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Again we are pleased to present the work of Michael DiGiorgio, who is an illustrator for Field Publications and is known as a field painter. He works directly from nature and tries to capture the feeling of the birds and other wildlife. His illustrations have appeared in Audubon Magazine, Nature Conservancy, National Wildlife and The Living Bird. He has exhibited at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, Northeastern Wildlife Exposition, Ballard Mill Gallery, Massena, NY and he helped to illustrate the National Audubon Society's Master Guide to Birding. Inquiries about commission work and other work available should be addressed to him at 18 Bretton Rd., Apt. 1W, Middletown, CT 06457.

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

SPECIES COMPOSITION OF FOOD BROUGHT TO ROSEATE TERN CHICKS ON FALKNER ISLAND, CONNECTICUT IN SUMMER 1984

Sarah W. Richards¹ and William A. Schew²

ABSTRACT

Food of Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*) chicks in 32 nests was identified between 14 June and 25 July 1984 at a nesting colony on the north end of Falkner Island, Connecticut, in central Long Island Sound. The Sand Lance (*Ammodytes americanus*) accounted for 55% of all individual fish brought to the chicks while Anchovy (*Anchoa* spp.) made up 27%; 11% of the fish was divided between Bluefish (*Pomatomus saltatrix*), Silversides (*Menidia menidia*), Menhaden (*Brevoortia tyrannus*) and Pipefish (*Syngnathus fuscus*). Seven percent of all fish brought to the colony were unidentified.

During the month of June, Sand Lance clearly were easily available, while in the month of July this availability appeared to decrease simultaneously with an increased availability of other species. Possible reasons for these differences are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

The food of Roseate Terns (*Sterna dougallii*) has been analyzed by Jones (1903) and Nisbet (1981) for Buzzards Bay and other areas near Cape Cod, Massachusetts, by Cooper et al (1970), and Hays et al (1973), for Great Gull Island; and by Safina (1985) for Cedar Beach on the south shore of Long Island, New York. To date, however, no observations have been published on the food of this species in colonies within Long Island Sound. Since there have been so few observations of the food of many carnivorous seabird species within the Sound, this study was undertaken to determine the food brought to the colony of the then

threatened and now federally listed endangered species Roseate Tern.

STUDY AREA AND METHODS

In 1984, between 175 and 200 pairs of Roseate Terns nested along with 2500 pairs of Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*) on Falkner Island 5 km south of Guilford, Connecticut in central Long Island Sound. Roughly half of the Roseates nested on a spit on the northern end of the island and could be observed easily from a blind erected on a bluff 15 m above the colony. The blind was sufficiently close to the colony to allow us to identify and determine approximate lengths of the fish brought to the chicks.

From 14 June to 25 July 1984, fish fed to chicks in 32 nests were identified during randomly selected hourly periods each day during the morning (0500-1300) and afternoon (1300-2200). During this 41 day period, 8 days of rain or fog prevented clear identifications. Fish species composition was determined from a total of 327 feedings.

RESULTS

Roseate Terns from Falkner Island fed more offshore, arriving at the island from the southeast and east 65% of the time, rather than from the Connecticut shoreline where the Common Terns fed in abundance.

Fish were brought to chicks throughout all daylight hours. Six common species were identified: juvenile Menhaden (*Brevoortia tyrannus*), Anchovy (*Anchoa* spp.), Pipefish (*Syngnathus fuscus*), Silversides (*Menidia menidia*), Sand

Lance (*Ammodytes americanus*), and juvenile Bluefish (*Pomatomus saltatrix*). Sand lance accounted for 55% of the items fed to chicks during the two months of observations (Table 1). They were almost the only prey brought to the island during courtship and early chick rearing.

The majority of Sand Lance fed to the chicks were 0-year (between 4 and 6 months old) and 1-year olds, varying in length from 5-10 cm and weighing between 0.5 and 2 g. These small, thin fish were easily consumed by the young chicks. In May and June, schools of Sand Lance of small size were seen and caught by the authors with plankton nets in the tide rips around the island. Thick schools of these and older fish have been caught along the south shore of central Long Island Sound over sandy sub-

TABLE 1

Number and percentage of individuals of each species of fish brought to Roseate Tern chicks on Falkner Island, Connecticut from 14 June to 25 July, 1984.

FishSpecies	TotalPeriod	June	July
	No./%	No./%	No./%
Sand lance	217/55	140/66	77/43
Anchovy	107/27	37/18	70/39
Bluefish	20/5	0/0	20/11
Silversides	17/4	13/6	4/2
Menhaden	3/1	2/1	1/1
Pipefish	1/1	0/0	1/1
Unidentified	27/7	19/9	8/4

strates (Richards, unpubl. data).

Anchovy was the second most common prey, accounting for 27% of the total catch. One species of Anchovy, *Anchoa mitchilli*, is the most abundant spawner in Long Island Sound during the summer (Wheatland, 1956). Menhaden, Silversides, Pipefish and Bluefish together made up approximately 10% of the total catch. With the exception of Pipefish, these species were thicker dorso-ventrally than Sand Lance. They varied between 7-8 cm in length and weighed between 2 and 5 g. These thicker, heavier fish were easily consumed by the larger chicks. Occasionally, individuals of these species were too large for the chicks to consume and were left at the nest site uneaten.

As far as could be determined, no juveniles of other fish species were taken during the study, although juvenile Mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*) have been taken by Roseate Terns at this colony in the past (Richards, pers. obs.). We were unable to identify a total of 7% of all fish brought to the colony, thus other species may have been utilized during our study.

Seasonal change in the species of fish brought to the chicks was observed (Table 1). In June, Sand Lance accounted for 66% of the items given to the young. In July, juvenile Menhaden and Bluefish, probably not available in this area in June, constituted over

11% of the items brought to the colony.

DISCUSSION

Jones (1903), Nisbet (1981) and Cooper, et al. (1970) found that Sand Lance constituted 70-100% of the food items brought during courtship and to chicks in various colonies within the Cape Cod, Massachusetts area and eastern Long Island Sound. Apparently, Sand Lance was utilized more heavily by Roseate Terns in those areas than in central Long Island Sound. There are three possible reasons for this difference: visibility of the water, availability of different fish species, and nutritional value of the different fish species.

Long Island Sound has a higher silt content than the ocean water further east or south of Long Island. Within the Sound, the north side (Connecticut) has a far higher silt content, partly due to the abundance of soft sediments, than the central and southern (Long Island) side with much coarser sediments. Roseate Terns in Buzzards Bay (Nisbet 1981) tended to feed in deeper and generally clearer water than Common Terns. Roseates from Falkner tended to do the same, while in the clearer water of the south side of Long Island at Cedar Beach (Safina 1985), they fed close inshore. Perhaps the terns could see the long, thin Sand Lance better in the clearer water.

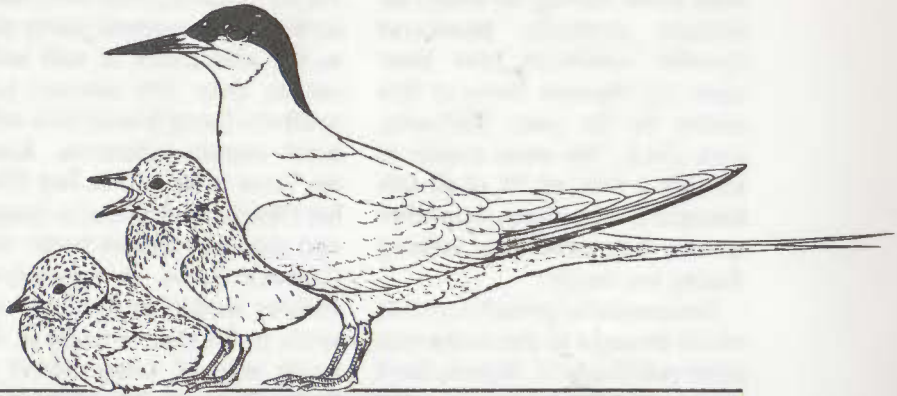
Reliance on juvenile Sand Lance early in the breeding season, noted earlier by Nisbet (1981) and Cooper et al (1970), also occurred at Falkner Island. In all areas, Roseate Terns replace Sand Lance with a variety of other species later in the breeding season. Some of these species, such as juvenile Menhaden and Bluefish were not available early in the summer when Sand Lance were abundant (Richards 1963). Secondly, evidence exists that the American sand lance and similar species from Europe and Japan may aestivate in the sand during late-summer and early-fall (Inoue et al 1967; Winslade, 1974; Sekiguchi, et al., 1976; Richards, 1987), thus decreasing their availability as prey simultaneously with the increase in availability of juveniles of other spe-

cies.

Thirdly, the small, thin Sand Lance was easily swallowed by small chicks early in the season. The wider, heavier juvenile fish of the other species were swallowed with difficulty, or not at all, by small chicks, but were easily consumed by larger chicks later in the season. These larger prey would be more valuable nutritionally to the larger chicks than would the smaller Sand Lance that commonly occur in central Long Island Sound, and thus may have been selectively chosen by the adults for food.

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FALKNER ISLAND
Tern • Project • Guilford, CT

ers improved the manuscript. These observations were part of an overall study of Roseate and Common Terns breeding at Falkner Island funded, at that time, by the Preservation of Natural Areas, the National Audubon Society, the Menunketuck Audubon Society, the Audubon Club of Guilford High School, the Valley Shore Waterfowlers, Inc. and by private donations.

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1. Little Harbor Laboratory, 69 Andrews Rd., Guilford, CT 064372
 2. Little Harbor Laboratory, 69 Andrews Rd., Guilford, Ct 06437 and Present Address: Dept. of Biology, Calif. State Univ., Long Beach CA 90840

MORE ON SNOW BATHING

Donald Hopkins

On January 7, 1988 I observed a second incident (see CW7:13) of snow bathing, this time by an American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*). It was 11:45 A.M. and the crow was in a hayfield on Granby Street, Bloomfield, CT. It was first sighted on the ground with one wing extended. (I observed the bird for 8 minutes). The bird, settled in the snow on its belly, was pecking in the snow. It then extended its head and pushed forward half its body length so that the head was under the snow. The bird raised its head and continued to peck at the snow, occasionally tugging at something. I could see it rock back on its tail as it released the object it was tugging. This tugging was repeated several times. The bird plowed forward with its head in the snow, interspersed with pecking and tugging and occasionally preening the breast. On one occasion it extended the left wing and scratched under the wing with its left leg. At the end of this procedure the bird stood up, walked a few steps, then flew further out (about 8 meters) into the field.

The bird walked about in an aimless manner for 2 meters and began the procedure of pecking and tugging and plowing ahead in the snow. This was done once, then the bird stood up and flew

off. For a short period as this behavior occurred, a second crow was in the trees at the edge of the hayfield.

After the crow had left the area, I walked over to look at the tracks in the field. At the first location of snow bathing, tracks revealed that the crow had wandered around before selecting a spot to bathe. In this area, tufts of grass had been pulled up to the surface of the snow. The grass was quite obvious at the first site and less so at the second site where less time was spent. The grass seemed to have served some purpose in the procedure. Impressions in the snow showed that the crow had both wings slightly extended while plowing.

The snow was light and uncompacted and was 13 centimeters deep in the hayfield which measured 52 by 64 meters. There were no other tracks in the field. The last snowfall had occurred on January 5th. The sky was clear, the sun bright, with light, variable winds. The crow was observed at a distance of 50 meters.

27 London Rd., Windsor, CT
06095

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Summer: June 1 - July 31, 1988

Clay Taylor

The weather for the summer of 1988 was notable for its extremes. It was hot and dry much of the time, with only .67 inches of rainfall in June - about 80% below the average. The temperature exceeded 80 degrees F on 15 days in June, and 6 of those days were over 90 degrees. The period from June 5th to the 30th recorded only .31 inches of rain, and this trend continued until July 9 when .12 inches fell - hardly enough to relieve parched plants or fill dwindling reservoirs. July continued hot, with 90 degree heat recorded in many places throughout the State for more days than we care to recall. A break in the drought began when .75 inches of rain fell on the 12th, .26 on the 14th, .35 on the 15th, and 1.27 on the 18th. This brought the total rainfall for the month to about 60% ahead of normal. This period was followed by another rainfall extreme - deluge! Twelve of the last 13 days of July had some rainfall, and over 3 inches fell in the northern part of the state from July 25th through the 27th, for a monthly total of over 8 inches. Unfortunately, the needs of the plants, insects and watercourses are better met by rainfall that is spread more evenly across the period.

Nesting during the early part of the season seemed to be normal, but late and second broods

were either unsuccessful or not attempted. The yearly Northern Mockingbird nest at the Meigs Point Nature Center in Hammonasset was not begun until early August, after the rains of July perked up the insect and worm population. Wild food production was far below normal in some parts of the state due to the drought and heat of June and early July.

Interestingly, the Bermuda high (a single high pressure center that forms over the North Atlantic in summertime), southwest winds, and extreme heat did not serve to pump in many southern wanderers or post-breeding dispersants. I received very few reports of unusual sightings for the entire summer. Perhaps the heat drove most everyone inside to the air conditioners, but birders are usually not that easily daunted.

There were two summer (June) bird counts conducted this year, the Woodbury/Roxbury count by the Western Connecticut Bird Club (hereafter WCBC) June 5 and the Greenwich/Stamford count June 18 and 19. Woodbury tallied 130 species tying the 1987 record and setting record high numbers for 27 species; 2 new species were recorded for the count, including 2 Grasshopper Sparrows in Washington.

Greenwich tallied 135 species and 39 high counts; new breeding records highlighted the count, which had a chick Turkey Vulture, a Least Tern Colony off Greenwich, Kentucky Warbler nest, and a pair of Cliff Swallows.

LOONS THROUGH WATER-FOWL

Common Loons were scattered throughout the ponds and lakes of the northwestern part of the state, but no successful nesting was found(DR). Pied-billed Grebes again nested in the Lordship marshes, Stratford(FMa), and a territorial male was in Litchfield(DR). There were the usual scattered late lingering and summering birds on Long Island Sound with reports of Common Loon, Horned Grebe, Oldsquaw, Red-breasted Merganser, etc.(m.ob.).

Double-crested Cormorants continued to breed in good numbers along the coast with colonies in the Norwalk, Guilford and New London area at or above previous levels (m.ob.). Inland sightings in summer are becoming almost routine, and this season provided 2 records with 1 on the Naugatuck River in Waterbury, June 14(RN) and another on the Connecticut River in East Haddam throughout the summer(CT). The most interesting inland report was from the upper Connecticut River where approximately 40 were seen July 4, with 4 juveniles, fueling specu-

lation about possible (and long suspected) breeding.

Heron nesting along the Sound was good this year, as Chimon Island supported a record 1044 Black-crowned Night Herons(fide MB), up from the normal 800+ expected there. Great, Snowy and Cattle Egrets, Little Blue and Green Herons all nested there as usual; a Tricolored Heron nest was suspected but not located. Barn Island in Stonington, as usual, had a Tricolored June 27 - July 7(MD).

Woodbury/Roxbury tallied a record 53 Wood Ducks June 5, but other duck numbers were ordinary. A Blue-winged Teal at Station 43, South Windsor, June 25(SK) was very interesting.

HAWKS THROUGH SKIMMERS

New nesting confirmations for Northern Goshawk came from Morris and Woodbridge(DR), while a Sharpshinned Hawk in Woodbury June 11(RN) was termed a late migrant. A pair of Cooper's Hawks again nested in Greenwich(FMa), and one bird seen July 15-31 in Watertown(RN) may have been associated with a nearby nest.

Immature Bald Eagles were seen sporadically with 1 over Greenwich July 24(LB), and 3 in the vicinity of the Colebrook Reservoir, Colebrook, through the period(DH fide JK). Adult Bald Eagles were seen on both the

Woodbury/Roxbury count and on Candlewood Lake, New Fairfield as reported to the Connecticut Rare Bird Alert (fide FMa). The other raptor with fish on its breath, continued to set records; 95 young Ospreys were fledged from 51 nesting attempts within the State. These numbers were up from 74 and 35 respectively in 1987 - fabulous! The majority of Ospreys are still found from the Connecticut River mouth east, but nests in Guilford and Westbrook produced young again. A serious nesting attempt at Hammonasset Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP), however, failed on June 13 due to human disturbance on a very hot day.

Northern Harriers are reported regularly in the Stratford/

Milford marshes each summer - someone must take the time to sit down and watch their movements to determine if they nest. Unfortunately, most reports only differentiate the adult males and do not differentiate adult females from immatures in summer at this locality. A late Peregrine Falcon was seen June 7 at Milford Point (hereafter MP)(SM).

Rail reports are usually thin but included new confirmations, now routine, of Clapper Rail nests along the coast (DR). King Rail was at Barn Island, Stonington, June 4 (JK) and can be found with great regularity there each summer. Soras were on territory in Litchfield (DR) and June 26 at Pequabuck Marsh in Plainville, where Virginia Rail was also re-



ported June 19(MC).

I never received the Connecticut DEP report on Piping Plover nesting successes for 1988, but the overall picture is similar to previous seasons; about twenty nests produced young in spite of various disturbances. American Oystercatchers are breeding across the shoreline, with 5 - 7 pairs in Fairfield County, a few pairs along the eastern shore, and one regular pair in the Westbrook/Clinton area. Sandy Point, Stonington, had 2 Oystercatchers fledge this year, and 1 of 2 fledglings at Menunketesuck Island, Westbrook, was banded July 4(CT,KC). The birds at this latter locality may be the individuals that are seen in the area into January and February (see previous

reports).

A few observers commented on Willets along the coast west of New Haven County, to which area the species is beginning to extend from their local range in the marshes at HBSP, where 10 - 15 pairs noisily guard their territories.

Among the first fall migrants are shorebirds, and 2 Greater Yellowlegs in Norwalk, June 30(FMa) were part of the first wave. By the second week of July, most species were represented at MP, Sherwood Island State Park (hereafter SISP), and other favorite spots. Numbers appeared to peak on or about July 20 with 500+ Short-billed Dowitchers July 24(FMa), 300+ "peep" sandpipers July 24(SM), 1000+ Semipalmated Sandpipers July



17(FMa), and 8 Willets July 27(SM), all at MP. Three Stilt Sandpipers at Sandy Point, West Haven July 15(RA) were the only ones reported. Whimbrels were at HBSF on and off, one being seen July 15 and a flock of 8 July 22(JK). The rest of the migration began to appear with the rains at the end of July.

Tern nesting success was good in 1988, although a few reports indicated that late arrivals on the smaller nesting islands led to low chick counts in late June. Falkner Island and other major islands did very well, although Duck Island in Westbrook had fewer Common Terns and only 2 pairs of Roseate Terns (down from 8 - 10 pairs in 1987). While banding tern chicks on Duck Island, we noticed many chicks more than a week old, that had died. There were no visible reasons for these deaths, and younger chicks did not seem to be affected.

Very few unusual terns or gulls were reported. A Royal Tern at MP July 15 and July 30(FP,JZ) and Black Skimmers at MP July 31(JB) were the only exceptions, albeit not unexpected.

DOVES THROUGH VIREOS

The active and apparently thriving Monk Parakeet colony on the Bridgeport - Stamford line received some newspaper publicity this summer. The local residents feed and protect their noisy

friends, and it will be interesting to monitor the colony's future success. Other parrot news was at SISP, where 3 Black-hooded Parakeets (sometimes called Nanday Conure) and 1 Senegal Parrot were present most of the year(RS). The Black-hooded Parakeets successfully nested(FMa).

There were no unusual owl sightings, and as noted in the previous field notes, there were no Common Barn-Owls fledged under the I-95 bridge in Milford, probably due to road construction there. It is always nice to see fledgling owls and 3 young Eastern Screech-Owls were reported sitting together on a branch in a backyard in Simsbury August 2(BK).

Comments about relative abundance of species were consistent - species with low numbers included both cuckoos(GC), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher(SK), and thrushes(JF,JK), while species with high numbers included Willow Flycatcher, Winter Wren(DR,JK), Eastern Bluebird(JF), and Brown Thrasher(GC).

The only woodpecker nesting report was of a young Pileated calling for food from its nest hole in Simsbury July 12(BK). Acadian Flycatchers were present in good numbers in the western part of the state(DR), and a calling Willow Flycatcher in Storrs was noted as unusual for the location(GC).



I would assume that the drought and lack of insects hurt Purple Martins but the HBSP colony begun last year expanded to 8 - 10 pairs. Notable for swallows was a pair of nesting Cliff Swallows at the North Stamford reservoir. Massing swallows at SISP July 15 included 100 Tree, 5 Northern Rough-winged, 15 Bank, and 75 Barn Swallows.

Common Ravens set records with a report of 14 fledged out of 7 nests(DR). The first nest to be found was in the northeastern part of the state (see the previous CW issue). Although the Black-capped Chickadee is a common nester, it is always nice to find a nest with three young in a backyard tree stump(GC).

Robins and other insect/

worm/fruit feeders suffered many nest failures due to the drought and severe heat late in the season(DR), but the Eastern Bluebird population continued to grow statewide with an estimated 900 nestlings produced this year(DR).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Other than comments about the less frequently seen species, very few reports were submitted about nesting failures or successes in this group. Impressions about relative abundances went as follows: lower than usual numbers were indicated for Northern Waterthrush(RN), Rufous-sided Towhee(EHi), Orchard Oriole(RN), and Purple

Finch(RN,EHi); those species up in numbers were Pine and Prairie Warblers(RN), Cerulean and Hooded Warblers in western Connecticut(DR), Worm-eating Warbler(GC), and Indigo Bunting(EHi).

A Lawrence's Warbler was reported at Flander's Nature Center, Woodbury(RB) and a singing male in East Haddam was in the company of territorial Cerulean, Kentucky, and Hooded Warblers(SO). Pine Warblers were confirmed nesting in West Hartford(DR) and at Lake Whitney, Hamden(FMc), while a Kentucky Warbler nested for the first time in Greenwich(TB). Always elusive, Yellow-breasted Chats were reported from Westport(RW) and the Greenwich Audubon Center where there were two singing males(TB).

A very good find was a Vesper Sparrow in Torrington July 3(MH), while the Grasshopper Sparrow colony at Bradley International Airport, Windsor Locks, continues to survive. A recently fledged Dark-eyed Junco June 5 in Union was an early date(GC) - maybe the parents knew the drought was approaching.

Numerous spring reports of late-lingering Pine Siskins carried into summer, the most notable one visiting a feeder in Sharon through the first week of July(BC). No nestings were reported but the odds are that more than a few Siskins tried some-

where in the state; it is important to remember that this species can begin nesting by March, however.

Observers; Contributors
(**boldface**):

Ralph Amodei, James Bair, Ray Belding, Lysle Brinker, Milan Bull, Tom Burke, Winnie Burkett, George Clark, Jr., Barbara Cole, Pam & Randy Comelo(P&RC), Katherine Converse, Mary Czapinski, Mike Dewire, Carl Ekroth, Jeff Fengler, Merion Frolich, Carol Goertz, Ed Hagen(EHa), Mike Hayes, Ed Hiestand(EHi), Don Hopkins, Jay Kaplan, Betty Kleiner, Steve Kotchko, Frank Mantlik (FMa), Stephen Mayo, Florence McBride (FMc), Russ Naylor, Sean O'Brien, Fred Purnell, Larry Reiter, Dave Roggen, Phil Rusch, Paul Saraceni, Richard L. Soffer, Clayton Taylor, Dave Tripp, Rob Winkler, Joe Zeranski. Susan Cole(omission from Spring CW8-4 observers).

24 Old Leesville Rd, Moodus, CT 06469

AN EDITORIAL ON THE EVOLUTION OF BIRDING

Roland C. Clement

An advance glimpse of status reports on rare birds in Connecticut (COA Bull. 2:1) from Zeranski and Baptist's manuscript of a forthcoming book on the birds of our state reminds one—or at least suggests—how different the bird students of the turn-of-the-century were when compared to those of today.

Although fewer in number, the early Connecticut ornithologists—professional and amateur—were often more assiduous afield and covered smaller areas more thoroughly on foot and by small boat; or they used bicycles and horse and buggy, and the new railroad to conduct "expeditions" farther afield. They did more camping on study sites because getting home for supper was much less easy than it is for us. Most important as a distinguishing characteristic, they were collectors of bird specimens because this was a necessary aspect of field ornithology prior to the advent of good optical equipment. Elliot Coues' *Key to North American Birds*, in six editions between 1872 and 1927, was the "field guide" of its day. It began with the forthright advice: "First, shoot your bird." Identification was then accomplished by running the specimen through the keys until all questions were

answered.

Serious field ornithologists thought it a test of mettle to collect ten to fifty specimens a day and many rare birds were reduced to possession and preserved for posterity in various collections. It may be just as well, some of us may feel, that there were few ornithologists during this first phase of birding's history. There was a great deal of shooting of wildlife by almost everyone in those days; the frontier mentality still held sway. As a consequence, unusual or puzzling acquisitions were more often referred to the community's expert in the identification of such things, and the net was drawn tighter on rarities. The Corn Crake shot in Saybrook in 1887 is illustrative. Only one other example of this European visitor has been found in Connecticut since that time. This era ended with the migratory bird treaty with Canada in 1918. Sage and Bishop's *The Birds of Connecticut* (1913) is our document of that period.

