

# THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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## *About our Cover Artist:*

**Michael DiGeorgio**

*"Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*)"*

We are using another of Michael DiGeorgio's fine drawings to grace the front cover of *The Connecticut Warbler*. He is presently working on illustrations for the Connecticut Breeding Bird Atlas. His illustrations have also appeared in *Audubon Magazine*, *Nature Conservancy*, *National Wildlife* and *The Living Bird*. He also helped to illustrate the National Audubon Society's *Master Guide to Birding*. Inquiries about his work may be addressed to him at 795 D Long Hill Rd., Middletown, CT 06457.

## A TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL HARWOOD

Michael Harwood (1934-1989)

"I remember a lovely May morning in Central Park in New York.... A friend and I heard an unfamiliar song, a string of thin, wiry notes climbing the upper register in small steps; we traced it to a tiny yellow bird in a just-planted willow tree. To say that the bird was 'yellow' does not do it justice. Its undersides were the very essence of yellow, and this yellow was set off by the black stripes on the breast, by the dramatic triangle of black drawn on its yellow face, and by the chestnut piping on its back, where the yellow turned olive... The low sun perfectly lit this perfect specimen of a prairie warbler—a common enough bird in the East, but one neither of us had seen before.

Having clinched the identification with a quick reference to our Peterson's *Field Guide*, we began a spontaneous jig of exhilaration—you would have thought we had just found gold—stared at the bird again through our binoculars, checked the book a few more times, pounded each other on the back, danced around the place whooping, and finally bounced off—no other verb comes close..."

That comes from Michael's introduction to Eliot Porter's *Moments of Discovery: Adventures with American Birds* (1977) for which Michael wrote the text. My checklist of the 130 species of birds we found together between 1958 and 1963 in Central Park, "Gotham" (as Michael referred to New York City), puts the year at 1961 for that particular moment of discovery. It was one of many we were to share together, and one of many he was to share, in person and in prose, with all of us until he died on the day after Thanksgiving in 1989. No one could fail to identify that bird from Michael's exquisite description. Brimming with exuberance, these passages also capture the joy with which he embraced his "co-planetarians," as he lovingly described his avian friends. And it captures the joy he found in the fellowship with all of us who shared his passion.

Good friend of this earth, guardian and advocate of those values that make life truly good and beautiful, you will be deeply missed by all of us, feathered and unfeathered alike.

—David A. Titus

Michael Harwood was chairman of the Advisory Committee for *The Connecticut Warbler* since 1987 and contributed several articles to this Journal. —Betty Kleiner, Editor

# SITE GUIDE

## BIRDER'S GUIDE TO THE MOHAWK STATE FOREST AND VICINITY

Arnold Devine<sup>1</sup> and Dwight G. Smith<sup>2</sup>

This large, heavily wooded state park contains several surprises: a black spruce bog, a beaver-maintained palustrine wetland and diverse conifer stands. Hiking trails provide access to much of the park. There is even a segment of the Appalachian Trail to hike and bird during your visit to the state forest. A number of lakes, swamps and marshes located near Mohawk State Forest may also be profitably birded for a wide variety of waterfowl and shorebirds while you are in the vicinity.

Mohawk State Forest includes some 3,245 acres located in the towns of Goshen and Cornwall. A central feature of this state forest is 1,683 foot high Mohawk Mountain, so named, as the legend goes, because the Tunxis and Paugussett Indians used the mountaintop to send smoke signals to warn local tribes of the approach of Mohawk warriors entering Connecticut from the north and west, on raiding expeditions. Although Indian raids no longer occur, the high promontory still provides great scenic vistas of the Catskill, Taconic and Berkshire mountains.

The preserve was established in 1921 when Alain C. White deeded 250 acres as a gift to the citizens of Connecticut. The deed carried but one restriction—no firearms were to be allowed on the preserve—and that stipulation remains in effect. Land acquisitions steadily increased the size of the original game preserve and also expanded opportunities for outdoor recreational activities. Today Mohawk State Forest offers a variety of seasonal sports. In summer, hiking and biking are common activities and the picnic tables are usually in demand. Fishermen try their luck at the ponds or along the streams almost any time of year, while in winter Mohawk Mountain becomes a ski resort with modern facilities for downhill and cross-country skiing. About 10 miles of trails may also be used by snow vehicles when the snow depth exceeds six inches.

Part of the 2000-mile Appalachian Trail, stretching from Maine to Georgia, runs through the preserve and affords hiking pleasures as well as opportunities for observing birds and other wildlife.

Mohawk's diverse terrestrial habitats include extensive tracts of conifer plantations, deciduous and mixed woodlands and a variety of successional communities—clear-cuts, old fields, brushy growth—which are reverting back to woodland. Wetland habitats include alder swales, hardwood swamps and bogs, marshes, brooks, creeks and

ponds.

Within the past few years and even months, extensive changes have occurred in parts of the forest. Occasional stands of Red Pine have been logged to destroy diseased trees infected with the Red Pine Blister. The July 1989 tornado also touched down in some parts of the forest, resulting in almost total devastation of such woodland areas.

Because of the size and heavily wooded nature of much of this state forest, a copy of the Cornwall USGS topographic map may facilitate your birding explorations.

**Access:** Take Route 8 to Exit 44 in Torrington. Follow Route 4 west past its junction with Route 63 at Goshen. Alternately, take Route 63 to Goshen and turn west on Route 4. Continue west on Route 4 three miles to a left on Allyn Road (which leads into the park from the east end) or four miles to the park's main entrance, also on the left. From Danbury and western Connecticut take Route 7 north to Route 4 at Cornwall Bridge. Follow Route 4 to the entrance to Mohawk State Forest on the right. Near the entrance is a permanent display which maps the major roads and trails of Mohawk State Forest.

## Specialities

### Spring/Fall Migration:

Twenty-eight warbler species including Cape May, Worm-eating, Nashville, Pine, etc., Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (rare), Philadelphia Vireo (rare).

### Nesting species:

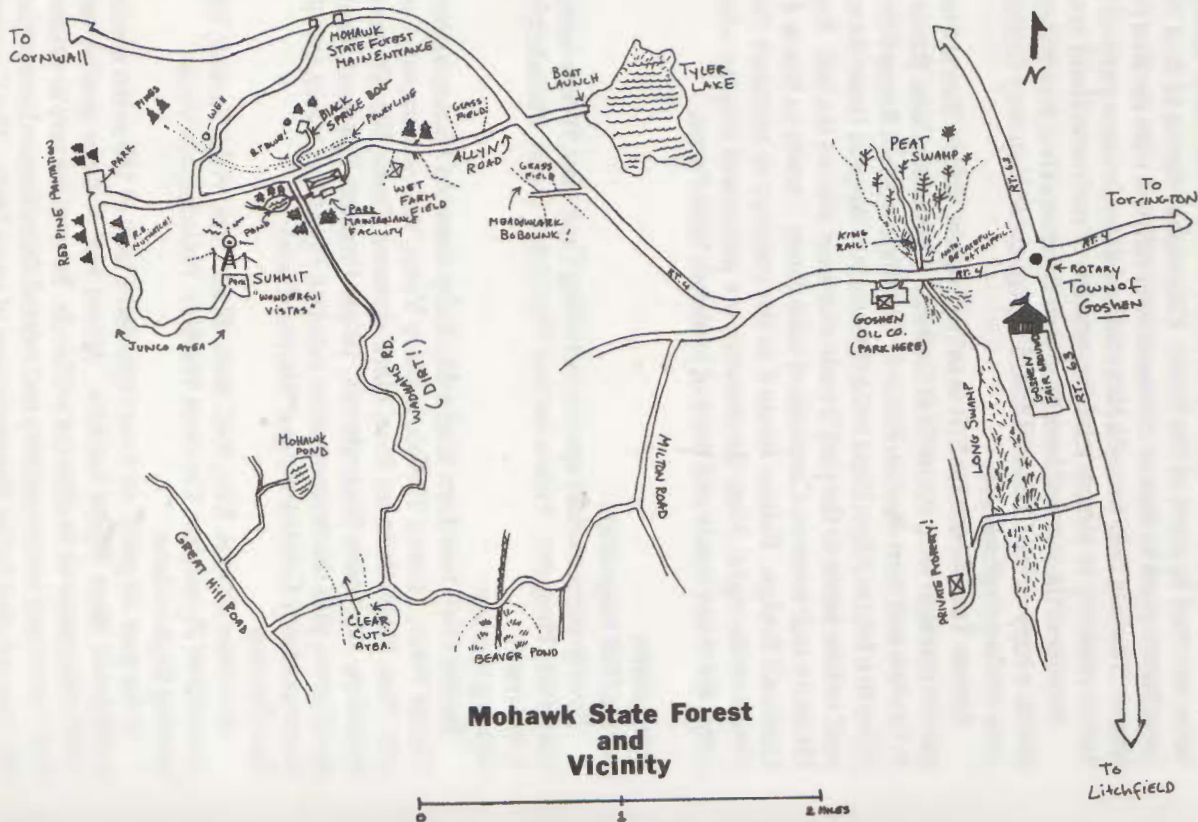
Barred Owl, Northern Goshawk, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, Solitary Vireo, Yellow-rumped, Canada, Pine, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian Warblers, Northern Waterthrush, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, plus the more western Acadian Flycatcher (rare), and the more southerly Golden-winged Warbler (rare).

### Rare Species:

American Bittern, King Rail, Sora, Black Tern, Wild Turkey, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Cerulean Warbler, Philadelphia Vireo.

### Birding Explorations:

In the past 10 years we have recorded a total of 140 avian species in Mohawk State Forest habitats. About half of these species nest within the preserve or adjacent wetlands. Several are rare to uncommon. Increased human activity and related disturbances have probably been a factor in the disappearance of some birds. The Cooper's Hawk and Northern Goshawk, for example, are not regularly encountered breeding species although they may still nest in more remote and unvisited parts of the forest. Several birds included in Connecticut



cut's "Species of Special Concern Animal List", published by the Connecticut DEP's Geological and Natural History Survey, may also be found in the Mohawk State Forest area.

### **Park Entry**

Entering the park via Allyn Road (which becomes Mohawk Mountain Road at the forest boundary), be sure to check the fields for Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark (May to August). Wild Turkey were observed frequently here in the past, but are no longer regular. The parking area for the black spruce bog is on the right, about 1.5 miles from Route 4. If you continue another 0.2 miles past the bog area, Allyn Road intersects with the main park road winding in from the park entrance.

Alternately, if you enter the Mohawk State Forest by the main entrance, be sure to stop at several scenic "overlooks" facing the northern hills. These areas have consistently produced Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, and other raptor species. Also be on the lookout for woodpeckers—Pileated, Downy, and Hairy Woodpecker are permanent residents while the Common Flicker and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker are regular from April to October. A few may overwinter.

Beyond the third "overlook," you will come to a well followed by a marked trail and wood road, all on the right side. Park and hike down the path leading through a stand of tall white pine and onto an open hilltop dominated by the ski-lift towers. This short walk commonly yields Brown Creeper, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Wood Pewee, Least Flycatcher, Pine, Black-throated Green, Blue-winged and Yellow-rumped Warbler, Solitary and Red-eyed Vireo and Field Sparrow, all of which are summer nesters in the park.

At the intersection with Allyn Road turn right and drive to the summit, about 1.1 miles. Towards the summit check the red pine groves at the sharp left corner for many common resident species: Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White and Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Ruby and Golden-crowned Kinglet, Northern Cardinal and Dark-eyed Junco. In May, Cerulean Warblers have been observed along the roadway. Just below the summit, the beautiful songs of the Hermit Thrush and Wood Thrush can be heard. Although superficially similar, these songs can be differentiated with a little practice.

### **Summit**

Birding in the clearings and scrub growth at the summit is rather limited, but the panoramic view is splendid. Soaring Turkey Vultures

or buteos, usually Red-tailed Hawks, are frequent during spring and summer. On good "movement" days, migrating raptors may be observed from September through November. Look for Least Flycatcher, Prairie, Blue-winged and Chestnut-sided Warblers, Rufous-sided Towhee, Chipping and Field Sparrow, and Dark-eyed Junco in the scrub growth of trees, shrubs, and tall grasses. All nest in this vicinity.

After birding the summit, drive back down to the intersection. Take Allyn Road 0.2 miles to the parking lot on the right, near the sign for the spruce bog.

### **Black Spruce Bog**

A trail leads from the parking area to the interior of the small black spruce bog. The trail briefly winds through a small mixed woodland highlighted by extensive mountain laurel. Through much of the summer note how the white-flowered laurel within the wood gives way to pink-flowered tints in the open cut. As the trail descends slightly into the boggy area, deciduous trees are replaced by conifers; first red and white pine, then hemlocks, and finally black spruce and tamarack in the lowest and wettest part of the bog. The understory is primarily black spruce seedlings and saplings spreading over an herb layer of ferns and ground cover of moss mats. A boardwalk provides access through the bog.

Along this all-too-brief trail you may observe several warblers, including Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Black-and-white, Black-throated Blue, Chestnut-sided, Canada, Ovenbird, and Northern Waterthrush. Other summer residents include Cedar Waxwing, Veery, Wood and Hermit Thrush, Black-capped Chickadee, White and Red-breasted Nuthatch, Red-eyed and Solitary Vireo, Rufous-sided Towhee, and Chipping Sparrow.

The bog can be an extraordinary migrant "trap" if you catch the right combination of weather conditions during May, August, and September. On good days the spruces and larches may teem with northern nesting species such as Cape May and Magnolia Warblers, Ruby and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Philadelphia Vireo, and Yellow-bellied Flycatcher.

While birding in the bog area, take time to search for rare and interesting bog flora such as the pitcher plant, sundew, and mountain holly. You will also note that the trees are primarily black spruce, with some hemlock and pines on the periphery of the bog area. Remember to stay on the boardwalk while looking for these and other plants to prevent damage to this fragile habitat.



### **Parking Lot and Pond**

Before you leave this area, check the parking lot with the huge shagbark hickory for species such as Eastern Phoebe and Barn Swallow, both of which nest in the building eaves; the Mourning Dove and American Robin. You may want to proceed to a small pond fringed with cattails and blue flag. Around the pond look for Northern Oriole, Gray Catbird, House Finch, Song Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Rufous-sided Towhee, and Blue Jay. In the past, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers nested in the gray birch adjacent to the pond.

### **Clear-Cuts, Tornado Paths and Mohawk Pond**

From the parking area follow Wadham's Road which winds for several miles through thick deciduous woods on either side. From the roadway a number of marked trails lead into these woods, offering hiking and birding opportunities.

About 2.8 miles from the parking area you, will come to a "T" intersection. Turn right and travel 0.2-0.3 miles to clear-cut areas. Ecologically, these clear-cuts display a mixed variety of successional stages, mostly seedlings and saplings of white pine, cherry and other "weed" species of trees and shrubs, with an herbaceous layer of grasses and flowers. Least Flycatcher, Golden-winged, Blue-winged and Chestnut-sided Warbler may be observed here, as well as characteristic open and scrub habitat species such as Blue Jay, Mourning Dove, Northern Cardinal and American Robin. This area is also a great location to hear the beautiful song of the White-throated Sparrow from May through August.

If you want to explore Mohawk Pond, continue past the clear-cut, bearing right onto Great Hill Road and right again on Perkin Road, which is lined with larches for much of its length. Mohawk Pond is down the road on the right.

### **Beaver Pond**

To bird the Beaver Pond, turn around at the clear-cut and drive straight through the "T" intersection. Note extensive damage where the July tornado touched down—whole stands of trees flattened with their trunks scattered in a discernable rotation pattern. Elsewhere tree-tops have been torn off, leaving only the jagged stumps.

About 0.3 miles from the intersection, drive over a stout wooden bridge and park on the right. An open, beaver-maintained palustrine wetland, bisected by a small stream, covers several acres. The wetland is dominated by scrubby willows and other aquatic emergents and fringed by a few snags. If you wait quietly on the bridge, you may be rewarded with the sight of beaver paddling along the stream. This

wetland is an excellent birding site. The presence and territorial behavior of Yellow Warbler and Ruby-throated Hummingbird suggest nearby nests. Other species to look for, from Spring through Fall, include Great Blue Heron, Pileated Woodpecker, Acadian Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Veery, Cedar Waxwing, Solitary and Red-eyed Vireo, Blue-winged, Chestnut-sided, Black-and-white Warblers, Common Yellowthroat, Scarlet Tanager, Swamp Sparrow, and American Goldfinch. From this spot a Barred Owl has responded to a vocal imitation of its territorial call.

After birding this pond, you can return to Route 4 by retracing your birding route through the park. Or, you may exit by continuing straight from the pond until the dirt road intersects Milton Road. Turn left to Route 4, then turn left to visit Tyler Lake.

### **Tyler Lake**

Take time to see Tyler Lake from the boat launch area, off Route 4. Watch for the state boat launch sign which directs you to Dohren Drive, located almost across from Allyn Road. Park and scan the lake for waterfowl. Due to heavy recreational use of the lake, summer birding is not too productive. Spring and fall species spotted on the lake include Common Loon, Great Blue Heron, Green-backed Heron, Mallard, American Black Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Wood Duck, Green-winged Teal and several swallow species. Tyler Lake has been one of the "big day" stops in Connecticut for the past five years and has never yet been disappointing. Two of the highlights observed here were a Black Tern and a White-winged Scoter in May 1988.

### **Long Swamp**

This interesting palustrine habitat is located immediately west of Route 63, 1.3 miles south of the Route 4 junction. Niesen Road (unmarked, but identified by a fruit stand on the corner) bisects the southern end of this cattail marsh. Park along the edge and explore for a good vantage point from which to bird the area.

Many elusive species frequent the marsh from spring through fall. Sora and Virginia Rails are fairly common and probably breed deep in the marsh. On a still morning the unusual "pumping" sound of the American Bittern can sometimes be heard in the marsh. Although the Least Bittern has not been recorded, its presence is suspected. Other potential species include Blue-winged Teal, Wood Duck, Great Blue Heron, Eastern Kingbird, Least Flycatcher, Tree Swallow, Cedar Waxwing, blackbirds, Common Yellowthroat and Swamp Sparrow. The area can be alive with sound when you are fortunate enough to catch the dawn chorus between May and August.

In the spring and fall shorebirds also may be observed. Be on the lookout for Killdeer, Least, Semipalmated, Pectoral, Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers.

### Peat Swamp

This forested wetland of dead trees and snags is located on Route 4 about 0.6 miles west of the Route 63 junction. Park at the Goshen Oil Company lot on the left and walk back to survey the swamp, which lies on both sides of the road. To the north the emergent vegetation consists of a mix of sedge and rush with the imposing remnants of a dead white pine forest. These dead snags make ideal perches for raptors such as Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawk, and American Kestrel, in summer, the American Rough-legged Hawk in winter; and Barred or Great Horned Owls whenever you are fortunate enough to catch their dark silhouettes on moonlit nights. Woodpeckers are frequently seen as are Great Blue and Green-backed Herons. On a particularly good birding day a King Rail was observed hunting along a drainage ditch, and an American Bittern was heard at this location.

Mohawk State Forest and the adjacent palustrine wetlands offer a diverse array of habitats and avian species for the birder and naturalist. The best time for birding is late spring and fall, however, a summer visitor will discover many northerly breeding species and often a surprise or two. Be sure to visit the black spruce bog and enjoy the unique flora that graces this rare Connecticut environment.

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# NON-BREEDING BALD EAGLES IN NORTHWEST CONNECTICUT DURING LATE SPRING AND SUMMER

D. A. Hopkins

The Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) formerly nested in Connecticut (Sage et al 1913:82) as recently as the late 1950's (Grier et al. 1983:12). Subsequently bald eagles were not seen in the State during the breeding season until 12 July 1975 when R. Rhindress (pers. comm.) sighted an adult on the Upper Farmington River. Following his report I began a study to determine the status of eagles in that area.

## Study Area

The study area in the Upper Farmington River Watershed extended from the Farmington-Avon line upriver (35 km) to the Massachusetts State line. This area includes five reservoirs. The southernmost is Nepaug Reservoir (277 ha.) on the Nepaug River, a tributary of the Farmington River. On the east branch of the Farmington River are Lake McDonough (156 ha.), a flow compensating reservoir, followed immediately upstream by Barkhamsted Reservoir (922 ha.). On the west branch of the Farmington, which is the main stem of the River, is the Hogback Reservoir (86 ha.) followed immediately upstream by the Colebrook River Reservoir which extends into Massachusetts. The Metropolitan District Commission, hereafter MDC, a semi-public water supply company, built and controls the first four reservoirs. The U.S. Corps of Engineers constructed and regulates the Colebrook River Reservoir which provides flood control with a highly variable area of water. The river and all but two reservoirs are open for public recreation, which is most intense in spring and summer. The two reservoirs with restricted public access are Nepaug and Barkhamsted. This section of the river is a cold water fishery that abuts five state forests (6671 ha.) and land controlled by the MDC.

## Methods

The initial search, a series of spot counts, was made from public access areas along the river and reservoirs from 13 July 1975 to July 1979. By 1979 it was determined that the Bald Eagles were most often seen around the Barkhamsted Reservoir, I obtained MDC approval to search this area and later (1983) Nepaug Reservoir. Four additional observers joined me at this time with a fifth added in 1982 and two more in 1988. During these years we observed along varied transects by the shoreline of the river and reservoirs. We watched the areas

where eagles were thought most likely to appear. Those sighted were watched to determine their activity. From 1979 to 1983, a portion of the time was devoted to trying to lure the eagles before a blind in order to photograph them and to attempt to read any bands. After the eagles were photographed, a black and white checkerboard (61 x 91 cm.) was photographed in the same spot. The resulting slides were projected onto white pieces of paper to trace the outline of the eagles and checkerboard graph. Estimates of positions of head, neck and tail joints enabled measurements of the eagle's length.

In 1976, two flights were made to search the reservoirs' shorelines for nests. The first, on 8 April, was a charter flight, while the second on 2 July was flown by an experienced pilot in a U.S. Fish and Wildlife plane. On the ground, observers searched for nests in the trees along the shores of the reservoirs.

In the summer of 1981, the Department of Environmental Protection's Wildlife Unit, aided by MDC personnel, placed a nesting platform in a large white pine (*Pinus strobus*) on Pond Island in Barkhamsted Reservoir. In late spring of 1988, two additional platforms were placed along the shore of Barkhamsted Reservoir and one at Nepaug Reservoir. Additionally, postcards were distributed to MDC personnel and State Conservation Officers working in the areas, requesting that they report any eagle sightings.

From 1975 through 1979, 54 sightings were recorded during the spring and summer. In the period 1980 through 1988, observers' time (3350 hours) and days (324) afield were recorded in addition to the number of sightings (220). Over the entire 14-year period, other observers reported 61 sightings. In 1979, observations were extended over the whole year, but this paper covers only the period May through August to eliminate the bias of migrants during other months.

## Results and Discussion

Over the 14 years at least one adult and one immature bald eagle were present in the study area during the normal breeding season of the northern subspecies (Palmer: 213). Over eleven seasons two adults were seen, and, in all but one year, one or more immatures were present (Table 1). These numbers of eagles were the minimum possible as shown by coincident sightings or plumage variations.

The eagles exhibited no consistent activities to indicate breeding. For example, adults were not seen in aerial display nor were they observed carrying sticks for nest building or repair. Only twice were prey carried out of sight to be consumed and, on only one occasion were two adults seen sharing prey.

Air and ground searches failed to reveal any nests. Furthermore,

MDC foresters who travel around the reservoirs have never found any nests attributable to eagles.

Table 1. A summary of the Bald Eagles seen in the Upper Farmington River Valley Summer 1975 through 1988.

	May		June		July		August	
	A	I	A	I	A	I	A	I
1975*	-	-	-	-	2	0	0	0
1976	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
1977	1	2	1	0	1	1	0	0
1978	0	0	2	0	2	1	0	0
1979	2	0	2	1	2	0	2	0
1980	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	1
1981	2	0	1	0	2	1	1	2
1982	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
1983	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1
1984	0	1 (u)	1	1	1	1	2	0
1985	1	0	1	1	2	0	0	0
1986	0	1	1	0	0	1 (u)	2	2
1987	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	0
1988	1	1	2	1	1	2	0	3

\* Observations began July 1975

A - Adult I - Immature (u) - Unidentified age

In July 1981, two adults were lured for photographic measurement. One measured 72 cm. long and the other measured 82 cm. The literature contains few body length measurements. The photographed eagles may have been southern birds (Forbush 1939:289), or one might have been northern and the other southern (Roberts 1955:524). Thus the photographic procedure was inconclusive and therefore, was discontinued.

On 29 May 1983, an adult made three strikes, each time seizing a fish and dropping it, then immediately landed on the shore of Barkhamsted Reservoir. The fish appeared to be approximately 30 cm. long and to weigh less than 0.45 kg. This size prey should have posed no problem for the eagle. As the bird came to rest, the right wing distinctly drooped with the carpal joint not brought up close to the body. The primaries failed to close over the base of the tail feathers and feather damage was apparent at the alula and on the number one primary. Apparently that eagle had suffered some trauma to the wing. To compensate, the bird would try (every 15 to 20 seconds) to bring the wing to its normal resting position. This twitch became quite

distinctive and allowed a continuing identification of this bird again in May, and June, twice in July, three times in August, and once in September. In 1984, this same bird was seen on one day each in January, February, March, and July. The eagle was seen 10 March 1985 and again on 12 and 18 July 1987. The probability that two eagles would display this problem is minute, and presumably only one bird was involved. If so, at least one eagle exhibited site fidelity to this area. Moreover, this bird was a non-breeder for four of the five years.

Banding of bald eagle nestlings in Florida in the 1940's and 1950's revealed a northern dispersal of immature eagles (Broley 1952:171). This discovery led to the presumption that southern adults also disperse to the north each summer (Spofford 1962); however, this idea has not been supported by banding recoveries (Palmer 1988:205, Stalmaster 1987:63). Thus, the adult bald eagles in the study area during the summer are non-breeding birds of the northern population as have been found in other northern areas (Hansen and Hodges 1985). A significant portion of the populations of adult raptors are non-breeders, especially among the larger raptor species (Newton 1979:12).

The origin of the eagles using the study area was not determined because none of the birds seen in summer had bands. Each winter six or more eagles frequent the study area. Undoubtedly, some of these birds remain for the summer. During the study, marked changes occurred in adult exploitation of the habitat. Hunting and/or loafing perches appeared to change each year or two. Some shoals were not hunted, and trees that appeared to have provided shade in the heat of the day changed from year to year. With the exception of a few obvious trees on a prominent point or of special snags, there was no consistent use of hunting and/or loafing perches over the years. These observations indicate a turnover of adults using the area. Presumably, summering adults can pair with eagles entering the area each winter or in spring could move north seeking to breed.

The question arises as to why eagles did not breed in the study area. Since 1982, the number of bass nests observed has dropped 80% in the Barkhamsted Reservoir, the prime part of the study area. Calculation of the habitat suitability index (Peterson 1986) for breeding eagles in the Barkhamsted Reservoir indicates that availability of prey is the limiting factor, while the factors of nest trees and human disturbance appear to be satisfactory.

Hence, it appears that until the prime nesting habitat to the north becomes filled, there is little chance that Bald Eagles will breed in the study area. Of greater importance here is that non-breeding adults and immatures can enjoy a habitat that is free from antagonistic

behavior of territorial eagles. Until breeding activity occurs in this area, the study area is significant in providing a stress-free environment for adults and immatures striving to reach their breeding potential.

### Acknowledgments

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## NOTES ON BIRDS USING MAN-MADE NESTING MATERIALS

William E. Davis, Jr.

Birds have used a wide variety of man-made or man-provided materials in their nest construction. For example, Collias and Collias (1984) mention Rock Doves (*Columba livia*) building a nest of pieces of iron wire; Allen (1939) tells of goldfinches using cotton as a nest liner; and Darlington (1962) reports a pair of House Martins (*Delichon urbica*) which constructed their nest from wet cement acquired from a freshly poured foundation and driveway nearby. I report here on several bird species which I have observed using man-made substances for nest material, and comment on the potential hazards of using some materials.

