R. Petersen

*Shadowbirds: A Quest for Rails* by William Burt. 1994. New York: Lyons & Burford. \$25.00.

Certain bird groups, such as waterfowl, birds of prey, and shorebirds, lend themselves to magnificent description. Others, such as thrushes, wood-warblers, and buntings, are often characterized in sentimental and flowery, if not gushy, prose. Each has its place in the ornithological literature; however, neither style is to be found between the covers of Bill Burt's *Shadowbirds*.

*Shadowbirds* treats the reader to something very different—an evocative and sensitive blend of literary genius that incorporates the finest elements of a historical novel, a gripping mystery, and a personal quest, along with a remarkable selection of photographs and observations of some of North America's least known and hard-to-find bird species.

As the author states in the introduction, "This book is about a quest for photographs of two birds, the black rail and the yellow rail: two shadowy little birds of the dark that live in marshes and are very, very hard to find—and still harder to photograph." While this, indeed, describes *Shadowbirds*, it belies some of the greater treasures awaiting the reader. Perhaps most importantly, it fails to impart the almost spiritual fashion in which Burt portrays the natural history of these mouselike *Gruiforms*.

Rails in general, but Black and Yellow rails in particular, are certainly among the most understated of the world's birds. Living as they do in salt meadows and prairie marshes—habitats featuring sameness and uniformity—and silent and obscure most of the year, they are the perfect subjects for a mystery and a quest. Bill Burt's exceptional knowledge of, and unabashed passion for, these feathered mites is abundantly exposed in this delightful book.

Beginning on a sultry June evening on a Maryland salt meadow, Burt immediately introduces the reader to the Black Rail and to Judge John H. Clark, the first ornithologist to find (in 1884) the species' nest in Connecticut—still the only New England state in which the Black Rail has ever unequivocally nested. Besides the Black Rail and Judge Clark, we learn of other denizens of those vast green swards bordering the eastern shore of Chesapeake Bay. The Marsh and Sedge wrens, the Sharp-tailed and Henslow's sparrows, and those two most elegant of rails—the King and Clapper—are described with vibrant clarity, just as are the grasses and sedges that comprise the principal habitat of the tiny Black Rail. And while enabling the reader to sense the exhilaration derived from the fragrance of salt air or to be blistered by the blazing shimmer of the Maryland midday sun, Burt also makes us squirm with his sizzling descriptions

of the ferocity of salt marsh mosquitoes.

Throughout his eloquent accounting of marshes, rails, and their vocalizations, and bittersweet photographic episodes, there are wonderful descriptions of the author's many human encounters made during his pursuit of rails and their portraits. These human encounters include descriptions of folks that all birders meet from time to time, each in his or her own way. Burt's encounters will surely bring a smile to all who have ever stood on a lonely back road listening for owls at night, or who have ever asked a local for directions to an unnamed pond or marsh in an unfamiliar region.

In a parallel, yet very different, scenario, Burt artfully segues the reader from the salt meadows of the mid-Atlantic Coast to the teeming prairie pothole country of North Dakota and Manitoba. In the section of the book titled, "Another Bird, Another Meadow, and a Golden Moon," we meet Reverend P.B. Peabody, arguably the Yellow Rail's most important biographer. But of no less interest, we discover the essence of William Burt's ultimate passion—to find the nest of the Yellow Rail.

The final chapters of *Shadowbirds* provide an analogy between the quest for the nest of the rail and the search for the Holy Grail. We find evocative descriptions of research and pursuit, trial and error, with success almost but not quite achieved. Yet, not unlike the quest for the Holy Grail, the reader is left with the sense that should the author triumph in his quest, life might never be the same for him! Could it be that there are some birds, just as there are some things in life, that are simply better sought for than found?

Regardless of your views on philosophy, read William Burt's *Shadowbirds*, for it is a masterpiece of modern nature writing, both from an ornithological perspective and from an aesthetic and literary point of view.

WAYNE R. PETERSEN serves as department head of At A Glance for *Bird Observer*.

Birders who attended Birders Day 1994 (cosponsored by the Massachusetts Audubon Society and the Brookline Bird Club) enjoyed an opportunity to experience Burt's enthusiasm and accomplishments first hand through full-screen projections of his extraordinary rail slides and his fascinating narrative of endless search and occasional discovery in the vast marshland habitats of the Black and Yellow rail.



### Third State Record of Mountain Bluebird in Massachusetts

On January 27, 1995, I was birding at Cape Cod National Seashore, South Wellfleet. At approximately 10:00 AM, I was driving past the parking lot of the headquarters building when I noticed a quick flash of blue from a bird that took flight from a tree in the middle of the headquarters lawn. At first glance, I thought the bird was an Eastern Bluebird. As the bird flew between trees, however, I could not distinguish any rusty coloring on its underside. As soon as I looked at the bird through binoculars, I realized that it was not an Eastern Bluebird but a Mountain Bluebird. There was no rusty coloring on the underside of the bird, but instead a blue-gray tinge to the upper breast and abdomen. There was also some black streaking at the ends of the primaries. I watched the bird fly between trees around the headquarters building for approximately twenty minutes. At one point, I thought there may have been two individuals, but I dismissed that idea; one Mountain Bluebird was hard to believe but two? I called representatives of the Massachusetts Audubon Society at Lincoln and at the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary (WBWS) hoping they might send someone to confirm the sighting. As people began arriving, observers from WBWS and I saw a group of three birds fly toward and land in a red cedar tree approximately twenty feet away. All three birds were Mountain Bluebirds, two males and one female.

These birds were occupying somewhat open grassland habitat interspersed with short pitch pine and eastern red cedar. In addition to grasses, predominant ground cover included bearberry, broom crowberry, and lichen.

Mountain Bluebirds are distributed throughout western North America. They breed from central Alaska and the Yukon Territory through the western provinces of Canada south through the western United States. Wintering birds occur from the extreme western United States south to northern Mexico and east to central and west Texas (National Geographic Society. 1983. *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*). Mountain Bluebirds are rarely observed east of the Mississippi River and are considered vagrants in Massachusetts (R. Veit and W. Petersen. 1993. *Birds of Massachusetts*). Two records for Massachusetts existed prior to this sighting. The first record was a male captured alive on a boat seventy miles south-southeast of Nantucket on April 28, 1980 (Veit and Petersen 1993). The second record occurred on May 29, 1994. An individual in Rutland had snapped a picture of a Mountain Bluebird in his backyard. He did not realize the importance of this sighting until friends later informed him of the significance (W. Petersen, personal communication). In the past several months, two Mountain Bluebirds were observed in Connecticut. Each sighting consisted

of individual birds. To my knowledge, the sighting reported here is the largest "concentration" of Mountain Bluebirds recorded in Massachusetts, New England, and perhaps east of the Mississippi River.

Edwin Hoopes, Yarmouthport, Massachusetts

### White-Winged Junco

On April 1, 1994, I received a phone call from Gwythian Evil of Marion, who asked whether I would like to take a look at a White-winged Junco. Being a bit skeptical, I drove to her house with only binoculars in hand. I did not realize when she called that this bird had been caught in a mist net and I would have a chance to see the bird in the hand. My initial reaction, when I saw the bird, was that it was a large blue-gray Dark-eyed Junco, with two very distinct bold white wing bars. I could not get over the distinct white bands; it was as if an artist had taken a brush and painted two white lines, one on the median wing coverts and the other on the greater wing coverts, against a slate-gray, almost blue-slate background. On closer examination of the coverts, each feather of the coverts was tipped with white for an estimated width of 1/8 of an inch.

The tail was striking in that the sixth and fifth rectrices were wholly white; the fourth rect was ninety to ninety-five percent white, with a narrow inside band that was dusky gray; and the third rect was white from the shaft outward, while the next one had some white, but was mostly a dusky slate-gray.

After looking at all the white on the tail and placing a phone call to Trevor Lloyd-Evans at Manomet Observatory, I decided to make a quick trip home to get my camera and photograph this unusual find. The possibility of collecting the bird was discussed, but the bander decided against it. Several photographs were taken, and the best were duplicated and sent to the Massachusetts Audubon Society and Manomet Observatory.

What was compelling in reading Alden Miller's book, *Speciation in the Avian Genus Junco*, was the close similarity this bird had with *aikeni*, the race called White-winged Junco, normally confined to the Black Hills in southwestern South Dakota. For example, Miller says that white on the third rectrix occurs in ninety-four percent of *aikeni* and only in two percent of *J. h. hyemalis*. Using the following criteria, wing length of 82 mm, two white wing bars (clear white tips on both greater and median coverts), tail (R5 and R6 all white, R4 seventy percent white, R3 forty-five percent white, and only R1 and R2 dark gray), blue-slate-gray tertials, and narrow paler edges on feathers around throat—along with what Alden Miller found in White-winged Juncos, then one can make an excellent case that this bird was indeed a White-winged Junco.

The contrast between the white in the tail and the white wing bars was apparent and easily observed when the bird was released, for it perched on a low

branch and preened allowing for good views with 10x40 binoculars. I noted a pinkish bill with a dark gray tip. The mantle was slate-gray, almost bluish slate-gray.

There are many examples of juncos having featherware that give the appearance of white wing bars, but, as far as I know, there are no juncos from the northeast that have such definite, distinct white bars as did this bird. This bird was apparently distinct from our eastern race.

Richard Harlow, Marion, Massachusetts

### Murder on the High Seas

Sunset was approaching on a late January day as Jim Berry and I arrived at Andrews Point in Rockport. We had been enjoying a productive day, so when we heard rumors of a Dovekie in the vicinity, we were eager for one more victory. Since the waters in the direction of Halibut Point proved to be virtually alcid-free save for one meager Razorbill, we tried looking in the other direction toward Cathedral Ledge. As we scanned the waves, I spotted what appeared to be a black and white fishing-line bobber. We looked more closely and saw that the bird was a Dovekie.

But our celebratory attitude was short-lived, for as we observed this bird at what was remarkably close range, a Great Black-backed Gull seemed to mistake it for a floating oreo cookie and swooped down upon it. The Dovekie avoided certain doom by executing a swift dive, leaving the gull apparently befuddled. Jim and I watched in horror as the Dovekie surfaced again and the gull, given a second chance at an afternoon snack, did its best impression of a cat and pounced. A painfully long struggle ensued as, for nearly a half-hour, the gull wrestled with the Dovekie, which thrashed helplessly, merely delaying the inevitable. Eventually the unfortunate Dovekie quietly expired. The final affront to both alcid and alcid-watchers was embodied in the gull's ridiculous efforts, which were pathetically unsuccessful, to consume its prey. Nor could this great behemoth of a larid even pick up the much smaller bird; frustrated, it conceded defeat and fled the scene in embarrassment. Another Great Black-backed Gull made a cursory attempt to pluck the Dovekie from the waves, failed, and departed. The distasteful spectacle was over, leaving a minuscule carcass floating forlornly off into the sunset.

