

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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The editors invite submission of articles, notes, black and white photographs and line drawings for publication in *The Connecticut Warbler*. Manuscripts should be typewritten, double-spaced and on one side of the sheet only, with ample margins. The style of manuscripts should follow the general usage in recent issues.

Cover Photograph: Female Boat-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus major*) photographed by Ray Schwartz November, 1985 at Lordship Marsh, Stratford: the first record for a Connecticut Christmas Bird Count.

CONNECTICUT ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION FOUNDING MEMBERS

Existence, whether of individuals or organizations, especially in the beginning, is a precarious affair. New organizations must cross a survival threshold — based on minimum size and time to cement relationships — in order to survive at all. The original nucleus of supporters is thus very special because it provides that critical mass. Particularly is this so of those who are willing to gamble the sizeable investment of a membership long before survival is assured. This is why we call them Founders.

The Connecticut Ornithological Association has, we believe, crossed this survival threshold as it enters its third year. We thank all of you — members, subscribers, contributors and especially the Founders whose Honor Roll appears on this page. The Editorial Group and the Board of Directors will work hard to merit the trust and support you have invested in C.O.A. and *The Connecticut Warbler*.

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A RETROSPECTIVE

CARL J. TRICHKA
Associate Editor

It seems so short a time since I wrote the editorial for Vol. 1, No. 1 of this journal, but a glance at my bookshelf shows that this issue marks the beginning of our sixth year — a third year under the aegis of the Connecticut Ornithological Association (COA).

I can happily report that we are now soundly based financially, thanks to the generous support of our Founders, whose names appear elsewhere in this issue, and also, a generous grant from the Larsen Fund, whose support is gratefully acknowledged. However, the backbone of this organization remains its members. To those of you who have supported us these past five years, we tip our hats. We also know that there are many birders out there whose names are not yet on our membership rolls. Please help us reach these prospective members and readers.

Our costs, primarily for publishing, will unfortunately continue to rise. One cost we have trouble controlling is that imposed by late membership renewals. Dues reminders and back issues are very expensive. Believe it or not, it costs eight times as much to mail out a single back issue as it costs through the normal process. Memberships are renewable in January even though you may have become a member late in the previous year. For example, if you joined in October 1985 you would have joined for 1985, would have received the four issues for 1985, and would have to renew for 1986 in January.

Regular readers of *The Connecticut Warbler* have seen many interesting articles in this

period. The significance of these articles will grow, just as Roger Tory Peterson anticipated when he editorialized in Vol. IV, No. 1: "1984 will be a milepost in the history of ornithology in our state."

The writing has so far been the work of a small group, but we are broadening our base of contributors. Why not join this group and submit notes and short articles of your own? Your experiences are worth writing about. If you merely doubt your ability to do so, get in touch with us and we will provide advice and direction.

65 Glover Street, Fairfield, CT 06430

FIRST REPORT AND INQUIRY FOR THE RARE RECORDS COMMITTEE

GEORGE A. CLARK, JR.

The Connecticut Ornithological Association Rare Records Committee, composed during 1985 of Tom Burke, George Clark, Fred Purnell, Fred Sibley, Mark Szantyr, Clay Taylor and Dennis Varza, first met during 1985 and has begun to establish procedures for review of records of rarities in Connecticut. Mark Szantyr was elected by the committee as the first Records Secretary, and people who wish to submit reports for review by the committee should send them to him (2 Treat Street, Apt. 6A, West Haven, CT 06516). Dennis Varza was elected Assistant Records Secretary. The committee is to serve as a clearinghouse for collection and review of records. Files are to be kept at the Yale Peabody

Museum, New Haven, and at the Museum of Natural History at the University of Connecticut, Storrs. The committee is to review submitted records and to publish its evaluation of those records. The committee should serve to bring such records to the attention of a wider audience and to encourage a more thorough documentation in reports of rarities. Well known rare records committees such as those in Britain and California have served to promote a higher standard of documentation for rarities and it is hoped that the Connecticut committee will serve a similar function for this state. A rare records committee can neither verify nor invalidate any records, but can provide a judgement on the adequacy of the evidence presented in support of unusual sightings.

In its initial meeting the Rare Records Committee addressed the question of what species have been adequately demonstrated to occur in Connecticut. Using a conservative requirement of specimen or photographic evidence, the committee found that more than 350 species of birds have been authenticated for a state list. However, there are a number of species that have possibly or probably occurred as wild birds in the state but for which more evidence might be helpful. We would therefore greatly appreciate knowing of additional unpublished records, photographs, or specimens of the following species or subspecies: Arctic Loon, Manx Shearwater, Sooty Shearwater, White-tailed Tropicbird, Reddish Egret, Wood Stork, Fulvous Whistling Duck, Greater White-fronted Goose, Barnacle Goose, Tufted Duck, Rufous-necked Stint, Pomarine Jaeger, Long-tailed Jaeger, South Polar Skua, Mew Gull, Thayer's Gull, Ivory Gull, Gull-billed Tern, Arctic Tern, Bridled Tern, White-

winged Tern, Razorbill, White-winged Dove, Great Gray Owl, Rufous Hummingbird, Say's Phoebe, Gray Jay, Bewick's Wren, Townsend's Solitaire, Bohemian Waxwing, Bell's Vireo, Audubon's Warbler, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Townsend's Warbler, Hermit Warbler, Swainson's Warbler, Green-tailed Towhee, Baird's Sparrow, LeConte's Sparrow, Western Meadowlark, Brewer's Blackbird.

Box U-43, Biology, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT 06268.

THE 1985-1986 CHRISTMAS COUNT

FRED C. SIBLEY

This is the fifth year for which I have analyzed the results of this annual birding extravaganza, and I'm still looking for meaning with only partial success. The vast array of numbers generated by the numerous watchers are really overwhelming. Many thanks to all of you producers of numbers. Each year is different and each year I try a different approach. This year you will see the comparability test and the high/low differential.

The year was average weatherwise, a change from the three previous warmer than usual count periods. The number of observers declined on the coast but increased markedly on the northern counts. Are there no challenges left in the south? Is the pollution too high? Are birders too poor? The Barkhamsted count entered its second year with increases in all departments. The Stratford-Milford count was relocated slightly, producing a spectacular increase in number of species.

New to the state was White-fronted Goose at Westport, the only one of several in the state to be "caught" by counters. The European subspecies of the Green-winged Teal seen at Stratford-Milford was also new although an annual bird in the state. Boat-tailed Grackles were first recorded for Connecticut shortly after Hurricane Gloria, and 3 of the 6 that took up residence at Lordship Marsh were still surviving when the Stratford-Milford Count took place. Also seen at Stratford-Milford were 3 Glossy Ibis, a species first recorded on last year's counts. An incredible 4 King Eiders showed up along the coast, as well as a Tundra Swan, Barrow's Goldeneye and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. The Oregon Junco, western subspecies of the Dark-eyed Junco, found on the Woodbury-Roxbury count was new to the mid-state counts. No matter how hard you try the best birds wait until after the counts to appear. This year was no exception with Cape May Warbler, Varied Thrush, another Tundra Swan, Orange-crowned Warbler and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher turning up around January 1.

The State species total of 173 was high, but didn't break any records and the same was true of the coastal (165), mid-state (105) and northern (108) counts. Excluding the high counts for Barkhamsted and Stratford-Milford only Oxford and New London had new highs. New Haven continued its domination of the coast with 128 species but was closely challenged this year by Stratford-Milford with 126. In the mid-state area, Woodbury-Roxbury, a perennial champion, beat out Salmon River by 8 with a total of 82. In the north, Hartford took honors for all inland counts with a total of 85.

In an attempt to rank counts, I fooled around with several numbers this year. One can predict with fair accuracy the count totals for any one year by taking the 10 year

cumulative total number of species for any count and multiplying it by 70% for coastal counts, 65% for mid-state counts and 60% for inland counts. New London, with a record number of species this year saw 76% of its ten year total. New Haven, when it set a state record of 138 had 76% of its ten year total. Obviously the 10 year total is partly a result of previous effort, but seems to be most strongly influenced by the area's potential. Stratford-Milford always had the second highest 10 year total but was consistently the lowest coastal count. The percentage seen must vary with weather, luck and amount of effort but the primary component seems to be scarcity of birds. Using Stratford-Milford as an example again, in the old count circle there was often only one possible site for an inland species. With the change of circle the possible sites for inland species was greatly increased and the percentage of the ten year birds seen jumped from 55% to 70%. Fool around with your count and see whether this comparability index has any validity. Maybe we can rate counts with vastly mis-matched areas.

The total number of individuals seen dropped by 70,000, the same as the decline in European Starling numbers. As usual, Hartford had the highest count (118,000) followed distantly by New Haven (77,000). If you remove the Starlings and American Crows, the Hartford count drops to 30,000 while New Haven at 68,000 then exceeds any other count. An interesting exercise this year was to compute the high/low differential. If you take all the species that have increased or decreased by more than 100 individuals over last year and divide the minuses by the pluses you end up with a fraction that can mean whatever you want it to mean. For coastal counts this fraction was 18/27, for mid-state counts 24/7 and for northern counts 14/17. Luckily the total increases and decreases in individuals for

the sectors matched this. The coast gained individuals, the mid-state counts lost tremendous numbers and the northern counts stayed about the same. Individual species did not follow this pattern. In other years, we have theorized that the warm weather resulted in high inland counts for numerous species. For Ring-billed and Herring Gulls this was true: northern numbers dropped by 5,000, mid-state by 12,000 and the coast picked up 13,000. For Canada Goose it was not true, numbers dropped by 2,000 in the mid-state area but increased by 4,000 and 6,000 respectively in the coastal and northern areas.

Other major changes in totals: American Robin dropped in all areas and by 4000 mid-state. All areas lost blackbirds with the northern areas losing 19,000 blackbirds, grackles, and cowbirds. The coast lost large numbers of Dark-eyed Juncos and White-throated Sparrows, a trend matched with lesser intensity in the other areas. Horned Larks increased spectacularly on inland counts. Tree Sparrow numbers also went up although not as sharply and Blue Jays hit a record 11,000.

Where are the winter finches? Once again a prediction of a super finch year failed to materialize. Although Pine Grosbeaks were recorded on all the northern counts plus Woodbury-Roxbury and Hidden Valley none made it to the coast. Red Crossbills were seen only at Barkhamsted and Litchfield Hills, while White-winged Crossbill (1 heard) was recorded only at Old Lyme. A total of 217 Common Redpolls were recorded on 10 counts, hardly an invasion year. Even Evening Grosbeak, Purple Finch and American Goldfinch were in very low numbers.

Every year we review the trends, but they always produce some surprises. Both cor-morant species were down sharply this year after years of increase. Pied-billed Grebes

were present in low numbers along the coast and totally absent inland for the first time. Mute Swans continued to increase along the coast. Canada Goose numbers went through the ceiling with a total 30% above last year's record. Greater Scaup came back with a vengeance this year. The 18,000 seen at New Haven exceeded the previous state record while the 5,000 seen on the other coastal counts exceeded the total for the last three years.

Hawks were the brightest of the bright spots this year. After several years of ups and downs with a seeming upward trend, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk and Red-tailed Hawk all set records in each of the three sectors. Red-shouldered and Goshawk were at very high although not record levels. Only the American Kestrel, close to its lowest levels and on a long decline, ruined the picture.

American Coots are rapidly vanishing from the December scene. The 1300 of ten years ago has shrunk to 83 this year with 53 of those on the Lakeville-Sharon count. Two Common Bobwhite at Storrs were the only ones seen. Shorebird numbers continued to increase and included rarities such as Red Knot, Western Sandpiper, and Semipalmated Plover.

Only Short-eared and Long-eared Owl did not set new records. The 26 Saw-whet Owls, recorded on 10 counts, were twice the previous high. Red-bellied Woodpeckers continued to increase and were recorded on every count except Stratford-Milford. Only two counts, Oxford and Hidden Valley, still list the species as a rarity. Ten years ago there was one inland and 26 on the coast versus this year's 44 and 100.

Tufted Titmouse and Carolina Wren numbers were at record highs. Are these highs and those of a number of other land

birds the result of several mild winters? Is it possible that the high hawk and owl numbers are a reflection of higher prey populations due to these mild winters? Tune in next year and watch me avoid the question.

Field Sparrow and Fox Sparrow numbers were at an all-time low due to declines on the coastal counts. Lapland Longspurs were represented by one at Woodbury-Roxbury and a count period bird on the coast. Eastern Meadowlarks were found at Lakeville-Sharon (8), Quinnipiac Valley (30), New London and New Haven (1 each) for the lowest count ever. Ten years ago, they were regular on inland counts averaging about 150 birds while the coast averaged about half this. In the last 5 years the coast has averaged 65 birds while the inland areas have dropped to an average 75. This year's 2 on the coast and 38 inland is disastrous.

In addition to Northern Bobwhite, Oregon Junco, Pine Grosbeak and Red Crossbill several other species were recorded only on the inland counts. Northern Shrike (2) at Hartford were the only ones for the state as were 6 Chipping Sparrows. A Dickcissel at Storrs was the only record of a formerly regular rarity. The coast had 54 species not recorded on inland counts. Most of these will never be found inland but it was a little suprising that Pied-billed Grebe and Common Barn Owl were not turned up.

SUMMARY

Not a bad count. Three new species were added to the count. A number of rarities turned up and there were numerous high counts. The mid-state counts suffered this year in numbers of birds seen but species totals hung on very well. The generally cold weather resulted in less than record counts of some of the species that have been

increasing every year, but this is not an indication of a long term trend. The number of observers was down except on the northern counts and as a result the number of inland observers exceeded the number of coastal observers for the first time ever.

The capsule summaries give more details on rarities, etc. For die-hard numbers freaks, you should be aware that count compilers receive a printout of the total results from all counts. Ask to see these sheets if you're so inclined. For the less hardy numbers freaks, we failed to publish the capsule summaries of the counts last year. The summaries were written and are available if you write.

THE 1985-1986 CHRISTMAS COUNT SUMMARY

FRED C. SIBLEY

The following paragraphs list each of the sixteen counts and summarize the notable birds. The number following the count is the total of species seen since 1976-77. This is followed by this year's count total and count period birds. Species seen 4 or fewer times in the past ten years are noteworthy; those seen only once in the period are starred (*). High counts and low counts are for the same ten year period. Total individuals seen are rounded off to the nearest thousand.

WHOLE STATE - 16 counts
(220 - 173 + 4); 967 observers;
503,000 individuals.

NORTHERN CONNECTICUT COUNTS
(146 - 108 + 0); 375 observers (high);
177,000 individuals.

BARKHAMSTED: (75 - 66 (high) + 1); 57 observers (high); 10,000 individuals (high). Co-compilers: David Tripp, Jr. and David Rosgen. *Noteworthy*: Ruddy Duck, Northern Goshawk, Eastern Phoebe, Common Yellowthroat, Pine Grosbeak, Red Crossbill.

STORRS: (106 - 64 + 1); 38 observers (high), 15,000 individuals. Compiler: Shirley Davis. *Noteworthy*: Snow Goose, Hooded Merganser, Northern Harrier*, Northern Bobwhite, No. Saw-whet Owl, Pileated Woodpecker*, Gray Catbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Dickcissel. *High Counts*: Canada Goose, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker. *Low Counts*: Hairy Woodpecker, Brown Creeper, American Robin, Evening Grosbeak.

HARTFORD: (125 - 85 + 1); 142 observers (high); 118,000 individuals. Compilers: Jay Kaplan and Steve Davis. *Noteworthy*: Snow Goose, Gadwall, Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Glaucous Gull, Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-breasted Sapsucker, Fish Crow. *High Counts*: Great Blue Heron, Mallard, Common Goldeneye, Northern Harrier, Rough-legged Hawk, Great Black-backed Gull, Eastern Screech Owl, Horned Lark, Cedar Waxwing, Savannah Sparrow. *Low Counts*: American Kestrel, House Sparrow.

LITCHFIELD HILLS: (113 - 67 + 1); 46 observers; 19,000 individuals. Compiler: Ray Belding. *Noteworthy*: Mute Swan, Canvasback, Long-eared Owl, Yellow-breasted Sapsucker, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Brown Thrasher, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Red Crossbill*. *High Counts*: Red-tailed Hawk, Wild Turkey, Horned Lark, Brown Creeper, House Finch. *Low Counts*: Field Sparrow, Brown-headed Cowbird.

