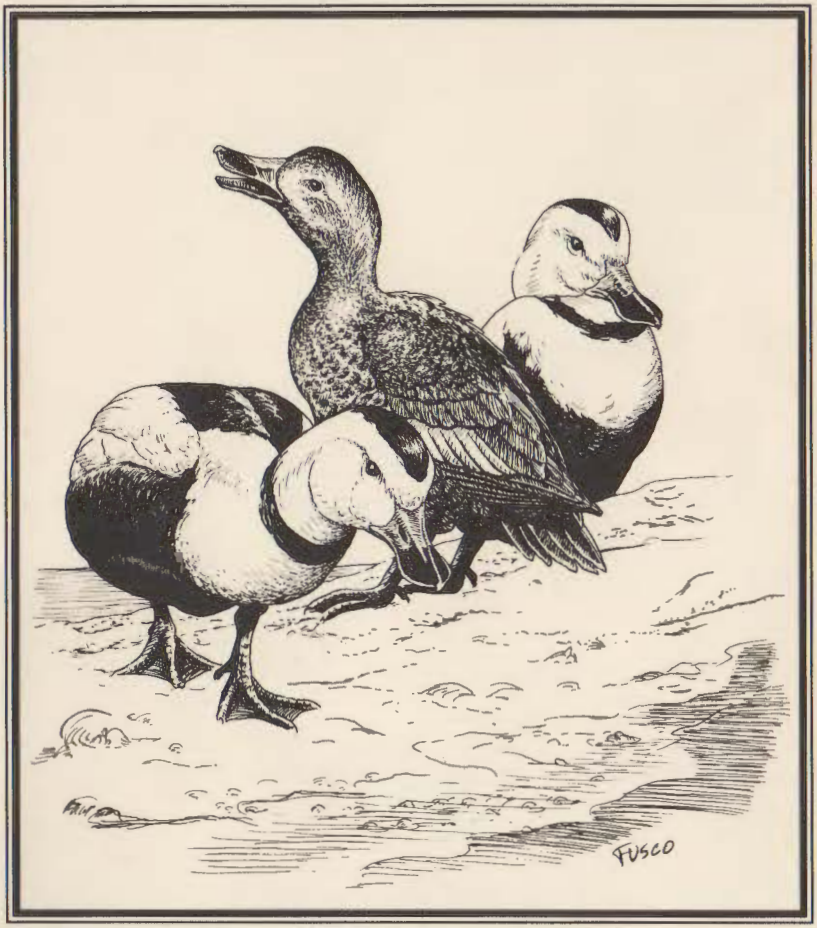
THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology



Volume XV No.1 **January 1995** Pages 1-32

ABOUT OUR COVER ARTIST:

Paul J. Fusco

"Labrador Duck (*Camptorhynchus labradorius*)"

Paul Fusco has produced an illustration of a most interesting species, which is discussed on Page 2 of this issuse, for his most recent cover drawing for *The Connecticut Warbler*.

Paul is working for the Department of Environmental Protection's Wildlife Division, where he has been employed since 1988. He is involved with many aspects of its media production, including illustration, photography and graphic arts. Paul's excellent artwork is seen in the bimonthly publication *Connecticut Wildlife*.

The Connecticut Warbler

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Volume 15 Number 1 January 1995

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Winter 1995

A LOST HERITAGE: LABRADOR DUCK

Louis R. Bevier

Sitting on the rock cobbled beach braced against a bitter cold late autumn wind, I hear the whistle of wings rushing overhead. Seven or eight large birds wheel into the wind just beyond the outer sand bar and settle onto the choppy waters. They begin to dive and frolick in the rolling surf, eagerly scouring the rich shellfish beds. I marvel at the enlarged pendulous flaps along the sides of their bills and wonder what purpose they might serve; I feel ready for cold months ahead now that the Labrador Ducks have returned to Milford Point for the winter.

This is fiction. The entity we called the Labrador Duck was last known alive 120 autumns ago somewhere on the south shore of Long Island. We knew of them for a mere 87 years after the first description to science in *Systema Naturae* by Linnaeus. Their food and feeding habits are little known, and the above is based on accounts by Wilson and Audubon, who themselves knew the species from limited experience. Only 54 skins and some miscellaneous skeletal parts remain of the Labrador Duck. These were collected from southern "Labrador" (of broader reference then) to southern New Jersey.

Connecticut holds but a small claim to this species. In 1785, Thomas Pennant published the first illustration of the "Pied Duck" based on a specimen from Connecticut; a specimen said to have been sent to Mrs. Blackburn in England. Befitting the mystery of the Labrador Duck, this specimen is now lost along with any knowledge about the species' haunts and habits in Connecticut. The only other reference to the species in the state is the Reverend Linsley's in 1843. The entry reads as follows: "255. F. Labradora, Bonaparte, Pied Duck, Stratford." Surely there was more to them than that.

Extinction. In the case of *Camptorhynchus labradorius* we can only guess. Hunting and egging? Perhaps. Why then were no eggs or downy young ever described and so few specimens saved. Outram Bangs proposed that devastating changes in the molluscan fauna brought about by increased human use of the New England coast might have tipped the balance against a specialized feeder such as the Labrador Duck. We know so little of the important relationships in Nature.

In our rush to enumerate the species seen in our lives, I hope that a few of us will take the time to learn some of those birds intimately. They are our heritage and our future.

CONNECTICUT'S 1994 FALL HAWK MIGRATION

Neil Currie

Following a year that saw impressive numbers of eagles, ospreys, and Broad-winged Hawks, "None of the Above" might be an appropriate title for Connecticut's 1994 fall hawk migration. Figure 1 shows the locations of the 1994 Hawkwatch sites in Connecticut.

At Quaker Ridge and Lighthouse Point, hawk watchers were on hand early in the season, August 20th at Lighthouse Point and a week later at Quaker Ridge. Following a cold front on August 23rd, 127 hawks, including 59 Osprey and 40 Broad-winged Hawks, passed by Lighthouse Point. By the time the watch at the Point ended on November 30th, 22,509 hawks had been counted during a record 651 hours. When Quaker Ridge shut down on November 13th, 22,813 hawks had been counted over 583 hours. Because large flights of hawks, primarily Broad-wings, don't develop inland in Connecticut until at least September 10th, watchers at interior sites wait until that date to begin counting.

During the fall, a rapid succession of cold fronts moved west to east through Connecticut. These weather fronts are almost always followed by northerly winds and a push of migrants, to delight hawk watchers. The large number of these fronts was one of fall's surprises. Another was the clear, blue skies that followed the fronts. Usually, the day following such a front produces fair weather cumulus clouds, a good background for spotting high-flying hawks. Without the clouds, watchers felt that they may have missed many hawks.

On September 10th, birders were at the many hilltop stations in western Connecticut. Conditions for migration were perfect, but the hawks didn't cooperate. At Botsford Hill in Bridgewater, however, the year's only Swainson's Hawk provided excitement as it roamed the nearby cornfield. The first big push of Broad-wings did not appear at inland sites until September 15th. Winds during the previous five days had been favorable, but few birds were on the move. During those five days another of the fall's surprises was taking place. Broad-wings were migrating far to the east and south of their normal routes. One observer noted them as far east as Norwich, and they were over New Haven in numbers unexpected for those dates (Table 1).

On September 15th the migration returned to normal, but Broad-wings continued to move along, or near the coast. A front had passed and behind it flight conditions were perfect. Now inland watchers were rewarded (Table 1). During the day inland and coastal Broad-wings funnelled through the Greenwich region, 6,970 of them over Quaker Ridge. On the next two days, Friday and Saturday, winds turned to the south, shutting down migration. Early the following day a cold front had passed and Broad-wings, accompanied by a variety of other hawks, were once again on the move, 7,085 at Quaker Ridge.

Usually there are three or four "big days" for Broad-wings in mid-September, but for inland sites in 1994, there were just two. The inland flight was just about over. In late September Broad-wing numbers are often high along the coast, but in 1994 few were passing over coastal sites. An unexpected late flight also took place in early October (Table 1). In Old Lyme, observers had never seen such numbers migrating on these late dates. On October 2nd, at Lighthouse Point, a flight of 1,609 passed while another 600+ were tallied two miles to the north at New Haven's East Shore Park.

At Lighthouse Point the eight days from September 29th through October 6th saw over 8,000 hawks move through to the west. This number included the 1,609 Broad-wings, 2,906 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 349 Osprey, and 2,029 American Kestrels. At East Shore, on six of those days, 4,140 hawks were counted. In the eight days, over 12,000 hawks had moved along this two-mile wide corridor. At Quaker Ridge 1,200 hawks were counted on those same days. At least another 10,000+ hawks, not recorded at Quaker Ridge, were passing through the Greenwich area. At these three sites, the most numerous hawks were Sharp-shins, Broad-wings and American Kestrels.

The larger buteos, in far fewer numbers, migrate in late October and November (Table 2). Warmer than usual weather may have accounted for the fact that not a single Rough-legged Hawk was spotted in Connecticut this fall.

With the exception of Red-tailed Hawks and American Kestrels, migrant numbers were down from 1993 for all species (Table 2). At Quaker Ridge, in Greenwich , counts of Red-tails and Kestrels increased (Table 5), but at Lighthouse Point in New Haven all species but Red-tails and eagles showed a decrease from 1993 (Table 3). Despite these declines the migration (timing, routes, and numbers) was about as expected. There are always exceptions as the fall of 1994 adequately demonstrates. Table 4 shows

the hawks observed at East Shore Park in New Haven.

Table 6 shows the results of 17 years of hawk watching at Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven.

At both Quaker Ridge and Lighthouse Point there were new compilers. At Quaker Ridge, Brian O'Toole replaced Elsbeth Johnson. Elsbeth was there for many years. Both Northeast Hawk Watch (NEHW) and Hawk Migration of North America (HMANA) are indebted to her for her efforts over the years. At Lighthouse Point, Ed Shove was gone, having passed away earlier in the year. Ed was a fixture at Lighthouse Point for many years. He spent almost every fall day watching and counting the hawks. Visitors from far and wide knew him and looked forward to shared days at the Point. In late September the New Haven Bird Club unveiled and dedicated a plaque at the hawk watching site in Ed's memory. This fall a group of volunteers, organized by Ron Bell, took over the watch at Lighthouse Point.

As always the fall hawk migration was a thrilling spectacle. Again, scores of birders were able to see the hawks in numbers, and especially along the coast, to see thousands of other birds as they passed. In Connecticut, we are fortunate to have among the longest concentrations in the country at both New Haven and Greenwich.

Recorders and compilers at Connecticut hawk watch sites this past fall included: Lois Aldi, Dan Barvir, Trudy Battaly, Ron and Betty Bell, Polly Brody, J. Bruskin, Tom Burke, Paul Carrier, Barbara Cole, Neil Currie, Paul Desjardins, Patrick Dugan, Cynthia Ehlinger, Richard English, Joe Ferrari, Larry Fischer, David Fiske, Frank Gallo, Jay Gartner, Ted Gilman, Joyce and Norbert Grohoski, Fran Guida, Tony Hager, Greg Hanisek, Don Hopkins, Elsbeth Johnson, Seth Kellogg, Dick Kenny, Jeff Kirk, Phyllis Kitchin, Gary Lemmon, Frank Mantlik, Mary Marro, Tom Mason, Steve Mayo, Jim McBride, Russ Naylor, Brian O'Toole, Drew Panko, Matt Popp, Steve Potter, Drew and Bobbi Reynolds, Paul Roberts, Bill Ruhl, Meredith Samtson, Fred Schroeder, Dori Sosensky, Art Titus, Tony Tortora, Mike Usai, Edith Wells, Lyle Whittlesey, Joe Zeranski and Joan Zulpa. Apologies to those I may have missed.

10 Mountain Laurel Ln., Sandy Hook, CT 06482

SITE LOCATIONS

Booth Hill - Hartland
Beelzebub Road - South Windsor
Powder Hill - Middlefield
Taine Mountain - Burlington #1
Johnnycake Mountain - Burlington #2
Chestnut Hill - Litchfield
Mount Tom - Bantam
Whittlesey Hill - Washington
Botsford Hill - Bridgewater
Whippoorwill Hill - Newtown
Huntington State Park - Redding
Griswold Point - Old Lyme
West Rock Tunnel - Woodbridge
Maltby Lakes - West Haven
Lighthouse Point Park - New Haven #1
East Shore Park - New Haven #2
East Rock Park - New Haven #3
Quaker Ridge - Greenwich

Figure 1. Broad-winged Hawk Flight Lookout Site Locations

Table 1: Broad-winged Hawk Flights - Fall 1994

SITES	September, 1994													November, 1994					
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20-24	25-30	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Booth Hill									149	5306									5455
Beelzebub Road	1	91	44	7	7	170	218			102	23								663
Powder Hill		2	7							10									19
Taine Mountain		197	45			51	126			637	27								1083
Johnnycake Mt.			18	4			610			2043		5							2680
Chestnut Hill		23	1	10			3321			2725									6080
Mount Tom							2150												2150
Whittlesey Hill										110									110
Botsford Hill	171	5	42	2			5638		16	2135									8009
Whippoorwill Hill		74	95	45	9	72	1267		5	2878	44								4489
Huntington St. Pk.		94	54	18	31		127		11	1361	61	80							1837
Norwich Area				37	68	91													196
Griswold Point														176	116				292
West Rock Tunnel													65						65
Maltby Lakes				412	1214		1854				3118	173							6771
Lighthouse Point Pk.	81		1110	125	9		2130			86	24	3	28	136	1609	110	205	82	5738
East Shore Park			2566	545	101						715	25	264	260	637	89	15	12	5229
East Rock Park					101														101
Norwalk Area											250		25						275
New Canaan Area					9					3092									3101
Quaker Ridge	169	545	580	75	651	10	6970		1	7085	420	1601	47		7	2	2	15	18180

Table 2. Connecticut - All Lookouts - Fall 1994

SITES	Total Hours	SPECIES															
		TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UR	Total
Booth Hill	10.5		30	5	6	47	1			5455				16	3	1	5	5569
Beelzebub Road	45	7	22		2	33				663				27			21	775
Powder Hill	9.5		16		3	25	7		2	19				6				78
Taine Mountain	21.5		24	3		52				1083				4	1			1167
Johnnycake Mt.	18.5		17	7	2	29	7			2680				8			9	2759
Chestnut Hill	21.6		30	6	3	25	2		1	6080				15		2	4	6168
Mount Tom	7		5	5	2	2	2			2150				2				2168
Whittlesey Hill	2		1			1	1			110								113
Botsford Hill	53.9		56	6	4	50	17			8009	4		1	25	1	2	4	8180
Whippoorwill Hill	57.5		83	6	10	182	2			4489	39			88	1	1	42	4943
Huntington State Park	47.7		20		16	111	4		4	1837	3			42	2		3	2042
West Rock Tunnel	4	10	3	2	2	98	4			65				42			8	234
Maltby Lakes	27	19	72	3	16	116	16		2	6771	8			148			83	7254
Lighthouse Point Park	651.1	196	1566	29	800	8035	911	3	58	5738	321		5	4128	224	39	456	22509
East Shore Park	56.2	131	368	14	66	3078	152		2	5229	22			1146	12	1	42	10263
New Haven Area, Total	738.3	356	2009	48	884	11327	1083	3	62	17803	351		5	5464	236	40	589	40260
Norwalk Area	3.7		8	4	1	31				250				11		1		306
New Canaan Area	8	1	23	4	6	84	7		2	3101	45			76	1			3350
Quaker Ridge	583.1	354	393	29	166	2128	165	5	136	18180	289		7	842	31	9	79	22813

SPECIES ABBREVIATIONS

TV - Turkey Vulture
OS - Osprey
BE - Bald Eagle
NH - Northern Harrier
SS - Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH - Cooper's Hawk
NG - Northern Goshawk
RS - Red-shouldered Hawk
BW - Broad-winged Hawk
RT - Red-tailed Hawk
RL - Rough-legged Hawk
GE - Golden Eagle
AK - American Kestrel
ML - Merlin
PG - Peregrine Falcon
UR - unidentified raptor

Table 3. Lighthouse Point Park Hawkwatch, New Haven, CT - Fall 1994

MONTH		SPECIES																
	Hours	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UR	Total
August	60.3	1	144	1	28	13	7	0	0	44	0	0	0	74	4	0	3	319
September	225.2	16	1024	13	431	3676	348	0	3	3552	14	0	0	2601	137	15	206	12036
October	220.1	174	390	15	224	3956	531	2	21	2142	71	0	5	1443	73	18	223	9288
November	145.5	5	8		117	390	25	1	34	0	236	0	0	10	10	6	24	866
1994 TOTAL	651.1	196	1566	29	800	8035	911	3	58	5738	321	0	5	4128	224	39	456	22509
1993 TOTAL	582.0	230	3284	32	1054	10105	2191	19	94	6088	253	1	4	4568	1020	61	1128	30132

Species abbreviations as in Table 2

Table 4. East Shore Park* Hawkwatch, New Haven, CT - Fall 1994

MONTH		SPECIES																
	Hours	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UR	Total
September	29.3	23	271	8	45	1696	56	0	1	4216	4	0	0	867	8	1	5	7201
October	30.2	163	101	7	23	1471	103	0	5	1021	45	0	0	281	4	0	41	3265
TOTAL - 1994	59.5	186	372	15	68	3167	159	0	6	5237	49	0	0	1148	12	1	46	10466

* East Shore Park is two miles north of Lighthouse Point Park. Species abbreviations as in Table 2

Table 5. Quaker Ridge Hawkwatch, Greenwich, CT - Fall 1994

MONTH		SPECIES																
	Hours	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UR	Total
August	44.6	0	32	1	3	9	2	0	1	55	1	0	0	11	0	0	0	115
September	237.0	11	309	20	102	1045	78	0	3	18099	26	0	0	599	21	4	53	20370
October	228.5	301	49	6	39	1006	80	4	46	26	110	0	3	231	10	3	24	1938
November	73.6	42	3	2	22	68	5	1	86	0	152	0	4	1	0	2	2	390
TOTAL - 1994	583.7	354	393	29	166	2128	165	5	136	18180	289	0	7	842	31	9	79	22813
TOTAL - 1993**	511.0	396	518	64	154	2053	166	11	132	29118	252	1	11	535	29	13	113	33566

** Includes 1 Black Vulture. Species abbreviations as in Table 2

Table 6: 17 Years at Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven

YEAR		SPECIES															
	Hours	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UR	Total
1978	228		438		136	5171	47		6	236	9		2	1652	19	3	124	7843
1979	248	3	644	2	268	7747	106	7	2	448	27		1	3722	121	20	316	13434
1980	419	17	835		666	9426	91	5	25	2164	122	8		3792	118	18	210	17497
1981	528	23	1070	4	706	13973	381	13	12	5017	103	3		7220	356	24	104	29009
1982	417	16	859	2	352	10136	179	2	12	506	79	1		2323	75	17	92	14651
1983	358		489		340	6417	98			717				1905	94			10060
1984	452	40	800	4	515	9401	159	2	14	977	168	10	1	1667	95	29	120	14002
1985	501	49	1171	3	648	10532	364	10	23	2907	207	9		2459	248	14	361	19005
1986	587	128	1489	13	988	12000	475	26	54	8142	374	13	6	4251	447	25	787	29218
1987	565	261	2059	21	947	8946	446	19	40	2172	248	2	3	3774	235	25	237	19435
1988	488	136	2453	8	677	7320	480	22	37	9330	131	5	1	2938	375	26	1005	24944
1989	534	121	4036	16	788	9656	1000	12	81	598	333	4	2	4572	553	48	949	22769
1990	611	128	3708	17	890	10834	1855	36	289	2352	490	6	2	4619	1382	95	1141	27844
1991	580	228	3034	17	399	8659	1863	30	474	910	658	4	1	4115	783	44	1182	22401
1992	488	242	1935	10	487	9683	1863	13	112	1264	498	2		3736	436	46	954	21281
1993	582	230	3284	32	1054	10105	2191	19	94	6088	253	1	4	4568	1020	61	1128	30132
1994	651	196	1566	29	800	8035	911	3	58	5738	321		5	4128	224	39	456	22509
Ave/Year	485	107	1757	10	627	9297	736	13	78	2916	237	4	2	3614	387	31	539	20355

BEHAVIORAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TAXONOMIC GROUPS

George A. Clark, Jr.

An appealing aspect of watching birds is looking for the differences in behavior of different taxonomic groups such as species, genera, or families. Behavior includes (1) movements, (2) postures when perched or standing, (3) choice of sites for feeding, nesting, and other activities, and (4) vocalizations/sounds. Unless one watches and listens carefully, many behavioral differences between taxonomic groups may be easily missed. Indeed, little is known about many of the behavioral differences. Careful and patient observation in the field can potentially reveal previously unreported differences in behavior, even among common species in Connecticut. In some cases, awareness of behavioral differences may help to identify birds in the field. Handbooks and field guides summarize many of the known aspects of behavior for particular species, but often fail to point out differences. In this article I provide examples of taxonomic differences in behavior and indicate possible directions for future discoveries. Because behavior as a whole is quite complex for even a single species, this brief account can do no more than summarize selected cases (based upon my personal observations).

Of special interest here are behaviors specific for particular species or groups of species. For example, most Connecticut species are easily grouped as either building open nests or nesting in holes, although occasional exceptions are known (for example, accounts for Blue Jay and House Sparrow in Bevier [1994]). Constancy in a behavioral characteristic within a species or group of species is likely to indicate that the behavior is at least partially inherited. For example, even young birds that have not previously built a nest usually construct one typical for the particular species. Although the materials used to construct the nest may vary according to the locality, the general form of nests is often sufficiently specific to identify a species from its nest alone. Yet even observations of nests in the field can potentially yield important new information. For example, can the nests of vireo species from Connecticut be identified on the basis of nest structure alone? Some features that may aid in identifying vireo nests are discussed in Bevier (1994), but further information on this topic would be useful.

Determining the extent of taxonomic specificity for little studied features of behavior may require lengthy observation in the field because some behaviors are infrequently seen. Nevertheless, even brief observations of previously unreported kinds of behavior, without knowing the extent of taxonomic specificity, may provide leads for recognizing previously unknown taxonomic differences. For example, Hopkins (1987, 1989) described snow bathing by the American Crow and Common Raven. It is not known how often such behavior occurs in those species or whether it occurs in other species of corvids, but once alerted to the occurrence of such behavior, future observers can watch for it and potentially extend our knowledge, enabling broader generalizations.

Little equipment other than binoculars and a notebook is needed for many observations of behavior, although photography, sound recording, and video can provide additional valuable information. Many aspects of behavior vary according to the individual bird. To look for such individual variation in behavior within a species, one can watch birds in different localities and thus be reasonably sure of sampling different individuals without the necessity of marking individual birds. If there is a great deal of individual difference in behavior, then it may be difficult to characterize species as a whole. I have here selected examples of apparently clear cut behavioral differences between species to illustrate kinds of features that can be observed. It would be possible to select entirely different examples because there are so many different aspects of bird behavior.

Handling of Food

Bird species often differ in their ways of manipulating food. Many species use the bill to pound food held down with one or both feet; the numerous examples include hawks, Purple Gallinules (personal observation in Florida), owls, jays, crows, chickadees, shrikes, vireos, crossbills, siskins, and goldfinches (Clark 1971).

Many other species use a variety of other means of food handling. For example, I have often watched American Robins dismember earthworms. A worm pulled from the ground is laid on the surface and then hammered with the bill. I have never seen a robin use its feet to hold a worm, and I have not seen a robin pick up and pound either a worm or other prey while held in the bill. In contrast, I have watched Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern

Kingbird, and Red-eyed Vireo perch in a tree and repeatedly strike against a branch a large arthropod held in the bill. The difference between the behaviors is whether prey are smashed while held in the bill or hammered while lying on a surface. Although there are many published reports of birds pounding their prey, authors have often failed to state clearly whether or not the prey were held in the bill during the pounding. Broad generalization about this topic requires much further observation.

Is the method of pounding prey related to the likelihood of the prey's escape? Earthworms once pulled to the surface seem to be relatively ineffective in their efforts to escape, whereas many insects, if still alive after capture, might escape if not held with the bill or foot.

Foraging in Litter

When searching for food on the ground, many native sparrow species hop forward and then jump backward while dragging the feet through plant litter. This behavior, called the bilateral or double scratch, serves to expose hidden food and is commonly demonstrated in Connecticut by Rufous-sided Towhees, American Tree Sparrows, Fox Sparrows, Song Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, and Dark-eyed Juncos (Clark 1970, Greenlaw 1977). Greenlaw (1977) first reported the occurrence of bilateral scratching by Red-winged Blackbirds and Brown-headed Cowbirds, and, by watching at Connecticut feeding stations, I have since seen this behavior by these two species. Perhaps the most persistent bilateral scratcher among species regularly seen in Connecticut is the Fox Sparrow, which often engages in this scratching even when finely cracked corn is in clear view on the surface of the ground (pers. obs.). There is thus far no clear explanation as to why Fox Sparrows continue to scratch bilaterally even when the food is not concealed. Seemingly, to continue to scratch for food when that food is clearly visible would be a considerable waste of energy. Are Fox Sparrows especially inefficient? Perhaps there is a better explanation of their behavior yet to be found.

In a contrasting group of species, bilateral scratching has never been reported in nature for Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, longspurs, Snow Bunting, or the taxonomically more remote House Sparrow (Clark 1970). It is of interest that, although the Tree, Chipping, and Field Sparrows are all included in the genus *Spizella*, only the Tree Sparrow ordinarily exhibits bilateral scratching. Thus, when sparrow-like birds are seen as silhouettes under poor illumination, occurrence of bilateral scratching provides a

clue leading toward identification.

Other kinds of birds forage in litter in entirely different ways. For example, Blue Jays, American Robins, Brown Thrashers, and Common Grackles often use their bills to move litter aside in searching for food beneath the surface, a behavior termed bill-sweeping (Clark 1971).

Among Connecticut birds, at least, there appears to be a tendency for those passerine species that bill-sweep to be of larger size than those using bilateral scratching. This difference in behavior might be related to the quantity of litter that can be removed with the bill as opposed to the feet. A small beak on a small bird might be ineffective in clearing litter, relative to scratching with both feet simultaneously. However, a larger beak on a bigger bird might be effective where a small beak would not be. Possibly these ideas could be tested in the field by observing the size of areas of litter cleared by birds using different methods. Some larger birds, such as the Ring-necked Pheasant (pers. obs.), scratch away the litter using only one foot at a time, and this method apparently clears away a relatively large swath of litter.

Hanging by the Feet During Foraging or Other Activities

Among Connecticut species, woodpeckers, Black-capped Chickadees, nuthatches, and Golden-crowned Kinglets are among those birds most frequently seen hanging by their feet from a perch while their backs face somewhat downward toward the ground. Numerous other species at times hang by their feet (pers. obs.). However, at present there is no comprehensive survey of the presence or absence of this behavior. I have seen and photographed Rose-breasted Grosbeaks hanging by their feet while feeding on sunflower seeds at a feeding station, but in hundreds of observations, I have never seen such behavior by the relatively closely related Northern Cardinals, which feed on the same seeds at the same feeding station, but on a flat surface or on the ground.

How many other cases might there be of species within the same family that differ in the occurrence of hanging by the feet?

Methods of Bill Cleaning

Numerous birds, including apparently all passerines, woodpeckers, and hummingbirds, clean their bills by bill-wiping, rubbing the bill across a branch or other surface (Clark 1970, Cuthill et al. 1992). In contrast, pigeons and doves clean the bill by scratching it with a foot (Brackbill 1976) and have never been reported to bill-wipe. Many waterbirds, including ducks, geese,

and swans, also do not bill-wipe but can readily use bathing and wiping the bill on the feathers as means of cleaning the bill.

Apparently no explanation has been proposed to account for these differences in methods of bill cleaning. Waterbirds would seem to have a favorable possibility to clean their bills by washing and preening. However, the lack of bill-wiping in doves is not so easily explained and remains a problem.

Connecticut birds for which observations of bill cleaning methods have apparently not yet been recorded include the cuckoos, nightjars, Chimney Swift, and Belted Kingfisher.

Head-scratching

Two broad categories are (1) direct or underwing head-scratching in which the foot is moved directly forward beneath the wing and (2) indirect or overwing head-scratching in which the foot is brought forward over the wing. There are numerous published reports on this behavior for various kinds of birds, but no comprehensive survey is available. In Connecticut, I have seen direct head-scratching for Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, and Northern Flicker. Species for which I have noted indirect head-scratching in Connecticut include Great Crested Flycatcher, American Robin, Common Grackle, and Brown-headed Cowbird. From a study by ten Cate (1985) comes the idea that direct head scratching is most likely to occur in species that spend much time on the ground. Indirect head-scratching requires that the wing be lowered to bring the foot over to reach the head. In ground dwelling birds such lowering of the wing should tend to bring the wing tip onto the ground where it might be dirtied; hence direct head-scratching, which would keep the wing clean, is presumably the preferable method for birds on the ground (ten Cate 1985).

Dust-bathing

As in the case of head-scratching, there are numerous published reports for birds engaging in dust-bathing in the eastern United States, but unfortunately, once again a comprehensive survey is lacking. The species perhaps most often seen dust-bathing in Connecticut is the House Sparrow, but I have also seen such behavior in the state for the House Wren and Brown Thrasher. It is presumed that many arboreal species never dust-bathe. One potential method for studying this behavior might be to provide areas of dry, loose soil that might attract those species that dust-bathe.

Positions of Wing Tips in the Folded Wings

When birds are not flying, the wings are folded with their tips lying either (1) apart or (2) overlapping so that the tip of one wing lies above the other wing tip. The Mourning Dove is an example of a species in which the tips of the folded wings do not overlap. In contrast, many passerines show overlap of the wing tips much of the time. My observations indicate that there is no constancy within an individual passerine as to whether the right or left wing tip is on top. Furthermore, passerines show variation within a single bird as to whether the tips of the folded wing lie on top of the tail or are held off the tail to the side. It is unknown whether there are differences between species in the frequency with which these two positions are held. Do species, such as the Eastern Phoebe, showing extensive up and down movements of the tail tend to hold the wing tips to the side of the tail so as not to impede the movement of the tail? More observations are needed.

Tail motions and Bobbing

Movements of these kinds are often very conspicuous and may aid in identification, for example, in the case of tail-wagging distinguishing the Eastern Phoebe from other small flycatchers. Bobbing movements are especially notable for birds found around water, e. g., Spotted Sandpiper, Winter Wren, Northern Waterthrush, and Louisiana Waterthrush. Many of the movements of the tail and other parts of the body occur so rapidly and are sufficiently complex that a close comparison of species may require high speed filming. From the viewpoint of the birds themselves, such body movements may help to convey information to other individuals, although the signals may not be easy for human observers to interpret.

Conspicuous movements might serve other roles in addition to communication. For example, consider the following species with notable tail movements: Eastern Phoebe, Hermit Thrush, Palm Warbler. Each occurs in the north during relatively cool weather. Could it be that the exercise in moving the tail helps to keep these birds warmer? Why then should the Prairie Warbler, which is present only in relatively warm weather, be such an active tail-wagger? In the case of species bobbing near water, could it be that the body movements facilitate the sighting of food? Bird behavior poses many puzzles for which we lack satisfactory answers.

Head Movements During Song

Many Connecticut passerine species, including many warblers and sparrows, often throw the head upward and backward when singing loudly. Other species, such as Gray Catbirds and several species of vireos, have not been seen to do this (further details in Clark 1976). An inventory of the occurrence of head lifting coincident with song is still far from complete for Connecticut birds. Throwing back the head and opening the bill widely evidently helps to project the voice over a greater distance (Westneat et al. 1993). Why do not more species show such behavior? Perhaps the vocalizations of catbirds and vireos are sufficiently loud that no additional amplification is necessary to fulfill the function of the song, but I know of no direct evidence to support or refute this conjecture.

Sounds

Although vocalizations are often used by birders for identification, many mechanical sounds produced by birds can also be an aid, for example, the whistling sound produced by the wings of a Mourning Dove taking off. Other mechanical sounds include the drumming of woodpeckers (Ellison 1991).

There are still many discoveries to be made in the study of bird sounds in the field. As an example, only recently have efforts been made to distinguish the calls of nocturnal migrating Bicknell's Thrushes from other populations in the Gray-cheeked Thrush group (Evans 1994). To study the vocalizations with ease, a high quality tape recorder, special microphone, and computer with software for sound analysis will be helpful; such equipment is now readily available at prices affordable for many birders.

Concluding Comments

As the above examples indicate, field inventories of the behaviors of Connecticut birds are still far from complete. Still other types of behaviors for which surveys are lacking include terrestrial gaits (Clark 1975) and hopping versus side-stepping along branches (Clark 1979). With the great number of bird species in the state and the great variety of behaviors shown by each species, it is perhaps not surprising that knowledge of many behavioral characteristics is still quite incomplete. Moreover, in many cases in which behavioral differences between species are known, the functional significances of those differences remain in question. The opportunities for new discoveries are great.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Louis Bevier made very helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

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BOOK REVIEW

Frank W. Mantlik

SHADOWBIRDS—A Quest for Rails. 1994. William Burt. Published by Lyons & Burford, New York, NY. 192 pages. $25.00 cloth.

SHADOWBIRDS is a vivid and compelling story about one man's search for the rare and fleeting beauty he finds in rails. It is also about lonesome, lovely places on strange summer nights, unexpected discoveries, and the magic of chasing a dream that flickers just beyond reach.

The book is visually beautiful, with a pleasing layout, large readable type, and the generous use of illustrative photographs. An eight page block of stunning and rare photographs of rails is complemented with 17 black-and-white images interspersed throughout the text.

In reading this book, it becomes clear that Burt is a true naturalist, a gifted photographer, and a talented writer—a rare combination indeed, the likes of Thoreau. Two notable quotes: "Black Rails are like dreams; in the awake clarity of day you find them gone" (pg. 56). Comparing Yellow Rail to Black Bail, "It is an equal miracle of stealth and secrecy, if any creature is...this rail is no less a genius of invisibility"(pg. 67).

The book also could have been subtitled appropriately, "A Quest for Photos," as that is what led the author on this journey. Those of us who attempt to both study birds and photograph them know that; while afield, each pursuit is delicately intermeshed with the other. The naturalist in us drinks in a wild creature's behavior while the photographer in us plots a way to capture it on film. Further, to obtain a "winning" photo of a wild bird, especially of such a shy and secretive bird as a rail, requires many elements to come together. These include the photographer's knowledge and experience, weather, lighting, timing, patience, and a good deal of luck.

Some would say he is a "loner"—traveling hundreds or thousands of miles away from home for months at a time to spend countless nocturnal hours in eerie wetlands. He clearly has learned along the way that working alone is the only way to pursue his dreams and to succeed in achieving his goal.

Stemming from boyhood experiences, this "railophile" is eager to slog through quagmires, sluices, and muck—places where

most would never think of entering. And he writes with an anecdotal and humorous style, much as found in the journalistic Arthur Cleveland Bent series of North American birds.

I have, however, two problems with the book. The first is a minor one regarding the statement (p. 16) that King and Clapper Rails "are now considered `forms' of a single species." While this taxonomic view is held by some, the American Ornithologists Union (AOU) and the American Birding Association (ABA) still consider them separate species.

William Burt

Black Rail

The second problem is somewhat more troubling. And that is the ethical concern of tromping around in delicate marshes with the expressed goal of finding and photographing rails and their nests. Some examples, by the author's own account: In pursuit of a calling Yellow Rail, "I spend the whole night chasing after him" (pg. 95). While walking through a Wilson's Phalarope colony, "They are solicitous for their eggs, from which they are constantly being displaced, sometimes almost underfoot—here I practically tiptoe" (pg. 83). "To walk in so delicate a creation feels violent, even murderous, but I do it; I leave behind an Elysium torn and pock-marked and profaned" (pg. 55).

The author rationalizes his disturbances by declaring his intentions are to revere, not to profane. He also is a single human, leaving only a temporary scar on habitat and bird. It is indeed clear that he is only pursuing his deep love of nature, painstakingly and excruciatingly searching for his subject. Much like the age-old hunting instinct, but in contrast to hunting, there is no desire nor wish, on his part, to at all harm his "prey."

While I believe Mr. Burt was sensitive to the well-being of these marsh-dwelling birds, I fear that the book might inspire many other budding, but less careful, photographers to venture forth into the wetlands. This could be disastrous to certain populations of these locally-rare birds. It is troubling that the author does not caution or warn readers against trying to reproduce his success, or at least to attempt so with the utmost care for the birds' well-being. In this day and age of jet-set "bird-listers," it is not good to encourage this. It is for this reason that the ABA has recently changed their listing "rules," allowing birders to "count" a nocturnal species only by hearing it's distinctive song. They did so in hopes of reducing nest and habitat disturbance by birdwatchers.

I suspect Mr. Burt might hold other dreams, perhaps of obtaining superb photographs of other elusive and rare avian phantoms: Ivory-billed Woodpecker, Bachman's Warbler, Eskimo Curlew? Just imagine obtaining full-frame color photos of these birds at their nests!

Overall, this book is an amazing and rare insight into the behavior of rails (especially of Black and Yellow rails), and of their habitats. In conclusion, *SHADOWBIRDS* is a delightful account of, and by, a man, who, in pursuit of his dreams, learns of and appreciates the wonders of Nature all along the way. Highly recommended!