On 23 July 1977, at the Box Butte State Recreation Area of northwestern Nebraska, I encountered what I later identified as an oriole nest, which was occupied by a House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*). My notes written at the time describe the situation:

"I was awakened by the singing of a very nearby House Wren who was obviously upset at our location. The wren's nest was a hanging affair, looking much like an oriole's nest (was it an abandoned nest?) constructed mostly of cottonwood cotton and completely enmeshed in monofilament fishing line, hook and all! I flushed the female with my close inspection and she dived under our van about six feet away. The nest was partly hidden by foliage on this low-hanging cottonwood branch (the nest was at eye level) and near the branch tip. I removed the hook (longshank) and a short segment of line, noticing that the 'oriole' appearance of the nest was due to the 'woven' look inspired by many feet of interwoven fishing line."

My initial confusion as to the probable constructor of the nest was cleared up when I learned that House Wrens frequently use the nests of other birds. Bent (1948) describes House Wrens utilizing nests of Barn Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*), robins, and phoebes. Bent also reports two wren takeovers of oriole nests and Schwab (1899) reports a House Wren building in a Northern Oriole's nest when there were empty bird houses available.

The globular shape and low elevation suggest that the nest was originally constructed by a "Bullock's" Northern Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) (Bent 1958). Collias and Collias suggest (1984) that birds use artificial materials that in some way resemble the natural materials they normally use. Allen (1939) reported on a "Baltimore" Northern Oriole which incorporated string into its nest. Presumably string and

monofilament fishing line resemble to some degree the long filamentous plant fibers orioles usually use for their nest construction. Jackson (1975) reported on a Northern Oriole nest from Mississippi which incorporated cellophane strips like those used in Easter baskets and nylon monofilament fishing line of at least two different sizes. Jackson also reported (1981) a Lichtenstein's Oriole (*Icterus gularis*) nest which also contained monofilament fishing line.

On 15 June 1988, Brian E. Cassie and I were walking along a powerline in Foxboro, Massachusetts, conducting a breeding bird census. I noticed a Black-capped Chickadee (*Parus atricapillus*) at ground level next to a pile of discarded junk. It had a thumbnail size puff of material resembling cotton in its beak. Close inspection showed that the bird had pulled spun fiberglass from the cylindrical insulation tube surrounding copper tubing attached to a discarded hot water tank. The chickadee and its mate flew off, and we were about to continue when Brian noticed small chunks of some material drifting slowly down from the crossbar framework of the powerline metal stanchion some 20 meters above. It proved to be more of the fiberglass wool. We located the source: the nest of an Eastern Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*) lodged between two struts. The adult birds both made visits to the nest, and bits of fiberglass were occasionally dislodged.

Chickadees commonly line their nest with cottony vegetable fibers and other soft materials (Bent 1946), and it is very probable that they were collecting the similar textured fiberglass for nest lining material. The kingbirds also line their nests with soft materials, and have been reported to use artificial materials such as bits of cloth, and string as lining materials, and often nest near pastures where wool (man-introduced material) is easily obtainable (Bent 1942). I found no references to the use of fiberglass wool as a nesting material, but an Icterine Warbler (*Hippolais icterina*) used glass fibers 5 to 8 centimeters long, used for reinforcing drywall sheets, to construct its entire nest (Monke 1978).

Using man-made materials as nesting materials can pose hazards to birds. Collias and Collias (1984) suggested that the Rock Dove nest of iron fragments failed because the nest material provided no insulation to keep in heat from brooding. Many species of birds and other animals have been reported trapped in tangles of monofilament fishing line, including a Screech Owl (*Otus asio*) which Jackson reported trapped in the Lichtenstein's Oriole's nest (1981). Anyone who has handled fiberglass wool is familiar with its irritating properties, and I think that its use as a nest lining would be an irritant to the naked chicks.

Not all man-made materials used for nesting by birds are necessarily directly harmful. For example, on the way to lunch at the American Ornithologists' Union meeting in Fayetteville, Arkansas, 8 August 1988, with Brian Harrington and Fred C. Sibley, Brian pointed out a nest of an American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*). It was perhaps three meters from the ground on the branch of a tree and had dozens of strips of machine shredded computer printout paper streaming from its structure. Some strips dangled a foot below the cup. The computer paper probably posed no direct threat to the adult or young birds, but may have posed an indirect threat, since the streaming paper made the nest highly visible to potential predators.

In some cases harmful effects may be very subtle. Martin and Hector (1988) found that sheep wool used by Cave Swallow (*Hirundo fulva*) as nest-lining material apparently increased incubation periods, probably because the wool interfered with normal brood patch contact with the eggs.

In some cases the use of man-made nesting materials is widespread, but harmful effects have not been demonstrated. Podolsky and Kress (1989) reported that 188 Double-crested Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) nests contained plastic debris, mostly woven into the nest structure. They pointed out that both adult and young cormorants ran the risk of becoming entangled in the plastic or ingesting it.

Clearly, the use of man-made or man-introduced nesting materials is widespread in the avian community, and the potentially hazardous effects poorly understood and deserving of further study.

### Acknowledgments

I wish to thank Michael Kaern for translating the Monke paper for me, Brian A. Cassie, John C. Kricher and Fred C. Sibley for reviewing an earlier draft of the manuscript, and Jean D. Allaway for proof reading earlier drafts.

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# CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES SUMMER: JUNE 1 - JULY 31, 1989

Jay Kaplan

Fewer field reports are received during the summer season. Is it too hot to go out? Technically, August is our hottest month, but perhaps the beginnings of the shorebird migration are enough to lure many birders out from their cool summer retreats. For many, summer is the time to travel to more exotic locales: the coast of Maine, southeast Arizona, California, Alaska....and beyond. Some birders get involved with other activities (boating, golf or tennis). For a few, perhaps burnout from one too many "Big Days" requires a prescription calling for a few months away from the binoculars. Whatever the reason, the paucity of summer reports dims our knowledge of Connecticut's bird life during this season of the year.

For a five year period, the Connecticut Breeding Bird Atlas Project provided the impetus to bird the summer months. Perhaps the old competitive juices began to flow....let's see who can confirm the greatest number of nesting species in this block! Alas, the Atlas project came to an end and for many birders, with it passed an interest in birding the summer season. Those who did get out last summer were not disappointed. Swallow-tailed Kite, Black and Caspian Terns, Black Skimmer and Chuck-will's-Widow were but a few of the species reported during the period.

Temperatures were slightly above normal for the month of June. The coast saw a record breaking 88 degrees F June 2, but temperatures dipped into the 50's June 12 and 15. The most distinguishing feature of the month was, again, rain. Hartford had 13 days of precipitation during the month, some 3.21 inches above normal. On the coast, precipitation was slightly less excessive, only 2.7 inches above normal for the month. Nearly 3 inches fell in the Hartford area June 9-10; not much help for fledging young birds. For the year, precipitation was more than 12 inches above the norm by June's end. July usually averages 75 degrees F near the coast and slightly warmer inland due to the rapid heating of large land masses. This July was slightly cooler and drier than the norm. Such a report, however, does little to convey the impact of the violent tornadic events that swept western Connecticut July 10, reducing the historic Cathedral Pines area of Cornwall to matchstick debris and causing considerable destruction to many places in the State.

The nesting season was, overall, successful in spite of the aforementioned meteorological events. However, cool, wet weather did

significantly affect early nesters, particularly ground and marsh-nesting species. One reporter expressed concerns about nest parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbirds, particularly of vireos and warblers. Yet another example of the importance of observing birdlife during the summer season!

## LOONS THROUGH FALCONS

As many as 3 Common Loons were observed throughout the period at Milford Point (m.ob.). Inland, 2 pairs of loons were engaged in courtship display on Barkhamsted Reservoir; however, there was no sign of nesting by the period's end. A single, non-breeding bird was also on the reservoir through the period, as was another non-breeding loon on Nepaug Reservoir. As of July 31, a female was sitting on a nest at Nepaug Reservoir (DR). Pied-billed Grebes were apparently not faring well. A territorial male at White Memorial Foundation, Litchfield, was driven off by a Mute Swan (DR). The 2 territorial males at Lordship Marsh, Stratford, were being subjected to intense human disturbance (dirt bikes and ATV's). Previous nesting birds in Newtown and Sherman failed to return this year and another pair in Sharon had not been confirmed as nesting by July 31 (DR). Double-crested Cormorants, on the other hand, continued to increase and expand along the coast from Norwalk to Stonington (DR). In addition to an inland nesting colony on King's Island in the Connecticut River, Enfield, 5 late migrants were seen June 4 in the Woodbury-Roxbury area (WCBC). A single bird was seen in Mansfield July 10 (RC).

Tri-colored Herons were reported in the Groton Long Point marshes June 16 (RSCB) and at Barn Island, Stonington, June 17 (SM). Southeast Connecticut was also the only area to report Cattle Egrets during the period with 2 birds along Jerry Brown Road, Mystic, June 2 and another at that location June 10 (RSCB). A new nesting confirmation for Yellow-crowned Night Heron came from Fairfield (DR). Brant remained off Milford Point throughout June with 3 reported June 10 (RE) and 7 birds June 26-30 (SM). Milford Point was also an unusual location for a Blue-winged Teal June 3 (FM). A single Greater Scaup was reported from Middle Beach Road, Madison, June 27 (FM), while 3 Lesser Scaup remained in Bush Harbor, Greenwich, June 1-20 (LBr). Other lingerers included 2 Oldsquaw off Milford Point June 30 (RE) and 12 White-winged Scoters near the Thimble Islands, Branford June 26 (JSp). New breeding confirmations for Hooded Merganser came from River Road, Kent (CB,DTr) and New Hartford (DR). A female with a chick was sighted in Barkhamsted in mid-June (DTr). Red-breasted Mergansers were sighted off Milford Point June 16 (SM) and from Middle Beach Road, Madison, June 27 (FM).

According to the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, this has been a productive year for Osprey with 52 active nests reported throughout the State. A total of 89 young were fledged, down from the record 95 in the previous year (DEP-WB). Of particular interest was an inland nesting attempt in southeastern Connecticut, the first such attempt in many years. Although this attempt failed, it is hoped Osprey will expand their range into other sections of the State in the next decade. Six Osprey were seen at Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison (hereafter HBSP), June 30 (JK) and a single bird was sighted at Milford Point July 22 (RE). Perhaps the most exciting report of the period came from Mansfield where 2 Swallow-tailed Kites were reported June 6-24 (GC,m.ob.). There are a number of southern New England records for this species during this time of year as it is known to overshoot its breeding grounds in the southeast. Should it be looked for on an annual basis as a rare but regular vagrant? Bald Eagles summered in the State at several locations. Two birds were sighted along the Connecticut River intermittently through the period (RC); 2 immature birds were seen June 4 in the Woodbury-Roxbury area (WCBC) and another immature was seen in Mansfield June 25 (LBr,TB). Barkhamsted Reservoir and the upper Farmington River Valley drew the greatest number of eagles including 2 adults, 1 sub-adult and 3 immatures (DR), but alas, once again there was no sign of nesting. A Northern Harrier was reported at HBSP June 16 (CE). An immature Cooper's Hawk was struck and killed by a car in Windsor July 31 (JK), while new confirmations for Northern Goshawk came from Glastonbury and New Hartford (DR). A Goshawk was reported in Woodbury July 25 (RN), and 4 Red-shouldered Hawks (2 adults, 2 immatures) were reported from the same town June 1-July 15 (EH et al.). The Western Connecticut Bird Club's June 4 count reported a record low 2 American Kestrels in the Woodbury-Roxbury area (WCBC). It should be mentioned that this count, patterned after the Christmas Bird Counts, is a splendid way to interest birders in getting out during this period. As does the Christmas Count, the WCBC June count provides information on population trends and such a count might be considered by other birding groups around the State. Thanks to Ed Hagen for compiling the data for this count. Although Peregrine Falcons have yet to nest in Connecticut in recent times, we may be getting closer. Springfield, Massachusetts hosted its first nesting Peregrines in many years atop a downtown building, and several newspaper accounts concerning the daring rescue of the young by Massachusetts State Department of Environmental Management's Endangered Species Unit thrilled birders and non-birders alike.

## GROUSE THROUGH WRENS

The early rains caused a high percentage of nesting failures for gallinaceous birds like Ruffed Grouse and Wild Turkey. There were many late nesting attempts including a hen turkey still sitting on eggs in Granby July 29 (DR). King Rails are often heard and occasionally seen at Manresa Marsh, Norwalk. An adult and 2 chicks seen July 7 (JK et al.) was a good sighting. There were few shorebird reports received for the period. The Department of Environmental Protection's Wildlife Bureau, in their SCOPE Publication, reports a record number 34 pairs of Piping Plovers were observed along the coast during the breeding season. Nest production increased 30% over the previous year with 61 young fledged in 1989 (DEP-WB). American Oystercatcher was reported from Milford Point, where 2 birds were sighted June 3 (FM) and 2 were also seen at Milford Point June 16 (SM), while 2 young were fledged from a nest in Stonington (RSCB). Early fall migrants included 2 Greater Yellowlegs at Greenwich Point July 2 (LBr) and another at Mumford Cove, Stonington (RSCB); and 2 Lesser Yellowlegs at Milford Point June 30 (SM). The spring rains eliminated many of the resting stops for northward bound Solitary Sandpipers. A single bird was sighted in Woodbury June 4-5 (WCBC,DTr). The two best spots for Willet in the State appear to be Milford Point, where 8 birds were reported July 22 (RE) and HBSP with 6 birds June 16 (CE). Bradley International Airport, Windsor Locks, remains the State's last stronghold for Upland Sandpiper. Nine birds were in view at one time July 18 (LBe,GC,et al.). The observers report that the birds were seen in a restricted area that perhaps affords them some protection from the heavy automobile traffic in some of the more accessible areas. Early migrant reports included 2 Ruddy Turnstones at Milford Point July 6 (SM) and 6 Red Knots at that location July 22 (RE). A late spring migrant Least Sandpiper, the first in 10 years, was observed on the WCBC June 4 count in the Woodbury-Roxbury area (WCBC). Two Dowitcher sp. were observed at Milford Point June 3 (SM et al.) and 11 Short-billed Dowitchers were sighted in this location July 7 (JK).

There were no unusual gulls reported for the entire period. Terns, however, were in good supply along the coast. One or two Caspian Terns were observed at Milford Point throughout July (m.ob.) and a single was sighted at Mumford Cove July 30 (RSCB). A Royal Tern was reported at Stonington Point July 29 (RSCB). Roseate Terns on Falkner's Island were reported down from 190 pairs in 1988 to 165 pairs this season; however, this remains close to the ten year average of 175 (JSp). Meanwhile, Common Terns on Falkner's Island continue to increase with 3500 pairs reported (JSp). DEP estimates indicated a



10% decline in pairs of Least Terns along the shoreline. However, young fledged was up over the previous year as 277 fledglings were produced in 1989 compared to 172 in 1988 (DEP-WB). A Black Tern was reported at Milford Point June 24 (RE,JF). A Black Skimmer was also reported for much of the period at Milford Point (m.ob.). Both Black-billed and Yellow-billed Cuckoos were reported as more common statewide (m.ob.), no doubt due to increases in gypsy moth infestation in various areas. A Chuck-will's-widow was heard calling briefly in Canton June 26 (AK). Unfortunately, it was chased off by a barking dog and despite intensive searching, could not be relocated. Whip-poor-wills continue to decline through much of the State and this trend has become alarming (DR).

A Yellow-bellied and a Least Flycatcher were both reported on Falkner's Island July 29 (JSp). Acadian Flycatchers appear to be expanding and a high of 13 were counted in the Woodbury-Roxbury area June 4 (WCBC). Horned Lark was newly confirmed as breeding in West Haven (DR). There are now close to 40 colonies of breeding Cliff Swallows in the State with new colonies discovered in Granby and Winchester (DR). There was a new confirmation for Fish Crow in the Reservoir lands of West Hartford (DR). Common Ravens had a fine year with 3 nests in Barkhamsted fledging 11 young and 2 nests in Sharon fledging 5 (DR). Other nests were also successful and several additional towns hosted territorial birds. It will be interesting to chart the progress of this species in the next several years. An unusual Red-breasted Nuthatch report came from Windsor Locks where an individual was seen July 12 (PD). Carolina and Winter Wrens continued to increase and expand their ranges (m.ob.).

## THRUSHES THROUGH FINCHES

Reports concerning songbirds were few. Eastern Bluebirds had an excellent season despite early losses to the cold, wet weather. Approximately 950 pairs nested statewide (DR). A new breeding confirmation for Golden-crowned Kinglet came from Granby with another probable breeding pair found in Torrington (DR). Perhaps the weather had something to do with a rash of late warbler reports including Tennessee Warblers in Woodbury-Roxbury June 4 (WCBC); a Magnolia in Greenwich June 10 (LBr); and a Wilson's in Woodbury-Roxbury June 4 (WCBC). There were a number of new nesting confirmations for warblers. These included a "Brewster's" hybrid in Litchfield, Magnolia in Barkhamsted, Black-throated Green in Torrington, Blackburnian in Granby, and Pine in Barkhamsted and Glastonbury (DR). A singing male Hooded Warbler was observed in East Rock Park, New Haven June 12 (FM), the same location as an earlier May report.

A new nesting confirmation for Savannah Sparrow comes from Middlefield (DR). The grasslands of Bradley International Airport continue to support Grasshopper Sparrows. Two singing males were located July 18 (LBe,GC,et al.). White-throated Sparrows were confirmed nesting in a new location in Salisbury (DR), and Orchard Orioles were newly confirmed in Rocky Hill (DR).

**Observers, Contributors (Boldface):**

Cheryl Barker, Louis Bevier (LBe), **David Bingham**, George Boynton, **Lysle R. Brinker** (LBr), Miley Bull, Tom Burke, Winnie Burkett, Jodie Chase, **George A. Clark, Jr.**, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection-Wildlife Bureau (DEP-WB), **Robert Craig**, Shirley Davis, Paul Desjardins, **Carl Ekroth**, **Richard English**, **Jeff Fengler**, **Merion Frolich**, **Ed Hagen**, **Jay Kaplan**, Alis Kuhn, many observers (m.ob.), **Steve Mayo**, **Florence McBride**, John McDonald, J. McNeeley, D. McKay, **Russ Naylor**, **Gerald Parkinson**, Records of Southeastern Connecticut Birds (RSCB), **David Rosgen**, Kathy Spada, **Jane Snyder**, **Jeffery Spendelow**, (JSp), Deborah Tenney, **David Tripp, Jr.** (DTr), Western Connecticut Bird Club (WCBC), Francis Zygmont.

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## CORRECTIONS

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Volume 9, no. 2, page 69: In the article by Clark, Sibley, and Clement on unusual bird specimens at the Yale Peabody Museum, the skeletal specimen (YPM 6750) listed as a Western Tanager from Connecticut is actually a Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

Volume 9, no. 4, page 86: In the article by Trichka on banding passerines on Chimon Island, the numbers for Ovenbird were transposed and should read 24 individuals and 7 years netted since 1981.

# THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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### 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.

# Winter 1990

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# THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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## *About our Cover Artist:*

**Nicole Kohut**

*"Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)"*

As a child growing up in Westport, Connecticut, Nicole Kohut always loved animals. She raised dogs, rabbits, frogs, turtles and quail. She also loved to draw. After graduating from high school in 1985, she decided to try combining these two interests and has been seriously drawing and painting animals and landscapes.

She has won prizes for her paintings in Stratford and Fairfield, and had a one-woman show of her work at the Connecticut Audubon Society's Fairfield Nature Center. Inquiries about her work may be addressed to 42 Westfair Dr., Westport, CT 06880.

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

## EDITORIAL

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It has now been over one year since I assumed the responsibility for compiling the field reports for *The Connecticut Warbler*. It is an enjoyable assignment and at the conclusion of each report I have a better feel for when and where rarities, vagrants, late migrants or early arrivals may occur within our State. Over time, one may develop a sense of certain trends within the State's avifauna. Are certain species extending their range? Are there others whose future should be of special concern?

My job is relatively simple as I merely provide a summary of the many field reports submitted to the "Warbler." Yet, as I compile the field notes for each issue, I am faced with the same nagging concerns. Do field reports submitted at the conclusion of each season offer an accurate portrayal of our State's birdlife? Are we missing anything and what can be done to rectify any errors of omission? What about active State birders who do not forward their seasonal reports? How can we encourage them to submit reports? Our State gets great coverage on weekends, but what of birds that choose weekdays to migrate through the State? Areas like Milford Point and Hammonasset Beach State Park are well covered, but should a Boreal Owl show up in Canaan or Union, would anyone ever find it? There is much to be said for birding new areas!

We are quick to report the Swallow-tailed Kite or Varied Thrush when such rarities appear, but if there is a crash in the Song Sparrow population, would it be reported in the field notes? For example: A year ago, there were several reports of Double-crested Cormorants staging off the coast during the fall period. This year, there was no mention of this species in over 35 reports received. It is unlikely the cormorant population crashed. Did such stagings go unreported? Did they bypass the State? Finally, how does the average birder determine the relevance of a sighting?

Perhaps the most important comment with which to leave you is that all information provided in the field reports can be useful, even that which does not appear in the limited space provided in the field notes column. Should an observation seem interesting or unusual, write it down and let others judge the value of the sighting. We'll be looking for your field reports for the next issue of *The Connecticut Warbler*.

Jay Kaplan  
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# THE 1989-90 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Stephen P. Broker

Seventeen Christmas Bird Counts were conducted in Connecticut this year, six of them Northern, five Mid-State and six Coastal. Of the seventeen, two have been conducted for fewer than 10 years. Barkhamsted held its 6th count during 1989-90, and Edwin Way Teale-Trail Wood held its 4th. Connecticut Christmas Bird Counts celebrating anniversaries this year were Salmon River (15th), Stratford-Milford (20th), Old Lyme-Saybrook (35th), and New London (40th). Five of the present counts, including Greenwich-Stamford (formerly known as the Port Chester, NY count), Hartford, New Haven, Oxford, and Westport, have been conducted for more than 40 years.

The weather was generally severe for the 1989-90 counts. Fifteen of seventeen counts were conducted under colder than normal conditions, with Stratford-Milford taking discomfort honors at -17 degrees from normal. The temperature ranged from -5 degrees to -9 degrees from normal for most of the counts. Only Old Lyme-Saybrook (+7 degrees from normal) and Pawling, NY (+5 to +10 degrees from normal) were conducted under warm, above freezing conditions. A sudden blizzard hit Connecticut the evening before Saturday, December 16 counts, making for difficult field conditions. The snow and cold generally persisted until a warm front came in just prior to Sunday, December 31 and Monday, January 1 counts, those held at Old Lyme-Saybrook and Pawling.

A total of 162 species and 2 subspecies or forms were observed in the state on Count Days, with an additional 6 species being recorded only during Count Week. Total individuals counted added up to 377,935; this is a new 10 year low and is probably related to the weather conditions. Northern counts recorded 100 Count Day species, 1 subspecies and 5 Count Week species. Mid-State counts recorded 108 Count Day species and 1 Count Week species, while coastally there were 146 Count Day species, 2 subspecies, and 6 Count Week species recorded. Total birds counted on Northern counts were at a 7 year low; Mid-state totals were at an 8 year low. Coastally, the total was the 2nd lowest in the past 10 years.

Numbers of observers on counts were led by Hartford (162), Greenwich-Stamford (133), and Westport (121), while New Haven had 80 observers and other counts followed well behind. Observers in the remaining counts numbered in the 40s, 30s, and fewer. Counts leading in numbers of field observers were Hartford (103), Greenwich-Stamford (80), New Haven (76), and Westport (70). Feeder watchers



were best organized in Hartford (59), Greenwich-Stamford (53), and Westport (51). All other counts could learn of the valued input of feeder watchers from these three counts.

In general, it was a poor year for total numbers of field observers, except on Mid-State counts where observers are highly consistent in their numbers. There was a record high for numbers of feeder watchers, and 1989-90 was an average or slightly below average year for total observers. The suggestion is that Connecticut continues to have strong interest in Christmas Bird Counts, but that harsh weather conditions caused many to confine their activities to feeder watching this year.

The 1989-90 National Audubon Society sponsored CBC was an excellent one for rarities and new species in Connecticut, with the most notable sightings being the first photographically documented observation of Townsend's Solitaire in the state (Woodbury-Roxbury), and the second authenticated sighting of Painted Bunting (Old Lyme-Saybrook, Count Week). Other species new to the State 10 year list were Eared Grebe (Greenwich-Stamford) and Black Vulture (Woodbury-Roxbury).

Townsend's Solitaire, found on the Woodbury-Roxbury count in an old field successional red cedar grove, was observed by many birders for several weeks thereafter. It was most predictably found in a small stand of tulip poplars, at times in the company of a flock of Eastern Bluebirds. As the bird was well photographed, it will advance from the state's hypothetical list to the list of authenticated species. Townsend's Solitaire winters well west of the Mississippi from southern Canada through the United States and into northern Mexico, but it is known to be casual in winter to the Northeast.

Painted Bunting, first seen in October at the backyard feeder of a family residing in Old Lyme, was eventually reported to the birding community and was picked up during Count Week for the Old Lyme-Saybrook count. The bird, a full adult plumaged male, was as easily found a staked out bird as one could imagine, living in an azalea behind the house and flying out to a glass plant stand and feeder at appointed early morning and late afternoon hours. Painted Bunting winters from northern Florida through portions of the Caribbean and Mexico, south to Panama. It occurs casually north to the Northeast, making this Connecticut record a significant but not fully startling one. The homeowners who graciously endured the daily arrivals of numerous birders to see Painted Bunting have our great appreciation.

Eared Grebe occurs casually in New England during winter, but the Greenwich-Stamford record is the first sighting of the species on a Connecticut Christmas Count in more than 10 years. The sighting

was made from close range at Cove Island, Stamford, with excellent details being provided.

With several additional sightings of Black Vulture having been made in Connecticut this winter, the species gives indications of becoming a more regular component of the state's avifauna. In the eastern United States, Black Vulture is a resident species from Florida as far north as south-central Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The most northeastern populations are described as partly migratory, and the species is known to occur casually to eastern Canada. It remains to be seen if a genuine range expansion into Connecticut is taking place.

Other Christmas Count rarities found in 1989-90 were Green-backed Heron, Tundra Swan, Greater White-fronted Goose, Harlequin Duck, Red Knot, Monk Parakeet, Common Raven, Veery, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco (see State, Regional, and Individual Count descriptions).

The Harlequin Duck, a not quite fully mature drake, was observed in a Norwalk marina on the Westport count on December 17, and it was seen as late as December 22 swimming around boat slips at extremely close range. Monk Parakeet was seen for the fourth consecutive year in Bridgeport, where it roosts near the Fairfield line. If its apparent success in breeding in Connecticut continues, it needs to be upgraded from a released or escaped species to an established introduction in the state. Common Raven, seen this year on Barkhamsted and Lakeville-Sharon counts, increases its presence in the state by range expansion from the north. Barkhamsted ravens were reported hard to locate on the count, however.

Connecticut observers seem determined to add Veery to the state (and North American) Christmas Count list, with a bird being reported from New Haven. Last year, Salmon River reported an individual. The New Haven bird was observed during Count Week in an active birder's backyard. It is suspected to have been the same individual which was captured there in October, rehabilitated from an apparent injury and released. The best explanation for the presence of Veery in Connecticut (or anywhere in North America) during the winter is that this individual, slowed by the injury, was unable or unmotivated to migrate to its normal wintering grounds in northern South America south into Brazil. A Veery, again believed to be the same one, was also seen here later in winter.

The New Haven Orange-crowned Warbler was seen just on Count Day, but the individual found on Stratford-Milford's count was present in a White Pine stand for at least a week thereafter. It was well photographed.

A few species have now been dropped from the current 10 year

lists, having last been seen on the 1979-80 Christmas Count. Dropped from the State list are Little Blue Heron, White Ibis, Common Moorhen, Swainson's Thrush, Western Tanager, and Northern "Bullock's" Oriole, the western equivalent of our Northern "Baltimore" Oriole. (The *bullockii* group of Northern Oriole occurs just casually in New England during winter.) All of the above species had previously been seen on coastal counts, and they thus come off the coastal list of Christmas Count species. Dropped just from the Northern counts are Red-throated Loon and Cape May Warbler, the latter having been a Count Week sighting. Dropped from Mid-State counts are Tundra Swan, Blue-winged Teal and Palm Warbler.

Christmas Bird Count data provide a wealth of information about our state's winter bird populations. A thorough analysis of population trends has yet to be undertaken and is dependent on computerization of records, a task not yet attempted in Connecticut. Nevertheless, some clear trends are emerging on some species for which we have collected data in past decades. The following observations are considered to be of particular significance.

