

# ***THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER***

*A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology*



## THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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### GOAL

To further the study of Connecticut's Bird life and to disseminate knowledge thereof, to educate the public to the need of conserving natural resources.

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### ABOUT OUR COVER

Noble Proctor photographed this Black-legged Kittiwake at Sandy Pt., West Haven, CT. on Sept. 9, 1983. It was discovered on Sept. 8, 1983 by Paul Desjardins.

## **NEW FRONTIERS: 1984**

by Roger Tory Peterson

It is with pleasure that I accepted the invitation to write this editorial because it includes the privilege of announcing the formation of a new group we have long needed, a Connecticut Ornithological Association (COA), organized and managed by and for Connecticut's birding community, both professional and amateur. I expect, therefore, that 1984 will be a milepost in the history of ornithology in our state.

The first step in bringing Connecticut up to date in addressing the need to integrate our growing interest in birdlife, and begin publishing our findings, was taken in 1981 with the appearance of this journal, the first quarterly devoted to combining the study of birds and the fun of seeking them out in our particular countryside. Now, the Connecticut Audubon Society which subsidized this publishing venture has agreed to cede The Connecticut Warbler to the new C.O.A.

I therefore ask all birders, and all organizations interested in birds and their conservation, to join me in giving wholehearted support to C.O.A. It will be our organization, and our journal. Together these will bridge the gap between scientific ornithology at our several universities, and the legion of people who enjoy watching birds because they are such colorful, cheery members of the outdoor community. Indeed, the more we learn about them, the more we realize that birds are an index to the ecosystems we both occupy.

A steering committee is currently gathering input from interested individuals and groups. Fred Sibley, preparator of birds at Yale University's Peabody Museum, is chairman and invites your suggestions. A summer meeting will attend to the approval of bylaws and the election of officers. The publication of The Connecticut Warbler will continue, but will henceforth be the responsibility of C.O.A. Your membership support of the Connecticut Ornithological Association is what will make all this possible. It will of course include a subscription to our journal.

Join us so that no birds shall join the Great Auk in oblivion.

## THE 1983-1984 CHRISTMAS COUNT

By Fred S. Sibley

This year December was exceptionally warm and continued warm well past the initial weekend of the count period. Only three counts (New London, Old Lyme, and Stratford-Milford) were held on the final weekend and even they experienced relatively mild weather. Aside from producing some of the most enjoyable count weather ever, the warmth also produced a lot of open water for ducks, herons, and other water birds. This was most evident on the inland counts as duck and heron numbers soared in both areas and record numbers of waterbird species were found. Hartford and Quinnipiac Valley tied for high inland species count with 84, one below the alltime record, but the Quinnipiac count was an amazing 11 above its previous high. Litchfield (70), Salmon River (76) and Oxford (62) all set new species count records.

Along the coast, New Haven took high species count honors with 124, Westport a distant second at 114, and only New London (111) came close to reaching its previous record.

The most unusual birds were those appearing shortly after the counts, Sandhill Crane at Westport; Barrow's Goldeneye, and Tufted Duck at New Haven. The best bird was a toss up between the Varied Thrush at Westport and a Wood Thrush at Hartford. Certainly the inland counts had more exciting records than other regions.

All references in the following discussion to the new count species, highs, lows, and rarities refer to the ten year period from 1974-75 to 1983-84. Thus, a species seen in 1972 and again this year would be listed as a new species.

Loons were about average this year. A Red-necked Grebe at Westport was the only one reported and single Horned Grebes at Litchfield and Quinnipiac were rarities (i.e. fewer than 3 inland sightings in last ten years). Pied-billed Grebes turned up on most inland counts although not equalling the record year of 1980 and along the coast numbers were back to normal after two record low years. Both cormorants were recorded in record numbers with Double-crested Cormorants going from a record two 10 years ago to 104 this year. Herons were represented by a Snowy Egret at Westport (rarity) and American Bittern (new-

inland) at Quinnipiac. The 154 Great Blue Herons broke the previous inland and coastal records.

The coastal species of ducks included no new species or rarities but the 22 inland species included Northern Shoveler (3 previous inland records) at Hidden Valley, Greater Scaup (3 previous records) at Storrs, and Oldsquaw (3 previous records) at Lakeville. Mute Swans were present in record numbers inland and on the coast. Snow Goose, normally uncommon on the coast, showed up on four counts and an unprecedented 35 were seen inland at Litchfield, for a record 53.

Among the ducks, Gadwall was new to the Litchfield and Oxford counts, Pintail was new to Quinnipiac Valley, Redhead and Ring-necked to Hartford, Greater Scaup to Storrs, Oldsquaw to Lakeville, and Ruddy Duck new to Hartford and Quinnipiac. Along the coast Ring-necked Duck at Stratford was the only bird new to a count. As in the previous two counts, the strong area for Wood Duck was Greenwich with the count increasing for the third year. While a record 315 Lesser Scaup were recorded, all but 3 were found at New Haven in contrast to other years when the species was more evenly distributed. Oldsquaw was present in record numbers, but Greater Scaup and Bufflehead were well below average along the coast. Ruddy Duck had a banner year both in the interior and on the coast after very low counts in 1980 and 1981. Hooded Merganser did well on the coast thanks mainly to an amazing 309 at New London. Common Merganser eclipsed the old inland record as well as the coastal record (1144 versus 983) and set new records on five of the counts.

Among the sandpipers, rails and other species associated with marshes and water, a number of rarities turned up including Osprey at Litchfield and Quinnipiac, Virginia Rail at Storrs; a Greater Yellowlegs at Quinnipiac; Glaucous Gull at Salmon River and Oxford; King Rail at Greenwich; and a peep sp? (Western Sandpiper) at Quinnipiac. There is strong evidence that all winter peeps on the east coast are Western Sandpipers. Therefore, this peep sp? and a sandpiper reported from Westport were probably Westerns. A Lesser Yellowlegs at New Haven was new for that count and the only fourth coastal record. A Black-headed Gull was also new for the New Haven

count. Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, and Purple Sandpiper were all present in record numbers along the coast.

Last year we commented on the gulls increasing their numbers inland and decreasing coastally presumably due to the warm weather. This year with even warmer weather the situation was only slightly similar. Ring-billed Gull is in a somewhat different situation of increasing steadily state wide and very rapid inland. This years inland count is nine times that of five years ago and 18 times the count ten years ago.

Bald Eagles were reported at Hartford, Litchfield, Lakeville, Woodbury and Old Lyme for a state record of 14. Osprey turned up at Litchfield and Quinnipiac but not on the coast where they were hopefully making a winter comeback in 1981. Raptor numbers were very encouraging. A Golden Eagle was seen at Lakeville and Osprey and Merlin (Salmon River) were inland rareties. Record numbers of Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Bald Eagle, Peregrine, and Merlin were sighted. American Kestrel and Northern Harrier were near record low numbers but everything else was average or well above.

Belted Kingfisher lingered inland in record numbers and on the coast, enjoying the open water, warmer weather and more active fish.

Owl watchers got their fill this year with near perfect weather and relatively warm temperatures. The owl specialialists ran out of excuses for not starting hours before dawn and turned up a record number of owls for their efforts. Along the coast, new records were set for Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, and Saw-whet Owl. On the inland counts record numbers of Saw-whet Owl was found. Ten years ago they were unusually scarce (average of less than one a year) and this year two-thirds of the counts found one or more. Snowy Owl turned up on the Stratford and Westport counts for a record. Short-eared Owl was the only species with a poor showing, being at a near record low of three.

The warm weather did produce large numbers of some late lingerers but a few rarities. Despite an abundance of unusual warblers on field trips in November only Nashville Warbler (Wesport), Pine Warbler (Old Lyme), and Ovenbird (new inland species-

Hartford) were found. Yellow-breasted Chat was missing for the first time in over ten years, Yellow-rumped Warbler numbers were average, Palm Warbler was only found at New Haven, and Yellowthroat numbers were only slightly above average.

Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Hermit Thrush, and Rufous-sided Towhee numbers were well above last year but only catbirds were present in record numbers. A Rose-breasted Grosbeak at Lakeville was a new inland species. Two Eastern Phoebes at Hartford were new to that count.

Woodpeckers did very well. Common Flicker and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker were at record levels inland. Red-bellied Woodpecker continued their increase coastally and inland. A record six Red-headed Woodpeckers, still rarities on every count, turned up at Hartford (3), Litchfield, Woodbury, and New Haven.

Interestingly, Brown Creeper, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren and Golden-crowned Kinglet, all standard winter residents, were doing very well. Perhaps due to last years warm winter and increased survivorship.

Eastern Bluebird continued to increase inland. Woodbury, Litchfield and Salmon River continue to be the interior strongholds while Westport and Greenwich contain almost all the coastal lingering bluebirds. Common Crow numbers were double the previous record due to nearly 50,000 at Hartford.

Winter finches just did not appear this year. Both Evening Grosbeak (2200) and Purple Finch (600) were present in average numbers but are hardly considered winter finches. Pine Grosbeak was found only at Litchfield and Hidden Valley; Common Redpoll at Hartford, Lakeville, and Salmon River; Pine Siskin on all counts except Quinnipiac and Stratford but low numbers on most: and five Red Crossbills at Salmon River and New London. Big finch flights previously occurred in 1973, 1977, and 1981, so maybe 1985 will produce another incursion. Boreal Chickadee, another rare winter invasion species, turned up at New Haven and Salmon River.

Meadowlark numbers have declined to a record low statewide. Until 1981, there were an average of 200 plus seen. In 1981, the species was almost absent on the coast and at about half strength inland. Last year saw a slight recovery, but this year numbers

dropped precipitously inland where only 27 birds were seen on two counts (Storrs and Quinnipiac).

Sparrows, being at the end of the list, are normally given little time by summarizers already dazed from the multitude of interesting records in the preceding 120-150 species. This year we will give them their due.

A Grasshopper Sparrow at Salmon River was the second for that count and the 4th inland record and a Lincoln's Sparrow at Old Lyme for the second year in a row were rarities. Vesper Sparrow (1 at Hartford) and Sharp-tailed Sparrow (1 at New London) were both more common in the '70's. Savannah Sparrow is also in a low point of their cycle although the Ipswich Sparrow, a distinctive subspecies, was recorded at Old Lyme and Stratford. Tree Sparrow numbers were low, but this is not surprising in view of the warm weather. There seems to be a rather exact correlation in previous counts with warm Decembers and low counts.

Probably balancing off the Tree Sparrow was the Field Sparrow which had record high numbers on five of nine inland counts and near record numbers on the coast. Fox Sparrow numbers, had record lows at New Haven and Westport, and do not lend themselves to explanation. Chipping Sparrow seems to be turning up with more regularity. Hartford has recorded them 12 of the last 13 years and this year New Haven, Westport and Salmon River recorded them. White-crowned Sparrow was about average as were the old reliables Dark-eyed Junco and White-throated Sparrow. Swamp Sparrow set new count highs at Litchfield, Oxford and New London while the Song Sparrow was recorded in record numbers at New London but alltime low numbers at Hartford and New Haven.

What best sums up the count? The total of 173 species is well above the 159 and 161 of the preceding years and the total individuals is nearly a record but due mainly to the high crow count at Hartford. As usual, Starlings (284,314) made up more than half the total individuals (551,640).

The total number of observers and party hours has increased slightly over the years. The total of 998 observers this year is only slightly above average. Greenwich had the most observers (230) followed by Hartford with 129. Hidden Valley beat Oxford by two



for the fewest number of observers with 16.

The following paragraphs list each of the fifteen counts and summarize the notable birds recorded. The numbers following the count name are the total species seen on ten counts from 1974 to present, followed by the species seen on all ten counts. Noteworthy species are those seen three or fewer times on the previous nine counts and those not seen the previous nine counts are underlined. High counts and low counts are for the same ten year period. \* Total individuals seen has been rounded off to the nearest thousand.

### NORTHERN CONNECTICUT COUNTS

STORRS: (110-33): Natchaug Ornithological Society. Compiler: Shirley Davis. 34 observers; 63 species plus 2 in count period; 10,000 individuals. Noteworthy: Pied-billed Grebe, Greater Scaup, Ring-necked Duck, Canvasback, Common Merganser, Bobwhite, Virginia Rail. High counts: Canada Goose, Ring-necked Duck, Canvasback, Common Goldeneye, Red-bellied Woodpecker. Low Counts: Mourning Dove, Common Flicker, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Purple Finch, American Goldfinch, White-throated Sparrow.

HARTFORD: (126-46): Hartford Audubon Society. Compilers: Steve Davis and Jay Kaplan. 129 observers; 84 species; 125,000 individuals. Noteworthy: Pied-billed Grebe, Mute Swan, Green-winged Teal, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Common Goldeneye, Ruddy Duck, Goshawk, Bald Eagle, Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Phoebe, Wood Thrush, Ovenbird, Vesper Sparrow. High Counts: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Common Flicker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Common Crow, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Purple Finch. Low Counts: Swamp Sparrow, Song Sparrow.

LITCHFIELD HILLS: (109-37); Litchfield Hills Audubon Society. Compiler: Ray Belding. 51 observers, 70 species (new high) plus 1 in count period; 17,000 individuals. Noteworthy: Great Blue Heron, Snow Goose, American Wigeon, Gadwall, Bufflehead, Goshawk, Cooper's Hawk, Bald Eagle, Osprey, Turkey, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Savannah Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow. High Counts: Snow Goose, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser,

Ring-billed Gull, Eastern Bluebird, Brown-headed Cowbird, House Finch. Low Counts: none.

LAKEVILLE-SHARON: (120-39); Housatonic and Sharon Audubon Societies. Compiler: Bob Moeller. 57 observers; 75 species plus 4 in count period; 10,000 individuals. Noteworthy: Horned Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Oldsquaw, Cooper's Hawk, Golden Eagle, Red-headed Woodpecker, Carolina Wren, Rusty Blackbird, Rose-breasted Grosbeak. High Counts: Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Brown Creeper. Low Counts: American Kestrel, Pileated Woodpecker, Common Grackle.

#### MID-CONNECTICUT COUNTS

SALMON RIVER: (110-36): Mattabeseck Audubon Society Compiler: Jim Mockalis. 28 observers; 76 species (new high) plus 2 in count period; 20,000 individuals. Noteworthy: Pied-billed Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Wood Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, Turkey Vulture, Merlin, Bobwhite, American Woodcock, Glaucous Gull, Iceland Gull, Boreal Chickadee, Common Redpoll, Grasshopper Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow. High Counts: Mute Swan, Black Duck, Common Merganser, Great Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Ringed-billed Gull, Common Flicker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Starling, Brown-headed Cowbird, Field Sparrow. Low Counts: none.

QUINNIPIAC VALLEY: (115-42): Compiler: Wilford Schultz. 34 observers; 84 species (new high) plus 3 in count period; 14,000 individuals. Noteworthy: Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, American Bittern, Mute Swan, Green-Winged Teal, Pintail, Common Goldeneye, Ruddy Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Greater Yellowlegs, Peep sp.? (Western ?), Long-eared Owl, Saw-whet Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Winter Wren, Water Pipit, Savannah Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow. High Counts: Pied-billed Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Mute Swan, Screech Owl, Saw-whet Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Black-capped Chickadee, Golden-crowned Kinglet, House Finch. Low Counts: Common Grackle.

OXFORD: (98-28): Naugatuck Valley Audubon Society. Compilers: Rod Hudson and Buzz Devine. 18 observers, 62 species (new high) plus 1 in count period; 10,000 individuals. Noteworthy: Pied-billed Grebe, Mute Swan,

Gadwall, Redhead, Goshawk, Glaucous Gull, Iceland Gull, Saw-whet Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Rufous-sided Towhee, Pine Siskin. High Counts: Common Merganser, Gray Catbird, Pine Siskin. Low Counts: none.

WOODBURY-ROXBURY: (112-51): Compiler: Buck Jenks. 58 observers; 77 species plus 3 in count period; 32,000 individuals. Noteworthy: Ring-necked Duck, Cooper's Hawk, Bobwhite, Killdeer, American Woodcock, Iceland Gull, Long-eared Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Brown Thrasher, House Wren. High Counts: Ringed-necked Duck, Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Common Crow, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Field Sparrow. Low Counts: Pied-billed Grebe.

HIDDEN VALLEY: (109-31): Compiler: Jim Hammer. 16 observers, 69 species plus 3 in count period; 13,000 individuals. Noteworthy: Northern Shoveler, Redhead, Ruddy Duck, Goshawk, Northern Harrier, Killdeer, Saw-whet Owl, House Wren, Winter Wren, Carolina Wren, Hermit Thrush, Pine Grosbeak, Pine Siskin, Rufous-sided Towhee. High Counts: Mute Swan, Redhead, Ruddy Duck, Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Belted Kingfisher, Starling, Field Sparrow. Low Counts: American Kestrel, Robin.

### COASTAL COUNTS

NEW LONDON: (151-79): Dennison Pequotsepos Nature Center. Compiler: Bob Dewire. 32 observers; 111 species plus 2 in count period; 43,000 individuals. Noteworthy: Ruddy Duck, Goshawk, Cooper's Hawk, Clapper Rail, Long-eared Owl, Eastern Bluebird, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Oriole, Red Crossbill, Sharp-tailed Sparrow. High Counts: Double-crested Cormorant, Mute Swan, Brant, Oldsquaw, Barred Owl, Gray Catbird, Song Sparrow. Low Counts: Wood Duck, Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser, Rough-legged Hawk, American Kestrel, American Coot.

OLD LYME: (155-72): Potapaug Audubon Society. Compiler: Jay Hand. 63 observers; 110 species plus 2 in count period; 20,000 individuals. Noteworthy: Double-crested Cormorant, Turkey Vulture, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, House Wren, Pine Warbler, Ipswich Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow. High Counts: Common Goldeneye, Surf Scoter, Purple Sandpiper, Ruddy

Turnstone, Dunlin, Sanderling, Horned Lark. Low Counts: Savannah Sparrow.