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COASTING GULLS OFFSHORE

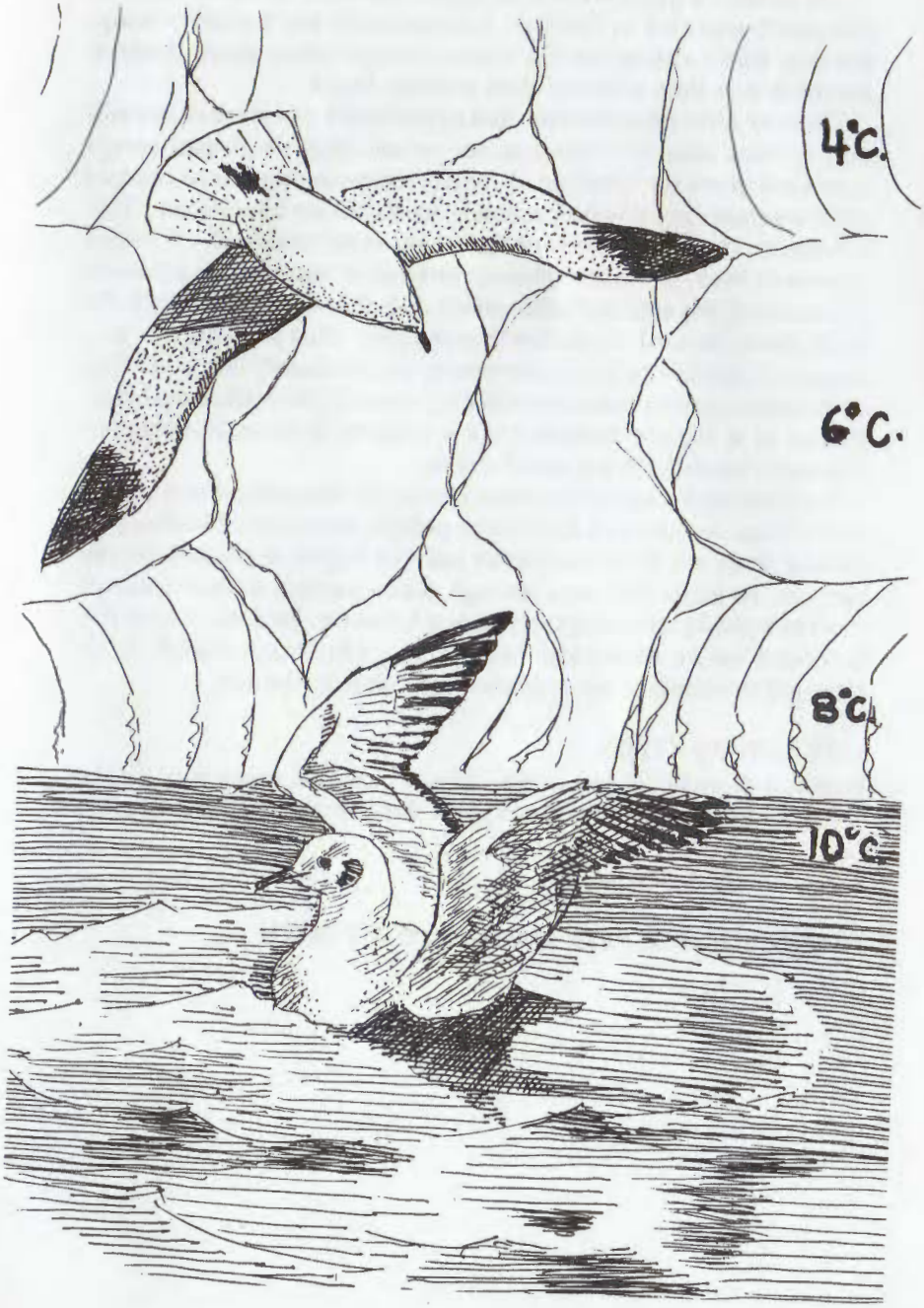
Roland C. Clement

For years most of our bird books have told us that of all the gulls, only the Kittiwake spends much time offshore. Generally, it was assumed that most gulls, though graceful on the wing, are not strong fliers, and thus tend to stick to the coast. These comments have been general indeed, since we didn't know much about the offshore habits of gulls. If fishermen had been ornithologically inclined, we might long ago have clarified this question; but few have been, and the rest of us seldom go offshore, especially in winter.

It has remained for oceanographers and a few other scientific specialists to study offshore conditions on a year-round basis, puzzling over such things as temperature interactions between the ocean and the atmosphere, winds, seasonal variations among all these, and a score of other less obvious environmental conditions. Physicists and meteorologists call this the study of fluid dynamics, and ornithologists can now relate bird behavior at sea to the conditions clarified by these other specialists. Only then does birdwatching become the study of birds.

In the April 1994 issue of *The Auk*, J. Christopher Harvey and David S. Lee provide a glimpse into the fascinating advances now being made in our knowledge of bird behavior by those who can bridge the disciplines involved in the study of birds in the real world. Interestingly, the authors of the article, entitled "Air-Sea Heat Flux, Ocean Wind Fields and Offshore Dispersal of Gulls," are attached to institutions we seldom think of as concerned with field studies of birds. Harvey is in the School of Forest Resources at Pennsylvania State University, and Lee is at the North Carolina State Museum of Natural Science in Raleigh. For several years they have studied gull movements in offshore waters from the Outer Banks of the Cape Hatteras region in North Carolina to Cape Canaveral in Florida.

It has long been known that birds at sea can minimize energy use by engaging in dynamic soaring. They take advantage of vertical gradients in wind velocity which allows them to go downwind in a high-speed glide, and then climb for a new glide by facing into the wind gradient. It was also known that some lift is derived from the air stream deflected upward as it strikes waves or swells—just as hawks take advantage of updrafts on the Kittatiny Ridge in Pennsylvania to glide for miles with almost no effort.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The ability of gulls to detect layers of unstable air at sea is a new discovery reported in *The Auk*. .Gulls actually stir the air by wing-beating while sitting on the water, thus creating small thermal currents that then support their soaring flight.

These studies demonstrate that appreciable numbers of several gull species actually winter at sea, when cold air masses swept eastward from the interior of North America come into contact with warmer ocean water, creating unstable air conditions. This is because the lower levels of the air mass are warmed—if only a degree or two—and this warmer air rises as soon as the pressure of the overlying cold air is disturbed. It is this disturbance that the birds have learned to do for themselves! This skill attests to a degree of sensitivity to air movement we can barely imagine. The convective soaring made possible by this skill then allows participation in a marine economy not available to them in summer, when air conditions are more stable.

So, gulls find it easier to make a living by foraging along coasts in summer, but can and do become pelagic in winter when the flux of heat from sea to air facilitates soaring flight. Soaring is necessary so the birds can scan enough ocean surface to find enough food to balance the energy expended to find it. So delicately is life balanced on an ecological knife-edge. My rough sketch is an attempt to visualize air currents that can only be felt.

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CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES: JUNE 1 - JULY 31, 1994

Jay Kaplan

Editor' Comment: Reports of rare or unusual bird species in Connecticut (see lastest COA Field List) require that documentation be submitted to the Secretary of the Rare Records Committee (Mark Szantyr, 2C Yale Rd., Storrs, CT 06268), if they are to be included in the Connecticut Field Notes.

Perhaps Connecticut birders were busy scouring more exotic locales this summer, as there were relatively few reports received. Or, maybe it was just too hot!

Connecticut's sun-worshippers were blessed with another warm summer. In fact, it was the second warmest June on record and the warmest July on record, with an average temperature of 77.1°F in Hartford (the National Weather Service began keeping such records in 1905!). There was little extreme weather in the northeast, and the lack of strong systems may have been a contributed to the few vagrants reported in the state this summer. An American White Pelican and a Chestnut-collared Longspur, both in June, were the only real "rarities" during the season. The precipitation for June in the Hartford area was 3.75 inches, the average for the month. July precipitation in Hartford totaled 5.34 inches, well above the normal 3.19 inches. Much of this rainfall, almost 3 inches, occurred July 28. On only one other date during the month was there greater than 0.5 inches of rainfall.

Summer Bird Counts were held in nine areas. A detailed article on the summer counts may in the previous issue of *The Connecticut Warbler* (October 1994).

LOONS THROUGH FALCONS

A breeding plumage Red-throated Loon was at Milford Point, Milford, June 20 (GH), while a first summer bird was at this location July 16-31 (BK,SM). Reports of non-breeding Common Loons were all coastal individuals from Sandy Point, West Haven, June 12 (SM), Selden's Island in the lower Connecticut River June 12 (GH), Walnut Beach, Milford, June 21 (GH) and Southport Beach, Southport, June 21 (CB). There were no reports of Pied-billed Grebe this summer! This species has become quite scarce as a breeder in the state, and we should take care to monitor its status. An American White

Pelican was present briefly at the millpond at Sherwood Island State Park (hereafter SISP), Westport, June 17 (Rob Winkler, CB, RS). This species is an accidental vagrant in southern New England, with most reports from July through November (Zeranski & Baptist 1990). Brown Pelican was not reported in Connecticut this summer. Birds can often be used to locate schools of fish; thus, 130+ Double-crested Cormorants feeding over bluefish at the mouth of the Housatonic River, Stratford, June 30 (GH) must have created quite the commotion.

Secretive Least Bitterns were reported only from the Station 43 Marsh, South Windsor, where a single bird was observed July 3 (AB, SM) and three were there July 24 (BD). Four Least Bitterns were seen from a canoe at Lords Cove, Old Lyme, July 19 (FM, JH). Immature Little Blue Herons were at Milford Point June 23 (TK) and at Sandy Point June 24 (SM). Two adult and one immature Yellow-crowned Night Herons were at Milford Point July 3 (TK), and a single adult remained until at least July 27 (BK). There were few reports of Glossy Ibis except for two concentrations: 20+ at Hammonasset Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP), Madison, July 15 (JK) and nine at Barn Island Wildlife Management Area (hereafter BIWMA), Stonington, July 31 (DP). There were no reports for Tricolored Heron or Cattle Egret.

Every summer there are reports of a few lingering waterfowl along the coast. These birds apparently are unable to continue northward to the breeding grounds, often due to weakened condition caused by injury or illness. In some cases, small groups remain; the reasons for such behavior are unknown. Groups of Brant, for example, occasionally linger at Milford Point. Four birds were there June 26 and two July 4-5 (SM). A male and a female Northern Pintail were at Milford Point June 14 (CB, FM), and a male was located there July 23 (TK). There was no evidence of breeding. Single female Surf Scoters were off Madison June 6 (GH) and at BIWMA July 5 (GH, FM). The duck species most often reported this summer was Oldsquaw, with at least a half dozen sightings including six males at SISP June 23 (RS). The latest was a female off Guilford July 11 (JS, JZ).

Black Vultures continued in the New Milford area, with four in the vicinity of the landfill June 4 (GH). There is speculation that this species has nested nearby, but there is as yet no evidence of breeding. A pair of Osprey nested at Cos Cob Harbor, Greenwich, through the period (BO), the westernmost

extension of this bird's breeding range along the coast in recent times. A total of 95 Osprey nests were active this year, an increase of 46% from 1993 (DEP). A total of 137 young fledged, an increase of 14% from the previous summer. Of particular note, however, was a very low rate of nest productivity from Great Island, Old Lyme, where only five of 16 nests were successful, fledging nine young. It is hypothesized that low numbers of shad and menhaden, two staple fish species for Osprey, may have contributed to the low nest productivity. Unhatched Osprey eggs were collected, and the results of testing for possible environmental contaminants are awaited (DEP "Pandion Papers").

The nesting Bald Eagles at Barkhamsted Reservoir, Barkhamsted, successfully fledged two young (DEP). Interestingly, a third adult eagle attended the young for the second consecutive year! An additional immature eagle landed above the nest in June, but was driven off by the adult female (Don Hopkins fide BK). Another adult bird was along the lower Connecticut River at Lord's Cove July 19 (JH, FM), and an immature was there July 29 (HG). An adult female Northern Harrier was at Milford Point July 8-10 (CB), again fueling speculation about the possibility of breeding activity at this location. A Cooper's Hawk was observed in possible courtship flight in Woodbury June 9 (RN). A late Merlin was in Woodbury June 4 (RN). The female Peregrine Falcon, in downtown Stamford through June 12, disappeared until seen again July 22; no nesting took place (Carla O'grady fide FM).

RAILS THROUGH BARN OWL

A **Black Rail** was seen well in Guilford June 30 (JS, JZ). This is perhaps the most elusive of our marsh birds, and only fragmentary information exists about its status in Connecticut; the secretive nature of this species makes any sighting noteworthy. Station 43 Marsh is a well known location for Virginia Rail and Sora, but a King Rail there June 4 (BD) was a welcome surprise. A possible adult Purple Gallinule, a very rare vagrant to Connecticut, was reportedly seen briefly in the marshes of Lord's Cove July 15 (Sue Mickolyczki fide FM); it could not be found the following day. A Common Moorhen, now rare in summer, was at the Sharon Audubon Center's Ford Pond, Sharon, June 3 (BD).

A Black-bellied Plover, scarce inland, was in Windham July 30 (LB). Three Semiplamated Plovers at Sandy Point June 9 (SM) were somewhat late. Thirty pairs of Piping Plovers nested

in Connecticut this summer, fledging 44 young. This number is up substantially from last year's nine fledglings. The Bridgeport-New Haven region is the most productive, accounting for over half the successfully fledged plover chicks. Ten pairs of plovers fledged 15 chicks from Long Beach, Stratford, alone (DEP). It should be noted that much of the plover's fledging success can be attributed to the work of volunteers who erect protective fencing and monitor the nest sites. Since the plovers compete with people using the beach, it will be necessary to continue nest protection for the foreseeable future.

A pair of American Oystercatchers at Falkner Island, Guilford, had two nesting attempts destroyed by storm tides in June (JS et al.). Four oystercatchers were at Falkner Island June 13 (JZ), and two adults and one to two immatures were at Milford Point July 3 and 24 (TK). Bradley International Airport, Windsor Locks, remains the only nesting site for Upland Sandpiper in Connecticut, with about 15 pairs there during the period (m.ob.). Two birds at SISP July 11 (RS) were likely early southbound migrants. A Whimbrel was at HBSP July 24 (LB et al.), and four were at Sandy Point July 24 (TK). A Marbled Godwit was in Madison July 26 through the end of the period (GH,DP,m.ob.). Single Red Knots were at Falkner Island June 21 and July 11 (JZ). Milford Point hosted large concentrations of Semipalmated Sandpipers, with 2,000+ July 24 (CB,LB et al.) and 500+ July 27 (BK). Thorough combing of these flocks may yield extra dividends such as the single Western Sandpiper at Milford Point July 27 (BK).

Although Laughing Gulls do not nest in Connecticut, their numbers generally increase the state as summer progresses. The mouth of the Housatonic River hosted 85 June 30 (GH). Four Royal Terns were at HBSP June 30 (FM,JH et al.), while single birds were at Milford Point June 25 (SM) and July 24 (CB et al.) and Sandy Point July 31 (BD). The number of Common Terns at Milford Point reached 400 by July 31 (SM). Two Black Terns, including one in breeding plumage and one molting, were at Falkner Island June 10; the breeding plumage bird was likely present sporadically through July 2 (JS,JZ). Four individual Black Skimmers were reported from Stratford to Madison between June 14 and July 9 (m.ob.)

After a disastrous 1993, Barn Owls rebounded with three nests and a total of 16 young owlets, all of which were banded in June. This is an increase of 13 young over the previous year (GZ).

WOODPECKERS THROUGH EVENING GROSBEAKS

There were many reports of Red-bellied Woodpeckers this summer, removing concern that this species did not fare well in the harsh winter of 1993-94. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were also well-reported in northwestern sections of the state(m.ob.), the only part of the state that the species breeds. A singing Olive-sided Flycatcher in Litchfield June 11 (RN et al.) was thought to be a late migrant. A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was at Steep Rock Reservation, Washington, June 5 (CW). Two Horned Larks were at Sikorsky Airport, Stratford, June 7 (FM,CB). Carolina Wrens did suffer from last year's winter weather, although they were still reported as widely distributed around the state. Interestingly, a slight influx of birds was noted in late summer, at least in northeastern Connecticut. It will be interesting to note how this species will fare should we have successive harsh winters.

Among the rarer warblers of the state, a Kentucky Warbler was along the Farmington Canal Line, Hamden, June 5, 8, and 14 (AB). The late spring migration of Mourning Warblers often brings a few to the state in early summer, and individuals were found in Southport June 4 (CB) and Westport June 8-9 (CB,GH). Yellow-breasted Chat appears to be all but extirpated as a breeding species in the state. Individuals were in New Milford June 4-12 (GH,m.ob.) and near Huntington State Park, Redding, June 8-18 (CB et al.).

Two Grasshopper Sparrows were at Bradley International Airport, Windsor Locks, the sole state breeding location for the species, July 3 (AB, SM). The highlight of the season was a well-described breeding plumage male **Chestnut-collared Longspur** at Sikorsky Airport June 7 (GH). The bird could not be relocated despite an intensive search. There is one prior record in Connecticut for this vagrant from the Great Plains, a specimen collected in Stratford August 29, 1968 (W. Bulmer, see Zeranski & Baptist 1990). There are several records for this species in the northeast for late spring and early summer; thus, this report fits a pattern of occurrence in the region. Another bird at this location reported as a female Lapland Longspur (m. ob.) would be extraordinary for the lower 48 states in June. Unfortunately, the description does not support the identification.

A male "Bullock's" Northern Oriole was on the Greenwich Summer Bird Count June 12 (BO). This would be an exceptional record as all reports of this subspecies in the northeast

are for fall or wintering birds; the identification should be considered tentative. The last Pine Siskin report was of four birds at a North Granby feeder June 4 (Judy Whittlesey, fide BK). A male Evening Grosbeak found on a USFWS Breeding Bird Survey June 1 in the Riverton section of Barkhamsted (BK,JK) was the only one reported this summer.

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ANSWER TO PHOTO CHALLENGE 11

Last issue's photo challenge came in October, prime time for sparrows in Connecticut. For the most part, it is a chore to obtain decent views of sparrows as they dive into weedy fields. With patience a few are seen well, and with luck a real rarity will pop into view. When good study is afforded, the prepared sparrow enthusiast will be ready for any surprise species. The conical bill and streaked plumage readily identify our bird as a sparrow.

Of the commoner streaked sparrows we have Savannah, Sharp-tailed, Fox, and Song; of the scarcer variety we have Vesper, Henslow's, Le Conte's, and Lincoln's. Before we go too far with the sparrows, however, we should consider the streaked finches—female and sub-adult male Purple and House Finches. Both these species would be more heavily streaked below, and neither has the clear, unpatterned eyebrow (supercillium) on our mystery bird. The fine streaking and small size of our bird should convince us that it is a sparrow.

Head pattern is most important with sparrows. Secondarily, the tail pattern and shape, body plumage, and bill shape. The face on our bird is remarkably open, with two dark spots at the rear of the ear coverts and a distinct dark mustache. Before we go any further, now is a good time to review the names of the various facial features. Accurately identifying these parts will be critical to any sparrow identification. The mustache is the name for a dark line running along the lower edge of the ear coverts, while the malar stripe is a dark line bordering the throat. Malar means jaw; so, "jaw stripe" might be a good way to remember this. Our bird clearly has one of these. This double dark-striped lower face will help eliminate many species from consideration. The streaking on the underparts is limited to the breast, none visible on the flanks. The back is subtly streaked but also somewhat scaled in appearance, especially towards the center of the back. The tail is notched.

The double-spotted ear coverts are most interesting though. What species might show this. A glance at a field guide might lead us to female Chestnut-collared Longspur, another "sparrow" which shows a similar pattern and which we had not considered yet. Our excitement grows seeing that the tail appears to show white along the outer edge. Nevertheless, the double-striped jaw and distinct breast streaking remove that species from contention. Female Lapland Longspur, just to be safe, shows a very distinct dark frame to the ear coverts; the hind collar should be paler, even in a black-and-white photo.

The blank pale area in front of the eye combined with the flat headed appearance strongly suggest one of the grassland sparrows. Those features together with the limited and finer streaking, and, most importantly, the lack of a dark line behind the eye, eliminate most of the sparrows mentioned above. Savannah is superficially the most similar candidate. But that species should have a dark line behind the eye and appear streaked on the back, not scalloped. Grasshopper has the blank face shown by our bird, but not the double-striped jaw; Henslow's has the double stripes (except juveniles), but the tail is not notched. The dark olive tones on the head of Henslow's

should make the head appear darker not lighter, as is the case with our bird. It would seem that we have exhausted the possibilities.

There is one other possibility, and it is a true accidental to the northeast with only one occurrence—at Montauk, New York, November 13th, 1899. The double-spotted rear auriculars are a key mark on this species, which breeds in the tall grass prairie of North Dakota and southern central Canada. If the photograph were in color, the head would show the dull ochre color so characteristic of the Baird's Sparrow. This sparrow winters in the grasslands of southern Arizona and New Mexico south into northern Mexico. It is a declining species of the prairie grasslands. Verifiable extralimital records of this species are few: e.g., from Ohio there is one for late April; from California there are three for September to early October. The chance of one showing up in Connecticut is remote, especially now that the populations of this sparrow have declined. Nevertheless, it pays to be prepared.

This Baird's Sparrow was photographed by Curtis Marantz in southern Arizona during winter.

Louis R. Bevier, P. O. Box 665, , CT 06268

Photo challenge 12. Identify the species. Answer next issue.

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Winter 1995 - Volume XV No. 1

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology

Volume XV No.2 **April 1995** Pages 33-72

THE CONNECTICUT ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

ABOUT OUR COVER ARTIST:

Mark Szantyr

"Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*)"

Mark Szantyr is not only well-known in Connecticut as a fine birder, but has added his talents as an artist to many birding publications, including several front covers for *The Connecticut Warbler.* He is currently co-illustrating a new book "*The Birds of Storrs, Connecticut and Vicinity.*" He has also recently completed the illustrations for a soon to be published bird-finding guide for Connecticut.

Mark is a member of the Board of Directors of the C.O.A. and is currently secretary of the Connecticut Rare Records Committee.

The Connecticut Warbler
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THE MABEL OSGOOD WRIGHT AWARD

Editor's Note: The following is the presentation by Tom Baptist, of the Mabel Osgood Wright Award, at the annual meeting of the Connecticut Ornithological Association on March 25, 1995.

Our organization established the Mabel Osgood Wright Award in 1990 to focus attention on, and to recognize, those individuals who have made significant contributions to the study and conservation of birds in Connecticut.

The first Mabel Osgood Wright Award was presented in 1991 to Ann Gaylord, and the Award has been presented subsequently to Roland Clement, George Clark, and Don Hopkins—all exceptional persons who have had remarkable careers in the study of birds and made outstanding achievements in ornithology.

Ladies and gentlemen, Robert Askins is also one of those distinguished few who has made truly important contributions, of far-reaching significance, to Connecticut ornithology.

Bob has compiled a long and impressive list of accomplishments and achievements. He has become one of Connecticut's, indeed the country's, leading authorities on bird populations and forest fragmentation, and has initiated and performed research into the effects of human land use on bird habitats and numbers. Bob's research and studies have shed light on the decline in certain neo-tropical migrants that have resulted from the phenomena of the division of forests into smaller and smaller tracts. Bob's research and efforts have put the need to preserve large forest tracts, both in temperate and tropical areas, in the forefront of today's conservation movement.

Bob received his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Michigan in 1970, his Master's degree from the University of Minnesota in 1977, and his Ph.D. there in 1981. He is presently a Professor of Zoology at Connecticut College and is a visiting professor at Yale University School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

Bob has authored or co-authored dozens of important papers published in prominent ornithological journals such as the *Wilson Bulletin, Journal of Field Ornithology, Condor, American Birds,* and even our own journal *The Connecticut Warbler,* as well as presented papers at numerous ornithological conferences, including many sponsored by the American Ornithologists' Union and the Association of Field Ornithologists.

Bob has tirelessly contributed his time and energy to the activities of science organizations such as the Thames Science Center, the Science Center of Eastern Connecticut, the Association of Field Ornithologists, and the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Program. Also, Bob has been a Director, a Vice-President, and Research Committee Chairman of the COA since 1986.

Clearly, Bob has a deep commitment to, and concern for, the environment and to the conservation of birds and their habitats. Bob is a devoted scientist who has dedicated himself to the study of birds and to improving the body of knowledge from which we can collectively act to guide our future.

Therefore, Bob, it is with great pleasure, and with sincere appreciation, that we present to you today the Mabel Osgood Wright Award.

MIGRATION OF DIURNAL NON-RAPTORS AT LIGHTHOUSE POINT, AUTUMN-1994

Greg Hanisek

Lighthouse Point in New Haven, Connecticut, is well-known for its autumn hawk flights, which are monitored annually by the New Haven Bird Club. This raptor migration is spectacular and draws large numbers of observers to the site at the southeastern corner of New Haven Harbor.

The hawks are accompanied by a variety of other diurnal migrants, ranging from cormorants and waterfowl to passerines. These flights are at times large and noteworthy, but long-term records have not been kept in an organized and comprehensive manner. This is understandable because of the daunting magnitude of such an undertaking.

As a participant in the 1994 hawk watch, I attempted to record flights of non-raptors as accurately as possible each Monday, which was my assigned day as a hawk counter. I also made non-raptor counts on some other days and received information from other volunteers who agreed to record non-raptors when possible. This effort produced about 250 hours of coverage.

The information that emerged, combined with a similar effort begun by John Granton in 1986 and carried out more comprehensively in 1987 (Granton 1987), offers a preliminary framework for understanding the makeup, volume and timing of diurnal flights of non-raptors at this nationally significant migratory watch point.

METHODS AND LIMITS

Counting every bird passing through this funnel would, of course, be impossible. It is important to look at the information gathered as a sample that, over time, could suggest population trends and establish seasonal patterns of occurrence.

With this caveat in mind, I did attempt to count or accurately estimate every bird I was able to see while on watch. To keep this manageable, I limited my effort to the area between the beach and the line of trees along the park's northerly rim. At times large flights of birds appeared in the direction of Tweed-New Haven Airport to the northeast and angled north so they did not pass over the point. I eliminated those birds from the sample because the distance often prevented accurate identification.

I counted individual birds when possible, but rounded larger flocks to the nearest ten. In the case of more massive flights, as sometimes happened with Tree Swallows or icterids, I estimated to the nearest hundred. On two occasions icterids arrived in flights of such magnitude that they presented unusual estimation problems discussed below.

During the first few count days I attempted to determine rates per hour for the most numerous species but found this to be difficult because numbers often fluctuated greatly from hour to hour.

The counts were taken throughout the duration of the hawk watch, from August 23 to November 27. To obtain a more complete picture of the diurnal passage, observation probably should start with the first cold front in July. Significant numbers of swallows, Bobolinks, and some other species had certainly moved through by the time the 1994 hawk watch began (Bull 1964, Zeranski and Baptist 1990).

The count was limited to diurnal migrants, species engaged in overhead directional flight after dawn. No effort was made to survey the nocturnal migrants—mainly passerines—that were present in the park following overnight flights. Waterfowl either in the harbor or obviously involved in local movements also were eliminated. It was difficult at times to distinguish between nocturnal and diurnal flights when primarily nocturnal migrants such as warblers continued to fly across the point during the first few hours of daylight. Some specific instances of this are discussed below. Some species, such as Bobolink, fly both day and night (Bull 1964). Only the diurnal flights are considered here.

THE BIG FIVE

The five most numerous species passing through Lighthouse Point were, in decending order of magnitude, Red-winged Blackbird,

Common Grackle, Cedar Waxwing, Tree Swallow, and Brown-headed Cowbird. During the 1987 study, the five most numerous species were, in similar order, Red-winged Blackbird, Blue Jay, Common Grackle, Tree Swallow, and Cedar Waxwing (Granton 1987). Because of the cyclical nature of bird populations and annual variations in weather patterns, this list is likely to vary from year to year. In 1992, for example, hawk watchers commented on huge flights of Blue Jays. A total of 3,000 was noted on October 3, 1992, part of "an enormous flight" from September 30 to October 4 (Kaplan 1993). While no seasonal count was made, the observable volume of jays probably would have moved that species into the Top Five for that year.

On a daily basis, Tree Swallows were among the least predictable of the common migrants. Their flights tended to develop later in the morning than those of the other numerous species, and flocks would sometimes appear in the afternoon following several hours of virtual absence. On September 12, for example, 400 were counted from 6:30 to 11 a.m., followed by 1,000 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The count logged 14,000 from August 23 to November 7. The peak flights occurred September 5-15, when 6,500 were recorded. The 1987 survey recorded about 29,000 with peak flights September 10-27.

Icterids tended to produce a more uniform daily profile, with numbers building from dawn until 10 a.m. and then tapering off to almost nothing by noon. The count logged 33,000 Red-winged Blackbirds and 15,500 Common Grackles, but this does not include two days—November 10-11—when massive icterid flights made quantification difficult.

On November 10, Bell noted from 7 to 9 a.m. "immense flocks of icterids. Some looked like smoke blowing across the sky. Some thin lines stretched from horizon to horizon; others were in bunches, most were at multiple altitudes. All were very high. By (the) 9-10 (hour) they had stopped." The following day the same observer noted more huge flocks of mixed icterids during the same 7 to 9 a.m. period. This time he estimated them at 50,000 per hour. The combined total of redwings and grackles appears to have been well in excess of 200,000. This is in keeping with past observations. In 1993, Mayo and Shove estimated a flight of 100,000 grackles November 17 (Kaplan 1994).

There were also 6,500 Brown-headed Cowbirds, plus whatever percentage they comprised of the two big flight days. Cowbirds were rather evenly spread out from early October to mid-November.

Red-wings were on the move throughout the count period, beginning with about 700 on August 23 and peaking during the massive November 10-11 flight. Grackles were virtually absent until the last

week of October, building quickly to a peak on November 10-11. The high for Rusty Blackbirds was 20 on October 22.

Cedar Waxwings migrated in varying numbers throughout the observation period, producing a total count of 30,000. They hit a dramatic peak November 5-6, when 20,000 were counted. This is a species almost defined by unpredictability. During the 1987 survey, a seasonal count of about 17,000 peaked September 15-20.

OTHER MIGRANTS:

LOONS: The count tallied 57 Common Loons from August 24 to October 29, and eight Red-throated Loons from October 17 to November 12. There were seven unidentified loons in overhead passage.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT: Because of its recent increase over large portions of its range, this is a species that deserves closer attention in the future (Petersen 1992). It is probably under-represented in this survey because of the difficulty of separating passing migrants from birds staging in the harbor. Peak migration days include 200 on October 10, 170 on October 17, and 110 on October 29.

HERONS: Sixteen Great Blue Herons, seen from August 24 to October 15, were considered migrants. Occasional sightings of Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets and Black-crowned Night-Herons probably involved birds lingering in local marshes.

WATERFOWL: The flights were modest. The period from October 2-14 produced reports of about 800 Snow Geese. This compares with the unprecedented flight of 7,900 reported by Rosengren et al. on October 26, 1992 (Kaplan 1993), and 1,700 during the 1987 survey. Other waterfowl that appeared to be in passage included single Northern Shovelers on August 29 and October 17, a flock of five Blue-winged Teal on August 29, two Green-winged Teal on September 5, a Wood Duck October 1, two American Wigeon October 15, and a White-winged Scoter October 17.

SHOREBIRDS: There were no significant flights. Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs occasionally flew over the point from August through mid-September but were probably involved in localized movements. High-flying birds that seemed to be migrants included a Common Snipe August 24, a Spotted Sandpiper September 3, and an American Golden Plover September 12. The Killdeer high was 40 on October 1.

COMMON NIGHTHAWK: Only 20 birds were counted, 16 of them on September 10. The lack of coverage from late afternoon until dark, when large flights often occur, leaves this species' 1994 status at Lighthouse Point undetermined.

CHIMNEY SWIFTS: The total was 1,600 from August 23 to October 5. The peak was 350 on August 23. The 1987 count recorded about 1,500 from August 23 to October 20.

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD: The seasonal total was 192, ranging from the start of the count to a late bird October 3. The peak counts were 21 on September 4 and 20 on September 12. The 1987 effort logged 166 hummers from August 23 to October 3 with a peak from September 2-12, an almost identical timing of flights.

PILEATED WOODPECKER: A highlight of the season was a Pileated that bounded up in front of the hawk watch September 3, calling loudly after it had apparently crossed the marsh. It was a new addition to the Lighthouse Point cumulative list (R. English, pers. comm.).

OTHER WOODPECKERS: Single Red-headed Woodpeckers were seen on September 10, October 2, and October 17. The six Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers included the first on October 1 and three on October 3. Common Flicker counts included a high one-day count of 100 October 1, but a total of only 230.

EASTERN KINGBIRD: The total was 194 logged from August 23 to September 19. This is another species whose numbers probably would have been augmented if the count started earlier. The peak count of 73 occurred August 29, with 69 the next day.

WESTERN KINGBIRD: One was seen September 19. It flew along the beach, landed near the pavilion and worked its way from perch to perch for about 20 minutes until it disappeared up the shore of the harbor in the direction of Fort Hale.

HORNED LARK: Just 12 were noted from October 22 to November 26.

SWALLOWS: In addition to the numerous Tree Swallows, single Purple Martins, which are very early migrants, were seen August 23 and 29. The Barn Swallow count was 460, with a late three on October 22. There were about 50 Bank Swallows and 30 Cliff Swallows. Because of the late start and problems involved in identifying other species in Tree Swallow flocks, this was probably the most under-counted group. The 1987 count logged 2,100 Barn Swallows (Granton 1987).

BLUE JAY: Following huge flights that saw thousands milling around the Point on some mornings in 1992, 1994 was a down year. The total was about 1,000, compared to 52,085 in Granton's 1987 count. Granton's count probably represents an unusually high total, because data gathered elsewhere suggest 1987 was a peak flight year in the Northeast (Yunick 1995).

AMERICAN ROBIN: The flight total of 9,000 stretched from October 3 to November 27, with a peak of 3,700 on November 6. This

was also the peak day for Eastern Bluebird and Cedar Waxwing. The 1987 total was 12,000 with a peak from October 29 to November 1 (Granton 1987).

EASTERN BLUEBIRD: The count total of 2,400 was one of the highlights of the season. The bluebird flight stretched from October 15 to November 27 with peak flights of 800 on November 6 and 400 on November 11. This appears to be a species thriving through active management. The 1987 count recorded only 146 from October 14 to November 15 (Granton 1987).

AMERICAN PIPIT: The count was 300 from October 3 to November 27. The peak occurred from October 15 to November 15.

WARBLERS: Most were treated as nocturnal migrants and disregarded. Birds arriving just after dawn usually dived into the woods and did not cross the Point. However, Palm Warblers and Yellow-rumped Warblers did stage noticeable daylight movements at times. The first two Palm Warblers were noted September 12, with a seasonal total of 220 and peak of 120 on October 3. The Yellow-rumped Warbler count was 550, with 400 on October 15. About 300 unidentified migrating warblers were noted in October.

BOBOLINK: The count total of 5,200 probably missed a significant number of migrants on the move before August 23. The 1987 survey recorded Bobolinks from its first day, August 1, through October 14 for a total of 14,500. In 1994 the last small flock was recorded on October 10. A single late migrant was noted October 30.

EASTERN MEADOWLARK: The count was 25, with 15 on November 3.

NORTHERN FINCHES: Following a banner flight in 1993 (Kaplan 1994), there were few in 1994. The only report was of three Evening Grosbeaks November 11. The 1987 survey fell on a good finch year. That flight included more than 10,000 Pine Siskins, 1,800 Purple Finches, 7,400 American Goldfinches (compared to 400 in 1994), 360 Common Redpolls, 100 Evening Grosbeaks, and eight White-winged Crossbills.

HOUSE FINCH: Strong movements of a bird whose movements are little-known was an interesting phenomenon. The total was 2,400 from October 10 to November 6, with 500 each on October 17 and November 4. The seasonal total in 1987 was only about 350 (Granton 1987).

DICKCISSEL: Lighthouse Point is the best place in Connecticut to see, or at least hear, this scarce species. The count recorded six from September 24 to October 2, including two on September 30 by Mayo and Grohoski.

SAVANNAH SPARROW: Most sparrows were considered nocturnal migrants and were seen only while feeding around the edges

of the woods. However, Savannah Sparrows staged a few noticeable daylight movements, including 200 on October 1.

SNOW BUNTING: There was no significant flight. The 1987 count recorded a major seasonal movement of 1,300.

OTHER SPECIES: A few nocturnal migrants were seen in insignificant numbers flying across the point after dawn. These included: Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Indigo Bunting.

No major flights of either Canada Goose or Common Crow were noted, compared to seasonal totals of 5,200 and 3,200, respectively, in 1987. The difference may have been an artifact of spotty coverage in 1994.

WEATHER NOTES:

A detailed analysis of the weather patterns affecting this migration would be worth a paper in itself and is beyond the scope of this report. In general, the best flights occurred as expected, in connection with cold fronts and northerly winds, but things weren't always that simple. Three days of noteworthy flights help illustrate this:

August 23: This date may suggest the dog days of summer, but a strong cold front created a flight worthy of later in the season. The day produced the seasonal peak of 350 Chimney Swifts and brought a surprisingly strong movement of icterids - 350 Brown-headed Cowbirds, 700 Red-winged Blackbirds and 35 Common Grackles. There were also 1,300 Tree Swallows, 20 Eastern Kingbirds, 90 Cedar Waxwings, and 175 Eastern Goldfinches from 8:30 a.m. until noon.

