THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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ABOUT OUR COVER

Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*)

by Paul Carrier

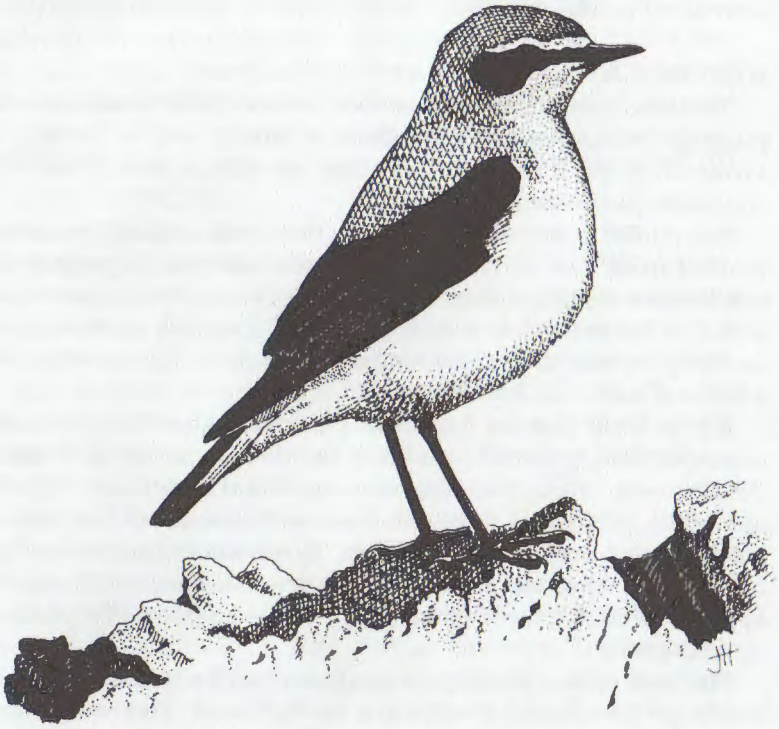
Our cover artist, Paul Carrier, has a deep interest in birds and enjoys all aspects of nature. This is his fifth cover for *The connecticut Warbler*. He leads field trips, including spring and fall hawk watches for the Hartford Audubon Society and illustrates the front cover of their bimonthly newsletter. He has also prepared a well received, hawk picture guide, and has illustrated several books. Paul has his own advertising and design studio in Harwinton, Connecticut.

THE STATUS AND IDENTIFICATION OF NORTHERN WHEATEAR IN CONNECTICUT

JULIAN HOUGH

For Connecticut birders, 1995 will be remembered as the year during which many added Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) to their state list.

This perky old world chat had one of its best fall seasons to date on the eastern seaboard, with reports ranging from Maine to southern New Jersey. With several New England states hosting Northern Wheatears, it was hoped that Connecticut would not be left out of the running. We were not disappointed. The eventual discovery of not one, but four different individuals was definitely a lion's share of the bounty.



Male Northern Wheatear by Julian Hough

Prior to 1995, there had been about eleven records of this largely Eurasian species in Connecticut. In Eurasia, Northern Wheatears are a fairly common and widespread breeder, extending eastward from Greenland across continental Europe into Siberia.

They have also colonized North America and occurrences here stem from two distinct geographical populations; Siberian birds which have extended eastward to Alaska, and Greenland birds which have extended westward to Arctic Canada. Despite this colonization, Wheatears remain a rare occurrence in the northern United States. This is primarily due to the fact that both the eastern and western populations migrate southeast and southwest respectively, to join European Northern Wheatears on their wintering grounds in Africa. This extensive migration is a major factor affecting the vagrancy potential of this species; long-distant migrants are more prone to be blown off-course or disoriented by weather systems, particularly young birds inexperienced in the art of navigation and migration. Spring occurrences are few and far between, but surely some birds must overwinter in the United State and return north in March.

IDENTIFICATION

Northern Wheatears have several distinct behavioral traits and plumage features which make them relatively easy to identify. By virtue of their tail-pattern alone, they are unique among all North American passerines (See Figure 1).

Sometimes wary but not shy, they will utilize prominent perches from which to feed. They recall shrikes in this respect and can be seen making sallies from their lookout posts, or swooping down to the ground in search of insects. They are nimble feeders on the ground and prefer open rocky, sandy or grassy areas with scattered bushes and trees.

It is in flight that the diagnostic black and white tail-pattern becomes strikingly obvious and it is this feature which first strikes the observer. The upper tail coverts and basal two-thirds of the tail are white, while the outer one-third and central tail feathers are black forming an inverted 'T' shape. This is very apparent in flight or when the bird fans its tail. On the ground, the closed tail often appears all-dark from a distance and is characteristically 'pumped' up and down.

The rest of the plumage is uniform; the body and wings are sandy-grey with strong buff tones on the breast. The head pattern is fairly simple, showing a faint, dusky eyestripe and a pale buff-white supercilium. The wing feathers have broad buffy fringes

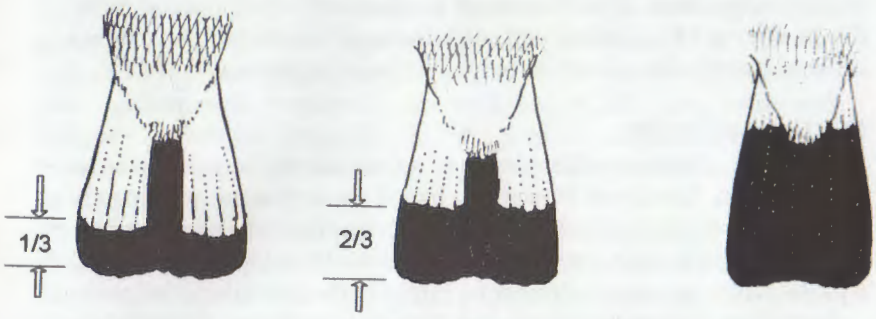


Figure 1: Tail Patterns of three species of wheatear (Julian Hough)

which mask the darker feather-centers and the primaries are long and blackish with conspicuous whitish-buff tips. The bill and legs are blackish.

AGING AND SEXING

Adult Northern Wheatears undergo a complete molt after the breeding season and, like first-year birds, look very neat and pristine in the fall. As a result, except for fall adult males (which still show blackish lores and dark ear-coverts) aging in the field is generally not reliable. Any non-adult male Northern Wheatear in fall should be referred to as "female or first-winter."

Summer plumage is attained in early spring when the broad, buffy feather fringes wear off to reveal the brighter summer dress below.

GEOGRAPHICAL VARIATION

Four subspecies are recognized (Cramp et al. 1988); *leucorhoa* (Greenland/Iceland), *oenanthe* (Northern and Central Europe east to Asia and western North America), *libanotica* (S. Europe and Near East) and *seebohmi* (N.W. Africa). Except for the latter (which has a black throat and underwing coverts) racial identification of out of range individuals is generally not reliable.

As would be expected, all Northern Wheatears recorded in eastern North America appear to belong to the Greenland race *leucorhoa*, being on average larger, longer-winged and more richly plumaged than nominate *oenanthe*.

In western Europe, where both of these races occur together during migration, clinal variation in plumage tones makes racial distinction problematical, although some 'Greenland' Wheatears do stand out in the crowd by virtue of their larger size.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Although there are 13 species of wheatear in Europe and the Middle East, Northern Wheatear, based on its range, is the only likely species to occur in North America. For the sake of completeness, two similar southern Eurasian wheatears, which have shown a pattern of vagrancy to Northern Europe, are mentioned below.

Isabelline Wheatear (Southeast Europe) is almost identical to Northern in fall plumages. They have a broader terminal band to the tail (two-thirds of the tail) and a shorter 'T' stem. The bill is slightly heavier and the dark eyestripe and whitish supercilium are more prominent and contrasting. The plumage is a paler sandy-grey and the blackish alula feather stands out on the closed wing as an isolated dark patch.

Desert Wheatear (Middle East and Asia Minor) unlike the above two, is a late fall/early winter migrant to northern Europe. It is usually recorded after the main flight of Northern Wheatears, typically occurring from late October-November onwards. Fall Desert Wheatears, particularly males, are very distinctive with blackish chin and throat and are unlikely to be confused with Northern. It is the females which are more similar but they show an obviously longer and virtually all black tail. The wings are blackish and contrast with the sandy-grey mantle and head, and the lores are pale.

So, seeing as I have clued you in, next autumn, when you see that flashing black and white tail pattern on the coast, you have no excuse for not identifying the species....and when you do, please call me! I still need Northern Wheatear for my Connecticut List!

JULIAN HOUGH, 51 Brook Street, #6C, Naugatuck, Connecticut 06770

Isabelline Wheatear
(Photo by Paul Holt, Sept. '93)

A PAIR OF ROSEATE TERNS FLEDGES THREE YOUNG WITH LIMITED HUMAN ASSISTANCE

JEFFREY A. SPENDELOW, JAMES M. ZINGO, SEAN FOSS

Hays (1994) reported that a trio of Roseate Terns (*Sterna dougallii*) raised three fledglings in 1991 at Great Gull Island, New York. Despite the regular occurrence of "supernormal" clutches of three or more eggs (Norton 1988, Hays 1994, Shealer and Zurovchak 1995), we are not aware of any reports of three young being fledged by just two adult Roseate Terns. Here we report a pair that, with limited human assistance given to the initially smallest chick for two weeks, fledged three young in 1994 at Falkner Island off the coast of Connecticut.

STUDY AREA AND METHODS

Falkner Island, now a unit of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, is located in Long Island Sound about 5 km south of Guilford, Connecticut. Researchers have been studying the terns and other birds nesting at this site since 1978 as part of the Falkner Island Tern Project (FITP), and descriptions of the island and the nesting habitats used by Roseate Terns at this site have been given by Spendelow (1982), Helander (1988), and Spendelow and Nichols (1989).

As part of the general FITP procedures, Roseate Tern nests and chicks are checked daily in the late afternoon if the weather pemits. All chicks are given a numbered U.S. Bird Banding Laboratory band on one leg within a day or two of hatching. Chicks receive a special 4-character "field-readable" band on the other leg when about five days old, and those found a few days before fledging receive colormarks on their plumage for short-term, long-distance identification.

In 1994, eggs and small tern chicks were weighed to the nearest 0.1 g using a 50-g Pesola spring scale and larger chicks were weighed to the nearest 0.5 g using a 100-g scale, or, if necessary, to the nearest 1.0 g using a 300-g scale. Following the methods and definitions used by Nisbet et al. (1995), we used these data to compute two growth parameters: (1) "linear growth rate" (LGR) is the slope of the regression line fitted to the mass data during the quasi-linear period of growth (3-13 days for the first hatched A-chicks, 4-14 days for the second-hatched B-chicks), and (2) "asymptotic mass" (AM) is the mean of all masses measured during the period

of near constant mass (17-28 days for A-chicks, 18-29 days for B-chicks). Further details on the methods to determine LGR, AM, and survival of the chicks are given by Nisbet et al. (1995).

Using spotting scopes and binoculars while sitting on the edge of the plateau about 20 m above the nesting beach below, the FITP research staff observed the Roseate Terns nesting in a small subcolony in study plots 45-46 for a total of about 13 h from 29 May to 13 July as part of a regional study of Roseate Tern metapopulation dynamics and ecology (Spendelow et al. 1995). Individual adult terns were identified by their unique colorband combinations; individual fledglings were identified by colormarks on their plumage and/or by their field-readable band numbers.

RESULTS

The first egg (E1) at Nest 4501 in a rock crevice weighed 23.9 g when found on 31 May 1994. On 2 June, under the assumption that it belonged to the same pair, we put an abandoned egg (E2: 21.1 g) found about 0.5 m away, in this nest. Another egg (E3: 21.6 g) was laid at this site on 3 June. During our observation periods, only two adults were seen incubating the eggs and feeding the chicks from this nest. The A-chick hatched from E1 on 25 June and weighed 19.5 g that afternoon (Day 0). The other two chicks both hatched on 27 June. The B-chick (presumably from the heavier E3) was larger than the C-chick, but due to weather conditions the chicks were not weighed that day. The following afternoon (Day 1) the B- and C-chicks weighed 18.6 and 16.3 g, respectively.

The A-chick grew normally ($LGR_{3\text{-}13}$ = 5.5 g/day), weighed 100 g on Day 15, and fledged (AM = 102 g) on 21 July at 26 days of age. The B-chick also grew normally ($LGR_{4\text{-}14}$ = 6.4 g/day) and fledged (AM = 94 g) on 26 July at 29 days of age. The C-chick, however, lost weight at first and weighed only 15.3 g on 29 June, so during the next two weeks we fed it small sand lance (*Ammodytes* sp.) we found dropped on the beach by Common Terns (*S. hirundo*). While detailed notes were not kept of every supplemental feeding, we fed the C-chick usually only once, but no more than three times daily. The A- and B-chicks never received supplemental feedings, and the C-chick did not receive any fish from the FITP research staff after 14 July (Day 17).

On 12 July, when the A-chick had reached AM and the B-chick's (Day 15) mass peaked temporarily at 97 g and it entered a period of slower growth, the C-chick weighed only 53.5 g. However, the C-chick gained weight rapidly over the next 6 days and on 18 July it weighed 103 g, slightly more than either of its siblings, which

both weighed 99 g. Although the B-chick never weighed more than 100 g, the C-chick weighed more than 100 g on three other afternoons during the next 12 days.

The early slow growth (LGR_{4-14} = 3.7 g/day) of the C-chick, however, also resulted in slower-than-normal development of its feathers, and it did not fledge (AM_{18-29} = 92.5 g, but AM_{21-34} = 96.8 g) until 31 July at 34 days of age. All three fledglings were seen several times on or after this date at various locations around the periphery of the island.

DISCUSSION

Hays (1994) reported a trio of adult Roseate Terns that successfully fledged three young without human assistance in 1991 due primarily to the ability of one bird (presumably a male) to deliver prey at a unusually rapid rate (1.3 fish/h). The growth rates of these chicks were not monitored, so it is not known if the smallest chick gained or lost mass during the first few days after hatching.

Given the initial weight loss of the C-chick at Nest 4501 on Falkner Island in 1994, it is doubtful that it would have survived past five days of age had we not fed it. During the period of the C-chick's most rapid weight gain from 12-18 July, however, except for the C-chick receiving two or three small fish from us, all three chicks at this nest apparently were fed only by their own two parents. Observations of adults were not made at this nest from 14-23 July, so it is possible, but highly unlikely, that another adult tern may have fed the chicks at Nest 4501 during this period. Chick-feeding rates by pairs in 1995 at Falkner Island averaged 1.4 feeds/h (D. Shealer, unpubl. data), but we did not record feeding rates by adult terns in 1994.

The combined average mass for Roseate Tern chicks from 1987-1990 on Day 15 at Falkner Island and Bird Island, Massachusetts, reported by Nisbet et al. (1995) was 94 g for A-chicks and 85 g for B-chicks, and most chicks from Bird Island were heavier than equal-aged chicks from Falkner Island. At Day 15 for each in 1994, both the A- and B-chicks at Nest 4501 were heavier than these 4-year averages and the C-chick, while weighing only 53.5 g on Day 15, gained almost 50 g during the next 6 days, suggesting that prey fish were abundant.

The annual average productivity of Roseate Terns at Falkner Island from 1987-1993 ranged from 0.79 to 1.18 (mean = 0.94) chicks per pair. The average productivity of all Roseate Terns at Falkner Island in 1994 was unusually high (1.33 chicks per pair), further indicating that suitable prey items for chicks were relatively easily

attained in 1994. Although probably only two chicks from Nest 4501 would have fledged in 1994 due to the C-chick's early death had we not provided limited supplemental feedings to it, our few feedings of small fish to it after Day 15 contributed minimally to its rapid growth during the next week. These observations demonstrate, therefore, that at least in some years a pair of Roseate Terns may be capable of meeting the feeding demands of three large chicks.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank the staff of the FWS's Stewart B. McKinney NWR for support and permission to study the terns on Falkner Island; Bonnie Brewer, Ellen Orrell, and Michael Stevens for assistance with the fieldwork; the Connecticut Audubon Society, Connecticut Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Fulton Foundation, Little Harbor Laboratory, the Menunkatuck Audubon Society, the FWS's Region 5 Office of Endangered Species, and the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center for financial support in 1994; and Mike Erwin, Betty Kleiner, Don McCrimmon, Ian Nisbet, Bruce Peterjohn, Dave Shealer, and three anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on drafts of the manuscript.

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CONNECTICUT ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION'S ANNUAL MEETING

The Connecticut Ornithological Association's 13th Annual Meeting will be held on March 9, 1997 at Middlesex Community Technical College in Middletown, CT. The meeting will run from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

This year's program is **Birding the Connecticut Shoreline.** The program will consist of eight speakers who will discuss the impact of Long Island Sound on various species of bird life. For additional information contact: Fran D'Amico at 203-237-2734 (evenings), 203-284-6129 (days) or Mark Szantyr at 860-429-4038.

A GREAT GRAY OWL IN CONNECTICUT

TOM HARRINGTON

On 14 January 1996, Sue Craig and I were birding at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison, Connecticut. At approximately 9:15 am, as we entered the Willard's Island Nature Trail at the east end of the park, we heard an American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) cawing at something in a dense stand of Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginianus*) near the trail. After searching for a minute or so we located the object of the crows' attention...a Great Gray Owl (*Strix nebulosa*).

The owl was about two to three feet over my head in the cedars. From that distance, the identification was simple even without binoculars. We spent the remainder of our initial time of observation studying the bird from a distance of about 25 feet, so as not to disturb the bird.

We left to get a disposable camera at a local convenience store so that we could try to document this rare occurrence. We returned after about an hour or so to find the bird in the same area and managed to get some photographs.

The owl stayed on its original perch in the cedar for approximately two hours. It did not move until a Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*) flew over the adjacent saltmarsh within a quarter of a mile of the perched bird. At this the Great Gray flew to a nearby perch in a crabapple tree (*Malus* sp.) at the edge of the marsh, where it remained for the duration of our observation.

IDENTIFICATION AND DESCRIPTION

This bird had a hooked bill and talons, round facial disk, and forward facing eyes typical of the Family *Strigidae*. Its large size eliminated all of the smaller members of this family and the overall dark grayish brown coloration, lack of ear tufts, and yellow eyes eliminated all but Great Gray Owl.

As stated, this spectacular bird showed an overall dark grayish coloration. It appeared larger than a Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*). Its head was large and rounded with no ear tufts. The facial disk was well developed and patterned with light and dark concentric rings. The yellow eyes seemed relatively small for an owl of this size. The bill was a pale yellowish color, much duller than the eyes. The chin directly beneath the bill was dark and this dark area was bordered on each side by white feathers, giving the appearance of a white bow tie or mustache. The underparts of the owl were barred pale gray and grayish brown. This patterning was densest on the upper breast. The upperparts were more uniformly patterned and appeared overall darker than the underparts, with occasional

pale spots, especially on the folded wing. The wings were long, extending more than half way down the tail. The tail appeared long for an owl and was banded with brown and pale grayish. The legs were fully feathered.

DISTRIBUTION AND STATUS

The Great Gray Owl is known for its irruptive movements during winter. Although its range is largely confined to middle and western Canada, as well as northern Minnesota to Washington and south along the mountains to Yosemite National Park in California, this bird moves farther south and east during winter dispersals. It is believed that these movements correspond to failure of the food base in the normal wintering areas. However, this may not be true in all cases.

A major irruption into New England occurred in the winter of 1978-79. During that winter, 94 Great Gray Owls were reported in New England, as well as one in New Brunswick. Sixty-seven were found in Maine, while 15 were located in Massachusetts. Other reports included one from Rhode Island, seven from New Hampshire, two from Vermont, and two undocumented, uncorroborated reports from Connecticut (Vickery and Yunick, 1979).

The winter of 1995-96 saw an estimated 11 Great Gray Owls enter the New England region. I observed one in Connecticut and one in Rowley, Massachusetts. A single bird was also reported from Rhode Island (D.L. Saint, pers. comm.). At least two were found in Vermont (Terry Hall, pers. comm.), three of the four reported from New Hampshire were accepted by the New Hampshire Rare Bird Committee (Alan Delorey, pers. comm.), and at least three were reported in Maine, with six others possible (Despres 1996).

The winter of 1995-96 may not have provided the largest invasion of this spectacular owl into our area, but the winter was certainly more exciting for what did show up. An irruption of northern owls into our region can be a wonderful event. The long hours often necessary to locate these birds in the bitter cold of winter are well worth the effort. However, when we do find these owls, we must all ensure their safety by exercising proper birding behavior and ethics while observing them and we must encourage such behavior in those who share this experience with us.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A special thanks to Sue Craig with whom I shared this discovery.

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WINTERING REGIONS FOR CONNECTICUT BREEDING BIRD SPECIES

GEORGE A. CLARK, JR.

Because most Connecticut breeding birds winter outside the state, events in other geographic regions can potentially have major effects on the status of our nesting species. While watching summer birds in the field in Connecticut, we often do not think about their wintering grounds. However, many of our breeding species spend more time outside the state than in it. Furthermore, some of the Connecticut breeding species travel enormous distances outside the state while on migration. My object in this article is to examine available information for generalizations about wintering regions of importance for Connecticut breeding species. No previous studies have specifically focused on this topic for Connecticut.

PROCEDURES

I examined a variety of cited sources (see Appendix) for information on wintering ranges of species or subspecies that breed in Connecticut. In addition, I have observed wintering birds of species that breed in Connecticut during many days afield in winter over a number of years in Connecticut, New Jersey, and Florida.

Using the COA (1994) Field Checklist, I selected for analysis 171 species that have regularly bred in Connecticut in recent years (see Appendix for the complete list). I arbitrarily excluded Northern Harrier, Sedge Wren, and Evening Grosbeak, species that are at best irregular breeders in the state.

The ideal evidence for determining the wintering range for each species would be data on the exact positions of wintering birds that had been individually marked while on their Connecticut breeding grounds. However, such data are generally unavailable for Connecticut species, and I have therefore used published accounts to determine the wintering ranges for those species and subspecies that regularly nest in the state. In addition, I have assumed, in view of a lack of evidence to the contrary, that Connecticut breeding birds would be unlikely to winter in northwestern Mexico or western North America. I have therefore excluded these regions where they are listed within the winter range for species breeding in Connecticut. I also excluded localities of occasional or accidental wintering occurrence because such areas, by definition,

do not contain many individuals of the particular species. Because it is generally unknown exactly what parts of the entire wintering range of a species are occupied by those birds that nest in Connecticut, it has been necessary to include entire wintering ranges for many of the breeding species. Thus the wintering ranges indicated here are in many cases probably too extensive in terms of the implicit surface areas suggested by the geographic names employed. It remains for future studies, perhaps by banding or radiotelemetry, to determine exactly where Connecticut breeders go in the winter. Knowledge of the wintering distributions for migratory birds is much less complete for regions south of the continental U.S. due to smaller numbers of observers and difficulties of access. There remain a number of uncertainties about wintering ranges, particularly in Latin America, and these are potential sources of error for my analyses presented below

For the purposes of analysis, I arbitrarily divided the entire wintering grounds used by Connecticut breeding birds into five geographic regions: 1) Connecticut (C), 2) southeastern North America (SE), specifically all regions south of Connecticut in the eastern U.S.A., 3) Caribbean region (CR) including the Bahamas, Greater Antilles, and Lesser Antilles, 4) Central America (CA) designating the region from the northern Mexican boundary to the Panamanian-Colombian boundary, 5) South America (SA). The wintering distributions of 171 species that breed in Connecticut are listed in the Appendix, which provides the basic data for the tabulations summarized in the tables. Certain assignments of wintering regions for particular species of Connecticut breeding birds might eventually be shown to be wrong, but potential errors of this kind, if not too numerous, should not greatly affect the general conclusions. Another limitation of the tabulation in the Appendix is that wintering birds are not distributed uniformly within each of the five arbitrarily selected wintering regions. For examples, extreme southern South America, the Lesser Antilles, and the highest elevations in the mountains of Central and South America are presumably relatively unimportant as wintering areas for bird species breeding in Connecticut, despite the interesting birdlife that does occur in those areas.

Composition of the Connecticut breeding species.— The 171 analyzed species of Connecticut breeders include 75 species of nonpasserines and 96 species of passerines. Among the latter, eight species are flycatchers (belonging to the suboscines) and 88 are songbirds (oscines). Invading species and species introduced since 1800 include at least 17 species or about 10% of the currently

breeding species. However, there have also been losses of breeding species since 1800, e. g., Passenger Pigeon, Short-eared Owl, Yellow-breasted Chat, Vesper Sparrow, and Henslow's Sparrow.

RESIDENT SPECIES AND EXPANSIONS OF BREEDING RANGES

An impressive total of 22 (13%) of the current Connecticut breeding species tend not to migrate at all. Among these 22 species that are resident year round, seven have been introduced from other geographic regions (Mute Swan, Canada Goose, Mallard, Ring-necked Pheasant, Rock Dove, Monk Parakeet, and House Sparrow). The only other successfully introduced species now in Connecticut are the European Starling and the House Finch, both of which are partially migratory. As far as Connecticut is concerned, successfully introduced species have been characterized by a lack of strong migratory tendency. There are no examples from the state of successful introductions of long distant migrants.

Some of the most conspicuous natural invasions of the state by bird species since 1800 have also involved relatively nonmigratory species, e. g., Red-bellied Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, Northern Mockingbird, and Northern Cardinal. However, the Acadian Flycatcher, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Cerulean Warbler provide examples of breeding range expansion since 1800 by migratory species and show that migratory tendencies or a long migration do not preclude relatively rapid expansion of the breeding range.

WINTERING REGIONS FOR MIGRANT SPECIES BREEDING IN CONNECTICUT

Among the analyzed 171 Connecticut breeding species, 101 species, or nearly 60% of the total, normally winter entirely south of the state. However, an additional 48 species also show major migratory movements to the south so that more than 85% of Connecticut breeding species show at least some tendency to migrate southward. It is not too surprising that the percentage of migratory species is so high considering the conspicuousness of migration in the state and the much greater abundance of birds in summer than in winter. Nevertheless, about 40% of Connecticut breeding species regularly occur to some extent in the state during winter.

A significant number of Connecticut breeding species winter in each of the five, arbitrarily selected, wintering regions, 1) Connecticut, 2) the southeastern U.S, 3) the Carribean region, 4) Central America, and 5) South America (Table 1). Slightly fewer species winter in the Caribbean region and South America than in the other three regions, but the number of species in all five regions is

Table 1. Number of species that breed in Connecticut and regularly winter in each of five geographic regions (details in the Appendix). Of the total of 171 species considered, 117 winter in more than one of these five regions.

Connecticut (C)	71
eastern USA, south of Connecticut (SE)	106
Caribbean region (CR)	55
Central America (CA)	82
South America (SA)	53

high enough that each must be considered important for wintering by Connecticut birds. From the viewpoint of the conservation of Connecticut breeding birds, none of these five broad wintering regions should be neglected.

Further analysis shows that no single combination among the five regions has an exceptionally high number of wintering species (Table 2). Thus, the analysis in this study reveals no outstanding "hot spot" regions, i. e., wintering regions of overwhelming importance because they hold an extraordinary percentage of Connecticut breeding species.

The number of regions within which a species winters is related to the extent of its wintering range. No species winters in all five

Table 2. Wintering regions for 171 species of Connecticut breeding birds and the number of such species in each such region. Abbreviations: C, Connecticut; SE, southeastern U.S.A.; CR, Caribbean region; CA, Central America; SA, South America.

C: 22 C+SE: 31 C+SE+CR: 0 C+SE+CR+SA: 1

C+SE+CR+CA: 3 C+SE+CA: 14 C+SE+CR+CA+SA: 0

SE: 9 SE+CR: 4 SE+CA: 10 SE+CR+SA: 3

SE+CA+SA: 0 SE+CR+CA: 16 SE+CR+CA+SA: 15

CR: 1 CR+CA: 3 CR+SA: 2 CR+CA+SA: 7

CA: 5 CA+SA: 9 SA: 16

regions, but 19 species have wintering ranges extending through four of the five regions (Table 3). The four regions south of Connecticut all include areas with relatively warm winter climates, so it is conceivable that one species might find suitable conditions within all of those regions. For all species, wintering ranges are contiguous, e. g., there are no cases in which a species has one significant part of its wintering population in the southeastern U.S., another part in South America, and a gap in winter distribution between these populations.

Another approach is to determine how many Connecticut breeding species exclusively winter in only one, or two, or three, etc., of the five wintering regions (Table 3). Fifty four species (more than 30% of Connecticut breeding species) winter in only one of the five regions. Of the five regions, the Caribbean has the lowest number of exclusive winter resident species, i. e., only one, the Black-throated Blue Warbler. Connecticut breeding species that winter only in Central America include 1) Least Flycatcher, 2) Wood Thrush, 3) Warbling Vireo, 4) Blue-winged Warbler, and 5) Chestnut-sided Warbler. Those 16 Connecticut breeding species wintering only in South America include Upland Sandpiper, two cuckoo species, Common Nighthawk, Chimney Swift, three species of flycatchers, Purple Martin, Bank Swallow, Veery, Red-eyed Vireo, Cerulean and Canada Warblers, Scarlet Tanager, and Bobolink; for species as a whole, these migrate the longest distances for Connecticut breeders.

Table 3. Number of Connecticut breeding species wintering in one or more of five wintering regions (C, SE, CR, CA, SA). See Table 2 for explanation of abbreviations and text for additional details.

Number of regions used in wintering	Number of species
1	53
2	59
3	40
4	19
5	0

Differences in land surface in the five wintering regions are extreme, e. g., the Caribbean islands comprise less than a tenth of the land surface area of Central America. The number of species wintering in each of the five major regions that I chose for analysis is presumably related to the winter climate, the differences in land surface area, and distance from the breeding grounds.

Forty three species, or about a quarter of those that breed in Connecticut, winter entirely to the south of the continental U.S. Such Connecticut breeding species leaving the continental U.S. for the winter include 9 species of nonpasserines, six of eight flycatchers, four of six swallows, two of five thrushes, two of five vireos, 14 of 24 warblers, plus Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Bobolink, and the two orioles. Included in this group of relatively long-distance migrants are some of our most colorful land birds, species that display striking differences in appearance of the sexes at the start of breeding, e. g., tanagers and orioles.

EXPLANATIONS FOR THE WINTER DISTRIBUTIONS

Bird migration is an evolutionary response to changes in seasonal (climatic) conditions that result in marked differences in food availability at different times of the year (Keast and Morton 1980). For Connecticut breeding species, some sources of summer foods such as active insects and nectar become largely unavailable in the state during the winter. Even those seeds, fruits, and dormant insects that are available in Connecticut during the winter are surely insufficient in abundance to provide food to sustain the large number of individual birds that occur in summer. Bird migration as currently occurring in Connecticut probably has not existed for much more than 10,000 years, the period of warm climate since the last major glacial retreat from New England (Clark in Bevier 1994). The reasonable presumption is that both migratory and resident species have recolonized Connecticut from the south. Such limited fossil evidence as is available on bird evolution suggests that present bird species, or at least ones of similar bone structure, have existed for thousands of years. Presumably migratory movements existed long before 10,000 years ago, and those migrations we detect today represent alterations of ones long predating the end of the last major North American glaciation. General kinds of advantages for migrating from the tropics to breeding grounds in northern sites with greater seasonal contrasts might be a flush of food produced during longer day lengths and perhaps a

reduction in variety of potential predators as a result of the scarcity of potential prey in the north in winter.

Current wintering areas for Connecticut birds are the results of changes in ranges during evolutionary history and also must be areas where food resources suffice to sustain substantial populations through the winter. Unfortunately, almost nothing is specifically known about the changes in winter ranges south of the southern limits of glaciation either before or during the last 10,000 years. Moreover, little is known about food abundance for most wintering populations in tropical areas. Marked differences between summer and winter diets are known for some species that breed in Connecticut, and winter and summer habitats often differ markedly (Keast and Morton 1980). Although differences between species in wintering ranges, winter diet, and winter habitats help to reduce the possibilities for competition between similar species on the wintering grounds (Keast and Morton 1980), these differences might be results, rather than causes, of an evolutionary branching and diversification of species over perhaps millions of years.

The present pattern of migration of Connecticut breeding species evolved over thousands of years and resulted in the wintering ranges being distributed over an enormous area, with a maximum concentration of species, about 60% of those breeding in Connecticut, wintering in the southeastern U.S.

POTENTIAL VULNERABILITY OF CONNECTICUT BREEDING SPECIES TO CHANGES IN LAND USE IN AREAS OCCUPIED OUTSIDE THE BREEDING SEASON

Land use is now recognized as a leading factor affecting the status of bird populations. For those species remaining year round in Connecticut, preservation of habitats will be necessary within the state. However, for the nearly 60% of Connecticut breeding species that winter virtually entirely outside the state, habitat preservation in other political jurisdictions, even outside the USA, is potentially of critical importance. A much more extensive treatment of conservation issues in the case of species migrating to the New World tropics has been provided by Hagan and Johnston (1992) and Rappole and McDonald (1994).

SUMMARY

Analysis of 171 Connecticut breeding species indicates that more than 85% show major migratory movements out of the state for the winter. About a quarter of those 171 breeding species winter entirely south of the continental United States. Efforts to con-

serve Connecticut breeding birds must include a consideration of the effects of changes occurring over a geographic area enormously larger than that of the state alone.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Louis Bevier provided insightful comments on a previous draft of the manuscript.

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APPENDIX

Wintering regions for bird species that breed in Connecticut. Symbols: C = Connecticut, * = relatively little migratory movement reported, SE = eastern North America south of Connecticut, CR = Caribbean, CA = Central America, SA = South America. Principal sources of information listed at the end of the table. See text for additional explanation.

Pied-billed Grebe SE, CR, CA (rare breeder in Connecticut)
Double-crested Cormorant SE
American Bittern SE, CR, CA (rare breeder in Connecticut)
Least Bittern CR, CA, SA
Great Blue Heron C, SE, CR, SA
Great Egret SE, CR
Snowy Egret SE, CR, SA
Little Blue Heron SE, CR, SA
Cattle Egret SE, CR, CA, SA (relatively recent invader in Connecticut and presently at best a rare breeder in the state)
Green Heron SE, CR, CA, SA
Black-crowned Night-Heron SE, CR
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron SE, CR, CA
Glossy Ibis SE, CR, CA, SA
Mute Swan C* (introduced in USA)
Canada Goose C (introduced as a breeder in Connecticut)
Wood Duck SE
American Black Duck C, SE
Mallard C, SE (much of population introduced as a breeder in eastern coastal USA)
Blue-winged Teal SE, CR, CA, SA (rare breeder in Connecticut)
Gadwall SE, CA
Hooded Merganser C, SE
Common Merganser C, SE
Turkey Vulture C, SE
Osprey SE, CR, CA, SA

Bald Eagle SE (rare breeder in Connecticut)
Sharp-shinned Hawk C, SE, CA
Cooper's Hawk C, SE, CA
Northern Goshawk C, SE
Red-shouldered Hawk C, SE
Broad-winged Hawk CA, SA
Red-tailed Hawk C, SE, CA
American Kestrel C, SE, CA
Ring-necked Pheasant C* (introduced in USA)
Ruffed Grouse C*
Wild Turkey C* (reintroduced in Connecticut)
Northern Bobwhite C* (presence at least partially due to stocking)
Clapper Rail C, SE
King Rail C, SE, CR, CA (rare breeder in Connecticut)
Virginia Rail C, SE, CA
Sora SE, CR, CA, SA
Common Moorhen SE, CA (rare breeder in Connecticut)
Piping Plover SE, CR
Killdeer SE, CR, CA, SA
American Oystercatcher SE, CR, CA
Willet SE, CR, CA, SA
Spotted Sandpiper SE, CR, CA, SA
Uplad Sandpiper SA (rare breeder in Connecticut)
American Woodcock SE
Herring Gull C, SE (relatively recent invader as breeder in Connecticut)
Great Black-backed Gull C, SE (relatively recent invader as breeder in Connecticut)
Roseate Tern CR, SA (rare breeder in Connecticut)
Common Tern SE, CR, SA
Least Tern CR, SA
Rock Dove C* (introduced in USA)
Mourning Dove C, SE, CA
Monk Parakeet C* (introduced in USA)
Black-billed Cuckoo SA
Yellow-billed Cuckoo SA
Barn Owl C, SE (rare breeder in Connecticut)
Eastern Screech-Owl C*
Great Horned Owl C
Barred Owl C*
Northern Saw-whet Owl C, SE (rare breeder in Connecticut)
Common Nighthawk SA (rare breeder in Connecticut)
Whip-poor-will SE, CA

Chimney Swift SA
Ruby-throated Hummingbird SE, CA
Belted Kingfisher C, SE, CR, CA
Red-headed Woodpecker C, SE (rare breeder in Connecticut)
Red-bellied Woodpecker C* (relatively recent invader in Connecticut)
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker SE, CR, CA
Downy Woodpecker C*
Hairy Woodpecker C*
Northern Flicker C, SE
Pileated Woodpecker C*
Eastern Wood-Pewee SA
Acadian Flycatcher CA, SA
Alder Flycatcher SA
Willow Flycatcher CA, SA
Least Flycatcher CA
Eastern Phoebe SE, CA
Great Crested Flycatcher SE, CR, CA, SA
Eastern Kingbird SA
Horned Lark C, SE (rare breeder in Connecticut)
Purple Martin SA
Tree Swallow SE, CR, CA
Northern Rough-winged Swallow SE, CA
Bank Swallow SA
Cliff Swallow CA, SA
Barn Swallow CR, CA, SA
Blue Jay C, SE
American Crow C, SE
Fish Crow C, SE
Common Raven C (rare breeder in Connecticut)
Black-capped Chickadee C
Tufted Titmouse C* (relatively recent invader in Connecticut)
Red-breasted Nuthatch C, SE
White-breasted Nuthatch C*
Brown Creeper C, SE
Carolina Wren C*
House Wren SE, CA
Winter Wren C, SE
Marsh Wren SE
Golden-crowned Kinglet C, SE, CA (rare breeder in Connecticut)
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher SE, CR, CA (relatively recent invader in Connecticut)
Eastern Bluebird C, SE, CA

Veery SA
Hermit Thrush SE, CA
Wood Thrush CA
American Robin C, SE, CA
Gray Catbird SE, CR, CA
Northern Mockingbird C, SE (relatively recent invader in Connecticut)
Brown Thrasher SE
Cedar Waxwing C, SE, CA
European Starling C, SE (introduced in USA)
White-eyed Vireo SE, CR, CA
Solitary Vireo SE, CR, CA
Yellow-throated Vireo SE, CR, CA, SA
Warbling Vireo CA
Red-eyed Vireo SA
Blue-winged Warbler CA
Golden-winged Warbler CA, SA (rare breeder in Connecticut)
Nashville Warbler SE, CR, CA (rare breeder in Connecticut)
Yellow Warbler CR, CA, SA
Chestnut-sided Warbler CA
Magnolia Warbler CR, CA (rare breeder in Connecticut)
Black-throated Blue Warbler CR
Yellow-rumped Warbler C, SE, CR, CA
Black-throated Green Warbler SE, CR, CA, SA
Blackburnian Warbler CA, SA
Yellow-throated Warbler SE, CR, CA (rare breeder in Connecticut)
Pine Warbler SE, CR, CA
Prairie Warbler SE, CR
Cerulean Warbler SA
Black-and-white Warbler SE, CR, CA, SA
American Redstart CR, CA, SA
Worm-eating Warbler CR, CA
Ovenbird SE, CR, CA, SA
Northern Waterthrush SE, CR, CA, SA
Louisiana Waterthrush CR, CA, SA
Kentucky Warbler CA, SA (rare breeder in Connecticut)
Common Yellowthroat SE, CR, CA
Hooded Warbler CA, CR
Canada Warbler SA
Scarlet Tanager SA
Northern Cardinal C* (relatively recent invader in Connecticut)
Rose-breasted Grosbeak CA, SA
Indigo Bunting CR, CA, SA
Rufous-sided Towhee SE

Chipping Sparrow SE, CA
Field Sparrow SE, CA
Savannah Sparrow SE, CR, CA
Grasshopper Sparrow SE, CR, CA (rare breeder in Connecticut)
Sharp-tailed Sparrow SE
Seaside Sparrow SE
Song Sparrow C, SE
Swamp Sparrow C, SE
White-throated Sparrow C, SE
Dark-eyed Junco C, SE
Bobolink SA
Red-winged Blackbird C, SE, CA
Eastern Meadowlark C, SE, CA
Common Grackle C, SE
Brown-headed Cowbird C, SE, CA
Orchard Oriole CA, SA
Northern Oriole CR, CA, SA
Purple Finch C, SE
House Finch C, SE (introduced in eastern USA)
Pine Siskin C, SE (rare, irregular breeder in Connecticut)
American Goldfinch C, SE, CA
House Sparrow C* (introduced in USA)

Sources: R. Askins pers. comm., AOU 1957, AOU 1983, Barlow 1980, Bevier 1994, Bond 1961, COA 1994, de Schauensee 1966, Hancock and Kushlan 1984, Hancock et al. 1992, Harrison 1987, Hayman et al. 1986, Hilty and Brown 1986, Keast and Morton 1980, Palmer 1962-1988, Peterson and Chalif 1973, Phillips 1986-1991, Root 1988, Stiles and Skutch 1989, Turner and Rose 1989, Zeranski and Baptist 1990.

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CONNECTICUT'S 1996 FALL HAWK MIGRATION

NEIL CURRIE

After more than 25 years of hawk watching, we know with reasonable certainty how, when, and where, the hawks are going to pass over Connecticut in the fall. We know the mid-September week during which the largest numbers of Broad-winged Hawks will migrate, and we know the best migration days will follow the passage of a cold front. We know that following these fronts winds will usually be from the north or northwest, and that as the sun warms the ground thermals will form on which the hawks will ride. We know that mid-September through mid-October will be the period during which the greatest numbers of all hawks will migrate through Connecticut (Table 1). We know that the Broadwings, by far the most abundant of the migrating hawks, are most reliably seen in the western part of the state (Table 2). (See also Table 5: 18 Years at Whippoorwill Hill in Newtown.) We know that other hawk species, scattered across the state as they move southward until they encounter Long Island Sound, will eventually become concentrated along or near the coastline. As a result of this, Sharp-shinned Hawks, Ospreys, Northern Harriers, American Kestrels, and other less numerous species, can be seen on most days during this period at Lighthouse Point in New Haven (Table 3). Because inland hawks are moving to the southwest and because other hawks are concentrated near the shore, and moving westward, Quaker Ridge in Greenwich (Table 4) also becomes a hot spot. We have also learned that each fall brings exceptions to all of this, and these exceptions produce some disappointments and also the surprises that make for the excitement of hawk watching.

As mid-September approached, inland watchers eagerly awaited the big push of Broadwings. Heavy rain on the 13th, followed by a cold front in the evening, brought on Saturday the 14th, ideal conditions for migration. Winds were from the northwest and at most lookouts there was an 80% cloud cover, a background against which high flying hawks are more easily seen. On that day hawks did not appear until noon and in the afternoon only in low numbers. The next day numbers were lower still. For this time period these low counts were disappointing.

Conditions the following three days included rain on the 17th and 18th throughout New England, and completely shut off any

migration. The evening of the 18th brought a strong cold front, producing very strong north winds on the 19th. Most lookouts reported zero to 20% cloud cover that day, but once again, with the exception of Johnnycake Farm (Table 2) and Beelzebub Road (Table 2), numbers were again lower than expected. Observers at Johnnycake in Harwinton are well known for their sharp eyes even with only blue skies above, part of the reason for the high count at that site. The count at Beelzebub, where counts are usually low, was perhaps that lookout's best one-day total ever, or at least one of the best.

The flight at Beelzebub Road in South Windsor provided a clue as to what was taking place to the east and south of the normal flight path. This spot is usually on the southeastern edge of the Broadwing flight path, but this year it was on the northwestern side. Pushed by very strong north winds, Broadwings moving out of Massachusetts, were well to the east of their normal path. From New Haven westward hundreds were migrating to the west along or near to the coast. The flight continued along this route the following morning. If coastal watchers were surprised and excited by this huge flight and inland watchers were disappointed, the inland watchers did find something exciting. The poor showing of Broadwings was more than made up for by record Bald Eagle counts. Observers at almost all lookouts saw Bald Eagles. At a few spots the numbers were like no other years: 15 at Johnnycake, four at Botsford Hill, three at Whippoorwill Hill, 11 at Waveny Park in New Canaan, and seven on the 19th and 11 on the 20th at Maltby Lakes in Orange.

At Quaker Ridge (Table 4), Bald Eagles also topped the show. There were 13 on the 19th and 15 on the 20th, and the fall season produced a record 68. On the 19th and 20th 6,376 Broadwings, part of the heavy coastline flight, passed over the Quaker Ridge lookout. As elsewhere, this included most of the season's Broadwings. Despite these two "big days" the Broadwing total for the fall was the second lowest in the thirteen year history of the count at Quaker Ridge. Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and American Kestrel numbers were disappointing at Quaker Ridge, well below 1995 results and thirteen year averages.

At Lighthouse Point (Table 3) there were surprises and disappointments, also. The total count, although almost equal to last year, was well below that lookout's nineteen year average. As at Quaker Ridge and elsewhere in the east, Northern Harrier numbers were alarmingly low. Also, as at Quaker Ridge, American

Kestrel numbers were well below average. There were surprises at Lighthouse Point: a record six Golden Eagles during the season, and on October 4th, 18 Northern Goshawks. This was an amazing number for one day taking place on a surprisingly early date. All day observers questioned themselves, but agreed they were really seeing these large accipiters. The goshawks were an unexpected bonus and thrill, the kind of experience that keeps us coming back to the lookouts year after year.

In nature there are no inviolable rules, and the hawk migration with all its variable influences, well illustrates this. The migration in the fall of 1996 was no exception, full of surprises, disappointments, and excitement.

A summary of the hawks recorded at Whippoorwill Hill in Newtown for the past 18 years, is shown on Table 5.

RECORDERS AND COMPILERS

The following recorders and compilers at Connecticut hawk watch sites this past fall hope you will join them in 1997: Lois Aldi, Ralph Amodei, Bill Banks, Dan Barvir, Ray Belding, Ron Bell, Polly Brody, Tom Burke, Kevin Clark, Paul Carrier, Barbara Cole, Neil Currie, Dave D'Andre, Fritz Davis, Paul Desjardins, Patrick Dugan, Cynthia Ehlinger, Carl Ekroth, Dick English, Joe Ferrari, Larry Fischer, David and Ann Fiske, Jay Gartner, Joyce Grohoski, Frank Guida, Tony Hager, Greg Hanisek, Bo Hopkins, Elsbeth Johnson, Seth Kellogg, Paul Kennedy, Tom Kilroy, Jeff Kirk, Phyllis Kitchin, Gary Lemmon, Frank Mantlik, Bill Mauger, Jim McBride, Russ Naylor, Brian O'Toole, Matt Popp, Janet Petricone, Alan and Betty Root, Arne Rosengren, Sol Satin, Fred Schroeder, Will Schultz, Art Titus, Tony Tortora, Bill Wallace, Edith Wells, Joe Zeranski, and Jim Zipp. Again, apologies to those whose names I may have inadvertently omitted.

