

# Bird Observer

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VOLUME 50, NUMBER 5

OCTOBER 2022



# HOT BIRDS

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The absolute top bird of the summer was a **Cape Verde Shearwater** spotted by a small pelagic birding excursion off of Chatham. This was only the second accepted record for all of North America, and the first for Massachusetts. A few other records, including one from Massachusetts, are suspected to be this species but not confirmed. Ian Davies took the photo on the left. See the full story on page 324 of this issue.

The Brookline Bird Club overnight pelagic trips frequently bring back astounding reports, and this summer was no exception. The rarest species seen this summer was a **Black-capped Petrel**, though it was overshadowed by the mind-blowing, unprecedented numbers of White-faced Storm-Petrels whose numbers exceeded 400 individuals at just one stop during the trip. John Oshlick took the photo on the right.



Ted Gilliland spotted a **Franklin's Gull**, apparently Hampden County's second record of the species, on a small island in the Connecticut River near Longmeadow. It was not reported again from Massachusetts, but another report came in from northeastern Connecticut three days later and about 35 miles away. Ted took the photo on the left.

One **Loggerhead Shrike** is a rare occurrence in Massachusetts. So far, 2022 has brought two to the state. Bill Lafley encountered one at Orange Airport, roughly 30 miles west and six weeks after Jon Skinner found one at Fitchburg Airport (featured in our last issue). Bill took the photo on the right.





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***Due to circumstances beyond Bird Observer's control, we are postponing the 50th Anniversary Photo, Video, and Writing Contest.***



# Bird Observer

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

**VOL. 50, NO. 5 OCTOBER 2022**

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# Birding Heald Street Orchard, Pepperell, Massachusetts, and Nearby Conservation Lands

*Mari F. Badger*

The Nashua River watershed is a tangle of Merrimack River tributaries that support lush riparian habitat in north-central Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire. What is now the town of Pepperell lies at the confluence of the Nashua and Nissitissit rivers.

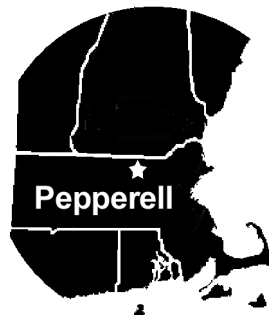
Indigenous people have lived in this region for at least 8,000 years, and Nipmuc, Pennacook, and Nashaway tribes valued the area for hunting, fishing, and berries. European settlers arrived in 1720 and began to farm, turning forests into field.

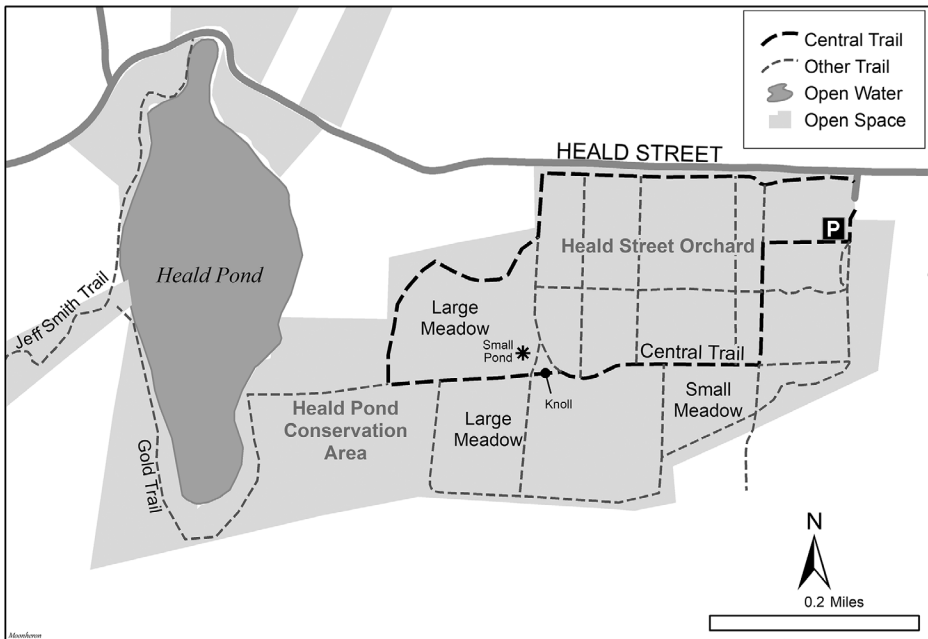
During the industrial revolution, paper mills and other industries grew to dominate the watershed and contributed to increased deforestation and water pollution. The runoff from factories and mills, combined with the effects of dams and culverts, reshaped and degraded the land. By the 1960s, the Nashua River was ranked by government agencies as one of the nation's ten most polluted rivers.

It is hard to overstate how polluted the river was. An Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) report from the 1960s details the gallons of industrial dyes, discharges associated with leather tanning, tons of raw sewage, catalogs of highly toxic chemicals, and biochemical oxygen demand affecting the river. According to locals, the stink was detectable more than a mile away.

Area resident Marion Stoddart decided she had had enough. She organized the Nashua River Clean-Up Committee, which pushed for regulation, remediation, and conservation. Stoddart also founded the Nashua River Watershed Association. The achievements of the local community in cleaning up the watershed offer a remarkable story of reclamation, one that has produced an astonishing result. Some of these waterways today are among the cleanest and purest in the state. Stoddart's achievements were honored by the United Nations, chronicled in murals, described in a widely read children's book, *A River Ran Wild* by Lynne Cherry, and presented in an award-winning documentary, *Marion Stoddart: The Work of 1000*. One of Pepperell's loveliest spots today is named in her honor.

The town of Pepperell and the Nashoba Conservation Trust protect 3,000-plus acres of this land today. An additional 5,300 acres are protected by other public and private entities. Much of this is former farmland or riparian—a type of habitat adjacent to rivers and waterways that hosts unique plants and animals. On a recent visit, I met a volunteer removing buckthorn and honeysuckle from a spot along Sucker Brook where flycatchers had nested. It was inspiring to learn how local people continue Stoddart's legacy and give their time to protect these areas with enthusiasm.





**Figure 1.** Map of Heald Street Orchard.

I made my first birding trip to Pepperell about 10 years ago after reading a Massbird entry about Heald (pronounced *heeled*) Orchard from local birder Alan Bostick. Ever since, Pepperell has kept drawing me back. I now try to bird the area at least a couple of times a year. Pepperell’s eBird hotspots—Nissitissit Meadow (73 species; local birder Scott Wilson added nine species on a single day in the spring of 2022), Keyes-Parker Conservation Area (118 species), Heald Street Orchard (159 species), Westside Trail/ Marion Stoddart Conservation Area (89 species)—rarely disappoint. After all, these hot spots are located in Massachusetts’s second-most commonly used migration flyway after Plum Island (cf. Nashua River Wild & Scenic River Study Committee) with a combined list of 230 species of birds—half of them nesting.

### Heald Street Orchard

The crown jewel is Pepperell’s 80-acre Heald Street Orchard. (See Figure 1. Map of Heald Street Orchard.) The town purchased this property in 1979 and leased the land to local apple farmers until farming was no longer sustainable. In 2008, the town introduced a detailed conservation plan for the orchard with the goals of protecting the water supply, preserving biodiversity, and supporting recreational use. Today the orchard is a lively successional habitat, but perhaps not a typical one. Though I have birded here mostly in the spring for the warbler show, it is a delight in all seasons, offering a great variety of species and impressive numbers of birds.

Heald Street Orchard is easy to find. From Pepperell Town Hall, drive north on Park Street, and take the first left onto Heald Street. Follow Heald Street for 1.5 miles;



Indigo Bunting. All photographs by the author.

the dirt parking area is on the left at the northeast corner of the orchard. There is a second, smaller lot just down the road in the northwest corner. The GPS coordinates for the northeast corner parking area are Latitude 42.67099; Longitude -71.62231. Other entrances are available but require hiking through rugged conditions.

There are no facilities nearby, and the location is not easily accessible to people with disabilities without specialized outdoor equipment such as an all-terrain wheelchair. It is also hilly and unfriendly to hinky knees. But even the parking lot can be impressively birdy and is worth checking out if you are driving by. I have seen Indigo Bunting, Northern Parula, and Cape May, Bay-breasted, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, Blue-winged, and Wilson's warblers even before turning the engine off.

Beginning birders and those who struggle with warbler neck will find Heald Street Orchard quite accommodating. Fruit trees are not towering trees, and their canopy is not very thick. Add to this the sheer number of birds, and you have favorable conditions to observe birds you may otherwise only hear or glimpse through leaves. The hills also make it easy to look down from a high point, not up. Photographers, too, will find it easier to photograph birds at Heald because of the shorter trees. If you enjoy recording birds, the lack of traffic in the area is a benefit. The only drawback is a nearby chicken coop—a rooster is often audible in the mornings.

Heald Street Orchard slopes from the north along Heald Street down to woodland on the perimeter in the south and west, with a shrubby margin in the east. Most of the apple trees are past their prime, but when the remaining few of these twisted gray branches are in bloom, the pale blossoms welcome plenty of bees and Orchard Orioles. Unmarked mowed paths crisscross the orchard in a mostly even grid. In spring, the orchard is easy to navigate, but by mid-June tall grasses and wildflowers filled with insects take over, and you are at the mercy of the mowing. Because the orchard is home to ground-nesting birds such as Bobolink and Field Sparrow, staying on paths is vital.

From the dirt lot, walk through the gate and enter the orchard by way of a shady bower, often filled with the songs of Wood Thrushes and the buzzy notes of Blue-gray





Heald Street Orchard.

Gnatcatchers. If you are lucky to be there just before dawn on a spring morning, the chorus can be overwhelming.

Most birders meander along the apple trees on the right at first. Take a left at the first T junction and head down the slope, then make a dogleg onto a wide mowed path—the Central Trail. This path runs along the field through the center of the orchard to its western edge. The Central Trail is unmarked, though easily navigated if you bring a map.

This is the first of two fields you will encounter. A recently installed kestrel box has caught the attention of local falcons, but reportedly no pair has yet chosen to call it home. As you walk along the Central Trail, listen for warblers, orioles, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, House Wrens, and sparrows in the trees on your right. Scan the field on your left for Eastern Bluebirds, American Kestrels, and swallows. It is possible to see Northern Rough-winged, Tree, Barn, and Bank swallows here.

Instead of heading to the right along the trees, take a detour straight down the eastern edge of the orchard. I have always enjoyed this edge that goes down the hill into the southeast corner because it often holds a surprise or two. This part of the orchard is muddy and includes deep froggy puddles surrounded by thick tangles, tall grasses and sedges, sumac, and bushy vegetation—ideal for skulkers such as Nashville Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Winter Wren, Warbling Vireo, Swamp Sparrow, and Wilson's Snipe, as well as birds such as Canada Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Black-and-White Warbler, and American Redstart, which can sometimes be seen up close and down low. I keep hoping for a Mourning Warbler here, though I have not found one yet. When you get to the bottom, scan the treetops along the margin for Scarlet Tanager, woodpeckers, and high-tree warblers such as Northern Parula and Blackburnian, Black-



Blue-winged Warbler.

throated Green, Blackpoll, and Tennessee warblers. Listen for Eastern Wood Pewee, Great Crested Flycatcher, and Red-eyed Vireo, as well as the other vireos. You may also find a flycatcher or two along with Eastern Kingbirds. Heald Street Orchard has historically offered a nice variety of flycatchers.

Walk back up through the field to reach the Central Trail. There is no need to be orderly or follow anything but your own ears. Tracking the unusual chip note can produce anything from a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher to an Orange-crowned Warbler if you are lucky. Any mowed path here can be good birding, and you can always orient yourself by going north toward the road.

The showstoppers here are the Blue-winged Warblers. You will find them in abundance, *bee-buzz*-ing themselves silly. Their numbers make Heald a wonderful place to compare this warbler's pre-dawn and post-dawn songs. Wherever there are Blue-winged Warblers in such numbers, there is also the tantalizing possibility of a Golden-winged Warbler—an unexpected lifer for me here a few years ago. In the recent past, Heald Street Orchard has drawn several Blue-winged x Golden-winged hybrids in addition to the spectacular numbers of Blue-winged Warblers. During the spring of 2019, Heald Street Orchard hosted a Brewster's warbler.

While the Blue-wings with their overdone eyeliner are the stars, that does not mean these charmers do not have stiff competition. Indigo Buntings often show up in terrific numbers, and you can find large flocks of Cedar Waxwings in the blossoms. Their numbers, as well as those of Eastern Bluebirds, can be quite astonishing.

Once you have had a taste of the Orchard's most colorful denizens, you may start to wonder about the habitat around you. In rapidly reforesting natural areas and in suburban Massachusetts, with its penchant for tree-free housing developments and expansive sterile lawns, grassland birds' breeding habitat is in decline. In typical succession, grasslands are overtaken by woody species and develop into shrublands and then young trees. The tree species spread and the landscape returns to forest. Heald Street Orchard is a managed habitat—succession happens, but not in the ways



The large meadow, looking west.

one might expect. The town approaches the orchard as a managed mosaic and aims to preserve a patchwork of habitats for critical species by slowing down some aspects of succession. A good example is a large meadow in the west of the orchard. Old fruit trees were cleared from a section in the west of the orchard in 2008, which the town has maintained as a meadow, mowing it once every two years in the late fall or early winter to ensure some grassland habitat is preserved. This meadow hosts Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Bobolinks, swallows, and raptors. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds zip between trees. Listen carefully for Grasshopper Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, and Prairie Warbler.

The meadow is managed not only for birds, but also for pollinators. The summer butterfly and dragonfly show can be as impressive as the warblers. Still, as one local birder remarked to me, the dying apple trees and the increasing presence of bittersweet, multiflora rose, and poison ivy are having an impact on pollinators and bird numbers. There is still work to be done to preserve the diversity of species here.

On the east side of the meadow, you will find a bare knoll, a good spot for sunning snakes that draw the interest of kestrels. This hilltop with its inviting bench is the place to listen to the spring chattering of Chimney Swifts overhead and to scan for birds of prey: Broad-winged, Red-Shouldered, Cooper's, and Sharp-shinned hawks, as well as vultures, Common Ravens, Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, and Merlins, depending on the season. Looking out from this spot one spring morning, I saw a gray fox. Many mammals are possible here year-round; reports of deer, mink, otters, foxes, and coyotes are common. Locals report a resident bobcat. Bears, porcupines, and moose are occasional.





The small meadow.

Just north of the knoll, a small pond with a hem of low shrubs and willows attracts different species. This little gem hosts Yellow Warblers, Wilson's Warblers, Eastern Phoebes, Eastern Kingbirds, and Least and Willow flycatchers, as well as other warbler species and mammals coming in for a drink.

At the southwest corner of the orchard, you can enter the cool shade of the woods to explore the adjacent Heald Pond Conservation area (discussed below). Otherwise, turn right up the hill toward the road to bird along the western edge of the orchard. Listen for the *chick-burr* of Scarlet Tanagers, the entertaining song of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and the eerie sounds of cuckoos. You have a reasonable chance of encountering at least four species of vireos as well as courting owls, depending on the season and time of day. When you come to the top, walk east along the northern edge of the orchard, meandering up and down the slope to explore the drier and sunnier environment around these trees, eventually coming back to the parking area in the northeast corner.

At the end of the day, Heald's warblers settle down. Swallows and swifts and other twilight birds take over. You can hear American Woodcocks, Eastern Whip-poor-wills, Common Nighthawks, and owls. Owls can be active year-round, and locals who snowshoe here in winter report impressive owl and raptor shows, with eagles setting on pond ice to consume their catch. Fall and winter birds include Pine Siskin, Common Redpoll, Dark-Eyed Junco, American Tree Sparrow, and Lincoln's, Fox, White-crowned, and White-throated sparrows. A recent Christmas Bird Count logged 81 species in Pepperell, including Lesser Scaup, Common Loon, and American Pipit, many of them in the orchard.

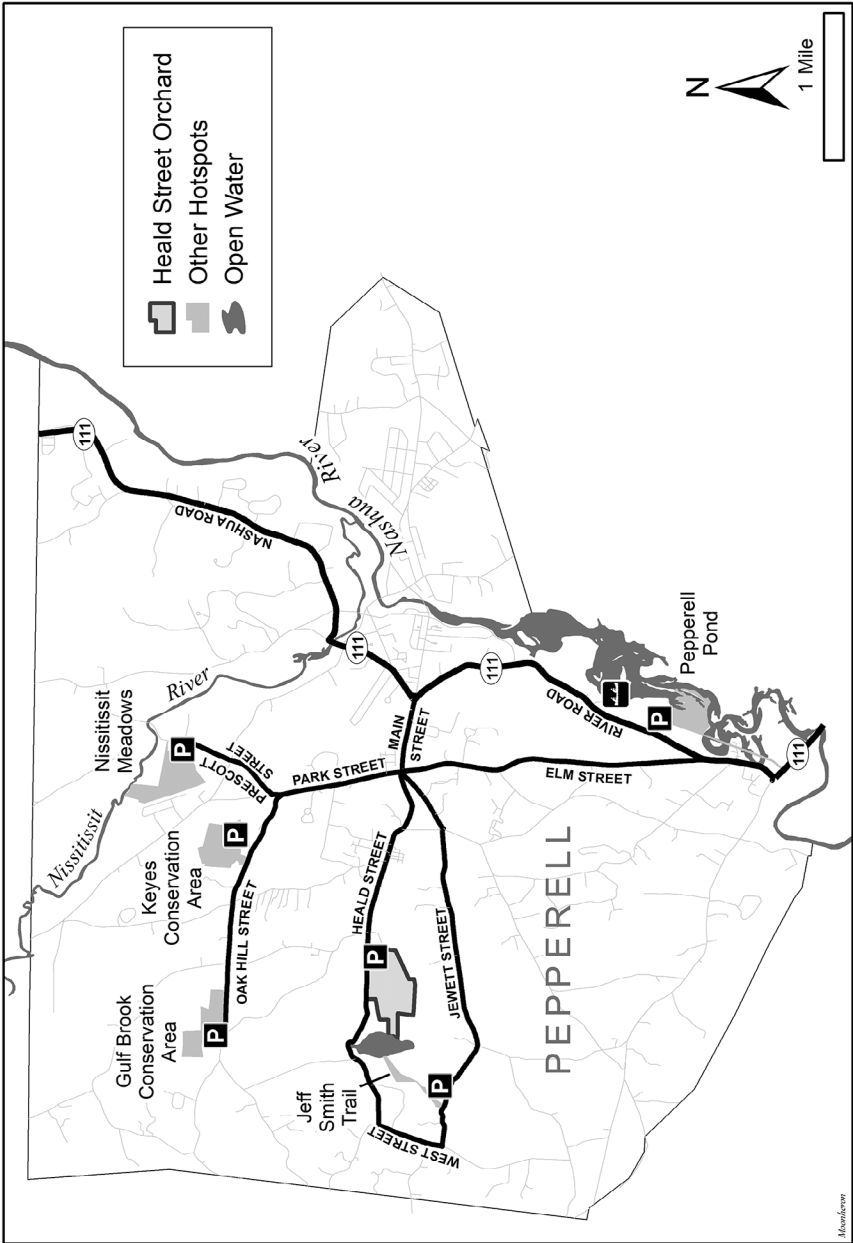


Figure 2. Map of Pepperell birthing hotspots.





Heald Pond, viewed from the road.

A few warnings—Heald Street Orchard is popular among dog walkers. Mostly, I have encountered dogs that are well-behaved and well under control. Unfortunately, stepping in dog feces is much too common here (or maybe I am unlucky). Deer ticks can also be a problem, so take reasonable precautions. Beware, too, of drenching rain. Rocky trails and grassy paths can be slippery when wet, and some patches of tall grass can be knee-deep and muddy enough to pull off your shoe. In summer, there can be a lot of poison ivy along paths, so closed-toed shoes and long pants are advisable.

While it is hard not to want to spend half a day at the Heald Street Orchard, you can also string together a few of Pepperell's other locations for a productive day in almost any season. Some particularly rewarding and scenic areas nearby include those listed below (see Figure 2. Map of Pepperell birding hotspots.), but this list is by no means comprehensive, and most of these spots seem underbirded to me, at least by eBird standards.

### **Heald Pond Conservation Area**

Many visitors to the Heald Street Orchard also explore the cool shade of Heald Pond Conservation Area, a 32-acre mixed woodland that surrounds a beautiful pond at the southwest corner of the orchard (see Figure 1). Several species of woodpeckers are common, as well as Black-capped Chickadees, Eastern Towhees, Brown Creepers, Ovenbirds, Carolina Wrens, Pine Warblers, and both nuthatches. Look for signs of Pileated Woodpecker excavations and trees stripped of bark just past the entrance. The pond may also offer a few ducks, a Common Loon, Hooded Mergansers, Belted Kingfishers, Spotted and Solitary sandpipers, and the occasional Osprey. The pond's edges are visited by Green and Great Blue herons, Black-crowned Night-Herons, and

other waders. This area hosts hawks, owls, turtles, salamanders, frogs, and beavers.

### **Jeff Smith Trail**

The trail around the west side of the pond—known as the Gold Trail—intersects the Jeff Smith Trail, but it is better to enter this trail south of the orchard at Jewett Street (Latitude 42.6638; Longitude -71.6425). There is a small lot here for parking.

The seven-mile Jeff Smith Trail runs all the way to the New Hampshire border through a 10-acre strip of microclimates glittering with condensation and full of mosses and fungi, creating a protected corridor for plants, wildlife, and hikers. The southern section of the trail from Jewett Street to the Gold Trail intersection is often wet, but it offers excellent birding. Underbirded and underappreciated, perhaps because of the complicated terrain, this ramble runs through the dramatic Blood Brook Ravine, which is not named for its color or a murderous history, but for the local Blood family. It includes wet thickets with clearings and woodlands as well as an old dam. It is an incredibly birdy spot, with Brown Thrashers, Gray Catbirds, Warbling Vireos, Northern Mockingbirds, both waterthrush species, Nashville, Magnolia, and Wilson's warblers, wrens, and various flycatchers. I suspect you can find much more here.