(1) Seven species have undergone significant, steady increases in numbers over the past 10 years or more. They are Mute Swan, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Wild Turkey, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Carolina Wren, and Eastern Bluebird. In analyzing their increases, it has been found useful to compare their numbers during the five year period 1985-86 through 1989-90 with the five year period 1980-81 through 1984-85. Percentage increases reflect the relation between the average annual numbers of the present five year period and the average annual numbers of the earlier five year period.

Mute Swan has increased 28% during the present five year period. Turkey Vulture has increased 70%, and Bald Eagle has increased nearly 450%. Eagle increases are due to specific improvements in the chemical environment (notably the withdrawal of DDT from the general market), and to the hacking of birds in Massachusetts. Wild Turkey has experienced an 825% increase, due to extensive restocking by the State Department of Environmental Protection. Red-bellied Woodpecker continues its range expansion northward, with an 168% increase in numbers. Carolina Wren is another southern species expanding its range northward. It has increased 123% in numbers during the past five years. Eastern Bluebird has increased 67% during the same time period.

Three additional species are in the early stages of what could prove to be long term increase in numbers. They are Black Vulture, Monk Parakeet and Common Raven. Black Vulture has been referred to

above. Monk Parakeet, found on the Westport count for each of the past three years, numbered 11 in 1987-88, 40 last year, and 70 this year. Common Raven was new to the state Christmas Count list in 1986-87. During the past four years its numbers counted have been 1, CW (in count week), 5 and 2.

(2) Seven species have decreased significantly in numbers over the past 10 years: American Kestrel, Ruffed Grouse, Virginia Rail, American Coot, Marsh Wren, European Starling and Eastern Meadowlark. Six of these species, all but European Starling, are cause for concern. Their decline in numbers in Connecticut and elsewhere is in each case longer term than just for the past 10 years. This year's total for American Kestrel (54 individuals) is the lowest by far in more than 25 years. It is 72% of last year's total, which was then a 10 year low. The 54 individuals of this year are less than 30% of the total of 10 years ago. The numbers of American Coot during the last two count years have fallen off severely from those of earlier counts. Eastern Meadowlark numbers were actually slightly higher this year than in the two previous years, but the overall trend in their numbers is alarmingly downward. Ruffed Grouse, Virginia Rail and Marsh Wren have declines which are not quite so clearly defined as the other species listed, but nonetheless there.

(3) Of the state's introduced or exotic species, the following observations are made. Mute Swan was recorded at its second highest total in 10 years. Ring-necked Pheasant was down in numbers, as was Rock Dove. Monk Parakeet has increased significantly in numbers for the past three years. European Starling was down in numbers, as it continues a steady 6 year slide. Starlings were twice as abundant during the 1983-84 count as they were this year. House Finch displays no apparent population change, having been counted at fairly consistent totals for the past six years. House Sparrow was low this year, though this species has fluctuated in numbers from one year to the next.

(4) The increase in numbers of hawks sighted on Christmas Counts is very encouraging, particularly with Bald Eagle, but also including Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Osprey and Turkey Vulture. Of additional interest is the continued expansion of Carolina Wren and Red-bellied Woodpecker, two southern species, into our state. The news of reduced numbers of Rock Dove, European Starling and House Sparrow can also be received with some elation.

(5) On a less positive note, the number of Mute Swan in Connecticut remains high, causing continued concern among birders and

wildlife biologists. More research needs to be done on the effects, if any, of Mute Swan on native waterfowl. It is clear, however, that Mute Swan numbers have increased steadily and dramatically in our state since the mid-1950s. These birds are not difficult to count. The introduction of exotics to an area usually has deleterious effects on native species. Monk Parakeet, which is in the early stages of establishment in Connecticut, is another species requiring our attention.

(6) What should we be doing, in addition to revelling in the challenges, delights and exertions of Christmas Bird Counts? I suggest the following: keep good records of bird sightings by locality, within each count circle; identify and describe the key birding localities, so that there is a written record of their productivity; practice conservation measures, such as the use of Wood Duck and bluebird boxes, and feeders for song birds; work toward habitat improvement and habitat restoration within our communities; document habitat loss; foster public education about natural history and conservation biology; publicize the Christmas counts more extensively.

#### INDIVIDUAL COUNT SUMMARIES

The following paragraphs list each of the 17 State counts and provide basic information on the counts individually, by region (Northern, Mid-State, and Coastal) and for the State as a whole. Data pertaining to 10 year results span the period 1980-81 (81st Annual National Audubon Society CBC) through 1989-90 (90th Annual CBC). Barkhamsted held its 6th count this year; Edwin Way Teale - Trail Wood held its 4th.

Data are recorded as follows: name of Christmas Bird Count (National Audubon Society / American Birds abbreviation for count); date of count; compiler(s); totals; Count Day (CD) species + Count Week (CW) species (% of 10 year CD + CW total, then 10 year total for each); total individual birds counted; number of field observers + number of feeder watchers. New High Counts = species counted at 10 year highs. New Low Counts = species counted at 10 year lows. New species = recorded for the first time in the last 10 years. Rarities = species seen 4 or fewer times in the past 10 years. Other Noteworthy Species = species seen 5 or more times in the past 10 years, but still of special interest or significance. Species, subspecies or forms not seen in the past 10 years (since the 1979-80 count) and dropped from State, Regional, or Individual lists are given. Ten year highs and lows are also provided for number of species observed, total individuals counted, and count observers.

Count abbreviations: Barkhamsted (BA), Edwin Way Teale - Trail

Wood (EW), Greenwich-Stamford (GS), Hartford (HA), Litchfield Hills (LH), Lakeville-Sharon (LS), New Haven (NH), New London (NL), Old Lyme-Saybrook (OL), Oxford (OX), Pawling, New York - formerly Hidden Valley, CT-NY - (PA), Quinnipiac Valley (QV), Stratford-Milford (SM), Salmon River (SR), Storrs (ST), Westport (WP), Woodbury-Roxbury (WR).

**WHOLE STATE (17 Christmas Bird Counts):** 162 spp. + 2 subspp. + 6 CW (76.4% of 10 year total, 216 + 4 CW); 377,935 individuals (10 year low); 687 field observers (10 year low) + 254 feeder watchers (10 year high).

New High Counts (17): Ring-necked Duck, Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Monk Parakeet, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Winter Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Orange-crowned Warbler, Vesper Sparrow, White-winged Crossbill. New Low Counts (32): Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Green-winged Teal, American Black Duck, Northern Pintail, American Wigeon, Oldsquaw, Surf Scoter, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Ruddy Duck, American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Clapper Rail, American Coot, Greater Yellowlegs, Ruddy Turnstone, Purple Sandpiper, Bonaparte's Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, Hairy Woodpecker, Marsh Wren, European Starling, Palm Warbler, Field Sparrow. New Species (4): Eared Grebe (GS), Black Vulture (WR), Townsend's Solitaire (WR), Painted Bunting (OL - CW). Additional rarities (10 + 1 subsp.): Green-backed Heron (NH - CW), Tundra Swan (GS), Greater White-fronted Goose (WR), Harlequin Duck (WP), Golden Eagle (PA), Red Knot (WP), Monk Parakeet (WP), Common Raven (BA; LS), Veery (NH - CW), Orange-crowned Warbler (NH; SM), Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco (LH). Other Noteworthy Species (10): Eurasian Wigeon (NH), Boreal Chickadee (NH - CW), Pine Warbler (SM; HA), Rose-breasted Grosbeak (ST), Dickcissel (GS), Vesper Sparrow (QV; NH), Grasshopper Sparrow (QV), Lincoln's Sparrow (OX), Red Crossbill (BA; LH), White-winged Crossbill (BA; OX). Species Dropped (5 + 1 form): Little Blue Heron, White Ibis, Common Moorhen, Swainson's Thrush, Western Tanager, Northern "Bullock's" Oriole.

**NORTHERN CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS (BA, EW, HA, LH, LS, ST):** 100 spp. + 1 subsp. + 5 CW (70.5% of 10 year total, 147 + 2 CW); 128,065 individuals; 225 field observers (10 year low) + 102 feeder watchers (10 year high).

New High Counts (13): Turkey Vulture, Northern Bobwhite, Tufted Titmouse, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Cedar Waxwing, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Lapland Longspur, Snow Bunting, White-winged Crossbill. New Low Counts (12): Mute Swan, Mallard, American Kestrel, Ruffed Grouse, Iceland Gull, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Mockingbird, Field Sparrow, Purple Finch. New Species (1): Pine Warbler (HA). Rarities (6 + 1 spp.): Horned Grebe (HA), Double-crested Cormorant (HA - CW), Common Raven (BA; LS), Rose-breasted Grosbeak (ST), Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco (LH - CW), Lapland Longspur (LH; LS; ST), White-winged Crossbill (BA). Other Noteworthy Species (2): Glaucous Gull (HA), Red Crossbill (BA - CW; LH - CW). Species Dropped (2): Red-throated Loon, Cape May Warbler (was CW).

BARKHAMSTED (BA-CT): Tues., Dec. 26. Compilers: David Rosgen & David Tripp, Jr. Totals: 59 spp. + 4 CW (68.5% of 6 year total, 90 + 2 CW); 10,610 individuals; 27 field observers + 12 feeder watchers. New Species (2): Wood Duck, Red-bellied Woodpecker. Rarities (8): Common Raven, Carolina Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Snow Bunting, Pine Grosbeak (CW), Red Crossbill (CW), White-winged Crossbill, Common Redpoll.

EDWIN WAY TEALE - TRAIL WOOD (EW-CT): Sat., Dec. 30. Compiler: Marilyn S. Higgins. Totals: 62 spp. + 0 CW (77.5% of 4 year total, 80 + 0 CW); 8992 individuals; 14 field observers + 3 feeder watchers. New Species (3): Mute Swan, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Fox Sparrow. Rarities (3): Winter Wren, Brown Thrasher, Yellow-rumped Warbler.

HARTFORD (HA-CT): Sat., Dec. 30. Compilers: Stephen A. Davis & Jay Kaplan. Totals: 83 spp. + 3 CW (64.7% of 10 year total, 131 + 2 CW); 71,950 individuals; 103 field observers + 59 feeder watchers (10 year high). New High Counts (3): Wood Duck, Winter Wren, Rusty Blackbird. New Low Counts (11): Mallard, American Kestrel, Ruffed Grouse, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Belted Kingfisher, Hairy Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadee, Northern Mockingbird, Field Sparrow, House Sparrow. New Species (3): Horned Grebe, Canvasback, Pine Warbler. Rarities (3): Double-crested Cormorant (CW), Gadwall (CW), Ring-necked Duck. Species Dropped (1): Loggerhead Shrike (was CW).

LITCHFIELD HILLS (LH-CT): Sun., Dec. 17. Compiler: Ray Belding. Totals: 67 spp. & 1 subsp. + 2 CW (60.5% of 10 year total, 111 + 1 subsp.

+ 3 CW); 15,297 individuals; 35 field observers & feeder watchers (10 year low). New High Counts (16): American Black Duck, Turkey Vulture, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Winter Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, American Tree Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Lapland Longspur, Snow Bunting, Common Grackle. New Low Counts (7): Ruffed Grouse, Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl (none, missed CD and CW 1st time in 10 years), American Robin, Northern Cardinal, Purple Finch. New Species (0). Rarities (11 + 1 subsp.): Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle (CW), Iceland Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Carolina Wren, Winter Wren, Savannah Sparrow, Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco (?), Lapland Longspur, Snow Bunting, Red Crossbill (CW). Species Dropped (0).

LAKEVILLE-SHARON (LS-CT): Sun., Dec. 17. Compiler: Robert Moeller. Totals: 64 spp. + 0 CW (60.4% of 10 year total, 102 + 4 CW); 10,090 individuals; 20 field observers (10 year low) + 13 feeder watchers. New High Counts (4): Rough-legged Hawk, Winter Wren, Savannah Sparrow, Snow Bunting. New Low Counts (8): American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant (none, missed CD 1st time in 10 years), Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Brown Creeper, Purple Finch. New Species (0). Rarities (5): Common Raven, Carolina Wren, Gray Catbird, Savannah Sparrow, Lapland Longspur. Species Dropped (4): Red-throated Loon, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Osprey.

STORRS (ST-CT): Sat., Dec. 16. Compiler: Winifred Burkett. Totals: 64 spp. + 3 CW (62.6% of 10 year total, 103 + 4 CW); 11,126 individuals; 26 field observers + 15 feeder watchers (10 year high). New High Counts (11): Northern Bobwhite, Barred Owl, Downy Woodpecker, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, Rufous-sided Towhee, Savannah Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Snow Bunting, House Finch. New Low Counts (3): Mallard, Northern Mockingbird, Field Sparrow. New Species (3): Red-breasted Merganser, Wild Turkey, Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Rarities (7): Cooper's Hawk, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Savannah Sparrow, Lapland Longspur. Species Dropped (4): Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Red-headed Woodpecker, Cape May Warbler (was CW).

MID-STATE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS (OX, PA, QV, SR, WR): 108 spp. + 1 CW (72.7% of 10 year total, 147 + 3 CW); 69,799 individuals;



136 field observers + 23 feeder watchers. New High Counts (16): Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Phoebe, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Gray Catbird, Savannah Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Lapland Longspur, White-winged Crossbill. New Low Counts (5): Ring-necked Pheasant, Common Snipe (CW, missed CD 1st time in 10 years), Great Horned Owl, Long-eared Owl, European Starling. New Species (3): Greater White-fronted Goose (WR), Black Vulture (WR), Townsend's Solitaire (WR). Rarities (10): Great Cormorant (OX; SR), Double-crested Cormorant (SR), Snow Goose (PA; SR), Osprey (OX), Golden Eagle (PA), Virginia Rail (QV), Vesper Sparrow (QV), Grasshopper Sparrow (QV), Lincoln's Sparrow (OX), Lapland Longspur (WR), White-winged Crossbill (OX). Other Noteworthy Species (2): Iceland Gull (WR), House Wren (QV). Species Dropped (3): Tundra Swan, Blue-winged Teal, Palm Warbler.

OXFORD (OX-CT): Sun., Dec. 17. Compiler: Buzz Devine. Totals: 73 spp. (10 year high) + 0 CW (68.9% of 10 year total, 106 + 0 CW); 10,848 individuals; 21 field observers + 2 feeder watchers. New High Counts (20): Great Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Bufflehead, Common Merganser, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Wild Turkey, Barred Owl, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Swamp Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, White-winged Crossbill. New Low Counts (1): Eastern Screech-Owl. New Species (0). Rarities (16): Great Cormorant, Bufflehead, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Wild Turkey, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Phoebe, Horned Lark, Winter Wren, Lincoln's Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Rusty Blackbird, White-winged Crossbill. Species Dropped (2): Northern Shoveler, Eastern Meadowlark.

PAWLING (PA-NY): Mon., Jan. 1. Compilers: Sibyll Gilbert & Jeanne Kauffman. Totals: 67 spp. + 4 CW (65.1% of 10 year total, 105 + 4 CW); 9343 individuals; 16 field observers + 14 feeder watchers (10 year high). New High Counts (21): Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey, Hairy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Mockingbird, Northern Cardinal, American Tree Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark. New Low Counts (1): Mallard. New Species (1): Golden Eagle.

Rarities (8): Snow Goose, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Goshawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Horned Lark, White-crowned Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark. Species Dropped (0)

QUINNIPIAC VALLEY (QV-CT): Sun., Dec. 17. Compiler: Wilford Schultz. Totals: 75 spp. + 2 CW (66.4% of 10 year total, 113 + 3 CW); 16,798 individuals; 18 field observers + 3 feeder watchers. New High Counts (14): Mute Swan, Northern Harrier, Ruffed Grouse, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow. New Low Counts (0). New Species (1): House Wren. Rarities (8): American Wigeon, Virginia Rail, American Coot, Carolina Wren, Vesper Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Rusty Blackbird (CW). Species Dropped (3): Common Loon, Tundra Swan, Pine Warbler.

SALMON RIVER (SR-CT): Sun., Dec. 17. Compiler: David A. Titus. Totals: 74 spp. + 1 CW (63.0% of 10 year total, 119 + 1 CW); 8237 individuals; 42 field observers (10 year high) + 3 feeder watchers. New High Counts (10): Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Gray Catbird. New Low Counts (3): American Kestrel, Rock Dove, Great Horned Owl. New Species (2): Double-crested Cormorant, Snow Goose. Rarities (5): Great Cormorant, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Savannah Sparrow, Snow Bunting, Eastern Meadowlark. Species Dropped (2): Blue-winged Teal, Palm Warbler.

WOODBURY-ROXBURY (WR-CT): Sat., Dec. 16. Compiler: Mark Szantyr. Totals: 85 spp. (10 year high) + 2 CW (73.1% of 10 year total, 116 + 1 form + 3 CW); 24,573 individuals; 39 field observers (10 year low) + 1 feeder watcher. New High Counts (12): Great Blue Heron, Mute Swan, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Common Merganser, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Iceland Gull, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Lapland Longspur. New Low Counts (14): Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl (CW, missed CD 1st time in 10 years), Hairy Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Northern Cardinal, House Sparrow. New Species (3): Greater White-fronted Goose, Black Vulture, Townsend's Solitaire. Rarities (8): Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Gadwall, Northern Harrier, Rough-legged Hawk, Wild Turkey, Iceland Gull,

Lapland Longspur. Species Dropped (0).

**COASTAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS (GS, NH, NL, OL, SM, WP):** 146 spp. + 1 subsp. + 7 CW (73.2% of 10 year total, 202 + 7 CW); 180,071 individuals; 326 field observers + 129 feeder watchers. New High Counts (16): Canada Goose, Ring-necked Duck, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Monk Parakeet, Barred Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Carolina Wren, Winter Wren, Gray Catbird, Orange-crowned Warbler. New Low Counts (32): Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Green-winged Teal, American Black Duck, Northern Pintail, American Wigeon, Oldsquaw, Surf Scoter, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Ruddy Duck, American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Clapper Rail, American Coot, Greater Yellowlegs, Ruddy Turnstone, Purple Sandpiper, Bonaparte's Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Eastern Screech-Owl, Brown Creeper, Marsh Wren, Cedar Waxwing, Field Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Lapland Longspur (none, missed CD and CW 1st time in 10 years). New Species (3): Eared Grebe (GS), Veery (NH - CW), Painted Bunting (OL - CW). Rarities (7): Green-backed Heron (NH - CW), Tundra Swan (GS), Harlequin Duck (WP), Red Knot (WP), Monk Parakeet (WP), Orange-crowned Warbler (NH; SM), Dickcissel (GS). Other Noteworthy Species (6): Eurasian Wigeon (NH), Red-headed Woodpecker (GS), Boreal Chickadee (NH - CW), Pine Warbler (SM), Vesper Sparrow (GS; NH). Species Dropped (5 + 1 form): Little Blue Heron, White Ibis, Common Moorhen, Swainson's Thrush, Western Tanager, Northern "Bullock's" Oriole.

**GREENWICH-STAMFORD (GS-CT):** Sun., Dec. 17. Compilers: Thomas Baptist, Canfield Clark and Gary Palmer. Totals: 117 spp. + 4 CW (73.3% of 10 year total, 165 + 0 CW); 30,810 individuals; 80 field observers (10 year low) + 53 feeder watchers. New High Counts (14): Canada Goose, Ring-necked Duck, Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Ruddy Turnstone, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush. New Low Counts (13): Pied-billed Grebe, American Black Duck, Oldsquaw, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruddy Duck, American Kestrel, Ruffed Grouse, Black-bellied Plover, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Eastern Screech-Owl, Rufous-sided Towhee, Common Grackle. New Species (2): Eared Grebe, Tundra Swan. Rarities (12): Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Ruddy Turnstone, Red-headed Woodpecker, Marsh Wren, American Pipit,

Common Yellowthroat, Dickcissel, Chipping Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow. Species Dropped (1 form): Northern "Bullock's" Oriole.

NEW HAVEN (NH-CT): Sat., Dec. 16. Compilers: Stephen P. Broker & Frank Gallo. Totals: 122 spp. + 12 CW (76.1% of 10 year total, 171 + 5 CW); 45,614 individuals; 76 field observers + 4 feeder watchers. New High Counts (15): Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Virginia Rail, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Gray Catbird, European Starling. New Low Counts (23): Red-throated Loon (CW, missed CD 1st time in 10 years), American Black Duck, Canvasback, Oldsquaw, White-winged Scoter, Ruffed Grouse, American Coot, Dunlin, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Rock Dove, Eastern Screech-Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Hairy Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadee, Brown Creeper, American Robin, Northern Mockingbird, Cedar Waxwing, White-throated Sparrow, Brown-headed Cowbird, Purple Finch, House Sparrow. New Species (3): Green-backed Heron (CW), Veery (CW), Orange-crowned Warbler. Rarities (8): Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Wild Turkey, Virginia Rail, Short-eared Owl, Boreal Chickadee (CW), House Wren (CW), Vesper Sparrow. Other Noteworthy Species (6): Eurasian Wigeon, Turkey Vulture, Black-bellied Plover, Greater Yellowlegs, Iceland Gull, Northern Oriole. Species Dropped (2): Swainson's Thrush, Western Tanager.

NEW LONDON (NL-CT): Sat., Dec. 30. Compiler: Robert Dewire. Totals: 109 spp. + 3 CW (74.7% of 10 year total, 148 + 2 CW); 20,475 individuals (10 year low); 26 field observers + 12 feeder watchers. New High Counts (11): Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Dunlin, Eastern Screech-Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Winter Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Gray Catbird, Dark-eyed Junco, House Sparrow. New Low Counts (19): Red-throated Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Black Scoter, Surf Scoter, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, American Kestrel, American Coot, Ruddy Turnstone, Bonaparte's Gull, Herring Gull, Rock Dove, European Starling, Field Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, American Goldfinch. New Species (0). Rarities (5): Snow Goose (CW), Turkey Vulture (CW), Bald Eagle, Short-eared Owl, Eastern Bluebird. Species Dropped (1): White Ibis.

OLD LYME-SAYBROOK (OL-CT): Sun., Dec. 31. Compiler: Jay Hand. Totals: 106 spp. + 3 CW (69.4% of 10 year total, 156 + 1 CW); 10,769 individuals (10 year low); 37 field observers (10 year low) + 6

feeder watchers. New High Counts (5): Hooded Merganser, Carolina Wren, Gray Catbird, Fox Sparrow, Snow Bunting. New Low Counts (27): Pied-billed Grebe (none, missed CD 1st time in 10 years; also missed CW), Mute Swan, American Black Duck, Mallard, Greater Scaup (none, missed CD 1st time in 10 years; also missed CW), Red-breasted Merganser, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Virginia Rail, Purple Sandpiper, Dunlin, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Belted Kingfisher, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, Northern Mockingbird, American Tree Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Common Grackle, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow. New Species (1): Painted Bunting (CW). Rarities (2): Chipping Sparrow, Sharp-tailed Sparrow. Species (and form) Dropped: Northern "Bullock's" Oriole.

STRATFORD-MILFORD (SM-CT): Wed., Dec. 27. Compiler: Steve Mayo. Totals: 108 spp. + 2 CW (67.1% of 10 year total, 163 + 1 CW); 20,875 individuals (10 year low); 37 field observers + 3 feeder watchers (10 year high). New High Counts (15): Ring-necked Duck, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, American Woodcock, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Tufted Titmouse, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, American Pipit. New Low Counts (9): Red-throated Loon, Common Loon (none, missed CW 1st time in 10 years; also missed CW), Pied-billed Grebe, Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail (none, missed CD 1st time in 10 years; also missed CW), Oldsquaw, American Kestrel, Herring Gull, Great Horned Owl. New Species (1): Pine Warbler. Rarities (8): Redhead, Cooper's Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Glaucous Gull, Long-eared Owl, House Wren, Orange-crowned Warbler, White-crowned Sparrow. Other Noteworthy Species (5): Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Virginia Rail, Barn Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Species Dropped (4): Common Moorhen, Western Tanager (was CW), Lark Sparrow (was CW), Grasshopper Sparrow (was CW).

WESTPORT (WP-CT): Sun., Dec. 17. Compiler: Frank W. Mantlik. Totals: 111 spp. + 5 CW (70.3% of 10 year total, 161 + 4 CW); 51,528 individuals; 70 field observers + 51 feeder watchers. New High Counts (27): Mute Swan, Canada Goose, Northern Pintail, Black Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Common Goldeneye, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Dunlin, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Monk Parakeet, Barred Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Horned Lark, American Crow, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Caro-

lina Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, American Pipit, Fox Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow. New Low Counts (6): Pied-billed Grebe, American Wigeon, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Common Merganser, Ruddy Duck (none, missed at least CW 1st time in 10 years). New Species (3): Harlequin Duck, Red Knot, Iceland Gull (CW). Rarities (11): American Bittern, Lesser Scaup, Black Scoter, Bald Eagle, Merlin, Monk Parakeet, Short-eared Owl, American Pipit, Yellow-breasted Chat, Eastern Meadowlark, Northern Oriole. Other Noteworthy Species (1): Cooper's Hawk. Species Dropped (3): Little Blue Heron, Northern Bobwhite, Barn Owl.

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## CORRECTIONS

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Volume 10, no. 1: Our apologies to our January 1990 cover artist for misspelling his name. It should have read "Michael DiGiorgio."

# CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

## FALL: AUGUST 1 - NOVEMBER 30, 1989

Jay Kaplan

This seasonal report is our longest, covering a four-month period over which one can experience just about any imaginable weather condition. Fall migration is closely tied to the changing weather patterns. Those who wait for weekend hawk movements, for example, may be sadly disappointed should the proper conditions for migration occur mid-week. The period is best remembered for several unique events including a hurricane that never arrived and a record-breaking Thanksgiving cold snap. On the whole, however, the period was not highly unusual.

August began, typically, with 3 days of 90 degree F. temperatures, but averaged cooler than normal for the month due to a protracted period of clouds and rain. Indeed it was the wettest August in 34 years with rainfall 2.89 inches above normal on the coast and 3.73 inches above normal inland.

September temperatures and precipitation averaged near normal, although the last week of the month brought some 10 inches of rain, a minor burden compared to the devastation levied upon the Carolinas September 22 by Hurricane Hugo. Connecticut received little of the hurricane's fury and there were no unusual reports of storm-driven birds along our coast.

October averaged 1.1 degree F. below normal, although during the final week of the month, temperatures were 10 degrees F. above normal. Over 4 inches of rain fell October 19-20, yielding a total of 7 inches for the month, some 4 inches above the norm.

November might best be described as a month of temperature extremes. November 14-16 produced high readings of 72 degrees F., 66 degrees F., and 67 degrees F., respectively in the Hartford area, giving us a belated taste of Indian summer. A powerful low pressure system November 20 with a barometric pressure of 28.95, the lowest November pressure since 1963 brought 6 inches of snow to the region. Records were set November 24, when the temperature dropped to 1 degree F. at Bradley International Airport, Windsor Locks and 17 degrees F. along the coast. It was cold for birds and birders! Temperatures moderated at month's end, but the November 24 cold snap was just a prelude for what was to come.

### LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Single Red-throated Loons were reported in Long Island Sound to the west of Great Island, Old Lyme October 13 (TH) and off Milford

Point October 21 (SKo); while five birds were off Compo Beach, Westport October 8 (FMa), and three birds were off Sandy Point, Stonington October 29 (Records of Southeastern Connecticut Birds, hereafter RSCB). Common Loons in Long Island Sound were reported only from Milford Point August 4 - 18 (JB et al.). Inland, a breeding attempt at Nepaug Reservoir, New Hartford failed in August, while two pairs of loons in Barkhamsted Reservoir did not attempt to nest (DR). Common Loons remained on Nepaug and Barkhamsted Reservoirs, through November 24 (DR,DT), and an additional bird was reported on Bantam Lake, Morris November 12 (DR,SS). Horned Grebes were not reported along the coast, although they surely arrived at some point during the period. Inland, a single Horned Grebe was sighted on Bantam Lake November 12 (DR,DT) and two birds were on Barkhamsted Reservoir November 14-22 (SKe,DR,DT). The only Red-necked Grebe reported was a bird, still showing vestiges of breeding plumage, on Nepaug Reservoir October 27 (JKa).

