

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology



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ABOUT OUR COVER

Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*)

by Michael DiGiorgio

Michael DiGiorgio is a nationally recognized artist in Connecticut. Mike has illustrated *The Breeding Bird Atlas of Connecticut*, as well as a variety of natural history books and field guides. His work is featured on the cover of the January/February cover of *Bird Watcher's Digest*, and the January issue of the Massachusetts Audubon Magazine: *Sanctuary*.

Mike has traveled to the tropics of Trinidad and Puerto Rico, and has exhibited his work in national wildlife art shows. He also teaches art and illustration at Wesleyan University and Middlesex Community College. He will be leading a trip to Trinidad on June 5, 1999 for a birdwatching and nature painting seminar at the internationally famous ASA Wright Center.

CONNECTICUT'S SIX YEAR BIG SIT! AN OVERVIEW

John Himmelman

Last October, Connecticut birders completed their sixth year participating in the BIG SIT!

Quick review: The BIG SIT!, sponsored and originated by the New Haven Bird Club, is an event in which participants count how many birds they can see or hear from within a 17 foot circle in a 24 hour period. It is a tongue-in-cheek way of testing the theory that "if one stayed in one place long enough, eventually every species of bird would fly by." To put it plainly, it's a stationary Big Day. The BIG SIT! has traditionally taken place on a Sunday in mid October. October may not be considered the prime time for birding in Connecticut, but there is still good movement occurring with song-birds and shorebirds exiting and sparrows and waterfowl entering the state. At this time of year there is also a good chance to see any of our 15 species of raptors (16, if we're lucky), as well as our two vultures. The main reason for choosing this time of year, however, is to satisfy the human element of this count. While the weather can be unpredictable, fall in New England is a beautiful time of year to be outdoors.

October 16, 1993 marked the first year of this event with five circles drawn in the state. The circles are chosen by the participants and, since there is always that competitive aspect in such endeavors, there are two categories: Inland and Coastal. The total bird count from those first circles added up to 105 species. Milford Point, Milford set the first record, with 65 species, followed closely by Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison (56), and Lighthouse Point, New Haven (52). Andrew Brand set the mark for the best Inland Count at Farmington Canal in Hamden with 45 species. Celia Lewis and Michael Anderson were socked in with fog at the Peabody Field Station in Guilford, but still managed to come up with 31 species.

Some of the notable birds on this first Sit included: Baird's Sandpiper at Milford Point by Frank Gallo, Joe and John Himmelman; American Golden Plover (back then it was Lesser Golden Plover) and Royal Tern, both seen by Clay Taylor at Hammonasset; a Blue-headed Vireo seen flying along the spit at Milford Point. Both Steve Mayo at Lighthouse and Andy Brand in Hamden had

Evening Grosbeaks. Andy added to that a Brown Thrasher and Lincoln's Sparrow.

The fact that from five stationary circles over one quarter of all of the bird species listed in Connecticut had been seen on a single day, a day in a season not carrying the highest density of birds, made it clear we should continue to do this Count.

The second BIG SIT! was held on October 16, 1994. Eight circles were covered for a combined tally of 115 species. Cold winds blew through the state, but the participants sat tight, sipped cider, and dug out some very good birds. Milford Point held the lead, increasing the mile mark to 70 species. Highlights included a late Common Nighthawk, Northern Goshawk, Peregrine Falcon, White-rumped Sandpiper, American Golden Plover, and a Yellow-crowned Night Heron at the end of the day, and 10 species of raptors. Hammonasset added eight birds to their previous year's total for a high of 64 species. Their highlights included Sora Rail, American Golden Plover, and a Nashville Warbler!

Lighthouse Point tallied 10 raptor species and added Red-headed Woodpecker to the list. If you want to see Red-headed Woodpeckers in Connecticut, that is the place to be in the fall. Greg Hanisek at Bantam Lake in Litchfield, brought the first owl, a Barred, to the count, as well as American Bittern, Northern Shoveler, Ruddy Duck, and American Coot. Frank Mantlik at Quaker Ridge in Greenwich had an immature Bald Eagle pass by his circle. Milford Point and Lighthouse both had Snow Buntings.

The interesting thing to note about the 1994 Sit was the contribution of Mike and Betsy Lasorso, who tallied 20 species in their yard. They got the only House Sparrow, a new bird for the list, thereby making a generally unwelcome bird more appreciated.

The BIG SIT! number three, held October 15, 1995, went national. Participants in eight states and in West Vancouver, British Columbia, tethered themselves to their 17 foot circles to come up with a total of 237 birds. California found the greatest number in their six circles - 123 species. They also broke the single circle record with 73 species of birds at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary in Irvine. Connecticut came in second with 120 seen from eight circles. This would be the closest we would ever come to catching them. Florida followed with 64.

Connecticut highlights in 1995 included: Snow Goose in three circles; Brant, American Bittern, Caspian and Royal Terns at Hammonasset; Short-eared Owl at Sandy Point, West Haven; Ruby-throated Hummingbird at Milford Point; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in Sterling; American Pipit in three circles; White-

crowned Sparrow at Hammonasset and Bantam Lake; Rusty Blackbird in Sterling and Bantam Lake; and Lapland Longspur, also at "Hammo."

Milford Point came in first again, bringing the new record up to 71. Hammonasset missed by one, with 70. Sherwood Island came in third with 55. The Inland record went to Bantam Lake with 50 species and was followed by Farmington Canal 42.

October 20, 1996. BIG SIT! number four. We were now up to 21 states, 48 circles, and 158 individuals. Perhaps we came a little too close for comfort with California in the previous year as they doubled their number of circles to 12! This increased their total to a record 182 species. They also set a new plateau for the highest single circle count in the nation with 97. Connecticut totaled 119, one less than the previous year. This time Indiana came in third with 79 birds, inching out Florida and South Carolina who tied with 76 species.

Connecticut once again made their stand with eight circles, manned and womanned by 18 birders. Some of our notable birds were Northern Gannet, American Bittern, Snow Goose, Black Scoter, Wood Duck, Northern Pintail, Peregrine Falcon, American Oystercatcher for the second year in a row, Virginia Rail, American Woodcock, Parasitic Jaeger (found by Dave Provencher and Dori Sosensky at Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford), Royal Tern, Indigo Bunting, Seaside Sparrow, and Purple Finch.

That year, Clay Taylor and company at Hammonasset usurped Milford Point's (Frank Gallo, Joe and John Himmelman) top circle position by finding 73 birds, a record that has yet to be beaten in this state. Milford Point came in second with 66 birds, followed by the Mantlik/Winkler/Soffer team at Sherwood Island with 51.

Andrew Brand and Jim Zipp regained their Inland crown with 50 species at Farmington Canal.

Sit number five took place on October 19, 1997. We now had 23 states, 56 circles filled with 196 sitters. Same old story: California wins with 155 birds. Connecticut follows with 129, but, uh-oh, Texas decides to get serious. We feel them breathing down our neck with 128! The Elfin Forest in Los Osos, CA tallied a new single circle record - 121 birds.

Back in Connecticut, the lead is stolen back by Milford Point, with 68 species. Hammonasset came in second with 66, followed by a new Inland Champ record set by Dave Tripp, Ray Belding, Fran Zygmunt, and Donna Rose Manwaring at White Memorial in Litchfield. They tallied 60 species, a Connecticut inland record that has not been broken.

Notable Connecticut birds seen by the 49 sedentary Yankees that year: Northern Gannet, Green Heron, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Snow Goose, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Northern Goshawk, Swainson's Hawk (Lighthouse Point), Bald and Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon (seen every year), Sora, Wild Turkey, American Oystercatcher, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Tennessee Warbler, Canada Warbler, Evening Grosbeak, Pine Siskin, Nelson's and Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows (following the split of Sharp-tailed Sparrow into two species), and Fox Sparrow.

This brings us to the sixth Big Sit!, held last October 19th. Seventeen states participated, as well as two counties in England. One hundred eighty-four sitters filled 45 circles bringing us a total of 336 species. The UK had added 47 species to the North American total of 289. California's seven circles found 160 birds. They also set yet another new record with 112 species seen in the Elfin Forest! Texas rode past Connecticut, their three circles lassoing 120 Lone Star birds. Connecticut tallied 114 seen by 37 people in their 11 circles. And this year, a third circle in the state proved they had the "stuff" for first place - Lighthouse Point! Frank Mantlik, Tom Kilroy, Bill Banks, Sue Nally, Gerry Nicholls, and Linda Donahue took the lead with 68 birds. Hammonasset came in second with 59, and third went to the inland champs at White Memorial with 57.

Good Nutmeg birds?: Red-necked Grebe, Snow Goose, Brant, Black Scoter, Northern Goshawk, Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, American Golden Plover, Eastern Screech, Great Horned, and Barred Owls, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Shrike sp., Black-and-white Warbler, Yellow-headed Blackbird, and Bobolink.

It seems the state hovers in that 120 area, but the possibility of 140, or maybe even 150, remains. It's all a matter of getting more coverage to represent all of the different habitats and areas of the state. Naturally, weather patterns and food availability in and around New England can also play a great factor in a big year.

The next BIG SIT! will be held October 17, 1999. There are a number of areas in the state that are not being covered. There are two excellent books that describe great birding spots in Connecticut (*Connecticut Birding Guide* and *Finding Birds in Connecticut*), as well as Noble Proctor's out-of-print book covering twenty-five areas. Open one up and pick a spot. One of the listings below shows what areas have been covered in the past. Some of those areas are traditionally covered by the same people year after year, while others are abandoned for new horizons. If you would like to participate in next year's BIG SIT!, contact John Himmelman (BIG SIT! Chief), 17 Hunters Ridge Road, Killingworth CT 06419. E-mail to

jhimmel@connix.com., or phone/FAX (860)663-3225. About a month before the event the rules and regs sheet will be mailed to you. Results of each year's event are sent to the circle's contact, who then shares them with the rest of the team. And don't forget, backyards make great circles!

Connecticut BIT SIT! Statistics

Number of birds seen by collective CT circles from 1993 - 1998:
168 species (two fifths [40%] of all the species listed in the state).

States/counties who have participated:

AL - 1996, AZ - 96-98, CA - 95-98, CT - 93*-98, CO - 96,98, FL - 95-97, GA - 98, IA - 97, IL - 96-98, IN - 96-98, KS - 97, LA - 97, MI - 96-98, MO - 96-98, MS - 96,98, NV - 97-98, NC - 96-98, NJ - 95-98, NY - 96,97, OH - 96-98, OR - 95-97, RI - 97, SC - 96-98, TN - 95-97, TX - 95-98, WA - 96,98, WI - 95,96

West Vancouver, B.C. - 95, North Yorkshire, England - 98, Bedfordshire, England - 98

*First 2 years were only in CT

The following birds were seen only in CT out of the 27 states, 2 England counties, and British Columbia from 1993 - 1998: Monk Parakeet (94-98), Black Scoter (96, 98), Seaside Sparrow (93, 96), Baird's Sandpiper (93), Northern Saw-whet Owl (97), Canada Warbler (97), Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow (97), Yellow-headed Blackbird (98).

Notable birds frequently seen in CT circles: Pied-billed Grebe (every year), Clapper Rail (every year), Peregrine Falcon (every year), Eastern Phoebe (every year), Eastern Bluebird (every year), Palm Warbler (every year), Salt Marsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow (every year), Eastern Meadowlark (every year), American Pipit (every year), American Golden Plover (93-96, 98), Monk Parakeet (94-98), Barred Owl (94, 95, 97-98), Purple Finch (94-98), White-crowned Sparrow (93, 95-98), Blue-headed Vireo (93, 95-97), Common Yellowthroat (93, 96-98), Rusty Blackbird (94-95, 97-98), Northern Goshawk (94, 97-98), Bald Eagle (94, 97-98), Royal Tern (93, 95-96).

Single Connecticut Appearances: Baird's Sandpiper (93 - Milford Point), Brown Thrasher (93 - Farmington Canal), Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow (97 - MP), Red Knot (94 - MP), White-rumped Sandpiper (94 - MP), Ring-necked Duck (94 - Bantam

Lake), Common Nighthawk (94 - MP), Red-headed Woodpecker (94 - Lighthouse Point Park), Nashville Warbler (94 - Hammonasset), Ruby-throated Hummingbird (95 - MP), Lapland Longspur (95 - H), Tricolored Heron (96 - H), Virginia Rail (96 - H), Parasitic Jaeger (96 - Harkness), Fox Sparrow (97 - FC), Northern Gannet (97 - H), Hooded Merganser* (97), Swainson's Hawk (97 - LP), Golden Eagle* (97), Tennessee Warbler (97 - FC & Sacred Heart Acad.), Canada Warbler* (97), Pine Siskin (97 - Sterling), Red-necked Grebe (98 - Sandy Point), Common Tern (97 - Nell's Point), Northern Rough-winged Swallow (98 - LP), Shrike sp. (98 - White Memorial), Black and White Warbler (98 - NP), Yellow-headed Blackbird (98 - Killingworth Yard).

*records misplaced (was most likely e-mailed) - if it was you, please contact JH.

Some of the birds not yet seen, but are well within the realm of possibility!: Horned Grebe, Lesser Scaup, Oldsquaw, Redhead, Common Merganser, Least Bittern, Black Vulture, Rough-legged Hawk, Gyrfalcon, Hudsonian Godwit, Western Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Solitary Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Purple Sandpiper, Glaucous Gull, Iceland Gull, Roseate Tern, Black Tern, Black Skimmer, Ruffed Grouse, Northern Bobwhite, King Rail, Common Moorhen, Long-eared Owl, Boreal Chickadee, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Winter Wren, Sedge Wren, Scarlet Tanager, Baltimore Oriole, a number of warblers including; Orange-crowned, Blackpoll, Pine, and Blue-winged, Yellow-breasted Chat, Blue Grosbeak, Dickcissel, Vesper, Clay-colored, Lark, Henslow's, and Grasshopper Sparrow, crossbills, and Common Redpolls.

Based upon this list, and other potential rarities, the Connecticut BIG SIT! list could be brought to over 200 species.

Seventy Nine people sat in the following 25 Circle locations from 1993 - 1998: Hammonasset, Madison (93-98), Lighthouse Point Park, New Haven (93-98), Farmington Canal, Hamden (93-98), Milford Point, Milford (93-97), Sandy Point, West Haven (94-98), a Sterling yard (95-98), Sherwood Island State Park, Westport (95-97), Bantam Lake, Litchfield (94-95), Nell's Island, Milford (97-98), White Memorial, Litchfield (97-98), an Oxford yard (97-98), Peabody Field Station, Guilford (93), Quaker Ridge, Greenwich (94), a Wallingford yard (94), a Beacon Falls yard (96), Harkness Memorial State Park, Waterford (96), a Bethel yard (97), a

Wallingford yard II (97), Westport Nature Center (97), East Rock Park, New Haven (97), a Cos Cob yard (97), Sacred Heart Academy, Hamden (97), a Killingworth yard (98), a Killingworth yard II (98), a Wallingford yard III (98).

Participants: Bill and Claudia Aherns, Michael Anderson, Susan Annatone, Bill Banks, Bob Barbieri, Charles Barnard, Ray Belding, Andrew Brand, Diana Carroll, John Castiglioni, Candace and Chip Chapman, Jerry Connolly, Lesley Weissman-Cook, Jim Cortina, Patrick Daigle, Michael DiGiorgio, Robert Dixon, Linda Donahue, Patrick Dugan, Celia Duffy, Pat Esposito, Frank Gallo, John Gaskell, Greg Hanisek, Stacy and Bill Hanks, Ed and Lee Hiestand, Sam Higgins, John Himmelman, Joe and Carol Himmelman, Julian Hough, Edward Jurzynski, Tom Kilroy, Lorine Krizan, Celia Lewis, Michael and Betsy Lasorso, Florence McBride, Richard McCormick, Donna Rose Manwaring, Steve Mayo, Frank Mantlik, Bo Missinne, Barbara Mollica, Martin Moore, Sue Nally, Gerry Nicholls, David Provencher, Shirlee and Charlie Rafford, Nancy Rosenbaum, Scott Roxbrough, Fran Saukas (and three students), Ray Scory, Ed Sadowski, Victoria Scranton, Richard Soffer, Dori Sosensky, Steve Stiffler, Brian O'Toole, Clay Taylor, Lisa Terry, Julio de la Torre, David Tripp Jr, Jim and Carol Zipp, Amy Peck, Randy Suhl, Rob Winkler, Joe Zeranski, Joan Zulpa, Francis Zygmunt. And countless others who stopped by the circles for a visit, adding a bird here and there.

JOHN HIMMELMAN, 17 Hunters Ridge Rd., Killingworth, CT 06419

1998 CONNECTICUT SUMMER BIRD COUNT

Joseph Zeranski and Thomas R. Baptist

The 1998 Summer Bird Count (SBC) provided interesting insight into the status of bird populations in Connecticut. A record 201 species were observed and the number of birds per party hour increased to a new high of 95.5. Two hundred and thirty seven observers were greeted by generally favorable weather during the count period. While 31 species show sustained increases in numbers, at least 24 are in serious decline and a dozen other species are on the verge of becoming extirpated as nesters in the state.

The nine SBC tracts encompass a significant area of the state (1,642 square miles, or 31.2%), more than any other breeding bird census technique used in Connecticut. A review of SBC's conducted since 1993 reveal that the census effort has been consistent as measured by the number of participants and party hours logged. The resulting data provide useful insights into short-term population changes, and some of the apparent population changes are summarized herein.

Increasing Species

Table 1.1 lists 31 species of nesting birds that are apparently increasing in population. The increase in Great Egret and Black-crowned Night Heron is entirely the result of nesting success at the Great Captain's Island rookery in Greenwich. Although nesting has increased at this location (it is now the largest colony on Long Island Sound), the total number of rookeries is declining overall in the state and the few colonies that remain deserve careful monitoring. Mallard increased throughout its range in the state, and Common Merganser also increased, especially in the Woodbury-Roxbury area.

Most raptors put in a good showing. Osprey increased along the coast and major river valleys, and nine Bald Eagles on the Barkhamsted Count were encouraging. Northern Harrier was reported on the New Haven Count, and 14 Sharp-shinned Hawks were dispersed throughout the state. Wild Turkeys continued their strong recovery with every count reporting them. American Oystercatcher increased, although this species was found only in Greenwich-Stamford. Great Black-backed Gulls continued to increase along the coast and major river valleys with 402 reported, well above the five-year average of 338. Thanks to a good showing on the New Haven Count, Common Tern increased significantly.

Monk Parakeets were reported from coastal sites, and the increase in kingfishers occurred throughout their range in the state. Downy Woodpecker increased significantly, as did Tree Swallow, Rough-winged Swallow, American Crow, and Tufted Titmouse. Acadian Flycatcher showed a slight increase, despite a dramatic decrease in other areas in its nesting range.

Brown Creeper, Winter Wren and Marsh Wren increased slightly, as did Gray Catbird, European Starling and Cedar Waxwing. With the exception of Louisiana Waterthrush, no warbler species showed any noticeable increase. Of the finches, record high counts of Field and Swamp Sparrows and American Goldfinches were reported.

Decreasing Species

Table 1.2 lists twenty-four species of birds nesting in Connecticut that showed record low counts in 1998. The reasons for the decreases are not fully understood and may involve a combination of factors. Loss of habitat due to human activities and development, along migratory pathways and on wintering and breeding grounds, is an important factor. In Connecticut, a number of mechanisms are especially relevant: habitat fragmentation; successional changes; mortality by cats, dogs, crows, jays, rats, squirrels, raccoons, and chipmunks (especially near human habitations); cowbird nest parasitism; and habitat alteration caused by browsing of white-tailed deer. Consequently, decreased mate recruitment, decreased nest productivity, increased nest predation, and increased nest parasitism appear to be among the specific influences responsible for population decreases. Further study is necessary, however, to determine the importance of these factors to each of the declining species.

The decrease in Green Heron numbers is difficult to explain when considering the amount of habitat available. Northern Goshawks appear to be at a low ebb, possibly related to the crash in Ruffed Grouse numbers. Is there any way to monitor the number of grouse killed by hunters each year? American Kestrels are in the midst of a precipitous decline, as evidenced by the six individuals observed compared to an average of 22 seen annually since 1993. Herring Gull numbers are quite low, possibly the result of fewer landfills to provide winter-time sustenance in Connecticut. The decline in Northern Flickers is noteworthy. Is this migrant more vulnerable on its wintering grounds than in its nesting range? The decline in Least Flycatcher and Eastern Kingbird is noteworthy and reasons are not readily apparent.

Table 1.1 Nesting species recorded in 1998 showing population increases.

Species	1998	1993-1997		
	Total	Ave.	Min.	Max.
Great Egret	217	155	88	193
Black-crowned Night Heron	385	232	161	329
Mallard	2923	2599	2361	2846
Common Merganser	132	68	32	85
Osprey	30	16	9	22
Bald Eagle	9	6	3	8
Sharp-shinned Hawk	14	8	5	13
Wild Turkey	382	238	97	335
American Oystercatcher	33	14	11	21
Spotted Sandpiper	49	36	21	44
Great Black-backed Gull	402	338	279	376
Common Tern	518	104	56	170
Rock Dove	1543	1291	974	1412
Monk Parakeet	19	8	1	14
Belted Kingfisher	166	106	75	124
Downy Woodpecker	694	487	394	596
Acadian Flycatcher	39	29	22	33
Tree Swallow	1867	1496	1194	1637
No. Rough-winged Swallow	414	301	259	331
American Crow	4516	3639	3169	3983
Tufted Titmouse	1547	1294	1053	1457
Brown Creeper	87	63	48	81
Winter Wren	72	27	14	50
Marsh Wren	91	62	37	83
Gray Catbird	3593	3386	3204	3520
Cedar Waxwing	1576	1142	568	1473
European Starling	8174	6635	5767	8133
Louisiana Waterthrush	140	127	111	135
Field Sparrow	190	170	143	186
Swamp Sparrow	325	242	140	297
American Goldfinch	2210	1709	1476	1927

Table 1.2 Nesting species recorded in 1998 showing population declines.

Species	1998	1993-1997		
	Total	Ave.	Min.	Max.
Green Heron	63	88	78	116
Northern Goshawk	4	10	7	18
American Kestrel	6	22	14	30
Ruffed Grouse	16	52	24	77
Herring Gull	794	1074	930	1229
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	4	30	12	47
Northern Flicker	657	732	658	828
Least Flycatcher	121	169	129	223
Eastern Kingbird	489	557	491	643
Golden-crowned Kinglet	4	8	6	11
Wood Thrush	1089	1319	1235	1486
Northern Mockingbird	593	819	594	981
Brown Thrasher	62	91	75	105
White-eyed Vireo	26	48	45	52
Yellow-throated Vireo	169	204	173	244
Blue-winged Warbler	504	657	623	716
Prairie Warbler	176	244	226	259
Black-and-white Warbler	506	556	523	597
Cerulean Warbler	2	9	6	12
Worm-eating Warbler	114	167	127	223
Scarlet Tanager	533	607	543	692
Song Sparrow	2212	2524	2328	2810
Eastern Meadowlark	38	60	39	81
House Finch	1312	2443	1487	3510

Four of our most numerous neo-tropical migrants are facing precipitous and prolonged decreases in population: Wood Thrush, Blue-winged Warbler, Black and White Warbler, and Scarlet Tanager. These long distance migrants may be exposed to a greater number of the population pressures listed above than other species. Excessive browsing of forest understory plants by deer, and chipmunk predation, may be important factors in the decline of Worm-eating Warbler and other species that nest on or near the ground. The status of these species warrants careful monitoring. Grassland and thicket-loving species have also decreased, especially Brown Thrasher, Northern Mockingbird, White-eyed Vireo, Prairie Warbler, and Eastern Meadowlark. The decline in House Finch numbers is significant with only 1312 reported, well below the average of 2443 observed from 1993-1997. The conjunctivitis outbreak may be taking its toll.

Late lingerers

Perhaps the biggest factor relevant to this year's record tally of 201 species is the number of late migrants and non-nesters observed. New Haven recorded Red-throated Loon, Blue-winged Teal, Solitary Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Dunlin, Short-billed Dowitcher, and Bay-breasted and Blackpoll Warblers. Greenwich-Stamford reported the only Horned Grebe, Red-necked Grebe, Snow Goose, Brant, American Wigeon, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Oldsquaw, Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser, American Coot, Greater Yellowlegs, Laughing Gull, and Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. Other late migrants included Red-headed Woodpecker in Quinnipiac Valley, Swainson's Thrush and Mourning Warbler in Barkhamsted, and White-crowned Sparrow in Litchfield Hills. Remarkable were three Pine Siskins observed at Salmon River.

Rarities

There are several species on the verge of becoming extirpated as nesters in Connecticut, and each requires careful monitoring. Wetland-loving species are, unfortunately, well represented: Litchfield Hills recorded the only Pied-billed Grebe; Barkhamsted logged the only American Bittern; Greenwich-Stamford posted the only Glossy Ibis and Yellow-crowned Night Heron; King Rails were in Greenwich-Stamford and Barkhamsted; New Haven tallied the only Common Moorhen; and Sora was missed altogether! A single Black Vulture was reported in Woodbury-Roxbury, and a Peregrine Falcon was observed in Hartford. Whip-poor-will and Com-

mon Nighthawk continue their slow decline with only a handful discovered in the usual locations. Rare away from known nesting grounds in Kent, East Haddam and western Windham County, single Cerulean Warblers were recorded in Woodbury-Roxbury and Litchfield Hills. The only Yellow-throated Warbler was tallied at Litchfield Hills. A lone Grasshopper Sparrow was found in Hartford and Greenwich-Stamford logged the only Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow. The only Golden-winged Warbler recorded was in New Haven; this species now appears to be extirpated as a nesting species in Connecticut. Other major misses include Great Cormorant, Willet, Barn Owl, Horned Lark, and Yellow-breasted Chat.

Summary

The Connecticut SBC is an excellent method of chronicling changes in summer bird populations because of the amount of coverage provided (32% of the state), the consistency of observer effort, and the number of years it has been conducted. This year's record tally (201 species) is mostly the result of the large number of tardy migrants and rarities found on the counts. Thirty-one species appear to be increasing, twenty-four appear to be decreasing, and approximately twelve species are nearly extirpated from the state as nesting birds. The remaining species appear to be stable or are fluctuating within normal population ranges

THOMAS R. BAPTIST, 613 Riversville Road, Greenwich, CT 06831

STATEWIDE COUNT TOTALS

Count dates were June 1, 7, 8, 14, 15, 28, & 29. 201 species and 100,353 individuals were reported on Count Days (CD). Two hundred & thirty-seven observers in 122 parties spent 1051 Party Hours (PHs), 1015 daytime and 36 night time, in the field. Individual count totals follow:

Barkhamsted Summer Bird Count (*founded 1992*)

Date: Sat. & Sun., June 27 & 28. Count Center (The BSBC is a 13 mile east-west by a 15 mile north-south rectangle): 41° 55' N 72° 59' W. Elevation 285 to 1457 ft. Area: Barkhamsted, Burlington (northern 1/4), Canton, Colebrook (south half), Granby (southwest 1/4), Hartland, New Hartford, Harwinton (north edge), Torrington (north 1/4), & Winchester.

Weather: Partly cloudy with isolated thunderstorms both nights. 6/27- Day Temp 62° to 77°F., Wind W, 0 - 10 mph., 0.1" rain., Night Temp. 77° to 66°F. windless. 6/28- Day Temp. 60° to 78°F.; Wind NW, 0 - 10 mph., 0.2" rain. Night Temp. 78° to 58°F. windless.

Totals: 120 Species, 12,662 Individuals. Twenty-six observers in 17 parties censused during 146 daytime & 1 night PHs.

Participants: *Lorraine Accardi, Bob Barbieri, Roger Behrens, Ray Belding, George Boynton, Bob Cartoceti, Rebecca Goettel, Jay Kaplan, Kathie Kellcher, Brian Kleinman, Linn Landgraf, Walt Landgraf, Daniel LaPlante, Bill Liedlich, Patti McCurdy, Barbara McQueen, Jamie Meyers, Russ Naylor, Carol Parent, David Rosgen (84 Falls Terrace, Apt. D, Oakville, CT 06779), Stanley Rosgen, Leland Sanders, Mary Schindewolf, Jonathan Schwartz, David Tripp Jr., & Francis Zymont.*

Greenwich-Stamford Summer Bird Count (founded 1976)

Date: Sat. & Sun., June 13 & 14. 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: Terrible-heavy rain Friday into Saturday; Saturday rain off and on, thunderstorms, overcast and fog all day; Sunday. AM heavily overcast, some light rain and drizzle, clearing in PM. 6/13- Temp. 60° to 66°F., Wind SE, 10-15 mph., 1.63" rain. 6/14- Temp. 61° to 71°F., 1.08" rain.

Totals: 147 Species, 20,625 Individuals, plus 2 CP species. Fifty-one observers in 28 parties censused during 265 day & 15.5 night PHs.

Participants: *Tom Andersen, John Askildsen, Pat Bailey, Ken Ballas, Lois Ballas, Tom Baptist, Trudy Battaly, Gail Benson, Andrew Block, John Bova, Thomas W. Burke (235 Highland Rd., Rye, NY 10580), Ioa Bynee, Albie Collins, George Dremeaux, Patrick Dugan, Cynthia Ehlinger, Anne French, Jay Gartner, Ted Gilman, Betty Grossman, Frank Guida, Andy Guthrie, Carol Hartel, Dave Havens, Berna Lincoln, Stan Lincoln, Jeff Main, Hugh McGuinness, Janet Mehmel, Mike Moccio, Lanois Neely, Mike Newhouse, Frank Novak, Jim O'Brien, Brian O'Toole, Gary Palmer (34 Field Rd., Cos Cob, CT 06807), Drew Panko, Matt Popp, Steve Potter, Paul Renken, Polly Rothstein, Meredith Sampson, Bob Shriber, Jason Siemers, Andy Spar, Patty Towle, James Vellozzi, Marian Waldon, Bill Wallace, Jack Wells, & Joseph Zeranski.*

Hartford Summer Bird Count (founded 1991)

Date: Sat. & Sun., June 13 & 14. Count Center: 41° 46' N 72° 40' W. Elevation 40 to 640 ft. Area (in whole or in part): Bloomfield, East Hartford, Farmington, Hartford, Manchester, New Britain, Newington, Rocky Hill, South Windsor, West Hartford, Wethersfield, & Windsor.

Weather: Overcast, showers both days. 6/13- Temp. 61° to 70°F. 6/14- Temp. 59° to 78°F.

Totals: 104 Species, plus two in CP, 9,629 Individuals. Twenty-nine observers in 9 parties censused over 71.5 day PHs.

Participants: *Bill Altmann, Maria Avignone, Mary E. Carter, Paul Cianfaglione (8 Glenn Ln., West Hartford, CT 06110), Patricia Chamber, Pat Comins, Pam Cooper, Ed Czapinski, Mary Czapinski, Marjorie Dickman, Michael Hamilton, Pat Junno, Jay Kaplan, Len Kendall, Betty Kleiner, Gil Kleiner, Steve Kotchko, Bill McGehee, Jamie Meyers, Clark Moseley, Paul Mueller, Eleanor Powers, Susan Protheroe, Dave Rosgen, Mary Rudik, Shirley Smigel, Martha Tallarico, Debby Wheeler, & Olive Wysocki.*

Litchfield Hills Summer Bird Count (founded 1994)

Date: Sat & Sun, June 13 & 14 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: 6/13- AM Misty, Cloudy, PM Heavy rain. 65°F+. 6/14- Very light rain sporadically all day, very cloudy. 70°F+.

Totals: 124 Species, 15,009 Individuals. Thirty-one observers in 14 parties censused during 149.5 day and 1 night PHs.

Participants: *John Baker, Bob Barbieri (56 Baron Ln., Torrington, CT 06790), Raymond Belding, Ruth Bigos, Debbie Bishop, George Boynton, Angela Dimmitt, Cecile Emond, Dave Emond, Greg Hanisek, Rita Hannon, Gordon Loery, Carolyne Longstreth, Marian Lyga, Donna-Rose Manwaring, Jerry Marcellino, Deborah Martin, Russ Naylor, Nancy Nichols, Ann Otsille, Ray Packard, Clarence Parker, Jim Parker, Virginia Peterson, Dave Rosgen, Jan Sturdevant, Dave Tripp, David Wakefield, Leigh Wells, Lyle Whittlesey, & Fran Zygmunt.*

New Haven Summer Bird Count (founded 1991)

Date: Sat & Sun, June 6 & 7. 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: 6/8 (5 AM - 5 PM)- Sunny and warm, Day Temp. 50° to 76° F. Wind NE, 0 - 15 mph.; 6/9 (5AM - 5PM) - Sunny and warm, then some clouds, Temp. 53° to 74°F., Wind NW 5 - 15 mph., Night: (6:30 - 9PM) Temp. 66° to 62°F., Wind NW 0 - 5 mph.

Totals: 139 species; 11,974 Individuals. Thirty-seven observers in 18 parties spent 96 daytime & 3 night PHs.

Participants: *Lee Aimesbury, Marion Aimesbury, Ralph Amodei, Ron Bell, Andrew Brand, Steve Broker, Elaine Brown, Steve Curtis, Fritz Davis, Roberta Digirolamo, Richard English, Sigrun Gadwa, Frank Gallo, Sheri Grant, John Himmelman, Mike Horne, Pat Horne, Katherine Hubbard, Will Hubbard, Patrick Leahy, Carol Lemmon, Gary Lemmon, Chris Loscalzo, Steve C. Mayo (27 Tuttle Ct., Bethany, CT 06524), Florence McBride, Frank Ragusa, Nancy Ragusa, Nancy Rosenbaum, Arne Rosengren, Lisa Santacroce, Lee Schlesinger, Ray Scory, Tom Sharp, Debbie Tenney, Bailey Wright, Barbara Wright, & David Wright.*

Quinnipiac Valley Summer Bird Count (founded 1992)

Date: Sat & Sun, June 20 & 21. 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: 6/20- Wind calm, Day Temp. 60° to 80°F. Night 55° to 60°F; 6/21- Wind calm, Day Temp. 82° to 83°F. Night 55° to 60°F.

Totals: 110 Species, 10,423 Individuals. Fourteen observers in 5 parties spent 61.75 day & 3 night PHs in the field.

Participants: *Elaine Bietek, Kevin Clark, Jamie Cook, Leslie Cook, Marjorie Hackbarth, Fred King, James McBride, Marty Moore, Nancy Morand, Mary*

Mushinsky, John Schultz, Wilford Schultz (93 Harrison Rd., Wallingford, CT 06492), Randy Suhl, & John Wagenblatt.

Salmon River Summer Bird Count (founded 1992)

Date: Sat. & Sun., June 6 & 7. Circle Center: 41° 33' N 72° 26' W. Elevation 5 to 550 ft. Area: East Haddam, East Hampton, Haddam, Middletown (southeast), & Portland.

Weather: Rainy, showers 80% of both days; 6/6- Temp. 65° to 80°F.

Totals: 91 Species on CD, 2,458 Individuals. Ten observers in 6 parties counted over 34 day & 1 night PHs.

Participants: *Sherry Bernstein, Newton Clark, Elana Coffey, Carrie Conrad, Larry Cyrulik, Jack Halibozek, Joseph Morin (8 West St. Terrace, Cromwell, CT 06416), Pat Rasch, Ed Reneson, & David Titus.*

Storrs Summer Bird Count (founded 1990)

Date: Sat., June 20. Count Center: 41° 48' N 72° 15' W, junction Rt. 195 & N. Eagleville Rd. Elevation 200 to 750 ft. Area: Andover, Ashford, Chaplin, Coventry, Mansfield, Tolland, Willimantic, West Willington, Willington, & Windham.

Weather: 6/20- Hot and Muggy with a 20 minute afternoon thunderstorm. Temp. 65° to 85°F. Wind NW, 0 - 10 mph.; 0.5" rain.

Totals: 94 Species, 2,052 Individuals. Ten observers in 5 parties spent 35.25 day PHs in the field.

Participants: *Fred Beardsley, Bill Gaunya, Marilyn Higgins, Steve Morytko, Carol Phillips, Robert Pirrie, Krista Rogers, Steve Rogers (75 Charles Ln., Storrs, CT 06268), Avo Somer, & Roxanne Steinman.*

Woodbury-Roxbury Summer Bird Count (founded 1978)

Date: Sun., June 7. 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: Wind WNW, 10 to 20 mph., AM- Sunny, cool (50°F), PM- partly cloudy, afternoon scattered showers, Temp. to 65°F.

Totals: 130 Species, 15,521 individual birds. Thirty-four observers in 20 parties spent 156 day & 11.5 night PHs censusing.

Participants: *Elliott Ashe, Ray Belding, Polly Brody, Bob Cartoceti, Mary Ann Currie, Neil Currie, Buzz Devine, Angela Dimmitt, Larry Fischer, Ted Greene, Greg Hanisek, Buck Jenks, Susan Kirk, Nancy Liedlich, William Liedlich, Carolyn Longstreth, John Longstreth, Donna Manwaring, Jerry Marcellino, Donna Marshall, Russ Naylor (44 Church St., Woodbury, CT 06798), Jim Nolan, Holly Patrick, Allan Root, Betty Root, Dave Rosgen, John Sjøvall, Darcy Thurrott, Art Titus, Carol Titus, Dave Tripp, Jr., Leigh Wells, Chris Wood, & Francis Zygmunt.*

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

1998 Summer Bird Count Tables

SPECIES	Coastal		Ct Valley		Upland Counts					1998 State Total	1993 - 1997			Yrs seen
	GS	NH	HA	SR	Mid-state		Northern				Ave.	Min.	Max.	
					QV	WR	BA	LH	ST					
Red-throated Loon		1								1	0.6		3	1
Common Loon	2	1				3	1			7	4.4	2	6	5
Pied-billed Grebe								1		1	3.2	1	5	5
Horned Grebe	2									2				CP
Red-necked Grebe	1									1	0.2		1	1
Great Cormorant											0.2		1	1
Double-cr. Cormorant	564	137	7	6	10	43	2			769	729	644	843	5
American Bittern							1			1	0.4		1	2
Least Bittern		1								1	2.2	1	4	5
Great Blue Heron	11	4	7	6	2	5	19	32	2	88	79	47	94	5
Great Egret	184	33								217	155	88	193	5
Snowy Egret	217	15								232	218	190	261	5
Cattle Egret	4									4	0.0			0
Little Blue Heron	4									4	1.0	1	5	5
Green Heron	21	7	7	2	1	10	3	11	1	63	88	78	116	5
Black-cr. Night-Heron	343	42								385	232	161	329	5
Yellow-cr. Night-Heron	2									2	4.4	2	10	5
Glossy Ibis	1									1	0.4		1	2
Mute Swan	91	139	5	6	80	34		17		372	348	297	383	5
Snow Goose	1									1	0.4		1	2
Brant	2									2	5.6	5	18	3
Canada Goose	1775	368	509	56	207	710	380	379	4	4388	4270	3379	5014	5
Wood Duck	103	9	8	26	12	66	14	66		304	304	273	347	5
Green-winged Teal											0.2		1	1
American Black Duck	30	14	8			1				53	72	50	106	5
Mallard	820	259	914	35	394	143	117	231	10	2923	2599	2361	2846	5

Mallard x Am Bl. Duck	2			1		1		4	8.8	2	24	5		
Northern Pintail									0.4		1	2		
Blue-winged Teal	1							1	1.0		3	3		
Northern Shoveler									0.2		1	1		
Gadwall									7.0	1	12	5		
American Wigeon	1							1	0.6		1	3		
Canvasback									0.2		1	1		
Ring-necked Duck	1							1	0.6		2	2		
Greater Scaup	4							4	2.0	1	3	5		
Lesser Scaup									0.4		1	2		
White-winged Scoter									0.2		1	1		
Common Eider									0.4		2	1		
Oldsquaw	3							3	0.4		1	4		
Common Goldeneye	3	3						6	0.2		1	1		
Bufflehead	4							4	1.6		3	4		
Hooded Merganser						6	5	11	9.6	2	20	5		
Common Merganser					75	52	5	132	68	32	85	5		
Red-breasted Merganser	1							1	1.2		3	3		
Ruddy Duck									0.4		1	2		
Black Vulture					1			1	1.0		4	2		
Turkey Vulture	8	26	5	10	41	86	40	33	2	251	240	186	299	5
Osprey	9	15	CP	2	3				1	30	16	9	22	5
Mississippi Kite										0.2		1	1	
Bald Eagle							9		9	5.6	3	8	5	
Northern Harrier		2							2	1.2		3	3	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	5			5	1		2	14	8.2	5	13	5	

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XX New 10 Yr. High Total (underlined)

XX New 10 Yr. Low Total (Bold)

1998 Summer Bird Count Tables

SPECIES	Coastal		Ct Valley		Upland Counts					1998 State Total	1993 - 1997			
	GS	NH	HA	SR	Mid-state		Northern				Ave.	Min.	Max.	Yrs seen
					QV	WR	BA	LH	ST					
Cooper's Hawk	4	1	CP		2	5	11	4	1	28	20	14	33	5
Northern Goshawk			1			1			2	4	9.8	7	18	5
accipiter species											1.8		3	4
Red-shouldered Hawk		7		1	4	8	4	1	4	29	28	25	31	5
Broad-winged Hawk	2	1	2	1	3	4	27	6	2	48	48	39	53	5
Red-tailed Hawk	27	24	15	2	13	48	34	12	2	177	189	140	241	5
buteo species											0.2		1	1
American Kestrel		1			1	1		2	1	6	22	14	30	5
Peregrine Falcon			1							1	1.6		3	4
Ring-necked Pheasant	81	2	1		4	4	1			93	46	22	73	5
Ruffed Grouse	1	6				3	4	2		16	52	24	77	5
Wild Turkey	57	10	3	4	16	102	93	92	5	382	238	97	335	5
Northern Bobwhite			1		1				2	4	6.0	1	11	5
Clapper Rail	2	9								11	6.6	5	8	5
King Rail	1						1			2	0.4		1	2
Virginia Rail					2	6	3	10		21	28	11	40	5
Sora											1.6		3	4
Common Moorhen		1								1	0.8		2	3
American Coot	1									1	0.6		1	3
Black-bellied Plover											2.2		5	4
Semipalmated Plover	3	27								30	1.4	3	4	4
Piping Plover		10								10	11	7	20	5
Killdeer	68	28	43	4	39	41	28	23	6	280	297	268	347	5
American Oystercatcher	33									33	14	11	21	5
Greater Yellowlegs	1									1	2.0	1	4	5
Lesser Yellowlegs											0.2		1	1

Solitary Sandpiper	CP	2								2	0.6		1	3	
Willet											1.4		4	4	
Spotted Sandpiper		2	11	5	1	7	15	4	3	1	<u>49</u>	36	20	44	5
Ruddy Turnstone			16								<u>16</u>	4.0		10	4
Sanderling			9								<u>9</u>	0.4	2	2	1
Semipalmated Sandpiper		1	200								201	415	2	2020	5
Least Sandpiper		1	2								<u>3</u>	0.6		2	2
White-rumped Sandpiper												0.6	3	3	2
Dunlin			4								4	2.0		6	3
Short-billed Dowitcher			4								4	0.0			0
small sandpiper species															1
Common Snipe												0.2		1	1
American Woodcock		2		1		7	4	1	1		16	14	8	20	5
Laughing Gull		11									11	63	4	119	5
Bonaparte's Gull												2.4		9	3
Ring-billed Gull		119	242	146	2	24	<u>38</u>	6	2	1	580	562	326	808	5
Herring Gull		421	135	125	7	4	94	1	6	1	794	1074	930	1229	5
Great Black-backed Gull		273	39	35	20	6	29				<u>402</u>	338	279	376	5
gull species												72			2
Gull-billed Tern												1.0	2	3	2
Common Tern		97	421								<u>518</u>	104	56	170	5
Least Tern			355								355	355	209	560	5
Black Tern												0.0			1
Black Skimmer												0.0			0
Rock Dove		359	264	425	18	137	86	70	59	125	<u>1543</u>	1291	974	1412	5
Mourning Dove		377	359	311	41	362	327	158	264	38	2237	2250	2123	2400	5

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1998 Summer Bird Count Tables