Ludlow Griscom—first at the American Museum of Natural History, then at Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology—whom Roger Peterson once called "the court of last recourse," made it possible for

amateurs to get to know birds without shooting them. There was a long hiatus between the collecting era and the new birding strategies of the present, and it shows in the record, I believe. Griscom published *Birds of the New York City Region* in 1923, and Peterson's first *Field Guide to the Birds* appeared in 1934, but The Great Depression of the 1930's and World War II in the 1940's scattered our interests. World War II technology provided good binoculars for almost everyone interested in owning them. By 1960, the advent of jet aircraft and a national network of good highways, not to mention rising incomes, set the stage for the modern explosion of interest in birds. We are now well into a new era when few rarities escape the binoculars, telescopes and telephoto lenses of the birding community.

When in April, 1984, a Ross' Gull was spotted in Connecticut at Oyster River, West Haven, I broke with my custom of not chasing rarities and went to see this bird. It was a revelation to me—not the bird, but the birders. I soon saw the bird well enough to accept the record and mark my life list, although it was not to me a truly exciting specimen. But the people! I sidled up to a group of fifty or so birders on the beach—mostly appended to a telescope, including a big-barreled Questar or two—and suddenly realized that I knew absolutely none of

these people. This was a real shock because I had once edited the *New England Bulletin of Bird Life* under Griscom's tutelage and had later come to know thousands of birders while staff biologist for the National Audubon Society during the sixties and seventies, not to mention more recent Connecticut contacts as president of the Connecticut Audubon Society and COA. One leather-suited lady at West Haven had come from outer Long Island on a motorcycle! The banter was mostly one-upmanship about who had seen or missed other rarities in Florida, California or Alaska. Was I on the right planet? At last Dennis Varza and Ray Schwartz appeared and I relaxed. Yet in those first, insecure moments in the midst of that small mob of strange modern birders, I suddenly realized how Roger Peterson must feel about the advent of the National Geographic Society's team-produced *Field Guide to the Birds of North America!*

Did the field ornithologist of early century really differ so much from today's birder? Perhaps the differences are merely byproducts of a different perspective and fading memories? Recapturing the motivations and responses of an earlier generation or century is certainly no easy task. Perhaps we might do better to look at the very different cultural environments we have occupied, each in our turn.

At the turn of the century, birding was still looked upon as frivolous, if not positively inimical to the work-ethic of a country caught up in a production mania that started about 1850 and still drives many of us. Thus, it was useful to masquerade one's interest in birds as a contribution to science. This was honest enough because specimens usually ended up in some museum or university and there was still lots of describing and distributional mapping to do. Indeed, ornithology was more descriptive than analytic in those days and the amateurs could still understand the professionals. Birders were, almost by definition, more "serious" about their hobby than we need to be today, when birding has achieved nearly the popular legitimacy of golf and tennis. It is true that the "population sample" used in characterizing the early birder is a skewed one, because those who were less assiduous in collecting, observing and reporting, left little trace and cannot be included in our measurements. Also, fewer people birded due to the lack of the requisite education, leisure and surplus income.

It is no accident that I can compare birding's popularity to golf and tennis. It has become a sport like these others. Sport (as David Sansone suggested recently in *Greek Athletics and the Genesis of Sport*) is "the ritualistic sacrifice of physical energy."

It seems obvious that in our day, birding is just one among many outdoor activities that have become specialized forms of recreation or sport. By sheer power of participation, birding won legitimacy. More of us can pursue this hobby because we are part of that large critical mass of Westerners who have achieved higher personal incomes. That fewer minorities participate, as yet, attests to a subordinate economic status. Ironically, the achievement of higher incomes also often involves stresses that cause people to seek out the therapy afforded by outdoor sports; others need this catharsis to balance a too-sedentary existence. Birding provides an extra bonus because it helps make us feel at home on the planet—an important contribution during a period in human history when technological change is so rapid that it imposes debilitating disorientation.

The ritualistic side of birding is exemplified by its listing competitions: life list, continental list, U.S. list, State list, yard list; by the Christmas Count, the Spring Big Day and the fall Hawk Watch. Competiveness has been a favorite American trait, is fun up to a point and can spur us to accomplishments we might otherwise not make the effort to achieve. It can also get in the way of what little scientific contribution our sport can make if "The Score" becomes more important than the enjoyment and the per-

ceptions it encourages. I am sometimes dismayed, by the euphoria that a phalanx of high-altitude migrating Broad-winged Hawks creates among hawk-watch observers: "two-hundred birds!" "no, three hundred!" or five hundred, or a thousand, all guestimates made by excited amateurs. Some of the sponsors of these ritualistic events seem to think they have failed if the daily September count of Broadwings does not achieve five figures.

It may be well to reflect on Alvin Toffler's observation (in *Future Shock*, 1970) that the larger a subcult like birding becomes, the more likely it is to fragment and spawn new subcults. The multiplication of birders has helped sell more Peterson field guides, and has also created a demand for new kinds of bird

books. Our friend and neighbor, Roger Peterson, the apostle of this birding revolution, finds it dismaying that one guru's offerings are no longer enough to satisfy the new multiplicity of interests. For many birders the American Birding Association now supplants the Audubon Society which gave them their start.

Subcults tend to be ephemeral, so although we can hardly rein in the sporting enthusiasms involved, those of us who hope to advance conservation causes and ornithological science by piggy-backing them on the new interest in birding should not fan the emotional flames. Banked fires last longer.

71 Weed Avenue, Norwalk, CT
06850



CONNECTICUT BIRD SPECIMENS IN THE STATE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

George A. Clark, Jr.

Serious study of birds in Connecticut began in the 1800's when the principal method of study was the collection and preservation of specimens. Although that inventory phase is now past for Connecticut, study skins obtained many decades ago still have scientific value and historic interest. Yet surprisingly little has been published about the present locations of historically important specimens. It is hoped that this will be the first of several articles on the present locations of important specimens from Connecticut.

At the Connecticut State Museum of Natural History at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, study skin specimens document the occurrence of 269 species of wild birds in the state. In this article I summarize the holdings of some unusual specimens and of large series of some species of special interest.

Most of the older study skins of Connecticut birds now at Storrs originated from the private collections of J. H. Sage and W. E. Treat and were taken mainly from 1875 through 1925; many of those specimens were mentioned in Sage et al. (1913, hereafter abbreviated SBB). The nomenclature here follows the American Ornithologists' Union

(1983), which may be consulted for scientific names of species. Additional abbreviations are: CW, Connecticut Warbler, WB, Wilson Bulletin. The following list includes the number of study skin specimens for each species and for the most unusual specimens either a literature citation or data on catalog number, locality, and date: 2 Leach's Storm-Petrels (from Sage Collection, SBB: 26), 30 American Bitterns, 8 Least Bitterns, 1 Blue Goose (UCONN 6030, Stonington, 12 Nov. 1956), 19 American Black Ducks, 21 Ospreys, 1 American Swallow-tailed Kite (CW 1:55), 4 Bald Eagles, 63 Northern Harriers, 134 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 42 Cooper's Hawks, 41 Northern Goshawks, 154 Red-shouldered Hawks, 53 Broad-winged Hawks, 86 Red-tailed Hawks, 8 Rough-legged Hawks, 1 Golden Eagle (from Sage Collection, SBB: 81-82), 101 American Kestrels, 28 Merlins, 2 Peregrine Falcons, 1 Gyrfalcon (from Sage Collection, SBB: 83), 6 Yellow Rails, 3 Upland Sandpipers, 1 Hudsonian Godwit (from Sage Collection, SBB: 60), 1 Wilson's Phalarope (UCONN 1974, immature female, Stratford, 29 Aug. 1969), 4 Red Phalaropes (from Sage Collection, SBB: 52), 1 Parasitic Jaeger (10 Sept. 1903 from Sage

Collection, SBB: 20), 1 Little Gull (WB 82:226-227), 2 Sooty Terns (CW 1: 55, and UCONN 7809, male, Waterford, 7 Sept. 1979), 4 Dovekies, 11 Thick-billed Murres, 1 Black Guillemot (SBB:18), 3 Passenger Pigeons, 8 Common Barn-Owls, 103 Eastern Screech-Owls, 19 Great Horned Owls, 4 Snowy Owls, 63 Barred Owls, 40 Long-eared Owls, 33 Short-eared Owls, 31 Northern Saw-whet Owls, 8 Red-headed Woodpeckers, 1 Black-backed Woodpecker (UCONN 2487, South Windsor, 22 Feb. 1924), 19 Sedge Wrens, 1 Varied Thrush (CW 1:55), 59 Northern Shrikes, 5 Loggerhead Shrikes, 1 Philadelphia Vireo (17 Sept. 1894 from Sage Collection, SBB: 145), 2 Orange-crowned Warblers (8 May 1888 from Treat Collection, SBB: 151; UCONN 4263, male, Coventry, 6 Oct 1967), 48 Connecticut Warblers, 2 Mourning Warblers, 1 Black-headed Grosbeak (CW 1:55), 1 Blue Grosbeak (UCONN 7945, male, Willimantic, 29 Apr. 1982), 1 Smith's Longspur (Auk 86:345), 1 Chestnut-collared Longspur (WB 82:226-227).

In one case, the date published in SSB does not agree with the date given on the original specimen label and in Sage's catalog of his specimens. Presumably the latter date is correct. On this basis the female Leach's Petrel reported as from 17 Sept. 1903 (SBB: 26) was actually taken on 16 Sept. 1903.

In addition to the above

listed specimens there is a mount of Glossy Ibis taken in 1850 (SBB:43).

Unfortunately, preserved specimens are generally uninformative about past trends in populations except for major changes. As examples, a lack of recent specimens reflects apparent declines in Red-headed Woodpecker, Sedge Wren, Northern Shrike, and Connecticut Warbler. For those species that have expanded their populations in the state relatively recently, all the Connecticut specimens at Storrs are from recent decades, as in the examples of Cattle Egret, Tufted Titmouse, Northern Mockingbird, Northern Cardinal and House Finch.

Acknowledgment

Fred Sibley made valuable suggestions on an earlier draft of this report.

Literature Cited

- American Ornithologists' Union. 1983. Check-list of North American birds, 6th ed.
Sage, J. H., L. B. Bishop, and W. P. Bliss. 1913. The birds of Connecticut. State Geol. Nat. Hist. Surv. Bull. 20.

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

THIRD REPORT OF THE CONNECTICUT RARE RECORDS COMMITTEE

The Connecticut Rare Records Committee (hereafter CRRC) was established in an effort to improve the quality of documentation for sightings of rare birds in Connecticut and to facilitate the preservation of that documentation. A previous report from the CRRC (1987, Connecticut Warbler 7:46-51) more fully explains that rationale for the CRRC.

This third report follows the format established in the previous CRRC report. Submitted and/or published notes on particular sightings have been reviewed by the CRRC and evaluated as accepted or not accepted. Not accepted reports include two categories: 1) reports for which the documentation was considered inadequate for the identification, and 2) reports of species judged by the CRRC to be correctly identified but most probably escapes or releases from captivity. A number of additional sightings are currently under review and are to be included in future CRRC reports. The CRRC welcomes submission of additional reports and Rare Bird Report Forms may be obtained from the CRRC Secretary, Frank Mantlik (39-A Woodside Ave., Westport, CT 06880).

In the following accounts, the

number of birds at each locality and date is one unless otherwise indicated. Hyphenated numbers in parentheses (e.g., "88-15") are CRRC file numbers. For cases in which two or more observers are named, those who submitted a report are marked with an asterisk (*). Reference to additional details in the Connecticut Warbler is provided as "CW", followed by the volume and pages. The following species are the most recent additions to the State list: Anhinga (hypothetical), Fulvous Whistling-Duck, Mew Gull (hypothetical), Burrowing Owl, Le Conte's Sparrow.

ACCEPTED RECORDS

EARED GREBE (*Podiceps nigricollis*). Sandy Point, West Haven, 6 Jan. 1987, D. Sibley* and R. Schwartz (88-15).

CORY'S SHEARWATER (*Calonectris diomedea*). Picked up at Lake Forest, Bridgeport, 5 Oct. 1985 and released 9 Oct., Fairfield, M. G. Bull et al. (86-10); photo on file.

NORTHERN GANNET (*Sula bassanus*). Numerous individuals were actively feeding along Long Island Sound in the period 24-29 Nov. 1985. The only group of these sightings reviewed by the CRRC

was from Stratford, 28-29 Nov., M. Szantyr et al. (88-7). See CW 6:17-18, 20.

ANHINGA (*Anhinga anhinga*). Longshore Club Park, Westport, 25 Sept. 1987, F. W. Mantlik (87-31). First accepted state record (hypothetical).

WHITE IBIS (*Eudocimus albus*). Immature at Lordship, Stratford, 30 Aug. 1980, D. A. Sibley (88-4).

FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna bicolor*). Three in Assekonk Swamp, North Stonington, 16-29 May 1987, N. Weismuller, R. Dewire, L. R. Bevier*, et al. (87-47). See

CW 7:45. Photos on file. First authenticated state record.

TUNDRA SWAN (*Cygnus columbianus*). Orange, 11 Jan. 1986, J. Bair (88-12); CW 6:38. Konold's Pond, Woodbridge, 15 Mar. 1986, M. Szantyr et al. (88-8).

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE (*Anser albifrons*). Simsbury and Granby, 16-17 Oct. 1985, J. Kaplan et al. (87-42). Willimantic Reservoir, Windham, 23-26 Nov. 1986, L. R. Bevier* and W. Burkett (87-35). Storrs, Mansfield, 16 Oct. 1987, L. R. Bevier* and W. Burkett (87-41). The CRRC



- considered the evidence to be insufficient for subspecific determination in these three cases.
- HARLEQUIN DUCK (*Histrionicus histrionicus*). Male, Merwin Point, Milford, 4 Nov. 1986, F. McBride* and J. Withgott (87-28). Photo on file.
- BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*). Bruce Golf Course, Greenwich, 16 May 1987, K. Ballas et al. (87-24).
- AMERICAN SWALLOW-TAILED KITE (*Elanoides forficatus*). Lake Whitney, Hamden, 10 June 1987, F. McBride* and A. Syer (87-27).
- GYRFALCON (*Falco rusticolus*). West Haven and New Haven, 22 Dec. 1987 until 7 April 1988, N. Currie*, R. Schwartz, et al. (87-48). Photos on file. See American Birds 42:228.
- BLACK RAIL (*Laterallus jamaicensis*). Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison, 6 Oct. 1986, C. Taylor (87-46).
- SANDHILL CRANE (*Grus canadensis*). Newtown, 24 Aug. 1987, M. Szantyr (88-10).
- AMERICAN AVOCET (*Recurvirostra americana*). Greenwich Point Park, Greenwich, 13 May 1985, J. Zeranski (88-27).
- CURLEW SANDPIPER (*Calidris ferruginea*). Adult in breeding plumage, Barn Island, Stonington, 7 June 1987, L. R. Bevier* and F. Purnell (87-36).
- RUFF (*Philomachus pugnax*). Female, Sherwood Island State Park, Westport, 8 May 1987, R. L. Soffer (87-21).
- RED-NECKED PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus lobatus*). Adult female, Sandy Point, West Haven, 8 June 1987, R. English (87-20).
- MEW GULL (*Larus canus*). Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison, 5-6 Nov. 1973, F. Purnell et al. (88-6). First state record (hypothetical).
- BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE (*Rissa tridactyla*). A half mile outside New London harbor, 29 Nov. 1987, H. McGuinness (88-11).
- BURROWING OWL (*Athene cunicularia*). New Haven harbor, 19-28 Dec. 1979, A. H. Bledsoe*, N. Proctor, et al. (88-5). First authenticated state record. See American Birds 34:254 including published photo.
- COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*). Canton Landfill, 27 Feb. 1983, J. Kaplan (88-2).
- SEDGE WREN (*Cistothorus platensis*). Storrs, Mansfield, 5 Oct. 1987, L. R. Bevier* and W. Burkett (87-40).
- NORTHERN WHEATEAR (*Oenanthe oenanthe*). Town Beach, Clinton, 27-29 Sept. 1987, J. Zickefoose*, A. Griswold, et al. (87-38).
- VARIED THRUSH (*Ixoreus naevius*). Male in Granby, 5 Jan. - 10 Feb. 1986, J. Ford, J. Kaplan*, et al. (87-43). Photo on file.
- YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER (*Dendroica dominica*). Audubon Center, Greenwich,

- 3-4 May 1986, T. Gilman et al. (87-34). Broad Brook Reservoir area, Meriden, 26 May 1987, F. Whitney (87-22).
- BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*). Branford, 20 Dec. 1980. N. Proctor, D. Sibley* et al. (88-16).
- CLAY-COLORED SPARROW** (*Spizella pallida*). Storrs, Mansfield, 30 Sept. 1987, L. R. Bevier* and W. Burkett (87-37).
- LE CONTE'S SPARROW** (*Ammodramus leconteii*). Canton, 27 Dec. 1987 to 9 Jan. 1988, J. Kaplan*, L. R. Bevier, J. Kaufman, et al. (88-1). Photos on file. First authenticated state record. See CW 8:25-27 and American Birds 42:231 including published photo.
- HOARY REDPOLL** (*Carduelis hornemanni*). Torrington, 12 Mar. 1987, M. Szantyr* and J. Kirk (88-9).
- UNACCEPTED RECORDS**
(Identification Questionable)
- LEACH'S STORM-PETREL** (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*). Bird found dead in East Hartford near the Connecticut River in 1975, but specimen lost (87-45).
- NORTHERN GANNET** (*Sula bassanus*). Westport, 30 Dec. 1984 (85-39).
- BLACK VULTURE** (*Coragyps atratus*). Greenwich, 23 Mar. 1988 (88-28).
- FERRUGINOUS HAWK** (*Buteo regalis*). Greenwich, 4 Sept. 1987 (87-32).
- SANDHILL CRANE** (*Grus canadensis*). New Canaan, 16 Jan. 1988 (88-22).
- RED-NECKED PHALAROPE** (*Phalaropus lobatus*). Milford Point, Milford, 27 Aug. 1986 (87-25).
- PARASITIC JAEGER** (*Stercorarius parasiticus*). Milford Point, Milford, 21 Sept. 1985 (87-30).
- MEW GULL** (*Larus canus*). West Haven, 23 Dec. 1984 (85-34). See CW 5, No. 1, cover photo.
- IVORY GULL** (*Pagophila eburnea*). Connecticut River in East Windsor Hill, 11 Jan. 1986 (86-7).
- RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD** (*Selasphorus rufus*). Portland Meadows, Portland, 30 Aug. 1986 (87-33).
- SCISSOR-TAILED FLY-CATCHER** (*Tyrannus forficatus*). Near Milford Point, Milford, 22 Aug. 1987 (87-29).
- GRAY JAY** (*Perisoreus canadensis*). East Rock Park, New Haven, Jan. or Feb., 1967 or 1968 (88-18).
- MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD** (*Sialia currucoides*). Male reported from Oxford, mid-April, 1975 (88-19).
- LARK BUNTING** (*Calamospiza melanocorys*). Beacon Falls, 24-25 Feb. 1985 (85-11).
- HENSLow'S SPARROW** (*Ammodramus henslowii*). Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison, 1 Sept. 1986 (87-26). Photos on file.

UNACCEPTED RECORDS

Origin Questionable (identification accepted)

BARNACLE GOOSE (*Branta leucopsis*). Adult with apparent hutchinsii Canada Goose mate and 2 hybrid offspring, at Southbury Training School, Southbury, and Squire Road Pond, Roxbury, 22 Nov. 1984 - 10 Jan. 1985 (85-33). Photos on file. See CW 5, No. 2: 16-18 and cover photo. Storrs, Mansfield, 21 Sept. 1986 (87-39). Photo on file.

RED-CRESTED POCHARD (*Netta rufina*). Bunnell's Pond, Beardsley Park, Bridgeport, 9-13 Dec. 1987 (87-49). Photo on file.

BLACK-HOODED PARAKEET (*Nandayus nenday*). Storrs, Mansfield, 13-14 Sept. 1987 (88-23).

CHOUGH (*Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax*). Newtown, 23-24 Nov. 1987 and 15 Feb. 1988 (88-20).

CORRECTIONS FOR THE SECOND CRRC REPORT:

CW 7:48 — The Gull-billed Tern was in Madison on 4 Oct. 1985 and seen by C. Taylor et al. (85-30).

CW 7:50 — The Yellow-headed Blackbird dates should be 16-25 April 1985.

CW 7:51 — The South Polar Skua report should have the CRRC designation (85-37), not "(87-37)".

CW 7:51 — For Ash-throated Flycatcher, add "See CW 6:33-34."

Submitted: September 27, 1988
George Clark, Chair and Compiler of the Third Report

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The editors welcome submission of articles and notes for the *Connecticut Warbler*. Manuscripts should be typed double spaced on one side of the sheet only, with ample margins on all sides. Style of the manuscript should follow general usage in recent issues. All manuscripts receive peer review.

Illustrations:

The editors welcome submission of line artwork of Connecticut and regional birds. Black and white photographs of particular interest will also be considered, but tend to print at less than optimum quality. Line art should be submitted as good-quality photographic prints or in original form. All originals and prints will be returned promptly after publication prints are made.

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

Winter 1989

Contents

Volume IX Number 1 January 1989

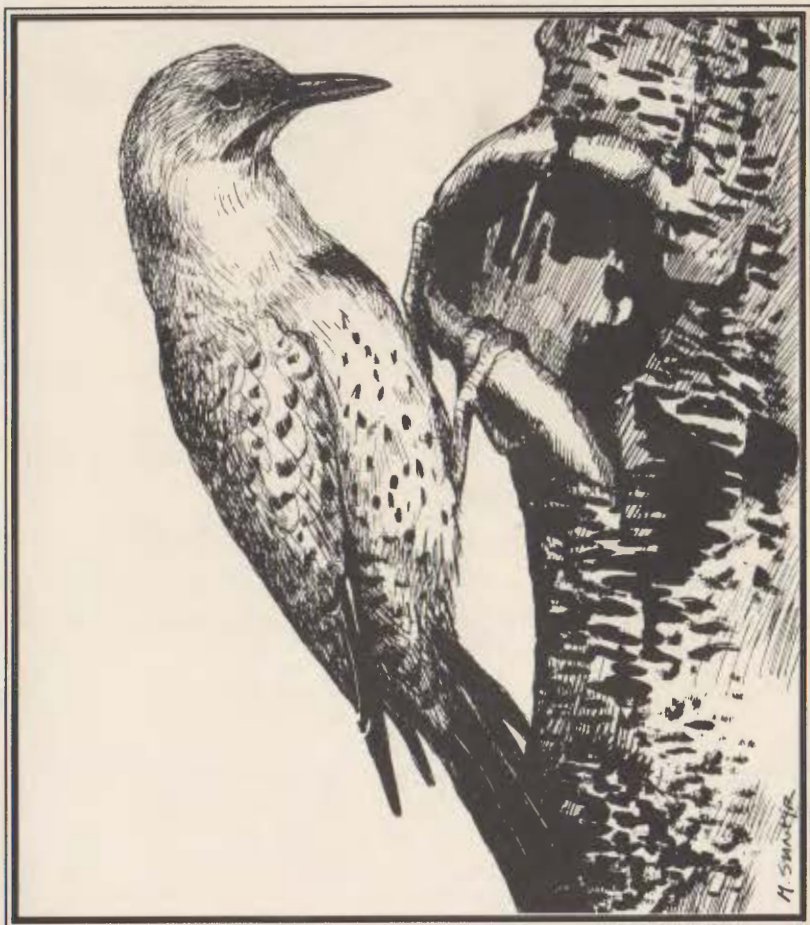
- 1** **Species Composition of Food Brought to
Roseate Tern Chicks on Falkner Island,
Connecticut in Summer 1984**
 Sarah Richards and William Shew
- 6** **More on Snow Bathing**
 Donald Hopkins
- 7** **Connecticut Field Notes**
Summer: June 1 - July 31, 1988
 Clay Taylor
- 14** **An Editorial on the Evolution of Birding**
 Roland C. Clement
- 18** **Connecticut Bird Specimens in the State
Museum of Natural History**
 George A. Clark, Jr.
- 20** **Third Report of the Connecticut Rare
Records Committee**

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Pages 25-48

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"Northern Flicker (Colaptes auratus)"

Mark Szantyr is a newcomer to bird painting, most of his work being large spatial or biomorphic abstractions, based on drawings from life. His primary media is oil paint, with works in juried shows, the most recent being the Kansas 14th Annual Small Painting, Drawing and Printmaking Show in Hays, Kansas. He is an avid photographer, especially of birds and nature, and has had many articles published about birds and birding, numerous ones in the Connecticut Warbler. He also runs a bird-banding station at the Flanders Nature Center in Woodbury, for the Western Connecticut Bird Clubs' Science and Research Committee. Inquiries about his work may be directed to him at 25 Bonair Ave., Waterbury, CT 06710.

