

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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ON THE COVER

Yellow-throated Warbler

We're at the time of year when birders pay special attention to their feeders. The Dunn feeder in Madison played host to a real distinguished visitor, a Yellow-throated Warbler. Mark Szantyr was among many who enjoyed viewing this beauty, which he captured in one of his excellent drawings.

2011 MABEL OSGOOD WRIGHT AWARD

In presenting the award to Buzz Devine at the annual meeting at Middlesex Community College, COA President Steve Mayo said:

It is an honor for me to, once again, present the Mabel Osgood Wright award. Mabel Osgood Wright was the author of "Citizen Bird," "The Friendship of Nature" and of course, "Birdcraft." She was a founder in the early 20th century conservation movement and a founding member of the Audubon Society of the State of Connecticut. She was a longtime friend and colleague of Frank Chapman. Together they produced Bird Lore magazine for more than 11 years. The Mabel Osgood Wright Award was established to honor a person who has devoted a lifetime to Connecticut ornithology. This year's recipient has done just that, and in many ways his ornithological contributions have been very similar to those of this award's namesake. He has made so many significant contributions in the areas of avian conservation, research and education.

Beginning with his Master's Degree thesis on Screech Owl ecology, Buzz Devine has devoted his life to the long-term study of Connecticut's nocturnal and diurnal raptors. His research has focused on their distribution, populations, habitat associations, nest and roost site requirements, diets and behavior. He has co-authored 54 published reports and articles. Some of these are found in *Birding*, *The Journal of Field Ornithology*, *Raptor Research* and *Bird Observer*. He is perhaps best-known to the Connecticut birding community for his collaborations with his friend and colleague, Dr. Dwight Smith. In addition to the comprehensive 1996 "Connecticut Birding Guide," this team has provided more articles for *The Connecticut Warbler* than any other author.

Buzz Devine played a major role in the Connecticut Breeding Bird Atlas. He was on the Steering Committee and an active trainer and participant in Connecticut's Breeding Bird Survey. He co-authored 27 species accounts in the 1994 "Atlas of

Breeding Birds of Connecticut.” For the past seven years, he has been the Western Connecticut coordinator for the Natural Diversity Database. Buzz has participated in dozens of Summer and Christmas Bird Counts and was compiler of the Oxford CBC for a quarter century.

Buzz is our premier expert on the distribution of Connecticut birds. He has served on Connecticut's Avian Taxonomic Review Committee for more than 15 years. He has conducted DEP Wetland Bird Surveys for over a decade. Buzz completed 20 years of service in the DEP, devoted to ensuring compliance with environmental regulations. After his retirement he has added even more bird distribution and conservation projects to this impressive resume. He was Audubon Connecticut's conservation plan consultant for the Naugatuck State Forest. He has made significant contributions to the Grassland Initiative, the Highlands Project, the Migratory Bird Habitat Stopover Project, the Conti Migratory Bird Habitat Stopover Survey and other important projects.

Our recipient is a founding member of the Western Connecticut Bird Club and has also supported Naugatuck Valley Audubon for decades. He has served in both organizations in many roles including president and director. He has led well over 100 field trips and owl prowls during his long birding career. Throughout these and other birding events, Buzz has always shared his experience and his extraordinary wit and sense of humor.

Involvement in the COA is not by any means a prerequisite for this award. However, Buzz has provided almost continuous service to COA. He was on the founding steering committee and has served on the Board and its committees for many years. He also served on the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut for 15 years.

On behalf of the Connecticut Ornithological Association membership, it is with great pleasure that I present the 2011 Mabel Osgood Wright Award to Buzz Devine.

SANDHILL CRANES

By Luke Tiller

The highlights of my first season hawk watching at Quaker Ridge in Greenwich (2009) were a pair of Mississippi Kites and a group of five Sandhill Cranes that soared over the watch one late October day. With the two species expanding their ranges in the Northeast, one from parts south and one from parts west of here, I suggested at my first season roundup presentation that maybe both of these species might become commonplace at Connecticut watches in not too distant future. Of course after making that prediction, and with the vagaries of hawk watching being what they are, 2010 saw sightings of neither species at Quaker Ridge. In 2011 however, both species were back and with regard to the cranes in a suspiciously coincidental pattern.

In 2009 the sighting of the cranes had become something of a Northeastern birding listserv phenomenon. The flock not only consisted of a rather sizeable number (at least for the Northeast) but also contained a rather distinctive individual, which had a group of primaries seemingly damaged or missing from its left wing. This combination of a distinctive individual among a distinctively large group of birds allowed various birders to track the movement of this flock.

The birds had been initially sighted on Cape Cod around the middle of October and had become celebrities on the Mass-bird listserv. The local tracking of the birds helped confirm that they were seen leaving the Tihonet Road area in Wareham, Mass., on Oct. 29 at about 9:30 a.m. They were observed later that morning by Paul Champlin, who was in his car in Fall River, Mass. Being the typical New England birder, Paul followed them a short hop down the road as far as Portsmouth, R.I., to add to his Rhode Island state list. The next sighting of the group was made by the regulars at Quaker Ridge at about 2:15 p.m. As the crow flies it is about 160 miles from Wareham to Greenwich. With both departure time and



Ken Mirman photo

Six Sandhill Cranes pass over the Quaker Ridge hawk watch site in Greenwich on Oct. 28, 2011.

arrival time noted, we can surmise the birds clocked an average of 32 mph for the journey. The story continued the next day when the same group was spotted at Scott's Mountain Hawkwatch on the N.J./Pa. border as they picked up from Merrill Creek Reservoir below the hawk watch site. Coincidentally Scott's Mountain Hawkwatch has a link to Connecticut in that it was started by hawk watcher and Connecticut Warbler editor Greg Hanisek.

In 2011, late in the day on Oct. 28 (note the single day difference to the 2009 sighting), we again picked up a large flock of Sandhill Cranes over Quaker Ridge, but this time consisting of six birds. It was a somewhat fortuitous sighting as it was toward the end of a rather unproductive day, however a little late burst of action had kept most of the regulars out there until after four. Of course the sighting piqued my interest straight away, and a quick check of the Massachusetts listserve confirmed that there again had been a group of Sandhill Cranes in Wareham and that the final reports indicated that there were possibly six birds in their flock this time around. Some further delving on the Cape Cod birding listserve, a few personal contacts and some research on eBird allowed me to confirm that there were in fact six birds seen in

autumn 2011 on the Cape, with the final logged sighting on either listserve or eBird being on Oct. 26.

It's kind of amazing to think that we had the same group of birds that originated in Wareham, Mass., head over Quaker Ridge on almost the exact same date two years out of the three I have conducted the count. Of course as a birder with a vague understanding of the processes of migration, one understands that birds are believed to physiologically be spurred to migrate by the changing amount of light in the day and that diurnal migrants navigate much the same way that we might, in that they use visual clues to decide where to head next. This all sounds great in theory, but witnessing the movements of these individual cranes really helped highlight both of these processes in action and makes one really wonder about the incredible migration that these birds undertake.

To add a little history to the sightings, Sandhill Cranes reports have increased dramatically in Connecticut over the last 10 to 20 years. Published just 20 years ago Zeranski and Baptist in their book, *Connecticut Birds*, list the species as a casual visitor from the Midwest with only two photographically documented records. Two further sightings are rejected by the book's authors for lack of corroborating evidence, and a third because it appears to pertain to a sighting in Massachusetts. Similarly Devine and Smith's *Connecticut Birding Guide*, published in 1996, lists the bird as a casual visitor.

With the first accepted record of the species in Connecticut dating back to just 1980 (or 1976 if you accept the reports the authors of *Connecticut Birds* dismissed), the Sandhill Crane is seemingly a rather recent addition to the avifauna of New England. Reports of the species to the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut rapidly began to increase just prior to the publication of the Zeranski and Baptist book, with single flyovers sighted in August 1987 in Newtown and in March 1988 in Westport. In the next few years accepted reports increased, including a Lyme bird that stuck around for two weeks in December 1991 and an individual in Sharon that

hung around for five months between July and December (causing some to question the provenance of the individual). There were also a couple of rejected reports of flyovers at Lighthouse Point and in Bloomfield, mainly it seems for not ruling out the possibility (although unlikely) of Common Crane. In the year 2000 the Avian Rare Records Committee, after accepting a further two records, decided to remove the species (as noted in the 9th ARCC report) from the review list.

Coincidentally perhaps the year 2000 was the year that Sandhill Cranes were first documented as breeding in New England, when a pair and a chick were discovered in Kennebec, Maine. Since then further successful attempts have been documented in a number of Northeastern states and provinces including Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, Massachusetts, Vermont and New York. The atlases of these states and provinces highlight the dramatic change of the status of this species. For example the Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas goes from zero blocks reporting Sandhill Crane sightings in the first atlas (1986-1990) to breeding being confirmed in one block, four blocks reporting it as probable and a further three blocks reporting it as possible in the second (2006-2011). A pair with a chick were discovered and confirmed during surveying for the ongoing Vermont Breeding Bird Atlas (2007) and one can see the incredible expansion in confirmed, probable and possible breeding blocks between the first and second atlases of Quebec and Ontario.

The boom of this species throughout their range is also probably highlighted by the increasing number of states that have either recently introduced or are considering introducing a hunting season for this species. Of course market hunting is probably one of the key reasons that this species disappeared from the east. Forbush, in his *Birds of Massachusetts and other New England States* (1925), states that the bird was considered "more or less common" during the period of settlement and quotes at least one settlement period text that refers to eating this species .

Whether it was more or less common I don't personally know, and this kind of vague reporting is a reason that one often struggles to wade through old books and try to translate what the definition of sightings would mean to a modern birder. Forbush in his book splits Sandhill Cranes into Little Brown Crane (Lesser Sandhill Crane) and Sandhill Crane (Greater Sandhill Crane). According to Forbush there is one specimen of Lesser Sandhill Crane collected from Rhode Island on Oct. 8 or 9, 1889, and recorded by William Brewster (who leant his name to the hybrid warbler) and two of Greater Sandhill Crane (one again recorded by Brewster) from Wakefield, N.H. in 1896 or 1897 and one from Lunenburg, Vt. He even notes a record of Whooping Crane from Connecticut, but that is perhaps a whole different story (dealt with in Zeranski and Baptist).

Forbush goes on to conclude, beyond some artistic descriptions of how dangerous of a fight a "winged" Sandhill Crane will put up, that the species may appear again in New England as an accidental straggler. It's always good to see a species doing rather better than predicted. I personally have now seen 15 Sandhill Cranes in the state, spread over four separate occasions and have never needed to twitch one. Due to my position as a professional hawk watcher my experience might be somewhat exceptional in the state, but I imagine we will soon be at the point where it won't be. However common these majestic birds become in Connecticut in future years I still can't imagine a time when it won't be a thrill to see and hear them here.

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eBird: <http://ebird.org/content/ebird/>

Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas: <http://www.mba-aom.ca/>

Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlases: <http://www.massaudubon.org/birdatlas/bbaportal/index.php>

NYSARC Report Vol 56 No 1: <http://nybirds.org/NYSARC/Reports/NYSARC2003.html>

Ontario Breeding Bird Atlases: <http://www.birdsontario.org/atlas/index.jsp>

Quebec Breeding Bird Atlases: http://www.atlas-oiseaux.qc.ca/index_en.jsp

Vermont Breeding Bird Atlases: <http://www.vtecostudies.org/vbba/>

BOOKS ON BIRDS

By Alan Brush

Early in 2011 birds claimed a measure of notoriety when somewhere between 3,000 and 5,000 Redwing Blackbirds fell from the sky near Beebe, Ark. Despite concerns of an ecological disaster, government conspiracy, the end of days or the coincidental release of the movie "The Big Year (starring Steve Martin), this was not actually an unusual event, although it may be unprecedented for media coverage. Bird deaths are certainly not uncommon, and estimates are that on average 1.3 million birds die daily. US Fish and Wildlife estimates that a minimum of 10 billion birds breed annually in the U.S., and up to 20 billion may be in the country during fall migration. So the death rate of birds is high due to natural predators, accidents and even the loss through fledglings' first attempts at flight. Cats, pesticides, collisions with buildings, cars, high-tension wires and habitat loss can account for the remainder. On balance the numbers of man-made causes continue to increase, while bird numbers fall.

The public's interest in birds, birding, and associated activities increased by 300% in the decades after 1960. In addition to a wave of new field guides and "where to find birds..." in every geographic area imaginable, we now have birding blogs, iPhone apps, bird-mapping tools, remote birding Web sites, and guided tours aimed at birders. There are books relating personal adventures such as Ken Kaufman's *Kingbird Highway* and Pete Dunn's *The Feathered Highway*. There are dictionaries of bird's names, books about the birding "tribe," and even a classic collection by RW Wood on *How to tell the birds from the flowers and other woodcuts, verses & illustrations* (first published in 1917; reprinted by Dover 1959).

The world of books about birds and birders does not end there. Sage-like commentary and advice on the birding life includes Cashwell's *The Verb to Bird. Sighting of an avid birder* (2003 Paul Dry Books, Philadelphia), J. Conner's *The Complete Birder. A guide to better birding* and a pair of classics *On Watching Birds* (L. Kilham. 1988 Chelsea Green Publ., Chelsea,

VT), *Birds Worth Watching* (G.M. Sutton, 1986 U. Oklahoma Press). Kilham's philosophy is summed up in the statement that he wants "...not to hand beginners cut flowers but to give them tips on growing their own..." Then there is Augustus C. Fotheringham's 1928 *Eoöornis pteroveloX* *Gobiensis*. (34 pg The Buighleigh Press. London), which is the classic send up of a scientific paper on birds, and a treasure in its own right. Consider now:

The teach your chicken to fly TRAINING MANUAL. Trevor Weeks.1995. 35 pgs. Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, CA.

In just 35 pages, Weeks packs in enough technical information, diagrams, figures, illustrations, surface and internal anatomy for the reader to train almost any chicken to fly. He even points out the aerodynamic qualities of the hen's egg. The original sponsor of the venture was the Society of Rights for Inferior Birds, where an unnamed inventor developed a theory to train poorly flying birds (e.g. Galliformes) to undertake long flights.

The author reviews and explains the development of a training machine and exercise regime that should allow all chickens, perhaps even one in your own possession, to become a decent flyer. The carefully drafted figures (not photos) detail the morphology of *Gallus gallus* related to flight. The details of the design and construction of the training machine developed from the designer's initial sketches are clear and helpful. The chapter "Psychology" is valuable with hints for reducing the insecurities endemic in the beginning flyer. Exercises are provided to "'instill confidence.'" Fig 6 is a painting of Sigmund Freud with a chicken. The painting is allegedly in a private collection and is credited with giving rise to the expression "Freudian Chic". The training program is aimed to develop the "wing" (=flight) muscles and neural circuitry that support flight.

While you may think that this is a lark (pun intended) the School of Fowl Training (or SOFT) reportedly was quite successful in the 1940's and early 50's. The entire scheme takes birding to a new level.

COMMON TEAL AND COMMON x GREEN- WINGED TEAL: THEIR OCCURENCE IN CONNECTICUT, WITH TIPS ON IDENTIFICATION

By Frank Gallo

The Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca carolinensis*) is a common small duck that breeds across the northern tier of North America, and winters mainly across the western and southern U.S., down into southern Mexico and the Caribbean. Prior to 1973, it was considered a separate species, (*Anas carolinensis*), from the Common (Eurasian) Teal (*Anas crecca*), which breeds across much of northern Eurasia, and winters across southern Eurasia, and into northern Africa. In April 1973, the American Ornithological Union (A.O.U.), lumped them together into one species, Green-winged Teal, (*Anas crecca*), representing three subspecies, Green-winged Teal, (*Anas c. carolinensis*), Common (Eurasian) Teal, (*A. c. crecca*), and Aleutian Green-winged Teal (*A. c. nimia*) from the Aleutian Islands, AK.

Currently, the taxonomy of the *Anas crecca/carolinensis* complex is again under review. Although the A.O.U. and the American Birding Association (A.B.A.) still consider the two conspecific (one species), most authorities outside the United States now split the complex into two species: Green-winged Teal (*A. carolinensis*), and Common Teal (*A. crecca*), based on morphological, behavioral, and molecular evidence. *A. c. nimia* is grouped with Common Teal, and is no longer considered a distinct subspecies, but rather, the largest form of a cline extending from Europe, east. In the United States, Common Teal is a rare but regular late fall to early spring visitor to the northern areas of both coasts; it is very unusual inland.

Because Common Teal and Green-winged Teal may very well be split again by the A.O.U., and given that males of these two forms are separable in the field, it seems a review of their status and occurrence in Connecticut (see Table 1),

and key identification criteria, is in order.

Identification

Males

Male Common Teal (CT) can be separated from male Green-winged (GWT) by its broad horizontal white scapular bar over a thin black bar that extends from the shoulder to the tail. (Note: This white scapular bar can be hidden by the upper scapulars, or flank feathers, making it hard to see). GWT lacks the horizontal white bar and has instead a vertical white breast bar, which is absent in CT. CT has distinct white to buffy lines on the face that extend from the base of the bill over and under the green face-patch on the side of head, to well behind the eye, outlining and highlighting the green patch. Male GWT just shows a short white line beneath the green under the eye. CT has a paler, more gray, or gray-buff chest, lacking the pink tones of GWT. Secondary characteristics to look for in male Eurasian Teal include a paler chestnut head, crown, and chin (more blackish in GWT), paler gray flanks with more coarse vermiculations, and a slightly wider, more distinct, pale vertical bar dividing the gray flanks from the black undertail coverts. Although a subtle character, the tertials are also more boldly patterned in CT. Both sexes of CT also show a white, rather than buff, upper border (wing bar) to the speculum, visible in flight or on the extended wing.

Females

Although, female Eurasian Teal has the white, rather than buff upper border to their speculum (wing bar), shows a more plain, less patterned face, is less heavily marked, and appears paler overall, given current knowledge, it are considered inseparable from Green-winged in the field.

Intergrades

Although rare, intergrades between the two occur, and have been reported on at least four occasions in Connecticut (see

Table 2). CT x GWT are quite variable, but generally show both the horizontal and vertical white stripes of their parents, each to varying degrees of intensity. At one extreme, individuals exhibit both a bold white horizontal scapular stripe, and a bold white vertical breast bar, and at the other extreme, may show one stripe completely, with only a faint hint of the other stripe. Often, both stripes are present, but reduced, usually thinner and fainter. It has been suggested that in some cases the horizontal white scapular stripe may also be shorter. Facial striping is generally intermediate in appearance. Given the potential for subtle plumage characters in intergrades, careful scrutiny of all purported Common Teal for signs of mixed characteristics is always warranted.

For a more complete discussion of the identification of GWT vs. CT, see Sibley: <http://www.sibleyguides.com/2011/03/distin-guishing-green-winged-and-common-teal/>, and Gilson: http://thebirdguide.com/identification/Eurasian_Teal/teal_hybrid.htm (a detailed discussion of CT, and intergrades in Oregon, with photos.)

Occurrence in Connecticut

Interestingly, the first published record of Common Teal is from East Hartford on 14 November 1889, and it is both the earliest fall record, and one of just five inland sightings in Connecticut; two others were also from the Hartford area, 27 March 1968 and 19 April 1997, both in South Windsor, with the fourth from the Willimantic River, Willimantic, on 27-28 March 1965 and the fifth from Mackenzie Reservoir, Wallingford, on 24-25 March 2011. Coastal reports range from 15 December to 30 April with most concentrated in March/April, the peak of Green-winged Teal migration, and when males are in alternate (full breeding) plumage and identifiable. (See Graph 1.) Fall individuals, in eclipse plumage, may not be recognizable, and would likely go unnoticed.

Published records also include one from the 1950s and a few in the 1960s. Although there are reports of Common Teal from Massachusetts, other New England states, and the Maritime Provinces of Canada during the 1970s, there is a dearth

of published records for this period in Connecticut.

Common Teal has been a regular visitor to the state since 1983, skipping only the winters of 1984, 1990, 1994, 1995, 1998, 2003, and 2008. They have occurred annually since 1999, with the exception of the winters of 2003 and 2008. (See Graph 2.) Most sightings have been of single individuals, with occasional sightings of two together at Milford Point, Milford.

Common Teal is a common breeder in lowland marshy areas in Iceland, with estimates of 3000-5000 breeding pair. Although declining in Asia and other parts of its range, there is a continuing long-term uptrend in Europe since 1974. Thus, it seems likely, at least for the near future, that Common Teal will continue to occur in Connecticut with similar, if not more, frequency. It falls to the A.O.U. to determine if, or when, it can be added to the State List. Whether a full species, or not, it is always a treat to find a Common Teal in Connecticut.

Acknowledgements

First, thank you to the many people, too many to mention by name, who sent me reports of their sightings; this compilation could not exist without you. Thanks go especially to Dennis Varza who provided notations for many of the earlier sightings. To Chris Elphick, Ian Gereg, Frank Mantlik and Mark Szantyr for their wonderful photos, and in Mark's case, drawings, too. You all made this a better article. To Vanessa Mickan who puts up with my data obsession and is always supportive.

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Mark Szantyr photo

This male Green-winged Teal shows the diagnostic vertical white breast bar. Compare its face pattern with those of the two male Common Teal on the facing page.

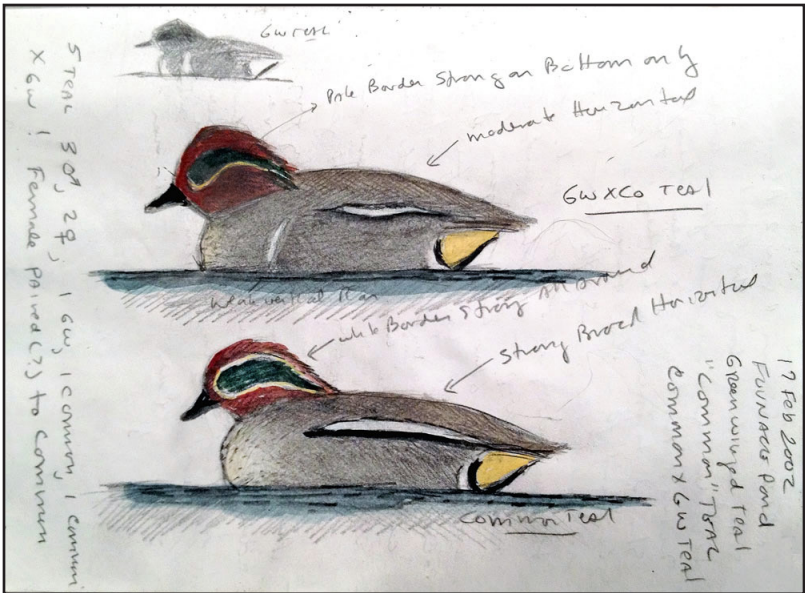


Frank Mantlik photo

This male Common Teal, identified by the horizontal white scapular bar, was photographed in Stratford in January 2009.

Chris Elphick photo
Two female Common Teal with a male on the Exe Estuary, Devon, England, in January 2010. Females of Common and Green-winged Teal cannot be safely separated in the field.





Mark Szantyr's field sketch of a male Common Teal and male Green-winged X Common Teal present together in February 2002 in Branford.



Ian Gereg photo
Two male Common Teal at the Livingston Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy in Litchfield.

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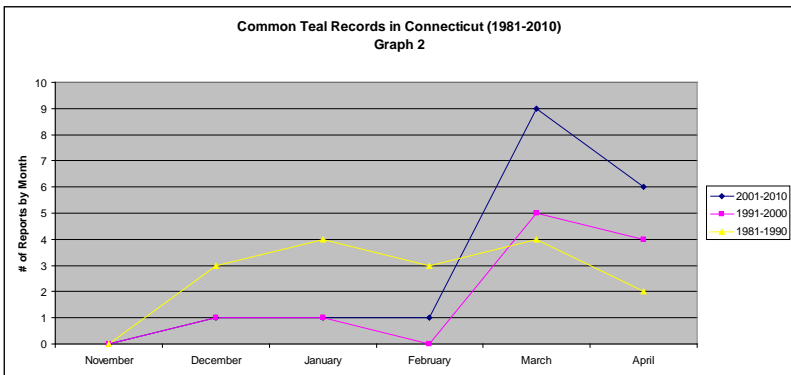
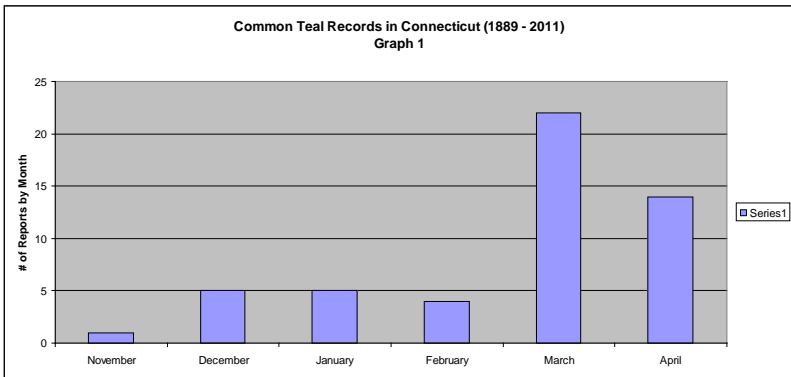
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Common Teal Sightings in Connecticut Table 1

Date	# Seen	Location	Observer(s)	Citations & Comments
11/14/1889	1	East Hartford	W. E. Treat, J.H.S. Coll	Sage & Bishop, Birds of CT, 1913
4/1/1953	1	Stonington	Noss	RNEB 9:65
3/27-28/1965	1	Willimantic, Willimantic R.	Paul Jannke, James A. Slater, John McDonald	Birds of Storrs, 1975
4/16/1967	1	Woodbridge, Konold's Pond	Proctor, Noble Finch, Davis	RNEB 23:Apr:06, & NS Proctor Per. Com.
3/27/1968	1	South Windsor	Kitchin	RNEB 24:Mar:03
3/20/1983	1	Milford, Gulf Pond	Richard English	CW-Vol.3:No.3:July 1983
1/30/ to 2/10/1985	1	Milford, Gulf Pond	Many Observers	CW-Vol.5:32-35:July 1985:30 Jan - 10 Feb 1985- 2nd year in a row.
3/23 to 4/13/1985	1	Milford, Gulf Pond	Many Observers	CW-Vol.5:49-51:Oct 1985
12/15 to 2/10/1986	1	Milford, Gulf Pond	Many Observers	CW-Vol.6:38-40:July 1986: 3rd year in a row+?
12/29/1986	1	Milford, Gulf Pond	Bill Martha	Bill Martha, pers. com.
3/1-15/1987	1	Milford, Gulf Pond	Many Observers	CW-Vol.7:No.4:52-55
12/15/1987 to 2/29/1988	1	Milford, Gulf Pond	Many Observers	CW-Vol.8:No.3:61-68
March 1988	1	Milford, Milford Point	Bull, Milan Rosa, Ron	CW-Vol.8:No.4:79-86:March 1988-exact date not reported - w/ 200 GWTE
1/6/1989	1	Westport, Gray's Creek	Barnard, Charles	CW-Vol.9:No.3:60-67
4/22-23/1989	1	Milford, Milford Point	Rare Bird Alert	CW-Vol.9:No.4:88-95:Oct 1989. Listed as an RBA report.
3/24/1991	1	Old Lyme, Blackhall River	Joe Morin et al.	CW-Vol.10: No.4
3/30-4/19/1991	1	Milford, Milford Point	Richard English	CW-Vol.11: No.4
12/20/1992	1	Stratford, Frash Pond	Greg Hanisek	Greg Hanisek
1/2/1993	1	Stratford, Frash Pond	Ed Hagen et al.	CW-Vol.13:No.3: "The Eurasian race of this species appears in CT almost annually"

3/2/1996	1	Westport, Sherwood Island State Park	Richard Soffer	CW-Vol.16:No.4:Oct 1996
3/31/1996	1	Milford, Milford Point	Greg Hanisek	Greg Hanisek
4/1/1996	1	Milford, Milford Point	Many Observers	CW-Vol.17:No.4: Oct 1996: listed as first week of April w/o a date-- in marsh w/300+ GWTE
4/19/1997	1	Windsor, Station 43	Paul Desjardins	CW-Vol.17:No.4:Oct 1997:1 of only a few inland records -FG
3/17-23/1999	1	Milford, Milford Point	Dennis Varza et al.	CW-Vol.19:No.4: pg 178.
4/8/2000	1	Milford, Milford Point	Nick Bonomo	Nick Bonomo
3/15 & 18/2001	1	Milford, Milford Point	Nick Bonomo	Nick Bonomo
4/1-30/2001	1	Milford, Milford Point	Mark Szantyr et al.	CW-Vol.21:No.4:Oct 2001. 1 male was present through April
4/20/2001	1	Milford, Milford Point	Greg Hanisek	Greg Hanisek
12/1/2001 to 3/15/2002	1	East Haven/Branford, Furnace Pond	Neil Currie et al.	CW-Vol 22:No.3:July 2002 & CW Vol 22: No.4 Oct 2002- joined by (Also, a hybrid ETxGWT 2/16-17 to at least 3/3/2002)
2/17 & 3/2/2002	1	East Haven/Branford, Furnace Pond	Nick Bonomo	Nick Bonomo
4/16/2002	1	East Haven/Branford, Furnace Pond	Greg Hanisek	Greg Hanisek (likely same bird that was first found Dec 1, 2001 - Fgallo)
3/21-early April 2004	1	Milford, Milford Point	Dori Sosensky et al.	CW-Vol.24:No.4: Oct 2004. Wheeler Marsh (Nell's Island Marsh)
3/21/2005	2	Milford, Milford Point	Steve and Charla Spector	CW-Vol.25:No.4:page 188: RBA report: 2 males in marsh very close - S.& C. Spector, pers. com.
4/14/2005*	1	Milford, Milford Point	Steve Spector	*One of the two remained until 4/14. Steve Spector; CW-Vol.25:No.4: page 188.
3/1-4/1/2006	1	Milford, Milford Point	Ken Elkins	CW-Vol.26:No.4:187-200:Oct 2006. Stayed 3/1 to at least 1 April
3/13/2006	2	Milford, Milford Point	Greg Hanisek	Greg Hanisek (2 birds)
4/10/2006	1	Stratford, Stewart B. McKinney NWR--Long Beach Blvd. Pond	Greg Hanisek	Greg Hanisek - Stratford, Warehouse Pond

4/12/2006	1	Stratford, Stewart B. McKinney NWR--Long Beach Blvd. Pond	Annette Cunnniffe	CW-Vol.26:No.4:187-200:Oct 2006.
3/26/2007	1	Guilford, Leetes Island Marsh	Greg Hanisek	Greg Hanisek
1/30/2009	1	Stratford, Bruce Pond	Frank Mantlik	F. Mantlik, per. com. (photos taken)
3/19/2009	1	Stratford, Stewart B. McKinney NWR--Long Beach Blvd. Pond	Frank Mantlik	E-bird report: Stratford, Warehouse RR trail Pond. F.Mantlik pers. com.
3/22/2009	2	Milford, Milford Point	Nick Bonomo	Nick Bonomo (2 birds)
3/25-27/2009	1	Milford, Milford Point	Twan Leenders (25-26), Bill Banks(26), Jim Dugan (27), Meredith Sampson (27), Annette Cunnniffe(27)	E-bird reports and pers. com with all. One drake with 250+ GWTE
3/12/2010	1	Milford, Milford Point	John Marshall	CW-Vol.29:No.3:99:July 2009. The only one for the season
3/8-9/2011	1	Milford, Milford Point	M. Warner & K. Blair(9th),S. Spector (8th)	E-bird:Mike Warner & Kathie Blair; RBA: Steve Spector. CW-Vol.31:No.4:171:Oct 2011.
3/23-24/2011	1	Wallingford, McKenzie Reservoir	Ted Groom et al.	Ted Groom via Nick Bonomo & RBA: CW-Vol.31:No.4:171:Oct 2011. Photo taken.
3/25/2011	1	Wallingford, McKenzie r	Paul Wolter	E-bird report. ** All sightings are of drakes

Common Teal x Green-winged Teal Sightings

Table 2

Date	# Seen	Location	Obeserver(s)	Citations & Comments
Pre-1983	2	Milford, Gulf Pond	Buzz Devine and Mark Szantyr	Mark Szanty (pers. Comm)
2/16 - 3/2/2002	1	East Haven/Branford-Furnace Pond	Neil Currie et al.	CW-Vol.22:No.4:Oct 2002. At least the 2nd time this hybrid combo has occurred in CT - seen 2/16-17
3/11/2006	1	Milford, Milford Point	Nick Bonomo et al.	CW-Vol.26:No.4:Oct 2006
3/31/2011	1	Stratford, Stewart B. Mckinney NWR	Frank Mantlik	CW-Vol.31:No 4:171:Oct 2011.

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Summer, June 1 through July 31, 2011

By Greg Hanisek

The cross-currents of the summer season produced an interesting array of breeders, migrants and far-flung rarities. In a year in which Connecticut experienced some extraordinary weather extremes, June and July played out with little meteorological fanfare.

Northbound Migration

A late Common Loon in breeding plumage was on Twin Lakes in Salisbury on June 16 (PCa), with one at Mansfield Hollow dam in Mansfield on June 18 (PR). A Northern Harrier on June 3 hunting in farm fields in Wallingford presumably was a non-breeder (MM). Two fly-by Whimbrels on June 14 at Sikorsky Airport in Stratford probably belong in this category (NBo). Milford Point still held a Semipalmated Plover, two Semipalmated Sandpipers and a White rumped Sandpiper on June 14 (NBo). A Black Tern foraged over Long Island Sound in Stratford on June 6 (FMa).

A Gray-cheeked (type) Thrush was at White Memorial Conservation Center in Litchfield on June 3 (DR). A late Cape May Warbler visited a yard in Stratford on June 6 (FMa). Blackpoll Warblers on June 16 in both Pomfret (TL) and Norwich (DP) were rather late, even for this late-moving species. The last report of Mourning Warbler came from Cornwall on June 8 (PCa).

Southbound Migration

Four American Wigeon flew over a Stratford yard on July 27 (SK). This is within the pattern of occasional early fall arrivals by the regularly occurring dabbling ducks. Migrant shorebirds were evident July 17 at Stratford Marina with 42 Greater Yellowlegs, four Lesser Yellowlegs, 20 Short-billed Dowitchers and one dowitcher sp. roosting on old pilings (FMa). The next day Sandy Point in West Haven held 25

Lesser Yellowlegs and 110 Semipalmated Sandpipers, while Milford Point attracted 220 Semipalmated Sandpipers (NBa). Sandy Point hosted a Marbled Godwit on July 27-31 (JH et al.). The first Whimbrel report came from Cockenoe I. in Westport on July 20 (LF), and the first Pectoral Sandpipers were reported at several coastal locations on July 18 (FG et al.). A Stilt Sandpiper and a Western Sandpiper were at the Access Road pools in Stratford on July 26 (FMa). An adult female **Wilson's Phalarope** was at Hammonasset Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP) on July 10 (FH). A Worm-eating Warbler, seldom seen during southbound migration, was at Smith Richardson Sanctuary in Westport on July 14 (SK).