Tom Young, Ipswich, Massachusetts

# BIRD SIGHTINGS

## JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1995

### SUMMARY



by Richard A. Forster, Marjorie W. Rines, and Robert H. Stymeist

The winter of 1994-1995 was very mild compared with last year's devastating weather. January's temperature averaged 34.6° at Boston, a full 6° above normal, and tied with 1949 for the 11th warmest in 125 years. A high of 66° was recorded on January 15, breaking the record of 65° set in 1932. This general warmth began in November, and the three months of November through January averaged the warmest since 1931-1932, ranking 3rd warmest in 125 years. Measurable amounts of rain fell on 17 days in January, totaling 4.33 inches, almost an inch above normal. There were only 4.4 inches of snow, 8.0 inches less than average. Another phenomenon of the warm month was two days with thunderstorms, a record for January. Dense fog was noted on five days, more than double the average amount.

February was colder, with an average temperature of 28.5°, 2.8° below normal. Rainfall totaled 2.57 inches, 1.05 inches less than normal. On February 28, rain combined with freezing temperatures, creating a serious ice storm that coated tree limbs with heavy icing, creating a photographer's winter wonderland but an arborist's nightmare. Snowfall was 8.5 inches, 3.2 inches less than normal. The only major snow storm of the season brought 6.6 inches on February 4-5. The season's total was 14.5 inches, 18.2 inches less than average. The season's total was a great contrast to last year's record 81.5 inches.

R. H. S.

#### LOONS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Loons and grebes were reported in normal numbers. A **Pacific-type loon** was observed in Sandwich, while an **Eared Grebe** put in an extended stay at Nauset Beach in Orleans, where it was first located on January 14. Both species occur almost annually in the state. An excellent early winter count of Northern Gannet was observed at Nantucket just after New Year's Day. Presumably the majority of these birds departed soon thereafter. A **Tundra Swan** made a brief appearance at Mashpee in early January. A subadult **Greater White-fronted Goose** sporting white at the base of the bill but lacking black mottling on the belly was present throughout the period in the Newburyport vicinity.

The extremely warm weather during the early portion of the period resulted in a considerable amount of open water at inland locations. These open conditions encouraged some waterfowl species to remain in the region instead of retreating farther south to winter in more typical locations. This was particularly true for Ring-necked and Ruddy ducks and Hooded and Common mergansers. It may also have benefited Northern Shovelers which were reported in better than normal numbers. Winter reports of Blue-winged Teal are unusual but have increased in recent years; thus one in West Barnstable comes as no surprise. The sea ducks were generally reported in normal numbers. Harlequin Ducks put in a good appearance, but a single King Eider continued to underscore the species' scarcity in recent winters. Reports of Barrow's Goldeneyes came in from scattered locations along the coast. A drake **Tufted Duck**, the first record for Worcester County, was discovered at the Wachusett Reservoir in West Boylston in late January, where it remained through February. About two weeks later another drake, a subadult, was found in Taunton. At approximately the same time as many as six were present in Rhode Island. Clearly something unusual happened to account for the unprecedented numbers of this rare winter visitor.

The mild season may have accounted for above average numbers of most raptor species. Winter reports of Turkey Vulture are now routine, but a **Black Vulture** coming to a night roost with other vultures in Randolph provided an unusual winter record. Bald Eagles were widely reported. One of the more memorable events of the season was the presence of upwards of 20 Northern Harriers at the Cumberland Farms fields in Middleboro throughout most of the season. The spectacle was most obvious in late afternoon with numerous birds coursing low over the fields while others were standing on the ground. Rough-legged Hawks were seen in below average numbers. Reports of sizable flocks of Wild Turkeys from Petersham and Barre indicate clearly that central Worcester County is the stronghold for the species in eastern portions of

the state. The open water was most beneficial for American Coot, which were widely reported in very good numbers relative to recent winters.

The usual winter shorebirds were present at standard locations in near normal numbers. Black-bellied Plover was present in better than normal numbers on Martha's Vineyard. Both Greater Yellowlegs and American Woodcock appeared more prevalent than normal. Surprising finds were a Semipalmated Plover in Revere and a Western Sandpiper in Westport, both in midmonth. Both species are rare in winter but are among the more likely species to occur in winter because small numbers of each species winter not too far to our south. The better than average shorebird showing was undoubtedly related to the mild weather.

Gulls are a staple feature along the coast in winter. Bonaparte's Gulls were found in abundance at selected southeastern coastal areas, where the only Little Gulls were found. A Common Black-headed Gull continued at Quabbin Reservoir from November, when it initially appeared. An adult Mew Gull was present in Winthrop. This gull is undoubtedly the same individual that has been present off and on at the same location since the winter of 1990-1991. Iceland Gulls were notably scarce, and Black-legged Kittiwake were scarcer than usual on outer Cape Cod. The most surprising and incredible find of the season was a **Bridled Tern** in first winter plumage found moribund on a golf course in Hyannisport on January 16. The bird succumbed shortly after it was found. The bird seemingly arrived at the end of a three-day period of unusually mild weather with temperatures in the 60s and moderate but constant south winds. Bridled Tern is most likely to be encountered in August or September after coastal storms or hurricanes, and even then it is an extremely rare find. Amazingly, there is a similar record for extralimital occurrence for this species in the northeastern portion of the continent during winter. The previous report is one taken at Custlett, Newfoundland, on January 21, 1891!

A trip to Stellwagen Bank in late January recorded four species of alcids including eight Dovekies and three Atlantic Puffins. Otherwise alcid reports were spotty and generally below average. Thick-billed Murres were very scarce, and Razorbills on outer Cape Cod were well below the numbers we have become accustomed to in recent winters. Both Snowy and Long-eared owls were poorly reported. Northern Saw-whet Owls continued to be a feature in the Athol vicinity. Observers visiting the aforementioned Cumberland Farm fields searching for harriers were treated to an equally fine display of up to a dozen Short-eared Owls. The abundance of microtine prey must have been astounding to host such a large number of these specialized raptors. The *Selasphorus* hummingbird first discovered in Fairhaven in October inevitably succumbed about January 25. There was no indication that the bird had begun molting into a plumage that would allow specific identification.

R. A. F.

| Date   | Location       | Number | Observers      | Date                            | Location       | Number | Observers        |
|--|----------------|--------|----------------|---------------------------------|----------------|--------|------------------|
| <b>Red-throated Loon</b>                       |                |        |                | 2/19                            | Gloucester     | 14     | M. Lynch#        |
| 1/15   | Nauset         | 10     | M. Lynch#      | <b>Eared Grebe</b>              |                |        |                  |
| 1/22   | Cape Ann       | 4      | D. Chickering  | 1/14-2/12                       | E. Orleans     | 1      | S. Arena# + v.o. |
| 1/28   | Scituate       | 5      | E. Cutler      | <b>Northern Gannet</b>          |                |        |                  |
| <b>Arctic/Pacific Loon (details submitted)</b> |                |        |                | 1/2                             | Nantucket      | 5500+  | R. Heil          |
| 2/18   | Sandwich       | 1      | S. Carroll#    | 1/14                            | P'town (R.P.)  | 100    | S. Arena#        |
| <b>Common Loon</b>                             |                |        |                | 1/15                            | Orleans        | 350+   | M. Lynch#        |
| 1/15   | Ipswich        | 19     | BBC (J. Nove)  | 2/5                             | Eatsham (F.E.) | 58     | S. Arena         |
| 1/15   | Boston H.      | 7      | TASL (M. Hall) | 2/11                            | E. Orleans     | 75     | B. Nikula#       |
| 1/21   | Cape Ann       | 15     | J. Berry#      | <b>Great Cormorant</b>          |                |        |                  |
| 1/29   | Wachusett Res. | 9      | J. Brown#      | 1/21                            | Rockport       | 100    | J. Berry#        |
| 2/10   | Westport       | 7      | E. Nielsen     | 1/25                            | Vineyard Haven | 125+   | A. Brown         |
| <b>Pied-billed Grebe</b>                       |                |        |                | 1/29                            | Newburyport    | 225+   | I. Lynch#        |
| 1/2  | Plymouth       | 2      | E. Weinheimer  | 2/10                            | Westport       | 80     | E. Nielsen       |
| 1/13   | Lakeville      | 4      | K. Anderson    | 2/19                            | Gloucester     | 44     | M. Lynch#        |
| 1/28   | Hyannis        | 4      | K. Weinheimer# | <b>Double-crested Cormorant</b> |                |        |                  |
| 2/11   | Plymouth       | 2      | M. Lynch#      | 1/15                            | Westport       | 3      | E. Nielsen       |
| 2/12   | Wareham        | 5      | J. Hoye#       | 1/15                            | Boston H.      | 35     | TASL (M. Hall)   |
| 2/13   | Nantucket      | 5      | B. Weinig      | 1/29                            | Falmouth       | 2      | R. Stymeist#     |
| 2/25   | Belmont        | 2      | D. F. Oliver   | 2/11                            | Cambridge      | 1      | D. F. Oliver#    |
| <b>Horned Grebe</b>                            |                |        |                | <b>American Bittern</b>         |                |        |                  |
| 1/7  | Rockport       | 34     | T. Young       | 1/1                             | Eastham        | 1      | G. Ferguson      |
| 1/15   | Boston H.      | 47     | TASL (M. Hall) | 1/2                             | Nantucket      | 1      | S. Arena#        |
| 1/27   | P.I.           | 27     | M. Pelikan     | 1/14                            | P.I.           | 1      | BBC (T. Young)   |
| 2/11   | Newburyport    | 7      | BBC (M. Rines) | <b>Great Blue Heron</b>         |                |        |                  |
| 2/19   | Manchester     | 18     | S. Arena       | 1/8                             | Framingham     | 6      | K. Hamilton#     |
| 2/19   | Westport       | 7      | E. Nielsen     | 1/8                             | Eastham (F.H.) | 2      | K. Weinheimer#   |
| <b>Red-necked Grebe</b>                        |                |        |                | 1/8                             | Wareham        | 2      | K. Anderson      |
| 1/15   | Winthrop       | 99     | TASL (M. Hall) | 1/21                            | WBWS           | 2      | K. Weinheimer#   |
| 1/21   | Cape Ann       | 14     | J. Berry#      | 1/25                            | Yarmouth       | 18     | T. Avers#        |
| 2/19   | Winthrop       | 36     | R. Forster     | 2/11                            | Plymouth       | 8      | M. Lynch#        |



