THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

Devoted to the promotion of bird study.

Volume II Number 1 January 1982 Pages 1 – 13

The Connecticut Warbler is published in January, April, July and October. Subscription is $6.00 per year, based on the calendar year. Individual issues may be purchased for $1.50 each, when available.

The editors invite the submission of articles, notes, black and white photographs and line drawings for use in **The Connecticut Warbler**. Manuscripts should be typewritten, double-spaced and on one side of the sheet only, with ample margins. The editors must reserve judgement as to how much of this material to use and return postage should be provided if materials are to be returned.

EDITORIAL

In reviewing the articles published in the first four issues of *The Connecticut Warbler* we were interested to note that over half of them involved the collecting of quantitative ornithological data. Modern bird study has come to mean more than just finding and identifying rare species exciting as that may be. In conducting a hawk watch, a Christmas count, a breeding bird census, a bird atlasing project or a bird banding operation we are constantly asking the question "How many?". And of course the longer we continue to ask this question and the fewer the variables introduced into the process of obtaining answers, the more valuable the results become.

We have conducted a breeding bird census in a stable mature forest at the White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield every spring but two, since 1965. A skilled census taker has used the same techniques in covering the same area. During that seventeen year period one warbler species, the Black-throated Green, which was originally the most abundant nesting species, has markedly declined in numbers while another, the Blackburnian Warbler, has quadrupled replacing the former as the most abundant nester. This replacement does not appear to be the result of natural forest succession or of competition between these two northern evergreen species. The work of Robert MacArthur and others has clearly demonstrated that these two species coexist in the same forests by occupying discrete niches. Perhaps the shift can be traced back to habitat disturbances in the South American wintering grounds of the two warblers. In any case, we are grateful to have become more aware of a significant change occuring in one of our prized natural areas. If seventeen years of work can be that rewarding, imagine the value of monitoring that same area for one hundred years or more.

Clearly, quantitative data can play an important role in increasing our awareness of the changes going on around us all the time even in protected natural areas. With more monitoring we would not need a professional ornithologist to elaborate on topics such as "A Review of the 1970's". With greater awareness, therefore, comes an enhanced ability to make wiser resource management decisions. It follows that more birders should be involving themselves in more long-term censusing projects and, equally important, improving their censusing techniques. The Christmas counts summarized in this issue are part of what is probably the world's oldest and largest bird population census and also probably the world's sloppiest census. This is its 82nd year and in 1980- 81 it included 33,802 named participants and 1,358 published counts, but scientists have been reluctant to use its results. Robert Arbib, editor of *American Birds*, suggested a number of possible improvements and outlined an ideal model for the C.B.C. in a talk at the First Annual Connecticut Bird Conference held in New Haven on May 2, 1981. His proposals can be found in a paper in the Proceedings of an International Symposium on Estimating Numbers of Terrestrial Birds (Asilomar, CA., October 26-31, 1980) published by the Cooper Ornithological Society. It may take a while to change the format of such a venerable institution as the Christmas Bird Count but this would appear to be as good a place as any to improve our census taking techniques.

Gordon Loery
Guest Editor
White Memorial Foundation

STATUS OF THE EASTERN WILD TURKEY IN CONNECTICUT

by Steven N. Jackson

The Eastern Wild Turkey was common in Connecticut before history was recorded and was a significant contributor to the diet of both the Indian and our colonial ancestors. It was originally distributed throughout a large portion of the continent, from northeastern Mexico to southern Ontario and Maine. Today, different subspecies exist in different parts of that range. Its present range in the east is coastally from Virginia to Florida, the Appalachian Mountains into Mississippi, Arkansas and northern Louisiana. It has also been re-introduced to several New England states and New York.

Although the turkey has shown a great ability to adjust to varying conditions, it has suffered more than most other game birds from the vast changes that occurred with the advance of civilization. The bird's large size and good table quality made it well worth the time necessary to put it on the table. Market hunting became widespread and with no laws to protect them, large numbers were shot at all times of the year. Birds were baited into areas and shot to be sold at local markets. Its greatest conflict, however, was with agriculture as large areas of land were cleared, reducing the available habitat to about 10% of its original range. The combination of uncontrolled hunting and land clearing eliminated the turkey from all but the most remote mountain areas of the northeast. Connecticut lost its turkey population by the early 1800's and by the early 1900's, the only wild turkeys in this general area, were located in remote areas of Pennsylvania.

Since those thoughtless days of our early heritage, many changes have occurred to preserve and manage our largest game bird. Land use patterns have changed and forested land once again predominates in the northeast. Turkey habitat has returned to its previous condition somewhat and turkeys are increasing in number. Every state that had its original turkey population eliminated by early practices has attempted to reestablish it.

In Connecticut, some 740 turkeys were released from 1956 to 1970. Many other states have released pen raised turkeys much more extensively then Connecticut. Pennsylvania, for example, has traditionally released 6,000 turkeys a year. Although these pen raised birds were given every reasonable opportunity to take hold and develop a stable population, they died out in a few years. Small groups were established but they did not expand their range or numbers as would be expected. Pen raised turkeys have not fared well when released, probably due to breaking the link of learned behavior which is so vital to their survival.

More recent efforts were concentrated on trapping wild birds and relocating them into areas with suitable habitat. This method is time consuming and slow but it does not break the learned behavior patterns and the birds take easily to new areas and expand their range and numbers. The state of Vermont has had outstanding success with this procedure and it stimulated interest in other neighboring states. The effect of live stocking wild birds has been most successful in New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut.

In February 1975, Connecticut received its first shipment of wild birds from New York. A total of eight young and one adult hen was received, with a second shipment of eight more young hens following a few days later. However, there were no toms in the shipment. The state of Vermont was contacted about supplying a few toms, but up to this point in time, their policy was not to ship birds across the Connecticut River except to New Hampshire. New York State officials finally captured five toms and transported them to Connecticut for release in the same area as the previous group of hens. The winter of 1975 was not harsh and survival expectations were high. Observations made during the spring and summer indicated that they had indeed survived and by the fall, estimates indicated the population had grown to forty birds.

Reports of turkey sightings were beginning to increase in 1976 especially in the towns of Colebrook, Norfolk, Canaan, Goshen, Cornwall and Torrington, all some distance from the original release site. By the fall of 1977

the population was estimated to be about 350 birds in Connecticut. Biologists from the Department of Environmental Protection began to trap turkeys for release in several other locations. Radio telemetry was used to monitor their progress. The breeding season of 1978 increased the population to an estimated 700 birds. Once again retrapping operations began and these birds were released in other prime habitat around the state, principally northeastern and northwestern Connecticut.

The wild turkey is a large bird with hens averaging 8 to 12 pounds and toms 10 to 20 pounds. Despite their weight, they are agile fliers and although fully capable of flight, they prefer to run from danger. Their keen eyesight and hearing make them extremely elusive. Few are sighted at close range and most observations are usually made from across a field or down a road.

Breeding takes place in late March and early April when toms go through the typical strutting and gobbling rituals to attract the hens. After mating, ten to twelve days are required for egg laying and an additional 28 days for incubating. After hatching, the hen and young frequent field edges and forest openings in search of insects. The polts require a high protein diet during the early months. These polts remain with the hen into the fall season. The toms have nothing to do with the young or their training and are basically loners. Groups of up to five toms of mixed ages are however seen throughout the year except for the breeding season. During late summer, the hens and young form flocks numbering as many as 25 and occasionally up to 50 birds.

Turkeys are omnivorous and it is easier to list the foods they do not eat, but included in their diet are Japanese barberry, sensitive fern, acorns, beechnuts, cherry pits, maple and ash seeds. The past few winters have not been harsh and have had little negative effect on the populations. There is no doubt that the turkey is capable of surviving in its present habitat in Connecticut.

Much can be learned about these birds from evidence left in the field. Tracks, droppings and feathers may be used to determine the sex of the birds. Their tracks, commonly seen in the snow, average 4½ inches long for females and 7 inches for males. Their drop-

SEX DIFFERENCES

Male, Tom or Gobbler – Head red with fleshy wattles beard up to 8 inches spurs on rear of leg up to 1½ inch.

Black tip on breast feathers – some iridescence

Female or Hen – head drab – without wattles normally no beard. No spurs on legs.

Buff tipped breast feathers – lack iridescence.

AGE DIFFERENCES

Immature Adult

Pointed black tip Rounded barred to tip

In the fall, differences in age can be told by the 10th primary wing feather or the last flight feather out on the wing.

Figure 1

pings also can indicate their sex as the hen droppings are curled while the tom's are generally straight. Their body feathers are another indicator of sex, with those of the tom being black tipped with some iridescence and those of the hen being buffy tipped and lacking the iridescence. (See Figure 1) Visually, the toms are dark in color with beards on their chests, spurs on their legs and red wattles on their heads. The hens are smaller, browner in color with dull blue-gray heads and lack the spurs and beards.

Determining the age of turkeys in the field can be difficult. Although the general size, length of beard, color of the feet and length of the spurs are general indicators, the bird should be observed at extremely close range or be in hand where the last two primary wing feathers will indicate age. An adult will have feathers that are barred with white to the end of the tip of the feather, while juveniles or immatures have pointed feathers that are black at the tip. (See Figure 1)

The primary goal of this stocking program carried out by the Wildlife Unit of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection is to reestablish the turkey in all of its potential range within this state. A secondary objective is to provide recreation, which is compatible with the developing population and is based on sound biological information and management techniques.

Sightings of wild turkeys are instrumental in accomplishing the goals set forth in this program. The cooperation of the public in reporting sightings to the Department of Environmental Protection will be appreciated. It is important to know where the turkeys are and in what quantities as well as how many young turkeys are observed with adult birds. Sightings should be directed to the Connecticut D.E.P., State Office Building, Hartford, CT. 06115, to the attention of Steven N. Jackson, Biologist.

The information contained in this article was compiled from a pamphlet entitled "The Connecticut Wild Turkey Program," written by Steven N. Jackson, Biologist for the Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection. We thank the D.E.P Wildlife Unit and Mr. Jackson for permission to exerpt information from that pamphlet.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CHRISTMAS COUNT SUMMARY

In this issue we present a summary of the entire Connecticut Bird Count for 1981-82. This work encompases fifteen counts, nine of them are located inland and six along the coast. A massive amount of data was accumulated and we can sympathize with the editors of *American Birds*, who publish over 1300 counts annually. Their regional editors digest many more counts than we have attempted to do here, however, the task is still awesome and anyone who would like to assist in the future will be more than welcomed!

But the data was finally compiled and we owe a great debt of gratitude to the count compilers, who promptly forwarded their results. The last count was held on January 3rd and this left only a short period of time to analyze the data and get it into a comprehensible format for our printers. Our thanks again to the compilers for their efforts and to the observers, too numerous to list, who braved the elements to perform the actual census. We have not attempted to second guess the compilers on any data or any species submitted for 1981-82, they were accepted without question. The same philosophy was applied to the 10 year summary, the data being taken from *American Birds* as printed.

Fred Sibley has searched the records and wrote a summary of the first decade of the Christmas counts – 1900 to 1909. He collaborated with Dennis Varza and Joe Zeranski to prepare the overall summary for 1981-82, and put the date in readable form. We do not intend to befuddle our readers with a pile of numbers. Hopefully, we plan to publish this same format in future years and plan to incorporate this timely information in our January issues.

CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS COUNTS 1900 to 1909 The First Decade

by Fred C. Sibley

On Christmas Day in the year 1900, George P. Ellis of Norwalk started off at 8 A.M. on an unseasonably warm day to conduct the first official Connecticut Christmas Count. Following Dr. Frank Chapman's suggestion (Bird-Lore 1900:192) of "spending a portion of Christmas Day with the birds" George braved 60 degree temperatures for several hours and before retiring for the night sent his first and last report to Bird-Lore for publication. His total of 8 Herring Gulls, 3 Crows, 11 Tree Sparrows, 18 White-breasted Nuthatches, and 5 Chickadees was typical of the early counts. Thus was launched the first of 66 counts for the decade.

This was never planned as an annual event as Dr. Chapman commented after the first count (Bird-Lore 1901:29); "At another time we hope to suggest a bird census on somewhat more exact lines. . . " but the fans wanted another like the first and got it. After the third count it was accepted as a permanent item and has continued to grow ever since. Since it was proposed as a one time affair and considered until at least the sixth count as mainly a training exercise, no one worried about rules. The count day was December 25th although many counts were made on other days and were accepted as long as they reached the editor by December 28th. The average count was 3½ hours of walking by one person. In 1909, Bird-Lore, feeling the pressure of publication costs, restricted observers to one count a year thus dropping Connecticut's contribution from 12 to 9 counts annually. Evidently the editor was plagued by the "little old lady in tennis shoes" myth and proudly points to the fact that 90 percent of the counts were made by men.

Counts varied greatly in quality and many were little more than backyard counts. Censuses were taken in seven of the present day count circles but only those in Waterbury, New Haven, and Westport went beyond the backyard and even here counts of less than 10 species and less than 100 individuals were regular.

Three censuses were made in the Hartford area. A typical one in 1907 by Albert Honywill covered two hours and tallied 10 species and 48 individuals. The only one in the Quinnipiac Valley was made in 1908 by Edward Perkins of Middletown who recorded

A hardy group of Christmas counters search for birds on a snapping cold count day. Over 1,000 observers participated in the 82nd annual event.

14 species. These included the only Brown-headed Cowbird of the decade and the only inland Herring Gull. At Washington in the Woodbury-Roxbury circle, Wilhelmina Knowles conducted four surveys between 1904 and 1908 for a total of 12 species including Pine Grosbeak.

What were the common species in these backyard counts? Black-capped Chickadee appeared on 61 counts with a high count of 72, Common Crow 60 (233), Tree Sparrow 51 (78), Blue Jay 49 (31), White-breasted Nuthatch 49 (27), Song Sparrow 47 (17), Downy Woodpecker 46 (9), Dark-eyed Junco 42 (60), American Goldfinch 37 (59), and Brown Creeper 31 (5). These nine species along with the less common Eastern Bluebird 18 (14), Golden-crowned Kinglet 21 (17) and Common Flicker 12 (5) represented over 60 percent of the sightings and 80 percent of the individuals.

In the Waterbury circle Frank Bruen, Royal Ford, and a few friends made 10 surveys in 9 years at Bristol with a high count in 1903 of 20 species and 526 individuals. Their total of 27 species in 9 years and the only sightings of Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Merlin, and Rufous-sided Towhee indicate an excellent effort.

On the coast, birds were easier to find and Frances Graves of New London compiled a total of 29 species in 6 counts. Common coastal birds were the same as for inland counts. In addition the following birds were seen regularly only on coastal counts; Starling on 29 counts with a high count of 200, Herring Gull 27 (393), Common Goldeneye 13 (125), Eastern Meadowlark 13 (29), Yellow-rumped Warbler 11 (5), Red-tailed Hawk 9 (2), Horned Lark 8 (50), Purple Finch 8 (9), and Red-shouldered Hawk 8 (2). Starlings were found only in New Haven and Norwalk at the time. One of the Waterbury counters remarked in 1909 that a pair of Starlings was wintering but was not seen on the count.

Censuses of this first decade are best compared to party efforts of today. In cases where observers took different routes although counting on the same day in the same area they were supposed to file separate reports. The New Haven group followed this rule by taking four or five censuses on the same day. The Norwalk Bird Club lumped individual censuses into one count, a course not followed by Bird-Lore until 10 years later.

At New Haven, A.A. Saunders, who started off in 1901 with 10 species and 29 individuals, was joined by Clifford and Dwight Pangburn and A. Honywill (see Hartford) for a combined count of 15 species, 10 party hours, and 193 individuals but only one Starling. The best count this crew put together was 40 species in 1907. Not remarkable? There were only 41 species recorded in all 12 counts that year. Of 75 species recorded in the decade 56 were seen in New Haven.

While New Haven conducted about half of the 66 censuses of the decade the Norwalk group, headed by Wilbur Smith, was carrying out club censuses in direct violation of count rules. The club's efforts regularly produced 20 species and in 1908 tallied 32 species and 626 individuals including Hungarian Partridge, Pied-billed Grebe, Red-headed Woodpecker, and a "Titlark". If you can't identify that one try the "Snowflake" they saw four years earlier.

Censuses covering a few hours and taken by one person on foot are hardly comparable to a 1980 count of 10 hours involving 100 observers in cars. However, as Dr. Chapman stated (Bird-Lore 1911:18); "How eagerly we of today would scan a similar census made during the time of Audubon!" We in like manner should be grateful for these census takers of 70 years ago. How do the ten years from 1971-80 compare?

The first reaction is to dismiss the counts as trash. In an hour of jogging on December 19th, I recorded 15 species and 160 individuals, a census that exceeded the majority of those in the 1900's. The totals of individuals are preposterously low. Three Robins as a high count? However, Dr. Chapman again comes forward and states; "Few species escape the man who knows his ground . . " The people of the time did not feel the counts were low and there were some good birders making the counts. If we accept the counts we then accept some major changes in 70 years.

Of 60 species seen on almost every coastal count in the last ten years 19 were never seen in the first decade. Tufted Titmouse, Mockingbird, and Cardinal are southern birds that had not reached Connecticut. Mute Swan and House Finch had not yet been introduced and Great Cormorant had not spread south. The absence of Mourning Dove, American

Wigeon, Canvasback, Common Merganser, American Coot, Killdeer, and Dunlin can perhaps be blamed on weak game laws of the time and the hunting of shorebirds. Mallard and Canada Goose had arrived as resident birds since 1900 and would not have been expected with or without hunting. All blackbirds were rare so the absence of Common Grackle fits the pattern. In fact, in 1919, Red-winged Blackbird in New Haven was one of only three records in the Northeast. Gulls were rare and Ring-billed Gull required supporting details when sighted in the 1920's in Fairfield. Great Horned Owl and Gray Catbird are the last two species seen regularly today and missed then. Your guess is as good as mine on these two.

To look at it from the other direction the commonest birds of the 1900's are the commonest birds of today. Among the others only Eastern Bluebird, Eastern Meadowlark, and Northern Shrike are less common today.

What about the difference between the 75 species of the 1900's and the 224 of the 1970's? This could be attributed to more observers, better observers, better guides and field glasses, and a lot of extra effort. All the 69 species seen fewer than 10 times in the 70's fall in this category – none were seen in the first decade. Many of the water birds represented problems in identification. Red-throated and Common Loon were considered unidentifiable in winter plumage. In the 1900's there were 24 species recorded from loons through guillemot. In the 1970's there were 89 species including 8 herons, 27 ducks, 9 hawks, 5 rails, 18 shorebirds and 9 gulls not seen in the earlier decade.

In addition to the 19 common species not seen in the 1900's there are about 30 other regularly seen species that were not recorded on the censuses of the 1900's. Many of these 50 species and at least a third of the 75 species recorded in the 1900's have increased dramatically in numbers (blackbirds, White-throated Sparrow, and Herring Gull being a few examples). There has been no corresponding decline in numbers except for the Bluebird, Meadowlark, and Northern Shrike mentioned earlier and no loss of species. The comparison between the two decades shows a major improvement of winter bird populations in Connecticut over the last 70 years.

Peabody Museum, Yale University, New Haven, CT 06520

THE 1981-82 CHRISTMAS COUNT

by Fred C. Sibley, Dennis Varza, Joseph Zeranski

The 1981-82 C.B.C. is now history. Over 1,000 observers participated in 15 counts and had one or more enjoyable and educational days chasing birds. After foolishly agreeing to do an analysis of the 1981-82 count, we found that spending a day with the birds and other birders was the most significant feature of the Christmas counts. Undaunted by this we went ahead and compared the last decade's results with this year's count and derived a mass of figures and statistics, too many in fact to cram into the pages of the *Connecticut Warbler*. The following article summarizes only the high points.

Is 100 species a "good" count? Is Redpoll a significant bird? We'll attempt to improve your expertise in interpreting the Christmas count figures.

There are 15 counts in the state and have been for the whole decade. The Waterbury count expired the same year as the Salmon River count sprang to life from the east bank of the Connecticut River. Inland counts, nine, record fewer birds than the six coastal counts and the two groups are normally treated separately when reviewing the counts.

What is a "good" species count? For coastal counts, New Haven has had the highest count every year since 1974 with a record 138 species in 1980 and 125 this year. The rest range from 112 to 124 species. Inland counts have been dominated by Hartford with a record 85 species last year. The other eight counts go from 57 to 84 species. Individual counts are limited by topography and numbers of observers so the differences in high counts do not reflect differences in potential directly.

What are the potentials for a maximum high count? There have been 226 species recorded in the last 11 years and 161 of these were seen in 1981. This includes 62 species seen on almost every coastal count and 59 seen on 50 to 90 percent of the coastal counts. This basic list of common and fairly common species totals 121, so any larger list

has to incorporate some of the 33 uncommon species and 72 rarities. Inland counts are faced with a smaller choice so a comparison of counts should add 30-40 species to inland counts.

What was the rarest bird in 1981-82 and in the decade? Wood Thrush certainly tops the 16 rarities seen this year. The one found "on its last legs" at Woodbury is the first since 1964 (New London). Brewer's Blackbird (Quinnipiac Valley) has not been reported since 1969 (Hartford and Westport) but has been expected since the species is extending its range east. For the decade there are 25 other species that have been seen only once ranging from Prothonotary Warbler to Razor-billed Auk. Some of the 1981 rarities appear regularly but only on one count: King Rail (Old Lyme), Lesser Black-backed Gull (Greenwich), Savannah (Ipswich) Sparrow and King Eider (Stratford), and European Wigeon (New London). This year European Wigeon also showed up at New Haven, Stratford, and Westport. The Harris' Sparrow, Orange-crowned Warbler, Pine Warbler, Dowitcher and Green Heron are listed under individual counts.