LAKEVILLE-SHARON: (115 - 73 + 1); 71 observers; 14,000 individuals. Compiler: Robert Moeller. *Noteworthy*: Northern Pintail, Cooper's Hawk, Killdeer*, Carolina Wren, Savannah Sparrow. *High Counts*: Rock Dove, No. Saw-whet Owl, Horned Lark. *Low Counts*: Common Snipe, House Sparrow.

MID-STATE COUNTS

(144 - 105 + 1); 132 observers; 76,000 individuals.

SALMON RIVER: (117 - 76 + 0); 30 observers; 10,000 individuals. Compilers: David Titus and Jim Mockalis. *Noteworthy*: Cormorant (Double-c. ?)*, Wood Duck, Northern Pintail, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Virginia Rail*, Common Snipe, Iceland Gull, Long-eared Owl*, No. Saw-whet Owl, Eastern Phoebe. *High Counts*: Am. Black Duck, Turkey Vulture, Blue Jay, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Northern Cardinal. *Low Counts*: none.

QUINNIPIAC VALLEY: (115 - 71 + 1); 24 observers; 15,000 individuals. Compiler: Wilford Schultz. *Noteworthy*: American Wigeon, Redhead, Northern Harrier, Northern Goshawk, Wild Turkey*, Pileated Woodpecker. *High Counts*: Am. Black Duck, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Ring-necked Pheasant, E. Screech Owl, Swamp Sparrow. *Low Counts*: Yellow-rumped Warbler.

OXFORD: (99 - 66 (high) + 2); 18 observers; 15,000 individuals. Compilers: Buzz Devine and Mark Szantyr. *Noteworthy*: Northern Pintail*, American Wigeon, Sharp-shinned Hawk, No. Goshawk, Iceland Gull, Glaucous Gull, Barred Owl, Short-eared Owl*, No. Saw-whet Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-breasted

Sapsucker, Winter Wren, Savannah Sparrow*, Lincoln's Sparrow*, Rusty Blackbird*, Common Redpoll*. *High Counts*: Am. Black Duck, American Crow, Am. Tree Sparrow. *Low Counts*: American Kestrel, Hairy Woodpecker, Purple Finch, Am. Goldfinch.

WOODBURY-ROXBURY: (113 - 82 + 3); 44 observers; 31,000 individuals. Compiler: Aldro Jenks. *Noteworthy*: Northern Pintail, Northern Harrier, Killdeer, Vesper Sparrow*, White-crowned Sparrow, Oregon Junco* (subspecies), Lapland Longspur, Rusty Blackbird, Pine Grosbeak. *High Counts*: Mute Swan, Canada Goose, Ring-necked Pheasant, No. Saw-whet Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Horned Lark, American Crow, Carolina Wren, Am. Tree Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird. *Low Counts*: Purple Finch, American Goldfinch. *Exotic*: Budgerigar.

HIDDEN VALLEY: (104 - 67 + 1); 16 observers; 5,000 individuals. Compiler: James Hammer. *Noteworthy*: Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Common Snipe, Barred Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, Horned Lark, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush. *High Counts*: Rock Dove, Red-breasted Nuthatch. *Low Counts*: none.

COASTAL COUNTS

(215 - 165 + 5); 481 observers;
251,000 individuals.

NEW LONDON: (153 - 116 (high) + 1); 44 observers; 29,000 individuals. Compiler: Bob Dewire. *Noteworthy*: Green-backed Heron, Snow Goose, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, Greater Yellowlegs, Water Pipit, Pine Warbler*, Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Common Redpoll*. *High*

Counts: Red-throated Loon, Common Loon, Oldsquaw. *Low Counts*: Great Cormorant, Bufflehead, Rough-legged Hawk, American Coot, Killdeer, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Brown-headed Cowbird, American Goldfinch.

OLD LYME: (159 - 113 + 0); 55 observers; 23,000 individuals (high). Compiler: Jay Hand. *Noteworthy*: Snow Goose*, Barrow's Goldeneye*, Golden Eagle, Wild Turkey*, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Sharp-tailed Sparrow, White-winged Crossbill*, Common Redpoll. *High Counts*: Great Cormorant, Red-tailed Hawk, Dunlin, Pileated Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, Rusty Blackbird, Pine Siskin. *Low Counts*: Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird.

NEW HAVEN: (182 - 128 + 3); 62 observers, 77,000 individuals. Compiler: Stephen Broker. *Noteworthy*: Blue-winged Teal, Eurasian Wigeon, King Eider*, Bald Eagle, Merlin, Black-bellied Plover, Common Black-headed Gull, Northern Waterthrush*, Vesper Sparrow. *High Counts*: Canada Goose, Greater Scaup, Surf Scoter, Common Merganser, American Woodcock, Ring-billed Gull. *Low Counts*: American Coot, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, European Starling, Fox Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark.

STRATFORD — MILFORD: (178 - 126 (high) + 5); 34 observers; 38,000 individuals. Compilers: Dennis Varza and Fred Sibley. *Noteworthy*: Glossy Ibis*, Common Teal* (subspecies), Ring-necked Duck, King Eider, Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Goshawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Ruffed Grouse, Sora*, Semipalmated Plover, Greater Yellowlegs, Red Knot, Western Sandpiper, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Barn Owl, Snowy Owl, Barred Owl, Pileated Woodpecker*, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher*, Eastern Bluebird*, Palm Warbler, Seaside Sparrow, Lincoln's

Sparrow*, White-crowned Sparrow, Boat-tailed Grackle*, Common Redpoll*. **High Counts:** Double-crested Cormorant, Canada Goose, Lesser Scaup, Surf Scoter, Common Merganser, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Sanderling, E. Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl, American Crow, Marsh Wren, Cedar Waxwing, Northern Cardinal, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, House Finch. **Low Counts:** Horned Lark, European Starling, Lapland Longspur, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle.

WESTPORT: 169 - 110 + 2); 107 observers; 46,000 individuals. Compiler: Frank Mantlik. **Noteworthy:** Double-crested Cormorant, Tundra Swan*, White-fronted Goose*, King Eider*, Black Scoter, Cooper's Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Merlin, Willet, Sanderling, Short-eared Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker*. **High Counts:** Red-throated Loon, Canada Goose, Gadwall, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Rock Dove, Carolina Wren, Savannah Sparrow. **Low Counts:** Pied-billed Grebe, Wood Duck, Oldsquaw, American Kestrel, Belted Kingfisher, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Field Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Common Grackle. **Exotic:** Monk Parakeet.

GREENWICH-STAMFORD: (166 - 118 + 2); 179 observers; 37,000 individuals. Compilers: Tom Baptist, Gary Palmer, Berna Weissman. **Noteworthy:** Red-necked Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Bald Eagle, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon*, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Common Snipe, Short-eared Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Eastern Phoebe, Yellow-breasted Chat, Grosbeak (Rose-breasted?), Northern Oriole, Common Redpoll. **High Counts:** Double-crested Cormorant, Turkey Vulture, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Fish Crow, Carolina Wren. **Low Counts:** Canvasback, American Kes-

trel, American Coot, Rufous-sided Towhee, Field Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, American Goldfinch.

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL CHRONICLES OF GEORGE T. GRISWOLD

GEORGE A. CLARK, JR.
Associate Editor

The Museum of Natural History at the University of Connecticut in Storrs has acquired the set of original notebooks compiled by Mr. George T. Griswold, covering 43 years of birding, principally in north-central Connecticut. In 1911 at 36 years of age Griswold began his notebooks. He lived then in Hartford, where for many years he worked for the Aetna Insurance Company. His notebooks contain many newspaper clippings that provide insights about birds and public attitudes. A newspaper article from 1912 urges readers to beat the high cost of living by eating House Sparrows! In the early years Griswold's birding trips were mainly by foot and trolley, but starting in the 1920s he increasingly used automobiles. In 1932 Griswold retired from the insurance business and devoted more time to bird study. For a number of years he compiled a newsletter entitled "Birdland Notes" which summarized numerous records of bird sightings in Connecticut; these quarterly notes, distributed in mimeographed form, were often reprinted in the Hartford newspapers. Starting in the 1930s Griswold and his wife, a physician with the professional name of Dr.

Maude Taylor, spent much time at their farm in Harwinton. Griswold died at age 80 at that home on Thumb Rock Farm, Cobble Lane, on October 3, 1954. His wife died 31 years later on October 25, 1985, at the age of 104.

Most of Griswold's early trips were made in the Hartford area, and his notes contain numerous records from Hartford, South Windsor, and surrounding towns. After 1940 most of his personal Connecticut records are from the vicinity of Harwinton. Beginning in the 1920s Griswold birded over an increasingly wide area, and after World War II he and his wife traveled widely in the USA and Canada. In later years he included in his notebooks numerous reports from other birders who are accordingly acknowledged. The entire span of his notebooks includes references to other active ornithologists whom he encountered, e.g., J.H. Sage, W.E. Treat, H.K. Job, J.B. May, A.M. Bagg, and S.A. Eliot. The Griswold notes will be of value for their historical insights on Connecticut bird study.

Griswold's notes include numerous records of Connecticut rarities such as Tundra Swan, Barrow's Goldeneye, Black Vulture, Yellow Rail, Purple Gallinule, phalaropes, Black Tern, alcids, Northern Hawk-Owl, Great Gray Owl, Black-backed Woodpecker, Bohemian Waxwing, and Prothonotary Warbler. As a specific example from Griswold's notes, his entry for the afternoon of January 12, 1938, provides details on the route followed by a rare Great Gray Owl as it moved over a series of tree perches from Farmington Avenue to Asylum Avenue in Hartford. Also included are many records of species usually found at the Connecticut shore but rare at the inland localities from which Griswold reported them. Griswold included numerous notes on species of special interest such as the bit-

terns, a variety of other herons, Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Upland Sandpiper, Common Barn-Owl, Whip-poor-will, Red-headed Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Boreal Chickadee, Sedge Wren, both species of shrikes, Philadelphia Vireo, and Connecticut Warbler. Moreover, his notes provide much information on migration dates and aspects of abundance for the more common species. Griswold birded through a time during which Connecticut became progressively less agricultural and mainly before the widespread use of chemical pesticides. Furthermore, his birding spanned the time from widespread shotgun collecting of specimens to the modern era with its improved optics and more reliable field guides. Griswold's notes clearly show that he sometimes encountered uncertainties in identification, and more recent knowledge indicates that he was occasionally wrong in his identifications. Thus his records of rarities would be cautiously used. Despite this limitation, Griswold's notes provide an important and unique view of Connecticut ornithology in the first half of this century.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to Betty Kleiner for initially bringing these notebooks to my attention and for subsequently providing important information about the Griswolds.

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CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

June 1 — July 31, 1985

DAVID ROSGEN

The 1985 breeding season was a very successful one for Connecticut's birds. Warm, dry weather characterized much of the summer. June was cool, with only 2 days above 80°F, and 66°F as the average mean daily temperature. July was slightly warmer, with temperatures ranging from 57°F to 87°F and an average daily temperature of 72°F. There were 11 days of precipitation in June, and 7 days in July, most of them during the last week.

The Connecticut Breeding Bird Atlas Project enjoyed a fourth successful year. Breeding activity began about two weeks earlier than normal, running from early May through late August, allowing atlasers time to visit more blocks; all 594 blocks have been visited, and all but two have produced nesting confirmations. 550 blocks have twelve or more confirmed nesting species. At this point, 190 species have been found exhibiting breeding activity in the State, and 178 of these species have been confirmed as breeding.

LOONS THROUGH HERONS

For the first time since the Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA) began in 1982, *Common Loon* was confirmed nesting in Connecticut: Norfolk (ADy). Territorial Common Loons were also observed at Nepaug, Barkhamsted and Colebrook Reservoirs and at Candlewood Lake, New Milford. Pied-billed Grebe was confirmed nesting in the Lordship Marshes, Stratford, while territorial

birds were heard calling in Sharon (DR), Cornwall (DV) and New Milford (JKf). Double-crested Cormorants continued to increase statewide. American Bitterns were heard in Norfolk, Goshen and Newtown, while Least Bitterns were confirmed nesting in South Windsor (2 blocks), Durham, Stratford and Stonington. Great Blue Herons had a banner year, producing 145 young from eight colonies located in Canaan, Hartland, Litchfield, Norfolk, Woodstock, Eastford, Pomfret and North Stonington. A Tricolored Heron was sighted off Greenwich Point on June 6 (TB).

WATERFOWL THROUGH RAILS

Five Brant lingered at Milford Point through most of July (m.ob.). Green-winged Teal, seen in 2 areas, have only been recorded as probable. A male Northern Pintail was seen at Manresa Marsh, Norwalk on June 9 (FM,CW) and a pair were observed in early June at White Memorial in Litchfield (DR). Blue-winged Teal were confirmed breeding for the first time: White Memorial (m.ob.) and Durham Meadows (NP). Gadwall were newly confirmed breeders at Barn Island (DR), and were seen at over a dozen other locations. Hooded Mergansers were recorded as probable breeders at 8 new sites, as well as at the 7 previously confirmed locations. Common Mergansers, already confirmed as breeders in ten blocks in the Farmington River Valley, were confirmed in an additional 3 blocks. Several pairs of Red-breasted Mergansers were seen off 4 points on Long Island Sound. Turkey Vultures were confirmed this year in Lebanon, New Hartford and Thomaston. Ospreys continued to recover and fledged 72 young from 44 active nests between Clinton and

Stonington (DEP). Northern Harriers eluded confirmation, although pairs were present in Stratford and Old Lyme. It was a good year for accipiters. Sharp-shinned Hawks were confirmed in New Milford, Cooper's Hawk in 2 additional blocks in the northwest corner and Goshawk in 4 additional blocks. The northeast corner continues to be the stronghold for Red-shouldered Hawks, with confirmed nesting in 9 blocks and individuals sighted in 25 others. Wild Turkeys continue to expand their range into south central and southeast Connecticut. A *King Rail* feeding a youngster at Great Island, Old Lyme (CT) was the first confirmation of this species. This area also produced 1 of 2 Sora confirmations, the other being Durham Meadows (NP). A Common Moorhen, although on territory, was not confirmed in Sharon. Guilford's Mulberry Point was host to a Purple Gallinule July 4-22 (m.ob.). An American Coot was at Milford Point July 21 (DV).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH TERNS

North and southbound shorebirds nearly overlapped this year as the northward movement continued until June 16 and the southward movement began June 28. Black-bellied Plovers were seen until June 5 and reappeared about July 5, while Semipalmated Plovers reappeared July 7. Piping Plovers were successful with 17 nests producing young (JZ). American Oystercatchers produced 7 young at their Norwalk breeding areas (MB), as well as being confirmed in two additional Mystic blocks (RD). Willets at Barn Island were a new confirmation. Red Knots reached a high of 30 at Milford Point July 20-27, while during the same period Semipalmated Sandpipers reached highs of 5,000 (DV). Among these were 5 Western Sandpipers July 21

(DV) with one remaining until July 27 (FM,CW). Northbound White-rumped Sandpipers were seen June 3-7 (DV). A Stilt Sandpiper was seen at Milford Point July 21 (DV) and a Ruff was seen at Sandy Point, West Haven July 8 (RS). The first confirmation for *Common Snipe* was a fledgling found in Tolland (TP). High Numbers (100+) of Laughing Gulls were present at Milford Point for much of the season. A *Common Black-headed Gull* was seen in New Haven Harbor on July 8 (RS), while a Glaucous Gull spent July at Milford Point (m.ob.). Two Caspian Terns were seen at Milford Point June 18 (RE) with a single bird at Norwalk July 15 (FM). Over 1,000 nests of Least Terns were found at Sandy Point, West Haven (FS). Four adult Black Skimmers at Long Beach Island, Norwalk July 13 (m.ob.) were the only ones reported.

