THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology

Volume 21 No. 1 **January 2001** Pages 1 - 40

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A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology

Volume 21, Number 1 January 2001

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ABOUT OUR COVER

American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*)

by Mark S. Szantyr

Mark S. Szantyr is an artist and educator living in Waterbury, Connecticut with his wife Gail and his 14 year old son, Bobby. A long-time Connecticut birder, he is a licensed bird-bander, and secretary of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut.

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 College. He has illustrated a number of texts and ornithological journals, including numerous covers for *The Connecticut Warbler* and is a regular contributor to the journal's series of bird identification articles.

CONNECTICUT'S 2000 FALL HAWK MIGRATION

Neil Currie

In 1971, when birders at many lookouts across Connecticut began to count migrating hawks, an overall picture of the fall migration began to emerge. Since then each year has added to that picture. In Connecticut the hawks pass to the southwest, avoiding the waters of Long Island Sound, and most are migrating during the day or two following the passage of a cold front. After a trickle of hawks in late August and during the first third of September, the migration begins in earnest as Sharp-shinned Hawks, American Kestrels, and Ospreys, passing over inland sites, become concentrated along or near the shore of Long Island Sound. From about September 12 through September 26 Broad-winged Hawks in large numbers (Table 1) move to the southwest over inland lookouts. Late in September there may be a heavy movement of Broadwings along or near the shore (Table 2). By mid-September large numbers of Sharpies, Kestrels, and Ospreys are also migrating, accompanied by smaller numbers of Northern Harriers, Cooper's Hawks, and Merlins, and even smaller numbers of Peregrine Falcons. Bald Eagles migrate throughout the month and continue to be seen during the rest of the fall. Then in late October and early November Northern Goshawks, Red-tailed Hawks, and Red-shouldered Hawks will be on the move. The timing of the migration of each species, specifically at Lighthouse Point, and in general across the state, in the year 2000, is shown in Table 2. This is the picture that has emerged from almost thirty years of hawk watching in Connecticut. With this knowledge, inland watchers are on hand on most days for the Broadwing flights between September 12 and 26. At Quaker Ridge (Table 3), located at the National Audubon Center in Greenwich, and at Lighthouse Point (Table 4), on the east side of New Haven Harbor, watches run daily from late August through at least mid-November.

This is the general picture, but as is true in nature there are always exceptions and surprises. To a birder making a first visit to a hawk watch it must seem that the sole function of the watch is to count the hawks. This is happening, but birders are there because they are excited by the sight of the migrating hawks, perhaps a big day with hundreds of hawks passing, or perhaps a life bird, or an eagle, maybe a Golden. The fall 2000 flight followed the general

pattern, but it also had its exceptions, surprises, and exciting moments.

At most inland lookouts heavy flights followed the cold fronts of September 12, 15, 21, and 24. At Good Hill on the 21st 608 hawks were counted and on the 27th there were 761. At Johnnycake Mountain in Burlington, on the 13th there were 689 hawks, 2,301 on the 16th, and 2,475 on the 25th. Also at Johnnycake on the 26th an inland record 13 Bald Eagles was recorded. At other inland sites (Table 1) there were one or two days during September on which over 1,000 hawks passed. At Quaker Ridge on five days between September 16th and 25th there were counts of 4,312, 1,106, 1,297, 4,670, and 1,056. At all of these sites the majority of the hawks, over 90%, were Broadwings.

For various reasons in recent years a few established sites have been abandoned. At the same time new ones have been established with surprising results. A lesson learned from this is that hawks are not just passing over specific points each year, but can be seen anywhere over western Connecticut on a good migration day. Good Hill, Heritage Village, Osborne Hill, and the Middle School in Torrington (Figure 1, Table 5) are the newest sites. Maltby Lakes in Orange has been covered for several years and is proving to be a spot receiving hawks from all of the New Haven area. Unfortunately, this year the long established lookout at Booth Hill in West Hartland had to be abandoned due to the property owner's objection to the number of people visiting the site. Fortunately the hawk watchers moved instead, to Johnnycake Mountain, spending more time there than in the past. They were rewarded with the highest total inland Broadwing count of the year, and a record inland count of 25 Bald Eagles (Tables 1 and 5).

From year to year at each inland site, a common variation is the difference in the number of Broadwings counted. The Broadwing counts at Quaker Ridge over the past four years reflect this (Table 3). At Lighthouse the total count of hawks is in a four year decline (Table 4). There the counts of Ospreys, Northern Harriers, Sharpshins, Cooper's, and Kestrels are down and all contribute to the total decline. On the other hand numbers were up at Johnnycake, Taine Mountain, Chestnut Hill, Huntington, Maltby Lakes, and at Quaker Ridge.

Because they are rare in the northeast in the fall, the appearance of a Golden Eagle, a Swainson's Hawk, a Rough-legged Hawk, or a Black Vulture, is always exciting. On October 13th watchers at Quaker Ridge were treated to the rare appearance of a Swainson's Hawk. A second Swainson's was seen in the Naugatuck Valley

during the fall. Over all the years of hawk watching only a handful of these birds have been observed. A Golden Eagle sighting is also a rare treat. During the fall this occurred once at Good Hill, and three times each at Lighthouse Point and Quaker Ridge. Black Vultures continue to be more prominent in Connecticut with one at Good Hill, three at Quaker Ridge, and 14 (apparently most in daily migration) at Heritage Village. Rough-legged Hawks were seen only at Lighthouse Point and Quaker Ridge, one each in late fall. This small count is typical of the past few years. Now, in January, Roughlegs are appearing in large numbers around the state (The hawk migration has continued into January, 2001!).

At the June conference of the Hawk Migration Association of North America, Connecticut was honored when three Connecticut hawk watchers were presented with certificates of appreciation. Polly Brody, Phyllis Kitchen, and Edith Welles have each finished twenty one years of helping to monitor the hawk migration.

Thanks to the following birders who were in charge of identifying, counting, and educating at Connecticut lookouts this fall, and special thanks to Donna Rose Manwaring, a long-time watcher at Quaker Ridge. Donna Rose has accepted a position as naturalist at Bent of the River, the National Audubon Society'sanctuary in Southbury, and will be leaving the Quaker Ridge site.

The following were watcher/counters: Lois Aldi, Ralph Amodei, Phil Asperelli, Neila Augelli, David Babington, Bill Banks, Tom Baptist, Charlie Barnard, Dan Barvir, Trudy Battaly, Ray Belding, Tom Bravo, Polly Brody, Paul Carrier, Barbara Cole, Al Collins, Rich Conners, Mary Ann and Neil Currie, Fritz Davis, Cynthia Ehlinger, Dick English, Larry Fischer, Ann and David Fiske, Steve Foisey, Joyce Grohoski, Frank Guida, Tony Hager, Greg Hanisek, Elsbeth Johnson, Paul Kennedy, Phyllis Kitchen, Lisa Lozier, Jane Low, Donna Rose Manwaring, Tom Mason, Steve Mayo, Jim McBride, Marty Moore, Vicki Nigro, Brian O'Toole, Gary Palmer, Drew Panko, Janet Petricone, Matt Popp, Stephen Potter, Tim Reed, Betty and Al Root, David Rosgen, Jeri Ross, Meredith Sampson, Bill Stoddard, Tony Tortora, Mike Usai, Bill Wallace, Edith Welles, Janet Zepko, and Carol and Jim Zipp. Apologies to anyone I have inadvertently left out.

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2000 HAWK WATCH SITE LOCATIONS

Beelzebub Road, South Windsor
Taine Mountain, Burlington
Johnnycake Farm, Burlington
Middle School, Torrington
Chestnut Hill, Litchfield
Good Hill, Woodbury
Heritage Village, Southbury
Osborne Hill, Sandy Hook
Huntington State Park, Redding
East Shore Park, New Haven
Lighthouse Point, New Haven
Maltby Lakes, Orange
Waveny Park, New Canaan
Quaker Ridge, Greenwich

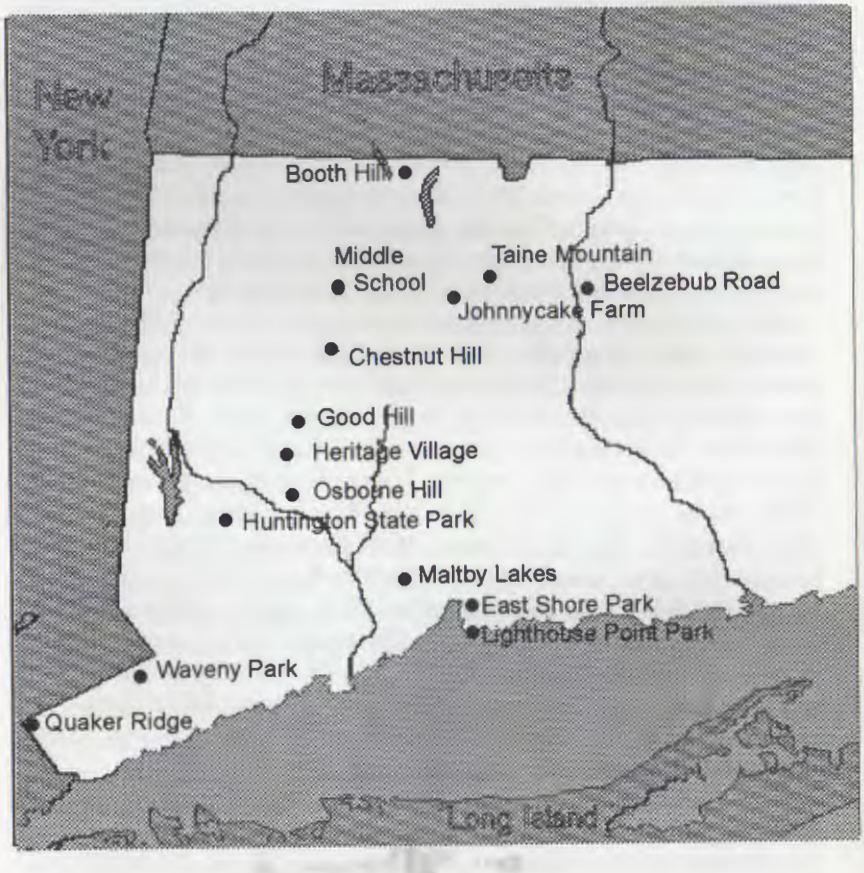

Figure 1. 2000 Hawk Flight Lookout Sites

Table 1: Broad-winged Hawk Flights - Fall 2000

	Weekend							September							Weekend								Total	Total
SITES*	pre 10	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	post 29	Hrs.	Count
Beelzebub Road				R		10		19			R				R		101	R					28	130
Taine Mountain		3		A		1		2674	68		A			109	A			A					22	2855
Johnnycake Farm		20		I	651	29		2251	121		I			309	I		2432	I					42	5813
Middle School	54	0		N				103	389		N				N	19		N					20	565
Chestnut Hill			4		370	622		129	346	273	12	41	1230	255			852						56	4134
Good Hill					15	617		198	488	87		221	599	161			59		737	42			42	3224
Heritage Village					323	65	12	1250	430			10	136	646					456	4			40	3332
Osborne Hill					10	191	2	2084	1003			17	165	326		38	398		20				46	4254
Huntington St.Pk.	0	3				14		1115	392														30	1524
East Shore Park																						2	5	2
Lighthouse Point	62							8				1		38			376	7	4	544	53	59	588	1152
Maltby Lakes	39	49	29	4	2	83		115	74	61		110	32	2023			351		381	296	16		89	3665
Waveny Park						2		332	71	3													17	408
Quaker Ridge	42	29	2		603	65	2	4173	1040	39	7	30	1227	4510		289	943		610	723	41	33	552	14408

* See Table 5 for towns site location.

Table 2: Lighthouse Point - Number of Hawks Each Five Day Period - Fall 2000

Dates / Species	August			September						October						November					Total
	19-21	22-26	27-31	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-31	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	
TV							2	11	41	2	49	3	20	138	10	37	2				315
OS	30	29	11	41	77	83	106	211	150	45	104	57	12	9	2						967
BE	1			1	2	1		9	7		7	5	1	9	3	1		2			49
NH		3		7	17	15	12	43	36	7	31	14	28	23	90	40	9	8	4	1	388
SS		2	2	54	154	268	244	467	360	207	842	340	377	271	719	235	31	25	5	3	4606
CH	1	2	1	4	17	27	25	91	93	56	155	40	39	55	49	21	7	3	1	3	690
NG														6	1	3					10
RS				1				1	1		5			24	19	31	2		1		85
BW	42	5		9	6		9	414	608	12	40	1	1	2	2		1				1152
SW																					0
RT				2		1	1	6	5	4	12	1	2	58	144	78	11	8	7	5	347
RL														1							1
GE												1		1	1						3
AK	1	6	4	47	53	109	113	296	274	61	374	103	143	38	26	4		1			1653
ML	1		4	6	16	17	6	53	14	7	25	12	44	13	8	1	9	2	3	1	243
PG		1	1			1		7	3	3	5	3	5	2			2				33
UR																					169
TOTAL	76	48	23	172	342	522	518	1609	1592	404	1649	580	672	650	1074	451	74	49	21	13	10711

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
UR - unidentified raptor

Table 3: Quaker Ridge Hawkwatch, Greenwich, CT - Fall 2000

MONTH	Days	Hrs.	SPECIES																	Total
			BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	SW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UR	
August	10	62			18	3		10				14					5			2	52
September	29	210	1	3	313	33	72	945	61		4	14361		8			289	16	5	23	16134
October	28	211	2	187	69	14	47	806	278	9	48	33	1	132		3	233	27	8	31	1928
November	13	69		23			6	73	10	1	62			146	1			6		3	331
Total 2000	80	552	3	213	400	50	125	1834	349	10	114	14408	1	286	1	3	527	49	13	59	18445
Total 1999		471		382	633	77	145	2282	321	17	137	10938		346	2	8	804	63	13	110	16278
Total 1998		616		353	923	93	313	3436	315	9	128	9949		238		8	922	67	19	82	16855
Total 1997		590	1	554	610	67	127	3360	368	13	126	15018	2	290			700	93	23	70	21422

Table 4: Lighthouse Point Hawkwatch, New Haven, CT - Fall 2000

MONTH	Days	Hrs.	SPECIES																	Total
			BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	SW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UR	
August	10	38			70	1	3	4	4			47					11	5	2	3	150
September	30	205		54	668	20	130	1547	257		3	1046		15			892	112	11	76	4831
October	31	212		222	229	25	193	2756	394	7	48	58		221	1	3	745	109	18	73	5102
November	30	133		39		3	62	299	35	3		1		111			5	17	2	17	628
											34										
Total 2000	101	588		315	967	49	388	4606	690	10	85	1152		347	1	3	1653	243	33	169	10711
Total 1999		548		198	1474	52	628	6056	847	25	68	352		969	5	2	2152	402	50	197	13477
Total 1998		560		254	1516	41	806	6529	771	17	26	371		258	5	3	2598	341	48	156	13740
Total 1997		543		206	1811	38	459	8212	876	12	50	2054	1	212		1	1865	242	53	155	16247

Table 5: Connecticut - All Lookouts - Fall 2000

SITES	Hrs.	SPECIES																		Total
		BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	SW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UR	
Beelzebub Road, South Windsor	28			6			7				130					3			7	153
Taine Mountain, Burlington	22			19	1		20				2855									2895
Johnnycake Farm, Burlington	42			33	25	5	70	9	1	1	5813					48	14	2	20	6041
Middle School, Torrington	20			7	3		19	5	1	1	565		4			8	3	1	12	629
Chestnut Hill, Litchfield	56			33	17	11	43		1		4134					20	1		5	4265
Good Hill, Woodbury	42	1		21	5	4	19	15	1	1	3224				1	7	5		8	3312
Heritage Village, Southbury	40	14		35	4	3	51	3		1	3332		27			20			18	3508
Osborne Hill, Sandy Hook	46			21	3	3	41	4			4254					23	2		5	4356
Huntington State Park, Redding	30			7		4	37	3		1	1524		3			7	1			1587
East Shore Park, New Haven	10		29	5	1	2	211	20	1	1	2		14			23	4		6	317
Lighthouse Point, New Haven	588		315	967	49	388	4606	690	10	85	1152		347	1	3	1653	243	33	169	10711
Maltby Lakes, Orange	89		25	447	15	8	213	15		4	3665		16			146	8	10	18	4590
Waveny Park, New Canaan	19			18	1		63	4		1	408		4			5			3	507
Quaker Ridge, Greenwich	552	3	213	400	50	125	1834	349	10	114	14408	1	286	1	3	527	49	13	59	18445

SPECIES ABBREVIATIONS

BV - Black Vulture
TV - Turkey Vulture
OS - Osprey
BE - Bald Eagle
NH - Northern Harrier
SS - Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH - Cooper's Hawk
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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

IDENTIFICATION NOTES
But It Has White Wing Bars!

Mark S. Szantyr

On 8 January 2001, Andy Brand called to let me know about an unusual junco at the feeders where he works. Andy knows that I have a great curiosity about juncos and that I would be interested in his find. He said that earlier that day he had a junco with two white wing bars repeatedly visiting the scattered seed on and below the rear deck at his employer's house on the property of Broken Arrow Nurseries in Hamden. We made plans to meet the next morning to try to see and photograph the bird.We both agreed that it was most likely just a normal "Slate-colored" Dark-eyed Junco, (*Junco hyemalis hyemalis*).

Now just hold on a darned minute you say. You have your field guide in hand. You have flipped to the back where the sparrows and juncos reside, and find a junco with white wing bars and lo and behold it is called White-winged Junco, *Junco hyemalis aikeni*, the subspecies of Dark-eyed Junco from the eastern portion of Montana and Wyoming, and the Dakotas. A genuine vagrant! Why weren't we excited?

The distribution of the "Dark-eyed" group of juncos is extraordinarily complex and the range of plumage variations is astounding. Add to this the history of different subspecies interbreeding, and the array of possible characters becomes overwhelming. Add to all of this the occasional anomalous plumage character (leucism, albinism, etc.) and it is amazing we can do anything with them at all.

So when Greg Hanisek and I arrived at the site the next morning and, with Andy, observed the bird in question, we were pretty certain it was not a White-winged Junco, but a Slate-colored Junco, the standard eastern form of Dark-eyed Junco, but that it was showing two fairly distinct, white wing bars, made up of white tips to the gray greater and median wing coverts.

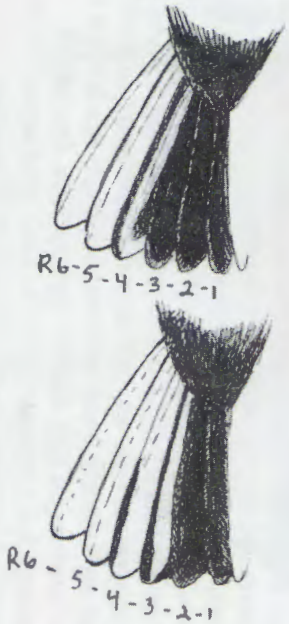
BUT IT HAS WHITE WING BARS!

How then would you know if you had a true White-winged Junco, *J. h. aikeni.* at your feeder? This question would certainly be best answered with the bird in the hand, as measurements would

be a reasonably conclusive way to distinguish *aikeni* from *hyemalis*. White-winged Junco is measurably longer winged and tailed and has a larger and deeper bill than Slate-colored Junco, even allowing for gender-related size differences. Another way that this subspecies differs from Slate-colored is in the amount of white in the open tail. (Figure 1) White-winged Junco shows markedly more white in the tail than Slate-colored Junco. Typical Slate-colored Juncos have 12 tail feathers and show on each side the outer tail feather, R(ectrix) 6, as all white, the next inner feather, R5, as mostly white, and the next inner feather, R4, as variably white and gray, withthe white usually occupying the outer web. Sometimes it is all or nearly all gray. The remaining tail feathers, R3, R2, and R1 are usually solidly gray. White-winged Junco usually shows R6 and R5 as all white, R4 is mostly white with only an extremely narrow gray area along the central part of the feather shaft, and R3 as largely white with variable amounts of gray. R2 and R1 are solidly gray. While this, too, is best determined in the hand, it may be possible to notice a significantly larger white area in the tail as the birds fly off the ground. Still another way that White-winged Junco can differ from Slate-colored Junco is in the color and quality of the gray portion of its plumage. White-winged Juncos are often a paler, more blue-gray overall and show palest in the flanks. The quality of this coloration can be quite different from the charcoal gray of Slate-colored Junco. White-winged also tends to show a contrasting blackish area in the area around the bill and lores. BE VERY CAREFUL WHEN TRYING TO DETERMINE SUBSPECIES OF JUNCO BASED ON PLUMAGE COLORATION! As will be explained in future junco identification notes, this practice can drive you crazy.

The junco at Andy's feeder was not large in comparison to the other juncos present. It was not paler except by what might be normal variation based on age and sex class of individual birds, and it showed a normal amount of white in the tail. But what about the wing bars? David Sibley, in his outstanding new field guide to North American birds, notes that this phenomenon can occur in one out of 200 Slate-colored Juncos (Figure 2) and warns to use all other characters in making this identification. In fact, I have seen one other individual marked similarly to the Hamden bird last winter in Connecticut.

I have spent an enormous amount of time in the past few years studying the juncos at my feeder and responding to reports of "odd" juncos from farther afield. It is amazing how variable these birds are. I have been rewarded with seeing a true "Oregon"



A. Typical pattern ot the spread tail feathers in Slate-colored Junco, *J. h. hyemalis*. Note that on some birds, especially females, R4 can be mostly gray.

B. Typical pattern of the spread tail feathers in White-winged Junco, J. *h. aiekeni*. *Aikeni* is also larger and paler gray than *hyemalis*.

Figure 1

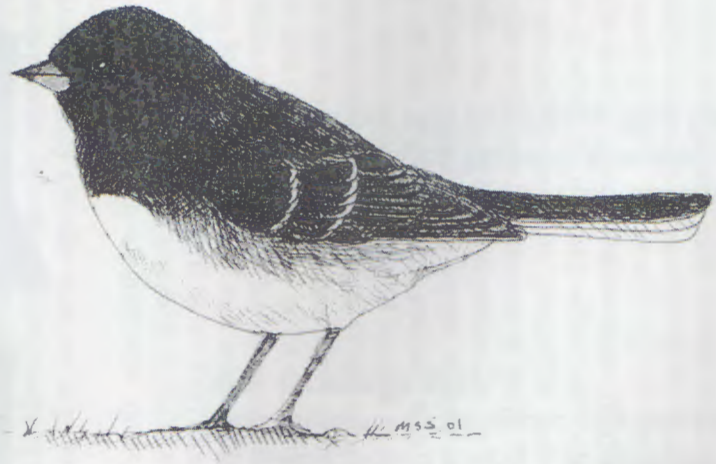


Figure 2 The "Slate-colored" form of Dark-eyed Junco, *J. h. hyemais* shows white tips to the greater and median wing coverts in about 1 in 200 birds.

Dark-eyed Junco on two occasions but more often than not, am left scratching my head wondering just how much pink in the flanks is enough. Just how hooded is it really? I urge you all look carefully at these little winter visitors to your feeding stations and start noting how variable they actually are. Call me if you find an interesting one but don't be disappointed if it is "just a Slate-colored Junco." I never am.

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DIET CHOICE IN THE AMERICAN ROBIN: DOES THE EARLY BIRD HEAR THE WORM?

JOHN P. ROCHE

The American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*), North America's largest thrush, is familiar to everyone as it forages for earth worms (e.g., *Lumbricus* spp. and *Helodrilus* spp.) on lawns in the spring and summer. But the robin does more than search for earthworms. It also gleans small invertebrates off of plants, and, for much of the year eats primarily berries and other small fruits. Also, while robins are thought of as the traditional harbinger of spring, many robins in the continental United States overwinter, relying on fruits to survive through the cold months. The robin also utilizes a wide range of habitats other than lawns. As breeders, they can be found in suburban and agricultural areas where shortgrass habitats are mixed with trees, as well as riparian areas, early successional forests, and partially logged forest stands. In the winter, they prefer forests, and in late winter, they begin to return to more open areas (Sallabanks 1995, Sallabanks and James 1999). The robin is thus a flexible bird, capable of foraging for a wide range of foods in a range of seasonal conditions and habitats. The present paper reviews diet selection in this abundant and highly flexible species, providing both a summary of findings and a call for much-needed further research.

Understanding diet selection is important to ornithologists because the choice of food types bears directly on a bird's ability to survive and produce offspring: the more calories and nutrients gathered per time, the lower the chance of starvation and the higher chance of raising successful offspring (see, e.g., Schoener 1971, Stephens 1990). Understanding diet selection is also important because what a bird chooses to eat shapes the community in which it lives. For example, by eating prey of a particular animal species, a forager can reduce the population size of that species, whereas by eating fruits and dispersing the seeds of a particular plant species, a forager can increase or reshape the population size of that species. The American Robin utilizes such a diversity of foods in such a diversity of habitats that its diet selection behavior is of particular interest and importance.

Fruit Selection

The amount of fruit eaten by robins varies dramatically with the seasons. In the spring, when young are being raised on protein rich insects, the robin's diet can consist of less than 10% fruit; in the fall and winter, when invertebrates are much less available in the temperate zone, its diet can consist of more than 90% fruit (Wheelwright 1986).

The robin's choices of particular fruits seem to follow the general rule: pick the fruit offering the most energy per time. In a pattern that follows this general rule, robins have been observed to display a hierarchy of cues to select among fruits. This was discovered in a seminal study by Sallabanks (1993), in which he studied the fruit selection behavior of free-ranging and captive robins in a mixed grassland/oak-hawthorn-thicket habitat in western Oregon. In his extensive investigation of robins foraging on European hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Sallabanks examined the following questions: (1) How do robins choose among shrubs? (2) How do robins choose among fruits on a shrub? and (3) How do robins choose which fruits to swallow once they have picked those fruits?

Sallabanks (1993) observed that robins made discriminations among shrubs and fruits within a shrub, but not among fruits once they were picked. That is, once a fruit was picked, it was eaten. Sallabanks found that the most important cue to robins is fruit crop size: fruits with larger crop sizes are preferred to fruits with lower crop sizes (fruits from larger crops are more accessible, and thus require lower search costs). The next most important cue is fruit size, with larger fruits preferred to smaller fruits (larger fruits can be processed more efficiently in terms of energy per time than smaller fruits). The third most important cue is fruit pulpiness, with more pulpy fruits being preferred to less pulpy fruits (Sallabanks 1993). For example, fruits with very high proportions of seeds (and thus less pulp), are avoided in favor of less seedy varieties.

Robins also select fruit on the basis of seed size; they prefer fruits with large seeds to those with small seeds (they quickly regurgitate large seeds, but not small seeds, so eating large-seeded fruits offers them more pulp per time) (Murray et al. 1993). Color, too, influences their fruit selection: in choice tests, robins prefer red and blue fruits over yellow and green fruits (Willson 1994, Willson and Thompson 1982). When faced with a choice between red and blue fruits, they were found to prefer red (Lepczyk 1993). Robins may even prefer fruits infested with invertebrates; infested fruits provide them with needed nitrogen and protein along with

the sugar from fruit pulp (Sallabanks and Courtney 1992).

In choice tests, robins prefer sugar rich fruits to lipid-rich fruits (Lepczyk 1993, Lepczyk et al. 2000). This observation further supports the hypothesis that robins choose fruits according to which offer the most energy/time: sugar-rich fruits were estimated to offer 2.62 kcal/h whereas lipid-rich fruits were estimated to offer only 2.25 kcal/h. Robins can also select fruit on the basis of type of sugar. American Robins do not manufacture sucrase, the enzyme responsible for breaking down the disaccharide sucrose (Karasov and Levey 1990). One study observed that robins sometimes avoid high-sucrose fruits (Brugger 1992), perhaps because of the birds' inability to digest sucrose.

Invertebrate Selection

Much less is known about invertebrate selection in the American Robin than fruit selection. This is not because invertebrates are a less important food source to robins; in the spring, and on through the summer, a large proportion of robins' diets consist of invertebrates (Wheelwright 1986). The bias in relative amounts of information may exist simply because it is easier to study fruit selection than invertebrate selection. Fruit selection can be done easily in the field by observing from which plants individual birds are taking fruit, and can also be done relatively easily in captivity. And a knowledge of fruiting plants is a less daunting taxonomic task than a knowledge of invertebrates (even to the level of family).

Robins glean invertebrates from vegetation, and occasionally will even glean invertebrates off of vegetation while on the wing, but how they select among invertebrates that are available for gleaning has not yet been studied. What has received some study is selection of earthworms while foraging on grassy lawns. Robins frequently forage for earthworms in grassy areas in the spring and summer. They search for earthworms using a widely moving foraging pattern known as *saltatory search* (O'Brian et al. 1989, Anderson et al. 1997) in which they run in a straight line for some distance, then stop and cock their head (the "head-cock" behavior, Heppner 1965), then strike at prey with their bill. In the head-cock behavior, they point one eye at a spot on the ground in front of them and tilt the other eye upwards and to the side, a position that could maximize visual view of potential prey, could maximize the distance between the bird's tympana and create more auditory depth discrimination, or both. After cocking their head in one direction, they often cock it in the other direction, directing their other eye down toward the ground in front of them. Then they jab

their bill into the ground in an attempt to capture a worm (the "bill-pounce" behavior, Heppner 1965). After the bill-pounce, they resume running along the ground until they stop again for another head-cock.

In a qualitative observational study on two robins foraging on lawns in eastern Pennsylvania, Eiserer (1980) reported that the robins he observed preferred to forage in shorter grass over longer grass, and that as grass became longer, the robins bill-pounced less for worms and increasingly gleaned smaller insects off of the vegetation (perhaps because earthworms become harder to see when grass becomes taller). In an observational study of three pairs of robins in Kansas, Swihart and Johnson (1986) observed that in the breeding season, females ate more invertebrates per bout than males, and that adults tended to eat smaller prey and bring larger prey to the nest. Swihart and Johnson also observed that each of the three observed pairs divided their feeding territories, with the male foraging in one segment and the female in the other. This arrangement would presumably be more efficient because it would prevent two birds from searching the same section of lawn in a short time period.

Understanding diet selection depends in part on understanding a forager's powers of perception. This is because in order to be able to consider a food item for selection, a forager must be able to perceive that food item. For a visually acute forager such as a robin, finding colorful berries on a bush by sight is relatively straightforward. However, finding an earthworm under the ground is more perceptually difficult. We have all watched countless robins foraging for earthworms. How do they perceive the worms that they pounce upon and eat? A number of sensory modalities could potentially be used. Sandpipers find buried invertebrates with vibrotactile cues (Barnard 1985), plovers find buried invertebrates with visual cues (Barnard 1985), and Australian Black-backed Magpies *(Gymnorhina tibicen)* find buried invertebrates with auditory cues (Floyd and Woodland 1981). Are any of these senses used by robins to find worms?

One of the classic studies on this question was done by Heppner (1965). Heppner conducted a detailed study of robins foraging on lawns at San Francisco State College in California, in which he quantified aspects of their foraging behavior, and also recorded the background noise intensity and the intensity of noise made by earthworms burrowing in soil. Heppner conducted field observations of free-ranging robins, and conducted observations of captive robins. He concluded that although burrowing worms do make

noise (measured as 9.4 dB in a measurement chamber), the background noise intensity was so loud (26.9 dB) that robins could not possibly hear the sounds coming from the worms. In one experiment, he also played high intensity white noise from a speaker while captive robins were foraging, and he reported that there was no difference in foraging behavior between robins subjected to the white noise and control birds that were not.

Heppner assumed that the robins could not hear the worms, but he did not actually test that hypothesis. He measured worm noise and background noise, but he had no way of knowing if the birds actually could hear the worms over the background noise. Similarly, in the white noise experiment, he did not know whether or not the white noise prevented the robins from hearing worms. Also, no sample size or inferential statistics were presented on the white noise experiment, so it is impossible to assess whether the conclusion that white noise did in fact not effect the foraging of the robins. Nor did Heppner rule out the possibility that the robins he observed could see all of the worms they captured. He "seeded" his study lawn with extra worms, and so the possibility exists that there may have been a great number of worms partly visible from the surface. This factor was not controlled for or measured in his study. Heppner's observations added to our background knowledge of foraging in the robin, but his results concerning sensory modalities were not conclusive. And yet, the confidence with which Heppner stated his conclusion that robins use sight to find worms continues to bias the perceptions of scientists. For example, in a recent comprehensive review of the biology of the American Robin, Sallabanks and James (1999) cites Heppner and states that robins "probably look for visible signs of worms in their burrows, rather than relying on auditory cues."

A recent controlled experimental test of sensory modalities used by robins to find worms came to a very different conclusion. In a study at Queen's University in Ontario, Montgomerie and Weatherhead (1997) presented four captive robins with square or rectangular wooden trays filled with baked soil to a depth of 5 cm. In one experiment, the birds were allowed to forage in trays in which one live and one dead mealworm were buried. In a second experiment, one live mealworm was buried in the foraging tray, a rectangular tray was suspended above the foraging tray, and the birds were allowed to forage, but without touching the foraging tray (eliminating vibro-tactile cues). In a third experiment, a live mealworm was buried in the foraging tray and the tray was covered with 1-mm-thick section of cardboard, which was itself then

buried with an additional 2 cm of soil (eliminating visual or olfactory cues). In a fourth experiment, one mealworm was buried in the foraging tray and the robins were allowed to forage, but high intensity white noise was played from a speaker in a cotton bag, buried 3-cm deep in the soil (assumed to eliminate auditory cues). In the first experiment (live worm vs. dead worm), robins located live mealworms better than expected by chance, and found dead mealworms no better than chance. This suggests that some cue was being released from live worms that was not being released from dead ones, or that robins could find both types of worms, but preferred the live ones. Potential cues coming from the live worms included vibro-tactile cues, visual cues, or auditory cues (it was assumed that there was no difference in smell between the live and dead worms, and thus that olfactory cues were not involved). In the second experiment, when the birds were denied vibro-tactile cues, they still found the worms better than chance. In the third experiment, in which visual cues were eliminated, the robins still found the worms greater than chance. Then, in the fourth experiment, in which auditory cues were blocked with white noise, the robins yet again found worms greater than chance. However, the birds were less successful in finding live mealworms in the presence of white noise (fourth experiment) than in the absence of white noise (first experiment). Montgomerie and Weatherhead concluded that their results "strongly suggest" that robins can use sound to find mealworms.

Montgomerie and Weatherhead' s data, however, were far from unequivocal. Yes, white noise decreased the robin's success in finding mealworms. But that could have been a result of distraction (i.e., lowered attention), not the blocking of sound cues. In the fourth experiment, visual cues were not blocked, so the birds could have been using vision to find the worms, Alternatively, the birds may have been using sound to find the worms, and could still hear the worms over the white noise (though possibly not quite as well). Or they may have been using a combination of vision and hearing. To definitively test sensory-modality hypotheses, experiments need to be conducted in which only one cue (i.e., one independent variable) is manipulated per experiment. For example, a test of the robins-use-sound hypothesis could have one treatment in which visual, olfactory, and vibro-tactile cues were completely blocked and auditory cues not blocked, and a second treatment in which all cues were blocked; if robins could find worms in the presence of sound alone and not in its absence, the robins-use-sound hypothesis would have robust support. The

white noise in the Montgomerie and Weatherhead (1997) experiment may not have been sufficient to block all sound cues. A complete blocking of sound cues may be possible through the use of louder noise, specialized tympana "muffs," or a temporary physiological auditory-signal antagonist.

So we are still left with uncertainty over what sensory modalities robins use to find worms and in what combinations they use these modalities. It would make sense that robins would use whatever modalities were available, and that if visual information was present, with its high degree of positional accuracy in birds, it would be used over auditory, vibro-tactile, or olfactory information. However, that has not been scientifically established. The possibility even exists that robins' sensitivities to particular sensory modalities change as their motivational levels change with respect to expected closeness to food (see e.g., Tinbergen 1951, Timberlake and Lucas 1989). More experimentation is clearly required to determine how robins' use different potential sensory modalities.

Another component of invertebrate selection that has not been explored, but that may offer interesting discoveries, is the question of whether or not robins flexibly adjust their pattern of saltatory search when hunting for earthworms so that they can adjust to differences in prey density and distribution. For example, Black-bellied Plovers *(Pluvialis squatarola),* which also display saltatory search, adjust their foraging pattern to prey density by moving a shorter distance after capturing a prey item (Baker 1974; Pienkowski 1983, Roche 1998). This simple behavior creates a pattern called *area-restricted search* after prey items are captured; area-restricted search allows a forager to concentrate its efforts where prey are potentially most abundant (Bell 1991). Do robins exhibit flexible adjustments to their search patterns such as area-restricted search, allowing them to maximize their capture rate in the face of variable prey concentrations? The answer is presently unknown, but this is a question that would be easy to rigorously address in observational studies of free-ranging birds and/or experimental studies of captive birds.

Conclusion

We have a good picture of many aspects of how the American Robin forages, including its selection of fruit type, whereas we have a less complete picture of how it selects, and how it locates, invertebrates. Many important questions about invertebrate selection in robins remain unexplored, and for those questions that

have been explored, the data remain highly inconclusive. Thus, questions about invertebrate diet selection in American Robins provide rich ground for future research. And once more baseline information is known about key basic questions, scientists can go on to investigate how the diet-selection behavior of robins is shaped by their evolution, and how it influences the communities in which they live.

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HOW ARE THE EAGLES DOING?

Donald A. Hopkins

Because of my interest in Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) I am constantly being asked the question "How are the eagles doing?" I offer here an overview for Connecticut of the progress the eagles have made over the past 25 years that I have been tracking them in the state. These observations for the most part have been published in prior volumes of this journal (Hopkins 1990, Hopkins 1992, Hopkins et al. 1993, Hopkins et al. 1995, and Hopkins et al. 1999). Most of these observations, beginning in the summer of 1975, were carried out in the upper Farmington River Valley. In the winter of 1979 I extended the study area to include the Connecticut River around the Enfield Rapids. To assist in these observations I recruited other observers, now numbering more than a dozen, and called the "Bald Eagle Study Group."

Besides the articles that have appeared in the Connecticut Warbler since 1979, we have published a yearly report about the eagles in the Farmington River valley, and beginning in 1980, an annual report on the Enfield Rapids wintering eagles.

A summation of eagle activity in the Farmington River area from 1975 to 1989 demonstrates that there were, on the average, three eagles in the area each summer. These birds were non-breeding birds and showed no sign of nesting activities. Then in 1990, a pair of Bald Eagles at Barkhamsted Reservoir in Barkhamsted, built a nest and copulated, but failed to reproduce. They failed again the following year, but were successful in 1992. This was the first successful eagle nest in Connecticut in about 40 years. Since that time the pair using this nest have fledged nine young plus a foster chick. Of these young, only one, a female hatched in 1994, has been located at this time. This female fledged three young on the Hudson River south of Albany, NY, this past year (2000).

A second nest in the state was established in Suffield on the Connecticut River and over the past three years has fledged four young. In 1998, on the Colebrook Reservoir in Massachusetts, just north of the Connecticut state line, a new nest was established. This nest fledged one young in 1999 and two young this past year.

Additional nesting activities have continued in the state with a nest in East Windsor established in 1999, but this nest has yet to produce young. A fourth nest in the state was established in West Suffield in the year 2000 and it too has not yet been productive. In the spring of 1996 a pair of Bald Eagles attempted to nest beside

the Connecticut River 0.9 miles north of the Bulkley Bridge in Hartford. The nest failed and the pair were not found in subsequent years. I will come back to this sudden flourish of nesting activities later.

As an indication of the vitality of the eagle population over a larger area, we can look at the results of the mid-winter eagle survey. Since 1979 a nation-wide survey has been carried out the second week of January to record the number of eagles on their wintering grounds. Figure 1 shows a steady increase in the wintering population of Bald Eagles since 1979. A more dramatic increase was noted in New York where the winter numbers increased from 174 eagles in 1996 to 350 in the year 2000 (Nye 2000). Nye ascribes the increase to two reasons. "First, Bald Eagle populations, in general, are increasing throughout eastern North America, including states adjacent to New York. Second, the resident New York breeding population continues to grow in both numbers of breeding pairs and numbers of young fledged, most of which remain in New York State throughout the winter." Since 1990 New York State has fledged 372 eagles (Nye 2000); since 1989 Massachusetts has fledged 115 eagles, and since 1992 Connecticut has fledged 14 eagles.

There are a number of reasons for this increase in the Bald Eagle population. The first would be the banning of the use of DDT in 1972. The second would be the enactment of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) which provided better protection for eagles, as well as protection of their habitat. The Act mandated that proactive steps be taken to restore the eagle population. Thus, the biologists developed the falconry technique of hacking young eagles into areas where their numbers had declined, or the species had been extirpated. The technique takes young eagles from areas where the populations are stable (e.g., Canada and Alaska) and hacks (releases) them into the wild in areas where they are in decline. New York is a leader in hacking eagles, hacking 182 young over a period of 12 years (P. E. Nye, pers. comm.). Massachusetts, over a period of seven years, has hacked 42 eagles (W. J. Davis pers. comm.).

With the jumpstart of hacking and improvements in management and habitat protection, eagle populations are soaring. The counts in Figure 1 indicate that populations are growing both in Connecticut and in regions to the north. As these populations grow, nesting territories to the north will become filled and more eagles will be looking to nest in Connecticut.

In answer to the question "How are the eagles doing?" Thanks to the Endangered Species Act, the eagles are doing well.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

I wish to thank the following for supplying data for this report: Julie Victoria, Connecticut DEP, Wildlife Division; W. J. Davis, Massachusetts Fisheries and Wildlife; Bradford G. Blodget, Massachusetts State Ornithologist; and P. E. Nye, New York State Endangered Species Unit.