This was a classic "dam-breaking" scenario. From August 16-22 a Bermuda High pumped hot air into New England on southwest winds. On the 22nd a cold front produced all-day rains, followed by clear skies and northeast winds at 8-12 mph on the 23rd.

November 6: This was one of the most exciting mornings of the year, with seasonal peaks of Cedar Waxwing, American Robin and Eastern Bluebird. Total passerines recorded from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. were 18,500, with icterids augmenting the above species.

The weather situation was less straight-forward than on August 23. Following moderate west-southwest winds on November 5, the 6th produced very light south-southeast winds and clear skies on a slowly falling barometer. The passerines flooded in, but there were only seven hawks. The next day, November 7, experienced extremely strong northwest winds, with almost no passerines but a good late-season flight of 112 hawks. Did the passerines move in anticipation of conditions too gusty for them to handle? Or were they reacting to the shift away from southwest winds, apparently the least favorable for all sorts of southbound migration?

November 10-11: This was the day of the massive icterid flight noted in greater detail above. After the strong northwest gusts of November 7, winds swung strongly to the southwest on the afternoon of the 8th, halting most migration. Light westerly winds on the 9th moved to northwest in the afternoon, setting the stage for the big flight on November 10-11 on light northwest winds and a slowly rising barometer.

The migratory death knell of southwest winds was noted on several occasions. Bell reported that on September 9 the early morning passage brought 200 Tree Swallows, 250 Cedar Waxwings, and 270 Bobolinks. Then the "wind went SW and everything stopped."

Rain, however, was not necessarily a complete deterrent to migration. On August 29 showers fell intermittently throughout the morning accompanied by very light winds out of the north and west. Despite the precipitation, the count logged 66 Chimney Swifts, two Common Nighthawks, 73 Eastern Kingbirds (a seasonal peak), 900 Tree Swallows, 110 Red-winged Blackbirds, and 850 Bobolinks, plus small numbers of several other species.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Ron Bell and Steve Mayo for taking the lead in recording diurnal migrants on days when I wasn't present. Bell also deserves special thanks for compiling weather data, some of which was supplied by the U.S. Coast Guard, New Haven. Other participants include Dan Barvir, Gary Lemmon, Kevin Clark, Will Schultz, Sonnie Wing, Bob DeCandido, John Maynard, Joyce Grohoski, Tom Kilroy, Clay Taylor, Frank Gallo, Neil Currie, Joe Morin, Dick Kenny, Paul Carrier, Paul Roberts, Dori Sosensky, Flo McBride, Richard English, Tom Mason, Tony Totora, Mary Carter, Richard Bernard, Paul Desjardins, Tom Jacobaitus, Joan Zulpa, Jim McBride, Betty Bell, Paul Grady, Sally Ranti, Lee Schlesinger, and Arne Rosengren.

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THE 1994-95 CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Stephen P. Broker

The 1994-95 Connecticut Christmas Bird Count was conducted between December 17 and January 2. There were seventeen counts whose 15 mile diameter circles are located wholly or partly in the state, including 6 northern, 5 mid-state and 6 coastal CBCs. An analysis of the count with an overview of the individual count results follows. An examination of 20 year trends in species numbers will be published in a forthcoming issue of *The Connecticut Warbler*.

Connecticut CBC participants tallied the highest species total in ten years, with 173 Count Day and 2 Count Week species being recorded. Most notable among these were Mountain Bluebird in Oxford, Veery in Hartford, Cinnamon Teal in Stratford-Milford, Black-legged Kittiwake in Old Lyme, and Nashville Warbler and Ovenbird in Greenwich-Stamford. Other state rarities were Green Heron and Wood Thrush (Quinnipiac Valley), Barnacle Goose (New Haven - considered escapees), Common Eider (Stratford-Milford), Golden Eagle and Townsend's Solitaire (Pawling-Hidden Valley), Cape May Warbler (Westport), Wilson's Warbler (Litchfield Hills), and Lark Sparrow (Woodbury-Roxbury). Other noteworthy species were Northern Gannet, Great Egret, Barrow's Goldeneye, Red Knot, Snowy Owl, and Northern Shrike. This list of new, rare, and noteworthy species makes the 1994-95 count one of the most impressive in recent years. The tables which accompany this report present 1994-95 CBC results in their entirety and highlight observable trends in the data. Let's begin now with count by count summaries.

Northern Counts:

BARKHAMSTED (BA-CT): A record high total of 69 Count Day and 1 Count Week species were observed, including three new species (Northern Pintail, American Coot, and Common Grackle) and 8 rare species, the most notable being Horned Grebe, Red-necked Grebe (2 individuals), Northern Harrier, and Common Snipe. Ten year high counts were recorded for 18 species, including Canada Goose, Hooded and Common Mergansers, Cooper's Hawk, Ring-billed Gull (counter to the trend of the rest of the state), Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Bluebird, and Red

Crossbill. Red-bellied Woodpecker was first observed on a Barkhamsted count in 1989-90. Two species were at 10 year low totals: Ring-necked Pheasant and House Finch. This was the only count in the state on which Red Crossbill was seen.

EDWIN WAY TEALE - TRAILWOOD (EW-CT): Twelve field observers recorded 70 Count Day species, tying Trailwood's record species high of 1993-94. The 12,618 total individuals seen were second highest in the 9 years this count has been conducted. Northern Pintail, Bald Eagle, Wild Turkey, Iceland Gull (seen elsewhere only in Hartford), Common Raven and House Wren are new to the count this year. House Wren was observed on the Trailwood count alone of the state's 17 counts. Rarities included Snow Goose, Killdeer, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush and Snow Bunting. The 19 species recorded in high numbers included Mute Swan, Turkey Vulture, Red-bellied Woodpecker and Eastern Bluebird, reflecting continued northern and eastern expansion of these species into Connecticut. Two species, American Kestrel and Golden-crowned Kinglet, were seen in record low numbers.

HARTFORD (HA-CT): Hartford observers logged a 10 year high total number of hours to record 89 Count Day and 3 Count Week species, high for northern counts. Black-crowned Night-Heron (the only noncoastal bird seen in Connecticut), Eurasian Wigeon, Common Raven and Veery were new to the count for the ten year period. Veery is an exceptional sighting. This species is not even listed on the National Audubon Society CBC list as a possible early winter species in North America. It winters in South America from northern Colombia and Venezuela to central Brazil and is not considered casual anywhere in North America except California and the Virgin Islands. That notwithstanding, Veery has been recorded previously on two Connecticut counts, in New Haven (Count Week, 1989-90, a well-documented injured bird) and Salmon River (1988-89). Hartford's other notable finds were the following rarities: Mute Swan, American Wigeon, Turkey Vulture (CW), Wild Turkey (CW), American Coot, Eastern Phoebe, Northern Shrike (seen on only one other count in the state), and Northern Oriole. Hartford tops all state counts with numbers of Red-tailed Hawks, 160 counted this year. The only statewide Rough-legged Hawk was seen on this count. Exceptionally high numbers of Ring-billed and Herring Gulls were counted, as were an eye-popping 18,259 Common Grackles! Twenty three species were counted in 10 year high numbers.

LITCHFIELD HILLS (LH-CT): Twenty nine field observers and 3 feeder watchers tallied the second highest species total for northern counts. The 88 species seen easily top the previous record high of 85 seen in 1990-91. Species new to the count were Red-throated Loon, Redhead, and Wilson's Warbler. Red-throated Loon was the only one seen in Connecticut away from the coast, and Redhead and Wilson's Warbler were species found statewide only on this count. Sixteen Greater Scaup were sighted (the only noncoastal ones on the state count), as were 17 Lesser Scaup. A remarkable 450 American Coots were recorded. One Monk Parakeet raises questions about the spread of this exotic species to noncoastal regions of Connecticut. Other rarities seen were Wood Duck, Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Ruddy Duck, Common Raven, and Savannah Sparrow.

LAKEVILLE-SHARON (LS-CT): Five new species were seen on the Lakeville-Sharon count: Horned Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Red-breasted Merganser, Bald Eagle, and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. The sightings of Common Loon, Double-crested Cormorant and Red-breasted Merganser were the only ones made away from the coast. The 1994-95 high count for Wild Turkey (205) was made here. One Red-headed Woodpecker was found, the only individual on a northern count. American Black Duck, Killdeer, Common Snipe, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and Pileated Woodpecker were among those species counted in ten year high numbers.

STORRS (ST-CT): Storrs recorded no new species, but 4 rarities were seen: Eastern Screech-Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Pileated Woodpecker, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Nine species were in high numbers, including Common Merganser, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Wild Turkey, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and Hermit Thrush. Purple Finch was missed for the first time in 10 years.

Mid-State Counts:

OXFORD (OX-CT): The Oxford count recorded the first Mountain Bluebird seen in Connecticut. A second Mountain Bluebird was found in the state this winter, one at Guilford Sluice, outside any CBC count circle. Peregrine Falcon was also new to the Oxford count. The four rarities for this count were Pied-billed Grebe, Bufflehead, Red-shouldered Hawk and Wild Turkey. There were 18 species in high numbers, including Wild Turkey, Red-

bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, American Robin, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Rufous-sided Towhee and Song Sparrow. Ruffed Grouse (missed for the first time in 10 years), Herring Gull, Golden-crowned Kinglet and Purple Finch were among those species at ten year lows.

PAWLING (HIDDEN VALLEY, CT), NY (PA-NY): Golden Eagle and Townsend's Solitaire were the highlights of the Pawling count. This was the first Golden Eagle tallied in 6 years (albeit in New York State), and just the third Townsend's Solitaire in the last 15 years (this one a Connecticut bird). Rarities included Wood Duck, Gadwall, Red-shouldered Hawk, Lesser Black-backed Gull, and Rusty Blackbird. Eight species were in high numbers, including Wild Turkey and American Coot, and Golden-crowned Kinglet was the one species in 10 year low numbers. The 1460 Common Mergansers counted, a high total, were well below the record total of 2977 in 1990-91. Six Pine Siskins were notable for this year's count.

QUINNIPIAC VALLEY (QV-CT): Quinnipiac Valley recorded the highest species total for mid-state counts, with 93 Count Day species. Seven species were new to the count: Green Heron, Ruddy Duck, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Wood Thrush, Brown Thrasher, American Pipit and Yellow-headed Blackbird. Green Heron, Wood Thrush and Yellow-headed Blackbird were the only ones found in the state. Rarities included Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail (an impressive 10 birds), Virginia Rail, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Pine Warbler, and Common Yellowthroat. In addition, 86 American Pipits were counted. Twenty seven species were at new 10 year highs, and just 2—Hairy Woodpecker and Purple Finch—were in low numbers.

SALMON RIVER (SR-CT): Ideal weather conditions contributed to Salmon River's second highest species total ever, with 81 Count Day and 2 Count Week species tallied. Most significant finds were American Coot, Red-headed Woodpecker, Common Raven and Chipping Sparrow (all new to the 10 year list), and Lesser Scaup, Northern Harrier, Virginia Rail, Killdeer, Common Snipe and White-crowned Sparrow, all rarities for Salmon River. Statewide trends in increasing numbers of mergansers, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and Eastern Bluebird were evident at Salmon River as well. American Kestrel and Brown Creeper were missed for the first time in 10 years. Red-headed Woodpecker was found

at three different locations, including a beaver impounded dead tree swamp. The Great Cormorant seen was the only noncoastal one in the state. A Count Week Osprey was unique to Connecticut counts this year. Common Raven was also of note, as were 7 Chipping Sparrows and 12 Eastern Meadowlarks.

WOODBURY-ROXBURY (WR-CT): Lark Sparrow was best bird on the count. This species, considered casual in the northeast, was last seen on a Connecticut count in 1986-87. Red-headed Woodpecker, Brown Thrasher, American Pipit, and Chipping Sparrow were also new Count Day species for the count. Rarities included Pied-billed Grebe, Snow Goose (the only ones found mid-state), Lesser Scaup, Lesser Black-backed Gull, and Northern Oriole (a species found elsewhere only in Hartford). Wild Turkey, American Robin, Yellow-rumped Warbler and Savannah Sparrow were among those in high numbers, and American Black Duck, Ruffed Grouse, and Purple Finch were in low numbers.

Coastal Counts:

GREENWICH-STAMFORD (GS-CT): Three species - Snowy Owl, Nashville Warbler, and Ovenbird - were found on Count Day and were recorded nowhere else in Connecticut. (A Count Week Snowy Owl was also recorded in Old Lyme.) Both wood warbler finds were particularly significant. The Nashville Warbler was the first seen on a Connecticut count in 10 years. It has been 12 years since the last Ovenbird was counted on one of our counts. Other warbler rarities on the count were Orange-crowned Warbler and Palm Warbler, making this count one of the most impressive in recent years for parulids. Monk Parakeet was recorded here for the first time ever. Greenwich-Stamford also had rare sightings of Merlin (Count Week), Lesser Black-backed Gull, and Long-eared Owl. Statewide high numbers of Ring-necked Duck (448), Ruddy Duck (75), and Turkey Vulture (72) were counted, and other species in high numbers included Common and Red-breasted Merganser, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Bluebird, Red-winged Blackbird and Common Grackle. Snow Goose and Northern Pintail were missed for the first time in 10 years, and American Kestrel was also missed Count Day for the first time although recorded during Count Week. Other species in low numbers were Ring-necked Pheasant, Ring-billed Gull, and Purple Finch.

NEW HAVEN (NH-CT): New Haven recorded its lowest species total in 20 years with 115 Count Day species. Best birds included Red-necked Grebe (rare on any Christmas Count, but particularly rare for New Haven), Monk Parakeet (previously seen Count Week), and Pine Warbler, and other rare sightings were of Barnacle Goose (the same 6 escapees recorded in 1993-94) and Pine Warbler. Eurasian Wigeon continues as a local specialty, and Marsh Wren is also found with regularity. Two Vesper Sparrows were the only ones found in the state this count year. High counts were made for Ruddy Duck, Wild Turkey, American Coot, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and 8 other species. Ten year low counts were made for Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse (missed first time), Common Snipe, American Woodcock, Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls, and Rusty Blackbird (missed first time).

NEW LONDON (NL-CT): American Bittern was new to the New London count this year, and rarities included Great Egret, Ruddy Duck, Clapper Rail, American Oystercatcher (found just on this count), Red Knot, Palm Warbler and Lapland Longspur. New London was count capitol for Common Loon (51), Mute Swan (424, certainly still tops in North America), Brant (58), and Black Scoter (36). Other species found only on this count were Red Knot and Yellow-breasted Chat. Twenty one species were at record highs for the 10 year period, including both loons, Ring-necked Pheasant (counter to state trends), Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Hermit Thrush, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Rufous-sided Towhee. Eastern Meadowlark was missed for the first time in 10 years, and both cormorants, Canvasback, American Kestrel, and Great Black-backed Gull were at new lows.

OLD LYME-SAYBROOK (OL-CT): Old Lyme-Saybrook topped the charts in species count both coastally and statewide for the second time in three years, with an outstanding 122 Count Day and 2 Count Week species. This year's remarkable count of rarities included Northern Gannet, Black-legged Kittiwake, Snowy Owl (Count Week), and Eastern Phoebe (all new to the Old Lyme-Saybrook 10 year list), and Barrow's Goldeneye, Red-headed Woodpecker, Common Yellowthroat, and Lapland Longspur (each seen four or fewer times in the last 10 years at Old Lyme-Saybrook). Observers recorded 30 species in new high numbers and just three species - Hooded Merganser, Northern Saw-whet Owl, and Brown Creeper - in 10 year lows. Saw-whet Owl was missed on the count for the first time in 10 years. In addition, 18 Bald Eagles and 35

Northern Harriers were counted, both very high numbers. Black-legged Kittiwake is new to the state Count Day list. Other species found only on this count were Northern Bobwhite and Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

STRATFORD-MILFORD (SM-CT): Cinnamon Teal and Common Eider were new for the count. Cinnamon Teal is a species which invariably raises eyebrows when seen in the east. Its occurrence is typically attributed to escape from a local duck farm. The normal winter range of Cinnamon Teal is from central Utah and southeastern Arizona south to northern Venezuela and northern Ecuador, so Connecticut is far out of range. It should be noted, however, that this species is casual in eastern North America from southern Ontario and Quebec to New York, New Jersey and further south. Veit and Petersen (Birds of Massachusetts, 1993) recognize Cinnamon Teal as part of the Massachusetts avifauna based two recent records in the month of May. The Connecticut Rare Records Committee will be looking closely at the current record from Stratford-Milford. Rarities for Stratford-Milford on the 1994-95 count were Turkey Vulture, Orange-crowned Warbler, Palm Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and Evening Grosbeak. Sixteen species were in high numbers (Mute Swan, Clapper Rail, American Coot, Red-bellied Woodpecker and Horned Lark included), and 13 were in low numbers (Ring-necked Pheasant, Great Black-backed Gull, and American Woodcock, Eastern Bluebird, and Purple Finch, these last three missed for the first time. One "Ipswich" Sparrow was counted, a Milford Point specialty. Stratford-Milford tallied 177 Evening Grosbeaks; only one other count had this species - Lakeville-Sharon with one.

WESTPORT (WE-CT): Species new to the Westport count were Laughing Gull and Cape May Warbler, while Northern Shoveler, Wild Turkey, Short-eared Owl (Count Week), Eastern Phoebe, American Pipit, Common Yellowthroat, and White-crowned Sparrow are rare finds for the count. Northern Shoveler, Laughing Gull, Short-eared Owl, and Cape May Warbler were found only on the Westport count this year. Twenty four species were at new 10 year highs, most notably the two loons, Surf Scoter, Common Goldeneye, Hooded and Red-breasted Mergansers, Turkey Vulture, Wild Turkey, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and Hermit Thrush. Ten year low species were Mallard, Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Herring Gull, and Great Black-backed Gull.

76 Diamond St., New Haven, CT 06515-1313

CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS 1994-95

SPECIES	NORTHERN						MID-STATE					COASTAL						STATE
	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	TOTAL
Red-throated Loon				1								23	18	20	24	37	29	152
Common Loon					2							15	7	51	18	10	25	128
Pied-billed Grebe				1	1		1	1	2		1	10	5	6	15	5	4	52
Horned Grebe	2			---	1							37	5	97	5	32	94	273
Red-necked Grebe	2												1				---	3
Northern Gannet															5			5
Great Cormorant										1		86	51	35	36	40	19	268
D-C Cormorant					2							4	6	32	11	6	6	67
Cormorant, Sp.										1					1	2		4
American Bittern														1		1		2
Great Blue Heron		2	20	1	2	3	8	2	6	7	6	27	21	43	12	21	44	225
Great Egret												1		2			3	6
Green Heron									1						---			1
Black-cr. Night Heron			1									2		3	1	4	11	22
Mute Swan		5	10	19			18	47	200	19	43	74	295	424	158	111	119	1542
Barnacle Goose													6					6
Snow Goose		1	13		2						3				1		3	23
Brant												12		58		20	4	94
Canada Goose	1050	2503	7888	2310	9601	2242	1229	2351	3206	466	4820	2822	2292	1385	680	1244	2688	48777
Wood Duck			3	2	1			3	3	10	2	11	2				6	43
Green-wgd. Teal (Am)			5	1					1			4	49		4	40	6	110
American Black Duck	164	58	147	72	184	23	44	26	1	137	64	438	1185	784	685	1398	745	6155
Mallard	1871	320	1699	922	470	413	290	286	1127	287	448	1318	1179	1652	698	1181	985	15146
Mallard Hybrid				1						2		8	11			20	1	43
Northern Pintail	6	2		1					10					1	13		3	36
Blue-winged Teal													2					2

Broker

SPECIES	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	TOTAL
Cinnamon Teal																1		1
Northern Shoveler																	3	3
Gadwall			1					2	1			2	123	75	4	291	32	531
Eurasian Wigeon			1										2					3
American Wigeon			4	4					1			66	207	22	5	72	126	507
Canvasback				3		2						4	19	10	3	152	7	200
Redhead				1				---						4				5
Ring-necked Duck	46			11	4			61	56	10	2	448	107	160	72	2	104	1083
Greater Scaup				16								92	385	236	96	808	121	1754
Lesser Scaup				17					---	1	1	4	10	2		1		36
Scaup, Sp.					1								200					201
Common Eider																1		1
Oldsquaw												210	80	20	19	288	174	791
Black Scoter													1	36				37
Surf Scoter												---	6	19	25	7	20	77
White-winged Scoter													44		8	204	205	461
Common Goldeneye	7	3		21	25	19		10		9	4	197	245	206	140	407	649	1942
Barrow's Goldeneye															1			1
Bufflehead	5	5		3	1		3	1		9		450	122	553	132	109	191	1584
Hooded Merganser	45	4	2	30	30		1	15	25	36	1	143	103	383	4	8	136	966
Common Merganser	433	19	218	234	67	117	35	1460	141	500	254	689	74	29	331	18	47	4666
Red-br. Merganser					1							456	237	1204	232	278	542	2950

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--- Not seen for 10 yrs.
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CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS 1994-95

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Ruddy Duck				15				23	8			75	5	38	2		28	194
Duck Sp.						1									5			6
Turkey Vulture		12	CW	6			1	CW	8	11		72	CW		1	1	47	159
Osprey										CW		---			---			0
Bald Eagle	3	1		2	1						6				18		1	32
Northern Harrier	1		9	1	2				9	2			11	2	35	12	10	94
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	3	15	4	5	7	7	5	9	7	11	11	11	6	12	8	7	131
Cooper's Hawk	2	3	2	1	2	1	2	3	4	1	6	8	2	3	5		5	50
Northern Goshawk			CW		1			2		1	1				CW		1	6
Accipiter, Sp.							1			1		2	1				3	8
Red-shouldered Hawk	1		2	1		4	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	7	1	3	30
Red-tailed Hawk	23	23	160	44	59	14	28	45	58	21	44	66	48	17	22	22	50	744
Rough-legged Hawk	---		1															1
Buteo,Sp.																1	1	2
Golden Eagle								1										1
American Kestrel		1	7	1	1	2		4	11	CW	3	CW	6	1	3	4	1	45
Merlin												CW	1	1		2		4
Peregrine Falcon			1				1					2						4
Falcon. Sp.															1		1	2
Falcon Sp., Large															1			1
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	5	8	5	2	2	4	3	15	8	13	1	3	5	10	2	14	101
Ruffed Grouse	12	2	2	14	9	3		5	2	3	1	2			2		1	58
Wild Turkey	24	30	CW	155	205	39	38	65	1	1	58		30	CW	6		5	657
Northern Bobwhite									---						13			13
Clapper Rail													2	1		3		6
Virginia Rail									2	1			3	4	7			17

Broker

SPECIES	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	TOTAL
American Coot	1		3	450	120			235	222	36		6	17	17	104	30	25	1266
Black-bellied Plover												7	2	23	36	1	30	99
Killdeer		2	2		2				1	4		20	3	2	5	1	4	46
Am. Oystercatcher														2	1		—	3
Greater Yellowlegs												3	5				8	18
Ruddy Turnstone												22	4	22	110		35	193
Red Knot														1				1
Sanderling													19		118	55	75	267
Purple Sandpiper												3	90	30	5	4		132
Dunlin												5	8	71	227	410	90	811
Sandpiper, Sp.																1		1
Common Snipe	1	1	1		2				4	4	1		2	2	1			19
American Woodcock				—			—		1	1			1	1	5			9
Laughing Gull												—					1	1
Bonaparte's Gull												145	238	30	49	122	6	590
Ring-billed Gull	1911	46	2723	606	100	204	279	487	1236	588	508	717	3429	817	1140	3170	1175	19136
Herring Gull	201	164	3859	237	67	103	191	160	232	700	2199	1764	1730	2861	1116	3915	2398	21897
Iceland Gull		1	2															3
Lesser Bl-blacked Gull								1			2	1				1		5
Great Bl-backed Gull	59	15	822	19	4	8	14	8	46	73	92	77	208	155	203	177	118	2098
Black-lgd. Kittiwake															1			1
Gull, Sp.					88					7								95

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CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS 1994-95

SPECIES	NORTHERN						MID-STATE					COASTAL						STATE
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Rock Dove	161	265	2725	395	410	417	326	244	657	90	612	753	936	542	419	722	1146	10820
Mourning Dove	393	277	1263	404	549	617	237	442	773	294	1462	456	602	332	500	361	599	9561
Monk Parakeet				1								3	4			93	141	242
Eastern Screech-Owl	3	3	13	20	4	1	7	2	37	2	21	35	12	3	5	3	37	208
Great Horned Owl	6	11	11	19	13	8	2	1	10	10	5	19	13	3	14	2	7	154
Snowy Owl												1			CW			1
Barred Owl	2	2	3	2	3	1		CW	2	3	6	2	CW	5	4		3	38
Long-eared Owl				1		1			2			1						5
Short-eared Owl																	CW	CW
N. Saw-whet Owl	6	1		2		2			1	4	7	1		3	---			27
Owl, Sp.																	1	1
Belted Kingfisher	9	6	17	10	3	3	5	8	9	15	10	27	18	19	25	15	28	227
Red-hdd. Woodpecker				---	1					5	1				3			10
Red-bld. Woodpecker	13	40	121	16	11	46	28	19	24	66	57	109	37	37	45	28	70	771
Yel-bld. Sapsucker	---		3		1	1		1	2	1	1	13	4	1	4	2	5	39
Downy Woodpecker	88	61	459	136	69	115	77	98	75	98	148	245	136	104	92	69	148	2218
Hairy Woodpecker	21	9	79	35	16	34	15	23	5	8	23	36	21	8	15	9	28	385
Northern Flicker	3	28	160	18	8	23	53	17	78	65	42	64	126	67	71	26	40	889
Pileated Woodpecker	10		3	8	10	1	3	4	3	14	4	12	1		6		10	89
Eastern Phoebe			1												3		1	5
Horned Lark			135	214	202	93			4		120		7	42	29	84		930
Blue Jay	590	474	1227	593	427	582	452	289	605	594	919	774	630	447	668	227	401	9899
American Crow	601	384	6555	3010	1347	533	1212	678	1304	402	2507	1809	3954	628	713	1294	1885	28816
Fish Crow			6									8	31	5	3	66	21	140
Common Raven	4	2	1	8	1					1								17
Black-cpd. Chickadee	1195	648	1532	1840	545	1028	520	617	571	599	1160	1041	589	657	789	239	607	14177

Broker

SPECIES	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	TOTAL
Tufted Titmouse	207	272	775	389	102	415	226	238	181	370	464	688	236	139	430	167	407	5706
Red-br. Nuthatch	74		27	34	12	2	1	5	1	1	5	12	9			4	7	194
White-br. Nuthatch	145	109	355	271	91	133	51	188	36	106	175	233	52	40	80	26	139	2250
Brown Creeper	14	5	21	15	5	3	1	6	2		3	6	1		3		5	90
Carolina Wren	2	9	23	2	2	11	12	9	8	31	16	62	28	37	59	17	21	349
House Wren		1																1
Winter Wren	3	2	2	5		2	1	4	1	1	3	12	6	4	7	4	2	59
Marsh Wren										---			4		7			11
Golden-crd. Kinglet	103	9	32	38	31	12	13	11	16	12	53	16	46	9	17		7	425
Ruby-crd. Kinglet	1	1	16	1		1		3	12	1	3	9	16		4	2	2	72
Eastern Bluebird	110	108	76	173	114	98	51	65	118	197	268	123	18	10	157	---	117	1803
Mountain Bluebird							1											1
Townsend's Solitaire								1										1
Veery			1															1
Hermit Thrush		3	5	3	1	3	9	4	12	10	34	15	20	32	17	4	10	182
Wood Thrush									1									1
American Robin	81	1032	584	514	152	119	3415	50	5302	135	6341	374	1194	352	529	59	61	20294
Gray Catbird			4	4	1		3	1	5	4	4	14	10	14	9	9	4	86
Northern Mockingbird	28	48	318	49	13	79	86	70	153	85	93	166	193	187	170	143	97	1978
Brown Thrasher			1						2		1	2	1	3	1			11
American Pipit				---					86		1				3	10	2	102
Cedar Waxwing	308	137	389	325	457	241	92	182	141	162	447	324	157	235	160	1	194	3952

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	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	TOTAL
Northern Shrike			1															1
European Starling	1253	2747	52424	4488	2072	2717	2377	2174	5747	1471	9707	3211	7803	7783	6162	2108	7330	121574
Orange-crd. Warbler												1				2		3
Nashville. Warbler												1						1
Cape May Warbler																	1	1
Yel.-rumped Warbler		1	29				53	CW	116	129	79	58	27	267	204	26	36	1025
Pine Warbler									1		---	---	1					2
Palm Warbler												2	2	2		1	2	9
Ovenbird												1						1
Com. Yellowthroat			---						1						1	1	1	4
Wilson's Warbler				1										---				1
Yellow-breasted Chat														3				3
Northern Cardinal	101	117	725	134	62	163	180	103	183	142	313	299	356	170	202	133	227	3610
Rufous-sided Towhee			1			1	5		2	5		6	8	51	26	6	3	114
Amer. Tree Sparrow	134	113	558	240	69	160	101	144	162	67	360	71	329	99	208	117	83	3015
Chipping Sparrow				---						7	3				3	2		15
Field Sparrow	1	5	24	1		6	27	2	16	13	17	10	53	83	61	33	26	378
Vesper Sparrow			---										2			---		2
Lark Sparrow											1							1
Savannah Sparrow			12	1					11		13	1	8	5	106	21	21	199
Ipswich Sparrow																1		1
Sharp-tld. Sparrow															1			1
Fox Sparrow			5		---		6	4	2		5	1	6	4	3	3	4	43
Song Sparrow	76	120	411	79	20	100	210	48	186	101	312	311	491	319	309	296	269	3658
Swamp Sparrow	1		8	14		3	11	2	12	7	7	8	27	14	17	18	10	159
White-thr. Sparrow	94	281	855	199	75	213	685	222	529	523	871	783	1585	606	881	479	378	9259

Broker

SPECIES	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	TOTAL
White-cr. Sparrow			7						10	1	3		1		1		1	24
Dark-eyed Junco	1464	480	2288	965	304	1013	432	347	333	**465**	1249	773	409	314	362	193	466	11857
Lapland Longspur														2	1			3
Snow Bunting		2		1									35	2	75		23	138
Red-wgd. Blackbird	2	3	981		14	20	7	4	146	15	102	24	**61**	208	339	**14**	75	2015
Eastern Meadowlark				----					12						31			43
Yellow-hdd. Blackbird			---						1									1
Rusty Blackbird		22	1	11		---		53			1	1		36	4			129
Common Grackle	1	10	18259	41			9		1905	103	53	197	359	26	833	**1**	5	21802
Brown-hdd. Cowbird	360	153	2166	459	15	8	75		2297	10	459	8	168	40	87	9	5	6319
Blackbird, Sp.							6											6
Northern Oriole			1				----				1							2
Purple Finch	51		17	9		---	**2**	19	**2**	6	**5**	**3**	4		3		6	127
House Finch	**394**	468	2737	983	434	**90**	874	602	1470	853	1886	1516	1460	911	1383	565	1002	17628
Red Crossbill	2																	2
Pine Siskin	CW			6				6						1			1	14
American Goldfinch	579	196	700	353	86	118	179	651	168	243	237	426	251	110	109		275	4681
Evening Grosbeak					1											177		178
House Sparrow	375	722	1815	936	205	**56**	462	302	251	234	499	1321	699	614	651	661	708	10511

BA - Barkhamsted
EW - Edwin Way Teale-Trail Wood
GS - Greenwich - Stamford
HA - Hartford
LH - Litchfield Hills
LS - Lakeville - Sharon
NH - New Haven
NL - New London
OL - Old Lyme - Saybrook
OX - Oxford
PA - Pawling NY - CT (Formerly Hidden Valley)
QV - Quinnipiac Valley
SM - Stratford - Milford
SR - Salmon River
ST - Storrs
WE - Westport
WR - Woodbury - Roxbury

CW Count Period
----- Not seen for 10 yrs.
XX Rare Species
XX New High Count
XX New Low count (Bold)
XX New Species for Count

SUMMARY - CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 1994-1995

	NORTHERN COUNTS						SUB
	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	TOTAL
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	14943	12618	118599	22708	19023	12500	200391
TOTAL CD SPECIES	69	70	89	88	75	63	
TOTAL CW SPECIES	1	0	3	0	0	0	
FIELD OBSERVERS	32	12	183	29	22	25	303
FEEDER WATCHERS	8	0	76	3	6	0	93
TOTAL ALL OBSERVERS	40	12	259	32	28	25	396

	MID-STATE COUNTS					SUB
	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	TOTAL
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	14796	13276	30477	10748	39795	109092
TOTAL CD SPECIES	65	74	93	81	85	
TOTAL CW SPECIES	0	3	0	2	0	
FIELD OBSERVERS	25	15	19	36	43	138
FEEDER WATCHERS	1	15	1	0	0	17
TOTAL ALL OBSERVERS	26	30	20	36	43	155

	COSTAL COUNTS						SUB
	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	TOTAL
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	27163	36238	27301	23834	23315	28506	166357
TOTAL CD SPECIES	108	115	109	122	101	115	
TOTAL CW SPECIES	2	2	1	2	0	1	
FIELD OBSERVERS	69	87	43	41	35	63	338
FEEDER WATCHERS	20	3	12	4	0	19	58
TOTAL ALL OBSERVERS	89	90	55	45	35	82	396

	ALL COUNTS	SUB TOTAL
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS		475840
TOTAL CD SPECIES		173
TOTAL CW SPECIES		2
FIELD OBSERVERS		779
FEEDER WATCHERS		168
TOTAL ALL OBSERVERS		947

BA - Barkhamsted
EW - Edwin Way Teale-Trail Wood
GS - Greenwich - Stamford
HA - Hartford
LH - Litchfield Hills
LS - Lakeville - Sharon
NH - New Haven
NL - New London
OL - Old Lyme - Saybrook
OX - Oxford
PA - Pawling NY - CT (Formerly Hidden Valley)
QV - Quinnipiac Valley
SM - Stratford - Milford
SR - Salmon River
ST - Storrs
WE - Westport
WR - Woodbury - Roxbury

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES: AUGUST 1 - NOVEMBER 30, 1994

Jay Kaplan

Editor's Comment: Reports of rare or unusual bird species in Connecticut (see latest COA Field List) require that documentation be submitted to the Secretary of the Rare Records Committee (Mark Szantyr, 2C Yale Rd., Storrs, CT 06268), if they are to be included in the Connecticut Field Notes.

WOW! What a fall season. Birders raced from one end of Connecticut to the other to look for exciting finds such as Eared Grebe, Gull-billed Tern, a *Selasphorus* hummingbird, Northern Wheatear, Black-throated Gray Warbler, and Lark and Le Conte's Sparrows! Many of these birds were quite accommodating, remaining on location for several days and affording easy viewing for those who made the effort to see them. Weather conditions also made birding easy. There were few major storms and temperatures were moderate for much of the period. August was a cool, wet month with a mean temperature of 1.5°F below average and double the normal rainfall, statewide. The thermometer never even reached 90°F. Precipitation for the month was 5.33 inches at Bradley International Airport, Windsor Locks (compared to a normal 3.65 inches), and although it rained on 15 days during the month, over 60% of the total was concentrated on only two dates. This pattern continued into September. Temperatures were mild and, while the 5.47 inches of precipitation was above the normal 3.79 inches, there were only six days of measurable rainfall during the entire month. Much of this occurred September 23rd when over three inches of rain fell in the Hartford area. October was seasonable and dry with only 1.51 inches of rainfall during the entire month. November rainfall was about normal with 4.57 inches, and it was a warm month averaging 46.1°F, almost 5°F over normal temperatures.

To sum up the fall season, there were many nice, clear days and birders were out in force. This combination usually makes for many field reports and this was certainly the case for the 1994 fall season.

LOONS THROUGH FALCONS

Scattered loons along the coast included nine Red-throated and five Common Loons at Hammonasset Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP), Madison, November 19 (SK). Among the numerous reports of Pied-billed Grebe from around Connecticut, 12 at Point Folly on Bantam Lake, Litchfield, October 16 (GH) were noteworthy. A Red-necked Grebe was inland at Columbia Lake, Columbia, November 14 (LB,MS), while another was at Harkness Memorial State Park (hereafter HMSP) November 28 (DP). While Horned Grebe is a common fall migrant, Eared Grebe is not. Thus, reports of this species from Greenwich Point, Greenwich, September 3-4 (JB) and from Cemetery Pond, Litchfield, September 17-18 (DT,GH) sent birders off in an attempt to add this western grebe to their lists. Another Eared Grebe at Bantam Lake, Litchfield, November 13-26 (DR,DT et al.) was likely the Cemetery Pond bird. In what has become an almost annual occurrence over the past decade, Northern Gannets again made a November incursion into Long Island Sound. Small groups of one to seven birds were seen from various locations along the shoreline from HBSP, Madison to Sherwood Island State Park (hereafter SISP), Westport, November 19-21 (m.ob.). These birds were followed by sightings of 20+ off Lords Point, Stonington (GH,NC) and 45+ at HMSP, Waterford, (DP) November 28. The first Great Cormorant reports were two at Lighthouse Point Park, New Haven, October 24 (GH) and 10 at HMSP, October 27 (DP). American Bitterns were reported from numerous locations between mid August and mid October (m.ob.). A late Great Egret was at Mirror Lake on the University of Connecticut campus, Storrs, November 8 (MH) and five were at Quiambog Cove, Stonington, November 22 (RD et al.).

