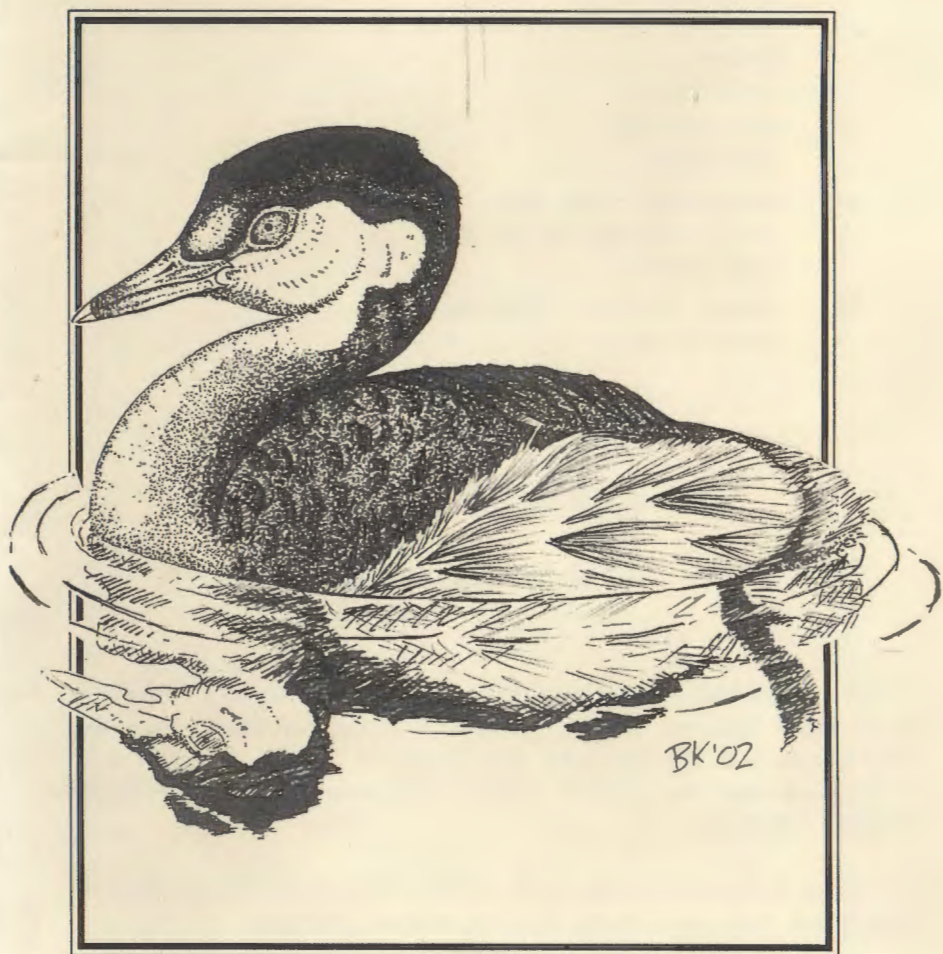


THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology



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ABOUT OUR COVER

Horned Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*)

by Brian Kleinman

Brian Kleinman is a Biology Major currently working as a tattoo artist in South Windsor. He has produced a number of front covers for *The Connecticut Warbler* and has illustrated several regional trail guides including the Canton Land Conservation Trust and Shade Swamp Sanctuary.

Brian is always looking to do wildlife illustrations for any type of publication. You may contact him at snaketat@msn.com.

BALD EAGLES BUILD A 'FRUSTRATION' NEST AT BARKHAMSTED RESERVOIR

Donald A. Hopkins, Gerald S. Mersereau,
Michael J. O'Leary

As part of a study of the Bald Eagles nesting at Barkhamsted Reservoir, on-going since 1992 (Hopkins, 1992), we have reported over the years a number of interesting happenings (Hopkins, et al. 1993, 1995, 1999). These reports involved a third adult eagle assisting and replacing the parent eagles at the nest. In 2001, we observed a nesting attempt, its failure, and the building of a second nest.

Study Area and Methods

The study area and methods are essentially as reported in 1992 (Hopkins, 1992). We have been asked to limit our visits to the nesting area to three days a week, no more than five hours per visit, and at all times remaining 400 meters or more from the nest.

Results and Discussion

Due to the heavy snow pack and the unplowed service road, the first visit to the nesting area was on 18 March 2001. On this date both adult eagles were busy adding sticks to the nest but were not incubating. By 23 March, incubation had begun, grass was added to the nest, and on the 24th normal incubation also appeared to be underway. On 31 March, both eagles were at the nest, but were flying in and out. Incubation did not appear to be taking place. On subsequent visits to the nesting area on April 1, 7, 8, 14, and 15, eagles were present at the nest tree on three of the days, 7, 14, and 15. The adults were perched in the nest tree, but were neither incubating nor adding sticks. On 21 April two adults were found building an alternate nest across the reservoir, 1.1 kilometers and 50 degrees northeast of the original nest, in a white pine tree (*Pinus strobus*). The female eagle with a distinctive dark patch on the upper tail coverts was seen previously at the original nest. We assume the male was also of the original pair. On the previous April visits the alternate nest tree had shown no signs of activity. This tree is a hunting, or loafing perch and has been used throughout the years by the eagles. Although the tree is not a super canopy

tree it is within a few meters of the water's edge. The nest is near the top of the tree and the supporting limbs encroach on the flight path of the eagles. Thus as the eagles flew into this nest with sticks, about half of the sticks were knocked from their talons. The number of sticks at the base of the tree was similar to the number in the nest. The eagles continued to work on this alternate nest on 28 - 29 April and 5 - 6 May. During the remainder of May, throughout June, and into July no activity at this nest indicated incubation. The pair of eagles resumed work on the alternate nest by adding sticks on 8 and 22 December. An eggshell recovered beneath the original nest in April indicated that at least one egg had been laid.

Alternate nests have been reported by Gerrard and Bortolotti (1988), who stated "pairs may build 'frustration' nests, entire or partial after a breeding attempt has failed." With regard to the term "Frustration", Bartolotti (pers. Comm.) has commented "I really don't think we coined the term at all; it was, if I remember correctly, one of those common raptorphile/falconer types of terms. Very likely a bad term at that. I am certain they have nothing to do with frustration, a term coined when people weren't studying raptors in a scientific manner." Although the term 'frustration nest' may appear to be anthropomorphic it does emphasize alternate nests, which are usually built at the start of the nesting season. It does appear that this nest has some connection to the nest failure and, until a better descriptive term comes along, we would propose that the term 'frustration nest' be accepted.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to thank Julie Victoria of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. At the Metropolitan District Commission we thank Carol Youell for her assistance in providing access to the nesting area and to James Starkey for recovering the eggshell. We would also like to thank all of those, too numerous to name, who diligently report sightings of eagles in the study area.

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NOTICE

Connecticut Ornithological Association Eighteenth Annual Meeting

March 9, 2002

Middlesex Community College, Middletown, CT

For information, directions, and/or early
 registration call:

Janet Mehmel (203) 655-9823

or on the COA website

www.ctbirding.org

Registration: Chapman Hall 8:00 - 9:00 AM

Pre-registration is \$10.00 per person

Registration at door is \$15.00

CONNECTICUT'S 2001 FALL HAWK MIGRATION

Neil Currie

From late August until September 11 small numbers of hawks were migrating daily through Connecticut. Cold (cool) fronts, followed by light northwest winds on the early mornings of September 1 and 5 made little difference in numbers except at Lighthouse Point in New Haven where 215 hawks passed on the 5. During this period the early migrants were Ospreys, Sharp-shinned Hawks, and American Kestrels. Figure 1 shows the location of the hawk watch lookout sites manned during the 2001 fall hawk migration.

On the night of September 10 another cool front moved through the state. With winds from the north and northwest on the 11th small numbers of Broad-winged Hawks were passing inland lookouts. At Lighthouse Point, there were 378 hawks and 508 passed over Quaker Ridge in Greenwich. At Quaker Ridge the 449 Broad-winged Hawks that day (Table 2) marked the beginning of their major move across the state. On winds from the east on the 12th and despite winds that turned to the southwest on the 13th small numbers of hawks continued to move. A day of rain followed the cold front that passed in the early morning of the 14th. Then with clearing skies and northerly winds on the 15th the major push of Broadwings was under way. Most inland lookouts recorded huge numbers of these birds (Table 2): 6,311 at Johnnycake in Burlington, 2,659 at the Middle School in Torrington, 6,117 at Chestnut Hill in Litchfield, 1,516 at White Memorial Sanctuary in Litchfield, 1,725 at Good Hill in Woodbury, 3,274 at Audubon's Bent of the-River Sanctuary (a new site) in Southbury, 2,469 at Happy Landing Farm (another new site) in Brookfield, and 1,378 at Quaker Ridge. Still another new site, Briggs Hill in Sherman, reported 717 Broadwings.

The wide pathway through which Broadwings cross Connecticut to the southwest lay further to the northwest than in most other years. At more southerly lookouts: Osborne Hill in Sandy Hook, Huntington State Park in Redding, Maltby Lakes in Orange, and Waveny Park in New Canaan, numbers were far below normal. Even the Quaker Ridge count of 1,378 was unusually low for that site. The following morning, September 16, brought more Broadwings but by noon the push was over.

The Quaker Ridge (Table 3) and Lighthouse Point (Table 4)

watches continued into November. At Lighthouse after September 14 there were 31 days on which over 100 hawks were recorded and on two of those days the counts exceeded 1,000. The great flight of October 8 included 1,561 Sharpshins, 59 Cooper's Hawks, and 226 American Kestrels, in a total of 1,941 hawks. This flight was the fourth largest ever recorded at Lighthouse. The November total of 1,108 hawks at Lighthouse was surprisingly high. Perhaps October's unusually warm weather had something to do with the later arrival of so many birds. Table 5, with hawk counts grouped into five-day periods, is included to show the distribution of each species over the 2001 fall season at Lighthouse Point. At Quaker Ridge following the push of September 15-16, there were 17 days on which 100 or more hawks passed. And during the last week of September 1,296 Broadwings and 750 Sharpies, part of a total of 2,556 hawks, migrated over the Quaker Ridge lookout.

Among the highlights of the 2001 fall migration were the September 15-16 Broadwing flight (Table 2), the October 8 flight at Lighthouse Point, the increased number (higher than recent years) of Sharpshins at Lighthouse (Table 4), and sightings of a total of 145 Bald Eagles at all but two of the lookouts (Table 1). Counts near the coastline (Maltby Lakes, Waveny Park, and even Quaker Ridge) were disappointingly low (Table 1). Rare or uncommon raptors included three Black Vultures, five Golden Eagles, and one Rough-legged Hawk, but no Swainson's Hawks. Swainson's are the rarest of our migrant raptors with only a handful of these western birds reported over the years. As noted above (Tables 1 and 2) three new sites were manned with great results during the Broadwing passage: Briggs Hill in Sherman, Happy Landings Farm in Brookfield, and Bent-of-the-River, the Audubon Sanctuary, in Southbury. The counts at these new sites on September 15 demonstrate that on a good flight day hawks (mostly Broadwings) can be seen over most of western Connecticut.

The following, joined by many other watchers, were the counters at Connecticut's hawk lookouts in 2001: Lois Aldi, Ralph Amodie, Neila Augelli, Renee Baade, David Babington, Bill Banks, Tom Baptist, Charlie Barnard, Dan Barvir, Trudy Battaly, Mike Beath, Ray Belding, Ron Bell, Tom Bravo, Polly Brody, Paul Carrier, Roland Clement, Neil and Mary Ann Currie, Mr. and Mrs. Duncan Denny, Paul Desjardins, Jo Ann Deugenio, Angela Dimmitt, Cynthia Ehlinger, Dick English, Larry Fischer, David and Ann Fiske, Steve Foisey, Joyce and Norbert Grohoski, Jason Guerard, Frank Guida, Ed Hagen, Greg Hanisek, Barbara Harrigan, Ernie Harris, Seth Harvey, Lynn James, Chris Johnson,

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Hawk Flight Localities

Taine Mountain, Burlington
Johnnycake Farm, Burlington
Middle School, Torrington
Chestnut Hill, Litchfield
White Memorial, Litchfield
Sycamore Avenue, Woodbury
Good Hill, Woodbury
Bent-of-the-River, Southbury
Osborne Hill, Sandy Hook
Maltby Lakes, Orange
Lighthouse Point, New Haven
Briggs Hill, Sherman
Happy Landing Farm, Brookfield
Huntington State Park, Redding
Waveny Park, New Canaan
Quaker Ridge, Greenwich



Figure 1. 2001 Hawk Flight Lookout Sites

Table 1: Connecticut - All Sites - Fall 2001

SITES	TOWN	Hrs.	SPECIES																		Total
			BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	SW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UR	
Taine Mountain	Burlington	21			16	13		49				1675				1	2		2	2	1760
Johnnycake Farm	Burlington	42			79	11	6	101	5	1		8235				1	61	7	2		8509
Middle School	Torrington	22			13	4	1	12	7	2		3014		8			7	1	1	14	3084
Chestnut Hill	Litchfield	85			37	14	9	81	4		2	7259					27	5		4	7442
White Memorial	Litchfield	9			15	4	1	4	7			1707				1	4				1743
Sycamore Avenue	Woodbury	2			3							640		3							646
Good Hill	Woodbury	34			16	4	1	15	3			2158		1			12	1		2	2213
Bent-of-the-River	Southbury	40	1		47	6	10	52	3		3	4265		4			10	1	1	1	4404
Osborne Hill	Sandy Hook	30			27	2	4	57	5		1	1039		2			25	6	1	31	1200
Maltby Lakes	Orange	96		15	431	9	4	125	10			415		2			97	3	8	10	1129
Lighthouse Point	New Haven	552		178	852	23	506	8143	707	3	87	307		503	1	1	1699	326	84	193	13613
Briggs Hill	Sherman	11.5	1		8	1		4	2		1	952		4			2			1	976
Happy Landing Farm	Brookfield	19			16	4		53	2			2921		3			21		1	11	3032
Huntington State Park	Redding	11.5	2		4	1		11	2		3	24		1		1	6				55
Waveny Park	New Canaan	34			28		1	34	3		1	166		3			24	3	1	6	270
Quaker Ridge	Greenwich	597	3	618	502	49	154	2460	297	14	172	4487		228		5	594	44	16	101	9744

SPECIES ABBREVIATIONS

BV - Black Vulture
 TV - Turkey Vulture
 OS - Osprey
 BE - Bald Eagle
 NH - Northern Harrier

SS - Sharp-shinned Hawk
 CH - Cooper's Hawk
 NG - Northern Goshawk
 RS - Red-shouldered Hawk

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

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

Table 2: Broad-winged Hawk Flights - Fall 2001

SITES	September																	Hrs. at Site	Total Hawks
	Pre- -11	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20-2	23	24-2	26	27	28	Post- 28		
Wind Direction*		NW	E	SW	Rain	N	N	E	NW	E	E	NE	Var.	W	W	NW			
Taine Mt.						1510	6					24		87			48	21	1675
Johnnycake		78	161		20	6311	1493			35				137				42	8235
Middle School	13			34		2659	257	51										22	3014
Chestnut Hill	27	19	150	134		6117	504	99	35	99	3	72						85	7259
White Memorial						1516			191									9	1707
Sycamore Avenue						640													640
Good Hill		20		35		1725	200		88	21		49		20				34	2158
Bent-of-the-River	1	13	268	12		3274	109	134	37	1				416				41	4265
Osborne Hill		33	125	1		707	164			9								30	1039
Maltby Lakes	44	4	40	66		30	58	10	46	47	9	66	4	7	6		8	96	415
Lighthouse Point	2					82	9	7		1		2	1	1		90	112	552	307
Briggs Hill				80		717												12	797
Happy Landing Farm			105	18		2469		108	92	45				24				19	2921
Huntington State Park						19	5											12	24
Waveny Park		149	12			41	1	2	2									40	207
Quaker Ridge	76	449	745	29		1378	327	101	69	12	1	58		265	104	850	23	597	4487

*Wind direction varies somewhat from lookout to lookout and may change as the day goes by.

Wind directions shown were prominent throughout the state on each date.

Table 3: Quaker Ridge, Greenwich, CT - Fall 2001 Hawkwatch

MONTH	Days	Hrs.	SPECIES																	Total		
			BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	SW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG		UR	
August	3	20			9		1	4				17					1			1	33	
September	29	226	1	14	469	34	84	1380	113	2	12	4466		8			488	20	8	24	7123	
October	30	238	2	437	24	12	64	1036	171	11	126	4		127		4	105	23	8	74	2228	
November	15	113		167	0	3	5	40	13	1	34			93		1			1		2	360
Total 2001	77	597	3	618	502	49	154	2460	297	14	172	4487		228		5	594	44	16	101	9744	
Total 2000		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	

Table 4: Lighthouse Point, New Haven, CT - Fall 2001 Hawkhatch

MONTH	Days	Hrs.	SPECIES																	Total	
			BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	SW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG		UR
August	4	16			19		2		2							6	2			31	
September	28	181		25	741	15	157	2169	215		8	270		27		872	105	31	68	4703	
October	31	215		111	92	7	206	5512	423		45	34		217	1	813	173	40	97	7771	
November	28	140		42		1	141	462	67	3	34	3		259		1	8	46	13	28	1108
Total 2001	91	552		178	852	23	506	8143	707	3	87	307		503	1	1	1699	326	84	193	13613
Total 2000		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	6058	847	25	68	352		969	5	2	2152	402	50	197	13479
Total 1998		560		254	1516	41	806	6529	771	17	26	371		258	5	3	2598	341	48	156	13740

Table 5: Lighthouse Point - Hawks Per Five Day Period - Fall 2001

Species	Dates	Aug.	September						October						Nov.
	Total	29-31	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	5-1	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-31	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	8143		88	67	492	328	139	1055	614	2303	534	545	607	909	462
American Kestrel	1699	6	129	29	226	109	71	308	111	520	38	104	15	25	8
Osprey	852	19	102	30	73	158	63	315	24	15	21	18	8	6	0
Cooper's Hawk	707	2	5	6	42	31	16	115	57	121	96	55	37	57	67
Northern Harrier	506	2	19	10	34	22	10	62	27	54	11	34	23	57	141
Broad-winged Hawk	307		2	0	82	17	3	166	25	2	5	1	0	1	3
Merlin	326	2	8	5	16	6	32	38	27	48	36	25	10	27	46
Red-tailed Hawk	503		3	0	5	5	1	13	2	10	1	4	16	184	259
Turkey Vulture	178				1	2	0	22	0	20	2	0	5	84	42
Peregrine Falcon	84		2	1	7	0	9	12	2	19	8	2	3	6	13
Red-shouldered Hawk	87		1	0	3	2	1	1	0	2	3	2	3	35	34
Bald Eagle	23		2	0	2	1	2	8	1	0	0	4	2	0	1
Northern Goshawk	3														3
Rough-legged Hawk	1										1	0	0	0	0
Golden Eagle	1														1
unidentified raptor	193		9	2	2	10	11	34	9	43	10	1	10	24	28
Totals															
Month		31	370	150	985	691	358	2149	899	3157	766	795	739	1415	1108
Year	13613	31						4703						7771	1108

FEEDING ECOLOGY OF A WINTER WATERFOWL COMMUNITY

Julie Groce

Introduction

Measurements of interspecific competition are often used to describe the relationships between coexisting species (Simpson 1949). Intense competition can result in the exclusion of one species in favor of another. Winter relations within communities are of particular interest because many species may be concentrated in the same habitat at a time when food availability is relatively low. In his studies on waterfowl communities in California, DuBowy (1988) proposed that interspecific competition is lower during winter months despite limitations in the food supply because of "resource partitioning" in which different waterfowl species use different sources of food. In 1989 and 1994, students at Connecticut College who studied winter waterfowl on the Thames River in southeastern Connecticut ultimately concluded that there was little competition among different species because of differences in feeding behavior (Kluza 1989, Alegranti 1994). I continued and expanded this study during the winter of 2001. In addition to examining competition among species, I analyzed the impact of time of day and ice cover on feeding preferences.

Study Area

The study area includes three tidal coves along the Thames River in Waterford, Conn.—Inner Smith Cove (ISC), Outer Smith Cove (OSC), and North Mamacoke Cove (NMC). A rocky shore adjacent to railroad tracks bounds ISC on the east and houses border the remaining three sides. A small bridge along a section of tracks allows for the passage of waterfowl between ISC and OSC. OSC expands into the Thames River, with rocky shorelines on the northern and western sides. NMC is situated to the south of OSC and its eastern edge, along Mamacoke Island, is likewise rocky. A *Spartina* marsh lies to the south of NMC while *Phragmites* is prominent along NMC's western side. The bottom of NMC is carpeted with sea lettuce (*Ulva lactuca*), as are areas up to 15 m from the ISC shore (O'Brien and Askins 1985, Alegranti 1994). Mollusks, crustaceans, and sea lettuce provide food for waterfowl in OSC (Kluza 1989, Alegranti 1994).

Methods

Observations were made between 3 February and 9 March 2001. The site was visited an average of four times per week during prescribed blocks of time—morning (7:00-8:30 AM), midday (11:00 AM-12:30 PM), and early evening (3:00-5:00 PM). The time of observation was random from day to day. Observations were not made during days of heavy snow or rain. An additional six observation periods from 28 March to 14 April, 2001, were conducted to determine how waterfowl populations changed during the spring migration.

Each individual duck was identified, sexed, and observed for 15 seconds and its activity during that time was recorded. The location of each individual was indicated on a gridded map (Figure 1). This allowed for the determination of which microhabitats each species used. Activities and locations of Canada Geese, Mute Swans, American Coot, and Pied-billed Grebes (see Table 1 for scientific names) in the area were also recorded using the same methods. Feeding behaviors were categorized as follows: bill dipping (penetrating substrate or water with bill), dabbling (placing bill into water and moving head back and forth), diving (submergence of entire body into water), neck plunging (submergence of head and neck into water), upending (submergence of head and neck and vertical tilting of body), or grazing (nipping off parts of plants on shore or algae on rocks). Other behaviors were categorized as courtship (displays and copulations), loafing/sleeping (bill tucked under wing, decreased state of alertness), preening (maintenance of feathers), or swimming (moving through the water with head raised).

Water depths in the coves were determined from nautical charts (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) and were classified into three zones: Zone 1 (< 0.3 m), Zone 2 (≥ 0.3 m to ≤ 1.0 m), and Zone 3 (> 1.0 m). Percent ice cover in each cove was estimated and the abundance of each species under light (0-30%) and heavy ($>30\%$) ice cover was compared with a Student's *t*-test. Abundance of species at different times of day and depth zone were determined using analysis of variance (ANOVA, SPSS version 10.0). The proportion of time each species spent foraging or not foraging under different conditions was compared using the Chi-square test. Interspecific competition was evaluated using niche breadth and niche overlap indices (Simpson 1949).

The niche of a particular species is often described in terms of the microhabitat in which the species feeds and the foraging tech-

niques it uses to find food (Simpson 1949). Niche breadth measures how wide or narrow the range of microhabitats or foraging methods is for each species, according to the proportion of time the species spends using each microhabitat or technique. A large value for niche breadth indicates the species is using a greater diversity of microhabitats. If species A spends small proportions of time in several microhabitats and species B spends the majority of its time in only one microhabitat, species A will have a larger niche breadth value. The niche overlap index (which ranges from 0 to 1) indicates how similar species are in their use of resources. The larger the overlap value, the more alike the species are in their use of microhabitats or foraging techniques (Simpson 1949).

Results and Discussion

The abundance of each species of waterfowl in the coves was monitored throughout the course of the study (Table 1). Dabbling ducks included American Black Duck, Gadwall, and Mallard. American Wigeon, and Wood Duck were sighted occasionally. Diving species included Canvasbacks, Greater and Lesser Scaup, Hooded and Red-breasted Mergansers. Common Merganser and Bufflehead were infrequent, with Common Merganser present only in the beginning of March. Canada Geese and Mute Swans were the most abundant waterfowl in the study area. Some species, such as Mallards and Canada Geese, showed large fluctuations in the number of individuals over the weeks. The peaks and valleys in numbers corresponded to the degree of ice cover; the higher the percentage of ice cover, the larger the number of individuals (Figure 2).

Most species decreased substantially after 9 March. Canvasback and Lesser Scaup were absent after that time. In contrast, Gadwall arrived at the coves in the beginning of March and their numbers remained relatively constant throughout the remainder of the study.

Comparison of Mallards and American Black Ducks.—Dabbling ducks usually feed between the surface and depths of around 40 cm (Paulus 1982, Thomas 1982). Although most American Black Ducks and Mallards preferred Zone 1 (< 0.3 m), Mallards had a broader niche breadth for microhabitat (Mallards: $B=0.68$; American Black Ducks: $B=0.40$), indicating they can make use of a wider range of microhabitats. Some Mallards were observed foraging in areas over 1.0 m deep, but it might have been that they were feeding on plant debris stirred up by the foraging activity of Mute Swans (Bailey and Batt 1974). Niche overlap of microhabitat for

Mallards and Black Ducks was intermediate ($C=0.59$) while overlap for foraging methods was relatively high ($C=0.70$). This suggests the two species are less similar in their use of microhabitats and more similar in their methods of foraging. Although their foraging techniques may be similar, they usually feed on different aquatic vegetation; Mallards prefer seeds while Black Ducks consume mostly submerged plants (Bellrose 1976, Thomas 1982, Jorde et al. 1983). Their diet preferences, however, can overlap (Kortright 1943). Numerous studies suggest that Mallards may competitively exclude Black Ducks from potential feeding and breeding areas (Ankney et al. 1987, 1989, Merendino et al. 1993). While results from this study show that competition between the species may be relatively limited in the coves, a detailed study of what they actually eat in the coves is necessary to understand the extent of competition.

Significantly more mallards were present in the coves during periods of >30% ice cover than during times of 0-30% cover ($F=23.294$, $p=0.006$; Figure 3). Black Ducks, on the other hand, were present in significantly greater numbers when ice cover was 0-30% ($F=1.622$, $p=0.001$). Both species spent the same proportion of time foraging with high and low ice cover. Since Mallards are typically found in inland ponds, lakes, and rivers (Kortright 1943), the Smith and North Mamacoke Coves may act as havens for them during times of heavy ice cover when their usual feeding areas are frozen over. American Black Ducks, however, feed more extensively in salt marshes and other coastal regions (Kortright 1943). It may be that with heavy ice cover Mallards coming to the coves from inland temporarily displace the Black Ducks to other areas along the coast.

Comparison of Mallards and Mute Swans.—While there was a significantly larger number of Mute Swans foraging in Zone 3 than in Zone 1 (ANOVA: $F=3.345$, $p=.045$), Mallards and Mute Swans nevertheless had a high niche overlap for microhabitat ($C=0.71$). Niche overlap for foraging techniques was low ($C=0.10$), implying that they employ different methods of foraging even though they are located in similar microhabitats. With the Mallard's preference for seeds and the swan's preference for sea lettuce and other aquatic plants (Conover and Kania 1994, Ciaranca et al. 1997), it is unlikely that these two species are competing for food.

Significantly more Mallards were present in the coves during the early evening than in the morning (ANOVA: $F=3.794$, $p=0.042$). Not only were more present, but significantly more were foraging in the evening ($\chi^2=107.619$, $p<0.001$). Because most dabblers feed

for part of the night (Owen and Black 1990), it would be interesting to make night observations in the area to determine if these species also forage at that time. Mute Swans also foraged most often in the evening ($\chi^2=113.813$, $p<0.001$). Although there was no significant difference in the number of swans with varying amounts of ice cover, significantly more were foraging in the coves during times of $>30\%$ ice cover ($\chi^2=11.077$, $p=.001$). This might be due to other feeding areas being frozen over.

Comparison of Canvasbacks and Mute Swans.—Canvasbacks and Mute Swans have often been considered potential competitors due to similarities in food and microhabitat preferences (Bellrose 1976, Perry and Uhler 1988). I found that these two species had a high niche overlap for microhabitat ($C=0.82$), as both species tended to prefer relatively deep waters. Canvasbacks can reach depths of 10 m while foraging (Kortright 1943), although they favor areas 1-4 m deep (Todd 1996); Mute Swans can reach a maximum of 1.2 m (Berglund et al. 1963, cited by O'Brien and Askins 1983, Ciaranca 1997). While their foraging techniques were different (neck-plunging and up-ending by swans and diving by Canvasbacks), they both foraged mainly on sea lettuce (Bartonek and Hickey 1969, Conover and Kania 1994). Their times of foraging also overlapped somewhat, as Canvasbacks foraged more during midday and early evening ($\chi^2=10.985$, $p=.004$) while the swans fed to a greater extent in the evening. These results are consistent with earlier findings indicating competition for resources between the two species.

Although a higher proportion of Mute Swans foraged in the coves when ice cover was $>30\%$, Canvasbacks preferred to forage in the area during times of 0-30% cover ($\chi^2=23.242$, $p<.001$). Canvasbacks tended to forage along the northern edge of ISC when there was no ice. During times of heavier ice cover, canvasbacks were forced into different sections of ISC and NMC, where their frequency of foraging decreased.

Comparison of Canvasbacks, Hooded Mergansers, Lesser Scaup, and Red-breasted Mergansers.—Niche overlaps for microhabitat of the diving ducks were all high, especially between Canvasbacks and Hooded Mergansers ($C=0.88$) and Canvasbacks and Lesser Scaup ($C=0.86$). The highest percentage of Canvasbacks and Hooded Mergansers were in both Zones 2 and 3 (≤ 1.0 m). Dugger et al. (1994) found that Hooded Mergansers typically forage in water depths of less than 1.5 m. Lesser Scaup also overlapped greatly with Hooded Mergansers and Red-breasted Mergansers ($C=0.82$ in

both cases). Lesser Scaup and Red-breasted Mergansers were found primarily in Zone 3. These species tend to prefer water depths of 3.3-6.0 m (Cronan 1957, Bellrose 1976), although Red-breasted Mergansers are known to forage in deeper waters of up to 10 m (Titman 1999). Because all these species dive for food, niche overlap for foraging technique was very high among them. Had it been possible to distinguish among the more specific types of feeding behavior employed by the ducks while under water, niche overlap values might have been lower.

The major deciding factor, then, of whether or not there is competition between these diving species is their food preferences. Canvasbacks tend to feed on submerged plants (Bartonek and Hickey 1969) while Lesser Scaup forage most of the year on aquatic invertebrates such as insects, crustaceans, and mollusks (Rogers and Korschgen 1966, Austin et al. 1998). Lesser Scaup are known to consume vegetation in some areas, particularly in the winter (Rogers and Korschgen 1966) and they were observed eating sea lettuce in the Smith and North Mamacoke Coves on several occasions. There may be some competition between Canvasbacks and Lesser Scaup if, in fact, the scaup are feeding mainly on vegetation in the coves. However, if Lesser Scaup are consuming mostly aquatic animals, there is the possibility of competition between them and Hooded Mergansers, as the main food of Hooded Mergansers includes small fish, crustaceans, and aquatic insects (Bellrose 1976, Dugger et al. 1994). Though Red-breasted Mergansers feed primarily on fish (Titman 1999), and therefore may be a competitor of Hooded Mergansers, the wider array of food preferences for Hooded Mergansers may nevertheless limit competition between the two species.

Canada Geese.—Of the Canada Geese that frequented the coves, only 12% fed there and the majority of that feeding occurred on land. It may be they were using the area more for resting than as a feeding area and were not competing with the other waterfowl for food resources. It is still important to note their abundance in the coves as their numbers are increasing on a national level (Wilkins et al. 2000) and their potential effects on other waterfowl continue to be disputed (Ankney 1996).

Conclusion

Within the winter waterfowl community on the Thames River, interspecific competition appears to be the greatest between Canvasbacks and Mute Swans, with potential competition occurring between Mallards and American Black Ducks and among several diving species. Subsequent studies over several years will only re-

fine our interpretations of the relationships among these waterfowl species. A closer examination of the actual food preferences of these species within the coves is necessary for a more definitive analysis of competition among them.

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TABLE 1: Total number of individuals observed at Inner and Outer Smith Cove and North Mamacoke Cove.

Species	February 3 - March 9, 2001		March 28 - April 14, 2001	
	total no. observed	no. observed feeding	total no. observed	no. observed feeding
American Black Duck (<i>Anas rubripes</i>)	102*	27*	26	6
American Wigeon (<i>Anas americana</i>)	6	3	2	0
Bufflehead (<i>Bucephala albeola</i>)	2	2	5	3
Canvasback (<i>Aythya valisineria</i>)	383*	253*	--	--
Common Merganser (<i>Mergus merganser</i>)	7	7	--	--
Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>)	40	12	44	16
Greater Scaup (<i>Aythya marila</i>)	29	9	--	--
Hooded Merganser (<i>Lophodytes cucullatus</i>)	190*	101*	10	4
Lesser Scaup (<i>Aythya affinis</i>)	98*	49*	--	--
Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)	762*	312*	5	0
Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>)	149*	89*	23	11
Wood Duck (<i>Aix sponsa</i>)	--	--	2	0
American Coot (<i>Fulica americana</i>)	23	16	--	--
Canada Goose (<i>Branta canadensis</i>)	1118*	147*	5	0
Mute Swan (<i>Cygnus olor</i>)	1815*	596*	125	59
Pied-billed Grebe (<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>)	36	12	2	0

* used in Chi-square analysis and ANOVA tests

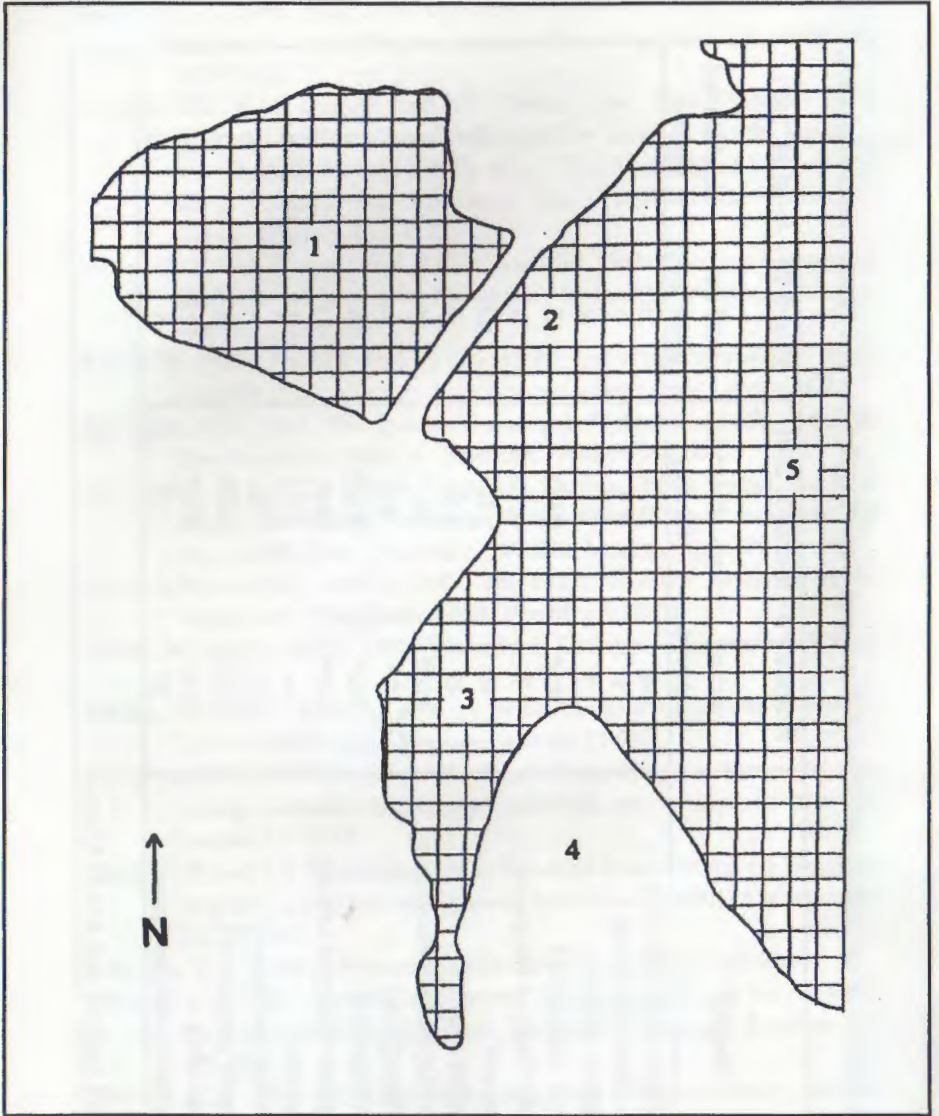


Figure 1: Gridded map of study area, each square represents roughly 25m².