NEW HAVEN: (181-83): New Haven Bird Club. Compilers: Fred King and Fred Sibley. 87 observers; 124 species plus 4 in count period; 50,000 individuals. Noteworthy: Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Black-headed Gull, Laughing Gull, Red-headed Woodpecker, Boreal Chickadee, Chipping Sparrow. High Counts: Great Blue Heron, Snow Goose, Great Black-backed Gull, Screech Owl, Purple Finch. Low Counts: Mallard, Greater Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Northern Harrier, Ruffed Grouse, Rusty Blackbird, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow.

STRATFORD-MILFORD: (175-64): Connecticut Audubon Society. Compiler: Dennis Varza. 46 observers; 109 species plus 2 in count period; 85,000 individuals. Noteworthy: Snow Goose, Wood Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Ruddy Duck, Peregrine Falcon, Glaucous Gull, Iceland Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Snowy Owl, Saw-whet Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Cedar Waxwing, Evening Grosbeak. High Counts: Great Cormorant, Oldsquaw, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Common Flicker, Rufous-sided Towhee. Low Counts: American Wigeon, Short-eared Owl, Hairy Woodpecker, Snow Bunting.

WESTPORT: (163-71): Saugatuck Valley Audubon Society. Compilers: Frank Mantlik and Dennis Varza. 115 observers, 114 species plus 4 in count period; 59,000 individuals. Noteworthy: Red-necked Grebe, Snowy Egret, Redhead, Virginia Rail, American Woodcock, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Glaucous Gull, Snowy Owl, Saw-whet Owl, Varied Thrush, House Wren, Nashville Warbler, Northern Oriole. High Counts: Great Blue Heron, Ruddy Duck, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling. Low Counts: Greater Scaup, Bufflehead, Herring Gull, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Cedar Waxwing, Brown-headed Cowbird, Fox Sparrow.

GREENWICH-STAMFORD: (164-78): Greenwich Audubon Society. Compilers: Fred Purnell, Tom Baptist, and Joe Zeranski. 230 Observers; 112 species plus 1 in count period; 43,000 individuals. Noteworthy: Black Scoter, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Harrier, Bobwhite, King Rail, Greater Yellowlegs, Laughing Gull, Saw-whet Owl, Horned Lark, Marsh Wren, White-crowned Sparrow. High Counts: Wood Duck, Black Scoter, Saw-whet Owl. Low Counts: none.

## THE WOODBURY-ROXBURY JUNE COUNT

A Bird Barometer

by Ed Hagen

The Western Connecticut Bird Club has sponsored a bird census in the area covered by the Woodbury-Roxbury Christmas Bird Count on the first Sunday in June since 1978. Christmas counts have value in defining the winter range for many species, in monitoring range expansion for non-migratory species (Northern Cardinal, Tufted Titmouse and Northern Mockingbird, for example), and in providing clues to population increases and decreases. June counts have a similar potential. Information on migratory breeding birds is the area of highest value. Christmas counts can not monitor this important activity directly. Atlas projects, which do examine breeding, are not ongoing, nor are they quantitative for the most part.

The Woodbury-Roxbury June count has particularly high potential to generate data on breeding range expansion. The count circle lies in west central Connecticut and is totally in land. The Housatonic River runs through the western part of the circle and Lake Quassapaug is at the eastern edge. It is an area that lies near the northern-most breeding territory for some species and near the southernmost breeding grounds for others. Hence, established presence of specific birds during the breeding season, or long term increase in numbers of certain species that are present can be evidence of range expansion. Varied habitats of this count circle make it a most suitable monitoring spot. The habitats present include fresh water marshes, river valleys, farms and deciduous, mixed, and evergreen forests.

Northern species known to breed nearby (Litchfield) but not yet observed are Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and White-throated Sparrow.

A southern species known to breed nearby but not yet observed is Blue-winged Teal. A western bird that appears to increase in this area as a breeder is the Cliff Swallow.

The following table lists those northern species whose range has a southern limit near central Connecticut:

SPECIES	'78	'79	'80	'81	'82	'83
Hooded Merganser	0	0	1	0	0	0
Common Merganser	0	1	0	0	0	0
Northern Goshawk	1	1	0	3	2	5
Alder Flycatcher	5	4	5	0	1	0
Red-breasted Nuthatch	0	0	2	0	0	1
Winter Wren	0	0	1	0	1	3
Swainson's Thrush	0	0	0	0	1	1
Hermit Thrush	0	3	0	3	2	5
Solitary Vireo	0	2	1	7	2	10
Golden-winged Warbler	0	0	3	0	0	0
Nashville Warbler	1	2	0	0	2	0
Northern Parula*	0	0	1	1	0	0
Magnolia Warbler	1	1	0	0	0	2
Black-thr. Blue Warb.	0	1	0	0	0	3
Yellow-rumped Warbler	0	2	1	0	0	0
Blackburnian Warbler	1	3	3	2	4	16
Pine Warbler*	0	0	0	2	0	0
Mourning Warbler	0	0	0	0	1	1
Canada Warbler	1	2	4	1	3	8

\*These species are relatively widespread in the USA, but in Connecticut appear more commonly in the northwest than in the southeast.

The following table lists those species whose range have a northern limit near central Connecticut:

SPECIES	'78	'79	'80	'81	'82	'83
Northern Bobwhite	2	0	3	1	0	0
Red-bellied Woodpecker	0	1	0	1	0	1
Acadian Flycatcher	1	1	1	1	2	3
Carolina Wren	0	0	2	4	2	5
White-eyed Vireo	0	1	0	1	3	0
Cerulean Warbler	0	4	1	0	0	2
Kentucky Warbler	0	1	2	1	0	0
Hooded Warbler	0	0	2	1	0	8
Yellow-breasted Chat	0	0	0	1	0	1
Orchard Oriole	5	3	11	5	5	6

The Woodbury-Roxbury June Count has averaged 35 participants and 113 species were observed. Its cumulative species total is 146. The count's major value lies in the fact that it samples populations near the limit of their ranges.

Monitoring over a long period of time will certainly help document range expansion or contraction in these species.

### LARSEN HAWK WATCH

by Carl Trichka

After a hiatus of a year, Joe Wall, veteran hawk watcher, resumed his familiar place upon the platform in Deer Meadow at Larsen Sanctuary, Fairfield, CT. An impressive number of raptors was recorded by Joe despite manning the platform for only 32 days during the September to November migration period. A total of 7,576 hawks were logged in for 1983.

Peak Broad-winged Hawk days occurred on September 14, 22, 23 and 24th in this region. Neil Currie, the regional coordinator for the New England Hawk Watch reported that there were extremely large counts of broad-wings recorded through out the region, with the peak flights in Massachusetts and northern Connecticut occurring on September 13 and 14. Mt. Wachusett in Princeton, MA. reported 19,912 broad-wings on the 13th, while at Southwick, MA. a count of 12,381 broad-wings was recorded, also on the same day. Based on the numbers reported at various stations across Massachusetts and northwestern Connecticut, the bulk of the broad-wing flight peaked during the period of September 12-14, while numbers recorded along southwestern Connecticut were much less indicating a more northerly flight path this year.

The following table lists the total number of hawks by species at Larsen Sanctuary for the three month fall period of 1983:

GOSHAWK	21	BALD EAGLE	5
SHARP-SHINNED	2598	NOR. HARRIER	88
COOPER'S	60	OSPREY	341
RED-TAILED	246	PEREGRINE	5
RED-SHOULDERED	65	MERLIN	5
BROAD-WINGED	3627	AMER. KESTREL	448
ROUGH-LEGGED	1	UNIDENTIFIED	66

## WOOD DUCK NEST BOX COMPETITION

by Ted Maguder and Glenn Pederson

The Wood Duck (Aix sponsa) is a favorite of waterfowl hunters and ornithologists alike. The shimmering, iridescent plumage of the drake, distinguish it as the most handsome duck in Connecticut. Since this gamebird feeds upon acorns, wild grapes, and other berries, it is often the target of hunters pursuing a special Sunday meal.

Since the initiation of the Connecticut Wood Duck Nesting Box Program in 1953, this bird has again become common in swampy areas. Nesting boxes provide a good substitute for cavities in dead trees. The erection of these boxes in swamps and marshes thus provides additional nesting spaces.

Usage of nesting boxes has been good to excellent, depending upon the area. During the 1981 breeding season, 502 out of 898 (55.9%) boxes inspected by conservation officers were utilized by Wood Ducks.

Charter Marsh in Tolland is a state-owned 240-acre wildlife management area purchased in 1948 as a waterfowl breeding and resting area. Management activities have included ; dike construction to flood 125 acres of former cranberry marsh, level ditching to create waterfowl nesting islands, Canada Goose and Mallard releases, seeding of goose pasturage, and the erection of Wood Duck nesting boxes. Nesting box usage was monitored here during a recent summer. Twenty-one boxes were inspected on a weekly basis from April through July, and inhabitants, nest construction, clutch size, and hatching success were recorded.

Five of the 21 boxes (23.8%) were successfully utilized by the Wood Duck. A total of 43 wood duck eggs were produced in the five boxes, and 18 hatched (42%). Surprisingly, a Wood Duck nest was built on the ground among the sedges. Seven eggs were in the nest, all of which hatched.

In order to compare the summer's results with other years, a summary of Wood Duck nesting box usage in Charter Marsh was obtained from DEP's bureau of wildlife. Three cycles of nesting box usage can be observed in the data since the erection of boxes in 1954. From 1954 through 1964, over 78% of the nesting boxes inspected were utilized by Wood Ducks. But from



1965 through 1974, usage dropped to 25%. Data from 1975 through 1982 show a come back, as utilization rose to almost 40%.

Nesting box usage is subject to many variables. Vegetational changes effecting food availability, predation, and competition for nesting boxes must be considered. Insufficient survey data are occasionally frustrating, for if ice cover is not present for the January census, it is impossible to inspect all the boxes.

Several investigations have mentioned the raccoon as the prime predator of Wood Duck eggs and nestlings, so predator guards are usually installed on nesting boxes. The Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) is also a serious competitor for nesting boxes. In our study, 13 of the 21 boxes (61.9%) were utilized by breeding starlings. This severe competition removed over 50% of the nesting boxes from Wood Duck usage during the peak of the breeding season. One exception was observed: successful clutch of five Wood Duck hatchlings in July was recorded in a box that previously held three Starling fledglings in late May.

The literature reports the Fox Squirrel, Carolina Wren, Tufted Titmouse, Screech Owl, Bluebird, Hooded Merganser, and several species of insects, as competitors for Wood Duck boxes. Our study added the Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*) to this list and identified the mud and paper wasps as important insect competitors.

Our study also agreed with previous research observations that the Wood Duck will not attempt to occupy a nesting box when used by competitors. However, other researchers have reported that a hen will usually defend her nest after incubation has commenced. It is believed that attachment of the hen to the nest will increase as the reproductive cycle progresses.

We do not dispute this, but believe that competition early in the breeding cycle will cause more abandonment by Wood Ducks planning to utilize a box prior to invasion by another species.

Wood Ducks will sometimes occupy boxes abandoned by other species, as already noted. Nesting success can be improved by periodic inspection and the removal of competitors. Our removal of wasp nests, however, only resulted in nesting by starlings.

Another important factor in the successful utilization of Wood Duck nesting boxes is the construction of the nesting box itself. Four of the five boxes utilized by ducks in our study allowed light to enter only through the entrance hole. Eleven of our 21 boxes had a glass plate in the roof, and only one such box used. This suggests that the Wood Duck prefers a dark box.

Our results are based upon a sample too small for statistical analysis. However, previous reports of the non-aggressive behavior of the Wood Duck confirm our observations and warrant a more thorough investigation of the role of competition in the use of nest boxes.

## NOTES AND NEWS

### THE CONNECTICUT RARE BIRD HOTLINE

When rare birds are discovered they are present at best for a few days to only a few hours. To adequately document these birds, photographs and/or many observers are necessary. Usually friends and an occasional outside expert are called in to see the bird. If no one can see the bird before it disappears, the validity of the record remains unsubstantiated. People competent to photograph or confirm the sighting are often neglected if they are not in regular contact. Finally, many of the other birders who would like to see the bird often hear about it weeks later, when it is obviously too late.

The first step undertaken to correct the delay in rare bird reports was the formation of the Connecticut Rare Bird Alert (RBA). The RBA is a recorded phone message, updated weekly or bi-weekly, with rare birds and seasonal highlights reported during the previous week. This method centralizes reports, but has two weaknesses, first it is up to the individual to call the tape regularly to learn of changes or new reports, secondly-often the bird has left by the time it has been reported and placed on the tape. To solve the problems associated with the RBA, the Connecticut Ornithological Association has developed a Rare Bird Hotline (RBH) to supplement the RBA. The RBH is a pre-arranged phone network between all the birding groups to transmit rare bird reports as soon as they are received. The idea is to transmit information on only

the rarest birds that need documentation, bridge the gap between the groups of birders that have little contact and get all interested birders aware of a rare report within 24 hours of the sighting. Those rare birds that do stay available for a week or more will then be put on the RBA for the casual birder who is not prone to dropping everything at the report of a Gyrfalcon.

If you are interested in becoming part of the RBH, contact one of the people listed below and leave your name and number where you can be contacted in the event a rare bird shows up. That same local person should also be contacted in the event you should happen to discover a rare bird also.

Greenwich	Joe Zeranski	661-9607
Westport	Frank Mantlik	838-1694
Oxford	Harold Crandall	888-1786
Sharon	Art Gingert	364-5302
Fairfield	Dennis Varza	374-6229
Hamden	Ray Schwartz	562-8867
Guilford	Fred Sibley	453-9345
Hartford	Rick Cech	561-2237
Storrs	Bill Gaunya	429-2541
Middletown	George Zepko	347-9411
Marlborough	Jim Mockalis	295-9337
Moodus	Clay Taylor	878-9078
New London	Bob Dewire	599-3085

### **RAPTOR COLLISIONS WITH UTILITY LINES** A Call for Information

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Sacramento, in cooperation with the Pacific Gas and Electrical Company, is assembling all available published and unpublished information concerning collisions of raptors with power lines and other utility lines. Actual case histories--no matter how circumstantial or fragmentary--are needed. Please acknowledge that you have such information by writing to Dr. Richard R. (Butch) Olendorff, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, 2800 Cottage Way, Sacramento, California 95825 U.S.A. (Phone (916) 484-4541). A form on which to record your information will then be sent by return mail.

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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 paper 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.

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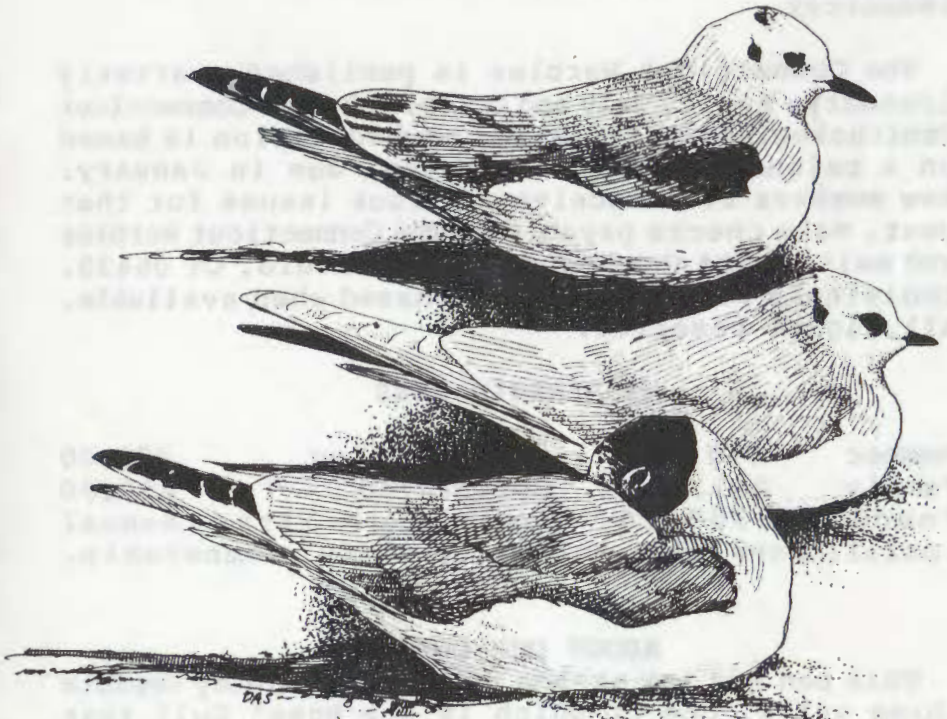
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# THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

*A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology*



## THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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### GOAL

To further the study of Connecticut's Bird life and to disseminate knowledge thereof, to educate the public to the need of conserving natural resources.

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Member	\$10.00	Contributing	\$20.00
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Founder	\$300.00, payable in three annual installments and automatic life membership.		

### ABOUT OUR COVER

This pen and ink sketch by David A. Sibley depicts three gulls, one of which is the Ross' Gull that appeared at the Oyster River in April. It brought birders flocking for days. It is flanked by two Bonaparte's Gulls in different plumage.

## 1ST ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

THE FIRST ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF THE C.O.A. WILL BE HELD AT THE PEABODY MUSEUM, YALE UNIVERSITY, NEW HAVEN, CT. ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 14, 1984.

ALL MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING OF THE C.O.A. ARE INVITED TO ATTEND. THIS MEETING WILL REVIEW THE PROPOSED BY-LAWS FOR THE ORGANIZATION AND SET FORTH A SLATE OF OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO BE VOTED UPON BY THE MEMBERSHIP PRESENT.