Although large flocks of Snow Geese migrate through the state in fall, few birds were reported this year. A Snow Goose in Sharon, August 8 (LW) was reportedly there through the summer. Other sightings included single individuals at Mirror Lake, Storrs, October 2 (GC) and Stanley Park, New Britain, November 2 (MC), and eight at HBSP, October 3 (JG). Brant also migrate through Connecticut, but fly at night at high altitudes. In addition to 150 birds at SISP, November 1 (RS), six birds were at Griswold Point, Old Lyme, October 14 (TH) and 16 were at Milford Point, Milford, November 15 (SK). Single Barnacle Geese of un-

known origin were in Westport, October 20-22 (CB) and at Storrs' Mirror Lake, October 24 (Bruce Carver, MS). According to *Connecticut Wildlife*, a publication of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, the forecast for the 1994 waterfowl season was excellent, with improved habitat conditions in the midwest and increased production in Alaska. Although this forecast was geared towards hunting, the same held true for waterfowl observation. Wood Ducks and Green-winged Teal were well reported with 129 "Woodies" at Cemetery Pond, Litchfield, August 12 (DR) and 300 teal at Watch Rock, Lyme, October 31 (JK,BKl). Bantam Lake hosted 80 Black Ducks November 27 (DR et al.). A single Northern Pintail was at HBSP, October 1 (JG), 12 were at Watch Rock, October 31 (JK, BKl) and two were at Foster Lake, Meriden, November 20 (FD), and 100 were at South Cove, Old Saybrook, November 27 (JH). Blue-winged Teal are suspected breeders at Station 43 Marsh, South Windsor, although breeding has never been confirmed at this site; thus 10 birds there August 24 (CE) may have been the result of a nesting effort, or may have been migrants as this species tends to migrate early. Five Blue-winged Teal were at Lighthouse Point Park, August 29 (GH). Cinnamon Teal, a western species, is usually only seen rarely east of the Mississippi River in spring. Thus, an individual at Milford Point, November 13-30 (m.ob.) may have been an escape! There were several Northern Shoveler reports including two at Bantam Lake, Litchfield, October 16 (GH). A drake Eurasian Wigeon was at Furnace Pond, East Haven, November 12-19 (m.ob.), while 46 American Wigeon were at Foster Lake, Meriden, November 20 (FD). Ring-necked Ducks were reported from inland water bodies including 124 at Crystal Lake, Winchester, November 24 (DR). When one thinks of Greater Scaup, huge rafts in Long Island Sound come to mind. This species is also found on inland lakes in migration and 16 were at Bantam Lake, Morris, November 13-14 (DR et al.). Lesser Scaup reports included 11 at Bantam Lake, Litchfield, November 13 (BD et al.), seven at Lake Waramaug, New Preston, November 15 (LW), and one in Niantic November 25 (DP). Although Common Eiders are common residents off the Rhode Island coast, their appearance in Connecticut is more sporadic and usually consists of single individuals. Thus, 38 birds at HMSP, November 12 were noteworthy and an immature male was still present November 30 (DP). A female King Eider was sporadic at Lighthouse Point Park, New

Haven, November 8-25 (RE, m.ob.). Black Scoter numbers vary from one year to the next, but reports this season included 13 at Batterson Park Pond, Farmington, November 3 (MC), seven at Middle Beach, Madison, November 6 (BD,JG) and 20-25 at HMSP November 14-30 (GH,NC,DP). There were 65 Hooded Mergansers at SISP, November 10 (RS). Bantam Lake, always a good spot for mergansers, had 39 Hooded and 300 Common Mergansers November 27 (DR et al.). Bantam Lake is also a prime site for Ruddy Ducks and numbers reached 125 November 16 (PC).

Black Vultures remain a fixture in the lower Housatonic Valley, and the Connecticut Rare Records Committee (CRRC) no longer requests documentation for this species. One to four birds were in the vicinity of the New Milford landfill, New Milford, September 22 - November 5 (LW,TK et al.). Turkey Vultures may have been considering a winter roost in Woodbridge with 21 birds there November 12 (JB). The latest Osprey report was from Waterbury November 30 (GH,NC et al.). Broad-winged Hawks normally migrate over the western hills in mid-September, but 400 over Storrs September 18 was unusual for eastern Connecticut (fide GC), while 125 at SISP, October 2 (RS) were unusual for location and date. Specific information on the 1994 fall hawk watch may be found in the January 1995 issue of *The Connecticut Warbler*. Of note, however, was an adult Swainson's Hawk reported from the Botsford Hill hawkwatch site, Bridgewater, September 10 (Jeff Kirk, fide NC). This species, seen increasingly in the east, should be looked for during early September hawkwatches. Light-phase Rough-legged hawks were at Griswold Point, Old Lyme, October 17 and November 12 (TH,DP) and on the latter date at HBSP (JG et al.). An immature Golden Eagle was at the Botsford Hill hawkwatch September 15 (NC et al.) and, over the course of the season, seven immature "Goldens" were seen from the hawkwatch site at Quaker Ridge, Greenwich (BO et al.).

A new one-day high of 153 American Kestrels was set at Quaker Ridge, September 15 (BO et al.). With all the bad news about kestrel breeding and wintering populations in Connecticut, it is nice to get some good news about this species, even if it is in a different season. At least seven reports were received for Peregrine Falcon, from two birds at Griswold Point, September 1 (JK et al.) to a single bird at Great Island, Old Lyme, November 15 (TH).

RAILS THROUGH TERNS

Two adult Virginia Rails with two downy chicks were reported at Lake Waramaug, Warren, August 24 (Les Ernhout, fide GH). This is a very late date for downy young for this species. A Common Moorhen was at Station 43 Marsh, October 7-9 (CE et al.). There were numerous reports of American Coot including 67 at Milford Point, November 15 (CB) and a peak of 427 at Bantam Lake, November 16 (PC). At the end of the period, 330 birds still remained. A possible Sandhill Crane was reported from the Lighthouse Point Park hawkwatch site October 2 (PC).

American Golden Plovers appeared at their usual stopovers this fall and many lingered for an extended stay, including one to four at HBSP August 28 - November 6 (m.ob.) and one to seven at Milford Point September 5 - October 24 (CB,JF et al.). Large groups of Killdeer exceeded 100 birds at HBSP, August 19 (JK) and at Lot W, Storrs, September 28 (LB et al.). American Oystercatchers were in small groups at several shoreline locations including two adults and two juveniles at Milford Point August 7 - September 7 (m.ob.). A late Solitary Sandpiper was at Lot W September 28 (GC). In addition to two Upland Sandpipers at Bradley International Airport, Windsor Locks, August 20 (JK), single birds were at Bluff Point, Groton, August 15 (DP) and at Milford Point, September 5 (JG et al.); three were at SISP, August 23 (RS) and three at HBSP, September 19 (CE). Whimbrels were at Griswold Point, August 4, 11 and 16 (DP), at SISP August 18 and 26 (RS), at Sandy Point, West Haven, August 24 - September 11 (m.ob.) and at HBSP, August 28 (JG,RN et al.). Reports of godwits included a Hudsonian at Griswold Point and Great Island, Old Lyme, October 14-21 (TH et al.) and an amazing 11 at SISP, August 22 (RS), and a Marbled Godwit at Neck Road Beach, Madison, August 2 (JG), and two at Griswold Point August 24-28 (RD,DP et al). An impressive 78 Red Knots were at Sandy Point August 7 (SM). Semipalmated Sandpipers peaked at 2,800 August 1 at Milford Point (SM). Scan these small peeps carefully for other species. There were two to three Western Sandpipers at Griswold Point August 6, 26 (DP) and two at Milford Point, September 5 (JF et al.). Six White-rumped Sandpipers were at Sikorsky Airport, Stratford, August 22 (GH) and 17 were at SISP the same day (FM,CB). Two Baird's Sandpipers were at HBSP, August 19 (JK) and one was at Milford Point September 4-7 (TK,m.ob.). Purple Sandpipers arrived in late November with eight at HMSP,

November 20 (TK) and three at HBSP, November 27 (JK,RN et al.). It was a good year for Buff-breasted Sandpiper with birds reported from five different locations. Groton/New London Airport, Groton was the most reliable with up to seven August 30 - September 17 (BD,DP). A Long-billed Dowitcher was seen and heard at Great Island, Old Lyme, October 17-23 (TH).

Perhaps the periods most unusual discovery was that of a juvenile **Long-tailed Jaeger** in Glastonbury following a late August thunderstorm. The bird subsequently died and was taken to the University of Connecticut in Storrs. This is the third Connecticut record for this species. The first was collected in Portland in 1909, and the second, originally misidentified as a Parasitic Jaeger, was found in Groton in 1979. One wonders what other vagrants are forced down by severe weather systems during migration. The chances of locating such a specimen are remote, making this find all the more exciting. Laughing Gulls often congregate on the Connecticut shore in fall, prior to flying south for the winter. There were 300 at SISP, August 6 (RS) and over 50 remained at Eastern Point, Groton, November 28 (GH). A Common Black-headed Gull was at Cove Island Park, Stamford, October 25 (LB). Early Bonaparte's Gulls were at Griswold Point, August 6 and September 11 (DP) and at Milford Point, August 16 and September 5 (SM,JG et al.), and four were at HBSP, November 17 (LW). An Iceland Gull at Horsebarn Hill, Storrs, October 24-25 (MS) was unusual for northeastern Connecticut. Lesser Black-backed Gulls were at Lighthouse Point Park, October 16 (TK,SM et al.) and at SISP November 1 (CB,RS). Two **Black-legged Kittiwakes**, always difficult to see from shore, were at HMSP, November 28 (DP et al.).

A **Gull-billed Tern**, still hypothetical on Connecticut's State List, was reported from Milford Point, August 13 (CE). Caspian Terns were at Griswold Point, August 3 and 11 (DP). There were several reports of Royal Tern including a late date at HBSP, November 5 (DP). Common Terns peaked at 2,000 at Milford Point, August 31 (SM). **Arctic Tern**, also hypothetical on the State List, was reported from Sandy Point, West Haven, August 27 (BD). Up to two Black Terns were at Milford Point, August 15-27 (m.ob.) and single birds were at Falkner Island, Guilford, August 16, 20-21 (JZi), at Sandy Point, West Haven, August 21 and 27 (BD), and at Griswold Point August 11 and September 1 (DP,JK et al.). Single Black Skimmers were at Milford Point September 5-6 (LB et al.) and at

Griswold Point August 27 - September 7 (JH).

OWLS THROUGH VIREOS

Connecticut was not inundated with owls this fall. Short-eared Owls were reported from Milford Point, November 5, (SK), Pine Creek, Fairfield, November 9 (CB), Lighthouse Point Park (TK) and HBSP (DP), November 12. Long-eared Owls were at Nehantic State Forest, Lyme, November 5 and HBSP November 12 (DP). A Northern Saw-whet Owl at HBSP October 22-28 (m.ob.) was the only live one reported this fall, although, alas, there were at least two road-killed Saw-whets in the Storrs area November 14 (LB,MS). The largest Common Nighthawk flights reported were 200+ in Mansfield, August 26 (MS) and 100+ along the Naugatuck River, Waterbury, August 25 (GH). The latest was a bird over Southbury, September 25 (Ed Hagen). One of the highlights of the season was an immature **Selasphorus Hummingbird** at an East Hartford hummingbird feeder. The homeowners, who first noted the bird in late September, realized that this was not the typical Ruby-throated Hummingbird and alerted area birders in late November. It is likely that this bird was a Rufous Hummingbird and would represent the second state record. There is, however, a Massachusetts record for Allen's Hummingbird and, as the immatures of the two species are not separable in the field, the bird's identity has not, as yet, been determined beyond the genus level. The bird remained through the end of the period and was seen by a large number of birders who made the pilgrimage to East Hartford. There were numerous reports of Red-headed Woodpeckers this fall from September 10 through the end of the period. While most were along the coast, there were inland reports from Trailwood Sanctuary, Hampton and from Southbury (m.ob.). There was an incredible fall migration at Bluff Point Coastal Reserve, Groton this year with large numbers for certain species. An example was Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, with 35 birds October 1 and an additional 15 the following day (DP et al.). Even more amazing were 6,000+ Northern Flickers at Bluff Point October 1 (DP).

Single Olive-sided Flycatchers were in Greenwich August 30-31 (BO), and in Stamford September 12-13 (PD). An Acadian Flycatcher was at Devil's Hopyard State Park, East Haddam, August 1 (JF). Western Kingbirds were at Lighthouse Point, the most reliable spot for this western vagrant, September 19 (GH), at SISP September 20 (RS), and in the Lordship section of Stratford, Sep-

tember 28-29 (NC,JK et al.). An amazing 70 Eastern Kingbirds migrated past Lighthouse Point August 29 (GH). The first Horned Larks were reported at HBSP October 27 and as many as 28 were there by November 20 (m.ob.) Tree Swallows peaked at 1,000 at HBSP, August 6 (SM), while aggregations of 5,000 were at Griswold Point, August 11 and at Bluff Point, September 6 (DP). By November 20th, 20 to 30 Tree Swallows remained at HBSP (BD,DP). Two late Cliff Swallows were at Lighthouse Point November 11 (Ron Bell fide RE).

Single Common Ravens in Warren, October 5 (LW) and New Milford, October 16 (RN et al.) were the only ones reported this period. Bluff Point recorded 100+ Ruby-crowned Kinglets October 11 (DP) and 30+ Blue-gray Gnatcatchers September 11 (DP). A Northern Wheatear was at HBSP, September 17-18 (Tom Koronkiewicz, m.ob.), where it sat obligingly for photographers on the picnic tables at the Meig's Point picnic area. Gray-cheeked Thrushes were at Bluff Point September 19 (fide DP), in Norwalk October 2 (FM), and at HBSP, October 6 (LW, RB). Birders will soon have the opportunity to officially distinguish between the Gray-cheeked and Bicknell's Thrush, as rumor has it that these birds will be split in the summer of 1995 by the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) and the American Birding Association (ABA). One of the more unusual reports was of 1,890 calling Swainson's Thrushes migrating over Millstone Point, Niantic, during the night of September 30 - October 1 (DP). This offers a whole new insight into tracking fall migrants and should be encouraged during periods of peak migration. There were many reports of American Robins this fall including 250 at Bluff Point, October 11 (DP) and 400 to 500 at Roaring Brook Nature Center, Canton, November 7 (JK et al.). A Northern Shrike was at SISP, November 11 (RS,RW). Philadelphia Vireos were at Bluff Point, September 10, 12 and 15 (DP), in Woodbury September 11 (RN), and at HBSP, September 25 (SK).

WARBLERS THROUGH EVENING GROSBEAK

More than one birder described Bluff Point this fall as a migration site comparable to Cape May, New Jersey, as evidenced by 11,000 warblers of 22 species between September 29 and October 4 (JH). It was a good year for Orange-crowned Warblers with two at Bluff Point, September 30 and another one October 3 (DP), one at HBSP November 3 (DP), and one at East Shore Park, New Haven, November 16-18 (JH,NC). There were several noteworthy late warbler dates including two Nashville Warblers at Byram Park, Greenwich, November 29-30 (m.ob.). Bluff

Point recorded 130+ Northern Parula Warblers October 1 (DP). A Cape May Warbler was in Pawcatuck November 27 (RD), and a Black-throated Blue Warbler at Bluff Point November 5 (DP). An estimated 4,500 Yellow-rumped Warblers were at Bluff Point October 11 (JH et al.) A Black-throated Green Warbler was at East Shore Park, New Haven, November 16 (JH), another late date. Of special note was a Yellow-throated Warbler foraging with Yellow-rumped Warblers at Mirror Lake, Storrs, November 9 (GC). The best warbler sighting, however, was a **Black-throated Gray Warbler** at Byram Park, Greenwich, November 29-30 (JZe et al.). This is the second record of this species for Connecticut and the first documented with photographs. The previous record came from Waterford in October 1967 (Zeranski & Baptist 1990). Another late warbler date was that of a Black-throated Green at East Shore Park, New Haven, November 16 (JH). There were numerous reports of Palm Warbler this fall including 17 on Meadow Ridge Road, Avon, September 28 (DR) and five on November 25 at East Shore Park November 25 (LB). The sole report for Connecticut Warbler came from Longshore Park, Westport, September 26 (NC et al.). Mourning Warblers were at SISP September 2 (RS), Quaker Ridge, September 7 (BO), and Cove Island Park, September 23 (PD). A Canada Warbler was at SISP November 7 (RS). Yellow-breasted Chats were at Cove Island Park, Stamford, September 1 and 10 (PD), Bluff Point, September 7 (DP), Quaker Ridge, September 13 (BO), and SISP September 26 (RS).

There were several reports of Dickcissels, all but one of them along the coast. The inland sighting came from Southbury, October 9 (RN). There were four records for Clay-colored Sparrow including birds at HBSP, September 25 (JG,SK), Cove Island Park, September 26 (PD,FM), Bluff Point October 1 (DP); and Ansonia, October 15 (JB). There were at least six Vesper Sparrow reports. **A Lark Sparrow** October 22 to end of period (BD et al.) and **Le Conte's** Sparrow October 12-17 (NC,MAC, et al.) were both seen in a farm field on Crook Horn Road in Southbury. In fact, the Lark Sparrow was found by birders who were looking for the departed Le Conte's! There were numerous reports of Lincoln's and White-crowned Sparrows from around the state, including a high of eight White-crowned Sparrows at HBSP, October 8 and 14 (JG, m.ob.).

A Lapland Longspur at Lot W, Storrs, September 29 (LB) was a good inland sighting. Other longspurs were on the coast, including 13 at HBSP, November 4 (JG). There were also inland reports

for Snow Bunting including individuals in Mansfield Hollow, Mansfield, October 20 (LB) and Torrington, November 3 (RB). At HBSP, numbers swelled to 100 by mid-November, dropping to 25 by the end of the period (m.ob.). An estimated 600 Bobolinks migrated past Lighthouse Point on August 29 (GH). A female Yellow-headed Blackbird was at Greenwich Point, September 5 (Jack Wells). An Orchard Oriole was banded at Falkner Island, Guilford, August 8 (JS,JZi), the first banding record for the island. There were few reports of winter finches this season. A single Pine Siskin was in Southbury, October 30 and another was at Bantam Lake, Litchfield November 13 (RN) along with a lone Evening Grosbeak (RN).

After six years and 24 columns of Connecticut Field Notes, the time has come for this editor to move on to other tasks for the COA. I cannot guarantee that my words will never again grace these pages in "The Warbler," but for the moment, it is time to shut down my word processor. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the many individuals who chose to share their sightings with the Connecticut birding community. It has been a great pleasure for me to compile these quarterly reports and I will truly miss birding vicariously through your trips into the field. Also, thanks to those of you who offered your thoughts, ideas and suggestions towards improving this column. In spite of what you may have heard, I really do appreciate constructive criticism. Do continue to forward your sightings, as they add immeasurably to the State of Connecticut's body of ornithological knowledge. I know that I will continue to send in my own field notes and I look forward to seeing many of you "in the field" in the months to come.

CONTRIBUTORS (**Boldface**) and OBSERVERS:

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ANSWER TO PHOTO CHALLENGE 12

Is this a piece of lichen-covered bark with wings? Is this a clue to the bird's identity? Among birds, few groups possess a plumage that so well disguises them by resemblance to some aspect of their habitat as the goatsuckers. This is a special case of cryptic coloration, and birds with it usually close their eyes and remain motionless instead of flying away from a threatening intruder. While appearing tranquil, this bird is probably preparing for a quick escape should the approaching camera lens get too close!

In addition to coloration, the large head, big eye, and small bill serve to identify our photo challenge as a goatsucker. Sitting prone on the ground, this bird might easily be identified as a Whip-poor-will because we are often told that nighthawks perch lengthwise on branches. However, we should always test such behavioral rules of thumb against physical characteristics. Not seeing any white patch in the wing, our identification seems reinforced. Nevertheless, the stiff, unbarred primaries extending to the tip of a notched tail and the lack of long, whisker-like bristles at the base of the bill should convince us that this is a nighthawk, a uniquely New World group within the goatsucker family.

Of the three North American species of nighthawk, only the Common Nighthawk is known from the Northeast; thus our quiz is solved. While unrecorded from the Northeast, both Lesser and Antillean Nighthawk should be considered possible vagrants here because they are migratory and sometimes found far outside their normal range—Lesser Nighthawk has occurred from Louisiana to Florida, and Antillean Nighthawk was found last summer as far north as coastal North Carolina. Late lingering nighthawks identified to species in the East have thus far proven to be Commons, but each out-of-season nighthawk should be checked

carefully. Common Nighthawk typically occurs in Connecticut from May through September; it is very rare in April and after September. There are some truly odd March reports of Common Nighthawk in the Northeast, including Connecticut (see Bagg & Eliot, *The Birds of the Connecticut River Valley*, and Veit & Petersen, *Birds of Massachusetts*), but none of these reports is substantiated. Since the Common Nighthawk and almost certainly the Antillean Nighthawk winter in South America and typically start their return to breeding grounds in April, the Lesser Nighthawk becomes an interesting possibility at this time of year because it winters as close as northern Mexico and generally starts returning north up to a month before the other species—especially in western North America, where the Common Nighthawk typically arrives in late May, later than in the East. There are a few records of Common Nighthawk along the Gulf Coast as early as March, and thus it is not inconceivable that one could perhaps be propelled north along a strong front to the Northeast.

How would one identify these nighthawks? The answer is very cautiously. Lesser Nighthawk would be the easiest, but a lone bird could be difficult. A single, silent nighthawk found in late October and lingering until mid-November in the Washington, D. C., area had observers excited about this possibility. The bird flew low to the ground, seemed brown, and appeared to have rounded wing-tips (Common typically has the outermost primary the longest, and thus appears more pointed at the wing-tip). All these characters are thought to indicate Lesser Nighthawk. The bird was photographed and later identified conclusively as a Common Nighthawk (Czaplak and Wilds, *Birding* 18:169-173). Caution is needed, especially with regard to these characters.

The Lesser Nighthawk is generally browner than all races of Common and Antillean Nighthawks. In flight, the wing band is farther out on the primaries but, more importantly, the white band tapers rather than broadens at the rear. The position of the wing band and the color of the bird are noticeably different from the other species in *direct comparison*, but of little use on a lone bird; the shape of the wing band is more useful at those times. If the bird is perched with the wing band visible, look just forward of the band to see if there are buffy spots or bars on the primaries. Lessers have the base of the primaries barred with buff spots, whereas both of the other species are black there. Look for this character on flying birds as well. Although described in Robert Ridgway's keys to North American birds (vol. 6, 1914) and illustrated in some field guides, it is not mentioned as an identi-

fication mark in those guides. Please note that it is the basal portion of *all* primaries that show this feature and not just the inner primaries as stated in recent discussions (*Birding* 18:169-173 [cited above] & 26:342; see photo in latter). Conveniently, some female Lessers (mainly immatures?) lack a wing band or have only a small buffy one. Obviously, one does not need to sex the bird to see if the wing band is absent. Nevertheless, it is good to know that all adult males show a white tail band, whereas *most* females and immature males of Common and Antillean Nighthawks lack the band. Immature male Lessers already have the tail band.

Antillean and Common Nighthawks are perhaps only reliably separated by call. Antillean gives a katydid-like "killikadick," and Common's usual call is "peent." Be aware that Antilleans frequently shorten the call to "ka-dick" and that Commons occasionally give a series of clicking noises that could confuse someone unfamiliar with the Antillean call (Stevenson et al., *Auk* 100:983-988). In the hand, Antillean Nighthawk is identified by its shorter wing and tail; its slightly more predominate buffy-brown tones and its smaller wing patches are not diagnostic from all Common Nighthawk populations.

A potentially useful area of investigation is the differences in molt between the three species. The Lesser Nighthawk begins a complete molt, including its primaries, in late summer and early fall, whereas Common Nighthawk delays molt of its primaries until winter (Selander, *Condor* 56:57-82). This would mean that in spring a Lesser Nighthawk should exhibit worn flight feathers. In fall, all juvenile nighthawks show a broad whitish fringe to the primaries, whereas by September and October when those juveniles are flying south, adult Common Nighthawks show dull black, worn primaries. Some observers (David Sibley et al.) have suggested that Antillean Nighthawk has a molt schedule similar to the Lesser Nighthawk. If this is true, then a spring migrant Antillean should show dull, worn primaries. Complicating this is Selander's statement that some juvenile Commons do not molt all the primaries in the first winter; thus some Commons could return with very worn primaries. This is all still very tentative, but worth keeping in mind.

The number of breeding Common Nighthawks in Connecticut continues to decline, and the species is now probably endangered here. Indeed, a decline seems apparent throughout the East and Great Plains, especially in urban areas. Nighthawks no longer are known to nest on the ground in Connecticut, although some still

do in Massachusetts. Further, its adopted rooftop urban habitat appears to be changing. Some have suggested that newer vinyl roofing materials may be replacing tar and gravel and that these newer materials could adversely affect nesting. Even without this change, it is also possible that the supply of insects in cities has declined, forcing birds to search elsewhere for suitable nest sites. Sadly, Common Nighthawk was only found in the New Haven area on surveys conducted in 1993 in six towns. I hope that the plight of this Neotropical migrant breeder is not overshadowed by the attention given the flashy tanagers and wood-warblers. The Common Nighthawk's designation in Connecticut as a Species of Special Concern would seem desperately in need of review as it is now at least Threatened as a breeder here.

Curtis Marantz photographed this spring migrant Common Nighthawk in Louisiana. It is probably a female because a male would likely show a conspicuous white throat patch, even though some of the lower throat might be tucked in and not visible in this photograph. The apparent lack of a white tail band is deceiving in this photo because the band is formed by white bars on the inner webs of the tail feathers, which are normally hidden from view on a closed tail seen from above.

Louis R. Bevier, P. O. Box 665, Storrs, CT 06268

Photo challenge 13. Identify the species. Answer next issue.

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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The Connecticut Warbler (ISSN 1077-0283) 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. Address all correspondence, and make checks payable to: The Connecticut Ornithological Association, 314 Unquowa Road, Fairfield, CT 06430.

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Member	$12.00	Contributing	$25.00
Family	$18.00	Sustaining	$40.00

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

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The editors welcome submission of line artwork of Connecticut and regional birds. Good quality photographs of particular interest will also be considered. 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.

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Spring 1995 - Volume XV No. 2

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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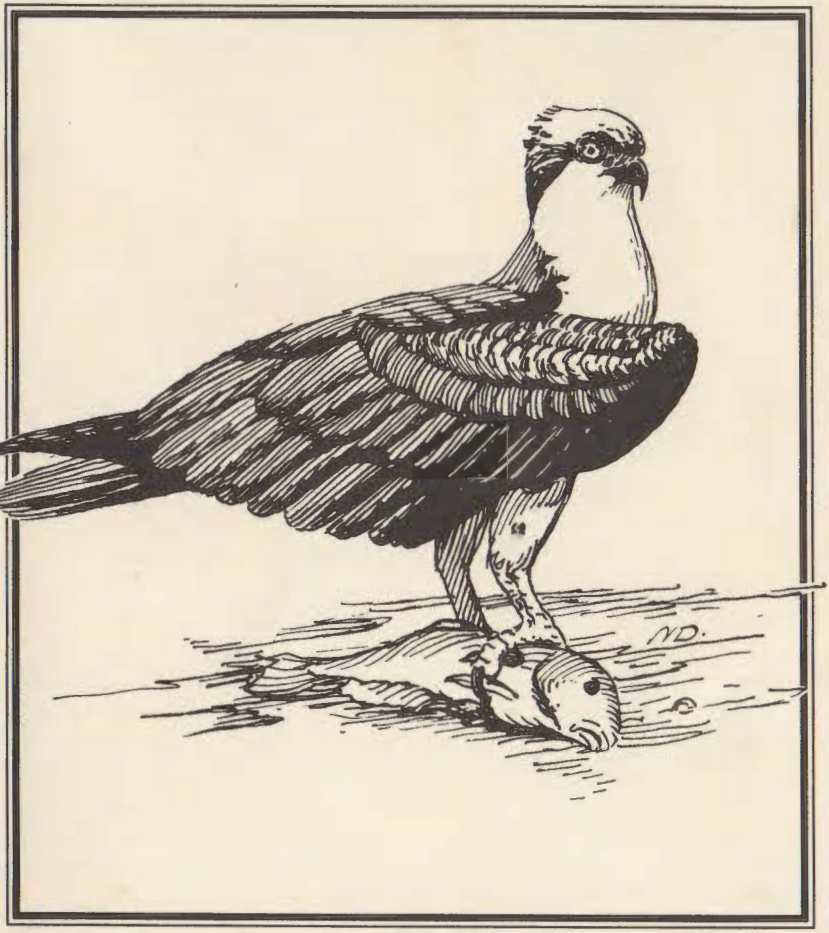

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THE CONNECTICUT ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

ABOUT OUR COVER ARTIST:

Michael DiGiorgio

"Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)"

Once again we are pleased to use a drawing by Mike DiGiorgio for our front cover illustration. The Osprey was drawn by Mike for *The Atlas of Breeding Birds of Connecticut,* which is reviewed in this issue of "The Warbler."

Mike works as an illustrator for a children's publication the "Weekly Reader," and is presently involved in a number of art projects. In his spare time he composes music and performs with the musical group "The Cuckoos."

The Connecticut Warbler
A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology

Volume 15 Number 3 July 1995

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Summer 1995

HUMAN-INDUCED FLIGHT IN BREEDING CONNECTICUT OSPREYS

John P. Roche

Although Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) are less affected by human activity than some other raptors (Poole 1981), they will fly from the nest when approached by humans. Quantifying the amount of time spent in human-induced flight by Ospreys breeding in suburban areas provides an important addition to our understanding of their activity budgets and allows us to assess the potential energetic effects of human disturbance. In this paper I examine the percentage of time Ospreys were observed to spend in human-induced flight at nests in southeastern Connecticut.

I observed four nests: (1) a nest on an artificial platform in a marsh bordering Long Island Sound and Quiambaug Cove to the west of Wilcox Point in Stonington (nest 1); (2) a nest on an artificial platform on the edge of Poquonock Reservoir in Groton (nest 2); (3) a nest on an artificial platform close to frequent human activity along a walking path in Haley Farm State Park in Groton (nest 3); and (4) a nest on an artificial platform close to frequent human activity at Hammonasset State Park in Madison (nest 4). In 1989, I observed nest 3 for 15 hours and observed nest 4 for 35 hours in the courtship/incubation period. In addition, I observed nest 1 for 95 hours in the nestling and fledgling periods. In 1990, I observed nest 1 for 92 hours throughout the breeding season and observed nest 2 for 72 hours throughout the breeding season. I also observed nest 3 for 20 hours in the courtship/incubation period in 1990. Nests 3 and 4 were both abandoned in the middle of June in 1989, but nest 1 successfully fledged four young. In 1990, four young were fledged from nest 1, two from nest 2, and three from nest 3. Nest 4 was inactive in 1990.

I continuously sampled at one of the nests during each sample session. I observed Ospreys at distances of 200-300 meters with a 15-45X telescope and 9 X 35 binoculars. The Ospreys did not visibly react to my presence at these distances. In 1990, sample sessions ran from 0600-1000, 1000-1400, or 1400-1800 EST. In 1989, observation periods were arranged to sample different times of the day wherever possible, but the time of day and length of observations were not systematic.

The mean amount of time Ospreys were observed to spend in human-induced flight was under 1.5% for all birds except the

female at nest 3 (Table 1). The highest percentage of time spent in human-induced flight was 4.02% for the female at nest 3. These data indicate that human-induced flight, even at a frequently disturbed nest, represented a small component of the time budgets of the observed nests. Because flight is an energy intensive activity, however, a bird that spends 4% of its daylight hours in human-induced flight could divert a considerable amount of energy away from offspring or physiological maintenance. The mean amount of time spent in human-induced flight at the nests observed throughout the breeding season in 1990 (nests 1 and 2) was approximately 0.1% in the courtship/incubation period and the nestling period, but increased to approximately 0.6% in the fledgling period.

The basal metabolic rate (BMR) for a female Osprey is approximately 5.44 kcal/hr (see Poole 1984). Poole (1984) used this figure to estimate the daily energy expenditure of an average female Osprey at his study site in Massachusetts; he calculated that an average female would expend a mean of 1.55 times BMR in a 24-hour period, or approximately 202 kcal. Flight consumes energy at about 12 times the BMR in female Ospreys and 14 times the BMR in males, whereas perching consumes energy at 1.5 times BMR (Poole 1984, see also Goldstein 1988). Using the above figures, I calculated that a female Osprey that spent 4% of its time in human-induced flight, 12 hours per day, would elevate its daily energy expenditure by approximately 27 kcal. This would represent an increase of approximately 13% over the 202 kcal/day level estimated by Poole (1984). Females have been observed to lose weight during the breeding season (Poole 1984) while raising broods with an average number of young, and therefore they may often experience negative energy budgets during the breeding season. A 13% increase in daily energy expenditure for a female already experiencing an energetic shortfall could be detrimental to its survivorship and reproductive success.

Even if human-induced flight does not reach a threshold to cause serious energy depletion, it could negatively affect breeding success in several other ways. At nest 3 the Ospreys were repeatedly forced from the nest as they reacted to people walking on a path about 50 meters from the nest. Each sudden flight from the nest during the incubation period poses the risk of cracking eggs (Reese 1977). Leaving the eggs unattended, even for brief periods, also increases the risk of predation on the eggs by crows or gulls. In addition, repeated brief disturbances could make a pair abandon their breeding attempt (Levenson and Koplin 1984,

Swenson 1979). Therefore, human disturbance might cause either egg mortality or nest abandonment before causing serious depletion of energy.

Nest 3 was subject to frequent human disturbance. Nest 4 was subject to relatively low levels of disturbance in 1989 until the night of 16 June, when a large group of people closely approached the nest. Nest 3 and nest 4 were both abandoned in 1989.

Data on the amount of human-induced flight to which breeding Ospreys are subject could be useful for designing conservation strategies for this species. For example, the amount of human-induced flight could be sampled at nests potentially subject to disturbance. This would allow nests subject to high levels of human disturbance to be identified. In addition, data on human-induced flight could increase our understanding of the threshold distances at which human approach elicits flight. The Ospreys observed in this study generally flew from a nest or perch when humans approached within 50 meters. Thus, a simple measure that could reduce the potential negative effects of human disturbance on Osprey reproductive success would be to establish 100 m quiet zones around active nests on public lands during the breeding season. In addition, artificial platforms could be placed in sites isolated from nearby human activity.

Although Ospreys are rebounding in numbers in the eastern U. S. since the banning of DDT in this country (Spitzer 1989), the birds remain vulnerable to the following threats: (1) human disturbance (Reese 1977, Swenson 1979, Levenson and Koplin 1984): (2) habitat alteration; (3) changes in the availability of their prey; and (4) pollution (Poole 1989, Steidl et al. 1991). This study suggests that some suburban Osprey nests may experience low levels of human-induced flight, but nests close to frequently used areas, such as the nest at Haley Farm State Park, may be subjected to relatively high rates of human disturbance.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank Richard Booth, Kim Wilson, Julie Victoria, and Robert Dewire for their assistance with this study. I also thank Alan Poole for making helpful comments on this project, two anonymous reviewers for making suggestions on this manuscript, and the Groton Water Company for providing access to their property.

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Table 1. Mean percentages of daylight spent in human-induced flight for breeding Ospreys at four nests in southeastern Connecticut.

Year and Nest	Sex	
	Female	Male
1989		
Nest 1	0.2%	0%
Nest 3	4.02%	<0.1%
Nest 4	<0.1%	0.14%
1990		
Nest 1	0.3%	0.1%
Nest 2	<0.1%	0.3%
Nest 3	1.2%	1.3%

CHRISTMAS COUNTS - 1970-1994
A 25 YEAR COMPARISON

Fred C. Sibley[1] and Stephen P. Broker[2]

Each year for many years the authors have tried to find meaning in the leftovers from the great annual party called the Christmas Bird Count. Long after your friends have tired of hearing how you and you alone paused to pursue a strange twitter in the reeds and came up with the first ever Yellow-backed Strange Twitter, the compilers are still counting one towhee, two towhee, three towhee, four. The compilers are also refusing to answer their phones, mail and requests from friends to finish the count. As a result your authors have unlimited time to concoct fanciful theories while waiting for that last count to arrive. Steve extracted "The 1994-95 Conclusion(s)" for the last issue of "The Warbler." This article is some of what didn't fit in the last issue.

What does a 25 year overview provide? Last winter was unusually warm and we started this article looking for indications in the data of a trend toward warmer winters or warmer Decembers. The data have been very uncooperative, meaning that we are not looking for the right clues, so we settled for a summary of the changes over this 25 year period. There is less interpretation than we had intended, so feel free to use your own imagination. The basic data are the average count for the five year period 1970-71 thru 1974-75 and the five year period 1990-91 thru 1994-95.

One great advantage of the data are their relative consistency. There are three new counts since 1970 and 31% more observers, but those are relatively minor statistical changes. Observers and coverage have gotten better, but not 100% better or even 50% better (i.e., there is no evidence count numbers have sky rocketed without a corresponding real increase in species populations). The one exception might be owl counts where the number of people doing owl prowls is closely linked to the number of owls reported. We feel justified in accepting a doubling of the count for any species as an indication of real change.