SPECIES	Coastal		Ct Valley		Upland Counts					1998 State Total	1993 - 1997			Yrs seen
	GS	NH	HA	SR	Mid-state		Northern				Ave.	Min.	Max.	
					QV	WR	BA	LH	ST					
Monk Parakeet	8	11								19	7.8	1	14	5
Black-billed Cuckoo		1		1	1	2	2	1		8	30	7	51	5
Yellow-billed Cuckoo			1			1		1	1	4	30	12	47	5
cuckoo species											4.6			4
Barn Owl											7.4	5	19	3
Eastern Screech-Owl	5	1	1	1	5	11	1			25	49	38	61	5
Great Horned Owl	7	4		1	3	9	13	2		39	28	16	40	5
Barred Owl	3	2	2		4	10	18	8	1	48	46	15	69	5
Long-eared Owl											0.4		2	1
Northern Saw-whet Owl							1			1	2.8		5	4
Nighthawk, Common	1	1			6					8	8.0	1	14	5
Chuck-will's-widow											0.2		1	1
Whip-poor-will		2			3	3	3			11	14	8	21	5
Chimney Swift	43	102	64	9	54	145	117	72	36	642	609	492	736	5
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	5	2	3	1	5	17	31	22	4	90	67	42	94	5
Belted Kingfisher	29	9	13	5	13	25	46	22	4	166	106	75	124	5
Red-headed Woodpecker					1					1	0.6		1	3
Red-bellied Woodpecker	113	28	31	9	32	76	25	27	6	347	315	239	418	5
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker						5	113	44		162	108	31	165	5
Downy Woodpecker	182	47	86	16	48	86	119	96	14	694	487	394	596	5
Hairy Woodpecker	32	15	13		7	13	44	29	1	154	150	110	198	5
Northern Flicker	192	72	80	13	68	81	68	70	13	657	732	658	828	5
Pileated Woodpecker	15	4	4		2	13	25	19		82	82	63	103	5
Olive-sided Flycatcher											0.6		1	3
Eastern Wood-Pewee	77	42	21	12	25	108	64	103	11	463	459	423	514	5
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher										1	0.4		1	2

Acadian Flycatcher	5	5			2	14	6	4	3	<u>39</u>	29	22	33	5
Alder Flycatcher	<u>3</u>					3	8	60		74	48	12	78	5
Willow Flycatcher	49	36	24	1	11	41	7	88	1	258	223	186	281	5
Least Flycatcher	1			1	4	37	41	35	2	121	169	129	223	5
Empidonax species						1				1	2.2		10	2
Eastern Phoebe	78	34	33	25	51	157	123	190	23	714	603	528	774	5
Great Crested Flycatcher	31	62	21	15	53	75	31	44	20	352	374	270	483	5
Eastern Kingbird	61	44	35	14	44	96	94	93	8	489	557	491	643	5
Horned Lark											0.2		1	1
Purple Martin	9	4			21			<u>2</u>		36	36	29	47	5
Tree Swallow	102	118	215	41	113	<u>219</u>	603	414	42	<u>1867</u>	1496	1194	1637	5
No. Rough-wngd. Swallow	<u>114</u>	78	20	16	26	53	69	19	19	<u>414</u>	301	259	331	5
Bank Swallow	2	96	3	8	44	136	30	61	1	381	328	202	529	5
Cliff Swallow	33		38			111	8	8		198	212	156	245	5
Barn Swallow	219	256	102	54	115	313	135	284	49	1527	1340	1184	1546	5
Blue Jay	257	273	113	47	132	240	247	168	23	1500	1568	1346	1697	5
American Crow	1093	592	514	71	443	784	436	521	62	<u>4516</u>	3639	3169	3983	5
Fish Crow	17	29	10			<u>1</u>	2	2		61	49	39	62	5
Common Raven			<u>2</u>		5		21	8		<u>36</u>	15	4	28	5
Black-capped Chickadee	283	129	118	44	124	312	462	311	86	1869	1680	1566	1877	5
Tufted Titmouse	349	138	89	49	77	<u>321</u>	274	186	64	<u>1547</u>	1294	1053	1457	5
Red-breasted Nuthatch	4	2	3		3	1	22	32	2	69	110	59	157	5
White-breasted Nuthatch	102	22	28	9	17	<u>60</u>	60	81	26	405	338	242	441	5
Brown Creeper	3		5			3	12	57	7	<u>87</u>	63	48	81	5
Carolina Wren	68	8	12	11	7	5	1		14	126	108	49	242	5
House Wren	220	27	42	7	24	168	193	88	24	793	839	742	927	5

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XX

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XX

New 10 Yr. Low Total (Bold)

1998 Summer Bird Count Tables

SPECIES	Coastal		Ct Valley		Upland Counts					1998	1993 - 1997			Yrs seen
	GS	NH	HA	SR	Mid-state		Northern			State Total	Ave.	Min.	Max.	
					QV	WR	BA	LH	ST					
Winter Wren	7	2	2		2	4	33	18	4	<u>72</u>	27	14	50	5
Sedge Wren											0.2		1	1
Marsh Wren	32	48						11		<u>91</u>	62	37	83	5
Golden-crowned Kinglet						<u>2</u>	2			<u>4</u>	7.6	6	11	5
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	<u>23</u>		10	14	2	49	32	33	10	173	178	146	207	5
Eastern Bluebird	39	7	70	7	30	<u>164</u>	121	111	9	558	467	319	564	5
Veery	113	35	4	17	61	203	480	414	52	1379	1221	872	1442	5
Swainson's Thrush							1			<u>1</u>	0.6		2	2
Hermit Thrush	<u>2</u>					<u>7</u>	78	37	3	127	125	99	167	5
Wood Thrush	143	81	64	40	123	218	198	192	30	1089	1319	1235	1486	5
American Robin	1065	677	730	155	1080	914	507	728	78	5934	5736	5048	6060	5
Gray Catbird	871	296	215	98	516	534	435	563	65	3593	3386	3204	3520	5
Northern Mockingbird	125	103	113	24	76	77	35	20	20	593	819	594	981	5
Brown Thrasher	24	6	5	1	6	14	2	3	1	62	91	75	105	5
Cedar Waxwing	150	148	103	57	91	<u>323</u>	245	432	27	<u>1576</u>	1142	568	1473	5
European Starling	1492	1187	1330	183	1698	853	415	838	178	<u>8174</u>	6635	5767	8133	5
White-eyed Vireo	17	2	1	3		1		2		26	48	45	52	5
Blue-headed Vireo	3					12	38	27	1	81	93	76	128	5
Yellow-throated Vireo	31	1	9	7	1	50	20	45	5	169	204	173	244	5
Warbling Vireo	91	51	46	19	30	166	28	83	8	522	511	292	664	5
Red-eyed Vireo	165	117	35	54	63	244	572	369	21	1640	1682	1273	1899	5
Blue-winged Warbler	75	74	12	22	83	110	34	78	16	504	657	623	716	5
"Lawrence's Warbler"		1				2				3	1.0		2	4
"Brewster's Warbler"		1								1	1.0		2	4
Golden-winged Warbler		<u>1</u>								1	1.2		2	4
Tennessee Warbler						<u>1</u>				<u>1</u>			2	3

Nashville Warbler											1.2		2	4
Northern Parula	<u>1</u>					1		1		3	2.8	1	5	5
Yellow Warbler	438	117	122	68	155	375	159	510	37	1981	2035	1593	2352	5
Chestnut-sided Warbler	10	18	10	5	17	87	209	259	1	616	625	375	777	5
Magnolia Warbler	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>				3	65	8		82	63	52	86	5
Cape May Warbler											0.2		1	1
Black-thr. Blue Warbler						3	118	22		143	112	73	144	5
Yellow-rumped Warbler			2			2	75	32		111	124	77	183	5
Black-thr. Green Warbler	9	9		6	23	<u>44</u>	93	48	7	239	204	103	261	5
Blackburnian Warbler						16	76	38	3	133	102	55	137	5
Yellow-throated Warbler										<u>1</u>	0.2		1	1
Pine Warbler	25	30	28	6	9	20	48	38	3	207	194	140	221	5
Prairie Warbler	10		14	23	29	80	11	1	8	176	244	226	259	5
Bay-breasted Warbler		<u>1</u>								<u>1</u>				0
Blackpoll Warbler		<u>1</u>				1		1		3	4.2		11	3
Cerulean Warbler						1		1		2	9.0	6	12	5
Blk.-and-White Warbler	69	45	14	12	17	85	113	140	11	506	556	523	597	5
American Redstart	13	7	29	33	19	198	262	336	8	905	917	634	1127	5
Worm-eating Warbler	35	7	2	15	26	21	4	2	2	114	167	127	223	5
Ovenbird	87	90	22	21	92	218	263	264	55	1112	1281	955	1484	5
Northern Waterthrush	1		1		1	1	4	31		39	44	8	69	5
Louisiana Waterthrush	25	5	6	2	1	47	23	26	5	<u>140</u>	127	111	135	5
Kentucky Warbler	1									1	2.4	2	7	3
Mourning Warbler		1						<u>2</u>		3	1.0		3	3
Common Yellowthroat	225	133	61	36	139	243	442	456	41	1776	1787	1415	2061	5
Hooded Warbler	1	7		2	1	14	1	1		27	27	23	37	5

BA - Barkhamsted

LH - Litchfield Hills

SR - Salmon River

XX

Noted 5 or fewer years in last 10 yrs.

GS - Greenwich-Stamford

NH - New Haven

ST - Storrs

XX

Species new to Count (shaded box)

HA - Hartford

QV - Quinnipiac Valley

WR - Woodbury-Roxbury

XX

New 10 Yr. High Total (underlined)

XX New 10 Yr. Low Total (Bold)

1998 Summer Bird Count Tables

SPECIES	Coastal		Ct Valley		Upland Counts					1998 State Total	1993 - 1997			Yrs seen
	GS	NH	HA	SR	Mid-state		Northern				Ave.	Min.	Max.	
					QV	WR	BA	LH	ST					
Wilson's Warbler											0.8		2	3
Canada Warbler	4	7				5	19	34	1	70	56	21	83	5
Yellow-breasted Chat											1.0		2	4
Summer Tanager											0.2		1	1
Scarlet Tanager	80	51	24	22	25	102	143	74	12	533	607	543	692	5
Northern Cardinal	317	165	187	65	124	282	137	155	54	1486	1560	1450	1702	5
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	36	43	27	4	18	62	83	80	15	368	384	302	476	5
Indigo Bunting	50	47	12	10	10	78	57	23	3	290	346	284	425	5
Eastern Towhee	77	91	29	36	79	133	130	104	11	690	763	660	887	5
Chipping Sparrow	262	54	107	57	183	<u>425</u>	378	270	38	1774	1745	1602	2005	5
Field Sparrow	11	29	18	10	29	61	12	15	5	<u>190</u>	170	143	186	5
Savannah Sparrow			12			9		21	4	46	28	12	54	5
Grasshopper Sparrow			1							1	3.8	4	8	3
Saltm. Sh.-tailed Sparrow	6	5								11	11	5	25	5
Nelson's Sh.-tailed Sparrow	1									1	0.2		1	1
Seaside Sparrow		1								1	0.6		2	3
Song Sparrow	537	181	27	60	116	410	280	546	55	2212	2524	2328	2810	5
Swamp Sparrow	10	2	3		7	35	64	203	1	<u>325</u>	242	140	297	5
White-throated Sparrow	<u>1</u>		<u>2</u>	2			1	8		14	16	2	23	5
White-crowned Sparrow								<u>1</u>		8	0.2		1	1
Dark-eyed Junco	<u>1</u>						29			30	55	41	70	5
sparrow species		2								2				0
Bobolink		6	40		11	138	42	300	4	541	414	257	550	5
Red-winged Blackbird	626	901	380	105	555	601	294	884	113	4459	4237	3859	4630	5
Eastern Meadowlark	CP	1	6		8	11		6	6	38	60	39	81	5
Rusty Blackbird											1.0		5	1

Common Grackle	1091	518	626	136	719	639	209	493	37	4468	4752	4047	5582	5
Brown-headed Cowbird	207	123	103	47	256	227	142	194	32	1331	1282	1129	1450	5
Orchard Oriole	13	6	2			<u>18</u>				39	34	21	54	5
Baltimore Oriole	185	141	86	25	62	211	68	98	16	892	1051	837	1182	5
Bullock's Oriole											0.2		1	1
Purple Finch				1	1	5	42	52		101	88	66	115	5
House Finch	372	117	181	52	105	249	120	94	22	1312	2443	1487	3510	5
Pine Siskin				3						<u>3</u>	0.4		2	1
American Goldfinch	262	190	312	106	246	349	331	376	38	<u>2210</u>	1709	1476	1927	5
Evening Grosbeak											2.6		5	4
House Sparrow	<u>1083</u>	401	53	56	498	312	172	209	98	2882	2752	2373	3015	5
Unidentified/Hybrids											4.8		21	4
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	20625	11974	9629	2458	10423	15521	12662	15009	2052	100353	96262	91345	101509	
CD Species	146	139	104	91	110	130	120	124	94	201	196	192	201	
CP Species	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.0			
DEGREE OF EFFORT:														
Party Hours	280.5	99	71.5	35	64.75	167.5	147	150.5	35.25	1051	1137	1101	1191.5	
Day Party Hours	265	96	71.5	34	61.75	156	146	149.5	35.25	1015	1081	1036	1130	
Night Party Hours	15.5	3	0	1	3	11.5	1	1	0	36	56	44	65.5	
Observers	51	37	24	10	14	34	26	31	10	237	238	230	257	
Parties	28	18	9	6	5	20	17	14	5	122	122	115	130	
Indiv. bds per 10 PH	735	1209	1347	702	1610	927	861	997	582	955	838	805	918.0	
Ind. bds per Observer	404	324	401	246	745	457	487	484	205	423	393	373	426.5	
% Ct Observers	21.5	15.6	10.1	4.2	5.9	14.3	11.0	13.1	4.2					
% Ct Party Hours	26.7	9.4	6.8	3.3	6.2	15.9	14.0	14.3	3.4					
% Ct Individual Birds	20.6	11.9	9.6	2.4	10.4	15.5	12.6	15.0	2.0					

For SBCs under 10 years old, only species first seen this year are shown. All other statistics are given for SBCs at least ten years old (GS & WR). New species and those found four or fewer years are noted in the statewide totals.

BA - Barkhamsted LH - Litchfield Hills SR - Salmon River
 GS - Greenwich-Stamford NH - New Haven ST - Storrs
 HA - Hartford QV - Quinnipiac Valley WR - Woodbury-Roxbury

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

A THIRD ADULT AGAIN ASSISTS AT A CONNECTICUT BALD EAGLE NEST

Donald A. Hopkins, Gerald S. Mersereau,
Alan C. Nordell

In 1993 we reported on the activities of a third adult Bald Eagle helping at an active nest in Connecticut (Hopkins et al. 1993). The following year this bird replaced the original female at the nest during the brooding period (Hopkins et al. 1995). The original female has not been seen since that time. In 1996 the original male and the new female were observed copulating and initiated incubation which stopped between 4 April and 6 April. The nest tree was climbed on 9 April, but no eggs or young were found. Inclement weather during the nesting period could have been a cause of nesting failure. In 1997 this pair fledged one young, and in 1998, two young were fledged.

Nesting activities for 1998 began normally, with copulation on 7 and 13 March, laying of the eggs on 16 March, hatching 19 April, and fledging on 12 July. On 9 May three adults were observed in the nesting area. While the parent female was in the nest tree, an unidentified female was perched about 355 meters east of the nest tree. The unidentified adult was in the area for at least one hour and 50 minutes, during which time the male returned to the nest. No interaction took place between the adults. On 26 July this new adult female brought food into the nest tree for the fledglings. At that time we could see that the edges of each white rectrix were lined with a tan color. This characteristic helped to make this bird easily identifiable. The third adult was seen again on 8 August bringing a fish to the two fledglings in the nest tree. At that time we could see not only the tan edges, but also a tan spot on the ends of the sixth rectrices. This adult was seen again on 23 August and 27 September in the nest tree. The three adults were again in the nest area on 31 October.

As with the first incident of a third eagle bringing fish to the young in 1993 and again last year (1998), the timing was related to the fledging of the young. At this time the parent eagles are less attentive to the young and a third eagle is able to move into the nest area unchallenged by the absent parent eagles.

LITERATURE CITED

- Hopkins, D. A., G. S. Mersereau, M. J. O'Leary 1993. A third adult Bald Eagle takes an active part in raising young eagles in Connecticut. Connecticut Warbler 13:114-116.
- 1995. A third adult Bald Eagle replaces a nesting eagle. Connecticut Warbler 15:114-115.

DONALD A. HOPKINS, 27 London Rd., Windsor, CT 06095

GERALD MERSEREAU, P.O. Box 321, Tariffville, CT 06081

ALAN C. NORDELL, 16 Middle Rd., Enfield, CT 06082



CONNECTICUT'S 1998 FALL HAWK MIGRATION

Neil Currie

If you are a hawk watcher and own a personal computer, or have the use of one, you may be aware that there are internet services, among the many birding services, that can keep you informed of the daily progress of the hawk migration. Last fall (1998) one service offered daily counts and a map of North America on which the progress of the Broad-winged Hawk migration could be followed south through Texas and on into Mexico. This program was under the cooperative sponsorship of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, the National Audubon Society, and Hawk Mountain's Hawks Aloft Worldwide project. From Vera Cruz, Mexico on the Caribbean coast there were reports of tens of thousands of Broadwings passing over on their way to Panama and beyond. Connecticut's lookouts took part in this effort, reporting their daily numbers and tracking the Broadwings across the state.

Another service, "Birdhawk" on the internet, provided daily news about the migration of all hawk species across the continent. Among many sites reporting was Hawk Mountain Sanctuary where hawks were counted and reported through December 15. At Hawk Mountain record numbers of Cooper's Hawks (1121), Golden Eagles (144), and Bald Eagles (154) were recorded. Also at Hawk Mountain on December 1, a very late flight of over one hundred hawks passed. This was one of many late movements across the eastern half of the United States and certainly reflected the fall's unusually warm weather.

In Connecticut the chief contributors to this project were Lighthouse Point in New Haven and Quaker Ridge in Greenwich. As usual these two major sites recorded the most watch hours (See Tables 1, 3, and 4), and with one exception the highest numbers of hawks were recorded at these two locations. The exception was Booth Hill in West Hartland, just west of Barkhamsted Reservoir, where 14,581 hawks were counted (Table 1). Of these 14,472 were Broadwings, of which 11,081 passed on September 13 (Table 2). In the early afternoon 8,610 passed in just one hour. In Connecticut this kind of flight is a rare and exciting opportunity for those who are lucky enough to experience it. Other high fall counts were at Whippoorwill Hill in Newtown and at Maltby Lakes on Route 34 in Orange (Tables 1 and 2). Whippoorwill watcher-counters, Polly

Brody and Art Titus, saw 3441 hawks pass while completing twenty years of observations at that lookout. At Maltby Lakes 7,671 hawks passed, 6,796 of them Broadwings.

Connecticut's 1998 fall migration produced many highlights. Among these were the flight of 8,610 Broadwings in one hour at Booth Hill, and record numbers of Bald Eagles at Lighthouse Point (41), Quaker Ridge (93), and Maltby Lakes (25). These, along with reports of large numbers of eagles from Pennsylvania, were a good sign. Other highlights included the revival of Northern Harrier numbers, after two years of apparent decline (Tables 3 and 4). High counts were reported from Lighthouse Point and Quaker Ridge (Tables 3 and 4). Following a year in which none were recorded, the appearance of five Rough-legged Hawks over Lighthouse Point provided another highlight. Birders recognize that there are never many Roughlegs migrating through or wintering in Connecticut. Along with the continuing increase in Bald Eagle numbers, the continued rebound of Ospreys (a record count of 317 at Maltby Lakes), since the low years of the seventies and early eighties, was also noteworthy.

In reality an analysis of a single year's counts is impossible. Why did the Broadwings pass further to the north than usual in 1998? Do the record counts of Bald Eagles at some lookouts actually indicate an increase in the eagle population? Are Northern Harriers really increasing in number? Why do large numbers of Broadwings appear in the New Haven area a week after Broadwings have passed through the state further inland? This does happen most years. Why is the number of hawks that pass over Lighthouse Point so much greater than at other shore points? These are just some of the many questions that continue to arise. There are so many variables to consider in attempting to answer the questions that an answer from a single year's counts becomes almost impossible. Thus, there is not much, if any, analysis in these fall reports.

COMPILERS AND COUNTERS

The following watchers and counters at Connecticut hawk sites hope you will join them next fall: Lois Aldi, Pat Bailey, Bill Banks, Tom Baptist, Dan Barvir, Trudy Battaly, Ron Bell, Gail Benson, Polly Brody, Tom Burke, Paul Carrier, Barbara Cole, Neil and Mary Ann Currie, Fritz Davis, Paul Desjardins, Angela Dimmitt, Patrick Dugan, Cynthia Ehlinger, Dick English, Larry Fischer, David and Ann Fiske, Joyce Grohoski, Frank Guida, Tony Hager, Anki Hamback, Greg Hanisek, Seth Kellogg, Dick Kenney, Phyllis

Kitchin, Frank Mantlik, Jim McBride, Marty Moore, Russ Naylor, Mike Newhouse, Brian O'Toole, Janet Petricone, Matt Popp, Steve Potter, Alan and Betty Root, Arne Rosengren, Jerry Ross, Meredith Sampson, Fred Schroeder, Art Titus, Tony Tortora, Edith Wells, Janice Zepko, Joe Zeranski, and Jim Zipp.

1998 HAWK WATCH SITE LOCATIONS

Booth Hill - West Hartland	Huntington State Park - Redding
Beelzebub Road - South Windsor	East Rock Park - New Haven
Taine Mountain - Burlington	East Shore Park - New Haven
Johnnycake Farm - Burlington	Lighthouse Point - New Haven
Chestnut Hill - Litchfield	Maltby Lakes - Orange
Good Hill - Woodbury	Norwalk-Westport Area
Botsford Hill - Bridgewater	Cove Island - Stamford
Whippoorwill Hill - Newtown	Quaker Ridge - Greenwich

NEIL CURRIE, 10 Mountain Laurel Lane, Sandy Hook, CT 06482

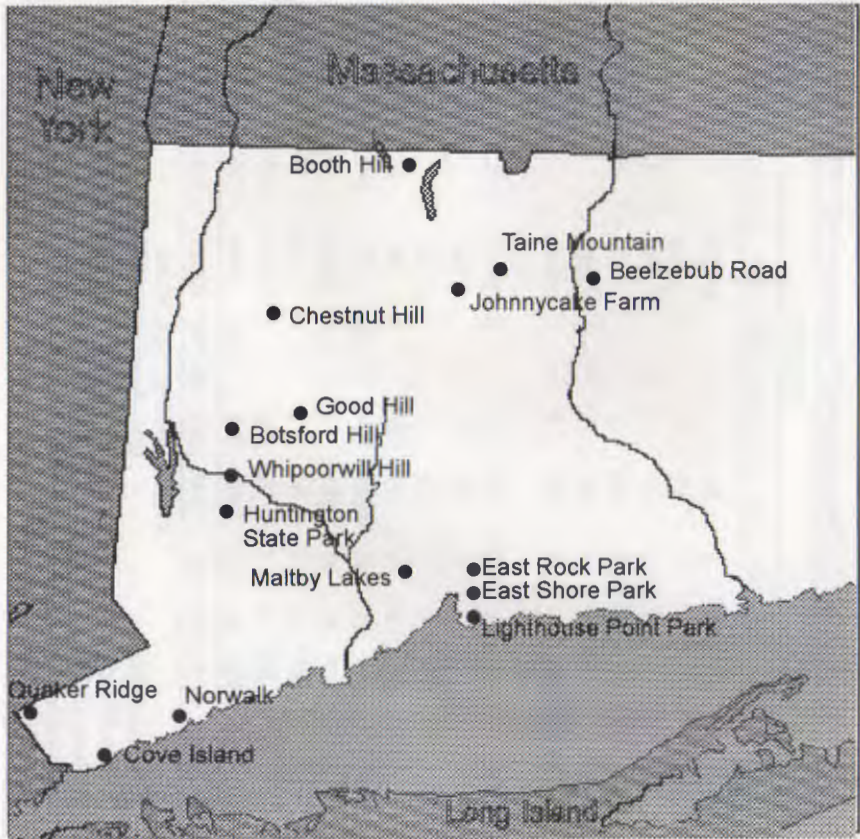


Figure 1. 1998 Hawk Flight Lookout Sites

Table 1: Connecticut-All Lookouts-Fall 1998

SITES	Tot. Hrs.	SPECIES																	Total	
		BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	S	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG		UR
Booth Hill, West Hartland	25			20	3	3	53				14472		1			21	1		7	14581
Beelzebub Road, South Windsor	51			15	1	3	17	1		203					3				12	255
Taine Mountain, Burlington	6			12			7			80		2			1					102
Johnnycake Farm, Harwinton	21			14	8	4	16	2		1155				1	19	1			9	1230
Chestnut Hill, Litchfield	38			29	5	4	36	3		2522					12					2611
Good Hill, Woodbury	29			25	5	2	26	2		1959					11	1			7	2038
Botsford Hill, Bridgewater	2				1					124		1			2					128
Whippoorwill Hill, Newtown	59			79	5	9	93	13		3114		39			70	2			12	3441
Huntington State Park, Redding	21			9		1	28	9		594					13	5				659
East Rock Park, New Haven	1		18	17	1		12	16		215									1	280
East Shore Park, New Haven	21		37	62	3	12	717	77		186		10			292	1	2	16		1416
Lighthouse Point, New Haven	560		254	1516	41	806	6529	771	17	26	371	258	5	3	2598	341	48	156		13740
Maltby Lakes, Orange	92		16	317	25	31	221	14		6796		8			222	5	4	8		7671
Norwalk-Westport area	4			37	3	2	63	3		26		2			21	1				158
Cove Island, Stamford	15		5	60	5	7	92	21	4	2	254	10			61	5	4	1		531
Quaker Ridge, Greenwich	616		353	923	93	313	3436	315	9	128	9949	238		8	922	67	19	82		16855
Total	1561		683	3135	199	1197	11346	1247	30	167	42020	569	5	12	4268	430	78	310		65696

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
 SW - Swainson's Hawk
 RT - Red-tailed Hawk
 RL - Rough-legged Hawk

GE - Golden Eagle
 AK - American Kestrel
 ML - Merlin
 PG - Peregrine Falcon
 UR - unidentified raptor

Table 2: Broad-winged Hawk Flights - Fall 1998

SITES	September 1998														Oct.	Total
	Pre-10	10	11	12	13	14-15	16	17	18	19-22	23	24	25-28	29	1998	
Booth Hill, West Hartland				484	11081		286	2611		10						14472
Beelzebub Road, South Windsor	7	0	2	1	81		21	70	1		6			14		203
Taine Mountain, Burlington						71				9						80
Johnnycake Farm, Harwinton	19	3	58		342				5		728					1155
Chestnut Hill, Litchfield		4	137	287	1163		294	575	62							2522
Good Hill, Woodbury		9		499	474		594	361	21		1					1959
Botsford Hill, Bridgewater	(very little coverage)				124											124
Whippoorwill Hill, Newtown	29	77	425	484	941	44	456	620	38							3114
Huntington State Park, Redding			9	298	233	3		14	36	1						594
East Rock Park, New haven	(no reports for September)														215	215
East Shore Park, New Haven	4										142	36			4	186
Lighthouse Point, New Haven	6	4	7	1	11			34	2	1	40	5	44		*216	*371
Maltby Lakes, Orange	231	572	965	18	97	0	8	156	96	39	2056	1739	87	732		6796
Norwalk-Westport area					6			20								26
Cove Island, Stamford										236			10		8	254
Quaker Ridge, Greenwich	216	278	1704	328	1683	6	259	642	86	3	504	3413	120	466	241	9949
Total	512	947	3307	2400	16236	124	1918	5103	347	299	3335	5299	297	1212	684	42020

* One (1) Broadwing on November 1.

Table 3: Lighthouse Point Park Hawkwatch, New Haven, CT - Fall 1998

MONTH	Hrs.	SPECIES																		Total
		BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	SW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UR	
August	28			47		4	8	5							32	3			1	100
September	195			797	16	373	2409	159	8	155		13			1521	159	9	54		5673
October	210		229	666	23	357	3800	570	16	11	215		137	3	3	1041	168	34	92	7365
November	127		25	6	2	72	312	37	1	7	1		108	2		4	11	5	9	602
1998 Total	560		254	1516	41	806	6529	771	17	26	371		258	5	3	2598	341	48	156	13740
1997 Total	543		206	1811	38	459	8212	876	12	50	2054	1	212		1	1865	242	53	155	16247
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

Table 4: Quaker Ridge Hawkwatch, Greenwich, CT - Fall 1998

MONTH	Hrs.	SPECIES																		Total
		BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	SW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UR	
August	54			40	7	4	8	1		1	55		1		17	1			1	136
September	269		29	670	72	225	1771	81		14	9653		11		658	45	9	29		13267
October	218		240	212	12	75	1632	228	7	77	241		151		5	246	20	10	48	3204
November	75		84	1	2	9	25	5	2	36			75		3	1	1		4	248
1998 Total	616		353	923	93	313	3436	315	9	128	9949		238		8	922	67	19	82	16855
1997 Total	590	1	554	610	67	127	3360	368	13	126	15018	2	290		700	93	23	70		21422
1996 Total	557		295	306	68	62	1549	157	7	180	8071	2	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

See Table 1 for species abbreviations.

Table 5: Whippoorwill Hill, Newtown, CT

YEAR	Hours	SPECIES																	Total
		BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UR	
1979	27		0	38	0	2	91	1	0	0	3814	11	0	0	31	1	1	63	4053
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	7900
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		4	2363	44			32			22	2647
1997	50			79	10	7	162	12		5	3378	44			30	2	2	15	3746
1998	59			79	5	9	93	13		5	3114	39			70	2		12	3441
Total	807	1	*286	1171	67	105	2248	72	6	21	100639	508	0	0	900	22	9	738	106793
#/YR	40.4			59	3.4	5	112	3.6	0.3	1	5032	25	0	0	45	1	5	37	5340

* Turkey Vultures no longer counted. Not migrating yet.



BOOKS ON BIRDS

Alan Brush

If you follow the news in print, on the radio, or TV, you cannot escape the occasional item on the recent fossil discoveries from Liaoning, China. In fact, Discovery magazine gave the findings a two-page spread in their "Top 100 Science Stories" issue (Jan. 1998). The specimens *Sinosauropteryx*, *Protarchaeopteryx* and *Caudipteryx* are unquestionably dinosaurs. However, a series of very early birds such as *Confuciusornis*, *Sinornis*, *Cathayornis*, and *Liaoningornis* have also been found in the same location. These species are being described and debated in the current scientific literature. Coincidentally, a number of books have also appeared that deal with the origin of birds and the evolution of flight and feathers. One important point not yet universally accepted is that the origin of birds and the evolution of flight must be appreciated as two quite different events. It is now also established that feathers appear in the fossil record before the appearance of either flight or animals as morphologically advanced as *Archaeopteryx*, long considered the most primitive bird.

One of these volumes *The Origin and Evolution of Birds* by Alan Feduccia (Yale University Press, 1996) was mentioned earlier here. Subsequently others have appeared as well as articles in the semi-popular literature. Consider the following:

The Rise of Birds by Sankar Chatterjee (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998). This work is heavy on anatomical details and includes a detailed model of the 'trees down' hypothesis on the evolution of flight. Chatterjee is almost the sole advocate of interpreting as a bird the controversial Triassic fossil *Protoavis* which he believes is 75 million years older than *Archaeopteryx*.

Taking Wing: Archaeopteryx and the evolution of bird flight, by Pat Shipman (Simon and Schuster, 1998) has been mentioned here previously. This is a fine example of science writing and gives as much emphasis to the characters and controversy involved as to the specimens. Consequently, the differences in methodology employed in the interpretation of fossil material are discussed as an entrée into the scientific discussions. *Archaeopteryx* is probably the best known of all fossils in part because of the early support it gave to Darwin's evolutionary theory (species are indeed not fixed

in time) and Shipman is justified treading very lightly on other issues in the evolution of birds in her presentation.

The Mistaken Extinction: Dinosaur Evolution and the Origin of Birds, by Lowell Dingus and Timothy Rowe (W. H. Freeman, 1998) is in a sense an amalgamation of two shorter books. One concerns the extinction of the dinosaurs at the end of the Cretaceous period; the other covers the rise and subsequent evolution of birds. Unlike Feduccia, for example, Dingus and Rowe are strong advocates for a dinosaur ancestry of birds. In discussing the post Cretaceous avian radiation, they consider aspects of avian natural history as well as the fossil evidence.

"The origin and early evolution of birds" by Kevin Padian and Luis Chiappe is a review article published in *Biological Reviews* 73:1-42 (1998) and essentially a technical paper. While probably available only at your nearby university library, it is extremely well written, convincingly argued, and strongly centered in a phylogenetic approach. Among some of the technical matters discussed are the problems that arise in defining groups (e.g., birds) and how they are diagnosed (i.e., the presence of feathers). Probably less accessible to the average reader than the books, but well worthwhile tracking down.

Padian and Chiappe also have an article in the February 1998 issue of *Scientific American*. Titled "The Origin of Birds and Their Flight," it is a popular treatment of the issues in the above article. The color photos are exceptional. Also don't miss "Dinosaurs take wing; the origin of birds" in the July 1998 *National Geographic*. Written by Jennifer Ackerman it includes the first photos of the newest finds (*Caudipteryx*) and of the field sites in northeast China.

And how significant are the new finds? That depends on the colorfulness of your vocabulary—especially when it comes to adjectives. In a word, they are extraordinary. The evidence from skeletons, and the feathers themselves, provides almost unimpeachable evidence for the ancestry of birds. The status traditionally afforded *Archaeopteryx* as a 'transitional' or 'intermediate' form between reptiles and modern birds is confirmed. Although the thought of finding finer and finer links is a bit dated (we now talk of sister groups and clades) the excitement is no less. These are dinosaurs with feathers.

Are those dinosaurs at your feeder? Here again there is a considerable amount of verbiage being spilt. To a great degree, it depends on your perspective and philosophy regarding the methods that are used to establish relationships and their consequences. I

think there is no longer any reasonable doubt that the origin of birds lies in the dinosaurs, particularly the maniraptorian theropods. However, I also contend that so much has happened in the subsequent 150 million years of evolution that birds should be recognized as a separate class. The advances in the flight apparatus, changes in skeletal design and physiology, and in functional and ecomorphology are absolutely compelling. Enjoy your birding!

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

BIRD BEHAVIOR NOTES

EASTERN SCREECH-OWL BEHAVIOR AT A BAL-CHATRI TRAP

During a winter trapping session I observed an Eastern Screech-Owl (*Otus asio*) attack and attempt to capture the bait animal in a bal-chatri trap. Since there is no published information on Screech-Owl behavior at bal-chatri traps I detail my observations herein.

The owl responded to playback of tape recorded song in a lightly wooded lot bordering a stream in Orange, Connecticut. After a single whinny the owl flew past me at a height of approximately 1.5 meters into another nearby wooded area. I walked about two meters into the woods in the direction of the owl, placed the trap on a bed of leaves 0.5 meters in front of me and sat down with my back to a tree. I was wearing dark blue clothing and a hood which partially shielded my face. I voiced a brief whinny call to which the owl responded by flying towards me and landing on the top branch of a sapling approximately two meters directly in front of and above me. The owl was silhouetted against the night sky and clearly visible. The owl sat motionless for about 4.5 minutes (silent count), then flew onto a branch stub about 0.6 meters high and 1.1 meters from the trap. The owl remained on this perch for about three minutes. It paid no attention to me but instead, appeared to watch the bait mouse intently, occasionally leaning forward about 50° from horizontal to observe the mouse. The owl changed perches twice more, with each new perch closer to the trap, then flew to the top branch of a red maple sapling about 2.7 meters high and directly above the trap. It leaned towards the trap, with the head projecting well forward over the body for 30 seconds, then attacked the mouse in an almost vertical glide with wings partly outstretched. No wing movements were noted during the glide except for a very slight braking action begun approxi-

mately 0.3 meters above the mouse. The owl struck the Plexiglass top directly above the mouse with a distinct thud. The mouse froze momentarily, then ran to a corner of the trap. The owl immediately pursued it by a low flight with wings partially outstretched to the trap corner. For the next six minutes the owl chased the mouse across the trap, sometimes by low flights one end of the trap to another (three observed) or by a rapid walking (seven observed) across the top. These movements were separated by brief intervals during which the owl remained motionless, watching the mouse through the Plexiglass. Mouse movements were in all but two instances followed by owl attacks. On the seventh attempt the owl leaned over the edge of the trap and tried to insert its bill through the wire mesh. It amplified this behavior on the subsequent attacks by extending one of its legs through the mesh, trying to grasp the mouse.

Since the owl had not become snared in a noose during the six minutes I observed it I attempted to hand capture it. As the owl leaned over the trap edge I reached for it. It quickly responded to my initial movement, took flight and easily eluded me.

The bal-chatri is a traditional and still common trapping technique for this and other birds of prey. Observing the behavior of the mouse and the owl suggests that the use of a round bal-chatri trap instead of the square bal-chatri trap might increase the movement of the mouse and thereby increase the capture attempts by the owl as well.

Dwight G. Smith

DOWITCHER DANCE

While observing Short-billed Dowitchers through a spotting scope recently, I was intrigued by a bit of behavior I had not noticed before.

We have all noticed that resting shorebirds, gulls, and terns, face into the wind so as to minimize disturbance of their coat of feathers. But this bird pivoted almost constantly on its one leg. Again, shorebirds and gulls often 'roost' on one leg, pulling the other into the ventral plumage. Apparently done to adjust to minor variations in the direction of the wind which circulated among clumps of salt-marsh grass, the minute pivotings would probably not be apparent to casual inspection. For one who has watched birds so long, this experience seemed to warrant my recent investment in a new scope.

Roland C. Clement



CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Greg Hanisek

SUMMER, June 1 to July 31, 1998

After a warm winter and a strange spring, both influenced by a strong El Nino system, summer settled into a more typical pattern without any remarkable weather extremes. While reports of rarities were minimal, birders provided a heartening amount of information on the state's breeding birds. This included confirmation of breeding by several uncommon or secretive species, as well as the state's first successful breeding by Black Skimmers.

Lingerers, Strays and Post-breeding Wanderers

Single Red-throated Loons lingered at Sandy Point in West Haven June 6 (LA et al.) and off Long Beach in Stratford June 26 (PCo). Common Loons as usual were widely reported in Long Island Sound. Inland, three non-breeders turned up on the Woodbury-Roxbury June count (fide RN) and a yearling was present through at least July 17 at Barkhamsted Reservoir (DR). Much more unusual was a Horned Grebe at Sandy Point in West Haven in late June (JMe). A post-breeding/feeding aggregation of Snowy Egrets reached nearly 180 at the Menunketesuck area of Westbrook July 14 (PCo). An excellent count of eight Little Blue Herons was made July 20 at Griswold Point in Old Lyme (HG). Up to three Tricolored Herons were at

Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison (hereafter HBSP) in July (LK et al.); two were at the Lordship marshes in Stratford June 6 (DV); and one was in the Black Hall River marshes in Old Lyme on June 9 (TH). Two Black-crowned Night Herons visited Lake Zoar in Southbury/Newtown through July 15 (DR), and one was in Watertown July 15 (RN); there are no known inland breeding sites in the state. A Glossy Ibis wandered to the Naugatuck River in Torrington July 27-29 (PCa), and the **White-faced Ibis** found in May at HBSP was still present in early July (m.ob).

An unusual mid-summer concentration of 300+ Mute Swans July 9 in Lords Cove, Old Lyme, had increased from 264 on June 18 and included no cygnets (TH). Following a recent pattern, a few Brant lin-

gered at scattered coastal locations (JT,BF et al.). Unseasonable ducks included a Northern Pintail at Back River in Old Saybrook June 25 (PCo); a Blue-winged Teal at HBSP July 21-24 (DS); two White-winged Scoters off HBSP June 15 (JG) and one at Pleasure Beach in Bridgeport July 17 (CB); an Oldsquaw July 27 at Griswold Point (TH); a Bufflehead, apparently flightless, July 23-27 in Old Lyme (TH); up to three Common Merganser in June and July at Lords Cove in Old Lyme, south of known breeding areas (TH); and a few Red-breasted Merganser scattered around on the coast as usual (TH et al.). A Bonaparte's Gull, another bird showing up more frequently off-season, was at Milford Point July 19 (BF). A Lesser Black-backed Gull was still at the Manchester landfill July 20 (PCo). The first Forster's Tern appeared July 23 at Griswold Point (TH), three were at North Cove in Old Saybrook the next day (DS,DB) and one was in Westbrook July 29 (PCo).

Northbound Migrants

On June 1, Milford Point still held two alternate plumaged Red Knots and two White-rumped Sandpipers (PCo). A survey of Sandy Point in West Haven June 6 found four Dunlin, nine Sanderlings and four Short-billed Dowitchers still present (LA et al.). Following a

good late May movement, two Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were at Osbornedale State Park in Derby on June 2 (MS). A Magnolia Warbler and two American Redstarts were on the move at HBSP on June 2 (DS, EN), and a Magnolia and a Chestnut-sided Warbler were there June 7 (C&SR). A Tennessee Warbler (BD) and a Blackpoll Warbler (RN) were still in Southbury June 7. A breeding survey in New Haven's East Rock Park produced the following late migrant warblers June 6 - two Magnolia, a Bay-breasted, a Blackpoll, and two Canada's (FD). A Mourning Warbler was in Fairfield June 1 (CB), and another *Oporornis*, probably a Mourning, sang an atypical song there June 9 (CB).

Southbound Migrants

A mid-summer Merlin turned up for the second year in a row, this one in Westbrook July 23 (PCo). The start of the shorebird migration July 4 at Milford Point included a Semipalmated Plover, a Lesser Yellowlegs, a Ruddy Turnstone, five Semipalmated Sandpipers, a Least Sandpiper and five Short-billed Dowitchers (PCo). Semipalmated Sandpipers had built to 2,000 there by July 26 (FM). Candlewood Lake held six Solitary Sandpipers July 25 (DR). A Stilt Sandpiper was at HBSP July 27-31 (CR,DS,EN). On July 14, single Whimbrels

were at Menunketesuck Island in Westbrook (PCo) and at HBSP (LK et al.). Two Western Sandpipers appeared July 20 in the Lordship section of Stratford (CB). The first Pectoral Sandpiper was reported July 26 at Milford Point (FM), and three were at HBSP July 30 (DS). A Common Snipe was an interesting find July 30 in Stratford (PCo); the beginning of this species' southbound migration is not well-documented in the state (PCo).

The first migrant Cliff Swallow was noted July 11 at HBSP (PDe); 25 Bank Swallows were over Stratford July 10 (PCo); and there were 14 Purple Martins at Menunketesuck July 24 (PCo). A Red-breasted Nuthatch in a Southport yard July 6-7 fit into the pattern of very early arrivals in flight years (CB), but this year no fall flight ever materialized. Strong movements of the early-departing Yellow Warbler were noted July 24-26 and July 28-31 in the Woodbury-Watertown area (RN). Louisiana Waterthrush, noted as an early migrant, was apparently on the move July 15 in Watertown (RN), followed by a Northern Waterthrush July 24 in Woodbury (RN).

The Breeding Season

GREBES THROUGH SKIMMERS

A Pied-billed Grebe in the

Stratford Great Meadows July 3-10 may have been indicative of breeding nearby (CB). A Great Blue Heron colony containing three or four pairs was at the Yale Myers property in Eastford (AH), and four pairs in the vicinity of White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield each fledged one young (DR). Up to five Cattle Egrets in Greenwich in June and July could indicate breeding on one of the offshore islands. Least Bittern, one of the state's most secretive breeders, was well-represented in the lower Connecticut River valley, where at least three, and possibly as many as five, were seen on several occasions from June 10 to July 17 in Lyme and Old Lyme (HG,TH). Elsewhere one was heard calling at dawn on July 3 at Stratford Great Meadows (CB). An American Bittern was in the Stratford Great Meadows June 6 (CB), and one was on territory in June in a marsh in Colebrook (DR).

One of the state's few confirmed records of breeding by Green-winged Teal was logged July 10 when a hen with five small ducklings was seen in the Lordship section of Stratford, where up to two adult males were seen in June (CB,PCo). A male Green-winged Teal through June 3 at a marsh in Morris raised suspicions of breeding (DR). A female Hooded Merganser with 15 young as seen June 28 in East

Hartland (GB) and another, with seven young, was at Great Pond in Simsbury June 17 (LK).

A secure-looking Osprey nest on a telephone pole at Pleasure Beach in Bridgeport disappeared without a trace in June (CB). Overall, however, it was a good season for these magnificent fishermen. According to DEP, the 141 active nests broke last year's record by 10. The total number of fledged young dropped from 243 in 1997 to 203 but remained well above the 1996 level of 143 (JV). Two Bald Eagle nests, one in Barkhamsted and one in Suffield, each produced two healthy young (DH fide JK). An immature Bald Eagle was at Bluff Point in Groton July 18 (PDe), and one was on the Connecticut River in Old Lyme July 7 (TH). An adult Northern Goshawk was in West Torrington July 29 (BB); a pair was in Ansonia in June (TK); and one was defending territory in Wolcott on June 7 (P&WS). Cooper's Hawks were widespread as nesters, i.e., three pairs at White Memorial (DR). Northern Harriers apparently bred again at Stratford Great Meadows, where several sightings of adults were augmented by an immature June 26 (CB,PCo). The Hartford Peregrine Falcons laid in a rain gutter atop the Travelers Tower, but the eggs were lost to heavy rain (JV). The only pair of

American Kestrels reported was in Morris, but breeding success was uncertain (DR).