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SITE LOCATIONS

Booth Hill - West Hartland
Beelzebub Road - South Windsor
Taine Mountain - Burlington
Johnnycake Farm - Harwinton
Woodchuck Lane - Harwinton
Chestnut Hill - Litchfield
Mount Tom - Bantam
Upper Grassy Hill - Woodbury
Botsford Hill - Bridgewater
Whippoorwill Hill - Newtown
Huntington State Park - Redding
West Rock Park - Woodbridge
East Rock Park - New Haven
East Shore Park - New Haven
Lighthouse Point Park - New Haven
Maltby Lakes - Orange
Westport
Waveny Park - New Canaan
Quaker Ridge - Greenwich
Harbor Hill - Stamford

Figure 1. Broad-winged Hawk Flight Lookout Site Locations

Table 1: Connecticut - All Lookouts - Fall 1996

SITES	Total Hrs.	SPECIES																	
		BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UR	Total
Booth Hill, West Hartland	10			1	2	1	6			1	20	2			4	2		2	41
Beelzebub Road, South Windsor	33			8	2		10				973				12			6	1011
Taine Mountain, Burlington	19			17	4		15				659				1				696
Johnnycake Farm, Harwinton	24			31	19	4	30	4		1	2663				18	1	1	4	2776
Woodchuck Lane, Harwinton	14			22	3		15	7			1874	4			1			4	1930
Chestnut Hill, Litchfield	38			15	8	2	22	2			1028				12			10	1099
Mount Tom, Bantam	12			5			2	2			218	3			4				234
Upper Grassy Hill, Woodbury	21			8	8		9	2			968				4	8		11	1018
Botsford Hill, Bridgewater	20	3		13	7	3	7	2			949				10	2		7	1003
Whippoorwill Hill, Newtown	54			64	12	2	95	9		4	2363	44			32			22	2647
Huntington State Park, Redding	30			26	2	4	51	7			953	1		1	19		1	1	1066
West Rock Park, Woodbridge	2						7				315							1	323
East Rock Park, New Haven	11		35	18		3	55	7		1	5652	5			25	2	2	3	5808
East Shore Park, New Haven	36		74	133	6	10	1297	142		6	625	10			225	3	3	45	2579
Lighthouse Point , New Haven	528		180	1384	26	259	5639	538	27	52	1212	404	1	6	1887	204	71	133	12023
Maltby Lakes, Orange	53		20	124	21	10	173	8			11854	4			60		2	6	12282
Westport	7			67	2		8	3			1493				12		1	1	1587
Harbor Hill, Stamford	21		4	144	6	4	14	2			1754	1			28	8	4		1969
Waveny Park, New Canaan	21		4	30	12	1	87	5			16640	2			40		1	1	16823
Quaker Ridge, Greenwich	557		295	306	68	62	1549	157	7	180	8071	336		2	383	49	12	47	*11526
Total	1511	3	612	2416	208	365	9091	897	34	245	60284	816	1	9	2777	279	98	304	66915

SPECIES ABBREVIATIONS

BV - Black Vulture
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
UR - unidentified raptor
*Includes 2 Swainson's

Table 2: Broad-winged Hawk Flights - Fall 1996

SITES	September, 1996												
	Pre-12	12	14	15	16	19	20	21	23	24	25	25+	Total
Booth Hill, West Hartland				17				3					20
Beelzebub Road, South Windsor		1	7		13	916	3			27	6		973
Taine Mountain, Burlington			188	18	4	421	24	4					659
Johnnycake Farm, Harwinton			1055	51	5	1538	14						2663
Woodchuck Lane, Harwinton			1754	111				9					1874
Chestnut Hill, Litchfield	1		239	118	183	476	11						1028
Mount Tom, Bantam				56		162							218
Upper Grassy Hill, Woodbury			228	208	64	457	11						968
Botsford Hill, Bridgewater	33	39	446	138		293							949
Whippoorwill Hill, Newtown	64	44	1434	144	83	532	56	6					2363
Huntington State Park, Redding			356	64		506	25	2					953
East Rock Park, New Haven						5630						22	5652
East Shore Park, New Haven							284		68		189	84	625
West Rock Park, Woodbridge						315							315
Lighthouse Point, New haven	16		7	1		596	144		102	45	195	106	1212
Maltby Lakes, Orange	26	10	39		12	8029	3508	118	38	74			11854
Westport						1493							1493
Harbor Hill, Stamford						1754							1754
Waveny Park, New Canaan				17	4	14023	2596						16640
Quaker Ridge, Greenwich	136	13	493	155	95	3683	2693	466	37	110	123	67	8071
Total	276	107	6246	1098	463	40824	9369	608	245	256	513	279	60284

Table 3: Lighthouse Point Park Hawkwatch, New Haven, CT - Fall 1996

MONTH		SPECIES																	
	Hours	BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UR	Total
August	30			69	4	22	3	2			12	3			2	2	3	3	125
September	171		40	1171	15	86	2411	114		17	1157	9		1	960	74	23	41	6119
October	188		73	142	6	109	2947	394	25	21	42	59		1	920	109	33	70	4951
November	139		67	2	1	4242	278	28	2	14	1	333	1	4	5	19	12	19	828
1996 Total	528		180	1384	26	259	5639	538	27	52	1212	404	1	6	1887	204	71	133	12023
1995 Total	513		181	1407	33	481	5386	688	7	62	766	717	1		1879	307	53	207	12175
19 Year Ave.	489		115	1719	12	600	8899	723	14	76	2714	271	4	2	3432	374	34	501	19486

Species abbreviations as in Table 1

Table 4: Quaker Ridge Hawkwatch, Greenwich, CT - Fall 1996

MONTH		SPECIES																	
	Hours	BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UR	Total
August	46			69	4	22	3	2			12	3			2	2	3	3	125
September	205		12	236	53	27	715	51	1	4	8024	3			233	15	4	21	*9399
October	211		152	46	9	25	777	89	6	105	5	123		2	147	34	8	20	*1549
November	95		129	1	2	4	50	15		70		210			1			4	486
1996 Total	557		295	306	68	62	1549	157	7	180	8071	336		2	383	49	12	47	11526
1995 Total	632	3	617	627	55	258	3123	259	15	260	36632	742		23	970	78	16	101	43779
13 Year Ave.	509		336	554	28	180	2715	152	11	116	19340	362	1	6	678	38	15	189	23766

Species abbreviations as in Table 1

* Includes 1 Swainson's Hawk

Table 5: 18 Years at Whippoorwill Hill in Newtown

YEAR		SPECIES																	
	Hour	BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UR	Total
1979	27		0	38	0	2	91	1	0	0	3814	11	0	0	31	1	1	63	4063
1980	34		15	46	0	7	98	0	0	1	1177	9	0	0	26	0	2	64	1445
1981	27		19	37	0	3	57	0	0	1	5620	7	0	0	52	0	0	70	5866
1982	20		0	31	0	3	39	3	1	0	3955	0	0	0	7	0	1	1	4041
1983	23		24	20	0	2	87	4	0	0	766	8	0	0	14	0	0	42	967
1984	36		20	53	2	3	83	1	1	0	13822	23	0	0	16	1	0	40	14065
1985	41		45	37	2	5	150	1	0	0	5934	35	0	0	68	1	1	73	6352
1986	35		35	34	2	6	47	0	0	0	3723	15	0	0	31	3	0	51	3947
1987	38		26	127	2	7	199	1	0	1	11588	25	0	0	33	1	0	77	12087
1988	35		42	70	4	6	93	4	0	3	7749	36	0	0	67	1	0	38	8113
1989	40		0	82	3	11	156	3	2	0	8046	15	0	0	84	4	0	35	8441
1990	39		60	53	1	2	82	3	1	0	2617	19	0	0	26	1	1	30	2896
1991	48		*	63	3	2	116	0	0	0	2898	25	0	0	50	0	0	33	3190
1992	57			72	4	3	198	1	0	0	7530	46	0	0	45	1	0	0	7971
1993	45			59	7	11	127	8	0	1	5795	42	0	0	84	1	0	20	6155
1994	58			83	6	10	182	2	0	0	4489	39	0	0	88	1	1	42	4943
1995	41	1		44	4	4	93	6	1	0	2261	26	0	0	46	2	0	10	2498
1996	54			64	12	2	95	9	0	4	2363	44	0	0	32	0	0	22	2647
Ave/Yr	39			56	3	5	111	3			5230	24			44	1		40	5538

SPECIES ABBREVIATIONS

BV - Black Vulture
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
UR - unidentified raptor

*Turkey Vultures no longer counted. Not migrating.

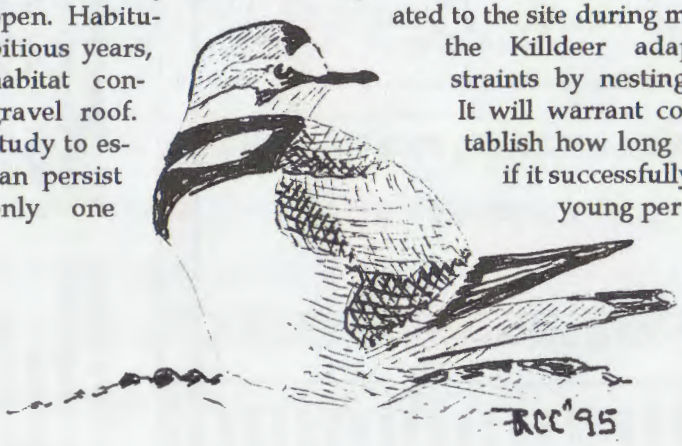
KILLDEER'S DILEMMA

ROLAND C. CLEMENT

On April 29, 1995 I followed a Killdeer chick and its mother for about an hour in late afternoon at Evergreen Woods, a retirement center in North Branford. About a week old, the chick was brooded by the parent approximately every five minutes, since the heat of the day was waning, and the temperature was only 60°F. This single chick survived to fly.

On June 13 that same spring, the staff called my attention to two newly-hatched Killdeer chicks that had jumped to the ground from the parapet of a gravel roof on the central community building. I had seem and heard the parent birds on the edge of that roof for two days. The drop was one of nearly twenty feet, and one chick was killed by the jump, whereas its sibling lay panting on the concrete patio at about 4 pm. At 6 pm, however, the surviving chick had revived, made off on its own, and was hopefully being brooded by its mother. Following three days of light rain, the temperature was only 65°F.

Resorting to gravel roofs for nesting is obviously a last resort for Killdeer and an expensive one. The Killdeer were first drawn to nest here when woodland was cleared for the retirement center's construction, a four-year process. During the first three years, ample open space lay unused, but when construction was completed in early 1995, only strips of lawn and highway remained open. Habituated to the site during more propitious years, the Killdeer adapted to habitat constraints by nesting on the gravel roof. It will warrant continuing study to establish how long this pair can persist if it successfully fledges only one young per brood.



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BOOKS ON BIRDS

Alan H. Brush

The books under consideration this month are in a sense a collection. The focus is on birders, not birds, and the books tend to be biographical or autobiographical in nature. Some describe the character of birds or folks who have worked with birds, others are dedicated to human experiences with birds.

The first two books are British in origin. *Bill Oddie's Little Black Bird Book* (subtitled: The truth about bird-watching), 1980, 149 pg., Methuen, London, ISBN 0-413-49480-2 is slightly dated but extremely entertaining. Oddie sorts through *twitchers, tickers* and assorted other descriptors for birders, describes birders' behaviors, relates experiences from the field, and generally has a grand time. There are photos and cartoon illustrations that add chuckles to a humorous text. It is a very funny book about folks just like ones you know. Another from England is *Confessions of a Scilly Birdman* by David Hunt (1985, 176 pgs., Croom Helm, Dover, ISBN 0-7099-3768-7). Hunt writes about birding for birders. The book is autobiographical, and begins with his birth. Hunt was a model of the birder-artist-writer that we all envy as his vocation and avocation were equal and congruent. Unfortunately, Hunt died prematurely in a rather unusual accident while on a birding trip. This and other aspects of his personality are recounted by Bill Oddie in the foreword and postscript.

In *Women in the Field* Marcia Myers Bonta (1991, xix +299 pgs., Texas A&M University Press, College Station, ISBN 0-89096-489-0, $13.95, Pb) details the biographies of 25 women involved in the "study of the outdoors". The material is loosely organized by discipline, and one category is 'The Ornithologists'. These include Margaret Morse Nice and Cordelia Stanwood. In terms of scientific accomplishment, Florence Merriam Bailey was probably the leader. She was the first woman elected Fellow of the AOU and received the Brewster Award in 1931. C. Hart Merriam was her brother and Vernon Bailey her husband. She was a prolific writer, including many scientific papers, popular articles and the *Birds of New Mexico* (1928, 807 pgs.). Bonta writes competently and sympathetically about the lives of these women. Another book about an extraordinary woman birdwatcher is Karen Harden McCracken's

Connie Hagar. The Life of a Texas Birdwatcher (1986, 296 pgs., Texas A&M University Press, College Station, ISBN 0-89096-406-8, $13.50 Pb). Hagar made significant contributions to both birding and conservation, appears to have had an almost inexhaustible circle of friends and admirers, and was dedicated to preserving the environment. She lived most of her life on the Texas coast, but her story is one without geographical bounds.

The life of another remarkable woman long associated with birds and natural history is documented in two autobiographical volumes. The author is Fran Hamerstrom and the books are *Is She Coming Too?* (1989, 156 pgs., Iowa State University Press, Ames, (ISBN 0-8130-0472-8) and *My Double Life* (1994, 316 pgs., University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, ISBN 0-299-14204-3). Fran was born to privilege and has lead a remarkable life. She did not let early experiences as a debutante or fashion model get in the way of her eventually becoming an internationally known wildlife biologist, ornithologist and teacher. She has published 12 books and numerous scientific and popular articles and is a role model for women in the sciences. Fran writes with a deep appreciation of the natural world and her words are a pleasure to read.

A different approach to writing about birds and natural history are those that focus on a single species, but are told from the viewpoint of the human who interacts with them. Two recent volumes that involve Peregrine Falcons are *Wings for my Flight* by Marcy Cottrell Houle (1991, 187 pgs., Addison-Wesley, Reading. $17.95, ISBN 0-201-57706-2) and *Learning to Fly* by P. H. Liotta (1989, 201 pgs., Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, $16.95). Both of these volumes developed from long term observations of birds in the wild. They reflect a deep personal involvement of the authors. Like other books of this type they are based on observations, but may have a manipulated time line in order to develop a coherent story. The story is the message; in both cases one of conservation in nature and personal growth. Both authors are keen observers and write well. The reader must be aware that considerable personal interpretation goes into the text. The author is inviting the reader to share their experiences in watching birds. Perhaps one of the classics in this line is *One Man's Owl* by Bernd Heinrich (1987, 224 pgs., Princeton University Press, Princeton, ISBN 0-691008470-X, $19.50). To my taste this is the best telling of the tale of living closely with an animal. Heinrich followed the story of the owl with *Ravens in Winter* (1991 Random House, New York, ISBN 0-679-73236-5). One strength of Heinrich's approach is that he continually asks questions of the animals to probe their behavior and

minds. Throughout he explains why he asks the particular question in this fashion and not another. He tests the animals and thus tests himself. Make no mistake, each of these authors realizes the special nature of their relationship with another species. How they report and interpret their observations, how they see the world, and the words they use to relate the experiences differ; and that's what makes the books interesting.

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PHOTO CHALLENGE

Louis Bevier

ANSWER TO PHOTO CHALLENGE 18

A well-marked bird, easily identified, and yet nagging doubt—these should be typical reactions to last issue's quiz. The thick, conical bill and intricate face pattern narrow our search to sparrows, among which the size and shape of bill is often key. Less subjective features displayed on our bird include a white crescent under the eye, a white spot at the back of the ear coverts, and a white malar stripe. An ill-defined breast spot is centered on the breast and surrounded by fine dark streaks. The crown shows a white stripe along the center, here framing the top of the head in profile. Importantly, the tail has broad white spots, small portions of which are highlighted by sunlight creating even brighter spots shining through areas not covered by other tail feathers.

The bill shape is heavy and rounded, somewhat like the familiar White-throated Sparrow. Many White-throats show a dark breast spot, and immatures are streaked around the breast in a pattern similar

to our quiz bird. The underparts on these White-throats is much darker, however, never showing the bright white background of our bird. The Harris' Sparrow, a rare visitor to Connecticut, might have an irregular dark breast spot, but also shows a more pointed, bright pink bill that would be obviously pale even in our black-and-white photo. Harris' also has a dark central crown and an all dark tail.

The large white spots on the outer tail feathers, here folded together and thus seen from below, are indeed a big clue. Among our common birds, towhees are big "sparrows" with a fairly similar bill shape and big white tail spots. Juvenile Eastern (Rufous-sided) Towhees are cloaked in streaks below, so our quiz might be one of those familiar birds in an unfamiliar plumage. Nevertheless, towhees have a more plainly marked face pattern. Another "sparrow" that has large white tail spots is an extreme rarity to Connecticut—Lark Bunting. Female and immature Lark Buntings are streaked, but lack the white eye crescent, have broader streaks running down the entire breast, and are more "bull-headed" in appearance, not having the peaked crown of our bird.

Returning to our nagging doubt, some may have guessed that our bird is a more familiar or easily identified species in an unfamiliar plumage. The remaining sparrow with truly large white corners on the tail is the Lark Sparrow, a rare fall and winter visitor to Connecticut. Some occur in spring, but even more rarely. The bold, white eye crescent and white spot at the rear of the ear coverts are good marks for Lark Sparrow. The irregular breast spot and streaking are indications of immaturity.

A bird in this plumage has never been found in Connecticut, nor is it likely to be, because this species molts beginning in July before migration. Where the species is common in western North America, a few might continue the molt into migration. The only indication of immaturity might be a few retained streaks, lack of chestnut coloration in the head stripes, lighter cheek patches, and retained dusky marks in the white spots on the tail (visible here).

I have often heard of Lark Sparrows reported in Connecticut as "immatures," as if aging this species were as easy as with White-crowned Sparrow, where the immature retains a brown crown stripes most of the fall and winter in contrast to the black-striped adults. This is not the case with Lark Sparrow. Adult Lark Sparrows undergo molt before migration as well, and acquire a duller plumage than the bright "field guide" illustrations. The extent to which some streaks on the flanks indicate a first year bird is still debated (are they two-year olds or do some adults have streaks

there in winter?). In any case, the "immature" and "adult" are not as easily identified as some observers seem to think. As one can see on this juvenile Lark Sparrow, the streaks often only are found on the breast, not the flanks (younger birds might show streaks down the flanks, though there seems to be individual variation).

Perhaps complicating the picture is the geographical variation in Lark Sparrow. A dull patterned western subspecies also occurs in the East. Two subspecies of Lark Sparrow are generally recognized: nominate *grammacus* breeds in the semi-wooded drainages of the Mississippi River west to central Minnesota, e. Kansas, and ne. Texas, and another (*strigatus*) across the Great Plains, the West, and Mexico. Western birds tend to be duller, browner (buff washed) above, more narrowly streaked on the back, and with less black in the forward part of the chestnut crown stripes. These birds are similar to immature of the eastern race. Thus, dull birds should not automatically be categorized as immatures (nor should they be identified to subspecies!).

Lark Sparrows well beyond the normal range include records from Great Britain, Cuba, and Honduras (all attributed to the darker eastern race), and as far south as Panama, well south of the western race's southern limit in southern Mexico. This juvenile Lark Sparrow was photographed in early July 1995 in Wyoming.

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Photo Challenge 19. Identify the species. Answer next issue

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Greg Hanisek

SUMMER, June 1 to July 31, 1996

After last year's hot dry summer, which left the state without much of a winter fruit and seed supply, this season proved pleasantly mild. Temperatures failed to hit 90 degrees throughout June and July, and Hurricane Bertha lost most of its steam before delivering a glancing blow. The weather offered few barriers to successful nesting, and overall the breeding season provided the most interesting and significant records. But before detailing them, we'll look at some of the season's non-breeding components. The symbol (*) indicates a report has been submitted to the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut.

NORTHBOUND MIGRATION

Late shorebirds were less in evidence than last year. A Black-bellied Plover was still at Greenwich Point June 16 (JBo), and a White-rumped Sandpiper June 1 at Milford Point (DSo, EN et al.) was worth noting. An Olive-sided Flycatcher and a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher June 2 on the Woodbury-Roxbury June Count were at the back end of their typical migration schedules. The count also produced a migrant Swainson's Thrush in Southbury (RN). This extension of the spring passerine flight into the first week in June was most evident at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison (hereafter HBSP), where a June 1 field trip produced a Swainson's Thrush and 13 species of warblers, only two of which breed in the park (DSo). The next day Magnolia and Blackburnian Warblers were found at the same site (PDe). These late northward pushes seem to be mainly coastal events, although this could be an elusion. How does one recognize a migrant American Redstart or Chestnut-sided Warbler inland at a time when territorial birds are spread across the state? That was the question raised by a Black-burnian Warbler June 8 at West Hartford Reservoir, a place where the species had not been detected nesting in the past (PDe). A high count of 12 redstarts at the same time and place also raised migrant vs. breeder speculation (PDe); a redstart June 28 at Manresa Is-

land in Norwalk was stuck somewhere in the middle of the migration periods (FM). There was no question about the migrant status of a Blackpoll Warbler June 11 at Hartman Park in Stamford (PDu), a Mourning Warbler June 2 at Laurel Reservoir in Stamford (PDu) or two Wilson's Warblers on the Woodbury-Roxbury June Count. A Mourning Warbler June 1 in Barkhamsted (MSz) was probably a migrant too, but breeding wouldn't be out of the question in that area. The latest northbound warbler was a Blackpoll June 13 in Woodbury (RN).

SOUTHBOUND MIGRATION

Shorebird movements were well underway by the first week in July, and as usual a few precocious migrants showed even earlier. Semipalmated Plover, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Sandpiper and Short-billed Dowitcher all were found at Milford Point from June 20-30 (DSo et al.). These built to 95 Short-billed Dowitchers and 3,000+ Semipalmated Sandpipers by July 23 at Milford Point (fide DSo). Inland, Meadow Brook Road in Ellington produced a Lesser Yellowlegs, four Semipalmated Sandpipers and five Least Sandpipers July 10 (CEk). The first migrant Upland Sandpipers were noted July 8 (MSz) and July 14 (BC), both at Windham Airport, and July 18 at HBSP (JG). A scattering of Whimbrel started out with singles July 14 at Griswold Point in Old Lyme (DP) and July 16 at Shippan Point in Stamford (PDu), followed by a high count of three in East Lyme July 17 (MSz). The first Red Knot showed up July 23 at Milford Point (fide DSo), and eight were at Sandy Point in West Haven July 27 (EN,DB et al.). The first southbound White-rumped Sandpiper was at Griswold Point July 17 (DP), and the first Pectoral Sandpiper was noted July 14 at HBSP (DSo,EN et al.). The shorebird highlights were a **Marbled Godwit** July 27 at Griswold Point (DP) and the arrival of 13 Stilt Sandpipers at HBSP July 23 (C&SR). The godwit is less than annual, and Stilt Sandpipers are never easy to find in the state. But following this nice little blitz, a few Stilts were seen sporadically through the end of the month. The only Buff-breasted Sandpiper was at Sandy Point in West Haven on July 26 (HW). Early Long-billed Dowitchers were reported from Calf Pasture Beach in Norwalk July 19 (FM) and from Watch Rock in Old Lyme July 26 (HG).

Shorebirds dominate the start of the southbound migration, but passerines are stirring in July as well - e.g., a Least Flycatcher banded July 18 on Falkner Island off Guilford (JS). Three Purple Martins were noted at a non-breeding site in

Sterling July 28 (RD), and the usual scattered flocks of Bank Swallows were seen throughout the month, both inland and along the coast. At Lighthouse Point in New Haven, a July 10 cold front produced a flight of 100 Tree Swallows, 100 Bank Swallows and five Northern Rough-winged Swallows in an hour (GH). This movement also included about 100 Brown-headed Cowbirds and 50 Red-winged Blackbirds (GH). The icterids and swallows all moved through low on a tight flight line. Both a Bank Swallow and a Bobolink were at Manresa Island in Norwalk July 14 (FM). On July 22, on a light north wind, a noticeable movement of Yellow Warblers (c. 12 in a half-hour) passed over Griswold Point just after dawn (GH,NC). They were joined by 100+ Red-winged Blackbirds and a steady movement of Tree and Bank Swallows.

LINGERERS, WANDERERS AND STORM WAIFS

The usual non-breeding Common Loons scattered along the coast included a high of three July 15 at Sherwood Island State Park in Westport (FM). Tubenoses are encountered inside Long Island Sound so infrequently that no well-established patterns of occurrence exist, but a **Manx Shearwater** (*) reported June 20 off Guilford between Goose Island and Falkner Island was certainly interesting (JS,MM et al.). Following a day of east winds, the bird was seen within 20 feet of the observers' boat. Last year's invasion of **Wilson's Storm-Petrels** was not repeated, but a single was seen July 18 from shore in Old Saybrook (SR). Double-crested Cormorants now turn up just about anywhere in summer, as illustrated by one at West Hartford Reservoir No. 2 and two in Simsbury, both on July 31 (JK). **American White Pelicans** (*) follow their own agenda. Their wayward movements are hard to classify, so we'll just note for the record that one was sitting in Niantic Harbor long enough for a few observers to see it July 23, then it left (MSz,DP). Five wandering Great Egrets turned up at three locations in Woodbury July 21-28 (RN), and three Black-crowned Night Herons were at Shepaug Dam in Southbury June 28 (DR). A good summer for Tricolored Heron produced a high of four on June 7 at Barn Island in Stonington (FM) and up to three in July at HBSP (DSo et al). A few Glossy Ibis were present at scattered coastal locations, with high counts of 29 on July 17 at Hatchett Point in Old Lyme (HG) and 22 on July 31 at HBSP (JG). Up to three juveniles were present with adults in July at Sherwood Island (FM).

The season produced the

usual motley collection of lingering waterfowl, but two records were unprecedented. A male and female **Common Eider** were found in the Connecticut River off Old Saybrook June 7. The startled observer, who was in a boat, back-tracked and circled the birds a second time to make sure of his ID (HG). Could the same pair have wandered west to Great Captain's Island in Greenwich, where a male and female were seen from a boat June 15 (TB)? More typical were single Snow Geese June 2 in Mansfield (MSz), June 13 at Nepaug Reservoir in New Hartford (TK) and July 20 in New Canaan (TK); up to nine Brant summering for a second consecutive year at Sandy Point in West Haven (PDe et al.) and four on June 21 at Compo Beach in Westport (FM); a drake Northern Pintail June 10-16 at Southfield Park, Stamford (PDu et al.); a Blue-winged Teal at Southfield Park June 10-15 (PDu et al.); an American Wigeon June 2 at Lake Quassapaug in Middlebury (fide RN); a Greater Scaup at Greenwich Point June 16 (JBo fide FM); a Bufflehead July 22 in Westbrook (EN,SR); six Oldsquaw June 16 at Sandy Point in West Haven (TK); an immature male White-winged Scoter off Compo Beach June 12 (FM); a female Black Scoter at Cummings Beach, Stamford, from July 18 on (PDu et al.); a few Red-breasted Mergansers at several coastal locations (EN et al.); a Common Merganser July 26 in Black Hall River in Old Lyme (HG); and a Ruddy Duck at Gorham Pond in Darien June 16-20 (PDu et al.).

A Black Vulture was at Sunny Valley Preserve in Bridgewater June 15 (CW). Raptors visiting Falkner Island included a Northern Harrier June 29 (DSh) and female American Kestrels June 23 and July 21 (JZ,JS). Their status as migrants or mainland breeders would seem impossible to determine. Unseasonable Bonaparte's Gulls were at Sandy Point July 5 and 14 (E&PN,PDe) and Milford Point July 28 (PDu); five were at Griswold Point in Old Lyme on July 28 (MSz). A **Black-headed Gull** at Holly Pond in Stamford appeared on the unusual dates of July 11-31 (PDu). Also unseasonable was a sub-adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** July 13 at HBSP (RC). Both have become regular enough that the odd dates didn't raise a lot of eyebrows, but how do we account for a possible **Black-legged Kittiwake** (*) flying by Meig's Point at HBSP July 17 (JG)? It seemed too late, and tied too closely to high latitudes, to have any connection to Hurricane Bertha, which petered out before delivering anything resembling a vagrant bonanza. **Gull-billed Terns** (*) have been frustratingly reluctant to enter Connecticut air space, but two were

reported June 15 at Greenwich Point (JBo,MSa,CEh). The high count of Forster's Terns was three on July 26 at Watch Rock in Old Lyme (HG). The only report of Caspian Tern involved a single in East Lyme July 19 (MSz). Falkner Island continues to produce Black Terns, with singles June 23-24 and July 27 (JS,JZ). A **Sooty Tern** (*) seen off Old Lyme July 14, the day after Bertha's passage, was the only juicy tidbit tossed our way (DP et al.), although Royal Terns July 15 at Cove Island Park in Stamford (PDu) and Compo Beach in Westport (FM) also may have been storm-driven. A seafaring Downy Woodpecker was banded July 29 on Falkner Island and showed up again six days later (JZ).

THE BREEDING SEASON

GREBES THROUGH MOORHENS

Pied-billed Grebe is a scarce breeder, and one noted June 15 on a pond near Meriden Airport was suggestive (FD,JG). Station 43 in South Windsor remains the most reliable place for Least Bittern, with at least two present in June and July (FM,JK). A single nest of Little Blue Herons was reported from Great Captain's Island in Greenwich June 13 (TB). A few Yellow-crowned Night Herons skulked throughout the season at Milford Point (m.ob.), Manresa Island in Norwalk (m.ob.), and Cove Island Park in Stamford (PDu). A single nest was found on Great Captain's Island (TB), and two were at a small pond in Clinton June 27 (JG). Summer Cattle Egrets always raise the possibility of nesting; reports included one at HBSP June 29 (JM et al.) and two through the season at Sherwood Island (CB).

A female Blue-winged Teal June 1-8 at White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield was at a spot where a pair was seen in May and where breeding has been suspected in the past (RN). Nesting Common Mergansers were reported from the Pomperaug River in Woodbury (RN,CW) and the Naugatuck River in Waterbury, where a female was accompanied by six young July 11 (RN).

The Great Island Osprey colony produced a count of 40 birds at Griswold Point on July 14 (DP), although nesting success there was poor again, according to the Department of Environmental Protection (hereafter DEP). Statewide, Ospreys enjoyed a good nesting season with 106 nests fledging 143 young, the second-highest number of fledglings in 28 years of monitoring. The Bald Eagle nest at Barkhamsted Reservoir failed (DEP), but an adult was at Colebrook Reservoir in Colebrook July 4 (FD,JG). A Sharp-shinned Hawk in Windsor July

31 may have been a breeder in an area where the observer had only one previous July record (PDe). Others were noted July 9 in Watertown (RN) and July 26 in Waterbury (RN). This meager showing by breeding-season sharpies was typical, as was the widespread presence of Cooper's Hawks (m.ob.). A Northern Goshawk was noted in Torrington June 17 and July 28 (RBa); a pair bred in Redding (FM) and one was at Northwest Park in Windsor June 7 (FM). Northern Harrier, a rare and elusive nester, may well have bred at the Great Meadows in Stratford. A female was seen there throughout the period (CB, FM), and an adult male was noted July 12 (EN). At Barn Island, another potential breeding spot, one was present July 14 (PDe). The Peregrine intrigue continued in downtown Stamford, with two birds present but nesting still unproven (PDu).

Clapper Rails were widely reported from in and around HBSP (m.ob.), but one June 14 at Barn Island in Stonington was the first the observer had found there in six years (DP). A probable King Rail was seen by many observers throughout the period near Willards Island at HBSP, sometimes consorting with Clappers. Where these two species occur together, pure lineage can never be assumed. A King was heard calling June 7 in Durham Meadows, along with two Virginia Rails (FM). **Common Moorhens** combine secrecy with scarcity, and they aren't all that consistent in the places where they show up. That made the discovery of four downy chicks July 30 at Cemetery Pond in Litchfield all the more satisfying (GH). They were with the pair of adults that had been present since May (BF, m.ob.)

OYSTERCATCHERS THROUGH GOATSUCKERS

The American Oystercatcher pair at Milford Point had two downy young by June 21 (DSo), but only one was evident later in the season. Two adults were accompanied by three young July 16 at Barn Island (DP). According to a DEP survey, 26 pairs of Piping Plovers nested at nine sites, produced 59 chicks, of which only 34 fledged. Last year 32 pairs fledged 40 young. Sandy Point held a post-breeding aggregation of 17 Piping Plovers July 27 (DSo et al.). The breeding colony of Upland Sandpipers at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks revealed a good count of nine birds July 2 (JK).

The Falkner Island Tern Project estimated 3,800 pairs of Common Terns and 150 pairs of Roseate Terns this summer. At least 26, and possibly as many as 44, Roseate nesting attempts failed due to predation, mostly by one or more Black-crowned Night Herons. Night Herons

were considered the major cause of death of at least 60 large Common Tern chicks in August, and herons killed at least two adult Common Terns. Productivity for Roseate Terns was calculated at about 0.5 chicks per nesting attempt in 1996, compared to almost one chick per attempt in 1995 (JS et al.). Perhaps related to lower productivity, the few reports of Roseate Terns seen from the mainland (DP,MSz et al.) failed to approach last summer's widespread sightings. The Least Tern outlook remains cloudy. DEP monitored 461 pairs at eight sites and recorded only 33 fledglings. Last year 538 pairs produced 48 chicks. Factors in the poor productivity included predation, high tides and disturbance by people watching July 4th fireworks displays. A Black Skimmer present in June at Sandy Point in West Haven was joined by a second bird July 1. The pair laid eggs in a tern colony (PF, photos). This marked only the second nesting ever in the state, but the nest was washed out by full moon high tides in late July before the eggs could hatch. The same fate befell the first nesting in Greenwich in 1982. Two other Black Skimmers stopped by Holly Pond in Stamford July 1 (PDu).

Scattered reports of both cuckoos included a fledgling Black-billed Cuckoo July 2 in South Windsor (JK). Long-eared Owls were present and possibly nesting in June in both Woodbury and Roxbury (AD, RN). Three Whip-poor-wills offered a welcome sound June 14 at Barn Island (DP), and one was at reliable Lake Wintergreen in Hamden June 1 (FM).

WOODPECKERS THROUGH VIREOS

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers near their southern breeding limits included four on the Woodbury-Roxbury Summer Bird Count June 2 (AD,JL et al.). Nine Acadian Flycatchers in June at Steep Rock Reservation in Washington represented a good concentration (BD), and one July 13 at Mount Riga in Salisbury pushed this southern invader to the state's northern limits (CB,AB). Two also were noted June 2 at Devil's Hopyard State Park in East Haddam (DP), June 2 to July 15 in Southbury (RN) and June 4 at Boston Hollow in Union (MSz). Away from their northwestern stronghold, Alder Flycatchers were reported from South Windsor June 1 (TK) and Pachaug State Forest June 6 (DP). On Falkner Island, as many as 14 different sites were used by nesting Barn Swallows (JS et al.).

Two Red-breasted Nuthatches were in Woodbury throughout the period, inhabiting a residential neighborhood where they have nested in the past (RN). The White Memorial area pro-

duced a good count of 15+ Brown Creepers June 8 (RN,LW et al.), as well as eight pairs of Marsh Wrens at Little Pond the same day (RN,LW). It's almost axiomatic, after two harsh winters out of the last three, that Carolina Wren numbers would be low. An observer who found one June 12 in Torrington suggested they were almost nonexistent in the Northwest Corner (RBa). Spruces at Boston Hollow in Union held two Golden-crowned Kinglets July 5 (MSz). Two White-eyed Vireos were noted July 10 and 31 in Nehantic State Forest (EN), and pairs were on territory at two locations in Watertown for the fourth and sixth consecutive years respectively (RN).

WARBLERS THROUGH NORTHERN FINCHES

Northern Parulas are probably breeding at several locations, as suggested by singing males June 23 in Nepaug State Forest in Canton (FD,JG) and in early July at both Boston Hollow in Union (RBA) and River Road in Kent (RBA). A Northern Parula June 2 in Woodbury was joined in a stand of sycamores by a **Yellow-throated Warbler,** which could not be relocated (DT,RBe). Reports of Magnolia Warbler, one of the state's less common breeders, included five June 1 in Barkhamsted (MSz), two July 30 in West Hartland (RBA), one or two through the period at Tunxis State Forest in Barkhamsted (JK,BK et al.) and a territorial male June 1-8 at White Memorial (RN,LW). The Barkhamsted area is clearly the state's stronghold; a June count there recorded 77 Magnolias, accounting for 90 percent of the statewide total. Another northern breeder, Yellow-rumped Warbler, was in Nepaug State Forest June 23 (FD,JG), and White Memorial held 12+ that were on territory June 8 (RN,LW), along with four pairs of Black-throated Blue Warblers, 35+ Blackburnian Warblers, and 20+ Pine Warblers (RN,LW). At Sunny Valley Preserve in New Milford, a pair of Pine Warblers nested successfully in a stand of a dozen pines surrounded by fields (CW). Five singing male Cerulean Warblers were found in Newtown June 2 (RW). A male Kentucky Warbler was present June 2-4 at Laurel Reservoir in Stamford, along with a Yellow-breasted Chat (PDu). A chat serenaded a family from a backyard in Redding through at least mid-June (TB).

Amazing Northwest Park in Windsor produced **the state's first confirmed nesting of Dickcissel in more than a century** in late May. The birds disappeared in late June, but visiting birders found ample compensation in **the state's first-ever nesting of Blue Grosbeak** (*).

After discovery of a male June 29 (LB), a pair was seen by several observers July 15 feeding three fledged young. Northwest Park also held several pairs of Orchard Orioles and at least three territorial Grasshopper Sparrows (m.ob.) in June. Windham Airport held five Grasshopper Sparrows June 28 (MSz), and a singing male was at Meriden Airport June 15 (FD, JG). Grasshopper Sparrows also were noted at the traditional site at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks and Suffield, where adults were seen carrying food July 2 (JK). Now that the Sharp-tailed Sparrows have been split, it would pay to study our breeding species, the Salt-marsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow. That will make it easier to pick out the Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow when its northeastern race migrates through the state. Guilford Sluice offered good field study opportunities with 10 Salt-marsh Sharp-tails present June 2 (EN). A Song Sparrow carrying food July 11 at HBSP was feeding it to a juvenile cowbird (JBa). Two Dark-eyed Juncos were probable breeders June 2 in Steep Rock Reservation in Washington (CW). The Barkhamsted June Count maintained a recent trend by finding five Evening Grosbeaks.

EXOTICS

A Zebra Finch was at Long Wharf in New Haven July 31 (EN et al.)

[Editor's Comment: Reports of rare or unusual bird species in Connecticut (species marked with an * on the latest COA Checklist) require that documentation be submitted to the secretary of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (Mark Szantyr, 2C Yale Road, Storrs, CT, 06268) if they are to be included in the Field Notes.]

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Falkner Island reports refer to the Falkner Island unit of the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge in Guilford and were submitted by the staff of the Falkner Island Tern Project. RBA refers to the Connecticut Rare Bird Alert.

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THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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Send manuscripts to the Editor. Please type double spaced with ample margins, on one side of a sheet. Submit a copy on a PC disk, if possible. Style should follow usage in recent issues. All manuscripts receive peer review.

Illustrations and photographs are needed and welcome. Line art of Connecticut and regional birds should be submitted as good quality prints or in original form. All submitted materials will be returned. We can use good quality photographs of birds unaccompanied by an article but with caption including species, date, locality, and other pertinent information.

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ABOUT OUR COVER

Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

by Nancy Cleary

Our cover artist, Nancy Cleary is an amateur naturalist who, for six years, brought Environmental Awareness programs to the school children in her community of Easton, CT as a volunteer under the aegis of the Connecticut Audubon Society. Professionally, she has bought and sold organic produce for a large, natural foods store and managed a commercial greenhouse. She holds an M.A. in American Studies from Brown, and has earned a Certificate in Commercial Horticulture from New York Botanical Garden where she is now pursuing one in Botanical Art & Illustration. Nancy and her husband Bob handle the mailings of *The Connecticut Warbler* for the Connecticut Ornithological Association.

THE MABEL OSGOOD WRIGHT AWARD

Editor's Note: The following is the presentation by Milan Bull of the Mabel Osgood Wright Award at the annual meeting of the Connecticut Ornithological Association on March 29, 1997.

Each year at this annual meeting, the Connecticut Ornithological Association bestows its prestigious Mabel Osgood Wright Award to someone who has made a difference, a significant contributor to our awareness of Connecticut bird life.

This award is open to all, professional and amateur, young or old, but to someone who has significantly added to our knowledge, understanding, or interest in these wonderful creatures that animate our lives.

We are very pleased to make this year's award to Mr. Gordon Loery of Morris, Connecticut.

Mr. Loery has a long career in Connecticut conservation and ornithological research that began soon after his graduation from Harvard University in 1948 and the Yale University master's program in 1952 with degrees in biology and conservation, respectively.

Mr. Loery began his career working with the Connecticut River Watershed Council; he was a naturalist at the Greenwich Audubon Center, and for the last 40 years worked as Conservationist, Museum Director, and Research Director for the White Memorial Foundation, Litchfield Nature Center and Museum, and the White Memorial Conservation Center.

Although Mr. Loery has published and edited a number of papers and other publications, including *Audubon Field Notes* by the National Audubon Society, he is perhaps best known for his work over the last four decades with Black-capped Chickadees at the White Memorial Foundation.

His work with this species has included population dynamics, capture-recapture analysis, possible competition between other species, and long term monitoring of the population at White Memorial. In short, Mr. Loery is the leading Black-capped Chickadee expert and has added greatly to our understanding and appreciation of this species.

Mr. Loery has been active in many civic conservation activities and has served as President, then Chairman of the Board of the Litchfield Hills Audubon Society, Director of the Connecticut Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, President of the Con-

necticut Botanical Society, President of the Connecticut Audubon Council, Councilor of the Northeastern Bird Banding Association, Director of the C.B. Ripley Land Trust, as well as a Director of our own Connecticut Ornithological Association.

Among the many honors bestowed upon Mr. Loery during his continued long career include Conservation Educator of the Year Award by the National Wildlife Federation, the Annual Conservation Award by the Litchfield Hills Audubon Society and the National Audubon Society, and Certificates of Merit and Achievement by the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut.

All of these, of course, pale in comparison with the award I am very pleased to present him with today, the Mabel Osgood Wright Award.

In recognition of your endeavors and outstanding achievements in the field of ornithology, The Board of Directors of the Connecticut Ornithological Association presents

THE MABEL OSGOOD WRIGHT AWARD

to

Gordon Loery

CONNECTICUT ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Connecticut Ornithological Association
Annual Meeting March 29, 1997

A copy of the Mabel Osgood Wright Award presented to Gordon Loery

EMISSARIES FROM THE SEA

SETH KELLOGG

For better or worse, vagrants provide the stimulation the birding community craves. It may be risky to suggest that seeing these rarities is akin to a sacrament. When the call comes, will we say, "I don't need to see that?" We would be right, but that doesn't stop us from dropping everything and making the pilgrimage. Why? One might learn a little about the behavior or appearance of the species from observing these aberrant individuals, but it is very little. Is it simply the scarcity that attracts, to see what you may never see again, or at least not for a long time? There is a double-edged sword here, because the pursuit and glorification of scarcity is probably the root cause of the despoliation of our planet as well as our own souls. It should not surprise us that the sacred can become the profane. In a world of abundance why is status, the possession of something others do not have, still so important? Let us leave that and look on the positive side of the vagrancy experience.

One clue to answering the question of why we crave vagrants may be the fact that many vagrant sightings turn into major communal events. One gets to see and visit with others who share your passion. Standing around in the cold and wind, waiting for the bird's arrival seems less absurd when others are doing it too. There is considerable humor at one's companions and one's own expense at such events. Reminiscence of previous such happenings also is a big topic, as well as the sharing of more mundane news of what is in or what is gone, the lesser highlights of recent birding activity. Is this just a bit of camaraderie, or in some way are we the faithful gathered to worship, giving thanks for the presence of a living bundle of feathers that had flown so far for naught but to give a favored few an ecstatic high, a momentary jolt and a lasting memory?

Is there even more to this lure of the vagrant, something we don't quite know how to talk about? Is it the mystery of migration? A vagrant reminds us of how amazing the flight of birds really is. Also how gorgeous their plumage, how fascinating their behavior, how miraculous their very life really is. If seeing it is sacramental, then it is so because it fulfills the need to keep our minds and our senses clear and alert, to discover the essence that is hidden, to fulfill what we have lost. Does it reveal to us how miraculous and

sacred our own life is and how easy it is to lose that sense of our own value in a world of indifference, danger and stress? Can we renew our course and find our way home? Sometimes it just takes an emissary from the sea to release us from our anxiety or lethargy and renew our focus and fervor.

We marvel at how and where birds come and go, and we have learned that the weather has a lot to do with their movements. So we watch the weather. Weather, like all of life, comes from the ocean, which covers most of the planet and is still the frontier of our human experience. Birds that live almost entirely over the ocean are the most mysterious of all. That is why we take to boats to find this most elusive of sights, and we also visit promontories and bays when storms bring strong winds that even the masters of the air cannot master. Finally we "hope" for a hurricane to sweep up and carry tropical seabirds in its eye until it reaches land, where the birds are dropped, exhausted and lost. A brief rest on a lake is all they need, however, before they rise high into the sky, orient themselves and flee to the safety of the tropical seas. That brief moment is all the birder has in which to find this storm tossed alien. It is one of the more intense forms of the vagrancy experience.

It was twenty years ago that I first tasted this form of the sweet sacrament, and I am ready now for another. In August of 1976 and then in May of 1977, two storms passed directly over Connecticut and left my home town a gift from the gods of the earth and sea. The first was a Hurricane named Belle that came up the Atlantic coast on August 8-9, 1976. The center of the storm took a path from Long Island across western Connecticut, veering to the east as it crossed the Massachusetts border at Southwick early in the morning of August 10th. At 6:30 AM I stepped outside my Southwick home to a calm, clear, sunny day, right in the "eye" of the much weakened storm. I was only mildly hopeful as I drove across town to the Congamond Lakes, and at first Middle Pond appeared completely barren. Then I caught site of a small dark bird fluttering low over the water. My first thought was "Black Tern," and I ran for my scope. When I had it set up, the bird in flight was gone, but now I noticed two birds far apart bobbing strangely in the water on the east side of the lake. I had never seen anything sit with tail so high and bill almost dipping in water. Driving to the other side for a closer look, I turned over the likely possibilities in my mind, but none fit and I was completely puzzled. The impossible I did not consider. Once there I finally saw one bird riding with wings

folded high revealing a white rump. "They're petrels!" I yelled out loud.

I found four more farther out and after studying my book I waited for one to fly. I already leaned toward Leach's Petrel from the flight of the first bird, which was so much like a nighthawk. I felt sure when I saw a forked tail briefly on the bird sitting closest to me. As I drove to find a telephone I noted four gulls flying, circling South Pond, and just as I stopped they alighted next to two more petrels. The small size and brownish coloration suggested immature Laughing Gulls, and eventually they came close enough to confirm this. Even closer was a white shorebird that landed and ran by only a few feet from me along the shore. I realized it was a Sanderling.

After making a few calls I wandered from spot to spot watching the petrels. The gulls had disappeared and so had a Common Tern in the distance. By 9:30 AM others started arriving, and we watched each bird closely to determine which petrel species it was. Two Least Terns coursed back and forth several times on the far side and perhaps another Sanderling was spotted on a distant beach. There were 10 to 12 observers by this time, and suddenly another birder appeared in a small outboard motorboat coming around the point. He and his pilot friend who lived on the lake picked us all up in turn, for a close inspection of these ocean wanderers. The birds were tame and perhaps exhausted. They would allow us to approach within five feet before rising from the surface and fluttering fifty feet or so farther. After doing this once or twice, we learned to keep enough distance so as not to spook them. It was difficult to miss the black feet and forked tail. A maximum of 15 petrels were counted on Middle Pond.