Lingerers, Wanderers and Strays

A Wood Duck was well out of breeding habitat June 26 at Sandy Point in West Haven (MSt). Probably the most unusual lingering waterfowl of the season was a drake Lesser Scaup that summered at a small park pond in Bethany (SM). Two immature male **King Eiders** sum-

mered at HBSP (NBa, m.ob.). This species is now liable to show up in any month of the year. White-winged Scoters summered off HBSP (JCo et al.); off Sherwood I. State Park in Westport (TGr et al.); and off Stratford (SK et al.). Long-tailed Ducks have been lingering in rather large numbers the past few years. There were 12 on June 16 off Westport (TGr) and four on June 17 off Guilford (JMh). An adult male Common Goldeneye, a species not noted for summer appearances, was off Stratford Point on June 13 (TL). Three Red-breasted Mergansers, a male and two females, were at HBSP on July 1 (PW).

A single shearwater, believed to be a **Manx Shearwater**, was seen from Stratford Point on June 23 (SK). Small numbers of **Wilson's Storm-Petrels** were present in Long Island Sound again this summer with a high count of at least 12 on July 5 off Stonington Point (BDw). The bird of the season was the state's first photo-documented **Anhinga** found June 11 at Lake Whitney in Hamden (FMc et al.). It remained throughout the day and part of June 12, perched on snags

with cormorants. (Photo in Connecticut Warbler, Vol. 31 No. 2).

A large wader aggregation on July 10 at Short Beach in Stratford included at least 90 Great Egrets, 100 Snowy Egrets and 10 Black-crowned Night-Herons feasting on abundant Sand Lance (FMa et al.). The season's only Cattle Egret was at a model airplane flying field in Bloomfield on June 12 (MSh et al.). Unexpected at the inland location, a Glossy Ibis was feeding in an industrial park field in Cheshire on June 23 (RB).

The post-breeding concentration of Laughing Gulls at Short Beach in Stratford hit 500 on July 19, when an out-of-season adult Bonaparte's Gull also was present (FMa). A first-summer Lesser Black-backed Gull was unique for the season July 26 at Sandy Point (NBo). An adult **Sandwich Tern** on July 8 highlighted an excellent tern show at the mouth of the Housatonic River (Milford/Stratford) in late June and early July (NBo). About 300 Common Terns, only about three of them non-adults, and six Roseate Terns were

at the river mouth on June 28 (FMa, NBo), with an adult Royal Tern there at Stratford's Short Beach on June 29 (FMa). Two Forster's Terns were at Short Beach on July 6 (CB). The season's only Caspian Tern flew by Stratford Point on July 7 (SK). Common Tern numbers hit 1400 and Least Tern 200 at Short Beach on July 21 (NBo). Three Common Terns were unusually far up the Connecticut River at Had-dam Neck on July 25 (PCo). Elsewhere single Royal Terns were off Westport on July 3 (NBo et al.) and on a sand-bar off Old Lyme on July 18 (NBo).

Almost as exciting as the Anhinga was a pair of **Eurasian Collared Doves**, a third state record, found on June 7 at Sikorsky Airport in Stratford (FMa). Beginning on June 8 they were observed bringing nesting material into a pine tree on the airport property (PDe). This attempt apparently was abandoned as they became hard to find after a few days, with sporadic sightings up to June 17 (m.ob.). Then a single sighting occurred July 23 in a residential neighborhood near



*Walt Duncan photo
Two Eurasian Collared Doves at Sikorsky Airport in
Stratford represented a third state record.*

the airport (CB). A **White-Winged Dove** was singing sporadically at Milford Point on July 19 (FG) but did not linger.

A Red-headed Woodpecker visited a feeder in Newington in late June (CP). Despite the species' significant increase as a breeder, a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was still unexpected as a fly-over at a Mystic yard on July 2 (GW). The most extraordinary record seasonally was a molting adult male **Lapland Longspur** found by a kayaker at Griswold Point, Old Lyme, on July 24 (MPr). It's a summer first for the state. An immature male **Blue Grosbeak** spent several days in mid-June at feeders at Bent of the River Audubon in South-

bury (PCo et al.). In late June males were reported from Roxbury (RN) and from a feeder in Morris (RDn).

The Breeding Season

A Blue-winged Teal was at Station 43 in South Windsor on June 18, a date suggestive of possible breeding (AB). Also suggestive was a drake Green-winged Teal on June 30 at Rocky Hill Meadows (PCi). Common Eiders (included here in anticipation of things to come) included six flying by HBSP on June 5 (JCo). Especially interesting was a female at Lyddy Island in Stonington on June 20 (PCo).

Away from breeding strongholds in the Con-

necticut River Valley, Least Bitterns were reported on several occasions during the season at Barn Island in Stonington (BDw) and in the Quinnipiac River marshes in North Haven (BBo). American Bittern observations were also made at the latter site (BBo). Two or more Tricolored Herons were present all summer at HBSP, with up to three juveniles there late in the season (m.ob.). These juveniles had abnormal amounts of white plumage, leading to speculation that they might be of hybrid origin. They were seen at times in close association with an

adult Little Blue Heron, suggesting that species might be the other parent. However, the plumage abnormality known as leucism (deficiency of normal pigmentation) probably could not be ruled out. A Yellow-crowned Night-Heron nest with one young was found at Groton Long Point (MB), an eastern outlier to the well-established breeding population west of New Haven. That population accounted for 25 Yellow-crowns, including 14 juveniles, on July 24 at Stratford Marina (PW).

Sporadic sightings of **Mississippi Kites** from Great



Maggie Perretto photo
A molting adult male Lapland Longspur was completely unexpected on July 24 at Griswold Point in Old Lyme.



*Hank Golet photos
An adult Northern Saw-whet Owl peers out of a nest box in East Lyme. It is one of the parents of the fledgling in the accompanying photo.*



Pond in Simsbury suggested breeding may have occurred for a fourth straight year, but there were no confirmed reports of a nest or young. A female Northern Harrier at Stratford Point on June 15 was not far from the state's last known breeding location (SK). A Sharp-shinned Hawk, a scarce and secretive breeder, was seen carrying prey on June 16 in New Mil-

ford (PCa). Singles were also seen the same day in both Canton and South Windsor (PCi).

Of special significance is a report on the success of the American Kestrel nest box projects under way for several years on the guidance of Gingert primarily in the northwest and Sayers primarily in the northeast. Here

are summaries for 2011:

Gingert -26 nesting pairs in 86 boxes, with 21 pairs fledging 97 young (most of them banded) in 11 towns.

Sayers - 18 successful pairs in 45 boxes fledging 64 young in 8 towns.

A King Rail was reported from the Stony Creek section of Branford on July 8 (GN). The Sandy Point breeding colony held 14 Piping Plover chicks and totals of c. 100 Common Terns and c. 300 Least Terns on June 26 (MSt). Small numbers of Black Skimmers were present at various locations sporadically all summer with no nesting attempts documented. The first report was of four on June 4 at Cockenoe Island, Westport, (LF).

Northern Saw-whet Owls are regular breeders in the state, but we seldom get evidence as good as a pair that fledged young from a nest box in East Lyme (RC). One was calling on June 27 in West Hartland (PCa). It appears that only New Haven has managed to retain a small breeding population of Common Nighthawks;

they are not being reported during nesting season in other cities. New Haven reports came in early June from High Street near Elm and in the vicinity of the Sterling Memorial Library on the Yale University campus (MA, MSc). Whip-poor-wills, however, persist at a number of locations in addition to a stronghold in the southeast. Reports this summer came from Plymouth (GH), New Hartford (MPe) and Durham (NM).

Acadian Flycatchers were on territory in June in Naugatuck State Forest and Whittemore Sanctuary in Woodbury (GH). A White-eyed Vireo on June 3 in Hartford North Meadows was a good find for Hartford County (PCi). Common Ravens can now turn up anywhere, but two on Pleasure Beach in Bridgeport on June 13 were unexpected nonetheless (PCo et al.). Six Cliff Swallows were at the dam at Nepaug Reservoir in New Hartford on June 6 (PDe). Marsh Wrens appeared to be on breeding territory in Phragmites in the center of Westport in June (TGr).

A female Nashville

Warbler was in potential breeding habitat June 30 in West Hartland (PCo et al.). A Northern Parula, which may be increasing as a breeder, was singing in Bozrah on June 11 (GW et al.). Away from known breeding locations in Kent and in eastern Connecticut, two singing Cerulean Warblers were in People's State Forest in Barkhamsted on June 19 (JS). A Grasshopper Sparrow was found on June 16 at Suffield Wildlife Management Area (PDe).

The Boat-tailed Grackle colony at McKinney National Wildlife Refuge in Stratford produced a mixed age-sex flock of 24 foraging June 25 on a lawn at Sikorsky Airport (FMa). Away from the Northwest Corner, Purple Finch is a very sparse breeder, so a pair at feeders and paying attention to potential nesting material on June 13 in an East Haddam yard was noteworthy (HM, SG). A Pine Siskin was still visiting a feeder in Cornwall into mid-June (AG).

Exotics: A European Goldfinch was at Riverside Park in Hartford on July 15 (PCi)

OBSERVERS - Mark Aronson, Jim Bair, Rob Ballinger, Bill Banks (BBa), Nick Barber (NBa), Charles Barnard, Nick Bonomo (NBo), Barney Bontecou (BBo), Alex Burdo, Morgan Butler, Joseph Cala (JCa), Paul Carrier (PCa), Rich Chyinski, Paul Cianfaglione (PCi), Jan Collins (JCI), Patrick Comins (PCo), Jerry Connolly (JCo), Annette Cunniffe, Rachael D'Andrea (RDn), Peter DeGennaro (PDn), Paul Desjardins (PDe), Buzz Devine (BDe), Bob Dewire (BDw), Mardi Dickinson, Townsend Dickinson, Robert Dixon (RDi), Jim Dugan, Patrick Dugan (PDu), Carl Ekroth (CEk), Chris Elphick (CEl), Tammy Eustis, Patrice Favreau, Bruce Finnan, Kevin Finnan, Larry Flynn, Frank Gallo, Ted Gilman (TGi), Art Gingert, Sheila Gleason, Tina Green (TGr), Greg Hanisek, Roy Harvey, Fran Holloway, Julian Hough, Jay Kaplan, Scott Kruitbosch, Dave Lawton, Twan Leenders, Frank Mantlik (FMa), Flo McBride (FMc), John Marshall (JMa), Steve Mayo, Janet Mehmel (JMh), Jamie Meyers (JMe), Vanessa Micken, Don Morgan, Harold Moritz, Judy Moore (JMo), Marty Moore, Nancy Morand, Russ Naylor, Gina Nichol, John Ogren (JOg), John Oshlick (JOs), Chris Pagliaro, Mary Elizabeth Peck (MPE), Maggie Peretto (MPr), Dave Provencher, Dave Rosgen, Phil Rusch, Meredith Sampson (MSa), Zellene Sandler, Tom Sayers, Mark Scott (MSc), Mark Shapiro (MSh), Arthur Shippee, Susanne Shrader, Maria Stockmal (MSt), Marty Swanhall (MSw), Jack Swatt, Mark Szantyr (MSz), Mike Warner, Glenn Williams, Paul Wolter, Sara Zagorski, Roy Zartarian, Anthony Zemba, Carol Zipp, Jim Zipp.

PHOTO CHALLENGE

By Julian Hough



A preening shorebird takes a break from realigning its feathers. It's not immediately obvious on this view what it is, since structurally it's hard to assess its true gestalt. In life, in a few extra minutes it would be sleeked down and back to feeding where a better impression of size and shape may yield some additional clues. But, this isn't life and we are stuck with this 'frozen in time' moment. And as if shorebird identification isn't hard enough already when watching in glorious Technicolor, it's in black and white too!

Size is difficult to assess in this image, so we try and pick out some helpful plumage details. The bill is not long like a Dunlin, appears fairly straight and comparing its length to its head, it's about equal in length. The head appears rather uniform with a paler supercilium. The upper parts are rather dark with broad pale fringes to the scapulars and wing coverts. The uniformity of the feathers and patterning helps age it as a juvenile.

Hmmm..nothing springs to mind until we reach the springboard to the ID which is that the legs, even in a black and white photo, are not black. This eliminates a boatload of spe-

cies and narrows the field, in our geographical area, to Least Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper and vagrant Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. Least Sandpipers often show a more capped effect and a bill that is all black, slightly down-curved and tapers to a fine point. Our bird has a bill that appears pale-based and is longer than Least. Also, the primary projection - the amount of primaries visible beyond the longest tertial - is noticeable on this bird, whereas Least barely shows any such projection. The overall upperpart pattern with largely blackish feathers and pale fringes, coupled with the pale bill and large primary projection fit Pectoral Sandpiper.

Can we rule out a vagrant Sharp-tailed Sandpiper? In this shot, it is difficult, but we would look first at the head pattern, probably the main feature that would attract our attention to a putative Sharp-tailed. Juvenile Sharp-taileds have a distinct rufous cap that contrasts with a supercilium that flares behind the eye, a feature that is lacking in our mystery bird. This suggests that even on this view that the bird is likely a Pectoral Sandpiper, rather than its hoped-for Asian cousin. If the bird were to be seen from the front, the neatly streaked breast-band would alleviate any doubts as to its identity.

This juvenile Pectoral Sandpiper was photographed by me in September at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison.



Photo Challenge No. 76

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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ON THE COVER

Graylag Goose

Mark Szantyr created this portrait of a Graylag Goose, one of the most significant records accepted in recent ARCC reports. He also included the likeness of a Pink-footed Goose, a species that made a splash in Connecticut in 2012. The 2009 Graylag represents a first accepted record for the United States, as did a 1998 Pink-footed accepted by the committee.

SEVENTEENTH REPORT OF THE AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE OF CONNECTICUT

By Jay Kaplan and Greg Hanisek

Last year, in the Sixteenth Report of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (see *The Connecticut Warbler*, Volume 31 No. 2), three species were accepted to the Connecticut State List, bringing the state total to 427 birds. The additions were White-tailed Kite, Northern Lapwing and Common Murre. This year, in part due to an unprecedented number of records derived from Tropical Storm Irene in late August, four new species have been added. Two of these were the result of Irene. Another provides a first record, not only for Connecticut, but for the lower 48 states. The fourth comes from an old record that was re-opened; the result of new information concerning vagrancy patterns of a species that was previously unheard of away from the coast.

Tropical Storm Irene reached Connecticut on the evening of 27 August 2011. The following day and in spite of what might charitably be described as “inclement” weather conditions, several hardy birders traveled to coastal lookouts and to large inland water bodies. In some cases they were richly rewarded. The committee received at least 15 reports concerning birds that were likely driven to Connecticut by Irene, including two new state records; a Band-rumped Storm-Petrel well documented by two experienced birders on the coast in Milford, and a White-tailed Tropicbird that was, incredibly, picked up in northern Litchfield County. The latter bird was kept for several days and eventually transported to an avian rehabilitation center in Florida.

It should be noted that numerous additional storm-driven birds, reported on the Connecticut Ornithological Association’s CTBirds list-serve, never made it to the Avian Records Committee. Birders should understand that the committee can not consider records appearing only on the list-serve. Full reports must be received in order for the committee to

give a potential new record full consideration. It is not too late to submit reports for these or other birds. In certain instances, records have been considered years following a bird's appearance in Connecticut. It should be noted, however, that it is preferable to evaluate records in a more timely fashion and ideally include information recorded at the time of the observation.

This report includes a new look at a record for Ivory Gull that was originally submitted some 25 years ago. At that time, the record was not accepted. In the ensuing years, however, new patterns of vagrancy have been well documented for the species. The Connecticut sighting was in the vanguard of inland reports, although it was not recognized as such at the time it was received. Old records can always be re-opened by request by any member should significant new information make it pertinent to do so. Graylag Goose, the fourth addition to the state list, gained acceptance after several years of consideration of the origin question.

At each meeting, the committee takes a careful look at Connecticut's Review List to determine if certain species might be removed or added. No such changes were made this year, although several species are under consideration for the future. One that will invariably come up again is Trumpeter Swan. Several eastern states are now reviewing the status of this introduced species. The committee has also begun a review of two birds whose viability is now in question - Ring-necked Pheasant, an introduced species; and Northern Bobwhite, a native species whose wild populations have likely now been extirpated.

STATE LIST AND REVIEW LIST

The state list now stands at 431. The committee depends on observers to submit their reports of species on the Review List (they are species marked with an asterisk on the COA Checklist plus any species new to the state). The most recent State List and Review List can be viewed on the COA Website at www.ctbirding.org. Submit written reports along

with documentary material to Jay Kaplan, ARCC chairman, (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 the original finder listed first followed by an asterisk. Observers who submitted a photo are acknowledged with ‡ following their names. Hyphenated numbers (e.g. 02-01) preceding the observers are the ARCC file numbers. For reopened files, an "R" follows the numbers. The species are listed in order according to the AOU Checklist. Multiple records of a particular species are listed chronologically. Months of the year are shortened to their first three letters.

ACCEPTED RECORDS

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE (*Anser brachyrhynchus*) One found on 5 Jan 2012 at Somersville Lake, Somers, was seen through at least 16 Jan in the Somers-Ellington-East Windsor area (12-05 Mike O'Leary*, Frank Mantlik‡, Greg Hanisek, Renee Baade). A bird showing a similar bill pattern was found on 20 Feb 2012 in Windsor and is believed to be the same individual (Steve Morytko*, Mark Szantyr‡, Julian Hough‡). One was found on 25 Feb 2012 at Lyman Orchard in Middlefield and was determined to be different from the bird (or birds) in file (12-05) because it showed a distinctively different bill pattern (12-08 Mark Barriger*, Keith Mueller‡). There are two previous records involving a total of three birds.

GRAYLAG GOOSE (*Anser anser*) One was found on 22 Feb 2009 in a flock of Canada Geese in a corn stubble field on Whirlwind Hill Road in Wallingford, where it wintered (11-03 Greg Hanisek*, Mark Szantyr‡). This constitutes a first state record and the first accepted record for the United States. However, there are several recent records from northeastern Canada, including the first accepted North American record of a bird that landed on an oil rig off Newfoundland in April 2005 (American Birding Association Checklist Com-

mittee Record 2008-05). Acceptance in Connecticut involved questions of identification and origin, both of which are complicated by the presence in North America, and more specifically within the general area of this sighting, of domestic Graylag Geese. Detailed photographs of this bird allowed for its identification as a Western Graylag Goose (*Anser a. anser*), the migratory subspecies nesting commonly from Iceland across northern Europe. Experts consulted by ARCC agreed to this identification and to the fact, based both on structure and other features, that this was a wild form rather than a domestic bird.

Origin raised more questions and resulted in ARCC taking several years of evaluation and solicitation of expert opinions. Key factors in acceptance were: 1/ lack of any of the bands, tags or foot alterations that would prove captive origin; 2/ expert commentary that wild-type western Graylag Geese are seldom held in wildfowl collections; 3/ occurrence in an area of Connecticut where geese known or presumed to originate in Greenland (Greenland race of Greater White-fronted Goose, Barnacle Goose, Pink-footed Goose and neck-banded Canada Geese) now occur regularly; and 4/ continued North American sightings of wild-type Graylag Geese since the bird accepted by ABA (Newfoundland and Nova Scotia in 2010; Nova Scotia and Quebec in 2011). ARCC considered it important to wait for additional North American records, because while Graylag Goose has been reported a number of times in Greenland, the most likely point of origin, it has not yet been confirmed nesting there.

BARNACLE GOOSE (*Branta leucopsis*) A string of recent sightings continued with a bird present from 10 Dec 2011 until at least mid-February 2012 among Canada Geese wintering in the Windsor-Bloomfield area (11-18 Paul Desjardins*, Joseph Cala‡, John Marshall‡).

GREAT SHEARWATER (*Puffinus gravis*) Shearwaters were not a major feature of Tropical Storm Irene's passage, but an experienced observer who traveled farther east than anyone else saw one in a large and varied movement of pelagic spe-

cies working their way eastward out of Long Island Sound at Old Saybrook (11-34 Andy Griswold*).

LEACH'S STORM-PETREL (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) Tropical Storm Irene delivered four on 28 Aug. 2011. One was viewed from Roberts Street in West Haven (11-36 Nick Bonomo*). One was seen at Mansfield Hollow dam in Mansfield (11-37 Phil Rusch*). One that was picked up in a Prospect yard and succumbed was delivered to Yale Peabody Museum as a specimen (11-38 Peter Thiel*†). One was photographed at Bantam Lake in Litchfield (11-39 Fran Zygmunt*†).

BAND-RUMPED STORM-PETREL (*Oceanodroma castro*) One of two state firsts delivered by Tropical Storm Irene, this bird presented itself along the Milford coast on 28 Aug 2011 to two observers with extensive pelagic experience, including previous observations of this species (11-33 Nick Bonomo*, Julian Hough*). They produced separate reports that included sketches and original field notes that emphasized plumage features, structure and flight style. When there are multiple observers of a review species, more than one report is always desirable.

WHITE-TAILED TROPICBIRD (*Phaethon lepturus*) This spectacular state first was picked up from the center of a road in Colebrook on 29 Aug 2011, the day after Tropical Storm Irene's passage, by a motorist who took it home and kept it alive for several days feeding it clams and raw fish while he tried to find somewhere he could take it (11-31 Linda Bowen†). He eventually found and took the bird to Linda Bowen, a licensed wildlife rehabilitator from Falls Village. She figured out the bird's identity and through her rehab contacts learned that it needed to go to Suncoast Seabird Sanctuary in Indian Shores, Fla. She then enlisted the help of friends, including an airline pilot, who got it onto a plane to Florida after she received health clearance for the bird through a registered USDA veterinarian. Her efforts won her a special recognition award from the Wildlife Rehabilitators Association. The person who found the bird wished to remain anonymous.

ANHINGA (*Anhinga anhinga*) This elusive species has proven difficult to document in the state, but a bird that posed cooperatively on 11-12 Jun 2011 at Lake Whitney in Hamden provided long-sought photo documentation, as well as a check-mark on dozens of birders' state lists (11-04 Florence McBride*, Frank Gallo‡, Peter E. Vitali‡, Mark Szantyr‡).

BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) After an immature was found off Griswold Point in Old Lyme on 29 Aug 2011, the day after the passage of Tropical Storm Irene, single immature birds were reported at various places on Long Island Sound through 14 Nov 2011. Sightings were made in Madison, Milford and Fairfield, with more extended stays in New Haven harbor and in Greenwich. A lack of overlap in sightings suggests, but certainly doesn't prove, that one immature bird could have remained in the Sound throughout the observation period. (11-21 Glenn Williams*, Hank Golet‡; Nick Bonomo‡, Keith Mueller‡, Scott Kruitbosch, Frank Mantlik‡).

WHITE IBIS (*Eudocimus albus*) An immature was found on 27 Aug 2011 at Barn Island Wildlife Management Area in Stonington and was present to at least 6 Sep 2011 (Bob DeWire*‡, Bill Asteriades‡).

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*) An adult was at the state's prime location for this western counterpart of the Glossy Ibis, Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison, on 21-22 Apr 2011 (11-16 Paul Fusco*‡). The bird fit the state pattern of spring occurrence on the coast. This pattern was broken by an adult in basic plumage, which became the first fall and first inland record on 20-22 Sep 2011 at Wangunk Meadows in Portland (11-17 Joanne Luppi*, Mark Szantyr‡).

YELLOW RAIL (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) One was seen by two observers, first on a grassy road edge and then in flight into the adjacent wetland on 14 May 2011 at Leadmine Brook in Harwinton. Sketches were rendered of the bird on the ground and in flight (11-12 Paul Carrier*, Winston Williams).

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) The day after the passage of Tropical Storm Irene, 29 Aug 2011, brought

numerous observers to Milford Point, where one of the best finds in the wake of the storm was this handsome species, which remained through at least 4 Sep 2011 (11-14 Nick Bonomo*‡, Scott Kruitbosch, Joseph Cala‡, Paul Fusco‡).

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE (*Rissa tridactyla*) One was seen from shore by an experienced observer on 16 Dec 2011 off Cove Place, Stratford (11-43 Frank Mantlik*). Birders searching for alcids from the New London-Orient, N.Y., ferry reported kittiwakes on three occasions, with the reports contained in a single file (12-01). One adult was seen on 6 Jan 2012 (Frank Mantlik*‡). At least five adults were seen on 8 Jan 2012 (Renee Baade*). Four adults were seen on 14 Jan 2012 (Glenn Williams*, Bill Asteriades‡).

IVORY GULL (*Pagophila eburnea*) One was seen on the Connecticut River in South Windsor on 11 Jan 1986 (86-07 Donald Hopkins* 86-07R Nick Bonomo). This represents a first state record. The record was not accepted by the committee in



Frank Mantlik photo

A Black-legged Kittiwake on the New London-Orient, N.Y., ferry route on Jan. 6, 2012.



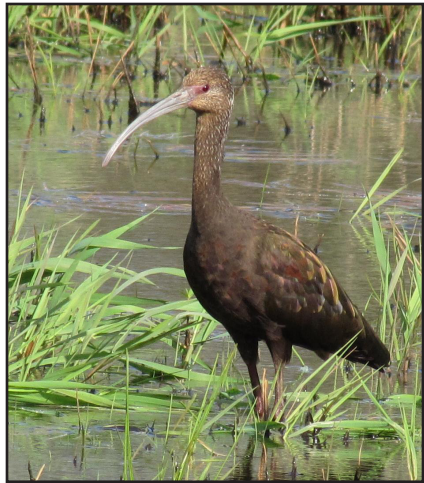
Paul Fusco photo

This Black-necked Stilt was a hit with birders at Milford Point in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Irene.



Carlos Pedro photo

The state's fourth Calliope Hummingbird visited a Pawcatuck feeder in October 2011.



Mark Szantyr photo

This White-faced Ibis in Portland in September 2011 was the state's first inland and first fall record.



*Mark Szantyr
photo
This long-staying
Harris's Sparrow
brought birders to
a Lebanon roadside
throughout early
2012.*

*Mark Szantyr photo
This Western Tanager
visited a feeder at
Peace Sanctuary in
Mystic in March
2012.*



*Julian Hough photo
Two or more Pink-
footed Geese in early
2012 included this
one in Windsor on
Feb. 20.*



Nick Bonomo photo
A juvenile Thayer's Gull on Dec. 5, 2011, at Windsor-Bloomfield landfill.

1988, but bylaws allow any committee member to submit a record for re-opening if substantial new information comes to light. Bonomo prepared a case for re-opening based on the pattern of occurrence that has unfolded since the 1980s, when this species was an extreme rarity. The original report contains two sketches that are a reasonable likeness of an Ivory Gull, but the committee at that time took a conservative approach because of the rarity combined with lack of evidence that these birds occurred inland at our latitude. Subsequent records from locations such as Tennessee, South Dakota and Minnesota indicate they are more wide-ranging outside the breeding season than previously believed. The behavior described in the original report, of the bird landing on an ice floe, also was consistent with the species. This action serves as a reminder that all reports, accepted or not, become a part of the state's permanent ornithological record. The original action represents the opinion of committee members at the time, but is always subject to re-evaluation.

THAYER'S GULL (*Larus thayeri*) A juvenile was at the Windsor-Bloomfield landfill in Windsor on 5-11 Dec 2011

(11-15 Nick Bonomo*†, Frank Gallo†). This species presents documentation challenges, which the observer met with a detailed description and a series of photos showing all aspects of the bird.

SOOTY TERN (*Onychoprion fuscatus*) Of more than 60 Sooty Terns recorded on 28 Aug 2011, reports and/or photos were received of four sightings involving 25 individuals incorporated into the following file (11-40): eight on the Housatonic River in Stratford (Frank Mantlik*, Scott Kruitbosch, Charles Barnard, Bill Asteriades); two in Fairfield (Alex Burdo*†); 11 at Candelwood Lake in New Fairfield (Jim Dugan*†), and four at Bantam Lake in Litchfield (Fran Zygmont).

GULL-BILLED TERN (*Sterna nilotica*) One of several excellent finds at Milford Point in the wake of Tropical Storm Irene was a bird on the gravel bars with other terns on 1 Sep 2011 (11-13 Tina Green*, Scott Kruitbosch†). One was seen in



*Frank Mantlik photo
A Common Murre on the New London-Orient, N.Y., ferry route on Jan. 11, 2012.*



Bill Asteriades photo

A White-winged Dove in a Stamford yard on Nov. 24, 2011.

Stonington harbor on 14 Sep 1998. The record came to light when the observer entered some of his older sightings into eBird and responded to a query (10-04 Chris Roberts*).

SANDWICH TERN (*Thalasseus sandwicensis*) An apparent adult was among hundreds of Common Terns at Short Beach in Stratford on 8 Jul 2011 (11-23 Nick Bonomo*, Scott Kruitbosch).

LONG-TAILED JAEGER (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) The observer's passion for pelagic trips stood him in good stead when he was able to apply extensive experience with all three jaeger species as this juvenile bird moved along the Milford coast during the passage of Tropical Storm Irene on 28 Aug 2011 (11-32 Nick Bonomo*). His excellent, detailed report included original field notes and a sketch.

DOVEKIE (*Alle alle*) One was picked up in a driveway in Groton on 11 Feb 2012 and taken into rehab (12-03 Glenn

Williams*‡). The bird was emaciated and later died despite eating well for several days (fide Maggie Jones).

COMMON MURRE (*Uria aalge*) After the state's first was documented in January 2011, winter 2011-12 produced multiple sightings, all from the New London-Orient, N.Y., ferry. The following records are all contained in (11-26). Single birds were reported on 31 Dec 2011 (Bill Asteriades*‡), on 6 Jan 2012 (Frank Mantlik*‡), on 7 Jan 2012 (Bill Asteriades*‡), on 8 Jan 2012 (Renee Baade*), on 9 Jan 2012 (Tom Johnson‡) and on 11 Jan 2012 (Frank Mantlik*‡). Two were present on 22 Jan. 2012 (Glenn Williams*, Bill Asteriades ‡).

THICK-BILLED MURRE (*Uria lomvia*) A grounded bird was picked up on a street in North Stamford on 20 Nov 2005 and brought to Greenwich Audubon (11-24 Brian O'Toole). It was taken to Wildlife in Crisis in Weston‡ and subsequently released into Long Island Sound. One was seen from the New London-Orient, N.Y., ferry on 31 Dec 2011, and the two observers provided a sketch as well as written details (11-25 Jay Kaplan*, Bill Asteriades*). One was seen and photographed in Connecticut waters on 11 Jan 2012 from the New London-Orient, N.Y., ferry (12-06 Frank Mantlik‡). Conditions for photography were difficult. While poor photos were obtained, the observer solicited positive identification comments from experts in Massachusetts and Newfoundland, where the species is seen more regularly.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) One was seen very briefly but heard repeatedly on 19 Jul 2011 on the Coastal Center grounds at Milford Point. (11-29 Frank Gallo*, Scott Kruitbosch). One visited a yard in Stamford on 23-25 Nov 2011 (11-09 David Winston*‡, Bill Asteriades‡).

EURASIAN COLLARED DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*) A pair, representing a third state record, was found on 7 Jun 2011 at Sikorsky Airport in Stratford (11-28 Frank Mantlik*‡, Scott Kruitbosch, Bruce Finnan‡, Mark Szantyr‡). On 8 Jun they were seen carrying nesting material, an attempt that apparently was soon abandoned, but they were seen sporadi-

cally by many observers through 17 Jun. There was a single sighting on 23 Jul in a nearby neighborhood.

CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD (*Stellula calliope*) The state's fourth record, all of them since 2006, visited flowers in a yard in the Pawcatuck section of Stonington on 21-22 Oct 2011 (11-10 Robert Jones*, Carlos Pedro‡). The dramatic increase in western hummingbirds in the East is one of North America's most intriguing ongoing avian events. Connecticut has now recorded three species in addition to Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and several more range from likely to possible.

NORTHERN WHEATEAR (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) A consultant working at Groton-New London Airport in Groton pulled out his camera when he encountered an unusual bird on 29 Sep 2011. He reported his sighting to Jenny Dickson of the state DEEP, who saw that it made its way into the ARCC files (11-06 Jason Ringler*‡). Connecticut has proven to be a prime stop-over point during the strikingly consistent September migration window for the small numbers of this Greenland-Arctic Canada breeder that reach our latitude in North America.

TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE (*Myadestes townsendi*) One was seen on 7 March 2012 at Sunny Brook State Park in Torrington (12-10 Ray Belding*‡). This is the seventh state record and the first since January 2006, when two were present in Hamden.

HARRIS'S SPARROW (*Zonotrichia querula*) One was found on 9 Jan 2012 along a rural roadside in Lebanon (12-04 Annie & Mike Perko*, Greg Hanisek, Frank Gallo‡, Mark Szantyr‡, Bill Asteriades‡). The first-winter bird was seen and photographed by many until at least early May. It was the 11th state record but only the third since 1986.

WESTERN TANAGER (*Piranga ludoviciana*) An adult male was seen on 30 Sep 2009 when it flew by the hawk watch at Lighthouse Point in New Haven, landing long enough in a treetop to allow scope views (10-05 Dana Campbell*, Don Morgan*). A drab basic -plumaged bird survived a window

strike in New Milford on 7 Feb 2012 and was photographed in the hand (12-02 Anne Kehmna*†). A bird in brighter basic plumage visited a suet feeder at Peace Sanctuary in Mystic on 25 Feb 2012 (12-09 Maggie Jones*, Glenn Williams†, Nick Bonomo†, Mark Szantyr†). This bird, a female or immature male, is most likely the same one seen briefly by Williams in a nearby backyard on 21 Feb. It was still present in mid-March.

PAINTED BUNTING (*Passerina ciris*) An adult male visited a feeder in the Mystic section of Stonington on 20 Jun 2009 (11-11 Maggie Jones*, Glenn Williams, Rosalind Isquith †). An adult male appeared at Cove Island Wildlife Sanctuary in Stamford on 25-26 Nov 2011 (11-07 Patrick Dugan*†). It was the second year in a row for an adult male at this location.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

MANX SHEARWATER (*Puffinus puffinus*) A shearwater seen from land in Stratford on 23 Jun 2011 fit the category of "small black-and-white shearwater," which in northwestern Atlantic waters refers primarily to two similar species, Manx Shearwater and Audubon's Shearwater. While Manx is the more likely of the two, a relatively short fly-by observation was not sufficient to categorically eliminate Audubon's. The general lack of tubenoses inside Long Island Sound, coupled with the wide-ranging proclivities of pelagic species, added to the committee's conservative approach.