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

The Tanager Tree

There is a tall, spreading tree on the trail to Pico Humboldt where the tanagers feed in the sunlight. In the high cloud forest of the Venezuelan Andes an early mist rolls up the valley on midwinter afternoons, shrouding the peaks in cool, wet whiteness. The tanagers continue feeding, oblivious to the cloud, their disembodied chatter drifting down through the mist.

I stood below that tree several weeks ago, gazing up into a rich and beautiful realm. In the Neotropics, tanagers travel in mixed feeding flocks, composed of up to a dozen species. For the most part they are as brilliantly colored as butterflies, with exotic descriptive names: Beryl-spangled, Saffron-crowned, Bay-headed, Burnished-buff. They display their greatest variety in the rain and cloud forests of South America, areas of astounding biological diversity which most of us will never see.

My companions this day were my friend Frank Mantlik and two young biologists from Hampshire College. We formed part of an expedition studying the livestock guarding dogs of the high Andes, descendants of those introduced by the Spaniards long ago.

Suddenly a new arrival among the tanagers caught our attention. It was a striking bird, black and white, with a bright splash of crimson. "Wow! What's that?" It was, indeed, an old friend, a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak coming into breeding finery on its wintering grounds. "Is it rare?" Not really. I explained how this bird could well be in New England by early May, defending a nesting territory in a woodlot. It was one of "our" birds, here only for the winter.

Yet seeing the grosbeak here was jarring. Wasn't this bird's life as clearly defined and determined by its time in the tanager tree as it was on its North American breeding grounds? If so, what sense could it make to view it as "our" bird, as though the other half of its existence did not matter? It was clearly "their" bird too, belonging as much to the Andean villagers, the bromeliads and the tanagers as to "us".

As we read of the ongoing destruction of the South

American forests we are inevitably tempted to disparage the attitude of governments and developers oblivious to the richness and fragility of their natural heritage. (It helps, of course, to overlook the policies that have brought the old-timber forest of our own Pacific Northwest to a tenuous remnant.) To many in South America, the attempts to establish long-term alternatives to habitat destruction smack of ecological imperialism and have evoked aggressive nationalistic responses. "They" are telling "us" what to do. There are others, however, who have learned the lesson of the tanager tree. Hugo Arnal, the dynamic young director of BIOMA, a Venezuelan organization committed to acquiring and preserving biologically important natural areas, has begun to marshal public and private support on behalf of the environment. His work, and that of others like him,

must be of direct concern to all of us who care about the diversity of life on our planet.

Even if we are never fortunate enough to visit the Amazon basin, the pampas of Argentina or an Andean cloud forest, their future is connected to our own. Let "your" next grosbeak serve as a reminder.

Frederick Purnell, Jr.
73 West Ave., Darien, CT
06820

Those wishing to support BIOMA's efforts may contact them at the following address:

BIOMA
Edit. Camara de Comercio de
Caracas
Piso 4, Avenida Este 2, Los
Caobos
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1010-A, Caracas, Venezuela

THE 1988-1989 CHRISTMAS COUNT

Fred C. Sibley¹ and Stephen P. Broker²

More Connecticut Christmas Counts are held the first Saturday of the count period than at any other time. When did we get the bitter cold and strong winds? You guessed it. After that day anything seemed reasonable. The 162 species plus one count period (CP) bird was no record breaker, but we can't see what isn't there. There were rare birds seen. Northern Gannet (Greenwich-Stamford) and Veery (Salmon River) were new for the state Christmas Count list. The Veery is most unusual and almost unheard of during winter. Ten counts had a total of 19 species seen only on one count. The New Haven count had 5 such species including Cape May Warbler, another exceptional winter record.

Other unique records of water and marsh birds: Greenwich-Stamford had the only Red-necked Grebe and Great Egret; New London the only Blue-winged Teal; New Haven had Eurasian Wigeon and Sora; Old Lyme had American Oystercatchers; Westport had Lesser Yellowlegs; and Stratford-Milford had Seaside Sparrow. Single count sightings of upland birds: Lakeville-Sharon had Red-headed Woodpecker, Trail Wood had Palm Warbler, Hartford had Rose-breasted Grosbeak and

Pine Grosbeak; Stratford-Milford had the only Barn Owl, New London had a Snowy Owl, New Haven had Grasshopper Sparrow and Westport came through with their colony of Monk Parakeets (the Connecticut Rare Records Committee is still struggling with whether this is an established feral population). People always want to know who's the biggest and the best. The coast always has the edge here with 44 species not seen elsewhere in the state and a total of 151 plus 2 CP species. If it's any consolation, the number of species seen inland but not on the coast was very high this year (10). New Haven as usual dominated the coastal counts despite going out in the worst weather. Their 125 was 14 above the competition (Old Lyme this year as Stratford-Milford faded to a three way tie for third). New Haven had the most field observers of the coastal counts, but Greenwich-Stamford claimed the most total observers. Palm Warbler and Short-eared Owl were both missed for the first time in ten years.

In Mid-state, the Woodbury-Roxbury count took honors for most species, individuals and observers. The 100 species seen mid-state was respectable and the House Wrens (4 total on Salmon River and Hidden Valley

counts) and Lincoln Sparrows (Salmon River and Woodbury-Roxbury) deserve special recognition. Great Cormorants were present for the first time (Salmon River) and Greater Scaup (Oxford) had not been seen in over 10 years. Incredibly, over 25 percent of the species mid-state were represented by high counts in contrast to the coast where high counts and low counts were about even (more later). On the Northern Counts, Hartford is always the top dog for species, individuals (65% of the State total) and observers - beating out Greenwich-Stamford for state honors in this category. The Palm Warbler at Trail Wood was new for the northern counts. The Marsh Wren, Double-crested Cormorant and Rose-breasted Grosbeak at Hartford and Lapland Longspur at Storrs are all rare species for this area. Ravens, still a rarity in the state, were recorded at both Barkhamsted (3) and Lakeville-Sharon (2). It was an exceptional year for Phoebes with 2 found at Litchfield Hills and 1 at Trail Wood.

The senior author - filling in for Stephen Broker - has attempted to make some sense out of this swirling mass of tea leaves. If I fail, just remember that none of the psychics predicted the events in China or Russia. Trends, easy to see in hind sight, are difficult to call on one year's decline. One doesn't want to run through the streets crying that the sky is fall-

ing, yet we do like to look back years later and say "I told you so." Therefore, as payment for doing this article, I get to throw in some predictions from time to time. Let's start by comparing this year's count to 1972-1976 period.

Waterfowl: Loons are about the same. Surprised? Pied-billed and Horned Grebes have declined somewhat. Great Cormorants show only a slight increase while Double-crested Cormorants have gone from 1 per year to 100 per year. Both species had numbers double or triple their present levels in 1984 & 1985. Herons are doing very well. Even the American Bittern is coming back to former levels. Snowy and Great Egret are appearing on the counts and the Great Blue Heron has gone from an average of 10 to over 200 per year. The only declining species is the Black-crowned Night-Heron - down a third from the 70's. Mute Swans just continue to multiply with a high count of 1750 this year; the 4th high count in the last 7 years. At the same time, they are still a rarity on the northern counts and midstate numbers are well below the 1985 peak. Snow Geese are essentially unchanged, while Brant average several hundred a year compared to the 1-2 of the early 70's. Canada Goose numbers did not break any records this year, but are still 7 times the count in the 70's with the increase spread rather evenly over the

state. The good news about the rest of the ducks is that Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead and all 3 merganser species are at high levels with the 1500 Red-breasted Mergansers breaking the old record. Gadwall are also doing well with a record 469 seen versus 23 in the early 70's. For the rest of the puddle and sea ducks, we are on a down trend from a peak in the early 80's and are back to or below the previous low in the mid to early 70's.

Raptors: Turkey Vultures are a permanent fixture now and much more common mid-state than on the coast. Ospreys turned up on the New Haven and Oxford counts. This is the same frequency with which they were seen ten years ago. With the continued recovery of the species I would have expected more winter records. Bald Eagle numbers were phenomenal. The 49 seen is almost double the previous high with 8 counts recording the species. Woodbury-Roxbury had the most with 13, followed by Old Lyme with 10. The rest of the hawks are all doing well. Red-shouldered and Rough-legged Hawk numbers equal those of the 70's, while the 3 accipiters and the Red-tailed have shown tremendous increases from those days with the mid 80's being the high point. The falcons have also done well with a record count of Merlins (4) and Peregrines (5) this year. The American Kestrel, as we all know, is not doing well and

the Christmas Count numbers only confirm this decline with the state low of 75, about a third of the mid 70's total. A new low has been reached in 4 of the last 7 years.

It was a bad year for Ruffed Grouse and Pheasant. Bobwhite that used to be reliable on the New London and Old Lyme counts are now a rarity on all counts and were found only on the Barkhamsted and Hartford counts this year; total of 7 birds. American Coot is a species we are losing as a winter resident. They were missed for the first time in 10 years mid-state and recorded record lows in the northern counts (13 individuals) and on the coast (10 individuals). Only 10 years ago the counts were 236 and 76 respectively. Nothing spectacular happened to shorebird numbers. We are on a down trend here, returning to the lower numbers of the early 70's. Killdeer were at record low numbers while American Oystercatchers turned up again at Old Lyme - 2nd year there and 3rd year for the state. The numbers of Ring-billed and Great Black-backed Gulls have leveled off on the interior counts although still 10 plus times larger than the numbers of the 70's. Interestingly, the number of Herring Gulls on the interior counts has increased only slightly over the same period and the numbers of all three gulls have remained almost constant on the coast.

Woodpeckers, winter finches, feeder birds, and southern birds all seem worthy of special attention this year. Woodpecker numbers were just great almost across the board. Red-bellied Woodpeckers posted their 6th high count in 10 years with record numbers reported on almost every count. Only the Barkhamsted count failed to record the species. Over 30 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported (3rd time in 5 years). Either counters are getting better at finding them or there is a trend developing. Downy Woodpecker numbers were at a record high. Flicker numbers are still 4-5 times greater than during the 70's, but down from the 1985 peak. A record number of Pileated Woodpeckers was seen this year, probably reflecting both increased observations and increased observer skills.

Winter finches were the biggest story of this Christmas Count and no one needs to get out a calculator to recognize the drop. Evening Grosbeaks were missed - well, one each on the Barkhamsted and Westport counts. Totals are almost meaningless - 1453 last year and 2 this year. A previous low count in the last 20 years of 425. Other winter finches did not show the catastrophic drops, but it definitely was not a finch year. Pine Grosbeak represented by a single bird in Hartford. Both crossbills were missed. Common Redpoll represented by 72 at

Barkhamsted and 1 at New Haven, Pine Siskin down from 1970 last year to 84 this year. Even American Goldfinch hit an all time low on the coastal and northern counts. The Purple Finch that some lump with winter finches has continued to decline. The count this year of 180 was less than half the lowest count recorded in the last 20 years (ignoring last year's 260). Who killed the Evening Grosbeaks? Acid Rain? Global Warming? Or perhaps the most magnificent year ever for northern seed plants and therefore, no need to move? Whatever the cause, this is a shift of massive proportions. A real phenomenon. Decades ago Evening Grosbeaks poured out of the north every 10-20 years with spectacular winter flights. Some have speculated that the now expected annual winter movement of this species has been in response to the abundance of feeders and McSunflower stands. Have you all stopped feeding or put out low fat sunflower seeds? Keep your eye on this species.

This brings us to a group of common feeder birds showing record highs for the state - Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, and White-breasted Nuthatch. We can also include Downy Woodpecker and if we go mid-state will find record highs for Hairy Woodpecker, Cardinal, White-throated Sparrow and Song Sparrow. We also find record highs for Carolina Wrens

state-wide, and for Mockingbird, Winter Wren and Gray Catbird mid-state. This may be due to the relatively mild 1987-88 winter. Certainly Carolina Wrens are sensitive to exceptionally cold winters and Mockingbirds, Cardinals and Tufted Titmouse are all southern birds that have invaded the New England area fairly recently. The House Wren, Winter Wren and Catbird are all species that can survive a mild winter and that probably succumb during February cold spells in a normal winter. Individuals of these species that survived last year's winter are likely to attempt overwintering again. Augmented by new birds attempting to overwinter, we have a record count. The fact that these record highs are showing up most prominently in the mid-state area would lend further support to the mild-winter argument. The feeder birds mentioned are primarily permanent residents with limited migration. The combination of a mild winter and extra food at feeding stations could explain their jump in numbers. Every mild winter should then be followed by an upturn in the numbers of these species. The northern areas are evidently still too cold for most of these species to overwinter.

The exceptional number of high counts mid-state and the exceptional number of low counts on the coast was mentioned earlier. This is an impor-

tant phenomenon. Although the following explanation may not be correct, some explanation is needed. In a normal year high counts should outnumber low counts by a wide margin. This is partially due to the fact that you can have a high count for any species, but you can only have a low count for species seen in each of the last ten years. Hartford is a more or less typical situation with 15 high counts and 5 low counts. In contrast, the coastal counts had 13 high counts and 18 low counts. Most of the coastal counts had similar patterns. Greenwich-Stamford was the most striking with a mismatch of 6 high count to 18 low counts. Going out on a limb, one might suggest that these low counts represent a shift from censusing the birds to censusing the habitat. Confused? On the average count for the average species only some of the birds are actually found. There is too much habitat (over 150 square miles) to be covered by the observers and we count only a portion of the birds. This is measured in party-hours and if we have approximately the same number of party-hours of effort from one year to the next we should sample the same proportion of the population and be able to detect changes in the population. For species that are very conspicuous or with very limited habitat, we census all the individuals. The ultimate censusing of all individuals of all the species

will never be reached. However, as we increase the number of observers we reach a total census for more and more species. These may be obvious Christmas Count facts. The new ingredient proposed is that in coastal areas the amount of habitat has shrunk rapidly even as the number of observers has increased. Thus for many species we started censusing the entire habitat many years ago. When the habitat is decreased we end up with fewer birds and a record number of low counts. We are, and this is a very important point in the argument, not censusing whether the birds had a good breeding year but how much habitat is left in our count circle. If Swamp Sparrows had their worst breeding season on record we could still end up with 20 on the count as we did when they had the best ever breeding season. The particular count circle has winter habitat for only 20 individuals. An indirect measurement of the habitat loss coastally may be very useful. If the argument is correct, then we should not be comparing coastal counts, where we are measuring habitat loss, with interior counts where we are measuring reproductive success.

Additional measures worth watching in future years are the total species count and the numbers of rarities. Both should decline if habitat loss is what we are now measuring, particularly on coastal counts.

Other troubles: Last year Stephen Broker pointed out that Eastern Meadowlarks have almost vanished as a wintering bird in Connecticut. This is certainly true again this year with 5 counts recording a total of 18 birds or 1/10th of the total 20 years ago. Unlike the Red-winged Blackbird, this decline has been statewide. For the Red-winged Blackbird this year's coastal count would have been a record low but for last year's slightly lower count. At the same time this year's mid-state count was 7 times as large as the previous high. In general, blackbird (Red-wing, Grackle, Cowbird) numbers are so erratic that trends are hard to find. The year 1985 was a big year (38,000); last year was a bad year (2,500). This year wasn't a lot better (7,000). Coastal counts for the same years were 12,000, 1300 & 1400. Confusing figures, but in the 1970's coastal totals always made up the greatest share of the state total and never sank below 50%. Closing suggestions. Look at interior rather than coastal figures for shifts in passerine numbers. Keep your eyes on Evening Grosbeak numbers for the next few years. Watch the resident feeder birds. Are they faring better than the migrants?

This year Stephen Broker deserves thanks for compiling all the data. At the last moment he asked me to summarize the mounds of data he had amassed.

That was the easy part. After he had sifted through the 17 different counts and sorted out what has possible significance, it took an army to carry it all up to my office. Thanks Stephen! Thanks also to the compilers for their cooperation with the Christmas Count summary. No one needs to thank all the participants. You probably had as good a time as we did. If we didn't enjoy it we wouldn't be there. The sponsoring organizations certainly deserve credit for keeping these counts going and for providing organization and extras:

Connecticut Ornithological Association, Dennison Pequotsepos Nature Center, Greenwich Audubon Society, Hartford Audubon Society, Housatonic Audubon Society, Litchfield Hills Audubon Society, Mattabesec Audubon Society, Natchaug Ornithological Society, Naugatuck Valley Audubon Society, New Haven Bird Club, Potapaug Audubon Society, and the Saugatuck Valley Audubon Society.

INDIVIDUAL COUNT SUMMARIES

The following paragraphs list each of the 17 State counts and provide basic information on the results of the 1988-1989 Christmas Bird Counts. The numbers following the count name refer to the total species seen on the count and the numbers of species seen during count periods. The number in parentheses is the total of

species seen during the past 10 years (since the 1979-80 count). Exceptions are Trail Wood, which held its 3rd count this year, and Barkhamsted, which held its 4th count. The number of individual birds seen on the count is given, rounded off to the nearest thousand. Numbers of observers participating in the count is then given, followed by the name of the compiler(s). Rarities are listed, those species which have been observed 4 or fewer times in ten years. Asterisks denote species unique to that one count. Other noteworthy species, which have been seen more than 4 times in the past decade, are referred to in the preceding section of this report. Finally, species recorded in new high or low numbers are listed. Species dropped from the various lists are those last seen more than 10 years ago.

WHOLE STATE - 17 counts

162 species + 1 CP (224); 444,178 individuals; 827 observers + 138 feeder watchers; 8 new High Counts; 10 new Low Counts; 1 New Species.

NORTHERN COUNTS - 6 counts.

106 species (153); 181,000 individuals; 322 observers + 49 feeder watchers; 15 new High Counts; 6 new Low Counts; 1 New Species.

TRAIL WOOD: 50 species (low count) (74); 11,000 individuals (new high); 13 observers + 2 feeder watchers. Compiler: Mari-

lynn Higgins. New species for count: Snow Goose, Northern Goshawk, Ring-necked Pheasant, Common Snipe, Eastern Phoebe, Gray Catbird, Palm Warbler*, Brown-headed Cowbird.

BARKHAMSTED: 62 species + 1 CP (90); 7000 individuals (low); 53 observers. Compilers: Dave Rosgen & Dave Tripp, Jr. Rarities: Pied-billed Grebe, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Northern Bobwhite, Iceland Gull, Common Raven, Snow Bunting.

STORRS: 59 species + 1 CP (110); 10,000 individuals; 25 observers. Compiler: Winnie Burkett. Rarities: Great Blue Heron, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Eastern Screech-Owl, Pileated Woodpecker, Brown Thrasher, Lapland Longspur (new). High Counts (5): Barred Owl, Downy Woodpecker, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Northern Cardinal. Low Counts (2): Purple Finch, Evening Grosbeak (missed for first time in 10 years).

HARTFORD: 85 species (129); 120,000 individuals; 153 observers + 42 feeder watchers. Compilers: Jay Kaplan & Stephen Davis. Rarities: Double-crested Cormorant, Bald Eagle, Northern Bobwhite, Killdeer, Northern Sawwhet Owl, Marsh Wren (new), Rose-breasted Grosbeak* (new), Pine Grosbeak*. High Counts (13): Great Blue Heron, Snow

Goose, Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Killdeer, Great Black-backed Gull, Great Horned Owl, Fish Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Winter Wren, Rufous-sided Towhee. Low Counts: Ruffed Grouse, Gray Catbird, Field Sparrow, Purple Finch, Evening Grosbeak (missed for first time in 10 years).

LITCHFIELD HILLS: 63 species (114); 16,000 individuals; 42 observers + 5 feeder watchers. Compiler: Ray Belding. Rarities: Ring-necked Duck, Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Rough-legged Hawk, Common Snipe, Long-eared Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Phoebe (new), Winter Wren, Gray Catbird. New Highs (7): Red-bellied Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Eastern Bluebird, White-throated Sparrow. New Lows (1): Evening Grosbeak (missed for first time in 10 years).

LAKEVILLE-SHARON: 64 species (108); 16,000 individuals; 36 observers. Compiler: Robert Moeller. Rarities: Mute Swan, Ring-necked Duck, Red-headed Woodpecker*, Common Raven (new), Carolina Wren, Gray Catbird, Snow Bunting, Rusty Blackbird. High Counts (2): Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Bluebird. Low Counts (6): Mallard, American Kestrel, Ruffed Grouse, Hairy Woodpecker,

White-breasted Nuthatch, American Goldfinch, Evening Grosbeak (missed for first time in 10 years).

MID-STATE COUNTS: -5 counts 100 species (148); 81,000 individuals; 141 observers + 17 feeder watchers. 26 new High Counts; 3 new Low Counts; 3 new species; 1 species dropped.

SALMON RIVER: 77 species (123); 9000 individuals; 46 observers + 1 feeder watcher. Compiler: David Titus. Rarities: Great Cormorant (new), Wild Turkey, Long-eared Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Veery (new), Common Yellowthroat, Lincoln's Sparrow (new), Snow Bunting (new). High Counts (19): Great Blue Heron, Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Wild Turkey, Eastern Screech-Owl, Barred Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, House Wren, Winter Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Northern Cardinal, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow. Low Counts (0).

QUINNIPIAC VALLEY: 73 species (117); 23,000 individuals; 24 observers + 3 feeder watchers. Compiler: Wilford Schultz. Rarities: Northern Pintail, Turkey Vulture, Wild Turkey, Glaucous Gull (new), Common Yel-

lowthroat (new), Yellow-breasted Chat (new), Rusty Blackbird. High Counts (21): Mute Swan, Turkey Vulture, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Wild Turkey, American Woodcock, Rock Dove, Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Northern Cardinal, Snow Bunting, Red-winged Blackbird, House Finch, House Sparrow. Low Counts (2): Common Merganser (missed for first time in 10 years), Purple Finch.

OXFORD: 62 species + 1 CP (105); 9000 individuals; 23 observers + 1 feeder watcher. Compilers: Buzz Devine & Mark Szantyr. Rarities: Snow Goose (new), Greater Scaup (new), Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser (new), Osprey (new), Bald Eagle (new), Northern Harrier, Killdeer, Winter Wren, Red-winged Blackbird. High Counts (8): Pied-billed Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Mute Swan, Common Merganser, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Carolina Wren, Swamp Sparrow. Low Counts (2): Great Horned Owl, Purple Finch.

WOODBURY-ROXBURY: 83 species (85); 28,000 individuals; 46 observers + 1 feeder watcher. Compiler: Aldro Jenks. Rarities:

Snow Goose (new), Wood Duck, Lesser Scaup (new), Bufflehead (new), Red-shouldered Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Wild Turkey (new), Long-eared Owl, Lincoln's Sparrow. High Counts (20): Mute Swan, Wood Duck, Common Goldeneye, Common Merganser, Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Great Black-backed Gull, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Northern Cardinal, Song Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco. Low Counts (5): American Kestrel, Mourning Dove, American Goldfinch, Evening Grosbeak (missed for first time in 10 years), House Sparrow.

HIDDEN VALLEY: 68 species + 1 CP (105); 12,000 individuals; 12 observers + 10 feeder watchers. Compilers: Sibyll Gilbert & Jeanne Kauffman. Rarities: Snow Goose, Bald Eagle, Wild Turkey, Barred Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Phoebe, House Wren, Savannah Sparrow (new). High Counts (29): Bald Eagle, Wild Turkey, Rock Dove, Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Carolina Wren, Winter

Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Cedar Waxwing, Northern Cardinal, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, House Finch, House Sparrow. Low Counts (1): Mute Swan.

COASTAL COUNTS - 6 counts. 149 species + 1 CP (218); 179,000 individuals; 364 observers + 72 feeder watchers; 13 new High Counts; 18 new Low Counts; 1 new species.

NEW LONDON: 111 species + 6 CP (153); 27,000 individuals; 23 observers. Compiler: Bob Dewire. Rarities: Northern Gannet (new), Blue-winged Teal, Lesser Scaup, Harlequin Duck (new), Ruddy Duck, Northern Goshawk, Merlin, Snowy Owl (cp-new), Eastern Bluebird (cp), Water Pipit, Chipping Sparrow, Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Lapland Longspur, Northern Oriole (cp). High Counts (20): Canada Goose, Blue-winged Teal, Gadwall, Oldsquaw, Common Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Dunlin, Bonaparte's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Northern Flicker, Carolina Wren, American Robin, Water Pipit, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow-rumped Warbler, White-throated Sparrow, Lapland Longspur, Rusty Black-

bird. Low Counts (7): Pied-billed Grebe, American Kestrel, American Coot, Barred Owl, European Starling, Fox Sparrow, American Goldfinch.

OLD LYME: 104 species (157); 17,000 individuals; 42 observers. Compiler: Jay Hand. Rarities: Black-crowned Night Heron, Northern Goshawk, American Oystercatcher, Yellow-breasted Chat, Chipping Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow. High Counts (10): Horned Grebe, American Bittern, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, Rock Dove, Barred Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Winter Wren, Gray Catbird. Low Counts (11): Red-throated Loon, Common Loon, Greater Scaup, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk (missed for first time in 10 years), American Kestrel, Horned Lark, European Starling, Savannah Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow.