Great Cormorants were reported from several inland locations, including single birds on the Connecticut River south of Brockway Island September 11 (TH); at Portland Quarry, Portland October 8 (BD); and at Station 43, South Windsor October 15 (CE). Two birds remained on Congamond Lake, Suffield September 26 - November 21 (SKe). American Bitterns were at five shoreline locations during the period. Most notable was a bird seen eating a sparrow at Hammonasset Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP), Madison October 9 (FMc). Two Least Bitterns were at Lordship Marsh, Stratford August 6 (SM) and a late migrant was at Lighthouse Point Park, New Haven October 16 (FG). Herons of note included a Little Blue Heron in Woodbury October 25 (EF fide RN) and Yellow-crowned Night Herons at Milford Point August 16 and 27 (SM) and a late immature at Manresa Island, Norwalk October 2 (FMa). A flock of 17 Glossy Ibis (16 juveniles) were feeding on a Westport lawn August 22 (FMa); while a late individual was at HBSP September 3 (LBe,FMa).

There has been much written about the decline of waterfowl numbers over the past decade. One cannot assess the situation in Connecticut by looking at seasonal report forms. However, there were few reports of large aggregations of waterfowl this season. "Many" Snow Geese were reported flying over the Storrs area October 6 (JM) and 350 were observed over Lighthouse Point Park November 19 (SM). Two "blue form" Snow Geese were seen at Mirror Lake, Storrs October 25 (LBe,GC) and three were at South Cove, Old Saybrook November 25 (BD,JG,TH). Each fall, inland reports of Brant come from scattered locations. This year, it was eastern Connecticut with two birds on Mirror Lake, Storrs October 21 (WE,JM,NM) and an



injured bird at Mansfield Dam, Mansfield October 25 to November 1 (AB,LBe,WB). Notable waterfowl aggregations at Andover Lake, Andover, included 45 Green-winged Teal October 21 and 38 Canvasback November 11 (WE,et al.). A Redhead was in Suffield November 3 (SKe). Lesser Scaup were reported from several locations including seven at Bantam Lake, Litchfield October 21 (BK), five on Barkhamsted Reservoir the same day (DH, fide BK), three at Andover Lake November 4 (LBe,WE,NM), and two at Great Pond, Simsbury November 17 (JKa). Black Scoters were reported from 6 locations including a "large raft" at HBSP October 14 (FMc), 31 on MacKenzie Reservoir, Wallingford October 20 (MM), and a flock of 70 with 70 Surf Scoters flying past Sherwood Island State Park (hereafter SISP), Westport during a 'nor'easter October 20 (FMa). Ruddy Ducks appeared in groups of seven, with one group in Suffield October 18 (SKe) and another on Bantam Lake November 13 (BD).

### **HAWKS THROUGH FALCONS**

Lighthouse Point Hawk Watch counted 3070 Ospreys as of October 22 (RE, fide FMa). Ospreys were reported into late November with individuals at Quana duck Cove, Stonington November 27 (RSCB) and along the Naugatuck River, Seymour November 27 (BK). Up to six Bald Eagles could be found in the vicinity of Barkhamsted Reservoir in August and by November, three adults and six immatures were frequenting this area (DR). Additional eagle sightings included immatures along the Connecticut River, Hartford August 14 (RR) and along the Thames River, Gales Ferry October 25 (RSCB). The Quaker Ridge, Greenwich hawk watch site bettered their record for Northern Harriers with 33 September 15. A new record for Red-shouldered Hawks was set October 23 with 31 birds sighted. Peak movements of Broad-winged Hawks occurred September 15 and 24 at Quaker Ridge with 4064 and 4114, respectively. Broad-wings seen over South Windsor September 13 numbered 1872 (PK). In New Haven, Lighthouse Point's hawk watch reported a Rough-legged Hawk October 23 (FG) and a Golden Eagle October 22 (JFe,SM,ES). Two Peregrine Falcons were at Milford Point August 23 to September 17 (CRBA,SM) and individual birds were at the south end of Great Island, Old Lyme September 20 (TH) and in Storrs October 8 (WB,et al.).

### **RAILS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS**

Two separate Black Rails were flushed at Milford Point marshes during the high "spring" tides on September 16 (FMa, fide MB). Soras were sighted in Storrs August 29 (WB); in Suffield September 17 (SKe); at Lighthouse Point October 16 (FG) and again at Storrs October 27 (WB). Five Common Moorhens were in Litchfield September 11 - 18

(DR,DT). An emaciated immature Common Moorhen was brought to the Westport Nature Center October 2 (fide FMa). A high count of 90 American Coot were on Bantam Lake November 12 (DR,SS,et al.)

Black-bellied Plovers peaked at Milford Point August 26 - September 2 (DR,DT) with 400 reported. Lesser Golden Plover were seen in the usual shoreline locations, including a high count of five birds at HBSP September 28 (BK,et al.). Inland, three Golden Plovers were seen in Suffield September 20 (SKe). Two immature American Oystercatchers were at Milford Point September 22 (JB) and three Oystercatchers were along the causeway to Menunketesuck Island, Westbrook September 8 (TH,AG). Another bird was observed at HBSP October 14 - 18 (m.ob.). Upland Sandpipers were not reported at Bradley International Airport, Windsor Locks during this period; however, four birds were at Sikorsky Airport, Stratford August 6 (SM,RS) and at least one bird was still in this location August 23 (CRBA). The only Whimbrels reported for the period were single birds at Milford Point August 6 (FP,JZ); Great Island, Old Lyme September 14 (TH); and Lighthouse Point September 16 (FMc). There were no fewer than eight reports of Hudsonian Godwit, including a high of four birds at Milford Point October 22-29 (m.ob). The high count of Red Knots reported at Milford Point was 50 birds September 2 (DR,DT), while 40 were still present October 15 (FMa,CW). There were some interesting inland shorebird reports including 15 Western Sandpipers along the Housatonic River, Orange August 24 (DR), and several of White-rumped Sandpiper, including two in Suffield October 21 (SKe) and two at Andover Lake November 4 - 11 (WE,et al.). The only Stilt Sandpiper report during the period was a bird at Milford Point September 23 (NC). Single Buff-breasted Sandpipers were reported from HBSP August 31 (JS, fide FMa), Sandy Point, West Haven September 12 (SM), and Suffield September 17 (SKe). A Ruff was reported at Milford Point August 23 (CRBA). Short-billed Dowitchers peaked at 300 at Milford Point September 3 (FMa,LBe,FP), while single Long-billed Dowitchers were at Seaside Park, Bridgeport October 12 (NC) and at Griswold Point November 22 (TH). A Wilson's Phalarope was reported from HBSP August 23 (CRBA). Seven Common Snipe were found in Litchfield November 24 (DR,DT), while a late American Woodcock was in New Hartford November 28 (DT).

### **GULLS THROUGH NIGHTHAWKS**

An immature jaeger, thought to be a Parasitic, was seen flying over the Quaker Ridge, Greenwich hawk watch site September 3 (AF, et al.); unfortunately, the observers could not eliminate Long-tailed Jaeger, which is just as likely at an inland locality. There were few

reports of unusual gulls along the coast this fall. A high of 135 Laughing Gulls were at Seaside Park, Bridgeport November 1 (SM). The earliest Bonaparte's Gull was at Milford Point August 6 (SM). The only Iceland Gull report came from Lake Zoar, Southbury, where an immature was seen November 26 (RN). Two Lesser Black-backed Gulls were photographed at SISP September 16 (FMa), and a single bird was in West Haven November 10 (CRBA). The only Glaucous Gull reported during the period was a bird in Newtown November 27 (NC).

Two Caspian Terns were at Milford Point August 26 to October 4 (m.ob.), while three Royal Terns were in the Great Island-Griswold Point area September 20 (TH). Several Forster's Terns were present with the flock of Commons at Milford Point, with a maximum of seven October 15 (FMa,CW). Three Black Terns were at Milford Point August 26 to September 6 (m.ob.). Two Black Skimmers were at Milford Point August 26 (CB,JFe), and a late immature was at Calf Pasture Park, Norwalk October 18 (FMa,CW).

This was not a year for Snowy Owls to invade the State, as not one was reported for the period. However, three Long-eared Owls were at HBSP November 25 (BD,JG). Short-eared Owls were at Great Island October 15 (TH), in Harwinton October 16 (PC) and two at Milford Point October 23 (RE). Saw-whet Owls were having a rough time of it this season. One bird was killed by a car on Rt. 44, Eastford November 6 (RB), while another was struck in North Stratford November 14 (JB). This latter bird was released. Also, three stunned birds were brought to Denison-Pequotsepos Nature Center (hereafter DPNC), Stonington during November. Common Nighthawks were first noted in Simsbury August 14 (BK) and the last report for the period was a bird in Pawcatuck October 21 (RSCB).

#### WOODPECKERS THROUGH VIREOS

An immature Red-headed Woodpecker was at Lighthouse Point September 30 (m.ob), while another was at a Stonington feeder October 2 (RSCB). Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported from many locations throughout the State during the period. An Olive-sided Flycatcher was in a West Hartford backyard September 18 (SF), while another was seen at Quaker Ridge, Greenwich August 24 (LBe,FMa,et al.),. A pair of Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were in the Fairchild Gardens, Greenwich August 27 (LBe,FP) and another was in Litchfield September 7 (DR). A late Great Crested Flycatcher was with a flock of American Robins at Barn Island, Stonington November 5 (RSCB); one wonders what it was eating. Lighthouse Point retained its reputation as a good place for Western Kingbird, with one sighted

there October 25 (FG). A huge flock of 5,000 Tree Swallows included three Bank Swallows at HBSP September 17 (FMa).

Up to 15 Common Ravens were seen in the Hartland - Barkhamsted area during the period (DR), and three Ravens were at West Hill Pond, New Hartford November 24 (LF,DT). July sightings of Red-breasted Nuthatches were just the beginning of a major invasion of this species throughout the State. Over 50 individuals were in the Barkhamsted-Hartland area November 14 (DR,DT) and observers reported an abundance of nuthatches in many other areas. White-breasted Nuthatches were also on the move, with 20 counted migrating past the Greenwich Hawk Watch site Sept. 24 (FMa,et.al.) Carolina and Winter Wrens continued to be well-reported throughout the State during the period. A Sedge Wren was heard calling in Sherman August 29 (NP fide JKf), while a Marsh Wren, locally rare in the Storrs area, was observed September 14 (WB). A late Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was at Cove Island Park, Stamford November 19 (FMa,FP).

Eastern Bluebirds lingered in the State during the period with flocks of over 30 birds in western Connecticut (DR,DT,et.al.). The only Gray-cheeked Thrush reported was at SISP October 1 (LBe,FP). October 22-23 was a peak period for migrating American Robins. Hundreds were at Flanders Nature Center, Woodbury October 22 (AD) and over 3000 were seen from Quaker Ridge, Greenwich the following day (LBr,et al.). American Pipits were reported moving throughout the period. A flock of 30 was sighted in Farmington September 30 (BD) and over 100 were in Litchfield October 27 to November 3 (DR). A Loggerhead Shrike was at Haley Farm State Park, Groton September 16 (RSCB). Philadelphia Vireos are usually reported from a few locations each fall. This year there were at least 10 reports August 2 to September 28, including 3 separate sightings in Storrs (LBe,WB,WE).

#### WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Fall warbler reports are always of interest. Lingering warblers are difficult to locate at the conclusion of the breeding season as the males cease to maintain territories and foliage easily obscures these small birds. Peak migration days were August 25, September 20 and 24, and October 4-6.

A Golden-winged Warbler at DPNC August 26 was an interesting sighting (RSCB), as was an Orange-crowned Warbler in West Hartford September 30 (SF). Palm Warblers were common in migration and 20+ were sighted in Farmington September 30 (BD). The latest warbler report for the period was of a Blackpoll Warbler at Lynde Point, Old Saybrook October 29 (TH). Lot W at UCONN in Storrs was an excellent location for *Oporornis* warblers where two Connecticut

Warblers were banded September 10. Two more Connecticut Warblers and a Mourning Warbler were banded there September 18 (WB). A single Connecticut Warbler was at Lighthouse Point September 30 (KT, JFa fide FMa). A Yellow-breasted Chat was also banded at Lot W on the 18th, making this a definite hot spot for the fall season. Late Scarlet Tanagers were in Natchaug State Forest, Chaplin October 15 (AB), and at Longshore Club Park, Westport October 21 (MM). Longshore Club Park was again a focal point for the State's birding community, producing two Blue Grosbeaks October 7 - 23 (AC, FMa, m.ob.). One bird was still present November 1 (CRBA), and another Blue Grosbeak was at Lighthouse Point October 23 (FG). Up to four Indigo Buntings remained at Longshore Club Park through October 14 (FMa, et al.) A Dickcissel there October 5 - 6 (CB, FMa) was among numerous reports of this species from around the State, including a total of seven in the Storrs area September - October (WB), two in Southport October 23 and November 14 (CB) and two at Cove Island Park, Stamford November 12 - 19 (FP, et al.).

Fall sparrows always provide some surprises and this season was no exception. The first report of note was a Clay-colored Sparrow at Lot W, UCONN, Storrs September 21 (WB). Good numbers of Vesper Sparrows passed through Storrs September 30 to October 22 (WE, LBe, JT) with a high of 4 October 21 (WE, et al.). Vesper Sparrows were also at HBSP October 9 - 15 (m.ob.), at SISP October 19-22 (FMa, et al.) and at Cove Island Park, Stamford November 30 (FP, et al.) Two Savannah Sparrows of the "Ipswich" race, were at Milford Point November 4 and 11 (SKo). Grasshopper Sparrows were in Storrs October 7 (JM, et al.). Three Lincoln's Sparrows were at Longshore Club Park, October 5 - 13 (FMa, et al.). No doubt the most exciting sparrow report for the period was a juvenal plumaged Le Conte's Sparrow that was photographed at SISP October 18-26 (FMa, JB, m.ob.), only the second documented record for the State. What makes this sighting even more unique is that only two records exist nationwide of this species in the juvenal plumage outside their breeding range. White-crowned Sparrows were reported in exceptional numbers in October, with 13 birds in Storrs October 10 (LBe), 19 at SISP (SKo) and 50+ at HBSP October 15 (RSCB). Two Dark-eyed Juncos of the "Oregon" race were in Woodbury November 11-12 (RN).

An early Lapland Longspur was at HBSP October 2 (JW). More typically was one there November 27 (FMc); two were in Farmington November 4 (BD), and another was a fly-over in Storrs November 14 (WE). Small groups of Snow Buntings were reported around the State from late October to early November, but the big concentrations were, as usual, along the shore including 120 at Milford Point November 4

(SKo). Bobolinks began staging at Station 43 marsh, South Windsor in late August with 150 there August 29 (CE). A late Bobolink was at Lighthouse Point October 26 (RE). White Memorial Foundation, Litchfield was a good place for Rusty Blackbirds in October with 110 October 23 (DR). A Northern Oriole visited a Westport feeder November 20 into December (fide FMa).

Early predictions were for a good winter finch year. Six Pine Grosbeaks were in Harwinton October 8 (PC). An adult male Red Crossbill seen in Litchfield August 20 (DR) was extremely early as were White-winged Crossbills in mid-August at the north end of Barkhamsted Reservoir (CRBA). Fifteen White-winged Crossbills were at West Hill Pond, New Hartford November 13 (DT). Pine Siskins were also reported early in the season, with two seen from Quaker Ridge September 30 (LBr, et al.). Huge flocks of siskins appeared at the north end of Barkhamsted Reservoir in mid-November and 2500+ were in that location November 24 (DT, et al.). Evening Grosbeaks, totally absent from the State the previous year, returned to Connecticut this season. Two were at Pine Mountain, Barkhamsted September 2 (TM) and a large flock was reported in Sherman November 20 (H&JB).

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THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

# Spring 1990

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## *About our Cover Artist:*

Patrick Lynch

“Red-tailed Hawk & young (*Buteo jamaicensis*)”

Patrick Lynch is Director of Biomedical Media Production and an Associate Research Scientist in Diagnostic Radiology at the Yale University School of Medicine. Pat and Dr. Noble Proctor are currently completing an ornithology manual, to be published by the Yale University Press in 1991. Pat is the former Art Director for the *Connecticut Warbler* and this is his second cover drawing.

# THE TUNDRA SWAN IN CONNECTICUT

James Bair

A few years ago, when I lived near the Thames River, I saw a swan with a black bill. It was like the Mute Swans (*Cygnus olor*) in every way except for the bill color. I excitedly thought it might be a Tundra Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*), though it proved to be a first-year Mute.

When at last I saw my first Tundra Swan, I realized how wrong my earlier guess had been. I felt like the trained bank teller who has handled so many real dollar bills, that he knows a counterfeit just by the feel of it. After seeing thousands of Mute Swans in coastal Connecticut, the Tundra Swan stood out so much that it might as well have been a different color.

The feral Mute Swan, plump and showy, reminds us that it descended from elegant, well-fed swans of parks and estates. It is a Louis XIV or a Vanderbilt. The lean and angular Tundra Swan is more like a Daniel Boone or a Chingachgook. It has spent generations running the gauntlet from the Arctic to the Carolina capes. Though now protected throughout the U.S., it was a victim of the nineteenth century feather hunters.

Tundra Swans nest in the Arctic from Hudson Bay to Alaska, and the eastern population winters in sizeable flocks from the Chesapeake Bay to Currituck Sound, North Carolina. Often some can be found as far north as southern New Jersey, but they are something to be noted in Connecticut.

Early records show that the Tundra Swan (formerly the Whistling Swan) was not uncommon in New England before extensive hunting began to limit its numbers. Merriam (1877) cites a 1638 Massachusetts settler's description of abundant flocks of swans. Forbush and May (1955) write "Swan Lake, 'Swanholt,' Swan Neck, Swan Point, names not rare in New England indicate the former presence of these noble birds. Now the few that pass over or through the northeastern states fly so high they are rarely noticed" (p. 48). Connecticut does not seem to have any such place names.

A Niantic sachem and first Connecticut Indian to convert to Christianity was Wequash (d. 1642). His name means swan. The name of his son, Wequashcook, means place of the swan, referring either to his father's name or to his birthplace. The brother of the Mohegan leader, Uncas, was named Wawecus, which is swan in that dialect. Wawecus Hill in Norwich is named after him (Huden 1962 and DeForest). In colonial times, wild swans were common fall and spring migrants in southeastern Massachusetts (Hill 1965), and a

remnant population wintered on the Massachusetts Islands into the twentieth century (Griscom 1940). They probably spent time in southeastern Connecticut, as well.

Although swans were known in colonial times, the first authenticated record is from December 1841 when Connecticut pioneer naturalist James H. Linsley shot one off Fairfield. The bird was still alive, so Linsley sold it to some men in an attempt to domesticate it. The bird died in two weeks and Linsley mounted it (Linsley 1843). This bird is now on display at the Barnum Museum in Bridgeport. It is one of the oldest extant bird specimens from the state.

This specimen is a curiosity for two reasons. First, the bill is painted to represent a Bewick's Swan, the European subspecies, rather than the American Whistling Swan type. The taxidermist who refurbished the bird in April of 1989 said that the bill was quite dirty and greasy when he got it. When he cleaned the bill, he found an outline of yellow paint, so he followed that pattern. The museum's specimens had previously been restored in the 1930's, but no one knows when or why the bill was painted with so much yellow. If the original bird had the Bewick's coloration, Linsley would probably have noted it, since the European form was well-described in literature and was considered a separate species until 1983. Second, we must remember that the bird is in a museum dedicated to the nation's most famous showman and con-artist, P.T. Barnum. The museum legend describes the bird as a "Rare Whistling Swan shot by Lapplanders and mounted by Mr. Barnum." This, of course, is meant to duplicate a hokey Barnum sideshow. If you look closely at the display, you will see the original handwritten museum tag which tells a different story.

Other nineteenth-century records indicate that the Tundra Swan was seen irregularly in the state, usually during fall or spring migration. Averill (1892) says simply "Swans have been seen at Stratford within the recollection of the writer." Linsley mentions a pair seen by acquaintances at Stratford in the fall of 1841 and a specimen which he knew about "a few years ago" that weighed a surprising 27 pounds. Since Tundra Swans rarely reach twenty pounds (Kortright 1967) that record, if accurate, may be another species. Linsley gave no other specifics, so it is impossible to trace the bird today. (Sage and Bishop [1913] appear to treat the four Linsley records as a single flock in which two were taken, but Linsley's own reports are detailed differently.)

Several Whistling Swans appeared in Branford Harbor and Milford during a "severe gale" in March 1876 (Merriam 1877), and an immature bird was taken near Grass Island, Guilford, 2 November 1893

(Sage and Bishop 913). Sage and Bishop state that the Guilford specimen was taken by "Capt. Brooks," presumably the officer in charge of Faulkner's Island Light and given to "Mr. Norton," presumably a Guilford fisherman and friend of Brooks. However, neither Joel Helander, Capt. Brooks' biographer, nor Mr. Norton's daughter, who is still alive, could recall anything about a swan skin, so this cannot be traced further.

As public awareness and the number of professional and amateur ornithologists grew in the twentieth century, more specific sightings have been recorded. This may also reflect a gradual expansion in the bird's winter range as it benefited from protection (Palmer 1976). Forbush (1925), though, noted that a flock was present at the mouth of the Connecticut River, but local witnesses were mum. He said that because of its protected status it is "difficult to get the facts when one is killed."

There are nevertheless a number of reliable sightings of the bird in the period from 1917 to 1950, especially 1917-1935. These are listed in Appendix 1. Because a swan is a rather notable bird, sometimes when an ornithologist or birder finds one, local people will say, "We've seen them before." So in his 1917 sighting Griswold notes that "locals" had seen them in 1915 and 1916 as well. The 1919 flock of four came to public attention because one of the birds had been shot illegally.

This 1919 swan from Branford is the only specimen of the Tundra Swan from the state besides the Barnum bird which I could locate. It is in the collection of the James Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford. Curiously, it also has a questionably painted bill. In this case the bill is orange, apparently painted by a taxidermist more familiar with the Mute Swan. The bird is otherwise clearly a Tundra Swan; even the yellow mark at the base of the bill is still visible.

The 1927 sighting was the latest spring record (29 May-4 June). It was photographed by Thornton Burgess who drove from Cape Cod to see it and is thereby probably the first photographic record of the bird for the state. It was also the last sighting in which the Mute Swan was not an issue (see Burgess 1927). Wild Mute Swans were nesting in New York and New Jersey by 1920 (Urner 1921). With the 1932 record, Bagg and Eliot (1932) are compelled to note that "it was definitely not a Mute Swan."

One of the most controversial sightings occurred in 1935. The bird seen along the Connecticut River from 5 February to 22 February was described by Griswold, Bagg, Eliot, and other knowledgeable witnesses as a Whistling Swan. (Presumably the Hartford area bird and the one seen further south on the River soon after were the same

individual.) However, an estate owner in Berlin had three Mute Swans escape his private pond, and he maintained that the bird was one of his. Interestingly, the Hartford Courant (1935b) carried a photo of the bird. The caption describes it as the escaped Mute Swan, but the picture more closely resembles a Tundra Swan. The following June a Mute Swan was killed in a quarry just a few miles from the Berlin estate; it had probably remained in the area the whole time. Also, in 1935 Saunders saw separate flocks of nine and five on the same day.

I could locate no records between 1951 and 1965, but since then there have been numerous sightings. (One 1951 sighting was simply a "swan." The recent listings in Appendix 1 need some additional comments. The four sightings of a single swan from Westport, New Haven, Orange, and Woodbridge the winter of 1985-1986 may very well be the same individual. The New Haven, Orange, and Woodbridge bird is likely the same one because it was seen in Orange after some rough weather along the coast and took off in the direction of Konold's Pond in Woodbridge where it was last seen. The bird wintering at Hammonasset 1973-1974 and the pair seen in Stamford on 30 April 1974 were part of what *American Birds* called an "invasion" of Whistling Swans in New England and the Maritimes that winter. The Clinton birds seen 18 November 1978 were part of another "good flight year" according to the same journal. They may have been part of the same flock seen at Hammonasset a week later. Even though southeastern Connecticut was the home of Wequash and Wawecus, the sole records on file for that region are the 1967 and 1990 birds.

While most records are from near Long Island Sound or the Connecticut River, there are a few inland records, either from inland ponds, or as overflights (see Figure 1). The earliest published record was from January 1924 on Twin Lakes, Salisbury (Pease 1935). The records from December 1966 and January 1967 in Lakeville likely involve the same bird. Overflights were reported in Sharon on 30 October 1972 and in Wilton 6 April 1984. A single Tundra Swan was observed at Mirror Lake, Storrs, 11 November 1985. Proctor (1978) refers to a flock of six seen in Southbury on the Housatonic River.

Mute Swans may attract single Tundra Swans which are off track. The only Mute Swans recorded in the state Christmas Bird Count in 1950 were eight (!) in Westport where the Tundra Swan was seen. Other recent sightings such as the New Haven 1986 bird were in flocks of Mute Swans. The man-made "Swan Pond" at Hammonasset was so named because Mute Swans reside there most of the time. It has attracted Tundra Swans at least twice.

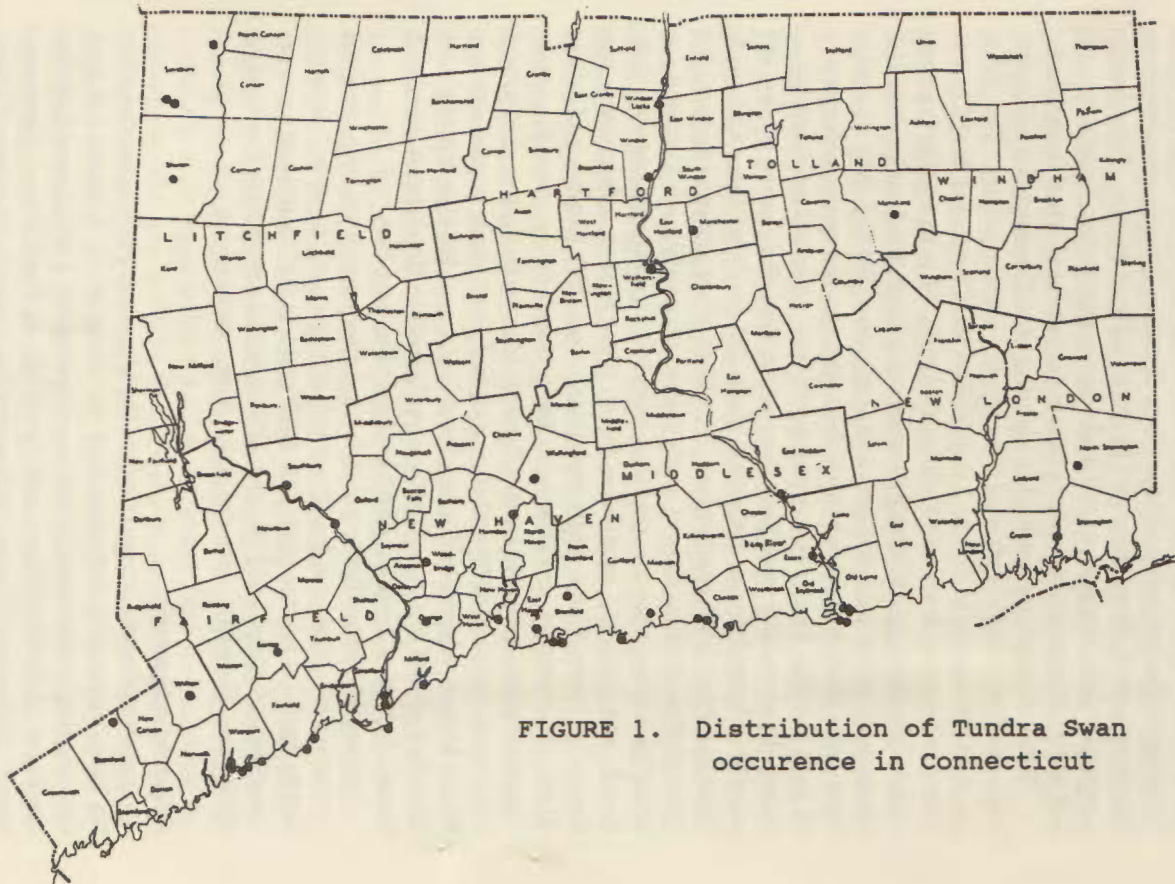


FIGURE 1. Distribution of Tundra Swan occurrence in Connecticut

Sightings of the Tundra Swan through the year, also show a pattern (see Figures 2&3). They occur from about the third week of October to the first week of June. Two clusters of sightings came from October to mid-November and in the middle of March. This closely corresponds to the peak of fall and spring migration. Tundra Swans are early nesters and tend to migrate earlier than other waterfowl.