|   |                  |            |                  |
|---|------------------|------------|------------------|
| <b>Great Blue Heron (continued)</b>     |                  |            |                  |
| 2/25                                    | Dartmouth        | 4          | S. Arena         |
| 2/27                                    | Framingham       | 3          | K. Hamilton      |
| <b>Black-crowned Night-Heron</b>        |                  |            |                  |
| thr                                     | Vineyard Haven   | 33 max     | A. Brown#        |
| 1/2                                     | Nantucket        | 1          | G. d'Entremont#  |
| 1/23                                    | Dorchester       | 5          | R. Donovan       |
| 2/22                                    | M. V.            | 2          | v.o.             |
| <b>Whooper Swan (probable escapes)</b>  |                  |            |                  |
| 1/22-2/18                               | M.V.             | 3          | J. Verner + v.o. |
| 2/20                                    | Ipswich          | 1          | BBC (J. Berry)   |
| <b>Tundra Swan</b>                      |                  |            |                  |
| 1/3                                     | Mashpee          | 1          | P. Trimble       |
| <b>Mute Swan</b>                        |                  |            |                  |
| 1/21                                    | Gloucester       | 13         | J. Berry#        |
| 1/23                                    | Framingham       | 5          | K. Hamilton      |
| 2/12                                    | Westport         | 102        | M. Boucher       |
| <b>Greater White-fronted Goose</b>      |                  |            |                  |
| thr                                     | Newbury/Newbypt  | 1          | v.o.             |
| <b>Snow Goose</b>                       |                  |            |                  |
| thr                                     | Winthrop         | 2          | v.o.             |
| 1/8                                     | E. Boston (B.I.) | 2          | G. Long          |
| 1/15                                    | Sterling         | 1 imm      | R. Bradbury      |
| 1/17                                    | Concord (NAC)    | 1 imm      | R. Forster       |
| 2/18                                    | Newburyport      | 4          | S. Haydock       |
| 2/20                                    | Chilmark         | 1          | A. Keith         |
| <b>Brant</b>                            |                  |            |                  |
| 1/8                                     | Marion           | 35         | K. Anderson      |
| 1/15, 2/12                              | Boston H.        | 1146, 635  | TASL             |
| 1/22                                    | Eastham (F.E.)   | 1920       | BBC (B. Volkle)  |
| 2/11                                    | Plymouth         | 150+       | M. Lynch#        |
| <b>Barnacle Goose (probable escape)</b> |                  |            |                  |
| 2/25                                    | Dartmouth        | 1          | S. Arena         |
| <b>Canada Goose</b>                     |                  |            |                  |
| thr                                     | Sherborn         | 500+       | E. Taylor        |
| 1/8                                     | Newburyport      | 600+       | M. Lynch#        |
| 2/1                                     | Newburyport      | 650        | BBC (M. Rines)   |
| 2/12                                    | Boston H.        | 642        | TASL (M. Hall)   |
| 2/16                                    | Wayland          | 300+       | N. Patterson     |
| <b>Wood Duck</b>                        |                  |            |                  |
| 1/29                                    | Eastham (F.H.)   | 1          | G. d'Entremont#  |
| 2/8                                     | Edgartown        | 25         | A. Ben David     |
| 2/12                                    | N. Dartmouth     | 2          | M. Boucher       |
| 2/18                                    | Taunton          | 1 m        | S. Arena         |
| 2/18                                    | Lakeville        | 1 m        | S. Arena         |
| 2/20                                    | W. Boylston      | 1 m        | M. Lynch#        |
| 2/25                                    | Orleans          | 2          | B. Nikula        |
| 2/26                                    | Middleboro       | 2          | K. Weinheimer#   |
| <b>Green-winged Teal</b>                |                  |            |                  |
| thr                                     | Cambridge        | 6-10       | M. Rines         |
| 1/2                                     | Nantucket        | 10         | G. d'Entremont#  |
| 1/8                                     | Marstons Mills   | 40         | P. Trimble       |
| 1/15                                    | Marlboro         | 6          | R. Forster#      |
| 1/24                                    | W. Harwich       | 12         | K. Hamilton      |
| 1/27                                    | Fall River       | 28         | T. Aversa        |
| <b>American Black Duck</b>              |                  |            |                  |
| thr                                     | P.I.             | 1165 max   | W. Drew#         |
| 1/11                                    | S. Dart. (A.Pd)  | 206        | LCES (J. Hill)   |
| 1/15, 2/12                              | Boston H.        | 1589, 1112 | TASL             |
| 2/11                                    | Plymouth         | 800+       | M. Lynch#        |
| 2/16                                    | Cumb. Farms      | 128        | S. Arena         |
| 2/19                                    | Westport         | 850        | E. Nielsen       |
| <b>Northern Pintail</b>                 |                  |            |                  |
| thr                                     | Framingham       | 1 m        | K. Hamilton#     |
| 1/8                                     | Rowley           | 2          | J. Berry         |
| 1/14                                    | Cumb. Farms      | 3          | T. Aversa        |
| 1/15                                    | Yarmouth         | 26         | M. Lynch#        |
| 1/21, 2/19                              | Wakefield        | 2          | P. + F. Vale     |
| 1/22                                    | P.I.             | 45         | E. Nielsen       |
| 2/27                                    | Framingham       | 1          | K. Hamilton      |
| <b>Blue-winged Teal</b>                 |                  |            |                  |
| 2/18                                    | W. Barnstable    | 1 m        | M. Tuttle        |
| <b>Northern Shoveler</b>                |                  |            |                  |
| 1/1                                     | Worcester        | 1          | M. Lynch#        |
| 1/1-15                                  | Marlboro         | 1 m        | R. Walton#       |
| 1/7-31                                  | Belmont          | 1 f        | M. Rines + v.o.  |
| 1/16                                    | Seekonk          | 2 m        | M. Boucher       |
| 1/17                                    | Somerset         | 1          | M. LaBossiere    |
| 1/27-29                                 | Marstons Mills   | 1 f        | v.o.             |
| 1/30, 2/13                              | Boston (F.Pk)    | 1 f        | T. Aversa        |
| 2/6                                     | Edgartown        | 2          | A. Ben David     |
| 2/18                                    | Falmouth         | 1 f        | M. Lynch#        |
| <b>Gadwall</b>                          |                  |            |                  |
| thr                                     | Belmont          | 7-9        | v.o.             |
| 1/2                                     | Plymouth         | 15         | K. Weinheimer    |
| 1/16                                    | Seekonk          | 268        | M. Boucher       |
| 1/17                                    | Somerset         | 100+       | M. LaBossiere    |
| 2/20                                    | Plymouth         | 27         | K. Weinheimer#   |
| 2/19                                    | Gloucester       | 5          | S. Arena         |
| <b>Eurasian Wigeon</b>                  |                  |            |                  |
| 1/1-1/31                                | Belmont/Camb.    | 1          | v.o.             |
| 1/28                                    | Chatham          | 3 m        | R. Stymeist#     |
| 2/11                                    | E. Harwich       | 2 m        | B. Nikula#       |
| 2/17                                    | Nantucket        | 1 m        | E. Andrews       |
| 2/20                                    | Somerset         | 1 m        | S. Davis         |
| <b>American Wigeon</b>                  |                  |            |                  |
| 1/3                                     | S. Carver        | 20         | K. Anderson      |
| 1/15                                    | Belmont          | 46         | D. F. Oliver     |
| 1/27                                    | New Bedford      | 14         | T. Aversa        |
| 2/11                                    | E. Harwich       | 40         | B. Nikula#       |
| <b>Canvasback</b>                       |                  |            |                  |
| 1/8                                     | Wareham          | 65         | K. Anderson#     |
| 1/14                                    | Falmouth         | 50         | J. Hoye#         |
| 1/15                                    | Dennis           | 150        | B. Nikula        |
| 1/15                                    | Yarmouth         | 70         | M. Lynch#        |
| 2/12                                    | Westport         | 109        | M. Boucher       |
| 2/23                                    | Lakeville        | 65         | K. Weinheimer#   |
| <b>Redhead</b>                          |                  |            |                  |
| 1/14                                    | Edgartown        | 3          | A. Brown#        |
| 1/16                                    | Seekonk          | 1 m        | M. Boucher       |
| 2/7-26                                  | Plymouth         | 2          | v.o.             |
| 2/13-15                                 | Nantucket        | 6          | B. Weinig        |
| <b>Tufted Duck</b>                      |                  |            |                  |
| 1/27-2/28                               | W. Boylston      | 1 m        | F. McMenemy#     |
| 2/12-28                                 | Taunton          | 1 m        | S. Arena + v.o.  |
| <b>Ring-necked Duck</b>                 |                  |            |                  |
| thr                                     | Framingham       | 42-44      | K. Hamilton#     |
| 1/4                                     | Newton           | 15         | E. Cutler        |
| 1/8                                     | Sterling         | 275        | R. Bradbury      |
| 1/14                                    | Bourne           | 30         | J. Hoye#         |
| 1/21                                    | Lakeville        | 40         | S. Arena#        |
| 1/28                                    | Wachusett Res.   | 200+       | M. Lynch#        |
| 2/18                                    | Falmouth         | 41         | M. Lynch#        |
| <b>Greater Scaup</b>                    |                  |            |                  |
| 1/15, 2/12                              | Boston H.        | 802, 364   | TASL             |
| 1/10                                    | Fairhaven        | 175        | M. Boucher       |
| 1/28                                    | Wachusett Res.   | 28         | M. Lynch#        |
| 2/18, 2/25                              | Lakeville        | 16, 62     | S. Arena         |
| <b>Lesser Scaup</b>                     |                  |            |                  |
| thr                                     | Natick           | pr         | R. Forster#      |
| 1/8                                     | Medford          | 2          | P. + F. Vale     |
| 1/8                                     | Wachusett Res.   | 1          | R. Bradbury      |
| 1/13                                    | Lakeville        | 7          | K. Anderson      |
| 1/27                                    | Fall River       | pr         | T. Aversa        |
| 2/18                                    | Falmouth         | 114        | M. Lynch#        |
| <b>Common Eider</b>                     |                  |            |                  |
| 1/8                                     | Plymouth H.      | 300        | J. Hoye#         |
| 1/8                                     | Marion           | 500        | K. Anderson      |
| 1/15, 2/12                              | Boston H.        | 8118, 5514 | TASL             |
| 1/21                                    | Cape Ann         | 200+       | J. Berry         |
| 2/11                                    | Plymouth         | 2000+      | M. Lynch#        |
| 2/11                                    | Newbypt H.       | 1100       | BBC (M. Rines)   |