That evening a few other Leach's Petrels were found on the Connecticut River, as well as an assortment of gulls, terns, and shorebirds. The next morning at South Pond one lone Leach's Petrel flew back and forth near shore before the admiring eyes of myself and two new observers, but by late afternoon it too was gone. We can only surmise that the counter-clockwise winds of the hurricane picked up the petrels somewhere near the eastern tip of Long island and brought them north and west until they arrived at the calm eye, dropping them when the storm weakened considerably over a relatively small area of the Connecticut River Valley near the Massachusetts-Connecticut border. Other ponds north and west of the area were checked but had no birds at all. The fact that these were all Leach's Storm Petrels indicates either that they

range or were driven considerably east and south of Buzzard's Bay, which is their southernmost known breeding area.

The next spring on May 9-10, 1977 a massive storm moved up the Atlantic coast bringing high winds, torrents of rain and finally, several inches of heavy, wet snow. In the Berkshire Hills trees already leafed out simply broke and crashed to the ground under nearly a foot or more of the heavy wet stuff. Late in the afternoon of the 10th I checked the Congamond Lakes again and found a Red-throated Loon and 31 Red-necked Grebes, resting on the churned up surface.

Early the next morning I returned to see if they were still there and if anything else had arrived. The wind was still strong, but the sky had cleared and I went to the Suffield side to have the sun behind me as I scanned the largest or "Middle Pond" of the lakes. A small black and white "duck" was alone in the middle of the pond. It reminded me of the petrels by its shape and manner, but the undersides were white. Again the impossible did not cross my mind. The water was still very rough, the wind blew strongly against the scope, and I could not get a steady look at the bird. After a while, however, I began to accept what my eyes were seeing. It had to be a shearwater. The most likely of this impossible family was a Greater Shearwater, but something told me to doubt this identification. It seemed small, but it was hard to be sure because it did not fly and was not near any other birds.

I rushed to a phone to have others come to see this bird. Within an hour the same people from the previous summer and a number of others were present, and we observed the bird flying and resting for about two hours. We set up in an open area on the west side of Middle Pond and followed the bird with scopes and glasses as it careened around the edges of the pond, often alighting, but almost immediately returning to the air. Its flight was mostly rapid wingbeats with occasional glides, those usually close to the surface. The size was confirmed when it landed next to several of the Red-necked Grebes and was noticeably smaller.

The upperparts were a dark muddy brown, with the dark coloring of the head ending at the eyeline and the light color extending up into the dark of the head to form a small patch behind the eye. When swimming, the light color showed above the water line. The bird came within 20 to 30 feet a dozen or more times, as it flew around the pond and over where we stood, showing a clear, strongly contrasting underwing of a white central section with dark completely around the edges, narrowest on the forewing. The tail was short and dark. Once it tipped and turned immediately over our heads and fanned its completely black undertail and co-

verts. About 12 to 15 people agreed at that time to the identification as Audubon's Shearwater. Subsequent study of more detailed descriptions of the flight behavior and plumage strengthened this conviction.

The bird flew around the western and eastern shores of both the Middle and South Pond, often straying right over the trees before again flying out over the water. At least twice it flew over the narrow peninsula separating the two ponds, an area which is entirely within Connecticut. Though the state line apparently extends only 50 to 100 feet into the water from the eastern (Connecticut) side rather than through the center of the lakes, this bird clearly was seen flying in Connecticut as well as Massachusetts (as were some of the petrels the previous summer).

When these two experiences took place, I had only been birding seven to eight years and knew very little about vagrancy. It was some time later when I began to realize how extraordinary these occurrences were. However, with greater and deeper knowledge and history, somehow I do not think another such event would be as exciting or formative of a birder's outlook as these were for me. Because these were birds I found in my own back yard, in my home, so to speak, it kept my focus on the real value of the experience. These are not things one can chase after of one's own will and efforts. Like one's own life they are gifts of grace. We receive them as emissaries of another time and place, perhaps beyond time and place, as sacraments connecting us to a home and an identity we have lost, but which we hope to regain.

It is important to say that such experiences with vagrants have made me more appreciative of common birds. Ovenbirds, Veerys, and even Downy Woodpeckers all share the same airspace as the vagrant. They also live in the same spiritual space of the miraculous gift that is life. I have discovered that the same sacramental thrill can be provided by the song of the first Louisiana Waterthrush of the season or the everyday color and whistle of the yard Cardinal. The everyday world of rushing and striving, of getting and competing, which now unnecessarily infects our lives and even seeps into bird study, is put in its demonic place. Our world needs to rediscover the sanctity of the common experience.

SETH KELLOGG, 377 Loomis Street, Southwick, MA 01077

THE 1996-97 CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

STEPHEN P. BROKER

True to its rich traditions and varied history, the 1996-97 version of the Connecticut Christmas Bird Count was filled with the usual challenges of weather, heroics in the field and surprises at feeders, an array of rarities and significant discoveries, species new to the all-time Connecticut CBC list, surreal interactions with nature, tired bodies, and great camaradery. This year, 759 field observers and 160 feeder watchers logged 2224 party hours and 8820 party miles during the designated count period of December 20, 1996 to January 5, 1997. Their combined efforts produced a statewide list of 169 species on count days and an additional three species (Glaucous Gull, Tree Swallow, and Evening Grosbeak) during count weeks. The combined total of 172 species is the 5th highest tallied in the past 20 years of CBCs.

The most noteworthy rarities for the 1996-97 Connecticut Christmas Bird Count include a Little Blue Heron at New Haven, three King Eiders off Mason's Island at New London, Willet at New Haven, Clay-colored Sparrow at New Haven, and Bullock's Oriole at Quinnipiac Valley. Top honors, however, certainly go to the Chestnut-collared Longspur observed at the mouth of the Connecticut River on Great Island for the Old Lyme-Saybrook count. Other significant finds include separate reports of Greater White-fronted Goose at Woodbury-Roxbury and New Haven, 41 Common Eiders at New London (some off Fisher's Island, NY, but others in the company of the King Eiders in Connecticut waters - a New London first!), Barrow's Goldeneye observed count day at Westport and count week at Old Lyme-Saybrook, Black Vulture at Woodbury-Roxbury (3) and count week at Litchfield Hills and Greenwich-Stamford, Golden Eagle at Lakeville-Sharon, a pair of Peregrine Falcons at Hartford, Black-headed Gull at Greenwich-Stamford, Tree Swallow seen count week at Old Lyme-Saybrook, Wilson's Warbler at Quinnipiac Valley, and Dickcissel at New London.

We entered the CBC season following a remarkably mild but wet fall. Clay Taylor, compiler for Salmon River, summarized the lead-in to the early winter census this way: "the weather was a perplexing mess - record rainfall and a lack of regular cold fronts in the fall made for an unspectacular migration. Any warm

weather holdovers were knocked out by a cold snap in November, but no snow and record warmth in December kept northern species 'up there' somewhere." As has been the pattern for many years, 10 of 17 Connecticut counts were held on the first weekend of the CBC calendar. Weather conditions on Saturday, December 21 were conducive to getting out in the field but were not without their problems. Woodbury-Roxbury compiler Chris Wood reported that "cold and sunny weather made for tiring birding, with temperatures ranging from 12 to 37°F over the day, and the low sun straining even the youngest pairs of eyes." Still water was partly frozen throughout the state, moving water was completely open, and there was no snow on the ground. These conditions and the unseasonably fall warmth contributed to much difficulty in finding waterfowl. Referring to one of New Haven area's large and bird-rich coastal lakes, Noble Proctor reported, "poorest duck year ever on Saltonstall." Conditions on Sunday, December 22 changed somewhat to partly cloudy skies and steadier winds generally from the west, but birding otherwise remained a fairly comfortable enterprise.

Barkhamsted's count on December 26 was characterized by A.M. clear and P.M. cloudiness, but field observers had to contend with up to 8 inches of snow from a preceding storm. The weekend of December 28-29 brought yet milder field conditions. Compiler Jay Kaplan wrote that "after struggling through a foot of snow and ice last year, the 1996 Hartford CBC was a piece of cake with bare ground, open water and temperatures slowly climbing into the low forties!" Stratford-Milford's count on the 29th was described by compiler Steve Mayo as "certainly the warmest (42-52°F) and most foggy in its history," the afternoon being complicated by light rain. But, the nascent 1997 brought chill to the air. The Pawling, NY-Hidden Valley, CT count on New Year's Day was held under the coldest conditions of the count season, with temperatures ranging from the low to mid teens down to just below zero; clear morning skies helped out somewhat. The final weekend saw a return to unseasonably warm weather (up to the high 40s each day). Warm air and cold ground meant that New London's January 4 count included considerable fog and partly cloudy skies, and Old Lyme-Saybrook had to deal with the same fog cover and cloudiness the following day.

Some generalizations can be made about this year's count, prior to our running through of the check-list. Annual loon, grebe, and cormorant censuses continue to benefit greatly from boat surveys of Long Island Sound waters, with at least the loons being

found in high numbers once more this year. Herons and egrets again provide us with one or two lingering rarities from our coastal nesting colonies. Although 32 species of ducks, geese, and swans comprised this year's anseriform list, several species of dabblers (Wood Duck, Green-winged Teal, American Black Duck, Northern Pintail) and divers (Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead) were in reduced numbers. Hawks, eagles, vultures, and falcons were generally plentiful, with the exception of Northern Harrier and Sharp-shinned Hawk (each down from recent high numbers), Rough-legged Hawk, and American Kestrel, a species which shows every sign of being in big trouble in our region. State galliforms are charting two disparate courses, rocketing numbers of Wild Turkey resulting from a wildly successful reintroduction program, and plummeting numbers of the native Ruffed Grouse and the exotic Ring-necked Pheasant. Rails continue to be found in acceptable numbers by intrepid wetland birders, and American Coot appears to be on the rebound from recent reduced levels.

This was a tough year for finding sandpipers, with low totals being reported for Ruddy Turnstone, Purple Sandpiper, Dunlin, Common Snipe, and American Woodcock. Snipe and woodcock are of major concern with their continued, severe erosion in numbers. While the closing of state landfills represents an evolving philosophy of solid waste disposal, it has not been good news for the larids, as all three abundant gulls are considerably less abundant than in the decade past. Monk Parakeet is definitely out of the Bridgeport-Fairfield monastery and evangelizing the western coastline and further afield. Put another way, we could be on the first verge of a veritable green revolution. Barn Owls and Short-eared Owls were sorely missed this year, and Eastern Screech-Owl was at a 20 year low count. The Hartford CBC would like it known in no uncertain terms that it annually serves up quantity as well as quality. The quality is reported on above and below. As for the quantity, in addition to the usual lofty numbers of field observers and feeder watchers (197 this year), the report submitted by Jay Kaplan tells an avian story of Hitchcockian dimensions. He wrote, "most incredible of these records was the evening roost of blackbirds in the Manchester Dump, estimated by some to exceed 160,000 birds, almost 100,000 of which were grackles, blackbirds, and cowbirds! This roost, along with the usual ample supply of starlings and crows, set what may very well be an all-time high for numbers of individual birds on a Connecticut Christmas Bird Count - over 239,000 birds!" This number is in fact greater than 100,000 birds above any previous Hartford count, and it is prob-

ably safe to extend the all-time high to any New England count of the century. Throwing away all traces of modesty, let's challenge CBC archivists anywhere to come up with numbers that can top these.

Lingering semi-hardy species present a mixed picture, with such species as Eastern Phoebe and Brown Thrasher in short supply but nonhardies and persistent neotropical migrants including House Wren, Marsh Wren, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird and our two recognized early wintering oriole species being counted at average to very high levels. Further support of the notion that weather conditions have profound effects on the availability of birds is provided by the wood warblers. Of the seven species of parulids seen this year (a very respectable number), Yellow-rumped Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and Yellow-breasted Chat all were comparatively abundant. This was also a generally good year for sparrows, with Savannah, Fox, Song, Swamp, White-throated, and White-crowned Sparrows occurring at or near 20 year high totals. No crossbills, no redpolls, scattered siskins, and no count day grosbeaks make this the ninth non-winter finch year of the last ten. Finally, please note that ornithologically-correct language now calls for our speaking of Green Heron, Black-headed Gull, Eastern Towhee, Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow, and Bullock's Oriole (which is not now nor has it recently been the same species as Baltimore Oriole). From here on, dispense with -backed, Common, Rufous-sided, Northern, and "", and add saltmarsh. Any questions? Let's get going!

Loons Through Ducks

Sampling the spreadsheet of information on the 1996-97 Connecticut Christmas Bird Count, we find as reported above that loons were in good supply again on Long Island Sound this year, with Red-throated at its second highest count ever and Common at third highest level. However, the more gracile *gavia* was down 18% from the previous year and the more robust species was up 29%. One Common Loon on Bashan Lake, Moodus (SR-CT) was just the fourth occurrence mid-state in 20 years. Pied-billed Grebe was counted in average numbers, suggesting that this rare Connecticut breeder and migrant is healthy in this part of southern New England. There was a dip in pied-billed numbers (in Connecticut and New England) during the period 1984-85 through 1993-94, with signs of recovery the past three years. Horned Grebe was in scarce supply, but Red-necked Grebe was found for the 17th time in the last 20 years. One Northern Gannet at New Lon-

don makes this the sixth year in a row this species has been sighted in Connecticut. One Great Cormorant was seen at Hartford, but otherwise this was the lowest total in 20 years for our more abundant wintering cormorant. In contrast, Double-crested Cormorant occurred in fairly average numbers, and two were seen at Hartford. This year's total of 69 individuals represents a good recovery from the 14 year low count of 26 last year. There is fairly considerable fluctuation in Double-crested Cormorant numbers over the two decades, and no clear trend of increase is evident in Connecticut.

Single American Bitterns were found at Old Lyme-Saybrook and Stratford-Milford. This secretive species has been found on 18 of the last 20 count years. Great Blue Heron continues its high numbers of the last 10 years with 307 counted statewide. One Great Egret was reported from Greenwich-Stamford, and another was seen at Westport. An immature Little Blue Heron was photographed at New Haven, just the second occurrence of this heron on a Connecticut count in more than 25 years. Mute Swan continues to addle its detracters with 1704 swans reported this year, down from last year's 1832 but consistent with numbers of the last 10 years. Most noteworthy is that New Haven outpointed New London for top swan honors for the first time in years. For the second year in a row, Greater White-fronted Goose makes the state list, with one at Woodbury-Roxbury and one at New Haven (new to this count). Snow Goose occurred in average numbers (19); it is a species whose numbers range from low single digits to high double digits each year. The coastal total of 670 Brant is a 10 year high but does not approach the extraordinary total of 4748 in 1981-82. Westport had 530 this year! Though down in numbers in 1996-97, Wood Duck made rare appearances at Edwin Way Teale - Trailwood, Storrs, Pawling, and Old Lyme-Saybrook. American Black Duck experienced its first major dropoff in many years, highlighted by low numbers at New Haven and New London. There are now three times as many Mallards being counted as Black Ducks, a much greater margin of difference than 20 years ago. Rare Northern Pintail finds were made at Pawling and Salmon River. Westport reported one Northern Shoveler, the only one in Connecticut. Big numbers of Gadwall at Greenwich-Stamford, New Haven, and Westport gave this species its second highest total in 20 years. The state's only Eurasian Wigeon was at Stratford-Milford. Nearly two-thirds of the state's 505 American Wigeon were found at Westport, and the species was new to the Pawling 20 year count.

A mere 340 Canvasback continues the low totals of the past seven years. Quinnipiac Valley found one, adding this species to its count list. Redhead was observed on Greenwich-Stamford and Old Lyme-Saybrook counts. Ring-necked Duck seems to be returning to average numbers following seven years of elevated numbers. A fairly rare find of this species was made at Hartford. Greater Scaup experienced a third consecutive year of increasing numbers. A total of 7189 is approaching the high numbers of the early 1980s and before. Birders recorded a 10 year high count of Lesser Scaup, with half of this year's total coming from the New Haven count. Prior to 1995, the highest number of Common Eider recorded in the past 20 years was eight in 1977-78. In 1995-96, New London recorded 100 in Long Island Sound waters off Fisher's Island, NY. This year the 41 Common Eiders seen included some in Connecticut waters. Do the recent observations signal a possible shift in wintering distribution of this species? The three King Eiders at New London add this species of *Somateria* to its 20 year count list. Black Scoter was found only at New Haven, observed by the party on patrol with the Coast Guard. There were fairly average numbers of Surf Scoter, a species which fluctuates in numbers on these counts. White-winged Scoter, too, was in average supply. One at Litchfield Hills was a remarkable inland record, new to the entire northern count list. The rare but regular wintering Barrow's Goldeneye was found this year at Westport and count week at Old Lyme-Saybrook, putting this species on the state list for the 4th time in 5 years. CBC sightings have picked up in recent years for the Barrow's. Barkhamsted and Trailwood noted fairly rare finds of Bufflehead. Hooded Merganser numbers are high for the 7th year in a row, most notably on northern counts. High numbers of Common Merganser on northern counts and along the coast boosted this species to a 20 year record. Red-breasted Merganser also has had higher numbers for the past seven years. Ruddy Duck totalled more than 100 for the eighth time in 20 years.

Hawks Through Sandpipers

Black Vulture continues its range expansion from the south, with three at Woodbury-Roxbury and count week observations at Litchfield Hills (a new record for northern counts) and Greenwich-Stamford. This pales in comparison with Turkey Vulture, as five year summations for this species for the last four half-decades are 128, 484, 531, and 665, a steady increase in numbers during this 20 year period. A total of 154 were counted statewide. One Osprey at

Litchfield Hills was the only individual observed on this year's count. Between 1 and 3 are seen on state counts most years. Included among the 43 observed Bald Eagles were rare finds at Trailwood, Oxford, and Quinnipiac Valley. This amounted to 62% of the 1995-96 total but continues the higher numbers recorded since 1985-86. Northern Harrier (45 statewide) dropped back from the elevated numbers of the past 5-7 years. Sharp-shinned Hawk numbers of the most recent 10 years are decidedly higher than those of the 10 before, but this year's sum is barely 50% of that for 1995-96. Cooper's Hawk was down somewhat from the previous year's record high but still well above average for the last 10 years. This Accipiter took a big jump in population beginning in 1985-86. High totals were achieved at five counts around the state this year. Northern Goshawk also was in above average numbers. The 46 Red-shouldered Hawks seen were far below the record total of 84 in 1995-96, but still easily the 2nd highest total in 20 years.

Red-tailed Hawks (760 statewide) also reached a 2nd highest total in 20 years, trailing the record 877 of the previous year. Single Rough-legged Hawks occurred at Barkhamsted and Lakeville-Sharon. Their numbers tend to fluctuate significantly from year to year, with highest numbers in 1970-71, 1975-76, 1980-81, 1989-90, and 1995-96, suggestive of population cycles in Connecticut during at least the early winter period. One Golden Eagle was seen this year at Lakeville-Sharon. While no more than 1 individual has been found on statewide counts of the last quarter century, the species has been found in 7 of the past 14 years. The falcon family brings both good news and bad. American Kestrel gives all indications of dropping out of our early winter avifauna, with just 15 being found this year (6 northern, 3 mid-state, and 6 coastal). Half of our state counts recorded 20 year low totals. Statewide totals reached fewer than 50% of the previous year's total, which was itself a 20 year low total. It's becoming easy to forget that kestrel numbers of 100 to 200 were the standard from the mid-1970s through the mid-1980s. The decline of the kestrel is mirrored by an increase, not dramatic but certainly observable, in Merlin numbers. Nine were found this year. It was previously incomprehensible that Merlin would be nearly on a par with kestrel in its occurrence. Two Peregrine Falcons at Hartford (in good hands at the Travelers Tower) and 3 at Greenwich-Stamford comprise this year's total. This falcon, too, is experiencing noticeable rejuvenation.

Peak numbers of Ring-necked Pheasant occurred in the early 1980s, but we're now at a 20 year low total of 79. That's not the

only thing to grouse about. Roughly speaking, *Bonasa umbellus* achieved a 20 year low total this year with a mere 32 being reported. Numbers from 1977-78 through 1987-88 ranged from approximately 150 to 275. Ruffed Grouse must be recognized as being in severe decline in the state. The extraordinary increase in numbers of Wild Turkey since the mid-1980s, the result of restocking efforts by DEP, closely correlates with the decline of Ruffed Grouse. This year, 1149 turkeys were counted, with more than 60% in the north but greatest percentages of increase in mid-state and coastal count circles.

Among rallids, three Clappers at New Haven and two at Stratford-Milford comprise a representative state total. Ninety two per cent of CBC Virginia Rails are found on coastal counts. Quinnipiac Valley is the only non-coastal count which finds Virginia Rail with any consistency, and QV continued its success by reporting 3 this year. The only Sora was one at New Haven, in the lower West River marshes. The last three years have seen among the highest totals of American Coot for the 20 year period, with 1266 in 1994-95, 438 in 1995-96, and an impressive 551 this year. Litchfield Hills contributed a sizeable percentage of the 96-97 statewide total, with 247. There were several precipitous drops in coot numbers in Connecticut and the New England region from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s. American Oystercatcher has been reported for the 5th year in a row, this year at Greenwich-Stamford (CW), New London (CW), and Old Lyme-Saybrook (3). One Willet well studied at New Haven represents just the fourth occurrence of this species on a Connecticut CBC in 20 years. Ruddy Turnstones, Purple Sandpipers, and Dunlins were low in numbers, and Sanderlings were up. Common Snipe continues to present a challenge to the field observer. This year's seven are a 20 year low count. Typical years report snipe numbering in the 20s and 30s. Following higher numbers of American Woodcock during the period 1984-85 through 1992-93, woodcock numbers have been on the low side for the past four years.

Gulls Through Corvids

Stratford-Milford reported one Laughing Gull, a coastal occurrence for each of the last seven years. Greenwich-Stamford had a Black-headed Gull, seen now in Connecticut four of the last six years. Elevated numbers of Ring-billed Gull were recorded during the period 1981-82 through 1994-95. This year's total of 15,362 and last year's 14,472 suggest a return to pre-1980 levels. Closing of landfills is certainly connected to the present decline. Herring Gull

also shows a second consecutive year of reduced numbers. Through the 1970s and 1980s, Herring Gull totals in the 40,000 - 50,000 range were the rule. Again, landfill closings are chiefly responsible. Hartford had two Iceland Gulls, and New London spotted one. Lesser Black-backed Gull is now reported in 75% of CBC years, with one at Oxford, two at Greenwich-Stamford, and one at Stratford-Milford. Glaucous Gull was missed on count day but seen count week at Hartford. No more than one to three are reported in a typical year. Great Black-backed Gull numbered 1963 this year, the second lowest in 20 years and just behind the previous year's low total of 1940. Colonies of Monk Parakeet were at Greenwich-Stamford, New Haven (Branford), Stratford-Milford, and Westport. The stronghold continues to be in the Bridgeport-Fairfield area, but three year old satellite colonies at Greenwich-Stamford and New Haven are establishing. Total numbers counted are again in the range of 300 individuals. The irruptive or semi-migratory Snowy Owl is seen on just 50% of Connecticut Christmas Counts. We had the species again this year, with one at Westport and one CW at New London. Barred Owl occurred at the third highest statewide total in 20 years, just a little behind last year's outstanding total of 50 birds. Long-eared Owl dropped from 19 in 1995-96 to 9 this year, but this species has occurred in double digits just four times in the last 20 years. Northern Saw-whet Owl was counted at the lowest total in seven years (17 statewide), but Saw-whet numbers have been significantly higher than average during most years of the period 1985-86 to present.

Red-headed Woodpecker made appearances at Oxford and Quinnipiac Valley. Numbers of the past 10 years have dropped off from the previous 10. Record high numbers of Red-bellied Woodpecker were reported on six Connecticut counts, with the greatest increases occurring mid-state. Five year averages for this species over the past 20 years are very telling: 43 - 102 - 256 - 636. The rate of increase in Red-bellied Woodpeckers is no less than staggering in Connecticut, with numbers more than doubling every five years since the mid-1970s. This year's total of 768 was just shy of the record high of 1994-95. Is some leveling off beginning to take place, or not? Yellow-bellied Sapsucker also graphs out sizeable increases over the past two decades. Five year summations for this species are 50, 108, 129, and 191 from the period 1972-73 through 1976-77 to the most recent five year period. This steady increase in numbers fully supports Wayne Petersen's suggestion in the 90th CBC New England summary (*American Birds*) that Yellow-bellied Sapsucker " may be steadily expanding its winter range north-

ward." The 1995-96 CBC season was a dismal year for Northern Flicker in Connecticut, but the most recent CBC enjoyed returns to high numbers generally with us since the early 1990s. Pileated Woodpecker (87 total) fell two short of the 20 year high record of 1994-95. We're either doing a better job of finding these woodpeckers, or their southern New England population is undergoing some expansion.

Warm fall weather did not favor the lingering of Eastern Phoebe in Connecticut, with single birds at Barkhamsted, Hartford, and Woodbury-Roxbury, a sharp contrast to the record 13 found statewide in 1995-96. Horned Lark numbers are among the most erratic of all species tracked on CBCs, with low numbers frequently following the previous year's high numbers. Last year, for example, 2498 were counted in Connecticut, the 3rd highest total in 20 years. This year, the paultry 564 seen were a 20 year low count. Go figure!

Tree Swallow seen count week at Old Lyme establishes just the second occurrence of this swallow on a Connecticut CBC. This species has been recorded with greater frequency in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Do we conclude that Connecticut is a less-buggy state in early winter? Of the 53,000 American Crows on Connecticut's counts, 25,000 were provided at the monster roost in Hartford, pushing statewide totals to the 3rd highest in 20 years. With the stunning totals for grackles and blackbirds, no other roost site in New England can lay claim to such extraordinary numbers of flocking birds. Fish Crow is also in abundance, with 252 primarily along the coast a 20 year high count. Lest American Crow swallow up all the publicity at the expense of its coastal congener, the reader should be advised that Fish Crow numbers are 500% higher for the period 1992-93 through 1996-97 than for the five year period 1972-73 through 1976-77. A statewide total of 20 Common Ravens continues the steady southward invasion of this corvid into Connecticut, a phenomenon of the last 11 years. A count week raven at Old Lyme-Saybrook represents the first appearance of this species on a coastal count. A total of six state counts recorded raven this year.

Creepers Through Sturnids

Several compilers commented on the paucity of Brown Creepers this year. In fact, statewide numbers were higher than in the 2 previous years but well below the average numbers recorded since ca. 1980. Carolina Wren underwent nearly two decades of phenomenal increase in southern New England, a range expansion that

was cut off by the extremely hard winters of the mid-1990s. While New England populations of this southern species of wren were drastically reduced, it should not be overlooked that there were still 10 times so many wrens in 1994-95 as in 1977-78. Several hard, snow-rich winters have now been followed by an extremely mild winter, but Carolina Wren numbers have dropped again, now down to 217 (a 10 year low). An apparent consolidation of population range is occurring to the south as New England numbers drop. The next several years can be expected to shed further light on the dynamics of Carolina Wren numbers. Six count circles reported a total of 10 House Wrens, a 20 year high total. All the press that Carolina Wren has been getting should not obscure the fact that total Winter Wren numbers of the last five years are 350% greater than those of the five year period beginning 1972-73. The early winter habits of Marsh Wren, which prefers coastal salt marshes in November and December, make it almost exclusively a species of coastal counts, and a not-easy-to-locate habitat specialist, to boot. The two counts that regularly record Marsh Wren, Old Lyme-Saybrook and New Haven, are aware that if you can find a spot in a marsh's *Phragmites* thicket where this wren can be induced to respond to tsuck calls, it's a good bet you'll find Marsh Wren here just about every year. It is thus of significance that Westport reports its first ever Marsh Wren this year. The 19 reported on all six coastal counts are one short of the 20 year high total. Mild fall weather benefitted this species, for sure.

Eastern Bluebird is down 30% from the 1995-96 total but in keeping with strongly elevated numbers of the last nine years. Nearly 8000 American Robins are testament to this frugivore's abundance this winter. The semi-hardy Gray Catbird also was favored by the mild fall weather, reaching record high numbers. In comparison, Northern Mockingbird was at a 10 year low total, suggesting food shortage as a cause. The Mockingbird has a near-exclusive fall diet of wild fruits and berries. Five reports of Brown Thrasher from Hartford, New Haven, and Stratford-Milford counts represent a 20 year low total. American Pipit was reported only at Woodbury-Roxbury (15), New Haven (1), and Old Lyme-Saybrook (CW). Pipit numbers vary substantially from year to year.

Three counts (Hartford, Pawling, and Quinnipiac Valley (CW)) reported Northern Shrike this year. We will not soon forget the extraordinary record-breaking irruptive year of 1995-96 for this species. European Starling numbers may have leveled off somewhat in the last 10 years of CBCs, but they are running at about

50% of the late 1970s to mid-1980s. As this introduced species still accounts for nearly 25% of all individuals recorded on a Christmas Count, its decline pales in comparison with its ongoing ubiquity. Keep in mind, however, that in 1983-84 the starling made up 45% of total individuals counted. This is not to suggest that it will soon be going the way of the Passenger Pigeon.

Wood Warblers Through Sparrows

The wood warblers were well represented on Connecticut counts. Orange-crowned Warbler was reported at New Haven. Yellow-rumped Warbler had a good showing with its fifth highest total in 20 years. Pine Warbler was spotted at Barkhamsted. While this is a rarity for any count circle, 1 or 2 are reported in the state in 3 out of 4 count years. Palm Warbler is an annual state find; it was located this year at Quinnipiac Valley and Greenwich-Stamford. Two years earlier, under considerably colder conditions, we had nine on state counts. The unique absence of Common Yellowthroat on the 1995-96 count was compensated for by the five that were located this year, at Greenwich-Stamford, New Haven, and New London. Wilson's Warbler was found for the fifth time in 20 years, this time with an appearance at Quinnipiac Valley. Four Yellow-breasted Chats, at Greenwich-Stamford (2), New Haven, New London, and Hartford (CW), match the 10 year high.

One Dickcissel at New London was an excellent find. The nine Chipping Sparrows found statewide on count days included seven at Westport. The occurrence of Clay-colored Sparrow on the New Haven count (a weedy field adjacent to I-95 in North Haven) is an overdue first for Connecticut CBCs and a unique early winter date for the species. Seen by one observer on count day, it was relocated the next day and described thoroughly and definitively at each sighting. Follow-up efforts to locate the bird did not succeed, but the documentation is extensive. Savannah Sparrow occurred in above average numbers, including five "Ipswich" Sparrows reported from New Haven, Old Lyme, and predictably, Stratford-Milford. Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow was located at New Haven (1) and Old Lyme-Saybrook (4). As noted above, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, and White-crowned Sparrow were abundant this year. Lapland Longspur was reported at Litchfield Hills, New London, and Old Lyme-Saybrook, but the big news of *Calcariusm* was the appearance of Chestnut-collared Longspur on the Old Lyme-Saybrook count. This is a new species for the all-time Connecticut CBC list. The thoroughly-documented sighting, if accepted by the Avian

Records Committee, will be the second confirmed record for Connecticut. At least two additional sight records have also been made in the last several decades. Chestnut-collared Longspur is a western North American species which is accidental east to the Atlantic Coast. To the longspur list are added 55 Snow Buntings from four coastal, one mid-state, and one northern count.

Earlier it was noted that Hartford reported 23,000 Red-winged Blackbirds. There were few others elsewhere in Connecticut during the count period. The 68 Eastern Meadowlarks seen statewide were the best showing for this species in recent years, but the breeding and migration status of meadowlark in Connecticut have been compromised severely by loss of farmland and open field habitat.

A remarkable 42,000 Common Grackles were reported, where else, on the Hartford count, with small handfulls noticed elsewhere in the state. For Brown-headed Cowbird, the final tally is Hartford, 34,000 - rest of Connecticut, 1690. Greenwich-Stamford had one Baltimore Oriole, and four made appearances at New Haven. Bullock's Oriole at Quinnipiac Valley marks the latest appearance of this bird - a recent recipient of full species rank - among Connecticut's avifauna. A few more House Finches were seen than were reported for the 1995-96 count, but they were well below the high numbers of three or more years ago. This species continues to be affected adversely by eye disease. Six Pine Siskins at Barkhamsted were the only reported from northern and mid-state counts. In addition, five coastal counts recorded siskin for a grand total of 20. Evening Grosbeak reached a twenty year low total, having been missed count day for the first time in 20 years. The species was recorded Count Week only at Old Lyme. A review of 20 years of data is very telling. The last five years we counted 419 total. Before that there were 2457 over the five year span. Before that, 6866, and during the period 1972-73 through 1976-77 there were 11,485. Wayne Petersen wrote in 1993, "what is going on with this flamboyant visitor from the North and West?" The question deserves repetition.

Thanks go to all compilers for their hard work and timely submission of Christmas Bird Count results, and to the Connecticut birders who continue to make the CBC a focal point of the year's field activities. It's a great feeling to participate in the longest running wildlife census in the world, one shared by all of us. Gil Kleiner prepared the Christmas Bird Count location map (Figure 1) and adapted the count spreadsheets to *The Connecticut Warbler*

format (no easy task), and Betty Kleiner coordinated the editorial oversight (again, no easy task).

Statewide Results

Shown below are statewide data for all seventeen Christmas Bird Counts conducted in Connecticut for the 1996-1997 early winter season, also geographic regional results for the 6 Northern, 5 Mid-State, and 6 Coastal CBCs, and data for each of the individual counts. The present report is based on 20 years of data, with the premise that there has been good consistency in the extent of coverage of each count for the past 20 years. This section, then, is based on examination of the results of the 324 Christmas Bird Counts conducted in Connecticut during the period 1977-78 through 1996-97 and on 21 spreadsheets of data updated each year.

Graphical information includes total Count Day and Count Week species for each region or count (this year and for the last twenty count years), total individual birds counted, and numbers of field observers, feeder watchers, and total observers. Also included are listings of those species recorded in 20 year high numbers, species recorded in 20 year low numbers, species new to the counts, rarities and other noteworthy species. New species are those recorded for the first time in 20 years, although some species may have been seen prior to 20 years ago on a given count. Rarities are defined as species observed seven or fewer times in the last 20 years. Other noteworthy species are those which do not meet the definitions used for new or rare species but which are otherwise quite unusual or significant in their occurrence on a count.

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CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS 1996-97

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												22	80	18	1	62	18	201
Common Loon										1		9	31	36	2	16	8	103
Pied-billed Grebe				1					2		CW	9	7	10	4	7	3	43
Horned Grebe					1							15	11	61	---	20	20	128
Red-necked Grebe												2						2
Northern Gannet														1				1
Great Cormorant			1							12		41	35	18	4	24	27	162
D.c. Cormorant			2						1	3		12	9	34	2		6	69
Cormorant, sp.										1					1			2
American Bittern															1	1		2
Great Blue Heron	1	20	19	2	2	2	8	CW	17	3	9	36	37	74	13	24	40	307
Great Egret												1					1	2
Little Blue Heron													1					1
Black-cr Night-Heron												12	2	1		11	3	29
Mute Swan			13	11			21	30	158	91	15	72	700	315	40	87	151	1704
Gr. Wh.-fronted Goose											1		1					2
Snow Goose			1	3	1				6		2	1			1	3	1	19
Brant												1	3	136			530	670
Canada Goose	62	402	8194	1136	7684	1289	1090	1753	3310	265	3509	3203	2219	1646	650	1886	1960	40258
Wood Duck		1	5		1	2		5		1	1		2	1	1	2	4	26
Green-winged Teal			5									10	6		3	5	16	45
American Black Duck	53	2	258	129	173	25	16	77	54	141	92	521	647	418	183	777	785	4351
Mallard	232	313	2008	394	235	385	345	328	1013	462	544	1314	1509	893	356	794	1620	12745
Mallard Hybrid				1		5		2				3	5			17	1	34
Northern Pintail								1		1		2	4					8
Northern Shoveler																	1	1

SPECIES	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	TOTAL
Gadwall												38	248	73	5	103	45	512
Eurasian Wigeon																1		1
American Wigeon			4					2				36	54	**20**		97	292	505
Canvasback				5					1	CW		18	13	69	CW	220	14	340
Redhead												1			2			3
Ring-necked Duck	4		2	33		3			5	2	8	70	156	151	16	6	32	488
Greater Scaup				1								637	6349	140		42	20	7189
Lesser Scaup				CW					CW			26	55	17		12	1	111
Scaup. sp.				1			3					1				5		10
Common Eider														41				41
King Eider														3				3
Oldsquaw												94	158	36		51	212	551
Black Scoter													1					1
Surf Scoter													25	69		3		97
White-winged Scoter				**1**								11	104			29	44	189
Common Goldeneye	7	13		30	16	12		25				158	175	238	**30**	314	379	1399
Barrow's Goldeneye															CW		1	1
Bufflehead	4	6					1	3		4	1	435	83	**485**	**21**	52	228	1323
Hooded Merganser	60	1	2	55	10	1		3	11	32	8	215	119	212	2	31	112	874
Common Merganser	361	7	101	1431	99	107	88	528	88	235	469	1371	17	34	67	176	73	7252
Red-br. Merganser												260	110	829	**36**	239	442	1916
Ruddy Duck				2				4	20			47	4	1	CW		27	105
Duck, sp.						1												1

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	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	TOTAL
Black Vulture				CW							3	CW						3
Turkey Vulture		CW		CW		CW	6	2	1	1	14	46	2	3	1		78	154
Osprey				1														1
Bald Eagle	3	1	3	3	3		1	4	1	2	18		CW	1	1		2	43
Northern Harrier								1	3				15	6	5	11	4	45
Sharp-shinned Hawk	CW	1	17	1		3	3	3	4	3	11	12	7	6	7	4	6	88
Cooper's Hawk	2		6	6	2		4	4	3	2	10	9	8	1	3	1	4	65
Northern Goshawk	1		1	1	2			2	1			1			CW	1	1	11
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	1	3			7	6		2	4	1		1	8	8		4	46
Red-tailed Hawk	11	12	136	59	55	27	20	47	55	25	94	74	68	20	8	9	40	760
Rough-legged Hawk	1		---		1													2
Buteo, sp.						1												1
Golden Eagle					1													1
American Kestrel		1	5		---			---	3		---	---	4	1	CW	1		15
Merlin			1					1	1				3		CW	3		9
Peregrine Falcon			2									3						5
Falcon, sp.								1										1
Ring-necked Pheasant		5	11		1	3	6	CW	24	5	3	5	1	1	5	2	7	79
Ruffed Grouse	8		1	8	---	3				3	2	---	1	CW	4		2	32
Wild Turkey	15	33	18	169	365	115	48	88	8	21	120	54	46			7	42	1149
Northern Bobwhite									2					3				5
Clapper Rail													3			2		5
Virginia Rail									3				1	6	5		2	17
Sora													1					1
American Coot			4	247	29		1	89	11			61	20	43		24	22	551
Black-bellied Plover												10	1	76	19	1	25	132

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Killdeer		2	3						1		CW	7	8	4	2	2	9	38
Am. Oystercatcher												CW		CW	3			3
Greater Yellowlegs												CW	3			2	2	7
Willet													1					1
Ruddy Turnstone												CW	1	15	41		8	65
Sanderling													113	1	78	147	47	386
Purple Sandpiper												18	24	16	8			66
Dunlin												4	**6**	43	31	254	282	620
Common Snipe						1			2				3				1	7
American Woodcock												1	1	2	1			5
Laughing Gull																1		1
Black-headed Gull												1						1
Bonaparte's Gull												126	57	142	---		44	369
Ring-billed Gull	298	142	2690	531	10	123	230	164	1084	529	450	1788	3016	561	441	2206	899	15362
Herring Gull	210	51	6185	259	11	**33**	**174**	**60**	201	214	**149**	1687	**701**	2949	**228**	1976	3732	18820
Iceland Gull			2											1				3
Lesser Bl.-backed Gull							1					2				1		4
Glaucous Gull			CW															0
Great Bl.-backed Gull	12	59	800	18	3	1	7	1	29	136	33	94	**134**	226	**34**	222	154	1963
Gull, sp.										2								2
Rock Dove	242	108	2419	165	410	317	110	177	540	66	259	1178	933	663	104	845	468	9004
Mourning Dove	305	198	1960	372	**220**	**179**	84	343	481	185	**313**	407	**453**	379	**234**	366	405	6884
Monk Parakeet												4	7			121	161	293

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Eastern Screech-Owl	2	4	11	7	3		5	1	21	8	**15**	33	6	---	10	5	16	147
Great Horned Owl	4	5	9	13	1	5	2	3	8	12	17	19	20	7	9	2	6	142
Snowy Owl														CW			1	1
Barred Owl	1	1	6	3		2	1	1	1	5	8	3		4	4	1	2	43
Long-eared Owl		1							2		2	CW		1	1		2	9
North. Saw-whet Owl	3			5		2	1				1			3	2			17
Belted Kingfisher	2	2	10	6	8	2	4	3	7	6	**4**	23	24	22	15	10	25	173
Red-hdd. Woodpecker							1		1									2
Red-bld. Woodpecker	9	13	93	47	16	20	24	44	36	47	68	112	40	33	60	19	87	768
Yellow-bld. Sapsucker			5	2			1	2		2	2	12	1	1	7	1	3	44
Downy Woodpecker	95	44	463	155	73	75	109	154	106	110	215	214	145	74	102	64	196	2394
Hairy Woodpecker	32	**3**	69	34	**11**	**6**	14	53	10	16	30	45	17	**3**	20	5	34	402
Northern Flicker	8	8	144	8	6	15	39	24	62	60	52	36	97	38	21	14	29	661
Pileated Woodpecker	7	1	2	16	3	2	3	6	1	5	6	10	5		12	1	7	87
Eastern Phoebe	1		1								1							3
Horned Lark		6	37	101	195	75					**56**		1	67	**16**	10		564
Tree Swallow															CW			CW
Blue Jay	611	135	924	640	309	287	236	444	641	232	573	627	437	372	318	169	591	7546
American Crow	454	405	25000	1764	875	309	1247	546	2072	540	3113	1432	4911	542	343	706	9094	53353
Fish Crow			5				10	2			CW	3	167	6		28	31	252
Common Raven	9		2	5	2			1		1					CW			20
Black-cpd. Chickadee	1146	**203**	1342	1478	625	488	446	670	442	652	1115	744	**444**	503	901	187	676	12062
Tufted Titmouse	202	110	810	364	75	208	197	268	186	384	552	560	302	256	509	138	419	5540
Red-br. Nuthatch	46		9	29	3	6	3	5	10	2	4	**2**	15		1		1	136
White-br. Nuthatch	121	**13**	215	262	83	**64**	71	216	62	159	202	249	83	64	115	26	116	2121
Brown Creeper	12	**1**	10	22	4	7	5	CW	6	4	17	6	8	2	17	1	7	129

SPECIES	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	TOTAL
Carolina Wren	1	1	16			1	8	4	1	10	12	23	6	46	45	17	26	217
House Wren								2		1		1		1		2	3	10
Winter Wren	1		6	4		3	2			6	4	12	7	8	4	5	2	64
Marsh Wren												1	5	2	9	1	1	19
Golden-crown' Kinglet	172	---	83	69	29	12	18	42	35	48	98	14	42	21	66	9	23	781
Ruby-crowned Kinglet			6	2			2			2	3	3	1	5	8	1		33
Eastern Bluebird	58	28	70	83	57	85	127	53	24	162	318	83	24	11	3	3	54	1238
Hermit Thrush			6	3		3	10	10	5	2	29	18	15	7	2	6	14	130
American Robin	148		947	78	317	22	728	247	2338	215	1135	106	254	392	718	112	129	7886
Gray Catbird			13	3	1	2	16	12	7	6	7	17	17	14	22	12	13	162
Northern Mockingbird	22	8	256	25	7	54	38	19	78	40	88	118	149	174	90	83	92	1341
Brown Thrasher			2										1			2		5
American Pipit											15		1		CW			16
Cedar Waxwing	163		622	133	78	76	249	296	67	88	390	236	87	111	278	46	297	3217
Northern Shrike			1					1	CW									2
European Starling	1235	2127	75000	2347	971	1620	2680	1231	4678	1366	10486	2127	4950	3786	1649	2286	1301	119840
Orange-crnd. Warbler													1					1
Yellow-rmpd. Warbler	4		83	2			46	5	39	21	48	20	21	61	86	5	18	459
Pine Warbler	1																	1
Palm Warbler									1			1						2
Common Yellowthroat												1	3	1				5
Wilson's Warbler									1									1
Yellow-breasted Chat			CW									2	1	1				4

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Northern Cardinal	109	45	721	169	55	113	150	183	160	116	272	324	288	230	173	196	261	3565
Dickcissel														1				1
Eastern Towhee	2		2			1	5	4	10	5	3	2	12	13	9	5	3	76
Amer. Tree Sparrow	155	42	415	343	244	130	164	127	82	188	190	73	343	145	287	180	100	3208
Chipping Sparrow	1					CW					1						7	9
Clay-colored Sparrow													1					1
Field Sparrow	5		22	1		20	32	2	9	30	60	3	42	69	49	15	16	375
Vesper Sparrow													1					1
Savannah Sparrow	1		39			1			5				9	6	53	41	11	166
'Ipswich' Sparrow													2		1	2		5
Saltm. Shp.-tld. Sparrow													1		4			5
Fox Sparrow			18			3	6	3	1	3	7	15	6	5	8	3	6	84
Song Sparrow	54	22	682	71	27	88	154	67	165	115	399	319	631	414	303	275	398	4184
Swamp Sparrow	2	4	25	15		7	18	5	9	10	9	10	44	21	81	16	14	290
White-thr. Sparrow	126	94	970	217	96	174	709	439	489	332	947	871	1076	674	541	453	500	8708
White-crn. Sparrow			4		3		1		1				3			1	4	17
Dark-eyed Junco	1434	95	1906	1309	640	554	509	744	377	566	1365	631	533	296	330	108	730	12127
Lapland Longspur				1										1	2			6
Chestnut-cld. Longspur															1			1
Snow Bunting			1			7					2	2		1	26	16		55
Red-winged Blackbird		4	23000	2	45	1	161	6	258	55	91	17	89	2021	229	17	302	26298
Eastern Meadowlark			3					10	8	12	3		13	3	3	13		68
Rusty Blackbird			15	2			1	30	2		5	5		1				61
Common Grackle			42000	1	4	6	24		23		4	2	12	31	4	9	13	42133
Brown-hdd. Cowbird		315	14000	171	36		91	81	72		529	1	3	15	251	89	36	35690
Baltimore Oriole												1	4					5

SPECIES	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	TOTAL
Bullock's Oriole									1									I
Purple Finch	39		17	21	38	7	26	18	15	4	58	26	10	1	1	1	22	304
House Finch	**158**	**7**	1489	345	135	270	406	423	360	319	818	722	782	581	346	586	686	8433
Pine Siskin	6												5	1	3	1	4	20
American Goldfinch	489	44	963	317	192	130	134	119	148	241	337	414	318	147	285	169	308	4757
Evening Grosbeak															CW			CW
House Sparrow	**291**	**103**	1666	423	154	388	727	165	369	483	335	1339	911	1044	747	922	824	11091
TOTALS																		
Individuals	9335	5475	239320	18194	14756	7996	11929	10539	20658	9143	30260	25986	36070	23619	11912	18421	31134	524747
CD Species	66	54	90	76	61	65	73	74	86	74	81	110	126	114	101	108	113	169
CW Species	1	1	2	3	0	2	2	3	2	1	3	5	1	3	10	0	0	3
Field Observers	20	13	154	42	29	21	25	23	16	46	50	66	63	42	50	22	77	759
Feeder Watchers	9	0	53	6	4	0	0	13	2	3	0	27	10	10	2	3	18	160
Total Observers	29	13	207	48	33	21	25	36	18	49	50	93	73	52	52	25	95	919
Party Hours	93	20	488	135	67	73.5	78.5	78	69	85	163	197	141	98	145	106	187	2224
Party Miles	516	131	1031	846	486	414	458	405	438	406	689	789	497	381	415	368	551	8820

SUBTOTALS	NORTHERN	MID-STATE	COSTAL
Individuals	295076	82529	147142
CD Species	108	111	158
CW Species	5	0	4
Field Observers	279	160	302
Feeder Watchers	72	18	70

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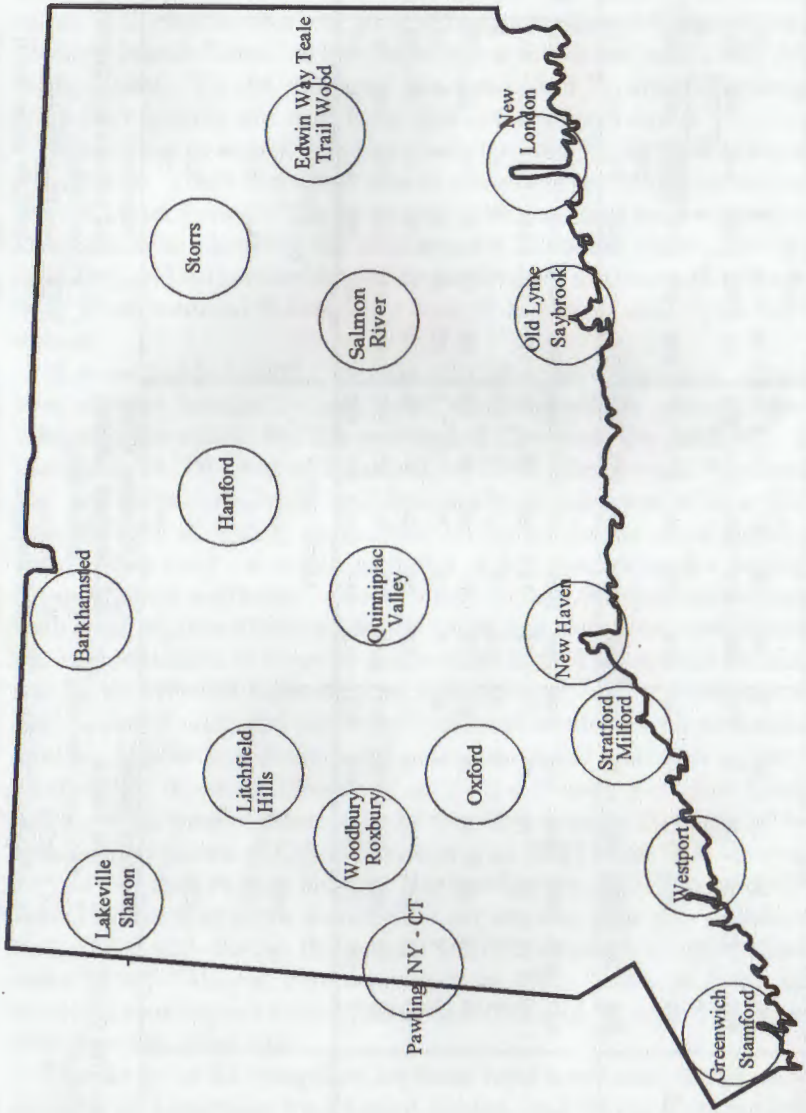

Figure 1: Christmas Bird Count Approximate Locations
(not to scale)

BOOKS ON BIRDS

Alan H. Brush

The question of animal cognition is currently widely debated. We believe that we know our own minds from the inside. But we don't know much about the minds of other animals—lobsters, spiders, or birds. Still, we often indulge ourselves by presuming that human attributes underlie the behavior of pets and birds. Recently Daniel Dennett suggested that there might be two types of minds. These are minds without language and the type of mind with language added. One way, of course, to understand another's mind is through language. This is difficult at best with another human who speaks the same language, and perhaps impossible with animals. We can understand the minds of those with different languages once we learn how, but it is not always easy. There are also non-verbal aspects to communication, posture and drawing come to mind. Basically, language is a way to find out about the minds of others. The deeper question—is a mind without language really a mind at all—is more contentious. Perhaps talking itself is a prerequisite for consciousness. The definition of mind is related to consciousness, and folks who write about animal cognition write about animal minds.