THAYER'S GULL (*Larus thayeri*) An adult gull found on 7 Dec 2011 in Fairfield showed some characteristics of Thayer's Gull (11-22). The observer made a good effort at photographing and sketching the bird, but distance and unfavorable weather made confirmation of this difficult species problematic.

BRIDLED TERN (*Onychoprion anaethetus*) One was reported 28 Aug. 2011 on the Housatonic River in Stratford (11-41). Multiple observers were present searching through at least eight Sooty Terns deposited by Tropical Storm Irene. The observers were not in unanimous agreement that a Bridled

was present, and some, including the one who first raised the possibility, felt it more prudent to note a Sooty/Bridled. One was reported on flotsam, seen from shore in Westport on 29 Aug. 2011 (11-42). The observers took great care in studying the bird but were also forthright about distance and difficult light conditions, which led the committee to take a conservative approach.

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) One was reported with Rusty Blackbirds and robins on 23 Oct 2011 in Litchfield (11-44). One was reported in a mixed flock of icterids in Stratford on 25 Nov. 2011 (11-08). In both cases single observers were able to see some, but not all, features indicative of this species. Because of its lack of outstanding field marks and its close resemblance to some plumages of Rusty Blackbird, this western species has proven frustratingly difficult to document in Connecticut. It will probably take, at minimum, an exhaustive description of all plumage and structural details extracted from a lengthy observation to provide sufficient evidence. A series of good photographs would be better.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED - ORIGIN QUESTIONABLE

TRUMPETER SWAN (*Cygnus buccinator*) A pair was on Konold's Pond, Woodbridge, from 5 Feb 2012 until at least 15 Mar 2012 (12-07 Paul Wolter*, John Marshall*, Mark Szantyr‡, Steve Broker‡). A pair was also on Konold's Pond from 21 Mar to 2 Apr 2011 (11-19 Frank Gallo*‡). It seems certain that the same pair was involved in both of these instances. These two birds are likely to be the same ones present at Cranbury Pond in Stratford from 28 Mar to 1 Apr 2010 as well. Reasons for questioning their origin were spelled out in the 15th ARCC report (see The Connecticut Warbler Volume 3 Number 30). Since that report was published it has come to light that most of the states/provinces where this species has been introduced east of its core range now consider it established. However, the closest state in that category, New York, does not, and the birds seen in Connecticut carry no bands or tags indicative of their origin. The committee believed it

was best to continue to monitor the dispersal of these birds, as well as to consider the position of records committees in states to our south, which have not yet accepted birds reported as migrants/winterers.

CORRECTION

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*) One banded in Scotland was first seen in Stratford on 3 Dec 2010. Its arrival date was listed incorrectly in the 16th ARCC report (see The Connecticut Warbler, Volume 31 Number 2).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For expert commentary on several difficult records the committee thanks David Boertmann, Ian Gereg, Bruce Mactavish, Carl Mitchell, Christian Newman and Blair Nikula. Committee members participating in review of the records in this report, in addition to the authors, were Nick Bonomo, Frank Gallo, Julian Hough, Frank Mantlik, Janet Mehmel, Dave Provencher, Mark Szantyr, Dave Tripp and Glenn Williams. The review involved 56 records, including three that were approved in a second round of voting and four that remain under consideration.

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BOOKS ON BIRDS

By Alan Brush

The View from Lazy Point. A Natural Year in an Unnatural World. Carl Safina. 2011. 401 pgs. Henry Holt and Co., New York. \$32.00. (Illustrations by Trudy Nicholson)

Eye of the Albatross. Visions of Hope and Survival. Carl Safina. 2002. 377 pgs. Henry Holt and Co., New York.

At a recent meeting of the Geological Society of America a session was dedicated to a proposal to establish Anthropocene as a formal geological term. The issues have centered on anticipating the changes human-wrought activities will have in the geological record. The current period, the Holocene, which began 11,500 years ago, essentially reflects nothing of the human experience or even human existence. Clearly, in the past millennia humans have had planet-wide environmental effects, some large and enduring enough to eventually appear in the geological record. Such activities might include deforestation and conversion of the land to cropland or savanna; effects on biodiversity (which would influence types and dispersal of fossils); mass extinctions; human made cities and infrastructure (e.g., all the world's paved surfaces); or the remains of mining and massive landform projects. Other transformations such as changes in carbon isotope composition of biological specimens, the appearance of man-made novel chemicals (PCB, plastics, radioactive isotopes), elemental aluminum, and ocean dead zones from agricultural nitrate runoff, can all leave traces in the record. These are massive, long-term effects with as yet unknown consequences. Worldwide, coastal cities, such as Amsterdam or New Orleans, could become fossilized leaving foundations, pavement, plumbing and solid wastes in the strata (lithosphere). Geoscientists with the British Geological Survey claim that these are all geological processes, but by human hand not glaciers, rivers or tectonic forces.

Massive and enduring as these activities are, Carl Safina's approach to the interactions of humans and nature is from a different perspective. The "View" is one of a keen observer, a thoughtful writer, walking the beach, fishing, birding rafts of winter waterfowl, and reflecting on the world as he sees it from the southern tip of Long Island. He is aware of the progression in the life of a single day yet remains sensitive to the seasons. For Safina, a day on Long Point may include a sense of wonder at the arrival of the spring's first Red-winged Blackbird, an appreciation of his adventure seeking dog, Kenzie, or an evening contemplating lifestyle and conservation. The dynamics of the day may include the comings and goings of Red Knots, a particular butterfly, abuse of the land at the hands of humans, or the resilience of Common Terns. Individual reveries are woven with his history (both MacArthur and Guggenheim Fellow, award-winning author), events of the day, and what the future may or may not portend. A particular sound or sight becomes a thread tugged to show nature's entanglement and may unravel a wider world. It's about how one man sees his world and its relationship to the broader world far from, but connected to, his home. For example, Safina fishes. He enjoys the process, and eats what he catches. He points out there is fishing to exist and fishing to provide commercial quantities. The latter has associated ecological costs, and impinges on the conservation of fisheries. Human behavior can confound sport, waste, survival, and even compromise a resource.

Safina expands his view with "Travels Solar" and "Travels Polar". Here he visits Belize, Bonaire and Palau, locations of some of the world's most pristine coral reefs. The topic is the effects of increased global CO₂ on the life of corals and the consequences for associated animal and plant life. The Polar destinations include SE Alaska, Svalbard Island, and Antarctica. Each destination serves as a springboard for an exploration or exposition on some aspects of natural history and the ongoing changes. Safina finds similar processes, human influences, and the associated problems in all directions, at all depths, and all climates. His descriptions of travel, powers of observation and ability to set the processes in a proper

perspective make for joyful reading, even if the message is somber.

In *Eye of the Albatross*, Safina's focus moves from a shack on Long Island, to Tern Island, part of French Frigate Shoals in the mid-Pacific Ocean. The narrator is a Laysan Albatross, Amelia. Safina traveled to the island as part of a group studying the immense nesting colony of these birds, which traditionally forage for weeks in the remote vastness of the Pacific. What evolves is a complex story of the ecology and evolutionary biology of the birds, the whales, sea turtles, sharks and seals encountered, tied in with the birds' encounters with long-line fishing gear, vast flotations of pollution, diminishing food resources. It's an incredible story, scary, and while viewed by a single observer, one with extraordinarily broad consequences. In a way, it's *Lazy Point* message from a different perspective. The devastating part is that the human behavior doesn't change.

I found Safina's world view reminiscent of J. Wesley Powell. Although separated in time their thought processes converge. Powell, an early explorer of the American West, was part explorer, part social reformer and part institution builder. He conceived, planned and led the first descent of the Colorado River. Powell, like Safina, thought in terms of entire regions. Powell the American West; Safina the oceans. Land, water, and society for Powell were parts of an interconnected whole. Powell saw that new lands and the way they were settled and used would have "profound consequences for both the land and society". Generations later, Safina witnesses the folly in the ways that humans currently consume and abuse the land, water, and air and the consequences for the future. All things Powell saw in his grand view, Safina sees from *Lazy Point*.

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Fall, August 1 through November 30, 2011

Compiled by Greg Hanisek

Weather always plays a major role in the avian character of a season, but in fall 2011 weather dominated the lives, not just the birding activities, of people in Connecticut. The passage of Tropical Storm Irene on Aug. 28 and a freakishly early major snowstorm on Oct. 29-30 caused widespread and prolonged power failures as well as significant property damage. Irene also produced a historic trove of pelagic birds, including two species new for the state, and trailed a number of good waterbird and shorebird sightings in its wake. Despite the snow, mild weather late in the season resulted in a number of lingering warblers, especially at the warm and buggy microclimate at East Shore Park in New Haven, where 13 species were recorded in November.

This report adopts taxonomic changes included in the 52nd Supplement of the American Ornithologists Union Checklist, 7th edition. These affect the order in which species appear throughout this report. The species accounts generally follow taxonomic order, although there are occasional exceptions in order to describe a significant mixed group of birds. The most significant change involves the order of the wood-warblers, whose taxonomy has been radically revised.

Three **Greater White-fronted Geese** and nine **Cackling Geese** for the season were indicative of the current status of these two species. The first date for each was Oct. 6, with a Greater White-fronted at Mackenzie Reservoir, Wallingford, (JOs) and a Cackling at Farmington Meadows (PCi). In what is quickly

developing into an annual event, a **Barnacle Goose** made another appearance. This one was at one of the prime "Goose Alley" locations, Broad Brook Pond in East Windsor on Nov. 19 (CEk). A flock of 115 Snow Geese, including one dark morph, passed over Stratford Point on Nov. 23 (FMA). A Eurasian Wigeon

was first noted on Nov. 18 at the millpond at Sherwood Island State Park in Westport (TGr). A tremendous flight of Blue-winged Teal brought 46 to Nod Road farm fields in Simsbury on Sept. 14 (DL), followed by a state record count of c. 60 there the next day (SJ). Sept. 15 also produced 13 at Glastonbury Meadows (BA). A total of 51 Northern Pintails in two flocks passed over Batterson Pond in Farmington on Oct. 10 (PCi). A single adult male returned to a wintering spot in Woodbury on Nov. 1, marking its seventh consecutive year (RN).

An immature male **King Eider** that summered at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison (hereafter HBSP) was present through at least Sept. 9 (m.ob.). Four Surf Scoters, seldom seen inland, were on Twin Lakes in Salisbury on Oct. 23 (PCi). An out-of-season White-winged Scoter was off Westport from Aug. 15 on (TGr), and one was unexpected at Mansfield Hollow dam on Oct. 13-14 (PR). A search of sparsely birded northeast Connecticut on Oct. 28 turned up nine Black Scoters each on Lower Bolton Lake,

Bolton, and Crystal Lake, Ellington (JMe). Bristol Reservoir No. 7 held 130 Ruddy Ducks on Oct. 18 (PCa), and 190 were at Pistapaug Pond in Wallingford on Oct. 28 (NB).

A walk on Canaan Mountain in North Canaan on Aug. 17 resulted in the flushing of three Ruffed Grouse together and a fourth one nearby (DM). The observer returned on Aug. 26 and flushed four groups totaling c. 20 birds. This was an outstanding observation for a species that has disappeared from old haunts in many parts of the state, and probably indicative of family groups in a good reproductive season, perhaps part of a cyclical high.

Shearwaters were not a key component of Irene's bounty, but at Old Saybrook a single **Great Shearwater** and a single **Manx Shearwater** were reported (AG). Storm-Petrels, on the other hand, were stars of the Irene show. **Band-rumped Storm-Petrel** was added to the state list with single birds reported from Milford (NB, JHo) and Stamford (PDU, BI). **Leach's Storm-Petrels** were depos-

ited both inland and on the coast: singles were at Bantam Lake in Litchfield (FZ), at Mansfield Hollow dam (PR, MSz), on the ground in Prospect (PT), in Milford (NB) and in Fairfield (ABu). Wilson's Storm-Petrel was a minor component with only a handful reported (JBr et al.). Outside of tropical storm context, a few Wilson's Storm-Petrels were found during August in Long Island Sound, which is now a regular occurrence (CL). A Pied-billed Grebe was unexpected for both date and location Aug. 11 at Sandy Point in West Haven (NB). The first of about a dozen Red-necked Grebes was in Norwalk harbor on Oct. 7 (NB); the high count was six on Nov. 5 at Bantam Lake in Litchfield (JMa).

An American White Pelican was seen by a canoeer at Ash Creek in Fairfield on Aug. 29 (SC), and one flew over Lighthouse Point in New Haven on Nov. 21 (SSa et al.). After discovery of an immature **Brown Pelican** at Griswold Point, Old Lyme, on Aug. 29 (HG, GW), there were reports through at least Nov. 14. All involved single birds. It's impossible to say

how many individuals were involved, but there was never a conclusive overlap of two or more, so it's possible a single immature was moving around in Long Island Sound the whole time. The only break from this pattern was a single adult seen at Penfield Reef, Fairfield, on Sept. 4 (JPu). We do know that on at least one occasion one immature was tracked moving from Milford Point to east of HBSP on a single morning. After the initial Old Lyme sighting Aug. 29-30, the following single immatures were reported: Sept. 1 at Milford Point (m.ob.); Sept. 2 & 8 at HBSP (JF, VD); Sept. 22 in Fairfield (PHe); Sept. 10, 14 & 18-20 in New Haven harbor (m.ob.); Sept. 11 in Stamford (PDu); Sept. 29 in Greenwich (fide BO); Oct. 12 in both Greenwich and Stamford (MSa, PDu); Oct. 17-31 in West Haven/New Haven (m.ob.); Oct. 31 in Fairfield (PHe); Nov. 2 in Westbrook (HG); and Nov. 3-14 in Greenwich (m.ob.).

Irene's most stunning special delivery was an adult **White-tailed Tropicbird** picked up from a roadside in Colebrook on Aug. 29 and eventually gotten into rehab



Jim Carr photo

This light juvenile Swainson's Hawk was a great find Oct. 7 at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison.



Jim Zipp photo

This immature male Rufous Hummingbird visited a North Haven feeder in mid-October.

at a specialized facility in Florida. It's uncertain whether this species, a first state record, came down during the storm on adjacent Colebrook Reservoir or ran out of gas on a return flight after being deposited farther north (fide LB). A Great Cormorant was early Sept. 4 at the mouth of the Housatonic River (FMa), and one was far up the Connecticut River Oct. 3 at Hartford North Meadows (PCi). One discovered on Nov. 5 at Lake Winnemaug in Waretown remained through season's end, an unexpectedly long inland stay for this species (GH).

An American Bittern was unusually exposed sitting on a power line in Milford on Aug. 24 (SH). Also unexpected was one at Bradley International Airport, Windsor Locks, on Oct. 6 (RT). Snowy Egrets, which do minimal wandering away from the coast, found Riverside Park sewage pond in Hartford to their liking, with four present on Aug. 2-6 (PCi et al.). Two immature Tricolored Herons that were present into November at HBSP showed an abnormal amount of white in their plumage, raising questions

about whether they were leucistic or perhaps the hybrid offspring of a Tricolored X Little Blue Heron pair (JF, m.ob.). The season produced four Cattle Egrets: Sept. 3 at Station 43, South Windsor (JMe); Oct. 11 at Sherwood Island State Park in Westport (TGr); and Oct. 24 and Nov. 15 at Lighthouse Point (GH, BB). Three juvenile Black-crowned Night-Herons were up the Housatonic River at Derby on Aug. 4 (RAI), an adult was at Cemetery Pond in Litchfield on Aug. 7 (FZ) and a juvenile was at a pond in South Windsor on Aug. 26 (PFa). Their status as breeders away from the immediate coast remains uncertain. A roost at Stratford Marina held 15 Yellow-crowned Night-Herons on Aug. 8 (FMa) and 28 on Oct. 9 (DV). A basic adult **White-faced Ibis** on Oct. 20-22 in Portland was the first inland and first fall record for state (JLu et al.). An immature **White Ibis** was a nice discovery Aug. 27-Sept. 6 at Barn Island, Stonington (BDw et al.).

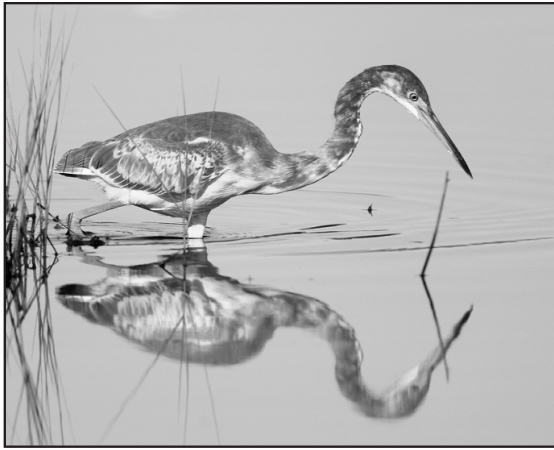
A record migratory flight of 521 Turkey Vultures was recorded at Boothe Park hawk watch in Stratford on Oct. 28 (SK). A roost at the

capped New Haven landfill off Interstate 91 held c. 60 Black Vultures on Nov. 20 (MA). Single **Mississippi Kites** were at Great Pond in Simsbury on Aug. 18 (CEk) and an immature over Quaker Ridge, Greenwich, on Sept. 28 (LTi). A light juvenile **Swainson's Hawk** seen on Oct. 7 at Lighthouse Point (SMa et al.) was very likely the same one photographed that day at HBSP (JCr, RGr). A dark morph was observed on Sept. 16 at Milford Point (FG, VM). Another dark morph was. at Lighthouse Point on Oct. 12 (LJ et al.)

A count of 13 Virginia Rails at Little Pond in Litchfield on Sept. 17 was considered typical for that productive spot in mid-September (DR). A major flight of American Coots in November brought counts ranging from 100 to 400+ on six different lakes, with double figure counts at many locations. The high of 429 was on Lake Wononscopomuc in Salisbury on Nov. 30 (RB), but it climbed over 600 in early December (RB). **Sandhill Cranes**, all flyovers, consisted of singles on a Connecticut River swallow cruise out of Essex on Oct. 2 (JRe)

and in New Haven on Oct. 6 (PDe); a flock of six over Quaker Ridge, Greenwich, on Oct. 28 (BO, LTi); and two flying over East Rock Park in New Haven on Nov. 25 (DCa et al.).

The first of more than 100 American Golden Plovers for the season was noted flying over UConn's Rentschler Field complex in East Hartford on Aug. 27 (PCi). The last report was one at Stratford Point on Oct. 27 (CB). A significant inland shorebird concentration at Rentschler on Sept. 8 produced 22 American Golden Plovers, three Hudsonian Godwits, one Stilt Sandpiper, one Baird's Sandpiper, 52 White-rumped Sandpipers and 45 Pectoral Sandpipers (AD, PCi et al.). An American Oystercatcher staging area on two small islands in the Norwalk Islands group held 59 on Sept. 13 (LF). A very cooperative **Black-necked Stilt** turned up Aug. 29 in the post-Irene scrum at Milford Point and was seen through at least Sept. 4 (NB et al.). The hits kept coming there on Aug. 30, with an **American Avocet** that stayed through at least Sept. 16 (m.ob).



Bruce Finnan photo

This is one of the abnormally plumaged juvenile Tricolored Herons present into November at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison.

An Upland Sandpiper was a nice flyby visitor Aug. 11 at Sandy Point in West Haven (NB), and one was on the turf at Sikorsky Airport, Stratford, on Sept. 7 (FMa). The first of five Marbled Godwits for the season was at Sandy Point, West Haven, on Aug. 5-13 (MSt et. al). Irene brought two flying by Stamford on Aug. 28 (PDu) and deposited one on Aug. 29-30 at Milford Point (JK et al.). Six Hudsonian Godwits for the season included an "Irene bird" flying by Stamford on Aug 28 (PDu) and three in the storm's wake on Aug. 29 at Milford Point (m.ob). The best count of Red Knots was 40 on Sept. 3 at

Milford Point (MA); at least 21 were still there on Oct. 13 (CB) and 25 were at Sikorsky Airport during a rainy nor'easter on Oct. 19 (FMa). Following the big snowstorm, 25 were in Stratford on Oct. 30-31 (FMa, SK).

Milford Point held c. 2300 Semipalmated Sandpipers on Aug. 7 (FMa). A good showing by Baird's Sandpiper produced 17 for the season, including six on Sept. 15 at Rocky Hill meadows (PCi). The high count for Pectoral Sandpiper, widely reported in good numbers, was 46 on Aug. 17 at Rocky Hill meadows (PCi). A Stilt Sandpiper was a nice inland find Oct.

2 at Portland fairgrounds (JCI, MP). The latest was at HBSP on Oct. 26 (KM). Buff-breasted Sandpiper produced a good seasonal total of 14, including an adult on the early date of Aug. 9 at Rocky Hill meadows (PW et al.). Almost all state records are of juveniles. A group of seven shorebird species Aug. 7 at Little Pond in Litchfield included one Short-billed Dowitcher (FZ); another inland bird was at Rocky Hill meadows on Aug. 8 (PCi). The first report of a Long-billed Dowitcher came from the state's most reliable spot for this species, Stratford Marina, on Sept. 3 (NB). A juvenile was a good inland find Sept. 16 at Nod Road in Simsbury (PCi), as was a calling bird Sept. 27 at Little Pond in Litchfield (DR). Red-necked Phalaropes swept into the state in unprecedented numbers on Irene's winds. A total of c. 190 included 75 in Old Saybrook (MB), 52 in Stratford (FMa), 35 at East Shore Park in New Haven (MB) and 25 at the Rentschler Field area in East Hartford (BA). The only **Red Phalaropes** reported were two in Old Saybrook (AG, MB).

A large influx of gulls on Sept. 29 brought c. 1200 Laughing Gulls (65% juveniles) to Short Beach in Stratford (FMa). The annually reliable adult Lesser Black-backed Gull at Burying Hill Beach in Westport was first reported on Sept. 29 (TGr).

One species stands out in the treasure trove of Tropical Storm Irene: **Sooty Tern**. They were everywhere, with at least 66 reported on Aug. 28 (47 on the coast and 19 inland, with only two immatures in the total). The high counts were 22 at Old Saybrook (AG) and 11 at Candlewood Lake in New Fairfield (JD). Least Tern, a species almost unknown inland, rode Irene to the Connecticut River in Glastonbury, where two were present Aug. 28 (BA), and singles were at Mansfield Hollow dam (CEI, MSz) and at the Rentschler Field area (BA). A **Gull-billed Tern** on Sept. 1 was one of the excellent post-Irene finds at Milford Point (TGr). A Caspian Tern was at Griswold Point in Old Lyme on Aug. 22 (HG). Irene produced several more, including one flying over Frash Pond, Stratford, (RP) and one at Mansfield Hollow

Reservoir (MSz), both during the storm on Aug. 28. There were reports the next day of three at Sandy Point (JH et al.) and singles at Calf Pasture Beach, Norwalk, (BM) and Compo Beach, Westport, (PDe). At least six others were along the coast from Sept. 4-27 (JHo et al.).

As Tropical Storm Irene approached on Aug. 27, a loose flock of nine Black Terns was at HBSP (CL) and five were at Griswold Point, Old Lyme (HG). They were widespread statewide on Aug. 28, with more than 50 reported. After Irene passed through, 25 were off Griswold Point, Old Lyme, on Aug. 29 (HG). Royal Tern has been very scarce in the state during the past decade, but this was a banner season. Irene produced at least six reports, with scattered individuals for several weeks afterward. Then Oct. 20 marked the beginning of an unprecedented incursion, with 20+ seen moving through Long Island Sound at HBSP during two hours (JMh). Thereafter another 14 were reported through Nov. 4 at various coastal locations. A gathering of 1500 Common Terns was at Short Beach,

Stratford, on Aug. 24 (FMA). Milford Point held 40 Forster's Terns on Oct. 9 (FG et al.) and 39 were still present Nov. 14 in Stratford (FMA).

Five Black Skimmers, including four juveniles, were at Short Beach, Stratford, on Aug. 24 (FM), and three juveniles were at Cockenoe Island, Westport, on Aug. 25 (LF). Following the storm, multiple skimmers were seen in the Milford Point area with a peak of 16 (mostly juveniles) on Sept. 7 (JOs et al.), but with as many as 11 still there on Sept. 17 (TA). One **Parasitic Jaeger** was reported from Old Saybrook during the storm Aug. 28 (AG), and two juveniles seen flying down the Housatonic River from Boothe Park in Stratford the next day were believed to be Parasitics (SK). Another was off Waterford on Oct. 2 (JK et al.). Irene produced a single juvenile **Long-tailed Jaeger** in Milford (NB), as well as at least four unidentified jaegers at various locations. The first report of Razorbill, which would stage a major winter incursion into Long Island Sound, was off HBSP on Nov. 6 (KM).



Jack Faller photo

A good October flight of Yellow-billed Cuckoos included this one at Hammonasset on Oct. 7.

A White-winged Dove was a distinguished visitor to a Stamford yard Nov. 23-25 (DW). Yellow-billed Cuckoo produced 24 reports, included six in a late flurry from Oct. 23 to Nov. 5, when the last one was noted at Silver Sands State Park in Milford (SSp). From Nov. 15 on Snowy Owls were seen in East Haven (JMH et al.), New Milford (fide PCo), Stratford (SK) and two in Madison (PW et al.). The first Short-eared Owl report was from Stratford Point on Oct. 26 (SK). Common Nighthawk flocks included c. 200 each on Aug. 26 and Sept. 9 at Quaker Ridge, Greenwich (LTi);

460 on Aug. 27 at Storrs (CEL); more than 300 on Aug. 30 in Hartford (DCa); and 500 in Windham on Aug. 31(PR).

A cold front on Aug. 23 produced 295 Chimney Swifts from 7:10 to 11:20 a.m. at Lighthouse Point (BB, LJ). At least 16, and possibly as many as 22, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were at feeders in a Chaplin yard on Aug. 14, after a heavy rain that apparently forced down migrants (PR). An immature male **Rufous Hummingbird** visited a feeder in Norwalk in late Sept. 29-30 (JJ); an immature male was at a North

Haven feeder in mid-October (fide JZi); and an adult female was at a Guilford feeder Nov. 16-20 (TK). The state's fourth **Calliope Hummingbird** fed on *Salvia* in a yard in Pawcatuck on Oct. 21-22 (RJ). A total of eight Red-headed Woodpeckers for the season included one found in late November at Hockanum River Linear Trail in East Hartford that remained through the winter (RGi et al.).

The first of 14 Olive-sided Flycatcher reports involved singles at Smith Richardson Sanctuary in Westport (TGr), at White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield (DR) and at Greenwich Audubon (LTi), all on Aug. 17. The first Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were found on Aug. 30 at both Northwest Park in Windsor (PDe) and at Birdcraft Sanctuary in Fairfield (ABu). Great Crested Flycatchers were a bit late Oct. 4 at Quaker Ridge, Greenwich, (LTi) and Oct. 6 at HBSP (JOs). The strong cold front on Aug. 23 produced a major flight of Eastern Kingbirds, with 605 counted at Lighthouse Point from 7:10 to 11:20 a.m. (BB, LJ). The largest single flock was 60 birds. The season's

only **Western Kingbird** made itself at home at Smith Richardson Sanctuary in Westport from Nov. 12-27 (JHa et al.).

A state-record late Philadelphia Vireo photographed on Nov. 28 in Newtown was also believed to be the latest ever for New England (PDu). Three Northern Shrikes for the season started with singles on Nov. 22 at both the Morris town beach on Bantam Lake (BDe) and at HBSP (JMh). One found Nov. 26 at Major Donnelly Preserve in South Windsor remained through the period (CEk). **Cave Swallows** were late to appear; with the first of the season on Nov. 30 in Stratford (FMa); a couple more showed immediately after in December. A migrant Marsh Wren was out of the marsh and in a weedy field on Sept. 25 at Osbornedale State Park in Derby (RH), and one was in a non-breeding area in Canton on Nov. 15 (JMe). We know little about this species' fall migration schedule in the state. A good Eastern Bluebird flight brought c. 200 to Lighthouse Point on Nov. 18 (DCa et al.). The season's only **Northern Wheatear** on Sept. 29 at Groton-New Lon-

don Airport in Groton was within the normal window for this rare migrant (JRi). The first American Pipit report came from Lighthouse Point on Sept. 1 (DCa).

In addition to two Golden-winged Warblers found in September flights at Bluff Point (GW et al.), one was at White Memorial Foundation on Sept. 17 (JMa). The first of c. 15 Orange-crowned Warblers was in New Hartford on Sept. 27 (PCa). The first of about a dozen Connecticut Warbler reports was on Sept. 14 in Goshen (TL), and the first of five Mourning Warblers was reported Sept. 1 from Cove Island in Stam-

ford (BI). Hooded Warblers, scarce fall migrants, were at McKinney National Wildlife Refuge in Stratford on Sept. 27 (CB) and at Allen's Meadow, Wilton, on Oct. 8 (PW). A typically scanty six Cape May Warblers were reported: Sept. 3 in Torrington (PCa); Sept. 7 and Sept. 17 at Bluff Point (GW, MA et al.); Sept. 9 at Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton (PCi); Sept. 17 in Woodbury (RN) and Oct. 4 in Sterling (RDi). A Northern Parula was late far inland in Goshen on Nov. 5 (KF). The first Palm Warbler was at Stratford Point on Sept. 9 (TL). The latest Black-throated Green Warbler was at HBSP on Nov. 19 (BA).



*Jack Faller photo
Grasshopper Sparrows, like this one at Hammonasset on Oct.
31, turned up more often than usual this fall.*

There were 11 Yellow-breasted Chats for the season.

East Shore Park in New Haven logged 13 warbler species in November, including the following that were still being seen in December: Tennessee Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Palm Warbler, Pine Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Yellow-breasted Chat. Last dates for other species at East Shore were Northern Parula and Black-throated Green Warbler on Nov. 7 (FG); a record-late Bay-breasted Warbler on Nov. 16 (GH et al.); Common Yellowthroat on Nov. 25 (FG); and Wilson's Warbler on Nov. 17 (FG).

The morning flights at Bluff Point State Park in Groton received good coverage (CEI, GW, DP et al.). The following is a summary of warbler highlights: Aug. 23- 400 warblers of 13 species (200 American Redstarts); Sept. 10 - 800 warblers of 16 species (200 American Redstarts, 45 Northern Parulas); Sept. 16 - 650 warblers of 16 species; Sept 17 - 1100 warblers of 20 species; Sept 25 - 200 warblers of 12 species;

Oct. 6 - 450 warblers of nine species; and Oct. 7 - 700 warblers of 11 species.

Who needs feeders? Fifty pounds of thrown seed in a Canton yard on Oct. 2 attracted 18 Eastern Towhees and two Lincoln's Sparrows (PCi). An American Tree Sparrow was very early Oct. 5 in South Windsor (PFa). The first of 12 **Clay-colored Sparrows** for the season was at Stratford Point on Sept. 26 (SK). The same location notched the first southbound Vesper Sparrow on Oct. 2 (TL). Two **Lark Sparrows** for the season were at Stratford Point on Sept. 2 (SK, TL) and at Czescik Marina in Stamford on Sept. 15 (PDu, BI). Six Grasshopper Sparrows was a good fall total, starting with one on Oct. 31 at Lighthouse Point (JOs). Four Nelson's Sparrows on Oct. 3 at Long Beach, Stratford, were the first migrants reported (FMa). An apparent adult male "Oregon" Junco was reported from a Waterford feeder on Nov. 29 (DTi).

The biggest flight at Bluff Point occurred after peak warbler season, when Glenn Williams, using sample counting methods, estimated

31,000 birds, predominantly sparrows and kinglets, on Oct. 23. The predominant species were c.10,000 White-throated Sparrows, 3000 Dark-eyed Juncos and 6000 sparrow sp. During the peak movement a random one-minute sample produced 400 White-throateds alone. Other noteworthy sparrow flights included 2000 on Oct. 7 and 400 on Oct. 6.

A late female Scarlet Tanager was in Storrs on Nov. 6 (FG). A non-adult male **Western Tanager** was reported Nov. 30 at Short Beach, Stratford (RW). The seasonal total of c. 60 Dickcissels included the first on Aug. 23 at Bluff Point (NB et al.) and seven at Lighthouse Point on Sept. 25 (SMa et al.). **Blue Grosbeaks** were widespread with nine for the season starting with one on Sept. 8 at Osbornedale State Park in Derby (JOs). Others were in Hamden on Sept. 24 (AB); up to two at Smith-Richardson Sanctuary in Westport Oct. 3-9 (TGr); at the Belding Preserve, Vernon, Oct. 3-4 (DH); at Cove Island, Stamford, on Oct. 4-8 (PDu); at Silver Sands State Park in Milford on Oct. 13 (SSp); at Pine Creek in Fairfield on Oct. 16

(JPu); and two at Silver Sands on Oct. 16 (FMa et al.). An Indigo Bunting was late Oct. 30 in Stratford (FMa). An adult male **Painted Bunting** enlivened Cove Island Wildlife Sanctuary in Stamford on Nov. 25-26 (PDu et al.). This follows one at the same location on 25 Dec 2010. Single **Brewer's Blackbirds**, a species seldom documented in the state, were reported from Litchfield on Oct. 23 (KF) and from Stratford on Nov. 25 (CB). An Orchard Oriole on Sept. 1 in East Windsor was the observer's first September record in 52 years of birding (PDe).

In general northern finches were nearly non-existent, with just a few scattered Pine Siskins reported. The exceptions were a Red Crossbill, an unexpected flyover at Cove Island, Stamford, on Oct. 8 (PDu), and five Evening Grosbeaks in flight over Berlin on Sept. 14 (RAm). The grosbeaks were in keeping with a recent trend of records outside the winter season.

Correction: Photos of Northern Saw-whet Owls that accompanied the summer field notes were taken by Rich Chyinski. An incorrect

photographer was credited.