What are some of the unusual misses? Laughing Gull, Eastern Phoebe, Northern Oriole, American Bittern, House Wren, and Northern Shrike are usually found on at least one count, but were absent this year from all counts.

What are the common species? Using the five year averages there are eight species recorded with over 10,000 individuals seen annually. Starling heads the list with 200,000 individuals followed by Herring Gull, Common Grackle, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Crow, Canada Goose, Mallard, and Greater Scaup. In 1981, Red-winged Blackbird and Common Grackle were represented by an incredibly low 900 and 400 birds respectively, and three additional species made the 10,000 list (House Sparrow, Black-capped Chickadee, and Ring-billed Gull). The total for 1981 for these nine species is 360,000 or 72 percent of the birds seen. The introduced species (Starling, House Sparrow, Rock Dove, House Finch, and Ring-necked Pheasant) make up almost 50 percent of the birds seen on the Christmas counts.

What are the differences between coastal and inland counts? Aside from the 30-40 species differential in counts there are numerous differences in abundance. Few species are equally common in both areas and persons interested in this aspect of winter distribution should compare the Westport and Hartford counts (areas with about equal numbers of party hours).

What are some of the significant changes in population? Since count circles are too large for all birds to be found, the number of birds seen is determined by the number of hours afield. Fortunately the number of party hours has increased very slightly over the decade and an initial comparison of raw numbers indicates trends. We have selected "southern species", hawks, shorebirds, Canada Goose, and Bluebird as examples of trends.

SOUTHERN SPECIES: Mockingbirds have increased four fold in the decade, Cardinals have doubled their numbers, and Tufted Titmouse has shown a 15 percent increase. The Mockingbird is still increasing at a rapid rate and all three of these southern species show a slower rate of increase at inland counts. An uncommon southern species, the Red-bellied Woodpecker, quadrupled in numbers along the coast and has gone from zero individuals inland in 1971 to 17 this year. The Carolina Wren has been reported on censuses since 1901 with good years and bad. The last five years have been exceptionally good with a doubling of numbers in coastal areas and an increasing number of inland reports.

HAWKS: This group is always of interest and has done remarkably well. Turkey Vultures have increased dramatically from one per year in the first half of the decade to 22 per year in the last half. The three accipiter species have doubled in numbers. The Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawk tripled in numbers although the Red-shouldered Hawk just held its own after a sharp drop in the mid-70's. Bald Eagles have doubled in numbers while falcons have shown no real change over the decade. Northern Harriers have increased only in the last few years but the jump has been dramatic and is consistent with hawk watch data. Likewise, the sighting of 3 Ospreys in 1979, 3 in 1980, and 3 this year may not seem grounds for optimism but there were only 3 sightings from 1971 to 1978.

SHOREBIRDS: There has been a steady increase in the numbers of wintering shore-

birds during the decade. This year was exceptional for Dunlin, Ruddy Turnstone, and Sanderling with new highs recorded for each species. Sanderlings have also started to show up outside the Stratford count and we expect an increasing number of rarer shorebirds in other areas if this trend continues.

CANADA GOOSE: This species continues to increase steadily and during the decade surpassed the Mallard and Black Duck as the most common waterfowl on the Christmas counts. Most duck numbers stayed about the same and Mute Swan numbers leveled off in 1976 after a spectacular increase in the preceeding 10 years.

BLUEBIRD: There is some sort of success story here. The 1981-82 count was the highest ever following a 1980 count that exceeded all previous counts. Every count in the middle of the state recorded new highs although most northern counts recorded unusually low numbers and the species remains rare along the coast except at Greenwich.

MISCELLANEOUS: Blue Jays were unusually abundant inland with the Storrs count recording a new state high of 2,173, well above the previous high of 1500 at Greenwich. All the coastal counts had unusually low numbers of this species.

Boreal Chickadees were almost abundant (10) at the Smith-Richardson Sanctuary on the Westport count. This area has produced the birds for several years while the species has been absent on other counts.

Short-eared Owls were at an all time high. Greenwich has a phenomenal 4,188 Brant (previous high 500), and a state high 57 for Wood Ducks. New Haven counters stirred out 4 Yellow-breasted Chats (previous high 2). This was an exeptionally good flight year for Snow Bunting and Horned Lark. The 674 Horned Larks at Greenwich (previous high 4) and the 282 Snow Buntings at Woodbury (previous high 7) are obviously exceptional even without statistical treatment.

How does this count compare to the 1900's? The 12 commonest birds in the first decade comprise 27 percent of the individuals seen on this years' counts or the same percentage contributed by the 19 species common today and not seen in the 1900's. All 75 species seen in the earlier decade make up less than 75 percent of this years total. In both cases we have eliminated the 200,000 Starlings from our calculations.

How does the 1981-82 census compare to the 1971-1980 censuses? Below average fits best. The highest count of 125 species, the total state count of 161 species, 16 rarities, 23 new state highs, 197 new count highs, and 41 new count species are average or below. The 1,009 participants was a new record as was the average coastal count of 115 species. Storrs (67), Hidden Valley (70), and Greenwich (115) all recorded new species highs for their counts while Salmon River and Oxford tied their previous highs.

The following paragraphs list each of the fifteen counts and summarize the notable birds recorded and birds observed during the count period. The "noteworthy" species are those recorded three or less times in the past ten years and are listed for each count. Bold faced species are new to that count. "Large numbers" refers to new high counts that are significantly higher than previous counts. The number appearing after the count name is the total number of species recorded since 1971.

COUNT CIRCLE SUMMARY

UPLAND COUNTS

STORRS: (113): Natchaug Ornithological Society; Compiler: Shirley Davis. 34 observers; 67 species plus 4 in count period. Noteworthy: Great Blue Heron, Green-winged Teal, American Wigeon, **Hooded Merganser, Cooper's Hawk,** Screech Owl, Long-eared Owl, **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker,** Water Pipit, and a **white-winged gull species.** Large Numbers: Great-horned Owl, Blue Jay, Tufted Titmouse, Gray Catbird, Pine Grosbeak, Red Crossbill. Count period: **White-crowned Sparrow, Short-eared Owl.**

HARTFORD: (131): Hartford Audubon Society. Compilers: Steve Davis and Jay Kaplan. 132 observers; 81 species plus 3 in count period. Noteworthy: **American Wigeon,** Goshawk, Marsh Hawk, Glaucous Gull, Long-eared Owl, Short-eared Owl, **Yellow-breasted Chat.** Large Numbers: Red-tailed Hawk, Great Black-backed Gull, Common Crow, Red-breasted Nuthatch. Count period: **Bobwhite.**

LITCHFIELD HILLS: (104): Litchfield Hills Audubon Society. Compiler: Ray Belding. 44 observers; 52 species plus 1 in count period. Noteworthy: Turkey Vulture, Rough-legged Hawk, Marsh Hawk. Large Numbers: Black-capped Chickadee, House Sparrow, Rusty Blackbird, Common Redpoll, Snow Bunting.

LAKEVILLE-SHARON: (135): Housatonic and Sharon Audubon Societies. Compiler: Bob Moeller. 70 observers; 71 species plus 1 in count period. Noteworthy: Wood Duck, Hooded Merganser, Saw-whet Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Brown Thrasher, White-winged Crossbill, Field Sparrow, **Harris' Sparrow**. Large Numbers: Turkey, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, House Sparrow, Common Redpoll, Snow Bunting. Count period: Bald Eagle.

MIDLAND COUNTS

SALMON RIVER: (98): Mattabeseek Audubon Society. Compiler: Jim Mockalis. 22 observers; 74 species plus 1 in count period. Noteworthy: Great Blue Heron, Common Goldeneye, **Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk**, Red-shouldered Hawk, Rusty Blackbird, Pine Grosbeak, Common Redpoll, White-winged Crossbill, **Savannah Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow,** Lapland Longspur. Large Numbers: Tree Sparrow. Count Period: Bald Eagle.

QUINNIPIAC VALLEY: (111). Compiler: Wilford Schultz. 20 observers; 69 species. Noteworthy: Red-bellied Woodpecker, Winter Wren, Brown Thrasher, **Water Pipit, Brewer's Blackbird, Rose-breasted Grosbeak,** Savannah Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow. Large Numbers: Eastern Bluebird, Tree Sparrow.

OXFORD: (102): Naugatuck Valley Audubon Society. Compilers: Rod Hudson and Buzz Devine. 24 observers; 57 species. Noteworthy: Great Blue Heron, **Mute Swan,** American Wigeon, Common Goldeneye, Red-shouldered Hawk, Barred Owl, **Pine Grosbeak,** Pine Siskin. Large Numbers: Ring-billed Gull, Common Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Eastern Bluebird, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Evening Grosbeak.

WOODBURY-ROXBURY: (112). Compiler: Buck Jenks. 54 observers; 74 species. Noteworthy: Mute Swan, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Red-shouldered Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Saw-whet Owl, **Wood Thrush, Yellowthroat,** Pine Grosbeak. Large Numbers: Common Merganser, Ring-billed Gull, Horned Lark, Tree Sparrow, Snow Bunting.

HIDDEN VALLEY: (115). Compiler: Jim Hammer. 22 observers; 68 species plus 2 in count period. Noteworthy: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, **Bald Eagle, Barn Owl,** Long-eared Owl, **Red-bellied Woodpecker,** Horned Lark, Rusty Blackbird, Pine Grosbeak, Snow Bunting. Large Numbers: Canada Goose, Great Black-backed Gull, Mourning Dove, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Mockingbird, Eastern Bluebird, Tree Sparrow.

COASTAL COUNTS

NEW LONDON: (156): Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center. Compiler: Bob Dewire. 29 observers; 110 species plus 1 in count period. Noteworthy: **Green Heron,** European Wigeon, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, **Goshawk,** Long-eared Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Cedar Waxwing. Large Numbers: Marsh Hawk, Great Black-backed Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Short-eared Owl, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

OLD LYME-SAYBROOK: (162): Potapaug Audubon Society. Compiler: Jay Hand. 58 observers; 118 species plus 2 in count period. Noteworthy: **Double-crested Cormorant,** Brant, Goshawk, Cooper's Hawk, **Osprey, Glaucous Gull,** Short-eared Owl, Common Redpoll, **Savannah (Ipswich) Sparrow,** White-crowned Sparrow. Large Numbers: Canada Goose, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Pine Siskin. Count Period: **Pine Warbler**, Peregrine Falcon.

NEW HAVEN: (185): New Haven Bird Club. Compilers: Fred King and Fred Sibley. 94 observers; 125 species plus 1 in count period. Noteworthy: **European Wigeon, Turkey Vulture, Osprey,** Ruddy Turnstone, Glaucous Gull, Short-eared Owl, White-winged Crossbill, Chipping Sparrow. Large Numbers: Great Cormorant, Lesser Scaup, Horned Lark, Savannah Sparrow.

STRATFORD-MILFORD: (177): Connecticut Audubon Society. Compiler: Dennis Varza. 42 observers; 109 species plus 3 in count period. Noteworthy: **Green Heron, European Wigeon,** Wood Duck, King Eider, Sharp-shinned Hawk, **Iceland Gull,** Barred

Owl, Saw-whet Owl, **Red-bellied Woodpecker,** Orange-crowned Warbler, Palm Warbler, Seaside Sparrow, **Dowitcher** species. Large Numbers: Gadwall, American Wigeon, Greater Scaup, Red-breasted Merganser, Dunlin, Sanderling, Bonaparte's Gull, Short-eared Owl, Common Crow, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren. Count period: Redhead.

WESTPORT: (164): Saugatuck Valley Audubon Society. Compiler: Frank Mantlik. 129 observers; 110 species plus 5 in count period. Noteworthy: **European Wigeon,** Ruddy Duck, Rough-legged Hawk, Osprey, Long-eared Owl, Boreal Chickadee, **Orange-crowned Warbler,** Palm Warbler, Common Redpoll. Large Numbers: Dunlin, Great Blackbacked Gull, Ring-billed Gull. Count period: **Turkey.**

GREENWICH-STAMFORD: (168): Greenwich Audubon Society. Compilers: Tom Baptist, Joe Zeranski, Alice Smith. 235 observers; 115 species plus 1 in count period. Noteworthy: Lesser Scaup, Turkey Vulture, Rough-legged Hawk, Bobwhite, Sora Rail, **Red-headed Woodpecker,** Lesser Blackbacked Gull, Water Pipit, **Pine Warbler, Pine Grosbeak,** Red Crossbill, White-winged Crossbill, **Savannah (Ipswich) Sparrow,** Chipping Sparrow, Lapland Longspur. Large Numbers: Brant, Wood Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Horned Lark, Eastern Bluebird, Snow Bunting. Count period: Merlin.

Screech Owl Preying on a Common Grackle

by

Arnold Devine, Debbie Devine and Audrey Gendron

Bent (1938) and Hekstra (1973) noted that the Screech Owl (*Otus asio*) is one of the most strictly nocturnal owls in North America. On June 7, 1978, a bright sunny day in Naugatuck, New Haven County, Connecticut, we heard the begging call of a young Screech Owl from a woodlot in which a Screech Owl family frequently roosted. After approximately 10 minutes the begging call stopped.

At 1230 hours an adult and an immature owl were observed in a large Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*) 7.2 meters distant from their nest box. Afterwards (1350 hours) we again found the young owl about 4.9 meters high in the same tree. On the branch with the fledgling was an adult and between both birds a decapitated Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*). A third Screech Owl, another immature, was on the opposite side of the adult. The adult stopped plucking the grackle and would not resume in our presence. After taking three photographs we departed. We returned 1.5 hours later to find only a few grackle feathers directly below the branch. The fledgling owls remained in their previous positions while the adult had moved higher up in the tree.

Two occurrences of Screech Owls hunting during the day have been reported. In Concord, Massachusetts, Brewster (1936) observed a Screech Owl carrying a nestling American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) to its nesting cavity at 0930 hours on 26 May 1916. Spendelow (1979) found a dead male and a live female Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) with a Screech Owl in a mist net at 0800 hours on May 28, 1978 in Chappaqua, New York, and concluded that the owl apparently was attracted by the sight or sound of the captured tanagers.

These observations of daylight hunting behavior of the Screech Owl occurred during its nesting season and especially in the period when the young are about to or have recently fledged. Apparently, the demands of the hungry immature owls prompted the adults to hunt at such abnormal hours for this normally nocturnal species.

Screech Owl (Otus asio) by C.J. Trichka

HAWK WATCH 1981

by Carl Trichka

Dedication . . . the only word to describe the corps of volunteers who man the hawk watch sites across the country. Their vigils, sometimes during days when the weather conditions could only be described as brutal, have provided a wealth of information on hawk migration. New England has set the pace for the rest of the country for many years. Lighthouse Point became the first daily manned site in Connecticut and now Larsen Sanctuary in Fairfield has become the second. This site is approximately 5 miles inland from the shore, yet the data from both points are very similar, except for the soaring hawks.

Arne Rosengren has assembled a staff at Lighthouse Point that provides daily coverage and expanded it this past season to extend the hours of observation during peak flights to 10 hours per day. The coverage at Larsen Sanctuary is the sole work of one individual—Joe Wall—with the exception of a few volunteers who assisted during the Broad-winged Hawk peak periods. The data generated from Larsen were exceptional. Hopefully, more volunteers can be recruited for this site.

LARSEN SANCTUARY

Larsen Sanctuary was manned for 77 days out of a 91 day period beginning September 1st and ending November 30. There were 10 days of rain during that period. Total hours of observation were 347, resulting in an average of 48.2 hawks per hour for the season. This is a significant increase over last year and, as would be expected, every species total was exceeded. The seasonal count of Ospreys was encouraging and reflects the general opinion that this species is increasing and thus recovering from the contamination it suffered earlier. The ratio of Sharp-shinned Hawk to Cooper's Hawk was 52:1.

The following is a summation of the 1981 season from September to November at Larsen Sanctuary.

GOSHAWK	25
SHARP-SHINNED	3893
COOPER'S	75
RED-TAILED	724
RED-SHOULDERED	136
BROAD-WINGED	9516
ROUGH-LEGGED	2
BALD EAGLE	4
NO. HARRIER	165
OSPREY	845
PEREGRINE	8
MERLIN	10
AM. KESTREL	1038
UNIDENTIFIED	126
TOTAL	16567

LIGHTHOUSE POINT

Arne Rosengren reports that new highs were recorded for the total number of hawks counted as well as totals for Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, and Broad-winged Hawk, Northern Harrier, Osprey, Peregrine, Merlin and American Kestrel. Coverage between September 3rd and October 10th was expanded to 10 hours per day. The watch was conducted for a total of 68 days, logging a total of 562 hours, and resulting in an average of 51.5 hawks per hour. The ratio of Sharp-shinned to Cooper's was 37:1.

A special thanks to Ed Shove, Brian Wheeler, Sal Masotta, Tony Totora, Richard English, Ray Schwartz and the many others who contributed so many hours. Financial support to the hawk watch group was provided by the New Haven Bird Club.

The following is a summation of the 1981 season from September to November at Lighthouse Point.

GOSHAWK	13
SHARP-SHINNED	13973
COOPER'S	381
RED-TAILED	103
RED-SHOULDERED	12
BROAD-WINGED	5017
ROUGH-LEGGED	3
BALD EAGLE	3
NO. HARRIER	706
OSPREY	1070
PEREGRINE	24
MERLIN	356
AM. KESTREL	7220
UNIDENTIFIED	104
TOTAL	28941

NOTES & NEWS

ADDENDUM

In the October 1981 issue, we published an article concerning a new nesting species for the state, the American Oystercatcher.

The history of this species attempting to nest or nesting in Connecticut goes back to 1976 when a nest attempt was made on an island off the New London coast. The attempt was futile. In 1979, a pair nested on a sand bar off the Stonington coast and one egg was seen. It was eaten by gulls. The first confirmed nesting was observed on Menunketesuck Island off Westbrook in 1980 when four observers recorded a pair with one young bird (pers, comm. N.S. Proctor). No photographs were taken at that time. The June, 1981 sighting, therefore, is the second confirmed nesting record for this species in Connecticut. It should also be pointed out that the previous nesting attempts and the latter confirmed nestings occurred on coastal islands and not the mainland of Connecticut.

Common Tern Color-Marking by the Canadian Wildlife Service

During 1981, Dr. Hans Blokpoel of the Canadian Wildlife Service, color-marked Common Terns at two large colonies in the Great Lakes area with the objective of determining the year-round distribution of the birds, especially their migration routes and wintering areas in Latin America. Adult terns were trapped on their nests at the Eastern Headland of the Toronto Outer Harbour (Lake Ontario) and at Tower Island (Niagara River). Orange plastic tags were attached to both wings of the trapped adult birds. In addition, young Common Terns were marked with pink plastic wing tags at those colonies. One standard metal leg band and one colored plastic leg band (yellow with a black horizontal stripe) were put on each of the tagged birds.

If you see a Common Tern with a pink or orange wing tag please record the following details: place, date and color of the tag. If possible, also record the combination of numbers and/or letters on the tag (the two tags on any bird have the same color and the same combination of letters and numbers) and note which legs the plastic and metal leg bands are on. All reports will be acknowledged and should be sent to:

Bird Banding Office
Canadian Wildlife Service
Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA
K1A OE7

STRICTLY FOR THE BIRDS

Bird watching, or birding, is a colorful and rewarding experience for those of us who are agile enough to strike out into the fields and woods in search of birdlife. There are those who are also content to watch birds through the kitchen window at a feeding station and share similar rewards. In fact, it is well known that more than one rare bird has shown up at someone's feeder, much to the delight of the birding community. But there are also those of us who are not as agile and cannot go off to field and wood to view birds.

With this thought in mind, Agnes S. Lucas, program Director at Golden Heights Manor in Bridgeport, CT reports that a program has been initiated among their patients entitled "Strictly for the Birds." With the guidance of the therapeutic recreation department at the manor, the patients will be engaged in making bird feeders as part of a Christmas Project. The materials to be used will consist mainly of tin cans and pie plates and lots of imagination. It is not intended to rival the commercially built feeders we are acquainted with but to apply creative imagination among the patients.

It is hoped that authorization can be received from the parks department to install some of the feeders in the city parks with the thought that some of the patients may be able to make a field trip to the feeders to see the fruits of their labor. Who knows, maybe the next Wheatear or Black-headed Grosbeak will have the good sense to visit one of these feeders.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology

Volume II Number 2 April 1982 Pages 14 – 26

The Connecticut Warbler is published in January, April, July and October. Subscription is $6.00 per year, based on the calendar year. Individual issues may be purchased for $1.50 each, when available.

The editors invite the submission of articles, notes, black and white photographs and line drawings for use in The Connecticut Warbler. Manuscripts should be typewritten, double-spaced and on one side of the sheet only, with ample margins. The editors must reserve judgement as to how much of this material to use and return postage should be provided if materials are to be returned.

EDITORIAL

Having birded in Connecticut for over twenty years, I have had both pleasure and disappointment in seeing many changes in Connecticut birding habitat. The arrival of the Cardinal, Tufted Titmouse and Mockingbird, the discovery of Glossy Ibis in the early 1960's or the return of nesting Acadian Flycatcher in the state are exciting events to be a part of. However, the loss of the Eastern Bluebird along the coast and the exploding populations of Mute Swan at the southeast section of the state are less pleasant events that I have witnessed, but somehow are becoming part of an ever changing picture.