Decreases in population are differently masked by the factors discussed above, but again a decline of 50% is taken as a clear indication of real decline in the December population.

We are rushing to get this article out before the next millennium so will not dwell endlessly on qualifying statements. Appendix I list the top ten species for three time periods. Appendices II and III give all the species that have increased by more than 100% or decreased by

50% over the period. To further dampen all the variables, and limit the length of the paper, we have limited the discussion mainly to those species showing a five fold increase or decrease. Many species would warrant more detailed discussions. Steve Broker has all the count data and is willing to share it. Betty Kleiner is always looking for articles, even ones like this.

The Christmas Count gives a good picture of the late December populations of birds, and a series of counts gives good indications of changes in the late December population. The counts, WITHOUT INTERPRETATION, do not tell you much about the total health of the population, the breeding success, or the population in February. For example a high Ring-necked Duck count usually indicates a lot of unfrozen ponds, not a high duck population. A high Snowy Owl count may indicate an exploding population that results in lots of young birds coming south, or a starving population resulting in birds wandering into strange territory looking for food.

Undaunted by this Herculean task, the flip size of cleaning the Aegean Stables, the authors have taken a quick glance at Appendices II and III and fallen into the trap of putting species into related groups and twisting the data to justify this grouping. Fear not, we are correct or think we are.

SPECIES RECOVERING FROM DDT DECLINE

The 1970's populations of many hawk species were seriously depressed. The recovery of these species has been well documented on breeding bird surveys, hawk watches and regional surveys. Not surprisingly, the Christmas Count data also reflect these changes. The banning of DDT may not be the only factor in this population increase, but certainly a major contributor for most species.

Nine species of hawks show an increase in populations over the last 25 years—three of them spectacular increases. Are all linked to DDT?

Bald Eagle: From 3 to 35 and now breeding in the state.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: From 8 to 120 per year.

Cooper's Hawk: From 4 to 44.

Other species showing less spectacular increases are Osprey, Northern Harrier, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Merlin and Peregrine Falcon.

INTRODUCED SPECIES

Newly introduced species typically take a number of years to build up a nucleus population and then expand explosively to a population plateau where their numbers remain fairly constant. Canada Goose, Wild Turkey, Monk Parakeet and House Finch have all reached or

passed this explosive expansion phase in the 25 year period.

Canada Goose: The introduced resident race may have reached peak numbers, although this year's count was nearly 10,000 above the five year average of 39,000 and well above the 6,500 of 20 years ago. Unfortunately some of the increase has been at the expense of the migratory geese who now find their stop-over areas increasingly occupied by resident birds.

Wild Turkey: A bird reintroduced by the state after many failed attempts. First recorded on counts in the late 70's and now found yearly on many counts and probably present in all the count circles.

Monk Parakeet: Although not recorded on a Christmas Count until 1973-74 it was increasing rapidly in the 70's until a control program cut it back to a small colony in Bridgeport. The species has now rebuilt its base population and is probably ready to increase significantly in the next few years from the present count of nearly 200 birds.

House Finch: A bird for the rare record hot line in the early 60's, it had become regular in the 70's and a downright trash bird today (6th most common species). and numbers may still be increasing.

Of the other introduced species, Mute Swan numbers were leveling off in the 1970's and the older introduced species (House Sparrow, Starling, Ring-necked Pheasant, and Rock Dove) had already stabilized their populations.

SPECIES SHOWING AN INCREASE IN POPULATION:

The total populations (not just Connecticut portion) of a number of species are increasing for a variety of reasons and this has resulted in higher Christmas Count totals.

Double-crested Cormorant: Increased from 1 bird a year in the 1970's to 92. The population of this species has exploded nationwide. In Connecticut the extension of the wintering range north and the breeding range south has resulted in the overlap of the two. Double-crested Cormorants can now be found year round in the state.

Brant: The adaptation from a diet of eel grass to one of sea lettuce has resulted in a range wide recovery. The increase on our counts from 6 per year to 130 reflects the marvelous recovery of this species, but masks the decline from higher totals in the 1980-85 period.

Gadwall: The population had gone from an average of 50 to over 200 by the mid 80's. The present average of 346 is heavily influenced by the large counts of the last two winters (response to open water?).

Common Merganser: Increased from 250+ birds to 4,500+. The increase in numbers has been fairly steady. This species needs open rivers, but there is always open water on the major rivers, and it would be incorrect to attribute any significant portion of the increase

to an increase in open water.

Ring-billed Gull: The increase for this species from 6,000 to 20,000 was mostly in the late 70's and early 80's. Winter counts in the 20,000 range have existed since the mid-80's.

The numbers of Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls have dropped sharply in the last two counts and Ring-billed Gulls have declined to a lesser extent. Maybe we're finally seeing the results of the closure of land fills.

Great Horned Owl: The increase of this species from 25 per year to 140+ is unlikely to be due to the greater number of people owling on count day. Screech Owl and Barred Owl numbers have only doubled or tripled during the period. Let's assume those populations have remained static and the increased counts represent increased owling effort. If we apply the same pattern to the Great Horned Owl numbers there would still be a doubling of the population after allowing for the increased owling effort.

Northern Saw-whet Owl: Counts have been in the 30 bird range for the last five years. In the 1970's it was almost unknown on counts; in the 1980's there were two years with counts in the 20's, but the average count was around 10. We understand that people have become more adept at finding this bird but the increase seems too large to represent just increased birding skills. There is no reason to believe the increase is due to more birds staying further north in winter.

Eastern Bluebird: A species showing a fairly steady increase in numbers over the whole 25 year period. It is not clear what caused the initial decline or the recovery. Now a common species on all the mid-state and northern counts.

SPECIES WITH HIGHER CHRISTMAS COUNT TOTALS - CAUSE UNKNOWN

The following species have increased dramatically on the Christmas Counts during the last 25 years, but the cause is not obvious to us. Some may reflect real increases in populations; others may reflect shifts in December range.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Surprising to us is that this formerly rare Christmas Count species is now a regular. Does this indicate a larger eastern population, with more birds wintering further north?

Northern Flicker: A species showing a steady increase since the 1970's, although with more peaks and valleys in the upward line than for most species. It is tempting to attribute the increase in numbers to warmer Decembers. Are there more flickers spending the winter here? We don't think so. The increase seems to be an early winter

phenomena.

American Robin: The counts vary so greatly from one year to the next that it is hard to see a trend. However, the last four years have exceeded all but one previous count and the 20,000 on this Christmas Count obscure the 1,300 seen in 90-91 and give a five year average that overshadows any previous five year period. Are these high counts due to mild Decembers and late lingerers or to an increase in the total population?

Cedar Waxwing: The ten fold increase of this species caught us totally off guard. The last seven counts have all been record breakers or close to record levels. Something real is happening here, but don't ask what!

SOUTHERN SPECIES MOVING NORTH

For more than 50 years people have commented on species like Cardinal becoming more common in the north. Some species like Cardinals and Tufted Titmice have moved past Connecticut to areas where the winters are much colder than anything Connecticut has ever experienced. The movement of these species cannot be attributed solely to a trend of warmer winters. Others like Carolina Wren, devastated by the hard winters of 1992-93 and 1993-94 are obviously moving in relation to a general warming trend.

Turkey Vulture: The increase from 1 a year to over 130 reflects the change from a summer to year round resident, as well as an increase in the summer population. Perhaps this species is more dependent on changes in food supply (what?) than to warmer winters.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: An easy one. The population has increased every year. This species continues to expand its range in Connecticut and to increase its abundance in areas already invaded. Now a common bird on most Christmas Counts. Like the Cardinal, it has moved on to areas with much harsher winters.

Fish Crow: A very real increase in numbers since the 1970's, but a species that is easily overlooked and always undercounted because of the tendency to put non-calling birds in the American Crow count. We feel this species is responding to warmer winters in the same manner as the Carolina Wren.

Carolina Wren: The almost 20 fold increase in 25 years clearly indicates a response by this resident to warmer winters. It is not a recent arrival in the state and its numbers have always fluctuated with the severity of the previous winter. Last year's count, reflecting the severity of the 1993-94 winter, was a third of the count two years ago.

OPPORTUNISTIC LATE LINGERERS

Unlike the previous group that must survive the whole winter, this group of species leave as the winter becomes more severe. They seem to stay as far north as the availability of food will allow. None stay through the whole winter although there is considerable variation both between species and within species as to when they leave. A warm December resulting in large amounts of ice-free water and marshes at count time should increase their numbers.

Great Egret: Not recorded in the 70's but now averaging 3 birds a year. A species that breeds in the state and regularly winters just to our south. The larger numbers on the last two counts would seem to indicate a response to warmer more ice-free conditions during those two Decembers.

American Oystercatcher: Not even recorded from the state in the early 1970's, this species is now a regular breeder and some individuals stay north long enough to be counted in December.

Red Knot: Not recorded in the 70's and now occurring at intervals. There is no clear correlation between numbers and warm Decembers.

Sanderling: An uncommon count bird in the 70's and fairly steady in the high 200's since the mid 80's.

Dunlin: Like the Sanderling much less common in the 70's, but its population has remained more or less the same since mid-80's, averaging 900+.

The populations of the above three species of sandpipers show no close correlation with warm December temperatures, so either they represent a population increase or extension of early wintering range north. They will stay longer than the Great Egret.

Eastern Phoebe: Although we are dealing with small numbers of birds there has been a real increase in the regularity and the numbers of sightings.

LOST NON-HEARTY SPECIES

These are the species that should respond most strongly to a warm December. They usually succumb to the first cold snap as they are not only poorly adapted to withstand cold weather, but most of their food supply has also vanished.

There are more warblers on the counts, but the sample size is not large enough to convince us that there has been a real change. Other than Yellow-rumped Warbler numbers which have increased slightly, the total warbler numbers increased by about the same amount. If we take out the Yellowthroat (decline) and the Yellow-breasted Chat (steady), then the warbler count increases from 17 to 41 with Orange-crowned Warbler, Pine Warbler and Palm Warbler making up most of the difference.

HALF-HEARTY SPECIES

We initially felt that this group would show significant increases in response to a warm December. These are usually optimistic winter residents that do not survive the whole winter. Each year a new crop of recruits arrive. Their numbers are not determined, like Carolina Wren, by how successful the previous winter's residents were but on the breeding success of the species in that particular year. On reflection one sees that the situation is much more complex. If the individual is hardy enough to survive into January in a normal or even a fairly serious winter, the temperature in December is going to make no difference in the Christmas Count numbers—the same numbers arrive each year and survive till mid-January no matter what sort of December we have. Some individuals of some species do survive the winter. Since individuals tend to return to the same wintering area each year, the survival of some individuals would result in their return or the return of their offspring in following winters. Gray Catbird and Hermit Thrush are possible examples of this scenario since some individuals do survive the winter and since their Christmas Count numbers have tripled over the past 20 years.

WARMER WINTERS?

Have we convinced you the winters are getting warmer? Have we convinced ourselves? Maybe. For each species that might be responding to warmer winters or the later arrival of winter there is also some other factor. If the total population had been higher in the 1970's would there have been more individuals on the Christmas Count? Could the Red-bellied Woodpecker have expanded its range in the 1970's or were the cold winters a limiting factor? A number of species seen to have responded to warmer Decembers. Gadwall, Ring-necked Duck and others are dependent upon open water and would be absent or in greatly reduced numbers if all the ponds were frozen. All the late lingerers seem to be responding to warmer early winter temperatures. Even Northern Flicker and American Robin numbers may be correlated with a later start to winter.

The increase in Carolina Wrens may reflect an increased tolerance to winter conditions, but a large part of the increase seems attributable to a trend toward warmer winters. The northward movement of Turkey Vulture and Fish Crow may also be mainly a response to warmer weather.

The evidence from non-hearty and half-hearty species is not conclusive but there is support for a warming trend.

We don't even want to predict what a continuation of this trend would produce. We've made enough errors in the preceding pages.

DECLINING SPECIES

We will not spend a lot of space on these, but in addition to the aforementioned increases, there have been some spectacular declines.

Canvasback: A species that has declined steadily from the early 80's. The cause is not known. Other sea ducks have also declined. All three species of scoters have declined. Greater Scaup was the third most common species in the 1970's (Appendix I) but its numbers declined after that.

Western Sandpiper: Counts of six and eleven were tallied in the 1970's, but there have only been three sightings in the last 15 years. This is way out of line with the increase of other sandpiper species and unexplained at this time.

Dickcissel: Although grassland species have never been common on the counts, this species, as well as Vesper Sparrow and Grasshopper Sparrow, have declined sharply. This may reflect decline of habitat in the eastern United States or in the case of Dickcissels, extensive pest control measures on the South American wintering grounds.

Evening Grosbeak: Historically (pre 1960's) this was an irruption species like the crossbills and one could wait 20 years between good flights. It then became a regular winter visitor and one of the most common feeder birds until 1988-89 when 2 birds were seen on Connecticut Christmas counts. It rebounded slightly the next year, but then sank back and the total count is often fewer than 100 birds.

All winter finches except Redpoll have declined (Pine Grosbeak, both crossbills, and Pine Siskin).

1. 25 Shirley St., Naugatuck, CT 06770.
2. 76 Diamond St., New Haven, CT 06515-1313.

APPENDIX I - TOP TEN SPECIES 1970-94

Average yearly total to nearest 1000 follows species name

1970-74		1980-84		1990-94	
Starling	188	Starling	225	Starling	127
Herring Gull	42	Herring Gull	47	Canada Goose	39
Greater Scaup	15	American Crow	34	Herring Gull	31
House Sparrow	14	**Canada Goose**	39	American Crow	31
American Crow	13	**Ring-billed Gull**	15	Ring-blled Gull	21
Mallard	11	Chichadee	13	**House Finch**	16
Black Duck	10	Mallard	12	Chickadee	13
Rock Dove	9	*House Sparrow*	11	Mallard	13
Chickadee	8	**Junco**	11	Junco	11
Mourning Dove	7	Rock Dove	9	Rock Dove	9

Notes: First appearance on top ten list. (Bold)
Last appearance on top ten list. (Italics)

APPENDIX II

Increase in average yearly count from 1970-74 to 1990-94

	Increase				90-94	70-74
	2X	3X	4X	5X+	Ave.	Ave.
Red-throated Loon	x				89	45
Common Loon		x			92	30
Double-crested Cormorant				x	92	1
Great Blue Heron		x			319	89
Great Egret				New	3	0
Mute Swan	x				1635	569
Brant				x	130	6
Barnacle Goose				New	3	0
Canada Goose				x	39256	6515
Wood Duck	x				65	25
Green-winged Teal	x				99	49
Gadwall				x	346	47
Eurasian Wigeon		Low			1	0
Ring-necked Duck			x		992	226
Hooded Merganser			x		918	196
Common Merganser				x	4558	255
Red-breasted Merganser	x				2369	1045
Turkey Vulture				x	131	1
Osprey	Low				1	0
Bald Eagle				x	35	3
Northern Harrier		x			72	21
Sharp-shinned Hawk				x	120	8
Cooper's Hawk				x	44	4
Red-shouldered Hawk	x				28	13
Red-tailed Hawk			x		691	148
Merlin		x			4	1
Peregrine	x				3	1
Wild Turkey				New	404	0
American Oystercatcher			New		2	0
Greater Yellowlegs	x				15	7
Ruddy Turnstone	x				115	39
Red Knot				New	7	0
Sanderling				x	297	26
Dunlin				x	927	169

APPENDIX II (Cont'd)

Increase in average yearly count from 1970-74 to 1990-94

	Increase				90-94	70-74
	2X	3X	4X	5X+	Ave.	Ave.
Bonaparte's Gull	x				834	351
Ring-billed Gull				x	20835	3802
Lesser Black-backed Gull				New	3	0
Monk Parakeet				New	186	1
Eastern Screech Owl		x			201	57
Great Horned Owl				x	141	27
Barred Owl	x				34	15
Northern Saw-Whet Owl			x		30	1
Belted Kingfisher	x				275	118
Red-bellied Woodpecker				x	486	14
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker				x	32	6
Northern Flicker				x	730	125
Pileated Woodpecker	x				62	30
Eastern Phoebe				Low	5	1
American Crow	x				30578	13267
Fish Crow				x	142	19
Tufted Titmouse	x				4775	2321
Red-breasted Nuthatch			x		384	95
Carolina Wren				x	761	42
Winter Wren	x				63	28
Golden-crowned Kinglet	x				785	268
Eastern Bluebird				x	1561	202
Hermit Thrush			x		145	36
American Robin				x	9590	808
Gray Catbird		x			98	32
Northern Mockingbird		x			1863	533
American Pipit	x				60	27
Cedar Waxwing				x	3677	362
Orange-crowned Warbler				Low	1	0
Palm Warbler	x				4	2
White-throated Sparrow	x				7458	3179
House Finch				x	15530	2384
Common Redpoll			x		107	24

APPENDIX III

Decrease in average yearly count from 1970-74 to 1990-94

	Decrease				90-94	70-74
	1/2	1/3	1/4	1/5-	Ave.	Ave.
Pied-billed Grebe	x				37	82
Blue-winged Teal		Low			0	1
Canvasback				x	421	2739
Redhead				x	3	16
Greater Scaup	x				6138	15199
Common Eider				x	1	8
Black Scoter	x				20	54
Surf Scoter		x			232	762
White-winged Scoter				x	405	2117
Rough-legged Hawk		x			4	12
American Kestrel	x				67	159
Ruffed Grouse	x				63	169
Northern Bobwhite		x			11	35
Clapper Rail	x				5	12
King Rail				Low	0	1
Sora Rail	x				1	2
American Coot	x				418	848
Western Sandpiper				x	0	3
Laughing Gull		x			2	6
Short-eared Owl		x			2	7
Brown Thrasher		x			9	26
Loggerhead Shrike					0	2
Dickcissel				Low	0	1
Vesper Sparrow				x	3	15
Grasshopper Sparrow				Low	0	1
Seaside Sparrow				Low	0	4
Fox Sparrow	x				54	118
Lapland Longspur				x	2	13
Red-winged Blackbird	x				1592	3388
Eastern Meadowlark	x				103	201
Northern Oriole	x				2	5
Pine Grosbeak			x		11	47
Purple Finch	x				213	455
Red Crossbill			x		5	20
White-winged Crossbill				x	0	15
Pine Siskin	x				139	275
Evening Grosbeak				x	131	1935

MORTALITY OF CONNECTICUT BIRDS ON ROADS AND AT BUILDINGS

Nancy A. Codoner

INTRODUCTION

Historically, shooting and habitat destruction have been major human causes of avian mortality. However, technological advances have created additional sources of mortality, including houses and motor vehicles. In 1975, Banks (American Ornithologists' Union 1975) estimated that, in the United States, about 3,500,000 birds die from window strikes each year and 57,179,000 birds are killed by vehicles each year. Although the percentage of birds killed by vehicle strikes or window strikes is not very high relative to estimates of all sources of mortality, it is unknown whether or not these kinds of mortality have increased in recent decades. Vehicle strikes would be a cause of mortality which did not exist before this century, and window strikes would have risen throughout this century parallel to the increasing number of buildings.

Klem (1989) performed experiments in order to study bird window strikes. He concluded that most strikes occur in areas of higher human population density. In particular, areas with bird feeders have higher strike rates. Birds collide with both clear and reflective windows, and collisions occur both in new man-made structures and in structures 100 years old. Klem (1989) also concluded that window strikes do not depend on season, time of day, weather, age, sex, window type, or habitat.

Fremlin (1985) attempted to explain why birds collide with cars. His argument was based on the fact that most birds have eyes on the side of the head instead of in front. As a result, the avian range of binocular vision is usually only a few degrees, whereas people have binocular vision which covers 100 degrees. Thus, a bird's field of binocular vision is substantially inferior relative to people. Fremlin (1985) stated that if a bird is flying at a diagonal towards traffic and on a "collision course", then it sees the oncoming car with only one eye. Because the car image in the retina does not move relative to its background, a bird continues to follow the collision course and eventually collides with the car. However, if the bird is not on a "collision course", then the car image appears to move and the bird can avoid a strike.

This argument seems valid for passerines, but may be questionable for birds of prey. Raptors have eyes in the front of the head, very close together in order to have accurate binocular vision that allows birds

of prey hunting success. If Fremlin's (1985) hypothesis is correct, then there should be few, if any, birds of prey which are hit by cars.

In the present study, I have attempted to determine whether or not there have been trends in these mortalities according to either time or species. Have the relative mortality rates of birds due to window strikes or collisions with vehicles remained the same? I hypothesized that both window strikes and car strikes have increased with time as a result of new buildings and more vehicles on the road.

METHODS

Two sets of data were used for this research. The first data set came from the University of Connecticut study skin collection, which includes about 9,500 specimens. This collection, located in Storrs, Connecticut, had birds obtained from all parts of the state. Each bird is labeled with identification and any information on the death or condition of the bird when brought to the University. I examined each individual and recorded the species plus any information on cause of death. The University sample size is the number of specimens that had information regarding cause of mortality. This study is limited to mortality from 1960 to 1993 because there are an insufficient number of records from earlier decades.

The second data set was taken from records at The Nature Center for Environmental Activities in Westport, Connecticut. Records were examined from the years 1985, 1987, 1990, and 1992. Nature Center records went as far back as 1970, but we were unable to find the paperwork for years before 1985. The four years used were chosen to provide data to represent the last decade. Sample size for the Nature Center birds is the total number of birds received there during those particular years. Because the Center is a rehabilitation facility, most birds were admitted alive. Thus, the Nature Center data include birds which were released as well as ones that died.

The data were analyzed in many different ways. To test for changing trends in mortality, the ratio of vehicle strikes to window strikes was calculated for specific periods of time. A chi-square test was performed to determine whether or not there was a significant difference in the relative frequency of vehicle and building strikes in recent decades. Data were separately analyzed to compare Nature Center data with University data and collectively to compare the past (1962-1977) and recent years (1978-1993).

From a combination of University and Nature Center data, the months in which vehicle strikes and window strikes occurred were recorded. For comparative purposes, monthly data were calculated in percentages and also combined into seasonal data for further

analyses.

In addition, the different species and taxonomic families were also analyzed. This information was evaluated with respect to type of mortality and frequency. Data from the University and Nature Center were combined for these evaluations. Throughout this study, the following abbreviations are used:

CRS = Car strike (includes all motor vehicles)
WNS = Window strike
CRS-related or car-related = Car strike + dead on road (DOR) + found on road (FOR)
WNS-related or window-related = Window strike + building strike (BLS) + dead near building (DNB) + found near building (FNB)

RESULTS

University Data - In the University collection, 397 birds had information on their deaths. Among the causes of death were shooting, trapping, collisions, and poisoning. However, six of these birds lacked information on the date and thus did not qualify for the study. The total number of birds having car-related deaths was 187, and the total deaths in window-related incidents were 134. The final sample number, which encompasses all mortalities that were car-related and window-related, totaled 321.

Nature Center Data - In the four years evaluated, the total number of birds was 1610. Of these, 125 were admitted due to car-related incidents, and 204 birds were admitted because of window-related incidents. The total number of birds involved in these types of collisions was 229. An additional breakdown of the Nature Center data is provided in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Nature Center data for individual years

	1985	1987	1990	1992
TOTAL ADMITTED	424	341	395	450
% CRS-RELATED	7.5	5.0	13.7	4.9
% CRS DIED	8.3	8.4	13.8	5.8
%WNS-RELATED	7.1	7.0	5.6	6.0
%WNS DIED	3.8	11.5	6.1	8.5

Time Periods - The time period from 1962 through 1977 is only represented by University specimens. For the years 1978-1993, both

University and Nature Center data are used. For the period from 1962 through 1977, the ratio of car-related deaths to window-related deaths equaled 1.68 in contrast to an equivalent ratio of 1.25 for the later period. The calculated ratios are listed in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Car strike and window strike data and ratios for each source.

	1962-1977 UNIV.	1978-1993 UNIV.	1985-1992 N.C.	1978-1993 UNIV.+N.C.
TOTAL CRS	9	47	81	128
TOTAL WNS	20	76	137	213
RATIO	0.45	0.6184	0.5912	0.6009
TOT CRS+DOR	62	125	—	—
TOT WNS+DNB+FOR	37	97	—	—
RATIO	1.6757	1.2887	—	—
TOT CRS+DOR+FOR	—	—	249	374
TOT WNS+DNB+BLS+FNB	—	—	203	300
RATIO	—	—	1.2267	1.2467

Months/Seasons - For evaluating mortalities by month and season, I combined University and Nature Center data. The highest mortality from window strikes occurred in October, September, May, November, and July in that order. Seasonally, car strikes were predominant in late spring to early summer (May-July) and in the fall (September-November). Figure 1 gives the percentages of the mortalities for each month.

Species/Families - For the evaluation of species and families, combined data from the University and the Nature Center were used. The study included 117 species belonging to over 40 taxonomic families. Table 3 lists the species most frequently involved in window and car-related incidents, and also provides the species with the most confirmed window strikes and car strikes. Confirmed strikes are the strikes which are known to be from vehicles or windows. Table 4 lists those families that had the most incidents in car-related incidents and window-related incidents.

DISCUSSION

The University data do not necessarily give good representation of either car strikes or window strikes because of possible unknown biases in the collection of specimens. For example, if certain people salvaged more window kills but road kills remained untouched, then

TABLE 3

Species most frequently involved in car strikes and window strikes.

HIGHEST			
CRS RELATED	CONFIRMED CRS	WNS RELATED	CONFIRMED WNS
Rock Dove *Columba livia*	Pine Grosbeak	Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus*	Sharp-shinned Hawk
Pine Grosbeak *Pinicola enucleator*	European Starling	Downy Woodpecker *Picoides pubescens*	Downy Woodpecker
Northern Oriole *Icterus galbula*	East.Screech Owl	Wood Thrush *Hylocichla mustelina*	Wood Thrush
European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*	Rock Dove	Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus*	Northern Flicker
Eastern Screech-Owl *Otus asio*	Northern Flicker	Ruffed Grouse *Bonasa umbellus*	Ruffed Grouse
Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus*	Barred Owl	Black-cap. Chickadee *Parus atricapillus*	Cedar Waxwing
Barred Owl *Strix varia*		Cedar Waxwing *Bombycilla cedrorum*	
Blue Jay *Cyanocitta cristata*		Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura*	
Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura*		Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*	
American Robin *Turdus migratorius*		Comm. Yellowthroat *Geothylpis trichas*	

TABLE 4

Families most frequently involved in car strikes and window strikes.

HIGHEST CAR-RELATED	HIGHEST WINDOW-RELATED
Doves	Accipiters, Thrushes
Grosbeaks	Warblers
Thrushes	Sapsuckers
Warblers	Titmice and Chickadees
Orioles	Finches
Starlings	Sparrows
Woodpeckers	Grosbeaks, Woodpeckers
Mimic Thrushes	Doves, Grouse
Sparrows	Mimic Thrushes
Titmice and Chickadees	

the final totals might be biased. The majority of bird specimens at the University were found dead and brought in so the actual death was not observed. For the purposes of this study, the birds found dead on a road were assumed to be from car strikes and birds found dead near buildings were assumed to be from window strikes. Although reliance on locations as an indicator may be a source for error, I suspect the percent of error will not be high.

The data for the individual years at the Nature Center showed no trend in car-related or window-related incidents. There were also no trends in the number of birds admitted to the center, or in the percent of birds that died from strike incidents. No trend was expected in these data because the time span covers only seven years, too short to detect possible long-term trends. In addition, the data from the Nature Center represent only southwestern Connecticut, and no other sections of the state. However, the Nature Center data are important because they give a more accurate representation for recent years.

In comparing time periods, the ratio of car strikes to window strikes decreased from 1962-1977 to 1978-1993. But, this trend is not statistically significant according to the chi-square results. Thus, there has been no drastic change in the relative frequency of car and window strikes in relation to each other. Unfortunately, I have no way of determining whether or not mortality from these sources has risen or fallen. By regrouping data from Table 2, I obtained the results in Table 5.

TABLE 5

Percentages of car strikes and window strikes.

	1962-1977	1978-1993
% Car-related	46.6	51.13
% Confirmed car strike	6.8	16.3
% Window-related	27.8	41.68
% Confirmed window strike	15	28.13

*Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% because numbers were taken from total birds considered, not just those which were involved in car strikes and window strikes.

Any possible increase in car-related incidents and window-related incidents might be explained by the additional number of cars on the road and the growing number of houses. Although these two factors have both risen, increase in window strikes was larger than in car strikes. There may be many explanations for the difference in numbers. One hypothesis to explain the greater increase of window-related incidents might be that the number of buildings has grown more rapidly than the quantity of roads. If mortality of birds is higher on roads which are longer and straighter compared to roads that are

shorter with slower speed limits, and if the increase in human population has resulted in the most recent new roads being smaller, residential ones, then this might account for a relative decrease in car strikes. The main roads and highways, which allow faster speeds and more cars, have generally been in place for decades and in some regions there is not much room for more of them. Higher traffic volume should result in higher mortality rates, however.

Consider the area within which birds may suffer strikes with cars or houses. The area around a main road will remain the same despite an increase in the number of cars. Although strikes will most likely increase because there are more cars on the road, these cars are still restricted in where they may go. Thus, the area for car strikes is hardly changed. However, if many new houses are built behind an original row of houses, then the area of potential window strikes has just increased substantially because there is additional surface. Thus, it is proposed that window strike numbers increased more than car strike numbers because of locality and area.

Another explanation to consider is the extent to which road kills have been collected in the past and present. Because wildlife rehabilitation has drastically grown in recent years, an injured bird on the road is perhaps more likely to be picked up today than it would have 20 to 30 years ago. This study relies on what was brought in at given times, and it appears that the sample has increased in comparison with that of earlier decades. As a result, the numbers of birds affected by cars may be significantly less than we think.

In evaluating the months in which mortalities occurred, I expected the highest rates to be in March-May and September-November due to the spring and fall migrations. However, the results for CRS months were surprising. I did not expect June and July to have high CRS rates because there should be less activity after the breeding season (Klem 1989). A possible explanation for high rates in the earlier part of the summer is that there is more foraging activity in order to feed the young. As a result, it is necessary to fly more, which increases the chance of crossing roads and being hit. Furthermore, many summer casualties might be young birds. In this study it was not possible to determine critically the ages of the birds for so many species.

The month of March was highly skewed in CRS numbers because of a flock of 18 Pine Grosbeaks which were hit by a truck. Otherwise, the percent for CRS in March would have been 3.8% instead of 9.6%. The fall migration pattern did indeed give September-November the highest numbers in both CRS and WNS categories.

There were a few surprises in the results regarding the species and

families which were represented in this study. For CRS mortalities, I did not expect to see any waterbirds from aquatic families to be in the study. However, two herons, a cormorant, and a plover were involved in car-related incidents. Another important point is the presence of the Eastern Screech-Owl and the Barred Owl on the CRS list. According to Fremlin's (1985) hypothesis, binocular vision is the key to car strikes. The passerines have little binocular vision, and birds of prey have a higher degree of binocular vision due to the location of their eyes. Hypothetically, raptors should not appear on the list of car strikes. Yet the owls are there. Their presence on the list does not support nor refute Fremlin's idea. My data do not give information on the circumstances in which these birds were hit. For instance, both owls are active day or night, and the exact time of the strike is unknown. Additionally, these birds will also scavenge on the roads, so it is possible that they were hit while sitting in the road.

For WNS mortalitites, I expected Blue Jay and Northern Cardinal to be among the species with the highest death rates. These birds are usually found at feeders, and Klem's (1989) study found that bird mortalities from window strikes were highest near bird feeders. However, neither Blue Jay nor Northern Cardinal were listed in window strike lists.

Another unexpected result in the highest WNS-related list was Sharp-Shinned Hawk. These hawks frequent bird feeders, where their prey is in high densities and the hawk's chances of eating are much greater. The hawks are killed when colliding with windows or buildings often while in pursuit of other birds. It was not a surprise that Sharp-Shinned Hawk appeared in the list, but it was a surprise that this bird of prey was at the top of the list. I had expected either Northern Flicker or Cedar Waxwing to top the list. Based on my experience in wildlife rehabilitation, flocks of as many as 5 to 20 waxwings have flown into windows.

In comparison with Klem's (1989) data, four species are on both his and my list of highest window strike frequencies: Wood Thrush, Northern Flicker, Cedar Waxwing, and Common Yellowthroat. Klem's study encompassed the United States and Canada, whereas my study concentrated on Connecticut. Unfortunately, neither study explains why these birds are among the most likely to strike windows.

Dunn (1993) studied bird mortality in one winter at homes which had bird feeders. Her study encompassed North America, and was executed by a survey from Project Feeder Watch. Dunn stated that 0.85 birds/house/winter in her sample number died from window strikes. At the top of her list of species killed by striking windows was

Pine Siskin, and among the other species listed were Northern Cardinal and Blue Jay. The only birds Dunn listed which also appear on my list are Downy Woodpecker and Mourning Dove .

At the level of bird families, the accipiters were a surprise in topping the list of window-related incidents. All other represented families were expected to be on the list. Results were also as expected for the list of car-related cases.

CONCLUSION

Between the periods 1962-1977 and 1978-1993, window-related strikes had a relatively larger increase than the car-related ones. This might be a consequence of the distribution of buildings. Additional houses expand the area of potential window strikes, whereas the additional cars remain in a possibly less expanded area of roads. Thus, the greater area of housing might yield a relatively greater number of window-related cases.

With regard to the time of year, bird strikes with cars and windows are most frequent in the spring and in the fall. These are the major migration periods for the majority of birds, and the greater activitiy in unfamiliar areas increases the chances of hitting something. In autumn, September-November are the months of peak rates of both car strikes and window strikes. Window strikes in the spring are also concentrated within the migration period, the highest concentrations being in April and May. However, a higher rate of car strikes occurs in May-July, towards the early part of summer. This is the period in which adult activity is high for care of the young and when young are leaving the nest.

Car strikes and car-related incidents seem to be predominant in species which are adapted to high density human populations. These species include Rock Dove, European Starling, Eastern Screech- Owl, and Northern Flicker. Because they are relatively used to human activity, the birds frequently occur in areas which include main roads. In addition, the species listed are present throughout the year, with only the flicker being somewhat less common in winter. Although the most conspicuous activity is in spring during breeding season, these birds occur all year and are the most likely to be killed by cars in Connecticut.

Window strikes and window-related cases primarily involve migrants and species which live further away from concentrated human populations. This type of mortality occurs near residential areas where human population is less dense but houses are still numerous. All birds are subject to collisions with windows, with the possible exception of shorebirds and waterfowl. The habits of these species do

not ordinarily draw them near houses.

In conclusion, almost any bird is subject to a car strike or a window strike. The rates seem to vary seasonally and to differ for different species. Although these mortalitites do not affect bird populations as much as do habitat destruction or shooting, car strikes and window strikes take their toll. Each mortality has presumably increased within the past decades and seems likely to continue to rise with increasing human activity. According to some theories, mortality increases from one set of causes are compensated by decreases in other causes. It would be of interest to know to what extent such compensation occurs in the case of vehicle and building strikes.

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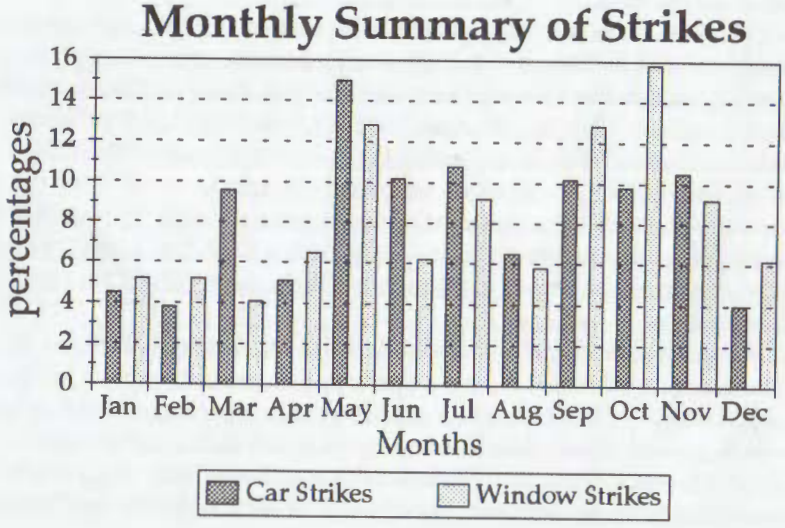
Figure 1



BOOK REVIEW

Wayne R. Petersen

THE ATLAS OF BREEDING BIRDS OF CONNECTICUT. 1994. Louis R. Bevier, editor. Illustrated by Michael DiGiorgio. Published by State Geological and Natural History Survey of Connecticut, Dept. of Environmental Protection, Hartford, CT. 461 pages. $36.95 cloth.

The introduction of this latest addition to the ornithology of Connecticut states, "This survey of Connecticut's breeding birds was initiated to determine what species of birds nest in Connecticut and what parts of the state are used by each of these species." With this end in mind, *THE ATLAS OF BREEDING BIRDS OF CONNECTICUT* was admirably successful.

As more and more state breeding bird atlas projects are completed and published, opportunities for comparison are considerable. In this regard, Connecticut birders should be justifiably proud that their new breeding bird atlas, which falls only five years on the heels of a new state bird book, compares favorably with the plethora of other atlas works that have appeared in the last few years.