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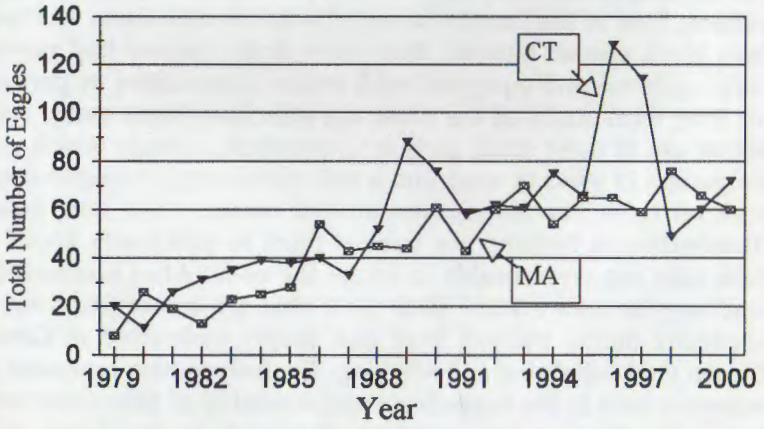
Figure 1 - Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey for Connecticut and Massachusetts



Source: Bradford G. Blodget, State Ornithologist, Mass. Wildlife
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BIRD BEHAVIOR NOTES

OWL FOOD OF GREAT HORNED OWLS

Great Homed Owls (*Bubo virginianus*) are formidable and opportunistic predators which are able to take a wide variety of vertebrate and occasionally invertebrate prey. Their chief prey sources include medium-sized birds and mammals but they also prey on almost any readily available animal including other owls.

In the past 25 years that we have been studying the ecology of this owl in Connecticut, we have documented 11 instances which Great Horned Owls took other, smaller owls, including seven captures of Eastern Screech Owls (*Otus asio*), two of Northern Sawwhet Owls (*Aegolius acadicus*), and one each of Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*), and Barred Owl (*Strix varia*).

All of the cases of Great Homed Owl predation on other owls were determined from pellet remains which contained bones and feathers or from remains found in nests. Eastern Screech Owl remains, for example, were identified based on parts of wings (red phased bird) found in a ledge nest and parts of craniums as well as feathers. Two of the Eastern Screech Owls killed by Great Horned Owls merit special interest. Both were birds that we had previously captured and equipped with radio- transmitters as part of our long term study of the roost site selection, home range and habitat use of these small owls in Connecticut, a study which encompassed 13 years of work and is still continuing. During routine work on these two radio-transmittered screech owls near Lake Chamberlain in Bethany, we tracked them to previously know n roost sites but were unable to locate the owls. After extensively searching the area around their roost sites the transmitters were eventually found, twisted, bent and deeply embedded in Great Horned Owl pellets but still working. The transmitters represent a testimony both to the ruggedness and reliability of their construction, and perhaps an even greater testimony to the toughness of a Great Homed Owl's digestive tract!

DWIGHT G. SMITH and ARNOLD DEVINE

OWLS IN MY BIRDBATH

From late March to mid April, 1999, two red morph Eastern Screech-Owls appeared regularly in the trees in my backyard and adjacent yards in central Newington just after sunset. While they preferred the branches of the tall firs, their occasional perches atop a bare tree permitted observation and identification through the binoculars. Sightings continued until early May when the trees were fully leafed.

Several owl-less weeks passed. Then, in mid June, the pair again appeared, this time on my chain link fence at about 5:00 am. Two weeks later, the back yard became a stopping point for four owls. On four occasions - three in the evening, one in the morning - the birds offered an outstanding opportunity for close observation. They remained in the yard for at least 15 minutes each time, perching on the feeders, the birdbath, and the edge of the small plastic wading pool I keep for my dog. Neither a flashlight nor a camera flash disturbed them. During the observation periods, they vocalized almost entirely with clicks, but one did whinny. The availability of water may have been an attraction. They drank from the birdbath. On separate occasions, two entered the water in the dog's pool. The opaque sides of the pool prevented me from seeing what the birds were doing in the water, and my concern grew about the possible need to deal with the beak and talons of a soggy, federally protected bird. Fortunately, each took to the air without problem.

ROY ZARTARIAN

BOOK REVIEWS

Jamie Meyers

The Sibley Guide to the Birds, by David Allen Sibley, (2000, 544 pages, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, NY, $35.00, hard paperback) and *Birds of North America*, Kenn Kaufmann,(2000, 384 pages, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, NY, $20.00)

Over the past few years, birders have been blessed with a plethora of new field guides, some of which have been better than others. None have been more highly anticipated than two guides that came out almost simultaneously late last year, *The Sibley Guide to Birds* by David Allen Sibley and *Birds of North America* by Kenn Kaufmann. At no point in the short history of birding have two guides authored by authorities of such high caliber and regard been unleashed on an eagerly waiting public with this much fanfare. Both represent positive steps forward towards furthering our understanding of bird identification, though in their own ways and with varying degrees of success.

I suspect that every serious birder reading this is already familiar with "The Sibley Guide to Birds", which is co-sponsored by the National Audubon Society as a replacement for its very uneven Master Guide series. This has been the most talked about field guide in a generation, and rightly so. Mr. Sibley, a former Connecticut resident, is a master of detail and design, and the overall impression of his guide, is one of awe. There are over six thousand excellent sketches of some eight hundred plus species that occur in North America. They generously cover an impressively wide range of forms and plumage variations that are likely to be encountered by birders, more so than in any other guide I have seen. For each species, Sibley illustrates a striking number of variations in a concise, relatively economic fashion.

Some would say ***too*** economically, and one of the chief criticisms of the guide is its brevity of text. This is a very visual guide, and in many cases the paintings say more than even pages of text could with just a couple of views. The lack of text in many places is made up for with columns discussing and illustrating differences between difficult species, such as Tropical vs. Couch's King-

bird, various drab gray southwestern passerinespecies or even the scaup.

Other criticisms have been levied at this guide, some I agree with. The maps are small and difficult to read, and they're not perfect. For example, one might conclude that Vesper Sparrow is a common summer bird here in Connecticut based on the range map, and we all know that's not the case. One innovation that I like very much with the maps is the series of little green dots showing patterns of vagrancy for certain species. This isn't perfect, either – for instance, Mongolian Plover has no green dot in Rhode Island (where it occurred in 1998), but Mr. Sibley himself has stated that he never intended the maps to be perfect in this regard; instead he wanted to show as well as possible where vagrants might be expected based on past experience, and he has achieved this better than anyone before him.

Another innovation that I have seen criticized are the in-flight paintings that accompany almost every species treatment. While it's true that nobody's going to be identifying *Empidonax* flycatchers on the wing any time soon, I do like these views, as they do well illustrate underwing and flank features that paintings of sitting birds would miss. To me, it's this kind of detail and forethought that sets this guide well apart from its predecessors and has surprisingly and deservedly placed it on The New York Times best-seller list.

One well acknowledged fault with the paintings is that the reds and oranges were overdone in earlier printings. That is supposed to be remedied in later printings. The size of the guide is also problematic for some. At over 500 large pages, this is a large, heavy volume, and not one that many folks will want to carry with them in the field. Yet, the true measure of a field guide is how well it helps birders with identifications, and in just the few months this book has been out, I have personally been involved in a number of situations where a difficult to ID bird has shown up. Each time I have heard someone ask, "Does anyone have a Sibley Guide with them?" and in every instance thus far, it's offered insights into a definite ID that any other guide on the market today has not been able to. At the risk of sounding clichéd, this impressive volume raises the bar in the busy field of North American field guides, and proof for me has been in the pudding in my own field experiences.

In some contrast is the newest offering from Kenn Kaufmann, "Birds of North America." Unlike the Sibley Guide, this book is aimed at beginning birders, much like the Peterson Guides of old. It seems very evident to me that this book is intended as a modern-

day version of the original Peterson guides that so many of us grew up on, updated for a new generation of birders.

Every new field guide has a different twist to it, and Kaufmann's is that he uses computer-enhanced photographs for his illustrations. This is an interesting strategy that backfires on first sight, though I will say that it's not as bad as it first looks. Still, the presentation as a whole is somewhat awkward, and the birds themselves look like magazine cutouts, presented as they are against a stale aqua background, or worse, they look like tired old museum specimens. Some of them don't seem all that realistic, either. I personally have never seen a Northern Cardinal with a huge crest like that shown in two of the photos in the section for that species.

My initial hope with this book was that even if it was aimed at beginners, any hints on identification that Kaufmann could give – as he is without question one of North America's premier birders – would be worth the purchase price, but having thumbed through this volume a number of times now, I'm not so sure that's true. As an intermediate level birder, I did not find a lot of revelations here. If I only had room in my pocket for one field guide, I would probably choose the latest version of the *National Geographic Field Guide To The Birds of North America* over this one.

Yet this book is not without its redeeming values. The strength in using photos is that beginners do get a decent feel for what the bird *actually* looks like in the field in a way that paintings can never do justice to. Also, the presentation does allow for more views of each species than Peterson, or even the underrated American Bird Conservancy guide *All the Birds of North America* provides. I also like the different shadings in the range maps, showing where a species is more or less common on its summering or wintering grounds.

"Birds of North America" is intended for a neophyte audience, and it serves its purpose adequately in that regard. More advanced birders, however, will get much more bang for their buck with "The Sibley Guide to the Birds", which is the guide that will probably stand the test of time better

JAMIE MEYERS, 4 Sexton Hollow Rd., Canton, CT 06019

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Greg Hanisek

SUMMER, JUNE 1 THROUGH JULY 31, 2000

It's been awhile since summer has been dismissed as the birding doldrums. The state's active birders enjoy sampling the rich diversity of breeding species, and they're well aware of the potential for rare visitors from an array of far-away places. From beginning to end, summer offers the opportunity for exciting finds, but this season was especially rewarding, with two first state records and a couple of very cooperative rarities.

Lingerers, Strays and Post-breeding Wanderers

The usual non-breeding Common Loons on Long Island Sound included two June 15 off Stamford (PDu) and one June 18 off Old Lyme (TH). A **Wilson's Storm-Petrel** was about four miles due south of Old Saybrook July 21, placing it just inside Connecticut waters for two returning fishermen (TH,HG). An immature Northern Gannet cruised off Shippan Point in Stamford June 6 (PDu), providing a rare summer record. Two American Bitterns in flight June 16 in Terryville, away from known breeding areas, were somewhat of a mystery (JHo); one in the Stratford Great Meadows July 24 was in breeding habitat, but it was also in the post-breeding period when nesting can't be inferred (FM). Among the season's usual accumulation of post-breeding herons was an excellent count of seven Little Blue Herons (four adults, three immatures) July 31 in Westbrook (PCo); Little Blues were widely reported this summer. Away from the coast, a Black-crowned Night-Heron was at Osbornedale State Park in Derby on July 16 (FM et al.), and three were at Shepaug Dam in Southbury July 30 (RN).

Lingering Brant included three in New Haven harbor June 26 (JT). Holly Pond in Stamford held two unseasonable waterfowl, a drake American Wigeon June 1-22 (PDu) and a female Greater Scaup June 1-20 (PDu). Another Greater Scaup was off Milford Point July 22 (TKi), and a Lesser Scaup was at

Cranberry Pond at White Memorial Foundation, Litchfield, on June 10 (DR). A drake Ring-necked Duck visited North Farms Reservoir in Wallingford on July 17 (TKu). The most unusual of the season's lingering waterbirds was a drake Canvasback present to at least June 8 in the Great Meadows at Stratford (GH et al.); close behind were two Ruddy Ducks at North Stamford Reservoir June 1-19 (PDu).

An immature Bald Eagle found Lord's Cove in Old Lyme an attractive place to soar on July 8 (TH,HG); another was over Westport June 7 (FM). A Northern Harrier was an unexpected visitor June 25 at Greenwich Audubon Center (TG). Just one of an array of stellar seasonal attractions, an adult **Purple Gallinule** was discovered July 15 at a pond in Osbornedale State Park (RL). It was seen by many observers through July 20. This southern species is a classic wanderer with a history of showing up in unexpected places at almost any time of year. Among the post-breeding terns gathering at Milford Point July 29-30 were two adult and one juvenile Roseate Tern (CB); one was far west of breeding areas June 3 at Compo Beach in Westport (FM). A Forster's Tern was at Milford Point July 29 (DS), and a Forster's Tern and a Black Tern were at Falkner Island off Guilford in late July (JSp fide PCo). The only Royal Tern reported was a single fly-by at Milford on July 20 (GN fide FM).

Since **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** operates on a migratory schedule geared to a different hemisphere, its rare-but-regular appearances in North America probably qualify for the wanderer category. The state's long-awaited first record was a well-photographed bird that wended its way to Windham Airport in North Windham on July 3 (JSe), but was not seen thereafter. What was a single Red-breasted Nuthatch up to on June 10 in Fairfield County? I don't know, so one in Easton goes into this category (DV).

Northbound migration

At least 10 Semipalmated Plovers, six Semipalmated Sandpipers, a Least Sandpiper, and a Dunlin were still present at Milford Point on June 11 (GW,PDe). A small group of northbound shorebirds June 3 at Station 43 included a White-rumped Sandpiper, always a nice find inland (CEk). Two Red Knot (one wearing a band) lingered to June 4 at Sandy Point in West Haven (PDe). A **Wilson's Phalarope**, a species

known for early June appearances, was at Hammonasset Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP) in Madison on June 12 (EN).

An Alder Flycatcher was moving on its usual late schedule June 2 at East Rock Park in New Haven (MSc). A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, another typically late migrant, was in Westbrook June 8 (PCo). The presence of several singing male Northern Parulas in mid-June probably reflects late migrants or unmated birds on the move, as none appeared to remain on territory; the reports included singles at two locations in Litchfield on June 11 (GH), one at White Memorial June 10 (DR) and one in Bloomfield on June 19 (JMe). Similarly, a Prairie Warbler was a one-day singer in a Norwich neighborhood June 11 (GW). A Magnolia Warbler was south of regular breeding stations on June 23 in Greenwich (RB). The latest reports of Blackpoll Warblers were June 8 on Sheffield Island, Norwalk (FM) and June 13 in Watertown (RN). A Mourning Warbler was following its normal migration schedule with an appearance June 8 in Westbrook (PCo). A male **Chestnut-collared Longspur** in full alternate plumage was found on a high school ballfield in Haddam on June 18 (DG) and was seen by many observers, often almost at arms length, the following day. Surprisingly, a number of eastern records for this species fall into the late spring migratory period, from late May to mid-June, including one of Connecticut's two previous records, which occurred on June 7, 1994 in Stratford.

Southbound Migration

Movement was well under way June 29 in Stratford, when a small piece of marsh held 8+ Greater Yellowlegs, 4+ Lesser Yellowlegs, a Pectoral Sandpiper and two Short-billed Dowitchers (MSz). By July 22 Milford Point held 200 Semipalmated Plovers, 2,000 Semipalmated Sandpipers and a Red Knot (FM). A Whimbrel was a flyover at Long Beach in Stratford on July 15 (TKi), and one was at Milford Point on July 28 in a large gathering of shorebirds that included 275 Least Sandpipers along with the expected thousands of Semipalmated Sandpipers and at least one Western Sandpiper (PCo). This shorebird lode became a bonanza July 29, when an adult **Red-necked Stint** was found there and seen by a number of experienced observers (FG et al.). In subsequent days a number of additional sightings were reported, and at least one photograph was taken. The bird would be a first state record if

accepted by ARCC, and the subsequent reports suggest two different Red-necked Stints may have been present in the flock of Semipalmated Sandpipers that numbered in excess of 5,000 at times. These sightings occurred about two weeks after an adult Red-necked Stint and an apparent Little Stint were seen and photographed across Long Island Sound on the North Shore of Long Island, N.Y. Two Pectoral Sandpipers were at HBSP on July 31 (PCo). Milford Point held 500+ Short-billed Dowitchers July 29 (DS) and a Stilt Sandpiper was there the next day (PDu). An adult Bonaparte's Gull was at Milford Point July 24 (DS,NB).

A Purple Martin, an early-migrating species, was at Greenwich Point July 28 (TG). A Black-and-White Warbler and a Worm-eating Warbler were both found July 16 on Willard's Island at HBSP (PDe), reminders of how early some common woodland nesting birds are on the move. In the same category was a Northern Waterthrush at Milford Point on July 24 (DS,NB).

Breeding Season

A Pied-billed Grebe showed itself June 18 at Laurel Reservoir in Stamford (PDu). A Least Bittern, a secretive and localized breeder, was calling at the Great Meadows in Stratford on June 8 (CB) and was seen there June 16 (FM). This is a historical nesting locale, but there has been no recent confirmation. The species also was noted at Lord's Cove in Old Lyme, an apparent breeding location (TH,HG), and four (two adults and two juveniles) were at the state's most consistent breeding site, Station 43 in South Windsor, on July 11 (PCi). Two family groups of Gadwall, totaling 20 birds, were in the Stratford Great Meadows July 26 (FM). A male Blue-winged Teal was at a possible breeding location June 29 in Stratford (MSz). Three Red-breasted Mergansers June 10 in Lordship (DV) were among the usual summer lingerers along the shore of the Sound, but they take on added significance this year, because breeding was suspected across the mouth of the Housatonic at Milford Point. A regular visitor to the point repeatedly saw an adult female and two apparent juveniles there, raising suspicions of nesting (PF). There are no confirmed breeding records for the state, and eggs or downy young probably would have to be seen to clinch a first record. However, this species has nested a number of times on Long Island, and this summer's observations should put birders on alert. On the Farmington River

in Collinsville, a hen Common Merganser escorted nine ducklings on July 6 (JMe). A newly fledged Hooded Merganser was on the Pomperaug River in South Britain July 4 (RN).

Sharp-shinned Hawk appears to be the least numerous breeder among the state's three resident accipiters, so one July 19 in Simsbury was worth noting (PDe). At the state's only confirmed nesting location, the Great Meadows in Stratford, three **Northern Harriers** (two females and one male) were all seen carrying food on June 7 (CB), and a female was seen carrying prey on July 12 (FM). On July 13, three fledglings were seen (PCo). A single harrier was seen June 16 at a potential breeding location, Great Island in Old Lyme (JG). New London may be the next city added to the Peregrine's list of state breeding sites; one was perched on a light pole at the Thames River bridge (I-95) on July 30 (GW). A single was dive-bombing ravens at Hubbard Park in Meriden of June 2 (MSz), and the pair on the Travelers Tower in Hartford produced two chicks, which were banded (fide FM). Now a rarity during breeding season, an American Kestrel was on the edge of the Stratford Great Meadows June 16 (FM,PDn).

A Northern Bobwhite was calling at Haley Farm in Groton on July 17 (CT). A probable King Rail was heard several times in June in the Stratford Great Meadows (FM,NC), and an adult and juvenile were seen there June 26 (GH,MSz). A Sora was near Station 43 on June 17 (PCi), and this species was calling from the Portland Meadows on June 5 (PCo). An interesting breeding encounter occurred June 18 in an asphalt parking lot on Route 1 in Madison, just east of HBSP. Two adult Willets were tending a chick on the open lot and noisily confronted two Common Crows while the chick scrambled for cover, well away from the saltmarsh habitat where Willets nest (JMa,AR). After two consecutive years of successful breeding at Sandy Point in West Haven, **Black Skimmers** did not nest this summer, although 10 were present on June 10 (GW); three adults were at Milford Point June 27 (NB).

A pair of **Barn Owls** was suspected of nesting in Pomfret, but the birds left after disturbance by construction with no nesting confirmed (GW). At the moment it appears that the only confirmed nesting pair in the state is in an industrial area in Fairfield County. A one-night survey in part of White Memorial pro-

duced 12 Barred Owls (DR). Two Whip-poor-wills were calling June 1 in Killingworth (JHi), and one was heard in Riverton on June 3 (FZ). Six Common Nighthawks flying around cliffs at Hubbard Park in Meriden June 2 (MSz) might have indicated rooftop breeding somewhere in the nearby urban center. Two survey routes through White Memorial each produced 20 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers (DR); another route produced 24 Hairy Woodpeckers (DR).

Three Willow Flycatchers and a Great Crested Flycatcher were on the Norwalk Islands June 8 (FM). Five **Common Ravens** together in Hamden on June 23 (AB) were indicative of this species' spread in the state to locations close to the coast. Another five, including three birds of the year, were cruising around appropriate breeding habitat at Hubbard Park in Meriden on June 2 (MSz). A Fish Crow north of Route 44 in Canaan on June 4 shows the breadth of this species' march through the state (FZ). Although **Cliff Swallow** is a very sparse breeder in most parts of the state, a good nesting population is established on bridges and dams on the Housatonic River. The biggest concentrations are in the middle stretches of the river, with 260+ adults and young noted into July at Shepaug Dam in Southbury/Newtown and 120+ on Lake Lillinonah in Bridgewater/Brookfield (RN). Small nesting groups elsewhere were logged at South Norwalk (PCo,FM), Bloomfield (BK), Fairfield (DV), Winsted (FZ), and Collinsville (JMe). In Southport, a new breeding site for Purple Martin held three pairs (DV).

Two different sections of White Memorial each held five Red-breasted Nuthatches (DR); this appears to be the most consistent breeding area in the state. Two Golden-crowned Kinglets were in old Camp Townsend in White Memorial (DR). The presence of Winter Wren and Hermit Thrush in June on Popp Mountain in Weston shows how close to the coast some of the more northerly breeding species can occur when good habitat is present (MC fide CB). A Wood Thrush was an interesting potential breeder June 8 on Chimon Island, Norwalk (FM). In White Memorial, two survey routes held 100 and 99 Veeries, respectively, and each held 46 Wood Thrushes (DR). A Pine Warbler was feeding on ants on the ground June 19 at Northwest Park in Windsor (FM, LD).White Memorial recorded 18 species of breeding warblers, including three Magnolias and two Hoodeds (GH). A

Hooded Warbler was a nice yard bird June 13 in Newtown (RB).

A colony of c. 36 pairs of Grasshopper Sparrows, the largest in the state and second largest in the entire Connecticut River Valley, was found on a former airport property in East Hartford during an environmental assessment for construction of a University of Connecticut football stadium and adjacent housing/commercial development (AJ). The site also contains two pairs of Upland Sandpipers as well as American Kestrel, Horned Lark, Eastern Meadowlark, Savannah Sparrow, and Bobolink. State environmental groups have mobilized in an attempt to save this grassland habitat, but have had very limited success due to private property laws in Connecticut. Mitigation for this loss is currently being explored with state agencies. An apparent territorial Savannah Sparrow was noted June 5 at a sandy, grassy area at Pleasure Beach in Bridgeport (CB) and one was singing June 16 at Stratford Great Meadows (FM,PDn); up to six were part of breeding colony in Easton, where a juvenile was noted July 12 (CB et al.). Grasshopper Sparrows seemed harder than usual to find at their breeding colonies at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks, but two were there June 17 (PCi).

The same Easton locale supporting Savannah Sparrow also held eight Bobolinks, including three juveniles, July 17 (CB et al.). An Eastern Meadowlark was on the grass-covered former landfill at Silver Sands State Park in Milford on June 26 (FM et al.) A female **Boat-tailed Grackle** was carrying food June 8 at New England's only known breeding location, the Stratford Great Meadows (CB). Up to three were seen there in June, including a possible juvenile on June 16 (FM,PDn). In addition to Northwest Park in Windsor, the Southbury area holds one of the best Orchard Oriole concentrations in the state, with a total of up to eight pairs at three locations (RN). Two Orchard Orioles were an interesting find June 8 on the Norwalk Islands (FM). Purple Finches were widespread at White Memorial, with several survey routes producing 10 to 20 individuals each (DR). There were two breeding pairs at Flanders Nature Center in Woodbury (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, 145 Farmington Ave., Waterbury, CT 06710) if they are to be included in the field notes].

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PHOTO CHALLENGE

Julian Hough

ANSWER TO PHOTO CHALLENGE 33

As an escape from land-lubbing birding, we embark on a pelagic boat trip, out into the eastern edge of Long Island Sound. Before long there are many gulls following the boat, hoping for a quick and easy snack churned up in the boat's wake.

A scan of the sitting congregation reveals this funny-looking gull; stocky, with a blocky, white gleaming head and a contrasting dark eye. And that bill!! A double-take and the bird is quickly identified, not as a gull, but as a Northern Fulmar. Easy one this month! The "patchy" looking gray upperparts and gleaming white underparts combined with the distinctive "tube-nose" are easy to see when settled. In flight, Northern Fulmars, unlike gulls, are stiff-winged flyers, and may be mistaken for shearwaters at long range. Unlike the latter family, Northern Fulmars are proportionately stockier and shorter-winged and intersperse their glides with rapid wing-beats.

Fulmars are rare in Connecticut waters; one record of a female collected in 1909 was the only record until a bird was sighted off Stamford in September 14 1997 (P. Dugan et al.). Due to a south-

erly expansion of its breeding range into Newfoundland, Northern Fulmar has increased in numbers during the last twenty years, and is described by Veit and Petersen (1993) in the *Birds of Massachusetts* as common to abundant offshore in Massachusetts during winter and seen from shore particularly after the passage of storms.

Since this species disperses well out to sea after the breeding season, increased reports from New Jersey and New York pelagics during May presumably relate to birds returning north to breed. Given its distribution, Northern Fulmar should be more common in Connecticut, but coastal geography dictates that this species, like many other pelagic species such as jaegers and shearwaters, is not inclined to enter Long Island Sound on their migrations and movements. But, as the Stamford record shows, it pays to be alert.

This Fulmar was photographed by me off Montauk, NY, in May 1998.

JULIAN HOUGH, 72 Quentin St., Waterbury, CT 06706

Photo Challenge 34. Identify the species. Answer next issue.

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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Send manuscripts to the Editor. Please type double spaced with ample margins, on one side of a sheet. Submit a copy on a 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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Volume 21, No. 1, 2001

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology

Volume 21 No. 2 **April 2001** Pages 41 - 96

The Connecticut Warbler
A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology
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ABOUT OUR COVER

Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*)

by Julian Hough

Julian Hough's artwork once again appears on the front cover of our journal. His fine drawings have not only appeared in American publications, but in the British journal *Birdwatching*. He has written and illustrated a number of identification articles for "The Warbler" as well as the author of the Photo Challenge.

Julian is a member of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut, and is one of the co-authors of the report which appears in this issue.

THE MABEL OSGOOD WRIGHT AWARD - 2001

The following is the presentation by Jay Kaplan of the Mabel Osgood Wright Award at the Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Ornithological Association on March 17, 2001.

The Mabel Osgood Wright Award was established in 1991, to recognize individuals who have made significant contributions to the study and conservation of birds in Connecticut. Past recipients of this award have included, among others, professional ornithologists George Clark, Robert Askins, and Fred Sibley. Although not an ornithologist by education, today's recipient is certainly no less a giant in this field and I cannot think of any one person who has done more to promote the study of birds in Connecticut over the past generation.

A portion of a famous quote states that "we will conserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand, we will understand only what we are taught." Our recipient, although lacking formal degrees, is a teacher; a teacher with a contagious love for birds and birding, and an eagerness to share knowledge with others. I am particularly impressed with the time our recipient spends with beginners, helping new birders to improve their identification skills and to expand their horizons. Our recipient also recognizes that birds cannot survive without healthy and substantial habitat in which to breed and successfully raise their young and has invested much time and effort to improve habitat for birds and other wildlife.

I would like to call your attention to this issue of The Connecticut Warbler, dated October 1985 (over 15 years ago). It includes articles on the occurrence of Purple Gallinule in Connecticut by Frank Gallo; the results of the 1983 Colonial Seabird Survey by Fred Sibley and the late Ray Schwartz; Connecticut Field Notes by Dennis Varza; and two short articles (both on owls) by Arnold "Buzz" Devine and Dwight Smith, and by Buzz Devine and Elston Stevens. Total length of the publication - 12 pages. The real significance of this issue of "The Warbler" is that it marks the first issue published under a new editor - the recipient of this year's Mabel Osgood Wright award - Betty Kleiner!

Betty Kleiner, even in 1985, was no stranger to Connecticut birders. Betty is a founding member of COA and served as this organization's first vice-president. She has been active with the Hartford Audubon Society for many years and served as President from 1971-73. She also served as Chair of the Wildlife Lecture Se-

ries and as long-time Chair of the Sanctuary Committee. She remains active with Hartford-Audubon, leading field trips and offering programs on Connecticut birds to garden clubs and other groups throughout the state.

Betty has also been active on the garden club circuit, both with her local Simsbury Garden Club of which she is a past president; and with the statewide Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut, where she currently serves as Chair of the Conservation and Preservation Committee; and as a member of the education subcommittee of the Connecticut Invasive Plants Working Group. Betty has also served as a most valued volunteer at Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton, where she has been answering questions and dispensing advice and information on birds and wildlife-related issues for over twenty years.

Betty Kleiner was one of the first birders I met when I moved to Connecticut in 1973. It was Betty who convinced me that I should become active with, first the Hartford Audubon Society, and later, the COA. I know there are many others in this room today who are also here because of her enthusiasm and her concern for birds, birders and birding. The study and conservation of birds has been more than a hobby for Betty. It has been a passion, and she has been and continues to be a leading advocate for bird conservation in Connecticut. Betty, it is a great honor for me to consider you one of my good friends, and to present you with the Mabel Osgood Wright Award for 2001.

TENTH REPORT OF THE AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE OF CONNECTICUT

Greg Hanisek, Julian Hough, and Mark Szantyr

The tenth report of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (ARCC) of the Connecticut Ornithological Association (COA) summarizes the latest cooperative effort of the state's birders to maintain an accurate record and historical archive of the state's avifauna. Current ARCC members, in addition to the authors, are Frank Mantlik, Buzz Devine, Chris Wood, Jay Kaplan, John Gaskell, Dave Tripp, and Frank Gallo. Also voting on records in this report were Dave Provencher, Richard Soffer, Polly Brody, and Bob Dewire, whose terms have now expired. The committee recognizes the effort required to document rarities and extends its thanks to all who have submitted written reports, sketches, and photographs. Committee members place special emphasis on original field notes and urge birders to carefully detail plumage characters, voice, behavior, and other aspects of a sighting in as timely a manner as possible. All submissions, regardless of the committee's action, become a part of the state's permanent ornithological record, and can be reopened at any time to consider significant new information (such as an additional observer's report, an emerging pattern of vagrancy, or a newly recognized field character). The committee provides a judgment on the adequacy of the evidence submitted but can neither verify nor invalidate individual records. All reports, along with members' comments on each record, are archived at the Connecticut State Museum of Natural History at the University of Connecticut in Storrs. For a review of the committee and its operation, see Bevier (1996).

HIGHLIGHTS

This report contains 49 records of 42 species reviewed by the ARCC. The committee accepted 67 percent of all records reported here, the majority of them from 1999 and 2000. The roster includes four new state records - Red-necked Stint, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Cave Swallow, and Brambling. Other notable records include: the state's second Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Sandwich Tern; its third Anhinga and Chestnut-collared Longspur; its fourth Franklin's Gull; and its fifth Rufous Hummingbird and Wood Stork. The Rufous Hummingbird represents an especially strong recent trend of western hummers appearing in the east in autumn, a phenomenon

that has continued in Connecticut beyond the period covered by this report.

STATE LIST AND REVIEW LIST

The State List now stands at 405 species. The most recently published state list contains 399 species and is available from the COA (314 Unquowa Road, Fairfield, CT 06430). The committee depends on observers to submit their reports of species on the Review List - these are species marked with an asterisk on the COA Field Checklist and any species new to the state. The most current State List and Review List can be viewed on the COA Web page at www.ctbirding.org. Submit written reports, along with any documentary material, to the ARCC secretary, Mark Szantyr (address below).

FORMAT

This report continues the format of previous reports. In the case of accepted reports, only observers who submitted reports are listed, with original finder listed first followed by an asterisk. Observers who submitted a photo are acknowledged with † after their names. Hyphenated numbers (e.g. 00-01) following the observers are ARCC file numbers. The species are listed in order according to the AOU Check-list. Records of particular species are listed chronologically. Months of the year are shortened to their first three letters.

ACCEPTED RECORDS

ANHINGA (*Anhinga anhinga*) A single bird was seen soaring over Woodbury on 10 Aug 1999. (Chris Wood* 99-30). Reports of soaring Anhingas attract close scrutiny in the Northeast, because many observers don't realize the soaring abilities of Double-crested Cormorants, which can lead to confusion. In this case, the experienced observer zeroed in on traits such as head, neck and tail proportions that help separate Anhingas from cormorants. The bird appeared at a time when southern waterbirds typically wander north of breeding areas. This sighting represents the third state record.

TUFTED DUCK (*Aythya fuligula*) A single female was present in a small flock of Greater Scaup on 26 Apr 1999 at Bantam Lake (Dave Tripp*, Greg Hanisek 99-25). This record was unusual, because most (if not all) previous records have been of males along

the coast. Aythya ducks present a number of identification challenges, especially in plumages other than adult male, but the presence of female Greater Scaup for direct comparison helped solidify this identification. It is worth noting that Tufted Duck is commonly kept in captivity, a fact pointed out by several committee members. However, it also has a history of vagrancy to this continent, and the committee in the end maintained its practice of considering individual Tufted Ducks as wild birds barring specific evidence to the contrary.

Single males were seen on 19-20 Feb 2000 at Black Rock Harbor in Bridgeport (Charles Barnard* 00-03; Mark Szantyr* 00-04). The identification was straightforward, but the number of birds present was not. Barnard found a single male in a large mixed Aythya flock on the 19th and was present when a male was found the following day. In his opinion, they appeared to be two different birds based on the size of their tufts. Two birds were never seen together, however, and some committee members were uncertain about the presence of two birds. The comments above on origin apply equally to this report.

HARLEQUIN DUCK (*Histrionicus histrionicus*) A female was seen by a number of observers on 30 Oct 1999 at Holly Pond in Stamford and the adjacent waters of Long Island Sound off Cove Island Park (Mark Szantyr 99-39). Initially seen briefly by Patrick Dugan on 28 Oct, it remained through 17 Nov 1999. Because of increased occurrences, the committee has removed this species from the review list and no longer seeks documentation of sightings.

Wood Stork - Cornwall, CT
Photo by Michael Root, 22 July 1999

WOOD STORK (*Mycteria americana*) An immature was seen near Cream Hill Lake in Cornwall on 22 Jul 1999 (Mike Root† 99-33). The observer was told of the bird's presence by neighbors and was able to obtain an identifiable photograph. The

photo, along with notation on date and place, comprises the entire record. The committee can act on an annotated photo if it is clearly identifiable, but it prefers to receive a detailed written description as well. In the case of hard-to-identify species, pictures and words may be needed to make a decision. In this case, the photo allowed identification and aging of a species prone to wandering northward in summer. This is the fifth state record, but the first since 1955.

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE (*Elanoides forficatus*) One was seen 8 May 2000 over Stamford (Diane Collins* 00-09). An identifiable sketch of this distinctive species accompanied a brief description. Records during the spring overshoot period are on the increase, and, as in this case, most involve single birds seen briefly overhead.

MISSISSIPPI KITE (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) One was seen 12 May 1999 over Redding (Jay Carlisle* 99-21). The comments about the status of Swallow-tailed Kite in the state apply equally well to this species, although identification of Ictinia is more problematic. In both cases, most of the reports come from the southwestern part of the state.

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*) An immature was seen 19 Oct 1997 at Lighthouse Point in New Haven (Frank Mantlik* 99-27). Although observed at a hawk watch, this individual was seen primarily while perched and in low flight giving a wing-on view. As a result, the diagnostic underwing pattern could not be seen, but the observer provided copious, detailed notes and a sketch. This is another increasing species, with all records to date falling in the autumn migration period.

PURPLE GALLINULE (*Porphyrula martinica*) An adult was present 15-20 Jul 2000 at a small pond at Osbornedale State Park in Derby (Mark Szantyr 00-17). This shy but unmistakable species spent much of its time hidden in thick vegetation, but many patient observers were able to see it during its stay, following its initial discovery by Roger Lawson.

RUFF (*Philomachus pugnax*) One was present 22-25 Apr 2000 in rain pools at the west end of Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison (Mark Szantyr, Patrick Comins† 00-05). This bird was easily viewed and seen by many observers, following its initial dis-

covery by John Maynard. Aging and sexing of non-adult males is difficult; this bird was believed to be a first-year female.

RED-NECKED STINT (*Calidris ruficollis*) An adult, representing a first state record, was discovered 29 Jul 2000 in a large flock of Semipalmated Sandpipers and other "peeps" on the tidal bars at Milford Point (Frank Gallo*, Mark Szantyr, Greg Hanisek 00-20). Although the bird was in nearly full alternate plumage, it was tucked in among the flock and required careful and patient study by more than a dozen birders present before its identification was satisfactorily deduced. The intricacies of identifying small Calidris sandpipers are such that an almost feather-by-feather description is needed to satisfactorily confirm a rare species. In this case, a number of the observers present had put in much study in anticipation of an appearance by one of the stints, and something close to a full library emerged from the various cars in the Coastal Center's parking lot. Checking and re-checking of plumage characters resulted in several detailed reports and a field sketch that was converted by Szantyr into a color illustration. It should be noted that searches for this bird on subsequent days produced some confusing and uncertain results. There was some evidence that a second *ruficollis* may have been present, and the committee is still reviewing some reports from subsequent dates, including a photograph. There were also some reports submitted that lacked the detail needed to confirm this species. (See Records Not Accepted section below).

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER (*Calidris acuminata*) An adult visited a drained pond in Waterbury on 11 Aug 1999 (Mark Szantyr* 99-34). The observer obtained close views in direct comparison with Pectoral Sandpipers, and was able to produce detailed notes on all aspects of plumage and bare parts. Original field sketches were submitted, as well as a color illustration created using the sketches as a guide. This is the second state record.

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus lobatus*) An adult female appeared on a pond in New Canaan on 19 May 1999 (Frank Gallo 99-46). Elsbeth Johnson discovered the bird and contacted Gallo, who provided written details and a sketch. Although most state records are from fall, this sighting occurred during the species' normal spring migration period.

Maintaining this pattern, another adult female appeared on a pond in Morris on 18-19 May 2000 (Buzz Devine*†, Greg Hanisek,

Mark Szantyr 00-07). This obliging bird performed for a number of observers and was well photographed.

FRANKLIN'S GULL (*Larus pipixcan*) A single bird was present 24 Oct-11 Nov 1999 in the vicinity of Holly Pond in Stamford (Patrick Dugan*†, Angus Wilson†, Greg Hanisek, Frank Gallo 99-40). While standing, the bird showed adult characteristics, but in flight the wings lacked the prominent white bar separating the black outer portion of the primaries from the rest of the wing, and the white primary tips were not very conspicuous. This combination of characters suggests a bird that had completed its first calendar year and entered its second. This is the fourth state record.

SANDWICH TERN (*Sterna sandvicencis*) One bird was discovered 12 Sep 1998 in a large tern flock at Sandy Point in West Haven (Bruce Finnan* 99-01). This was a rather brief view of a bird in flight, and those circumstances resulted in extensive committee discussion. In the end, a fairly detailed description of the head and bill, along with good seasonal timing for this species, led to acceptance. It is a second state record.

RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD (*Selasphorus rufous*) An adult male visited a feeder in Hebron from 30 Aug to 23 Nov 1998 (Suzanne Gerety*, Christopher Juhl† 99-05). Many Selasphorus hummingbirds are unidentifiable to species in the field, but a color photograph showed this to be an adult male. It is the fifth state record.

FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannus savana*) An adult was photographed on 3 Jul 2000 at Windham Airport in Windham (Jane Seymour*† 00-19). This is the long-awaited first state record of a South American species with a long history of vagrancy to North America.

CAVE SWALLOW (*Hirundo fulva*) The first state record derives from a minimum of four birds seen and sketched on 7 Nov 1999 at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison (Noble Proctor* 99-37).

Three more were seen at Mansfield Hollow dam in Mansfield on 8 Nov 1999 (Mark Szantyr* 99-38).

The November 1999 flight of Cave Swallows was an event of broad proportion, spreading from the Great Lakes to the eastern seaboard. Although the records above were the only ones submitted for review, up to 30 Cave Swallows were reported in Connecticut from 5 Nov to 29 Nov. (See Connecticut Warbler Vol. 20 No. 2

April 2000 for a more detailed account of this flight). Both the southwestern and Caribbean races have been documented in the Northeast. Most autumn records probably relate to southwestern *pallida*, though this cannot be proven in the field. Given the sedentary nature of the Caribbean population, the extent and numbers of birds involved in the 1999 invasion and the weather conditions in the southwest, it is assumed that *pallida* was the race involved. A specimen and banded bird, both from Ontario during this flight, each fit *pallida* on measurements, giving circumstantial weight to the idea that the other birds were also probably *pallida*.

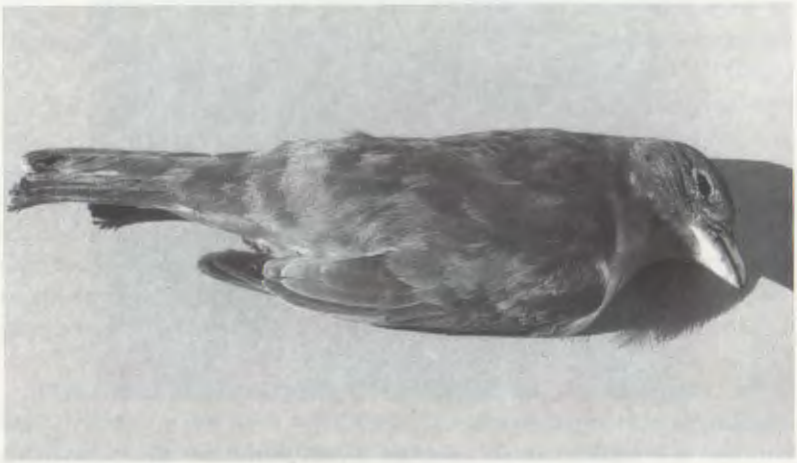
Fork-tailed Flycatcher, North Windham, CT
Photo by Jane Seynour, 3 July 2000

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*) One was seen 22-23 May 2000 at Groton-New London Airport in Groton (James Restivo*, Greg Hanisek, Mark Szantyr† 00-08). The bird allowed close approach as it hunted insects from a chain-link fence.