NEW HAVEN: 125 species + 3 CP (179); 49,000 individuals; 110 observers and 6 feeder watchers (high). Compiler: Stephen Brocker. Rarities: Eurasian Wigeon, Turkey Vulture (cp), Osprey, Bald Eagle, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Wild Turkey, Sora, Black-bellied Plover, Cape May Warbler (new), Grasshopper Sparrow (new), Common Redpoll. High Counts (20): Mute Swan, Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, Buf-

flehead, Red-breasted Merganser, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Wild Turkey, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Fish Crow, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Northern Cardinal. Low Counts (13): Red-throated Loon, Wood Duck (missed for first time in 10 years); Northern Pintail, Oldsquaw, American Kestrel, Killdeer, Bonaparte's Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Red-breasted Merganser, European Starling, Swamp Sparrow, Brown-headed Cowbird, Evening Grosbeak (missed for first time in 10 years).

STRATFORD-MILFORD: 105 species + 1 CP (173), 25,000 individuals, 44 observers. Compiler: Fred Sibley. Rarities: Snow Goose, Northern Shoveler, Merlin, Common Barn-Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Bluebird, Chipping Sparrow. High Counts (13): Great Blue Heron, Mallard, Gadwall, Common Goldeneye, Ring-necked Pheasant, Belted Kingfisher, Downy Woodpecker, American Robin, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird. Low Counts (2): Short-eared Owl (missed for first time in 10 years), Brown-headed Cowbird.

WESTPORT: 105 species + 2 CP (165); 32,000 individuals; 54 observers + 27 feeder watchers. Compiler: Frank Mantlik. Rarities: American Bittern, Cooper's Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Lesser Yellowlegs, Monk Parakeet, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Oriole. High Counts (8): Double-crested Cormorant, Mute Swan, Red-shouldered Hawk, Ring-billed Gull, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Carolina Wren, Winter Wren, Brown Thrasher. Low Counts (14): Pied-billed Grebe, American Wigeon, Oldsquaw, Ruffed Grouse, American Coot (missed for first time in 10 years), Great Black-backed Gull, Hermit Thrush, Savannah Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Snow Bunting (missed for first time in 10 years), Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch.

GREENWICH-STAMFORD: 105 species (162); 29,000 indi-

viduals; 91 observers + 39 feeder watchers. Compilers: Gary Palmer, Canfield Clark, & Thomas Baptist. Rarities: Red-necked Grebe, Great Egret, Harlequin Duck (new), Black Scoter, Peregrine Falcon, Greater Yellowlegs, Ruddy Turnstone, Eastern Phoebe. High Counts(6): Red-necked Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Great Black-backed Gull, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird. Low Counts (20): Pied-billed Grebe, American Black Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Ruffed Grouse, American Coot (missed for first time in 10 years), Black-bellied Plover, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, American Robin, Ruby-crowned Kinglet (missed for first time in 10 years), Cedar Waxwing, Yellow-rumped Warbler, American Tree Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Purple Finch, American Goldfinch, Evening Grosbeak (missed for first time in 10 years).

HELP WANTED!

New Art Director for
The Connecticut Warbler.
Someone with access to a
computer with desktop pub-
lishing software. If interested,
contact either
Pat Lynch - 272-6556
or Betty Kleiner - 658-5670

1. Peabody Museum, Yale Uni-
versity, New Haven, CT 06511

2. 76 Diamond Street, New Ha-
ven, CT 06515

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Summer & Fall: August 1 - November 30, 1988

Jay Kaplan

Due to unforeseen circumstances and a change in field editors, much of the data for this column was unavailable. The editors regret this inconvenience and extend apologies to all those contributors who have been so generous with their field notes and sightings. We hope to return to a regular schedule with our next issue of the *Warbler*.

This period saw a continuation of the abnormally high temperatures that gripped much of the northeast throughout the summer. During latter August, temperatures finally moderated and dropped to 50 degrees F August 22. Showers were a welcome change August 23-25 and following a moderate (1.5 inches) rain September 4, cool weather conditions precipitated songbird migration. A major cold front moved through the State October 8-9 with strong northwest winds and a "nor'easter" November 1 dumped up to 3 inches of rain on portions of Connecticut, providing some relief to area reservoirs. November continued with unsettled weather conditions including heavy rain November 17.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Common Loons and Horned Grebes began to congregate off

our coast in mid-November. A late loon remained on the Connecticut River near Suffield throughout November(PS). Photographs were taken of an Eared Grebe on Bantam Lake, Litchfield in mid-October; however, field notes on this sighting have yet to surface (fide FM). A Great Cormorant was sighted inland at Mansfield Hollow Reservoir October 16-17(WE). As many as 600 Double-crested Cormorants were staging at the Norwalk Islands October 1(FMa,CW), while 75 cormorants were inland along the Connecticut River at the Enfield Dam October 2. By October 23 only a single bird remained (PS). American Bittern sightings included single birds seen August 18 at Lordship Marsh, Stratford(FMa), September 3 at Barn Island, Stonington (m.ob), October 17 at Connecticut Audubon's Larsen Sanctuary (RW) and November 30 at Quiambaug Cove, Stonington (MP). Late egret reports included 2 Snowy Egrets at Manresa Marsh, Norwalk November 6(FMa) and a Cattle Egret located in Newtown August 5(MS) which was 18 miles inland. A Greater White-fronted Goose appeared at Mirror Lake, Storrs October 9(WE). Few Snow Geese were reported from southeastern

Connecticut with only a single bird on the Pawcatuck River September 30(EK). Meanwhile, 200 Snows were seen flying over Greenwich Audubon Center October 4(EJ). 100+ Brant seen flying over Storrs October 30(WB) were most unusual for northeastern Connecticut. Another unusual Brant sighting was that of a dazed bird found wandering in a Farmington parking lot October 31(fide JK). The bird was subsequently released.

Single male Eurasian Wigeon were found November 26 at Lake Saltonstall, Branford and at Furnace Pond, Guilford(SB). Up to 1000 Greater Scaup were at Milford Point November 6(FMa,FP). A female Common Eider was discovered at Milford Point September 18(FP,RE). This bird remained through the period and was seen by many observers. A single Black Scoter was observed north of the Enfield Dam on the Connecticut River November 5(PS).

HAWKS THROUGH TERNS

Excellent hawk flights were observed at Quaker Ridge, Greenwich September 10, 14 and 16. Over 28,000 hawks were totaled on the three dates including 13,000 Broad-winged Hawks and 6 Bald Eagles September 16(fide FMa). Lighthouse Point, New Haven, was also a choice site as 24,629 hawks were tallied through October 31. There were record high counts for Osprey

(2450), Broadwings (9330), Cooper's (471) and Merlin (364). Also sighted at this location were 8 Bald and 1 Golden Eagle, 18 Goshawks and 26 Peregrine Falcons. Numbers of Sharp-shinned hawks and Kestrels were down from 1987(fide RE). On the other hand, southeastern Connecticut hawk watch sites reported good numbers of sharpies and kestrels with the best date September 22(RSCB). As mentioned, it was a record year for Ospreys. Late sightings included single birds inland at the Hopmeadow Country Club, Simsbury, October 25(KD) and along the shore at Lighthouse Point November 14(RE). Among several inland Bald Eagle sightings was an immature bird sporting a wing tag #37, seen on the Housatonic River, Shelton, September 23(CC,CL). It was observed again in late September in Rocky Hill and determined to be a bird from Alaska that was released in New York State's reintroduction program. The bird was captured October 6 and returned to the New York hawk site, where it was last observed October 23(fide FMa). In addition to those birds sighted on hawk watches, there were also numerous sightings of Peregrine Falcons including a bird in downtown Waterbury November 4(MS).

A Sora was caught and banded August 27 in Storrs(WB). Nine Oystercatchers were at Sandy Point, Stonington, August

27(AOa). There were numerous reports of Lesser Golden Plover including a flock of 25 that landed at the tip of Milford Point September 19(PD). The last report of Piping Plover for the period were 2 birds at Milford Point August 10(FM,MS). Hudsonian Godwits were reported August 10 from Milford Point(FM,MS); September 3 from Ash Creek, Bridgeport (AC,DF); October 29-November 13 at Milford Point(RE) and 3 birds at Hammonasset State Park, Madison November 4-6(JK). The only Baird's Sandpiper reports for the period came from Milford Point September 10-11(m.ob.). One of the most exciting shorebird reports for the period was a juvenile Curlew Sandpiper discovered at Milford Point September 14(NP). The bird was photographed and remained until September 29(JZi) and, if accepted by the Connecticut Rare Records Committee, it will constitute the 12th (approx.) record for this species in the State. The only Buff-breasted Sandpiper reported was a single bird at Short Beach Park golf course, Stratford, September 4 (DT). Wilson's Phalaropes were reported from Milford Point August 11 (TBa,JZe) and from Lordship Marsh August 17(NC). An extralimital report of Parasitic Jaeger in Rye, New York, October 21 (TBu) sent Connecticut birders running for the shore, but the bird could not be relocated in Greenwich in spite of their ef-

forts. An immature jaeger was sighted at Milford Point September 15(BR), but this bird was not positively identified. Late Laughing Gull sightings included 16 birds at Veteran's Park, Norwalk, November 16(FMa) and a single bird at Gulf Pond, Milford November 25(MS). A rare inland sighting of Bonaparte's Gull, perhaps the third for the northeast corner, came from Mansfield Hollow Reservoir September 3(WE). Single Lesser Black-backed Gulls were seen at Milford Point September 18 (m.ob.) and from Sherwood Island State Park, Westport November 13(RS). An early Glaucous Gull was found at the North Haven dump October 15(MM). A strong east wind yielded 9 immature Black-legged Kittiwakes at Greenwich Point October 21(TBa,FP,JZe). All birds were flying into the wind. Sightings of larger terns included a Caspian at Milford Point September 18 (FP,RE) and a Royal at Longshore Park, Westport, August 4(FMa). Roseate Terns were sighted sporadically at Milford Point through September with a late date of September 19(FMa). Common Terns peaked at Milford Point September 19 with over 1200(FMa). The last Least Tern reports were also from Milford Point with 40 birds sighted August 7 (FMa). Up to 4 immature Black Skimmers were seen at Milford Point August 17-September 14 (m.ob.).

DOVES THROUGH VIREOS

A late Yellow-billed Cuckoo was found in New London October 6(AD). Long-eared Owls were reported from Lighthouse Point, where two birds were seen November 12(fide RE) and a single bird November 22(NC). Single Short-eared Owls were also reported at Lighthouse Point on these dates by the same observers. An additional Short-eared Owl report came from Station 43, South Windsor, where a single bird was seen November 14(SK). Northern Saw-whet Owls continued to be where they shouldn't as single birds collided with cars in Stonington October 26 and November 21 (SCBR). Another hit a Norwalk Maritime Center window November 4. A Saw-whet Owl in proper location was found roosting in cedars in Old Saybrook November 29(TR).

Large flights of Common Nighthawks were observed August 25-30 in the Farmington Valley area (JK) and in Waterbury August 25 where 150 birds were observed (MS). Chimney Swifts seen near the Farmington River in Collinsville September 8, numbered over 100(JK). Red-headed Woodpeckers appeared at feeders in Stonington in October and Madison in December and an immature bird was located in Cranbury Park, Norwalk, November 18(EH). Olive-sided Flycatchers were reported in Canton September 2(JK), in

Redding September 8(MS) and in Woodbury, September 11(MS). Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were located August 25 in Suffield(PS), in Newington August 28(JE,SE) and at Flanders Nature Center, Woodbury, September 11(MS). A Western Kingbird was reported on three occasions from Lighthouse Point Park. Sightings were made September 30(RE,FMc), November 14(RE), and November 26(fide RE).

Common Ravens have now been confirmed as residents in the northwest and northeast corners and at Barkhamsted Reservoir. However, the birds are not always easy to find and thus 2 ravens feeding on a deer carcass at Kent School(TR) November 15, were interesting. Gray-cheeked Thrush were reported from Roaring Brook Nature Center, Canton September 2 and 17(JK); and from Lighthouse Point, where 2 birds were seen October 5(NC). Over 1000 American Robins passed by the Quaker Ridge Hawk Watch site in 20 minutes October 20(EJ). Water Pipits were observed at Lighthouse Point October 13 (FMa,et.al.). A dozen pipits were seen at Station 43, South Windsor, October 14(JK,et.al.) and 7 birds were seen at Sherwood Island State Park October 16(RW). Philadelphia Vireos were seen from at least six locations in the State, all between September 3-25. The latest Red-eyed Vireo reported was a bird from Longshore Park, Westport, October

24(FMa).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

An Orange-crowned Warbler was observed at Milford Point September 14(CB). Connecticut Warblers were seen at Sherwood Island State Park August 21(RS); Birdcraft Sanctuary, Fairfield, August 30(AOi); Huntington State Park, Redding, September 10(RM) and at the Audubon Wildflower Garden, Greenwich, September 19(FP). Mourning Warblers were sighted at Flanders Nature Center, Woodbury August 17(MS); and immature bird was banded at Birdcraft Sanctuary, Fairfield September 28(AOi); and a late individual was found at Hammonasset State Park October 9(SJ). Late warbler reports included American Redstarts at Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center, Stonington, October 31-November 2(SCBR) and November 19, a very late date, at Sherwood Island State Park(MB).

This fall was a very good one for sparrows, with record numbers of several species banded at Storrs(WB). Unusual sparrows included Vesper reports from Sherwood Island State Park October 12(FMa), from Storrs October 15(LB) and from Longshore Park, Westport October 19(FMa). A Grasshopper Sparrow was banded in Storrs September 29(WB) and additional birds were seen in that area October 19(JMc) and October 21(GC,TC).

Two early Lapland Longspurs were seen at Milford Point October 9(RE) and an inland Snow Bunting was seen feeding along the shore of Congamond Lake, Suffield November 6(PS). A high total of 200 Bobolinks were seen in Waterbury August 6(MS). An immature male Yellow-headed Blackbird was seen at Hammonasset State Park August 9(CT). Winter finches - forget it, they just weren't here. There were few Purple Finches reported and virtually no reports of siskins or grosbeaks - nor would there be any during the coming winter.

Observers;

Contributors (boldface)

Tom Baptist(TBa), Charles Barnard, Jr., Louis Bevier, Steve Broker, Milan Bull, Tom Burke(TBu), **Winnie Burkett**, George Clark, Jr., Albie Collins, Carol Collins, Ti Crossman, Neil Currie, Ken Doyle, John and Sharon Egan, Richard English, Walter Ellison, Diane Ferber, Ed Hiestand, Elsbeth Johnson, Sheryl Johnson, Elizabeth Kading, **Jay Kaplan**, Steve Kotchko, Charles Letizio, Rod MacDonald, **Frank Mantlik (FMa)**, Flo McBride(FMc), John McDonald, Mark Mushkat, m.ob=many observers, Artie Oliveria(AOa), Alison Olivieri(AOi), Maggie Philbrick, Noble Proctor, Fred Purnell, **Records of Southeastern Connecticut Birds (RSCB)**, Tom Rochovansky, Bill Root,

Paul Saraceni, Richard Soffer,
Mark Szantyr, Clay Taylor, Dave
Tripp, Rob Winkler, Connie

Wood, Joe Zeranski(JZe), Julie
Zickefoose(JZi).

71 Gracey Road, Canton, CT
06019

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Changes do occur in the Warbler from time to time and some need an explanation. You will note in this issue the change of Field Notes Editor and the related form. The next issue (July) will contain our first Site Guide, which will be a semi-annual feature.

Jay Kaplan has agreed to edit the Field Notes and will be assisted by Paul Desjardins. There are two report forms in this issue, one for March thru May- the Spring sightings, and the June - July nesting season form. They are both to be sent to me (See form). Please note that the June - July form must be received by August 10. The need for such a quick return date is to send important sightings to American Birds in time for their publication date. This was voted upon by the C.O.A. Board. In the future, all report forms will have a quick turn-around date. It is crucial that the forms be filled out as birds are sighted. The October issue of the Warbler will contain both the Spring and Summer reports.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Clay Taylor for his fine job as Field Notes editor, a tough assignment that he has

handled for the past year and a half. We received many compliments and comments on Clay's style of editing. It is a big job and his expertise and efforts were greatly appreciated. Thanks Clay!

Our Site Guide editors have done a great job with their first Site Guide and are already working on the next one. They welcome any data or information on potential sites or complete site guides for future issues. If you have a favorite birding area that might make a good site guide, please contact one of the editors. Your suggestions are important to the compilation of data on Connecticut bird life.

Last, but not least, we need a new Art Director for the Warbler. Pat Lynch, who has been doing such a great job with the layout and laser printing of each issue, will no longer be able to do so, because of job commitments. If you have access to a computer and desktop publishing software for formatting the Warbler and have an interest in doing this job, please contact either Pat at 272-6556 or me at 658-5679 for further information. We need your help!

Betty Kleiner

SNOW GESE STRUCK DOWN BY THUNDERSTORM

Milan G. Bull

On March 24, 1988, a fast-moving weather front passed over lower Fairfield County, Connecticut, bringing heavy showers, thunder, lightning, and strong gusty winds. It was a prime example of a severe spring thunderstorm.

Approximately one mile from my home in the Southport section of Fairfield is a low, but somewhat steep hill, approximately 170 feet in height, known as Mill Hill. It is old farmland that has been subdivided into two acre house lots with several remaining fields and woodlots.

At about 8:00 p.m., as the worst of the storm was passing over Fairfield, I was busy turning off electrical appliances, as a particularly severe lightning bolt had just shaken the house. On the top of Mill Hill, at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Kenneth Morgan, a lightning bolt struck a utility pole, knocking out their power. At 8:30 p.m., Mrs. Morgan was returning home from a meeting and as she turned into her long driveway, she noticed what looked like the work of vandals. Through the rain, what appeared to be a long string of white plastic bags was strewn across her drive and into the woods. As she drove around the "bags," Mrs. Morgan observed that they were actually

dead birds and so returned with her husband and a flashlight to collect them. Being dark, windy, and rainy, and the birds were much larger than expected, the Morgans retreated and left the clean-up until morning.

The following morning, Mrs. Morgan telephoned the Fairfield police for help. When the police arrived, they found 17 Snow Geese (*Chen caerulescens*), all dead except one. The birds were lying in a nearly straight line, about five feet apart. The line of dead geese was nearly 100 feet long and extended from a neighbor's property, across the road and the Morgan's drive, and into their woods. Mrs. Morgan felt that neighborhood dogs might have carried off one or two additional birds, and at least one other had been partially eaten by some animal during the night. Thus the total number of birds involved may have been as high as 20.

The somewhat astounded Fairfield police called the Connecticut Audubon Society to report this incident and ask for help in disposing of the birds. Subsequently, the remaining live goose was admitted to the CAS wildlife rehabilitation center, and to this day it remains on the waterfowl pond.. The bird was x-rayed by a

local veterinarian and was found to have breast muscle trauma preventing it from flying.

On March 28th, Dr. George A. Clark, University of Connecticut ornithologist, delivered one of the specimens to the Pathobiology Laboratory at the UConn Cooperative Extension Service, for autopsy. An April 7th diagnosis indicated "trauma from falling, but cause of falling uncertain."

The position of the dead birds on the ground suggests that the

entire line of migrating geese fell as one. Perhaps the fall was caused by severe wind shear from which the geese could not recover.

The author would appreciate receiving reports of other bird losses during inclement weather. Please address reports to the Connecticut Warbler.

2325 Burr St., Fairfield, CT 06430

DON'T FORGET!
Your
Summer field reports
must be received
by August 10th!

POSSIBLE "RED-SHAFTED" NORTHERN FLICKER IN WOODBURY, CONNECTICUT

Mark Szantyr

Shortly after first light on 4 September 1987, while banding passerines at the Van Vleck Sanctuary of the Flanders Nature Center in Woodbury, Connecticut, Michael Harwood, Angela Dimmitt and I noticed the occurrence of a fair migration of Northern Flickers (*Colaptes auratus*). There were many flickers on the sanctuary and small groups of three to six birds were moving east to west over the sanctuary pond, adjacent to which we had set our portable banding table. The height of flight varied from fifteen to approximately one hundred meters. In attempting to count these birds, we looked, at least casually, at each that passed.

At approximately 0730 hours, while I was banding one of the many Gray Catbirds (*Dumetella carolinensis*) caught that day, Dimmitt noted that one of the passing flickers had red wing-linings. My quick check confirmed that one of four flickers passing overhead indeed had red and not yellow wing-linings. I made comparisons to the other three birds in the group and was able to rule out light conditions as the cause of the perceived red color. The bird was observed for about ten to fifteen seconds as it made its way westward beyond the treeline. Checks on all subse-

quent flickers passing over us that morning supported our initial observations of light and color.

Weather and light conditions were good. The weather was clear and cool, following the passing of a cold front, and the light was at a low angle over our right shoulders, illuminating the passing birds well.

The bird was identified as a Northern Flicker by the undulating flight style typical of woodpeckers and by the white rump patch extending up the lower back of the bird. This allowed us to rule out other possible species with red underwings. We did not note the color on the underside of the tail, and there were no other field marks to suggest the red-shafted form, formerly *C. cafer*. We cannot exclude the possibility that the flicker in question was a "Yellow-shafted" X "Red-shafted" hybrid or an aberrant-plumaged "Yellow-shafted" Flicker, but the red color did appear typical of "Red-shafted" Flickers I have seen in western portions of the United States.

Bent lists the breeding range of "Red-shafted" Flicker as north to southern Alaska, east to central North and South Dakota, and south to Oaxaca, Mexico. He states that during migration this

"species" is known to wander further to the east and to the Great Plains, with records as far east as Texas. Records from further east still are considered as hybrids with *C. auratus*, i.e. the current "Yellow-shafted" race of Northern Flicker. An interesting note is the 1988 banding of a "Red-shafted" X "Yellow-shafted" flicker at a banding station on Nantucket Island, Massachusetts (G. Tallcouch, pers. comm.).

There have been at least a few reported sight records for this western subspecies in Connecticut, but to date I know of none that have been satisfactorily documented. It would be of interest to search the literature for any well-documented occurrence in the eastern half of the

country or for the eastern-most hybrid nesting locations from which such birds might originate.

My thanks to Michael Harwood for reviewing this text.

Literature Cited

Bent, A. C., 1964. Life Histories of North American Woodpeckers. Dover Publications, Inc., New York, NY, 264-308.

25 Bonair Ave., Waterbury, CT
06710

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

Editor

Betty S. Kleiner, Simsbury
5 Flintlock Ridge, Simsbury 06070

Art Director

Patrick J. Lynch, Cheshire

Associate Editors

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Guide for Contributors

Preparation of Manuscripts:

The editors welcome submission of articles and notes for the *Connecticut Warbler*. Manuscripts should be typed double spaced on one side of the sheet only, with ample margins on all sides. Style of the manuscript should follow general usage in recent issues. All manuscripts receive peer review.

Illustrations:

The editors welcome submission of line artwork of Connecticut and regional birds. Black and white photographs of particular interest will also be considered, but tend to print at less than optimum quality. Line art should be submitted as good-quality photographic prints or in original form. All originals and prints will be returned promptly after publication prints are made.

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

Spring 1989

Contents

Volume IX Number 2 April 1989

- 25 **Editorial - The Tanager Tree**
 Frederick Purnell, Jr.
- 27 **The 1988-1989 Christmas Count**
 Fred C. Sibley and Stephen P. Broker
- 39 **Connecticut Field Notes**
Fall: August 1 - November 30, 1988
 Jay Kaplan
- 44 **From the Editor's Desk**
 Betty Kleiner
- 45 **Snow Geese Struck Down by Thunderstorm**
 Milan G. Bull
- 47 **Possible "Red-shafted" Northern Flicker in**
Woodbury, Connecticut
 Mark Szantyr

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About our Cover Artist:

Julie Zickefoose

"American Woodcock (Scolopax minor)"

Julie Zickefoose is a free-lance artist and naturalist who is devoted to the study, conservation, and appreciation of birds. Her work for the Nature Conservancy involved the creation of the Least Tern/Piping Plover Recovery Program. She is currently illustrating Birds of Insular Newfoundland and a book on Ospreys. Her paintings, drawings and articles have appeared in American Birds, Bird Observer, Bird Watcher's Digest and numerous publications of the U. S. and Canadian Wildlife Services.

The American Woodcock is Julie's third cover drawing for The Connecticut Warbler. More information about her work may be obtained by writing to her at Box 84, Hadlyme, CT 06439.

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

EDITORIAL

*All around
me I saw
communication,
friendship,
warmth.*

Since moving to Massachusetts in 1987, I have been asked many times why I continue to work for COA. A good question.

I believe in the goals and objectives of COA and the work that we do. Connecticut needs to document its avian history in order to develop a reference for the future. The ornithological community needs a forum through which it can come together, communicate, cooperate. The public needs to be informed concerning avian trends.