Now, if language involves "audible, articulate, meaningful sounds as produced by the vocal cords" and "the means by which animals communicate", then what can be learned about animal minds by studying how they communicate? "Good question", you say. Clearly birds provide wonderful models to study acoustic communication, and perhaps, but just perhaps, give insights to animal minds. And if that holds, what about using avian communication to explore cognition and understanding.

In "***Ecology and Evolution of Acoustic Communication in Birds***" (1996, Cornell University Press, xx+587 pages, ISBN 0-8014-8221-6) Don Kroodsma and E. H. Miller bring together 25 essays by a group of leaders in the field of avian vocal communication. Each responded to the editors' challenge to write on those ideas that "excite you the most". Predictably, the re-

sponses are broad and integrative. All employ an evolutionary and ecological approach. The 39 authors combine to answer many questions, pose others and enthusiastically discuss their ongoing research. The volume is divided into five sections: 1) Development (6 Chapters), 2) Vocal Repertoires (3 chapters), 3) Vocal Variation in Time and Space (6 chapters), 4) Control and Recognition of Vocalizations (5 Chapters) and 5) The Behavior of Communication. The appendix includes information on natural sounds archives. The citations are located in a Literature Cited section (77 pages).

This is a large book. The 587 pages cover a lot of ground and include considerable detail. Depending on your interests and experience you might want to begin with a chapter that piques your interest, rather than proceed from front to back. You don't have to ponder deeply the intricacies of birds' song to get involved. Simple questions often are a good beginning. It is peak Indian Summer as I write this and a Northern Mockingbird is singing his heart out from a perch across the street. Why now? Clearly they are not breeding. Is the singing simply impulsive, involuntary and uncontrollable? Or is the song based on emotion and the bird reacting to some complex environmental stimulus. What is this benighted individual *thinking*?

Another approach is to consider how birds learn songs. We can separate alarm calls of jays, crows, ducks, herons, even though they all serve similar functions. The calls are constant over the entire range of the species. They are also relatively simple, but the birds can sort them all out. Species specific singing, usually associated with territory defense or breeding is more complex. How these songs are learned, what factors are involved and the complexity of the song itself are all involved and discussed here. You can also read about how songs are designed (relative to functions) and which environmental and social factors are important. There are chapters on changes in the brain associated with the learning, remembering and performing the song. Does it get detailed? Absolutely. But you can learn how birds holding a territory recognize the songs of neighbors and, consequently, identify potential intruders. Or what it is about song males sing that females prefer.

And that is not all. Various authors also detail how they designed the experiments that allowed them to study song. They have to deal with the problem that results from the lab might not be the same as in the field. Categorizing songs is another aspect of communication. You can't ask a bird what it means. The

types of experiments and the equipment necessary to do this work are also described.

The book is considered a technical one. However, there is relatively little jargon, and the authors use a narrative style that is easily followed. This is a great source for information on the songs that everyone enjoys. There are insights into how, and why, birds communicate. If you have an interest in birds' song, this is a great place to start to understand what they are about.

ALAN BRUSH, 92 High St. Mystic, CT

White-breasted Nuthatch by Paul Fusco

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Greg Hanisek

FALL, August 1 to November 30, 1996

The eason produced no migratory events on a par with last fall's invasion by Northern Shrikes, or its mass exodus of chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, and woodpeckers. For the second year in a row, the hawk flights at Lighthouse Point were mediocre. The overall hawk flight was also below par at Quaker Ridge, but Broad-winged Hawks staged a good coastal movement. If this sounds like the formula for insipid birding, then we need to stir in a little spice. That was provided by an excellent variety of rarities spread out from August to the last day of November.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

The high count of Red-throated Loons was 100 off Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford (hereafter Harkness) on November 9 (DPr), with the first noted September 20 at Milford Point (AD). Harkness hosted 20 Common Loons October 20 (DPr), and 20 were off Norwalk October 6 (FM). The high counts for Pied-billed Grebe were four each November 11 at Laurel Reservoir in New Canaan (EJ) and November 12 at Groton Reservoir (DPr). An early Horned Grebe was off Canfield Island, Norwalk, October 6 (FM). Inland, two Red-necked Grebes were on Columbia Lake in Columbia November 6 (WG), and singles were at Shenipsit Lake in Tolland October 23 (RBA) and Bantam Lake in Litchfield November 16-24 (DR,LW et al.); there were also a handful of coastal reports.

The high count of Northern Gannets was 20 off Harkness November 9 (DPr), and 10 were off Shippan Point in Stamford November 17 (PDu,BO). **American White Pelicans** swarmed into Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New York in unprecedented numbers in October, leaving Connecticut birders poised for their arrival. It happened on

October 27 when four were seen flying by Mammonasset Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP) (S&VG). They were relocated on the Madison waterfront, where they entertained a large contingent of birders later in the day, and lingered for at least another day in neighboring Guilford (m.ob.). Among the several candidates for bird of the season was a well-described **Anhinga**(*) seen September 14 flying over the Quaker Ridge hawk watch in Greenwich (TBu,BO et al.). Following an emerging trend in the Northeast, immature Great Cormorants appeared far inland at two locations - one November 16-29 at Bantam Lake in Litchfield (GH,BD) and two November 7 at Mansfield Hollow Dam in Mansfield (MSz).

American Bittern, a species of concern around the continent, continues to produce upbeat news. Singles were seen periodically throughout the season at HBSP (m.ob.); other reports came from Great Island in Old Lyme August 20 (HG) and September 25 (THe), Sherwood Island State Park in Westport September 4 (RSo), Fayer-weather Island in Bridgeport September 27 (CB), Great Meadows in Stratford October 23 (CB), Frash Pond in Stratford November 5 (GH), and Milford Point November 10 (CB). Late Great Egrets were at Greenwich Point November 16 (BO), New Haven November 14 (PDe), and at North Farms Reservoir in Wallingford November 1-10 (WS); the high count was 42 September 8 at Sherwood Island (FM). August 23 produced a high count of 100 Snowy Egrets at Milford Point, where they congregated at the tip of the point to catch baitfish being driven against the shore by larger fish (CB). An immature Little Blue Heron was inland September 22 at a farm pond in Durham (WS). Tricolored Herons were well reported, with up to two, including an immature, seen at HBSP through October 17 (JMa et al.). Elsewhere, two were at Barn Island in Stonington September 2 (BD), one was at Ash Creek in Fairfield August 16 (CB), and one was at Watch Rock in Old Lyme October 2 (DPr). Two late Cattle Egrets were at Cummings Park in Stamford November 24 (PDu).

The recent surge in **Greater White-fronted Goose** sightings continued. One was found November 30 in Southbury, where a flock of Canada Geese also attracted two apparent birds of the small race *hutchinsii*, a few Snow Geese and yet another Barnacle Goose of unknown origin (RN,NC et al). That followed the appearance of a

White-fronted October 31 at Fisher Meadow Park in Avon (EM) and one November 24 at Shenipsit Lake in Tolland (CE). Shenipsit also held three small Canadas identified as *hutchinsii* (MSz). In Storrs, a flock of 150 Snow Geese flew over the Lot W area October 5 (GC), but the big Snow Goose event was November 12 at Lighthouse Point, when a total of 1,000 passed over (RBe).

Station 43 in South Windsor held 36 Wood Ducks October 12 (SK). The first Green-winged Teal was reported August 11 at Milford Point (FM), and a flock of 25 drake Northern Pintails was at Griswold Point November 20 (DPr). The strong showing by Gadwall isn't limited to the coast; 13 were noted for the season in the Meriden-Wallingford area (WS). That area also attracted 125 American Wigeon on Foster Lake in Meriden November 1-3 (WS). The first two Blue-winged Teal were reported August 27 from Sherwood Island (RSo), and the high count was 12 on September 27 at a pond in Durham (EN); two were still at Batterson Pond in New Britain October 19 (MC). Two Northern Shovelers were at both Milford Point November 3 (FG) and Holly Pond in Stamford November 19 (PDu). Drake **Eurasian Wigeons** were found in November at Furnace Pond in East Haven (BD,EN), Oyster River in West Haven (m.ob) and at Milford Point (SK). The big count for Ring-necked Ducks was 200 on November 11 at Laurel Reservoir (EJ). The best inland count of Greater Scaup was 10 on November 24 at Maltby Lakes in West Haven (JBa). The high count of Canvasback was 150-200 at Frash Pond in Stratford November 23-26 (SK,GH). A drake Redhead was early and unusual October 1 at Sherwood Island (RSo).

Following the recent surge in **Common Eider** numbers off Rhode Island, the season produced two September 21 at Bluff Point (DPr); one the same day at Milford Point (FM et al.); up to nine at Harkness through November 9 (DPr); and up to 10 in late November off White Sands Beach in Old Lyme (SK,BD,JG). A female **King Eider** (*) proved elusive after its discovery November 24 off Lighthouse Point in New Haven (TK), showing itself sporadically through the end of the month. A drake Black Scoter was present through the last half of November at North Cove in Old Saybrook (JG,BD et al.), and the one that summered off Stamford remained through September 18 (PDu). Inland, one was on Lake Zoar in Newtown/Monroe October 15 (RW). Of special interest were

16 Black Scoters (15 males) October 15 at Batterson Pond (MC). This species may be more regular than suspected on lakes and ponds, where drop-in flocks tend to be nervous and often leave after very brief stays. The Batterson Pond flock topped the largest concentration reported from the coast, which was 15 on October 20 at Harkness, along with 200+ Surf Scoters, 100+ White-winged Scoters and 300+ unidentified scoters (DPr). Laurel Reservoir produced an excellent inland count of 150 Bufflehead November 11 (EJ). A Red-breasted Merganser, uncommon inland, was at Nepaug Reservoir in New Hartford November 16 (PDe). Ruddy Ducks staged another excellent flight, including 40 on November 30 at Bride Brook Reservoir in Niantic (JG); 26 on November 1 at Batterson Pond (MC), 20 in November at Bantam Lake (m.ob), 19 on November 30 at Pistapaug Reservoir in Wallingford (WS), 10 on November 20 at Chestnuthill Reservoir in Wolcott (GH) and eight October 26 at Shenipsit Lake in Tolland (CE). At North Farm Reservoir in Wallingford, numbers built from 21 on October 26 to 162 on November 16 (WS, BD), and Laurel Reservoir held 110 on November 11 (EJ). These were overshadowed by a flock in North Cove that built from 155 on November 20 to 170 a day later, topping out at 220 on November 24 (THe et al.).

RAPTORS THROUGH JAEGERS

The closing of the New Milford landfill, a favorite smorgasbord for New England's only reliable collection of Black Vultures, has had no negative effect on their numbers. After a record 25 appeared at the Sunny Valley Preserve in spring, another 20 were discovered November 11 feeding on a deer carcass on the banks of the Housatonic River (CW). Late Ospreys were on Fenton River in Mansfield November 10 (SS) and in Wilton November 28 (FM). Although the hawk watches produced low counts overall (see article in Volume 17, No. 1), Quaker Ridge recorded a seasonal record 68 Bald Eagles (BO); three migrants were in Clinton August 18 (JG,CP); and four were already in winter residence around Hamburg Cove in Old Lyme by the first week in October (DH fide HG). Lighthouse Point tied its all-time high for Golden Eagles with six (RBe). Two immature Golden Eagles were over HBSP November 3 (RZ,LT et al.)

The raptor highlight was two reports of **Swainson's Hawk**

(*), a dark-phase bird over Quaker Ridge on September 29 (DPa,JF) and a very dark immature, probably of the rufous morph, trapped, banded and photographed October 5 at HBSP (RSc,JY,SRo). A light-phase Rough-legged Hawk was at HBSP November 15-16 (m.ob). A Peregrine Falcon seen August 16 at Griswold Point showed a band combination of the type used to mark a three-week old female on June 20 at Holt's Ledge in Lyme, N.H. (HG). Three were at HBSP September 28 (EN), and one of two at Griswold Point September 23 caught a Common Tern (DPr). The first fall sighting occurred August 8 at Falkner Island (JS), followed by a Merlin there August 9 (JS). A count of 25+ American Kestrels was made at HBSP September 30 (SRa), but overall the news on this once-common species remains bad. In the Wallingford area, only two were found in places that normally hold six to eight (WS).

Two Virginia Rails (migrants or breeders?) were found August 3 at HBSP (EN). An immature Sora was found August 27 at Sherwood Island, where the species is rarely encountered (RSo), but secretive actions probably play a role in this perception. There were plenty at Nell's Island in Milford, where hunters shot 18 on September 27 (RM fide FM). The season's only Common Moorhen was reported from Foster Lake in Meriden September 22-27 (WS). American Coot arrived en masse, with 230 on Laurel Reservoir November 1 (PDu); 200 at Bantam Lake in late November (LW et al.); 47 at Milford Point November 10 (SK); 20 on Batterson Pond November 18 (MC); and 15 on Groton Reservoir November 12 (DPr).

Semipalmated Plover topped out at 300 on August 11 and 18 at Milford Point (FM). A juvenile Black-bellied Plover on September 7-9 (LB,MSz) at Windham Airport in North Windham was unusual for the northeastern quadrant; Milford Point held 200 September 6 (FM). An excellent season for American Golden Plover (c 55 reported) included a high count of 14 September 22 at Sikorsky Airport in Stratford (TBr). Bluff Point held a nice concentration of 27 American Oystercatchers August 24 (DPr).

American Avocets (*) are less than annual in the state, so the appearance of two at opposite ends of the coast easily rates as the shorebird highlight. Seen on one day only were singles at Sherwood Island State Park in Westport on August 13 (CB) and on Palmer Neck Road in Stonington October 25 (HG,BS). A Greater Yellowlegs lingered to No-

vember 7 at Mansfield Hollow Dam (MSz), and a good inland count of 11 Lesser Yellowlegs was made August 18 at Cromwell meadows (PDe). The high count of Whimbrel was five at HBSP September 4 (KH). Another uncommon shorebird, **Hudsonian Godwit**, put on a good show October 20-23 at HBSP (ES,JG et al.). Was it the same bird that appeared October 23 at Griswold Point in Old Lyme (THe)? Singles were at Milford Point August 8 (WG) and Stamford October 6 (PDu). In all cases birders were careful to check for the dark wing linings; the very similar Black-tailed Godwit of Eurasia is always a possibility, but it has pale wing linings.

A good season for Stilt Sandpipers produced six August 13 at HBSP (BY et al.), one at Bluff Point September 21 (DPr), one in Guilford September 25 (EN), and a late one October 5 in Old Lyme (THe). A small flight of Upland Sandpipers produced ones and twos at a half-dozen locations. Milford Point produced high counts of 2,000+ Semipalmated Sandpipers August 7 and 18 and 100+ Least Sandpipers August 11 (FM). Griswold Point had 150 Dunlin October 29 (DPr). Single Western Sandpipers were at Griswold Point August 30 (DPr) and HBSP September 18 (DS), and three were at Compo Beach in Westport October 10 (FM). The best counts of White-rumped Sandpiper were eight at Griswold Point October 8 (DPr) and four at HBSP September 17 (EN). One lingered to October 10 at the dam in North Windham, along with two Pectoral Sandpipers (MSz). The season's only Baird's Sandpipers were singles September 7 at Windham Airport (LB) and August 11-18 at Griswold Point (HG,AG). Buff-breasted Sandpiper staged a nice flight with about 20 reported all along the coast, including a high of seven August 29 at Groton-New London Airport (DPr). The big day for Pectoral Sandpiper was September 17, when a nor'easter deposited 50 at HBSP (EN,JG) and 36 at Sherwood Island (CB); 20 were at Groton-New London Airport September 11 (DPr). Milford Point held 200 Short-billed Dowitchers August 7 (FM). A disoriented American Woodcock displayed October 29 in Preston (DPr).

Laughing Gulls built to 500+ at Avery Point in Groton September 2 (MSz) and 270 at HBSP August 23 (JG). A Black-headed Gull remained in Stamford through November, and an immature Iceland Gull was seen there November 5 (PDu). Lesser Black-backed Gulls included the reliable

adult at the Stratford seawall through November (MSz), another through November at Stamford (PDu), an immature November 26 in Storrs (MSz) and an adult at Sherwood Island beginning September 17 (CB,FM). A few Royal Terns were seen sporadically August 26 to October 20 at HBSP (DS,JG) and August 17 to September 30 at Griswold Point (THe,DPr); two each were at Bluff Point August 24 (DPr) and at Menunketesuck flats in Westbrook September 9 (GH). The only Caspian Tern reports involved singles August 10 (NC) and September 13 (CB) at Milford Point, August 11 at Sandy Point (DS), and September 18 at Shippan Point (PDu). A Roseate Tern was at HBSP August 17 (JG). Forster's Terns were scattered along the coast in small numbers; the exceptions were 25+ at Lord's Cove in Old Lyme on September 29 (HG) and 23 at Milford Point on October 23 (CB). The latest report came from Penfield Reef in Fairfield, where three were still present November 6 (CB). A Black Tern was present August 19-September 8 at Sandy Point in West Haven (DB,MSc,AB et al.) and August 9 and September 8 at Milford Point (CB,FM); three were at Harkness in the September 17 nor'easter (DPr). Five reports of Black Skimmers were scattered along the coast through October 7 (EN et al.).

Jaegers are rare birds inside Long Island Sound, so three reports of **Parasitic Jaegers** (*) made this a major season for these swashbuckling predators. The sightings came from Norwalk September 17 (FM), Griswold Point October 20 (DPr et al.) and Greenwich Point November 8 (BO). An unidentified jaeger was off Stamford November 9 (PDu).

OWLS THROUGH VIREOS

Two migrant Barn Owls were found along the coast, one in Milford November 18 (DS et al.) and one October 20 at Lighthouse Point (TK et al.) Two Snowy Owls, one of them emaciated, were reported in the Norwich area November 5 (RBA). The event of the season occurred November 1, when a **Boreal Owl** (*) was found early in the morning in an evergreen grove at HBSP (SH,JC et al.). It posed throughout the day for dozens of observers, who had been primed for its arrival by the appearance of three in Massachusetts earlier in the week, but it was never seen again. It was the second for the state in the 1990s, after a gap dating back to 1946, and the second mega-owl event for the park in 1996. A Great Grey Owl put on a one-day show in January. At HBSP, the first Long-eared Owl was detected

October 27 (JR,FSm) and the first Northern Saw-whet Owl on October 26 (SY et al.) A long-eared was at Pine Creek in Fairfield November 23 (CB), and single Short-eared Owls were at Chaffinch Island in Guilford October 27 (CW) and at Milford Point October 25 (SK) and November 10 (FM).

A migrant Black-billed Cuckoo was netted and banded August 3 on Falkner Island (JZn). The top daily count of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds at Lighthouse Point was 23 on September 16 (GH). Up to 200 Common Nighthawks were moving over Waterbury August 20 (MSz), with scattered reports elsewhere (TL,CE). A Red-headed Woodpecker moved through Lighthouse Point September 22 (FD). Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers September 26 at Bluff Point (DPr) and October 6 in Storrs (GC) represented the front end of the migration season. The high count of Northern Flicker was 100 at Bluff Point September 20 (DPr).

In keeping with recent averages, two **Western Kingbirds** (*) appeared, but neither was typical. A flyby at Bluff Point in Groton was on the early side August 30 in a flight of 20+ Eastern Kingbirds (DPr), and a Western at a truck farm in Southbury October 7-29 (TG, m.ob.) lingered longer and occurred farther inland than normal. Lighthouse Point logged 51 Eastern Kingbirds on August 19 (GH). One of the season's best finds came right at the end, when the state's second **Ash-throated Flycatcher** (*) revealed itself in Old Lyme on November 30 (BD,JG) and lingered into December. This is the typical arrival time for this species in the East; by contrast, the latest Great Crested Flycatcher was at Bluff Point September 21 (DPr). An Eastern Phoebe lingered to November 24 at Mackenzie Reservoir in Wallingford (WS). High counts for Eastern Wood-Pewee at Bluff Point were 25 each on September 21 and September 26; two were still present October 1, when they were joined by 80 Eastern Phoebes (DPr). Olive-sided Flycatchers were barely mentioned this fall, but one was in Goshen on the late dates of October 16-18 (RB-S).

Purple Martin, an early migrant, was on the move August 12 in North Windham (MSz); six were in Central Village August 18 (RD) and five passed Bluff Point August 30 (DPr). Two late Tree Swallows were at HBSP November 17-18 (FG,EN). The early-migrating Northern Rough-winged Swallow was still in South Windsor September 28 (PDe). Red-breasted Nuthatches were virtually non-existent, with just a few singles reported. A late

House Wren was at Sunny Valley Preserve in New Milford November 26 (CW). Marsh Wren was considered common in passage this fall at Sherwood Island, which held up to 12 on October 6 (RSo). The kinglet flight seemed average with high counts at Bluff Point of 150 Golden-crowned Kinglets October 29 (DPr) and 60 Ruby-crowned Kinglets October 1 (DPr).

Gray-cheeked (sp) Thrushes were at Bluff Point September 15 (DPr), Pine Creek in Fairfield October 1 (CB), Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton October 2 (JK), and a late one November 9 in Newtown (PBr). The high for Swainson's Thrush was just six on October 1 at Bluff Point (DPr), with three in Westport October 1 (FM); 10 Hermit Thrushes were tallied at Bluff Point October 29 and November 30 (DPr). High counts for American Robin were 2,000 at Bluff Point (DPr) and 9,000 at Lighthouse Point (GH), both on November 11, which also produced a heavy movement at Sherwood Island (FM). By all accounts, the state's Eastern Bluebirds had a poor breeding season following the harsh winter of 1995-96, but they were still doing well somewhere. In an otherwise lackluster passerine season at Lighthouse Point, they staged a major October movement. Flights of 200 to 300 were noted on several days, topped by 1,000 on October 24 (RBe,JZp). One wonders if the birds that nest the farthest north also migrate farthest south, moving them beyond the worst of the winter kill and general debilitation in Connecticut. Last year's flurry of **Northern Wheatear** (*) sightings wasn't repeated, but for the second year in a row a single bird was found in the Storrs area (THa), far from the coastal haunts that usually attract this species. It hung around dirt and manure piles at Lot W from September 15-19.

A good showing by American Pipits in the central part of the state included a high count of 123 on November 24 at Lyman Orchard in Middlefield (WS). The big November 11 passerine flight brought 1,200 Cedar Waxwings to Bluff Point (DPr) and 5,200 to Lighthouse Point (GH). Bluff Point's best days for Red-eyed Vireo were September 20 and October 1, with 20 each day (DPr). A late one was at Sherwood Island October 29 (RSo). Bluff Point had six Philadelphia Vireos for the season, including three on September 20 (DPr). Singles also were in Stamford September 7 (PDu,MM), Lot W in Storrs on September 20 (MSz), Litchfield on September 16

(RBa), and Canton on September 15 (JG). Bluff Point produced 25 Solitary Vireos October 1 (DPr).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Some first arrival dates for warblers included: August 2 - Northern Waterthrush in Stamford (PDu); August 3 - Louisiana Waterthrush, two netted and banded at Falkner Island (JZn); August 10 - Nashville Warbler, Northern Parula, American Redstart, all at HBSP (C&SR et al.); August 14 - Yellow-breasted Chat at HBSP (C&SR); August 16 - Mourning Warbler, netted and banded at Falkner Island (JS,JZn); August 24 - Black-throated Blue at HBSP (C&SR); August 30 - Prairie Warbler netted and banded at Falkner Island (JS); September 2 - Magnolia Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler and Black and White Warbler, all at HBSP (C&SR). High daily counts of unidentified warblers at Bluff Point, by far the state's most productive migratory funnel for night-migrating passerines, included: 200+ August 30; 350+ September 11; 600+ September 20; 200+ September 26 and then as the Yellow-rumped Warbler flight kicked in, 3,000 on September 30 and 1,500 on October 1 (DPr). Following are species-by-species highlights with an emphasis on totals from Bluff Point, which are in addition to the unidentified numbers listed above.

A late Blue-winged Warbler was at Bluff Point October 1 (DPr), and a rare passage Golden-winged Warbler was there September 20 (DPr). Bluff Point, by far the best place in the state to find Orange-crowned Warblers, produced three for the season (DPr et al.). Unfortunately, it isn't necessarily to best place to see them because they sneak through so quickly. Much more approachable were singles October 2 at Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton (JK), November 15-16 at HBSP (MSz,DS) and November 28-30 at Cove Island Park in Stamford (PDu). The high count for Northern Parula at Bluff Point was 125 on Sept. 30, a day which also produced 25 Magnolia Warblers, 150 Black-throated Blue Warblers, 200 Black-throated Green Warblers, 35 Palm Warblers and 200+ "baypoll" warblers (DPr). A late Black-throated Blue Warbler was in Guilford November 3 (E&PN), and one was at the front end of migration Aug. 11 in Suffield (PDe). A seasonal highlight was a **Black-throated Gray Warbler** (*), potentially the state's 5th record, found October 2 at West Hartford Reservoir No. 6 (PC,JMe,SF). A Blackpoll lin-

gered to Oct. 27 at West Hartford (PDe). Bluff Point's high counts for Yellow-rumped Warbler were 1,000 on October 1 and 1,200 on October 15 (DPr), down somewhat from recent autumn peaks. Numbers also were down from last year at Sunny Valley Preserve in New Milford (CW). The species remains abundant, however, and it pays to check the swarms carefully. A second look paid off at Sherwood Island October 15 with the discovery of a bird believed to be of the western **Audubon's** (*) race (RSo).

A Cape May Warbler was in Canton October 2 (JK). A resourceful Prairie Warbler was picking insects from a spider web September 7 at HBSP (DS), and one lingered to November 12 in Stamford (PDu). Bluff Point produced a single Cerulean Warbler, a rare fall migrant, on September 21 (PBo). For two species with early migration peaks, Bluff Point produced highs of about 20 Black-and-White Warblers September 20-21 (DPr) and a string of good counts for American Redstart: 175 on August 30, 100 each on September 11 and 15, 150 on September 20, and 80 on September 21 (DPr). Worm-eating Warblers are tough to find in fall, so four at Roaring Brook Nature Center on August 25 represented a good count (JK); Bluff Point turned up only one for the season, on August 29 (DPr). A Kentucky Warbler was a rare find at Bluff Point September 30 (DPr), and a Mourning Warbler was there September 15 (DPr). An unidentified *Oporornis* passed through Bluff Point September 11, followed by an excellent six on September 20 (DPr). As expected, Common Yellowthroats peaked on the late side at Bluff Point, with 12 on October 1 (DPr). Bluff Point's three Hooded Warblers were well-spaced, with singles August 30, September 30, and October 1 (DPr). A fresh specimen of Yellow-breasted Chat was picked up dead alongside glass windows at the biology building on the UConn campus in Storrs on October 8 (GC). It provided the first specimen for the northeastern part of the state. Singles were in Southbury August 28 (NC), at Lighthouse Point September 9 (FD), at Stamford October 13 (PDu), at Millstone Point in Waterford October 15 (DPr), at Sherwood Island November 16 (JBe) and at HBSP as late as November 29 (BG).

Bluff Point produced high counts of 80 Scarlet Tanagers and 40 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, both on September 20 (DPr); a late grosbeak was in Westport October 26 (FM). The season produced three **Blue Grosbeaks**, all in Stam-

ford - singles were at Cove Island Park October 1 and 10 and one was in Woodland Cemetery, Stamford October 27 (PDu). Lot W in Storrs held 10+ Indigo Buntings September 14 (MSz). Dickcissels were well-reported again, with one October 22-23 at HBSP (MSz et al.), one in Guilford November 1 (EN), three in Stamford in October (PDu) and nine in the Groton-New London area for the season, including three September 30 at Bluff Point (DPr).

High counts for sparrows at Bluff Point and Millstone Point included: 150 Chipping Sparrows at Bluff Point on October 15; 40 Field Sparrows at Millstone on October 15; 300 Savannah Sparrows at Millstone October 15; 400 Song Sparrows at Millstone Point on October 15; 350 Swamp Sparrows at Millstone Point on October 15; 1,000 White-throated Sparrows at Bluff Point on October 29; and 1,000 Slate-colored Juncos at Bluff Point on October 29 (DPr). Vegetable fields in Southbury held 200+ chippies October 10 (FM). **Clay-colored Sparrows** were reported from Millstone Point October 16 (DPr) and Stamford September 27 (PDu). Single Vesper Sparrows were at Lot W in Storrs October 2 (MSz); Fairfield October 26 (CB), Old Lyme October 15 (THe), and Sherwood Island October 24 (RSo); the Groton area produced eight for the season, including three on October 13 (DPr). At least two, possibly three, **Lark Sparrows** (*) highlighted the seed-eating contingent. One lingered at HBSP September 11-14 (RO,ST et al.), with perhaps the same bird seen again September 26 (RSc); another made a brief appearance October 26 at the estimable brush dump at Longshore Country Club in Westport, the site of a number of interesting discoveries over the years (FM,CB). A Savannah (Ipswich) Sparrow was at Long Beach in Stratford November 10 (CW) and on a remnant patch of dune in Old Lyme November 14 (THe). A Grasshopper Sparrow, seldom encountered as a fall migrant inland, was in Southbury October 3 (NC); others were in Stamford October 10 (PDu) and Millstone Point October 11 (DPr).

Birders were alert for the newly split Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, whose northeastern race is a regular migrant. Reports came October 12-27 at HBSP (JG,DS,DPr), and October 10-12 in Stamford (PDu). The earliest Fox Sparrow report came October 30 in Sharon (LW), with a flurry November 3-4 at various locations (RD et al.). The first White-crowned Sparrows were singles September 20 at Lot W

in Storrs (GC) and September 21 in Groton (EN et al.). The season's first White-throated Sparrows were reported September 20 at Lot W in Storrs, along with three Lincoln's Sparrows (MSz); three Lincoln's also were found there September 26 (MSz). Singles were noted September 22 at Mohawk Mountain (CW), September 23 in New Milford (CW), September 15 at Batterson Pond (MC), and September 19 at Sherwood Island (RSo). Inland, 300 Snow Buntings were at Windham Airport November 6 (MSz); the next highest count was 120 at HBSP November 15 (MSc). Eight Lapland Longspurs were together at HBSP November 15 (EN) and 13 were there November 17 (SK). An immature female Lapland Longspur was an early arrival September 25 at Griswold Point (DPr).

Northwest Park in Windsor still held seven Orchard Orioles August 2 (PDe). The best counts of Eastern Meadowlarks were 15 at soccer fields in Wallingford and 17 at the fairgrounds in Durham, both on November 16 (WS). Six Rusty Blackbird visited reliable Folly Point at Bantam Lake October 30 (RBa). Purple Finch was sparse in the Storrs area (GC), although there was a good flyover flight Oct. 29 (MSz). Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks produced just a handful of reports.

EXOTICS

A Ruddy Shelduck was in Mansfield November 6-7 (BG, MSz).

[Editor's Comment: Reports of rare or unusual bird species in Connecticut (species marked with an * on the latest COA Checklist) require that documentation be submitted to the secretary of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (Mark Szantyr, 2C Yale Road, Storrs, CT 06268) if they are to be included in the Field Notes].

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PHOTO CHALLENGE

From the Editor:

Our Photo Challenge writer is on vacation, but rather than leave you in the dark on the identity for the bird shown in the January issue and reprinted below, we will tell you it was a Savannah Sparrow. It was photographed by Mark Szantyr. We apologize for the poor reproduction of the photograph.

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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Illustrations and photographs are needed and welcome. Line art of Connecticut and regional birds should be submitted as good quality prints or in original form. All submitted materials will be returned. We can use good quality photographs of birds unaccompanied by an article but with caption including species, date, locality, and other pertinent information.

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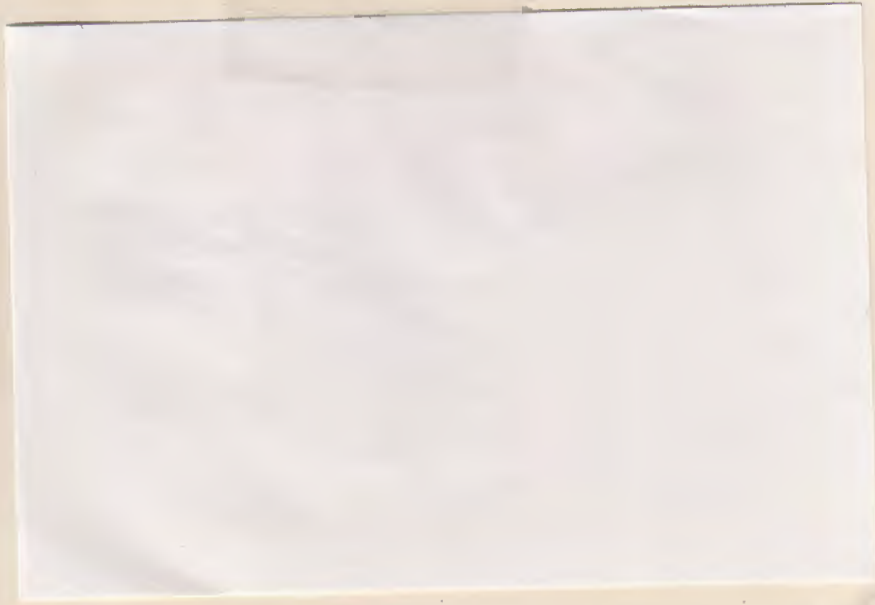

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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The Connecticut Warbler
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ABOUT OUR COVER

Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*)

by Mark Szantyr

We are pleased to feature another front cover drawing by Mark Szantyr. Mark is currently the Vice President of the Connecticut Ornithological Association and Secretary of the Connecticut Avian Records Committee. He is an acccomplished artist and recently prepared the art work for the *Connecticut Birding Guide.*

Mark, an avid birder, teaches art courses and bird identification classes. He has authored and co-authored numerous articles for *The Connecticut Warbler,* as well as other publications. He also helps to band birds at the Storrs banding station.

SEVENTH REPORT OF THE AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE OF CONNECTICUT

Frank W. Mantlik, Mark S. Szantyr, and David F. Provencher

This seventh report of The Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (ARCC), formerly The Connecticut Rare Records Committee, comes 18 months after the sixth (Szantyr, Mantlik, and Provencher, 1996). The committee recognizes and thanks those who have dutifully reported their sightings of rarities. While the files are now current and up to date, a number of difficult cases remain pending.

The committee's principal aim is to provide a complete and accurate record of rare birds reported in Connecticut. A rare records committee can neither verify nor invalidate any records, but can provide a judgment on the adequacy of the evidence presented in support of unusual sightings. In other words, this committee, in its rulings, is not saying that a person did or did not see a particular rare bird. Instead, it is ruling on the adequacy of the written documentation (and other evidence). All reports, including original field notes, photographs, tape recordings, descriptions, and members' comments on each record are archived at the Connecticut State Museum of Natural History at the University of Connecticut in Storrs. For an overview of the committee and its operation, see Bevier (1996).

HIGHLIGHTS

This report contains 86 records of 54 species, plus two subspecies, reviewed by the ARCC. The committee accepted 62% of all records reported here. The records span dates from 1916 to 1996, although the majority are from 1995, which was a banner year for rare birds in the state. Please note that the ARCC does not routinely evaluate reports of subspecies, but does so at its own discretion. Significant Connecticut records in this report include the following:

First record for Audubon's Shearwater, White-faced Ibis, Mississippi Kite, Sabine's Gull and Say's Phoebe.

Second record for Arctic Tern, Rufous Hummingbird, and Bohemian Waxwing.

Third and fourth record for Black-throated Gray Warbler.

Third, fourth, and fifth record for Swainson's Hawk.

Fourth record for Painted Bunting.

One species (Long-billed Curlew) formerly designated as "Hypothetical" on the state list (i.e., species supported only by written details but lacking a specimen, photograph, or voice recording) now has that designation removed based on photographs deposited with the ARCC.

Please note that the committee has dropped the use of the term "Hypothetical" due to vagueness, and has replaced it with the more accurate "Sight Record Only" (SRO).

STATE LIST AND REVIEW LIST

This report provides details on four additions to the Connecticut state list, which now stands at 396. The most recently published state list contains 390 species and is available from the Connecticut Ornithological Association (314 Unquowa Rd., Fairfield, CT 06430). The committee depends on observers to submit their reports of species on the Review List—these are species marked with an asterisk on the Connecticut Ornithological Association's Field Checklist—and any species new to the state. Submit written reports along with any photographs or sound recordings to the current ARCC Secretary, Mark Szantyr, 2C Yale Rd., Storrs, CT 06268.

The committee also requests that photographs submitted for documentation of a sighting be accompanied by a written report. Photos submitted alone are analogous to a museum specimen lacking a data tag; both are of little use. Several records in this report consisting of only a photo or sketch have sat inactive, due to the absence (until recently) of any accompanying written documentation.

The committee presents its most recent changes to the Review List (see elsewhere in this issue), adding some species, and deleting a number of others which have proven somewhat regular in recent years. Records in this report involving the latter are denoted "RX".

FORMAT

This report continues the format of previous reports. In the case of accepted records, only observers who submitted reports are listed with the original finder listed first and followed by an asterisk. Observers who submitted a photograph are acknowledged with † following their names. Hyphenated numbers (e.g., 92-24) following the observers are ARCC file numbers. The species are listed in order according to the A.O.U. Check-list (1983) and Supplements. Records are listed chronologically.

Abbreviations are: AB (= American Birds), AFN (= Audubon Field Notes), CW (= The Connecticut Warbler), Hammonasset (= Hammonasset Beach State Park), NASFN (= National Audubon Society Field Notes), RX (= no longer on Review List), SRO (= sight record only). Months of the year are shortened to their first three letters.

ACCEPTED RECORDS

EARED GREBE (*Podiceps nigicollis*). One in basic plumage was at Cemetery Pond, Litchfield 17-19 Sep 1994 (G. Hanisek, C. Wood; 95-22). Published dates were not all inclusive (CW 15: 60). Eared Grebes move earlier in the fall than Horned Grebes, as exemplified by this Sep date. Any *Podiceps* grebe seen in Connecticut before Nov should be carefully scrutinized for Eared.

AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER (*Puffinus lherminieri*). One storm-related bird on Congamond Lakes in Suffield, CT (and Southwick, MA), 11 May 1977 (S. Kellogg*; 95-35). This bird's appearance was the result of an intense coastal storm 9-10 May that brought high winds, heavy rain and wet snow. The bird alighted on and flew around Middle and South Ponds (in MA), and at least twice also flew over the narrow peninsula (in CT) separating the two ponds. The detailed description included small size, brown upperparts, dark undertail coverts, proper underwing pattern, and flight behavior. Although twelve or more people observed the bird and agreed on the identification, apparently no photos were obtained. This is the first accepted record for Connecticut (SRO). Massachusetts also considers it a valid record, but it was accidentally omitted from Birds of Massachusetts (Wayne Petersen, pers. com.).

WILSON'S STORM-PETREL (*Oceanites oceanicus*) Up to 45 birds feeding in Long Island Sound off Groton 14-30 Jul 1995 (M. Szantyr, C. Marantz, R. Naylor; 95-17). Initially, four birds were reported 14 Jul off Bluff Point by D. Provencher. Later that day, Szantyr saw five or more off Avery Point. Subsequently, these birds were seen by dozens of birders, though they were too far offshore to be photographed. The weather during the period was hot, hazy, and humid; speculation is that the flock wandered into the Sound under these conditions and then found a food source at the mouth of the Thames River. This was certainly a major incursion of this species into Long Island Sound. (CW 16: 49-50).

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*). An adult in alternate plumage was at Hammonasset, Madison 16-19 May 1995 (D. Provencher*, M. Szantyr †, F. Mantlik †; 95-28). It actively fed in the salt marshes around Cedar Island with a flock of Glossy Ibis (*P. falcinellus*), and was seen by many. Being in peak breeding plumage, the bird exhibited a distinct white feathered border around the pinkish-red bare facial skin, a blood-red eye, pinkish-red legs, and a colorful, iridescent reddish-brown mantle with greenish wing coverts. This record is the first for Connecticut (CW 15:142, NASFN 49:228).

TUNDRA SWAN (*Cygnus columbianus*) (RX). A flock of eight adults was on Holly Pond, Stamford/Darien 9-10 Mar 1995 (P. Dugan* †; 95-09).

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE (*Anser albifrons*) (RX). One adult was at Goodwin Park, Hartford/Wethersfield 26 Nov-2 Dec 1995 (M. Szantyr; 95-43) (CW 16: 85, 126). One was at Willimantic Reservoir, Mansfield 16 Dec 1995 (B. Carver, Jr., T. Harrington †; 96-15).

COMMON EIDER (*Somateria mollissima*) (RX). One adult male flew past Camp Harkness, Waterford 21 Oct 1995 (D. Provencher*; 96-4) (CW 16: 85). One female off Shippan Point, Stamford, and Weed Beach, Darien, discovered by Patrick Dugan, 8 Feb-15 Apr 1996 (G. Hanisek; 96-19). Seen by many during its stay (CW 16: 127, 171).

KING EIDER (*Somateria spectabilis*). One male, apparently in eclipse, or post-eclipse plumage, flew past Camp Harkness, Waterford 21 Oct 1995 (D. Provencher; 96-5) (CW 16: 85).

HARLEQUIN DUCK (*Histrionicus histrionicus*). An adult female discovered by L. & M. Aimesbury at Merwin Point, Milford 16 Dec 1995 remained through 9 Mar 1996, and was seen by many (D. Provencher, M. Szantyr, F. Mantlik; 95-44) (CW 16: 127, 171-172).

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE (*Bucephala islandica*) (RX). An adult male and female were on the Connecticut River, Enfield 9 Feb 1996 (M. Szantyr; 96-17); a lone female was initially discovered here 17 Dec 1995 by P. Desjardins and a lone male on 31 Dec 1995 by C. Taylor. The pair remained through 23 Feb 1996, and were seen sporadically by numerous observers (CW 16:127). Another adult male

and female, initially discovered by R. Soffer, were present in Long Island Sound off Sherwood Island State Park, Westport 7-25 Jan 1996; the male remained through 16 March 1996 (M. Szantyr; 96-16) (CW 16: 127, 171).

MISSISSIPPI KITE (*Ictinia mississippiensis*). Three separate and independent sightings of a single bird in Stamford 13 June 1995 (P. Dugan*), 16 June 1995 (Cove Is. Park - M. Moccio*), and in Darien (Woodland Park) 17 June 1995 (J. Mehmel*, B. Van Loan*), were possibly of the same individual. Reasonably taken collectively as one record (95-14), this constitutes a first state record (SRO) (CW 16:47).

There was a large influx of Mississippi Kites north in May - June 1995, with sightings from Newtown, CT 3 June (95-11), Cape Cod, MA 17-19 June, and up to six birds in Cape May, NJ 1-9 June (NASFN 49:907-908, 912).

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*). Based on a request by Szantyr, the committee decided to reconsider this record (91-21) of a sub-adult bird seen by a hawkwatcher in Harwinton 20 Sep 1991 (P. Carrier*), which initially went three voting rounds and was not accepted (though went unpublished as such). While the written description lacked important information such as wing shape and flight style, and the drawing resulted in differing interpretations, what eventually swayed the committee to accept was input and analysis by Hanisek, Kaplan, and Brody, as well as the experience of the observer.

One light-phase immature was seen flying over Storrs, Mansfield 26 Oct 1995 (M. Szantyr* †, S. Suter; 95-34). The four slides taken of the high-flying bird nevertheless illustrate the proper wing and tail proportions as well as the dihedral wing aspect.

One adult was seen flying south over Sunny Valley Preserve, New Milford 17 Nov 1995 (C. Wood; 95-38). The brief though detailed description was accompanied by a convincing sketch. The late date is within the range of vagrants in CT and MA. These are the third, fourth and fifth accepted records for Connecticut.