Despite 160 years of ornithological history in the Nutmeg State, there has heretofore never been an attempt to assess its breeding bird populations. With this in mind, groundwork for the atlas was initiated by a group of interested birdwatchers, ornithologists, and Connecticut citizens in the fall of 1981. The National Audubon Society and its statewide affiliates of local chapters, the Audubon Council of Connecticut, organized the project in early 1982. The actual field work for the project was undertaken during the years 1982-1986.

Using criteria now well established on the breeding bird atlas circuit, over 500 volunteers censused 117 quads (i.e., 596 atlas blocks) within each of eight designated state regions. Regional coordinators worked closely with volunteers in their area to insure the best coverage possible during the atlas period. Unlike some states that have used priority blocks instead of total coverage for atlassing, either because the area of their state was too large or because their birder population was too small, Connecticut effectively had some coverage in every one of its atlas blocks. In blocks having little or no coverage, "block busting" on a single day was used as a way to obtain at least some level of coverage toward the end of the atlas period.

By the end of the 1982-1986 period, 173 species (plus two hybrids) were confirmed as breeding in the state, and a grand total of 189 species exhibited some level of breeding behavior (i.e., possible,

probable, confirmed). Species formerly nesting in the state but not confirmed during the atlas period were Peregrine Falcon, Gray Partridge, Short-eared Owl, Sedge Wren, Dickcissel, and Henslow's Sparrow. Not surprisingly, four of these are grassland species - a suite seemingly declining or absent from more and more areas throughout the Northeast. The Northern Harrier, another grassland species, was among species determined to be only possible or probable breeders in Connecticut.

As is so often the case with atlas projects, new breeding species were added to the state list. In this instance, Black Skimmer and Olive-sided Flycatcher represented an interesting meeting of northern and southern breeders in the same region. Besides providing evidence of new breeders in the state, the project also highlighted the need for careful future monitoring of a number of species (e.g., colonial waterbirds, raptors, Golden-winged Warbler, Grasshopper Sparrow, etc.).

A reflection of the observer effort invested in the atlas project is indicated by the fact that 235 blocks recorded 75+ species, with an average number 71 species per block. Thirty-five blocks had over 100 species, while only 28 blocks recorded fewer than 50 species. The total atlas database contained 42,629 records!

Certainly as interesting as all the numbers in *THE ATLAS OF BREEDING BIRDS OF CONNECTICUT* are the species accounts. These artfully crafted and carefully annotated accounts are authored by some of Connecticut's top field ornithologists. Each account includes an introduction describing each breeding species' general status in the state, followed by a discussion of its habitat preferences and the specific results of the atlas. There is also a separate and cogent discussion of "Interpreting Distributions of Breeding Birds" by George A. Clark, Jr. Species confirmed only at the possible level are presented in a separate appendix, as are the block totals for bird species, Connecticut Breeding Bird Survey trends, and a complete list of scientific names for all plants and animal species listed in the text.

One of my particular likes about the published results of the Connecticut atlas is the reader friendly quality of the type size and map figures. Certain other such projects with which I am familiar either leave the reader squinting, or unable to decipher the detail desired for reading maps with this level of detail. On the other hand, I miss not having a series of transparent overlays to superimpose on the maps to reveal any species' correlation with physiographic regions, elevation, forest type, temperature regime, etc. And how about a special map depicting the location of major coastal waterbird colonies? A final distraction to the reader is the painful amount of

blank space accompanying certain of the accounts (e.g., Black Skimmer), along with the variable way the type tapers to accommodate the somewhat stylized artwork (e.g., the Osprey account).

Despite these minor criticisms, Louis Bevier as Editor of the project, and all of the birders who contributed their time and energy to the atlas project should be pleased with the finished product. It is a book that anyone with an interest in Connecticut or New England birds should own.

Massachusetts Audubon Society, Center for Biological Conservation, Lincoln, MA 01773.

RARE RECORD REPORTS NEEDED!

Mark Szantyr

In the most recent issue of The Connecticut Warbler (Vol. 15), No. 2, I came across a number of reports in Connecticut Field Notes and in the Christmas Count Summary that are of great interest to the Connecticut Rare Records Committee (CRRC). These articles include reports of birds that appear on the list of review species, as published by this committee, and also on the latest COA Checklist (species noted with an asterisk). As secretary of the CRRC, I am asking anyone with information about these sightings to please submit it to our committee.

The most important duty of the Rare Records Committee is to maintain the historical record for those bird species that occur in our state. It is important to gather as many reports of review species as possible so that an accurate profile is developed for a species' occurrence, age/sex of individuals, duration of stay, location and frequency of occurrence. All greatly increase our understanding of these in-state rarities. A review of this information may give clues to many things, including where and when a species may be located in the future.

In evaluating these reports, the CRRC determines if enough conclusive information is provided to support scrutiny, not only now or in the short term, but for the long haul. All of us, observers, reporters, photographers, and committee members, are creating an historical record and we must recognize the responsibility that accompanies such an endeavor. Whether or

not the committee decides that the information provided substantiates the report, please know that your report goes into the file for that species as part of a permanent record and is available for review at any time. It has happened that additional information has come forth, or that new field I.D. information was discovered that allowed for a more accurate appraisal of a rarities report. These files are always active and your contributions to this file are critical.

Rare Records Report Forms are not necessary. In fact, a clear, concise account of the occurrence and a good, thorough description of the bird, in your own words and without the aid of a field guide, are preferable.

If anyone has any questions about the Rare Records Committee or needs any information about reporting a rarity, please feel free to contact me. As they say on the Rare Bird Alert, "We need Reports!" My address is:

Secretary, CRRC, 2C Yale Rd., Storrs, CT 06268

Rarities listed in The Connecticut Warbler Vol. XV, No. 2 that are not accompanied by Rarities Reports:

Townsend's Solitaire
Pawling, NY/Hidden Valley, CT CBC

Eared Grebe
Cemetery Pond, Litchfield, Sept. 17-18 (DT,GH).
Bantam Lake, Morris, Nov. 13-26. (DR,DT).

King Eider
Lighthouse Point, New Haven, Nov. 8-25. (RE et al.)

Swainson's Hawk
Botsford Hill, Bridgewater, Sept. 10. (JK,NC).

Black-legged Kittiwake
Harkness Memorial, Waterford, Nov. 28. (DP et al.).

Western Kingbird
Lighthouse Point, New Haven, Sept. 19, (GH).
Sherwood Island St. Pk., Westport, Sept. 20 (RS).

Clay-colored Sparrow
Hammonasset Beach St. Pk., Madison, Sept. 25, (JG,SK).
Cove Island Park, Stamford, Sept. 26, (PD,FM).
Bluff Point, Groton, Oct. 1, (DP).
Ansonia, Oct. 15, (JB).

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES DECEMBER 1, 1994 — FEBRUARY 28, 1995

Greg Hanisek

Editor's Comment: Reports of rare or unusual bird species in Connecticut (see latest COA Field List) require that documentation be submitted to the Secretary of the Rare Records Committee (Mark Szantyr, 2C Yale Rd., Storrs, CT 06268), if they are to be included in the Connecticut Field Notes.

Call it the Winter That Wasn't. It wasn't cold, it wasn't snowy and it wasn't marked by the eruption of northern species that made the frigid white winter of 1993-94 so exciting.

Precipitation was above normal for each of the three months, but almost all of it fell in the form of rain. The only major snowstorm dropped up to a foot on February 3-4. The amount of precipitation decreased as the season progressed, from 1.48 inches above normal in December to 0.01 above normal in February. The monthly totals were 5.39 inches in December, 3.84 in January and 3.24 in February. Temperatures were well above normal. The December average was 34.4° F., compared to a norm of 30.0° and 29.7° the previous year. January's average was 31.1°, compared to a norm of 26.6° and a bone-chilling 17.6° last year. Things got a bit nippier in February, which averaged 25.1°, compared to a norm of 28.9°. But last year was colder at 23.1°.

From the birder's standpoint, this made for a somewhat lackluster season. Open water and minimal snow cover allowed birds to range widely, so there were few notable concentrations. From the birds' survival standpoint, this was undoubtedly a good thing. Above normal numbers of several species, such as Hooded Merganser and American Coot, were most likely a result of the mild weather. So was the ability of vagrants such as Lark Sparrow and Mountain Bluebird, plus a long list of half-hardy species, to linger deep into the season. Surely, common birds such as Carolina Wren and Eastern Bluebird benefited as well.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Loons and grebes offered a mixed bag. Red-throated Loons were widespread in small numbers with a high of 15 February 15 off Griswold Point, Old Lyme (DP). An inland bird was at Lake Waramaug, New Preston, December 18 (DT). Common Loons were scarce. The largest concentration was 20 December 4

at Harkness Memorial State Park, Waterford (CW), but those soon dispersed. Horned Grebes were better represented, with two late inland lingerers December 26 at Barkhamsted Reservoir, Barkhamsted (EH,RN) and decent numbers building along the coast late in the season. The best concentration was 110 February 18 at Sherwood Island State Park (hereafter SISP), Westport (RS). Pied-billed Grebes took advantage of open water to winter at Bantam Lake, Morris (GH), Lordship marshes, Stratford (RN et al.), Smith Cove on the Thames River in Waterford (CE,JG), and in Niantic (JG). A total of at least seven Red-necked Grebes were reported between Greenwich and Westport (RS,PD et al.) and in Old Saybrook (JH).

Northern Gannets continued their recent incursions into Long Island Sound, with five off Griswold Point January 1 (DP) and one far west at Southport February 10 (CB). Two American Bitterns at Milford Point December 3 may have wintered (TK,SM), and one at Hammonasset Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP), Madison, Feb. 23 surely did (Pat Bacon fide DR). There were reports of 10 lingering Great Egrets from Greenwich to Waterford, with the latest January 13 at SISP (RS). Up to five Black-crowned Night Herons tarried to January 3 in Westport (FM) and two stayed until January 16 at SISP millpond (FM).

A probable **Tundra Swan**, the season's only report, called as it flew over New Canaan February 28 (Elaine McDaniel fide FG). The rare-but-regular **Greater White-fronted Goose** was present December 2-11 in Westport (CB et al.) and in early January in Storrs (MO,LB,CE). Snow Geese weren't much more abundant, with five through January 15 in Southbury (RN et al.) and singles from mid-February at Holly Pond, Stamford (PD) and in late February in Essex (DP). The best Brant concentrations included 54 from Groton to Stonington January 22 (JG) and 30 at Harkness State Park, February 26 (RN et al.).

The open water allowed an unusual number of Wood Ducks to winter, including an extraordinary group of 20+ in Newtown through mid-February, when they probably began spring dispersal (LF). The Green-winged Teal maximum was 100 December 4 at Milford Point, Milford (FM). Northern Pintails generated scattered reports of up to seven birds statewide. A drake **Cinnamon Teal**, origins unknown but highly suspect, was present at Milford Point from November through early January, until it was shot January 9 by a hunter (MB,m.ob.). There are no unequivocal records of wild birds for the state. A Norwalk pond

held up to three Northern Shovelers through January 4 (JJ,FM) and singles were in Southbury December 19-28 (RN) and Mansfield February 25 (MS). Burgeoning Gadwall numbers included 67 January 29 at Frash Pond, Stratford (SK), and 115 January 30 at the mouth of Oyster River, West Haven (GH,NC). The usual complement of Eurasian Wigeon included drakes at Furnace Pond, East Haven (DP); the West Haven shore (MS); and Seaside Park, Bridgeport (TK,SM). The high count of American Wigeon was 92 December 18 in Norwalk harbor (FM).

Canvasbacks were well-represented with 200+ at Frash Pond January 29 (SK) and 800+ at Smith Cove, New London in February (DP,AG). Redheads were scarce, which was normal: a hen January 15-February 28 at Holly Pond (PD,TBu); one January 28 at Old Saybrook (RBA); a drake January 30 at West Haven (GH); two February 7 at Smith Cove (DP); and three hens February 26 in West Haven (GH). The West Haven birds were in the harbor with a flock of Greater Scaup that peaked at 5,000 in late January. A smattering of Lesser Scaup included three that remained inland through mid-February at Bantam Lake (NC). The scarce **King Eider** was a seasonal highlight, with a basic-plumaged bird December 4 at Milford Point (SM,m.ob.) and another off Neck Road, Madison, for about a week beginning February 28 (GH,JHo). A Common Eider was in Milford in late December (FD,NC). Scoters were present in modest numbers all along the coast, with a good but short-lived concentration holding 30 Black Scoters and 100 Surf Scoters December 1 at Harkness (FM et al.). Christmas Counts make birders actually stop and count common species, resulting in a report of 350+ Common Goldeneyes at Milford Point December 27 (RN). A pair of Barrow's Goldeneyes were at the traditional Enfield spot on the Connecticut River January 6-February 18 (BK et al.). Others included one at Essex January 1 (JH), one at Old Saybrook January 28-31 (JH), and a pair in Westport from January 13 on (RS,m.ob.). Hooded Mergansers were everywhere, and widespread reports of Common Mergansers included 300+ on the Connecticut River at Chester on February 12 (SK). The open waters of Bantam Lake held 38 Ruddy Ducks to mid-December (LW), and 24 were at Held Pond, Weston, December 18 (FM).

RAPTORS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Lack of snow cover, plus fewer birds ganged up at feeders, had an impact on raptor observations. Certain species,

most notably Cooper's Hawks and Red-shouldered Hawks, were less conspicuous than last winter, when they were forced into the open in search of food. Early winter produced a single Rough-legged Hawk at the Hartford landfill (BK,JK), but a February influx (from which direction?) brought singles to HBSP (EN,FG), Essex (m.ob), Old Lyme (FG), Fairfield (CB), and Deep River (JHi). Northern Harrier and the declining American Kestrel wintered in decent numbers on the snowless farmland and unfrozen marshes. Reports of 10 different kestrels were received from all parts of the state, including a pair at a nest box in Storrs in late February (fide GC). The 45 harrier reports were mainly coastal as expected; three in Wallingford December 25 were the most inland (JG), and nine in Stratford February 12 also were noteworthy (MS). A huge flock of icterids at farms in Wallingford in late December attracted Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks, as well as an interesting inland report of up to two Merlins December 20-26 (DP). Other Merlins were in Mansfield December 2 (MS) and New Canaan February 27 (EJ).

Other raptor reports of note included Black Vulture: up to two throughout January at Sunny Valley Preserve in New Milford (CW); Bald Eagle: at least 14 at Shepaug Dam in Southbury (DR et al.), about 25 wintering along the Connecticut River (m.ob.), singles at various spots in the northwest (LW et al.), and one February 7 at Mansfield Hollow in the northeast (Charlene Fuller fide GC); Red-shouldered Hawk: a pair on territory February 27 in Storrs (GC,NBC); Sharp-shinned Hawk: a pair calling in Portland February 24 (ES); Northern Goshawk: December 17 in Salem (DB) and January 4 in Southbury (DR); and Peregrine: up to two in downtown Stamford (PD) and singles at Long Wharf, New Haven, December 1-4 (CW et al.), in Bridgewater Dec. 12 (CW), at Milford Point December 31 (DP) and at SISP January 7 (PB).

American Coot, virtually absent last winter, were scattered along the coast in small numbers and wintered inland in unusually big numbers. At Bantam Lake, 90 were present when winter began, and at least 70 were still there when it ended (LW et al.). At Lake Waramaug a December flock of 58 still numbered 20 at season's end (LW et al.). American Oystercatcher, an increasing species, was found on the Old Lyme and New London CBCs, as well as in Guilford January 21 (SC) and at Westbrook's Menunkatesuck Island (DG), which probably holds the state's best concentration of the regular winter species—Black-bellied Plover,

Ruddy Turnstone, Dunlin and Sanderling. Up to four reports of Greater Yellowlegs included at high of seven December 18 at Manresa Island, Norwalk (FM). Much less expected was a Lesser Yellowlegs January 1 in Bridgeport (CB). The only Red Knot report came from Harkness December 31 (DP), and 20 Purple Sandpipers were there January 1 (FM).

GULLS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A late Laughing Gull on the Norwalk Islands made the Westport CBC (Townsend Dickenson fide FM). A Common Black-headed Gull was in Stamford from January 21 on (PD, m.ob.). Iceland Gull reports came from Plainfield December 28 (DP), Stamford February 6-13 (PD et al.), and two at the Manchester landfill in January (DP et al.). An adult Glaucous Gull was at the same landfill January 9 (MS) and a first-winter one was at Oyster River February 12 (MS). The only coastal reports of Lesser Black-backed Gull involved "Old Reliable" in Stratford all winter (m.ob.) and one at Holly Pond December 27 to February 20 (PD, m.ob.). Inland, two were at the Manchester landfill January 16 (GH,NC), one was at Lake Zoar, Southbury, January 18-22 (DR) and one was at New Milford landfill December 17 (EH). The gulls were eclipsed December 3 at Milford Point by two late Forster's Terns, a species noted for tardiness and for wintering farther north than any other East Coast *Sterna* (TK,SM). One was still there the next day (FM et al.). On a more wintry note, three large alcids—probably Razorbills—were seen February 7 from the deck of the New London-Orient Point ferry as it approached the mouth of the Thames River (FM,GH). A single of the same description was seen from the ferry January 29, along with a Black-legged Kittiwake (JH), and another probable Razorbill was off SISP February 6 (FG).

A brief flurry of Snowy Owls brought singles to a Stamford yard December 16-19 (BO et al.), Milford Point December 17 (fide MB) and HBSP December 31 (fide BK). A Long-eared Owl wintered at Greenwich Point, Greenwich, (BO et al.); a roost built to seven in Fairfield by season's end (CB et al.), and one responded to a screech-owl tape on the Storrs CBC (MS). Two Short-eared Owls wintered at Silver Sands State Park in Milford, (m.ob.), and singles were at Milford Point December 3 (TK), Fairfield December 16-February 16 (CB et al.), Stratford January 30 (GH,NC) and Griswold Point February 10 (DP). A Northern Saw-whet Owl was in Plainfield December 28 (DP) and several others were found wintering in west-

ern Connecticut (LF,FM). One was found dead January 19 in North Windham (MS).

November's *Selasphorus* hummingbird, now identified as a **Rufous Hummingbird**, lingered at an East Hartford feeder until Dec. 10, when it was moved to a greenhouse for the winter (m.ob.). Open water meant plenty of Belted Kingfishers, including three in Wethersfield December 28 (SK). An excellent collection of Red-headed Woodpeckers, all present throughout the winter, included a single in Southbury (RN et al.), two in Salem (DB) and five in East Haddam (SK et al.), with breeding likely to occur at the latter two spots. In addition, four were on the Old Lyme CBC, one was in Trumbull December 29-January 2 (Douglas Edwards fide FM), and one was noted January 23 in Stonington (MS). Perhaps the abundant autumn acorn crop played a role in this extravaganza. No Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported after the Christmas Counts.

FLYCATCHER THROUGH WARBLERS

The passerine reports are dominated by half-hardy, semi-hardy and hardly-hardy species hanging around long after the party is normally over. The usual late fall reports that lap over into December were augmented this winter by a number from January and even February. The list begins with Eastern Phoebe, which seldom makes it past Christmas Count season. In addition to three in December (SM,FM,TB et al.), one was far north at Torrington January 12-28 (RB), another stayed in Washington to at least January 30 (DR), and a third was in Redding February 2 (DR). A dumpster with a scenic view of the Saugatuck River in Westport attracted a nice flock of 35+ Fish Crows February 13 (GH). Common Ravens were much harder to find than last winter, with no big concentrations. However, one was seen sporadically south of the usual haunts in Newtown and Southbury (RN,CW,DR), one was in the east in Central Village December 28 (DP) and a pair was in Ledyard February 20 (BA). Last winter Red-breasted Nuthatches were everywhere; this winter we received three reports. A House Wren was unseasonable December 28 on the Trail Wood CBC in Hampton (MS). Winter Wrens were well-represented, with six reports involving up to 15 birds, but Ruby-crowned Kinglets seemed scarce for such a mild season, with the handful of sightings all from December.

The winter's highlight was the presence of two cooperative **Mountain Bluebirds**, the state's first confirmed records. An immature female was at Guilford

Sluice, Guilford December 4 to February 4 (Tom Koronkiewicz,NP et al.) and an immature male was in Sandy Hook December 17 to February 5 (NC,LF et al.). Hermit Thrushes were widely reported, and American Robins were in good supply with 2,000+ December 1-25 in Southbury (RN), 6,000+ on the Woodbury-Roxbury Christmas Count (fide EH), and 400+ at Shepaug Dam, Southbury, January 14 to February 2 (DR). Reports of Gray Catbirds and Brown Thrashers weren't out of the ordinary, considering the mild weather. Five reports involving a total of eight American Pipits were more than normal but were all along the coast, as expected. If you wanted Starlings, you had 'em in Niantic, where a mob of 40,000+ was reported as "Quite a sight!" January 7 (DP). Northern Shrike was one species that added some winter feel to the season. Singles were in Hamden January 22-23 (AR et al.), New Milford January 29 (AT) and Deep River February 18 (SW).

It's a pretty fair warbler winter in Connecticut when you get 11 species. In addition to the usual Yellow-rumped Warblers, November's stellar **Black-throated Gray Warbler** lingered to December 15 at Byram Park, Greenwich (BO et al.). Its two companion Nashville Warblers also tarried, with at least one staying to January 3, a record late date (BO et al.). All the west-to-east traffic last fall makes one wonder where these Nashvilles came from. The westerly drift also brought an Orange-crowned Warbler to red-hot Byram Park Dec. 11 (TBu et al.) and two to Lordship December 27 (MB). A Pine Warbler remained in New Canaan until December 13 (EJ) and one visited an Uncasville feeder in February (CR). Palm Warblers were widespread with six reports of at least 15 birds, all coastal (m.ob.) A Cape May Warbler was a surprise find on the Westport CBC December 18 (FM et al.); there are only about three previous winter records. An Ovenbird, about the fifth winter record, visited a Darien feeder in December and made the Greenwich-Stamford CBC (JF,BO). A Common Yellowthroat was in Southbury December 17 to January 27 (DR) and at Easton December 18 (TB et al.). New Preston produced a tardy Wilson's Warbler December 18 (DT et al.), for about the fourth winter record. Two Yellow-breasted Chats in Mystic December 31 (JH) and one in Westport January 29-February 3 (RW,FM) rounded out the "Winter of the Warbler."

SPARROWS THROUGH WINTER FINCHES

Chipping Sparrows joined the parade of holdouts, with a high count of three December 15-20

in Southbury (RN) and one to at least January 13 at the Manchester landfill (DP,MS). A Vesper Sparrow was an excellent mid-winter find January 15 at Station 43 in South Windsor (Sam Fried fide BK). The **Lark Sparrow** that appeared October 23 in Southbury was seen at least until January 19 (m.ob.). The Ipswich race of Savannah Sparrow was at Milford Point December 27 and February 20 (SK,RN et al.), at SISP December 10 (CB), and at Harkness February 26 (RN et al.). A Sharp-tailed Sparrow was still at Milford Point December 4 (RN et al.). Six reports of 10 White-crowned Sparrows included one that made it through the winter in Stamford (PD). The only Lapland Longspurs reported were seven at Griswold Point January 1 (CT) and two that wintered at HBSP (m.ob.), along with up to 50 Snow Buntings and 45 Horned Larks (JG). The Snow Bunting high was 70 Jan. 30 at SISP (FM).

A Northern Oriole was eating rose hips in Salem January 7 (DB) and one was in Old Lyme December 12 (JH). The best Eastern Meadowlark count was three January 1 at Griswold Point (DP). The latest Rusty Blackbirds were four in Plainfield December 28 (DP) and one at the Manchester landfill January 9 (MS). The Common Grackle flock in Wallingford in late December was estimated at 30,000 (DP) and another 30,000 were moving in Preston January 29 (DP). The last of the western vagrants that made the autumn season so spectacular was a female Yellow-headed Blackbird among the Wallingford blackbird hordes from December 18-21 (JW, m.ob.).

Winter finches? Forget it. A half dozen trips through last winter's finch-rich precincts in the Northwest Corner produced nothing but four Purple Finches February 5 in Canaan (GH). Another four were reported February 13 in New Preston (LW) and one was in Storrs January 29 (MS). The remainder of the finch roster won't take long to recite: two Red Crossbills December 26 in Barkhamsted (DR,DT); single Pine Siskins December 19 in Southbury (RN) and December 18 at Westport (TR); eight Common Redpolls on the Hartford CBC; and one Evening Grosbeak February 1 at Thomaston (DR).

Exotics: A Black Swan was in Norwalk Harbor in mid-winter (FM), and a Mandarin Duck wintered in Naugatuck (JHo).

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CORRECTIONS

In Table 1 of the article "Connecticut's 1994 Fall Hawk Migration" CW15-1, page 7, the heading November 1994 should read October 1994.

In the article "Coasting Gulls Offshore", CW15-1, page 22, third paragraph, should read, J. Christopher Haney - 2 places.

In the article "Connecticut Christmas Bird Counts 1994-1995", CW15-2, page 57 under SM, American Goldfinch should read 177 and Evening Grosbeak should be blank, denoting none.

Wanted: Someone to pick up *The Connecticut Warbler* at the Printer in New Haven, affix labels and mail it in Fairfield. Please contact Betty Kleiner, Editor, at 5 Flintlock Ridge, Simsbury, CT 06070 or call (203) 658-5670, if you are willing to help.

ANSWER TO PHOTO CHALLENGE 13

Red-shouldered Hawk, 12 March 1995, Stratford, Connecticut. L. Bevier

The answer to our quiz is abbreviated because the picture reproduced last issue was so poor. Unlucky thirteen? Immature hawks can be tough enough without being blurred and darkened in photos. Red-tail is eliminated by the lack of a distinct dark bar along the leading edge of the underwing and the lack of a whitish chest. Also eliminated are Swainson's Hawk, which shows a dark wing against paler underwing coverts, and the Accipiters, which have barred wing tips. The white flash just inside the rather wide black wing tips eliminates Broad-winged Hawk, which also shows a tapered wing profile and overall pale underwing. The darker wing linings and slightly bulging wing profile also indicate Red-shoulder.

Louis R. Bevier
P.O. Box 665, Storrs, CT 06268

Photo challenge 14.
Identify the species.
Answer next issue.

I welcome comments and corrections on the Photo Challenge. Also, the quiz is open to any submitted photographs. Please send your letters or photographs to the address above.

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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Betty S. Kleiner (203) 658-5670
5 Flintlock Ridge, Simsbury, CT 06070

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The Connecticut Warbler (ISSN 1077-0283) 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. Address all correspondence, and make checks payable to: The Connecticut Ornithological Association, 314 Unquowa Road, Fairfield, CT 06430.

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Member	$12.00	Contributing	$25.00
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Guide for Contributers

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 accompanied with an IBM PC disk, if possible. 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. Good quality photographs of particular interest will also be considered. 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.

Connecticut Ornithological Association
314 Unquowa Road
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Address Correction Requested

Summer 1995 - Volume XV No. 3

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology

Volume XV No.4 **October 1995** Pages 113- 152

ABOUT OUR COVER ARTIST:

Mark Szantyr

"Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)"

We are pleased to use another of Mark Szantyr's drawings for our front cover. Mark is an avid birder and bird bander, as well as an accomplished artist. He is currently working on a special project for Orvis that involves his artistic talents.

Mark drew the Northern Wheatear (a rare species in Connecticut) from one he recently sighted in Windham.

The Connecticut Warbler
A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology
Volume 15 Number 4 October 1995

Contents **Fall 1995**

A THIRD ADULT BALD EAGLE REPLACES A NESTING EAGLE

Donald A. Hopkins[1], Gerald S. Mersereau[2], Michael J. O'Leary[3]

In 1990 a pair of Bald Eagles first attempted nesting in northwestern Connecticut, but these birds were not successful until the spring of 1992 (Hopkins 1992). On 17 July 1993 a third adult was seen at the nest (Hopkins et al. 1993). This adult was present during the prefledging period of the young eagles and was last confirmed in the nesting area on 7 August 1993. At that time the third adult was identified as having a U.S. Fish and Wildlife band on the right leg, and a gold or orange band on the left leg. The parent eagles have a USF&W band only on the right leg. At this time the third adult was sexed as a male by comparing it with the two fledglings, male and female, that were all feeding on the shore.

During the 1994 breeding period a third adult again appeared in the nesting area. This bird was chased away by the male parent. The interloper appeared to be a female with a USF&W band on the right leg and no band on the left leg. The next appearance of a third adult in the nesting area was on 18 June 1994. This individual was large enough to be a female and had a USF&W band on the right leg and a gold one on the left. On 19 June this adult flew into the nest and proceeded to feed the young, and did so again on 4 July. On 17 July the third adult and the fledglings were sitting in the nest tree when the male parent brought a fish into the nest. All three waiting eagles jumped into the nest to feed. On 23 July the third adult was again in the area and a partial reading of the gold band was made. The third adult was seen again on 24 July and 6 August. The third adult was not observed again in 1994.

The 1995 nesting period began with the two adults copulating on 4 March and 12 March. No gold bands were visible on the two adults. On 2 April a third adult was observed in the vicinity of the nest, flying near the nest tree. On 23 April the third adult, the female with the gold band, was observed in the nest, brooding and feeding the nestling. At that time a brown smudge was observed on the left rear of the crown of this bird. This mark remained on the eagle throughout the summer and made it possible to identify this eagle in the nest, without observing leg bands. As change-overs of adults took place at the nest, it was easy to identify the male and female by size difference. The original female, which had been present during the incubation period, failed to appear in the nesting area for the balance

of the summer. The exact circumstance of the displacement of the original parent is unknown. We believe the third adult with the gold band was misidentified as a male eagle in the summer of 1993. We have been able to read part of the graphics on the gold band for each of the past three years. The partial reading of the band would suggest that the third adult may have come from Maine.

LITERATURE CITED

Hopkins, D. A. 1992. Bald Eagles successfully nest in Connecticut in 1992. Connecticut Warbler 12:121-124.

Hopkins, D. A., G. S. Mersereau, M. J. O'Leary. 1993. A third adult Bald Eagle takes an active part in raising young eagles in Connecticut. Connecticut Warbler 13:114-116.

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BOOKS ON BIRDS

Alan H. Brush

Two new books from Houghton Mifflin mark an interesting change in a series that has been quite successful. Most birders are aware of the gargantuan effort involved in previous volumes on *Seabirds* (Peter Harrison, 1983), *Shorebirds* (Hayman, Marchant & Prater, 1986), and *Waterfowl* (Madge & Burn, 1988). These massive volumes, which group together diverse collections of birds, are major contributions. Together they have set a standard for books of this type. They are useful on many levels and, once you become comfortable with some of the individual peculiarities, provide excellent reference material. My copies, although soiled, have stood up well to the demands of travel and frequent use.

The two recent additions to the series are slightly more specialized. *Woodpeckers*, by Hans Winkler, David A. Christie, and David Nurney (1995, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 406 pgs., $40.00) covers approximately 200 species in 64 color plates. Unlike the previous volumes, distribution maps are included with the species description. Previously, maps either appeared in a separate section following the text or opposite the figures in the plates. In turn, the plates almost exclusively illustrate the birds perched vertically on a trunk, often

with inserts of facial pattern. There are few illustrations of birds in flight. The species descriptions include all the topics one might expect: identification, distribution, habitat, descriptions, geographic variation, measurements, and, where known, voice, habits, breeding information, and usually several references.

The size of the volume reflects the success of the family. In addition to the systematic portion there are approximately 35 pages providing information on various aspects of natural history. Woodpeckers are widely distributed and have some unusual habits. Their vagility is low however, and consequently most birders will not see most of these species. There is also a welcome discussion of morphology and mechanics. Remember, these birds are not only adapted to hopping up vertical surfaces, they also use their beaks as chisels to dig in hard surfaces, and they have extensible tongue mechanisms that are themselves remarkable in design. The section on behavior is also eminently readable and there is a lot of interesting natural history here.

For those who care, this is one of the first guide type books to use the taxonomic scheme proposed by Sibley, Ahlquist and Monroe based on DNA hybridization techniques. It is an understatement to say that this classification is controversial. Nonetheless, the consequences for this particular volume are minimal. The traditional subdivisions of the order are, in this case, essentially maintained even though they are given slightly different levels. For example, the family *Picidae*, which includes the wrynecks and woodpeckers, is the focus of this volume. The other large groups are arranged with some modification, and the entire group has been elevated to a Parvclass. While the arguments here are somewhat arcane when it comes to field identification, the intent is to say something about the evolutionary relationships of various members of the group if, in fact, you are attuned to the subtle arguments of melting curves and the significance of higher taxonomic categories.

The second volume considered here is different yet again. *Crows and Jays* is the second in the series by Steve Madge and Hilary Burn (1994, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, xxiii+191 pgs., 32 color plates, 118 maps, $40.00). This book is smaller than the others simply, I suppose, because there are many fewer species (120 by the authors count) involved. However, the crows and jays are just about everyone's (universal?) favorites. With their enormous variety of color, size, and fascinating behavior they appear in literature, myths and as part of our entree to the natural world. Twenty-two of them are listed as endangered or threatened. The traditional classification, the well defined *Corvidae*, has also been challenged. The primary changes

proposed is a vast expansion of the group to include an enormous assemblage of over 650 species. One consequence is that the traditional family has been realigned as a tribe, within a subfamily, in the expanded family, the *Corvidae*. No matter, really, as it detracts nothing from the enjoyment of the book itself.

This volume is a treasure trove. It is the only source I know of that illustrates American, Northwestern, and Fish Crows together on the same plate. With the recent expansion of Fish Crows in this area, the plate is certainly welcome. Madge and Burn also illustrate all forms of Scrub Jays, which are about to be listed as separate species by the AOU. There are also the Treepies of the old world tropics (not to be confused with the better known Magpies), and the truly bizarre Ground Jays (*Podoces*). One must travel to the deserts of Central Asia, Iran or Tibet to see these species. By the way, the suffix '-pie' in these names refers to the pointed nature of the bill.

A final question has to do with the future possibilities of identification guides to selected groups of birds. Various university presses are active and volumes on tanagers, warblers, sparrow & finches, and kingfishers have appeared. These are not field guides in the sense that they include birds of a particular area. They are dedicated to particular taxa of varying inclusiveness. Should you own them all? Perhaps, but it would be expensive. Further, no one knows how many more might appear. From talking with publishers's representatives, I suspect more are in the works.

Horsebarn Hill, U-165, Storrs, CT 06269-3042

SONG OF THE MOCKINGBIRD

Henry C. Chitwood

When I was a boy growing up in northern West Virginia during and shortly after World War I, a popular song of the time was "Listen to the Mockingbird." It was a favorite in our family sing-songs as we gathered around the piano while my grandmother played. I thought the mockingbird romantic and associated it in my mind with old southern mansions, magnolias, and spreading live oaks.

There were no Northern Mockingbirds where I lived. We were too far north and west, barely beyond their range at that time. But I did become acquainted with mockingbirds at an early age. My father bought a house in rural Virginia near Washington, D.C., where we spent the summers. Though the location was only sixty miles south

and two hundred miles east of our northern home, it had mockingbirds, along with many other songbirds. A memorable pleasure at our summer home was to wake up in the morning to their singing. We enjoyed listening to the mockingbird's long musical recital and tried to pick out the original songs he included in the repertoire. Among others I remember were songs or calls of the robin, cardinal, Summer Tanager, Yellow-breasted Chat, bobwhite, and catbird (who is also, but less accomplished, a song imitator). The mockingbird has since extended its range northward and now in Connecticut it is one of the most visible of all songbirds. Its persistent song—even at night—and aggressive personality, make it especially noticeable.

Birds may sing, just like humans, because they are happy, but the main reason is to stake out and advertise claim to an area. In most cases, the male is the only singer (as any ornithologist knows). By using songs of other birds—that is, speaking to them in their own language—he is telling them, "this is my territory, keep out." He will naturally use the songs he has heard from other residents. If his neighboring species are few, he will learn few new songs. If bird populations are declining and species are completely eliminated from certain areas, our mockingbirds might not be exposed to the songs of the variety of birds of former years. In my experience, the song of the mockingbird seems to have become less varied and less interesting. I have noticed that the versatility of song is also lacking in Florida.

In gathering material for his medley, a mockingbird is not limited to bird songs. He will mimic various noises that are loud and persistent. Burglar alarms, that accidentally and frequently sound off, to the annoyance of all, are a source of such extraneous material. The local mockingbirds have incorporated this monotonous and unpleasant sound of the burglar alarm prominently into their composition, which now seems to me to contain fewer songs of other birds and is chiefly one of improvisation.

The early morning chorus of bird songs, that was once so enjoyable, seems to have gone with the past, at least where I live. I am convinced that birds, in general, sing less now in areas that I have visited. This is partly because there are fewer birds to do the singing but, possibly nearly as important, as a result of smaller bird concentrations, there is less need to sing for territorial establishment. Those who think birds sing for joy might say that, with man's crowding of their living space and destruction of their food supply, they sing less now because they are not as happy as they once were.

19 Ledge Rd., Old Greenwich, CT 06870

THE 1995 SUMMER BIRD COUNT

Joseph Zeranski

This was a unique year for Summer Bird Counts (SBCs) with two species recorded that have yet to be documented in the state of Connecticut. This unlikely event occurred with reports of Mississippi Kite and Gull-billed Tern. Unfortunately in neither case were the birds photographed nor could they be relocated, with the exception of a brief kite sighting several days later. This is illustrative of the fortuitous nature of birding experienced by SBC observers.