THE DATE OF SEPTEMBER 29, 1984 HAS BEEN CHOSEN FOR THE LIGHTHOUSE POINT HAWK WATCH AND FIELD DAY. ALL MEMBERS AND FRIENDS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND. A SPECIAL INVITATION HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO DR. ROGER TORY PETERSON. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND DETAILS WILL FOLLOW IN A SPECIAL MAILING. MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

## FIRST CONNECTICUT RECORD FOR THE ROSS' GULL

by Anthony H. Bledsoe, Raymond Schwartz  
and Dennis Varza

On 11 April 1984 Dennis Varza and Ray Schwartz sighted an unusual gull at the mouth of the Oyster River, West Haven, Connecticut while searching for Little Gulls at low tide in flocks of migrating Bonaparte's Gulls. Varza and Schwartz were scanning the flocks of Bonaparte's Gulls when they saw a small gull with very light wings and wingtips, sleeping amidst the Bonaparte's Gulls. Approaching to about 15 meters, they noted that the bird had a short bill, equal in length to the distance between the bill and the eye, and dark smudges in front of the eyes and at the sides of the head. This combination of characters prompted them to approach more closely. The bird flushed and revealed light gray underwings, a broad white trailing edge to the wing, and a wedge-shaped tail. Suspecting that they had seen a Ross' Gull, (Rhodostethia rosea), Varza and Schwartz telephoned other observers, but the gull departed before the other birders arrived, and it was not relocated that day. The next day, just before low tide the gull appeared again on the exposed mudflats of the Oyster River estuary, and by the end of the day, nearly 50 observers had seen it and its identification was confirmed. During the next two weeks, several hundred observers from Connecticut, nearby states, and as far away as Florida gathered at the Oyster River for an opportunity to see the Ross' Gull outside its normal range of Siberia and the Arctic Ocean. Its last appearance was on 22 April and by then nearly 200 people had seen it. Several observers photographed the Ross' Gull, and a drawing of the bird by David Sibley appears on the cover of this issue. A detailed description of the Oyster River Ross' Gull is on file with the Records Committee of the Connecticut Ornithological Association.

The plumage of the Ross' Gull at Oyster River was typical of adults molting from winter to breeding plumage, with the neck ring becoming more prominent over a period of time. The lack of any remnants of dusky coloration on the wing coverts indicates that the bird was a full adult, at least two years old.

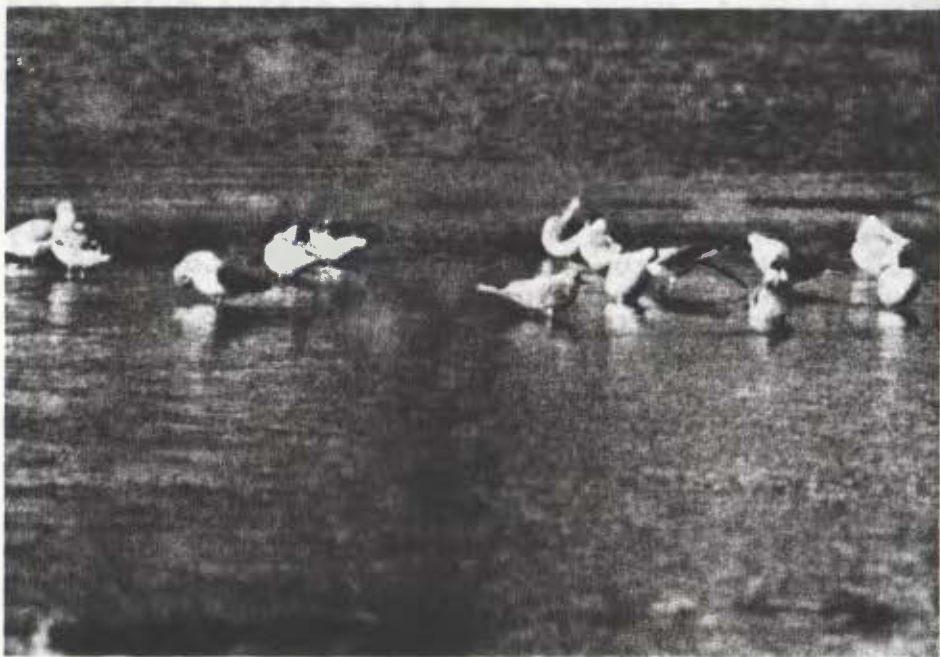


Observers differed in their perception of the extent of the rosy tinge on the underparts--some observers could not see any rosy color, while others reported a faint rosy tinge on the belly, visible only under certain lighting conditions. Some Bonaparte's Gulls also had the same coloration to their underparts, and the consensus among observers was that a rosy tinge on both the Ross' Gull and the Bonaparte's Gulls, although faint, was present. Ross' Gulls in both breeding and winter plumage in the Arctic are usually conspicuously rosy, but subarctic Ross' Gulls rarely have much, if any, rosy tinge (Bledsoe and Sibley, MS). A rosy tinge, variable in extent, is normally found on adult alternate plumage Little, Bonaparte's, Common Black-headed and Franklin's Gulls (Dwight 1925, Grant 1978, 1979, 1981).

The Ross' Gull was sighted at the Oyster River on 7 of 12 days from 11 April to 22 April 1984, most frequently at or near low tide. On one occasion (20 April), the bird was present at high tide. The bird usually spent its time preening and sleeping on exposed mudflats in large, mixed flocks composed primarily of Bonaparte's Gulls but included Great Black-backed, Herring, and Ring-billed Gulls, and up to three Common Black-headed Gulls, one Little Gull, an Iceland Gull, and on 19 April, a Royal Tern. It was difficult to spot the Ross' Gull arriving at the mudflats. Once on the mudflats (and when unobstructed by other gulls), it stood out clearly, looking substantially whiter than the Bonaparte's Gulls. When leaving the area, the Ross' Gull usually flew southeast towards the center of Long Island Sound. The bird typically stayed at the Oyster River for several hours, although the duration of its visits were variable, ranging from 15 minutes to 3 hours. The bird did not spend any substantial time in flight, flying only when the flock of gulls was disturbed or when leaving Oyster River. On one occasion it sat on the water. The only time the bird was observed feeding was at high tide on 20 April.

Ross' Gull breeds in large numbers in eastern Siberia and in small, isolated groups at several arctic sites. The winter range of the species has not been determined with certainty but is most likely the Arctic Ocean along lines of breaking

ice. The Connecticut Ross' Gull was the seventh North American record away from the Arctic Ocean and the small breeding colony at Churchill, Manitoba (Chartier and Cooké 1980). The Ross' Gull records for Massachusetts (2 March-6 March 1975, Miliotis and Buckley 1975) and Illinois (19 Nov-1 Dec 1978, Balch et al. 1979) are widely known, but records from Newfoundland (18 Dec 1976, Amer. Birds 31:306-307), Colorado (28 April-7 May 1983, Chase and Bunn 1984), Ontario (14-23 May 1983, Amer. Birds 37:865), and British Columbia (9 Nov 1966, in Chartier and Cooke 1980) are less widely appreciated. The subarctic North American records of Ross' Gull fit the seasonal pattern of vagrancy of the species in the subarctic Northern Hemisphere, with records scattered from September to July and concentrated in late December and middle April (Bledsoe and Sibley MS). Observers in Connecticut, New York, and other northeast states should be aware of the possibility, and indeed, given enough time, the probability of another local occurrence of Ross's Gull.



Ross' Gull (center)

Photo by Ray Schwartz

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### CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

AUTUMN: SEPTEMBER 1-NOVEMBER 30, 1983

by Dennis Varza

The fall migration arrived on time and tended to produce a steady flow of birds instead of a wave-like pattern. Many fall migrants stayed late while many migrants appeared early. The net result of the two patterns indicated that November was a good month for birding. The most significant sighting for the year was a Long-toed Stint (photo) at New Haven. Besides the first state record, it is probably the first continental record for the United States. Details of this sighting will be published in American Birds. Other major sightings include Gannet, Black Rail, Black-legged Kittiwake, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Boreal Chickadee, Sedge Wren, and a Clay-colored Sparrow. September 13 and 14 were days of a major Broad-winged Hawk migration movement as was 23 and 24 September. During that period there was also a large flight

of thrushes, vireos, and warblers. The Greenwich Nature Center reported 300+ Rose-breasted Grosbeaks during that period. A second part of that flight was the arrival of several early winter migrants that included Great Cormorant and Lapland Lonspur.

#### LOONS-HERONS

Both species of loon and Horned Grebe were common along the coast from 10 October through December. There was an early Horned Grebe on Sept. 12 (DV) in Stratford, and their numbers were up all fall. Six to ten grebes could be found where one or two expected. Two Gannet were seen at Hammonasset St. Pk. on Oct. 11 (RS, JZi) after a day of strong east winds. A land lubber Double-crested Cormorant was observed in the Storrs area on Oct. 8 by the N.O.S. Great Cormorant became common after 25 October, while most of the herons departed. Late records for herons include, Great Egret Nov. 7, Snowy Egret Nov. 11 and Green-backed Heron Nov. 9, all in the Greenwich area. There were more American Bittern reports this year than in the past several years.

#### WATERFOWL-BIRDS OF PREY

The Snow Goose flights that occurred in early October were previewed with an early bird at Sherwood I. St. Pk. on September 24 (CH, DV). Several of those birds lingered along the shore into December. There was also a large flight of migrant Canada Goose observed in Greenwich on Oct 7. Brant were low in numbers while sea ducks were much more common. Oldsquaw was common to abundant with one turning up in North Haven on Nov. 26 (BD, MS). Other inland sea duck records include a scaup sp. and a Common Goldeneye, both in the Storrs area, Oct. 13 and Nov. 28 respectively (CHa). An early group of Ring-necked Duck was spotted on a reservoir in Easton on Oct. 1 (FS), while a male Eurasian Wigeon patronized local reservoirs in the New Haven area in mid-October (RS). White-winged Scoter was more common in most areas except Madison, where normally high counts were very low. There may have been more of a shift in distribution than a real increase in numbers.

The hawk migration went from excellent inland to very poor on the coast. The prevalence of variable winds pushed most of the birds inland, making for

disappointing coastal counts. A very late Broad-winged Hawk was reported from Greenwich on Oct.13 (FN). There were more reports of Merlin away from hawk watches than in the past. For more details of the specific hawk watches, consult the 1983 New England Hawk Watch Report.

#### RAILS-TERNS

A Black Rail was observed in Nell's I. Milford on Oct.3 (RM), and a late King Rail was reported at Greenwich Pt. on Nov.24 (JG). Coot was more common than in the past several years. The main flavor of the shorebird migration was the number and diversity of late migrants. Over 10 species of shorebirds were reported for November, including; 1 Hudsonian Godwit in West Haven Nov. 24-Dec.1 (MOBS), 2 Semipalmated Sandpiper, and 2 Ruff all on Nov.9 in Stratford (MC,DV). Other late dates include three Semipalmated Plover on Oct.23 in the Greenwich area (fide TBu), one Stilt Sandpiper on Oct.31 in Stratford (MS,DV), and one Spotted Sandpiper on Oct.19 in the Greenwich area (fide TBu). Two Long-billed Dowitcher were reported, both at Milford Pt., one on Sept.17 (TB1) and the other on Nov.24 (TB1,DS). The Long-toed Stint mentioned earlier was seen at Long Wharf, New Haven Harbor on Sept.11 (BK,PD) and was photographed. Golden Plover and Buff-breasted Sandpiper were regular along the coast from New Haven to Milford during the entire month of September. In contrast to the late records, there was an early Purple Sandpiper and a Black-legged Kittiwake at Sandy Pt. West Haven on Sept.8 (PD), and a Bonaparte's Gull in the Greenwich area on Sept.25 (fide TBu). "Lester", the Greenwich Pt. Lesser Black-backed Gull was first seen on Sept.12 then on Oct.2,4 (DB). He has been more sporadic in his appearances this winter. Forster's and Common Tern was present along the coast through October. The last Forster's report was on Nov.12 at Stratford (DV).

#### CUCKOOS-NIGHTHAWK

A late Black-billed Cuckoo was found in the Greenwich area on Oct.10 (fide TBu). There were up to seven different Snowy Owls reported in the period from 13 October to 10 November. Most stayed one or two days, then moved on. Saw-whet Owl arrived at the

same time as evidenced by several injured birds brought into various nature centers. A late Common Nighthawk was seen at the New Haven golf course on Nov.19 (Tb1).

#### FLYCATCHERS-SHRIKES

Most of the empidonax flycatchers left Connecticut by Sept.3, while a few Least and Yellow-bellied Flycatcher remained until mid-September. Several Western Kingbird were reported for the Milford and New Haven areas during the last two weeks of September and a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was seen at Hammonasset St. Pk. on Oct.11 (RB,RS,CTa,JZi). Horned Lark showed up in flocks of 100-200 birds on November 24. Several late swallow records are as follows: Purple Martin on Oct.25 at Hammonasset (DV), Rough-winged Swallow on Oct. 15 in New Haven (Tb1), and a Barn Swallow on Nov.12 in New Haven (DS). Blue Jays migrated heavily from late September to mid-October. At the Greenwich Hawk Watch, 2400 Blue Jays were counted the first two weeks of October with a peak on 701 birds on 29 September. Only one Boreal Chickadee was reported and it remained for only one day at East Haven on Oct.6 (NP). A Sedge Wren was also reported on Oct.2 from Lighthouse Pt. New Haven and remained for only one day also (NP). Winter Wren was more common this fall and Birdcraft Banding Station, Fairfield banded four birds compared to the normal one. Dates for the wrens ranged from mid-September to the end of October. Water Pipit was very common from 15 October to 14 November; flocks of 20-40 birds per area were common along the shore. One Loggerhead Shrike was reported for several days in late October at Hammonasset St. Pk. (CTa).

#### VIREOS-WARBLERS

The vireo-warbler migration was average with only one reported flight day on September 23-24. Many species stayed into October and several past the 15th. A Solitary Vireo, banded in Westport on Nov.3 (TR), was very late. There were nine Philadelphia Vireo reported in the Greenwich area with dates ranging from Sept.8-24th. Other individuals were more scattered throughout the state during the same period. Cape May Warbler was

reported more commonly this fall by many observers. Palm Warbler was also present in large numbers as well. One could find five to ten birds at a time at a variety of places along the shore. The list of late warblers is as follows: Nashville Warbler on Nov.7 in the Greenwich area (fide TBu), Tennessee Warbler Nov.2 in the Greenwich area (fide TBu), Cape May Warbler on Sept.16 in Hamden (DS), Black-throated Green Warbler on Oct.16 in the Greenwich area (fide TBu), Blackburnian Warbler in Guilford on Nov.24 (TBl,DS), Common Yellowthroat in Fairfield on Nov.22, and three Blackpolls, one on Oct.29 in Storrs (RL) and two on Nov.12 in East Haven (TBl,DS) and the Greenwich area (fide TBu). More reports of Kentucky Warbler and Chat were received this fall than in the past several years. Birdcraft netted two Kentuckys (a new species for them) on Sept.12 and Sept.25, and three Chats, where one per year is normal. This compliments the increased reports over the summer.

#### SPARROWS-FINCHES

The October sparrow migration was very strong with many birds reported moving through the area. Vesper Sparrow was very common from Oct.7 to Nov.7 with one or two birds located in virtually every "sparrow field" checked and 5-10 in a number of fields. A Henslow's Sparrow was reported from Lighthouse Pt., New Haven on Oct.23 (NP,RS) and a Lark Sparrow at East Haven Dump on Oct.6 (NP). At Milford Pt. three to four Ipswich Sparrow spent the fall from Oct.30 onward. Tree Sparrow arrived in many localities on Nov.4. A Clay-colored Sparrow was at Hammonasset on Oct.25 (CTa,RS,DV). An early Lapland Longspur was found in Stratford on Sept.24 (DV,CH) and a late Bobolink remained in the Greenwich area until Nov.13 (fide TBu). Evening Grosbeak and Pine Siskin moved through the state in two waves. The first occurred the last two weeks in October and the second the last two weeks in November. Some of the birds of the last wave lingered into December. There were scattered reports of Redpoll, Crossbill, and Pine Grosbeak from November onward but not in significant numbers.

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### SPRING MIGRATION ON FAULKNER ISLAND

By Steven C. Sibley

Faulkner Island has been the site of an intensive tern study since 1978 (see Sibley, 1981, Conn. Warbler 1:18-24). The island has also provided a unique view of spring landbird migration in Long Island Sound. Project volunteers have run a landbird banding operation on the island since 1978 with 1669 birds of 75 species banded in the period 1978-1980. Faulkner's is a four-acre island situated three miles off the Guilford-Madison coast. A 100 sq. meter patch of sumac provides the only cover over one meter in height. Other habitats include grassy fields, lawns (where rabbits keep the grass trimmed), gravel slopes and beaches, and several abandoned Coast Guard buildings.

Because of the island's small size and lack of tall vegetation, banding most landbirds on the island on any given day is relatively simple and is usually accomplished by noon. This provides a very accurate measure of the previous nights migration, as few



migrants remain on the island for more than 24 hours. An additional asset in studying migration on the island is its relative lack of breeding birds. European Starlings, Red-winged Blackbirds, Barn Swallows, and one pair of Song Sparrows (in 1980 only) are the only nesting passerines. This makes it possible to observe the migration of such common Connecticut nesting species as Gray Catbird and Common Yellowthroat throughout the spring, whereas, on the mainland discerning migrants from local breeders is just about impossible after May 15.

We found many species to be migrating in fairly large numbers as late as June. Yellowthroats provide the best example of this. Of the 1669 landbirds banded from 1978- 1980, 510 (30%) were yellowthroats. Of these, 210 (40%) were banded after May 20, with the last birds banded June 3. Obviously, all of us who hang up our binoculars for the spring by May 20 are missing more than a few late stragglers. Catbirds, towhees, most warblers, and many others including Blue Jays, fit the same pattern (see Table). Blue Jays do migrate in fairly large numbers in the spring as the table shows. They also migrate later than one might predict for such a hardy species, with one individual showing up on the island June 9! Those species which we know to be late migrants, such as Mourning Warbler, are well represented on Faulkner. Of the four Mourning Warblers banded, all were caught in the period May 31-June 2.