VARIED THRUSH (*Ixoreus naevius*) One visited fruiting shrubs in Andy Brand's yard in Hamden from 18-20 Nov 1999 (Greg Hanisek, Jim Zipp† 99-41). Its overall dull coloration identified it as a female, and it was probably a first-year bird based on its brown tail.

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER (*Dendroica nigrescens*) One adult was seen on 2 Oct 1996 at a Metropolitan District Commission reservoir in West Hartford (Paul Cianfaglione*, Jamie Meyers, Sam Fried 97-08). One adult was seen 7 Nov 1999 at Crook Horn Road in Southbury (Kevin Finnan* 99-44). There has been a recent increase in records of this species in the state. Most are in late fall to early winter.

SUMMER TANAGER (*Piranga rubra*) An apparent window-kill was found on the deck of a home in Guilford on 3 May 2000 (Amy Hopkins*† 00-15). This southern species has become a rare but regular visitor to the state, usually as a spring overshoot. Because of its now-annual occurrence, the committee no longer requires documentation.



Summer Tanager, Guilford, CT, A. Hopkins*
Photo by Mark Szantyr, 3 May 2000

WESTERN TANAGER (*Piranga ludoviciana*) One was seen in a backyard in New Fairfield on 19 Oct 1999 (Don Breeger* 99-42). Lack of red on the head and face indicated it was a female or immature male.

CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR (*Calcarius ornatus*) An adult male was found on a ballfield at Haddam-Killingworth High School in Haddam on 18 Jun 2000 (Dave Gumbart*, Mark Szantyr, Julian Hough† 00-11). This spectacular bird allowed approach within a few feet. The date of occurrence falls within a late spring-

early summer window that has produced a surprising number of northeastern records. This is the third state record.

Chestnut-collard Longspur, Haddam, CT
Photo by Julian Hough, 19 June 2000

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) Three males were found in association with a large mixed flock of blackbirds on 10 Nov 1999 in Windham. (Mark Szantyr* 99-36). A difficult identification was obtained through use of plumage and structural characters, and was aided by the presence of the primary confusion species (Rusty Blackbird and Common Grackle) close by for comparison. Field sketches were provided.

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus major*) A male and a female were seen on 14 Apr 2000 in the Long Beach-Great Meadows section of Stratford (Charles Barnard*, Patrick Comins 00-16). This species is now regular at this location and has been confirmed breeding in the past; a few reports from other coastal locations have occurred recently as well. As a result, the committee no longer solicits documentation of occurrences in the state, although details of breeding are still sought. Birders should also note that the very similar Great-tailed Grackle has been undergoing range expansion and has been documented as far north as Maritime

Canada. As a result, all large grackles should be viewed critically, and any seen away from the immediate coast should be carefully documented.

BULLOCK'S ORIOLE (*Icterus bullockii*) An immature male frequented a feeder in Stafford 5 November to at least 30 Nov 1999 (Linda Mack*†, Mark Szantyr† 99-35). Winter orioles present a variety of identification problems. Good photos helped confirm this identification.

An adult male visited the Lang feeder in West Goshen for the third consecutive winter, from December 1999 to at least February 2000 (Mark Szantyr 00-01). This is an exciting example of site fidelity in a vagrant, a phenomenon documented a number of times in North America.

Bullock's Oriole, Stafford, CT
Photo by Mark Szantyr, 8 November 1999

BRAMBLING (*Fringilla montifringilla*) A male visited a feeder in a Weston neighborhood from 4 January to 24 March 2000, establishing a first state record (Evangeline LaMore*†, Mark Szantyr, Curtis Marantz 00-02). A large number of observers produced written details, photos and sketches. This abundant Eurasian species is a long-distance migrant with a long history of appearances in the northern U.S. and Canada. The committee believed its his-

tory of vagrancy outweighed the possibility that it was an escaped cage bird. However, see the Yellowhammer account elsewhere in this report for additional comment on this problem.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED, identification questionable.

YELLOW-NOSED ALBATROSS (*Thalassarche chlororhyncos*). On 10 Jul 2000, a bird suggesting a pale bodied albatross was described by observers as being seen from a moving automobile as the bird crossed the I-95 bridge over the Housatonic River between the towns of Stratford and Milford (00-18). Considering the circumstances of this observation, a reasonable view was had and an array of very interesting field marks was noted. The observers subsequently became aware of the infamous Yellow-nosed Albatross(es) that had been making random appearances along the eastern seaboard from Maine to Florida during the late spring and summer of 2000. After comparing the details of their sighting to these other reports, concluded that they had seen this bird as it made its way between the Mid-Atlantic States and New England. The committee was more than a little intrigued by this report and gave it close and careful consideration in light of the unique set of circumstances presented by the events of this year. Unfortunately, the observer admitted that the conditions of the observation were far from ideal to confidently identify this bird and even if thought to be an albatross, the details were certainly insufficient to eliminate other similar species. It is very important to note that even though this report is inadequate to place the species on the state list, it will be a part of the permanent ornithological record for the state of Connecticut and provide a tantalizing bit of information to those people analyzing "Albatross Summer 2000".

SOOTY SHEARWATER (*Puffinus griseus*). A single individual was reported from off of Meig's Point at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison on 10 Oct 1999 (99-43, 99-43A). While the identification was likely correct, the description provided by the observers (99-43) and the subsequent additional information (99-43A) do not conclusively identify this as P. *griseus* to the elimination of other possible dark shearwater or petrel species. The committee does want to stress that the identification is most likely correct and that Sooty Shearwater is by far the most likely candidate for this observation. This group of pelagic birds can be decidedly difficult to identify without unambiguous photographs and extensive de-

scriptive details. We thank the observers for their efforts in the reporting of this observation of a species long overdue for inclusion on the state list.

BROWN PELICAN (*Pelicanus occidentalis*). Remarkably, a bird of this species was reported far inland along the Connecticut River at Windsor Locks on the equally remarkable date of 31 Dec 1999 (00-13).

The place and timing of this report would probably be enough to elicit skepticism from most committee members but remarkably again, a bird of this species was seen, photographed, and captured for rehabilitation and relocation in nearby Massachusetts within a few days of this sighting (MassBird; Massachusetts Audubon Rare Bird Alert Hotline, m.ob.). The committee believes that this pelican probably did fly through Connecticut to get to Massachusetts and that this report probably refers to the same individual. This report was not deemed acceptable because of its lack of details and because of uncertainty as to the name or names of Connecticut observers involved in this sighting. Also, the question was raised as to the possibility of an other than wild origin for this bird, considering the anomalous circumstances of timing and location. The committee asks anyone having additional information concerning this bird's New Year's Eve occurrence in Connecticut to please forward details to Mark Szantyr, ARCC Secretary, 145 Farmington Avenue, Waterbury, Connecticut 06710.

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE (*Elanoides forficatus*). An apparent adult of this species was reported from Weston on 5 Jun 1999 (99-32). While arguably one of the most distinctive birds in North America, Swallow-tailed Kite is reported far more often than it is accepted by this committee because accounts of these occurrences are rarely, if ever documented beyond the declarative statement, "I saw a Swallow-tailed Kite!" The timing and circumstances of this sighting leave little doubt that the observer did indeed see a Swallow-tailed Kite but sadly, little or no supportive documentation accompanied the report. Some committee members noted that portions of the sparse details were, in fact counter-indicative of this species.

GYRFALCON (*Falco rusticolus*). A "nearly black" Gyrfalcon was reported from Griswold Point in Lyme during the Old Lyme, Connecticut Christmas Bird Count on 3 Jan 1999 (9-17). The committee agreed that the details of this sighting, while suggestive of a

large falcon, do not confidently establish the identity as *F. rusticolus* to the exclusion of other large falcons including hybrids kept by falconers. In the last decade, several falconer's birds have been seen in our area, including a Prairie Falcon (*F.mexicanus*) x Peregrine Falcon (*F. peregrinus*) in Rhode Island. Also, some members of the committee commented that the weather conditions during this count were horrendous and probably did not allow for optimal viewing conditions.

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*). A single individual was reported from Greenwich on 23 Jun 1997 (97-46). This report was the subject of extensive debate by the committee. While this was probably a correct identification, the committee could not reach a consensus as to certain reported details and felt that a conservative resolution would be best. Black-necked Stilt is widely reported from our region yet is incredibly rare in Connecticut.

AMERICAN AVOCET (*Recurvirostra americana*). Three birds of this species were reported from the extensive marshes at the mouth of the Housatonic River in Milford on 31 Jul 1999 (99-31). As in the previous record, the committee felt that the sparse details of the sighting did not conclusively eliminate other possible shorebird species. The committee reminds observers that even birds as distinctive as American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, and Swallow-tailed Kite need thorough and complete documentation.

RED-NECKED STINT (*Calidris ruficollis*). A bird described as a near alternate plumage adult was reported from off of Milford Point, Milford on 30 Jul 2000 (00-21) and another bird of indeterminate plumage was reported from the same area on 1 Aug 2000 (00-22). The summer of 2000 saw an amazing array of stints, small Eurasian shorebirds of the genus Calidris, in Long Island Sound. (See 00-20, Accepted Records, elsewhere in this report). These reports, while certainly suggestive of a stint, and likely *C. ruficollis*, do not conclusively eliminate other small sandpipers in the genus Calidris. As stated above, this is an extremely difficult identification problem and detailed descriptions of plumage and structure are necessary. Even with this detail, some of these birds defy confident identification to species.

ROSS' GULL (*Rhodostethia rosea*). A bird described as in extremely bright alternate plumage was reported from Old Saybrook on 22 Mar 2000 (00-14). The committee agreed that details in this

report were insufficient to eliminate more expected small gull species or to confidently identify *R. rosea*.

ARCTIC TERN (*Sterna paradisaea*). A bird described as a subadult or second year bird was reported and photographed at Sandy Point in West Haven on 8 Aug 1999 (99-45). Terns of the genus Sterna can be very similar especially in other than definitive alternate plumage. The second year, (first-summer or "Portlandica"), plumage of Arctic Tern and of the more expected Common Tern, *S. hirundo*, is not often seen in New England as these birds usually spend this portion of their lives in the southern hemisphere. The identification of this or any plumage of Arctic Tern in Connecticut requires detailed descriptions of plumage and structural characters. Even then it may be difficult to identify certain individuals. With due regard for the excellent field skills and experience of the observer, the committee agreed that the details of this observation, including the photographs, do not conclusively identify the bird in question as *S. paradisaea*, nor do they certainly eliminate *S. hirundo*. Interestingly, the committee learned of a bird seen that same weekend in the same location that was initially thought to be Arctic Tern, but that was subsequently seen well and critically studied and determined to be a Common Tern in an "unusually dark" plumage.

CASSIN'S KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus vociferans*). A single bird thought to be of this species was seen and photographed at Hammonasset Beach State Park on 19 Aug 1998 (99-12). This report initiated one of the most interesting ornithological investigations in ARCC history. The bird was fairly well studied. The photographs were suggestive at best but actually provided some key evidence for this investigation. The write-ups and photos describe a kingbird shaped bird with fairly yellow under parts; a distinct and fairly broad white terminal band to the tail, a dark breast set off from the yellowish under parts by a narrow white area, a "medium" sized bill for a kingbird, and moderately dark upper parts. Lacking, or unable to be determined were the white malar area typical of Cassin's Kingbird, a clear determination of the number of tail feathers evident, the certain age of the individual, or the true extent of the yellowish coloration to the under parts.

Many committee members felt that this bird showed real possibilities to be *vociferans* but a few were initially troubled by the tail pattern. The white tip seemed to be a bit extreme for Cassin's Kingbird which has white or pale fringing to the tip of the tail and not

really a defined white tip as this bird showed. The tails suggested that of an Eastern Kingbird (*T. tyrannus*), but the yellowish coloration to the under parts seemed to be beyond what reviewers have experienced with the species. Copies of the slides were sent digitally to experts from around the country and what ensued was extremely interesting. Most of these people felt that the bird was not Cassin's Kingbird for the same reasons as stated above. A few felt that the images did not conclusively identify it as Cassin's, nor did they conclusively eliminate Cassin's. The most important bits of information came when the ARCC asked reviewers if they had any experience with hybrid Eastern X Western Kingbird (*T. verticalis*). Surprisingly, a few people had some experience with this pairing and more importantly, numerous extremely experienced ornithologists felt that these photos suggest what a hybrid of this pairing could, in fact, resemble (V. Remsen, K. Garrett, T. Leukering, pers. comm.)! While identification to this hybrid combination is far from provable, the committee agreed that the bird was not Cassin's Kingbird and that identification of this bird as an Eastern X Western Kingbird hybrid could not be ruled out.

The breeding range of Western Kingbird is spreading eastward at an impressive rate and recent nestings in Tennessee and in the upper Midwest, east of the Mississippi, seem to indicate that hybrid pairings like the one suggested above may become more frequent (Winging It, Aug 99). Observers are asked to carefully note all details of yellow-bellied kingbird observations.

This committee would like to extend special thanks to Louis Bevier, Kimball Garrett, Greg Lasley, Tony Leukering, Van Remsen, and Don Roberson for their careful analysis and comment on this confusing issue.

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus major*). A single male was reported from Griswold Point in Old Lyme on 22 Sep 1996 and three, two females and one male, from a nearby site in Old Lyme on 23 Sep 1996 (96-57). The committee agreed that certain aspects of this report were not conclusive for identification as *Q. major* and felt that a conservative evaluation would be the best result. Boat-tailed Grackle is now of regular occurrence in Connecticut, especially in the area of the Lordship/Great Meadows marshes in Stratford. For this reason, it is no longer a review species except as it pertains to records of breeding.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED, origin questionable.

TRUMPETER SWAN (*Cygnus buccinator*). An adult was seen and well photographed on 17 May 1999 from the town docks in Stratford (99-22). Certainly a good find as the bird was with the ubiquitous Mute Swans (*Cygnus olor*), this occurrence coincides with an influx of this species in the east, undoubtedly the result of introductions in the upper Midwest and north. The observer did well in documenting this occurrence and the committee asks that any future observations be similarly documented and reported in order that we might develop a complete picture of the seemingly inevitably successful reintroduction of this species to the eastern portion of its historical range.

BARNACLE GOOSE (*Branta leucopsis*). A single adult was with a large flock of migrant Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) on the Willimantic Reservoir in Mansfield on 6-7 Apr 1996 (97-02). As has been discussed, an occurrence of Barnacle Goose in Connecticut is very difficult to confidently assess in light of its origin, either wild or from captivity. The species is widely kept in waterfowl collections, is inexpensive to purchase, is quite attractive, and adapts very well to "wild-like" behavior once on the loose. However, we do have evidence that at least one Barnacle Goose, a banded individual shot by a hunter, has made it to North America from its nesting location in the Old World (Szantyr, CW, Vol. 5, No. 2 1985). The Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*) that occurred in Mansfield in March 1998 (98-11) was deemed wild based on the large quantity of circumstantial supporting evidence that accompanied the sighting and the fact that research showed that Pink-footed Goose is not widely kept in captivity. It is more than a little intriguing that this Barnacle Goose showed up in the same area, used the same roosting and foraging sites, at the same time of year, and with essentially the same, or a very similar flock of migrant Canada Geese as the Pink-footed Goose. So is this bird wild? There is no way to know. Is it an escape from captivity? Same answer. By far the most conservative approach, and the one we took here, says that until a Barnacle Goose record is accompanied with the same level of supporting details as the Pink-footed Goose of 1998, we should consider any record of suspect origin.

YELLOWHAMMER (*Emberiza citrinella*). A bird of indeterminate age and sex was videotaped at a Stamford feeder where it spent approximately an hour on 3 Dec 1999 and was never relo-

cated (00-12). The story of how we got word of this record is nearly as intriguing as the record itself. A friend of the committee and renowned ornithologist, Paul Buckley, lives in Rhode Island. Paul has a local birdwatching supply store that he frequents. This store has an area where people can post photos and videos of birds that are either unknown to them or of some other interest. While on a visit to this store, Buckley observed a video being viewed, recognized the species as Yellowhammer and, dumbfounded, asked for all the details. The Stamford, Connecticut homeowner that made the video has a relative who lives in Rhode Island. The homeowner asked to have this video brought to the store so that this bird, unknown to him, could be identified. Paul, when learning that the bird was recorded in Connecticut, alerted this committee and subsequently we were able to get a copy of the video for our records.

Holy Mackerel! Yellowhammer is a reasonably common Eurasian species. Only the northern part of its population is moderately migratory. This species has occurred in Iceland only about 12 times in approximately 50 years of record keeping. It has never been recorded in anywhere in North America, including Greenland or the Aleutians. An alternate plumage male Yellowhammer is a strikingly bright yellow sparrow-like bird. As a male in basic plumage or in female or juvenal plumage, the bird could easily be overlooked at a feeder or in the wild. This bird was in such a plumage. An observer familiar with this bird from England suggests that due to the lack of strong yellow in the plumage, the bird is most likely not from the northwestern European population, the population that is deemed to be the most migratory (Trevor Lloyd-Evans, pers. comm). This individual showed no bands but was missing tertials on the bird's right wing. It was not possible to determine whether this was from molt or from being in captivity. The committee made a check of national and international breeders and importers of cage birds and found that Yellowhammer is widely offered to the avicultural trade. We also found rather circuitously that a Connecticut breeder had been shipped two of this species at around the same time as the Stamford occurrence.

Again, Holy Mackerel. This report, if accepted, would constitute a first record for North America. This is not something to be taken lightly. Such information significantly alters what we know about a species distribution and movements. This committee, after some discussion, decided that there was more than enough circumstantial information to suggest a likely captive origin There was no information supporting a wild origin except that its date of

occurrence coincides with dates when the migratory population arrives at its wintering grounds. The committee believed that in order to accept this record as wild, a pattern of occurrences on the intervening landmasses between here and the Eurasian range of Yellowhammer must be established.

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GREAT HORNED OWL PREYS ON DOMESTIC CAT

William E. Davis, Jr. and Craig Armstrong

Great Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*) are fearsome predators. They are primarily nocturnal and crepuscular perch-and-pounce hunters that have acute hearing and vision, and wing feathers adapted to produce silent flight. Their diet in most areas is about 90 % mammals, some of which are astonishingly large. In addition to rabbits and hares, they take squirrels, skunks, raccoons, porcupines, small dogs, and cats (Houston et al. 1998).

These opportunistic foragers are able to lift and fly with prey considerably heavier than themselves (owl weight 2 to 5.5 pounds), occasionally carrying a carcass weighing 8 to 9 pounds (Karalus and Eckert 1974). Bent (1938) reports three instances in which Great Horned Owls have taken domestic cats, and relates that cats often put up a considerable struggle, sometimes forcing the owl to relinquish its prey. Austin (1932) describes a Great Horned Owl he captured that was flying low to the ground carrying a freshly killed half-grown cat. Owls may take a half hour to kill a cat, which they usually do by driving their talons deeply into the cat's neck and shoulders, and slashing at the cat's spinal column with their beak (Karalus and Eckert 1974).

We report here an account of a "successful" Great Horned Owl attack on a half-grown domestic black cat. On 19 January 2001, Judi Zizza, of Westwood, MA left her house on the way to work and found a dead Great Horned Owl at the end of her driveway. The owl still grasped the partly eaten remains of a half-grown black cat. Examination of the owl (which smelled strongly of skunk) revealed a serious abrasion on the left leg, deep enough to expose bone; that

Figure 1. Great Horned Owl and cat that it had killed and partly eaten. *Photos by W. E. Davis*

is consistent with the hypothesis that the owl was struck by a car while carrying the cat from one feeding perch to another. The cat was missing its head, right leg and enough of its chest to reveal its heart (Figure 1). Examination of the stomach contents of the owl revealed large boluses of black cat fur and the entire paw and right leg of the cat, which apparently had been swallowed whole (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Carcass of cat killed by Great Horned Owl including right leg that was removed from the owl's stomach.

We hypothesize that the owl caught the cat in a neighboring yard or in the road and proceeded to eat the anterior portions of the cat. The owl was then disturbed, perhaps by the car that hit it, and was struck while flying with the carcass.

Cat predation by Great Horned Owls is probably under-reported since most attacks occur at night and the owl usually removes the prey before devouring it. We suggest that owl predation is commonplace, particularly on kittens and half-grown cats, and especially in winter when the more usual rodent prey may be reduced in numbers. Cat owners may do well to heed the advice of the American Bird Conservancy's "Cats Indoors" initiative.

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THE 2000-2001 CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Stephen P. Broker

During the three-week period December 14, 2000 through January 5, 2001, Connecticut's Christmas Bird Count early winter bird censuses were conducted by seventeen Audubon societies and bird clubs - the fifteenth consecutive year that all these counts have been held. In 1984-85 Barkhamsted held its inaugural count, and in 1986-87, the Edwin Way Teale-Trail Wood count was initiated in the state. All other Connecticut counts have been conducted for more than 25 years, a few dating back to the first years of this century-long movement. When the milestone National Audubon Society sponsored 100th Annual Christmas Bird Count was held in 1999-2000, Connecticut State birders recorded 173 Count Day and 1 Count Week species, comprising nearly half a million individual birds sighted. We fell somewhat short of those totals in the 101st edition of the Christmas Bird Count, recording eight fewer species and 100,000 fewer individuals. What was missed in quantity, however, was more than made up for in quality.

Highlights of the 2000-01 Christmas Bird Count include a Pacific Loon in New London (a difficult and extremely rare identification in Connecticut and a first for the all-time State CBC list), Eared Grebe in New London, Little Blue Heron in Greenwich-Stamford, three Common Eiders on the New London count, wintering mated pairs of Peregrine Falcons at Hartford and New Haven, a Sandhill Crane in Hartford (new to count day for Connecticut), a Swainson's Thrush in Greenwich-Stamford, Western Tanager count week in Woodbury-Roxbury, Grasshopper Sparrow in Stratford-Milford, and Seaside Sparrow in Old Lyme-Saybrook. Additional regional rarities include Vesper Sparrow and Savannah Sparrow on northern counts, Red-throated Loon, Greater White-fronted Goose, Brant, Northern Shoveler, Merlin, Red-headed Woodpecker, Marsh Wren, and Vesper Sparrow on mid-state counts, and Black Vulture (count week), Northern Shrike, and Dickcissel on coastal counts.

Twenty year high counts were recorded for eight species, most notably Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Gadwall, Lesser Black-backed Gull, and Cedar Waxwing. An unusually high number of twenty-year low totals - twenty nine in all - were recorded, including very low numbers for three species of owls, two woodpecker

species, chickadees, nuthatches, creepers, mockingbirds, and three species of sparrows. Also included among the twenty year low totals were several species which have been in population declines for ten or more years: American Kestrel, Ruffed Grouse, American Woodcock, and European Starling.

New London achieved the high species count in Connecticut for the first time, with 121 count day and 1 count week species, the count's greatest total ever. Woodbury-Roxbury reached a high total of 95 count day plus 1 count week species, extraordinary for a mid-state count, and Oxford had its second highest species count ever, with 76 count day and 2 count week species. Hartford and Litchfield Hills led the six northern counts with 87 count day + four count week species, and 82 count day species, respectively. While Hartford did not approach its record total of 102 count day (+ 4 CW) species tallied in 1999-2000, nearly twice as many birders participated here as on any other count in Connecticut, effectively blending observer numbers with field expertise and diverse Hartford-area habitat. The state's sixteen other counts still have a lot to learn from Hartford about generating such levels of interest among their legions of birders.

All told, 165 count day and 1 count week species (Western Tanager) were recorded on Connecticut's counts by 685 field observers (down 75 from the total of 1999-2000) and 140 feeder watchers (up 35 from last year). The reduced numbers of field observers and increased numbers of feeder watchers most certainly reflected the desire of many to participate on one or more CBCs, but to do so in the comfort of home and safe from the prevailing inclement weather. Two of the three counts with low participant numbers were held on one of the meanest CBC days in memory, Sunday, December 17. Offsetting this general decline in participants was a record high number of total observers on New Year's Day at Pawling, New York - Hidden Valley, Connecticut, due in part to their banner year for dedicated feeder watchers.

In Deference to the Weather.

There was absolutely no cause for indifference to the weather this CBC season. It can be argued that temperature and precipitation conditions prior to and during the three-week count period played a greater role in species and total individuals counted than in any CBC year in recent memory. The following comments are based on weather data from the Northeast Regional Climate Center (Cornell University), the National Weather Service (NWS), and the New York Times (meteorology by Pennsylvania State University).

The month of October was dry and somewhat warmer than normal throughout the Northeast. The NWS describes the month as "a mix of Indian Summer and an early preview of winter weather" with several frontal systems early in the month and above normal temperature readings, followed by unseasonably cool temperatures and an end to Indian Summer by mid-month, additional moderation in temperature for the remainder of October, and finishing up with unusual chill and gale force winds in eastern New England. In keeping with the rest of the Northeast, Connecticut experienced its fourth driest October on record, but our state recorded temperatures somewhat below normal for the period. The southern portion of the state (Bridgeport data) averaged 54.0°F (1.6° below normal), while northern regions of Connecticut (Windsor Locks data) averaged 51.8° (0.4° below normal). With 0.43 inches of precipitation in the southern parts of the state and 1.07 inches in the northern parts, the entire state was down at least 2.5 inches of rain from the normal.

In November, the state got additional hints of a rough winter to come, as described by the NWS. "Clouds and rainfall dominated the first half of November and a more significant change to cooler than normal temperatures and drier conditions, occurred during the second half of November." There were several cold fronts, chilling winds, and freezing rain in Hartford at the conclusion of the Thanksgiving weekend and an inch of snow in the Northeast Hills by the end of the month. Overall, coastal Connecticut continued with its cooler than normal temperatures (average 43.6° F or 2.0° below normal), while inland, northern sections averaged 40.9° F for the month (1.0° below normal). It was decidedly rainy along the coast (4.13 inches, slightly above normal), less so inland (an estimated 2.80 inches, or 1.24 inches below normal).

The last month of the year was marked by a series of powerful snowstorms, including widespread accumulation of snow beginning December 8 (1 to 2 inches); December 14 (0.5 inches, but considerably more severe in eastern Massachusetts); December 20 (2 to 3 or more inches), December 22 (trace amounts to more than 1 inch accumulation), and especially December 30 (7.0 to 10.8 inches in Hartford County, 4.0 to 10.5 inches in Tolland and Windham Counties). The average monthly temperature for Bridgeport was 29.6° F (4.7° below normal) and for Windsor Locks was 25.2° F (4.2° below normal).

Let's put these data in context with some comments from birders out in the field and down on the ground. Jay Kaplan gave voice to the thoughts of most field observers on Saturday, Decem-

ber 16 counts by writing, "although the weather was less than ideal, it could have been much worse," with a cold, overcast morning and light rain in the afternoon. Woodbury-Roxbury birders were undeterred by Saturday's uncertain weather conditions, described by Chris Wood as "gray and damp," as they tallied a record high species total. Conditions for birding were much less kind for those out on Sunday, the 17th. Bob Moeller, compiler for the Trixi Strauss Lakeville-Sharon count, described the day well in writing, "it was rainy, heavy at times, all day, with only momentary lulls in the driving rain. The wind was southwesterly at 10 to 40 mph and the temperature ranged from 42° to 65°." He continued, "sometimes the rain came at us horizontally, sometimes it was only a heavy drizzle, and sometimes for 5 or 10 minutes, it stopped. Our circle got from 3 to 4 inches during the day. The worst day for finding and observing birds that our Count has had." Gary Palmer wrote of the Greenwich-Stamford count, "the predawn hours were foggy, then the winds picked up and brought in heavy showers all day that were accompanied by thunder and lightning. The winds ranged from 10 to about 50 mph." He echoed Bob Moeller's view by stating that "this was about the worst weather ever on count day." Buzz Devine, who now steps down after nearly a quarter century as Oxford's compiler, wrote, "the only positive point that can be said regarding the weather was the mild temperature. The combination of intermittent heavy rain, strong wind (sometimes gusting to 30 knots or more!!), and overcast sky made finding birds and identifying species a real challenge." Frank Mantlik also noted Westport's "heavy rain, high winds, and warm temperatures." On the Salmon River count, gale force winds created sizeable whitecaps on inland lakes such as Moodus Reservoir.

The weather took a turn for the better by the following weekend, and Dave Tripp reported temperatures of 6-30° F on Saturday, December 23, morning and afternoon cloudiness, negligible wind, 0-2 inches snow, and still and moving water partly open. Stratford-Milford's coastal count had a temperature range of 10 to 32 degrees, with partly clear skies, no precipitation, but some strong gusts of wind. The following weekend, the Trail Wood's count on Sunday, December 31 enjoyed temperatures ranging from 20 to 27 degrees, clear skies, and no precipitation. New Year's Day brought sunny skies, calm air, and crisp temperatures of 9 to 15 degrees for Pawling, NY-Hidden Valley, CT. Angela Dimmitt reported that the December 30 storm left 12 to18 inches of snow. Some birders responded by strapping on the snowshoes. With

most New York and Connecticut water frozen, the Housatonic River provided fast-flowing open water for ducks. The New London count, originally scheduled for Saturday, December 30, was rescheduled to New Year's Day. Most counts do not have much latitude for date changes, but New London did, and Bob Dewire reported that "it was definitely a good move because we had our best count ever . . . including 4 species never recorded before!" The implications of this cold and snow-laden CBC season in Connecticut are discussed further in the check-list account that follows.

Loons through Ducks

Loons and grebes were in far lower numbers than usual along the coast, largely due to the difficult viewing conditions of gusting wind, rain, and choppy seas. Compare this year's 38 Red-throated Loons with a usual range of 150-250 individuals, or this year's 42 Common Loons with a typical range of 50-200 divers. One Red-throated at Salmon River was new for this count and only the second occurrence of the species on a mid-state CBC. Common Loon was missed at Old Lyme-Saybrook for the first time. However, the discovery and careful identification of a Pacific Loon at Mason Island, Stonington for the New London count was a first for a Connecticut CBC and a rare documentation for state avifaunal records. Pacific Loon has widespread distribution along the Pacific coast from Alaska to California and Mexico, and on the Gulf coast from Texas to Alabama and Florida. A check of the unofficial results posted at the National Audubon Society/BirdSource website shows Pacific Loon occurring this year at inland sites in Idaho, Colorado, Arizona, Indiana and Kansas, and along the Atlantic coast in just three locations: Schoodic Point, Maine; New London, Connecticut; and Chesapeake Bay, Virginia.

Pied-billed Grebe numbers were the lowest in seven years, and Horned Grebe numbers were at a twenty-year low, at 65% of average levels. Red-necked Grebe, which has been seen on 16 of the last 20 count years, was missed this year. However, another outstanding discovery on the coast was an Eared Grebe at Giant's Neck in East Lyme (New London count). The bird prolonged its stay in the area and was seen by many observers. Eared Grebe was last recorded on the Greenwich-Stamford CBC in 1989-90. Northern Gannets were at their second highest total ever at 12, as they were seen at Westport, New Haven, and Old Lyme-Saybrook. They now have been recorded 10 times in the last 12 years. Double-crested Cormorants were counted in highest numbers in seven years, and four at Pawling/Hidden Valley were new for that count. A 20-year low total of 124 Great Cormorants was

at 50% of average numbers.

Old Lyme-Saybrook sleuthed out the only three American Bitterns for the state total. Great Blue Herons numbered fewer than 50% of last year's total and were well below the 10-year average. Four Great Egrets along the coast make a good total for a species found on only 50% of CBCs. An immature Little Blue Heron was a rare find "on the shores off Port Chester Harbor" at Greenwich-Stamford. First observed during the month of November, the bird was photographed to substantiate the record. This species was last found at New Haven in 1996-97 (also an immature), and a prior record at Westport dates to 1979-80. Black-crowned Night-Heron averages 22 individuals per count year, so the reporting of 4 in the state this year is very low.

The first record of Black Vulture on a Connecticut CBC was at Woodbury-Roxbury in 1989-90. This year eight were seen, including five at Pawling/Hidden Valley, two at Woodbury-Roxbury, one at Oxford, and one CW at Westport. Their range expansion into the state continues and is leading to recent sightings of individuals and pairs along the entire Connecticut coastline. The 267 Turkey Vultures seen statewide continue their big numbers of the last four years and comprise the second highest total ever. Greater White-fronted Goose was seen for the sixth consecutive year, this time at Woodbury-Roxbury. Snow Geese were in great abundance, particularly at Lakeville-Sharon, pushing the statewide number more than 200 above the previous high count. Canada Goose numbers have been inflating for the past four years, with an increase of nearly 10% from last year's record high count and more than 20% above pre-1997-98 numbers. A similar spurt in population growth was realized by the mid-1980s, followed by a decade of relatively stable population size. Golfers and homeowners beware! Large numbers of Brant were recorded along the entire coast, with highest concentrations at New Haven (528) and Stratford-Milford (406). The state total is topped only by the 1981-82 count, when 4748 were seen (90% of them at Greenwich-Stamford). In contrast, Mute Swan numbers have held fairly constant for a dozen years. There appears to be increased occurrence of swans in northern regions of Connecticut, and slightly below average numbers were counted along the coast this year.

Among the dabbling ducks, Wood Ducks took a dive in numbers, Gadwall, American Wigeon, and American Black Ducks were recorded at high levels, and Mallards were only slightly above average in spite of record highs mid-state. A Gadwall at Oxford was a rarity. As is typically the case, few Gadwall tend to be recorded along Connecticut's eastern coastline. A rarity Eurasian Wigeon at Holly Pond in Stamford matched one on the coast at New Haven. Eight

Northern Shovelers constituted an average total, and 14 Northern Pintails were on the low side but in keeping with year-to-year fluctuations in their numbers. Weather played a major role in the generally low counts of diving ducks on our foul weather CBC days, although several species were exceptions to the rule. White-winged Scoter was at 62% of the 20 year average, Bufflehead was at a 20 year low, and all three merganser species were well below their elevated numbers of recent years, particularly Common and Red-breasted. Seemingly in response to their recent name change to Long-tailed Duck, Oldsquaws voted with their wings and achieved a new 20-year low total. The 352 Canvasbacks represented an unremarkable number since their plummet from pre-1990 levels. Ring-necked and Ruddy Ducks came back to reality from last year's record highs, while still giving a pretty good showing. Common Goldeneye was in average numbers, with two at Quinnipiac Valley being noteworthy. In marked contrast to above-mentioned low species counts, Stratford-Milford produced 15,000 Greater Scaup (a throwback to the huge rafts of the past), and the remainder of the coast chipped in another 2400 for the second highest total in 20 years. Three Common Eiders at New London were rare. Adjacent Fisher's Island, New York waters provide our best hope for recording this species on Connecticut counts. New London's fine Surf Scoter count gave a good boost to the coastal total. Four Lesser Scaup at Trail Wood were excellent finds and were new for this count.

Hawks through Sandpipers

Wintering populations of Bald Eagles have been robust in recent years, but the CBC statewide total of 47 is average for the last 15 years. Bald Eagle numbers range from 25 to 75 year-to-year. A fairly high state total of Northern Harriers was aided by 18 each at Old Lyme and New London, and 10 more at Hartford. Sharp-shinned Hawk was counted in average numbers, and Cooper's Hawk continued its high numbers of the last six years with good totals on coastal and northern counts. Northern Goshawk was at fourth lowest numbers in 20 years and was missed count day and count week mid-state for the first time. Red-shouldered Hawk achieved a high total on northern counts, with four at Trail Wood and seven at Storrs. Red-tailed Hawks were at 57% of last year's record count, but the species continues to maintain higher numbers over the last decade. Rough-legged Hawk reached its second best total in 11 years, in part due to the seven observed at Old Lyme-Saybrook. Last year's CBC review article noted that "previous annual count summaries have failed to note a disturbing decline in numbers of Rough-Legged Hawk in the early

winter of Connecticut." The same issue of *The Connecticut Warbler* carried a Connecticut Field Notes reference to "a Rough-legged Hawk invasion that brought reports of more than 40 statewide, marking one of the largest flights in recent memory." What gives? It's a good reminder of the delimited time period covered by Christmas Bird Count data and suggests again the need to examine these numbers in the context of the broader time span of the season. Our hawk experts have commented on major incursions of Rough-legs into our area during the past two winters. They also recognize a paucity of Rough-legs in the decade or more prior to 1999-2000.

This year, I can only offer the same tired mantra for American Kestrel: new 20 year low count. In the last five years, we have averaged 19 CBC kestrels. During the five-year period 1976-77 through 1980-81, we averaged 186 kestrels. Four Merlins statewide, including rare sightings at Barkhamsted, Storrs (CW), and Pawling, made for an average total. Wintering pairs of Peregrine Falcons often will stay in the vicinity of their breeding grounds, and that was the case again this winter with the Travelers Tower birds in Hartford. New Haven boasts a mated pair for the second winter, and singles were recorded at Greenwich-Stamford and Stratford-Milford. Recently delisted as a federally endangered species, peregrine remains a state-listed endangered species. The continuing recovery of Peregrine Falcon in Connecticut will be marked by new breeding sites on human-made structures, but more importantly by the return of this magnificent bird to courtship, egg-laying, incubation, and fledging on Central Valley cliff-faces.

Ruffed Grouse dropped to a new 20-year low in the state. Comparison of five-year averages for the periods beginning in 1976, 1981, and 1996 is very telling. We went from an average 162 grouse a year up to a high of 197, and most recently to about 27 a year. Paralleling the decline of grouse, there has been a meteoric rise of Wild Turkey through restocking efforts. We reached the second highest gobbler total ever this year, and five counts set record highs in the process. Clapper Rails were found at New Haven and Stratford-Milford, and the ten Virginia Rails divided evenly between New Haven and New London, were joined by an atypically low contribution from Old Lyme-Saybrook, yielding a below average total. Each of the three previous count years produced more than 1,000 American Coot, so the 202 found this year represented a sizeable drop. Sharing star billing with Pacific Loon, a Sandhill Crane found in a Bloomfield cornfield also was located "flying with the crows at their evening roost on the Hartford/West Hartford line." This *Grus* find adds another count day species to our state list. Sandhill Crane was previously reported count week at Old Lyme-Saybrook on the 1991-92 CBC. Both Black-bellied

Plover and Killdeer set new 20-year lows, and nearly all sandpipers seen were in short supply. Ruddy Turnstone, Dunlin, and American Woodcock reached new low totals. Greater Yellowlegs was at second lowest numbers, while Common Snipe also was down. Sanderling was slightly below average, and only Purple Sandpiper was sighted in good numbers, thanks largely to the 122 recorded at Old Lyme-Saybrook.

Gulls through Corvids

A Laughing Gull was present on the Stratford-Milford count, but Greenwich-Stamford compiler Gary Palmer reported, "the Black-headed Gull that wintered here five years in a row in the same location did not return." Bonaparte's Gulls were comparatively abundant at Greenwich-Stamford, Westport, and Old Lyme-Saybrook. Recent landfill closings correlate with diminished numbers of the three common gull species. Ring-billed Gull was at its sixth lowest level in 20 years, Herring Gull at its second lowest, and Great Black-backed Gull numbers were representative of the last seven years but were down 50% from totals of the early 1980s. Iceland Gulls were seen at Hartford, New Haven, and Old Lyme-Saybrook (3), and seven Lesser Black-backed Gulls give us a new 20-year high, with one being counted in the north at Trail Wood and six along the coast. Hartford and Old Lyme-Saybrook also reported Glaucous Gulls.

Include Mourning Doves among the causalities of rainy, windy weather. They were seen in new low numbers on five counts and on a statewide basis. Monk Parakeets were robust along the coast, however, as Westport led the way and New Haven reported its all-time high parakeet total. The 20 seen at Greenwich-Stamford were judged an undercount of the true population size now there. Barn Owl was reported at Stratford-Milford in a known roost site, and the fly-at Greenwich, new for the GS count, was believed to be a released bird produced by a captive pair lodging nearby. Eastern Screech-Owl and Great Horned Owl were all but unlocatable on some counts. Screech-Owl was at 50% of normal totals, and Great Horned Owl was not much better at 60% of normal. Barred Owl was similarly undercounted. One Snowy Owl was seen at New London. A Long-eared Owl at Barkhamsted was one of the best finds on this count, and one was seen at New Haven. Short-eared Owls have been harder to find in the last eight years, with this year's effort turning up single birds at Stratford-Milford and Old Lyme-Saybrook. Northern Saw-whet Owl rounded out the owl results with below average numbers. Reduced amounts of open water probably account for Belted Kingfisher's second lowest total in 20 years.

While most woodpeckers headed for cover during the count period, three Red-headed Woodpeckers represented a nice total. Two were at Hartford, "present since fall and not unexpected." One was seen at Woodbury-Roxbury. Red-bellied Woodpecker was counted in third highest numbers ever, although last year's record total was reduced this year by 100. Similarly, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker continued three previous years of good numbers. Downy, Hairy, and Pileated Woodpeckers and Northern Flicker took big hits, however. Downy and Hairy were at levels 25-30% below average and established record lows. Flicker did not live up to its elevated numbers of the last decade. Pileated Woodpecker was found less frequently than normal, although one seen in Ledyard was a new species for the New London CBC list. Northern Shrike did well in a non-irruptive year, with reports coming in from six counts. The most recent big shrike years were in 1995-96 and 1999-2000. Dropping nearly 30,000 birds from last year, American Crow nonetheless was estimated in high numbers. Jay Kaplan wrote, "our estimates tell us there are 35,000 crows in the state's largest roost, give or take a few." Common Raven was seen on seven northern and mid-state counts, 38 in all accounting for the second highest total ever.