Northwest of the pond, the trail is extremely steep and often slippery as it wends through a thick grove of oak, maple, beech, and hemlock with a rich understory. This challenging trail follows a geologic fault line along a high ridge that overlooks a deep canyon with fantastic views of the pond. It then crosses the road into other conservation areas: first Pepperell Springs, and then the Gulf Brook Conservation Area. In 1780, local resident Joseph Heald believed that there was gold and silver in the rock formations and tried to mine them. The effort failed and was repeated by others, but all anyone ever found was slate.

### **Nissitissit Meadow**

Nissitissit Meadow is an eBird hotspot. Less than a mile of walking takes you through a beautiful wetland with trails along the Nissitissit River, a fast-flowing, cold water river that provides critical habitat for species of concern such as American and Least bitterns, water shrews, spotted and wood turtles, the spine-crowned clubtail dragonfly, and five of the state's six freshwater mussel species (one of the most endangered animal groups in North America).

A short loop to the south leads to a marsh, and the north trail loops you through a meadow that connects to additional trails in the Nissitissit River Wildlife Management Area. Managed by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, it is a parcel that includes hundreds of additional acres of woodland to explore. This is a magnificent riparian habitat where you can find both Northern and Louisiana waterthrushes, Spotted Sandpipers, Baltimore Orioles, woodpeckers, flycatchers, vireos, and many of the high-tree wood warblers. The small lot is on Prescott Street. The GPS coordinates for the parking area are Latitude 42.68937; Longitude -71.59395.

### **Keyes-Parker Conservation Area**

Another eBird hotspot, the Keyes-Parker Conservation Area, consists of 70 acres

of open fields, forests, ponds, and wetlands. The area surrounds Sucker Brook, which is one of the highest quality cold water brooks in eastern Massachusetts and a breeding area for brown trout and the endangered brook floater mussel. A small dam was removed a few years ago, and a culvert was improved to allow the brook to flow more freely. The landscape is still adapting, but it is spectacular. The woodlands here feature beautiful and healthy eastern hemlock and shagbark hickory. The grassy meadows are filled with wildflowers and pollinators. Bird species include Red-tailed Hawks, Barred Owls, Pileated Woodpeckers, Black-capped Chickadees, Eastern Bluebirds, Cedar Waxwings, Common Nighthawks, Solitary Sandpipers, Cliff Swallows, Rusty Blackbirds, and a nice variety of ducks, warblers, and flycatchers during migration.

### **Gulf Brook Conservation Area**

This 208-acre town-owned parcel includes mixed woodland, wetland, old-growth trees, a steep gorge, and a beaver pond. The Gulf Brook wends its way through these woodlands, and thanks to a project done in partnership with the state, volunteers, and private funders that involved the replacement of two decaying culverts, the brook now provides high-quality breeding habitat for brown trout and other species of concern. The area was also protected with Northern Saw-whet Owls in mind.

Gulf Brook is an excellent place to seek marsh birds, woodpeckers, and songbirds as well as gray foxes, white-tailed deer, porcupines, beavers, otters, and mink. Salamanders and frogs are abundant. There is an entrance on Oak Hill Street. A small parking area is located across the street from the trail on Chestnut Street. The GPS coordinates for the parking area are Latitude 42.68533; Longitude -71.63252.

### **Pepperell Pond/Marion Stoddart Conservation Area/Westside Trail**

The Pepperell Pond area of the Nashua River is a migratory stopover for waterfowl. The Westside Trail runs on a railbed through spectacular scenery where views of the river are to your east. Bald Eagles are common in this area. This eBird hotspot is an out-and-back trail that provides great looks at the river and its wetlands. A scope or a kayak will be useful here to see birds on the west bank. Because the trail runs along the west side of the river, you will be looking into the sun in the morning; afternoon birding here is more enjoyable. The GPS coordinates for the canoe and kayak launch and parking area are Latitude 42.64666; Longitude -71.58916. The GPS coordinates for the Walent parking area are Latitude 42.64190; Longitude -71.59108.

The eBird lists for Pepperell's treasured areas may not tell the whole story. Some of these natural places are filled not only with a chorus of songbirds, but also with the prospect of something unusual, something rare. Heald Street Orchard and its environs certainly seem like those kinds of places.

Special thanks to local birders Alan Bostick and Scott Wilson for sharing their stories and comments on birding in this area with me, and to Paula Terrasi, Conservation Administrator for the Town of Pepperell. 🐦

*Mari Badger is a Hopkinton birder, formerly of Cambridge, working on a birding festival for greater Boston. This is her second article for Bird Observer.*

## A Cape Verde Shearwater (*Calonectris edwardsii*) in Massachusetts: A First for the State and Second Fully Documented Record for North America

*Jeremiah Trimble, Peter Trimble Sr., Ian Davies, Julian Hough, and Nick Bonomo*



A close-up of the Cape Verde Shearwater shows many of the features that contribute to the identification of this bird. In particular, note the bill's thin structure and dusky coloration, which differ significantly from the brighter, stouter yellow bills of Cory's/Scopoli's Shearwater. Photograph by Peter Trimble, Sr.

At sunrise on Friday, August 12, 2022, we boarded Nick Bonomo's 20-foot vessel the *Ardenna* and departed Saquatucket Harbor in Harwich, Massachusetts, for points east. The main goals of the day were to explore for pelagics while saving time to search the shorebird areas around South Monomoy. We compiled a wishlist of rarities. Jeremiah offered his prediction for the day's highlight: Cape Verde Shearwater—a lofty goal. It turned out that we did not have to wait long to see this mega-rarity—a first for the waters off Cape Cod and Massachusetts.

Skies were overcast and winds were light as we rounded Monomoy Point toward the productive waters east of Chatham. Though not heavily covered by birders, this nutrient-rich area between the Gulf of Maine and the Nantucket Shoals always seems to have something to offer between birds, cetaceans, and other pelagic creatures. At their best, these waters are teeming with marine life. This day's experience was very bird-centric. Hundreds of shearwaters, storm-petrels, gulls, and terns were scattered over a



Map showing the precise location of the Cape Verde Shearwater 4.6 miles east of Chatham Light, Chatham, Massachusetts, first sighted around 7:20 am on August 12, 2022. Map by Nick Bonomo/Google Earth.

broad swath of water about three to five miles offshore. There were no massive tight flocks. Rather, the tubenoses were following scattered topwater-feeding fish. The calm waters were perfect for spotting whales, dolphins, or sharks, but surprisingly we had none of those. The only fin we saw belonged to an ocean sunfish (*Mola mola*).

Near the tip of South Monomoy, we began to see our first seabirds. Wilson’s Storm-Petrels (*Oceanites oceanicus*) were numerous but mostly remained distant. Great (*Ardenna gravis*) and Cory’s (*Calonectris diomedea*) shearwaters were common and scattered in loose flocks as far as we could see. We proceeded north until we were about four miles due east of Chatham Light, where we found a good concentration of birds and feeding activity. Jeremiah wasted no time and spotted a small, dark “Cory’s-type” shearwater with a grayish bill on the water around 7:20 am. He initially saw the bird with two Great Shearwaters about 75 meters from the boat. Later, two more Great Shearwaters drifted in to form a loose flock with the Cape Verde. The fun part about observing pelagics from a small boat is that you can get quite close to the birds, so the perspective from a 20-foot boat is remarkable compared to the large vessels we typically charter for pelagic trips. When Jeremiah first pointed out the Cape Verde Shearwater, we were already close to this individual and at nearly eye level with it.

Although Jeremiah recognized the bird as a Cape Verde Shearwater in the very first views, the process of confirming such a rare bird was a separate thing all together—a process that required careful consideration. Nick maneuvered the boat so the bird was in better light while it was still on the water. We slowly approached the shearwaters. The Cape Verde Shearwater was the farthest away in this small flock, which allowed some more time—but not much—to view the bird. One by one, the Great Shearwaters lifted off the water and flew directly away. Luckily, the Cape Verde Shearwater allowed





The Cape Verde Shearwater, first seen on the water. Note the overall dark appearance, especially on the head and the dingy gray bill. Although it is seen alone here, its smaller, more slender shape is recognizable compared to Cory's/Scopoli's Shearwater. Photograph by Ian Davies.

a fairly close approach, and when it took off it flew directly in front of the boat—which was especially satisfying for Julian and Ian in the bow—before turning and heading straight away. After we exchanged brief looks of disbelief, Nick gunned the boat in pursuit as best he could, but the bird effortlessly flew away from us, which is saying something since we were doing 30mph.

After losing sight of the bird, we began the process of reviewing our sighting and the many images we captured of the bird. It did not take long for all to arrive at a consensus on the identification—though it did take a few moments for each of us to shake off the shock of what had just transpired. Cape Verde Shearwater has been recorded off the east coast of North America at least once before, so each of us had been prepared for this identification for years. Despite nobody on board having field experience with the species, this bird clearly checked all the boxes in textbook fashion with good views and photos to boot. A life bird for everyone on board! Repeatedly during the day, we searched the waters where the sighting occurred but made no further observations of the bird. It was not until we anchored off South Monomoy in the afternoon that we were able to properly celebrate this extreme rarity.

### **Identification**

On first sight on the water, one of the most notable characteristics was the bird's smaller size in comparison to Cory's Shearwater; it was similar to or even a bit smaller than Great. The bird's overall dark appearance, especially on the head, made it stand out from Cory's Shearwater. Its appearance was less distinguishable from the accompanying Great Shearwaters because they appeared similarly dark on the top of the head, especially when hunched over and hiding their white nape. Compared to the nearby Great Shearwaters, which showed a sharp edge separating a dark cap and white lower face and throat, this bird showed messy, diffuse, darker ear coverts and a face that faded and blended into the white of the throat and sides of the neck. The contrast between the darker ear coverts and crown and the notably pale throat was, perhaps,



The Cape Verde Shearwater in flight not long after it lifted off water. This image shows many features of this species including the rather slender wings, the long tail, the fully dark primaries, and the dark head and ear coverts fading away toward the throat—in contrast to the sharply demarcated dark cap of a Great Shearwater. Photograph by Jeremiah Trimble.

the reason this bird initially recalled Great rather than Cory's Shearwater. The bird's bill was thin and dingy grayish—similar to Great—standing out dramatically from the brighter, stouter, yellow bills of Cory's (*C. d. borealis*) and Scopoli's (*C. d. diomedea*) shearwaters, the local *Calonectris* taxa.

In flight, the same characteristics were visible, as well as a dark underside to the primaries, long thin wings, a long tail, and a flight style more similar to Great Shearwater—snappier wingbeats and less ponderous flight than Cory's. The dark underside to the primaries helps distinguish Cape Verde Shearwater from Scopoli's, which has white tongues extending into the outer primary feathers. Photo review showed thin white eye arcs that stand out against a rather dark face.

This individual was in active prebasic molt with new secondaries and was replacing the inner primaries. Peter Pyle added, "The Massachusetts bird is likely a SY commencing second prebasic molt. The outer primaries and rectrices seem rather worn, pointed, and brownish and the plumage seems rather even in wear, without molt limits."

### **Status and Distribution**

Cape Verde Shearwater breeds on the Cape Verde Islands off Northwest Africa from June through November. Though its movements are not well known, it appears that much of the population migrates south to waters off eastern South America—primarily Argentina, Uruguay, and southern Brazil—occurring there October through March.



Note the dark ear coverts, extensively pale throat, and slim, dusky bill that contribute to a Great Shearwater–like impression when seen at range. The Cape Verde’s smallish head and long narrow wings are evident. Photograph by Julian Hough.



Note the underwing pattern of the Cape Verde Shearwater. The fully dark primaries with no white extending into these feathers is a key feature that contributes to its identification in comparison to Scopoli’s Shearwater. Photograph by Nick Bonomo.

### Previous North American Record and Occurrences

North America’s first documented record was off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, on August 15, 2004 (Patteson and Armistead 2004). This sighting laid the foundation for additional records and put this species firmly on the radar of pelagic enthusiasts in North America.

Several undocumented sight records hint that this species may occur in the western North Atlantic waters more often than is suggested by the first documented record. We consider the following reports to be good Cape Verde Shearwater candidates, but sufficient documentation and photographs were not possible under the conditions.

2021, Massachusetts: August 19, at sea, near Hydrographer Canyon (D. Gochfeld).

2018, New York: June 22, Robert Moses State Park (S. Mitra).

2013, North Carolina: September 29, at sea, off Cape Hatteras (N. Bonomo).

2012, New York: June 2, Robert Moses State Park (S. Mitra).

### **Finding Cape Verde Shearwater**

We believe that with a better understanding of the features described above, future records of this cryptic species may increase, though the gap of 18 years between documented sightings indicates that the species is indeed quite rare in North American waters.

To find your own Cape Verde, your best chances are to look off the east coast of North America in late summer, ideally offshore, but potentially also from land. Both documented records are in a very tight mid-August time window, with potential sightings ranging more widely.

Search for a bird that looks like a small, dark Cory’s Shearwater, perhaps with a subtly capped appearance, with flight style more intermediate between the languid flapping of Cory’s and the snappier wingbeats of Great. Make sure to eliminate Cory’s by looking at the thin dusky bill, and rule out Scopoli’s by the lack of white



This typical borealis Cory's Shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea borealis*) is the most common subspecies of Cory's Shearwater in New England offshore waters. In comparison to Cape Verde Shearwater, note especially the Cory's stout, bright yellow bill and overall bulky structure. The fully dark primaries are similar to the pattern shown by Cape Verde Shearwater. Photograph by Jeremiah Trimble.



This typical Scopoli's Cory's Shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea diomedea*) is an uncommon subspecies off the coast of the United States. Advancements in digital photography, which allow for careful study of difficult field marks, may help show that it is more common than previously thought. Note especially the bright yellow bill as in *C.d. borealis*, and also the obvious tongues of white extending into the outer primaries that help differentiate Scopoli's from both Cape Verde Shearwater and borealis Cory's Shearwater. Photograph by Jeremiah Trimble.

on the underside of the primaries. Note that many of these differences are subtle and difficult to confidently judge under field conditions, thus great care is encouraged while evaluating a putative Cape Verde Shearwater.

Good luck, and we hope to see many more records in the future!

## Acknowledgments

Many thanks to Peter Pyle for commenting on photos and Shaibal Mitra for providing detailed information on putative sight records. 🐦

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The team of Cape Verde Shearwater observers after returning from our day on the water. From left to right: Ian Davies, Julian Hough, Nick Bonomo, Peter Trimble Sr., and Jeremiah Trimble pose in front of Nick Bonomo's 20-foot boat, the *Ardenna*. Photograph by Jeremiah Trimble.

**Jeremiah Trimble** works at Harvard University's Museum of Comparative Zoology, where he manages the nearly 400,000 specimens of birds in the Ornithology Collection. He has been an avid birder since he could hold binoculars, has led natural history tours around the world, and has conducted research in Alaska, Costa Rica, Mongolia, and Australia, among other locations. He has spent a lot of time offshore of Massachusetts exploring and documenting seabirds.

**Peter Trimble Sr.** is a retired schoolteacher who lives in Centerville, Massachusetts, on Cape Cod, where he has lived his whole life. He is a life-long birder who has spent over 25 years as a naturalist of seabird and whale trips off the coast of Massachusetts and is a field ornithologist at Joint Base Cape Cod and Air Station Cape Cod.

**Nick Bonomo** is a physician assistant in orthopedic surgery and resides in the pelagic-deprived state of Connecticut. He has been birding New England since his teens and over the years has developed a particular interest in seabirds and shorebirds. He is a member of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut.

**Ian Davies** works at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, where he is one of the eBird project leaders. He originally got into birds in Massachusetts at Manomet Bird Observatory (now Manomet), and over the past 18 years has birded every corner of the state.

**Julian Hough** is originally from the United Kingdom and has been an obsessive birder since age six. His main interests are in migration and identification. He is a keen artist and photographer and currently lives in New Haven, Connecticut, with his son Alex.



## *Bird Observer: A Writer's Home*

*John R. Nelson*

I remember the flush I felt when my story “Twitcher’s Temptation” appeared in the April 2004 issue of *Bird Observer*. I had told a tale of the morning I had raced from Gloucester to Princeton to find my nemesis bird, a Northern Goshawk, and, after a tussle with temptation, passed up my chance to see the bird for fear I would disturb a goshawk pair nesting at Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary. I had been birding for just a few years, and it was the first story I had written about birds. The story was later reprinted in the English journal *Essex Birding*, a sister publication to *Bird Observer*. I could brag about being an internationally published author.

The next six bird pieces I wrote, mostly comic tales about my birding adventures, were all published in *Bird Observer*. I smiled at my good fortune—a whole journal devoted to birds right here in New England—and I was struck by the editors’ willingness to publish articles that approached birding from a wide range of perspectives. I felt motivated to venture farther afield, merging personal explorations with scientific and historical research to write longer essays I submitted to literary magazines. “Brolga the Dancing Crane Girl,” on dancing birds and dancing people, won a nonfiction prize from *Shenandoah* in 2011. “Funny Bird Sex,” published in 2016 in *The Antioch Review*, was awarded a Pushcart Prize. I contributed essays to national birding publications such as *Birdwatching*, *Birding*, and *Birdwatcher’s Digest*. But I continued to submit articles to *Bird Observer*, my first home as a writer. Many of these pieces became part of a collection, *Flight Calls: Exploring Massachusetts through Birds*.

In 2017 I wrote a blog for *The Missouri Review* titled “Writing about Birds: An Unexpected Niche.” I had had literary ambitions since seventh grade. I had published a few stories and poems, some articles about my course “Criminals in Literature,” and a book about teaching, but my writing career had mostly been a series of frustrations, rejections, and misbegotten projects, some merely ill-executed, some spectacularly silly. As a Harvard student I had imagined myself as the next Dostoyevsky or Faulkner. I knew nothing about birds and would have been dumbfounded by the notion that, fifty years later, I would become one of those strange characters hunting through the back-alley archives of Harvard’s Museum of Comparative Zoology. But, through *Bird Observer*, I had discovered a niche as a writer. Or maybe the niche found me. In ecology “niche” denotes a habitat in which a species is well-fitted to thrive. Somehow, through telling stories about dancing cranes and clever ravens, I had found what sounded like my natural voice, learned to craft an essay with a sense of dynamic flow, chosen paths where I could follow my curiosity about science and literature. Within the literary world my niche is relatively small and specialized, my successes modest, but it is a habitat in which I feel I can thrive.

I look forward to reading each issue of *Bird Observer* because I know there are many ways to write about birds and I am sure to find something that will inform or delight me. In the October 2021 issue, I found Lisa Schibley’s article on the

International Shorebird Survey, which demonstrates the scientific value of data collection but also captures the challenges and camaraderie of tracking elusive shorebirds in the field with birding colleagues. In June 2022, I found Kari Sasportas's "Birding with Autism," which precisely elucidates how autism affects a birder but transcends its subject by helping readers feel what it is like to experience the world from a point of view they might otherwise never understand. The regular "Where to Go Birding" articles not only guide me through places I had never visited—which trails to walk, what birds I might find—but often offer a deeper sense of the history and allure of these places. I look through the bird sightings and MARC reports to get information about the locations of sightings and appearances of rarities in Massachusetts. In Martha Steele's "Musings from the Blind Birder" I look for narrative and perspective. Wayne Petersen's "At a Glance" columns challenge me to a game that requires using knowledge of field marks and reasoning skills to identify mystery birds. Mark Lynch's excellent book reviews have led me to countless sources that enhance my understanding of birds. The writing is accompanied by cover art from talented painters like Barry Van Dusen and photographs by birders throughout New England. All photos can be found in full color on the journal's website, which is managed by Eric Swanzey, *Bird Observer's* innovative, forward-looking president.

I have had enough experience with literary journals to appreciate the quality of writing in *Bird Observer* and the scrupulous work of the editorial staff, especially Editor Marsha Salett. Editors are the usually unsung collaborators of writers. They have to find writers, prompt and encourage them, and nag them about deadlines while offering objective, sometimes tough critiques and maintaining a standard of excellence. The best editors can inhabit a piece of writing and find the latent potential—a promising idea that needs fleshing out—that the author has been struggling to pinpoint. *Bird Observer* editors, all volunteers, do all this as a labor of love—love of birds and love of fine writing.

As a current director of *Bird Observer*, I have come to appreciate more fully its vital role in the birding community. I founded and chair the Association of Massachusetts Bird Clubs, now 22 clubs from around the state, which was formed to unite clubs in support of conservation initiatives, offer mutual support, and share ideas about how to address common concerns. From the start, *Bird Observer* has been the Association's strongest partner. The New England Birding Calendar on the website enables clubs to post field trips and events to a wide audience, and the journal encourages clubs to write articles about their distinctive histories and missions. After a presentation at an Association meeting, the Murmuration—a crowd-sourced project to gather and share information about safety and accessibility at eBird hotspots—found a home on the *Bird Observer* website. In August 2020, when many birders were feeling isolated and disoriented, the journal published a collection of articles on "Birding Safely and Sanely During the Pandemic of Spring 2020." I contributed a short piece, "Whip-poor-will Dream," trying to sort out my feelings, at one moment in history, about the decline of beloved whip-poor-wills, Black Birders Week, and friends who first became excited about birds during the pandemic. Like many birders, I often prefer to bird alone, but I believe in the power of community—meeting places, in person or in print, for birders to come together, share, and unite. *Bird Observer* has helped to turn a

diverse assortment of birders from around the state into a genuine community.