COA has reached beyond the early stages of its development and made great strides with its publications and projects. We have a clear understanding of our mission and we are finding new ways to work together and accomplish our goals. It is challenging and rewarding for me to be part of all this.

In setting up committees this year, I was struck by a willingness for volunteering and helping out. The old troopers are still there along with some new faces too. Betty Kleiner and Jay Kaplan work hard in getting The Warbler out. New to that staff are Paul Desjardins with field reports; and site guide editors, Dwight Smith, Buzz Devine and Mark Szantyr. Carl Trichka keeps our financial records in order. Neil Currie, George Zepko and Frank Mantlik are still out there in the field signing up new members.

The Rare Records Committee, led by George Clark, has completed work on the State checklist. Roland Clement continues to write articles and news releases, spreading the word about COA. Michael Harwood returns to the Editorial Advisory Committee with new members Alan Brush, William Davis and John Kricher. Winnie Burkett changes hats from Secretary to chairperson of the Program Committee. Just when Fred Sibley thinks it was safe to answer the phone again, we call to ask for another favor.

These are just some of the wonderfully talented people who conduct our business. The selfish reason why I continue to work for COA is that I enjoy working with these people. I've learned a lot from them.

My motivation for staying involved in Connecticut ornithology, even though I no longer live in the State, became apparent to me at our annual meeting in March of this year. Following the workshop presentations, everyone gathered for a refreshment break. I took this time to stand back and observe. There was an energy and congeniality in the gathering that was exciting to see.

I saw people comparing notes on the workshop presentations - discussing and debating points. There were questions about the afternoon program - What would the quiz be like? - Wouldn't the presentation about the salt marsh be interesting? - Who would be going on the field trip?

I saw friends making plans for lunch together - a quick trip to Birdcraft Museum for birds and bargains - a brown bag lunch on the lawn. All around me, I saw communication, friendship, warmth. All around me, I saw COA.

Debra M. Miller
14 Oakridge Dr., Franklin, MA 02038

Site Guide

NAUGATUCK STATE FOREST

Arnold Devine¹, Mark Szantyr², Dwight Smith³

Diverse landscapes of woods, ponds and streams coupled with a beautiful ravine and 162 species of birds highlight birding explorations in Naugatuck State Forest, just minutes from New Haven and Waterbury.

The Hunter's Mountain area of Naugatuck State Forest includes about 2,191 acres of mixed hardwoods, pine plantations, laurel thickets, swampy areas, streams and a steep-sided hemlock ravine. The vegetation of this State-owned forest has been much affected by past practices. Historically, forests in the Naugatuck Valley were cut for use in the brass industry. Hardwoods such as chestnut and red maple sprouted in great numbers from the stumps, and frequent wood crops were produced by clear cutting. Later, trees were cut for railroad ties. Lumber production from both private and public lands in this part of Connecticut peaked in 1909, and has since steadily declined, although a few permits are still issued for limited cutting of timber in this and other state forests. The impressive hemlock forest that occurs on the north-facing slope of Spruce Brook Ravine is an old-growth stand little affected by human activity.

In the early years of this cen-

ture the locale now known as the Naugatuck State Forest was a popular recreational area called High Rock Park. Trains of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad stopped near Spruce Brook to drop off passengers for an outing day of picnics, hikes or fishing. Eventually, title to the land was presented to the State of Connecticut by Harris Whittemore, who had purchased it in parts over a period of years. In the 1930's the state forest was improved through clearing of brush and other debris, planting of cover, and construction of trails by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Today, much of the state forest is crisscrossed with hiking trails or unimproved roadways. Incongruously (some would say incredibly!), the DEP recently sanctioned the construction of a rifle range within the forest, so be prepared to hear the "booms" of high-powered rifles as you hike along the trails.

An abundance of wildlife other than birds may be observed within the state forest. Three of Connecticut's five squirrels, the southern flying squirrel, gray and red squirrel are common within their respective habitats. At dusk and through the night aerial animals other than owls may include the little and big

brown bats, eastern pipistrelle and red bat. In the leaves and debris of the forest floor are white-footed mice and shrews while meadow voles occur in the fields and brushy areas. Deer, gray fox, otter and of course, raccoon and opossum are also frequently encountered.

SPECIALITIES

Spring migration: 33 species of warblers (including Hooded, Pine, Blue-winged/Golden-winged complex, Worm-eating, Black-throated green, Canada, and Wilson's) and Olive-sided Flycatcher.

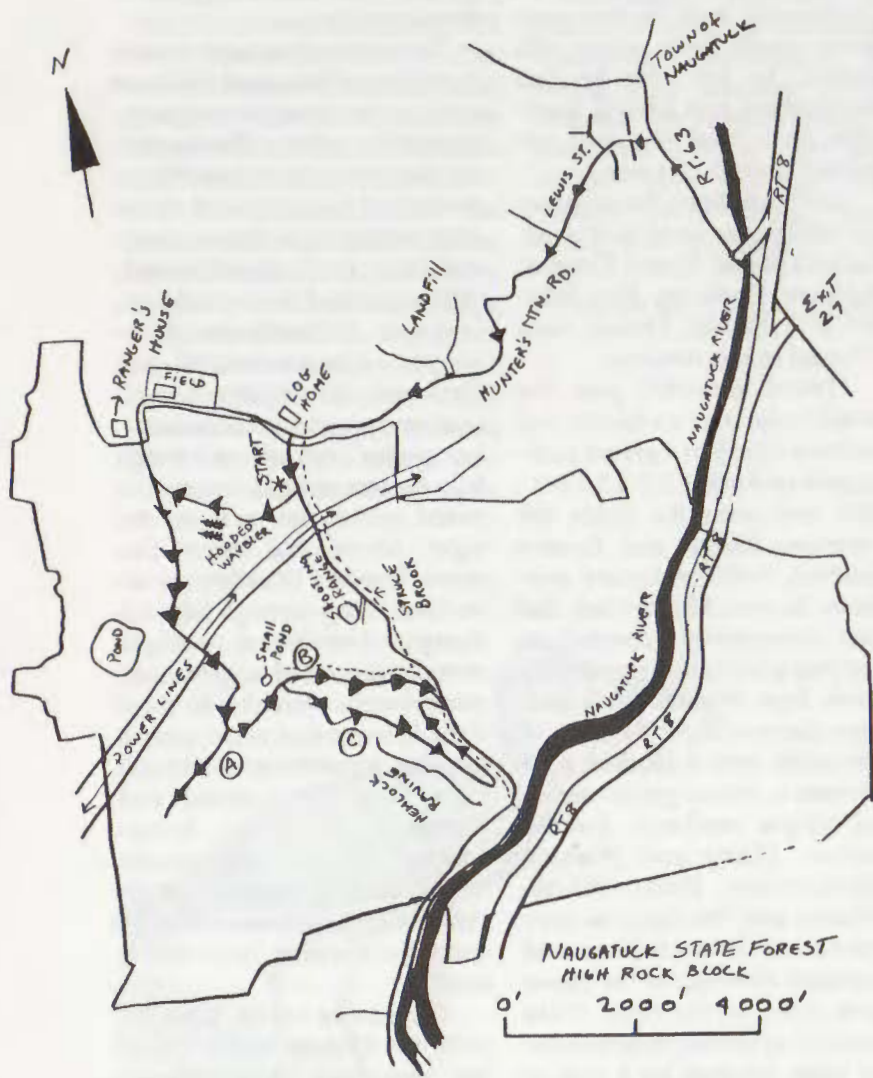
Nesting: Hermit Thrush, Solitary Vireo, Winter Wren, Northern Goshawk, Northern Sawwhet Owl (suspected), Whip-poor-will, warblers including Golden-winged/Blue-winged complex, Black-throated green, Pine and Worm-eating. **Rare Species:** Upland Sandpiper, Fish Crow, Bald Eagle, Northern Goshawk, Red-headed Woodpecker, Connecticut and Mourning Warbler.

During the past 10 years the Naugatuck State Forest (Hunter's Mountain block) has provided 162 species. The area, located within the Naugatuck River Valley can be one of the best inland migrant traps with a spring warbler migration rivaling East Rock Park. With suitable weather conditions the fall raptor migration is also noteworthy. The steep sided, cool hem-

lock ravine, a dominant feature of the park, provides a microclimate conducive to more northerly nesting species.

Access: Take Route 8 to Exit 26, which leads to Route 63. Take Route 63 North over the bridge across the Naugatuck River, turning left onto Scott Street at the second light. About one-tenth of a mile further, take the second left onto Lewis Street. Follow Lewis Street through the residential area to a stop sign. Going straight, Lewis Street becomes Hunter's Mountain Road up a steep hill passing several houses which are clustered towards the hilltop. Continue past a metal gate on the right, usually ornamented by piles of trash, leading to the former Laurel Park landfill. The state forest boundary begins just beyond.

Birding Explorations: Continue slowly along Hunter's Mountain Road stopping frequently to bird the adjacent habitats. The brushy fields which line the roadsides can produce House Wren, Brown Thrasher, Chestnut-sided, Yellow and Blue-winged Warbler. In late spring-summer you may hear the Bee-buzz-buzz-buzz of the Golden-winged Warbler - try to spot the singer. In the past five years our searches have revealed the songster to be a Blue-winged Warbler. This is one of many areas in the forest where Blue-wing/Golden-wing hybridization is evident. In late summer the area may host a



variety of butterfly species. During winter, flocks of Robin, Cedar Waxwing and Evening Grosbeak occasionally feed in the overgrown apple trees which still persist. In fall, Red-headed Woodpecker and Upland Sandpiper have been observed migrating through this area.

Continue down the roadway to a white pine stand on the left. Ruffed Grouse, Brown Creeper, Northern Goshawk, Pine Warbler and Hermit Thrush have occurred in this woodlot.

Travel downhill past the paved forest road on the left and continue uphill to a gravel parking area on the left (0.2-0.3 miles). Park and scan the fields for American Kestrel and Eastern Bluebird, both permanent residents. Eastern Meadowlark has been consistently recorded in past years, but is now apparently absent from this site. Walk back down the road about 200 feet and turn right onto a blocked path between a spruce grove and an old apple orchard. Ruffed Grouse, Hairy and Pileated Woodpecker, Field, White-throated and Fox Sparrow may be seen here. Return to the car and backtrack downhill to the paved forest road on the right. Drive about 0.3 miles to a gravel road on the right, blocked by a row of large rocks to prevent vehicle entry (if you come to a powerline cut you are 0.1 mile too far). Park here to begin birding a trail loop, about 3.0 miles in length. Over

the years we have found that this loop bisects the widest variety of habitats and offers the greatest diversity of birds.

The mature deciduous woods along Spruce Brook and the forest road can be good for migrants, especially warblers. The east facing slopes warm up quickly on cool spring mornings and can be alive with birds. In this area listen and look for Yellow-throated, White-eyed and Red-eyed Vireo, Common Yellowthroat, Blue-winged, Chestnut-sided and Black-and-white Warbler as well as other common woodland nesting species from spring through fall. As you ascend the trail, a mixed spruce grove is on the right. Above and below this grove, Hooded Warblers are often heard May through July. Although not confirmed, nesting is strongly suspected, so please use caution while searching for these birds. Scan the tops of the spruces for the sometimes numerous Cape May, Bay-breasted and Blackpoll Warblers. Ruby-crowned Kinglets are usually numerous in Spring and Fall. In 1985 a Golden-crowned Kinglet spent the summer here—did it nest?

Continuing uphill along the path, the thickets of blackberry and jewelweed have produced Mourning and Kentucky Warblers. Late May to June is the best time. During late August and early September, scan the dead tree tops along the entire path-

way for the teed-up posture of the Olive-sided Flycatcher. This park is one of the most reliable spot for the species during this period. Follow the path to the "T" intersection (about 800 yards from the trailhead). Along the way, Wild Turkey was once seen. Rufous-sided Towhee, Ruffed Grouse and Scarlet Tanager are more common. At the T take a left and listen for Canada Warblers which have been recorded during summer months and may breed.

From the T to the pond, about 0.3 miles, in past years members of the Blue-wing/Golden-wing Warbler complex have been observed along this trail, including the Brewster's hybrid. Brown Thrasher, Field Sparrow and Chipping Sparrow and Rose-breasted Grosbeak abound in this area.

Upon reaching the pond, take some time to study the dead wood, the pond and the shoreline as well as the sky. From this point, numerous species of raptors have been seen including a courting pair of Northern Goshawks, Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawk and the occasional Osprey. Turkey Vultures soar on warm summer days as they nest along the ledges overlooking the Naugatuck River. Search the dead tree tops for Eastern Bluebird at any season, and in summer for Common Flicker, all of the swallows, blackbirds and the occasional Olive-sided Flycatcher. Depending on the season and water level,

various wading birds have occurred, including Great Blue and Green-backed Heron, the latter of which has nested, Spotted, Solitary, Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers. Duck species at the pond may include Mallard, Black and Wood Duck.

Leaving the pond, return to the main trail bearing left at the Y and heading toward the power line right of way about 100 m. If you are short of time, you can follow the power line down slope back to the paved road (about 0.4 miles). Be careful along the route as many sections are rocky, muddy and flooded. The shrubby habitat along the powerline can be ideal for Prairie and Yellow Warbler, Indigo Bunting, Field and Song Sparrow and American Goldfinch in spring and fall. During winter, check for Purple Finch, White-throated, Song and Fox Sparrows. Should you choose to continue along the main trail, be on the lookout for Chestnut-sided and Nashville Warblers, and both cuckoos.

The deciduous woodland along the left side of the trail has produced woodcock, as late as December. From this point to a sharp right curve (about 500 yards which begins a horsehoe bearing left down the hillside), the area abounds with wild grape. In season, both the grape and insects they attract supply a food source for Ruffed Grouse, Catbird, Veery and Wood Thrush, Northern Cardinal,

Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Northern Oriole and a host of other species. Hooded Warblers also occur here regularly. Both Olive-sided Flycatcher and Gray-cheeked Thrush have been observed during fall migration.

If you have time for a short excursion, take the trail on the right which appears about half-way down the horseshoe (about 275 yards). This trail leads through a red maple shrub swamp to a hemlock and white pine lined "canyon" (about 400 yards). Along the trail Worm-eating Warblers are common in spring and summer as are Eastern Wood Pewee and Great Crested Flycatcher. In the lower "canyon" a river otter was once observed scurrying in and around the rocky ledge as it headed into a small stream.

Returning to the trail back at the horseshoe, continue downhill, where a small stream parallels the trail. Louisiana Waterthrush is common and nests whereas Northern Waterthrush occurs sporadically during migration. Continue to the small pond on the left. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds have been recorded in the apple trees along its edge. Northern Oriole, Scarlet Tanager, Common Yellowthroat and many other species will be conspicuous (spring-fall).

Across the concrete dam in the pine grove are a picnic table and benches, where you can relax, listen and watch for Pine

Warbler, Brown Creeper and the uncommon Pileated Woodpecker. If you don't wish to cross the dam, another stand of white pine is about 400 feet downslope—where the same species also may be found. Broad-winged Hawks have nested in the vicinity in recent summers.

From the small pond there are two ways to proceed. You can follow the left fork downslope past the pine grove on the left (just discussed) and parallel with the small stream. After crossing the footbridge the trail terminates at the paved forest road. The right fork ascends a slight hill. This trail bisects an upland deciduous woodland where Downy and Hairy Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse and White-breasted Nuthatch are permanent residents. Red-eyed Vireo, Scarlet Tanager, Ovenbird and Wood Thrush are common species during spring, summer and fall. About 250 yards from the pond you will come upon a hemlock grove with a small road on the left. Take this left trail approximately 200 yards until you reach a small stream. Here you will find blue trail markers following the stream downhill into the Spruce Brook Ravine. Follow the trail and the brook downstream about 180 yards until a trail, identified by a 4 inch red diamond attached to a hemlock, breaks off to the right. A singing Acadian Flycatcher has been observed in this area. At this

point you are entering the north facing slope of Spruce Brook Ravine. Bisected by the river, the north slope of this beautiful east-west oriented ravine forms a cool, moist conifer-forested microhabitat. Birds usually found further to the north may nest in this ravine. Watch for Winter Wren, Black-throated Green Warbler, Solitary Vireo and Hermit Thrush. One July day a Northern Saw-whet Owl was heard calling in the woodland.

The 0.6 mile long trail is steep as you descend but fortunately it is all downhill and in good condition. The bank slopes steeply to the brook 200 feet below along parts of the trail. Past the steep area, the ravine opens up and habitat begins changing to a mixed deciduous-conifer woodland. The Worm-eating Warbler, Eastern Wood Pewee, Great Crested Flycatcher, Veery, Wood Thrush and Ovenbird are fairly common in spring and summer. When you come to a dirt parking lot, stay along the left edge until a trail veers left toward the brook. Take an immediate left and follow the trail up and along Spruce Brook. Once you get back into the ravine the innumerable waterfalls and deep pools of water are picturesque, especially in winter when icefalls and ice ledges are plentiful. Be on the lookout for northern species and for Eastern Phoebe, which nests on the moss covered rock outcroppings, and Louisiana Waterthrush, darting

up and down the stream bank. It also nests here.

This quarter mile trail along the brook can be refreshingly cool even on a hot summer day. The water looks inviting, but can be surprisingly cold. Along the trail, watch for striped maple, which provides another indicator of the cooler conditions which prevail on the north-facing slope of this ravine.

The trail ends at the previously mentioned footbridge. The open bottomland between the ravine slopes can be teeming with bird life, except during winter. Here Blue-winged and Chestnut-sided Warbler, American Redstart, Yellowthroat, Solitary and Red-eyed Vireo, Veery, Wood Thrush, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Northern Cardinal are some species for which you might search.

To proceed back to the parking area, do not cross the footbridge (unless you want to return to the small pond and retrace the trail back to the car), but follow the dirt road 200 feet to the paved park road, bearing left up the hill. It is about 0.5 miles back to the car. Check the wooded slope on the right for Worm-eating Warbler, if you have not yet seen one. Search the open area toward the hilltop for Olive-sided Flycatcher in late May and early September.

On the left is a shooting range (as you may have already heard!). It is difficult to understand why the DEP permitted the

construction of a shooting range in the middle of a state forest, especially since the Naugatuck State Forest has traditionally been a major recreational location in the Naugatuck Valley. On the left, between the shooting range and the powerline, the Hooded Warbler can usually be located, initially by its song and, with persistence, by sight. Also, check the powerline cut for hawks, Pileated Woodpecker, Prairie Warbler, Song and Field Sparrow, Indigo Bunting, Northern Oriole, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak during spring, summer and early fall, before proceeding to your car about 0.1 mile up the road.

Once in the car, drive downhill past the dirt road leading into Spruce Brook Ravine to the bottom of the valley and to the confluence of Spruce Brook and the Naugatuck River. Park here and scope the rock ledges and hillside for Turkey Vulture, Northern Goshawk, Bald Eagle (rare in winter), Osprey, Broad-winged Hawk, waterfowl and gulls. Glaucous and Iceland Gulls were uncommon fall and winter residents along this stretch of river (usually about 0.25 to 1 mile upstream) when the Laurel Park landfill was active, and may still be found. Fish Crows may occasionally be heard calling as they fly above the river valley. Drive slowly south along the gravel road which parallels the railroad tracks. Stop and listen for Worm-eating Warbler along the bedrock

slopes and for Warbling Vireo in the cottonwoods and sycamores that line the river. Killdeer and Spotted Sandpipers nest along the small islands and gravel banks of the river. Belted Kingfishers nest in the short sand bluffs which formed the former shooting range. When the paved road is reached, continue 0.3 miles, turn left, crossing a bridge over the railroad tracks, then cross the steel bridge over the Naugatuck River to arrive at the former route 8. To access Route 8, turn left (north) to Naugatuck or right, (south) towards Seymour.

A variety of nocturnal species are found in the park. Screech, Great Horned, Barred and Northern Saw-whet Owls all have been recorded and are probably permanent residents (although the Saw-whet is rare and sporadic). Undoubtedly, the Eastern Screech-Owl is the most common species located on Hunter's Mountain Road, especially in the forest-field habitat at the park boundary, along the paved park road near the powerline right-of-way and elsewhere. Great Horned and Barred Owls are not consistently found in any one location, but remain uncommon through the whole area—both have been heard on Hunter's Mountain Road and observed along the Naugatuck River. Woodcock are common along Hunter's Mountain Road and can be observed at dusk performing their courtship ritual from April-

July. The forest supports a fine Whip-poor-will population and is one of the most consistent locations for finding this species from April through August. Whip-poor-wills can be heard along Hunter's Mountain Road, by the park boundary, near the trail parking site described above and off the dirt road leading into Spruce Brook Ravine. Common Nighthawks are uncommon, but can be observed performing their aerial maneuvers in pursuit of insects along the Naugatuck River from late May-July. From mid-August to mid-September nighthawks are sometimes abundant, especially on overcast evenings. Nighthawks apparently use the river as a migratory route.

If birding is slow or you have completed your explorations, take time to examine the ecology of the hemlock forest. Both abiotic and biotic conditions are similar to the great coniferous forests that form a broad belt across Canada and Eurasia. Notice that the forest is self-sustaining, i.e., the seedlings and saplings are also hemlock, indicating that it is unlikely to be displaced

by a deciduous wood. You are observing a dramatic example of how microclimate influences vegetation. The north-facing slope receives less sunlight and cool, wet conditions prevail, resulting in a more northern habitat-hemlock conifer forest. Conversely, the south-facing slope is warmer and dryer, hence a deciduous woodland. The obvious differences between the shrub and herb layers of each forest type also result from this microclimate differences.

You may also want to cross the Naugatuck River to explore the eastern part of the Naugatuck State Forest, which includes more than a thousand acres of forest, much of it a white birch/gray birch hybrid forest.

1. D.E.P. Hazardous Waste Management Section, Hartford, CT
2. 25 Bonair Ave., Waterbury, CT 06710
3. Southern Connecticut State Univ., New Haven, CT 06525

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Winter: December 1, 1988 — February 28, 1989

Jay Kaplan

A "wimpy winter?" asked The Hartford Courant at the conclusion of the winter season. Well, from a birder's point of view, it all depended upon what you were hoping to see. From a meteorological standpoint, the temperatures were not all that wimpy. December was actually 1.5 deg. F below normal in Bridgeport, although 1.3 deg. F above normal for the Hartford area. January was a mild month with temperatures averaging 5.4 deg. F above normal for the State. February was just about average, with high readings of 57 deg. F in Bridgeport and 65 deg. F in Hartford February 1. It was the precipitation or, rather, a lack of precipitation, that made the winter seem so mild. The snowfall for the entire 1988-89 winter measured 11.9 inches and total precipitation from December 1 through the end of the 1988-89 winter season in Hartford stood at a mere 4.73 inches. For comparison, a normal winter's snowfall is just under 50 inches. With conditions like this, one might have expected all kinds of unusual sightings. There was a smattering of catbirds and orioles around feeding stations, but nothing to generate great enthusiasm. Does lack of snow also mean lack of winter finches? There surely weren't any around

this season. Nevertheless, there were a few goodies such as a Black-headed Grosbeak in Harwinton. Massachusetts managed a Sprague's Pipit and a Le Conte's Sparrow (our bird from 1987?) and many Connecticut birders travelled north to begin their 1989 lists on a high note. Will a mild winter have any effects upon spring migration? Stay tuned to the next issue of The Warbler to find out!

Winter Bird Feeder Survey: 1988-1989

This year's survey elicited 41 responses, up from 37 received last year. Of this total, 51% (20) of the feeding stations were located in a residential area and 37% (15) were in rural woodland. Three feeders were in rural farmland, while two were in urban areas. These figures show a slight shift from the previous year when 60% of the feeding stations were in residential areas and 24% in rural woodlands. Most stations (39 out of 41) used sunflower seeds. Other common foods provided were mixed bird seed (28 stations), suet 28, and thistle seed 26. Water was provided at 12 stations, and cracked corn at 11. At least a dozen other varieties of food were utilized ranging from finch mix to popcorn, from ca-

nary seed to table scraps. One station even provided maple sap from a tree to which the feeder was attached.