Swainson's Hawk has become annual in the northeast U.S., particularly in autumn. It is not clear whether this is attributable to more aware, experienced hawkwatchers, or to an actual increase of this western species in the east.

GYRFALCON (*Falco rusticolus*). A dark morph immature was at Hammonasset, Madison 4 Dec 1995 (D. Provencher; 95-39). Ini-

tially discovered perched in a tree, it soon took flight and stooped on the bait set up at the hawk banding station. Also seen (and videotaped) by the hawkbander (S. Roxbrough) as well as by three other birders.

PURPLE GALLINULE (*Porphyrula martinica*). An adult 25 Jun - 28 Jul 1985 in Guilford, was in a residential backyard (Pat & John Littel) with a small pond and adjacent to coastal wetland. Initially published in an article (CW 5: 43-46) by Frank Gallo (with photos by R. Schwartz and F. Mantlik on file), the record (96-6) is now officially reviewed and accepted by the ARCC. An adult was seen 15 Jul 1994 in the marshes along the Connecticut River at Oliver's Hole (north of Lord's Cove), Lyme, by a single observer while conducting botanical research (S. Mickolyzck; 94-22). Despite no previous experience with the species, the observer described a combination of features and behavior which are distinctive of Purple Gallinule.

SANDHILL CRANE (*Grus canadensis*) (RX). One adult in a cornfield along Westwoods Rd., Sharon 11 Jul - 14 Dec 1993 (L. Whittlesey †, R. Naylor; 93-20). Despite rumors suggesting that this bird was of dubious origin (i.e., possibly an escaped captive), no concrete evidence existed to support that claim (CW 14: 73, 114).

LONG-BILLED CURLEW (*Numenius americanus*). An adult was present 10-16 Jul 1995 at Windham Airport, North Windham, where it was seen by many and photographed (M. Szantyr* †, C. Marantz, R. Naylor; 95-18). The thorough, detailed descriptions, coupled with fine drawings and photographs serve well to support this first documented Connecticut record. It should be noted that while several specimens from CT during the 19th century are mentioned in the literature, the whereabouts of these specimens are presently unknown (Zeranski & Baptist, 1990). A bird of the prairies of western North America, it formerly was a more common fall migrant in New England up to the 1850s. It is now only a rare

Long-billed Curlew, Windham, CT
Photo by Mark Szantyr

straggler anywhere on the Atlantic coast (Bent, 1929). This individual obviously found the airport grasslands reminiscent of the prairies.

RUFF (*Philomachus pugnax*). One individual, a basic-plumaged male, was in the salt marsh at Milford Point, Milford 25 Mar - 14 Apr 1996 (G. Hanisek*, P. Brody, M. Szantyr, J. Wells, Jr., R. Stanford †, B. Finnan †, L. Burdge †; 96-23). The fact that the bird remained for so long resulted in it being observed by dozens of birders. Since adult males are typically in alternate plumage by late March, this individual was probably an immature (one-year-old) male.

Ruff, Milford Point, CT
Photo by B. Finnan, 30 March 1996

LITTLE GULL (*Larus minutus*) (RX). An adult was found in a flock of approximately 150 Bonaparte's Gulls (*Larus philadelphia*) at South Cove, Old Saybrook 14 Mar 1996 (M. Szantyr*, D. Provencher*; 96-22). This site has become a traditional location for this species and for Black-headed Gulls (*Larus ridibundus*), among the staging flocks of Bonaparte's Gulls. Little Gull has become annual in CT, often with multiple sightings.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE (*Rissa tridactyla*). One was observed from Hammonasset, Madison, flying over Long Island Sound on 7 Nov 1995 (D. Provencher*, M. Szantyr; 95-42). The identification of this species, when observed at a distance, hinges much more on the pattern of the gray upperparts than on the black wingtips. Immature Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*) is frequently misidentified as this species based upon the lack of white in the wingtip. A discussion of field identification of Black-legged

Kittiwake will be published in a future issue of CW. (Szantyr, CW ID Series, in prep.)

SABINE'S GULL (*Xema sabini*). Finding a rarity is always exciting. It is surprising that the excitement of discovering two immature Sabine's Gulls that briefly stopped at Mansfield Hollow Reservoir, Windham 5 Sep 1995 did not prove fatal! (M. Szantyr* †, B. Carver; 95-21). This species is highly pelagic, though a portion of the population travels overland from its breeding grounds to oceanic waters. Observations from inland locations are rare in the northeast. These individuals were two of five reported in the northeast during the fall of 1995 (NASFN 50:22). The other three individuals were reported in Massachusetts waters. This constitutes a first Connecticut record, well documented by two most fortunate, and alert, observers (CW 16:88).

ARCTIC TERN (*Sterna paradisaea*). Three adults were with a flock of Common Terns (*S. hirundo*) at Milford Point, Milford, 20 Aug 1991 (C. Barnard, Jr., J. Fengler, J. Bair; 91-17). This record, after much deliberation, was initially not accepted by the ARCC, and was published as such in the Sixth Report (CW 16: 20-21). Subsequently, the record was reconsidered, based on new and substantial information provided in a written report from another observer of the same birds the same day. In addition to corroborating descriptive details in the other reports, this observer noted the "whiter wings with windows" of one of the birds in flight, a distinct characteristic of *paradisaea*. Although there are several previous sight records and lost specimens, this is the second formally reviewed and accepted record for Connecticut.

THICK-BILLED MURRE (*Uria lomvia*). An individual was discovered at Jordan Cove, Waterford 13 Jan 1991 after it apparently, while in flight, struck power transmission lines. It died on the 15th and the specimen was presented to the University of Connecticut. (L. & M. Kalamian*, J. Zickefoose, G. Clark †; 96-11). Another individual was discovered off Meigs Point, Hammonasset, Madison 31 Oct 1995 by four experienced observers and watched for approximately 10 minutes (D. Provencher*, M. Szantyr; 95-41). The occurrence of alcids in Long Island Sound is uncommon at best and any sighting should be reported whether or not the observer is certain of which species was seen. While Razorbill is the most likely alcid to occur in the Sound, Thick-billed Murre also has a propensity to stay close inshore on occasion. The identification of large alcids on

the water can be difficult and every possible detail should be noted during an observation.

GREAT GRAY OWL (*Strix nebulosa*). A single bird was present at Hammonasset, Madison 14 Jan 1996 (T. Harrington* †, S. Craig*, P. Fusco †; 96-18)(CW 16:130). There are three specimen records for this species in CT, the last of which was taken in East Haven in 1907 (Zeranski and Baptist, 1990). There have been several sight records in CT since, but this individual is the first well documented since the East Haven specimen. This individual was part of a significant southern movement of this species throughout North America which included an incursion into New England. Of fifteen Great Grays reported in New England, only this bird and a long-staying individual in Rowley, MA were documented for southern New England (NASFN 50:148). The Hammonasset bird delighted many observers but disappointed many more who tried unsuccessfully to relocate it the following day.

RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD (*Selasphorus rufus*).

A hatch-year female was at a feeder in East Hartford from 26 Sep - 12 Dec 1994. It was then captured and harbored through at least 21 Apr 1995 (J. Kaplan, M. Szantyr †, R. Yunick, A. Heidcamp; 96-21). The identification in the field of Selasphorus hummingbirds is extremely difficult, with the exception of adult males. Of particular concern regarding vagrants to the east is to distinguish Rufous Hummingbird from Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus sasin*). Females and immatures of these species are indistinguishable in the

Rufous Hummingbird, East Hartford, CT
Photo by M. Szantyr, 30 November 1995

field. All such individuals observed out of range should be identified as "Selasphorus species" unless examined in the hand. The identification of this individual was considered "probable Rufous" (based on vagrancy patterns) until the bird was examined in the hand and measured. The wing-cord, tail length, width of retrices, exposed culmen length, and pattern and shape of retrices showed the individual to be an immature female Rufous. Seven Selasphorus Hummingbirds were reported in the New England region during the fall of 1994 (NASFN 49:23). Four of these birds were described as adults. Many thanks are due the homeowners (R. & J. Morrison) who allowed many birders into their yard to observe this gem. Thanks also go to L. Bevier for his persistent hard work in arranging the examination of the bird, and to Robert Yunick for the detailed examination and measurements that allowed a positive identification. The individual was banded (number T 94809) and was released in excellent health in the spring of 1995. This represents a second state record (CW 15:65, 146-147).

SAY'S PHOEBE (*Sayornis saya*). This record is the specimen mentioned in Zeranski and Baptist (1990). The specimen's whereabouts were previously considered unknown. It was located, measured, and photographed in the Peabody Museum of Yale University (L. Bevier †; 96-10). The specimen was taken in Gaylordsville 15 Dec 1916. The specimen tag states "Collection of Louis B. Bishop, No. 29334, Shot by T. for E.H. Austin. Given me by latter & received in flesh on Dec 17." This female is the only acceptably documented occurrence for CT. Though previously included on the state list, this is the first formal review of the record.

WESTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus verticalis*) (RX). An alert and experienced observer sighted a single bird in flight at Lighthouse Point, New Haven 19 Sep 1994 (G. Hanisek*; 95-23). The observer watched the bird fly westward until it landed, thus allowing over sixty observers to see it. Another individual was carefully observed and well documented at Hammonasset, Madison 18 Nov 1995 (R. Pelletier*; 95-45).

BOREAL CHICKADEE (*Parus hudsonicus*). A single bird was briefly observed by an experienced observer near the raptor banding station at Hammonasset, Madison, 4 Nov 1993 (R. Schwartz*; 94-2). This species is mainly resident in northern New England and Canada but undergoes fall southward movements at irregular in-

Speciemem of a Say's Phoebe, Gaylordsville, CT
Relocated and photographed at Yale Peabody Museum by L. Bevier

tervals. It has been nearly absent from southern New England in the last two decades. The fall and winter of 1993 in the east saw a massive southward movement of Black-capped Chickadee (*Parus atricapillus*) and a limited movement of *hudsonicus*, with at least 14 reported from Massachusetts and one from Rhode Island (NASFN 48:183).

SEDGE WREN (*Cistothorus platensis*). An individual was observed well by three observers in Storrs near the University of Connecticut, 27 Sep 1995 (M. Szantyr*, Sherman Suter; 95-32). The bird could not be relocated later that same day. This dynamic little species has declined in the northeast due to loss of habitat but breeds in some numbers in the Great Lakes region. Breeding in the shallows and margins of interior marshes, it is usually found in similar habitat on migration.

NORTHERN WHEATEAR (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) One was discovered at Latimer Point, Stonington 18 Sep 1995 but could not be relocated the following day (B. Dewire; 95-37). One believed to be a female or a first-year male was present on the levy at the eastern end of the Windham Airport, Windham 18-20 Sep 1995 (M. Szantyr* †, S. Suter; 95-25). This record is unusual in that the bird was discovered away from the coast and it remained for several days. This attractive little thrush is usually found on its trans-Atlantic migration at coastal locations in the fall and is usually gone by the following day. Another individual was discovered by Simon Perkins of Massachusetts at Sandy Point, West Haven 23 Sep 1995 and was meticulously documented (C. Marantz*; 95-40). Another individual was observed feeding actively at the Sikorsky Municipal Airport, Stratford 6 Oct 1995 (S. Henckel*; 95-29). It should be noted that, apart from adult males, this species is extremely difficult to age and sex in the field during fall migration. The fall of 1995 was notable for Northern Wheatear sightings in New England, with at least eight being reported (NASFN 50:23-24).

VARIED THRUSH (*Ixoreus naevius*). A male was observed coming to a feeder in Norwalk from about 12-28 Mar 1995 (J. Hough, F. Mantlik †; 95-07). The submissions to the committee were from observations on 21 March and included an excellent drawing of the bird (See CW 16:32). The owners of the property (R. Rabenold) were very cooperative in allowing birders to spend a great deal of time in their yard observing the bird.

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*). An individual was photographed at Hammonasset, Madison 7 Sep 1986 (J. Kirk* †, M. Szantyr; 96-07). The photograph was not accompanied with written documentation until 10 years later. Another individual was observed at Milford Point, Milford 17 Mar 1996 (T. Kilroy*; 96-25). The dramatic decline of this species in the northeast U.S.

makes all observations in Connecticut of heightened importance. Proper documentation should be made of all sightings.

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER (*Dendroica nigrescens*). An apparent female was observed at Talcott Mountain Science Center, Avon 8 May 1991 (T. Harrington*; 95-20). Another individual (probable female) was observed 7 May 1992 at East Rock Park, Hamden (J. Fengler*; 92-12). The committee benefited from information, passed on to it by L. Bevier, from Jon Dunn's research for a North American warbler text. This information convinced some members who had concerns about the described throat pattern. These represent the third and fourth accepted Connecticut records for this species.

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER (*Protonotaria citrea*) (RX). A male was photographed at East Rock Park, Hamden 27 Apr 1995 (M. Szantyr †; 95-12).

SUMMER TANAGER (*Piranga rubra*) (RX). A male was photographed at Cove Island Park, Stamford 16 May 1995 (P. Dugan* †; 95-10).

BLUE GROSBEAK (*Guiraca caerulea*) (RX). An adult male was photographed near the Manicatides's feeder in Fairfield 16 Apr 1986 (M. Szantyr, M. Bull †; 96-09). The record was not officially presented to the committee until 1996.

PAINTED BUNTING (*Passerina ciris*). A male patronized a feeder in East Lyme for most of the day 11 Apr 1993. (E. Albert* †, L. Vegliante; 95-13). This occurrence is well within the pattern of vagrancy for the species and was one of five reported in the northeast that spring (AB 47:396). This is the fourth record of this species in the state.

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW (*Spizella pallida*) (RX). A singing male was discovered at Northwest Park, Windsor 28 May 1994 (P. Desjardins*, G. Hanisek, M. Szantyr; 95-15). The individual was present through at least 31 May and was observed by many birders. Another was discovered at Hammonasset, Madison 23 Sep 1995, during the COA fall field day (R.Naylor, L. Whittlesey †; 95-27). This bird was extraordinarily cooperative and was studied at length by many observers, making itself the star of the day.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) (RX). An individual was observed in a mixed blackbird flock at Rocky Neck State Park, East Lyme, 25 Mar 1995 (R. Dewire; 95-36). The description suggests a first-spring male.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED, Identification Questionable.

REDDISH EGRET (*Egretta rufescens*). A single bird in full alternate plumage was reported from rain pools at Hammonasset, Madison, 28 Sep 1975 (88-3). The committee received the account of this sighting in 1988, more than ten years after the reported occurrence. The record has been in review until its final disposition in 1995. The committee believes that there are too many unanswered questions as to plumage, mechanism of occurrence, circumstances of the observation, and discrepancies between the published account in American Birds (AB 30: 29-36) and the account received by this committee, to accept what would be a first state, and one of possibly two regional records. During the mid 1970's, Reddish Egret was scarcely known from even as far north as North Carolina. It was not until 1992 that this species was first documented in the Northeast, following a significant increase of this species in the south. Since that time, post-breeding wanderers typically have been immatures, only rarely adults, and none have been reported to be in full alternate plumage. It is interesting to note that herons and egrets are rarely included in the lists of storm-blown species found following the passage of severe tropical storms and depressions.

TUNDRA SWAN (*Cygnus columbianus*) (RX). Two birds were reported flying up the Connecticut River at South Glastonbury 24 Dec 1995 (96-26). The observer eliminated Mute Swan (*C. olor*) in the description of the bill, but did not consider nor eliminate Whooper Swan (*C. cygnus*) or Trumpeter Swan (*C. buccinator*). As stated in previous reviews by this committee, Whooper and Trumpeter Swans have recently been seen in Connecticut under circumstances that suggested the individuals were escaped birds or birds from introduced stock. Numerous reports of Trumpeter Swans are being received from the eastern United States, most if not all of them attributable to the introductions in central and eastern North America. An interesting note involves six Whooper Swans that have been in Massachusetts for a few years and are now actually breeding and raising young (Wayne Petersen, pers. com.). Although a review of the recent records of Tundra Swan in Connecti-

cut has shown that this species is regular enough to warrant removal from this committee's review list, swans provide a difficult identification problem and all swans suspected of being Tundra Swans should be carefully scrutinized to eliminate these other possible species.

COMMON EIDER (*Somateria mollisima*) (RX). Fourteen females were reported from Long Island Sound, seen from Greenwich Point, Greenwich 14 Sep 1991 (91-24). The committee, after long, laborious debate, agreed that the description does not convincingly describe Common Eider, nor does it adequately eliminate other duck species, including the similar King Eider (*S. spectabilis*). The committee tried on numerous occasions to secure additional corroborative descriptions from other observers, but to no avail. Common Eider is proving to be a regular migrant into Long Island Sound in the fall and winter and the date of this report, while early, is not out of the question for the species.

MISSISSIPPI KITE (*Ictinia mississippiensis*). One adult was reported from Sandy Hook 3 Jun 1995 (95-11). While this report is quite likely correct, the committee agreed that the brevity of the observation did not allow for enough detail to convincingly document what would be a first Connecticut record. The committee paid special deference to the extensive hawk-watching experience of the observer and to the seemingly perfect timing for the occurrence of this northward wandering raptor. This species is regularly recorded at Cape May, New Jersey in the spring and summer and there are at least twenty records from Massachusetts, nearly all from the spring, and most from the southeast section of the state. A large majority of these occurrences pertain to first year birds with adults forming a very small minority. (For Connecticut's first accepted record of Mississippi Kite, see previous citation in this report.)

BLACK RAIL (*Laterallus jamaicensis*). One was reported seen in daylight in a saltmarsh channel along Leete's Island Road, Guilford 30 Jun 1994 (94-17). Another was reported running across Rt. 146 in Guilford 7 Jun 1991 (96-20). The sighting from Jun 1994 (94-17) was previously reviewed by this committee and not accepted (Szantyr, Mantlik, & Provencher, 1996). This record was reopened at the request of the observer with the submittal of new information concerning the sighting. After review, the committee agreed that the additional information did not alter the original

decision to not accept, as the new information still did not satisfactorily eliminate the young of other rail species or even other possible black birds that might be seen in coastal marshes, nor does it answer the questions raised as to the circumstances of the observation. Similar concerns troubled the committee regarding the Jun 1991 report (96-20). While the committee agrees that the described plumage characters could pertain to Black Rail, the circumstances of the observation, that is seen from a moving car, at night, in headlights, and at a distance of twenty meters without optical aids, raises a question as to the certainty of any description, especially that of a very small, dark, running bird. While both these reports might be correct, the committee laments the lack of follow-up to locate this rare species after dark as well as the lack of communication to other members of the birding community. Any and all documentation of the occurrence of Black Rail in Connecticut is most welcomed by the committee. This species historically nested in our state and may do so presently but its secretive nature and habitat requirements make its discovery very difficult.

SANDHILL CRANE (*Grus canadensis*) (RX). One was reported flying above Penwood State Park, Bloomfield 17 Apr 1994 (94-9) and another was reported over Lighthouse Park, New Haven 2 Oct 1994 (94-24). Common Crane (*G. grus*) has been reported from North America about nine times and recent occurrences of presumed escaped captive Common Cranes in New York and New Jersey make positive and complete identification of Sandhill Crane mandatory. The committee agrees that neither of these two reports conveys the certainty with which the observers claim to have made the identification and, again, while probably correct, the reports do not include convincing details that eliminate possible identification contenders.

GULL-BILLED TERN (*Sterna nilotica*). One was reported from the sandbars off of Milford Point, Milford 13 Aug 1994 (94-18). While many of the characters described in this report suggest Gull-billed Tern, the committee agreed that Forster's Tern (*S. forsteri*) was not sufficiently eliminated. Gull-billed and Forster's Terns can be quite similar in comparison to Common Tern (*S. hirundo*). Both are much whiter and can have similar dark head markings, as well as both having heavier, all dark bills in the fall. Close and careful descriptions of tail shape and length as well as wing pattern are critical in identifying members of a very confusing group of birds.

WHITE-WINGED TERN (*Chlidonias leucopterus*). One was reported from the Housatonic River in New Milford 13 May 1979. This report (85-3) was reviewed and not accepted by a previous committee (Purnell & Mantlik, 1987). Current identification information prompted this committee to reopen this record and to reassess the account in light of this new information. The committee believes that, even in light of new and more complete methods for identifying terns, the description provided does not satisfactorily eliminate other Chlidonias species and, in fact, does not eliminate the possibility of a Sterna tern. Various committee members felt that the description most closely approximates Black Tern (*C. niger*), but even some aspects of this identification are troubling.

An important thing to note here is that the files of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut are never really considered closed. At any time, with the advent of new information as to the record in question or with new and more critical identification information for the species in question, a record can be re-opened and re-assessed.

THICK-BILLED MURRE (*Uria lomvia*). One was reported from Long Island Sound off of Griswold Point, Old Lyme 13 Jan 1991 (91-2). While reasonably well-described, the committee determined that details of the sighting do not convincingly eliminate other large alcid species, such as Common Murre (*U. aalge*) or Razorbill (*Alca torda*).

RAZORBILL (*Alca torda*). One was reported from Long Island Sound off of Meigs Point, Hammonasset, Madison 14 Nov 1991 (92-4), and three were reported 7 Feb 1995 one to two miles off of Waterford by two observers riding the New London-Orient ferry (95-08). The 1991 report consisted only of a sketch with minimal descriptive notation and no details of the observation. The committee decided that this lack of important details as well as some discrepancy in the plumage described for the time of year left too many unanswered questions to accept this report of what is, at best, an irregular visitor to Connecticut waters. While the 1995 report has much more complete details, the observers themselves admit to a small degree of uncertainty about the identification. While the committee agreed that the description probably refers to Razorbill, they decided to err on the side of caution and to not accept this report.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*). A male was reported in "the first week of June", 1995 from Wilton (95-24). The committee agreed that this report lacked sufficient detail to warrant acceptance as a first state record. Details of plumage were not conclusive and aspects of the reported vocalization seemed wrong for any North American flycatcher species. Vermilion Flycatcher is a very rare vagrant to the northeast, with only three or so records from Massachusetts and New York. These records all occurred in fall and most pertain to immature males or females.

CAROLINA CHICKADEE (*Parus carolinensis*). One was reported from New Canaan 16 Dec 1990 (96-13). Separating Carolina Chickadee from the more expected and variable Black-capped Chickadee (*P. atricapillus*) is a very difficult identification challenge. A series of audio and visual field marks must be noted and even then, due to the variability within each species, identification may not be possible. The differences are very subtle and confusing even to experts that study this group (Kaufman, 1990). While the bird was reasonably described, the report neither convincingly eliminates Black-capped Chickadee nor the possibility of a hybrid between these two similar forms. Carolina Chickadee is virtually unknown as a vagrant even a short distance away from its more southerly range. Any suspected occurrence in our area should be accompanied by complete measurements and photographs as well as sound recordings in order to make possible a reasonable evaluation of the report.

SEDGE WREN (*Cistothorus platensis*). A singing bird was reported from Bakerville Swamp, New Hartford 13 Jul 1977 (87-44), and reportedly stayed for approximately two weeks. While this report is undoubtedly correct, no details in the report conclusively eliminate Marsh Wren (*C. palustris*). The importance of taking good, clear, and complete field notes was not stressed as strongly twenty years ago as it is today and basing decisions on the recollection of individuals without the aid of written details from the time of the observation allows for too much vagueness and for too much interpretation.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING (*Bombycilla garrulus*). A small flock was reported from Miles Wildlife Sanctuary, Sharon 29 Oct 1995 (96-3). While the ability and credentials of the observer are beyond question, circumstances of the observation did not allow for complete and positive documentation. The observer himself admits to

the insufficiency of the report. This report is of interest, however, especially in light of an invasion by this species into western Massachusetts at the time.

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*). One was reported from Greenwich 26 Jul 1995 (95-30). The committee agreed that, while the date is suggestive of Loggerhead Shrike and the observer is quite experienced, no details of structure or plumage were noted that conclusively eliminate Northern Shrike (*L. excubitor*). Shrike identification is an under-appreciated identification challenge. Descriptions of shades of gray are too subjective to be of any real use and geographic variation in both species seem to include a broad array of shared plumage characters. Details of head structure and patterning, including close study of the color and structure of the bill, are necessary to conclusively identify a shrike to species (Szantyr, CW ID Series, in prep.). This report was very interesting as Loggerhead Shrike is becoming increasingly rare in Connecticut and with the fact that it came a few months prior to the largest invasion of Northern Shrikes in recent Connecticut ornithological history (Hanisek, CW 16:91, 131-132).

YELLOW-RUMPED "AUDUBON'S" WARBLER (*Dendroica coronata auduboni*). One was reported from Woodbury 2 May 1986 (96-14). While intriguing, this report does not conclusively nor convincingly eliminate "Myrtle" Warbler (*D.c. coronata*), which can have highly variable plumage characters depending on age, sex, and molt. Various elements of the report, including the description of the white area in the median coverts, indicate confusing plumage and molt characters that do not allow for confident identification.

SUMMER TANAGER (*Piranga rubra*) (RX). A bird judged to be an immature male was reported from New Haven 18 May 1995 (95-19). The committee agreed that various elements of the described plumage, including "olive wings and belly", an all darkish bill, no description of the tail color, and the reported incessant singing of an "atypical Summer Tanager song", together with tough backlighting during the observation make acceptance of this record difficult. Reports of rarities with aberrant plumages or singing unusual songs should receive extremely close scrutiny. Rare species usually occur in what would be typical plumage and singing typical songs or calls. Anyone seeing what appears to be a rarity but with atypical plumage or song should carefully and criti-

cally eliminate all more expected possibilities before giving a positive identity to the bird in question.

WESTERN TANAGER (*Piranga ludoviciana*). A bird described as an adult male was reported from Simsbury 29 Aug 1994 (94-20). While adult males of this species should be relatively easy to identify, the possibility of a molting Scarlet Tanager (*P. olivacea*) showing characters similar to this western species must be considered. The committee, after long debate, concluded that there was insufficient information in this report to convincingly eliminate a molting Scarlet Tanager, or to eliminate the possibility of some escaped exotic cage species. Western Tanager is an uncommon vagrant to our area and, interestingly, the August date of this report coincides with past records of adult males in the east (Zeranski and Baptist, 1990; Veit and Petersen, 1993).

SPOTTED TOWHEE (*Pipilo maculatus*). A male was reported from Rowayton 4 Nov 1990 (96-8). This form recently received full species status as Rufous-sided Towhee was split by the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list Committee into the eastern form, Eastern Towhee (*P. erythrophthalmus*) and the more western Spotted Towhee (*P. maculatus*). The committee agreed to be conservative in the evaluation of this record, which would be a first of this form for Connecticut. While this report may be accurate, the inexperience of the observer and the possibility of misinterpreting the pale tertial edges shown by the more expected Eastern Towhee as the mantle spotting of Spotted Towhee were deemed sufficient reasons not to accept this record. It is important that observers become familiar with the topography of birds and that they learn to use the proper names of the feathers or feather groups they are intending to describe. Such attention to detail makes evaluation of sight reports much easier for the committee, leaving little uncertainty to our interpretation of what the observer meant. There are no accepted records of Spotted Towhee in Connecticut.

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW (*Spizella pallida*) (RX). One was reported from Storrs, Mansfield 21 Sep 1989 (89-16). While no doubt accurate, this report is not detailed enough to conclusively eliminate other possible sparrows, including Chipping Sparrow (*S. passerina*).

LARK SPARROW (*Chondestes grammacus*). One was reported from Storrs, Mansfield 6 Oct 1994 (94-27). The report and sketch

suggested that the bird in question was in juvenal plumage, showing extensive heavy streaking on the flanks and sides of the breast. A search of the literature and review of museum specimens reveal that Lark Sparrows lose most if not all of this streaking before they leave the breeding grounds, and an immature Lark Sparrow, by this date in Oct, would be virtually indistinguishable from an adult. Other details of the description, including the extent of the pale area at the base of the primaries, the lack of description of a central breast spot, and inconclusive description of the diagnostic tail pattern did not convincingly identify this bird as a Lark Sparrow, nor were other possible sparrow species eliminated. Observers are reminded that one of the first steps in any identification is the accurate aging of the individual in question. Other characters of plumage and molt can be better assessed when this has been determined.

LE CONTE'S SPARROW (*Ammodramus leconteii*). An individual initially identified as a "very pale Le Conte's Sparrow" was reported from Stratford 7 Oct 1995 (95-26), and was seen by several observers through at least 12 Oct. This report is almost a case study in how **not** to identify a bird, and is a testament to the hard work it often takes to "get the identification right". This bird was seen briefly and fleetingly, and "by elimination" was identified as a Le Conte's Sparrow, as it was the only species that the plumage characters seemed to fit. Further brief glimpses over the next few days also pointed out characters that seemed appropriate for the pale extreme of immature Le Conte's Sparrow. Again, observers were starting with an identification and interpreting and sometimes imagining field marks to fit their

Red Bishop, Immature Female
Stratford/Lordship, CT
Photo by M. Szantyr

identification. Finally, on 12 October, the bird was carefully studied and photographed. It was determined to be some sort of escaped, non-native, cage bird, probably of the widow/whydah/bishop group. An outside expert was recently consulted to evaluate the slides and a preliminary identification as Red Bishop (*Euplectes orix*) was made (M. Gustafson, pers. com.).

So what do we learn from all of this? One, two, and sometimes many field marks don't always add up to a positive or correct identification. The realm of possibilities sometimes isn't limited to what you might expect. Starting with an identification and finding field marks to fit is the wrong way of going about identifying any bird. "Rarity Hysteria" can readily cloud the judgement of otherwise critical field observers. This points out the need for each and every one of us to independently identify each suspected rarity, and not to accept an identification without personal corroboration. Too often, in the search for "twitches" on a checklist or numbers on a lifelist, observers accept someone else's identification by showing up at the site of a find simply to see and check off another "good one". All of us, including this writer, have learned an important and embarrassing lesson at the "hands" of this little cage bird.

DARK-EYED "OREGON" JUNCO (*Junco hyemalis oreganus*). A female or immature was reported from Southbury 30 Nov 1985 (91-8), one was reported from Middlebury 21 Dec 1985 (91-9), and two immatures were reported from Southbury 6 Nov 1994 (94-30). Juncos are a very poorly understood group, with as much variation within each subspecies as there is between each subspecies. While typical "Slate-colored" adults and typical "Oregon" adults pose little confusion, immatures and females of these and the adults and young of other geographic forms can be so similar that in-field identification becomes nearly impossible. This committee did a remarkable amount of research into the descriptions and variability of each form and determined that these sight reports were inconclusive as to the actual subspecies being described. In fact, various committee members believe that the reports refer to the brown immatures of "Slate-colored" Junco, which can show very rusty flanks and mantles. The committee warns observers that close and careful scrutiny of the hood shape across the breast, the extent of the hood around the nape, the color of the hood, the color of the lores, the color and extent of the flanks, and the color of the back are critical to even begin to identify a junco to subspecies. Even with all of this, a good, clear photograph is necessary to

evaluate this information and please know that, even with a photo, the identification may still not be possible.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*). A female was reported from Greenwich 5 Sep 1994 (94-33), and another, a probable male, was reported from Rowayton, Norwalk 18 Jul 1995 (95-16). Both of these reports include remarkably early dates for the occurrence of Yellow-headed Blackbird in Connecticut but coincide very well with the first dispersals of Red-winged Blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) after the breeding season. Female and young Red-winged Blackbirds can be astonishingly yellow-faced and dark-bodied at this time of the year. A photograph shown to the committee shows a female or young Red-winged Blackbird with a bright chrome yellow face and chest that could easily be mistaken for a Yellow-headed Blackbird. The committee agreed that the unusual dates of these reports, coupled with minimal details, do not convincingly support the identifications.

HOARY REDPOLL (*Carduelis hornemanni*). A female was reported from a feeder in Torrington 7-8 Apr 1994 (94-14). The field identification of redpolls is very difficult and rests on a number of very minute differences in plumage and structure. While this description seems to be suggestive of Hoary Redpoll, there is not enough detail to conclusively eliminate Common Redpoll (*C. flammea*). A very informative article in Birding (Vol. 27 (6): 446-457) gives extensive information into the identification of the redpoll complex and is worth consulting when trying to identify any "pale" redpoll.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED, Origin Questionable.

TRUMPETER SWAN (*Cygnus buccinator*). One was seen on a small pond near the Danbury Fair Mall, Danbury 21 Aug 1993 (96-27). This bird was seen by a number of observers and over a few days time. The individual sported a patagial tag with the number 227, which indicated that it was part of a captive breeding program and had been released into the wild in northern Ontario. Trumpeter Swans are being seen from many locations in the east and most are directly attributable to these reintroduction programs. The committee wants to thank the sole reporter who took the time to submit details of this sighting. Information on birds such as these is very important and many of us are quick to dismiss any species or individual that is not "countable" on a life list.

Data on all birds that occur in Connecticut is of interest to either the ARCC or the Field Notes Editor of CW and we thank you for your time and effort in ensuring the complete documentation of any unusual occurrence.

EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH (*Carduelis carduelis*). One was present at a Bethlehem thistle feeder 6 Jan - 24 Feb 1991 and again 29 Oct - 21 Nov 1991 (96-12). This species is occasionally reported from throughout our region. As this attractive species is widely available from pet stores and as no pattern of vagrancy is seen from intervening land masses between northeastern North America and its normal European range, it seems unlikely that these occurrences are natural in origin. The committee wants to stress, however, the importance in documenting the occurrence of presumed exotic species for posterity, should such patterns of natural dispersal become evident.

PIN-TAILED WHYDAH (*Vidua macroura*). An adult male was present in a Fairfield backyard 27 Jun 1995 (95-23). This highly distinctive African species is a popular caged bird and is widely available at pet stores. There is no record of vagrancy across the Atlantic and occurrences of this species is properly attributed to unnatural means. Interesting is the occurrence of this or another male of this species in Stratford in Oct 1995 where a Red Bishop (*Euplectes orix*) was mis-identified as a Le Conte's Sparrow (*Ammodramus leconteii*). One can only speculate as to the source of these very popular pet trade birds.

CONTRIBUTORS

The committee greatly appreciates the time and effort expended by the following people who submitted reports or photographs of rarities: Ellen Albert, James Bair, Thomas R. Baptist, Bob Barbieri, Charles Barnard, Jr., Louis Bevier, William E. Bolster, Polly Brody, Milan Bull, Les Burdge, Winifred Burkett, Paul Carrier, Bruce Carver, Jr., George Clark, Patrick Comins, Fred Comstock, Sue Craig, Neil Currie, Julio de la Torre, Paul Desjardins, Robert Dewire, Patrick Dugan, Carl S. Ekroth, Jeff Fengler, Bruce Finnan, Gordon Fox, Paul Fusco, Frank Gallo, Frank B. Gill, Ed Hagen, John G. Haig, Greg Hanisek, Tom Harrington, Arnette Heidcamp, Keith Hubbard, Lisa Kalamian, Mimi Kalamian, Seth Kellogg, Scott Henckel, Julian Hough, Keith Hubbard, Jay Kaplan, Joseph Keating, Tom Kilroy, Jeff Kirk, Carol Lemmon, Frank Mantlik, Curtis Marantz, Janet Mehmel, Susan Mickolyzck, Michael

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Former members who voted on certain of the records in this report are: Louis Bevier, Milan Bull, Tom Burke, George Clark, Richard English, Ed Hagen, and Jay Kaplan.

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Review List of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut

In association with the Connecticut Ornithological Association's Avian Records Committee Report, the following is the latest Avian Records Review List.

The Committee welcomes written descriptions, photographs, sound recordings, and other documentaion for occurrences in Connecticut of any species on this list, as well as any species not on the official state list (see COA Field Checklist, August 1994).

Pacific Loon
Eared Grebe
Western Grebe
Northern Fulmar
Black-capped Petrel
Cory's Shearwater
Greater Shearwater
Manx Shearwater
Audubon's Shearwater
Wilson's Storm-Petrel
White-faced Storm-Petrel
Leach's Storm-Petrel
American White Pelican
Brown Pelican
Anhinga
Magnificent Frigatebird
White Ibis
White-faced Ibis
Wood Stork
Fulvous Whistling-Duck
Tufted Duck
King Eider
Harlequin Duck
Swallow-tailed Kite
Mississippi Kite
Swainson's Hawk
Gyrfalcon
Yellow Rail
Black Rail
Corn Crake
Purple Gallinule
Wilson's Plover
Black-necked Stilt
American Avocet
Spotted Redshank
Eskimo Curlew
Long-billed Curlew
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
Curlew Sandpiper
Ruff
Red-necked Phalarope
Red Phalarope
Pomarine Jaeger
Parasitic Jaeger
Long-tailed Jaeger
Franklin's Gull
Mew Gull
Thayer's Gull
Black-legged Kittiwake
Ross' Gull
Sabine's Gull
Gull-billed Tern
Sandwich Tern
Arctic Tern
Bridled Tern
Sooty Tern
Dovekie
Thick-billed Murre
Razorbill
Black Guillemot

Atlantic Puffin
Band-tailed Pigeon
White-winged Dove
Northern Hawk Owl
Burrowing Owl
Great Gray Owl
Boreal Owl
Chuck-will's-widow
Rufous Hummingbird
Black-backed Woodpecker
Say's Phoebe
Ash-throated Flycatcher
Tropical Kingbird
Western Kingbird
Gray Kingbird
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
Boreal Chickadee
Sedge Wren
Northern Wheatear
MountainBluebird
Townsend's Solitaire
Varied Thrush
Bohemian Waxwing
Loggerhead Shrike
Bell's Vireo
Black-throated Gray Warbler
Hermit Warbler
Western Tanager
Black-headed Grosbeak
Painted Bunting
Green-tailed Towhee
Lark Sparrow
Lark Bunting
Henslow's Sparrow
Le Conte's Sparrow
Golden-crowned Sparrow
Harris' Sparrow
Smith's Longspur
Chestnut-collared Longspur
Brewer's Blackbird
Boat-tailed Grackle
Hoary Redpoll

Unusual Breeding Birds

Documentation of breeding of the following species, and others not known to breed, will be reviewed and archived by the ARCC.

Tricolored Heron
Blue-winged Teal
Bald Eagle
Northern Harrier
Peregrine Falcon
Black Rail
King Rail
American Coot
Common Snipe
Black Skimmer
Barn Owl
Long-eared Owl
Short-eared Owl
Red-headed Woodpecker
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Sedge Wren
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Loggerhead Shrike
Northern Parula
Yellow-throated Warbler
Prothonotary Warbler
Blue Grosbeak
Dickcissel
Vesper Sparrow
Henslow's Sparrow
Boat-tailed Grackle
Red Crossbill
Pine Siskin
Evening Grosbeak

FIRST STATE RECORD: SABINE'S GULLS IN NORTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT

Mark S. Szantyr

One day while birding with Louis Bevier on the dike that forms the boundary between the east end of the Windham Airport and the Mansfield Hollow Reservoir, North Windham, Windham County, we were musing over what rare birds might be found at this location. Previously that summer, we had found a Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*) on the grassy lawns surrounding the runways of the airport. This furnished a first documented modern record for the state. Louis and I were discussing the merits of the habitat, the unique circumstances in 1995 that forced the water level in the reservoir to be so extremely low, exposing vast mudflats, and the possibility of daily coverage by a small group of local birders. We came up with a list of ten species. Some of these would be first or second state records, others would be first northeast Connecticut records. Either way, the finding of any of these birds would be significant to Connecticut ornithology, and making such a dream list seemed to spur us on during long, hot days at the dike. Our list included:

Western Sandpiper
Baird's Sandpiper
Northern Wheatear
Sabine's Gull
Lark Bunting
Rock Wren
Say's Phoebe
White-winged Dove
Vermillion Flycatcher
Western Meadowlark

On 5 September 1995, Bruce Carver and I decided to bird the dike, after a rather unsuccessful morning chasing landbird migrants along a nearby abandoned railroad bed. A moderate cold front had passed during the night of 4-5 September and we began our morning with hopes of a good bird movement. Another cold front was making its way out of the north and we went to the dike hoping to census shorebirds that had been building in numbers before impending torrential rain would wash out our day altogether. At approximately 0800 hours, Bruce and I were on top of the dike counting American Golden Plovers (*Pluvialis dominicus*). The light

had deteriorated extremely, the sky was dark, and a steady light north wind was developing. I noticed four gulls winging in from out over the reservoir. These birds were passing left to right as they crossed into my field of view. I identified two of them as Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*), and the other two as juvenile Sabine's Gulls (*Xema sabini*). The gulls took turns chasing each other around and over the limited water in front of us and shortly, the two Sabine's landed on an exposed mudflat directly below us. These delicate birds walked off the mud and began to swim and preen on the water, again, directly below our vantage point. I had taken a few photographs as the birds flew in and continued to take

Sabine's Gulls
Photo by M. Santyr, 5 September 1995

some while the birds sat on the water. We studied the birds carefully, noting all the field marks that would separate them from other more likely small gulls. Almost immediately, these two birds lifted off the water and, after circling a few times in front of us, flew back toward the main body of the reservoir, appearing to land on an exposed island of rock and mud, where a number of Ring-billed gulls were roosting. As they flew in front of us, I managed to

take a few more photos, though the light was so low, I had little hope of getting anything useable for documentation. Barely able to contain our excitement, Bruce and I ran the 0.5 mile back off of the dike and went to his house to confirm our identification and alert other birders. Approximately thirty minutes later I was back on the dike and met another local birder, Sherman Suter, who was the first to arrive of those whom we called. He had been there for about fifteen minutes and had been unable to relocate the birds. By this time the front had passed. No rain had fallen, but a moderate wind continued out of the north and strong bright sunshine now predominated. We were joined by a number of other birders but were unable to relocate the Sabine's Gulls.

Description

The birds were small gulls, smaller than the two Ring-billed Gulls with which they were associated. In flight, they were lighter and more buoyant and seemed fairly long-winged and slim bodied. The pattern of the upper parts was striking. The outer wing, including the outer primaries and primary coverts up to the carpal joint, were black. This black seemed to form a triangular wedge with its wide end at the tips of the primaries and coming to a point at the carpal joint. The tips of the black primaries were white. The secondaries and outermost secondary coverts were white. This seemed to form a broad based inner white triangle. The remaining wing coverts, mantle, nape, and crown were dark brownish gray. As previously mentioned, this pattern was striking and unmistakable. The rump and tail were white. The tail was well forked and ended in a complete black terminal band. The undersides of the bird were white and a small tongue of the brownish-gray mantle color extended onto the sides of the breast ahead of the wings. While sitting on the water, the birds were more closely observed. The bills were dark and on each bird the face was white ahead of the eye and on the forehead. The entire dorsal aspect of the bird, including the crown and the face behind the eye, was the brownish-gray coloration described earlier. The mantle appeared scalloped, with the brownish-gray feathers having a darker sub-terminal bar and a paler tip. The contrast of the darker inner bar and paler tip caused the scalloping to be quite obvious. The primaries were black and had a small white tip to each. The birds had delicate, gentle heads and facial expressions. While the birds sat on the water, the extension of the mantle color onto the breast was obvi-

ous, sometimes causing a small white spot to appear on the sides of the breast at the bend of the wing.

Other Species and How Eliminated

Other small gulls considered were: Ross' Gull (*Rhodostethia rosea*), Little Gull (*Larus minutus*), Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*), Bonaparte's Gull (*Larus philadelphia*), Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*), Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*), and Franklin's Gull (*Larus pipixcan*). We eliminated them by size, tail shape, striking wing pattern, and by the lack of a contrasting carpal bar, or lack of a dark collar in the case of kittiwake. These birds were immediately separated from the larger gull species by size and upper wing pattern. Likewise, we eliminated most terns by wing pattern, bill shape, and mantle color. Large-billed Tern (*Phaetusa simplex*) is a South American species that has occurred in North America three times. It has an upper parts pattern very similar to Sabine's Gull, but was eliminated by the lack of black on the head and nape and by the lack of a large yellowish bill.

Why Was Sabine's Gull on Our List?

Sabine's Gull is a circumpolar nester that is almost entirely pelagic away from the breeding grounds. The North American populations migrate across the North Atlantic to winter at sea off of western Africa or down the Pacific Coast to winter off the western coast of South America. There is an overland component to both of these migration pathways. During most autumns, a few individuals are found on the Great Lakes, along the Mississippi River, Lake Champlain, and on western lakes and reservoirs in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and the Gulf Coast. Nesting success and weather conditions likely influence the numbers that are found far inland in any given year. Interestingly, most inland occurrences pertain to birds in juvenal plumage. Sabine's Gulls most likely migrate over New England, including Connecticut during most years. Yet they are rarely seen as they continue out to the Atlantic Ocean. Occasionally large cold fronts from the north meet with warm moist air from the south or west, often resulting in an active weather episode, accompanied by large, violent thunderstorms where these two weather systems meet. Birds traveling ahead of these south bound cold fronts are often grounded, or forced to seek refuge at available habitats along the way. During the end of August and into September, several species of birds, normally considered as coastal in New England, are making their way across the land mass to the Atlantic from their prairie or arctic nesting sites. These

include Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*), Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*), and Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*), Franklin's, and Sabine's Gulls. When these migrants meet with unsettled weather over land, they very often seek refuge on large inland bodies of water like the Mansfield Hollow Reservoir. They usually remain only a short time before continuing on their way. By birding these large bodies of water during or immediately after the passage of such weather systems, observers increase their chances of encountering one of these prizes. For whatever reason, 1995 was a good year to find Sabine's Gulls inland. Of the 334 individuals reported between the months of August and November, 182 were from inland locations (see Table 1). Predictably, the majority of these were juvenile birds. Many states, provinces, and regions recorded their highest tally ever, while most noted an increase in Sabine's Gull numbers during this period. It is also notable that more Sabine's Gulls are reported from the west than from the east. By birding a likely habitat during appropriate weather conditions during the right time of year, we found a species that was long overdue for inclusion on the list of Connecticut birds. Lucky? Sure. But in the words of Louis Pasteur,

"In the fields of observation, chance favors only the mind that is prepared."

Epilogue

In case you were wondering how we did on our list of predictions, we got four out of ten. Western Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, and Northern Wheatear were all new to the list of birds found in the Storrs area. Sabine's Gull was new to the state list. Hey, if you hit .400 in the Majors your picture would be on a cereal box.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Louis Bevier for his editorial suggestions in the preparation of this article and for his companionship during many fruitless hours making dreamlists of birds to find in Connecticut. I would like to thank Bruce Carver for being there on that fateful morning in spite of what looked like torrential rain. Finally, I'd like to thank all the dedicated birders that made their way to the northeast corner only to be disappointed. I'd like to thank them for still talking to me.