- 1. Inner Smith Cove. 2. Outer Smith Cove.
- 3. North Mammacoke Cove. 4. Mammacoke Island. 5. ThamesRiver

Figure 2: Number of Mallards and estimated percent ice cover observed per visit between 3 February and 9 March.

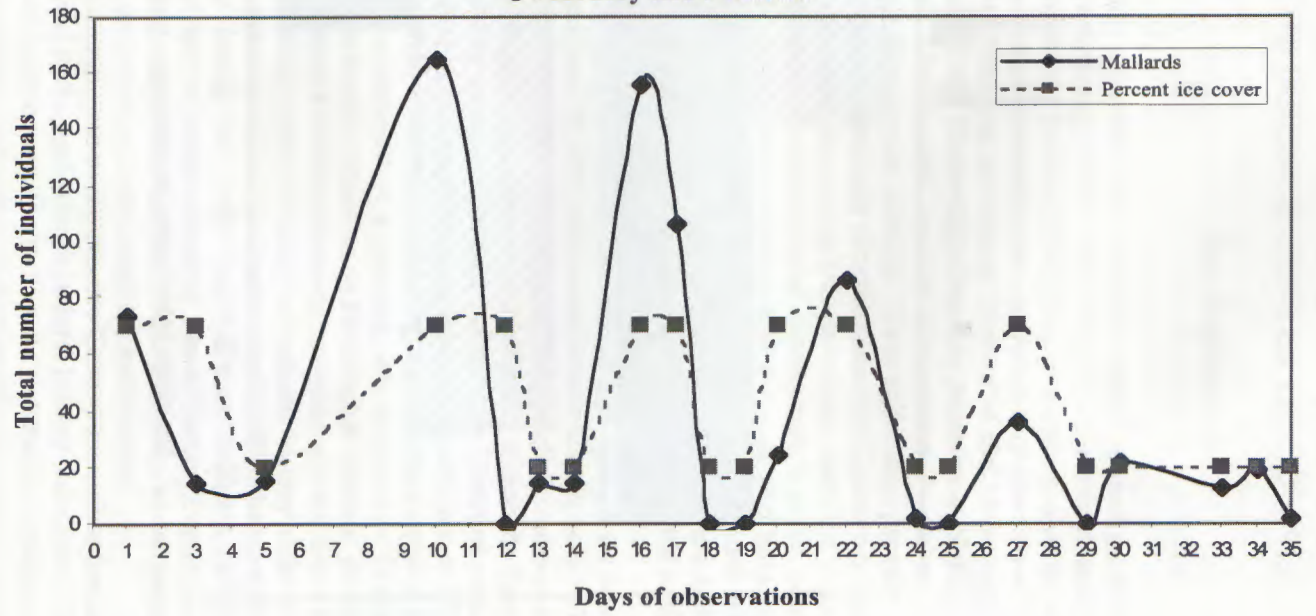
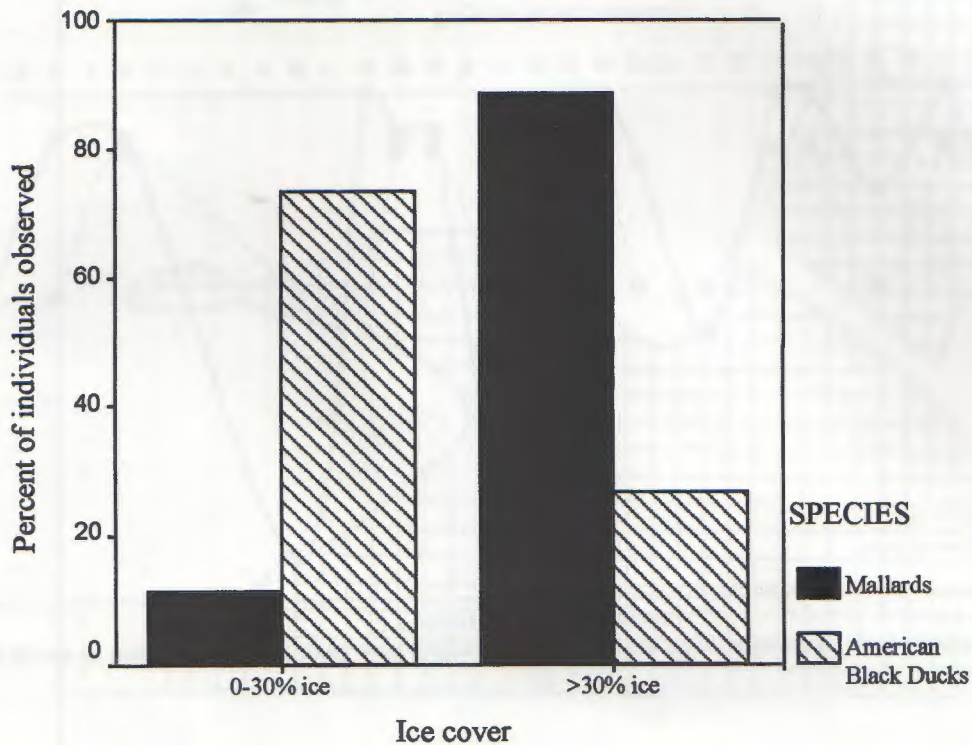


Figure 3: Percent of Mallards and American Black Ducks observed with different amounts of ice cover.



ASSESSING SIGNIFICANT BIRD SPECIMENS AT THE SCIENCE CENTER OF CONNECTICUT

Jay Kaplan

During 1989-1991, Dr. George Clark a retired professor, who taught ornithology at the University of Connecticut, and was also the Connecticut State Ornithologist, co-authored a series of articles that provided information on significant bird specimens housed at the State Museum of Natural History at the University of Connecticut, at Yale University's Peabody Museum of Natural History in New Haven, and at the Connecticut Audubon Society's Birdcraft Museum in Fairfield. These collections provide a definitive and significant body of information on Connecticut's avifauna and particularly, on rare records over more than 150 years.

Connecticut's ornithological community should note that a number of other institutions around the state also hold significant specimens or other noteworthy information. One such institution is the Science Center of Connecticut, currently located at 950 Trout Brook Drive in West Hartford. The Science Center maintains a number of natural history collections.

The Science Center of Connecticut first opened its doors to the public on June 19, 1927, and was officially known as the Children's Museum of Hartford. At that time, the fledgling museum occupied a room in the Pond House in Hartford's Elizabeth Park. A few mineral and animal collections donated by Hartford-area naturalists of that period, were enough to draw an average of 175 visitors daily. Within a year of its opening, the Museum needed larger facilities to accommodate a growing collection and in October 1927, the former Sumner Mansion on Farmington Avenue, just down the road, became available. Museum curators quickly filled the nine-room mansion with a variety of natural history collections. The Museum remained in this location until 1959, when it moved to its current facility on Trout Brook Drive. In 1973, the Museum merged with Canton's Roaring Brook Nature Center to create a more regional institution that could provide a wider range of programs and services to its members and visitors.

As an employee of the Science Center, the author has long been interested in the institution's natural history collections. These collections deserve careful scrutiny for records of significance in all natural history disciplines. Unfortunately, as is often the case with

"teaching" collections, many of the specimens acquired by the institution over the past seventy years, including many native species, did not necessarily originate in Connecticut. For example, a Dovekie (*Alle alle*) in the collection is labeled "Simsbury, Connecticut." Further research revealed that this bird actually originated on Long Island and was donated to the Center in 1970 by a Long Islander who had subsequently moved to Simsbury. Developing "natural history" collections was a popular pastime in the late nineteenth century and first part of the twentieth century and collectors would often buy, sell, or trade specimens. Institutions would often obtain entire collections from other sources such as a collection of mounted bird specimens that the Science Center acquired from Wesleyan University in Middletown. In the process of these exchanges, specimen tags were often changed or even lost and catalogue records are frequently not updated to reflect these transactions. For example, several specimens of the extinct Passenger Pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*) are housed at the Science Center. These specimens, gifts to the Museum in an earlier time, provide no accompanying information to indicate where these birds originated. Roaring Brook Nature Center acquired a collection of mounted specimens from a now-defunct private school in 1980. The taxidermist, whose name is unknown, lived in Putnam, Connecticut. The collection, from the late nineteenth century, includes such species as Common Ground Dove (*Columbina passerina*) and Red-cockaded Woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*). Neither species was likely to have been collected in Connecticut.

One of the most interesting birds in the Center's collection is a well-preserved specimen labeled Heath Hen (*Tympanuchus cupido cupido*). Now considered a subspecies of Greater Prairie Chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido*), the Heath Hen was a resident of pine barrens and shrubby grassland areas. It was likely extirpated from Connecticut by the mid-nineteenth century (Zeranski and Baptist 1990). Massachusetts' author Thornton Burgess on Martha's Vineyard photographed the last Heath Hen in March 1932, shortly before its disappearance. A copy of this photograph can be found in the Science Center's collections.

Upon careful examination, however, it was determined that the specimen is actually not a Heath Hen at all, but a Greater Prairie Chicken. According to Dr. George Clark, Heath Hen specimens are quite rare, with introduced specimens of Greater Prairie Chicken being far more common in New England. Even in the mid to late nineteenth century, Heath Hen specimens were hard to find and commanded a relatively high price during the days of commercial

trading. Therefore, sellers tended to be less than careful in identifying their specimens.

References on Heath Hen identification describe "pointed pinnae" on the neck in contrast to the rounded pinnae of other subspecies (Greenway 1967). The Science Center specimen exhibits very obviously rounded pinnae. Heath Hens also possess "banded" or heavily spotted axillaries in contrast to usually pure white axillaries of other subspecies. This characteristic can be difficult to see without causing damage to mounted specimens. Although the Science Center's Heath Hen specimen is in reasonably good condition, this is not always the case with many of the bird specimens housed at museums and nature centers.

The Science Center of Connecticut has always been considered a "teaching" museum and its collections have always been used for educational purposes, exhibits and programs. A resulting difficulty is that, over time, specimens do not always fare well. A number of specimens, although listed in the institution's accession records, are apparently no longer in the collection. This is unfortunate, but is an all too common occurrence with museum specimens from an earlier era. There are also notations of specimens given or "on permanent loan" to other institutions. One large collection of bird eggs is now housed at the historic Old State House in downtown Hartford. Other collections listed in the accession files could not be located and further research will be necessary to determine the whereabouts or even the continued existence of these specimens.

In spite of difficulties encountered in wading through over fifty years of records, there are several specimens for which there is documentation in the Science Center's records. These specimens are listed in Table I and should be considered significant to the state's ornithological record.

There has been some discussion of possibly transferring certain specimens of significant ornithological interest to The Connecticut State Museum of Natural History Museum on the campus of the University of Connecticut at Storrs. It might be valuable for members of the Connecticut Ornithological Association and other students of natural history to investigate local museums, nature centers or other facilities that may also house significant specimens. Such detective work cannot help but expand and improve our knowledge of Connecticut's natural history.

Acknowledgments:

I wish to thank Dr. George A. Clark for his keen insight and helpful comments with regard to this article. Appreciation is also extended to Susan Bonk, former Science Center of Connecticut staff member who looked through the Center's accession forms for records of significant specimens; to Hank Gruner, Vice President of Programs and Exhibits at the Science Center for allowing access to the institution's natural history collections; and to Brian Kleinman, Science Center Animal Curator, for his critical examination of Greater Prairie Chicken specimens housed at the Science Center.

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Table I: Significant Specimens at the Science Center of Connecticut

Tundra Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*). 2 same sex.
C.M. Pond donor. Collected Elizabeth Park, Hartford.
1887.

Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*). 2 males under glass. WWC donor. Collected Portland. October 9, 1877.

Purple Gallinule (*Porphyryla martinica*).
Percy Fellows donor. Found on Elm Street, Wethersfield.
June 22, 1960.



BOOK REVIEW

Jamie Meyers

Smithsonian Handbooks Birds of North America, Eastern Region, by Fred J. Alsop III, (2001, 751 pages, DK Publishing Inc., New York, NY, \$24.95, softcover).

Just when you thought the market for field guides to the birds was reaching saturation level, this monster volume hit the shelves a couple of months ago with little fanfare or apparent notice. While large in size and ambitious in scope, the lack of attention was warranted, as this volume breaks little if any new ground.

Every new guide that challenges the throne has some new gimmick or feature that supposedly sets it apart from the rest, but I am having a difficult time discerning what the Smithsonian's gimmick is. An astounding 700 + species are covered, one to a page, in this the Eastern Region version of the guide. Basically every species that has ever been found east of the 100th parallel is given a page, and that in itself is a disturbing flaw. Some fairly unexpected species receive treatments here that are not warranted. The same amount of room is devoted to treatments of Eurasian and American Kestrel, for instance. Only in the small print does it note that the Eurasian Kestrel is "accidental", and to me that isn't enough to denote the true rarity of this species in the eastern U.S. The section on martins is far more absurd – single page treatments of five species (!) are given equal time and space within, despite the obvious disparities in their patterns of occurrence.

The other major problem I have with this guide is its relative uselessness in terms of aiding in identifications. Each page features one oversized photo of its subject and maybe a tiny illustration denoting flight patterns, but that is woefully inadequate. For almost the same amount of money one can pick up a copy of the Sibley Guide and get ten times the bang for the identification buck. As I hit one pair of treatments, I pictured myself on the Cape May Ferry looking out over the churned up water in late August after the passage of a tropical storm when suddenly a medium-sized dark tern wings past the boat. I watch the bird carefully as it streaks by then turn to this guide to figure out whether it was a Sooty or a Bridled,

only to find one illustration of each bird within, each posed as though sitting on a pole - or in a museum collection. Nothing whatsoever even hinting at those subtle yet critically important field marks that are emphasized so well in Sibley and many other guides.

The most useful feature of this guide is that it does offer some basic natural history information about each of the species treated within. As such, it might serve a decent role as a handy guide for nature centers and other like organizations to have around when people ask general natural history questions about a species. In some ways, this is a colorized, pretty version of the well-known *The Birder's Handbook*, except that it lacks the interesting essays on the right hand pages which made that volume such a treat to own, which this writer read and reread not so long ago when I was a beginning birder.

This is a volume that tries to find a niche but fails. In terms of dispensing natural history information, *The Birder's Handbook* is better. In terms of illustrating species for purposes of identification, even the weaker field guides currently on the shelves are better. At the risk of sounding totally negative, I will say that I have enjoyed thumbing through the species treatments and have picked up the occasional interesting tidbit that I didn't know, but birders of all skill levels would be far better served by saving their money and spending it on the superior references that abound on the shelves of any well-stocked bookstore.

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CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Greg Hanisek

SUMMER, JUNE 1 THROUGH JULY 31, 2001

The season presented its usual complicated mix of birds heading north, birds heading south, and birds just hanging around. Within these crosscurrents, several interesting vagrants and wanderers appeared. Reports on breeding species form the bedrock of this period, however. These can be gleaned for a number of interesting nesting occurrences and trends, with special attention to the strong array of nesters with northerly affiliations and the handful of grassland breeding species that face challenges as farmland withers away. Anyone interested in the state's breeding species should also peruse the full account of the state's Summer Bird Counts, which was published in the October 2001 issue of this publication.

Wanderers, Lingerers, and Vagrants

A Common Loon lingered June 7-9 at Bantam Lake in Litchfield (DR), and the usual handful of summerers in Long Island Sound were represented by singles off Long Beach, Stratford, on June 5 (DV); in Great Harbor, Guilford, June 30 (MA); and off Charles Island, Milford, on July 9 (DV). A Red-throated Loon in basic plumage was unexpected on the Connecticut River in East Haddam June 16 (JMo), as was a Horned Grebe in alternate plumage June 11 on the Connecticut River in Essex (AGr). A few **Wilson's Storm-Petrels** were seen regularly in Connecticut waters at

the eastern end of Long Island Sound in July, sometimes viewable from the New London-Orient Point ferry and from Avery Point, Groton (NB, MG, DA et al.). Up to five at a time were reported.

A flyover American Bittern on July 29 in Southport was likely a post-breeding wanderer (CB). Two Snowy Egrets were inland at Riverside Park in Hartford on July 19 (PCi). A Tricolored Heron appeared July 19 at Milford Point (DV). An adult Black-crowned Night heron was far from known breeding sites July 20 at Lake Zoar in Southbury (RN). Glossy Ibis are maintaining a strong presence in the state, with a

flock of 40+ on July 28 in Old Saybrook (J&AO).

In what has become a regular occurrence, a few Brant tarried into July at Milford Point (DV) and Southport (CB). Three Greater Scaup were still off Gulf Pond in Milford on June 7 (DV), and a male Long-tailed Duck lingered to June 7 off Waterford (DTo).

A sub-adult **Mississippi Kite** was seen in flight in Oxford on June 24, which fits into the established late spring-early summer pattern for vagrants to the northeast (KF,BF). A report and sketch have been submitted to ARCC. It would represent a fourth documented state record.

A Solitary Sandpiper on June 16 at Lake Zoar in Southbury falls into the catchall category because it was halfway between late northbound and early southbound status (RN). A Lesser Black-backed Gull was at Hammonasset Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP) in Madison on July 8 (PCi). The season's first Forster's Tern report came from Short Beach, Stratford, on July 3 (DV). The only report of Royal Tern came from Short Beach on July 3 (NB), and single Caspian Terns were in Southport June 23 (CB) and at Milford Point July 21 (KF et al.).

Two Dickcissels appeared briefly in June. One was in Litchfield June 9 (MSz) and one was in Hamden June 4-5

(C&JZ), both in grass fields. There was no evidence of nesting. A seasonally odd **Yellow-headed Blackbird** appeared at Milford Point June 5 (FMc). A pair of Evening Grosbeaks visited a feeder in Barkhamsted on June 22 (DPe).

Northbound Migration

There were still 11 White-rumped Sandpipers at Milford Point on June 1 (NB), and Greenwich Point held four Red Knots the same day (JW). Both are late migrants that are often present in early June. Noteworthy movements of Common Nighthawk, a late-migrating species, included the following counts at White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield: 52 on June 1; 12 on June 2; and 47 on June 7 (DR). All of the season's Olive-sided Flycatcher reports were tightly clustered, with singles on June 1 in East Haddam (CT) and Hamden (C&JZ), and on June 3 in New Hartford (JK) and Union (PCi). Single Alder and Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, two more species with late migration schedules, were banded June 5 at Milford Point (CWe). An Acadian Flycatcher that appeared June 9 in a yard in Preston may have been on the move (DPr). A Marsh Wren, presumably a tardy migrant, was away from known breeding areas June 9 in Southbury (RN). In the Woodbury/Watertown area, 10

Blackpoll Warblers were heading north on their typically late schedule on June 1 (RN). The latest report was of a single June 14 in Watertown (RN). A Mourning Warbler was banded June 9 at Milford Point, within its normal migration window (CWe).

Southbound Migration

Continued monitoring of the front end of migration revealed two Ospreys on the Naugatuck River in Beacon Falls and Naugatuck, well away from breeding areas, on July 2 (GH,MSz). They arrived with the first cold front of the month. Ospreys were first noted July 15 at Bantam Lake (JE), and three were fishing in the Connecticut River in South Windsor on July 12 (PCi). The season's only Marbled Godwit was found July 31 at Long Beach, Stratford (PCo). Two Western Sandpipers appeared at Milford Point July 21 (PCi). A Pectoral Sandpiper was at Little Pond in Litchfield July 23 (DR). Marsh pools in Stratford held a good flock of 45 Short-billed Dowitchers as early as July 8 (BSt). In what has proven to be a regular mid-summer movement, two Bonaparte's Gulls appeared July 23 at Milford Point (NB). A Black Tern was at Bantam Lake in Litchfield July 7 (AD et al.).

A good movement of Eastern Kingbirds produced counts of 48 on July 30 and 60 on July 31

at White Memorial (DR et al.). Bank Swallows are among the earliest passerines to begin moving south, as illustrated by several at Sandy Point in West Haven on July 1 (FG,PDe). A single Purple Martin, another early migrant, was in Southport July 29 (CB).

The Breeding Season

An American Bittern was at White Memorial on July 31 (EA, BSe). Up to three Great Blue Herons near Southbury Training School throughout the season raised the possibility of nesting nearby (RN). A survey of the rookery on Great Captains Island in Greenwich produced these totals: Black-Crowned Night Heron - 150 pairs; Great Egret - 98 pairs; Snowy Egret - 40 pairs; and Little Blue Heron - one pair (fide PCo). Yellow-crowned Night Heron continues as a regular breeder in Milford area (DV et al.).

East of the Connecticut River, where they remain rare, two Black Vultures (harassed by a Broad-winged Hawk) were in Hampton on June 20 (MSz). One at West Rock Ridge in Hamden July 27 was south of the species' strongholds (MSc). In an area where the species is now regular, a Black Vulture was an unusual roadkill in Derby (DTr). Although this species has not yet been confirmed as a breeder, there seems little

doubt that its continued presence, at least in parts of the Housatonic River drainage, is indicative of a nesting population.

By July 23, more than 130 Wood Ducks, including many young of the year, had gathered at Little and Cemetery ponds in White Memorial (DR); four Blue-winged Teal were there July 17 (DR). In a purely speculative vein, a female Northern Shoveler was present July 13 in the Lordship marshes in Stratford, an area that regularly holds nesting Gadwall and in recent years has had confirmed nesting of Green-winged Teal and suspected nesting of Blue-winged Teal (MSz). In addition, a pair was present June 17 in a flooded field in Rocky Hill (MH). A male Green-winged Teal was seen in Lordship July 3 (DV), and a female Gadwall with young was noted there on several occasions (DV,MSz). The steady southward expansion of Common Merganser as a breeder continues, with a female and seven young present in July on Hemlock Reservoir in Easton, about five miles from downtown Bridgeport (DV). The species is now a consistent breeder in upper Fairfield and upper New Haven counties, with the following broods noted during the season: female with 14 young on the Pootatuck River in Newtown (RN), female with 14 young on the

Pomperaug River in Woodbury (CWo), and female with 22 young on the Pomperaug in South Britain (RN). A female Hooded Merganser was found nesting in a wood duck box in Middlebury (BD et al.). The Department of Environmental Protection, in its spring waterfowl breeding survey, done for the Atlantic Flyway Council, estimated about 470 pairs of this secretive nester in the state.

A pair of Bald Eagles nested successfully in the Housatonic River drainage, producing one young (DR et al.). Previous modern nestings have been in the Connecticut River drainage. A pair of Northern Harriers was present again at the state's only confirmed breeding site in Stratford (CB et al.). Sharpshinned Hawk is a sparse and secretive breeder, raising questions about summer sightings. Were single birds observed July 21 at Devil's Hopyard State Park in East Haddam and at HBSP local breeders, non-breeders, or post-breeding wanderers? (PDe). One on June 8 in Watertown was more squarely in the breeding season (RN). Cooper's Hawks are now widespread nesters, with reports of about 10 individuals at White Memorial Foundation indicative of their status. A study by a Southern Connecticut State University faculty member has located 24 nests of Northern Goshawks over a wide swath of

the state ranging from Redding to Chaplin (TB). Sightings of Broad-winged Hawks at four locations at White Memorial in June were heartening (DR et al.). Among a handful of possible American Kestrel nestings were reports of two pairs fledging young in Cornwall (fide AGi). In addition to the previously reported urban pairs, a pair of Peregrines has been confirmed nesting on a cliff face (JZ et al.). Further details about the location are being withheld to protect the site from disturbance. A pair nesting again under a highway bridge in Bridgeport produced two young that were banded on June 30 (DV).

A Northern Bobwhite, of unknown origin, was singing at Bafflin and Wyndham Land Trust in Pomfret on June 22 (GW). The strong Virginia Rail population at White Memorial centered on Little Pond, where 14 were counted June 26 and 19 were present July 30 (DR). American Oystercatcher added Cat Island in the Thimble Islands of Branford to its list of new breeding locations in the state (CWr). In addition to herons, the Great Captain's Island survey turned up 100 nesting pairs of Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls, predominantly Herring (fide PCo). Black Skimmer failed in nesting attempts at Sandy Point in West Haven, where it was confirmed nesting beginning in 1999, but it

nested and successfully raised chicks this year at Cockenoe Island in Norwalk. There were c. three pairs, and fledged young were photographed (AH). Six skimmers were in a Common Tern colony in Branford in early June, but no nesting was observed (SH).

Both Black-billed and Yellow-billed Cuckoos were noted during the season at Audubon Center in Greenwich (TG); in a rural section of Watertown two Black-billed and one Yellow-billed Cuckoo were calling together July 5 (GH,MSz). However, the outstanding cuckoo find was nine Yellow-billed Cuckoos in the Maromas area of Middletown in early June (JMo). The list of Whip-poor-will locations reported in recent summers now includes the Maromas area of Middletown and Babcock Pond in Colchester (JMo). A Red-headed Woodpecker was present throughout the season in Elizabeth Park in Hartford, but there was no evidence of a mate (JMr). Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers continued their recent southward nesting expansion, with nesting confirmed in Southbury (RN) and suspected in Woodbury (RN). The presence of 17 in portions of White Memorial on June 10 was indicative of the overall strength of the breeding population (DR).

White Memorial, the state's stronghold for Alder Fly-

catcher, held a total of 20+ at three prime locations in mid-June (DR). The same locations held 30+ Willow Flycatchers (DR). Survey numbers at White Memorial in June give an idea of the relative abundance of breeding vireos: Blue-headed Vireo, 20+; Yellow-throated Vireo, 30+; Warbling Vireo, c. 30; and Red-eyed Vireo, c. 200 (DR). Northern Woodbury had a good concentration of c. six White-eyed Vireos in nesting habitat (RN et al.). Common Ravens continue their presence in suburban New Haven with one noted June 26 on the campus of Southern Connecticut State University (MSc). That bird probably derives from a nest site in Hamden that has been active for at least five years in a row, according to a study done at SCSU (ST). For the second year in a row young fledged in the Killingly area (AZ).

Some 15 Bank Swallows on the Naugatuck River in Waterbury June 6 indicated a breeding colony somewhere nearby (RN). About 90 were in a colony near Shepaug Dam in Southbury (DR et al.) and about 25 were in a colony at Heritage Village, Southbury (RN). A small colony also was found in a traditional spot along Route 34 in Derby (RL). Cliff Swallows continue to thrive in the Housatonic River drainage, where the colony at Shepaug

Dam held 150+ (RN et al.). A small colony held 10+ at the mouth of the Pomperaug River in Southbury (RN et al.). Elsewhere, the dam at Easton Reservoir had six active nests (DV), a few nested at a shopping plaza in Barkhamsted (FZ,RP), and at least five (including one nest) were at a school in Wilton (BSt). An unusual inland Purple Martin colony was discovered in June in Vernon (JMe); of the few known colonies, most are along the coast.

A search of prime habitat at White Memorial turned up 13 Brown Creepers June 9 (DR). It's a tribute to the richness of habitat at White Memorial that in addition to its array of northern breeders, two locations surveyed in mid-June held a total of 40 Blue-gray Gnatcatchers (DR). The noteworthy breeding bird densities at White Memorial are well illustrated by the thrushes. Surveys of selected habitat in June turned up 200+ Veeries, 40+ Hermit Thrushes and 250+ Wood Thrushes (DR).

In recent years the only reliable spot for breeding Golden-winged Warbler has been River Road, Kent. None was found there this year, but a location in Cornwall has been found to support c. four pairs (MD). Singing males also were noted at two locations in Canaan (JZ). A Northern Parula, which may be expanding from its current marginal status as a breeder,

was in Litchfield June 10 (RN). An additional five were noted at White Memorial (DR); one was on River Road, Cornwall, on June 30 (PCi); and there were two in June in the New Milford area (AD). Cerulean Warbler, a very localized nester, was in a Woodstock yard June 5 (DB). A Kentucky Warbler was found June 18 at Reservoir 6 in West Hartford (PCi).

A statewide survey of grassland breeding birds, conducted by the Connecticut Ornithological Assoc. (hereafter COA), found Savannah Sparrows widespread in hay and grassfields, primarily in the northern tier of counties. Of special interest was an apparent territorial bird on a former landfill at Silver Sands State Park in Milford in July (FMa, PDU). A concerted search for Grasshopper Sparrows turned up nesting or suspected nesting at eight locations, including previously unknown ones in Suffield (BK) and Windsor (PCi et al.), the latter with a least 14 individuals noted (PCi, MH). These sites are all in either the upper Connecticut River valley or the Northeastern Tier.

The COA survey found Bobolinks present in appropriate grass and hay field habitat throughout the state, with most of the occupied sites in the northern tier of counties. Breeding success from year-to-year

remains unknown because the effects of haying are difficult to determine. Eastern Meadowlarks were found in similar areas but in much smaller numbers. Southbury is a stronghold for Orchard Oriole. Four separate areas in town held a total more than 20 of these lively icterids (RN, JL et al.); a concentration of 10 at Bent of the River Audubon Sanctuary on June 27 included six juveniles (DM). The Lordship breeding area held up to two adult and three juvenile Boat-tailed Grackles July 7-14 (TS, TK, MSz). At White Memorial, the north shore of Bantam Lake and adjacent Bantam River marshes held 100 Swamp Sparrows in June (DR). Four Dark-eyed Juncos turned up at White Memorial in June (DR). Purple Finches were widespread at White Memorial in June, with surveys locating about 50 (DR). Farther south, there was a total of up to four pairs in two separate areas in Woodbury (RN).

Exotics:

A drake Red-crested Pochard was on a pond in Stratford June 23 (CB et al.). A Golden Pheasant appeared in Newington July 9 (RZ).

[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 37

A cormorant sits on a grassy bank. In Connecticut the choices are narrowed to either Double-crested, or Great Cormorant. Double-crested Cormorant is a common autumn and winter visitor around our shores, often seen migrating in huge numbers and regularly found in summer as well. Great Cormorants are their larger cousin, more uncommon, though often detected in the same migrating flocks by more discerning eyes.

A lone bird often attracts our attention, especially if it is in unusual habitat such as this bird, and causes us to scrutinize a common species more than usual. So, which species is it?

The pale mottling just visible on the breast and ear-coverts suggests an immature bird since an adult bird would most likely be all dark in these areas.



The secret to separating Double-crested and Great Cormorant lies in the head pattern, particularly the shape of the gular patch (the area of bare skin at the base of the bill/throat). In Double-crested, the gular patch extends under the throat in a convex shape, while in Great Cormorant, the shape of the patch is 'V' shaped, caused by an intrusion of feathers pointing towards the base of the bill.

Of course, this difference is only obvious when specifically looked for and can often be hard to see in the field, unless you can partially see the underside of the throat. In our photo, the shape of the patch is difficult to discern with accuracy. In life, the color of the gular patch and bill would be helpful. In Double-crested, the color of the patch is a bright, mustard-orange, unlike the pale yellowish to orange-yellow of Great Cormorant. A good feature shown by Double-crested is that the lores (small area of skin connecting the eye to the bill) are often the same bright orangish color as the throat patch. On Great Cormorant, this is often dull and inconspicuous. Our bird shows a dull and contrasting loreal area, which favors the identification as Great Cormorant. Further, although in monochrome here, Great Cormorants would show a dull, lemon-gray lower mandible, while Double-crested Cormorants typically show a brighter, more yellow-orange mandible.

Further confirmatory features of the identification are the darker throat and upper breast (whiter with a contrasting darker belly in Double-crested) and the palish ear-coverts (typically darker and more solid in most, but probably not all, Double-crested).

Also, Great Cormorants are noticeably bigger bodied and heavier-billed, although assessing these features on a lone bird, without the other species present for comparison, is of limited use.

This Great Cormorant was photographed by me on the Scilly Isles, United Kingdom, in October 1991.

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



Photo Challenge 38 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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ABOUT OUR COVER

Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*)

by Paul Fusco

Paul Fusco has again contributed the front cover artwork for our Journal. His talents, especially in art and photography, are used to a great extent in his job with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Wildlife Division. As a Visual Media Designer, many of his drawings and photographs appear in the *Connecticut Wildlife*, a bi-monthly magazine. His photos have also appeared in regional, as well as national birding journals.

The MABEL OSGOOD WRIGHT AWARD – 2002

The following is the presentation of the Mabel Osgood Wright Award by Fred C. Sibley at the Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Ornithological Association on March 9, 2002.

The Mabel Osgood Wright award recognizes a persons' lifetime contributions to ornithology in its broadest sense. Previous recipients represent a wide variety of both professional and amateur ornithologists so the committees' decision to present the award to a mushroom expert this year should not be a surprise.

Mabel Osgood Wright was a pioneer in bird conservation in the 1900's, a leader in popularizing birding and an inspiration to thousands. In a similar manner, this year's recipient has, by his presence, his writings, and his teaching, enriched Connecticut Ornithology by much more than the sum of his own accomplishment.