No species was reported at all 41 stations, however, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse and House Finch did appear at all but one station at some point during the winter season. Mourning Dove and Downy Woodpecker made it to 39 stations, while Northern Cardinal and Dark-eyed Junco were seen at 38. Other high scorers were Blue Jay (37), White-breasted Nuthatch (35) and White-throated Sparrow (33). Certainly there are no surprises on this list as all of these species are common winter visitors to feeding stations in our region. Birds seen at over 50% of the stations were American Goldfinch (28), European Starling (27), American Crow and Song Sparrow (25), and House Sparrow (22). All results are similar to those of last year. Next on the list in terms of frequency of appearance were Red-bellied Woodpecker (18) and Hairy Woodpecker (17). Have Red-bellied Woodpeckers driven Hairy's away from feeding stations? American Tree Sparrow was next (16). Mockingbird was noted at 12 feeding stations, although not one person mentioned anything about fruit. Species sighted from 5-10 times included Rock Dove, Brown Creeper, Carolina Wren, Fox Sparrow, Red-winged Black-

bird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird and Purple Finch. Many of these were regionally restricted birds. Pileated Woodpecker was seen but three times, which is a pity as it is very impressive to see these large birds tearing suet bags to shreds. Seen only 3-4 times were Field Sparrow, Rusty Blackbird and Sharp-shinned Hawk. Might the latter be common? Look for piles of feathers in the vicinity next winter. The following species were reported from only one station: Northern Flicker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Rufous-sided Towhee, White-crowned Sparrow, Merlin, Ring-necked Pheasant and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Absent from our list were such birds as Brown Thrasher, Gray Catbird, Swamp Sparrow and, of course, the missing red-polls, siskins and grosbeaks.

What does this all mean? It is hard to tell until we begin to receive a greater number of reports and more years of records. For example, I know of several feeding stations that regularly attract such species as Ruffed Grouse and Wild Turkey to name two species that were not reported this year. Unlike other aspects of the field notes, designed to discuss unusual sightings or abundances, the winter feeder survey shows trends. Without an historic and larger data base, one cannot begin to extrapolate meaningful changes in occurrence - the winter finches being

an obvious exception. Should we continue a winter feeder survey? By all means. The survey will take time to develop into a useful tool. It is also a means by which feeder watchers may learn what species may be missing at their backyard feeding stations. Looking for these species the following year will help to improve their observational skills and, perhaps add to our knowledge of the species we may take for granted. Keep watching those feeders!

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

In spite of the mild temperatures and a good deal of open water, loons were in short supply throughout the period. Red-throated Loons were scarce in southeastern Connecticut as reported in the Records of Southeastern Connecticut Birds (hereafter RSCB). A single Common Loon was seen on the Connecticut River in Suffield, December 18 (PS). Grebes were also on the low side with single Pied-billed Grebes reported from the Housatonic River in Southbury, December 26 (RN) and along the Thames River, New London through January (RSCB). Along our southwest coast, Horned Grebes could be found in their usual haunts, although numbers were down from the previous year. Sherwood Island State Park (hereafter SISP), Westport had a high number of 50 February 20

(FMA et al.). Single Red-necked Grebes were seen at Groton Long Point December 30 (RSCB); Rocky Neck State Park (hereafter RNSP), Niantic January 26 (RBA); and off Long Beach, Stratford February 4 (RS). Great Cormorants, common along the coast, are rare inland and the single bird on the Connecticut River in Suffield January 13-19 (SKe,PS) was noteworthy. This is the third consecutive year a Great Cormorant has been reported at this location. One species that apparently enjoyed the mild weather conditions was Great Egret. Two birds were seen in Norwalk Harbor December 1 (FMA) with one remaining until December 16 (BF), and single individuals were reported from Milford Point December 7 (SM), SISP December 24 (RW), and Great Meadows, Stratford December 29 (SKo). The lack of snow on the ground was great for geese, with flocks numbering thousands of individuals in many areas of the State. With all of these geese, there couldn't help but be a few rarities. A Greater White-fronted Goose (Greenland race) was discovered amidst two thousand Canadas on a Bloomfield sod farm January 9 (BK,JKa). The bird was seen sporadically and last reported February 25 (HM, fide TB). Another individual appeared on Mirror Lake, Storrs December 31 (JMc). Snow Geese were widely reported with one or two birds reported from 11

different locations. Brant were also plentiful with a high of 370 in South Norwalk December 27 (FMa,CW) and flocks of up to 150 birds reported from other coastal locations (fide FMa).

Open inland waters provided a host of waterfowl reports, in addition to the usual coastal sightings. Two Wood Ducks were seen on the Connecticut River in Suffield February 25 (PS). A Green-winged Teal (Eurasian race) was sighted January 6 (CBa) at Grays Creek, Westport. In addition to several coastal sightings, Northern Pintails were reported from Congamond Lake, Suffield December 12 (SKe); Lake Beseck, Middletown December 21 (WS); the Enfield Boat Launch, Connecticut River January 16 (BK, JM); and from North Farms Reservoir, Wallingford January 29-February 2 (WS). Eurasian Wigeon have become almost regular winter visitors in Connecticut in the last few years. This season, sightings of single birds came from Lake Saltonstall, East Haven early December (fide RE); Oyster River, Milford January 29 (SM); and West Haven February 1 (BD). A single Redhead was reported on Aspetuck Reservoir, Easton January 1 (NC, RN et al.) and three Redheads were present on the Thames River, New London through much of the period (m.ob.). A Ring-necked Duck was sighted on the upper Connecticut River from the Enfield Boat Launch February 4 (JB) and

February 24 (LK). These sightings pale when compared to the 100+ birds seen on the Naugatuck River, Seymour January 12 (BD). A single Greater Scaup Barkhamsted Reservoir January 1 (DT) was an uncommon sighting. The three Lesser Scaup seen in Barkhamsted Reservoir December 26 (SKe) may seem insignificant when compared with the 125 seen in New Haven Harbor December 12 (FMa et al.). Another report of five Lesser Scaup came from New London January 17 (BK, WC, MC). The Common Eider previously reported from Milford Point, was last seen December 6 (RE). Two duck sightings stand out this season. A Harlequin Duck observed on the Thames River during the New London CBC, December 26, was the best. The bird remained in the area through the period. More reliable and also outstanding, were the three Barrow's Goldeneye located on the Connecticut River. First reported from the Enfield Boat Launch January 15 (PS), these birds, one male and two females, remained through March 3 with a large flock of Common Goldeneyes. A high of 25 Ruddy Duck were seen at Held Pond, Weston December 3 (FMa).

VULTURES THROUGH GULLS

Mild conditions may have influenced Turkey Vulture movements during the period as 11 birds were seen roosting on an island in Lake Quonnipaug,

Guilford December 21 (WS). A mid-winter warm front coincided with seven birds in Granby February 1 (HJ) and five in Union February 2 (BK,WC). The open waters allowed eagles to remain dispersed along the State's major waterways and Bald Eagles were everywhere this season. Bald Eagles are expected around the reservoirs in northwestern Connecticut during the winter. An immature Golden Eagle, sighted at the north end of Barkhamsted Reservoir January 14 on a New Haven Bird Club trip, was not expected. The bird was last reported February 19 (PS). An adult Golden Eagle was sighted in Preston December 12-16 (RSCB). Single Northern Harriers were reported from Lordship Marsh, Stratford January 1 to end of period (RN), Bloomfield January 12 (BK), Durham Meadows January 14 (WS), and a male in Wallingford February 26 (WS). American Kestrels continue in short supply with few winter reports of this species - a good subject for some research? Merlin, on the other hand, were reported throughout the period with single birds at Sikorsky Airport, Stratford December 20 (NC), Hartford January 6 (CE), and SISP February 20 (SKo). Peregrine Falcon reports were even more prevalent with seven reports, including one from Hartford and six from the coast.

Northern Bobwhite have declined in recent years, even from

eastern portions of the State. Thus, 12 birds along a powerline at Denison-Pequotsepos Nature Center, Mystic January 17 were a welcome sight (RSCB). A late Sora was observed at Lake Whitney, New Haven December 16-17 (FMc). Winter numbers of American Coot, according to CBC reports, have declined dramatically. Remnant populations remain with six birds on Congamond Lake, Suffield (SKe), and five on the Thames River, New London (FS) through the period plus a single bird at Rocky Neck State Park (NHBC). Few shorebirds reports were received for the period. Three Black-bellied Plover were seen at Longshore Club Park, Westport January 1 (RN) and a single bird was at SISP January 15 (EJ). There were two Common Snipe at Hamden Water Compound December 3 (CG) and one at Green Farm Road, Westport January 15 (EJ). American Woodcock were reported sporadically throughout the period.

As usual, South Cove, Old Saybrook was a good place for Bonaparte's Gulls with 200 seen in this location January 17 (BK,WC,MC), but no Little or Black-headed Gulls. An albino Ring-billed Gull was again at Ft. Hale Park, New Haven through the period (fide FG). Iceland Gulls were reported from the Connecticut River, Suffield January 13-19 and February 23 (two birds) (SKe), the Housatonic

River, New Milford January 20 (NC); and the New Milford landfill January 26 (RBA). Lesser Black-backed Gulls continue to increase as winter visitors, with reports of this species from six locations, primarily landfills. A single Glaucous Gull was seen in Hartford February 17 (RR).

OWLS THROUGH KINGLETS

A Common Barn Owl was a road kill in Gales Ferry December 21 (RSCB). A very reliable Eastern Screech Owl during the period was at the Enfield Boat Launch on the Connecticut River. It was studied and photographed by many observers who were waiting for the Barrow's Goldeneye to appear. Single and brief reports of Snowy Owls came from Milford Point January 11 (NC) and January 26 (RBA), and Sandy Point, West Haven February 1 (RBA). A Long-eared Owl was sighted at Hammonasset Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP) December 31 (JB) and two birds were found in Sherman January 10 (JKf). One Saw-whet Owl spent the entire winter at Greenwich Point Park (m.ob.), while less sedentary birds were seen in North Haven February 7 (FMc); February 11 (BD) and a different bird February 20 (BD,DSm).

An adult Red-headed Woodpecker was sighted in Clinton January 14 (BD,MS,FG). Open agricultural lands in Bloomfield provides suitable winter habitat

for Horned Lark and 75 were seen there January 9 (JKa,BK). Common Ravens are now permanent residents at Barkhamsted Reservoir, but difficult to observe. Three birds were sighted January 15 (DT) and single individuals were located February 19 (PS) and February 25 (RN et al.). Red-breasted Nuthatch was all but absent this winter with birds missing from many of their usual haunts. One in New Milford January 1 (RN et al.) was the only report received. A species that has increased during the relatively mild winters of recent years is the Winter Wren. Numerous reports were received from throughout the State and it will be interesting to look for any increase in nesting activity by this species. Golden-crowned Kinglets were in good supply, but there was only one report of Ruby-crowns, an individual in Sherman January 2 (AD,JKf).

THRUSHES THROUGH FINCHES

Single Hermit Thrushes were reported from Canton December 20 (JKa) and Woodbury through the period (RN). Brown Thrashers were observed at Farmbrook, New Haven December 4 (DB), the Hamden landfill December 19 (CG), and HBSP, Madison January 23 (NC). The mild weather conditions may have contributed to numerous winter reports of Gray Catbirds, including reports from East Rock Park, New Haven

(two birds) December 14 (FMc); Durham Fairgrounds January 14 (WS)); and Sherman February 20 (JKf). A late Water Pipit was at HBSP December 10 (SM). Mild weather did not provide an increase in late warbler reports. A single male Common Yellowthroat at Durham Meadows January 14 (WS) was the only report for the period. One of the most interesting reports was an immature male Black-headed Grosbeak at a Harwinton feeder. The bird, first observed February 5, remained for one week and was photographed (RB,DT), but was not put on the rare bird alert at the request of the homeowner. Almost as unique was an immature Indigo Bunting at a Glastonbury feeder January 12-13 (J&ML).

Sparrows of interest included a Chipping in Shelton December 28 (JB,EB) and a Lincoln's in Middlebury December 17 (BD). Lapland Longspurs were reported sporadically from HBSP throughout the period (m.ob.) with no more than two individuals seen at any one time. A Snow Bunting was also seen at HBSP January 14 (RE), while another was sighted in Middletown December 18 (WS). A male Red-winged Blackbird in South Norwalk (CW) January 27 might have been an early migrant. Singing males in East Hartford (JKa) and West Hartford (AC) February 13 were the vanguard of the spring migration. A flock of 50 was seen in Milford February 22

(MB). Flocks of Rusty Blackbirds were reported north of Konold's Pond, North Haven December 9 and January 6 (FMc); three appeared at a Middletown feeder December 18-19 (GM) and a flock of more than 17 Rusty's at a Wallingford feeder for much of the period increased to 42 by February 11 (WS). Single Northern Orioles were reported from feeders, one, killed by a Sharpshinned Hawk in Wilton December 3 (fide FMa), a first year-male in Westport December 8-18 (fide FMa) and a bird in Groton Center January 3 (RSCB).

Winter Finches.....that's all, folks. Actually, there was a single report of a fly-by Evening Grosbeak in Canton December 20 (JKa). Not too impressive when compared with previous years. However, reports of the absence of a species are as valuable as reports of the presence of the species. Thus, we believe there were almost no siskins, repolls, grosbeaks or crossbills in Connecticut during the winter of 1988-89.

Observers; Contributors (boldface)

Ralph Amodei, James Bair, Cheryl Barker(CBr), Dan Barvir, Charles Barnard(CBa), Ray Barnett(RBa), Ray Belding(RBe), Ella Bradbury, Andrew Brand, Miley Bull, Tom Burke, Walter Charsky, Alice Cheney, Barbara Cole, Neil Currie, Mary Czapinski, Buzz Devine, Angela Dimmitt, Mike Dudek,

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Merrithew (JMe), Russ Naylor, New Haven Bird Club (NHBC), Alison Olivieri, Rare Bird Alert (RBA), Records of Southeaster Connecticut Birds(RSCB), Ron Rozsa, Paul Saraceni, Wilford Schultz, Ray Schwartz, Fred Sibley, Dee Smith, Dwight Smith (DSm), Jane Snyder, Mark Szantyr, Dave Tripp, Connie Wood, V. P. Wystrach

71 Gracey Rd., Canton, CT 06019



UNUSUAL CONNECTICUT BIRD SPECIMENS IN THE YALE PEABODY MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

George A. Clark¹, Jr., Fred C. Sibley², Roland C. Clement³

This is the second report in a projected series on the location of unusual bird specimens from Connecticut. The first report concerned specimens housed at the University of Connecticut in Storrs (Clark 1989). We now report on exceptional specimens in the collections at the Yale University Peabody Museum of Natural History (YPM) in New Haven.

We here list either the number of specimens or, for certain unusual specimens, a citation of published reference or data on catalog number, locality and date. Our nomenclature follows the Sixth Edition of the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds (1983). For each species marked with an asterisk, a kodachrome photograph of one or more specimens has been deposited in the research photographic collection of the Connecticut State Museum of Natural History in Storrs. Specimens in the following list are study skins unless otherwise designated as a mount, skeleton, or preserved in fluid:

Eared Grebe (YPM 77316, male, Mt. Carmel, Hamden, 22 Dec. 1964*); Greater Shearwater (YPM 95275, male, Saybrook, 7 July 1973*); American White Pelican (mount; Mackenzie 1961:24);

Brown Pelican (mount: Mackenzie 1961:23); Tricolored Heron (skeleton, YPM 11613, Milford, 4 Nov. 1976); 3 Greater White-fronted Geese (Auk 62:309-310, 1945; these birds appear to be of the Greenland subspecies, *flavirostris*); Eurasian Wigeon (YPM 325, male, Grove Beach, Clinton, 2 Jan. 1920; YPM 89109, male, Lake Staltonstall, Branford, 16 Dec. 1971*); Golden Eagle (YPM 10242, immature female, North Madison, 24 Nov. 1936); 3 Yellow Rails; Corn Crake (Auk 61:471-472, 1944*); 4 Purple Gallinules*; American Oystercatcher (skeleton, YPM 13843, Betts Island, Norwalk, 1 June 1984); Spotted Redshank (Auk 89:677, 1972*); 1 Whimbrel*; 2 Marbled Godwits*; Buff-breasted Sandpiper (skeleton, YPM 11649, Guilford, 28 Aug. 1977); Ruff (YPM 90809, male, Stratford, 8 July 1974*); Long-billed Dowitcher (YPM 14228, juvenile female, North Haven, 25 Sept. 1913*); 2 Common Black-headed Gulls (skeletons, YPM 12949, Milford, 26 June 1980; Schwartz 1987); 1 Iceland Gull*; 1 Glaucous Gull*; 7 Black Terns; Black Skimmer (in fluid, YPM 11382, Milford, 25 Oct. 1972); 5 Dovekies; 2 Thick-billed Murres (+ 1 skeleton); 4 Passenger Pigeons; 1 Monk Parakeet*; 1

Snowy Owl; Boreal Owl (YPM 1662, male, Kent, 12 Nov. 1906*); 2 Chuck-will's Widows (YPM 85435, female, Stony Creek, 26 June 1969; YPM 85108, male, Falkner's Island, 11 May 1980*; skeleton, YPM 2273, New Haven); Black-backed Woodpecker (skeleton, YPM 11999, New Haven, winter of 1977-78; Boreal Chickadee (YPM 2299, North Haven, 2 Dec. 1913*); 1 Philadelphia Vireo; Yellow-throated Warbler (YPM 6189, albilora subspecies, male, Hamden, 31 Oct. 1952*); 1 Cerulean Warbler*; Prothonotary Warbler (YPM 8488, female, Guilford, April 1959*); Summer Tanager (YPM 46443, male, Hamden, 14 Apr. 1960*); Western Tanager (skeleton, YPM 6750, male, North Madison, 12 July 1968); Harris' Sparrow (YPM 89125, male, North Madison, 28 Feb. 1974*); Dickcissel (YPM 97183, male, Guilford, 30 Dec. 1984*); Yellow-headed Blackbird (YPM 3544, female, New Haven, 1878*; see Sage et al. 1913: 112); Hoary Redpoll (Sage et al. 1913: 120*).

In addition to the above specimens, a carcass in fluid without bill, feet, or feathers is recorded as being from an Artic Tern (YPM 1586, West Haven, 22 Sept. 1961). We have not attempted to confirm the original identification. Bull(1964:274) mentioned a Great Gray Owl specimen at YPM, but we have been unable to find it. Perhaps that specimen is a mount which no longer bears a label.

Acknowledgments

Eleanor Stickney and Steve Zack helped in making study material available. Louis Bevier and Walter Ellison aided in the examination of certain important specimens.

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1. Biology, Box U-43, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT 06268
 2. Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University, New Haven, CT 06520
 3. 71 Weed Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06850

Book Review

Twentieth Century Wildlife Artists, Nicholas Hammond, 1986. Published by The Overlook Press, Woodstock, New York. 224 pp. ISBN 0-87951-221-0. \$40.

This handsome volume has been in various book stores for three years. As a birder and a would-be artist, how could I resist a recent mark down in its price?

The author has been an officer of England's Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) for more than 20 years, first as editor of *Birds*, and now as Director of Information and Education. He has had ample time to study and encourage the work of most of the current crop of Western Europe's bird illustrators and artists, and had easy access to the work of their predecessors. A trip to the United States acquainted him with much of what has been produced in this country. The coverage, however, is admittedly somewhat biased, due to personal acquaintance and access. The artists discussed include 25 from Western Europe, 14 from North America, and 3 from Australia, each interesting in his/her own way.

As public interest in bird portraiture continues to grow apace, future compilers should be alerted to include (from North America) John Livingston Bull, Robert Verity Clem, Guy Coheleach, Donald Malick, John C. Yrizarry and Connecticut's own Julie Zickefoose. Actually, Clem

was invited to submit work for reproduction, but refused. This is unfortunate for all of us.

The 14" x 19" book has 125 color plates, with another 125 in black-and-white. Four introductory chapters discuss the relation of "Wildlife Art" to art, providing a brief background to earlier efforts at picturing birds. Today's wildlife painting and the special use of illustrations for identification purposes are also covered, all in 33 pages. The following pages treat 42 artists and their work. Two pages each for bibliography and index round it out. It is surprising that a book of this price should have unjustified lines.

The "old masters," Bruno Liljefors and Louis Fuertes, each receive eight pages, and everyone gets at least two pages. It is, of course, unfair to judge an artist's work from pictures in a book because (1) the selection process may often miss the best of the artist's work, (2) reproductions always short-change the delicacies of color and texture, and (3) reduction in size may alter the impact of a composition to its detriment.

What do we look for in such a book? So eager are we as hobbyists that almost any new bird images will please us; and this

book provides many exciting ones.

But any reviewer worth his salt will feel an obligation to deflate that Philistine assumption, "I know what I like." This is what the long controversy about illustration versus animal art versus art is all about. It has nothing to do with the "In" art style of museum circles at any given time. It does ask whether the artist has built on the long tradition of the struggle to make line, form, value and color evocative. As this book puts it, the artist, qua artist, must know how to "share his enthusiasm for the experience of seeing an animal, not just for the animal itself." This is done by emphasizing the pattern of dynamic forces inherent in the forms of the picture. These include the gestural vitality of the bird involved, its "jizz" if you can stand that horrible neologism. Very few bird artists have addressed this need yet, or attained the mastery to

accomplish it. This is why museums hang so few of them.

Hammond is very much aware of the need that every bird picture create a new synthesis of "bird in its environment," but he speaks of it only indirectly. Hopefully, someone will soon come along who has a trained eye, both for birds and the dynamics of good pictures, select a few, and explain to us why some impact us more than others. When we viewers of bird pictures become educated enough to ask for better work, then bird artists will know that they must become better artists if they are to communicate the excitement we all feel in viewing birds. This book does not accomplish that, but it is a pleasing step in the right direction.

Roland C. Clement
71 Weed Ave., Norwalk, CT
06850

UNUSUAL FEEDING BEHAVIOR IN ICELAND GULL

Mark Szantyr

At 0545 hours on Sunday, 20 April 1986, while birding in an agricultural area along Rt. 34 in Orange, Connecticut, Frank Gallo and I encountered a group of approximately 50 gulls feeding in the dirt of a recently plowed cornfield. Upon inspecting the flock, we found that it was com-

prised of Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*), Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*), and one Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides*). The Herring Gulls, numbering approximately 40, ranged from first-winter birds to adults as determined by plumage. The Ring-bills numbered about 10

birds and were aged similarly to the Herring Gulls. According to bill color and plumage characteristics, the Iceland Gull was in fading first-winter plumage, approaching first-summer.

The gulls worked through the overturned soil and each species was seen to take a type of earthworm in their bills and, with two or three quick upward flips of the head, swallow the worm whole. The Iceland Gull was seen to take three of these worms, probably of the species *Lumbricus terrestris*, in this manner. We observed the gulls until their foraging took them beyond a small hill and out of view. The total time of observation was approximately 25 minutes.

Thinking this type of feeding behavior unusual for *L. glaucooides*, a check of the available literature was made. Both *L. argentatus* and *L. delawarensis* are well known to forage in agricultural fields, often following a plow and capturing prey in its wake. No mention was made of Iceland Gull taking insects or earthworms, nor was any reference made to their foraging in agricultural fields.

Gulls are opportunistic and will use whatever food source is available. The recent increase in gull numbers at landfills, both coastal and inland, as reflected in the summaries of Connecticut's Christmas Bird Counts, seems to correspond to the increase in size and numbers of these landfills.

On January 14, 1982, an adult male Ivory Gull (*Pagophila eburnea*) appeared at a bird feeder in Saratoga Springs, New York.

This denizen of the arctic ice floes was observed to dine on various table-scraps, including pork, chicken and clams. The bird was banded and released.

Clearly these instances illustrate the resourcefulness and opportunism of the family Laridae in their search for food. They also raise questions to what might be considered "normal" gull behavior.

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25 Bonair Ave.,
Waterbury, CT 06710

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Guide for Contributors

Preparation of Manuscripts:

The editors welcome submission of articles and notes for the *Connecticut Warbler*. Manuscripts should be typed double spaced on one side of the sheet only, with ample margins on all sides. Style of the manuscript should follow general usage in recent issues. All manuscripts receive peer review.

Illustrations:

The editors welcome submission of line artwork of Connecticut and regional birds. Black and white photographs of particular interest will also be considered, but tend to print at less than optimum quality. Line art should be submitted as good-quality photographic prints or in original form. All originals and prints will be returned promptly after publication prints are made.

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

Summer 1989

Contents

Volume IX Number 3 July 1989

- 49 **Editorial**
 Debra M. Miller
- 51 ***Site Guide: Naugatuck State Forest***
 Arnold Devine, Mark Szantyr, Dwight Smith
- 60 **Connecticut Field Notes**
Winter: December 1, 1988 - February 28, 1989
 Jay Kaplan
- 68 **Unusual Bird Specimens in the Yale Peabody
Museum of Natural History**
 George A. Clark, Jr., Fred C. Sibley,
 Roland C. Clement
- 70 **Book Review**
 Roland C. Clement
- 71 **Unusual Feeding Behavior in Iceland Gull**
 Mark Szantyr

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About our Cover Artist:

Shawneen Finnegan

*"Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*)"*

Shawneen E. Finnegan has been sketching since age 3 but only recently began drawing birds. Art has always been a pastime although at one time she worked as a graphic artist. Shawneen attended the Academy of Art College in San Francisco, studying photography. Interested in the out-of-doors and wildlife all her life, birding became an obsessive hobby seven years ago. She has traveled extensively in the U.S. pursuing birds. Currently residing in Santa Barbara, California, she devotes her time to bird photography and artwork when not out in the field observing birds.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

*Pat was the one
who really
made the
"Warbler" into
a first class
journal*

This issue of the Connecticut Warbler is dedicated to **Patrick J. Lynch.**

Pat has been Art Director for the "Warbler" since mid-1987 and under his direction, our journal has taken on a new look, both externally and internally. Pat spent many hours formatting the text, making sure the artwork was reproduced to its best advantage. He also contributed artwork for one of the covers. Although I was responsible for the contents, Pat was the one who really made the "Warbler" into a first class journal for birders; one of which we can be proud.