But I will always value *Bird Observer* first and foremost as a journal that offers opportunities for writers. *Bird Observer* has sponsored a 50th-anniversary photo, video, and writing contest for subscribers. Once the anniversary is past, the journal will keep striving to nurture young and novice writers and offer a forum for diverse perspectives on birds and birding. Maybe you could write a field note about your illuminating observation of a particular bird. Maybe you have become absorbed in an ornithological pioneer, like Margaret Morse Nice, who should not be forgotten. Maybe you are fascinated or amused by names and words for birds. Maybe you are intimately familiar with a hidden gem, a seldom visited place in your local patch, and could share your knowledge in a Where to Go Birding article. Maybe you have just discovered the pleasures of birding after feeling for years that birding was not for people like you. You might find your home as a writer at *Bird Observer*. You will be in good hands, in good company, as a member of an enduring community. 🦋

**Brookline Bird Club Webinar:**  
**“*Bird Observer*’s 50-Year Roundtable”**  
**November 2, 2022**

On November 2 at 7:00 pm the Brookline Bird Club will host the webinar “*Bird Observer*’s 50-Year Roundtable” in celebration of *Bird Observer*’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a journal and the longstanding collaboration and cross-fertilization between *Bird Observer* and the BBC. Join BBC president Leslie Kramer, the moderator, and panelists Wayne Petersen, Bob Stymeist, Marsha Salett, and John Nelson for a discussion of the origins of *Bird Observer* as a unique, high-quality source of information for New England birders, the roles of *Bird Observer* and the BBC in developing an active, diverse state birding community, and the future of birding and bird conservation in Massachusetts. Audience members will be welcome to ask questions of panelists and join the discussion.

Wayne Petersen is Mass Audubon’s Director of Important Bird Areas Program and a founder and past president of *Bird Observer*. Bob Stymeist is a past president of the BBC and a founder and director of *Bird Observer*. Marsha Salett is the editor of *Bird Observer*. John Nelson chairs the Association of Massachusetts Bird Clubs and BBC’s Conservation & Education Committee and is a director of *Bird Observer*.

For information on registering for this webinar, visit [brooklinebirdclub.org](http://brooklinebirdclub.org). 🦋

# The History of *Bird Observer*: Chapter 4

## A Mild Start, A Tumultuous Ending

*William E. Davis, Jr.*

[Editor's Note: All of *Bird Observer's* content from 1973 to 2015 has been digitized to SORA, the Searchable Ornithological Research Archive at <<https://sora.unm.edu/>> This archive is a resource that is open to the public. You can access all articles through SORA as well as through *Bird Observer's* archives.]

The journal moved smoothly along in 1988 with Harriot Hoffman presiding and Dorothy Arvidson as editor. There was the usual fluster about getting new ads and retaining old ones, the gyrations involved in keeping our subscriber rate above 700, advertising *Bird Observer* everywhere possible, running programs for subscribers, and keeping the computer hardware working and the software up to date. To keep the staff happy, there was a combined party and business evening in January as well as a glorious summer party.

At meetings, staffers frequently discussed exchanges of *Bird Observer* with other journals. *Bird Observer* ran an announcement, "Do You Want the 'Sunday Hunting Bill' to Pass?" that included information on how to oppose the bill if you did not want your Sunday birding interrupted by gunfire. Janet Heywood implemented the annual tide chart and continued to produce the maps for the Where to Go Birding articles. Wayne Petersen scheduled three workshops: "Counting Birds at Christmas," "Winter Raptors," and "'At a Glance' Goes Live." John Kricher and Ted Davis scheduled a three-session series, "Evolution as Illustrated by Birds."

During 1988, *Bird Observer* produced reports of ongoing projects and articles of general interest as well as the usual Where to Go Birding articles, which included Martha Litchfield's "Nantucket, Part I." Fourteen Field Notes from Here and There were published in four issues. The single rare bird sighting was Kenneth Winkler's "Notes on a Hammond's Flycatcher." Bob Stymeist produced his usual "Christmas Bird Counts" report. Stauffer Miller's "Lyme Disease and the Birder" provided essential information for the unsuspecting birder.

The year 1989 was active with programs. The Kricher and Davis evolution workshops went well: "There have been rave reviews on the evolution series. ..." Brian Cassie scheduled a workshop on building a birding library, and Kricher and Davis proposed a two-part workshop, "The Whys of Birding—Problems in Bird Biology," to go along with Brian's. Wayne Petersen's workshops on shorebirds, warblers, and waterfowl were fully subscribed.

With all the workshops that were going on, the topic of workshop financing got a lot of attention, e.g., minimum enrollment and the percentage of enrollment fees to go to the instructor. In general, finances were a major topic of discussion at staff meetings. The February 1989 treasurer's report indicated that the unencumbered funds of *Bird Observer* were \$18,605, a hefty sum. In 1988, the number of subscribers was 749, also a healthy number. However, in the May 1989 minutes, the treasurer's report indicated a

loss of \$1,426 in 1988. Fluctuating losses and gains were a chronic problem.

Ted Davis suggested establishing an endowment to deal with the chronic financial problems: “Ted suggests that we set up a program allowing contributors to make restricted-use contributions, particularly bequests, to *Bird Observer*. . . . Janet moved that the president should appoint a long-range fundraising planning committee to pursue this. This motion was carried.”

Ted brought up another subject for consideration, peer review:

If you want to attract quality articles, your editorial policy must include peer review. The reason is that peer-reviewed articles are considered the ones of significant value in the publications listing of (e.g.) a young faculty member. To establish peer review as policy you just add “All scientific articles are subject to peer review.”

The discussion was put off until the next staff meeting, but the motion was eventually passed. A Long-range Planning Committee was established with Martha Vaughan, Ted Davis, and Janet Heywood as members. At the October 1989 staff meeting, members were canvassed for their views on “visions of *Bird Observer* for the future.” Ted organized a *Bird Observer* archival arrangement with the Bird Division of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University. An important question arose about the possibility of *Bird Observer* being one of the sponsors of the upcoming spring joint meeting of the Association of Field Ornithologists and the Wilson Ornithological Society to be hosted by John Kricher at Wheaton College. The meeting committee for this event was composed entirely of *Bird Observer* members and included Martha Vaughan, Martha Steele, Ted Davis, Janet Heywood, and of course, John Kricher. It had been a forward-looking year.

The first 1989 issue of *Bird Observer* contained an article “On Collection: Points of View” that was a debate by two *Bird Observer* folks on the merits of collecting extralimital vagrant birds. In favor of collecting was Ted Davis’s “A Bird in the Hand is Worth Two in the Bush” and opposing collecting was John Kricher’s “Extralimitals—Is it a Question of the Right Bird or the Bird’s Rights.” With humor and one-upmanship, Kricher used two of Davis’s published papers as examples of why one should not collect vagrant or rare birds; these papers provided new information for science—neither bird was collected. Also in the February 1989 issue was Richard Veit’s “Vagrant Birds: Passive or Active Dispersal,” in which he defended the premise that vagrant birds are in the outer fringes of population level dispersal episodes that may be caused by environmental changes.

Here is a sampling of some of the articles that appeared in other 1989 issues of *Bird Observer*. Dorothy Arvidson wrote “A Tick-list for Birders: Update on Lyme Disease” that provided useful information on avoiding this tick-borne disease. Ted Davis’s “Distraction Displays or ‘Injury Feigning’ in Birds” examined what we know about this common behavior in nesting birds. Richard Walton, in “An Honor Without Profit,” discussed the individuals whom Audubon honored in bird names, and the nomenclatural changes that eliminated many of those names. Verdie Abel’s “The Ethics of Nature Watching” reviewed detrimental or unethical activities of some birders, a stark reminder of the responsibilities that go along with birding. Rare bird sightings

included Allen Bennett's "A Massachusetts First: Allen's Hummingbird on Nantucket." Where to Go Birding articles included Brian Cassie's "Birdwatching in Puerto Rico."

Off to a calm start, 1990 ended turbulently. Ted Davis became president. At the February staff meeting, minor issues were handled, such as how many copies of the journal should be given to authors, and Wayne Petersen reported on his forthcoming workshops. Ted's request for a published statement that scientific articles would be peer reviewed was implemented in the February issue. The joint meeting of the Association of Field Ornithologists and the Wilson Ornithological Society at Wheaton College was presided over by John Kricher, and the role of *Bird Observer* in this gala event was a topic of considerable discussion. Ted proposed the publication of a group of four papers from the AFO/WOS conference symposium on the "Amateur in Ornithology" in *Bird Observer*. In addition, *Bird Observer* had a nice display at the meeting. Ted announced that he would be in Australia from August to December and suggested Bob Stymeist as president pro tempore for that period. The publishing of another book on birding in Massachusetts, when to publish a new index and what period it should cover, and the need for new computers were frequent topics of discussion.

A difficult period began for *Bird Observer* when Dorothy Arvidson announced that she wished to "turn the editorship of *Bird Observer* to someone by next April." Martha Steele volunteered to do the editing for the April issue, which was to feature the four papers from the AFO/WOS meeting. Brian Cassie announced that he would no longer write book reviews, creating a problem. Dorothy reported that she had worked hard on the style sheet for the proposed book of finding birds in Massachusetts. Janet Heywood suggested that a book task force be established to facilitate completion of the book, and a motion to that effect was passed unanimously. Janet also discussed the production of *Bird Observer* decals and their distribution. Her crucial role in *Bird Observer* was becoming evident.

Ted returned from sabbatical in time for the December meeting. *Bird Observer* lost \$600 over the production of Volume 18. To help raise funds, new T-shirts were sold, and a twentieth anniversary yard sale was proposed. Dorothy raised concerns about the length of the section on Bird Reports, noting that the unpredictable length from issue to issue was causing problems during production. She also suggested that a committee be formed to review the role of Bird Reports in the journal.

Despite the problems, the 1990 *Bird Observers* contained some excellent material. Where to Go Birding articles included Alan Strauss's "Bird Finding at Sachuest Point, Rhode Island, and Environs." Rare birds were plentiful in 1990, with Forster's "Sighting of a Ross' Gull (*Rhodostethia rosea*) at Niles Pond in Gloucester" and George Gove and Judy Gordon's Field Note, "Sighting of a Golden-crowned Sparrow at Dartmouth." David Stemple, Ida Giriunas, Jim Moore, and Marsha Paine reported a "Terek Sandpiper at Plum Island" in a Field Note. Other Field Notes reported Ian Lynch's sighting of a "White-faced Ibis at Plum Island" and Kyle Jones' report of a "Sandhill Crane at Provincetown." Articles included Ted Davis's report on "Two Aberrant Goldfinches" at his birdfeeders and presented the speculations of P. A. Buckley and Alex Middleton on their origin. It had been quite a year for *Bird Observer* publications.

The problems that Dorothy Arvidson identified became even more contentious in 1991 as her editorship came to a close. Ted Davis hosted the February 1991 annual meeting at his home in Foxboro, and Bob Abrams entertained the group with a slideshow after the business was conducted. A major item of business was the formation and meeting of an Editorial Search and Journal Reevaluation Committee. One of Wayne Petersen's workshops was canceled. Martha Vaughan, Lee Taylor, and Janet Heywood presented a workshop budget recommendation, which included rescheduling Wayne's canceled gull workshop. Ted called a special meeting to elect new members. Martha Steele, who had been working on editing the symposium papers for the April issue, was among those elected. Martha was also picked as the editor of *Bird Observer* to succeed Dorothy.

In the March meeting, some trouble was brewing. The minutes stated:

Regarding the effective date ... for appointment of a new editor, Dorothy thinks that she should remain in position as editor through the publication of the June issue, since she had done a lot of work on that issue and should get credit for it. Janet then suggested publishing the June issue in April and the April issue, for which Martha has had primary responsibility, in June. This at first seemed wild but was then acclaimed as a stroke of genius. Recommendation ... was carried unanimously.

New problems arose over the Massachusetts birding book, with Dorothy expressing quality concerns. Janet Heywood responded that "the book is really an anthology with many authors and Dorothy is too hard on her own product." Ted recommended that the book task force meet soon. Ted also reported that he had sent in abstracts for 12 *Bird Observer* articles to the *Journal of Field Ornithology*. The Editor Search and Journal Reevaluation Committee suggested major changes in staff positions:

The committee proposes the establishment of the following six editorial departments, each listed with the initial candidate to serve as its head: Where to Go Birding Articles: Jim Berry; Field Records: Bob Stymeist; Feature Articles and Field Notes from Here and There: John Kricher; Book Reviews: Brian Cassie; Art: Ted Davis; At-a-Glance: Wayne Petersen.

All but Brian Cassie accepted their positions, and the motion to accept the committee's proposal passed unanimously.

During the first half of 1991, the birding book project continued to occupy significant staff time as roles and responsibilities were debated. By summer, Ted Davis was tasked with exploring with the American Birding Association (ABA) the possibility that the project could become part of ABA's series on where to find birds throughout North America. This was a major step forward in the eventual publication of the book. In regard to the book, Janet Heywood requested a "final decision from Dorothy on what Dorothy's role will be. Work on the project cannot proceed effectively until this is decided." As Dorothy's role in the book was becoming unclear, the May meeting contained much discussion of the situation, and Martha Vaughan was appointed as an additional editor.

The June meeting reported that 1990 had "not been our best year," indicating the continuing difficulties with making ends meet. A special meeting was held, with the



most active participants being three former editors of *Bird Observer*, Paul Roberts, Leif Robinson, and Terry Leverich. Alden Clayton, Jim Berry, and John Kricher were elected to the staff as department heads; Clayton became the book review editor. Dorothy Arvidson was given the masthead title of editor emeritus and accepted the honor.

Ted Davis hosted the summer party; the staff meeting that preceded the party concentrated on getting the book published. Ted established a pattern of presenting potential cover art to the entire staff to get their comments before he made final decisions. The staff decided to switch to rolling subscriptions rather than calendar year subscriptions, thus eliminating the necessity of mailing back issues to late subscribers. The number of paid subscribers for 1991 was 725.

At the September staff meeting, Ted reported that he had talked to Paul Baicich, who agreed to present the book proposal at the ABA executive meeting in California. Ted would call a special meeting of interested persons as soon as he got a response from the ABA. Ted advised everyone to proceed with decisions on content and field testing. A revision of the masthead listing of personnel and departments turned a bit contentious, with Ted having to cast the deciding vote in favor of proposed changes after a deadlocked vote. He commented that “this amount of disagreement indicates the need for some form of compromise.”

The November meeting minutes noted that “Ted reported that a standard contract draft has been received from the ABA.” In December, Simon Perkins, Alden Clayton, and John Kricher were elected as directors “effective immediately.” Wayne Petersen continued to produce the At a Glance feature. With the fourth issue of 1991, Ted Davis took over writing the About the Cover species accounts. Wayne and Ted have continued to write these features for the remainder of *Bird Observer*’s first 50 years. The Field Records column was renamed “Bird Sightings,” a fitting ending to a year of profound change in *Bird Observer*.

Despite the challenges and transitions faced by *Bird Observer* in 1991, the journal published a large number of excellent articles. The Where to Go Birding articles included Jim MacDougall’s “Birding the Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary.” The April issue, the first with Martha Steele as editor, began with Edward (Jed) Burt’s “Introduction to the 1990 AFO/WOS Symposium: The Amateur in Ornithology.” This was followed by four papers: Mary Clench’s “The Importance of Contributions by Amateurs to American Ornithology: A Short History,” Harold Mayfield’s “The Amateur: Finding a Niche in Ornithology,” Robert Yunick’s “Banders as an Ornithological Resource,” and John Tautin’s “The Amateur Birdbander: The Bird Banding Lab Perspective.” Succeeding issues continued to present interesting papers, including Donald Kent’s “Differences in Foraging Ability of Adult and Juvenile Snowy Egrets in the Saugus River Marsh” and Brad Blodget’s “Profiles of New England Ornithologists: Joseph A. Hagar.” Another biographical paper of significance was Jim Baird’s “Profiles of New England Ornithologists: Ruth P. Emery, the Original Voice of Audubon.”

January 1992 started with a book contract from the ABA for the staff to consider, with some good points and some not so good:

They are offering us \$1200 up front for the manuscripts....Ted considers this lean. But we would get 50 cents for each copy sold. Ted considers this good, since they are anticipating good sales with a first run of 10,000....The name is not negotiable; it must be *A Birder's Guide to Massachusetts*. But they offer to include information on *Bird Observer*, a subscription form, and maybe identification of *Bird Observer* as author on the cover.... Ted's feeling about going with the ABA is still good.

After a comment by Dorothy that the manuscripts needed a lot of work because they did not conform to the style manual, Ted replied, "the ABA would make the final decisions on style, so maybe we shouldn't do so much work on style ourselves." The end of this long book project was in sight when lawyer Jay Shetterly took over for *Bird Observer*. The nitty-gritty of the contract negotiations with the ABA proceeded to the point where Ted was authorized to sign the contract.

On a pleasant note, Marj Rines invited *Bird Observer* staff to hold their summer party at her house on a lake in Arlington. The offer was gratefully accepted, and in August she was unanimously elected to the board of directors. The computers were wearing out, and it was suggested that it was time for another fundraiser, perhaps as a celebration of *Bird Observer's* twentieth year. This, along with the high of 780 paid subscribers, made for a happy ending to 1992.

The Where to Go Birding articles started with a fling to the west with John Kricher and Ted Davis's "Concan on the Edwards Plateau, Texas." Articles of note included Robert Askins' "Forest Fragmentation and the Decline of Migratory Songbirds," D. C. Morimoto's "Anything but Barren: The Search for Pattern in the Breeding Bird Community of the Massachusetts Pine Barrens," and Blair Nikula's "The Great Gannet Wreck of '91" brought about by a nor'easter storm. Additional articles included Ian Nisbet's "Predation by a Peregrine Falcon on Common and Roseate Terns on Bird Island," a Field Note titled "Cormorant and Clam" by Jeremy Hatch that described an adult Double-crested Cormorant with a clam firmly attached to its lower mandible, and Ted Davis's "Are Accipiter Populations in Winter Affected by Bird Feeders?" The year 1992 had been an excellent one for *Bird Observer* and provided a calm ending for some difficult years of change for the organization. 🐦

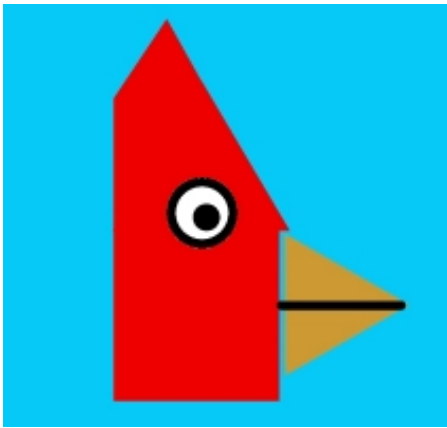
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# PHOTO ESSAY

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## Yellow-crowned Night-Herons: My Newest Life Bird

*Bonnie Tate*



Yellow-crowned Night-Heron close-up before dusk. Hemenway Landing, Eastham, Cape Cod, August 3, 2022. All photographs by Bonnie Tate.




Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at the tree line before it flew into Nauset Marsh. Hemenway Landing, Eastham, Cape Cod, August 3, 2022.



Juvenile Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Hemenway Landing, Eastham, Cape Cod, August 3, 2022. The juvenile Yellow-crowned Night-Heron is similar to the juvenile Black-crowned Night-Heron, but they can often be distinguished by shape. The YCNH has a taller, slimmer stance and a long, slender neck. The juvenile BCNH is squat and chunky and has a short, thick neck. Hemenway Landing, Eastham, Cape Cod, August 3, 2022.



Juvenile Black-crowned Night-Heron, Plymouth, Massachusetts, August 1, 2022. The juvenile Black-crowned Night-Heron has larger and fewer teardrop spots, and the juvenile Yellow-crowned Night-Heron has smaller and more fan-shaped spots. In the field, these spots are the best distinction beyond the overall silhouette. 

*Bonnie Tate is a scientist, teacher, and nature photographer who currently lives in Easton, Massachusetts.*

# OBSERVATIONS

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## Notes on a Wintering Fox Sparrow

*Matt Pelikan*



First public appearance: A snowstorm brings the Fox Sparrow into the open, January 30, 2022. All photographs by the author.

One way to get to know a species is to encounter a lot of individuals over a long time in a lot of places. Appearance and behavior differ depending on whether a bird is migrating, defending a territory, or feeding young. Multiple experiences, even brief ones, eventually add up to a clear impression of the nature of a species. But there is also something to be said for prolonged acquaintance with just one bird, getting to know its daily routine and the way it responds to changing circumstances. Birds exist as individuals, as well as members of species, and the behavior of any individual varies, sometimes dramatically, across time and circumstance. Intimate knowledge of an individual can reveal what a species is capable of, which is often different from what is typical.

On January 13, 2022, an oversized sparrow caught my eye as it darted across our small backyard and into a red cedar tree. A brief glimpse through binoculars in very bad light before the bird disappeared showed exactly what I expected: the rusty back and heavy breast-spotting of a Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca*). I had seen the species in our Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard, yard before, but so long ago that I am fuzzy on the dates.

The sighting surprised me because, less than two weeks previously, no Fox Sparrows had been found by roughly seventy contributors to the Martha's Vineyard



Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Moreover, hot on the heels of my sighting, a half-dozen solid reports of the species on the Vineyard cropped up on social media. It appeared that a modest wave of this northern songbird hit the island following the CBC, suggesting that Fox Sparrow migratory movements across the Vineyard continued well into early winter of 2022. One of these visitors (Penny Uhlen Dorf, personal communication) succumbed to a Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*). Most of the others remained at the same site for at least a few days before disappearing, with at least one (Luanne Johnson, personal communication) regularly present at the same feeding station well into March.

In our region, Fox Sparrow is a regular transient in variable numbers in late fall and early spring, with varying numbers remaining in the state through most winters (Veit and Petersen 1993). The species is somewhat harder to come by on Martha's Vineyard than in mainland Massachusetts; Whiting and Pesch (2007) consider it a regular fall migrant "in small numbers," with some wintering most years and "most... recent records... between October and March." I have never encountered a Fox Sparrow as a spring migrant on the Vineyard. CBC data, compiled locally and shared with me by Luanne Johnson, the current count coordinator, show a high count of 24 on the 1976 CBC. There have been a few years when the species was missed entirely—as on the 2021 count, actually held on January 2, 2022—and there were some tallies of around 20 individuals in the 1960s and 1970s. No clear trend jumps out from the numbers.