CUCKOOS THROUGH VIREOS

Due to gypsy moth infestation in eastern Connecticut, both cuckoos were numerous there and absent from other areas. Common Barn Owl was confirmed nesting in an additional Middletown block, while Eastern Screech Owls increased in the northwest corner where they have been rare. Common Nighthawk was confirmed nesting in New Haven. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were confirmed nesting in 10 additional blocks. A *Red-headed Woodpecker* nested successfully in West Suffield for the second year (fide SK), and additional territorial birds were sighted in Winchester and Branford. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers extended their range southward, with successful nesting in New Preston. Acadian Flycatchers were confirmed nesting in 6 additional blocks in eastern Connecticut, while Alder Flycatcher was confirmed in 3

western blocks. New Purple Martin colonies were discovered in Cornwall, Thompson and Stonington, and there are now 16 Cliff Swallow colonies in northwestern Connecticut. *Common Ravens* were found in 3 northwest corner blocks during the breeding season, but there was no evidence of breeding activity. Golden-crowned Kinglet was newly confirmed nesting in New Milford (JKf). Singing Swainson's Thrushes were sighted in 2 northwest locations (DR), while Hermit Thrushes were confirmed in some 20 new blocks. Another northern species, Solitary Vireo, was confirmed as far south as Franklin and North Stonington.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

At least 19 pairs of Golden-winged Warblers nested in the northwest corner, with 3 new confirmations. A Lawrence's hybrid was confirmed in Sharon and a Brewster's hybrid in Stafford. A territorial *Northern Parula Warbler* gave hope of future nesting confirmation in Norfolk (PCv). Additional confirmations were reported for Magnolia, Yellow-rumped and Pine Warblers. At least 16 pairs of Cerulean Warblers nested in Connecticut, with half along the Housatonic River in Kent and the remainder in the East Haddam area. The State's second confirmation of *Kentucky Warbler* came from Mystic when an adult was seen carrying food. A late Mourning Warbler was seen June 9 in New London. Hooded Warblers were confirmed in 28 blocks, while Yellow-breasted Chat was confirmed in North Greenwich (TB). Savannah Sparrow nested in Pomfret (DR), while Grasshopper Sparrow was confirmed at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks (PD). A Henslow Sparrow was seen in Middletown on July 20 (GZ).

Bobolinks seem to be holding their own, but Eastern Meadowlarks continue to decline. Orchard Orioles were confirmed in Sharon, Cornwall, Windham and New Hartford, while new Pine Siskin confirmations came from Norfolk and Waterford.

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CORRECTIONS: Volume 5, Number 4: Under LOONS THROUGH HAWKS, Common Tern should read Common Teal. Under RAILS THROUGH TERNS, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper should read Stilt Sandpiper. Under TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES, the Summer Tanager in Groton was seen June 1.

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Cover Photograph: Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*) and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*) photographed in Norwalk, Connecticut on October 16, 1985 by Ray Gilbert.

FIRST DOCUMENTED SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER IN CONNECTICUT

FRANK W. MANTLIK

Several species of migrant shorebirds can be found in autumn on the wet, rain-soaked playing fields of Connecticut's coastal parks. In light of the loss of much of Connecticut's coastal marshes to development, such places provide essential areas for the birds to feed and rest, especially during the extra-high spring tides and stormy weather of October and November.

It was under such conditions at Veteran's Park, Norwalk, Fairfield Co., that on 15 October 1985 at 1650 EDT, the author discovered a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*). The bird was actively feeding in one large grassy rainpool with a remarkable concentration of 40 Pectoral Sandpipers (*C. melanotos*). When some of these birds flew to an adjacent asphalt basketball court, the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, with 9 Pectoral Sandpipers, was carefully studied for 10 minutes from a distance of 10 meters using Leitz 8X20 binoculars.

Following a review of the literature (Dunn & Blom 1983, Davis 1981, Bent 1927, Prater, et al. 1977, Roberson 1980), phone calls were made to several local experienced birders/photographers with the hope of corroborating and documenting the identification.

These hopes were realized on 16 October, as the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was seen during much of the day, and was carefully studied under sunny skies by Ray Gilbert (who obtained color photographs), Fred

Purnell, Tom Baptist, Rob Winkler, Nancy Voldstad, Todd Weintz, and Dennis Varza. During the afternoon the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and several Pectoral Sandpipers were mist-netted and banded by Varza. The bird, band number 971-04186, was a hatching year female, with a wing chord of 132 mm and no fat deposits. Black & white and color photographs of the hand-held bird were taken by Winkler and Gilbert. There were several unverified sightings of the bird after the 16th.

This report constitutes the first documented record of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper for Connecticut. A detailed description of the bird, along with photographs, are on file with the Rare Records Committee of the Connecticut Ornithological Association. There is one previous sight record; a breeding-plumaged adult at Milford Point 8 May 1977 (Vickery 1977).

The Sharp-tailed Sandpiper breeds in Arctic northeastern Siberia and winters from India to Australia. It also appears as a vagrant in Europe and North America (Pizzev 1980). Roberson (1980) states there is a regular migration in small numbers along the entire West Coast of the US and Canada between September and November composed almost entirely of juveniles. The first record of this species in eastern North America was a female collected near Homestead, Florida on 1 October 1967 (Ogden 1968). Since that time there have been several records from the Northeast, including an adult in New York 18-24 July 1981 (Davis 1981) and again 16 July 1983 (DiCostanzo 1983), as well as 2 records from Massachusetts: 30 June 1971 (collected) and 3-5 November 1973 (R.A. Forster pers. comm.).

The following description of plumage and behavior is taken from my field notes.

SIZE: Virtually identical in size and

overall body proportions to Pectoral Sandpiper.

PLUMAGE: Juvenile plumage. Bright rusty/rufous cap (comparatively unstreaked and uniform). Very noticeable whitish superciliary line, extending behind eye. Much lighter breast with bright orange/buffy wash throughout and a lightly-streaked necklace effect which continued along sides of the breast/flanks (i.e., not the heavy, dark gray streaking as in Pectoral, nor the sharp contrast between dark breast and white belly). Belly and undertail coverts white, but latter with noticeable dark (brown/gray/black?) streaking. The Pectorals showed no such noticeable streaking. Feather edgings of primaries a pronounced rufous-reddish, giving bird a very colorful back pattern. When in flight with Pectorals, pattern was very similar. Only vocalizations (while in flight) were those of Pectoral (low prurrp or churrp).

SOFT PARTS: Bill noticeably shorter than that of Pectoral, without the pronounced droopiness. Could not definitely see any contrasting color at base of bill, so it appeared more uniformly dark/black. Leg color light yellow-brown, similar to Pectoral. However, legs were noticeably thicker in girth than all Pectorals, and the toes appeared to be very long (maybe as much as $\frac{1}{3}$ again as long as in Pectorals).

BEHAVIOR & HABITAT: Posture, when standing erect and alert, virtually same as that of Pectorals. Gilbert added that (16th October) the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper spent much time off by itself feeding in taller and/or denser grass, occasionally coming out to join the Pectorals in more open watery areas.

Most of these field marks were independently noted on the 16th by the other observers, and many of these points are clearly illustrated in the photographs. Photos also

show that the tail is wedge-shaped, with individual feathers rather pointed (as in Prater, et al. 1977).

COMMENTS

The timing of this bird's appearance fits well the vagrancy pattern of the juveniles of the species, i.e., primarily in October.

The City of Norwalk plans increased development of Veteran's Park that could lead to loss of this harborside sanctuary for migrating shorebirds.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank Ray Gilbert and Robert Winkler for their patient and professional efforts in obtaining photographs, and to Fred Purnell for his thorough literature research and helpful suggestions.

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METEOROLOGY OF THE 1985 GANNET INCURSION INTO LONG ISLAND SOUND

ROLAND C. CLEMENT

During the week of Thanksgiving 1985 Long Island Sound experienced the largest visitation of Gannets (*Sula bassanus*) ever recorded. Why?

Gannets breed — in the western Atlantic — only in eastern Newfoundland and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, with a total population of approximately 120,000 birds (Powers 1983). Only about 55 percent of the population nests in any one year, nearly half of these on Bonaventure Island near the tip of the Gaspé Peninsula of Quebec.

The young take 5 to 6 years to reach sexual maturity, and are completely pelagic during the first 3 years. Adults, followed a little later by the young, leave the colonies in August, move down the Nova Scotia coast in September, and cross the Gulf of Maine in October. At this time large num-

bers are found offshore from Jeffrey's Ledge, off New Hampshire, south to Nantucket and George's Bank. In late October they move into the Middle Atlantic Bight between Nantucket and Cape Hatteras. Thus, peak numbers are found in Block Island Sound and off Montauk Point from late October to early December. During this period birds may be seen, when there are strong onshore winds, from coastal headlands in Rhode Island and from Montauk Point. However, the birds rarely enter Long Island Sound.

In the late 1940's, Donald R. Griffin (1949) — who later became famous for his work on bat echo-location — took 17 adult Gannets from Bonaventure Island and released them at Caribou, Maine to observe homing ability. Following them in a light plane, he learned that these birds lack a well developed navigational ability. Instead of flying directly to their home island, they engaged in a random search of the unfamiliar inland territory, spiraling in wider and wider circles until they struck the coast. Then they returned to Bonaventure almost directly, following the familiar shoreline.

This behavior is our clue to what happened in Long Island Sound during Thanksgiving week 1985. A study of the daily weather maps (compiled at 7 AM) shows that in the region between Nantucket and New York City there were east or northeast winds at 15 to 20 mph, light rain, fog, and complete overcast for the period November 26 through 29. Visibility was below 5 miles throughout the region.

We can now reconstruct what happened by combining what we know of existing conditions: (1) Gannets were at their seasonal migratory peak off our region during the Thanksgiving holiday; (2) fairly strong winds from the east pushed numbers of Gannets into Block Island Sound; (3) once

there, poor visibility prevented them from exiting past Montauk Point as they would normally do, and (4) the strong easterly winds vectored them into Long Island Sound for an unprecedented mass visit.

I have been asked why this phenomenon has apparently never before been observed. The answer probably has two components: (1) the combination of peak migration, strong easterly winds, and poor visibility for 4 days is itself very infrequent; and (2) although it may well have occurred before over the centuries, there were never so many bird watchers on the scene — even in miserable weather — to report it. Keep birding!

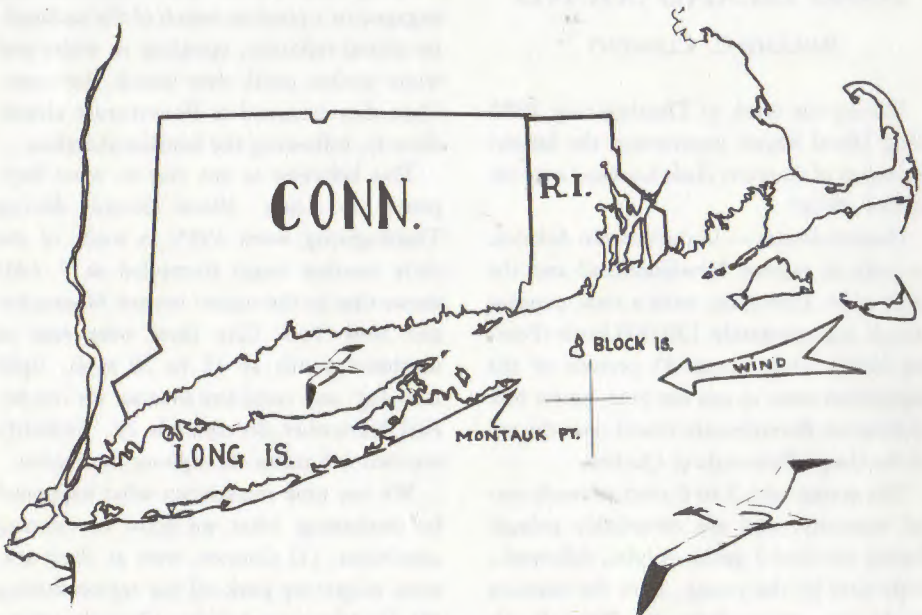
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CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Fall: August 1 — November 30, 1985

JAY KAPLAN

The fall migration might best be described as average, punctuated by periods of great excitement caused by Hurricane Gloria in late September, an unusual weather system during the Thanksgiving holiday weekend and the discovery of such rarities as *Swainson's Hawk*, *Sharp-tailed Sandpiper* and *Northern Wheatear* along the coast. Shorebird migration peaked early in August at such traditional staging grounds at Milford Point, where 10,000 Semipalmated Sandpipers could be seen August 8. Most of these birds were gone the following day. It was a good year for both Baird's and Buff-breasted Sandpipers, both of which were reported from several locations in late August-early September.

Wading birds were also reported in good numbers in early August, with Snowy Egrets peaking at 300 in Lordship Marsh, Stratford August 3 (DV). Inland, August started slowly with little in the way of frontal systems moving through the State. The end of the month saw peak movements of Common Nighthawks and Chimney Swifts. Thousands of nighthawks were seen in the Farmington Valley August 27-28, while approximately 300 Chimney Swifts were seen going to roost in a Chimney in Greenwich August 18 (TB). The passage of the first significant cold front, August 29-31 was followed by a heavy Osprey flight at Lighthouse Point.

September, a relatively mild, dry month began on an exciting note with the discovery of a Northern Wheatear at Hammonas-

set State Park. An influx of birders led to a rippling effect making the park a birding hot spot for awhile.

Inland, hawk migrations did not match the spectacular displays of previous years. A frontal system September 9-11 initiated songbird migrations and warblers were reported throughout the State during the period September 11-21.

Hurricane Gloria, arriving on our coast September 27 more than made up for a slow start to the season. In the following 48 hours Greater and Cory's Shearwater, storm petrels, Gull-billed Tern, *Bridled Tern* and Lesser Black-backed Gull were among the more exciting species to appear, not only on the coast, but up the Connecticut River to the Massachusetts border. Unfortunately, by October 1, most of these birds had found their way back to sea. A cold front October 4-5 was the most significant of the month and the shoreline hawk migration reached its peak, although the discovery of *Boat-tailed Grackles* at Lighthouse Point overshadowed the hawks. By mid-October, attention again turned to shorebirds with the discovery of a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper in Norwalk.

The latter half of October saw the influx of large flocks of geese and sparrows. One of the most extraordinary occurrences of the season developed in the period November 26-30. Following an easterly weather system off Long Island Sound, our coast was besieged by Northern Gannets. Sea ducks were abundant during this period with huge rafts of Common Goldeneye, Oldsquaw, Greater Scaup and White-winged and Surf Scoters. Black-legged Kittiwakes and Pomarine Jaegers were also sighted during this invasion, one of the most fascinating events ever recorded in our state and a fine way to end the fall migration period.

LOONS THROUGH HERONS

In most years the 100 Red-throated Loons sighted November 19 between Stratford and Clinton (MS, DV) would be an impressive total. However, on what has come to be known as gannet Friday, 214 Red-throated Loons were sighted off the coast between Branford and Bluff Point State Park November 29 (NP). A large inland movement was also unusual with 16 reported from Lake Congamond, Suffield November 12 (SK). Horned Grebes were in short supply along the coast, while 6 on Bantam Lake in Litchfield November 10 (m.ob.) and a single bird on Barkhamsted Reservoir November 23 (SK) were the only ones reported inland. Hurricane Gloria provided a host of tubenose sightings. Perhaps the most notable was an extralimital report of a *Northern Fulmar* picked up on a road in Westchester County, NY, not far from the Greenwich line. In Connecticut, a *Cory's Shearwater* was brought to the Connecticut Audubon Center in Fairfield and released (MB) and a *Greater Shearwater* was found in Guilford September 27 (MS). Petrels were also reported with 3 storm-petrels, species unknown, from Stamford (JZ) and 2 from Batterson Pond, New Britain (EC, MC), while 2 *Leach's Petrels* were sighted on the Connecticut River at Suffield (SK). Single *Northern Gannets* were observed from Stratford (DV) and Greenwich Point November 3 (JG). This was but a preview of things to come later in the month.

Gannets were first observed November 24 from Hammonasset S. P. (NC). By November 28, 40+ birds were seen from Stratford (MS) and another 40 from Greenwich Point (JZ, TB). On November 29, gannet Friday, 372 gannets were reported between Branford and Bluff Point S.

P. (NP). Of this total, 114 were seen from Meigs Point, Hammonasset State Park and 236 from Bluff Point. Never in the history of Connecticut ornithology have so many gannets been seen at one time, 1 or 2 sightings every other year being more the norm. Single Great Cormorants were seen in Norwalk Harbor September 15 (FM) and inland at Lake Congamond September 27 (SK), probably hurricane waifs. A high number of 16 Cattle Egrets appeared in Westport August 30 (FM). Lingering Tricolored Herons were reported from Milford Point October 2 (DR), from Sandy Point October 6 (BD) and from Hammonasset S. P. October 8 (m.ob.). A single American Bittern surprised hawk watchers at the Greenwich Audubon Center September 14. A very late Glossy Ibis was found feeding with a flock of ducks on Leetes Island Road, Guilford November 29 (NP), while another lingered throughout November at Silver Sands State Park (MS).

WATERFOWL THROUGH CRANES

A *Tundra Swan* at Mirror Lake November 29 was the first record for the Storrs area (GC). An early *White-fronted Goose* at Great Pond, Simsbury October 16-17 (BK, JK) was the first of several this season. Additional reports, all of the Greenland race, came from Pomfret November 15 (PM), Branford November 17 (NP) and Southbury November 28 (FG). Snow Geese, on the other hand, were sporadic with few reports although a blue-phase was seen in Pomfret November 15 (PM).