Additional responsibilities with his job at Yale's School of Medicine have forced Pat to resign as our art director. We are saddened to lose his expertise with desktop publishing and as a talented artist. We cannot thank him enough for all he has done to make the Connecticut Warbler a successful publication.

There is now a big gap in our production of the Warbler and we are working hard to fill this void. An offer has been made to format this issue which will help in the interim. We are hoping to utilize desktop publishing to be provided by another member of C.O.A. This offer includes the use of a laser printer. Our hopes for the future of the Warbler include a bigger and better journal with more staff and a greater variety of articles - something for everyone. Don't hesitate to send me your thoughts and ideas regarding the Warbler; your input is important not only to the staff, but to the COA Board.

Betty Kleiner, Editor

The Connecticut Warbler

BASICS OF BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY

Sam Fried

There are many reasons why a birder might want to become a bird photographer. Whether it is a desire to capture the rare and fleeting beauty that is the essence of all birds or to provide documentation of a bird's occurrence or plumage, bird photography presents incredibly difficult challenges, along with incomparable rewards. An evening viewing bird photos provides a source of pleasure as old friends are remembered and past experiences relived. Comparing one's own photographs to the photos and paintings in field guides provides a greater understanding of a species' appearance in the field. Building a "life list" of species photographed adds another dimension to birding which will keep you fascinated long after you've seen and identified a new species.

Getting Started

A basic outfit that will enable you to photograph birds includes: a 35mm single lens reflex camera body with automatic metering, equipped with a winder or motor drive; a 400mm lens, $f/5.6$ or faster; a gunstock-type mount for the camera and lens; a sturdy tripod; and a large amount of slide film. Of utmost importance is an attitude that includes a great deal of patience and embraces tolerance for any initial failure.

Since it is generally very difficult to get an acceptably large image of a wild bird with *any* size lens, it is usually impossible to do so with a lens shorter than 400mm. There are several types of such super-telephotos from which to choose. The two primary choices are straight optical lenses (the long heavy ones) and catadioptric or mirror lenses (the short light ones). Standard optical lenses are in the approximate price range as most mirror lenses, but higher quality optical lenses which feature low dispersion glass and internal focusing generally cost much more. Some photographers don't care for mirror lenses because the pictures they produce look one dimensional, and out of focus images appear as "donuts" or double lines. Mirror lenses are also very slow, usually with maximum apertures of $f/8$ and even lower actual light transmission levels. When lower light reaches the film, slower shutter speed will be required. This is a distinct disadvantage in bird photography because fast shutter speeds are necessary to stop bird and camera motion. For these reasons magazines rarely publish photos taken with a mirror lens, except for documentary purposes.

A major consideration in choosing your lens is its close-focusing capability, which is even more crucial than with your binoculars. Nothing is more frustrating than to have to back away from a bird because you're too close to focus! A 400mm lens should focus to 15 feet or less. One significant advantage of internal focusing and of mirror lenses is that they usually

focus much closer than standard optical lenses. Extension tubes, which are simply short lens barrels that house no optics, allow closer focusing with any type of lens, and are useful in certain situations.

Supporting Equipment

A 400mm/5.6 lens mounted on a gunstock can be satisfactorily hand held when shooting at 1/125 second or faster. Whenever additional support is available, take advantage of it and your pictures will be sharper. Since long lenses magnify every shake and vibration as much as they do the image (even at high shutter speeds), your results will be improved with the use of a sturdy tripod, or monopod. Every bird photographer should own a steady tripod and a beanbag (make your own with some heavy cloth and a few pounds of dried beans). Beanbags provide excellent support in many situations. Where a firm but uneven surface is available, rest your lens on a beanbag directly on a tree stump, rock or the roof of a car. Using a cable release will remove another source of movement - pressing the shutter release button. A desirable feature on your camera body is mirror lock-up, which prevents the reflex mirror from moving during exposure. It should be utilized when you are photographing a stationary subject.

Another helpful piece of equipment is a high quality 1.4x teleconverter, which increases the magnification of your primary lens by 40% (but with about a one-stop loss in light transmission). With a teleconverter, your lens's close-focusing capability remains the same. Teleconverters are not recommended for mirror lenses or for less than top-quality optical lenses since they magnify optical defects right along with image size.

Film

There will always be an argument over which type of film is best for bird photography. Probably the highest standard is set by the magazines that publish bird photographs. The uniformly preferred film is Kodachrome 64 slide film, because of its relative speed, sharp grain and good color saturation. Kodachrome 25 is also excellent, but is very slow and Fujichrome 50 has been finding an audience in the past few years. Faster speed film results in grainier, more contrasty images, as a general rule, and will not enlarge well or show as much detail in the bird's feathers. You may want to try faster film when you start out, or when light conditions demand it, but overall, the end result of slower film is superior in all regards.

Critical Focus

It is often difficult to keep the whole bird in focus while using long lenses, due to shallow depth of field. Consequently, it is essential that you use great care in focusing, concentrating on those parts of the bird that must be sharp. Always focus on the head, especially the eye, unless some other feature of

the bird is critically important. A helpful item, for camera bodies with interchangeable viewfinder screens, is a plain matte screen the whose center will not black out when using a lens with a small maximum aperture. Another helpful type of screen incorporates a fresnel lens, which increases the relative brightness of the image, and allows for easier viewing and focus.

Techniques

There are as many ways to photograph birds as there are ways to go birding. Wandering around taking pictures on a catch-as-catch-can basis may provide the most fun, but is not necessarily the most effective way to consistently obtain good shots. You can sit in a blind for hours, or even days, waiting for THE MOMENT. You can travel in a car or boat, each acting as a very effective blind.

One cardinal rule applies to whatever technique you employ: if you're shooting a species for the first time, or if it's a rare bird that requires documentation, always begin shooting early. Don't worry about perfect light, composition, angle, or size of image until after you've taken some pictures. Keep moving in slowly and shoot until you are satisfied that you have some good shots. If you're lucky, some photos will come out well, often not the ones you expected. Always carry several extra rolls of film in your pocket.

A. Wandering around on foot

Use a 400mm lens on a gunstock or a monopod equipped with a ball head. Although a monopod is steadier with weighty equipment, it is not much help for action shots or for anything much above eye-level. Therefore, unless you are shooting shorebirds or the like, use a gunstock. Tripods are cumbersome, slow to use and may interfere with use of your binoculars. A tripod is of great use, however, when your subject is nearby and you have sufficient time to set up.

B. Driving in a car

Cars make excellent blinds and provide steady support, except in strong winds or when other people in the car won't sit still. The best car for this purpose has a "bench" front seat for sliding across, plenty of room for your ever expanding array of equipment, power windows that can all be operated from the driver's position, high clearance for rough roads, and, of course, four-wheel drive.

Rest your long lens on the window or the roof. Beanbags are great for this approach as they instantly conform to any surface and help to dampen vibrations.

Should you spot a bird by the side of the road and it's too late for a slow stop in perfect position, don't slam on your brakes. You will only frighten

your subject. Continue past the location, ready your equipment, turn around and come back, gently rolling into just the right position the first time. You will probably only have one chance, so turn your engine off, take some shots, then try creeping closer. Some birds that you see along roadways (hawks, herons, etc.), don't mind cars and trucks roaring past them, but as soon as one slows down, they're gone.

C. Shooting from a boat

On a rocking boat, a 300mm or 400mm lens on a gunstock is about the only combination that works. Keeping the bird in the frame, if you're on an ocean trip, is itself a noteworthy achievement. A success ratio of about 3% is admirable.

D. Working from a blind

The techniques involved in working with blinds far exceed the space allowed in this article. Suffice it to say that a great deal of patience and time may be required in working from a blind, but the results can be extraordinary.

Flight Shots

Shooting birds on the wing with a camera is more difficult than doing it with a gun, because even if you "hit" them, their motion doesn't stop. The result is many blurry and out of focus images. Good flight shots of small birds are very difficult to obtain without an elaborate flash set-up. Larger birds, such as soaring hawks and sea birds, are somewhat easier, but still present a great challenge. Use of a gunstock-mounted 400mm lens is almost mandatory for this type of work. Perhaps the easiest way to get good flight photos of sea birds is from a boat that the birds are following for food. Sometimes the birds will hang almost motionless, making flight shots relatively easy.

Feeder Photography

Feeding stations are an excellent place to practice and develop your shooting skills. Natural looking pictures can be had by observing where the birds usually perch near the feeder or where they forage on the ground.

Metering

Photographing evenly lit, medium-toned subjects against a similarly lit background is easy. But what do you do with black birds, white birds, black and white birds? A general rule of thumb is to overexpose one stop to bring out the detail in black birds, underexpose one stop to keep the detail from washing out in white birds, and bracket your exposures (take several shots above and below the meter's indicated reading) whenever possible. Be

aware of the light values on the background and foreground: a darkish or medium-toned bird on water that is reflecting a bright sky will be underexposed; birds in trees are often either backlit by a bright sky or brilliantly lit in front of a dark canopy of leaves. These situations require exposure compensation because your meter doesn't recognize the most important part of your picture. If you are buying a camera specifically for bird photography, one with a built-in spot meter is very helpful with tricky lighting situations. This will enable you to meter the precise area of the frame you want properly exposed.

Composition

The same rules of artistic composition may be applied to bird photography as in other art forms. However, you generally don't have time to compose, and may feel very fortunate if you obtain a sharp, well-exposed image. If the bird is relatively stationary, try to arrange the photo so that the bird is not in the center of the frame. Include some important background habitat or color and look for an interesting pose. If the bird is involved in some natural behavior, be it feeding, courtship, nest-building, or other activity, develop a series of shots that tell a story. Of course, capturing such moments is the most difficult task facing a bird photographer; most opportunities occur and are gone in an instant.

A spot of light reflected in the bird's eye will make the bird come alive in your photograph. Such a "catchlight" is almost essential if the bird is dark-eyed and dark-headed so that you can't otherwise see the eye.

Many bird photographers talk about filling the frame with the bird's image as if it were the ultimate accomplishment of their careers. Most of the time it is impossible to "fill the frame", except with large birds at close range. Many lenses simply don't focus that closely, even if the opportunity should present itself. From an aesthetic point of view, the image of the bird should take up no more than 1/2 to 2/3 of the frame. Otherwise, it is overwhelming in size and looks like a poster without background or foreground. Aim for a composition that is balanced and pleasing to the eye.

Ethics of Bird Photography

The ethics of bird photography can be stated with a few simple rules:

1. Never intrude on a bird to the extent that you are displacing it from its preferred habitat.
2. Never take any action that would expose a bird or a nest to predation or the elements.
3. Don't take pictures of nests or nestlings, unless you are absolutely not disturbing the birds. Nest photography may threaten the lives of the parents and the young birds; even hawk nests high in trees can be endangered should the young get excited and fall out before they are

- ready to fledge.
4. Never closely approach a bird to photograph it when other people are still observing it; always ask other observers if they have any objection to your moving closer to the bird.
 5. Never move ahead of other photographers working the same bird; you can all move up together and there is no reason to hurry when approaching a bird on foot.

Conclusion

Bird photography can provide a great deal of joy. A real sense of pride and achievement accompany the capture of a critical moment on film. Every image is new in a field that is open to discovery in behavior, flight, plumage, and sexual as well as seasonal variations needing photographic documentation.

Photography keeps birding a vibrant and exciting hobby; you can always improve your pictures of even the most common species. Photographing a rarity that documents the occurrence of a species is a proud accomplishment. Even if you've seen them all, it is extremely difficult to get recognizable pictures of a large number of species. Looking back at birds you photographed years before brings forth a treasure of memories and often some surprises, adding immeasurably to the pleasures of bird photography and our appreciation of the natural world.

Suggested additional reading: Russ Kinne - The Complete Book of Photographing Birds, 1981, AM Photo.

90 Sunny Reach Drive, West Hartford, CT 06117

AMERICAN SWALLOW-TAILED KITES IN MANSFIELD, CONNECTICUT

George A. Clark, Jr.¹, and Louis Bevier²

Probably the most exceptional birds seen in Connecticut during June 1989 were two American Swallow-tailed Kites (*Elanoides forficatus*) in Mansfield. The kites were first reported the afternoon of June 6 from the Holiday Hill Camp on Chaffeyville Road, where Paula Coughlin and several others spotted them in flight. That evening Coughlin telephoned George Clark. Clark's initial assumption was that these birds would probably not be seen again, at least locally. The usual experience with this species in the northeast has been that these birds do not linger in the area.

It was, therefore, a great surprise when four days later Mansfield resident Dale Truman telephoned Shirley Davis to report two kites flying over his home. Davis promptly called members of the local Natchaug Ornithological Society. Converging on Browns Road, Bob Craig, John McDonald, Jim Slater and Clark were rewarded by a fleeting glimpse of the kites passing out of sight over the tree-tops. Meanwhile Davis, at the Trumans' home on nearby Crane Hill Road, had taken three recognizable photographs of a kite flying overhead. By the time McDonald and Clark reached the Trumans' home they had only another momentary glimpse of the birds. As the kites moved away, observers drove off in different directions to look for them. John McDonald clearly saw both birds flying over the woods to the east of a farming area along Mansfield City Road. However, by early afternoon, the birds had vanished.

The following morning, June 11, Clark was called by Truman, who again reported the birds flying around his home. After alerting several people of the reappearance, Clark drove around looking for a good vantage point from which he might be able to observe the birds. The best location was the same area on Mansfield City Road where McDonald had seen the birds the previous day. Clark waited some minutes and the birds flew over the tree tops more than 300 feet to the east. The black and white underwing pattern and the deeply notched tail can be seen in Clark's photographs, which show recognizable, though small, images of both birds. While in that area Clark was joined by Carol Phillips, Dolores Hilding and Winnie Burkett. The kites disappeared about mid day. It was later learned that Mary Jane Spring had seen a kite that morning from the Freedom Green condominium complex further south in Mansfield. By this date the kites were on the statewide Rare Bird Alert, and during subsequent days a number of observers from outside the local area came seeking the kites. Unfortunately, the kites were not seen for days at a time. However, on June 21, Jim Slater received a telephone report of a kite sighted near the intersection of State Rt. 195 and Browns

Road. Louis Bevier searched the area of past sightings and observed both birds in the late afternoon from Mansfield City Road. Bevier found another favorable vantage point at the top of a knoll on private property, just west of Rt. 195 and south of Clover Mill Road. On June 24 he was able to get recognizable pictures of a kite overhead at that site. Bevier and Tom Baptist later were able to see the bird at that location. Bevier watched the bird for more than 15 minutes at distances as close as 75 to 100 feet, describing it as "a large hawk with relatively broad, long wings with swept back, pointed ends." He noted molt in the inner primaries and heavy wear on outer primaries, features which we subsequently confirmed by photographs. Head, underparts, and wing linings were snow white. The long tail was black and shaped like that of a Barn Swallow. The leading edge of the upper wing coverts was blacker than the gray sheen on the greater coverts and secondaries. The bill was small and hooked, and the grayish-yellow feet were relatively small. Bevier saw the bird pursuing a dragonfly and, on another occasion, saw the bird reach down to chew on an unidentified item held in the foot.

Subsequently, Bob Craig reported observing a kite on June 19 at a swamp near the intersection of Rt. 195 and Clover Mill Road, and Sharon Ashworth saw both birds near Mansfield Hollow Dam. We have been unable to obtain information on unconfirmed reports after June 24. The birds were never observed perched and no evidence of breeding was obtained.

Thus, kites were present in Mansfield over at least a 19-day interval, as indicated by detailed reports. All sightings were within a 3-mile diameter circle, although the absence of sightings on some days could have been due to the birds leaving the circle area. To our knowledge, a stay of this duration, by this species in such a limited area is unprecedented in the northeast in recent decades. The only record of an extended visit in this region is described by Eaton (1914), who related the account of at least two kites at West Hoosick, New York (near Bennington, VT) in 1886. One bird was shot for a specimen but at least one was present from July 16 to August 9. The collector, Griffin Haight, believed additional birds, possibly young, were present, but evidence for breeding was not found.

Swallow-tailed Kites formerly bred as far north as Minnesota with egg dates as late as June 7 and 16 (Roberts 1936). Additional evidence for early summer nesting in the northern part of the kite's range is a report of a nest with eggs June 3 from Iowa (Bent 1937). Since 1900, however, kites have become extremely scarce in the north central states (Roberts 1936), and the breeding range of the species within the United States is now restricted to the southeast. An extensive change in habitats and land use over the last century with the progressive spread of agriculture is in our opinion, a conceivable, though by no means proven, cause for the elimination of breeding kites in the north central states.

Robertson (1988) noted a recent major increase in numbers of kites in their breeding range in the United States. Occurrences of Swallow-tailed Kites to the north of the breeding range have become more frequent in recent years with annual occurrence in the northeastern states. The Mansfield birds represent the third consecutive year of reported occurrence in Connecticut, following the 1987 Hamden and 1988 Clinton sightings of single birds (CT Warbler, 9:22, 1989, and 8:81, 1988). We know of seven other earlier reports (Zeranski and Baptist, in press).

Acknowledgments:

We thank the many named and unnamed individuals who helped by generously sharing their information on the whereabouts and activities of the Mansfield kites.

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1. Biology, Box U-43, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT 06268
 2. P.O. Box 665, Storrs, CT 06268

BANDING PASSERINES ON CHIMON ISLAND

Carl J. Trichka

Chimon Island was one of the units incorporated into the Connecticut Coastal National Wildlife Refuge (renamed the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge) and has the largest heronry in Connecticut. Its importance as a bird sanctuary was known for decades prior to its acquisition by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1984.

In 1981, Connecticut Audubon Society began field research on Chimon to document the breeding of herons, egrets, ibises and gulls. The island was being offered for sale and its value as a refuge had to be documented. A secondary goal was to study the passerine migration through this area in spring.

At that time, the consistent banding of migrant passerines on offshore Connecticut islands was being done only on Falkner and Chimon Islands. Sibley(1984) summarized data from Falkner Island covering the years 1978 to 1980. During that period a total of 1,669 individuals were banded on Falkner, representing 76 species. From 1981 through 1989, a total of 1662 individuals of 64 species were banded on Chimon (Table 1).

TABLE 1. Passerines Banded on Chimon Island

Year	Species	Individuals	Dates
1981	23	86	5/25 - 6/3
1982	35	194	5/24 - 5/30
1983	16	62	5/24 - 6/3*
1984	38	256	5/17 - 5/24
1985	25	200	5/20 - 5/25
1986	37	302	5/18 - 5/24
1987	26	102	5/31 - 6/5
1988	25	183	5/25 - 5/28
1989	32	277	5/22 - 5/26

* four days only

Discussion

There are striking contrasts in habitats between the two islands. Falkner is a windswept gravel pile rising some 30 feet above Long Island Sound. It is barren except for patches of sumac and wild rose. Situated 3 miles off the coast, it is about 4 acres in size.

Chimon Island is about one mile from the coast and comprises some 70 acres. It is heavily wooded (cherry and maple) at the south end, with dense

tangles of bittersweet, wild rose, blackberry, Japanese honeysuckle and poison ivy elsewhere. What were once open fields are now overgrown and reverting to heavy secondary growth. Other differences affect banding opportunities. Most noticeable is that Falkner stands alone off the coast whereas Chimon is surrounded by several wooded islands and vegetated sandbars that offer passing migrants more resting and feeding options not always available on Falkner. The banding efforts on each island has been very different including numbers of nets and personnel involved in each operation.

Banding on Falkner was done throughout the spring migration, while on Chimon it was conducted for one week only, usually at the end of May. Operations on Chimon started as early as May 18th and ended as late as June 5th. Utilizing a one week period also produces other variables such as weather. Although poor weather was encountered throughout the study period, it did not totally hamper banding operations and did not last for more than one to one and a half days in any one year.

Initially, banding on Chimon was a hit or miss affair. A wide variety of banding sites were tried. Over the years some of these sites became unproductive due to vegetation changes. During the last six years we chose sites at the northwest and west sides of the island that were increasingly productive. The heavily wooded south end of the island, although probably a productive area for migrants, was not utilized because of its proximity to nesting herons and the fact that the approaches are heavily grown with bittersweet and poison ivy.

TABLE 2. Captures and Netting Effort

Year	Birds/100 Net Hrs.	No. of Nets
1981	No data	5
1982	83.4	6
1983	53.2	3
1984	66.4	5
1985	60.9	5
1986	95.0	8
1987	46.3	9
1988	110.9	10
1989	138.8	10

Although the data presented in Table 2 appear variable, there are several reasons to explain them. Early in the study, nets were opened and closed at the convenience of staff and when birds appeared plentiful. During the last four years, a more consistent approach was taken. Nets were opened before dawn and closed before noon. Bird activity dropped off markedly in the later morning hours when most feeding activity shifted to the upper

levels of the trees. In the last two years, the banding sites were greatly improved by U.S. Fish and Wildlife personnel who cut all the low brush in the net lanes and opened up part of the northwest field. This appeared to materially improve our results.

As shown in Table 3, the most common passerines banded on Chimon were Gray Catbird and Common Yellowthroat. Catbirds accounted for 21.2% (353) of all individuals banded, while yellowthroats represented 20.9% (348). In all, 23 species of warblers were banded representing 53% of all individuals banded (888). Although some of the species involve large numbers, most of these occurred during a single year when a "wave" of birds chose Chimon to rest. This was true of some *Catharus* thrushes and several species of warblers.

Migrant passerines utilizing the Atlantic coastal flyway to northern breeding grounds have few options when weather forces them off course. For birds over Long Island Sound, the offshore islands that dot the coast of Connecticut offer habitats in which to rest and feed before resuming their travels northward. These islands are also the home of such nesting species as the American Oystercatcher (a recent arrival), along with eight species of herons and egrets, two species of gulls, one cormorant species and at least three species of terns, of which the Roseate Tern is a rarity in Connecticut.

I would like to thank the Connecticut Audubon Society and Milan G. Bull, Director of Field Studies and Ornithology, for support and assistance during this period. Also, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service which provided the access to the island and the many volunteers who assisted us while enduring somewhat primitive living conditions on the island.

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TABLE 3. Individuals and Species Banded 1981-1989

	No. Individuals	No. Years Netted Since 1981
American Woodcock (N)	2	2
Black-billed Cuckoo (N)	1	1
Northern Flicker (N)	4	2
Eastern Wood Pewee	1	1
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	6	4
Acadian Flycatcher	6	4
Traill's Flycatcher (N)	24	9
Least Flycatcher	11	5

TABLE 3. Individuals and Species Banded 1981-1989 (cont.)

	No. Individuals	No. Years Netted Since 1981
Great-crested Flycatcher	4	4
Barn Swallow (N)	6	6
Brown Creeper	1	1
House Wren (N)	11	5
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1	1
Veery	25	7
Gray-cheeked Thrush	10	4
Swainson's Thrush	52	8
Wood Thrush (N)	8	3
Gray Catbird (N)	353	9
Brown Thrasher (N)	1	1
White-eyed Vireo (N)	5	3
Yellow-throated Vireo	1	1
Red-eyed Vireo	23	7
Blue-winged Warbler	1	1
Tennessee Warbler	1	1
Northern Parula	7	5
Yellow Warbler (N)	66	8
Chestnut-sided Warbler	5	3
Magnolia Warbler	92	7
Cape May Warbler	2	1
Black-throated Blue Warbler	13	5
Black-throated Green Warbler	1	1
Blackburnian Warbler	1	1
Bay-breasted Warbler	3	2
Blackpoll Warbler	24	5
Cerulean Warbler	1	1
Black-and-white Warbler	3	3
American Redstart	92	9
Ovenbird	7	24
Northern Waterthrush	47	8
Kentucky Warbler	1	1
Mourning Warbler	13	7
Common Yellowthroat (N)	348	9
Wilson's Warbler	20	7
Canada Warbler	120	9
Yellow-breasted Chat	3	3
Scarlet Tanager	2	2

TABLE 3. Individuals and Species Banded 1981-1989 (cont.)