Observers - Ross Allen (RAI), Ralph Amodei (RAM), Tim Antanaitis, Mark Aronson, Bill Asteriades, Pat Bailey, Bill Banks, Jim Bair (JBr), John Barriger (JBa), Mark Barriger, Kyle Bardwell, Charles Barnard, Ray Belding, Nick Bonomo, Linda Bowen, Andy Brand (ABr), Steve Broker, Alex Burdo (ABu), Joseph Cala (JCa), Dana Campbell (DCa), Jim Carr (JCr), Paul Carrier (PCa), Stephanie Carrow, Mona Cavallero, Paul Cianfaglione (PCi), Jan Collins (JCl), Patrick Comins (PCo), Jerry Connolly (JCo), David Coutu (DCo), Val DaCosta, Andrew Dasinger, Peter DeGennaro (PDg), Paul Desjardins (PDe), Buzz Devine (BDe) Bob Dewire (BDw), Robert Dixon, Mike Doyle, Jim Dugan, Patrick Dugan (PDu), Cythia Ehlinger (CEh), Carl Ekroth (CEk), Chris Elphick (CEl), Tammy Eustis, Jack Faller, Patrice Favreau (PFa), Kevin Finnan, Larry Flynn, Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe, Paul Fusco (PFu), Frank Gallo, Ted Gilman (TGi), Randy Given (RGi), Hank Golet, Rick Gravlin (RGr), Tina Green (TGr), Andy Griswold, Jack Halibozek (JHa), Greg Hanisek, Stacy Hanks, Ernie Harris, Roy Harvey, Paige Hermann (PHe), Pam Holden (PHo), Fran Holloway, Tom Holloway, Julian Hough (JHo), Dan Huber, Brenda Inskeep, Jalna Jaeger, Lynn James, Kris

Johnson, SH Johnston, Robert Jones, Jay Kaplan, Tom Kelly, Cindy Kobak, Scott Kruitbosch, Dave Lawton, Twan Leenders, Chris Loscalzo, Joanne Luppi (JLu), Joey Lounsbury (JLo), Rick Macsuga, Frank Mantlik (FMa), John Marshall (JMa), Steve Mayo (SMA), Florence McBride (FMc), Janet Mehmel (JMH), Jamie Meyers (JMe), Vanessa Mickan, Judy Moore (JMo), Don Morgan, Steve Morytko (SMo), Keith Mueller, Brendan Murtha, Sean Murtha (SMu), Russ Naylor, Gina Nichol, Larry Nichols, John Ogren (JOg), John Oshlick (JOs), Brian O'Toole, Richard Payne, Maggie Perretto, John Pfitzner (JPf), Dave Provencher, James Purcell (JPu), Mike Resch, James Restivo (JRe), Jason Ringler (JRi), Tom Robben, Dave Rosgen, Phil Rusch, Meredith Sampson (MSa), Sol Satin (SSa), Mark Scott (MSc), Arthur Shippee, Susanne Shrader (SSH), Donna Rose Smith, Charla Spector, Steve Spector (SSp), Maria Stockmal (MSt), Marty Swanhall (MSw), Jack Swatt, Mark Szsantyr (MSz), Rollin Tebbetts, Peter Thiel, Luke Tiller (LTi), David Tingley (DTi), John Triana, Dave Tripp (DTr), Louise Tucker (LTu), Kathy Van Der Aue, Dennis Varza, Mike Warner, Glenn Williams, Robert Williams, Dave Winston, Paul Wolter, Sara Zagorski, Joe Zeranski (JZe), Carole Zipp, Jim Zipp, Fran Zygmunt.

PHOTO CHALLENGE

By Louis Bevier

Are you thinking what I'm thinking? Thanks for leaving us this one, Julian! Is this nondescript bird some game British birders like to play: "Is it Nightingale or Thrush Nightingale? Better check to see if it shows seven or eight primary tips beyond the tertials." We'd probably be better off trying to identify the big leaf covering the legs—let's see, blade ovate to reniform and margin crenate to serrate...oh, it's some violet. Easy.

For the most part, we are lucky in North America not to have the nightmare, nondescript groups of species many birders must learn in Europe--*Locustella*, *Phylloscopus*, *Acrocephalus*, *Hippolais*--even the names are hard. That said, we do have a few genera that are chronically difficult. I'm not talking about *Empidonax*, a group for those playing the game on legendary. I mean stealth difficult. That is, birds we think are easy but routinely trip us up, and we don't even know it.



To narrow down our bird, I think we can all get to passerine. And if that leaf is of a common species of violet, then we may be looking at a not-so-small bird. The slender bill eliminates finches and sparrows, and among plain-backed wood-warblers, Swainson's has a bold eye brow, and the waterthrushes show bold streaks below. Hmm, waterthrushes? Why are they called that? They are vaguely thrush-like in shape and color. A recap of visible features then includes a relatively big eye, plain upper parts, and a spotted breast. This steers us to one of the stealth difficult groups I mean: *Catharus*. These are forest birds that one frequently sees on the ground, and they are all roughly 6-7" in length. Their subtle coloration is often difficult to discern in the low-light that we often see them. So, seeing one in the open is worth study.

As with most birds, identification of *Catharus* demands focus on the face pattern. Here, we see a bird with a broad pale area in front of the eye (the lores) and a weak, partial eye ring. This eliminates Swainson's Thrush, which has a bold eye ring connected to a line that runs across the top of the lores (a supra-loral line). This combination of supra-loral line and eye ring imparts an appearance of spectacles. Not what we see here. Hermit Thrush likewise has a bold eye ring but lacks the supra-loral. Hermit Thrush also has bold and extensive spots on the breast, which doesn't match our bird.

A trio of closely related species within the genus *Catharus* does share the facial pattern we see on our mystery bird: Veery and Gray-cheeked and Bicknell's Thrushes. Each of those species has a similar partial pale crescent around the rear of the eye like our bird, and each has some gray in the cheeks as well as a broad pale area in the lores. Both Gray-cheeked and Bicknell's, collectively the "Gray-cheekeds," show a bold, dark streak along the sides of the throat (the submalar) and both have relatively bold, distinct black spots on the breast. The spots on our bird look somewhat blurry and small. A good working hypothesis then is that our bird is a Veery.

If we had a color image to work with, those familiar with Veery might say the upper parts would easily distinguish it

from the two “Gray-cheekeds.” This is usually true, but not always. Our breeding Veery shows uniform bright gingery or rufescent, tawny brown upper parts. Gray-cheeked Thrush is dull grayish to olive brown above; Bicknell’s is similar but somewhat richer brown with rusty tones in the crown and tail. I’ve seen many a Veery called a Bicknell’s, even in the hand. More confusing yet, a few Veerys that migrate through Connecticut are duller brown and slightly more boldly spotted on the breast. These are understandably confused with Gray-cheeked or Bicknell’s. These darker Veerys may be birds from south-central Quebec and southwestern Newfoundland or more western populations.

How does one distinguish between a darker Veery and the two “Gray-cheekeds?” Useful clues apart from the breast spots and throat streak lie in the flank and bill coloration, neither of which are so easy to see in black-and-white. On Veery, the flanks are cold, clear gray and contrast with the brown wing folded above them. The color on the flanks is often concealed under the wing, but even then Veery has a brighter white belly (still one should look for the flank color). Our bird shows that contrast. Additionally, the Veery’s flanks contrast with the pale buff wash at the sides of the breast. Again, this is modestly discernible in the quiz image. On both Gray-cheeked and Bicknell’s the flanks are darker and grayish-brown, thus colored more similarly to the wing and the sides of breast, with which the flanks show little contrast. Another clue is throat color. The “Gray-cheekeds” have white throats that contrast with a buff wash across the breast; both “Gray-cheekeds” have their throats framed by an obvious dark streak, the submalar or lateral throat stripe. On Veery, the throat *and* breast are washed with buff, with the throat bordered by a weak submalar. If light is good, look at bill color. The pale base of the mandible on Veery is pinkish to orangish-pink, whereas on the two “Gray-cheekeds,” this pale area is yellow. Lastly, the Veery’s bill is more robust and deeper, showing a stronger arch, whereas the “Gray-cheekeds” have relatively more slender bills.

Mark Szantyr photographed this Veery in May at Ashford.



Photo Challenge No. 77

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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ON THE COVER

Golden Eagle

Paul Carrier's regal Golden Eagle is a fitting subject for this issue, which includes the report on the 2011 hawk-watch season. Every lookout in the state considers itself fortunate to log this charismatic species.

THE 2011-2012 CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

By Stephen P. Broker

The 2011-2012 Connecticut Christmas Bird Count offered birders a choice of 18 counts on which to participate, including six northern, five mid-state and seven coastal CBCs. This year, 651 field observers and 43 feeder watchers took part in this early winter avian love fest, for a total of 694 observers. The rate of participation was the highest in five years, but it remains well below the 900 to 1,000 observers who went out through the 1980s and 1990s. In the process of conducting these 18 counts between Dec. 14 and Jan. 5 (as stipulated by National Audubon Society guidelines), we produced a combined 2,305 total party hours and 7,322 total party miles. These are very respectable numbers for time and effort spent in the field and at feeders.



*Mark Szantyr photo
Red-shouldered Hawks, once greatly outnumbered
by Red-tailed Hawks, have now whittled down the
ratio on CBCs to 5-to-1*

The net result statewide (including portions of neighboring New York and Rhode Island) was 304,000 individual birds comprising 176 count day and three count week species. The species missed on count days but located during the three days before/three days after count period were Redhead at New Haven, Harlequin Duck at Westport, and Snowy Owl both at Old Lyme-Saybrook and Stratford-Milford. Our species total falls just short of the record 177 count day species recorded in 2007-08, making this one of the more memorable statewide Christmas Bird Counts. The species observed represent a tremendous diversity across the regional avifauna and include a number of rarities as well as three stunning species new to the Connecticut count.

Except for the sudden and severe snowstorm of Oct. 29, the fall of 2011 and early winter of 2011-12 were extremely mild in southern New England. This was particularly true of conditions for the Christmas Bird Counts, as essentially all counts took place in the absence of rain or snow. Hartford compiler Jay Kaplan summed up the relation between weather and birds by writing, "Who would have predicted, after Storm Alfred dumped up to 18 inches of snow on our area in late October, that mid-December would feature relatively mild temperatures and open water. This was, of course, a double-edged sword. Although some species may have lingered in southern New England due to the mild conditions, the absence of snow allowed birds to range further afield than concentrate in pockets where there would be shelter and food in a harsher season."

Litchfield Hills compiler Ray Belding noted, "Although birding was sparse prior to the count, we did pretty well on the actual day." Chris Loscalzo, compiler of the New Haven count, added, "The warm weather in the weeks leading up to the count led to the finding of several lingering fall migrants, including House Wren, Brown Thrasher, Nashville Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Baltimore Oriole."

Twelve bird counts were held on the first weekend of the

count period. On Saturday, Dec. 17, Hartford birders enjoyed temperatures ranging from a balmy 28°F to 48°F with partly cloudy skies in the morning and clear skies during the afternoon. The Storrs CBC that day was held under similar although slightly warmer conditions. Temperatures at Woodbury-Roxbury on the 17th held from the low to high 30s under cloudy to partly cloudy skies, while New Haven started the day with slightly cooler temperatures and finished its count in the low 40s. A cool weather system came in that night, dropping temperatures on Sunday, Dec. 18, to 16° F to 19° F along the coast at Greenwich-Stamford, Westport and Napatree and afternoon temperatures to the high 20s and low to mid 30s. Partly cloudy skies persisted throughout the day along the coast. Further inland, at Oxford, Quinnipiac Valley, and Salmon River temperatures ranged from lows of 14°-18° to highs of 26°-34° with clear skies all day. Quinnipiac Valley co-compiler Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe wrote, "It was another chilly day for the Quinnipiac Valley Christmas Bird Count. The temperature just after sunrise was a mere 21° F and despite the sun's warm rays and cloudless skies, only climbed to 29° F by mid-afternoon. A cold breeze throughout the day was also a topic of conversation at the compilation dinner. The freezing temperatures on count day were in contrast to the unseasonably warm weather that characterized the weeks prior." Sunday's northern counts at Litchfield Hills and Lakeville-Sharon began at chilly temperatures as low as 7° F and advancing to no more than 30° F.

Barkhamsted and Stratford-Milford held counts on Monday, Dec. 26, with a temperature range of 37°-45° F on the coast and 32°-39° F in the north. Completely unlike last year's situation of a blinding blizzard rolling in at noon, Stratford-Milford this year had cloudy skies in morning and clear skies in afternoon, and Barkhamsted started under partly clear and ended under partly cloudy skies. The weekend of Sat., Dec. 31, and Sunday, Jan. 1, saw a general warming, with temperatures at New London on the 31st ranging from the mid 30s to the mid 50s and temperatures on New Year's Day at Pawling/Hidden Valley from the low 30s to the low 50s. A light rain at New London was of little consequence, and skies were

partly cloudy to clear on each of these counts. Edwin Way Teale, Trail Wood brought an end to the Connecticut CBC period on Monday, Jan. 2, with temperatures ranging from 25° to 43° with some clouds appearing during that afternoon. Thus, 2011-2012 was characterized by very gentle weather for most of our field observers.

Species totals were very high on the statewide count and on many of the individual counts. Among the six northern counts, Hartford led with 89 count day species, followed by Litchfield Hills with 85 species. The Storrs CBC set a record high total of 76 count day species. Mid-state, Woodbury-Roxbury recorded the highest count day total with 90 species, followed by Pawling/Hidden Valley with 84 species. Along the coast, New Haven tallied 128 count day species, followed by New London with a strong count of 123. Count success also is measured in terms of total observers, total party hours in the field, and total party miles. In those terms, the following counts deserve special mention. Barkhamsted birders achieved 2nd highest total party hours since the count's inception in 1984-85. Litchfield Hills covered a new high of 120 total party miles. Lakeville-Sharon had its 3rd highest total party hours. Storrs set a new 30-year record for total party hours. Oxford had its 3rd highest total party hours. Pawl-



*Jim Sherwonit photo
This Yellow Warbler on the Old Lyme-Old Saybrook CBC was a first for Christmas Bird Counts in Connecticut.*

ing's list of participants reached a new high with 44 total field observers. For Quinnipiac Valley, 29 is the 2nd highest number of field observers, and 141 hours in the field is a shade below its record. Napatree brought out 29 field observers for a new participation record. New London had its 2nd highest total party hours.

Seldom are so many as three species added to the all-time statewide Christmas Bird Count species list, but such is the case this year. The new species are a Thayer's Gull identified at New London, a Common Murre also at New London and a Yellow Warbler at Old Lyme-Saybrook (Old Lyme, south of Interstate 95). Thayer's Gull has made appearances at the Windsor-Bloomfield Landfill in the last two years, but to locate one on a Christmas Bird Count and along the coast is doubly fortuitous. Common Murre is a very recent addition to the state list of avifauna, so to have one of the first photographically confirmed sightings of this species take place on a CBC is a momentous event. The all-time Christmas Bird Count species list, stretching back to our first state counts in 1900-01, includes some genuine wood warbler early winter rarities, such as Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler and MacGillivray's Warbler. This year's occurrence of Yellow Warbler brings the all-time CBC list up to 23 warbler species, a very impressive assortment indeed. A number of additional rarities and noteworthy species were spotted on CBCs this year, including: Harlequin Duck count week at Westport; Little Blue Heron at Stratford-Milford; Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at Stratford-Milford; King Rail at Old Lyme-Saybrook; Parasitic Jaeger at Old Lyme-Saybrook; Dovekie at Napatree; Thick-billed Murre at New London; nine Northern Rough-winged Swallows at Hartford; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Greenwich-Stamford; Wood Thrush at Woodbury-Roxbury; Nashville Warbler at New Haven; Cape May Warbler at Barkhamsted; Clay-colored Sparrow at Woodbury-Roxbury. Any of these species is worthy of recognition as the most outstanding discovery of the Christmas Bird Count season in most years.

A consideration of new high or low totals as compared with

the previous 29 years of data is a useful first step in tracking changing populations of early winter birds. In many instances, new 30-year highs and lows simply are the result of chance year-to-year events or circumstances. With a closer look at the data over a three-decade window, emerging trends can be recognized. Christmas Bird Count data then can be combined with other sources of information, such as the Summer Bird Count, annual breeding bird surveys, periodic state breeding bird atlases, surveys of targeted species, and a growing body of eBird reports to further substantiate population trends. With that in mind, let's take a look at species that achieved 30-year high totals or 30-year low totals in 2011-12.

The 30-Year High Counts are: Brant (3844, up from 3660); Bufflehead (2055, up from 1884); Barrow's Goldeneye (3 + 1 CW, up from 2); Red-throated Loon (511, up from 408); Northern Gannet (73 for the six coastal counts on Long Island Sound, excluding Napatree; when adding in Napatree data, this year's 250 gannets fall far short of the all-time record of 1127 individuals in 2006-07 when Napatree reported 1092 gannets in its waters); Great Egret (25, up from 14); Bald Eagle (128, up from 102); Common Raven (145, up from 102); Orange-crowned Warbler 4, all at Westport!, tying the previous high of 4); Nashville Warbler (2, up from 1); Common Yellowthroat (11, up from 7); Yellow-breasted Chat (10, up from 7). The 30-Year Low Counts are: American Kestrel (4, down from 7); Black-bellied Plover (17, down from 25); Ruddy Turnstone (43, down from 63); Great Black-backed Gull (757, down from 797); American Tree Sparrow (1079, down from 1688). With that in mind, let's review the state-wide findings and provide further information on species seen this year.

Waterfowl through Hawks

Greater White-fronted Goose was recorded for the 16th time in the last 17 years. This year, individuals were seen in Hartford and Quinnipiac Valley. Snow Goose numbers fluctuate widely, ranging from a 30-year high of 425 in 2000-

01 to a 30-year low of two in 1982-83. This year's total of 27 is just above the median number. Among Connecticut's geese, Brant has shown the greatest early winter population increases over the past decade, with a record 3,844 in 2011-2012. Hartford (Goodwin Park, Hartford) recorded the only Cackling Goose. The 46,000 Canada Geese are representative of their higher numbers over the past two decades. Mute Swans continue a slow, silent descent in numbers from previous years of non-game management egg addling, with some 1,200 being counted statewide. The 1,000 recorded, mostly on the coast and with their traditional highest concentrations in New Haven and New London, remain well below the populations of the mid- to late-1990s and the earliest years of the new millennium. Their record high was 2,037 in 2002-03. Most duck species were counted in high or near record high numbers, including Gadwall, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Common Eider (thanks to Napatree's input), Surf Scoter, Black Scoter, the three merganser species, and Ruddy Duck. The glaring exceptions are American Black Duck, which shows a 50% drop in early winter population during the last two decades, and Canvasback, which produced the second lowest count in 30 years. When is the last time four different counts recorded Barrow's Goldeneye in the same year? That's easy – never, but such was the case in 2011-12 at Pawling/Hidden Valley (CW), Woodbury-Roxbury, Greenwich-Stamford, and New Haven. Duck species unique to one count this year were Eurasian Wigeon at Westport, Northern Shoveler at Litchfield Hills, Redhead count week at New Haven, and Harlequin Duck count week at Westport.

Among the phasianids, Ring-necked Pheasant checked in with reduced numbers for the ninth consecutive year, giving further credence to the view that this introduced species is completely dependent on introductions by game organizations especially in our northern and mid-state regions. Our native Ruffed Grouse has had its numbers drop precipitously over the last three decades, and this year only four individuals were recorded, with two at Barkhamsted and two at

Litchfield Hills. During 1982-83, the first year of the current 30-year period, 220 Ruffed Grouse were counted statewide. The 1988-89 count was the last on which more than 100 were counted, and by 1996-97 fewer than 50 grouse could be located. Few species have gone through such a collapse in numbers. While grouse have been bottoming out, the reintroduced Wild Turkeys continue to flourish.

Our two abundant wintering loon species continue to offer good news. Red-throated Loon established a record high total this year, and Common Loon was close behind with the second highest total ever, topped only by the 2005-06 count, a year when Napatree recorded an eye-popping 547 Common Loons and the rest of the (mostly coastal) counts recorded more than 400. Pied-billed Grebes were on the high side, while Red-necked Grebe, with six individuals total found inland at Litchfield Hills and Pawling/Hidden Valley and coastally at New London (2), Old Lyme, and Westport, also was well represented. This year, every coastal count had the opportunity to see Northern Gannet. The 20 gannets spotted at New London, 28 at Old Lyme-Saybrook, and an impressive 13 at Greenwich-Stamford attest to the continued expansion of gannet flight paths into Long Island Sound. Napatree's oceanic orientation, of course, provides a different order of magnitude for gannets, with 177 counted there this



Julian Hough photo
Red-throated Loons established a state record total on the 2011-12
Christmas Bird Counts.

year. Double-crested Cormorants continue to own a greater share of the total cormorant count with high numbers again this year, while Great Cormorants were in fairly average numbers.

American Bittern is a bonus bird for any count, and Napatree, New London, and Stratford-Milford were successful in finding this secretive species in the current count year. Great Blue Herons have been undergoing a century-long recovery from the degradations of the late-Victorian plume hunter fueled millinery trade, as seen in the expansion of colonial nest sites throughout the state. This year, they maintained their high early winter levels of the last two decades. In his summary of the 111th New England Christmas Bird Count, Audubon/American Birds regional editor Wayne Petersen commented, "Four Great Egrets at New Haven and singles at New London, Stratford-Milford, and Napatree may have set a New England CBC high total." In fact, the 2001-02 Connecticut CBC recorded 14 Great Egrets, but that high number is made obsolete by this year's count with nine Great Egrets at Stratford-Milford, two each at New Haven and New London, and an impressive 12 at Napatree – totaling 25 for our portion of southern New England. National Audubon, your symbolic representation is flying high. Both Little Blue Heron and Yellow-crowned Night-Heron are unique to the Stratford-Milford count this year. Black-crowned Night-Heron checked in with fairly typical statewide totals.

The 188 Black Vultures equal the second highest statewide total, exceeded only by last year's 244. Turkey Vultures maintain their high numbers of the last 15 years. Bald Eagle soared another 25% above its previous record high, with 128 this year. We have here an ongoing conservation success story both for wintering birds and late-winter/early spring nesting Bald Eagles in Connecticut. Northern Harriers were harder to find than usual, with Storrs recording two individuals, Quinnipiac Valley and Salmon River seeing individual birds, and a somewhat reduced number along the coast. Sharp-shinned Hawk was in low supply, while Cooper's Hawk maintained its robust numbers of the past 15

years. Two mid-state and three coastal counts managed to locate Northern Goshawk. Red-shouldered Hawk continues its expansion through the state, with 162 individuals being just short of last year's record high of 168. Two northern and two coastal counts set records for Red-shouldered Hawk. The Red-tailed to Red-shouldered ratio now has dropped to 5:1. All three Rough-legged Hawks were in northern count circles. Rough-leg numbers are suggestive of a loose cyclical fluctuation over 3 to 6 year periods, with our three most recent years being at the low part of the cycle. Stratford-Milford found the only Golden Eagle this year.

American Kestrel declines are well-documented by CBC data, with 149 statewide in 1983-84, 52 in 1993-94, nine in 2003-04, and just four this count – a record low total. The recently completed Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas 2 (Mass BBA2 field work was conducted from 2007 through 2011) issued "State of the Birds: Documenting Changes in Massachusetts' Birdlife" in 2011, based on the first four years of atlas data. In this report, American Kestrel is recognized as "declining sharply in Massachusetts in recent years". Toxic pollutants, West Nile virus, increasing numbers of predatory Cooper's Hawks, loss of grassland foraging and breeding habitat, and the hazards of migration have been proposed as causes of these sharp declines. Connecticut is fortunate (as is Massachusetts) in having some conservation-minded birders who are maintaining nest box programs in an attempt to reverse the losses of this littlest falcon in our region.

While kestrels falter, Merlin is a species that continues to expand its presence on Christmas Bird Counts. Merlin now has tied or outnumbered kestrels in nine of the last ten CBCs in our state, a situation that could not have been predicted in the 1980s or 1990s. The AOU Check-List of North American Birds (Seventh Edition) lists eastern populations of Merlin as nesting in southern Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Maine. Birds of North America On-Line cites a "growing number of nesting reports (10-15 annually) during 1990s at least as far south as Augusta [Maine] (and probably now statewide)", with a similar expansion of nesting

Merlins in eastern New York, and “recent colonization” and “southward expansion” in Vermont and New Hampshire. The Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas 2 confirmed Merlins breeding in Berkshire County, Hampshire County, and Dukes County (Martha’s Vineyard!), and these breeding bird data suggest the arrival of nesting Merlins in Connecticut in the near future. Peregrine Falcons guarding established nesting territory tend to be nonmigratory, so at least some of the five peregrines counted at Hartford, three at New Haven, and nine additional coastal birds (for a statewide total of 18) are resident birds. The last five years have seen the highest numbers of peregrines on our bird counts.

Rails were fairly well represented this year, with five coastal Clapper Rails and 23 Virginia Rails, including two at Pawling/Hidden Valley, last recorded there in 2006-07. It has been a dozen years since any of our counts have reported King Rail, and Old Lyme-Saybrook takes the honors for this year’s discovery of this rare rallid. Just the sixth Sora in 20 years of Connecticut CBCs was found at Napatree this year. (Don’t forget, we include parts of New York and Rhode Island in our ‘statewide’ review.) This was Napatree’s second Sora find in its ten-year count circle existence. American Coot provided its highest total in 12 years (674 individuals), which perhaps was to be expected based on the seasonal postings of coot sightings on the Connecticut Ornithological Association’s website listserv, ctbirds.org. Plovers and sandpipers usually present a varied picture, and this year is no exception. Black-bellied Plover and Ruddy Turnstone were at 30-year low totals, while Wilson’s Snipe continues a seven year trend of reduced numbers. Other species are somewhat variable in number, and this year Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, Purple Sandpiper, Dunlin and American Woodcock were seen in average or below average numbers. The only shorebird winner of late is Sanderling, with the third highest total in the last three decades. While it’s likely that early winter numbers of Sanderlings are increasing here, field observers must take care that frequently relocating flocks of Sanderlings along coastal feeding sites does not lead to erroneous over-counting. No more than one American Oys-

tercatcher has been reported in the majority of recent counts, and New Haven found the only one this year.

The closing of nearly all landfills throughout Connecticut has had a profound effect on the numbers of gulls on CBCs as well as throughout the year. It appears there really is no such thing as a free lunch! All three of our most common gull species were in significantly depleted numbers, with Ring-billed (12,700) at its second lowest total in 30 years, Herring (11,300) at its third lowest, and Great Black-backed establishing a new 30-year low of 757 individuals. Compare these numbers with 21,000 Ring-billed, 56,000 Herring, and 4,700 Great Black-backed Gulls in the mid-1980s. Of Hartford's count, Jay Kaplan wrote, "We were fortunate to get a single Lesser Black-backed Gull while missing both Iceland and Glaucous Gull this year, the former for only the second time over the past decade." Four Iceland Gulls were found along the coast: one each at New Haven, New London, Old Lyme-Saybrook (Middle Beach, Westbrook), and Stratford-Milford. Old Lyme-Saybrook field observers Lisa Wahle and Joe Morin (Joe also serves as compiler of the Salmon River count) wrote of their Iceland Gull observation, "We missed this bird last year and thought he/she may have passed on to the eternal gull hunting grounds. But on January 1, 2012, the Iceland Gull showed beautiful adult plumage. This bird has been seen on Christmas Bird Counts at Middle Beach in Westbrook since 1995." Old Lyme-Saybrook (Fenwick area of Old Saybrook) struck gold with a Parasitic Jaeger, only the second jaeger to occur on a Connecticut CBC. The first Parasitic Jaeger was found at New Haven in 2007-08.

Among the alcids, only Razorbill has become prevalent enough in Long Island Sound to warrant removal from the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (ARCC) review list. This reflects, in part, a decade of regular sightings of Razorbills in Connecticut's coastal waters on the Christmas Bird Count. A surprising number of Razorbill sightings were reported close to shore from several coastal locations this winter. On the Christmas Bird Count, a total of 24 Razorbill were counted on all coastal counts from Greenwich to New

London, with Napatree adding an additional 30 Razorbills from its more open Atlantic Ocean waters. Twice since its inception, Napatree has reported more than 150 Razorbills, but clearly the species is entering Long Island Sound in never-before-seen numbers. Napatree reported a Dovekie for the fourth time in ten years, but the eye-popping news is that both Common Murre and Thick-billed Murre were seen from a ferry ride in Connecticut waters on the New London CBC. Common Murre recently was added to the Connecticut state list (see the 16th report of ARCC at the Connecticut Ornithological Association website), and several sightings took place in this winter from dedicated, alcid-seeking ferry-riding birders in Long Island Sound. This increasingly common occurrence of pelagic species in LIS waters makes one ever more hopeful of seeing Atlantic Puffins in the Sound before too long.

Mourning Doves were in somewhat short supply, as were several other common birds identified below. Barn Owl, exclusively a bird of the coast on our Christmas Bird Counts, was missed on all counts this year. The various typical owl species occurred with mixed results. For Eastern Screech-Owl, three counts registered new 30-year high totals: Storrs with 13, Pawling/Hidden Valley with 30, and Napatree with two. Snowy Owl avoided observation on all count days, but Old Lyme-Saybrook and Stratford-Milford made nice count week sightings. Seven Barred Owls at Quinnipiac Valley led the state for this species, while three Long-eared Owls at Woodbury-Roxbury and two Short-eared Owls at New Haven were welcome finds. A total of 20 Northern Saw-whet Owls statewide were decidedly on the low side. Apropos of the effort required to locate nocturnal predatory birds, Quinnipiac Valley's Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe noted, "Participants began owling just after midnight. We had logged 14.25 hours and covered 109 miles before sunrise, picking up seven Barred Owls (a new count record), 14 Great Horned Owls (our third highest record), and nine Eastern Screech-Owls. Alas, no Saw-whet or Long-eared Owls this year (at Quinnipiac Valley)."

For hummingbird enthusiasts (and aren't we all!), the 2011-12 CBC lacked the glamour of last year's count. Alas, no *Selasphorus* species, either Rufous Hummingbird or the long-awaited Allen's Hummingbird, was queued up at a feeder. It is noteworthy that Allen's Hummingbird appeared in Northampton, Mass., on the 2010-11 CBC, constituting the fourth record for Massachusetts. Let's acknowledge it, Northampton is just up the road from us, so keep your eyes on the . . . feeders. With an abundance of open water, one might expect lofty numbers of Belted Kingfisher among count results, but this species tends to be variable on CBCs, and 200 found this year were neither noticeably high nor appreciably low. Hartford (East Hartford) came through with the only Red-headed Woodpecker reported. Multiple reports of Red-headed Woodpecker have been made in a number of previous count years, and it would be nice to get another family group, as was the case at Salmon River (Daniels Road, Moodus) some years ago. Those among us with some southern allegiance have been waiting patiently for word of this year's Red-bellied Woodpecker count. The expansion northward of the Red-bellied population continues to be heartening – we have remained at four-digit totals for the better part of the last decade. In contrast, Northern Flicker numbers have seen some decline in recent years. Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, and Pileated Woodpecker continue their widespread presence.

The tyrannids produced no surprises this year, with single Eastern Phoebes sighted in Storrs, Pawling/Hidden Valley, Woodbury-Roxbury and Old Lyme-Saybrook. It's been six years since Ash-throated Flycatcher and Western Kingbird have graced the count and 38 years since the aberrant appearance of an Eastern Kingbird at New Haven. This year we experienced no big shrike incursion, but single birds were found at Hartford (South Windsor) and Pawling/Hidden Valley. Blue Jay numbers slumped to 54% of last year's total, making this the third lowest in 30 years. American Crow and Fish Crow numbers were down as well, with an estimated 15,000 American Crows in Hartford providing nearly half the statewide total. While they constitute a small percentage

of Fish Crows statewide, four individuals at Storrs mark the second consecutive year of the species in this northern count circle. And then there are the Common Ravens, the best and the brightest of modern feathered reptiles, cognitively speaking. The first Common Raven to be counted on a Connecticut CBC appeared in the Barkhamsted count circle in 1986-87. Ten years later there were reports of 20 ravens mostly on northern counts, and by 2003-04 we topped 100 ravens statewide. This year 145 were counted, and it is likely that their numbers will continue to increase. The Common Ravens that I have been observing for 12 years at West Rock Ridge State Park in Woodbridge during the February through June breeding season have fledged four young in most years. If this is an indication of the species' success throughout Connecticut, then we have a major growth industry on our hands. Connecticut scores near the top of the national charts in educational attainment among its hominid citizens. Why should we not rejoice in a similar distinction with our state avifauna?

Horned Larks were in short supply, in spite of excellent counts at Hartford and Storrs. In recent years, it's become apparent that some swallow species linger (Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow) or migrate through the state (Cave Swallow) in late fall and early winter, notably at water treatment plants where flying insects make their last stand before die-off. This year, Hartford (East Hartford) found nine Northern Rough-winged Swallows on count day. The previous occurrence of this species was in 2007-08 at New Haven's East Shore treatment plant. Cave Swallow made New Haven's count week list at the same plant in 2008-09. A total of 6,500 Black-capped Chickadees mark the 2nd lowest count in 30 years, and Tufted Titmouse also was less prevalent. Red-breasted Nuthatch numbers in southern New England are tied to the relative success of the previous breeding season, and a mere 26 statewide this year is the second poorest total in three decades. White-breasted Nuthatch is less variable and was more in line with previous years' results. Brown Creeper was fairly hard to find this year.

The population expansion of Carolina Wrens into southern New England was well underway by the early 1980s. After topping 1,000 individuals on Connecticut CBCs in 1992-93, a year or two of severe winter weather knocked the population down to 20% of its previous high. It required ten years for the species to recover to its former abundance, where it has generally held for the last decade. Birders will recall the tremendous amount of snowfall in mid-winter 2011, just after the 2010-11 Christmas Bird Count season. So, what has happened to Carolina Wren as a consequence? Its numbers have fallen to 54% of the previous year's total. If the pattern of the past holds, Carolina Wren will require a number of years to rebuild its population. Single House Wrens were reported from Woodbury-Roxbury, New Haven, and New London, while Winter Wrens were best distributed on northern and coastal counts. Marsh Wrens popped out of the, well, marsh at Napatree, New Haven and New London, but the most significant find was one at Edwin Way Teale, Trail Wood. This represents a new species for the Trail Wood count. Once you find a Marsh Wren in appropriate habitat, keep looking for it there year after year. Site fidelity is strong in this species, as it is for other marsh birds.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher is another of the luminous stars of 2011-12, with a well-photographed bird turning up at Greenwich-Stamford. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher ranks as one of the rarest of passerines for Connecticut CBCs, with just two counted in 1984-85 (at Greenwich-Stamford and New Haven) and one seen count week in 1985-86 (at Stratford-Milford). Golden-crowned Kinglets were on the low side this year, while the hard-to-find Ruby-crowned Kinglet, a species with more year-to-year fluctuation, was in better than average relative abundance. Prior to the 1980s, the Eastern Bluebird population experienced a major decline due in large part to loss of open country habitat and to competition for tree nest cavities with European Starlings. A program to install nest boxes in suitable habitat has been successful in bringing back their numbers, yet they have shown some variability on counts in recent years. The last two years have seen an uptick in their numbers, with Barkhamsted doing particularly



*Meredith Sampson photo
This Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Greenwich Point was
one of less than a handful ever recorded on Connecticut
CBCs.*

well this year.