Chickadees through Waxwings

Some small species of songbirds were much harder to find due to the difficult weather conditions. Chickadees were counted at a 20-year low, as were White-breasted Nuthatches and Brown Creepers. Tufted Titmouse was a thousand birds lower than the 10-year average. Carolina Wren was unable to build on population gains of last year's count and lost some ground on its peak totals of 1992-93. But, seven House Wrens made for a good sum. Marsh Wren was new to the Oxford count, and Westport's find at a salt marsh along Sasco Creek was just the second time this wren has been observed on the count. Kinglets ranged from average numbers (Golden-crowned) to fairly high numbers (Ruby-crowned). Eastern Bluebird reported in at half last year's total and was down somewhat from recent years' population growth. One of the best finds of the statewide count was a Swainson's Thrush at Greenwich-Stamford. Last recorded in 1993-94 at Hartford, Swainson's was found for only the second time in the last two decades. Hermit Thrushes were at second highest levels, and more than 20,000 American Robins would have made the front page story but for the 27,000+ seen just two years ago. Northern Mockingbirds and European Starlings also dipped to 20 year lows, the starlings continuing a steady downhill slide and diminishing another 10% from last year's record low. Alarm would be premature, but just think

back to the early 1980s when four starlings were being seen for every one seen today. American Pipits were rare finds at Woodbury-Roxbury and Greenwich-Stamford, and nine were high at New London. The skies were dominated by robins no more so than by Cedar Waxwings, with wave after wave of waxwings adding up to a 20 year high. Woodbury-Roxbury, New Haven, and Storrs were particularly graced by their high-pitched calls.

Wood Warblers through Sparrows

Remember last year's extraordinary wood warbler year? This year, just 5 warbler species were reported, with one Orange-crowned at Old Lyme-Saybrook, Pines at New Haven and Old Lyme, Palms at New Haven and Stratford-Milford (CW), and Common Yellowthroats at Hartford and New Haven (2) providing the only parulid thrills of the count. Yellow-rumped Warbler was fairly abundant on many individual counts. A Western Tanager found count week at Woodbury-Roxbury was new to the state 20-year species list. Western Tanager was previously seen in 1979-80 at New Haven (1) and at Stratford-Milford (CW). Among the sparrow species, American Tree Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, and Swamp Sparrow were at low or 20-year record low numbers, while Chipping Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, and White-crowned Sparrow were at high or record high levels. Connecticut counts averaged 836 Field Sparrows during the five-year period 1981-82 to 1985-86, a figure that has dropped to an average of 290 during the five most recent count years. The *Spizella* species reported at Salmon River, was either a Clay-colored or a Chipping Sparrow based on field marks noted and on a memory sketch. One of seven Vesper Sparrows seen was at the Mansfield Landfill and represented a new species for Storrs. Five "Ipswich" Sparrows were counted at their traditional strongholds at Stratford-Milford and Old Lyme-Saybrook. Best sparrow in show surely was the Grasshopper Sparrow seen at Stratford-Milford, a new find for that count. Our last CBC Grasshopper Sparrow was recorded in 1991-92 at Quinnipiac Valley. The remaining excellent sparrow finds were two Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows at Stratford-Milford, a Seaside Sparrow at Old Lyme-Saybrook (last seen CW at New Haven in 1993-94 and count day at Stratford-Milford in 1988-89), and a Lincoln's Sparrow, new to the Barkhamsted count. Seven counts had high numbers of Fox Sparrow, and this species has been counted up in the 120s level for the last three years. In addition, Dark-eyed Junco was in lower than usual numbers while Lapland Longspur and Snow Bunting were comparatively abundant this year. Greenwich-Stam-

ford recorded a Dickcissel, a species that now has been seen eight times in the last twenty years. Red-winged Blackbirds were fairly well represented on the count, as were Eastern Meadowlarks, given their weaker numbers in recent years. Large flocks of Common Grackles occurred at Barkhamsted and Old Lyme-Saybrook, but Brown-headed Cowbirds were substantially harder to find. The only Baltimore Oriole of this year's count was an individual "feeding on crabapples along the Park River in Hartford." Pine Grosbeak was a noteworthy find at Woodbury-Roxbury. Purple Finches were frequently seen again this year, while House Finches were found at a mere 70% of last year's record low total. The only Pine Siskins of the count were one at Barkhamsted and one count week at New Haven. Evening Grosbeaks are all but gone from our early winter census, with the last three years bringing us one, two, and two. To appreciate the change, consider that during the first three years of this 20-year period we counted 2,270, 1,079, and 2,255. No species has dropped more profoundly in numbers.

This annual article reviewing Connecticut Christmas Bird Count results has attempted to identify population trends of bird species based on the wealth of data available from these early winter censuses. Thus, clear trends in population increases have been recognized for a number of species. The most apparent of these increases are the state populations of Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Black Vulture, Canada Goose, Mallard, Cooper's Hawk, Wild Turkey, Monk Parakeet, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Common Raven, Carolina Wren, and Eastern Bluebird, but there are other significant increases that have been noted. Similarly, population declines have been recognized for Canvasback, American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, American Woodcock, European Starling, Eastern Meadowlark, and Evening Grosbeak, among other species. Our understanding of the changing population status of a broad array of bird species has been enhanced considerably with the publication in 2000 of Robert Askin's monograph, *Restoring North America's Birds: Lessons from Landscape Ecology* (Yale University Press). Drawing on his own research as well as a comprehensive review of the scientific literature, Bob Askins has produced an invaluable synthesis of historical information on North America's avifauna, population declines in birds of grasslands, eastern thickets, forest interiors, wetlands, and other specialized habitats, and bird conservation using the principles offered by landscape ecology. There's no better way to make sense of Christmas Bird Count data than to immerse oneself in this important book.

STEPHEN P. BROKER, 50 Hidden Place, Chershire, CT 06410

CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS 2000-01

SPECIES	NORTHERN COUNTS						MID-STATE COUNTS					COASTAL COUNTS						State Total
	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	
Red-throated Loon										1		2	14	10	**1**	6	4	38
Pacific Loon														1				1
Common Loon	1											**3**	6	26	---	5	**1**	42
Pied-billed Grebe							5		2			**2**	**2**	9	3	11	5	39
Horned Grebe												44	8	50		**5**	**2**	**109**
Eared Grebe														1				1
Northern Gannet													4		2		6	12
D.c. Cormorant			3					4		10		3	29	30	30	1		110
Great Cormorant			CW				1			12		**11**	**13**	**11**	41	25	10	**124**
Cormorant, sp.							3										4	7
American Bittern															3			3
Great Blue Heron		12	34		CW	1	5	2	3	1	3	15	27	38	9	27	27	204
Great Egret													2			1	1	4
Little Blue Heron												1						1
Black-cr Night-Heron												1	1			1	1	**4**
Black Vulture							1	5			2						CW	8
Turkey Vulture		4				27	95	9	24	CW	14	7	3	17	49	8	10	267
Gr. Wh.-fronted Goose											1							1
Snow Goose			CW	4	401	CW	1	CW	1	1	1		CW	2	7	7		425
Canada Goose	427	2055	12444	2775	6910	2995	1075	647	4484	699	4636	3345	2827	2922	2581	3118	2013	55953
Canada Goose (small)				2							5							7
Brant							1					272	528	133	6	406	122	1468
Mute Swan		3	13	35	21	2	22	35	97	136	23	63	407	504	61	40	184	1646
Wood Duck			6	3			1			1	5		5	1	2		3	27
Gadwall							1		2			127	584	**6**	3	165	29	917
Eurasian Wigeon												1	1					2

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American Wigeon			2	1					3			116	382	26		209	164	903
American Black Duck	119	59	173	206	90	15	34	21	48	109	120	441	1102	**417**	819	1997	653	6423
Mallard	491	602	1510	993	327	252	635	435	1037	429	682	**1029**	1858	1635	757	1153	**736**	14561
Mallard Hybrid	3			2				1				2	15			4	1	28
Northern Shoveler			CW						3				5					8
Northern Pintail			1	1			1		3			1	4	2			1	14
Green-winged Teal			5		6		1		5			1	31	2	1	8	15	75
Canvasback				5	2				1			15	39	164		96	30	352
Ring-necked Duck	2			203	101	6	38	3	183	31	3	**45**	116	58	17	73	65	944
Greater Scaup				1								10	2173	23	97	15020	93	17417
Lesser Scaup	CW	4		2				1	1			2	19	2		3	1	35
Scaup, sp.																11		11
Common Eider														3				3
Surf Scoter													1	133	12		4	150
White-winged Scoter														---		4	13	**17**
Black Scoter													1	2	1			4
Long-tailed Duck												**9**	29	26	5	78	72	**219**
Bufflehead	CW			2			3	78		4	1	413	126	**334**	50	60	118	**1189**
Common Goldeneye			2	4	28			6	2	CW	3	345	235	155	90	635	118	1623
Hooded Merganser	36		2	40	52	1	18	39	29	10	5	262	128	423	21	67	122	1255
Common Merganser	146	7	163	340	44	59	68	33	57	112	457	493	90	85	201	165	46	2566
Red-br. Merganser												392	**96**	640	140	288	158	1714
Ruddy Duck	CW			17	4			80	8			49	26		1	4	37	226

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	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	
Duck, sp.					47													47
Bald Eagle	4		3	3	3			4		3	4	1			20	2		47
Northern Harrier	1	1	10	2	2	2		1	4		1		12	18	18	16	1	89
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	5	18	1	2	3	1	3	6	7	7	6	13	13	19	7	4	118
Cooper's Hawk	6	1	13	2	2	2	2	2	2		5	8	5	7	13	4	5	79
Northern Goshawk	1													1	2		1	5
Accipiter, sp.					1													1
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	4	1			7		2	1	1	3	2	6	6	14	4	1	53
Red-tailed Hawk	34	36	124	17	22	34	20	45	24	28	46	51	58	46	47	28	21	681
Rough-legged Hawk		1										1		2	7			11
American Kestrel	1		2	1	1			CW	2	1	1		2	1		1		13
Merlin	1					CW		1				1		1		CW		4
Peregrine Falcon			2									1	2			1		6
Ring-necked Pheasant	6	4	7	16	2	2	16	6	7	3	2	CW		1	4		11	87
Ruffed Grouse	2	1		---	CW	1			CW					2	2			8
Wild Turkey	44	1	181	215	107	182	53	117	105	143	113	79	41	6	33		134	1554
Clapper Rail													2			2		4
Virginia Rail													5	5	2			12
American Coot				59				27	46		5	5	5	28	2	7	18	202
Sandhill Crane			1															1
Black-bellied Plover												---		15	18	1	1	35
Killdeer							1			1	1	8	4	2	2	1	2	22
Greater Yellowlegs												1	2			1		4
Ruddy Turnstone												13	2	12	32		6	65
Sanderling													85	1	84	24	16	210
Purple Sandpiper												5	33	62	122		4	226

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Dunlin												---		50	43	14	2	**109**
Common Snipe									1	5	1	1	2	2				12
American Woodcock									CW				2	1	1		CW	**4**
Laughing Gull																1		1
Bonaparte's Gull												277	3	6	124	26	97	533
Ring-billed Gull	342	72	1971	740	219	84	820	73	1186	170	551	2064	2449	879	986	1896	1353	15855
Herring Gull	11	54	3274	97	33	40	217	**14**	307	**75**	151	735	1429	5260	727	1445	1079	14948
Iceland Gull			1										1		3			5
Lesser Bl.-backed Gull		1	2									1	1	1			1	7
Glaucous Gull			1												1			2
Great Bl.-backed Gull	5	36	703	7	10	4	44	**1**	37	28	49	77	304	265	190	**98**	141	1999
Gull, species					111	10												121
Rock Dove	343	151	2631	57	493	**188**	278	195	645	83	212	**312**	1321	387	347	1165	**320**	9128
Mourning Dove	277	283	1786	**206**	**168**	262	95	286	**171**	**102**	362	465	753	354	389	342	**215**	**6516**
Monk Parakeet												20	171			81	227	499
Barn Owl												1				1		2
Eastern Screech-Owl	4		18	11	---		---	14	**9**	**2**	19	23	10	5	**4**	2	**1**	**122**
Great Horned Owl	9		5	**1**	**CW**	9	CW	6	**4**	**1**	22	**5**	9	9	5	2	1	**88**
Snowy Owl														1				1
Barred Owl	4			2		1		4	1		8	1		2	3		2	28
Long-eared Owl	1												1					**2**
Short-eared Owl															1	1		2
North. Saw-whet Owl	8			2		3		2			6			3	2			26

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Belted Kingfisher	4	3	19	3	**1**	2	4	3	6	4	2	**12**	26	13	9	6	6	123
Red-hdd. Woodpecker			2								1							3
Red-bld. Woodpecker	32	17	142	16	3	51	12	71	14	18	129	94	69	22	65	22	34	811
Yellow-bld. Sapsucker	3	1	5				1	7	2	2	6	5	6	6	11		1	56
Downy Woodpecker	107	47	290	**62**	**16**	118	41	141	**21**	**34**	167	**132**	116	72	56	63	**62**	**1545**
Hairy Woodpecker	23	4	45	9	**2**	23	6	37	1	7	29	30	19	6	12	**2**	18	**273**
Northern Flicker	7	8	162	8	1	24	15	30	43	36	77	38	81	84	40	15	16	685
Pileated Woodpecker	13	1	4	2	CW	3	2	6		CW	8	7	1	1	3	2	4	57
Eastern Phoebe		1	CW			2		1										4
Northern Shrike	2		1	1				CW			1				1			6
Blue Jay	585	194	765	300	**80**	652	144	409	174	198	773	340	559	305	614	155	141	6388
American Crow	1451	428	35000	2010	568	718	1167	1582	536	472	2547	**1163**	3567	643	734	610	**668**	53864
Fish Crow			10				1					3	81	2	2	29	3	131
Common Raven	16	1		11	5		CW	4			1							38
Horned Lark			131	10	107	106	40				**24**		73	80	96	339	10	1016
Black-cpd. Chickadee	974	261	**729**	744	**156**	688	269	688	**150**	**304**	857	**387**	**326**	442	733	**90**	**200**	**7998**
Tufted Titmouse	238	184	440	198	**31**	361	193	387	67	185	438	370	248	217	300	79	**135**	4071
Red-br. Nuthatch	21		8	**1**		3	2	10	1	1	4	**2**	12	3	6		3	77
White-br. Nuthatch	130	62	**153**	**79**	**14**	131	27	173	**12**	**39**	174	**111**	59	59	106	32	**39**	**1400**
Brown Creeper	28	5	**7**	7	---	5	**1**	6	1	2	5	**3**	5	CW	5	1		**81**
Carolina Wren	2	6	53	1	CW	24	11	16	13	20	27	67	53	81	77	21	18	490
House Wren											1	1			2	2	1	7
Winter Wren	2		6	1		3	1	1		1	5	6	5	4	2	4		41
Marsh Wren							1						3	1	1		1	7
Golden-crown' Kinglet	80	37	65	52	10	71	12	27	17	27	118	21	42	47	106	10	8	750
Ruby-crowned Kinglet			10	2		1	3	1	5	9	3	10	8	10	4	5		71

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Eastern Bluebird	55	56	76	51	61	128	51	89	18	130	380	**19**	47	78	150	6	**12**	1407
Swainson's Thrush												1						1
Hermit Thrush	10	3	22	3	1	13	5	21	2	4	41	8	10	41	18	4	6	212
American Robin	342	150	1383	297	224	1688	1333	440	3508	324	842	157	6902	1590	979	287	274	20720
Gray Catbird		1	7	1		1		8	2	1	4	**3**	17	23	6	2	2	78
Northern Mockingbird	31	23	177	**9**	**5**	51	21	24	**3**	19	75	**54**	146	164	63	74	**17**	**956**
Brown Thrasher			1								1		2	7	1		1	13
European Starling	934	1277	**16000**	1785	2118	1653	**1164**	913	4470	**647**	**1239**	2420	8006	4283	6195	2844	1863	**57811**
American Pipit									10		1	5	12	9	2	8		47
Cedar Waxwing	205		210	158	162	1123	382	308	117	369	2135	439	1777	68	312	7	373	8145
Orange-crnd. Warbler															1			1
Yellow-rmpd. Warbler	2	1	25	3			4	39	19	21	82	21	46	306	59	26	12	666
Pine Warbler													1		1			2
Palm Warbler													1			CW		1
Common Yellowthroat			1										2					3
Western Tanager											CW							CW
Eastern Towhee	1		3		1	1	2		4	5		**1**	21	**4**		1	3	47
Amer. Tree Sparrow	160	65	452	**218**	100	94	**21**	120	50	48	281	**9**	**175**	63	134	**117**	**31**	**2138**
Chipping Sparrow	1		2			1		2			2	6	3	1	4	1		23
Field Sparrow		1	**8**	---		21	13		**2**	31	**13**	2	7	44	14	5	**8**	**169**
Spizella, sp's unknown										1								1
Vesper Sparrow						1					1		5					7
Savannah Sparrow			18	1		1	1	14	3		42	2	**3**	17	10	54	5	171

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'Ipswich' Sparrow															1	4		5
Grasshopper Sparrow																1		1
Saltm. Shp-tailed Spar.																2		2
Seaside Sparrow															1			1
Fox Sparrow	5	3	11	6	CW	4	1	15	1	4	19	3	12	6	18	7	5	120
Song Sparrow	92	44	418	38	**6**	135	99	127	93	61	242	182	431	250	197	298	**89**	2802
Lincoln's Sparrow	1																	1
Swamp Sparrow	CW	1	12	15		30	6	2	4	1	4	**2**	19	16	18	10	2	**142**
White-thr. Sparrow	736	185	890	478	50	297	493	583	231	234	795	540	979	498	674	246	221	8130
White-crn. Sparrow			4		2			1	5		2		13	2			1	30
Dark-eyed Junco	2352	735	1210	746	188	1172	**199**	600	**157**	168	1165	500	452	386	493	184	**217**	10924
Lapland Longspur														3	8	15	1	27
Snow Bunting			59			1					2		26	91		158	35	372
Northern Cardinal	158	104	591	146	**16**	134	105	197	**60**	115	307	217	283	214	148	116	**97**	3008
Dickcissel												1						1
Red-winged Blackbird	338	11	392	1008	165	22	1	80	1461		42	15	751	612	2761	74	22	7755
Eastern Meadowlark								2	6		1			11	29	2	2	53
Rusty Blackbird			12	7					3		6	1	4	4	25			62
Common Grackle	4069		354	936	132	1	4		4	12	48	70	92	358	4549	150	1	10780
Brown-hdd. Cowbird	81	23	**86**	246	21	18	28		340	14	8	1	258	74	181	50	4	1433
Blackbird, sp.					51													51
Baltimore Oriole			1															1
Pine Grosbeak											1							1
Purple Finch	14		17	25	3	10	4	25	---	5	49	8	11	3	9		2	185
House Finch	114	50	**569**	**156**	**51**	198	**99**	366	**116**	**148**	515	**338**	486	502	314	232	**116**	**4370**
Pine Siskin	1												CW					**1**

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American Goldfinch	487	99	969	169	**22**	170	42	216	54	**49**	471	213	531	162	131	94	**57**	3936
Evening Grosbeak				1							1							2
House Sparrow	435	317	970	**239**	**48**	473	175	271	255	**129**	**246**	823	1091	1206	567	712	678	8635
TOTALS																		
Individuals	16675	7806	88109	16334	13630	14619	9762	10265	20612	**6108**	21990	**20549**	45651	28539	29335	36152	**14058**	400194
CD Species	72	60	87	83	58	71	76	78	82	70	95	108	120	121	117	108	108	165
CW Species	4	0	4	0	6	2	2	3	2	3	1	1	2	1	0	2	2	1
Field Observers	34	11	137	59	22	18	26	19	22	38	33	**52**	80	42	36	24	**32**	685
Feeder Watchers	4	0	28	8	2	1	1	28	0	0	3	25	7	5	6	0	22	140
Total Observers	38	**11**	165	67	**24**	19	27	47	22	38	36	77	87	47	42	24	**54**	825
Party Hours	106	49.8	303.5	105	61	101	63	79	51	78.8	118	186	166	103	108	84	89	1851.2
Party Miles	796	?	822	?	497	415	417	?	297	461	599	671	584	457	387	325	364	7091.6

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
? Not recorded

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Greg Hanisek

FALL, AUGUST 1 THROUGH NOVEMBER 30, 2000

Fall is the longest reporting period of the year, and it brackets the time when bird populations reach their yearly peaks. The state's growing cadre of active birders took advantage of the situation, recording good numbers of the season's less common migrants and a nice array of seasonal and annual rarities. There are items of interest across the breadth of the systematic list, but the hummingbird situation, part of a national phenomenon, is especially worthy of note.

GREBES THROUGH GEESE

A staging group of 16 Pied-billed Grebes was at Bantam Lake in Litchfield October 21 (DR et al.). Red-necked Grebe reports included two October 14 at Milford Point (PU); two October 29-30 at Nepaug Reservoir in New Hartford/Canton (JK,JMe); one October 31 at Batterson Park Pond in New Britain (PCi,MC) and two November 17 at Bantam Lake in Litchfield (GH,DR). An **American White Pelican** was reported without details September 14 at Griswold Point in Old Lyme (PS fide PCo).

Great Island and Goose Island, near the mouth of the Connecticut River in Old Lyme, produced six reports of American Bittern involving eight individuals from August 25 to November 29, which pretty well spans the species' migration period (TH,HG); three were at Hammonasset Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP) in Madison on November 12 (AD), two were at Milford Point October 22 (FG et al.), one was seen from the Quaker Ridge hawk watch in Greenwich on September 10 (TG) and one was at White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield October 20 (DR). A canoe trip through Durham meadows produced a single Least Bittern on August 13 (LS). Single Great Egrets were inland in Watertown August 25 (RN), Ellington August 11-12 (KL) and New Milford October 19 (AD). Little Blue Herons were much more widespread and numerous than usual along the

coast, with a high of nine (five adults) on September 5 at Menunketesuck Island. in Westbrook (EN); the latest was October 19 at HBSP (DB). A Tricolored Heron was at Milford Point September 4 (F&LM). A Cattle Egret was at a traditional Westport location August 7 (FM) and a late one lingered with a herd of cows to November 15 in Wallingford (WSc et al.). As often happens in late summer, two Black-crowned Night Herons wandered up the Housatonic River to Southbury August 27 (RN) and one got as far as New Milford in early August (AD); another was in Hartford September 9 (PCi). A Yellow-crowned Night Heron lingered to November 3 at Barn Island in Stonington (FN). The latest report of Glossy Ibis was one on October 23 at Griswold Point in Old Lyme (TH,HG).

The Quaker Ridge hawk watch recorded a Black Vulture September 27 (DM), and three were in Stamford October 1-2 (PDu). Four Greater White-fronted Geese, for the season, continued the current trend of multiple sightings in appropriate seasons: one on October 21 at Snipsic Lake in Tolland (MO); one November 6-15 at Southbury Training School (RN,NC); one November 19 at a pond in Newington (RZ); and one in late November on Mirror Lake in Storrs (CEl,SM). A total of 500 Snow Geese passed over Griswold Point in two hours on October 4 (HG); 300+ were noted the same day over Guilford (JHu); and Quaker Ridge tallied about 1,200 in October (TG). A 'Blue' Goose flew by Compo Beach, Westport, with 26 Snows on October 6 (FM). An unusual number of inland Brant reports included a flock of 21 on October 7 at Station 43 in South Windsor (CEk), two at Cemetery Pond in Litchfield on October 6-14 (EB,DR), one at Wethersfield Cove October 7 (SK) and one at a pond in Newington November 22 (RZ). They were also widespread and numerous along the coast. In the northeast, where Mute Swans are not yet a daily presence, four were on Coventry Lake November 24 (CEl).

DUCKS THROUGH RAPTORS

Gadwall, scarce inland, included two at Cemetery Pond on August 24, a time of year when southbound dabbling ducks usually begin to show up (DR), and one at Southbury Training School on October 14 (RN). Little and Cemetery Ponds in Litchfield held a good inland concentration of 83 American Black Ducks on August 26 (DR). The high count of Blue-winged Teal was 27 on August 29 at Little and Cemetery Ponds (DR). The first Northern Shoveler was at Cem-

etery Pond on August 27 (PDe); the high count was six on Bantam Lake on October 23 (DR). The first Northern Pintail appeared at Cemetery Pond August 26 (DR). Cemetery Pond and adjacent portions of White Memorial Foundation held 106 Green-winged Teal October 17 (DR). A single Redhead was at Bantam Lake November 11 (SL,JW). The biggest counts of Ring-necked Ducks were 330+ on Fisher Pond in Salisbury November 15 (JMe) and 200+ at a pond in Winchester on October 28, both high fall totals (JMe).

A female King Eider appeared November 19 at HBSP and remained through period's end (JC). They're a bit less than annual in the state. A flock of 150+ White-winged Scoters was off Sherwood Island State Park in Westport on November 15 (DV). An unusual number of Black Scoters were detected inland: 39 on October 15 at Colebrook Reservoir, Colebrook (FZ); 110 flying over Nepaug Reservoir in Canton October 29 (JMe); 15 on West Hartford Reservoir October 30 (JMe); 10 at Batterson Park Pond October 30 (PCi, MC); and four at Mansfield Hollow Reservoir on October 22 (SM). The latter group included one Surf Scoter, the most common scoter in the Sound but the rarest inland (SM). A group of 30 Common Mergansers August 27 at Nepaug Reservoir in New Hartford was an interesting concentration between peak breeding and migration times (PDe). Ruddy Ducks continued their series of good flight years with 150 at Bride Lake in East Lyme on November 1 (TH), building to 230 there on November 13 (TH); 155 on Bantam Lake on November 28 (DR); and 100 on Broad Brook Reservoir in Cheshire on October 17 (JBa).

A visit to Lighthouse Point on August 17 confirmed recent discoveries about early Osprey movements: 13 moved through in an hour on northwest winds (JZ). Late Ospreys were at Salmon River Cove in East Haddam on November 27 (HG) and at both Cedar Lake in Chester (BM) and Uncas Lake in Lyme (TH), and again on November 28 (BM). A stunning leucistic Cooper's Hawk appeared October 9 at Lighthouse Point in New Haven. The bird looked all white at distance, but on close approach it could be seen that the darkest parts of the plumage, such as the tail bands, were creamy buff. In full soar, the flight feathers were translucent (GH et al.). A Cooper's hawk varied its avian diet September 10 when it grabbed a chipmunk in a Simsbury yard (BK). Various observers from Litchfield to Southbury reported c. 1,900 Broad-winged Hawks September 13-14 (fide RN). Reports of **Swainson's Hawks** continue

their upward trend with two for the season: September 30 over Naugatuck (MS) and October 13 at Quaker Ridge hawk watch in Greenwich (DM). A Red-tailed Hawk, nearly pure white except for dark shaft streaks in the outer primaries, was in Portland September 6 (MS). A Golden Eagle was over Bauer Farm Park in Madison on October 11 (TH,HG).

RAILS THROUGH TERNS

American Coot numbers peaked at 145 on November 16 at Bantam Lake (DR). A few American Golden Plovers were present almost throughout the season, with the first reported August 18 at Menunketesuck Is. in Westbrook (PCo) and one still present November 10 at Sikorsky Airport in Stratford (PDu); the high count was five at Milford Point on September 30 (NB). A Semipalmated Plover lingered to November 18 at Griswold Point (TH). An **American Avocet**, less than annual and prone to fast getaways, made a typical one-shot appearance on October 12 at HBSP (DP et al.). Single Upland Sandpipers were seen at various locations in the Lordship section of Stratford August 8-11 (CB,NB,DV). Two Whimbrels were at Milford Point August 1 (JR) and up to three were there September 4 (F&LM). The season's only godwits were a Marbled Godwit and two Hudsonian Godwits together on September 10 at Sandy Point in West Haven (F&LM), and one Hudsonian on October 22 at Griswold Point in Old Lyme (TH).

Five Red Knots were at Milford Point September 3 (FM), the high count in a rather meager flight. Two Sanderlings on September 14 at Mansfield Hollow dam represented just the second record for the Storrs area (CEl). The best count of Semipalmated Sandpipers was 6,000, virtually all adults, on August 2 at Milford Point (PCo). The season's only Baird's Sandpipers were singles on September 10 at Sandy Point (FD) and September 16 in Guilford (PCo). The only report of Stilt Sandpiper was one August 6 at Milford Point (JHo). It was a good season for Buff-breasted Sandpipers with eight reported. The highlights were one inland near Buckland Hills Mall in Manchester on August 9 (PCi) and two together on August 28 at Sandy Point (NB). Milford Point held 600 Short-billed Dowitchers on August 2 (PCo). Common Snipe was first noted August 20 at White Memorial (JMe).

The high count of Laughing Gulls was 500+ at Sandy Point on September 10 (F&LM). Two adult Bonaparte's Gulls were inland on the Connecticut River at East Haddam on September 7, an early date, although sum-

mer records on Long Island Sound have been on the increase (TH). The first Iceland Gull of the season was a first-winter October 29 in Stamford (JMh,PDu). A Lesser Black-backed Gull appeared October 1 at Holly Pond in Stamford, about three weeks earlier than usual at that location (PDu); three were at HBSP on November 16 (LF). A Caspian Tern, a surprisingly hard species to find in the state, was at HBSP September 24 for the season's only report (CR). The Menunketesuck flats remain one of the best places to see Roseate Terns, with up to 20 present on August 19 (PCo). The Sandy Point Common Tern concentration ranged from 1,000 to 3,000 from August 25 to September 11 (DS,FM,DA). Up to 20 Forster's Terns were noted there September 4 (RN, JL et al.) and 29 gathered at the Menunketesuck flats on October 19 (GH,DP). Nine Forster's were still present on October 23 over the Connecticut River in Old Lyme (TH). Single Black Terns were at Long Beach in Stratford August 5 (GH,MS), at Griswold Point August 7 (DS,DP), at Sandy Point on August 12 (DS), at Milford Point on September 2 (RH) and at Silver Sands September 4 (TK). Two were at Sandy Point August 25 (DS).

CUCKOOS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A Yellow-billed Cuckoo was a bit late October 1 at McCann Family Farm in Somers (JS). A Barn Owl, a species in marked decline, was over the marsh at Milford Point on October 22 (FG et al.). November brought the makings of a good Snowy Owl flight, with two different birds reported moving around the Stratford-Milford area beginning November 5 (m.ob.); in addition two underweight birds were picked up in the New Haven area and taken in for rehab (fide JA); one seen November 23 at Lighthouse Point in New Haven may have been different from all of the above (NC). Two Northern Saw-whet Owls at White Memorial on October 22 could have been either migrants or residents (DTr, FZ); a road-killed migrant was found October 21 in the Lordship section of Stratford (F&LM).

An excellent, widespread flight of Common Nighthawks occurred August 25 to September 5. High counts included 400 on August 27 in New Hartford (JGr); 300 on September 2 in Canton (JMe); 200 on August 25 in Naugatuck (JD); 125 on August 29 at Little Pond (DR) and 100 on August 27 in Southington (JA). A very late Common Nighthawk was picked up November 15 in Stamford (and carefully exam-

ined and measured to eliminate other species). It was taken into care and subsequently died (fide MS). A Whip-poor-will was still singing September 20 in Durham (NM).

September 5 produced a movement of 300+ Chimney Swifts at Lighthouse Point (GH). The same day brought an excellent count of 47 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds passing Lighthouse, about double what normally comprises a good flight day there (GH). A Ruby-throated repeatedly ate from a suet feeder August 30 in New Milford (AD). The event of the season was the presence of at least four **Selasphorus hummingbirds** (there were vague reports of a couple more) visiting feeders: West Hartford, September 29 to October 15 (EF); Avon, October 27 to November 21 (GZ); Cheshire, mid-September through period's end (AN); and Stratford, mid-September through period's end (KB). The West Hartford bird appeared to be a first-year male based on the extensive amount of rufous coloration on the tail, upper tail coverts, and rump; the other three were proved to be female Rufous, two hatch-year and one after hatch-year, by tail pattern and extensive in-hand measuring prior to banding (MS). A migrant Red-headed Woodpecker passed the Johnnycake Farm hawk watch in Burlington on September 17 (PDe,PCa), and one was in Haddam on September 28 (JHi); another appeared at the CIGNA campus in Bloomfield in late September and remained throughout the period (JMe). Four Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers on September 29 in a yard in Waterbury indicated a heavy migratory flight (MS).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH PIPITS

Olive-sided Flycatchers were noted August 19 and 31 in Canton (JMe), August 25 in Naugatuck State Forest (GH,MS), August 29 in Redding (DV), September 10 in Harwinton (PCa) and September 29, a rather late date, at Bluff Point (DS). Yellow-bellied Flycatchers included one or two August 29 in Naugatuck State Forest (MS) and one September 10 in Harwinton (PCa). Little Pond is the place to study the differences between Alder Flycatcher and Willow Flycatcher, with 12 and 14 there, respectively, on August 5 (DR). The typical August migration of Eastern Kingbird was apparent August 17 at White Memorial with a total of 65 at three locations on the refuge (DR); at Lighthouse Point, 78 were noted in passage on August 20 (BB). Three Western Kingbirds for the season involved singles at Lighthouse Point on September 27 (JZ), in Guilford Septem-

ber 28 (RBA) and inland at Little Pond in Litchfield on October 20 (JMc,MM). Three Northern Shrikes for the season presaged another good winter for this sought-after species: singles were seen November 7 in Torrington (RBl), November 15 in Canton (JMe), and November 16 in South Windsor (MH). A big warbler movement October 12 at Bluff Point also included 30+ Blue-headed Vireos (DS). Philadelphia Vireos were in good numbers statewide, with a high count of about five in a heavy passerine flight on September 23 at Naugatuck State Forest (MS). The state's Common Ravens usually stick close to rugged cliffs, but one was soaring over Woodbury October 29 (RN); singles were recorded in Danbury September 9 (SB), Easton on October 9 (DV), Bloomfield on October 11 (JMe), and at Quaker Ridge on October 9 and 23 (TG).

Two Purple Martins on September 17 in Burlington were near the end of their migration window (PDe,PCa). A Tree Swallow lingered to November 5 at Long Beach in Stratford (FM,JHo). A late Northern Rough-winged Swallow was at White Memorial October 15 (DR) and a surprising three were at Quaker Ridge October 17 (TG). By August 20 the large Cliff Swallow colony at Shepaug dam in Southbury had essentially been emptied by migratory departures (RN). Despite some August records, the flight of Red-breasted Nuthatches was modest. However, 20 were found on November 3 in the Pine Island section of White Memorial, a breeding area (DR). Two Winter Wrens were new arrivals September 27 in Waterbury (MS), and during November, diligent searching at a variety of locations at White Memorial turned up a total of 28 (DR). The Marsh Wren colony at Little Pond held at least 19 birds on August 29 (DR), with 10 still present on October 26 (DR). The season's first Ruby-crowned Kinglets were noted September 14 in Westbrook (PCo). A pre-dawn flight over Woodbury on September 10 produced a count of c. 200 Veeries, based on flight calls (RN). A Wood Thrush was late October 2 in Canton (JMe). The first American Pipit was noted September 17 at Sandy Point (PCo).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Golden-winged Warbler, seldom noted in fall migration, produced two reports: at Eagleville Preserve on September 12 for the first record in the Storrs area in more than a decade (CEl) and at HBSP on September 24 (RS,JMc). Bluff Point produced two Orange-crowned Warblers on October 7 (DS) and

one on September 22 (DS); other singles were seen September 30 in Waterford (DTo) and October 7 in Westport (JHu). A Nashville Warbler present September 28 in Waterbury showed pronounced tail-wagging suggestive of the western race (MS); another bird of this type was in Bloomfield on October 5 (JMe). A flight of 4,000 warblers of nine species on October 12 at Bluff Point in Groton was 98% Yellow-rumped Warblers. A big flight on October 4 at Salt Meadow in Westbrook included 1,500 Yellow-rumped Warblers and 200 Palm Warblers, most of them Yellow Palms (PCo). A Palm Warbler was still present November 3 at Little Pond (DR). The September 23 flight through Naugatuck State Forest produced 50+ Black-throated Green Warblers (MS), and a number of observers commented on this species' abundance during the second half of September. Willard's Island at HBSP, a good place for late warblers, held a Blackburnian Warbler and at least two Blackpoll Warblers November 19 (DS,MM). On August 20, Pine Warblers were still attending fledged young in Woodbury (RN). A Black-and-White Warbler was a bit late October 15 in Newtown (RB). Connecticut Warblers were noted August 28 and September 22 in Naugatuck State Forest (BDe,MS) and September 22 at Bluff Point (DS). Southbound Mourning Warblers can appear quite early, as illustrated by one August 18 in Bloomfield (JMe) and another August 24 in Westbrook (PDn). The big October 4 flight in Westbrook included 40 Common Yellowthroats (PCo). A Hooded Warbler was still present at Brooksvale Park in Hamden on September 22 (JZ). A Wilson's Warbler was at the front end of its migration August 18 in Waterbury (MS). Yellow-breasted Chats were in Westbrook August 25 (PCo), at Bluff Point on September 6 and 22 (DS,CEl et al.), at HBSP September 14 (JC), and in Storrs September 24 (SM).

A female **Summer Tanager** moved through a Waterbury yard September 21 with a wave of migrants (MS); most records of this southern vagrant occur in spring, but there are a few from other times of year. The first American Tree Sparrow was a bit early October 19 in New Milford (AD). Two Clay-colored Sparrows for the season were singles September 16 and October 18 at Cove Island Park in Stamford (PDu et al.). It was good season for Vesper Sparrows, with about 15 reports of single birds; three were in a field in New Milford November 5-12 (EA). Two **Lark Sparrows** for the season included a record early one at West Beach in Stamford on August 14 (PDu)

and another September 10 in Madison (fide JHu); this species has a history of arriving earlier than most of the other vagrant sparrows from the west. On October 8, a grassland area in Easton held 100+ Savannah Sparrows (CB). A **Henslow's Sparrow** was seen at close range and beautifully photographed on November 3 in Hamden (AB, photo JZ). There have been less than a handful of confirmed sightings in the past decade. At Sandy Point in West Haven, up to eight Salt-marsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows on August 13 appeared to consist of two to three pairs with newly fledged young (RN). The state's birders are still working to tease out the status of Salt-marsh and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows during migration. One patient and careful observer filed this tally from Milford Point on October 15: 14 definitive Salt-marsh, one unequivocal Nelson's and 30 identified as "only certain it's a sharp-tailed" (BS). On October 22, a "big sit" produced two Salt-marsh and 10 Nelson's, that jibes with Nelson's status as a later migrant (FG et al.). Observers should note that the best current information suggests our Nelson's should be of the pale, drab "Acadian" form. The bright "*nelsoni*" form is apparently a rare vagrant to the Northeast and probably not confined to saltmarshes. The season's first Fox Sparrows were four on October 4 at White Memorial (DR). The usual widespread appearance of Lincoln's Sparrows included an excellent nine on October 6 at Simsbury's community gardens (JMe). A count of 75 Swamp Sparrows October 4 at Little Pond was indicative of a heavy migratory flight (DR). The peak count of White-crowned Sparrows was 30 at HBSP on October 12 (DS). A White-throated Sparrow singing in a Waterbury yard of August 3 was unusual for both date and place (MS). A bird believed to be a hybrid Dark-eyed Junco/White-throated Sparrow was seen at Station 43 on September 25 (PCi). This hybrid combination has been reported a number of times in North America, including two years ago in Connecticut. A Lapland Longspur was early September 27 at HBSP (DV).

The only Blue Grosbeaks for the season were singles in Westbrook on September 28 (PCo) and at Station 43 on October 7 (PCi). The Dickcissel count was conservatively 30+ for the season (m.ob.), mostly flyovers at coastal watch sites, with one as early as August 5 in a House Sparrow flock at Milford Point (GH), and two together at Cove Island Park in Stamford on October 18 (PDu). Perched ones included singles September 8 at W Lot in Storrs (CEl) and October 11-14 at

Crookhorn Road in Southbury (NC). A harrier flushed a flock of 10+ Eastern Meadowlarks November 27 at Great Island in Old Lyme (TH). A peak count of 355 Rusty Blackbirds on November 3 at Little Pond helped solidify the White Memorial area as the best place in the state to find this species (DR). A female Boat-tailed Grackle was noted August 27 at Milford Point (DS) and was probably the same bird present through the end of the period at Long Beach in Stratford (m.ob.); another female was reported October 12 in Waterford (TH). A Baltimore Oriole was still at HBSP on November 18-19 (BDW). In a season that produced almost no late fall flight of northern finches, there were a couple of interesting early records. Two White-winged Crossbills were present August 6 at West Hartford Reservoir (PCi), and on September 23 an undetermined number of Evening Grosbeaks were heard overhead in Waterbury (MS). A few Pine Siskins turned up late in the season in the White Memorial area (DR).

[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].

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CORRECTION

In Volume 21, No.1, Page 3, Ron Bell's name was omitted.

"My apoligies for my inadvertent omission of Ron Bell's name in the list of last year's (2000) hawk watchers. Ron always deserves recognition for his work running the Lighthouse Point Hawk Watch each year." Neil Currie

PHOTO CHALLENGE

Julian Hough

ANSWER TO PHOTO CHALLENGE 34

A medium-sized gull bathes in a shallow pool. The slight build, long-wings, and unimpressive bill, lends a somewhat Ring-billed look. However, on second glance, the first noticeable feature is the dark back, much darker than Herring or Ring-billed, and reminiscent of a Lesser Black-backed Gull. Secondly, the bill is pale with a 'dipped in ink' tip (reminiscent of a first-winter Glaucous Gull).