The Fox Sparrow lingered in our yard as a singularly stealthy presence for the next couple of weeks. I would get a glimpse of it every day or two, sometimes zipping across the yard, sometimes foraging, probably for fallen fruits, under the red cedars that line the back of our small yard. Initially, it showed no interest at all in the seed I doled out, a small handful at a time, for the benefit of our resident Song Sparrows (*Melospiza melodia*) and Black-capped Chickadees (*Poecile atricapillus*), wintering Dark-eyed Juncos (*Junco hyemalis*) and White-throated Sparrows (*Zonotrichia albicollis*), and unruly Blue Jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*) that showed up to demand largesse nearly every morning. Eventually the Fox Sparrow would land briefly on the deck early in the morning, eat a few seeds, and disappear; but at no point could the seed I provided have constituted a significant part of the bird's diet. During this period, I never saw the Fox Sparrow in the open for more than a few seconds at a time, and I never saw it interact with members of another species. This behavior was exactly what I expected for a species that I think of as rather shy, calm, and solitary.

### **Response to Stress**

An intense snowstorm during the night of January 29 and much of January 30 brought out an entirely different side of our Fox Sparrow. Our yard received about 14 inches of soggy snow, driven by a relentless north wind. I doubled up on my birdfeeding operation, but the seed I put out was covered quickly by snow. Our regular customers foraged optimistically and with some success, shuffling and poking in the deepening snow on our deck. To my surprise, they were joined midmorning on the 30th by the Fox Sparrow, which was making its first foray into anything resembling prolonged full view.



Snow flies from vigorous two-footed kicking by the Fox Sparrow.

Two aspects of this bird's behavior were especially notable. First, I was astonished at the energy and persistence with which it employed the classic, double-footed kick that many sparrows use for foraging: a two-footed hop into the air followed by a vigorous forward kick, raking the snow with its strong hallux. The bird's use of this move appeared downright obsessive during this storm. It kicked almost constantly for minutes at a time, barely stopping to pick out a few seeds, and continued kicking even when seed uncovered by other birds was plainly visible on the surface of the snow. It was as if the foraging behavior itself took precedence over the actual acquisition of food.

The second striking, if short-lived, change in behavior was in the degree of boldness the Fox Sparrow displayed—not only foraging in the open for minutes at a time but aggressively defending its personal space against other birds. Brief, agonistic interactions are common within and between species at feeding stations. But this Fox Sparrow pressed home its attacks, pecking, biting, and on one occasion yanking a rectrix out of a junco. The day after the storm, the bird reverted to its normal, secretive, solitary habits. But a second storm on February 14 produced exactly the same result: 24 hours or so of frenetic foraging and unbridled aggression.

Altered behavior during extreme weather makes sense for a bird, because food resources can become scarce and challenges emerge such as cold temperatures, high winds, and wet plumage. There is good indication that these behavioral changes can be physiologically driven and not just voluntary responses to storms. For example, studying Dark-eyed Juncos, Rogers et al. (1993) found that fresh snowfall was correlated with elevated levels of corticosterone and increased adrenal gland mass,

potentially driving behavioral changes such as increased foraging. The response of my Fox Sparrow to snow was likely extreme for its species, or indeed for any species. But it acted like an organism that was experiencing a high level of stress, and it was easy to believe that hormonal surges governed the striking behavioral changes I observed.

### **Onset of Song**

Perhaps the most startling aspect of this bird's extended visit was the abrupt onset of vocal behavior. The sparrow was, as far as I could tell, as silent as the tomb for its first month and a half—reasonably so, since it had no one to talk to. Indeed, in all my experience with Fox Sparrows as migrants or wintering birds, I had never found them talkative. Aside from one memorable, long-ago morning at Punkasset Preserve in Concord, Massachusetts, when a small flock of Fox Sparrows in a multiflora rose bush included several males singing simultaneously, I could not recall ever hearing vocalizations from this species. But one day in late February, I heard and instantly recognized—though I had never heard it before—the smack call this species gives. “A very sharp smack,” says my Sibley guide (Sibley 2003), and that is just right. It ranks among the most distinctive passerine call notes. One can give a serviceable approximation by smacking one's lips.

I could not discern any purpose for the use of this call note. There still were not any other Fox Sparrows in evidence, and at the time I first heard the call, there were not even any members of other species around that the Fox Sparrow could have been interacting with. But hormones clearly have their own inexorable logic, and after a day or two of occasional smack notes, I detected what I figured was my sparrow's first attempt at song. It was just a single, slurred note, repeated a couple of times, and I was not completely sure it was not an isolated note from a House Finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*). But the day after that abortive song attempt, the Fox Sparrow cut loose with a full rendition: a series of high, slightly shrill, whistled notes, each note lasting perhaps a third of a second and the whole series lasting about two seconds. This first bout of song was not prolonged, consisting of only about a dozen song repetitions. But starting the next day, a morning serenade lasting a half-hour or more became a regular event.

The rapid achievement of complete song surprised me. Our local Song Sparrows, breeding in the yard and then remaining through the winter, typically spend two or three weeks in February and early March producing gradually more complex bursts of gurgles and squeaks before they can finally put the melody in *melodia*.

The Fox Sparrow's singing would begin around 6:45 am, or roughly a half-hour after local sunrise. He invariably chose a concealed perch for singing—another contrast with our long lineage of local Song Sparrows, which have always preferred to sing from prominent spots such as the tops of small trees, a corner of a trellis in our front yard, or, especially, the utility wires leading to our house. Typical singing perches were about 15 feet up in the evergreens in our yard. We have eastern red cedar, arborvitae, and white pine, all of which were used at least occasionally, with the bird singing from a branch about halfway out from the trunk to the margin of the foliage. The bird was typically hard to locate, but eventually he settled on two preferred spots at opposite



By March 5, 2022, daily but very brief visits to our feeding station were part of the Fox Sparrow's routine.

ends of our yard. In contrast to its wariness of me at other times, the Fox Sparrow paid little attention to me when he was singing. I could walk right up to the base of the tree he was in and take my time finding an angle from which I could watch him.

This singing behavior approximates that reported from the Fox Sparrow's breeding grounds by C. W. Townsend and G. M. Allen in their 1907 volume *Birds of Labrador* (cited in Bent 1968): "Its clear flute-like notes are somewhat ventriloquial in character, and as the bird sings generally from a concealed perch inside of a spruce or fir tree a foot or two from the top, it is often difficult to find the performer." Our robust red cedars likely exceed the height of a Newfoundland spruce, but in retrospect, the presence of a variety of conifers may have been a feature that attracted the Fox Sparrow to our otherwise unremarkable yard.

Only on one occasion did I hear the Fox Sparrow sing later in the day than about mid-morning. One evening in mid-March, the bird gave a virtuoso performance from one of our red cedars, mingling song repetitions and smack notes with only momentary pauses for about 90 minutes. This shift of his vocal efforts may have signaled the beginning of a transition from wintering bird to northbound migrant.

### **Preparing for Departure**

As the end of March approached, the sparrow became less regular in our yard. Several mornings, I heard him singing from a yard down the street, and the occasional day began to pass without my noticing one of his furtive raids on the birdseed. I left the Vineyard for a brief vacation March 24–27, a span that featured a couple of days of

unseasonably warm weather in southern New England, and after we returned, several days passed with no sign of the Fox Sparrow. On the 5th and 6th of April, what I can only assume was the same bird put in brief appearances, grabbing a few millet seeds and singing from favored perches, and that was the last I saw of him.

It is easy to imagine a growing sense of restlessness in a migratory bird as the days lengthen and the weather warms. I expect that during his temporary absence, he wandered a bit, getting his bearings for migration. Perhaps he made an abortive attempt to leave, remembered that several miles of water needed to be crossed, and returned to his winter base to think things over. But of course his eventual departure was inevitable. Our yard might have done fine as winter quarters, but with no conspecifics around and a breeding imperative starting to build, it was time for this bird to leave.

I feel fortunate to have enjoyed the prolonged visit of what I came to think of as “my” Fox Sparrow. I never would have imagined the radical change in his personality prompted by snowstorms, or the suddenness with which he commenced a regimen of full song. Nor would I have imagined how entrenched his wariness was under more moderate weather conditions, with no sign at all of growing comfortable with my presence or with his surroundings. I was surprised by his tenacity in adhering to a daily schedule of foraging and song when conditions allowed, and in favoring a small number of specific perches for his singing. He may have elected to occupy the anthropogenic habitat of our yard and even, eventually, to exploit the artificial food resource I provided. But he remained a profoundly wild bird, risk-averse, wary, and far less interested in me than I was in him. Still, it was a pleasure getting to know him, learning the lessons he gave on what Fox Sparrows can do. I hope he is enjoying a successful summer. 🐦

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# MUSINGS FROM THE BLIND BIRDER

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## A Story of Determination and Passion

*Martha Steele*

Recently, Bob and I birded with Jerry Berrier, who has been totally blind from birth due to retinopathy of prematurity, where the infant receives too much oxygen following birth. Our morning walk along trails in the Middlesex Fells in Medford was memorable for the unusual presence of both Yellow-billed and Black-billed cuckoos. Jerry held on to Bob's elbow as they walked, while Alvin and I trailed behind them. We were navigating a tricky section of the trail with numerous uneven rocks and roots when my focus was interrupted with an unfamiliar sound. Bob yelled out, "Yellow-billed Cuckoo!" Two individuals were calling to each other and their calls penetrated through the forest. It was a life bird for Jerry and only the second time I had heard this species. Before the end of the walk, we also heard the more common Black-billed Cuckoo to round out a wonderful morning of birding.

Jerry was introduced to birding while in college. He was born and grew up in Pittsburgh and in 1970, he matriculated into the Indiana University of Pennsylvania. For his psychology major he was required to take a biology course. As a substitute for laboratory requirements in the course, his professor gave Jerry his Cornell bird records, created and narrated by Arthur Allen, and asked Jerry to learn the songs on the records. At the end of the semester, the professor took Jerry on a walk in the woods and quizzed him on his recognition of bird songs. Jerry was hooked. He recalled that the Northern Cardinal had a beautifully pure song that was easy to remember and he particularly enjoyed learning the song of the Eastern Towhee.

After completing college, Jerry worked as a counselor for a blindness organization before landing a job near Pittsburgh with a phone company that eventually became Verizon. He served as an employment interviewer, career counselor, and finally assistant manager in the Verizon Center for Customers with Disabilities. In 1998, he accepted a transfer to the Boston area and continued working for Verizon until he retired after nearly 25 years of service.

What I find remarkable about Jerry's skills as a birder is that he is virtually self-taught without ever having had the benefit of sighted mentors along the way. He listened to hours of bird recordings by any means he could lay his hands on, worked to memorize the songs, and then applied his auditory memory to identify birds in the field. In addition, he carried a cassette recorder everywhere he went to record any song he heard to help him compare it to other recordings he had compiled once he got back home. He has been inspired by a few conversations over the years with another birder, Lang Eliot, but for the most part, he has honed his considerable birding skills on his own.

Jerry's learning experience contrasts sharply with mine, where I always had an expert mentor to help me identify the birds I saw and later heard, which seems to me

to be far easier than the road Jerry traveled. We also learned to bird by ear by different paths. Jerry never experienced sight and thus learned to bird by ear from the beginning. In contrast, when I started birding in 1989, I still had excellent vision but was unable to hear bird songs due to hearing loss. In 2010, after receiving my first cochlear implant, and at a point where I was losing the ability to see birds, I started learning bird songs that I heard for the first time thanks to the implant. In a sense, I became a new birder twice, first learning birds by sight and then learning birds by their vocalizations.

Jerry laments being unable to see birds, feeling deeply the inability to perceive what he knows must be a visual pleasure. He muses that if he ever got sight, the first thing he would like to see is his family followed by a Red-tailed Hawk in flight. But, like me and so many others we know in the blindness community, he does not dwell on his loss, instead focusing on what he can enjoy. To some in the sighted world, it may seem depressing to imagine being blind. But such a life can be as satisfying, joyful, and enriching as any other. Despite occasional frustrations or sadness at our loss, this is our only life and we fervently want to live it.

And that life, for Jerry and me, is imbued with our love of birds and our natural environment. Being outdoors to listen for birds, we hear, smell, and touch so much more. Dew drops from trees onto our heads, mossy smells reach our noses, and trees creak and moan with the wind that rustles our hair. Listening to birds lifts our spirits, especially at the unexpected arrival of a beautiful song. While walking recently near his home, Jerry stopped dead in his tracks at the sound of a Wood Thrush. Its song echoed and reverberated all around him, creating a three-dimensional haunting and melodic solo avian symphony. On a frigid January day, Jerry groggily followed his guide dog in the early morning, muttering to him to hurry up and relieve himself so they could get back inside to warm up. Suddenly, from what seemed only yards away, he heard two Great Horned Owls calling to each other. He immediately straightened up, adrenaline rushing through his body, now fully awake and alert. He was awash with joy, standing still and oblivious to the cold or his dog. The birds continued calling to each other for three minutes and Jerry could not move. The experience not only made his day—it made his year, even his decade. Any birder can relate to the moment: imagine closing your eyes, hearing that sound, and you will feel the same thrill pulsating through your body at one of nature's best offerings.

In these moments, Jerry's experience is the same as it would be for any birder standing there with him. He is enjoying the moment as deeply as any birder, sighted or blind. You do not need to see birds to derive immense pleasure from their presence. Indeed, as I have written before in this column, I am a more relaxed birder now than when I had sight because I am focused entirely on the songs and not distracted by the often frustrating and time-consuming effort to see a singing bird in thick canopies or dense thickets.

Like all of us, Jerry sometimes misidentifies what he hears. He was puzzled by a song that he had great difficulty identifying, finally deciding it was a Prothonotary Warbler. But, upon further research on the natural history of the bird and additional comparisons of the bird's song to various recordings he had in his library, he finally determined that it was "just" a House Finch. He felt a bit embarrassed at his gaffe,




thinking it an egregious misidentification. On the flip side, he feels tremendous satisfaction at a successful identification of a bird he had never heard. For example, he recorded a song that he could not recall from any memory, returned to the house, and searched for a match. He landed on Yellow-breasted Chat, a thrilling accomplishment.

Over the years, Jerry has compiled more recordings to help him continue to nurture his birding skills. In the late 1980s, Dick Walton's *Birding by Ear* was a great resource with enlightening verbal descriptions of songs. The *drink your tea* of the Eastern Towhee and the *Oh, Sam Peabody, Peabody, Peabody* of the White-throated Sparrow were immensely helpful in remembering the birds. Later, the *Stokes Field Guide to Bird Songs: Eastern Region* added to Jerry's resources to consult for songs that he heard. Today, The Merlin Bird ID app from the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and the Larkwire app are useful resources for any birder, new or experienced, sighted or blind.

Jerry is constantly trying to improve his skills that, so far, are best for songbirds. He still has difficulty identifying certain birds, such as the American Goldfinch (I too sometimes have trouble with this bird, common as it is). But other birds that he originally had difficulty with, such as the Baltimore Oriole, are much easier now with his experience in the field. Some groups of birds need a lot more work, such as shorebirds, but for him, it is more challenging to get to locations with shorebird numbers to start to learn their vocalizations well.

Although he misses what he knows must be the visual beauty of the birds he loves, bird sounds bring joy and wonderment into his life. He shares his love of birds with anyone he can, particularly those in the blindness or disability communities. Jerry has been working with Massachusetts Audubon for fifteen years as an accessibility consultant, helping to ensure those with physical challenges can pursue interests in birding, botany, or any other interest grounded in interacting with the natural world. Some of his contributions include assisting with writing and editing scripts for accessible trails, visiting accessible trail sites prior to construction to make recommendations, assisting with audio production—reading navigational instructions, adding bird sounds, editing scripts read by local celebrities—and helping coordinate testing of partially completed trails by individuals with various disabilities. In 2022, Jerry joined Team Nuthatch for the World Series of Birding in New Jersey. The team consisted solely of birders with access challenges, the first ever such team for this event.

Jerry is always open to birding with sighted birders who can walk with him in birding destinations and share what they are hearing. He lives with his wife in Malden and can work with birders to find a mutually convenient location to meet for a morning or day of birding. Jerry can be reached at [jerry.berrier@gmail.com](mailto:jerry.berrier@gmail.com). 

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

# FIELD NOTE

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## Double-eyed Royal Tern

*John J. Gill*



Full view of the double-eyed Royal Tern in flight, March 24, 2022. All photographs by the author.

I was with a friend at Sebastian Inlet, in Melbourne, Florida, on March 24, 2022. The inlet is in Sebastian Inlet State Park, Brevard and Indian River counties, and is off State Road A1A approximately 12 miles north of Vero Beach. We were trying to photograph Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) catching fish, but it was windy and the water was too rough for the Ospreys to fish. Suddenly a Royal Tern (*Thalasseus*



Cropped version that shows the eyes better.

*maximus*) came crashing down into the water in front of me, and I noticed that it had a fish, so I started clicking away.

I did not realize what I had until I started to process the image of the tern in flight. At first, I thought that I had some sort of an artifact, but after I looked closely at it, it appeared that the bird had two eyes on one side of its head. I was obviously surprised and excited. I did not observe the other side of its head, but it would have been interesting to see if it was the same.

In short, I was fortunate to be at the right spot at the right time, and importantly, I had my camera ready for a quick shot. 🐦

# ABOUT BOOKS

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## Four Short Reviews of Four Large Books

Mark Lynch

*The Complete Birds of the World: Every Species Illustrated.* Principle illustrators: Norman Arlott and Ber van Perlo. 2021. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press; Ireland: Harper Collins Publishers; Britain: William Collins.

It has always been an ambition of mine to produce a colored checklist of every bird in the world, so I was more than happy when I was approached by Myles Archibald of Harper Collins to put together a book of the world's birds, drawing on their collection of bird guide artwork. (p. 9)

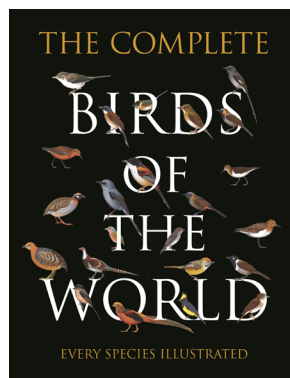
This is exactly what Arlott says it is: a huge, illustrated checklist, 300 color plates illustrating more than 10,700 species, including most male and female plumages when those are different. No subspecies are illustrated. Species are mostly drawn to scale on each plate. Opposite the species plates is a page that includes the bird's name and one short paragraph with details on length, spare details of plumage, voice, habitat, distribution, and where unique, behavior. Most of the illustrations are taken from the Collins field guides. There are no real extras. There is one full page of bird topography. There is a full-page world map, bizarrely without country names or borders, so it is a map of the continents.

Arlott is the author and illustrator of a number of books. His art has even appeared on stamps from countries such as Jamaica, the Bahamas, Liberia, and Fiji. Van Perlo has also illustrated many field guides. In addition, several of the illustrators have worked on South American field guides.

This is a very large and heavy book. Weighing 6.8 pounds, 11.25" x 9," and almost two inches thick, this is not a book that is easy to read and enjoy. You are not going to nestle down in your easy chair and prop this book up on your knees without the danger of throwing some muscle out. Be careful not to drop it on your foot!

Because this book is mostly about the illustrations, let us focus on the plates. The individual bird illustrations are fine. But here is the one important caveat. On many pages there are too many birds shown, so that your eye cannot easily focus. Most of the species are illustrated facing to the reader's left. Some, like the tropical ovenbirds (p. 273, plate 131), are more vertical. On many plates, birds overlap nearby species, so the visual chaos is even greater. On page 177, plate 83 is just one of the hummingbird plates. It is a good example of how too many birds crowded on a single page ultimately makes for a plate that is not enjoyable to look at. I certainly tried. I sat with the book on my lap, gazing at the plates for what seemed like hours. Your focus just cannot find a place to rest easily. Eventually, my eyes would glaze over, and sometimes I fell asleep. On close inspection, a few of the individual bird illustrations were not of the quality typical of the rest of that plate's drawings and appeared to be hastily painted in. This includes the Black-crowned Antpitta and Rufous-crowned Antpitta on page 291, plate 140. Are these the work of a different artist?

*So, how can you use this book?* It is certainly not a field guide. You would need a wagon to carry this doorstep any distance. The written plumage details are minimal. If you are a hardcore world birder, you could use it as an unwieldy checklist, circling the names or illustrations of the species you have ticked. But there are much better online programs to keep track of your list. Lists that would not kill your cat should they fall on it. You could even dash around madly carrying the book screaming, “I have ALL the birds of the world!” Which could be fun but would likely wear thin in a short period of time. This behavior could get you locked up, which would cut into your birding time. In the end, I began looking at this as a challenge printing project. The challenge was: could you picture all the species of the world in just one volume. We now know that the answer is yes, it can be done, but now what do I do with it?



***National Audubon Society, Birds of North America.*** Various authors. 2021. New York, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Essays by leading scholars in each field provide holistic insights into the world of birds. (inside front flap)

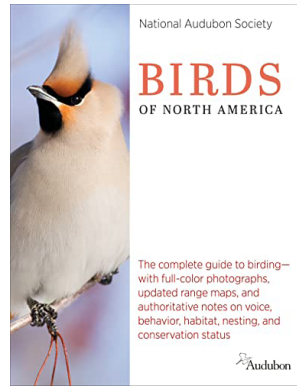
I was looking forward to this guide, which was touted as “the complete guide to birding.” Sad to say that the book falls short of that promise.

This is another large book, but with a soft cover. It weighs four pounds and is 7.12” x 9.5” x 1.75”, making it impractical to bring into the field.

The introductory sections include typical sections on taxonomy, bird names, habitats, ranges, migration, courtship, breeding, and nesting. The vast and complex subject of avian intelligence (p. 10) is given just two paragraphs. Optics and photography are summed up in a mere two paragraphs (p. 13). There is a collection of brief essays on bird biology topics that include “Adaptions of Birds of Prey” (p. 16–18), “Confusing Fall Warblers” (p. 20–21), “Plunge-diving Behavior in Seabirds” (p. 19–20); and “Fly catching Habits, Adaptations, and Techniques” (p. 18–19). There are a variety of authors of these essays, one being natural historian Brian Cassie from Massachusetts. These essays are fine as far as they go, but they certainly are not the last word on the subject. Collectively, they seem unrelated, a hodgepodge of subjects thrown together in this book because they are about birds.