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Table 1. 1995 Records of Sabine's Gulls, (*Xema sabini*), as gleaned from National Audubon Society *Field Notes*, Spring 1996, Vol. 50, No.1

Field Notes Region	State / Province	Number / Age	Range of Dates
Atlantic Provinces	New Brunswick	1 / ad.	26 Oct.
Quebec Region	Quebec	**14 / (1 ad., 5 juv., 8 ?)**	18 Aug. - 1 Oct.
New England Region	Massachusetts	3 / ?	29 Aug. - 5 Sept.
	Connecticut	**2 / juv.,**	
Hudson/Delaware	Pennsylvania	1 / ?	5 Oct. - 11 Nov.
	New York (L. Eire)	**1 / ?**	
S. Atlantic Coast	N. Carolina	**1 / juv.**	4 - 5 Sept.
Ontario Region	Ontario	**13 / (1 juv., 12 ?)**	27 Aug. - 12 Nov.
Appalachian Region	Pennsylvania	**2 / ?**	15 Oct. - 3 Nov.
Western Great Lakes	Michigan	**3 / juv.**	6 Sept. - 5 Nov.
	Minnesota	**3 / juv.**	
Mid West. Prairie	Illinois	**13 / ?**	14 Sept. - 31 Oct.
	Iowa	**6 / ?**	
	Ohio	**5 / (2 juv., 3 ?)**	
	Indiana	**1 / ?**	
	Missouri	**1 / ?**	
Central Southern	Unknown	**6 / ?**	18 Sept. - 14 Oct.
	Tennessee	**1 / ?**	
	Louisiana	**1 / ?**	
Prairie Provinces	Manitoba	**2 / (1 ad., 1 juv.)**	10 Sept. - 21 Sept.
S. Great Plains	Oklahoma	**2 / ?**	6 Sept. - 26 Oct.
	Kansas	**1 / ?**	
Texas Region	Texas	**6 / (2 ad., 4 juv.)**	10 Sept. - 2 Oct.
Idaho/W. Montana	Montana	**3 / ?**	9 Sept. - 30 Oct.
	Idaho	**1 / juv.**	
Mountain West Reg.	Wyoming	**30 / ?**	No dates Avail.
	Nevada		
	Utah		
	Colorado		
Southwest Region	Arizona	**10 / (1 ad., 9 juv.)**	9 Sept. - 7 Oct.
	New Mexico	**22 / (1 ad., 21 juv.)**	9 Sept. - 8 Oct.
Alaska Region	Alaska	7 / (1 juv.,6 ?) + **2 / ?**	23 Aug. - 12 Oct.
British Columbia Reg.	British Columbia	102 / (2 juv.,100 ?) + **1 / ?**	30 Aug. - 21 Nov.
	Washington	1 / juv.	
Oregon/Washington	Washington	27 / (9 juv. 18 ?) + **9 / ?**	10 Aug. - 15 Sept.
Mid. Pacific Coast	California	3 / juv. + **9 / ?**	5 Aug. - 9 Oct.
South Pacific Coast	California	**17 / (1 ad., 16 juv.)**	1 Sept. - 9 Oct.

Total Individuals: 334 **Total Inland :182**

Notes:

Bold = Inland Sightings
ad. = adult
juv. = juvenile
? = age unknown

FIRST WHITE-FACED IBIS FOR CONNECTICUT

David F. Provencher

On 16 May 1995 I was returning home from a morning of birding East Rock Park in New Haven when I decided to stop at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison to look for Little Blue Heron. I was at the end of the Cedar Island trail scoping the marsh when I noticed about seven ibis fly in and land near the trees of Cedar Island. I could not see the birds in the marsh from where I was so I made a mental note to check them for White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) when I left. As I walked back along the trail I saw the ibis feeding in the marsh and began looking through them. One bird lifted its head and displayed a red face and red iris. It also had a relatively broad white border of feathers around the face and completely encircling the eye. Even though I was looking for this species, I had quite a jolt when I saw it. I watched the bird a little longer noting bright red intertarsal joints, or knees (actually ankles), bright red feet, and an overall reddish coloration to the plumage. I then left to call other birders, a number of whom were able to relocate the bird later that day and the two subsequent days.

IDENTIFICATION

White-faced Ibis was once frequently called "Black Ibis", "Bronze Ibis", or "White-faced Glossy Ibis" (Bent 1926). The very distinctive structure of ibis make identification to genus very easy. The possible species that need to be considered in the northeast are White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*), White-faced Ibis, and Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*). The White Ibis is easily discounted by plumage. The separation of White-faced Ibis and Glossy Ibis is most easily done when the birds are in alternate or "breeding" plumage (Kaufman 1990). At this time, the facial skin of White-faced Ibis is bright red while Glossy's facial skin is blue-black. The iris on White-faced is red in adults, which is true year round, while Glossy's iris is dark brown. The feathers that border the face on breeding plumage White-faced Ibis are white and this border completely encircles the eye. Breeding plumage Glossy Ibis's face is bordered by pale blue skin, not feathers, and this border is broken behind the eye. The legs and bill of breeding plumaged White-faced Ibis are bright red, especially the ankles and feet. Glossy Ibis has gray-green legs but may show red coloration around the ankles when in alternate plumage. White-faced Ibis in breeding plumage tends to be redder overall than Glossy Ibis and this individual showed this trait. While Glossy Ibis averages a little larger than White-faced, there is overlap in size. This particular bird appeared slightly larger than the Glossys that it was associating with, suggesting a male. Based upon the appearance of the

individual's plumage, I believed it to be a full adult. The legs and bill were not completely bright red overall, suggesting perhaps the very first indication of losing "breeding" appearance. In basic, or "winter" plumage, White-faced Ibis and Glossy Ibis are more difficult to separate. The best single feature for identification at this time is the iris color. While young White-faced Ibis's have brown irises like Glossy Ibis, these become blood red during their first winter (Ryder and Manry 1994). The white facial border on *chihi* is absent in basic plumage while the pale blue facial border on winter *falcinellus* is less distinct but often still evident.

NORTH AMERICAN DISTRIBUTION AND NORTHEAST STATUS

In North America, White-faced Ibis breed throughout the Gulf of Mexico coastal plain from the Rio Grande to the Mississippi delta and has bred in the Florida panhandle. It also breeds in central and southern California, and locally throughout much of the west as far north as southern Alberta and as far east as Minnesota and Kansas. The species also breeds in north central Mexico but its Mexican distribution is poorly known. White-faced Ibis winter in the southern areas of its breeding range and throughout much of Mexico and into Central America. The species range also includes areas of South America.

The species' occurrence in New England has been increasing with as many as eight reported since 1984 (NASFN 49:227-228, 50:254,928). The second record for Connecticut occurred in Stonington May 2 through at least May 5, 1996 (CW 16:170). One to two birds summered at Jamaica Bay NWR on Long Island during 1979, 1980, and 1981 (Bevier and Trouern-Trend 1992). White-faced Ibis is now annual in spring and summer at Bombay Hook NWR in Delaware. Much more likely than Glossy Ibis to use agricultural land for foraging, White-faced seems to be extending its range eastward. There is every reason to expect occurrences of *chihi* to continue in Connecticut, as well as the rest of the northeast.

ABBREVIATIONS

CW - *The Connecticut Warbler*; NASFN - National Audubon Society *Field Notes;* NWR - National Wildlife Refuge

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BOOKS ON BIRDS

Alan H. Brush

Antbirds and Ovenbirds, by Alexander Skutch (1996, xviii + 268 pages, 71 illustrations, mostly black and white drawings by Dana Gardner, University of Texas Press, Austin, ISBN 0-292-77705-1.

Someone once admonished writers to "write about what you know best." Good advice for anyone, and this is precisely what Alexander Skutch does. A resident of the tropics since the mid 1930's, he knows the birds well and has witnessed enormous change in both the birds and the environment. He writes wonderfully about the lives of birds. Skutch focuses on life at the nest, and his words and images soar through the shrubs, the forest, across rivers, and into our heads. It is a pleasure to read his impressions, share his observations, and benefit from this thinking and speculation about what birds do, how they do it and how the lives of birds fit together.

The groups he deals with in this book (and, by the way, he has produced a fair number of others) are the antbirds (*Formicariidae*) and the ovenbirds (*Furnariidae*). These groups are tropical and reach deep into South America. None are represented in North America; our ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*) is a parulid warbler. In Central and South America, representatives of antbirds and ovenbirds are easily observed, some quite well adjusted to humans. There are about 250 species of Antbirds, a family surpassed in numbers of species in the New World only by tyrannid flycatchers and the hummingbirds. Antbirds are so named because they forage in association with ants. They don't eat the ants, but the insects disturbed by the ants. Ovenbirds are slightly less rich in species (ca. 214) and tend to build elaborate nests from which their name derives.

It is not my intention here to tell more about the birds, that is Skutch's forte'. But what he tells and how he does it is wonderful. Skutch is a birdwatcher of the highest order. From his descriptions, you get the idea that he is always looking. Days, nights, good weather, poor weather, he looks. He observes. He wonders. He thinks, then, of course, he writes. The effect is that you feel as if you were looking over his shoulder, except that he sees just a bit

more. He seems to know the bird's history, where it was yesterday, and what it might do or where it might be next. He gently directs your attention to some bit of the plumage, or a small, almost invisible movement, or volunteers something he'd seen previously that helps to understand. It is a remarkable book and a must read before your next trip to the tropics, no matter how many times you've been before.

The book is divided into two parts. One, The Antbirds, the other, The Ovenbirds. Within each section are chapters with similar titles that reflect the author's interest and the flow of ideas. Beginning with a chapter on the nature of the family taxonomically, he moves to Food and Foraging; Daily life; Voice, Displays and Courtship; Nests; Eggs and Incubation; The Young and their Care; Nesting Success. Each section also contains a chapter on a specific species reprinted from an earlier publication. Finally, there is a chapter on relationships with humans.

This book is different from many of the technical tomes produced on bird families. All species are not included, far from it. Much of the text is based on Skutch's personal observations. Where appropriate, he includes observations on species contributed by others, but this is his book. The material is detailed and accurate, and is easily assimilated in large part because the author is an excellent story teller. We see through his eyes, listen through his ears. We also share his frustrations, participate in simple field experiments, and come to appreciate the data of many years of studies as summarized in the few tables included.

The way in which questions are posed in the text is charming. In a descriptive narrative, Skutch will interject an interpretation of a sound or a particular behavior. He notices the activity or posture within the framework of the immediate observation, say parental behavior at the nest. Then he may do a simple experiment such as adjust the nest, move the eggs, whatever. He then carefully notices, and reports the response of the parent bird. No, he doesn't repeat the experiment on a dozen birds, use controls, or perform a statistical analysis. He observes and reports the results, and integrates it in the narrative. He tells a story and accommodates the natural curiosity that drives us all to look at birds. He just looks deeper and then thinks about what he sees.

I would like to point out the chapters (11 and 21) on the relationship of the birds with humans. Both are extremely sensitive. Yes, rhetorical questions are common, but they serve to focus the reader's attention. There are also some wonderful comments and observations on human behavior of, and the human interpretations

of bird behavior. In commenting on human fondness for the Rufous Hornero which builds a massive nest structure often close to human habitation, he remarks that locals often give it a name. The names are affectionate and reflect the industrious nature of a small birds building a large nest. Then, "Since a bird that receives a Christian name should act like a good Christian, the hornero is reputed to rest from its labors on Sundays and all church holidays". A lovely thought; one easily disproved by simple observation. Still a charming thought and typical of Skutch's approach to understanding birds.

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CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Greg Hanisek

WINTER, December 1, 1996, to February 28, 1997

We seem to have settled into a cycle of alternating winters - one cold and snowy; the next unseasonably mild. This was a mild winter, with little snow worth mentioning. The National Weather Service termed it the 10th mildest on record for New England. There weren't a lot of northern birds worth mentioning either, not even a strong echo of last year's monumental flight of Northern Shrikes, but a smattering of vagrants kept things interesting. As expected in a balmy winter, a variety of late lingerers were noted.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Loons and the common grebes were scattered in unremarkable numbers, with a high of 25 Red-throated Loons February 17 at Sherwood Island State Park in Westport (FM). A Red-necked Grebe was at Shippan Point in Stamford December 30 and February 16 (PDu), and one was off Hammonasset Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP) in Madison beginning February 4 (CR). Harking back to the big fall movement into the Northeast, four **American White Pelicans** were seen in flight at HBSP on February 24 (CR), and scattered sightings continued in March. An immature Double-crested

Cormorant in Stamford Harbor January 19 was one of very few present in the state in mid-winter (PDu). Meanwhile, Great Cormorants continue to show up inland, with one December 7 at Pistapaug Reservoir in Wallingford (WS), one January 18 at Lake Zoar in Southbury (DRo), and one January 29 on the Naugatuck River in Seymour (GH).

An American Bittern was seen at HBSP on December 14 (JG) and occasionally throughout the season (RBe et al.); others were in Stratford December 29 (FM) and at Great Island in Old Lyme January 2 (TH). Great Blue Herons were easy to find on all the open water. A more unexpected byproduct of the mild season was an immature Little Blue Heron that provided a first record for the New Haven Christmas Count and only the second December record for the state (L&MA). Three immature Black-crowned Night Herons wintered in Stamford harbor (PDu), and a few could be found as usual around the Great Meadows at Lordship (NC et al.).

Mute Swans continue to spread; six on December 28 in South Windsor represented a first record there in winter (PDe,CE). It was perhaps the best winter on record for geese overall and certainly unprecedented for the number of **Greater White-fronted Geese**. One hot spot was Southbury Training School, where a large Canada Goose flock attracted up to eight of the Richardson's form throughout the season (RN); a Brant on December 15 (RN); a **Barnacle Goose** on December 3 (NC); a **Greater White-fronted** through January 19 (RN et al.); and two Snow Geese in December (RN). Snow Geese in ones and twos were scattered all over the state (RD et al.). The biggest group, an adult and four immatures, spent some of their nights at the other goose hotspot, Mackenzie Reservoir in Wallingford (WS), which was also the roosting spot from mid-January on for four **Greater White-fronted Geese**, the largest group ever recorded in the state (WS et al.). Two were at Bantam Lake in Litchfield December 21 (BF). Other White-fronts were singles reported January 1-8 (WS) and February 6 in North Branford (EN), February 7 in Bloomfield (JM), February 13 at Mirror Lake on the University of Connecticut campus in Storrs (SRu,PR), February 16 in Middlefield (WS), and February 21 in Durham (RBA).

Two wintering Wood Ducks were in a backyard in Guilford January 26 (EN), and migrants moved in quickly with 21 at Station 43 in South Windsor on February 23 (SK) and a pair February 25 in Chester (HG). Single Wood Duck X Mallard

hybrids wintered in Watertown (RN) and in Stratford (GH). Northern Pintails were noted in ones and twos at several locations, primarily in February (CE et al.). The scaup flocks off West Haven held 120 Gadwalls on February 6 (GH). Drake Eurasian Wigeons wintered at their reliable spots in Bridgeport (EN) and West Haven (m.ob.), and a pair was reported from Gulf Pond in Milford January 8 (LP,HL). A female Northern Shoveler was seen December 22 in Norwalk harbor (GN,FP).

A drake **Tufted Duck**, the first in the state since 1994, was discovered February 11 in North Cove in Old Saybrook (GH) and remained through the end of the period (m.ob.). A single Canvasback in Durham in December and three at North Farms Reservoir in Wallingford in late February were the observer's first in that area since 1972 (WS). North Cove in Old Saybrook had 274 Canvasbacks February 15 (TH), and Frash Pond in Stratford held 216 on February 8 (SK). Redheads were more widespread than usual, with a high of six in the Greater Scaup rafts off West Haven in February (CE et al.). Others included a drake off Westport January 19 (CB), a pair in a small pond in Westbrook January 10 (EN), a drake January 26 to February 6 in Stamford harbor (PDu), and a female in Holly Pond, Stamford, from January 30 on (PDu). Stamford harbor held 18 Lesser Scaup February 18 (PDu), and eight were at Frash Pond February 8 (SK). Ten Ring-necked Ducks on January 4 at Pistapaug Reservoir represented a good mid-winter count (WS).

It seems as if **Common Eider** is the latest bird to mount a major increase in numbers. Up until two years ago, birders couldn't count on finding one during a given winter. But this year they were easy to locate at the eastern end of Long Island Sound (BD,TH et al.), with 41 reported on the New London CBC. Up to 19 flocked off White Sands Beach in Old Lyme in early December, with one staying through the period (TH et al.), about 10 wintered off Enders Island in Mystic (DP et al.), and two were off Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford January 6 (EN,SRa). The Connecticut River in Enfield again held one or two wintering **Barrow's Goldeneyes** (PDe et al.) along with at least 50 Common Goldeneyes (BKl et al.). A pair of **Barrow's** wintered at the traditional spot off Westport (CW et al.), and a drake was at Salmon River Cove in East Haddam December 11-12 (HG,CH,TH). White-winged Scoters and Surf Scoters were reported in modest numbers, and as usual in winter, Black Scoters were virtually ab-

sent. Laurel Reservoir in Stamford held 660 Common Mergansers December 22 (EJ,NM). Ruddy Ducks continued a recent positive trend, with a high count of 18 to January 18 at Pistapaug Reservoir (WS). Others included two at Bolton Lake in Bolton December 5 (MS), one in January at Lake Zoar in Southbury (DRo), two each in February at North Farms Reservoir (WS et al.), and North Cove in Old Saybrook (EN), and seven February 21 at Laurel Reservoir in Stamford (PDu).

VULTURES THROUGH OWLS

Six to eight **Black Vultures** were on a deer carcass at Sunny Valley Preserve in New Milford January 18 (CB), and up to 10 were in Bethel January 23 to February 19 (LH). One to two were seen at scattered locations in southern Litchfield, northwestern New Haven and northern Fairfield counties throughout the season (LWe,AD et al.). Canaan Mountain, the most reliable spot for wintering Golden Eagle, hosted one, or possibly two, throughout the period (GH,CW et al.). Away from the northwest corner, single Northern Goshawks were reported at HBSP December 11 (JHi), and December 20 (SRx), December 22 to January 4 in the Wallingford area (WS), February 28 in Durham (WS), and January 1 in Sherman (DA). Red-shouldered Hawk, which seems to be holding its own, was encountered by birders throughout the state (LWh,SK,GC). However, Rough-legged Hawks were conspicuously absent; the only reports were of singles December 8 at HBSP (SRx) and December 26 at Nepaug Reservoir (PCa). Merlins continue to do well. Numerous sightings were made along the coast, as well as the following inland reports: January 17 in Windsor (PDe), December 22 in North Haven (WS); January 12 in Waterbury (GH), and January 18 in Southbury (DRo). American Kestrel, on the other hand, is almost gone as a winterer. We received fewer reports for kestrel than for Merlin, and three for the winter in the Wallingford area was an all-time low (WS). A Peregrine Falcon again wintered in downtown Stamford (PDu), and a half dozen reports were received from other locations.

Lingering Virginia Rails were found December 22 in Easton (MBu) and at Sherwood Island (RW). A flock of 100 American Coot on December 11 at Rogers Lake in Old Lyme dwindled to 50 on December 22 (HG). The best overwintering group was 30+ at Bantam Lake (mob). One of the season's most unusual finds wouldn't have raised an eyebrow four months earlier. A Willet was discovered Decem-

ber 21 on the New Haven Christmas Count and remained through the season at the mouth of Oyster River in Milford/West Haven (mob). It is apparently the first to have successfully overwintered in New England, and was believed to be of the western race *inornatus*, a regular autumn migrant. Western Willets normally occur later in the fall than the eastern race, which nests in Connecticut. Menunketesuck Island in Westbrook held about 100 wintering Dunlin, along with smaller numbers of Black-bellied Plovers, Ruddy Turnstones, Sanderlings and Purple Sandpipers (RC et al.). The best count of Purple Sandpipers was an excellent 60+ off Neck Road in Madison December 8 (DS). American Woodcock arrived February 28 in Roxbury (CW) and Westport (EJ); one February 7 in Southbury may have overwintered (JN). A wintering Common Snipe was in Salem January 14 (DB).

An adult **Little Gull** appeared in late February at South Cove in Old Saybrook, a reliable spot for this species in spring (DP et al.); perhaps the same one was seen in nearby North Cove February 22 (TL). Wintering **Black-headed Gulls** included adults at Pine Creek, Fairfield, January 29 (CB), at South Cove January 26 (EN), and in Stamford (PDu) and Stratford (JHo). The Manchester landfill was the best gull spot, harboring a winter population of five or six **Iceland Gulls**, two **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** and one first-year **Glaucous Gull**. Other Iceland Gulls were at Southport Beach January 10 (CB), at Middle Beach in Westbrook January 10-February 13 (EN,RC), in Stamford through the period (PDu), at Shepaug dam in Southbury January 15 (DRo), and in Waterbury January 16 (RP). Five sightings of single first-winters in the Storrs area may have represented one individual (GC,MS). Other Lesser Black-backed Gulls included the reliable winterer in Stratford (mob), two in Stamford (PDu), one on December 21 in Shelton (JG,FD), and one on February 6 at HBSP (CW). A bird that may have been a Herring X Glaucous hybrid, a form known as Nelson's Gull, was reported in Stamford January 1 (PDu,CB).

The season's only Barn Owl report came from Greenwich Point December 5 (JBo). Two Long-eared Owls wintered in Fairfield (CB), and singles were seen in Old Lyme December 13 (HG,TH,BB), Westport December 22 (TR), and Pomfret December 28 (MS). A Northern Saw-whet Owl wintered in Bridgewater (DRo et al.) and one was reported from Oxford in February (BD). **Snowy Owls** were scarce, with one December 22 on the Westport Christ-

mas Count (FM,TD) and another seen February 1 on Menunketesuck Island by a sea kayaker (DN fide FM). The season's most compelling owl tale unfolded belatedly, when a birder was shown a photo taken by a hunter, of a "baby" owl in late January on a remote section of Bear Mountain in Salisbury. The photo offered an excellent image of an adult **Boreal Owl** (fide JZ). Subsequent searching failed to relocate the bird, which was part of a large New England flight that brought one to HBSP in November.

WOODPECKERS THROUGH TANAGERS

Immature Red-headed Woodpeckers wintered in Wallingford (WS et al.) and Middlebury (BD), and the mild weather produced a flurry of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, including singles January 12 in Clinton (CR), February 29 in Beacon Falls (JO) and January 25 in Wallingford (GH). An Eastern Phoebe lingered to December 15 at Pine Creek, Fairfield (CB,JBe), and the fall season's **Ash-throated Flycatcher** remained through December 5 in Old Lyme (JG,BD). On February 17 a group of seven Horned Larks was noted perching on the roof of E.O. Smith High School in Storrs, where snow had blown off at a time when the ground was snow covered (GC). In addition to the usual wintering flocks at HBSP, 40 larks were in Ellington December 7 (CE) and 30 were in Southbury in December (RN).

Common Ravens south of their normal limits included one on January 5 in Thomaston (CW), two January 1 near the Hanging Hills in Meriden (GH), and one January 28 over Beacon Falls (GH). Actually "normal limits" may be a misnomer, because they're showing up increasingly in all parts of the state. Red-breasted Nuthatches were scarce, but three wintered in Guiffreda Park in Meriden (WS) and two visited a feeder in Greenwich throughout the season (BO). Carolina Wrens remained hard to find inland, so one December 7 in Ellington was worth mentioning (CE), while three House Wrens on the Westport CBC put an exclamation point on the mild season. Winter Wrens were widespread in good numbers, with several reports of multiple sightings such as two in Sterling February 25 (RD) and 12 reports for the season from members of the Western Connecticut Bird Club (fide RN). The only Ruby-crowned Kinglet report came from Wallingford on February 9 (PDe). A pair of Eastern Bluebirds visited a nest box in Storrs as early as February 18 (GC). American Robins were present in good numbers, and the easy conditions accounted for

sightings such as four Hermit Thrushes in Sherman on January 1 (DRo). Gray Catbirds found the snowless terrain to their liking inland, with a record 13 on the Hartford CBC. Widespread reports included one making it to at least February 23 in Windsor (PDe) and another surviving through the winter in Meriden (WS). The only American Pipit reports were early in the season, as expected: one December 10 in Middlefield (WS) and 15 on the Woodbury-Roxbury CBC (GH,RO).

After last year's blizzard of Northern Shrikes, we got only a light dusting this time: singles wintering in Canaan (BD et al.) and South Windsor (PDe,CE); one on January 1 in Torrington (DT); and one January 22-23 in Hamden (ABr). Another notable late lingerer was a Solitary Vireo December 3-5 in Old Lyme (MS,DP). November's Orange-crowned Warbler remained at Cove Island Park in Stamford through December 15 (PDu et al.), and a Common Yellowthroat remained at the same park through January 5 (PDu). A Pine Warbler was at Nepaug Reservoir December 26 (PCa). The Quinnipiac Valley CBC reported single Palm Warbler and Wilson's Warbler, the latter a rare but not unprecedented lingerer at this latitude. A Yellow-breasted Chat was a good find January 5 in Lyme (HG,DB,BKe,CK), and another was in New Haven December 21 (WS). The bird of the season was an obliging female **Western Tanager** whose equally obliging hosts opened their Granby home to dozens of birders during its extended stay from January 11 to March 31 (DRs,PW). It was the first in the state since 1984 and posed for numerous photographs.

WesternTanager, female
Granby, CT - Photo by F. Mantlik
26 January 1977

DICKCISSEL THROUGH FINCHES

A **Dickcissel** visited a feeder in Canton from February 1 to 10

(JM). Like the catbirds, Eastern Towhees were more widespread inland than usual because of the snowless conditions, e.g., one January 20 in Southbury (RN) and one February 20 in Norfolk (GH). A Chipping Sparrow appeared at a Simsbury feeder January 9 and stayed through the end of the period (BKl); at least two, and possibly as many as five, chippies wintered in thickets at Crook Horn Road in Southbury (RN,BJ). A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was found in North Haven December 21 (ABr). Pine Creek in Fairfield held four White-crowned Sparrows December 2, with one lingering to January 8 (CB); two made it through the winter in Middlefield (WS). A Sterling feeder attracted four Fox Sparrows December 26 (R&LD); eight were in a yard in Old Lyme on February 8 (TH), and by February 15 up to 10 were visiting feeders at Heritage Village in Southbury (CF). Of special interest was a Fox Sparrow, apparently of one of the western forms, which was seen and heard calling in Storrs on December 5 (MS); detailed notes and sketches have been forwarded to the ARCC. Sherwood Island held 34 Snow Buntings on February 22 (EJ).

A huge wintering roost of icterids in Manchester was estimated at about 100,000 Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles and Brown-headed Cowbirds (PCo et al.). Amid this sea of dark feathers, it seemed amazing that a single female **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was found numerous times during the season as it fed in a residential section of East Hartford, often with hundreds of other blackbirds (MBe). Another was present during the period at a feeder in Waterford (SB). An Eastern Meadowlark was still in Torrington December 9 (RBa), and eight lingered to December 22 in Middletown (WS). A flock of 30 on January 14 in Salem represented an excellent mid-winter count (DB), and 13 spring migrants appeared in Durham February 22 (WS).

A spring migrant Common Grackle was noted February 23 in Storrs (GC). Baltimore Orioles visited feeders Jan. 6-9 in Ridgefield (P&ABa) and in mid-February in Shelton (TK); one was in North Stamford Dec. 22 (PDu,MM) and another was in Woodbridge December 21 (RBe). Rusty Blackbirds were present all winter and easy to find at Station 43, where 29 were counted February 23 (SK). Aside from a strong surge of Purple Finches throughout the northern tier in February (GH et al.), northern finches were difficult to find. Five Common Redpolls visited a feeder in Winchester on February 13 (DRo) and nine were seen in Storrs February 6 (MS). An Evening

Grosbeak was seen December 25 in Naugatuck State Forest (RN).

EXOTICS

A Black Swan was in Norwalk harbor for the third consecutive winter (FM), two Gray-lag Geese were in Litchfield for the second consecutive winter (BF), a Ruddy Shelduck was in Bloomfield February 7 (JM), and a Red Bishop was in Westport December 2 (BM).

[Editor's Note: Reports of rare or unusual bird species in Connecticut (species marked with an asterisk on the most recent COA checklist) require that documentation be submitted to the secretary of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (Mark Szantyr, 2C Yale Road, Storrs, CT 06268) if they are to be included in the field notes.]

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GREG HANISEK, 175 Circuit Ave., Waterbury, CT 06708

PHOTO CHALLENGE

We wish to thank our former Photo Challenge Editor, Louis Bevier, for creating, and writing the photo identification article in each issue of *"The Warbler"* for the past five years. We have learned much from his detailed descriptions of the birds whose photos have been featured on this page. Louis has moved to Philadelphia.

Our new Photo Challenge Editor is Julian Hough. He has recently moved to Naugatuck, Connecticut from England. He has worked as a research biologist for both Long Point (Canada) and Cape May Bird Observatories, studying field identification and bird migration. Julian is a talented and widely published artist, with work included in *The Birds of Cape May* (by David Sibley), the *Birds of North America*, and recently in the ABA magazine *Birding*. Since 1992, he worked as a journalist for Britain's top-selling bird magazine *Birdwatching*, and writes a series of identification articles. In recent years he has developed an interest in photography and has been widely published in numerous European and American publications. His passion for birds has led to extensive travel, including extended periods in India, Nepal, Australia, Europe, and the Middle East.

Photo Challenge 20. Identify the species. Answer next issue.

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

Editor

Betty S. Kleiner

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The Connecticut Warbler (ISSN 1077-0283) is devoted to the study of birds and their conservation in Connecticut and is published quarterly (January, April, July and October) by the Connecticut Ornithological Association.

Send manuscripts to the Editor. Please type double spaced with ample margins, on one side of a sheet. Submit a copy on a PC disk, if possible. Style should follow usage in recent issues. All manuscripts receive peer review.

Illustrations and photographs are needed and welcome. Line art of Connecticut and regional birds should be submitted as good quality prints or in original form. All submitted materials will be returned. We can use good quality photographs of birds unaccompanied by an article but with caption including species, date, locality, and other pertinent information.

CONNECTICUT ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Membership, including subscription to *The Connecticut Warbler* and *COA Bulletin*, is based on a calendar year and is renewable in January: Individual, $12.00; Contributing, $25.00; Family, $18.00; Sustaining, $40.00. Life membership is $300.00, payable in three annual installments. Send membership application, dues, change of address, and checks payable to: Connecticut Ornithological Association, 314 Unquowa Road, Fairfield, CT 06430.

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The Connecticut Warbler

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Volume 17, Number 4 October 1997

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ABOUT OUR COVER

Black-and-White Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*)

by Julian Hough

Our Photo Challenge Editor, Julian Hough, is also a talented artist and we are again pleased to have one of his drawings on the front cover of *The Connecticut Warbler*. Julian is also an accomplished photographer and has written numerous articles for ornithological journals, several of which have appeared in "The Warbler."

Julian's artwork has appeared in *Birding*, *The Birds of Cape May*, and the British journal *Birdwatching*.

Editor's Note:

Our first "Letter to the Editor" appears in this issue of The Connecticut Warbler, with a reply from the author of the Site Guide in question. If any of our readers wish to make comments, critical or otherwise, on any articles that appear in "The Warbler" please send them to our "Letters Editor" Mark Szantyr, 2C Yale Rd., Storrs, CT 06268. Let's keep them coming.

LETTERS

I read with interest Dave Provencher's Site Guide article on Bluff Point (Vol. 13, 84-90). The fall migration of passerines there has made it a popular location for Connecticut and New England birders; some have even termed it a "mini- Cape May." Is this an isolated phenomenon in Connecticut, or are there other locations that have similar concentrations of fall migrants?
Frank Mantlik, Norwalk

Dave Provencher replies:

The phenomena which has become well known at Bluff Point in Groton is called morning flight. It is a poorly understood continued movement of nocturnal migrants in the first hours of daylight. This movement has been observed throughout eastern North America and beyond so it is not restricted to Bluff Point. What is special about Bluff Point is the concentration of numerous migrants into a relatively small area. Why is this? I believe several factors create this, and I do not believe these factors to be exactly duplicated anywhere else in Connecticut. Bluff Point is an undeveloped coastal peninsula of some size surrounded by development, open expanses of water, and an airport. It also has a raised central spine oriented north/south that dominates the coastal plain in southeastern Connecticut. Generally speaking, nocturnal migrants undertake broad-front migration while diurnal migrants follow leading edges such as river valleys, shorelines, ridges, etc. The shoreline in southeastern Connecticut is oriented east/west. This is directly in the path of the nocturnal migrants. When the morning flight occurs, the nocturnal migrants move as diurnal migrants, that is to say they switch to leading-edge navigation. Furthermore, the natural habitat that covers Bluff Point Coastal Reserve ends abruptly at the northern boundary of the state land. So, the nocturnal migrants hit the coast and are attracted to the obvious woodlands of the raised peninsula. They are also deflected from their nocturnal compass heading by the coastline and

follow the coast westward. They travel through and above the woodland until they are forced into the northwest corner, the "hot corner." They then launch into the air to continue their push towards the wintering grounds. This is a general description of the phenomena and of course not all individuals or species behave this way. I believe it is these factors, as well as others that are as yet unknown, that create a truly impressive concentration of the morning flight at Bluff Point. Morning flight is occurring throughout the state when it is occurring at Bluff, so certainly local concentrations along the coast are occurring elsewhere as well. There may well be other locations that have the same affect at a lower concentration of birds such as Hammonasset Beach State Park, Lighthouse Point Park, and Sherwood Island State Park. I still believe, however, that dawn at the "hot corner" is the best place to be on the east coast north of Cape May during the fall migration!

Dave Provencher, Preston

Beginning with Volume 18 in 1998, we will be adding a new feature, "Connecticut Ornithological Literature" to *The Connecticut Warbler*. We will provide an ongoing, comprehensive bibliography of recent literature specific to Connecticut ornithology, or representing other contributions by Connecticut ornithologists and birders to science or the appreciation of birds, including books, papers in professional and popular journals, state and federal publications, and graduate theses and dissertations. We may also include other publications that, in our subjective judgement, might be of particular relevance to Connecticut ornithology. Despite trying to make this bibliography as complete as possible, we will undoubtedly omit some ornithologically significant publications or reports. We would be grateful if readers would inform us of omitted works, errors, and future publications, and we encourage authors to provide reprints, or at least citations, of their publications, reports, and theses. To get things started, we will include ornithological works from the last few years.

Please submit and appropriate materials to the "Connecticut Ornithological Literature" editor: James M. Zingo, Department of Forestry and Wildlife Management, Univ. of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003-4220. Thank you for your help with this task, which will, hopefully, prove useful and informative for all of us.

IDENTIFICATION OF ADULT ARCTIC TERN VS ADULT COMMON TERN IN FALL

David F. Provencher and Mark S. Szantyr

The purpose of this article is to discuss the field identification of adult Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) vs adult Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) during fall migration. The occurrence of Arctic Tern in coastal waters of eastern North America south of the breeding grounds is more likely during the pre-breeding northern migration than during the southward post-breeding migration (Lee and Cardiff 1993). Despite this, the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut receives submitted reports of adult Arctic Tern from observations of post-breeding tern flocks on the Connecticut shoreline. Since most of the field coverage of terns in Connecticut occurs during these gatherings, this discussion is intended to cover this field identification issue.

Each year, post breeding tern flocks form on the Connecticut shoreline. These flocks are primarily made up of Common Tern and Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*). Joining these are small numbers of Forster's Tern (*Sterna forsteri*) and Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*) with occasional Royal Terns (*Sterna maxima*), Caspian Terns (*Sterna caspia*), and Black Terns (*Chlidonias niger*). Rarely, Arctic Tern is reported among these gatherings. These reports are either undocumented or inadequately documented and the status of Arctic Tern in Connecticut remains accidental at best. The discussion that follows is a point by point separation of fall adult Arctic Tern from fall adult Common Tern, the species most often misidentified as *Sterna paradisaea*.

Structure of Standing Birds

There are structural differences between Arctic and Common Terns that are useful in separating the two species at anytime of the year. Arctic Tern has remarkably short legs. A standing bird will appear almost legless with the belly nearly touching the ground. These legs are coral red and noticeably shorter than the bill. Common Tern's legs are orange-red and nearly as long as the bill. An Arctic Tern standing in a group of Common Terns will appear to be standing in a hole. Apparent leg-length can be affected by the disposition of the feathers on the belly, so caution must be used in assessing this character. Also, beware birds that actually are standing in holes!

The bill of Arctic Tern is shorter and thinner than Common's and appears stubbier. It is a rich coral red and may have an ill-defined dusky tip to the upper mandible. This dusky tip may rarely also occur on the lower mandible. Common Tern's bill is longer, more dagger-like, and orange-red with a distinct black tip. These dark tips are variable in extent and may be virtually lacking but Common Tern's bill will always appear longer and more dagger-like than Arctic Tern's bill. It should be noted however that both species have black bills during winter when neither should be in our region. Some individuals of both species can show darkening bills during fall.

Arctic Tern's outer tail feathers, or rectrices, are longer than the outer tail feathers of Common Tern. An adult Arctic Tern's tail will usually extend out beyond the folded wingtips on a standing bird. Common Tern's tail will not extend beyond the folded wingtips. This can be a very useful field mark, but caution must be used since an Arctic Tern's tail feathers may be broken or worn. Arctic Tern molts its rectrices on its wintering range and a bird in our area during the fall would have rectrices at least six months old or older (Olsen and Larsson 1995). An examination of standing Arctic Terns at Churchill Manitoba in June showed a significant number of individuals whose tails did not extend beyond the wingtips (Provencher pers. obs.).

Arctic Tern is smaller bodied and shorter necked than Common Tern and should appear more delicate standing among Commons. In comparison to Common Tern, Arctic Tern will appear virtually neckless. This short necked look is a very good field mark. Also, the head of Arctic is very rounded and the high point of the crown appears to fall directly over the eye. Common Tern's head is slightly less rounded and the high point of the crown appears to fall behind the eye. This is another characteristic which can be affected by feather disposition.

Structure of Flying Birds

The neckless appearance of Arctic Tern is very evident in flight. There is very little head projection out from the leading edge of the wings. The short neck coupled with the longer outer tail feathers gives Arctic Tern the appearance of having the wings very far forward on the body. Common Tern shows more neck and head forward of the wings. It also trails a shorter tail behind the wings and looks rather evenly balanced fore and aft. In addition, Arctic Tern holds its wings more angled than Common Tern's. The inner section of the wing, the arm, is pushed forward and the outer part, the

hand, is angled back more. This gives Arctic Tern wings a more exaggerated inverted W shape than Common Tern's. The effect of these differences is that Arctic Tern appears more elegant and delicate in flight compared to Common Tern.

Plumage

The most important plumage aspects to note on flying birds are the upper and under surfaces of the wings. Arctic Tern molts all its primaries once a year while on its wintering range in the southern hemisphere (Harris, Tucker, and Vinicombe 1989). Consequently all its primaries are of a similar age while in our region. This gives a uniform appearance to the upper wing and as the primaries wear this uniform appearance is maintained. Common Tern also molts its primaries on the wintering range but undergoes a partial molt in late winter/early spring to summer plumage (Olsen and Larsson 1995). This partial molt includes the inner primaries but not the outer 5 to 7 primaries. Therefore when Common Tern is in our region, the outer primaries are considerably older than the inner primaries. These older feathers have undergone considerable wear and appear to darken as the bloom wears off. This creates a dark wedge on the upperwing surface of Common tern that grows more distinct as the summer wears on, unlike the uniform upperwing appearance of Arctic Tern.

The underwing of Arctic Tern is bright white and the primaries are narrowly tipped with black. This creates a well defined narrow black band contrasting sharply with the white underwing. The bright underwing of Arctic Tern gives the appearance of translucence. This can be an excellent field mark. The different ages of the primaries on Common Tern are also evident on the underwing. Overall the underwing is a silver-gray and lacks the translucent quality of Arctic Tern with the exception of the newer inner primaries which can look like a small white panel at the bend of the wing. The primaries are broadly tipped blackish resulting in an underwing with a broadly smudged trailing edge, quite unlike Arctic's sharply defined narrow band.

The black cap of Common Tern extends further down the nape than the cap of Arctic Tern. The bottom edge of Common's cap cuts nearly straight across the face to the upper mandible. On Arctic Tern the bottom edge of the cap cuts across the face and dips slightly towards the front of the face to the upper mandible. This leaves less white visible between the cap and the gape on Arctic Tern than on Common Tern. Arctic Tern's head appears more rounded than Common's and its black cap does not extend as far

down the nape. This gives Arctic Tern a much more "skull-capped" look than Common Tern. The underside of Arctic Tern is gray and the same color as the wings and mantle. This gray extends up the throat onto the face and creates a white cheek line between the black cap and the gray face. This white cheek line usually contrasts distinctly with the gray lower face. Common Tern's underside is also gray but is not as dark as the wings or mantle. This gray extends onto the throat and sometimes onto the lower face. The white area on the face below the cap is broader than on Arctic Tern and doesn't contrast as sharply with the gray lower face. The result is more an indistinct white face patch than a sharp cheek line such as on Arctic Tern.

The gray underside of Arctic Tern contrasts with its bright white underwing, while the gray underside of Common Tern does not contrast with its silver-gray underwing. The rump and uppertail of Arctic Tern are whiter than Common's and there is more contrast with its mantle color.

Flight Style

Arctic Tern flies with more grace and elegance than Common Tern. It seems to be much more a master of conditions, dealing with wind and waves effortlessly. By comparison, Arctic Tern's wingbeats are shallower and quicker than Common Tern. Arctic's body seems to bob up and down with each wingbeat while Common's deeper wingbeat does not seem to result in as much body movement. The difference is rather subtle, however, and can be blurred by conditions and an individual bird's activities. The difference in flight style should never be used for positively identifying an individual. It can however, be quite useful for detecting an Arctic Tern flying with Common Terns. For proper identification, identify the bird by structure and plumage, then study flight style.

The Need to Document

Arctic Tern breeding is circumpolar in arctic and sub-arctic regions. A colonial breeder, the nearest significant colonies are off the coasts of Maine and New Brunswick. The post breeding dispersal begins in July and by August is well underway. By September the species is by-and-large gone from our region with the possible exception of rare stragglers. Post breeding dispersal movement seems first to be slightly biased northward and then largely out to pelagic waters before heading south-eastward towards the wintering range. This behavior makes the chances of seeing one in

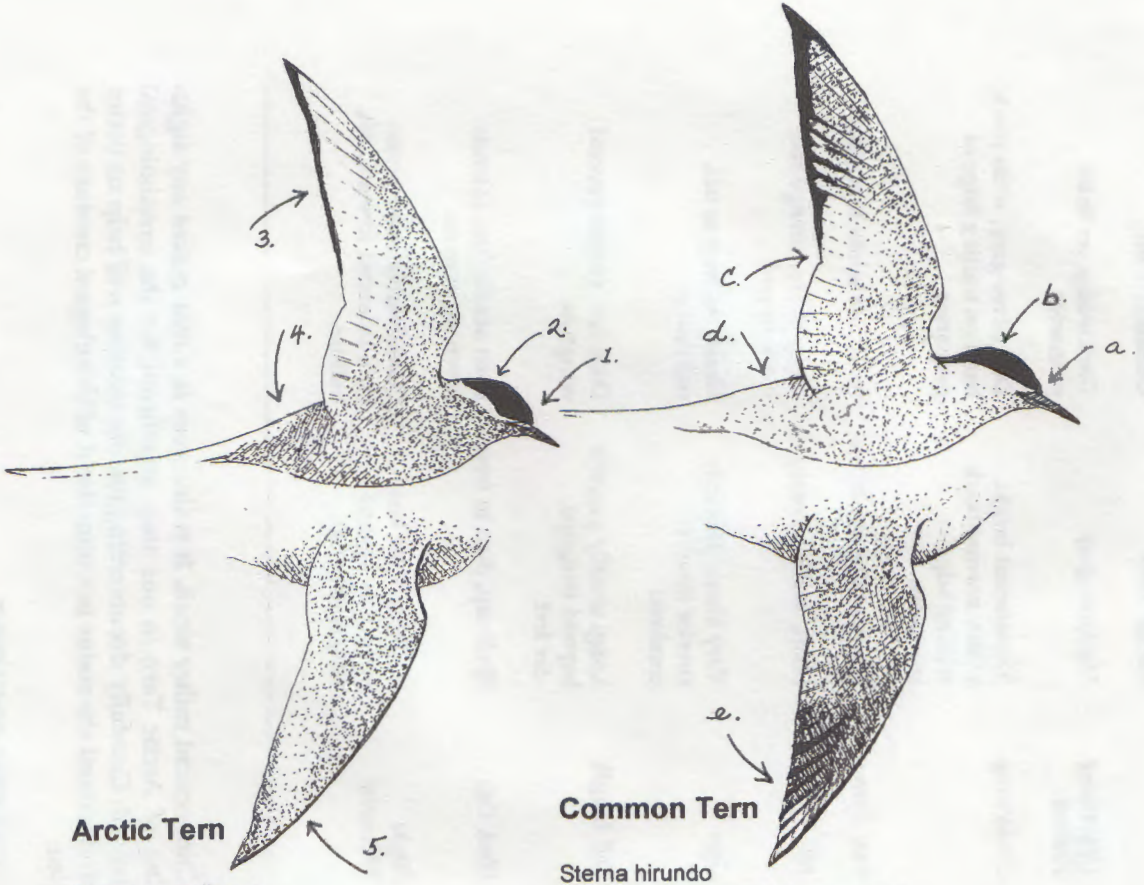
Arctic Tern vs Common Tern Comparison

	Arctic Tern	Common Tern
Upperwing Pattern	Uniform gray	Dark wedge on outer primaries
Underwing	Translucent bright white, narrow black trailing edge to primaries	Dull silver-gray, wide black band on trailing edge of primaries
Face Pattern	Sharp white cheek line	Indistinct white face patch
Bill	Short, stubby, coral-red.	Long, sharp, orange-red, black tipped.
Legs	Very short, distinctly shorter than bill, coral-red	Nearly as long as bill, red-orange.
Tail Length	Long, usually projects beyond wingtips. *See text.*	Does not project beyond wingtips
Black Cap	Skull cap, dips in front.	Even across face, extends down nape more.
Flight Silhouette	Neckless, little head projection beyond wings, long tail.	Considerable head projection, balanced fore and aft, bulkier.

Connecticut rather small. It is this very fact that makes any sighting of Arctic Tern in our state significant for the ornithological record. Carefully documenting the observation will help us better understand the status in Connecticut of this elegant creature of the sea.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Louis Bevier's measuring of specimens at the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, as well as his always valuable comments, provided necessary information to the authors.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Arctic Tern
Sterna paradisaea
(alternate plumage / late summer)
Common Tern
Sterna hirundo
(alternate plumage / late summer)

Arctic Tern

Sterna paradisaea

(alternate plumage/late summer)

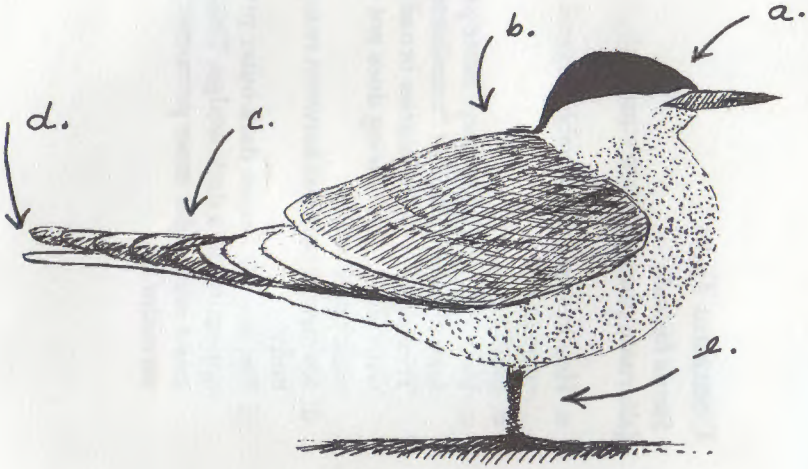
1. Small headed, front-weighted in flight.
2. Neckless appearance.
3. Underwing flight feathers bright white, appearing "translucent", contrasting with gray body. Very narrow black trailing edge to primaries.
4. White rump contrasting with gray body. Tail long.
5. Upper wing uniform gray.