Before we go any further, we need to age the bird. The uniformly gray upperparts, without any contrast with the wing coverts, suggest a bird which is at least three years old. Most medium-sized larids until they are at least three years old show some distinct contrast between newly-acquired mantle feathers and retained brownish wing coverts.

The dark-tipped bill, another sign of immaturity, is also supportive of this age, as is the iris, which in most gulls is dark until their molt into second-basic plumage (the end of their second calendar year).

The features seem to fit Lesser Black-backed Gull, though the small head and proportionately long bill seem wrong. The color of the bill and legs, helpful in aging and identifying gulls, is not evident in a black and white photo. In life, the legs are greenish yellow and the bill is greenish, with a distinct black tip and a red "nail."

Lesser Black-backed Gulls never show this bill pattern at any age. Some third and fourth calendar year Lesser Black-backeds often show a dark subterminal bill band though it is not as well defined and the bill tip is often paler.

What are the alternatives? Thankfully, there are few that occur in North America. The only confusion species is Black-tailed Gull, and this is what it is.

This Asian species has been recorded several times in the USA, with East Coast records from Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland. It is unclear as to how many individuals are involved, although it is obvious that some of the above records relate to one or more returning individuals.

As the bird takes flight, the clinching feature, a solid, broad black tail band cleanly separated from the white tail base is obvious!

Gulls can be confusing due to their plumage variation. Any Lesser Black-backed like species that has a combination of a pale iris, a dark-tipped, greenish bill and a clean broad tail band is a Black-tailed Gull. With records from two states adjoining Connecticut, it is a species that should be kept in mind, especially if you find a 'funny' Lesser Black-backed.

This sub-adult Black-tailed Gull was photographed in Rhode Island, July 1995 by Mark Szantyr.

JULIAN HOUGH, 72 Quentin St., Waterbury, CT 06706

Photo Challenge 35. Identify the species. Answer next issue.

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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Send manuscripts to the Editor. Please type double spaced with ample margins, on one side of a sheet. Submit a copy on a 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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Volume 21, No. 2, 2001

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology

Volume 21 No. 3 **July 2001** Pages 97-144

The Connecticut Warbler
A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology

Volume 21, Number 3 July 2001

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ABOUT OUR COVER

Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*)

by Mark Szantyr

The front cover drawing by Mark Szantyr was originally done to accompany the article on Grasshopper Sparrows in this issue. We think you will agree that it should be on our cover for all to see.

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GRASSHOPPER SPARROW

Patrick M. Comins

The sun had just set on a warm evening in mid-June, 1995 as I pulled my car alongside a 30 acre abandoned tobacco field next to a shopping center in the Buckland Hills area of Manchester. I rolled down my window and heard a quiet *"tseeeeee-stickitatickitasickitatickitiatickit."* It was a song I had never heard before but recognized from tapes as being the 'long song' of a Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*). I was there to look for American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*) for the Hartford Audubon Summer Bird Count, but had struck gold, encountering one of the least common nesting birds in Connecticut. The next day I found as many as three sparrows singing and counter-singing. My fascination with this secretive little sparrow and other grassland birds has remained with me to this day.

I spent as much time as I could that summer visiting the 40 acre field and enjoying the sights and sounds of the Grasshopper Sparrows and other grassland nesting birds present there, Horned Larks (*Eremophila alpestris*), Savannah Sparrows (*Passerculus sandwichensis*), Bobolinks (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*), and Eastern Meadowlarks (*Sturnella magna*). The Grasshopper Sparrows persisted in announcing their presence regardless of whether it was hot or cold, rainy or sunny, day or night. The birds, perched upon Curled Dock (*Rumex crispus*), were always easy to see, but as I approached they would fly off in a weak, bobbing fashion, and disappear into the grass like a figment of my imagination. It was not until I purchased a good spotting scope that I was able to appreciate the subtle beauty of these enigmatic creatures of the grass. The warm buffy breast, complex pattern of rufous, buff, brown, and tan on the back, and the fine rufous streaks on a field of gray on the nape all combine to make a handsome bird. Not as showy as the Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) or Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*), but every bit as beautiful in its own way. To watch it sing is always a treat, a glimpse into a performance meant to be seen only by its own kind. Opening its mouth, throwing its head back, a territorial male sings with such intensity that the stalk of its chosen perch vibrates along with it.

The field changed through the years. Gone was the Curled Dock; mullein (likely *Verbascum phlomoides* or perhaps *V. thapsus*) replaced it as the sparrows' singing perch. Eventually succession,

all-terrain vehicles, and unleashed dogs took their toll on the grassland birds. The Horned Larks were the first to abandon the field, then the Eastern Meadowlarks. By 1999, only two pairs of Grasshopper Sparrows remained. I never heard their song at all at that location in 2000, the song that to me had been the defining sound of summer for those few years. The Grasshopper Sparrows had left, and the only remaining grassland inhabitants were a few singing Savannah Sparrows. The property is slated for development as a major shopping center, but still sits vacant due to the downturn in the economy and the saturation of commercial development in the area. There was no winner in this case. Due to economics and lack of habitat management the birds are gone, and the developers still have not realized their plans. Similar scenarios have occurred all too many times in Connecticut and are examples of one of the reasons the Grasshopper Sparrow has declined to the brink of extirpation from the state.

The recent news about the planned development in East Hartord of Rentschler Field, which is owned by United Technologies Corporation (UTC), has brought the Grasshopper Sparrow from the conversations and lists of birders to the front page of the Hartford Courant newspaper. The discovery by researchers from the Massachusetts Audubon Society in the summer of 2000 of 35 singing males (along with other grassland birds) on this 400+ acre former airfield excited the birding community. Some birders suspected that grassland birds might nest there, but this many Grasshopper Sparrows was beyond our wildest dreams. The discovery made Rentschler Field the site of the second largest population in the Connecticut River Valley, by far the largest population in Connecticut, and one of only five populations in New England with more than 20 pairs (Andrea Jones, pers. comm.). The birds were discovered when an environmental impact study was conducted for the new University of Connecticut football stadium. The state is mitigating the impact of developing the 75 acre stadium site (site work is in progress) by establishing a 200 acre grassland habitat on state property in Somers. Although the rest of the site continues to support Grasshopper Sparrows, United Technologies is studying plans to develop the remainder of the field in the coming years.

The impending loss of this newly found gem is discouraging, but it has sparked a new awareness about grassland birds in the state and a growing resolve to conserve and manage grassland habitat. Audubon (formerly National Audubon Society), Connecticut Audubon Society, COA, The Nature Conservancy, Connecticut College, the University of Connecticut, state and federal agencies,

and other groups have formed a grasslands working group to assess the status of grassland birds, including the Grasshopper Sparrow and grassland habitat in the state. Formed in response to the Rentschler situation, the goal of the group is to determine the reasons for the decline of this habitat, to create a strategy for conservation and enhancement of Connecticut's most endangered habitat type, and to report its findings to the Connecticut General Assembly's Environment Committee. At least three grassland nesting species of birds and many grassland insects have been extirpated from Connecticut, and we do not want to see any more species lost. UTC has shown support for efforts to attempt to mitigate this loss, has offered to work together with the conservation community to conserve grassland-nesting birds in Connecticut, and has provided a representative to the grasslands working group.

The Rentschler Field situation makes it more important than ever for birders to become familiar with the Grasshopper Sparrow, its habitat requirements, and the factors that threaten its persistence in Connecticut. We must also help search for new areas that can be managed for this species and other grassland birds, and determine how to accomplish the restoration and/or conservation of these areas.

Identification and Behavior

The songs of many of the *Ammodramus* sparrows, including Grasshopper Sparrows, are often weak in volume and non-musical. The females of some species, including Grasshopper Sparrows, sing in addition to the males (Vickery, 1996). Grasshopper Sparrows are persistent singers in the nesting season, often singing at night, in the heat of the day, or in the rain. Their song is often the best way to confirm their presence. The high-pitched buzzy song is distinctive, and they are often heard counter-singing where more than one pair is present. A good way to estimate the number of pairs in a given area is to count the number of songs heard counter-singing from different territories as they sing back and forth. The typical song is an insect-like *"ti-zeeeeeeeeeeee,"* or *"ti-k-zeeeeeee."* They also have a longer drawn out *rattling "tseeeeee-stickitatickitasickitatickitiatickit"* song. The only similar song generally heard in our area is the Savannah Sparrow. The Savannah Sparrow has a more Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) –like cadence with three introductory notes and more variation in pitch within the song than that of a Grasshopper Sparrow. Interestingly, there has been at least one record of hybridization between Savan-

nah and Grasshopper Sparrows (Dickerman, 1968).

The visual identification of adult Grasshopper Sparrows is generally straightforward, being the only species of grassland-nesting sparrow found nesting in Connecticut lacking wingbars and with no streaks or markings on their sides. Chipping Sparrows (*Spizella passerina*) can also be found in such habitats, but have wingbars and are very dissimilar in appearance to Grasshopper Sparrows. The Field Sparrow (*S. pusilla*) also has a clear breast, but again, has wingbars. Its pink bill is characteristic, so should also help in avoiding confusion between this species and Grasshopper Sparrow. Savannah Sparrows are sometimes mistaken for Grasshopper Sparrows due to the similarity in their songs. The Savannah Sparrow has a heavily streaked breast, a slightly longer tail and is a slightly stronger flyer than the Grasshopper Sparrow.

Structurally, Grasshopper Sparrows are rather typical *Ammodramus* sparrows, being small (Length 5", WingSspan 7.75", Weight 0.6 oz.), chunky, flat-headed, relatively large-billed, and having a relatively short spiked tail. They also have a rather typical *Ammodramus* flight pattern with a hunched posture and weak-appearing flight on relatively short wings with quick fluttery wingbeats. They rarely are seen flying for any appreciable distance, typically popping up, flying low over the grass for a few yards and dropping back down.

The plumage of adults includes a buff median crown stripe, with black lateral crown stripes, a white eye-ring, yellow/orange in the supraloral area, and a buffy breast and sides. The back is streaked grayish-brown, and there is yellow at the bend in the wing. The last feature can be difficult to observe in the field. Juvenile birds can be much more problematic, but should be ruled out before any identification of rarer *Ammodramus* species can be considered, i.e., Baird's (*A. bairdii*), Henslow's (*A. henslowii*), Le Conte's (*A. leconteii*), or any sharp-tailed sparrow away from coastal areas. Alternately, the more common Savannah Sparrow should be ruled out before identifying a bird as a juvenile Grasshopper Sparrow.

The Grasshopper Sparrows nesting in Manchester generally began singing at the nesting grounds between May 5th and May 10th, and by late July became more difficult to observe, although they could be heard singing on occasion in August. This species can be very difficult to detect when not singing, so when they actually return to, or leave territory is difficult to determine. Zeranski and Baptist (1990) list the earliest spring arrival for Grasshopper Sparrows in Connecticut as April 20th, and the latest departure as Janu-

ary 1st, 1968, although the same source mentions that an individual survived at a Greenwich feeder between January and April 1980. They are most apt to be seen as migrants in September and October (Zeranski and Baptist, 1990).

Studies in Ohio showed that Grasshopper Sparrows normally returned to breeding grounds during late April and early May, first clutches were generally laid during the last half of May and early June, and most young fledged between 20 June and 5 July. (Smith 1963; Swanson, 1996) noted that Grasshopper Sparrows returned to nesting grounds in mid-April to early May in Pennsylvania, with an early return date of March 31st. Pairs often produce two broods, which is very important for management, because the second brood sometimes does not fledge until mid to late July (Andrea Jones, pers. comm.). Jones therefore strongly suggests delaying mowing of grassland habitats until after July 31st. Numbers of eggs in nests in one study in Pennsylvania ranged between two and six eggs, with most nests having between four and five eggs (Smith, 1963).

Taxonomy and Status

The Grasshopper Sparrow belongs to the genus *Ammodramus*, one of nine members of this New World genus. The common name is alternatively said to refer to this sparrow's primarily insectivorous diet, or to its insect-like song. It formerly had been called the Yellow-winged Sparrow. The genus name *Ammodramus* comes from the Greek for *ammos* (sand) and *dramien* (to run), and the species name *savannarum* comes from the Latin for "of the savannas", a reference to the preferred habitat (Gruson, 1972). Other members of this genus in North America include Baird's, Henslow's, Le Conte's, Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed (*A. caudacutus*), Nelson's Sharp-tailed (*A. nelsoni*), and Seaside (*A. maritimus*) Sparrows. The Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed and Seaside Sparrows are the only other members of this genus to breed in Connecticut in certain coastal marshes. Henslow's Sparrow formerly nested in Connecticut but was extirpated over 40 years ago.

The species in this genus are residents of wet or dry grasslands (Rising and Beadle, 1986). They are most easily observed in the nesting season, when males of many of the species sing from exposed perches in their grassy tangles. They can be difficult to observe outside of the nesting season due to their secretive habits. Exacting habitat requirements have contributed to declines in numbers of most of the species in this genus, throughout their North American range. At least one subspecies in the genus has

become extinct, the 'Dusky' Seaside Sparrow (*A. m. nigrescens*). The eastern subspecies of Henslow's Sparrow (*A. h. susurrans*) has suffered a major decline, and the Florida subspecies of Grasshopper Sparrow (*A. s. floridanus*) is listed as federally endangered.

There are eleven subspecies of Grasshopper Sparrows found from Canada to Central America. Four subspecies are found nesting north of Mexico, and two are migratory, including *A. s. pratensis* – the subspecies found in Connecticut and the Northeast (Rising and Beadle, 1986). This subspecies nests in eastern North America from the Atlantic Coast to northeastern Texas to Wisconsin and winters from the southern United States to southern Mexico and Guatemala, the Bahamas, and Cuba (Rising and Beadle, 1986). As conservationists increasingly recognize the importance of protecting distinct populations, an understanding of the subspecies present in an area has become important when making conservation decisions. Although the Northeast holds only about 3% of world population of Grasshopper Sparrows, it supports more than 11% of the eastern subspecies (Wells and Rosenberg, 1999).

Grasshopper Sparrows have declined significantly in the last 50 years and are disappearing from much of their former range. Preliminary analysis of North American Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data by Sauer et al.) indicates that Grasshopper Sparrow breeding populations have experienced significant annual declines from 1966-1999 in the U.S. and Canada combined (-3.5%), the U.S. alone (-3.5%), the Eastern U. S. (-6.1%) and the northeastern U.S. (USFWS Region 5), (-4.6%). Connecticut did not have enough Grasshopper Sparrows detected on BBS routes for any trend analysis. These trends translate into a population decline of about 69% in the United States since the 1960s, a loss of over two-thirds of the U.S. population (Vickery 1996).

The Grasshopper Sparrow is listed as endangered by the State of Connecticut, meaning that its known nesting population is restricted to less than five locations in the state. This species is also listed as endangered in Maine; threatened in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and New Jersey; and is considered a species of special concern in New York (Dettmers and Rosenberg, 2000). Grasshopper Sparrows have declined markedly in Rhode Island in recent years and now are virtually absent from the mainland as a breeder and are declining on Block Island as well (Hugh Willoughby, Dick Ferren pers. comm.).

The known nesting locations in Connecticut in recent years are Rentschler Field, Bradley International Airport, Windham Airport,

and Northwest Park in Windsor. Grasshopper Sparrows may not have nested at Northwest Park in 2000, but appear to have returned for 2001. A small number of males were also discovered in 2001, singing in a field adjacent to Bradley Airport, and another group of at least six singing males was discovered in a field in Suffield (Jamie Meyers pers. comm.).

Table 1. Numbers of singing male Grasshopper Sparrows at Bradley International Airport, 1998-2000, Massachusetts Audubon Society data (Andrea Jones pers. comm.).

	1998	1999	2000
Grasshopper Sparrow	8	11	10

Grasshopper Sparrows were formerly more common in Connecticut. They were considered abundant nesters in the 1870s. Mabel Osgood Wright referred to this species as a common summer resident (Wright, 1907), and it was considered common up to the 1930s (Zeranski and Baptist, 1990). They have declined dramatically since that time and were confirmed as nesters at only two locations by the Connecticut Breeding Bird Atlas project (surveys conducted between 1982-86), with an additional two sites listed as probable and two more sites listed as possible (Clark, 1994). Some of the smaller populations have disappeared, while other small populations have appeared in new locations since that time.

Grasshopper Sparrows undoubtedly benefited from the large scale clearing of forests after settlement by Europeans, but there is evidence that appropriate habitat was present in the area prior to that time (Askins, 2000). The idea that Connecticut was entirely forested prior to European settlement is now known to be incorrect. At least two areas of large grassland habitat are known to have once existed in or near Connecticut. The 1,700 acre North Haven Sandplains, along the Quinnipiac River, was an extensive area of sandy soils that was once an Oak-Savannah/grassland habitat, and the Hempstead Plains on Long Island was a 30,000-acre Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) prairie (Askins, 2000). Native Americans practiced land management in the Connecticut River Valley and along the coast of using periodic burning of forests to facilitate hunting, travel and agriculture, creating additional grassland areas (Vickery and Dunwiddie, 1997). In addition, natural

fires, flooding, the activities of beavers (*Castor canadensis*), and even the presence of American Mastodons (*Mammut americanum*) [prior to 10,000 years ago], all contributed to the presence of grasslands in this area (Askins, 2000). The presence of unique species and subspecies of grassland plants and wildlife found in the northeast such as New England Blazing Star (*Liatris scariosa var. novae-angliae*) and especially the Heath Hen (*Tympanuchus c. cupido*) is additional evidence for the historical occurrence of grasslands in this area (Askins, 2000). The occurrence of these unique species and subspecies, including *A. s. pratensis* combined with the evidence for historical grasslands in and around Connecticut creates at least circumstantial evidence that Grasshopper Sparrows may have been present in Connecticut prior to colonial times.

Farmland, particularly fallow or abandoned fields and lightly grazed pasture land eventually came to have an enormous positive impact on grassland species in New England, making the Grasshopper Saprrow a common and widespread species in New England in the 19th Century. Grasslands, particularly those large in area, have today become one of the most scarce habitat types in Connecticut and New England. It is possible that the amount of appropriate grassland habitat for this species in Connecticut and New England is now near the historical minimum. The loss of grasslands to development and succession, loss of agricultural land, more intensive agricultural practices, and the near elimination of natural forces that create forest openings, such as flooding and fire, have been detrimental to Grasshopper Sparrows.

Habitat

The very specific habitat needs of this species make its conservation problematic in Connecticut. Grasshopper Sparrows typically nest in large expanses of open grassland with 3-5% woody component (Swanson, 1996) and are not found in fields with more than 35% woody vegetation (Jones and Vickery, 1997; Smith, 1963; Smith, 1968). They seem to have an affinity for former shade-grown tobacco fields in central Connecticut (pers. obs.). Grasshopper Sparrows generally are found nesting in grasslands on well-drained upland sites, typically with xeric (dry), often sandy soil (Swanson, 1996); such soils are often present in old tobacco fields in Connecticut. I have observed the sparrows running on and taking dust baths in dry dirt roads at the Manchester location. Hanisek has, however, observed them nesting in New Jersey, in areas with rich but well-drained soil with no bare earth (pers. comm.). It is not known if the sparrows truly have an affinity for

any soil type, or if the presence of dry or well-drained soils facilitates the growth of the vegetative communities in which this species nests.

There is some regional variation in habitat use, and as with many species, Grasshopper Sparrows may be more tolerant of 'marginal' habitat in the heart of their range and where they are abundant than at the edges of their range. In New England, Grasshopper Sparrows tend to use habitats dominated by short clump-forming grasses (height: 4-14 inches) with minimal vegetation litter and grass cover, and patches of bare ground, and with scattered tall forbs (non-grass herbaceous plants) (ht: 8-25") or short shrubs (ht: 1-8"), which they use for song perches (Jones and Vickery, 1997; Smith, 1963). It is possible that the presence of wildflowers, or at least some variety in the herbaceous species, may also increase the amount of insect activity thus providing a more abundant prey base for Grasshopper Sparrows.

Grasshopper Sparrow abundance declined as grass density increased on reclaimed surface mines in West Virginia, and increased litter and grass density may have inhibited Grasshopper Sparrow foraging efficiency (Wray et al., 1982). Vegetation heights in breeding territories in West Virginia were found to be between 9 and 24 inches, and breeding activity decreased as grass cover increased and bare ground declined (Whitmore, 1979). Whitmore also found that the sparrows in his study area used sparsely vegetated grasslands with at least 24% bare ground and 27% grass cover at spring arrival, with an average litter depth of 0.59 inches in peak breeding season. Crossman (1989) found that in Grasshopper Sparrow territories at Bradley Airport the median litter depth ranged from 0.62 to 0.78 inches, and the percentage of bare ground ranged from 22.5 to 32.5 %. Dechant et al. (2001) suggested that the key to management for this species in North Dakota is to provide large areas of contiguous grassland of intermediate height with moderately deep litter cover and low shrub density. Again, there is regional variation in habitat use; in New England this species is found more often in sites with patches of bare ground and more minimal litter cover (Andrea Jones, pers. comm.).

Whitmore (1979), in areas in West Virginia where the Grasshopper Sparrow breeds abundantly, found the dominant vegetation to be fescue (*Festuca sp.*), birdsfoot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), red top (*Agrostis gigantea*), timothy (*Phleum pratense*), and oats (*Avena sp.*), although some of these species are likely to create densely covered ground (Greg Hanisek, pers. comm.). Exposed perches for singing display are an important component of nesting habitat. I have ob-

served the species using Curled Dock and mullein at the Manchester location, and at Kennebunk Plains, Maine, I have observed them using small shrubs (less than 36 inches in height) as perches. Nests are constructed on the ground, and arching grasses above the nest create a partial cover (Vickery, 1996). This ground-nesting behavior makes Grasshopper Sparrows particularly vulnerable to disturbance by all terrain vehicles and humans or dogs walking through nesting habitats. Nests are difficult to see and can be easily stepped on if someone is walking where nests might be.

Potential nesting locations should be maintained through a regime of periodic (every 2-4 years) mowing or, preferably, burning of the habitat. For example, a rotating schedule of periodic burning is used to manage the habitat for Grasshopper Sparrows and other grassland birds at Kennebunk Plains. This rotation provides the greatest variety of grassland types at that location, and increases the chances that optimum habitat for each species is always available. This is important because Grasshopper Sparrows tend to avoid areas that have been burned in the spring prior to their arrival (Johnson, 1997; pers. obs., at Kennebunk Plains), and Grasshopper Sparrows become most abundant 2 to 4 years after fire management (Johnson, 1997). It has been suggested that, optimally, 20-30% of a large active grassland habitat should be burned in any one year in order to maintain the widest variety of grassland habitat types possible at any one location (Herkert, 1994a). Management by mowing may have similar results. In New Jersey, a rotation of crops resulting in large fallow fields often produces suitable nesting habitat for Grasshopper Sparrows (Greg Hanisek, pers. comm.). Conservation Reserve Program lands may provide important nesting areas in the Midwest (Dechant et al., 2001; Johnson and Igl, 1995).

Grasshopper Sparrows have been observed breeding in the following habitats in the Northeast: lightly grazed pasture, reclaimed surface mines, old hayfields, moderately grazed pastures, airfields, conservation areas, blueberry and coastal sandplain grasslands and heathlands, cool and warm season grasslands, and capped landfills (Dettmers and Rosenberg, 2000; Andrea Jones, pers. comm.). I have observed them singing from smaller (3 to 5-acre) patches of grassland at the edges of agricultural fields in Alpha, New Jersey. It is not known how productive such populations are. Jones and Vickery (1997) consider thirty acres the minimum habitat requirement for this species, although most populations found in Connecticut in recent years have occurred on larger tracts. The populations that do occur in smaller, 30 acre grasslands

are generally small, from just a few to eight pairs, and the survival rates are significantly lower than in large populations (Jones, 2000). Jones also suggests that large populations are more likely to be viable "source" populations and many small populations do not persist over time. Many of the populations at small sites disappeared in the course of her four-year study.

The usual territory size for each pair of Grasshopper Sparrows is 2 to 4 acres (Jones and Vickery, 1997), but territory size can be quite variable within many species depending on habitat quality. Crossman (1989) found territories at Bradley Airport ranged in size between 1 to 3.2 acres, and Smith (1963) found territories to range between 1.2 and 3.3 acres with an average of 2.03 acres in Pennsylvania. Territory size is the amount of land used by each pair; why the area defended by each pair is smaller than the overall minimum area required for some species to nest is not known. More research is necessary to determine the reasons for this, but in the case of the Grasshopper Sparrow, it may be due to the semi-colonial nature of the species.

A study in Maine by Vickery and Hunter (1994) determined that this species could be found on at least 50% of single point count surveys conducted in areas larger than about 250 acres, but were less likely to be found in similar surveys on smaller patches. From this it can be concluded that attempts to manage for this species may be more likely to succeed if the chosen area is larger than 250 acres. Herkert (1994b) considered the minimum area required to support a breeding population of Grasshopper Sparrows to be around 74 acres. Winter and Faarborg (1999), however, showed that there is regional variation in area requirements for grassland species, and that in southwestern Missouri tallgrass prairie fragments, Grasshopper Sparrow density was more dependent on vegetation characteristics than on habitat fragment size. Another argument for larger grassland patches for Grasshopper Sparrows is that in Minnesota Johnson and Temple (1990) found that cowbird parasitism may have occurred more often in nests located closer to woody edges of grasslands and nest depredation occurred less often in larger grasslands than it did in those of smaller size.

Airports provide many of the nesting locations for Grasshopper Sparrows in New England at this time. Tightening of FAA regulations with respect to air strike hazards, along with development and expansion pressures at area airports make continued nesting at airports an impractical long-term solution for the sparrows' survival in the region.

Table 2. Habitat Requirements for Grasshopper Sparrows.

50 % incidence (Vickery and Hunter, 1994)	247 acres
Minimum Area (Jones and Vickery, 1997)	30 acres
Territory Size (Jones and Vickery, 1997)	2-4 acres
Vegetation Type (Jones and Vi,ckery, 1997)	Short bunch grasses (ht: 4-14") with minimal litter and grass cover, patches of bare ground, scattered tall forbs (ht: 8-25") with scattered, low, lightly wooded vegetation (ht: 1-8") for song perches [e.g., tall herbaceous vegetation such as common mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*), curled dock (*Rumex crispus*) or low growing shrubs and such as lowbush blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*) or sweetfern (*Comptonia peregrina*)]; favors well-drained upland sites; absent from fields with >35% shrubs.
Grassland Type (Jones and Vickery, 1997)	Upland meadow/pasture, old field, sandplain grassland (e.g., pastures, old hayfields, dry meadows, airfields, blueberry barrens, extensive mixed agricultural areas, cultivated grasslands, capped landfills).

Despite strict habitat area requirements, there is hope for attracting Grasshopper Sparrows to newly created habitats, as long as the local population remains to fill in the new habitat. There may be tremendous opportunities to greatly enhance the numbers of this species in Connecticut if we act soon to create and restore large grassland habitats. These sparrows and other species of grassland birds in the Northeast have probably evolved to be opportunistic in their selection of breeding sites. As grasslands appeared through fire, windstorms, or other natural disturbance factors, birds moved in, bred there until the habitat degraded, and then moved to another area of suitable habitat. The fact that this species also keeps appearing in capped landfills in Massachusetts and unused tobacco land in Connecticut offers us hope that if we provide suitable habitat, the sparrows are likely to find and use it (Jones, pers. comm.). Evidence of this species' ability to utilize new habitat areas is also available from other areas of the country. Grasshopper Sparrows have been successfully attracted to grassland habitat restored from farmland in the DelMarVa area (Frank Gill, pers. comm.), and much literature has discussed Grasshopper Sparrows and other grassland species using Conservation Reserve Program lands in the Midwest and reclaimed surface mines in West Virginia and other areas (see Dechant et al., 2001 and Dettmers and Rosenberg, 2000).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Grasshopper Sparrows and other grassland nesting birds have suffered serious local and continent-wide declines. These interesting species add to the biodiversity of our area and are naturally occurring elements of our ecosystems. Efforts should be made to learn more about Grasshopper Sparrows and other grassland nesting birds and to work to reverse the declines in their populations in Connecticut. Large tracts of grasslands must be acquired for preservation or obtained through easements and actively managed to maintain early successional habitats in order for Grasshopper Sparrows and other grassland specialists to persist in southern New England. This will require tremendous resolve on the part of conservation organizations as well as state and local governments. Major challenges will be obtaining the funds required to acquire and manage grassland habitats.

Serious efforts must be undertaken in order to prevent the extirpation of the Grasshopper Sparrow from Connecticut. Wells (in Vickery and Dunwiddie, 1997) performed a viability analysis of Grasshopper Sparrows for Maine, where the population is doing

much better than in Connecticut. He estimated that there was a 50% probability that this species would be extirpated within 50 years; however, with optimum management of all habitats the risk dropped to 22%. These models make a number of assumptions, but their results indicate that there is much to do to ensure the continued existence of this species in Connecticut.

Preventing the loss of Grasshopper Sparrows from the state will require the creation of at least one or two 'reservoir sites', i.e., large protected and managed grassland refuges of over 400 acres. These locations will allow this species to have a stable local population, and produce sufficient young to contribute to the overall regional population. Smaller 'satellite' or 'overflow' locations would be useful to provide nesting locations for any surplus young produced at the main location. These satellite locations may not be as productive as the larger sites, but they would also benefit other, less area-sensitive, grassland-nesting species, and serve the important purpose of giving people local access to these interesting sparrows, thus providing educational opportunities (Robert Askins, pers. comm.). This aspect is important because people are more likely to wish to conserve things to which they have a personal connection.

Innovative approaches should be explored to create these satellite locations in view of the high price of real estate in Connecticut. Techniques such as conservation easements, assistance and education for local land trusts and municipalities in management and conservation of properties as grasslands, and perhaps educating farmers about the benefits of late-mown warm season grasses may prove less expensive than land acquisition efforts. Warm season grasses put on their growth later than cool-season hay species, thereby giving grassland birds a chance to fledge their young. This allows farmers a chance to get good crop of nutritious hay even late in the season although with cool season species three crops are possible a year, which does not happen with the warm season grasses (Andrea Jones, pers. comm.). Subsidies for farmers may be necessary to make up for the loss of one of the hay crops, or as incentive to hay their fields later in the season.

Special Thanks

I wish to thank the following people, who were extremely helpful in reviewing this paper, and/or providing information: Robert Askins, David Comins, Andrew Dasinger, Chris Elphick, Dick Ferrin, Greg Hanisek, Frank Haviland, Andrea Jones, Jamie Meyers, Joan Morrison, Steve Oresman, Mark Szantyr, and Hugh Willoughby.

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BLACK-TAILED GODWIT AT MILFORD POINT: FIRST STATE RECORD

Julian Hough

On Thursday, 18 April 2001, at approximately 1:00 PM, Katie Hubbard found a breeding-plumaged godwit in the intertidal creeks at Milford Point, New Haven, Connecticut. She tentatively identified it as a Bar-tailed Godwit, a vagrant from Europe, Siberia, and northwestern Alaska, and alerted staff at the Coastal Audubon Center. Together with Milan Bull, they watched the bird at length and quickly re-identified the bird as a Black-tailed Godwit, a similarly rare Eurasian species.

A small group of observers, alerted to the bird's presence by the prompt dissemination of the news, managed to see the bird at close range before it was inadvertently flushed by fishermen at 3:15 PM. The bird was lost from sight out over the marsh.

A growing band of observers searched in vain for the next few hours until, on the rising tide, Chris Elphick located the bird around 6 PM. Although distant, the bright chestnut-red breast and mantle and bill structure, were evident. The bird was briefly seen in flight, when the striking black and white wing-pattern and white rump were evident. The bird spent the last hour preening and swimming short distances between islands of vegetation. Despite a vigilant search over the next two days, the bird was never seen again.

A breeding-plumaged Black-tailed Godwit had been present the previous week at Eastport, Long Island, New York and, according to Nick Bonomo, Greg Hanisek, and Dori Sosensky et al. who saw both birds, it appeared that both records relate to the same individual. The New York individual was last seen on Tuesday 16 April, so it is highly probable that it was present at Milford Point on the day prior to its discovery.

Interestingly, the story does not end there. A Hudsonian Godwit was reported at Harkness State Park in Connecticut, 26-28 April, but alarmingly, this rare spring occurrence went unreported. Bob Dewire thought it unusual enough to check out the report on the 30th (four days after the initial sighting) and to his credit quickly realized the bird was in fact not a Hudsonian Godwit, but a Black-tailed Godwit! This was the same bird as that briefly present at Milford Point, a week earlier. Unfortunately, news was apparently slow to filter out to the masses, but several

observers managed to document this exciting occurrence with video and photographs.

Black-tailed Godwit, Harkness Memorial St.. Pk., Waterford, CT
Photo by Spencer Bullis, April 30, 2001

Black-tailed Godwit, Eastport, Long Island, NY
Photo by Angus Wilson, April 7, 2001

GODWIT IDENTIFICATION IN NORTH AMERICA

Four species of godwit are on the North American list. Hudsonian and Marbled Godwits are the only breeding species confined to North America. Bar–tailed Godwit breeds in northern Europe, Siberia, and northwestern Alaska while Black-tailed Godwit, from Iceland and continental Europe, is the only true vagrant godwit to North America.

Marbled Godwit is distinct from the other three species by virtue of its uniform honey-buff upperparts, cinnamon underwings and heavily barred / "marbled" upperparts. It is unlikely to be confused with any other godwit species and is thus not covered here.

Records along the Eastern Seaboard

There have been several records of both Black-tailed and Bar-tailed Godwits along the eastern seaboard from Florida to New Foundland, and birds could show up anywhere during main migration periods. Indeed, in the seventies, all four species were present on the same day at Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey—a unique experience!

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa limosa*)

The history of Black-tailed Godwits breeding in England, at the northwestern edge of their Continental range, has been peppered with highs and lows.*

Since the 1800's, the Black-tailed Godwit has endured a tenuous hold as a British breeding bird. Much prized as a table delicacy, it was pushed almost to extinction by hunters. As numbers decreased, the birds became more valuable and attracted the attention of egg-collectors. This had a further detrimental affect on the species, and Black-tailed Godwits virtually disappeared from their fenland strongholds in southeast England.

Black-tailed Godwits finally came back to breed regularly in the mid-fifties. A small population established itself in Cambridgeshire and peaked at 11 pairs in 1961. Since that time the Black-tailed Godwit has become more firmly established.

Two distinct races occur in Europe, the nominate, continental race *limosa* and the Icelandic race *islandica*. The former race is generally longer-billed with slightly paler and less extensive chestnut underparts with sparser barring.

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* *For a more detailed history of this re-colonization I suggest reading the fascinating and informative book by John Gooders, "Birds That Came Back," which details the highs and lows of some of Britain's scarce breeders.*

Racial identification of lone individuals can be difficult, but generally, *islandica* differs from *limosa* by the following:

- Shorter bill and slightly shorter legs than *limosa*.
- The underparts tend to be a richer, more saturated chestnut red.
- The underparts are more heavily barred (especially along the flanks)
- The upperparts often show more chestnut patterned summer feathers than *limosa*.

A third race, *melanuroides*, occurs in east Asia. It is the smallest of the three races and the plumage is similar to the Icelandic race, being quite heavily barred on the upperbreast and flanks, and, as such, subspecific identification may not be possible.

Excellent photos and a more in-depth discussion on subspecies of Black-tailed Godwit can be viewed at Angus Wilson's informative website, "Ocean Wanderers"

http://www.oceanwanderers.com/NYBlacktailedGotwit.htm

Taking into account breeding distributions, *islandica*, rather than *limosa*, seems to be the race most likely to occur here and the plumage features of the Long Island/Connecticut bird, seem to favor that race.

Identification

Size: 36-44 cm (15 3/4 inches) Despite the implied differences in tail patterns hinted at in their names, one of the most widely used features for separating these two species is the shape of the *bill:* straight in Black-tailed and slightly upturned in Bar-tailed. However, this difference can often be hard to discern, and some Black-tails may give the impression of slightly upturned bills. In summer plumage, Black-tails have a bi-colored, not all dark bill.

Black-tailed Godwit is a large, elegant wader, and the rangier jizz, caused by its long legs, is often a more obvious identification feature than the shape of the bill.

On closer inspection, they differ from Bar-tails in that the chestnut underparts are less extensive (becoming white around the belly and upper flanks) and the underparts are more heavily barred blackish-brown.

By far the easiest way to differentiate between the two is in flight. Black-tailed displays a broad, white wingbar and square white rump. The latter contrasts sharply with its darker back and has a solidly black, not barred tail. Another feature to look for on flying birds is the underwing pattern. In Black-tailed, the underwing is whitish but it is sandwiched between a narrow, blackish leading edge to the wing and a grayer, broader trailing edge.

Black-tailed Godwit - adult summer (probably *islandica*)
Note slightly straighter, pale-based bill than Bar-tailed, though the latter difference is often hard to discern in the field. Brick-red throat and upper-breast.
Photo by Steve Young.

Bar-tailed Godwit - adult summer (race *baueri*)
More richly colored below, lacking the heavily barred upperbreast and flanks of Black-tailed Godwit. Bill all dark and often more distinctly upturned than Black-tailed Godwit. Note shorter legs than Black-tailed, with less tibia exposed above the knee. Wing-coverts more heavily patterned than summer Black-tailed.
Photo by Jim Zipp.

Adult - summer

Sexes generally similar, the female averaging duller. Long, pale pinkish-yellow bill with a distinctly dark tip. Head and underparts brick-red, becoming whiter on the belly. The supercilium and chin are typically whiter or creamier. Upperparts similar in color to the head with black-barred feather centers to the mantle. Wing coverts are plain grayish-brown.

Adult - winter

The pink basal color to the bill is the most striking feature. Otherwise, winter Black-tails appear uniformly smoky-gray above and across the breast fading to white on the lower breast and belly. There is a short whitish supercilium, which in most, but probably not all indiviuals, does not extend back behind the eye.

Juvenile - first-winter

Similar to winter adult. Close views will reveal dark centers to the feathers of the mantle, scapulars and wing-coverts. The tips of the greater coverts and tertials are noticeably notched, though these will wear off by late winter.

Black-tailed Godwit - juvenile/first-winter

Upperparts and wing-coverts have dark–centered feathers with tertials notched only at the tip. Neck, breast and upper flanks often with peachy-wash when fresh. Longer-legged than Bar-tailed or Hudsonian. *Photo by Steve Young.*

Habitat and Behavior

During the breeding season it inhabits temperate latitudes across central Eurasia, with *islandica* confined to Iceland, Shetland Islands, Faeroes, and Norwegian Lofoten Islands. At other times of the year, Black-tails have a preference for marshy, inland waters often with aquatic vegetation. In winter, birds may be found in coastal areas, such as saltmarsh, flooded fields and sheltered bays.

Migration and movements

Most of the population moves south to winter in southern Europe. The wintering birds in northern Europe and Britain are believed to originate from the Icelandic population. The nominate race winters in central Africa east to India.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa lapponica*)

There are two distinct races, nominate *lapponica* breeding in northern Europe and the Siberian and Alaskan race *baueri*. The latter is responsible for West Coast records, and differs from the European race by its slightly larger size and finely barred underwings and rump.

Identification

Size: 37-41cm (15 1/4 inches). A little smaller, shorter-billed and shorter-legged than its close cousin. The bill is often noticeably upturned and all dark.

The upperparts, particularly the wing coverts are more heavily marked than Black-tailed Godwit. Compared with Black-tailed, the chestnut color to the underparts of the male in summer is slightly richer in tone and is more extensive, reaching all the way to the undertail coverts. The belly and upper flanks are clean and unbarred.

In flight, the most striking difference is the white inverted 'V' on the back and a finely barred tail. The outer primaries are noticeably dark but there is no obvious wingbar and the underwings appear uniformly whitish without the darker borders seen in Black-tailed Godwit.

Adult - summer

Though superficially similar to Black-tailed Godwit, adults usually look cleaner and less worn than Black-tails owing to the more marked wing coverts and more extensively orange-red underparts. The mantle and wing-coverts are more boldly patterned with black and chestnut.

Adult - winter

Paler and buffier than Black-tailed. Shows a whiter and more extensive supercilium than Black-tailed. The upperparts appear more streaked due to the dark feather centers of the mantle and wing coverts. The breast is buffish and lightly streaked.

Juvenile - First-winter

Similar to adult but more intricately patterned with broad, pale fringes to the upperparts and notched, not 'streaked' tertials. The breast and upper flanks are often more distinctly streaked when fresh.

Bar-tailed Godwit - adult
Short legs and all dark bill are evident. Note the dark-centered upperpart feathers and whitish belly of this molting individual.
Photo by Steve Young

Habitat and Behavior

Outside the breeding season, Bar-tails are essentially a coastal species, shying away from inland marshy areas favored by Black-tails. They can be found on open estuaries, mudflats and rocky coasts though some birds often pause at inland locations during migration. Quite gregarious in winter, often forming large concentrations.

Migration and Movements

Most of the European population winters along the coasts of western Europe, from Britain and Ireland south to North Africa.

HUDSONIAN GODWIT *(Limosa haemastica)*

"Hudwits", as they are affectionately known, breed in Canada (including southwest Hudson Bay) and Alaska. Unlike the two Old World godwits, there is no geographical variation.

They are long distance migrants wintering in southern South America, particularly in Argentina.

Identification

Smaller and more compact than Black-tailed Godwit, with a shorter neck and more horizontal carriage. The bill is proportionately long and slightly upturned.

In flight, the upper surfaces appear similar to Black-tailed Godwit, with whitish wingbars and white rump and black terminal band to the tail.

Unlike any other godwit, the underwing coverts are blackish and are diagnostic at all ages.