To make matters worse, these essays contain no references, and no list of references is found anywhere in this book. In one section titled “Corvid Intelligence” by John Marzluff, he writes, “Many people receive trinkets from their neighborhood crows.” (p. 27) “Many people?” I thought. My neighborhood crows have never left anything for me, ever. I searched for a reference to this seemingly anecdotal statement and could find no citation. Searching for a description of Marzluff’s research brought me to a single paragraph on page 907 that lists *all* the contributors with a single short line for each person, including “John Marzluff, Ph.D, author and the James Ridgeway Professor of Forest Resources at the University of Washington.” That tells the reader nothing as to why he would be appropriate as the author for this short essay on corvids. Researching Dr. Marzluff on the University of Washington website, I found:

“John Marzluff studies how humans affect birds through habitat fragmentation and increased urbanization, as well as the challenges of conserving birds on islands. He focuses primarily on corvids—that is, ravens, crows, and jays—but he has also worked with falcons and hawks throughout the world. Conversely, he is also interested in all the ways that birds affect people—how, for instance, birds influence art or language. In addition to his research, he has written several popular science books about crows, including, most recently, *Gifts of the Crow: How Perception, Emotion, and Thought Allow Smart Birds to Behave Like Humans*. In recognition of his work, he has been awarded the H.R. Painton Awards from the Cooper Ornithological Society, as well as the Washington State Book Award for general nonfiction.”



So, Dr. Marzluff is a good choice to write an essay on corvid intelligence, but why not include that information in the all too brief bios of the authors in this guide? Why are his books not included in a bibliography? These essays are interesting, but the reader should check out any one of several books focused on each topic. Of course, such a bibliography would have been nice to help readers who want to learn more. But there is none.

The species accounts take up the bulk of the book, pages 30–848. One page covers one species. Included for each species are a description of the bird and some plumage details, notes on its voice, nesting habits, range, subspecies, similar species, and conservation. A tiny black bird silhouette contains a two-letter code that refers to the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s (IUCN) list of threatened species. This runs from least concern to extinct (p. 15). Some of the written details on the conservation of a species seem contradictory. Under Buff-breasted Flycatcher we read:

Although its numbers are declining due to habitat loss, the small Arizona population may be increasing. Buff-breasted Flycatcher used to be more widespread in the southwestern United States, but its numbers reached a record low in the 1960s and only a small population remains north of Mexico—perhaps a few dozen pairs. It is recognized as a state-endangered species in Arizona. (p. 541)

The IUCN’s code for this species printed next to the above description is LC for least concern. Should we be concerned about the Buff-breasted Flycatcher or not? The IUCN does not consider it a bird of concern, yet the bird is declining, except, maybe it is not—in Arizona. Readers can be forgiven if they may find some of the conservation information in this guide somewhat confusing. Again, there are no references cited for any of the above statements.

The range maps included for each species are small and difficult to read because of poor color choices for the different types of occurrences. But the biggest surprise are the photographs. Small color photographs are shown for each species, typically four to five per page. Some of these are very small. The quality of these species portraits is generally good, but some are poor, such as the dark shot of the Cassin’s Auklet (p. 280).

Important variations of plumages are not always depicted. For instance, many species of alcids are shown in breeding plumage only. Several photos were apparently chosen for aesthetic reasons, not to aid in identification, but are reproduced too small to be of real visual interest. My biggest caveat is that none of the photographs are labeled—not to species, not to plumage, nor age. The readers do not know if they are looking at a shot of a juvenile, female, or male. I picked up the guide to check on this again and again to see if I missed something. I did not.

The *National Audubon Society Birds of North America* ends with a glossary (p. 873–77), an index, and photography credits that run 20 pages (p. 886–906).

Although well-intentioned with many good points, this guide misses the mark. Certainly, some editing and layout decisions were not well thought out. The next edition, if there is to be one, needs to include a do-over of layout. This should include adding a bibliography and labeling the photographs. Photographs should show different plumages and be labeled; pretty is not enough. Perhaps, condense the photo credits to make room for some details on the authors' bios instead. I could go on.

***National Geographic Complete Birds of North America.*** Third Edition. Edited by Jonathan Alderfer and Jon L. Dunn. 2021. Washington D.C.: National Geographic.

This book includes all species of native birds reliably recorded in North America, which we describe as the continent north of Mexico, plus adjacent islands and seas within 200 miles of the coast. (p. 6)

Good ole NatGeo! This book has clearly defined goals and accomplishes them—details and illustrations of all species that have been seen in North America.

The species accounts make up the bulk of the book, pages 10–735. Each species has details on identification: winter as well as adult male and female plumages. There are notes on similar species, voice, status, and distribution: breeding, winter, migration, and where it is rare. The maps are larger than in the National Audubon book described above and are easy to read. The illustrations are detailed and helpful, with important field marks labeled on the illustration. There are introductory paragraphs to the bird families illustrated with color photographs. These can be a few paragraphs or a full page or more and are interesting to read. There are also sidebars, usually several paragraphs, on topics such as waterthrush identification (p. 681), *Calidris* plumage and structural details (p. 169), flight identification of Long-eared and Short-eared owls (p. 389), and the Singer Tract and James T. Tanner (p. 413). Each of these is in the section of the book next to the birds described. The species accounts end with a page on the birds of Greenland (p. 734) and Bermuda (p. 735). These two sections include a list of species found there, not on mainland North America. There are three pages of biographies of the contributors. Each contributor is given a good-sized paragraph. Drawing and photography credits take up two densely printed pages. Everything in this guide is clear, concise, and easy to read. The pages are well laid out.

The introductory sections are brief and include topics such as taxonomy, plumage variation, feather topography, and abundance terms and codes. They use the Bird Life International and IUCN codes.

I found myself reading entries on species that are true rarities for North America, such as Great Spotted Woodpecker (p. 406), Slender-billed Curlew (p. 160), and



Mottled Owl (p. 385). Though this is a large book weighing 4.6 pounds and measuring 7" x 10" x 2," it is easy to read and enjoy. You cannot really take this hefty guide into the field, but you could use it at home to clarify the identification of species you have photographed. *The National Geographic Complete Birds of North America* continues to be a good home reference as well as a fun book to dip into.

***Birds of Maine***. Peter D. Vickery, Barbara S. Vickery and Scott Weidensaul (Managing Editors). Charles D. Duncan, William J. Sheehan, and Jeffrey V. Wells (co-authors). 2020. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

It is bittersweet, however, because Peter did not live to see it through to completion. After receiving what was ultimately a terminal cancer diagnosis in 2015, he had the foresight to assemble a team of friends and colleagues, representing some of the best ornithologists in Maine, initially to help him and eventually, to assume the task of completing his magnum opus, and to recruit Lars Jonsson and Barry Van Dusen to provide their extraordinary art. (p. xiii, Foreword by Barbara S. Vickery)

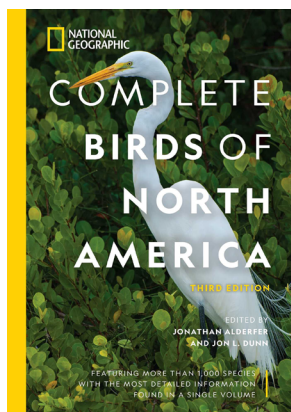
Peter D. Vickery died in February 2017, and his magnum opus, *Birds of Maine*, is a stunner. This is a magnificent volume, beautifully laid out, and the definitive volume about birds in Maine as of the early twenty-first century.

This is not an identification guide, but an annotated history of birds in Maine. Most species accounts include a description of its status in Maine. For example, under Ivory Gull: "Ivory Gulls are casual along the Maine coast in winter and spring. There are 16 winter and three spring sightings since 1894." (p. 256). A nice touch is that each species has an introductory descriptive sentence. Under Ivory Gull: "A strikingly white, almost pigeon-like gull from the icy Arctic." (p. 256) This is followed by the species' historical status in Maine, its global distribution, a description of its conservation status, and then exact dates and locations of sightings of the bird.

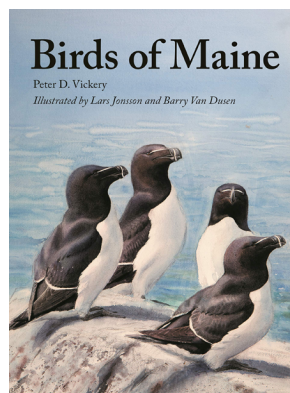
But it is the extra content that sets this volume apart from other state bird accounts. This includes a large section on "The Distribution of Birds in Maine" (p. 7–29, which includes sections on the Gulf of Maine surface temperatures, the blueberry barrens, the ecoregions of Maine, and much more).

Next is a section about "Maine's Ornithological History" (p. 31–41) and "The Current Status and Conservation Needs of Maine Birds" (p. 42–67). There are pages of charts detailing "Breeding Bird Survey Annual Trend Estimates" (p. 68–69) and Christmas Bird Count trend estimates (p. 70–71). These introductory sections feature color photography, full color paintings— including a full-page painting of a Great Auk (p. 42)—and several drawings. Even the surveys are in color. There are a number of color maps of Maine, including four full pages of a color roadmap of the state complete with conservation areas and parks.

*Birds of Maine* contains several appendices (p. 583–600), including "Geographic place names found in *Birds of Maine* text" (p. 584–91). It ends with a long section of "Works Cited" (p. 601–27) and an index. Whew!



*Birds of Maine* is an embarrassment of riches, a sumptuous volume that is both a definitive account of the birds of Maine at the time of its publishing, and a perfect tribute to Peter D. Vickery, who so deeply loved the birds of his state. There are many touches that make this volume an outstanding addition to any birder's library. There are full page color photographs, including a two-full-page aerial shot of a boardwalk snaking through Saco Heath (p. 26–27). There are full-page color paintings that include a two-page painting of a Snowy Owl (p. 350–51); an Olive-sided Flycatcher (p. 388–89), and Common Ravens (p. 414–15). Even the species maps are in color. Special mention has to be made of Barry Van Dusen's black-and-white drawings that are found throughout the book and really liven up the text.



But there is a real problem with *Birds of Maine*. It is tough to read without something to prop it up because of its weight and size: 7.2 pounds and 12”x 9” x 1.75.” I threw my shoulder out casually handling this book. It is interesting to compare it to *Birds of Massachusetts* by Veit and Petersen (1993). That book lacks all the colorful bells and whistles of *Birds of Maine*. There are no color photographs or paintings, though there are full-page black-and-white drawings by Barry Van Dusen. Maps are simple and black and white. The concise introductory sections cover the same ground, more or less, as those sections in *Birds of Maine*. If you are interested in historical bird records, *Birds of Massachusetts* gets the job done in much less space. At 2.4 pounds and 9.25” x 6.25” x 1.5,” *Birds of Massachusetts* is the size of a typical book and therefore is easy to read.

Eventually, the fate of these huge state ornithological histories will be to exist online. In this format, they can be easily updated and corrected and save paper. These online references will have all the bells and whistles of *Birds of Maine*—you just will not own them. The best example is *Birds of the World* online, hosted by Cornell University. It is supported by yearly subscriptions. All the details of a species' life are included, plus recordings of songs and calls, and lots of color photographs. The range maps are large and in color. I use that resource often because of the convenience, ease of use, and scholarly content. *Birds of Maine* is an amazing book, detailed, definitive, and beautiful. It is a perfect tribute to Peter D. Vickery; congratulations to all the authors and artists who saw this personal work to completion. But, like the Great Auk pictured in *Birds of Maine*, it is likely that this kind of volume is doomed to extinction. 🦅

## Reference

Veit, Richard R. and Wayne R. Petersen. 1993. *Birds of Massachusetts*. Lincoln, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Audubon Society.

To listen to Mark Lynch's conversation with Jonathan Alderfer about the National Geographic guide, go to:

<https://www.wicn.org/podcast/jonathan-alderfer/>

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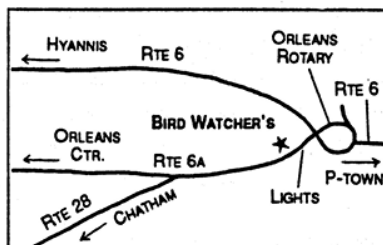
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NORTHERN HARRIER BY SANDY SELESKY

## Addendum and Corrections to *Bird Observer* August 2022

### Birding Great Salt Bay Farm Wildlife Preserve in Lincoln County, Maine:

The Great Salt Bay Farm Wildlife Preserve is managed by the Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust ([www.coastalrivers.org](http://www.coastalrivers.org)), which recently renamed it Salt Bay Farm and Nature Center. The Trust and some websites locate the preserve in Damariscotta. The best way to find the preserve is to enter its street address—110 Belvedere Road—in either Nobleboro or Damariscotta, depending on the map app you use.

Damariscotta River Association (DRA) Community Garden is now called Twin Villages Foodbank Farm ([www.twinvillagesfarm.org](http://www.twinvillagesfarm.org)).

### *Osprey Steals Fish from Great Black-backed Gull:*

The gull in this Field Note is a Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*). 🦅

# BIRD SIGHTINGS

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May–June 2022

*Neil Hayward and Robert H. Stymeist*

## WEATHER

The month of May—the height of spring migration—is often the most anticipated birding season of the year. The dry weather in April this year continued into May, in which precipitation fell on only five days. Boston recorded just 1.32 inches of rain, nearly two inches below the average. The high for the month in Boston was 89 degrees on May 22. A warm front came through during the day on Friday, May 13, resulting in a fallout—just in time for Mass Audubon’s annual Bird-a-thon. The mercury rose 26 degrees from 60 degrees on Thursday, May 12, to 86 degrees on Saturday. The fallout also coincided with Global Big Day, an event sponsored by BirdLife International and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Nearly 54,000 participants tallied an amazing 7,738 species from over 200 countries. This year, Cornell was celebrating the twentieth anniversary of eBird.org. Another major fallout occurred overnight on May 20 and conditions were perfect for birders at Plum Island on Saturday, May 21, when overnight rain and early morning fog dropped hundreds of birds on the island.

The lack of rain continued into June. Although precipitation was recorded on 14 days during the month, a total of only 2.32 inches of rain fell, 1.5 inches below normal. The high for the month in Boston was 90 degrees on June 26. At the other end of the scale, June 19 was an unusually cool day with a high temperature of only 63 degrees.

*R. Stymeist*

## GEESE THROUGH HERONS

A **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** found on June 16 was the first record for Berkshire County. Populations of this duck have been expanding in the southern United States with vagrants appearing more frequently in the north. The species has now been recorded in 10 counties in Massachusetts, missing only from Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, and Norfolk counties.

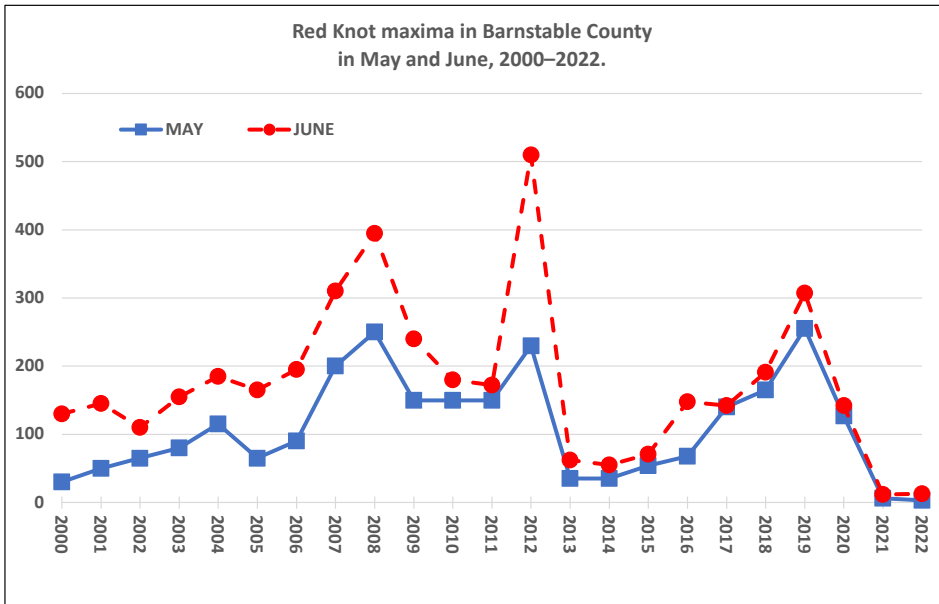
Geese were slow to depart their wintering haunts. A flock of eight Snow Geese on Plum Island on June 1 is only the fifth June record this century and the only June record to feature more than one bird. A Brant in Pittsfield on June 29 is the first June record for Berkshire County.

A count of 25 Wood Ducks on Martha’s Vineyard on June 25 is only the third June record for the island and beat the previous high count of nine. The 106 Wood Ducks in Westborough on June 17 beat the previous June high for Worcester County of 80 birds. The American Wigeon x Mallard hybrid continued at Fairhaven until May 12. This hybrid taxon has been reported annually in the state since 2016, although it appears less common in the summer. Ruddy Ducks were recorded for the first time in June in Bristol and Franklin counties.

Single **White-winged Doves** were reported from Orleans on May 20 and from North Truro on June 19. This southern species is almost annual to the state, with most records coming in the summer with a peak in June. A survey at Camp Edwards, Falmouth, on May 13 produced an impressive three **Chuck-will’s-widows** and 25 Eastern Whip-poor-wills. A count of five Chuck-will’s-widows on Nantucket on June 28 is a new high count for the island.

**Common Gallinules** were present in Richmond, Berkshire County, where they have nested





**Figure 1.** Maximum numbers of Red Knots reported in Barnstable County, Massachusetts, in May and June for the years 2000–2022. Data from eBird.org.

in the past. The species is listed as Special Concern by the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) and is a rare and occasional breeder in the state. Sandhill Cranes were reported from nine counties, with breeding reported in Hardwick, New Marlborough, Worthington, Ashfield, and Burrage Pond in Hanson. Sandhill Cranes have been rapidly increasing their presence in our region. The first modern record of Sandhill Cranes breeding in the state was in New Marlboro in 2007.

A **Wilson’s Plover** was photographed at Morris Island, Chatham, on May 26. The species is less than annual to the state with the lion’s share of reports coming from Cape Cod. This record is the only one so far this year north of Cape May, New Jersey. **Black-necked Stilts** were reported from Barnstable and Nantucket counties. An Upland Sandpiper at Westborough WMA on May 5 is the first Worcester County period record since 2010. Red Knots are suffering from a population decline shared by many shorebirds. Cape Cod has been the go-to place in spring to see this species, with numbers typically in the hundreds. In 2021, however, the birds were counted in the single digits and those reduced numbers were repeated this year (see Figure 1). A Stilt Sandpiper at Belle Isle, East Boston, on June 7 is the first eBird June record for Suffolk County since 1979. A count of 256 Red-necked Phalaropes on Jeffreys Ledge on May 20 is the highest period count for the state for over a decade. The highest period count for the species was 2,420 at Andrews Point, Rockport on May 24, 2005.

The rarest gull of the period was a **Franklin’s Gull** at Provincetown on May 28. The species is almost annual to the state, although this year’s record is early; there is a single April record from Marstons Mills on April 27, 1993, as well as only two other May records. Bonaparte’s Gulls were reported in record low numbers for May and June—with maxima of just 17 and 11, respectively. Last year, those numbers were 750 in May and 150 in June, and in 2020 they were 2,400 in May and 390 in June. Iceland Gulls were reported from four counties in June—a record for the month.

Arctic Terns featured in what will be remembered as one of the most unusual ornithological phenomena of 2022: a massive displacement of birds inland and along the coast from Maryland to southeast Massachusetts. The terns, migrating north from Antarctica, had been halted by a low-pressure system in the mid-Atlantic Bight in mid-May. Marshall Iliff speculated that the terns, “battered by the winds were less able to make a long overland flight and maybe more prone to stopover at lakes because of their depleted resources.” He also noted that,

This was NOT an inland displacement of terns from easterly winds. No Arctics appear to have been found inland with the strong winds and instead they were found inland when the winds lightened up. This shows that the birds were moving inland intentionally. This also was not a fallout, in the sense that bad weather can sometimes ground seabirds that migrate over land (e.g., scoters, Brant, jaegers, Sabine’s Gulls, and sometimes Arctic Terns). Waterbird fallout events tend to happen with strong weather systems that have a lot of precipitation—not at all the recent weather pattern.

Here in Massachusetts, Arctic Terns were reported from 10 counties between May 13–15, including the first record for Norfolk County at Lake Massapoag. Hampshire County beat its previous high count of one bird with 18 Arctic Terns at Quabbin Reservoir.

A pair of **Gull-billed Terns** were reported from Cape Cod in the first half of June. This tern is reported on average every two out of three years, with most records coming between May and September. A **Sandwich Tern** found at Westport on June 27 is the second record for this Bristol County seawatching spot and only the fifth record for the county. The only Forster’s Tern of the period—at Allens Pond Wildlife Sanctuary on June 19—is one of the latest spring arrival dates for this species, which can sometimes appear as early as April. Black Skimmers continue to increase in our region. A count of 40 birds in Edgartown in May and June is a high count for both months. Essex County recorded its first May skimmer since 2001 and Nantucket scored its first June record with three birds on June 11.

A count of four **Pacific Loons** at Race Point in May beat the month’s previous high of two birds. None was reported in June, which is typical for the species; most reports come from October to May.

Wilson’s Storm-Petrels may have been affected by the same weather system in mid-May that displaced Arctic Terns. Birds were seen from coastal observation points from Cape May, New Jersey, to Chatham, Massachusetts. A count of 1,225 birds seen on Jeffreys Ledge on May 30 beat the previous high for the month of 500 birds set in 2011. A count of 65 birds on May 1—also on Jeffreys Ledge—is the second earliest record for the state, after a record of 15 birds from Monomoy on April 26, 1997. Bristol County scored its first May record of Wilson’s Storm-Petrel with two birds seen from Gooseberry Neck on May 15.