The most disturbing observation however, has been the decrease in the number of quality birding areas that were considered "hot spots", but now have been developed or drastically changed. Some of these changes we have had little control over. The loss of Red Pine stands along the coast removed some excellent habitat that were the favored locations of winter concentrations of owls, kinglets, nuthatches and others. The areas at Rocky Neck State Park and around the entrance to Hammonassett State Park, as well as several reservoirs, lost prime habitat when the pines died out. Other areas have been directly altered by man and often without warning, vis., the superb shorebird areas in the Lordship Marshes and the cedars and the pond at Hammonassett Park.

Barn Island in Stonington has undergone a slower change, brought about by the rapid expansion of phragmites into the cattail marshes and poor water flow through the impoundments, particularly the third impoundment. This area previously attracted large shorebird concentrations on the mud flats at low tide. The third impoundment now remains flooded and is virtually birdless during the fall. Barn Island has greatly changed in the past ten to fifteen years and the number of birds, let alone the variety, simply are not present anymore due to the encroaching phragmites growth.

I am sure that birders across the state can think of similar areas that they know well which have suffered similar fates either through outright destruction or a more subtle change. In many cases it may be possible to prevent these occurrances from taking place. Up to date data of the changes in an area is a big step in showing its worth if there are plans to develop or change it. Data such as will be gathered by the Breeding Bird Atlas will be an invaluable tool to those responsible for wildlife management plans for these areas. The lack of funds may be a stumbling block in many cases but there are ways to circumvent this problem. Again, the keeping of records of sightings or ornithological events in any area can be very important when one considers that sooner or later that habitat may eventually change, either by man or by natural selection.

In any case, if there are birders who know of impending development to any area known for its ornithological value, their concerns should be made statewide. Often birders not living near a particular area may nevertheless have valuable information that can help in the preservation of that habitat. By informing people across the state, their concerns can be coordinated by a growing number of people who can help protect those areas so that they remain viable and continue to be enjoyed by all who visit them.

Robert C. Dewire
Guest Editor
Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center

EFFECTS OF "SUB-URBANIZATION" ON BIRD POPULATIONS

by Gregory S. Butcher

In 1953, Dr. Richard Goodwin and Dr. William Niering began censusing the breeding birds of the 73 acre southern portion of the Bolleswood Natural Area of the Connecticut Arboretum in New London. They used the Williams' Spot-Map Method (1936), which is still used in the censuses published annually in *American Birds*. The primary objective was to correlate changes in bird populations with changes in vegetation. Vegetation transects were established in 1952 and have been surveyed at ten year intervals.

A total of eleven bird censuses were completed between 1953 and 1976 (Robert C. Dewire made four of these). I performed the 1976 census and analyzed the results of all the censuses with the help of Drs. Niering, Goodwin and William Barry. To our surprise, many of the changes in bird populations were not correlated with vegetation changes, but apparently occurred because of habitat destruction and suburban development surrounding the study site. Our conclusions were published in 1981 in *Oecologia* (49:29-37), an international journal, in an article entitled "Equilibrium Biogeography and the Size of Nature Preserves: An Avian Case Study".

For our purposes, the study site was divided into two sections. The Old-Field Area was originally 50% open fields and 50% open shrubs in 1953, but now is 75% young oak forest. The Forest Area was completely forested in 1953 and was still recovering from the 1938 hurricane that blew over most of the area's mature hemlocks. The mixed hardwood forest now contains more hemlock, larger trees and fewer shrubs than it did in 1953.

In the Old-Field Area, breeding bird changes correlated well with vegetation changes. Seven of the nine species that prefer open shrub habitats declined or disappeared between 1953 and 1976: Ring-necked Pheasant, Prairie Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, American Goldfinch, Field Sparrow and Song Sparrow. In their place, six new species colonized the site, all birds which prefer forest habitats: Black-capped Chickadee, Veery, Red-eyed Vireo, Black and White Warbler, American Redstart and Scarlet Tanager. As expected, as the Old-Field site changed from a shrubland to forest, the shrubland birds were replaced with forest birds.

Eastern Wood Pewee

In the Forest Area, we expected more birds that prefer mature forests and mixed hardwood-coniferous forests to nest. However, the trend was nearly the opposite. Only two mature forest species colonized the site between 1953 and 1976 – Great-creasted Flycatcher and Tufted Titmouse – and five mature forest species disappeared – Ruffed Grouse, Eastern Wood Pewee, Black-throated Green Warbler, Canada Warbler and American Redstart. In addition, four species that prefer young forests colonized the site or increased in numbers during the census – House Wren, American Robin, Northern Oriole and Cardinal.

We concluded that birds which specialize in breeding in forest interiors were declining on the site and that birds which were successful breeders in suburban areas were increasing. The five suburban breeders who colonized the site between 1953 and 1976 were Great-creasted Flycatcher, Tufted Titmouse, American Robin, Northern Oriole and Cardinal.

Mature forest species are usually forest interior specialists. These species are unable to maintain breeding populations in small, isolated patches of forest. Our study site was

becoming increasingly isolated from other forests because of surrounding development. Thus, the populations of forest interior specialists droped from 66% of the breeding pairs in 1953 and 1955 to 38% of the population in 1976.

We documented the extensive development surrounding the study site between 1953 and 1976. To the north, Gallows Lane was improved and subjected to increasingly heavy traffic; a water main was installed along the road, and a water storage tank and pumping station were erected adjacent to the border of the study site. Eight buildings were constructed on the Connecticut College campus, 300 meters to the east, during the study period and five homes were built on Bloomingdale Road at the site's immediate western border. The most extensive development occurred to the south, where two shopping centers, apartment complexes, and a highway interchange with connecting roads were constructed. Some of the construction involved extensive blasting over a prolonged period. In addition to destroying some forest habitat and isolating the study site from similar habitat, development reduced the buffer area of low density human use and created disturbances such as noise, night lighting, pets and other impacts related to human occupancy.

Similar results have been reported by Dr. Robert Whitcomb and co-workers on a number of sites in the Baltimore-Washington, D.C. area. They found, as we did, that migratory warblers and vireos are especially prone to local extirpation in small patches of

FOREST AREA BREEDERS

NO. OF BREEDING PAIRS IN 57 ACRES

SPECIES	1953 & 1955	1973 & 1976	
STEADY POPULATION			
Blue Jay	3	9	
Black-capped Chickadee	5	9	
Gray Catbird	17	19.5	
Brown Thrasher	5	4	
Wood Thrush	17	12	
Veery	15	19	
Black and White Warbler	24	11	
Ovenbird	22	16	
Common Yellowthroat	7	3	
Scarlet Tanager	9	8	
Rufous-sided Towhee	16	17	
DECLINING POPULATION			
Red-eyed Vireo	44	6	
Hooded Warbler	18	1.5	
EXTIRPATED POPULATION			
Ruffed Grouse	2	1	(1973 only)
Common Flicker	3	2.5	(1973 only)
Eastern Wood Pewee	4	0	
Black-throated Green Warbler	3	0	
Canada Warbler	9	0	
American Redstart	6	0	
RECENT COLONIZATION			
Great-creasted Flycatcher	0	8	
Tufted Titmouse	0	5	
American Robin	0	2	
Red-winged Blackbird	0	5	
Northern Oriole	0	6.5	
Cardinal	0	2.5	
INCREASING POPULATION			
House Wren	2	13.5	

forest. These species may also be affected by habitat destruction and pesticide use in the West Indies and Latin America, where they winter.

The message of this study is that birders in Connecticut must recognize the importance of preserving large, continuous tracts of mature forest habitat and become involved in protecting them. Gordon Loery's editorial in the January issue of the *Connecticut Warbler* reminded us that "quantitative data can play an important role in increasing our awareness of the changes going on around us all the time, even in protected natural areas." You can make a valuable contribution by participating in census efforts such as those appearing in *American Birds*, the Breeding Bird Survey of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the recently launched Connecticut Breeding Bird Atlas Project.

Gregory S. Butcher graduated from Connecticut College, New London, CT in 1977 with a B.A. degree in Zoology. He is presently completing his doctoral research at the University of Washington in Seattle on the coloration and behavior of orioles.

BIRDING AT GREENWICH POINT PARK

by Thomas R. Baptist

One of the better known places in southern Fairfield County for birdwatching is Greenwich Point Park in Greenwich. To get to the park, get off the Connecticut Turnpike at Exit 5 and go east on U.S. 1 to the first light (Sound Beach Ave.). Turn right onto Sound Beach Avenue and go south 1.8 miles through the village of Old Greenwich to its end at Shore Road. Bear right onto Shore Road and follow it 0.8 miles to its end at the entrance of the park. Greenwich Point is a municipal park open only to the residents of Greenwich from Memorial Day to Labor Day, but the general public is admitted the remaining portion of the year. A call to the Greenwich Parks Department (622-7814) is advised to check if resident passes are being checked at the entrance booth. It may be helpful to have a friend in Greenwich whose pass may be borrowed.

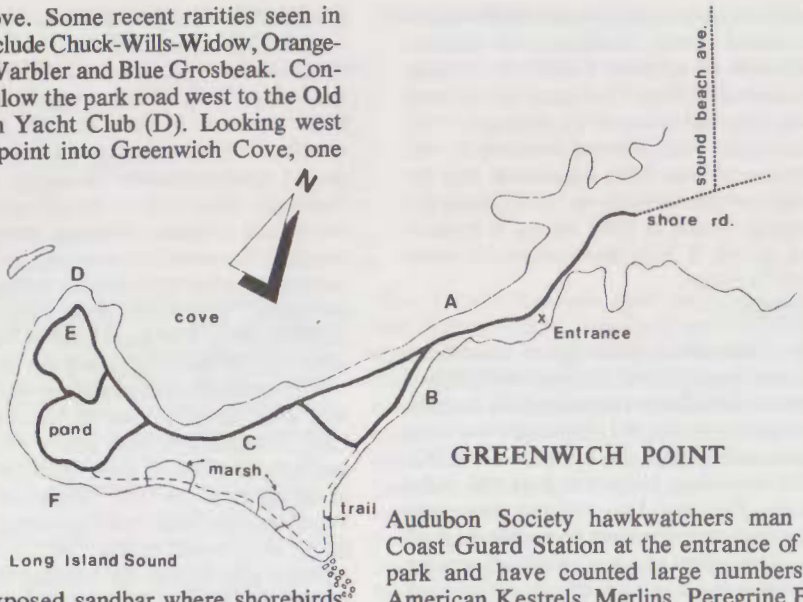
Greenwich Point was an island in the Long Island Sound before a causeway was constructed about 1880, connecting it to the mainland. The Point was first used by settlers as farmland and later in the 19th century as an estate for a wealthy Nutmegger. In the early 1900's, the Point was a private golf club open only to members. The entire 149 acres was purchased by the Town of Greenwich in 1945 and has been a park since.

Greenwich Point features a number of different habitats ranging from sandy beach to salt marshes to upland forest. Much of the upland vegetation is relatively recent second-growth deciduous hardwoods, but the activities of various garden clubs and the Greenwich Parks Department have effectively diversified the upland areas which now appeal to a variety of birdlife.

Upon entering the park, scan both the east and west sides of the Causeway (A) for gulls, shorebirds and ducks. Species such as Wilson's Plover, King Eider, Cattle Egret and Whistling Swan have been seen from this location, albeit rarely. The sandy beach area (B) along the eastern portion of the park deserves careful scrutiny, for many gulls congregate here, particularly at low tide. In the winter months, an occasional white-winged gull can be found here. A Lesser Black-backed Gull has spent the last four winters on this beach – certainly one of the most predictable of its species in North America!

Following the parkroad past the beach area, one comes to the Holly Grove (C) on the left side of the paved road. Pull off into the parking area and quietly walk through the dense thickets and evergreens looking for owls. Great Horned, Barred and Saw Whet owls are regular winter visitors. Check the birdfeeder in the Holly Grove carefully. Recent winter sightings of Grasshopper Sparrow and Veery prove that this feeder draws a crowd! During migration, many species of passerines can be found in and around the

Holly Grove. Some recent rarities seen in this area include Chuck-Wills-Widow, Orange-crowned Warbler and Blue Grosbeak. Continue to follow the park road west to the Old Greenwich Yacht Club (D). Looking west from this point into Greenwich Cove, one sees an exposed sandbar where shorebirds gather at high tide. This is the best place in the park to observe shorebirds. A brief visit to the open fields and thickets around the Cowbarn (E) can be productive for a variety of passerines.



GREENWICH POINT

The extreme southern portion of the park can provide the most exciting birding in the entire area. From the yacht club, follow the park road to the causeway (F). Scan the brackish water pond on the north side of the causeway looking for ducks and herons which tend to congregate on and around the small island. Walking east along the top of the flood-control dike, one will find a series of man-made salt marshes on the left, and Long Island Sound on the right. This stretch of trail has yielded an amazing assortment of rarities including Manx Shearwater, Wilsons Storm-Petrel, Yellow Rail, Burrowing Owl, Snowy Owl, Black Guillemot, Black-legged Kittiwake, Western Kingbird, Sedge Wren and Connecticut Warbler. Who knows what will appear next? Be sure to scan the salt water areas for ducks. In the winter, large numbers of Oldsquaw, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Mergansers and scaup may be seen.

The park is an exceptional place to count migrating hawks. Every year, the Greenwich Audubon Society hawkwatchers man the Coast Guard Station at the entrance of the park and have counted large numbers of American Kestrels, Merlins, Peregrine Falcons, Sharp-shinned Hawks and Ospreys. Counts of two to three peregrines per day in early October are not unusual. Buteos are seen in good numbers and are observed regularly. Bald Eagles have been noted on several different counts.

The best time to visit the park to observe birds is during the spring and fall migration, and during the winter months. The summer season is generally less productive due to the intensity of use by Greenwich residents.

Tom Baptist is the conservation coordinator for the Town of Greenwich and co-compiler of the Greenwich Christmas Bird Count.

VALENTINE'S DAY BIRD COUNT

by Dennis Varza

On Sunday, February 14, 1982, twenty-six observers took to the field in Stratford and Milford and conducted a bird count similar to a Christmas Bird Count. Their purpose was to measure late winter bird populations and compare them to the early winter count. The idea for the count arose when I was birding the Lordship marshes in Stratford. I was impressed by the two feet of ice in the area

where I had observed a Seaside Sparrow just three weeks earlier. Realizing the effect it should have on all birds, I decided to repeat the Stratford-Milford Christmas Bird Count in February and compare the changes. Valentine's Day was selected because it was before the arrival of the blackbirds and the departure of the winter birds. Also, since the Christmas Count is held during a holiday period, I felt it was appropriate to select another holiday.

METHODS

The Valentine's Bird Count (hereafter VBC) was conducted in the Stratford-Milford Christmas Bird Count (hereafter CBC) circle. The circle was divided into eight sections plus one boat party, the same as the CBC, and all the areas save one had the same captains. The one area without the same captain had two members from the original party. This count circle is relatively unique as the center is 2.5 miles southeast of Stratford Point, leaving an area of about 33% land. Also, the area is highly urbanized, reducing the amount of available habitat. Each of the eight areas were small enough for one party to cover in one day, therefore the count needed a minimum of 24 observers for thorough coverage. For a similar inland count a minimum of 72 observers would be needed.

RESULTS

A total of 123 species were recorded on the combined counts, which included count period birds. The CBC had 113 species or 91% of the total, while the VBC had 87 species or 70%. There were 81 species or 65% common to both counts. Of the 81 species, 10 had an increase in total numbers and 11 species remained the same. Excluding Starlings, there was a 56.7% decrease in individuals counted. Starlings were excluded because the count is a roost and the VBC had a more accurate count due to a new observation point. This fact produced an increase of 10,000 birds. The magnitude of that change alone would have disrupted the results.

The most obvious change in bird distribution was noted among the ducks. On the CBC, the marshes were active with hunters and devoid of ducks, while ducks were noted in all areas of the VBC. However, at Gulf Pond, an oasis from hunting pressures, fewer ducks were noted on the VBC (Table 1). It appears that during the hunting season the ducks concentrate in a few "safe" areas which makes counting easier. They then disperse when the hunting season is over. Therefore, the low counts may be due to the ducks being scattered and hence more difficult to count. Exceptions to this were Mallard, Ring-necked Duck and Common Merganser. All three normally frequent fresh water and may have become more abundant due to inland ponds being frozen over.

Certain normally rare winter birds were faithfully recorded; King Eider (3), Long-

TABLE 1 CHANGES IN DUCK POPULATIONS

SPECIES	GULF POND			LORDSHIP		
	CBC	VBC	% Change	CBC	VBC	% Change
Canada Goose	320	8	− 97%	0	100	+100%
Mallard	302	320	+ 6%	1	4	+ 75%
Black Duck	50	250	+ 80%	133	228	+ 42%
Pintail	1	0	−100%	-	-	-
Green-winged Teal	27	29	+ 7%	-	-	-
American Wigeon	250	10	− 96%	0	33	+100%
Canvasback	300	20	− 91%	-	-	-
Greater Scaup	6000	230	− 96%	8	500	+ 98%
Bufflehead	6	3	− 50%	0	2	+100%
Oldsquaw	40	7	− 82%	0	20	+100%
Common Goldeneye	75	93	+ 19%	2	40	+ 95%
White-winged Scoter	50	6	− 88%	2	0	−100%
Red-breasted Merganser	176	120	− 31%	0	30	+100%
AVERAGE CHANGE			− 49%			+ 61

TABLE 2 CHANGES IN SPARROW POPULATIONS

SPECIES	CBC	VBC	% Change
Dark-eyed Junco	135	66	−51%
Tree Sparrow	321	133	−58%
White-throated Sparrow	212	72	−66%
Song Sparrow	727	64	−76%
Field Sparrow	67	13	−80%
Savannah Sparrow	62	7	−88%
Swamp Sparrow	29	2	−93%

billed Dowitcher (1), Common Snipe (1), American Woodcock (1), and Orange-crowned Warbler (1). Other expected birds such as Black-bellied Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Common Loon, Hooded Merganser and Flicker were not recorded. Most unusual was the Bonaparte's Gull. On the CBC there were 379 recorded, a new count high, but only two birds were seen on the VBC.

"Typical" winter birds such as the Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Common Crow, Black-capped Chickadee and White-breasted Nuthatch decreased by an average of 56%. There were four species of warblers observed on the CBC while two were absent on the VBC and Yellow-rumped Warbler decreased by 83%. All the blackbirds decreased, however the Red-winged Blackbird posed a problem. There were 134 red-wings on the CBC seen flying to roosts, whereas the 130 birds seen on the VBC were mainly singing males that may have just arrived. Also, Horned Lark flocks appeared to have dispersed, with birds noted singly and some were singing on territory.

The traditional winter finches, Redpoll, Pine Siskin, White-winged Crossbill, Purple Finch and American Goldfinch were more abundant, the first four were new species to the counts. Evening Grosbeaks however were absent. Sparrows were in lower numbers than expected (Table 2). Savannah Sparrow declined 88% and in one area, a field that normally contains about 25 birds on theCBC, had only three on the VBC.

CONCLUSIONS

Hunting appears to affect the distribution of ducks to the extent that the survey may not be reliable on the local scale. The remainder of the birds can be divided into three groups, Winter hardy residents, Half-hardy residents and Winter hardy transients and unhardy birds. Winter hardy residents include birds such as the Mourning Dove, Blue Jay and Dark-eyed Junco, and their numbers vary between −40 to −75%. Resident half-hardy birds such as the Yellow-rumped Warbler, Carolina Wren and Field Sparrow vary in number between −75 to −90%. Winter hardy transients and unhardy birds such as the winter finches, Common Yellowthroat, Winter Wren and Brant can vary 100% either way.

As with any study, the VBC provided information that was both expected and unexpected, giving rise to new questions. The above conclusions were derived from only one year's data so one must be cautious by reading too much into them. Plans are to continue the VBC each year to get a better understanding of the fluctuations and try to separate weather and population factors.

White-Winged Crossbill

I would like to thank all the observers who participated in the first annual Valentine's Day Count for their time and effort. Anyone interested in the complete results of the count may write to this publication for a copy.

LEAST TERN NESTING AT MILFORD POINT

by Ray Schwartz and Fred Sibley

The Least Tern is a threatened species in Connecticut that finds few suitable nesting sites along the coastal beaches, which are subject to heavy recreational use. In Rozsa's report (Connecticut Colonial Waterbird Survey, 1980), an estimated 130 pairs were present in the entire state in 1977 and 1980, but none at Milford Point which had not been used as a nesting site since 1974, when 20 pairs were present. We were therefore surprised to see large numbers of Least Terns on May 30, 1981 hovering over a small sand island just west of the Milford Point breakwater. A survey of the island by Brian Wheeler, Steven Sibley and the authors located 47 nests.

Between June and mid-August, Ray Schwartz visited the island fifteen times and banded 245 chicks with the assistance of Brendan Gunther and a few other volunteers. The highest nest count occurred on June 29, when 76 were noted. However, these were washed away on July 4th by a storm. A renesting attempt produced another high count of 76 on July 15th. Since the normal clutch size is two, frequently only one chick survives, and we therefore estimated that 245 chicks represented 160 successful nests or 100 to 120 pairs. The highest nest count combined with chicks present at the time indicates a total population somewhat higher than 100 pairs. In early June, the date of the 1977 and 1980 counts, there were 70-80 pairs present at Milford. These birds probably came from the colony at Long Beach in Stratford, but that colony only had about 35 pairs in 1977 and 1980. No matter how you compare the 1981 totals or how conservative you are in figuring nesting pairs, there was a tremendous increase in nesting in the state during 1981.