Adult - summer

Adults have a pale grayish head and neck fading into dark vinous-red underparts. The underparts are barred blackish-brown with a paler, whitish vent. The bill is dark-tipped with a reddish-orange base.

Adult - winter

Very similar to Black-tailed, but Hudsonian's appear darker, more smoky-brown overall, especially on the lower breast and belly (often with remnants of barring). They tend to lack the striking pale bill base of the former species.

Juvenile - first-winter

Similar to Black-tailed Godwit, but plainer wings, lacking the dark-centered wing coverts and mantle feathers of Black-tailed. Juvenile Hudsonians show dark subterminal anchors to the mantle feathers and greater coverts.

In flight, the blackish underwings are diagnostic. The bill is shorter with a more restricted pinkish base.

Black-tailed Godwit - adult winter
Uniform, smokey-gray upperparts with plain tertials indicating adult, not juvenile/first winter. Broad-based, two-toned bill, typically straighter-looking than Bar-tailed. *Photo by Steve Young.*

Hudsonian Godwit - first-winter
Similar to juvenile. Black-tailed but note lack of peachy tones to neck and breast. Bill darker with less extensively pale base. Note new, adult-like gray scapular feather.
Photo by Julian Hough.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks to Milan Bull and the staff at the CAS Milford Point Coastal Center for their cooperation and help. I am indebted to Steve Young who supplied the bulk of the photos for this article and to Angus Wilson for his photo of the New York godwit, plus allowing us to link to his website "Ocean Wanderers"

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THE SHARP-SHINNED HAWK IN CONNECTICUT

Dwight G. Smith, Trevor Becker, and Arnold Devine

The Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*) has traditionally been categorized as an uncommon migrant and a rare breeding species in Connecticut. This small accipiter hawk, has in fact, also been consistently rated as a rare species throughout most of New England except during migration. Peak numbers are observed each year during fall migration, from late August into early November, when at certain times it is often the most abundantly tallied raptor migrant.

Although breeding pairs are sometimes observed in Connecticut little is known of the nesting status and nest site selection of Sharp-shinned Hawks within the state. The Connecticut Natural Diversity Data Bank on nesting Sharp-shinned Hawks listed a 1967 New Milford site, a 1982 Canton site, and a single 1983 Hartland site. No nests were found, but fledged young and attending adults were observed by Hopkins et al. (1987). Hopkins et al. (1987) also reported from Tunxis State Forest in Hartland an apparently successful Sharp-shinned Hawk nest which was active in 1986.

Herein we report our observations of nests and nest sites gathered over a period of several years but concentrated over two years, the 1999 and 2000 nesting seasons.

Historical Status

Literature reports suggest that the Sharp-shinned Hawk was a fairly common and widespread nesting species in Connecticut in the late 1800's. Its breeding status was variously termed "common" by Merriam et al. as reported in Zeranski and Baptist, (1990), "moderately common in Litchfield County" by Job (1922), "moderately common" by Sage et al. (1913), and a "fairly common" breeder in the Stamford area by Howes (1928).

Zeranski and Baptist (1990) recounted the known history of its decline in Connecticut to its apparent extirpation as a breeding species by the late 1950's. However, they also noted that summer reports of its occurrence began increasing again in the 1970's. In the mid-1970's, raptor enthusiasts Mike and Bill Root were unable to find evidence of breeding Sharp-shinned Hawks despite their

intensive searches for nesting pairs of this and other raptors in the northwestern part of the state (Root and Root, 1978).

The Connecticut Breeding Bird Survey, conducted from 1982 to 1986, reported Sharp-shinned Hawk breeding evidence in 6.4 percent of all blocks surveyed in the state but confirmed breeding was limited to five blocks, which represented less than one percent of the survey blocks in the state. Two confirmed sites were in the extreme north-central part of the state and another two sites were near the New York border (Smith and Devine 1994).

During our fieldwork for *Connecticut Birding Guide,* we confirmed instances of Sharp-shinned Hawk breeding activity near Barkhamsted Reservoir in Barkhamsted, White Memorial Foundation, Litchfield, and James L. Goodwin State Forest (Devine and Smith 1996).

Nesting Phenology

In Connecticut, Sharp-shinned Hawks claim territories in late March through April and nest construction occurs a month later. Eggs are generally laid in late May and early June. Incubation is usually listed as 30 to 32 days but we have no direct verification of this, other than that the young were heard calling (food begging) in June and occasionally seen flying about the territory in July and into August. These dates are consistent with the nesting timetable reported by Hopkins et al. (1987) or when territorial activity was observed in mid-May. Five freshly laid eggs were in the nest on May 25, young were observed in the nest on 28 June and were banded on 6 July.

Habitat Selection and Nest Sites

All 11 Sharp-shinned Hawk territories that we observed were located in stands of conifers or in mixed hardwood stands comprised primarily of conifers. Most of these nesting territories were near open water, either a stream, a wetland marsh, pond, or lake. Nesting stands were small, generally ten acres or less, and bordered by roads, power lines, wood roads, wood trails, or other artifacts of habitat fragmentation.

Sharp-shinned Hawk nests were all located high in the tops of conifers, mostly or fully hidden by the canopy foliage and very difficult to spot from below. Placement of Sharp-shinned nests high within the canopy affords protective cooling by overhead foliage but may be even more important in providing concealment from avian predators. Northern Goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*), Great Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*), and Barred Owls (*Strix varia*) all

nest in similar habitat and will take young and adult Sharp-shinned Hawks when available. Nest concealment becomes especially important when we consider that six of the 11 (54.5%) Sharp-shinned Hawk nests we located were within 150-370 meters of active Northern Goshawk or Great Horned Owl nests.

In comparison, Forbush (1927) reported that the Sharp-shinned Hawk nests he located in Massachusetts in the early years of this century were placed only 6 to 9 meters high in small conifers and were "easy to find."

Sharp-shinned Hawk nests were broad and flat, measuring slightly over 0.6 meters in diameter and were compact and well built. Nests were comprised of tightly woven small to medium-sized sticks and twigs and lined with bark. A few appeared to have been decorated with moss or other greenery but we were unable to confirm if they were deliberately decorated or if the green leaves and needles had fallen or blown into the nest cup.

Sharp-shinned Hawk nests were readily distinguished from nests of Northern Goshawk and Cooper's Hawks (*Accipiter cooperii*) in (1) overall size as both of these larger accipiters build much larger and less compact nests, (2) the size of twigs and branches comprising the nests, which again were considerably smaller—on the average—than those of the larger accipiters, and (3) placement in the tree, as the nests of Sharp-shinned Hawks were high in the canopy while both Cooper's and Northern Goshawk nests were in the middle or lower layers of the canopy.

All of the nests we observed were in small conifer stands located on slopes, steep hillsides, uplands, and more rarely on bottomlands. Several nesting stands were part of water company conifer plantations, but two were in second growth mixed woodland that replaced pasture abandoned in the 1930's.

Nesting woodlands were predominantly conifers, which comprised an average of 67.8 percent of total cover, although two nesting stands were comprised of nearly equal percentages of conifers and deciduous trees. The canopy of stands in which nests were located tended to be closed, ranging from 75-95% canopy cover. Shrub cover such as Mountain Laurel, averaged 52.5 percent, suggesting that stands were relatively open and mature. Although we typically think of Sharp-shinned Hawks as nesting in remote and rugged locations, all the nests we found were located near woodland roads, paved roads, or open habitats. One, for example was located only 16.8 meters from an open wetland while another was but 26.5 meters from the nearest paved road.

At each nesting locale, the nest tree species was also the domi-

nant species component of the conifer stand. Including alternate nests, seven were located in white pine, two in Norway spruce, and two were in eastern hemlock. All nests were in live trees and placed in limb axils supported by 4-7 small horizontal branches. Average nest height was 19 meters in trees that averaged 22.4 meters in height. Neither height nor size of nesting trees differed substantially from other trees in the stands.

Food and Hunting

Sharp-shinned Hawk prey were determined from remains found beneath nests or remains found at plucking posts. Distances of plucking posts to the nest ranged from 21.6 to 39.6 meters with a clear view and flight path to the nest. Plucking posts were on short stumps or slightly elevated fallen logs, generally ranging from 0.1 to 0.5 m above ground. Feathers, bones, and in a few cases bits of fur were collected from beneath nests or plucking posts and taken to the laboratory for identification.

Prey brought to the nest or partly consumed by the adults prior to bringing the remainder to the nest consisted primarily of birds and small mammals. Over 90 percent of the prey were small birds, generally ranging in size from 15 to 30 grams (based on adult weights of birds).

A general review of our food habits data for this hawk suggests an overwhelming preference for avian prey. Sharp-shinned Hawks at many nest sites seem to concentrate on certain species, probably developing a search image for a particular species. For example, at one nest site we found the remains of a whole group (remains of a family group) of Cedar Waxwings (*Bombycilla cedrorum*).

The most common birds we found in Sharp-shinned Hawk prey remains included Tufted Titmouse (*Parus bicolor*), Black-capped Chickadee (*Parus atricapillus*), White-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*), Eastern Bluebird (*Silia sialis*), and various warblers, notably Chestnut-sided (*Dendroica pensylvanica*), Prairie (*Dendroica discolor*), Yellow (*Dendroica petechia*), and American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*). Some larger avian prey we noted included Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*), Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*), and American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*). Less common but notable avian prey included Black-throated Green Warbler (*Dendroica virens*), and Winter Wren (*Troglydytes troglodytes*). A few small mammal remains were also present as bits of fur and bone beneath the plucking post. These included white-footed mouse (*Peromyscus leucopus*), short-tailed shrew (*Blarina brevicauda*) and meadow vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*).

Conclusions and Summary

The number of Sharp-shinned Hawk nests found in recent years suggests that this species is again appearing in numbers in the state as a breeding species. Observations of Sharp-shinned Hawks in May and through the summer months should be further investigated as they may indicate the presence of an active nest nearby.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Larry Fischer, Mike Redmond, Pat Redmond, Frank Mantlik, and Jim Hunt provided information about the location of nest sites or territories of one or more of the Sharp-shinned Hawk nest sites we described in this report.

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Sharp-shinned Hawk (*photo by Mona Cavallero, March 6, 2001*)

Table 1. Nest Site Characteristics of Sharp-shinned Hawks in CT

Characteristic	Average	Range	Comments
Nest height [a]	62.5	44-75	Height to bottom of nest
Nest tree height [a]	73.8	55-89	Average canopy height
Canopy height [b]	86.1	63-124	Average of 16 heights
Percent conifer cover [c]	67.8%	50-76%	Measured at 20 stations
Percent deciduous cover [c]	32.3%	24-50%	Measured at 20 stations
Shrub cover percent [c]	52.5%	45-60%	Measured at 20 stations
Number of supporting branches	4.5	2-7	Provided nest support

[a] taken with a sunclinometer

[b] based on measurements taken within a 0.4 ha circle centered at the nest site.

[c] based on four 100 m transects centered at the nest site and running through the four cardinal points of the compass.

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BOOK REVIEW

Jamie Meyers

West Nile Story, A New Virus in the New World, by Dickson Despommier, (2001, 134 pages, Apple Trees Productions LLC, $14.95, softcover).

The continuing saga of the West Nile Virus (WNV) in the New World - especially in our portion of it - is a troubling one, and it's not going away. Even as I write this, WNV has already hit the headlines a couple of times, as local and state officials have been discussing strategies for combating it during the summer.

Media coverage of events has been generally limited to the virus' effect on humans, alerts on where spraying may or may not occur, and how many infected birds were found and where. The stock market-like coverage of numbers has focused primarily on what will fit into a sound bite or brief blurb, leaving deeper questions largely unanswered. How did the virus get here in the first place? What conditions are ripe for its spread? And most importantly, what can we expect for the future? This short book, written by veteran Columbia University professor Dickson Despommier, addresses these issues - which are important for birds and humans alike.

This is a book intended strictly for the layperson, written in a direct, entertaining non-textbook fashion that well presents a good amount of information in a brief space - just over one hundred pages when one discounts the extensive inventory of other readings listed at the end and the index. The chapters are divided into a number of short sub-sections that split things up nicely and make for easy reading.

Despite the fact that WNV is a recent appearance on local TV screens, it has been well established in the Old World for several decades. After setting the stage, by describing what happened in the New York City area during the summer of 1999, Despommier spends a significant amount of time explaining how the virus has reared its head in places like Egypt and Romania during the past few years, drawing parallels between outbreaks of infection in those remote places to what we experienced half a world away. As it turns out, weather conditions play a vital role in the spread of

the virus in both hemispheres. The drier the summer and the more widespread the availability of stagnant, polluted water sources, the better for the virus - and the worse for the birds and for us.

One basic question that's always lingered in my mind on this topic is how the virus was transmitted to the United States in the first place. Nobody knows for certain, but several theories have been floated, and each of the more palpable ones is examined here. The author's conclusion - that an unwitting person who was bitten by an infected mosquito in Israel, and then boarded a plane for New York City, worked his or her way up to Queens (where the virus was first detected) and was then bitten by an American mosquito, which then triggered the chain of events that followed, is quite believable, especially in light of the fact of DNA-sequencing tests linking early cultures from the U.S. to that found in an infected domestic goose in Israel in 1998. The truth, however, will probably never be known.

Indeed, uncertainty is a definite theme that is repeated throughout this book, despite the wealth of scientific fact is dispensed here, and that in and of itself is a central - and unsettling - theme echoed. In terms of prognostications for the future, there are few definites. Instead, past outbreaks and epidemics are detailed in the hopes that history will teach us something. The more one reads, the more one gets a sense that of movement into uncharted territory, and the contents of future chapters very much unknown.

Some things are clear, however. The biological processes involved in the spread of the virus, and those that aid and abet it, are well understood, and explained nicely in this book. It's also evident that a lot more birds than humans have suffered from the spread of WNV in the New World. Crows have been widely cited as the species most affected, but a couple dozen avian species had been recorded with the virus at the time of this book's publishing, and I have anecdotally heard that it has spread into many more since then. Whatever the true numbers are, it's clear to me is that public policy concerning WNV will be largely shaped not by the virus' effects on birds, no matter how severe, but rather by its effects on humans. However we choose to deal with it, "the choice is ours", in Despommier's words.

But what choice will we make? What choice ***should*** we make? While I like this little tome and took a lot out of it, a major frustration I also came away with was that these questions were not answered at all. In some ways, *West Nile Story* is like a good mystery novel that builds nicely but lacks an ending. Of course, this story is still being written, and will be for some time, but one reading this

book looking for specific policy recommendations or insights into what the future might hold for WNV in the New World might well be disappointed here. That said, though, it might be somewhat unfair to expect that, from a work covering a topic so volatile, and so politically and psychologically charged.

I do recommend it, though, to one interested in gaining a deeper understanding on WNV from a historical and biological perspective in one quick, easy read on a topic where human and avian fortunes are so extricably tied.

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CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Greg Hanisek

WINTER, DECEMBER 1, 2000 THROUGH FEBRUARY 29, 2001

December got off to a mild start, as is often the case, but a spring-peeper calling December 17 on the Oxford CBC was nonetheless unexpected. January and February brought colder weather with snowstorms scattered throughout the two months. Northern species such as Rough-legged Hawks, white-winged gulls and Northern Shrikes created a wintry birding atmosphere, but abundant fruit supplies allowed American Robins and Cedar Waxwings to remain in large numbers. It was a good season for uncommon waterfowl but a poor one for northern finches.

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

A **Pacific Loon** was reported by five observers December 30 at Mason Island in Mystic on the New London Christmas Bird Count (hereafter CBC) (CT et al.). If accepted by ARCC it would be a second confirmed state record. Reports of this species in the Northeast, and in Connecticut, have been on the increase but documentation of state sightings has been spotty. Five Pied-billed Grebes wintered at Smith Cove in Waterford (RD). Single Red-necked Grebes were off Greenwich January 7 (M&TD), off Waterford January 18 and February 20-22 (DP,MS) and off Fairfield February 4 (DV). An **Eared Grebe**, found December 30 at Rocky Neck State Park in East Lyme on the New London CBC, was present through January and well photographed (BDe, m.ob.). There is ample precedent for wintering in New England, but most recent state records have occurred in early autumn.

A Great Cormorant December 7 at the Cigna campus in Bloomfield (JMe) was one in a recent string of inland sightings. A Double-crested Cormorant, a scarce winterer, was in Bridgeport January 14 (DV), and one was unexpected inland on Candlewood Lake in New Fairfield January 1 (ADi). More than 40 Northern Gannets were off Madison on December 9 (NB et al.). At least one American Bittern wintered at Hammonasset Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP) in Madison

(JMa); others were seen December 31 in Old Saybrook (JMe) and in January at Short Beach in Stratford (NC et al.). The Quinebaug fish hatchery in Central Village attracted a good mid-winter concentration of 16 Great Blue Herons on January 14 (RD). **Black Vultures** were present in the usual western locations, with the Derby-Seymour area the most consistent place to find them this winter. One, February 10 in Niantic (EN) was on the southeast coast, where there are very few records.

WATERFOWL

Snow Geese were widely reported in small numbers. The season produced the following **Greater White-fronted Goose** sightings: Bantam Lake in Litchfield January 13-26 (DR et al.); the Storrs area beginning in December (SM,MS et al.); and MacKenzie Reservoir area in Wallingford, two in January and February (WSc et al.). An immature Tundra Swan was at Saybrook Point in Old Saybrook January 1 (PDe). Wood Ducks, sparse in mid-winter, put in a good showing at Quinebaug fish hatchery, where up to five were present in January (RD); there were a few other winterers scattered around the state. A Gadwall, still uncommon inland despite good numbers along the coast, was at Bantam Lake December 2-4 (DR). Bantam Lake held 645 Mallards and 168 American Black Ducks in mid-December, with numbers gradually dwindling throughout the season (DR et al.). The **Eurasian Wigeon** for the season included one wintering at Holly Pond in Stamford (JMh), two wintering in the Bradley Point/Oyster River area of Milford/West Haven (NB, JMr et al.), and singles on December 5 at Mondo Pond in Milford (SHa) and February 1+ in Norwalk harbor (FMa). A drake Northern Shoveler appeared January 1 on the Cigna campus in Bloomfield (J&LCl); a female was at North Farms Reservoir in Wallingford in mid-January (MS), with a male joining it there February 11 (MB).

Long Island Sound continues to support large wintering rafts of Greater Scaup, mainly in the area from West Haven to Fairfield. A number of rafts in the 2,000 to 3,000 range were noted during the season, with a high count of c. 7,000 off West Haven on January 13 (JMe). Five Redheads wintered in Norwalk harbor (FMa et al.) and one was in New Haven harbor January 7 (RP). Bantam Lake still held four Canvasbacks and 50 Ring-necked Ducks in early January, a decrease from 10 and 150, respectively, in mid-December (DR et al.).

A female **King Eider** wintered at HBSP (JC et al.). The season's only **Common Eider** were three at Eastern Point in Groton on December 30 (fide

BDe). A single Long-tailed Duck was unexpected January 2 on Bantam Lake (JE). A little more seasonal was a White-winged Scoter December 1 at Nepaug Reservoir in New Hartford (DT); a flock of more than 100 wintered off of Fairfield (DV). A first winter male Black Scoter was at Mason Island in Mystic January 27 (DP) and a female was off Meigs Point at HBSP February 15 (MS). The season's lone **Barrow's Goldeneye**, a drake, wintered on the Connecticut River between Old Lyme and Old Saybrook (HG et al.). Lake Zoar in Southbury held an impressive 1,700 Common Mergansers at dawn on December 27 (DR et al.). A flock of 48 Hooded Mergansers at Bantam Lake on December 4 dwindled to 17 by mid-January (DR et al.). Frash Pond in Stratford held 60+ Hooded Mergansers on January 14 (J&CZ). Candlewood Lake held 80 Ruddy Ducks on January 1 (RN), and 60+ were on Bantam Lake in early December (DR).

RAPTORS

More than 50 Bald Eagles wintered again in the lower Connecticut River valley (FMa et al.), with a roost in Lyme holding at least 26 on January 25 (HG). At Lake Zoar/ Shepaug Dam in Southbury, 30 were present December 31 (RN); others were scattered around the state, including five on December 4 at Bantam Lake (DR et al.). A drama played out January 8 at the marsh at Milford Point, where a female Northern Harrier drowned a Canvasback and was then driven off by another female, which fed on the duck for several hours (LCr). Northern Goshawks were in Stratford January 10 (CB), Watertown January 12 (RN), Easton January 17 (JK) and New Milford January 23 (DP); one moved into HBSP in mid-January, where it was seen eating a Black Duck January 17 (RA), and spent the rest of the season in the park (DS et al.). Golden Eagles wintered in two traditional spots, Canaan Mountain in Canaan and the lower Connecticut River valley. This year there were two at each spot, instead of one (NC et al.). Another one, probably an adult, was reported from Niantic January 5 and 7 (DP).

Rough-legged Hawks staged a major flight, with more than 30 reported statewide for the season. The largest numbers, as expected, were along the coast, with as many as 10 in the lower Connecticut River valley and at least five in the Stratford-Milford marshes (HG, JZ, m.ob.). They also were widely scattered inland, mostly singles but up to three in Southbury in late December/early January (DR,RN). Two Peregrines wintered in Groton, where at least one was seen almost daily on

the Gold Star Bridge (RD), and singles were stationed in most of the state's urban areas. Merlin, a species that has increased as a winterer in recent years, produced the expected coastal sightings. Inland, one was seen eating a titmouse in Mansfield on December 17 (SM), and others were in Southbury January 8 (DM) and in the vicinity of Connecticut Children's Hospital in Hartford on several occasions in February (CEk,PCi). American Kestrel, sharply reduced as a winterer, produced two sightings December 9 in Ellington (CEk). Others included singles December 10 in Ledyard (FN), January 2 in Hartford (SK), January 8 in Stratford (CB), in mid-January in Seymour (BDv) and February 2 in Hartford (PCi).

RAILS THROUGH ALCIDS

The high count of American Coot wintering at Bantam Lake was 100+ on December 4 (DR et al.). A Sandhill Crane was present in the Bloomfield-Simsbury area December 16-23 (JMe, m.ob.), with a report December 20 from Glastonbury likely referring to the same bird (JF); then possibly the same bird was seen far south in Orange December 26, flying over and calling (NB). There was a sighting of a single bird in flight February 24 in West Hartford, not far from original sightings (SF). American Oystercatcher is increasing as a winterer, with up to nine in the Menunketesuck area of Westbrook (JMa et al.) and a few others scattered along the coast. Groton Long Point held 15 Black-bellied Plovers and 13 Ruddy Turnstones on January 13 (RD). The season's best concentration of Purple Sandpipers was 50 on a breakwater in Stonington January 7 (DP). A Common Snipe was at Quinebaug fish hatchery December 22-January 1 (RD,GW).

Two Laughing Gulls were late on December 18 in Bridgeport, with one still present December 23 (DV). Surprisingly, the only **Black-headed Gull** reported was inside the lower Connecticut River valley, seen during an eagle watching boat trip February 3 (FD et al.). Up to 50 Bonaparte's Gulls were at Captain's Cove in Bridgeport on January 14 (DV), and as more began to move in during February, numbers built to 160 at HBSP on February 24 (FMa).

An immature **Thayer's Gull** was seen December 29 in a large group of gulls feeding on alewives stunned and killed by turbines at Shepaug Dam in Southbury (GH,MS). If accepted by ARCC, it will be a third state record. It was a very good year for **Iceland Gull**, especially with Gull Central (aka the Manchester landfill) now closed. A total of 20+ for the season included inland birds December 27-31 at Shepaug

Dam (GH et al.), at Quinebaug fish hatchery on February 18 (RD) and at North Farms Reservoir on several dates in January and February (m.ob.). A long-staying individual was back on a beach in Westbrook for at least five consecutive years (m.ob.). **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** generated c. 15 reports, and **Glaucous Gull** put in a good showing with singles December 22-23 at Wethersfield Cove (PCi,SK), in December/ January in Old Saybrook (JMo et al.), December 20 in West Hartford (PCi), January 11 at Silver Sands State Park in Milford (NB) and January 15+ at North Farms Reservoir (JMc). **Razorbills** are seldom seen, and usually only briefly, inside Long Island Sound, so a group of at least six that stationed themselves off New London in February presented a rare opportunity for state birders. The alcids were visible from land with effort, but easier to see from one of the ferries (FD, RS, DP et al.)

OWLS THROUGH PIPITS

Single Snowy Owls appeared on Duck Island off Clinton on December 21 (TK) and at HBSP on January 16 (CR et al.). A more cooperative one showed up February 9 at Seaside Park in Bridgeport and remained through the end of the period (CB et al.); it was joined by a second one, apparently for one day only, on February 18 (JHo et al.). A Long-eared Owl found on January 12 in tangles near the Connecticut River in Old Lyme (HG) may have been the source of one that was unaccountably sitting in the open on a boat dock in Old Saybrook on January 22 (NC,GH). Two roosted in Milford in late January (NB). Short-eared Owls were widespread along coast, with up to six present on a former landfill maintained as grassland at Silver Sands State Park in Milford (NB, m.ob.). At least four Northern Saw-whet Owls were at White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield in February (DR).

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers maintain a wintering stronghold in the lower Connecticut River valley, where as many as six could be found along one road in Lyme (NC et al.). Farther inland three were at two locations in Newtown (PB,RBa). Two **Red-headed Woodpeckers** wintered, one at the Cigna campus in Bloomfield (JMe) and the other at feeders in Berlin (AT). An Eastern Phoebe toughed it out to January 5 in Bridgewater (LW); even more surprising was one feeding on juniper berries February 6 in Woodbury, following a February 5 snowstorm (RN), and one that remained to at least February 20 at the Mansfield Hollow dam spillway (SM,JR). Flocks of 65 and 70 Horned Larks were at

separate locations in Ellington in January (CEk), but the largest concentration was c. 300 on February 3 in East Canaan (RBe). Here's the rundown from another good Northern Shrike winter: at least two each wintering at White Memorial (RN, DB, FZ et al.) and the Undermountain area of Canaan (GH et al.); one wintering in Middlefield (JMa et al.); one in Canton December 3 (JMe); one in South Windsor December 17+ (CEk); one in Durham December 23 (WSc); one in Simsbury December 29 (LK); one in Bloomfield January 1 (J&LC); one in New Fairfield January 4 (ADi); one in Washington January 6 (ADi); one at Station 43 January 6+ (JMe et al.); one in Bethlehem January 6 (RBe); one in Goshen January 8 (MS et al.); one in Bloomfield January 11 (FZ); one at Wyndham Land Trust in Pomfret January 25 (RD); and two in New Hartford January 27 (FZ).

A lingering **Blue-headed Vireo** turned up December 3 at Mansfield Hollow State Park in Mansfield (CEl). Among the increasingly widespread Common Raven reports were two at White Memorial on December 27 (JG), two in Hamden on December 24 and January 14 (BB, K&MJ), and one in Easton on January 28 (CB). A concerted effort January 5 turned up 34 Red-breasted Nuthatches in the Catlin Woods and Pine Island sections of White Memorial in Litchfield (DR). The same search also produced eight Brown Creepers, three Winter Wrens, and 19 Golden-crowned Kinglets (DR). The idea that Carolina Wrens suffer severe hard-weather losses hit home in Sherman when one of two roosting in a basket all season was lost in a February 6 storm (ADi). Two tardy House Wrens were toughing it out in Bridgeport on December 23 (DV). American Robins were widespread and numerous despite severe weather, indicative of good wild fruit supplies. One of spring's welcome intrusions into this season was a pair of Eastern Bluebirds checking out nest boxes in Newtown on February 21 (RBa). Quinebaug fish hatchery held three Hermit Thrushes and two Gray Catbirds on January 26 (RD), and singles of both species were widely reported. Brown Thrashers were in Deep River December 31 (PP) and Silver Sands State Park in Milford January 1 (FMa); one wintered near Milford Point (NC, m.ob.). A massive flock of 485 Cedar Waxwings offered another testament to the fruit supply December 16 in Mansfield Hollow (CEl). The highest count of American Pipits was 11 at HBSP on February 12 (CEk).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

A decent collection of warbler sightings included: an Orange-crowned Warbler December 31 at Saybrook Point in Old Saybrook (JMe et al.); a Yellow-rumped Warbler visiting a suet feeder in Southington on January 27 (JA); a Pine Warbler January 27 in Lyme (BDe); a Palm Warbler still present January 10 at HBSP (RS); and best of all, an **Ovenbird** wintering and photographed at a feeder in Durham (fide SRi). An adult male **Western Tanager** appeared one day only, Dec. 14, at a feeder in Woodbury (J&WF). Amazingly, what was undoubtedly the same bird appeared there again Feb. 28 and stayed for three days, when it was photographed.

It was a good season for Eastern Towhees, with widespread reports including up to three wintering at Bent of the River Sanctuary in Southbury (JL). An excellent inland count of up to 15 Savannah Sparrows feeding on roadside weed seeds was made December 31 at Lake Zoar in Southbury (RN); less than two weeks later the count was down to nine or less, with a toll taken by cars and a Cooper's Hawk (RN). An "Ipswich" Sparrow was at Griswold Point in Old Lyme January 9-10 (HG,TH) and a few wintered as usual at Long Beach in Stratford (m.ob.). A spate of late Chipping Sparrows included two on December 10 in Clinton (ADa), two on January 1 in Sherman (ADi); two present to January 7 in Southbury, with one lingering until at least January 14 (RN), and singles December 16 in Roxbury (RN, LW), and Mansfield (SHi fide CEl), January 1 in Oxford (PF), January 2 in Old Saybrook (A&JO), and January 9 in Niantic (DP).

A Grasshopper Sparrow was closely and critically observed December 23-24 at Silver Sands State Park in Milford (AB, NB, SS). There are very few winter records. An unusually productive season for Vesper Sparrow yielded a flock of five wintering in Middlefield (RS et al.); up to three at an orchard in Easton (CB); two at farm in Bethlehem (GH et al.); and one in Mansfield December 16 (SHi fide CEl). A junco in Hamden showing white wing bars proved on close examination to be probably regular *hyemalis* Slate-colored Junco with abnormal markings, rather than an extra-limital *aikenii*, the form known as White-winged Junco (AB, MS et al.). A flock of up to 150 Snow Buntings was at Stratford Point January 31-February 4 (GH,DV).

Eastern Meadowlark is declining at all seasons due to habitat loss, so a flock of 12 in Ellington on January 8 was noteworthy (CEk); others in-

cluded four on January 1 at Stratford Great Meadows (FMa); five at Guilford sluice on December 5 (NB et al.), five on January 7 at White Memorial (MS); and five in Durham on January 18 (NM). **Baltimore Orioles** visited feeders in Durham (NM) and Wallingford (HF). The rare-but-regular **Yellow-headed Blackbird** made a couple of timely seasonal appearances, most noteworthy the discovery of three (two of them males) in a flock of 10,000 blackbirds on February 18 in Old Saybrook (MB); one appeared February 10 in a residential neighborhood in Norwalk (fide JHu). Rusty Blackbirds, usually scarce and local as winterers, put on a good showing with 30+ at the reliable White Memorial locations December 2-4 (DR), up to 18 at Quinebaug fish hatchery in January (RD), 36 at North Stamford Reservoir on January 1 (PDu), and at least 15 near Miller Road in Middlefield in January (JMc et al.). A female **Boat-tailed Grackle** lingered to December 11 in Stratford, near New England's only breeding site (GH,RH).

In an off year for northern finches, single Pine Siskins were at Bent of the River Sanctuary in Southbury January 9 (PCo) and at White Memorial January 19 (DR). On February 5, two siskins and an Evening Grosbeak visited a yard in Cromwell (JMo). Another grosbeak was in Roxbury December 16 (RN,LW).

EXOTICS:

An immature swan in December and January at Bantam Lake offered a lesson in how difficult the two native species can be to separate. Close scrutiny and some detective work eventually revealed this was a **Trumpeter Swan** that escaped from a waterfowl fancier elsewhere in Litchfield County (DT et al.) A Barnacle Goose was on the Connecticut College campus in New London on February 16 (BA). Two Red Crested Pochards were on Bantam Lake for most of the period (m.ob.) A **Great Tit** wintered at a feeder in Sharon, where it was photographed (FMu). This colorful Eurasian songbird is a rather sedentary species that is not a good candidate for long-distance vagrancy. It also appears on lists of birds that have been imported for the cage trade.

[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].

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PHOTO CHALLENGE

Julian Hough

ANSWER TO PHOTO CHALLENGE 35

I can hear you all cursing as I write this month's solution! Another darn confusing peep! As the fall is upon us, we have to wrestle with the challenging aspects of shorebird identification.

Unfortunately, real life is in color and would yield a few more helpful clues than the accompanying monochrome photograph.

This close up view of a shorebird should provide us with the plumage minutiae to identify this peep. Firstly, the neatness of the upperpart feathers, which all look similar in appearance, age the bird as a juvenile. We can now compare similar species of the same age. The dark legs help to rule out Least Sandpiper and leave us to consider White-rumped, Baird's, Semipalmated, and Western. The lack of a noticeable streaked breast extending across the breast, and/or slightly onto the flanks, rules out White-rumped and Baird's and leaves us to consider the choice of Semipalmated or Western Sandpipers.

Semipalmated Sandpipers are a common spring and fall migrant in Connecticut, while Western Sandpipers are an uncommon/rare spring bird in Connecticut, but slightly more regular in fall. As its name implies it is predominantly a bird of the West Coast.

The separation of Western from Semipalmated Sandpiper is one of the classic 'trial-by-fire' identifications among North American shorebirds.

Semipalmated Sandpipers are 'dumpy' looking with a broad-based, and relatively short, blunt-tipped bill (to me, Western Sandpipers resemble a miniature Dunlin). Slightly larger than Semipalmated, Westerns have a typically long, 'drooping' bill and long legs. The flat back, slim body and long legs give Westerns a rangier appearance.

Our mystery bird, with its flat-back, attenuated rear end, and noticeably long bill—typically longer than a typical Semipalmated Sandpiper—fit Western Sandpiper quite well.....or do they?

Despite that bill, the bird is not a Western Sandpiper as expected, but is, in fact, a juvenile Semipalmated Sandpiper.

I have to own up here and admit to those less well-versed in shorebird identification that this is a very difficult and tricky individual. It would fool even the most experienced shorebirders, so don't feel too bad if you plumped for Western!

Although bill length and structure are often useful in identifying a majority of individuals, they are both variable features in Semipalmated and Western Sandpipers. This individual is instructive in that it makes us look closer at other, more subtle, fieldmarks.

The color of the upper scapular fringes, and the shape of the 'anchor' marks on the lower scapulars, are important to note when faced with tricky individuals. In Western, the upper scapulars have black centers and broad, bright rufous edges which contrast with the grayer wings. The rear lower scapulars have pale gray centers, heightening the contrast with the rufous upper scapulars, a contrast lacking in our bird, even though it is a black and white photo. While some bright Semipalmateds may show pale rufous fringes to the scapulars, the contrast is typically not as pronounced as that shown by a typical Western and this latter pattern fits our bird quite well.

Also, the crown is distinctly streaked and contrasts with a prominent white supercilium, a pattern typical of Semipalmated rather Western. Juvenile Westerns show a darker central crown with grayish, more finely streaked crown sides. Rarely do they show a noticeable capped effect as that shown by Semipalmated.

While often subjective, on Western, the supercilium often 'bulges' more obviously in front of the eye and forming an obvious 'V' when seen head-on.

The use of features such as primary projection and eye-ring are unreliable and should not be used as points of difference between Semipalmated and Western.

If you are lucky enough to hear the bird call, a sharp "chut" is indicative of Semipalmated, while Westerns utter a rippling, high-pitched 'treeet' or 'cheet.' Semipalmated are far more vocal than Westerns in my experience, facilitating identification in most cases.

As an aid to identification, Westerns, due to their longer bill and legs are more prone to wade, belly deep in water during feeding. The feeding method often involves much probing rather than pecking.

Westerns have an earlier molt from juvenile-first winter plumage than Semipalmated. The similar molt in Semipalmated is significantly later and they still appear in full juvenile plumage into October. Thus, a molting juvenile sandpiper in late August-September should be a Western.

The bill, although long, is still very much Semipalmated in shape, being broad-based and blunt-tipped. The unusual long-bodied look and longer primary projection can probably be explained by the fact that these are longer in females than males, and it is likely that this bird is a juvenile female Semipalmated Sandpiper. It was photographed by me at Jamaica Bay NWR, New York, September 1999.

JULIAN HOUGH, 51 Brook St., 6-C, Naugatuck, CT 06770

Photo Challenge 36. Identify the species. Answer next issue

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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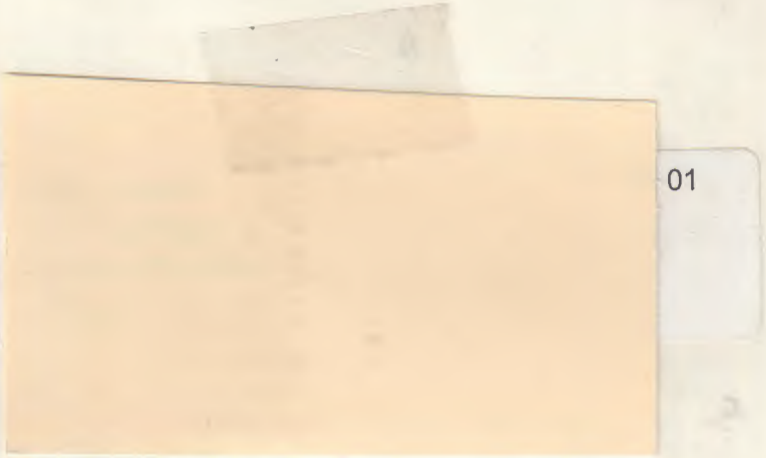

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THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology

Volume 21 No. 4 **October 2001** Pages 145 -188

The Connecticut Warbler
A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology
Volume 21, Number 4 October 2001

CONTENTS

ABOUT OUR COVER

Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*)

by Paul Carrier

Paul has contributed another drawing for our front cover, a bird that is uncommon in this part of the country, but a few nest at Bradley International Airport. With luck, a drive around the perimeter of the airport in late April or May, one may get a look at Upland Sandpipers feeding in the grassy areas surrounding the runways.

Paul is a free-lance artist, working from his home. He is an avid birder with a special interest in migrating hawks. He is a member of the Hartford Audubon Society for whom he leads field trips and illustrates their Club newsletter. Paul makes his home in Harwinton, Connecticut.

IDENTIFICATION OF CLIFF SWALLOW AND CAVE SWALLOW

Julian Hough

In North America, the Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) forms a species pair with Cave Swallow (*P. fulva*), a similar looking species which breeds only in parts of the southwestern United States, southern Florida and the Caribbean.

Unlike the much more widespread Cliff Swallow, Cave Swallows are only sporadic visitors to the eastern seaboard of North America. However, an unprecedented influx of Cave Swallows occurred in northeastern United States and Canada during November 1999, furnishing first records for many states and provinces. This invasion involved hundreds of individuals, with birds reported as far north as Quebec, Canada, and as far east as Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York.

Previously, Cave Swallow records along the Mid-Atlantic States had been sporadic at best. Intriguingly, since the first state record in April 1990, Cape May, New Jersey, had a monopoly on this species in the northeast until autumn 1999. Records for this species have been annual since 1992 at Cape May and show a distinct peak in November. Cliff Swallows, on the other hand have already moved south and are very scarce after September. In the northeastern United States, any lingering Cliff-type Swallow in November is scrutinized carefully.

Five Cave Swallows were present at Cape May during November 1997, but during the invasion of November 1999, about 125 individuals including a flock of 30 (P. Lehman pers. com.) eclipsed this figure. Similar large numbers were reported from Ontario, Canada (c.90) and Connecticut (c.35).

Status and Distribution

In North America, Cliff Swallow breeds north to Alaska and south to Texas, and from coast to coast, although they are substantially more numerous in the west than in the east.

Cave Swallow is a highly polytypic species, with several populations in southwestern North America, Florida, Yucatan, the Greater Antilles, and northern South America. Two isolated groups of Cave Swallow breed in North America. The race breeding locally in Florida is assumed to be derived from the Cuban race

P. f. cavicola, while *P. f. pallida** breeds in southeastern New Mexico and central and southern Texas.

Cave Swallows, particularly southwestern *pallida*, have expanded their range in North America over the last twenty years, taking advantage of bridge construction and utilizing culverts for nest building. Coupled with heightened observer awareness, it is now likely that this species will become even more regular as a late autumn visitor to eastern states, including Connecticut.

Taxonomy and Geographic Variation

Clements (2000) lists four races of Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*):

P. p. pyrrhonota (North America east of the Rockies)
P. p. hypopolia (Alaska and western Canada to southern California, Nevada, and Utah)
P. p. cachina (Southwest Utah to Arizona, New Mexico, and southern Texas)
P. p. melanogaster (Extreme southern Arizona to Mexican Plateau and southern Mexico)

Most races resemble the nominate form in the field though *P. p. melanogaster* exhibits a rufous-buff forehead patch similar to Cave Swallow.

Up to eight forms of Cave Swallow have been proposed, although only Garrido et al. (1999) recognize more than five races in a single treatment (Kirchman 2000).

Clements (2000) lists six races of Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*):

P. f. pallida (Northern Arizona to New Mexico, southern Texas and northeast Mexico)
P. f. citata (Southern Mexico)
P. f. cavicola (Cuba and Isle of Pines)
P. f. poeciloma (Jamaica)
P. f. fulva (Hispaniola and Gonave Island)
P. f. puertoricensis (Puerto Rico)

Interestingly, DNA (cytochrome-b) studies on the northwestern South American populations of Cave Swallow, *P. f. rufocollaris*, have suggested that these would be better regarded as a separate

*While some literature references the name *pelodoma* when referring to the southwestern populations, this was a replacement name that was created when this species was in the genus *Hirundo* (since the name *pallida* already pre-existed). The AOU has since placed these species back in the genus *Petrochelidon*, so *Petrochelidon fulva pallida* should be the name used when referring to the southwestern population.

species, Chestnut-collared Swallow *P. rufocollaris* (Kirchman 2000). These differ from northern populations in having a reduced chestnut forehead, a contrasting white throat, and a chestnut breastband.