Generally speaking, waterfowl numbers were high this fall, although American Wigeon were low with less than half the numbers reported in the usual areas. Ruddy Ducks were common this fall with 20-30

reported from Bantam Lake, November 10 (RN). Broad-winged Hawk migration did not offer massive kettles this fall, although over 100 birds September 12 was a record for the Storrs area (GC). A *Swainson's Hawk* at Hammonasset S.P. September 9 (RS,DV) was documented with a photograph and was the fourth record for the State. There were 40-50 American Coot on Lake Congamond October 27-November 30 (SK). A *Sandbill Crane* appeared briefly in New Canaan October 17 (JM).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH SKIMMER

Many birders flock to the sand bars and mudflats along our coast each fall to observe the abundance of the migrant shorebirds and to hope for a glimpse of a rarity. The shorebirds did not disappoint us this season in either category.

Lesser Golden Plovers were distinctly more common this fall with flocks of 15-20 seen regularly in early September. A late Semipalmated Plover was seen at Gulf Pond, Milford November 23 (WCBC). Hurricane Gloria deposited good numbers of American Oystercatchers along the coast. Some stayed for a month or more with 13 sighted in the Norwalk Islands October 27 (FM). An *American Avocet* was sighted in Branford September 27 (NP). Hudsonian Godwits appeared in several locations with single birds reported from New Canaan October 6 (JD,RH) and from Stratford October 8-12 (NC et al.) and November 5 (DV). More suprising, 8 birds were seen in Guilford November 10 (NP). Marbled Godwits also appeared in Westport September 29 (JS), on the Norwalk Islands October 6 (TB) and in Saybrook October 7 (CTa). Perhaps the highlight of the fall migration was the appearance of a *Sharp-*

tailed Sandpiper in Veteran's Park, Norwalk October 16-17 (FM). This is the second record for Connecticut and the first photographed. An early Purple Sandpiper was seen at Milford Point September 23 (DV). All 3 phalaropes were present in the State this fall with several reports of Wilson's Phalarope from August through early September, 5 *Red-necked Phalaropes* at Sandy Point August 18 (MS,DV) and a *Red Phalarope* in Stratford October 7 (DV). *Pomarine Jaegers* were reported from Sandy Point August 6 (AB) and Guilford November 28 (NP), while a *Parasitic Jaeger* was reported from Milford Point September 21 (JB,CH). Hurricane Gloria was most likely responsible for the appearance of a Lesser Black-backed Gull in Bridgeport September 28 (CTr,DV), although another was seen in New Haven November 15 (MS). The summering Glaucous Gull was reported from Milford Point through August. A Common Black-headed Gull was seen in Stratford November 23 (MS,DV). Three *Black-legged Kittiwakes* were reported from Hammonasset S.P. November 29 (RS) and 1 from Guilford (NP). Hurricane Gloria deposited several tern species along our coast. A *Gull-billed Tern* was at Hammonasset S.P. October 6 (CTa). A *Bridled Tern* was seen from Branford September 27 (NP), while 3-5 Caspian Terns, 10-20 Royal Terns and 100-200 Black Skimmers were found along the shore for over a week following the hurricane. Several Black Skimmers remained through October and the last bird was seen at Gulf Pond, Milford November 20 (MS et al.).

CUCKOOS THROUGH SHRIKES

A late Black-billed Cuckoo was sighted at Lighthouse Point Park October 8

(MS,DV). There was a flight of Long-eared Owls in late October-early November at Hammonasset S.P. In mid-November, Saw-whet Owls appeared in the northwest part of the State. In the Canton — Granby area alone, 3 birds were hit by automobiles. There was a late flight of Chimney Swifts in early November with 3 birds still present at Lighthouse Point November 13 (RE). Red-headed Woodpecker were reported at Lighthouse Point September 22 (RE) and October 8 (DV) and from Greenwich Point November 6 (BM,LM). Western Kingbirds were reported from Stratford September 28 (CTr,DV) and November 28 (DV) and from Lighthouse Point October 7 (RE,FG). Common Ravens continued to appear in Connecticut's northwest corner in the fall as 1-4 birds could be found from September through November at the Norfolk dump (DR,TR). One was found further south in New Canaan November 17 (JD). There were scattered unverified reports of Boreal Chickadees from the northwest corner and one positive report from Hammonasset S.P. November 10 (NP).

Sedge Wrens were reported from Hammonasset S.P. September 6 (GZ) and from Greenwich Point October 6 (JG et al.). One of the biggest finds of the season was a *Northern Wheatear* at Hammonasset S.P. September 5 (PD,RE). This bird, the first in the state in many years, was regular and easily located through September 10 just west of the swan pond. A female Varied Thrush was found bathing with American Robins in a small swamp in North Greenwich November 8 (JG et al.). A Loggerhead Shrike, now scarce throughout the Northeast, was banded at Hammonasset S.P. August 13 (CTa).

VIREOS THROUGH FINCHES

A very late Yellow-Throated Vireo appeared at Hammonasset S.P. October 30 (NP). Late warbler reports included a Tennessee Warbler in Storrs October 30 (WB), Orange-crowned Warbler November 10 at Hammonasset S.P. (NP), a Nashville Warbler November 9 and a Cape May Warbler October 24, both in Fairfield (DV), a Blackpoll Warbler at Greenwich Audubon Center October 28 (MFN), a Louisiana Waterthrush in Georgetown October 23 (MS) and a Wilson's Warbler in Canton October 15 (JK). Sparrows of interest during the fall period included an immature Lark Sparrow at Laurel Reservoir, New Canaan October 14 (JD), Henslow's Sparrow from Stratford October 7 (DV) and Clay-colored Sparrow in Stratford September 7 (DV). A Dickcissel was found in Woodbury October 13 (RN). The last of those birds blown in by Hurricane Gloria were *Boat-tailed Grackles* with 2 at Lighthouse Point October 7 (JB,RE et al.) and 3 in Stratford October 30 through November (CH,m.ob.). Late Northern Oriole reports came from Woodbury November 13 (RN) and from a feeder in Stratford mid-November through December 1 (FM). Purple Finches and Evening Grosbeaks were common in the central part of the State in mid-October, but had virtually disappeared by mid-November.

Contributors: James Bair, Tom Baptist, Ginger Bladen, Anthony Bledsoe, Milan Bull, Winnie Burkett, Greg Butcher, George Clark Jr., New Haven Bird Club, Western Connecticut Bird Club, Neil Currie, Ed and Mary Czapinski, Julio de la Torre (JD), Paul Desjardins, Buzz Devine, Richard English, Frank Gallo, John Guarnaccia, Kenneth Hannon, Michael

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71 Gracey Road, Canton, CT 06019

THE NORWALK ISLAND HERON COLONIES — A HISTORY

PETER MARRA AND MILAN BULL

In the spring of 1985 the Nature Conservancy officially transferred Chimon Island to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for inclusion in the newly created Connecticut Coastal National Wildlife Refuge. This 70 acre island, the largest of the Norwalk Islands, contains the largest heron colony in Long Island Sound and has been a subject of joy and concern for many years. Proposed developmental projects have continually threatened the island, even as heron numbers steadily increased. A study initiated in 1981 by the Connecticut Audubon Society highlighted the importance of the colony and was a major factor in its eventual purchase by the Nature Conservancy. This paper presents the history of the colony and findings of the Connecticut Audubon Society study.

The Norwalk Islands, located near the mouth of the Norwalk River on the north

shore of Long Island Sound, consist of four major islands (Chimon, Sheffield, Cockenoe, and Shea), nine smaller islands, and about 20 hammocks (Ellis, 1962). The bedrock of the islands is probably Ordovician metamorphic, like that of the adjacent mainland, but it is deeply overlaid by glacial sands, gravels, and till originally deposited as a frontal moraine when the Wisconsin Ice Sheet melted approximately 13,000 years ago.

The vegetation of the islands is dynamic, reflecting changes resulting from climate, natural succession and human manipulation. Although originally forested, the islands were probably cleared and burned many times by native Americans before the European colonists took control in the 17th century.

Chimon, named after the Indian Chief Mamachimon, was cleared for farmland, used as a summer resort, and finally abandoned in the 1960's. Brushy growth quickly covered the old fields, and natural succession took over where human manipulation left off. Most of the vegetation presently consists of woody shrubs and trees, but old fields, small dunes, and tidal marsh also occur. Near the center of the island, crown vetch (*Coronilla varia*), butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) and wineberry (*Rubus phoenicolasius*) all flourish. Closer to the shore jimson weed (*Datura stramonium*) and beach pea (*Lathyrus japonicus*) grow in close proximity to the glasswort (*Salicornia virginica*), sea lavender (*Limonium carolinianum*) and spartina grass (*Spartina alterniflora*) that occupy the tidal areas.

Chimon supports a variety of vertebrates with bird species being much more numerous than mammals or reptiles. Only three mammals — Norway rat (*Rattus norvegicus*), meadow vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) and a

single racoon (*Procyon lotor*) — have been recorded. The eastern garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*) and northern brown snake (*Storeria dekayi*) are both abundant and are the only species of reptiles on the island. Of the 135 species of birds recorded since 1981, about 40 breed on the island. The rocky northern shore provides ideal nesting habitat for the 1,000 pairs of Herring (*Larus argentatus*) and the 50 pairs of Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*). Eight species of heron occupy the higher ground of southeastern Chimon and also a small portion of nearby Shea Island 500 yards to the west.

The Norwalk Islands were the site for the first documented state nesting of Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*), Great Egret (*Casmerodius albus*), Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*), Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) and Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*). For all species of heron except Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*), bitterns and Green-backed Heron (*Butorides striatus*) these islands and Ram Island, near Stonington, represent the only significant nesting sites in the State.

The first heron nesting, 8 pairs of Snowy Egret and 20 pairs of Great

Egret, occurred on Sheffield Island in 1961 (Bull 1964). In 1962 the colony consisting of 3 pairs of Snowy Egret, 14 of Great Egret, and 2 of Yellow-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax violaceus*) moved to Shea Island, apparently due to human disturbance, although 2 pairs of Great Egret remained on Sheffield. Heavy recreational use of Chimon Island precluded the nesting of herons there until the mid-1960's. The first Chimon Island census in 1968 (Dater 1968) recorded 42 pairs of 4 species including the first Little Blue Herons (see Table I). In 1971 the Saugatuck Valley Audubon Society employed a warden to protect the colony and his survey (Burg 1971) listed 300 pairs of Black-crowned Night Herons, 350 of Snowy Egret, 38 of Great Egret, 15 of Green-backed Heron, 10 of Cattle Egret, 1 of Little Blue Heron, 3 of Yellow-crowned Night Heron and 3 of Glossy Ibis, (Burg, 1971). This was the first nesting of Cattle Egret and Glossy Ibis in the state. No more censuses were made until Noble Proctor and Fred Sibley conducted a census for the Colonial Waterbird Survey in 1977 (Erwin and Korschen 1979). Their one hour census indicated a slight increase in Black-

TABLE I
Pairs of Herons Nesting in the Norwalk Islands

Species	1961a	1962a	1968b	1971c	1977d	1979e
Great Egret	20	16	6	38	20	8
Snowy Egret	8	3	25	350	100	100
Little Blue Heron	—	—	1	1	1	2
Tricolored Heron	—	—	—	—	1/2	1
Green-backed Heron	n/a	n/a	n/a	15	5	10
Black-c. Night-Heron	—	—	10	300	400	450
Yellow-c. Night-Heron	—	2	—	3	—	2
Glossy Ibis	—	—	—	3	10	9
Total	28	21	42	710	536	582

a. Bull 1964, b. Dater 1968, c. Burg 1971, d. Erwin & Korschen 1979, e. Wood 1980.

crowned Night Herons and a marked drop in Snowy Egret numbers (100 pairs). A survey made in 1979 showed little change from 1977 (Wood 1979) except for 2 Tricolored Herons (*Egretta tricolor*). Table I gives totals for all these censuses.

In 1981, CAS began a five year research study on the Chimon Island heronry and recorded about 800 pairs of 7 species nesting on Chimon and an additional 100 pairs of 2 species on nearby Shea Island (Erskine 1981). In 1982, counts early in the season indicated large numbers of Black-crowned Night Herons and Snowy Egrets had abandoned Chimon although the latter species had probably moved to Shea (Table II). A cautious approach to management seemed best and the ambitious program of trapping, banding and color marking carried out in 1981 was curtailed. A raccoon found foraging in the colony may have been responsible for the heron movement. From 1981 to 1984 the number of herons nesting in the Norwalk Islands increased from 727 pairs to 969. In 1985 Shea Island was not censused, but Chimon had 83 more pairs of herons than in 1984.

In 1980, what was to become a major heron colony in Connecticut was estab-

lished on Ram Island off Mystic with a single pair of Black-crowned Night Herons. By 1983 there were 40 pairs of Black-crowned Night Herons plus 20 pairs of Snowy Egrets (Sibley, 1985), and in 1984 two pairs of Glossy Ibis were also nesting there. These birds probably came from the much closer rookery on Fisher's Island, N.Y., rather than from the Norwalk Islands.

In 1977, there were 6 heron colonies on the south side of Long Island Sound (1024 pr. of 5 species), 4 in Rhode Island (1024 pairs of 6 species), 14 in Massachusetts (2564 pairs of 7 species), and 8 in Maine (287 pairs of 5 species) compared to the 536 pairs of 7 species at Chimon Island that year.

The history of the two heronries in Connecticut demonstrates that herons respond rapidly to changes in vegetation or human use. Evidently the islands provide some protection from mammalian predators; the dense vegetation provides nesting sites as well as reducing human disturbance. Sheffield Island, used by herons in the early 1960's, is no longer used as a nesting site although apparently similar to Chimon and Shea in both vegetation and human ac-

TABLE II
Pairs of Herons Nesting on Chimon and Shea Islands 1981-1985

Species	Chimon	Shea	Chimon	Shea	Chimon	Shea	Chimon	Shea	Chimon
	1981a	1981a	1982b	1982b	1983b	1983b	1984b	1984b	1985c
Great Egret	28	—	31	—	36	1	21	—	8
Snowy Egret	217	—	105	50	213	100	231	100	200
Little Blue Heron	13	—	8	1	4	2	12	2	5
Green-backed Heron	12	—	10	—	8	1	11	—	10
Black-c. N.-Heron	509	100	197	113	372	175	341	190	480
Yellow-c. N.-Heron	2	6	—	8	—	3	—	4	—
Glossy Ibis	23	—	25	15	32	15	14	5	10
Tricolored Heron	—	—	—	—	1/2	—	—	—	—
Total	804	106	376	187	665	297	630	301	713

a. Erskine 1981, b. surveys by Peter Marra and Susan Langevin, c. survey by Milan Bull.

tivity. Chimon Island is now part of the Connecticut Coastal National Wildlife Refuge and should have a fairly stable future. Continued monitoring and censusing is essential, and research projects would be desirable. Efforts should also be made to protect the nesting birds on Shea.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was conducted under the auspices of the Connecticut Audubon Society and supported by grants from them and The Nature Conservancy. We owe special thanks to the numerous volunteers who helped with this project but especially to Susan Langevin. Comments and editorial assistance were provided by Roland Clement, Dr. Noble Proctor, Fred Sibley, John Souther, Dennis Varza, Carl Trichka, and Dick Ferren. The work of Sandra Erskine in 1981 was especially valuable for the present study.

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THE CONNECTICUT BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

CHRISTOPHER S. WOOD

Now in its final year, the five-year breeding bird atlas project is a cooperative effort to map the distribution of every species of bird that actually nests in our State. Connecticut's five-thousand square mile land area is mapped on 117 U.S. Geological Survey topographic sheets and each of these maps was subdivided into nine-square-mile blocks. Each of the resulting blocks has been visited by one or more of the 1500 volunteer ornithologists who are participants during the March to July nesting season, with most of them afield every weekend during the peak of the season. Already, some 190 species have been found on territory and 178 of these have been confirmed as actually nesting. The final field season of this project, about to begin, will see field teams concentrating on confirming the

NOTES AND NEWS

dozen or so probable nesting species, trying to add a few unsuspected ones, and learning more about the actual density of nesting birds in areas that can be given intensive coverage, the so-called block-busting effort of the enthusiastic participants. The project leaders will welcome additional participants for this final effort.