Nesting success proved impossible to determine. A number of young fledged and certainly more died than the six we found. This site suffered less from human disturbance than the nesting site used in the early 1970's at the end of Milford Point because it is accessible only at low tide. A large number of gulls roosted on the island but were never observed to attack the small chicks. Observations of the roosting gulls from a blind would be very valuable and Dr. Noble Proctor hopes to have a student working on this aspect of the study in 1982. Storm tides never washed completely over the island, a condition which would have killed all the chicks present at the time. This was a prominent factor with other colonies in the state resulting in destruction of a large number of nests. Posting of the island or appointment of a full time warden might be beneficial but is certainly not critical to the success of this particular colony.

EARLY CHRISTMAS COUNTS

by Roland C. Clement

Fred Sibley's review of the first decade's Counts in Connecticut (January issue) evoked many memories. Not that I was among the counters of that first decade, but while at Cornell University in 1950 I surveyed all the Christmas Counts in order to test the periodicity of flights of the Northern Shrike from the subarctic, where it nests. My own Christmas counting began in 1945, when I organized the Tiverton-Little Compton-Middletown, R.I., count. My field experience thus bridged the century, and I knew many of the noted early participants, going back to the originator of these counts, Frank C. Chapman at the American Museum of Natural History. I also knew some of the earliest of the Connecticut counters, including A. A. Saunders, Wilbur Smith, and Paul Spofford.

Sibley properly stresses the discrepencies between both the number of species and the number of individuals in the first decade's counts and today's much higher counts. He then suggests that perhaps we should, following Chapman's assessment, give the early counts more credence than first reactions propose. Being consistent, he then says that "If we

accept the counts, we then accept some major changes in 70 years." I would only warn that the data these counts profer need to be weighted carefully, with a full appreciation of the historical circumstances involved.

Notice, first, that the Christmas counters of the turn of the century were not birders but bird lovers, plus a few students of birds. The birder is a phenomenon of the Griscom-Peterson era. It was Ludlow Griscom, first while at the American Museum in New York, and later at the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard, who first showed how to identify birds with the aid of binoculars instead of a shotgun. He did this in the 1920s, and a useful comparison of the interplay between ability in field identification and changing status in birds is evident in the three standard texts on the birds of the New York City area: Griscom (1923), Cruickshank (1942), and Bull (1964).

What Roger Peterson did with his first *A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS* (1934), applying and extending the field mark technique originated by Ernest Thompson Seton, was to systematize and popularize the new knowledge of bird identification perfected by Griscom, Charles Urner, and a few others. Except in the New York City area, eastern Massachusetts, and the San Francisco Bay area — all centers of origin for the sport because they had competent museum ornithologists who took an interest in general field identification — birders did not become dominant until the 1940s and later.

So, the early bird counts were casual sorties intended mostly to demonstrate an interest in birds and provide a little publicity for the new bird conservation movement launched by the newly formed State Audubon Societies, Connecticut among them. Without good binoculars, waterfowl and other birds at a distance were unidentifiable for most people, and were not counted. Nor had the focused interest in bird songs materialized until Aretas A. Saunders initiated it with his 1951 book, and until recordings and tape playback systems later became available. Remember that Chapman organized the Christmas Bird Count to counter the New Year's hunts in which men and boys combed the countryside afoot to see how many forms of wildlife they could shoot.

In addition to improving human skills, of course, there have been drastic habitat changes in the last century because of changing technology and human population growth. Agricultural abandoment in the Northeast began about 1850 because the West was opened up to farming, and farming was easier there than in the rocky Northeast. Connecticut was then 65% open land, but today it is almost 65% wooded, and the new forest which took over the abandoned farms is approaching maturity. In addition, the urbanization of the countryside, particularly after World War II, has eliminated a great deal of wildlife habitat, especially wetlands and shorefront. One consequence of this habitat loss, however, is that the suitable areas which are left perhaps carry more winter birds than they did earlier. They at least make our counting easier, and thanks to the automobile, we cover them all.

I suggest, therefore, that today's higher bird counts, except as they can be accounted for by habitat change and actual population changes confirmed by regional trends, are a result of better training in identification, better tools of the trade, competitive enthusaism, and, perhaps even more so, a result of the better organization which has characterized these counts in recent years. For example, in the 1940s, Griscom's Cape Cod count had, for several years, been the lead count east of New Haven. When, by dint of better coverage, we exceeded his totals with our Little Compton, R.I. count, Griscom was not only stunned but a little defiant. He declared our accomplishment pure luck, and unlikely to be repeated. But, having learned the tricks of organization of field parties so as to cover key areas, we stayed in the running thereafter, though only occasionally in the lead, as Griscom had predicted based on geography and habitat quality.

1981 BANDING SUMMARY

During this past winter, we mailed out questionnaires to bird banders across the state for the purpose of publishing their results and advising others of the scope of

their operations along with any interesting data. Those banders who responded to our request before publication time are included in this article.

DR. JOHN COGGINS of Higganum, CT. bands in a forested area and uses several mist nets. His operations spanned 64 days with a total of 823 individuals of 37 species banded. A Sharp-shinned hawk was his most interesting bird. A Wood Thrush, banded by Dr. Coggins was encountered but data has not been received from the Banding Lab yet. He also captured a House Finch in July, 1981, banded in Richmond, Virginia in Jan. 1979.

ROBERT C. DEWIRE of the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center banded for 57 days, capturing 1,256 individuals of 63 species. Bob maintains a banding station at Anguilla Brook and also bands at the Nature Center for educational purposes. He also "tackles" the gulls on Chimon Island during the summer. A Gray Catbird banded by Bob in Sept., 1980, was recovered in Turnbull Bay, Florida in February, 1981. An American Redstart, banded in Sept., 1980 was recovered in Nassau, Bahamas in October, 1980, a flight of over 1,600 miles in less than 20 days! The highlight of his activities was the capture of a Boreal Chickadee in October, 1981.

DR. JEFFREY SPENDELOW of East Haven, CT reported an unusually active schedule of banding around New Haven Harbor, Lighthouse Point and Falkner's Island. Research on Falkner's Island involved banding over 3,700 Common and Roseate Terns, along with gulls, Spotted Sandpiper and nesting passerines. Among the 180 individuals banded on the island during migration were Bobolink, Golden-winged Warbler and Mourning Warbler. Jeff recovered three Semipalmated Sandpipers in the harbor. The data has not arrived as yet. Operations at Lighthouse Point resulted in 1,450 individuals of 71 species banded. Large numbers of Black-capped Chickadee, Blue Jay and Tufted Titmouse were banded along with 52 Sharp-shinned Hawks, a Kestrel and 2 Warbling Vireos.

CARL TRICHKA of Birdcraft Museum reported operations spanning 91 days, of which 70 were at Birdcraft Station during the migration periods. A total of 103 species and 2,580 individuals were banded. At Birdcraft, 86 species and 1,753 individuals were processed. Banders conducted a research project on Chimon Island this past year to study the breeding population and dispersal patterns of the herons and egrets that nest there. Over 300 young herons and egrets were banded and color dyed. An active schedule of demonstrations was carried out over the year in various parts of the state. Carl reports that a Brown Thrasher (3 yrs. old) was captured at Birdcraft, being originally banded in Maryland. His interesting birds banded were Rough-legged Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, 25 species of warblers and a Lincoln's Sparrow.

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

by Jay Hand & Jim Mockalis

This report will be a regular feature in subsequent issues of *The Connecticut Warbler*, but it can continue to happen only if we receive information from as many active birders as possible. To this end we have solicited the assistance of many of you who, as C.B.C. compilers, ornithologists and active field observers, are in touch with the many other birders in the state and can act as regional compilers and forward information to us. What we are reporting are sightings of rarities or unusual species for a given season, early and late dates for migrants, numbers during peak periods, comments on seasonal trends for given species, observations of unusual behavior – in short, anything that you think is noteworthy or might be of interest to others. We would rather have too much than not enough information, and reports may be submitted directly to either of these editors or to a regional compiler, whose address may be found below. Reporting periods are also defined below.

Documentation is a sore subject with some birders, and the lack of same can lead to conflicts and bruised egos, but it is necessary to lend credibility to a field notes column like this. Sightings unconfirmed by reliable, competent and/or experienced birders are on shaky ground, especially those in which rarities that are very similar to expected species are involved, and it is advised that rarities or question-

able species be photographed, viewed by as many other birders as possible, or described meticulously while still fresh in the mind. In this way the integrity and accuracy of sightings will be maintained.

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(This list will be amended as soon as more volunteers are recruited.)

REPORTING PERIODS:

Winter: December, January, February
Spring: March, April, May
Summer: June, July, August
Autumn: September, October, November

WINTER: DEC. 1, 1981-FEB. 28, 1982

The winter of '81-'82 was not colder than normal if looked at as a whole, but on a monthly basis it had its extremes. December was about normal, with a bitter cold snap at the beginning and the first major snowfall about midway through the month. Moderating temperatures produced mostly open water and bare ground for the coastal C.B.C's, but after heavy rains at the outset of January, the bitter cold clamped down and didn't begin to let up until the 20th. The rest of the month was typical of late January, and February started warmer than normal and stayed that way, with a warming trend beginning on the 15th. The daily high temperature reached at least the freezing mark every day after that. Snowfall through the winter was about a foot less than normal, with the shoreline running about twice that. The winter birding scene can be summarized by the words of Noble Proctor: the winter was unique in that there was nothing unique about it in the way of rarities or of unusual numbers or individuals.

HERONS THROUGH FALCONS — Two Green Herons on Jan. 2 were totally unexpected, one at Beaver Brook, Milford, the other near Bluff Pt., Groton. Also on the late side was a Least Bittern flushed from the Tyler St. marsh, E. Haven, on Dec. 7 (DS fide TB).

European Wigeons seemed to be everywhere along the coast, but four birds appeared to be the most accurate count. One at Gulf Pond, Milford, on Nov. 27 remained until Jan. 2, while one at St. John's by-the-Sea, W. Haven, on Dec. 6, stayed until the 19th. On Dec. 15, the RBA reported an individual at Smith's Cove, Waterford, that was probably the same one reported on the Dec. 18 tape at Eastern Pt., Groton. The bird was located in Groton or along the opposite shore of the Thames R. through the end of February. At Mill Pond at Sherwood Is. St. Pk., Westport, another drake was found Dec. 25 and showed up sporadically into March. The RBA of Dec. 15 reported a Barrow's Goldeneye off Harkness St. Pk., Waterford, while the Dec. 1 tape drew attention to a ♀ and two subadult ♂King Eiders off Milford Pt., where they were seen through Feb. 14.

A Turkey Vulture was notable over Saltonstall Lake, E. Haven-Branford, on Dec. 19, and a Golden Eagle flew over Guilford n. of I-95 on Nov. 28 (DS, TB). Bald Eagles in the state numbered as many as 38 birds: 18 adults, 18 imm., and two of unknown age, including a dead imm. that had been shot. Most of the activity was on the Conn. and Housatonic Rivers. Late Ospreys showed up on three C.B.C.'s; one at Saltonstall Lake on Dec. 19, one over Aspetuck Reservoir, Easton, on Dec. 27, and one at Essex on Jan. 3. In mid-January another flew over Rte. 7 in Wilton. A Peregrine Falcon was seen at Hammonassett St. Pk., Madison, Jan. 2, and a probable Merlin was on Chimon Is., Norwalk, Dec. 27 (TD, fide FM).

RAILS THROUGH WOODPECKERS— A King Rail eluded its would-be captor in Old Saybrook Jan. 3 (NP). Two Soras were seen in the marsh e. of Lighthouse Pt., New Haven, on Dec. 19, and one was found in Old

Saybrook on Jan. 3. Piping Plovers arrived in Guilford by Feb. 27. Unusual were the five Greater Yellowlegs observed on Dec. 27 – one in Fairfield, one in E. Norwalk and three in Norwalk. The Dowitcher, sp., discovered at Gulf Pond, Milford, on Jan. 2 was a surpirse, as was the Long-billed Dowitcher (FS) in the same area on Feb. 14, which may have been the same bird.

Single Glaucous Gulls were found around the New Haven harbor breakwater Dec. 19 (GZ, fide TB), in Wethersfield Cove of the Conn. R. Jan 2 (TF, fide SD), and at the seaward tip of Menunketesuck Is., Westbrook, Jan. 3 (GL et al.). Another, but perhaps the Westbrook bird, was reported off the Essex Steamboat Dock by the RBA on Jan. 19 and was seen through the 22nd. Jan. 2, two Iceland Gulls were seen in Wethersfield Cove, and one was at the mouth of the Housatonic R. On the 9th one was seen on the W. Haven shore, and on Feb. 14 an Iceland and an unidentified white-winged gull were seen at the Bridgeport dump. The Lesser Black-backed Gull arrived at Greenwich Pt. in the fall and spent its fourth winter there. The flock of Bonaparte's Gulls congregating in South Cove, Old Saybrook, about Feb. 15 included a Black-headed and three adult Little Gulls. They could be found there into March. A Little Gull was also seen on the w. side of New Haven harbor near Sandy Pt. on Dec. 6 only, following severe weather.

Single Barn Owls were noted on Dec. 19 in New Fairfield and on Dec. 21 in Branford. The only Snowy Owl reported was seen on Nov. 29 being mobbed by crows along I-95 in Darien (MC, fide FM). Saw-whets were reported in good numbers, with as many as 20 known from coastal locations.

An imm. Red-headed Woodpecker was present at a feeder in Greenwich from Nov. 26 into March.

CROWS THROUGH WARBLERS — Fifteen Fish Crows were identified on four coastal C.B.C.'s, and one was heard in Windsor on Feb. 22. Once again Boreal Chickadees invaded Smith-Richardson Sanctuary in Westport. Present from Nov. 26 into April were as many as 20 birds, of which eight were banded. Winter Wrens bear mention simply by virtue of their scarcity: a scant seven birds were reported from only four C.B.C.'s, two of which were coastal counts. Although only ten Marsh Wrens were found in Essex, Lyme and Old Lyme on Jan. 3, a thorough combing of similar habitats elsewhere along the coast would have produced more.

A Wood Thrush barely survived long enough to be observed in Bridgewater on Dec. 19. The only Northern Shrike reported was an imm. seen at the n. end of Barkhamsted Reservoir in Hartland on Nov. 21 (MH). Alive and well was the Loggerhead Shrike which spent its fifth consecutive winter under the power lines in Lyme. First seen Sept. 26, it remained in the vicinity into March. A Black-and-White Warbler creeping along branches in S. Windsor on Feb. 15 was most unexpected (LE, fide PD). Orange-crowned Warblers were hard to find for most, but single birds were found Dec. 27 with the borealis at Smith-Richardson and Jan. 2 in a thicket just off I-95 in Milford. Another probable Orange-crown was seen at Beaver Brook, Milford, on Feb. 14. Two Pine Warblers showed up at feeders, one in Greenwich on Dec. 20 (JZ), the other in Old Saybrook on Jan 6 (IE). Two Palm Warblers were were attracted to the Fairfield dump on Dec. 27 and one to the Milford dump on Jan. 2. A Common Yellowthroat was present most of December in Southbury along the Housatonic R., and two were found in Milford and Old Saybrook on Jan. 2 and 3. The four Yellow-breasted Chats found on the New Haven C.B.C. on Dec. 19 constituted a state high

Boreal Chickadee *photo by Dennis Varza*

for the past ten years. One other bird was seen in the Wethersfield Meadows near the Conn. R. on Jan. 2.

BLACKBIRDS THROUGH SPARROWS–

On Dec. 20 a Brewer's Blackbird was seen in Wallingford (IB, fide WS) and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak in the Upper Meadows, Durham (BM). Winter finches had good flights in the state, with the exception, perhaps, of Evening Grosbeaks, which seemed to be scarce in many localities. Pine Grosbeaks and Common Redpolls were not scarce, with three different reports of Hoary Redpolls from the Hartford area the first week of Feb. (fide NP). Another Hoary was seen at a feeder in the Elmwood section of W. Hartford Feb. 24 (RR, fide PD). Red Crossbills were sporadic but could be found, and White-winged Crossbills were particularly numerous, especially in late Jan. and early Feb. Many reports came in mistaking Whitewings feeding along roadsides for Yellow-rumped Warblers (NP).

Lone Savannah "Ipswich" Sparrows were seen on Greenwich Pt. from early Dec. through early Jan., on Milford Pt. Jan. 2, and on Griswold Pt., Old Lyme, on Jan. 3. Sharp-tailed Sparrows were reported from three coastal locations w. of New Haven from Dec. 19 through Jan. 2. Lordship marsh, Stratford, produced the only Seaside Sparrow in the state on a C.B.C. Jan. 2. Wallingford and Colchester each produced a Vesper Sparrow on Dec. 20, while a third was seen Jan. 2 in Stratford. Two Northern "Oregon" Juncos were observed at a feeder in East Hampton on Jan. 16 (DT et al.). In Sherman two Chipping Sparrows showed up at a feeder in early Nov. and stayed until the last week in Feb. Single birds were found in E. Haven Dec. 19, in Greenwich Dec. 20 and in Glastonbury Jan. 2.

Observers and contributors abbreviated in the text:

Irston Barnes, Tony Bledsoe, Mary Cushman, Steve Davis, Paul Desjardins, Townsend Dickinson, Irving Esty, Louise Evans, Todd Freeburg, Mike Hayes, George Letis, Frank Mantlik, Bill Martha, Noble Proctor, Ron Rozsa, Wilford Schultz, David and Fred Sibley, David Titus, George Zepko, Joseph Zeranski.

Other abbreviations used:

C.B.C.: Christmas Bird Count; e.: east; fide: reported by; imm.: immature; Is.: Island; n.: north; Pt.: Point; R.: River; RBA: Rare Bird Alert; St. Pk.: State Park; w: west; ♀: female; ♂ : male.

NOTES & NEWS

NOTES FROM THE REGION

During the summer of 1981, several significant breeding records occurred in this region. New Hampshire recorded Ringed-billed Gulls nesting on several inland lakes, while Massachusetts had a breeding American Wigeon at Monomoy and a Lincoln's Sparrow at Savoy. On Long Island, Forster's Tern was observed breeding and the first state nesting record for the Boat-tailed Grackle occurred. (*American Birds*, 35:6.)

Another interesting note appeared in *The Journal of Field Ornithology* (52:4, p 340). on December 14, 1979, an immature Laughing Gull was recovered on Kauai, Hawaii. It was banded on July 19, 1979 near Barnegat Light, NJ and in five months travelled some 8000 km, clear across the United States.

ERRATUM

In Dr. Robert J. Craig's article, "Breeding Biology of Waterthrushes" (Oct. 1981 issue), there were errors and omissions introduced that were a result of editorial revision. We apologize to Dr. Craig and readers wishing to study the details of his comparative life history study should consult his thesis, either at the University of Connecticut, or available through University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, MI. A full citation of his work is provided in Dr. George A. Clark's review of theses on page 48 of the same October issue.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Connecticut Warbler is a quarterly publication devoted to the advancement of the study of birds and their conservation in the state of Connecticut. It is published by the Natural History Services Department of the Connecticut Audubon Society. Address all correspondence to 314 Unquowa Road, Fairfield, CT. 06430.

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology

Volume II Number 3 July 1982 Pages 27 – 42

The Connecticut Warbler is published in January, April, July and October. Subscription is $6.00 per year, based on a calendar year. Renewal is due in January. New subscribers during the year will receive all four issues for that calendar year. Make checks payable to The Connecticut Warbler and mail to 314 Unquowa Road, Fairfield,CT. 06430. Individual issues may be purchased for $1.50 each, when available.

EDITORIAL

COLLECT THAT SIGHT RECORD!

It's easy to tell that a new checklist is being prepared. People are already reving up their defenses against the anticipated attacks on their integrity and birding ability. The age-old question of "Why do you have to shoot a bird to be sure you saw it?" is raised again.

Why indeed do we accept only collected bird records and discard all sight records? This is an incorrect question. No state checklist is based solely on collected specimens, and all recent checklists have included species documented solely by sight records.

What then is the basis of all the fuss? Documentation! A specimen is just a bit of organic garbage until someone prepares it, labels it, identifies it, and stores it properly for later re-examination. Sight records seldom receive a fraction of that attention, and when reviewed years later, there is no more information than date seen and location.

This is a deplorable situation. With the quality of today's field guides, optical equipment, and skilled observers there is little reason to doubt a WELL DOCUMENTED record. Proper documentation should convince someone ten years later who does not know you that it was actually a Yellow-headed Blackbird, or whatever you saw.

Documentation is hard work. The preparation of a specimen from collecting to skinning, to cataloguing into a collection takes several hours. The documentation of a sight record is equally time-consuming, and in the same way that a specimen decays if not prepared promptly, the details of a sight record quickly fade and become lost. Your record should be filed with some individual or institution so that it will be available to all researchers. Publication of details enhance the survivability of the record.

"You expect me to write down everything? All the details? The names of other observers? The location of photographs? That's work! I'm not a professional ornithologist. I'm not going to type and edit this report and file it with Connecticut Audubon. I bird for fun!"

Does this sound like you? If so, you'll have to agree that a stranger is unlikely to accept your record. State checklists are read by strangers who would not be pleased to see unverified "records", so your record will not be used.

"Collect" sight records someone! Please! A well documented sight record is better than a poorly documented record of a specimen. Besides, documenting your sight records gives you something to do in the evening. Try collecting sight records of Herring Gulls or Red-tailed Hawks for practice. When the big one comes your way some lucky day, you'll be ready to bag it. Good Hunting!