Clements (2000) has split *rufocollaris* from Cave Swallow with two races:

P. r. aequatorialis (Pacific coast of Ecuador)

P. r. rufocollaris (Pacific coast of northern and central Peru)

In simplistic terms, Cave Swallow populations in North America can be split into two groups, southwestern *pallida* and the Greater Antillean *fulva*.

However, while the latter was often considered as not differing geographically, Garrido et al. point out that there is geographic variation among the island populations (see above), with the form resident on Puerto Rico distinct from the others by virtue of their strongly washed cinnamon-rufous undertail coverts.

In the field, the island forms would appear similar and, since most are described as sedentary, are unlikely vagrants to the eastern United States.

Interestingly, the theory that the Florida population (the origin for some of the East Coast reports?) was derived from the partially migratory Cuban race, *P. f. cavicola* (Garrido et al.) was found by DNA comparisons to be inconclusive. In fact Kirchman et al. found that while the Florida population is closely related to Caribbean populations, they also shared alleles with the Texas individuals, indicating gene flow between southwestern and Florida Cave Swallows.

Identification

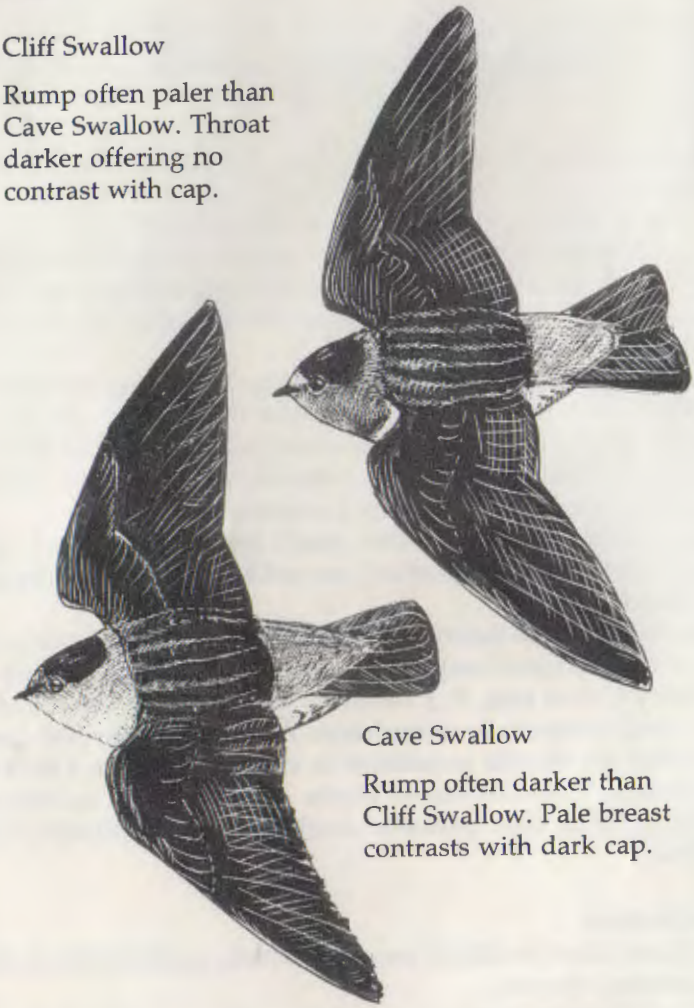
Cliff and Cave Swallows are quite distinct species with no similar confusing species.

Although there are plumage subtleties between the southwestern and Greater Antillean populations of Cave Swallow, these do not interfere with the separation at species level from Cliff Swallow. In essence, both Cliff and Cave Swallows are likely to appear very similar under most field conditions. Observers should concentrate on differences in head pattern—particularly the color of the forehead and throat.

Cliff and Cave Swallows are similar in size with short, square-ended tails and broad-based wings. In flight, when both Nearctic species are together for comparison, Cave Swallow appears more compact and stocky and more 'bull-necked' or 'neckless' than Cliff Swallow.

Cliff Swallow

Rump often paler than Cave Swallow. Throat darker offering no contrast with cap.



Cave Swallow

Rump often darker than Cliff Swallow. Pale breast contrasts with dark cap.

Cave Swallow Cliff Swallow

Note pale, peach throat in Cave Swallow

Artwork by Mark Szantyr

Aging and Sexing

Sexes of both species are alike. Adults of both species show glossy blue tones to the crown and mantle, which contrast with their brown flight feathers. Adults also show striking white stripes on the mantle.

Juveniles of both species are duller than adults: the glossiness to the head and mantle is replaced by dull slate tones, and while there are often pale stripes, these are often grayish and not as eye-catching as in the adults. During the winter, after completion of the post-juvenile molt, first-year birds resemble adults.

Adult Cliff Swallows in autumn, when seen close and in good light, show deep, 'red wine'-colored ear-coverts which merge into a darker throat. The throat and upper breast of juvenile Cliff Swallows is a dingy grayish-brown, and the forehead usually duller and less contrasting than in adults. The tips to the tertials and wing coverts are broadly tipped brownish buff and are visible at close range on perched birds.

Adult Cave Swallows can be aged as noted above for Cliff Swallow. Autumn adult Caves probably appear brighter on the face and throat than juveniles, but since the plumage differences between the ages are more subtle, aging may be more difficult compared with Cliff Swallow.

In many instances, the plumage features noted above may be impossible to discern in the field and aging may not be possible.

Molt

Both adult and juvenile Cave and Cliff Swallows have complete post-breeding and post-juvenile molts (DeSante et al. 1987). Adult and juvenile Cliff Swallows molt primarily on the wintering grounds in South America, but adult and juvenile Cave Swallows commence their wing molt prior to migration, while they are still on the breeding grounds. While the timing of these molts may be a little earlier in Cave Swallow, as DeSante et al. point out, further investigation is needed to clarify the exact timing and state of molt of autumn individuals of both species.

Two November specimens and a banded juvenile Cave Swallow from Ontario (1999) had all replaced some inner primaries, secondaries, and tertials as part of their post-juvenile molt.

In November, any pale-rumped swallow showing obvious signs of active molt on the outer primaries is probably an adult and thus more likely to be a Cave Swallow.

Head Pattern

At a distance, adult and first-year Cave Swallows show a more distinct 'capped' or 'masked' appearance than Cliff Swallow. This is because the throat and collar are a cleaner, cinnamon-orange color. This extends around the ear-coverts and across the nape, thus isolating and accentuating the dark cap. In juvenile Cave Swallows of the southwestern race *pallida*, the color of the throat fades into a grayer upperbreast, whereas in *fulva*, the upper breast is often a similar color to that of the throat.

Autumn Cliff Swallows, by virtue of their darker throat and ear-coverts, often appear more uniformly 'hooded' rather than 'capped' or 'masked'. The dark ear-coverts and grayish nape offer little contrast with the crown, unlike in Cave Swallow where the paler nape and ear-coverts contrast sharply with the dark cap. This difference is likely to be the most obvious feature in the field.

The color of the forehead patch, when close enough to see, is rufous-buff in Cave Swallow and creamy-yellow in easternCliff Swallow. The forehead patch is sometimes slightly more extensive in Cave Swallow, extending farther behind the eye, although this may be of little use in the field.

The dark forehead of Cave Swallow is also less contrasting than the pale forehead of Cliff Swallow and contributes to the former's capped or 'raccoon masked' appearance (Angus Wilson pers. com.)

Rump

It is generally believed that Cave Swallows have darker, more rusty-orange rumps than Cliff Swallows but, in the field the color of the rump is of little use in distinguishing the species, although any particularly dark-rumped individual could well be a Cave Swallow. Examination of museum specimens not only showed that the rump color varies between the different races of Cave Swallow, but also varies among individuals of the same race. Further examination showed complete overlap in the rump color with Cliff Swallow. Some Cliff Swallows had rumps as dark as some Caves, while some Caves had rumps as pale or paler than a Cliff Swallow.

Voice

Both species give rough call notes, but Cave Swallows often give higher, sweeter, single-syllabled notes unlike anything given by Cliff Swallow (P. Lehman pers. com.).

Migration

The timing of the migration of both species may be of importance when considering potential northeastern occurrences. Cave Swallows generally leave their breeding grounds later than Cliff Swallows. For example, departure dates from New Mexico colonies from 1981-1992 ranged from 28th October to 10th November (West 1995). This is reinforced by the lack of October records of Cave Swallows from Cape May, where the species has been seen annually in November since 1992.

Which race is likely to occur in the Northeast?

In the United States, racial assignation of vagrant East Coast Cave Swallows has proven problematical due to the questionable validity of field characters. Compared with *pallida*, nominate *fulva* is described as smaller, with a darker rump and undertail-coverts and buffier flanks (Turner & Rose 1989). Recent observations indicate that this is an over-simplification of the problem, especially since juvenile Caves in late autumn, regardless of race, have grayish-brown flanks (like *pallida* at all seasons {P. Lehman pers. com.). Measurements indicate that *pallida* is consistently larger in size than *fulva*. Although an accurate size assessment of lone individuals may be impossible, a spring record from New York (May 1990) was thought to be attributable by size to one of subsets of *fulva*. Also, while two specimens from Nova Scotia (June 1968 and May 1971) were assigned to the partially migratory, Cuban race *P. f. cavicola* (W.E Godfrey, letter to I.A. McLaren, 16 August 1971), specimens from South Carolina (1993) and North Carolina and Ontario, Canada (1999) were consistent with southwestern *pallida*.

In general, taking into account the sedentary nature of Greater Antillean populations of Cave Swallows and the range expansion of *P. f. pallida*, most sight records in late autumn in the U.S. are assumed to involve *pallida* rather than *fulva*, although this cannot be proven.

Due to a lack of reliable plumage criteria separating the forms, it appears to be impossible to identify juvenile Cave Swallows to race. Clearly there is much to learn about this taxonomically complicated species which impacts and complicates the understanding of the vagrancy patterns of the various races in the northern United States. Since at least two forms have occurred in northeastern United States and Canada, detailed descriptions should be taken, particularly in case that further studies suggest a split of *fulva* and *pallida*.

In late October, and especially in November, birders should make a concerted effort to eliminate the possibility of Cave Swallow when faced with a putative Cliff-type swallow.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Paul Lehman, Shawneen Finnegan, Angus Wilson, and David Sibley provided helpful comments and suggestions for this article. The following provided information on Cave Swallow occurrences during the November 1999 invasion: Alfred Adamo, Michael Bertrand, Ned Brinkley, Allen T. Chartier, David Christie, Mark Cranford, Bob Curry, Paul Lehman, Kevin McLaughlin, Ian McLaren, Kayo Roy, Mark Szantyr, Noel Wamer, and Angus Wilson.

My thanks also go to Bob Curry and Kevin McLaughlin for providing extensive information on the Ontario, Canada invasion; Angus Wilson and Andrew Guthrie for information on Cave Swallow status in New York State, and Blake Maybank and Ian McLaren for information on Cave Swallow records from Nova Scotia.

Finally, I am grateful to Jon King and Steve Dudley for providing references and I am also indebted to Fred Sibley for allowing access to the skin collection at the Peabody Museum, New Haven, Connecticut.

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Cliff Swallow, adult, Derby, Connecticut, USA, June 1999 (Julian Hough/ Naturescape Images). Note the contrasting orange-buff rump and creamy forehead patch. The dark auriculars and throat offer little contrast with the crown.

Cave Swallows, possibly belonging to the Cuban race *P. f. cavicola*, Homestead, Florida, April 1999 (Jane and Adrian Binns). Note the color of the rump and extensive rufous flanks.

Specimens of Cliff and Cave Swallows, Peabody Museum, New Haven, CT, November 1999 (Julian Hough/Naturescape Images).
Upperside view, from left to right: juvenile Cliff Swallow, adult Cliff Swallow, adult Cave Swallow (*P. f. pallida*) and adult Cave Swallow (*P. f. fulva*). Note that there is little difference in rump color between both species and subspecies. In the Cave Swallows, note the smaller size and rump color of nominate *P. f. fulva*.

Specimens of Cliff and Cave Swallows, Peabody Museum, New Haven, CT, November 1999 (Julian Hough/Naturescape Images). Underside view, from left to right: juvenile Cliff Swallow, adult Cliff Swallow, adult Cave Swallow (*P. f. pallida*) and adult Cave Swallow (*P. f. fulva*). Note the darker throats and upperbreast of the Cliff Swallows, compared to the pale cinnamon-buff throats of the Cave Swallows.

THE 2001 CONNECTICUT SUMMER BIRD COUNT

Joseph Zeranski and Frederick Purnell, Jr.

The 2001 Summer Bird Count (SBC) marks the completion of the first decade of a systematic survey of the state's summer avian population. A total of 230 observers in 128 field parties devoted 1,143 Party Hours (PHs) to recording the birds present in the ten count areas statewide. Although the number of participants fell short of the all-time record of 257, and despite inclement weather on some count days, the number of individual birds recorded – 108,875 – represents a new high, surpassing the 108,346 recorded on the 1999 SBC. The species count of 184, however, was considerably below the 1998 high of 201. Fifty-eight species were recorded in higher numbers than at any other count period in the decade, while five registered all-time lows. Two species – Royal Tern and Dickcissel – made their first appearance on a Connecticut SBC since collaborative counting began in 1992.

While various factors may influence the relative abundance or scarcity of a given species during a particular count period, analysis of this year's results against the data base compiled over a decade may provide a basis for forming hypotheses regarding long-term population trends and suggest further lines of investigation as to causes. In what follows we have attempted to draw attention to some of the potentially noteworthy information the 2001 SBC data provides.

Increasing Species. Among the species recorded at decade-long highs, several may be seen as exhibiting overall increases in population. Great Blue Heron and Great Egret were both sighted in record numbers, with the latter's total of 376 more than doubling the average recorded during the previous nine years. All but a single Great Egret occurred on coastal counts, with the vast majority reported from Greenwich-Stamford, a function of the flourishing colonies on Great Captain's Island. New Haven's total of 63 Great Egrets represents a high for that count. American Black Ducks are at least holding their own, and showed a new high count. In the uplands, Hooded and Common Mergansers showed marked gains; the total of 50 Hoodeds eclipses the previous SBC high of 20 and the 196 Commons are 35 birds over the previous high. The 50 Ospreys and 18 Bald Eagles recorded statewide serve

to indicate a strong rebound for both raptors from the dire straits they faced twenty-five years ago. A new high for summer Broad-winged Hawk also bodes well. Sightings of Wild Turkey were distributed throughout Connecticut, and the count total of 645 was 125 birds more than the earlier high.

Among shorebirds, American Oystercatcher continues to grow in numbers; the 38 seen on the coastal counts represents a new high and doubles the decade average. An unusual cluster of 14 Willets on the Trumbull-Bridgeport SBC led to a new high of 15 statewide, a stark contrast to the 2.2 average from previous years. Mourning Dove and Ruby-throated Hummingbird attained new highs, as did Red-bellied and Pileated Woodpeckers.

Passerines exhibiting healthy numbers included three Flycatchers – Eastern Wood-Pewee, Great Crested Flycatcher and Eastern Kingbird – while Red-eyed Vireo, Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher and Hermit Thrush were also abundant. Of particular note is the fact that a total of 58 Common Ravens were recorded, 18 more birds than previously recorded. Although the majority was from the Barkhamsted SBC, the fact that 17 were scattered among four other counts statewide gives an indication that this corvid continues to expand its range in Connecticut.

Some warbler populations are clearly doing well. New highs were recorded for Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, American Redstart and Ovenbird, and the total of 377 Pine Warblers far exceeds the decade average by 180%. A total of 827 Scarlet Tanagers also represents a new high by over 125 birds. A remarkable total of 11 Seaside Sparrows were encountered on the New Haven SBC; the species had been seen on only four previous counts, with a high tally of four individuals. Northern Cardinal, Bobolink, Purple Finch and American Goldfinch give every indication of doing well, occurring in record numbers.

Decreasing Species. Data from the 2001 SBC also provide reason for concern about the status of certain of our avifauna. For the first time in the decade no Pied-billed Grebe was recorded in the State, although as many as five had been encountered in the past and the average had been 2.4 per count. Numbers of Double-crested Cormorant continued to decline, with the Greenwich-Stamford and Hartford SBCs recording lows for the decade and the state total of 574 also establishing a new minimum. Northern Goshawk and American Kestrel continue to decline with near lows, with the latter bird's drop being particularly persistent. Ring-necked Pheasant and Ruffed Grouse were present in small numbers and only two Northern Bobwhites were found, both on

the Quinnipiac Valley SBC. Piping Plover hit a low for the decade; with the New Haven count reporting only five individuals, with an additional bird present on the Trumbull-Bridgeport count. Herring Gull numbers were down sharply, the statewide low of 532 only slightly more than half the average counted since 1992. Another coastal nester, Least Tern, showed a drop of nearly identical proportion, with a statewide count of 179, far below the average of 338. The fragility of colonial nesting sites along Long Island Sound clearly underscores the need for careful monitoring.

Some passerines also showed signs of declining populations. Only 40 Red-breasted Nuthatches were found, less than half the average for previous SBCs and a new low for the state. Brown Thrasher, once a common and conspicuous denizen of our hedgerows and woodland edges, continues its precipitous decline. Only 49 were reported, down from 80 last year and well below the previous low of 62. Warbler numbers continue to decline as well. Blue-winged Warbler, a widely distributed breeder throughout the State, reached a new low of 396. A single Golden-winged Warbler was found on the Litchfield Hills SBC, while one "Lawrence's" hybrid was present in New Haven. There were no reports of Nashville, Yellow-throated, or Kentucky Warblers, or Yellow-breasted Chat.

Late Lingerers. A single Red-Throated Loon was present on the Salmon River SBC and a lingering Great Cormorant was in New Haven. A Ring-necked Duck was counted on the Quinnipiac Valley SBC and Greater Scaup was missed for the first time, while an all-time high of four Oldsquaws was present at Greenwich-Stamford. A total of five Greater Yellowlegs reported from three count areas represents a new count high. By contrast, no Semipalmated Plovers were found this year. The five Bay-breasted Warblers encountered on the Litchfield Hills SBC were highly unusual; only a single individual had been reported previously on an SBC this decade.

Rarities. Three American Bitterns on the Barkhamsted SBC represent a new high for the State. The two Northern Shovelers on the Hartford count constitute only the third SBC record for the species in the decade. Four Green-winged Teal were found, three in Greenwich-Stamford and one in Trumbull-Bridgeport. Single King Rails and Soras were found in Greenwich-Stamford and Hartford respectively, while the single Royal Tern on the Trumbull-Bridgeport count represents a first for the Connecticut SBC. Two Black Skimmers were recorded on the New Haven count, only the fourth record for an SBC since 1992. Also new to the State count was a

Dickcissel found on the Litchfield Hills SBC. Two Boat-tailed Grackles reported from Trumbull-Bridgeport represent a new high for an SBC and only the second record since the statewide survey began.

Looking Ahead. The completion of the first ten years of the Connecticut SBC represents a milestone for Connecticut ornithology. The field observers, compilers and supporters who have donated their time, skill and energy to creating this database can take pride in their accomplishment. As we enter the second decade of the SBC it will be incumbent on all of us to encourage new volunteers to assist in furthering this important effort. Only by ongoing longitudinal studies such as the SBC can the changes in an area's avian population be accurately monitored. We owe it to future generations to maintain and expand our efforts.

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TABLE DEFINITIONS

Species known to nest recently within Connecticut are printed in italics.

The high/low/rare/new stats (below) are given for local SBCs at least ten years old (GS, NH, HA, WR, & ST).

For local SBCs held for fewer than 10 years (TB, SR, QV, BA, & LH) just new Count Day species are noted.

Under the statewide totals all stats are shown, but they only cover the last nine years.

XX = Rare, noted on fewer than five years during previous 10 years [outlined box]

XX = New Count Day species [darkened outlined box]

XX = More birds tallied than recorded on the previous10 years [underlined number]

XX = Fewer birds tallied than recorded on any of the previous10 year [boldfaced number]

0 = Not recorded on Count Day, *but* recorded on all the previous 10 years [boldfaced zero]

COUNT LOCATIONS

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

2001 Connecticut Summer Bird Count Totals

SPECIES	Coastal			Ct Valley		Upland Counts					2001	% of 92 - 00	# yrs	1992-00		
						Mid-state		Northern								
	GS	NH	TB	HA	SR	QV	WR	BA	LH	ST	Totals	aver.	rec	Aver.	Min.	Max
Red-throated Loon					1						1	250%	2	0.4	0	3
Common Loon	1								1		2	45%	9	4.4	2	7
Pied-billed Grebe											**0**		9	2.4	1	5
Horned Grebe												0%	3	0.4	0	2
Red-necked Grebe												0%	2	0.2	0	1
Double-cr. Cormorant	**267**	155	72	**3**	15	24	24	10	2	2	**574**	76%	9	753	621	964
Great Cormorant		1									1	909%	1	0.1	0	1
American Bittern								3			3	536%	4	0.6	0	2
Least Bittern		4		2		1					7	368%	9	1.9	1	4
Great Blue Heron	13	10	5	**15**	4	15	11	38	34	9	154	167%	9	92	44	153
Great Egret	296	63	16			1					376	202%	9	186	88	354
Snowy Egret	99	27	16				1				143	74%	9	193	107	261
Little Blue Heron	2										2	90%	8	2.2	1	5
Tricolored Heron												0%	2	0.2	1	1
Cattle Egret												0%	1	1.2	4	7
Green Heron	**18**	12	6	8	4	8	8	8	14	**0**	86	102%	9	84	63	116
Black-cr. Night-Heron	396	39	10	1		3	1				450	157%	9	286	161	458
Yellow-cr. Night-Heron	4		1								5	145%	9	3.4	2	10
Glossy Ibis												0%	4	0.8	0	4
Black Vulture							2		2		4	120%	5	3.3	0	17
Turkey Vulture	13	15	1	5	14	11	79	66	102	7	313	129%	9	243	129	310
Snow Goose												0%	3	0.3	0	1
Canada Goose	1840	455	202	318	67	262	914	421	699	19	5197	121%	9	4283	3173	5014
Brant	26		3								29	414%	7	7.0	0	19
Mute Swan	**42**	67	41	6	1	148	20		15	1	341	98%	9	349	259	419
Wood Duck	65	19	1	23	7	42	69	42	115	5	388	131%	9	297	135	398
Gadwall		4	10								14	237%	7	5.9	0	12

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American Wigeon												0%	6	0.7	0	1
American Black Duck	36	31	44			3	1	5			120	152%	9	79	50	117
Mallard	940	**162**	88	516	10	389	329	173	209	**9**	2825	109%	9	2593	2083	3022
Mallard x Am Bl.Duck	2	1					3	1	1		8					
Blue-winged Teal												0%	4	0.7	0	3
Northern Shoveler				2							2	606%	2	0.3	0	2
Northern Pintail												0%	2	0.4	0	1
Green-winged Teal	3		1								4	1333%	2	0.3	0	2
Canvasback												0%	2	0.1	0	1
Ring-necked Duck						1					1	167%	4	0.6	0	2
Greater Scaup											**0**		9	2.3	1	5
Lesser Scaup												0%	3	0.3	0	1
Common Eider												0%	1	0.2	0	2
White-winged Scoter												0%	1	0.1	0	1
Oldsquaw	4										4	714%	3	0.6	0	3
Bufflehead												0%	7	1.9	0	4
Common Goldeneye	1										1	128%	2	0.8	0	6
Hooded Merganser		1	1				1	9	38		50	500%	8	10	2	20
Common Merganser		2					68	122	4		196	231%	9	85	27	161
Red-breasted Merganser		1	1								2	106%	6	1.9	0	7
Ruddy Duck												0%	4	0.9	0	4
Osprey	24	34	4			3	3	3	2	2	75	341%	9	22	6	51
Mississippi Kite												0%	1	0.1	0	1
Bald Eagle				1	1		4	12			18	280%	9	6.4	2	12
Northern Harrier												0%	7	1.9	0	5
Sharp-shinned Hawk				1		2		7	3		13	156%	9	8.3	4	14
Cooper's Hawk		1		1		1	2	13	10		28	127%	9	22	7	38
Northern Goshawk								4	1		5	67%	9	7.4	2	18

accipiter species										1	1						
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	6			9	1	10	5	5	3	40	129%	9	31	22	47	
Broad-winged Hawk	7	1		2	1	2	3	24	21	1	62	132%	9	47	22	61	
Red-tailed Hawk	40	18	1	20	5	22	47	39	49	7	248	127%	9	195	127	266	
buteo species																	
American Kestrel				1		1		4	6	1	13	72%	9	18.0	6	30	
Peregrine Falcon		2	1								3	150%	7	2.0	0	6	
Ring-necked Pheasant	**4**			2	1	3	6				16	33%	9	48	9	93	
Ruffed Grouse						1		18	1		20	50%	9	40	16	77	
Wild Turkey	93	31	2	22	12	47	92	183	154	9	645	220%	9	293	43	518	
Northern Bobwhite						2					2	29%	9	6.8	1	19	
Clapper Rail	**1**	3	6								10	119%	9	8.4	4	15	
King Rail	1										1	175%	4	0.6	0	2	
Virginia Rail	1	1	2			1		1	20		26	96%	9	27	8	51	
Sora				1							1	83%	7	1.2	0	3	
rail species	1	1									2						
Common Moorhen												0%	5	0.8	0	2	
American Coot												0%	5	0.6	0	1	
Black-bellied Plover	1	2	1								4	174%	6	2.3	0	5	
Semipalmated Plover												0%	4	5.1	0	35	
Piping Plover		**5**	1								**6**	43%	9	14	7	34	
Killdeer	51	**19**	10	**19**	2	33	40	46	24	12	256	89%	9	289	219	351	
American Oystercatcher	30	2	6								38	200%	9	19	8	33	
Greater Yellowlegs		2	2			1					5	294%	8	1.7	1	4	
Lesser Yellowlegs												0%	1	0.1	0	1	
Solitary Sandpiper								1			1	140%	5	0.7	0	2	
Willet		1	14								15	682%	6	2.2	0	11	
Spotted Sandpiper	**0**	5	1	12	1	6	14	1	5	1	46	131%	9	35	20	49	
Upland Sandpiper													CP				
Ruddy Turnstone	2	2									4	65%	8	6.2	0	16	
Sanderling												0%	4	2.0	2	9	
Semipalmated Sandpiper		6									6	8%	9	72	2	349	

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Western Sandpiper												0%	1	0.1	1	1
Least Sandpiper												0%	3	0.7	0	3
White-rumped Sandpiper												0%	1	0.3	0	3
small sandpiper species																
Dunlin												0%	5	1.7	0	6
Short-billed Dowitcher												0%	2	1.3	0	8
Common Snipe												0%	1	0.1	0	1
American Woodcock	1	CP						5	8		14	82%	9	17	8	24
Laughing Gull	34	CP	2								36	77%	9	47	1	119
Bonaparte's Gull												0%	4	1.4	1	9
Ring-billed Gull	122	258	11	65		45	**0**	7	2	1	511	93%	9	547	326	808
Herring Gull	**348**	97	48	**31**	2	2	**1**	2		1	**532**	54%	9	977	794	1229
Great Black-backed Gull	177	**30**	11	5	6	3	**0**				232	71%	9	327	216	414
gull species		25									25					
Gull-billed Tern												0%	2	0.6	0	3
Royal Tern			1								1		0	0.0	0	0
Roseate Tern												0%	1	0.2	0	2
Common Tern	65	**15**	4								84	47%	9	180	56	518
Forster's Tern												0%	1	0.1	1	1
Least Tern	14	**151**	14								**179**	53%	9	338	209	560
Black Tern													CP			
Black Skimmer		2									2	61%	3	3.3	0	12
Rock Dove	243	217	116	143	4	294	60	102	77	62	1318	91%	9	1453	974	2543
Mourning Dove	457	275	93	316	104	321	396	337	399	101	2799	121%	9	2311	2123	2576
Monk Parakeet	12	30	13								55	239%	9	23	1	105
Black-billed Cuckoo	2	8			1	5	6	4	6		32	145%	9	22	6	51
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	9	5	1	1	5	1	2	2	1	1	28	133%	9	21	4	47
cuckoo species									1		1					

Barn Owl												0%	4	5.4	0	19
Eastern Screech-Owl	27			1	2	11	4	2	10		57	124%	9	46	25	61
Great Horned Owl	7	2			7	6	1	4	11		38	131%	9	29	16	40
Barred Owl	10					3	8	17	25		63	126%	9	50	15	85
Long-eared Owl												0%	1	0.2	0	2
Northern Saw-whet Owl												0%	7	2.1	0	5
Common Nighthawk		3				5	2		4		14	200%	9	7.0	1	14
Chuck-will's-widow												0%	1	0.1	0	1
Whip-poor-will		2			5	1	4	6	7		25	156%	9	16	8	24
Chimney Swift	46	24	19	40	11	59	144	168	107	50	668	113%	9	593	413	736
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	9	5		3	2	2	16	55	30	4	126	180%	9	70	31	97
Belted Kingfisher	24	6	1	4	5	7	24	38	12	4	125	105%	9	119	75	166
Red-headed Woodpecker												0%	5	0.6	0	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	148	59	15	52	12	23	75	41	34	**0**	459	138%	9	332	194	448
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker							7	106	122	7	242	170%	9	142	13	311
Downy Woodpecker	205	51	16	42	22	29	55	113	105	23	661	121%	9	546	394	764
Hairy Woodpecker	61	11	5	8	6	4	15	45	47	4	206	129%	9	160	110	217
Northern Flicker	184	64	8	61	12	46	95	82	74	22	648	91%	9	709	590	828
Pileated Woodpecker	14	6	7		4	8	23	27	33	1	123	154%	9	80	50	107
Olive-sided Flycatcher												0%	5	0.7	0	2
Eastern Wood-Pewee	97	31	17	24	31	15	137	115	183	11	661	137%	9	481	413	596
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher												0%	5	0.7	0	2
Acadian Flycatcher	2	5			2	2	12	6	1	1	31	111%	9	28.0	20	39
Alder Flycatcher				4			3	13	80		100	175%	9	57	7	111
Willow Flycatcher	31	16	4	27	3	31	43	15	95	1	266	118%	9	226	168	281
Least Flycatcher					3	4	26	54	70	**0**	157	105%	9	150	121	223
Empidonax species									10		10					
Eastern Phoebe	92	26	13	**11**	27	30	172	188	217	35	811	123%	9	657	528	873
Great Crested Flycatcher	45	41	14	23	39	27	116	61	136	**11**	513	137%	9	375	270	483
Eastern Kingbird	62	42	11	30	19	37	111	197	151	23	683	125%	9	547	489	643
White-eyed Vireo	11	1	1	4	1	3	7		1		29	71%	9	41	21	57
Yellow-throated Vireo	42	2	2	2	12	6	75	35	65	**4**	245	123%	9	199	158	244

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Blue-headed Vireo	4					2	12	56	42		116	126%	9	92	53	128
Warbling Vireo	83	30	4	28	23	59	166	40	134	20	587	116%	9	506	292	664
Red-eyed Vireo	225	80	41	**21**	138	39	406	715	848	30	2543	149%	9	1708	1181	2098
Blue Jay	303	148	73	88	29	129	241	305	198	60	1574	104%	9	1513	1305	1697
American Crow	799	322	108	355	135	373	667	579	690	81	4109	109%	9	3769	2755	4516
Fish Crow	15	14	4	4	2	2	6	4	3		54	98%	9	55	33	94
Common Raven		3				5	3	41	6		58	276%	9	21	2	40
Horned Lark												0%	1	0.1	0	1
Purple Martin	18	4				19		2	1		44	119%	9	37	8	54
Tree Swallow	179	68	24	**59**	42	100	232	433	492	144	1773	118%	9	1501	795	1867
No.Rough-wngd Swallow	108	37	8	24	1	34	69	83	26	30	420	133%	9	315	192	414
Bank Swallow	2	51	4	33	3	21	126	81	14	4	339	107%	9	318	167	529
Cliff Swallow	71	3	20	18			194	24	9		337	153%	9	220	59	420
Barn Swallow	265	139	28	119	57	133	320	222	260	87	1630	118%	9	1379	1184	1575
Black-capped Chickadee	280	**68**	45	62	58	56	288	439	423	99	1818	108%	9	1691	1209	2064
Tufted Titmouse	411	108	48	49	77	100	343	286	289	75	1786	133%	9	1347	952	1584
Red-breasted Nuthatch	5	2	1	2		1	1	20	7	1	**40**	45%	9	88	41	157
White-breasted Nuthatch	174	26	7	11	12	16	43	113	76	24	502	138%	9	364	218	519
Brown Creeper	2	**0**		1	1		1	30	44	3	82	109%	9	75	35	130
Carolina Wren	109	14	6	23	20	26	41	1	6	9	255	144%	9	177	49	434
House Wren	**188**	**25**	12	60	25	56	178	147	124	26	841	101%	9	833	697	938
Winter Wren	4			1		1	12	20	15	3	56	140%	9	40	14	80
Sedge Wren												0%	1	0.1	0	1
Marsh Wren	17	43	14	3		10			26		113	151%	9	75	37	100
Golden-crowned Kinglet	2							2			4	49%	9	8.1	4	16
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	22	**0**	1	7	27	2	81	47	66	14	267	145%	9	184	125	243
Eastern Bluebird	75	4	3	**16**	14	31	218	179	98	20	658	126%	9	524	319	793
Veery	130	44	26	11	52	30	228	551	554	55	1681	134%	9	1254	806	1628

Swainson's Thrush												0%	5	0.7	0	2
Hermit Thrush	3			2	4		6	150	77	1	243	183%	9	133	77	185
Wood Thrush	300	87	56	57	72	90	289	256	245	51	1503	118%	9	1269	1089	1486
American Robin	1226	**317**	115	336	201	48	921	777	1014	218	5173	91%	9	5671	5022	6260
Gray Catbird	847	261	75	287	111	294	631	580	798	90	3974	117%	9	3393	2626	3775
Northern Mockingbird	167	72	35	92	25	104	111	78	40	30	754	95%	9	792	593	1111
Brown Thrasher	**16**	2		7	3	1	**7**	2	8	3	**49**	58%	9	85	62	105
European Starling	1490	482	211	924	107	892	647	781	958	422	6914	98%	9	7026	5767	8174
Cedar Waxwing	105	72	41	74	61	85	259	292	468	**15**	1472	121%	9	1218	568	1649
Blue-winged Warbler	47	45	11	11	20	40	90	57	63	**12**	**396**	67%	9	591	400	716
"Lawrence's Warbler"		1									1		6			
"Brewster's Warbler"													6			
Golden-winged Warbler									1		1	111%	6	0.9	0	2
Tennessee Warbler												0%	4	0.8	0	2
Nashville Warbler												0%	6	0.9	0	2
Northern Parula	1						2		1		4	127%	9	3.1	1	5
Yellow Warbler	327	91	42	117	61	182	384	225	597	49	2075	104%	9	1987	1593	2352
Chestnut-sided Warbler	**4**	4	4	8	1	8	82	221	367	2	701	116%	9	603	294	777
Magnolia Warbler							2	62	13		77	115%	9	67	42	92
Cape May Warbler												0%	1	0.1	0	1
Black-thr. Blue Warbler							5	144	70		219	180%	9	122	33	186
Yellow-rumped Warbler				1			4	120	44		169	150%	9	113	31	183
Black-thr Green Warbler	13	6		2	7	9	56	124	144	15	376	171%	9	220	100	317
Blackburnian Warbler				1			11	73	67		152	133%	9	114	55	170
Yellow-throated Warbler												0%	2	0.2	0	1
Pine Warbler	39	28	8	6	18	4	30	134	105	5	377	180%	9	210	89	314
Prairie Warbler	10	18	4	18	40	36	82	21	2	**3**	234	109%	9	215	145	259
Bay-breasted Warbler									5		5	3500%	1	0.1	0	1
Blackpoll Warbler							6		1		7	179%	5	3.9	0	11
Cerulean Warbler					1		1	1	5		8	101%	9	7.9	2	12
Black-&-White Warbler	**28**	**18**	11	2	30	8	120	178	206	12	613	110%	9	555	467	639
American Redstart	17	12	21	13	47	19	223	361	505	**5**	1223	137%	9	891	553	1127

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Worm-eating Warbler	70	13	18	2	20	16	20	3	11	5	178	114%	9	156	114	223
Ovenbird	140	85	1	17	67	75	243	405	434	**43**	1510	122%	9	1237	955	1484
Northern Waterthrush				1			7	3	35	1	47	112%	9	42	8	69
Louisiana Waterthrush	45	2	5	2	5	2	40	28	28	3	160	122%	9	131	111	155
Kentucky Warbler				CP							CP		6	1.7	0	7
Mourning Warbler							2				2	156%	6	1.3	0	3
Common Yellowthroat	**171**	66	26	**41**	48	108	264	438	653	35	1850	106%	9	1741	1367	2061
Hooded Warbler	1	2	1	**2**	4	3	14	2	2		31	119%	9	26	18	37
Wilson's Warbler												0%	3	0.4	0	2
Canada Warbler					1			17	35	1	54	96%	9	56	21	83
Yellow-breasted Chat												0%	5	0.9	0	2
Summer Tanager												0%	1	0.1	0	1
Scarlet Tanager	124	33	14	25	38	41	161	172	209	**10**	827	139%	9	595	442	692
Eastern Towhee	72	50	10	36	48	41	147	146	140	15	705	100%	9	704	585	887
Chipping Sparrow	279	33	33	**52**	78	131	518	339	397	70	1930	110%	9	1752	1483	2090
Field Sparrow	**5**	19	1	21	18	19	72	13	15	**1**	184	103%	9	178	143	212
Savannah Sparrow		**0**		6		2	9	2	12	17	48	155%	9	31	12	54
Grasshopper Sparrow						2					2	63%	6	3.2	0	8
Nelson's Sh-tailed Sparrow												0%	3	0.8	0	1
Saltm Sh-tailed Sparrow	20	6									26	433%	9	6	5	25
Seaside Sparrow		11									11	1222%	4	0.9	0	4
Song Sparrow	**368**	133	65	182	76	153	428	509	676	65	2655	107%	9	2475	2212	2915
Swamp Sparrow	8	3	1	8	7	18	18	56	234	1	354	128%	9	276	126	457
White-throated Sparrow							1	1	5		7	50%	9	14	2	23
White-crowned Sparrow												0%	2	1.0	0	8
Dark-eyed Junco								39	12		51	111%	9	46	11	70
Northern Cardinal	360	**104**	39	139	53	158	404	240	276	71	1844	120%	9	1534	1302	1702
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	44	**13**	10	17	5	17	**84**	107	111	**6**	414	109%	9	380	300	476

Indigo Bunting	**46**	31	2	10	9	41	100	116	80	7	442	136%	9	325	213	425
Dickcissel									1		1		0	0	0	0
Bobolink			9	28		20	153	27	319	15	571	139%	9	411	257	550
Red-winged Blackbird	630	456	169	389	127	1093	676	398	1093	240	5271	122%	9	4304	3859	5102
Eastern Meadowlark				6		10	10		3	10	39	75%	9	52	17	81
Rusty Blackbird												0%	1	0.6	0	5
Common Grackle	1382	**433**	120	341	133	756	570	375	557	58	4725	101%	9	4661	3276	5682
Boat-tailed Grackle			2								2	2000%	1	0.1	1	1
Brown-headed Cowbird	212	**58**	24	**54**	49	145	**159**	181	191	54	1127	92%	9	1231	935	1450
Orchard Oriole	11	7		7	1		11		1		38	95%	9	40	21	71
Baltimore Oriole	167	83	16	97	48	60	255	88	145	24	983	100%	9	983	807	1192
Bullock's Oriole												0%	1	0.1	0	1
Purple Finch					1		6	67	85		159	163%	9	97	40	155
House Finch	278	127	67	**84**	68	143	267	159	173	37	1403	67%	9	2107	1277	3510
Pine Siskin												0%	4	0.8	1	3
American Goldfinch	310	159	45	298	94	362	488	570	585	119	3030	159%	9	1909	1179	2666
Evening Grosbeak												0%	5	1.6	0	5
House Sparrow	1576	378	139	335	90	323	400	302	309	199	4051	140%	9	2886	2352	3946
Other unidentified/hybrid		13									13					
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	21376	7786	2945	7031	3115	8868	16764	16966	20743	3281	108875	113%		96637	79871	108346
CD Species	128	125	112	110	102	120	128	129	136	95	184	98%		188	178	201
CP Species	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	50%	2			
DEGREE OF EFFORT:																
Party Hours	277.5	102.5	22.0	76.0	48.0	36.0	170.0	198.0	171.5	41.0	1142.5	104%		1101	962.0	1191.5
Day Party Hours	261.5	101.0	22.0	76.0	45.0	32.0	161.5	188.0	162.5	41.0	1090.5	104%		1049	905	1130
Night Party Hours	16.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	3.0	4.0	8.5	10.0	9.0	0.0	52	96%		54	42.0	65.5
Observers	51	35	6	20	13	11	34	23	32	5	230	101%		228	188	257
Parties	32	17	5	11	5	6	19	15	14	4	128	111%		115	99	130
Indiv. birds per 10 PH	770	760	1339	925	649	2463	986	857	1210	800	1076	122%		880	805	984
Indiv. birds per Observer	419	222	491	352	240	806	493	738	648	656	506	122%		415	373	471
% Observers	22	15	3	9	6	5	15	10	14	2	100					
% Party Hours	24	9	2	7	4	3	15	17	15	4	100					
% Individual Birds	20	7	3	6	3	8	15	16	19	3	100					

STATEWIDE COUNT TOTALS

Count Dates: June 3, 4, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, & 24. Reported on Count Days (CD) were 184 Species, plus one additional Count Period (CP) species, consisting of 108,875 Individuals. Two hundred & thirty observers in 128 Parties (Ptys) spent 1142.5 Party Hours (PHs) in the field.