The following species, heretofore considered rare or uncertain, are among those confirmed as nesters, thanks to the cooperative field work of the last four years: Common Loon, Cattle Egret, Sora Rail, Common Snipe, Black Skimmer, Long-eared Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Kentucky Warbler, Evening Grosbeak, and Pine Siskin. The twelve probable breeders that might be confirmed this year are Tricolored Heron, Northern Shoveler, Bald Eagle, Chuck-will's-widow, Swainson's Thrush, Prothonotary Warbler, Northern Parula, Green-winged Teal, Red-breasted Merganser, Northern Harrier, Common Raven and Wilson's Warbler.

The Connecticut project chairman is Christopher S. Wood. David Rosgen of Sharon is statewide field coordinator, and George Zepko of Middletown is providing computerization for the accumulated data. The project was launched in 1982 by the staff of the National Audubon Society's Northeast Region office in Sharon and the Audubon Council of Connecticut. The council will publish the results in 1988, providing a reliable data base on the occurrence and distribution of the State's breeding birds and thereby helping to identify ecologically unique and important areas.

Quanopaug Trail, Woodbury, CT 06798

CHRISTMAS COUNTS: Susan Roney Drennan was appointed Editor of *American Birds* in July, 1985, much to the pleasure of many who have enjoyed working with her while she was assistant editor under Robert Arbib these last several years.

At an I.C.B.P. meeting in New York City on October 25th — where, by the way, Ms. Drennan was elected a director — she put to rest rumors that the National Audubon Society had decided to forego publishing the Christmas Count issue of *American Birds*. She said plans to publish both the 1985 and 1986 counts were already underway, though the high costs of publishing this special annual issue were being reviewed.

* * *

HAWK WATCH CONFERENCE: Due to unforeseen circumstances the New England Hawk Watch Conference at Northampton, MA March 22 and 23 has been cancelled. It will be rescheduled for 1987.

* * *

DEFECTIVE COPIES: If your April issue (Vol. 5, No. 2) was missing pages, write to Carl Trichka, 65 Glover St., Fairfield, CT 06430 for a replacement.

* * *

ANNUAL MEETING: The annual meeting of the C.O.A. will be held on Saturday, May 24, 1986 at the Milford Public Library in Milford, Ct. beginning at 10 A.M. The day will begin with a workshop on shorebirds by Wayne Petersen which is limited to 100 people. That will be followed by lunch, a short business meeting and then a field trip to Milford Point.

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THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology



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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 mails checks to 314 Unquowa Road, Fairfield, CT 06430.

Membership Fees

Member	\$10.00	Contributing	\$20.00
Family	\$15.00	Sustaining	\$30.00
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The editors invite submission of articles, notes, black and white photographs and line drawings for publication in *The Connecticut Warbler*. Manuscripts should be typewritten, double-spaced and on one side of the sheet only, with ample margins. The style of manuscripts should follow the general usage in recent issues.

Cover Drawing: Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) copyright 6-68 by Julie Zickefoose, Hadlyme. All rights reserved.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As the new president of the Connecticut Ornithological Association (COA) it is exciting to find the organization doing so well. After several years of working hard to establish ourselves the future looks bright.

In this issue of the Connecticut Warbler, following the second annual May membership meeting I want to recognize the contributions of the outgoing officers and board members of the COA. These people were involved with the COA when it was just a pipe dream, followed through to a kick-off meeting at Lighthouse Point on September 29, 1984 and continued to build this organization to its present stature.

Roland Clement was our first president and has since presided over all of the organization's work. During his tenure there were two primary jobs to be accomplished; the continued publication of *The Connecticut Warbler* and the development of a strong supporting organization. The Warbler had been started several years earlier by a small group of individuals financially assisted by the Connecticut Audubon Society (CAS) in Fairfield. When CAS no longer felt it could support the Warbler, the COA was organized to take on that job. At that point we needed financial support from a dedicated membership to publish the journal.

Roland presided over the difficult steps of launching and establishing the COA and as a result of his success the Warbler is now entering its third year under COA sponsorship. All of us who served as officers, board members, or committee chairmen during these years are grateful to Roland for his energy and leadership and for the inspiration he provided to us.

During Roland's tenure the editorship of the Warbler changed hands twice. Carl Trichka, one of that small group of founding fathers and editor since issue one, turned over the editorship to Anthony Bledsoe with the October, 1984 issue. When Anthony's work took him to the University of Wisconsin, Betty Kleiner became editor. Anthony made several innovative changes that increased the quality of the journal. Betty has built on these and, by increasing the number of editorial assistants, brought the Warbler back on schedule. The editorship is a very time consuming task and only one of Betty's volunteer jobs. She was, therefore, amused when an acquaintance recently asked Betty, a "non-working" housewife, what she does in her spare time.

At our annual meeting in Milford four board members, Stuart Mitchell, Julio de la Torre, Robert Dewire, and Joe Zeranski, finished their terms of office. However, Joe was reelected to fill another one year term. These and the other officers and board members have all worked devotedly to make COA a reality. Their individual and collective contributions have been enormous.

We welcome three new board members who will serve until mid-1989: Robert Askins of New London, Debra Miller of Deep River, and Robert Moeller of Sharon. The opposite page reveals the shifts in the COA organization.

The COA objectives listed in our bylaws are to promote interest in and knowledge of birds, to maintain Connecticut checklists and records, to publish accurate scientific information, and to promote cooperation within the ornithological community, especially among organizations, and between amateurs and professionals.

The new officers of the COA believe strongly in these goals and are justifiably proud of the accomplishments during the first years. However, the Warbler is still the focus of all these objectives and a strong membership is needed for a strong Warbler. An increased membership can mean a larger journal, the Warbler, with more articles in each issue and reaching a broader spectrum of the birding community. An increased membership can work toward a higher quality Warbler.

As members of the COA you are already contributing to a scientific enterprise long overdue in our state, the advancement of the knowledge of birds in Connecticut. You can contribute even more by persuading another birder of the value of the COA. If each of us could find one new member our organization could be a thriving one and closer to realizing its full potential.

Neil Currie
President
Connecticut Ornithological Association

CONNECTICUT BIRDS: THE PIPING PLOVER

JULIE ZICKEFOOSE

On January 10, 1986, the Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) became Connecticut's first Federally Threatened breeding bird species, a listing many conservationists believed was long overdue. The plover, declared Endangered in the Great Lakes region and Threatened on the Great Plains and Atlantic coast, has made the National Audubon Society's Blue List every year since its inception in 1971, and has been a focus of ornithological concern since the late 1800's. This paper deals with historical fluctuations in Atlantic coast populations, current population size and nesting success in Connecticut, and the implications for and management of this imperiled shorebird. Piping Plovers arrive on Connecticut beaches about the same time as the Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) in late March or early April. After a whirlwind courtship, punc-

uated by figure-8 display flights, strutting and frequent border clashes, the plovers settle down to nest in late April or early May. Four pale buff eggs, finely marked with brown spots, are laid in a shallow scrape among sparse beach vegetation. Each pair defends a large territory so the density of birds, even in prime habitat, is low (from 4 pairs per ¼ mile of beach to 4 pairs per 1½ miles). This combined with the scarcity of sandy beaches in Connecticut makes the Piping Plovers a rare breeding bird.

Tracing the history of the Piping Plover's fluctuating population on the East Coast is a fascinating, if inexact, exercise. Of 50 records compiled from 1813 to 1958, only 8 specifically referred to Connecticut. The period 1813-1879 represents the highest recorded abundance; Wilson (1813) described the plover as "very abundant on the low sandy shores of our whole sea-coast during the summer." Nuttall (1834) refined this range: "Common inhabitant . . . from New Jersey to Nova Scotia." Interestingly, Linsley (1843) stated that the Piping Plover was "a rare bird, but breeds in Stratford." This may reflect the relative scarcity of

sandy beaches in Connecticut compared with neighboring states, suggesting that the Piping Plover may always have been a local breeder in the state.

The words "common" and "abundant" prevail in East Coast records through the 1870s. Merriam (1877) found it breeding at Stratford and Saybrook, and as a migrant at Portland, Connecticut. 1879 was the last year the bird was described as a common breeder in Massachusetts (Forbush 1912). Only 5 years later, Brewer (Forbush 1912) stated: "From many of our beaches in New England this plover has been driven." Though one was taken Aug. 29, 1886 in West Haven and an adult was collected May 28, 1888 in Bridgeport (Sage and Bishop 1913), the Piping Plover rapidly disappeared as a breeder, and even became scarce as a migrant by 1906 in Massachusetts (Forbush 1912). A September 1904 sighting in New Haven Harbor (Sage and Bishop 1913) was the last recorded in Connecticut until a single bird was seen May 13, 1924, on the beach at Great Marsh, Westport (Saunders 1931).

The period 1884 to 1913 represents perhaps the lowest known ebb of Atlantic coast Piping Plover populations. Overhunting was the major culprit as spring gunners shot both adult and young Piping Plovers on the breeding beaches. By 1908, the species had been extirpated from Maine (Knight 1908) and New Jersey, where it was known as "a rare migrant, if it occurs at all in the state" (Stone, 1909). Cape Cod's Piping Plovers, abundant only 30 years earlier, were drastically reduced. Forbush (1912) cited the species only as an "uncommon migrant to Massachusetts." Long Island had breeders only in "a few localities" (Eaton, 1914). Rhode Island's birds dropped to less than 6 pairs from 1908 to 1912 (Raithel 1983), and we must assume a

similar reduction, if not total extirpation, for Connecticut. Piping Plovers were wholly extirpated from New Jersey by 1912 (Forbush 1925) and nearly absent from Virginia by 1913 (Bailey 1913). By 1913, with the plover all but extirpated from Maine to New Jersey, the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act was passed, protecting shorebirds from decimation by market hunters.

Where open beach habitat was still available, Piping Plovers began to rebound. Only 6 years after passage of that act, Robbins (1919) reported a "generous increase in numbers, due to the 1913 legal protection. It may pretty confidently be expected that they will reappear in other localities and that there will be a return to something like their former abundance." It was still rare on the East Coast, but overhunting could not be blamed now. Chapman (1923) wrote, "Man's increasing encroachments on its haunts threatens it with extinction as a summer resident in our Atlantic states." Connecticut saw much beach development in this period, and the Piping Plover was not reported nesting in the state until 1931, when Aretas Saunders (1931) found a pair breeding at Lordship Beach, Stratford.

In 1938, the "Great Hurricane" came to the Piping Plover's aid, sweeping the northeast coast nearly clean of its cottages. The bird enjoyed a brief renaissance; Wilcox (1939) estimated 500 pairs on Long Island alone (probably more than nest from Newfoundland to Virginia today!). By the 1950's development and the increasing human use of beaches had caught up with the bird sending it into another cycle of decline.

Piping Plovers are restricted to North America and no more than 1350 breeding pairs of Piping Plovers may remain (The Nature Conservancy 1983). The entire east

coast population probably numbers no more than 450 pairs including my Connecticut counts of 17 in 1983, 15 in 1984 and 20 in 1985.

Canada has an estimated 500 pairs, perhaps 400 of those on its prairie sloughs and alkaline lakes. Similar habitat in North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska harbors an estimated 340 pairs. In the Great Lakes region the Piping Plover is in imminent danger of local extinction. Less than 20 pairs now remain out of a population that may have surpassed 800 pairs at the turn of the century (Russell 1983). Changes in water levels, increased development, recreation and gull predation are all cited as contributing factors (Russell 1983, Lambert and Ratcliff 1981, Cuthbert and Wiens 1982).

How are Piping Plovers doing in Connecticut relative to other areas? In 1985, volunteer Tom Damiani and I monitored 28 nesting attempts of the state's 20 Piping Plover pairs. This was the first attempt to gain a detailed statewide picture of nesting success, and the results were revealing. Of 98 eggs laid, 51 hatched successfully (a 52% hatch rate). This compares with a 91% hatch rate in Long Island nests (Wilcox 1959). Undisturbed Nova Scotian nests had a 79.4% hatch rate (Cairns 1982); on relatively undisturbed Lake of the Woods, Minnesota, hatching success was 44% (Cuthbert and Wiens, 1982); on disturbed Michigan beaches, only 30% hatched (Lambert and Ratcliff 1979).

Another index of success is number of fledglings per pair. Connecticut Piping Plovers fledged an average of 2.0 young per pair in 1984 and 1.75 per pair in 1985. The following fledgling ratios have been reported for other regions: Nova Scotia: 1.3 to 2.1 (Cairns 1982), New Jersey: 1.19 (Joanna Burger pers. com.) and Rhode Is-

land: 0.57 to 1.36 (Raithel 1983). Highly disturbed Michigan beaches yielded only 0.6 fledged young per pair (Lambert and Ratcliff 1979). These preliminary data suggest that Connecticut Piping Plovers enjoy a fairly high fledging rate. The incubation period is the most perilous time for these ground-nesting, precocial birds. Of the 47.9% of eggs which failed to hatch in 1985, 14.3% were taken by mammalian predators, 12.2% were destroyed by humans, 12.2% by unknown predators, and 9.2% were undeveloped and/or infertile.

Connecticut Piping Plovers share the nesting beaches with Least Terns (*Sterna antillarum*) and this may play an important role in helping the species survive. The aerial mobbing of Least Terns is a highly effective defense against most avian predators — gulls and crows are regularly observed giving a wide berth to tern colonies. Where plovers nest among Least Terns, they can also benefit from posting, which is usually not done where the plovers nest singly. Thus, plovers who stick with terns enjoy double protection, against both avian predators and human disturbance.

If the Piping Plover is to maintain a viable population, its breeding and wintering habitat must be protected from development and its nesting beaches protected from human disturbance. Posting is essential and effective with or without acquisition of land by organizations such as The Nature Conservancy. Due to the recent listing of the species as threatened, The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, Connecticut Audubon Society and many other organizations are actively involved in management efforts to preserve the Piping Plover. In the words of C.H. Rogers, who in 1921 was elated to find plovers had returned to a

long-empty New Jersey beach, Let us give it a good chance, as it is a most charming little spirit of the sands.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My work with the Piping Plover was part of the Least Tern/Piping Plover Recovery Program funded by the Nature Conservancy, Connecticut Chapter, 55 High St., Middletown, CT 06457. I wish to thank Tom Damiani for both sparking and contributing to this study.

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WESTERN MYIARCHUS IN BETHANY, CONNECTICUT

MARK SZANTYR

On October 6, 1984, while birding along a roadside in Bethany, Buzz Devine, Dennis Varza, and I spotted a *Myiarchus* flycatcher as it landed in the top of a large white ash tree (*Fraxinus americana*). The bird was extremely pale below with only a faint yellow wash, strongest on the lower belly and crissum. The bird appeared long-tailed and short-winged and was only slightly larger than an Eastern Wood-pewee (*Contopus virens*) in the same tree. The tail showed a pale rufous wash throughout and appeared notched. While the bird preened, its head and face were observed and clearly lacked an eye ring or any facial pattern. The bill was all dark, as was the eye. The throat was white and the upper breast was a very pale pearly rey, strongest at the sides.

We observed the bird for only a few minutes before it flew away. A review of our observations suggested the Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*). Later study of *Myiarchus* skins at the Peabody Museum in New Haven confirmed our belief and plumage characteristics suggested the Ash-throated Flycatcher rather than Nutting's Flycatcher (*M. nuttingi*). The photo of Ash-throated Flycatcher in the Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding, Volume Two, page 227, is a good representation of what we saw.

The Ash-throated Flycatcher inhabits the western United States and Mexico, south to Guatemala. Its breeding range extends

north to central Washington, east to western Texas, south to southwest Tamaulipas and west to Baja California. In winter, the Ash-throated Flycatcher is found rarely north to southern Nevada, south to Guatemala, east to Yucatan, west to Baja California. Spring migration puts birds on the breeding grounds from early March in the San Antonio, Texas, region to mid-May in the Yakima, Washington, area. In fall migration birds leave between late August to late November throughout the range.

Nutting's Flycatcher, closely resembling the Ash-throated Flycatcher, resides from central Sonora and western Chihuahua, Mexico, south to Costa Rica (*American Ornithologists' Union, Check-list of North American Birds, 5th ed., 1957, Allen Press, Lawrence, Kansas*). It rarely wanders from this range, and only one record is as far north as Arizona.

The Ash-throated Flycatcher is an increasingly regular vagrant to the east coast, with more observations added each year. William Murphy (*American Birds, 35:241-247*) lists records of the Ash-throated Flycatcher from ten eastern states and two eastern Canadian provinces. These sightings span five months in the fall (Sept.-Jan.), and two months in the spring (May-June).