These clusters are not highly significant in Connecticut, for sightings are irregularly scattered through the winter period. The third peak in December in Figure 3 may reflect the Christmas Bird Counts when more people are out looking for birds. However, this is a time when "shortstopping" stragglers of many waterfowl make their last move before the coldest time of year (Connor 1988, p. 83). It is also clear from the January and February sightings and records that many of our Tundra Swans have wintered over. Swans are sometimes noted after violent weather, suggesting that they were blown off course or forced down. Palmer (1976, p. 79) confirms this. Although Heintzelman (1978) reports that "corn and other grainfields are used in winter as feeding sites in some areas", the only such Connecticut records are the 1986 Orange and the 1990 Stonington reports. Fall hawk watchers at Lighthouse Point, New Haven, often see large flocks of Snow Geese high overhead. Sandhill Cranes and other distinctive western species have been noted flying over the state. Tundra Swans may frequently fly over Connecticut, too. Litchfield County is only about 50 miles east of the great circle route between Baffin Island, where the Tundra Swans nest, and the Chesapeake and Carolina shore. Palmer (1976) says "possibly there is an overland route" between New England and east Hudson Bay.

Just as few Snow Geese actually alight here and a grazing Sandhill Crane is a real rarity, so few Tundra Swans actually land in Connecticut to feed or winter over. A 1987 state D.E.P. publication says, "Accidental every 1 to 3 years." While not common as in the days of Wawecus, they still come through. Keep looking up.

### Acknowledgments

I wish to thank George Clark of the University of Connecticut for his help, especially for providing the notes of G. T. Griswold and information on the Barnum Museum specimen. I also appreciate the kindness of Robert Pelton and Ben Ortiz of the Barnum Museum, Fred C. Sibley and Eleanor Stickney of the Peabody Museum, Christmas Count compiler Stephen P. Broker, Edith Nettleton of the Guilford Free Library, Jay Kaplan of the Roaring Brook Nature Center, Schoepfer Taxidermists, the Branford Education Department, Paul Desjardins of the Hartford Audubon Society, Marlene



# TUNDRA SWANS IN CONNECTICUT

Dates Swans First Noted

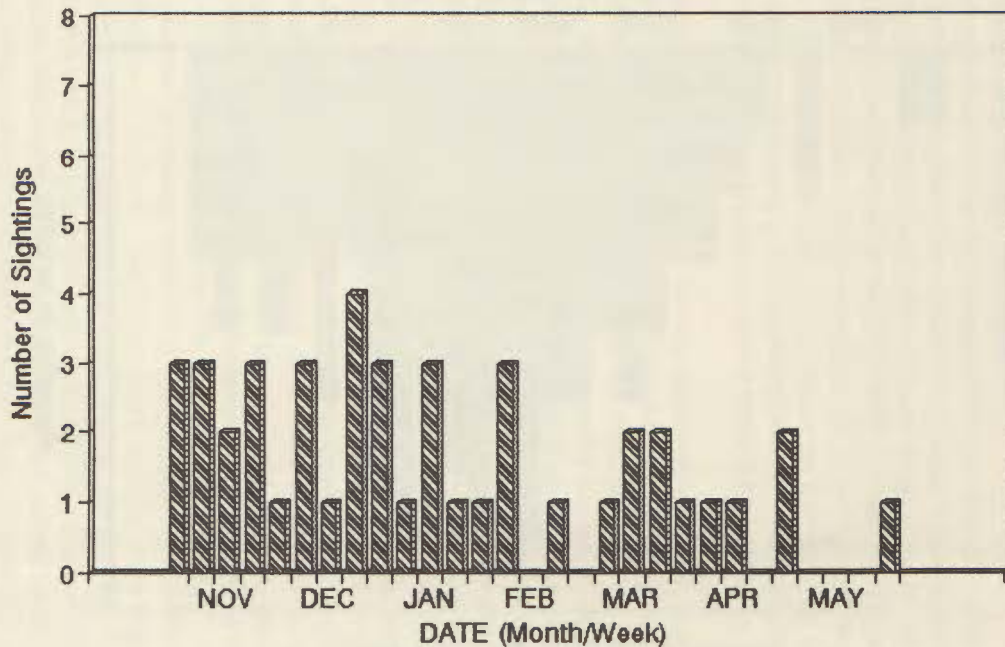


FIGURE 2

# TUNDRA SWANS IN CONNECTICUT

Date Swans Known to be Present

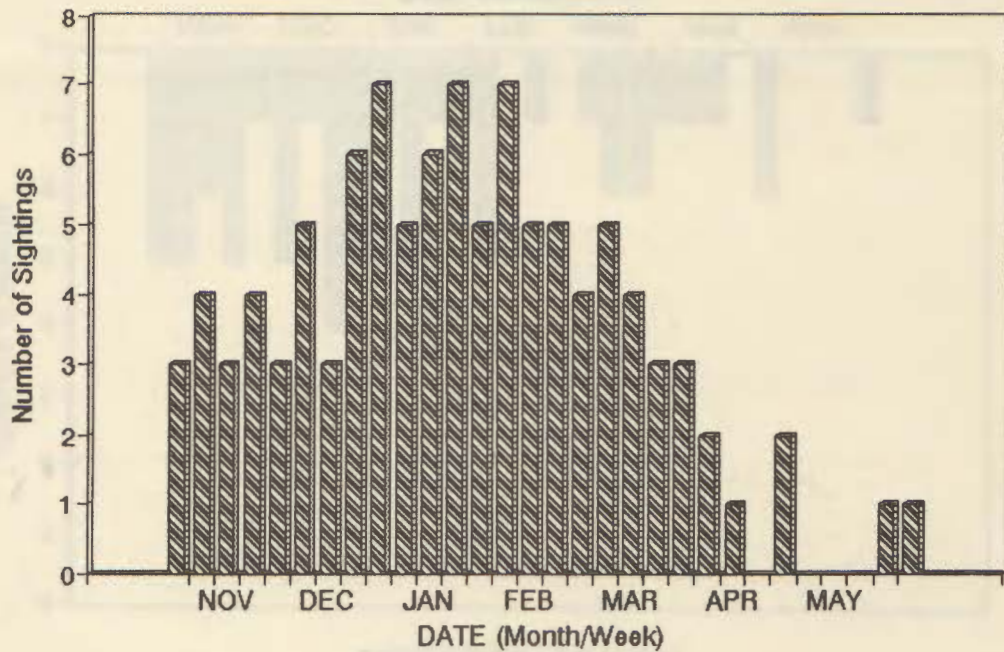


FIGURE 3

Palmquist and staff of the James Blackstone Memorial Library, Noble S. Proctor of Southern Connecticut State University, Anthony Bledsoe of the University of Pittsburgh, and Robert Dewire of the Denison-Pequotsepos Nature Center.

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Appendix 1. Reports of Tundra Swan in Connecticut (\*= Christmas Bird Count record, †=specimen record, p.c.= personal communication, ovhd= seen flying overhead)

Dated Records				
Year	Day/Month	Location	Reference	No.
1841	Dec	Fairfield	Linsley, 268	1†
1876	Mid-March	Branford Harbor	Merriam, 120	Several
1876	Mid-March	Milford	Merriam, 120	Several
1893	2 Nov	Grass Is., Guilford	Sage & Bishop 42	1†
1917	30 Apr	Farmington & Conn. Rivers, Windsor	Griswold	1
1919	13 Nov	East Haven River, Branford	Bishop, Ardwin	4†
1924	8-12 Jan	Twin Lakes, Salisbury	Pease, Bergstrom	1
1927	29 May-4 Jun	Grants Is., Conn. River, E. Windsor	Griswold, Burgess	1
1932	21 Mar-4 Apr	Laurel Lake, Manchester	Griswold, Bagg & Eliot (both)	1
1935	5-18 Feb	Wethersfield Cove & Conn. River, Hartford	Griswold, Bagg & Eliot (1937),42	1
1935	22 Feb-5 Mar	Conn. River, Haddam to Fenwick	Griswold, Bagg & Eliot (1937),42	1
1935	5 Nov	Penfield Reef, Fairfield	Saunders	9
1935	5 Nov	Milford Point	Saunders	5
1935	7 Dec	Greens Farms, Westport	Bergstrom	1
1938	3 Dec	Westport	BNEBL 2(12):2	1
1942	7 Mar	Westport	BNEBL 6:14	2
1945	23 Nov	Easton	RNEB 1:206	1
1947	Oct	East River, Guilford	Mackenzie 29	1
1950	30 Dec	Westport	AFN 5:59, RNEB 6:249	1*
1965	23 Dec-2 Jan	Housatonic R., Sandy Hook	Proctor 89 & p.c.	6

## Appendix 1. (continued)

## Dated Records

Year	Day/Month	Location	Reference	No.
1966	31 Dec (noted prior)	Lake Wononscopomuc, Lakeville	AFN 21:118	2*
1967	21-22 Jan	Lakeville	RNEB 23:2	1
1967	7 Jan-27 Mar	Mystic	RNEB 23:2	1
1972	30 Oct	Sharon	AB 27:31 (ovhd)	2
1973	late Oct-mid-Mar	Hammonasset Beach	AB 28:28,220,616; CW 7:47	1*
1973	26 Jan-2 Mar	Old Lyme	AB 28:610	1
1974	30 Apr	Laurel Reservoir, Stamford	AB 28:780	2
1975	mid-Dec-end Jan	Old Lyme	AB 30:690, Proctor p.c.	1
1977	27 Mar	Nell's Is., Milford Point	AB 31:973, CW 7:47	1
1978	9-10 Mar	Branford	Proctor p.c.	6
1978	18 Nov	Clinton Harbor	Proctor p.c.	14
1978	25 Nov	Hammonasset Beach	AB 33:154	25
1979	23 Dec	Quinnipiac Valley	AB 34:406	1*
1982	3 Dec	North Farms Resvr., Wallingford	CW 3:23	1
1982	mid-Nov-mid-Feb	L. Saltonstall, East Haven	AB 37:280; CW 3:2,23; Proctor p.c.	1*
1984	6 Apr	Wilton	CW 4:63 (ovhd)	500
1985	11 Nov	Mirror Lake, Storrs	Hudon, CW 6:20	1
1985	22 Dec	Westport	CW 6:9,38; AB 40:676	1*
1985	26-31 Dec	New Haven Harbor	CW 6:38, Bledsoe p.c.	1
1986	11-15 Jan	Grassy Hill Rd., Orange	CW 6:38, 9:21	1
1986	15-22 Mar	Konold's Pond, Woodbridge	CW 6:50, 9:21	1
1987	2-4 Feb	Housatonic R., Oxford	Proctor p.c.	1

## Appendix 1. (continued)

## Dated Records

Year	Day/Month	Location	Reference	No.
1989	14 Apr	Branford	Proctor p.c. (ovhd)	21
1990	9-23 Jan.	Rt. 2, N. Stonington	Dewire p.c.	1

(Total records: 44)

## Records with Details Lacking

Date	Location	Reference	No.
Fall 1841	Stratford	Linsley 268	2
Fall-Winter 1921	Mouth Conn. River	Forbush 303	Flock

(Total records: 2)

## Records Based on Vague Reports or Questionable Identification

Date	Location	Reference	No.
Before 1841	Stratford Area	Linsley 268	1†
1877	Elizabeth Pk., Hartford	Bergstrom	1†
Before 1892	Stratford	Averill 6	?
Spring 1915 & 1916	Conn. River, Windsor	Griswold	1
Summer 1934	Clinton & Westbrook	Griswold	1
Spring 1944	Lake Quonnipaug, Guilford	Mackenzie 29	1
Spring 1951	Lake Quonnipaug	Mackenzie 29	1

(Total records: 7. The last three could likely be Mute Swans; Griswold and Mackenzie list them secondhand for information purposes only. 1915 & 1916 are unclear secondhand reports. The 1877 report does not appear in any of the published records until 1964 and may represent a captive bird; specimen could not be traced. See text on Linsley and Averill records.)

## SURPRISING CONTEST

Roland Clement

One does not often think of American Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) and Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) as competitors for food. I watched such a contest taking place under a row of Russian Olive (*Elaeagnus unbellata*) shrubs that were dropping their bright red berries. November 12, 1989 was a bright, crisp morning in Norwalk, Connecticut. The four crows involved could, and did, feed in the shrubs themselves, but since the limbs were too slender to provide secure footing, the birds often picked fallen fruit from the ground. This put them in competition with three Mallards--two of them drakes--who had left the pond to feed on its bank. The crows objected to this intrusion and jousted at the ducks, often driving the drakes back to the water momentarily. The crows met more spirited resistance from the hen Mallard who held her ground, and counter-attacked. Most of this jousting was in a crouched position, but occasionally wing-tilting occurred. During ten minutes of observation this contest remained mere threat, with no actual violence.

Not surprisingly, the standard reference works on crows or Mallards do not mention such an interaction. Nor is this use of a particular food plant mentioned in Martin, Zim, and Nelson's *American Wildlife & Plants: A Guide to Wildlife Food Habits*.

This report may be of interest to future compilers of behavior in these birds.

71 Weed Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06850





*SITE GUIDE*

## **GREATER NEW HAVEN HARBOR**

Arnold Devine<sup>1</sup> and Dwight G. Smith<sup>2</sup>

The shoreline of greater New Haven Harbor is one of the outstanding birding areas in Connecticut. The estuarine and coastal environments--mud flats, sand spits, rocky promontories, beaches and salt marshes--that are found along this part of Long Island Sound attract an exceptionally wide diversity of waterfowl and other avian species. During a peak migratory period a birding expedition to the greater New Haven Harbor may produce 120+ species, and on a good winter's day as many as 50+ species may be observed. This area also has a reputation for attracting rarities, and many of the "first" state bird records have been documented by birders along the shores of this harbor.

For this site guide, greater New Haven Harbor is considered to be the stretch of Connecticut coastline with Merwin Point, in the Woodmont section of Milford, its western boundary and Lighthouse Point Park, New Haven, its eastern. In the guide we concentrate on nine major stops that afford especially good birding opportunities, beginning at Merwin Point and working east to Lighthouse Point Park. Many other areas along the way also offer birding and photographic possibilities. You may want to follow the entire route, which will take a good half day, or just randomly explore some of the specific sites that are described in detail. Whichever your preference, the New Haven Harbor shoreline will provide interesting and rewarding observations of a variety of birds and their behavior.

Fall and spring are generally the best birding seasons, but winter can also be productive. Summer (late July through September), too, offers good birding but can sometimes be frustrating because of increased recreational use of so much of the shoreline area. The shorebird migration between late July and September at Long Wharf and Sandy Point (also referred to as the West Haven sand spit) can be rewarding and challenging, while the fall raptor migration at Lighthouse Point Park is famous throughout New England.

### **Specialties**

The list of rare and unusual species observed along this shoreline area is extensive. Over 35 species of shorebirds have been tallied, including Wilson's Plover, Hudsonian and Marbled Godwit, numerous sandpipers such as Baird's, Upland and Buff-breasted, Spotted

Redshank, all three phalaropes, and American Avocet. The variety of gulls and terns that may be seen probably equals or exceeds that of any other area of Connecticut's coastline, and some of the more unusual are the white-winged gulls (Glaucous and Iceland) and such European gulls as Lesser Black-backed, Little and Black-headed. Uncommon tern species include Caspian, Royal, Black and Roseate, while rare waterbirds like Red-necked and Western Grebe, Barrow's Goldeneye, and Common and King Eider may occur. Other occasional rarities are raptors such as Bald and Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon and Gyrfalcon, Snowy Owl and Burrowing Owl (this last species is, obviously, extremely rare in the state). Some of the more unusual songbirds seen in this shoreline area include Western Kingbird, Lark Bunting and Lark Sparrow.

### **Nesting Species**

The harbor is used principally for staging, roosting and foraging rather than for nesting. However, a few species of waterfowl (Mute Swan, Mallard and Gadwall), rail (mainly Clapper), sandpiper (Spotted), and passerines (Sharp-tailed and Seaside Sparrow) nest in the nearby salt marshes, while a variety of eastern deciduous forest species breed in woodlots bordering Lighthouse Point Park and in the ornamentals at Nathan Hale Park. Sandy Point in West Haven hosts nesting populations of two Federally endangered species, the Piping Plover and Least Tern, which have limited breeding ranges in Connecticut and elsewhere along the East coast. Both are identified as "species of special concern" in Connecticut.

### **The Birding Tour**

When looking for coastal species, one should consider tidal conditions: low or mid-tide is best for shorebirds, while ducks may be closer to shore at high tide.

To begin the birding tour, take Exit 40 off eastbound I-95 and turn left at the traffic light at the end of the ramp. Drive past the Mayflower Truck Stop and turn right onto Woodmont Avenue. Go 1.3 miles to the first traffic light and turn right onto Merwin Avenue, which takes you to New Haven Avenue (0.2 mile). Turn left onto New Haven Avenue, take the first right, King's Highway, and follow it to Beach Avenue on the left. Park near the rocky shore area which is Merwin Point.

### **Merwin Point**

This rocky promontory affords an ideal vantage point from which to scan the waters of New Haven Harbor and Long Island

Sound. It is most productive from October through April, when one should be on the lookout for Common and Red-throated Loon, Red-necked and Horned Grebe, both Great and Double-crested Cormorant (Great especially in winter and Double-crested mainly in spring and fall), and several species of waterfowl: Mallard, American Black Duck, American Wigeon, Oldsquaw, Bufflehead, White-winged and Surf Scoter, and Red-breasted Merganser. In winter huge rafts of Greater Scaup can frequently be seen far offshore, and these should be 'scoped carefully for one or two Lesser Scaup. Many gull species forage and roost in the area. Scan the coast for Bonaparte's Gull in winter and spring and for Black-headed Gull in spring (usually March-April). The rocky outcropping is one of the most consistent places we know of for providing opportunities to observe the foraging behavior of Purple Sandpipers from November through April. Both Common and King Eider have also been seen in winter from Merwin Point.

### **Oyster River**

From Merwin Point proceed along the shoreline on Beach Avenue. Just past the small park on your left (which also is a convenient stopping point), turn left onto Bonsilene Street, proceed two short blocks, turn right onto New Haven Avenue, and drive 0.4 mile east to Oyster River. Park in the sandy lot on the right.

This small cove is where the Oyster River flows into New Haven Harbor and is always worth a short visit. Large flocks of gulls and lesser numbers of waterfowl and shorebirds can concentrate here, so always study the gull flocks for rarities! From November through March white-winged gulls (Glaucous and Iceland) are uncommon but regular visitors, and Lesser Black-backed Gull is becoming more regular. Bonaparte's Gulls are seen in small numbers throughout the winter, but in March and April they may congregate in flocks of several thousand. During this period the rare "European" gulls frequently appear, and careful checking of the Bonaparte's Gulls will sometimes yield Little and/or Black-headed Gulls. If you have difficulty differentiating the adult Bonaparte's from the adult Black-headed (which is a misnomer, since the Black-headed really has a dark brown hood), we offer this helpful tip: since the Black-headed often obtains its breeding plumage earlier than the Bonaparte's, it is easier to locate an adult Black-headed when only small numbers of individuals display hoods. Once most of the Bonaparte's Gulls have their hoods, good luck! Remember to study the Bonaparte's Gulls carefully. Oyster River was the site of Connecticut's first record of Ross' Gull, which lingered for about a month (March-April)

in 1983. Waterfowl commonly seen at this stop include Gadwall and American Wigeon.

### **Saint John's By the Sea**

From Oyster River proceed about 0.8 mile along Ocean Avenue to the next stop at Saint John's By the Sea, a church on the inland side of the street. Along the way you may want to make a quick detour down one of the dead-end streets (Holcomb, Baldwin or Templeton) on the right, from which you can often get a better vantage of the Oyster River and harbor area, depending on the time of year and the sun's position. At the church, park across the street (on the sea side) in the parking area, which has recently been renovated. This spot is good primarily for loons, grebes and waterfowl. Scan the harbor and shoreline for ducks, including Mallard, American Black Duck, Common Goldeneye, Oldsquaw and American Wigeon. Check the wigeon flocks closely for Eurasian Wigeon, which has been noted each winter for the past five years. Although fairly regular at this stop, Eurasian Wigeon is possible anywhere between Oyster River and Bradley Point.

### **Bradley Point and Vicinity**

Continue east along the shore on Ocean Avenue, keep to the right on Captain Thomas Boulevard, and park in the lots on either side of the little stream that empties into the Sound. From here you can scan the beach for a wide variety of gulls and also walk to the rocky point. Bird the sandy beach area, mud flats and grassy, pool-like wetlands between the two parking lots. Large flocks of gulls frequently rest in the puddles and pools. All the usual gulls (Herring, Ring-billed and Great Black-backed) are common, and Bonaparte's Gull occurs here with the same regularity as at Oyster River but in smaller numbers. When present, Lesser Black-backed and Black-headed Gulls are usually seen December-April, but they are still uncommon to rare.

Shorebirds commonly found in the pools include Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs, Killdeer, Black-bellied Plover and Least, Semipalmated and Pectoral Sandpiper. In August look for Wilson's Phalarope. Hudsonian Godwit has occurred here in November and December.

### **Sandy Point**

Also known as the West Haven sand spit, this next stop is reached by continuing along Captain Thomas Boulevard. At the stop sign make a right onto Washington Street and then a quick left onto

Beach Street. Go about 0.5 mile until you see the Sandy Point parking area on the right, across from the Captain's Galley restaurant. In summer there is a substantial parking fee for non-residents of West Haven.

Sandy Point is an elongated sand peninsula about 50-150 yards wide that reaches eastward into New Haven Harbor. It is a unique and interesting area, with scattered clumps of beach grass above high tide level and small clumps of *Spartina* along some of the intertidal stretches. This is an exceptional birding area from August through October, when the shorebird migration is in full swing. During this season the following species are usually present: Ruddy Turnstone, Killdeer, Lesser Golden, Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plover, Dunlin, Short-billed Dowitcher, Red Knot, Least, Semipalmated and Western Sandpiper, Willet and Sanderling. Occasionally Buff-breasted Sandpiper and Wilson's or Red-necked Phalarope make a brief appearance.

A variety of herons and egrets may also frequent Sandy Point. The most common herons are Great Blue and Green-backed, but Little Blue and Tricolored can sometimes be spotted, and the egrets to watch for are Great and Snowy. The usual gulls and terns are encountered here, but several of the latter that are less frequent but regularly seen during August and September include Caspian, Roseate and Forster's. Throughout the winter check the beach for flocks of Snow Bunting and Horned Lark. Occasionally a Lapland Longspur will be present, and one November an immature Lark Sparrow was associated with these flocks.

Loons, grebes and waterfowl become more noticeable in November, and many can be seen all winter long. The infamous Western Grebe made a significant appearance in this area during November, 1978, and stayed throughout that winter.

On the other side of the New Haven Wastewater Treatment Plant (adjacent to Sandy Point) are a boat dock and landing which afford a view of the harbor from a different perspective, and a quick scan from this site can often be fruitful. During winter note the large concentration of Mute Swans, being careful to scrutinize these individuals for the rare Tundra Swan, which occurs sporadically.

### **West River**

Return to Beach Street (which now becomes First Avenue) and turn right. Follow First Avenue to the second traffic light and turn right onto Elm Street/Kimberly Avenue. At the first light turn left and veer to the right to the Coast Guard Station lot at the end of the road. Park here and 'scope the West River and harbor area for gulls

and waterfowl. In late fall and winter Canvasback, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Mallard, American Black Duck, American Wigeon and Greater Scaup are common. Check the reedgrass along the river's edge for less common Green-winged Teal and Northern Pintail. Occasionally Barrow's Goldeneye, Lesser Scaup and Redhead can be seen here.

If you want to look along the West River farther inland, continue on Kimberly Avenue over the bridge to the next intersection, turn left on Boulevard (Route 10), and take an immediate left at the New Haven Fire Training Center. The short road ends at a cul-de-sac, where you can 'scope the West River from the lawn on the north side of the Training Center, which has consistently produced Redhead in winter for several years. Raptors--mainly Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Rough-legged Hawk (uncommon) and Snowy Owl (rare)--may be seen hunting the tidal wetland and adjacent landfill from this site.

### **Long Wharf**

From the Training Center go back to Boulevard and follow the signs that lead you onto I-95 eastbound, from which you should take Exit 46, for Long Wharf. At the end of the ramp, you can go left or right onto Long Wharf Drive, which parallels the 0.8 mile of extensive tidal mudflats that comprise this section of the west side of New Haven Harbor proper. The habitat here attracts large numbers and a variety of shorebirds and waterbirds, especially in fall and spring. A number of vagrants and rarities--Spotted Redshank, Burrowing Owl, Gyrfalcon, Marbled Godwit and American Avocet, to name but a few--have been recorded at this site, so birders should always be "on the lookout" when inspecting this area. Common species include Semipalmated and Black-bellied Plover, Killdeer, Ruddy Turnstone, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Red Knot, Dunlin, Short-billed Dowitcher, Least and Semipalmated Sandpiper and Sanderling. Less common, but regular, are Spotted, Pectoral, Western and White-rumped Sandpiper, Willet, Lesser Golden Plover and Wilson's Phalarope (the latter is normally seen in the first half of August).

The same species of gulls encountered at Oyster River are present at Long Wharf, although the variety and numbers here can be quite impressive during fall, winter and spring. Be sure to check for two of the "European" gulls, Black-headed and Lesser Black-backed. Many of the terns can be observed from May through September, with a few (mainly Forster's) lingering into late October. Black, Royal and Caspian Tern are infrequent visitors in August and September. Invariably entertaining and photogenic, Black Skimmers occasion-

ally appear about this time, too.

### **Nathan Hale Park/Morris Cove Seawall**

From Long Wharf continue east on I-95 to Exit 50. At the end of the ramp turn right onto Woodward Avenue, which leads directly to Nathan Hale Park. Park in the lot on the right, just as the road bends sharply to the left. As an alternative, you can continue on Woodward to Townsend Avenue. Take a right, go 0.2 mile and park near the Morris Cove seawall.

From the parking area or the seawall you can scan the eastern side of New Haven Harbor. This area is often good for loons, waterfowl (mainly diving ducks) and gulls. An albino Ring-billed Gull spent the last two winters in the vicinity. Several species that can normally be seen in fall and winter are Common and Red-throated Loon, Horned Grebe, Great and Double-crested Cormorant, Oldsquaw, Greater Scaup, Common Goldeneye and Red-breasted Merganser.

### **Lighthouse Point Park**

From the Morris Cove seawall continue along Townsend Avenue 0.4 mile to the traffic light, turn right onto Lighthouse Road, and proceed to the park entrance, where there is a seasonal entry fee. This final stop in our birding tour features a variety of habitats that await exploration—sandy beaches, rocky points, outlets, salt marshes, fields, meadows and deciduous woodlands. In addition to supporting an assortment of waterbirds, the park is situated along an important migratory route for hawks and neotropical songbirds. Plan to spend some time observing (and participating in) the annual fall hawk watches, which now draw sizeable crowds of birders on good days. In 1988, 24,944 hawks were tallied at this station.

To start, leave your car in the boat launch lot to the right. Beginning at this point, it is perfectly feasible to walk the entire shoreline of the park. From fall through spring you should be able to see many of the waterbirds found at all of the other sites in this guide. In the harbor are rafts of American Black Duck, Mallard, Greater Scaup and American Wigeon. Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Common Goldeneye and Oldsquaw are usually common as well, and you should check the rafts for less common White-winged and Surf Scoter, Lesser Scaup, Gadwall and Eurasian Wigeon. Other waterfowl recorded here include Common and King Eider, Snow Goose, Redhead and Barrow's Goldeneye. Red-throated and Common Loon, Red-necked and Horned Grebe and Great Cormorant also occur regularly in small numbers.

Snow Buntings usually arrive in early November and are

sporadic throughout the winter along the beach or around the gravel lots. Occasionally you will be able to pick a Lapland Longspur or two out of a bunting flock, and you should find Horned Lark much of the year in the same habitats.

Most of the hawk watch activity happens in September at the open area next to the extensive reedgrass marsh. With the right weather conditions (light or northerly winds and good visibility), a one- or two-day visit will produce most of New England's diurnal birds of prey: 15 species including Turkey Vulture were recorded in 1988. Bonus species like Golden Eagle (only a few each season) and Peregrine Falcon (the number counted is rising each year--26 in 1988) highlight the hawk watch.