INDIVIDUAL COUNT TOTALS

Barkhamsted Summer Bird Count (*founded 1992*)

Count Dates: June 23 & 24 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 129 species, 16,966 individual birds. Twenty-three observers in 15 Ptys spent 198 PHs in the field. Since 1992 150 CD species have been recorded and 118 of these have been found nesting.

Participants: *Jocelyn Baker, Bob Barbieri, Cheryl Barker, Ray Belding, George Boynton, Ayreslea Denny, Duncan Denny, Angela Dimmitt, Margo Fenn, Liz Fraser, Pat Junno, Peter Kandefer, Jay Kaplan, Erik Landgraf, Linne Landgraf, Walt Landgraf, Rhonda Marchard, Carol Parent, Paul Richardson, David Rosgen (84 Falls Terrace, Apt. D, Oakville, CT 06779), Stanley Rosgen, Phyllis Winer, and Fran Zygmont.*

Weather: 6/23- mostly cloudy with frequent showers & thunderstorms (2"), WSW winds 0-15 mph, 62° to 82°F. Night- 0.25" rain, WSW winds 0-15 mph, 82° to 72°F. 6/24- mostly cloudy AM, becoming sunny PM; NW winds 0-10 mph, 62° to 86°F. Night- NW winds 0-3 mph, 86° to 68°F.

Count (a rectangle, 12 mile east-west by a 17 mile north-south) Center: 41° 55′ N, 72° 59′ W. Elevation: 285 to 1457 feet. Area covered: Barkhamsted, Burlington (northern 1/4), Canton, Colebrook (south half), Granby (southwest 1/4), Hartland, New Hartford, Harwinton (northern edge), West Simsbury, Torrington (northern 1/4), and Winchester.

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

Count Dates: June 16 & 17 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 128 species, 21,376 individual birds. Fifty-one observers in 32 Ptys censused during a period of 277.5 PHs. Since 1976 216 CD and 5 CP species have been recorded and 138 of these have been found nesting

Participants: *Tom Andersen, John Askildsen, Ken Ballas, Tom Baptist, Trudy Battaly, Richard Becker, Joe Belanger, Cathy Belisle, Gail*

Benson, Andrew Block, Michael Bochnik, Lyle Brinker, Jackie Bruskin, Thomas W. Burke (235 Highland Rd., Rye, NY 10580), Ioa Byrne, Al Collins, Diane Collins, Peter Davenport, Patrick Dugan, Cynthia Ehlinger, Ted Gilman, Lynn Giudice, Andy Guthrie, David Havens, Paul Hinlicky, Erin King, Berna Lincoln, Stan Lincoln, Janet Mehmel, Joan Mish, Frank Novak, Anneliese O'Toole, Brian O'Toole, Gary Palmer (34 Field Road, Cos Cob, CT 06807), Drew Panko, Matt Popp, Steve Potter, Paul Renken, Polly Rothstein, Meredith Sampson, Bob Shriber, Jared Silbersher, Alice Smith, Bruce Smith, Greg Socha, Andy Towle, Patty Towle, James Vellozzi, Bill Williams, Lynn Zeltman, and Joe Zeranski.

Weather: 6/16- SE winds 0-10 mph, 69° to 78°F. 6/17- very heavy rain (2.5"+), 10-20 mph. Winds. Temp. 68° to 74°F.

Count (a square, 15x15 mile east-west) Center: 41° 05′ N, 73° 37′ W. Elevation: sea level to at least 740 feet. Area covered (Connecticut, 65% of area): Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, & Stamford; and (New York, 35% of area) Armonk, Bedford (in part), Port Chester, Rye, and White Plains (in part).

Hartford Summer Bird Count (*founded 1991*)

Count Dates: June 16 & 17 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 110 species, 7,031 individual birds, plus 1 CP species. Twenty observers in eleven Ptys counted over 76 PHs. Since 1991 148 CD and 5 CP species have been recorded.

Participants: *Bill Altmann, Mona Cavallero, Paul Cianfaglione (8 Glenn Lane, West Hartford, CT 06110), Patrick Comins, Pam Cooper, Greg Gallagher, Michael Hamilton, John Karpinski, Chris Kavanagh, Len Kendall, Betty Kleiner, Gil Kleiner, Jack Lazorik, Elaine Lechowicz, Stephanie Lovell, David Lyons, Jamie Meyers, Mary Rudek, Shirley Smigel, and Frank Vartulli.*

Weather: 6/16- overcast, muggy, and humid, NE winds 0-5 mph, 87° to 70°F. 6/17- mostly heavy AM rain and off-and-on afternoon showers (2"); NE winds 5-10 mph, 74° to 68°F.

Count (15-mile diameter circle) Center: 41° 46′ N, 72° 40′ W. (Old State House) Elevation: 40 to 640 feet. Area covered: Bloomfield, East Hartford, Farmington, Hartford, Manchester, New Britain, Newington, Rocky Hill, South Windsor, West Hartford, Wethersfield, and Windsor

Litchfield Hills Summer Bird Count (*founded 1994*)

Count Dates: June 9 & 10 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 136 species, 20,743 individual birds. Thirty-two observers in 14 Ptys censused during 171.5 PHs. Since 1994 162 CD

and three CP species have been recorded of which 99 have nested.

Participants: *Elliot Ashe, Bob Barbieri (183 Laurel Lane, Harwinton, CT 06797) Ray Belding, Joan Benham, George Boynton, Frank Brandt, Pat Desmond, Angela Dimmitt, Cecile Emond, Dave Emond, John Eykelhoff, Jeff Greenwood, Greg Hanisek, Lucas Hyder, Gordon Loery, Donna Rose Manwaring, Gerry Marcellino, Patti McCurdy, Russ Naylor, Nancy Nichols, Ann Orsillo, Charles Orsillo, Virginia Peterson, Linda Potter, Dave Rosgen, Mark Szantyr, Dave Tripp, David Wakefield, Mary Wetherill, Lyle Whittlesey, Dale Winters, and Fran Zygmont.*

Weather: sunny and warm, 80° to 90°F.

Count (15-Mile diameter circle) Center: 41° 43′ N, 73° 14′ W. Elevation: 450 to 1658 feet. Area covered (in whole or in part): Cornwall, Goshen, Kent, Litchfield, Morris, Sharon, Torrington, Warren, and Washington.

New Haven Summer Bird Count (*founded 1991*)

Count Dates: June 3 & 4 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 125 species, 7,786 individual birds, plus 2 CP species. Thirty-five observers in 17 Ptys spent 102.5 PHs in the field. Since 1991 187 CD species have been recorded.

Participants: *Lee Aimesbury, Marion Aimesbury, Ralph Amodei, Andrew Brand, Steve Broker, Fritz Davis, Richard English, James Gladden, Sherri Grant, Christine Hayes, Stacy Hanks, Mike Horne, Pat Horn, Katherine Hubbard, Carol Lemmon, Gary Lemmon, Christopher Loscalzo, Steve C. Mayo (27 Tuttle Court, Bethany, CT 06524), Florence McBride, Judy Moore, Scott Pierce, Frank Ragusa, Nancy Ragusa, Nancy Rosenbaum, Arne Rosengren, Lee Schlesinger, and Deborah Tenney.*

Weather: 6/9- partly cloudy AM, sunny PM; SW winds 10 mph, 55° to 80°F. 6/10- partly cloudy AM, sunny PM; NE winds 0-5 mph, 58° to 81°F.

Count (15-Mile diameter circle) Center: 41° 18′ N, 72° 56′ W. Elevation: Sea level to 700 feet. Area covered: Branford (western), East Haven, Milford, New Haven, North Haven, Orange, West Haven, and Woodbridge (in part).

Quinnipiac Valley Summer Bird Count (*founded 1992*)

Count Dates: June 16 & 17(Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 120 species, 8,868 individual birds. Eleven observers in six Ptys spent 36 PHs in the field. Since 1992 144 CD species have been recorded; 92 have nested.

Participants: *Mark Carabetta, Kevin Clark, James McBride, Marty*

Moore, Nancy Morand, Ed Renesen, Wilford Schultz (93 Harrison Road, Wallingford, CT 06492), Leslie Weisman-Cook, and George Zepko.

Weather: 6/16- 0-5 mph winds, 62° to 75°F. 6/17- 4.1" rain, S winds 0-5 mph, 55° to 65°F.

Count (15-Mile diameter circle) Center: 41° 28′ N, 72° 44′ W (Intersection of routes 68 & 157). Elevation: 30 to 600 feet. Area covered: Cheshire (in part), Durham, Guilford (in part), Killingworth (in part), Meriden, Middlefield, Middletown, North Branford, North Haven, and Wallingford.

Salmon River Summer Bird Count (*founded 1992*)

Count Dates: June 9 & 10(Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 102 species, 3,115 individual birds. Thirteen observers in five Ptys censused for 48 PHs. Since 1992 135 CD and one CP species have been recorded; 84 of these have been found nesting.

Participants: *Dan Cimbaro, Sarah Cimbaro, Carrie Conrad, Larry Cyrulik, Dan Drega, Bob Gastia, Michael Good, Jack Halibozek, Joseph Morin (8 West St Terrace, Cromwell CT 06416), Patricia Rasch, Ed Reneson, Dan Tinter, and David Titus.*

Weather: clear, hazy, and humid both days, 72° to 85°F.

Count (15-Mile diameter circle) Center: 41° 33′ N, 72° 26′ W. Elevation: 5 to 550 feet. Area covered: Colchester, East Haddam, East Hampton, Haddam, Middletown (southeast), and Portland.

Storrs Summer Bird Count (*founded 1990*)

Count Dates: June 23 & 24 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 95 species, 3,281 individual birds. Five observers in four Ptys spent 41 PHs in the field. Since 1990 124 CD species have been recorded; 64 have nested. Brown Creeper is a new breeder, while Osprey was reported as nesting but was not confirmed.

Participants: *Carol Charter, Marilyn Higgins, Sarah Hume, Judy Marcus, and Steve Rogers (75 Charles Lane, Storrs, CT 06268).*

Weather: 6/23- cloudy, few showers AM, light drizzle to partly sunny PM, later muggy, light drizzle; SW winds 0-15 mph, 60° to 80°F. 6/24- muggy, mostly cloudy, showers AM, some showers PM (1-2"); SW winds 5-10 mph, 70° to 78°F.

Count (15-Mile diameter circle) Center: 41° 48′ N, 72° 15′ W. (Junction of Route 195 and N. Eagleville Road) Elevation: 200 to 750 feet. Area covered: Andover, Ashford, Chaplin, Coventry, Mansfield, Tolland, Willimantic, West Willington, Willington, and Windham.

Trumbull-Bridgeport Summer Bird Count (*founded 1999*)

Count Dates: June 16 & 17(Sat. & Sun.).

Totals: 112 species, 2,945 individual birds. Six observers in five Ptys counted for 22 PHs. Since 1999 144 CD species have been recorded, 18 species exhibited evidence of nesting. Participants: *Buzz Devine, Steve Mayo, Mike Murphy, Tom Sharp (22 Albion Street, 3rd Fl., Waterbury, CT 06705), Steve Spector, and Dennis Varza.*

Weather: 6/16- foggy, humid, 75° to 80°F. 6/17- partly cloudy with a slight breeze and some hard rain, ca 75°F.

Count (15-Mile diameter circle) Center: 41° 16′ 30″ N, 73° 13′ 45″ W. Area covered: Bridgeport, western Derby, Easton, Fairfield, Milford (in part), Monroe, southern Newtown, S/E Redding, Shelton, Stratford, Trumbull, and Weston.

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

Count Date: June 3 (Sat.).

Totals: 128 species, 16,764 individual birds. Thirty-four observers in 19 Ptys spent 161.5 PHs in the field. Since 1978 176 CD species have been recorded, while 122 species have nested.

Participants: *Janet Amalavage, Elliott Ashe, Renee Baade, David Babington, Polly Brody, Bob Cartoceti, Maryann Currie, Neil Currie, Buzz Devine, Angela Dimmitt, Larry Fischer, Ed Hagen, Kathy Hall, Greg Hanisek, Seth Harvey, Buck Jenks, Susan Kirk, Nancy Liedlich, William Liedlich, Carolyn Longstreth, John Longstreth, Ray Naylor, Russ Naylor (44 Church Street, Woodbury, CT 06798), Allan Root, Betty Root, Dave Rosgen, John Sjovall, Darcy Thurrott, Carol Titus, Dave Tripp Jr., Leigh Wells, Chris Wood, John Zaneski, and Francis Zygmont.*

Weather: fog, mist, and rain AM, sun and showers (1-2″) PM; SSW winds 10-20 mph, 55° to 85°F. Night- some scattered sprinkles, WNW winds 10 mph, 50° to 58°F.

Count (15-Mile diameter circle) Center: 41° 32′ N, 73° 16′ W. Elevation: 110 to 1060 feet. Area covered: Bethlehem, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Middlebury, New Milford, Newtown, Roxbury, Southbury, Washington, and Woodbury.

A PAIR OF ROSEATE TERNS ADOPTS ANOTHER PAIR'S EGG

Jeffrey A. Spendelow, J. Michele Kuter, and Corey M. Grinnell

Most cases of adoption in Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*) occur when a chick leaves (or is moved from) its nest site and adopts new parents (Ian Nisbet, pers. comm.). It is not known to what extent similar behavior occurs in Roseate Terns (*S. dougallii*), however, because (except for studies of chick-provisioning Richards and Schew 1989, Teets 1998, Shealer 1999) until recently, little behavioral work has been done with chicks of this endangered species (Nisbet 1989, Schew and Richards 1989, Grinnell and Spendelow 2000). Here we report a case where a pair of Roseate Terns abandoned their egg a few days prior to the hatching of the chick. Another pair took over incubation of the egg and then raised the chick to fledging, demonstrating that an adoption can be initiated by adult terns.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Roseate Terns nesting at the Falkner Island unit of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge off the coast of Guilford, Connecticut have been studied intensively since the 1980s. Because descriptions of the site and study methods have been given in numerous papers (Spendelow 1982, 1991; Nisbet et al. 1995, 1998; Spendelow et al. 1995; Nisbet and Spendelow 1999), they are not repeated in detail here.

On the mornings of 25 and 26 May 2000, an unbanded adult Roseate Tern was seen going in and out of Box 240, one of 24 boxes placed on the eastern side of the island in Plot 46 as part of a habitat enhancement project. On the afternoon of 26 May, an egg was found in this box and the nest was labeled as 46-08. On the morning of 27 May from a blind on the top of the island overlooking this area, JMK saw the unbanded bird feed its colorbanded mate and then switch incubation duties. JAS saw the unbanded bird incubating later that afternoon, and on 10 June, JMK saw another incubation switch by the pair.

On 16 June, after 21 days of incubation by this pair, JAS trapped the unbanded bird and gave it a six-band combination of two metal bands (a USGS Bird Banding Laboratory [BBL] band), a special "field-readable" [FR] band with a four-character complex

stamped twice around the perimeter), and four plastic celluloid colorbands as part of a long-term study of the ecology and metapopulation dynamics of this endangered species (Nisbet and Spendelow 1999). JAS trapped the other member of the pair (a six-year-old bird) and gave it a six-band combination on 17 June. Two Roseate Tern nests in nearby boxes were predated by a Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) on 16-17 June, but nest 46-08 escaped predation. Although the egg was near hatching (being "starred" on 18 June and "pipped" on 19 June), the probable combination of being trapped and being disturbed by a nearby nocturnal predator (Zingo et al. 1997, Zingo 1998) apparently caused these adults to abandon their nest, and they never were seen again in the year 2000 on Falkner Island.

The first time observations were made from this blind by JAS (on 20 June) after the original pair had been trapped, he saw a new pair (one banded on the left leg with a FR band and on the right leg with a BBL band, hereafter referred to as "FR:SV", and the other one unbanded) by the entrance to the box. The banded bird of the new pair was seen entering the box. The chick hatched that day, 25 days after the egg had been laid, and weighed 18.1 g late that afternoon. On 22 June, JAS saw the unbanded bird of the new pair go inside the box and brood the chick, and on 27 June JAS saw FR:SV feed a small sand lance (*Ammodytes americanus*) to the chick. The unbanded adult never was seen bringing food to the chick during more than 12 hours of observations by the authors from 20 June to 16 July, although it might have done so at times when the nest was not under observation.

A positive identification of FR:SV was not made until 11 July when CMG read its FR band and we determined it to be a three-year-old bird first seen at Falkner Island in 2000 on 13 June with its unbanded mate in another area of the island. All of our observations to identify birds at other nests on the island indicated that this pair did not lay an egg of their own before taking over incubation of the abandoned egg at nest 46-08.

The chick was given its pre-fledgling colors on 14 July and FR:SV was seen by JMK outside 46-08 for the last time on 16 July, the last day the chick was found hiding inside its nestbox. The chick was identified as a fledgling by its colors only once on the western side of the island by JAS on 17 July. An unbanded adult (possibly the mate to FR:SV) was seen briefly looking into the nestbox on 24 July, a week after the chick was last seen.

Growth of the chick during its first few days was typical of a first-hatched Roseate Tern chick (Nisbet et al. 1998), and on 23

June, Day 3 after hatching, it weighed 30.8 g. Although the chick continued to grow well for another day or so, by 27 June (Day 7) its growth rate had dropped considerably and by Day 18 when an A-chick typically weighs 99.3 g (Nisbet et al. 1995), this chick weighed only 68.2 g. Although it reached a maximum mass of 90.8 g on Day 23, the chick's average mass from Day 19 to Day 26 was only 81.5 g and we suspect that during the last part of the linear phase of growth (Nisbet et al. 1995) it was being fed by only one adult. Although we did not find it dead, because the chick was seen as a fledgling only once and because of its "below normal" mass and presumably weak condition prior to fledging, we strongly suspect that it died soon after fledging.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge staff for their support and permission to work on Falkner Island; Jan Amendola, Sandy Chan, Carrie Dean, and Arno Reinhardt for help with the fieldwork; Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Connecticut Audubon Society, Connecticut Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, Fulton Foundation, Little Harbor Laboratory, Menunkatuck Audubon Society, Quebec-Labrador Foundation, University of Massachusetts, USFWS Division of Refuges, and USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center for logistic and financial support; and Betty Kleiner and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on drafts of the manuscript.

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CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Greg Hanisek

SPRING, MARCH 1 THROUGH MAY 31, 2001

The season began with an interesting array of winter rarities lingering into March, but by the end of the month migrants were arriving at a good clip. Some noteworthy early dates were logged in late March and early April, and warblers made a strong early push (e.g., 19 species in Bethany and 15 species at East Rock Park, New Haven, both on May 3). The traditional mid-May peak of warbler migration was on the quiet side, but a good late flurry was exemplified by 17 species May 24 and 13 species May 28, both at Hammonasset Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP) in Madison.

The continued increase in observer reports, most of it facilitated by e-mail, gives a broader and deeper understanding of the status of many species seasonal movements. Aside from unusual numbers or exceptional dates, which are included in the main report, observers of cumulative efforts indicated the following species were in especially good supply during their appropriate seasons: Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, White-rumped Sandpiper, Iceland Gull, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Magnolia and Pine Warbler.

Following are first-arrival dates for some regularly occurring migrants.

Great Egret - March 21 in Old Lyme (FN); Broad-winged Hawk - April 10 in New Canaan (FG); Piping Plover - March 18 in Milford (PCo) and West Haven (CEk); Willet - April 13 in Waterford (DTo); Spotted Sandpiper - April 22 in Southbury (RN); Black-billed Cuckoo - May 5 in New Milford (ADi); Yellow-billed Cuckoo - May 2 in Watertown (RN); Whip-poor-will - April 20 in New Haven (BC); Chimney Swift - April 14 in Watertown (RN); Ruby-throated Hummingbird - April 24 in Mystic (GW); Least Flycatcher - April 24 in Kent (MSz,GH); Eastern Phoebe - March 7 in East Haddam (RSu); Eastern Kingbird - April 22 in Greenwich (TG) and Southbury (RN); Blue-headed Vireo - April 14 in Woodbury (RN); Yellow-throated Vireo - April 27 in Old Lyme (DP); Warbling Vireo - April 24 in Kent (MSz,GH) and Southbury

(PB); Red-eyed Vireo - May 2 in Newtown (RBa); Purple Martin - April 9 in Madison (FG); Tree Swallow - March 11 in Milford (PDe); Northern Rough-winged Swallow - April 5 in Waterbury (RN); Bank Swallow - April 14 in Litchfield (DR); Barn Swallow - April 10 in Litchfield (DR); House Wren - April 23 in Greenwich (TG) and Watertown (RN); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher - April 12 in Stamford (PDu); Veery - April 22 in Southbury (RN); Wood Thrush - April 24 in East Lyme (LV); Gray Catbird - April 22 in South Windsor (CEk); Brown Thrasher - April 20 in Litchfield (CBr&DB).

Also Blue-winged Warbler - April 19 in Hamden (TP); Nashville Warbler - April 24 in Newtown (PB); Northern Parula - April 24 in Kent (MSz,GH); Yellow Warbler - April 21 in South Windsor (PCi); Chestnut-sided Warbler - April 27 in Watertown (RN); Black-throated Green Warbler - April 21 in Greenwich (TG); Blackburnian Warbler - April 26 in Guilford (JC); Palm Warbler - April 7 in Greenwich (TG) and Farmington (GO); Cerulean Warbler - April 29 in Lyme (HG); American Redstart - April 24 in East Lyme (LV); Ovenbird - April 24 in Southbury (PB); Northern Waterthrush - April 21 in Greenwich (TG); Louisiana Waterthrush - April 13 in Newtown (PB) and Lyme (HG); Wilson's Warbler - May 3 in Derby (GH, MSz); Rose-breasted Grosbeak - April 22 in Portland (JMo); Indigo Bunting - May 5 in New Milford (ADi); Chipping Sparrow - April 4 in Ellington (CEk); Eastern Meadowlark - March 11 in Southbury (RN); Orchard Oriole - April 24 in Westport (RSo); Baltimore Oriole - April 24 in Kent (MSz,GH).

GREBES THROUGH VULTURES

Four Red-necked Grebes were off Oyster River, West Haven, March 8 (RSu); Bantam Lake held four on April 14 (GH et al.); and three were fly-bys in Stamford April 16 (PDu). There were also a number of singles reported, both inland and along the coast. A breeding-plumaged **Eared Grebe** was enjoyed by many April 9-15 at Reservoir No. 6 in West Hartford (AS et al.); most recent records have involved drab autumn birds. Up to five Northern Gannets were inside New Haven harbor March 18 (NC et al.), and they were widespread out in Long Island Sound throughout the season. Great Cormorants essentially replace Double-crested Cormorants in Long Island Sound during the winter, but one of the best places to see concentrations of Greats is inside the lower Connecticut River: case in point, 37 at Parker Point, Chester, March 7 (RSu).

An American Bittern was unexpected at Southbury Training School April 21-22 (RN), as were two in overhead flight

April 30 in Greenwich (TG); one was at Nod Brook in Avon May 1 (PCi) and another was in a suspected breeding area May 13 at Roy Swamp in Sharon (EH). Four Great Egrets represented a good inland count May 12 in New Milford (ADi). A nice scattering of Little Blue Herons included three adults April 30 at Sherwood Island State Park (hereafter SISP) in Westport (RSo), where a Tricolored Heron was present April 23-May 12 (RSo). Single Tricoloreds were in Guilford May 12 (JBe) and in Old Saybrook (DS), and at HBSP (DH) in late May. Cattle Egrets are now very spotty visitors to the state, so a flock of seven on May 4 at Harkness Memorial State Park, Waterford, was significant (BD); one was at Station 43 on May 2 (AG). An adult Black-crowned Night Heron was far removed from coastal breeding areas April 28 at Southbury Training School (RN); another was at Little Pond in Litchfield April 19-20 (DR) and two were at Batterson Pond in Farmington April 21 (PCi). A Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was at Harbor Plaza, Stamford, May 3 (PV). A Glossy Ibis invasion brought a stellar 57 to wet fields near Barn Island, Stonington, on April 6 (BD), and two were inland in Rocky Hill on April 29-30 (MH,JMe). An adult **White-faced Ibis** at HBSP on May 27 represented a fourth state record (JHo et al.).

The eastward push of Black Vultures continued with up to three seen on and off April 1-14 over Nehantic State Forest in Lyme (DC et al.) and another in Preston May 4 (DP). One was a good find for the Hartford area April 14 in Bloomfield (PCi), and another was unusually close to the coast April 13 in Westport (FMa). Reports were widespread in the strongholds of the Naugatuck and upper Housatonic valleys.

WATERFOWL THROUGH CRANE

A **Greater White-fronted Goose** joined a flock of Canada Geese at Greenwich Point beginning May 15 (JW); its appearance well past the species normal migration period raises questions about its origin. A flock of 100 Snow Geese March 18 at Station 43 in South Windsor included two "blue" morph birds (CEk,PDe). With Brant staging to depart, more than 700 were at Sandy Point in West Haven April 23 (FG). Wood Ducks are widespread and numerous, but 62 was still a notable spring count March 20 at Station 43 (PCi). Milford Point held 800+ Green-winged Teal on April 19 (MSz), and a **Common Teal** was present there throughout April (MSz et al.). Station 43 hosted 23 Northern Pintails on March 28 (CEk).

Milford Point held 12+ Northern Shoveler on March 25, an unusually high count (DR et al.), and up to four drakes were at SISP April 24-31 (RSo). Away from the usual locations, a **Eurasian Wigeon** visited SISP March 24-April 3 (RSo) and one was in Riverside Park, Hartford, March 19 (PCi). A flurry of Redhead activity March 11 produced seven off Shippan Point in Stamford (NB et al.) and three off Silver Sands State Park in Milford (PDe), along with five that wintered in Norwalk harbor (TK et al.). A count of c. 130 Ring-necked Ducks at Lambstown Swamp, Ledyard, was the seasons best (LV).

A Long-tailed Duck dropped into West Hartford Reservoir No. 6 on April 13 (CEk), and a female Black Scoter lingered to May 27 at HBSP (GW). A seawatch at Shippan Point, Stamford, produced 300+ fly-by White-winged Scoters April 16 (PDu), and one was at Batterson Pond, Farmington, April 13 (PCi). A drake **Barrow's Goldeneye** remained to at least March 3 in the Connecticut River off Old Lyme (NB et al.). The Housatonic River in New Milford attracted up to 2,000 Common Mergansers March 15-16 (ADi); a female was on a nest at Lake Zoar in Southbury on April 28 (RN), and a female with young on Hemlock Reservoir in Easton represented the state's southern-most nesting for this increasing breeder (DV). Away from the coast, two Red-breasted Mergansers were at Nod Brook in Avon April 1 (JMe) and one was on Lake Waramaug in Washington on April 22 (ADi).

The first of a breeding pair of Ospreys arrived at SISP March 20 (RSo). A Red-tailed Hawk that built a nest on a facade of Hartford Hospital was still tending it May 14 (RZ). Rough-legged Hawks were still at Lake Zoar in Southbury on March 25 (RN) and Station 43 on March 28 (CEk). Away from wintering areas, an immature Golden Eagle was at Caswell Cove, Milford, March 1 (NH). A pair of Peregrines in Bridgeport raised two young (DV).

A King Rail was calling at Station 43 on May 19-21 (JBa,DA), and one was found at Barn Island May 8 (DP). The productive marsh at Little Pond in Litchfield held 12 Virginia Rails and two Soras April 30 (DR). A Virginia Rail and two Soras were in Ellington May 12 (CEk), and a Sora was at Quinebaug Valley Fish Hatchery in Plainfield May 15 (GW). A **Common Moorhen** cooperated for birders May 6-14 at Lake Basile in Simsbury (LK et al.). A **Sandhill Crane** was a distinguished visitor to farm fields at Southbury Training School April 25-26 (JL et al.). Its relatively short wings and

wing-tip pattern were indicative of the *tabida* subspecies (Greater Sandhill Crane).

PLOVERS THROUGH SKIMMERS

An American Golden Plover, uncommon in spring, was at HBSP on May 5-6 (JC,DS et al.). A Semipalmated Plover was inland on the Farmington River at Collinsville May 14-16 (DTr). A Killdeer calling overhead in downtown Waterbury at 2 a.m. March 9 indicated migratory movement (GH). A leucistic shorebird, apparently a Greater Yellowlegs, presented an identification challenge May 30 at Barn Island in Stonington (GW); the bird had a pink bill with a dark tip, pink legs, a dark eye and a hint of brown in the white plumage. Milford Point held 170+ Greater Yellowlegs April 30 (DS). Wetlands at White Memorial held 12 Solitary Sandpipers on both May 8 and May 11 (DR et al.). A Willet, one of the least likely shorebirds to show up inland, was a good find April 24 at Station 43 (DA). Upland Sandpiper first appeared April 14 at Bradley Airport in Windsor Locks (PCi); one turned up in Easton May 6 (CBa,JMh), and one was a bit late May 24 at HBSP (CR et al.). Two Whimbrel were at Barn Island April 29 (PCi). The bird of season was without challenge the state's first **Black-tailed Godwit,** an adult in high breeding plumage, discovered April 19 at Milford Point (KH et al.) and seen by a number of observers that day only. However, what surely was the same bird was re-identified April 29 at Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford (BD), where it appeared April 26, but was first thought to be a Hudsonian Godwit. It is believed to be the same bird that put in a long appearance on Long Island, NewYork, just before its arrival at Milford Point. Three Red Knots were still moving north at Greenwich Point May 29 (JW). A Sanderling made an unusual inland appearance May 20 at Batterson Pond in Farmington (PCi), and Great Pond in Simsbury attracted a Dunlin April 13 (RPr,LK). A male **Ruff** in black and white nuptial plumage was discovered May 7 at Barn Island and remained at least to May 13 (GH,NC et al.). Perhaps the numeric highlight of the season was the 140 Common Snipe flushed from fields in South Windsor on April 8 (PCi).

The first Laughing Gull appeared March 24 at Oyster River, West Haven (NB). In the typical late March-to-mid-April window, single Little Gulls were at Old Saybrook March 31 (DS) and at Holly Pond April 16 (PDu), with two at Seaside Park, Bridgeport, on and off during that interval (DV,RN). One lingered to May 7 at

Southport Beach, Fairfield, (DV). Common Black-headed Gulls were recorded during the same time frame at Oyster River mouth (CEk et al.), at Holly Pond (PDu) and two at Seaside Park (RN). A Glaucous Gull made an unexpected appearance March 28-29 at the CIGNA campus in Bloomfield (JMe), following a visit by one March 17 to Wethersfield Cove on the Connecticut River (SK,PCo); one remained in the Milford-Bridgeport area to at least April 6 (NB,DV). The last Iceland Gull reported was in Waterford April 30 (DTo). Two Common Terns made an uncommon inland appearance May 15 at Bantam Lake (DR); one was a record early arrival April 13 at Holly Pond in Stamford (PDu). The season's best count of Black Skimmers was five on May 28 at Milford Point (T&LZ).

OWLS THROUGH WRENS

After an apparent absence of several years, a pair of Barn Owls was found breeding again in the Middletown area (DD). One of the **Snowy Owls** from the winter season remained to at least March 10 at Seaside Park in Bridgeport (NB et al.). A Long-eared Owl working railroad tracks at dusk April 15 in Stratford was believed to be hunting American Woodcock (FMa). At White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield, seven Northern Saw-whet Owls were found between February 28 and March 4, with some probably on territory (DR et al.). The spring migration of Common Nighthawks seldom produces the large flights seen in fall, so 28 in the White Memorial area May 25 were noteworthy (DR). The Red-headed Woodpecker that wintered in Bloomfield was still present April 30 (JMe). A pair of Red-bellied Woodpeckers were already active around a nest hole March 25 in Newtown (RBa). Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers are extending their breeding range in the state; one giving the species' distinctive territorial drum April 7 in Woodbury was south of traditional nesting areas (RN), as was a breeding pair in New Milford (ADi).

Two Olive-sided Flycatchers were in Bloomfield May 20 (PCi); singles were in West Hartford May 15 (PDe), in Ellington May 19 (CEk), in Cornwall May 21 (GH et al.), in Kent May 27 (LT), at Bantam Lake May 29 (DR) and in Hamden May 30 (C&JZ). Eastern Wood-Pewees staged an early arrival with reports from Wilton on May 2 (JHu) and Southington May 3 (JA). Also early were Yellow-bellied Flycatchers May 10 at SISP (RSo) and May 12 in Ellington (CEk). An Acadian Flycatcher arrived at Bent of the River Audubon

Center in South Britain on May 20 (PB). Both Alder and Willow Flycatchers were first noted May 20 at White Memorial (DR), a prime breeding locale. Alders are seldom detected away from breeding areas, so one May 29 at SISP was noteworthy (RSo). Counts at several locations at White Memorial in mid-May produced 20+ Great Crested Flycatchers (DR et al.), and a Great Crested Flycatcher was very early April 22 in Milford (JMe). A count of 23 Eastern Kingbirds May 11 near the north end of Bantam Lake indicated a strong migratory movement (DR).

A Northern Shrike remained to at least March 27 at Station 43 (PCi). Two White-eyed Vireos were in Watertown May 22 (RN). A Philadelphia Vireo sang in a Waterbury yard May 27 (BF), and another was a bit early May 11 in Preston (DP). Fish Crows were courting in the first week of March in Woodbury (RN). Three pairs of Purple Martins perched on a martin house in Chester May 28 (PP); very few confirmed nesting locations exist in the state. A Cliff Swallow tied an early arrival date for Hartford County on April 14 (JMe), but it was a day behind one in Wallingford (DS). The Lake Zoar breeding colony held c. 100 Cliff Swallows May 19 (RN), and eight were nesting at West Hartford Reservoir No. 6 on May 20 (PCi). All six species of swallows were at Quinebaug Fish Hatchery May 15 (GW).

The first Marsh Wren was noted April 23 at Little Pond in Litchfield (DR). Perhaps the most interesting event of the season revolved around discovery of a **Sedge Wren** singing in a small rye field at Station 43 on May 12 (PCi et al.). The field also contained a number of Marsh Wrens that showed no interest in excellent Marsh Wren breeding habitat within sight of the field. This appeared to be a mixed flock of migrating wrens downed by inclement weather and content to stay in a confined area until flying conditions improved. They cleared out after May 16.

THRUSHES THROUGH NORTHERN FINCHES

A **Northern Wheatear** made a typically quick appearance May 26 at HBSP (LK, LW-C); most state sightings occur in September but there are a few May records. A Gray-cheeked (sp.) Thrush was at White Memorial May 19, a typical date, (RBe), and a Swainson's was a bit early May 8 at East Rock Park in New Haven (SK). Swainson's Thrushes were widely reported in the last 10 days of May. Hermit Thrushes were widespread through White Memorial with 12 noted in the Catlin Woods-Pine Island area May 25 (DR), and apparent

territorial singers were found farther south in Southbury (RBa,PB) and in Bethany (GH,MSz) in May. SISP offers a good window on Hermit Thrush migration, because there is no chance of encountering territorial birds; regular visits there indicated a good flight April 5-May 4, with up to 10 individuals present on several occasions (RSo).

A Golden-winged Warbler, seldom found away from breeding sites, visited a Canton backyard May 5 (DTr). Lawrence's Warblers turned up in Manchester May 16 (BA), in East Lyme May 19 (GW et al.) and in Orange for the third year in a row (CLo). Counting Yellow-rumped Warblers during peak migration can be a daunting task; but the effort produced 235 on May 1 at the north end of Bantam Lake (DR et al.). Pine Warbler, the earliest returning migrant warbler, appeared in Cromwell March 17 (JMo) and made it all the way to Cornwall by March 27 (AG); one was so early March 7 in Kent that wintering can't be ruled out (LE). A Prairie Warbler was early April 9 in Westport (JHu), as was a Bay-breasted Warbler May 2 in Hamden (FMc). Two Black-and-White Warblers appeared very early March 31 at East Rock (BB). The season produced two reports of **Prothonotary Warbler**: one in a New Canaan yard April 30-May 2 (GC) and one near the shore of Bantam Lake in Litchfield May 24 (SQ). A Kentucky Warbler appeared May 9 in Manchester (BA) and one dropped in to East Rock Park, New Haven, May 27 (MSc). Single Mourning Warblers were in Hamden May 14 (CZ), in Ellington May 19 (CEk), in Orange May 25 (NB) and in a Preston yard May 30 (DP). A Common Yellowthroat was about 10 days early April 15 in Mansfield (CEl). Well into the northern tier, where they are uncommon, single Hooded Warblers sang in Hartland May 9 (PDe) and Canton May 20 (DTr). A Yellow-breasted Chat was found May 19 in a field in Lyme (ADa).

The season's only **Summer Tanager** was a bit late May 17 at Nehantic State Forest in Lyme (DP et al.); most records occur in April as overshoots at the start of migration. The **Western Tanager** that visited a Woodbury feeder in late February was present to at least March 2 (WF et al.). A field in East Lyme held a nice flock of five Indigo Buntings May 10 (LV). A **Dickcissel** that wintered at a Branford feeder was still present in late March (KC). A Chipping Sparrow that appeared at a feeder March 15 in Southbury would appear to be too early for a newly arrived migrant (J&CL). A Vesper Sparrow was a surprise visitor April

14 at White Memorial (DR), the same day one appeared at South Windsor (PCi), right in this species' migration window. Northwest Park in Windsor held two Grasshopper Sparrows beginning on May 13 (PDe), and at least four were present in May in fields near Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks, in addition to birds at the airport itself (MH et al.). Lincoln's Sparrows were widely reported beginning May 5 (RSo et al.). A flock of 19 Lapland Longspurs coming into alternate plumage livened up a cold day at Seaside Park in Bridgeport on March 9 (GH,MSz); flocks in the state seldom exceed single digits. White Memorial held an excellent 180 Rusty Blackbirds April 23 (DR et al.). At least three **Boat-tailed Grackles** arrived at the Stratford breeding area by April 20 (DV). Two Pine Siskins appeared May 2 at Cove Island in Stamford (JBe), and two Evening Grosbeaks were feeding on buds April 30 in South Windsor (HP).

EXOTICS: A Eurasian Goldfinch visited a feeder in Milford May 26 (T&LZ).

[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].

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CORRECTION

The Table of Contents of Volume 21 No.3 July 2001, omitted the title for the artricle "**The Sharp-shinned Hawk In Connecticut**" by Dwight G. Smith, Trevor Becker, and Arnold Devine which was contained therein. The article entitled "**A Pair of Rosesate Terns Adopts another Pair's Egg**" by Jeffrey A. Spendelow, J. Michelle, and Correy M. Grinnell is printed in this issuse.

Photo Challenge

Julian Hough

ANSWER TO PHOTO CHALLENGE 36

Ducks...I hate ducks! And geese. Except, of course, when they are new to my list! So, it is with great tribulation that I have to spend my valuable time this month scribing about a duck! Without being chauvinistic, that's exactly what this month's bird is, not a stately drake, but a brown, drab boring female of the species. No crests, no tufts, no sails, no color! Nada! They're enough to drive anybody quackers! However, thankfully for me, I can wrap this month's solution up very quickly which will leave me more time to concentrate on birds I like better.

It looks a lot like many species we've seen before, but the pale, scaup-like area at the base of the bill and a narrow, whitish bill stripe eliminate many species to leave us with only Redhead and Ring-necked Duck.

Typical female Ring-necked Ducks appear similar to our mystery bird, being overall brown, darker on the upperparts and grayer around the 'face'. The distinct subterminal stripe on the bill and narrow pale eye-ring fit that species well. Unfortunately, the head shape is wrong for Ring-necked Duck, but fits Redhead better. And, that is what it is—a female Redhead.

Female Redheads often appear more uniform on the head than this photograph, but the pale areas at the bill base can be apparent and can cause confusion with female Ring-necked Duck. The shape of the head, reaching the peak above and just in front of the eye in Redhead, differs from that of Ring-necked Duck, which reaches a peak behind the eye at the rear of the crown, analogous to the differences in head shape between Greater and Lesser Scaups. Also, the bill appears proportionately long compared with the head, again favoring Redhead.

This female Redhead was photographed in Stamford, CT, not by me (I don't waste film on ducks and geese) but by the irrepressible Mark Szantyr.

JULIAN HOUGH, 51 Brook St., 6-C, Naugatuck, CT 06770

Photo Challenge 37. Identify the species. Answer next issue

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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Send manuscripts to the Editor. Please type double spaced with ample margins, on one side of a sheet. Submit a copy on a 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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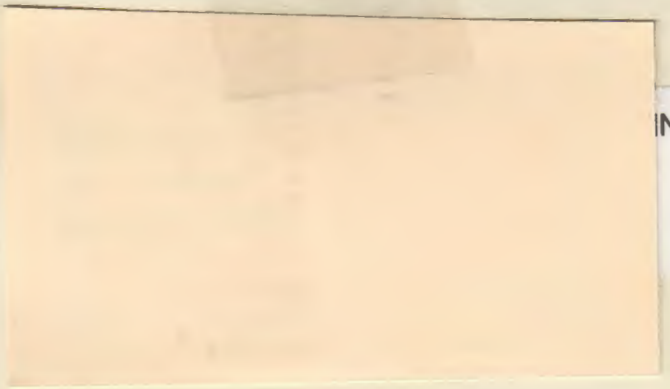
Volume 21, No. 4, 2001



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