Hermit Thrush appeared in average numbers, represented well on the Barkhamsted and Edwin Way Teale, Trail Wood counts. The surprising find of a lingering Wood Thrush at Woodbury-Roxbury (New Milford) brought this species back to our state list for the first time since 1994-95, when one was found at Quinnipiac Valley. The winter range for Wood Thrush is from southern Texas and the Yucatan south to Panama and Colombia, yet we have recorded Wood Thrush six times in Connecticut in the last 30 years. Greg Hanisek gives context to the discovery of this bird in his excellent "Talking Nature with Greg Hanisek" blog with the statement, "In the avian world, rarity is as much seasonal as it is geographic." American Robins, at 7,200 statewide, were a mere fraction of the outburst of 42,000 two years ago, and this is very much in keeping with their year-to-year variability. Gray Catbirds were in average abundance.

Concern has been expressed in recent years over an apparent decline in the Northern Mockingbird population in our region, and Connecticut CBC data support this notion. We have seen reduced numbers of mockingbirds in each of the past six CBC years. Brown Thrasher is regarded as another bonus bird for any count, and this year we found 11, all on

coastal counts. The highest total achieved in the last 30 years is 18 in 1987-88. "Not bad this year, not bad this year. How 'bout that, how 'bout that? Get the message, get the message?" For some years attention has been called to the sharp decline in European Starling numbers on our counts. The apparent peak in European Starlings during the last half-century or so was 370,000 on the 1962-63 CBC, and counts of more than 200,000 were commonplace through the 1970s and early 1980s. The 35,000 this year comprise the second lowest total in 30 years and continue the precipitous decline of this 19th century introduction from Europe. What a great example of the imbalance of nature! In contrast, this was a good year for finding American Pipits, with Hartford and Woodbury-Roxbury recording the highest numbers. Jay Kaplan wrote, "The pipit count was due to freshly plowed fields along the Connecticut River." One at Litchfield Hills was a rare find there. While pipits were plentiful, waxwings were waning – Cedar Waxwings, that is. The same was the case for Snow Buntings, as they were very hard to find. Snow Buntings are following Cedar Waxwings on the species list, you ask incredulously? Not to worry, it's just the AOU reordering the avian phylogeny. Science is a never-ending, self-correcting process. It's all good, so just think about earth, air, fire, and water.

Wood-warblers turned out in force this year in the form of CBC rarities and one new species for the statewide count. Westport swept the Orange-crowned Warbler list with a remarkable four observed. Nashville Warbler was seen for the seventh time in the last 30 years, with one each at New Haven and Westport. Eleven Common Yellowthroats statewide (including four at Napatree) set an all-time high. (Note here and below the extensive reshuffling of species order among the parulid warblers.) Cape May Warbler at Barkhamsted is one of the most significant finds of this count, having been seen just twice previously since 1982-83. Connecticut has never before reported Yellow Warbler on a Christmas Bird Count, so one at Old Lyme-Saybrook ranks among the most outstanding finds of 2011-12. Eight Palm Warblers were



Roy Dellinger photo
This Vesper Sparrow on the Salmon River CBC was
the only one reported on the 2011-12 counts.

detected statewide, including three in a coastal flock at New Haven (Carolina Creek, East Haven). One Pine Warbler at New London continues its near-annual occurrence. Yellow-rumped Warblers (442 statewide) were at an 11-year high. Ten Yellow-breasted Chats are a uniquely high count. Given all these discoveries, this is arguably the most impressive wood-warbler year in memory.

Eastern Towhee was in average abundance, but American Tree Sparrow fell 42% below last year's count and continues to hint at a slide in numbers. Such an assessment, however, does not square with published information on Birds of North America Online, where American Tree Sparrow is described as an "abundant species, breeding in remote, undisturbed (far northern) areas; populations are thus in no immediate danger." Five coastal and two mid-state counts reported Chipping Sparrows in near-record numbers. Clay-colored Sparrow is a species that breeds "sporadically" so far east as western New York, with typical post-breeding departures for Baja California, Texas, and Mexico. As Clay-colored Sparrow has been expanding eastward, it has occurred multiple times on Connecticut counts. The Woodbury-Roxbury CBC has produced the latest addition to our CBC list. Concerning Field Sparrow, Birds of North America Online states, "despite declines over much of its range, the species remains

abundant and thus is not often of management or conservation concern. It is likely that abundance in the former heavily forested eastern part of the range is higher now than it was prior to logging and clearing for settlement." Connecticut CBC data indicate a clear trend in declining numbers of Field Sparrow for more than a decade. Whereas counts of 500, 700, and even 1,200 Field Sparrows were made in the 1980s and '90s, the most recent counts have all come in with fewer than 200 individuals. This year's total, 103, was the second lowest in the last 30 years. It's not surprising, then, that the Mass Breeding Bird Atlas 2 recognizes Field Sparrow as ranking in the top fifteen species experiencing breeding declines.

The only Vesper Sparrow seen this year was found at Salmon River in a farm field near Moodus Reservoir. The bird was well photographed. Savannah Sparrow and its pale coastal form, "Ipswich" Sparrow, were present in average numbers. Seaside Sparrow has become increasingly difficult to locate in recent years, and individual birds at New London and Old Lyme-Saybrook were excellent finds. Field observers and feeder watchers spotted Fox Sparrows, Song Sparrows, Swamp Sparrows and White-throated Sparrows in fairly typical numbers. Litchfield Hills can boast of Lincoln's Sparrow on its count, while Napatree claims two Lincoln's Sparrows in its count circle. Hartford specializes in White-crowned Sparrows from its grassy agricultural fields on either side of the Connecticut River, this year locating seven individuals. Yet, summarizing Hartford's count, Jay Kaplan wrote, "Also low in numbers were most sparrow species, likely due to a lack of snow and the fact that the Glastonbury Meadows, a veritable sparrow factory with its brushy field edges, was completely cut over and plowed, much to the pleasure of the aforementioned pipits." Woodbury-Roxbury and Napatree count circles produced three White-crowned Sparrows each. Given the overall mildness of winter, it is somewhat surprising that Dark-eyed Junco was recorded in quite high numbers. No Lapland Longspurs made the count this year.

While Eastern Meadowlark has experienced the same loss of habitat that other grassland birds have suffered, 32 this year

including 15 at New London and 12 at Old Lyme-Saybrook were a bit of a surprise. Flocking birds presented a varied picture. The 2010-11 CBC was a big one for Rusty Blackbird numbers, but this species now has returned to more representative numbers at one-third the level of last year's count. Common Grackle was on the low side, while Brown-headed Cowbirds were up. There's a lot to be said for the parasitic life style. Two Baltimore Orioles at Hartford (West Hartford) and one each at Greenwich-Stamford and New Haven provided good representation for this colorful species. Purple Finch is in decline, both as a wintering species and a breeder. The downward trend in their numbers on Connecticut CBCs is supported by the results of the Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas 2, where Purple Finch ranks 6th in greatest decline in numbers of atlas blocks, when comparing data from the 1970s with the most recent atlas breeding data. House Finches show a less steep decline in numbers. Once again, it was not a winter finch year, with no Pine Grosbeaks, no crossbills, and one lone Common Redpoll at Hartford (Glastonbury). Average counts of American Goldfinch were achieved. The 55 Evening Grosbeaks that showed up in the Westport count circle were a welcome flashback to the pre-1990 years when this delightful bird was a significant part of our avifauna.

List of Compilers:

As always, the success of the Connecticut Christmas Bird Count is dependent on the leadership of our compilers and their teams of field observers and feeder watchers. We salute the following CBC compilers for their hard work and organizational skills, with particular recognition going to Ray Belding who has served as compiler of the Litchfield Hills CBC for 35 consecutive years. Our compilers and their sponsoring organizations are: David Tripp, Jr. (Barkhamsted CBC, Litchfield Hills Audubon Society), Susan Harrington (Edwin Way Teale – Trail Wood CBC, Connecticut Audubon Society at Trail Wood), Jay Kaplan and Stephen Davis (Hartford CBC, Hartford Audubon Society), Raymond Belding (Litchfield Hills CBC, Litchfield Hills Audubon Society), Robert Moeller (Lakeville-Sharon CBC, Audubon Sharon), Steve Morytko

(Storrs CBC, Natchaug Ornithological Society), Roy Harvey (Oxford CBC, Naugatuck Valley Audubon Society), Carena Pooth and Angela Dimmitt (Pawling, NY-Hidden Valley, CT CBC), Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe and Melissa Baston (Quinnipiac Valley CBC, Quinnipiac Valley Audubon Society), Joseph Morin (Salmon River CBC, Mattabeseck Audubon Society), Ken Elkins and Renee Baade (Woodbury-Roxbury CBC, Western Connecticut Bird Club), Brian O'Toole and Gary Palmer (Greenwich-Stamford CBC, Greenwich Audubon Society), Shai Mitra and Glenn Williams (Napatree RI-CT-NY CBC), Christopher Loscalzo (New Haven CBC, New Haven Bird Club), Robert Dewire (New London CBC), Barbara Hawes (Old Lyme-Saybrook CBC, Potapaug Audubon Society), Steve Mayo (Stratford-Milford CBC), Mardi Dickinson and Townsend Dickinson (Westport CBC, Connecticut Audubon Society / Birdcraft Museum).

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SPECIES	NORTHERN COUNTS						MIDSTATE COUNTS					COASTAL COUNTS						STATE TOTAL	
	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NA	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	TOTAL
	12/26	01/02	12/17	12/18	12/18	12/17	12/18	01/01	12/18	12/18	12/17	12/18	12/18	12/17	12/31	01/01	12/26	12/18	
Greater White-fronted Goose			1						1										2
Snow Goose			3	1	3						1	16		1			1	CW	27
Brant												116	86	2648	145	154	266	429	3844
Cackling Goose			1																1
Canada Goose	544	2177	8360	2093	5944	2510	733	2161	3248	344	3558	2869	1629	3903	2082	995	1799	1094	46043
Mute Swan		1	14	21	2	2	2	58	97	5	3	50	214	333	263	79	18	41	1203
Wood Duck	CW		10	4		4		14			4	8	4	6	2	1	1	1	58
Gadwall			8	10	4				10		1	71	9	168	17	44	185	82	609
Eurasian Wigeon																		1	1
American Wigeon				6								31	14	61	10		235	69	426
American Black Duck	42	0	142	132	88	14	19	76	39	35	30	572	548	570	388	199	287	442	3623
Mallard	181	83	949	951	582	198	468	749	533	183	439	1092	451	1196	871	420	1375	589	11310
Mallard Hybrid			2	1				2						1			7	22	35
Northern Shoveler			1																1
Northern Pintail			2	1	2	1					2	1					2	2	13
Green-winged Teal (Amer.)			2		5	1		2				8	10		1	1	15	8	132
Canvasback														2			15	2	19
Redhead																		CW	CW
Ring-necked Duck	13	66		52	8	460	46	116	26	6	3	238	47	88	169	38	12	23	1411
Greater Scaup								4				1	1	3181	109	58	1776	CW	5130
Lesser Scaup				7				8	5	28	1	2		4	1		3		59
scaup, sp.																			1
Common Eider													1059	1	217	5			1282
Harlequin Duck																		CW	CW
Surf Scoter												CW	66	10	351	10	1	30	468
White-winged Scoter												8	37	41	22	10	38	198	354
Black Scoter												CW	41		2	2		CW	45
scoter, species																			20
Long-tailed Duck												136	7	81	51	19	79	291	664
Bufflehead	23	3		35	1		31	11	11			532	354	218	382	157	92	205	2055
Common Goldeneye		22	1	29	4	3		8	6	16	6	149	33	331	163	49	401	299	1520
Barrow's Goldeneye								CW			1	1		1					3
Hooded Merganser	152	15	32	112	74	24	50	68	79	31	22	319	188	309	519	50	128	197	2369
Common Merganser	190	23	44	556	44	16	20	3488	138	59	49	724	0	13	15	103	8	11	5501
Red-breasted Merganser					1							436	273	228	891	149	268	158	2404
Ruddy Duck				17	45			268	217			38	403	6	8	42		9	1053

Northern Counts	Mid-State Counts	Coastal Counts	Legend
BA = Barkhamsted	OX = Oxford	GS = Greenwich-Stamford	CW Count Week (Count Period)
EW = Edwin Way Teale, Trail Wood	PA = Pawling, NY/Hidden Valley, CT	NA = Napatree	XX New 30 Year High Count
HA = Hartford	QV = Quinnipiac Valley	NH = New Haven	XX New 30 Year Low Count
LH = Litchfield Hills	SR = Salmon River	OL = Old Lyme-Saybrook	XX New Species for Count
LA = Lakeville-Sharon	WR = Woodbury-Roxbury	SM = Stratford-Milford	XX Rare Species for Count
ST = Storrs		WE = Westport	0 First Time Not Seen, 30 Yrs

	NORTHERN COUNTS						MIDSTATE COUNTS						COASTAL COUNTS						STATE
	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NA	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	TOTAL
	12/26	01/02	12/17	12/18	12/18	12/17	12/18	01/01	12/18	12/18	12/17	12/18	12/18	12/17	12/31	01/01	12/26	12/18	
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	2	7	3	8	8	1	3	CW		3					2			38
Ruffed Grouse	2			2													25	21	4
Wild Turkey	60	20	57	254	95	155	63	76	90	28	29	53		80	38	20			1164
Red-throated Loon												47	137	82	74	63	69	39	511
Common Loon						1				2		34	310	46	241	67	32	20	753
Pied-billed Grebe				1		2			6	4	1	5	8	6	15	6	11	4	69
Horned Grebe	1											19	38	34	91	10	26	20	239
Red-necked Grebe				1				1							2	1		1	6
Northern Gannet												13	177	1	20	28	9	2	250
Double-crested Cormorant			3						1			22	37	23	72	11	12	8	189
Great Cormorant												47	39	22	106	21	12	11	258
American Bittern													1		1				3
Great Blue Heron		9	36	3	1	4	4	10	8	6	10	31	26	34	45	19	17	14	277
Great Egret													12	2	2		9		25
Little Blue Heron																	1		1
Black-crowned Night-Heron														2	3		11	4	20
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron																	1		1
Black Vulture		3	8	10	1	3	106	13	3		18	4	5	7	3	2		2	188
Turkey Vulture		4	37			80	155	20	1	4	3	71	37	70	47	51	17	19	616
Bald Eagle	14	3	8	8	5	3	4	33	3	10	8	3	4	8	1	12	1	CW	128
Northern Harrier						2			1	1			9	9	2	14	7	CW	45
Sharp-shinned Hawk	5	1	16	3			2	5	3	1	4	7	6	9	10	4	3	6	85
Cooper's Hawk	4	2	12	8	6	6	1	7	5	1	2	15	6	14	10	9	5	5	118
Northern Goshawk							1	1				CW	1						1
Accipiter, sp.																4			4
Red-shouldered Hawk	5	25	4	7		9	12	7	5	15	11	3	9	11	13	16	6	4	162
Red-tailed Hawk	43		125	52	46	40	41	108	50	26	83	77	27	68	33	40	23	28	910
Rough-legged Hawk	1			1															3
Golden Eagle					1												1		1
American Kestrel						1													4
Merlin			3	3				1	1		1	2	4	2		2	2	CW	21
Peregrine Falcon			5			CW	1				1	1	3	2	2	2	2	2	18
Clapper Rail													1	3		1			5
King Rail																1			1
Virginia Rail								2					2	2	1	15		1	23
Sora													1						1
American Coot		13		88		3	1	281	44			8	37	38	57	32	66	6	674
Black-bellied Plover												CW	3	8	6				17

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	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NA	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	TOTAL
	12/26	01/02	12/17	12/18	12/18	12/17	12/18	01/01	12/18	12/18	12/17	12/18	12/18	12/17	12/31	01/01	12/26	12/18	
Killdeer						9			16		2	8	5	1	2		1	6	50
American Oystercatcher														1				1	
Greater Yellowlegs													3	2		1		6	
Ruddy Turnstone												15		2	22	0	1	3	43
Sanderling													35	166		77	255	25	
Purple Sandpiper												6	21	23	26	54		2	
Dunlin												4	1	CW	6	206	203	CW	
Wilson's Snipe			1								1			2	1	3		8	
American Woodcock	2													2	1	2		8	
Bonaparte's Gull												10	34		4	2	2	1	
Laughing Gull														1				1	
Ring-billed Gull	456	209	976	444	611	239	403	479	1017	148	157	1264	398	2059	334	284	2582	630	12690
Herring Gull	6	7	566	8	33	7	58	124	19	16	342	826	604	1788	2990	714	1961	1254	11323
Thayer's Gull															1				1
Iceland Gull														1	1	1		CW	2
Lesser Black-backed Gull			1											1	1			CW	4
Great Black-backed Gull		2	52			CW	3	11	4	0	25	67	113	119	195	58	39	69	757
Parasitic Jaeger															1				1
Dovekie													1						1
Common Murre															1				1
Thick-billed Murre															1				1
Razorbill												1	30	1	9	6	3	4	54
alcid, sp.														5					5
Rock Pigeon	225	415	1324	167	358	364	155	101	439	261	244	478	20	1210	387	261	2001	325	8735
Mourning Dove	316	296	1188	221	107	182	68	308	217	99	329	733	210	714	465	160	292	132	6037
Monk Parakeet									3			27	2	127		2	132	12	303
Eastern Screech-Owl	5	9	20	7	3	13	12	30	9	7	30	28	2	26	1	17	3	7	229
Great Horned Owl	4	6	8	8	6	7	2	5	14	2	19	19	6	12	3	10	1	6	138
Snowy Owl																CW	CW		1
Barred Owl	4	1	1	6	2	4	3	4	7	2	6	1	1	2	4		1	2	51
Long-eared Owl				1											1				3
Short-eared Owl													1	2					5
Northern Saw-whet Owl	5			4		2		1		2	2		2		1	1			20
Belted Kingfisher	7	3	33	7	10	4	5	16	8	5	8	13	5	27	12	18	12	6	199
Red-headed Woodpecker			1																1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	43	18	167	65	47	74	34	69	54	49	93	158	27	90	53	32	21	41	1135
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1		11	9	4	2	5	5	7	7	13	18	3	7	9	10	1	6	118
Downy Woodpecker	70	48	202	148	44	110	71	94	72	76	123	184	52	156	103	61	35	54	1703

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 QV = Quinnipiac Valley
 SR = Salmon River
 WR = Woodbury-Roxbury

Coastal Counts
 GS = Greenwich-Stamford
 NA = Napatree
 NH = New Haven
 OL = Old Lyme-Saybrook
 SM = Stratford-Milford
 WE = Westport

Legend
 CW Count Week (Count Period)
 XX New 30 Year High Count
 XX New 30 Year Low Count
 XX New Species for County
 XX Rare Species for County
 0 First Time Not Seen, 30 Yrs

	NORTHERN COUNTS						MIDSTATE COUNTS						COASTAL COUNTS						STATE
	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NA	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	TOTAL
	12/26	01/02	12/17	12/18	12/18	12/17	12/18	01/01	12/18	12/18	12/17	12/18	12/18	12/17	12/31	01/01	12/26	12/18	
Hairy Woodpecker	24	7	46	40	13	11	12	30	11	6	21	47	3	33	8	5	8	10	335
Northern Flicker	6	11	97	17	5	33	8	24	21	7	35	38	27	43	38	12	4	8	434
Pileated Woodpecker	4		6	9	3	7	1	22	4	5	6	12		3	1		2	3	92
Eastern Phoebe						1		1			1					1			4
Northern Shrike			1					1											2
Blue Jay	218	74	458	413	199	292	191	236	205	159	498	492	24	360	180	165	47	105	4316
American Crow	538	259	15000	1106	1314	525	777	1351	821	292	1848	420	61	7018	342	229	151	126	32178
Fish Crow			18			4	9	22	8	1	5	14		107	3	4	21	CW	216
Common Raven	47	3	2	15	15	2	2	29	3	4	8			8	4			2	145
Horned Lark		38	125		61	183					7		6	77	8	30	0		535
Northern Rough-winged Swallow			9																9
Black-capped Chickadee	663	166	446	800	327	512	314	541	205	269	478	338	216	281	574	214	81	86	6511
Tufted Titmouse	306	82	441	351	99	340	270	346	237	359	439	521	100	353	258	355	95	102	5054
Red-breasted Nuthatch	4		4	7	1			2	2	1				1	1	2			26
White-breasted Nuthatch	116	49	192	229	70	146	70	136	58	138	209	254	43	141	95	104	35	48	2133
Brown Creeper	5	4	9	14	4	4	1	10	1		7	11	3	6	1	4	2	1	87
Carolina Wren	17	8	46	12	4	25	13	51	16	23	40	60	64	79	120	78	22	18	696
House Wren											1			1	1				3
Winter Wren	3		6		1	2	1	2			3	9		4	12	3	3	3	52
Marsh Wren		1											2	2		8			13
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher												1							1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	53	37	25	50	17	21	10	16	4	2	10	18	13	14	7	5	8	10	320
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		1		1				1			2	6	3	10	8	26	1	1	60
Eastern Bluebird	127	61	54	206	82	204	110	111	69	114	217	70	29	26	85	131	7	61	1764
Hermit Thrush	12	6	5	13	3	5	8	2	2	4	17	7	7	11	18	2		5	127
Wood Thrush											1								1
American Robin	393	89	619	478	338	345	102	282	475	104	164	2003	301	484	291	59	275	360	7162
Gray Catbird	1	4	1	1	4	1	4	1	3	4	6	7	15	8	20	4	4	6	94
Northern Mockingbird	11	20	92	10	10	34	32	31	51	13	47	88	65	96	85	30	48	31	794
Brown Thrasher													3	1	7				11
European Starling	1011	1627	3397	2107	2661	1495	639	592	5106	398	2311	1834	1427	4418	3085	1291	1065	899	35363
American Pipit			48	1		7					33		0	20	21	1			131
Cedar Waxwing	223	53	43	101	3	312	5	145	5	32	305	58	13	36	70	50		113	1567
Snow Bunting				3									1			15	11		30
Orange-crowned Warbler																		4	4
Nashville Warbler																		1	2
Common Yellowthroat			1									1	4	2			1	1	11
Cape May Warbler	1																		1

Northern Counts

- BA = Barkhamsted
- EW = Edwin Way Teale, Trail Wood
- HA = Hartford
- LH = Litchfield Hills
- LA = Lakeville-Sharon
- ST = Storrs

Mid-State Counts

- OX = Oxford
- PA = Pawling, NY/Hidden Valley, CT
- QV = Quinnipiac Valley
- SR = Salmon River
- WR = Woodbury-Roxbury

Coastal Counts

- GS = Greenwich-Stamford
- NA = Napatree
- NH = New Haven
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Legend

- CW Count Week (Count Period)
- XX New 30 Year High Count
- XX New 30 Year Low Count
- XX New Species for Count
- XX Rare Species for Count
- 0 First Time Not Seen, 30 Yrs

	NORTHERN COUNTS						MIDSTATE COUNTS					COASTAL COUNTS						STATE TOTAL		
	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NA	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	TOTAL	
	12/26	01/02	12/17	12/18	12/18	12/17	12/18	01/01	12/18	12/18	12/17	12/18	12/18	12/17	12/31	01/01	12/26	12/18		
Yellow Warbler												1				1			1	
Palm Warbler													5	1			1		8	
Pine Warbler																1			1	
Yellow-rumped Warbler			3	1			24	3	2	3	29	1	286	4	38	42	CW	6	442	
Yellow-breasted Chat												1	1	6			2		10	
Eastern Towhee		2							3		2	13	24	8	10	5	4	1	72	
American Tree Sparrow	35	20	240	169	60	48	13	23	37	21	81	16	64	108	28	46	41	29	1079	
Chipping Sparrow										3	3	CW	1	14	16			1	38	
Clay-colored Sparrow											1								1	
Field Sparrow			3			2	5	5	1	1	2	3	22	5	45	6		3	103	
Vesper Sparrow											1								1	
Savannah Sparrow			14						2	1	10	5	11		25	5	13	3	89	
Savannah 'spw' Sparrow														2					2	
Seaside Sparrow														1	1				2	
Fox Sparrow	1		2	1		CW	6		4	1	1	25	29	17	15		3	5	110	
Song Sparrow	31	40	247	73	23	104	226	60	189	68	258	354	269	343	360	173	149	201	3168	
Lincoln's Sparrow				1									2						3	
Swamp Sparrow	CW	5	2	21		5	3	16	2	3	13	9	15	23	15	8	4	1	145	
White-throated Sparrow	141	148	578	458	115	346	454	350	463	296	711	1181	502	682	602	353	251	249	7880	
White-crowned Sparrow			7								3		3						13	
Dark-eyed Junco	1533	496	1059	1915	671	1047	1164	913	825	575	1730	1526	293	541	315	210	89	397	15299	
Northern Cardinal	161	57	321	237	60	165	174	143	142	128	276	282	255	276	239	121	106	119	3262	
Red-winged Blackbird	83	169	1223	769	381	35	4	54	14	7	43	11	387	148	99	1136	31	CW	4594	
Eastern Meadowlark													1	4	15	12			32	
Rusty Blackbird		10	59	14				1	4			2	1	5	1				9	
Common Grackle	14	12	43	246	5	125	12	1		2	673	20	2	9		427	CW	CW	1591	
Brown-headed Cowbird	2	133	106	1322	1051	304	7	29	14	25	10	CW	957	10	6	274	3	1	4254	
Baltimore Oriole			2									1	1						4	
Purple Finch	28			21	5	5					0	2		0					61	
House Finch	159	55	479	191	66	235	163	270	121	135	369	251	202	342	444	156	94	121	3853	
Common Redpoll			1																1	
Pine Siskin	6				17					2								3	28	
American Goldfinch	789	106	584	411	214	286	214	203	131	136	438	233	44	388	237	122	109	109	4754	
Evening Grosbeak																			55	
House Sparrow	303	261	1155	294	406	391	394	131	277	354	248	1133	335	875	1317	297	1286	311	9768	
TOTALS																				
Total Individuals	9494	7600	41762	17696	16504	12176	7991	15058	16054	5195	17306	23113	14122	38063	21365	11267	19009	10649	304424	
Total Count Day Species	66	66	89	85	71	76	68	84	79	71	90	103	115	128	123	118	108	106	176	
Total Count Week Species	2	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	1	0	6	0	2	0	1	3	12	3	
Total Field Observers	29	10	91	48	28	31	16	44	29	38	27	17	29	83	33	41	28	29	651	
Total Feeder Watchers	12	0	0	10	0	4	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	6	5	0	1	2	43	
Total Observers	41	10	91	58	28	35	16	44	30	40	27	17	29	89	38	41	29	31	694	
Total Party Hours	147.5	39	274.5	140.38	90	120.65	80.6	137.75	141.75	56.5	112	272	82.5	160	137	103.25	125.2	84.75	2305.33	
Total Party Miles	646.5	?	522	927.5	?	618.85	?	?	453.1	344.5	827.5	692	331.25	471	455	273.75	475	284.5	7322.45	
Northern Counts							Mid-State Counts					Coastal Counts						Legend		
BA = Barkhamsted							OX = Oxford					GS = Greenwich-Stamford						CW	Count Week (Count Period)	
EW = Edwin Way Teale, Trail Wood							PA = Pawling, NY/Hidden Valley, CT					NA = Napatree						XX	New 30 Year High Count	
HA = Hartford							QV = Quinnipiac Valley					NH = New Haven						XX	New 30 Year Low Count	
LH = Litchfield Hills							SR = Salmon River					OL = Old Lyme-Saybrook						XX	New Species for Count	
LA = Lakeville-Sharon							WR = Woodbury-Roxbury					SM = Stratford-Milford						XX	Rare Species for Count	
ST = Storrs												WE = Westport						0	First Time Not Seen, 30 Yrs	

2011 FALL HAWK WATCH

By Steve Mayo and Neil Currie

Connecticut coastal hawk watchers eagerly await August and September cold fronts. These bring hawks, along with scores of orioles, kingbirds, warblers and other neotropical migrants. The 2011 early season resulted in a long wait, indeed. Early Connecticut autumn weather consisted of tropical storms, occluded fronts, stationary fronts and warm fronts. When the skies are filled with rain, fog and mosquitoes, the migration tends to be lackluster. On Aug. 28, Tropical Storm Irene did provide some excitement at the coastal watches. Quaker Ridge had two Sooty Terns. Boothe Memorial Park reported 2 Parasitic Jaegers moving southward, directly overhead. Although Lighthouse Point Park was closed that day, an immature Brown Pelican was seen from the watch site over subsequent weeks.

Connecticut in early September was dominated by high pressure, followed by a weak stationary front. This produced southerly winds and later, rain. Finally, after Hurricane Kattia cleared further eastward over the Atlantic, the coastal sites experienced their first real puff of northerly winds. On Sept. 10, Quaker Ridge had an impressive early season total of 466 hawks. In addition to 71 Osprey and 210 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 151 Broad-winged Hawks started moving southward. The tally at Lighthouse Point Park (Lighthouse) was 235 and included 88 Osprey and 101 Sharp-shinned Hawks. The winds shifted by noon, however. It was back to high temperatures and light southerly winds for the next several days.

Sooner or later, the weather had to break. Boothe Memorial Park compiler Scott Kruitbosch analyzed years of Connecticut hawk watch and weather data. Based on the blocking weather, strong high pressure over the Great Lakes and an approaching front, he accurately predicted that a remarkable Broad-winged flight was imminent. By the early morning of Sept. 16, the front had moved off the New England coast and



Julian Hough photo
 This is a regular sight at the Lighthouse Point Hawk Watch - a Merlin, before or after eating a small bird.

the Broad-winged Hawks poured through. Boothe Memorial tallied 8,041 Broadwings, and Quaker Ridge had 6,342. Waveny Park in New Canaan counted 3,520. Even Lighthouse, located just a few meters from Long Island Sound, had 3,713 Broad-winged Hawks.

On Sept. 17, Broad-winged Hawks continued to push by the more coastal sites such as Flirt Hill, Boothe Memorial and Quaker Ridge. Further inland, the season's peak Broadwing numbers occurred at Litchfield's Chestnut Hill (2,159), Burlington's Johnnycake Mountain (1,614) and Torrington's Middle School (1,896). The following day, high pressure continued to build over New England. Moderate northeast winds brought impressive early day Broadwing flights over Booth Hill in West Hartland, as well as Johnnycake Mountain.

It was back to consistent southerly winds for most of the remainder of the month. Highlights were limited to several days of Sharp-shinned Hawk movement along the coast (af-



Julian Hough photo
A Northern Goshawk, like this immature at Lighthouse Point, is a red-letter addition to the day's tally at any Connecticut hawk watch site.

ter a passing front on Sept. 25), and the sighting of a Mississippi Kite over Quaker Ridge on Sept. 28.

After "Broadwing season," Connecticut hawk watching tends to focus on the peak accipiter flights of early October. On Oct. 5, Tropical Storm Ophelia moved past Newfoundland, helping to generate strong northwest winds over coastal Connecticut. At Lighthouse the daily total of 1,340 raptors included 245 Coopers Hawks. There were 358 American Kestrels as well as an indeterminate number of Kestrels flying westward beyond the beach, a few feet above Long Island Sound. The next day, 995 diurnal raptors were counted. Boothe Memorial and Quaker Ridge also had excellent flights on Oct. 5 through 7, including hundreds of Sharp-shinned hawks. More unusual species included 2 Northern Goshawks over Boothe Memorial (10/7) and Lighthouse (10/11) and single Swainson's Hawks at Lighthouse (10/7 and again 10/12). By mid-October it was back to southerly winds, punctuated by occasional northeast winds from a passing

rain storm.

The end of the October featured a devastating early season blizzard. Just prior, a clearing cold front on Oct. 28 brought 914 hawks over Boothe Memorial. These included a near-record 218 Red-tailed Hawks and certainly a New England record 521 Turkey Vultures. Quaker Ridge had 296 hawks (138 Turkey Vultures) and Lighthouse had 635 (371 Turkey Vultures) for the day. The nor'Easter hit Connecticut around noon the next day, closing down Connecticut hawk watching. Only two Northern Harriers were counted during 45 minutes of Lighthouse coverage. Remarkably, the park was plowed and re-opened on Oct. 30, and 484 hawks were counted. Quaker Ridge and Boothe Memorial tallied 109 and 147, respectively.

Fair coastal hawk movements occurred as high pressure built over New England. On Nov. 1 Quaker Ridge had 191 hawks, including 114 Turkey Vultures and 40 Red-shouldered Hawks. Lighthouse tallied 249 on the first of the month. After a front cleared early on Nov. 4, Lighthouse reported 304 hawks, including 109 Red-tailed Hawks and 51 Cooper's Hawks. Quaker Ridge had 11 Black Vultures and 3 Golden Eagles on Nov. 4. Coastal hawk watching continued into early December but there were few cold fronts to generate significant hawk flights.

The 2012 hawk watch season is rapidly approaching. Perhaps our New England weather will be slightly less spectacular than that of 2011.

Additional data, including daily summary reports for 2011 and prior, may be accessed from the Hawk Migration Association of North America website, hawkcount.org.

Birders who counted at our Connecticut lookouts in 2011 included: Rene Baade, David Babington, Bill Banks, Tom Baptist, Charlie Barnard, Dan Barvir, Steve Beal, Susan Beal, Ray Belding, Debbie Bishop, Nick Bonomo, Polly Brody, Tom Burke, Alexandra Burlingame, Dana Campbell, Paul Carrier, Al Collins, Neil Currie, Ayreslea Denny, Paul Desjardins,

Randy Domina, Jim Dugan, Cynthia Ehrlinger, Max Ehrman, John Eykelhoff, Sandy Faison, Larry Fischer, Steve Foisey, Corrie Folsom-Okeefe, Samantha Foster, Frank Gallo, Jeff Greenwood, Frank Guida, Tony Hager, Liam Haggerty, Art Hankey, Carol Hannon, Dennis Hannon, Roy Harvey, Tom Hook, Julian Hough, Lynn James, Elsbeth Johnson, Roger Johnson, Lynn Jones, Sulmaan Khan, Anne Kehmna, Jim Kandefer, Paul Kennedy, Scott Kruitbosch, Twan Leenders, Lisa Lozier, Frank Mantlik, Jerry Marcellino, John Marshall, Steffan Marting, Steve Mayo, Robin McAllister, Florence McBride, Ken Merrifield, Ken Mirman, Don Morgan, Marty Moore, Judy Moore, Jim Moore, John Oshlik, Brian O'Toole, Ron Pelletier, Patty Pickard, Matt Popp, Mike Reese, Rick Roache, Gail Roberts, Paul Roberts, Dave Rosgen, Ronnie Santo, Sol Satin, Dori Sosensky, Elaine Spector, Charles Spector, Maria Stockmal, Luke Tiller, Carol Titus, Tony Tortora, Benjamin Van Doren, Bill Wallace, Mike Warner, Joe Wojtanowski, John Wojtanowski, Steve Wolter, Sara Zagorski, Joe Zeranski, Fran Zygmont.