A Northern Bobwhite was calling in Norwich in late June but after about a week it was found dead (GW); several were heard calling in the vicinity of Stonington Country Club in North Stonington July 27 (GH,NC). Virginia Rails, whose coastal breeding status is not well known, were noted June 6-July 3 on the fringes of the saltmarsh at Stratford Great Meadows, in an area that has freshwater pools (CB,DV); another was at HBSP July 12 (CR). Given the uncertain genetic status of King Rails summering along the coast, it was heartening to learn of a solid inland observation June 28 in Harwinton/New Hartford (FZ).

Five Piping Plovers, including three fledglings, were at Pleasure Beach in Bridgeport July 17 (CB). Statewide, the DEP reported that 21 pairs of Piping Plovers produced 22 fledged young for the season, compared 25 pairs and 44 chicks in 1997. Spotted Sandpipers July 4 at Milford Point included a large downy chick (PCo). An American Woodcock with a chick was a good find June 6 at Lordship (DV). Herring Gulls nested on a factory roof in Lordship in June (DV). Roseate Terns from the Falkner Island breeding colony were often feeding in the rips off Meigs

Point at HBSP and rested at Menunketesuk in late June-July (JMe et al.). Others, possibly from New York colonies, could have been seen from Waterford (DP et al.). Least Tern colonies at Long Beach in Stratford (about 28 birds) and Pleasure Beach in Milford (about 45 birds) suffered from human interference and high-tide flooding in late June. The Long Beach colony was eventually abandoned, and Pleasure Beach had only one fledgling at period's end (CB). Overall, however, the DEP said about 450 pairs nested, an increase of 11 percent over last year. Better yet, the number of fledged young increased from 75 to 105 (JV).

The season's big breeding news was the state's first successful nesting by Black Skimmers. Following an unsuccessful attempt last year, a pair was observed mating in late May and again on June 11. Several nests were soon active, and monitoring by DEP revealed the first chick July 11. On July 26, there were 13 chicks being fed (DS et al.).

CUCKOOS THROUGH VIREOS

A pair of Black-billed Cuckoos was nesting in Pomfret (AH). A recently fledged Barred Owl, with a parent nearby sounding an alarm note, was seen June 2 at Wadsworth Falls State Park in Middletown

(JMa). Northern Saw-whet Owl, widespread but hard to find as a breeder, was in Barkhamsted June 27 (DT). Whip-poor-will, a species generally considered in decline, turned up in quite a few places when searches were made: five on June 6 in Nepaug State Forest (JMe); three in Woodbury June 7 (JL), at least 19 in Patchaug State Forest in Voluntown June 20 (DP), one at Evergreen Lake in Hamden June 20 (TK), and three in New Hartford June 27-28 (FZ).

An adult Red-headed Woodpecker made a rare summer one-day visit to a Westport feeder June 6 (TR fide FM). Quite unexpected was an apparent family group of three Pileated Woodpeckers foraging together in the dead limbs of a sugar maple on a residential street in Middletown (JMa). A pair of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, a species apparently increasing as a breeder and extending its range, had a nest in Bethlehem near its southern limit in the state. Young were fledged about June 26-27 (EF). This species was found in record numbers and distribution in Litchfield County on the June counts (AD,RN et al.).

Acadian Flycatcher, scattered sparsely throughout the state, was represented by three in Boston Hollow on June 15 (AH), one in Lyme June 4 (HG,TH) and five on the Barkhamsted count (BS et al.).

Alder Flycatcher, which is most prevalent in the northwest, was at the opposite corner of the state in Pomfret July 19-21 (AH). One of very few Purple Martin nesting colonies in the state was active at Baflin Farm in Pomfret (AH). At Shepaug Dam, the 44+ pairs of Cliff Swallows fledged at least 115 young by July 28 (DR,RN), and several Housatonic River bridges supported active colonies.

A pair of Fish Crows was on a nest at Shepaug Dam June 7, with three fully fledged young July 28 (DR); five nests in West Hartford had fledged young by July 30 (DR); and a nest in Sherman also fledged young (DR). Common Ravens were widespread in the north, with two pairs having four+ fledged young in Winchester and Barkhamsted, respectively (DR et al.). A breeding pair of Golden-crowned Kinglets in Barkhamsted was at a site occupied five consecutive years (DR). For the second consecutive year, a male Swainson's Thrush appeared territorial on the west side of Barkhamsted Reservoir (DR); there are no confirmed breeding records for the state.

Winter Wren, most commonly found as a breeder in the northern tier, was near the coast June 4 in Lyme and June 8 in Old Lyme (HG). Among the many found on the Litchfield

County June counts, a pair in West Hartland had seven fledged nestlings (fide DR). White Memorial, an inland stronghold for Marsh Wren, held at least eight territorial males through July (DR,BL,LW et al.). Two White-eyed Vireos were singing in Pomfret June 27 and one was elsewhere in Pomfret July 19 (AH); the Watertown-Morris area held up to six pairs in June (RN,DR).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Lawrence's Warblers were noted June 7 in North Woodbury (DT) and in Southbury (JN). The two singing male Yellow-throated Warblers reported from White Memorial in May were present until mid-July, with one remaining through the third week, but there were no signs of nesting or of a mate (KF). Magnolia Warbler was numerous in its Barkhamsted stronghold, with a record 65+ on the count including a number feeding young (DR,DT et al.). The Barkhamsted count also produced a record 119 Chestnut-sided Warblers as compared to 109 Yellow Warblers (DT et al.) Yellow-rumped Warbler, a sparse nester in northern areas, was at Thompson Dam, Thompson, July 3 (RD), and at the Yale Myers site in Eastford July 4 (AH). A male Hooded Warbler was in Sterling from June 11 to

July 12 (RD). Worm-eating Warblers were reported in good numbers throughout the state. A pair of Mourning Warblers was present throughout the season in Hartland, where they acted territorial, but no definite evidence of nesting was observed (DR et al.) A singing Yellow-breasted Chat was in Storrs June 12-16 (MS).

Grasshopper Sparrow, a rare breeder, was at Thompson Dam, Thompson, June 12 (RD), and at least two singing males were noted in Manchester (PCo). A singing male White-throated Sparrow was in Barkhamsted June 27-28 (DR et al.). Orchard Oriole (RD,EJ et al.) seems to be on the increase, with many reports including 18 pairs in the Woodbury-Southbury area (RN et al.). A male and a female Boat-tailed Grackle were seen into early July in the Lordship section of Stratford, the state's one known breeding location (CB). A pair of Purple Finches were escorting two young to a feeder in Sterling July 3 (RD). Pine Siskins weren't a major component of last winter's big finch flight, so three were a surprise June 14 in Haddam (JMo).

[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, 662 Phoenixville Rd., Chaplin, CT 06235) if they are to be included in the field notes.]

OBSERVERS, CONTRIBUTORS (boldface)

Lee Aimesbury, **Bob Barbieri**, **Charles Barnard**, Didier Bizien, George Boynton, Paul Carrier (PCa), **Patrick Comins** (PCo), Neil Currie, **Fritz Davis**, **Paul Desjardins** (PDe), Buzz Devine, Angela Dimmitt, **Robert Dixon**, **Bruce Finnan**, **Kevin Finnan**, **Ethel Follett**, John Gaskell, **Ted Gilman**, **Hank Golet**, **Anki Hamback**, **Greg Hanisek**, **Ted Hendrickson**, Don Hopkins, **Elsbeth Johnson**, **Jay Kaplan**, **Tom Kilroy**, **Len Kendall**, Bill Leidlich, John Longstreth, **Frank Mantlik**, John Maynard (JMa), **Jamie Meyers** (JMe), Joe Morin (JMo), **Russ Naylor**, Jim Nolan, Elaine Nye, **Dave Provencher**, **Charlie Rafford**, **Shirley Rafford**, Tom Rochovansky, **Dave Rosgen**, Bud Saunders, **Peg Shaffer**, **William Shaffer**, **Dori Sosensky**, **Mark Szantyr**, **John Triana**, **Dave Tripp**, **Dennis Varza**, Julie Victoria, Leigh Wells, **Glen Williams**, Francis Zygmunt.

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



PHOTO CHALLENGE

Julian Hough

ANSWER TO PHOTO CHALLENGE 24

After a stressful festive season, I have decided to go easy with a relatively straightforward, but seasonally topical, photo-challenge. No prizes for guessing this month's mystery bird is a waxwing, but which is it - Cedar or Bohemian?

Cedar Waxwing is a common and widespread bird throughout the state, but Bohemian Waxwing is a rare visitor from more northern and western latitudes. However, during the winter months, food shortages to the northwest and perhaps harsh weather may cause a southward irruption of Bohemian Waxwings into New England. Many Connecticut birders know it pays off to sift through winter flocks of Cedars for their slightly larger cousin. Of course, from the photograph, there is nothing with which to compare size, so we must look at other features. Thankfully, the differences between these two similar species are clear cut and easy to see. Apart from a variable number of red waxy tips protruding from the secondaries, Cedar Waxwings are always plain winged lacking any pale markings on the folded wing. On our bird, the bold white bars at the base of the primary coverts and secondaries and the pale 'hooks' all along the length of the primaries, immediately identify this bird as a Bohemian Waxwing. And it gets even better. It's in your garden eating your apples! Whooppee!

Before we get too excited at our identification, there are other subtle features worth noting. Firstly, Bohemian's lack the indistinct white stripe above the dark eye patch. This is obvious on most Ce-



• dars but it may be difficult to discern on some individuals. Also, the black eye patch is more convex between the eye and the bill whereas on Cedar Waxwing the eye-patch appears to be

noticeably concave, giving a 'bulging' appearance.

Finally, one of the most diagnostic features, and probably the most useful in field conditions, cannot be seen from the photo! Bohemian Waxwings have solidly dark chestnut vents (the area underneath the tail) while this area is creamy white in Cedars. This is one of the first features to look for and can be especially noticeable when birds are overhead, either flying or while flocks are feeding in trees. Another apparent difference in such views is that of Bohemian's lack of the lemon-lime suffusion obvious on the lower belly of Cedar Waxwing. Plumage wise, many Bohemians tend to appear more warmly colored around the 'face' and many look more fully-crested than some Cedars. In flight, Bohemian's look larger and bulkier (more 'football-like') than Cedar's and their call is slightly deeper, though I often find this hard to detect.

One last thing. Now we have identified it, what age and sex is it? If the photo was in color, the markings on the primaries would appear as a yellow stripe extending along the length of the wing, with obvious white 'hooks'. The presence of these obvious white 'hooks' age the bird as an adult. A first-winter would still show the yellow stripe, but not these 'hooks'. The shape of the dark throat patch and the number of waxy tips to the secondaries are a clue to sex - males tend to have a more extensive and well delineated throat patch and a larger number of waxy tips than females. However, some birds may appear intermediate and should be left unsexed. Based on the above, this bird is an adult, probably a male. It was photographed by me at Aviemore, Scotland in March 1996.

Julian Hough, 21 Walnut St., Naugatuck, CT 06770



Photo Challenge 26. Identify the species. Answer next issue.

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

Editor

Betty S. Kleiner - 5 Flintlock Ridge, Simsbury, CT 06070
(860) 658-5670 - CTWarbler@compuserve.com

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Frank Mantlik

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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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ABOUT OUR COVER

American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*)

by Paul Fusco

The American Woodcock drawing on the front cover of this issue of *The Connecticut Warbler*, is the work of multi-talented Paul Fusco. Besides his excellent artistry, especially with pen and ink, Paul likes to photograph birds and his photos have appeared in a number of publications. A handsome colored photograph of a Piping Plover, taken by Paul, graces the front cover of the June 1999 issue of *Birder's World*.

Paul is employed by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Wildlife Division as a Visual Media Designer. He is also Conservation Chairman of the Connecticut Ornithological Association.

THE YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT: SOME NEWS

William Burt

Here's a note of cheer for any who might be discouraged by the disappearance of the Yellow-breasted Chat from the Connecticut nesting scene.

In the course of an hour-long morning hike on June 11, 1997, I was delighted to hear the antic notes of not one, two, three, but four male chats on four discrete territories in a half-mile long tract of open country in the town of Lyme - and within one mile of the site of a nest I'd found 20 years before, (a comical occasion, that one; after two hours' burrowing through greenbriers, with a protective armoring of heavy coat and gloves and hat and goggles, I gave up the search at last and crawled back out to the open trail, only to find the nest right there before me, waist-high and in plain view beside the trail).

This open country is a mosaic of marsh and pasture and vast tumbling tangles of blackberry, bayberry, and especially the wretched greenbrier (*Smilax*), and occasional interspersed red maples and red cedars, which served as the birds' singing perches. Some of these thickets are draped with undulating blankets of wild grape, which by late spring have screened the shrubbery from view almost completely.

The next day, June 12, again all four chats were singing on their respective territories; and the comical song-flight was observed several times.

I was away then for several weeks, but returned to the site on July 6. Not a peep nor a glimpse of any chat was evident, but this was not in the least surprising, considering the nature of the birds and the lateness of the date. The next morning I made one final investigation, finding things uneventful as before - except at one territory, the farthest from the road (of course), where there was a subtle, barely audible Morse Code-like ticking (*tut-tut, tut-tut-tut, etc.*), which betrayed the presence of a chat carrying food. I withdrew some distance, sat still and watched, waited, and listened. At length, after several audible feedings and some triangulating and then some incremental sneakings up, and more watching and listening, I managed to find that which was being fed: a single bob-tailed fledgling, ensconced deep in a mass of bittersweet and blackberry. It was still broad of gape and scruffy, but fairly well feathered out to a greenish-yellow drab, rather like a dull fall warbler; and it was able to get about by hopping and climbing, and

even short flight, so it had been out of the nest for several days at least, maybe even a week. When fed, or about to be fed, it made a harsh importuning call that might be construed as *chat-chat, chat-chat*.

On seeing me, the parent bird gave the typical alarm call: a loud nasal *jayew!*, with the querulous whining quality of a cat's meow.

Subsequently, I happened to spend a week in Kentucky observing and photographing chats with researchers Herman Mays, Jr. and Gary Ritchison, who are making intensive nesting and behavioral studies of the bird, primarily with an eye to the promiscuity of females (high incidence of "extra-territorial forays" and "extra-pair copulations," as they call them); and I learned more about this cryptic chat vocabulary in the vicinity of nests and young. Indeed, that Morse Code-like ticking was to be heard when there were *fledged* young in the vicinity, and a parent was mildly solicitous for them; and the loud alarm note, *jayew!*, meant an intruder was visible and the bird was in highest dudgeon. But there are two other obscure calls, as well: a very soft and subtle plaint - *jhay?* - with a definite interrogative quality, which is given when the intruder has left (or hidden himself in a blind); and a peculiar corvine grating call that sounds just like the croaking of a distant raven, delivered only when the coast is perceived clear and the bird is *en route* to the nest. But so much for vocal minutiae.

Early in the century, seemingly because there was still sufficient open farmland to ensure a continuum of the necessary reverting thorny second-growth, the chat was considered a fairly common nesting bird in Connecticut, especially in the southern part; and it even nested regularly in Massachusetts. But it has since declined severely in New England, and more recently has disappeared almost entirely. Robert Askins, who has been watchful of this species in Connecticut, says there have been no breeding sites he is aware of anywhere in the state since 1991 (Ford 1992); and Wayne Petersen of Massachusetts tells me there has been no evidence even suggestive of nesting in that state since 1984 - though viable habitat does still remain he feels. To him, the disappearance of the chat is an enigma much like that posed by another onetime nesting bird of New England, the Loggerhead Shrike: the two disappeared at about the same time, and for reasons equally unclear. In any event, this locality in Lyme would seem a special one indeed, constituting perhaps the chat's only known remaining breeding grounds in New England.

During 1998 I was away all spring and much of the summer, and unable to check up on the Lyme chats, but I trust they are still

there and thriving and may continue so for some time, as succession seems to have been negligible here over the past two or three decades, and the threat of housing or other development - here, at least - seems slight as well.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks to Dr. Robert Askins of Connecticut College, and Wayne Petersen of Massachusetts Audubon Society, for their thoughts on New England Yellow-breasted Chats.

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William Burt, 35 Lyme St., Old Lyme, CT 06371



Yellow-breasted Chat (*Artwork by Paul Carrier*)

THE 1998-1999 CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Stephen P. Broker

The January 10, 1999 New York Times carried a brief article and detailed diagram of the weather for New York City during 1998. The past year was identified as being the all-time warmest on record (tying two other years in the present decade, 1990 and 1991). The graphic contained monthly summaries of precipitation for 1998, comparisons with average monthly precipitation, and day-by-day bar graphs of temperature, as well as annotations for record highs and lows. Of particular interest to Connecticut Christmas Bird Count participants is, that record high and very high temperatures occurred repeatedly in the first part of December as well as during the middle of the month. November and December were also unusually dry, and they were preceded by four months of below average precipitation, including an extremely dry July. NOAA weather data from Tweed-New Haven and Bradley International Airports show the same pattern of unseasonably warm temperatures, especially in the first part of December. Such an in-temperate early winter in southern New England made for some remarkable birding on the 99th running of the National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count. For example, Greenwich-Stamford compiler Gary Palmer termed this "the most unusual and most exciting" CBC of the last three decades, largely due to the warm weather. Conditions were good enough to produce 163 count day and eight count week species, a fine total for the state.

In this article I address three themes which emerge from the 17 CBCs held in Connecticut or overlapping with neighboring New York and Massachusetts. First is that many of our winter birds, including residents, winter visitors, and lingering fall migrants, occurred in significantly high numbers on this count. Second is that many but not all semi-hardy species and a number of not-at-all hardy species were in high numbers. Third is that early winter populations of birds continue to change throughout the state, including increasing and decreasing populations of species identified in previous annual installments of this article and a few recently recognized trends. Before taking up these themes, let's have an overview of the 1998-99 CBC to see what occurrences made it a standout count.

The opening weekend of the count period provided some con-

trasting conditions, with a cloudy December 19 characterized by an absence of snow, strong southwesterly winds on the coast and open and partly frozen water inland, while December 20 brought more gentle but variable winds and unseasonably warm weather. Ten counts were held on these days. Edwin Way Teal-Trailwood and Stratford-Milford counts then were held on December 27, when temperatures dropped but skies were generally clear and wind was calm. By the first of the new year winter chill had returned to Connecticut. Sybill Gilbert described Pawling's count as occurring in bitterly cold weather with near gale force winds. Jay Kaplan described Hartford's January 2 CBC as "one of the coldest in recent memory. At the start, the thermometer read 0°F, and the high reading for the day was a less than balmy 17 degrees. It was a good thing that the northwest breeze was slight." New London had similar conditions, producing what Bob Dewire termed "a surprisingly excellent count." Mother Nature struck with full force on January 3, however, when the last Connecticut count of the period, Old Lyme-Saybrook, experienced very difficult birding conditions, including "cloudy, foggy, heavy rain" in the A.M. and "partly cloudy, light rain" in the P.M.

Species highlights of the 1998-99 count were five Northern Gannets on four different coastal counts, five Great Egrets at New London and individual birds at Greenwich-Stamford and Old Lyme-Saybrook, a Snowy Egret seen count week at Stratford-Milford, six Tundra Swans at Litchfield Hills, a Greater White-fronted Goose count day at Woodbury-Roxbury and one count week at Hartford, a drake Harlequin Duck count week at Greenwich-Stamford, a Golden Eagle count week at Old Lyme-Saybrook, Snowy Owl count week at Hartford, 41 Tree Swallows on the New London count, Mountain Bluebird at Greenwich Stamford, American Redstart count week also at Greenwich-Stamford, Clay-colored Sparrow at New Haven, and Bullock's Oriole at Litchfield Hills. These significant finds were surpassed, however, by the unprecedented occurrences at Greenwich-Stamford of Purple Gallinule (count week) and Blackburnian Warbler (count day).

Other notable finds were a blue morph Snow Goose at Oxford, eight Black Vultures at Woodbury-Roxbury and two at Westport, an Osprey at New Haven, an intriguing large falcon species conservatively identified as such at Old Lyme-Saybrook, a Sora at New Haven, four American Oystercatchers at Greenwich-Stamford and two at New Haven, Laughing Gull (count week), Black-headed Gull, and Lesser Black-backed Gull at Greenwich-Stamford (Hartford had one of these latter, the Lesser that is, during

count week), Barn Owl at Stratford-Milford, Red-headed Woodpeckers recorded both at Hartford and Salmon River, Northern Shrikes on five different northern and mid-state counts, Orange-crowned Warbler count week at New London, and Lincoln's Sparrow on three counts. The only other count in the last 25 years which can claim to have had a similar number of avian luminaries was in 1980-81 when the list of accidentals, casuals and rarities included Common Eider, King Rail, Short-billed Dowitcher, Black Guillemot, Varied Thrush, Bohemian Waxwing, Rose-breasted and Black-headed Grosbeaks, and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

Flashy birds aside, it must be stated that this was the winter of the robin. We've had big numbers of robins before, most notably more than 7000 counted two years ago, above 8000 in 1984-85, nearly 10,000 in 1992-93, and an overwhelming 20,000+ in 1994-95. This year, however, the total number of American Robins reported was 27,731. Birders from around the state sighted flocks of dozens of robins, and in some instances hundreds of robins; Quinnipiac Valley and Woodbury-Roxbury recorded more than 6000 robins each. Record highs were registered on northern, mid-state, coastal, and statewide totals. You couldn't go anywhere without these birds bobbing along.

This was also the winter of the Green-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Ring-necked Duck, Ruddy Duck, Fish Crow, Common Raven, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Cedar Waxwing, American Tree Sparrow, and White-crowned Sparrow. Each of these species took significant jumps in numbers over the highest previous total of the past 20 years, increasing 50% to 100% in most instances. There were fully 35 species at record high numbers this year, as compared with nine species at 20 year low totals. Extensive open water in the northern and mid-state regions resulted in very inflated numbers of essentially all waterfowl. Two of the record high species, Bald Eagle and Eastern Bluebird, continue their remarkable recoveries from drastically low numbers of the past, largely the result of successful conservation strategies. Another, the introduced Monk Parakeet, threatens to make Connecticut the parakeet capitol of America. Monk Parakeets now number nearly 650 in the state, with largest populations being shared between Stratford-Milford and Westport count circles. Remember last year's phenomenal winter finch year? In keeping with past cycles of these irruptive species (crossbills, redpolls, siskins, grosbeaks), this winter they were not to be found. There were no crossbills, no redpolls, a combined four siskins at Westport and Old Lyme-Saybrook along the coast, no less, and one Evening Gros-

beak across the state line in Pawling, NY. In addition, Purple Finch was in very low numbers this year. Larger flocking birds (blackbirds, grackles, cowbirds) were in modest supply statewide, although they were found in high numbers on several northern counts.

Now let's look at several broad themes. 1. Lots of winter birds. Most of our winter birds, including the resident species most evident in winter months, the winter visitors from elsewhere, and the often-present fall lingerers, achieved very high numbers this winter. These included both commonly wintering species of loon, Canada Goose, most ducks, Barred Owl and Northern Saw-whet Owl, most woodpeckers including Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, White-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, both kinglets, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow-rumped Warbler, American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Fox Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, and American Goldfinch. The only exceptions were the winter finches, as noted above, and Red-breasted Nuthatch, which couldn't be bought on some counts and barely surfaced on others. Widely distributed open water accounts for some of the high species occurrences, also the afore-mentioned unusually warm weather, conservation successes, population increases, and just plain chance.

2. Lots of semi-hardies and non-hardies. These birds include various uncommon migrants, late lingerers, variable early winter species, cold spell-sensitive species, and southern species expanding their winter ranges northward. Among this group present in large numbers this winter, or just plain present, were Pied-billed Grebe, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Green-winged Teal, Lesser Scaup, Turkey Vulture, Greater Yellowlegs, Carolina Wren, House Wren, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, and Gray Catbird.

Most recorded 20 year high totals. Interestingly, a few other species which one would expect to respond well to unseasonably warm weather didn't do so. These party poopers included Clapper Rail and Virginia Rail, Marsh Wren, Brown Thrasher (believed to be declining in the state), Eastern Phoebe (five counted statewide make a good but not high total), Pine Warbler (none, and why not at least one this year?), Palm Warbler (four is an unremarkable total), Common Yellowthroat (O.K. numbers, but not high), Chipping Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Sharp-tailed and Seaside Sparrows, and the "northern" orioles (two this year is also unremarkable). Marsh Wren, in particular, is probably not strongly tied to warm early winter weather, although that is not to suggest that it is happy in the dead of a Connecticut winter. As for Virginia Rail, Old Lyme-Saybrook, the stronghold for this species year to year,

was nearly shut out on Virginias due to very difficult weather conditions, but an average Old Lyme total still would have made this species under represented.

3. Trends in population change. Those species which are seen to be increasing their winter populations based on examination of CBC data are Red-throated and Common Loons, Great Blue Heron, Canada Goose, a number of ducks but especially Gadwall, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, and Ruddy Duck, both vultures, Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks, Merlin, Wild Turkey, American Oystercatcher, Greater Yellowlegs, Monk Parakeet, Red-bellied Woodpecker (up another 18% from last year's record high), Northern Flicker, Fish Crow, Common Raven, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, and Cedar Waxwing. The reasons for such increases are varied and include range expansions north, range expansions south, winter feeding stations, successful restocking programs, greater availability of open water, and long term recovery of populations. These are some of the species to keep watching in the years ahead.

Not all is on the upswing, however. Declining species include Canvasback, American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Common Snipe (but not American Woodcock), Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, European Starling, Eastern Meadowlark, and Evening Grosbeak. Most of these species have been identified as declining in previous CBC articles. A total of 23 kestrels recorded statewide represents a 50% increase over each of the past two years, but this species has destabilized as a wintering species in Connecticut. Ruffed Grouse has also taken a major hit during the past decade, as have meadowlarks and especially Evening Grosbeaks. There is no need to rush out and put starlings on the threatened list, but the 85,000 seen this year pale in comparison with the quarter of a million seen just 15 years ago. Closed landfills have had a profound effect on this species as well as on two of our three most common gulls.

Finally, here are some additional notes on rarities found, thanks to the input of compilers from around the state. The Brant found on the Hartford count was in Wethersfield Cove and represents a unique inland report for this species. A pair of Peregrine Falcons continues to roost on the Travelers Tower in downtown Hartford. The Purple Gallinule was a weakened immature bird found in Stamford and brought into a wildlife rehabilitation center just prior to the Greenwich-Stamford count. Occurring more than two months later than any previous Purple Gallinule in the state, the

bird expired and is now a museum specimen. The female or first fall male American Redstart at Greenwich-Stamford was well seen at Calves Island and thoroughly described. The Blackburnian Warbler found in Greenwich is believed to have been a first year female. Occurring several weeks later than any previous sight record, the report of this bird included extensive descriptions and diagrams of appearance, behavior, and conditions of viewing, as well as a follow-up visit to further see and describe the bird. Greenwich-Stamford's Mountain Bluebird was found on the SUNY Purchase campus in the Westchester county part of the count circle, undoubtedly seeking a higher education. It was seen by many observers and photographed for rare records purposes. New London's five Great Egrets were found at three coastal locations: Rocky Neck State Park, Waterford Beach, and Millstone Point. Forty of the forty one Tree Swallows were seen as a single flock at Fisher's Island, New York, but New London also tallied a lone Tree Swallow at Bluff Point Coastal Reserve, giving Connecticut another January record for this species. Thanks go to Gary Palmer, Jay Kaplan, Frank Mantlik, Bob Dewire, and Bob Moeller, who were particularly helpful in sharing extensive compilers' reports and documentation for their counts. As always, a copy of Joe Zeranski's and Tom Baptist's Connecticut Birds was kept in hand during the development of this analysis.

Stephen P. Broker, 50 Hidden Place, Cheshire, CT 06410-3723

CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS 1998-99

SPECIES	NORTHERN						MID-STATE					COASTAL					STATE TOTAL	58 BROKER
	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM		
Red-throated Loon												31	32	11	8	36	28	146
Common Loon	2			CW	1							27	6	36	7	10	32	121
Pied-billed Grebe	1			6	2			1	2	2	2	7	12	12	24	20	12	103
Horned Grebe	1											45	12	31	2	16	71	178
Red-necked Grebe												3						3
Northern Gannet												1	2	1		1		5
Great Cormorant			1				3			10		61	30	15	30	46	17	213
D.c. Cormorant		1							2	5		1	26	24	9	5	1	74
Cormorant, sp.			2										1	1			3	7
American Bittern															1		1	2
Great Blue Heron	2	12	20	2	2	2	12	1	23	10	15	32	42	47	11	16	46	315
Great Egret												1		5	1			7
Snowy Egret																CW		CW
Black-cr. Night-Heron												7	1	8		1	13	30
Tundra Swan				6														6
Mute Swan			18	44	16	1	40	38	152	86	39	74	376	468	157	129	105	1743
Gr. Wh.-fronted Goose			CW								1							1
Snow Goose		2	3	1	200			5	1	3		3	2	1			4	223
Snow Goose (blue)							1											1
Brant			1									42	43	47		132	500	765
Canada Goose	517	1009	7881	2729	6538	1639	1510	2359	3564	464	6068	3449	3456	1503	1364	1495	2282	49847
Canada Goose (small)				1							1							2
Wood Duck	2	2	13	15	1			1	1			10	5	2		1	4	57
Green-winged Teal			3	1	6				63			18	134		23	109	17	374
American Black Duck	127	19	186	151	49	102	37	72	171	118	136	426	1101	924	608	1258	546	6031
Mallard	784	354	1518	733	376	199	405	526	983	303	613	1768	1633	2136	545	961	1273	15132

SPECIES	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	TOTAL	
Mallard Hybrid	4							7					28					8	47
Northern Pintail	1			1			2		5		1	1	5	3	8			1	28
Northern Shoveler			1	2		11			2				2		3	CW		2	23
Gadwall			1	2				CW	5			25	282	13	13	248	16		607
Eurasian Wigeon													CW				1		1
American Wigeon			1	7				5	25		1	51	200	35		108	167		600
Canvasback				8				1				5	9	116	5	133	22		349
Redhead						2								1					3
Ring-necked Duck	83	16	1		18	757	30		48	2	117	1	136	47	96	98	176	68	1694
Greater Scaup	1		1					6				1020	4252	149	2	18	48		5497
Lesser Scaup								10				3	250	7		15			285
Scaup, sp.						CW									322				322
Harlequin Duck												CW							CW
Oldsquaw					2							223	268	29	1	114	309		1146
Black Scoter												4		3					7
Surf Scoter												1	4	7		2	7		21
White-winged Scoter													49	1	2	40	174		266
Scoter, sp.													28						28
Common Goldeneye	6	17	1	56	67	5		11	2	6		250	128	118	144	358	330		1499
Bufflehead	3			3	2	3	1	13	1	18		426	176	428	38	65	166		1343
Hooded Merganser	102	5	5	103	18	8	43	10	45	58	10	216	169	380	40	48	169		1429
Common Merganser	184	30	232	449	301	76	24	2746	376	172	172	603	34	86	144	172	26		5827
Red-br. Merganser								CW				416	177	506	706	312	516		2633

BA - Barkhamsted
 EW - Edwin Way Teale-Trail Wood
 GS - Greenwich - Stamford
 HA - Hartford
 LH - Litchfield Hills
 LS - Lakeville - Sharon

NH - New Haven
 NL - New London
 OL - Old Lyme - Saybrook
 OX - Oxford
 PA - Pawling NY - CT
 (Formerly Hidden Valley)

QV - Quinnipiac Valley
 SM - Stratford - Milford
 SR - Salmon River
 ST - Storrs
 WE - Westport
 WR - Woodbury - Roxbury

CW - Count Period
 --- First time not seen in 20 yrs.
 XX - Rare Species
 XX - New High Count
 XX - New Low Count (Bold)
 XX - New Species for Count

CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS 1998-99

SPECIES	NORTHERN						MID-STATE					COASTAL						STATE TOTAL	60 BROKER
	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE		
Ruddy Duck		19	5	138	48			102	125	43		33	1	297	18	27	66	924	
Duck, sp.						13												13	
Black Vulture											8						2	10	
Turkey Vulture		8	1			9	74	6	14	12	18	51	19	2	5	2	37	249	
Osprey													1					1	
Bald Eagle	25	1	1	7	4			9		5	8		1	1	10	1	2	75	
Northern Harrier		1	7		2	2		5	2				14	4	4	7	2	50	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	5	18	4	3	7	3	5	7	8	8	3	17	11	4	6	4	117	
Cooper's Hawk	3	1	8	3	4	4	2	2	3		13	5	12	6	4	2	7	79	
Northern Goshawk					1		1			1		1		1			2	7	
Accipiter, sp.													1					1	
Red-shouldered Hawk	2	4	1	1		4				2	9	2	1	2	6	1	3	40	
Red-tailed Hawk	39	34	160	52	41	15	29	58	41	21	53	59	75	19	10	17	40	763	
Rough-legged Hawk			2					1										3	
Buteo, sp.										1								1	
Golden Eagle															CW			CW	
Eagle, sp.					1													1	
American Kestrel			4		1			2	4		1		5	2	---	3	1	23	
Merlin			2									CW		2			1	5	
Peregrine Falcon			2									1	CW	1				4	
Falcon, sp.						1												1	
Large Falcon sp.															1			1	
Ring-necked Pheasant		3	7	8	1	2	10	4	12	5	14	3	1	1	2	3	9	85	
Ruffed Grouse	3			2	5	2		1	2	---	1		1		2		2	21	
Wild Turkey	50	12	59	123	79		43	37	46	10	92	74	99	19	69	32	64	912	
Northern Bobwhite								4										4	
Clapper Rail													1			1	2	4	

SPECIES	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	TOTAL
Virginia Rail									1	1			4	2	1			9
Sora													1					1
Purple Gallinule												CW						CW
American Coot	1	1	CW	308	178	14		127	74	1	11	7	17	39	117	17	107	1019
Black-bellied Plover												17		19	14	1	32	83
Killdeer								1	5	1	2	11	19	3	6	6	34	88
American Oystercatcher												4	2					6
Greater Yellowlegs												5	8			11	9	33
Ruddy Turnstone												33		5	26		75	139
Sanderling													30		24	110	72	236
Purple Sandpiper												11	27	81	1			120
Dunlin												2		17	104	27	130	280
Common Snipe		1					2		2	1	7		2	1	2	1		19
American Woodcock											1	3	---	4	2	1		12
Laughing Gull												CW						CW
Black-headed Gull												1						1
Bonaparte's Gull												103	32	6	26	6	14	187
Ring-billed Gull	1208	95	967	784	148	317	367	937	1599	393	777	1614	3369	1055	488	2023	701	16842
Herring Gull	18	65	888	31	24	37	132	317	66	163	107	1029	1328	3859	521	1319	1033	10937
Iceland Gull			1															3
Lesser Bl.-backed Gull			CW															1
Glaucous Gull			1															1
Great Bl.-backed Gull	6	7	244	2	2	1	22	10	9	86	17	178	130	254	99	120	118	1305

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XX New Low Count (Bold)

XX New Species for Count

CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS 1998-99

SPECIES	NORTHERN						MID-STATE					COASTAL					STATE	
	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	TOTAL
Gull, sp.					42	1					15							58
Rock Dove	319	575	2818	214	315	470	329	166	851	80	294	991	1362	458	56	749	531	10778
Mourning Dove	217	282	1014	439	285	319	205	202	1024	250	1161	756	789	304	241	395	375	8258
Monk Parakeet												36	60			262	283	641
Barn Owl																1		1
Eastern Screech-Owl	4	2	15	25	12	1	4	8	39	10	19	54	10	2	10	3	30	248
Great Horned Owl	12	2	11	31	4	12	3	2	11	12	20	16	12	3	4	2	7	164
Snowy Owl			CW															CW
Barred Owl	3	6	3	9	2	1			2	7	8	1	1	3	2		4	52
Long-eared Owl									6		1		1	1			1	10
Short-eared Owl															CW	1		1
North. Saw-whet Owl	7			8	1	3		3	1	2	5	1		5	3			39
Belted Kingfisher	9	3	18	18	10	6	9	9	14	20	14	45	45	26	3	11	32	292
Red-hdd. Woodpecker			1							1								2
Red-bld. Woodpecker	42	18	109	68	19	43	29	36	48	78	127	157	60	30	21	18	52	933
Yellow-bld. Sapsucker	3		6		1		3	3	7	6	10	14	4	6	5		5	73
Downy Woodpecker	115	47	377	194	73	105	146	127	84	192	271	271	138	94	45	61	131	2471
Hairy Woodpecker	32	7	80	40	9	10	23	35	10	35	68	49	25	7	6	9	33	478
Northern Flicker	7	10	200	31	12	25	53	14	74	133	88	84	107	71	20	26	64	1019
Pileated Woodpecker	11	2	5	13	8		1	11	1	7	9	15	2		2	4	5	96
Eastern Phoebe							1			2	1		1					5
Horned Lark		239	285	56	250	167			10		64	25	25	86	23	77		1327
Tree Swallow														41				41
Blue Jay	395	292	903	504	243	686	386	298	506	705	757	432	551	489	270	196	228	7841
American Crow	433	259	8964	3800	840	467	1482	665	947	613	2758	1961	8321	599	426	1278	4285	38098
Fish Crow			5				8	CW	1			6	388	10		71	23	312

SPECIES	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	TOTAL
Common Raven	24			20	8		1	1	1		4							59
Black-cpd. Chickadee	1010	277	991	1416	375	700	547	493	441	611	1318	821	457	580	388	183	407	11015
Tufted Titmouse	273	180	627	278	108	364	279	219	302	437	628	530	276	176	249	113	244	5283
Red-br. Nuthatch	20		9	9	2	4			1	1	1	4	---		4		4	59
White-br. Nuthatch	161	78	263	275	103	233	92	125	63	180	313	267	53	56	63	24	80	2429
Brown Creeper	13	7	14	25	10	9	6	7	5	10	20	5	7	4	2		3	147
Carolina Wren	7	6	25	6	1	27	14	4	15	36	27	66	23	62	14	5	38	376
House Wren									1	1	2	2		1		1		9
Winter Wren	11		3	6	3	2	5	2	4	8	12	9	7	6	5	4	3	90
Marsh Wren								2					3	---	---			5
Golden-crown' Kinglet	286	32	117	496	72	103	120	87	45	159	362	67	78	97	17	16	64	2070
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	3		6	1	1	1	8	2	6		16	11	3	4	9		1	72
Eastern Bluebird	61	57	97	282	108	123	170	97	24	289	550	85	34	66	80	8	80	2211
Mountain Bluebird												1						1
Hermit Thrush	3	4	21	8	2	4	19	4	10	14	50	23	17	36	11	6	20	252
American Robin	596	130	1194	1798	538	311	1420	630	6170	1395	6066	281	1955	3477	1224	371	175	27731
Gray Catbird			7	3	1		9	8	12	5	7	17	13	25	2	3	10	122
Northern Mockingbird	28	20	243	23	7	43	52	27	102	67	105	122	140	147	26	95	62	1309
Brown Thrasher													2	3				5
American Pipit			7						2					1		1		11
Cedar Waxwing	331	153	528	551	373	202	154	213	209	512	1542	205	136	237	169	91	237	5843
Northern Shrike		1	1		CW			1	1									4
European Starling	1012	1745	30000	3190	2232	2071	2278	862	5431	1851	7240	3335	8055	6161	3826	2992	3445	85726

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XX Rare Species
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CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS 1998-99

SPECIES	NORTHERN						MID-STATE					COASTAL						STATE TOTAL	64 BROKER
	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE		
Orange-crnd Warbler														CW				CW	
Yellow-rmpd. Warbler		2	57	17			138	18	63	45	86	35	26	322	51	98	63	1021	
Blackburnian Warbler												1						1	
Palm Warbler													3	1				4	
American Redstart												CW						CW	
Common Yellowthroat	1									1						1	1	4	
Yellow-breasted Chat														2	1			3	
Northern Cardinal	146	111	744	150	41	142	193	158	213	186	345	321	286	220	154	147	215	3772	
Eastern Towhee			7		CW			1	4	4		3	3	40	---	2	5	69	
Amer. Tree Sparrow	407	113	1239	706	274	124	428	217	336	255	786	111	475	115	224	325	138	6193	
Chipping Sparrow												1	4					5	
Clay-colored Sparrow													1					1	
Field Sparrow	CW		36	1		8	76	2	28	43	18	12	38	21	9	21	54	367	
Savannah Sparrow			21			10			13	2	11	2	25		3	3	3	93	
'Ipswich' Sparrow																8		8	
Fox Sparrow	5		6	4		4	13	6	6	8	16	5	18	11	11	2	10	127	
Song Sparrow	68	46	487	76	19	68	305	38	306	152	340	395	414	269	116	314	344	3757	
Lincoln's Sparrow							1									1		2	
Swamp Sparrow	4	1	9	20	1	13	16	3	19	14	22	11	43	11	20	31	2	240	
White-thr. Sparrow	173	199	676	271	53	198	465	495	679	416	1245	931	1252	688	565	468	434	9211	
White-crn. Sparrow			7		7				17		7	1	12		1		1	33	
Dark-eyed Junco	1845	571	2267	1316	423	954	1133	770	590	1102	2494	1078	606	400	245	178	599	16571	
Lapland Longspur															2			2	
Snow Bunting			20											31		5	57	113	
Red-winged Blackbird	31	25	698	156	3	35	49	3	53	92	82	48	275	729	400	95		2774	
Eastern Meadowlark						3			7		7		9	9	3			38	

SPECIES	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	TOTAL
Rusty Blackbird			55		1		1		14		16	1	5	4	3	5	2	107
Common Grackle	CW	438	5245	2	104	5	2	2	418	122	1	4	28	454	488	2020	2	9335
Brown-hdd. Cowbird	6	1	261	1418	168	28	19	37	278	55	463	26	74	126	80	107	145	3292
Baltimore Oriole										1		1						2
Bullock's Oriole				1														1
Purple Finch	4	11	6	10	7		3	5	1	3	9	---	8	2	61		4	134
House Finch	110	80	713	732	207	258	461	406	793	428	945	980	662	502	299	233	483	8292
Pine Siskin															2		2	4
American Goldfinch	591	82	602	633	248	149	228	232	277	335	849	428	371	145	99	91	172	5552
Evening Grosbeak								1										1
House Sparrow	272	337	1776	700	134	428	445	283	469	413	437	1213	856	889	562	993	786	10993

TOTALS	NORTHERN						MID-STATE					COASTAL						
Individuals	12190	8195	76186	25852	16651	13507	14597	14531	28504	13573	40321	29030	47117	31328	16510	22016	24242	434150
CD Species	71	68	93	86	80	70	71	85	96	82	89	117	120	111	108	109	115	163
CW Species	2	0	4	1	3	0	0	3	0	0	1	5	2	1	2	2	0	8
Field Observers	28	14	155	50	31	17	33	24	24	48	45	66	96	38	40	24	47	780
Feeder Watchers	0	5	49	7	3	0	1	12	0	6		22	8	9	8		17	147
Total Observers	28	19	204	57	34	17	34	36	24	54	45	88	104	47	48	24	64	927
Party Hours	94	36.25	426	126.8	75	70.25	79.5	67	67	106.8	170	233.3	189.3	91	89.5	100.5	143	2165.2
Party Miles	549	159	979	766	446	398.3	383	468	388	406.8	841.5	740	599	373	390	341	443	8670.6

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SITE GUIDE: NEPAUG RESERVOIR AND ADJOINING STATE FOREST

Paul Carrier

The Nepaug Reservoir and adjoining Nepaug State Forest in the towns of Canton, Burlington, and New Hartford, contain some of the best habitat within our state for finding common as well as hard to find indigenous breeding bird species. The only disadvantage to birders is an inaccessibility to certain areas owned by the Metropolitan District Commission from which the public is excluded. The MDC restricts entry into much of their property, but the following is a description of sites accessible to the public with most affording birders a good chance to hear and see Nepaug's many hidden treasures.

Situated at the southeast corner of northwestern Connecticut, Nepaug can claim most, if not all, of northwest Connecticut's breeding bird species within its boundaries.

To date, over 130 bird species have been observed breeding here, and if you add to this list another 103 species that have been seen during migration, the total of 233 species is quite impressive for such an inland area.

During Connecticut's breeding bird atlas project, the Nepaug area was second only to the huge White Memorial Foundation property in Litchfield County for confirmed breeding species. This is quite impressive, due to the fact the Nepaug area was covered by fewer than a dozen people, with only two contributing more than 10 hours during that five year period.

Although birding Nepaug can be rewarding at any time of the year, it shows its greatest potential during the breeding season. A morning of birding should tally over 90 bird species during the months of May or June, with a good day of over 100 species not unusual.