Since some bird species are more prone to fly over water, one might predict that Faulkner and Connecticut's other coastal islands would attract a different composition of birds than the mainland. Banding on Chimon Island, Norwalk, by Carl Trichka et al in 1981 and 1982, has also shown a considerable movement of landbirds in late May. Banding May 25-June 3 in 1981 and May 23-30 in 1982 yielded 268 landbirds of 39 species, including 13 species of Warblers. Interestingly, only 16 (5.9%) of these were yellowthroats. This may be due to Chimon's proximity to shore and to other islands, as well as its several acres of woods and thickets. Whether the proportionate numbers of yellowthroats are unique to Faulkner or more visible there because of the lack of breeding individuals is difficult to determine. Although the composition of migrants on Chimon seems to more

closely resemble that of the mainland than Faulkner there are several similarities. Most notable among these is the abundance of Lincoln's Sparrows, considered a very uncommon spring migrant in our state. Three were banded on Chimon in 1982 and a total of 12 have been banded on Faulkner in the period May 8 to June 2.

Landbird migration on these islands deserves further attention in the future, and birders should be aware that many migrants pass through our state in the period May 20-June 5.

I would like to thank Fred C. Sibley and Dr. Jeffrey Spendelow who were in charge of the banding operation, and all of the project volunteers without whose help and efforts this project never would have occurred. Thanks also to the U.S. Coast Guard for permission to use the island.

SPECIES	May			June	Total
	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-9	
Common Yellowthroat	38	262	168	42	510
White-throated Sparrow	146	46	2	0	194
Swamp Sparrow	80	62	18	4	164
Rufous-sided Towhee	78	55	9	2	144
Grey Catbird	7	74	30	0	111
Blue Jay	0	25	8	1	34
Magnolia Warbler	1	10	13	2	26
Savannah Sparrow	14	6	2	0	22
Yellow Warbler	2	11	9	0	22
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	18	0	0	0	18

Table 1. The ten most common migrants banded during ten day periods.

### AN IDENTIFICATION AID "THE PEEPS"

by Noble S. Proctor

The Calidrine sandpipers, known collectively as "peeps" in the New World and stints in the Old World, are one of the more challenging groups for the birder to work with.

To the new birder, being confronted with a mass of look-alike species can be a baffling and frustrating introduction to a "relaxing" new hobby! Though field

guides point out key characters, look-alikes are often grouped together, and the plates themselves can mesmerize and overwhelm. How often have we all heard "They all look the same to me!"

One way is to construct your own key. Try to develop an analytic key that eliminates species via a sequence of steps. For example, a key for the common peeps seen in Connecticut might flow as follows:

#### KEY TO PEEPS

- 1) Legs---yellowish/greenish---Least Sandpiper.
- 1a) Legs otherwise (mainly black)-----see 2.
- 2) Wings extend well beyond tail, crosses at tip---Baird's S.
- 2a) Wings slightly beyond tip of tail/even with/or shorter---see 3.
- 3) Wings beyond tail tip but not crossed, flank below folded wing has markings---White-rumped S.
- 3a) Wings to tail tip or shorter---see 4.
- 4) Shoulder markings distinctly red chesnut; bill deep at base and noticeably long---Western S.
- 4a) Shoulder brownish to gray, bill black and stubby---Semipalmated S.

This approach (or modifications thereof to suit your own perception of key field marks) is one way to lend support to the pages of brownish shorebirds and offer an alternative to picture comparisons.

Shorebird problems continue even after one has mastered the common peeps because of the occurrence of European and circumboreal vagrants. The Rufous-necked Stint is a good example. This takes a bit more analysis.

In recent years, this species has appeared on both coasts of the continental U.S. A Siberian nester, it is a regular passage bird on the outer Aleutians and nests sporadically on the extreme northwestern coast of Alaska near Wales. It winters from southern China to Australia and Tasmania.

A bird in breeding plumage is unmistakable. Birds in worn or pre-basic plumage are more difficult. Such a bird in a flock of "Semis" would easily escape notice. The following may aid in making the identification:

Legs: rather short giving a squat, bulky appearance in contrast to Semipalmated or Little Stint. This effects the bird's appearance as it walks--shuffling rather than having a pert stride.

Bill: black, fairly short and stubby, similar to a Semi's but unlike the thin narrow-tipped bill of a Little Stint. For comparison, it would be as a Red Phalarope's bill is to a Northern Phalarope's.

Tail: the outer tail feathers are very pale and in flight look almost white. In the Semipalmated or Little Stint, the grayness makes the tail rather indistinct.

Feeding: Rufous-necked walks and jabs at prey unlike Semipalmated or Little Stint who work one area over well before moving on.

Basic (Winter) Plumage: strong white supercilliary line is conspicuous and gives the appearance of wrapping over the top of the bill across the forehead. Semipalmated and Little Stint are not nearly as distinct and have no wrapping effect.

Wings: excluding Baird's Sandpiper, this is the longest-winged of the peeps; they taper out beyond the tail tip whereas the Semipalmated and the Little Stint go out to the tip.

Call: as with all shorebirds, familiarity with calls is a great field aid. If one is familiar with the calls of the other peeps, the thin "teeat" note of the Rufous-necked is distinct.

SUMMATION: when scanning a flock of peeps, look for: (in non-breeding plumage) a shorter bird, usually with the hint of a collar from the bright chesnut breeding plumage, long wings and a strong white eyeline meeting over the bill.

It is apparent, then, that with the potential for vagrants, this prolonged analysis is vital. When such a bird is seen, take detailed notes, characterize the bird's actions, get photos if possible, and, please, ask for help. With the distillation of such notes in most cases, the identification can be confirmed. Such analyses help make all of us more comfortable when confronted with the "peeps" afield.

## WOOD WARBLER SONGS

by Chris Wood and Carl Trichka

Warbler Wave! The call goes out and birders head for the field with the usual accoutrement of field guides, tape recorders, and binoculars. The results of a few hours of wobbling after warblers is usually referred to as "warbler neck", which may be accompanied by frustration from failing to identify those brilliantly colored jewels of springtime.

An important birding skill is knowing the warbler songs, thereby enhancing your ability to locate and identify most of what you see. In the fall the shapes and colors of warblers and leaves converge confusingly on pointed, yellow-green. However, warbler vocalizations change much more dramatically than those of the leaf. The calls are usually replaced by "chip" notes, a phenomenon that could be the subject of an article by anyone who thinks they can do it! So spring is the time to get out and learn the warblers.

Many members of the wood warbler family have more than one song. The Prairie Warbler has as many as nine songs (Nolan, 1978) and the Chesnut-sided Warbler has several, including one with a "swit-chew" ending that is used when establishing a territory. However, that emphatic ending is not used in the bird's territorial defense song.

In addition to distinct song types, many warbler species exhibit distinct song dialects, recognizable just as humans can distinguish Southern, Mid-Western, and New England accents. The distinctions are complicated by the fact that people hear songs differently, leading to various interpretations when mnemonics or verbalizations are applied as learning aids. For example, the call of the Blue-winged Warbler has been described as "Bee bzzz" yet some people interpret it as "gee whiz" or "cheese whiz". Whatever wording or clues are used, the trick is to associate the song with something familiar so it will be remembered and, in turn, associated with the proper species.

The warbler list below, arranged by song similarities, was adapted from the recent field guides and literature and the authors' interpretation.

### BUZZY SONGS

Golden-winged: soft-Bee bzz bzz bzz.

Blue-winged: Bee bzzzz/gee whiz.

Parula: rising zeeeeee yip; last note drops.

Black-throated Blue: zee zee zee zee/I am so lazy.

Black-throated Green: zee zee zee zo zee/sweet, sweet, sweet su-zy.

Cerulean: zray zray zray zray zreee; last note higher.

Prairie: rising zee zee zee zee zee zit. No drop at end.

### SWEET SONGS

Yellow: sweet sweet sweet ain't I sweet.

Magnolia: weeta weeta weeta. Last note rises.

Chesnut-sided: please please please to meetchu/

I wish to see Miss Beecher-last note drops.

Hooded: weeta weeta wee tee o. Next to last note higher.

Yellowthroat: witchity witchity wich.

Yellow-rumped: trilling call rising in pitch.

Canada: jumbling, ends in emphatic wip. No two on same pitch.

Redstart: variable tsee tsee tsee tsee tseet.

### CHIPPING SONGS

Palm: accented roll: thi thi thi thi thi thi.

Pine: loose musical trill.

Worm-eating: dry sharp trill.

### TEACHER SONGS

Ovenbird: cheartea cheartea cheartea or teacher teacaheer teacher.

Kentucky: churry churry churry.

Mourning: churry churry chorry chorry. Last two notes drop.

### SEE SEE SONGS

Black and White: wee see wee see wee see. Even pitch.

Bay-breasted: teesi teesi teesi. Higher pitch.

Cape May: seet seet seet seet. High, thin.

Blackpoll: zi zi zi zi zi zi zi zi. Louder in middle.

### TWO PART SONGS

Nashville: seebit seebit seebit seebit ti ti ti ti ti ti.

Slow to quick.

Wilson's: chi chi chi chi chet chet. Second part drops.

Blackburnian: zip zip zip zip ti ti tsee. Jumble, ends high.

### THREE PART SONGS

Tennessee: tizip tizip tizip zit zit zit ti ti ti.

Loud, descends.

Louisiana Waterthrush: tseebit tseebit tseebit twit twit tweeta tweet. Last note rises.

Northern Waterthrush: twit twit twit twee twee chew chew chew. Last note drops.

# NOTES AND NEWS

The C.O.A. issues a call to anyone with artistic ability to design a new logo featuring the Connecticut Warbler and the organization name.

## ...a New ANNUAL

We welcome a new annual publication of the International Council for Bird Preservation/U.S. Section (I.C.B.P.) called BIRD CONSERVATION, No. 1, edited by Dr. Stanley A. Temple of the University of Wisconsin. It is a 148-page compendium, in 6"X9" format, of the latest and best information on the status and recovery programs for the endangered bird species of the United States. This informative and readable first issue contains major articles on the Peregrine Falcon, the Northern Bald Eagle, and the California Condor, plus shorter pieces on a dozen other topics. The authenticity of each major piece is enhanced by the fact that it is written by the people who did the research.

We urge this new publication on every reader of The Connecticut Warbler who wishes to have reliable information on U.S. bird conservation efforts. Order your copy from University of Wisconsin Press, 114 North Murray St., Madison Wisconsin 53715, enclosing a check for \$13.95 per copy, postpaid. By placing a standing order for subsequent issues, you can save 20%. In that case, send a check for \$11.36 for the first issue, and subsequent issues will be mailed to you when they appear, along with a covering invoice. A second volume is now in press and should be available this fall.

## CORRIGENDUM

In the Greenwich-Stamford section of the 1983-1984 Christmas Count article, we incorrectly listed Fred Purnell as a co-compiler. Please substitute Gary Palmer in his place.

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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 paper 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.

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# **THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER**

*A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology*



## THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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### GOAL

To further the study of Connecticut's Bird life and to disseminate knowledge thereof, to educate the public to the need of conserving natural resources.

The Connecticut Warbler is published quarterly (January, April, July and October) by the Connecticut Ornithological Association. Subscription is based on a calendar year with renewal due in January. New members will receive all four issues for that year. Make checks payable to The Connecticut Warbler and mail to 314 Unquowa Road, Fairfield, CT 06430. Individual issues may be purchased when available. All rights reserved.

### MEMBERSHIP FEES

Member	\$10.00	Contributing	\$20.00
Family	\$15.00	Sustaining	\$30.00
Founder	\$300.00, payable in three annual installments and automatic life membership.		

### ABOUT OUR COVER

Frank Mantlik photographed this Sandhill Crane while it visited Westport during the period of December through February. See page 37.

## FIRST ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

The First Organizational Meeting of the C.O.A. was held on August 14, 1984 at Yale University's Peabody Museum. This well attended meeting had a full agenda with most noteworthy items being the adoption of the organizational by-laws and the election of officers and board of directors.

The first slate of officers, elected by a majority vote, for a one year term are as follows:

PRESIDENT: ROLAND C. CLEMENT OF NORWALK  
VICE-PRESIDENT: BETTY KLEINER OF SIMSBURY  
SECRETARY: JULIO DE LA TORRE OF NEW CANAAN  
TREASURER: ROBERT FLETCHER OF CHESHIRE

The following were elected as members of the Board of Directors with expiration of term denoted in parenthesis:

NOBLE S. PROCTOR OF BRANFORD (85)  
CLAY TAYLOR OF MOODUS (85)  
GEORGE ZEPKO OF MIDDLETOWN (85)  
ROBERT DEWIRE OF PAWCATUCK (86)  
STUART MITCHELL OF PORTLAND (86)  
JOSEPH ZERANSKI OF GREENWICH (86)  
NEIL CURRIE OF WATERTOWN (87)  
SHIRLEY DAVIS OF MANSFIELD CENTER (87)  
DONALD A. HOPKINS OF WINDSOR (87)

The by-laws of the C.O.A. were discussed, revisions were made and they were adopted by a majority vote. They are printed herewith in this issue.

Plans are well underway for the September 29th Lighthouse Pt. Hawk Watch and C.O.A. Field Day, sponsored by the New Haven Bird Club. Dr. Roger Tory Peterson will be there to deliver a talk at 9 A.M. All members and friends are invited to attend, meet Dr. Peterson and enjoy a day of hawk watching at one of New England's premier hawk watch locations.

**CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES**  
**WINTER: DECEMBER 1, 1983-FEBRUARY 28, 1984**  
by Dennis Varza

The winter season had several exceptional records such as Barrow's Goldeneye, Sandhill Crane, Varied Thrush, and Northern Shrike, all making for interesting birding. Overall the winter was mild except for a period of freezing weather in late January.

**LOONS-HERONS**

Common during the fall migration, loons became scarce after December. Horned Grebe was very common this fall and remained so all winter. Only one Red-necked Grebe was reported on the Westport Christmas Bird Count (hereafter CBC). American Bittern was formerly a dependable winter resident, but only two were reported, one each from Stratford and Quinnipiac CBCs. A lingering Snowy Egret was reported on the Westport CBC.

**WATERFOWL**

Ducks were plentiful with good numbers of Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Oldsquaw, White-winged Scoter, Common Goldeneye and Ruddy Duck, plus all three mergansers. The Greenwich CBC had 83 Wood Duck, thanks to a program of feeding. A male Blue-winged Teal was seen at Sherwood Isl. St. Pk. on Jan. 21 (FM), and a male Eurasian Widgeon in Lordship on the same date (FM). Six Shoveler were reported, two in Stamford in early Dec., one on Candlewood Lake in late Dec. and three at Milford Pt. in late February. A male Barrow's Goldeneye was in the West Haven side of New Haven Harbor Jan. 19-29 (SB). From Jan. 20 to Feb. 10, what appeared to be a Tufted Duck was observed and photographed (CT, GZ) in the same location. The bird has a brown wash on the sides and a short tuft characteristic of an immature male. However, the back was dark gray, not the black of typical birds. The offcolor back had caused some people to consider it a hybrid with a Greater Scaup, which are known from the wild and captivity. The problem revolves around the question: is the light back an immature or hybrid character? Until photos are shown to experts, it is best to reserve judgement. We would appreciate receiving additional photos of this bird that may help to clarify the identification.

**BIRDS OF PREY**

Ospreys, once considered accidental in winter can now be revised to rare but regular; three were seen on the

CBCs, all on inland counts. A total of 14 Bald Eagles were seen on five CBCs, along with a Golden Eagle on the Lakeville CBC. Stuart and Janet Mitchell's winter eagle survey reported 15, 30, and 40 birds for Dec., Jan., and Feb. The mid-winter increase in hawks is often neglected by non-hawk enthusiasts. The progression of harsh weather and reduced prey force wintering hawks to drift south in a sort of "second migration". In late Jan., hawks started turning up in unusual places, particularly Rough-legged and Red-shouldered Hawks, and the accipiters turned to bird feeders. There were sightings of Peregrine Falcon from New Haven to Westport, usually one day sightings that could have been provided by one bird.

#### CRANES-WOODPECKERS

The year started out right with a Sandhill Crane at Sherwood Isl. St.,Pk. Mill Pond. The bird was first observed Dec. 31 (FM) and stayed until Feb. 21. It spent its days in a corn field 3 miles inland, and the nights on the shore. The warm weather of Dec. produced many late records of shorebirds and rails. Many inland CBCs reported Virginia Rail, Common Snipe and American Woodcock. At Greenwich Pt. a King Rail lingered until mid-Jan. At West Haven a Hudsonian Godwit stayed until Dec. 1 (fide AB), and a Lesser Yellowlegs was reported on the New Haven CBC. The Quinnipiac and Westport CBCs each reported an inadequately uncorroborated Semipalmated Sandpiper. The first reported courting American Woodcock was on Feb. 18 in Greenwich. Considering the mild weather, this may have been a winter survivor rather than an early migrant. Glaucous and Iceland Gull were regular along the coast all winter. Considering the number of records, there must have been at least 10 or 12 birds of each species. "Lester", the Greenwich Lesser Black-backed Gull wasn't often observed in his usual haunts but there were single sightings of adult lessers as far east as New Haven, which may have been the same bird. Two Snowy Owls stayed the winter in the Lordship area. Ten CBCs reported one or more Saw-whet Owls for a record number this winter. The Hartford CBC reported six of the elusive Red-headed Woodpecker, and another one was seen in Bethany most of the winter (AB).

#### PERCHING BIRDS

The mild weather allowed a variety of "summer" birds to remain. Two Eastern Phoebes and a Wood Thrush were seen on the Hartford CBC. A Swainson's Thrush was

photographed at Greenwich Pt. on Dec. 26 (D&JB). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at a feeder in Cos Cob Jan. 13, and another on the Lakeville CBC. The warbler count included a Nashville on the Westport CBC, a Palm on the New Haven CBC, a Pine on the Old Lyme CBC, an Ovenbird on the Hartford CBC, and many reports of Yellow-rumped Warbler and Common Yellowthroat. Lingered sparrows included a Grasshopper Sparrow on the Salmon River CBC, a Lincoln's Sparrow on the Old Lyme CBC, and a number of Chipping Sparrow on the New Haven, Westport and Salmon River CBCs.