Reports in *American Birds* since Mr. Murphy's article are: Nov. 14, Brier Island, Nova Scotia (A.B. 37:37); Nov. 1, Deer Isle, Maine (A.B. 39:28); Nov. 26, St. John's, Newfoundland (A.B. 39:28); Nov. 21, Jones Beach, N.Y. (A.B. 39:34).

The date of the Connecticut record, October 6, fits neatly into the timetable of expected occurrence in the east. A detailed account of our sighting was sent to Mr. Murphy, and his evaluation supports our identification of the bird as an Ash-throated Flycatcher (see COA rarities file). This

would be the first recorded occurrence in Connecticut. Any *Myiarchus* flycatcher observed in the east from October on should be closely scrutinized for this species.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks to William Murphy for his evaluation of our sighting, to the Peabody Museum for the use of the collection, and to the other observers for their help.

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Editor's Note: No decision regarding this sighting has been made by the Rare Records Committee.

INTERACTIONS BETWEEN A SHARP-SHINNED HAWK AND A PILEATED WOODPECKER

JAY KAPLAN

On November 4, 1985 6 staff members of the Roaring Brook Nature Center, Canton, Connecticut observed an attack of a Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*) on a Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*). Originally attracted by the woodpecker's call, the staff members were standing by a large observation window watching the woodpecker when a Sharp-shinned Hawk suddenly flew out of the woods, made a pass at the woodpecker and alighted on a branch of a red oak tree slightly above and some thirty yards from the woodpecker. During

the next 30 minutes the hawk made 9 additional passes at the woodpecker. Each time the hawk would drop with talons outstretched, only to have the woodpecker walk around to the other side of the tree. The hawk came within 6 inches of the woodpecker, but seemingly could not negotiate the turn necessary to make contact. During this entire period, the woodpecker did not freeze or leave the protection of the tree. It kept the tree between itself and the hawk and watched the hawk even while cleaning its bill against the tree trunk. At 9:30 AM a van pulled into the parking lot and the hawk flew into the woods. The woodpecker then began calling and continue calling non-stop for over 4 minutes before leaving the area. At 9:32 AM chickadees and other small songbirds started returning to the feeders.

The entire incident was observed from a distance of approximately 50 yards. The woodpecker, during the attack, was 20 feet up on a white ash, located close to several feeders. The whole area serves as a wildlife attracting area for the Nature Center and is heavily used by wintering songbirds. Woodpeckers, including the Pileated, often alight on the ash tree and then descend to 1 of the 2 suet feeders suspended from a clothesline.

A Tufted Titmouse (*Parus bicolor*) and a Black-capped Chickadee (*Parus atricapillus*), frozen against the trunk of a shadbush just outside the observation window, did not move during the encounter and appeared as though carved from wood. The titmouse finally fled at 9:25 AM but the chickadee remained until the hawk left the area. These birds, caught in the open by the hawk's sudden appearance, were evidently not detected.

Sharp-shinned Hawks are not unusual visitors to this area, and each winter, sharp-

ies hang around the Nature Center feeder area for a few days at a time. This hawk, first observed November 5, may have been responsible for the death of six birds that flew against the glass of the observation window. When the hawk appears, the songbirds scatter in all directions and are more likely to strike objects in their flight path Bent (*Life histories of North American birds*) states birds are the principal fare of the Sharp-shinned Hawk and gives a lengthy list of prey species. One wonders if the Sharp-shinned Hawk could have subdued the Pileated Woodpecker in flight.

71 Garcey Road, Canton, CT

OBSERVATIONS OF AGONISTIC INTERACTIONS BETWEEN A PAIR OF FERAL MUTE SWANS AND NESTING WATERFOWL.

GARY S. KANIA AND
HARVEY R. SMITH

Since the first sighting of feral Mute Swans (*Cygnus olor*) in Connecticut during the 1920's, the state's population has increased to over 1200 birds. Of about 100 nesting pairs observed in 1983, most nest sites were in estuarine habitats, although some were in small (less than 3 ha) freshwater ponds. Competition for freshwater nest sites between mute swans and native waterfowl is of concern in Connecticut because of a rap-

idly growing swan population. Aggressive interactions between nesting Mute Swans and waterfowl are known (Eltringham 1963; Stowe and Marsters 1970; Willey 1968), yet the extent of competition between swans and other waterfowl remains unresolved. In 1983, the authors observed the following agonistic behavior between a pair of feral Mute Swans and nesting Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) and Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*).

Observations were made daily from mid-March through August 1983, on Endress Pond, a natural, 2.5 ha pond in Guilford, Connecticut. The pond is bordered by woodlands, farmlands, and residential lawns, and contains two islands. The larger island (400 sq. m) and the smaller island (175 sq. m) are approximately 5 m and 30 m from the nearest shore, respectively.

A pair of Canada Geese has successfully fledged goslings annually since 1971. All goose nests have been on the small island. Since 1980, one pair of Mallards has also successfully nested annually on one of the islands, producing approximately 4 fledglings per year. Although only Canada Geese and Mallards have been observed to nest, numerous other waterfowl periodically use the pond for feeding or resting. No Mute Swans sightings were made prior to 1983.

During the last week of March, 1983, the Canada Geese were observed nest-building on the western end of the small island. The goose was on the nest by 1 April. Concurrently, an attentive Mallard hen was observed 15 m away on her first of 3 nests. On 6 April, a pair of feral Mute Swans appeared on the pond. The swans spent most of their first day exploring, but, when observed the next morning, they had commenced nest-building on the eastern edge of the small island approximately 5 m from the nesting Mallard and 20 m from the

goose nest. Despite vegetative cover, the nest occupants were in view of one another. On the morning of 12 April, the swans were observed nest-building at the site of the mallard nest. Mating displays and copulation by the swans were noted and it became apparent during the next 2-3 days, as nest building continued, that they had abandoned their original nest site; it also appeared that the pen had begun incubation. The Mallard built a second nest 8 m west of her original nest. On 19 April, the swans were nest-building on the site of the second Mallard nest. The Mallard hen then abandoned the island.

A Mallard pair was seen daily at the western end of the pond until 1 May. From 2 to 6 May, the hen was seen entering and exiting the woods at the western shore of the pond. After 7 May, the hen was no longer seen with the drake and when observed on 1 June, with a brood of 8 newly hatched young, it was presumed she had re-nested in the woods.

Meanwhile, the swans had completed their new nest on top of the second Mallard nest. The pen again appeared to be incubating as egg-rolling was observed. Only 5 m separated the nesting goose from the pen.

Agonistic behavior, initiated by the cob toward the gander, noticeably increased. This behavior included daily acts of aquatic and aerial chasing, wing-hitting, biting and dunking. These attacks often left the gander nearly exhausted as he tenaciously defended his territory. Physical injury to the gander appeared limited to loss of patches of neck feathers.

Although no overt attacks on the nesting goose were observed while she was incubating, the swans' tolerance of her was short lived. On 1 May when the goose came off the nest with 6 goslings, she was imme-

diately attacked by the cob. While the gander fought off the cob, the female goose and young retreated to their nest and remained there for the duration of the day. That afternoon, the pen left her nest and joined the cob in the attacks on the gander. During the next evening, the goose left the nest with the goslings and swam to the extreme western end of the pond. The swans remained near the small island but made no attempt to return to their nest or pursue the geese. The swans exhibited threat posturing, however, and the geese remained at the western end of the pond. The swans vacated the pond on 3 May and did not return. No additional waterfowl were observed on the pond during the swans' presence.

On 4 May, examination of the nests on the island revealed the following: the goose nest contained 6 hatched eggs and 1 unhatched fertilized egg; the first swan nest, 1 m in diameter, contained no eggs; the second swan nest (the first Mallard nest) was 2 m in diameter and contained 4 unhatched Mallard eggs while the third swan nest (second Mallard nest) measured 3 m in diameter and contained 5 unhatched Mallard eggs. All Mallard eggs were located on the surface of the bowl of the swan's nest. Through lab examination it was determined that the Mallard eggs were fertile and had been incubated less than 10 days.

Our observations are in contrast to reports of ducks and Canada Geese nesting peacefully and successfully within a few feet of a swan's nest (Eltringham 1963, Willey 1964). The defense of a nesting territory toward other swans by breeding and non-breeding swan pairs has been previously documented (Minton 1968) and interspecific intolerance of breeding swans has been reported (Kortright 1942; Stone and Masters 1970; Willey and Halla 1972). We are

unaware, however, of any reports of permanent physical displacement of waterfowl from their nests by Mute Swans.

The displacement of the hen Mallard may be a result of the aggressive nature of nesting Mute Swans. The pen's tenacity for the Mallard nest site after displacement and the attempted incubation of the Mallard eggs may be attributed to the pen's inability to lay eggs. In addition, it is noteworthy that the Mallard pair renested 3 times.

The pen became inattentive after the hatching of the goose eggs, and although abandonment of a territory early in the nesting season is characteristic of non-breeding pairs (Minton 1968), in this instance it closely coincided with the goose brood leaving the nest. Therefore, the abandonment of the pond by the swan may be attributed either to the abandonment behavior known to exist among non-breeding pairs, to an unsuccessful breeding attempt by a young inexperienced pair, to coincidence and/or to the gander's increased attention toward the defense of the female goose and goslings.

Considering our limited observations, it is apparent that further observations are necessary to determine the actual degree of competition between feral Mute Swans and nesting waterfowl on small freshwater ponds.

Indeed, the inference from Rhode Island observations is, that other waterfowl may avoid areas of swan nesting (Willey 1968). As Connecticut's breeding swan population increases, the use of small freshwater ponds as nesting sites is also likely to increase. The ponds often are historical nesting sites for native waterfowl and the aggressive behavior displayed by nesting swan pairs may become a factor in limiting native waterfowl populations in Connecticut, directly

through agonistic behavior or indirectly through avoidance.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Winter: December 1,
1985-February 28, 1986

DENNIS E. VARZA

The winter season was neither severe nor particularly warm. December was colder than the past two years but January was slightly warmer, and this trend continued into March. Highlights of the winter included an Ivory Gull, several Tundra Swans, White-fronted Geese, and King Eiders. Other noteworthy birds included Green-winged (Common) Teal, Barrow's Goldeneye, Varied Thrush and Yellow-headed Blackbird. For more details on sightings from the Christmas Bird Counts, see *The Connecticut Warbler* 6:3-9.

In December the mercury reached 50° on only two days compared to 10 last year, while mean temperatures exceeded 40° on only 5 days compared to 15 last year. The mean temperature was below freezing on 15 days compared to 3 last year. Major cold fronts occurred on December 3, 15 and 26 producing a rapid drop in water temperatures and reduced hopes for many winter vagrants.

January was cold but not harsh. There were cold snaps, January 7-8 and 14-16, a thaw from the 18th to 22nd, followed by several days with mean temperatures below 20°. The coldest temperature for the winter was reached on January 15, 7° compared to -3° on January 21 1985.

February remained cold with not one day breaking 50°. Mean temperatures stayed between 20° and 40°, with a long spell of sub-freezing weather from the 6th to 18th. Last year 7 of the last 11 days were above 50°.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

A Red-necked Grebe was seen in Suffield December 4 (SK). Often considered coastal birds, there are many records for reservoirs. A more diligent search of reservoirs may show that this is their preferred habitat. Double-crested Cormorants are now regular in winter and no longer merit special remarks. Two American Bitterns wintered; one at Hammonasset State Park (JK) and one at Manressa Island in Norwalk (FM).

The large flocks of Canada Geese found statewide contained several Tundra Swans and White-fronted Geese. Tundra Swans: 1 Southport December 22 (RB,et al.), 1 West Haven December 27-31 (AB,et al.), and 1 Orange January 11-15 (JB et al.). White-fronted Geese: 1 Wallingford December 10 (NP), 2 Orange December 14 to January 12 (NP,et al.), 1 East Windsor December 13-15 (JK,BK), 1 Sherwood Island State Park December 22 (RC,et al.). Individual Wood Ducks were reported across the state and now seem to be rare but regular during the winter. The Green-winged (Common) Teal of Gulf Pond, Milford returned for the 3rd winter and stayed to early February. American Wigeons were in low numbers and only 1 group of 3 Eurasian Wigeons was reported; West Haven December 15 thru February 12 (m.ob.). Redheads were reported regularly only from the Thames River in New London (RBA). King Eiders could be found for most of the season. A female at Sherwood Island SP December 8-19 (FM,et al.) was joined by an immature male December 14 to January 4. Another female at Merwin Point, Milford December 29 to March (m.ob.) was joined by a female Common Eider January 25 (BK,et al.). The only Barrow's Goldeneye reported was a bird on the Old Lyme CBC.

HAWKS THROUGH GULLS

Turkey Vultures are now reported statewide during the winter and can be considered locally common. All hawks were well represented as evidenced by CBC totals. Rough-legged Hawks were more frequent than last year, but still not regular. Bald Eagles did very well. The annual survey tallied 54 birds statewide (JM,SM). There were also 2 Golden Eagles reported, 1 on the Connecticut River in Essex as last year and 1 at Lake Gaillard (NP). A Merlin spent the winter at Manressa Island, Norwalk (FM), and a Peregrine Falcon was reported on the Hartford CBC.

Two Ring-necked Pheasants survived the winter in Storrs (GC, et al.), a rare feat for that area. Lingering shorebirds, in addition to those on the CBC's, included a Greater Yellowlegs December 5 to January 4 and a Willet December 1-21 in Norwalk (FM), a dowitcher sp in Milford December 12 (MS), and a Common Snipe in Storrs February 1 (GC, et al.). A Little Gull was found in Old Saybrook February 15 (RH), while a Common Black-headed Gull spent the winter in New Haven Harbor. An Ivory Gull was reported on the Connecticut River in East Windsor February 20 (DH,GM). It was sighted only once in spite of many visits by other birders. The record is under review by the Rare Records Committee. The white-winged gulls were fewer in number than last year, the best places for them were the West Haven and Hartford dumps.

OWLS THROUGH FINCHES

Long-eared and Saw-whet Owls were widely reported with more records than the past two years. The only resident Snowy Owl was in Stratford December 15 to January 18. Individual Yellow-bellied Sapsuck-

ers were reported statewide making for a modest invasion. Eastern Phoebe were reported on 4 CBC's plus 1 additional bird in Greenwich February 5 (RH). Other lingering insect eaters included a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in Milford December 30 (NP), 2 Northern Orioles throughout December; 1 in Stamford and 1 in New Britain. A Varied Thrush was found in Granby January 5 to February 10 (BK, et al.), and 2 Northern Shrikes were reported on the Hartford CBC.

Two Lincoln Sparrows were found on CBC's; 1 on the Oxford count and 1 on the Stratford-Milford count. An Oregon Junco was found on the Woodbury-Roxbury CBC (MS). Lapland Longspurs were scarce even in the expected places. A Yellow-headed Blackbird was frequenting feeders in New London February 7-20 (RBA). The 6 Boattailed Grackles in Stratford dwindled to 2 by the end of February. Reports of winter finches were lackluster. Pine Siskins were widespread, but in small numbers. Pine Grosbeaks and Common Redpolls stayed mainly in the northwest corner of the State and were very local. Both crossbills were reported in small numbers, with most passing through the area.

Contributors: Connecticut Rare Bird Alert, James Bair, Tom Baptist, Anthony Bledsoe, Ella Bradbury, Tom Burke, Winnie Burkett, Paul Carrier, Carol Charter, George Clark Jr., Roland Clement, New Haven Bird Club, Western Connecticut Bird Club, Neil Currie, Buzz Devine, Richard English, Merion Frolich, Sam Fried, Frank Gallo, Kenneth Hannon, Mike Hayes, Rick Helprin, Charles Hills, Don Hopkins, Jay Kaplan, Jeanne Kauffman, Seth Kellogg, Betty Kleiner, Bill and Linda Macaulay, John McDonald, Glenn McNamara, Frank Mantlik, Gerry

Mersereau, Jan Mitchell, Stuart Mitchell, Mianus Field Notes, m.ob. = many observers, Noble Proctor, Krbtin Ranhosky, J. Ruoff, Ray Schwartz, Natchaug Ornithological Society, Roxanne Steinman, Mark Szantyr, Dennis Varza, Tom Wehtje, Connie Wood.

NOTES AND NEWS

FOUNDING MEMBER — CORRECTIONS: We apologize to Roger Tory Peterson for omitting his name from the list of founders that appeared in the January 1986 issue of the Warbler. Our apologies also to Mr. Douglas H. Thomson of Farmington who was listed as David.