These accomplishments are massive; he is not only a mushroom expert, but a world class birder, a charismatic tour leader and the world's best field natural history teacher. His knowledge of plants and animals, not just in North America, but in the world is staggering. His ability to impart this to students is extraordinary. His ability to find birds is legendary. His former students work in so many nature-oriented jobs in the Northeast that you are surprised when you find someone who is not a former student.

This is of course Dr. Noble Proctor. A person who started birding at age 5 and has never quit. I will only briefly sketch his accomplishments and awards.

He received his Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut and has been a professor, teaching numerous biology and natural history courses, at Southern Connecticut State University since the 1970's. His former students number in the thousands.

He is an accomplished photographer and writer with numerous books including the latest edition of the Peterson *Field Guide to Eastern Birds* and the outstanding *Manual of Ornithology*. He has been a sought-after tour leader for almost 30 years and taken groups to over 65 countries.

Wayne Peterson of Massachusetts Audubon really wanted to be here to present the award but escaped to Patagonia. He did write a letter recounting his long association with Noble and the last part of this tribute is a fitting summary for this award presentation.

*The following is, in part, a tribute to Noble from his friend
Wayne Petersen:*

I first met Noble in 1965 in the Newburyport, Mass. area where he was birding with his close friend, the late Jim Lane. After we spent a full day birding together, they invited me to join them the next evening at the convention center in Boston for the National Audubon Society's annual convention. Following those two brief encounters, Noble and I at once developed a friendship that was to last a lifetime. As we increasingly spent time together, Noble and I gradually developed a scheme to spend two full months on the road birding, botanizing, and photographing wildlife between New England and Key West in 1966. That trip galvanized a friendship that has never varied in the nearly 39 years since.

But personal recollections aside, it is Noble Proctor the naturalist, teacher, mentor, author, scientist, and conservationist that is being recognized here today. Not only through the many generation of students that he has inspired through his academic career at Southern Connecticut State University, but also through his years working as an international tour leader, lecturer, and humanitarian. Noble has touched the lives of all who ever had the privilege of knowing or working with him. His list of accomplishments in the field of Connecticut ornithology is too lengthy to recount, and his influence beyond the borders of the Nutmeg State is international in scope. Time and distance do not permit me to provide a more thorough accounting of all that Noble has given to Connecticut's natural history legacy, but I suspect that all who sit in this room today could provide their own reasons why he is abundantly deserving to receive this award. It is only fitting that the Mabel Osgood Wright Award, the Connecticut Ornithological Association's most distinguished tribute, be presented to Noble Proctor, truly one of the greatest North American naturalists of our time.

THE 2001-2002 CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Stephen P. Broker

One of the major stories of the 2001-2002 Connecticut Christmas Bird Count season was the extreme warmth and dryness that the state experienced through the fall and early winter period leading up to the counts. These warm, dry conditions persisted through mid and late December and into January, with the result that most of the 17 state counts were conducted under the warmest conditions on record, and most were unaffected by precipitation. Birding out in the field and at feeders was fairly easy and comfortable, and there was no need to brace oneself for chilling winds, frigid temperatures, slick roads, deep snow banks, or fogged up optical equipment. It was as though we were birding at lower latitudes in the East. Species and numerical results, however, did not necessarily reflect any significant increase in semi-hardy birds. Rather, the results fit into an overall pattern of populational increases and decreases that have been establishing themselves over the last two decades.

Highlights of this year's Connecticut Christmas Bird Count include an Eared Grebe at New London, Little Blue Heron at Stratford-Milford, Green Heron at New London, Barnacle Goose at Storrs, Eurasian Green-winged Teal (Common Teal) and Common Moorhen at New Haven, a large alcid species at New London, Blue-headed Vireo at New Haven, Black-throated Green Warbler at Barkhamsted, Wilson's Warbler count week at New Haven, and Lark Sparrow at Storrs. The most remarkable find, however, was a reported MacGillivray's Warbler at Woodbury-Roxbury. This record awaits review by the Avian Records Committee of COA for possible inclusion on the State Species List. Other noteworthy species found include Tundra Swan (three individuals at Litchfield Hills, one at Old Lyme-Saybrook), Common Eider and Orange-crowned Warbler at Westport.

The weather in adjacent New York City was indicative of what Connecticut was experiencing. This was the Big Apple's fifth driest October on record, and the City enjoyed the warmest November (average temperature 52.7 degrees F) and December (average temperature 44.1 degrees F) since official climatological record keeping began 107 years ago (*New York Times*, Sunday, January 6, 2002). Precipitation was at 36% of normal for the three-month period of

October through December. There were five record high days in December leading up to the December 14 start of CBC season. . At home in Connecticut, the Northeast Regional Climate Center reported the following statewide temperature averages and amounts of precipitation: October: 52.6° F, ppt 29% of normal; November: 45.5° F (warmest since 1975), ppt 22% of normal; December: 39.6° F (record high), ppt 56% of normal; January: 33.4° F (6th highest), ppt 40% of normal. (See Cornell News website, www.news.cornell.edu, also www.nrcc.cornell.edu).

The explanation for the unusual warmth was that “the jet stream has been farther to the north than normal . . . so we’re not getting the Canadian air or the severe cold outbreaks that we would normally see” (Cornell News). In fact, the winter of 2001-02 proved to be the warmest on record for the entire northeast region. Water use restrictions recently imposed by Fairfield County attest to the severe lack of rain and snow in the region. The northeast urban centers of Hartford, New York City, Philadelphia, and Atlantic City were particularly hard hit. Hartford’s water deficit reached nearly 16 inches for the period July 2001 through February 2002, and all of Connecticut had greater than a 10-inch deficit by the end of this period. These conditions resulted largely from circumstances that preceded the Christmas Bird Count period.

Focusing more specifically on the weather events of December, Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks and Tweed-New Haven Airport reported light rains just before and following the ten Connecticut counts held on the first weekend of count period (December 15 and 16). These counts experienced partly cloudy skies, light rain only at Storrs and Woodbury-Roxbury, and temperatures reaching the low to mid 40’s in northwest Connecticut and high 50’s on the coast. Stratford-Milford and Barkhamsted counts, held on the second weekend (December 22 and 23), had partly cloudy skies, no precipitation, and highs in the low 40s. Somewhat cooler conditions prevailed for the last weekend of counts (December 29 and 30) and for Pawling/Hidden Valley’s New Years Day count: partly cloudy, no precipitation, highs reaching the high 30s. The only precipitation in the waning days of December was on the 24th. This *Connecticut Warbler* review article has drawn attention in past years to those species suggested by the early winter Christmas Bird Count data to be undergoing major population patterns of increase or decrease. The present analysis is based on the last twenty years of CBC results. I now have compiled cumulative statewide data (as well as regional and count by count results) for the 33-year period 1969-70 through 2001-02. An upcom-

ing article will present a table of the statewide results for the last third of a century and consider in greater depth the changing early winter populations of Connecticut birds. The 2001-02 CBC results indicate a continuation of a number of these population trends.

Six species recorded at 20-year lows include Canvasback, Ring-necked Pheasant, American Tree Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, and Eastern Meadowlark. Swamp Sparrow does not have any identifiable decline in numbers over time, except that there has been a quick drop of 56% over the last two years. Similarly, American Tree Sparrow does not show any steady decline, although an interesting four to five year cycle of high and low numbers is suggested by CBC results. On the other hand, Canvasback, Ring-necked Pheasant, Field Sparrow, and Eastern Meadowlark all show serious declines in numbers, dating back to the mid to late 1980s. Concerns about Canvasback relate to loss of prairie pothole habitat in their northern plains breeding territory. The other three species rely on farmland, fields, and other open country for breeding and wintering populations. The appropriation of open space for human uses (suburbanization) or its conversion to woodlands accounts in part for these and other grassland species declines. (Bevier. 1994, Askins 2000). The picture is much brighter for a number of species fortifying their range expansions into Connecticut or benefiting from concerted efforts at reintroduction to the eastern United States. The most significant birds among the twenty five species recorded this year at 20 year high totals are Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Egret, Brant, Wood Duck, Black and Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Sanderling, Monk Parakeet, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Common Raven, Tufted Titmouse, American Robin, and Fox Sparrow.

As this article goes to press, Bald Eagle is undergoing a veritable explosion in nest building and egg-laying along the Connecticut River and elsewhere. For the first time, some of these nests can be viewed from respectable and appropriate distance by admiring birders. Peregrines – both banded and unbanded birds - seem to be popping up with significantly greater frequency and continuing their attempts to nest on buildings and bridges and at least one cliff face. Common Ravens have expanded their winter and breeding populations and now are nesting through western and eastern uplands and on Central Valley trap rock ridges right down to Long Island Sound. Black Vultures nearly doubled the previous (1997-98) high count of 28, and they are being observed with greater fre-

quency near the coast. Inflated American Robin numbers do attest to the unusually warm fall, as do the high counts for such former "southern species" as Turkey Vulture, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and Tufted Titmouse.

Summarizing individual count results by region, three of six northern counts achieved record high species totals. High honors went to Hartford, which recorded 96 count day and 4 count week species (second highest ever), followed by Litchfield Hills' record high 92 count day and three count week species. Lakeville-Sharon's 78 count day species have been exceeded only once, in 1977-78. Barkhamsted (76 count day species) and Storrs (74 count day species) also set new count records. Among the five mid-state counts, Oxford's 79 count day species were just one behind their record total of 80 species in 1999-2000. Quinnipiac Valley's 93 count day species were second highest ever, and Salmon River's species total was also second highest for this count. Along the coast, New London set a count record with 121 count day species, as did Westport with 120 count day species. New Haven had a very respectable 126 species on count day.

Individual counts enjoyed some good additions to their species lists or excellent finds of rarities in addition to those previously mentioned. Barkhamsted recorded three new species for its count including Black-throated Green Warbler, Red-throated Loon, and Turkey Vulture (count week). Nineteen species were recorded in record highs. Edwin Way Teale - Trailwood added White-crowned Sparrow to its CBC list. Hartford observed Black Scoter for the first time on a CBC, and had the only Red-headed Woodpecker seen this year. Litchfield Hills found its first count day Red-necked Grebe, a species seen here just once previously, as a 1993-94 count week bird. Long-tailed Duck was another good find, and both crossbill species were seen. Lakeville-Sharon reflected the continued expansion of Red-bellied Woodpecker into the northern parts of Connecticut with a record high total. A count week Common Loon and a Horned Grebe were its best rarities. Storrs added five species to its CBC list: Double-crested Cormorant, Barnacle Goose, Black Vulture (count week), Palm Warbler, and Lark Sparrow. A good rarity was Lapland Longspur.

Oxford recorded Common Loon and Vesper Sparrow as new CBC species, and located American Woodcock for the first time since 1984-85. Pawling also added Common Loon to its species list, and Marsh Wren was found here for the second time. Quinnipiac Valley observed both cormorant species, Northern Goshawk, and Common Raven, as well as one of only two House Wrens found

away from the coast. Salmon River's rare species included Common Loon, seven Pied-billed Grebes, a Merlin, and Common Raven (count week). Woodbury-Roxbury added Red-throated Loon and Red-necked Grebe to its list, in addition to the MacGillivray's Warbler. The other non-coastal House Wren was found there.

Greenwich-Stamford had a dozen rarities, including Eurasian Wigeon, Surf Scoter (count week), and Marsh Wren. New Haven recorded the second Connecticut CBC Blue-headed Vireo, a secretive Common Moorhen (Lake Whitney Reservoir), and five Northern Gannets seen off the coast. New London's Black Vulture (new) and Peregrine Falcon accompanied several other great finds. The Peregrine at Old Lyme-Saybrook was a species new to count day. Northern Gannet and Common Raven were other significant finds. Stratford-Milford counted Little Blue Heron for the first time and again staked out Barn Owl for its day in the field. Westport had 18 species in record high numbers and nearly a dozen rarities, including American Bittern, Black Vulture, and Snowy Owl.

Readers are invited to search the table that follows for additional information relating to Connecticut's early winter bird populations.

LITERATURE CITED

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CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS 2001-02

SPECIES	NORTHERN COUNTS						MID-STATE COUNTS					COASTAL COUNTS					State	
	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	Total
Red-throated Loon	1										2	47	27	38	40	15	46	216
Common Loon				CW	CW		1	1		1	1	15	13	56	12	16	17	133
Pied-billed Grebe			3	9	4	2	3	5	5	7	2	14	10	11	9	28	5	117
Horned Grebe	7					2						23	4	33	3	12	29	113
Red-necked Grebe				1							1	1		2				5
Eared Grebe														1				1
Northern Gannet													5	1	3		1	10
D.c. Cormorant						3	4		2	16		7	22	120	45	4	12	235
Great Cormorant									1	6		74	17	56	2	17	14	187
Cormorant, sp.													3			5	5	13
American Bittern															1		1	2
Great Blue Heron	2	6	30	3	4		5	5	18	4	11	55	36	60	27	22	52	340
Great Egret												2		3	1	5	3	14
Little Blue Heron																	1	1
Green Heron														1				1
Black-cr Night-Heron												2	2	CW		3	2	9
Black Vulture				2		CW	CW	17			29	1		3			2	54
Turkey Vulture	CW	5	CW	CW		40	41	4	40	3	57	38	38	52	54	8	30	410
Snow Goose		1	4		1				3			2	CW		2		2	15
Canada Goose	508	1309	11144	2207	12506	1652	1085	1813	4442	491	4019	3250	4606	1749	934	1744	1756	55215
Canada Goose (small)											1							1
Brant			1									252	70	143		79	1196	1741
Barnacle Goose						1												1
Mute Swan	3	2	12	34	8	8	34	38	104	96	39	84	258	161	469	37	152	1539
Tundra Swan				3										1				4
Wood Duck	1		3	6	1		38	1	4	3	6	17	16		8	19	66	189

SPECIES	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	Total
Gadwall			2	12			1	2	5			41	394	15	12	43	42	569
Eurasian Wigeon												1	2					3
American Wigeon			1		2		1		36			93	292	21	18	144	147	755
American Black Duck	127	28	255	130	57	39	19	221	58	248	93	807	788	765	576	853	462	5526
Mallard	574	325	1514	1045	316	186	302	696	768	578	696	1829	2056	1426	938	948	633	14830
Mallard Hybrid	6				2			2					9		4	8	2	33
Northern Shoveler					2								CW	1		2	1	6
Northern Pintail			1	1					2			1	8		10	2	1	26
Gm-wngd Teal (Amer.)			6	12	4				12			13	120	2	5	40	80	294
Gm-wngd Teal (Eur.)													1					1
Canvasback			1	1									3	4	CW	45	9	63
Redhead															6			6
Ring-necked Duck	72	2	2	108	77	129	22	15	115	40	4	271	93	511	54	147	38	1700
Greater Scaup				2								3	2	--	325	120	173	625
Lesser Scaup				6				1				CW	59	6		2		74
Scaup, sp.					8													8
Common Eider																		1
Surf Scoter												CW		46	38		36	120
White-winged Scoter													2	1	26	2	59	90
Black Scoter			1											7	1			9
Long-tailed Duck				CW								252	90	65	23	146	561	1137
Bufflehead	4			16	6		5	5	1	19		504	120	511	81	73	228	1573
Common Goldeneye	9	22		70	32	11		15	1	11		195	49	216	112	141	234	1118

BA - Barkhamsted
 EW - Edwin Way Teale-Trail Wood
 GS - Greenwich - Stamford
 HA - Hartford
 LH - Litchfield Hills
 LS - Lakeville - Sharon
 NH - New Haven
 NL - New London
 OL - Old Lyme - Saybrook
 OX - Oxford
 PA - Pawling NY - CT
 (Formerly Hidden Valley)
 QV - Quinnipiac Valley
 SM - Stratford - Milford
 SR - Salmon River
 ST - Storrs
 WE - Westport
 WR - Woodbury - Roxbury
 CW - Count Period
 --- First time not seen in 20 yrs.
 XX Rare Species
 XX New High Count
 XX New Low Count (Bold)
 XX New Species for Count

CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS 2001-02

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	
Hooded Merganser	193	12	9	126	24	8	30	33	46	50	2	287	95	426	28	98	150	1617
Common Merganser	435	19	128	224	13	2	26	142	109	182	90	715	31	35	29	86	139	2405
Red-br. Merganser												328	48	947	92	261	201	1877
Ruddy Duck	CW			165	76			298	214	17		125	7	107	6	4	68	1087
Duck, sp.						2												2
Bald Eagle	13	1	3	6	2		2	11		8	16	3	1		16	1	1	84
Northern Harrier			8			CW		1	4	1	1		10	6	19	9	2	61
Sharp-shinned Hawk	5	1	18	6	4	3	5	7	12	5	5	20	25	14	9	6	14	159
Cooper's Hawk	4	3	23	5	5	2	2	7	5	3	5	18	12	8	11	2	8	123
Northern Goshawk			1					CW	1	1	CW	2	2	2			1	10
Accipiter, sp.						2												2
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	3	2	2		4	2		2	10	3	12	3	5	9	2	3	63
Red-tailed Hawk	42	22	148	68	81	18	41	81	62	54	69	103	117	24	39	26	40	1035
Rough-legged Hawk											1	1	1					3
Buteo, sp.						1												1
American Kestrel			4		1	1		2	1		1		1	2	CW	1		14
Merlin		1	1							1		1	4	1	2	1		12
Peregrine Falcon			3									1	CW	2	1	1		8
Ring-necked Pheasant	1		4	5	3	3	2	2	12	2	5	1	1	1	2		6	50
Ruffed Grouse	4			2	CW					2		CW			2			10
Wild Turkey	127	5	125	264	205	165	19	178	93	133	117	134	64	7	37	48	84	1805
Clapper Rail													2			1	2	5
Virginia Rail								1					2	3	4			10
Common Moorhen													1					1
American Coot			1	99	4	5		215	18	6		97	12	26	23	11	14	531
Black-bellied Plover														21	35		1	57

SPECIES	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	Total
Killdeer			1	4	5					4		16	28	7	11	---	32	108
Greater Yellowlegs												8	2			4	2	16
Ruddy Turnstone												CW	51	33	94		1	179
Sanderling													114		309	93	---	516
Purple Sandpiper												24	26	71	21		4	146
Dunlin													11	21	265	150	27	474
Common Snipe					1		1		1			1	7	1	5		1	18
American Woodcock							1		1	1	3	1	1		2			10
Black-headed Gull															CW			CW
Bonaparte's Gull												72	2	82	12		4	172
Ring-billed Gull	996	156	1606	576	740	311	506	2531	1051	269	737	1692	2032	640	878	2288	542	17551
Herring Gull	52	29	850	36	25	42	163	774	105	82	212	717	1193	4741	777	1339	903	12040
Iceland Gull			2												1			3
Lesser Bl.-backed Gull			1									1						2
Glaucous Gull			1															1
Great Bl.-backed Gull	5	33	324	4	2	10	8	5	8	25	34	70	208	404	99	158	90	1487
Gull, sp.			5			2												7
large alcid species															1			1
Rock Dove	175	70	2515	280	496	284	448	218	959	72	121	873	1698	423	246	1127	433	10438
Mourning Dove	292	220	1555	615	421	208	153	326	276	97	354	924	697	288	310	237	325	7298
Monk Parakeet												57	175			368	308	908
Barn Owl																	2	2
Eastern Screech-Owl	1		26	18	7	1	2	20	33	6	13	46	9	6	13	2	34	237

BA - Barkhamsted	NH - New Haven	QV - Quinnipiac Valley	CW - Count Period
EW - Edwin Way Teale-Trail Wood	NL - New London	SM - Stratford - Milford	--- First time not seen in 20 yrs.
GS - Greenwich - Stamford	OL - Old Lyme - Saybrook	SR - Salmon River	XX Rare Species
HA - Hartford	OX - Oxford	ST - Storrs	XX New High Count
LH - Litchfield Hills	PA - Pawling NY - CT	WE - Westport	XX New Low Count (Bold)
LS - Lakeville - Sharon	(Formerly Hidden Valley)	WR - Woodbury - Roxbury	XX New Species for Count

CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS 2001-02

SPECIES	NORTHERN COUNTS						MID-STATE COUNTS						COASTAL COUNTS						State
	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	Total	
Great Horned Owl	21	2	11	7	9	2	6	3	8	5	8	21	CW	3	15	---	13	134	
Snowy Owl													1			1	2	4	
Barred Owl	4		3	3	2	2		2	2	1	4	1	1	4	5		7	41	
Long-eared Owl	2								1		1		1	1	1	1	2	10	
Short-eared Owl			CW															CW	
North. Saw-whet Owl	18		4	22	2	4	CW	CW	1	3	6	2		12	4			78	
Belted Kingfisher	15	4	21	10	6	5	7	6	11	16	13	25	24	16	20	17	17	233	
Red-hdd. Woodpecker			1															1	
Red-bld. Woodpecker	39	25	182	62	27	31	29	77	29	48	77	219	68	38	49	32	60	1092	
Yellow-bld. Sapsucker	2	1	6	4	1	1	2	6	3	5	10	12	3	4	24	2	2	88	
Downy Woodpecker	102	49	329	184	72	101	85	282	72	113	133	212	111	96	88	32	107	2168	
Hairy Woodpecker	36	3	81	45	19	15	12	36	6	13	29	57	17	8	16	4	26	423	
Northern Flicker	14	19	160	22	9	22	58	19	36	44	47	36	88	52	53	19	18	716	
Pileated Woodpecker	15	1	2	9	9	2	4	7	1	4	6	6	1				4	73	
Eastern Phoebe							1	1		2		1					1	6	
Northern Shrike			3	2														6	
Blue-headed Vireo														1				1	
Blue Jay	460	161	1026	541	299	234	281	337	183	268	321	716	325	255	325	200	188	6120	
American Crow	595	699	15000	4924	1079	456	977	1182	2188	488	5355	1305	4358	666	772	919	5558	46521	
Fish Crow			8				1	3			2	13	96	1	1	25	10	160	
Common Raven	28			7	12		2	9	2	CW	4							65	
Horned Lark	22		88	7	195	353							38	36	110	70		919	
Black-cpd. Chickadee	1201	300	1150	1624	462	589	407	704	534	548	992	1050	576	745	569	241	488	12180	
Tufted Titmouse	358	162	685	491	140	325	265	434	267	478	554	699	365	280	516	155	336	6510	
Red-br. Nuthatch	13		19	16	2	6	1	1	3	3	3	6	13	10	7	1	2	106	
White-br. Nuthatch	185	99	326	337	103	129	85	195	68	134	204	268	100	76	221	35	106	2671	

SPECIES	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	Total
Brown Creeper	24	5	8	8	4	5	3	17	8	14	14	8	2	2	6	1	3	132
Carolina Wren	16	13	103	8	2	35	14	27	32	60	40	129	70	143	105	31	47	875
House Wren									1		1	1			2	1	1	7
Winter Wren	11		1	6		6	2	5	5	4	8	15	2	8	3	4	1	81
Marsh Wren				4				1				1	2	2	1			11
Golden-crown' Kinglet	180	35	48	105	20	66	70	29	29	63	141	17	27	34	26	9	13	912
Ruby-crowned Kinglet			5	2			1	3	3	3	1	10	4	4	5	2	1	44
Eastern Bluebird	100	70	134	274	130	191	195	127	119	272	496	100	74	50	182	5	56	2575
Hermit Thrush	12		19	9		4	8	4	15	18	21	28	12	30	18	2	9	209
American Robin	663	62	699	2310	30812	72	376	118	921	275	756	1763	447	816	308	183	217	40798
Gray Catbird	1		3	2	2	1	5		5		2	10	8	21	4	4	2	70
Northern Mockingbird	31	18	203	36	14	51	54	106	221	45	59	164	122	165	81	58	59	1487
Brown Thrasher												1	3	4		3		11
European Starling	1927	1970	7307	4075	1515	1779	729	852	4529	530	1334	5118	7041	10619	2650	4051	3287	59313
American Pipit			CW			1			45				3	1		8	1	59
Cedar Waxwing	519		147	548	239	90	67	155	20	157	909	113	63	76	24		36	3163
Orange-crown' Warbler																	1	1
Yellow-rmpd. Warbler	1		5		1		48	2	9	16	41	24	17	72	23	20	18	297
Bl.-thr. Green Warbler	1																	1
Palm Warbler						1				1		1	1	1	1		1	8
MacGillivray's Warbler											1							1
Common Yellowthroat												1				2		3
Wilson's Warbler													CW					CW

BA - Barkhamsted

EW - Edwin Way Teale-Trail Wood

GS - Greenwich - Stamford

HA - Hartford

LH - Litchfield Hills

LS - Lakeville - Sharon

NH - New Haven

NL - New London

OL - Old Lyme - Saybrook

OX - Oxford

PA - Pawling NY - CT

(Formerly Hidden Valley)

QV - Quinnipiac Valley

SM - Stratford - Milford

SR - Salmon River

ST - Storrs

WE - Westport

WR - Woodbury - Roxbury

CW Count Period

--- First time not seen in 20 yrs.

XX Rare Species

XX New High Count

XX New Low Count (Bold)

XX New Species for Count

CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS 2001-02

SPECIES	NORTHERN COUNTS						MID-STATE COUNTS					COASTAL COUNTS						State
	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	Total
Yellow-breasted Chat														4	1			5
Eastern Towhee			2				1		2	1	2	9	10	21	15	9	2	74
Amer. Tree Sparrow	74	59	511	267	223	52	126	171	103	66	139	26	105	30	69	53	58	2132
Chipping Sparrow								1		1		2	6	2				12
Field Sparrow			1	15		3	9		1	23	27	10	8	23	14	2	12	148
Vesper Sparrow							1				1							2
Lark Sparrow						1												1
Savannah Sparrow		2	15			1	26	1	11	1	1		17	4	---	5	2	86
'Ipswich' Sparrow															1	3		4
Fox Sparrow	2	2	18	9	3	7	12	3	4	9	3	50	27	15	11	6	17	198
Song Sparrow	47	31	447	102	17	112	345	120	164	153	226	392	231	314	120	159	168	3148
Swamp Sparrow	3		10	10	2	9	3	7	3	12	3	17	7	11	11	7	3	118
White-thr. Sparrow	125	116	721	255	54	142	344	318	381	277	541	1189	799	695	1104	289	336	7686
White-crn. Sparrow		3	1	1					3		7	1	8			1	1	26
Dark-eyed Junco	653	524	1784	911	491	765	881	768	474	912	1469	1378	366	337	569	199	515	12996
Lapland Longspur						1								6	4	1		12
Snow Bunting			CW	1							2		1	77	12	77		170
Northern Cardinal	111	126	645	208	50	163	207	228	197	159	297	366	293	291	242	103	181	3867
Red-wngd. Blackbird	2	76	1646	56	4	80	23		131	45	21	4	597	248	273	110	32	3348
Eastern Meadowlark									5					8		8		21
Rusty Blackbird	1		1	20	4				1	2	2	1	1	6				39
Common Grackle	1	4004	5921	1	41			CW	4			3	368	5	19	6005	6	16378
Brown-hdd. Cowbird	179	135	467	464	131	33	2		439		20	1	19	1	10	8	28	1937
Baltimore Oriole			2															2
Purple Finch	---	1	12	24	7	18	22	19	6	9	18	14	8		5		3	166
House Finch	162	97	976	432	270	162	383	293	413	354	24	704	717	595	506	268	245	6601

SPECIES	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	Total
Red Crossbill				2							17		2					21
White-wgd. Crossbill				1								4						5
Common Redpoll	46	1	16	34	3		24	9		CW						15	2	150
Pine Siskin	171		3	271	10	54		30	1	2	38	24	4	CW			4	612
American Goldfinch	229	132	696	314	190	194	136	270	311	321	614	603	346	197	247	79	159	5038
Evening Grosbeak	2												1					3
House Sparrow	271	124	1351	380	84	418	463	287	282	348	329	2151	1301	1042	436	1019	321	10607
TOTALS																		
Individuals	12355	11412	63386	25644	51914	9939	9775	14967	20944	8880	22144	33346	35235	32726	17154	25622	22333	417776
CD Species	76	60	96	92	78	74	79	79	93	88	88	116	126	121	122	110	120	
CW Species	2	0	4	3	2	2	2	3	0	2	1	4	5	3	2	0	0	3
Field Observers	26	10	120	54	28	21	30	28	19	42	30	63	52	42	42	25	42	674
Feeder Watchers	4	0	50	13	1	2	3	26	0	2	2	21	7	4	4	1	25	165
Total Observers	30	10	170	67	29	23	33	54	19	44	32	84	59	46	46	26	67	839
Party Hours	99	44.5	394.5	132	77.5	84.8	60.3	75.8	61	89.7	163	219	206	107	124	104	108	2149

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| BA - Barkhamsted | NH - New Haven | QV - Quinnipiac Valley | CW - Count Period |
| EW - Edwin Way Teale-Trail Wood | NL - New London | SM - Stratford - Milford | --- First time not seen in 20 yrs. |
| GS - Greenwich - Stamford | OL - Old Lyme - Saybrook | SR - Salmon River | XX Rare Species |
| HA - Hartford | OX - Oxford | ST - Storrs | XX New High Count |
| LH - Litchfield Hills | PA - Pawling NY - CT | WE - Westport | XX New Low Count (Bold) |
| LS - Lakeville - Sharon | (Formerly Hidden Valley) | WR - Woodbury - Roxbury | XX New Species for Count |

DO YOU HAVE YOUR DIVERS DOWN?

Pitfalls Surrounding the Identification of Red-throated and Arctic Loons

Mark S. Szantyr

In recent years, especially from late fall through early spring, reports of Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*), and at least a few of Arctic Loon (*G. arctica*), show up on rare bird alerts along the East coast. Although some of the Pacific Loon reports turn out to be correct, no Arctic Loon has yet been confirmed in North America away from the West Coast. Clearly, more of these two rarities are reported than actually have been shown to occur based on evidence to date.

Pacific Loon is an arctic nesting bird of North America, extending into northeastern Asia as a breeder. It winters along the Pacific Coast from Alaska to Mexico, with a large proportion of the population off Baja California and western Mexico. Pacific Loons are casual in central and eastern North America north to the Great Lakes and east to the Atlantic coast, with most reports from Maine to Virginia. The Arctic Loon nests across northern Eurasia and has only recently been detected in winter along the Pacific Coast of North America with just over half a dozen verified records from Washington to northern Baja California. All but one record are from coastal bays and lagoons; the one inland record is from a large reservoir on the Columbia River in Washington. Although a sight report from Massachusetts has been cited as possibly this species, the details of the sighting are far from definitive. Other reports along the East Coast have either turned out to be most likely Red-throated Loons or even Common Loons.

So what is happening?

I believe that some honest misidentifications are made. This is not a big surprise as most loons are identified under difficult viewing conditions, such as strong surf, bright sun, great distance, etc. Further, identification of loons in non-breeding plumage is more difficult than many appreciate. Although recent field guides cover loon identification quite well (Dickinson 1999, Sibley 2000), careful study of the regularly occurring species in the field is still needed to improve one's skill.

What are people seeing?

Are Common Loons (*Gavia immer*), being "wishfully thought" into their more unexpected congeners? What else could it be? Well,

it could be that people are misidentifying Red-throated Loons (*Gavia stellata*).

What? How could that be?

Red-throated Loons are so distinctive! They are certainly the easiest loons to identify, right? Not always. Given the more usual distant views under less than ideal conditions, Red-throated Loons can easily be confused with other loons and sometimes for an alcid. Also, I believe that observers are not aware of the age-related variation in Red-throated Loon and may be unfamiliar with the appearance of Red-throated Loon at close range.

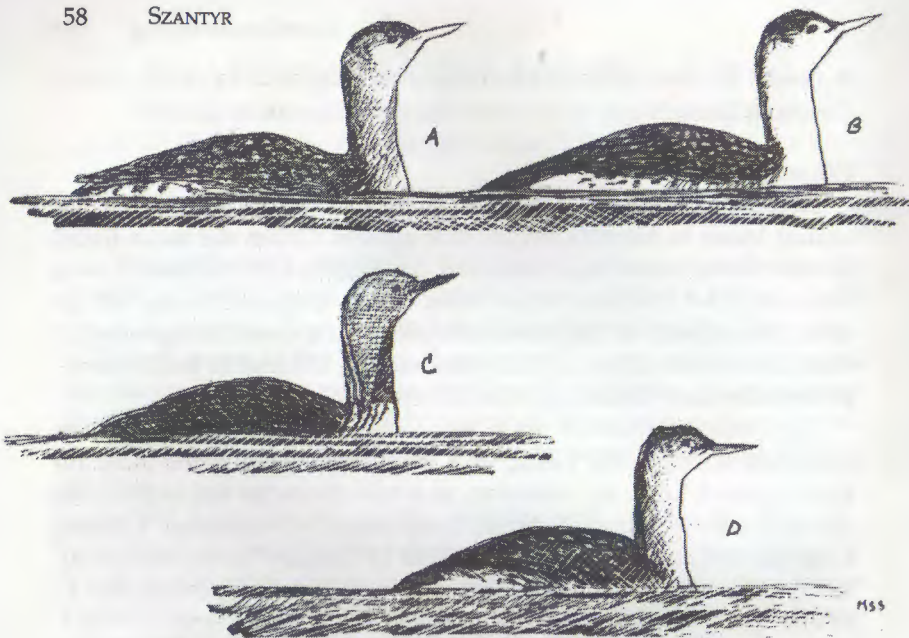
Two major problems seem to be that Red-throated Loons are confused with Pacific Loon, and the white flanks often seen on Red-throated Loon are mistaken as a sole character for identifying Arctic Loon. A reported Arctic Loon from Brownsmead, Clatsop County, Oregon, 26 December 1998 to 16 January 1999 (Tweit et al. 1999) was a Red-throated Loon (examination of photos by L. Bevier, pers. comm.).

Identification of Red-throated Loon.

Red-throated Loon is a fairly common wintering species along the Connecticut coastline, and in most winters it outnumbered Common Loon, especially later in the season. It is surprisingly uncommon to rare on inland waters in the state, and occurrences inland should always be double checked as records of Pacific Loon from the east often come from large inland lakes and reservoirs.