Common Tern

Sterna hirundo

(alternate plumage/late summer)

a. Head extends noticeably beyond leading edge of wing.
b. Neck apparent.
c. Underwing silvery gray. Inner primaries may appear whiter or "translucent". Trailing edge of primaries broadly edged with black. Underwing does not contrast with body color.
d. No strong contrast between rump and body.
e. Upperwing shows dark outer primaries, appearing as a dark wedge. This contrasts with paler inner primaries and secondaries.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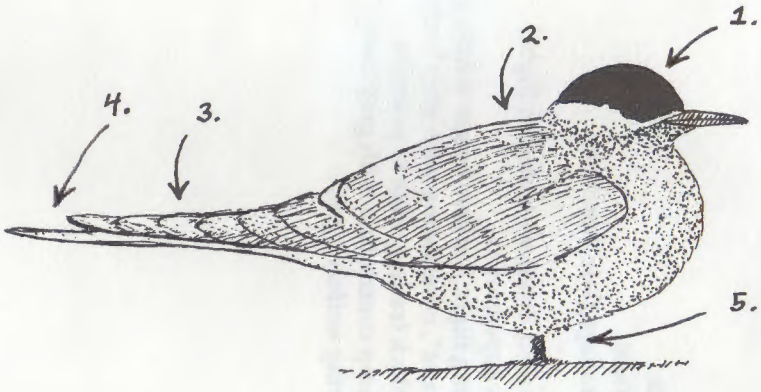
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Arctic Tern

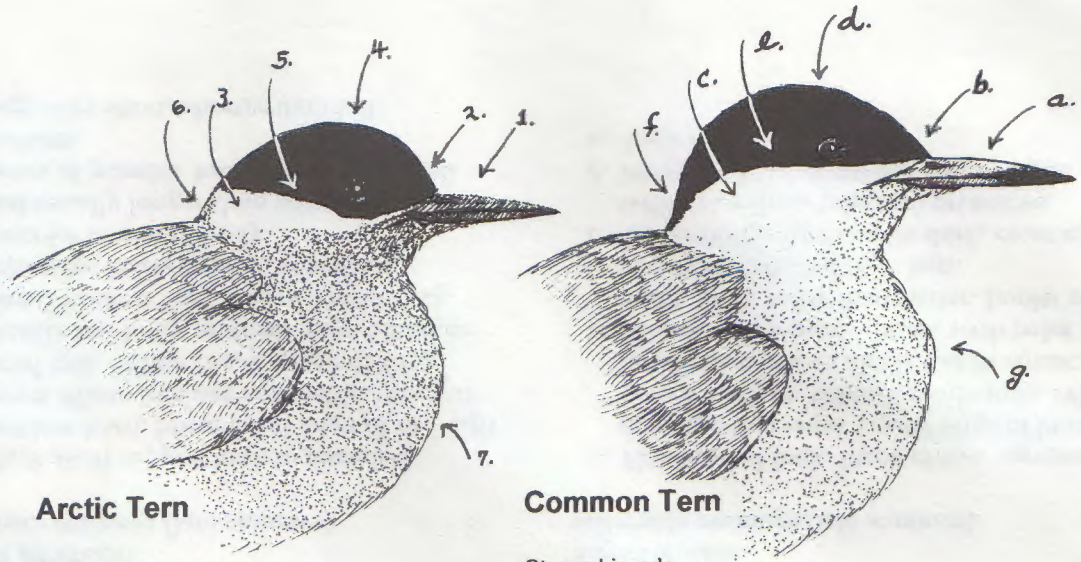
Sterna paradisaea
(alternate plumage/late summer)

1. Black skull-capped look to rounded, neckless head, lower front edge of cap dips down. White lore not noticeable, pinched facial look. White cheek stripe distinct.
2. Mantle and body uniform gray. Slimmer than Common Tern. Looks front-heavy.
3. Primaries uniform gray, appearing concolor to rest of body.
4. Tail usually longer than wings but be aware of possible broken or missing tail feathers.
5. Legs very short, shorter than bill.

Common Tern

Sterna hirundo
(alternate plumage/late summer)

a. Flat-headed look. Black crown appears to extend down nape. Lower edge of black crown straight. White lore obvious. White facial patch not as distinct as in Arctic.
b. Mantle and wings contrast with paler body. Body fuller than Arctic. Looks more evenly distributed over legs.
c. Outer (longer) primaries dark, contrasting with paler inner (shorter) primaries.
d. Wings and tail about the same length.
e. Legs as long as the bill.



Arctic Tern

Sterna paradisaea
(alternate plumage / late summer)

Common Tern

Sterna hirundo
(alternate plumage / late summer)

Arctic Tern

Sterna paradisaea

(alternate plumage/late summer)

1. Bill all coral red, may show dusky tip to upper mandible. Bill shorter, appears finer than Common Tern.
2. White space between bill and cap barely visible; results in a distinctive pinched look to the face.
3. White cheek stripe contrasts distinctly with cap and gray face.
4. Crown deepest above the eye, resulting in a round-beaded look.
5. Lower edge of crown dips onto cheek near the eye.
6. Shows little to no neck, black cap does not extend down neck, resulting in a capped appearance.
7. Gray underparts of bird do not contrast with mantle and wings.

Common Tern

Sterna hirundo

(alternate plumage/late summer)

a. Bill orange-red with dark tip. Some may show all orange or with limited dark. Bill longer than Arctic.
b. White space between cap and bill noticeable, gives open expression to the face.
c. White face patch can be distinct but not as distinct and covering more of the face than that of Arctic Tern.
d. Crown deepest behind eye, flat headed look.
e. Lower edge of crown cut straight across face.
f. Black of crown seems to extend farther down neck, more neck shows than Arctic.
g. Pale gray underparts of bird contrast with darker mantle and wings.

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SITE GUIDE: FARMINGTON CANAL GREENWAY—HAMDEN AND CHESHIRE

Dwight G. Smith, Arnold Devine, and Andy Brand

Farmington Canal Greenway began life in 1828 as the Farmington Canal, a 78 mile inland transportation route that ran from New Haven north through central Connecticut to join with the Connecticut River near Northampton, Massachusetts. In 1848, the canal line became part of the New Haven and Northampton Railroad, which still later was incorporated as part of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad. With the decline of the rail lines in the middle years of this century, the canal railway deteriorated rapidly. In some places sections were taken over by adjacent businesses and in others the land was converted into convenient dump sites.

In the 1990's, a grass roots movement centered in the towns of Cheshire and Hamden successfully promoted the conversion of several sections of the old canal line into a linear greenway park. Today, some 6.6 miles of former canal line/railroad bed in Hamden and Cheshire have been leveled, paved, and provided with wooden bridges, benches, and other modern conveniences for recreation. Plans call for a further extension of the greenway south through Hamden into New Haven and possibly north into Southington.

Birders can find birding opportunities along the existing greenway throughout much of the year. Over 150 species have been observed, and the greenway is especially good for spring migrants that use the former canal line as a migration corridor. Woodland, edge, and wetland nesting birds also offer good birding in spring and summer. Noteworthy species that have been observed along the greenway include Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, both cuckoo species, Yellow-breasted Chat, Kentucky and Mourning Warblers, and Lincoln's and Vesper Sparrows.

Birders be forewarned! The greenway has proven especially popular as a walking, hiking, biking, roller blading, jogging, and baby strolling area and recreational traffic can be intense throughout most of the day. The best hours for birding the greenway are either very early in the morning or in the later evening hours. When birding, be patient with other recreational enthusiasts and watch out for fast moving bikers and roller bladers. In fact, at any time of day, it is always best to stay well off the pavement when exploring for birds.

Directions

From Interstate 91 take Exit 10 (Route 40, Hamden) and follow the Mt. Carmel Connector to Route 10 north (2.6 miles). Turn right onto Route 10 north, continue for 1.5 miles and turn left onto Todd Street. Try to park in the Farmington Canal Greenway lot on the right. You can also elect to park at Brooksvale Recreational Park, located on 524 Brooksvale Avenue or at the main Greenway parking lot located on Route 42 (see map for details). Parking is also permitted at the north end of Brooksvale Avenue, at its intersection with Mt. Sanford Road.

Birding

Todd Street to Shepard Avenue

Note the 2.6 mile marker at the start of the greenway trail. Scattered along the trail are several information signs about the history and natural history of the old canal line. Don't miss the wildlife ecology poster board at the north end of the parking lot.

The weedy field of grasses and goldenrod to the right of the parking lot can produce Chipping Sparrow and Bobolink in spring and summer; Brown Thrasher (uncommon); Field and White-throated Sparrows in fall; and Ring-necked Pheasant and Wild Turkey (uncommon) throughout the year.

Within a hundred yards, the walkway enters woods with the old canal to the left. Here and all along the canal birding can be exceptionally good during spring migration for warblers, vireos, flycatchers, and orioles. In late spring and summer the trailside edge and woods along the trail can be profitably birded for a wide variety of species; common and widespread species include Blue Jay, Eastern Towhee, Gray Catbird, Northern Cardinal, Common Yellowthroat, and Yellow and Black-and-White Warblers. Several species of woodpeckers including Downy, Hairy, and Red-bellied along with the Northern Flicker, can be common in the woods. Crow-sized Pileated Woodpeckers can occasionally be spotted (but more often heard) in the wilder sections of the trail while Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, a rarer species, can sometimes be recorded during migration.

Near the 2.0 mile marker the greenway nears Route 10 as evidenced by the buildings, parking lots, and dumpsters on the right. House Sparrows and Eurasian Starlings make their appearance along this segment of the greenway but birders may also spot an occasional Eastern Bluebird (which nest in the boxes put up along the trail). Near mile marker 1.8 is the remains of the old Canal Lock

Number 14 and the old lock-keeper's house across the way. It is now on the registry of historic homes. Pine Warblers and American Crows nest in the old pines near here. In summer and early fall, listen for the calls of Fish Crows which occasionally intermix with American Crows during their post breeding dispersal. (Be aware that Fish Crows may be hard to distinguish from female and young American Crows, especially in summer).

Brooksvale Avenue to Mount Sanford Road.

This is considered by many birders to be the most productive section along the canal line, especially for spring migrants and nesting species.

Just beyond the 1.2 mile marker, on the right, check the Christmas tree plantation. A variety of field and edge birds such as Bobolink, Olive-sided Flycatcher (rare), Ring-necked Pheasant, and White-throated Sparrow occur here. In summer, the nest boxes in the field may hold nesting Eastern Bluebird or Tree Swallow. Fall migrants may include Chipping, Fox, Song, Swamp, Savannah Sparrows and Dark-eyed Junco. Rarer sparrows possible in the field and woodland edge community may include Lincoln's and White-crowned Sparrows.

Beyond the field the trail again enters an open woodland and woodland edge good for many of the woodland and edge species previously listed. Around 0.7 miles the trail runs through a powerline cut, now comprised of abundant weedy and scrubby growth. The open cut of the powerline affords a good locale for spring migrant warblers, vireos, and sparrows. This is also the spot to check for Baltimore and Orchard Orioles (rarer) in late April and May. Both Black-billed and Yellow-billed Cuckoos have also been heard in this area.

Nesting species along the powerline can include Field Sparrow, Indigo Bunting, Blue-winged and Prairie Warblers, and Common Yellowthroat. The powerline cut also affords a vantage point to scan the sky for raptors. Turkey Vultures and Red-tailed Hawks are fairly common, but American Kestrel, Broad-winged and Cooper's Hawks are always possible. Occasionally, other flyovers such as the Pileated Woodpecker and Northern Flicker can be spotted from the powerline. This is also a fairly reliable spot to call for owls in the late evening and early morning hours. Great Horned Owl is likely and Eastern Screech Owl can sometimes be imitated into responding as well, but not usually at the same time. As part of the New Haven Bird Club's Big Sit, a team of birders has had 45-50 species from this power cut on a mid-October day.

Beyond the powerline the trail enters an open woodland that becomes wet bottomland woods, especially on the right. The trail from here to Mount Sanford Road has proven especially productive for spring migrants, especially warblers, vireos, and flycatchers such as the Great Crested Flycatcher. In summer, the area supports a more typical variety of open woodland birds such as Eastern Wood-Pewee, Veery, and Ovenbird, along with an assortment of other species. Red-shouldered Hawks usually nest along this stretch of the canal.

The larger area of open water to the left of the trail should be checked for waterfowl from spring through fall. Mallards nest along the banks and Wood Ducks nest in tree cavities overlooking the water. On the opposite side of the trail, the swampy area and pond can hold Canada Goose, Green Heron, Wood Duck, and occasionally, Hooded Merganser.

Mount Sanford Road to Route 42

From Mount Sanford Road to South Brooksvale Road the trail continues to parallel the old canal, still on the left as it goes through a wet woodland. The area can be extremely buggy on warm summer evenings, so be prepared.

North of South Brooksvale Road the habitat becomes more open with a narrow field on the right and a line of trees and shrubs paralleling the canal on the left. A small cattail marsh and shrub swamp begins to take shape on the left, just to the west of the shallow canal. In spring, the flycatcher migrants that sometimes occur in this area include Willow and Acadian. This area is also good for an occasional Virginia Rail, American Bittern, or Green Heron. Nesting birds in this area generally include Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Yellowthroat and Yellow Warbler. Cavities in the dead trees towards the west end of the swamp can hold nesting Wood Ducks and perhaps Eastern Screech Owls. They can also be checked for Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers and Common Flicker. Occasionally, an American Woodcock or Common Snipe can be scared up. In spring and summer, Eastern Kingbird, Baltimore Oriole, Warbling Vireo, and Common Grackle often contribute their melodies to the chorus of Red-wings. They can usually be spotted in the more open vegetation to the east. In fall, almost all of the warblers, sparrows and blackbirds previously noted may turn up, along with an occasional Rusty Blackbird.

Shortly beyond the marsh, the canal crosses under the trail to the right where it is slotted through a refurbished lock, complete with a green lock-keeper's house, now restored and occupied. The

shallow water in the old canal lock is criss-crossed with muskrat paths among which water plantain (an uncommon aquatic plant) grows. Check the canal's grassy edges for Spotted Sandpiper and an occasional Great Blue Heron or Green Heron. The open area around the house may yield an occasional Carolina Wren and House Wren.

North of the lock, the greenway trail continues straight ahead while the canal diverges to the right. The area along the former canal now functions as an overflow parking lot.

Route 42 to Cornwall Street

The greenway continues north of Route 42 for another two miles, paralleling the canal, which now continues somewhat deeper and with a more continuous water supply for much of the year. In summer, 1996, a Black Swan (probably an escapee rather than a rarity) lingered for several weeks. The woods on both sides and occasionally open fields (mostly to the right of the canal) harbor the same species previously discussed. In spring check the woods and shrubby edge for migrant Hermit, Swainson's, and Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's Thrushes and a variety of warblers such as Northern Parula, Yellow-rumped, Magnolia, and Tennessee. Some common nesting species in these woods include Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Veery, Wood Thrush, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Scarlet Tanager, and Brown-headed Cowbird.

In fall, the canal along this section can occasionally yield Green-winged and Blue-winged Teals, Northern Pintail, Canvasback and less frequently, a Common Loon. Other spring and fall birds along the waterway may include Solitary and Spotted Sandpipers.

In September, the sky above the farm fields is often good for flights of Common Nighthawks.

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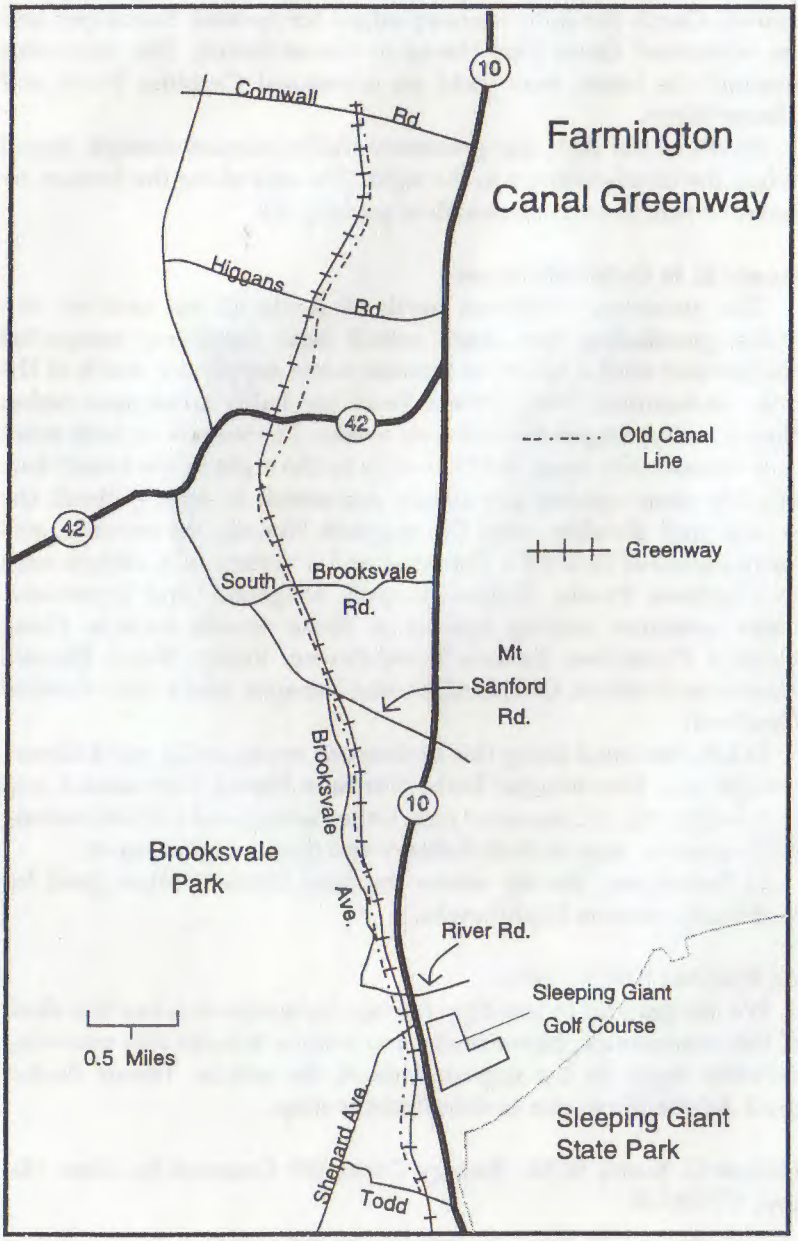
Farmington
Canal Greenway
Cornwall Rd
Higgans Rd
10
42
42
Old Canal Line
Greenway
South Brooksvale Rd.
Mt Sanford Rd.
Brooksvale Ave.
10
Brooksvale Park
River Rd.
Sleeping Giant Golf Course
0.5 Miles
Sleeping Giant State Park
Shepard Ave.
Todd

THE 1997 SUMMER BIRD COUNT

Joseph Zeranski

For the fourth consecutive year the same nine Summer Bird Counts (SBCs) were conducted in Connecticut. Held on weekends throughout June, two SBCs were coastal, two were held along the Connecticut River, two others were upland, while the remaining three counts were in the northern hills. Of 189 species found on Count Day(s), 155 were seen on the previous four SBCs, 13 on three of the four counts, eight were seen on two of the four, and another seven on just one prior count. Six additional species were new for the past ten years.

Briefly contrasting the degree of effort expended on the SBCs with Connecticut's Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs), we find that in 1997 there were 233 summer observers; just 27.7% of the 928 field observers on the most recent CBCs. SBCs' 1197 party hours (PH) were about 51.6% of the CBCs' 2314 PHs. Thus each SBC observer spent about twice as much time in the field than he or she did when conducting CBCs. Incidentally, summer counts held during the early part of the month were apt to experience more migrants and a higher portion of those species whose songs waned later in the month. Yet the nine SBCs together present a nice cross section of the nesting season. During the censusing period, weather conditions seem to have little influence on the presence or absence of most nesters, although heavy rains and hot, humid conditions may effect observer proficiency.

Before proceeding, it is only fair to mention that most SBC additions (although interesting) have limited relevance to our understanding of breeding birds. New species to the SBCs in 1997 included **Red-necked Grebe** (Greenwich-Stamford), an unusual summer vagrant, but not an entirely surprising one. **Common Snipe** (Greenwich-Stamford) has only nested in Connecticut at most three or four times historically, but this one-person sighting, if accepted by the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut, was probably a late migrant, as it was not in its preferred nesting habitat and was not relocated. The singing **Chuck-will's-widow** (Woodbury-Roxbury) was undoubtedly a spring overshoot, but its nesting range is slowly expanding northward and eventual breeding here is not an outlandish prospect. A late migrant was the **Cape May Warbler** (Woodbury-Roxbury). Formerly considered a sub-species, now elevated to full species status, a **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow** (Greenwich-Stamford) was also a late migrant. The

White-crowned Sparrow (Woodbury-Roxbury) record is among the latest spring occurrences recorded in the state.

From time to time we find that some of the nesters long considered rarities may not be quite as rare as is generally thought. **King Rail** was reported twice during the last five years as was **Olive-sided Flycatcher**. Particularly noteworthy was that in four of the last five years the elusive **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was tallied.

Using the averages of four SBC totals, from 1993 through 1996, in comparison to the 1997 results, we notice, or think we notice, some nesting population trends. Although 1993 saw one fewer SBC than in subsequent years, these five years are similar and comparable in many ways.

Concise summaries provide most telling changes and include a recent jump in **Barred Owl** numbers. Its 1993-94 numbers, compared to those of **Great Horned Owl** averaged 26 birds vs. 23 birds. Totals in 1996-97 demonstrated a noticeable increase, averaging 54 birds to 32 birds.

Since mid century, species have been expanding into the state northward from the south and southward from northern New England. The southern **Red-bellied Woodpecker** is still increasing and this year's total (418 birds) is 70% greater than the average of the prior four years, while both Greenwich-Stamford and Woodbury-Roxbury topped their previous highs. Expanding from the north, **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** has grown every year since 1993. Its 1997 total (165 birds) is over 75% above the same four year average (93.5).

Among the flycatchers, recent growth was experienced by **Alder Flycatcher**, which has increased every year since 1993; its total of 78 birds is almost twice its earlier average (41). Dependent upon rather precise and limited nesting sites **Bank Swallow's** total of 202 birds, was down about 56% from its 1993-96 averages and was less than 76% of its lowest year's figure in 1993.

Two other expanding species have entered the state from opposite directions. **Fish Crow**, historically found largely along the coast, was on seven 1997 SBCs and the total (62 birds) was 37% higher than the 1993-96 average (45). Expanding south from higher northern elevations, **Common Raven** has increased within the last two decades from an accidental vagrant to a regular local upland nester and noted on three SBCs. Still having a rather limited base, its 1997 total of 28 birds is 2.4 times the 1993-96 average of 11.5 birds.

Carolina Wren showed a moderate gain of about 20%, from a recent low total (49) in 1996. After suffering through two disas-

trous winters, its tally of 61 was only about one-fourth of 1993's 242 birds. Reaching a five year low (594), **Northern Mockingbird** numbers were 68% of its 1993-96 average. **Warbling Vireo's** 1997 numbers (664) were 141% of the 1993-96 aveage (472).

Golden-winged Warbler is a marginal state nester (1.4 birds averaged over the last five years), but has been seen during four of the last five years. A slight growth in its diminished numbers seems to have been experienced by **Hooded Warbler**, about 50% more than averaged on the earlier SBCs (37 vs. 24.5). **Canada Warbler** numbers have grown each year. This year's count of 83 birds was two-thirds higher than the average for 1993-96 (49).

All trends were not up. **Eastern Towhee** was about 15% below the previous four year average (686 vs. 781 birds). Long suffering **Savannah Sparrow** has shown censusing fluctuations, probably due to a limited population. Nevertheless, its 1997 tally (12 birds) was only 40% of the 1993-96 average (32). Starting with much higher numbers, the **Eastern Meadowlark** count (39) was just 60% of the same four year average (65.5). **Orchard Oriole**, seen on seven of the nine 1997 SBCs, was twice as common (54) as its average during the prior four years (28.5). Finally, **House Finch** numbers continue to drop. The 1997 count (1,487) was just 42% of the 1993 total (3,510), and only 55% of the prior four years average (2681.5).

Of all the avian population changes occurring in the northeastern United States as a result of habitat alteration, the most pervasive is the persistent decline of birds which are found among treeless expanses, such as grasslands, fields, meadows, and low thickets. Contrary to popular views, natural and set fires periodically spread through the precolonial countryside. Particularly vunerable were ridges and hilltops. Stretches of burned over forests, grasslands, dense thickets covered by grape vines, and meadows, interrupted by beaver populated stream corridors and wooded wetlands, were commonplace. Some treeless areas were even large enough to support Prairie Chicken populations. During the days of the "virgin forest", tree-traveling squirrels in much of the state would have needed very circuitous routes to cover most long distances.

*Some grassland species like **Upland Sandpiper, Common Nighthawk, and Grasshopper Sparrow**, are hanging in by the "skin of their teeth" as breeders. **Yellow-breasted Chat** and **Savannah Sparrow**, often locally common nesters into the early part of this century, are not doing much better. Formerly abundant, **Vesper Sparrow** may be gone as a nester. **Northern Bobwhite** is not far behind as its numbers diminish. Most of these species have lost all but a fraction of their preferred nesting*

habitat, with the remainder in jeopardy. ***Eastern Meadowlark*** *and* ***Bobolink,*** *as yet not as rare, have become more localized in recent decades and increasingly absent in many areas. On a similar vein, great reductions in treeless wetlands, such as marshes and wet sedge meadows, have undermined nesting rail and bittern populations. Most observers agree that these and other open field and meadow dependent birds are in a genuinely sorry state.*

Loyal, hard working compilers as well as enthusiastic and knowledgeable field observers are responsible for the success of Connecticut SBCs. Having worked to initiate and develop the Hartford SBC since 1991, compiler Kathie Felice is retiring after this season. Ray Belding stepped down from his position as co-compiler of the Litchfield Hills SBC, having helped guide it since its 1994 founding. Both deserve tremendous credit for getting their respective SBC's off the ground.

A quick reminder to the faithful reader, the end of this section offers a concise outline of each SBC's statistics with a list of participants. There are tables showing species' totals for each SBC area and for the entire state. New species are noted for all 1997 categories. For the old timers of Connecticut SBCs (those conducted for at least 10 years; Greenwich-Stamford beginning in 1976 and Woodbury-Roxbury founded in 1978), ten year lows and highs are recorded, as are rarities, species seen fewer than five times during the preceding decade. Also shown are 'count period' species (CP), those found within three days of the count day(s) (CD), but not on CD. The number of counts on which each species was seen during the prior four years and statewide averages for 1993-96 years are included.

STATEWIDE COUNT TOTALS

Dates: June 1, 7, 8, 14, 15, 28, & 29. Reported on Count Days (CD) were 189 Species & 98,081 Individuals, plus two Count Period (CP) species. Two hundred & thirty three observers in 124 parties spent 1197 Party Hours (PHs), 1121 daytime and 58.25 night time, in the field.

INDIVIDUAL COUNT TOTALS (northern 1/4), Canton, Colebrook (south half), Granby (southwest 1/4), Hartland, New Hartford, Torrington (north 1/4), & Winchester.

Weather: Sunny daytime and clear both nights. 6/28: Day Temp 52° to 85°F., Wind W, 0 - 10 mph., Night Temp. 72° to 62°F.

windless.; 6/29: Day Temp. 62° to 88°F.; Wind SW, 0 - 5 mph., Night Temp. 75° to 65°F. windless.

Totals: 120 Species, 10,878 Individuals. Twenty one observers in 15 parties censused during 137 daytime & 8 night PHs.

Participants: *Bob Barbieri, Cheryl Barker, Roger Behrens, George Boynton, Jay Kaplan, Kathie Kellcher, Betty Kleiner, Gil Kleiner, Linne Landgraf, Walt Landgraf, Charlie Lynes, Sharon Lynes, Rachael Manzer, Barbara McQueen, Miles Messenger, Jamie Meyers, Carol Parent, David Rosgen (84 Falls Terrace, Apt. D, Oakville CT. 06779), Stanley Rosgen, Bud Sanders, David Sweeney.*

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

Date: Sat. & Sun., June 14 & 15. 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, & Stamford; and (New York, 35% of area) Armonk, Bedford (in part), Port Chester, Rye, & White Plains (in part).

Weather: Mostly sunny both days. 6/14: Temp. 62° to 80°F., Wind SW, 5+ mph., 6/15: Temp. 48° to 75°F., Wind S, 10+ mph.

Totals: 146 Species, 22,311 Individuals, plus five CP species. Sixty-two observers in 33 parties censused during 315 day & 13.5 night PHs.

Participants: *Tom Andersen, John Askildsen, Pat Bailey, Ken Ballas, Tom Baptist, Trudy Battaly, Gail Benson, Michael Bochnik, John Bova, Thomas W. Burke (235 Highland Road, Rye NY 10580), Sue Carnahan, Albie Collins, Bob Darula, Julio de la Torre, Patrick Dugan, Cynthia Ehlinger, Andrew Farnsworth, Ken Feustel, Sue Feustel, Anne French, Jay Gartner, Betty Grossman, Carol Hartel, Alyssa Havens, Dave Havens, Bo Hopkins, Jalna Jaeger, Ann Jambriska, Joe Jambriska, Bob Kurtz, Claudia Leff, Jeff Main, Frank Mantlik, Hugh McGuinness, Dave Medo, Janet Mehmel, Tom Meyer, Frank Novak, Jim O'Brien, Brian O'Toole, Gary Palmer (34 Field Road, Cos Cob CT 06807), Drew Panko, Matt Popp, Steve Potter, Polly Rothstein, Meredith Sampson, Bob Shriber, John Shull, Jason Siemers, Alice Smith, Bruce Smith, Curtis Smith, Mary Beth Sollins, Andy Towle, Patty Towle, David Tracy, Mohan Tracy, Ann Vajsabel, James Vellozzi, Bill Wallace, Mariam Waldon, Joseph Zeranski.*

Hartford Summer Bird Count ***(founded 1991)***

Date: Sat. & Sun., June 14 & 15. Count Center: 41° 46' N 72° 40' W. Elevation 40 to 640 ft. Area: Bloomfield, East Hartford, Farmington, Hartford, Manchester, New Britain, Newington,

Rocky Hill, South Windsor, West Hartford, Wethersfield, & Windsor.

Weather: Mostly sunny and pleasant. 6/14: Temp. 75° to 80°F., Wind SW, 0 - 10 MPH.; 6/15: Temp. 55° to 70°F.

Totals: 111 Species, plus one in CP, 11,032 Individuals. Eighteen observers in 15 parties censused over 108.5 day & three night PHs.

Participants: *Bill Altmann, Mary E. Carter, Paul Cianfaglione, Pat Comins, Ed Czlapinski, Mary Czlapinski, Paul Desjardins, Kathie Felice (274 Morningside Drive East, Bristol CT 06010), Pat Junno, Jay Kaplan, Betty Kleiner, Gil Kleiner, Steve Kotchko, Bill McGeehee, Mary Rudick, Dave Rosgren.*

Litchfield Hills Summer Bird Count *(founded 1994)*

Date: Sat. & Sun., June 7 & 8 Count Center: 41° 43' N 73° 14' W. Elevation 450 to 1658 ft. Area (in whole or in part): Cornwall, Goshen, Kent, Litchfield, Morris, Sharon, Torrington, Warren, & Washington.

Weather: 6/7: Cool and cloudy, Temp. 50° to 65°F. 6/8: Warm, Sunny, Temp. 65° to 75°F.

Totals: 138 Species, 17,232 Individuals. Forty observers in 13 parties censused during 174 day & 13.5 night PHs.

Participants: *John Baker, Bob Barbieri (56 Baron Lane, Torrington CT 06790), Joan Barry, Raymond Belding, Sue Belding, George Boynton, Angela Dimmitt, David Doubleday, Ellen Doubleday, Cecile Emond, Dave Emond, Jeff Greenwood, Jeremy Greenwood, Jeff Gros, Greg Hanisek, Rita Hannon, Bill Liedlich, Gorden Loery, Marian Lyga, Donna Manwaring, Colech Martin, Curtis Martin, Deborah Martin, Jeffrey Martin, Rich Martin, Andy McGee, Randy McHugh, Nancy Nichols, Clarance Parker, Jim Parker, Virginia Peterson, Dave Rosgen, Gerry Smith, Nina Stein, Adele Taylor, Dave Tripp, David Wakefield, Leigh Wells, Lyle Whittlesey, Fran Zygmont.*

New Haven Summer Bird Count *(founded 1991)*

Date: Sat. & Sun., June 7 & 8. 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, & Woodbridge (in part).

Weather: 6/7: (AM - 4 PM)- Cloudy and cool, Day Temp. 50° to 70° F., Wind dir. var, 0 - 5 mph. Night (8-9 PM) Temp. 58° F., Wind dir. var. 0 - 5 mph.; 6/8: (5 AM - 3 PM)- Cloudy to mid morning, then clearing, Temp. 50° to 78°F., Wind dir. var., 0 - 10 mph.

Totals: 117 species, plus one species during CP; 7,356 Individu-

als. Twenty three observers in 13 parties spent 90 daytime & one night PHs counting.

Participants: *Lee Aimesbury, Marion Aimesbury, Carol Bedworth, Ron Bell, Andrew Brand, Steve Broker, Richard English, John Himmelman, Mike Horne, Katy Hubbard, Will Hubbard, Tom Kilroy, Patrick Leahy, Carol Lemmon, Gary Lemmon, Chris Loscalzo, Steve C. Mayo (27 Tuttle Court, Bethany CT 06524), Florence McBride, Michael McBride, Nancy Rosenbaum, Lee Schlesinger, Debbie Tenney, John Triana.*

Quinnipiac Valley Summer Bird Count *(founded 1992)*

Date: Sat. & Sun., June 14 & 15. Count Center: 41° 28' N 72° 44' W (Intersection of routes 68 & 157). Elevation 30 to 600 ft. Area: Cheshire (in part), Durham, Guilford (in part), Killingworth (in part), Meriden, Middlefield, Middletown, North Branford, North Haven, & Wallingford.

Weather: Cool with light winds, and sunny to partly sunny. 6/14: Temp. 64° to 79°F., Wind 0 - 10 mph.; 6/15: Temp. 59° to 74°F., Wind 0 - 10 mph.

Totals: 115 Species, 8,273 Individuals. Twelve observers in six parties spent 66 day & two night PHs in the field.

Participants: *Mark Carabetta, Kevin Clark, Marjorie Hackbarth, Fred King, Marcia Klattenberg, Bill Martha, Jessica Martha, Pat Marsha, James McBride, John Schultz, Wilford Schultz (93 Harrison Road, Wallingford CT 06492), George Zepko.*

Salmon River Summer Bird Count *(founded 1992)*

Date: Sun., June 8. Circle Center: 41° 33' N 72° 26' W. Elevation 5 to 550 ft. Area: Haddam, Middletown (southeast), & Portland.

Weather: None submitted.

Totals: 88 Species on CD, 1,354 Individuals. Eleven observers in five parties counted over 28 day PHs.

Participants: *Mary Augustiny, Carrie Conrad, Larry Cyrulik, Marcy Klattenberg, Nancy Lawton, Ellen Luekens, Lewis Luekens, Joseph Morin (8 West St. Terrace, Cromwell CT 06416), Pat Rasch, Ed Reneson.*

Storrs Summer Bird Count ***(founded 1990)***

Date: Sat. & Sun., June 14 & 15. Count Center: 41° 48' N 72° 15' W., Juncture Rt. 195 & N. Eagleville Rd. Elevation 200 to 750 ft. Area: Andover, Ashford, Chaplin, Coventry, Mansfield, Tolland, Willimantic, West Willington, Willington, & Windham.

Weather: 6/14: Fair, partly cloudy, with low humidity, pleas-

ant. Temp. 60° to 76°F., Wind NW, 5 - 10 mph.; 6/15: Temp. 70° to 48°F., Wind W. 0 - 10 mph.

Totals: 97 Species, 3,315 Individuals. Eight observers in five parties spent 40 day and .25 night PHs in the field.

Participants: Bruce Carver, Dave Corsini, Sue Craig, Bill Gaunya, Tom Harrington, Bob Pirrie, Steve Rogers (75 Charles Lane, Storrs CT 06268), Avo Somer.

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

Date: Sun., June 1. Count Center: 41° 32' N 73° 16' W. Elevation 110 to 1060 ft. Area: Bethlehem, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Middlebury, New Milford, Newtown, Roxbury, Southbury, Washington, & Woodbury.

Weather: Fog/overcast AM, Hot and partly sunny PM. Temp. 65° - 85°F., Wind WSW, 0-15 mph.

Totals: 134 Species, 16,331 individual birds. Thirty eight observers in 19 parties spent 162.5 day & 17 night PHs censusing.

Participants: *Dave Babington, Ray Belding, Polly Brody, Glenn Budner, Bob Cartoceti, Mary Ann Currie, Neil Currie, Buzz Devine, Angela Dimmitt, Larry Fischer, Ethel Follett, Ted Greene, Susan Kirk, William Liedlich, Carolyn Longstreth, John Longstreth, Frank Mantlik, Donna Mannwaring, Jerry Marcellino, Charlene Marshall, Russ Naylor (44 Church Street, Woodbury CT 06798), Nancy Nichols, Charles Nims, Jim Nolan, Ben Olewine, Allan Root, Betty Root, Dave Rosgen, Fred Schroeder, John Sjovall, Kay Thompson, Darcy Thurrott, Art Titus, Carol Titus, Leigh Wells, Chris Wood, Francis Zygmont.*

JOESEPH ZERANSKI, 163 Field Point Rd., Greenwich, CT 06830

1997 SUMMER BIRD COUNT DEGREE OF EFFORT

	Coastal		Ct Valley		Upland Counts					1997	1993 - 96
					Mid-state		Northern			State	4 Yr
SPECIES	GS	NH	HA	SR	QV	WR	BA	LH	ST	Total	Ave.
Party Hours	328.5	91	112	28	68	179.5	145	187.5	40.25	1179.25	1126.4
Day Party Hours	315	90	109	28	66	162.5	137	174	40	1121	1070.8
Night Party Hours	13.5	1	3	0	2	17	8	13.5	0.25	58.25	55.6
Observers	62	23	18	11	12	38	21	40	8	233	239.8
Parties	33	13	15	5	6	19	15	13	5	124	121.5
Individual Birds per 10 PH	679	808	989	484	1217	910	750	919	824	832	846.7
Indiv. Birds per Observer	360	320	613	123	689	430	518	431	414	421	397.9
% Observers	26.6	9.9	7.7	4.7	5.2	16.3	9.0	17.2	3.4		
% Party Hours	27.9	7.7	9.5	2.4	5.8	15.2	12.3	15.9	3.4		
% Individual Birds	81.7	97.2	119.0	58.1	146.3	109.4	90.2	110.5	99.0		

BA - Barkhamsted
GS - Greenwich-Stamford
HA - Hartford
LH - Litchfield Hills
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QV - Quinnipiac Valley
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1997 SUMMER BIRD COUNT TABLES

SPECIES	Coastal		Ct Valley		Upland Counts					1997 State Total	1993 - 96	
					Mid-state		Northern				Yrs Seen	4 Yr Ave.
	GS	NH	HA	SR	QV	WR	BA	LH	ST			
Red-throated Loon											1	0.8
Common Loon	4						1			5	4	4.3
Pied-billed Grebe							4			4	4	3.0
Horned Grebe												CP
Red-necked Grebe	1									1		
Great Cormorant											1	0.3
Double-crested Cormorant	409	113	43	23	45	12	2	1		648	4	748.8
American Bittern								1		1	1	0.3
Least Bittern			2							2	4	2.3
Great Blue Heron	11	6	6	2	5	2	18	35	9	94	4	73.8
Great Egret	169	23					1			193	4	145.3
Snowy Egret	224	25								249	4	210.8
Little Blue Heron	4	1								5	4	1.5
Green Heron	36	8	4		6	7	5	11	1	78	4	91.0
Black-cr. Night-Heron	300	29								329	4	208.0
Yellow-cr. Night-Heron	1	1								2	4	5.0
Glossy Ibis											2	0.5
Mute Swan	134	73	16		84	26	2	16		351	4	347.0
Snow Goose					1					1	1	0.3
Brant											3	6.5
Canada Goose	1973	323	590	44	185	964	310	598	27	5014	4	4084.3
Wood Duck	97	5	13	13	16	43	25	95	3	310	4	302.3
Green-winged Teal											1	0.3
American Black Duck	42	43	4	2	12		1	2		106	4	63.8
Mallard	918	196	954	9	291	142	129	193	14	2846	4	2536.8

Mallard x Am. Bl. Duck		2	5					1		8	4	9.0
Northern Pintail	1									1	1	0.3
Blue-winged Teal		1								1	2	1.0
Northern Shoveler											1	0.3
Gadwall	2	8			2					12	4	5.8
American Wigeon											3	0.8
Canvasback Duck											1	0.3
Ring-necked Duck											2	0.8
Greater Scaup	2									2	4	2.0
Lesser Scaup											2	0.5
White-winged Scoter											1	0.3
Common Eider											1	0.5
Oldsquaw	1									1	1	0.3
Common Goldeneye	1									1		0.0
Bufflehead	1				1					2	3	1.5
Hooded Merganser					1		11	8		20	4	7.0
Common Merganser					2	31	48	4		85	4	64.0
Red-breasted Merganser											2	1.5
Ruddy Duck					1					1	1	0.3
Black Vulture											2	1.3
Turkey Vulture	26	38	2	2	28	67	42	89	5	299	4	224.8
Osprey	9	7	1	1	1		1	2		22	4	14.0
Mississippi Kite											1	0.3
Bald Eagle							3			3	4	6.3
Northern Harrier											3	1.5

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XX Noted 5 or fewer years in last 10 yrs.
XX Species new to Count
XX New 10 Yr. High Total (underlined)
XX New 10 Yr. Low Total (Bold)

1997 SUMMER BIRD COUNT TABLES (Cont'd)

SPECIES	Coastal		Ct Valley		Upland Counts					1997	1993 - 96	
					Mid-state		Northern			State	Yrs	4 Yr
	GS	NH	HA	SR	QV	WR	BA	LH	ST	Total	Seen	Ave.
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	1			1	2	1	1	1	10	4	7.8
Cooper's Hawk	CP		4		3	7	13	6		33	4	17.0
Northern Goshawk	4				1		1	1		7	4	10.5
accipiter species											4	2.3
Red-shouldered Hawk		5	4	2	1	6	1	2	4	25	4	29.3
Broad-winged Hawk	6	CP	2	5	1	5	13	13	1	46	4	48.3
Red-tailed Hawk	53	11	34	4	31	43	21	37	7	241	4	176.3
buteo species							1			1		0.0
American Kestrel					8	2	1	9		20	4	22.5
Peregrine Falcon	1		2							3	3	1.3
Ring-necked Pheasant	23	1	1		4					29	4	49.5
Ruffed Grouse		1				1	12	10		24	4	59.3
Wild Turkey	26	14		1	7	68	101	112	6	335	4	214.0
Northern Bobwhite					1					1	4	7.3
Clapper Rail	7	1								8	4	6.3
King Rail	1									1	1	0.3
Virginia Rail	1	1	2		1	4		31		40	4	25.3
Sora						2		1		3	3	1.3
Common Moorhen											3	1.0
American Coot	1									1	2	0.5
Black-bellied Plover	1	1								2	3	2.3
Semipalmated Plover											2	1.8
Piping Plover		20								20	4	9.0
Killdeer	49	21	51		27	53	23	44	6	274	4	302.3
American Oystercatcher	21									21	4	12.3

1997 SUMMER BIRD COUNT TABLES

SPECIES	Coastal		Ct Valley		Upland Counts					1997 State Total	1993 - 96	
					Mid-state		Northern				Yrs Seen	4 Yr Ave.
	GS	NH	HA	SR	QV	WR	BA	LH	ST			
Red-throated Loon											1	0.8
Common Loon	4						1			5	4	4.3
Pied-billed Grebe							4			4	4	3.0
Horned Grebe												CP
Red-necked Grebe	1									1		
Great Cormorant											1	0.3
Double-crested Cormorant	409	113	43	23	45	12	2	1		648	4	748.8
American Bittern								1		1	1	0.3
Least Bittern			2							2	4	2.3
Great Blue Heron	11	6	6	2	5	2	18	35	9	94	4	73.8
Great Egret	169	23					1			193	4	145.3
Snowy Egret	224	25								249	4	210.8
Little Blue Heron	4	1								5	4	1.5
Green Heron	36	8	4		6	7	5	11	1	78	4	91.0
Black-cr. Night-Heron	300	29								329	4	208.0
Yellow-cr. Night-Heron	1	1								2	4	5.0
Glossy Ibis											2	0.5
Mute Swan	134	73	16		84	26	2	16		351	4	347.0
Snow Goose					1					1	1	0.3
Brant											3	6.5
Canada Goose	1973	323	590	44	185	964	310	598	27	5014	4	4084.3
Wood Duck	97	5	13	13	16	43	25	95	3	310	4	302.3
Green-winged Teal											1	0.3
American Black Duck	42	43	4	2	12		1	2		106	4	63.8
Mallard	918	196	954	9	291	142	129	193	14	2846	4	2536.8

Mallard x Am. Bl. Duck		2	5					1		8	4	9.0
Northern Pintail	1									1	1	0.3
Blue-winged Teal		1								1	2	1.0
Northern Shoveler											1	0.3
Gadwall	2	8			2					12	4	5.8
American Wigeon											3	0.8
Canvasback Duck											1	0.3
Ring-necked Duck											2	0.8
Greater Scaup	2									2	4	2.0
Lesser Scaup											2	0.5
White-winged Scoter											1	0.3
Common Eider											1	0.5
Oldsquaw	1									1	1	0.3
Common Goldeneye	1									1		0.0
Bufflehead	1				1					2	3	1.5
Hooded Merganser					1		11	8		20	4	7.0
Common Merganser					2	31	48	4		85	4	64.0
Red-breasted Merganser											2	1.5
Ruddy Duck					1					1	1	0.3
Black Vulture											2	1.3
Turkey Vulture	26	38	2	2	28	67	42	89	5	299	4	224.8
Osprey	9	7	1	1	1		1	2		22	4	14.0
Mississippi Kite											1	0.3
Bald Eagle							3			3	4	6.3
Northern Harrier											3	1.5

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1997 SUMMER BIRD COUNT TABLES (Cont'd)

SPECIES	Coastal		Ct Valley		Upland Counts					1997	1993 - 96	
					Mid-state		Northern			State	Yrs	4 Yr
	GS	NH	HA	SR	QV	WR	BA	LH	ST	Total	Seen	Ave.
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	1			1	2	1	1	1	10	4	7.8
Cooper's Hawk	CP		4		3	7	13	6		33	4	17.0
Northern Goshawk	4				1		1	1		7	4	10.5
accipiter species											4	2.3
Red-shouldered Hawk		5	4	2	1	6	1	2	4	25	4	29.3
Broad-winged Hawk	6	CP	2	5	1	5	13	13	1	46	4	48.3
Red-tailed Hawk	53	11	34	4	31	43	21	37	7	241	4	176.3
buteo species							1			1		0.0
American Kestrel					8	2	1	9		20	4	22.5
Peregrine Falcon	1		2							3	3	1.3
Ring-necked Pheasant	23	1	1		4					29	4	49.5
Ruffed Grouse		1				1	12	10		24	4	59.3
Wild Turkey	26	14		1	7	68	101	112	6	335	4	214.0
Northern Bobwhite					1					1	4	7.3
Clapper Rail	7	1								8	4	6.3
King Rail	1									1	1	0.3
Virginia Rail	1	1	2		1	4		31		40	4	25.3
Sora						2		1		3	3	1.3
Common Moorhen											3	1.0
American Coot	1									1	2	0.5
Black-bellied Plover	1	1								2	3	2.3
Semipalmated Plover											2	1.8
Piping Plover		20								20	4	9.0
Killdeer	49	21	51		27	53	23	44	6	274	4	302.3
American Oystercatcher	21									21	4	12.3