	No. Individuals	No. Years Netted Since 1981
Northern Cardinal (N)	6	5
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	7	2
Indigo Bunting (N)	4	4
Painted Bunting	1	1
Rufous-sided Towhee	2	1
Seaside Sparrow	1	1
Song Sparrow (N)	48	8
Lincoln's Sparrow	11	6
Swamp Sparrow (N)	12	4
White-throated Sparrow	15	3
White-crowned Sparrow	1	1
Red-winged Blackbird (N)	15	5
Common Grackle (N)	13	6
Brown-headed Cowbird	1	1
Northern Oriole (N)	1	1
House Finch (N)	22	7
American Goldfinch (N)	55	8

(N) Denotes Confirmed Nesting

65 Glover Street
Fairfield, CT 06430

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Spring: March 1 - May 31, 1989

Jay Kaplan

Ah spring! This observer looks forward to spring more than any other season. Winter may provide northern rarities and autumn, with its hawk migrations and vast assemblages of shorebirds, may be the ultimate in birding for some of my contemporaries. For me, however, the arrival of our first spring migrants provides a rekindling of spirit and a desire to get up early in the morning to enjoy the bright colors and pleasant melodies of our songbirds. (It's also much easier to see them without all those darn leaves that obstruct one's view later in the season). Others must feel as I do, because it seems as though we receive more field reports at this season than any other. More reports do not necessarily translate into more interesting observations, but a quick perusal of 1989's spring sightings might send shivers up a birder's spine. American White Pelican, Wilson's Plover, Yellow-throated Warbler and Lark Sparrow in Connecticut? Wow! Enough to peak the interest of even a casual birder, and certainly enough to rouse the more ardent from their winter cabin fever.

The start of the spring season of birding does not always coincide with that of the calendar. March began with average temperatures in the mid thirties, but as it is wont to do, dropped to a frosty 8 degrees F in Hartford March 8, tying the record low for the date. Temperatures began to moderate through mid-month, reaching 70 deg. F March 18 and 19 in Hartford. Early migrants took good advantage of this warm front as robins and grackles poured through the northern half of the State. The morning of March 20 saw temperatures plunge into the teens, bringing the northward movement to an abrupt, albeit temporary, halt. The first day of spring provided something different, at least this year, it rained! A little snow even fell on the northwest hills, but overall, the dry winter pattern continued with precipitation for the month more than one inch below normal. March went out like a lamb with the temperature reaching 83 deg. F March 28 in the Hartford area. April began under damp conditions, with precipitation on the first 7 days of the month in Bridgeport, the first ten days in the Hartford area. Temperatures were mild during this period, but from mid-month cool, dry conditions prevailed. Rainfall for the month was still almost one-half inch below normal, giving little indication of what was to come. Any concern over a repeat of the drought conditions of 1988 quickly disappeared in early May. By May 10, Bradley International Airport (Windsor Locks) had received 5.61 inches, over two inches above normal for the entire month. Over 3 additional inches fell in Bridgeport May 16-17, and the total for the month in the Hartford area stood at 11.95 inches, eight inches over normal.

A noted Fairfield County meteorologist (Dr. Mel Goldstein) stated "It was the wettest May on record, and the third wettest month on record (in 40 years)." Would these weather conditions influence the migration or the success of the nesting season? In spite of the rains, there were few indications that weather conditions at the end of the period impacted on most species. Several observers reported a scarcity of such inland shorebirds as Solitary and Spotted Sandpipers, no doubt due to high water levels in wetlands and along water courses. Others reported fewer swallows, thrushes or warblers but such trends were evidently not apparent throughout the State. When the urge to move north begins, it takes more than slight temperature swings or above-average rainfall to dampen the flow of birds to their breeding grounds.

LOONS THROUGH FALCONS

Red-throated Loons lingered into mid-May along the coast with a last report from East Haven May 10 (EH). A high of 45 was reported from Sherwood Island State Park, Westport (hereafter SISP), March 5 (FMa et al.). Common Loons were numerous along the coast throughout May with 7 reported at Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison (hereafter HBSP), May 18 (FMa, FP). Inland, 2 pair were present on Barkhamsted Reservoir April 8-May 17; however, there was no indication that these birds nested (DR). An adult Pied-billed Grebe with a chick was sighted at Lordship marshes, Stratford, May 26 (FP). A small pond, located behind a row of warehouses, has been a confirmed nesting location for the grebes for several years. A high count of 120 Horned Grebes were reported from SISP March 27 (RCI). Red-necked Grebes were reported from at least 6 coastal locations March 20-April 19, plus an inland sighting at Batterson Pond, New Britain, April 8 (MC).

An adult Northern Gannet was reported off HBSP March 18 (WW). One of the most intriguing sightings for the period was an adult, breeding plumaged American White Pelican at Greenwich Point Park, Greenwich May 29 (LBr). The bird was photographed off Pelican (seriously) Island, and was last seen flying east along the shoreline. Despite intensive searching, the bird was not relocated. Double-crested Cormorants first nested in the State 10 years ago with 2 nests on East White Rock (Island), Westport. This year, there were 90+ nests on the island (MB). Offshore, Goose Island, Guilford held 256 cormorant nests by May 23 (JSp). The usual number of herons were reported nesting on Norwalk's Chimon Island, with an additional report of a new colony containing 400 birds on nearby Grassy Island (MB).

Waders were also doing well on Great Captain's Island, Greenwich (MB). American Bitterns continue to be reported sparsely with single birds sighted in South Windsor April 2 (JKt), Simsbury April 7 (MV), Cheesebor-

ough Pond, Stonington April 30-May 6 (RSCB) and at HBSP May 2 (SM). Least Bitterns appeared in their usual haunts with a high of 3 birds at Lordship Marsh May 27 (RE). Tricolored Herons were reported from SISP May 7 (RSo), Norwalk May 17 (MS,NC) and Milford Point May 21 (SM). The sudden predicted expansion of Cattle Egrets has yet to materialize. Two birds were seen in Ledyard May 14 (RSCB) and 3 were reported in Westport May 23 (RN et al.). An unusual nesting location for Yellow-crowned Night Herons was discovered in residential Fairfield with 2 nests in the crown of a tall oak tree (MB). At least one pair of Yellow-crowneds continue to nest on the Norwalk Islands and 1-2 adults were seen through May in the Milford Point marshes (m.ob).

How many Snow Geese migrate through Connecticut? These high flyers are often missed, but 1,070 were spotted over Mansfield March 28 (WB,WE,TC). Brant were reported in good numbers along the coast with a high of 100 at Manresa, South Norwalk May 19 (EH). A Green-winged Teal, Eurasian Race, was at Milford Point April 22-23 (RBA), while a high of 62 of our more familiar race was seen in South Windsor March 24 (SKo). A single Northern Shoveler was in South Windsor March 18 (SKe) and 5 birds were at Milford Point on that date (CE), with 3 remaining until April 8 (JB). Eurasian Wigeon were frequently sighted in the West Haven area March 4-19 (m.ob.) and additional birds were at SISP March 26 (RW) and April 6 (RBA). Canvasback are common on the coast in March, but 9 birds on Congamond Lake, Suffield, March 15 (SKe) are a good sighting. A single Redhead was on Bantam Lake, Litchfield, March 27 (RB). Scaup were also reported from inland locations with 26 Greater Scaup on Mudge Pond, Sharon, March 27 (DR) and 6 Lesser Scaup at this location April 14 (DR). The previously reported immature male Harlequin Duck on the Thames River, New London was present until at least March 4 (LBe, FP, JZe). There were large movements of White-winged Scoters on Long Island Sound in mid-May with 180 reported off Milford Point May 18-19 (EH). The previously reported Barrow's Goldeneye on the Connecticut River, Enfield was last seen March 3 (PS). Hooded Mergansers were confirmed breeding at Barkhamsted Reservoir (DT) and along the Housatonic River, Kent (DT,CBk).

There were few noteworthy movements of hawks this season, although March 17 was apparently a good day for Turkey Vultures and Red-tailed Hawks in the New Canaan area with 30 Vultures sighted on that date (EJ). The 1988-89 winter, with its mild temperatures and open water, saw Bald Eagles on many of the State's major waterways. At least one bird persisted through the period at Barkhamsted Reservoir (m.ob.). Northern Harriers have not nested in the State in recent history. Thus, a female carrying sticks in the Lordship marshes May 30 (LBe) was most encouraging. Although no nest was found, a pair of adults remained in the area through May (m.ob.). A Rough-legged Hawk was reported from the Portland meadows March 17

(DR,ES). The lower Connecticut River valley produced the only Golden Eagle report with a bird in Essex March 2 (RE). There is a mounting concern in the State's birding community with regard to low numbers of both wintering and nesting American Kestrels. Hopefully, some of the 11 Kestrels sighted in the South Windsor marshes April 13 (SKo) remained on territory. Merlin reports included single birds from Mansfield Hollow Reservoir, Mansfield, April 18 (LBe, WE); Watertown April 24 (RN); Haley Farm State Park, Groton, April 25 (RSCB); and Kent May 17 (DR et al.). The several Peregrine reports were primarily of immature birds and included one chasing a yellowlegs at Milford Point May 6 (RBA). The latest report of a Peregrine was from Ellington May 13 (CE) and there were no indications of nesting in the State's larger cities.

TURKEYS THROUGH NIGHTJARS

Wild Turkeys continue to increase in the State beyond their stronghold in the northwest. King Rails were reported from Lordship marsh May 14 (DR,DT), Manresa Marsh May 14-21 (m.ob.) and Durham May 20 (FMa et al.). Soras were also reported in the usual locations, plus single birds from Greenwich Point Park May 4 (LBr) and from Transylvania Pond, Southbury, May 13 (RN). The only Common Moorhen report for the period came from Dead Man's Swamp, Cromwell, where a bird was heard calling May 19 (EH,MS et al.). A very strange report of a white "crane-like" bird with black wing-tips, seen flying down the Connecticut River in Chester March 23 was reported to the Connecticut Rare Bird Alert. The bird was not relocated and the report has not been verified. Equally intriguing was a report of a bird that could possibly have been a Northern Lapwing from Stearn's Farm, Mansfield, March 16 (Ken Koper fide LBe). Intensive searching failed to relocate the bird. A report has been submitted to the CRRC. Returning to more plausible, although by no means routine sightings, a Wilson's Plover was observed and photographed at Long Beach, Stratford May 3 (WW). A high count of 33 Killdeer was reported at SISP March 19 (SKo). Five to 6 pairs of American Oystercatchers were again nesting successfully on the Norwalk Islands. Nests were reported on Long Beach Island, Tree Hammock, Sheffield, Goose and Cockenoe Islands (FMa,MB).

Willetts may well have nested in the Lordship marshes where 3 birds were present May 4 (FMa,SM). Willetts were also sighted at SISP May 12 (RSo) and their usual locations in the salt marshes at Meig's Point, HBSP (m.ob.) and Barn Is., Stonington (LBe). Bradley International Airport, Windsor Locks, is now the only known breeding location in the State for Upland Sandpiper. In addition to the Bradley birds, 2 birds, likely migrants, were sighted in Durham April 21 (FMc) and another at Flanders Nature Center, Woodbury, May 5 (MS). Two White-rumped Sandpipers, more often considered fall migrants, were at Milford Point May 14-20 (m.ob.). A Purple

Sandpiper remained until May 24 at the mouth of the Thames River (RSCB). Common Snipe and American Woodcock appeared in many locations following the March 18 warm front. A snipe continued in New Hartford until May 12 (DT). As many as 3 individual Little Gulls appeared amidst the flock of Bonaparte's Gulls in the West Haven area April 8-9 (m.ob.). Common Black-headed Gull was also observed sporadically in this area at the mouth of the Oyster River March 12-April 21 (m.ob.); Bradley Pt. Park April 8 (RE) and Savin Rock April 17 (FMc,AR). Iceland Gulls were on Menunkatesuck Island, Westbrook, March 4 (FP,LBe), Merwin Point, West Haven March 21 (JKi) and Savin Rock April 9 (FMc). West Haven was also a good location for Lesser Black-backed Gull March 28-April 8 (RBA). A Lesser Black-backed Gull appeared inland at Shepaug Dam, Southbury, March 19 (DR). Glaucous Gull went unreported for the spring period. A Caspian Tern was sighted at Long Beach, Stratford, May 19 (EH,MS et al.). Black Terns were at Short Beach, Stratford, May 8 (WW), and Milford Point May 27 (JB) and May 31 (RE). Black Skimmers were at Long Beach May 15 (SM) and Groton Long Point (RSCB). Both Yellow-billed and Black-billed Cuckoos were reported in various locations throughout the State, no doubt due to outbreaks of gypsy moth caterpillars. Only one Common Barn Owl returned to the Wesleyan University, Middletown nesting location; however, another pair did nest in the vicinity (GZ fide FMa). A late Long-eared Owl was being harrassed by crows and jays in Westport April 7 (FMa) and the only Short-eared Owl reported was at Long Beach March 21 (WW). A Chuck-will's Widow was discovered roosting at Lake Wintergreen Park, New Haven, April 27 (JG), where it was photographed. The bird was last reported May 3 when it was heard calling for the first and only time (RSc fide FMa).

WOODPECKERS THROUGH WARBLERS

The only Red-headed Woodpecker report for the period was from the tip of Milford Point May 29 (JS fide FMa). Songbird migration may have been only slightly delayed by the wettest May on record. There was good movement May 4, and warbler migrations were reported as heavy May 14, 18-19 and 25. Olive-sided Flycatchers were reported from Boston Hollow, Ashford (FMa et al.) May 20, and East Rock Park, New Haven May 28-29 (FMc et al.). *Empidonax* flycatchers were in good numbers including a singing Acadian in Fairchild Garden, Greenwich May 21 (LBr). Another most unusual observation was made in Lordship marsh May 25, where a possible Ash-throated Flycatcher was reported. The bird was seen by an experienced observer who was looking for a reported Boat-tailed Grackle. A report has been forwarded to the CRRC. Common Ravens seem to be expanding in northwestern Connecticut, with reports from 6 different towns throughout the period. Birds were sighted in Cornwall, Sharon,

Barkhamsted, Norfolk, Canaan and New Hartford (DR). Additional Ravens nested in the eastern part of the State in Ashford (m.ob.). Winter Wrens were reported commonly from many areas this spring. A very early Marsh Wren was on its South Windsor nesting grounds April 3 (KM). A phenomenal number of approximately 200 Golden-crowned Kinglets were observed in East Rock Park, New Haven, April 8 (RE). There was good thrush movement in the Westport area May 25 (FMa). Among the more interesting thrush reports were Gray-cheeked in Litchfield May 19 (EH), Southport May 20 (CBn) and Goshen May 23 (RN,DR et al.). The mid-March warm front caused a veritable explosion of American Robins in the northern half of the State - 350 were sighted in the area of Lot W on the UConn campus, Storrs, March 20 (WE fide GC). A Water Pipit was observed in Mansfield April 30 (GC et al.). Observers had virtually nothing to say about vireos this season. Does this mean they were in average numbers or were there none at all?

No one is ever satisfied with warblers. There were many observers who commented upon the scarcity of "warbler waves." Yet, there was quality as well as quantity reported in several locations. Brewster's Warblers were in Kent May 14 (DT,FZ) and May 31 (FMc) and in Orange May 15 (FMc). A Lawrence's Warbler appeared for the third consecutive year in West Hartford May 7 (PD et al.) and another was paired with a female Blue-winged in Fairchild Wildflower Garden, Greenwich, May 28 (FMa,CW). River Road, along the Housatonic River, Kent, with its nesting Golden-winged and Cerulean Warblers, is known as an excellent location for warblers. The area went beyond expectations with the sighting of a Yellow-throated Warbler May 14 (PD). This bird was last sighted May 17 (MS,NC). A high of 30 Palm Warblers were in the Mansfield - Ashford - Coventry area April 30 (GC et al.). In addition to their usual breeding grounds in Kent and in Devil's Hopyard State Park, East Haddam, a Cerulean Warbler was observed at East Rock Park May 4 (RE). Also at East Rock was a Prothonotary Warbler May 5-6 (FMc et al.), which was photographed. Additional Prothonotary Warblers were in Southport May 14 (CBn) and on Falkner's Island, where one was banded May 22 for the first time since at least 1978 (JSp). A Worm-eating Warbler, banded on Falkner's Island the following day, was also the first one caught in 12 years of banding on the island (JSp). A singing male Kentucky Warbler was again found in Fairchild Garden, Greenwich, May 9-28 (m.ob.). Right next to this bird was a calling male Mourning Warbler May 28 (FMa,CW) and the two birds actually appeared to be scolding one another. There were five additional sightings of Mourning Warblers in southwestern Connecticut, all between May 25-30.

TANAGERS THROUGH GROSBEAKS

Summer Tanagers were at two locations during the period with single

birds in the Fairchild Wildflower Garden, Greenwich, May 11 (RBA) and another at the Connecticut College Arboretum, New London, May 20 (RSCB). Perhaps Summer Tanagers should be looked for in arboretum-type settings. A Blue Grosbeak was reported at HBSP May 4 (RBA) and was relocated May 10 at Meig's Point (NP fide MS). Vesper Sparrows went unreported at Bradley International Airport, Windsor Locks; however, birds were observed at White Memorial, Litchfield April 25 (RBA) and Barkhamsted Reservoir May 14 (DT et al.). A Lark Sparrow was observed at close range on Dolbia Hill Road, East Haddam May 27-28 (JZi). Grasshopper Sparrows continue to nest at Bradley Airport, although perhaps in fewer numbers than in past seasons. The mid-March warm front that brought so many early migrants into northern Connecticut also was generous with Fox Sparrows, reported from many locations. A high count of 21 Fox Sparrows were at Roaring Brook Nature Center, Canton, March 21 (DA,JKa) with the last bird reported there April 25. Three White-crowned Sparrows were reported at HBSP May 14 (FMa,FP), while single birds were seen in Litchfield May 18-19 (EH,FMc) and in Storrs May 20 (GC).

Birders should screen blackbird flocks very carefully. A male Yellow-headed Blackbird was found amidst a Red-winged flock in Suffield March 24 (HP). A male Boat-tailed Grackle was at Lordship marsh May 14-19 (EH et al.) This may be a potential breeding location for this species should it continue its northward expansion into Connecticut. A European Goldfinch was reported at an undisclosed Norwalk feeding station in mid-April. This bird was assumed to be an escapee (fide FMa). Evening Grosbeaks, unreported in the State since December, were reported only twice during the period; 2 birds at a Harwinton feeder March 26 (PC) and 2 birds in Boston Hollow, Ashford, May 8 (WB). Where are those grosbeaks, anyway???

In closing, it might be mentioned that a team of five birders set a new Connecticut Big Day record May 19 with 170 species. Congratulations to Ed Hagen, Mark Szantyr, Buzz Devine, Chris Wood and Bill Root. Something to shoot for in 1990!

Observers; Contributors (Boldface)

David Anderson, James Bair, Cheryl Barker(CBk), Charles Barnard(CBn), Ray Belding, Louis Bevier(LBe), David Brigham, Lysle Brinker(LBr), Winnie Burkett, Paul Carrier, Rene Chubet(RCh), George Clark, Jr., Roland Clement(RCl), Robert Craig(RCr), T.I. Crossman, Neil Currie, Mary Czlapinski, Paul Desjardins, Carl Ekroth, Walter Ellison, Richard English, Merion Frolich, Frank Gallo, Jon Gibbs, Ed Hagen, Elsbeth Johnson, Jay Kaplan(JKa), Seth Kellogg(SKe), Betty Kleiner, Jeff Kirk(JKi), Jeff Kittle(JKt), Steve Kotchko(SKo), Frank Mantlik(FMa), Steve Mayo, Florence McBride(FMc), Kathy Murphy, Russ Naylor, Tish

Noyes, Gerald Parkinson, Hazel Phillips, Noble Proctor, Fred Purnell, Connecticut Rare Bird Alert(RBA), Records of Southeastern Connecticut Birds(RSCB), Arne Rosengren, Dave Rosgen, Paul Saracini, Ellen Schremp, Ray Schwartz(RSc), Jane Snyder(JSn), Jeffrey Spendelow (JSp), Jerry Stanley, Richard Soffer(RSo), Mark Szantyr, David Tripp, Muriel Viets, Walter Wehtje, Rob Winkler, Connie Wood, George Zepko, Joe Zeranski(JZe), Julie Zickefoose(JZi), Francis Zygmunt.

71 Gracey Road, Canton, CT 06019

EARLY SPRING HAWK MOVEMENT

Elsbeth Johnson

Connecticut hawk migrations are generally considered a fall phenomenon. The Spring migration appears scattered, is tedious to chronicle and has none of the drama involved in the autumnal spectacle. I wouldn't know where to go in spring to meet my fellow watchers unless I went to Hook Mountain in Rockland County, New York.

March 18, 1989, was unseasonably warm and when, in mid-morning, I saw a Red-shouldered Hawk over my home in New Canaan in southwestern Fairfield County, I suspected a movement. The morning edition of the New York Times weather map predicted a fast-moving cold front along the entire Appalachian front at about 2 p.m., preceded by a trough of northward-moving warm air and brisk southwesterly winds until sundown, when the front was to cross the New York City region. This was exactly the type of weather conditions which Aaron M. Bagg first called to our attention in 1955, when he wrote "Airborne from Gulf to Gulf" for the Bulletin of the Massachusetts Audubon Society.

I packed my gear and headed for a spur of the Oenoke Ridge in northwestern New Canaan, about a mile from the New York State border. From an elevation of about 570 feet I scanned a vast countryside dotted with patches of fog and haze. Forty miles away to the southwest, was the dim but unmistakable outline of the Empire State Building in central Manhattan! At 11 a.m. the temperature was 64 degrees F. (18 degrees C.), the sky was overcast with patches of low fog and the wind WSW at 15 mph with occasional gusts.

The first bird, a Turkey Vulture, was sighted on the horizon, but did not approach the lookout. A small kettle of birds then appeared, and immediately vanished in the haze. Two resident Red-tailed Hawks played to the south in a leisurely fashion. A Red-shouldered Hawk appeared on the ridge, but was in and out of sight due to the tree cover. A definite migrant, I thought. Just before the hour ended, two Red-tails thermalled and beat their way to the northwest; a third followed. Patches of sunshine appeared and the wind abated. Four Turkey Vultures (my earlier kettle?)

flew due north, apparently migrants. The first hour had yielded three species, one unidentified raptor and a total of 10 birds.

At noon the skies remained mostly overcast, but the temperature was now 68 degrees F. and the wind had diminished to 6-8 mph. Several passerines were singing below me and flitting among the trees. Turkey Vultures began appearing, circling, rocking and spiralling upward in a lazy fashion. One group of nine birds appeared nearby; while further away, a group of 11 more, plus a Red-tail was observed. All took a long time, enjoying the thermal, before gliding due north. The Red-tail returned and I now had two adults and one immature that could possibly be designated as locals. Now, with less wind and continued warming, the birds gained altitude, although they remained well below the middle altitude cloud ceiling. A Sharp-shinned Hawk appeared overhead, gained altitude and flapped northward. At 12:36 p.m. a Peregrine Falcon appeared, seemingly from nowhere, made two circling glides and sped off to the east. The noon-hour total was 35 raptors, consisting of 25 Turkey Vultures, six Red-tails, one Sharp-shin, one Peregrine, and one unidentified raptor.

By 1 p.m., the wind had almost subsided and the temperature rose to 72 degrees F. New York City reported a temperature of 76 degrees, breaking a 1934 record high of 71 degrees for that date. Only a single Sharp-shin passed through during the hour. The sky darkened as the front approached, earlier than forecast.

At 2 p.m. there was no wind and the first drops of rain began to fall. Thunder rumbled in the distance and lightning began to flash while I moved my gear and watched the storm approach. The rain was heavy at times, the temperature fell steadily, and visibility decreased considerably as I ended my watch. The following day it snowed.

64 Silvermine Rd., New Canaan, CT 06840

Note: This same weather system sent an impressive number of early migrants, i.e., American Woodcock, Fox Sparrow and American Robin, into the area.

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

Editor

Betty S. Kleiner, Simsbury
5 Flintlock Ridge, Simsbury 06070

Art Director

Patrick J. Lynch, Cheshire

Associate Editors

Robert A. Askins, New London	Frank Mantlik, S. Norwalk
Anthony H. Bledsoe, New Haven	Frederick Purnell Jr., Darien
George A. Clark, Jr., Storrs	Fred C. Sibley, Guilford
Jay B. Kaplan, Canton	Carl J. Trichka, Fairfield

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Guide for Contributors

Preparation of Manuscripts:

The editors welcome submission of articles and notes for the *Connecticut Warbler*. Manuscripts should be typed double spaced on one side of the sheet only, with ample margins on all sides. Style of the manuscript should follow general usage in recent issues. All manuscripts receive peer review.

Illustrations:

The editors welcome submission of line artwork of Connecticut and regional birds. Black and white photographs of particular interest will also be considered, but tend to print at less than optimum quality. Line art should be submitted as good-quality photographic prints or in original form. All originals and prints will be returned promptly after publication prints are made.

Fall 1989

Contents

Volume IX Number 4 October 1989

- 73** **From the Editor's Desk**
 Betty Kleiner
- 74** **Basics of Bird Photography**
 Sam Fried
- 80** **American Swallow-tailed Kites in Mansfield,
Connecticut**
 George A. Clark, Jr., and Louis Bevier
- 83** **Banding Passerines on Chimon Island**
 Carl J. Trichka
- 88** **Connecticut Field Notes**
Spring: March 1 - May 31, 1989
 Jay Kaplan
- 95** **Early Spring Hawk Movement**
 Elsbeth Johnson

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