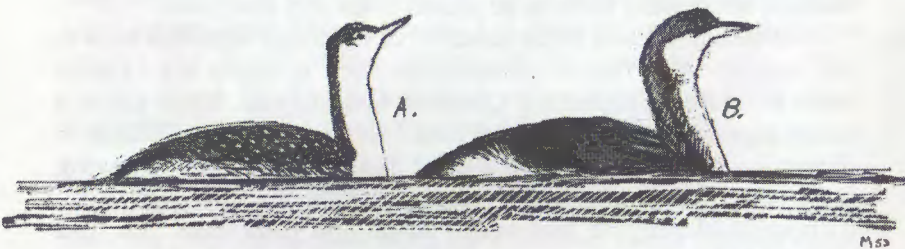
Red-throated Loon is the smallest of the loons although its size can overlap with Pacific Loon. Arctic Loon is larger than Pacific (with overlap), approaching Common Loon in size. Arctic Loon is much bigger than Red-throated Loon. Size can be very difficult to determine with a lone bird at a great distance under poor viewing conditions. When seen well, Red-throated Loon shows some very distinctive identifying features of shape and coloration. The bird appears to have a more or less rounded back, a shallow breast and a rather heavy full throat when compared to its rather small and delicate head and bill. The bill usually appears to be held at an upward angle, forming a continuous line with the throat and this posture is exaggerated by the upward-curving lower mandible. The upper mandible is quite straight and not decurved near the tip as is typical of the other loons. The bill is usually pale though it may darken as the season progresses toward spring.

The upper parts usually show characteristic white flecking formed by pale borders to the tips of its dorsal feathers; this may



Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*)

- A. Juvenile Red-throated Loon
- B. Adult non-breeding Red-throated Loon
- C. Adult breeding Red-throated Loon
- D. Juvenile Red-throated Loon with head in atypical horizontal posture, and plumage showing some transitional characteristics that might allow for confusion with Arctic Loon.



Red-throated Loon, (A) Compared to Arctic Loon, (B) (Both adult, non-breeding plumage)

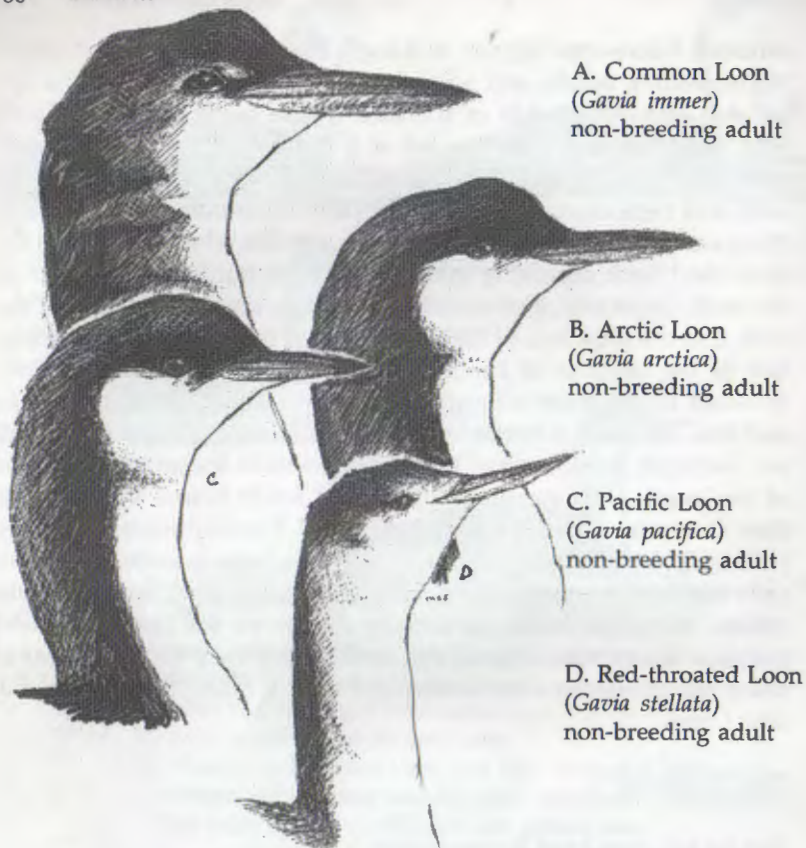
be very difficult to discern under some viewing conditions. Red-throated Loon is generally the palest loon although under certain lighting conditions it can appear starkly black-and-white, which can cause the incautious observer to mistake it for an Arctic/Pacific Loon or even a Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*), or alcid. The face is typically very pale, with the white of the face extending up to and around the eye. Immature and adult Red-

throated Loons can appear strikingly different from one another. Non-breeding adults and some juvenile birds often show the eye isolated in a white side of the face. These birds, with their pale bills, can look very pale headed at a distance. Young birds, however, can also appear quite dark-headed, with streaking in the head and neck causing the eye to appear surrounded in dark feathering and the line of demarcation between the white throat and the dark hind neck occurring more toward the midline of the side of the neck. Typically, Red-throated Loon has a very pale side of the neck and the dark line of the nape appears thin and to be far posterior of the midline of the side of the neck. On the water, Red-throated Loons show a variable amount of white along the flanks and this can have a variable amount of streaking mixed throughout. In flight, Red-throated Loon appears to be the smallest headed of the loons, and usually holds its head lower below the bodyline than Common Loon. Adult Red-throated Loon appears to be very pale in flight, especially in the area of the head and can look dorsally dark and ventrally light, with a clean and even line of demarcation. Immature birds are usually darker on the head and have variably heavy markings on the neck so that they might appear to show the chinstrap often associated with the identification of Pacific Loon.

The Problems

But its bill was held horizontally!

The first point of identification that we all learn that allows us to differentiate between Common Loon and Red-throated Loon is that Common Loon (and Pacific and Arctic) hold their head in a horizontal position, more or less parallel to the horizon while Red-throated Loon typically holds its head pointed somewhat upward, bill pointing variably skyward. The delicate structure of the bill along with the up-curved lower mandible seems to accentuate this character. Be careful! Red-throated loons can and do hold their head horizontally! And guess what...Arctic Loon tends to hold its bill at a slightly upward angle, recalling the head posture of...you guessed it...Red-throated Loon. Under good conditions, the head pattern of pale around the eye and the upswept structure of the lower mandible along with the pale coloration of the bill should still allow for a correct identification but what if the bird is in a rolling surf and in poor light and out from shore a great distance? What if it is a juvenile in transition? What if you really want to see an Arctic Loon?



A. Common Loon
(*Gavia immer*)
non-breeding adult

B. Arctic Loon
(*Gavia arctica*)
non-breeding adult

C. Pacific Loon
(*Gavia pacifica*)
non-breeding adult

D. Red-throated Loon
(*Gavia stellata*)
non-breeding adult

Loons : These typical head shapes and plumage patterns should allow for identification of any loon seen well. Probably the most difficult factor in loon identification is the condition under which most observations are made.

But it showed white in the flanks!

Another identification truism is that if a small basically black-and-white loon shows white in the rear flanks above the waterline, it is an Arctic Loon. This is represented as a confident method for separating Arctic Loon from Common and, especially, Pacific Loons. Now while that might be true, it is not stressed strongly enough in the field guides that Red-throated Loon variably shows white along the flanks above the waterline. This can be especially confusing in late winter when juvenile plumage birds are worn and the seemingly all white underparts contrast with seemingly all dark dorsal aspects of the back, neck and top of the head above the eye. The "white flank" character of Arctic Loon is an upward flar-

ing white patch at sides of rump (over the femoral tract). Also remember that loons go through a wide variety of postures on the water and often rotate their bodies out from under themselves to preen. At such times, even Common Loon can show what appears to be a pale or white flank patch. REMEMBER! The use of the flank patch should ONLY come into play once it has been determined through careful study of other field marks (especially head and neck characters) that the bird is either an Arctic or Pacific Loon. Since both Red-throated and to a lesser extent Common Loon can show a white flank patch at times, going to that character first can easily send the observer down the wrong path.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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SITE GUIDE :
SILVER SANDS STATE PARK,
MILFORD, CONN.

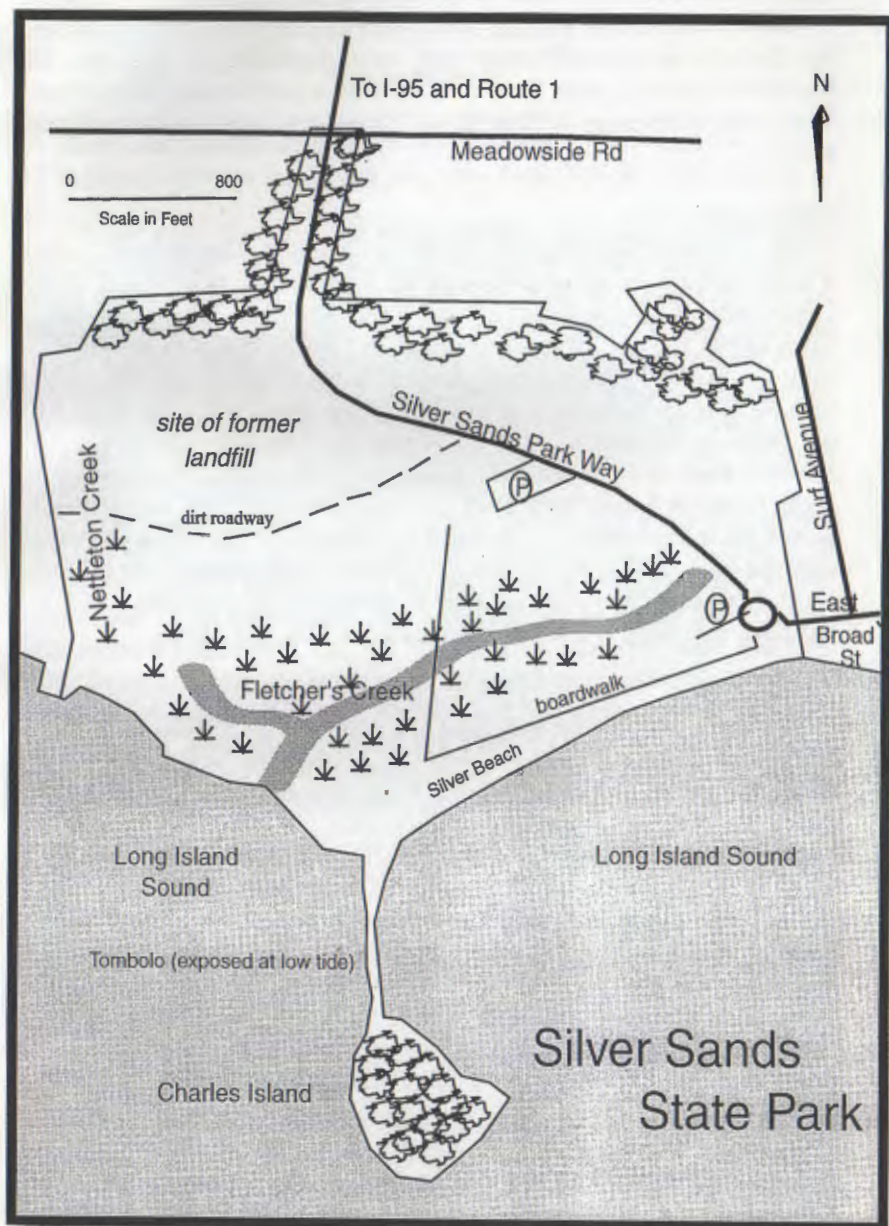
Dwight G. Smith and Arnold Devine

Located along the Milford shore line, Silver Sands State Park covers part of the site of a former landfill and is in the process of being fully developed as Connecticut's fourth shoreline summer recreational park. When completed the park will be about 310 acres with ample parking and with limited recreational and picnic facilities.

Natural habitats within the park include a tidal creek, salt marsh, sandy beach, shrubby thickets, and extensive grassy areas that are kept mowed through most of the year. The park is bordered to the west, north and northeast by thin, shrub-woodlands with residential areas just beyond. The site of the former landfill is now a grassy hillside that is completely fenced in and therefore not directly accessible for birding or for hiking. However, birders can walk along the fence line and scan the grassy hill and trees beyond for raptors and other birds. The small woodlot that marks the northern boundary can also yield migrants and a variety of wintering species.

This state park is small enough to be thoroughly birded in two or three hours. Birders that visit Milford Point may want to include a tour of this site on their way east towards Oyster River and the Greater New Haven Harbor area (or conversely, birders heading west along the shore may elect to visit this site). Best birding opportunities occur during fall, winter, and spring when a variety of birds of prey and waterbirds may be tallied. Long-eared and Short-eared Owls, Northern Harriers, and Rough-legged Hawks are possible during the winter months and Snowy Owls have also been recorded. Fall songbird migrants appear in some variety and numbers.

Charles Island is reputed to be one of the many sites where Captain Kidd buried his treasure in 1699. The island is directly if temporarily accessible from Silver Sands State Park via a gravel bar that is exposed at low tide but hidden beneath the waves at high tide. Access to this island is closed from 1 May through August 31 to protect the heron and egret rookeries that nest among the trees on the island. At other times it is open to the more adventurous birder. If you elect to visit the island when it is open, please



be aware of the time and tide access limits, otherwise you may have to wade or swim back to the mainland.

Silver Sands State Park is not staffed during the winter months but the gate is normally open and limited parking is available. If the gate is closed, park the car legally on a convenient side street such as Surf Avenue or East Broad Street and walk in to bird the park.

Directions

Silver Sands State Park is located in Milford, Connecticut, only a short distance south of Interstate 95. To get there take Exit 35 (Bic Drive, School House Road) off the interstate when heading south. Turn left at the end of the exit ramp and go 0.3 miles to the traffic light on Route 1 (Boston Post Road). (If northbound on Interstate 95 take Exit 35, turn right at the end of the exit ramp, and proceed 0.2 miles to the traffic light on Route 1). Turn left onto Route 1, heading east, and continue 0.2 miles to a traffic light. Watch for the signs to Silver Sands State Park. At the light, turn right onto Silver Sands State Park Road. This road continues for 1.4 miles directly into the park. Inside the park continue to a large parking lot on the right. Maintain the speed limit of 25 miles per hour. Further along the park roadway is a smaller parking lot near the beach.

Birding

We recommend that you bird the park via a 1.5 mile loop that begins from the parking lot over the boardwalk, continues west along the beach and then returns along the old roadway that begins at the western boundary of the park.

The boardwalk begins near the parking lot and extends southward through a salt marsh comprised mainly of reedgrass intermixed with other saltwater vegetation. A walk along the boardwalk over the tidal creek and marsh brings the former nature of this state park sharply into focus. Tires, bottles, bits of lumber, and other trash litter the mud and float in the gray-green waters of the creek, which seem to call out for chemical analysis. The small open pools and quiet waters can be filled with animal life, particularly crabs such as the fiddler crab and Japanese shore crab.

Birders will be much more interested in the variety of herons and egrets that may be spotted feeding in the marsh. From mid-spring into fall you can anticipate spotting Great Blue and Green Herons, Snowy and Great Egrets. Both Black-crowned Night Heron and Yellow-crowned Night Heron are possible, especially during the twilight hours of dawn and dusk. Some of the sparrows

to expect during the nesting season include the Song Sparrow and Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow. Savannah Sparrow is a relatively common fall and winter species.

Beyond the boardwalk turn right and walk along the sandy beach, heading west for about 0.5 miles. During the fall migration plovers and peeps can be common, especially Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Semipalmated and Least Sandpipers. Herring, Ring-billed, and Black-backed Gulls, and terns (mainly Common) are always possible along this stretch of sandy beach. Bonaparte's Gull often shows up during fall and spring migrations and is also possible during winter. Three rare but possible wintering gulls include Glaucous, Iceland, and Lesser Black-backed. Dunlin and Sanderlings are regular in winter as well.

The near shore waters may host a variety of water birds at any time of year but numbers and variety decrease during summer, especially during peak recreation periods. Waterfowl may include American Black Duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Canvasback, Bufflehead, Greater Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Long-tailed Duck, scoters, and Red-breasted Merganser. Common and Red-throated Loons are uncommon winter visitors. Double-crested Cormorant can be spotted throughout the year but is less common in winter. Great Cormorant is also fairly regular from fall through early spring. Offshore rarities have included Black Scoter, Red-necked Grebe, and Thick-billed Murre (extremely rare).

Turn right at the west end of the park just before the residential areas and follow the former roadway through the thicket and marsh grasses. Explore the scrubby growth of woods, which can yield a few species of songbirds at almost any time of year. This little wood is best known among birders for harboring an occasional Long-eared Owl or Northern Saw-whet Owl in winter. After birding the woods walk north along the roadway for about 100 yards then turn right and continue along the old roadway that skirts the former landfill on your left. (This old roadway takes you back to the parking lot). This is one of the best areas to spot winter raptors. While you can't enter the fenced area there are enough vantage spots to give a good view of the grassy mound of the former landfill and the trees that mark its northern border. Both Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks can sometimes be spotted in the trees—Red-tails much more frequently than the Rough-legged Hawks. Northern Harriers are often spotted hunting just over and along the grassy hill. Cooper's Hawk, American Kestrel, Merlin, and Peregrine Falcon are occasional from fall to spring.

Before returning to the parking lot you may want to explore the grassy and shrubby area between the roadway and the marsh. In the fall this area can harbor Horned Lark and a variety of sparrows. The north side of the landfill may be worth a check during winter and spring for semi-hardy winter holdouts.

Charles Island Adventure

This small, heavily wooded island is linked to Silver Sands State Park by a narrow gravel bar (called a tombola) about 0.25 miles in length. The gravel bar is exposed for several hours at low tide but underwater at high tide so visits to the island must be brief—be sure to return before the walkway disappears beneath the waves, otherwise you will have to wade, knee-deep, through water.

From May through July Charles Island hosts a heron colony, which contains primarily Snowy and Great Egrets, Black-crowned Night Herons, and Glossy Ibis. During the nesting season the island is off-limits to birders and wildlife enthusiasts. At other times this island may provide a birding adventure in search of winter foraging flocks, fall migrants that stop over to rest and feed, and spring migrants that use this as their first landfall after crossing Long Island Sound.

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BOOK REVIEW

Jamie Meyers

Rare and Elusive Birds of North America, by William Burt (2001, 208 pages, Universe Publishing Inc., New York, NY, \$39.95, hardcover).

Black Rail. Swainson's Warbler. Baird's Sparrow. The very names of these secretive species conjure up images of mystery in the minds of most birders. Connecticut resident William Burt has spent two decades studying and photographing many of North America's least observed birds. His first book, the critically acclaimed *Shadowbirds*, focused solely on the natural history of rails. While some of this latest release reprises the work that appeared in that book, the cast of elusive characters is expanded here to twenty species that represent some of the least observed and understood species in North America.

"The quest" is a common theme that runs through many of our great literary works. As such, this handsome volume could be looked at as avian literature, in the spirit of a birding Kerowac or Hemingway. As Mr. Burt notes in his introduction, it's a combination of stories and pictures, but to me it's more than that. It's hard to place a label on *Rare and Elusive Birds of North America*; while it resembles a coffee-table book, it has more substance than that. Neither is it just a book full of excellent photographs, although the photos are a key component. Nor is it totally just a travelogue, as each species account contains a generous amount of natural history. Indeed, it's a little of each.

If you enjoy excellent bird photography, this volume might well be worth its price just for the photos. Not only are the birds captured in clear detail, but also they're framed in contextual situations that bring the stories to life, and tell stories of their own. My favorite sets of photos are those of a Least Bittern taken at a nesting location in Old Lyme. The cover shot is a stunner, showing an adult bird peeking through some dense marsh vegetation, while several downy young sit hidden off to the side of the shot. There are several inside that I like even better, showing the species in full color and totally within its element, working its way acrobatically through the greenery in ways we all know they do but seldom see. Similarly, while most of us have seen American Bitterns here and there, how many of us have come face to face with this stately bird at its nest? Or enjoyed views of a nest full of prehistoric-looking fledglings? Taking us places where many of us have never been is the magic that makes this book shine, and there is plenty of that in just the fifty-seven photographs which are sprinkled amongst the text.

One who enjoys travel and visiting diverse locations will also find much to like here. During the course of a short 200 pages, the action moves from the marshes of Old Lyme to the canebrakes of South Carolina to the prairies of North Dakota and Manitoba and many places in between. Mr. Burt proves himself as good a writer as he is a photographer, taking small details and weaving them seamlessly into the stories. I could pretty much hear and feel the insects buzzing around my head as I was reading about a nighttime search for Black Rails, and sense the overwhelming flat darkness as I was following the account of a search for Henslow's Sparrows in Iowa. I particularly enjoyed the brief non-birding vignette about a trip down US 13 in Delaware, a road I myself have traveled many times.

In addition to the photographs, the obvious love and respect Mr. Burt shows for his subjects runs through this volume. His own words, in describing locating a particularly territorial Poor-Will in Nebraska, are an example: "And the bird himself, so close, he was endearing, almost comical for the big-eyed, big-headed look and petite body; yet he was so self-possessed, and fearless. This one had pluck, and personality. He was the reward: the one worth waiting for." Each chapter is its own mini-drama, and like all good dramas the stories run a gamut of emotions and mood. There was a bit of amusement in his account of finding American Bittern nests in a field in North Dakota (and yes, they nest in fields, not bogs, which surprised me), suspense in his arduous efforts to find a Swainson's Warbler nest, and heartbreak when he finds that the five young Connecticut Warbler chicks he'd been watching had come to an untimely end early in their ill-fated lives.

Over the course of the proceedings, a number of notable characters pop up, present and past. Henry David Thoreau, Arthur Cleveland Bent and a host of ornithologists from previous generations join modern-day experts in the accounts. Of particular interest to Connecticut birders might be Mr. Burt's loving telling of a photographic quest with an 85-year old Roger Tory Peterson for Least Bitterns in Old Lyme. In many ways, the combination of superb photography and flawless writing is an extension of the work of those pioneer naturalists.

If there is any criticism I could offer up, it would be that some eager birder might read this volume and be tempted to sloppily follow in his footsteps. "Don't try this at home" was a phrase that went through my mind more than once as I was reading the accounts. Many of the species he writes about are uncommon, and their habitats sensitive and sadly disappearing. To his credit, Mr. Burt himself emphasizes the same point.

But that's a small objection, and it shouldn't dissuade anyone from enjoying this well-crafted labor of love from one of Connecticut's own. Recommended.



CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Greg Hanisek

FALL, AUGUST 1 THROUGH NOVEMBER 30, 2001

Autumn, our longest reporting period, normally produces a broad array of species, and this season did not disappoint. Combine all those birds with an ever-growing numbers of birders scouring the state, and the rarity bar inevitably gets raised. Regular but uncommon species such as Lincoln's Sparrows and even Philadelphia Vireo are being reported in numbers that make individual notation impossible. We usually get a few Yellow-breasted Chat reports, but this fall we got 15. Connecticut Warblers are notoriously difficult to find, but observers turned up about 10, along with an equal number of Mourning Warblers. A number of irruptive species spiced up the mix in November. Add to this a nice collection of rarities scattered throughout the four months, and a picture of ornithological richness comes into focus.

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

Single Red-throated Loons were good inland finds November 24 at both Lake Waramaug in New Preston (GH et al.) and Bantam Lake in Litchfield (MD). Red-necked Grebes were noted throughout November on Bantam Lake, with a high of three on November 7 (RBe). Staging Pied-billed Grebes built to nine on October 11 at Laurel Reservoir in Stamford (PDu) and 19 on October 26 at Bantam Lake (DRo et al.).

Totally unexpectedly was a storm-petrel encountered September 30 as it flew over Station 43 in South Windsor. It was believed by observers to likely be

a Leach's Storm-Petrel (DCr), and details provided to ARCC suggest that species. It was learned subsequently that on the same day this species was seen on both Block Island and Martha's Vineyard during a second straight day of northeast winds (fide FM). An American White Pelican seen and photographed October 18 in Stamford generated a handful of subsequent reports (PDu). After a summer that produced a large number of Brown Pelican sightings as far north as Barnegat Bay in New Jersey, a single immature was seen September 19-20 at Juniper Point, Groton, and in Connecticut waters between Groton and Fish-

ers Island, N.Y., where it fed in the wake of fishing boats with gulls (MH). Two Great Cormorants on November 17 at Bantam Lake extended this species' recent trend of inland appearances (DRo).

American Bitterns continue to be found in good numbers along the coast in fall and winter, with an especially noteworthy three on October 16 at Great Island in Old Lyme (TH). The most unexpected one was at a small pond in Newington on September 3 (AS). A Least Bittern, seldom noted in migration, was at Sandy Point, West Haven, September 5-6 (PF). A very late immature Little Blue Heron was present through the end of November at Frash Pond in Stratford (CWs); three were at Hammonasset Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP) in Madison, on September 23 (SK). A Black-crowned Night Heron wandered up the Naugatuck River to Waterbury August 7 (RN); singles were at Bantam Lake on August 2 (RK), September 27 (JE) and October 7 (RN). The three Cattle Egrets for the season were singles October 22 at Lighthouse Point (GH), November 9 in Old Lyme (TH), and November 16 in Middlefield (KC). Single Glossy Ibis wandered inland August 26 to New Hartford (JMe) and Hartford (PCi).

The following **Black Vulture** reports are from parts of the

state where they remain rare to uncommon: east of the Connecticut River, one was in Mansfield November 6 (MSz); in the Hartford area, one was at Brainard Airport November 10 (PCi); and near the coast, four were in Guilford September 8 (fide DS), two were in Hamden October 22 (AB), two were in Milford October 23 (NH), and one was in Killingworth November 9 (LF).

WATERFOWL THROUGH RAPTORS

The only **Tundra Swans** for the season were seen on November 17: one at Watch Rock in Old Lyme (BD) and two the same day as flyovers at Lighthouse Point (BB). Three **Greater White-fronted Geese** for the season consisted of two in Mansfield November 14-23 (MSz, SMO) and one at Farmington Meadows on November 25 (PCi). On October 21, 200+ **Snow Geese** dropped into farm fields at Southbury Training School (DL). An unusual number of **Brant** were reported inland, including three at Globe Hollow Reservoir in Manchester to October 26 (BA), three at Batterson Pond in Farmington on October 28 (PCi), and one the same day at North Farms Reservoir in Wallingford (AB). Others singles were at Bantam Lake October 12-19 (RK), Triangle Lake in Colebrook October 22

(RHo), on a ballfield in Falls Village in late October (AGi), and in the Southbury-Woodbury area October 27-November 11 (RN).

At Station 43 marshes in South Windsor, a spectacular arrival of 500+ Wood Ducks was counted at dusk on September 3 (CEk). Station 43 also produced a good total of 11 Blue-winged Teal October 6 (SK), and up to 14 were present through September 22 at Quinebaug Valley Fish Hatchery in Central Village (RD), along with one Northern Shoveler (RD). However, the high count for Blue-winged Teal was 22 on September 11 at White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield (DRo et al.). August 25 was an early date to have as many as 17 Green-winged Teal at Cemetery Pond in Litchfield (DRo). A count of 19 Gadwall November 18 at White Memorial was good for an inland site (DRo). Two Eurasian Wigeon were at Konold's Pond in Woodbridge on November 26 (KH).

A Redhead visited Bantam Lake November 12 (JE). A female King Eider arrived November 17 at HBSP and stayed through period's end (C&SR et al.). Among widespread reports of smaller numbers, 34 Black Scoter were at Batterson Pond on October 28 (PCi) and 65 were at Nepaug Reservoir in Canton the same day (JMe). A

White-winged Scoter August 12 at HBSP presumably summered on the Sound (MSz), and the best inland count was five at Bantam Lake October 26 along with a Long-tailed Duck (EA et al.). Another Long-tailed Duck was there November 17 (DRo), and one visited Nepaug Reservoir October 30 (JMe). The season's only inland Red-breasted Mergansers were two November 26 at Bantam Lake (DRo). Ruddy Ducks peaked at 80 on November 26 at Bantam Lake (DRo).

Ospreys lingered to November 26 in East Haddam (TH, HG) and November 27 at Bantam Lake (EA). Lighthouse Point (which had 13,613 raptors for the season) logged 618 Sharp-shinned Hawks on October 7 and 1,561 on October 8 for an excellent two-day total of 2,169 (SMa, GH). Broad-winged Hawks made a strong push on the classic date of September 15, with 5,000 each at Johnnycake Mountain in Burlington and Chestnut Hill in Litchfield (fide NC). In a very slow season for Rough-legged Hawks, one was at Lordship November 13 (DV, JKi). Single Golden Eagles were nice finds at Cove Island Park in Stamford October 28 (PDu) and over Middletown November 9 (MSz); an early one appeared September 15 at White Memorial (DRo). Two Peregrines were on the Gold Star Bridge in Groton October 25 (RD).

RAILS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

The stellar Virginia Rail population in White Memorial Foundation produced a count of 34 on September 15 at Little Pond (DRo). Bantam Lake held 80 American Coot November 27 (EA). There were three Sandhill Crane reports: HBSP September 17 (S&CR) and September 27 (EN), and Stratford Great Meadows October 18 (BK). A good overall showing by American Golden Plovers was topped by 27 at Sikorsky Airport in Stratford on September 24 (FM). The latest was November 4 at Milford Point (DV). Three Semipalmated Plovers were late on November 19 at Milford Point (DV et al.). In what was likely a post-breeding group of this increasing nester, 16 American Oystercatchers were on Shea Island in Norwalk August 3 (JJ). An American Avocet, a species known for quick-hit appearances in the state, offered ample opportunity for birders to catch up with it October 28 to at least November 11 at HBSP (CR, m.ob.).

Cemetery Pond in Litchfield produced a good inland total of 15 Lesser Yellowlegs August 9 (DRo); two days later the same spot held 13 Solitary Sandpipers (DRo). A lone Solitary Sandpiper, seldom reported in October, was at Northwest Park in Windsor on October 7 (PDe). An Upland Sandpiper was a

good find at Nepaug Reservoir in New Hartford August 25 (JMe), a day that also brought singles to HBSP (EN) and Sikorsky Airport (FM); others were at Windham Airport August 5 (SMo) and at HBSP August 16 (LK). Along with a scattering of single Whimbrels along the coast, five were at Barn Island, Stonington, on September 20 (GW). The season's only Marbled Godwit cooperated for many of the 65 participants in COA's Shorebird Workshop August 19 at Sandy Point (DS et al.). The only Hudsonian Godwit was at Milford Point on September 9 (FG). The best count of Red Knot was 13 on August 27 at Sandy Point (NB).

A very late Least Sandpiper lingered to November 19 at Mondo Ponds in Milford (DV). Cemetery Pond produced an inland high of 75 Least Sandpipers, along with one White-rumped Sandpiper, on August 25 (DRo, MD). Among the usual scattering of Western Sandpipers were three at Milford Point on August 7 (MSz), with the latest report October 1 from Seaside Park, Bridgeport (CB). Baird's Sandpiper included two at Sandy Point August 28 (LK, RP), one was at HBSP September 14-16 (PDe, PF) and up to two at Milford Point September 11-14 (AGr, RJ et al.). Pectoral Sandpipers were widespread in

small numbers both inland and along the coast (SK et al.). Stilt Sandpipers were scarce with just the following singles reported: August 8-9 at Milford Point (NB), August 11-12 at HBSP (PCi), and September 9 at Menunkestesuck Island in Westbrook (PCo). A Buff-breasted Sandpiper appeared August 27 at Sikorsky Airport, Stratford (GH) with a high of four there on September 22 (DN); one was at HBSP September 26-27 (RA, EN). A count of 15 Common Snipe at Lord's Cove in Old Lyme on November 30 was good for so late in the season (HG). Up to two Long-billed Dowitchers were at Great Island, Old Lyme, from September 27 to October 16 (TH), and one was in Stratford October 20 (NB).

GULLS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

An impressive 2,860 Laughing Gulls were counted coming into Holly Pond, Stamford, on September 24 (PDu, FG). A movement brought 485 Ring-billed Gulls and 14 Great Black-backed Gulls to Bantam Lake November 18 (DRo et al.). A Lesser Black-backed Gull first arrived September 21 at HBSP (EN), closely followed by one September 29 at Cove Island Park in Stamford (PDu); the latter remained through the end of the period.

Milford Point held 4,000 stag-

ing Common Terns on August 15 (DS). Five Forster's Terns were on the Connecticut River in Lyme on August 5 (HG), and eight at Cove Island Park in Stamford on October 8 were the most along the coast (PDu). The only Caspian Terns reported were three at Short Beach, Stratford, on September 25 (NB) and one at Sandy Point August 15 (NB). A Royal Tern was at Sandy Point August 20 (NB). Single Black Terns were at Milford Point August 1 (NB) and August 28 (CWe) and Sandy Point August 24 (NB).

A White-winged Dove was reported September 10 from a yard in Sterling. The same yard hosted the state's first fully documented record for this species in May 1997. That bird was videotaped (LD). Barn Owls were reported from Lighthouse Point October 14 (NR) and Milford November 11 (SH). At least 10 Snowy Owls for the season, scattered all along the coast, made for a very strong fall showing (m.ob.). At least one emaciated bird was taken into rehab (MK). A nocturnal foray at Bent of the River Audubon Sanctuary in Southbury on November 23 produced a Great Horned Owl, a Long-eared Owl, and four Northern Saw-Whet Owls (JL et al.). At HBSP four Northern Saw-whet Owls were present November 4 (JHo et al.).

A flight of 79 Common Nighthawks passed over White Memorial August 25 (DRo, JE). A female type *Selasphorus hummingbird* was seen in a community garden in Storrs on September 17 (MSz). Another visited flowers in a Southington yard October 6-10 (JA), and an unidentified hummer zipped by Lighthouse Point November 12 (FG, JZ). In addition to the usual fly-bys at Lighthouse Point, a juvenile Red-headed Woodpecker visited a Waterbury yard October 17 (MSz), and one was in Southbury October 21 (RN et al.).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

Lighthouse Point recorded a late Eastern Kingbird October 14 (NR). Two **Western Kingbirds** for the season included a fly-by November 5 at Lighthouse Point (GH), and an unusually cooperative one that stuck around in a West Hartford park October 8-13 (DCo et al.). Willow/Alder Flycatchers manage to slip away in the fall with little notice, but an alert observer spotted one September 4 in a Newtown yard (RBa). A timely flurry of Yellow-bellied Flycatchers included up to three on September 2 at Bluff Point (DP). Single Olive-sided Flycatchers were in Canton August 11 (JMe) and tightly clustered a bit later in Cheshire August 24 (LB), White Memorial

August 25 (MD), New Hartford August 26 (JMe) and Bluff Point August 28 (FN).

A very late Red-eyed Vireo was seen November 17 at HBSP (BD), and a Blue-headed Vireo, a species more inclined to linger, was in a New Haven yard November 27 (fide JZ). The first of about 20 Philadelphia Vireo reports came on August 23 in West Hartford (PCi). Common Raven is now widespread but spotty throughout the state; especially good counts were 12 in Canaan on October 21 (PCi) and 10 at White Memorial September 15 (DRo et al.). A late Barn Swallow was noted on November 17 at Lighthouse Point (BB), and a Northern Rough-winged Swallow was late there October 21 (PDe, FM).