* * *

CLIPPING SERVICE: Retired COA president Roland C. Clement, now a director and chairman of a publicity committee, asks our readers to clip and send newspaper reports about COA activities to him at his home address: 71 Weed Ave., RFD2, Norwalk, CT 06850. He would also welcome suggestions about how better to publicize the existence of COA and its journal.

* * *

LEAVING: Jon E. Ahlquist, currently at Yale University, has accepted a position as Associate Professor in the Department of Zoological and Biomedical Sciences of Ohio University, Athens, OH 45701, beginning in September

* * *

AWARD GIVEN: Roger Tory Peterson was awarded Connecticut Citizen of the Year in recognition of a lifetime of accomplishments, by The Jackson Newspapers. The award was presented at a dinner in his honor on June 1, 1986 in New Haven.

BOOK REVIEW

The Atlas of Breeding Birds of Vermont. Sarah B. Laughlin and Douglas B. Kibbe (editors). 1985. Published for Vermont Institute of Natural Science by University Press of New England, Hanover, N.H. pp 456, \$45.00.

For New England birders, this atlas will prove informative and useful. It contains a wealth of information about the 193 species of birds that breed in Vermont and it is also the first North American atlas of breeding birds, built on the format of the British Breeding Bird Atlas, now 10 years old.

If this pioneering effort deserves any criticism, it is that too much information is packed into the one and one-half page species accounts. A multitude of references to the literature are combined with first-hand accounts with no particular uniformity. To find information on nesting materials, for example, you may have to read the entire account. It also seems superfluous to include descriptions of vocalizations and to cite winter records. Of interest, however, are such references as the value of individual wildlife refuges to Northern Pintails, or the optimum nestbox height for the Common Goldeneye.

The editors have properly incorporated a summary of the history, methods and purposes of breeding bird and other natural history atlasing. In combination with their earlier paper in *American Birds* (36:19), it provides sufficient guidance to conduct any such survey.

Vermont's low human population and its many square miles of remote territory posed a real challenge to this atlasing project. A priority block system was imposed on the 179 blocks and nearly all yielded at least 75 species. The resulting analysis shows each species' occurrence in the priority blocks (statewide), compared to occurrence in the priority blocks of each of the 7 physiographic regions of the state. This effective picture of habitat preferences deserves further development.

This Vermont atlas has already stimulated the planning and development of other atlases. In Connecticut, therefore, the Vermont product is required reading as we conclude our field work and design the Connecticut publication. We thank Vermont for showing the way to a project product its atlasers can be proud of.

Christopher S. Wood

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THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology

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The editors invite submission of articles, notes, black and white photographs and line drawings for publication in *The Connecticut Warbler*. Manuscripts should be typewritten, double-spaced and on one side of the sheet only, with ample margins. The style of manuscripts should follow the general usage in recent issues.

Cover Drawing: New C.O.A. decal, see Notes and News.

"IN PRAISE OF FAMOUS MEN . . ."

ALAN H. BRUSH

Connecticut's only Professor of Ornithology left this summer to return to California. Charles Sibley was born in California and received his formal education at the University of California, Berkeley. From the start he was interested in mechanisms of species formation and by implication, the evolution of birds. The connection between the 2 processes was unclear at the time, but his work of over 40 years has contributed greatly to our understanding of the evolution and systematics of birds.

Charles has been Coe Professor of Ornithology at Yale for 20 years and a widely recognized figure — Secretary General of the XIII International Ornithological Congress at Ithaca, New York and now President of the American Ornithologists' Union. In the spring of 1986, he was elected to the National Academy of Sciences, one of the highest honors attainable for an evolutionary biologist. His career is marked by a series of achievements that have earned him great respect among his peers.

Connecticut, Yale and the entire ornithological world have benefited by Sibley's foresight, determination and intellect. Charles was probably the first avian systematist to embrace modern molecular approaches in the study of relationships among birds. His early work on the protein chemistry of egg-whites went through several phases and culminated in 2 Peabody Museum Bulletins. Their dual content of an exhaustive literature review and new information on the phylogeny of birds made these volumes early classics. These years of work were only a prologue to the next step

which involved moving from the gene products (proteins) to the level of the genes themselves. This is the level, in theory, that should provide the purest information on genetic relationships among organisms. It is a potential mother-lode of information for systematic ornithologists.

In recent years Sibley, in close association with Jon Ahlquist, developed DNA X DNA hybridization as a technique to study the evolution and relationships of birds. His laboratory produced a staggering amount of data on birds and recently studies were initiated on higher primates. Ornithologists generally agree that this work is a contribution of enormous magnitude. As often happens in highly innovative work, some of the interpretations are hotly debated, but the primary data are recognized as a substantial contribution and the techniques are being widely adopted. Equally important, it has rekindled wide interest in problems abandoned earlier for lack of data. Whatever the eventual outcome, the work has been instrumental in stimulating interest in the relationship of birds.

We all see different patterns in the stars. The constellations are only constructs of the human imagination. The pattern recognized as science also originates from individual units: stars. In many ways Charles Sibley is one of these stars. He has generated ideas, enthusiasm and a constant flow of energy. His solar system has comprised colleagues, students, postdoctoral associates, and the larger community of ornithologists interested in understanding the evolutionary history and relationships of birds.

At the end of August 1986, the Sibleys moved to Tiburon, California. Charles is on the Faculty of California State University, San Francisco and directs their laboratory of Molecular Evolution. As Charles begins this new phase of his career, we wish him

success and await with interest his future discoveries.

Biology Department, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT

HIGHLIGHTS OF CONNECTICUT ORNITHOLOGY, 1780-1930

GEORGE A. CLARK, JR.

Although European colonists occupied Connecticut in the 1600s, little was written about the birds for almost 200 years. The early colonists had neither the time nor inclination to study birds, or to write about them. Moreover, prior to 1800, ornithologists were handicapped by a lack of suitable telescopes or field glasses and an inability to preserve bird specimens against insect attack. These factors and the general elusiveness of many birds made their observation difficult. In a comprehensive review of North American ornithology before 1800, Elsa Allen (1951) mentioned the few pages on birds included by Samuel Peters in his 1782 volume on the general history of Connecticut.

The Connecticut Warbler was discovered in Connecticut in 1808. While traveling through the state, Alexander Wilson (1766-1813) took the first specimen and published its description in 1812. The Connecticut Warbler remains the only bird species discovered in Connecticut. From the time of Wilson's discovery until 1930, ornithology devoted itself mainly to distributional studies. After 1930, other aspects of ornithology such as ecology and behavior became of interest.

For half a century (1845-1895), in addition to distribution studies, specimen collection was actively pursued by almost all who seriously studied birds. Many of the specimens collected in those years are found in museums today. Sage, a coauthor of the state's third checklist in 1913, listed many Connecticut collectors including C.K. Averill Jr., J.N. Clark, C.C. Hanmer, W.H. Hoyt, L.H. Porter, L.C. Sanford, W.E. Treat, and W. Wood. In the north-eastern part of the state the Reverend C.M. Jones (1829-1917), who lived for 44 years in the Eastford-Woodstock area, became well known for his posthumously published report (Jones 1913).

The first extensive report on Connecticut birds was by the Reverend James H. Linsley (1787-1843) who, after seven years of study published the first state checklist in 1843 (Trichka 1981). By modern criteria Linsley's list is inadequate, for he included species not known to occur in Connecticut with the expectation that they should occur. Not until 1877, did another state checklist appear. This list (1877) by C. Hart Merriam (1855-1942) was more satisfactory in many respects. Merriam's major contribution to Connecticut ornithology came while he was an undergraduate student at Yale (1874-1877). Merriam was also a collector. His collections of Connecticut bird specimens can now be found in the British Museum (Natural History) at Tring, England. Elsewhere, Merriam led a distinguished career. After leaving Connecticut, he earned an M.D., but practiced medicine for only four years. Later, he made important contributions to ornithology on the national scene, directing for 25 years the U. S. Biological Survey, forerunner of the present U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Other Connecticut ornithologists, more active on the national scene, made contributions in the state. Professor O. C. Marsh (1831-1899) of Yale was the outstanding investigator of fossil birds in North America in the 1800's, as well as a leader in the study of dinosaurs. George Bird Grinnell (1849-1938) was a leading collector of birds in the state, and his specimens are now at the Connecticut Audubon Society's Birdcraft Museum in Fairfield. As a young boy, Grinnell attended a school in New York taught by the widow of John James Audubon. He later graduated with a Ph.D. from Yale, where he assisted O. C. Marsh. Outside of Connecticut, he was a notable figure because of his major influence in the spread of conservation ideas throughout North America (Rieger 1983).

John H. Sage (1847-1925) was also a national figure, but his career centered in Connecticut. He started professionally as a clerk with Aetna Life Insurance Co. in Hartford, but moved to Portland to join the First National Bank, where he became the chief officer. He was perhaps the most prominent figure in Connecticut ornithological history, as he served the American Ornithologist's Union (A.O.U.) as Secretary for 28 years, and as President for 3 years. The founders of the A.O.U. were, in 1883, the leading scientific bird collectors in North America, yet the organization quickly took the lead in efforts to preserve living birds. In the late 1800s, the unregulated slaughter of many birds for food and for feathers to decorate ladies' hats led to the formation of the Audubon movement. A.O.U. members were more aware of these problems than most people and initiated the popular Audubon movement. In Connecticut, Sage was a key figure in the preparation of the third checklist of

Connecticut birds (Sage and Bishop 1913). He, too, was a collector and the major part of his collection is now housed at the University of Connecticut in Storrs with a smaller part at the National Audubon Society's center in Greenwich.

Louis Bishop (1865-1950), a coauthor of the third state checklist, was a physician, receiving his degrees from Yale and practicing in New Haven. At his home on Orange Street he built a small backyard museum to accommodate his ornithological collection, much of which now resides in Chicago's Field Museum.

The late 1800s saw an awakening of interest in bird preservation and of scientific study of living birds in the field. Numerous state and local Audubon groups were formed between 1895 to 1915. Mabel Osgood Wright (1859-1934) was prominent in the formation of the Connecticut Audubon Society (C.A.S.) and its later (1914) acquisition of Birdcraft Sanctuary. She was also a leader in the national Audubon movement. The New Haven Bird Club was founded in 1907, and the Hartford Bird Study Club in 1909. Organized bird-banding in North America began in 1907 under the sponsorship of the New Haven Bird Club (Cole 1922). In 1909 the state legislature created a non-remunerative position of State Ornithologist of Connecticut, a title to be held by a member of the faculty of Connecticut Agricultural College at Storrs (now the University of Connecticut). A prominent individual in the Audubon movement, Herbert K. Job (1864-1933) was the first to hold that title. Job had been a minister in Kent and had compiled bird records for northwestern Connecticut. In 1914, he resigned as State Ornithologist to direct the Department of Applied Ornithology for the National Asso-

ciation of Audubon Societies, the forerunner of the National Audubon Society. This department was located in Amston, Connecticut, a town named after Bridgeport industrialist Charles M. Ams, who purchased a large tract of land where he simultaneously encouraged the Audubon program and pursued efforts at industrial development. However, his automobile company failed in 1917 (Sibun 1975), and the Audubon center for education and gamebird rearing was no longer publicized in *Bird Lore* after 1926.

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DISPERSAL OF HERONS FROM CHIMON ISLAND

PETER P. MARRA AND
MILAN G. BULL

The importance of Chimon Island as a nesting site for Connecticut herons has been recognized by its inclusion in the Connecticut Coastal National Wildlife Refuge, but proximity of suitable feeding areas may be as important to the herons as undisturbed nesting area. In 1983 the Connecticut Audubon Society undertook a study to determine where the herons nesting on Chimon island fed. We wanted to determine not only whether available food resources might be a limiting factor on the colony size, but also whether feeding areas were in danger of being destroyed.

METHODS

Hérons leaving from, and returning to the colony were visually tracked from the four cardinal points on the island using a Type 7 Silva hand compass. Herons were recorded from 0600 to 0800 and 1900 to 2100 hours by two observers at one of the four observation sites. Sites were changed each day and counts were discontinued during periods of inclement weather. As herons left the island the number of individuals, departure direction, and time were noted

along with information on weather and tidal conditions. In the evening only the number of individuals and time were recorded as the point of origin of the birds was not clear.

Compass readings were made just before a bird went out of sight. The birds constantly made adjustments in their flight line, so it was necessary to follow their flight paths as far as possible to increase the accuracy of the readings. Most herons left the island in small groups and readings were taken from the center bird in the group.

Although eight species of herons and egrets were included in the study only four — Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), Great Egret (*Casmerodius albus*), Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*), and Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) — were abundant enough to give an adequate sample size for conclusions about feeding areas. Departure sightings of Green-backed Heron (*Butorides striatus*), Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*), Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*), and Yellow-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax violaceus*) totalled only 25 of nearly one thousand heron sightings.

Surveys of the coast were made by car or canoe from Darien northeast to Milford. Most areas were visited 3 or more times and the number of herons, egrets and ibises counted.

RESULTS

It was quickly apparent that there were major flight paths leading to the major feeding areas. However, some species differed markedly from the average.

Black-crowned Night Herons accounted for over half the sightings (610) with 77 percent going northeast and 12 percent go-

ing southwest (Table I). Snowy Egrets were also common (204 sightings) and had a similar northeast component (82 percent). Glossy Ibis (107 sightings) also left mainly in a northeast direction (80 percent of sightings). However, they were concentrated in a much smaller arc (25° - 60°) than the previous species (Table I). Great Egrets were uncommon (36 sightings) with most (69 percent) going west and a few (31 percent) going northeast.

From the ground surveys the major feeding areas in order of importance seemed to be: Norwalk Islands; Mill Pond in Westport (50° - 60°); Milford Point (70° - 80°); Saugatuck Shores (25° - 35°); and the Norwalk harbor area (340° - 355°).

Herons were also observed feeding as far west as Scott's Cove in Rowayton (5 miles west of Chimon I.) and as far east as Milford Point (17 miles east of Chimon I.).

DISCUSSION

Most of the Black-crowned Night Herons, Snowy Egrets and Glossy Ibises left in a northeasterly direction and a large number of Great Egrets also left in this direction. The Black-crowned Night Herons and Snowy Egrets were travelling primarily toward Mill Pond and Milford Point with very few birds headed toward the Saugatuck Shores. Snowy Egret departure lines show a strong concentration toward Lordship Marsh in Stratford and Milford Marsh. The Black-crowned Night Herons are not as strongly concentrated and there are a large number of sightings in the 80° - 90° band, perhaps indicating that they fly over water until they near their objective and then turn inland. The Great Egrets that travelled northeast flew toward Mill Pond or Milford Point.

TABLE I

Number of Herons Leaving Chimon Island by 10 Degree Arcs

Degrees	NH	SE	GE	GI	Degrees	NH	SE	GE	GI
10	1			5	100	16	3		3
20	7		1	2	110	12			
30	12	15		13	120	3			
40	16	10	1	18	130	3			
50	52	21	3	14	140	2			
60	115	20	1	26	150	1	4		
70	110	65	1	3	160		3		
80	85	31	4	4	170	2	3		
90	81	6			180		1		
% of									
Total	77	82	31	80		6	7	0	3
Degrees	NH	SE	GE	GI	Degrees	NH	SE	GE	GI
190	8	1			280	5	4	5	
200	1	3			290	4	2	3	1
210	3				300	3		5	4
220	2				310	4		2	5
230	1				320	7			1
240	16				330	1			
250	5	2			340	4	2	1	2
260	24	1	2		350	3	1		1
270	11	6	6		360			1	4
% of									
Total	12	6	22	0		5	5	47	17

Glossy Ibis were concentrated on either the Saugatuck Shore flight line or that for Mill Pond with very few heading toward Milford Point. The Snowy Egrets travelling west and south and the Black-crowned Night Herons travelling southwest were probably going to feeding areas in the Norwalk Islands. The heavy concentration of Great Egrets headed west is not easily explained, except that areas west of Chimon

Island are characterized by reduced marsh habitat. These shore areas with deeper water than marsh habitat may be more attractive to a longer-legged heron like the Great Egret. They probably feed heavily in the Norwalk Islands as well when departing in this westerly direction.

Ground observations support the conclusion that departure headings were indicative of the destination. The Lordship

Marsh-Milford Point area and Mill Pond were equally important feeding areas. Mill Pond and Saugatuck Shore were the major feeding sites of the Glossy Ibis. However, Saugatuck Shore attracted only a fraction of the other herons in comparison to Mill Pond and Milford Point. The Norwalk Islands seemed to a major feeding area. At any time 15-20 herons could be found feeding along the water's edge at Chimon. Yellow-crowned Night Herons were observed feeding almost exclusively on a small marsh northwest of Manressa Island, near Norwalk.