Directions

To get to our starting point (A) take Exit 39 off Interstate 84 (the Farmington exit), and follow Route 4, 5.5 miles west through the town of Farmington and the village of Unionville. Ahead, Route 4 turns left up a steep hill toward Burlington. Go 2.1 miles from this left and turn right onto Covey road. Proceed north to the first fork and turn right onto Foote Road. Travel north 0.8 miles on Foote

Road until you enter an area with tall white pines on the right and tall tamaracks on the left; park at the dirt pulloff on the right. This is point A (Figure 1).

From this point the road is called Clear Brook, named after the brook that travels next to the road on the left all the way down into Nepaug Reservoir. This area is dominated by varied species of conifers planted years ago along Clear Brook. Here, you can find many species of more northern breeders nesting among the tall pines. Species of this area include Golden-crowned Kinglet, Winter Wren, Blackburnian Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Purple Finch, and Red-breasted Nuthatch.

Around the bend, at point (1), you could also add Blue-headed Vireo to the above list. Also look and listen for Evening Grosbeaks, as they have been seen here well into the month of May. This road can also be rewarding in winter for finches, including both crossbills. Continue east on Clear Brook Road until you come to



point (2). Here the woods evolve into a mix of coniferous and deciduous trees. The hillside on the right is a good place to look for Black-throated Blue and Worm-eating Warblers. Continuing on, you will eventually see the waters of the Nepaug Reservoir on your left. Just past, park beneath the tall conifers on either side of the road at Point (3). This is a great place during spring migration to find all the thrushes. Also, during spring and fall, you should scan the tall trees for migrating warblers. If you are here at the right time, you can see warblers by the hundreds, although they can get lost up in the dense, tall trees. This requires good hearing as well as eyes to find the most of what is there. Proceed down the road and on the left you will see a dirt pull off. Park here at Point (B); on your left, you will see several dirt paths that lead down to the water (4). Scan the reservoir for water birds, and also check the skies for hawks. This is a good place for Northern Goshawks, Sharp-shinned, and Cooper's Hawks in summer. Water birds to be

seen here in spring and summer include Common Merganser, Common Loon (a possible breeder), Black Duck, and late migrants.

At night, you might hear Great Horned and Barred Owls calling, and with luck, you might hear Whip-poor-wills, as well.



In late fall and winter, if the water is still open, you can find late migrants and winter ducks including Oldsquaw, Greater Scaup, Bufflehead, and Common Goldeneye. You might also spot a Bald Eagle as they frequent this area in any season. In fall, all three scoter species have been seen here as well.

Continue to Point (5) where you should stop under the tall, numerous tamaracks that line both sides of the road. This area is perhaps the best migration trap in the area, especially for warbler s. Don't overlook the dense tangle of underbrush on the right. One spring, a local birder spotted a Connecticut Warbler. Late in the spring, Mourning Warbler can sometimes be seen here.

Continue to the intersection of Clear Brook and Barnes Hill Roads. Take a left, and shortly you will see a large grassy dam on your left Point (C). Climb up the steps for another good view of the reservoir. In the spring you can also see nesting Blackburnian, Yellow-rumped, and Pine Warblers in the surrounding woods. At the bottom of the dam, you might want to turn right onto Aqueduct Road, Point(6) on the map. On the right is a ravine that has produced nesting Winter Wrens and Worm-eating Warblers. After you bird the ravine, turn back and travel north on Aqueduct to the next right; this will bring you to Route 179. Turn left and go into Collinsville.

When you get to the intersection where route 179 turns right, go straight and park. This is Point (D). On your right you can see the Farmington River. Scan for shore birds and swallows. Cliff Swallows have nested nearby, but you will often catch one on migration too. Shorebirds can also be seen here particularly in times of low water when mudflats are exposed. In 1980 a Common Merganser nested on the river here. Now, this local duck can be seen almost any time of the year and Hooded Mergansers are regular as well. From here, go back to Route 179 and cross the bridge until you spot a short driveway after the canoe shop on the left. Here, at Point (7), you can scan a sand bar just to your right. In the fall, scan for unusual gulls. Lesser Blacked-backed, Glaucous, and Iceland Gulls have been seen here. Take a left and follow Route 179 north; you can also stop at Points (8)and (9) to see the river from different

sites. In winter, these spots can also produce good ducks and occasionally Bald Eagles.

Just up the road from point (9), take a left onto Powder Mill Road, travel over an iron bridge, go straight here until you see the reservoir. At this spot, you are at point (F). From this spot, you can scan the reservoir well. Species seen include Red-throated and Common Loon, Red-necked and Horned Grebe, Coot in the fall, and many species of ducks. To the south, there are many conifer trees, and scanning them in winter can produce winter finches, with crossbills always a possibility. Moving through the gate to your west, you can walk 0.5 miles down a popular walking road to the large concrete Nepaug Dam. Along the way, look and listen for breeding Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Pine, Blackburnian and other warblers.

Just past the dam, White-throated Sparrows once nested, but the trees have since grown taller, and these birds have moved elsewhere.

From here backtrack and take the left just before the iron bridge. This road is Point (E) on the map. This is one of the better areas to find unusual birds during spring migration. Check out all the trails leading down into the woods which edge the Farmington River.

Hard to find White-eyed Vireos, flycatchers, uncommon warblers, Philadelphia Vireos, and thrushes have all been seen here in spring. Birding here will always produce the unexpected. In 1972, the first confirmed state nesting for Cerulean Warbler was discovered here. Unfortunately, none have nested since. There is a closed off road to the left that goes into the MDC properties; here, years ago, during the winter, a Boreal Chickadee was spotted in with Black-caps. This shows that the Nepaug area can get good birds, but some are unfortunately hidden within areas we can't explore.



From this road travel north, cross Route 202 into an area that parallels the Farmington River on the right. Stop often while traveling on this short road to look for American Kestrels, Eastern Bluebirds, mockingbirds, and Orchard Oriole which can all be seen here. If you take the parallel road to the left of the first, going north, it will bring you into the lower section of the Nepaug State Forest. This is Point (G). As you proceed north, past an industrial area (formerly a good birding spot) into the woods of Nepaug State Forest, look and listen for Hermit Thrush, Northern Waterthrush, Wood Duck, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and other lowland breeding species. While traveling this road, check out the Farmington River to your right, as Common Mergansers nest along here. Note: This is a rough road. When you get to the end of this road, turn around and backtrack south. On the right is a dirt road going right up into the deep parts of Nepaug State Forest. This can be a very good and rewarding trip to find Juncos, Hermit Thrush, and other good breeding birds, but it is advised that you have four wheel drive, for it can get rough here, especially in the spring. If you choose to not go here, proceed south 1.5 miles, back to Route 202 and take a right. Travel west 1.1 miles up the hill, where at the top you will see on your left, a road used as a parking area (Point H in Figure 1). This is a popular walking spot and if you walk, you will come to the same dam described in Point (F) (Site 10). From the parking area scan the reservoir well with a scope. During migration almost all species of ducks, both loons, all grebes, occasional Bonaparte's Gulls and Black Terns, plus a host of shore birds have been seen on the exposed sand bar. In spring, look for Red-breasted Nuthatch, Yellow-rump and Pine Warblers, Eastern Bluebird and Purple Finch by the parking lot. Ravens may be seen throughout this area as well.

From here take a left (west) onto Route 202, and proceed a short distance past the pond on your right, and take the first road on the right. Go down and park by the fence. This is Point (I) (Site 11). On your left, there is a large tract of white pines, where Yellow-rumped, Pine and other warblers nest. Also check out the ponds for water birds. From here go west onto the dirt road into Nepaug State Forest. This road is rough but passable for most cars. In a short distance you will come to a gated dirt road on the right. Park as best you can here; this is Point (12). You should walk in to look and listen for Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Pine, and other warblers. Also Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Pileated Woodpecker, and Northern Goshawk occasionally nest here. From here, continue west into the

forest until you come to a dirt road on your right, Point (14). This road is the same one noted not to take without four wheel drive, but if you have it, feel free to explore, for many northern birds breed in this area. If you decide not to take this road, proceed straight until you come to an intersection and power line. This is Point (J). Here you have several options. You can walk the power lines east or west (15-13) or you can explore the several roads and trails. Much has been seen here, especially in spring.

Warblers nesting here include Prairie and Chestnut-sided, and often one can hear juncos, as well. If, in your travels, you find a recently cut over or lumbered area, listen for nesting White-throated Sparrows. All three accipiters have nested here, and one should be on the alert for them. If you would like to drive deeper into Nepaug State Forest, Site (16), all of these roads eventually come out again to Route 202 (See map).

As you drive out, you will eventually go down a fairly steep section. On the right, there is a small dirt lumber-



ing road amongst many red and pitch pines; listen for Pine Warblers and Purple Finches. Park here, Point (17), and walk north. This eventually reaches the power line again. To the north is a large woodland marsh and wetland of the Nepaug River. Great Blue Herons and other water loving birds can be seen here.

The Nepaug State Forest is also a good place to bird in the fall and winter. Over the years, access into it on snowshoes and cross country skies has produced Barred, Great Horned, and Northern Saw-whet Owls, plus all of the winter finches. One year, Pine Grosbeaks were seen feeding on the snow under the hemlocks, with the observers having to ski around them.

From Point (17), you will travel down to Route 202. Here take a right (west) to the first left, 0.3 miles. This is called Brown's Corner. Take a left on Spacer Road 2.2 miles, until it forks, then bear left. Just past a house and small pond on your left, look for a pull-in with large tamaracks. Park here. This is point (K). This old abandoned road is now restricted for motor vehicles, but you can walk it. The tall tamaracks on your right can be filled with migrants in

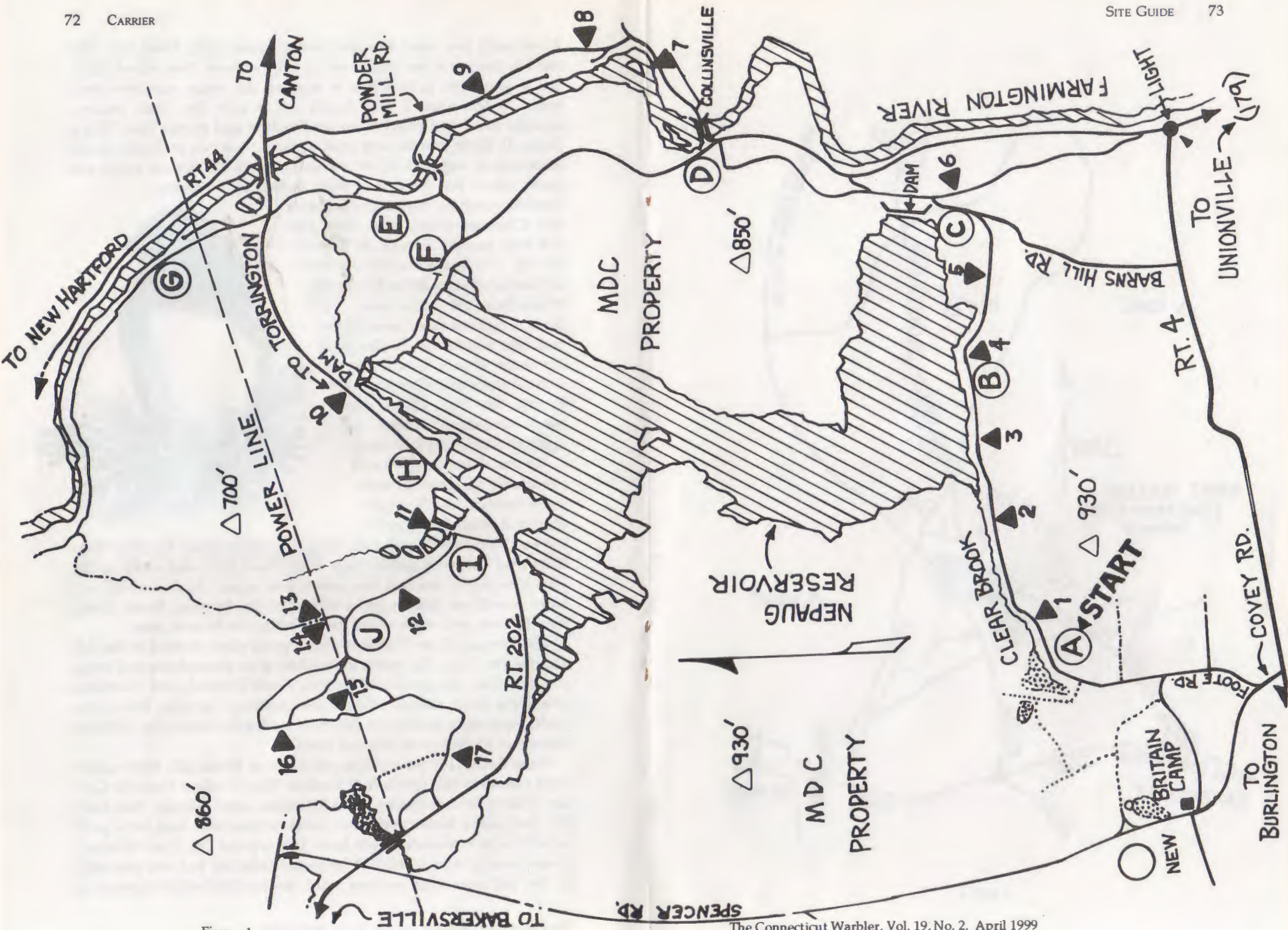


Figure 1

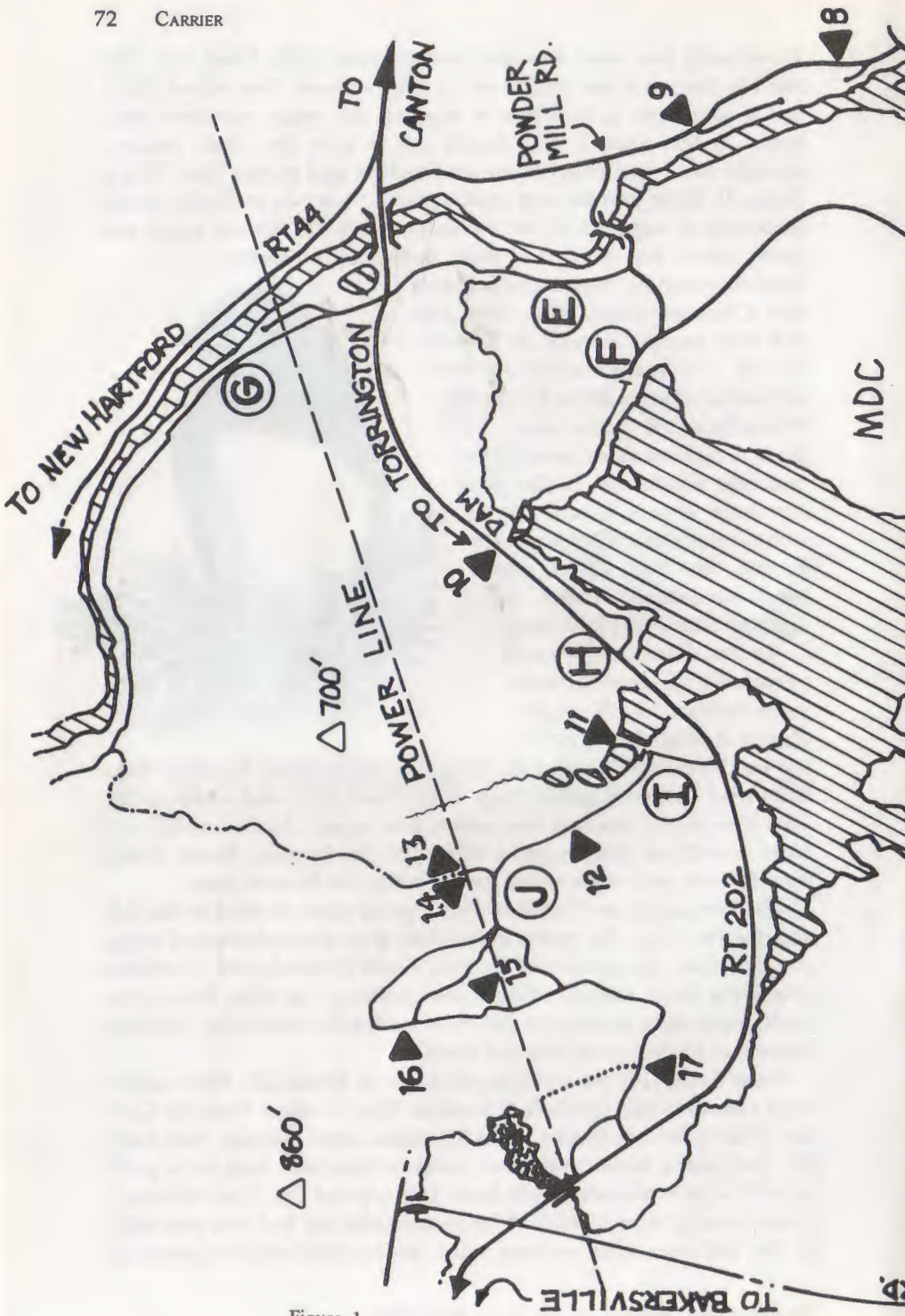
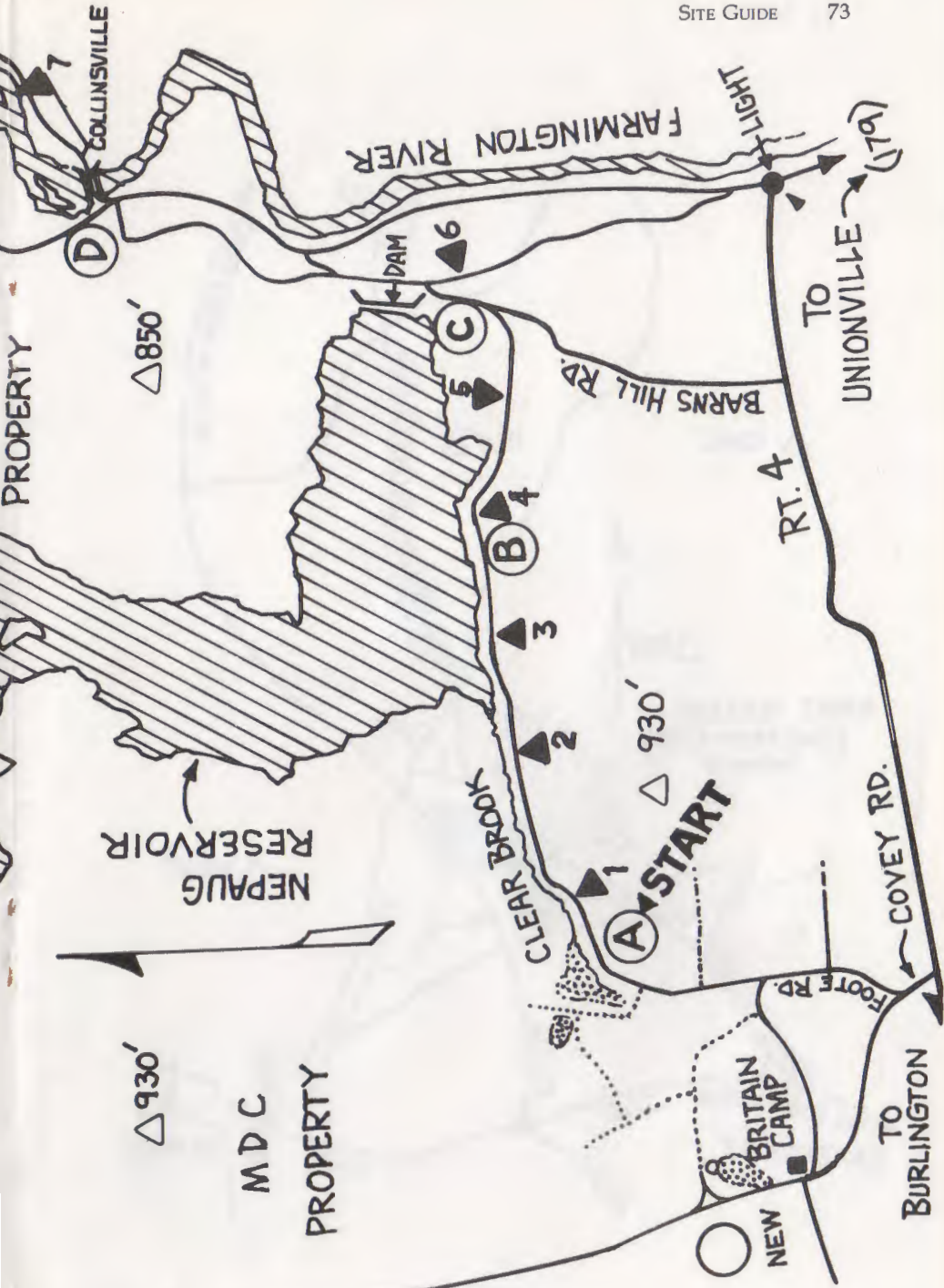


Figure 1



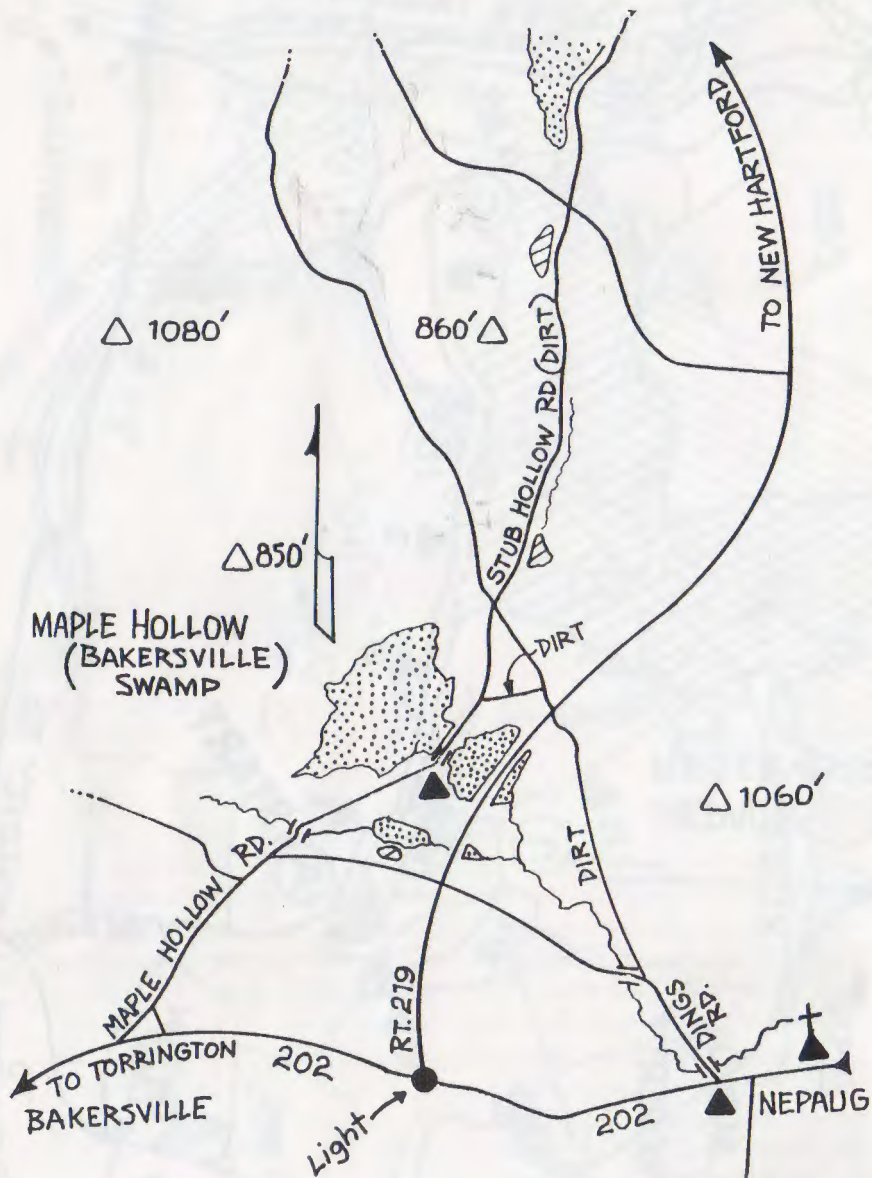


Figure 2

the spring. This is a good place to get late Palm, Cape May, and Bay-breasted Warblers. Residents here include Red-breasted Nuthatch, Blue-headed Vireo, Yellow-rumped and Pine Warblers. Also, all species of thrushes can be here during migration, sometimes in numbers. In past years, Nashville Warblers nested just past the little pond on the right. Wood Ducks also nest nearby. The pine trees on your left can produce Blackburnian, Yellow-rumped, and Pine Warblers. A short way down the trail you will come to a trail (dirt road) on your left. In the late 80's, Golden-winged Warblers nested just 1/4 mile down this road on the right. Since then, the cut-over area has grown up, but with so much lumbering going on they may still be here somewhere. Unusual birds seen here in the past include Gray-cheeked Thrush, possible nesting Pine Siskins (seen well into the summer), hybrid Brewster's and Lawrence's Warblers, nesting Goshawks and Cooper's Hawk, Barred, and Great Horned Owls, and Whip-poor-wills. This concludes the trip around the Nepaug Reservoir and State forest.

Bakersville Swamp, New Hartford

If you have the time, there is a place nearby that is well worth the trip. It is called Bakersville Swamp (Figure 2).

To get to Bakersville Swamp, drive back north to Route 202, taking a left (west) at Brown's Corner. In 1.2 miles, you will pass a church on the right, take the next right onto Ding's Road. Proceed northwest checking out the fields on the left for birds. Stay left at the fork with Carpenter Road and continue until you reach Route 219. Cross 219 and continue until you come to Maple Hollow Road (note brick house on corner). Take a sharp right onto Maple Hollow. You will notice fields on either side of the road, check for field birds, but the disturbance to the area on the right has drastically altered that habitat and most of the Bobolinks and Eastern Meadowlarks have gone. Ahead, where the swamp begins, park (see arrow) and check out both sides of the road for resident Willow and Alder Flycatchers. All four Empidonax flycatchers have nested here, with Acadian being the least common. Yellow Warbler, Swamp Sparrow, American Woodcock, and other common swamp birds nest here, but look for the unexpected, because that is what this area is best for. American Bittern nested here in the past, and can still be seen occasionally.

During spring and fall migration, if you hit it right, this area can be very active. One foggy morning in September, the following birds were seen along this road: All the vireo species, including four Philadelphia; 20 species of warblers including Wilson's,

Hooded, and Worm-eating, but the bird of that day was a Yellow-breasted Chat. Other rare and unusual species that have been observed here include Great Egret, Glossy Ibis, Virginia Rail, Sora, Bald Eagle, Short-eared Owl, a territorial singing Sedge Wren, and Marsh Wren. On a more regular basis, during migration you might find, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Common Snipe, Olive-sided and Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, Savannah, Lincoln's, and White-crowned Sparrows. In the winter, Lapland Longspur, Snow Bunting, and winter finches may be seen. The all year list here is long, and a visit at anytime could be rewarding. Past the swamp are wet fields with grazing cattle. Check these out as well, especially during migration. From here, you can proceed straight ahead until you intersect a cross road. Here, continue straight ahead on Stub Hollow Road. This is a dirt road with many species to be found as breeders. Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, and Magnolia Warblers nest here. You might also hear or see Acadian Flycatcher, Louisiana Waterthrush, and when you go past the first dirt road intersection, look for Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Canada Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, and many other common birds.



Following the suggested stops described can be very rewarding, but these are by no means all the best spots to be birded. Feel free to explore any interesting areas you come across; it could net you that unexpected bird you didn't plan to see. Discovering the unexpected is what makes birding the Nepaug area so exciting.

The artwork in this Site Guide was by Paul Carrier.

PAUL CARRIER, 80 High View Dr., Harwinton, CT 06791



CONNECTICUT ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

Compiled by James M. Zingo

For the following selected citations, the postal and/or e-mail addresses (if available) of the corresponding author or publisher are given in brackets followed by my own comments (if any) in italics. Despite trying to make this bibliography as complete as possible over the long-term, I will undoubtedly omit some ornithologically significant contributions. I would be grateful if readers would inform me of omitted works, errors, and future publications, and I encourage authors to provide reprints or citations of their work. Comments, suggestions, citations, and reprints may be sent to me via post (*Department of Forestry & Wildlife Management, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003-4210*) or e-mail (*jzingo@forwild.umass.edu*). Thanks to A. Hunter Brawley and Dwight G. Smith for providing reprints of their recent work, and to Amy L. Hinshaw for helping prepare this installment.

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JAMES M. ZINGO, Department of Forestry & Wildlife Management, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003-4210 (jzingo@forwild.umass.edu).



BIRD BEHAVIOR NOTES

CROW CASHES FOOD

After a snowfall at our home in Branford, I put food for ground-feeding birds on plastic cafeteria trays so that it won't sink out of sight. Seeds are often supplemented with table scraps. Among the resident birds are three American Crows who normally grab the larger pieces of food and fly off with them.

One morning in winter 1995-96 I observed one of the crows walk about 10 feet and appear to hide the food at the base of some dead perennial stalks in my flower garden. I watched through binoculars as the crow repeated this act four or five times. I then observed the crow take some buttered noodles and walk about 15 feet onto the snow-covered lawn. Holding the noodles in its beak, it scraped a hole with the side of its beak and dropped in the noodles. It then took three or four mouthfuls of snow and covered the cache.

To my amazement, the crow walked another 15 feet to the perennial garden and dug around under some shrubs. It came up with a large dry brown leaf which it carried back to the cache in the lawn. It then carefully tucked half of the leaf sideways in the snow, so that it stood up like a flag next to the noodle cache. It repeated this behavior nine more times, always walking the entire 60-foot round trip.

CAROL LEMMON

BLACK-BACKED GULL CATCHES A SKATE

On 15 February 1998, while walking along the beach at Black Point, Niantic, Connecticut, I observed a large bird diving into the water about one hundred meters down the beach. I quickly recognized the bird as an adult Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*), and was quite taken with its behavior. While a second gull looked on, this individual would fly up to a near hover about four meters above the surface, fold its wings much like a fishing Brown Pelican

(*Pelecanus occidentalis*), and dive into the water. The bird made at least ten dives during a four minute period.

Although I did not measure the water's depth, I would estimate that it was perhaps close to one meter. Eventually the bird secured something in its beak and began to swim toward the shore, about a 10 meter distance. When the bird reached the shore, I was astonished to note that it held a winter skate (*Raja ocellata*) that was still wriggling. The gull carried the skate to the beach and dropped it on the sand.

It is well known that the Great Black-backed Gull is an opportunistic feeder. Their exploits at local landfills are legendary. I have observed one of these birds take a Black Duck (*Anas rubripes*) off the Meig's Point jetty at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison. The gull dragged the duck across the water, its beak firmly clamped on the duck's back. Arthur Cleveland Bent in his *Life Histories of North American Gulls and Terns* noted that a major portion of the diet of this gull is fish, but commented that the bird rarely catches its own food. This marks the first time that I have observed this species taking live fish prey.

At my approach to within about 10 meters, the gull flew out into the water, keeping a watchful eye as I examined the still gasping skate. The skate was approximately 30 cm long and at the head, about 15 cm across. Out of curiosity, I moved the skate back into the shallow water, then backed off. When I was no more than 10 meters away, the gull began to swim toward the skate in the water and by the time I had moved another few meters, it had begun to retrieve its dinner. At 1645 EST, it was time for me to think about my own and I left the area. Oddly, seafood did not come to mind.

JAY KAPLAN



BOOKS ON BIRDS

Chris Wood

In the twenty years or so that I've known and birded with Buzz Devine, I'd always thought of him as a man of few words. Happily, his publication with Professor Dwight Smith of the *Connecticut Birding Guide* has proved me wrong. This comprehensive new guide to birding in our fair state is in fact loquacious, but most engaging.

Perhaps more importantly, *Connecticut Birding Guide* is extremely useful. I've birded Connecticut for over 20 years and still count about 12 of the 84 sites in this guide as not yet on my life list of visited birding locales. Each site is more than adequately described, with clear and simple maps for most, and with summary lists of typical or specialty species. Beginning or novice birders can find places most suited to their level of expertise or accessibility, while more experienced birders can use the Guide to plan their big days, year lists, or field trips.

Not every site covered offers unique habitat, the likelihood of rarities, or even exceptional bird diversity. However, birding sites are conveniently organized by the major ecological and geographical regions of the state to assure ample diversity of birds for even the most spontaneous or time-constrained of birding trips. Introductory information about birding and Connecticut seems geared primarily to beginning birders, although brief overviews of Connecticut and descriptions of basic habitat structure are helpful even to well-traveled birders who perhaps do not have formal ecological training or are new to our region.

Buzz and Dwight's affection for screech owls, which originally brought these two together, is revealed in the delightful cover illustration by another Western Connecticut Bird Club member, Mark Szantyr, whose drawings are found throughout the book. New birders might benefit from the identification of the birds in these accomplished illustrations, but that is a small concern.

It is certainly no small task to consolidate a representative selection of Connecticut birding sites. For such a small state, Connecticut has much to offer both the casual and active birder. While not as concise as the celebrated Lane Guides, *Connecticut Birding Guide*

provides ample information in a pleasant and readable style and in small enough bites that a reader is not overwhelmed, a problem I found with the similarly arranged but somewhat more leaden *Guide to Coastal Carolina Birding*. Wisely, in my estimation, the book does not waste pages with yet another unusable field check list, although an annotated species list is a further help in planning birding activities for beginners and experts alike.

Knowing that this guide was begun several years ago, a few very minor criticisms can be overlooked. For instance, some recently discovered hot spots, such as the strawberry patch in Southbury and Shean Road in Goshen, are not included. Additionally, some current technological advances, such as multimedia field guides and birding resources found on the World Wide Web go unreferenced. With commendable restraint, the book does not delve into habitat degradation and bird conservation issues, although I know both authors to have more than a passing interest in those subjects.

All in all, however, this is a reference and tool that no Connecticut birder should be without, and Western Connecticut Bird Club members should take particular pride in this effort by our friends and native sons. I expect this guide will inspire more of us to pursue our affection for birds afield, more often and more productively.

CHRIS WOOD, 6 Orton Lane, Woodbury, CT 06798



CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Greg Hanisek

FALL, August 1 to November 30, 1998

Overall this was a good migration, with widespread reports of less-common species such as Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Winter Wren, Philadelphia Vireo, Cape May Warbler, Vesper Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow and White-crowned Sparrow. The more uncommon waterfowl and shorebirds were also well-represented. However, Olive-sided Flycatcher went virtually unmentioned, Red-breasted Nuthatch was just about non-existent, and Purple Finch was scarce. The season also produced a fine array of rarities ranging the phylogenetic list from Eared Grebe to Yellow-headed Blackbird.

GREBES THROUGH WATERFOWL

The season's first Red-necked Grebe was at Sandy Point in West Haven on October 18 (PDe), two flew past Compo Beach in Westport November 24 (FM) and one was off Westport November 29 (JHu); inland, singles were at Nepaug Reservoir in Canton/New Hartford October 23-26 (JMe) and at Laurel Reservoir in Stamford November 23 (PDu). Two **Eared Grebes**, found on September 7 at Laurel Reservoir (PDu et al.) were present one day only and fit the established pattern of appearing earlier than the earliest Horned Grebes. A Horned Grebe August 6 and 14 at Greenwich

Point was so unseasonable that it likely was summering (TG). Good counts of Pied-billed Grebes included up to six during the season at Stratford Great Meadows (JB,DV) and eight on November 23 at Laurel Reservoir (PDu), but these were overshadowed by a staging flock that built to 17 on November 1 at North Farms Reservoir in Wallingford (WS). The best counts of Northern Gannets were 16 off Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford October 14 (DP) and 12+ off Old Lyme on November 27 (TH).

Away from the American Bittern's autumn stronghold in the marshes of Hammonasset Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP) in Madison, singles were

reported from Lords Cove in Lyme September 30 (HG); Great Island in Old Lyme September 17 and October 21 (TH); Middle Cove in Essex November 9 (HG); Great Meadows in Stratford October 3-9 (CB,PCo) and November 1 (DV); and inland in Woodbury September 25 (RN). Eight Great Egrets at the Quinnebaug fish hatchery in Plainfield September 1 represented a good inland total (RD). The high count of Snowy Egrets at Stratford Great Meadows was 75 on August 15, with one lingering to November 27 (CB,DV). Away from HBSP, single Tricolored Herons were at Greenwich Point August 14 (TG), Menunketesuck flats in Westbrook August 25 (PCo), and Stratford Great Meadows September 11-16 (DV,PCo). A Cattle Egret lingered into mid-November at HBSP (FG et al.). Yellow-crowned Night Heron apparently enjoyed a productive summer. On August 9 in Bridgeport, a group of 12 consisted of three pairs of adults with young (DV); on August 24 at Milford Point, 17 (three adults, 14 juveniles) were pushed out of the marsh and into a tree roost by high tide (FM et al.). A group of 38 Black-crowned Night Herons was at Stratford Great Meadows September 1 (PCo). Single Glossy Ibis wandered inland to Torrington on August 2 (PCa)

and Bantam Lake in Litchfield September 12 (AT).

It was the best season in many years for **Tundra Swans**, with reports of at least 22 at seven locations: Essex had four November 2 (FN) with at least two through the period (m.ob.); one was found at Bantam Lake, Morris on November 11 (SKi) with the number building to eight over the next few days (m.ob.); two flew over Lighthouse Point in New Haven November 14 (FD); six passed over HBSP November 16 (CR), and singles were in Groton November 14 (DP) and Storrs November 21 (MS,SM). At Lighthouse Point, October 5 produced a peak flight of 3,200 Canada Geese (GH). Brant, which are casual inland, appeared October 27 in Canton (JMe), in late November in Wallingford (LS) and November 6 in Storrs (MS); on the coast the best count was c. 1,000 on October 25 at Milford Point (DSo). Three **Greater White-fronted Geese** for the season continued a recent pattern of increased occurrence: one October 7 in Storrs (MS), one October 24 in Southbury (RN) and one October 29 in Coventry (JS).

Among widely scattered Northern Pintails, a flock of 50 on November 28 at Old Saybrook was the largest reported (DR). Top counts of Blue-winged Teal were 15 each at Cemetery Pond in Litchfield

September 18 (DR) and Stratford Great Meadows September 11 (DV). By the last week in November, at least two drake **Eurasian Wigeon** had arrived at the Oyster River area of West Haven/Milford (PK); one was at Furnace Pond in East Haven November 13 (JT). Reports of about 20 Northern Shovelers were well above average, with high counts of four at Bantam Lake November 11-15 (BD et al.), three at Bishop Pond in Meriden on November 29 (WS) and three at Station 43 in South Windsor on September 26 (JMe). The North Branford section of Pistapaug Reservoir held 103 Ring-necked Ducks November 29 (WS), and a flock of 15 made an early arrival September 7 at Laurel Reservoir (PDU).

A sub-adult male **Common Eider** was in the estuary at Bluff Point in Groton on November 14 (CE). **Harlequin Duck** is rare on Long Island Sound, so a group of five November 13 from a boat off Falkner Island, Guilford was unexpected (PCo). Nepaug Reservoir in Canton/New Hartford hosted a nice run of seaducks, with 11 Black Scoters on October 26, two White-winged Scoters on October 27, and two Oldsquaws on October 28 (JMe). A single White-winged Scoter was at Bantam Lake November 22 along with an excellent 17 Oldsquaws (DT,FZ). On the

coast, 17 Black Scoters and 14 White-winged Scoters were flybys on southeast winds at Harkness Memorial State Park on October 14 (DP). The only inland report of Red-breasted Merganser was one in Shelton September 17-27 (DV). Ruddy Ducks weren't as numerous as last year but still made a good showing, including 80 at Pistapaug Reservoir and 10 at Mackenize Reservoir, both in Wallingford, in early November (WS) and 75 in late October at Batterson Pond in New Britain (MC).

RAPTORS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Three **Black Vultures** in Shelton October 26 were south of their regular areas of occurrence (DV). Two Ospreys were late November 30 on the Salmon River in East Haddam (HG). Five Bald Eagles were in the air together September 29 at Barkhamsted Reservoir (PK). Two dramatic encounters with Northern Harriers had similar outcomes: on September 22 at Milford Point a harrier caught a Black-bellied Plover and killed it by drowning, only to have the carcass usurped by crows (FM); on September 20 at Great Pond in Simsbury a harrier took a Green Heron and held it under water for an extended period before moving it to a tuft of grass and eating it (JMe,LK). Two juvenile harriers at

Stratford Great Meadows August 7 were believed to be the product of nesting suspected there for the second consecutive year (PCo,CB). Rough-legged Hawks were at HBSP on October 30 (RS), November 2 (BM) and November 19 (GW), and one was over Stamford November 8 (PDu). A Golden Eagle was seen chasing a gull at Hadlyme ferry September 21 (DP), one was over Interstate 84 in Newtown on October 21 (RBA) and another was over Oxford October 21 (RM). For a full account of the 1998 fall hawk watches, see Connecticut Warbler, Vol. 19 No. 1.

At Baffin Sanctuary in Pomfret, two adult Virginia Rails were seen with four chicks from August 5 through September 2 (R&LD). The lower Connecticut River valley is a well-known staging area for migrant Soras, and an observer reported "many" there September 30 at Lord's Cove in Lyme (HG). The season's only **Common Moorhen** was found September 6 in South Windsor (PCi). The sighting of two **Sandhill Cranes** provided a seasonal highlight: one October 20 at Lighthouse Point (RBe,AH) and one November 19 at Sandy Hook (PB).

In a good season for American Golden Plover, the high counts were 19 on September 15 at Milford Point (PCo), 13 on September 17 at Mansfield Hol-

low Dam (MS), and 10 on September 25 at Sikorsky Airport in Stratford (CB). A staging group of 53 Killdeer was at Vietnam Memorial Park in Wallingford October 10 (WS). At Milford Point on November 13, a good late-season gathering of shorebirds included 167 Black-bellied Plovers, 191 Dunlin and 61 Sanderlings (PCo). An **American Avocet** made one of the species' rare visits to the state August 18-19 at West Haven (JK), staying about a day longer than usual. A good total of 67 Greater Yellowlegs was in Stratford Great Meadows September 30 (PCo). An unusually high concentration of 20 Spotted Sandpipers was noted on the point at Milford Point on August 7 (PCo). Only a handful of Upland Sandpipers were reported, mostly in August. The high count of Whimbrel was three on September 10 at Long Beach in Stratford (CB), which also held three on October 4 (DV). They were among more than 20 reported for the season. A **Marbled Godwit** surprised hawk-watchers at Lighthouse Point September 7 when it flew by with two Whimbrels (GH,WB); the next day two Marbled Godwits were across the harbor at Sandy Point in West Haven (JMa,FG et al.) High count of Semipalmated Sandpiper was 5,000 at Milford Point on August 10 (GH). The season produced reports of 15+

Western Sandpipers (PDe,MH et al.). Of special note was a single Western inland with 60 Semipalmated Sandpipers September 17 along the Housatonic River in Shelton (DV). A Least Sandpiper was very late November 7 at Stratford Great Meadows (CB). The latest date for White-rumped Sandpiper was November 28 at HBSP (DB,SB). Reports of more than 10 **Baird's Sandpipers** for the season was above average, with birds ranging from Bridgeport to Mansfield Hollow, mostly in September (DV,TK,MS et al.). A juvenile **Curlew Sandpiper**, an age-class seldom seen in North America, was present from October 8 to 15 in Old Lyme (TH et al., photo MS). The top count of Pectoral Sandpipers was 25+ at Mansfield Hollow dam on September 17, when a Short-billed Dowitcher also made an uncommon inland appearance (MS). Single Long-billed Dowitchers were reported from the Stratford Great Meadows September 16-30 (CB,PCo), Griswold Point in Old Lyme September 16-18 (DP), HBSP on September 16-18 (DP) and Milford Point October 25 (DSO). Sikorsky Airport in Stratford held up to six Buff-breasted Sandpipers September 11-12 (CB,DV), with two lingering through September 20 (JJ). An American Woodcock was still present November 30 in Southbury (HB,JN,BSt). Three

Wilson's Phalaropes for the season was a good showing, with singles in late August in Guilford (RBA), August 29 at HBSP (PDe et al.), and September 10 in Woodmont (LDo). A **Red-necked Phalarope**, a rare species in the state, appeared August 13 in Pomfret, almost a year to the day after one was found at the same location (RD).

GULLS THROUGH SWALLOWS

The latest Laughing Gull was a single at Bridgeport November 24 (PCo). A **Black-headed Gull** was in Stamford from October 5 through the end of the period (PDu), and one was in Groton November 15 (DP). The bird of the season, in a season filled with good ones, was the state's third **Franklin's Gull**, an adult found and photographed among a flock of 500 Laughing and 500 Ring-billed Gulls at Oyster River in Milford on November 15, the day after an unprecedented incursion of 30+ birds into New Jersey (FM,LDo). A half-dozen **Ice-land Gulls**, all in November, marked a good start for the winter gull season (DSp et al.). Careful monitoring of the Manchester landfill offered some insight into the movements of **Lesser Black-backed Gull**. The species was present during all four months of the season with a peak of four or

five on September 29 (PCo). One arrived Oct 21 at Cove Island in Stamford (PDu). The report of a **Sandwich Tern** at Sandy Point on September 12 was a seasonal highlight (BF,KF) and if accepted by ARCC would be a second state record. A staging flock of Common Terns peaked at 1,500 August 24 at Sandy Point (m.ob.) The high count of Forster's Terns was 38 on October 15 at Menunketesuck flats in Westbrook (PCo); nine were still present on November 2 at Penfield Reef in Fairfield (CB), with two lingering to November 14 at Sunken Island in Fairfield (CB). Menunketesuck held 15 adult and five juvenile Roseate Terns August 25 (PCo), and one got as far west as Stamford September 4 (PDu). Six Black Terns were reported for the season, five in August and one in September (m.ob.). A post-nesting flock of 25 Black Skimmers at Sandy Point, included 13 juveniles on August 24 (FM,GH).