|                                       |  |              |                   |
|---------------------------------------|--|--------------|-------------------|
| Common Eider (continued)              |  |              |                   |
| 2/19                                  | Westport                               | 2000         | E. Nielsen        |
| 2/26                                  | Buzzards Bay                           | 2000         | K. Weinheimer#    |
| King Eider                            |  |              |                   |
| 1/30                                  | Truro                                  | 1 imm m      | W. Bailey#        |
| Harlequin Duck                        |  |              |                   |
| 1/7                                   | Rockport                               | 16           | T. Young          |
| 1/8                                   | Wellfleet H.                           | 2            | K. Weinheimer#    |
| 1/15                                  | Duxbury                                | 7            | E. Neumuth        |
| 1/29                                  | Squibnocket                            | 50           | A. Brown#         |
| 2/19                                  | Sconset                                | 6            | E. Andrews#       |
| 2/19                                  | Rockport (A.P.)                        | 25           | M. Lynch#         |
| Oldsquaw                              |  |              |                   |
| 1/8                                   | Newburyport                            | 150+         | M. Lynch#         |
| 1/21                                  | Katama                                 | 300+         | A. Brown          |
| 2/20                                  | Salisbury                              | 600          | E. Taylor         |
| Black Scoter                          |  |              |                   |
| 1/14                                  | E. Orleans                             | 400          | B. Nikula         |
| 2/12                                  | Nauset B.                              | 200          | J. Hoye#          |
| 2/17                                  | P.I.                                   | 115          | W. Drew#          |
| Surf Scoter                           |  |              |                   |
| 1/15                                  | Boston H.                              | 206          | TASL (M. Hall)    |
| 1/21                                  | Cape Ann                               | 26           | J. Berry#         |
| 2/12                                  | Orleans                                | 15           | J. Hoye#          |
| 2/20                                  | Scituate                               | 20           | K. Weinheimer#    |
| White-winged Scoter                   |  |              |                   |
| 1/7                                   | P.I.                                   | 150          | D. Chickering     |
| 1/15                                  | Boston H.                              | 736          | TASL (M. Hall)    |
| 2/19                                  | Rockport                               | 175+         | S. Arena          |
| Common Goldeneye                      |  |              |                   |
| 1/8                                   | Rowley                                 | 90+          | J. Berry          |
| 1/10                                  | Fairhaven                              | 125          | M. Boucher        |
| 1/15, 2/12                            | Boston H.                              | 646, 469     | TASL              |
| 1/21                                  | Katama                                 | 250          | A. Brown#         |
| 1/22                                  | Cape Ann                               | 200+         | D. Chickering     |
| 2/11                                  | Newburyport                            | 200          | BBC (M. Rines)    |
| 2/18                                  | Lakeville                              | 36           | S. Arena#         |
| 2/19                                  | Westport                               | 150          | E. Nielsen        |
| Barrow's Goldeneye                    |  |              |                   |
| thr                                   | Winthrop                               | 1 m          | v.o.              |
| 1/8                                   | Gloucester                             | 1 m          | BBC (W.Drummond)  |
| 1/8                                   | Vineyard Haven                         | 3            | A. Brown          |
| 1/15                                  | Boston                                 | 1            | D. Brown#         |
| 1/15-2/25                             | Newbypt H.                             | 1-4          | v.o.              |
| 1/22                                  | Magnolia                               | 1            | C. Leahy          |
| 1/28                                  | Winthrop                               | 1            | P. Fitzgerald     |
| 2/9                                   | Wareham                                | 1 f          | M. Sylvia         |
| 2/18                                  | Lakeville                              | 1 f          | S. Arena#         |
| Common Goldeneye x Barrow's Goldeneye |  |              |                   |
| 1/15                                  | Newburyport                            | 1 m          | J. Berry#         |
| Bufflehead                            |  |              |                   |
| 1/8                                   | Newburyport                            | 200+         | M. Lynch#         |
| 1/15, 2/12                            | Boston H.                              | 1083, 858    | TASL              |
| 2/2, 2/11                             | Somerville                             | 5, 24        | D. F. Oliver#     |
| 2/10                                  | Westport                               | 122          | E. Nielsen        |
| 2/18                                  | Falmouth                               | 160+         | M. Lynch#         |
| Hooded Merganser                      |  |              |                   |
| 1/4                                   | Newton                                 | 75           | E. Cutler         |
| 1/6                                   | S. Carver                              | 23           | J. Shaw           |
| 1/6                                   | Petersham                              | 81           | R. Bradbury       |
| 1/8, 2/27                             | Framingham                             | 97, 17       | K. Hamilton       |
| 1/11                                  | Cambridge                              | 20           | E. Malloy         |
| 1/15                                  | Belmont                                | 24           | G. d'Entremont#   |
| 1/22                                  | Orleans                                | 22           | B. Volkle         |
| 2/18                                  | Falmouth                               | 69           | M. Lynch#         |
| 2/26                                  | W. Brookfield                          | 27 f         | M. Lynch#         |
| Common Merganser                      |  |              |                   |
| 1/3                                   | Dorchester                             | 47           | T. Aversa         |
| 1/4                                   | Newton                                 | 65           | E. Cutler         |
| 1/6                                   | S. Carver                              | 41           | J. Shaw           |
| 1/8, 2/27                             | Framingham                             | 86, 38       | K. Hamilton       |
| 1/19                                  | Quabbin (G35)                          | 195          | J. Nove           |
| 1/24                                  | Acton                                  | 60           | M. Resch          |
| 1/25                                  | Yarmouth                               | 46           | T. Aversa         |
| 1/29                                  | Wachusett Res.                         | 146          | M. Lynch#         |
| 2/17                                  | Taunton                                | 29           | S. Arena          |
| 2/25                                  | Belmont                                | 22           | D. F. Oliver      |
| Red-breasted Merganser                |  |              |                   |
| 1/8                                   | Buzzards Bay                           | 150          | K. Anderson#      |
| 1/8                                   | Sterling                               | 1 f          | R. Bradbury       |
| 1/15                                  | Boston H.                              | 726          | TASL (M. Hall)    |
| Ruddy Duck                            |  |              |                   |
| 1/4                                   | Newton                                 | 22           | E. Cutler         |
| 1/6                                   | S. Carver                              | 11           | J. Shaw           |
| 1/8                                   | Framingham                             | 48           | K. Hamilton#      |
| 1/15                                  | Dennis                                 | 6            | B. Nikula         |
| 2/9                                   | Lynn                                   | 4            | J. Quigley#       |
| 2/10                                  | Gay Head                               | 4            | A. Fischer        |
| 2/18                                  | Lakeville                              | 3            | S. Arena#         |
| 2/19                                  | Brookline                              | 3            | N. Komar          |
| thr                                   | Reports of 1-2 indiv. from 7 locations |              |                   |
| Black Vulture                         |  |              |                   |
| 1/30                                  | Randolph                               | 1            | N. Smith          |
| Turkey Vulture                        |  |              |                   |
| 1/14                                  | Plymouth                               | 2            | K. Weinheimer#    |
| 1/15                                  | Westport                               | 5            | E. Nielsen        |
| 1/15                                  | S. Middleboro                          | 2            | P. Trimble        |
| 1/30                                  | Randolph                               | 13           | N. Smith          |
| 1/30                                  | Plainville                             | 2            | G. Valade         |
| 2/16                                  | W. Bridgewater                         | 3            | E. Weinheimer     |
| 2/17                                  | Wrentham                               | 2            | W. Riley          |
| 2/20                                  | Ipswich                                | 1            | BBC (J. Berry)    |
| 2/25                                  | Northboro                              | 2            | M. Lynch#         |
| 2/26                                  | Barre                                  | 1            | M. Lynch#         |
| Bald Eagle                            |  |              |                   |
| thr                                   | Lakeville                              | 2 ad + 1 imm | v.o.              |
| 1/3                                   | Lincoln                                | 1 ad         | fide MAS          |
| 1/8                                   | Framingham                             | 1 ad         | P. Iarrobino#     |
| 1/15, 1/27                            | Clinton                                | 1 imm        | M. Lynch + v.o.   |
| 1/29                                  | Lexington                              | 1            | T. Boyle          |
| 1/29                                  | Sudbury                                | 1            | H. Shaw           |
| 1/29                                  | Newburyport                            | 3            | I. Lynch#         |
| 2/1-28                                | Brewster/Harwich                       | 2 ad         | v.o.              |
| 2/3, 2/19                             | Westport                               | 1 ad         | M. Boucher + v.o. |
| 2/5                                   | Freetown                               | 1            | D. McRae          |
| 2/6                                   | Dracut                                 | 1            | M. Magee          |
| 2/9                                   | Gay Head                               | 1            | A. Fischer        |
| 2/10                                  | Plainville                             | 1 ad         | G. Valade         |
| 2/10, 24                              | Waltham                                | 1            | D. Hartman + v.o. |
| 2/11                                  | Eastham                                | 1 ad         | T. Cameron#       |
| 2/12                                  | Wareham                                | 1 ad         | J. Hoye#          |
| 2/19                                  | Taunton                                | 2            | P. Ferreira       |
| 2/20                                  | Essex                                  | 1 ad         | D. Ring           |
| Northern Harrier                      |  |              |                   |
| thr                                   | Cumb. Farms                            | 21 max       | v.o.              |
| 1/8                                   | DWWS                                   | 5            | S. Perkins#       |
| 1/22                                  | Sandwich                               | 2            | P. Trimble        |
| 1/31, 2/14                            | W. Roxbury                             | 2, 2         | T. Aversa         |
| 1/31                                  | P.I.                                   | 4            | W. Drew#          |
| 2/20                                  | Sudbury                                | 2            | R. Forster        |
| 2/20                                  | Essex                                  | 4            | T. Young#         |
| 2/26                                  | Rowley                                 | 2 imm        | J. Berry          |
| 1/3                                   | S. Carver                              | 1            | K. Anderson       |
| 1/13, 2/2                             | Wayland                                | 1            | N. Patterson      |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk                    |  |              |                   |
| 1/14                                  | Cumb. Farms                            | 2            | T. Aversa         |
| 1/15                                  | Westport                               | 3            | E. Nielsen        |
| 2/2                                   | Wareham                                | 2            | M. LaBossiere     |
| 2/11                                  | Plymouth                               | 2            | M. Lynch#         |
| thr                                   | Reports of individuals from 21 loc.    |              |                   |
| Cooper's Hawk                         |  |              |                   |
| thr                                   | Reports of individuals from 25 loc.    |              |                   |