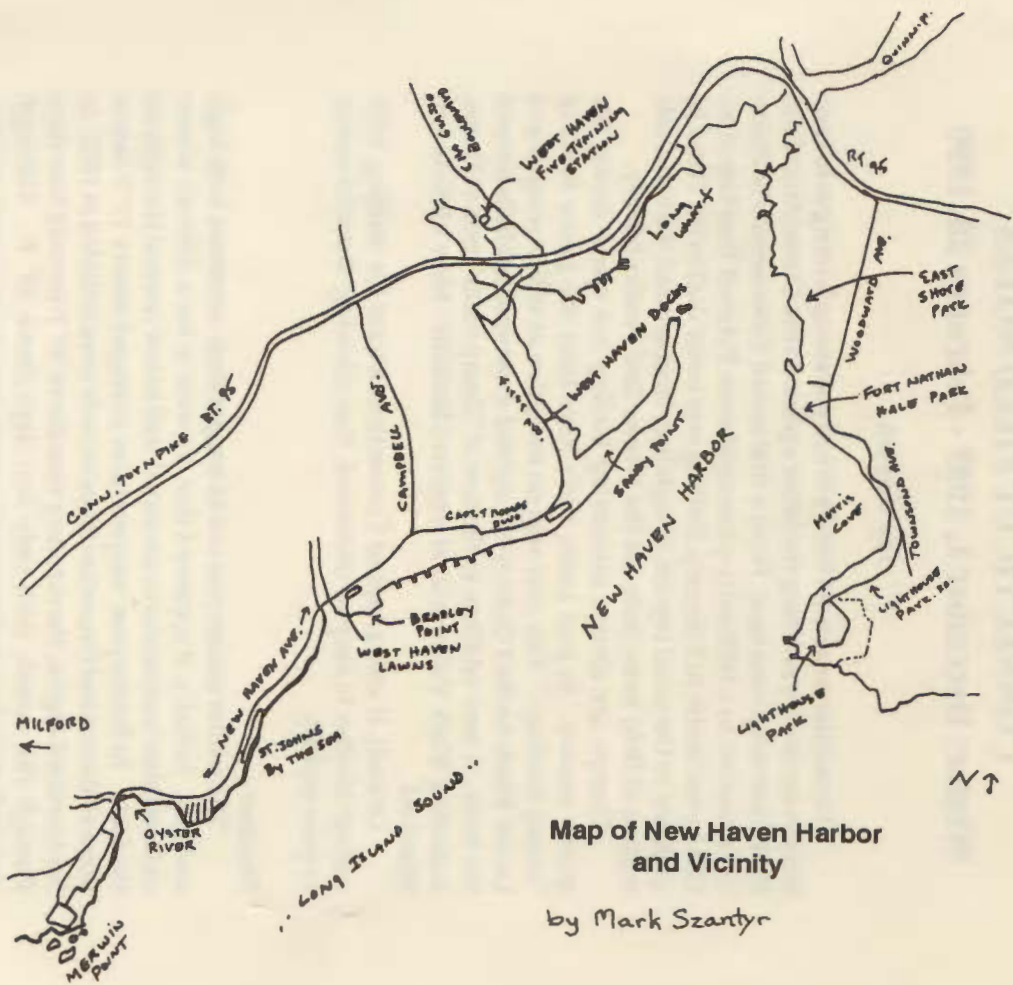
Other migrant species to watch for are Common Flicker, Red-headed Woodpecker (September-October), Purple Martin and other swallows, Blue Jay (in "trains"), Eastern Bluebird and Cedar Waxwing. Some of the migrants that pause to rest and refuel in the willows, sumac and deciduous woodland bordering the marsh include Ruby-throated Hummingbird (usually in early September), woodpeckers, flycatchers, chickadees, thrushes, vireos, warblers and grosbeaks. A wide variety of sparrows can be found along the marsh and shrub/field edges throughout October and early November. Lincoln's, White-crowned, Vesper, Seaside and Sharp-tailed Sparrows are fairly reliable, and Clay-colored Sparrow has been recorded here. Some of the rarities reported from the park are Western Kingbird (becoming more regular here in October/November), Blue Grosbeak, Lark Bunting and Boat-tailed Grackle. Dickcissel has also been observed consistently in September and October.

Owls have been seen with increasing frequency over the past five years. Check the shrubs and pitch pine thickets for Saw-whets and Long-ears from mid-October through November. Great Horned Owls often overwinter, while Barred and Eastern Screech-Owls occur in the woodlands. Snowy Owl has been seen along the beach during November and December, and through the winter you could see a Short-eared Owl hunting the marshes and fields.

### **Seasonal Birding Greater New Haven Harbor**

Greater New Haven Harbor is one of the unique birding sites in the state. Not only is there convenient access to the entire shoreline, but one can see an abundance of waterbirds and shorebirds. As the species and their numbers fluctuate with the change of seasons, birders have the opportunity to observe migration strategies of several taxa of birds and a chance of finding a Connecticut rarity (remember to report any rarities to the Rare Bird Alert!).





Map of New Haven Harbor and Vicinity

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## CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Winter: December 1, 1989 - February 28, 1990

Jay Kaplan

The winter season of 1989-1990 had just enough intrigue to keep birders anxiously awaiting the latest update to the Connecticut Rare Bird Alert telephone tape. From a first record Townsend's Solitaire in December to a brilliantly-plumaged male Painted Bunting at an Old Lyme feeder in February, birding was never dull in the State. In addition to the usual reports of sightings from around the State, this edition of field notes includes the Winter Bird Feeder Survey.

Dumps are always interesting birding hot spots during the winter season. In past years, gulls have been the prime focus of "dump birding." This year was no exception as white-winged and Lesser Black-backed Gulls were sighted at several landfills around the State. A new addition to the fare of "dump birds" was vultures, including Black Vultures in at least two landfills - New Milford and Branford.

Overall, it was a typical Connecticut winter for birding, with enough rarities to keep us interested, thus allowing the cold season to pass rapidly.

### Weather

The winter season was one of temperature extremes, both high and low. Initially, it appeared that we were in for a difficult winter as December temperatures averaged well below normal throughout the State. In Bridgeport, temperatures averaged nearly 11° F below normal, the coldest December since records were initiated in 1922. In the Hartford region, the mercury rose above 30° F on only four days through the month, with only two days above 35° F. Although snowfall, with four inches near the coast, was about normal, precipitation for the month was almost three inches below average; only .83 inches in Bridgeport, 1.46 inches in Hartford.

January, in contrast, was the warmest in 58 years in the Hartford region with 20 days of temperatures exceeding 40° F. For the coast, it was the fourth warmest January on record. Precipitation was slightly above average, but snowfall was below the norm with only 11 inches inland and five inches along the coast.

February's weather could be characterized as pleasant. Temperatures exceeded 50° F on eight days including a high of 68° F in Hartford February 23. There were record highs along the coast in

mid-month, then record lows February 25-6. Precipitation was near normal with a nine inch snowfall February 25. This was followed by a strong cold front featuring a barometric pressure of 30.91 inches, a chilly prelude to the beginning of the spring migration.

### **Winter Bird Feeder Survey: 1989-1990**

The results of the survey are somewhat predictable, although the bird feeder survey leaves us with more questions than it answers. For example, this survey could provide more data on the incidences of predation by accipiters at winter bird feeding stations. However, it is quite likely that many feeder-watchers do not recognize that they are also providing accipiters with a feeder in the form of many songbirds that congregate around feeding stations. Thus, the hawks are not always included in feeder survey reports because they don't eat seed.

The Winter Bird Feeder Survey continues to draw response from suburban feeding stations, but has made no headway in generating information from either urban or rural areas. Of the 44 responses received (up three from the previous year), 57% (26 responses) came from residential feeding stations. Another 28% (13 responses) were located in rural woodlands. A number of respondents were uncertain as to how one might distinguish between these two classifications. This is understandable as many areas around the State are slowly changing from rural woodlands to residential neighborhoods. There were two responses from feeding stations classified as rural farmland and one response from an urban feeder. Two feeder reports failed to designate a location. Could it be that fewer urban feeders are likely to belong to C.O.A. and thus less likely to see our report form? Or, are our urban members reluctant to list their Rock Doves, Starlings and House Sparrows on the reporting form? Perhaps we might add gull to our list (none were reported).

Location of a feeding station had little bearing on the choice of food available to the birds. Sunflower seed was the most popular feeder fare as 40 stations (91%) utilized this staple product. Also popular were suet (34 stations), thistle seed (32) and mixed seeds (30). No mention was made of the ingredients in the mixed seeds, and thus, this latter category may cover a wide range of available food types. Water was used at nine feeding stations and corn (in some form) at seven. Peanut hearts were available at two stations while one station each reported using the following: chickadee pudding, fruit, bread, table scraps and parrot chow. There were no reports of psitticines at this last station!

With regard to birds, this year's feeder survey was similar to those of previous years. Black-capped Chickadee, Dark-eyed Junco and House Finch were seen at all 44 reporting feeder areas. Tufted Titmouse (missed only at the urban station) and Blue Jay, were reported at 43 areas. Also widespread were Mourning Dove, Downy Woodpecker and White-breasted Nuthatch, reported from 42 stations. Other species reported from most of the stations were Northern Cardinal and White-throated Sparrow (40 stations), American Goldfinch (39) and European Starling (32). Of these, only the American Goldfinch changed notably over last year, when it was seen at 68% of the stations compared to 88% this year. Although the sample is too small to be significant, it would appear that goldfinches were more prevalent at feeders this winter as opposed to last. The only other species seen at over 50% of the feeders were American Crow (30 stations) and House Sparrow (27). Red-bellied Woodpecker (21 stations) again outpolled Hairy (16). It was a better year for black-birds as Common Grackle was reported from 20 stations and Red-winged Blackbird from 17. Also reported from 17 stations was Carolina Wren. All of the last three species were reported from less than 10 stations the previous winter.

Additional species reported from 10-20 feeders included American Tree and Song Sparrows (19 stations), Red-breasted Nuthatch (13 in an invasion year), Fox Sparrow (13), Rock Dove (12) and Northern Mockingbird (11). The latter species brings up an interesting question. To be reported should a bird be "in the area" of the feeder, or must it actually consume something from the feeder? Birds seen at 5-10 stations included Purple Finch and Evening Grosbeak (9 stations), Brown Creeper and Brown-headed Cowbird (8), Rufous-sided Towhee and Field Sparrow (6). Last year, Evening Grosbeak went unreported! Northern Flickers were sighted at four feeding Stations, while Pileated Woodpecker was seen at two. Swamp Sparrow and Common Redpoll were reported at one feeder each.

Of the write-ins, Sharp-shinned Hawk led the way with nine reports. Of course, all stations, in a sense, are providing food for accipiters. Cooper's Hawk and Northern Goshawk were also reported from single locations. Other species reported during the course of the season at one station included Canada Goose, Ring-necked Pheasant, Wild Turkey, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, American Robin, Winter Wren and Rusty Blackbird. Again, in some cases it is not clear as to whether the bird was merely in the vicinity of a feeding area or was an active participant in partaking of the food provided.

The Winter Bird Feeder Survey has the potential to provide some interesting data from which equally interesting conclusions

may be drawn. However, at this point, our sample is too small to offer any significant insights on feeding patterns in the State during the winter feeding season. On the other hand, if all feeder watchers sent in their results, we would likely be overwhelmed with report forms. Observing birds at the feeder on a cold winter morning provides an enjoyable and educational opportunity for novice and expert birders alike. Perhaps we should let it go at that.

## LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Loons were, in general, scarce along the coast this season as reported in Records of Southeastern Connecticut Birds (hereafter RSCB). The only reports received of Red-throated Loons were an injured bird at Smith's Cove (Thames River), New London January 16 (BK et al.) and two birds at the mouth of the Thames River February 20 (RSCB). A Red-necked Grebe was sighted at Avery Point, Groton February 12 (NP). The highlight grebe for the period was an Eared Grebe at Cove Island Park, Stamford December 17 (TB et al.). Discovered on the Greenwich-Stamford Christmas Bird Count (hereafter CBC), it was studied at close range. An American Bittern was flushed from a salt marsh at Manresa Island, Norwalk during the Westport CBC December 17 (FM et al.). There were several Black-crowned Night Heron reports along the coast throughout the period including three birds in Mystic in early February (RSCB). A Tundra Swan, first observed January 24 (RD), spent about two weeks feeding in a farm field in North Stonington. Perhaps it was amused by the controversy created by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's (hereafter CTDEP) plan to reduce the State's Mute Swan population, now estimated at 2,000.

At least one Greater White-fronted Goose spent much of the winter in western Connecticut. Reports of this species came from Woodbury December 11-16 (MS), where one was seen in a flock of Canada's with three hybrid young. Another bird was sighted in Newtown February 4 (NC). There were scattered reports of Snow Geese from around the State and two blue morphs were seen in Morris February 17 (EC,MC). A Barnacle Goose was reported in Ledyard February 13 (RSCB). It was assumed that this was the same bird that nested in the vicinity the previous summer with a Canada Goose. Brant were reported as "few and far between" this winter in southwest Connecticut (FM). Southeastern Connecticut was evidently more hospitable with a flock of 200 moving along the coast between Groton and Waterford (RSCB).

In recent years, wildlife biologists have expressed concern over

the population trends of the American Black Duck. A winter high of 700 were seen at Gray's Creek, Longshore Park, Westport December 28-9 (FM). A single male Eurasian Wigeon was along the West Haven shoreline throughout the period (m.ob.). American Wigeon and Canvasback were reported in very low numbers this winter in southwest Connecticut. However, in southeast Connecticut, 1,000 Canvasback were reported in the Thames River in December (RSCB). In addition to the usual Redheads at Smith's Cove, New London (m.ob.), individuals were also at Seaside Park, Bridgeport December 27 (JF,DV) and in West Haven January 2 (NC). A female Lesser Scaup was on Aspetuck Reservoir, Easton December 17 (JKn et al.). A male Harlequin Duck was seen and photographed December 17 in Norwalk Harbor during the Westport CBC. Twelve Black Scoters were seen at Penfield Reef, Fairfield December 17 (FP,JZ), while at nearby Sunken Island Reef, Fairfield, there were 400 White-winged Scoters February 9 (CBA). At least two (one male, one female) Barrow's Goldeneye were present on the Connecticut River near the Enfield Boat Launch area December 23 - mid-February (m.ob.). It should be noted that these birds have wintered in this location for the past several years. Hooded Mergansers peaked at 40 at Holly Pond, Stamford February 16 (FM); while Common Mergansers, once scarce in the State, peaked at 675 at Shepaug Dam, Southbury February 7 (DR).

#### VULTURES THROUGH MONK PARAKEET

Vultures continue to expand their winter range into the State. A **Black Vulture**, discovered at the New Milford Dump during the Woodbury-Roxbury CBC December 16 (EHa), was later joined by two additional birds (m.ob.). The landfill was host to 70+ Turkey Vultures as well, particularly during the colder periods. A Black Vulture was also sighted at the Branford dump February 6 (NP fide MB). In southeast Connecticut, 60 Turkey Vultures spent the winter in North Stonington (RD). A late Osprey was observed on the Naugatuck River, Seymour December 1 (BD), while an early spring arrival was reported in Stonington February 20 (RSCB). Bald Eagles were seen throughout the period, statewide, but particularly along the major rivers, lakes and reservoirs. The mid-January census tallied 76 eagles - 23 adults and 53 immatures (CT DEP). As many as 28 eagles were seen on a single day at Shepaug Dam, Southbury in late February (EHi, fide FM).

There were several reports of Northern Harrier along the coast including four at Lordship Marsh, Stratford December 3 (JS) and 20 on the Westport CBC December 17. Rough-legged Hawks were also

numerous along the coast with at least five birds at Lordship marshes (FM,JKa, et al.). Merlin were reported in Torrington January 17 (NC,JKi), in Hartford January 19 and 28 (CE) and at Manresa Is., South Norwalk February 8 (FM). For the first time in several years, there were no Peregrine Falcons reported in the State's larger cities for any extended periods of time. Peregrine reports came from New Haven Harbor, where one was observed feeding on a Rock Dove January 20 (FC); and from Old Saybrook February 24 (RSCB).

A late Virginia Rail was observed in the Durham Meadows, Durham December 10-18 (WS); additional birds were found on the Old Lyme and New London CBC's. American Coot continues to decline as a winter resident in Connecticut. The only report received was a bird on the Housatonic River, Southbury December 2-10 (RN). Late shorebirds included single Greater Yellowlegs at Manresa Island (FM) and Fairfield (FP) December 17; three to six Red Knots at Penfield Reef, Fairfield December 3-17 (RG,FM,FP) and a single bird at Greenwich Point January 28 (LBr); and an American Woodcock in Stratford January 1 (JY).

A flock of 100 Bonaparte's Gulls were in South Cove, Old Saybrook February 11 (FM) and a Common Black-headed Gull was in that location February 6 (NC). As usual, dumps were prime places for gull watching. The New Milford Dump was the most reliable location with Iceland, Lesser Black-backed and Glaucous Gulls reported (m.ob.). Iceland Gulls were also reported at Lighthouse Point, New Haven December 4 (RE); at the Middletown Ave. dump, New Haven December 8 (FG); at "Brickyard Pond," off Route 72, New Britain December 11 (fide BK), on the Saugatuck River, Westport December 14 (TR) and at Shepaug Dam, Southbury January 29 (DR). A Lesser Black-backed Gull was on the Naugatuck River, Ansonia January 1 (BD). Glaucous Gulls were reported from "Brickyard Pond", New Britain December 10 (JKa) and at Seaside Park, Bridgeport December 27 (JF,DV). The most interesting of the gull sightings was a possible California Gull at Savin Rock, West Haven January 1 (MS). This first-year bird was studied at close range and the Connecticut Rare Records Committee is awaiting a report on this sighting, which if accepted, would be a first record for Connecticut.

The thriving Monk Parakeet colony in Bridgeport now contains some 70+ birds (FM,FP,AC). These birds have been present for 15-20 years and it will be interesting to speculate upon future developments with this exotic from South America.

## OWLS THROUGH SHRIKES

Other than a "possible" sighting at Great Island, Old Lyme

February 11 (TN, fide NP), there were no reports of Snowy Owls this winter in the State. Up to three Long-eared Owls were present in their usual haunts at Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison (hereafter HBSP) throughout the winter, although they were by no means reliable. Short-eared Owls, never common in Connecticut, were reported from at least seven shoreline locations. There were also scattered reports of Northern Saw-whet Owls including, unfortunately, a number of road killed birds in southeast Connecticut (RSCB).

Red-bellied Woodpecker and Carolina Wren continue to do extremely well in the State, even during the winter months. The Westport CBC set records for both species with 41 woodpeckers and 55 wrens December 17 (fide FM). One of the highlights of the winter season was the discovery of a Townsend's Solitaire on the Woodbury-Roxbury CBC December 16 (MS). This first state record was photographed in a red cedar grove and seen almost daily for at least a week. In early January, a solitaire was discovered in Pawling, NY, some 22 miles due west of Woodbury. It was assumed that this was the same bird. Late reports of American Pipit included a single bird at Milford Point December 9 (SM); 13 at Sherwood Island State Park, Westport (hereafter SISP) December 17 (RC,RS,RW); and three at Milford Point January 9 (DR). Northern Shrikes were scarce this season with two birds reported in Somers in mid-January (fide JKa) and a bird in Pawcatuck February 5 (RSCB).

### WARBLERS THROUGH GROSBEAKS

In spite of the frigid temperatures of late November and December, there were several interesting warbler reports. An Orange-crowned Warbler was discovered at Bluff Point State Park, Groton February 13 (NP). A Pine Warbler was found in New Canaan January 28 (EJ). A Palm Warbler was in Woodbury January 14 (RN). Last, but certainly not least, an Ovenbird spent the entire season in a West Simsbury backyard, where it was seen on numerous occasions (VK et al.). Yellow-breasted Chats were seen on the Westport and New London CBCs.

Another exciting feature of the season was the appearance of a brilliantly plumaged male Painted Bunting at an Old Lyme feeder. First observed in mid-October, the bird was originally written off as not that unusual. Finally, in early February, the bird made it to the Connecticut Rare Bird Alert and during the remainder of the month, scores of birders had the opportunity to observe and photograph this second state record. Cove Island Park, Stamford was a hot spot for finches and sparrows this winter. Two Dickcissels were discovered



in a leaf/brush dump in mid-November and at least one of the birds remained until mid-February (m.ob.). Another Dickcissel was at a Preston feeder in mid-February (RSCB). Cove Island Park also hosted a Chipping and a Vesper Sparrow (FP et al.); as well as large numbers of the more common sparrow species. Another good location for sparrows was the old Fairfield landfill, where an estimated 300 Song, 100 Savannah, 100 Swamp and a single Grasshopper Sparrow were observed December 9-10 (FM,FP,JZ). An immature White-crowned Sparrow was at Longshore Park, Westport December 24 (TR). Dark-eyed Juncos were seen throughout the State in good numbers and individuals of the "Oregon" race were seen in Cornwall December 17-22 (DT,CBK) and in Woodbury mid-November - January 6 (RN). Reports of Lapland Longspur were limited to a single bird at SISP December 2 (AC) and two at HBSP February 11 (LBe,FM). There were several reports of inland Snow Bunting flocks including 75 in Storrs December 9 (fide GC).

Eastern Meadowlark has declined as a wintering bird in Connecticut, thus two birds at Fairfield Hills State Hospital, Newtown January 7 (RN) was a good find. A young male Northern Oriole was at a Westport feeder November 20-December 8, and again December 20 (FM et al.). A flock of 2,000 Common Grackles was in Manchester February 9 (CE), apparently spring migrants.

Following the winter of 1988-89, did anyone believe that we would ever see winter finches in the State again? This season was more to a birder's liking with numerous reports of Pine Grosbeak and both crossbill species in the northwest hills. Common Redpolls were scarce, but a Hoary Redpoll was reported sporadically with three Commons at a Torrington feeder, primarily following periods of inclement weather (JKi et al.). There were scattered flocks of Pine Siskins reported in southwest Connecticut in December (FM), but if one really wanted to see this species the north end of Barkhamsted Reservoir was a good location. Large flocks, including one of 1,000 birds, could be found feeding on birch catkins January 1 (JKa, JM, et al.). Evening Grosbeaks returned to the northwest hills this winter and 2 birds even made it to a Westport feeder December 9 (FM).

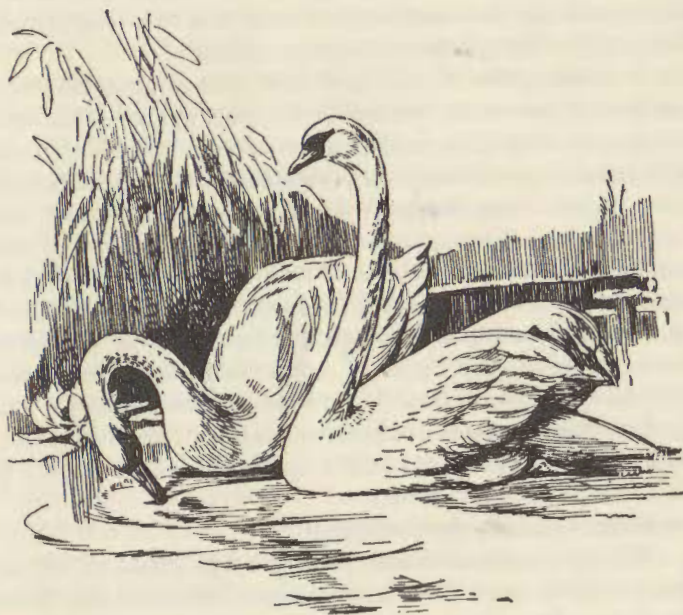
#### Observers; Contributors (boldface)

Ralph Amodei, James Bair, Cheryl Barker(CBK), Charles Barnard(CBa), Louis Bevier(LBe), Lysle Brinker(LBr), Milan Bull, Tom Burke, Fred Caples, George Clark, Jr., Roland Clement, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Albie Collins, Neil Currie, Ed & Mary Czapinski, Buzz Devine, Robert Dewire, Angela Dimmitt, Carl Ekroth, Richard English, Jeff Fengler, Frank

Gallo, John Gebhardt, Ray Gilbert, Ed Hagen(EHa), Ed Hiestand(EHi), Elsbeth Johnson, Jay Kaplan(JKa), Seth Kellogg, Jeff Kirk(JKi), Betty Kleiner, Virginia Knight, Jay Knox(JKn), Frank Mantlik, m.ob. = many observers, Steve Mayo, Jim Moore, Russ Naylor, Tish Noyes, Noble Proctor, Fred Purnell, Records of Southeast Connecticut Birds, Tom Rockovansky, Dave Rosgen, Wilford Schultz, Richard Soffer, Jerry Stanley, Mark Szantyr, Dave Tripp, Rob Winkler, Dennis Varza, Jeff Young, Joe Zeranski.

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# THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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

## **Membership Fees**

Member	\$10.00	Contributing	\$20.00
Family	\$15.00	Sustaining	\$30.00
Life \$300.00, payable in three annual installments			

## **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.

# Summer 1990

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**Winter: December 1, 1989 - February 28, 1990**  
                 Jay Kaplan

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Volume X No.4

**October 1990**

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## *About our Cover Artist:*

### Paul Carrier

#### *"Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*)*

This is the second cover illustration created for *The Connecticut Warbler* by artist Paul Carrier. He has done illustrations in most medias but prefers ink marker and scratch method. Paul has illustrated several books and many commercial projects. He has always been interested in nature, especially birds and snakes. He does a cover illustration each year for the New England Hawk Watch report and illustrates the front cover of the Hartford Audubon Society newsletter. Several years ago Paul started his own advertising and design studio in northwestern Connecticut. His story about finding the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher appears in this issue.

# 1981 - 1990

## THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER "HAPPY 10TH BIRTHDAY"

Carl J. Trichka<sup>1</sup> and Fred C. Sibley<sup>2</sup>

As *The Connecticut Warbler* celebrates 10 years of publication, some of our members and subscribers may wonder how this all began. The time - late fall, October 1980. Seated at the dining room table of a farmhouse in Kempton, PA, were Milan Bull, Dennis Varza and Carl Trichka. Trichka recalls, "we were leading a field trip to Hawk Mountain for Connecticut Audubon Society. We began to put together an idea about publishing a newsletter for the bird banders in the state. CAS was asked for approval and funding; they agreed. We obtained a list of the banders and sent them a questionnaire. About one half responded, applauding our effort and a few said they would try to send material."

The fledgling group decided to go forward and publish any bird related material they could find. They contacted amateurs and professionals around the state for material and began setting up an advisory board. Work on Volume 1, Number 1 began in January 1981 and the first issue was printed and appeared in late winter of that year.

As the first issue's table of contents indicates, Trichka, Bull and Varza were the whole journal. Once the journal was a reality, however, interest increased greatly. By the second issue, Noble Proctor, Robert Dewire and Fred Sibley had all submitted articles, and the subsequent list of contributors expanded rapidly. This was a formative year as the journal sought a direction, finally establishing a niche somewhere between the prestigious scientific journals and the *Birdwatchers Digest* type magazine. Fred Sibley remembers, "we started with a very large editorial board, trying from the inception of the journal to involve all parts of the state's birding community. Although we had some 20 members involved with the publication, it was difficult to fill a broom closet when a meeting was called. This problem was gradually addressed at nomination time and board meetings today frequently have 95% attendance. It is interesting to look at this initial board of editors and see how many are still active

- Roland Clement, Joe Zeranski, George Clark, Gordon Loery, Frank Mantlik as examples."

By the end of 1981 "The Warbler" had over 200 subscribers and that figure grew for the next two years. Late in 1983, CAS decided they could no longer underwrite *The Connecticut Warbler* although they would still support it with mailing privileges.

There was never any serious thought of letting "The Warbler" die, but a crisis was fast approaching. Membership was not large enough to support even a stripped down version of "The Warbler," and a new editorial staff and working area was needed. Several members of the advisory board were recruited, and a committee was formed for the purpose of establishing a non-profit ornithological association, one totally independent of any Audubon affiliation. The primary objective of this association was the continued publication of the journal. The next step was funding, and through the generous support of a group of Founding Members as well as some donations, a financial base was established. Thus, the Connecticut Ornithological Association was formed and officially announced by Roger Tory Peterson in the January 1984 issue of the journal.

In late 1984, the editing process shifted to the Yale University's Peabody Museum and the editorship to Tony Bledsoe. While the Connecticut Ornithological Association was increasing its membership, the production of the journal remained difficult. Sibley recalls, "we begged for articles, tried to find a reasonably priced printer, and find a free computer to use, etc." Tony Bledsoe finished his degree at Yale and left the area for other employment, and in mid 1985, Roland Clement, Carl Trichka and Fred Sibley filled the gap in publishing "The Warbler." At the end of that year, Betty Kleiner assumed the position of editor and continues in that capacity today.