Common Barn Owls made rare appearances August 2 in Torrington (PCa) and September 3 at Greenwich Audubon Center (TG), which also had a Northern Saw-whet Owl October 6 (TG). Three Saw-whets were in Litchfield November 22 (DT,FZ) and three more were in Canaan October 7 (JHu); a single was in Southbury November 15 (LF). Among the few

Long-eared Owls encountered was one November 8 in Old Lyme (DP) and one November 9 at HBSP (GW). Short-eared Owls were widely reported in the coastal marshes (GW et al.). A flock of 40 Common Nighthawks was noted August 17 over downtown Torrington (BB). This decade's emerging trend of western hummingbirds being detected in the east was amply demonstrated: an adult male **Rufous Hummingbird** visited feeders in Hebron from August 30 through November 23 (SG,CJ); an immature male **Selasphorus hummingbird** appeared at a feeder in Guilford Oct. 17 and remained through late November (LC; photo by MS); and a female **Rufous Hummingbird** found in Glastonbury died in captivity after being received in very weakened condition by a rehabilitator in late October (fide JA). A total of 20+ **Red-headed Woodpeckers** for the season statewide, including c. 15 at Lighthouse Point, made this a very good flight year (RZ et al.). One remained through the season at a beaver swamp in East Haddam, where breeding has been suspected in the past (HG). A major flight on September 29 at Bluff Point in Groton brought 200+ Northern Flickers and c. 20 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers (DP).

Single Yellow-bellied Flycatchers on October 4 at Light-

house Point (JHo) and Southbury (RN) were quite late. Also tardy was an Eastern Wood-Peewee October 9 in Woodbury (RN). It was an average year for **Western Kingbird**, with one reported September 20 at Station 43 in South Windsor (PCi,PDe) and one September 22-23 in Guilford (JHu). A puzzling tyrant flycatcher, possibly the state's first **Cassin's Kingbird**, was seen and photographed August 19 at HBSP (JK,BK), during a day with a very heavy flight of Eastern Kingbirds, i.e., 130 in 1.5 hours at Lighthouse Point (GW). A report has been forwarded to ARCC. Late swallow records included a Barn Swallow at Milford Point November 13 (PCo), a Northern Rough-winged Swallow September 23 in Bloomfield (JMe) and six Bank Swallows October 11 in New Haven (DR). The Cliff Swallow breeding colony at Shepaug dam in Southbury peaked at 195 adults and fledged young on August 11, and they were gone by August 25 (DR).

CORVIDS THROUGH FINCHES

The gradual spreading of Fish Crows throughout the state was evidenced by a "large number" mixed with Common Crows in a roost in Wallingford, where a group of 12 was noted in apparent mi-

gration on October 24 (WS). Although increasing in the state, **Common Ravens** were still unexpected on the immediate coast, where one hung around Lighthouse Point for a few days in mid-September, driving crows crazy (JZ,RBe), and one was seen October 6 at HBSP (CR,WB). Not far away, three were seen November 26 in Hamden and were also being harassed by crows (AB). A **Sedge Wren** was observed briefly just before midnight October 22 under the lights in the parking area of a power station in Waterford (DP), and another was reported October 25 at Greenwich Audubon (TG). The Marsh Wren colony at White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield peaked at 15 adults and fledged young on September 10, and most were gone by October 1 (DR). October 4 produced a big flight of Golden-crowned Kinglets, with c. 100 in Stratford (DV).

One of the season's rarities was a **Northern Wheatear** that was present at Sherwood Island State Park in Westport from September 19-22, a typical arrival time (CB, m.ob.; photo FM). One good thrush deserves another, and the season got its second when a **Townsend's Solitaire** was seen in a flock of robins November 7 in Litchfield (BD). If accepted, it would be a third state record. The peak movement of Veeries and

Wood Thrushes appeared to occur August 20-22 in the Watertown area (RN). Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's (sp.) Thrushes were in Westbrook September 17 (PCo), West Hartford October 2 (PCi), Canaan October 7 (CW) and at Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton September 20 (JMe). An American Pipit was an early arrival August 2 at HBSP (RS), followed by one on August 20 at Sandy Point in West Haven (JB); the high count was 200 on October 4 in New Milford (AT). Single **Northern Shrikes** were found November 22 in Canaan (GH) and November 25 in Hampton (MS).

A Blue-headed Vireo, a noted lingerer, was at Trap Rock in Wallingford October 25 (WS). The first of many Philadelphia Vireos appeared August 8 at Aspetuck Reservoir in Easton (DV). The last Red-eyed Vireos were noted October 5 in Southbury (HB, JN, BSt) and September 11 in New Milford (RN). Good warbler flights were noted September 6-7 in the Newtown-Southbury area, with a total of 16 species along with several vireos and Empidonax flycatchers (PB). At Bluff Point in Groton, the state's nonpareil spot for fall passerine migration, the following warbler flights were noted: September 5 - 1,000 warblers, 21 species; September 9 - 1,000 warblers; September 23 - 400 war-

blers, 17 species, mostly Blackpolls; September 25 - 1,000 warblers, 20 species; September 29 - 2,000 warblers, 21 species; and October 10 - c. 2,000 warblers, 9 species, 90% Yellow-rumped with good numbers of Black-throated Blue and Black-throated Green (DP, FM et al.). A Tennessee Warbler was very late November 26 in Hamden (AB), and a good high count of 10 was noted September 7 in Litchfield along with four Nashville Warblers (RN). **Orange-crowned Warbler** staged a good flight with about six for the season statewide (RD, GW, JMe et al.).

As is typical for the early-moving Yellow Warbler, peak movements were detected August 3-5 in Watertown (RN). Cape May Warblers were widely reported, with a high of four on September 28 in Chaplin (MS). Palm Warblers were early August 31 in New Milford (DR) and September 3 in Windsor (PDe). An Ovenbird lingered to November 30 in Southbury (HB, JN, BS). August 19 in Hartland (PDe) and August 25 in Southbury (HB, JN, BS) were good back-end dates for Louisiana Waterthrush, one of the first of our breeding passerines to head south. A migrant Northern Waterthrush was out of habitat foraging along a tidal creek in Old Lyme August 13 (TH). Kentucky Warbler, which is seldom

noted in fall migration, appeared August 27 at the Connecticut Audubon campus in Glastonbury (MS); another was at Cove Island in Stamford September 16, a late date (PDU). Mourning Warbler, another species known as an early migrant, was seen August 12 at Sasco Creek in Southport (CB). Connecticut Warblers were noted September 17 (BO) and September 25 (TB) at Greenwich Audubon, and another was at Lighthouse Point October 11 (DR). A Yellow-breasted Chat was banded August 22 on Falkner Island off Guilford (fide PCo), one was at Cove Island September 9-13 (PDU et al.) and one lingered to November 29 at HBSP (BSv); two were unexpected fly-bys at 8:30 a.m. November 12 at Lighthouse Point, passing at 100 feet with one about 50 feet behind the other (RBe).

Bluff Point produced an excellent total of 150 Scarlet Tanagers in the big September 29 flight (DP). Single **Blue Grosbeaks** were in Groton October 26 (GW), in Southbury October 28 (CW), and at HBSP October 10 (PCi,C&SR). An Indigo Bunting lingered to October 31 in Canton (JMe). On evidence of the past three years, as more hawkwatchers at Lighthouse Point have learned how to identify **Dickcissel** by call, this has proven to be a regular fall migrant with up to four recorded

October 4 (JHo et al.). The total for the season was 40+ statewide, the majority at Lighthouse. The reports were scattered throughout the season but tapered off after late October. The first American Tree Sparrow report came November 8 from Wallingford (WS). The season's three **Clay-colored Sparrows** were in Southbury September 24-30 (CW et al.), Westport September 1 (FM,NC), and HBSP October 22 (DK). The season's lone **Lark Sparrow** appeared September 27 at HBSP (JG,PF). Two "Ipswich" Sparrows had arrived by November 25 at Milford Point (PCo). Cove Island Park in Stamford held a Grasshopper Sparrow October 15-18 (PDU et al.), and one was at Thompson Dam in Thompson on August 8 (LD). An immature **Golden-crowned Sparrow** was discovered October 24 in Southbury and seen sporadically for about a week (BD,TK). If accepted, it would be a second state record. The first report of Dark-eyed Junco came September 23 from Westbrook (PCo). A Lapland Longspur arrived October 10 at Long Beach in Stratford (CB), and one was inland in a Sharon corn field November 20 (CW). The high count of Snow Buntings was 42 on November 1 at HBSP (SK).

The season's lone **Yellow-headed Blackbird** flew over a yard in Killingworth October 18

(JHi). The first Rusty Blackbirds appeared September 18 in Litchfield (DR). An Orchard Oriole was still at Northwest Park in Windsor on August 28, a late date for a species known for early departures (PDe). A Baltimore Oriole, a known lingerer, was still present November 27 in Stratford (DV). Northern finches were virtually absent. Even Purple Finch was quite scarce. A few Evening Grosbeaks blew through in October and November (BC et al.), and one Pine Siskin was reported November 11 in Southbury (RN).

[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, 662 Phoenixville Rd., Chaplin, CT 06235) if they are to be included in the field notes.]

OBSERVERS, CONTRIBUTORS (boldface):

Jane Amico, **Renee Baade** (Rba), **James Bair**, William Banks, Tom Baptist, **Bob Barbieri**, **Charles Barnard**, S. Baron, **Ron Bell** (Rbe), Dick Bernard, Walter Bosse, **Hunter Brawley**, **Polly Brody**, Andy Brand, Paul Carrier (PCa), Bruce Carver, Paul Cianfaglione (PCi), **Patrick Comins** (PCo),

Lisa Courtney, Neil Currie, Mary Czapinski, Fritz Davis, **Paul Desjardins** (PDe), Buzz Devine, Linda Dixon, **Robert Dixon**, Linda Donahue (LDo), **Patrick Dugan** (PDu), Chris Elphick, **Bruce Finnan**, Kevin Finnan, Larry Fischer, Paul Fusco, **Frank Gallo**, **John Gaskell**, Suzanne Gerety, **Ted Gilman**, **Hank Golet**, **Anki Hamback**, Michael Hamilton, **Greg Hanisek**, **Ted Hendrickson**, **John Himmelman** (JHi), **Julian Hough** (JHo), **Jim Hunter** (JHu), Jalna Jaeger, Christopher Juhl, Peter Kandefer, **Jay Kaplan**, Don Kelting, Len Kendall, **Susan Kirk** (SKi), **Tom Kilroy**, Brian Kleinman, Mary Alice Koenke, **Steve Kotchko** (SKo), Bob MacDonnell, **Frank Mantlik**, John Maynard (JMa), Richard McCormack, **Jamie Meyers** (JMe), Joe Morin (JMo), Steve Morytko, **Russ Naylor**, Jim Nolan, Frederick Norton, Brian O'Toole, **Dave Provencher**, **Charlie Rafford**, Shirlee Rafford, **Dave Rosgen**, **Wilford Schultz**, Ray Scory, Jean Smith, **Dori Sosensky** (DSo), David Spector (DSp), **Barbara Starr** (BSt), **Bruce Stevenson** (BSv), Larry Stowe, **Mark Szantyr**, Art Titus, **John Triana**, **Dave Tripp**, **Dennis Varza**, **Glenn Williams**, **Chris Wood**, **Roy Zartarian**, Jim Zipp, Francis Zygmunt.

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



PHOTO CHALLENGE

Julian Hough

ANSWER TO PHOTO CHALLENGE 26

No prizes for guessing this month's challenge is a gull! Comparing the general build and size of the bill with the immature Herring Gull in the background, it is clearly one of the larger larids that we are dealing with. The overall whitish plumage makes the bird stand out at a distance, and the white, unmarked primaries confirms our suspicions that it is one of the northern white-winged gulls, either Glaucous or Kumlien's Iceland Gull.

In order to proceed in the identification process it is important to age this individual, since only then can useful comparisons be made with similar species of the same age. Adult Kumlien's and Glaucous Gulls have pale yellowish irises and bills, and typically show some obvious head streaking in winter. This doesn't fit with our bird. The dark eye, bi-colored bill, 'muddy' underparts and a few dark-flecked wing-coverts indicate this is an immature bird. The dark eye ages this as a bird of the year (first-winter) since both species develop adult-like pale irises by their second year. So, now that we have confidently aged the bird correctly we can hopefully come to a quick conclusion about the bird's identity. Thankfully, this is easy, by virtue of the bill pattern alone. The robust, 'dipped-in-ink' pattern is diagnostic of Glaucous Gull. Kumlien's show a slimmer, all black bill. Another standard means of separating both



species is that Kumlien's have longer wings which project further past the tail and impart a rather attenuated look. In the photograph, the wings of our bird are rather short, extending a little way past the tail - perfect for Glaucous Gull! The overall build, with a strong bill, full breast and flat head all conform with the identification. Kumlien's Gulls are generally smaller and slighter built, with smaller bills and longer wings. They also have more rounded heads and proportionately larger eyes which gives them a more 'cute' expression than Glaucous Gull. Also, it is worth noting that Glaucous Gulls often look whiter than Kumlien's in first-basic plumage, which are generally 'cafe-au-lait' colored.

At this point, it is worth considering the need to eliminate a partially leucistic, or albino gull. These aberrant individuals can look surprisingly like the real thing, and a good look is needed to be sure the bird is a 'kosher' white-winged gull. A young white-winged gull will always show some dark flecking in the tail and wing-coverts, obvious on most first-year Kumlien's, though these may be difficult to see, especially on Glaucous Gull, or particularly worn birds in late winter/early spring. This first-year Glaucous Gull was photographed by me in Gloucester, Massachusetts, in February 1998.

Julian Hough, 21 Walnut St., Naugatuck, CT 06770

Note: In CW19, No. 1, under the PHOTO CHALLENGE, the answer was to PHOTO CHALLENGE 25, not 24.



Photo Challenge 27. Identify the species. Answer next issue.

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

Editor

Betty S. Kleiner - 5 Flintlock Ridge, Simsbury, CT 06070
(860) 658-5670 - CTWarbler@cs.com

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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 computer 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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THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology



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The Connecticut Warbler

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ABOUT OUR COVER

Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

by Mark Szantyr

Mark S. Szantyr is an artist and educator living in Waterbury, Connecticut. A long-time birder, he is a licensed bird-bander, a founding member and past Vice-President of the Connecticut Ornithological Association. He is currently secretary of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut. Mark has served on the Connecticut DEP's Endangered Species Advisory Board for Birds, The DEP Biodiversity Forum for Birds, was recently the State Coordinator of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge Migratory Bird Stopover Habitat Survey, and is the Field Biologist for the DEP/Nature Conservancy Worm-eating Warbler Survey. Mark received his Master of Fine Arts degree in painting from the University of Connecticut in 1992 and is currently teaching art at Eastern Connecticut State University and Quinebaug Valley Community-Technical College. He has illustrated a number of texts and ornithological journals.

SITE GUIDE:
CROOK HORN ROAD, SOUTHBURY
(STRAWBERRY PATCH ROAD)

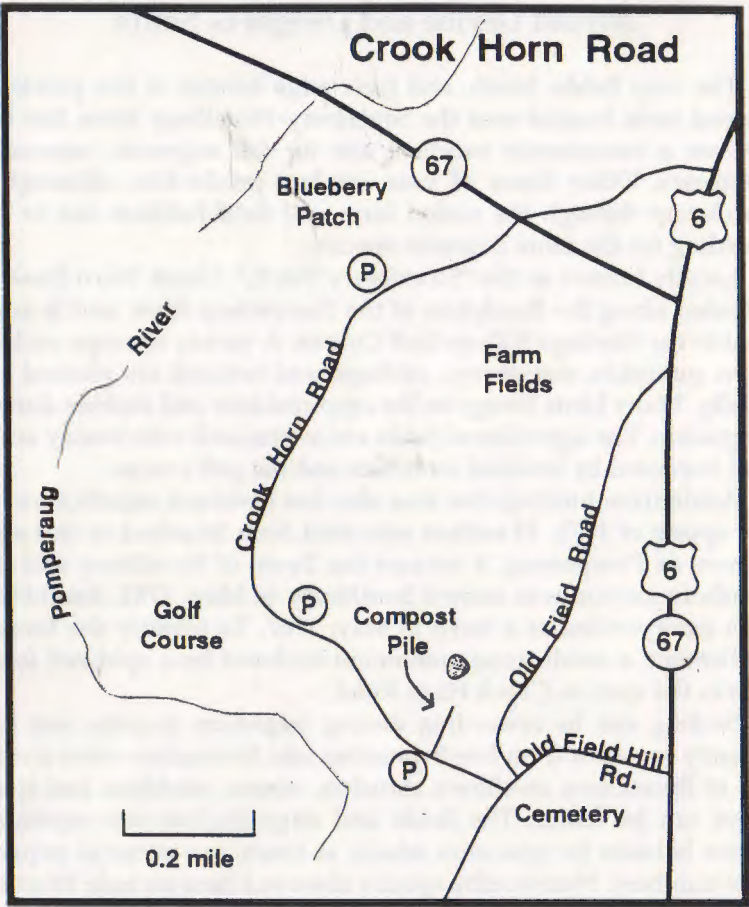
Arnold Devine and Dwight G. Smith

The crop fields, brush, and river edge habitat of this privately owned farm located near the Southbury-Woodbury town line has proven a consistently excellent site for fall migrants, especially sparrows. Other times of year are less productive, although a quick trip through the varied farm and field habitats can be rewarding for the more common species.

Locally known as the "Strawberry Patch," Crook Horn Road is situated along the floodplain of the Pomperaug River and is adjacent to the Heritage Village Golf Course. A variety of crops such as corn, pumpkin, strawberry, cabbage, and broccoli are planted annually. Many birds forage on the crop residues and stubble during migration. The agricultural fields are intermixed with weedy areas and bordered by lowland woodlots and the golf course.

Aside from birding, this area also has historical significance. In the spring of 1673, 15 settlers relocated from Stratford to this area known as Pomperaug. It became the Town of Woodbury and the southern section was named Southbury in May, 1781. Southbury was incorporated as a town in May, 1787. To identify the former settlement, a small stone monument enclosed by a split rail fence marks the spot on Crook Horn Road.

Birding can be rewarding during migration periods and frequently excellent from late September into November when a variety of flycatchers, swallows, thrushes, vireos, warblers, and sparrows can be found. The fields and edge thickets are especially prime habitats for sparrows which, at times, can occur in impressive numbers. Noteworthy species observed here include Western Kingbird, Connecticut Warbler, Blue Grosbeak, Lark Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Le Conte's Sparrow, and Dickcissel. Notable among the rarities found at this site was a Golden-crowned Sparrow discovered in October of 1998. Other regularly occurring species of interest are Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Brown Thrasher, American Pipit, Indigo Bunting, Vesper Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, and Rusty Blackbird.



Map of Crook Horn Road and Vicinity, Southbury, CT

DIRECTIONS

To reach Crook Horn Road from I-84, take Exit 15 and follow Route 67 North. At the traffic light (1.5 miles) where Route 67 and Route 6 diverge, turn left and follow Route 67 for 0.2 miles and turn left onto Crook Horn Road (across from Southbury Baptist Church). Crook Horn Road is paved but in 0.2 miles it becomes a dirt and gravel road.

BIRDING

Please Note: This is private property. Birders must take care to respect the rights of the farmer. Stay along the field edge or near the roadway and avoid walking through the crops. Note also that on some weekends model airplane enthusiasts use a part of the field to fly their radio-controlled airplanes, so it is best to bird the strawberry patch in the early morning hours.

Immediately after Crook Horn Road turns from a paved to a dirt and gravel road (0.2 miles), park in the dirt parking area on the right. Farther to the right (west) is the overgrown blueberry patch. During fall migration, the overgrown field and blueberry patch should yield Eastern Bluebird, Cedar Waxwing, American Goldfinch, and a variety of sparrows, led in abundance by Chipping Sparrows.

Just beyond the blueberry patch, the trees along the river to the northwest can yield both Eastern Screech-Owl and Great Horned Owl by night (usually by calling these owls in using vocal imitation. Please do-not use taped recordings here). The open woodlands and thickets along the river can yield Gray Catbird, Hermit Thrush, and Eastern Towhee. The fall flux of blackbirds may include flocks of Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles along with the occasional Rusty Blackbird.

Continue along Crook Horn Road past the historical marker (0.2 miles) and park along the side of the road near the compost (manure) pile (0.4 miles). A short dirt road on the left just beyond the field edge identifies this spot. The large manure pile, thicket, and fields bordering the pile normally harbor an interesting assortment of fall migrants.

During the fall the variety and abundance of sparrows are found most clearly in the vegetation stubble that covers much of the farm fields, and also in the thickets around the compost pile. Song and White-throated Sparrows are generally the most abundant and widespread species to be found, but check also for Field, Savannah, Fox (uncommon), White-crowned, Swamp, and Ameri-

can Tree Sparrow. Dark-eyed Juncos, Horned Larks, and American Pipits can often be found foraging in loose flocks across the fields. Rarer species to look for include Vesper and Lincoln's Sparrows, Dickcissel, and Blue Grosbeak.

The trees and shrubs that border the dirt road provide additional opportunities for maximizing your species count at this birding site. The red cedars and scattered bush honeysuckles that line the road can yield Eastern Bluebird, Eastern Phoebe, and Cedar Waxwing along with the occasional Carolina Wren or Brown Thrasher.

The larger sycamores usually harbor woodpeckers, so be sure to check them for Red-bellied, Hairy, and Downy Woodpeckers, Northern Flicker, and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (uncommon). Other species frequently tallied among the trees include Brown Creeper, Indigo Bunting, Tufted Titmouse, and a variety of warblers, most commonly Yellow-rumped Warbler. The roadside edge can also be expected to yield the usual assortment of more common species including Black-capped Chickadee, Blue Jay, American Crow, American Robin, Northern Mockingbird, House Finch, and Northern Cardinal.

The fields and edge also provide foraging habitat for Red-tailed, Red-shouldered, and Broad-winged Hawks, American Kestrel, and Turkey Vulture. During migration keep an eye peeled for Sharp-shinned or Cooper's Hawk as well.

ARNOLD DEVINE, 18 South St., Plymouth, CT 06782

DWIGHT G. SMITH, SCSU Biology Dept., 501 Crescent St.,
New Haven, CT 06515

VIGILANCE BEHAVIOR OF WINTERING BALD EAGLES IN CONNECTICUT

Howard I. Russock

ABSTRACT

The vigilance behaviors of Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) wintering near a hydroelectric dam in western Connecticut were studied for five winters. Perched eagles in the presence of other eagles exhibited more head turns per minute than solitary eagles; eagles search for cues from other eagles for food sources and piracy opportunities. However, feeding Bald Eagles exhibited the same level of vigilance whether or not they were in the presence of other eagles. Adult bald eagles that had caught a fish were more likely to subsequently go to a different perch than were unsuccessful hunters. Piracy was attempted after more than 30% of successful fish captures. Adult and immature Bald Eagles were equally likely to be the object of a piracy attempt, but immature eagles comprised over 75% of the potential pirates.

In winter many Bald Eagles migrate south in search of open water as their summer fishing areas freeze. At such times they often congregate below hydroelectric dams. The dam's turbines kill and injure fish and keep the water below the dam free of ice, providing food (Spencer 1976, Stalmaster 1987, Stalmaster and Plettner 1992).

During the winter these eagles may be under physiological stress due to severe weather conditions or a relative scarcity of food. They compensate by roosting and perching for up to 99% of a 24 hour day to conserve energy, engaging in sit-and-wait hunting, and stealing to acquire food (Stalmaster and Gessaman 1984, Gerrard and Bortolotti 1988, Stalmaster 1987, Watson et al. 1991, Stalmaster and Plettner 1992). While perching, they increase their vigilance behavior in the presence of other eagles. This increased vigilance allows them to detect clues from other eagles as to potential sources of food (Knight and Knight 1983) and alerts them to opportunities for piracy (intraspecific food stealing) and kleptoparasitism (interspecific stealing) (see review by Brockmann and Barnard 1979). Piracy is a commonly reported behavior of wintering Bald Eagles (Griffin 1981, Fischer 1985, Hansen 1986,

Bennetts et al. 1990, Watson et al. 1991, Stalmaster and Gessaman 1984, Stalmaster and Plettner 1992, Bennetts and McClelland 1997). If a Bald Eagle has food, greater vigilance would allow it to better detect piracy attempts, increasing the probability of retaining its prey and avoiding injury. Knight and Knight (1986) and Knight and Skagen (1988) found that feeding eagles were more successful in defending against piracy attempts if their heads were raised prior to the attempt.

The purpose of this study was to examine the vigilance strategies of a population of Bald Eagles wintering below the Shepaug Hydroelectric Dam and Power Plant in Southbury, Connecticut. The National Audubon Society's Continental Bald Eagle Project documented Bald Eagles wintering in this area as early as 1963 and this population has been studied previously (Russock 1979; Faccio and Russock 1984).

The first objective of the study was to determine whether these wintering Bald Eagles did, in fact, exhibit increased vigilance behavior when perching in the presence of other eagles. The second objective was to determine if Bald Eagles with food exhibited increased vigilance activity when in the presence of other eagles. However, while studying feeding Bald Eagles it became clear that many individuals were taking their prey to more secluded, less observable perches, apparently to avoid other eagles in the area. Therefore, the examination of perch selection as a vigilance strategy was added as a third objective. Finally, all observable piracy attempts occurring during the study were documented. The threat of piracy was an assumption underlying the other aspects of the study and it was therefore deemed important to document the actual extent of its occurrence.

STUDY AREA AND METHODS

We observed Bald Eagles at Northeast Utilities' Shepaug Hydroelectric Dam and Power Plant, located at the junction of the Housatonic and Shepaug Rivers on the border between Newtown and Southbury. Most of the study was conducted from an observation building owned by Northeast Utilities at the top of a hill on the eastern (Southbury) side of the Housatonic River. Below this building is the hydroelectric plant, followed downstream by a predominantly bare hillside with trees lining the river. The western side of the river is composed of wooded hills, and above the dam is a lake surrounded by woods. The eagles could be observed for approximately one km below the dam.

The eagles were observed during the winters of 1990 - 1991

through 1994 - 1995, from the last week of December to mid-March each year. Throughout the five winters of the study a mean of 6.2 eagles were observed per day (seasonal range: 5.3 - 7.1), evenly divided between adult (mean = 3.1, range: 2.9 - 3.5) and immature (mean = 3.1, range: 2.3 - 3.6) eagles. The peak number of eagles observed in one day each season ranged from 10 - 25.

Fish were the only observed prey of the eagles below the dam. All fish were taken by active feeding; none were observed being scavenged along the shore. While it was not possible to collect quantitative data on the prey base, there were no apparent differences in prey abundance among years.



*Photo by Steve Faccio
at Shepaug Dam, Southbury, CT*

We collected data concerning four different aspects of vigilance behavior:

General Vigilance - Data were collected on every eagle observed during the study whose head was clearly visible. During a 10 minute observation period the number of times each eagle turned its head was recorded. Eagles were classified as full adults (pure white head and tail) or as immatures and by whether they were alone or other eagles were near, thus creating four groups ('solitary adults', 'adults not alone', 'solitary immatures', 'immatures not alone'). However, data were collected not more than twice on a given individual during a winter of study, once when 'solitary' and once when 'not alone'. A sketch of each eagle was made to note distinguishing markings and avoid duplication.

Feeding Vigilance - Data were collected every time an eagle was successful in a hunting attempt and brought its fish to an observable perch. The total length of time the eagle was feeding was measured as was the number of head raises during the feeding bout and the total time that the eagle's head was raised. Initially, the eagles were classified into the same four groups as described under general vigilance. However, due to low numbers in some groups the data were lumped into two groups, 'solitary feeding eagles' and 'eagles feeding in the presence of others'.

Perch Selection - Every time an eagle made a pass at the water we recorded whether or not its hunting attempt was successful and whether it returned to its perch of departure or went to a different perch. These data were collected only during the last three winters of this study.

Piracy - For the last three winters all observed piracy attempts were documented. We noted whether all eagles involved in the interaction were adult or immature birds and, when possible, whether or not the attempt was successful.

RESULTS

General Vigilance - There was a significant difference between the four groups in their mean number of head turns per min ($P < 0.001$, ANOVA). Fischer's Least Significant Difference Tests indicated that solitary adult eagles exhibited significantly fewer head turns per min ($n = 44$, mean = 15.3 ± 4.5) than adult eagles that were not alone ($n = 26$, mean = 19.3 ± 5.4 , $P < 0.004$). Similarly, solitary immature eagles exhibited significantly fewer head turns per min ($n = 23$, mean = 14.4 ± 5.7) than immature eagles that were not alone ($n = 21$, mean = 20.4 ± 7.6 , $P < 0.001$). However, there was no significant difference between solitary adult and im-

mature eagles or between adult and immature eagles that were not alone.

Feeding Vigilance - There was no significant difference (t Test) in mean sec vigilant per min., between solitary feeding eagles ($n = 38$, mean = 15.6 ± 7.4) and eagles feeding in the presence of others ($n = 21$, mean = 15.0 ± 7.4). There was also no significant difference (t Test) in mean head raises per min between solitary feeding eagles ($n = 38$, mean = 5.2 ± 2.1) and eagles feeding in the presence of others ($n = 21$, mean = 4.3 ± 2.0).

Perch Selection - Adult eagles were observed catching a fish on 44 occasions; 23 (52.3 %) took the fish to a different perch. Of 40 observed unsuccessful fishing attempts by adult eagles, only eight (20.0%) subsequently went to a different perch ($P < 0.003$, Chi Square Test). Immature eagles were observed catching a fish on 38 occasions; 21 (55.3 %) took the fish to a different perch. Of 22 observed unsuccessful fishing attempts by immature eagles, 11 (50.0 %) subsequently went to a different perch (not significant, Chi Square Test).

Piracy Attempts - Of the 76 successful fish captures observed, 23 (30.3%) resulted in a piracy attempt. Piracy was attempted in 13 of 39 (33.3%) successful fish captures by adult eagles and 10 of 37 (27.0%) of successful fish captures by immature eagles (not significant, Chi Square Test). Of the eagles initiating piracy attempts, seven (24.1%) were adults and 22 (75.9%) were immature eagles ($P < 0.001$, Sign Test); some piracy attempts involved more than one eagle. It was not possible to accurately determine the success rate of the piracy attempts, as most cases resulted in the eagles chasing each other out of sight.

DISCUSSION

Bald Eagles that were not feeding exhibited more vigilance behavior in the presence of other eagles than when solitary. Presumably, this increased vigilance served both to increase the detection of potential prey and to detect potential piracy opportunities (Knight and Knight 1983). There was no difference between adult and immature eagles in their levels of vigilance behavior and, therefore, no evidence of an effect of experience.

In this study feeding eagles were no more vigilant in the presence of other eagles than when they were alone in spite of previous studies indicating that such behavior is an effective method of avoiding piracy (Knight and Knight 1986, Knight and Skagen 1988). However, we only collected data on feeding eagles that were observable because they remained in the foraging area di-

rectly below the dam; data were not collected on eagles that took their food to a more remote perch. It is possible that eagles feeding in such an active area exhibited equally high levels of vigilance behavior whether or not other eagles were visible at the actual time they were feeding.

Taking prey to a different perch was a common behavior that presumably aided the eagles in avoiding piracy attempts. Fischer (1985) reported observing Bald Eagles selecting protected eating sites on numerous occasions and describes such site selection as one of nine strategies eagles use to avoid piracy.

Finally, piracy was documented as an frequent phenomenon in this population. Almost one third of the eagles capturing a fish were subjected to a piracy attempt. Many previous studies have reported piracy as a common method of food procurement in wintering eagles (Stalmaster and Gessaman 1984, Hansen 1986, Knight and Skagen 1988, Bennetts et al. 1990, Watson et al. 1991). While adult and immature birds were equally likely to be the object of a piracy attempt, immature eagles comprised over three-quarters of the potential pirates. Similarly, Griffin (1981), Fischer (1985) and Stalmaster and Plettner (1992) found immature eagles made more piracy attempts than adults in their study populations, possibly as a compensation for lower hunting ability. In addition, Bennetts and McClelland (1997) found that piracy behavior tended to decrease with age. In any event, the level of piracy activity found in this population is an indication of the adaptiveness of the vigilance strategies documented in this study.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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HOWARD I. RUSSOCK, Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences, Western Connecticut State University, Danbury, CT 06810

THE ROSEATE TERN

Patrick Comins

The medium sized terns—Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*), Roseate Tern (*S. dougallii*), Forster's Tern (*S. forsteri*), and Arctic Tern (*S. paradisaea*) which breed in Eastern North America, are a notoriously difficult group of birds to identify in the field. However, with a little experience the Roseate Tern can be readily identified by several unique features. Some of these field marks can be apparent at longer distances. Circumstances such as poor lighting or quick views can make it difficult to be sure of a tern's identity. In these situations it is better to leave a tern unidentified than to venture a guess. With a little practice at 'terning,' these situations should become less frequent. Given even decent views of a Roseate Tern, they eventually will "pop right out" of a group of Common Terns. This article was not written because this is a particularly rare bird, or a difficult one to identify. It is, however, an important one to identify due to its status as a federally endangered species.

The more information we have on the Roseate Tern's habitat usage in the northeast, the better we can understand its ecology, and the first step to understand its needs is being able to identify it.

The species most often confused with the Roseate in Connecticut is the Common Tern. Unless otherwise noted, discussion is limited to adults in summer plumage. The Common Tern is a common to locally abundant coastal, summer resident and seasonal migrant. The Roseate Tern is a very rare, to locally uncommon coastal summer resident and rare migrant. The problem is often that of Roseates being a needle in a haystack. Terns are gregarious by nature. They nest, roost, migrate and often feed in very large groups. These two species of terns have evolved to each fit into their own niche within the group. For example, Common Terns are much more aggressive in defending their nesting colonies than are Roseate Terns, but the Roseate Tern has taken advantage of this fact. In Connecticut they nest almost exclusively within large colonies of Common Terns. They take advantage of more protected nest sites in comparison with the exposed nest of the Common Tern. Researchers on the Falkner Island Unit of Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, under the direction of Dr. Jeffrey Spendelow, have taken advantage of this fact and have pioneered the use of artificial nest shelters to improve the nesting success of this species.

Often the 'first clue' to the presence of a Roseate Tern is its up-

wardly inflective "jhiv-ik" call. This call is more similar to that of a Least Tern than to any of the Common Tern's calls. The most frequent call of the Common is a loud down-slurred raspy "Keeeeeer." The Roseate has several other distinctive calls, but these are more difficult to pick out. They include a songbird-like "peep" contact note and a call that sounds like ripping fabric, that is not down-slurred, but is reminiscent of a low, coarse Common Tern.

In flight, 'first clue' to the Roseate's identity is its quick, stiff, shallow, snappy wingbeats. The Common Tern flies in a much looser, more leisurely manner with slower, deeper wingbeats. This difference is caused by the fact that the Roseate Tern is longer overall than the Common, including the tail while its wings are narrower and shorter. Combined, this ratio forces Roseates to fly in a different manner. This characteristic must be used with caution however, because wind conditions or birds gaining flight speed can cause variations in flight. This can be an excellent starting point for identification of a bird in flight. There is also a subtle difference in how the two species dive for food. The Roseate Tern hovers less often and will often search as it flies, diving directly straight down into the water, or twisting abruptly in flight as if making last second adjustments. They rarely hesitate, often appearing to dive in a "kamikaze-like" manner. The Common Tern tends to hover more often, or hesitate before diving. Research has shown that the Roseate Tern also tends to dive deeper and stay down longer than the other similarly sized terns.

There are several other features that can confirm a Roseate's identity. Roseate Terns are much paler across the back (appearing white at times). Under optimal lighting conditions this will be apparent at very long distances (Figure 1). Again, this feature must be used with caution, and is most useful when there are members of both species that can be compared under similar lighting conditions. Another clue is that there is little or no contrast between the rump and the rest of the upperparts in the Roseate unlike the Common Tern.

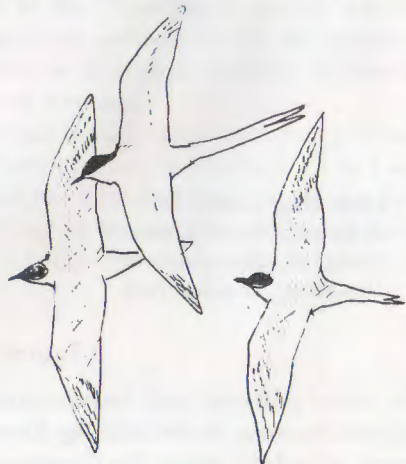
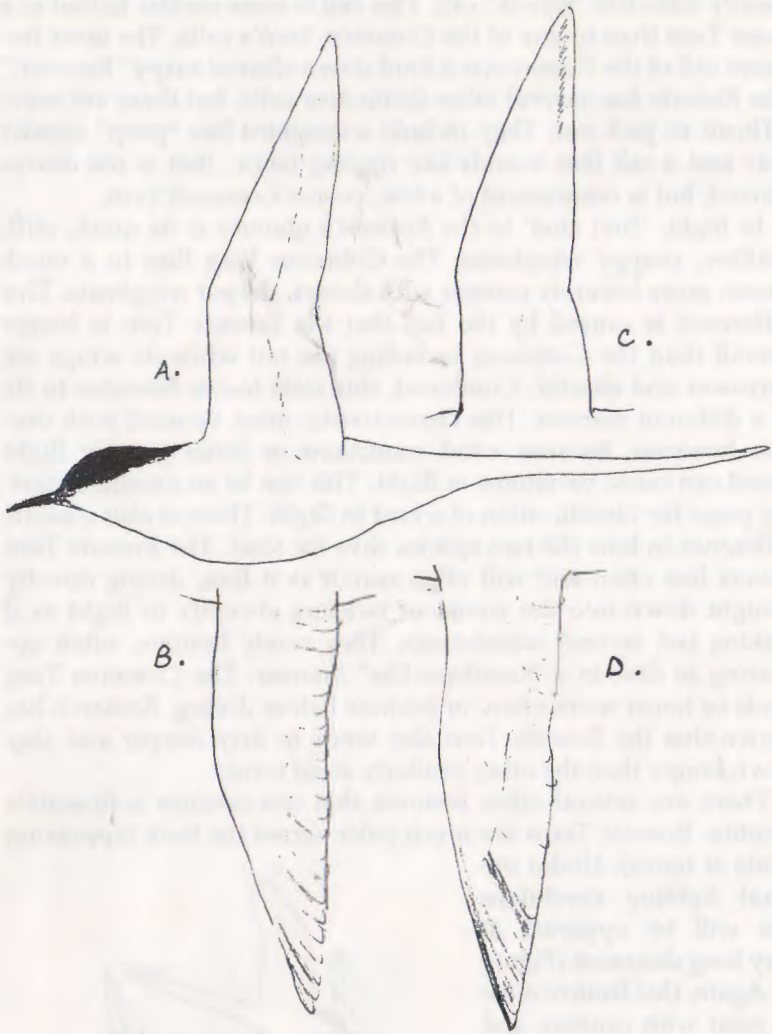


Figure 1



- A - Underwing Roseate Tern
- B - Upperwing Roseate Tern
- C - Underwing Common Tern
- D - Upperwing Common Tern

M. STANTYK 99

Figure 2

The color patterns and translucence of the underwing are other helpful features. In the field the Roseate Tern's underwings appear nearly all white, while the Common Tern has an area of black on the trailing edge of the underwing (appearing as a black line) (Fig-

ure 2, A and C). The Roseate Tern also has a wing that appears translucent from the inner primaries and along the secondaries, while the translucent window in the Common Tern is confined to the inner primaries. This feature is most useful when the birds are flying overhead with the sun behind them.

The upperwing provides yet another clincher. The Roseate Tern has a black leading edge to the outer primaries providing a marked contrast to the rest of the wing, while the Common Tern has a dark wedge in the inner primaries (Figure 2, B and D). This feature can be difficult to see in the field in both species, but becomes more marked as summer wears on. Another feature that can be helpful in flight is the very long tail of the Roseate. This can be difficult to see at long distances, however, due to the thinness of the tail feathers. In this case a bird can even look front heavy, due to its relatively or proportionately large head and long bill. The Roseate



An adult Roseate Tern on a nest in a numbered tire on The Falkner Island Unit of Stewart B. McKinney NWR. Note the slim-streamlined 'jizz'. Note the reduced black under the wing and lack of a trailing edge to under primaries. In the field the underwings generally appear white. Photo by Patrick M. Comins, Connecticut Audubon Society. Photo property of, and used with permission of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Tern also appears slimmer in general than the Common Tern; its body and wings appearing more streamlined.

The Roseate's bill is most often all black in contrast to the Common's orange-red bill with a black tip. In the height of the breeding season the Roseate can have a bill that is blood red as much as half the way out from the base. This feature is normally apparent only in July and early August. With such birds it is good to remember that the Roseate generally has more black on the lower mandible and that the black/red border forms a jagged 'z'. Bill color is most useful on birds at rest. In this situation the tail is also helpful; in most cases the tail of the Roseate Tern extends well past the tips of the wings. On the Common Tern this does not normally occur. The tail is so short that if it does project at all past the wings, the primaries would have to be noticeably damaged. The Roseate also lacks the thin black distal lines apparent on the outer tail feathers of the Common. If the tail of a Roseate Tern is broken off, other features can reveal its identity. It will appear much paler across the 'back' and breast than Common Tern, its bill color will differ, and it will appear slimmer and more streamlined. The contrast between the pale inner primaries and the dark outer primaries provides another helpful mark on the Roseate Tern; it gives the birds a noticeable rectangular pale wedge in the primaries at rest (Figure 3). The roseate color that gives this tern its name is not very useful in the field and can only be seen under optimal conditions during the height of courtship. It is most easily seen soon after the birds first arrive in mid to late May.

Juvenile terns are another subject altogether, but there are some easy and useful characteristics that lead to correct identification. The juvenile Roseates have black legs from hatching, while the Common has pinkish or flesh colored legs from hatching. The bill of the Roseate is all dark, while that of the Common is lighter toward the base, but this can be difficult to see in poor light. Young Roseates are also more scaly across their 'backs', with a more marked contrast between the black and silverish white, and the head is blacker with more white apparent on the forehead of the Common. In flight young Roseate Terns can be difficult to distinguish from the similarly sized terns. The body and wing shape, and flight style are reminiscent of the adults; this feature should be used with caution though. The underwing pattern does resemble the adults and this can be used as a confirmatory mark. Luckily young birds are often found in the presence of adults of the same species for comparison. First summer birds present their own challenges, but first summer Roseate Terns are quite rare in our part of the world.

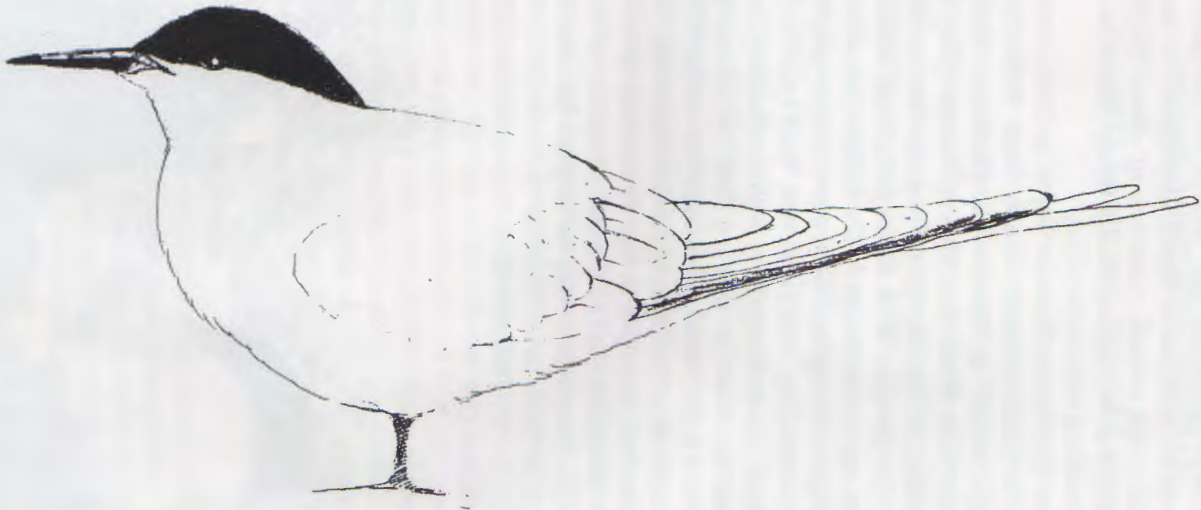


Figure 3. - Adult Roseate Tern drawn by Mark Szantyr

Other tern species like the Arctic Tern (very rare in Connecticut) and the Forster's Tern (locally common fall migrant) present their own identification problems and should be discussed on their own. The Roseate Tern has a small population in northeastern North America with overall numbers of about 8,000 breeding birds. You can consider yourself lucky every time you are able to observe this beautiful bird in the wild.