|                     |                                     |       |                 |                                       |                        |      |                      |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|------|----------------------|
| Northern Goshawk    |                                     |       |                 | 1/1                                   | Rochester              | 175  | E. Weinheimer        |
| 1/13                | Lakeville                           | 1     | K. Anderson#    | 1/1                                   | Acton                  | 60+  | M. Lynch#            |
| 1/30                | Hopkinton                           | 1 ad  | R. Wolanin      | 1/2                                   | W. Newbury             | 40   | J. Brown#            |
| 2/1                 | Boxford                             | 1     | D. Jewell#      | 1/4                                   | Newton                 | 100  | E. Cutler            |
| 2/10                | Wareham                             | 1     | M. Sylvia       | 1/6                                   | S. Carver              | 55   | J. Shaw              |
| 2/10                | Franklin                            | 1     | J. Hoyer#       | 1/13                                  | Lakeville              | 85   | K. Anderson          |
| 2/12                | Petersham                           | 1 BBC | (W. Drummond)   | 1/19                                  | Norwood                | 35   | C. McKenzie          |
| 2/18                | Taunton                             | 1     | M. Lynch#       | 1/31                                  | Arlington              | 141  | M. Rines             |
| 2/20                | Maynard                             | 1 ad  | L. Nachtrab     | 2/11                                  | Plymouth               | 66   | M. Lynch#            |
| Red-shouldered Hawk |                                     |       |                 | 2/17                                  | Nantucket              | 35+  | E. Andrews           |
| 1/1, 2/23           | Bridgewater                         | 1     | E. Weinheimer   | thr                                   | Reports of 1-29 indiv. |      | from many loc.       |
| 1/10                | E. Middleboro                       | 1     | K. Anderson     | Black-bellied Plover                  |                        |      |                      |
| 2/4                 | Holliston                           | 1     | J. Howe         | 1/14                                  | Duxbury                | 8    | E. Neumuth           |
| 2/18                | Falmouth                            | 1     | M. Lynch#       | 1/21                                  | Katama                 | 50   | A. Brown#            |
| 2/20                | DWWS                                | 1     | K. Weinheimer#  | 1/22                                  | Westport               | 2    | M. LaBossiere        |
| 2/23                | Acushnet                            | 2     | M. LaBossiere   | 2/18                                  | Katama                 | 20   | A. Keith             |
| Red-tailed Hawk     |                                     |       |                 | Semipalmated Plover                   |                        |      |                      |
| 1/22                | Cumb. Farms                         | 10+   | R. Lockwood#    | 1/15                                  | Revere                 | 1    | R. Stymeist#         |
| 1/29                | Danvers-Newbury                     | 8     | I. Lynch#       | Killdeer                              |                        |      |                      |
| 2/25                | Dartmouth                           | 7     | S. Arena        | 1/2                                   | Nantucket              | 3    | G. d'Entremont#      |
| 2/26                | Salisbury                           | 6     | E. Nielsen      | 1/7                                   | Gloucester             | 1    | R. Lockwood          |
| Rough-legged Hawk   |                                     |       |                 | 1/8                                   | Plymouth               | 1    | R. Stymeist#         |
| 1/8                 | Rowley                              | 1 lt  | J. Berry        | 1/15                                  | Squantum               | 4    | TASL (M. Hall)       |
| 1/29                | E. Middleboro                       | 3     | K. Holmes       | Greater Yellowlegs                    |                        |      |                      |
| 2/11                | P.I., Salisbury                     | 5, 2  | BBC (M. Rines)  | 1/2                                   | Nantucket              | 5    | H. D'Entremont#      |
| 2/11                | DWWS                                | 3 lt  | G. d'Entremont  | 1/8                                   | Fairhaven              | 3    | H. D'Entremont#      |
| 2/20                | Essex                               | 1 lt  | I. Lynch#       | 1/14                                  | M. V.                  | 2    | A. Brown#            |
| 2/23                | Lakeville                           | 1     | K. Weinheimer#  | 1/14                                  | Falmouth               | 1    | J. Hoyer#            |
| 2/24                | W. Bridgewater                      | 1 lt  | R. Forster      | 2/25                                  | Westport               | 1    | S. Arena             |
| 2/25                | Cumb. Farms                         | 3     | M. Resch        | Ruddy Turnstone                       |                        |      |                      |
| American Kestrel    |                                     |       |                 | 1/2                                   | Winthrop               | 1    | J. Berry             |
| 1/22                | Cumb. Farms                         | 2     | R. Lockwood#    | 1/2                                   | Nantucket              | 15   | G. d'Entremont#      |
| 2/18                | Raynham                             | 2     | S. Arena#       | Sanderling                            |                        |      |                      |
| 2/19                | Pochet I.                           | 2     | J. Sones#       | 1/2                                   | Winthrop               | 100  | J. Berry             |
| Merlin              |                                     |       |                 | 1/15                                  | Revere                 | 320  | R. Stymeist#         |
| 2/19                | Nantucket                           | 2     | E. Andrews      | 1/16                                  | Barnstable             | 178  | T. Cameron           |
| thr                 | Reports of individuals from 14 loc. |       |                 | 1/21                                  | Katama                 | 50   | A. Brown#            |
| Peregrine Falcon    |                                     |       |                 | 2/12                                  | Westport               | 29   | M. Boucher           |
| thr                 | Boston                              | 1-2   | v.o.            | 2/12                                  | Revere                 | 104  | R. Stymeist#         |
| 1/2                 | Nantucket                           | 1     | G. d'Entremont# | 2/19                                  | Salisbury              | 75   | R. Heil              |
| 1/8                 | Newburyport                         | 1     | J. Smith        | Western Sandpiper (details submitted) |                        |      |                      |
| 1/14                | Duxbury                             | 1     | E. Neumuth      | 1/14                                  | Westport               | 1    | M. Sylvia            |
| 1/30                | Chatham                             | 1     | P. Bailey       | Purple Sandpiper                      |                        |      |                      |
| 2/1-2/28            | Lawrence                            | 1     | S. Charette     | 1/21                                  | Winthrop               | 31   | M. Lynch#            |
| 2/3                 | P.I.                                | 1     | D. Jewell#      | 1/22                                  | Westport               | 100+ | M. LaBossiere        |
| 2/8                 | Essex                               | 1     | S. Young        | 2/5                                   | Scituate               | 40   | BBC (G. d'Entremont) |
| 2/10, 27            | Saugus                              | 1 ad  | J. Berry        | 2/7                                   | Cape Ann               | 80   | R. Forster#          |
| Ruffed Grouse       |                                     |       |                 | 2/10                                  | Westport               | 132  | E. Nielsen           |
| 1/4                 | Wayland                             | 1     | N. Patterson    | 2/19                                  | Squibnocket            | 12   | A. Keith             |
| 1/6                 | Byfield                             | 2     | S. Haydock      | Dunlin                                |                        |      |                      |
| 1/8                 | E. Boxford                          | 1     | J. Brown#       | 1/2                                   | Winthrop               | 40   | J. Berry             |
| 1/29                | N. Middleboro                       | 1     | K. Holmes       | 1/8                                   | Rowley                 | 31   | J. Berry             |
| 2/15                | W. Boylston                         | 3     | C. Ralph#       | 1/14                                  | Duxbury                | 300+ | E. Neumuth           |
| 2/18                | Wayland                             | 1 BBC | (B. Howell)     | 1/15                                  | Revere                 | 91   | TASL (M. Hall)       |
| Wild Turkey         |                                     |       |                 | 1/16                                  | Barnstable             | 45   | T. Cameron           |
| thr                 | Sherborn                            | 20    | E. Taylor       | 2/5                                   | Eastham (F.E.)         | 250+ | S. Arena             |
| 1/22                | Danvers                             | 9     | D. Chickering   | 2/19                                  | Westport               | 95   | E. Nielsen           |
| 1/23                | Leominster                          | 7     | D. Amblo        | 2/20                                  | Katama                 | 35   | A. Brown             |
| 2/20                | Essex                               | 10    | T. Young#       | Common Snipe                          |                        |      |                      |
| 2/20                | Petersham                           | 80    | M. Lynch#       | 1/2                                   | Nantucket              | 5    | G. d'Entremont#      |
| 2/26                | Barre                               | 141   | M. Lynch#       | 1/8                                   | Buzzards Bay           | 1    | K. Anderson          |
| 2/26                | Worcester                           | 9     | M. Lynch#       | 1/14                                  | Newburyport            | 3    | BBC (T. Young)       |
| Northern Bobwhite   |                                     |       |                 | 1/23                                  | Bourne                 | 3    | M. LaBossiere        |
| 1/8                 | Newton                              | 1     | G. Long         | 2/10                                  | Bridgewater            | 2    | S. Arena#            |
| 1/22                | Sandwich                            | 10    | P. Trimble      | 2/18                                  | Cumb. Farms            | 1    | S. Arena#            |
| 1/29                | Gay Head                            | 12    | A. Brown#       | American Woodcock                     |                        |      |                      |
| 1/29                | N. Middleboro                       | 16    | K. Holmes       | 1/3                                   | Wayland                | 1    | N. Patterson         |
| 2/19                | W. Roxbury                          | 6     | N. Komar        | 1/12                                  | M. V.                  | 1    | L. McDowell          |
| Virginia Rail       |                                     |       |                 | 1/25                                  | Marstons Mills         | 1    | T. Aversa            |
| 1/12                | Cotuit                              | 4     | P. Trimble      | 2/1                                   | Milton                 | 1    | T. Cameron           |
| American Coot       |                                     |       |                 | 2/11                                  | W. Bridgewater         | 1    | T. Cameron#          |