A noteworthy October 7 flight at Bluff Point included more than 500 Black-capped Chickadees (DS). A good movement of Red-breasted Nuthatches got off to an early start with reports on August 14 in Killingworth (DRu) and New Milford (AD), followed by 20 at Bluff Point September 2 (DP) and 25 there on September 11 (DP). Two Marsh Wrens were still at Little Pond on November 27 (DRo). At least four **Sedge Wrens**, including three singing males, were present for most of August on private property in Old Lyme (HG et al.). The habitat was wet field with grasses, sedges and patches of

Phragmites. A silent bird was seen carrying food on August 21, but a subsequent search for nests was unsuccessful. One migrant Sedge Wren was in a Hartford area cemetery September 28-30 (PCi et al.).

Wood Thrushes clear out quickly and quietly on fall migration, but one was in a Newtown yard September 13 (RBA); another at White Memorial on October 29 was extraordinarily late (JE). A pre-dawn flight in Southbury on September 4 produced an estimate of 200 Veeries calling overhead (RN), and the big October 7 flight at Bluff Point produced 40+ Swainson's Thrushes (DS). A Gray-cheeked thrush was calling overhead at dark September 16 in Waterbury (MSz). The 10,000+ American Robins and 300+ Eastern Bluebirds logged on October 27 at Lighthouse Point is indicative of the good flights regularly noted there (BB). Two American Pipits were early September 5 at Mansfield Hollow Dam in Windham (MSz).

Warblers tend to spread out over the long fall season, but Bluff Point offers a window on their movements. Early September produced some good flights with high species counts, such as 800 warblers of 21 species on September 11 and 750 warblers of 20 species on September 12 (DP). The second half of September produced several

dates when 15 to 18 species were noted, with 1,300 warblers of 16 species on October 7 (DS). Seldom seen in fall migration, a Golden-winged Warbler was at Bluff Point in Groton September 29 (FN). An Orange-crowned Warbler, usually encountered along the coast, was at White Memorial September 18 (DRo, JE); singles were at Bluff Point September 23, 26 & 29 (DS, FN, GW) and at HBSP October 30 (DTr) and November 17 (BD). Cape May Warblers were noted in Woodbury August 19 (RN), Wethersfield September 28 (PCi) and at Bluff Point September 5 (DP) and September 30 (DS). A late American Redstart appeared October 28 in Canton (JMe). A Northern Waterthrush was on the move October 1 at Cove Island in Stamford (PDu). The migrant trap at Cove Island also produced a Hooded Warbler September 14. A Canada Warbler was late October 15 in Orange (PN).

GROSBEAKS THROUGH NORTHER FINCHES

The season's only Blue Grosbeaks were immatures October 5 in Hamden (JZ) and October 27 at Cove Island (PDu, AC). In addition to flyovers at coastal watchpoints, single Dickcissels were at a Madison feeder September 28 (JC); in Stratford October 3 (DV) and October 21 (DS); at Cove Island October 11-12 (PDu); and in a New Haven

yard October 22 (DRd). The first American Tree Sparrow was reported October 31 at White Memorial (JGr). A Chipping Sparrow with young visited a Newtown yard on the late date of September 4 (RBa); one lingered to November 8 in Hamden (J&CZ). The season's **Clay-colored Sparrows** were at Cove Island September 29 to October 13 (PDu, AC) and at HBSP October 20 (JGa). "Ipswich" Sparrow was first noted October 16 at Great Island, Old Lyme (TH) and October 23 at Cove Island (PDu). Two Grasshopper Sparrows at Northwest Park in Windsor were accompanied by a juvenile August 9 (PCi). A Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow appeared September 24 at Cove Island, Stamford (PDu). We're still working out the migration window for this species, but this date may be near the front end of the movement.

Among a wealth of individual Vesper Sparrow reports were high counts of four on October 21 at Silver Sands State Park in Milford (DS), three at Crook Horn Road in Southbury October 14 (RN), and two at Wallingford Community Gardens October 28 (AB). A **Lark Sparrow**, a first for the Storrs area, was discovered October 30 at Lot W; it was seen through the end of the period (SMo et al.). The high count of Fox Sparrows was 10 in mid-November

at the White Memorial feeders (DRo). A juvenile Dark-eyed Junco was seen August 17 in good breeding habitat in Thomaston, south of its usual nesting haunts in the state (MSz); a junco August 30 at Northwest Park in Windsor was more likely an early migrant (PDe).

A Baltimore Oriole was still on the move November 7 at HBSP (BM). Three **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** for the season, surprisingly all males in September, consisted of one September 4 at Sherwood Island State Park in Westport (PSo) and two September 11 in Ledyard (FN). Most of the state's fall records are later. Up to 300 Rusty Blackbirds in Simsbury October 22 (JK) were an unusually large and heartening number; White Memorial held 147 on October 25 (DRo). A high of nine **Boat-tailed Grackles** occurred at Sikorsky Airport, Stratford on September 5 (MR); these were presumably a couple of family groups from the nearby breeding outpost at Stratford Great Meadows.

The only **Pine Grosbeaks** reported were two on November 9 in Canaan (PCa) and up to three overhead on November 12 at McLean Game Refuge in Granby (MSz). **Red Crossbill** generated widespread reports of small flocks, mostly in November and most consistently in pines along the coast (i.e., at

HBSP). The best inland reports were six on Canaan Mountain on November 21 (MSz) and seven in Danielson on November 29 (GW). **White-winged Crossbill** presented the same scenario, but in addition a number of singles and small groups were noted at hanging sunflower and thistle feeders throughout the state. Most feeder visits were of short duration. The best inland counts were ten in Woodbury on November 3 (RN) and six at a Granby feeder October 30 (JW). There were scattered reports of Common Redpolls in November (m.ob.). Pine Siskins were noted as early as September 15 at Lighthouse Point, with counts of 300 per day noted there in late October (BB et al.). An extraordinary flock of 130+ visited feeders in a Sterling yard in the last week of November (RD). Evening Grosbeaks produced a few reports in October and November, followed by an early arrival September 27 in Greenwich (MSa).

[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 in-

cluded in the field notes].

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Greg Hanisek, 175 Circuit Ave., Waterbury, CT 06708

Editor's Note:

The first confirmed nesting of Black Vultures has been recorded in Connecticut.

A nest, with eggs was found and photographed on April 1, 2002 in the Kent area by Patrick Redmond.

A follow-up article with photos will be forthcoming in the July 2002 issue of *The Connecticut Warbler*.



PHOTO CHALLENGE

Julian Hough

ANSWER TO PHOTO CHALLENGE 38

Scanning through an assembled throng of gulls in a coastal parking lot, we see that one bird stands out as being smaller than the surrounding Ring-billed Gulls, maybe a Bonaparte's?

The only small gulls to regularly occur in Connecticut are Bonaparte's and two European species - Black-headed and Little Gull.

Plumage-wise, the dark-centered wing-coverts, tertials and black tail-band (just visible in the photo) indicate a first-winter or first-summer plumage. The bill is slightly longer and heavier than either Little Gull or Bonaparte's. It appears palish with a dark tip, a pattern at odds with Little Gull or Bonaparte's Gull, which show an all-black bill and are smaller and thinner than our mystery bird.

In life, the color of the bill and legs would appear bright fleshy-orange and cement the identification as a Black-headed Gull.



The dark-centers to the wings also would be more blackish, less brown on both Little and Bonaparte's Gulls at this age, making them appear more crisp and contrasting, especially in flight.

While Black-headed and Bonaparte's Gulls are more alike in size and structure, Little Gulls are very different in jizz, being squat, compact and short-necked, quite unlike our mystery bird.

This first-year Black-headed Gull was photographed by Jay Kaplan in Florida in 1973.

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



Photo Challenge 39 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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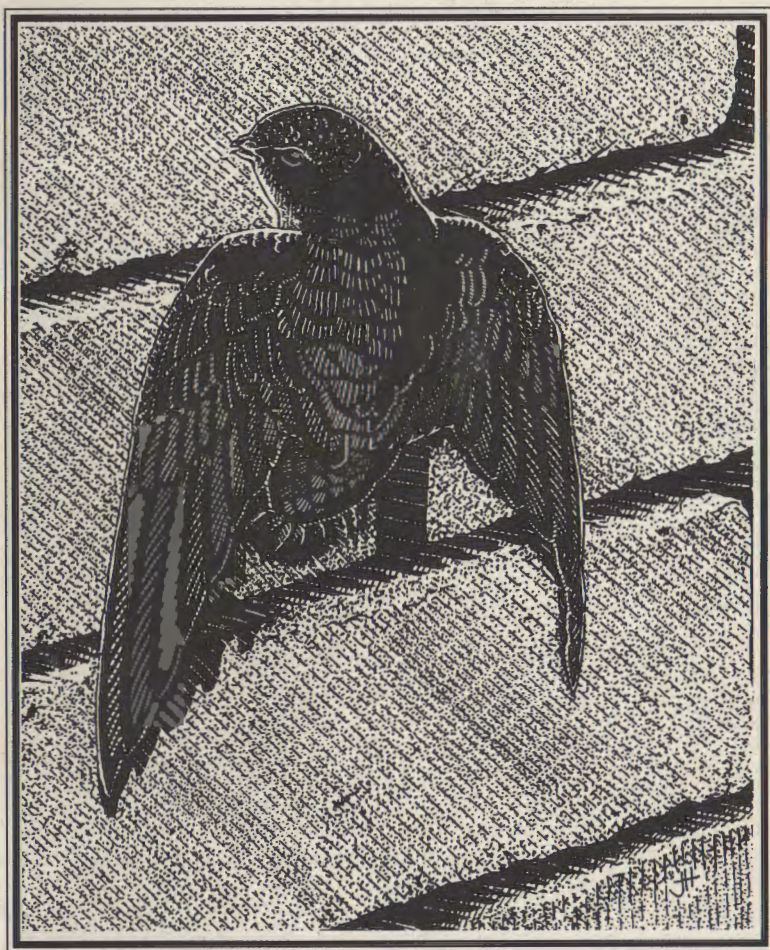
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ABOUT OUR COVER

Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*)

by Julian Hough

Julian Hough's drawing of a Chimney Swift clinging to the inside of a chimney is not our usual type of cover art, but he has depicted a swift in a manner seldom seen by most of us.

Julian is a talented photographer, artist, and writer, having authored a number of articles for "The Warbler." His photographs and artwork have appeared in numerous European and American ornithological journals.

We are also grateful for his "Photo Challenge" answers that appear at the end of each issue of *The Connecticut Warbler*.

ELEVENTH REPORT OF THE AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE OF CONNECTICUT

Greg Hanisek and Mark Szantyr

The eleventh report of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (ARCC) of the Connecticut Ornithological Association (COA) continues the ongoing effort of the state's resident and visiting birders to maintain an accurate record and historical archive of the state's birdlife. Current ARCC members, in addition to the authors, are Frank Mantlik, Frank Gallo, Dave Tripp, Chris Wood, John Gaskell, Dave Provencher, Jay Kaplan, and Ed Hagen. Also voting on records in this report were Buzz Devine and Julian Hough. In its assessment of reports, the committee places special emphasis on original field notes, and urges birders to carefully detail as many points as possible regarding a bird's physical appearance, behavior, vocalizations, and habitat. The committee continues to get some reports, which it cannot accept, that contain detailed accounts of the circumstances surrounding a sighting, but no description of the bird. Because reports become part of a historic archive, they are only acceptable if they contain a description that would allow someone examining them many years hence to come to the same conclusion as the committee on the bird's identity. The committee thanks the many birders who have taken the time to submit reports and, in many cases, photos, sketches, or tape recordings. All submissions become part of the state's permanent ornithological record and can be re-opened at any time to consider significant new information, such as an additional observer's report or a newly recognized field character. The committee provides a judgment on the adequacy of the evidence submitted but can neither verify nor invalidate an individual record. 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 35 records of 26 species reviewed by the committee. The committee accepted 77 percent of records reported here, most of them from 2000 and 2001. Three new species have

been added to the State List — Barnacle Goose, Black-tailed Godwit, and MacGillivray's Warbler. Other notable occurrences were a third state record for Thayer's Gull; fourth state records for White-faced Ibis and Mississippi Kite; a third spring record for Northern Wheatear; and a continuation of the recent flurry of *Selasphorus* hummingbird discoveries.

STATE LIST AND REVIEW LIST

The State List now stands at 408. The most recently published state list contains 406 species and is available from 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 records, 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., 02-01) 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

EARED GREBE (*Podiceps nigricollis*) One was at Rocky Neck State Park in East Lyme 30 Dec 2000 through Jan 2001. (Hanisek, Szantyr‡, Meyers, Provencher‡ 01-13). This individual in basic plumage was discovered by Robert Dewire on the New London CBC.

A bird in nearly full alternate plumage was present 9-17 Apr 2001 at West Hartford Reservoir No. 6 in West Hartford. (Jamie Meyers, Don Crockett‡ 02-20). This spring discovery by Anne Shapiro was unusual; most recent state occurrences have been during two periods — mid-winter (i.e., 01-13) and early autumn.



**Eared Grebe at Rocky Neck State Park in Niantic
December 2000 into January 2001**

Discovered by Bob Dewire and photographed by Dave Provencher. Copyright© 2001 David Provencher

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*) One was present 27 May 2001 at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison. (Julian Hough*, Mark Szantyr, Dori Sosensky 02-16). The bird, an adult in nearly full alternate plumage, represents a fourth state record.

KING EIDER (*Somateria spectabilis*) A female was seen 20 Nov 2000 off Meigs Point at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison. (Hanisek* 01-08). The bird was present from late fall through most of the winter and seen by many observers.

MISSISSIPPI KITE (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) An immature was seen 24 Jun 2002 in Middlebury and Oxford. (Bruce Finnan,* Kevin Finnan* 02-17). The observers provided sketches of the bird, which was followed in a car as it cruised through two towns. The observation occurred during the typical late spring-early summer period when overshooting kites appear in the Northeast. It is a fourth state record.

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*) One was seen in flight 30 Sep 2000 in Naugatuck (Mark Szantyr* 01-03). The date falls into the typical autumn migration range in which most eastern records occur. The finder provided sketches.

AMERICAN AVOCET (*Recurvirostra americana*) One appeared at Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison, from 28 Oct to 11 Nov 2001. (Mark Szantyr, Bruce Finnan† 02-18). The extended stay was unusual for this species, which typically makes one-day appearances in the state. Because sightings have now become annual, or nearly so, the committee has removed this species from the Review List and no longer solicits documentation.



American Avocet

October 28, 2001, Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison

Photo copyright© Nick Bonomo

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa limosa*) An adult in alternate plumage was discovered 19 Apr 2001 at the Connecticut Audubon Coastal Center at Milford Point and seen by a few observers that day only, providing a first state record. What was certainly the same bird was re-identified 29 May 2001 at Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford (Greg Hanisek, Chris Elphick, Mark Szantyr, Spencer Bullis† 02-19). Evidence suggests this was the same bird present for an extended period at a site on Long Island, N.Y. The bird was last seen there just before it appeared at Milford Point, where Katie Hubbard discovered it. The bird re-appeared 26 April at Harkness but was first identified as a Hudsonian Godwit by a novice birder. It was not seen after 29 April, when it was properly identified by Robert Dewire. Several field characters, especially the extensive rich red wash on the underparts and the heavily barred flanks, suggest it was of the race *islandica*. However, separating and sexing the three races of *L. limosa* present a variety of difficulties. For an extensive discussion, see the New York rarities section of the Web site www.oceanwanderers.com.



**Video-grab of the Black-tailed Godwit
at Harkness**
Copyright© 2001 Nick Bonomo

RED-NECKED STINT (*Calidris ruficollis*) One was seen 3 Aug 2000 at Milford Point (Dave Provencher* 02-11). This bird, described as being in worn alternate plumage, was observed in conjunction with intense searches for the state's first Red-necked Stint, which was seen by a number of observers at Milford Point on 29 July (see ARCC's 10th Annual Report). The extensive details provided by the observer convinced the committee of the identification. The observer believed certain plumage details suggested this was a different individual than the bird found on 29 July, and the sighting occurred at a time when other stints were being reported from nearby Long Island. However, the committee did not make a determination on the number of individuals involved.

RUFF (*Philomachus pugnax*) An alternate plumaged male was present 7-13 May 2001 at Barn Island in Stonington (Greg Hanisek,* Andy Griswold 02-14). Most state records occur in spring.

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus lobatus*) One was seen 13 Aug 1998 in Pomfret (Robert Dixon* 99-09). Because sightings of the species have become almost annual, the committee no longer solicits documentation.

THAYER'S GULL (*Larus thayeri*) One was found on 29 Dec 2000 on the Housatonic River below Shepaug Dam in Southbury (Mark Szantyr*, Greg Hanisek* 01-09). This first-year bird, representing a third state record, was in a large group of gulls feeding on fish stunned by the dam's turbines. It was sketched in detail by Szantyr.

RAZORBILL (*Alca torda*) Among a flurry of recent reports was one on 15 Mar 2000 off Mystic (Fred Norton* 00-06). Multiple sightings of this species have been reported in recent years, mostly from the eastern end of Long Island Sound, but also as far west as Stamford. Razorbill remains a Review Species on the most recent COA checklist but is a candidate for removal.

RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD (*Selasphorus rufus*) Single birds were: a hatch-year female 30 Oct to 22 Nov 2000 at the Zeisz feeder in Avon (Betty Kleiner, Jay Kaplan, Mark Szantyr‡ 01-05); an after hatch-year female 22 Nov to 12 Dec at the Norwell feeder in Cheshire (Greg Hanisek, Mark Szantyr‡, Jim Zipp‡ 01-06); and a hatch-year female 28 Nov to 7 Dec at the Barron feeder in Stratford (Mark Szantyr‡ 01-07). All three birds were trapped and banded, allowing determination of age and sex through in-hand measurements and tail patterns.

HUMMINGBIRD (*Selasphorus sp.*) A hummingbird identifiable only to this western genus visited a feeder in West Hartford 12-14 October 2000 (Kaplan, Szantyr 01-04).

One was seen in a community garden at University of Connecticut's W Lot in Storrs on 17 Sep 2001. (Mark Szantyr* 02-24).

Another *Selasphorus* visited a Southington yard, feeding at flowers but ignoring well-stocked feeders, 6-10 Oct 2001. (Jayne Amico*, Mark Szantyr‡ 02-23).

These sightings, along with those of the Rufous Hummingbirds, continue the state's recent increase in sightings of *Selasphorus* hummingbirds. This is part of a larger trend of increased sightings of western hummingbirds throughout the East, primarily from mid-fall to early winter.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannus forficatus*) One was seen on 7 Oct 1999 in New Canaan (S. Zimmerman 00-23). The single observer provided a sketch along with plumage and behavioral details. This species has been expanding its range eastward

and has a history of autumn vagrancy to the East Coast.

BOREAL CHICKADEE (*Poecile hudsonica*) One was seen on 8 Nov 99 in Greenwich (Donna Rose Manwaring*† 01-01). The bird spent most of the day at the hawk watch site at Quaker Ridge, where it was photographed.

SEDGE WREN (*Cistothorus platensis*) One was found on 12 May 2001 at Station 43 in South Windsor. (Paul Cianfaglione,* Dori Sosensky, Bruce Finnan† 02-09). The bird appeared in unusual habitat, a grain field, and remained there along with a number of Marsh Wrens through 16 May, when they all apparently left. This seemed to be a migratory group downed by inclement weather and oblivious to territorial Marsh Wrens a short distance away.

Up to four were present in July and August 2001 on private property in Old Lyme (Hank Golet,* Mark Szantyr 02-12), where they were sound-recorded by the finder. The birds were present in good breeding habitat, and food carrying was observed. However, a search for nests was unsuccessful.

A fall migrant appeared 23 Sep 2001 in a cemetery in Wethersfield (Paul Cianfaglione,* Roy Zartarian 02-10).



Sedge Wren May 15, 2001. Windsor
Photo copyright© Bruce Finnan

NORTHERN WHEATEAR (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) One was seen on 26 May 2001 at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison. (Len Kendall* 02-02). A great majority of northeastern records fall in September, but Connecticut has two previous May records that fall in the period 17-31 May (Zeranski & Baptist). In spring 2001, a major flight brought at least 42 storm-driven birds to eastern Newfoundland in late May; two were reported from Massachusetts (16-17 May in Petersham, 19 May in Provincetown). As a result of this movement, a pair fledged young on the Avalon Peninsula, Newfoundland, in summer 2001, some 700 km south of previous known nesting sites in North America. (North American Birds, 55:3).

MacGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER (*Oporornis tolmiei*) One was found on 15 Dec 2001 in New Milford. (Dave Tripp,* Jay Kaplan, Mark Szantyr 02-04). The bird was found on the New Milford CBC and seen by the finder with much difficulty as it skulked in thick vegetation. It was seen briefly by a few observers that day and on 16 Dec. It also was heard by a number of others as it at times, called persistently. The call notes, combined with the finder's careful notation of key fieldmarks, allowed for separation from the most likely confusion species, Mourning Warbler. Although Mourning Warbler is regular in Connecticut in migration, it is unrecorded in winter. Conversely, MacGillivray's Warbler records in the East occur mostly in late fall and winter. This is the state's first unambiguous record. A single specimen attributed to this species is considered inadequate by the committee because of ambiguous labeling information.

WESTERN TANAGER (*Piranga ludoviciana*) An adult male visited a feeder in Woodbury 14 Dec 2000 and remarkably appeared again from late Feb to 2 Mar 2001 after being absent all winter (Whitey Frew,* Greg Hanisek, Mark Szantyr† 01-15).

ACCEPT - ORIGIN UNCERTAIN

BARNACLE GOOSE (*Branta leucopsis*). An apparent adult was located on the Stearn's Farm property in Mansfield, Tolland County, 4 December 2001 and stayed through the first part of January 2002 (Mark Szantyr*†, Curtis Marantz, Chris Elphick, Don Crockett† 02-02). The Avian Records Committee of Connecticut has had the dubious pleasure of evaluating several reports of this



Western Tanager - February, 2001, Woodbury, CT

Photo by M. Szantyr

species and until now has always judged that the origin of this fairly popular avicultural species is difficult to ascertain. This bird is common in captivity and the "old school" common logic was to be better safe than sorry and reject this easily identified bird, nearly out of hand, simply because the committee could not be sure that any individual was truly wild. Why then are we accepting this individual to the official state list?

The evidence: The bird appeared wild, was un-banded and had all its toes intact.

The bird occurred at the proper time for its species to be migrating and at a location that has, in the past, held other migrant waterfowl from essentially the same source location as *B. leucopsis*. A Pink-footed Goose, *Anser brachyrhynchus*, was located in this same field with an apparent Greater White-fronted Goose, *Anser albifrons*, of the Greenland race *flavirostris* on 21 March 1998 and several additional *flavirostris* White-fronted Geese have been there noted in each season since.

The goose was in the company of several thousand Canada Geese, *Branta canadensis*, including birds that had been neck-banded as migrants or as nesting birds, and the bands indicate that at least part of this migrant flock had origins in or near Greenland. This was in fact similar to evidence that allowed the committee to

accept the Pink-footed Goose to the state list, the first for the Lower 48 states (see Ninth Report).

According to experts in the United States Fish and Wildlife Service as well as their counterparts in Canada and Greenland, Barnacle Goose numbers are exploding on their Arctic breeding grounds, as are most other Arctic nesting geese.

According to experts in the field of aviculture, the numbers of Barnacle Geese in captivity has probably been declining through the past decade, a consequence of economic and legislative factors.

The 2002 Connecticut Barnacle Goose was part of a seemingly small invasion of the species in New England and in the Mid-Atlantic states, with several birds located in New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and even a bit farther south.

Even in the face of this voluminous circumstantial evidence, the committee acted carefully and worked diligently to not act in haste. The ARCC has at its disposal a voting category that allows us to accept a species even though we cannot definitely prove that the individual in question is wild. When the bird has been properly identified and the preponderance of the evidence seems to indicate a wild origin and there is little or no evidence to the contrary, we believe it is responsible to accept the record under our voting category, **Accept - Origin Uncertain**. Species accepted under this category are fully accepted onto the state list and enjoy the same status as any other bona fide vagrant. We believe that the disclaimer simply reflects the truth in a situation that is essentially unknowable.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED, identification questionable.

ANHINGA (*Anhinga anhinga*) One was reported on 30 Aug 2001 from Lake Waramaug in New Preston (02-07). Historically, reports of Anhingas have been hard to pin down in the state because of their elusive nature and the difficulty of separating them from Double-crested Cormorants under some circumstances. In this case the report lacked any descriptive detail that would confirm the presence of an Anhinga.

GYRFALCON (*Falco rusticolus*) One was reported 6 Nov 01 from Milford (02-08). Gyrfalcon is another species that has proven hard to document sufficiently. It lacks distinctive fieldmarks, often passes through an area quickly and carries with it the knotty problem of recognizing hybrid falcons used in falconry. In this case a careful and alert observer's attention was drawn to gulls driven

into a frenzy behavior not usually elicited by the regular raptors in the area. A large raptor came into view, but passed by quickly. The committee felt that the descriptive detail the observer was able to glean from this brief encounter was insufficient to positively identify the visitor as a Gyrfalcon.

WHITE-WINGED TERN (*Chlidonias leucopterus*) One was reported from Milford Point on 20 May 1999 (99-26). The committee previously voted not to accept this report, but considered it again because some additional information was provided. After reviewing all of the evidence, the committee again was of the opinion that the observation was too brief and distant for positive identification of a continent-level rarity that would also represent a first state record.

GRAY JAY (*Perisoreus canadensis*) One was reported in Dec 2001 from Watertown (02-22). This report, which would have represented a first state record, was especially tantalizing because Gray Jays were in the midst of one of their extremely rare incursions south of their boreal breeding areas (i.e., two or three were present in Massachusetts during winter 2001-02). This individual was seen briefly at a feeder, and while some descriptive detail was provided, the committee felt the information was insufficient to confirm the identification.

WESTERN TANAGER (*Piranga ludoviciana*) One or more were reported from Redding in December 2001 (02-13). The committee was unable to accept the report, in part, because of a lack of cohesion. It was difficult to determine exactly how many birds, of which sex, were being reported from at least two different areas. This, combined with scanty descriptive detail, left the committee unable to act positively on the report.

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus major*) Up to three pairs with at least one juvenile were reported 24-27 Jun 01 from Desmond's Pond in South Windsor (02-22). The report contained minimal description, with no characters noted that would clearly distinguish Boat-tailed Grackle from the similar and more expected Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*). At least one character mentioned, tail length, seemed better for Common Grackle. There was no mention of voice, which also is significant in separating these species. Away from peninsular Florida, Boat-tailed Grackles occur virtually exclusively on the immediate coast, and

the presence of a breeding colony on an inland pond would be unprecedented here. It is worth noting that adult male Common Grackles, during breeding season, display deeply keeled tails that sometimes confuse inexperienced observers. It also should be noted that Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*), a species that does occur inland, has been expanding its range northward. However, none of the details in this report suggested that species. Because Boat-tailed Grackles have established a small breeding population on the Fairfield County coast, the committee no longer solicits documentation of birds in typical habitat. However, reports are sought of any large inland grackles that might prove to be *mexicanus*.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED, origin questionable.

TRUMPETER SWAN (*Cygnus buccinator*) An immature bird was on Bantam Lake in Dec 00 and Jan 01 (Dave Tripp, Greg Hanisek, Mark Szantyr† 01-12). Separation of immature (and in some cases adult) Trumpeter and Tundra Swans presents one of North America's most difficult and under-appreciated identification problems. This bird's continued presence allowed careful scrutiny of plumage, along with critical study of bare parts, size and shape. This facilitated confident identification as to species, but additional detective work by Tripp determined that the bird had escaped from a waterfowl fancier elsewhere in Litchfield County. Since Trumpeter Swans are the subject of re-introduction schemes in several places on the continent, the possibility of a vagrant reaching Connecticut cannot be dismissed, but each case will have to be considered on its own merits.

GREAT TIT (*Parus major*) One visited a feeder in Sharon during the winter of 2000-01 (Mark Szantyr† 01-14). The proprietor, Fritz Mueller, was astounded to look out one morning and see a bird he remembered from his childhood in Germany. The identification of this well-marked and active bird was straight forward, but there was little reason to entertain the idea of naturally occurring vagrancy. Great Tits are sedentary throughout most of their Old World range and are kept as cage birds, factors pointing to escape as the most likely origin.



Great Tit - December 2000, Sharon, CT

Photo by M. Szantyr

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AT LAST, BLACK VULTURE RECORDED NESTING IN CONNECTICUT!

Pat Redmond

On 1 April 2002, my son Patrick and I decided to look for a Raven's nest in the Kent area. Previously, we found a nest that Common Ravens had used last year but it appeared that they had moved to a new location. Patrick and I love rock climbing, and since almost all our raven nests (12 sites) require a rope and saddle to reach the nest, we thought combining the two would make for a fun day.

Kent is mountainous and the terrain has many steep, rocky areas with small cliffs. These jagged, craggy sides with ledges and small caves are perfect habitat for Common Ravens and vultures, both Turkey and Black. Black Vultures have been sighted around Kent in good numbers for several years. Some evenings we've counted over 40 Black Vultures getting ready to roost for the night. Knowing this, we are always checking possible nest sites while rock climbing, and also we are usually climbing where we think we'll find a nest.

After locating a new raven nest site, we worked our way down through an area containing many small caves. Patrick was working an area about 50 feet below me. He was surprised when a Black Vulture hopped out of a small cave and sat less than 10 feet away from him. He whispered up to me, "Dad...BLACK VULTURE!" I looked down and there it sat. We stood still and talked calmly while waiting to see what it would do. The Black Vulture seemed calm. It preened under its left wing, ruffled itself and went back into the cave. I worked my way down and peered into the cave. There, not four feet away was the vulture looking like she was sitting on eggs. We left the area quickly and quietly and went happily down the mountain having found the nest of a Common Raven and a probable Black Vulture's nest, also. That night, I telephoned Noble Proctor to tell him of our find. Although all signs led us to believe that we had found a nesting Black Vulture, no eggs or chicks were observed, so a return visit was needed to confirm the nesting.

On Saturday 6 April, Patrick and I returned to the location. This time, when the vulture came out and sat as before, we continued down to the cave. The vulture flew off to a nearby tree. When we

peered into the cave, I'll never forget Patrick's excitement as he said, "Dad, we scored big," because right before us were two beautiful Black Vulture eggs.



Two Black Vulture Eggs - photo by Patrick Redmond



Two Black Vulture Chicks - photo by Patrick Redmond

Although we have been watching Black Vultures nesting successfully for five years in a cave in New York state, this nest site is very special because it is the first confirmed Black Vulture nest in Connecticut. We were confident that we would find a nest because there are so many Black Vultures in the area, and we felt that it was just a question of when. I am so glad that my son Patrick spotted it first.

The nest was confirmed when Noble Proctor accompanied us to the site and not only photographed the eggs, but also caught the changing of the adult guards. Proctor photographed one of the adult birds incubating the eggs. The three of us then proceeded to the cave in New York State in order to photograph and record two eggs at that site.

On 13 April we again checked the Kent nest site and recorded the egg measurements. One egg measured 81.5 x 49.5 mm and the other egg measured 73.8 x 50.3 mm.

On 4 May we visited the site and observed that one chick had just hatched and the other egg was in process of hatching. We photographed and videotaped the hatchlings and left. The following week we returned and photographed the chicks at one week old. Two weeks later on 26 May we visited the nest again. We found two healthy, three week old chicks that were hissing and grunting at us as Patrick took pictures. We now visit the nest at two-week intervals in order to follow the chicks' progress. At 11 weeks, the chicks are big and healthy, and look like they will fledge in a week. This has been a rewarding experience for Patrick and me and we are both looking forward to our next adventure.

PAT REDMOND, 83 Fuller Mountain Rd., Kent, CT 06757

GOSHAWK NESTING SUCCESS IN CONNECTICUT

Dwight G. Smith and Trevor Becker

The Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) is an uncommon permanent resident in Connecticut. The Connecticut Breeding Bird Survey, conducted in 1982-1988, found breeding evidence in 13.8% of blocks surveyed in the state, but very little is known about its nesting success within the state (Smith and Devine 1994). In previous papers we have presented information about the breeding ecology and food habits of northern goshawks nesting in Connecticut (Becker, 2000, Becker and Smith 2000, Smith and Becker 2000). In this paper we summarize our data about goshawk nesting success based on observations of nesting pairs gathered over a number of years beginning in 1973 and continuing through the 2001 nesting season.

Nests Studied

We gathered information about the nesting and migratory ecology of goshawk in Connecticut from 1973-1982 and again from 1999-2001. We obtained information from 19 nests during 6 years beginning in 1973—all found in the northern and western part of the state. From 1999-2001 we were able to observe and obtain productivity information for 24 nests found at 18 different nesting areas widely distributed in Connecticut although many of these were again concentrated in the northern and western regions of the state.

Nesting Success

Because goshawks are highly sensitive to intruders during all phases of the nesting cycle we were unable to obtain complete information about breeding productivity at all nest sites studied. Known information about breeding productivity is presented in Table 1. For a number of sites we were unable to obtain clutch size but follow-up visits often permitted a determination of the number of young fledged.

We differentiated between active nests in which eggs were laid and active nests that were abandoned prior to a clutch being laid. In 1979 and 1982, and again in 2000 and 2001, some active

nest sites were abandoned prior to laying the clutch. Overall, the number of eggs per known clutch averaged 2.96 eggs per nest and varied from a low of 2.5 in 2001 to a high of 3.5 in 1974. The number of young fledged per nest varied even more dramatically; high numbers of young were fledged per successful nesting attempt in 1974 (three young per nesting attempt), 1978 (2.7 young per attempt) and 2000 (2.75 young per nesting attempt). These success rates contrast with 1982 in which only 1.25 young fledged per nest. When these success rates are considered against the total number of active nesting sites in a given year the number of young fledged decreases sharply, averaging only 1.96 young per all active nest sites. Interestingly, the least productive years were 1979 and 1982 when goshawk productivity decreased notably compared to other years.

Nest productivity varied greatly between the years of study for unknown reasons but might have been tied to food availability. Certainly in good prey years, characterized by in higher chipmunk and squirrel populations productivity was higher while in obviously poor prey years productivity declined. Measured in terms of young fledged per all nests, the most productive years were in 1974, 1978 and 2000.

Our intensive studies of the nesting ecology of goshawks conducted between 1999-2001 revealed a total of 41 fledged young for an average of 2.2 young per nest (range of 1-4 young). This rate is considerably higher than productivity rates reported from other eastern study areas but compares well with productivity rates of 2.2 reported for several western localities in Arizona, Nevada, and Oregon (Bosakowski 1999). An overall productivity rate of 2.2 young per breeding attempt is slightly above the replacement rate, suggesting that the Northern Goshawk population in Connecticut is at least stable. This agrees with our observations that the Northern Goshawk nesting distribution is continuing to both increase and spread within Connecticut.