Connecticut - All Lookouts - Fall 2011

Lookout	Town	Hours	BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	
INLAND GROUP													
Booth Hill	West Hartland	7							9		1		2710
Botsford Hill	Bridgewater	67			34		13	2	135	26			1258
Chestnut Hill	Litchfield	44			24		11		40	1			2623
Flirt Hill	Easton	6			1			1		2		1	1951
Johnnycake Mt.	Burlington	42	7		39		22	7	72	15	1		5196
Middle School	Torrington	84	4	1	28		7	5	34	18	1	6	2488
Poquonock	Windsor Locks	152	2	39	16		14	8	29	15		3	20
Taine Mountain	Burlington	6		1	4		1		7				37
White Memorial	Litchfield	21	4		8		9	1	14	8		4	354
INLAND TOTAL													
		429	17	41	154		77	24	340	85	3	14	16637

Connecticut - All Lookouts - Fall 2011

Lookout	Town	Hours	BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	
COASTAL GROUP													
Boothe Memorial	Stratford	111	8	847	146		57	38	1522	247	2	57	8645
East Shore Park	New Haven	0											
Lighthouse Point	New Haven	569	13	713	844		114	258	4721	1544	4	154	3365
Quaker Ridge	Greenwich	617	11	659	552		149	115	3005	429	7	235	8464
Waveny Park	New Canaan	34			25		9	1	26	5		2	3563
COASTAL TOTAL		1331	32	2219	1567		329	412	9274	2225	13	448	24037
Lighthouse Point		569	13	713	844		114	258	4721	1544	4	154	3365
Quaker Ridge		617	11	659	552		149	115	3005	429	7	235	8464
All other lookouts		574	25	888	325		143	63	1888	337	5	73	28845
Total		1760	49	2260	1721		406	436	9614	2310	16	462	40674

Lookout	Town	Hours	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UR	TOTAL
INLAND GROUP										
Booth Hill	West Hartland	7								2720
Botsford Hill	Bridgewater	67	2			26	1		12	1509
Chestnut Hill	Litchfield	44				2			4	2705
Flirt Hill	Easton	6	3			26	1			1986
Johnnycake Mt.	Burlington	42			1	20	2	3		5385
Middle School	Torrington	84	4			7	10	1	28	2642
Poquonock	Windsor Locks	152	63		4	6	3	4	10	236
Taine Mountain	Burlington	6								50
White Memorial	Litchfield	21	8					2		412
INLAND TOTAL		429	80		5	87	17	10	54	17645

Lookout	Town	Hours		RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UR	TOTAL
COASTAL GROUP											
Boothe Memorial	Stratford	8645		456		1	111	33	10	35	12215
Lighthouse Point	New Haven	3365	2	550	3	5	1235	216	212	371	14322
Quaker Ridge	Greenwich	8464		106		9	390	119	29	18	14297
Waveny Park	New Canaan	3563		9			8	2	4	10	3664
COASTAL TOTAL		24037	2	1121	3	15	1744	370	255	434	44500
Lighthouse Point		3365	2	550	3	5	1235	216	212	371	14322
Quaker Ridge		8464		106		9	390	119	29	18	14297
All other lookouts		28845		545		6	206	52	24	99	33524
Total		40674	2	1201	3	20	1831	387	265	488	62143

Connecticut - Broadwing Flight - Fall 2011

			Sep						Oct	
Lookout	Town		-14	15	16	17	18	19-30	Nov	Total
INLAND GROUP										
Booth Hill	West Hartland						2700	10		2710
Botsford Hill	Bridgewater		20	229	574	377	12	33	13	1258
Chestnut Hill	Litchfield		49	15	387	2159	13			2623
Johnnycake Mt.	Burlington		122	25	445	1614	2985	5		5196
Middle School	Torrington		144	137	214	1896	2	95		2488
Poquonock	Windsor Locks		15					3	2	20
Taine Mountain	Burlington		6			22	9			37
White Memorial	Litchfield				255	93		6		354
Taine Mountain	Burlington		6			22	9			37
White Memorial	Litchfield				255	93		6		354

Connecticut - Broadwing Flight - Fall 2011

				Sep- tember						Oct	
Lookout	Town			-14	15	16	17	18	19-30	Nov	Total
COASTAL GROUP											
Boothe Memorial	Stratford			2		8041	447		23	132	8645
Flirt Hill	Easton						1951				1951
Lighthouse Point	New Haven			1		3116	43		60	145	3365
Quaker Ridge	Greenwich			207	83	6176	1580	170	133	58	8407
Waveny Park	New Canaan			1		3530	24	3	5		3563

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

Lighthouse Point, New Haven - Fall 2011

	Hours	BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PF	UR	TOTAL
August	18			3		1	1								1				6
September	163		4	520	47	64	1746	331		14	3220	7			279	59	74	83	6448
October	220	7	542	320	57	147	2754	1094	3	70	145	199	2	3	939	140	108	236	6766
November	155	6	161	1	9	44	209	116		69		323	1	2	16	15	25	50	1047
December	13		6		1	2	11	3	1	1		21				2	5	2	55
December	5					2	2	2		1		3							10
Total		13	713	844	114	258	4721	1544	4	154	3365	550	3	5	1235	216	212	371	14322

Quaker Ridge, Greenwich - Fall 2011

	Hours	BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PF	UR	TOTAL
August	78			34	4	1	2	2			6				1	3			53
September	210		7	383	75	57	1399	105		3	8357	7			192	60	11	5	10661
October	195		468	132	58	48	1523	290	5	140	99	60		5	197	52	16	13	3106
November	134	11	184	3	12	9	81	32	2	92	2	39		4		4	2		477
Total	617	11	659	552	149	115	3005	429	7	235	8464	106		9	390	119	29	18	14297

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Winter Season, December 1 2011 to February 29, 2012

By Greg Hanisek

Winter produced few northern visitors. Boreal finches were almost entirely absent, and northern raptors, other than a decent flurry of Snowy Owls and a few Northern Shrikes, offered little excitement. Alcids were the notable exception, drawing many birders to cross-Sound ferry rides that were especially productive in January. In keeping with recent trends, Eurasian geese and half-hardy (even some hardly-hardy) species provided a string of significant records. Add in a nice collection of rarities and it was an interesting and productive season.

A **Pink-footed Goose** was found on Jan. 5 at Somersville Mill Pond in Somers (MO) and was seen throughout the season (m.ob). The reports came mainly from Somers and Enfield, but one found Feb. 20 in a Windsor corporate park may also have been this bird (SMo, MSz). On Feb. 25 a different Pink-footed Goose (separated by bill pattern) was found in Middlefield and was seen through Feb. 27 in neighboring Durham (MB et al.). **Greater White-fronted Geese** were present in December and January at Mackenzie Reservoir in Wallingford (NB et al.); Broad Brook Pond in East Wind-

sor (CEk); and Ferry Lane in South Windsor (PDe); another turned up in mid-January at the Farmington Meadows (PCi), and two were in Somers on Feb. 5 (PDe). Snow Geese were still on the move in mid-December, with c 50 passing southwest over Harwinton on Dec. 20 (PCa) and c 100 moving southwest over Norwalk the next day (LFl). A few were around all winter, but 16 on Jan. 2 on Ferry Lane in South Windsor was an unusual number for that date (RMa). A **Barnacle Goose** found Dec 10 in a Windsor corporate park remained until mid-February in both Windsor and Bloomfield (BK et al.). A report of



Keith Mueller photo

This Pink-footed Goose at a pond in Middlefield was one of at least two in the state during the season.

one on Feb. 7 at Broad Brook Pond in East Windsor probably involved the same bird (CEk). Cackling Goose was widely reported with at least 10 for the season. Two **Trumpeter Swans** of unknown origin were at Konold's Pond, Woodbridge, Feb. 5 through the end of the period (PW, JMa et al.).

There were reports of up to five Eurasian Wigeon, although the exact number moving around from Stratford to Westport was difficult to assess (m.ob.). With waterfowl movements well under way in late February, 28 Northern Pintails were at

Station 43, South Windsor, on Feb. 25 (PDe). A drake Mallard X Northern Pintail hybrid wintered at Raven Pond in Stratford (BBa et al.). Among reports of eight Redheads, the least expected was a female that dropped in briefly on the Swan Pond at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison (hereafter HBSP) on Dec. 2 (GH). Three adult males were off the West Haven boat launch on Dec. 19 (FG), with reports of one or two through the season around New haven harbor. Three (two males and a female) were at Lake Waramaug in New Preston

on Jan. 16 (BDe) and one was at Mackenzie Reservoir, Wallingford, Jan. 14-18 (NB et al.). A major mid-winter incursion brought c 640 Ring-necked Ducks to Mackenzie Reservoir, Wallingford, from Jan. 31-Feb. 8 (MMo, NB). Mitchell Pond in Salem held 114 on Jan. 13 (HG).

A drake **Harlequin Duck** enlivened Penfield Reef, Fairfield, from Dec. 9 -16 (JP et al.); possibly the same bird was seen Dec. 21 at Sherwood Island S.P. (TG). A boat survey of the Norwalk Islands on Jan. 9 estimated c 1000 White-winged Scoters in deep water two to three miles south of Cockenoe Island, but weather conditions made an accurate count difficult (LFI). The observer noted there could have been several thousand in a flock stretched east-west for several miles. Four White-winged Scoters were unusual mid-winter drop-ins at Bantam Lake in Litchfield on Jan. 1 (DR). The Jan. 9 Norwalk Islands trip logged c. 400 Long-tailed Ducks (LFI). An unusually good season for **Barrow's Goldeneye** produced reports of an adult male Dec. 2 at Penfield Reef, Fairfield (JP); an adult male Dec. 17-Jan.

3 on the Housatonic River in New Milford (GH et al.); a female Dec 17 in West Haven on New Haven CBC (FM); one on Dec 18 on the Greenwich-Stamford CBC (fide BO); and an adult male Dec 19 at White Sands Beach, Old Lyme (MMA). Lake Waramaug in New Preston, the state's premier Common Merganser staging area, held 3000 on Jan. 2 (RBe). The tail end of a good fall flight included 112 Ruddy Ducks still at Pistapaug Pond in Wallingford on Dec. 8 (MMo).

A good loon movement was noted Dec 28 from Burying Hill Beach in Westport, when c 190, half Common and half Red-throated Loons, were seen flying west from 7:25 to 8:30 a.m. (TG). Single Red-throated Loons were inland Dec 3 at Bristol Reservoir No. 7 (PCa); Dec. 7 at Batterson Pond in Farmington (PCi); and Jan. 13 at Candlewood Lake in New Milford (AD). A Great Cormorant lingered inland at Bantam Lake to at least Jan. 1 (DR). The high count for Red-necked Grebe was five off Enders Island in Mystic on Feb. 19 (PR et al.)

Reports of at least seven American Bitterns for the

season were all coastal as expected. Great Egret, which now regularly lingers into January, peaked at six on Jan. 1 in Stratford, where one individual made it through the whole season (FM et al.). The less-hardy Snowy Egret was at Rocky Neck State Park in East Lyme Dec. 3-12 (BDw et al.). The pattern continued with an immature Little Blue Heron present in Stratford until at least Jan 12 (JMo et al.), and two Yellow-crowned Night-Herons at McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, Stratford, on Dec. 6 (FM.). An unusually late Yellow-crowned was at McKinney on Jan. 1 (TG, SZ et al.).

A Black Vulture roost in

Derby held c 100 in mid-December (FG). Rough-legged Hawks stayed to the north with just three reports for the season. Four Golden Eagles for the season included a radio-tagged bird soaring over North Branford on Jan. 24 (SW); two immatures on a Connecticut Audubon River Quest cruise on the Connecticut River out of Haddam on Feb. 18 (BY, JR); and an immature at Lake Waramaug on Feb. 7 (RBe). A female American Kestrel returned to a breeding location at Sunny Valley Preserve in New Milford on Feb. 28 (WW fide JD).

The fall season's major flight of American Coots produced a high count of 417 at Lake



Russ Smiley photo
A major incursion of American Coots was welcomed by this Bald Eagle at North Farms Reservoir in Wallingford on Feb. 27.

Wononscopomuc, Salisbury, on Dec. 4 (RBe); there were still 323 present on Jan. 4 (RBe). A Sora was a good find at Barn Island, Stonington, on Dec. 18 on the Napatree CBC (fide GW). A Lesser Yellowlegs was surprisingly early Feb. 26 at Greenbacker Pond in Durham, where it stayed through season's end (JMa et al.). American Woodcock is occasionally found along the coast in winter, but two over-wintering far inland in Canton were unexpected (PCi). On Jan. 4 one was found alive on a sidewalk in downtown Hartford after apparently hitting a building (BA).

A **Black-legged Kittiwake** was seen from shore on Dec 16 off Stratford (FM), and trips on the New London-Orient, N.Y., ferry found them in Connecticut waters with three on Jan. 6 (FM et al.), at least six on Jan. 8 (RBa, JD) and four on Jan. 14 (GW, PR et al.). The lone **Black-headed Gull** report came from Barn Island, Stonington, where a first-winter bird was present Jan. 24- Feb. 20 (BDw et al.). A first-cycle **Thayer's Gull** was seen and well-photographed Dec. 5-11 at Windsor Bloomfield landfill (NB et

al.). There were at least 20 reports of Iceland Gull but only five of Lesser Black-backed Gull, as the latter continues to be relatively scarce compared to high numbers in nearby states. Glaucous Gull numbers were about average with five for the season.

In a spectacular alcid year by Long Island Sound standards, **Common Murre**, added to the state list just a year earlier, was the star attraction. The first was seen Dec 31 from the New London-Orient, N.Y., ferry. The species was subsequently seen in Connecticut waters on six trips through Jan. 22, with two seen on the latter trip (m.ob.). Adding interest were single **Thick-billed Murres** seen from the New London-Orient ferry Dec 31 (JK et al.) and Jan. 11 (FM et al.). Razorbills have been regular in the Sound for a decade, but this winter brought an unprecedented incursion that included 27 in 40 minutes moving by Shippan Point, Stamford, on Dec. 15 and 38 at the same location on Dec. 22 (PDU et al.). Other significant sightings included 33 past Westport on Dec. 28 (TG) and 25 feeding on a calm surface off Long Beach,



*Nick Bonomo photo
This first-cycle Thayer's Gull was photographed at Windsor-Bloomfield landfill on Dec 5.*

Stratford, on Feb. 16 (FM). There were reports of single-digit numbers throughout the Sound all winter.

Snowy Owls were at the Stratford Point-Short Beach area Dec. 1-2 (SK et al.) and on Jan. 1 (FM et al.); at Charles Island, Milford, on Dec. 20-22 (SG et al.); at Sikorsky Airport, Stratford, on Dec. 25 (BBo); at Great Island, Old Lyme on Dec. 29 (HG); and at Bradley International Airport, Windsor Locks, on Dec. 30 (RT). There were no reports of live Short-eared Owls, but the remains of one were found at Jared Eliot Preserve in Guilford (JMh).

A Rufous Hummingbird present since summer in a Stamford yard was still there until at least Jan. 16 (KMc). A Selasphorus hummingbird visited a Guilford yard on Dec 3 (RSa). An immature Red-headed Woodpecker wintered at Hockanum River Trail in East Hartford (m.ob); an immature was in Stonington on Dec. 3 (SBw); and an adult was at Hartford North Meadows on Jan. 4 (PCi).

An Eastern Phoebe on Feb. 15 at Great Pond in Simsbury may have been a very early arrival (BK). A Northern Shrike wintered at Major Donnelly Preserve in South Windsor (m.ob.); one was seen on Dec. 10 in Hamden



Tom Sayers photo
This Yellow-throated Warbler, seen here on Feb. 28, extended its stay at an Enfield feeder into the spring season.



Mark Szantyr photo
This Yellow-headed Blackbird was one of two that visited a Sterling feeder in winter 2011-12.

(ABr); singles were present Jan. 29+ in Southbury (NC) and Goshen (PDu); one visited a Madison yard Feb. 8 (MDi); and one was in Storrs on Feb. 21-22 (SMo). The Southbury site held two on Feb. 26 only (AD, LFi). The latest report of Blue-headed Vireo was Dec 5 at East Shore Park in New Haven, (JTr). A Common Raven landing on Compo Beach in Westport on Dec. 3 (FM) was among an increasing number of reports on the shoreline.

The latest Tree Swallow report was Dec. 12 at Silver Sands State Park in Milford (CF); the first spring sighting was on Feb. 19 on the Connecticut River in Lyme (BY). Nine Northern Rough-winged Swallows at the East Hartford sewage treatment plant on Dec. 18 (RMa et al.) were new for the Hartford CBC, and one made it through the winter at the New Haven treatment plant adjacent to East Shore Park (m.ob.). Single **Cave Swallows** were still present Dec. 1 in Stratford (RBa, NC) and Dec. 2 at East Shore Park (GH). A wintering Marsh Wren made it to at least Feb. 19 in the Lieutenant River marshes in Old Lyme (BA).

A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was late Dec. 4-18 at Greenwich Point (BH et al.). A Wood Thrush on Dec. 17 at Harrybrooke Park, New Milford on the Woodbury-Roxbury CBC was the state's second December record in the past two years (GH). The best count of American Pipits was 50 on Jan. 21 at Governor's Field in Newtown (RBa). The high count of Snow Buntings was 90 on Jan. 12 at Stratford Point (FM, TL).

Among quite an array of significant winter warbler records was a Northern Waterthrush on Jan. 7 at Pine Creek landfill, Fairfield (PW). A Tennessee Warbler lingered at East Shore Park, New Haven, until at least Dec. 3 (BA). Nashville Warblers were present to Jan. 17 at East Shore Park, with three present on Jan. 8 (NB, DG). At least one lingered until Jan. 2 at Pine Creek (CB et al.). A total of eight Orange-crowned Warblers for the season included up to four together at McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, Stratford, in early December (FM) and up to three at Pine Creek to at least Dec. 29 (BI). A Common Yellowthroat was seen at Pine Creek to at least

Jan. 7 (PW). A late Cape May Warbler was photographed Dec. 26 in New Hartford on the Barkhamsted CBC (DT), and a Yellow Warbler was an incredible find Jan. 1 in Old Lyme on the Old Lyme-Old Saybrook CBC (JR, JSh). At least two western Palm Warblers and one Pine Warbler made it through the season at East Shore Park (JOs et al.). A **Yellow-throated Warbler** wintered at a feeder in Madison (fide JCo), and one began a weeks-long stay at an Enfield feeder on Feb. 26 (JLa). Yellow-breasted Chats made a good winter showing with at least eight for the season.

Chipping Sparrow's increased winter status was

well-illustrated by 14 on the New Haven CBC (CL). Two **Clay-colored Sparrows** for the season were singles at Raymond Brook Marsh in Hebron on Dec. 16 (JTr) and in New Milford on Dec. 17 (GH), the latter staying through the season. A Salt-marsh Sparrow found on Jan. 23 at Long Beach, Stratford, probably wintered (FM, TG.). A wintering Seaside Sparrow was at Great Island in Old Saybrook on Jan 1 (DP). Single Lincoln's Sparrows, both Dec. 18, were in Stonington on the Napatree CBC (fide GW) and on the Litchfield Hills CBC (fide RBe). A top candidate for bird of the season, in a very good season, was an immature **Harris's**



Anne Kehmna photo
This Western Tanager survived a window strike in New Milford on Feb. 7.

Sparrow found on Jan 9 in Lebanon, where it remained throughout the period and far beyond (AP, MP et al.). A female **Western Tanager** survived a window strike on Feb. 7 in New Milford (AK). A male of uncertain age visited feeders in Mystic from Feb. 21 through the end of the period (GW, MJ et al.). The season's lone Dickcissel was at Cove Island Sanctuary in Stamford on Feb. 25 (CEh).

A male Red-winged Blackbird singing on territory on Feb. 9 at Milford harbor was the veteran observer's earliest for the area (FG). A first-winter male **Yellow-headed Blackbird** visited a Sterling feeder Dec. 31 (RD), and an adult male was at the same feeder Jan. 15 -19 (RD et al.). A female was in an icterid flock on Feb. 8 in South Windsor (RSm). Up to 75 Rusty Blackbirds were at Station 43, South Windsor, on Dec. 4 (PDe), and a flock at a feeder in Hamden grew to 57 on Jan. 23 (CZ, JZ). A count of 51 was made at Little Pond in Litchfield on Feb. 18 (JMa). The wintering flock of Boat-tailed Grackles in Stratford numbered 19 on Jan 9 (FM), the first reported sighting of them since August in a

well-birded area. The winter presence of Baltimore Oriole is clearly on the rise. There were eight reports in December and five in January. In an almost finchless winter, a White-winged Crossbill was at Bent of the River Audubon in Southbury on Feb. 16 (PCo).

Exotics: A Mandarin Duck wintered at Raven Pond in Stratford (m.ob).

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PHOTO CHALLENGE

By Greg Hanisek

Let's do this backwards. This is an Eastern Phoebe. You were quite sure at first. It was a drab, brown songbird, and clearly a flycatcher with the typical blocky head of the family. Its size and lack conspicuous plumage features said "Eastern Phoebe." It even bobbed its tail.

Then you had second thoughts. It called, and it sounded nothing like the husky *fee-blee* you were used to hearing. It also had wing bars, which didn't jump out at you at first because they weren't white. In fact they were quite rusty, a color you didn't associate with our familiar flycatcher.

Not to worry. The sharper sound you heard was the phoebe's call note, quite different from its eponymous song. The rusty covert tips were a feature of the species' juvenile plumage, which is held for just a short time before molt produces a more familiar wing pattern.

Mark Szantyr photographed this juvenile Eastern Phoebe on July 3, 2011 in Ashford.





Photo Challenge No. 78

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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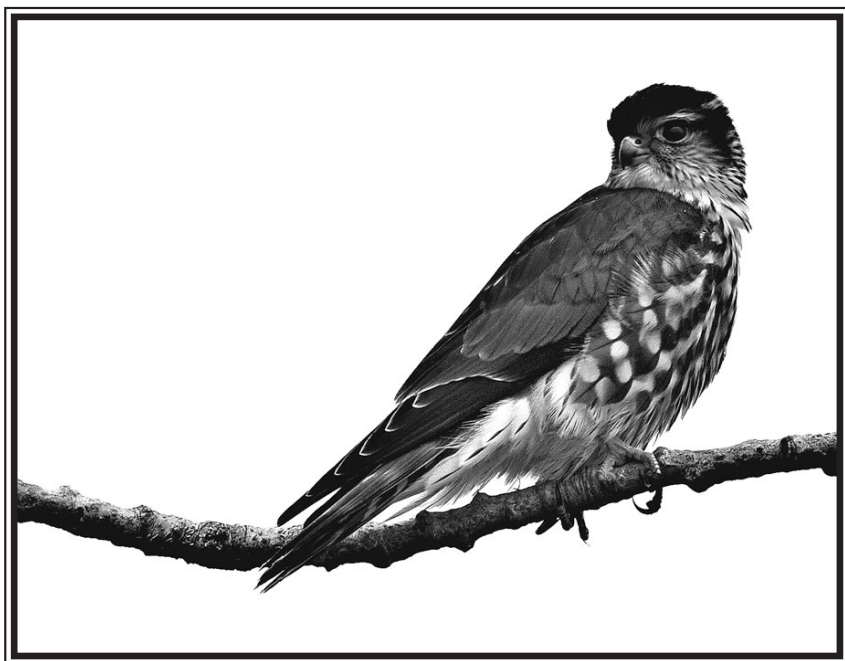
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ON THE COVER

Merlin

Mark Szantyr has graced many covers with his pen-and-ink drawings. For this issue he applies his artistry to the digital realm with this sparkling grayscale image. The Merlin itself does double duty, as a typical migrant flying along with the October issue and as an expanding species that may soon find its way into our Summer Bird Counts as a breeder.

THE 2012 SUMMER BIRD COUNT

The 2012 Summer Bird Count

By Joe Zeranski and Patrick Comins

Introduction

This year marked the 21st year we have been conducting statewide Summer Bird Counts! The Summer Bird Count has provided valuable insight into the status and distribution of breeding birds in Connecticut and serves as a great early warning system to alert us to ongoing changes in the birds of Connecticut. Thank you to all of the observers, compilers and captains that make this count happen!

Results

This year 184 count day species were recorded. This is just about average and down from last year's (tied with 2002 and 2007) total of 191. There were two additional species (Black Tern and Dunlin) recorded in the count period. There were 247 observers, in 144 parties; 1416.5 party hours were tallied, with 1357.5 being daylight hours and 59 night hours. The number of parties and total party hours are all time highs.

There were 115,598 individual birds recorded, which is a new record by nearly 1,000 birds. The ten most abundant species were, in descending order: **American Robin, European Starling, Common Grackle, Red-winged Blackbird, Gray Catbird, House Sparrow, Red-eyed Vireo, Canada Goose, Song Sparrow, and Morning Dove**. This is nearly identical to last year's list, when **Red-eyed Vireo** and **Canada Goose** traded places and, **American Crow** (11TH place this year) replaced **Mourning Dove** (13th place last year) for 10th place.

Fourteen species were represented by a single individual:

Lesser Scaup, Surf Scoter, Common Loon (SC), Horned Grebe, American Bittern (E), Northern Harrier (E), Greater Yellowlegs, Upland Sandpiper (E), Olive-sided Flycatcher, Nashville Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Nelson's Sparrow,

Seaside Sparrow (T) and Dickcissel

There were 24 species recorded on the count days that do not regularly breed in Connecticut and can be considered either late migrants or non-nesting visitors: **Brant**, **Greater Scaup**, **Lesser Scaup**, **Surf Scoter**, **Long-tailed Duck**, **Red-breasted Merganser**, **Common Loon** (SC), **Horned Grebe**, **Northern Harrier** (E), **Black-bellied Plover**, **Semipalmated Plover**, **Greater Yellowlegs**, **Ruddy Turnstone**, **Sanderling**, **Semipalmated Sandpiper**, **White-rumped Sandpiper**, **Laughing Gull**, **Ring-billed Gull**, **Forster's Tern**, **Black Skimmer**, **Olive-sided Flycatcher**, **Blackpoll Warbler**, **Nelson's Sparrow** and **Dickcissel**. The two additional count period species are from the non-nester category, **Dunlin** and **Black Tern**, both of which are notable, having been recorded on ten and two counts previously. **Black Tern** was also recorded on two previous count periods and is an uncommon species in Connecticut at any date. There is a temptation to place **Ring-necked Pheasant** in the non-nesting category, as nearly all birds seen these days are either released for hunting purposes or escaped from captivity. The underlined species are potential nesters, but in the absence of additional supporting evidence they will be considered non-nesting visitors.

Noteworthy from this group were the seven **Greater Scaup**, a new all-time high for this species. Six of these were from Greenwich/Stamford and one from New Haven. The **Lesser Scaup** was only the sixth SBC record and was especially noteworthy from Litchfield Hills. The **Surf Scoter** found in Greenwich/Stamford was a first ever for the count, the 257th species. **Long-tailed Ducks** have been recorded on 12 of the 21 counts and the six from Greenwich/Stamford were a record high count. New Haven also had one during the count period. The **Horned Grebe** was the first ever recorded in Greenwich/Stamford and only the fifth SBC record, plus two additional count period records. The **Northern Harrier** (E) from Litchfield Hills is a new species for that area. Nesting is certainly a possibility for harriers. They have nested in the state fairly recently at Stratford Great Meadows Unit of Stewart B. McKinney NWR, but they no longer nest there

and have not been confirmed nesting anywhere in the state in several years. **White-rumped Sandpipers** have been fairly regular in the last ten years, having been recorded in eight of the last ten counts, but overall, they are an uncommon species for the state at any date. Two **Black Skimmers** in Greenwich/Stamford were a good find. This species has nested in Connecticut in the past, but not in several years. One **Olive-sided Flycatcher** was recorded in Litchfield Hills and is a possibility for nesting in Connecticut, but are also notoriously late migrants. **Nelson's Sparrow** is always a good find, especially in the spring and Greenwich/Stamford's was only the eighth SBC record. Finally, perhaps the best bird of the count was a **Dickcissel** in Greenwich/Stamford. A first for the count, bringing us to 258 species recorded overall. They are underlined because a pair stayed at Northwest Park in Windsor for the entire nesting season (in 1996), but this bird was likely a migrant. **Surf Scoter** was also a first, but **Dickcissels** are rarer overall in the state, thus edging it out as the bird of the count.

Notable Nesting Species

Four **Pied-billed Grebes** (E) were logged on the Litchfield Hills Count, a species that can be hard to find in June in Connecticut, having been missed on four of the last ten counts. They also tallied the only **American Bittern** (E) of the count and two **Least Bitterns** (T). Two **Least Bitterns** were also recorded on the Hartford count. **Northern Goshawks** are always a tough species to find nesting in Connecticut, and the two for New Milford/Pawling were a first for that area and two more were recorded in Barkhamsted. We're getting used to seeing **Peregrine Falcons** (E) in the state, but it is a pretty good bird on the Barkhamstead count and now for the second year in a row. Hartford had the only **Upland Sandpiper** (E) of the count, presumably at Rentschler Field. New Haven had its nearly annual **Common Nighthawk** (E), but Woodbury/Roxbury added five and Hartford had one for count period. The latter is especially intriguing as a possible nesting attempt in the area, as they generally nest on flat rooftops in cities in Connecticut. Litchfield Hills again stepped up



*Julian Hough photo
Red-shouldered Hawk was one of several raptors that appeared in
high numbers on the Summer Bird Counts.*

to find some of Connecticut's least common nesting song-birds, including **Golden-crowned Kinglet** (along with New Milford/Pawling) and **Nashville Warbler**. The Storrs Count found their first ever **Hooded Warbler**. Hartford also added another rare grassland nesting bird with seven **Grasshopper Sparrows** (E), including one from a new location, from the former Hartford Landfill and the rest from Rentschler Field and a field in South Windsor. Greenwich/Stamford did their part by turning up both **Seaside** (T) and **Saltmarsh Sparrows** (SC). Barkhamsted turned up two **Pine Siskins**, always a great find in June and could easily represent nesting birds. **Pine Siskins** are so nomadic that the same individuals who may have been nesting this year in Connecticut could have nested in Alaska the previous season.

Species Recorded in Above Average Numbers

There was a bumper crop of new ten-year and all-time high counts this year, due in part to the record number of party hours put in this year. The warm and early spring and good weather on the count weekends may have contributed to this as well. **Wood Ducks*** with an all-time high of 607, were 155% of their ten-year average, and **Common Mergansers**

came in at an all-time high of 234, which is nearly double any previous record. The high count of mergansers is likely bolstered by some ducklings, due to the early spring this year.

Black Vulture again came in at an all-time high, with 47, beating out last year's record of 41 and was found for the first time on the Storrs Count. This year **Turkey Vulture** joined them in an all-time high of 454, which exceeds the previous high (2010) by over 50 individuals. **Bald Eagle** (35) and three hawks also came in at all-time highs, **Cooper's Hawk*** (49), **Red-shouldered Hawk** (120) and **Red-Tailed Hawk** (360), and Broad-winged Hawk (64) came in with a ten-year high. **Peregrine Falcon**, which has not yet been moved to its new position in the taxonomic order for this article, tied (2010, 2011) an all-time high of 9.

American Oystercatcher (T) came in at an all-time high of 78, a remarkable 60 of which came from Greenwich/Stamford, which is good news for this state-threatened species, although reproductive success remains very low for oystercatchers, particularly in the western Sound. Oystercatchers



*Julian Hough photo
Bolstered by numbers on the Greenwich-
Stamford Count, American Oystercatchers
established a new high.*

were joined by **Willet*** (25) and **American Woodcock*** (24, ten-year high and tied with 1999 and 2000 for the all-time high). **Barred Owl*** came in at an all-time high of 132, eclipsing 2004's previous record by one. **Chimney Swift*** came in at an all-time high of 973, shattering the old record by nearly 200. **Ruby-throated Hummingbird*** (236) and **Red-bellied Woodpecker*** (790) appear to be continuing an upward trend. Only 31 and 194 respectively were recorded on the first count in 1992. **Pileated Woodpeckers*** tied an all time high with 167. Two Empidonax flycatchers got A's with more **Aca-dian*** (34, 10-year high) and **Alder Flycatchers*** (134), also joined by their cousin **Eastern Phoebes*** (939, nearly double last year's total of 548). Both **Warbling** (1,011) and **Red-eyed Vireos*** (3,526) seem to be doing well, turning in all-time highs, along with **Blue Jays*** (1,757) and **Fish Crows*** (148).

The warm and early spring may have benefitted swallows as well, which by all accounts seem to have a good reproductive year with **Purple Martins** (87) (T), **Tree*** (2,200) and **Barn Swallows*** (1,990) at all-time highs. Some of our most familiar songbirds also came in with record counts including, **White-breasted Nuthatch*** (1040), **Eastern Bluebird** (684, ten-year high), **Veery*** (2335), **Gray Catbird*** (4,762) and **Cedar Waxwing*** (2,434). Those five species are all short-distance migrants and may have benefitted by the mild winter. Several species of warblers also came in at record levels with, **Yellow Warbler** (2,297, ten-year high), **Black-and-White Warbler*** (624, ten-year high), **American Redstart** (1,566), **Ovenbird*** (1,951), **Louisiana Waterthrush*** (225) and **Common Yellowthroat*** (2,019, ten-year high). Rounding out the species with high counts are **Scarlet Tanager*** (888), **Savannah Sparrow** (SC) (106) and **Swamp Sparrow*** (463). In the case of **Savannah Sparrows**, much of that bumper crop came from Hartford, where a new grassland is taking hold atop the former landfill.

Many of the above species appear by all accounts to be doing well, but don't share much in common for habitat. They are the type of species you would expect to be encountered in greater numbers with more effort as indicated by * above,

which indicates high for raw totals only, at least one other year exceeds total when corrected for party hours.