Fred C. Sibley
Guest Editor
Peabody Museum

A PRELIMINARY CONNECTICUT BLUE LIST

by Fred C. Sibley

Are we allowing our birds to disappear without being noticed? Are we failing to notify others of declining and threatened species until too late?

Fear no more, the Blue List is here. The Blue List was introudced by *American Birds* a decade ago (Anon. 1971), riding the wave of environmental ferver and a great interest in endangered species. What is this all-purpose savior? It is essentially an early warning system, a list of species that are not now endangered but are seemingly headed in that direction. It was hoped that placing a species on the Blue List would call attention to its plight and result in corrective action while a sufficiently large population still survived.

Unfortunately the tremendous potential of this list, with its ability to draw national attention to the concerns of thousands of amateur birders, has never been realized. The excellent ten year summation by Tate (1981) only rekindled my dissatisfaction with the list. If I were a state administrator with responsibilities for wildlife or an environmentalist trying to protect the state's natural resources, I would simply be bewildered by the list.

Of the species on a recent national blue list, 42 occur in Connecticut. Which of these should be singled out for action or protection? Certainly, no one expects the state to set up a recovery plan for each of these 42 species. If an environmentalist is going to lobby for action, what sort of action does he or she lobby for? It is not clear even to a knowledgeable birder what species are really critical or what factors are threatening any given species.

We should correct this shortcoming by establishing a list that administrators and environmentalists can go to for solid information. A list that points up the areas where we lack or think we lack information. The following is a first attempt at producing a Blue List that fulfills these potentialities.

This list uses the 1981 Blue List (Tate, 1981) as a base. Of 68 species on the national list, 26 do not occur in Connecticut, and an additional 7, threatened elsewhere, are not listed as threatened in the East (Red-necked Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, American Kestrel, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Carolina Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Yellow Warbler). For reasons advocated in the original species accounts, 14 species are not considered threatened in Connecticut. These are Common Loon, Least Bittern, Great Blue Heron, Canvasback, Osprey, Merlin, Bobwhite, Common Tern, Barn Owl, Screech Owl, Whip-Poor-Will, Hairy Woodpecker, Willow Flycatcher, and Purple Martin. The remaining 20 species are here organized into four categories depending on what new action seems appropriate.

SURVEY: There is probably enough information available for a determination of status, but it has not been assembled. There are seven species in this category (Black-crowned Night Heron, Upland Sandpiper, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Sedge Wren, Loggerhead Shrike, Eastern Meadowlark, although threatened nationally, may be too rare in the state to warrant listing, i.e., nothing we could do would contribute to survival.

STUDY: We know or think the species is declining but there are insufficient data to determine why. The American Bittern may disappear from the Connecticut list if not studied quickly. The Black Duck, Roseate Tern, Short-eared Owl, Cliff Swallow, and Golden-winged Warbler are less urgently in need of study, but merit attention.

MANAGE: The information is already available to do something about the species' decline. The Piping Plover, Least Tern and Eastern Bluebird would all benefit from management now, each of them on a seasonal basis. The minor investment needed makes neglect inexcusable.

MONITOR: These species may be increasing in numbers and are candidates for removal from the list. If not removed in the next few years they should at least be placed in a particular category. The Marsh Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, and Red-shouldered Hawk all require active monitoring.

We should be monitoring all species and perhaps are doing so through the network of bird watchers. But someone must analyze the data. A species claimed to be declining should be surveyed to see if it is actually

declining; it should be studied if is declining without apparent cause; and should be managed as soon as appropriate corrective action is determined.

This is a Connecticut list and includes only species threatened in the state. Species have been, and should be, listed without a lot of supporting evidence. Therefore, species should be removed quickly when it is found that they are not in trouble.

I wish to thank George Clark, Robert Dewire, Tom Hoehn, Noble Proctor, Chris Wood, and Joseph Zeranski for their review of the paper and for their helpful comments. They do not agree with all my placements, and in the final analysis this is my idea of what a Blue List should be. The list sorts through the large number of birds "blue listed" nationally and pinpoints four (American Bittern, Piping Plover, Least Tern, and Black Duck) that are in immediate need of study or management. An additional 16 species in less immediate danger are listed with reasons as needing management, study, survey, or monitoring.

The following species accounts give my reasons for not including 14 species listed nationally and my thinking on the placement of the 20 species I consider deserving of listing. This list is not a final document; it should be updated annually. People with information or opinions on any of the species should express these in letters to the editor or articles in this journal. Comments on the Blue List concept and on particular aspects of the list will all be appreciated.

Common Loon - Probably always a very rare breeder in Connecticut and not threatened on its wintering areas. This species deserves a place on the national list based on the evidence of declining winter numbers but not on the state list because the detrimental factors are operative mostly outside Connecticut, though we must watch oil pollution. *REMOVE.*

Black-crowned Night Heron – Listed as declining in Connecticut, yet some colonies are increasing. Do we have good figures for the last ten years? *SURVEY.*

Least Bittern - Habitat loss is listed as the major cause of decline in the national listing. Habitat loss — really changing land use patterns — should be considered separately. Least Bittern populations are healthy and doing well in the remaining habitat. If the wetlands are preserved the species is preserved and efforts to champion the Least Bittern will only detract from and possibly weaken efforts to save the wetlands. With the shift in agricultural practices in Connecticut over the last 100 years woodland species have increased and grassland species have declined. Do we list all grassland species as threatened? The secretive nature of the Least Bittern and the consequent underestimations of numbers should not be grounds for listing. *REMOVE.*

2. *American Bittern* - A prime candidate in Connecticut. Not doing well even in good wetland habitat. There is need for immediate study on the causes of this decline. *STUDY.*

   Great Blue Heron - Not strongly listed nationally and probably no reason to list it in Connecticut. *REMOVE.*

3. *Black Duck* - A candidate mainly because of genetic swamping by the Mallard. Perhaps no one will wish to advocate eradication of the Mallard in Connecticut but there may be management practices that would reduce hybridization with the Mallard. It may seem inconsistent to have a species on the game list and the Blue List simultaneously (see next species), but eliminating hunting will not increase the number of pure Black Ducks. *STUDY.*

   Canvasback - This valuable game bird is still being hunted and certainly receives more study than most – and perhaps all other – birds on this list. Keeping the bird on both the hunting list and the Blue List would seem to be a contradiction. This, and the lack of any major mortality factors in Connecticut, argue for delisting. *REMOVE.*

   Osprey - A truly threatened species ten years ago. The cause of the problem was finally documented, and with the banning of culprit DDT, the population has rebounded. Population size or even population size relative to ten years ago, is not so important as the health of the population and the trend of population. The Osprey is a success story. *REMOVE.*

4. *Marsh Hawk* - Is this species still in trouble? Aren't you seeing more birds,

and especially more males, each year? *MONITOR.*

5. *Sharp-shinned Hawk* - Certainly less common than 50 years ago but probably now increasing in numbers. *MONITOR.*
6. *Cooper's Hawk* - As above. *MONITOR.*
7. *Red-shouldered Hawk* - Are we in a long-term decline? What is a normal population level? *MONITOR.*

   Merlin - This is not a nesting species in the state and there are no obvious threats to the migrants. *REMOVE.*

   Bobwhite - A game species who's marginal population is augmented by release of captive birds. The decline of agriculture cut numbers drastically. No one seems to have a handle on the health of the population, so there is hesitancy in delisting the species. *REMOVE.*
8. *Piping Plover* – An uncommon nester in areas of maximum recreational use. A prime candidate for protective management. *MANAGE.*
9. *Upland Sandpiper* – An uncommon nester in the state perhaps limited solely by habitat. Are scant populations holding steady? *SURVEY,* then *MANAGE.*

   Common Tern – The limiting factor seems to be adequate nesting sites. Present population appears healthy and stable. *REMOVE.*
10. *Roseate Tern* – The national listing mentions that there is only one major colony in Connecticut but this has always been true. Yearly fluctuations in nesting birds of 50 percent, and erratic shifting from one colony site to another are normal and make it difficult to determine long term trends. Declining in adjacent states and probably in Connecticut. *STUDY.*
11. *Least Tern* – Like the Piping Plover, the nesting areas are subjected to heavy recreational disturbance. Nesting also shifts unpredictably from site to site, but management of historic sites should be a priority item. *MANAGE.*

    Barn Owl – Has increased dramatically in the last ten years. Nest boxes have worked wonders in other areas and should do so here. *REMOVE,* but get your club to put out some boxes.

    Screech Owl – Listed nationally. Is there any reason to put it on our state list? *REMOVE.*
12. *Short-eared Owl* – Does it nest anywhere in the state? May suffer on migration form rail hunters, duck hunters and others because of its concentration in the coastal wetlands. No clear figures on abundance or changes in abundance. *STUDY* and educate.

    Whip-Poor-Will – Increasing in numbers, evidently in response to an increase in large moths, thanks in turn to lessened use of persistent insecticides. (Proctor, 1981). *REMOVE.*
13. *Ruby-throated Hummingbird* – Probably decreasing as a nesting bird and fall migrant. *SURVEY.*

    Hairy Woodpecker – Any decline is probably due to urbanization. Most people feel it is still doing well in proper habitat. Worth study? *REMOVE.*

    Willow Flycatcher – Listed nationally but no reason to do so in Connecticut. *REMOVE.*
14. *Cliff Swallow* – Listed as decining in Connecticut for reasons unknown. *STUDY.*

    Purple Martin – Listed nationally but certainly increasing in Connecticut over the last five years. *REMOVE.*
15. *Sedge Wren* – Are there enough individuals in the state to justify a statement on status? Birds like the Henslow's Sparrow and Red-headed Woodpecker that have nested in Connecticut in the past were not even considered in this list because no amount of action in Connecticut would make any difference to their status. Their fate is determined in other states. Is Sedge Wren in this category? *SURVEY.*
16. *Eastern Bluebird* – Still rare along the coast. Many areas have had success using nest boxes, let's get more of them out. *MANAGE.*
17. *Loggerhead Shrike* – Always uncommon and now almost non-existent for reasons unknown. This poses a dilemma because the species cannot be studied in the state due to low numbers. Encourage studies elsewhere. *SURVEY.* Like the Sedge Wren a candidate for removal by reason of regional disappearance.

18. *Golden-winged Warbler* – We face a complex historical retreat in the face of invading Blue-winged Warblers, a seemingly natural extirpation. *STUDY.*
19. *Eastern Meadowlark* – Listed as declining in surrounding areas. Do we have a problem? *SURVEY.*
20. *Grasshopper Sparrow* – Now limited to a few isolated breeding sites. Are people keeping tabs on all these sites? Is it holding its own? Are numbers too low to warrent listing? *SURVEY.*

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FINDING BIRDS IN YALE FOREST

by Robert J. Craig

LOCATION: Ashford and Union, Connecticut. The starting point for exploring the area, the village of Westford, is 28 miles northeast of Hartford.

ACCESS: Westford is easily reached from Exit 104 of Interstate 86. Upon exiting, travel south on State Route 89 for 4 miles to Westford.

DESCRIPTION: Yale Forest extends over 7000 acres of steeply rolling hills ranging in elevation from 600 to 1200 ft. The tract is a mosaic of heavy timber, ponds, swamps, and marshy creeks. In spots, mature stands of trees approach primeval conditions. The Yale School of Forestry operates the area as a research station, and consequently I urge visitors to stay on public roads and refrain from entering the forest's interior.

BIRDWATCHING: The proximity of this largely undistrubed tract to major universities has made it an ideal spot for a number of scientific investigations, including two recent ones dealing with birds. These bird studies have demonstrated that Yale Forest is one of the ornithologically richest inland areas in all of New England.

The following is a guide to looking for birds in the different seasons:

SPRING: To begin a spring outing to Yale Forest, it is best to start from Westford. Instead of turning right and continuing south on Route 89, drive straight and descend a steep hill. At this point the pavement will end and a dirt road, treacherous during the mud season, will enter the area called Boston Hollow. This unique spot – a rocky gorge vested in a rich forest of towering conifers, birches, and maples – offers a dramatic contrast to the surrounding dry oak woods. Traversing the Hollow's floor is an equally unusual sluggish stream that alternately expands into hemlock swamps and contracts into rushing brooks.

The focal point for a spring expedition to Boston Hollow is unquestionably the warbler migration. Over 30 species occur regularly, and on a good May morning the number of warbler songs issuing from the treetops can be bewildering, with so many species singing at once that only an exceptional individual or a wishful thinker could claim to identify them all. In addition to the warblers, the Hollow

provides excellent habitat for thrushes, and it is often possible to hear the songs of Veeries, Wood, Hermit, and Swainson's Thrushes all at once.

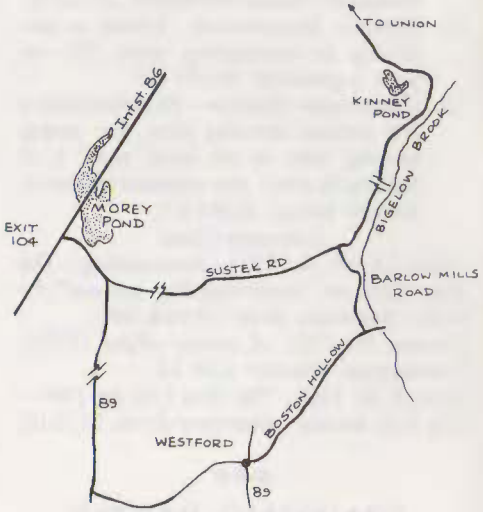
The dirt road winds 1.7 miles through the Hollow, whereupon it exits into a lowland adjacent to the large stream, Bigelow Brook. Here the stream's rocky riffles and deep pools run between a mixture of old fields, swamps, and pastures – favorite haunts for birds of prey. Turkey Vultures, Red-shouldered Hawks, and Goshawks occur here regularly, and in the flocks of Tree Swallows circling above it is often possible to locate Purple Martins and Cliff Swallows.

Where the road divides at the north end of Boston Hollow, take the left fork for 1.2 miles. At the 1.2 mile mark the road again divides; continue straight ahead (right fork) and shortly the road, still paralleling Bigelow Brook, will become paved. This marshy portion of the stream, sandwiched between conifer-clad hillsides, has all the elements of a wilderness landscape, down to Great Blue Herons perched in snags and Pileated Woodpeckers drumming in the distance.

The last stop on this tour, tiny Kinney Pond, is 3 miles from the end of Boston Hollow. This slice of boreal Canada is perhaps the most picturesque spot in the forest. You might almost expect to hear an Olive-sided Flycatcher singing nearby and, in fact, you might.

SUMMER: To explore Yale Forest in summer follow the same route outlined for a spring trip. Early morning visitors to Boston Hollow will be greeted by the incessant singing of Winter Wrens, which share the rocky slopes with Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, and Blackburnian Warblers. Canada Warblers are common breeders in the hemlock swamps, as are Northern Waterthrushes. Louisiana Waterthrushes are also present, but become difficult to find after early May when they cease singing. At the north end of the Hollow listen for the Acadian Flycatchers and Worm-eating Warblers that frequent the area, and upon emerging from the Hollow look for Ruby-throated Hummingbirds in the streamside shrubbery.

Proceeding west toward Kinney Pond, listen for White-throated Sparrows and Yellow-rumped Warblers, both near the southern



extremity of their breeding range at this spot. One of the most pleasant sounds of a New England Summer, the song of the Hermit Thrush, can be heard from the hillsides in the vicinity.

While travelling to Kinney Pond, stops at a few places along Bigelow Brook can be most rewarding. The dead trees bordering the brook harbor several nesting pairs of Eastern Bluebirds, and along the far shore in a stand of giant pines the Golden-crowned Kinglet has bred.

AUTUMN: To one who has never been in New England the word Autumn cannot have any true meaning. In New England the roadsides and fields are ablaze in a profusion of asters and goldenrods, and the forests announce the arrival of the season with a dazzling display of color.

To be sure, fall migration begins in August, long before the landscape has been transformed. It is then that the first Solitary Sandpipers appear along the shores of Kinney Pond, and small flocks of Cape May and Tennessee Warblers begin to trickle through the area. Because of the inland location of

Yale Forest, the trickle never develops into the flood often observed at city parks, but a patient search of streamside thickets and forest borders will reveal the presence of a variety of bird species. In any event, what a birdwatcher may lose in the way of a long list is rather adequately compensated for by the sight of migrating birds against an Autumn background of scarlet maples and shimmering birches.

WINTER: Winters vary greatly in the number of birds present. In years of finch flights, the forest is literally alive with siskins, crossbills, and grosbeaks. At other times the silence is so intense that the landscape seems totally devoid of life. But even on the quietest of mornings a visitor is filled with an inescapable feeling of anticipation. One never knows when a Barred Owl will suddenly swoop across the trail or when a Wild Turkey will venture from its woodland retreat. There is also the ever-present possibility of the appearance of a real rarity; Gray Jays and Three-toed Woodpeckers can both be expected in this area. However, most of all the winter forest is a place to come to be apart, to appreciate the chickadees, to encounter the stark wildness of this stunning bit of nature.

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THE GREENWICH-STAMFORD SUMMER COUNT

by Gary Palmer

For those field observers who are now embarking on the Connecticut Breeding Bird Atlas project, it may be useful to refer to the 1976-1981 Greenwich-Stamford count. The results provide some interesting comparisons and insights into the distribution and status of species which may be found elsewhere in the state.

There are ample reasons for conducting a breeding season count. Compared to the Christmas counts, the weather is far more pleasant and the number and variety of birds is more diverse. Perhaps the greatest benefit from an on-going survey such as this is that it helps document long term changes in nesting populations. Systematic studies of local nesting birds have largely been neglected and more emphasis is being placed on the status of nesting species for environmental purposes.

Some of the considerations which went into establishing this summer counterpart may be of interest to anyone contemplating initiation of a similar survey. The centers of both the summer and Christmas counts are the same point, however, it was decided to use a square rather than a circle to more accurately reflect the area which is regularly covered by the *Mianus Field Notes*. This publication has, since 1972, published a summary of local, seasonal bird sightings. The count square is divided into smaller territories, each with its own captain and field parties. Ability to identify birds by call notes is crucial.

To simplify the count, all birds are counted with the exception of unfledged young. Since the birds are within their territories, they are not likely to be in large flocks whose numbers are sometimes mis-estimated.

The third Sunday in June was chosen to hold the count as most species are on territory and few migrants are present to cloud the picture. It became apparent after a year or two that the square could not be covered in a single day and compilers Tom Burke and Gary Palmer extended it to the full weekend so that more representative sites and habitats could be canvassed. A boat party usually searches the sound and offshore islands for nesting gulls and terns or lingering waterfowl or shorebirds.

Additional field work is required to gain a better understanding of the slow and subtle changes that nesting bird populations are continuously undergoing. Studies are needed which regularly survey birds over a long period of time so that population changes may be better known and summer counts such as this help us recognize and document these changes.

The following are the results of the Greenwich-Stamford summer count. A total of 159 species have been recorded, while 7 others have been found during the count period-three days before and three days after the weekend. Of this total, 109 are presently nesting. A key has been provided to show the status of each species. It should be noted that some of the low totals of certain species

in the early years reflects a lack of experience in conducting such surveys, and that the count has not been held long enough to document significant long-term changes – although some are suggested.