Good places to observe Roseate Terns in Connecticut include Meig's Point at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison, Menunketesuck Island in Westbrook, Harkness State Park in Waterford, and Rocky Neck State Park in Niantic. They are not to be expected inland. If you do sight a Roseate Tern in Connecticut, please contact the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge so that the data can be passed on to the Falkner Island Tern Project and other groups working on the recovery of this species. Particularly look for colored leg bands and note their pattern. (There are two colored bands on each leg along with a metal band on each leg. The metal band is wider on one leg than the other, and noting which leg has the wider band would also be useful. Please avoid flushing resting birds in order to obtain information). Keep an eye out for color-marked juveniles in late summer, and note the three color sequence from the head to the tail. Notations of behavior, location, and flock composition will be helpful. Information should be sent to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 1030, Westbrook, CT 06498. (860)399-2513. Fax: (860)399-2515. E-mail: r5rw_sbmnrw@fws.gov



Adult Roseate Tern on nest drawn by Paul Carrier

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PATRICK COMINS, 30 Marlborough St., Portland, CT 06480

NOOSE CAPTURING AND MARKING NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWLS

Dwight G. Smith and Ken Petit

Capturing and marking nocturnal raptors is sometimes a necessary evil. Although sometimes stressful to the captured bird, the practice permits recognition of marked individuals which can then be identified and followed to obtain data on roost site or nest site selection and other ecological information.

The most widely used method of capturing owls and other raptors is the bal-chatri trap (e.g., Smith et al. 1983, Craighead and Craighead 1942, Berger and Mueller 1959, Smith and Walsh 1981). This trapping technique has proven effective on many raptor species, especially those that frighten at close human approach. It can be a complicated technique; the trap must be set up, requires live bait, typically mice, and has a mixed capture success. Furthermore, the noosing of raptor toes and occasionally their tarsi may potentially harm the birds as they pull and struggle against the nylon nooses.

Herein, we describe a simple but effective noosing method that can be used to capture the Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*). This noosing technique has greatly reduced our capture time per bird, while increasing our overall capture success rate.

Northern Saw-whet Owls over-winter every year in southern Connecticut, often in considerable numbers. They usually select daytime roosts in conifers at heights generally less than 2-5 meters, which facilitates the noose capturing process. Once we have located a roosting individual, we carefully assess the density and configuration of vegetation surrounding the bird, and a pathway of "least resistance" to the roosting individual is chosen. Next, a 15 pound nylon monofilament slip-noose (Jenkins 1979) is tied to the end of a three meter saltwater fishing pole. Using the predetermined pathway, the noose is slowly moved toward the owl. Once looped over the owl's head and neck, the noose is gently pulled tight and the owl lifted from the roost branch. Care must be taken when fixing the noose to the pole. Twisted or curled nooses make positioning the noose around the owl difficult. The monofilament must be untangled and the loop of the noose must lie parallel to or slightly below the site of attachment. Once in hand (usually less than 10 seconds. after noosing), the owl is cut free from the

monofilament. None of the 28 owls that we captured using this technique showed any sign of injury following capture.

We were successful in 28 out of 33 (84.8%) attempts at capturing saw-whets with this technique. Unsuccessful attempts occurred when birds flushed from roost trees as the noose was being positioned, or when birds "ducked" out of the noose just prior to ensnarement. Second attempts at capturing flushed birds that roosted in nearby trees were sometimes successful. Dense vegetation surrounding the bird occasionally obstructed our noose, making any capture attempt impossible.

This technique has proven to be a rapid, and effective capture method for the Northern Saw-whet Owl. Its use also permits owls to be handled during daylight hours when banding, color-marking, measuring, and attaching radio transmitters is facilitated. Additionally, this technique can be used during daylight hours, when nocturnal raptors are reluctant to attack mice in bal-chatri traps. Furthermore, the noose pole equipment is extremely portable, thereby eliminating the transport of burdensome traps and bait mice into field settings.

In several instances we color-marked Northern Saw-whet Owls using a fishing pole to which a small (0.1 inch) paint brush was taped. We used non-toxic model aircraft paints (available at any hobby store), generally pale blue, pale red, or white for marking one or both of the legs or lower tarsi of an individual owl. Markings were kept small and simple, and limited to one or two toes.

Most individuals displayed seemingly amazingly tolerance to being marked; they perched quietly while being marked and made no obvious responses. Others raised their leg or slightly shifted their position during and following markings. In none of our marking attempts did any of the saw-whets take flight or exhibit behaviors suggesting that they were stressed or otherwise disturbed.

To summarize, we believe that these methods of capturing and marking Northern Saw-whet Owls may also be effective on other more-or-less tame owl species such as the Boreal Owl (*Aegolius funereus*), and Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*).

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DWIGHT G. SMITH, Biology Department, Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, Connecticut 06515

KEN PETIT, Biology Department, Springfield College, Springfield, Massachusetts 01015

COA Shorebird Workshop Announcement

On Sunday August 22nd the Connecticut Ornithological Association will hold its annual shorebird workshop at the Connecticut Audubon Society's Coastal Center at Milford Point. The workshop will be held from 8:00 AM until noon and is co-sponsored by the Coastal Center at Milford Point. Workshop coleaders Frank Mantlik and Jay Kaplan will open the workshop by providing participants with information about fall migration and the natural history of some of the species to be expected. Last year, over fifty species were observed during the course of the workshop, which is held at one of Connecticut's premier locations for migrant shorebirds and terns.

In addition to tips on shorebird and tern identification, workshop participants will be treated to information on the natural history of the area, as well as ideas on where to view upcoming birding spectacles such as the fall hawk watch. The workshop will offer something for birders of all skill levels, whether it be the chance to learn how to use a new spotting scope, to learn about a birding area that may be new to you, or to hone your skills on the nuances of fall dowitcher identification! For additional information on the workshop, please call COA field trip chair, Jay Kaplan at (860) 693-0157 (evenings).

LOCATING ROOST SITES AND NEST SITES OF THE EASTERN SCREECH OWL

Tests of Alternative Methods

Dwight G. Smith and Arnold Devine

The Eastern Screech Owl (*Otus asio*) is a widespread and locally common permanent resident of Connecticut's mixed and deciduous woodland communities. Ecologically, this owl functions as a higher order consumer, often a top carnivore in these communities and is thereby considered a key species within the communities that it inhabits (Devine and Smith, 1998). However, due to its nocturnal activity patterns much basic information regarding its population status and ecology is difficult to obtain (Smith, Devine, and Gilbert 1988). This is especially true with respect to its basic roost site or nest site habitat requirements. While this owl responds readily to playback of tape recorded song, the habitats from which the owl is responding, however, do not necessarily represent the habitat selection requirements of the species. Individuals owls may move to the periphery and even outside of their immediate home range to drive off a would-be intruder. Yet, the conservation and management of this owl requires obtaining information about critical resources of their habitat that center on their roost site and nest site selection (Smith 1989).

In this paper we examine four methods that we have tested and used to locate nest sites and roost sites of Eastern Screech Owls in Connecticut during the course of a 20 year study of these and other owls: (1) locating nesting and roosting sites by following radio-marked adults, (2) chance-location of roosting or nesting sites, (3) locating nesting sites by responses of young, and (4) locating nest sites by mobbing passerines.

Following Radio-marked Adults.

Radio marking or radio tagging involves the capture and fitting of one or more adult screech owls with transmitters. Using modified bal-chatri traps, we have captured several dozen adult Eastern Screech Owls during the course of our studies of this species in Connecticut. Adults were fitted with a backpack attachment weighing less than five grams and tracked for time periods varying from less than a month to more than a year. Using this method we have gathered information about 28 nest sites and literally hundreds of roosting sites. Some results of our studies have been pub-

lished in several journal articles (e.g., Smith 1989, Smith and Gilbert, 1981, 1984, Smith and Walsh 1981).

Locating the roosting sites and nesting sites of Eastern Screech Owls using this technique has provided invaluable documentation that is not otherwise obtainable. The equipment is expensive and requires state and federal licenses to operate, and is therefore not readily available to everyone, without incurring time and often personal expense. Furthermore, the process of capturing, fitting, and carrying the radio transmitter may put the owl at some risk, although we encountered no problems in our work and observed no mortality of the equipped owls either during and following use of this technique.

Chance Location of Nest or Roost Sites.

Eastern Screech Owls sometimes sun themselves at the entrance to their roosting cavity, particularly during the late afternoon hours in fall, winter, and spring. Alert birders often note the presence of tree cavities in the areas that they bird or investigate, and periodically check them for occupancy by sunning screech owls. By this method we have found roughly five percent of the total number of roost sites that we have documented during our study years. While certainly posing a minimal risk to the sunning screech owl (if we don't capture it) this method of locating roost sites has a number of limitations. First, it is time consuming and chance dictated. Second, and equally important, most of the roost sites that are found by chance are next to roads or trails, and therefore do not provide an unbiased indicator of roost site habitat selection. Third, adults rarely sun themselves at cavity entrances during the nesting cycle so this method may not yield any information on screech owl nest site locations.

In several instances we captured the sunning owls and fitted them with radio transmitters, thereby documenting their additional roost sites. This revealed that the ratio of known roost sites (i.e., roost sites determined by chance spotting sunning owls) to the total number and variety of roost sites used by each of the owls was very low. That is, we found dozens of additional roost sites after fitting the owls with transmitters.

Locating Nesting Sites by Responding Young.

This technique involves playback of tape recorded song late in the nesting cycle, when the young are often at the nest entrance, begging for the adults to bring them food. We have used this method to locate nests only twice, once in Bethany and once in

Westport. Using this method we initiated playback within an hour after dark, when the young are hungry and the adults are busy searching for food for them. In both instances the young responded almost immediately with the characteristic raspy, begging call and we were able to locate their nests. This technique holds potential, but the researcher must be relatively near the nest site to begin with, as the adults quickly utter a warning call that quiets the young.

Mobbing Passerines and Roost or Nest Sites.

McPherson and Brown (1981) published an account of a novel method for locating roost sites of Eastern Screech Owls. They conducted an experiment in which, according to their account, mobbing passerines responding to a tape-recorded screech owl call, gathered at the entrance to the nearest roost site and called, thereby alerting each other and also the researchers that this was a roost site location. We were sufficiently intrigued to attempt this method, in several varying experiments.

In the first experiment we played Eastern Screech-Owl songs at two different known roost sites in Bethany, Connecticut. We positioned the tape recorder about 12 meters from the known roost site and played a series of screech owl songs with a 45 second interval between songs. At both known locations a variety of songbirds responded to the tape playback by flitting back and forth and calling about the tree cavity entrance. In both experiments, however, another small group of three or four songbirds gathered at a different cavity and began calling and flitting about at that entrance as well. Did these represent two separate screech owl roosting sites?

In the second experiment we played the same series of tape recorded song at several random sites within a woodland in Bethany and Woodbridge. In every instance, songbirds appeared within a few minutes and began flitting through the trees, calling softly in response. Also, in every instance, they gathered at the nearest tree cavity entrance and exhibited typical passerine mobbing responses. These results suggested that either every cavity was an entrance site or perhaps the birds simply looked for a tree cavity in the immediate vicinity of the tape recorder. We tested this latter possibility in our last experiment during which we entered a woodland, temporarily tacked up a suitable sized nest box and played a screech owl song from a tape recorder located nearby. In each test, songbirds responded almost immediately, and in each case their responses were directed at the nest box that we had just tacked up. We ran several variations of this test, in which the nest

boxes were placed at different heights, in different locations within the woodland. We also introduced delays of one to two hours and in two cases, of two day intervals, between the time that the nest box was tacked up and the time when we returned to play the screech owl song. Without exception, songbird responses were observed at every playback and without exception, the songbirds directed their responses towards the new screech owl nest box that we had just installed. In view of these results, we do not recommend the use of this method for locating nest sites and roost sites of screech owls.

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DWIGHT G. SMITH, Biology Department, Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, Connecticut 06515

ARNOLD DEVINE, 18 South Street, Plymouth, Connecticut 06782



BIRD BEHAVIOR NOTES

Sharp-tailed Sparrows

I am spending the summer of 1999 monitoring 11 plus acres of saltmarshes along the Connecticut coast as part of a regional survey for Massachusetts Audubon. One of the thrusts of the study is to identify marshes where Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows and Seaside Sparrows nest. The study protocol calls for points set 50 meters from marsh edge. One of the more interesting and amusing habits that I have noted is, that upon discovering a presence within the marsh, Sharp-tailed Sparrows tend to 'stalk' an intruder. Since Sharp-tails tend to keep flights short and low, spending equal time skulking through grasses, it has been a way to locate them with ease. The bird or birds will drop nearby (often within 2 to 5 meters) and move through the grasses to marsh elder, water hemp, or cordgrass, then stretch up in an apparent effort to observe the intruder. Their posture, craning their necks to see, is amplified by the bird's burnt orange 'eyebrows'. They often move to another position to check things out from another angle. The species doesn't seem to be as territorial as other breeding birds. Males and females appear to be promiscuous; they seem to congregate in small breeding groups, and females tend to the brooding of young, so I can only assume that they are actively curious about my presence. Forbush mentions this behavior in *A Natural History of American Birds of Eastern and Central North America*.

Their curiosity was confirmed to me when returning from a point off Willard's Island in Hammonasset Beach State Park, I sank to my thighs in a well camouflaged hole and floundered out to an audience of five Sharp-tails sitting on marsh elder within 15 feet of me. I couldn't make out as to whether they were laughing.

PATTY PENDERGAST

Broad-winged Hawks

In late April of 1995, I was driving north on Shewville Road near the Ledyard-Preston town line with my wife, Elizabeth. I noticed what looked like a game bird hanging upside down with wings partially spread, just off the road. We pulled over and went back to investigate. The landscape was a rocky hillside covered by deciduous trees and some shrubby undergrowth. The bird was approximately five meters from the road shoulder and two or three meters off of the ground.

We did not approach with caution, as we assumed that the bird was dead. As we reached the spot where the bird was visible from the road, we realized that it was a hawk and it was not hung up on shrubs, but its talons were actually clinging to a branch. As I stepped into the woods to retrieve and identify the hawk, our bird in question burst to life and became two – both flying away from us. They were Broad-winged Hawks (*Buteo platypterus*). One perched in view approximately fifteen meters away, while the other flew further up the wooded hillside. After approximately 30 seconds, the closer hawk flew off in the same direction as the other bird.

We did not know the sexes of the hawks, but we surmised that we either interrupted some courtship copulatory behavior, or we had witnessed a brief stalemate in a territorial dispute. I have been unable to find anything about this type of behavior in any of the literature.

GLENN WILLIAMS



BOOKS ON BIRDS

Alan Brush

The appearance of new field guides, handbooks and other directories to birds in various parts of the world continues unabated. The series from Yale University Press which has included *Munias and Mannikins*, *Shrikes, Skuas & Jaegers*, is going to expand shortly to include *Parrots and Blackbirds*. Princeton University Press has issued volumes on *Finches and Sparrows*, *Kingfishers*, and *Chickadees, Tits, Nuthatches and Treecreepers* among others. Then there are the assorted encyclopedic collections—*Waterfowl*, *Seabirds*, *Shorebirds*, *Warblers, Crows and Jays*, and *Woodpeckers* from Houghton Mifflin. These exist in addition to field guides and various “Finding birds in_” series. The list will fill a fat catalogue and dozens of feet of bookshelves. This recounting doesn’t involve the various technical series of handbooks, reference volumes, and surveys. It is indeed difficult to keep all the possibilities and permutations in mind!

I have two books on hand that are part of the welcome abundance, but inhabit quite different spots within the broad spectrum. Coincidentally, they cover foreign countries, but ones easily accessible to many local birders. The areas, the United Kingdom and Mexico, are popular travel destinations for birders going abroad. In addition, the various natural history tour groups make travel in both directions easy and affordable. Both books are worth considering.

The third edition of “*The Birds of Mexico and Adjacent Areas*” by E.P. Edwards (xxi+209 pg., 51 color plates, 1 map. 1998. University of Texas Press, Austin. ISBN 0-292-72091-2) has just been released. The book is no longer unique for the area covered and suffers in its presentation. While it covers an expanded area, the “Adjacent Areas” of the title are Belize, Guatemala, and El Salvador, it is dated in its organization, sparse in its information content and clumsy to use.

There is no doubt that the area is rich in birdlife. The cover claims that “More than a thousand species_” occur in the area. Moreover, Edwards has been writing about it since at least 1972 when the first edition of the book was published. As might be ex-

pected the coverage of the landbirds is good, but the seabirds seem to be added as an afterthought. The book is not especially user friendly. Species descriptions are brief and limited. While range, habitat, field marks, and voice are mentioned the information is sketchy in most cases. There is only minimal information on seasonal occurrence or migration. The plates are richly colored but without any indication of scales and are removed from the text. Many plates are crowded and the images are small. Consequently, the plates are difficult to use.

In vivid contrast is the new *Pocket Guide to the Birds of Britain and NorthWest Europe*, by C. Knightly and S. Midge with illustrations by D. Nurney (xx+299 pgs, 1998, Yale University Press, New Haven. ISBN 0-300-07455-7). It is intended as a field guide, but offers much more than the traditional guides. It is clearly laid out with the illustrations and distribution maps integrated with the text in each of the species descriptions. Granted, there are fewer (ca. 350) species than in Edwards, however, by comparison the descriptions are expanded and greatly enriched. In many cases there is one species per page. This allows what appears to be larger image size (for the nicely done illustrations) and inclusion of all alternate plumages, species appearance in flight, age differences, etc. Plus there are useful verbal descriptions of flight patterns, behavior, status and population numbers, and many informative natural history observations. The authors help the reader to identify and 'see' each species by providing insightful comments.

In addition to the species descriptions that form the bulk of the book, the introductory material includes two pages on "Improving your Fieldcraft." The section includes tips that come only with experience. Overall, the book is extremely easy to use and features a quick-find pictorial index on the endpapers. This guide impressed me as the authors speak directly to the reader and their enthusiasm for birds and birding is clear. The information is informative and easily accessible. The illustrations are clear, well crafted, and appealing. Enjoy.

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



CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Greg Hanisek

WINTER, DECEMBER 1, 1998 TO FEBRUARY 28, 1999

This was another mild winter overall with little snow and ice. As expected, the unchallenging weather allowed many half-hardy species to linger in the state in unusually high numbers. The presence of open water accounts for a number of interesting waterfowl reports, and the continuing presence of mounds of garbage at the Manchester landfill sparked an ongoing gull identification festival amid the rumbling trucks and heady aromas. There was no significant incursion of northern finches, but Northern Shrikes staged a good flight, and Rough-legged Hawks were in better numbers than in recent winters.

LOONS THROUGH WATER- FOWL

As Red-throated Loons began to stage at season's end, 30 were at the Housatonic River mouth February 19 (DV). The best coastal count of Horned Grebe was 200 along the Fairfield shoreline February 11 (DV). Unusual inland in mid-winter, a single Horned Grebe was on Lake Zoar in Southbury January 16-20 (RN,BD). The same impoundment held up to four Pied-billed Grebes during the season (RN), and six were on Laurel Reservoir in Stamford December 20 (EJ); adding to the mild-season total were up to 12 wintering in the Stratford-Milford area around the Housatonic mouth (DV et al.). A Red-necked Grebe was on

Bantam Lake in Litchfield December 5-12 (DT), and one was at Batterson Park Pond in New Britain on December 5 (LK,RP); on the coast singles were at Milford Point on December 4 (PCo), off Pine Creek Point in Fairfield December 6 (CB), Shippan Point in Stamford January 13 (PDu) and Penfield Reef in Fairfield February 23 (DV). A few Northern Gannets were in the western Sound in December (CB,FM), and seven were off Old Lyme December 11 (TH). Adding to the recent list of inland sightings, an immature Great Cormorant was on Lake Zoar December 6 (DR). Single American Bitterns were at Great Island in Old Lyme December 7 (TH), in Westport December 20 (JHu) and Sherwood

Island State Park in Westport February 6 (RSo); two were in the Lordship marshes of Stratford December 16 (DV), and there were several sightings in December at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison (hereafter HBSP). A Great Egret lingered to December 11 near Hatchett's Point in Old Lyme (TH), and a Snowy Egret was present in Stratford to at least December 30 (DV,PCo).

After an unusually heavy fall flight, up to four **Tundra Swans** appeared at Bantam Lake on January 2-5 (BD,DR), with three staying to January 10 (DR). Perhaps these were part of the group of eight found on Woodridge Lake in Goshen on the Litchfield Hills CBC (DT). In addition, two were in South Cove in Essex through most of the winter (R&LD et al.). An adult **Greater White-fronted Goose** was in the Southbury-Roxbury area through December 20 (RN); up to two were at Shenipsit Lake in Tolland in early January 1 (CE,MSz); one was at Cigna campus in Bloomfield December 1-22 (JMe et al.), and one was in Coventry February 23 (SM). About 100 Snow Geese passed over Southport in a late movement December 5 (CB), and as has increasingly been the case, small numbers were scattered throughout the state as winterers (m.ob.). A Brant was

an unexpected winterer in Waterbury, where it spent time on a ballfield with a flock of Canada Geese (MSz et al.); another inland bird was present December 26-January 2 at Wethersfield cove (SK). The high coastal count was 520 in Norwalk harbor on January 24 (FM).

A drake Wood Duck wintered on Lake Zoar in Southbury (RN et al.); 14 were still present December 28 in Deep River (PP); five on the Moosup River in Sterling January 7 was a good mid-winter count (RD); and 10 were early arrivals February 20 at Station 43 in South Windsor (PDe). A few Northern Pintails were scattered around the state, and two in the Connecticut River December 27 at Station 43 were noted to be submerging completely like diving ducks (PDe). A total of five Northern Shovelers in the Wallingford-Meriden area included one that lingered to January 10 at North Farms Reservoir (WS); c. six others were reported statewide (JHi et al.). A stretch of Long Island Sound near the Milford-West Haven line, a traditional wintering spot for **Eurasian Wigeon**, held three drakes this season (TK); one wintered at Seaside Park in Bridgeport (DV), one was at Holly Pond in Stamford from January 5 to the end of the period (PDU), and a first-year male was there January 17-February 22 (PDU). A

group of 10 Redheads (eight males) was an unexpected arrival January 16 at Bantam Lake, with five lingering to February 5 (DT et al.); an adult male was at Holly Pond January 7-February 10 (PDU) and a female was in Mansfield February 14 (MSz). The high count of Lesser Scaup was 26 in Stamford harbor on January 21 (PDU). Bantam Lake held a good wintering flock of 60+ Ring-necked Ducks (DR et al.), and at Pistapaug Reservoir in North Branford a flock built to 200 before a freeze in the last week of December drove them out (WS). The largest flock of Greater Scaup reported was 2,000 off Fairfield on January 17 (DV). A first-winter male **Harlequin Duck** was a good find December 13 at Shippan Point in Stamford (PDU); it stayed to at least January 25. Staging Common Goldeneyes formed a massive flock of 450-500 on February 2 off the mouth of the Saugatuck River in Westport (FM). A female **Barrow's Goldeneye** was at Cove Island Park in Stamford January 12-13 (PDU), and another was at Milford Point February 24 (PCo). A Red-breasted Merganser, scarce inland, was at Shepaug dam on Lake Zoar January 30-31 (DR). Wintering Hooded Mergansers peaked at 20 on January 25 at Bantam Lake (DR). Bantam Lake's fall flock of Ruddy Ducks still held

130 birds in mid-December, but the number gradually diminished until only five were left in early February (RN); a flock of 27 wintered at Pope's Cove in Milford (DV).

VULTURES THROUGH GULLS

The high count of **Black Vultures** in the wintering flock in the New Milford area was 33 (DT et al.); four were in Bethlehem, where they've wintered for at least three years (DT); one was in Derby December 26 (BD); two were in Seymour January 1 (JBa); two were in New Canaan December 20 (DH); and one was east of the species usual haunts at Haddam Village on February 22 (GH). The wintering Bald Eagles at Shepaug dam in Southbury peaked at c. 35 in early February (DR et al.), and a Connecticut Audubon Society boat trip on the Connecticut River from Essex to East Haddam produced 25 on February 7 (FM et al.). The big numbers weren't confined to the major river systems: Barkhamsted CBC logged 25 (DT). At Mackenzie Reservoir in Wallingford, an eagle was feasting on Canada Geese in early January (WS), and on the Farmington River in Collinsville, where 17 geese were trapped in the ice during a sudden freeze in February, astonished onlookers saw an

eagle devouring a goose that was still alive (fide JK). A leucistic Red-tailed Hawk was in Manchester for the third year in a row (BA). A dark phase Rough-legged Hawk was inland in Canaan January 19-February 1 (DT,BD et al.); another was seen January 6-31 in Wallingford (WS). On or near the coast, two Rough-legs (light and dark) were in Old Saybrook January 30 (JHi) and singles were in Essex December 2 (JHu) and East Haven December 9 (JHu). Single Golden Eagles wintered at traditional spots in Canaan (BD et al.) and the Chester section of the Connecticut River valley (SK et al.); others were in Manchester December 14 (PCo) and Monroe on January 23 (GH). Both a Peregrine Falcon and a Merlin wintered in Stamford (PDU). Peregrines were also present in Bridgeport (DV) and New Haven (DS et al.), and Merlins were scattered around the state, mainly on the coast. We received reports of less than 10 American Kestrels.

Single Clapper Rails lingered into December at Manresa in Norwalk (FM) and Pine Creek in Southport (DV et al.) One of the season's best birds was an immature **Purple Gallinule** found in moribund condition in Stamford in mid-December. It was taken to a rehabilitator but it succumbed (fide MSa). The mild weather allowed unusual

numbers of American Coots to winter, including a flock of c. 140 at Bantam Lake (m.ob.) and c. 120 at Rogers Lake in Old Lyme (RBa). At Oyster River in Milford, a regular wintering spot for Killdeer, 14 on February 14 was a good count (PDe), as was 15 on December 20 at Manresa (FM). American Oystercatcher is increasing as a winterer, so four each at Menunketesuck Island in Westbrook December 12 (JMa) and December 20 on the Stamford/Darien CBC were not unexpected. Penfield Reef in Fairfield held 16 Purple Sandpipers December 26 (CB), and 18+ were at Menunketesuck on February 11 (HG). The first "spring" report of American Woodcock came February 13 at a cemetery in Bridgeport (DV), with several others reported around the state in the following week (BKo et al.).

A Laughing Gull was still in Bridgeport December 1 (DV), and five lingered to December 13 at Holly Pond in Stamford (FG). The high count of Bonaparte's Gulls was 220 at Holly Pond on January 7 (PDU). A Black-headed Gull wintered in Stamford (PDU). Single Iceland Gulls were at Stevenson dam in Oxford January 29 (GH) and February 13 (BD), at Windsor landfill January 31 (PDe), at Shepaug dam February 21 (DR,RN), at Holly Pond January 17 (PDU) and wintering

at Middle Beach in Westbrook (m.ob.). However, Iceland central was the Manchester landfill, which held multiple Iceland gulls daily throughout the season (PCo). Glaucous Gulls were also regular at the landfill, with more than one present on some days (PCo), and a first-winter **Thayer's Gull** was photographed February 23, about one year after the state's first fully documented record at the same location (PCo). As might be expected, Comins' careful scrutiny of the thousands of gulls present produced sightings of a number of individuals that couldn't be confidently identified. Of special interest was a Herring-type gull that showed many of the characteristics of **Yellow-legged Gull** (*Larus michahellis*), a southern European form recently split off from Herring Gull by a number of Old World authorities. Excellent photographs by Comins were submitted via the Internet to experts worldwide, and while many agreed that the bird appeared to be *michahellis*, opinion was not unanimous. As if large gulls weren't tough enough, an adult Herring Gull at Shippan Point exhibited almost pure white primaries, leading to easy confusion with an Iceland Gull (FM et al.). A first-winter gull believed to be a Herring X Glaucous hybrid was at Cove Island February 28 (PDU), and this form, some-

times called Nelson's Gull, was noted on several occasions at Manchester (PCo). An adult Lesser Black-backed Gull wintered at Holly Pond (PDU), and they were a regular feature in Manchester (PCo).

OWLS THROUGH MIMIDS

Barn Owls were present during the season in the Lordship section of Stratford (FM,NC et al.) and at Greenwich Point (JBo et al.). Scattered reports of one to two Long-eared Owl came from Harwinton on December 9 (PCa), Fairfield on January 30 (BD), and during the season at Sherwood Island (RSO), Greenwich Point (FM et al.) and HBSP (AS). The usual complement of Short-eared Owls was found in the bigger coastal marshes. Northern Saw-whet Owls were widely reported, with a high count of up to three in Litchfield in December (RN). The surging Monk Parakeet population produced a record 300+ on the Westport CBC (FM). Immature Red-headed Woodpeckers wintered at Waramaug State Park in Warren (DT et al.), at a swamp in East Haddam (SK et al.), and at a feeder in Coventry (fide MA); one was in Morris December 11 (DR). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker seemed to be everywhere, its unusual numbers perhaps a combination of the mild weather and its status as an increasing breeder in the state.

An Eastern Phoebe lingered to December 20 in Southbury (RN); other late reports came from Killingly December 29 (RD) and the Quinebaug fish hatchery in Central Village January 1 (RD). Farmland in the Wallingford-Durham area held several flocks of Horned larks, the largest being 200+ at Brookside Farm in Durham on January 10 (WS). The steady growth in the population of Common Ravens was reflected in the 24 found on Barkhamsted CBC (DT) and 20 on the Litchfield Hills CBC (DT). A Fish Crow on February 15 at Bantam Lake was probably a spring arrival at a spot that supports a nesting colony (DR). Although Red-breasted Nuthatches were generally scarce, a careful search on February 19 in evergreens at White Memorial Foundation's Catlin Woods in Litchfield turned up 18 Red-breasted Nuthatches, eight Brown Creepers, and 20 Golden-crowned Kinglets (DR). Another by-product of the mild season were single House Wrens December 20 along the Mill River in Fairfield, in a Bridgeport park December 27, and along the Sasco River in Fairfield January 25 (DV). A good supply of wintering American Robins included c. 1,000 in the Southbury-Woodbury area January 10 (RN). The only report of a Brown Thrasher came from

East Rock Park in New Haven on December 13 (PH).

PIPITS THROUGH FINCHES

American Pipits are casual in mid-winter, but this mild season produced reports of one to four at a half-dozen locations. However, these were topped by mid-January sightings of 20 wintering in manured farm fields in Wallingford and eight in Durham (WS). The monumental **Northern Shrike** flight of 1995/96 changed the standard for this incursive species, but the following reports made this a pretty good year: one wintering in Canaan (GH et al.); one at the Wyndham Land Trust in Pomfret on December 3 (GW); in Hampton on December 27 (P&AH); January 16 in Simsbury (LK,RP); in early January at Miller Road in Middlefield (RSu,JMc), in Mansfield January 20 (MSz), at Haddam Meadows January 19 (BY), at the Bloomfield community gardens January 26-February 22 (JMe); trapped and banded January 26 at White Memorial (GL), and at Thompson dam in Thompson January 29 (RD). A wintering Pine Warbler visited feeders at White Memorial in early January (DR,DT); two were together in Manchester December 6 (PCo) and one was in West Hartford in early December (PCi). A Palm Warbler was still present January 1 at Harkness (PDe).

An Ovenbird turned up at a feeder in New Canaan on December 19 (B&DW). A Common Yellowthroat remained in Stamford December 1-14 (PDu); others were in Stratford December 16 and Easton December 20 (DV). A Yellow-breasted Chat wintered in thickets near the Chester ferry slip (C&SR).

A report of a Scarlet Tanager eating berries December 4 at Lighthouse Point in New Haven represents a record late date for the state (AH). An adult male Rose-breasted Grosbeak frequented a Canton feeder from mid-December through the period (MM,JK). Long Beach in Stratford, probably the best place in the state to see the Ipswich race of Savannah Sparrow, held eight on December 27 (CB,FM,RBI); two were at Great Island in Old Lyme December 5-7 (TH). A well-marked "**Oregon**" Junco of the *oregonus* race wintered at a feeder in Southington (JA). Of interest was one or more juncos at White Memorial that showed features of the Pink-sided (*mearnsii*) race of "Oregon" Junco. However, this is a difficult identification problem, and some of the features evident suggested these may actually have been the western *cismontanus* race of Slated-colored Junco. The two forms can look perplexingly similar (BF,KF,MSz). The number of the Fox Sparrows overwinter-

ing at Shepaug dam peaked at nine on January 31 (DR et al.); this species was widespread and well-reported this winter, as was White-crowned Sparrow. Single Lincoln's Sparrows were still present December 15-17 in Roxbury (RN) and January 10 in Beacon Falls (BD). A mowed field in Morris held 300 Snow Buntings and one Lapland Longspur January 14 (DT,RBe). Another good flock of Snow Buntings was the 160 at Sherwood Island on January 13 (FM) and 40 were in Goshen January 26 (TGa). At least two Lapland Longspurs wintered in Lordship (DV).

A Bobolink December 11 at the Wyndham Land Trust in Pomfret was extraordinarily late (RD). The productive Durham-Wallingford farms held up to seven Eastern Meadowlarks at one location and up to 17 at another, the latter present to at least January 30 (WS). In a prime example of site fidelity by a vagrant, the adult male **Bullock's Oriole** that wintered at a West Goshen feeder in 1997-98 returned to spend another winter (RBe,DT et al.). A Baltimore Oriole was found December 20 in North Stamford (PDu) and one was in Manchester December 14 (BA). Up to 20 Rusty Blackbirds wintered at fields near Lyman Orchard in Middlefield (JM et al.), and a smaller flock wintered at Quinebaug fish hatchery (RD).

Amid the paucity of "winter finch" reports, the best was probably the 12 Evening Grosbeaks on January 8 in North Windham (GS). There were four on December 12 at White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield (DR), plus a few scattered singles. Other reports included one Pine Siskin February 7 in Woodbury (RN); and a single White-winged Crossbill February 14 at Lake Zoar (RN), and a few Purple Finches here and there (CW et al.).

EXOTICS:

A Ruddy Shelduck was on a pond in New Canaan January 29-February 2 (fide FG).

[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, 145 Farmington Ave., Waterbury, CT 06710) if they are to be included in the field notes.]

OBSERVERS,

CONTRIBUTORS (boldface)

Mary Albro, Bill Altmann, Jane Amico, **Renee Baade** (RBa), James Bair (JBa), Charles Barnard, Ray Belding (RBe), **Ron Bell** (RBl), John Bova (JBo), **Polly Brody**, Paul Carrier (PCa), Paul Cianfaglione (PCi), **Patrick Comins** (PCo), Neil

Currie, **Buzz Devine**, Paul Desjardins (PDe), **Robert Dixon**, Linda Dixon, **Patrick Dugan** (PDu), **Carl Ekroth**, **Bruce Finnan**, **Kevin Finnan**, Frank Gallo, Tom Gaynor (TGa), Ted Gilman (TGi), **Hank Golet**, Peter Hamback, Anki Hamback, **Greg Hanisek**, Dave Havens, Ted Hendrickson, Jon Himmelman (JHi), Jim Hunter (JHu), **Elsbeth Johnson**, **Jay Kaplan**, Len Kendall, **Tom Kilroy**, **Betty Kleiner** (BKl), Gil Kleiner, Bill Kolodnicki (BKo), **Stephen Kotchko**, Gordon Loery, John Longstreth, **Frank Mantlik**, Marcia Marsted, John Maynard (JMa), Jim McBride (JMc) **Jamie Meyers** (JMe), Steve Morytko, **Russ Naylor**, **Patty Pendergast**, Roger Preston, Dave Provencher, **Charlie Rafford**, **Shirley Rafford**, **Dave Rosgen**, Meredith Sampson (MSa) **Wilford Schultz**, Richard Soffer (RSo), **Dori Sosensky**, Andrew Spender, Randy Suhl (RSu), Gail Szantyr, **Mark Szantyr** (MSz), John Triana, **Dave Tripp**, **Dennis Varza**, Jayme Welch, Jack Wells, **Glenn Williams**, **Chris Wood**, Barbara and David Wright, Bill Yule.

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



PHOTO CHALLENGE

Julian Hough

ANSWER TO PHOTO CHALLENGE 27

So, is it Common, Arctic, or Forster's Tern?

In life, we would have the benefit of glorious technicolor to aid our identification. This would make the identification process easier, particularly since tern identification often consists of the assessment of bare part colors and the subtle shades of grays and whites. The bird appears to be in alternate plumage (as evidenced by the full, unmoulted black cap). The legs are relatively long, the tail streamers unremarkable in their length, and the bill, with a dusky tip (look closely!) all eliminate Arctic Tern. Although Arctic Tern has been claimed in Connecticut, an under-appreciation of Common Tern's molt and fall appearance, combined with a lack of detailed descriptions have relegated Arctic Tern to accidental at best. For a succinct and excellent summary of the identification problems posed by adult Common and Arctic Terns, see Mark Szantyr's and David Provencher's article in Vol.17, No.4 (pg. 147-158).

Common and Forster's Terns can appear superficially similar until you actually sit down and look closely at them. Forster's Terns are slightly longer-legged and stouter-billed than Common



Tern, with the color of their bill and legs being more orange, less red. Forster's also show more white on the lores where the lower border of the cap meets the bill. The amount of white in this area decreases from Forster's through Common to Arctic. In the photograph, the area of white on the lores of our bird looks quite narrow and the bill seems typical for Common Tern. Another feature in favor of the identification as Common Tern, and visible in the photograph, is the length of the tail streamers compared to the length of the wings. In Common they fall shorter than the wingtips, while in Forster's the tail streamers typically protrude beyond the folded wing. So, based on structural features we feel confident that the bird is an adult Common Tern. The darkness of the outer primaries is also consistent with adult Common Terns in late summer. Unlike Arctic and Forster's Terns, Common Terns retain their older outer primaries but replace their inner primaries on the wintering grounds. By late summer, these old outer primaries have lost their gray 'bloom' and appear contrastingly dark compared with the fresh gray inner primaries. In the field, this contrast is visible in flight as a dark 'wedge'. Further differences useful in separating Common and Forster's Tern will be discussed in a future article in "The Warbler."

This adult Common Tern in worn summer plumage was photographed by me, at Cape May, NJ in August 1996.

Julian Hough, 21 Walnut St., Naugatuck, CT 06770



THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

Editor

Betty S. Kleiner - 5 Flintlock Ridge, Simsbury, CT 06070
(860) 658-5670 - CTWarbler@cs.com

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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 computer 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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A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology



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ABOUT OUR COVER

Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*)

by Julian Hough

We are pleased to once again use the fine artwork of Julian Hough on our front cover. Not only has Julian's artwork appeared in North American publications, but has been featured in the British journal *Birdwatching*. His artwork and writing has also appeared in a number of articles in *The Connecticut Warbler*. Julian is a member of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut

Julian is also an excellent photographer and many of his photographs appear in our Photo Challenge, of which he is the author. He confesses to not using his best photos, in order to make the Photo Challenge a little more difficult.



THE CONNECTICUT ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION'S PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Editor's Note: The following is the presentation of the President's Award by President Dave Provencher at COA's Annual Meeting on March 20, 1999.

At the 1999 Annual Meeting of The Connecticut Ornithological Association I had the great honor of presenting the inaugural "President's Award" to Carl Trichka. For some time COA has presented the Mabel Osgood Wright award to an individual who has made significant contributions to Connecticut Ornithology. This important award is not specifically in recognition for service to COA however, and such service should be recognized and celebrated. I therefore created, and the Board of Directors approved, the COA's President's Award. The impetus to create this award came directly from the retirement of Carl Trichka from the position of Treasurer which he had held for so very long. As I reviewed the service Carl has given to COA since its inception I was struck by the simple fact that no other individual deserves more recognition for the creation and success of the association. Carl was one of the founding fathers of both The Connecticut Ornithological Association and its journal *The Connecticut Warbler*. He has served as Assistant Treasurer, Treasurer, Editor, author, and President. He has been the organizational nerve center for nearly the entire existence of COA and continues to play an important role in the day-to-day functioning of the organization. Indeed, there is virtually no function within the association that Carl has not at one time or another performed and performed well. Through Carl's generosity, vision, and dedication, and those who worked with him, the birds and birders of Connecticut have benefited tremendously and continue to benefit. COA and *The Connecticut Warbler* simply would not exist if these special individuals had not envisioned them and acted on those visions. Today we take many things in the Connecticut birding community for granted that simply would not exist if it were not for the efforts of those first few who together with Carl got the ball rolling.

As president I have had many duties and many responsibilities and I have come to truly appreciate the generosity and sacrifice of those who have come before me. I can think of no other action I have taken as president which has given me such pleasure and deep satisfaction as being instrumental in recognizing Carl with this new, and greatly deserved award. I want to personally thank Carl for giving me the chance to recognize a good man for doing good things. All that COA has achieved, and all that it achieves in the future, is because of men and women such as Carl Trichka.

DAVID PROVENCHER

President

The Connecticut Ornithological Association

IN MEMORY OF A. E. "GENE" BILLINGS

It was not long after my arrival in Connecticut that I met a Norfolk resident named A.E. "Gene" Billings. Gene had a quiet, gentle manner about him, but at the same time he was someone who made things happen. Passionately interested in the natural world, Gene served on numerous local and statewide boards and commissions, and was a former director of COA. He authored two publications on birds and birding in Connecticut, and was at work on another book at the time of his death aboard Egypt Air Flight 990. Over a twenty-five year span, I had the pleasure of spending time with Gene both in the field and around a board table, but it wasn't nearly enough time. Gene Billings and his wife Barbara will be sorely missed by his many friends in COA and in Connecticut's environmental community.

Jay Kaplan

1999 CONNECTICUT SUMMER BIRD COUNT

Joseph Zeranski and Thomas R. Baptist

The 1999 Summer Bird Count (SBC) provided interesting insight into the status of bird populations in Connecticut. 186 species were observed, down from the record 201 species observed in 1998. A record 108,334 individual birds were counted, and the number of birds per party hour increased to a new high of 98.4, breaking the previous record of 95.5 set last year. Two hundred and thirty observers enjoyed generally favorable weather during the count period. Sixty-two species were counted at ten-year record high levels, and eight species were counted at ten-year lows.

The nine SBC tracts encompass a significant area of the state (1,642 square miles, or 31.2%), more than any other breeding bird census technique used in the state. A review of SBC's conducted since 1993 reveal that the census effort has been consistent, as measured by the number of participants and party hours logged. The resulting data provide useful insights into short-term population changes, and some of the apparent population changes are summarized herein. Data from a newly formed count in southwestern Connecticut were received too late for inclusion in this report, but the authors look forward to including it in next year's article.

Increasing Species. Greenwich's nesting colonies of night herons, egrets and cormorants accounted for the majority of individuals counted for these species. Great Egret increased notably. Wood Duck and Mallard increased throughout their range in the state, and Common Merganser increased, especially in the Woodbury-Roxbury area.

Most raptors put in a good showing. Cooper's Hawk reached a ten-year high, and ten Bald Eagles were sighted. Osprey increased along the western coast and along major river valleys, and thirty-six Red-shouldered Hawks represented a ten-year high. Wild Turkeys continued their strong recovery with every count reporting them: a ten-year record high 505 were counted. For the second straight year, American Oystercatchers were found only in Greenwich-Stamford. Great Black-backed Gulls continued to increase along the western coast and major river valleys with 414 reported, a ten-year record high. Twelve Black Skimmers, a recent colonizer at West Haven's Sandy point, returned for the second consecutive year. Thirty-eight Monk Parakeets were reported from coastal sites, and a ten-year high 85 Barred Owls were counted. Ruby-

throated Hummingbirds increased, and woodpeckers continued a positive trend. Downy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers increased significantly, as did Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Eastern Wood Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, and Red-eyed Vireo showed perhaps temporary increases. Species that have acclimated to human settings increased this year: Tree Swallow, Purple Martin, Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, American Crow, Tufted Titmouse, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, and Eastern Bluebird. Despite dramatic decreases in recent years, Veery, Hermit Thrush, and Gray Catbird increased slightly.

In contrast with the recent past, several warbler species showed slight increases: Black and White, Black-throated Blue, Blackburnian, Black-throated Green, Pine, and Louisiana Waterthrush. Of the finches, record high counts of Chipping, Field, Swamp, House, and Song Sparrows, and American Goldfinches were reported. Red-winged Blackbird was reported at a ten-year high, and 142 Purple Finches were a refreshing positive count.