Tubenoses were recorded in historically significant numbers this period. A count of 135 Northern Fulmars on Georges Bank on May 24 is the highest period count this century. A survey by the Stellwagen Sanctuary Seabird Stewards (S4) Program on June 24 set records for all tubenose species this year, including 1,790 Cory’s Shearwaters and 5,930 Great Shearwaters—both record period counts. This count was the tenth year of data from this survey.

Ten American Bitterns continued at Burrage Pond, tying the record count set there in the previous period. **Cattle Egrets** were reported from Hadley and South Deerfield. The latter continued from the end of the previous period and are the first spring Cattle Egrets for Franklin County. Following a mini-invasion of **White Ibises** in April, a single immature was present in Scituate from May 5–13. It was the only White Ibis north of Island Beach, New Jersey, during the period and the first May record for Massachusetts since 2004.

*N. Hayward*

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck**

6/16 Richmond 1 ph Z. Adams + v.o.

Snow Goose

6/1 PI 8 M. Densmote + v.o.

Brant

5/1, 5/22 PI 80, 28 v.o.

5/19 Gill/Turners Falls 11 T. Gilliland

5/19, 6/29 Pittsfield (Pont.) 28, 1 J. Pierce + v.o., M. Kelly

6/19 Salisbury 1 C. Rimmer#

Mute Swan

5/12 Berkley 62 J. Eckerson

Wood Duck

6/17 WWMA 106 V. Burdette

6/25 Petersham 72 M. Lynch#

6/25 Tisbury 25 D. Benvent

Blue-winged Teal

5/1-6/8 Burrage Pd WMA 6 3pr L. Schibley + v.o.

5/15 Monomoy NWR 6 J. Trimble#

5/17-5/25 Medfield 2 J. Bock

6/9, 6/21 PI 1, 1 T. Wetmore, P. Modest

Northern Shoveler

5/1 Burrage Pd WMA 4 3m+1f L. Schibley + v.o.

5/15 Monomoy NWR 8 J. Trimble#

5/26, 6/2 PI 2, 1 S. Babbitt + v.o.

6/30 Nantucket 9 S. Kardell#

Gadwall

5/15 Monomoy NWR 26 J. Trimble#

6/1-6/30 PI 27 max T. Wetmore+v.o.

6/30 Nantucket 41 S. Kardell#

American Wigeon

5/11, 5/14 PI 8, 2 T. Wetmore#, D. McComisky

5/16 Hadley 1 T. Gessing + v.o.

American Wigeon x Mallard (hybrid)

5/1-5/12 Fairhaven 1 m C. Longworth + v.o.

Northern Pintail

5/7, 6/4 PI 2, 1 S. Hedman#

5/15 Monomoy NWR 8 J. Trimble#

6/4 Nantucket 15 S. Kardell#

Green-winged Teal

5/1 BFWMA 18 V. Burdette + v.o.

5/1 Hadley 10 N. Kahn

5/1-5/5 October Mountain 6 max M. Iliff + v.o.

5/12 N. Adams 6 N. Henkenius

5/15 Monomoy NWR 3 J. Trimble#

Ring-necked Duck

5/1-5/8 N. Quabbin 13 max B. Lafley + v.o.

5/1-5/14 Great Barrington 7 max P. Banducci+v.o.

5/15 Monomoy NWR 2 J. Trimble#

6/18 W. Tisbury 1 M. Gilmore#

Greater Scaup

5/6 Pittsfield 1 P. Banducci + v.o.

5/18 Somerset 2 A. LeBlanc

Lesser Scaup

5/1 Pembroke 3 G. d'Entremont

5/15 Monomoy NWR 10 J. Trimble#

**King Eider**

5/1-5/8 PI 1 f ph B. Hillman + v.o.

5/3 Salem H. 1 ad m W. Rose

5/4 Duxbury B. 1 f ph R. Bowes

Common Eider

5/27 Chatham 300 G. d'Entremont

6/12 Westport (GN) 30 M. Iliff

Harlequin Duck

5/1-5/5 Westport (GN) 6 max L. Waters# + v.o.

5/4 Scituate 5 m L. Norton

5/15 Aquinnah 10 R. Weiman

5/20 Nantucket 2 C. Duffly

6/20 Rockport 1 m D. Peterson#

Surf Scoter

5/17 Westport (GN) 45 J. Eckerson

5/19 Wachusett Res. 3 max Anon + v.o.

6/6, 6/21 PI 4, 1 A. Sanford, R. Heil

White-winged Scoter

5/17 Westport (GN) 50 J. Eckerson

5/19 Tolland 5 D. Holmes

5/19 Pittsfield (Pont.) 4 J. Pierce + v.o.

6/6 PI 25 A. Sanford

Black Scoter

5/14 N. Scituate 400 G. d'Entremont#

5/17 Westport (GN) 270 J. Eckerson

6/20-6/24 PI 4 max v.o.

Long-tailed Duck

5/15 Westport (GN) 1 M. Iliff#

6/19 Winthrop 2 E. VerSteeg

6/22 Rockport 1 D. Peterson#

Bufflehead

5/1 Pembroke 28 G. d'Entremont

5/4 Hadley (Honeyptot)3 T. Gilliland

5/13 Fall River 1 f J. Eckerson

Common Goldeneye

5/4-5/5 Gill/Turners Falls 1 T. Gilliland + v.o.

5/7 PI 2 f G. d'Entremont#

Hooded Merganser

5/4 GMNWR 30 J. Forbes

5/29 Petersham 6 1f+5yg M. Lynch#

6/1-6/20 Easton 6 1f+5yg S. Huntress#

Common Merganser

5/1-5/11 Boston (CHRes.) 16 R. Doherty + v.o.

5/14 Pelham 2 f M. Lynch#

Red-breasted Merganser

5/4-5/5 Gill/Turners Falls 2 T. Gilliland + v.o.

5/4, 5/19 Pittsfield (Onota)2, 1 J. Pierce

6/2 Fairhaven 2 C. Longworth

Ruddy Duck

5/15 Monomoy NWR 10 J. Trimble#

Northern Bobwhite

6/12 Orleans 3 P. Morf

6/22 Eastham 3 P. Pariseau

6/25 N. Truro 1 J. Sherwood

Wild Turkey

6/1 Fairhaven 12 C. Longworth

6/23 New Braintree 36 M. Lynch#

Ruffed Grouse

thr Quabbin (G8) 9 3ad+6yg S. MacAlister+v.o.

5/14 Falmouth 3 M. Tucker

6/17 Gardner 4 1ad+3yg C.+E. Faughnan

6/19 Ware R. IBA 10 1ad+9yg M. Lynch#

Ring-necked Pheasant

5/1-6/4 October Mountain 2 max M. Iliff + v.o.

Pied-billed Grebe

5/2-5/5 GMNWR 1 M. Kaiser + v.o.

5/12-6/22 Lenox 2 max V. Zollo + v.o.

5/18 Westborough 1 M. Walsh#

5/22-6/26 Richmond 2 max S. Townsend+v.o.

Horned Grebe

5/4 Turners Falls 2 T. Gilliland + v.o.

5/4 Holyoke 1 T. Gilliland

5/15-6/26 Wellfleet 1 R. Sormani

Red-necked Grebe

5/4 Southwick 2 D. Holmes

5/4 South Hadley 2 T. Gilliland

5/16 Marblehead 1 J. Smith + v.o.

**White-winged Dove**

5/20 Orleans 1 ph M. Faherty

6/19 N. Truro 1 ph E. Dziedzic

Yellow-billed Cuckoo

5/18-5/28 Medford 2 max R. Stymeist#+v.o.

5/20 PI 2 C. Lawlor#

5/22 MBWMA 2 S. Santino+ v.o.

Black-billed Cuckoo

5/14-5/25 PI 1 v.o.

5/21 Hardwick 1 M. Lynch#

5/29 MBWMA 2 H. Wales#

6/8 MSSF 1 SSBC (G. d'Entremont)

<b>Black-billed Cuckoo (continued)</b>				<b>American Oystercatcher</b>			
6/16	Freetown	1	G. Chretien	5/21	S. Dart. (APd)	5	W. Duncan#
6/29	Medfield	1	J. Bock	6/24	Chatham	26	J. Davidson
<b>Common Nighthawk</b>				<b>Black-bellied Plover</b>			
5/4	Pittsfield	1	S. Townsend	5/14	Westport (GN)	12	N. Paulson
5/17	Medfield	1	J. Bock	5/19-5/30	Wachusett Res.	21 max	V. Burdette + v.o.
5/20	ONWR	50	C. Cook	5/22	Monomoy NWR	240	D. Bates
6/3	Hadley (Honeypot)	2	M. Maity	6/3	Quincy	1	B. Porter
<b>Chuck-will's-widow</b>				<b>American Golden-Plover</b>			
5/13	Camp Edwards	3	J. McCumber	5/7	Duxbury B.	2	L. Schibley + v.o.
6/28	Nantucket	5	S. Kardell#	6/30	Nantucket	1	B. Balkind
<b>Eastern Whip-poor-will</b>				<b>Killdeer</b>			
5/1-5/31	PI	18 max	K. Bailey# + v.o.	6/4	Winchendon	6 1ad+1yg	M. Lynch#
5/4-6/30	Quabbin Pk	14 max	L. Therrien	6/12	Freetown	6	G. Stuck#
5/5-6/30	Mount Tom	7 max	D. Allard + v.o.	<b>Semipalmated Plover</b>			
5/11	Melrose	4	J. Mott	5/15	Medfield	1	J. Bock
5/11-6/30	Montague	6 max	P. Gagarin + v.o.	5/19	Fairhaven	24	C. Molander#
5/13	Camp Edwards	25	J. McCumber	5/20	Wachusett Res.	10	B. Abbott
6/3	Great Barrington	1	D. Abrams	6/5	Quincy	1	V. Zollo
6/8	MSSF	8	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	6/9	South Hadley	1	T. Gilliland
6/12	Freetown	10	C. Molander#	<b>Piping Plover</b>			
6/17	Lancaster	6	C. Cook	thr	Ipswich (CB)	17 max	v.o.
<b>Chimney Swift</b>				5/3	Quincy	1	v.o.
5/1, 5/5	Northampton	325, 175	T. Gagnon	5/15	Cohasset	1	V. Zollo
5/1-5/31	GMNWR	54 max	v.o.	6/1-6/30	PI	25 max	A. Sanford + v.o.
5/24	New Bedford	79	L. Miller-Donnelly	6/22	Westport	24	Anon.
<b>Ruby-throated Hummingbird</b>				<b>Wilson's Plover</b>			
6/15	Hardwick	5	M. Lynch#	5/26	Chatham	1 ph	J. Negreann
6/18	S. Dart. (APd)	4	J. Offermann	<b>Upland Sandpiper</b>			
<b>Clapper Rail</b>				thr	Plymouth Airport	4 2pr	fide G. d'Entremont
5/28	Fairhaven	6	C. Longworth	5/1-5/31	Westover AFB	5 max	J. Lafley + v.o.
5/29-5/31	PI	1	T. Wetmore + v.o.	5/5	WWMA	1	R. Spedding + v.o.
6/11	Westport	2	G. d'Entremont	5/30-6/12	Boston (Logan)	1	S. Jones + v.o.
6/12	Eastham (FH)	4	P. Morf	<b>Whimbrel</b>			
<b>King Rail</b>				5/1	Gloucester	1	M. Watson
5/25	Bolton	1 nfc	V. Burdette	5/18-5/23	PI	1	R. Ross + v.o.
5/31-6/26	Newbury	1 au	T. Wetmore + v.o.	<b>Ruddy Turnstone</b>			
<b>Virginia Rail</b>				5/22	Marion	60	S. Perkins
5/1-5/31	GMNWR	5 max	v.o.	6/1	Monomoy NWR	50	A. Kneidel
5/1-5/31	PI	3 max	v.o.	6/4	Westport (GN)	5	D. Merski
5/3	HRWMA	4	E. LeBlanc	<b>Red Knot</b>			
5/8	Medfield	2	J. Bock	5/21	Westport (GN)	1	R. Pratt
<b>Sora</b>				5/31	Plymouth B.	11	J. Garrison
5/6-5/18	Groveland	3 max	M. Watson + v.o.	6/1	Monomoy NWR	10	A. Kneidel
5/5-6/17	Hadley (Fort R.)	2 max	S. Schwenk# + v.o.	6/7	PI	1	S. Babbitt
5/15	Monomoy NWR	18	J. Trimble#	<b>Stilt Sandpiper</b>			
6/4	Clinton	2	D. Ammerman	6/1-6/3	PI	1	A. Sanford + v.o.
<b>Common Gallinule</b>				6/7	E. Boston (BI)	1	S. Riley
5/1-6/25	Richmond	4 max	M. Iliff + v.o.	<b>Sanderling</b>			
5/7-5/13	Northampton	2 max	T. Loso + v.o.	5/7	PI	56	T. Wetmore#
5/14	Burrage Pd WMA	1 ad	S. Hedman#	6/1	Monomoy NWR	600	A. Kneidel
5/15-5/20	Monomoy NWR	1	J. Trimble#	<b>Dunlin</b>			
5/29-5/30	GMNWR	1	J. Forbes + v.o.	5/1-5/31	PI	140 max	P. Vale + v.o.
<b>American Coot</b>				5/19	Pittsfield	7	R. Wendell
5/1-5/9	PI	1	v.o.	5/19	Deerfield	4 max	T. Gilliland + v.o.
5/15	Monomoy NWR	1	J. Trimble#	5/19-5/21	Wachusett Res.	14 max	Anon. + v.o.
5/20-5/22	Woburn (HP)	1	R. Flynn + v.o.	5/22	Monomoy NWR	250	D. Bates
<b>Sandhill Crane</b>				<b>Purple Sandpiper</b>			
thr	Hardwick	4 1pr+2yg	W. Howes	5/1-5/17	Rockport	14 max	J. Hoye# + v.o.
5/1-5/6	Newbury	2 max	J. Kovner# + v.o.	5/7	Scituate	100	L. Norton
5/10-6/26	New Marlborough	3 1pr+2yg	So. Auer + v.o.	5/14	Nahant	28	B. Black#
5/11	Eastham	1	J. Harris	5/15	Cohasset	13	V. Zollo
5/14-6/23	Worthington	4 1pr+2yg	J. Taylor	5/21	Aquinnah	1	S. Wainright
5/15-6/3	Ashfield	4 1pr+2yg	S.+H. Mardis + v.o.	6/3	Marblehead	1	J. Smith + v.o.
5/24-5/26	Chatham	1	J. Jordan	<b>Least Sandpiper</b>			
5/25	Burrage Pd WMA	3 1pr+2yg	G. d'Entremont	5/6	S. Dart. (APd)	87	M.+J. Eckerson
5/27	Falmouth	1	S. Gaichas	5/19	Wachusett Res.	60	K. Bourinot
6/4	Cummington	2 1pr	M. McKittrick	<b>White-rumped Sandpiper</b>			
6/5	GMNWR	4	L. Faust	6/1	PI	31	R. Heil
6/5	Edgartown	1	S. Wainright	6/9	Longmeadow	2 max	T. Gilliland + v.o.
<b>Black-necked Stilt</b>				6/10	Quincy	1	J. Offerman + v.o.
5/20-22 6/16-17	Nantucket	22 ph	C. Duffy, M. Chalfin-Jacobs	6/13	S. Dart. (APd)	18	Anon.

<b>Pectoral Sandpiper</b>			
5/1-5/10	Fairhaven	4 max	M. Boucher# + v.o.
5/3	W. Brookfield	2	D. Lusignan
5/15	Wachusett Res.	1	M. Lynch#
<b>Semipalmated Sandpiper</b>			
5/1-5/7	PI	35 max	v.o.
5/15	Monomoy NWR	33	J. Trimble#
5/25, 6/11	S. Dart. (APd)	122, 8	J. Eckerson, G. d'Entremont
<b>Short-billed Dowitcher</b>			
5/19	Westport (GN)	74	J. Eckerson
5/19	Quincy	15	M. McWade
5/19	October Mountain	6	R. Green, So. Auer
5/19-5/25	Wachusett Res.	6 max	V. Burdette + v.o.
5/23	Northampton	5	J. Oliverio
<b>American Woodcock</b>			
5/1-5/31	PI	14 max	K. Bailey# + v.o.
5/14	N. Easton	3	R. Bedard
<b>Wilson's Snipe</b>			
5/1-5/8	Topsfield	1	v.o.
5/1-6/11	October Mountain	2 max	M. Iliff + v.o.
5/21	Quincy	1	E. Ross
<b>Spotted Sandpiper</b>			
5/15	Saugus	6	G. Wilson#
5/20	Wachusett Res.	12	M. Lynch#
<b>Solitary Sandpiper</b>			
5/5-5/21	Topsfield	7 max	S. Zhang + v.o.
5/17	ONWR	5	P. von Rohr
6/6	PI	1	T. Wetmore
<b>Lesser Yellowlegs</b>			
5/4	BFWMA	6	R. Jenkins#
5/6	PI	60	T. Wetmore#
6/28	S. Dart. (APd)	3	R. McKetchnie#
<b>Willet</b>			
5/6	S. Dart. (APd)	25	M.+J. Eckerson
6/1-6/30	PI	75 max	S. Babbitt# + v.o.
<b>Greater Yellowlegs</b>			
5/5	PI	70	T. Wetmore#
5/16	Wachusett Res.	17	V. Burdette
6/3	Hadley (Honeypt)	1	L. Therrien
<b>Wilson's Phalarope</b>			
5/7, 5/14	PI	1, 1	N. Landry, N. Hayward
5/20	Nantucket	1	T. Pastuszak
5/27	Chatham	1 f	G. d'Entremont
<b>Red-necked Phalarope</b>			
5/20, 5/25	Jeffreys L.	256, 6	S. Mirick#
<b>Red Phalarope</b>			
5/20	Jeffreys L.	26	S. Mirick#
<b>Pomarine Jaeger</b>			
6/25	P'town (RP)	1	J. Smith#
<b>Parasitic Jaeger</b>			
5/28	P'town (RP)	1	B. Nikula
6/27	Westport (GN)	2	J. Eckerson
<b>Common Murre</b>			
6/18	Rockport (AP)	1 alt	R. Heil
<b>Razorbill</b>			
5/14	Rockport (AP)	1	J. Hoye#
5/20	Jeffreys L.	1	S. Mirick#
6/22	PI	1	T. Wetmore
<b>Black Guillemot</b>			
5/19	Boston H. waters	8	S. Jones + v.o.
6/3	Marblehead	1	J. Smith
6/20	Rockport	2	D. Peterson#
<b>Black-legged Kittiwake</b>			
5/7	PI	2	G. d'Entremont#
<b>Bonaparte's Gull</b>			
5/4	South Hadley	4	T. Gilliland
5/4	Stockbridge	4	G. Ward + v.o.
5/6	Westport (GN)	12	M.+J. Eckerson
6/1-6/13	Lynn/Swampscott	8 max	v.o.
<b>Laughing Gull</b>			
6/12	Westport (GN)	225	M. Iliff
6/19	P'town (RP)	1350	P. Flood
6/26	PI	5	J. Barcus

<b>Franklin's Gull</b>			
5/28	P'town (RP)	1 ph	B. Nikula
<b>Iceland Gull</b>			
5/6	Lynn	1	J. Quigley
5/6-6/19	P'town (RP)	1	M. Zeitler
5/12	S. Dart. (APd)	1	C. + S. Darmstadt
5/19	Gloucester	1	R. Heil
5/24	Revere B.	1	C. Cox
5/29	Newbury	1	B. Harris#
6/5	Saugus	1	G. Wilson#
6/5-6/28	PI	1	J. Mott + v.o.
<b>Lesser Black-backed Gull</b>			
5/6	Westport (GN)	2	M.+J. Eckerson
5/8	PI	1	J. Keeley
5/27	Lynn/Swampscott	1	S. Sullivan#
6/17	P'town	18	E. Dziedzic
6/23	Rockport (AP)	1	R. Heil
<b>Glaucous Gull</b>			
5/3	Fairhaven	1	C. Longworth
5/29	PI	1	D. Chickering
6/12-6/18	P'town (RP)	1	D. Burton, v.o.
<b>Least Tern</b>			
5/25	S. Dart. (APd)	85	J. Eckerson
6/1	PI	185	R. Heil
<b>Gull-billed Tern</b>			
6/1	Osterville	2 ph	N. Villone
6/7	WBWS	2 ph	J. Negreann
6/11	Orleans	2 ph	K. Burke
<b>Caspian Tern</b>			
5/1	Carver	6	Anonymous
5/1-5/3	Burrage Pd WMA	3	C. Darmstadt# + v.o.
5/3	W. Harwich	3	A. Single#
5/5	Duxbury B.	2	A. Single
5/5-5/8	Wayland	1, 1	J. Hoye#, M. McKenna#
5/19	Pittsfield (Onota)	1	J. Pierce
5/21	W. Roxbury (MP)	2	M. Iliff
5/22	Quincy	2	D. O'Brien
6/18-6/21	P'town (RP)	2	S. Sweeney, P. Crosson
6/20	W. Brookfield	3	D. Mazzarese
<b>Black Tern</b>			
5/7	P'town (RP)	3	P. Flood
5/21-5/28	Wachusett Res.	1	J. Forbes + v.o.
6/3	PI	3	J. Hillsley
<b>Roseate Tern</b>			
5/7	PI	1	T. Wetmore# + v.o.
5/13	Fairhaven	100	H. Zimmerlin
5/22	Tuckernuck I.	230	L. Morello
5/28	P'town (RP)	14	B. Nikula
<b>Common Tern</b>			
5/4	Mystic River	2	L. Hale
5/4	Northampton	1	M. McKittrick + v.o.
5/13	Westport (GN)	200	M. Iliff
5/14	P'town (RP)	1300	B. Nikula
<b>Arctic Tern</b>			
5/13	Lakeville	9	E. Dalton + v.o.
5/13	Wachusett Res.	8 max	B. Robo + v.o.
5/13	Westport (GN)	5	M. Iliff
5/13	Sharon	5	L. Waters + v.o.
5/13	Richmond	2 max	V. Zollo# + v.o.
5/13-5/14	Quabbin (G5)	18 max	L. Therrien + v.o.
5/15	Hadley (Honeypt)	17	J. Trimble
5/15	Manomet Point	5	A. Lamoreaux#
<b>Forster's Tern</b>			
6/19	S. Dart. (APd)	1	S. Berke
<b>Royal Tern</b>			
6/18	P'town (RP)	1	P. Flood#
6/30	Nantucket	1	S. Kardell#
<b>Sandwich Tern</b>			
6/27	Westport (GN)	1 ph	J. Eckerson
<b>Black Skimmer</b>			
5/5	Brewster	6	S. Finnegan#
5/22-5/31	Plymouth B.	1	H. Howarth + v.o.
5/29-5/30	PI	1	J. Smith + v.o.