Boreal Chickadee turned up on the New Haven and Salmon River CBCs. Winter Wren, common this fall, continued to be observed regularly. Water Pipit, also common, managed to stay until mid-Jan. Varied Thrush showed up at two locations. One was reported from Wilton from Dec. 25 to Jan. 20 and a second in Sherman about the same time (fide DR). A Northern Shrike stayed in Durham Meadows most of Jan. After a strong fall migration flocks of blackbirds arrived on Jan. 19 and were regular after Feb. 5, when males were setting up territories, two weeks ahead of schedule. A male Yellow-headed Blackbird was seen again in Stratford on Feb. 29 and sporadically through March, lending credence to the theory that rare birds show up again in the same locations. Evening Grosbeak was well represented in Dec. but by mid-Jan. they were hard to find. There were scattered reports of Pine Grosbeak, crossbills, redpolls and Pine Siskin but in small numbers.

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Bylaws of the  
Connecticut Ornithological Association

Article I. Name and Objectives

- Sec. 1. Name: This not-for-profit organization shall be known as the Connecticut Ornithological Association (COA).
- Sec. 2. Objectives: To promote an interest in, and an appreciation of birds; to encourage, through research, the advance of avian knowledge; to disseminate accurate scientific information about birds and their habitats; to maintain and publish ornithological records; and to help facilitate cooperation between the ornithological community--amateur and professional--and the general public.
- Sec. 3. Emblem: The emblem of the COA shall be the Connecticut Warbler (*Oporornis agilis*).
- Sec. 4. Offices: The principal offices of the COA shall be in Connecticut.

Article II. Membership

- Sec.1. Members: Anyone interested in supporting the objectives of the COA may become a member by payment of dues, and shall be a member in good standing if dues for the current calendar year have been paid.
- Sec.2. Privileges: Every member in good standing shall receive The Connecticut Warbler, shall receive advance notice of all COA meetings, may vote at the annual election and business meetings, and shall be eligible for election to office.
- Sec.3. Dues: Membership shall be for the calendar year and shall involve the payment of dues established from time to time by the board of directors.
- Sec.4. Classes of Membership: Prospective members may elect to join as individual Member, Family Member, Contributing Member, Sustaining Member, and Founder (Life) member. By unanimous vote of the Board, an individual may be elected to Honorary Life Membership for (a) significant contributions to ornithology, or (b) distinguished service to the COA. The Board of Directors may change the number and type of membership classes.

Article III. Board of Directors

- Sec. 1. Composition: This Board shall consist of the elected officers and no less than six (6), nor more than twelve (12) directors. After the first year, the latter shall be elected on a staggered basis, each for a term of three (3) years, one third of which shall be elected each year.
- Sec. 2. Powers: The Board is the COA's governing body: it shall determine policy, control all property, approve expenditures, set dues, and otherwise exercise the powers granted by these bylaws.
- Sec. 3. Quorum: Eight (8) members shall constitute a quorum for Board meetings.
- Sec. 4. Organization: The president shall act as chairperson of the Board and may vote only to break a tie. The president shall call quarterly meetings of the Board during months chosen by the Board. At least fourteen (14) days notice shall be given for these regular meetings. Special meetings may be called by the president, or at the request of any three (3) directors, provided that (a) the directors are notified, verbally or in writing, of the time, place, and purpose of the meeting, that

(b) the meeting is restricted to its announced purpose, and that (c) proxy votes are allowed.

Sec. 5. Removals: By a majority vote of all other members, the Board may, for cause, remove officers or directors who are delinquent in their duties.

#### Article. IV Officers

Sec. 1. Officers: There shall be a president, a vice president, recording secretary, and a treasurer, plus such other officers or assistants as the Board may deem necessary. All officers shall be subject to these bylaws and directives of the Board. They shall be elected annually. No officers or directors shall receive compensation for services rendered the COA, although out-of pocket expenses may be reimbursed by direction of the Board.

Sec. 2. Duties: All officers are voting members of the Board. Their duties are as follows:

President - Calls and presides over the Board meetings and those of the membership; appoints committee chairpersons; is ex-officio member of, and oversees, committees except as limited by Article VII, sec. 1; coordinates day to day activities of the COA; speaks for the COA, and is otherwise chief executive, subject to the directives of the Board of Directors.

Vice President(s) - Assists the president, and assumes the president's duties in the latter's absence or incapacity to serve.

Recording Secretary - Keeps complete and accurate records of all meetings; is secretary to the Board; has custody of the COA's records; provides notices to members, and supplies draft minutes to board members for their review and approval.

Treasurer - Receives and promptly deposits all funds, makes proper dispersals; keeps appropriate accounts in the COA's name; invests COA funds according to directives of the Board; and prepares a detailed statement of income and expenditures for the fiscal year. The fiscal year shall extend from July 1 to June 30 of the succeeding year.

#### Article V. Elections

Sec. 1. Nominations: A nominating committee shall be appointed by the Board at least sixty (60) days prior to the annual meeting, consisting of two (2) Board members and one (1) member in good standing who is not an elected official of the COA. This committee shall propose a slate of nominees to fill all expiring offices for consideration at the annual meeting. It may not nominate any of its members. Nomination may also be made from the floor.

Sec. 2. Length of Service: Officers and Directors shall be elected by the members during the business portion of the annual meeting, and shall serve from the conclusion of that meeting until their successors assume office.

Sec. 3. Vacancies: Should a directorship or an office become vacant, the Board may fill that unexpired term by majority vote.

Sec. 4. Limitations: Directors and elected officers must be members in good standing. The president, vice president (s), and the Directors shall not serve more than two (2) full consecutive terms in any one office.

Sec. 5. Voting: Should one or more candidates be nominated from the



floor, in addition to the slate proposed by the Nominating Committee, each new nomination shall be seconded by three (3) members in good standing. Contested seats shall be voted upon by secret ballot, whereas unchallenged nominations may be voted upon by acclamation. There shall be no voting by proxy.

Sec. 6. Quorum: A quorum at any business meeting of the COA shall be twenty-five (25) members.

#### Article VI. Member's Meetings

Sec. 1. Annual Meeting: A general meeting of the membership shall be held in early spring each year, at a time and place approved by the Board. Twenty-one (21) days' written notice of this meeting shall be given to the membership. The officers shall report on the condition of the COA, and elections shall be held. (see V:6 for Quorum).

Sec. 2. Other Membership Meetings: With the customary twenty-one (21) days' notice, the president may call additional meetings of the members, either for information or to conduct the business of COA.

#### Article VII. Committees

Sec. 1. General: Except where the bylaws specify otherwise, all chairpersons are to be appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of, the president. The president is ex-officio member of all committees except for Nomination, Editorial, and Rare Records Committees.

Unless otherwise specified, chairpersons shall appoint the members of their committee, and these need not be members of the Board, although Board approval shall be sought before adding a non-COA member to a committee.

Sec. 2. Executive Committee: The officers and two Directors appointed annually by the Board shall act on the Board's behalf in conducting necessary business between Board meetings. This executive Committee's actions shall be reported to the Board for ratification at the next Board meeting.

Sec. 3. Finance Committee: The president, the treasurer, and one (1) other Board member appointed annually by the Board shall constitute the Finance Committee. It shall prepare a budget for the Board's approval, shall advise the Board on financial matters, recommend fund-raising policies, and regularly audit COA funds. It shall keep all Life Membership payments in an endowment fund.

Sec. 4. Nominating Committee: (see Article III:1).

Sec. 5. Rare Records Committee: The Board shall appoint three (3) members to set uniform standards for acceptable state records of birds. It shall be the sole arbiter of valid records. It shall document changes in status; record its findings; justify its decisions; and submit an annual report of findings for publication in The Connecticut Warbler. It shall work closely with the Editor to help screen reports of rare birds submitted for publication. A committee member shall not sit in review of his or her own report. When a committee member submits a report, the remaining member(s) shall enlist a temporary alternate to help evaluate this report(s).

Sec. 6. Research Committee: The Board may appoint three members to serve on a Research Committee which shall undertake, encourage, sponsor, support, or cooperate with other groups in field research projects on behalf of COA objectives. This Committee shall keep the membership informed of studies affecting our understanding of Connecticut birdlife.

- Sec. 7. Editorial Advisory Committee: The president shall recommend for the Board's approval a chairperson and two (2) other specially qualified individuals to advise the Board and the Editor on matters designed to achieve and maintain high standards in COA publications.
- Sec. 8. Publications Committee: With the approval of the Board, the president shall appoint an editor for The Connecticut Warbler, and this Editor shall form a committee to help plan, edit, print and distribute The Connecticut Warbler, all as approved by the Board.
- Sec. 9. Membership Committee: Consisting of three (3) members, this committee shall enroll new members, solicit renewals, maintain an updated membership list (including addresses), develop membership incentives and promotions, and provide current membership totals at business meetings of the COA.
- Sec. 10. Program Committee: Consisting of three (3) or more members, this committee shall organize the annual, and other, meetings of the COA.
- Sec. 11. Newsletter Committee: When the need arises, a Newsletter Committee shall be appointed to provide information of interest to members.
- Sec. 12. Conservation Committee: A committee of three members may be appointed to work with an advise governmental agencies or other groups. It shall develop recommendations to encourage avian conservation, and promote habitat protection and creation, especially for endangered or declining species. It shall keep the membership informed of these efforts.
- Sec. 13. Field Trip Committee: A committee may be appointed to organize and conduct field trips for COA members and others.
- Sec. 14. Education Committee: A committee may be appointed to develop and sponsor programs, slide shows, exhibits, and other offerings for the general public and for other conservation organizations, to encourage an interest in birds, especially Connecticut birdlife.
- Sec. 15. Publicity Committee: A committee may be appointed to promote COA and its activities through press releases, articles, radio and television programs, and otherwise.
- Sec. 16. Other Committees: The president may appoint special ad hoc committees to handle any additional matters when requested by the Board.

#### Article VIII. Publications

- Sec. 1. Journal: The official journal, a quarterly, shall be called The Connecticut Warbler. It shall record pertinent field observations, report on research and field studies, note changes in avian populations, discuss field identification problems, and otherwise update its readers on advances in Connecticut ornithology.
- Sec. 2. COA Newsletter: (see Article VII, Sec. 9) This newsletter may be distributed separately or as an insert in the journal.
- Sec. 3. Other Publications: COA may issue other pertinent publications, such as checklists, guides to localities, and other educational tracts the Board finds to be in the interest of the COA.

#### Article IX. General Matters

- Sec. 1. Bylaws Amendments: Amendments to these bylaws may be submitted in writing to the Board for its consideration by a committee of three (3) chosen by the Board to advise it.

Should the Board approve any such amendments by a two-thirds majority vote at a subsequent meeting, these amendments shall then be submitted to the membership in written form. Approval by a simple majority of the members at an annual meeting of the COA shall constitute adoption.

- Sec. 2. Fiscal Year: The fiscal year shall run from July 1 to June 30.
- Sec. 3. Rules of Order: Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall be the parliamentary authority for conducting meetings of the COA
- Sec. 4. Library Subscriptions: Fees for organizations desiring the COA Journal may be authorized by the board, providing such payment carries no voting privilege.
- Sec. 5. Affiliations: While retaining full independence, the COA may affiliate with other local, regional, or national organizations, as approved by the Board. It shall seek to support and cooperate with organizations having similar objectives, and may cosponsor projects with other groups.
- Sec. 6. Receiving Property: Donated properties may be accepted by Board action if the Board finds that such acceptance furthers the objectives of COA.
- Sec. 7. Dissolution: Should the COA be dissolved for any reason at any time, any properties remaining after its obligations are paid shall be allotted by the board to one or more other non-profit organizations who agree to use the funds to fulfill objectives similar to COA's objectives.
- Sec. 8. Annual Report: The officers shall prepare a written report the activities of the COA annually, and this shall be presented verbally at the annual meeting and filed with the permanent records of the COA.

### FOUNDER MEMBERS

The following individuals are Founder Members of the Connecticut Ornithological Association. Their valued support for this new organization is most appreciated.

MRS. FLORANCE C. ALLAIN, Greenwich  
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## TERRESTRIAL VISITS BY ARBOREAL BIRDS

By George A. Clark, Jr.

Highly terrestrial birds such as Horned Larks and Water Pipits are typically found on the ground rather than perched in bushes or trees. However, most landbirds in Connecticut are more arboreal and regularly perch off the ground. Some species such as American Robins use both the ground and arboreal perches, whereas others such as Red-eyed Vireos are mainly, if not entirely, arboreal. However, at least some of the primarily tree-dwelling species occasionally do voluntarily descend to the ground. Whether this occurs in all the predominantly arboreal species is apparently unknown, and available information is far too incomplete to generalize broadly about the circumstances and duration of terrestrial visits. My observations in Connecticut, as summarized in the following account, indicate that ground-visiting sometimes occurs at particularly critical times for the birds.

A number of rather arboreal species that regularly visit bird feeders placed off the ground will also go to the ground near a feeder to obtain food as I have seen for the Downy Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Redpoll, American Goldfinch, Pine Siskin, and House Finch. How often these species visit the ground when away from bird feeders is unknown, but I have noted White-breasted Nuthatches doing so on three occasions. I have also seen an American Goldfinch land on the ground far from any feeding station, hop along the ground to a puddle, and drink.

My records of predominantly arboreal and commonly insect-eating species visiting the ground in Connecticut include the Eastern Kingbird (on 1 occasion), Phoebe (4), House Wren (2), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (1), Cedar Waxwing (1), Yellow-throated Vireo (1), Yellow-rumped Warbler (21), Blackpoll (1), Canada Warbler (1), Northern Oriole (2), and Scarlet Tanager (4). The factors stimulating ground visits were not always obvious, but in some cases special circumstances were notable. For example, Cedar Waxwings visited the ground in December to obtain

fallen fruits from a Mountain Ash tree. On one occasion a House Wren on the ground dust-bathed. Of the total of 39 occasions when I noted these arboreal species on the ground, only 2 occurred between June 1 and September 15. Thus nearly all my records for these arboreal birds on the ground came during the cooler months. All my records of yellow-rumped warblers on the ground came in three different years during the period October 17 through November 2, when the birds were presumably attempting to forage; on several occasions I found yellow-rumps in sheltered spots in a field of corn stubble on breezy, cool days at Storrs. Most of my sightings of Scarlet Tanagers on the ground came from May 26-28, 1967, in northeastern Connecticut. That year May 25 and 26 were cold and rainy days, and the tanagers were apparently seeking food on the roadside shoulders where some of the birds were struck and killed by passing vehicles. Zumeta and Holmes (1978, Wilson Bull. 90: 575-586) described an apparently similar case of tanager mortality associated with inclement weather in New Hampshire and Vermont in late May of 1974. My presumption is that, when the weather has been very cool and the ground is free of snow, insect-eating birds are most likely to find food on or near the ground.

As a tentative conclusion, food-finding appears to be one major motivation for predominantly arboreal species to visit the ground, and such visits are for many insect-eaters seemingly most likely to occur during or soon after cool weather. Much observation is still needed to determine which other predominantly arboreal species come voluntarily to the ground. More should be recorded also about the extent to which arboreal species come to the ground to gather nest materials in spring and summer.

Dr. Clark is Prof. of Biology and Curator for Ornithology at the Univ. of Conn. Museum of Natural History. He is also the State Ornithologist for Connecticut.

## WHO IS ?.....

C.O.A.'s first president, Roland C. Clement of Norwalk, has enjoyed a long career in field ornithology and conservation work.

He dates his professional career to 1933, when he served as assistant to Maurice Broun (of Hawk Mountain fame) at the O.L. Austin Ornithological Research Station, Cape Cod, Mass. An A.O.U. associate from 1935, he was made an Elected Member in 1970 after reporting on his field studies of the birds of interior Labrador, now incorporated in W.E. Clyde Todd's Birds of the Labrador Peninsula (1963). These Labrador studies, made during two years of service as U.S. Air Force weatherman, and during two subsequent summer visits, also led to the publication of two life histories - that of the Common Redpoll and the Eastern White-crowned Sparrow - in A.C. Bent's U.S. National Museum series, Life Histories of North American Birds. With W.W.H. Gunn, he authored a chapter on "The Warblers of Eastern Canada" in Griscom and Sprunt's The Warblers of North America (1957). A popular book, The Living World of Audubon (1974), ran through several editions.

From 1950 to 1977 he was, first, executive of the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, then, for nineteen years, staff biologist of the National Audubon Society in New York, retiring as vice president. The chemical pesticides battle took up a decade, but he also served on the U.S. Forest Service's Condor Advisory Committee, organized a Peregrine Falcon conference that led to the formation of federal recovery teams, and was chairman of the ICBP/U.S. section, as well as ICBP's Secretary for the Americas, and a member of several other conservation bodies. He is currently working on a history of the Audubon movement, and is trying to become a watercolorist.

## NOTES AND NEWS

### CORRIGENDUM

In our April, 1984 issue, the article by Steven C. Sibley entitled Spring Migration on Faulkner Island contained an incorrect spelling of the islands name. The correct spelling is FALKNER.

## BLUEBIRDS OF BETHLEHEM

Fred Comstock of Bethlehem, CT. has more than just a passing admiration for the Eastern Bluebird. His involvement with this beautiful species has prompted him to embark on an ambitious program of educating the public about the plight of the bluebird through newspaper articles and establishing bluebird trails in and around the Bethlehem area. He has also distributed nesting box literature to interested groups and individuals and instructed many people in the establishment of nest boxes to achieve the best results.

This spring, he started banding bluebird chicks and reports the following. From May 24th to August 1st, a total of 25 chicks were banded with U.S. Fish & Wildlife bands. Another 17 chicks fledged out while he was away on vacation. Two nests were lost to blow fly infestation while one nest was deserted by the adult birds and another lost when an unknown predator destroyed a nest of chicks and an adult. A fifth nest box was taken over by a House Wren.

The banding program will continue next year and this publication will keep our readers posted on the results. Anyone interested in attracting bluebirds and erecting boxes can contact Fred at Rt. 2, Box 332-B-1, Bethlehem, CT. 06751.

## NATIONAL BIRDS OF PREY CONSERVATION WEEK

In July, President Reagan signed into law a resolution establishing a National Birds of Prey Conservation Week, to be celebrated October 7-13, 1984.

Now that a "raptor week" is in effect, bird clubs around the state should seize the opportunity to promote conservation through public education of our birds of prey. The National Wildlife Federation has developed a list of project ideas and materials available to assist those groups wishing to become involved.