Decreasing Species. Eight species set ten-year record lows, and at least ten other species continued severe long-term declines. The reasons for the decreases are not fully understood and may involve a combination of factors. The loss of habitat due to human activities and development along migratory pathways and on wintering and breeding grounds is an important factor. In Connecticut, a number of mechanisms are especially relevant: habitat fragmentation; successional changes; mortality by cats, dogs, crows, jays, rats, squirrels, raccoons, and chipmunks (especially near human habitations); cowbird nest parasitism; and habitat alteration caused by browsing of white-tailed deer. Consequently, decreased mate recruitment, decreased nest productivity, increased nest predation, and increased nest parasitism appear to be the specific influences responsible for population decreases. Further study is necessary, however, to determine the importance of these factors to each of the declining species.

The only Least Bittern recorded this year was in New Haven. The decrease in Double-crested Cormorants is difficult to explain when considering the amount of habitat available and its increase in recent years. The decline of Snowy Egret appears to be entirely related to a decrease at the Great Captain's Island rookery in Greenwich. Plant succession and gull predation may account for the decrease there. Ruffed Grouse continue to occur in low numbers. American Kestrel is in the midst of a precipitous decline, as evidenced by the 12 individuals observed state-wide. Herring Gull numbers continue to decrease, possibly the result of fewer landfills

to provide winter-time sustenance in Connecticut. Only a single Laughing Gull was observed, and five Common Nighthawks were noted. The decline in flickers continues and is noteworthy. Is this migrant more vulnerable on its wintering grounds than in its nesting range? The decline in White-eyed Vireo is noteworthy; the reasons are not readily apparent.

Five of our most numerous neotropical migrants are facing precipitous and prolonged decreases in population: Wood Thrush, Blue-winged Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, and Eastern Towhee. These long distance migrants may be exposed to a greater number of the population pressures listed above than other species. Excessive browsing of forest understory plants by deer, and chipmunk predation, may be important factors in the decline of Worm-eating Warbler and other species that nest on or near the ground. The status of these species warrants careful monitoring. Grassland and thicket-loving species continue to decrease, especially Brown Thrasher, Northern Mockingbird, White-eyed Vireo, and Eastern Meadowlark. The only Golden-winged Warbler was reported at Litchfield Hills. Several species went unreported: Glossy Ibis, King Rail, Long-eared Owl, Horned Lark, Kentucky Warbler, and Seaside Sparrow.

Late lingerers. As in last year's survey, the number of late migrants and non-nesters observed was significant. New Haven recorded Common Loon, Northern Pintail, Greater Scaup, Ruddy Duck, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, and Semi-palmated Sandpiper. Greenwich-Stamford reported the only Horned Grebe, Brant, American Wigeon, and Bufflehead. Other late migrants included Greater Yellowlegs at Quinnipiac Valley, Red-headed Woodpecker at Barkhamsted, Swainson's Thrush at Woodbury-Roxbury, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher at Hartford, Mourning Warbler at Woodbury-Roxbury, Northern Parula at Greenwich, New Haven, Woodbury-Roxbury and Litchfield Hills, and Nashville Warbler at Litchfield Hills. Remarkable was a Pine Siskin observed at Litchfield Hills.

Rarities: Wetland-loving species are unfortunately well represented: Hartford recorded the only Pied-billed Grebe; Litchfield Hills logged the only American Bitterns; New Haven tallied the only Common Moorhens; and Sora was missed everywhere except Litchfield Hills! Black Vultures were reported in Woodbury, Roxbury and Litchfield Hills, and Peregrine Falcons were posted at New Haven and Hartford. Whip-poor-will continues a slow decline with only a handful discovered in the usual locations. Rare away from known nesting grounds in Kent, East Haddam and

western Windham County, Cerulean Warblers were recorded at Woodbury Roxbury, Litchfield Hills, and Storrs. The only Yellow-breasted Chat was tallied in New Haven. Grasshopper Sparrows were found in Hartford, Salmon River, and Quinnipiac Valley.

STATEWIDE COUNT TOTALS

Count dates were June 5, 6, 12, 13, 19, 20, 26, & 27. Reported on Count Days (CD) were 187 Species & 108,334 Individuals. Two hundred and thirty observers in 118 parties spent 1101 Party Hours (PHs), 1059 daytime and 42 night time, in the field.

INDIVIDUAL COUNT TOTALS

Barkhamsted Summer Bird Count (*founded 1992*)

Date: Sat. & Sun., June 26 & 27. Count Center (The BSBC is a 13 mile east-west by a 15 mile north-south rectangle): 41° 55' N 72° 59' W. Elevation 285 to 1457 ft. Area: Barkhamsted, Burlington (northern 1/4), Canton, Colebrook (south half), Granby (southwest 1/4), Hartland, New Hartford, Harwinton (north edge), Torrington (north 1/4), & Winchester.

Weather: Partly to mostly sunny, hazy, and very humid both days. 6/26- Day Temp 67° to 90°F., Wind SW, 0-5 mph., Night Temp. 84° to 78°F. windless.; 6/27- Day Temp. 70° to 90°F.; Wind SW, 0-10 mph. Night Temp. 85° to 78°F. windless.

Totals: 122 Species, 14,638 Individuals, plus 2 CP species. Twenty-eight observers in 17 parties censused during 163 daytime & 1 night PH.

Participants: *Bob Barbieri, Paul Carrier, April Clayton, Angela Dimmitt, Art Hanke, Jane Hanke, Pat June, Grace Kandefer, Peter Kandefer, Jay Kaplan, Pat Keener, Kathie Kellcher, Bill Liedlich, Nancy Liedlich, Donna Manwaring, Jamie Meyers, Russ Naylor, Ann Orsillo, Carol Parent, Paul Richardson, Joan Ritchie, David Rosgen (84 Falls Terrace, Apt. D, Oakville CT 06779), Stanley Rosgen, Leland Sanders, Phyllis Winer, Sarah Winer, Francis Zygmunt, & Liz Zygmunt.*

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

Date: Sat. & Sun., June 12 & 13. 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: 6/12- Cool, clear, partly cloudy, Temp. 50° to 78°F. Wind NE-SE; 6/13- Temp. 64° to 75°F. trace of rain, A.M. Foggy & overcast, P.M. Mostly cloudy.

Totals: 128 Species, 22,539 Individuals, plus 4 CP species. Fifty-one observers in 28 parties censused during 241 day & 22.5 night PHs.

Participants: *Georgia Abbott, Peter Alexander, Tom Anderson, John Askildsen, Daniel Ballas, Ken Ballas, Grace Baptist, Mikey Baptist, Tom Baptist, Trudy Battaly, Gail Benson, Michael Bochnik, Jacqueline Bruskin, Thomas W. Burke (235 Highland Road, Rye NY 10580), Albie Collins, Linda Donahue, George Dremeaux, Patrick Dugan, Cynthia Ehlinger, Anne French, Jay Gartner, Andy Guthrie, Carol Hartel, Dave Havens, Jeff Main, Frank Mantlik, Hugh McGuinness, Dave Medd, Janet Mehmel, Mike Newhouse, Frank Novak, Brian O'Toole, Gary Palmer (34 Field Road, Cos Cob CT 06807), Drew Panko, Willian Park, Matt Popp, Steve Potter, Paul Renken, Nancy Ross, Polly Rothstein, Meredith Sampson, John Shull, Alice Smith, Bruce Smith, Andy Towle, Michael Usai, William Van Loan, James Vellozzi, Bill Wallave, & Joseph Zeranski.*

Hartford Summer Bird Count (*founded 1991*)

Date: Sat. & Sun., June 19 & 20. Count Center: 41° 46' N 72° 40' W. (Old State House, Hartford). Elevation 40 to 640 ft. Area: Bloomfield, East Hartford, Farmington, Hartford, Manchester, New Britain, Newington, Rocky Hill, South Windsor, West Hartford, Wethersfield, & Windsor.

Weather: Overcast, showers both days. 6/19- Temp. 61° to 70°F. 6/20- Temp. 59° to 78°F.

Totals: 118 Species, 9,049 Individuals, plus 1 CP species. Twenty-four observers in 17 parties censused over 66 day and 2 night PHs.

Participants: *Bill Altmann, Mark Carabetta, Mary E. Carter, Paul Cianfaglione (8 Glenn Lane, West Hartford, CT 06110), Pam Cooper, Ed Czapinski, Mary Czapinski, David Hays, Julia Hays, John Karpinski, Chris Kavanaugh, Len Kendall, Betty Kleiner, Gil Keiner, Steve Kotchko, Jack Lazork, Stephanie Lovell, Bill McGehee, Clark Moseley, Tim Owen, Dave Rosgen, Shirley Smigel, Frank Vartulli, & Bob Wagner.*

Litchfield Hills Summer Bird Count (*founded 1994*)

Date: Sat & Sun, June 12 & 13 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: 6/12- Sunny, hot. 80°F+. 6/13- Partly cloudy, some showers. 75°F.

Totals: 141 Species, 20,909 Individuals, plus 3 CP species. Thirty-nine observers in 14 parties censused during 185.5 day and 3 night PHs.

Participants: *George Allen, Elliot Ashe, Janet Baker, John Baker, Bob Barbieri (183 Laurel Lane, Harwinton CT 06797, Joan Barry, Fred*

Baumgarten, Pat Baumgarten, Ray Baumgarten, Ray Belding, Susan Belding, George Boyton, Angela Dimmitt, Dave Emond, John Eykelhaff, Cathy Felton, Dick Felton, Laurie Fortin, Jeff Greenwood, Greg Hanisek, Karl Holtzsehue, Gorden Loery, Donna-Rose Manwaring, Bob Manwaring, Deborah Martin, Jerry Marcellino, Larry Marsicaro, John Melody, Russ Naylor, Ann Otsille, Ray Packard, Virginia Peterson, Paul Richardson, Dave Rosgen, Nina Stein, Dave Tripp, David Wakefield, Lyle Whittlesey, & Fran Zygmunt.

New Haven Summer Bird Count (founded 1991)

Date: Sat & Sun, June 5 & 6. 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: 6/5- Sunny to partly cloudy, Temp. 55° to 80°F., Wind dir. mostly W., 0 - 5 mph.; 6/6- Sunny with scattered clouds, Temp. 65° to 78°F. Wind dir. SW., 0 - 10 mph.

Totals: 127 species; 8,614 Individuals. Twenty-eight observers in 13 parties spent 115 daytime & 1 night PH.

Participants: *Lee Aimesbury, Marion Aimesbury, Ralph Amodei, Ron Bell, Andrew Brand, Steve Broker, Jean Buck, Ruth Croll, Fritz Davis, Roberta Digirolamo, Richard English, Sigrun Gadwa, Sherri Grant, Anki Hamback, Peter Hamback, Stacy Hanks, John Himmelman, Mike Horne, Pat Horn, Katherine Hubbard, Chris Loscalzo, Steve C. Mayo (27 Tuttle Court, Bethany CT 06524), Florence McBride, Mike McBride, Lee Schlesinger, Ray Scory, Tom Sharp, & Debbie Tennie.*

Quinnipiac Valley Summer Bird Count (founded 1992)

Date: Sat & Sun, June 19 & 20. 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: 6/19- Wind calm, Day Temp. 60° to 80°F., Night 60° to 65°F.; 6/20- Wind calm, Day Temp. 60° to 80°F., Night 60° to 65°F.

Totals: 117 Species, 9,069 Individuals. Ten observers in 5 parties spent 70 day & 4 night PHs in the field.

Participants: *Mark Carabetta, Kevin Clark, Leslie Cook, Steve Dombrowski, Joe Finnely, James McBride, Marty Moore, Wilford Schultz (93 Harrison Road, Wallingford CT 06492), John Wagenblatt, & George Zepko.*

Salmon River Summer Bird Count (founded 1992)

Date: Sun., June 12 & 13. Circle Center: 41° 33' N 72° 26' W. Eleva-

tion 5 to 550 ft. Area: East Haddam, East Hampton, Haddam, Middletown (southeast), & Portland.

Weather: 6/12 - Clear, mostly overcast, Temp. 65° to 80°F. 6/13- A.M. some brief showers, then clear, but mostly overcast, Temp. 65° to 80°F.

Totals: 101 Species on CD, 2,873 Individuals. Nine observers in 3 parties counted over 32 day & 4 night PHs.

Participants: *Mary Augustiny, Carrie Conrad, Dan Dreaga, Bob Gastia, Joseph Morin* (8 West St. Terrace, Cromwell CT 06416), *Ed Reneson, David Titus, Debbie Zapner, & Tom Zapner.*

Storrs Summer Bird Count (founded 1990)

Date: Sat. & Sun., June 12 & 13. 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: 6/12- Cloudy A.M. Sunny, very cool early morning; light breeze P.M. Temp. 48° to 83°F. Wind E/NE, 0-5 mph; 6/13- Cloudy A.M., clearing late morning; hot, slightly humid & windy P.M. Temp. 59° to 85°F. Wind S, 0-15 mph.

Totals: 96 Species, 3,626 Individuals. Eleven observers in 6 parties spent 41 day PHs in the field.

Participants: *Fred Beardsley, Dave Corsini, Jim Durdan, Sue Durdan, Bill Gaunya, Marilyn Higgins, Judith Marcus, Larry Marcus, Steve Rogers* (75 Charles Lane, Storrs CT 06268), *Avo Somer, & Vicky Wetherell.*

Woodbury-Roxbury Summer Bird Count (founded 1978)

Date: Sun., June 6. 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: Wind WSW, moderate. Sunny, hazy, Temp. 50's to 80°F.

Totals: 128 Species, 17,017 individual birds. Thirty observers in 15 parties spent 146.5 day & 4.5 night PHs censusing.

Participants: *Elliott Ashe, Renee Baade, Ray Belding, Bob Cartoceti, Mary-Ann Currie, Neil Currie, John Demker, Buzz Devine, Angela Dimmitt, Larry Fischer, Greg Hanisek, Susan Kirk, Nancy Liedlich, William Liedlich, Carolyn Longstreth, John Longstreth, Frank Mantlik, Donna Manwaring, Russ Naylor* (44 Church Street, Woodbury CT 06798), *Jim Nolan, Allan Root, Betty Root, Dave Rosgen, Fred Schroeder, John Sjovall, Darcy Thurrott, Art Titus, Carol Titus, Jaymee Welch, & Leigh Wells.*

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

1999 Summer Bird Count Tables

SPECIES	Coastal		Ct Valley		Upland Counts					1999 State Total	1993 - 1998			
	GS	NH	HA	SR	Mid-state		Northern				Yrs. Seen	Ave.	Min.	Max.
					QV	WR	BA	LH	ST					
Red-throated Loon											2	2.0	1	3
Common Loon	1	1								3	6	4.8	2	7
Pied-billed Grebe			1							1	6	2.8	1	5
Horned Grebe	1									1	1	2.0	2	2
Red-necked Grebe											2	1.0	1	1
Great Cormorant											1	1.0	1	1
Double-cr. Cormorant	502	77	8	15	8	5	5	1		621	6	735	644	843
American Bittern										2	3	1.0	1	1
Least Bittern		1						CP		1	6	2.0	1	4
Great Blue Heron	16	5	7	7	14	11	45	38	8	151	6	80	47	94
Great Egret	319	34								354	6	165	88	217
Snowy Egret	133	20								153	6	221	190	261
Cattle Egret											1	4.0	4	4
Little Blue Heron	3									3	6	2.5	1	5
Green Heron	28	3	15	2	12	9	2	9	1	81	6	84	63	116
Black-cr. Night-Heron	342	36								380	6	258	161	385
Yellow-cr. Night-Heron	2									2	6	4.0	2	10
Glossy Ibis											3	1.0	1	1
Mute Swan	75	61	4	29	154	14		16		353	6	352	297	383
Snow Goose											3	1.0	1	1
Brant	3									3	4	7.5	2	18
Canada Goose	1785	445	559	98	153	554	377	633	59	4663	6	4290	3379	5014
Wood Duck	96	8	30	4	55	44	50	105	6	398	6	304	273	347
Green-winged Teal											1	1.0	1	1
American Black Duck	19	28	7	2	2	3				61	6	69	50	106

Mallard	1009	201	696	34	419	346	<u>118</u>	178	21	<u>3022</u>	6	2653	2361	2923
Mallard x Am Bl. Duck		8				4	2			14	6	8.0	2	24
Northern Pintail		1								1	2	1.0	1	1
Blue-winged Teal											4	1.5	1	3
Northern Shoveler			1							1	1	1.0	1	1
Gadwall											5	5.8	1	12
American Wigeon	1									1	4	1.0	1	1
Canvasback											1	1.0	1	1
Ring-necked Duck											3	1.3	1	2
Greater Scaup	CP	1								1	6	2.3	1	4
Lesser Scaup											2	1.0	1	1
White-winged Scoter											1	1.0	1	1
Common Eider											1	2.0	2	2
Oldsquaw											3	1.0	1	3
Common Goldeneye											2	3.5	1	6
Bufflehead	1									1	5	2.4	1	4
Hooded Merganser								14		14	6	9.8	2	20
Common Merganser						73	63	25		<u>161</u>	6	79	32	132
Red-breasted Merganser	3	4								7	4	2.3	1	3
Ruddy Duck		3			1					4	2	1.0	1	1
Black Vulture						<u>11</u>		6		<u>17</u>	3	2.0	1	4
Turkey Vulture	16	20	16	4	14	80	56	90	7	<u>303</u>	6	242	186	299
Osprey	<u>12</u>	18	1			1			1	<u>33</u>	6	18	9	30
Mississippi Kite											1	1.0	1	1
Northern Harrier		1						1	1	3	4	2.0	1	3

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Species new to Count (shaded box)

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QV - Quinnipiac Valley

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XX

New 10 Yr. High Total (underlined)

XX

New 10 Yr. Low Total (Bold)

1999 Summer Bird Count Tables

SPECIES	Coastal		Ct Valley		Upland Counts					1999	1993 - 1998			
	GS	NH	HA	SR	Mid-state		Northern			State	Yrs.			
					QV	WR	BA	LH	ST	Total	Seen	Ave.	Min.	Max.
Bald Eagle							10			<u>10</u>	6	6.2	3	9
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	1	3	1				2		8	6	9.2	5	14
Cooper's Hawk	5				1	6	16	9	1	<u>38</u>	6	22	14	33
Northern Goshawk	2	1					1	1	2	7	6	8.8	4	18
accipiter species		1								1	4	2.3	1	3
Broad-winged Hawk	2	3	2	1	1	5	23	24		<u>61</u>	6	48	39	53
Red-shouldered Hawk	CP		2	4	6	8	8	3	5	<u>36</u>	6	29	25	31
Red-tailed Hawk	30	20	20	7	14	<u>77</u>	33	56	9	266	6	187	140	241
buteo species						1			2	<u>3</u>	1	1.0	1	1
American Kestrel		1	2		1	2	CP	6		12	6	19	6	30
Peregrine Falcon		2	1							3	5	1.8	1	3
Ring-necked Pheasant	5	4		2	3	4	3	3		24	6	54	22	93
Wild Turkey	30	31	24	6	33	79	169	112	21	<u>505</u>	6	262	97	382
Ruffed Grouse	1				1	1	14	9	2	28	6	46	16	77
Northern Bobwhite	2		1		3			CP		6	6	5.7	1	11
King Rail											3	1.3	1	2
Clapper Rail	6	7								<u>13</u>	6	7.3	5	11
Virginia Rail	1			3	4		3	40		<u>51</u>	6	27	11	40
Sora								1		1	4	2.0	1	3
Common Moorhen		2								<u>2</u>	4	1.3	1	2
American Coot											4	1.0	1	1
Black-bellied Plover											4	2.8	1	5
Piping Plover		16								16	6	11	7	20
Semipalmated Plover	CP									CP	5	12	3	30
Killdeer	58	28	44	13	55	44	37	37	21	337	6	294	268	347

American Oystercatcher	33								33	6	17	11	33
Willet									6		1.2	1	4
Greater Yellowlegs				1					1	6	1.8	1	4
Lesser Yellowlegs									1		1.0	1	1
Solitary Sandpiper									6		1.3	1	2
Spotted Sandpiper	2	4	3		8	12	2	3	34	6	38	20	49
Ruddy Turnstone									5	5	6.0	1	16
Sanderling									2	2	5.5	2	9
Dunlin									4		3.5	1	6
Semipalmated Sandpiper	1	19							20	6	380	2	2020
Least Sandpiper									3		2.0	1	3
White-rumped Sandpiper									1		3.0	0	3
Short-billed Dowitcher									1		4.0	4	4
small sandpiper species								2	2	1	1.0	1	1
Common Snipe									1		1.0	1	1
American Woodcock	1		CP		1	1	10	11	<u>24</u>	6	15	8	20
Laughing Gull	1								1	6	54	4	119
Bonaparte's Gull									3		4.0	1	9
Ring-billed Gull	143	93	67	2	10	10	17	24	366	6	565	326	808
Herring Gull	598	88	115	6	9	17	2	6	842	6	1074	930	1229
Great Black-backed Gull	<u>292</u>	57	44	10	2	9			<u>414</u>	6	349	279	402
gull species									2		179	1	357
Gull-billed Tern									2		2.5	2	3
Common Tern	<u>161</u>	98						CP	259	6	173	56	518
Least Tern		228							228	6	355	209	560

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1999 Summer Bird Count Tables

SPECIES .	Coastal		Ct Valley		Upland Counts					1999	1993 - 1998			
	GS	NH	HA	SR	Mid-state		Northern			State	Yrs.	Ave.	Min.	Max.
					QV	WR	BA	LH	ST	Total				
Black Tern											0	0.0	0	0
Black Skimmer		12								12	1	9.0	9	9
Rock Dove	561	185	113	14	223	103	115	61	40	1415	6	1333	974	1543
Mourning Dove	523	259	301	92	338	340	228	430	65	2576	6	2248	2123	2400
Monk Parakeet	10	28								38	6	9.7	1	19
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	6		1			5		1	4	17	6	26	4	47
Black-billed Cuckoo		2			3	3		6		14	6	27	7	51
cuckoo species											4	5.8	1	12
Barn Owl											3	12	5	19
Long-eared Owl											1	2.0	2	2
Great Horned Owl	5		1	2	3	5	9	10		35	6	30	16	40
Barred Owl	4		2	5	3	12	28	29	2	85	6	47	15	69
Eastern Screech-Owl	25		8	3	6	5	2	5		54	6	45	25	61
Northern Saw-whet Owl								1	1	2	5	3.0	1	5
Nighthawk, Common		2				1			1	5	6	8.0	1	14
Chuck-will's-widow											1	1.0	1	1
Whip-poor-will		1		3	2	4	5	7		22	6	14	8	21
Chimney Swift	64	25	44	11	58	158	109	72	38	579	6	615	492	736
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	7	3	1		3	9	46	23	5	97	6	71	42	94
Belted Kingfisher	31	11	11	6	8	20	33	18	7	145	6	116	75	166
Red-headed Woodpecker											1	1.0	1	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	128	52	41	12	32	67	40	56	20	448	6	320	239	418
Northern Flicker	188	59	67	22	52	94	77	107	28	694	6	720	657	828
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker						5	154	152		311	6	117	31	165
Downy Woodpecker	168	53	72	20	53	103	130	143	22	764	6	521	394	694

Hairy Woodpecker	46	12	10	3	5	16	34	56	7	189	6	151	110	198
Pileated Woodpecker	14	2	5	3	1	12	25	29	5	96	6	82	63	103
Olive-sided Flycatcher								1		<u>1</u>	3	1.0	1	1
Eastern Wood-Pewee	69	37	9	23	24	119	97	193	25	596	6	460	423	514
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher			2							<u>2</u>	3	1.0	1	1
Acadian Flycatcher	2	4		3	1	11	2	1		24	6	30	22	39
Alder Flycatcher		2	1			3	10	61		77	6	53	12	78
Willow Flycatcher	37	55	13	6	20	36	10	83	1	261	6	229	186	281
Least Flycatcher			1	4	1	20	38	57	3	125	6	161	121	223
Empidonax species											3	4.0	1	10
Eastern Phoebe	112	28	28	34	32	169	187	252	31	873	6	622	528	774
Great Crested Flycatcher	65	40	25	23	26	68	54	90	12	403	6	370	270	483
Eastern Kingbird	64	44	35	19	37	102	95	139	21	556	6	546	489	643
White-eyed Vireo	17		1	1	2	1			1	23	6	44	26	52
Yellow-throated Vireo	24	2	4	10	2	<u>73</u>	44	69	12	240	6	198	169	244
Blue-headed Vireo			2	1		19	65	39	2	128	6	91	76	128
Red-eyed Vireo	203	61	48	68	67	293	668	638	52	2098	6	1675	1273	1899
Warbling Vireo	70	16	53	26	42	170	37	122	15	551	6	513	292	664
Blue Jay	315	172	164	23	137	208	296	241	44	1600	6	1557	1346	1697
American Crow	<u>1137</u>	396	365	71	386	<u>776</u>	424	800	101	4456	6	3785	3169	4516
Fish Crow	21	13	5			<u>10</u>	6	8		<u>63</u>	6	51	39	62
Common Raven					1	<u>2</u>	24	10		<u>37</u>	6	18	4	36
Horned Lark											1	1.0	1	1
Tree Swallow	<u>143</u>	83	121	26	174	<u>252</u>	461	541	58	1859	6	1558	1194	1867
Purple Martin	18	4			28			1		<u>51</u>	6	36	29	47

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SPECIES	Coastal		Ct Valley		Upland Counts					1999 State Total	1993 - 1998			
	GS	NH	HA	SR	Mid-state		Northern				Yrs. Seen	Ave.	Min.	Max.
					QV	WR	BA	LH	ST					
Bank Swallow	CP	83	5	36	48	112	100	8	12	404	6	337	202	529
Cliff Swallow	29		6			<u>176</u>	22	8		241	6	210	156	245
No. Rough-wngd. Swallow	96	48	13	4	34	<u>100</u>	63	15	24	397	6	320	259	414
Barn Swallow	266	110	112	28	128	361	156	336	78	<u>1575</u>	6	1371	1184	1546
Tufted Titmouse	317	109	90	56	63	320	297	231	81	<u>1564</u>	6	1337	1053	1547
Black-capped Chickadee	248	84	132	53	109	296	505	548	89	<u>2064</u>	6	1712	1566	1877
Brown Creeper	2		2	1	4	3	22	73		<u>107</u>	6	67	48	87
White-breasted Nuthatch	118	19	30	9	36	51	111	119	26	<u>519</u>	6	349	242	441
Red-breasted Nuthatch	2	4	9		1		41	21	3	<u>81</u>	6	103	59	157
House Wren	262	29	39	32	35	187	109	158	26	877	6	830	742	927
Winter Wren	8	3			1	11	26	28	3	<u>80</u>	6	34	14	72
Carolina Wren	117	10	14	14	8	27	4	3	18	215	6	111	49	242
Marsh Wren	17	47	1					20		<u>95</u>	6	67	37	91
Sedge Wren											1	1.0	1	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	2					<u>1</u>	2	11		<u>16</u>	6	7.0	4	11
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	<u>25</u>	1	10	13		66	40	48	23	<u>226</u>	6	177	146	207
Eastern Bluebird	<u>80</u>	15	66	16	17	<u>206</u>	152	187	54	<u>793</u>	6	482	319	564
Wood Thrush	198	75	66	59	79	196	245	293	32	1243	6	1281	1089	1486
Veery	125	34	11	49	43	180	484	658	44	<u>1628</u>	6	1248	872	1442
Swainson's Thrush						<u>1</u>				<u>1</u>	3	1.3	1	2
Hermit Thrush			3	4	1	8	92	73	4	<u>185</u>	6	126	99	167
American Robin	1212	499	732	172	565	949	640	1110	134	6013	6	5769	5048	6060
Gray Catbird	813	250	375	112	250	586	510	787	92	<u>3775</u>	6	3420	3204	3593
Northern Mockingbird	143	72	123	21	83	94	32	46	22	636	6	781	593	981
Brown Thrasher	24	1	8	3	4	22	2	12	1	77	6	86	62	105

European Starling	1483	822	1012	144	1158	<u>1293</u>	362	835	387	7496	6	6891	5767	8174
Cedar Waxwing	108	136	77	39	27	209	252	342	16	1206	6	1215	568	1576
Blue-winged Warbler	82	72	11	33	43	83	31	92	28	475	6	631	504	716
"Lawrence's Warbler"							1			1	5	1.6	1	3
"Brewster's Warbler"						1		1		2	5	1.2	1	2
Golden-winged Warbler								1		1	5	1.4	1	2
Tennessee Warbler											4	1.8	1	2
Nashville Warbler								1		1	4	1.5	1	2
Northern Parula	1	1				1		1		4	6	2.8	1	5
Chestnut-sided Warbler	9	14	4	14	7	90	226	371	3	738	6	624	375	777
Cape May Warbler											1	1.0	1	1
Magnolia Warbler			1				54	12		67	6	66	52	86
Yellow-rumped Warbler			1		1	3	77	45		127	6	122	77	183
Black-and-White Warbler	68	28	9	28	22	85	188	190	21	<u>639</u>	6	548	506	597
Black-thr. Blue Warbler						8	136	42		<u>186</u>	6	117	73	144
Cerulean Warbler						3		2	1	6	6	7.8	2	12
Blackburnian Warbler						1	83	68	1	<u>153</u>	6	107	55	137
Black-thr Green Warbler	6	7	3	9	12	38	112	116	14	<u>317</u>	6	210	103	261
Yellow-throated Warbler											2	1.0	1	1
Prairie Warbler	11	15	11	24	18	72	7	9	4	171	6	233	176	259
Bay-breasted Warbler											1	1.0	1	1
Blackpoll Warbler											4	6.0	1	11
Pine Warbler	38	20	20	14	6	20	82	100	10	<u>310</u>	6	196	140	221
Yellow Warbler	435	136	154	69	126	385	215	602	85	2207	6	2026	1593	2352
Mourning Warbler						1				1	4	2.0	1	3

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					QV	WR	BA	LH	ST					
Kentucky Warbler											4	3.3	1	7
Canada Warbler		1				10	19	33		63	6	58	21	83
Wilson's Warbler										3	3	1.3	1	2
Hooded Warbler	3	2		3	5	10		2		25	6	27	23	37
Worm-eating Warbler	69	14	7	14	16	3	6	5	4	138	6	158	114	223
Ovenbird	94	88	25	66	53	219	312	428	57	1342	6	1253	955	1484
Louisiana Waterthrush	28	6	6	6	2	55	15	29	8	155	6	129	111	140
Northern Waterthrush			1			3	7	46		57	6	43	8	69
Common Yellowthroat	246	88	85	52	88	250	531	600	53	1993	6	1785	1415	2061
Yellow-breasted Chat		1								1	3	1.7	1	2
American Redstart	29	5	21	50	23	148	341	416	21	1054	6	915	634	1127
Summer Tanager											1	1.0	1	1
Scarlet Tanager	93	34	18	31	54	118	135	156	22	661	6	595	533	692
Eastern Towhee	70	45	35	55	41	116	131	130	23	646	6	751	660	887
Field Sparrow	18	19	25	16	23	70	10	16	6	203	6	173	143	190
Chipping Sparrow	356	35	87	116	104	495	377	436	84	2090	6	1750	1602	2005
Grasshopper Sparrow			3	2	1					6	4	5.0	1	8
Saltm. Sh.-tailed Sparrow	7	7								14	6	11	5	25
Nelson's Sh.-tailed Sparrow	1									1	2	1.0	1	1
Seaside Sparrow											3	1.3	0	2
Savannah Sparrow			13		1	2		10	13	39	6	31	12	54
Song Sparrow	529	188	292	92	115	533	424	665	77	2915	6	2472	2212	2810
Swamp Sparrow	8	5	2	11	18	33	56	322	2	457	6	256	140	325
White-throated Sparrow							1	13		14	6	16	2	23
White-crowned Sparrow											2	4.5	1	8

Dark-eyed Junco						<u>1</u>	31	17		49	6	51	30	70
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	54	21	24	7	26	73	123	95	9	432	6	381	302	476
Northern Cardinal	363	169	153	68	105	338	183	208	69	1656	6	1548	1450	1702
Indigo Bunting	49	35	17	9	25	101	58	47	5	346	6	337	284	425
Bobolink			28	<u>3</u>	22	103	36	269	9	470	6	436	257	550
Eastern Meadowlark			2		10	9	1	4	8	34	6	57	38	81
Red-winged Blackbird	695	522	320	78	939	838	326	1100	283	<u>5101</u>	6	4274	3859	4630
Common Grackle	1291	476	670	122	849	828	404	582	174	5396	6	4705	4047	5582
Rusty Blackbird											1	5.0	5	5
Brown-headed Cowbird	200	69	106	32	197	243	126	218	212	1403	6	1290	1129	1450
Orchard Oriole	28	2	4	2	2	11	1			50	6	35	21	54
Baltimore Oriole	233	87	63	32	30	262	102	143	42	994	6	1025	837	1192
Bullock's Oriole											1	1.0	1	1
Purple Finch			1	1	2	6	63	69		<u>142</u>	6	90	66	115
House Finch	369	104	109	39	115	317	150	228	39	1470	6	2254	1312	3510
Pine Siskin								1		<u>1</u>	2	2.5	2	3
American Goldfinch	377	158	290	57	231	409	417	608	119	<u>2666</u>	6	1793	1476	2212
Evening Grosbeak			1				CP			1	4	3.3	2	5
House Sparrow	<u>1165</u>	338	263	69	277	442	149	370	160	<u>3233</u>	6	2774	2373	3015
Unidentified/Hybrid											5	4.8	4.8	4.8
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	22539	8614	9049	2873	9069	17017	14638	20909	3626	<u>108,334</u>		96991	91345	101509
CD Species	128	127	118	101	117	128	122	141	96	186		190.0	184	198
CP Species	4	0	1	0	0	0	2	3	0	1		1.7		

BA - Barkhamsted

LH - Litchfield Hills

SR - Salmon River

XX Noted 5 or fewer years in last 10 yrs.

GS - Greenwich-Stamford

NH - New Haven

ST - Storrs

XX Species new to Count (shaded box)

HA - Hartford

QV - Quinnipiac Valley

WR - Woodbury-Roxbury

XX New 10 Yr. High Total (underlined)

XX New 10 Yr. Low Total (Bold)

1999 Summer Bird Count Effort - Degree of Effort

SPECIES	Coastal		Ct Valley		Upland Counts					1999 State Total	1993 - 1998		
	GS	NH	HA	SR	Mid-state		Northern				Ave.	Min.	Max.
					QV	WR	BA	LH	ST				
DEGREE OF EFFORT:													
Party Hours	263.5	115	68	36	74	151	164	188.5	41	1101	1123	1051	1191.5
Day Party Hours	241	114	66	32	70	146.5	163	185.5	41	1059	1070	1015	1130
Night Party Hours	22.5	1	2	4	4	4.5	1	3	0	42	53	36	65.5
Observers	51	28	24	9	10	30	28	39	11	230	238	230	257
Parties	28	13	17	3	5	15	17	14	6	118	122	115	130
Indiv. birds per 10 PH	855	749	1331	798	1226	1127	893	1109	884	<u>984</u>	858	805	957.5
Indiv. birds per Observer	442	308	377	319	907	567	523	536	330	<u>471</u>	398	373	426.5
% Observers	22.2	12.2	10.4	3.9	4.3	13.0	12.2	17.0	4.8	100.0			
% Party Hours	23.9	10.4	6.2	3.3	6.7	13.7	14.9	17.1	3.7	100.0			
% Individual Birds	20.8	8.0	8.4	2.7	8.4	15.7	13.5	19.3	3.3	100.0			

For SBCs under 10 years old, only species first seen in 1999 are shown. All other statistics are given for SBCs at

least ten years old (GS & WR). New species and those found four or fewer years are noted in the statewide totals.

BA - Barkhamsted

LH - Litchfield Hills

SR - Salmon River

XX

Noted 5 or fewer years in last 10 yrs.

GS - Greenwich-Stamford

NH - New Haven

ST - Storrs

XX

Species new to Count (shaded box)

HA - Hartford

QV - Quinnipiac Valley

WR - Woodbury-Roxbury

XX

New 10 Yr. High Total (underlined)

XX

New 10 Yr. Low Total (Bold)

BALD EAGLES IN NORTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT

MARCH 1998 TO APRIL 1999

Michael O'Leary for The Bald Eagle Study Group

The Bald Eagles in North Central Connecticut have been observed by the Bald Eagle Study Group since 1979. Their movements and behaviors have been reported in this periodical since then. This report has been prepared to assist those agencies and individuals engaged in Bald Eagle research, management, preservation and enjoyment. Anyone may make additional copies of this report for distribution.

Discussion and Summary

The Suffield pair of breeding Bald Eagles (brother and sister - leg bands W13 and W17, respectively) started incubating in a second Hilltop Farm nest on March 13, 1998. This nest is north and east of the original nest that was built in 1996 and used successfully in 1997. The first egg hatched in the second nest on April 16,

1998. By April 24, two nestlings were visible. Eleven consecutive days of rain in May had no ill effects on the birds. The landowners did not allow nest tree access that year so the nestlings were not banded. By mid-July, both had fledged. With two fledglings also at Barkhamsted that season, Connecticut's post 1950's total now stands at twelve (1992-1999).



Male Bald Eagle on left, Female on right.

Photo by Sam Fried

The Suffield breeding pair remained in the area throughout the mild winter of 1998-1999. Immature eagles were also observed, but their origin is unknown. With the mild weather and large amounts of open water in southern New England, relatively few migrant eagles used the Connecticut River Valley. Many wildflowers were still in bloom in December. Skunk cabbage was in blossom as of December 6, 1998. Moths and mosquitoes were observed as late as December 19. By the start of the winter season, it was already 300 degree days warmer than normal. Wintering eagles didn't appear consistently in the Enfield Rapids area (river mile 60-68) until January 10, 1999 - twenty days later than last season. The National Bald Eagle Survey, coordinated by the U. S. Geological Survey, Biological Resources Division on January 8 and 9, 1999 counted only 60 Bald Eagles in Connecticut - 27 immatures and 33 adults. The mild winter last year yielded even lower at 49. In contrast, the severe, cold winter in January 1996 surveyed 128 Bald Eagles in Connecticut.

The Rapids Area reflected these low numbers. From December 21, 1998 to March 20, 1999 (calendar winter) wintering eagles were seen only on 16 days. The eagle-day total (an accumulated sum of eagles observed) was 29. Last year's mild winter totals were 15 and 21. The cold, severe winter of 1995-1996 had remarkable totals of 72 and 239. By March 20, 1999, only 4728 degree days had accumulated compared to a normal total of 5186.

Throughout the late winter, the Suffield pair (still W13 and W17) constructed a third nest at Hilltop Farm just north of the first nest. By March 10, 1999 one adult was observed in the incubating position. The largest snowstorm of the season dumped 8-12 inches on March 14, apparently with no ill effect because the adults appeared to be feeding an unseen nestling on April 14, 1999.

Prey species observed this season (not observed being consumed) included the following, in addition to native and introduced fish: Canada Goose, domestic white goose, Greater White-fronted Goose, American Black Duck, Mallard, Black Duck X Mallard hybrid, domestic white duck, Muscovy Duck, Common Goldeneye, Common Merganser, Great Cormorant, Horned Grebe, Wild Turkey (first time recorded here), Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Glaucous Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Rock Dove and Gray Squirrel.

Additional Correspondence

Pete Nye of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation reported on the status of Bald Eagle #34. Its location

was not investigated in Northern Quebec in 1998 because time did not permit. This is the eagle that was rescued on the Connecticut River in Enfield on January 31, 1982, retrapped on the St. Lawrence River on February 2, 1997 and satellite tracked to a nesting area in Northern Quebec in July of 1997.

Also, Steve Gephard, a fisheries biologist with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (D.E.P.), may have shed some light on why Bald Eagles have been observed eating American Eels in the winter. The eel is usually a dormant bottom dweller in the winter. However, Steve speculates that melting, tumbling ice or Common Mergansers were dislodging the eels to the surface.

Suffield Properties

In the winter and spring of 1999, members of the Bald Eagle Study Group attended several meetings in Suffield concerning two properties critical to the nesting Bald Eagles. The St. Alphonsus College property was sold and the Hilltop Farm sale is pending as of April 15, 1999.

The former college property abuts the Hilltop Farm to the north. This now will be the Suffield Conference Center, which will house education space for law enforcement training. It will also be used by Baran Institute of Technology in Windsor as a dormitory and the Connecticut Culinary Institute as classrooms. The Suffield Zoning and Planning Commission passed unanimously on February 2, 1999, a plan for an expanded parking lot on the southern part of the property. The plan for this parking lot, which borders the eagles's nests on Hilltop Farm, must be approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and the Connecticut D.E.P.

The potential buyer of Hilltop Farm, the Eagles' Nest Development Group, LLP, is requesting a double zoning change from R-45 (1 acre residential) to R25 to P.D.A. (Planned Development Apartments). Their existing plan on the 89 acres is for 215 residential cottages and a 105,000 square foot assisted living center of 85 units. A par-3 golf course and tennis courts are also in the plan. Testimony and documents from the Bald Eagle Study Group were presented to the Zoning and Planning Commission emphasizing that this plan would adversely affect the nesting Bald Eagles and violate the guidelines drawn up in 1983 in the Northern States Bald Eagles Recovery Plan, which is a regulatory document approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. On April 19, 1999, the plan for the double zone change was rejected, but the development group asked for a regulation change so that the Zoning and Planning Commission could pass a property directly to P.D.A. from R-45.

The ultimate use of this property and the fate of the Bald Eagles is still pending.

We have observed since the beginning of this Annual Report in 1979 that eagles used certain specific perches in the area. Any dramatic change to these properties would severely alter the eagles's use of the area, even if the radius of 660 feet around the nest was protected. Specific trees and even specific tree branches have been used year after year by Bald Eagles. Trees on the southeast part of Hilltop Farm that border the Connecticut River have been used as loafing and hunting perches since January 1984. Even if the nest were protected, the proposed activities around these perches would probably cause the nest pair to abandon the site altogether.

Observers:

Herbert Butler	Tony Gallichio	Justin Michaud
John Caldwell	Jimmy Graves	Ed Nash
Adam Caronna	Missa Haight	Alan Nordell
Deborah Caronna	Don Haight	Mike Nordell
Michael Caronna	Michael Haight	Anne O'Leary
Mackenzie Coombs	Don Hopkins	Michael O'Leary
Peter Coombs	Jane Hopkins	Eugene Orłowski
Cherl Duchaineau	Julie Hopkins	Anthony Panfili
Julia Edmonds	Joe Hunt	Michael Pascucilla
Lynn Edmonds	Kate Hunt	Joe Styran
Sheia Edmonds	Ron Meloche	Rollin Tebbetts
Carl Ekroth	Jerry Mersereau	Joyce Welch
Adam Ferrari	Bob Michaud	Stephanie Wrona
Mike Foley		

For copies of previous reports or questions and comments, please direct to:

MICHAEL O'LEARY, Editor, P.O. Box 492, Ellington, CT 06029

Editor's Note:

The study group noticed a reduced amount of activity at the nest in May, and two extended observation periods in early June revealed a failed nest - reasons unknown.

IDENTIFICATION NOTES:

TWO NEW WRENS FOR CONNECTICUT

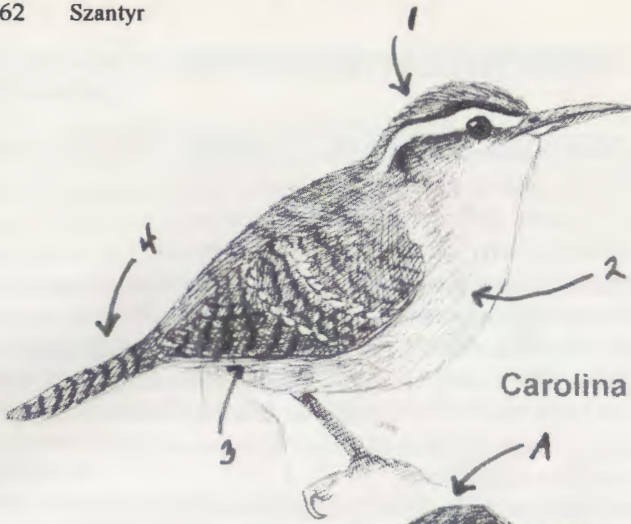
Mark S. Szantyr

Bewick's Wren, *Thryomanes bewickii*, and Rock Wren, (*Salpinctes obsoletus*), are rare vagrants to the eastern part of North America, with New York and Massachusetts, each showing a small number of convincing records of each species. There is a banding record of Bewick's Wren from Block Island, Rhode Island. Connecticut has yet to document the occurrence of either species, in spite of occasional reports of Bewick's Wren.