STATUS	SPECIES	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
M	Common Loon	1	0	0	3	2	0
	loon (sp.)	0	cp	0	0	0	0
M	Great Cormorant	1	0	0	0	0	0
N	Double-crested Cormorant	0	3	72	13	26	11
N	Great Blue Heron	1	4	1	0	3	1
B	Green Heron	22	32	36	32	29	28
O	Little Blue Heron	1	1	1	1	2	2
O	Cattle Egret	0	1	1	1	1	4
O	Great Egret	6	15	13	14	16	14
O	Snowy Egret	33	70	33	60	68	67
O	Louisiana Heron	0	0	0	0	0	1
O	Black-crowned Night Heron	46	53	37	71	57	48
B	Yellow-crowned Night Heron	10	10	10	10	10	11
O	Glossy Ibis	0	0	2	0	0	cp
B	Mute Swan	99	64	42	120	42	37
B	Canada Goose	790	919	260	839	1,019	1,206
M	Brant	0	cp	0	0	0	3
B	Mallard	396	496	286	363	477	411
B	Black Duck	63	104	36	62	54	67
M	Gadwall	0	0	0	0	1	0
M	Blue-winged Teal	0	0	0	1	cp	0
M	American Wigeon	0	0	0	0	1	0
B	Wood Duck	32	28	36	12	51	24
M	Ring-necked Duck	0	0	0	cp	0	0
M	Canvasback	0	0	0	cp	0	0
M	Greater Scaup	19	0	16	1	0	1
M	Common Goldeneye	0	0	0	0	0	1
M	Bufflehead	0	0	1	0	0	0
M	Oldsquaw	1	0	1	0	0	0
M	Black Scoter	1	0	0	0	0	0
M	Ruddy Duck	1	0	0	0	0	0
O	Hooded Merganser	0	0	0	0	0	1
M	Red-breasted Merganser	0	1	0	0	0	0
P	Turkey Vulture	1	2	6	4	9	3
M	Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	0	0	0	1	0
	accipiter (sp.)	cp	0	0	1	0	1
B	Red-tailed Hawk	3	6	7	9	9	8
P	Red-shouldered Hawk	0	0	2	2	1	1
B	Broad-winged Hawk	1	8	4	8	9	5
	buteo (sp.)	0	0	0	0	4	0

M	Marsh Hawk	0	0	0	cp	0	0
B	Osprey	cp	20	0	0	0	0
B	American Kestrel	3	7	1	3	5	11
B	Ruffed Grouse	7	8	4	7	3	44
B	Bobwhite	3	1	1	cp	8	7
B	Ring-necked Pheasant	41	60	57	92	101	94
B	Chukar	20	8	1	3	0	0
B	Clapper Rail	7	3	3	1	2	1
P	Virginia Rail	4	0	0	0	0	0
O	American Coot	0	0	0	0	0	1
M	American Oyster-catcher	0	0	0	0	2	0
B	Killdeer	7	20	14	10	14	19
M	Black-bellied Plover	0	cp	0	0	0	0
M	Ruddy Turnstone	0	cp	0	0	0	0
B	American Woodcock	4	3	3	8	3	3
B	Spotted Sandpiper	0	4	1	2	1	1
O	Great-black backed Gull	13	20	25	28	18	17
M	Lesser-black backed Gull	0	0	0	1	0	0
B	Herring Gull	377	506	292	122	319	231
N	Ring-billed Gull	83	232	200	39	356	48
N	Laughing Gull	1	294	162	13	4	26
B	Common Tern	51	83	18	20	6	67
P	Least Tern	4	2	0	0	0	0
M	Black Skimmer	cp	0	0	1	0	0
B	Rock Dove	204	199	112	257	593	279
B	Mourning Dove	286	352	300	286	492	359
B	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	1	1	18	94	109	84
B	Black-billed Cuckoo	0	1	13	11	29	18
	cuckoo (sp.)	0	0	0	18	16	10
B	Screech Owl	21	18	26	24	19	21
B	Great-horned Owl	5	3	6	8	6	6
B	Barred Owl	4	0	4	1	0	0
B	Whip-poor-will	cp	2	5	1	5	17
B	Common Nighthawk	2	2	2	5	10	7
B	Chimney Swift	36	74	67	63	57	64
B	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	3	1	2	2	cp	1
B	Belted Kingfisher	17	8	7	12	21	9
B	Common Flicker	134	122	127	181	172	205
B	Pileated Woodpecker	4	8	6	12	13	13
B	Red-bellied Woodpecker	7	6	9	27	13	24
M	Red-headed-Woodpecker	0	0	cp	0	0	0
B	Hairy Woodpecker	15	24	15	33	36	24
B	Downy Woodpecker	68	108	82	107	171	148
B	Eastern Kingbird	49	54	100	90	122	80
B	Great-crested Flycatcher	28	35	34	63	49	30
B	Eastern Phoebe	52	43	44	57	53	62

P	Acadian Flycatcher	cp	1	0	4	0	0
B	Willow Flycatcher	12	14	11	24	20	23
P	Alder Flycatcher	0	0	2	1	3	1
B	Least Flycatcher	2	5	7	5	3	10
B	Eastern Wood Pewee	24	26	30	57	45	42
	Empidonax (sp)	0	0	0	0	0	1
B	Tree Swallow	43	67	23	23	22	32
B	Bank Swallow	4	2	1	2	5	0
B	Rough-winged Swallow	15	39	37	23	35	52
B	Barn Swallow	195	308	209	271	305	309
M	Cliff Swallow	2	0	0	0	0	0
B	Blue Jay	313	341	354	419	550	390
B	Common Crow	281	361	391	510	533	482
B	Fish Crow	7	5	9	8	5	9
B	Black-capped Chickadee	274	268	247	288	667	517
B	Tufted Titmouse	141	166	198	229	229	216
B	White-breasted Nuthatch	57	99	93	151	140	164
P	Red-breasted Nuthatch	0	0	3	0	2	2
B	Brown Creeper	9	5	7	2	8	14
B	House Wren	66	89	69	125	165	174
B	Winter Wren	4	1	0	3	1	2
B	Carolina Wren	4	7	1	2	3	2
B	Long-billed Marsh Wren	3	4	2	4	5	12
B	Mockingbird	72	99	103	140	127	160
B	Gray Catbird	401	497	412	620	581	744
B	Brown Thrasher	73	83	81	70	80	80
B	American Robin	624	608	457	662	730	773
B	Wood Thrush	137	133	151	227	201	213
P	Hermit Thrush	0	1	0	0	0	0
B	Veery	93	120	133	184	180	212
P	Eastern Bluebird	6	9	7	25	22	21
B	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	0	2	2	5	6	8
B	Golden-crowned Kinglet	5	2	1	0	0	5
B	Cedar Waxwing	11	18	5	5	19	34
B	Starling	991	869	799	1,431	1,700	1,280
B	White-eyed Vireo	35	20	18	26	16	31
B	Yellow-throated Vireo	7	9	9	21	11	19
P	Solitary Vireo	0	0	1	0	0	0
B	Red-eyed Vireo	70	104	96	143	154	170
B	Warbling Vireo	3	10	13	18	21	12
B	Black-and-White Warbler	44	67	60	98	83	131
B	Worm-eating Warbler	23	17	12	40	51	56
B	Blue-winged Warbler	78	85	107	185	75	188
M	Nashville Warbler	0	0	0	1	0	0
M	Northern Parula	0	0	1	1	0	0
B	Yellow Warbler	193	234	223	409	279	372

M	Yellow-rumped Warbler	0	0	5	0	0	0
B	Black-throated Green Warbler	5	5	2	1	0	2
B	Chestnut-sided Warbler	14	9	14	8	14	26
M	Blackpoll Warbler	0	1	0	1	0	0
B	Prairie Warbler	1	7	18	22	13	36
B	Ovenbird	81	118	94	179	201	188
B	Northern Waterthrush	1	2	4	0	1	4
B	Lousiana Waterthrush	12	13	15	15	12	22
P	Kentucky Warbler	0	0	1	3	0	0
B	Common Yellowthroat	133	179	214	331	329	374
B	Yellow-breasted Chat	3	3	4	2	2	5
B	Hooded Warbler	7	8	6	7	8	1
B	Canada Warbler	5	8	4	11	3	6
B	American Redstart	4	10	6	13	8	6
B	House Sparrow	465	426	281	433	447	808
B	Bobolink	8	3	12	5	2	cp
B	Eastern Meadowlark	14	8	8	9	11	7
B	Red-winged Blackbird	1,003	680	775	928	792	1,095
B	Orchard Oriole	0	1	0	3	14	7
B	Northern Oriole	105	106	103	218	219	213
B	Common Grackle	878	651	927	1,071	1,132	992
B	Brown-headed Cowbird	52	40	62	49	80	108
B	Scarlet Tanager	35	55	68	107	135	103
B	Cardinal	144	183	225	277	246	300
B	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	81	66	67	117	118	142
B	Indigo Bunting	19	17	30	46	63	75
B	Purple Finch	1	1	2	2	1	1
B	House Finch	229	259	257	268	233	297
M	Pine Siskin	0	0	1	0	0	0
B	American Goldfinch	121	155	154	113	100	143
B	Rufous-sided Towhee	139	195	181	231	232	219
P	Grasshopper Sparrow	1	0	0	1	0	0
B	Sharp-tailed Sparrow	10	3	2	1	2	2
M	Seaside Sparrow	cp	0	0	0	0	0
B	Chipping Sparrow	68	61	106	92	91	134
B	Field Sparrow	16	34	51	100	72	54
M	White-throated Sparrow	0	0	1	0	0	0
B	Swamp Sparrow	22	25	17	21	15	21
B	Song Sparrow	327	266	297	366	440	447
159	Total Species	122	125	131	130	123	126
7	Count Period Species	6	4	1	4	2	2
	Total Individuals	11,414	12,524	11,063	14,849	16,838	16,788
	Observers	59	49	41	42	43	34

STATUS SUMMARY	TOTALS
B – Breeding within count area	109
O – Breeding locally but outside count area	10
P – Potential or suspected local breeders	12
N – Non-breeders summering in area	4
M – Migrants, accidental visitors or unknown status	31
	166

cp – Count period

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

by Jay Hand & Jim Mockalis

SPRING: MAR. 1 – MAY 31, 1982

The period March through May was just about normal with respect to temperature, but it was deficient in rainfall amounts. The warming trend begun in February continued through March, and it seemed that spring would be early. Things evened out and actually fell a little behind in April, though, which was cooler than normal, as evidenced by a freak snowstorm on the 6th that dumped at least a foot of powder snow on the state as the temperature plunged. The following day was especially bitter, considering the mild weather that had preceded the storm. Thick clouds all day, a high temperature barely above 20°F. and northerly winds in excess of 25 m.p.h., not to mention the deep snow cover, had many wondering just what the impact would be upon those early migrants dependent upon bare ground and above-freezing temperatures for survival: the robins, phoebes and tree swallows. The return of sun on the 8th brought bare ground to wind-scoured fields by mid-afternoon, and avian casualties were remarkably minimal. The balance of the month was calm by comparison, and migrants came through as expected.

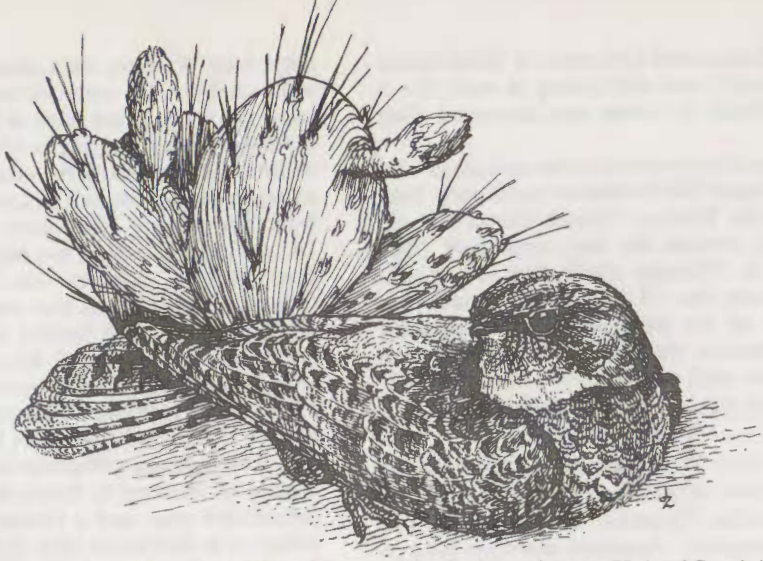
May, for the first three weeks marked by predominantly northerly winds and nary a trace of a storm, was a different story. Like the weather systems, bird movement all but ceased. Lack of a sustained southerly airflow or of a decisive weather event to stall the persistent trickle of migrants produced what many disdainfully referred to as no migration at all. True, missing were those warm, moist May mornings when the birds inundate an area and drown all other sounds with their songs. There were no "waves," no mass movements to fill those waiting niches overnight. Instead, there was a curious absence of birds from places they should have been and a perplexing quietness about the woods. Most species were observed more or less on time, but their numbers were painstakingly slow to increase - in extreme cases close to a week might pass before the numerical status of a common species might change in an area of several square miles. Apart from the scattered rarities and occasional early and late individuals, there was nothing particularly noteworthy about this year's spring migration. About the only positive aspect was the fact that one didn't have to worry about missing a peak day because there simply weren't any.

GREBES THROUGH RAILS—

A Red-necked Grebe was reported off Waterford by the RBA of Mar. 5, and another was seen off the Saybrook breakwater Mar. 10. Inland sightings included two on L. Pocotopaug, East Hampton, Mar. 20 and one on Easton Reservoir Apr. 11. A late Great Cormorant remained off Ash Creek, Bridgeport, through Mar. 29, while a flock of 20 Double-crested Cormorants passed over Storrs on May 7. This species nested off Norwalk Harbor once again for a second state record.

An early Green Heron turned up in Storrs Apr. 20, and a Snowy Egret was observed in Lordship marsh, Stratford, Mar. 20. The RBA of May 5 reported a Cattle Egret from Harkness S.P., Waterford, while the tape of Apr. 20 reported a Least Bittern from Branford. An American Bittern was seen in Greenwich Apr. 15 and at the Guilford Sluice Apr. 17.

More than just a few observers remarked at the virtual absence of migrating Canada and Snow Geese. A Green-winged Teal in S. Windsor May 25 was later than usual, and the drake European Wigeon at Sherwood



Is. S.P., Westport, was last seen Mar. 25. Northern Shovelers showed up in several locations: two in Woodbridge Mar. 20, one in Stratford Mar. 29, six in Westport Apr. 9, and one in Niantic Apr. 10-11. Two Lesser Scaup were at Ash Creek, Bridgeport, Mar. 1-5, and two adult ♂ King Eiders were among the White-winged Scoters off Greenwich Pt. on May 2 and again on May 5. An adult ♂ Black Scoter was temporarily grounded by dense fog when it was seen March 13 on Mitchell Pond, Salem, where it was also heard calling.

An early Broad-winged Hawk was spotted in Simsbury Apr. 4, and a very late Marsh Hawk May 24 at Lordship suggested the possibility of breeding. Single Merlins were noted Apr. 29 at Lordship and May 16 at Milford Pt.

A King Rail was reported from Branford by the Apr. 20 RBA and from N. Cove, Saybrook, May 31 (CT).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH WOODPECKERS—

American Oystercatcher was reported from Stonington by the RBA of Mar. 26, one was seen May 16 at Milford Pt., and two have been seen regularly in the Norwalk Is. since mid-May, with as many as five reported from Chimon Is. the last week of May. An exciting find was the Wilson's Plover at Milford Pt. May 16 (SS *et al*). A Whimbrel flew over Griswold Pt., Old Lyme, May 2, while another was observed in Norwalk May 30. On May 11 one Upland Sandpiper was seen at Stratford Airport, but on May 21 two were noted, raising the possibility of nesting. The Brainard Airport, Hartford, birds were back again this year. Lone Solitary Sandpipers Apr. 11 at Guilford Sluice and Apr. 18 in East Haddam were well ahead of schedule, with a high of 14 birds in S. Windsor not until May 17. Single Long-billed Dowitchers May 3-4 in S. Windsor (CN, fide PD) and May 19 at Milford Pt. (FM) were excellent finds for any season. Unusual was a Western Sandpiper seen May 14 in S. Windsor (RC), and totally unexpected was a Reeve on May 31 at N. Cove, Saybrook (CT).

A first-year Glaucous Gull was at Konold's Pond, Woodbridge, Mar. 20, and an Iceland Gull was reported from Westport Apr. 5. The Lesser Black-back Gull was regular at Greenwich Pt. through Apr. 15, but another adult bird was found at Sherwood Is. S.P. only on Mar. 1 (FM). The Black-headed and one Little Gull remained near the Saybrook breakwater at late as March 28.

Least Terns began to be seen on their breeding grounds along the shoreline May 1-3, and single Caspian Terns were reported from Greenwich Pt. on May 4 and from Harkness S.P. by the RBA of May 5. The only Black Tern reported was an adult seen at Greenwich Pt. May 26, and the only Black Skimmer of the spring was an adult seen May 30 at Chimon Is.

A Long-eared Owl roost in Wethersfield produced a nest with young in April, but it was found by crows and destroyed (fide RC).

One of the best birds of the spring had to be the Chuck-Will's-Widow heard early May 14 at the Westport Nature Center and observed through the day until dark (fide FM). A Chimney Swift Apr. 17 at Old Lyme and Apr. 18 in Salem were somewhat ahead of the pack, and the Red-headed Woodpecker that wintered in Greenwich was last seen Apr. 26.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH LONGSPURS—

On May 16 a seldom-seen Yellow-bellied Flycatcher appeared at Greenwich Pt. and an Acadian Flycatcher was heard calling in N. Greenwich. Acadians were not hard to find along the Eightmile R. in the vicinity of Devil's Hopyard S.P., East Haddam, and one was banded on Chimon Is. the last week of May. Olive-sided Flycatchers were seen May 16 and 23 in Marlborough and May 19 in Greenwich.

April 9, Tree Swallows were seen walking on the ice of Moodus Reservoir, East Haddam looking for insects. Cliff swallows were reported nesting in many localities: Southbury, Simsbury, Colbrook, and New Milford, where 20-25 pairs were estimated. Two Purple Martins returned to New Milford on the very early date of Mar. 26.

Mar. 25 a Fish Crow was heard calling in S. Windsor. A Gray-cheeked Thrush was seen May 14 in Marlborough, one was banded at Birdcraft Sanctuary, Fairfield, May 16, and three more banded on Chimon Is. during the last week of May. Water Pipets were noted Apr. 8 in Greenwich, Apr. 11, at Portland meadows, Apr. 15 in Storrs and Apr. 18 in Salem.

A Prothonotary Warbler was seen in N. Greenwich on Apr. 28 and again on May 5, while one was present but silent in W. Hartford May 6-7. On May 21 a Golden-winged Warbler passed through W. Hartford, and one was found mated to a Blue-wing in New Hartford. In fact, Golden-wings seemed to be more common east of the Housatonic R. than in past years (fide PC). A "Lawrence's" Warbler was singing on territory in Colchester for the fourth consecutive year. Cape May Warblers were abundant in Norwalk on May 11, when at least ten were seen. As many as ten pairs of Myrtle Warblers were found nesting in New Hartford, while Cerulean Warblers maintained their strongholds in Kent and in Lyme, where at least five singing birds were noted May 14. An early Cerulean was heard May 3 in East Haddam, another was heard in N. Greenwich May 7, one was seen in Suffield May 8, and a was banded in Chimon Is. during the last week of May. Two Pine Warblers were found on Greenwich Pt. Mar. 14, while 15 Northern Waterthrushes were banded at Birdcraft Sanctuary May 16. On May 11 a Kentucky Warbler was first heard singing on territory in Salem for the fourth consecutive year, and a Mourning Warbler turned up in Suffield on May 20 and one was banded on Chimon Is. during the last week of May.

Four singing Orchard Orioles were found near Nepaug Reservoir in the New Hartford area during May. In the vagrant department, a first-year ♂ Summer Tanager was described in the vicinity of East Rock, New Haven, on May 22 (JM), a Blue Grosbeak was reported from New Canaan by the RBA of Apr. 20, and another was found dead in Willimantic Apr. 29.

Winter finches remained very late, with Common Redpoll reported from Mansfield Apr. 12, Pine Siskins found nesting in W. Hartford on May 8, seven Red Crossbills visiting red pines in Middletown May 6, and a White-winged Crossbill seen Apr. 15 in Storrs.

A Grasshopper Sparrow was seen at Greenwich Pt. May 7, and the species was found nesting in Simsbury and at Bradley Field. Vesper Sparrows also nested at Bradley (fide PC). A Chipping Sparrow in Hartford Apr. 6 was fairly early, but a Lincoln's Sparrow in W. Hartford Apr. 25 was unusually early. Also unusual was a White-crowned Sparrow banded on Chimon Is. the last week of May. News of 6-10 pairs of White-throated Sparrows breeding in the New Hartford area was interesting, but the Smith's Longspur at Hammonasset S.P., Madison, May 2 (PD) that comprised only the second state record for that species was undoubtedly the bird of the season.

Observers and contributors abbreviated in the text:

Paul Carrier, Rick Cech, Paul Desjardins, Frank Mantlik, John Maynard, Charles Nielson, Steve Sibley, Clay Taylor.

Other abbreviations used:
fide: reported ' by; L.: Lake; Pt.: Point; RBA: Rare Bird Alert; S.P.: State Park; ♀: female; ♂: male.

NOTES AND NEWS

EAGLES

The National Wildlife Federation has begun to census wintering Bald Eagles throughout the United States to add to our knowledge of this species winter range. The State of Connecticut through the Department of Environmental Protection has assisted NWF in gathering data this year. Tom Hoehn, Biologist for D.E.P. has forwarded data on this years survey. Sightings were made from January 2 through January 16, 1982.

LOCATION	ADULT	IMMAT.
Shepaug Dam	3	3
Candlewood Lake	2	0
Saugatuck River	0	1
Sherwood Island	0	1
Milford (Housatonic R.)	0	1
Barkhamstead	1	0
Connecticut River	5	11
Lake Gaillard	2	0
Lake Saltonstall	0	1
	13	18

HAWK WATCH DATES

The dates for the Connecticut hawk watch for the fall season are as follows:
Sept. 18-19 Oct. 2-3 (Coastal) Oct. 24-25
Anyone interested in assisting or just visiting a manned hawk watch site should contact their local bird clubs, chapters or this publication for the location of the nearest site.

A GATHERING OF EAGLES

The Machias Outing Club is planning to take 10 people to Glacier National Park,atop the Continental Divide in Montana, for a wilderness trip that will feature a spectacular gathering of Bald Eagles that congregate on McDonald Creek prior to departing for their wintering grounds. The trip will be November 12 to 21, 1982 and costs $750 per person, excluding air fare. This cost includes motel, food, transportation from airport to lodgings, through the park, leaders and park fees.

A district naturalist and staff will guide participants on day hikes through the park daily, explaining the geological history of this magnificent park formed by glaciers. It is a unique opportunity to visit one of the most strikingly beautiful parks in the west. Weather conditions are very similar to Connecticut in November. An overnight backpacking trip into the park is optional.

The park offers a diversified blend of western and eastern birds along with a variety of mammals such as bighorn sheep, deer, bear and moose. Migrating waterfowl, blue and spruce grouse, white-tailed ptarmigan, dipper, mountain chickadee, Stellar's Jay, black-billed magpie are but a few of the species present in the park.

Don't pass up this chance to visit Glacier, and celebrate the year of the eagle. For details, write to 248 Lyons Plain Rd., Weston, CT. 06880.