Black Skimmer (continued)				5/1-5/17	GMNWR	1		v.o.
6/4	Edgartown	40	R. Culbert	5/2-26, 6/22	PI	1		v.o.
6/11	Nantucket	3	M. Chalfin-Jacobs	5/17	Brookline	1		v.o.
Red-throated Loon				5/26	Burrage Pd WMA	10		N. Block
6/4	S. Dart. (APd)	1	C.+T. Ekholm	6/3	BFWMA	2		V. Burdette
<b>Pacific Loon</b>				Least Bittern				
5/1	P'town (RP)	4	ph	P. Flood	PI	6	max	v.o.
Common Loon				5/2-5/13	Mashpee	1		N. Villone
5/17	Westport (GN)	211	J. Eckerson	5/7-6/12	GMNWR	1		J. Barcus + v.o.
5/19	Wachusett Res.	8	K. Bourinot	5/13	IRWS	2		S. Santino
6/8	Lincoln	2	J. Forbes	5/25	Burrage Pd WMA	1		G. d'Entremont
6/15	Hardwick	2	1pr	M. Lynch#	Longmeadow	2	max	M. Moore
Wilson's Storm-Petrel				6/19-6/28	Hatfield	2	max	M.Fairbrother+v.o.
5/1, 5/30	Jeffreys L.	65,1225	L. McKillop#, S. Mirick	Great Blue Heron				
5/15	Monomoy NWR	18	J. Trimble#	5/31	Weston	41		J. Forbes
5/15-5/17	Westport (GN)	2	max	M. Iliif + v.o.	6/27	Bolton	35	D. Ammerman
5/24	Plymouth Co. (offshore)	228	L. Waters	Great Egret				
6/19	Rockport (AP)	2	R. Heil	5/1-5/31	PI	27	max	v.o.
6/24	Stellwagen Bank	4550	L. Waters#	5/25	Burrage Pd WMA	10		G. d'Entremont
Leach's Storm-Petrel				6/21	Barnstable	18		P. Crosson
5/29	Plymouth Co. (offshore)	1	A. Lamoreaux#	6/26	Westport	11		L. Miller-Donnelly
6/30	Stellwagen Bank	1	L. Waters#	Snowy Egret				
Northern Fulmar				5/26	Fairhaven	6		C. Longworth
5/24	Georges Bank	135	X. Xu	6/21	Barnstable	20		P. Crosson
Cory's Shearwater				Little Blue Heron				
6/22, 6/23	Rockport (AP)	11,87	R. Heil	5/15	W. Harwich	3		M. Iliif#
6/24	Stellwagen Bank	1790	L. Waters#	5/19-5/25	Quincy	2		M. McWade
6/25	Nantucket	400	S. Kardell	6/2	Gloucester	2		J. Nelson
6/27	Westport (GN)	85	J. Eckerson	Tricolored Heron				
6/27	Gloucester (EP)	16	R. Heil	thr	PI	2	max	v.o.
Sooty Shearwater				5/13	W. Harwich	1		P. Kyle
5/16	PI	4	A. Kneidel#	5/17	N. Truro	1		R. Sormani
5/17	Westport (GN)	1	J. Eckerson	<b>Cattle Egret</b>				
6/8	Nantucket	150	S. Kardell#	5/1	Hadley	1	ph	L. Therrien + v.o.
6/22	Rockport (AP)	4	R. Heil	5/6	S. Deerfield	1	ph	P. Gagarin + v.o.
6/24	Stellwagen Bank	2810	L. Waters#	Green Heron				
Great Shearwater				5/21	Topsfield	3		G. d'Entremont#
6/8	Nantucket	400	S. Kardell#	6/11	Dartmouth	4		D. Bates#
6/12	Westport (GN)	2	M. Iliif	6/25	Clinton	3		D. Ammerman
6/24	Stellwagen Bank	5930	L. Waters#	Black-crowned Night-Heron				
Manx Shearwater				5/1-5/31	PI	7	max	v.o.
5/29	Plymouth Co. (offshore)	1	A. Lamoreaux#	5/1-5/31	Watertown	4	max	v.o.
6/8	Revere B.	28	J. Krakowski + v.o.	6/21	Barnstable	9		P. Crosson
6/27	Gloucester (EP)	2	R. Heil	Yellow-crowned Night-Heron				
Northern Gannet				5/5-6/21	Dartmouth	2	max	A. Morgan + v.o.
5/4, 6/12	Westport (GN)	145,2	J. Eckerson, M. Iliif	6/1-6/30	PI	4	max	v.o.
5/8	Dennis	266	G. d'Entremont	6/29	Yarmouth	4		E. Hoopes
6/18	Rockport (AP)	145	R. Heil	<b>White Ibis</b>				
Great Cormorant				5/5-5/13	Scituate	1	imm	phEAnderson+v.o.
5/14	N. Scituate	3	G. d'Entremont#	Glossy Ibis				
5/19	Boston H.	9	S. Jones + v.o.	5/1	Newbury	162		A. Gurka#
6/27	Westport (GN)	1	J. Eckerson	5/14	Burrage Pd WMA	35		G. d'Entremont#
Double-crested Cormorant				5/16	Chatham	14		P. Gose
5/3-5/24	Orange	13	max n B.Lafley+v.o.	5/23	Dartmouth	20		B. King
5/5	Westport (GN)	230	G. Stuck#	<b>White-faced Ibis</b>				
5/15	Wachusett Res.	23	M. Lynch#	5/1	Newbury	2	max	ph L. Morello#+v.o.
American Bittern								
thr	October Mountain	3	max	M. Iliif + v.o.				

## VULTURES THROUGH DICKCISSEL

Numbers of raptors this spring were up for some species but down for others. Fourteen **Mississippi Kites** were noted during the period, an increase from seven birds observed in 2021 and only two birds in the spring of 2020. Five **Swallow-tailed Kites** were reported—the same number as last year, although this year's sightings were all one-day wonders, unlike the four birds last year that lingered for several days. An immature **Golden Eagle** was photographed on Mount Greylock on May 7. Spring records of this raptor are rare in Massachusetts; in the past ten years only one other report of a Golden Eagle has been recorded in the spring—last year in Deerfield and on the same date of May 7. On the downside, it was not a good year at the spring



hawkwatch site on Plum Island. The total number of American Kestrels was just 28 compared with 332 in 2021 and 222 in 2020. Only 12 Merlins were noted this year compared with 80 last spring. The last date for Snowy Owl on Plum Island was May 7, and the Snowy Owl first noted at the end of April at Jeremy Point in Wellfleet was last seen on May 31.

The dry and almost rain-free month of May made it pleasant for birding throughout migration. A warm southwest wind on the evening of May 5 followed by a cold front resulted in the first major fallout of migrants with birders reporting spectacular birding just about everywhere on May 6. There were many highlights including the discovery of a **Swainson's Warbler** in the Middlesex Fells area in Medford. This record was just the sixth for the state and the bird was one of the most cooperative as more than 50 birders were able to see it during its one-day visit. Other May 6 arrivals included **Yellow-throated Warblers** in Needham and in Franklin Park, Boston, where a **Cerulean Warbler** was also noted. May 6 also included some birds usually seen later in May: an Eastern Wood-Pewee in Stockbridge, Bay-breasted Warblers at Mount Auburn Cemetery, and Lincoln's Sparrows in seven locations. As noted in the weather summary, the May 13 fallout coincided with the Bird-a-thon, where 13 teams tallied a combined total of 254 species in Massachusetts. Some notable late records during this period included a report of an American Tree Sparrow from Plum Island on May 24 and a Lapland Longspur on Tuckernuck Island on May 22.

Other unusual birds noted during the period included a **Black-headed Grosbeak** photographed in Plymouth—the first report of this species since a bird in Easthampton in December 2010. A **Loggerhead Shrike** was found at the Fitchburg Airport on June 6–8, two years after the last report in the state at the Turners Falls Airport. Some of the more unusual warblers include a **Golden-winged Warbler** in Lenox, **Prothonotary Warblers** in Nahant and Savoy, seven **Kentucky Warblers**, and seven **Yellow-throated Warblers**. A high count of 11 Worm-eating Warblers on May 5 was tallied on Mount Holyoke. Also noteworthy during the period were eight **Summer Tanagers** and two Dickcissels. 🐦

*R. Stymeist*

Black Vulture				5/20	Wachusett Res.	2 ad	M. Lynch#
5/10	Norfolk	2	E. Nielsen	6/18	Fall River	2	D. Hlosek#
5/18	P'town	2	M.J. Foti	<b>Mississippi Kite</b>			
5/26	Boston (FPk)	1	S. Jones	5/14	Chatham	1	J. Bock#
Turkey Vulture				5/14, 6/6	N. Truro	1,1	M. Tucker, L. Waters#
5/14	Dartmouth	15	M. Iliff	5/15	Dighton	2 ad ph	J.+A. Eckerson
5/18	Petersham	11	M. Lynch#	5/18	Mashpee	1 ph	M. Keleher#
Osprey				5/19	Cambr. (FP)	1 ph	B. Shamgochian+v.o.
5/25	S. Dart. (APd)	35	J. Eckerson	5/20	Marshfield	1	B. Vigorito
6/1-6/30	PI	23 max	S. Babbitt + v.o.	5/22	Truro	2 ph	V.Zollo, D. Burton
<b>Swallow-tailed Kite</b>				5/22	Gloucester	1 ph	B. Harris#
5/18	Mashpee	1 ph	M. Keleher#	5/22	Kingston	1 ph	D. Furbish#
5/22	Truro	1 ph	V.Zollo, D. Burton	5/23	Natick	1 ph	N. Jacob
5/24	Freetown	2 ph	K. Wylie#	6/11	Sudbury	1 ph	H. Stein
5/26	Falmouth	1	J. Carroll	<b>Red-shouldered Hawk</b>			
<b>Golden Eagle</b>				5/2-6/10	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	M. Iliff + v.o.
5/7	Mount Greylock	1 imm ph	S. Darmstadt, I. Freedman	5/18	Petersham	4	M. Lynch#
Northern Harrier				5/20	Attleboro	3	J. Tolbert
6/10	Dartmouth	1	L. Howard	<b>Broad-winged Hawk</b>			
6/10-6/21	Westover AFB	1	S. Laks + v.o.	5/14	Hingham	11	S. Avery
6/16	Northampton	1	D. Allard	5/23	Boston (FPk)	2	S. Jones
6/20	Acton	1 m	M. Kaiser	5/26	Seekonk	2	D. Mehta
Sharp-shinned Hawk				6/19	October Mountain	2	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
5/1-5/14	PI	56	Hawkcount (B. Secatore)	<b>Barn Owl</b>			
5/5	Athol	7	E. Mueller	5/20	Edgartown	3	S. Wainright
Northern Goshawk				<b>Snowy Owl</b>			
5/5	Pittsfield	1	K. Hanson#	5/1-5/31	Wellfleet	1	J. Negreann
5/5-5/24	Assabet R. NWR	1	J. Blanchard + v.o.	5/7	PI	1	H. Stein
5/29	Marlborough	1	M.+L. Sorenson	<b>Barred Owl</b>			
6/25	Upton	1	T. Dodd	5/14	Falmouth	2	M. Tucker
Bald Eagle				6/15	Easton	2	B. Tate
5/13	Quaboag IBA3	2ad+1yg	M. Lynch#				



Cliff Swallow (continued)				6/16	Seekonk	2	R. McKetchnie
5/5-6/30	Great Barrington	343	98n	L. Merry + v.o.	Cedar Waxwing		
6/1-6/26	Nbpt	6	max	v.o.	5/21	Hardwick	48
Red-breasted Nuthatch				6/5	S. Dart. (APd)	12	M. Lynch# K. Bartels
6/4	Winchendon	21		M. Lynch#	American Pipit		
6/8	MSSF	4	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)		5/5-5/6	Topsfield	3 max
6/30	New Salem	10		M. Lynch#	5/13	Fairhaven	2
Brown Creeper					5/15	DFWS	1
5/21	Upton	14		N. Paulson	5/19	S. Deerfield	1
6/8	MSSF	3		G. d'Entremont	5/20	Scituate	1
House Wren					Evening Grosbeak		
5/11	Hardwick	22		M. Lynch#	thr	Royalston	6 max
5/14	Acoaxet	8		N. Paulson#	5/1-6/2	Colrain	2
Winter Wren					5/8-6/23	Williamsburg	2 max
5/14	Wompatuck SP	4		G. d'Entremont#	5/9	Princeton	2
6/18	Mount Greylock	6	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)		5/12	Conway	2
6/25	Petersham	4		M. Lynch#	5/13	Warwick	4
Marsh Wren					6/20	Winchendon	2
5/1-6/25	Richmond	16 max	S. Townsend# + v.o.		Purple Finch		
6/1	PI	19		R. Heil	thr	PI	10 max
6/1-6/30	GMNWR	18 max	D. Swain + v.o.		6/4	Winchendon	5
6/4	Somerset	9		A. Cembalistry	Common Redpoll		
6/10	BFWMA	7		V. Burdette	5/1/2022	Easton	1
Carolina Wren					Red Crossbill		
5/13	Quaboag IBA	6		M. Lynch#	5/15-6/30	Montague	9 max
6/25	Westport	5		J. Offermann	5/20-6/26	Mount Greylock	16 max
Golden-crowned Kinglet					6/10-6/22	Rutland	4
5/1	Ware R. IBA	1		M. Lynch#	6/17-6/20	Oakham	12 max
5/14	New Salem	1		M. Lynch#	6/19	Ware R. IBA	3
Ruby-crowned Kinglet					6/28	Sharon	1 Typ1 au
5/1	HRWMA	11		J. Skinner	Pine Siskin		
5/1	Ware R. IBA	9		M. Lynch#	5/3-6/20	Heath	5 max
6/4	PI	1		W. Buswell	6/4	Ashburnham	2
Eastern Bluebird					6/20	Easton	1
6/15	Hardwick	13		M. Lynch#	Lapland Longspur		
6/30	New Salem	11		M. Lynch#	5/21-5/22	Tuckernuck I.	1
Veery					Grasshopper Sparrow		
5/21	Hardwick	49		M. Lynch#	5/2-6/21	Westover AFB	5 max
5/21	Marlborough	10	nfc	T. Spahr	5/13-6/30	Southwick	12 max
6/18	Mount Greylock	5	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)		5/14	Falmouth	26
6/19	October Mountain	7	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)		5/14	Camp Edwards	10
6/25	Westport	14		E. Nielsen#	5/22	Lancaster	12
6/30	New Salem	45		M. Lynch#	5/29	Plymouth Airport	3
Gray-cheeked Thrush					6/26	Norfolk	2
5/15	Pittsfield	2	nfc	M. Iliff#	Lark Sparrow		
5/16-5/24	PI	1	S. Sullivan#, S. Babbitt		6/18	N. Truro	1
5/18	Quabbin (G12)	1		L. Therrien	Clay-colored Sparrow		
5/20	Boston (CHRes.)	1	R. Doherty + v.o.		5/15	PI	2
5/21	Mount Washington	1	b	B. Nickley	6/4-6/30	Falmouth	1
5/21	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	nfc	M. Iliff	Field Sparrow		
5/21, 5/29	Marlborough	1,1	nfc	T. Spahr	5/7	Everett	2
5/24	Boston (FPk)	1		S. Jones + v.o.	5/20	Freetown	10
6/3-6/4	Woburn (HP)	1	au	M. Price + v.o.	5/21	Hardwick	5
Swainson's Thrush					6/4	Lancaster	24
5/10-5/29	MtA	6	max	v.o.	American Tree Sparrow		
5/15	Leominster	12		J. Skinner	5/1	Wayland	1
5/20-6/24	Mount Greylock	4	max	So. Auer# + v.o.	5/5-5/6	Dartmouth	1
5/21	Marlborough	60	nfc	T. Spahr	5/24	PI	1
Hermit Thrush					Dark-eyed Junco		
5/14	Pelham	10		M. Lynch#	5/18	Mt Wachusett	5
6/18	Mount Greylock	5	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)		5/28	BHI (Spectacle I.)	1
6/19	October Mountain	3	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)		6/18	Mount Greylock	9
6/25	Petersham	18		M. Lynch#	6/26	Ashburnham	9
Wood Thrush					White-crowned Sparrow		
5/13	Hadley	18		G. d'Entremont#	5/1-5/13	W. Roxbury (MP)	2
6/24	N. Brookfield	13		V. Burdette	5/5	Westwood	2
6/25	Westport	10		J. Offermann	5/6	Boston (FPk+McW)	2
Gray Catbird					5/7	MBWMA	5
5/21	Hardwick	131		M. Lynch#	5/21	MtA	1
6/1	PI	65		R. Heil	White-throated Sparrow		
6/16	S. Dart. (APd)	36		A. Cembalistry	5/5	Warren	10
Brown Thrasher					5/31-6/13	Boston	1
5/15	Westborough	4		A. Desai	6/12	BHI (Spectacle I.)	1

Vesper Sparrow				5/21	Dartmouth	2	L. Miller-Donnelly
thr	Hadley (Honeypt)	4 max	L. Therrien + v.o.	Louisiana Waterthrush			
5/1	GMNWR	1	B. Harris#	5/1-5/17	Boxford	2 max	v.o.
5/7-6/21	Westover AFB	2 max	D. Bates# + v.o.	5/14	Pelham	4	M. Lynch#
5/11-6/30	Lancaster	3 max	v.o.	5/15	Concord	3	J. Forbes
Seaside Sparrow				5/16	Oakham	4	J. Lawson
5/21-6/11	Barnstable (SN)	1	P. Crosson, v.o.	6/16	Pepperell	4	S. Wilson
5/22-thr	PI	4 max	T. Wetmore + v.o.	Northern Waterthrush			
5/25	S. Dart. (APd)	24	J. Eckerson	5/17	Fall River	15	L. Miller-Donnelly
Nelson's Sparrow				5/18	ONWR	8	J. Meigs
6/30	Newbury	2 b	J. Clark#	5/20	P'town	7	B. Nikula
Saltmarsh Sparrow				<b>Golden-winged Warbler</b>			
5/25	S. Dart. (APd)	45	J. Eckerson	5/13	Lenox	1 ph	J. Pierce
6/1, 6/26	PI	42,20	R. Heil, T. Wetmore	Blue-winged Warbler			
6/4	Barnstable (SN)	15	S. van der Veen	5/16	Fairhaven	11	C. Longworth
6/30	Newbury	20	J. Clark#	5/20	WWMA	9	T. Spahr
Savannah Sparrow				6/1-6/15	Bedford	3 max	v.o.
5/12	BFWMA	27	S. Sutton	6/1-6/26	MBWMA	4 max	S. Babbitt + v.o.
6/5	Saugus	54	G. Wilson#	Golden-winged x Blue-winged Warbler (hybrid)			
6/17	Dartmouth	10	L. Miller-Donnelly	5/5	Medford	1	J. Levy
Savannah Sparrow (Ipswich Sparrow)				5/10-5/14	MBWMA	1 ph	M. Watson + v.o.
5/6	Westport (GN)	1	M.+J. Eckerson	6/11	Concord	3	1 ad+2f ph
Lincoln's Sparrow				6/16	Westborough	1	M. Iliff#
5/6, 5/12	MtA	1,1	D. Nyochio, C. Floyd#	Brewster's Warbler (hybrid)			
Swamp Sparrow				5/7-6/17	Amherst	1 m ph	C. Elowe + v.o.
5/14	Freetown	5	L. Abbey	5/9	Woburn (HP)	1 ph	v.o.
6/14	BFWMA	25	V. Burdette	5/12	Middleton	1 ph	S. Sullivan
6/30	New Salem	9	M. Lynch#	5/12	Washington	1 m ph	M. Watson#
Eastern Towhee				Lawrence's Warbler (hybrid)			
5/16	Freetown	23	L. Abbey	5/6	Newton	1	I. Reid
5/21	Hardwick	43	M. Lynch#	5/7-5/27	Belchertown	1 m ph	L. Therrien
6/8	MSSF	18	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	Black-and-white Warbler			
Yellow-breasted Chat				5/1-5/26	MtA	11 max	v.o.
5/13	Hadley	1	M. Horman# + v.o.	5/1-5/31	PI	53 max	v.o.
Bobolink				5/1-5/31	MNWS	14 max	v.o.
thr	Hadley (Fort R.)	36 max	L. Therrien + v.o.	5/13	Hadley	12	G. d'Entremont
5/23	Spencer	60	R. Jenkins#	5/14	Petersham	40	A. Lovelless
6/5	Saugus	31	G. Wilson#	5/20	P'town	14	B. Nikula
6/16	S. Dart. (APd)	52	A. Cembalisty	6/18	Mount Greylock	4	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
Eastern Meadowlark				<b>Prothonotary Warbler</b>			
thr	Westover AFB	8 max	J. Lafley + v.o.	5/16	Nahant	1	W. Tatro#
5/1	Weymouth	5	D. O'Brien	5/21	Savoy	1	L. van Handel#
5/29	Plymouth Airport	5	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	<b>Swainson's Warbler</b>			
6/4	S. Dart. (APd)	8	C. Ekholm	5/6	Medford	1 ph	J. Levy + v.o.
6/22	Wachusett Res.	6	B. Robo	Tennessee Warbler			
Orchard Oriole				5/8-5/22	MtA	5 max	v.o.
5/13-6/30	Southwick	6 max	M. Moore + v.o.	5/14-5/22	PI	11 max	S. Zhang + v.o.
5/18	Westborough	5	Anon.	5/20	Boston (FPk)	6	J. Young + v.o.
5/21	PI	8	G. d'Entremont#	Orange-crowned Warbler			
6/27	Dartmouth	7	F. Bouchard#	5/5	Boston (McW)	1	P. Peterson + v.o.
Baltimore Oriole				5/9	Wilbraham	1	D. Narango
5/11	Hardwick	38	M. Lynch#	5/22	Ipswich	1	I. Pepper + v.o.
5/13	Hadley	8	G. d'Entremont#	Nashville Warbler			
5/15	Fairhaven	10	C. Longworth#	5/12	Freetown	3	J. Eckerson
Rusty Blackbird				Mourning Warbler			
5/1-5/11	Longmeadow	7 max	L.+A. Richardson+v.o.	5/14-5/30	Hadley	7 max	L. Therrien+v.o.
5/2	BFWMA	5	S. Sutton	5/16-5/31	MNWS	5 max	v.o.
5/9	Wayland	4	J. Forbes	5/20-5/25	MtA	2 max	v.o.
5/11	Washington	1	G. Hurley	5/22-6/6	Boston (McW)	2	L. Grimes + v.o.
Ovenbird				5/24	Athol	2	E. LeBlanc
5/5-5/31	PI	15 max	v.o.	5/27	October Mountain	5 max	M. Watson# + v.o.
5/11	Hardwick	134	M. Lynch#	6/5-6/17	Mount Greylock	1	D. O'Brien + v.o.
5/14	Wompatuck SP	50	G. d'Entremont#	<b>Kentucky Warbler</b>			
5/17	Fall River	51	L. Miller-Donnelly	5/15, 6/4	MNWS	1,1	J. Smith, J. Hoye#
6/18	Mount Greylock	35	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	5/16	Gloucester (EP)	1	S. Hedman
6/19	October Mountain	26	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	5/17	Woods Hole	1 ph	M. Tucker
6/30	New Salem	53	M. Lynch#	5/20	Marshfield	1 ph	S. Avery# + v.o.
Worm-eating Warbler				5/20	Seekonk	1	R. McKetchnie
5/5	Mount Holyoke	11 max	L. Therrien + v.o.	5/23	Williamstown	1 ph	D. Shustack + v.o.
5/7	Mount Tom	4	T. Gessing	Common Yellowthroat			
5/12-5/13	Falmouth	3	E. Hill-Gest#	5/2-5/31	GMNWR	23 max	v.o.
5/13	Hadley	8	G. d'Entremont#	5/21	S. Dart. (APd)	15	W. Duncan#
5/14, 5/19	MNWS	1,1	B.+Z. Peters, J. Smith	6/23	New Braintree	55	M. Lynch#