On a state level, HAWKS of Portland, CT. will prepare news releases for local media and offer live raptors for filming.

Additional interest can also be generated by utilizing this theme during the official New England Hawk Watch weekends of September 15-16 and September 29-30.

For further information and assistance contact Stuart Mitchell, HAWKS, P.O. Box 212, Portland, CT. 06480, or call 342-2672.

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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 paper 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.

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# **THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER**

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## THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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*The Connecticut Warbler* is published quarterly (January, April, July, and October) by the Connecticut Ornithological Association (COA). Membership to COA is based on a calendar year, with membership renewable in January. New members of COA receive all four issues of *The Connecticut Warbler* for that year. Make checks payable to The Connecticut Ornithological Association, and mail checks to 314 Unquowa Road, Fairfield, CT 06430.

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Cover Photograph: Saw-whet Owl, photographed in Guilford Jan. 10, 1975 by Noble S. Proctor

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The question most frequently put to me during this first month as president of COA — by media people and interested inquirers alike — has been, "How will COA differ from Audubon Societies and other bird clubs?" Simply put, COA will provide an interface between the ornithological community and the growing legion of amateur birdwatchers who have not yet gone beyond their field guide in learning about birds and those who study them. Our quarterly, *The Connecticut Warbler*, will be our principal means for doing this. We will hold an annual members' meeting, but the ongoing business of the Association will be done by your officers under a Board of Directors.

University ornithologists and several advanced amateurs are doing fascinating work we believe all readers of *The Connecticut Warbler* will want to know about. This quarterly, and perhaps, later, a newsletter, will keep you abreast of these studies and thus add to your appreciation of the significance of Connecticut's birdlife. For example, Professor Charles Sibley's studies at Yale University's Peabody Museum of Natural History are revealing all sorts of new things about the relationships of the birds of the world, new knowledge that will change our views of the evolution and classification of birds. The birds we enjoy in Connecticut are part of a world community, and their future depends on understanding both the needs of the birds and our own impacts on the natural systems that supply these needs. We are in this together.

But we'd like this to be a two-way street. If you tell us what puzzles you about birds, or what interests you most, we will be aided in devising an editorial policy best suited to satisfying you, our readers.

Because this issue marks a reorganization of the editorial team of *The Connecticut Warbler*, it is particularly appropriate for me to give thanks to Carl J. Trichka who has done yeoman work in producing the first four volumes of this quarterly. Carl will continue as Managing Editor, and we look to Anthony H. Bledsoe, who was awarded a Ph.D. degree in biology at Yale University in May, 1983, to broaden our coverage even as he keeps things both readable and interesting.

Our kick-off meeting at Lighthouse Point, New Haven on September 29 was a well-attended and pleasant gathering. Even the unpromising weather opened briefly for the opening ceremony at 9:30 AM, when Roger Tory Peterson helped welcome the nearly 200 birders and friends, who gathered at the lighthouse pavilion to enjoy "coffee and", have field guides autographed by Roger and Virginia Peterson, and get acquainted. Sharp-shinned Hawks were moving in modest numbers, and Frank Gallo, ranger in the New Haven Parks Dept., exhibited a live immature Sharp-shinned Hawk just taken in a net. We are especially appreciative of the co-sponsorship of this initial COA event by the New Haven Bird Club, and of the organizing stint of Tony Bledsoe, Gil and Betty Kleiner, and George and Millie Letis, among others, in providing refreshments and announcements of COA's presence. A good time with a good crowd.

Roland C. Clement  
President  
Connecticut Ornithological Association

# THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE PASSERINE BIRDS OF NORTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA

CHARLES G. SIBLEY AND  
JON E. AHLQUIST

Most books about birds are organized according to a classification in which the orders, families, genera, etc. are arranged according to some taxonomist's concept of their evolutionary relationships. The underlying idea is that the arrangement of the groups and subgroups should reflect the evolutionary history—the phylogeny—of birds. Thus, a classification is only as accurate as that of the phylogeny upon which it is based. To reconstruct a phylogeny it is necessary to determine the branching pattern of the lineages through time.

This is much the same problem as reconstructing the genealogy of a human family. Anyone who has searched out the ramifications of a family tree knows that it is fairly easy to determine the branching pattern and dates of recent events, but that it becomes increasingly difficult to reconstruct the older branches of the tree. As the number of branches increases, and the data become less certain, the accuracy declines and, eventually, the trail ends. Except for royalty, most human genealogies can be traced back in time for less than 300 years, and many of the branches for much less.

The avian tree began as a branch from the reptilian trunk about 150 million years ago and the evidence of its branchings and their

datings was, until recently, to be found only in a sparse fossil record and in the anatomical characters of living birds. Unfortunately, anatomical characters often provide false clues to phylogenetic relationships, especially for the older branches, because convergent evolution produces similar structures in unrelated birds. For example, swifts and swallows are superficially alike because both are adapted to feed on flying insects. In some of the early classifications of birds, swifts and swallows were classified together but it has long been recognized that swallows are passerines and swifts are non-passerines, and that they are not closely related to one another. Although it is easy to find many differences between swifts and swallows, other cases of convergent evolution are more subtle. Thus, anatomical similarities and differences are difficult to interpret, different classifications are produced by different ornithologists, and consensus is seldom attained.

Birds are often cited as the best known group of animals because all but a small percentage of the living species have been discovered, described, and named. We also know a great deal about their distributions, habitats, and other aspects of their natural history, but our understanding of their phylogeny, and the accuracy of the classifications that have been proposed, have been no better than for other groups of organisms.

To circumvent the inherent difficulties of anatomical comparisons a search developed for sources of evidence that would provide a more objective and accurate reconstruction of phylogeny. The revolution in molecular biology during the past 30 years has provided new ideas and new methods, including the development of techniques that make it possible to compare the information encoded in the genes themselves. At

the genetic level the phylogenetic message is in the form of a sequence of coding units analogous to the sequence of letters in a book, or to the bits in a computer language. Instead of subjective opinions about the interpretation of complex anatomical structures such as muscles, bones, etc., it is now possible to compare the genetic material, the DNA, and to obtain an objective measurement of the differences between the entire sets of genes of any two species. There are about 2.5 *billion* coding units (nucleotides) in the DNA of a human, and about 2 billion in that of a bird. With the technique of DNA-DNA hybridization we can compare these huge numbers of characters and obtain an average measurement of the genealogical distance between living species that represent the different lineages of birds. From these measurements it is then possible to reconstruct the branching pattern of the phylogeny. In addition, by calibrating the DNA distance measures against time, it is possible to calculate the approximate date, in millions of years ago, that the divergences between living lineages occurred. Following is a synopsis of the procedures involved in the technique of DNA-DNA hybridization.

### METHODS

DNA is the abbreviation for deoxyribonucleic acid, the chemical basis of the genetic material for all the organisms on Earth, except for certain viruses. DNA is a double-stranded molecule in which the two strands are composed of complementary sequences of four kinds of chemical coding units, the nucleotides. The four nucleotides, and their one letter abbreviations, are adenine (A), thymine (T), cytosine (C), and guanine (G). The nucleotides always occur as complementary pairs, held together by chemical bonds: an A in one stand is always

paired with a T in the other strand, and a C is always paired with a G. Genetic information is encoded in the sequence of the nucleotides. The "genes" are specific sequences of nucleotides that code for the many kinds of proteins that make up much of the structures, and control the functions, of plants and animals.

If double-stranded DNA in solution is heated to boiling, the chemical bonds between the A-T and G-C pairs will rupture ("melt"), and the double-stranded DNA will be converted into single strands. The chemical bonds between complementary nucleotides are the same as those that hold the atoms of the water molecule together—hydrogen bonds—thus, the melting of DNA is essentially the same process as melting ice, or boiling water to produce steam. In other words, the chemistry involved is remarkably simple.

If the single strands of a melted sample of DNA are allowed to cool, they reform into the double-stranded structure because the complementary pairs of A-T and G-C nucleotides "recognize" one another and re-establish the hydrogen bonds between them. The reformation is accurate according to the sequence of the nucleotides if the temperature during the reassociation is above about 50° Centigrade. At 60°C in a salt solution of moderate concentration (e.g., 0.12 molar sodium phosphate) the rate of reassociation is maximal and the accuracy of nucleotide pairing is virtually perfect. Thus, under appropriate conditions, the single strands of the DNA of any species will reassociate only with their complementary partners, and the complete double-stranded structure will be restored to its original condition.

Similarly, if the single-stranded DNAs of two different species are combined under conditions favorable for the reassociation of

complementary A-T and C-G pairs, "hybrid" double-stranded DNA molecules will form. Such DNA-DNA hybrids will contain mismatched pairs: for example, an A may be opposite a C, and no bonds will form between them. Since the melting temperature is proportional to the number of hydrogen bonds between the two strands, such mismatches will cause the hybrid DNAs to melt at a temperature lower than that required to melt perfectly paired double-strands.

Mismatched pairs are the result of evolutionary changes (mutations) that have occurred in the ancestral lineages of the two species composing the DNA-DNA hybrid since they last shared a common ancestor. The number of mismatches is, therefore, proportional to the time that has elapsed since the two lineages diverged. Thus, the melting temperature of a DNA-DNA hybrid provides a relative measurement of the time of the branching. By calibrating the melting temperature data against well-dated geological events that caused the common ancestral species to be divided into two geographically separated populations, we are able to date divergence events in absolute time. For example, we may assume that the common ancestor of the Ostrich of Africa and the Rheas of South America was divided into two lineages by the opening of the Atlantic Ocean in the late Cretaceous, about 80 million years ago. By comparing the DNAs of the living Ostrich and Rhea, we have been able to calibrate the DNA distance measurements in terms of absolute time (Sibley and Ahlquist 1981).

We have made several other such comparisons, which provide the basis for the calculation of a calibration factor, namely, a median melting point depression of 1° Centigrade is equivalent to 4.5 million years since the two lineages diverged from their

most recent common ancestor. For example, if the median melting temperature of a DNA-DNA hybrid between two species is 10° below that of the double-stranded DNA of either of the two species whose DNAs were used to form the hybrid, it means that they diverged about 45 million years ago.

The details of the DNA-DNA hybridization method, and the dating technique, are both more complex than presented above, but DNA-DNA hybridization is used widely in molecular biology, and is part of the process popularly called "genetic engineering." The technique has been in use for 25 years, and has been applied to studies of many groups of plants and animals.

#### SOME RESULTS

During the past 10 years we have made more than 22,000 DNA-DNA hybrid comparisons, using the DNAs of about 1600 of the 9000 species of living birds. From these data we have reconstructed the phylogeny of nearly all the groups of birds, and developed a classification based on that phylogeny. Our data for the Order Passeriformes (perching birds) are virtually complete, and the following classification of North and Central American passerines is based on the DNA phylogeny.

In most traditional classifications, the categorical ranks of groups (orders, families, etc.) have been assigned on the basis of subjective evaluations of differences and similarities between species, and on ideas of phylogeny based on anatomical, behavioral, or other characters. "New" families usually have been described because a taxonomist decided that a species, or several species, were so different that they "deserved" to be separated. In the absence of a better method, this procedure was the best available, but it produced such unnatural groups as the "Muscicapidae," noted below.

In the following classification, the branching pattern of the phylogeny is reflected in the classification by using the DNA-based datings of divergence events to assign categorical ranks. Thus, orders are groups that branched from one another between 90 and 100 million years ago (MYA), suborders branched 80-90 MYA, infraorders 70-80 MYA, parvorders 60-70 MYA, superfamilies 50-60 MYA, families 40-50 MYA, subfamilies 30-40 MYA, and tribes 20-30 MYA. This objective method of assigning categorical rank produces a classification in which a given category is equivalent to approximately the same amount of evolutionary divergence throughout the classification. The concept of "categorical equivalence" has long been viewed as the ideal way to assign ranks, but it could not be implemented until we had a method to date the divergence times between lineages. Even if the calibration in absolute time should prove to be in error, the classification would not be affected because, for this purpose, relative time is just as good as absolute time.

A CLASSIFICATION OF THE  
PASSERINE BIRDS OF  
NORTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA

Order Passeriformes, Perching Birds  
Suborder Oligomyodi, Suboscines  
Infraorder Tyrannides, New World  
Suboscines  
Parvorder Tyranni  
Superfamily Tyrannoidea  
Family Tyrannidae  
Subfamily Tyranninae,  
Tyrant Flycatchers  
Subfamily Tityrinae,  
Becards, Tityras  
Subfamily Cotinginae,  
Cotingas, Sharpbills

Subfamily Piprinae,  
Manakins  
Family Mionectidae, Mionectid  
Flycatchers  
Parvorder Furnarii  
Superfamily Furnarioidea  
Family Furnariidae  
Subfamily Furnariinae,  
Ovenbirds  
Subfamily Dendrocolaptinae,  
Woodcreepers  
Superfamily Formicarioidea  
Family Formicariidae, Ground  
Antbirds  
Family Rhinocryptidae,  
Tapaculos  
Family Conopophagidae,  
Gnateaters  
Parvorder Thamnophili  
Family Thamnophilidae, Typi-  
cal Antbirds  
Suborder Passeres, Oscines (Songbirds)  
Parvorder Corvi  
Superfamily Corvoidea  
Family Corvidae  
Subfamily Corvinae  
Tribe Corvini, Crows,  
Jays, Magpies,  
Nutcackers  
Subfamily Vireoninae, Vireos  
Family Laniidae, Shrikes  
Parvorder Muscicapae  
Superfamily Turdoidea  
Family Bombycillidae  
Tribe Dulini, Palm Chat  
Tribe Ptilonotini, Silky  
Flycatchers  
Tribe Bombycillini,  
Waxwings  
Family Cinclidae, Dippers  
Family Turdidae  
Subfamily Turdinae, Typical  
thrushes

Family Sturnidae  
     Tribe Sturnini, Starlings  
         (introduced)  
     Tribe Mimini, Mocking-  
         bird, Thrashers,  
         Catbirds  
 Superfamily Sylvioidea  
     Family Sittidae  
         Subfamily Sittinae,  
             Nuthatches  
     Family Troglodytidae  
         Subfamily Certhiinae, North-  
             ern Creepers  
         Subfamily Troglodytinae,  
             Wrens  
         Subfamily Polioptilinae, Ver-  
             din, Gnatcatchers  
     Family Paridae  
         Subfamily Parinae, Titmice,  
             Chickadees  
     Family Aegithalidae, Bushtits  
     Family Hirundinidae, Swallows  
     Family Regulidae, Kinglets  
     Family Sylviidae  
         Subfamily Phylloscopinae,  
             Leaf Warblers  
         Subfamily Sylviinae  
             Tribe Timaliini, Wrentit  
                 (= babblers)  
 Superfamily Fringilloidea  
     Family Alaudidae, Larks  
     Family Ploceidae  
         Subfamily Passerinae, House  
             Sparrow (introduced)  
         Subfamily Motacillinae,  
             Pipits  
     Family Fringillidae  
         Subfamily Fringillinae  
             Tribe Carduelini, Gold-  
                 finches, Crossbills,  
                 etc.  
             Tribe Drepanidini, Hawai-  
                 ian Honeycreepers  
         Subfamily Emberizinae

Tribe Emberizini, North-  
 ern "sparrows," bun-  
 tings, longspurs,  
 towhees, etc.  
 Tribe Parulini, Wood-  
 warblers, incl.  
     *Zeledonia*  
 Tribe Cardinalini,  
     Cardinals  
 Tribe Icterini, Troupials  
 (= New World ori-  
 oles), Meadowlarks,  
 Blackbirds, etc.  
 Tribe Thraupini, Tana-  
 gers, Neotropical  
 honey-creepers  
 (= "Coerebidae"),  
 Swallow-Tanager,  
 Tanager-finches

#### DISCUSSION

This classification covers the same passer-  
 ine groups included in the latest edition of  
 the American Ornithologists' Union  
 checklist (1983). A comparison between  
 the two classifications will reveal many dif-  
 ferences. The A.O.U. checklist was based  
 on traditional ideas about the classification  
 of the Passeriformes, most of which were  
 developed by Alexander Wetmore who  
 based his classification (1930, 1960) on  
 that of Hans Gadow (1893). Most field  
 guides and other bird books have used the  
 Gadow-Wetmore- A.O.U. arrangement.  
 The basis for the new classification presen-  
 ted above is discussed by Sibley and  
 Ahlquist (1983).

Some of the groups in this classification  
 do not occur in the United States, and we  
 will not comment on them. The others are  
 familiar to most persons interested in birds,  
 but they may occupy an unfamiliar position  
 in our arrangement. The following com-  
 ments pertain to some such groups.



One of the most fascinating discoveries from our worldwide studies is that the "old endemic" passerines of Australia originated from a single ancestral species about 55-60 MYA. The present passerine avifauna of Australia evolved from this common ancestor by adaptive radiation while Australia was widely separated from other land masses. Among the groups that evolved in Australia was the ancestor of the crows, jays, magpies, and their relatives, which form the traditional family "Corvidae." When the phylogeny of the corvids became clear, it was apparent that there are actually many more members of the family than had been recognized and we had to revise its boundaries. Among the New World groups that we found to be members of the reconstructed Corvidae are the vireos and their relatives in South and Central America, the greenlets, peppershrikes, and shrike-vireos. From the dating of divergence events it seems likely that the ancestor of the Subfamily Vireoninae branched from the corvid stem about 40 MYA, when the last land connection between Australia and South American, via Antarctica, was broken as the continents drifted apart.

This was a startling discovery because the vireos usually have been thought to be allied to the wood-warblers (Tribe Parulini), although there have been doubts expressed by previous authors, and the shrikes (Laniidae) have been suggested more than once as possible relatives of the vireos. Comparisons of the DNAs of vireos with those of members of all other groups of passerines, showed their relationship to the other corvids, and that the Laniidae is the adjacent family (sister group) to the corvids. In our classification, the Corvidae also includes many groups of Australian passerines, such as the whistlers, monarchs, fantails, birds of paradise, woodswallows, etc.