COLOR MARKED CATTLE EGRETS

Juvenile Cattle Egrets will be color banded and color marked this summer as part of a study of post-fledgling dispersal. One or both wings will be colored with red, blue, green, yellow, white and blue numbered plastic bands. Observer reports will be appreciated—noting color sequences (and if possible, color band numbers,) date and place of observation and number of Cattle Egrets present.

Please report observations to the Bird Banding Lab, Laurel, MD 20708 and to Debbie Mignogne, P.O. Box 1490, University of Maryland, Eastern Shore, Princess Anne, MD 21853.

E.B.B.A. - N.E.B.B.A. CONFERENCE

by Carl Trichka

A joint annual meeting of the Eastern and Northeastern Bird Banding Associations was hosted by the Frost Valley YMCA Conference Center in Oliveria, NY, on April 16-18, 1982. This conference center in the Catskill Mountains provided a rustic setting for over 100 participants who enjoyed a weekend of seminars and some excellent cuisine.

The conference began with Jerome Jackson of Mississippi State University who reported that the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker is declining at the rate of about 12% per year, and because of its specialized habits, may continue to decline. Unlike other woodpeckers it nests only in living trees, usually mature pines over 70 years old, and takes up to four years to prepare a suitable nest cavity.

Despite rainy weather, New York Department of Environmental Protection staff demonstrated a new rocket net designed to capture wintering Bald Eagles. Peter Nye, the project leader, also presented a paper on the group's efforts to restore the Bald Eagle as a nesting species in upper New York state.

George Jonkel, head of the Bird Banding Lab reported on a visit to Brazil, where wildlife officials are setting up a banding program similar to that in the United States. Later, Jonkel presented an update on banding operations for 1981. The total number of birds banded in 1981 was about 1.3 million with 66,000 returns. The number of licensed banders remained at 2200 with an additional 2000 sub-permittees.

Annual meetings for both associations were held and EBBA elected Hannah Suthers as its new president.

EBBA awards a $250 grant to a student who in studying birds uses banding as a tool. This year, due to growth of the trust fund, it was decided to increase the awards to four, totalling $1,000.

Saturday afternoon a small group took a respite from the lectures and stepped outside for some fresh air. The steady drizzle let up and hawks were noted migrating through the cloud layer. This sent everyone scrambling for binoculars and during the next hour or so, were treated to the passage of about 70 hawks. Among the numerous Broad-wings and Sharpies were two Cooper's and a Marsh Hawk. The proverbial "odd couple" was a pair of ducks, one a Wood Duck, the other a Common Merganser, heading south together.

One of the several interesting papers was one by Len Soucy, Jr., who discussed his study of the Barn Owl in northwestern New Jersey. He found that 80% of the owls preferred to nest in old, abandoned, wooden water tanks, found in rural areas. He also found nesting Barn Owls in abandoned wells, haystacks and under bridges. It was noted that this species is somewhat human tolerant and will use a prefabricated nesting box if available. This species can also produce large broods as evidenced by his slides showing a nest with ten young owls. The adult birds must have put a severe dent in the rodent population to feed that brood.

The concluding conference speaker was Charles T. Collins of California State University, president of the Western Bird Banding Assoc., who entertained us with his travels while studying tropical swifts.

Next years EBBA meetings will be held April 22-24 at a site near State College, Pennsylvania.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Connecticut Warbler is a quarterly publication devoted to the advancement of the study of birds and their conservation in the state of Connecticut. It is published by the Natural History Services Department of the Connecticut Audubon Society. Address all correspondence to 314 Unquowa Road, Fairfield, CT. 06430.

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology

Volume II Number 4 **October 1982** **Pages 43 – 55**

The Connecticut Warbler is published in January, April, July and October. Subscription is $6.00 per year, based on a calendar year. Renewal is due in January. New subscribers during the year will receive all four issues for that calendar year. Make checks payable to The Connecticut Warbler and mail to 314 Unquowa Road, Fairfield,CT. 06430. Individual issues may be purchased for $1.50 each, when available.

The editors invite the submission of articles, notes, black and white photographs and line drawings for use in **The Connecticut Warbler.** Manuscripts should be typewritten, double-spaced and on one side of the sheet only, with ample margins. The editors must reserve judgement as to how much of this material to use and return postage should be provided if materials are to be returned.

EDITORIAL

BIRDS OF THE FUTURE

How is Connecticut birdlife likely to change during the next few decades? Although this cannot be answered with any degree of certainty or completeness, the extrapolation of current trends indicates some probabilities. Whatever happens, human activities are likely to remain strongly influential. The following projections on the short-term future of Connecticut birds have greatly benefited from discussions with James A. Slater.

Many of our now common breeders and migrants winter in the Latin American tropics. These include the Broad-winged Hawk, cuckoos, swift, hummingbird, orioles, tanager, and most of our flycatchers, swallows, thrushes, vireos, warblers, and a few others. Breeding populations of certain of these are reportedly declining in parts of North America, presumably due at least in part to extensive deforestation and perhaps also pesticide use in the tropics (Ambuel and Temple, 1982, *J. Field Ornithol.* 53:149-158). Are such species now declining in Connecticut also? Will some species that are now regular thus become rarities in the future.?

In recent decades certain migrants such as the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and non-migrants such as the Tufted Titmouse and Cardinal have expanded northward as breeders. But we cannot anticipate that many more landbird species from the south will soon colonize Connecticut as breeders because the pool of such species in the southeastern U.S. is relatively small. Although a continued arrival of strays can be expected for a variety of species from the western and southern U.S. and to a lesser extent from Europe, such waifs appear generally unlikely to establish breeding populations.

During the past 130 years several introduced species have shown dramatic increases in the state, the House Finch being a recent example. Although the present high prices for caged birds and restrictions on their importation lessen the likelihood of further successful introductions, a number of species probably could thrive here should the opportunity arise, and it seems reasonable to expect further introductions, either deliberate or accidental.

Since 1900, Connecticut land use has shifted markedly away from farms and fields to woods and buildings. Certain bird species living in fields have been greatly reduced or extirpated as breeders including the Upland Sandpiper, Sedge Wren, Vesper Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Henslow's Sparrow. Will a future continuation of this trend jeopardize the Connecticut breeding of the Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, and Savannah Sparrow?

Increased urbanization and suburban sprawl have severely fragmented some forests in the state, and this has apparently contributed to the elimination in certain neighborhoods of species requiring large forest tracts (Butcher, 1982, *Conn. Warbler* 2:15-17); this trend may well continue. Will depletion of dead trees and snags for fuel wood threaten Barred Owls, Hairy and Pileated Woodpeckers? The spread of human habitation has tended to increase the numbers of the introduced Rock Doves, Starlings and House Sparrows, whose persistance seems now well assured. Other beneficiaries of human activities such as Mute Swan, Canada Goose and Mallard also appear destined to increase in the state unless novel forms of management intervene.

Future effects of chemical pollution are difficult to forecast. With restrictions on the use of chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides in the U.S., breeding populations of most Connecticut hawks appear to be presently stable or increasing slightly, but for these as well as our other birds, continued human vigilance is in order.

George A. Clark, Jr.
Guest Editor
University of Connecticut

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

by Jay Hand and Jim Mockalis

"Connecticut Field Notes" is a regular feature of *The Connecticut Warbler.* The purpose of this column is to draw attention to information about the birds of Connecticut that is noteworthy, *i.e.* sightings of species that are: rare, unusual or seldom seen in the state; not regularly found in a particular locality; early or late as compared with traditional migration dates; present or absent in unusually high or low numbers; or involved in interesting or unusual behavior. We hope that this column can serve as a medium for the announcement of exciting finds (especially now, with the Breeding Bird Atlasing Project under way) and as an accessible archive for sight-records. Our goal, of course, is to be as thorough and inclusive as possible, but without the cooperation of *all* birders in the state we cannot hope to achieve what most of us would like to see—a well-informed, communicative and concerned network of observers. The key word in any endeavor of this sort is "records." With so many of us keeping lists of one kind or another, it shouldn't be difficult to extend this type of recordkeeping one step further by listing what important species were seen, where on each day that a particular species fills their lenses and forget the other days, even when the species may be rare or unusual! Those of you who are seeing more than one Orange-crowned Warbler per year are discarding valuable information and cheating the rest of us out of a chance to gape in awe of your birding prowess (luck?). On our part, the amassing of data is time-consuming and often frustrating, especially when it comes to prying information out of sources unaccustomed to sharing it with others or to keeping accurate records when we finally do coax it out of them. So far we can't really complain because participation has been good and we've had a lot of surplus information, but more contributors will make for more complete coverage. There are a lot of you out there who see good birds but never tell a soul, so why not inflate your egos a little and let us report what you've been seeing. To those of you who do furnish us with data, keep up the good work but don't be offended if we don't see fit to use it all, and to you who've been withholding evidence, cough it up. As for you who don't keep records, remember that record-keeping is like brushing your teeth—just another good habit.

SUMMER: JUNE 1-AUG. 31, 1982

Two significant weather features marked an otherwise normal summer season. In the wee hours of June 6, the nearly twelve inches of rain that had fallen over the preceding 36 hours culminated in the worst flooding of the century in Connecticut. The bulk of the damage to man-made structures occurred in the downstream portions of the state, but everywhere many ground and wetland nesters had to start over. Remarkably, there were no noticeable declines in the numbers of young produced by these species from previous years' numbers. With ample time yet to raise at least one brood, most birds did just that with a rate of success comparable with that of other years. The rest of June and July held no surprises, but early in August a pattern of rapidly-changing air masses developed. Bubble after bubble of cool, dry air descended on the Northeast out of central Canada in un-August-like fashion, and the passerine migration was suddenly under way, as evidenced by good numbers of warblers beginning to appear in the banding nets at Birdcraft Sanctuary in Fairfield. The first real mass of cold air (41° F. in Hartford at dawn on the 22nd) brought the first truly northern migrants (Tennessee, Wilson's, Parula and Cape May Warblers) to the nets at Birdcraft. The cooler-than-normal weather continued right into September, and fall migrants streamed southward unchecked, a good two weeks ahead of schedule.

LOONS THROUGH IBIS—

Coincidentally, on June 27 single Common Loons were observed on Saugatuck Res. (BF, CWd, GS, *fide* FM) and on Nepaug Res. (PC), where this species has been suspected of nesting in the past but has not yet been confirmed as a breeder. Content not to venture farther north, two Horned

Grebes apparently spent the summer, or at least part of it, in the state. One was seen June 19-20 off Wallack's Pt., Stamford (JH), and another was seen at various locations along the Old Lyme shore from the Black Hall R. to Point O'Woods the week of July 19-25 (WE, JH, BB). Both birds were in breeding plumage.

In addition to the three pairs of Double-crested Cormorants nesting on East White Rock, Norwalk Is. (*fide* FM), the banding of 13 out of at least 15 nestlings on Goose I., Madison (MB), and the discovery of an active nest atop a piling in the Thames R. in Norwich (FP) comprised a second state breeding record for this species. The first record came from the Norwalk Is. in 1980.

A Cattle Egret was present at Milford Pt. Aug. 29 (JM, DT). Traditionally having bred only in the Norwalk Is., Snowy Egrets and Glossy Ibis expanded their breeding range in the state to include Ram Is. at the mouth of the Mystic R. this year (GC, TH, BM, RS). Unusual for Storrs was a Snowy at Mirror L. on the UConn campus Aug. 18 and 20 (DC, *fide* SD). Although the species was not observed to have nested in the Norwalk Is. this year, a Louisiana Heron was seen at the Manresa power facility, Norwalk, June 27 (CW, EH, HC, *fide* FM), and one frequented Norwalk Harbor from Aug. 1 on (CWd, fide FM). A Least Bittern was observed at Lordship marsh, Stratford, June 29 (DV), and, predictably, the species was reported from Station 43, S. Windsor, July 13 (*fide* RBA) and from Dead Man's Swamp, Cromwell, Aug. 8 and 15 (DT). An American Bittern was noted on the pond at Birdcraft Sanctuary, Fairfield, Aug. 23 (*fide* CTa).

GEESE THROUGH RAILS—

Lingering waterfowl included a Brant at Hammonasset S.P., Madison, July 8 (JM), a Greater Scaup at Greenwich Pt. June 10 (*fide* DB), a Bufflehead at Greenwich Pt. through June (*fide* DB), a subadult ♂ King Eider, apparently sick, off Hoadley Pt., Guilford, Aug. 14 (TB, *fide* BDe), and three Black Scoters (one ♂) on Nepaug Res. June 10 (PD). A ♂ Common Merganser showed up on the Naugatuck R., Seymour, July 30 (BD).

A species to be watched for, a **Black Vulture** was well-described from Ashford Aug. 18 (IL, *fide* RC). A Northern Goshawk was present in N. Stamford through June 20 (DH, *fide* DB), while Sharp-shinned Hawk was confirmed as a nesting species in both Barkhamsted and Canton (PC). The report from north-central Conn. is that Red-shouldered Hawks are doing poorly compared with five years ago (PC). In Stratford a ♀ Marsh Hawk was present at the Lordship marsh all summer (DV).

It seems that the state stocking program for Wild Turkeys has been successful in Fairfield, with reports of adult birds being seen with young in June and July (*fide* FM). Old Saybrook remains a good spot for King Rails, one having been observed at North Cove July 8 (JM). Virginia Rail and Sora were no surprise at Station 43 July 13 (*fide* RBA), and Common Gallinule was a successful breeder there (PD) and may have nested near Bristol as well (PC).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH SKIMMERS—

Four to five Am. Oystercatchers were present in the Norwalk Is. all summer, but no evidence of nesting there was found (*fide* FM). Single birds were noted at Greenwich Pt. Aug. 19 (TB, JZ, *fide* DB) and at Milford Pt. Aug. 29 (JM, DT). Single Whimbrels at Greenwich Pt. July 3 (DB, JB) and at Guilford Sluice Aug. 14 (*fide* RBA) and three at Griswold PT., Old Lyme, Aug. 15 (JM) betokened good movement of that species through the state. Other than the Brainard Airport, Hartford, birds, which were never confirmed as nesters, one Upland Sandpiper was seen at Lordship marsh. Aug. 13 (DV). Willets were scarce, a single bird showing up at Greenwich Pt. June 9 (KB, *fide* DB) and two at Lordship marsh Aug. 13 (DV). The only Phalarope reported was a Wilson's at Milford Pt. Aug. 17 (CT), and on Aug. 29 a **Long-billed Dowitcher** was identified at the same locality (JM, DT). **Baird's Sandpipers** moved through early and were seen in good numbers, the earliest being one seen in Old Saybrook Aug. 13 (NP). Stilt Sandpipers were here and there, with one at Milford Pt. July 23 (DV) and one behind Mile Creek Beach, Old Lyme, Aug. 20 (JH).

Expected but seldom seen in the state, a **Gull-billed Tern** was found over the Whelk Rd. marsh, Madison, on Aug. 29 (NP). A Forster's Tern was seen at Griswold Pt. Aug. 15 (JM), and at Milford Pt. a record 215 Least Tern nests were counted (RS). Casual in late summer, Royal Terns were found in two spots: three at Long Wharf, New Haven, July 16 (*fide* RBA) and six at Hammonasset Aug. 28 (CT) that tarried well into September. A **Caspian Tern** July 12 (DB) and a Black Tern June 7 (DB, JB) were recorded at Greenwich Pt., while another Black was noted at Milford Pt. Aug. 17 (CT). **Black Skimmer** was finally added to the ranks of the state's breeding birds with the discovery of a nest with eggs of Bluff Is., Greenwich, July 14 (JB, GSn, *fide* DB). (See article in this issue.) Close observation began June 20, when two birds were seen (CP, *fide* DB). As many as five Skimmers were seen until the 25th, after which only two remained (DB, JB). Unfortunately, the nest was washed out by high tides several days after it was discovered. Other Skimmers were seen at Milford Pt. - one on Aug. 17 (CT) and two on Aug. 29 (JM, DT).

GOATSUCKERS THROUGH VIREOS—

Movement of Common Nighthawks along the Saugatuck R. in Seymour was impressive on Aug. 26, when over 900 were counted between 7 and 8 P.M. (BD). In Ridgefield an adult Red-headed Woodpecker was seen repeatedly during the first week of August (LB, *fide* FM). A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher sang for its observer in Peoples S.F., Barkhamsted, June 7 (BD). Steep Rock Park in Washington yielded two Acadian Flycatchers on June 6 (CW, FM, *et al.*), and singing males were present at the Conn. Arboretum in New London well into June (*fide* BDe). Willow Flycatchers were found in new areas in north-central Conn. and seem to be gradually overrunning Alders (PC). According to the nets at Birdcraft, the first major movement of flycatchers occurred Aug. 18, when Yellow-bellied, Acadian and Least were banded (*fide* CTa). Also moving early were Olive-sided Flycatchers, as one passed through Greenwich Audubon Center Aug. 22 (JZ, *fide* DB) and another was seen at Lighthouse Pt., New Haven, Aug. 28 (CT). Two Cliff Swallows were observed June 7 at Peoples S.F. (BD), and at least 12 Purple Martins occupied the house at Sherwood I. S.P., Westport, for the first time (FM).

Winter Wren and **Hermit Thrush** were both confirmed nesters in Northwest Park, Windsor (CB, *fide* PD), and the latter was also confirmed in Burlington and in New Hartford (PC). The first migrating thrushes appeared in the nets at Birdcraft on Aug. 31, while a rare **Northern Wheatear** showed up at Hammonasset on the 29th (FW, *fide* RS) and stayed through the 31st (RS).

Presumably the same one that wintered, a **Loggerhead Shrike** was seen under the power lines in Lyme on June 2 (BM, RS), and another was found at Grace Salmon Park, Westport, Aug. 19 (*fide* RBA). At the northern fringe of its range, White-eyed Vireo was confirmed as a breeder in Storrs with the discovery of an active nest at UConn (GCk, *fide* SD). Solitary Vireo, also near the edge of its range, was found nesting in Burlington and in New Hartford (PC), and in Union it was observed feeding a young Cowbird (GCk, *fide* SD). Riding the early waves, a Philadelphia Vireo was seen in Litchfield in late August (PC).

WARBLERS THROUGH JUNCOS—

Not only was a **Prothonotary Warbler** banded at Birdcraft on Aug. 17, but it was recaptured on the 30th (*fide* CTa)! Worm-eating Warbler, a ground nester, was observed feeding a young Cowbird in Ashford (SD), Black-throated Blue Warbler was confirmed as a breeder in Union (GCk, *fide* SD) and Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler was confirmed in Burlington (PC). Another colony of Cerulean Warblers, in Easton, had five singing males on June 27 (FM). A Northern Waterthrush in Old Greenwich on July 23 (DB) was neither expected nor surprising, and a Kentucky Warbler singing in New Milford on June 9 (BD) was the only one reported other than the Salem birds. Connecticut Warblers, moving through early, were seen around the state in late August and early September. One was banded at Birdcraft on Aug. 28 (*fide* CTa), while another

was seen in a backyard in Wallingford on the 31st (BM, RS). Probably much commoner than they seem due to their retiring nature, Mourning Warblers were seen in Roxbury June 6 (CW, FM, *et al.*) and in N. Coventry June 7 (GCk, *fide* SD). Two, an adult and an imm., southbound on Aug. 29, were seen along the Rippowam R., New Canaan (TD, *fide* FM). A pleasant surprise to the shrike-stalkers in Lyme on June 2 was the Yellow-breasted Chat singing amid the undergrowth beneath the power lines (BM, RS). Not unexpected, Northern Junco was found nesting in Union (GCk, *fide* SD).

Observers and contributors abbreviated in the text:

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Other abbreviations used:

Am.: American, Conn.: Connecticut, *et al.*: and others, *fide:* reported by, imm.: immature, I.: Island, Is.: Islands, L.: Lake, N.: North, Pt.: Point, R.: River, Rd.: Road, Res.: Reservoir, S.: South, S.F.: State Forest, S.P.: State Park, UConn: University of Connecticut, ♀ : female, ♂: male.

ADDENDUM

On May 25 a ♀ **Northern Phalarope** in breeding plumage was observed at Lake Whitney in Hamden (Flo McBride, *fide* Ray Schwartz).

FIRST STATE BREEDING RECORD OF BLACK SKIMMERS

by Thomas R. Baptist

Although Black Skimmers (*Rynchops niger*) have nested for a number of years on Long Island (J. Bull, 1974, *Birds of New York State*, Doubleday, Garden City, NY) and occasionally as far north as Massachusetts (L. Griscom and D. E. Snyder, 1955, *The Birds of Massachusetts*, Peabody Museum, Salem, MA), there have been no records of breeding in Connecticut.

On 20 June 1982 Charles Pettengill observed two Black Skimmers sitting on a sandy shoal which connects two granite outcrops of Bluff Island in Cos Cob Harbor, Greenwich CT. On 24 June, Doris and John Bova watched five skimmers on the island and noted that two of these spent much time together on the shoal and occasionally flew together around the island. Continued observations from the nearby mainland by the Bovas and others from 25 June through 13 July added to the suspicion that the skimmers were breeding. On 14 July this was confirmed when John Bova and George Simpson found and photographed three Black Skimmer eggs in a shallow depression on a sandy shoal. Unfortunately, the nest and eggs were washed away by a late night high tide on 18 July. Since incubation by the female was assumed to have begun on 25 June, the eggs might have been very near the time of hatching by 18 July. The adults continued to stay at the island through 5 August.