Thinking back on the history of "The Warbler," one remembers a lot of dark moments when the future was pretty bleak, or it just wasn't fun anymore. In celebrating the 10th year of publication, it is nice to know that the dreams of those early years have actually materialized. The COA continues without regional bias and provides a focal point for Connecticut's birders. A rare records committee has been active in producing an official state checklist. Authors receive requests for article reprints from all over the globe. The journal is exchanged with 18 ornithological groups across the country and is subscribed to by the British Museum of Natural History, as well as the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology in California.

This could only have happened through the tireless dedication of our officers, board members, the editorial staff, and other volun-



teers who have donated their time and efforts to our success. To our members who have been with us since 1981, and those new to our ranks, we say thank you for your support - it is what keeps us going.

We hope you will join us in wishing *The Connecticut Warbler* a happy birthday and wish it continuing success in the years to come.

1. 65 Glover St., Fairfield, CT 06430

2. 25 Shirley, Naugatuck, CT 06770

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## ON FINDING THE SCISSOR-TAILED

Paul Carrier

On July 6, 1990, I was scheduled to pick up a package at the west side parking area of Bradley International Airport Windsor Locks. I brought my two sons with me and told them we could watch the planes take off and land.

My son Seth, who at nine years old has more life birds than I had at age 30 said, "Dad, what bird is that? I don't recognize it." On the fence, just 15 feet away, was an adult Scissor-tailed Flycatcher! It was 12:15 PM - a clear, sunny day with 80° F temperature and no wind. We watched the bird for 15 minutes, then attempted to call other birders from a pay phone across the road. It took six different calls to find anyone at home, and we were finally able to spread the word about our great find. I understand quite a number of birders were able to see the bird that afternoon. Unfortunately, it was gone the following day.

Coincidentally, when I moved to West Hartford, at the age of nine, my father and I were looking for some shrubs at a nursery near Bishop's Corner in West Hartford. I was already interested in birds and had knowledge of all the city birds of Hartford. I wandered into a group of small cultivated trees. Looking up, I saw a bird at the top of a birch tree. It was unmistakable! As I remember, it was a medium-sized bird with a whitish gray head and body, with a long blackish split tail and with pink on the body. I ran to my Peterson, and sure enough, it was a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. At that age, there was no one to whom I could report it. I put it down on my life list and have continued to watch and love birds since that time.

What a coincidence that at age nine, my son Seth spots another one. This one, I assume, will be recorded.

High View Rd., Harwinton 06791

## FOURTH REPORT OF THE CONNECTICUT RARE RECORDS COMMITTEE

The Connecticut Rare Records Committee (CRRC) continues to encourage preparation and preservation of documentation for records of unusual birds in the state. The committee evaluates the adequacy of this documentation, its completeness and sufficiency to support the identification, and then maintains this evidence in a permanent file of all submitted reports, which researchers may evaluate and study in much the way one may evaluate and study specimens in a museum collection. This permanent file, currently preserved at the Connecticut State Museum of Natural History in Storrs, is the result of a cooperative effort by all the observers who have submitted reports. The committee greatly appreciates their support and acknowledges their contributions to this record of Connecticut's ornithological history.

This report adds one species to the state list: Thayer's Gull is accepted in the hypothetical category. The number of bird species recorded in Connecticut now stands at 381. Also discussed in this report is the first photographic documentation for American White Pelican in Connecticut. Previously, only a single specimen documented the occurrence of this species in the state, although there are several sight reports. In the present report a total of 24 species are covered, with 18 records of 16 species accepted, and 9 records of 9 species not accepted.

### Format

This fourth report continues the format of previous reports (*Connecticut Warbler* 7:46-51, 1987, and 9:20-24, 1989). The CRRC welcomes the submission of additional observations. A checklist of all species recorded in Connecticut and accepted by the CRRC is available (at cost) from the Connecticut Ornithological Association, 314 Unquowa Rd., Fairfield, Connecticut, 06430. This list indicates those species for which the committee reviews reports. Documentation for these species and any species not on the state list should be sent to the secretary, Louis Bevier, P. O. Box 665, Storrs, Connecticut, 06268. In addition, reports of rare breeding species are requested (a list was published in the C.O.A. *Bulletin*, Vol. 3, No. 2, summer 1989). If desired, report forms that outline the details for writing a description are available from the secretary.

In the following lists of records, hyphenated numbers in parentheses (e.g., 90-3) are CRRC file numbers. For accepted records, only the

names of observers who have submitted reports are listed (alphabetically), with the original finder listed first and that name followed by an asterisk. In some cases the original finder did not submit a report, in which case the finder's name, if known, is given in parentheses after the list of contributors. Observers who submitted a photograph are acknowledged with "(ph)" following their names. Photographs greatly assist in the review procedure, and their submission with the written report is strongly encouraged. Citations of the Connecticut Warbler are abbreviated as "CW" followed by volume, page(s), and year.

## ACCEPTED RECORDS

**NORTHERN GANNET** (*Morus bassanus*). One adult was seen flying over Long Island Sound off Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison, 18 March 1989, W. Wehtje\* (89-13).

**AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN** (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*). One adult in breeding plumage, with the horn-like growth on the top of the bill, was at Greenwich Point, Greenwich, 29 May 1989, L. R. Brinker\* (ph) (89-10).

This is the first photographic documentation for the state. A mounted specimen is at the Yale Peabody Museum, but is currently sealed in plastic there and not accessible for viewing (F. Sibley pers. comm.).

**BLACK VULTURE** (*Coragyps atratus*). Two were seen at the New Milford landfill, 16 Dec 1989-19 Feb 1990 with three there on 30 Dec 1989, E. Hagen\*, T. W. Burke (90-1).

This species has been increasing in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, but reports continue to be very sparse for Connecticut.

**AMERICAN SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** (*Elanoides forficatus*). Two were seen in Mansfield intermittently over the period 6-24 June 1989, P. Coughlin\*, L. R. Bevier (ph), G. A. Clark (ph), S. Davis (ph), D. Truman (89-8).

This species has appeared annually in the Northeast in recent years, and this is the third consecutive year that it has been seen in Connecticut. A published account of this occurrence and the significance of the extended period of stay appears in CW 9:80-82, 1989.

**BLACK RAIL** (*Laterallus jamaicensis*). At least one was near the mouth of the Housatonic River at Nell's Island, Milford, 15 September 1989, R. Baldwin\* (89-15).

One other individual was reported from same general area as this bird and the observer stated that he had seen others there and at Great Island (at the mouth of the Connecticut River) in past years. There are three previous reports from this area and two reports from nearby Stratford (none yet reviewed by the Committee).

SANDHILL CRANE (*Grus canadensis*). One was seen in flight over Westport, 12 March 1988, R. S. Winkler\* (88-25)

The majority of records in the Northeast are for fall.

WILSON'S PLOVER (*Charadrius wilsonia*). One was seen at Long Beach, Stratford, 3 May 1989, W. Wehtje\* (ph) (89-13).

THAYER'S GULL (*Larus thayeri*). One adult was carefully studied and sketched at the Shelton landfill, 25 January 1988, D. Sibley\* and R. Schwartz (88-17).

At present, this form is recognized as a distinct species (*American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds*, 6th ed., 1983), but its status as a separate species is still open to question. Regardless of its eventual taxonomic placement, the description and sketches of the bird match the features of Thayer's Gull as currently known. Features of the primary tips noted on this bird were the main characters used in separating this bird from a possible Kumlien's Iceland Gull (*L. glaucooides kumlieni*). Readers are directed to Kevin Zimmer's discussion of the identification of Thayer's Gull in *A Field Guide to Advanced Birding* by Kenn Kaufman (1990).

This first accepted record for Thayer's Gull in the state warrants its placement in the CRRC state check-list in the hypothetical category used for those species not represented by a specimen or photograph.

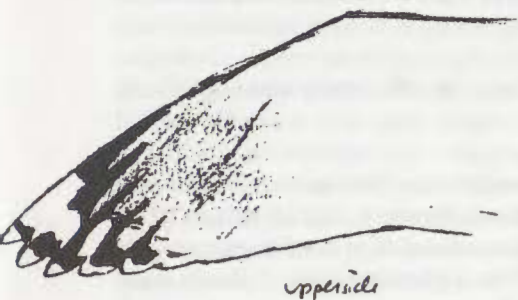
BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE (*Rissa tridactyla*). One collected in Stamford, 21 January 1895, is now a mounted specimen at the Yale Peabody Museum (YPM #97871) but was formerly housed at the Bruce Museum in Greenwich (89-6). Two immatures and a separate group of seven farther offshore were seen over Long Island Sound from Greenwich Point, Greenwich, 21 October 1988, T. R. Baptist\* (89-7).

BURROWING OWL (*Athene cunicularia*). One was at Greenwich Point Park, Greenwich, 24 May 1980, T. R. Baptist\* (88-31).

This is the second state record. The first occurred only six months prior when one was photographed at New Haven, 19-28 December 1979 (previously accepted 88-5, CW 9:22, 1989).



*underside of folded Primaries*



*upper side*



*underside*

**Thayer's Gull, 25 January 1988, Shelton, Connecticut**

*Sketch by David Sibley*

CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*). One was heard and its voice recorded in Suffield, 15-17 May 1988, J. Withgott\* (voice recording on file with CRRC), J. Kaplan (88-35).

On the last date, a nightjar flew towards one observer and landed nearby, apparently in response to a tape recorded call of Chuck-will's-widow, while at the same time a Chuck-will's-widow could be heard calling from the nearby woods. The bird that flew towards the observer could possibly have been another Chuck-will's-widow, but the bird was not seen well enough to identify or to eliminate Whip-poor-will (*C. vociferus*).

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*). One male was seen at a feeder in Harwinton, 29 January-11 February 1989, R. Belding, David Tripp (ph), (found by Don and Dottie Cromwell) (89-12).

BLUE GROSBEAK (*Guiraca caerulea*). An adult male was at Milford, 25 May 1985, D. Varza\* (90-4).

LARK SPARROW (*Chondestes grammacus*). One was well seen and beautifully sketched at Burnham Brook Preserve, East Haddam, 27-28 May 1989, J. Zickefoose\* (89-5). One wintered at the Longshore golf course in Westport, 18 December 1986-14 January 1987, T. Rochovansky\* and N. A. Voldstad (ph) (90-2).

This record was published with the sketches under the title "The Lark Sparrow in Massachusetts" in the *Bird Observer* (17:192-195).

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*). A male was in South Windsor, 3 March 1985, P. Desjardins\* (90-3). The bird was reportedly photographed, but the photograph is not in the CRRC files.

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus major*). A male was seen at Lordship marsh, Stratford, 14 May 1989, E. Hagen\* (89-3).

This is the fourth record for the state. The bird was well described, including the diagnostic calls.

#### UNACCEPTED RECORDS (Identification questionable)

WHITE IBIS (*Eudocimus alba*). North Cove, Old Saybrook, 22 May 1988 (88-33).

This species is rarely reported in Connecticut, but the majority of records for the Northeast are in May. This report involved a bird seen

flying in dense fog, and thus seen poorly. The bird was described as entirely white or sandy-white, with no black wing-tips. Adult White Ibis have noticeable black wing-tips, which are like semaphores on the flying bird, and immatures in spring, when almost one year old, are boldly marked with splotches of brown and white, the flight feathers being entirely dark brown until that fall when the bird is just over one year old. Thus, the committee was faced with a description of a bird that did not fit any known plumage of White Ibis. Most members agreed that if this were a White Ibis, it would have been a highly aberrant individual, and unanimously agreed that the report was best treated as unidentified.

AMERICAN SWALLOW-TAILED KITE (*Elanoides forficatus*). Clinton, 24 May 1988 (88-34).

In this case, no description of the bird accompanied the report and although this is a very distinctive species that is easily identified, the committee requires details of the bird's appearance to accept the report. These details are important for other researchers who may evaluate the report at some later time.

GYRFALCON (*Falco rusticolus*). Darien, 27 January 1988 (88-29). A photograph submitted for this report shows an immature Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*).

PRAIRIE FALCON (*Falco mexicanus*). Lighthouse Point, New Haven, 23 October 1989 (89-14).

This is a well-written report, giving careful details of just what was seen and under what conditions. The primary observer questioned the sufficiency of their own views to establish firmly the identification, but felt confident that they had seen a Prairie Falcon. Indeed, many members of the CRRC agreed that the bird may well have been that species. Nevertheless, for a first state record, the description lacked many features necessary to identify Prairie Falcon--for example, the pale brown upperparts, pale head, and facial pattern were not described. The description did note the "dark axillars" as well as the stiffer wing-beat, both characteristic of Prairie Falcon. Unfortunately, the extent and pattern of these dark axillars was not described (Prairie has black feathering extending out the underwing lining, and not restricted to the axillars) and several members commented that observing a bird against a bright sky could have created an illusion of dark axillars. In any case, this feature was not re-confirmed as the bird continued right overhead and out of sight.

Of note is the fact that a Prairie Falcon was seen two weeks

previously on Block Island, Rhode Island, 7 October (photograph and note in *American Birds* 44:31 & 57). Thus, the Connecticut report could have involved the same individual. However, a hybrid Prairie X Peregrine was reported to have escaped from a Rhode Island falconer only two weeks prior to the Block Island report, and given the description of the bird in Connecticut, the possibility that this bird was seen could not be eliminated.

There are no previous reports for Prairie Falcon in Connecticut and the species has no record of vagrancy to the Northeast.

WHOOPIING CRANE (*Grus americana*). Chester, 24 March 1989 (89-11).

Although somewhat intriguing, the description did not accurately describe a Whooping Crane. This endangered species continues to migrate along a very narrow flight corridor between Texas and Alberta, and is highly unlikely as a vagrant to Connecticut. Zeranski and Baptist describe a previous questionable report for Connecticut in their recent book, *Connecticut Birds* (1990).

NORTHERN LAPWING (*Vanellus vanellus*). Mansfield, 16 March 1989 (89-2).

An unusual appearing bird seen in a farm field and described by a lone observer had a pattern reminiscent of Northern Lapwing; however, the observer did not identify the bird at the time and had no knowledge of this species. Others reading the description felt that it best fit Northern Lapwing but after later seeing a Rock Dove (*Columba livia*) with a similar pattern nearby felt that the observation was best left unidentified. Northern Lapwing has not previously been reported in Connecticut. Most records for eastern North America are from late fall, with the exception of a few spring records for Newfoundland.

SPOTTED REDSHANK (*Tringa erythropus*). Norwalk, 22 May 1988 (88-36).

This was submitted as a non-breeding plumaged bird with entirely pale underparts. All Spotted Redshanks are normally black or heavily blotched with black below by May. It is possible that the bird had not molted; however, the upperparts were described as "warm buff-brown," whereas winter plumaged Spotted Redshanks appear rather gray above with slight brown tones. One member pointed out that the description better matched female Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*), but that the bird was best left as unidentified.



PARASITIC JAEGER (*Stercorarius parasiticus*). Greenwich, 3 September 1989 (89-17).

This report clearly involved a jaeger of some sort and therefore is noteworthy. An excellent description was submitted, including a drawing of the underwing. The bird appeared to be an immature, although no barring was noted on the underwing, which would indicate a bird in juvenile plumage. It is important to age jaegers before making an identification. Therefore, the details were insufficient to eliminate other species of jaeger, especially the very similar immature Long-tailed Jaeger (*S. longicaudus*), a species that is found at inland localities more frequently than other jaegers. An excellent treatment of jaeger identification can be found in Kenn Kaufman's recent book, *A Field Guide to Advanced Birding* (1990).

GRAY JAY (*Perisoreus canadensis*). North Colebrook, 30 December 1944 (88-32).

This report is an account of an observation made by an experienced observer and published by a colleague who did not see the bird (*The Auk*, 62:458, 1945). Unfortunately, the account provides no description of the bird itself. This species is exceedingly scarce away from its known range and the CRRC knows of no specimens, extant photographs, or descriptions of Gray Jays in Connecticut despite a number of published reports (summarized in *Connecticut Birds* (1990) by Zeranski and Baptist).

Submitted: September 1990

Louis Bevier and George Clark, co-compilers of the Fourth Report.

Committee Members for 1990: Tom Burke, Milan Bull, Richard English, Jay Kaplan, Fred Purnell. Alternates: Tom Baptist, Winnie Burkett, Jay Hand, Frank Mantlik, Fred Sibley.

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### Correction:

Our apologies to James Bair for misspelling his name in the table of contents on the back cover of Volume 10, Number 3.

# CONNECTICUT TIDAL RELATIONSHIPS

(or how to find the correct local tide)

Joseph Zeranski

Congregations of birds, particularly shore birds, marsh birds and, less often, waterfowl are quite often present only at certain tides. Occasionally, a rare and highly sought after individual may be found at a precise location during a particular tide or two. Should this site be located a distance from the observer, both guess work and good luck are usually needed to find the time of the appropriate tide. The chart has been designed so that the times of various tides can be determined once a tide's time is known for almost any single town. The chart will enable birders to be present at a specific location at the time of a particularly desired tide.

To determine the desired tide, consult the local newspaper (usually under the weather section) to find out when the desired tide will occur at some location in the state. This location should then be found in one of the towns listed in the column to the left in the chart. In one of the horizontal rows, find the town in which the site you wish to visit is located. The place on the chart where these two points converge will show the difference (in hours and minutes) between the time of the tide in your newspaper and at the desired site. These numbers will indicate that the tide in question occurs either before (designated by a minus sign: -) or after (designated by a plus sign: +) the tide's time as given in the newspaper for the town listed in the column, (occasionally it occurs about the same time and no time difference is indicated). The first number is the difference in hours and minutes for high tide, while the second is for low tide. A slash (/) separates high and low tide. Shown below each town in the rows is the mean tidal range, which is the difference in height (feet) between mean high water and mean low water.

For example, you wish to be in Stonington at high tide but the newspaper only gives that tide for New Haven (which is averaged in the chart between the inner and outer harbors) - say 11:35 AM. Look in the column for New Haven, then follow that row to the right until directly under Stonington are the numerals - 2:10/-2:15. This means that Stonington's high tide arrives about 2 hours and 10 minutes before it does so in New Haven (while low tide occurs 2 hours and 15 minutes before). Therefore, low tide at Stonington is about 9:25 AM.

It should be noted that these times are approximations for the

intervals between tides at a single location and may vary somewhat from season to season and even from tide to tide. Strong winds and extreme tides may also modify their timing. Tide arrival times will even vary from spot to spot within a single town. For simplification, times are given in standardized 5 minute intervals.

A copy of this chart kept in a field guide may be a useful reference.

## LONG DISTANT BIRDING FROM BRIDGEPORT

For travelling birders the following tidal information, at a minimum, is certainly an interesting curiosity and may very well prove to be quite helpful in planning when to be at a particular location. Once the time of a given tide is known for Bridgeport, using the chart, then the approximate times of the high and low tide at locations from northern Maine south through Florida may be determined. From Bridgeport's time, add or subtract the time given under the desired location below to find the appropriate time of that location's tide.

Many of the listed locations are for well known coastal spots, while others are near frequented birding locations. Due to problems in establishing precise tide times for some popular birding areas, a few of the times given below may differ somewhat from nearby birding locations. These time differences are averaged for both high and low tides, but when there is more than a minor difference between high and low tide occurrences, both are given (high tide followed by low tide). Shown after each time difference is the mean tidal range (in brackets: [feet]) for that location.

Check this information during birding trips and, if necessary, make any corrections. North of Maine and west of Florida you are on your own. Good Luck.

MAINE: Bar Harbor -0 30 [10.6']; Bidderford/Scarsboro -0 15 [18.6']; Camden -0 20 [9.6']; Cutler (Little River) -0 40 [13.5']; Damariscotta Harbor -0 20 [8.8']; Eastport -0 25 [18.4']; Kennebunkport +0 05 [8.6']; Matinicus Harbor -0 25 [9.0']; Machiasport (Machias Bay) -0 26 [12.4']; Mount Desert -0 25 [10.6']; Muscungus Harbor -0 15 [9.0']; Old Orchard beach -0 10 [8.8']; Portland -0 10 [9.1']; Rockland -0 20 [9.4']; Vinalhaven -0 25 [9.3']; Frenchman Bay (Winter Harbor) -0 35 [10.1'].

NEW HAMPSHIRE: Isle of Shoals (Gosport Hbr.) -0 10 [8.5']; Portsmouth +0 10 [7.8'].

MASSACHUSETTS: Annisquam -0 05 [8.7']; Chatham (inside harbor) +1 55/2 25 [3.6']; Edgartown (M.V.) +0 55/0 15 [1.9']; Gay Head (M.V.) -3 35/2 45 [2.9']; Gloucester Harbor -0 05 [8.7']; Hyannis Port +1 05 [-0.30']; Monomoy Point +0 40 [3.7']; Nantucket (town) +1 05 [3.0']; Newburyport +0 20/1 00 [7.8']; Plumb Island (south end) 0/0 25 [8.6']; Plymouth +0 15 [9.5']; Provincetown +0 15 [9.1']; Rockport -0 05 [8.6']; Salem 0 [8.8']; Scituate -0 05 [8.8']; South Yarmouth +1 45 [2.8']; Vineyard Haven (M.V.) +0 25/0 [1.7']; West Falmouth Harbor -3 10 [4.0']; Wellfleet +0 15 [10.0']; Woods Hole (Uncatena Island) -3 15 [3.6'].

RHODE ISLAND: Block Island (salt pond) -3 35 [2.6']; Newport -3 25 [3.5']; Pt. Judith -3 40 [3.1']; Watch Hill Pt. -2 45/2 15 [2.6'].

NEW YORK: City Island +0 25 [7.2']; Democrat Pt. (Fire Island Inlet) -4 00 [2.6']; East Rockaway Inlet -3 35 [4.1']; Great South Bay (Fire Island Coast Guard Station) -3 45 [1.9']; Great South Bay (Oakbeach/Gilgo) -0 45 [0.7/1.1']; Jamaica Bay (JFK) -2 45 [5.3']; Jones Inlet (Point Lookout) -3 45 [3.6']; Little Gull Island Light -1 30 [2.2']; Long Beach (outer coast) -3 55 [4.5']; Montauk Pt. -2 55 [2.0']; Moriches Inlet -4 30 [2.9']; Northport +0 05 [7.3']; Oyster Bay Harbor +0 10 [7.3']; Port Jefferson +0 05 [6.6']; Rye Beach 0 [7.2']; Shinnecock Inlet (ocean) -4 25 [2.9']; Stony Brook +0 10 [6.1'].

NEW JERSEY: Atlantic City (steel pier) -3 50 [4.1']; Barnegat Inlet Jetty -3 45 [3.1']; Barnegat Bay (Tom's River) +1 15 [0.6']; Brigantine Channel -3 25 [3.5']; Cape May Harbor -3 35 [4.4']; Cape May Pt. -2 50 [4.7']; Great Bay (Gravelling Pt.) -2 45/2 15 [3.2']; Holgate (fishing pier) -2 15 [2.6']; Little Egg Harbor (Tuckerton Creek entrance) -1 40 [2.4']; Long Branch -3 55 [4.4']; Manahawkin Bridge -0 55/0 05 [1.5']; Ocean City -0 05 [3.7']; Red Bank -1 40 [3.0']; Sandy Hook -3 25 [4.7']; Seaside Park -4 05 [4.2']; Shark River Inlet -3 50 [4.0']; Stone Harbor -2 50 [4.1']; Wildwood (beach) -3 40 [4.1'].

DELAWARE: Bombay Hook -1 20 [5.7']; Canal Wildlife Refuge -0 10 [5.1']; Cape Henlopen -2 55 [4.1']; Leipsic River entrance -1 10 [5.5']; Mahon River/Little Creek -1 35/0 55 [5.4']; Rehoboth Beach -3 40 [3.9']; Woodland beach -1 20 [5.9'].

MARYLAND: Cambridge -7 20 [1.6']; Crisfield +1 50 [2.0']; Chance (Deal Island) +2 40 [2.2']; Fishing Bay (Black Water NWR) -3 30 [2.5']; Ocean City (fishing pier) +3 50 [3.5']; Pocomoke City +3 40 [1.6']; Point Lookout -9 50 [1.2'].

DC: Washington -3 10 [2.8'].

VIRGINIA: Assateague Beach (Toms Cove) -3 10 [3.6']; Cape Charles Harbor -2 10 [2.3']; Cape Henry -3 05 [2.8']; Chincoteague Channel (south end) -3 15 [2.2']; Chincoteague Island (Oyster Bay) -2 00 [1.5']; Kiptopeke Beach -2 40 [2.7']; Newport News -1 45 [2.6']; Virginia Beach -3 35 [3.4'].

NORTH CAROLINA: Cape Hatteras -4 05 [3.6']; Curritucke Beach Light -3 50 [3.6']; Hatteras Inlet -3 45 [2.0']; Kitty Hawk (ocean) -3 55 [3.2']; Moreland City -3 30 [3.1']; Ocracoke -3 15 [1.0']; Oregon Inlet -3 20 [2.0'].

SOUTH CAROLINA: Charleston -3 20 [5.3']; Edisto Beach -2 45 [5.4']; Georgetown/Sampit River -1 55/1 10 [3.7']; Hilton Head -2 50 [6.6']; Bull Bay (McClellanville) -2 55 [5.1']; Myrtle Beach -3 40 [5.1'].

GEORGIA: Blackbeard Island -3 00 [6.9']; Brunswick (East River) -2 20 [7.2']; Cumberland Wharf -1 35 [6.8']; Harris Neck -2 40 [7.5']; Savannah -2 40 [6.9']; Tybee Light -2 22 [6.8'].

FLORIDA: Cape Canaveral -3 45 [3.5']; Cedar Key -2 55 [2.6']; Chassahowitzka NWR +2 35 [2.4']; Clearwater +1 10 [1.8']; Daytona Beach (ocean) -3 20 [4.1']; Dry Tortugas (Garden Key) -0 15 [1.1']; Everglade City (Barron River) +3 50/4 45 [2.3']; Flamingo +4 45/6 40 [2.0']; Jupiter Inlet -2 50 [2.5']; Key Largo (Ocean Reef Club) -2 45 [2.3']; Key West -0 50 [1.3']; Mayport -2 50 [4.5']; Naples (outer coast) +1 25 [2.1']; Punta Rassa +2 40 [0]; St. Augustine -2 30 [4.2']; Sanibel area +2 35 [0]; Tavernier Key -2 30 [2.1']; Vero Beach (ocean) 3 30 [3.4'].

### Literature Cited

Tide Tables 1990, East Coast of North & South America, U. S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, Washington, DC.