The gathering of ornithological information in the field is a combination of the intellect and emotion; with science on one hand, and an adventure of anticipation and discovery on the other. This is no less true for SBCs. We are all apt to be distracted from the painstaking collection and interpretation of nesting data by observations of unusual summer vagrants. For many field observers we may be emphasizing the scientific at the expense of more enriching personal experiences. Perhaps we should try to balance these considerations.

One hundred and seventy four species have been documented as nesting in Connecticut in recent years. Another 16 or so may be considered former nesters. Over time Connecticut's SBCs have recorded all but one of the former group (Upland Sandpiper), and all but four of the latter group (Common Snipe, Long-eared Owl, Prothonotary Warbler, and Vesper Sparrow). This is not intended to suggest that all of the individuals recorded, or even all species, were actually nesting, but merely that they were present during a particular time period. This does indicate is that SBCs cover a fairly comprehensive cross section of the state's habitats and that their surveying track record has proven to be surprisingly thorough.

This year 187 species were reported on Count Day(CD), plus two during the Count Period (CP). Of this total, 162 have been documented as nesting. This year's overall stats are rather similar to last year's, with the same nine SBCs reporting (see tables), although there was a drop in birds seen per 10 Party Hours (PH) and per observer.

The aforementioned Mississippi Kite was seen by several observers both prior to and following Count Day in western Darien and southeastern Stamford for about a week. A threesome of startled SBC observers stumbled upon and flushed the bird in the middle of a Darien park. This species has become a more frequent summer vagrant in the northeastern United States in recent years and is now seen annually in New York and New Jersey.

There may be more sight reports for Gull-billed Tern in Connecticut

than for any other species that has not been confirmed by photographic or specimen evidence. In this case the three birds observed were seen in the Rye, NY portion of the Greenwich/Stamford SBC. The two observers, both competent birders, observed the birds flying west along the coast a couple of miles from the border, coming from the direction of the Nutmeg State. Details for both species are being submitted to the Connecticut Rare Records Committee.

Two additional species were also new to SBCs. Sanderling, is not a completely unexpected summer vagrant, and Ring-necked Duck had been a Count Period (CP) bird in 1979. Second SBC appearances were made by Red-throated Loon (seen in 1984) and Great Cormorant. Although interesting, these summer vagrants are non-breeders and might be considered peripheral to the main objectives of the SBC.

Seen only a few times in past years, but potential nesters, were Green-winged Teal (three previous records), Northern Harrier (three prior records), Peregrine Falcon (1994), and Red-headed Woodpecker (two prior records).

Fifteen 1995 species were not present last year. Of these Grasshopper Sparrow is a rare and local nester, while Green-winged Teal, Northern Harrier, and Swainson's Thrush are possible nesters. The remainder are vagrants. Seventeen 1994 species were not found this year. Included were rare nesters American Bittern, Sora, Olive-sided Flycatcher, and Pine Siskin. Also on this list were rare breeders Kentucky Warbler and Yellow-breasted Chat, local nester Seaside Sparrow, and potential nester Black Vulture. Nine others were summer vagrants or late migrants.

Last year, in an overly eager attempt to depict the scientific benefits of SBCs, we commented upon the population trends of several species over a mere two year time span. An indication of the meaninglessness of forecasting trends based upon fragmentary evidence is that most of these species' declining numbers rebounded this year to earlier population levels. Last year there were noticeable declines for Red-tailed Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Northern Flicker, Barn Swallow, Blue Jay, American Crow, House Wren, Winter Wren, Northern Mockingbird, Song Sparrow, Common Grackle, House Finch, and American Goldfinch. The 1995 numbers recorded for these birds, with the exception of Barn Swallow, Winter Wren (still suffering from the severe 1993-94 winter), and House Finch (its numbers may have been afflicted by a debilitating eye disease), have risen appreciably with many returning to their former numbers.

Species showing growth last year have remained at high levels, even increasing. Exceptions to this continued growth were noted for Cedar Waxwing, Black-throated Green Warbler, and Ovenbird. If

there is a message in these changes, it is simply that many species, for a variety of reasons, including survey inconsistencies, may fluctuate noticeably over relatively short time spans.

Prior to discussing individual SBCs and the changing status of individual species, we would be remiss if we failed to include certain items of interest for truly dedicated Connecticut SBC trivia buffs. Included is an inventory of those fifty-six species found on every SBC in all its years. Their abundance is determined by dividing the average number of birds seen statewide over the past two years by 100 Party Hours (PHs). This statistic is given after each species. European Starling 598, American Robin 547, Common Grackle 436, Red-winged Blackbird 385, Canada Goose 379, American Crow 312, Gray Catbird 305, House Sparrow 244, Song Sparrow 233, Mallard 226, Mourning Dove 198, Yellow Warbler 181, Chipping Sparrow 164, Common Yellowthroat 162, Red-eyed Vireo 156, Black-capped Chickadee 156, American Goldfinch 152, Northern Cardinal 148, Tree Swallow 143, Blue Jay 137, Ovenbird 131, Wood Thrush 129, Rock Dove 124, Veery 122, Tufted Titmouse 120, Brown-headed Cowbird 117, Barn Swallow 108, Northern Oriole 96, Cedar Waxwing 91, American Redstart 84, Northern Mockingbird 80, House Wren 78, Rufous-sided Towhee 73, Northern Flicker 68, Eastern Phoebe 62, Scarlet Tanager 60, Blue-winged Warbler 59, Chimney Swift 54, Black-and-White Warbler 51, Eastern Kingbird 49, Warbling Vireo 47, Downy Woodpecker 44, Eastern Wood-Pewee 41, White-breasted Nuthatch 34, Rose-breasted Grosbeak 33, Great Crested Flycatcher 31, Killdeer 30, Northern Rough-winged Swallow 30, Indigo Bunting 29, Swamp Sparrow 25, Prairie Warbler 21, Turkey Vulture 20, Red-tailed Hawk 15, Field Sparrow 15, and Belted Kingfisher 9.

Absent on all but a single count in a single year were the following: Wood Duck, Hairy Woodpecker, Willow Flycatcher, Eastern Bluebird, Brown Thrasher, Yellow-throated Vireo, and Chestnut-sided Warbler.

In addition to the birds above, another twenty-six, less abundant but still geographically widespread, summer residents have appeared on all nine counts. These include Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, Wild Turkey, Virginia Rail, Ring-billed Gull (the only non-breeder on the list), Herring Gull, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Whip-poor-will, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Acadian Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Bank Swallow, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Carolina Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Hermit Thrush, Solitary Vireo, Black-throated Green Warbler, Pine Warbler, Eastern Meadowlark, and Purple Finch.

On the other end of the spectrum are those reported historically

only once such as rare nesters Black and King Rails, possible nester Northern Pintail, potential nester Black Vulture, and nine summer vagrants. Only slightly more common, with two appearances on SBCs, are very local, irregular, or former nesters including American Bittern, Tricolored Heron, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Horned Lark, and Sedge Wren, as well as possible nester Summer Tanager, constituting seven non-breeders.

With each additional year, a SBC adds a little bit more to our understanding of breeding bird populations. Barkhamsted SBC (BaSBC) has recorded 136 species since its 1992 inception. Missed for the first time were Carolina Wren, Brown Thrasher, and Eastern Meadowlark. One hundred and thirteen species are thought to have nested at one time or another within the count area's boundaries. Two species were not seen on any other 1994 SBC, while three species were added to this count's cumulative total.

The Greenwich-Stamford SBC (GSSBC), experiencing its twentieth consecutive year of existence, noted three new species and reached an all time total of 208 species. Absent were Kentucky Warbler, Hooded Warbler, and Canada Warbler, the latter two having been sighted during all of the 19 previous count years. One hundred and thirty-eight species have nested. This summer eleven species were seen solely on this count.

Five years old, the Hartford SBC (HaSBC) added eight species to the 128 found in previous years. For a second year, this count was the only one reporting both Least Bittern and Red-headed Woodpecker.

In its second year, the Litchfield-Hills SBC (LHSBC) added nine species to the 130 seen during its founding year. Eighty-seven were described as nesters.

The New Haven SBC (NHSBC) added six new species, bringing its new cumulative total to 164. Nine species were found exclusively on this SBC, including one rare breeder, Common Moorhen. Overall, sixty-two species are considered nesters.

Quinnipiac SBC (QVSBC) observed 99 species, including four new ones. Six species seen on all previous counts were absent this year. It was the second consecutive year that Parula Warbler has been a QVSBC exclusive.

Salmon River SBC (SRSBC) has had 111 species overall; one-hundred and one of these were observed this year.

One hundred and eighteen species have been seen on the Storrs SBCs (StSBC) including two species new to the count this year.

Two new species this year brought the Woodbury-Roxbury SBC's (WRSBC) all time total to 166 species.

It will take a number of years to verify declines in breeding birds, but apparent population drops are occurring in species such as American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant (suffering from both a reduction in DEP releases and a decline in overgrown fields and brushy thickets), American Woodcock, Brown Thrasher, and Rufous-sided Towhee.

In a similar vein, species that are expanding should be noted. During the last quarter of this century Double-crested Cormorants have expanded tremendously. Close behind, as an expanding nester, has been Red-bellied Woodpecker over a slightly longer period. More recently, with help from the DEP, Wild Turkey seems to be trying to occupy almost every decently sized second growth woodland in the state. Additional species that may be beginning to expand include Hooded Merganser, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and possibly White-eyed Vireo. Definite increases have occurred for a number of other species, including several raptors, although to a lesser degrees.

Common Loon, Green-winged Teal, Northern Harrier, Peregrine Falcon, Red-headed Woodpecker, Swainson's Thrush, Nashville Warbler, and Northern Parula all bear watching for nesting evidence. Stamford's pair of Peregrine Falcons, with the female having been replaced by a another this spring, again failed to produce a family. Carolina Wren seems to have leveled out following last year's precipitous decline and, after a mild winter, may have increased somewhat.

The results of the 1995 SBC, found in their entirety in the following tables, show that this was a very interesting year.

STATEWIDE TOTALS

Count Dates: June 5, 11, 12, 18, 19, 25, 26, and 27. Reported on Count Days (CD) were 187 Species and 101,509 Individual birds (including 9 hybrid individuals, 1 subspecies, and 11 unidentified individuals), plus 2 Count Period (CP) species. Two hundred and thirty-eight observers in 125 parties spent 1105.7 Party Hours (1062.25 daytime and 43.5 night time) in the field.

INDIVIDUAL COUNT TOTALS

Barkhamsted Summer Bird Count (*founded 1992*)

Date: Sat. and Sun., June 26 and 27. (Apparently there were additional count census days which were unacknowledged and unreported. Uncertainties regarding the submitted data were unresolved at press time). Count Center (The BaSBC is a 13 mile east-west

by a 15 mile north-south rectangle): 41°55' N 72°59' W. Elevation 289 to 1457 ft. Area: Barkhamsted, Burlington (northern quarter), Canton, Colebrook (southern), Granby (southwest quarter), Hartland, New Hartford, Torrington (northeast half), and Winchester. Weather: 6/24: Partly sunny/cloudy, with 1/4 inch rain, Temp 62° to 84°F; Wind ESE, 0-10 mph. Night Temp 76° to 68°F., Wind SE, 0-5 mph. 1/10 inch rain. 6/25: Partly sunny, cloudy with 1/4 inch rain; Temp 68° to 86°F; Wind ESE, 0-10 mph. Night Temp 80° to 65°F. Wind SE, 0-5 mph.

Totals: 117 Species, 12,018 Individuals (including 1 hybrid, and 2 unidentified individuals). Twenty-one observers in 19 parties surveyed during 162 daytime and 5 night PHs.

Participants: *George Boynton, Ann Davenport, Ayreslea Denny, Duncan Denny, Robin Denny, Rowland Denny, Kathie Felice, Barbara Johnson, Paul Johnson, Patricia Keener, Kathie Kellcher, Vima LeJeune, Rea McCarty, Jim Moore, Carol Parent, David Rosgen (72H Leigh Avenue, Thomaston CT 06787), Stanley Rosgen, Phil Royer, Leland Sanders, Dell Smith, Linda Smith.*

Greenwich-Stamford Summer Bird Count (*founded 1976*)

Date: Sat. and Sun., June 17 and 18. Count Center (The GSSBC covers a 15x15 mile square): 41°05' N 73°37' W. Elevation 0 to at least 740 ft. Area: (Connecticut, 65% of area) Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, and Stamford; (New York, 35% of area) Armonk, Bedford (in part), Port Chester, Rye, and White Plains (in part). Weather: 6/17: Temp 60° to 85°F. Wind S, light. 6/18: Temp 58° to 90°F. Wind SW, light.

Totals: 135 Species, 19,438 Individuals (including 7 hybrids and 14 unidentified individuals) plus 6 CP species. Fifty-five observers in 28 parties surveyed 254 daytime and 9.5 night PHs.

"With the GS Count returning back to June 17th and 18th (3rd weekend), we found singing ending very early in the AM, perhaps causing first misses for Hooded and Canada and some other low totals; the earlier weekend probably better for counting." TWB.

Participants: *Tom Andersen, John Askildsen, Pat Bailey, David Ballas, Rev. Ken Ballas, Tom Baptist, Trudy Battaly, Joe Bear, Gail Benson, Andrew Block, Michael Bochnik, Lysle Brinker, Thomas W. Burke (235 Highland Road, Rye NY 10580), David Callan, Albie Collins, Patrick Dugan, Cynthia Ehlinger, Gretchen Eisenmenger, Andrew Farnsworth, Peter Frechtel, Anne French, Andy Guthrie, Carol Hartel, Dave Havens, Jalna Jaeger, Bob Kurtz, Claudia Leff, Frank Mantlik, Janet Mehmel, Gregg Moxhay, Brian O'Toole, Rebekah Packard, Gary Palmer (34 Field Road, Cos Cob CT 06807), Jane Palmer, Drew Panko, Marlene Park, William*

Park, Matt Popp, Steve Potter, Polly Rothstein, Meredith Sampson, Bob Shriber, Bob Siemers, Jason Siemers, Alice Smith, Bruce Smith, Tom Stephensen, Andy Towle, Patty Towle, David Tracy, Mohan Tracy, Mike Usai, Bill Van Loan, Jr., Beryl Williams, Joe Zeranski.

Hartford Summer Bird Count (*founded 1991*)

Date: Sat. and Sun., June 10 and 11. Count Center: 41°46' N 72°40' W. Elevation 40 to 640 ft. Area: Bloomfield, East Hartford, Farmington, Glastonbury (in part), Hartford, Manchester, New Britain, Newington, Rocky Hill, South Windsor, West Hartford, Wethersfield, and Windsor. Weather: 6/10: Cloudy, overcast and showers, Temp 57° to 72°F. Wind 1-8 mph; 6/11: Cloudy, overcast and showers, Temp 58° to 66°F. Wind 2-5 mph.

Totals: 118 Species and 9,913 Individuals. Thirty-six observers in 12 parties surveyed over 90.5 daytime and 2.5 night PHs.

Participants: *Bill Altmann, William Bosse, Mary Carter, Sue Chiraboga, Pat Comins, Ed Czlapinski, Mary Czlapinski, Steve Davis, Paul Desjardins, Kathy Dimlow, Carl Ekroth, Catherine Ekroth, Verma Feist, Kathie Felice (274 Morningside Drive East, Bristol CT 06010), Marge Hackbarth, Pat Haikos, Betty Kleiner, Gil Kleiner, Charlotte Kidwell, Janis Lapoint, Stephanie Lovell, Bill McGehee, Jamie Meyers, Joann Meyers, Glenn Milham, James Moore, Josephine Motekaitis, Elyse Petzold, Dave Rosgen, Mary Rudek, Miss Rudek, Eileen Rutman, Zellene Sandler, Bill Scheul, Joan Tinson, Louise Tucker.*

Litchfield Hills Summer Bird Count (*founded 1994*)

Date: Sat., June 10 and 11. Count Center: 41°43' N 73°14' W. Elevation 450 to 1658 ft. Area: Cornwall, Goshen, Litchfield, and West Torrington. Weather: Both days - Partly cloudy to cloudy, and warm. Temp 60° to 70°F.

Totals: 130 Species and 17,374 Individuals. Thirty-nine observers in 13 parties counted during 158 daytime and 7 night PHs. "All participants seemed to feel there were lots of birds this year" BB, RB.

Participants: *John Baker, Bob Barbieri (56 Baron Lane, Torrington CT 06790), Raymond Belding (46 Scoville St., Torrington, CT 06790), Charlotte Bostwick, Ed Briggs, Angela Dimmitt, David Doubleday, Ellen Doubleday, Curt Edgat, Cathy Fenton, Jeff Greenwood, Jeremy Greenwood, Rita Hannon, Susan Kirk, William Liedlich, Carolyn Longstreth, Marian Lyga, Donna Manwaring, Gerry Marcellino, Deborah Martin, Randy McHugh, Russ Naylor, Nancy Nichols, Ann Orcello, Ray Packard, Clarence Parker, Jim Parker, Virginia Peterson, Dave Rosgen, Gerry Smith, Nina Stein, Jan Sturdevant, Dave Tripp, David Wakefield, Leigh Wells, Lyle Whittlesey, Roger Willis, Francis Zygmont.*

New Haven Summer Bird Count (*founded 1991*)

Date: Sat and Sun, June 10 and 11. Count Center: 41°18' N 72°56' W. Elevation 0 to 700 ft. Area: Branford (western), East Haven, Milford, New Haven, North Haven, Orange, West Haven, and Woodbridge (in part). Coverage: Sat., 4:30 AM to 6 PM, Sun. 4:30 AM - 5 PM. Weather: 6/10: Partly Cloudy then sunny by 12 noon, Temp. 58° to 75° F. Wind SSE, 0-5 mph; 6/11: Cloudy, steady rain 9 AM - 11 AM (0.3"), Cloudy through remainder of day. Temp 60° to 78°F. Wind ESE, 0-15 mph. Night: Coverage 8 PM - 9:30 PM, Temp 69° to 71°F. Wind SE, 5-10 MPH.

Totals: 128 Species, 11,900 Individuals (including 16 hybrid individuals). Thirty observers in 20 parties spent 111 daytime and 1.5 night PHs counting.

Participants: *Lee Aimesbury, Marion Aimesbury, Carol Bedworth, Betty Bell, Ron Bell, Richard Bernard, Roger Bowersox, Andrew Brand, Steve Broker, Kevin Clark, Cathy Day, Richard English, John Himmelman, Liz Himmelman, Chris Lascalso, Cathy Leahy, Pat Leahy, Carol Lemmon, Gary Lemmon, Steve C. Mayo (27 Tuttle Ct., Bethany, CT 06524), Florence McBride, Nancy Rosenbaum, Arnie Rosengren, Lee Schlesinger, Tom Sharp, Kimberly Stoner, Marge Thomas, Tony Tortora, Jeff Young, Susan Yurkus.*

Quinnipiac Valley Summer Bird Count (*founded 1992*)

Date: Sat and Sun, June 17 and 18. Count Center: 41°28' N 72°44' W (Intersection of routes 68 and 157). Elevation 30 to 600 ft. Area: Cheshire (in part), Durham, Guilford (in part), Killingworth (in part), Meriden, Middlefield, Middletown, North Branford, North Haven, and Wallingford. Weather: Temp 72° to 92°F. 6/17: Wind 0-8 MPH, 6/18: Wind 0-12 MPH.

Totals: 102 Species, 6,888 Individuals. Twelve observers in five parties spent 41.5 daytime and 3 night PHs in the field.

Participants: *Dave Bryant, Mark Carabetta, Kevin Clark, Majorie Hackbarth, Clare Healy, Jim McBride, Nancy Moran, John Schultz, Wilford Schultz (93 Harrison Road, Wallingford CT 06492), Wilhelmena Smith, Eleanor Tessmer, George Zepko.*

Salmon River Summer Bird Count (*founded 1992*)

Date: Sat. and Sun., June 10 and 11. Circle Center: 41°33' N 72°26' W. Elevation 5 to 550 ft. Area: Colchester (western), East Haddam, Haddam, Middletown (southeast), and Portland. Weather: 6/10: Cloudy, low 80's, Heavy Rains 10 AM - 3 PM, Night - Occasional brief showers, upper 60's; 6/11: Mostly cloudy, clear and sunny after 10 AM.

Totals: 108 Species, 4,310 Individuals. Seven observers in six parties counted over 52 daytime and 3 night PHs.

Participants: *Elana Coffey, Larry Cyrulik, Mary Dimon, Ed Masse, John Maynard, Joseph Morin (8 West St Terrace, Cromwell CT 06416), Ed Reneson, David Titus.*

Storrs Summer Bird Count (*founded 1990*)

Date: Sat. and Sun., June 17 3:30 AM - 5 PM., June 18 5:30 AM - 12 noon. Count Center: 41°48' N 72°15' W., junction Route 195 and North Eagleville Rd. Elevation 200 to 750 ft. Area: Andover, Ashford, Chaplin, Coventry, Mansfield, Tolland, Willimantic, West Willington, Willington, and Windham. Weather: Both days - clear and cool in early AM; very hot in PM. increasing sw winds as the days progressed. 6/17: Temp. 50° to 88°F, Wind SW 0-15 mph. 6/18: Temp. 64° to 90°F, Wind SW 0-10 mph.

Totals: 101 Species, 4,345 Individuals plus 1 CP species. Ten observers in six parties surveyed over 50.25 daytime Party Hours and 4 night PHs.

Participants: *Bruce Carver, Dave Corsini, Sue Craig, Bill Gaunya, Tom Harrington, Jeff Rogers, Jim Rogers, Steve Rogers (75 Charles Lane, Storrs CT 06268), Avo Somer, Mark Szantyr.*

Woodbury-Roxbury Summer Bird Count (*founded 1978*)

Date: Sun., June 4. Count Center: 41°32' N 73°16' W. Elevation 110 to 1060 ft. Area: Bethlehem, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Middlebury, New Milford, Newtown, Roxbury, Southbury, Washington, and Woodbury. Weather: early AM fog, partial clearing, warm and muggy; clouding up at midday, a few scattered showers; PM was drier, cooler with fair skies, Temp 65° to 80°F, Wind WNW.

Totals: 130 Species, 15,323 individual birds (including 1 hybrid). Twenty-eight observers in 16 parties spent 143 daytime and 8 night PHs surveying.

Participants: *Janet Amalavage, Lorraine Amalavage, Bob Cartoceti, Mary Ann Currie, Neil Currie, Buzz Devine, Angela Dimmitt, Larry Fischer, Ethel Follett, Greg Hanisek, Buck Jenks, Susan Kirk, William Liedlich, John Longstreth, Chris Mangels, Russ Naylor (44 Church Street, Woodbury CT. 06798), Dick O'Brien, Ben Olewine, Jack Olszewski, Al Root, Dave Rosgen, John Sjoval, Darcy Thurrott, Art Titus, David Titus, Dave Tripp, Jr., Leigh Wells, Francis Zygmont.*

163 Field Point Rd., Greenwich, CT 06830

1995 SUMMER BIRD COUNT TABLES

SPECIES	Coastal		Ct. Valley		Upland Counts					1995 State Total	1994 State Total
					Mid-state		Northern				
	GS	NH	Ha	SR	QV	WR	Ba	LH	St		
Red-throated Loon		3								3	
Common Loon	1	1								2	6
Pied-billed Grebe	1	1								2	4
Great Cormorant	1									1	
Double-cr Cormorant	518	188	11	1	3	9	1			731	843
Least Bittern			2							2	1
Great Blue Heron	12	4	5	2	1	7	19	27	5	82	75
Great Egret	138	33						1		172	153
Snowy Egret	157	38								195	197
Little Blue Heron	2									2	1
Green Heron	25	13	8	5	8	16	2	8	2	87	82
Black-cr Night-Heron	125	36								161	170
Yellow-cr Night-Heron	10									10	2
Mute Swan	74	94	2	5	81	24		17		297	383
Brant	CP	5								5	
Canada Goose	1578	420	518	147	162	736	208	493	178	4440	3925
Wood Duck	102	25	2	8	18	80	17	49	8	309	347
Green-winged Teal				1						1	
American Black Duck	21	15	3			1	6	4		50	75
Mallard	603	313	722	18	347	147	115	176	177	2618	2361
MallardxAm Bl. Duck	7	16				1				24	
Gadwall		10								10	1
American Wigeon						1				1	
Ring-necked Duck						2				2	
Greater Scaup	1									1	1
Lesser Scaup	1									1	

Oldsquaw	CP									CP	1
Bufflehead	1									1	3
Hooded Merganser							1	5		6	18
Common Merganser		1				19	54			74	78
Red-br Merganser	CP									CP	3
Turkey Vulture	21	16	7	9	10	71	62	57	8	261	186
Osprey	2	13								15	9
Mississippi Kite	1									1	
Bald Eagle	CP						5			5	7
Northern Harrier		1	2							3	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	CP	1				3	2	1		7	13
Cooper's Hawk	2		1	3		6	2	5	2	21	15
Northern Goshawk	6						2			8	18
accipiter species	1					2				3	
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	3	3	1		11	2		7	28	31
Broad-winged Hawk	11		3	2		9	18	8	1	52	49
Red-tailed Hawk	29	12	20	6	11	61	27	23	5	194	140
American Kestrel		3	3	4	6	6	1	4	3	30	22
Peregrine Falcon	2							1		3	1
Ring-necked Pheasant	**27**	6	2	2	4	3		1	1	46	58
Ruffed Grouse	9	5	2		11	4	12	30	4	77	59
Wild Turkey	16	11	20	13	4	28	82	124		298	135
Northern Bobwhite				7	4					11	5
Clapper Rail	3	3								6	5
Virginia Rail			2	1		1		28		32	38
Common Moorhen		1								1	1

Ba-Barkhamsted
GS-Greenwich-Stamford
Ha-Hartford
LH-Litchfield Hills
NH-New Haven
QV-Quinnipiac Valley
SR-Salmon River
St-Storrs
WR-Woodbury-Roxbury

XX Noted 4 or fewer years in last 10 yrs.
XX Species new to count
XX New 10 year high total (underlined)
XX New 10 year low total (Bold)

1995 SUMMER BIRD COUNT TABLES (Cont'd)

SPECIES	Coastal GS	Coastal NH	Ct. Valley Ha	Ct. Valley SR	Upland Counts Mid-state QV	Upland Counts Mid-state WR	Upland Counts Northern Ba	Upland Counts Northern LH	Upland Counts Northern St	1995 State Total	1994 State Total
Black-bellied Plover		1								1	
Semipalmated Plover	CP	3								3	CP
Piping Plover		10								10	8
Killdeer	45	29	36	11	25	61	26	50	24	307	347
American Oystercatcher	12									12	13
Greater Yellowlegs	1	1								2	1
Solitary Sandpiper						1				1	1
Spotted Sandpiper	1	5	10		4	12	11	1		44	34
Willet	1									1	1
Sanderling		2								2	
Semipalmated Sandpiper		18								18	2
small sandpiper species	1									1	
American Woodcock				2	1	3	5	3		14	20
Laughing Gull	114	5								119	117
Bonaparte's Gull	1									1	9
Ring-billed Gull	180	100	7	2	10	16	4	7		326	601
Herring Gull	632	131	271	10	12	71	3	3	6	1139	1043
Great Bl.-backed Gull	179	59	123	8	1	4	2			376	341
Gull-billed Tern	3									3	
Common Tern	35	21								56	73
Least Tern	17	435								452	214
Rock Dove	274	286	164	11	259	121	73	120	104	1412	1320
Mourning Dove	**319**	341	292	118	209	402	148	311	102	2242	2123
Monk Parakeet	4	3						1		8	1
Black-billed Cuckoo	8	10	5		2	12	1	2	1	41	29
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	17	5	5		3	13	1		3	47	19

cuckoo species	12									12	
Barn Owl					13					13	19
Eastern Screech-Owl	40		5	1	4	3		8		61	56
Great Horned Owl	10	3	2	7	3	4	3	8		40	31
Barred Owl	4		1	5		13	6	10	9	48	38
Northern Saw-whet Owl							4	1		5	4
Common Nighthawk	1		1	2	7					11	1
Whip-poor-will		3	1	3		3	1	1		12	16
Chimney Swift	**38**	40	55	13	31	167	214	100	44	702	500
Ruby-thr Hummingbird	4	2	1	2	1	10	26	27	6	79	47
Belted Kingfisher	17	5	3	9	6	26	19	28	5	118	75
Red-headed Woodpecker			1							1	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	95	30	17	26	11	70	5	18	12	284	269
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker						2	51	73		126	87
Downy Woodpecker	173	50	39	22	18	51	111	87	16	567	394
Hairy Woodpecker	44	12	10	2	2	22	27	34	5	158	110
Northern Flicker	175	121	89	45	67	97	74	114	46	828	664
Pileated Woodpecker	15	6	2	9	1	12	21	22		88	63
Eastern Wood-Pewee	79	45	22	34	16	97	55	117	26	491	423
Acadian Flycatcher	7	3	1			15		3	3	32	33
Alder Flycatcher			3			1	4	43	2	53	40
Willow Flycatcher	**30**	29	18	3	14	32	6	67	1	200	234
Least Flycatcher	1		1	2	2	42	15	88	8	159	193
Eastern Phoebe	78	33	21	41	28	184	123	197	69	774	596
Great Crested Flycatcher	48	46	22	27	20	78	29	64	19	353	330
Eastern Kingbird	**61**	48	28	21	32	122	114	117	26	569	504

Ba-Barkhamsted	LH-Litchfield Hills	SR-Salmon River	XX Noted 4 or fewer years in last 10 yrs.
GS-Greenwich-Stamford	NH-New Haven	St-Storrs	XX Species new to count
Ha-Hartford	QV-Quinnipiac Valley	WR-Woodbury-Roxbury	XX New 10 year high total (underlined)
			XX New 10 year low total (Bold)

1995 SUMMER BIRD COUNT TABLES (Cont'd)

	Coastal		Ct. Valley		Upland Counts					1995	1994
					Mid-state		Northern			State	State
SPECIES	GS	NH	Ha	SR	QV	WR	Ba	LH	St	Total	Total
Purple Martin	14	3	4		11					32	34
Tree Swallow	89	127	139	72	40	155	468	459	88	1637	1526
No. Rough-wgd. Swallow	67	52	19	21	18	47	26	34	15	299	331
Bank Swallow	1	26	84	8	12	263	108	20	7	529	370
Cliff Swallow	55		4			160	5	21		245	243
Barn Swallow	230	195	73	56	64	**189**	139	187	51	1184	1197
Blue Jay	343	276	121	55	100	278	218	218	75	1684	1346
American Crow	885	281	338	106	327	718	366	558	139	3718	3169
Fish Crow	14	14	7		2	2				39	50
Common Raven					1	1	12	2		16	12
Black-capped Chickadee	290	144	123	60	57	245	480	361	117	1877	1566
Tufted Titmouse	335	134	98	66	35	266	219	221	83	1457	1182
Red-breasted Nuthatch	7	4	11	1		2	53	51	CP	129	137
White-breasted Nuthatch	167	19	18	13	21	44	75	59	25	441	301
Brown Creeper	2		2	1		7	16	38	3	69	64
Carolina Wren	52	19	7	14	2	8		3	5	110	79
House Wren	228	46	48	46	24	127	134	109	46	808	916
Winter Wren	1					4	2	6	1	14	17
Marsh Wren	34	44	4	1						83	68
Golden-crowned Kinglet	2		2					3		7	6
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	22	3	7	32	1	52	36	38	16	207	170
Eastern Bluebird	36	7	47	36	17	125	149	109	38	564	519
Veery	167	57	15	43	22	191	316	569	62	1442	1247
Swainson's Thrush								1		1	
Hermit Thrush		3	1	6	2	11	99	40	5	167	142
Wood Thrush	299	141	72	81	81	258	191	311	52	1486	1372

American Robin	1160	652	540	289	545	1055	500	1115	204	6060	6018
Gray Catbird	912	413	205	128	162	475	469	616	140	3520	3204
Northern Mockingbird	182	185	132	48	99	**135**	61	53	48	943	820
Brown Thrasher	**24**	10	7	9	4	**15**		4	2	75	90
Cedar Waxwing	**31**	24	44	24	17	103	149	141	35	568	1442
European Starling	917	1038	1182	229	845	**727**	213	747	339	6237	6963
White-eyed Vireo	**22**	7	5	5	2	4		2		47	52
Solitary Vireo	3	1	2	2		11	51	58		128	98
Yellow-throated Vireo	32	5	5	41	1	50	18	37	31	220	184
Warbling Vireo	86	25	42	35	118	130	31	81	34	582	460
Red-eyed Vireo	**186**	84	77	149	36	230	474	510	56	1802	1646
Blue-winged Warbler	**104**	89	24	65	50	**127**	47	112	35	653	653
Golden-winged Warbler								2		2	1
Tennessee Warbler								2		2	2
Nashville Warbler						1				1	1
Northern Parula					1					1	5
Yellow Warbler	381	212	97	99	135	349	220	564	93	2150	1847
Chestnut-sided Warbler	**9**	25	4	34	4	113	234	344	10	777	507
Magnolia Warbler						4	48	2		54	52
Black-thr Blue Warbler						5	95	43	1	144	116
Yellow-rumped Warbler				2		3	110	67	1	183	118
Black-thr Green Warbler	22	12	2	36		27	47	81	15	242	261
Blackburnian Warbler						3	62	71	1	137	87
Pine Warbler	39	17	20	3	5	11	37	80	9	221	190
Prairie Warbler	15	13	7	59	16	68	21	2	25	226	243
Cerulean Warbler				2		3		5	2	12	8

Ba-Barkhamsted	LH-Litchfield Hills	SR-Salmon River	XX Noted 4 or fewer years in last 10 yrs.
GS-Greenwich-Stamford	NH-New Haven	St-Storrs	XX Species new to count
Ha-Hartford	QV-Quinnipiac Valley	WR-Woodbury-Roxbury	XX New 10 year high total (underlined)
			XX New 10 year low total (Bold)

1995 SUMMER BIRD COUNT TABLES (Cont'd)

	Coastal		Ct. Valley		Upland Counts					1995	1994
					Mid-state		Northern			State	State
SPECIES	GS	NH	Ha	SR	QV	WR	Ba	LH	St	Total	Total
Black-&-White Warbler	**102**	66	5	41	18	**72**	112	163	18	597	550
American Redstart	28		25	88	4	199	236	351	39	970	885
Worm-eating Warbler	66	24	4	42	9	12		1	6	164	162
Ovenbird	187	119	33	117	16	215	252	425	61	1425	1484
Northern Waterthrush	1			8	3	6	9	39	3	69	22
Louisiana Waterthrush	**18**	7	8	12		**26**	35	21	7	134	111
Mourning Warbler								1		1	
Common Yellowthroat	224	116	85	78	74	**220**	400	565	79	1841	1742
Hooded Warbler		3		16		**6**			1	26	23
Wilson's Warbler								1		1	1
Canada Warbler		1				3	20	39	2	65	46
Scarlet Tanager	142	58	39	68	16	120	110	109	30	692	623
Northern Cardinal	325	237	154	87	94	354	157	216	78	1702	1562
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	**52**	19	33	11	16	86	80	87	15	399	334
Indigo Bunting	66	25	9	21	11	79	38	37	12	298	337
Rufous-sided Towhee	**80**	106	16	98	54	174	151	173	35	887	733
Chipping Sparrow	347	73	126	105	46	411	448	315	134	2005	1622
Field Sparrow	**16**	17	16	34	12	53	13	14	11	186	143
Savannah Sparrow		1	26			17		6	4	54	21
Grasshopper Sparrow			8							8	
Sharp-tailed Sparrow	11	1								12	25
Song Sparrow	493	204	296	89	130	**396**	451	655	96	2810	2328
Swamp Sparrow	17	1	7	9	10	**10**	25	216	2	297	253
White-throated Sparrow					1		4	18		23	21
Dark-eyed Junco							58	8		66	70
Bobolink			51	1	31	124	24	206	20	457	347

Red-winged Blackbird	**536**	888	402	155	746	689	189	811	214	4630	3859
Eastern Meadowlark	3	1	7		11	18		7	9	56	62
Common Grackle	1025	1137	1182	87	637	608	236	534	136	5582	4047
Br.-headed Cowbird	207	188	105	113	152	281	61	243	100	1450	1129
Orchard Oriole	17	1	1			10				29	21
Northern Oriole	256	117	126	75	55	199	143	161	39	1171	941
Purple Finch			1	1		3	45	39	2	91	115
House Finch	407	243	389	142	130	499	310	288	111	2519	3040
American Goldfinch	239	193	196	47	133	279	346	378	67	1878	1476
Evening Grosbeak							2			2	2
House Sparrow	823	415	330	117	130	337	244	303	167	2866	2514
Unidentified Individuals										0	3
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	19438	11900	9913	4310	6888	15323	12018	17374	4345	101509	92402
CD Species	135	128	118	108	102	130	117	130	101	187	189
CP Species	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
DEGREE OF EFFORT:											
Party Hours	263.5	112.5	93	55	44.5	151	167	165	54.25	1105.75	1101.5
Day PH	254	111	90.5	52	41.5	143	162	158	50.25	1062.25	1036
Night PH	9.5	1.5	2.5	3	3	8	5	7	4	43.5	65.5
Observers	55	30	36	7	12	28	21	39	10	238	230
Parties	28	20	12	6	5	16	19	13	6	125	115
Indiv. Birds per 10 PH	738	1058	1066	784	1548	1015	720	1053	801	918	839
Indiv. Birds per Observer	353	397	275	616	574	547	572	445	435	427	402
% Observers	23.1	12.6	15.1	2.9	5.0	11.8	8.8	16.4	4.2	100.0	
% Party Hours	23.8	10.2	8.4	5.0	4.0	13.7	15.1	14.9	4.9	100.0	
% Individual Birds	19.1	11.7	9.8	4.2	6.8	15.1	11.8	17.1	4.3	100.0	

For SBCs under 10 yrs. old, only species new in 1995 are shown. All statistics are given for SBCs at least ten years old(GS & WR).
New species and those found four or fewer years are shown under statewide totals.