Species Recorded in Below Average Numbers

One species came in at a ten-year low, although the 102 **Blue-headed Vireos** recorded (59% of the ten-year average), would have been a record high in any year before 1999. **Monk Parakeet** tied a ten-year low at 50, which would have been a high for any year before 2000. Some other nesting species were recorded in well below average numbers, most of whom are early successional specialists. The five **Ruffed Grouse** were only 54% of average, well below the high count of 77 recorded in 1995, but up from the single individual that was recorded last year. The 17 **Black-billed Cuckoos** represented 69% of average, the six **Whip-Poor-Wills** only half of the average, four **White-eyed Vireos** only 26% of average and 30 **Brown Thrashers** 73% of average. Some species from this group, including **Blue-winged Warbler** (308, 96%), **Prairie Warbler** (119, 108%) and **Eastern Towhee** (598,104%) did come in near or even above average, but are still much



Mark Szantyr photo
Brown Thrasher is one of a suite of scrubland birds that counts
have shown to be in decline.



*Mark Szantyr photo
Ruffed Grouse, a species long in decline, remained in low numbers on the counts.*

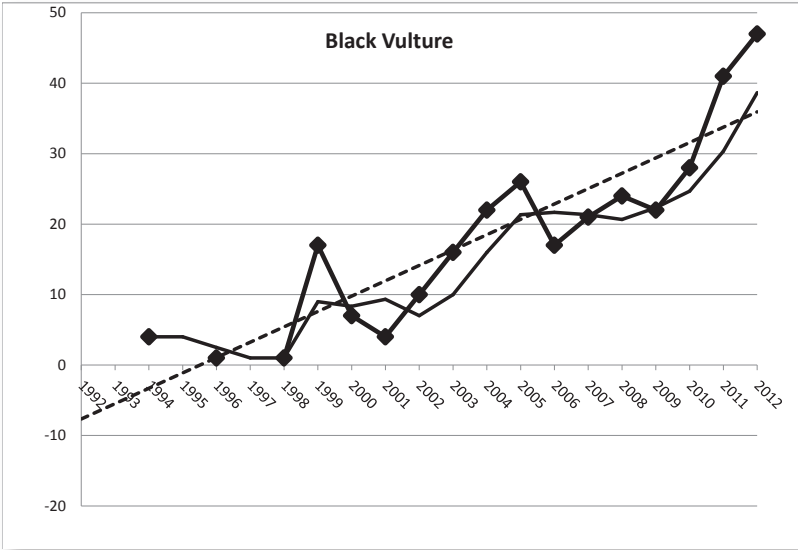
reduced from the first ten years of the count. Both Prairie and Blue-winged Warblers would have been record lows for any year before 2003 and towhees would have been the second lowest total from that period. Other nesting species worth mentioning in the category of below average numbers would be **Great Horned Owl** (18, 69%) and **Bank Swallow** (180, 64%). Additionally, no **Soras** were recorded, one of only three times in the last ten years and five times overall and no **Northern Saw-Whet Owls** were recorded for only the 3rd time in the last ten years and 5th time overall.

Thank you

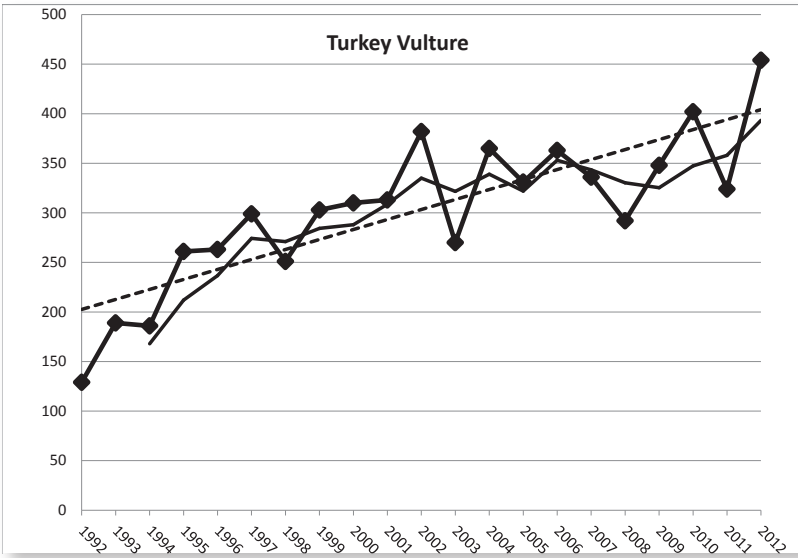
In conclusion, on behalf of the Connecticut Ornithological Association, we would like to thank all of the observers, captains and compilers. The data that you provide is critical for understanding our ever-changing breeding bird populations!

Note: Any evidence of nesting by state-endangered (E), threatened (T) or special concern (SC) species should be reported to the COA Natural Diversity Database (NDDB) Project. This will ensure that the best available information can be taken into account in land-use decisions.

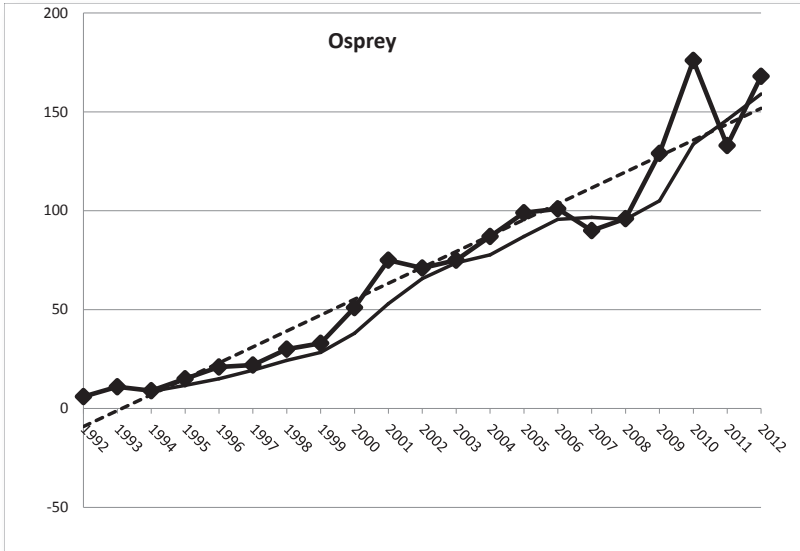
This year we present graphs on 21 years of results for our regularly occurring vultures, raptors and falcons. The below graphs present the total number observed (not corrected for party hours), the three- year rolling average of those results and a standard Excel trendline to illustrate a general trend for the results.



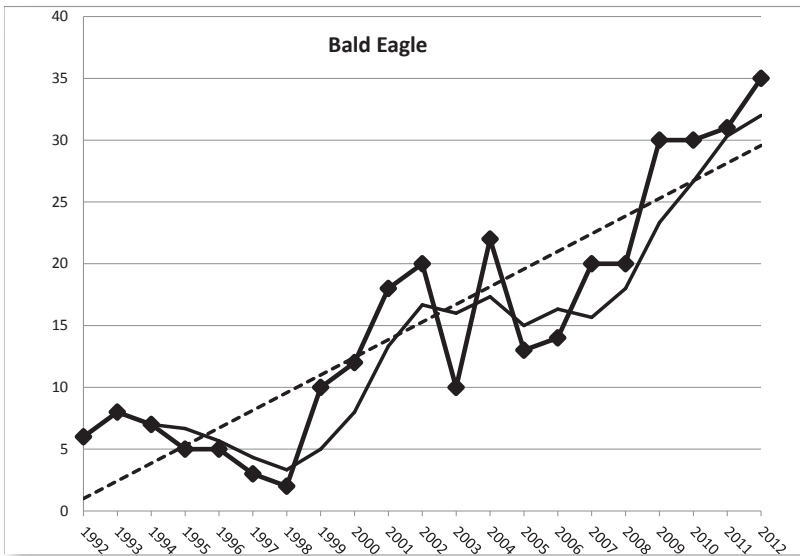
Black Vultures have gone from being an intermittently occurring species to a widespread and regular customer on the Summer Bird Count and reached a new high of 47 on the latest count.



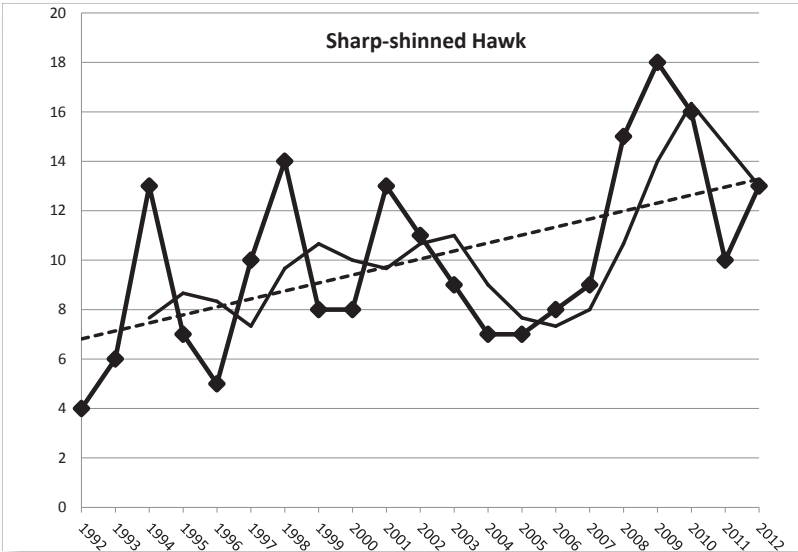
Likewise, Turkey Vultures also reached a new high of 454 in 2012. Less than 200 were recorded statewide on each of the first three counts.



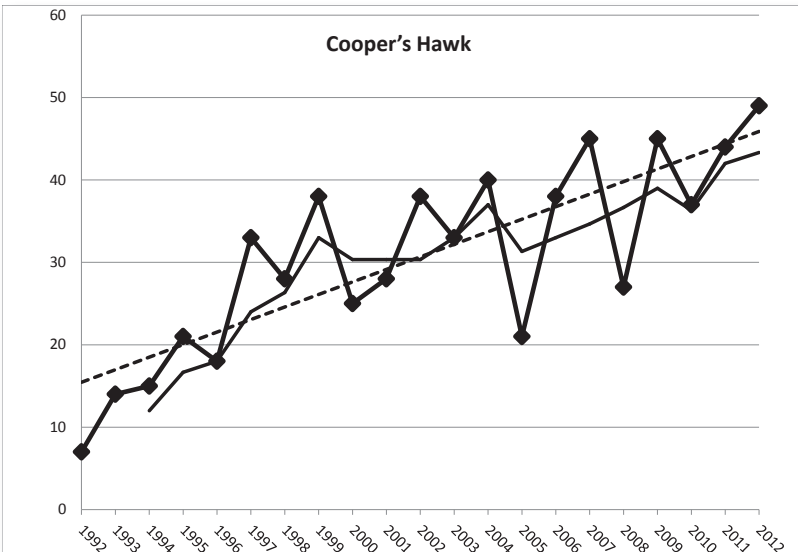
Osprey came in at slightly below the all time high of 176 in 2010, but this year's is impressive considering it is more than the cumulative total for the state between 1992 and 1999.



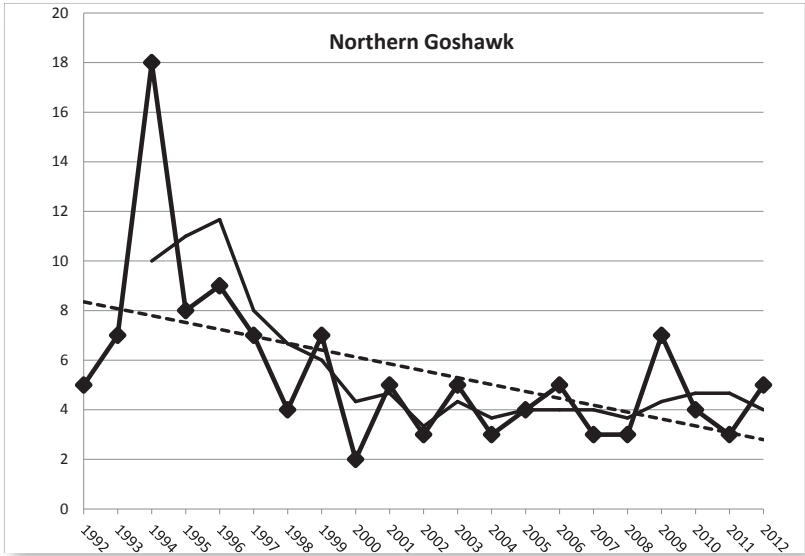
Bald Eagle set a new all time high of 35 in 2012. Less than 15 were recorded statewide each year before 2000.



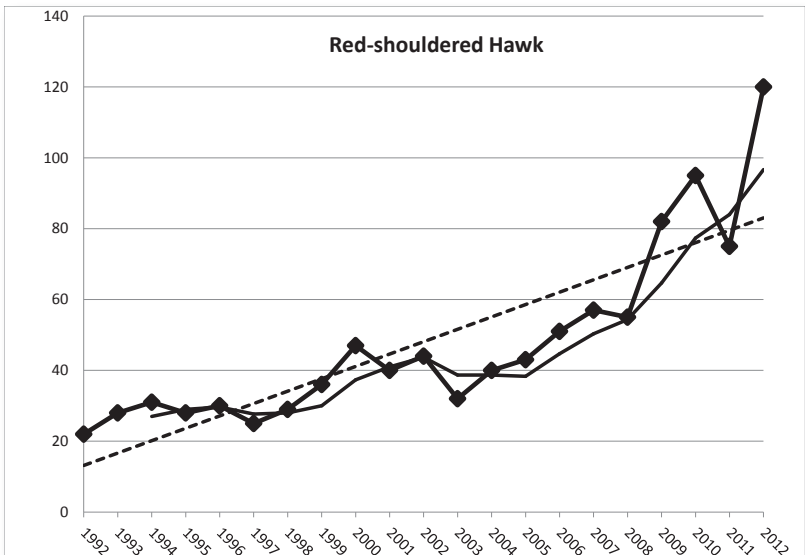
The number of Sharp-shinned Hawks recorded varies quite a bit from year to year, likely due in part to their secretive nature in the nesting season.



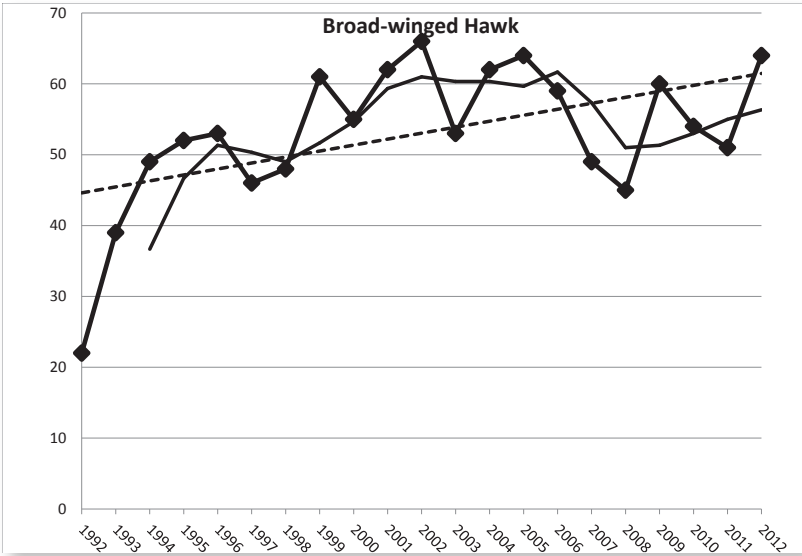
Cooper's Hawks also came in at record levels in 2012 with a new high of 49. They were formerly listed as a threatened species in Connecticut, but are no longer listed.



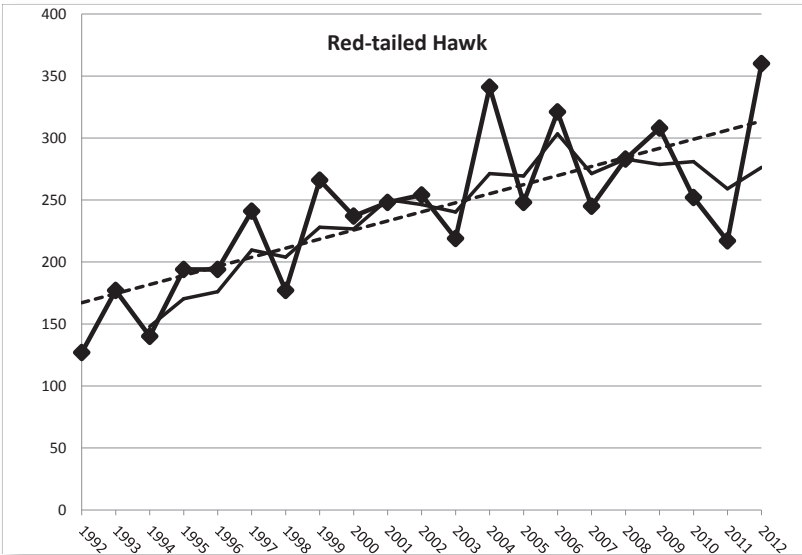
I'm not sure we can tell much from the graph for Northern Goshawk, other than that they appear to have had a great year in 1994, or at least we found a lot of them.



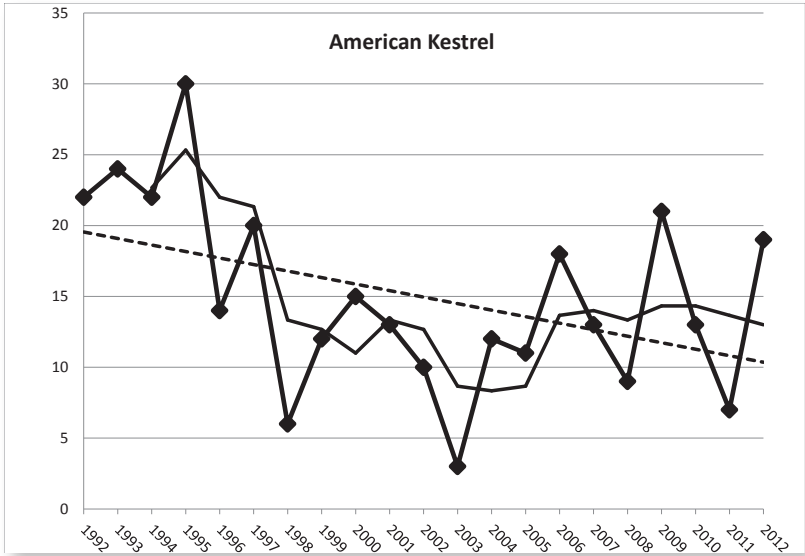
Red-shouldered Hawk also came in at an all-time high of 120 in 2012. They were listed as a species of special concern in Connecticut, but are no longer on the state list.



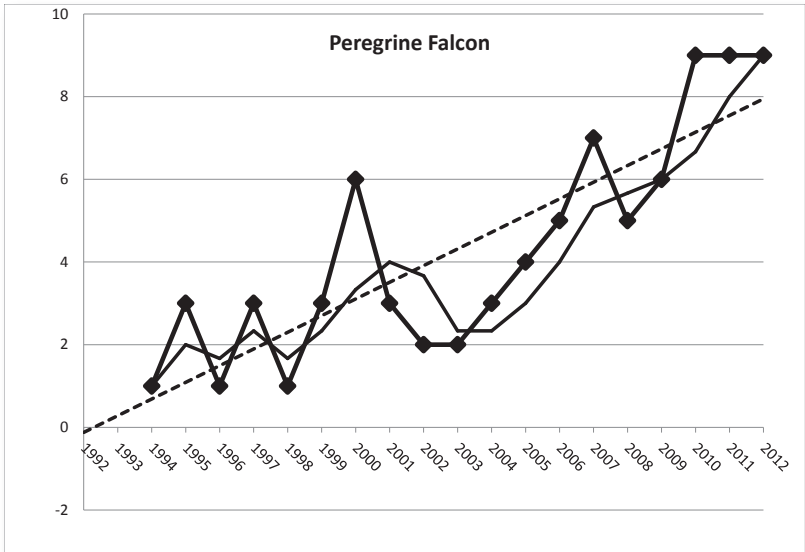
Compared with the first two years of the count, recent numbers of Broad-winged Hawks appear impressive, but if you were to look at the graph from only 1994 to the present, year to year eccentricity rules the day over any apparent trend.



Red-tailed Hawks also set a new record high of 360 in 2012. Although there is quite a bit of year-to-year variability in their numbers, we are finding more of them than we did in the early years of the count.



Year to year variation is the rule for American Kestrels, although a case could be made for a decline in the late 90's and early 00's and perhaps a bit of a recovery since that time. There certainly has been a lot of effort going into their recovery in the last decade or so.



Peregrine Falcons have held steady at nine over the last three years of the count, which is impressive considering they were not recorded in the first two years of the count and varied between one and three statewide from 1994-2004, with a brief exception in 2006.

2012 Connecticut Summer Bird Count Totals

Species known to nest recently within Connecticut are shown in *italics*. The high/low/rare statistics below are given for local SBCs at least ten years old. For SBCs held on fewer than 10 years (NM/P) only new Count Day species are noted.

The stats under **State Totals** pertain to the prior ten SBCs unless double underlined when they pertain to the all-time results.

"Rare"- noted on fewer than five years during previously censused 10 years [outlined box]	= XX
New Count Day [CD] species; not recorded on previously censused 10 years[darkened outlined box]	= XX
<u>More numbers</u> were tallied than were on any of the previously censused 10 years [underlined number]	= <u>XX</u>
Fewer numbers were tallied than recorded on any of the previously censused 10 year [boldfaced number]	= XX
<u>Not recorded</u> on CD 2011, but recorded on all the previously censused 10 years [boldfaced zero]	= 0.0
<u>Double underlined</u> boxes are shown for <u>all-time</u> records [double underline]	= <u>0.0</u>

SPECIES	<i>Coastal SBCs</i>		<i>CT</i>	<i>Upland SBCs:</i>				2012 State Totals	% of 2002-2011 Average	# yrs obs.	2002-2011				
	GS	NH	Hfd	Valley		Mid-state					Northern		Ave	Low	High
				WR	NM/P	Ba	LH				St				
Snow Goose															
<i>Canada Goose</i>	1290	458	485		294	158	312	376	62	3435	0%	3	0.4	0	2
Brant	16	1								17	40%	10	42.9	6	235
<i>Mute Swan</i>	61	139	6		3	17		6	2	234	88%	10	265	165	462
<i>Wood Duck</i>	164	68	93		83	29	<u>47</u>	<u>103</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>607</u>	155%	10	393	272	599
<i>Gadwall</i>	1	4								5	83%	8	6.0	0	15
American Wigeon											0%	2	0.2	0	1
<i>American Black Duck</i>	43	16						1		60	109%	10	55	30	86

SPECIES	Coastal SBCs		CT	Upland SBCs:					2012 State	% of 2002-2011	# yrs	2002-2011		
	GS	NH	Valley	Mid-state		Northern						Totals	Average	obs.
			Hfd	WR	NMP	Ba	LH	St						
<i>Mallard</i>	935	232	339	<u>64</u>	86	<u>161</u>	158	25	2000	110%	10	1823	1228	2325
Blue-winged Teal										0%	2	0.3	0	3
<i>Green-winged Teal</i>										0%	4	0.5	0	2
Ring-necked Duck										0%	4	0.5	0	2
Greater Scaup	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>							<u>7</u>	875%	8	0.8	0	4
Lesser Scaup							<u>1</u>		<u>1</u>	500%	2	0.2	0	1
King Eider										0%	0	0.0	0	cp
Surf Scoter	<u>1</u>								<u>1</u>	0%				
White-winged Scoter										0%	3	0.7	0	5
Long-tailed Duck	<u>6</u>	cp							<u>6</u>	353%	7	1.7	0	4
Bufflehead										0%	6	0.9	0	2
Common Goldeneye										0%	2	0.3	0	2
<i>Hooded Merganser</i>						7	10	<u>3</u>	20	70%	10	28.4	11	72
<i>Common Merganser</i>				17	15	<u>173</u>	29		<u>234</u>	206%	10	114	86	136
Red-breasted Merganser		<u>2</u>							<u>2</u>	143%	9	1.4	cp	4
Ruddy Duck										0%	6	2.7	0	10
<i>Ring-necked Pheasant</i>	1			4					5	74%	10	6.8	3	12
<i>Ruffed Grouse</i>					1		4	3	8	54%	10	14.9	1	26
<i>Wild Turkey</i>	58	19	22	40	27	129	142	40	477	91%	10	526	461	582
<i>Northern Bobwhite</i>										0%	8	1.8	0	5
Red-throated Loon										0%	3	1.2	0	8
Common Loon	1	cp							1	23%	9	4.3	0	9
<i>Pied-billed Grebe</i>							<u>4</u>		<u>4</u>	222%	6	2	0	7
Horned Grebe	<u>1</u>								<u>1</u>	1000%	1	0.1	0	1

Manx Shearwater										0%	0	0.0	0	cp
Wilson's Storm-petrel										0%	1	0.3	0	3
Northern Gannet										0%	0	0.0	0	cp
<i>Double-crested Cormorant</i>	<u>678</u>	217	16	10	15	<u>16</u>	11	6	969	117%	10	826	598	1025
Anhinga										0%	1	0.1	0	1
<i>American Bittern</i>							1		1	37%	9	2.7	0	6
<i>Least Bittern</i>			2				<u>2</u>		4	190%	9	2.1	0	6
<i>Great Blue Heron</i>	<u>36</u>	15	54	47	35	42	61	21	311	119%	10	260	186	375
<i>Great Egret</i>	<u>274</u>	59							333	133%	10	251	163	345
<i>Snowy Egret</i>	<u>77</u>	18							95	101%	10	94	66	135
<i>Little Blue Heron</i>										0%	7	0.9	0	2
Tricolored Heron										0%	1	0.1	0	1
Cattle Egret										0%	1	0.1	0	1
<i>Green Heron</i>	35	10	16	7	8	6	9	2	93	123%	10	76	59	113
<i>Black-cr Night-Heron</i>	390	21	<u>1</u>	2					414	171%	10	242	161	449
<i>Yellow-cr Night-Heron</i>	5	2							7	106%	10	6.6	1	21
<i>Glossy Ibis</i>	cp	4							4	118%	8	3.4	0	8
<i>Black Vulture</i>	2	<u>6</u>		7	9	<u>14</u>	8	<u>1</u>	<u>47</u>	207%	10	22.7	10	41
<i>Turkey Vulture</i>	<u>53</u>	48	<u>4</u>	65	65	100	77	<u>42</u>	<u>454</u>	133%	10	341	270	402
<i>Osprey</i>	59	91	<u>9</u>	<u>3</u>		1	2	<u>3</u>	168	159%	10	106	71	176
<i>Mississippi Kite</i>										0%	1	0.1	0	1
<i>Bald Eagle</i>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>		3		18	6		<u>35</u>	167%	10	21	10	31
<i>Northern Harrier</i>							<u>1</u>		<u>1</u>	167%	4	0.6	0	2
<i>Sharp-shinned Hawk</i>	cp		cp	2	2	<u>6</u>	1	<u>2</u>	13	118%	10	11	7	18
<i>Cooper's Hawk</i>	11	3	5	4	6	7	9	4	<u>49</u>	133%	10	36.8	21	45
<i>accipiter species</i>				1					0		1			
<i>Northern Goshawk</i>		1				<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>		5	125%	10	4	3	7
<i>Red-shouldered Hawk</i>	8	7	6	<u>35</u>	8	<u>34</u>	10	<u>12</u>	<u>120</u>	209%	10	57	32	95

SPECIES	Coastal SBCs		CT	Upland SBCs:					2012	% of	#	2002-2011		
	GS	NH	Valley	Mid-state		Northern			State	2002-2011		yrs	Ave	Low
			Hfd	WR	NMP	Ba	LH	St	Totals	Average	obs.			
<i>Broad-winged Hawk</i>	5	<u>2</u>	1	<u>2</u>	13	<u>20</u>	12	<u>9</u>	<u>64</u>	114%	10	56	45	66
<i>Red-tailed Hawk</i>	85	21	42	<u>67</u>	28	<u>44</u>	49	<u>24</u>	<u>360</u>	133%	10	271	217	341
<i>American Kestrel</i>			<u>7</u>	2	7		2	1	19	162%	10	11.7	3	21
Merlin										0%	2	0.2	0	1
<i>Peregrine Falcon</i>		4	4			<u>1</u>			9	173%	10	5.2	2	9
<i>Clapper Rail</i>	1	9							10	91%	10	11.0	2	21
<i>King Rail</i>										0%	1	0.1	0	1
<i>Virginia Rail</i>			1	1	4		20		26	100%	10	26.1	15	38
<i>Sora</i>										0%	8	1.1	0	3
American Coot										0%	6	0.9	0	2
Black-bellied Plover	1	4							5	135%	6	3.7	0	9
American Golden-Plover										0%	1	0.1	0	1
Semipalmated Plover	cp	4							4	74%	7	5.4	0	15
<i>Piping Plover</i>		16							16	104%	10	15.4	8	24
<i>Killdeer</i>	58	9	75	19	16	26	36	30	269	113%	10	238.0	158	297
<i>American Oystercatcher</i>	<u>60</u>	18							<u>78</u>	164%	10	47.7	29	60
<i>Spotted Sandpiper</i>	<u>10</u>	cp	20	<u>2</u>		8	2	6	48	115%	10	41.6	26	65
Solitary Sandpiper										0%	5	0.6	0	2
Greater Yellowlegs			1						1	45%	7	2.2	0	5
<i>Willet</i>	<u>11</u>	14							<u>25</u>	182%	10	13.7	4	24
<i>Upland Sandpiper</i>			<u>1</u>						<u>1</u>	100%	2	1	0	4
Ruddy Turnstone	2	cp							2	49%	8	4.1	0	11
Red Knot										0%	4	2.7	0	22
Sanderling	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>							4	118%	5	3.4	0	21

Semipalmated Sandpiper		45							45	144%	8	31.3	0	215		
Least Sandpiper										0%	6	20.2	0	73		
White-rumped Sandpiper		2							2	74%	8	2.7	0	6		
Pectoral Sandpiper										0%	2	0.3	0	2		
Purple Sandpiper										0%	1	0.1	0	1		
Dunlin			cp						cp	0%	5	1.7	0	11		
Short-billed Dowitcher										0%	1	0.3	0	3		
Wilson's Snipe										0%	1	0.1	0	1		
<i>American Woodcock</i>		1	1	8		5	7	2	<u>24</u>	189%	10	12.7	8	20		
Laughing Gull		21							21	59%	9	35.3	0	111		
Ring-billed Gull		58	159	35	5	<u>9</u>	7		273	64%	10	427	190	795		
<i>Herring Gull</i>		570	234	3	1				808	105%	10	771	413	1096		
Glaucous Gull										0%	3	0.3	0	1		
<i>Great Black-backed Gull</i>		129	63						192	76%	10	253	107	373		
<i>Least Tern</i>			208						208	124%	10	168	13	334		
Gull-billed Tern										0%	1	0.2	0	2		
Caspian Tern										0%	2	0.5	0	3		
Black Tern		cp							cp		2	0.2	0	1		
<i>Common Tern</i>		286	30						316	96%	10	330	116	547		
Forster's Tern		3							3	136%	6	2.2	0	7		
Black Skimmer		2							2	30%	7	6.6	0	26		
<i>Rock Pigeon</i>		372	130	141	49	20	76	104	<u>192</u>		1084	105%	10	1032	759	1279
<i>Mourning Dove</i>		653	275	433	284	195	316	331	<u>169</u>		2656	101%	10	2617	2273	2897
<i>Monk Parakeet</i>		17	33								50	50%	10	101	26	288
<i>Black-billed Cuckoo</i>			1		5	2	4	4	1		17	69%	10	24.6	10	69
<i>Yellow-billed Cuckoo</i>		7	2	1	2	1	5	6	<u>7</u>		31	81%	10	38.2	11	144
cuckoo species										0%	3					
<i>Eastern Screech-Owl</i>		6	1	1	16	10	<u>6</u>	9	5		54	131%	10	41.1	27	59
<i>Great Horned Owl</i>		2		2	4	1	3	2	4		18	69%	10	26.2	10	36

SPECIES	Coastal SBCs		CT	Upland SBCs:					2012 State	% of 2002-2011 Average	# yrs obs.	2002-2011		
	GS	NH	Valley	Mid-state		Northern						Totals	Ave	Low
			Hfd	WR	NMP	Ba	LH	St						
<i>Barred Owl</i>	14	2	2	25	6	43	31	9	132	151%	10	88	61	131
<i>Northern Saw-whet Owl</i>										0%	9	2.5	0	7
<i>Nighthawk, Common</i>		1	cp	5					6	58%	10	10.3	1	77
<i>Whip-poor-will</i>		1				4	1		6	50%	10	12	3	22
<i>Chimney Swift</i>	188	111	153	102	39	200	96	84	973	136%	10	713	554	783
<i>Ruby-throated Hummingbird</i>	34	9	14	19	15	70	49	26	236	138%	10	171	137	220
<i>Belted Kingfisher</i>	12	9	17	18	8	25	20	2	111	117%	10	95	70	125
<i>Red-bellied Woodpecker</i>	246	59	97	94	65	107	74	48	790	130%	10	609	506	750
<i>Yellow-bellied Sapsucker</i>				28	62	302	216		608	136%	10	447	245	649
<i>Downy Woodpecker</i>	277	83	88	82	106	136	135	90	997	127%	10	785	501	1095
<i>Hairy Woodpecker</i>	73	21	20	27	18	83	43	10	295	116%	10	254	202	356
<i>Northern Flicker</i>	172	47	113	28	35	58	70	15	538	100%	10	538	468	687
<i>Pileated Woodpecker</i>	25	7	10	17	16	51	28	13	167	130%	10	128	103	167
<i>Olive-sided Flycatcher</i>							1		1	91%	6	1.1	0	3
<i>Eastern Wood-Pewee</i>	109	41	73	86	51	115	165	41	681	107%	10	634	510	797
<i>Yellow-bellied Flycatcher</i>										0%	4	1.1	0	5
<i>Acadian Flycatcher</i>	5	1	1	15	6	1	5		34	158%	10	21.5	7	30
<i>Alder Flycatcher</i>			2	1	3	27	105	1	139	139%	10	100	75	138
<i>Willow Flycatcher</i>	42	40	43	37	25	17	81	4	289	110%	10	263	226	315
<i>Least Flycatcher</i>			1	8	7	46	45	17	124	93%	10	133	75	166
Epidonax species			4					1			3			
<i>Eastern Phoebe</i>	70	25	38	143	101	216	249	97	939	131%	10	718	496	907
<i>Great Crested Flycatcher</i>	102	46	44	72	44	75	109	33	525	119%	10	443	360	529
<i>Eastern Kingbird</i>	83	31	35	85	41	148	137	56	616	114%	10	542	486	628