(Sibley and Ahlquist 1982a, 1983, 1985).

Another surprising discovery revealed by the DNA comparisons is the remarkably close relationship between the Old World starlings and the New World mockingbirds, thrashers, and catbirds. The DNA evidence indicates that the starlings and the mockingbirds diverged from a common ancestor about 25 MYA, and by the rules we use to assign categorical rank on the basis of the time of origin of lineages, they are placed as tribes in the Family Sturnidae, Superfamily Turdoidea (Sibley and Ahlquist 1984). This relationship was also suggested by a serological (immunological) study over 20 years ago (Stallcup 1961), but the evidence was discounted and ignored. Additional support has been found in the structure of the syrinx and head region.

As is true for the vireos, the starling-mockingbird relationship may be explained by the history of the Earth. During the early Tertiary (= 65-30 MYA) the climate of the Arctic regions was temperate and broad-leaved deciduous trees grew as far north as northern Greenland. It thus seems probable that the common ancestor of the starlings and mockingbirds was able to spread over the northern hemisphere. However, beginning about 30 MYA, the climate became increasingly colder and, presumably, the North American and Eurasian populations were pushed southward and out of contact by 25-30 MYA, which is the DNA-dated divergence time between the Sturnini and the Mimini.

Most recent classifications include a large family, "Muscicapidae," the so-called "Old World insect-eaters," including the Old World warblers, flycatchers, thrushes, wrens, babblers, and other groups. The DNA comparisons have shown that the "Muscicapidae" is a composite of members of both of the Parvorders and, in some clas-

sifications, it has included members of all six of the Superfamilies of our Suborder Passeres! Such "polyphyletic" categories are rejected by all taxonomists and, to terminate the confusion, we have urged that the "Muscicapidae" not be used as a family name (Sibley and Ahlquist 1980, 1985).

In virtually all recent classifications the swallows (Hirundinidae) are placed at the beginning of the list of songbird families. This arrangement was based on the argument that their specialized syringeal and tarsal characters are "primitive" and, therefore, that they should be placed at the bottom of the phylogenetic tree. The DNA comparisons show that the swallows are the descendants of a branch in the sylvioid cluster that originated about 45-50 MYA. Their syringeal and tarsal characters are actually derived structures that evolved after they branched from the other sylvioid lineages (Sibley and Ahlquist 1982b).

Similarly, the larks (Alaudidae) have been placed at the beginning of most classifications of the Passeres because they too have some unique morphological characters. The DNA-DNA comparisons show that the larks are members of the Fringilloidea, and that their differences from the other fringilloids evolved after, not before, the divergence took place.

The wagtails and pipits (Motacillinae) are placed near the Old World warblers (Sylviinae), flycatchers (Muscicapinae), or thrushes (Turdinae) in most classifications, but the DNA comparisons show them to be members of the Family Ploceidae which, in our classification, includes the African weaverbirds, the House Sparrow (Passerinae), the Old World accentors (Prunellinae), and the waxbills (Estrildinae).

The Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*) usually has been viewed as an aberrant wood-warbler, but some authors have sug-

gested that it might be a member of the mockingbird-thrasher group. The DNA comparisons confirm its membership in the Parulini, but also show that it is quite distant from the "typical" parulines, such as *Vermivora* and *Dendroica* (Sibley and Ahlquist 1982c).

These are but a few of the discoveries the DNA comparisons have produced. Can we be confident that they represent a more accurate reconstruction of avian phylogeny than previous studies? Obviously, we think so, and to date there have been no serious challenges, although skeptics remain. A classification is a hypothesis of phylogeny, and the accuracy of a hypothesis must be tested by its ability to explain deductions that must be true if the hypothesis is true. So far, we can say with confidence that our DNA-based phylogeny is congruent with the geological history of the Earth to a far greater degree than any previous classification, and that every relationship indicated by the DNA data has been found to be supported by other sources of evidence, including anatomical characters. Now that a new hypothesis of relationships among bird groups has been presented, its ability to answer deductive questions can be compared with that of other ideas about avian phylogeny. May the best plan win.

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## THE STATUS OF BARROW'S GOLDENEYE IN CONNECTICUT

STEPHEN P. BROKER

Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*) is seldom observed in Connecticut, and many active observers have not seen this species in the state. It has been described as a "rare winter visitant" (Merriam 1877) and an "accidental visitor" in Connecticut (Sage et al. 1913). My discovery of an adult male Barrow's Goldeneye in New Haven Harbor in January, 1984 and the subsequent realization that the status of Barrow's Goldeneye in Connecticut has not been assessed for forty years prompted me to undertake a review of the state records of this species.

Barrow's Goldeneye has a disjunct geographic distribution consisting of two populations (see A.O.U. 1983). The population of western North America consists of about 150,000 birds (Bellrose 1976), which breed locally on montane lakes and rivers from southern Alaska, British Columbia, and Alberta to the Cascades, Sierra Nevada, and northern Rocky Mountains. These birds winter coastally from southern Alaska through British Columbia to

Washington and Oregon, rarely to San Francisco, and inland from southern British Columbia to northern Montana and the Colorado River Valley. The population of eastern North America and northwestern Europe breeds on lakes and rivers in northern Labrador, Greenland, and Iceland. This population is considerably smaller than the population in western North America. Barrow's Goldeneyes in Greenland and Iceland winter near their nesting grounds, while Labrador birds winter from the Gulf of St. Lawrence south to New York. A few winter inland in Maine and New York, but most winter along the coast. Barrow's Goldeneye is rare south of Cape Cod, Massachusetts (Bent 1925; see also winter reports in *American Birds*). Stragglers have reached North Carolina (Forbush 1925).

Adult male Barrow's Goldeneyes are easily identified in winter and breeding plumage. Recent field guides (National Geographic Society 1983, Peterson 1983, Robbins et al. 1983) discuss the identification of adult males fully. Female Barrow's Goldeneyes cannot be identified positively in the field unless the following features are observed: 1) head and neck dark brown, not gray brown as in Common Goldeneye; 2) head rounder and lower than in Common Goldeneye; 3) bill all yellow, shorter and deeper than in Common Goldeneye, and continuously tapered; and 4) white wing patch separated by a continuous dark band (see Brooks 1920, Forbush 1925, Johnsgard 1975). These features are variable, and most authorities require that female goldeneyes with the characteristics listed above be in the company of drake Barrow's in order to be identified as female Barrow's Goldeneyes (Griscom 1945, Elliott 1961). First-year Barrow's and Common Goldeneyes of either sex are virtually indistinguishable in the field.

Early authors had little information on the status of Barrow's Goldeneye in Connecticut. Linsley (1843) did not list the species, while Merriam (1877) included it on the basis of a single drake collected on Long Island Sound and purchased by John H. Sage on November 14, 1867 at the Hartford Market. Sage et al. (1913) listed only two records of Barrow's Goldeneye, the 1867 specimen and two adult males collected at Lake Saltonstall, East Haven on December 25, 1883 by A.J. Graniss. Bagg and Eliot (1937) listed a third Connecticut record, a pair seen on March 21, 1937 at Fairfield by A.A. Saunders. Hoffman (1940) described a drake and a possible female seen November 19, 1939 on the Connecticut River in South Windsor. Hasbrouck (1944) listed the Connecticut records of Barrow's Goldeneye in his review of records for the eastern United States.

There has been no comprehensive treatment of Barrow's Goldeneye in Connecticut since Hasbrouck's review. Hasbrouck listed 7 records for Connecticut. Of these, one sighting from Wells River, Vermont is incorrectly assigned to Meriden, Connecticut. A second, the bird purportedly collected on Long Island Sound in 1867, is listed twice. A third report from Noank is unsubstantiated. Several authors have discussed the status of Barrow's Goldeneye in Massachusetts (Brewster 1909, Forbush 1925, Bagg and Eliot 1937, Griscom 1945, Hill 1965) and New York (Parkes 1951, Elliott 1961, Bull 1974).

Since 1944, there have been 17 published reports of Barrow's Goldeneye in Connecticut. I have reviewed these reports and have sought information on unpublished sightings. I have accepted as valid those reports for which I have the names of the observers, the date and locality of observation, and an acceptable written and/or

## RESULTS

verbal description of the bird(s). An acceptable description includes: 1) a description of the plumage, shape, and behavior of the bird in question; 2) the conditions of observation (light, weather, distance, duration, and optical equipment); 3) the reasons for eliminating similar species in making the identification; 4) indication of the experience the observer has with the species; and 5) the names of other observers (if any) (see Clark 1983 for a discussion of criteria for the acceptance of sight records). I have also accepted reports substantiated by specimens, if the specimen is accompanied by the name of the collector and the date and locality of collection.

Table 1 lists the 20 reports of Barrow's Goldeneye in Connecticut that meet my criteria for acceptance. Sixteen records are of single adult males, one is of a pair of adult males, and three are of male and female pairs. Connecticut has no record of more than two Barrow's being seen together. There are no sightings of single females that meet my criteria for acceptance.

The earliest date of arrival of Barrow's Goldeneye in Connecticut is November 19. The latest departure date is March 27. Only 7 of the 20 records have involved stays of two days or more. Notable among these are the drake that stayed off Indian Neck,

Table 1. *Records of Barrow's Goldeneye in Connecticut.*

Date	Locality	Number and (if known) sex (* = specimen[s])	Reference(s)
Dec. 25, 1883	Lake Saltonstall, East Haven	2♂*	Sage et al. 1913
Mar. 21, 1937	Fairfield	1♂	Bull. New Engl. Bird Life 1(6):3;
		1♀	Bagg and Eliot 1937
Nov. 19, 1939	Connecticut River, South Windsor	1♂	Bull. New Engl. Bird Life 3(12):3;
		w/poss. ♀	Hoffman 1940
Jan. 8, 1941	Saybrook	1	Bull. New Engl. Bird Life 5(1):3
Feb. 6, 1954	Saugatuck River, Westport	1	Audubon Field Notes 8:239
Dec. 7, 1954	Fairfield Beach, Fairfield	1♂*	David Parsons, pers. comm.
Dec. 20, 1960	Carolina Creek, East Haven	1♂*	David Parsons, pers. comm.
Feb. 4, 1967	New Haven Harbor, West Haven	1	Rec. New Engl. Birds 23(2):3
Feb. 24- Mar. 16, 1968	Indian Neck, Branford	1♂	Rec. New Engl. Birds 24(2):3; Rec. New Engl. Birds 24(3):5
Dec. 17, 1972	New Haven	1	New Haven Bird Club Newsl. 10(4):2; Amer. Birds 27:208
Mar. 21, 1974	Great Meadows Marsh, Lordship	1♂	Carl J. Trichka, pers. comm.
Dec. 27-30, 1974	Mystic River, Mystic	1♂	Amer. Birds 29:239
Mar. 25-27, 1976	Lake Watrous, Woodbridge	1♂	New Haven Bird Club Newsl. 13(6):4; Amer. Birds 30:691
Nov. 30, 1976- Jan. 12, 1977	Mystic River, Mystic	1♂	New Haven Bird Club Newsl. 14(4):2; Amer. Birds 31:497
Feb. 9-10, 1977	Sandy Point, West Haven	1♂	New Haven Bird Club Newsl. 14(5):5; Noble S. Proctor, pers. comm.
Feb. 10-12, 1980	Indian Neck, Branford	1♂	Noble S. Proctor, pers. comm.
Mar. 2, 1981	Lake Saltonstall, East Haven	1♂	Noble S. Proctor, pers. comm.
Dec. 13, 1981	Harkness State Park, Waterford	1♂	Rick Cech, pers. comm.
Dec. 24, 1983	Charles Is., Milford	1♂*	David Parsons, pers. comm.
		w/poss. ♀	
Jan. 19-25, 1984	West River, West Haven	1♂	Stephen P. Broker, pers. obs.; fide Anthony H. Bledsoe, Fred C. Sibley

Branford for 22 days during the winter of 1967-1968 and the drake that visited the Mystic River for 44 days during the winter of 1976-1977. Only twice have two sight records been made during the same winter.

Most sightings of Barrow's Goldeneye in Connecticut have been made at river mouths. Half of the records fall within an 8 mile radius of New Haven Harbor. The state has only one truly inland sighting, the pair observed November 19, 1939 on the Connecticut River in South Windsor. Three sightings have been made on coastal lakes, one 7 miles inland on Lake Watrous, and two on Lake Saltonstall, East Haven, 3 miles inland.

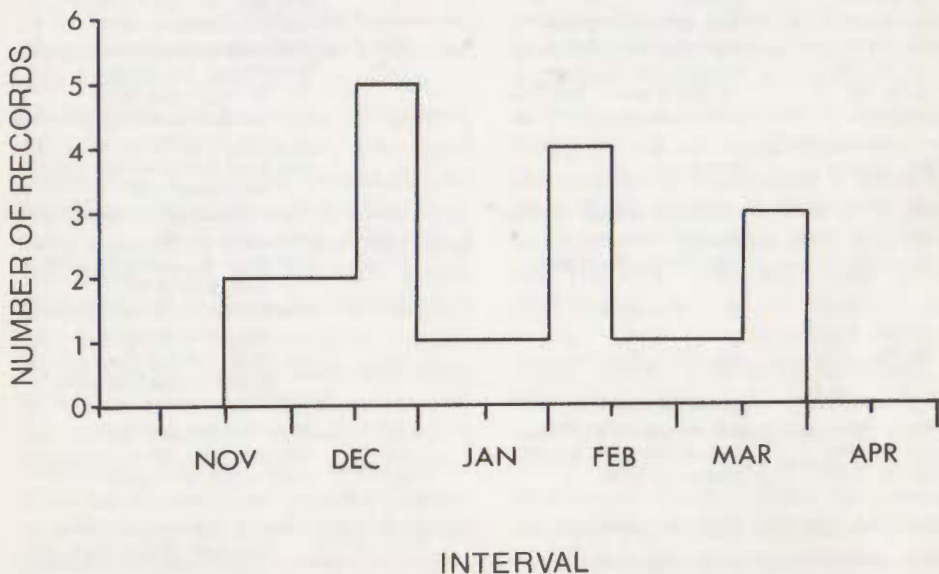
Barrow's Goldeneye was sighted infrequently in Connecticut prior to the 1970s. During the last decade, however, sightings have been made nearly every winter. The 20 substantiated records of Barrow's Golden-

eye in Connecticut are plotted according to date of initial sighting in Figure 1.

Four records of Barrow's Goldeneye in Connecticut are supported by specimens. Two drakes were taken at Lake Saltonstall, East Haven on December 25, 1883 and were not preserved (Sage et al. 1913). Mr. R.E. Johnson collected another drake on December 7, 1954 at Fairfield Beach, Fairfield. The mounted specimen (CASC#B1338) is housed at Birdcraft Museum, Fairfield. A drake Barrow's was collected by Arthur Briggs near the mouth of Carolina Creek, East Haven on December 20, 1960. The mounted specimen is now in the collection of Edwin E. Gesner of Branford (David Parsons, pers. comm.). The carcass of this bird is in the Yale Peabody Museum ornithological collection (YPM alcoholic specimen 3647). Alex Perez collected a drake that was flying over

Figure 1.

Records of Barrow's Goldeneye in Connecticut, plotted according to date of initial sighting. The time intervals are half-months.



the exposed sandbar at Charles Is., Milford on December 24, 1983. The mounted specimen is currently on display at Perez's taxidermy shop in Derby.

The Children's Museum of Hartford has a mounted drake Barrow's Goldeneye that lacks written documentation. This specimen may be the drake bought by Sage in the Hartford Market in 1867. Sage's notebook lists this bird as having been collected "in Long Island Sound" on November 9, 1867 (George A. Clark, pers. comm.). A penciled entry in Sage's notebook indicates that the specimen was given to the Children's Museum in 1928. The museum's accession book has no entry for a Barrow's Goldeneye, however, and the specimen lacks a label. Thus, it is not certain that this specimen is the bird purchased by Sage in 1867. The vague locality of collection of the Sage specimen and the early date for arrival in Connecticut cast doubt on this record, and I consider it an unsubstantiated report. There is no evidence to support the statement by Hasbrouck (1944) that the Sage specimen is at Yale Peabody Museum.

I have received 8 reports of Barrow's Goldeneyes in Connecticut that do not meet my criteria for acceptance. Six have incomplete or inconclusive data. Several may meet the criteria for acceptance with additional information. Two additional reports of Barrow's Goldeneye are incorrectly assigned to Connecticut — the sightings of drakes on December 28, 1965 (Cruikshank 1966, Audubon Field Notes 20:132) and December 30, 1966 (Baird and Emery 1966, Rec. New Engl. Birds 22[12]:4) were made in New York off Fisher's Island, a part of the New London, Connecticut Christmas Bird Count area (Robert Dewire, pers. comm.).

The pattern of occurrence of Barrow's Goldeneye in Connecticut is consistent with the overall pattern of winter occurrence of the species in northeastern North America. Barrow's Goldeneyes arrive in Maine and Massachusetts from mid- to late November and reach the southern edge of their winter distribution along the coasts of Long Island and northern New Jersey by early December. The cluster of December records in Connecticut is consistent with this pattern of arrival. The pattern of spring departure mirrors the sequence of fall arrivals. In spring, Barrow's Goldeneyes leave Long Island and Connecticut in late March and depart from coastal Massachusetts and Maine by mid- to late April. Barrow's Goldeneyes prefer the same habitats in Connecticut as they do farther north — river mouths, harbors, protected coastlines, and, rarely, inland lakes and rivers.

Most records of Barrow's Goldeneye in Connecticut are of adult males in winter/breeding plumage, a consequence of the difficulty of identifying adult females and first-year birds of either sex. Females probably occur in the state as frequently as do males, but the difficulty of identifying females with certainty precludes their detection. Adult males in eclipse plumage are unlikely to be seen in Connecticut in winter because they assume winter plumage prior to departure from their breeding grounds. Adult males that have persisted into the summer along the northeast coast have been seen occasionally in full eclipse plumage.