Nest Failures and Conservation Implications

Although breeding productivity of Connecticut nesting goshawks suggests a healthy population the failure rate of active nests remains a concern. These failures involved nests that were constructed but no eggs laid, nests in which one or more young did not survive to the fledgling stage, and nests in which recently fledged young were killed.

Factors that caused nesting failures included human interfer-

ence and activity either at or in the immediate vicinity of the nest site and predation by Great Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*) on young or adults. The female goshawk is highly vulnerable to Great Horned Owls while incubating the eggs, and young goshawks in the nest or recently fledged are also taken opportunistically by this large and powerful owl.

At three and possibly more goshawk nests Great Horned Owls killed either the male or female of the breeding pair. At four traditional territories, goshawks claimed territories and constructed nests but did not lay eggs because Great Horned Owls nested within the same woodland tract. The owl-goshawk relationship is best illustrated by the history of a goshawk breeding site in Guilford. Active for three consecutive years, the pair was unsuccessful in the fourth year when the remains of a goshawk were discovered beneath the nest tree. Thereafter Great Horned Owls appropriated the nest for several years before it deteriorated. Sixteen years after observation of the first nesting goshawk pair, a new pair claimed the territory and successfully nested in the same tree.

Human interaction, disturbance, and interference with the Northern Goshawk nesting cycle remains another important factor in nesting failures. At some goshawk breeding areas located in close proximity to residential areas as well as other areas where human-goshawk interactions were a too frequent occurrence, yet the nests were successful, is a tribute both to the nature of the resilience and tolerance of goshawk pairs as well as the remarkable attitude of humans. On the other hand, several goshawk nests located in the immediate vicinity of residences failed for unknown reasons. Two of these failures followed shortly after goshawk-human attacks.

At least two nesting failures occurred early in the nesting cycle, and involved a predator climbing into the nest and eating the eggs. Eggshells were scattered about the nest and eggshell fragments were found on the ground beneath the nest. Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) tracks in soft mud immediately below the nest tree strongly implicated this adaptable carnivore as the culprit, but opossums (*Didelphis marsupialis*) and the Common Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) are also opportunistic predators that may readily take a temporarily unprotected clutch of eggs.

Table 1. Breeding Success of Northern Goshawks in Connecticut.

	1973	1974	1977	1978	1979	1982	1999 ^a	2000	2001
No. Active Nests*	2	2	4	3	4	4	16	5	3
No. Nests with Eggs**	2	2	4	3	1	3	—	4	2
No. Eggs/Nest	3.0	3.5	—	3.3	—	2.7	2.8	—	2.5
Total Young Fledged***	5	5	9	8	2	4	—	11	5.0
No. Young Fledged/Nest	2.5	3.0	2.25	2.7	2	1.25	—	2.75	2.5
No. Young Fledged/ All Active Nests	2.5	3.0	2.25	2.7	0.5	1.0	2.2	2.75	1.25

* A nest was considered active if pairs attended to it during construction and decoration and the female was observed on the nest early in the breeding cycle.

** Both of the failed 1978 sites were successful in one or more of the previous years during which they were watched.

*** Total young fledged from all active nests.

^a Complete data available for only 9 of 16 active nests in 1999.

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Mike Redmond and Pat Redmond introduced Dwight Smith to raptor nesting ecology in northwestern Connecticut in the early 1970's and were helpful during Trevor Becker's field work between 1999-2001. In addition to our own field observations the following people provided helpful information about nesting goshawks through the years, Mike and Pat Redmond, Victor Hardiswick, Maureen Smith, Tom Bosakowski, Arnold Devine, Larry Fischer, Ed Schove, Polly Brody, Carole Hise, and Nancy Balan.

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A SUBURBAN WATERBIRD ROOST

Roland C. Clement

Behind the large Lakewoods Apartment building, my current residence at 1199 Whitney Ave., Hamden, Conn. during the Fall of 2001, a sizable roost of Double-crested Cormorants, Common Egrets, and Snowy Egrets (early), was present from early September to early November. The roost was in tall White Pine and dead Hemlock in a narrow belt of trees between upper Lake Whitney, here less than 400 feet wide, and the apartment building and a rear parking lot. East of the lake is the New Haven Country Club.

I counted arriving birds weekly from September 7 to November 12, usually from the Davis Street bridge, about 1000 feet south of the roost, so as to obtain an unobstructed view, and using a 10x42 binocular. Most of these counts were solo. Most of the cormorants came from the southeast in a steady stream, whereas Common Egrets came in loose flocks from the northeast, and Snowy Egrets hurtled in from the east in tight flocks. All of them had presumably spent the day on the Quinnipiac River and its marshes a mile and more to the east. Although arrival time overlapped among the three species, most cormorants came in first, then Snowy Egrets, and last, Common Egrets. All of them left the roost shortly after dawn, between 6 and 6:30 a.m.

Numbers varied somewhat, depending on weather and observational conditions, but cormorants maintained a count of about 100 through September and October (with a peak count of 131 on September 29); dropped to 22 on November 4, and only six on November 12. Snowy Egrets peaked early, with 97 on September 7, and 40 or so until September 22, but only seven on September 29, and none thereafter. Common Egrets began at 58 on September 7, peaked at 87 on September 17 and declined slowly, with four on October 25, and a singled crippled bird on November 12.

On October 25, with a strong north wind, most of the cormorants sat on the water for an hour before roosting; and that same evening, several Common Egrets sought a more sheltered spot on the east bank of the lake.

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BIRD BEHAVIOR NOTES

NEST PREDATION BY A WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH

For more than twenty years some friends and I have spent the Saturday before Mother's Day birdwatching and banding birds at the same spot in Salem, Connecticut. The place is a lovely mixture of habitats, with cultivated fields separated from hayfields by wooded hedgerows and typical oak-maple forest blending into a shrubby swamp, all transected by a substantial brook with a stone Roman-arched bridge built in 1903 crossing it. It is, in short, the sort of place one might expect to be alive with warblers on Mother's Day weekend, and it has never disappointed us. Our years of experience in the same spot, at around the same date, have allowed us to note seasonal fluctuations and longer term trends in numbers and species, most of which correspond to trends noted more scientifically on a wider scale. In addition, we often have the opportunity to observe some of the less frequently seen species in this special place.

May 11, 2002, was fairly typical of our Mother's Day weekend outing in most regards. It was a beautiful day, with moderate temperatures. We banded twenty birds of nine different species and were kept glued to our binoculars by the activity around us. In between net runs we were standing on the stone bridge observing the bird activity and were particularly enjoying a pair of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers (*Poliophtila caerulea*) showing their colors in the brilliant sunlight. We had spotted their nest, a mug-shaped structure made of lichen on a branch high up in a maple tree. While we were watching we were surprised to see a White-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*) hop along the branch and peer into the gnatcatcher's nest. We were even more surprised when the nuthatch stuck its head in the nest, emerged with an egg in its beak and flew away. Within two minutes the nuthatch repeated the procedure and flew away with a second egg. None of us had ever seen or heard of nest predation behavior by nuthatches before and a

subsequent review of the literature has failed to produce any cases.

Observers: David Bingham, Janet Bystrek, John H. Coggins, John J. Coggins, Michael Marino, Gail Mellow, Lisa Wahle.

JOHN H. COGGINS, Higganum, CT

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE FEEDING ON CARRION

At 0930 EDT on the morning of 12 April 2002, I was driving north on Woodchuck Hill Road in West Simsbury when I came upon a Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*) in the middle of the road. The chickadee was pecking at something that, much to my surprise, was the remains of a road-killed Gray Squirrel. Initially, I thought that perhaps the bird was pulling hair for use in a nest. As I slowed to a stop some 50 m from the bird, it became apparent that the bird was actually feeding on meat from the dead squirrel. I observed the bird for over one minute and, in that time span, observed the bird pull out and swallow several mouthfuls of squirrel flesh. After this time, another car appeared behind me and, as I was now running late for an appointment, I began to drive towards bird and squirrel. When I was less than 10 m from the squirrel, the chickadee finally flew off into the woods at the side of the road.

Upon looking at several references including *The Encyclopedia of North American Birds* (Terres, ed. 1980), I could find no references of this behavior. *Life Histories of North American Jays, Crows and Titmice* (A.C. Bent 1946), however, does describe the pecking by chickadees "at animal hides....or even entrails of animal carcasses." It might be interesting to study how chickadees interact with crows and other scavengers at road kill sites along Connecticut's roadways. Perhaps we will develop a new perspective on the tenacity of these bold little parids.

JAY KAPLAN, Canton, CT

LILLY TROTTING REDWINGS

Today's major compendium on the life histories of the birds of this continent is the multi-volume, large-format series, *The Birds of North America*, published by the American Ornithologists' Union, and still in process. It will soon replace the 19-volume series of *Life Histories of North American Birds* by Arthur Cleveland Bent, published by the U. S. National Museum.

Contribution No. 184 on the Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), by Ken Yasukawa and William A. Searcy was published in volume 5 of the new series in 1995. This is our point of reference; although, of course, because it is one of the continent's most widespread birds, the Red-wing has been more studied and published upon than most species.

While summering at Aton Forest, Norfolk, Connecticut, during 2001, I made almost daily observations of Red-wing feeding behavior on a long beaver pond below my living room windows. Nearly two-thirds of this pond surface is covered by a floating mat of Yellow Pond Lilly, or Spatterdock, (*Nuphar advena*), with lesser quantities of the white-flowered Water Lily (*Nymphaea odorata*).

Consulting Yasukawa and Searcy, I found that they had already reported that the Red-wing forages on "floating mats of vegetation," without, however, specifying the nature of such mats, nor the differential use of this habitat by the two sexes involved. My observations thus seem worth recording.

Protracted feeding on this water lily mat was essentially restricted to female Red-wings. The females are about 30 grams lighter than the males, and so can walk five to ten feet before the lily leaves sink and make it necessary to flutter to firmer pads. They may lack the grace of jacanas, but they are otherwise proper make-shift lily trotters. When they came to the large yellow flowers of the Spatterdock, they often climbed onto them, always in pursuit of the insects they were gathering for the young who followed the males on firmer ground. This use of floating mats for provisioning the young is thus a brief, seasonal activity. Although male Red-wings occasionally landed on the pond lily mat, they did not walk on it. Their weight differential apparently made this impractical.

ROLAND C. CLEMENT, Hamden, CT



BOOK REVIEW

Jamie Meyers

The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior, (2001, 587 pages, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, NY, \$45.00, hardcover).

After raising the bar on field guides with *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, David Sibley's companion to that impressive volume has been awaited with much anticipation, especially by those of us in Connecticut, for its local influence. One of its three editors is University of Connecticut's Chris Elphick, a well-known name in Connecticut ornithology. Noble Proctor and Margaret Rubega also assisted in this effort. I have to admit that my initial perception of this book was a bit clouded by some of the advance talk I had heard about this book, but as I've gotten to know what it is, and - more importantly - what it isn't, my admiration for it has grown.

This guide will best benefit serious beginners and intermediate birders, and as such contains a treasure trove of facts about birds and their lives. The first one hundred pages or so comprise a nice general overview of basic information about habitat, migration, breeding, conservation, and important aspects of avian natural history too numerous here to mention, all presented in an easy to read, well laid out format featuring a generous portion of Mr. Sibley's fine illustrations.

The remaining four hundred plus pages cover all of the families of birds that occur in North America, from a (the loons) to z (the Old World sparrows). Rather than handling each individual species separately, each section deals with a family in a fairly broad stroke. Each treatment is written by different authors, and in each there are discussions about whatever might be important for birders to know about that particular family - such as capture and consumption of prey by the owls, or the amazing tongue structure of woodpeckers, or vocalization in warblers. All sections have notes about taxonomy, food and foraging strategies, breeding habits, and conservation, the latter of which I'm glad to see. A brief sidebar giving general details about the worldwide characteristics of each family is also provided, which I find interesting as well.

As ambitious a volume as this is, those looking for specific information about a specific species will have to look elsewhere, as there isn't as much of that as I was initially expecting. I found myself recently looking for detailed information on nesting Cliff Swallows, and found better and much more specific information both on the Internet and in *The Birder's Handbook*, which I recommend as a companion volume to this edition. Another initial comment I heard was that this book was going to fill in the missing text on identification that was missing in the first Sibley guide, and that's not the case, either.

But that information is readily available elsewhere, which is probably why it's not in the scope of this large volume. This book is an excellent reference, and has already found a place on my bed stand as something I can pick up from time to time for some good, informative bedtime reading. For me, it's like a combined Bird Behavior 101 and 201 in one tight, well written and nicely produced package. There might not be too much in it for seasoned experts or professional ornithologists, but for those of us who bird for a hobby, there is a wealth of information here. Unlike the Sibley Field Guide, this is not an essential addition to the bookshelf, but I still recommend it and commend the editors and writers on a job well done.

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



CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Greg Hanisek

WINTER, DECEMBER 1, 2001 THROUGH FEBRUARY 28, 2002

November's unseasonably warm weather continued through December. That didn't stop a number of northern species, most notably Snowy Owls and some finches, from staging good flights, but it also accounted for an unusual array of late-lingering herons and warblers. A January cold snap restored some sense of meteorological propriety; but Spring quickly backed into February, when waterfowl and American Woodcocks made early arrivals. In addition to a number of unseasonable reports, winter produced a nice mix of rarities, a huge robin roost and a foreshadowing of a first state breeding record.

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

Two Red-throated Loons were unusual fly-overs December 15 in Bethlehem (MSz). Laurel Reservoir in Stamford still held seven Pied-billed Grebes on December 16 (EJ), and seven were at Bantam Lake December 10 (DR et al.). In addition to the usual scattering of Red-necked Grebes along the coast (EJ, JW et al.), up to two were at Bantam Lake in Litchfield through most of December (DR et al.). An Eared Grebe was present from December 29 to at least January 4 at Rocky Neck State Park in East Lyme, where one wintered in 2000-01 (BDw et al.). Great Cormorant, a species that is increasing inland, was at

Bantam Lake December 1-8 (JE et al.).

American Bitterns appeared at Great Island in Old Lyme on December 14 (HG), Bulkley Pond in Southport on December 16 (DV), and Plum Bank Marsh in Old Saybrook on December 21 (JO); at least one wintered at Hammonasset Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP) in Madison, (FN et al.), and two were unexpected December 9 at a reservoir in Middlefield (DS). A half-dozen Great Egrets were present in December, with at least two lingering well into January. The latest was seen January 18 at Lordship (DV); one on February 19 at Sherwood Island State Park in

Westport could have been a winterer or an early arrival (DV). A Snowy Egret appeared at Bluff Point, Groton, on the record late date of January 9 (RD). A Little Blue Heron was at Frash Pond, Stratford, to at least January 1, also a record late date (FMa). A Green Heron found on the New London CBC on December 29 set another late state record, this by just one day (RDW). In addition to the usual wintering birds in the Stratford area, five Black-crowned Night Herons were at Sherwood Island January 3 (PS), two were at Pine Creek in Fairfield January 12 (FMa) and two were at Bluff Point, Groton, January 27 (NH). A Yellow-crowned Night Heron was seen as late as December 12 at Great Island in Old Lyme (DC).

In what was the best evidence to date of breeding by **Black Vulture** in Connecticut, a pair was videotaped in apparent copulation February 17 in Seymour (MSz). Since then breeding has been confirmed elsewhere. (See pages 110-112 of this issue). A roost in New Milford held 31 Black Vultures on January 13 (AD).

WATERFOWL

A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was in Enfield January 5 (MO), with possibly the same bird in Windsor February 19 (PDe). An adult **Barnacle Goose** was present from De-

ember 4 to mid-January in Storrs (MSz et al.). It was in the company of Canada Geese that had been neck-banded in Maritime Canada, the same type of consort accompanying the Pink-footed Goose that visited this site in March 1998. A few Wood Ducks wintered over in open water, with unusually high counts of 14 on January 8 at Bantam Lake (JE et al.) and 10 on January 2 at Konold's Pond in Woodbridge (FMc). These numbers were eclipsed by an early-season count of 55 at a pond in Norwalk on December 16 (FMa). By mid-February migrants, such as two on Steele Brook in Watertown, began to appear (RN). A total of 12 Gadwall at White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield on December 10 was a good inland count (DR et al.). **Drake Eurasian Wigeon** wintered in **West Haven (m.ob.)** and at Holly Pond, Stamford (PDU). Good concentrations of American Black Ducks included 184 at Bantam Lake on January 4 (DR et al.), and 260 coming into Laurel Reservoir late in the afternoon of December 16 (EJ). A Blue-winged Teal was an unusual mid-winter find January 1 at Quinebaug Fish Hatchery in Central Village (RD). Three Northern Shovelers were present throughout January and February at Mondo Ponds, Milford (DV et al.); up to eight wintered at South Cove, Old

Saybrook (GH et al.). A Northern Pintail took advantage of the mild season to appear as early as February 17 at Station 43 in South Windsor, a spot that would be frozen solid in most winters (PDe); where it came from remains open to question since an unusual number of singles were scattered around the state, both coastally and inland, all winter (FMc, DV et al.). On Feb. 16-17, a small group of Green-winged Teal at a pond in East Haven included an adult male Eurasian Teal, which had been present all winter, and an adult male Green-winged X Eurasian Teal (showing both horizontal and vertical white stripes). This is at least the second instance of this hybrid form occurring in the state (NC et al.).

Laurel Reservoir held 245 Ring-necked Ducks on December 16, a late date for such a large concentration (EJ). Up to six Redheads wintered in South Cove in Old Saybrook (DV et al.), and two wintered at Veteran's Park in Norwalk (FMa et al.); one was at Sherwood Island February 25 (JHu). Up to three Greater Scaup and five Lesser Scaup were at Bantam Lake in January (RBe, DR et al.). Coastally, 2,500 Greater Scaup were at Milford Point January 30 (DV). A female King Eider wintered at HBSP (CR et al.), and the only Common Eider reported was De-

cember 16 on the Westport CBC (fide FMa). A Long-tailed Duck was a good inland find December 19 at Bantam Lake, as were four White-winged Scoters there December 5 (DR et al.). A fine flock of 300+ White-winged Scoters was off Fairfield January 30 (CB). A female Black Scoter was an unexpected winterer on the Connecticut River in Hartford (m.ob). Bantam Lake held a good inland high of 62 Common Goldeneyes December 16 (DR et al.). Hooded Merganser, increasing as a winterer, topped out at 46 on December 16 at White Memorial (DR et al.). A single inland Red-breasted Merganser was at Bantam Lake December 10 (DR). Laurel Reservoir held c. 700 Common Mergansers and 125 Ruddy Ducks December 16 (EJ). A count of 500 Ruddy Ducks was made on Candlewood Lake on January 18 (AD); 100 were present January 17 on South Cove in Old Saybrook (BSt) with 270 in Old Saybrook January 22 (DV).

RAPTORS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Widespread open water resulted in smaller-than-usual concentrations of Bald Eagles on the big rivers, but they were still easy to find in the lower Connecticut River valley. Northern Goshawks were at HBSP December 18 (SH), at Greenwich Point in December

and January (JW et al.), in Milford January 16 (CWs), at Aspetuck Reservoir in Easton February 23 (DV), and at Bent of the River in South Britain February 28 (DM). An aberrant Red-tailed Hawk seen January 1 in Suffield was described as "immaculately white, with a pinkish-yellow bill and bright yellow legs tinged pink. Only the eyes were dark" (SF). Dark morph **Rough-legged Hawks** were in Bethlehem December 15 (MSz) and in **Windsor** January 6 (SF); other singles were in **New Haven** January 28 (DS) and at **Ely's Ferry, Lyme**, February 8-9 (GW, JHi). Two Golden Eagles wintered in the lower Connecticut River valley (DS et al.), and an adult was over Torrington February 8 (MSz). American Kestrels were reported in decent numbers; they weren't outnumbered by Merlins, as they have been in some recent winters, even though Merlins were rather widely found.

Virginia Rail lingered to at least December 27 at Haley Farm, Groton (GW). A late **Common Moorhen** was found at Lake Whitney in Hamden on December 14 (FMc). Laurel Reservoir had c. 100 American Coots on December 16 (EJ). A **Sandhill Crane** was reported at Mono Pond in Columbia in early December (JHa). American Oystercatchers, now regular in winter, seemed rather scarce. Penfield Reef in Fairfield

held a good concentration of 35 Purple Sandpipers February 17 (CB). The other regular wintering shorebirds — Black-bellied Plover, Greater Yellowlegs, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling and Dunlin — were present in average numbers. Three Common Snipe at Lake Whitney in Hamden on January 25 apparently wintered (AS), as did three at Quinebaug Fish Hatchery in Central Village (RD). Up to three American Woodcock apparently overwintered at Bent of the River Sanctuary in South Britain (CL, RN), and singles were present January 10 at Sherwood Island (RS) and January 31 in Stamford (PDu). Migrants began to appear at various locations in February, such as two in Sterling February 1 (RD) and displaying birds February 16 in Chaplin (CEI).

GULLS THROUGH WOOD-PECKERS

The only **Black-headed Gull** reported was an adult on February 24 at **South Cove, Old Saybrook** (NB). A good mid-winter concentration of 90 Bonaparte's Gulls was at Captain's Cove, Bridgeport, throughout January and February (DV). Some 10 reports of **Lesser Black-backed Gull** included three adults at **Riverside Park** in Hartford January 10 (PCi). A **Glaucous Gull** was at **Wethersfield Cove** December 29 (SK), and **Iceland Gull** gen-

erated about 15 reports for the season. Single **Black-legged Kittiwakes**, a species seldom reported in the state, were seen from a New London ferry January 28 (EN) and off Avery Point, Groton, February 10 (PR). Forster's Tern made a record late appearance December 29 in Stratford (PF). There also were reports from December 2 in Fairfield (CB) and December 20 at Short Beach (DV). Alcids are rare inside Long Island Sound. During the past few winters, Razorbill sightings have been increasing at the eastern end of the Sound, but quite unexpected were at least four **Razorbills** as far west as Stamford on January 6 (PDu et al.). Less surprising were two from a New London ferry January 28 (EN) and singles off Avery Point Groton, January 27 (DS) and Enders Island, Mystic, December 25 (FN), January 1 (FN) and February 10 (PR).

It was a good winter for **Snowy Owls**, with sightings all along the coast. It is impossible to say how many individuals were involved, but two were present together on several occasions at **Milford Point (m.ob.)**. The maximum was three together at **HBSP on December 13 (CR et al.)**, and at least two emaciated ones were taken into care. The only report away from the immediate coast was one in **Chester in early February (PP)**. **Long-eared Owls** were re-

ported from **Greenwich Point (TG)**, **Wilton (FMa)**, **Easton (Jkn)** and **Milford (m.ob.)**; one was a road kill February 14 in New Milford (EA). **Short-eared Owls**, in short supply this winter, included one February 23-24 at **Silver Sands State Park in Milford (NB, DS)**. A search through the swamps at **White Memorial** turned up an excellent 11 **Northern Saw-whet Owls** December 16 (DR, RN). Single **Red-headed Woodpeckers** wintered at Goodwin Park and Elizabeth Park, both in the Hartford area (PCi et al.).

PASSERINES

An Eastern Phoebe lingered to January 11 in Westport (JHu). At least five **Northern Shrikes** were present for the season. In addition to lone sightings December 21 **Chaplin (MSz)** and December 29 in **Waterford (BDw)**, singles were seen a number of times at **White Memorial (DR et al.)**, **Station 43 (PCi et al.)** and **Goshen (LH et al.)**. A **Blue-headed Vireo** hung on until at least December 15 in West Haven (fide DS). Common Ravens have been increasing for a decade, but 28 was still a good count on the **Barkhamsted CBC (DT)**. A pair of **Carolina Wrens** seemed to be rushing the season when they were seen copulating January 28 in **Southington (JA)**. Marshes at **White Memorial** still held four **Marsh Wrens** on December

16 (RN), and one was in Old Saybrook January 6 (DS). A night roost of c. 30,000 American Robins formed in mid-December in Sharon in an overgrown conifer (mostly Norway spruce) plantation (BM et al.). The birds came in between 4-5 p.m. At times they were strafed by Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks. This appears to be the largest winter roost ever reported in the state, although there have been even larger ones in northwest New Jersey in recent years.

The season produced a real warbler feast: Orange-crowned Warbler — to December 16 in Norwalk (FMA); Nashville Warbler — December 1 at Osbornedale State Park in Derby (RHa); Black-throated Green Warbler — present to at least January 5 in Canton, a record late date and first January record (JMe); Pine Warbler — singles were in New Haven December 27 (JT), and in Fairfield January 1 (RJ); Palm Warbler — four for the season included one that wintered in Stamford (RBC), two at HBSP in early January (BK et al.), and one in Lyme December 30 (HG); Northern Waterthrush — a species that rarely lingers into December, one turned up at Walnut Beach in Milford on January 20 (DS), a record late date and first January record; Wilson's Warbler — from December 12-26 in a Milford yard for the sec-

ond-latest date on record (CWs); Yellow-breasted Chat — 11 reported for season, all along the coast, well above normal. The season's highlight, not just for warblers but overall, was a **MacGillivray's Warbler** found December 15 in New Milford on the Woodbury-Roxbury CBC and seen briefly and heard again the next day (DT et al). Amazingly, a second MacGillivray's was seen briefly but well by one observer on January 12 at Silver Sands State Park in Milford (BDe).

Eight Field Sparrows comprised a good winter flock January 1 in Pawcatuck (RD). Two **Lark Sparrows** for the season consisted of one that appeared December 15 at Lot W in Storrs and remained most of the season (SM et al.), and one on December 18 in South Meriden (MB). A flock of 100+ Snow Buntings wintered at the former gun club property at Stratford Point, apparently crossing at times to **Milford Point** (GH, BK, FMA). The season's **Dickcissels** were at Greenwich Audubon December 2 (FG et al.) and in a Stamford yard December 4 (PDU). Two male Red-winged Blackbirds took up territory at Sherwood Island February 6, an unusually early date (RS). Up to three **Boat-tailed Grackles** wintered at Long Beach in Stratford, near New England's only breeding site (NB et al.). The latest Baltimore Oriole re-

port was January 1 from Hartford (JKa). After a decent fall flight, two Red Crossbills were at White Memorial December 1 (FK), and White-winged Crossbills made feeder visits in Clinton in late December (fide JC), in Willington January 13 (MSd), and in Killingworth February 6-9 (DG); five were at White Memorial December 8 (DR). Common Redpolls were scattered across the northern tier throughout winter, with a few reaching the coast. The high count was 50 on January 27 at Colebrook Reservoir (RBe). About 50 Pine Siskins in a yard in Sterling (RD) was the best flock reported. There were just a handful of Evening Grosbeaks, including six at White Memorial December 3 (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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PHOTO CHALLENGE

Julian Hough

ANSWER TO PHOTO CHALLENGE 39

This month's quizbird is obviously a hawk, and the main features are the breast markings and the pattern of the open wings. Firstly, the transverse barring on the breast is indicative of an adult (juveniles would be streaked or spotted). The width of the breast barring and a lack of a darker head, rules out the smaller accipiters, Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks, and the absence of a broad, white supercilium eliminates Goshawk.

So, we have a choice here in the northeast between Red-tailed, Red-shouldered, and Broad-winged Hawk.

The tail pattern, which would normally be helpful, is obscured in this photo so we need to concentrate on the underwing pattern and breast pattern. The breast pattern is wrong for Red-tailed, which shows predominantly white underparts with a dark brown breastband. Red-shouldered



Hawk has barred rufous underparts like this bird, but generally has the upper breast and throat an almost solid rufous color. The open wing pattern is a further detrimental feature for Red-shouldered. On that species, the underwing coverts are a bright orange rufous with finely barred flight feathers. The very pallid underwing set-off by a blackish trailing edge, dark barred breast and palish throat are typical of Broad-winged Hawk, and that is what this species is.

This adult Broad-winged Hawk was photographed by Jay Kaplan at Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton.

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



Photo Challenge 40 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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Committee of Connecticut**

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The Connecticut Warbler

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ABOUT OUR COVER

Savanah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*)

by Paul Carrier

Paul has been trying to document the Savanah Sparrow, which appears on the cover, as a nester in his hometown of Harwinton. Though it was documented years ago, it appears to have been absent for the last decade or more.

Paul owns an advertising studio named "Carrier Graphics" in his home in Harwinton. He has always had an interest in birds and nature. He is a member of the Hartford Audubon Society and leads several field trips each year. He also illustrates their club newsletter, as well as other ornithological publications.

THE 2002 CONNECTICUT SUMMER BIRD COUNT

Joseph Zeranski and Frederick Purnell, Jr.

The 2002 Connecticut Summer Bird Count (SBC) initiates the start of a second decade of systematic co-operative study of the state's avifauna at the commencement of the breeding season for most native species. With ten years of data available for comparison with current information it is now possible to provide longitudinal studies of the population trends of our birdlife that may facilitate the formation and testing of hypotheses as to the causal factors underlying significant changes. The overall health of our avian community can only be improved by access to such information.

As in the past, the 2002 SBC depended upon the efforts and expertise of numerous field observers. A total of 223 individuals participated in the census, grouped into 105 field parties. Both figures are consistent with the averages over the last decade. More attention was given to night observation than in the past, with the total of 69.5 party hours (PH) at night representing a new high. The grand total of 110,978 individual birds observed represents a new high for the SBCs, surpassing last year's high of 108,875. The number of birds per observer also reached a new level of 535.2. The total species count of 191 surpassed last year's 184, but fell short of the high of 201 recorded on the 1998 SBC. The real value of such an effort, however, does not lie in the sum total of species or individuals observed, but in the breakdown of how the populations of various species compare with what has been recorded in the past. In what follows we will provide a preliminary analysis of some of the more striking trends that emerge from the analysis of the data in hopes that it will suggest areas for more detailed study in the future.

Increasing Species

Great Blue Herons continue to grow markedly in the area. The total of 248 sighted eclipses last year's record-setting total of 154 and is more than two and one half times the average recorded over the last decade. Great Blues were recorded from all nine count areas, with decade count highs recorded in five. The population seems to be increasing throughout the State. Least Bittern continues to do well; the six recorded (five from the Litchfield Hills SBC)

falls just short of last year's high of seven and remains well above the decade average. Yellow-crowned Night Heron attained a new decade record of 11, with nine in Greenwich-Stamford and two in New Haven.

The Turkey Vulture population is also booming. The statewide count of 382 represents a significant increase over last year's record-setting total of 313 individuals. And the numbers also indicate a statewide distribution. Black Vulture is also doing quite well, with the first confirmed Connecticut nesting discovered just this year. Among waterfowl, Mute Swan hit a new high of 462 and Gadwall equaled last year's record of 14, all but one of which were sighted on the New Haven SBC.

Osprey continue to do well, falling just short of last year's record of 75, the majority of sightings coming, as expected, from coastal count areas. Bald Eagle also shows every sign of rebounding in Connecticut. The statewide count of 20 bests last year's record-setting 18, and the 15 reported from the Barkhamsted SBC represents a new maximum for that count. Among the other raptors, Broad-winged and Red-tailed Hawks continue to show signs of a healthy local population, the former with a new SBC record of 66 and the latter maintaining numbers significantly above its decade average. Wild Turkey also gives every indication of flourishing throughout the State. Clapper Rail attained a new SBC high count of 21, thanks largely to the record 17 individuals identified on the New Haven SBC. American Oystercatcher also set a new level with 41 statewide, 30 of which were in the Greenwich-Stamford count area.

High counts were also recorded statewide for Mourning Dove, Black-billed Cuckoo, Northern Saw-Whet Owl (a function of the increase in nocturnal PHs, perhaps?), Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-bellied, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers. Passerines showing decade high counts included Alder Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Blue-headed and Red-eyed Vireos, Blue Jay, Tufted Titmouse, Marsh Wren, Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, Veery, American Robin, Gray Catbird, European Starling and Indigo Bunting. That Tufted Titmouse and Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher should be thriving now in Connecticut stands in stark contrast to their status here some 40-50 years ago. And they are not alone; the climatic and land use factors which have promoted the spread of species from the south into New England are doubtless responsible for several of the other success stories the SBC is documenting.

Although the numbers and diversity of the warbler populations passing through Connecticut continues to raise concern, it is

particularly significant that some species appear to be doing well. Substantial increases can be noted in the counts of Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Pine, Cerulean, and Ovenbird.

Decreasing species

The most disturbing finding, perhaps, to emerge from the 2002 SBC is the devastation of the Least Tern population in Connecticut. Last year's total of 179 individuals represented a new low for the statewide SBC, only slightly more than half the yearly census until then. This year the Least Tern records dropped to 50, all but four of which were recorded on the New Haven count, and dropping the population to 16% of the average over the last decade. These data must send a warning to the ornithological community that the status of this remarkable species has reached the brink and that special efforts are needed to intervene to assure that it continues to be a part of our avifauna.

A sharp decline in the numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches is also significant. Last year's SBC count of 40 represented a decade low. This year the total recorded was 21, only 25% of the average statewide over the last decade. When this is factored into the stunning increases noted above in southern species such as Tufted Titmouse and Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, it should raise some questions about climatic conditions affecting our local biota. No Grasshopper Sparrows were recorded, although they have been seen on SBCs in seven of the last ten years. Loss of grassland habitat is a major concern statewide.

Late Lingerers

Common Loon attained a decade high, with a total of ten individuals. A single Greater Scaup put in an appearance on the Greenwich-Stamford SBC, as did a lone Bufflehead. A statewide record of ten Ruddy Ducks eclipsed the previous maximum of four, thanks largely to nine in Greenwich-Stamford. Three American Coots – two on the Litchfield Hills SBC and one on the Quinnipiac Valley count – tripled the state record for that species.

Among the shorebirds, a new count high of seven Black-bellied Plovers was recorded, all but one of which were on the New Haven SBC. Semipalmated Plover continues to be elusive; none were recorded on count days, although there was a count period report from Greenwich-Stamford. Semis have been recorded only four times on SBCs over the last decade. White-rumped Sandpiper, on the other hand, was recorded for only the second time in the last ten years. The six individuals recorded on the New Haven count

doubled the previous high.

Among passerines, seven Northern Parulas, six of which were located on the Barkhamsted SBC, represents a new decade high. The totals for Blackpoll and Mourning Warblers (six and two, respectively) fall well within the numbers seen in the past, although both species have been absent from all State SBCs on several of the last ten years.

Rarities

Without question the highlight of this year's SBC as far as rarities are concerned was the Glaucous Gull on the Woodbury-Roxbury count, the first ever recorded since the coordinated SBC program was initiated. Also noteworthy were the Golden-winged Warbler on the Quinnipiac Valley SBC, a first count record for the area, and the two Boat-tailed Grackles from the Trumbull-Bridgeport SBC which matches the previous high and represents only the third record for the species on an SBC overall.