The site of this first skimmer nesting for Connecticut, Bluff Island, has also been used by a colony of breeding Common Terns, present for nine consecutive years. The island covers 7,000 sq. ft. and contains several separate granite outcrops loosely connected by sand shoals. The island is 4,300 feet west of Greenwich Point Park and 1,250 feet south of the mainland at Riverside. The Greenwich Conservation Commission and Parks Department persuaded the Town of

Greenwich to designate Bluff Island as a wildlife sanctuary in April, 1982. The island was then posted with vandal-resistant signs proclaiming the area as a tern nesting colony and prohibiting all trespassing. It was regularly patrolled by the Greenwich Marine Police, who were authorized to arrest trespassers. Quite surprisingly, the terns responded to this new protection with an increase from 8 breeding pairs in 1981 to about 100 in 1982! This increase and the nesting of the Black Skimmers clearly document the value of local initiative in wildlife conservation.

Special thanks are due to Doris and John Bova for their meticulous observations of the skimmers and to the many other residents of Greenwich who offered their time and support in protecting the island from the insensitive disruptions which commonly occurred in previous years.

Tom Baptist is the conservation coordinator for the Town of Greenwich and co-compiler of the Greenwich CBC.

Black Skimmer Nest Photo by John Bova

SMITH'S LONGSPUR IN CONNECTICUT

by Paul J. Desjardins

The Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*) breeds along the northern limits of Alaska to Hudson's Bay and winters usually in south central Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, part of Louisiana, eastern Kansas and Oklahoma and northeastern Texas.

Literature indicates that the bird appeared in Massachusetts on October 12, 1968, while here in Connecticut, a specimen was collected in Stratford on March 23, 1968. This sighting therefore, *represents the second state record for this species.*

It occurred during the early afternoon of May 2, 1982 while I was birding Hammonasset State Park in Madison. I observed the bird feeding near a Horned Lark in an area of short grass near the large parking area across the road from the swan pond. The bird acted rather nervous due to the close proximity of several other people.

It was flushed several times and each time it displayed the distinctive tail pattern reminiscent of of a junco or Vesper Sparrow. The white feathers appearing only along the outer edges of the tail. In addition, it displayed a prominent white wing patch at the shoulder. The bird was still in winter plumage. Each time the bird was flushed, it issued a rattling note quite different from the Lapland Longspur.

I managed to obtain three photos taken with a 500 mm telephoto lens, which show the white shoulder patch. The bird apparently departed the area shortly thereafter as it could not be located later that same afternoon. It should be stressed that any longspurs seen in Connecticut should be carefully checked for field marks. The distinctive tail patterns and other marks should be noted since the Lapland Longspur is the only species normally occurring in this area.

Paul Desjardins lives in Windsor Locks and is a member of our Editorial Advisory Board.

Smith's Longspur

Photo by Paul Desjardins

OSPREY SUCCESS AND DISTRIBUTION IN CONNECTICUT

by Thomas R. Hoehn

The Osprey (*Pandion haliatus carolinensis*) is one of the most enjoyably observed birds in Connecticut. A frequent question is "Why don't they nest west of the Connecticut River or more than a mile from the shore of Long Island sound?" Before I discuss factors affecting distribution, I will review their history and status.

According to early reports, the 1935 Long Island Osprey population was less than half the number recorded in 1882 (Bent, 1937). The primary cause of this decline was presumably man developing the coastal area. We know that the prime cause of osprey declines since 1945 was the widespread use of D.D.T. which resulted in eggshell thinning (Ames & Mersereau, 1964). Since the ban on D.D.T. in 1970 the Connecticut Osprey population has recovered at a consistent rate considering that it took from 1970 to 1973 for the ecosystem to respond. Bad weather in the spring of 1978 (Table 1) set things back.

The 1981 nesting season was particularly impressive, with an average of more than two young fledged from each of the 17 successful nests. Since 1977 average productivity has been 1.36 young fledged per observed pair, similar to pre-D.D.T. levels. This increase coincides with a decrease in D.D.E. (a D.D.T. metabolite) and dieldren residues in unhatched osprey eggs. These increases in productivity following the D.D.T. ban are typical for North American Osprey populations (Henny & Anderson, 1979).

Current threats to the osprey include P.C.B.'s and heavy metals (mercury and lead) which have been associated with increased embryonic mortality in other species (Wiemeyer et. al., 1972). However, their effects on ospreys is unclear. The primary causes of known osprey mortalities are impact injuries, emaciation, shooting, and respiratory infections (Wiemeyer et. al., 1980). Shooting of ospreys in the United States appears to be declining as a result of increased public awareness of raptorial species and increased law enforcement (Evans, 1982).

Currently there is no formal management plan for the osprey in Connecticut but the key needs have been clear for some time. Critical habitat preservation, pesticide monitoring, and providing nesting platforms have all been proven effective in restoring osprey populations. The State Department of Environmental Protection has erected more than sixty nesting platforms in recent years. Private individuals and utility companies have provided additional nesting sites so that more than 100 platforms exist today. Osprey nesting platforms have been erected in Greenwich, Norwalk, Westport, Fairfield, Milford, East Haven, Branford, Guilford, Sharon, Enfield, Cromwell, Haddam, Lyme, Ledyard and other cities without success. All successful osprey nests in Connecticut since 1970 have been confined to the six coastal towns between the Pawcatuck and Connecticut Rivers in southeastern Connecticut. Currently there are four pairs in Stonington, five in Groton, one in New London, four in Waterford, three in East Lyme, twelve in Old Lyme, and one in Westbrook.

Several recent nesting attempts in coastal towns west of the Connecticut River have failed. These were in Westbrook and Madison; the total number of towns with any osprey nesting activity is thus eight.

The key to successful reproduction in ospreys is fishing success. These birds require shallow, relatively clear waters with a predictable supply of fish. In late March, April and May alewives and blueback herring return from the sea to find their way to the streams where they were spawned. This high concentration of prey species coincides with the egg laying and incubation period when the female osprey has increased nutritional needs. As the alewives and blueback numbers slow in May, menhaden and other prey species become more abundant. Almost all of the viable alewive runs that remain are in the streams of southeastern Connecticut. In central and southwestern coastal towns, dredged harbors, dammed streams,and turbid waters have either eliminated the alewive runs or made them inaccessible to osprey.

Menhaden are somewhat evenly distributed in coastal waters and therefore are probably not affecting osprey distribution in coastal areas even though they are the most common prey species in the summer. It appears that alewives and blueback herring are accessible to osprey during the period when they need them most, during the egg laying and incubation period, in particular, and prior to the menhaden's arrival. This explanation needs more confirmation, but fisheries biologists have confirmed the locations of the alewive runs and we have frequently observed ospreys taking alewives and blueback herring. Add to this the shallower, less turbid waters of the southeastern shore and it is a logical explanation for osprey distribution in Connecticut.

Examples in New York state may reinforce the belief that a predictable supply of fish is the most important key to current osprey success. The only nesting ospreys in western Long Island Sound are at Lloyd Neck, Long Island (directly south of Darien, CT.). This pair has failed to raise young for each of the three years they have been there. Also, many of the nesting ospreys near eastern Long Island have had poor reproductive success which researchers have ascribed to long flights to and from fishing areas (Poole, 1981). Therefore, it appears that food supply and human disturbance are the important factors currently limiting breeding success in ospreys. That some ospreys currently nest near parking lots and railroad tracks demonstrates a certain adaptiveness but these are exceptions and 95% nest in isolated, low-disturbance areas.

The potential for inland nesting by ospreys in Connecticut is also reduced by the need for a predictable fish supply. Experience in other states and European countries has shown that reservoirs and impoundments are the most likely locations for reestablishing breeding populations of the osprey. Lakes with good fishing potential and low human activity support the densest osprey populations in Sweden (Odsjo and Sondell, 1976). In recent years, more ospreys are being observed in inland locations in Connecticut during the breeding season. With 30 nesting pairs in coastal Connecticut in 1982, we expect another good year, with slow expansion into neighboring towns.

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Osprey *photo by Carl J. Trichka*

SUMMARY OF CONNECTICUT OSPREY ACTIVITY SINCE 1969

YEAR	NESTS OBSVD.	SUCC. NESTS	YOUNG
1969	16	7	10
1970	13	5	8
1971	12	3	8
1972	10	4	9
1973	10	3	4
1974	9	4	7
1975	10	5	10
1976	13	7	14
1977	14	9	20
1978	16	8	15
1979	17	15	25
1980	19	15	26
1981	25	17	38

WINTERING GADWALLS AT HEATHER POND

by Lee & Frank Wagner

At the request of the Greenwich Audubon Society, we made observations at Heather Pond and other nearby areas as part of a year-long species count. The pond is within the 15 mile diameter circle used in the annual Christmas Count. It was during one of our weekly winter visits to Heather Pond that a pair of Gadwall was observed. We know that this species is unusual during the winter months in this area, so we concentrated our observations during these months to determine their relative abundance. This article covers the ten year period from 1971 to 1981.

We began visiting the pond during the early morning or in the evening. Observations of Gadwall had to be done with a good deal of stealth as they are wary and do not allow close approach. An exception to this was a pair that frequented the pond regularly for several years and appeared less nervous than most. Binoculars were used at all times because too close a presence would normally cause the flock to fly.

This man-made pond, originally a gravel pit, measures approximately 200 x 300 feet and is located at the end of Heather Lane on the east bank of the Noroton River in Darien, CT. During this ten year period, the north side of the pond was filled in by the owners of the adjacent, undeveloped land. A stream feeds this pond at the northeast corner along with run off from the steeply wooded land to the east. It is also believed that a spring contributes to the level of the pond. Outflow is through a narrow channel at the southwest corner, emptying into the Noroton River.

During the latter part of 1975, heavy rains caused the river to break through the bank separating it from the pond. A large amount of sand and gravel was deposited near the west side of the pond. The high water levels produced by the breach were later reduced

by adding fill, yet allowing a small flow of water into the pond. This kept a sizeable portion of the pond open during freezing weather. In January 1979, another breach was made in the bank at another location. This break was never filled in and the river continues to flow into the pond, exiting via the outfall at the southwest corner.

When the pond is free of ice, the Gadwall may use all of the pond but prefer the eastern bank, which is shielded by a steep, wooded hill. They are seldom seen on the western bank. The pond, because it usually has some open water during the colder months, plays host to several other species of waterfowl. Canada geese, Mallards and Mute Swans are frequent visitors when nearby ponds freeze over. This overcrowding often causes the Gadwall to leave. On one occasion in November 1976, a flock of Ruddy Ducks arrived at the pond, increasing in numbers to 25 within three weeks. The Gadwall departed during their arrival and returned within two weeks after the Ruddy Ducks left.

In March 1976, a courting display was observed, the only such observation in the decade. Two males and one female were involved. As the males raised their chests out of the water, they briefly jerked their heads high, stretched their necks and abruptly pulled the head down to the shoulders until their bills touched the chest as they sat back on the water. As they repeated this movement, the feathers on the top of the heads were raised. The males faced each other as they performed these movements. The female occasionally made soft sounds to the nearest male. One male appeared to place himself between the female and the other male, even though his rival was only about two feet away.

In February of the same year, vocalizations were briefly heard. These calls were made along with a bobbing of the head. A second group of Gadwall joined the first, giving the same calls. This stopped shortly after the two groups joined into one. Was this some form of greeting? Unfortunately, we were not able to write down these vocalizations, but they were not consistant with the descriptions found in the field guides. These two behavior patterns were the only ones noted aside from the normal feeding, sleeping or preening habits.

During 1977-78 a motorbike trail developed in the area and was present during the next season along with numbers of teenagers who gathered during the daytime on weekends and evenings during the week until mid-January. How much of an effect this had on the numbers of Gadwall we could not establish. Poor weather conditions prevailed from January 1978 to April 1979 with below zero temperatures or heavy rains flooding the pond.

Our observations suggest that the Gadwall arrives in mid-March or April. December appears to be the peak month; with February the next most used month. Our visits to Heather Pond at regular intervals ended with the 1978-1979 season. We did not check the pond in 1979-80 until December and in 1980-81 not until November.

WINTER FOOD OF THE SAW-WHET OWL

by Dwight G. Smith & Arnold Devine

The ecology of the Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*) has been intensively studied in some parts of its range but little information has been published on its food habits in Connecticut. Although the Saw-Whet Owl is a rare to uncommon nesting species in the state, Proctor (1978) noted that this owl is a regular winter visitant in a variety of coniferous habitats in southern Connecticut.

Herein we report on the winter food habits of the Saw-Whet Owl in southern Connecticut based on analysis of pellets.

METHODS

Pellets were collected from beneath known roost sites of Saw-Whet Owls from November through April, 1979 to 1982, and packaged in separate monthly groups. Observation confirmed that all roost sites were those of Saw-Whet Owls. Pellets were air dried, weighed, and maximum length and width measurements taken. Pellet analysis followed standard procedures: pellets were broken

apart with forceps, and small mammals identified on the basis of skulls or mandibles, birds on the basis of feathers. In some cases, mammal identification was confirmed by microscopic identification of fur, which is species-specific.

RESULTS

A total of 269 pellets were collected; measurements are presented in Table 1. Pellet measurements showed slight but not significant differences between months. Pellet weight averaged 1.18 g. but varied from 0.24 g. to 2.55 g., the largest containing remains of two prey individuals. Average length was 30.2 mm with a range from 17 to 48 mm while average width was 15.5 mm with a range from 5 to 22 mm. The larger pellets are within the size range of the Screech Owl (*Otus asio*) pellets and care should be taken when collecting pellets of either of these two small owls. Most pellets contained one prey individual. Of a total of 276 prey items all but one, a Junco, (*Junco hymaelis*) were small mammals (Table 2). The White-footed Mouse (*Peromyscus leucopus*) was the single most common prey item each month and comprised 45% of the total prey individuals. Other common, small mammals included the Short-tailed Shrew (*Blarina brevicauda*) which comprised 3.3% of the total prey; Meadow Vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) which comprised 21% and the House Mouse (*Mus musculus*) which accounted for 15.2%. Uncommon small mammals comprising less than 2% of the total food included three small shrews (*Scoricidae*) and the Junco. These results are similar to food habit studies of this owl in other parts of its range. Stomach contents of 21 Saw-whet Owls in Maine contained 86% mice, 4% shrews and 5% songbirds (Mendall, 1944). Rusling (1951) noted that contents of 93 pellets collected in New Jersey contained 89 mice (48 Meadow Voles, 40 White-footed Mice and 1 Pine Vole (*Microtus pinetorum*), 6 shrews and 1 frog. Rusling further noted that this small owl shows a decided preference for the White-footed Mouse, a fact which is confirmed by our observations.

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Dr. Dwight G. Smith received his Ph.D. from Brigham Young Univ. and teaches at Southern Conn. State College. He has published about 100 articles concerning raptors and is currently the editor of Connecticut Journal of Science Education. In 1978, he co-authored a book published by the National Wildlife Fed. entitled Working Bibliography of Owls of the World.

Arnold "Buzz" Devine received his M.S. in Biology from Southern Conn. State College in 1982 and has written articles dealing with the owl family which have appeared in several ornithological journals. He currently works for the Conn. D.E.P.

Saw-whet Owl Photo by Debbie Devine

TABLE 1. DIMENSIONS OF PELLETS COLLECTED.

Month	N	Length[a]			Width			Weight		
		Mean	SD	Range	Mean	SD	Range	Mean	SD	Range
November	7	30.6	9.7	18-47	15.1	1.8	13-18	1.28	0.8	0.40-2.55
December	28	30.4	8.3	19-43	16.4	2.8	10-20	1.39	1.2	0.40-2.44
January	41	33.8	3.2	17-46	15.9	1.9	12-20	1.12	0.4	0.44-2.20
February	106	28.8	6.9	18-48	15.4	2.6	5-21	1.18	0.5	0.39-2.55
March	59	28.8	5.6	17-44	15.3	2.2	11-22	1.08	0.4	0.51-2.21
April	28	29.0	2.9	18-40	15.1	2.5	11-18	1.01	0.4	0.24-1.89
Total	279									

a) Length and width in mm; weight in g.

TABLE 2. WINTER PREY SPECIES IN SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT

Prey species	November		December		January		February		March		April		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Microtus pennsylvanicus	4	44.4	7	23.3	8	18.0	22	20.0	12	20.0	5	19.0	58	21.0
Peromyscus leucopus	3	33.3	18	60.0	20	45.0	51	47.0	26	44.0	6	23.0	124	45.0
Mus musculus	1	11.1	3	10.0	5	11.0	19	18.0	6	10.0	8	30.0	42	15.2
Blarina brevicauda	-	-	1	3.0	4	9.0	4	4.0	-	-	-	-	9	3.3
Sorex fumeus	-	-	-	-	1	2.0	-	-	-	-		-	1	0.4
Microsorex hoyei	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3.0	1	1.7	-	-	4	1.4
Cryptotis parva	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1.7	-	-	1	0.4
Unidentified rodent	1	11.1	1	3.0	6	14.0	8	7.0	13	22.0	7	27.0	36	13.0
Junco hymaelis	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.9	-	-	-	-	1	0.4
Totals[a]	9	99.9	30	99.3	44	99.0	108	99.9	59	99.4	26	99.0	276	100.1

a) May be less than 100.0 due to rounding.

LISTING

by Joseph D. Zeranski

Since the sport of birding blossomed into what we recognize today, a spin-off has evolved. . . . listing. Listing has been defined as the recording of species which have been identified within a particular area. This area could be a political boundary, a time period or both. The lists take many forms, the most common being the life list. There are state lists, county lists, town lists, yard lists, year lists, big day lists, etc. Observers spend a lot of time, money and effort to increase the size of their lists.

To its disparagers, listing can be a mania for simply checking off the names of birds and too often suggests little concern for the more subtle and significant aspects of avian studies. It is felt that this practice overemphasizes competitiveness and promotes one-upsmanship, as the lists themselves may be unreliable and contain preposterous extravagances. After all, a long list does not necessarily earn respect or enhance ones credentials.

To its proponents, listing encourages the more thorough coverage of areas or time periods than would otherwise occur, resulting in not only more data and knowledge but stronger field skills among observers. Lists can help birders anticipate how many and which species might reasonably be found in an area over a particular period of time. Since birding can consume untold amounts of resources, lists can reflect the amount of time, energy and skill which a person has devoted to birding and provide rough benchmarks with which to judge an observers degree of proficiency. For many birders a comparison of lists shows their ranking and therefore their relative standing in the birding community.

The staff and Editorial Advisory Board of the **Connecticut Warbler** have recognized that many of its readers keep lists of one sort or another-at least life lists-and like most people appreciate peer recognition. Lists of the total number of species seen by birders are often popular reading, even when they are not taken too seriously. After considering the pros and cons of listing, we have decided to publish certain types of lists for our

readers, as it might encourage more field activity and foster a better understanding of avian distribution within the state. Attached to the renewal application in this issue is a form with space for submitting a state list (200 species minimum), a county list and up to three town lists. In addition, there is space to list five species you would *most* want to see in the state. This information will be published in the spring issue.

To this end we have established a few rules which are as follows:

1. All species must have been identified while within the boundaries of the specific area by the reporting observer.

2. Totals are to include all native species as well as introduced species such as Mute Swan, Starling, House Sparrow.

3. All sight records shall be of wild, unrestrained and alive birds, seen through December 31st of the previous year.

4. All species shall coincide with those found in the 5th edition of the A.O.U. Checklist.

5. In publishing these totals, this publication does not endorse them or vouch for their credibility.

This publication will rely upon the integrity of those reporting their lists to provide accurate totals and the staff reserves the discretion not to publish lists, which in their judgement, unduely strains the realm of credibility.

NOTES & NEWS

A.O.U.

The American Ornithologists' Union, oldest and largest of the ornithological societies in North America, is celebrating the hundredth anniversary of its founding in 1983. Its quarterly journal, THE AUK, now includes about 1000 pages a year of papers on a wide variety of ornithological topics. The long-awaited sixth edition of the AOU Checklist of North American Birds will be published in time for the centennial meeting. If interested in knowing more about the AOU please write to Membership Chairman Dr. Gustav A. Swanson, Department of Fishery and Wildlife Biology, Colorado State University, Ft. Collins, CO 80523.

NEW FEATURE— NEXT YEAR!!

It is proposed to begin a new column in future issues of the *Connecticut Warbler* dealing with birding tips. We hope to help birders see a greater variety of birds and maybe improve their birding skills. Novice and intermediate birders will find useful information in this column and hopefully add a few tips for even the "pros". We have available the top birders in the state who can expand on their favorite sites, where to find the elusive species and offer helpful tips on field identification of the more difficult species. But to accomplish this, we need our readers help. Drop us a line with questions about where to see certain species, advice on identification or any other problem that puzzles you. Don't be shy—remember even the pros were beginners once.

WHERE TO BIRD IN THE U.S.A.

Many of you have travelled around the country visiting various wildlife refuges, nature centers, etc. in search of birds, and dutifully gathered maps and checklists. After the trip is ended, do you wonder what to do with this information? Much of it is retired to a dusty corner, especially if you plan not to return to that area again. Now is your chance to put that data to good use. In addition to establishing a Rare Bird file at Birdcraft Museum, we have begun to collect bits and pieces of information from around the country. Our files presently contain maps, choice birding area information, checklists for 37 states plus some of the Canadian provinces. If you have such information and are willing to donate it, please send it to Birdcraft Museum, 314 Unquowa Road, Fairfield, CT 06430. For those of you who are planning a birding trip in the near future, drop us a line about the areas you plan to visit and we will see if we can help you out.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Connecticut Warbler is a quarterly publication devoted to the advancement of the study of birds and their conservation in the state of Connecticut. It is published by the Natural History Services Department of the Connecticut Audubon Society. Address all correspondence to 314 Unquowa Road, Fairfield, CT. 06430.