Hérons have adapted to the urbanized Connecticut shoreline, but still are most concentrated in the least developed areas. They do feed in close proximity to urban areas such as the heavily developed Norwalk Harbor and Saugatuck Shores, however, heron numbers are much greater at the less developed Milford Point and Mill Pond.

The size of the Chimon Island heronry does not appear to be limited by lack of feeding grounds at this time. Little-utilized areas to the west and seemingly good feeding grounds near Chimon Island could support more foraging herons. With the anticipated addition of Milford Point to the Connecticut Coastal National Wildlife Refuge, none of the five major feeding areas are currently facing any threat of development.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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WEIGHTS AND WING LENGTHS IN CONNECTICUT BLUE JAYS

S.D. JEWELL

Very little has been published on weights of birds of any species from Connecticut. During banding operations from January 1981 to December 1982 at Storrs, Connecticut, Natchaug Ornithological Society banders recorded weights and wing lengths for 126 Blue Jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*) trapped with seed baits. Ages were determined where possible using standard criteria provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and Canadian Wildlife Services (Anonymous 1977). This note summarizes major findings from my analyses of these data.

The mean weight of all birds ($n = 126$) was 90.4 g with a range from 69.3g to 109.6g and a standard deviation (S.D.) of 8.2. Mean weights by age class were 90.7g in the first fall (HY; $n = 52$; S.D. = 5.8), 82.5g for birds in the first complete calendar year of life (SY; $n = 17$; S.D. = 11.4), 92.4g for birds after the first year of life (AHY; $n = 40$; S.D. = 7.4). Statistically significant differences in weight (t -test; $P < 0.05$) were found between SY and both AHY and HY. There was a trend in all age groups for weight to decrease from fall to early spring with a mean loss for individual

recaptured birds of 7.2g ($n=12$, with a mean interval of 93 days between weighing).

Mean wing length (chord) for all Blue Jays was 131.1 mm ($n=122$; S.D. = 3.9). Mean wing lengths for the different age categories were 130.5 mm for HY birds ($n=50$; S.D. = 3.7), 128.8 mm for SY birds ($n=17$; S.D. = 3.7), 133.0 mm for AHY birds ($n=40$; S.D. = 3.9). AHY birds had longer wings ($P<0.05$) than SY or HY birds.

Blue Jays in Connecticut from fall through spring are substantially larger than birds of the same season in Florida. Fisk (1979) banding over comparable seasons at Homestead, Florida, obtained mean adult weights of 73.7g ($n=85$) and mean wing lengths of 124 mm ($n=174$), respectively 81.1% and 93.4% of the corresponding values in my study. This geographic difference in size agrees with the differences between Michigan and Florida reported for much smaller samples of presumed breeding birds by Amadon (1944) and with north-south differences in wing length found for presumed breeders by James (1970). The Blue Jay is one of a number of eastern U.S. species in which northern breeding populations are reported on the basis of wing length to be larger than the southern populations (James 1970), but few data have been published comparing weights for winter populations in the north versus the south. The tendency for northern populations to be larger is a trend designated as Bergmann's Rule. Factors producing larger birds in the north are unknown, although some hypotheses are available (Clark 1979). Recent experiments on Red-winged Blackbirds indicate that geographic variation in size of adult birds depends on locality of rearing rather than heredity in local populations (James 1983).

Thus the size differences between Florida and Connecticut birds might be primarily due to rearing conditions, although experimental evidence will be required to verify this.

It was not possible in this study to document an increase in size of Blue Jays from the first fall onward, because the only two distinct year categories were HY and SY. The SY birds had lower mean weights and shorter mean wing lengths than the HYS. The weight loss was probably a seasonal reflection of the stress imposed on first year birds over the winter (in banding records HY birds become SY birds on January 1). The difference in wing length was not significant.

My study has many of the same limitations as other banding studies (see Clark 1979 for a discussion of some of these factors). A special factor for the population I studied in the winter of 1981-82 was an outbreak of the parasitic nematode *Capillaria contorta*, which is known to produce weight loss and even death through starvation (Helmbolt, et al. 1971). Because the presence of this parasite could not be reliably diagnosed by visual inspection at the time of banding, the influence of the infection on the weights cannot be determined.

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CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Spring: March 1 -
May 31, 1986

Many people commented on a poor and uneventful migration, which may have been the reason for the small number of reports received. Several years ago it was suggested that the deforestation of South America was causing a decrease in the number of North American birds by reducing

their winter habitat. Since that time, any comment about poor birding almost always included a reference to the deforestation. In order to make a determination on the change in specific abundance, consistent observation over many years is required to separate short term events from long term trends. That is why it is important to keep records and report them even if they do not include rare birds. A poor spring migration might be the result of many factors. A season with few weather fronts could cause the birds to trickle through our region, or middle of the week migration waves could be missed by weekend birders, or the migration could be poor only by comparison to exceptional years.

No one knows better than this writer the tedium of keeping records. However, keeping records will expand your knowledge and allow you to discuss migration intelligently instead of being dependent on others' interpretation. Submitting your records allows others to benefit from your knowledge. Even information for common species (first dates, last dates and peak numbers) can be important when combined with records from across the state. Records not directly quoted in this column are still valuable and are kept on file. Incomplete records are still useful and far better than no records at all. If you keep the records to yourself why keep them at all? Please send in those records!!

The weather for spring was as uneventful as the birds. There were many small warm fronts, punctuated by several major cold fronts. Rainfall was low, 6.32 inches vs. the average 11.5 inches for the season recorded at Bradley International Airport.

March started off warm but a cold front March 5-7 plunged temperatures into the teens. The front then reversed, returning as a warm front, and temperatures continued

to fluctuate back and forth until March 20. During this period waterfowl and Horned Grebes passed through and we saw the arrival of Tree Swallows and Eastern Phoebes. A second cold front March 20-24 was followed by a series of mini warm fronts through April 5. These fronts brought the Egrets, Glossy Ibis, Killdeer and the first Palm and Pine Warblers.

A cold front passed through on April 6 followed by warm south-west winds on the 8th which brought numbers of Great Blue Herons. A secondary cold front on April 10 was followed by a period of unsettled weather until the 27th with some rain nearly every day. It was during this period, particularly April 24-27, that the first Chimney Swifts, Eastern Kingbirds, swallows, Solitary Vireos and several species of warblers arrived.

A cold period from May 1-4, slowed migration, inhibited insects and concentrated swallows on bodies of water. Southwest winds following this high pressure system pushed temperatures into the 80's on May 6th. The first cuckoos, Common Nighthawks, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Red-eyed Vireos, Indigo Buntings and White-crowned Sparrows appeared with this warm weather. The biggest and best migrant waves occurred May 17-18 and in addition to abundant warblers included empidonax Flycatchers, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrushes and Philadelphia Vireos. These waves of birds coincided with big day attempts on the 18th by Mark Szantyr and by Seth Kellogg et al. Both groups recorded a new state one day record of 162 species. A final warm front May 28-29 coincided with the peak of the shorebird migration, pushed temperatures into the 90's, and produced a few late Mourning Warblers.

LOONS THROUGH HAWKS

There were three Red-necked Grebes reported; single birds at the Saugatuck Reservoir in Weston March 23 (MS), Hammonasset State Park April 6 (MS) and Greenwich Pt. April 20 (DB). An early Great Egret was with the gulls at Oyster River, Milford on March 17 (MS). A Tundra Swan spent most of March at Konold's pond in Woodbridge, last seen March 22 (MS). A late Snow Goose was in Southbury May 28-29 (RN). A Eurasian Wigeon was at Station 43 in South Windsor March 23 (PD). The mid-March flight of ducks included many reports of Pintail, Shoveler and both teal. The King Eider that wintered off Merwin Point, Milford was last seen March 22 (MS). Northern Harriers moved through the state from April 19 to May 19. There were Peregrine Falcon sightings at Mansfield Hollow May 1 (JH) and Norwalk May 6 (FM, CW).

RAILS THROUGH TERNS

Konold's Pond produced an early Virginia Rail March 23 (RN) coinciding with the peak of the Killdeer migration. The first American Oystercatcher turned up on the Norwalk Islands March 16 (FM). Inland records of shorebirds are always of interest. On the Farmington River in Canton there was a Semipalmated Plover May 14, several Greater Yellowlegs throughout April and a flight of Least Sandpipers May 13-14 (JK). An exceptionally large flock of 51 Pectoral Sandpipers was in South Windsor April 6 (PD), and 30 Common Snipe were at Harkness Memorial State Park April 6 (MS). A Wilson's Phalarope, rare in spring, was in North Stamford May 2 (TW).

The early spring gull watching at Oyster River in Milford produced one Little Gull March 24-28, up to 6 Common Black-headed Gulls March 15 to April 5, and several Iceland Gulls and Glaucous Gulls to April 5. An adult Lesser Black-backed Gull was in the area from Oyster River to Long Wharf, New Haven March 15 to April 5. There were single Caspian Terns at Old Saybrook May 18 (SF) and Norwalk May 13 (FM). A pair of Black Terns were at Sandy Point in West Haven May 17 (PD) and a single bird at Milford Point May 31 (JB,LS).

CUCKOOS THROUGH SHRIKES

In Southbury, a Budgerigar survived in the wild from November 1984 to March 22 of this year when it was probably taken by a predator (RN). This bird's ability to survive two winters, raises the question of establishment if there were enough birds. Acadian Flycatchers continue to increase with Hartland, Naugatuck and Redding recording them as new. An early Eastern Wood Pewee was located in New Hartford April 22 (JB). A Common Raven at the North Canaan dump March 22 (NC,MS) is the latest in a series of recent records from the northwest corner of the State. A Loggerhead Shrike was found in Simsbury March 18-22 (JT et al.)

VIREOS THROUGH FINCHES

There were several bright spots in an otherwise bleak warbler picture. Single Yellow-throated Warblers were seen at the Greenwich Audubon Center May 3-4 (TG et al.) and at Osborndale State Park in mid May (WS). There was a Prothonotary Warbler in Redding May 1-3 (MS et al.)

and Kentucky Warblers in Greenwich May 8 (LB) and Hammonasset State Park May 17 (BK,SF). There were several reports of Blue Grosbeaks in the Fairfield-Westport area. Sightings April 23-25 at a feeder (MB et al.), Fairfield Beach Road April 27 (HH) and a pair at Sherwood Island State Park May 18-19 (TD,CW,JD) may have been the same birds. An early Chipping Sparrow appeared in Woodbury April 9 (RN), and an early Northern Oriole in West Hartford April 1 (SF). A female Boat-tailed Grackle was found in Hammonasset State Park May 18 (DV). Several Redpoll sightings indicate a movement through the State, March 12-16. Pine Siskin were reported throughout April with the last birds found in Simsbury on May 17 (BK,JK). Only one group of Evening Grosbeaks was reported this spring and that was in Canton May 14 (JK,BK).

Contributors: James Bair, Doris Bova, Ella Bradbury, Lysle Briker, Milan Bull, Winnie Burkett, George Clark Jr., Neil Currie, Julio de la Torre (JD), Paul Desjardins, Buzz Devine, Townsend Dickinson, Sam Fried, Merion Frolich, Frank Gallo, Ted Gilman, John Hudson, Jay Kaplan, Seth Kellogg, Betty Kleiner, Frank Mantlik, Russ Naylor, Mianus Field Notes, m.ob. = many observers, Lee Schlesinger, Jeff Spindelow, Will Stoddard, Mark Szantyr, Jonathan Trouern-Trend, Dennis Varza, Connie Wood.

NOTES & NEWS

C.O.A.DECAL: The design of the Connecticut Warbler on our cover is abstracted from John Henry Dick's line drawing in *The Warblers of North America*, a 1957 book published by Devin-Adair Company.

This drawing has now been reproduced as a decal, with black on a yellow field. A copy will be sent to all new members, to Life Members, and to all COA members who renew their membership in 1987.

Additional copies of the decal may be obtained for \$1 each from Carl Trichka, 314 Unquowa Road, Fairfield, CT 06430.

* * *

BIRD PROGRAMS: C.O.A. is compiling a list of people who give bird talks in Connecticut. This list would be made available to organizations on request. If you would like to be listed, please send the following information to Winnie Burkett, 17 Southwood Rd., Storrs, CT 06268:

1. Program titles that you give.
2. Distance you are willing to travel to give programs.
3. Your fee for presenting programs.
4. How you can be contacted.
5. Additional information about you and the type of programs (eg. movies, slides, skins, live specimens, etc.).

Thank you for your consideration. We hope that you will choose to participate in this effort to improve the opportunities for interested groups to share in our enthusiasm for birds.

* * *

HAWK CONFERENCE: The New England Hawk Migration Conference will be held in Holyoke, Massachusetts on April 4, 1987. This the third conference will focus on the full life cycle of hawks. It will include an overview of New England's raptor migration and the weather that affects this phenomena as well as current research being carried out in New England. The program will include:

New England's Hawk Migration - An Overview by Seth Kellogg.

Weather, The Energy to Power Hawk Migration by Dr. Mel Goldstein.

Migration Data - A Program For The Personal Computer by Ed. Mair.

Breeding Ecology of Northern Harriers in New Hampshire by Pat Serentino.

The Breeding Bird Atlas - A Survey of Potential Breeding Areas of Raptors by Nancy Martin-Ellison.

Maine's Bald Eagles' Breeding Success Related To Winter Feeding by Mark McCullough.

Ospreys, A Twenty-year Project On The Connecticut Shore by Gerry Mersereau.

New England's Newest Raptor, The Turkey Vulture by Carol Smith.

Reintroduction Of An Endangered Species - Bald Eagles at Quabbin Reservoir by Jack Swedberg.

Raptor Banding - The Means And The Results by Michael Olmsted.

Raptor Wintering Grounds - A Latent Threat by Member of the Staff of Hawk Mtn. Sanctuary.

First Aid And Medical Treatment For Raptors by Mark Pokras

* * *

BLUEBIRD LECTURER: In the July 1984 (IV:3) issue of the **WARBLER** we reported on Fred Comstock's efforts in returning the Eastern Bluebird to Connecticut. In 1984 Fred, who lives in Bethlehem, CT, banded 25 nestlings in boxes he set up at his home and around the neighborhood. During the past two years he has increased his efforts by helping others to erect nest boxes in suitable habitat. His area of operation now includes Bethlehem, Flanders Nature Center in Woodbury and Middlebury, Roxbury, Beacon Falls, Oxford, Southbury and

Newtown. As a consequence of these efforts he banded 73 nestlings in 1985 and 155 this year!

Fred reported that this was an extremely bad year for blow-flies with a resulting increase in nestling mortality. He also noted that heavy raccoon predation at some nest boxes in previous years was prevented this year by changing from wooden posts to metal fence stakes.

If your club or group is interested in having Fred do a bluebird program, write him at 160 Main St., North Bethlehem, Ct 06751. You should provide the projector and screen.

* * *

CHRISTMAS COUNTS: Listed below are counts, dates and compilers for the 1986-87 counts. Contact compiler if you would like to participate. COA sponsors the Stratford-Milford Count.

Count	Date	Compiler	Phone
Barkhamsted	Sun Dec. 28	David Rosgen	364-0520
Greenwich-Stamford	Sun Dec. 21	Tom Baptist	914-628-1118
Hartford	Sat Dec. 27	Jay Kaplan	693-0157
Hidden Valley	Sat Jan. 3	Jim Hammer	792-6849
Lakeville-Sharon	Sun Dec. 21	Bob Moeller	364-0520
Litchfield Hills	Sun Dec. 21	Ray Belding	485-1368
New Haven	Sat Dec. 20	Stephen Broker	387-0798
New London	Sat Jan. 3	Bob Dewire	599-3085
Old Lyme	Sun Jan. 4	Jay Hand	434-0213
Oxford	Oxf Dec. 21	Buzz Devine	723-8079
Quinnipiac Valley	Sun Dec. 21	Wilford Schultz	265-6398
Salmon River	Sun Dec. 21	David Titus	635-1544
Stratford-Milford	Sun Dec. 28	Dennis Varza	374-6229
Storrs	Sun Dec. 21	Shirley Davis	429-3219
Westport	Sun Dec. 21	Frank Mantlik	838-1694
Woodbury-Roxbury	Sat Dec. 20	Buck Jenks	263-2613

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The Connecticut Audubon Society

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