Hooded Warbler				6/25	Ashby	9	J. Forbes#
5/2	Quincy	1	L. Waters + v.o.	Palm Warbler			
5/12-6/29	Westfield	1	D. Holmes + v.o.	5/6	MtA	5	C. Rimmer# + v.o.
5/14, 5/25	PI	1,1	R. Ross, T. Marron#	5/17	Amherst	1	G. Brown
5/16-6/17	New Marlborough	3 max	G.+C. Ward + v.o.	5/18	PI	1	A. Sanford
5/27	N. Truro	1	J. Young	Pine Warbler			
5/29	Freetown	3	S. van der Veen	5/1	Royalston	28	E. LeBlanc
American Redstart				5/17	Fall River	15	L. Miller-Donnelly
5/7-5/31	PI	65 max	v.o.	6/8	MSSF	15	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
5/13	Hadley	26	G. d'Entremont#	6/30	New Salem	22	M. Lynch#
5/13	N. Dighton	12	J. Eckerson	Yellow-rumped Warbler			
5/20	WWMA	34	T. Spahr	5/1-5/25	MtA	65 max	v.o.
6/20	Falmouth	13	N. Marchessault	5/1-5/31	PI	50 max	v.o.
Cape May Warbler				6/18	Mount Greylock	3	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
5/6	Boston (FPk)	4	S. Jones	Yellow-throated Warbler			
5/6	Brookline	1	M. Garvey	5/6	Needham	1	<i>albilora</i> ph R.Everett+v.o.
6/1	Bedford	1	J. Keyes	5/6-5/7	Boston (FPk)	1	<i>albilora</i> ph T.Jacobson+v.o.
Cerulean Warbler				5/14	MtA	1 ph	D. Radovsky + v.o.
5/2-6/30	Mount Holyoke	7	M. McKittrick + v.o.	5/17	Gloucester	1	<i>albilora</i> ph R. Schain
5/5	Norfolk	5	v.o.	5/17	Holyoke	1	K. Wentworth
5/6	Boston (FPk)	1	S. Jones + v.o.	5/19-5/21	P'town	1 ph	M. Thompson
5/14	Mashpee	1	M. Tucker#	5/22-6/25	Edgartown	1 ph	M. Curtin, v.o.
5/21	Savoy	1	L. van Handel#	Prairie Warbler			
Northern Parula				5/6-6/30	Montague	14 max	V.+K. Woodring + v.o.
5/1-5/31	PI	64 max	v.o.	5/21	Freetown	8	G. Chretien#
5/1-5/31	MNWS	15 max	v.o.	5/22	Lancaster	20	B. Burke
5/16	WWMA	13	T. Spahr	6/8	MSSF	6	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
5/20	P'town	35	B. Nikula	Black-throated Green Warbler			
Magnolia Warbler				5/9	Leverett	25	B. Lafley
5/5-5/31	MtA	8 max	v.o.	5/14	Petersham	28	A. Loveless
5/7-5/31	PI	35 max	v.o.	6/18	Mount Greylock	7	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
5/7-5/31	MNWS	15 max	v.o.	Canada Warbler			
5/16	WWMA	12	T. Spahr	5/6-5/24	MtA	4 max	v.o.
5/20	P'town	12	B. Nikula	5/14	Petersham	4	V. Burdette
6/18	Mount Greylock	3	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	5/14-5/31	PI	18 max	v.o.
Bay-breasted Warbler				5/14-5/31	MNWS	16 max	v.o.
5/6-5/29	MtA	2 max	v.o.	6/19	October Mountain	3	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
5/14-5/26	PI	10 max	v.o.	Wilson's Warbler			
5/16-6/2	Mount Holyoke	3 max	F. Bowrys + v.o.	5/21	PI	12	G. d'Entremont#
5/17	Sharon	2	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	Summer Tanager			
5/17-5/31	MNWS	6 max	v.o.	5/4	Westborough	1	S. Dankwardt
5/19	Boston (FPk)	5	S. Jones + v.o.	5/6-5/8	Longmeadow	1 m	T. Snelham + v.o.
5/20	Petersham	4	A. Loveless	5/9-5/14	Nantucket	1	v.o.
Blackburnian Warbler				5/11	Salem	1	B. Smith#
5/5-5/31	PI	16 max	v.o.	5/18	Winchester (Fells)	1	C. Engstrom
5/14-5/30	MNWS	12 max	v.o.	5/21	P'town	1	K. Miller#
6/18	Mount Greylock	9	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	5/22	Wakefield	1	L. Ireland
6/19	October Mountain	6	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	5/24	New Salem	1 f	M. Tillinghast
6/26	Ashburnham	15	J. Young	Scarlet Tanager			
Yellow Warbler				5/25	Ware R. IBA	14	M. Lynch#
5/1-5/29	MtA	18 max	v.o.	5/31	Fall River	4	L. Abbey#
5/1-5/31	PI	79 max	v.o.	6/12	Erving	10	M. Lynch#
5/15	Saugus	25	G. Wilson#	Rose-breasted Grosbeak			
5/20	WWMA	34	J. Lawson	5/5	Warren	19	M. Lynch#
5/25	S. Dart. (APd)	36	J. Eckerson	5/13	Hadley	19	G. d'Entremont#
Chestnut-sided Warbler				5/14	Acoaxet	7	N. Paulson#
5/21	Hardwick	54	M. Lynch#	Black-headed Grosbeak			
5/21	PI	13	G. d'Entremont#	5/19-5/20	Plymouth	1 ad m ph	J. Kowalsky+v.o.
6/18	Mount Greylock	7	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	Blue Grosbeak			
6/19	October Mountain	9	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	5/3	Shirley	1	R. Baker
Blackpoll Warbler				5/16	W. Newbury	1	O. Wilder
5/6-5/29	MtA	16 max	v.o.	6/10-6/30	Hadley (Honeypot)	3 max	M. McKittrick + v.o.
5/13-5/31	PI	31 max	v.o.	6/18	Falmouth	3	S. Dresser
5/20	WWMA	8	T. Spahr	Indigo Bunting			
5/25-6/24	Mount Greylock	5 max	K. Kosek + v.o.	5/1	Williamstown	1 m	M. Morales
5/29	Westport	3	T. Blodgett#	5/24	Lancaster	12	J. Guion
Black-throated Blue Warbler				6/20	Westport	2	G. Stuck#
5/14	Petersham	14	A. Loveless	Dickcissel			
5/20	P'town	9	B. Nikula	5/22	Hadley	1 m	D. Fournier# + v.o.
6/18	Mount Greylock	8	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	5/22	Needham	1	P. Oehlkers
6/19	October Mountain	7	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)				





# BYGONE BIRDS

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## Historical Highlights for May–June

Neil Hayward

### 5 YEARS AGO

*May–June 2017*

An immature **Magnificent Frigatebird** was photographed on a Hyannis Whale Watch Cruise west of Stellwagen Bank on June 10. Possibly the same bird was reported from Scarborough, Maine, on June 12, and then again in Massachusetts off Salisbury Beach on June 13. A **Brown Booby** was found in Ludlow on June 4. An adult **Brown Pelican** was spotted up and down the North Shore in early May and then again at Plum Island on June 20. A **Purple Gallinule** spent two days at Miacomet Pond, Nantucket at the end of May. An adult male **Ruff** was at Allens Pond from May 11–16. A **Bar-tailed Godwit** of the Siberian/Alaskan subspecies *baueri* was at Chatham from June 17 until the end of the month. Up to four **Franklin's Gulls** were present at Race Point. **Scissor-tailed Flycatchers** were found at Plum Island and Sharon. The **Harris's Sparrow**, which first appeared in Dalton on November 25, was last seen on May 11.

Best sighting: a **Brown Booby** was photographed on the guard rail of a bridge under construction in Ludlow in Hampden County. This was the first inland record of the species for Massachusetts.

### 10 YEARS AGO

*May–June 2012*

A **White-winged Dove** was photographed on Nantucket in early June. A **Wilson's Plover** was found by a plover warden on Martha's Vineyard on May 18. A **Bar-tailed Godwit** was photographed on Tuckernuck Island on June 7 and later spotted on South Beach in Chatham at the end of the month. An observer on a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) survey vessel on George's Bank reported six **South Polar Skuas** and a **Red-billed Tropicbird** on June 13. **Brown Pelicans** were reported from Chatham on May 17, Gloucester on June 5, and Boston Harbor from June 7–30.

Best sightings: one of the best seasons for Snowy Owls. Norman Smith banded a total of 42 Snowies at Logan Airport this winter, with the last bird released on Plum Island on May 29.

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**Bird Observer**  
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## 20 YEARS AGO



### *May–June 2002*

An **American White Pelican** spent two days along the Connecticut River at Northampton in late May. An unprecedented nine **Mississippi Kites** were recorded from the North Truro hawkwatch on June 1. The two mega-rarities from the previous period—**Eurasian Kestrel** in Chatham (second record for the state) and **Pacific Golden-Plover** at Plum Island (first for the state)—both lingered until May 5. A **Bar-tailed Godwit** of the *baueri* subspecies found on Martha's Vineyard on May 4 was only the second record of this taxon for the state. An adult **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** was photographed on Nantucket on May 24. **Sedge Wrens** were present in Athol and Marshfield, and a **Harris's Sparrow** was found at Salisbury Beach on May 18.

Best sighting: a male **Lazuli Bunting** was photographed coming to a puddle in Sconset, Nantucket on May 5–10. This was the first record for Massachusetts.

## 40 YEARS AGO



### *May–June 1982*

A female Common Eider with two young seen in the outer Boston Harbor islands in late May was the first confirmed breeding record for Boston. A **Purple Gallinule** was photographed walking on cars in a driveway in Falmouth on May 16–31. At least five individual **Ruffs** were reported from the Newburyport area in May. An adult **Franklin's Gull** was on Nantucket from May 9–10. An adult **Gull-billed Tern** in breeding plumage was seen on Monomoy on May 24, and the Plymouth Beach tern colony hosted five pairs of Arctic Terns. Two Short-eared Owl nests were found on Monomoy in May, each containing five eggs. A **Burrowing Owl** was discovered in Northampton on May 4. A pair of **Prothonotary Warblers** attempted to nest in Sharon but appear to have been unsuccessful. Two **Western Tanagers** were reported in May, with individuals at Mount Auburn Cemetery and on Nantucket. A **Lark Bunting** spent four days on Nantucket from May 22–25, and a Seaside Sparrow was found at Nahant Thicket on May 17.

Best sighting: a **Swainson's Warbler**, observed by many at the Provincetown Beech Forest from May 4–6, was the first record for Massachusetts. 🐦

# ABOUT THE COVER

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## Pied-billed Grebe

The small and distinctive Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*) is the most widely distributed grebe in the Western Hemisphere. Adults in breeding plumage have light brown bodies with darker brown backs and white undertail coverts and bellies. The head is tinged with gray and the throat has a black patch outlined with whitish feathers. They have a distinctive white eye ring and a distinctive bill: short, deep, laterally compressed, and white with a prominent vertical black bar. Males are larger than females. The eye ring and bill shape easily separate the Pied-billed Grebe from all other grebes. In winter plumage, adults mostly resemble breeding birds, but the black throat patch is white and the bill is brownish, and in most individuals the black bar has faded away. Juvenile birds resemble adults in winter plumage but often retain some brown and beige striping on the head.

Three subspecies of the Pied-billed Grebe are recognized. *P. p. podiceps* is found throughout North America south to Panama. *P. p. antillarum* and *P. p. antarcticus* are found in the Antilles and in South America respectively. Where there is suitable habitat, the breeding range of migratory Pied-billed Grebes stretches from eastern British Columbia irregularly across Canada, nicking up into the Northwest Territories, to the Great Lakes and east to Nova Scotia. In the United States, they breed from Montana south to northern Texas and east in an irregular pattern to Massachusetts. They are year-round residents in most of the remainder of the United States, Mexico, Central America, coastal northwest and western South America, and eastern Brazil south through Chile and Argentina.


In Massachusetts, the Pied-billed Grebe is a rare and local breeder that shows signs of decline and is listed as an endangered species in the Commonwealth. It is considered a fairly common migrant. The decline in breeding numbers in Massachusetts is linked to the draining or ecological changes of freshwater marshes. They typically return to Massachusetts in mid-March, and in fall, migrants leave or pass through in late September through October to avoid ponds freezing over, although a few winter over in Massachusetts if they can find open fresh water.

Pied-billed Grebes are seasonally monogamous, but a pair may remain together for a second breeding season. They usually produce two broods in a season. Both males and females vocalize, but the female's call is shorter and softer. The full call consists of three parts, a series of *whup* notes followed by a long series of *kaow* notes, terminating in a long *kaooo*. This vocalization functions as territorial advertisement and communication between members of the pair. Calling birds submerge the lower part of the neck with the black throat patch prominently displayed, and the bill open. Courtship behavior includes both birds assuming an upright posture with necks stretched up, bills pointing at each other, and the black throat patch distended. Also, one bird may dive and swim along below the water surface.

If threatened, they also give alarm calls. Territorial birds are aggressive with intruders, diving and attacking under water. A defending bird will surface and adopt a threat posture with head drawn back and bill forward, low, and near or at the water surface. Sometimes fighting birds will stand vertically in the water, necks stretched, each trying to grab the other bird's bill with its own. Pied-billed Grebes on territory may attack other grebe species.

Pied-billed Grebes breed on brackish or freshwater ponds containing emergent vegetation. The male or the pair builds a floating platform of local plant materials in emergent vegetation or occasionally in more open water. The pair forms the bowl-shaped nest from material either retrieved from the bottom of the pond or clipped from the emergent vegetation. They may build a second platform where mating occurs. Both parents incubate the clutch of six to eight bluish white unmarked eggs for the 23–27 days until hatching. When both parents leave the nest, they cover it with vegetation, apparently for thermoregulation purposes. Pied-billed Grebes may also occasionally egg dump into nearby nests. The chicks are semiprecocial, leaving the nest soon after hatching, but are carried on an adult's back and may drown if left alone in the water. They cannot feed themselves for the first week and rely on their parents for food for nearly five weeks. They reach independence in about nine weeks. Chicks from the first brood may help at the nest of the second brood, but do not feed the second brood.

Pied-billed Grebes are opportunistic foragers, taking a wide variety of prey that includes fish, insects, and crustaceans—about anything small that swims. The large bill and strong jaw muscles enable them to crush crustaceans and kill fish, which they swallow headfirst. They may use herons and egrets as beaters, following them as they stir up prey. They eat their own down feathers to facilitate the formation of pellets of indigestible food for regurgitation.

Pied-billed Grebes are taken by Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, owls, snakes, alligators, and snapping turtles. Coots, as well as raccoons and mink, predate the eggs. Pied-billed Grebes avoid predation by diving and resurfacing in dense vegetation with only their eyes and nostrils above the surface. Adults may carry away threatened young on their backs and may feign injury. They are often killed by duck hunters. As a nocturnal migrant, Pied-billed Grebes suffer from collisions with TV towers and buildings. Historically, habitat alteration has been a problem. Pied-billed Grebes are considered endangered or species of special concern in all the New England states except for Maine. However, most of the Breeding Bird Survey data suggest a stable population. Although population stability needs further study, there is hope for the long-term survival of this interesting bird species. 

*William E. Davis, Jr.*



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SNOWY OWL BY SANDY SELESKY

# AT A GLANCE

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August 2022



WAYNE R. PETERSEN

In this issue, readers are challenged by what appears to be a sparrow or finch of some kind. The conical shape of its bill suggests that it is better adapted for cracking seeds than for foraging for insects and other soft-bodied arthropods. Although bill shape alone does not mean that a species exclusively feeds on one type of food, it nonetheless is suggestive of its preferred food or items that it is especially adapted to eat.

Another feature of the mystery bird that is characteristic of most sparrow species is that it exhibits a prominently streaky plumage. Nearly all sparrows are conspicuously streaked at some point in their life, even if only as juveniles. In the case of the pictured bird, the streaks are confined to the back, and the underparts appear plain. Most juvenile sparrows also have streaked underparts. Recognizing that the mystery bird is a sparrow—because very few other North American bird species exhibit the combination of small size (compared to the twig the bird is perched on), a fairly thick conical bill, and plain underparts with a prominently streaked back—the identification task is considerably simplified.

Despite their nasty reputation for being hard to identify, some sparrows are relatively easy to recognize. A close look at the mystery bird reveals several prominent characteristics that make it distinctive. First and possibly most important are the distinct dark line running through the eye and the wide white eyebrow stripe (supercilium) that runs in front, above, and well behind the eye. Only two sparrow species that regularly occur in Massachusetts have such a distinctive combination of facial and head markings—Chipping Sparrow and Clay-colored Sparrow. Although other species exhibit pale eyebrow stripes, few have one as obvious as that of the mystery sparrow,

and none has one in combination with such a prominent black eyeline.

Distinguishing between Clay-colored and Chipping sparrows can sometimes be tricky, especially when an image is in black and white. In a color picture, the sandy or buffy tones on the breast of a Clay-colored Sparrow would usually be obvious. Because the journal image is not in color, these tonal differences cannot be determined.

The absence of a distinct malar stripe beside each side of the throat area is a clue that the pictured bird may be a Chipping Sparrow, as is the lack of a clearly defined, white median crown stripe. Clay-colored Sparrows, in contrast, would typically show both of these characteristics.

What we can see on the mystery bird, in addition to the barely traceable malar stripes, is a crown thinly streaked with dark, only a suggestion of a diffuse median crown stripe, off-white coloration on the underparts, and thin black lores between the eye and the bill. In Clay-colored Sparrows the lores are buffy, not dark. These last features clinch the identification as a Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*). The combination of an unstreaked breast and a finely streaked crown indicate that this Chipping Sparrow is likely a bird in its first-winter plumage. A look at the colored version of the mystery bird on the *Bird Observer* website will also reveal a conspicuously gray rump, a feature that would be brownish tan in a Clay-colored Sparrow.

Chipping Sparrows are common summer residents in Massachusetts, favoring open woodlands and suburban areas for nesting. They are especially obvious and vocal when they first arrive in April and again in midfall when large flocks may sometimes be found along weedy roadsides or in nearby fields. Chippies are relatively rare in Massachusetts during the winter, and at that season are most often found in southeastern Massachusetts or Cape Cod. The author photographed this first-winter plumaged Chipping Sparrow in Orleans, Barnstable County, on October 11, 2008. 🐦

Wayne R. Petersen

## ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST

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### Avery Whitlock

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

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

Reference image provided by Becky Matsubara: <<https://flic.kr/p/2iuMocT>> 🐦



# AT A GLANCE

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SUSAN BROWNE

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

## MORE HOT BIRDS

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As in recent years, this summer featured **Brown Pelican** sightings from several places. Reports came from at least four towns on outer Cape Cod, the two farthest-apart corners of Nantucket, and from the Massachusetts mainland, at Scituate. Joey Negreann took the photo on the right.



**White Ibis** may not remain on Massachusetts's review list much longer after more summers like this one. The species was reported from at least five places around the state. Perhaps the most surprising was in Williamstown, where birders conducting a Common Nighthawk migration count added an unexpected bonus to their tally. Other ibises appeared in Quincy, Cohasset/Scituate, Concord, and Newburyport. David Swain took the photo on the left.

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