Greater Yellowlegs					1		1			2	4	2.0
Lesser Yellowlegs											1	0.3
Solitary Sandpiper			1							1	2	0.5
Willet	2	2								4	3	0.8
Spotted Sandpiper	1	4	6		9	14	2	5	1	42	4	34.5
Ruddy Turnstone	2									2	3	4.5
Sanderling											1	0.5
Semipalmated Sandpiper	2	16								18	4	14.5
Least Sandpiper											2	0.8
White-rumped Sandpiper											1	0.8
Dunlin	CP									CP	3	2.5
small sandpiper species											1	0.3
Common Snipe	1									1		0.0
American Woodcock	1				1	2	1	14		19	4	13.3
Laughing Gull	5									5	4	77.3
Bonaparte's Gull											3	3.0
Ring-billed Gull	229	239	106	19	35	15	4	3		650	4	540.0
Herring Gull	499	107	369	8	32	8	1	6		1030	4	1085.3
Great Black-backed Gull	164	56	41	8	4	6				279	4	353.3
gull species							1			1	1	89.3
Gull-billed Tern											2	1.3
Common Tern	119	51								170	4	87.8
Least Tern	1	208								209	4	391.5
Black Tern												0.0
Rock Dove	524	161	214	12	181	**81**	47	68	64	1352	4	1275.8

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Greater Yellowlegs					1		1			2	4	2.0
Lesser Yellowlegs											1	0.3
Solitary Sandpiper				1						1	2	0.5
Willet	2	2								4	3	0.8
Spotted Sandpiper	1	4	6		9	14	2	5	1	42	4	34.5
Ruddy Turnstone	2									2	3	4.5
Sanderling											1	0.5
Semipalmated Sandpiper	2	16								18	4	14.5
Least Sandpiper											2	0.8
White-rumped Sandpiper											1	0.8
Dunlin	CP									CP	3	2.5
small sandpiper species											1	0.3
Common Snipe	1									1		0.0
American Woodcock	1				1	2	1	14		19	4	13.3
Laughing Gull	5									5	4	77.3
Bonaparte's Gull											3	3.0
Ring-billed Gull	229	239	106	19	35	15	4	3		650	4	540.0
Herring Gull	499	107	369	8	32	8	1	6		1030	4	1085.3
Great Black-backed Gull	164	56	41	8	4	6				279	4	353.3
gull species							1			1	1	89.3
Gull-billed Tern											2	1.3
Common Tern	119	51								170	4	87.8
Least Tern	1	208								209	4	391.5
Black Tern												0.0
Rock Dove	524	161	214	12	181	**81**	47	68	64	1352	4	1275.8

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1997 SUMMER BIRD COUNT TABLES (Cont'd)

SPECIES	Coastal		Ct Valley		Upland Counts					1997 State Total	1993 - 96	
					Mid-state		Northern				Yrs Seen	4 Yr Ave.
	GS	NH	HA	SR	QV	WR	BA	LH	ST			
Mourning Dove	442	168	326	29	434	372	132	294	39	2236	4	2253.3
Monk Parakeet	6	8								14	4	6.3
Black-billed Cuckoo	3		6		4	6		3	1	23	4	32.0
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	4	2	6		4	6		3	4	29	4	30.0
cuckoo species	1									1	3	5.5
Barn Owl									2	2	3	9.3
Eastern Screech-Owl	28		3	1	5	5		2		44	4	50.0
Great Horned Owl	4	1	4		1	2	4	14		30	4	28.0
Barred Owl	5		3		2	12	15	30		67	4	40.5
Long-eared Owl											1	0.5
Saw-whet Owl, Northern								1		1	3	3.3
Nighthawk, Common	2	1			8	3				14	4	6.5
Chuck-will's-widow						1				1		0.0
Whip-poor-will		1	CP		3	2	1	14		21	4	12.8
Chimney Swift	49	25	65	5	47	198	89	97	40	615	4	607.5
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	13		2	2		15	36	25	1	94	4	59.8
Belted Kingfisher	20	2	10	4	11	12	25	22	1	107	4	106.3
Red-headed Woodpecker											3	0.8
Red-bellied Woodpecker	159	26	46	6	24	91	20	28	18	418	4	289.0
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker						2	58	105		165	4	93.5
Downy Woodpecker	161	38	61	7	26	78	130	82	13	596	4	459.3
Hairy Woodpecker	44	10	15	3	2	26	54	43	1	198	4	138.5
Northern Flicker	194	61	97	17	51	87	70	101	15	693	4	741.8
Pileated Woodpecker	12	2	4	2		17	21	31	1	90	4	80.5
Olive-sided Flycatcher								1		1	2	0.5

Eastern Wood-Pewee	108	15	22	7	22	98	41	108	20	441	4	464.0
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher											2	0.5
Acadian Flycatcher	4	1	1		3	12			1	22	4	30.3
Alder Flycatcher			4			4	7	63		78	4	40.8
Willow Flycatcher	54	14	37		19	31	9	49	2	215	4	225.3
Least Flycatcher	CP		1	2	2	**25**	49	53	10	142	4	176.0
Empidonax species											2	2.8
Eastern Phoebe	78	17	35	7	28	134	83	131	27	540	4	618.8
Great Crested Flycatcher	68	17	37	9	51	131	30	122	18	483	4	346.3
Eastern Kingbird	**51**	18	58	10	38	162	86	143	14	580	4	551.8
Horned Lark											1	0.3
Purple Martin	18	4			18					40	4	35.5
Tree Swallow	133	97	146	25	76	173	525	387	72	1634	4	1461.5
No. Rough-winged Swallow	92	14	36	13	9	33	104	13	9	323	4	295.8
Bank Swallow	2	14	14	2	5	30	42	30	63	202	4	360.0
Cliff Swallow	69		12			82	15	12		190	4	217.3
Barn Swallow	267	198	88	8	138	267	135	232	58	1391	4	1327.5
Blue Jay	**319**	112	155	17	162	270	208	199	47	1489	4	1588.0
American Crow	1130	310	452	49	374	658	343	555	112	3983	4	3552.8
Fish Crow	28	13	11		2	2	2	4		62	4	45.3
Common Raven						3	15	10		28	4	11.5
Black-capped Chickadee	270	81	141	29	69	266	440	394	82	1772	4	1657.0
Tufted Titmouse	384	104	97	55	61	302	147	172	69	1391	4	1270.3
Red-breasted Nuthatch	2	2	11		1	1	21	23	5	66	4	120.5
White-breasted Nuthatch	142	11	38	5	15	58	64	60	10	403	4	321.8

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1997 SUMMER BIRD COUNT TABLES (Cont'd)

SPECIES	Coastal		Ct Valley		Upland Counts					1997 State Total	1993 - 96	
					Mid-state		Northern				Yrs Seen	4 Yr Ave.
	GS	NH	HA	SR	QV	WR	BA	LH	ST			
Brown Creeper	7		2			15	13	41	3	81	4	58.3
Carolina Wren	39	2	3	4	1	8		3	1	61	4	120.0
House Wren	222	32	65	9	28	150	118	89	29	742	4	861.8
Winter Wren	10	2				10	10	16	2	50	4	20.8
Sedge Wren											1	0.3
Marsh Wren	25	17	4					5		51	4	64.5
Golden-crowned Kinglet	3							4		7	4	7.8
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	18	3	2	6		72	31	22	15	169	4	180.3
Eastern Bluebird	44	11	68	4	15	128	114	101	10	495	4	459.8
Veery	**89**	26	13	14	27	238	362	465	64	1298	4	1202.0
Swainson's Thrush											2	0.8
Hermit Thrush	2			1	1	9	59	37		109	4	129.5
Wood Thrush	258	51	95	26	55	313	184	221	53	1256	4	1334.8
American Robin	1295	419	616	95	562	**1029**	409	1149	179	5753	4	5732.0
Gray Catbird	900	238	303	38	222	710	355	622	89	3477	4	3362.8
Northern Mockingbird	157	73	103	4	76	103	27	19	32	594	4	875.3
Brown Thrasher	35	6	7	7	6	25	3	4	1	94	4	90.5
Cedar Waxwing	201	84	103	29	117	306	252	332	49	1473	4	1059.8
European Starling	1226	706	1170	33	1134	**500**	257	611	437	6074	4	6775.0
White-eyed Vireo	34		3	5	2			4		48	4	48.0
Blue-headed Vireo	1	1	1		2	14	28	30	2	79	4	96.5
Yellow-throated Vireo	**24**		6	9	3	47	31	66	14	200	4	205.3
Warbling Vireo	97	20	67	14	44	235	32	126	29	664	4	472.8
Red-eyed Vireo	237	65	63	44	36	302	460	529	52	1788	4	1655.0
Blue-winged Warbler	112	84	19	25	57	167	37	99	23	623	4	665.0

"Lawrence's Warbler"		2								2	3	0.8
"Brewster's Warbler"		1								1	3	1.0
Golden-winged Warbler								2		2	3	1.0
Tennessee Warbler											3	1.5
Nashville Warbler								2		2	3	1.0
Northern Parula						3		1		4	4	2.5
Yellow Warbler	417	131	214	35	160	459	184	543	88	2231	4	1985.5
Chestnut-sided Warbler	12	11	10	3	10	131	204	365	15	761	4	591.0
Magnolia Warbler						3	59	8		70	4	61.5
Cape May Warbler						1				1		0.0
Black-thr. Blue Warbler						9	70	41		120	4	109.5
Yellow-rumped Warbler			3			1	79	47		130	4	122.0
Black-thr. Green Warbler	18	5	2	6		43	47	76	7	204	4	204.5
Blackburnian Warbler						12	46	48	1	107	4	100.3
Yellow-throated Warbler											1	0.3
Pine Warbler	30	17	18		6	25	60	37	9	202	4	192.3
Prairie Warbler	11	18	13	32	22	116	5	1	25	243	4	244.3
Blackpoll Warbler	2	1	1			5				9	2	3.0
Cerulean Warbler						1		5	4	10	4	8.8
Black-and-White Warbler	115	29	15	12	20	15	118	173	26	523	4	564.8
American Redstart	32	4	34	19	22	184	242	369	62	968	4	904.0
Worm-eating Warbler	76	12		8	4	14		4	9	127	4	176.8
Ovenbird	174	63	25	27	32	267	251	343	62	1244	4	1289.8
Northern Waterthrush	2			1		9	6	38	3	59	4	40.0
Louisiana Waterthrush	32	4	1	2	2	48	20	24	2	135	4	125.0

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 5 or fewer years in last 10 yrs.
XX Species new to Count
XX New 10 Yr. High Total (underlined)
XX New 10 Yr. Low Total (Bold)

1997 SUMMER BIRD COUNT TABLES (Cont'd)

SPECIES	Coastal		Ct Valley		Upland Counts					1997	1993 - 96	
					Mid-state		Northern			State	Yrs	4 Yr
	GS	NH	HA	SR	QV	WR	BA	LH	ST	Total	Seen	Ave.
Kentucky Warbler	6					1				7	2	1.3
Mourning Warbler	CP					1		2		3	2	0.5
Common Yellowthroat	233	84	104	16	60	355	411	558	54	1875	4	1764.8
Hooded Warbler	2	7		10	1	16		1		37	4	24.5
Wilson's Warbler											3	1.0
Canada Warbler	1	1				8	19	53	1	83	4	49.3
Yellow-breasted Chat	CP									CP	3	1.3
Summer Tanager											1	0.3
Scarlet Tanager	113	16	30	10	26	139	83	105	25	547	4	622.0
Northern Cardinal	338	125	221	35	113	346	136	219	64	1597	4	1550.5
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	**43**	19	26	3	27	121	76	82	12	409	4	377.8
Indigo Bunting	100	17	18	4	18	131	68	55	14	425	4	326.5
Eastern Towhee	88	59	18	18	39	163	117	144	40	686	4	781.8
Chipping Sparrow	358	25	137	38	69	409	308	317	73	1734	4	1747.3
Field Sparrow	**15**	12	8	12	20	72	14	14	6	173	4	168.8
Savannah Sparrow			1			5	1	3	2	12	4	31.8
Grasshopper Sparrow			4							4	2	3.8
Saltm. Sh.-tailed Sparrow	5									5	4	12.3
Nelson's Sh.-tailed Sparrow	1									1		0.0
Seaside Sparrow	1									1	1	0.5
Song Sparrow	474	106	367	32	198	491	280	593	70	2611	4	2502.5
Swamp Sparrow	15		9	3	18	19	37	177	3	281	4	232.0
White-throated Sparrow						2	2	13		17	4	15.5
White-crowned Sparrow						1				1		0.0
Dark-eyed Junco						3	28	10		41	4	58.3

Bobolink	1	3	47		29	**112**	34	225	10	461	4	402.8
Red-winged Blackbird	660	396	402	22	744	668	214	920	263	4289	4	4223.8
Eastern Meadowlark	2	1	4		17	**9**		5	1	39	4	65.5
Rusty Blackbird											1	1.3
Common Grackle	1258	471	596	23	799	713	241	672	40	4813	4	4736.5
Brown-headed Cowbird	213	85	190	15	189	221	116	272	47	1348	4	1265.8
Orchard Oriole	20	4	4	3	1	21		1		54	4	28.5
Northern Oriole	315	75	149	18	31	276	72	136	43	1115	4	1035.3
Bullock's Oriole											1	0.3
Purple Finch						4	42	33	1	80	4	89.8
House Finch	372	111	274	42	85	**244**	120	189	50	1487	4	2681.5
Pine Siskin											1	0.5
American Goldfinch	344	60	266	47	168	380	223	385	54	1927	4	1654.5
Evening Grosbeak											4	3.3
House Sparrow	897	331	588	21	211	381	195	250	141	3015	4	2686.5
Other Unident./Hybrid						1					2	5.0
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	22311	7356	11032	1354	8273	16331	10878	17232	3315	98082		95305
CD Species	146	118	111	88	115	134	121	138	97	189	220	187
CP Species	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2

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BOOKS ON BIRDS

Alan H. Brush

This time I would like to begin not with a book, but with a magazine article. Specifically, *Audubon* magazine for March/April 1997. On the cover boldly stated is "THE ORIGIN OF BIRDS" and the subtitle "Is There a Dinosaur Link." The cover and a double page spread inside features *Sinosauropteryx*, claimed by investigators in Bejing to be a dinosaur with feathers. What could better prove the ultimate evolutionary origin of the line leading to today's avian diversity? The article refers to the specimen as *Compsognathus*, a type of advanced theropod dinosaur. The genus *Compsognathus* was described from a well preserved specimen from the Late Jurassic beds close to those that have yielded the specimens of *Archaeopteryx*, the earliest known bird. Here is a case of scientists at different institutions, looking at the same specimen (slab and counterslab) with significantly different interpretations. It is just this sort of situation that continues to fuel this very interesting, and important, debate.

In the *Audubon* article, the author Virginia Morell, reports the find and uses the argument to point out the current controversy surrounding the evolutionary origin of birds. It is a popular article, and Morell is at liberty to establish the polemics. In fact, the questions surrounding the origin of birds go back at least to the times of Darwin and Huxley, coinciding with finding the first *Archaeopteryx* material (1868). The debate, of course, includes more than simply the question, "what is the oldest bird?" For one thing, it involves philosophical approaches to taxonomy. For some, it includes consideration of the mode of life of the ancestor: did flight evolve from trees down (arboreal) or from the ground up (cursorial)? For others it involves how we understand and interpret evolutionary history. There are several camps of taxonomists, and both ornithologists and paleontologists who study birds and their evolution. There are multiple possible points of view. Traditionally, there have been only a limited number of fossils. By good fortune, that has changed radically in the past decade providing fuel for the fires. So Morell's article is timely and provides some insight into the characters in the drama, the arguments, the counterarguments

and the necessary conclusions. Plus, the photos are outstanding and most, if not all, of the newer finds are mentioned.

The article is good reading and, among other things, provides an introduction to a book that is relevant to these and other issues in the field. **The Origin and Evolution of Birds**, (1996, Yale University Press, New Haven, x+420 pp., $55, ISBN 0-300-06460-8) by Alan Feduccia, may be the most widely discussed book on birds in recent memory. Anyone interested in the issues of the origin of birds, the evolution of flight, the possible role of feathers in all of this (feathers, after all, are a major factor in the definition of birds), how the various types of birds evolved and some of the problems in the understanding of a very spotty and sometimes confusing fossil record (and probably always inadequate), should take a look at this book. Feduccia presents the details cogent to the long running debates on the issues among biologists of many stripes. In fact, the number of paleo-ornithologists is relatively small. But they are extremely productive, well known, and highly respected in the ornithological community. Feduccia comes to the book with impeccable credentials and an agenda. Consequently, his writing is often contentious and he presents his side of the debates passionately. In spite of this, there is thorough coverage of the fossil bird fauna of the world and fascinating discussion of many of the controversies involving the interpretation of the material.

For many of the reasons discussed by both Morell and in Feduccia's book, *Sinosauropteryx* potentially holds a special interest for those interested in avian origins and early evolution. If it is a dinosaur with feathers it supports strongly the dinosaur hypothesis. It is exactly this point that the scientists from Bejing had in mind when they named the beast. As yet, there is no description in the western literature, although documentation is being prepared by workers in Nanjing. So for me it was an unimaginable opportunity to be invited to be one of four scientists to go to China in March (1997) and examine these specimen and others from the same fossil beds. Since the first *Sinosauropteryx* was found (and the slab and counterslab sold to two separate institution) two more specimens have turned up; one each in Bejing and Nanjing.

Now the question is "did we look back in time and see the origin of birds?" Was there a window into events that occurred 145 million years ago? Are birds related to dinosaurs or derived from some much earlier ancestor? Can western scientists survive for over three weeks on a diet of nothing but Chinese food and the most intense intellectual stimulation on the planet? Well, it's a definite 'yes' to the latter. The others are a bit more difficult.

Sinosauropteryx is definitely a dinosaur, most likely *Composgnathus*. The 'hair-like' (bad term) structures involved are certainly epidermal fibrous tissue, but not feathers in the modern sense. That is, they have none of the features we could recognize as being traditional feathers. Their exact nature is still unknown, and a good deal more work is needed. Might they be a precursor of feathers or a proto-feather? Perhaps.

We do, however, have an expanded appreciation for the potential treasures in these Upper Jurassic deposits. The fossil beds of Liaoning Provence contain a wealth of fossils; some may be potential avian ancestors; others are clearly birds. There are individual fossil feathers present. Still other, as yet undescribed fossils, that might be very closely related to, or actually be, the ancestor of birds may exist there. But these have still to be found, studied and documented. The beds need to be accurately dated; the absolute ages are still unknown. More work is needed on the geological processes involved in forming the beds.

In the minds of many workers, modern birds represent the living descendants of dinosaurs. Interest in dinosaurs themselves has undergone an enormous resurgence. This is due to technical advances in museum displays and amusement parks (autotronics), movies (computer generated images), and the astonishing new fossil finds in China, South America and Madagascar. New discoveries are reported in the popular press and discussed in the various 'science' magazines. Despite the glitz, the basic questions are essential to understanding the history of life and how the natural world functions. Before we dismiss this all out of hand, it would do us well to recall that we are dealing with potentially significant issues. The evolutionary origin of feathers and the problem of the development of flight in birds are two that come to mind.

ALAN H. BRUSH, 92 High St., Mystic, CT 06355

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Greg Hanisek

SPRING, MARCH 1 TO MAY 31, 1997

The spring season proceeded through a series of peaks and valleys. Many of winter's most interesting visitors lingered into March, and migration began with a strong early push of passerines. Note especially the number of precocious arrivals from late March to mid-April. But in late April things stalled. Many species, especially warblers, that normally arrive from April 20 to 30, were delayed until after May 1. Migration built steadily after that, hitting a crescendo from May 18 to 23, when excellent flights involving both variety and numbers of passerines were noted throughout the state.

Following are some arrival dates for regular migrants.

Osprey - March 15 in Madison (JC); Broad-winged Hawk - April 13 in Southbury (RN); American Kestrel - March 12 in Watertown (GH); Solitary Sandpiper - May 5 in Wethersfield (SKo) and Southbury (RN); Spotted Sandpiper - May 3 in Hartford (RN); American Woodcock - March 7 in Southbury (RN); Common Tern - May 4 at Milford Point (RN); Virginia Rail - April 23 in Stamford (PDu); Black-billed Cuckoo - May 4 in Watertown (RN); Chimney Swift - April 30 in Storrs (GC); Eastern Phoebe - March 10 at Fresh Meadows (JZi); Eastern Wood-Pewee - May 10 in Bridgewater (RN); Tree Swallow - March 21 in Old Lyme (HG); Purple Martin - April 22 in Madison (CR); Ruby-crowned Kinglet - April 6 in Woodbury (RN); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher - April 7 in Westport (RS) and Chaplin (PR); House Wren - April 17 in Stamford (PDu); Wood Thrush - April 26 in Barkhamsted (CW); Gray Catbird - April 22 in Madison (CR); Brown Thrasher - April 19 in Windsor (PDe); Solitary Vireo - April 21 in Litchfield (CW); Northern Parula - April 22 in Southbury (RN); Black-throated Green Warbler - May 1 in Woodbury (GH); Blackburnian Warbler - May 1 in Woodbury (GH); Pine Warbler - March 24 in Stamford (PDu); Palm Warbler - April 8 in Middlebury (GH); Prairie Warbler - April 20 in Meriden (LS); Yellow Warbler - April 20 in Litchfield (RN); Black-and-White Warbler - April 20 in Meriden (LS); Ovenbird - April 29 in

Chaplin (AF); Louisiana Waterthrush - April 15 in Fairfield (FM); Northern Waterthrush - April 22 in Kent (CW); Hooded Warbler - April 30 at Bluff Point Coastal Reserve in Groton (DP); Seaside Sparrow - April 22 in Madison (DS); Eastern Meadowlark - March 12 in Watertown (GH).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

The best count of Red-throated Loons was 48 off Sherwood Island State Park in Westport on March 11 (CB). An adult in breeding plumage was an unusual inland find May 10 at a pond in Bridgewater (RN,LWe). Pied-billed Grebes are sparse breeders, so two courting pairs were noteworthy in April at White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield (DR). Sherwood Island held 100 staging Horned Grebes during the last week in April (DR). The latest Red-necked Grebe was at Sherwood Island May 10 (RS). One of the season's best birds, an **Eared Grebe**, was seen on April 11 at the always-productive Cove Island Park in Stamford (PDu), but could not be relocated. Northern Gannets were widely reported in western Long Island Sound March 4-April 8 (CB,PDu). The three **American White Pelicans** seen briefly in late February reappeared March 7 at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison (hereafter HBSP) and were seen sporadically for about a week, usually in flight (CR et al.).

An American Bittern was at Station 43 in South Windsor April 23 (DH); two were present in late April at HBSP (DS et al.); one was in Old Lyme April 25 (HG); and two were at possible breeding locations in White Memorial through the period (DR,JL). A Least Bittern was a good find at Sherwood Island May 8 (RS). The first Great Egret arrived March 22 at HBSP (JGa), and seven Snowy Egrets arrived March 30 at South Cove in Old Saybrook (DP). Little Blue Heron was first noted April 22 at HBSP (SRf), and the season's only Tricolored Heron appeared there the next day (VD). The season's first Cattle Egret was early March 30 at Milford Point (BO) with scattered sightings from Westport to Stamford through May (PDu,MM). A Green Heron March 30 at HBSP was very early (AR); there are only four earlier arrivals on record. Inland Black-crowned Night Herons were in Watertown April 11 (RN) and Litchfield April 14 (GL). The first Yellow-crowned Night Heron was noted April 7 at Sherwood Island (RS), followed by scattered sightings at several coastal locales. Glossy Ibis, which were widespread and numerous along the coast, first appeared March 22 at Sandy Point in West Haven

(CE) and March 23 at HBSP (CP,RP). Singles were inland in East Hartford April 19-20 (JV) and Lebanon April 24 (AF); of special note was a flock of 12 flying far up the Connecticut Valley in Ellington April 30 (DH).

The winter season's four **Greater White-fronted Geese** remained at MacKenzie Reservoir in Wallingford through at least March 11 (WS,m.ob.). A concentrated flight of Snow Geese produced 200 sitting on the Sound (an unusual sight) at Sherwood Island March 22 (PDe et al.); more than 400 passing through Old Lyme March 25-26 (HG), and about 400 over Waterbury March 27 (BE). Two interesting hybrid waterfowl were reported: a Mallard X American Wigeon March 18 at Reservoir 6 in West Hartford (RBA) and at Mallard X Wood Duck in Stratford the same day (GH). South Cove in Old Saybrook held 25+ Northern Pintails March 16 (RN). The first report of Blue-winged Teal involved a female March 19 at South Cove (DP); numerous sightings throughout the state followed, and a wetland in Windsor, near the mouth of the Farmington River, held a very high count of 30, along with 60 Green-winged Teal and 70+ Wood Ducks April 18-19 (PCo). An estimated 250 Green-winged Teal were at Nell's Island, Milford April 20 (FM). An **Eurasian Teal** was a good find April 19 at Station 43 (PDe). There were about 10 reports of Northern Shovelers for the period (AT et al.). Reports of single Eurasian Wigeon were from Seaside Park through April 10; Milford Point March 26; and Stn. 43 April 26 (RBA).

Frash Pond in Stratford had 165 Canvasbacks and 27 Lesser Scaup March 8 (SKo). North Cove in Old Saybrook held 100 Canvasbacks, 250 Greater Scaup and 100 Lesser Scaup March 19 (DP). They were joined by the drake **Tufted Duck** that had been found there in February and was last seen March 22 (SKe). The ever-increasing **Common Eider** included two immature males March 25 at Stonington Point (DP), and two at Milford Point May 26 (PDe). An immature male **King Eider** was found off Sherwood Island on April 28 (FM). An Oldsquaw, uncommon inland, was on Bantam Lake in Litchfield March 28 (BB). The pair of **Barrow's Goldeneye** wintering off Burying Hill Beach in Westport were seen through at least March 19 (m.ob.). A Bufflehead was late May 26 at Milford Point (PDe). The high count of Hooded Mergansers was 40 on March 23 on Bantam Lake (DR). Lake Waramaug in Warren hosted an impressive 1,200 Common Mergansers March 20 (LWh).

RAPTORS THROUGH GULLS

Western Litchfield, northern New Haven and northern Fairfield counties produced scattered reports of one to four **Black Vultures** throughout the period (JMc,PCa,FS,LH); east of this well-established range, one was seen March 15 in Berlin (RBA) and two were reported from Durham March 22 (JMa,AR). A sub-adult **Mississippi Kite** was seen briefly May 5 at Station 43 (MS), and an adult was seen - again briefly, as seems typical for this wraith-like raptor - May 8 in Bethel (LH). If accepted by the ARCC, they would be the second and third state records. Nesting Northern Goshawks were reported from Guilford (EN), Canaan (GH) and Bethany (DR). The wintering Golden Eagle was still in Canaan March 5 (RN). An extraordinarily early Broad-winged Hawk was reported from Ansonia March 9 (JB), two days ahead of the previous arrival record. DEP confirmed the nesting of Peregrine Falcons on the Travelers Tower in Hartford, and three chicks were banded. The female was a bird re-introduced into the wild in 1994 in Greece, N.Y. A pair of Peregrines were observed copulating May 11 under the I-95 bridge in Bridgeport (JHi). Breeding was never proven, but these birds probably accounted for regular sightings at Milford Point throughout the period. The Stamford Peregrines were still present with no evidence of breeding, but one was seen eating a woodcock on March 9 (PDu et al.).

The only report of Northern Bobwhite, a species with a precarious toehold in southeastern Connecticut, involved a single bird May 20 at Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford (DP). The first Clapper Rail appeared March 27 at Sherwood Island, an early date if not a winterer (RS). Sharon Audubon Center, a traditional spot for **Common Moorhen**, held one on May 19 (BD), and one visited a Bridgeport yard for several days in May (HS).

HBSP hosted a gathering of 110 Killdeer April 1 (JGa), but Sherwood Island topped that with an impressive 280 on April 3 (RS). HBSP held 70 Black-bellied Plovers May 16 (JGa). The first Piping Plovers were reported from Sandy Point in West Haven March 18 (GH). By May 20 a pair of American Oystercatchers had two young at Cummings Beach in Stamford (PDu). The first Lesser Yellowlegs were a bit early March 22 at Sherwood Island (CB) and March 23 at HBSP (AS). The state's first wintering Willet was still at the mouth of the Oyster River in West Haven March 24 (GH). A Whimbrel visited HBSP on April 29 (CR). The high count of Least Sand-

pipers was 125 May 16 at Barn Island Wildlife Management Area in Stonington, where they were joined by 13 White-rumped Sandpipers (DP). Sandy Point held 10 White-rumps May 26 (GH). Semipalmated Sandpipers peaked at 1,000 May 21 at Milford Point (GH). A Western Sandpiper, uncommon in spring, was at Milford Point May 4 (DR). Five Pectoral Sandpipers were at the front end of their typical migration schedule March 31 at Milford Point (GH), and three were at HBSP April 14 (RC). Six Purple Sandpipers were still on Goose Island off Guilford May 26 (JS). A flock of 100+ Dunlin joined the gulls at low tide in South Cove March 16-25 (JGa). Two Common Snipe at Station 43 on March 7 could have been winterers or early migrants (JMe); a dozen looked forlorn and out of place standing on a frozen stream in Watertown following an April 1 snowstorm (GH). The same place held 50+ under more favorable conditions April 9 (GH), and 50+ were at Durham Meadows April 5 (JGa et al.). Sherwood Island had nine American Woodcock on April 3 (RS). **Wilson's Phalarope**, a species that has been less than annual in the state in recent years, was found May 20 at HBSP, but it did not linger (SRn et al.).

An early Laughing Gull appeared March 23-24 in Stamford (PDu), and one was unusual passing over a hawk-watch in Harwinton April 16 (PCa,JGr). South Cove produced **Little Gull** sightings from March 16 to April 8, with at least one adult and one immature present (DP,JGa et al.); an adult was at Shippan Point in Stamford March 24-April 20 (FG,PDu) and an immature was at HBSP March 25 (DP). Other reports from South Cove included an immature **Black-headed Gull** March 30, 200 Bonaparte's Gulls March 17 and a second-year **Lesser Black-backed Gull** March 30 (DP). A Black-headed stayed through April 21 in Stamford (PDu). A Bonaparte's Gull April 16 in Storrs was believed to be a first for the UConn campus (GC). Oyster River held 200 Bonaparte's and an adult Black-headed Gull March 23 (DS et al.) An immature Iceland Gull lingered through April 14 at Mirror Lake in Storrs (GC, BC); a first-year was in East Haven April 9 (GH, NC); a first-year was present March 27-April 20 in Stamford (PDu); and a third-year was at Oyster River April 5 (RE). Other Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported from HBSP (GH), Stratford (m.ob.), Stamford (PDu) and Manchester landfill (MS). A Caspian Tern flew by Cove Is. in Stamford May 19 (FG), and three were at Little Pond at White Memorial May 31 (RBA).

A total of five Black Terns in May at Falkner Island included three on May 22 (JS).

Of special interest to gull watchers were the feeding flocks, described by several observers as "frenzies," that occurred off beaches in late March - early April. One group off HBSP March 21 involved 2,000+ gulls, including an immature Iceland Gull and two Black-headed Gulls (FG,JMa et al.). The next day at the same location a flock included 5,000 Bonaparte's Gulls, as well as several hundred Herring, one Iceland and one Black-headed, but very few Ring-billed or Great Black-backed (SKe). Similar concentrations were noted off Lordship (FM) and Shippan Point (PDu). This phenomenon, which also involved surface-feeding waterfowl, apparently is tied to the hatch of a marine worm.

DOVES THROUGH VIREOS

A **White-winged Dove** paid a May 18 visit to a feeder in Sterling, where it was videotaped (RD). If accepted by ARCC, it would be the second state record and the first fully documented one for a species that is showing up with increasing frequency in the Northeast. Maximum counts of Monk Parakeets reported include 66 at Compo Beach in Westport on March 3 (FM), and 24 at Milford Point feeders April 6 (FG). A Black-billed Cuckoo was banded on Falkner Island May 20 (JS,JZo). A **Snowy Owl** appeared on the dunes at Long Beach in Stratford March 22 (MC,NC). It couldn't be located the next day, but searchers found a Short-eared Owl that remained for at least a week (DS et al.). A Short-eared was present in late March-early April at HBSP (GH,CR), one was at Sherwood Island March 21 (RS) and one was at Milford Point April 7 (DB).

Although a species of concern, Whip-poor-will still occurs at locations scattered throughout the state. Reports this spring included an arrival April 21 in Durham (NM), 4+ in Waterbury April 27 (GH), one May 17 in Southington (S&VG) and three at Barn Island May 24 (DP). For the third year in a row, an overshooting **Chuck-will's-widow** made an appearance, this time on May 23 in Westbrook (WK). Two Common Nighthawks April 26 in Cromwell were very early but not unprecedented (JMo); there are at least three other April records for the state, including two April 20 arrivals. April 19 produced a widespread movement of Common Flickers (DS et al.). The immature Red-headed Woodpecker that wintered at a feeder in Wallingford remained through March (mob); an adult at Sherwood Is-

land May 15 was the observer's first there in 12 years (RS).

Olive-sided Flycatchers turned up May 17 in Southbury (JN) and Kent (SKo), May 21 in Fairfield (CB), May 23 in New Milford (DR), May 24 in New Hartford (GH), and May 26 in Derby (GH,NC). Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were reported May 19 at Rose Horton Park in Stamford (PDu), May 20 in Preston (DP), and May 21 in Manchester (PCo). An Acadian Flycatcher, which isn't often detected away from breeding areas, was at Harkness in the May 20 grounding (DP). River Road in Kent held at least 10 Least Flycatchers May 23 (DP). Falkner Island offers a window on migration phenomenon that are impossible to detect elsewhere. During the big May 19-20 flight, researchers caught and banded four Eastern Phoebes, a species that conventional wisdom would say had finished its movements about a month earlier (JS,JZo). More than 100 Bank Swallows flocked May 17 at Station 43 in South Windsor (DP).

Common Ravens undertook what may have been their most widespread dispersal in modern times. The expected activity in the north included a pair nest-building in Canaan in March (BD), a pair on a nest with eggs March 28 at Barkhamsted Reservoir (DR), and regular sightings in Ashford (GC). In keeping with recent developments, other sightings included two March 1-16 at Shepaug Dam in Southbury (DR), singles in Beacon Falls in March (BD), Watertown March 17 (RN), Penwood State Park in Bloomfield April 5 (PDe) and Prospect April 20-27 (DR), followed by two cavorting over a yard in Sterling May 28 (RD). Quite unexpected was a pair nesting on a ridge in Southington (BF) and up to two present April 7 to at least May 11 at East Rock Park in New Haven (FG,RE et al.). The latter may have been the same ones seen at Sleeping Giant State Park in Hamden in March (ABr,JZi).

Red-breasted Nuthatches were still on the move May 19, when one was seen at Sherwood Island (RS). A Marsh Wren at HBSP was so early March 30 that it was more likely a winterer than a newly arrived migrant (AR). Winter Wrens were widely reported early in the season, including up to four singing March 23 at Bend of the River Sanctuary in Southbury (JN). For the second year in a row the dwindling Swainson's Thrush appeared in good numbers. Widespread reports after mid-May included 10 on May 23 in Kent (DP) and 14+ at various Litchfield County locations May 20-23 (DR). Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's (sp.) Thrushes re-

mained much more elusive; the few reports included two in Kent and one in Simsbury in late May (BK) and one in East Rock Park May 22 (GH). A Hermit Thrush was banded on Falkner Island May 20, well beyond what would be considered its normal migration window (JZ). A good count of the earlier-arriving Wood Thrush was 15 on May 12 in Nehantic State Forest (DP). An immature **Northern Shrike** was present through mid-March at Station 43 (JMe), and one that wintered in Canaan was singing on March 13 (GH). The abundance of Warbling Vireos, and their density in lowland habitats such as the Connecticut River valley, were illustrated by 10 on May 10 in Nehantic State Forest and 20 May 17 in East Hartford (DP). A White-eyed Vireo, uncommon anywhere in the state, was north of its usual hangouts May 14 in Kent (DR). An exception to the dirth of late April arrivals was a very early Red-eyed Vireo April 21 in Southbury (JL).

WARBLERS

As has become the pattern in recent years, the best warbler flights occurred after the middle of the month. The best stretch was May 18, with 22 species in Kent, to May 23, which produced the biggest flight of the season. On May 20 a passing front piled up birds in the rain at Greenwich Point, which held 18 species (JW); Bantam Lake, where 18 species were on Folly Point (GH); Harkness, which held 16 species (DP); and at a yard in Preston, which produced 15 species (DP). A Big Day in Manchester May 21 tallied 25 species (PCo), and 25 species also were found at River Road in Kent on May 23 (DP,GH,NC), when overall numbers were very high (see totals below). Falkner Island in Guilford recorded excellent flights May 19-20 (JS). Several species were widespread in above-average numbers, most notably Magnolia Warbler (66 caught at Falkner Island May 19-20), Bay-breasted Warbler, Wilson's Warbler and Canada Warbler.

Golden-winged Warbler was on territory at River Road in Kent (m.ob.) and one sang at South Kent School May 31 (PCo). Lawrence's hybrids were reported from Orange in early May (RBA) and in a Sterling yard May 20-25 (R&LD) A Brewster's was in Kent May 17 (LWh). Amid a good migration overall, Tennessee Warbler was a species present in very low numbers though six were in Norwalk May 19 (FM). The only other multiple sighting received was of two May 20 at Harkness (DP), which also held three Nashville Warblers the same day (DP). A Nashville at

Falkner Island May 19 was the first banded at the site in spring (JZo, et al.). An unusually good showing by **Orange-crowned Warblers** produced singles May 5-6 and May 11-12 at Cove Island Park in Stamford (PDu et al.), and May 15 at Northwest Park in Windsor (PDe). Northern Parulas were widespread and numerous - i.e. 10 on May 11 at East Rock Park (DP) and 18 on May 20 at Harkness (DP). The first Pine Warblers were quite early March 24 in Stamford (PDu) and March 27 in Hamden (JZi), and during an April 18 snowstorm one was eating sunflower seeds at a feeder in New Milford (CW). **Yellow-throated Warbler** is noted as an early migrant, but a male found March 30 at Chatfield Hollow State Park in Killingworth shattered previous arrival records (BY). It remained through the season at this beautiful location, which appears to have supplanted River Road in Kent as the best place to find this species. Another **Yellow-throated Warbler** was found May 20 at Greenwich Point (JW). A migrant Cerulean Warbler was a good find in Storrs May 21 (GC). Cape May Warblers, which can be elusive in the spring, included two May 24 in Southport (CB) plus a scattering of singles (CW et al.). The big flight on May 23 produced the following counts at River Road in Kent: 30 Yellow Warblers; 20+ Chestnut-sided Warblers; 50+ Magnolia Warblers; 30 Yellow-rumped Warblers; 15 Blackburnian Warblers; 15+ Bay-breasted Warblers; 20 Blackpoll Warblers; 15 Cerulean Warblers; 30+ American Redstarts; 12 Northern Waterthrushes; six Wilson's Warblers; and a stunning 50+ Canada Warblers (all DP). East Rock held 10 Canadas the next day (SKo). Falkner Island's 49 American Redstarts May 19-20 included a site record 38 banded on the latter date (JZo). It was a good spring for **Prothonotary Warbler**, with females May 8 in Nehantic State Forest (DP) and May 10-11 at East Rock Park (RE, SKo et al.), and males May 6 at Broadbrook Reservoir in Cheshire (RBA), Larsen Sanctuary, Fairfield May 7-10 (fide MB), and in a Middletown yard May 4 (BP). Nehantic State Forest produced an excellent count of 14 Worm-eating Warblers and 22 Ovenbirds May 12 (DP), and a very early Worm-eating was reported April 17 in Easton (LF fide RN). Falkner Island banded 10 Ovenbirds May 20 for a site record (JS, JZo). A good season for Kentucky Warblers produced two on May 10 in Newtown (PB) and singles May 9-10 and May 19 at Cove Island (PDu), May 11 at East Rock Park (DP) and May 29 in Southport (CB). Mourning Warbler reports included at least

two May 18-23 in Kent (DP,EN,ABa); an early one May 6 in Watertown (DR) and singles May 19 at Sherwood Island (RS), May 24 at East Rock Park (JHo) and Bend of River Sanctuary, Southbury (JN), and May 29 in Westport (CB). Single Yellow-breasted Chats were found May 10 in East Rock Park (RBA), May 11 in Newtown (EF), May 17 at Harkness (EN) and one was banded May 19-20 at Falkner Island (JS,JZo et al.).

TANAGERS THROUGH NORTHERN FINCHES

The May 23 flight wasn't limited to warblers. River Road also produced 40+ Scarlet Tanagers. The season produced three reports of **Summer Tanager**, an immature male May 5-8 in Darien (JMh et al.), a male May 12 in Edgewood Park in New Haven (FG) and a female May 17 at a feeder in New Canaan (J&RK). The female Western Tanager, present at a Granby feeder since January, remained through March 30 (Dan Ross,Peg Wallace); over 100 people got to see it during its stay. A yard in New Preston held 10 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks on May 20 and six Indigo Buntings on May 18 (LWh). The season's only Blue Grosbeak report came from Woodbury May 14 (EF et al). Single **Dickcissels** visited a Madison feeder during March (WL fide JC) and a Wethersfield feeder April 19-26 (SKo). **Lark Sparrow** was reported for the second spring in a row, this one at Northwest Park in Windsor on May 20 (EG,PDe). A Chipping Sparrow was rather early April 3 at Chatfield Hollow, but given the surge of migrants at that time it probably was a new arrival rather than a winterer (GH, NC). A **Clay-colored Sparrow**, a species more common in fall, frequented an evergreen nursery in Hamden April 23-27 (ABr). It was joined there by a Vesper Sparrow April 24 (GH); other Vesper Sparrows were at HBSP April 26 (AT), Cove Island April 16-17 (PDu), and Barkhamsted May 11 (DR). Most of the lingering Lapland Longspurs were at HBSP, where three were present April 1 along with 11 Snow Buntings (JGa), but one was also at Sandy Point March 22 (CE). A good flight of Lincoln's Sparrows produced four on May 12 at Sherwood Island (RS), and singles May 12 in Stamford (CB), May 15 at Cove Island (PDu) May 19-20 at Falkner Island (JS,JZo), May 20 in New Preston (LWh) May 21 in Guilford (EN), May 24 at Boyd Sanctuary, Litchfield (BB), and May 23 at Northwest Park (PDe). Fox Sparrows were widespread and singing March 23 in Storrs (GC), and 50 were counted in White Memorial (BB).

Boat-tailed Grackles returned for the third consecutive year to the Great Meadows in

Stratford, where the state's first breeding was confirmed in 1995. A male and two females were present beginning May 10 (m.ob.); another was seen May 22 at HBSP (DS). The wintering **Yellow-headed Blackbird** in East Hartford was seen through at least March 16 (MB). White Memorial held 15+ Rusty Blackbirds April 16 (DR).

Late spring Evening Grosbeaks are mysterious creatures. One was found May 10 in Granby following a winter in which this species was essentially absent (BK). However, some recent June records suggest possible sparse breeding in the northern tier.

Exotics - A pair of Red-crested Pochards were in Collinsville May 4 (PCa).

[Editor's Note: Reports of rare or unusual bird species in Connecticut (species marked with an asterisk on the most recent COA checklist) require that documentation be submitted to the secretary of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (Mark Szantyr, 2C Yale Rd., Storrs, CT 06268) if they are to be included in the field notes].

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Falkner Island reports refer to the Falkner Island Unit of the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge and are provided by staff of the Tern Project.

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BIRD BEHAVIOR NOTES

Learning to identify birds is only the exciting first step in getting to know them. It can be equally satisfying to come to know them as well-adapted individuals by taking time to observe them closely, giving them time to demonstrate the many ways in which they have learned to cope with the environments they occupy. The field guides we use in first learning about birds simply do not have the space to call attention to behavioristic details. Indeed, behaviorism is a study in itself, with a fascinating literature. Books by Niko Tinbergen on the Herring Gull, or Konrad Lorenz' *King Solomon's Ring*, are delightful introductions. Here are several observations of intriguing bird behavior submitted by our readers. The editor welcomes such accounts.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK CATCHES A BAT

Neil Currie and I were birding near the entrance to the so-called "gun club" property in the Lordship section of Stratford on 4 December, 1995. It was a sunny day, near noon, with temperatures in the fifties, but we were still surprised to see a bat actively pursuing small insects over an open area. We saw it well enough to conclude that it was a Hoary Bat, a large solitary forest species seldom seen under such favorable circumstances.

As we watched it intently through binoculars, a Sharp-shinned Hawk appeared in the field of view and snatched the bat out of the air. The hawk immediately glided to the ground, apparently struggling under the weight of its prey. It disappeared behind a small rise, and when we approached the hawk took off again, flying low, with labored wingbeats, down a roadside tree line and out of sight.

Sharp-shinned Hawks are primarily bird eaters, but it is well known that they also take small mammals on occasion.

Greg Hanisek

HUMMINGBIRD BATH

July and August of 1995 were extremely dry in the Hartford region. While I was using a garden hose with a spray nozzle to water plants, I was approached within six or seven feet by a male Ruby-throated Hummingbird. It flew into the fine spray and slowly moved back and forth in about a three foot arc for several minutes. It then flew to a nearby branch where it sat and preened. We observed this behavior on at least three different occasions that summer.

Betty Kleiner

PHOTO CHALLENGE

Julian Hough

ANSWER TO PHOTO CHALLENGE 20

Out over the marshes at Milford Point, a strange bird floats into view. The compact build, somewhat pointed wings, black cap and short dark bill of the bird in the July issue's photo-challenge, identify it as tern - a conclusion which many of you will have reached quite quickly. The combination of plain wings and a full black cap age the bird as an adult. Some of its plumage features seem vaguely familiar but there is something not quite right about it and it doesn't seem to 'fit' any of the species with which we are familiar. As it twists and turns you notice that the dark belly contrasts markedly with the white underwings. What on earth is it?

Even though there are no other species present for size comparison, the proportions of our bird indicate that we are dealing with one of the smaller terns. Forster's can be ruled out, as that species has white underparts with a longer paler bill. In fresh plumage, both Common and Arctic Tern can show grayish underparts which contrast with the underwings and highlight the whiter 'cheek' area. The short, dark bill without a noticeable black tip and grayish underparts all seem to fit Arctic Tern rather than Common. However, the coloration of our bird seems too dark even for the darkest Arctic Tern and, hold on a minute though, the bird has a gray rump! This is clearly visible in the photograph and together with

the short, narrowly forked tail indicate that we are dealing with, not a white-rumped *Sterna* tern, but one of the short-tailed, gray-rumped 'marsh' terns of the genus *Chlidonias*. There is only one member of this genus which breeds in North America: Black Tern. Now the darkness of the underparts seems to fit, but the underwings seem too pale and the head pattern is wrong. So, what are the alternatives? White-winged Tern, a close cousin, is a vagrant from Eurasia and has been seen several times on the Atlantic seaboard. In adult plumage, they have jet-black axillaries with a white rump and tail, quite unlike the pictured bird. By a process of elimination, the combination of sooty underparts, gray rump, contrasting white 'cheeks' and short, broad-based bill fit only Whiskered Tern. I photographed this Whiskered Tern at Beidaihe, Hebei Province, China in May 1995. This Eurasian species was first recorded in July 1994 at Cape May, NJ and was the first record for North America. I was privileged to see this particular bird and there has been a subsequent record from Barbados. Though it may seem a little 'off the wall' I feel that it is a species which is likely to turn up again in the future and a species which many observers should be aware of, especially when confronted with a 'funny' Black Tern.

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Photo Challenge 21. Identify the species. Answer next issue.

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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Send manuscripts to the Editor. Please type double spaced with ample margins, on one side of a sheet. Submit a copy on a PC disk, if possible. Style should follow usage in recent issues. All manuscripts receive peer review.

Illustrations and photographs are needed and welcome. Line art of Connecticut and regional birds should be submitted as good quality prints or in original form. All submitted materials will be returned. We can use good quality photographs of birds unaccompanied by an article but with caption including species, date, locality, and other pertinent information.

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