|  |       |     |                 |                         |       |       |                   |
|--|-------|-----|-----------------|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------------------|
| American Woodcock (continued)          |       |     |                 |                         |       |       |                   |
| 2/16 Middleboro                        | 3     |     | S. Arena        | 1/2 Nantucket           | 2     |       | R. Heil           |
| Little Gull                            |       |     |                 | 1/15 Rockport (A.P.)    | 1     |       | E. Salmela        |
| 1/2 Nantucket                          | 2     |     | R. Heil         | 1/22 Vineyard Haven     | 1     | oiled | A. Brown          |
| 1/28 Vineyard Haven                    | 1     |     | V. Laux#        | 1/31 Stellwagen         | 2     |       | S. Highley        |
| Common Black-headed Gull               |       |     |                 | Razorbill               |       |       |                   |
| 1/1-30 Hardwick                        | 1     | imm | R. Bradbury     | 1/2 Winthrop            | 3     |       | J. Berry          |
| 1/2 Nantucket                          | 1     |     | G. d'Entremont# | 1/2 Nantucket           | 115   |       | R. Heil           |
| 1/7 Winthrop                           | 12    |     | R. Lockwood     | 1/19 P'town (R.P.)      | 100   |       | A. Strauss        |
| 1/14-2/25 Newburyport                  | 1     |     | v.o.            | 1/21 Katama             | 25    |       | A. Brown#         |
| 1/16 New Bedford                       | 1     |     | D. Zimmerlin    | 1/28 Orleans            | 83    |       | M. Lynch#         |
| 1/16 Lynn                              | 1     |     | J. Quigley      | 1/28 Dennis             | 13    |       | K. Weinheimer#    |
| 2/3 Newbypt H.                         | 2     |     | N. Nash         | 1/31 Stellwagen         | 53    |       | S. Highley        |
| 2/4 Squibnocket                        | 1     |     | V. Laux         | 2/11 E. Orleans         | 20+   |       | B. Nikula#        |
| 2/20 Nantucket                         | 1     |     | E. Andrews      | 2/19 Rockport (H.P.)    | 11    |       | S. Arena          |
| Bonaparte's Gull                       |       |     |                 | 2/20 Gay Head           | 10    |       | A. Keith          |
| 1/2 Winthrop                           | 145   |     | J. Berry        | Black Guillemot         |       |       |                   |
| 1/15 Westport                          | 410   |     | E. Nielsen      | 1/14 P'town (R.P.)      | 2     |       | S. Arena#         |
| 1/16 Lynn                              | 105   |     | J. Quigley      | 1/21 Cape Ann           | 11    |       | J. Berry#         |
| 2/13-15 Nantucket                      | 1000+ |     | B. Weinig       | 2/7 Cape Ann            | 18-20 |       | R. Forster#       |
| Mew Gull                               |       |     |                 | Atlantic Puffin         |       |       |                   |
| 1/15-2/28 Winthrop                     | 1     | ad  | G. d'Entremont# | 1/31 Stellwagen         | 3     |       | S. Highley        |
| Ring-billed Gull                       |       |     |                 | Large alcid species     |       |       |                   |
| 1/1 Worcester                          | 300+  |     | M. Lynch#       | 2/11 E. Orleans         | 200   |       | B. Nikula#        |
| 1/16 Lynn                              | 201   |     | J. Quigley      | Mourning Dove           |       |       |                   |
| 2/12 Newburyport                       | 600+  |     | M. Lynch#       | 1/8 Framingham          | 176   | fide  | K. Hamilton       |
| Herring Gull                           |       |     |                 | 1/22 Sandwich           | 140   |       | P. Trimble        |
| 1/30 Acton                             | 1200  |     | M. Resch        | Barn Owl                |       |       |                   |
| Herring x Great Black-backed Gull thr  | 1     |     | J. Quigley      | 1/2 Nantucket           | 2     |       | G. Frost#         |
| Iceland Gull                           |       |     |                 | 1/17-18 Pepperell       | 1     |       | M. Resch          |
| 1/1 Worcester                          | 1     |     | M. Lynch#       | Eastern Screech-Owl thr |       |       |                   |
| 1/7 Winthrop                           | 3     |     | R. Lockwood     | 1/1, 2/7 Ipswich        | 2, 4  |       | J. Berry          |
| 1/13 Provincetown                      | 7     |     | T. Aversa       | 1/8 Framingham          | 5     |       | K. Hamilton       |
| 1/22 P.I.                              | 4     |     | J. Berry        | 2/1-28 Arlington        | 2     |       | R. Kaumeheiwa     |
| 1/27 Acton                             | 3     |     | M. Resch        | 2/11 E. Middleboro      | 6     |       | K. Holmes         |
| 1/31 Stellwagen                        | 1     |     | S. Highley      | Great Horned Owl        |       |       |                   |
| 2/19 Newburyport                       | 11    |     | R. Heil         | 1/6 Barre               | 2     |       | M. Lynch#         |
| 2/20 Nantucket                         | 6     |     | E. Andrews      | 1/8 W. Gloucester       | pr    |       | R. Medico#        |
| thr Reports of indiv, from 4 locations |       |     |                 | 2/6-28 Essex            | pr n  |       | R. Young#         |
| Lesser Black-backed Gull               |       |     |                 | 2/7 Ipswich             | 4     |       | J. Berry          |
| 1/21 W. Concord                        | 1     |     | R. Stymeist#    | Snowy Owl               |       |       |                   |
| 1/29, 2/20 Nantucket                   | 1     |     | E. Andrews      | 1/1 Winthrop            | 1     |       | P. + F. Vale      |
| 2/25 Westport                          | 2     | ad  | S. Arena        | 1/8 Martha's Vineyard   | 1     |       | A. Brown#         |
| 2/25 Taunton                           | 1     | 3W  | S. Arena        | 1/22 Newbypt/P.I.       | 3     |       | J. Berry#         |
| Glaucous Gull                          |       |     |                 | 2/7 Edgartown           | 1     |       | F. Markwika       |
| 1/6 Sandwich                           | 1     |     | R. Lockwood     | 2/19 Nantucket          | 1     |       | E. Andrews#       |
| 1/14 P'town H.                         | 1     | ad  | S. Arena#       | Barred Owl              |       |       |                   |
| 1/16 Salisbury                         | 1     |     | E. Cutler       | 1/6 Petersham           | 1     |       | M. Lynch#         |
| 1/19 P'town (R.P.)                     | 1     |     | A. Strauss      | 1/8 Framingham          | 1     |       | K. Hamilton       |
| 1/31 Acton                             | 1     | imm | M. Resch        | Long-eared Owl thr      |       |       |                   |
| 2/11 Eastham                           | 2     |     | E. Nielsen      | 2/8 Essex               | 1     |       | T. Cameron + v.o. |
| 2/11, 19 Lynn                          | 1     |     | J. Quigley      | Short-eared Owl thr     |       |       |                   |
| 2/18 Newburyport                       | 1     | 2W  | T. Young        | 1/2 Cumb. Farms         | 12    | max   | v.o.              |
| 2/25 Gloucester                        | 1     |     | M. Resch        | 1/2 Lakeville           | 1     |       | J. Hoye#          |
| Black-legged Kittiwake                 |       |     |                 | 1/8 DWWS                | 3     |       | BBC (T. Prince)   |
| 1/14 E. Orleans                        | 25    |     | S. Arena#       | 1/28 Katama             | 3-4   |       | M. Curtin#        |
| 1/19 P'town (R.P.)                     | 24    |     | A. Strauss      | 2/7 Fairhaven           | 3     |       | M. Boucher        |
| 1/21 Katama                            | 24    |     | A. Brown#       | 2/19 Salisbury          | 1     |       | R. Heil           |
| 1/21 Rockport                          | 10-12 |     | J. Berry#       | 2/26 Rowley             | 1     |       | J. Berry          |
| 2/5 Eastham (F.E.)                     | 376   |     | S. Arena        | Northern Saw-whet Owl   |       |       |                   |
| 2/11 E. Orleans                        | 30+   |     | B. Nikula#      | 1/2 Nantucket           | 1     |       | G. d'Entremont    |
| Bridled Tern                           |       |     |                 | 1/6 Petersham           | 2     |       | M. Lynch#         |
| 116 Hyannisport                        | 1     |     | N. Handy        | 2/12, 20 Hamilton       | 1     |       | J. Berry          |
| Dovekie                                |       |     |                 | 2/16 Athol              | 6     |       | D. Small          |
| 1/2 Nantucket                          | 1     |     | R. Heil         | 2/26 Weston             | 1     |       | K. Griffiths#     |
| 1/7 Rockport                           | 1     |     | T. Young        | Selasphorus hummingbird |       |       |                   |
| 1/14 Provincetown                      | 4     |     | E. Salmela      | 1/1-25 Fairhaven        | 1     |       | N. Mach + v.o.    |
| 1/31 Stellwagen                        | 8     |     | S. Highley      | Belted Kingfisher       |       |       |                   |
| 1/21 Rockport (A.P.)                   | 1     |     | J. Berry#       | 1/8 Framingham          | 5     |       | K. Hamilton       |
| Thick-billed Murre                     |       |     |                 | 1/14 Outer Cape Cod     | 3     |       | S. Arena#         |

|                        |       |               |  |                          |     |                 |
|------------------------|-------|---------------|--|--------------------------|-----|-----------------|
| Red-headed Woodpecker  |       |               |  | 2/1-28 Chelmsford        | 1   | D. Dunn         |
| thr Georgetown         | 1 imm | v.o.          |  | 2/10 Northboro           | 1 f | B. Volkle       |
| thr Petersham          | 1 imm | v.o.          |  | Yellow-bellied Sapsucker |     |                 |
| 1/8 W. Yarmouth        | 1 imm | P. Trimble    |  | 1/14 Worcester           | 1   | R. Bradbury     |
| Red-bellied Woodpecker |       |               |  | 2/17 Watertown           | 1   | N. Dane         |
| thr Acushnet           | 1 m   | M. LaBossiere |  | Northern Flicker         |     |                 |
| thr Lincoln            | 1 m   | S. Perkins    |  | 1/2 Nantucket            | 27  | G. d'Entremont# |
| thr Holliston          | 2     | J. Howe       |  | Pileated Woodpecker      |     |                 |
| 1/8 Westport           | 3     | E. Salmela    |  | 1/6 Petersham            | 1   | M. Lynch#       |
| 1/8 Edgartown          | 1     | M. Donnelly   |  | 2/11 Belmont             | 1   | M. Hall         |
| 1/13 Newburyport       | 1 M   | R. Heil       |  | 2/14 Needham             | 1   | D. MacIntyre    |
| 1/19 Acton             | 1     | K. Castle     |  | 2/16 Lincoln             | 1   | S. Perkins      |
| 1/29 Bourne            | 1     | R. Stymeist#  |  | 2/19 Manchester          | 2   | S. Charette     |

#### FLYCATCHERS THROUGH GROSBEAKS

The big story for this group was the exceptionally mild and snowless winter. Several indicator species such as Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, American Pipit, and (unfortunately) Brown-headed Cowbird were reported in unusually large flocks. Winter reports of some species are not entirely uncommon on Cape Cod and in Bristol County, but this year brought reports from throughout the region. Some of the birds in this group include Tree Swallow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Palm and Yellow-rumped warblers, Yellow-breasted Chat, Rufous-sided Towhee, and Chipping and Clay-colored sparrows.

Many unusual species were also noted, the most noteworthy being three **Mountain Bluebirds** at the Marconi area of South Wellfleet. This was only the third record of this species in Massachusetts, but certainly the most cooperative. They lingered in the area for many weeks and were seen by hundreds of birders. Good feeder birds included a **Western Tanager**, which visited two feeders in Belmont, and a **Painted Bunting**, which returned to a feeder in Brewster for a remarkable third consecutive year. Dickcissels were noted from two locations, and **Harris' Sparrows** were found on Nantucket and in Hopkinton.

A **Sedge Wren** was discovered at Fort Hill in Eastham, and a Northern Waterthrush was found in Marstons Mills, for only the third winter record of this species. Several single **Bohemian Waxwings** were noted, with the exception of over 10 individuals reported from Pembroke. Northern Shrikes were exceptionally well reported, and Red-breasted Nuthatches were virtually unreported, in stark contrast to last year's invasion.

R. H. S.

|                     |       |                |  |                       |    |                   |
|---------------------|-------|----------------|--|-----------------------|----|-------------------|
| Eastern Phoebe      |       |                |  | 2/20 Royalston        | 1  | M. Lynch#         |
| 1/14 Acushnet       | 1     | M. LaBossiere  |  | Red-breasted Nuthatch |    |                   |
| Horned Lark         |       |                |  | 1/2 Lakeville         | 1  | J. Hoye#          |
| 1/8 P.I.            | 22    | M. Lynch#      |  | 1/11 E. Boxford       | 2  | J. Brown#         |
| 1/21 Cumb. Farms    | 200   | S. Arena#      |  | 1/13 Quabbin          | 5  | E. Nielsen        |
| 1/22 Eastham (F.E.) | 42    | K. Weinheimer# |  | 1/26 E. Middleboro    | 1  | K. Anderson       |
| 1/28 Wellfleet      | 15    | E. Nielsen     |  | 1/28 Truro            | 3  | BBC (R. Stymeist) |
| 2/7 Fairhaven       | 85    | M. Boucher     |  | 1/29 Wellfleet        | 1  | G. d'Entremont    |
| 2/13 Newburyport    | 130   | G. Long        |  | 2/1 Boxford           | 1  | D. Jewell         |
| 2/25 Dartmouth      | 65    | S. Arena       |  | 2/6 Rochester         | 2  | M. LaBossiere     |
| 2/25 P.I.           | 89    | M. Lynch#      |  | 2/20 Royalston        | 2  | M. Lynch#         |
| Tree Swallow        |       |                |  | 2/20 W. Boylston      | 2  | M. Lynch#         |
| 1/21 Falmouth       | 20    | C. Leahy       |  | Brown Creeper         |    |                   |
| 1/24 Mashpee        | 3     | S. Miller#     |  | 1/7 Medfield          | 2  | E. Nielsen        |
| 2/5 Squibnocket     | 1     | V. Laux        |  | 1/23 E. Middleboro    | 2  | K. Anderson       |
| American Crow       |       |                |  | 2/19 S. Natick        | 2  | D. F. Oliver#     |
| thr Framingham      | 5200+ | E. Taylor      |  | Carolina Wren         |    |                   |
| 1/14 Methuen        | 5607  | J. Hogan       |  | 1/1 Worcester         | 1  | M. Lynch#         |
| 2/7 W. Roxbury      | 1000+ | T. Aversa      |  | 1/8 Fairhaven         | 17 | R. Stymeist#      |
| 2/26 Lawrence       | 3000+ | E. Taylor      |  | 1/8 Westport          | 15 | E. Salmela        |
| Fish Crow           |       |                |  | 1/8 Framingham        | 7  | fide K. Hamilton  |
| thr Framingham      | 2     | E. Taylor      |  | 1/14 Belmont          | 1  | R. Stymeist       |
| thr Mt. A.          | 1-8   | v.o.           |  | 1/14 Lexington        | 1  | M. Lynch#         |
| 1/8 Marstons Mills  | 1     | P. Trimble     |  | 1/22 Westwood         | 1  | E. Nielsen        |
| 1/22 Sandwich       | 2     | P. Trimble     |  | 1/22 Sandwich         | 10 | P. Trimble        |
| 1/23 Roslindale     | 2     | T. Aversa      |  | 1/29 Falmouth         | 16 | M. Rines#         |
| 2/7 W. Roxbury      | 3+    | T. Aversa      |  | 2/5 Medford           | 1  | P. + F. Vale      |
| Common Raven        |       |                |  | House Wren            |    |                   |
| 1/19 Quabbin (G35)  | 2     | J. Nove        |  | thr Boston            | 1  | T. Aversa         |
| 2/15 Bridgewater    | 1     | A. Hankin      |  | 1/16 S. Dartmouth     | 1  | T. Aversa         |
| 2/15 Clinton        | 1     | C. Ralph#      |  | 1/22 Cumb. Farms      | 1  | K. Anderson       |