163 Field Point Road, Greenwich, CT 06830

## CONNECTICUT TIDAL RELATIONSHIP CHART

DESIRE KNOWN TIDE	Greenwich	Stamford	So Norwalk	Fairfield	Bridgeport	Stratford	Milford	New Haven	Branford
	7.4'	7.2'	7.1'	6.9'	6.8'	5.5'	6.6'	5.5'	6.6'
DESIRE TIDE									
Stonington	+2:25/+2:40	+2:20/+2:35	+2:25/+2:40	+2:20/+2:25	+2:15/+2:25	+2:10/+2:15	+2:05/+2:15	+2:10/+2:15	+2:05/+2:05
Noank	+2:15/+2:10	+2:10/+2:05	+2:15/+2:10	+2:10/+1:55	+2:05/+1:55	+2:00/+1:45	+1:55/+1:45	+2:00/+1:45	+1:55/+1:35
New London	+1:55/+2:00	+1:50/+1:55	+1:55/+2:00	+1:50/+1:45	+1:45/+1:45	+1:40/+1:35	+1:35/+1:35	+1:40/+1:35	+1:35/+1:25
Norwich	+1:40/+1:35	+1:35/+1:30	+1:40/+1:35	+1:35/+1:20	+1:30/+1:20	+1:25/+1:10	+1:20/+1:10	+1:25/+1:10	+1:20/+1:00
Saybrook Pt	+0:45/+1:05	+0:40/+1:00	+0:45/+1:05	+0:40/+0:50	+0:35/+0:50	+0:30/+0:40	+0:25/+0:40	+0:30/+0:40	+0:25/+0:30
Essex	+0:15/+0:20	+0:10/+0:15	+0:15/+0:20	+0:10/+0:05	+0:05/+0:05	0:00/-0:05	-0:05/-0:05	0:00/-0:05	-0:05/-0:15
Lyme	+0:30/+0:50	+0:25/+0:45	+0:30/+0:50	+0:25/+0:35	+0:20/+0:35	+0:15/+0:25	+0:10/+0:25	+0:15/+0:25	+0:10/+0:15
Madison	+0:30/+0:45	+0:25/+0:40	+0:30/+0:45	+0:25/+0:30	+0:20/+0:30	+0:15/+0:20	+0:10/+0:20	+0:15/+0:20	+0:10/+0:10
Guilford	+0:20/+0:30	+0:15/+0:25	+0:20/+0:30	+0:15/+0:15	+0:10/+0:15	+0:05/+0:05	0:00/+0:05	+0:05/+0:05	0:00/-0:05
Branford	+0:20/+0:35	+0:15/+0:30	+0:20/+0:35	+0:15/+0:20	+0:10/+0:20	+0:05/+0:10	0:00/+0:10	+0:05/+0:10	-
New Haven	+0:15/+0:25	+0:10/+0:20	+0:15/+0:25	+0:10/+0:10	+0:05/+0:10	0:00/0:00	-0:05/0:00	-	-0:05/-0:10
Milford	+0:20/+0:25	+0:15/+0:20	+0:20/+0:25	+0:15/+0:10	+0:10/+0:10	+0:05/0:00	-	+0:05/0:00	0:00/-0:10
Stratford	+0:15/+0:25	+0:10/+0:20	+0:15/+0:25	+0:10/+0:10	+0:05/+0:10	-	-0:05/0:00	0:00/0:00	-0:05/-0:10
Bridgeport	+0:10/+0:15	+0:05/+0:10	+0:10/+0:15	+0:05/0:00	-	-0:05/-0:10	-0:10/-0:10	-0:05/-0:10	-0:10/-0:20
Fairfield	+0:05/+0:15	0:00/+0:10	+0:05/+0:15	-	-0:05/0:00	-0:10/-0:10	-0:15/-0:10	-0:10/-0:10	-0:15/-0:20
So Norwalk	0:00/0:00	-0:05/-0:05	-	-0:05/-0:15	-0:10/-0:15	-0:15/-0:25	-0:20/-0:25	-0:15/-0:25	-0:20/-0:35
Stamford	+0:05/+0:05	-	+0:05/+0:05	0:00/-0:10	-0:05/-0:10	-0:10/-0:20	-0:15/-0:20	-0:10/-0:20	-0:15/-0:30
Greenwich	-	-0:05/-0:05	0:00/0:00	-0:05/-0:15	-0:10/-0:15	-0:15/-0:25	-0:20/-0:25	-0:15/-0:25	-0:20/-0:35

DESIRED KNOWN / TIDE	Gulford	Madison	Lyme	Essex	Saybrook Pt	Norwich	New London	Noank	Stonington
	5.4'	4.9'	3.1'	3.0'	3.2'	3.0'	2.6'	2.3'	2.7'
<b>Stonington</b>	+2:05/+2:10	+1:55/+1:55	+1:55/+1:50	+2:10/+2:20	+1:40/+1:35	+0:45/+1:05	+0:30/+0:40	+0:10/+0:30	-
<b>Noank</b>	+1:55/+1:40	+1:45/+1:25	+1:45/+1:20	+2:00/+1:50	+1:30/+1:05	+0:35/+0:35	+0:20/+0:10	-	-0:10/-0:30
<b>New London</b>	+1:35/+1:30	+1:25/+1:15	+1:25/+1:10	+1:40/+1:40	+1:10/+0:55	+0:15/+0:25	-	-0:20/-0:10	-0:30/-0:40
<b>Norwich</b>	+1:20/+1:05	+1:10/+0:50	+1:10/+0:45	+1:25/+1:15	+0:55/+0:30	-	-0:15/-0:25	-0:35/-0:35	-0:45/-1:05
<b>Saybrook Pt</b>	+0:25/+0:35	+0:15/+0:20	+0:15/+0:15	+0:30/+0:45	-	-0:55/-0:30	-1:10/-0:55	-1:30/-1:05	-1:40/-1:35
<b>Essex</b>	-0:05/-0:10	-0:15/-0:25	-0:15/-0:30	-	-0:30/-0:45	-1:25/-1:15	-1:40/-1:40	-2:00/-1:50	-2:10/-2:20
<b>Lyme</b>	+0:10/+0:20	0:00/+0:02	-	+0:15/+0:30	-0:15/-0:15	-1:10/-0:45	-1:25/-1:10	-1:45/-1:20	-1:55/-1:50
<b>Madison</b>	+0:10/+0:15	-	0:00/-0:05	+0:15/+0:25	-0:15/-0:20	-1:10/-0:30	-1:25/-1:15	-1:45/-1:25	-1:55/-1:55
<b>Gulford</b>	-	-0:10/-0:15	-0:10/-0:20	+0:05/+0:10	-0:25/-0:35	-1:20/-1:05	-1:35/-1:30	-1:55/-1:40	-2:05/-2:10
<b>Branford</b>	0:00/+0:05	-0:10/-0:10	-0:10/-0:15	+0:05/+0:15	-0:25/-0:30	-1:20/-1:00	-1:35/-1:25	-1:55/-1:35	-2:05/-2:05
<b>New Haven</b>	-0:05/-0:05	-0:15/-0:20	-0:15/-0:25	0:00/+0:05	-0:30/-0:40	-1:25/-1:10	-1:40/-1:35	-2:00/-1:45	-2:10/-2:15
<b>Milford</b>	0:00/-0:05	-0:10/-0:20	-0:10/-0:25	+0:05/+0:05	-0:25/-0:40	-1:20/-1:10	-1:35/-1:35	-1:55/-1:45	-2:05/-2:15
<b>Stratford</b>	-0:05/-0:05	-0:15/-0:20	-0:15/-0:25	0:00/+0:05	-0:30/-0:40	-1:25/-1:10	-1:40/-1:35	-2:00/-1:45	-2:10/-2:15
<b>Bridgeport</b>	-0:10/-0:15	-0:20/-0:30	-0:20/-0:35	-0:05/-0:05	-0:35/-0:50	-1:30/-1:20	-1:45/-1:45	-2:05/-1:55	-2:15/-2:25
<b>Fairfield</b>	-0:15/-0:15	-0:25/-0:30	-0:25/-0:35	-0:10/-0:05	-0:40/-0:50	-1:35/-1:20	-1:50/-1:45	-2:10/-1:55	-2:20/-2:25
<b>So Norwalk</b>	-0:20/-0:30	-0:30/-0:45	-0:30/-0:50	-0:15/-0:20	-0:45/-1:05	-1:40/-1:35	-1:55/-2:00	-2:15/-2:10	-2:25/-2:40
<b>Stamford</b>	-0:15/-0:25	-0:25/-0:40	-0:25/-0:45	-0:10/-0:15	-0:40/-1:00	-1:35/-1:30	-1:50/-1:55	-2:10/-2:05	-2:20/-2:35

From a known town's tide, subtract or add the time difference given to its right under the town to determine the time when that town's tide will occur. The high tide difference is given before the slash while that of the low tide is after the slash. Immediately under each town is the tidal range (in feet) between mean high water and mean low water at that location.

## CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

SPRING: MARCH 1 - MAY 31, 1990

Jay Kaplan<sup>1</sup> and Frank Mantlik<sup>2</sup>

Several years ago in May, some of my (JK) birding companions travelled many miles to Point Pelee, Ontario (on the north shore of Lake Erie, east of Detroit). I recognize that this is one of the premier birding locations on the continent during spring migration, yet, I really had no interest in going. Why leave Connecticut during such a wonderful season?

In 1990, a majority of observers classified the spring bird migration in Connecticut as a good one and there were a number of days when it was particularly evident. Consider the words of one veteran birder who, after a day at Woodbury's Flanders Nature Center April 29, exclaimed "...an incredible fallout!...like I've never seen, even at Cape May! Birds were all over the trees and on the ground!" The Storrs and Hartford areas reported a number of early records broken or tied. May 8 was considered by several observers to be the best day of all, eliciting such comments as "fabulous warblers!" and "THE DAY at East Rock Park (New Haven)."

Among the rare and unusual species reported in Connecticut this spring were: Red-necked Grebe, Tricolored Heron, Eurasian Wigeon, Black Vulture, Bald and Golden Eagles, Peregrine Falcon, Black Rail, Caspian and Forster's Terns, Black Skimmer, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Chuck-will's-widow, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Sedge Wren, Yellow-throated, Prothonotary and Mourning Warblers, Painted Bunting and Boat-tailed Grackle. Not a bad list for so close to home! Several teams of birders participated in BIGDAYS in May, and a new state record (ABA rules) was tallied May 18, when a team composed of Ed Hagen, Mark Szantyr, Buzz Devine and Bill Root counted 173 species! Go to Point Pelee or Cape May? No, thank you, I think I'll stay around here this weekend and look for warblers...or, maybe I'll head for the shore....

### Weather

A record low March 7 was followed by a record high on the 13th in Bridgeport. Overall, the month provided a series of warm days, with temperatures in the 40-50° F. range, interspersed with cooler, more seasonable weather. The mercury soared to a record 84° F. in Bridgeport March 13 and record highs were also set March 15, 16, 17



and 23 with temperatures exceeding 65° F. As a result, the month averaged almost two degrees above normal, while precipitation averaged 1.83 inches below the norm in Bridgeport and 1.67 inches below normal in the Hartford area. Snowfall was about average.

April began chilly and wet, with precipitation on seven of the first nine days. A late snow of 1.7 inches melted quickly. Following a record low of 31° F. on the 19th, a warm flow of southerly air brought record high temperatures April 27-28, reaching 91° F. in Bridgeport and 94° F. in Hartford April 28. This weather pattern was responsible for a northward surge of migrants around the State. Rainfall in northern Connecticut was only slightly above the monthly average of four inches.

May was marked by many days of rain or fog, interspersed with days of mild, dry air. This produced ideal conditions for several "waves" of spring migrants, much to the delight of birders. Bridgeport's three inches of rain May 16-17 were indicative of the 3.45 inches above normal rainfall for the month. Temperatures averaged 1.6° F below normal.

## LOONS THROUGH FALCONS

There were several reports of Red-throated Loons along the coast throughout the period, as well as an inland sighting from New Britain April 10 (MC). There were numerous Common Loon sightings, both along the coast and inland, with a high of 11 birds on Barkhamsted Reservoir, Barkhamsted/Hartland April 27 (DR,DT). Pied-billed Grebes were seen frequently and presumed nesting at several locations (m.ob.) including Lordship Marsh, Stratford and Miles Audubon Sanctuary, Sharon. Horned Grebes were numerous along the coast with a maximum of 60 at Sherwood Island State Park (hereafter SISP), Westport March 25 (FM,SM). Inland sightings included single birds in Mansfield April 10 (AB), Southbury April 27-May 7 (RN) and a bird that molted into breeding plumage while lingering on Barkhamsted Reservoir March 2-April 27 (DR). There were only two reports of Red-necked Grebes. Three were sighted at SISP April 10 (RS), and a single bird was at Sandy Point, West Haven May 8 (FG). The latest Great Cormorants reported were seven birds at the mouth of Oyster River, West Haven April 14 (DR). Peak migrations of Double-crested Cormorants were noted at Compo Beach, Westport April 22 (FM) with 200 birds seen in two hours, and an equal number were seen at Milford Point May 8 (FP,LBe). This species continues to expand its breeding range in the state as evidenced by 25 new nests in trees at Calf Pasture Island, Norwalk (MB). Inland sightings included a flock of 50 over Mansfield April 22 (GC

et al.).

There were at least eight reports of American Bittern, with birds calling in Dead Man's Swamp, Cromwell, May 18 (EH,MS et al.) and at White Memorial Foundation, Litchfield May 4 (NC). Least Bitterns were reported from their usual haunts. Notable among the many Great Blue Heron reports was a bird seen at 2200 feet from the cockpit of a G-III airplane April 15 over Danbury (JS)! The earliest report for Great Egret was from Cove Island Park, Stamford March 11 (FP), for Snowy Egret, from Westport March 23 (RB). A Tricolored Heron was at Hammonasset Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP), Madison May 4 to the end of the period (m.ob.). Cattle Egret numbers have decreased over the past several years (FM), although a high of five birds was seen on Turkey Hill Road, Westport May 28 (DR). Yellow-crowned Night Herons and Glossy Ibis were reported from their usual shoreline locations with a record early date of nine ibis at SISP March 17 (RS).

It should be noted that, due to public opposition, the controversial plan of the Department of Environmental Protection to limit the growth of the feral Mute Swan population was dropped from consideration. Sightings of Snow Geese were primarily from the shoreline, although a white and a blue morph were on Batterson Pond, Farmington March 31 (MC). An additional five blue morphs, rare in the state, were at SISP April 4 (RS). Several inland flocks of Brant included 75 birds in Bloomfield April 8 (PC) and 30 at Tyler Lake, Goshen May 16 (MS). The previously reported Barnacle Goose successfully hatched five young with her Canada Goose mate where these birds were observed on Sandy Hollow Road, Ledyard May 8 (RSCB).

Wood Ducks were reported in good numbers this season with a maximum of 38 at Station 43, South Windsor March 16 (MH), and an equal number at White Memorial Foundation's Little Pond March 18 (DR). Large numbers of Green-winged Teal were reported from coastal and inland marshes through March and April, with a high of 460 birds at Milford Point April 7 (SK). The latest report was from SISP May 21 (FM). A maximum of 400 American Black Ducks occurred along the Southport shore March 25 (FM,SM). Northern Pintails were reported from only three locations around the state, including 10 birds both in Old Saybrook March 8 (FM) and at Station 43 March 14 (CE). There were 11 reports of Blue-winged Teal from around the state including a high of six birds in Watertown April 12 (RN). Northern Shovelers were at four coastal locations (m.ob.), while Gadwall were reported as widespread along the coast. A male Eurasian Wigeon was present along the West Haven shoreline until at least March 26 (m.ob.), while both American Wigeon and Canvas-

Canvasback were reported as "scarce" this season. High numbers of Ring-necked Ducks included 100 on Barkhamsted Reservoir March 9 (DR) and 400 at Hesky Meadow, Woodbury March 14 (BD,MS). Also at Hesky Meadow was a Lesser Scaup March 11-17 (BD,RN). Only three reports, all coastal, were received for Surf Scoters, including a high of 65 birds March 3 at HBSP (RE). Hooded Mergansers were reported as breeding again at Miles Audubon Sanctuary (EH,DT,FM) and at several other northwest locations, while Common Merganser continues to increase as a breeding species in the Farmington and Housatonic River valleys (fide DR).

A **Black Vulture** was reported soaring over a home in Danbury March 23 (JS). Reports of Osprey were most encouraging. In addition to the sizeable breeding population east of New Haven a pair that nested on a platform at Nell's Island, Milford, represented a significant westward expansion and the first such attempt in this area in decades. Another pair attempted to nest inland at Avery Pond, Preston (RD), and there were other sightings of inland pairs in May. Wintering Bald Eagles departed in March, but there were numerous sightings into May. Immatures were in Natchaug State Forest, Eastford May 2 (WB), in North Stonington May 7 (RSCB), and two immatures remained at Shepaug Dam, Southbury through the period (DR). At Barkhamsted Reservoir, two adults engaged in courtship displays, but had not attempted nesting by the end of the period. They were joined by an immature April 27 through May 31 (DR).

There have been no confirmed nestings of Northern Harrier in Connecticut since the 1960's (fide JZ). However, for at least the second year an adult pair remained through the period at Great Meadows, Stratford (m.ob.). Accipiters and Red-shouldered Hawks were reported in usual numbers, but Broad-winged Hawks were reported as "fewer than usual" by several observers. There were at least nine reports of migrant Rough-legged Hawks, including a late bird in Hamden April 20 (RE). An immature Golden Eagle, seen and photographed in Ashford/Eastford March 10, was the first known record for this species in the Storrs area (GC,LBe,WB). Meanwhile, a report of two Golden Eagles soaring over a ridge in Roxbury April 4 was deemed "very reliable" by veteran hawkwatchers (fide PB). American Kestrel appears to be declining as a breeder in the state, although reasons are unclear. Few sightings were reported during the period and Kestrels are no longer breeding at Miles Audubon Sanctuary (EH). There were at least six reports of migrant Merlins from around the State. Two Peregrine reports included one bird at Station 43 May 6 (SK), and another over Lake Zoar, Monroe May 8 (DR).

## WILD TURKEYS THROUGH OWLS

The Wild Turkey population continues to expand in northwestern Connecticut, and there were several reports from the southwestern part of the State, including five birds at Devil's Den, Weston March 26 (RW, fide FM). Only two reports, both from the northeast, were received for Northern Bobwhite (GC et al.). Does this species need some monitoring? One of the most exciting reports for the period came from Lordship Marsh, Stratford, where two **Black Rails** were heard calling incessantly May 18 (EH,MS et al.). Numerous birders tried their luck on three subsequent evenings, and a single bird was heard two or three times May 20 (JY). Might this species nest in this location, or were the birds migrants or overshoots? King Rails were reported from Durham Meadows, Durham May 12 (SF,BK,PL), from Lordship Marsh May 19-28 (RN et al.) and from Manresa Marsh, Norwalk May 25 (NC,RN). Single Common Moorhens were in Litchfield May 17 (NC,JKi), Miles Sanctuary May 18-28 (EH,MS,et al.), and Hart Pond, Cornwall May 25-28 (RN,NC,JKi). Two American Coot were on Lake Saltonstall, East Haven April 13 (SM), while two to four were on Bantam Lake, Litchfield March 17-April 9 (DR). A **Sandhill Crane** was sighted and heard bugling over Wallingford May 14 (MM).

The earliest Black-bellied Plover report came from South Norwalk March 22 (FM), and numbers peaked at Milford Point May 12 and at HBSP May 24 with 200 birds at each location (FM). Three **Lesser Golden Plover**, a rare spring migrant in Connecticut, were reported, without details, from Milford Point April 19 (JF). Endangered Piping Plover pairs returned to their protected shoreline nesting grounds in approximately the same numbers as in 1989 and we hope for nesting success.

An American Oystercatcher was first observed March 4 at Lordship (SS fide MB). In addition to pairs in the usual locations, a nest with one egg was discovered on Bluff Island, Greenwich May 7 (TBa,JZ), representing the farthest western nesting attempt in the State. An Upland Sandpiper in Mansfield April 29 (GC et al.) was an exceptional find - the first for the Storrs area since 1971. Two Whimbrel were at Milford Point May 20 (SM et al.). Coastal observers echoed the near absence of Red Knot this season, with only two reports from Milford Point: a pair May 14 (SM et al.) and an individual May 24 (RC). The latest of three reports of Purple Sandpiper was of two birds at Manresa, Norwalk May 12 (MS). Sightings of Wilson's Phalarope, an uncommon spring migrant, included single males at HBSP May 7, 13 and 14 (JC,AD,MS) and at SISP May 18 (RS,RW).

There were several sightings of Common Black-headed Gulls among the massive flocks of Bonaparte's Gulls at Oyster River in late March and early April (m.ob.). A Little Gull was also observed and photographed at Cove Island Park, April 7 (LBe) and a late immature was at Milford Point May 31-June 2 (LBe,RE,JM). Bonaparte's Gulls peaked with perhaps record high numbers in Old Saybrook, West Haven and Stamford. South Cove, Old Saybrook, hosted 1500 birds March 8 (FM), Oyster River had 3000 March 26 (LBe,FM et al.), and Cove Island Park had 800 April 13 (FP,JZ). There were also two inland reports from Mansfield March 31 and April 29 (WB,GC et al.). Single Iceland Gulls were at the mouth of the Housatonic River, Stratford March 1 (MC,BK), at Oyster River March 10 (RE,JF,SM) and at Southport Beach, Fairfield March 25 (FM,SM). Lesser Black-backed Gulls were in New Milford March 1 (NC) and at Milford Point May 24 (RC,EJ), while Great Black-backed Gulls continue to increase at inland locations.

Adult Caspian Terns were on the Milford Point sandbar April 29 (FM,CW), at Compo Beach, Westport May 18 (TR), and at Great Harbor, Guilford May 22 (JC). Two Caspians were at Frash Pond, Stratford May 31 (NC). A pair of Roseate Terns was seen copulating on the Penfield Reef, Fairfield seawall May 26 (FM). Both birds were banded and may have been part of the Falkner's Island, Guilford, nesting colony. A Forster's Tern at Greenwich Point April 14 (FP,JZ) marks the earliest corroborated spring record for this species, rare at this season. Nine Black Terns were observed flying west in Rye, NY, just west of the Connecticut border May 14 (TBu). Another pair was at Cornfield Point, Old Saybrook on that date (SM et al.), and two more were at Manresa May 18 (LBe). Two Black Skimmers were also at Manresa May 18 (EH,BD et al.).

There were few cuckoo reports this season; a handful for Black-billed Cuckoos and only two for Yellow-billed. Perhaps there were no significant outbreaks of Gypsy Moth caterpillars in the state this season? A resident Barn Owl was reported at the Middletown Ave. Dump, New Haven in May (m.ob), while other individuals were sighted at Lordship and in Stratford in late May (FM). A territorial Northern Saw-whet Owl was discovered in Black Spruce Bog, Mohawk State Forest, Goshen May 12, when it responded to a Barred Owl tape at 11 AM (MS). It continued calling through the period (m.ob). This species is a rare nester in Connecticut. Another Saw-whet vocalized from mid-March through mid-April in North Stonington (RSCB).

## NIGHTHAWK THROUGH VIREO

Common Nighthawks were widely reported, and an April 18

sighting in Norwalk (DK), if correct, would be a new early record for the state. A Chuck-will's-widow was heard calling for "10-15 minutes" at Brown Farm, Middletown May 19 (JM et al.). Meanwhile, Whip-poor-wills continue to be scarce, with birds failing to return in several areas of the state (GC,DR). A new early record for Ruby-throated Hummingbird was set in Norwalk April 19 (DK), besting the previous record by one day. A Red-headed Woodpecker remained at a Guilford feeder from early May through May 20 (fide JC), with photographs obtained May 19. There were six reports of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, all from northwest Connecticut (m.ob.).

Olive-sided and Alder Flycatchers were reported as "more numerous" this season, while Acadian was less common and the most reliable location was River Road, Kent (DR). There were at least seven reports for Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, including a very early Newtown sighting May 4 (PB fide RN). There is some question as to whether the cool, rainy conditions of early May were detrimental to some of the state's Purple Martin colonies; apparently no breeding took place at Milford Point or HBSP. Common Ravens nested again in Sharon (FM,et al.), and in Ashford (LBe,et al.). One or more birds was heard calling at River Road, Kent in May, suggesting possible breeding (m.ob.). Red-breasted Nuthatch was more numerous in the northwest and north central hills (DR).

One of the most exciting finds for two Big Day teams May 18 was two or three singing Sedge Wrens in Peat Swamp, Goshen (EH,LBe,FM,et al.). Since this species has virtually been extirpated as a breeder in the State, subsequent confirmation of nesting, obtained by photographs, was most significant (JKi,LBe,DR). Maximum numbers of kinglets reported were 20 Golden-crowned in Westport April 6 (FM), and 35 Ruby-crowned in Woodbury/Southbury April 22 (RN). Although the cool, rainy conditions of early May resulted in some nestling mortality, Eastern Bluebirds now number some 1200 pairs statewide (DR). This increase can be attributed, in part, to nest boxes erected and maintained specifically for this species. There were six reports of Gray-cheeked Thrush, all from western Connecticut in late May. A nor'easter grounded at least 20 Swainson's Thrushes in an oak-hickory woodlot at SISP May 17 (FM,LBe). Inland reports of this species noted lower numbers than usual. Among the three American Pipit reports was a late record for the state from Storrs May 19 (WB,GC et al.). A Philadelphia Vireo at Barn Island, Stonington May 24 was unusual for southeast Connecticut (RSCB).

## WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

By most accounts it was a pretty good spring for warblers, with

a number of peak days corresponding to shifting weather patterns. Early records were established for various species in different locations. For example, record early warbler dates for the Storrs area include Blue-winged April 27, Yellow April 27, Cape May May 3, Blackburnian April 29 and Ovenbird April 27 (all fide GC). River Road, Kent, earned the distinction as "THE PLACE" to go for warblers, although there is no truth to the rumor that New York birders planned to annex this area and charge Connecticut birding groups a toll to cross the Housatonic River. Perhaps the best of the many species discovered in that area was a male **Yellow-throated Warbler** May 7 (NC). It was joined by a second, less-colorful bird May 10 (PL,SF), and the male was seen carrying nesting material May 12-13 (RN,MS et al.). There were strong indications that nesting occurred and if so, this would be the first state record. However, to our knowledge, there is no photographic evidence to indicate nesting occurred. There were three additional reports of this species, from Norwalk May 11 (fide DK), from Westport May 14 (RB) and from Salem, where a bird was banded May 19 (DM). A Prothonotary Warbler was reported in Westport May 14 (RB). The previously reported Ovenbird that overwintered in West Simsbury began singing April 19 (GK), apparently overcoming a leg injury first noted in late winter. Kentucky Warblers were reported from East Rock Park, New Haven April 30 (JH fide MB), from Fairchild Audubon Garden, Greenwich May 6 (FP) and May 14 (LBr,BO), and from River Road May 20 (TBu,DS). River Road also provided one of at least seven statewide sightings of Mourning Warbler May 20 (TBu,DS). The most unusual of these reports was a singing male in Mohawk State Forest, Cornwall May 28 - June 17 (m.ob.), an unusually lengthy stay for a territorial' male of a species for which there are no Connecticut nesting records. The three reports of Yellow-breasted Chat came from West Haven May 15 (JF), from Westport May 17-18 (LBe,FM,FP), and from Redding May 20 (TR).

Indigo Buntings were reported as early by several observers, late by another! The brilliantly-plumaged male **Painted Bunting** that was regular at an Old Lyme feeder, was last seen April 5 (JH), after which the feeder was removed. There is also an unsubstantiated report of a second Painted Bunting seen at a feeder in Westport for two days in March (fide TW). Two Painted Buntings in Connecticut simultaneously would be extraordinary! Dickcissel, a casual spring migrant in the State, was reported at Cove Island Park, March 11 (FP) and at Sasco Pond Park, Southport May 22 (CB). The former was likely a wintering bird. The only Vesper Sparrow reported was from Mansfield April 29 (LBe,GC).

Grasshopper Sparrows were not readily located on their nesting grounds at Bradley International Airport, Windsor Locks (JKa), although a pair was seen May 30 (JKi,NC). It was a good spring for Lincoln's and White-crowned Sparrows, with numerous reports for each in May. Lapland Longspur continued into early March at HBSP (m.ob), and an individual was sighted at SISP March 2 (RS). Eastern Meadowlark was reported as "scarce" by several observers. A Yellow-headed Blackbird visited a Clinton feeder April 26-May 3 (fide MB,JF). Rusty Blackbirds peaked at 50 at White Memorial Foundation March 18 (DR). A Boat-tailed Grackle was reported from Barn Island, Stonington May 7 (NP fide MB) - this species has been seen annually in the State since 1985.

Winter finches stayed well into the spring this year. Five Pine Grosbeaks were in Hartland March 9 (DR et al.). A high of 22 Purple Finches were seen at Roaring Brook Nature Center feeders, Canton April 4 (BK,JKa et al.) and a singing male remained until May 25 on Lantern Hill Road, Ledyard (RSCB). A rare, coastally-nesting pair was discovered in a cedar tree May 27 at Bluff Point State Park, Groton (JC). Red Crossbills were seen April 24 in Pachaug State Forest near Voluntown and three birds were at a Canton feeder May 11-13 (fide JKa). Courtship display was observed at Barkhamsted Reservoir, Hartland April 27 (DR). A male White-winged Crossbill was also sighted courting two females in Mohawk State Forest May 19 (DR). Pine Siskins remained in the northwest hills until late May, and the last Evening Grosbeaks reported for the spring were three birds in West Hartland May 20 (JKa et al.).

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# THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER ARTICLES TEN YEAR INDEX 1981 - 1990

compiled by Betty Kleiner

This index includes entries for authors, species, subjects (keywords) of articles, and a few miscellaneous categories, such as book reviews, identification, and migration.

Entries are derived mainly from the titles of articles. This simplified the indexing process but also limited the number of citations for each entry.

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