The geographic distribution of the 20 records of Barrow's Goldeneye in Connecticut provides little information on the migration routes used by Barrow's Goldeneye in eastern North America. It can be argued that the eastern records reflect a stepwise

coastal migration of Barrow's Goldeneye in fall and spring, because fall dates of arrival are progressively later in the south and spring departures are later in the north. However, the dates of arrival and departure are also consistent with the use of inland migratory routes, such as the Connecticut and Hudson River Valleys. Until information about staging areas in Labrador and the flight routes of individual birds is available, it will not be possible to determine with certainty the migratory routes used by Barrow's Goldeneye in the northeast.

If migration does occur in stages along the northeast coast, then Barrow's Goldeneyes arriving at the eastern end of Long Island Sound have two options for further migration. The birds may continue westward along the Connecticut coastline, or they may proceed along the eastern shores of Long Island. However, there are no clear trends in movement from east to west along the Connecticut coast through time, nor are there any clear patterns of movement along the coast of Long Island. Most Long Island records are from Montauk Point, Orient Point, and Gardiner's Bay (Parkes 1951, Elliott 1961, Bull 1974). Few records of Barrow's Goldeneye are from the south shore of Long Island, and only one is from the north shore.

The recent increase in sightings of Barrow's Goldeneye in Connecticut is best attributed to a recent increase in the number of observers (see Hill 1965, Bellrose 1976). The peak of occurrence of Barrow's Goldeneye in Connecticut in December probably represents the arrival of southward moving birds but could also be the result of the increase in birding activity during the Audubon Christmas Bird Count period. It is difficult to determine the significance of the other peaks in Figure 1. The apparent localization of records in the vicinity of

New Haven Harbor can be ascribed equally well to a concentration of active observers in the area as to the existence of a small wintering population there.

The daily patterns of movement of Barrow's Goldeneye in Connecticut are as much a mystery as are the migratory routes by which the birds reach the state. There are no detailed descriptions of the feeding and resting habits of Connecticut Barrow's Goldeneyes, and offshore rafts of ducks have not been checked to determine if Barrow's Goldeneyes spend more time offshore than the distribution of Connecticut records indicates.

The Connecticut records of Barrow's Goldeneyes do indicate that the species is not a vagrant in the state but rather is a regular winter visitor in small numbers. Further studies of Barrow's Goldeneye in Connecticut and Long Island Sound are needed to clarify the abundance, distribution, and movements of the species in Connecticut.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

SPRING: MARCH 1 – MAY 31, 1984

DENNIS VARZA

The spring migration ran slightly behind schedule but produced many days of excellent birding and a variety of rarities. The

highlight of the season was Connecticut's first Ross' Gull, but sightings of Harlequin Duck, Golden Eagle, Parasitic Jaeger, Orange-crowned Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, and Yellow-headed Blackbird also brightened a generally cold, damp spring. Early spring migrants arrived in the third week of March — Killdeer arrived in numbers on March 20, while Eastern Phoebes and Tree Swallows moved through the state in good numbers March 25. March 24-27 witnessed movement of Glossy Ibis, Black-crowned Night Heron, and many species of ducks. Between April 17 and April 19, Broad-winged Hawks, Bonaparte's Gulls, Louisiana Waterthrushes, Yellow-rumped and Palm Warblers, and Chipping, Savannah, Song, and Swamp Sparrows migrated through the southern part of the state. April 27-29 yielded the first Solitary Vireos, Prairie, Yellow, and Black-and-white Warblers, Northern Waterthrushes, Ovenbirds, American Redstarts, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. Birding in early May was generally slow, and there were no large waves of migrants until May 11-13, when large numbers of warblers arrived. Red-eyed Vireos were uniformly late, arriving in numbers May 12. May 18-20 saw another wave of migrant warblers and flycatchers.

#### LOONS THROUGH HERONS

There were six reports of Red-necked Grebes, all in April between Greenwich and New Haven. Great Cormorants lingered through April, the last being seen off Norwalk May 18 (FM). Snowy Egrets were late, arriving in Stratford April 2 (DV), but Great Egret arrived nearly on time March 27 in Westport (FM). An early Tricolored Heron flew by Oyster River, West Haven April 18 (DV,AB), and two frequented the Stratford-Milford area during May (DV). A Green-backed Heron observed flying in a

snowstorm March 9 in Milford (MKW) either was very early or had overwintered locally. Single Glossy Ibises, infrequent inland visitors, were at Simsbury April 9 (JTT) and South Windsor May 19 (PD).

#### WATERFOWL THROUGH RAILS

500 Tundra Swans were observed over Route 7 in Wilton April 6 (KN et al., fide FM). Snow Geese moved across the state April 9, with about 900 birds in five flocks over Greenwich that day (DB,HC,TG). 3000 Brant in several flocks were seen at Sherwood Is. State Park, Norwalk May 20 (MS, BD,FM). A ♂ male Eurasian Wigeon was at Great Meadows, Stratford March 31-April 2 (RS,DV) with a large flock of American Wigeons. A ♂ Harlequin Duck was seen by residents of coastal Branford for a month before being identified by a birder April 20 (BK); it remained until April 27 but proved difficult to locate for many observers. Birders counting scoters at Greenwich Pt. observed an immature ♂ King Eider April 26 (JZ,DB); two unidentified ♀ eiders were there the next day (JZ,TBa). Late were a Bufflehead at Sherwood Is. State Park May 20-23 and 3 Ring-necked Ducks on Saugatuck Reservoir May 23 (MS).

The spring hawk flight was uneventful. The first Broad-winged Hawk arrived in Simsbury April 3 (JTT), followed by a large movement April 18. A Golden Eagle migrated along West Rock Ridge April 28 (NP). The only Peregrine Falcons reported were at East Rock, New Haven May 2 (NP) and Milford Pt. May 17 (FM). Clapper and Virginia Rails were widespread along the coast in late April and early May. Single King Rails were at Holly Pond, Stamford March 14 (BF) and Sachus Head, Guilford May 3 (NP).

## SHOREBIRDS THROUGH TERNS

The shorebird migration was slightly late and notably sparse. Table 1 describes the pattern of migration of the common shorebirds in the Stratford-Milford area this spring (DV). The first Piping Plover was at Milford Pt. March 18 (DV). Two Lesser Golden Plovers were at Hammonasset State Park April 16 (RS,DV). Several Whimbrels were reported between Milford Pt. and West Haven April 9-26 (m.ob.). An early White-rumped Sandpiper was at Guilford Sluice May 5 (RS,DV). Wilson's Phalaropes appeared at several coastal localities this spring, with five reports between Westport and Madison May 2-18 (AB, DV, m.ob.).

Gulls provided coastal observers with an exciting April. An early April search for Little and Common Black-headed Gulls turned up an adult Ross' Gull at Oyster River, West Haven April 11-22 (RS,DV;

see Bledsoe et al. 1984, Connecticut Warbler 4:19 for details). Persistent observers were rewarded not only with excellent views of the Ross' Gull, but with fine looks at a first-winter Little Gull and one first-winter, and two adult Common Black-headed Gulls throughout mid-April. Up to 3 Little and 5 Common Black-headed Gulls frequented Old Saybrook in late March (m.ob.). Several Glaucous and Iceland Gulls were observed throughout April between Milford Pt. and New Haven, while Laughing Gull arrived on April 13, making it possible to see 10 species of gulls in one day in West Haven. A search for the Ross' Gull produced another rarity, Parasitic Jaeger, at Oyster River April 12 (NP). On April 19, a movement of Common Terns brought two Forster's Terns and a Royal Tern to the mudflats at Oyster River (AB,DS). Guilford has several Caspian Terns the same day (fide NP).

Table 1. *Shorebird migration in the Stratford-Milford area, Spring 1984.\**

Species	First	Peak	Last
Black-bellied Plover	April 8	May 30 (600)	June 24
Semipalmated Plover	April 29	May 14 (350)	June 21
Greater Yellowlegs	April 2	May 2 (260)	June 28
Lesser Yellowlegs	April 8	May 6 (15)	May 22
Ruddy Turnstone	May 6	May 22 (190)	June 21
Sanderling	—	June 5 (110)	June 10
Semipalmated Sandpiper	April 26	June 5 (1000)	June 21
Least Sandpiper	April 18	May 11 (500)	June 7
Dunlin	—	May 22 (660)	June 17
Short-billed Dowitcher	May 6	May 30 (100)	June 7

\*The number in parentheses is the total number of birds seen on the peak date.

## CUCKOOS THROUGH WRENS

Cuckoos were scarce in Connecticut this spring, as they were throughout New York State (see Kingbird 34:171). Yellow-billed Cuckoos arrived in small numbers in mid-May. Only four Black-billed Cuckoos were reported, all seen or heard May 12-16. Two Red-headed Woodpeckers were in Farmington throughout the period (PD), suggesting possible breeding. The wintering Red-headed Woodpecker in Bethany stayed until the end of March (AB), and two in Milford remained until the end of April (BM). Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were widely distributed in the northwest portion of the state throughout the spring. The earliest Eastern Phoebe and Tree Swallows were found March 23, two days before numbers of each arrived in the state. An early Eastern Kingbird was at Storrs April 9 (PS). By April 15, all six species of swallows had arrived. Singing Winter Wrens were widespread in the western half of the state throughout May, but proving their nesting is another matter.

## GNATCATCHERS THROUGH WOOD-WARBLES

The earliest reported Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was at Yale Golf Course, New Haven April 18 (AB). A White-eyed Vireo banded at Birdcraft Museum, Fairfield March 24 was extremely early and apparently did not survive (fide DV). Palm and Yellow-rumped Warblers, normally mid-April migrants, did not arrive in numbers until late April and stayed well into May. Cape May Warblers, usually uncommon in spring, were common this May, with singing males in many warbler flocks. Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, and Hooded Warblers appeared to be more common than usual this spring, but most observers considered

Worm-eating and Prairie Warblers less common than usual. An early Wilson's Warbler was in Simsbury April 28 (JTT). A Yellow-throated Warbler appeared at Connecticut College Arboretum May 14 (RN), while a singing **Orange-crowned Warbler** at Barn Is., Stonington May 4 is virtually without precedent (PL). There were many reports of Prothonotary Warblers this spring, including singing males at Pawcatuck April 22 (BD), Greenwich April 28-29 (fide TBu), Branford in early May (NP), Fairfield May 20 (DB), and Hartford Meadows June 17-24 (fide JK). A ♂ and a ♀ Prothonotary Warbler were at Southbury May 13 (JB).

## TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

Five Summer Tanagers were reported this spring: an adult ♂ at Stratford Springs April 8 (FD); a ♀ in Hamden April 19-21 (FMc); another ♀ in Milford April 29 (MKW); a second-year ♂ banded at Birdcraft Museum May 15 (CT); and another second-year ♂ banded in Fairfield May 17 (EA). Only one Blue Grosbeak was reported, a ♂ at East Rock, New Haven May 10 (FMc). White-throated Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos lingered into late May in southern Connecticut. The ♂ **Yellow-headed Blackbird** reported in February in Stratford continued to be seen sporadically at several Stratford feeders into April (DV). Orchard Orioles, locally distributed breeders in Connecticut, were reported from their usual haunts in Greenwich, Milford, and Southbury.

## CONTRIBUTORS

Elting Arnold, Tom Baptist, Anthony Bledsoe, Doris Bova, Jim Buonocone, Thomas Burke, H. Carter, George Clark Jr., Mrs. Frederick DeCarli, Buzz Devine,

Paul Desjardins, Bob Foley, Ted Gilman, Jay Kaplan, Betty Kliner, Paul Lehman, Frank Mantlik, Flo McBride, Bob Muller, Kris Norling, Robert Noss, Noble Proctor, Ray Schwartz, David Sibley, Mark Szantyr, P. Stake, Clay Taylor, John Trovern-Trend, Dennis Varza, Mary K. Wickun, Joe Zeranski (m.ob. = many observers)

## THE NEW A.O.U. CHECK-LIST

The year 1983 marked both the centennial of the American Ornithologists' Union and the publication of its sixth edition of the *Check-list of North American Birds*. This 877-page volume now lists 23 orders, 93 families, and 1,973 "accepted" species as occurring in North America, south to include Panama, but excluding Greenland. Prior editions were published in 1886, 1895, 1910, 1931, and 1957. This is the first time that the Check-list includes the birds of Mexico, Central America, and the West Indies.

This hefty volume thus becomes an important source document for those needing an authoritative list of the birds of this continent, along with a precis of their geographic distributions, and generalized statements of their habitat preferences. This is no small accomplishment, and everyone agrees that it is done well. Copies (at \$35 each) can be obtained from the treasurer of the A.O.U., Dr. Kenneth P. Able, P.O. Box 44, Berne, New York 12023.

Of special interest, however, is the fact that the ornithological community is now so large and active in exploring new relationships of birds that many do not consider the new Check-list an adequate summary of

the presumed evolutionary histories, and relationships, of the birds treated. The July, 1984 issue of *The Auk* carried five reviews of the Check-list, and these outline some of the feeling that the Check-list Committee missed an opportunity to document its decisions more fully, explain its working concepts more carefully, and provide branching diagrams of presumed relationships, so that other researchers could also have turned to this new Check-list as a reference to what we know about the evolutionary histories of North American birds. Instead, some insist, they must continue to collate and analyze a vast and growing journal literature for themselves.

Amateurs who depend on field guides for their classification of birds have little awareness of the tremendous ferment that agitates the scientific community about the nature of species and other taxonomic categories, their histories in time and space, and the techniques for divining and checking our assumptions about these relationships. *The Connecticut Warbler* will try to provide non-technical glimpses into this dynamic research field in the coming months. We are particularly well situated to do so because the work of Professor Charles G. Sibley and Jon E. Ahlquist at the Peabody Museum of Yale University is at the forefront of a new understanding of the relationships of the birds of the world based on research with DNA hybridization techniques.

Roland C. Clement

## OSTROM ENDERS' BOOKS TO TRINITY

A 270-page 1983 catalogue, *Ornithology Books in the Library of Trinity College*,

*Hartford*, marks Ostrom Enders' gift of his large personal natural history library to the college he served as trustee for several years. Augmented by prior collections, over six thousand volumes now make the Trinity College library a significant research collection, and Connecticut residents should be particular beneficiaries of this generosity. Local ornithologists can now find almost anything they may wish to consult in the line of ornithological literature within a fifty-mile radius of home, either in Hartford, Storrs, or New Haven.

Ostrom Enders of Avon, who became a Founding Member of the Connecticut Ornithological Association in July, is a retired president of Hartford National Bank and was also chairman of the board of that bank. His initial interest in birds was that of a sportsman. Having hunted them, he learned to propagate them and achieved recognition as an aviculturist, developing an outstanding collection of waterfowl. His library was thus particularly strong in these areas, and grew out of several fine volumes given him by his father. Mr. Enders was a director of the National Audubon Society during the 1960s, and he continues his interest in birds and their conservation. He and a brother, Dr. John F. Enders, have established a fund to maintain and update the Trinity College collection of ornithological books. C.O.A. was given a copy of the 1983 catalogue by Mr. Enders.

Roland C. Clement

## NOTES AND NEWS

S. Dillon Ripley of Litchfield, who is retiring as Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution after twenty years of outstanding

service, received the 16th Arthur A. Allen Award at a dinner held in his honor at Ithaca, New York on October 13, 1984. The award is given annually in recognition of outstanding contributions to ornithology, including the communication of ornithological knowledge to the public.

Many will recall that Dr. Ripley was director of Yale University's Peabody Museum of Natural History before becoming director of the Smithsonian. He also led the International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP) to new accomplishments and serves as a member of the board of directors of the World Wildlife Fund — U.S. He is an authority on the birds of southeast Asia and has authored several books, including *A Portfolio Edition of Rails of the World* (1984).

A few months earlier Dr. Ripley was also a co-recipient of the Olympia Prize, given by the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation for contributions to the preservation of nature.

\* \* \*

The Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary with a gala weekend at the sanctuary October 13-14, 1984. Special tribute was paid to Rosalie Edge of New York City, who bought what is now Hawk Mountain to prevent the annual slaughter of migrating hawks that went on there for a generation prior to 1934, and to Maurice and Irma Broun for their devoted curatorship and educational work on behalf of raptors.

\* \* \*

Joint meetings of the Cooper and Wilson Ornithological Societies will be held June 5-9, 1985 at the University of Colorado, Boulder. The American Ornithologists' Union will hold its annual meeting at

Arizona State University, Tempe, October 7-11, 1985.

\* \* \*

Wesleyan University's Graduate Liberal Studies Program will offer a course on Connecticut birds for the Spring 1985 term. The course, titled "The Biology of Connecticut Birds" and taught by Anthony H. Bledsoe, will investigate the biology and ecological requirements of Connecticut birds and will review the avifauna of Connecticut and field techniques in ornithology. "The Biology of Connecticut Birds" is open to anyone with a bachelor's or master's degree who wants to resume the unfinished business of a liberal education — the quest for knowledge about ourselves and our world, to which the Graduate Liberal Studies Program at Wesleyan is committed. For further information contact Mr. Stephen P. Broker, Associate Director, Graduate Liberal Studies Program, Wesleyan University, (203) 344-7930.

\* \* \*

The North American Bluebird Society provides grants in aid for ornithological re-

search (professional or amateur) directed toward cavity-nesting species, with an emphasis on bluebirds (*Sialia*). For guidelines and application forms, write T. W. Gutzke, P.O. Box 121, Kenmare, ND 58746. Completed applications are due January 31 each year. Decisions are announced March 15.

\* \* \*

Save Saturday, May 11, 1985, for the annual meeting and outing of your Connecticut Ornithological Association at the Edwin Way Teale Memorial Sanctuary, Kenyon Road, Hampton, Conn., where we will be guests of Nellie Teale and the Connecticut Audubon Society, which owns the 130-acre Teale Farm. Details will be forthcoming.

\* \* \*

Keep an eye out for immature Bald Eagles banded as nestlings in Newfoundland last summer (1984). They bear a standard U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service aluminum band on the left leg and a red plastic band with white numbers on the right. Report sightings to Joe Brazil, Newfoundland Wildlife Division, P.O. Box 4750, St. Johns, Newfoundland A1C 5T7.

\* \* \*

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The Connecticut Audubon Society

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