Ba-Barkhamsted LH-Litchfield Hills SR-Salmon River
GS-Greenwich-Stamford NH-New Haven St-Storrs
Ha-Hartford QV-Quinnipiac Valley WR-Woodbury-Roxbury

XX Noted 4 or fewer years in last 10 yrs.
XX Species new to count
XX New 10 year high total (underlined)
XX New 10 year low total (Bold)

LORD OF THE AIR

A Birder's Quest for Bald Eagles During the Winter That Almost Wasn't

Robert Winkler

Weston, CT—When a long-awaited cold spell arrived amid the otherwise mild weather of last winter, I proposed to a fellow birder that we compete to spot the Saugatuck Reservoir's first Bald Eagle of the season. The loser would buy the winner a case of beer. We would proceed on the honor system, but there could be no doubt about the identification. A huge bird of prey soaring in the distance—merely a probable Bald Eagle—would not count.

My wager was declined, and I thought it might be because my friend felt outclassed by my greater birding experience. Time, however, would humble me. Soon after I suggested this friendly contest, the other birder not only had found the season's first Bald Eagle, but he had also seen others: a total of four Bald Eagles—two adults and two immatures, distinguishable by differences in coloration—compared to my total of zero.

To my further chagrin, I was unable to locate any eagles each time this birder would call to describe the whereabouts of his latest sighting. The water of Weston's Saugatuck Reservoir covers 868 acres, but even in this large area a bird with a seven-foot wingspan is no needle in a haystack. With white head and tail sandwiching a dark-brown body, the adult Bald Eagle is, in Roger Tory Peterson's words, "all field mark." Yet this unmistakable feathered giant continued to elude me.

To explain my inability to find Bald Eagles last winter, I have a plausible enough theory. These fish-loving raptors visit Connecticut when advancing winter freezes their watery haunts to the north. The Saugatuck Reservoir, large and deep, normally has considerable open water long after smaller and shallower Fairfield County reservoirs become solid ice.

For years this characteristic has made the Saugatuck a magnet for a few wintering Bald Eagles, but the warmest winter in memory had left other bodies of water more open than usual. Not confined to the Saugatuck, the eagles could roam in minutes to another reservoir miles away or perch for hours on a riverbank hidden from prying binoculars.

Not only was this a plausible theory; it was also a convenient rationalization for a frustrated birder. Still, January had arrived, and I had not yet seen an eagle. Never had I gone so deep into winter without finding this spectacular bird. Some winters I have seen

eagles on almost every visit to the reservoir, and once I had six eagles in view simultaneously. This winter I hadn't found an eagle in 15 tries.

I resolved to set aside a day for birding the reservoir and would not stop until I found *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*. The night before, I did a ritual cleansing of my binoculars and spotting scope. Then I disassembled the monopod I use to support my scope and cleaned the leg sections, washed and dried the nylon collars, and regreased the threads.

The next morning, armed with a special permit from the water company, I was at the dam one-half hour after sunrise. The air was cold but still, broken only by the caws of reservoir crows, and in the white pines near my vantage point, the light tapping of a downy woodpecker.

I checked all the favorite eagle perches: the spreading dead tree on the south end of the big island, the conifer groves jutting into the reservoir's east side, and the hemlock-covered sides of the hill above the dam. First with binoculars, then with scope, I did a 360-degree pan of the woods at the edge of the water. Not forgetting the sky, I scanned clouds and infinite blue.

Repeating this procedure, I worked my way up the reservoir, stopping next at the wide "bay" south of Godfrey Road. The wind blew lightly from the north but carried no eagle into view. Farther along, I pulled into the boulder-strewn parking area just above the big island, a reliable observation post for eagles—that is, until last winter. Binoculars around my neck and scope slung over a shoulder, I then walked the hiking trail between Valley Forge Road and the narrow channel at the reservoir's midsection.

There were other birds: Blue Jays and a Red-bellied Woodpecker, Buffleheads and a probable Pied-billed Grebe, a Red-tailed Hawk, Herring Gulls, and an unexpected Great Cormorant that slithered from the water like a feathered reptile and stood at reservoir's edge on a smooth slab of rock. I stopped to study three large birds soaring above a distant southern ridge, but their wings were uptilted—not "spread-eagled" almost flat against the sky—revealing them as Turkey Vultures.

Returning to my car, I continued to Redding, where the northern third of the reservoir lies. From the next turnoff I chose, a downhill trail winds through woods before looping past the water. During the walk, I convinced myself to change my inner approach to this quest for eagles.

Nothing was wrong with my outer approach: I had put myself in the eagle's domain at a time of day when it begins to hunt. But like the hundreds of motorists who pass the reservoir on Route 53 every day without seeing eagles, my thinking was out of tune with the wild. I was focused like a laser in a world where discovery comes by peripheral vision.

Looking at a tree, you hear a sound and want to see the bird that

makes it. You stare harder and hear the sound again, stare harder but don't see the bird. From the sound, it must be right in front of you, but the branch is empty. If, however, you pull back and broaden the view to include the whole tree—even throw the scene out of focus—suddenly in the corner of your eye, you see the bird. It was there all the time, yet you wonder, how could I have missed it?

These thoughts helped loosen my perceptual bonds. Crossing a brook, I began to feel the reservoir, rather than just see it. With each step toward water's edge, my tunnel vision widened and the reservoir opened to me further. I became less conscious of being an outsider. A left turn off the trail brought me through a small stand of pines. Here I calmly accepted that today I might not see any eagles. I would stop trying so hard.

As I came out to the water, I felt the electric charge of other living things. Below this point, the largely empty surface of the reservoir stretched for miles. But here, finally, there were hundreds of birds splashing around and filling the air with quacks and honks.

Two hundred Mallards and twenty-five Black Ducks swam just north of where I stood, close to my side of the reservoir, many with heads under water and tails tipped up. Thirty-five Canada Geese and a few Buffleheads floated in the middle, and a string of Common Mergansers paddled along the opposite shoreline.

Twelve more honking geese flew toward me from the other side of the reservoir, not in vee-formation but one next to the other. This line of geese blocked my view of a bird that followed them, which for a second I took to be another goose lagging behind.

When they banked to the left, the geese unmasked the bird in their wake: an adult Bald Eagle! Our meeting was a most satisfying culmination to my two-hour search that morning, plus all my previous attempts spanning several weeks. With an admiring nod, I welcomed this noble winter visitor to the woods and waters of southwestern Connecticut.

The eagle turned with the geese and followed them closely, passing less than 200 yards in front of me. It undoubtedly saw me standing on an exposed rock but did not let on with even the slightest veer from its course. Honking anxiously, the fleeing geese knew that eagles sometimes prey on their kind, but in this eagle's leisurely flapping I saw no intent to kill. Based on size, I judged it to be a male Bald Eagle, which is smaller than the female.

This lord of the air sailed north along the shoreline. Up went the large flock of Mallards and Black Ducks. They divided their number into smaller squadrons to create confusion and ready themselves for evasive action, but the eagle ignored them. The geese took a hard right turn across the water, but the eagle let them go and continued

straight toward the top of the reservoir.

Soon the ducks returned, chattering among themselves as they wheeled close by me before sliding into the water. Normally they would not come so near, but my threat was nothing compared to the danger they felt from above. I sensed their apprehension as the eagle, reaching the reservoir's northern brim, turned and slowly circled in our direction.

For a minute I lost sight of the eagle; then suddenly he materialized directly above the largest concentration of waterfowl. Ducks and geese frantically took to the air, zooming this way and that, but the eagle showed no reaction.

I wondered whether this was a hunting tactic designed to exhaust the prey before attempting a kill. Or perhaps this seeming lack of interest was a ruse that would change to a deadly surprise attack once a victim let down its guard. But would an eagle strike with a man this close? Perhaps I was the reason he would not show his talons.

At or near water, all was commotion among hundreds of water birds, yet high above the majestic eagle soared alone, tracing elegant circles in the clouds. The benevolent despot was, for the moment, overlooking his realm. He did not know and would not care that his image graces the great seal and the postal truck. He rises above all human matters, coming and going in silence, allowing us only a glimpse before disappearing beyond the horizon.

After lording it over the other birds a while longer, the eagle moved south along the opposite shore, flying quite high. When he reached the expanse of water between the channel and the big island, he pulled back his great wings and rocketed down, finally displaying his predatory side. I thought he had a trout in his sights, but when he abruptly came out of the dive and resumed soaring, I knew the target had vanished.

By now this grand bird was a mere speck in my binoculars. I drove the four miles back to my starting point at the dam, found this speck, and viewed the eagle from another angle. From this great distance, the white head and tail were invisible against the clouds, and the bird appeared headless and tailless. Beyond him I saw other specks that represented large birds, maybe even other eagles.

By winter's end I would see four Bald Eagles at the reservoir—two adults and two immatures. If they allow me, and if I allow myself, I will find eagles again this winter.

Robert Winkler, a writer, lives in Weston, CT and frequently writes about nature.

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CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES SPRING, MARCH 1 — MAY 31, 1995

Greg Hanisek

Editor's Comment: Reports of rare or unusual bird species in Connecticut (see latest COA Field List) require that documentation be submitted to the Secretary of the Rare Records Committee (Mark Szantyr, 2C Yale Rd., Storrs, CT 06268), if they are to be included in the Connecticut Field Notes.

March was drier and warmer than normal, continuing the pattern of last winter. Things changed in April, when a series of cold fronts dropped the average temperature to 46.5°F, two degrees below normal, and reduced the early stages of migration to a trickle. This was in stark contrast to April 1994, when temperatures averaged three degrees above normal and early migrants created a flurry of excitement. May started out much like April but then produced a truly noteworthy migratory binge. From about May 12 to May 20 the state was flooded with warblers, tanagers, thrushes and flycatchers. A complicated series of dueling highs and lows built to a May 18 crescendo as low pressure sliding over from the Great Lakes pushed a warm front through the Northeast. As noted repeatedly in this report, May 18 offered a stunning mixture of passerines, shorebirds and lingering species making a final push northward. In the midst of this flight, which several observers called the best they'd seen in years, appeared the state's first White-faced Ibis.

Although migration started slowly overall, a number of precocious arrivals were scattered among this year's rather modest April movements. These included a remarkable Wood Thrush, which broke the record by eight days when it showed up April 8 in Newtown (PB); a Ruby-throated Hummingbird in Stratford that tied the early arrival record April 20 (JY); a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in Woodbury that tied the record April 9 (RN); a Veery in New Milford April 18 that beat the record by a day (AT); a Solitary Vireo in Southbury April 2 that was five days ahead of the record (RN); a Yellow Warbler that was five days in front April 16 in Southbury (BL); and a Magnolia Warbler that was two days ahead of the record April 22 in Killingworth (John Himmelman fide FM).

These were the exceptions. Just as interesting are the species

that show up on time. Some examples of first arrival dates that fit the norm include: Willet April 18 in Madison (CR); Eastern Wood-Pewee May 8 in Kent (SK); Eastern Phoebe March 12 in Southbury (RN); Great Crested Flycatcher April 30 in Woodbury (RN); Least Flycatcher April 30 in Kent (GH) and Eastford (PR); Eastern Kingbird April 26 in Storrs (GC); House Wren April 16 in Southbury (BL); Yellow-throated Vireo April 27 in Shelton (TK); Warbling Vireo April 29 in Storrs (GC); Northern Parula April 28 in Middlebury (GH); Black-throated Green Warbler April 26 in Naugatuck (GH); Black-throated Blue Warbler April 27 in South Windsor (PDe); Louisiana Waterthrush April 15 in Branford (MS); and Ovenbird April 29 at West Rock State Park, New Haven (AB).

We probably shouldn't forget the very tardy. Hammonasset Beach State Park, hereafter HBSP, Madison, proved to be "Straggler Central" with a Red-throated Loon (FM) , a Horned Grebe (DT), a super-late Short-eared Owl (JW) and a Cliff Swallow (RE) all on May 18, plus a Solitary Vireo May 22 (SY et al.) and a Dark-eyed Junco May 20 (GH).

LOONS THROUGH HERONS

Loon and grebe reports were unspectacular, with high counts of 21 Red-throated Loons March 5 (FG) and 80 Horned Grebes March 1 (FM), both at Sherwood Island State Park, hereafter SISP, Westport. Northern Gannets were on the move March 2-April 17, when a total of at least 20 birds was reported from five locations between Old Saybrook and Greenwich (m.ob.). The high count was nine, all adults, March 29 at SISP (FM,RS). Gratifying numbers of the elusive and declining American Bittern were reported: two April 14 at Station 43 in South Windsor (CE), one April 15-16 at the Farmington Canal in Cheshire (RB,AB), a flyover April 21 in Woodbury (RN), singles April 22 and May 5 at SISP (RS), one May 28 in Sharon (FM,TD) and records from March 13 through May 9 suggesting wintering and possible breeding at HBSP (m.ob.). Snowy Egret first appeared March 21 at Lordship, Stratford, (JHo et al.), followed by Great Egret March 25 at HBSP (JG,FD). Single white egrets that were found April 26 at HBSP (DP) and May 7 in Norwalk (FG) showed the general characteristics of Snowy Egrets but had two long head plumes in addition to the normal shaggy nape. This raised the possibility of **Snowy X Little Egret hybrids**. Photographs were obtained, and experts are being consulted.

The scarce Tricolored Heron made a good showing with three

Possible Snowy EgetX Little Egret hybrid
Norwalk Harbor, Norwalk, CT
Photographed 7 May 1995 by Frank W. Mantlik

May 27 at Milford Point (JB) and two May 25 at HBSP (SH); one was at HBSP April 26-May 1 (RE et al.), one was at Milford Point May 6 (fide DSo) and another was at Barn Island, Stonington, May 4 (DP). Little Blue Herons were scarcer, with two at HBSP April 23 (JM), one in Guilford April 15 (GH), one at SISP May 6 (fide DSo) and one at Falkner Island, Guilford, May 26 (DS). There were reports of up to five Cattle Egrets on the Fairfield County coast April 29 to May 31, including three in Westport April 30-May 29 (CB, PD et al.), and one was inland near the Orange-Derby line May 26 (JB). The first Green Heron was in South Britain April 15 (JL). Yellow-crowned Night-Herons weren't as widely reported as in the past two years; the high count was three on May 7 at Manresa Island, Norwalk (FM). The bird of the season was the adult **White-faced Ibis**, in high breeding plumage, discovered May 16 at HBSP (DP). The ibis remained through at least May 19, offering close views of a first state record for many birders. It was accompanied by up to 15 Glossy Ibis, which were also present in

Adult White-faced Ibis: 1st. Connecticut Record.
Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison, CT
Photographed 18 May 1995 by Frank W. Mantlik

small numbers from Norwalk to Stonington, with the first report of seven March 30 at HBSP (CR) and the high count of 21 at Barn Island April 20 (DP).

WATERFOWL

Holly Pond in Stamford, one of the state's better waterfowl magnets, attracted a noteworthy flock of eight **Tundra Swans** March 9-10 (PD et al.). There was little worth noting about the Snow Goose flight, which produced a high count of just 10 on March 9 in Ellington (CE). Up to 300 Brant lingered as late as May 12 in Westport (FM), with a few staying through the end of the season at various coastal locations (JG et al.). The high count of Green-winged Teal was 370 at Milford Point April 9 (FG); a late one was in Westport May 26 (FM). Northern Pintails were spotty, with a high count of only six on April 7 at Southport Beach (CB). Populations of Blue-winged Teal and Northern Shoveler in the state seem headed in opposite directions, and the once-rare shoveler is the one on the increase. This spring produced reports of about a dozen of each statewide, including a February 25 shoveler in Mansfield that set an early arrival record for the Storrs area (MS et al.) and six teal together April 3 at Station 43 (CE). This South Windsor location also held a Eurasian Wigeon March 20 (CE), and singles were in Bridgeport March 4 (Lysle Brinker fide FM), Griswold Point in Old Lyme, April 8 (DP) and Milford Point May 12 (CB). An American Wigeon lingered through May at Lake Quassapaug, Middlebury (BOI).

Ring-necked Ducks topped out at 60 on March 13 at Messerschmidt Pond, Westbrook (FG), and a pair lingered through May at a small pond in Newtown (PB). The best Lesser Scaup count was 15 on March 14 in Woodbury (RN). Four female **Common Eiders** were late but northbound May 15 in Stratford (NC), and the winter's female **King Eider** remained in Madison until March 10 (GH et al.). The only inland scoter report involved a White-winged May 27 at Lake Lillinonah in Southbury (DR). Winter's pair of **Barrow's Goldeneye** at SISP remained until March 13 (RS), and 300 Oldsquaw were there March 1 (FM). Common Mergansers, on the increase as breeders throughout the Northeast, had broods of eight and 12 young on the Pomperaug River in Southbury in mid-May (JL,DC). Up to two lingering Red-breasted Mergansers were at Falkner Island April 28 to May 30 (JS et al.); the high count was 200 March 1 at SISP (FM). The lone Ruddy Duck report came from Shelton May 13 (TK).

RAPTORS

Black Vultures remain firmly established in New Milford and Kent, with a maximum of five in

Kent in April and May (LW et al.). Now they're showing up elsewhere, such as Canton, which had one April 18 (SP); Watertown, where one was soaring in early May (HH); and of special interest, a report of five May 14 in Glastonbury by a raptor research intern (Christine Leahey fide FM). A Bald Eagle revealed name, rank and serial number March 4-12 at Lake Zoar in Southbury. Its band showed it to be a third-year bird hatched in 1992 at Barkhamsted Reservoir, New Hartford (DR). Its 1992 nestmate showed up at Quabbin Reservoir in Massachusetts in early March, and at least one of Barkhamsted's 1994 hatchlings overwintered in Sullivan County, N.Y. (fide RN). An adult Bald Eagle was in Litchfield as late as May 6 (JF). An Osprey was first noted on a nest platform at HBSP on March 16. There was no doubt about the Osprey's intentions, but what about two Northern Harriers in courtship flight at HBSP on April 27 (MS)?

One or two pairs of possible nesting Sharp-shinned Hawks were at White Memorial Foundation, Litchfield, throughout May (DR). In Waterford, two raised suspicions of breeding May 28 (MS). Cooper's Hawk, a more common breeder, was noted at scattered sites throughout the state. Breeding Northern Goshawks, either proven or suspected, were reported from Southbury (DR), Easton (NC), Litchfield (RN), Norfolk (JF), Canton (JK), Sterling (C&GL), the Northeast corner (GC) and Washington (GH). Singles were in Hamden March 15 (AB), Preston April 1 (DP) and Mansfield Depot April 15 (MS). The season's first Broad-winged Hawk report came from South Windsor April 7 (CE); by April 20 one was already nest-building in Ashford (MS). The only Rough-legged Hawks were noted March 18 in Manchester (SK), March 19 at Lordship (JHo) and April 2 in Newtown (RN). American Kestrels were widespread during their April migration, especially April 5-20, but they thinned out quickly thereafter. Merlins, which continue to show up more often inland, were in Tariffville March 5 (DH), South Windsor March 19 (SK), Farmington March 26 (JMo) and Windsor May 14 (PDe). Two Peregrines were again in downtown Stamford throughout the period but showed no signs of nesting (PD). One was at SISP March 20 (RS); and at HBSP singles were sighted three times from Feb. 26 to March 10, when a Snow Bunting ended up on the hors d'oeuvre tray (CR et al.).

GAMEBIRDS THROUGH TERNS

The Wild Turkey population explosion continues. Numbers are growing, even on the heavily developed Fairfield County coast, where a flock of 40 fre-

quented Norwalk (m.ob.), and one sat atop a tree in densely populated Compo Beach, Westport, May 2 (Pat Eason fide FM). A King Rail was at SISP May 20 (RS) and one was photographed April 28 at Milford Point (DP). A Virginia Rail March 3-4 in Storrs was early enough to raise suspicion that it wintered nearby (J&LSe). The only Sora reports came from traditional locations: Station 43 on May 4 (CE) and May 31 (DP), White Memorial Foundation, Litchfield, May 12 (JKi) and Goshen May 15 (MS). It was a fine spring for the elusive and reclusive Common Moorhen: singles were at three different locations in Old Lyme May 2-25 (HG); one probably looked ridiculous standing on a breakwater at SISP May 12 (RS); and at least three were in residence in Sharon beginning in late April (GH).

The shorebird flight seemed light and spotty, although there were some good high counts. Black-bellied Plover was one of the more numerous and widespread species, with more than 100 at HBSP May 18 (GH). Milford Point held 300 Semipalmated Plovers the same day (FM). Among the landlubbers checking in at Falkner Island was a Killdeer April 28-30 (PO). American Oystercatchers were at all their recently established haunts: Manresa Is., Milford Point, HBSP and Menunkateesuck Island in Westbrook. The high count was seven at HBSP on May 18 (FM et al.). Of special interest is their saga at Falkner Island, where a nesting attempt failed in late April. Then a three-egg clutch was found May 19, but that was abandoned May 26 (JS et al.). Greater Yellowlegs peaked at 100 April 17 at Milford Point (GH,NC) but Lesser Yellowlegs were scarce. The best Solitary Sandpiper count was eight on May 15 in Ellington (CE). Away from their Bradley International Airport, nesting grounds, Upland Sandpipers were reported May 10 in Ellington (CE) and April 26-27 at HBSP (JG,CR). The season's only Whimbrel visited Falkner Island May 25 (JS), and the only Red Knot report came from SISP May 26 (RS). Milford Point racked up another seasonal high with 2,000 Semipalmated Sandpipers May 18 (FM). The high count for Least Sandpiper was 50 on May 6 in Shelton (TK). Other noteworthy peep sightings included two White-rumped Sandpipers and two Western Sandpipers May 24 at Milford Point (RN,J&CL) and a White-rumped May 5 at HBSP (DSo). The only Pectoral Sandpiper reports were of two April 8 in Old Lyme (DP) and two more April 25 at Guilford Sluice, Guilford (GH,NC). Up to 30 Common Snipe tarried in a sodden field in Newtown in early April (LF), and American Woodcock was first heard displaying March 7 in Chaplin (CF,AF).

The earliest Laughing Gulls were two April 30 in Stamford (FG). Single **Little Gulls** were in Stamford March 21 to April 8 (PD), Griswold Point March 19 (DP) and Old Saybrook March 5 (DP). **Common Black-headed Gulls** were at Griswold Point March 1 (DP), Westbrook March 13 (JG), Oyster River in Milford March 17 and 26 (GH, DP), Stamford March 18 (PD) and Old Saybrook March 5 and 26 (DP). The best count of Bonaparte's Gulls was 1,000 in Old Saybrook March 25 (FM et al.). A Lesser Black-backed Gull was at the New Milford landfill March 30 (CW). The Windsor landfill held an adult Lesser Black-backed and a second-year Iceland Gull in mid-April (PDe). The only reports of Black Terns came from Falkner Island, with one on May 22 and two on May 29 (DS).

CUCKOOS THROUGH VIREOS

Both cuckoos were gobbling tent caterpillars in excellent numbers statewide from about May 12 through the end of the period. A Barn Owl, which proved to have been previously banded, was mist netted in a Hartford sewer plant and released on site April 7 (JK,GK,GM). At Greenwich Point, a Great Horned Owl nest blew out of a white pine in late March, but three young were fledged from a wicker basket provided as a replacement (fide B0). The young may have enjoyed an especially hearty meal about that time; a Long-eared Owl that spent the winter at the Point was found decapitated on April 1 (fide BO). Two Short-eared Owls that wintered at Silver Sands State Park in Milford were seen through March 26 (AR et al.); others were in Fairfield March 4 (CB), Lordship April 9 (FG) and sporadically into May at HBSP (m.ob.) Northern Saw-whet Owls were in Fairfield March 1 (CB), Litchfield March 13 (DR), Sterling March 11-16 (RD) and calling at Bigelow Hollow State Park, Union, March 22 and April 13 (JF). Common Nighthawks put in a good showing May 16-20, with 41 in Stamford May 18 (PD) and 65 in Durham/Middlefield May 20 (JG,FD). A startled pair of homeowners awoke early on the morning of May 23 to the sound of a **Chuck-will's-widow** calling in their Norwalk yard (FM,CWo). The bird, about the 15th state record since 1889, could not be relocated that evening. A Whip-poor-will was calling in Sharon in mid-May (MS et al.) and four were in Nehantic State Forest, Lyme, May 21 (DP).

The earliest Chimney Swift report was April 15 in Waterbury (GH); six on April 20 in Willimantic set an early-arrival record for the Storrs area (BC). Fall's *Selasphorus* hummingbird in East Hartford, which was kept alive over winter in a greenhouse, proved through measurements

to be a female **Rufous Hummingbird**, the state's second (fide LB). The immature Red-headed Woodpecker that wintered in Southbury molted into adult plumage and was last seen April 9 (RN). The three to four that wintered in East Haddam were excavating cavities April 3 (fide JH). The state's breeding population of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers is best appreciated when they first arrive as drumming, yelping cut-ups in the quiet, leafless woods. On April 22 at least 12 were along a section of trail in north western Connecticut (FG) and at least eight were along River Road in Kent April 18 (GH).

From May 18-28, Olive-sided Flycatchers were reported from South Britain (J&CL), Hamden (AB), Newtown (PB), Shelton (TK), Westbrook, Lyme and Redding (CRBA). Willow and Alder Flycatchers staged a good flight May 20-28, with Alders as usual running a few days behind Willows (RN et al.). Acadian Flycatchers also arrived during that period, but in much smaller numbers (JF,JK,DP et al.). The only Yellow-bellied Flycatcher reports were of two in Hadlyme May 21 (DP) and one at Mohawk Mountain, Cornwall, May 25 (NC). HBSP still held 20 Horned Larks March 16 (JG), and they were on territory at Bridgeport and Bradley airports. A Northern Rough-winged Swallow was a bit early March 27 at Lake Zoar in Southbury, an excellent spot for early swallow flights (DR), and so was a Cliff Swallow April 18 in Sandy Hook (NC). A Tree Swallow March 10 in Mansfield was very early for the Storrs area (MS). A Common Raven was in New Milford throughout the period, and eastern sightings continued to mount with singles April 27 in Voluntown (JF), May 18 in Bozrah (RD) and May 26 in Union (JF). Their latest move may be toward the shoreline, where a pair was calling March 29 in North Guilford (RBA).

The Red-breasted Nuthatch flight was negligible, but a reliable pair returned for at least the fifth year to a residential area in Woodbury, where they had fledged young May 28 (RN). There aren't any marshes on Falkner Island, but there was a Marsh Wren there May 21 (DS). Swainson's Thrushes were widespread May 13-23, with five in the New Milford-Bridgewater area May 13 (RN,CW et al.), but only two reports of Gray-cheeked Thrush were received. One was in Canton May 20 (JK) and another was at HBSP May 17 (DP). A **Varied Thrush** was a distinguished visitor at the Rabenold feeder in West Norwalk from early March through April 19 (fide RS,FM). The protracted migration of American Pipits was illustrated by records ranging from March 6 at HBSP (JG) to May 13 in New Milford (fide CW). SISP hosted a massive flock of 500 Cedar Waxwings May 18

(RS). White-eyed Vireos were inland in Watertown May 12 (CW), Chaplin May 16 (PR), Bridgewater May 21 (RN), and Shelton May 26 (TK). Solitary Vireos were widespread April 21-30. Single Philadelphia Vireos, always hard to come by in spring, were in Hamden May 18 and Barkhamsted May 31 (JF).

WARBLERS

No matter what else happens, warblers make or break a spring migration. They made this one with a surge that peaked May 16-18. The flight washed over a broad front, producing a total of 23 species at Nehantic State Forest and HBSP on the 17th (DP), followed by 21 species in Kent (CW) and 20 in North Windham (MS) the next day. A number of observers noted that during the May 12-20 period, warblers were often generally present at all birding locations, a situation they hadn't experienced in years. Other good counts included 16 species May 16 in Stamford (PD) and 13 the same day at Lighthouse Point in New Haven, a spot that's overlooked in spring (PDe). Species that are often scarce, such as Cape May, Bay-breasted and Wilson's Warblers, were widespread. The only Golden-winged Warbler reports came from the traditional sites in Kent (m.ob.) and Sharon (MS,RN). Lawrence's Warblers were in Fairfield May 4 (Doug Edwards fide FM), Lyme May 12 (HG), and Storrs May 19 (MS). A Brewster's Warbler was in Mansfield May 14 (GC et al.). The season's only Orange-crowned Warbler, a spring rarity, was at HBSP during the big May 18 flight (SH). An April 29 Magnolia Warbler was an early-arrival record for the Storrs area (GC). Yellow-rumped Warblers staged a heavy flight from April 12-24. The male **Yellow-throated Warbler** arrived on schedule April 22 at River Road in Kent and proved easy to find throughout the period (m.ob.). This is the sixth year in a row at this location.

Observers from Woodbury (RN) to Storrs (MS) commented on the excellent flight of Pine Warblers in mid-April, when birds appeared in marginal as well as prime habitat. The Palm Warbler flight peaked April 23-24, with 20+ at Greenwich Audubon Center on the 23rd (FM,TD). Blackpoll Warblers peaked as expected during the last 10 days of May, with a few present through the end of the month. Away from breeding sites, a Cerulean Warbler appeared in Hamden during the May 18 flight (JF). Black-and-White Warblers poured into the state April 22-23 (m.ob.), and an American Redstart sneaked in a tad early in South Windsor April 27 (PDe). An overshooting male **Prothonotary Warbler** wowed a crowd April 26-28 at East Rock Park, New Haven, the state's best place

to see this southern species (DSo et al.). A Worm-eating Warbler was a bit early April 22 at SISP (RS), as was a Northern Waterthrush April 17 in New Milford (AT). Kentucky Warblers were at both HBSP (RSw) and Hadlyme (DP) on May 21; the latter locale held up to three in late May (SO). Mourning Warblers? There were a bundle: May 18 in Kent (CW), May 18 and 20 in Hamden (AB), May 18 and 24 at HBSP (SH), May 20 in Southport (CB), May 20 in Preston (DP), May 21 at East Rock (JBe), May 25 at Falkner Island (JS,JZ et al.), May 26 in Storrs (MS) and May 30 in Fairfield (AO). The only Yellow-breasted Chats were at Greenwich Point May 9 (Meredith Baxter fide BO) and on Falkner Island May 23 (DS).

TANAGERS THROUGH ICTERIDS

An unprecedented **Summer Tanager** invasion started with a male photographed at Cove Island Park in Stamford May 16 (P&JD). The same day an adult and a sub-adult male were found at East Rock Park in New Haven (RSw et al.). During the May 18 extravaganza, a sub-adult male spent the day singing at the state Agricultural Experiment Station in Hamden (JF,CL). The tanagers weren't the season's only southern vagrants. Two **Blue Grosbeaks** were at East Rock Park May 6 (CR et al.). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was on the early side April 19 in Washington (DB). On May 15 in Kent, as morning rain and fog broke, a group of nine male Indigo Buntings dropped from the sky onto the edge of a field, which must have been a stunning sight (MS). The first Chipping Sparrow arrived April 12 in Chaplin (AF). A **Clay-colored Sparrow**—about the fifth spring record—sang at Northwest Park in Windsor May 28-31 (PDe et al.). The park also held up to six Grasshopper Sparrows during the same period (PDe,LB et al.), offering hope of a new breeding locale. Vesper Sparrows, always a good spring find, were reported from Litchfield April 20 (BB,DR), Bradley International Airport, Windsor Locks, April 30 (JG et al.), and Kent May 2 (GH). Lincoln's Sparrows appeared in Bridgewater May 13 (CW), White Memorial Foundation May 14 (DT), HBSP May 17 (two) and 18 (CR,DP et al.), and Ellington May 21 (CE). White-crowned Sparrow was one of the season's most-noticed species. Heavy migration peaked May 12-13, and several observers commented on hearing singing birds more often this year than ever before. The high count was 11 on May 13 in Bridgewater (fide CW).

The latest Lapland Longspur was reported March 16 from HBSP (LB), which still held 30 Snow Buntings that day (JG). The buntings dropped to one by March 25 (JG). Eastern Meadow-

larks arrived March 15-18, with reports from HBSP (m.ob.), Roxbury (GH), and Newtown (NC). The season's only **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was a male that visited a Niantic yard March 15-23 (DP, JH et al.). A good Rusty Blackbird flight produced 60+ at White Memorial Foundation March 28 (DR) and 50 in Suffield April 30 (SKe et al.). A leucistic Common Grackle visited a Wethersfield yard March 5 (SK). On April 18, few migrant passerines had yet returned to River Road in Kent, but Brown-headed Cowbirds were strategically scattered through the woods—waiting (GH). After the finchless winter, the only spring report of note was two Evening Grosbeaks May 7 at White Memorial Foundation (DT).

EXOTICS

Four Barnacle Geese were at Shenipsit Lake, Tolland March 9 (MO); an Egyptian Goose was at Holly Pond, Stamford, March 4 (JW); an Emperor Goose was at North Farms Reservoir, Wallingford, April 27-28 (Bill DiChello fide FM); and a Chukar was in Oakville April 14 (Wayne Murray).

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Falkner Island records refer to the Falkner I. Unit of the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge in Guilford, from Jeff Spendelow, Jim Zingo and the staff of the Falkner Island Tern Project.

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ANSWER TO PHOTO CHALLENGE 14

Harsh sunlight often plays tricks with us, casting dark shadows on one side of a bird and thus disguising any color, or shining so brightly that it washes out any color on the other side of the bird. The solution? Walk around until we get the sun at our backs. However, that is not always feasible, and we then are forced to use clues for identification that we ordinarily ignore. Such is the case with our last photo challenge.

The long legs and large feet on our bird indicate a species that is a strong walker. Can we narrow the possibilities to a family of birds that spends much of the time walking on the ground? Grouse and pheasants are such a group, but they have shorter bills and much shorter toes. They also have variegated feather patterns to camouflage them in grass and leaves. What about herons and egrets? After all, the bird is standing next to water and mud. Possibly, but it is not a heron because the legs are too short. Yet another group, the shorebirds, can be eliminated by the stout bill. The birds considered thus far walk around more or less in the open, but another family of birds that includes strong walkers is the rails, which stalk through marshes mostly unseen. Rails are also adept swimmers, with coots being the adaptive extreme to that mode of locomotion within the rail family. Turning to our field guide, we see that the size, dark plumage, and short, stout bill best fit coots and gallinules (moorhens).

Noticing that the bill runs up the front of the birds face, a feature called the frontal shield, we can feel confident that we have the right

group. Since the frontal shield looks white, the natural conclusion is that our bird is an American Coot. But remember the conditions. Bright sunlight is playing tricks. So, perhaps the two white stripes at the side of the tail will lend a clue. Alas, American Coot, and both gallinules, Purple Gallinule and Common Moorhen, have white under the tail. We therefore should consider

other features of our bird. Remember the swimming ability of coots. That ability is assisted by fleshy lobes on the toes, clearly not what we see on our bird. We must have one of the gallinules. Most field guides concentrate, rightly so, on the obvious color differences between Purple Gallinule and moorhens. Purple Gallinules are bright iridescent blue and green, their frontal shields are blue on the forehead, and the legs are bright yellow-green. None of these characters, however, help us identify our mystery bird. A quick glance at the flanks shows us that there is a line of white just below the wings; this line is not obvious because the feathers are fluffed out and this breaks up the pattern. Our bird is therefore a Common Moorhen.

Moorhens, or Common Gallinules, are decidedly uncommon in Connecticut, and anyone looking for one must look hard. A few still breed in scattered cattail marshes in the state or are found as migrants in marshes, but these too are rare. The Common Moorhen is distributed throughout much of the world except, notably, Australia, New Guinea, and New Zealand. As a testament to the dispersal abilities of rails, the species has colonized several oceanic island groups such as Hawaii, Guam, the Azores, and the Galapagos. Pretty good for such a gawky looking group of birds! This Common Moorhen was photographed by Curtis Marantz at Brazos Bend State Park, Texas, in February 1992.

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Photo challenge 15. Identify the species . Answer next issue, space permitting.

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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The Connecticut Warbler (ISSN 1077-0283) 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. Address all correspondence, and make checks payable to: The Connecticut Ornithological Association, 314 Unquowa Road, Fairfield, CT 06430.

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Member	$12.00	Contributing	$25.00
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The editors welcome submission of articles and notes for *The Connecticut Warbler*. Manuscripts should be typed double spaced on one side of the sheet only, with ample margins on all sides accompanied with an IBM PC disk, if possible. Style of the manuscript should follow general usage in recent issues. All manuscripts receive peer review.

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Fall 1995 - Volume XV No. 4