These identification challenges involve two different problems. Bewick's Wren is similar to the regularly occurring Carolina Wren, *Thryothorus ludovicianus*. Carolina Wren is variable in the intensity of its coloration and in some instances can approach the color of the eastern subspecies of Bewick's Wren, *T. b. bewickii*. Rock Wren is a different matter. While certain characters are superficially similar to the eastern wrens, the trouble here is that most of us do not know to expect it as a vagrant species, and a vagrant species with very particular habitat preferences when it does occur in the east.

Bewick's Wren

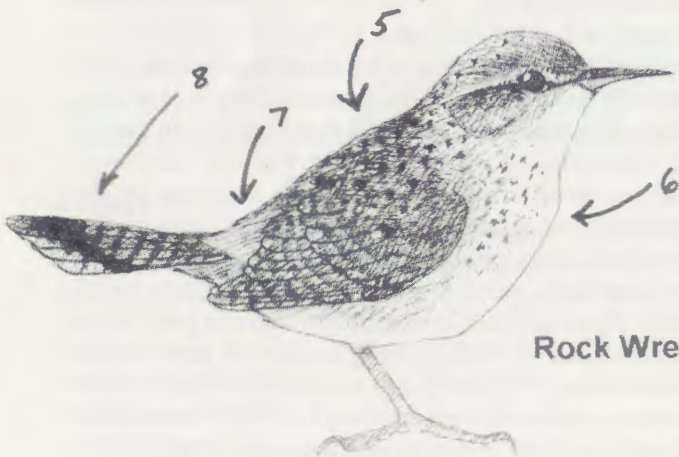
Bewick's Wren is a wide ranging species, occurring along the entire west coast and through the southwestern, south central, and eastern central states in the United States. In the eastern portion of its range, its numbers are greatly reduced even to being extirpated from large portions of its former eastern domain. Due to this loss, its status as a vagrant species has changed dramatically in recent decades. Today, it is indeed a very rare vagrant to the northeast. Bewick's Wren is a sparrow-sized and trim wren, showing an obvious white eyebrow stripe, a long tail, white tips and spots on the outer tail feathers, and clean, pale grayish-white under parts. Its upper parts vary from dark, grayish brown in some western forms to a much warmer, more reddish brown in the eastern part of its range. Bewick's Wren shows dark barring in the tail and fainter dark barring in the wings. This barring is reduced to absent in the primaries. The white eyebrow stripe in Bewick's Wren terminates near the rear edge of the cheek patch, appearing quite straight. The bill is long and thin. It is mostly dark with the lower mandible



Carolina Wren



Bewick's Wren



Rock Wren

being paler toward the base. Bewick's Wren's tail is quite long and very mobile. It is said that Bewick's Wren jerks its tail in a side-ways motion. While worth noting, this is probably not absolutely diagnostic for the species. The white tipped and spotted outer tail feathers with dark barring are diagnostic but they are not always blatantly evident.

Separating Bewick's Wren from Carolina Wren.

Bewick's Wren and Carolina Wren can be superficially quite similar. If the bird in question is an eastern form Bewick's Wren, the problem can be daunting unless given good views. If you are lucky enough to see the white on the outer tail feathers, problem solved! But what if you can't? How do you separate Bewick's Wren from Carolina Wren without relying on the outer tail feathers? (Note: The numbers and letters refer to the numbers and letters included in the species illustration, Plate No. 1).

Carolina Wren.

1. Carolina Wren has a long white eyebrow stripe that is bordered along its top edge by a narrow black line. The eyestripe on Carolina Wren is long, longer than in Bewick's Wren and usually appears to droop down behind the cheek patch and trail off on the lower hind neck. The bill on Carolina Wren is long and appears thicker than Bewick's Wren and subtly blunter at the tip. The coloration is dark with a pale base to the lower mandible.

2. Carolina Wren is usually a striking warm reddish buff on the flanks and belly. This color gets richer toward the rear of the bird and pales toward the head where it contrasts with the white throat and chin. While normally quite rich, a color never attained by Bewick's Wren, some Carolina Wrens can be extremely washed out to nearly being white over most of their under parts.

3. Carolina Wren usually shows distinct barring in the flight feathers, including the primaries, and in the tail. In fresh plumage, the greater and median wing coverts sometimes appear tipped in white, forming two faint wing bars. These can often be absent.

4. Carolina Wren is a large and bulky wren. The tail appears short for the overall size of the bird. In the field, comparing the length of the tail to the distance between the eye and the bill tip should show that the tail is about equal to or shorter than this distance.

Bewick's Wren.

A. Bewick's Wren also has a white eyebrow stripe. It is not usually as broad as in Carolina Wren. While sometimes present, there

is usually no dark line along the top border of the eyebrow stripe and if it is present it is greatly reduced. The eyebrow stripe usually appears straighter than in Carolina Wren and usually terminates near the rear of the cheek patch. Bewick's Wren's bill is finer than Carolina Wren and often appears to be more delicate at the tip.

B. Bewick's Wren is usually pale grayish white below, getting darker and sometimes slightly buffy in the rear flanks. At most times, it is paler below than Carolina Wren and never approaches the warm reddish buff color of that species.

C. Bewick's Wren is usually darker and less reddish above than Carolina Wren, though eastern birds can be reddish above approaching Carolina Wren in color. Bewick's Wren appears more faintly barred in the flight feathers and the primaries are often unbarred, appearing plainer and darker than in Carolina Wren. Most often, Bewick's Wren doesn't show white tips to the wing coverts.

D. Bewick's Wren is a more slimly built bird than Carolina Wren. This appearance is amplified by its obviously long and limber tail. Making the same comparison as mentioned for Carolina Wren, you should find that Bewick's Wren's tail is equal to or longer than the distance from the eye to the tip of the bill. Bewick's Wren has white tips and spots on the outer tail feathers. If this is evident, your work is made significantly easier.

Rock Wren

Rock Wren is a fairly large wren. It is regular over a large part of western United States, excluding the extreme northwest. It is a more terrestrial wren and is a bird of open, rocky and often arid surroundings. It is very active as it checks for insects in nooks and crannies of various rock strewn habitats. It is known to bob its body frequently as it flies from rock to rock, fanning its broad buff tipped tail as it lands. In the east, Rock Wren has shown up in cemeteries and along rocky coastlines and jetties. Areas to check might include the rocky rip-rapped embankments of dams, rocky coastal promontories, vacant and debris-covered construction sites, and any rocky location that might approximate its more western habitat. Rock Wren has usually been found late in the fall and early winter in the east, with November and December being the most likely time to find this species. This species is a true skulker and finding it will take patience and perseverance as it "mouses" its way through an endless sea of "Rock-Wren colored" stones and boulders.

5. Rock Wren is a moderately pale bird, sometimes appearing an

overall medium sandy brownish gray. The upper parts are finely speckled with white and dark spots. It sometimes shows an indistinct pale eyebrow. Its bill is long and thin and dark.

6. The under parts are a pale brownish gray to whitish and usually show some faint spotting or streaking in the lower throat, breast, and upper flanks. The species usually shows a buffy wash toward the rear of the upper parts and also appears more buffy in the rear flanks to the under tail coverts.

7. Rock Wren has a distinctive cinnamon rump that stands out well from the dull brownish upper parts and tail.

8. Rock Wren has a fairly long and broad tail. It is dull brown and barred above and spotted dark and light below. It has pale buff tips to all but the central tail feathers and a broad dark subterminal band anterior to the buff tips. As stated earlier, Rock Wren often fans its tail as it flits from rock to rock while searching for food.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to Louis Bevier and George Clark for their input into the details of this manuscript and to Dave Provencher for being there when we both learned how frightening this identification challenge can actually be.

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Mark S. Szantyr, 145 Farmington Avenue, Waterbury, CT 06710

PRAIRIE BIRDS

Roland C. Clement

It was the last chapter of William Burt's lovely book on rails, *Shadowbirds* (1994), that prompted my 1998 trip to the high plains of the Canadian west. That book's gentle word pictures of big sky country, the ethereal songs of windbirds in open landscapes, and two captivating men, the Reverend P. B. Peabody and A. C. Bent—all these became a lure to my lifelong ambition to "get the feel" of all of North America's biotic provinces. The time to do that is when plants are in flower, and the birds are singing.

Peabody and Bent were among the first to study the birds of that country at the turn of the century. Some Canadians did also, of course, but we knew less about them because they published elsewhere. Mr. Peabody, working out of an Episcopal pastorate in Kansas during the first quarter of the century, became an authority on nesting birds, especially those of the prairie. Every June, for years, he wangled a small stipend from some wealthy egg collector, and explored that lovely country alone. It fascinated Bill Burt that I had known Mr. Bent in the Forties, and taken him birding in Tiverton, R.I., when he lived in Taunton and I in Fall River, Mass. Bent had explored southwestern Saskatchewan by horse and buggy in 1905 and 1906, and published his ornithological discoveries in *The Auk* in 1907 and 1908. The same Arthur Cleveland Bent who, in 1910, launched the 23-volume set of U. S. National Museum reports on the *Life Histories of North American Birds*, still one of the most highly readable points of departure for coming to know these birds. It was this acquaintance that brought me the invitation to contribute two life histories to this monumental project, that of the Common Redpoll, and that of the Eastern White-crowned Sparrow.

The focus of Bent's interests surprised me on rereading his 1907 account of the *Summer Birds of Southwestern Saskatchewan*. After describing the landscape, he wrote "With this brief description of the three classes of plains, which in the aggregate comprised fully 95 percent of the whole region, we will leave this comparatively uninteresting phase of the subject and consider some of the more highly favored localities which we found much richer in bird life and therefore of much greater interest ornithologically." These more interesting localities were the wooded stream bottoms and the prairie lakes.

Bent was obviously less a faunalist assessing bird populations in relation to habitats, than a collector of specimens to confirm occurrence. It reminded me of Ludlow Griscom's frequent peremptory announcement when we birded together in the Forties, "Things are getting dull!" But this is what seemed important to Bent and his colleagues nearly a century ago. Unfortunately, that "less interesting" 95% of the region is now in agriculture, and we can only guess at that land conversion's impact on bird life, since we were not left comparative population data.

When I learned that Bill Burt planned to revisit that country, I asked whether I might join him afield, and he agreed! I could at least help bridge the century. I flew to Medicine Hat on July 7, a bit late, but not too late at 50° north latitude for bird song and unfledged young birds. Bill was still busy photographing farther south, so I had a few days alone and explored southern Alberta and the Rocky Mountain front, including Waterton Lakes National Park, and adjacent Glacier National Park in Montana. I sketched Black Terns and the mountains.



Black Tern by Roland C. Clement

We joined forces on July 13 in Maple Creek, on Saskatchewan's transcontinental Route 3. Bill toured me around for four dawn-to-dusk days north of the Cypress Hills Provincial Park. We visited two 20,000-acre ranches and a large Ducks Unlimited diked lake, and I for one found interaction with fascinating residents as pleasant as new birds. Well, almost.

Bill Burt, a wildlife photographer and writer who lives in Old Lyme, is a superior field man with a superlative ear. He recognizes unique habitats on sight. Again and again, he would stop the car and roll down the window, saying, "This is good Baird's Sparrow prairie;" then, "Three of them are singing on that slope." I couldn't hear them, but with a little help, succeeded in scoping some and had only to wait until they tilted their heads enough to show the ochre median stripe. The same with Sprague's Pipit: "Four birds are singing up there," though we couldn't see them. It was pleasant to hold my own in recognizing what I saw, as when I "called" my first Sprague's Pipit even though it was completely silhouetted in a road ditch. It was also fun to see what a rangy bird a chick of the Long-billed Curlew is as it trots off with the stride of a miniature ostrich!

I was struck, again, by how poorly most field guides capture the character of the species they portrait. For example, Sprague's Pipit often has the high-strung character of an Upland Sandpiper. It is like the difference between the appearance of a American Golden Plover and a Black-bellied Plover. How much there is to learn! As to bird diversity, we found the contrasts striking. Land in wheat of course has few birds. Lightly grazed prairie has fair numbers. Wherever the original prairie and its ponds had been preserved more or less intact, they seemed to have as many birds as in Bent's day. But these areas had become oases. The conspicuous roadside birds that flush before your car are Vesper Sparrows and Horned Larks.

Bill of course had to introduce me to his specialty, "the type-writer birds." We waited till dark on the edge of a suitable sedge marsh, and later still, until the winnowing snipe and the whinnying Soras quieted down enough for me to hear the "tic-tic" notes of the Yellow Rail, a bird which, heretofore, I knew only as a winterer in the Louisiana marshes. Le Conte's Sparrows were also singing in the dark, but their thin hissings were inaudible for me. As we drove back to our Maple Creek motel near midnight, we marveled at a spectacular display of Aurora Borealis. I apparently waxed so enthusiastic over this spectacle that Bill said I should put that sort of verbal excitement into my writing. But that's his forte.

BALD OR GOLDEN ?

Paul Carrier

Years ago, as a beginner hawk watcher, I would worry about the possibility of seeing a Golden Eagle and not being able to tell it from a Bald Eagle. In the early 70's, when hawk watching was in its early stages, field guides showed only obvious plumage differences as a means of recognizing these two eagles. At a hawk watch, the chances of having a decent look at an eagle, or even a hawk, was slim at best. The knowledge of basic plumages did help, but was not everything needed to make confident, positive identifications.

Since those early years, I have seen perhaps a dozen Golden Eagles at various migration sites in Connecticut, and not once was identification of a Golden ever in question. With a little knowledge, and some experience, these two large birds can easily be separated, for their differences far outweigh their similarities.

Let us briefly discuss the unmistakable adult Bald Eagle. When seen well, its plumage of all white head and tail, set apart from an all dark body and wings is always diagnostic. Beyond this, the different age plumages are less distinct, but by no means indistinguishable.



Golden Eagle by Paul Carrier

A lengthy description of plumage details is beyond the goal of this article, which is to discuss how they appear and behave in flight. These finer points are sometimes the only indication as to which species you are seeing, and most of the time your only clue.

In my experience, a Bald Eagle always looks to be the larger of the

two. Not because they are, but because they just appear to be. This illusion comes from the different style of flight they present: the Bald appearing stiff and straight, the Golden flexible and curvy.

The first sighting of a possible eagle species usually turns out to be a Bald Eagle, whereas the spotting of a Golden Eagle first suggests an overly large buteo. This difference results from the straighter, longer looking wings of the Bald, as compared to the curvy wings of the Golden.

Another solid point is: if your large distant eagle is sailing with a straight or slightly drooping wing profile, it most likely is a Bald Eagle (Figure A).



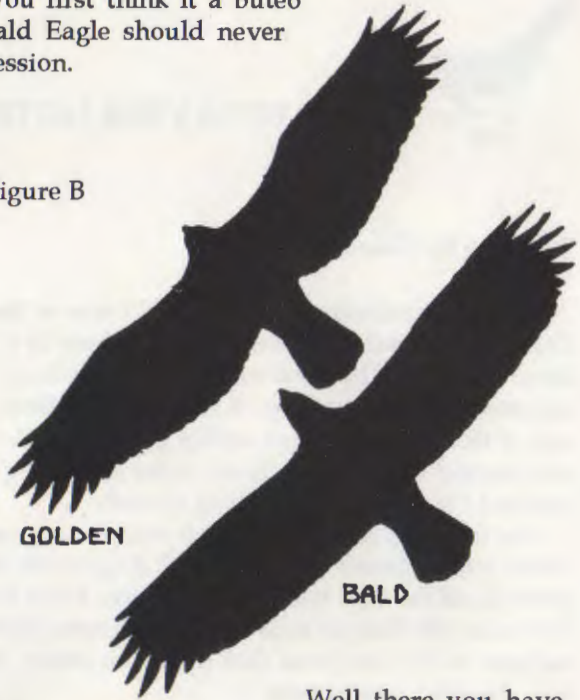
Figure A

Contrastingly, if the bird sails with wings held at a slight dihedral, and you know it's an eagle, it is most likely a Golden. In all my years of seeing Golden Eagles here in the northeast, never have I seen one sail without this distinctive flight profile. It is said that eastern Golden's do this more often than their western counterparts but I feel most probably use this style of flight, no matter where they come from.

A final good field mark is in the widely discussed tail and head lengths. The Bald Eagle always appears to have a large, protruding head, appearing equal to its tail length, whereas the Golden's head seems smaller and less protruding (Figure B). Part of this illusion is due to the fact that Balds possess a more massive bill. This difference along with more curvy wings gives the Golden the appearance of being a very large buteo. When a Golden is seen flying high above, sailing fast with tucked in curvy wings, and showing little

head protrusion, you first think it a buteo (Figure C). The Bald Eagle should never give you this impression.

Figure B



Well there you have it. The next time you go hawk watching, do not fear missing out on identifying a Golden Eagle. As mentioned above, their differences far outweigh their similarities.



Figure C

PAUL CARRIER, 80 High View Dr., Harwinton, CT 06791



BIRD BEHAVIOR NOTES

Tool Use By Green Heron

Yesterday morning, July 18, 1999 I was at the Flanders Nature Center in Woodbury, Connecticut. There is a large pond; since there are a few thin, scattered stumps sticking out of the water I assume it is not very deep. A Green Heron flew out and landed on one of these small stumps within good binocular viewing distance and started watching for food. After observing for a short while I realized I was seeing something special.

The bird had something that it was placing on the surface of the water with extreme care, then pick it up a few moments later and move it, all the time watching it closely. From what I could see the item was less than an inch long, light green, thin and straight. My surmise at the time was that it was an insect, or at least most of one. In other words, bait.

While I watched this process the bird caught two fish. The first was a small minnow. The second was a much larger minnow, and when the bird grabbed the fish it got the bait with it. After the second catch was swallowed the heron resumed its vigil, but without this aid. I continued to observe for a while without seeing the bird catch any fish. It stretched out to touch various tiny unidentifiable things floating on the surface, but I never saw it manipulate any of them.

Eventually it flew to the trees on the edge of the pond where it was joined by three others. The first bird was in adult plumage, while at least one of the others was immature.

The Birder's Handbook has a reference under Green Heron to the Tool Using topic. This topic talks of similar (though perhaps more advanced) behavior by herons in southern Japan, and includes the admonition "You should be on a sharp lookout for similar behavior in North American herons."

ROY HARVEY



CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Greg Hanisek

SPRING, MARCH 1 THROUGH MAY 31, 1999

The early part of the season produced some interesting waterfowl and gulls, but the most noteworthy event was the pattern of arrival for neotropical migrants. For several years, the strongest push of warblers and other May passerines has occurred later than usual, with the heaviest flights occurring around May 20. This year the biggest flights were early, with a major fallout on May 6. On that day Mantlik noted 81 species in the Norwalk area, including 12 species of warblers, and Soffer encountered his biggest early May flight ever at Sherwood Island State Park in Westport (85 species, including 16 species of warblers).

East Rock Park in New Haven had 20 species of warblers, followed by 16 species of warblers there the next day (DSO). Naylor reported that in western Litchfield County "warblers were concentrated by two to three days (May 6-8) of cloudy, misty weather into local fallouts." Some very early records are scattered through the seasonal report, but overall the early May push involved species that normally migrate in the first half of the month. Species such as Yellow-bellied Flycatchers and Mourning Warblers arrived late in the month as expected. The latter part of the month also produced some good flights, i.e., 20 warbler species on May 12 and 19 species on May 14, both at East Rock, as well as 19 species on May 21 in the Chaplin area (MSz).

Following is a list of first-arrival dates for regularly occurring species.

Great Egret - March 21 in Bridgeport (DV) and Old Lyme (FM);
Snowy Egret - March 21 in Old Saybrook (PCi); Green Heron -
April 18 in Litchfield (DRo); Semipalmated Plover - April 27 at
Milford Point (Pco); Piping Plover - March 23 at Milford Point
(PCo); Greater Yellowlegs - March 5 in Lordship (DV); Lesser Yel-
lowlegs - March 27 at Milford Point (TK); Spotted Sandpiper -
April 13 in Litchfield (DT); Least Sandpiper - April 27 at Milford
Point (PCo); Common Tern - April 28 in Guilford (JS); Least Tern -
April 28 in Madison (CR); Chimney Swift - April 24 in Simsbury

(JMe); Least Flycatcher - May 3 in Watertown (RN); Eastern Phoebe - March 16 in Waterbury (RPe); Eastern Kingbird - April 24 in Greenwich (TG); Purple Martin - April 8 in Madison (AS); Tree Swallow - March 14 in Stamford (PDu); Barn Swallow - April 7 in Lordship (DV); Bank Swallow - April 8 in South Windsor (PDe); House Wren - April 23 in Canton (JMe); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher - April 18 in Litchfield (DRo); Veery - April 27 in Fairfield (DV); Wood Thrush - April 28 in Newtown (RBA); Brown Thrasher - April 3 in Bridgeport (DV); Blue-headed Vireo - April 10 in East Haddam (PDe); Yellow-throated Vireo - April 30 in Durham (DSO); Warbling Vireo - April 26 in Manchester (BAI); Blue-winged Warbler - April 24 in Westbrook (BK); Nashville Warbler - April 28 in New Haven (DSO); Northern Parula - April 24 in Newtown (PB); Yellow Warbler - April 26 in Litchfield (DT); Black-throated Green Warbler - April 20 in Branford (JHu); Blackburnian Warbler - May 1 in New Milford (AD); Pine Warbler - April 1 in Canton (JMe); Prairie Warbler - April 26 in Woodbury (RN); Palm Warbler - April 3 in Woodbury (RN); Black-and-White Warbler - April 23 in New Canaan (DW), Canton (JMe) and Waterbury (RN); Worm-eating Warbler - May 1 in Guilford (DSO); Northern Waterthrush - April 18 in Patchaug (GW); Louisiana Waterthrush - April 2 in Greenwich (TG); Common Yellowthroat - April 22 in Stratford (Pco); Rose-breasted Grosbeak - April 25 in Hamden (LB); Rufous-sided Towhee - April 8 in East Killingly (MG) and Ellington (CEK); Chipping Sparrow - April 2 in Madison (CR); Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow - April 27 in Madison (AS); Orchard Oriole - April 26 in Ansonia (RBA); Baltimore Oriole - April 27 in Fairfield (MB).

GREBES THROUGH WATERFOWL

A Horned Grebe was a bit late May 10 at Bantam Lake in Litchfield (DRo). Single Red-necked Grebes were at Hammonasset Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP) on March 21 (DV) and Sherwood Island State Park in Westport April 25 (FG); inland, one was on Bantam Lake in Litchfield April 18 (DRo) and a group of five was on the Connecticut River in South Windsor the same day (GH,ER). Groups of 10 North-

ern Gannets were off Southport/Westport (FM) and Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford (DP), all on March 22. A Great Cormorant was inland at Shepaug dam in Southbury on April 11 (RN). Although some Double-crested Cormorants linger into Christmas Count season, they are virtually absent thereafter, which makes their spring arrival easily detectable. This year arrivals were noted March 21 in Bridgeport harbor (DV) and March 22 in New Haven harbor

(GH,NC). Although it is a species of concern, American Bittern continued its recent string of good showings: one or more at Lordship March 24-April 14 (DV, CB); several reports from HBSP in April and May (CR et al.); one or more at various locations around Bantam Lake and White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield from April 17 through the end of the period (DRo, L&FZ et al.); a migrant at New Canaan Nature Center on April 22 (TF fide FG); and apparently territorial birds at Roy Swamp in Cornwall (JMe) and at Great Pond in Simsbury (LK). Away from breeding sites in the Connecticut River Valley, one or more Least Bitterns were present during the season at White Memorial (DT et al.). A colony of Great Egrets had begun nesting April 15 at Cockenoe Island off Westport (FM). A handful of reports of Little Blue Heron included singles May 2 at Milford Point (RH) and May 3 at Millstone Point in Waterford (RBo). Tricolored Heron was first noted April 20 at HBSP, with several sightings thereafter (GH,NC); two were at Barn Island in Stonington May 20 (GW). A Cattle Egret was in Westport May 24-25 (FM). The first Glossy Ibis was reported March 28 at HBSP (TH); four were flying inland at Uncasville on May 25 (MSz).

Two Tundra Swans that win-

tered at North Cove in Essex were present through at least March 15 (m.ob.) Of special interest was a **Trumpeter Swan**, probably a stray from a midwestern release program, seen and heard at close range in Stratford in May 17-21 (FG et al.). Two **Greater White-fronted Geese**, a species on the increase in the state, were at Station 43 in South Windsor on April 25 (MSz). Flights of 250-300 Snow Geese passed over both Newtown (NC) and Waterbury (GH) March 31. A blue phase Snow Goose appeared in early April at a boatlaunch in Stratford and remained for weeks (DV,m.ob.). Peak Brant movements occurred April 1-20 on the Fairfield County coast, with maximum counts of c. 7,000 (DV). The high count of Green-winged Teal was c. 300 at Milford Point in late April (JL et al.); a flock of 11 was still present May 4 at Bantam Lake, near potential breeding areas (DT). A **Common Teal** was present March 17-23 at Milford Point (DV et al.) The first Blue-winged Teal were two reported March 30 in Stamford (PDU); a nice flock of 13 was on Little Pond at White Memorial Foundation on April 18 (DRo). Northern Shovelers seemed to be everywhere. Reports included singles at Quinnebaug Fish Hatchery in Central Village April 15-May 18 (RD), at Lords

Cove in Old Lyme April 9 (HG) and in East Hartford April 20 (WSm); pairs were in the Quinnipiac marsh in Hamden May 2 (AH) and at Mackenzie Reservoir in Wallingford April 17-18 (DSn); and up to four were in the Lordship area March 30-April 22 (DV,PCo). Two **Eurasian Wigeons** that wintered in Stamford were present through March 19 and March 28, respectively (PDu); singles were in Bridgeport harbor March 3 (DV) and off West Haven March 20 (CEk).

The high count of Canvasbacks was 130 on March 14 at Frash Pond in Stratford (FM,LDo). A male Redhead was on Reservoir 1 in Farmington March 13 (MMe). North Bay of Bantam Lake, in Litchfield, held four Redheads March 26, along with a nice flock of 20+ Lesser Scaup (GH et al.); 35 Lessers were in Bridgeport harbor April 27 (DV) and 30 were at Frash Pond March 14 (FM,LDo). A flock of 3,000 Greater Scaup off Milford on March 5 was the largest one reported (DV). An apparent female **Tufted Duck** April 26 at Bantam Lake was one of the most interesting finds of the season (DT et al.), raising questions of identification, origin or perhaps even hybrid status. A pair of **Common Eiders** were at HBSP March 27-31 (CR et al.); a boat trip March 21 found four **Common Eiders** flying off

Groton (FM). A staging flock of 400 Oldsquaws was an impressive sight off Compo Beach in Westport March 24 (FM). The mid-May movement of scoters through Long Island Sound, an event usually overlooked by birders distracted by the warbler migration, produced a raft off HBSP on May 16-17 that held 150+ Surf Scoters and at least 12 Black Scoters (GH,JMe). Five White-winged Scoters dropped onto Bantam Lake April 23 (GH); other inland reports included two on Nepaug Reservoir in Canton April 24 (JMe) and one there May 22 (DT,FZ). A drake **Barrow's Goldeneye** was with about 300 Common Goldeneyes in Wequetequock Cove in Stonington March 6 (TK); two Common Goldeneyes were late May 26 at HBSP (DSo). A female Bufflehead was still present May 16 at Sherwood Island (JMe et al.) A female Hooded Merganser on May 11 at Station 43 was late enough to be a breeding candidate (PDe). A staging flock of Common Mergansers swelled to 1,600 on April 2 at Lake Waramaug in New Preston (TBa). Two Red-breasted Mergansers, noted lingerers, were at HBSP on May 31 (JMe), and one was inland April 11 at Shepaug dam in Southbury (RN). A flock of nine Ruddy Ducks lingered to May 4 at Bantam Lake (DT), but the high count was 120 at Bride

Lake in Niantic on March 21 (FM).

RAPTORS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Away from established locations, Black Vultures were in Shelton March 19 (DV), in New Canaan April 2 (DRd) and two in Ellington April 5 (CEK). At the height of the Osprey migration, 14 were noted at various locations at White Memorial (DRo). An American **Swallow-tailed Kite** was reported April 20 in Greenwich (DSm), and a **Mississippi Kite** was reported May 12 near Huntington State Park in Redding (JC). At Great Meadows in Stratford, nesting behavior was again observed in a pair of Northern Harriers, with sticks deposited at a nest site April 14 (CB). Pairs of Northern Goshawks were noted during the season in Hampton (MSz), Ansonia (TK) and Monroe (RMc fide FM). A migratory flight of 230 hawks in an hour, primarily Broad-winged Hawks, was noted April 17 in Harwinton (PCa). Two American Kestrels copulating April 17 in Pomfret were doing their part to maintain the species' dwindling state breeding population (PL fide GW); a good migration-season concentration of eight was at the Killingly landfill April 8 (GW).

Wild Turkeys can't expand much more in the state unless they sail out to Falkner Island.

They are now being seen at Short Beach in Stratford (DV), Sherwood Island (JJ) and on the saltmarsh a Manresa Island in Norwalk (FM). An excellent count of 18 Virginia Rails was made at Little Pond in White Memorial Foundation on April 25 (DRo). In the northeast, where they are seldom reported, two to four Soras were calling May 19 at Wyndham Land Trust in Pomfret (GW). Two Common Moorhens were reported from Miles Sanctuary in West Cornwall on May 17 (FG et al.). A **Sandhill Crane** was found May 3 in a farm field at Station 43 (CN fide CEK).

Milford Point held a peak count of 600 Black-bellied Plovers May 24, illustrating this species' typical late May push through the state (DV). Single American Golden Plovers, rare in spring, were at HBSP May 7 (CR) and at Milford Point May 21 (DV). There were 140 Greater Yellowlegs in Stratford April 29 (DV). Millwoods Park in Wethersfield held a good concentration of six Solitary Sandpipers May 16 (SK), and the first arrival was about a week early April 17 in Simsbury (LK). An Upland Sandpiper rested in a grassy lot at HBSP on April 27 (JGr), and one dropped in at Sherwood Island on May 5 (RS). On May 21, Milford Point held four White-rumped Sandpipers, which are typically late migrants, and two

Western Sandpipers, which are rare anytime in spring (DV); one Western was still there May 23 (TK). Pectoral Sandpipers, noted for early arrivals, were first found March 31 at HBSP (AS). A Short-billed Dowitcher was a good inland find May 22 at Bantam Lake (DT,FZ). A female American Woodcock with two young was noted May 25 at White Memorial (DRo). A good count of 30+ Common Snipe was made April 9 at Wyndham Land Trust in Pomfret (RD). A female **Wilson's Phalarope** was at HBSP May 13-14 (GW et al.), and a male was there May 26-28 (CR, PH et al.). A single **Red-necked Phalarope** was a pleasant surprise at Mead Pond in New Canaan on May 19 (EJ,FG).

GULLS THROUGH CUCKOOS

A first-winter **Black-headed Gull** was present periodically in April in Stamford, and an adult was there through April 21 (PDU); a first-winter was present on several dates in early April at the Oyster River mouth in Milford/West Haven (GH et al.). Up to three **Little Gulls** were in Stamford in April (PDU et al.); the regular April occurrences in Milford peaked at three on April 7 at Oyster River mouth (FM), with one at Merwin Point the same day (FM) and one at Bayview Beach the day before (GN). Bantam

Lake attracted three north-bound Bonaparte's Gulls April 26 (GH), and on the coast several thousand were off Stamford during the regular April movement (PDU).

A first-winter **Iceland Gull** remained through March 31 at Holly Pond in Stamford (PDU), and an adult that wintered at Westbrook was present to at least April 20 (PCo). Others included one at Long Beach in Stratford April 9 (CB); two at Lordship April 11 (FM); and at least three lingering into April at Manchester landfill (PCo). The Manchester landfill still held up to three **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** May 3 (PCo), and at least one wintered in Stamford (PDU). Another Lesser Black-backed, neither at a dump nor on the coast, was a nice find on the Farmington River in Collinsville April 25 (PCa). A first-winter **Glaucous Gull** was in Stamford April 7 (PDU), and one was at the Hartford landfill April 28, along with one Iceland Gull (CEK). At the Manchester landfill, three Glaucous were present in early April and one lingered to May 3 (PCo).

An unusually good showing by Caspian Terns included one April 25 at North Cove in Old Saybrook (LT), one April 28 at Watch Rock in Old Lyme (PP) and one May 22 at Lords Cove in Old Lyme (HG). A Common Tern was a good inland find

May 8 at Goodwin Reservoir in Colebrook (FZ). A bird believed to be a **White-winged Tern**, an Old World species that has been confirmed several times in New Jersey, Delaware, and New York, was reported by a single observer May 20 at Milford Point (PCo). Details have been submitted to the ARCC. If accepted, it would be a first state record. Two Black Terns were seen by a boater off Westbrook on May 20 (TE fide FM). Black Skimmers were back at their newly established nesting colony at Sandy Point in West Haven on May 18 (P&AH). The only alcid of the winter or spring was a **Razorbill** April 3 at Stonington Point (RBA).

Two Monk Parakeets on April 9 in the Mount Carmel section of Hamden were well inland of their usual haunts (AB). A Common Barn-Owl was at HBSP on May 15 and a few days thereafter (BG, JMe et al.); one was at Lordship March 14 (FM, LDo); and another was harassed by crows May 9 at Sherwood Island (SS). Two Long-eared Owls were in Fairfield in March, following a winter that produced very few sightings (BD). Single Short-eared Owls were noted on several occasions in March at HBSP (MH, SD). A **Chuck-will's-widow**, a rare but in recent years annual spring visitor, was heard for five minutes on May 2 in Chester (PP). Whip-

poor-will reports included an early one April 16 at Stony Creek (CW); singles on April 28 in Durham (NM) and Ellington (CEk); one May 7 in Cove Island Park in Stamford (PDU, MMo); one May 8 and 14 at Barn Island (TBI); and up to three in a backyard in Sterling May 29 (RD, LDi). The best flight of Common Nighthawks was 200 on May 28 at White Memorial (DRo, RPa). A Black-billed Cuckoo was a very early arrival April 25 in Branford (JHi); the record arrival date is April 23. A Red-headed Woodpecker that wintered in New Preston was still present May 14 (SA); one that wintered in Coventry was still there April 3 (MAI), and a winterer in East Haddam remained through at least mid-April (GH et al.).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH VIREOS

An Olive-sided Flycatcher was on the early side May 12 at Bent of the River Audubon Sanctuary in Southbury (PB); others were more timely, May 22 in Sharon and Cornwall (DT, FZ), May 25 at Sherwood Island (RS) and May 26 in Hamden (J&CZ). Single Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were timely at Cove Island Park in Stamford on May 21 (PDU), River Road in Kent May 23 (TK), and Sherwood Island May 25 (RS). Alder Flycatcher, the latest arrival among the state's regular

breeding species, was first noted May 20 at its breeding stronghold at White Memorial (DRo, PF et al.); a passage migrant was a bit early May 11 in Stratford (CB) and another was at Northwest Park in Windsor on May 15 (PDe). One of the best sightings of the season was a **Western Kingbird** May 26 at HBSP (CR); there is only one other, somewhat equivocal, spring record for the state, although there are a few from neighboring states. Horned Larks were found nest-building at Milford Point on May 8 (PCo), one of the few nesting reports in recent years. Seven Purple Martins, sparse migrants in the state, visited Cove Island May 6 (PDu). A Northern Rough-winged Swallow was found on the record-early date of March 21 in Essex (JMe,MH,PCi). A flock of 80 Bank Swallows on May 20 in Bridgeport illustrates how late this species can be on the move (DV).

A count of 12 Fish Crows on March 5 at White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield was illustrative of this species' spring arrival schedule (DRo); nests were noted at three locations at the Foundation in May (DRo). A Common Raven was seen at a nest site in Killingly on March 11 (RD), and two were present for the third time in the last four springs at Lantern Hill in North Stonington (GW); but the big

raven news was the confirmation of nesting in Hamden, pushing the species' expanding breeding range in the state almost to the coast (JZ,AB). Two Red-breasted Nuthatches April 30 in Killingworth were harbingers of an unusual summer wave of boreal species that would sweep across the state (JHi). Single Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's Thrushes were in Fairfield May 16 (DV), East Rock both May 12 (TK) and May 21 (BAg) and Nachaug Forest on May 21 (MSz). The best counts of Swainson's Thrush were six on May 14 at White Memorial (DRo) and three each on May 9 in Shelton (DV) and May 12 in Waterbury (GH). A good count of five Brown Thrashers was noted in Beacon Falls on May 4 (RPe). Following winter's good showing, it wasn't surprising that a Northern Shrike remained through March 18 at Thompson dam in Thompson, where it was heard singing (RD), and another lingered to at least March 1 in Bloomfield (GH,NC). A White-eyed Vireo had already reached Fairfield by April 27 (DV); away from the coast, singles were at White Memorial on May 9 (DRo), in Sharon on May 22 (DT,FZ) and in Hamden May 25-26 (AB). A Red-eyed Vireo was a bit early April 28 in Manchester (CEL).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

At least one Golden-winged Warbler returned to the traditional River Road location in Kent (SK et al.), and this declining species showed signs of hanging on, with reports from White Memorial Foundation on May 15 (DRo) and Cornwall on May 22 (DT,FZ). Brewster's Warblers were in Woodbury May 3 (RN) and Mansfield May 12 (BP). The rarer Lawrence's hybrid was in Waterbury during the big May 6 fallout (BF). A Tennessee Warbler was almost inexplicably early April 18 at Station 43 (GH). An **Orange-crowned Warbler** was a good find April 22-25 in East Rock (CL,DSO,JB). Just when you think you have those warbler songs down, on May 10 a Yellow Warbler at White Memorial was doing a perfect rendition of a Chestnut-sided Warbler song (BF). Single Cape May Warblers were in Norwich on May 6, an early date (GW), in Cornwall on May 11 (FM) and in Easton on May 22 (DV). White Memorial held four Bay-breasted Warblers May 15 (DRo), and an extraordinarily early one was reported April 22 in Guilford (MAN). In Chaplin, 10 Cerulean Warblers were found at four locations on May 21 (MSz), and a single at East Rock on May 8 was a good find near the coast (SK,TK); the colony at River Road in Kent held at least 15 on

May 11 (BF). The season's only Prothonotary Warbler was a male May 2-6 in a yard in Darien (JMh). A Kentucky Warbler was present May 18-22 in a Bridgeport park (DV, PB et al.), and one appeared in a yard in Hamden on May 20 (CZ). Mourning Warbler reports came from River Road in Kent on May 15 (DC) and May 23 (TK), East Rock May 21-22 (FD,JB), Cove Island May 21-24 (PDu) and Hamden May 25 (AB). White Memorial produced four Wilson's Warblers May 12 (DRo). Yellow-breasted Chats were at Bluff Point in Groton on April 10 (PDe) and in Orange on May 17 (MSz); one that probably wintered was in Chester in mid-March (AH et al.).

The last American Tree Sparrows were noted April 28 in Litchfield (DRo), a late date. A Seaside Sparrow was an early arrival April 2 at HBSP (CR). A Vesper Sparrow was an unexpected visitor at White Memorial Foundation on April 20 (DRo), and one was at Crook Horn Road in Southbury April 8-9 (NC). A search in Shelton on May 9 turned up five Lincoln's Sparrows during their typical but easily overlooked migration period (DV); three were at Station 43 May 11 (PDe). White-crowned Sparrows were widespread and conspicuous May 9-12 (DV et al.). Three Lapland Longspurs were noted through March 21 at Lordship (DV). A

good count of 16 Rusty Blackbirds was made at Quinebaug Fish hatchery on March 9 (RD), but White Memorial is the premier spot for this species, with 145 present on April 24 (DRo, L&FZ). **Boat-tailed Grackle** returned to Great Meadows in Stratford, where the state's only nesting has been confirmed, with a male present April 3 (CB). Two Evening Grosbeaks were unexpected visitors at the White Memorial feeders on April 27 (DRo), presaging summer appearances.

[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, 145 Farmington Ave., Waterbury, CT 06710) if they are to be included in the field notes.]

OBSERVERS,

CONTRIBUTORS (**boldface**):

Sharon Abner, Bev Agler (BAG), Mary Albro (MAI), Bill Altmann (BAI), Mike Anderson (MAN), **Renee Baade** (RBA), **Jim Bair**, Tom Baptist (TBA), **Charles Barnard**, L. Bausher, **Trudi Bird** (TBI), Rick Boughton (RBO), **Andrew Brand**, **Polly Brody**, Milan Bull, **Jay Carlisle**, **Paul Carrier** (PCa), Paul Cianfaglione (PCI), Dwight Christenson, **Patrick Comins** (PCo), **Neil Currie**, Fritz Davis, **Paul Desjardins** (PDe), Buzz Devine, Angela Dimmitt, Linda

Dixon (LDi), **Robert Dixon**, S. Dombrowski, Linda Donohue (LDo), **Patrick Dugan** (PDu); Tom Eason, **Carl Ekroth** (CEK), Chris Elphick (CEI), **Bruce Finnan**, Tommy Fox, Paul Fusco, **Frank Gallo**, B. Garber, John Gaskell (JGa), **Ted Gilman**, **Hank Golet**, Joe Green (JGr); Michael Green; **Anki Hamback**, Peter Hamback, Michael Hamilton, **Greg Hanisek**, **Roy Harvey**, **John Himmelman** (JHi), T. Holloway, **Jim Hunter** (JHu), Jalna Jaeger, **Elsbeth Johnson**, **Len Kendall**, **Tom Kilroy**, Bill Kolodnicki, **Steve Kotchko**, John Longstreth, Chris Loscalzo, Peter Lusa, **Frank Mantlik**, Rob McClenahan (RMc), **Rich McCormack** (RMk), Janet Mehmel (JMh); Mary Meyer (MMe), **Jamie Meyers** (JMe), Michael Moccio (MMo), Nancy Morand, **Russ Naylor**, Gerry Nicholls, Charlie Nielson, Fred Norton, Ray Packard (RPa), **Ron Pelletier** (RPe), Bob Pirrie, **Carena Pooth**, **Patty Prendergast**, **Dave Provencher**, **Charlie Rafford**, Eric Ramm, Rare Bird Alert, Doug Rodda (DRd), **Dave Rosgen** (DRo), Dwight Smith (DSm), Mark Scott, (MSc), Stacey Shaw, Walton Smith (WSm), **Richard Soffer**, Dana Sonnenschein (DSn), **Dori Sosensky** (DSo), Andrew Spencer, Jeff Spendelow, **Bruce Stevenson**, **Will Storz** (WSt), **Mark Szantyr** (MSz), **John Triana**, **Dave Tripp**, **Louise Tucker**, **Dennis Varza**, Linda Vegliante, Chris Woerner (CWn), **Glenn Williams**, Chris Wood (CWo), David Wright, Carol Zipp, **Jim Zipp**, Fran Zygmunt, Liz Zygmunt.

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



PHOTO CHALLENGE

Julian Hough

ANSWER TO PHOTO CHALLENGE 28

It's early autumn and a small shorebird feeds in a pool by the coast. It is quite nondescript and worn looking. The worn plumage ages the bird as an adult. Juveniles would be fresh and uniform in plumage. The overall color is a cold gray, finely streaked gray-brown on the head and breast with a pale supercilium above the eye. The bill is of medium length and there is a noticeable pale flesh-brown base to the lower mandible. The color and length of the legs are not discernible from the photo and are of no use in the identification process. We can, however, eliminate a few of the more abundant species to be found around our coasts on the above evidence. The bill is too short for Dunlin, while an adult Semipalmated Sandpiper would be browner with heavier breast markings. The overall shape of the bird is attenuated, with at least three primary tips visible beyond the longest tertial. These long wings projecting past the tail are an important clue and a feature shared by only two species - White-rumped and Baird's Sandpipers.

In fall, these two species are relatively straightforward to identify. The gray appearance, indistinct supercilium and pale base to the bill are all typical of fall adult White-rumps, while the chevrons extending along the entire length of the flanks are characteristic of this species. Fall adult Baird's Sandpipers are very scarce, mainly due to their early migration through the interior of the country.



Scaly, 'mini-wheat' juveniles, less experienced in the art of migration are the norm in the fall. Juvenile Baird's have a longer, straighter, and all black bill (lacking a pale base as in both ages of White-rumped), a broader supercilium and often a noticeable eyering. In flight they have a dark bar extending through the rump. Juvenile White-rumps are notable late arrivals, usually occurring in the later half of September, rarely before then. They are very warm above, with chestnut tones to the head and scapulars (which isolates a colder grayer nape) and, in flight, a white rump! So, combined with the knowledge of migration times and molt, it makes the identification relatively straightforward. White-rumps also have a very distinctive, high-pitched, almost insect-like call, transcribed as "zit". This typically 'gray' adult White-rumped was photographed by me, at Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge, New York in August 1998.

Julian Hough, 21 Walnut St., Naugatuck, CT 06770.



Photo Challenge 29. Identify the species. Answer next issue.

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

Editor

Betty S. Kleiner - 5 Flintlock Ridge, Simsbury, CT 06070
(860) 658-5670 - CTWarbler@cs.com

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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 computer 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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