Looking Ahead

All who are concerned with the future of Connecticut's avian communities owe special thanks to the many volunteers who spent hours in the field and working at the computer (or typewriter!) collecting and/or collating the data that constitute the heart of the Connecticut SBC project. As we look ahead to the 2003 SBC we should take into the field some priorities established from the patterns we have begun to see emerge. To what extent are fluctuations in the numbers of individuals of a particular species due to local weather conditions, number of observers covering different spots within a count area, or deeper factors such as climatic change, habitat alteration or changes in local land-use? Particular attention should be paid to getting precise counts of species showing marked changes in population over the last eleven years. It is only through accurate and continuing longitudinal studies such as those the Connecticut SBC is undertaking that the case can effectively be made for changes in policy necessary to protect the interests of our avian neighbors.

STATEWIDE COUNT TOTALS

Count Dates: June 2, 8, 9, 15, 16, 22, 23, 29, & 30. Reported on Count Days (CD) were 191 Species, plus three additional Count Period (CP) species, consisting of 110,978 Individuals. Two hundred & twenty three observers in 105 Parties (Pty) spent 119 Party Hours (PHs) in the field.

INDIVIDUAL COUNT TOTALS

Barkhamsted Summer Bird Count (*founded 1992*)

Count Dates: June 29 & 30 (Sat. & Sun.).

Totals: 126 species, 16369 individual birds. Twenty observers in 12 Prys spent 146 PHs in the field. Since 1992 150 CD species have been recorded and 118 of these have been found nesting.

Participants: *Lorraine Accardi, Elliot Ashe, Jocelyn Baker, Bob Barbieri, Ray Belding, George Boynton, Ayreslea Denny, Duncan Denny, Angela Dimmitt, Liz Fraser, Seth Harvey, Jay Kaplan, Brian Kleinman, Linn Landgraf, Walt Landgraf, Russ Naylor, David Rosgen (84 Falls Terrace, Apt. D, Oakville, CT 06779), David Tripp, Logan Tripp, and Fran Zygmunt.*

Weather: 6/29- mostly sunny, NW winds 0-10 mph, 56° to 85°F. Night- mostly clear, W winds 0-3 mph, 83° to 63°F. 6/30- mostly sunny; W winds 0-2 mph, 52° to 86°F. Night- partly cloudy, calm, 86° to 64°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), Torrington (northern 1/4), and Winchester.

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

Count Dates: June 15 & 16 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 134 species, 25232 individual birds, plus 5 CP species. Sixty-one observers in 31 Prys censused during a period of 303 PHs. Since 1976 217 CD and 5 CP species have been recorded and 138 of these have been found nesting.

Participants: *Georgia Abbott, Tom Andersen, John Askildsen, Pat Bailey, Ken Ballas, Tom Baptist, Trudy Battaly, Joe Belanger, Gail Benson, Michael Bochnik, Leah Boyd, Jackie Bruskin, Thomas W. Burke (235 Highland Road, Rye, NY 10580), Ioa Byrne, Rod Christie, Al Collins, Diane Collins, Peter Davenport, Patrick Dugan, Cynthia Ehlinger, Ross Geredien, Ted Gilman, Bill Giuliano, Andy Guthrie, Carol Hartels, David Havens, Kate Heath, Paul Hinlicky, Kelli Jewell, Tait Johansson, Sandra Marraffino, Allison McLaughlin, Janet Mehmel, Frank Novak, Anneliese O'Toole, Brian O'Toole, Gary Palmer (34 Field Road, Cos Cob, CT 06807), Drew Panko, Michael Parkes, Matt Popp, Steve Potter, Paul Renken, Polly Rothstein, Meredith Sampson, Alice Smith, Bruce Smith, Marilyn Smith, Marybeth Sollins, Ann Swaim, Andy Towle, Patty Towle, David Wagner, Bill Wallace, Steve Walter,*

John Wehr, Matthew Williams, Nancy Wolfe, and Lynn Zeltman.

Weather: 6/15- Overcast, light rain much of day (0.2" +); light NE winds, 54° to 61°F. 6/16- rain, heavy at times (0.5" +), clearing by 1 PM; SW light winds, 54° to 74°F Temp.

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 Results for 2002 not submitted.

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 8 & 9 (Sat. & Sun.).

Totals: 148 species, 21677 individual birds. Thirty observers in 14 Ptys censused during 185.5 PHs. Since 1994 165 CD and three CP species have been recorded of which 99 have nested.

Participants: *Janet Amalavage, Elliot Ashe, Tracie Baker, Bob Barbieri* (183 Laurel Lane, Harwinton, CT 06797), *Ray Belding, George Boynton, Curt Edgar, Dave Emond, John Eykelhoff, Kathy Hull, Greg Hanisek, Lucas Hyder, Donna Rose Manwaring, Jerry Marcellino, Patti McCurdy, Pat Moore, Russ Naylor, Nancy Nichols, Ann Orsillo, Clarence Parker, Jim Parker, Cynthia Phipps, Dave Rosgen, Darlene Soden, Nina Stein, Dave Tripp, David Wakefield, Lyle Whittlesey, and Fran Zygmunt.*

Weather: Sunny and warm; 6/8- 70° to 75°F, 6/9- 75° to 85°F.

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

New Haven Summer Bird Count (*founded 1991*)

Count Dates: June 8 & 9 (Sat. & Sun.).

Totals: 125 species, 12290 individual birds, plus 2 CP species. Thirty-five observers in 19 Ptys spent 113 PHs in the field. Since 1991 187 CD species have been recorded.

Participants: *Lee Aimesbury, Marion Aimesbury, Ralph Amodei,*

Christine Amini, Phil Asprelli, Larry Bausher, Art Benson, Andrew Brand, Steve Broker, Roy Delinger, Sharon Delinger, Richard English, Stacy Hanks, Dave Holstein, Mike Horne, Patrick Leahy, Gary Lemmon, Christopher Loscalzo, Steve C. Mayo (27 Tuttle Court, Bethany, CT 06524), Florence McBride, Judy Moore, Frank Ragusa, Nancy Ragusa, Nancy Rosenbaum, Arne Rosengren, Lee Schlesinger, Tom Sharp, Art Shippee, Vicki Spiro Smith, Steve Spector, Maria Stockmal, Jessica Sulkowski, Deborah Tenney, John Triana, and Marianne Vahey.

Weather: sunshine, mild temperatures. 6/8- NE winds 5-10 mph, 53° to 75°F. 6/9- SW winds 0-5 mph, 58° to 80°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 15 & 16 (Sat. & Sun.).

Totals: 117 species, 6837 individual birds. Ten observers in four Ptrys spent 67.5 PHs in the field. Since 1992 146 CD species have been recorded, while 92 have nested.

Participants: *Claudia Ahrens, William Ahrens, Lorraine Gunderson, Ann Hoag, Marty Moore, Nancy Morand, Wilford Schultz* (93 Harrison Road, Wallingford, CT 06492), *Randy Suhl, John Wagenblatt, and Leslie Weisman-Cook.*

Weather: 6/15- intermittent heavy rain AM, cloudy, 58° to 77°F. 6/16- partly sunny, winds 0-10 mph. 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 8 & 9 (Sat. & Sun.).

Totals: 105 species, 3893 individual birds. Twelve observers in four Ptrys censused for 60 PHs. Since 1992 136 CD and one CP species have been recorded; 84 of these have been found nesting.

Participants: *Mary Augustiny, Dan Cimbaro, Carrie Conrad, Larry Cyruulik, Dan Drega, Michael Good, Jack Halibozek, Joann Luppi, Joseph Morin* (8 West St Terrace, Cromwell CT 06416), *Patricia Rasch, Ed Reneson, and David Titus.*

Weather: clear both days, 50° to 78°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 22 & 23 (Sat. & Sun.).

Totals: 98 species, 5091 individual birds. Eight observers in five Ptys spent 48 PHs in the field. Since 1990 125 CD species have been recorded and 82 have nested.

Participants: *Joyce Arthur, Bruce Carver Jr., Carol Charter, Marcia Hughes, Steve Morytko, Georgia Michalec, and Steve Rogers* (75 Charles Lane, Storrs, CT 06268).

Weather: 6/22- AM- partly cloudy, PM- partly cloudy, hazy; SW winds 5-15 mph, 58° to 86°F. 6/23- fair all day; SW winds 5-10 mph, 62° to 78°F.

Count (15-Mile diameter circle) Center: 41° 48' N 85° 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 15 & 16 (Sat. & Sun.).

Totals: 105 species, 3893 individual birds. Twelve observers in four Ptys counted for 60 PHs. Since 1999 144 CD species have been recorded, 25 species exhibited evidence of nesting.

Participants: *Jeff Brenzel, Larry Fisher Jr., Roy Harvey, Roger Lawson, Patrick Leahy, Chris Loscalzo, Steve Mayo, Tom Sharp* (22 Albion Street, 3rd Fl., Waterbury, CT 06705), *Steve Spector, and Dennis Varza*.

Weather: 6/15- heavy rain overnight and rain early AM, overcast PM, ENE wind 5-10 mph, 55° to 75°F. 6/16- partly cloudy with some hard rain, slight wind, 52°-76°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 2 (Sat.).

Totals: 131 species, 15919 individual birds. Thirty-nine observers in 19 Ptys spent 174 PHs in the field. Since 1978 177 CD species have been recorded, while 123 species have nested.

Participants: *Renee Baade, David Babington, Ray Belding, Polly Brody, Maryann Currie, Neil Currie, Buzz Devine, Angela Dimmitt, Trevor Eddy, Larry Fischer, Ethel Follett, Ted Greene, Ed Hagen, Bo Hagen, Seth Harvey, Buck Jenks, Ann Kehmina and family, Jeff Kirk, Susan Kirk, Nancy Liedlich, William Liedlich, Carolyn Longstreth, John Longstreth, Jerry Marcellino, Russ Naylor (44 Church Street, Woodbury, CT 06798), Nancy Nichols, Pat Owens, Allan Root, Betty Root, Dave Rosgen, Linda Schocken, Mark Schocken, Fred Schroeder, John Sjovall, Darcy Thurrott, Carol Titus, Leigh Wells, and Chris Wood.*

Weather: Partly cloudy/wind AM, humid; PM mostly clear, drier, warmer. WNW winds 15-25 mph, 55° to 85°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.

JOSEPH ZERANSKI, 163 Field Point Road, Greenwich, CT 06830
FREDERICK PURNELL, Jr., 73 West Avenue, Darien, CT 06820

2002 Connecticut Summer Bird Count Totals

Species known to nest recently within Connecticut are shown in *italics*. The high/low/rare/new stats (below) are given for local SBCs at least ten years old. For counts held for fewer than 10 years (TB & LH) only new Count Day species are noted. Under the statewide totals all stats cover A41 the prior ten 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 previous 10 years [underlined number]
XX = fewer birds tallied than recorded on any of the previous 10 year [boldfaced number]
0 = not recorded on CD, but recorded on all the previous 10 years [boldfaced zero]

GS - Greenwich-Stamford
 NH - New Haven
 TB - Trumbull-Bridgeport

SR - Salmon River

QV - Quinnipiac Valley
 WR - Woodbury-Roxbury

BA - Barkhamsted
 LH - Litchfield Hills
 ST - Storrs

<u>SPECIES</u>	Coastal			Ct. Riv. SR	Upland Counts					2002 State Totals	% of 92-01 Ave	# yrs seen	1992-2001		
	GS	NH	TB		Mid-state		Northern						Ave	Low	High
					QV	WR	BA	LH	ST						
Red-throated Loon										0%	3	0.5		3	
Common Loon	<u>5</u>	2						1		8	190%	10	4.2	2	7
<i>Pied-billed Grebe</i>								4		4	182%	9	2.2		5
Horned Grebe										0%	3	0.4		2	
Red-necked Grebe										0%	2	0.2		1	
<i>Double-crested Cormorant</i>	292	<u>288</u>	59	12	42	12	<u>13</u>	7	3	728	99%	10	735	574	964
Great Cormorant										0%	2	0.2		1	
<i>American Bittern</i>								1		1	125%	5	0.8		3
<i>Least Bittern</i>	CP	1						5		6	250%	10	2.4	1	7
<i>Great Blue Heron</i>	<u>29</u>	12	3	8	<u>17</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>87</u>	42	<u>11</u>	248	253%	10	98	44	154
<i>Great Egret</i>	179	<u>74</u>	36		2					291	142%	10	205	88	376
<i>Snowy Egret</i>	64	<u>47</u>	23							134	71%	10	188	107	261

<i>Little Blue Heron</i>	2								2	90%	9	2.2		5
<i>Tricolored Heron</i>										0%	2	0.2		1
<i>Cattle Egret</i>										0%	2	1.1		7
<i>Green Heron</i>	24	12		2	3	6			2	13	62	73%	10	85 63 116
<i>Black-cr Night-Heron</i>	224	39	15		1						279	92%	10	302 161 458
<i>Yellow-cr Night-Heron</i>	9	2									11	306%	10	3.6 2 10
<i>Glossy Ibis</i>	2										2	286%	4	0.7 4
<i>Black Vulture</i>					1	8				1	10	294%	6	3.4 17
<i>Turkey Vulture</i>	41	28	2	13	52	78	64	96	8	382	153%	10	250 129 313	
<i>Snow Goose</i>												0%	3	0.3 1
<i>Canada Goose</i>	1601	577	328	86	358	654	343	610	62	4619	106%	10	4375 3173 5197	
<i>Brant</i>	1							5		6	65%	8	9.2 29	
<i>Mute Swan</i>	84	168	51	5	102	29		15	8	462	133%	10	348 259 419	
<i>Wood Duck</i>	138	14	5	9	41	15	19	34	14	289	94%	10	306 135 398	
<i>Gadwall</i>		13	1							14	209%	8	6.7 14	
<i>American Wigeon</i>											0%	6	0.6 1	
<i>American Black Duck</i>	33	18	17			1	9	2		80	96%	10	83 50 120	
<i>Mallard</i>	778	239	138	24	261	221	147	165	45	2018	77%	10	2616 2083 3022	
<i>MallardxAm Black Duck</i>		3	1											
<i>Blue-winged Teal</i>	CP									CP		5	1.4 8	
<i>Northern Shoveler</i>											0%	3	0.5 2	
<i>Northern Pintail</i>											0%	2	0.4 1	
<i>Green-winged Teal</i>											0%	3	0.7 4	
<i>Canvasback Duck</i>											0%	2	0.1 1	
<i>Ring-necked Duck</i>											0%	5	0.6 2	
<i>Greater Scaup</i>	1									1	48%	9	2.1 5	
<i>Lesser Scaup</i>											0%	3	0.3 1	
<i>Common Eider</i>											0%	1	0.2 2	
<i>White-winged Scoter</i>											0%	1	0.1 1	
<i>Oldsquaw</i>	CP									CP		4	0.9 4	
<i>Bufflehead</i>	1									1	59%	7	1.7 4	
<i>Common Goldeneye</i>											0%	3	0.8 6	

2002 Connecticut Summer Bird Count Totals

SPECIES	Coastal			Ct. Riv. SR	Upland Counts				2002 State Totals	% of 92-01 Ave	# yrs seen	1992-2001			
	GS	NH	TB		Mid-state		Northern					ST	Ave	Low	High
					QV	WR	BA	LH							
<i>Hooded Merganser</i>						6	7	7	20	143%	9	14		50	
<i>Common Merganser</i>						53	50	7	110	113%	10	97	27	196	
<i>Red-breasted Merganser</i>	1								1	53%	7	1.9		7	
<i>Ruddy Duck</i>	9				1				10	1250%	4	0.8		4	
duck (sp?)		8													
<i>Osprey</i>	30	27	6		4	1	2		71	263%	10	27	6	75	
<i>Mississippi Kite</i>										0%	1	0.1		1	
<i>Bald Eagle</i>				3		1			20	263%	10	7.6	2	18	
<i>Northern Harrier</i>					1				1	59%	7	1.7		5	
<i>Sharp-shinned Hawk</i>	2	1		1	2				11	125%	10	8.8	4	14	
<i>Cooper's Hawk</i>	3	2	3			6	14	10	38	165%	10	23	7	38	
<i>Northern Goshawk</i>	2	CP			1				3	42%	10	7.2	2	18	
accipiter species															
<i>Red-shouldered Hawk</i>		5	2	7	5	4	10	7	44	138%	10	32	22	47	
<i>Broad-winged Hawk</i>	4	CP	1	7	1	4	27	15	66	135%	10	49	22	62	
<i>Red-tailed Hawk</i>	60	26	4	16	20	46	30	46	254	127%	10	200	127	266	
buteo species						1									
<i>American Kestrel</i>		1				3	2	4	10	56%	10	18	6	30	
<i>Peregrine Falcon</i>	1							1	2	95%	8	2.1		6	
<i>Ring-necked Pheasant</i>	7		1	1	1			2	12	27%	10	45	9	93	
<i>Ruffed Grouse</i>							4	15	19	50%	10	38	16	77	
<i>Wild Turkey</i>	102	28	30	26	32	89	126	112	582	177%	10	328	43	634	
<i>Northern Bobwhite</i>										0%	10	6.3	1	19	
<i>Clapper Rail</i>	3	17	1						21	244%	10	8.6	4	15	
<i>King Rail</i>										0%	5	0.6		2	
<i>Virginia Rail</i>	2	1		1	1	2		21	28	104%	10	27	8	51	
<i>Sora</i>								1	1	83%	8	1.2		3	
rail species															

<i>Common Moorhen</i>										0%	5	0.7		2
American Coot									2	600%	5	0.5		1
Black-bellied Plover	1	6								280%	7	2.5		6
Semipalmated Plover	CP										4	4.6		35
<i>Piping Plover</i>		11	13							185%	10	13	7	34
<i>Killdeer</i>	50	30	6	12	15	36	26	33	26	82%	10	285	219	351
<i>American Oystercatcher</i>	30	9	2							195%	10	21	8	38
Greater Yellowlegs		4							1	250%	9	2.0		5
Lesser Yellowlegs										0%	1	0.1		1
Solitary Sandpiper						1				140%	6	0.7		2
<i>Willet</i>	1	1	5							200%	7	3.5		15
<i>Spotted Sandpiper</i>	2	6			7	6	7	2		83%	10	36	20	49
<i>Upland Sandpiper</i>											CP			
Ruddy Turnstone		2								33%	9	6.0		16
Sanderling										0%	4	1.8		9
Semipalmated Sandpiper	1	50								77%	10	66	2	349
Western Sandpiper										0%	1	0.1		1
Least Sandpiper		2								333%	3	0.6		3
White-rumped Sandpiper		6								2000%	1	0.3		3
small sandpiper species														
Dunlin		1								67%	5	1.5		6
Short-billed Dowitcher										0%	2	1.2		8
Common Snipe										0%	1	0.1		1
<i>American Woodcock</i>				1		1	5	3		59%	10	17	8	24
Laughing Gull	6									13%	10	46	1	119
Bonaparte's Gull										0%	4	1.3		9
Ring-billed Gull	246	390	71	12	33	30	8	5		146%	10	543	326	808
<i>Herring Gull</i>	393	208	477	2	6	9		1		117%	10	933	794	1229
<i>Great Black-backed Gull</i>	192	58	39	2	3	13		1		97%	10	317	216	414
Glaucous Gull														
gull species														
Gull-billed Tern										0%	2	0.5		3

2002 Connecticut Summer Bird Count Totals

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	GS	NH	TB		Mid-state		Northern						Ave	Low	High
				QV	WR	BA	LH	ST							
Royal Tern										0%	1	0.1		1	
Roseate Tern										0%	1	0.2		2	
Common Tern	66	50								68%	10	170	56	518	
Forster's Tern										0%	1	0.1		1	
Least Tern	2	46	2							16%	10	322	179	560	
Black Tern											CP				
Black Skimmer	CP		3							94%	4	3.2		12	
Rock Dove	378	338	129	14	154	56	66	97	47	89%	10	1440	974	2543	
Mourning Dove	532	671	81	89	210	444	303	445	121	123%	10	2360	2123	2799	
Monk Parakeet	12	3	11							100%	10	26	1	105	
Black-billed Cuckoo	1	20	2	4	5	11		8	1	226%	10	23	6	51	
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	7		1	4		8	1	2	1	109%	10	22	4	47	
cuckoo species															
Barn Owl										0%	4	4.9		19	
Eastern Screech-Owl	13			1	2	3	1	7		57%	10	4.7	25	61	
Great Horned Owl	4			4	2	3	8	10		103%	10	30	16	40	
Barred Owl	8		1	6	2	6	38	17	2	157%	10	51	15	85	
Long-eared Owl										0%	1	0.2		2	
Northern Saw-whet Owl						1	4	2		368%	7	1.9		5	
Nighthawk, Common		2				1		3		78%	10	7.7	1	14	
Chuck-will's-widow										0%	1	0.1		1	
Whip-poor-will		1			1	3	7	2		82%	10	17	8	24	
Chimney Swift	91	67	14	18	119	139	107	146	39	123%	10	601	413	736	
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	12	5		1	2	19	45	46	7	180%	10	76	31	126	
Belted Kingfisher	22	13	4	6	10	13	32	18	7	104%	10	120	75	166	
Red-headed Woodpecker										0%	5	0.5		1	
Red-bellied Woodpecker	232	68	11	29	31	98	41	48	15	166%	10	345	194	459	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker				1	1	11	140	92		161%	10	152	13	311	

<i>Downy Woodpecker</i>	<u>273</u>	54	18	<u>27</u>	28	83	128	112	<u>41</u>	764	137%	10	557	394	764
<i>Hairy Woodpecker</i>	<u>77</u>	10	8	<u>2</u>	4	13	57	44	9	<u>224</u>	136%	10	165	110	217
<i>Northern Flicker</i>	276	79	12	18	36	65	73	98	30	687	98%	10	703	590	828
<i>Pileated Woodpecker</i>	15	2	4	5	1	17	<u>36</u>	39	1	120	143%	10	84	50	123
<i>Olive-sided Flycatcher</i>			<u>1</u>							1	167%	5	0.6		2
<i>Eastern Wood-Pewee</i>	89	39	<u>24</u>	23	21	99	95	179	32	601	120%	10	499	413	661
<i>Yellow-bellied Flycatcher</i>											0%	5	0.6		2
<i>Acadian Flycatcher</i>	6	3		<u>3</u>		9	2		2	25	89%	10	28	20	39
<i>Alder Flycatcher</i>				<u>1</u>		1	<u>25</u>	89		<u>116</u>	190%	10	61	7	111
<i>Willow Flycatcher</i>	43	<u>35</u>	5	<u>6</u>	25	29	<u>20</u>	112		275	120%	10	230	168	281
<i>Least Flycatcher</i>		<u>1</u>	2	4	1	32	33	85	8	166	110%	10	151	121	223
<i>Epidonax species</i>	1														
<i>Eastern Phoebe</i>	78	24	15	<u>61</u>	35	<u>220</u>	151	268	55	<u>907</u>	135%	10	672	528	873
<i>Great Crested Flycatcher</i>	55	44	5	<u>39</u>	20	88	49	128	22	450	116%	10	389	270	513
<i>Eastern Kingbird</i>	68	<u>66</u>	8	<u>33</u>	30	122	125	156	<u>20</u>	628	112%	10	560	489	683
<i>White-eyed Vireo</i>	21	4	3	8	4	3		2	<u>4</u>	49	123%	10	40	21	57
<i>Yellow-throated Vireo</i>	25	<u>11</u>		29	2	58	35	64	<u>3</u>	227	111%	10	204	158	245
<i>Blue-headed Vireo</i>					<u>3</u>	9	<u>86</u>	59	2	<u>159</u>	169%	10	94	53	128
<i>Warbling Vireo</i>	<u>112</u>	43	1	35	<u>37</u>	167	<u>43</u>	123	41	602	117%	10	514	292	664
<i>Red-eyed Vireo</i>	232	76	49	<u>176</u>	39	388	<u>803</u>	962	59	<u>2784</u>	155%	10	1792	1181	2543
<i>Blue Jay</i>	431	210	36	<u>87</u>	104	244	296	275	46	<u>1729</u>	114%	10	1519	1305	1697
<i>American Crow</i>	883	463	106	<u>112</u>	349	649	543	641	82	3828	101%	10	3803	2755	4516
<i>Fish Crow</i>	25	15	1	<u>4</u>	5	<u>14</u>	4	17		85	155%	10	55	33	94
<i>Common Raven</i>		<u>2</u>				<u>5</u>	31	5		43	172%	10	25	2	58
<i>Horned Lark</i>											0%	1	0.1		1
<i>Purple Martin</i>	17	7			8			8		40	105%	10	38	8	54
<i>Tree Swallow</i>	136	80	35	39	85	215	450	411	49	1500	98%	10	1529	795	1867
<i>Northern Rough-w Swallow</i>	<u>124</u>	46	6	13	9	58	42	26	<u>8</u>	332	102%	10	326	192	420
<i>Bank Swallow</i>	4	36	4	15	48	108	88	22	44	369	115%	10	320	167	529
<i>Cliff Swallow</i>	44		6			222	28	30		330	143%	10	231	59	420
<i>Barn Swallow</i>	303	<u>260</u>	42	30	142	272	173	324	89	<u>1635</u>	116%	10	1404	1184	1630
<i>Black-capped Chickadee</i>	303	92	21	68	50	301	<u>547</u>	466	95	1943	114%	10	1704	1209	2064

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					QV	WR	BA	LH	ST						
<i>Tufted Titmouse</i>	577	147	64	126	88	361	400	408	98	2269	163%	10	1391	952	1786
<i>Red-breasted Nuthatch</i>	4						8	9		21	25%	10	83	40	157
<i>White-breasted Nuthatch</i>	146	15	16	16	24	53	111	78	59	518	137%	10	378	218	519
<i>Brown Creeper</i>	1		2	1	2	2	34	48	3	93	122%	10	76	35	130
<i>Carolina Wren</i>	206	47	9	32	22	57	13	16	18	420	227%	10	185	49	434
<i>House Wren</i>	214	42	4	55	36	145	115	138	34	783	94%	10	834	697	938
<i>Winter Wren</i>	3	1			3	5	19	14	5	50	119%	10	42	14	80
<i>Sedge Wren</i>											0%	1	0.1		1
<i>Marsh Wren</i>	24	68	4					34		130	165%	10	79	37	113
<i>Golden-crowned Kinglet</i>	5						2	1		8	104%	10	7.7	4	16
<i>Blue-gray Gnatcatcher</i>	15		2	24	1	90	51	99	26	308	160%	10	192	125	267
<i>Eastern Bluebird</i>	67	10	11	34	22	205	139	150	34	672	125%	10	537	319	793
<i>Veery</i>	158	38	5	56	14	220	560	602	57	1710	132%	10	1297	806	1681
<i>Swainson's Thrush</i>											0%	5	0.6		2
<i>Hermit Thrush</i>				4	3	11	131	78	4	231	160%	10	144	77	243
<i>Wood Thrush</i>	274	76	46	94	99	232	329	276	53	1479	114%	10	1292	1089	1503
<i>American Robin</i>	1780	633	101	312	400	922	870	1088	248	6354	113%	10	5622	5022	6060
<i>Gray Catbird</i>	1261	375	70	251	177	508	548	746	157	4093	119%	10	3452	2626	3974
<i>Northern Mockingbird</i>	172	141	21	59	57	120	44	65	34	713	90%	10	788	593	1111
<i>Brown Thrasher</i>	23	3		5	1	11	2	10	4	59	72%	10	82	49	105
<i>European Starling</i>	2293	1289	423	89	841	1005	534	1131	1247	8852	126%	10	7014	5767	8174
<i>Cedar Waxwing</i>	239	244	31	59	130	364	562	663	95	2387	192%	10	1243	568	1649
<i>Blue-winged Warbler</i>	55	65	9	39	35	59	37	101	26	426	75%	10	571	396	716
"Lawrence's Warbler"										0		6			
"Brewer's Warbler"										1		6			
<i>Golden-winged Warbler</i>					1			1		1	111%	7	0.9		2
<i>Tennessee Warbler</i>										0		4	0.7		2
<i>Nashville Warbler</i>							6	1		7	875%	6	0.8		2

Northern Parula						1	1	5	7	219%	10	3.2	1	5	
Yellow Warbler	520	153	46	85	92	349	160	599	64	2068	104%	10	1996	1593	2352
Chestnut-sided Warbler	2	5		12	7	73	233	353	4	689	113%	10	612	294	777
Magnolia Warbler						2	78	16		96	141%	10	68	42	92
Cape May Warbler											0%	1	0.1		1
Black-throated Blue Warbl	1			2		2	119	67	1	192	145%	10	132	33	219
Yellow-rumped Warbler					1	5	99	56	2	163	138%	10	118	31	183
Black-thr Green Warbler	7	5		5	25	63	184	132	15	436	186%	10	235	100	376
Blackburnian Warbler	1					20	116	94	2	233	197%	10	118	55	170
Yellow-throated Warbler											0%	2	0.2		1
Pine Warbler	33	23	13	22	18	38	152	125	7	431	190%	10	227	89	377
Prairie Warbler	7	9	5	40	24	68	9	14	2	178	82%	10	217	145	259
Bay-breasted Warbler											0%	2	0.6		5
Blackpoll Warbler	1					1		4		6	143%	6	4.2		11
Cerulean Warbler				1		0	5	7	2	15	190%	10	7.9	2	12
Black-& White Warbler	42	28	13	25	17	80	166	213	14	598	107%	10	561	467	639
American Redstart	32	7	8	58	16	188	299	564	9	1181	128%	10	925	553	1223
Worm-eating Warbler	80	27	17	26	22	13	5	4	7	201	127%	10	158	114	223
Ovenbird	140	79	37	98	126	190	381	446	59	1556	123%	10	1264	955	1510
Northern Waterthrush			2		7	5	2	33	1	50	116%	10	43	8	69
Louisiana Waterthrush	25	14	2	8	3	46	14	24	7	143	107%	10	134	111	160
Kentucky Warbler											0%	6	1.5		7
Mourning Warbler							2			2	143%	7	1.4		3
Common Yellowthroat	269	98	21	88	81	228	424	647	48	1904	109%	10	1752	1367	2061
Hooded Warbler			2	6	7	12	2	5		34	131%	10	26	18	37
Wilson's Warbler											0%	3	0.4		2
Canada Warbler						2	15	29	4	50	89%	10	56	21	83
Yellow-breasted Chat											0%	5	0.8		2
Summer Tanager											0%	1	0.1		1
Scarlet Tanager	97	33	8	47	27	118	210	178	25	743	120%	10	619	442	827
Eastern Towhee	76	58	10	79	45	103	113	170	20	674	96%	10	705	585	887
Chipping Sparrow	370	48	31		83	447	531	423	143	2076	117%	10	1770	1483	2090

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					QV	WR	BA	LH	ST						
<i>Field Sparrow</i>	10	<u>38</u>		23	28	60	12	11	6	188	105%	10	179	143	212
<i>Savannah Sparrow</i>					<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	19	<u>24</u>	48	145%	10	33	12	54
<i>Grasshopper Sparrow</i>											0%	7	3.1		8
<i>Nelson's Sh-tailed Sparrow</i>											0%	3	0.3		1
<i>Saltm Sharp-tailed Sparro</i>	9	10								19	136%	10	14	5	26
<i>Seaside Sparrow</i>	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>								<u>7</u>	368%	4	1.9		11
<i>Song Sparrow</i>	540	231	79	51	91	474	454	630	84	2634	106%	10	2493	2212	2915
<i>Swamp Sparrow</i>	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>	2	15	10	20	46	221	0	326	115%	10	284	126	457
<i>White-throated Sparrow</i>			<u>1</u>		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	1	6		10	77%	10	13	1	23
<i>White-crowned Sparrow</i>											0%	2	0.9		8
<i>Dark-eyed Junco</i>							26	4		30	64%	10	47	11	70
<i>Northern Cardinal</i>	<u>512</u>	198	33	42	77	362	203	273	96	1796	115%	10	1565	1302	1844
<i>Rose-breasted Grosbeak</i>	50	16	6	10	12	77	94	110	11	386	101%	10	383	300	476
<i>Indigo Bunting</i>	64	<u>49</u>	4	12	34	126	<u>117</u>	71	16	<u>493</u>	146%	10	337	213	442
<i>Dickcissel</i>											0%	1	0.1		1
<i>Bobolink</i>		<u>1</u>		<u>3</u>	<u>9</u>	132	39	339	9	532	125%	10	427	257	571
<i>Red-winged Blackbird</i>	653	764	103	116	412	717	315	904	210	4194	95%	10	4401	3859	5271
<i>Eastern Meadowlark</i>		2			8	<u>1</u>		7	3	21	41%	10	51	17	81
<i>Rusty Blackbird</i>											0%	1	0.5		5
<i>Common Grackle</i>	<u>1590</u>	756	120	89	305	528	312	553	<u>311</u>	4564	98%	10	4668	3276	5582
<i>Boat-tailed Grackle</i>			2							<u>2</u>	667%	2	0.3		2
<i>Brown-headed Cowbird</i>	240	102	20	59	90	192	148	241	59	1151	94%	10	1221	935	1450
<i>Orchard Oriole</i>	<u>33</u>	2		2		16		2	<u>2</u>	57	143%	10	40	21	71
<i>Baltimore Oriole</i>	245	90	13	55	50	214	80	132	28	907	92%	10	983	807	1192
<i>Bullock's Oriole</i>											0%	1	0.1		1
<i>Purple Finch</i>						4	<u>75</u>	67	2	148	142%	10	104	40	159
<i>House Finch</i>	364	122	21	84	107	217	109	240	58	1322	65%	10	2036	1277	3510
<i>Pine Siskin</i>											0%	4	0.7		3

<i>American Goldfinch</i>	<u>455</u>	<u>222</u>	49	<u>117</u>	214	323	505	<u>528</u>	<u>126</u>	2539	126%	10	2021	1179	3030
<i>Evening Grosbeak</i>								<u>2</u>		2	143%	5	1.4		5
<i>House Sparrow</i>	1564	470	173	92	191	347	222	<u>345</u>	195	3599	120%	10	3003	2152	4051
other unidentified/hybrid								16		16		0	67	11	385
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	25232	12290	3670	3893	6837	15919	16369	21677	5091	110978	115%		96621	79871	108875
<i>CD Species</i>	143	129	110	117	125	144	134	153	103	203	97%		209	178	201
<i>CP Species</i>	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	500%	2	0.6		2

DEGREE OF EFFORT:

<i>Party Hours</i>	303.0	113.0	22.0	60.0	<u>67.5</u>	174.0	146.0	185.5	48.0	1119	101%		1104	962	1192
<i>Day Party Hours</i>	288.0	111.0	22.0	57.0	<u>65.0</u>	160.0	129.0	170.5	47.0	1049.5	100%		1054	905	1130
<i>Night Party Hours</i>	15.0	2.0	0.0	3.0	2.5	14.0	17.0	15.0	1.0	<u>69.5</u>	129%		54.0	42.0	65.5
<i>Observers</i>	61	35	8	12	10	39	20	30	8	223	98%		227	188	257
<i>Parties</i>	31	19	7	4	4	9	12	14	5	105	91%		116	99	130
<i>Indiv bds per 10 PH</i>	833	1088	1668	649	1013	915	1121	1169	<u>1061</u>	<u>1057.3</u>	120%		882	805	984
<i>Ind. bds per Observer</i>	414	351	459	324	684	408	818	723	636	<u>535.2</u>	127%		422	373	473
<i>% Observers</i>	27	16	4	5	4	17	9	13	4	100					
<i>% Party Hours</i>	27	10	2	5	6	16	13	17	4	100					
<i>% Individual Birds</i>	23	11	3	4	6	14	15	20	5	100					

GS - Greenwich-Stamford
NH - New Haven
TB - Trumbull-Bridgeport

SR - Salmon River

QV - Quinnipiac Valley
WR - Woodbury-Roxbury

BA - Barkhamsted
LH - Litchfield Hills
ST - Storrs

EASTERN SCREECH-OWL FORAGING BEHAVIOR

Arnold Devine and Dwight G. Smith

Introduction

The Eastern Screech-Owl (*Otus asio*) is a widespread and locally common resident throughout much of Connecticut. It is absent only from deep woods of remote and rugged areas where larger owl species that prey upon this smaller owl, such as the Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) occur. Otherwise, it is a permanent resident of mixed and deciduous woodlands, agricultural landscapes, suburbia, and open space habitats such as city and town parks and cemeteries (Smith and Devine 1994, Devine and Smith 1996).