|   |       |                      |  |                               |                |       |                       |
|---|-------|----------------------|--|-------------------------------|----------------|-------|-----------------------|
| Winter Wren                             |       |                      |  | 1/29                          | Cumb. Farms    | 54    | R. Stymeist#          |
| 1/8 Framingham                          | 2     | C. Quinlan           |  | 1/27                          | N. Dartmouth   | 10    | T. Aversa             |
| 1/21 Woods Hole                         | 4     | P. Trimble           |  | 2/7                           | Sandwich       | 7     | T. Aversa             |
| 2/2 Wareham                             | 2     | M. LaBossiere        |  | <b>Bohemian Waxwing</b>       |                |       |                       |
| 2/3 Marshfield                          | 2     | T. Aversa            |  | 1/14                          | W. Peabody     | 1     | R. Donovan            |
| thr Reports of individuals from 10 loc. |       |                      |  | 1/20                          | N. Eastham     | 1 ph  | R. Everett#           |
| <b>Sedge Wren</b>                       |       |                      |  | 1/28                          | Wellfleet      | 1     | R. Heil#              |
| 1/8 Eastham (F.H.)                      | 1     | S. Arena             |  | 2/22                          | Pembroke       | 10-15 | M. Dwyer              |
| <b>Marsh Wren</b>                       |       |                      |  | <b>Cedar Waxwing</b>          |                |       |                       |
| 1/2 Nantucket                           | 1     | G. d'Entremont       |  | 1/2                           | Nantucket      | 50    | G. d'Entremont        |
| 1/14-24 Cumb. Farms                     | 1     | T. Aversa            |  | 1/3                           | Essex          | 60+   | T. Young              |
| 1/16 S. Dartmouth                       | 1     | T. Aversa            |  | 1/8                           | Sherborn       | 100   | E. Taylor             |
| 1/28 Cotuit                             | 2     | T. Aversa            |  | 1/13                          | W. Newbury     | 215+  | R. Heil               |
| 2/26 Westport                           | 1     | G. Gove#             |  | 1/22                          | Ipswich        | 200+  | J. Berry              |
| <b>Golden-crowned Kinglet</b>           |       |                      |  | 1/28                          | Eastham        | 100+  | M. Lynch#             |
| 1/13 Quabbin                            | 15    | E. Nielsen           |  | 2/20                          | S. Acton       | 50+   | M. Blackshaw          |
| <b>Ruby-crowned Kinglet</b>             |       |                      |  | 2/26                          | Worcester      | 75+   | M. Lynch#             |
| 1/1-2/15, 2/15-28 Wellesley             |       | 1, 2 R. Weinig       |  | <b>Northern Shrike</b>        |                |       |                       |
| 1/1 Waltham                             | 1     | C. Ralph             |  | thr                           | Sandwich       | 1     | P. Trimble            |
| 1/16 S. Dartmouth                       | 1     | T. Aversa            |  | 1/1-2                         | Nantucket      | 2     | D. Lange              |
| 1/15 Everett                            | 1     | R. Stymeist#         |  | 1/4                           | Ipswich        | 1     | J. Nove               |
| 1/16 Acushnet                           | 2     | D. Zimmerlin         |  | 1/7-2/10                      | P.I.           | 1-2   | v.o.                  |
| 1/19 Lakeville                          | 1     | M. LaBossiere        |  | 1/7                           | Dorchester     | 1     | T. Cameron#           |
| 1/21 Woods Hole                         | 1     | P. Trimble           |  | 1/8, 2/21                     | Rockport       | 1, 1  | C. Leahy, N. Nash     |
| 1/21 Milton                             | 1     | J. Cameron           |  | 1/13, 2/10                    | Wayland        | 1     | N. Patterson          |
| 1/21 Centerville                        | 1     | G. Ferguson          |  | 1/15                          | Princeton      | 1 imm | R. Bradbury           |
| 1/22 Watertown                          | 1     | R. Stymeist          |  | 1/15-2/18                     | Eastham (F.H.) | 1 ad  | v.o.                  |
| 1/22 Boston                             | 1     | T. Aversa            |  | 1/16                          | Orleans        | 1     | T. Cameron            |
| 1/29 Bourne                             | 1     | R. Stymeist#         |  | 1/27                          | Whitman        | 1     | K. Holmes             |
| 2/5 Waltham                             | 1     | C. Ralph             |  | 1/30                          | Provincetown   | 1     | W. Bailey#            |
| 2/15 W. Roxbury                         | 1     | M. Rines             |  | 2/1                           | Edgartown      | 1     | A. Mohrman            |
| <b>Eastern Bluebird</b>                 |       |                      |  | 2/2                           | Truro          | 1     | J. Sones#             |
| 1/2, 2/7 N. Attleboro                   | 9, 21 | G. Valade            |  | 2/11                          | Gay Head       | 1     | A. Fischer            |
| 1/6 Edgartown                           | 15    | J. Verner            |  | 2/18                          | Middleboro     | 1 imm | S. Arena#             |
| 1/28 Wellfleet                          | 20    | P. Trimble           |  | <b>Orange-crowned Warbler</b> |                |       |                       |
| 1/29 Barnstable                         | 12    | G. d'Entremont#      |  | 1/2                           | Boston         | 1     | T. Aversa             |
| 1/29 Cumb. Farms                        | 35    | R. Stymeist#         |  | 2/3                           | Harwich Port   | 1     | B. Nikula             |
| 2/1-28 Rochester                        | 10    | fide F. Smith        |  | <b>Yellow-rumped Warbler</b>  |                |       |                       |
| thr Reports of 1-9 indiv. from 18 loc.  |       |                      |  | 1/15                          | Brewster       | 30+   | M. Lynch#             |
| <b>Mountain Bluebird</b>                |       |                      |  | 1/15                          | Westport       | 17    | E. Nielsen            |
| 1/27-2/28 Wellfleet                     | 3     | E. Hoopes + v.o.     |  | 1/16                          | P.I.           | 8     | K. Disney             |
| <b>Hermit Thrush</b>                    |       |                      |  | 1/28                          | Wellfleet      | 60    | E. Nielsen            |
| 1/8 Marstons Mills                      | 1     | P. Trimble           |  | 1/29                          | Squibnocket    | 50    | A. Brown#             |
| 1/8 Ipswich                             | 1-2   | J. Berry             |  | 2/20                          | Scituate       | 18    | K. Weinheimer         |
| 1/8 Fairhaven                           | 4     | R. Stymeist#         |  | 2/25                          | Dartmouth      | 15    | S. Arena              |
| 1/15 Westport                           | 3     | E. Nielsen           |  | 2/26                          | Falmouth       | 20    | K. Weinheimer#        |
| 2/22 Concord                            | 1     | M. Schwoppe          |  | <b>Pine Warbler</b>           |                |       |                       |
| 2/25 Dartmouth                          | 1     | S. Arena             |  | thr                           | Yarmouthport   | 2     | K. Hamilton           |
| <b>American Robin</b>                   |       |                      |  | 1/14                          | Katama         | 1     | A. Brown#             |
| 1/13 W. Newbury                         | 135+  | R. Heil              |  | 1/16                          | S. Dartmouth   | 2     | T. Aversa             |
| 1/15 N. Dartmouth                       | 225   | M. Boucher           |  | 1/29                          | Wellfleet      | 4     | E. Nielsen            |
| 1/22 Sandwich                           | 500   | P. Trimble           |  | 2/1-28                        | Dover          | 1     | P. Hallowell          |
| 1/28 Eastham                            | 200+  | M. Lynch#            |  | <b>Palm Warbler</b>           |                |       |                       |
| 2/5 Acushnet                            | 200   | M. Boucher           |  | 1/2                           | Nantucket      | 1     | G. d'Entremont#       |
| 2/20 Ipswich                            | 275+  | BBC (J. Berry)       |  | 1/3                           | Dorchester     | 1     | fide MAS              |
| 2/22 Wayland                            | 150+  | N. Patterson         |  | 1/16                          | S. Dartmouth   | 1     | T. Aversa             |
| <b>Gray Catbird</b>                     |       |                      |  | 1/22                          | Forestdale     | 3     | P. Trimble            |
| 1/8 Fairhaven                           | 4     | R. Stymeist#         |  | 1/24                          | Cumb. Farms    | 2     | T. Aversa             |
| 1/15 Eastham                            | 2     | M. Lynch#            |  | 1/27                          | Fairhaven      | 6     | T. Aversa             |
| 1/15 Westport                           | 3     | E. Nielsen           |  | <b>Northern Waterthrush</b>   |                |       |                       |
| 1/29 Gay Head                           | 4     | A. Brown#            |  | 1/1-14                        | Marstons Mills | 1     | v.o.                  |
| 1/29 Woods Hole                         | 7     | R. Stymeist#         |  | <b>Yellow-breasted Chat</b>   |                |       |                       |
| 2/5 Marshfield                          | 1     | BBC (G. d'Entremont) |  | 1/7                           | Dorchester     | 1     | T. Cameron#           |
| 2/14 W. Roxbury                         | 1     | T. Aversa            |  | 2/18                          | Falmouth       | 1     | M. Lynch#             |
| 2/18 Falmouth                           | 7     | M. Lynch#            |  | <b>Western Tanager</b>        |                |       |                       |
| <b>Brown Thrasher</b>                   |       |                      |  | thr                           | Belmont        | 1     | J. Campbell, G. Speck |
| 1/1-2/8 Boston                          | 1     | T. Aversa            |  | <b>Painted Bunting</b>        |                |       |                       |
| 1/15, 2/11 Westport                     | 1     | E. Nielsen           |  | thr                           | Brewster       | 1 m   | A. Furman + v.o.      |
| 1/29 Chappaquiddick                     | 1     | J. Cressy#           |  | <b>Dickcissel</b>             |                |       |                       |
| <b>American Pipit</b>                   |       |                      |  | 1/1-8                         | Melrose        | 1     | D. Jewell + v.o.      |
| 1/16 S. Dartmouth                       | 44    | T. Aversa            |  | 1/16                          | S. Dartmouth   | 1     | T. Aversa             |





|                                  |              |     |                 |                        |             |     |                  |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-----|-----------------|------------------------|-------------|-----|------------------|
| Brown-headed Cowbird (continued) |              |     |                 | 1/13                   | W. Newbury  | 1   | R. Heil          |
| 1/15                             | Sudbury      | 50  | R. Forster#     | 1/21                   | Middleboro  | 1   | S. Arena#        |
| 1/16                             | S. Dartmouth | 350 | T. Aversa       | 2/3                    | Scituate    | 1   | L. Burbank       |
| 1/24                             | Yarmouthport | 72  | K. Hamilton     | 2/4                    | Acushnet    | 1 m | M. LaBossiere    |
| 2/5                              | Harwich Port | 12  | B. Nikula       | 2/19                   | Cambridge   | 1   | R. Graf          |
| 2/19                             | Wakefield    | 16  | P. + F. Vale    | House Finch            |             |     |                  |
| Northern Oriole                  |              |     |                 | 1/8                    | Framingham  | 319 | fide K. Hamilton |
| 1/14                             | Newbury      | 1   | R. Heil         | White-winged Crossbill |             |     |                  |
| 1/19-23                          | Watertown    | 1   | L. Cocco        | 2/10                   | W. Boylston | 8   | B. LaBrie        |
| 2/2                              | Edgartown    | 1   | A. Colter       | American Goldfinch     |             |     |                  |
| 2/27                             | Mt.A.        | 1 m | fide J. Heywood | 1/13                   | W. Newbury  | 103 | R. Heil          |
| Purple Finch                     |              |     |                 | 1/22                   | Sandwich    | 150 | P. Trimble       |

### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|             |   |          |   |
|-------------|---|----------|---|
| ad          | adult                                   | H.       | Harbor  |
| alt         | alternate                               | I.       | Island  |
| b           | banded                                  | L.       | Ledge   |
| br          | breeding                                | M.V.     | Martha's Vineyard   |
| dk          | dark (phase)                            | Mt.A.    | Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge                            |
| f           | female                                  | Newbypt  | Newburyport   |
| imm         | immature                                | P.I.     | Plum Island   |
| ind         | individuals                             | Pd       | Pond  |
| juv         | juvenile                                | P'town   | Provincetown  |
| loc         | location                                | Res.     | Reservoir   |
| lt          | light (phase)                           | R.P.     | Race Point, Provincetown                                    |
| m           | male                                    | S. Dart. | South Dartmouth   |
| max         | maximum                                 | S.F.     | State Forest  |
| mi          | mile                                    | S.N.     | Sandy Neck, Barnstable                                      |
| migr        | migrating                               | S.P.     | State Park  |
| n           | nesting                                 | Stellw.  | Stellwagen Bank   |
| ph          | photographed                            | Worc.    | Worcester   |
| pl          | plumage                                 | BBC      | Brookline Bird Club   |
| pr          | pair                                    | BMB      | Broad Meadow Brook, Worcester                               |
| S           | summer (1S = first summer)              | CBC      | Christmas Bird Count  |
| thr         | throughout                              | CCBC     | Cape Cod Bird Club  |
| v.o.        | various observers                       | DWWS     | Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary                           |
| W           | winter (2W = second winter)             | EMHW     | Eastern Massachusetts Hawk Watch                            |
| w/          | with                                    | GMNWR    | Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge                      |
| yg          | young                                   | HRWMA    | High Ridge Wildlife Management Area,<br>Gardner-Westminster |
| #           | additional observers                    | IRWS     | Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary                            |
| A.P.        | Andrews Point, Rockport                 | LCES     | Lloyd Center for Environmental Studies                      |
| A.Pd        | Allens Pond, S. Dartmouth               | MARC     | Massachusetts Avian Records Committee                       |
| B.          | Beach                                   | MAS      | Massachusetts Audubon Society                               |
| B.I.        | Belle Isle, E. Boston                   | MBO      | Manomet Observatory   |
| Cambr.      | Cambridge                               | MBWMA    | Martin Burns Wildlife Management Area,<br>Newbury           |
| C.P.        | Crooked Pond, Boxford                   | MNWS     | Marblehead Neck Wildlife Sanctuary                          |
| Cumb. Farms | Cumberland Farms,<br>Middleboro-Halifax | MSSF     | Myles Standish State Forest                                 |
| E.P.        | Eastern Point, Gloucester               | NAC      | Nine Acre Corner, Concord                                   |
| F.E.        | First Encounter Beach, Eastham          | NEHW     | New England Hawk Watch                                      |
| F.H.        | Fort Hill, Eastham                      | ONWR     | Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge                              |
| F.P.        | Fresh Pond, Cambridge                   | SRV      | Sudbury River Valley  |
| F.Pk        | Franklin Park, Boston                   | TASL     | Take A Second Look Harbor Census                            |
| G40         | Gate 40, Quabbin                        | WBWS     | Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary                            |
| G45         | Gate 45, Quabbin                        |          |   |



## ABOUT THE COVER: CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER

The Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*) is a tame, perky little bird that frequently cocks its tail and droops its wings as it hops rapidly between branches and peers out at an observer from scrubby vegetation. In breeding plumage adults are unmistakable with yellow crowns, a black moustache strip through a white face, chestnut flanks, white underparts, pale yellow wing bars, and a striped yellow-green back. Females are duller in coloration and have less chestnut on their flanks. Although considered one of the "confusing fall warblers," their yellow wingbars and white eye ring serve to identify the immature birds, while the adults always retain some chestnut, even in their winter plumage.

The Chestnut-sided Warbler is one of the few bird species to benefit in a substantial way from European settlement and habitat alteration. The species was so rare in the early nineteenth century that Alexander Wilson, the "father of North American Ornithology," saw but two individuals, and Audubon reportedly observed only one. They are birds of the scrub and second-growth and have benefited from the destruction of virgin forest.

They breed across the northern Midwest and southern Canada from Saskatchewan through the Maritime provinces. In the east they follow the coast south to New Jersey, and in the Appalachians south to Georgia. There is also an isolated breeding population in the Front Range of Colorado. They are considered a fairly common breeding bird in central and western Massachusetts, but are largely absent in the southeastern part of the state. These warblers winter in Central America from Nicaragua to Panama, with the largest numbers on the Pacific slopes of Costa Rica.



*Chestnut-sided Warbler*  
Drawing by William E. Davis, Jr.

They arrive in New England in early to mid-May and are nesting by the end of May or early June. In fall they migrate down the Appalachians and Mississippi Valley, departing New England from late August through the third week of September.

They nest in brushy thickets bordering abandoned fields and second-growth forest. Territorial song is similar for neighboring males, but varies

regionally, producing "dialects." The song's various descriptions include *very, very, pleased to meetcha*, or *see, see, see Miss Beecher*. There is also a rambling song and various *tchip* and *zeet* calls. Displays include a "fluff" display with feathers puffed out, and a "wings out" display with closed wings held away from the body. In aggressive displays, a male may fly in circles toward another male, but they lack the exaggerated moth-like flight of some warblers.

The species is monogamous, and the nest is a cup of fine plant materials lined by even finer ones. Spiderwebs are often used to help bind plant fibers together. The nest is generally in a low bush, one to three feet from the ground, and the four eggs are generally whitish, variously marked with brown. The female incubates during the nearly two weeks until hatching, but both parents feed the young and give distraction displays, with fluttering wings and fanned tail, should an intruder approach the nest. Fledging occurs in ten to twelve days.

These little warblers eat mostly insects and spiders, but occasionally take fruit and seeds. They are fairly stereotyped or inflexible in their foraging behavior, specializing in gleaning caterpillars from the underside of leaves in low to midlevel shrubs and lower branches of trees, although they occasionally hawk insects. The lack of flexibility in their foraging behavior is attributed to the fact that they forage in similar habitat on both the wintering and breeding grounds. They are solitary and territorial on their wintering grounds, but will join mixed-species foraging flocks, as the flocks pass through their territories.

Chestnut-sided Warblers are still common in their preferred habitat, but they have nonetheless experienced a steady decline since the 1940s. They are frequently parasitized by cowbirds, which often occupy edge habitat. They also may be the victim of deforestation on their wintering grounds, which in recent decades has replaced regenerating shrubby forest where they thrive with grasslands for cattle, or with sugar cane production, or other agricultural practices. We can only hope that the influences of man, which were so advantageous during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, do not bring them full circle back to the rarity of Audubon's day. W. E. Davis, Jr.

#### ABOUT THE OUR COVER ARTIST

Julie Zickefoose and her husband, Bill Thompson III, recently expanded their nature preserve in Appalachian Ohio to eighty acres, which is contiguous with a neighbor's eighty protected acres of woods and meadow. Thirteen warbler species breed there, as does a thriving population of box turtles, which Julie is studying. As a contributing editor, Julie continues to write and draw for *Bird Watcher's Digest*, and she recently received an Apex Award for Excellence in Writing for "A South African Tapestry" in the *BWD* March/April 1995 issue. Julie can be reached at Indigo Hill, Route 1, Box 270, Whipple, Ohio 45788.

M. Steele

While the photo caption invites the reader to ". . . identify this bird?", the photo actually depicts six individual birds; however, they are all the same species. A careful look at the six shorebirds at once reminds us why birds in this group can often seem particularly tedious to identify. They all look marginally different, yet remarkably similar. Variations in the stage of molt, season of the year, age or gender, and the bird's specific plumage at the time it was photographed are all elements to consider in identifying an unknown shorebird photograph. Several important features at once reveal themselves in the photograph. The well-defined breast streaking and the apparent necklace across the midbreast suggest that the birds are adults in alternate (breeding) plumage. Shorebirds, especially "peep," in basic (winter) or juvenal plumage tend to have few breast streaks, which if present are largely confined to the sides of the breast. In addition the back pattern of juveniles is often scaly in appearance, an effect created by the broad, pale feather edgings on the scapulars and wing coverts that generally characterize this age class of shorebirds. Shorebirds in basic plumage are typically pale and uniform gray on the back.

Because the shorebirds in the photo are neither strongly streaked below nor strongly scaled on the back, it is fair to assume that they are adults in alternate plumage. Their bills are uniformly straight and tapered, with no obvious thickening at the base or droop at the tip. The bills are also fine and slender, not blunt and stout. The fine and slender bills and the overall small and delicate build of the birds removes the chunkier and bigger-headed Sanderling as a possibility. This suggests that the birds are one of the several small sandpipers that are collectively called peep (e.g., Baird's, White-rumped, Western, Semipalmated, Least).

The birds are not Baird's or White-rumped sandpipers because these species show an obvious primary projection beyond the tail due to their particularly long primaries. The Least Sandpiper and the much larger and more robust Pectoral Sandpiper can be eliminated on the basis of their pale leg color. The mystery peep clearly have blackish or dark legs.

The choice lies between Western and Semipalmated sandpiper. The birds are Semipalmated Sandpipers (*Calidris pusilla*.) In alternate plumage the Western Sandpiper is much more heavily patterned than Semipalmated Sandpiper, especially on the breast and flanks, which are prominently marked with distinctive chevron-shaped markings. Furthermore, the bills of adult Western Sandpipers are noticeably thickened at the base and would appear longer and droopier at the tip than those of the Semipalmated Sandpiper.



Deborah Howard took this picture at Plymouth Beach in May. Courtesy of MAS.

## AT A GLANCE

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Photo by William B. Long. Courtesy of MAS.



Can you identify this bird?

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

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