Throughout its range in Connecticut the Eastern-Screech Owl is an opportunistic and versatile predator that takes an exceptionally wide range of prey through the lower size spectrum of small and medium sized birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, as well as a wide variety of invertebrates as opportunity presents.

We have been investigating the ecology of this small owl since 1975 as part of our long-term study of the ecology and biology of Connecticut birds of prey. In this paper we present our observations of Eastern Screech-Owl foraging behaviors in the context of diet profiles that illustrate how different foraging behaviors are used for catching different types of prey. A complete enumeration of Eastern Screech-Owl predation will be the subject of a future paper.

Methods

Details on screech owl hunting techniques were obtained by direct observation of screech owl hunting behavior in the field during early evening hours, immediately before and following sunset. The owls were observed in the vicinity of nest and roost sites or following their departure from such sites. Methods used to locate roost and nest sites were previously described (Smith, Devine, and Gilbert 1987, Smith and Devine, 1994, 1999). Most observations varied from 1 to 45 minutes duration and occurred from the time the owl actively began foraging until it became too dark for further viewing.

Foraging Periods

Eastern Screech-Owls are considered among the most nocturnal of predators and typically exit their daytime roosting sites about one-half hour after sunset, but before full darkness. Unmated owls begin foraging almost immediately after leaving their roosting site but mated pairs usually spend several minutes together before initiating their nightly foraging activities.

On overcast days the owls may emerge from their roost sites somewhat earlier, depending on a variety of local conditions including food availability. When food is scarce, or during inclement weather, they often emerge for foraging somewhat earlier, especially in periods of prolonged snow cover. These conditions produced most of the several hundred observations of Eastern Screech-Owl foraging behaviors that we were able to make. Our observations were usually in close proximity to the foraging owls, almost always within 3 to 16 meters to the bird.

Hunting Techniques

Although screech-owls are adaptable and opportunistic in hunting mode and technique, our observations revealed six basic hunting techniques (1) Perch, Wait, and Strike (2) Perch, Strike and Rummage (3) Gleaning (4) Aerial Pursuit, (5) Harassing, and (6) Walking and Patrolling.

Perch, Wait, and Strike: This is the most common foraging technique that we observed from fall through spring. The Perch, Wait, and Strike foraging technique undoubtedly arises in the context of hunting habitat frequented by the Eastern Screech-Owl, which consists mostly of open woodland, orchards, and woodland edge habitat where suitable hunting perches are typically quite abundant.

An owl using this technique moves slowly and systematically through a woodlot or along an edge habitat, stopping frequently on low branches to search the area immediately below. Owls that we were able to observe typically perched on the lowest open branches of the woodland canopy, or the lower branches of orchard trees. Heights of perches generally ranged from 1.1 to 2.5 meters above ground, rarely higher.

Foraging owls remained on a perch for highly variable times, from one to several minutes, rarely for a shorter duration. If no potential prey item was observed, the owl flew to another perch, often nearby. Often successive perches were near one another and in

a circular pattern, ensuring that a woodland opening was thoroughly searched for potential prey before moving on to another foraging site.

If prey was spotted the owl darted quickly to the ground in an attack. Although the "classic" raptor attack is a long stoop or glide terminated by thrusting the feet forward in front of the body with talons spread wide (Goslow, see Smith 2002 for a description of this behavior in other owls), Eastern Screech-Owls rarely exhibited this attack form.

Instead, the attack was mostly a quick, steep plunge with the feet thrust forward at the last minute. If the attack is unsuccessful and the prey individual escapes to a hiding place the owl returns to the same perch or to a nearby perch and resumes searching the immediate area below. We have often seen screech owls attack, miss, and return to the same perch site, attack again and return again several times in quick succession. Even after a series of unsuccessful attacks the screech-owl often remained for several minutes in the vicinity before departing.

Perch, Wait, and Strike foraging was most frequently employed when foraging for small mammals and small birds, but rarely for invertebrates. However, an element of opportunism operates within this foraging method in that moths, earthworms, and other invertebrates, which are spotted as they move about in the undergrowth are also subject to this mode of attack.

Perch, Strike, and Rummage: This foraging method of predation is similar to the Perch, Wait, and Strike method except for one distinctive difference—if the strike misses the owl often remains on the ground for several minutes, rummaging through the vegetation and leaf litter, often shuffling leaves about with its legs and talons. If the prey was found the owl quickly struck with its talons at the prey individual, sometimes striking several times in rapid succession. Screech-owls were generally persistent in rummaging about the leaf litter and vegetation for initially elusive prey.

This foraging technique was most often used in hunting small mammals, but not birds—the latter responded to the missed owl strike by flying deeper into woods or thick brush.

However, rummaging also produced larger invertebrates such as earthworms, which were also snared with the talons. Smaller insects and other invertebrates such as beetles, moths, and similar organisms were captured and carried in the mandibles rather than with the feet.

Gleaning: Gleaning was most often observed from mid-spring to late summer months, when aerial insects were most abundant. Gleaning took place in the middle or upper canopy of woodlands or among the upper branches of orchard trees or landscape ornamentals. A typical gleaning bout was very short, lasting about 1-3 seconds. Owls observed employing this technique moved about the canopy by flitting from branch to branch. Sometimes they briefly hovered just above the canopy, then made short stoops to pluck prey from branches or, less commonly, from the tops of leaves.

Prey individuals captured by gleaning consisted entirely of insects, primarily stationary moths and caterpillars, less often beetles. The frequency of gleaning was directly related to the abundance of caterpillars and typically peaked in late summer months when insect populations peaked. We did not observe this technique employed at any other time of year.

Aerial Pursuit: We infrequently observed Eastern Screech-Owls employing this foraging method for capturing flying insects, but were unable to determine its frequency and effectiveness as a hunting method. Screech-owls using aerial pursuit typically perched along woodland edge habitats, especially along edges bordering a stream, lake, or wetland and tended to forage out over the open portion of the habitat rather than within the woodland interior.

Basically, this hunting technique consisted of darting from a perch to pursue and catch an insect in mid-flight. If flying insects were abundant, the owl would repeat the aerial pursuit technique several times, returning to the same perch between foraging bouts.

An owl would frequently catch flying beetles and moths in its mandibles when using this technique. We generally observed this hunting technique in summer and early fall, coincident with relatively high populations of flying insects. Johnsgard (1988) and Bent (1938) both note that use of this hunting technique by Eastern Screech-Owls was much more commonly reported in southern and southwestern locales, where screech owls are considerably more insectivorous than their northern counterparts, which rely much more heavily on vertebrate prey for much of the year.

Harassing: This hunting tactic may be considered an extension of Perch, Strike, and Rummage in which context it was infrequently observed. Harassing consisted of a screech-owl hovering about thick brush, vigorously flapping its wings and jumping or hopping

about in efforts to frighten a bird or small mammal out of the brushy cover and into the open.

Walking and Patrolling: The literature and food habits summaries of Eastern Screech-Owls from other parts of their range suggests that this hunting technique is probably more common than we observed. Since we observed this method infrequently we could not always be sure in every case that it was not an extension of a failed strike and rummage hunting method. One of us (DGS) did observe a pair of Eastern Screech-Owls very obviously using this hunting technique along the periphery of Clark's Pond in Hamden, Connecticut on two consecutive late summer evenings in August. Both members of the pair walked slowly along the edge of the pond and were very obviously looking for prey. Although approaching darkness precluded recording hunting success, one member of the pair stood still in shallow water along the pond edge. At least two strikes into the shallows were made, but neither appeared to be successful. However, the owls continued to remain along the pond edge into darkness.

Walking and patrolling along ponds and wetlands offers a ready explanation for the occasional appearance of crayfish, aquatic worms, and even small fish in the screech-owl diet. Screech-owls observed patrolling grassy areas beneath orchards might have been employing the same hunting technique in search of beetles and grasshoppers, both of which were occasionally taken as prey by the owls we studied.

Discussion

Hunting methods employed by Eastern Screech-Owls varied with prey type, season of year, and habitat in which foraging occurred. The most commonly observed foraging behavior consisted of the Perch, Wait, and Strike technique which was typically employed in habitats such as open woodland, along edge habitat, suburban landscapes, and urban open space.

Gleaning and Aerial Pursuit foraging was seen from spring into fall months and generally took place over open areas or along woodland edge habitat. Aerial Pursuit has been called the "fly-catcher" style of foraging and Sutton (1929) noted that this foraging method is also a common mode of foraging employed by frogmouths and other Caprimulgiformes, which are comparatively close relatives of the owls.

Another foraging method often observed included Perch,

Strike, and Rummage which seemed to be the most successful of all methods, especially in fields, around wetlands and watercourses, and in grassy areas where brush was lacking.

Two methods used by other birds of prey, but not seen employed by foraging Eastern Screech-Owls were (1) Quartering and (2) Extended Stoops or Strikes although it is possible that both may be used occasionally. We have seen Eastern Screech-Owls interrupt a series of several direct flights back and forth between perches eight meters apart to briefly hover, then plunge onto prey in grassy areas in a foraging mode reminiscent of quartering.

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BOOK REVIEW

Jamie Meyers

Sparrows of the United States and Canada, The Photographic Guide, David Beadle and James Rising (2002, 328 pages, Academic Press, San Diego, CA, \$29.95, oversized softcover).

One of my favorites of the recent spate of family-specific field guides was the original that these same authors published in 1996. This new volume is basically an update to that worthy effort, the most obvious difference being that the well-rendered artwork is totally replaced by photographs. Some of the text is cut and pasted from the original, but in places it too is updated, especially with regard to distribution and ranges.

The biggest knock on photographic guides has always been that photos don't measure up to paintings in terms of showing pertinent field marks and portraying species as they really appear in the field. I've always agreed with that criticism, until now. The authors searched far and wide for the best photographs they could find, and the results of that quest are quite positive. The photos are very well rendered, and are worth the price of this book on their own merits. Each is accompanied by a concise paragraph of text pointing out key identification points, the photos of which well illustrate real-life detail, as opposed to that captured in the whim of an artist's brush.

The guide covers a whopping 63 species and subspecies, including about a dozen Asian and tropical strays or potential strays. As in 1996, in places the authors treat forms that are not currently recognized, such as the "Bell's" subspecies of the Sage Sparrow, as distinct species, apparently still anticipating splits to come in the future. Interestingly, they split out various forms of Fox Sparrow and the juncos, but they leave the Brewer's "Timberline" subspecies – which many consider a viable candidate for splitting – lumped. It's hard to know their reasoning why, and I wish they had covered that better in the text. Regardless of taxonomic decisions that may or may not be, by dint of elevating those subspecies, better coverage is given to them than would have otherwise been the case, and I appreciated that.

Even in species that aren't candidates for splits, the number of

photos are generous and cover the spectrum of different forms in a way few other photographic guides have succeeded in doing previously. For instance, there are 18 different shots of both Song and Savannah Sparrows spanning the continent and showing well the variations among these widespread species. I found the composite of the seven photos of the usually furtive Lincoln's Sparrow to be quite satisfying overall, a good collection of photos, that, taken together, nicely shows this handsome species as it is encountered in the field. Many of the species covered receive similar treatments.

Yet, as in any photographic guide, the flip side of the coin is that the range of illustrations presented will always be dictated by the availability of quality frames for any given species. Perhaps also space limitations prevented better inclusion, but there is only one shot of a juvenile Song Sparrow, and that one does not show the buffy upper chest coloration that can lure birders into inaccurate identifications. Something is also lacking in the treatment of Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow. The only shot of our Atlantic *subvirgatus* is in poor light, and even the authors themselves aren't totally sure if it in fact is that subspecies. There are no breeding plumage shots of the subspecies whatsoever. One wonders if the less than optimal coverage in this case is a result of inattention or simply the lack of good photographs of an elusive species that is probably difficult to photograph. I can't help but suspect the former, since they produced some great photos of other secretive species, such as Le Conte's and Baird's Sparrows, in both cases away from their breeding grounds. Whatever the reason, birders trying to make an ID on a questionable bird during migration here in Connecticut would be better served by using other sources.

Other changes from the 1996 guide are both good and bad. I quite liked the breeding survey density maps in the first guide. They were original and gave information that couldn't easily be found anywhere else. However, they've been replaced by more standard field guide range maps that are good in their own right, but I'd like to have seen the authors keep the density maps from the previous edition. On the plus side, there is a nice new section up front about habitats, complete with sample photographs of each habitat type and a discussion about what species prefer which habitats. This introduction is well done and concise, giving a wealth of general information about sparrows in a brief ten pages or so that is an improvement on that presented in the first guide. The inside cover sports a nice, handy index that is quite helpful.

My gut feeling when I heard that this guide was out was that I didn't really need to own it because I already had the first edition.

That was before I actually saw it on the shelf. I admit that the photos sucked me in, but I don't regret the purchase at all, and I feel that this is an upgrade to the previous volume. The overall presentation and usefulness of this guide is excellent. Dr. Rising and Mr. Beadle took a good thing and made it better. This nice book comes recommended.

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BIRD BAND RECOVERY

A hatching year female Northern Harrier, banded by Ray Schwartz at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison, Connecticut on September 19, 1995, was recovered in Canada on May 22, 2002.

The dead harrier was found in Notre-Dame du Lac, Quebec. The location is about 280 miles northeast of Quebec City on the Gaspé Peninsula, or $6 \frac{1}{2}$ degrees north and $3 \frac{1}{2}$ degrees east of where it was banded.

FRED SIBLEY



CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Greg Hanisek

SPRING, MARCH 1 THROUGH MAY 31, 2002

In keeping with recent trends, this spring produced a few unusually early arrivals, but the most noteworthy development overall was the detection of several uncommon species in good numbers. Noteworthy among these were American Bittern, both cuckoos, Golden-winged Warbler, Mourning Warbler, and Philadelphia Vireo. It's difficult to ascribe broad meaning to these reports, because they're at least in part related to the recent surge in shared sightings facilitated by e-mail. The season produced the usual complement of rarities, but in the long run the increasing volume of reports on regular sightings will prove much more important to our understanding of the state's birdlife.

Field Notes Dates

Following are first arrival dates for a selection of regular migratory species.

Green Heron — April 19 in Southbury (PBr); Osprey — March 12 at Old Lyme (HG); Piping Plover — March 24 in Waterford (GW); Common Snipe — March 17 in Durham (WSc); Common Tern — April 27 in Stamford (PDu); Black-billed Cuckoo — May 11 in Hamden (AB) and Branford (AGi); Yellow-billed Cuckoo — May 7 in New Haven (LS); Common Nighthawk — May 12 in Southbury (RN); Whip-poor-will — April 18 in Waterbury (MSz) and Southington (JA); Chimney Swift — April 21 in Woodbury (RN); Willow Flycatcher — May 8 in Stratford (DVa) and Watertown (RN); Eastern Wood-Pewee — May 7 in Pomfret (GW); Eastern Phoebe — March 7 in Litchfield (DRo); Great Crested Flycatcher — April 21 in Stratford (F&LM); Eastern Kingbird — April 26 in Greenwich (TG); Yellow-throated Vireo — April 26 in Preston (DP); Blue-headed Vireo — April 14 in Southbury (CLo); Warbling Vireo — April 27 in Southbury (PBr); Fish Crow — March 15 in Torrington (DTr); Purple Martin — April 9 in Madison (JC); Tree Swallow — February 28 in Greenwich (TG)); Northern Rough-winged Swallow — April 2 in Watertown (RN); Barn Swal-

low — March 27 in Greenwich (JWe); House Wren — April 18 in Greenwich (TG); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher — April 16 in Litchfield (DRo); Veery — April 25 in Lyme (HG); Wood Thrush — April 24 in Greenwich (TG); Blue-winged Warbler — April 19 in Southbury (PBr); Tennessee Warbler — May 9 in Waterbury (GH); Yellow Warbler — April 21 in Woodbury (RN); Black-throated Blue Warbler — April 24 in Burlington (PCi); Black-throated Green Warbler — April 20 in Litchfield (DRo); Blackburnian Warbler — May 3 in New Haven (MSc); Pine Warbler — March 27 in Sterling (RD); Prairie Warbler — April 24 in Southbury (CLo); Palm Warbler — April 9 in Greenwich (TG); Bay-breasted Warbler — May 4 in Waterbury (GH); Black-and-White Warbler — April 10 in Southbury (PBr); Worm-eating Warbler — April 23 in Bethany (GH, MSz); Louisiana Waterthrush — April 2 in Guilford (BY); Common Yellowthroat — April 24 in Greenwich (TG); Chipping Sparrow — April 5 in Watertown (RN); Rose-breasted Grosbeak — April 24 in Southbury (CLo); Eastern Meadowlark — March 12 in Roxbury (MSz); Orchard Oriole — April 20 in Darien (JMh).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

A Red-throated Loon was still present May 17 at Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford (DVa) and one was unexpected May 11 on Quinnipiac marsh ponds in Hamden (FMc). A good inland count of 10 Red-necked Grebes was made on April 18 at Batterson Pond, Farmington, which recorded 23 for the season (PCi); two were at Ender's Island in Stonington March 10 (GW). A single bird arrived March 17 at Trap Falls Reservoir in Shelton and remained through April 19, an unusually long stay (TK et al.). A pair of Pied-billed Grebes was observed nest-building at White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield on April 28 (SHa).

Double-crested Cormorants had at least six nests on a Bridgeport breakwater May 21 (DVa). Long Island Sound produces few reports of tubenoses other than Wilson's Storm-Petrels, so one Manx Shearwater far west off Stamford May 8 was an exciting find (PDu).

Two Great Egrets, uncommon inland in spring, were in Newtown April 3 (PBr) with one on the Still River in Brookfield the same day (ADi). The season's first Little Blue Heron was in Milford April 2 (LAI&MA). A Tricolored Heron appeared April 8 in Branford (CK). An adult Black-crowned Night Heron was at Lake Zoar, Southbury, on the unusual date of March 30 (RN). The only Cattle Egret for the season was

at Sherwood Island State Park (hereafter SISF), Westport, from April 30 to May 2 (AH). In keeping with recent trends, American Bitterns were widely reported, both in potential breeding locations and in wetlands where they were more likely transients. Overall, there were more than a dozen sightings. Two Glossy Ibis were uncommon inland visitors April 17 at Little Pond in White Memorial (LAm).

Connecticut's long-awaited first confirmed nesting of Black Vulture was discovered April 1 by rock-climbers Pat and Patrick Redmond in Kent, one of the first areas where the species became established about a decade ago. (See detailed article in Vol. 22 No. 3). East of the Connecticut River, where they remain uncommon, single Black Vultures were in Haddam March 5 (DG, MC) and East Lyme April 1 (JO).

The high count of Snow Geese was 51 on March 24 in Ellington (CE). A Brant was inland March 22-24 in Farmington (MHm, PCi), with one still in the area April 16 (EN). An immature **Tundra Swan** was present March 10-19 at Candlewood Lake in Brookfield (JD). Away from usual wintering spots, a **Eurasian Wigeon** was at Griswold Point, Old Lyme, on March 24 (HG). South Cove in Old Saybrook held a good concentration of at least 10

Northern Shovelers March 10 (J&AO) as that species continued its recent upward trend. At least one Eurasian Teal was present on the New Haven County coast into mid-March (m.ob.) and the hybrid **Green-winged X Eurasian Teal** found during the winter was at Furnace Pond, Branford, until at least March 2 (MSz).

South Cove in Old Saybrook held up to six Redheads in mid-March (BD); two were at Bantam Lake in Litchfield March 24 (FZ), and one was there April 3 (GH). The best count of Ring-necked Ducks was 186 on March 24 at Janie Pierce Park in Southbury (PBr). The flock of Lesser Scaup at North Cove in Old Saybrook built to 150+ on March 2 (SK). A Long-tailed Duck was inland April 1 at Batterson Pond in Farmington (PCi), as were single White-winged Scoters April 16 at Nepaug Reservoir in Canton (JMe, JK) and April 17 at Batterson Pond (PCi). Batterson attracted two Surf Scoters April 15 (PCi) and two were at Nepaug April 20 (JMe). A Black Scoter visited Bantam Lake April 14 (RK). Lake Waramaug in New Preston held at staging group of 750 Common Mergansers March 8 (GH). Inland Red-breasted Mergansers included one at Nepaug (JMe, JK) and seven at Batterson (PCi), both on April 15.

RAPTORS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A major flight of American Kestrels on April 7 produced 16 over a capped landfill in New Haven (MHo) and eight on a short stretch of farm road in Bethlehem (GH). An immature Golden Eagle was over Cornwall on March 29 (KA). A Virginia Rail March 14 at Lord's Cove in Lyme was suspected of overwintering (DC). Two **Common Moorhens** for the season were in Natchaug State Forest in Eastford on May 16 (MSz) and in Stratford on May 22 (FN).

An American Golden Plover, uncommon in spring, was at Hammonasset Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP) on April 23-29 (EN et al.). A high count of 12 Solitary Sandpipers was at Millwoods Park, Wethersfield, on May 4 (SK). Away from their breeding site at Bradley Airport, single Upland Sandpipers visited Rocky Hill Meadows May 4 (AW) and SISP in Westport on May 21 (DVa). Following last spring's well-traveled Black-tailed Godwit, a **Bartailed Godwit** was seen by one observer and photographed April 18 in Old Saybrook. It apparently was of the race *baueri* (DVa). Purple Sandpipers were on the move in late May, a typical but overlooked phenomenon, with two on May 17 at Rocky Neck State Park in East Lyme (DVa). Eight Short-billed

Dowitchers were a good inland find May 21 at Great Pond in Simsbury (JMe). The season's high count of Common Snipe was 34 on April 8 in Mansfield (MSz); 18 were noted on March 21 in Durham (JWk). The season's lone **Wilson's Phalarope** visited HBSP May 17-19 (BM et al.).

A Laughing Gull, uncommon in spring, was at Seaside Park, Bridgeport, May 21 (DVa). The first flurry of **Black-headed Gulls** brought singles to Southport March 21 (CB, AJH), Oyster River in West Haven March 24 (FMA) and South Cove in Old Saybrook March 25 (J&AO). Two were at Oyster River March 29 (AR, JMa) and one was still in Southport April 15 (JHu). An adult **Little Gull** was at Holly Pond in Stamford April 4 (PDu). Two Bonaparte's Gulls made an inland appearance May 14 on Lower Bolton Pond (MSz). A leucistic Ring-billed Gull caused double-takes May 20 at HBSP. The all-white bird had a pinkish bill with a dark ring and pinkish-gray legs (GH, NC). Another leucistic Ring-bill was at a Stratford boatlaunch where it has been seen occasionally for several years (MSz). Single **Iceland Gulls** were still present April 8 in Bloomfield (JMe) and April 9 at Batterson Pond, Farmington (PCi). The season's only Caspian Tern was at Sandy Point in West Haven May 19

(PU). In a state that seldom produces jaegers, a **Pomarine Jaeger** flying over HBSP on May 11 produced an exciting outing for a handful of fortunate birders (DSO et al.). Alcids of all kinds are rare in Long Island Sound and seldom seen away from the eastern end; however, after deep westward penetration by Razorbills in the fall, a **Dovekie** was reported off West Haven on March 30 by an experienced observer (RB).

It was an excellent spring for cuckoos, especially for Yellow-billed Cuckoo. The first Yellow-billed was reported May 7 followed by a flurry of reports around the state May 10-12 and continuing steadily through May (m.ob.). Black-billed Cuckoo was also widespread but reports numbered about two-thirds of those for Yellow-billed (m.ob.). A Barn Owl was at Sherwood Island on March 28 (RSO). An unusual inland sighting of Short-eared Owl occurred April 6 at Little Pond, Litchfield (RB). Migrating Northern Saw-whet Owls were detected March 3-4 in a Sterling yard (RD) and at Miles Audubon Sanctuary in Sharon (FB). Two Whip-poor-wills were in Ellington May 10 (CE). Two Redheaded Woodpeckers that wintered in two different parks in Hartford remained through the season (m.ob.).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

The first Olive-sided Flycatcher was a bit early May 11 in New Haven (TK). Others were May 16 in Lyme (DP) and West Hartford (DSc), May 17 in Ellington (CE), May 21 in Southbury (PBr) and two on May 26 in Sharon (FMa et al.). A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher appeared May 21 in Milford (CWs) and one was at HBSP on May 24 (DSO). Acadian Flycatcher was first noted May 11 in Nehantic State Forest in East Lyme (GW). Two Northern Shrikes for the season included one to March 9 in South Windsor (NC, MM) and one March 19 in Durham (JMa). Philadelphia Vireo, always a sparse and easily overlooked spring migrant, appeared May 12 in Waterbury (MSz), May 13 in Preston (DP), May 16 at Greenwich Point (JWe) and May 19 in Kent (TK). Blue Jays staged a steady movement along ridges from Kent to Cornwall on May 5 (FG); these May migrants are easily overlooked at a time when warblers get most of the attention. Among the state's burgeoning population of Common Ravens was a pair with three noisy, pink-gaped young at Lovers Leap in New Milford on May 31 (ADi).

Cliff Swallows, maintaining their state stronghold in the Housatonic Valley, nested un-

der eaves at the former Fairfield Hills State Hospital site in Newtown (PBr). A high concentration of 12 Brown Creepers was noted April 9 in Goodwin Forest, Hampton (MSz). Although separation of gray-cheeked-type thrushes is a field problem of the first magnitude, the following sightings were thought to be correct at the species level based on multiple criteria: single Gray-cheeked Thrushes in Granby (MSz) and Canton (JMe) and singing in a Preston yard (DP), all on May 17, and a Bicknell's Thrush in Suffield on May 20 (MSz). A Swainson's Thrush was unusually early April 25 in Lyme (HG).

Single Golden-winged Warblers, seldom seen away from breeding areas, were in a Southington yard May 1 (JA) and in Westport May 4-5 (JHu); four singing males were at three locations, presumably territories, May 21 in Sharon, Kent and Canaan (JMe), and an apparent territorial pair was at Bent of the River Sanctuary in Southbury, south of this species' usual range in the state (CLo, PCo). A Lawrence's Warbler appeared May 11 in Westbrook (DH), and another was in Westbrook May 26 (JTo et al.). A Brewster's Warbler was in Nehantic State Forest May 25 (DP). Two Yellow-throated Warblers for the season were singing in Woodbury

April 29 (RN) and Granby May 21 (MSz). A Palm Warbler March 30 in Southbury was either a wintering bird or a very early migrant (RN). Cape May Warblers were reported May 8-9 in New Haven (MSc), May 10 in Granby (MSz) and May 12 in Canton (DTr, FZ). Away from the species' Kent stronghold, a Cerulean Warbler was at Sessions Woods in Burlington May 16 (PF) and in Wethersfield May 19 (SK). Two Prothonotary Warblers appeared May 16, one in Nehantic State Forest in Lyme (DP) and the other in East Rock Park in New Haven (MSc); the Nehantic bird was present through at least May 23 (AGr). A Kentucky Warbler was in Guilford May 8 (JC) and another was at East Rock May 19 (PU); one that appeared May 28 in West Hartford remained into June (JMe et al.). Mourning Warblers arrived with a flurry of three reported on May 17 and a total of at least 15 for the season (m.ob.). A Yellow-breasted Chat was at Milford Point May 19 (CWs).

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

The season's only Summer Tanager was in Nehantic State Forest in Lyme on May 4 (DP). An American Tree Sparrow sang its full song March 25 in Stratford (GH); the species seldom starts singing before it departs for northern nesting areas.

In a good season for Vesper Sparrow, the first arrived in Ledyard April 2 (FN), and the high count was four in South Windsor April 16 (PCi). Single Grasshopper Sparrows were at HBSP on April 26-27 (EN, JC), Haley Farm State Park in Groton May 5 (BA) and Osbornedale State Park in Derby May 23 (PF). A Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow on March 28 in Westport was so far ahead of the usual May arrival dates that it almost certainly wintered (RSo). Ten Fox Sparrows represented a nice yard count March 23 in Hamden (J&CZ). Lincoln's Sparrows were timely arrivals May 12 in New Milford (ADi) and May 13 in Southington (JA) and Hamden (JZ). The season's only Dickcissel was at a feeder in Southington April 4 (fide JZ).

The high count of Rusty Blackbirds was 125 on April 27 at White Memorial (DRo). Two male and one female **Boat-tailed Grackle** arrived March 19 at the Stratford breeding site (CB). The maximum count was seven on April 21-30 (PCi). Scattered reports of **White-winged Crossbill** included 12 in Pachaug State Forest in Voluntown on April 16 (BD); one was in a Woodbridge yard March 23 (JMo). A few Pine Siskins continued to move through until as late as May 20 (m.ob.). The latest Common Redpoll report was April 7 in

Goshen (PCi). There was a late April movement of Evening Grosbeaks, with birds reported from six locations from April 21 to May 5 (CWi, MW et al.).

Exotics — A Ruddy Shelduck was on a pond in Norwalk for the third consecutive year (RSo). A Chestnut Bulbul was at large in a Stamford neighborhood in March (PDu). A European Goldfinch visited a Southbury feeder on March 29 (CD).

[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

Mark Szantyr

ANSWER TO PHOTO CHALLENGE 40

Just What Sparrow Is That?

It is said that each journey, no matter how long, begins with just one step. I have always wondered what happens when that first step is in the wrong direction.

So it's a beautiful September morning and you are in the field. You and a friend are birding the brushy edge of a recently harvested cornfield; the tall green stalks now reduced to ankle-high stubble. You are looking for migrants, something rare, maybe an unusual sparrow or two as there is plenty of food about, plenty of scattered corn and the various grasses and weeds are in full autumnal bounty.

Up ahead, you spot a bird precariously balanced at the top of a wand of goldenrod. It is a brownish sort of bird, rather streaky overall, with various parts of its plumage appearing black, rich buff, pale cream, and golden ochre. You notice that this bird has a striped crown, with a pale central crown stripe, and its bright golden face is marked with a few more dark lines and spots, mostly behind the eye. In the bright morning sun, this bird seems to gleam like a spot of well-streaked gold. "Sparrow!", you emphatically whisper to your partner....but which one? (You have just taken the aforementioned First Step).

"Plain breast!" you continue...."Not a Song Sparrow or anything like that. It's so golden looking.... Not a Swamp or Field Sparrow." Looking at the strong head pattern, you next look longingly at the plain breast in hope of finding...yup; you guessed it, the "stickpin" spot of a Lark Sparrow. But to no avail. It's not a Lark Sparrow.

"Wait a minute!" you shout. "Look at that head shape! Streaked head with a smooth transition between forehead and bill...it must be one of the grassland sparrows!" (Step number two!).



“Is it Le Conte’s, or better yet, Baird’s Sparrow?” You wonder out loud. You let your imagination drift to that coveted FIRST STATE RECORD. (Step number three in the record books).

“Don’t get crazy.” Your *inner birder* says.....“You haven’t even eliminated Henslow’s Sparrow yet”. “HENSLOW’S SPARROW!” you sputter... “How could I forget?” Is it a Henslow’s? No....still no breast streaking, no matter how much you wish. And besides, the head, while buffy, isn’t green and shows little contrast in color to the dorsal aspect of the bird as might appear in a Henslow’s Sparrow.

In a moment of utter clarity you announce to all who will listen “I HAVE GOT IT! GRASSHOPPER SPARROW!” While your words are still echoing off the surrounding hills, you run through the field marks again....streaky golden buff bird with dark and light dorsal stripes...Plain sandy golden buff breast...Striped crown with a pale central crown stripe...Two buffy wing bars... Dark ‘ear’ spots and line behind the eye.... Oh man, its all looking

good. You continue.... "Short spindly tail? well no, not really short. Reddish/purplish nape streaking?.... No, not really. Reddish tinge to the cheek?....No. Nice, obvious white eye-ring? No. Yellow edging at the bend of the folded wing?.....No.Uh Oh!"

That sinking feeling in your gut is reinforced when a small mixed flock of blackbirds lands in the vicinity of your "rarity" and you notice that it and the Brown-headed Cowbirds are about the same size. You then notice that the "sparrow-like" bill of your bird is too deep at the base, too pointy at the tip, too large overall to be that of a sparrow.

At around this point in your agony, your birding partner taps you on the shoulder and says, "Where is it in relation to that Bobolink?"

Spring plumage male Bobolinks (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) are beautiful black birds with strong dorsal patterning of white and yellow. Females in the breeding season look very much like our quiz bird and when in the company of the males offer no real identification challenges. Males out of their breeding finery and young birds of both sexes likewise, resemble the female and when you encounter such a cryptically colored and patterned bird out of context, scenarios like that postulated above are not beyond the pail.

Our quiz bird, a female or basic plumage Bobolink, was photographed by Sam Fried at Jamaica Bay, New York. Julian Hough, our knowledgeable and esteemed Photo Quiz Editor was out of the country for this month's answer and after reading my ramblings, he may never leave again.

Mark Szantyr, 145 Farmington Ave., Waterbury, CT 06710



Photo Challenge 41. 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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