<i>White-eyed Vireo</i>	1	cp		1	1			1	4	26%	10	15.6	2	49	
<i>Yellow-throated Vireo</i>	28	cp	0	2	35	33	29	79	36	242	102%	10	238	176	280
<i>Blue-headed Vireo</i>			1	17	3		48	32	1	102	59%	10	173	137	227
<i>Warbling Vireo</i>	182	75	163	156	89		79	191	76	1011	145%	10	700	517	825
<i>Red-eyed Vireo</i>	246	62	77	365	234		<u>1363</u>	<u>992</u>	<u>187</u>	<u>3526</u>	133%	10	2651	2255	2992
<i>Blue Jay</i>	469	151	167	193	102		<u>403</u>	200	72	1757	116%	10	1510	1328	1729
<i>American Crow</i>	357	130	144	427	296		503	643	123	2623	100%	10	2619	2202	3828
<i>Fish Crow</i>	53	21	7	14	3		7	<u>20</u>	<u>23</u>	148	161%	10	92	62	144
<i>Common Raven</i>	7	6	2	8	4		57	<u>24</u>	<u>2</u>	110	136%	10	81	43	116
<i>Horned Lark</i>											0%	1	0.2	0	2
<i>Purple Martin</i>	<u>72</u>	5	cp				8	<u>2</u>	<u>87</u>	302%	10	28.8	14	50	
<i>Tree Swallow</i>	<u>206</u>	<u>230</u>	119	167	107		566	606	199	2200	128%	10	1719	1245	2176
<i>Northern Rough-w Swallow</i>	<u>151</u>	<u>100</u>	39	41	40		73	32	28	504	123%	10	411	328	540
<i>Bank Swallow</i>		1	24	9	8		50	<u>40</u>	<u>48</u>	180	64%	10	281	148	407
<i>Cliff Swallow</i>	55	10	10	111	65		49	13		313	115%	10	273	181	365
<i>Barn Swallow</i>	<u>448</u>	221	104	231	219		240	325	<u>202</u>	1990	118%	10	1683	1483	1889
<i>Black-capped Chickadee</i>	293	100	77	225	177		637	457	128	2094	112%	10	1865	1602	2254
<i>Tufted Titmouse</i>	458	128	137	265	124		405	278	165	1960	106%	10	1849	1478	2269
<i>Red-breasted Nuthatch</i>	2				4		28	9		43	174%	10	24.7	7	60
<i>White-breasted Nuthatch</i>	<u>232</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>83</u>	83	96		195	135	<u>149</u>	1040	172%	10	606	349	982
<i>Brown Creeper</i>					2		30	39	1	72	111%	10	65	41	93
<i>Carolina Wren</i>	131	24	36	46	25		22	16	<u>37</u>	337	99%	10	340	199	502
<i>House Wren</i>	242	47	40	132	107		92	148	<u>62</u>	870	101%	10	864	544	1143
<i>Winter Wren</i>	1	<u>1</u>		2	3		33	8		48	111%	10	43.1	13	88
<i>Marsh Wren</i>	18	56	1		3			27		105	93%	10	112	52	253
<i>Golden-crowned Kinglet</i>					1			2		3	48%	9	6.2	0	16
<i>Ruby-crowned Kinglet</i>											0%	1	0.1	0	1
<i>Blue-gray Gnatcatcher</i>	34		<u>17</u>	54	21		35	50	52	263	101%	10	261	193	321

SPECIES	Coastal SBCs		CT	Upland SBCs:					2012 State Totals	% of 2002-2011 Average	# yrs obs.	2002-2011		
	GS	NH	Valley	Mid-state		Northern						Ave	Low	High
			Hfd	WR	NMP	Ba	LH	St						
<i>Eastern Bluebird</i>	67	14	23	124	47	<u>151</u>	162	<u>96</u>	<u>684</u>	131%	10	522	441	672
Gray-checked Thrush										0%	1	0.1	0	1
<i>Veery</i>	<u>172</u>	11	16	236	227	801	790	82	<u>2335</u>	125%	10	1875	1371	2260
Bicknell's Thrush										0%	1	0.1	0	1
Swainson's Thrush										0%	6	0.7	0	2
<i>Hermit Thrush</i>			2	7	2	170	51	1	233	109%	10	213	147	270
<i>Wood Thrush</i>	189	75	111	213	65	266	246	54	1219	98%	10	1250	1065	1479
<i>American Robin</i>	2543	764	<u>1488</u>	608	335	846	884	<u>548</u>	8016	120%	10	6693	4750	8404
<i>Gray Catbird</i>	1132	294	<u>344</u>	<u>547</u>	398	686	<u>1026</u>	<u>335</u>	<u>4762</u>	122%	10	3895	3140	4396
<i>Northern Mockingbird</i>	142	48	89	59	38	20	14	<u>47</u>	457	94%	10	484	370	713
<i>Brown Thrasher</i>	<u>2</u>	5	1	10	3	2	3	4	30	73%	10	41.1	26	59
<i>European Starling</i>	1349	978	979	434	468	341	445	692	5686	97%	10	5849	4766	8852
<i>Cedar Waxwing</i>	228	85	259	206	157	<u>831</u>	576	92	<u>2434</u>	142%	10	1711	1181	2391
<i>Blue-winged Warbler</i>	53	40	9	59	23	25	60	39	308	96%	10	322	271	426
"Lawrence's Warbler"										0%	3			
"Brewster's Warbler"		1								0%	2			
<i>Golden-winged Warbler</i>										0%	2	0.2	0	1
Tennessee Warbler										0%	1	0.1	0	1
<i>Nashville Warbler</i>								1	1	67%	7	1.5	0	7
<i>Northern Parula</i>	1			1	1			2	5	93%	10	5.4	1	11
<i>Yellow Warbler</i>	<u>493</u>	142	210	226	179	165	<u>739</u>	143	<u>2297</u>	115%	10	1995	1791	2195
<i>Chestnut-sided Warbler</i>	7	3	3	86	39	214	<u>300</u>	14	666	109%	10	612	529	689
<i>Magnolia Warbler</i>				1		74	<u>29</u>	1	105	101%	10	104	88	139
<i>Black-throated Blue Warbler</i>				14		149	<u>53</u>		216	110%	10	196	160	243

<i>Yellow-rumped Warbler</i>		1				81	33		115	99%	10	116	95	163
<i>Black-thr Green Warbler</i>	1	2	1	35	8	159	119	<u>20</u>	345	98%	10	352	272	436
<i>Blackburnian Warbler</i>				6	2	<u>182</u>	<u>41</u>		231	116%	10	199	139	243
<i>Pine Warbler</i>	63	21	<u>33</u>	24	10	<u>156</u>	101	<u>42</u>	450	110%	10	409	319	460
<i>Prairie Warbler</i>	12	10	16	53	3	7	4	14	119	108%	10	110	80	178
<i>Blackpoll Warbler</i>							1		1	25%	10	4	1	9
<i>Cerulean Warbler</i>						2	5	9	16	139%	10	11.5	4	21
<i>Black-&-White Warbler</i>	19	<u>7</u>	3	67	48	225	227	<u>28</u>	<u>624</u>	121%	10	514	417	617
<i>American Redstart</i>	35	<u>14</u>	74	176	129	<u>554</u>	527	57	<u>1566</u>	128%	10	1226	896	1382
<i>Prothonotary Warbler</i>										0%	1	0.1	0	1
<i>Worm-eating Warbler</i>	26	15	<u>7</u>	16	20	3	10	19	116	106%	10	109	75	201
<i>Ovenbird</i>	62	74	26	167	153	<u>687</u>	<u>665</u>	117	<u>1951</u>	130%	10	1496	1249	1722
<i>Northern Waterthrush</i>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	5	2	13	25	2	52	108%	10	48.3	22	77
<i>Louisiana Waterthrush</i>	27	7	7	59	14	<u>53</u>	45	13	<u>225</u>	135%	10	167	84	205
<i>Kentucky Warbler</i>										0%	1	0.2	0	2
<i>Mourning Warbler</i>										0%	5	1	0	4
<i>Common Yellowthroat</i>	<u>232</u>	50	<u>90</u>	<u>173</u>	155	521	<u>683</u>	<u>115</u>	<u>2019</u>	115%	10	1749	1516	1974
<i>Hooded Warbler</i>	1			14	18	1	<u>11</u>	<u>1</u>	46	116%	10	39.8	11	72
<i>Wilson's Warbler</i>										0%	2	0.2	0	1
<i>Canada Warbler</i>				0	1	24	35		60	117%	10	51	39	75
<i>Yellow-breasted Chat</i>										0%	4	0.5	0	2
<i>Scarlet Tanager</i>	113	32	<u>48</u>	123	70	<u>273</u>	188	41	<u>888</u>	122%	10	730	569	839
<i>Eastern Towhee</i>	55	30	37	75	51	116	<u>210</u>	24	598	104%	10	574	446	677
<i>Chipping Sparrow</i>	414	67	132	328	170	682	<u>489</u>	<u>308</u>	2590	113%	10	2292	1707	2745
<i>Field Sparrow</i>	23	12	<u>5</u>	<u>31</u>	13	5	<u>7</u>	<u>12</u>	108	92%	10	118	77	188
<i>Savannah Sparrow</i>			<u>52</u>	<u>19</u>	2	2	17	14	<u>106</u>	175%	10	60	21	92
<i>Grasshopper Sparrow</i>			<u>7</u>						<u>7</u>	250%	9	2.8	0	6
<i>Nelson's Sparrow</i>	<u>1</u>								<u>1</u>	250%	4	0.4	0	1
<i>Saltmarsh Sparrow</i>	1	1							2	23%	10	8.6	1	19
<i>Seaside Sparrow</i>	<u>1</u>								1	42%	4	2.4	0	11

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	<u>25822</u>	9843	11205	11622	7800	<u>19922</u>	<u>21675</u>	<u>7716</u>	<u>115598</u>	116%		99912	82283	114588
<i>CD Species</i>	134	127	113	120	120	125	138	<u>111</u>	184	99%		185.8	173	191
<i>CP Species</i>	4	<u>7</u>	3	0	0	0	0	<u>2</u>	2	76%		2.6	0	6
DEGREE OF EFFORT:														
<i>Observers</i>	54	32	40	20	23	26	34	<u>18</u>	247	103%		239	193	263
<i>Parties</i>	32	14	25	16	14	14	21	<u>8</u>	<u>144</u>	116%		125	102	140
<i>Party Hours</i>	291.5	131	129	156	93	<u>281</u>	246	89	<u>1416.5</u>	114%		1239	1008.5	1349.75
<i>Day Party Hours</i>	281.5	129	128	146	90	<u>273</u>	235	75	<u>1357.5</u>	115%		1184	962.5	1290.5
<i>Night Party Hours</i>	10	2	1	10	3	<u>8</u>	11	<u>14</u>	<u>59</u>	107%		55.4	40.5	69.5
<i>Indiv. birds per 10 PHs</i>	885.8	751.4	868.6	745.0	838.7	709.0	881.1	867.0	816.1			150.8	74.3	853
<i>Indiv. birds per Observer</i>	478	308	280	581	339	766	638	429	468			698.8	445.65	998
<i>% SBC Observers</i>	22	13	16	8	9	11	14	7	100					
<i>% SBC Party Hours</i>	21	9	9	11	7	20	17	6	100					
<i>% SBC Individual Birds</i>	22	9	10	10	7	17	19	7	100					

2012 CONNECTICUT SUMMER BIRD COUNT STATEWIDE COUNT TOTALS

Count Dates: June 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, & 24

Totals: 183 species were recorded totaling 115,598 individual birds, with another two species seen during count period. Two hundred and forty-seven observers in 144 parties spent 1465.5 Party Hours [PH] in the field.

During the prior ten years, plus this year, 132 species were recorded on count day. This year Surf Scoter was an all-time addition while Dickcissel was a ten year addition.

Since 1992, 258 CD species have been recorded. For all Connecticut summer bird counts combined, with data going back to 1776, 262 species have been counted, while another 4 species were count period birds.

LOCAL COUNT TOTALS

Barkhamsted Summer Bird Count (*founded 1992*)

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

Totals: 125 species, 19,922 individual birds. Twenty-six observers in fourteen parties spent 281 PHs in the field. Since 1992 159 CD species have been recorded.

Participants: Bob Barbieri, Ray Belding, Chris Chinni, Ayreslea Denny, Angela Dimmitt, Peter Fabor, Nikki Hall, Seth Harvey, Vicki Hester, Jim Kandefer, Jay Kaplan, Marie Kennedy, Leona LeJeune, Vima LeJeune, John Marshall, Bill Martha, Russ Naylor, Carol Parent, Cynthia Phipps, Mike Placo, **David Rosgen** (121 Laurel Way, Winsted, CT 06098-2534; ctbluebird1020@gmail.com), Sam Slater, George Stephens, Dave Tripp Jr., John Wagonblatt, and John Weeks.

Weather: Both day times: Partly sunny, nighttimes: Partly Cloudy,

Count (a rectangle, 12 mile east-west by a 17 mile north-south) Center: 41°5'N 72°59'W. Elevation: 285 to 1457 feet. Area covered: Barkhamsted, Burlington (northern

edge), Canton, Colebrook, Hartland, New Hartford, Torrington (northeast 1/4), and Winchester.

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

Count Dates: June 11 & 12 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 134 species, 25822 individual birds, plus four count period species. Fifty-four observers in 32 Parties observed for 291.5 PHs. Since 1976, 236 CD species have been recorded including the addition this year of Surf Scoter and Dickcissel, 141 of these have been found nesting

Participants: Tom Anderson, Mike Aurelia, Andrew Baksh, Tom Baptist, Trudy Battaly, Joe Belanger, Gail Benson, Michael Bochnik, **Thomas W. Burke** (235 Highland Road, Rye, NY 10580; tom.burke@mcgladrey.com), Ioa Burns, Al Collins, Alex Collins, Diane Collins, Max Collins, Chris Cooper, Eamon Corbett, Annette Cunniffe, Daniel Cunniffe, James Dugan, Patrick Dugan, Cynthia Ehlinger, Debby Ethridge, Andrew Farnsworth, Kathy Gellman, Ted Gilman, Fran Greenberg, Frank Guida, John Hannan, Carolyn Hartel, David Havens, Jalna Jaeger, Wendy Knothe, Ellen McLean, Kenneth Mirman, Frank Novak, Mary Ann O'Leary, **Brian O'Toole** (55 Mill Plain Road – Unit 4-3, Danbury, Ct., 06811), Gary Palmer; Drew Panko, Steve Ricker, Bob Rocco, Polly Rothstein, George Roussey, David Salmon, Meredith Sampson, Jonna Schaffer, Bob Shriber, Andy Towle, Matt Tozer, Marvin Turner, Behjamin Van Doran, Bill Van Loan jr., Mike Warner, and Adam Zorn.

Weather: 6/9- daytime: WNW winds, 5-8 MPH, 59° to 73°F., light rain to mostly cloudy; 6/10- daytime: SE winds, 4 – 8 MPH, 66° to 81°F., drizzle to sunny.

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

Hartford Summer Bird Count (*founded 1991*)

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

Totals: One hundred and thirteen CD species & three CP species, 11,205 individual birds. Forty observers in 25 Parties covered 129 PHs. One 169 CD species have been documented since 1992.

Participants: Bill Asteriades, Dana Cambell, Mark Cavallero, Paul Cianfaglione, Kathy Clark, Jonah Cohen, Pam Cooper, Michael Corcoran, Andrew Dasinger, Paul Desjardins, Peter Egan, Carl Ekroth, Dee Hanson, Eric Hanson, Matt Hoyte, Denise Jernigan, **Jay Kaplan** (71 Gracey Road, Canton, CT. 06019; jaybrd49@aol.com), Gil Kleiner, Brian Kleinman, Steve Kotchko, David Lawson, Isabelle Lawton, Larry Lunden, David Lyons, Rick Macsuga, Matt Messina, Vanessa Mieken, Annette Pasek, Roger Preston, Daria Protopopova, Brian Toal, Joe Valenti, Joe Valenti Sr., Jon Ward, Judy Whittlesey, Mike Whittlesey, Sara Zartarian, and Roy Zartarian.

Weather: 6/9- light showers AM, overcast PM, 57° to 77°F., <1" rain; 6/10- partly cloudy AM, clear PM, 58° to 84°F.

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

Litchfield Hills Summer Bird Count (*founded 1994*)

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

Totals: 138 species, 21,675 individual birds. Thirty-four observers in 21 Parties accumulated 246 PHs. Since 1994, 175 CD species have been recorded.

Participants: Beverly Baldwin, **Robert J. Barbieri** (29 Evens St., #1, Torrington, CT. 06790; 1 860 489-0033), Marcia

Barker, Cindy Barrett, Ray Belding, Arsylea Denny, Angela Dimmitt, Mike Doyle, Eileen Finnan, Kevin Finnan, Evelyn Gelerter, Carol Grabowski, John Grabowski, Nicki Hall, Dennis Hannon, Jim Kandefer, Joan Lang, Jerry Marcellino, John Marshall, Bill Martha, Deborah Martin, Kerry Mayers, Russ Naylor, Ann Orsillo, Dave Rosgen, Sam Slater, Olaf Soltau, BK Stafford, Peary Stafford, George Stephens, John Sugrue, **David Tripp Jr.** (63 Dyer Ave., Canton, Ct. 06019, dtrippjr@comcast.net), John Wagenblatt, David Wakefield, and Fran Zygmunt.

Weather: Showers and wet all weekend. No night birding due to heavier rains. 6/9 - winds W/NW 0-10 mph, 62° to 72°F., 6/10 - winds E/SE 0-10 mph, 62° to 78° F.,

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

New Haven Summer Bird Count (*founded 1991*)

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

Totals: 127 species, 9,843 individual birds. Thirty-two observers in 14 Parties spent 129 PHs in the field. Since 1991, 201 CD species have been confirmed with the addition this year of Anhinga.

Participants: Christin Arnini, Mark Aronson, Phil Asprelli, Bill Batsford, Larry Bausher, Phyllis Bausher, Steve Broker, Louisa Cunningham, Roy Dellinger, Sharon Dellinger, John Farley, Mike Ferreri, Mike Horn, Patrick Leahy, Christ Loscalzo, **Steve Mayo** (27 Tuttle Court, Bethany, CT 06524; rsdmayo@sbcglobal.net), Florence McBride, Pat McCrelles, Bob Mitchell, Judy Moore, Mike O'Brien, Beverly Propen, Nancy Rosenbaum, Arne Rosengren, Lee Schlesinger, Arthur Shippee, Nancy Specht, Andy Stack, Debbie Tenney, Jesus Alejandro Tirado, Marianne Vahey, and Paul Wolter.

Weather: 6/9 – daytime: W/NW winds, 0-3 mph,

63° to 73°F., overcast. [0.01" rain]; nighttime: NW winds, 0-5 mph, 71° to 72°F., Clear. 6/10 – var. winds, 0-8 mph., 63° to 78°F., partly cloudy, nighttime: ESE winds, overcast

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).

New Milford/Pawling Summer Bird Count (*founded 2003*)

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

Totals: 120 species, 7800 individual birds. Twenty-three observers in fourteen parties spent 93 PHs in the field. Since 2003, 155 CD species have been recorded.

Participants: Ann Astarita, Ray Belding, Don Breeger, Barbara Butler, Binnie Chase, **Angela Dimmitt** (PO Box 146, Sherman, Ct. 06784; angeladimmitt@aol.com), Larry Fischer, Dot Fleury, Sibyll Gilbert, Linton Hamilton, Marge Josephson, Anne Kehmna, Marie Kennedy, Dennis Larkin, Russ Naylor, Carena Pooth, Shelly Redel, Olaf Soltau, Zack Smart, Sally Spence, Nick Thold, Herb Thompson, and Bill Wallace.

Weather: 6/16 - daytime: 54° to 80°F. "Perfect"; evening: 52° to 54°F. 6/17 - daytime: W wind, 5 mph., 54° to 77°F. "Perfect/gentle breeze",

Count (15-Mile diameter circle) Center: 41°32'N 73°34'W (Intersection of routes 68 & 157 in Pawling NY). Elevation: 300 to 600 feet. Area covered: in Connecticut (1/3 of area): Sherman, New Fairfield, and New Milford (west of route 7); and in New York (2/3 of area): Patterson, Pawling, Putnam Lake, Carmel, southern Windale, and Poughquag.

Storrs Summer Bird Count (*founded 1990*)

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

Totals: 111 species, 7716 individual birds. Eighteen observers in eight parties accumulated 89 PHs in the field.

Since 1990, with the addition of Black Vulture this year, 137 CD species have been counted.

Participants: Denise Anamani, Maximiliano de Leon Aubrey, Sebastian de Leon Aubrey, Christopher Demers, Kathleen Demers, Susan Harrington, Tom Harrington, Gary Hochgraf, Susan Hochgraf, Judy Hyde, Jorge De Leon, Ann Lewis, **Steve Morytko** (288 Varga Road, Ashford, CT 06278-1828; smorytko@yahoo.com), Steve Rogers, Phil Rusch, Aliza Taft, Lisa Wahle, and Nan Woodbury.

Weather: 6/16- NW winds, 0-15 mph., 46° to 75°F.,
6/17- W winds, 0-10 mph., 49° to 79°F.,

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

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

Count Date: June 3 (Sun.)

Totals: 120 species, 11,622 individual birds. Twenty observers in 19 Parties counted during 156 PHs in the field. Since 1978, 181 CD species have been recorded.

Participants: Grace Aarons, Renee Baade, David Babington, Ray Belding, Polly Brody, Buzz Devine, Angela Dimmitt, Ken Elkins, Larry Fischer, Dennis Hannon, Seth Harvey, Tom Hook, Anne Kehmna, Gary Meier, **Russ Naylor** (44 Church Street, Woodbury, CT 06798, 203 263-2502), Darcy Thurrott, Carol Titus, Leigh Wells, Tom Zissu, and Francis Zygmunt.

Weather: 6/3 daytime: WSW Winds, 10-15 mph.,

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.

MY CONNECTICUT BIG YEAR

By **Bill Asteriades**

It all started toward the end of December 2010, as I began to plan for my Big January. I checked the recent rarities posted to CT Birds and put a plan in place for the first three days – the eastern Connecticut coast on Jan. 1, western Connecticut coast on Jan. 2 and central Connecticut coast on Jan. 3. I did not know at the time that I would do a Big Year, but knew if I had a good first month that I might just try it.

Jan. 1 started with my annual effort helping Andrew Dasinger with the New London Christmas Bird Count, and I was able to throw in a few side trips. That produced 59 species. The best birds were Bob Dixon's Rufus Hummingbird, a Clay-colored Sparrow first seen by Phil Rusch, Marsh Wren and Pine Siskin. My traditional New Year's Day kickoff to a Big January with Rick Macsuga would have to wait until Jan. 2. It failed to disappoint, as I added 43 more species. Highlights included Barnacle and Cackling Geese at Westport's Longshore Club and King Eider at Stratford Point. Jan. 3 added other shoreline birds such as a Razorbill at Harkness Memorial, a difficult bird in early 2011. I added nine more species for a total of 111 in three days, breaking my goal of 100 species. I ended January with 144 species – a solid start. Rarities noted included Common Murre, Golden Eagle and Yellow-headed Blackbird. At that point, I decided to give a Big Year a shot.

As I pondered what lay ahead, the integrity of my bird list was a key issue. My goal was to limit the number of species seen on my own, especially the rarities. I vowed to always carry a camera with me or try to see birds with witnesses. 100% confirmation of the identity was a must; a probable sighting was not good enough. I also realized how important it would be to seek assistance from other birders for location tips, current sightings etc and began to consider how I might do this. I was hoping the request for support would be well-



*Bill Asteriades photo
Yellow-headed Blackbird seen on Jan. 15 at
Riverfront Park in Glastonbury*

received and was surprised at the outcome.

The next few months were relatively quiet, as expected, and I chased after rarities only. In April, I was quite happy to receive a call from Ann Pettengill about a White-winged Crossbill that was visiting her feeder in Glastonbury. I did not have to wait long for it to pay a visit while I enjoyed a beverage with the hospitable Pettengills in their kitchen. Their backyard is beautiful and abuts a state forest. It has produced some very good birds over the years including Blue Grosbeak.

On to a spring migration, which brought much excitement and a lot of chasing. Andrew and I co-led a three-week count for Hartford Audubon Society, which runs the last week of April through the middle of May. This is a friendly competition among birders representing Hartford County towns trying to accumulate the greatest number of species during this time period. It would serve well for my Big Year since I would have another reason to bird, and we really do not like losing to Jay Kaplan and Jamie Meyers! I was able to mix in a few side trips during and after this count, including trips for the Ruff in Stratford, a Golden-winged Warbler and Barn Owl on a tip from a friend, and a King Rail, which Rick Mac-

suga and I heard in a marsh after donating a pint of blood to mosquitoes.

I picked up another rarity in the most unlikely of circumstances. Jay led a bird trip at Goodwin Park in Hartford for my daughter Julie, a teacher, and her sixth-grade class. When an 11 year-old student calmly said that he had a Red-headed Woodpecker, Jay and I looked at each other knowing that he meant Red-bellied Woodpecker. Jay went over to check on the bird and began waving and yelling for me to look up in the tree. Sure enough a beautiful adult Red-headed Woodpecker was perched at the top! This student received great recognition from us and from the school, and was very proud when presented with a certificate of achievement from the Hartford Audubon Society for his accomplishment.

Through May, my species totaled 247. Working full-time and living an hour from the shore, I had to revise my strategy to become more efficient. Being a numbers guy, I assembled a chart of the remaining possible species and segregated them into three tiers based on the probability of seeing them. I included expected dates to see these birds, using Greg Hanisek's *Connecticut Birds By The Season*, and listed a few key locations for each species working with Jay, Phil, Nick Bonomo, Dave Tripp and others. I used this list for the next seven months to help ensure a comprehensive and focused approach. I was trending to the low 290s without including any of the rare tier 3 species. At this point I realized that 300 species might be possible with hard work and some luck.

The month of June added 10 birds, two of which were totally unexpected - Anhinga and Eurasian Collared Dove; two very nice rarities which, of course, were not to be found in any of my tiers. July brought another eight species including Mississippi Kite, Wilson's Storm Petrel and Marbled Godwit. The petrel required a pre-dawn run to Stonington Point and a mad dash back to work for an 8:00 a.m. meeting. Fortunately, a few petrels were within close range of the shore and re-



*Bill Asteriades photo
Olive-sided Flycatcher seen in Glastonbury on May 21*

quired little time. By now, my network of “birding friends” had grown and I was receiving calls regularly. This was a tremendous help since one key to seeing rarities is to leave immediately and stay in contact with the observer in case the bird moves.

Summer ended with a very big bang when Hurricane Irene ripped through our state and littered us with rarities. On the morning of the Hurricane and against my wife’s wishes, I decided to make an early morning run to the pond at Rentschler Field in East Hartford. This area has been a reliable attraction for shore birds and I did not have the courage (yet) to make a trip to the shore during the hurricane. I was ecstatic to see 25 Red-necked Phalaropes in a flooded pool of water behind the pond. When I arrived home, I read Nick’s postings to CT Birds of a Long-tailed Jaeger, Sooty Tern and Band-rumped Storm-Petrel, and could no longer resist the urge; Karen’s common sense objections would have to be set aside! The drive down I-91 was a bit eerie since there were but few cars between Meriden and New Haven and the highway was littered with branches. Large, uprooted fallen

trees were everywhere. I was in contact with Nick and he informed me about some Sooty Terns that Frank Mantlik had located in Stratford, near the Route 1 bridge. When I arrived, Frank and others were battling 50 mph winds and watching the Sooty Terns. It was an incredible sight, seeing the terns holding their own against the high winds and sheets of rain. They appeared to be handling the conditions better than the birders!

The most productive part of this storm appeared in the ensuing week. After seeing a Black-necked Stilt at Milford Point, I decided to take a half-day off from work the following day and headed back to Milford Point in the hopes of seeing some lingering "storm birds." This would turn out to be a fortuitous trip. On my way to Milford, I received a few calls about a Gull-billed Tern found by Tina Green. When I arrived, the bird could not be relocated among hundreds of Common Terns flying about. I decided to walk to the end of Milford Point for the American Avocet, which was posing quite nicely upon my arrival. As I was watching the avocet, Tina called to say she had relocated the tern. I raced back to the sandbars and was able to see it, as it stood out quite prominently amid the other terns. The bird stayed for 15-20 minutes and then flew off, not to be seen again. Timing is everything. I was quite happy to pick up these three birds and headed home.

As it turned out, however, the fun was not over. Sara Zagorski called 10 minutes after I left and simply said "Bill, Brown Pelican, turn around now!" I arrived home a bit later and a lot happier, picking up four great birds in a day and a half!

The fall was quite active with a steady stream of rarities including Western Kingbird, White-winged Dove and two trips to Stamford for Painted Bunting. The kingbird, seen on Nov. 13, was number 300 for the year. A call from Nick in early December meant another tick on my list with a great bird he had picked out amid 2,000 gulls at the Bloomfield-Windsor landfill – a Thayer's Gull. Running around Connecticut was



Bill Asteriades photo

Marbled Godwit seen on July 2 at Sandy Point

starting to wear on me and I began to look forward to Jan. 1 so I could rest! My wife was looking forward to it so I could begin working on my ever-growing honey-do list.

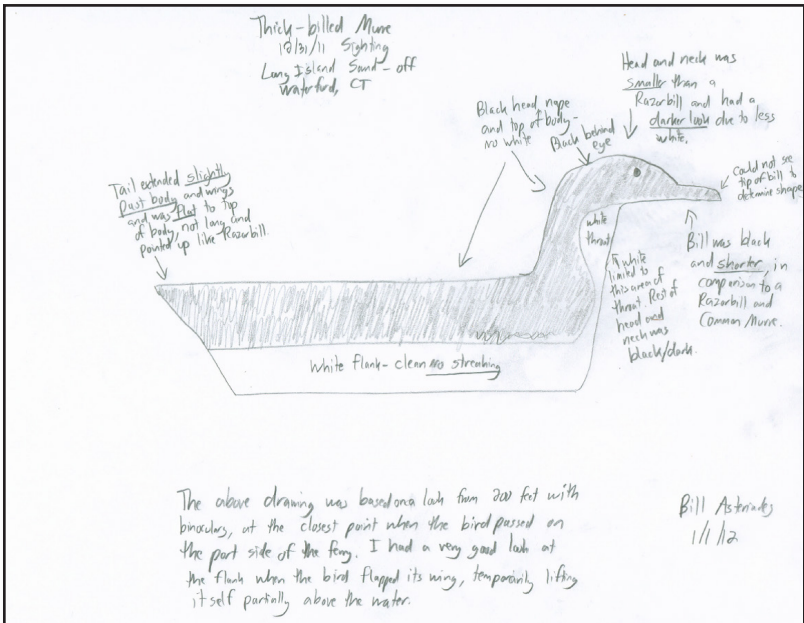
My Big Year ended in a grand fashion on Dec. 31 when Jay and I rode the New London-to-Orient Point ferry for the New London CBC as Frank Mantlik was unavailable on the day of the count. As many Connecticut birders know, Jay gets motion sickness easily so he was well-drugged for even this short trip. Perhaps the drugs helped as we saw a Thick-billed Murre, number 308 for the year, and also Common Murre on the return trip, a first for a Connecticut Christmas Bird Count. Both species were well within Connecticut waters. The murre was actually identified from a photograph of a distant alcid taken with my new camera.

The support I received from the Connecticut birding community was tremendous throughout the year. Without a doubt this support had a greater effect on my Big Year results than did Hurricane Irene. Recently, someone mentioned that some out-of-state birders are envious of the harmony

and camaraderie that exists with the birders in our state. I understand their envy and certainly can say from first-hand experience that our birders are a very supportive and helpful group! It also was quite lucky that Hurricane Irene came through in 2011. The total number of storm birds seen is difficult to assess as some of these species do occur in the state. An estimate of the range of storm birds seen would be from five to eight.

So.....my final tally – 308 species, 33 species of warblers, 19 species of sparrow, over 90% seen with witnesses or pictures taken, 99,910 birds, lots of miles on my car and a lot of favors to pay back to many birders and to my wife to whom this article is dedicated!

EDITOR'S NOTE - I was one of the many birders who knew about Bill's effort in 2011. I realized the birding "force" was with him when he showed up at Lighthouse Point hawk watch in New Haven on what was basically a random fall Monday and we enjoyed a flyover by an American White Pelican.



CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Spring 2012

Compiled by Greg Hanisek

It was a memorable spring in which the primary theme of recent years asserted itself - the increasingly early onset of the season. Connecticut's increasingly large and skilled group of active birders found a number of species at or near record-early arrival times. Mix in an excellent May in which uncommon species such as Cape May Warblers and Gray-cheeked Thrushes were widely reported, coupled with an array of rarities across the species spectrum, and there was plenty to keep everyone out in the field.

Following is a compilation of typical early arrival dates. An asterisk (*) indicates an extraordinary date is included in the main text.

Blue-winged Teal - March 17 at Milford Point (SZ); Snowy Egret - March 6 in East Lyme (HG); Green Heron - April 25 in Middletown (TAn); Yellow-crowned Night-Heron - March 23 in Milford (SSp & CS); Glossy Ibis - March 18 in Madison (SSp & CS); Osprey - March 4 in Hamden (ASp); Broad-winged Hawk - April 8 in Chaplin (PR); Clapper Rail - March 20 in Stratford (FM); Piping Plover - March 11 in Old Lyme (HG); Spotted Sandpiper - April 14 in Hartford (PCi); Pectoral Sandpiper - March 24 in Madison (AP & MPE); Least Tern - May 1 in Stratford (TGr); Common Tern - May 3 in Stratford (FM); Common Nighthawk - May 4 in New Haven (MSc); Eastern Whip-poor-will - April 16 in Kent (JJo); Chimney Swift - April 15 in Avon (SSh) and Hamden (NB), Ruby-throated Hummingbird - April 22 in Hampton (EL) and Willington (DWr).

Least Flycatcher - April 27 in Lyme (DP); Great Crested Flycatcher - May 1 in Woodbury (DS); Eastern Kingbird - April 21 in Simsbury (PW); Blue-headed Vireo - April 14 in Fairfield (ABu) and Wethersfield (PDE); Warbling Vireo - April 17 in West Hart-



*Mark Szantyr photo
A flurry of Tundra Swans in March included this one on Mono Pond
in Columbia.*

ford (PDe); Purple Martin - April 6 in Greenwich (MSa); Northern Rough-winged Swallow - March 31 in Canton (JMe) and Litchfield (JDu); Cliff Swallow - April 8 in Bristol (PCa); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher* - April 15 in Guilford (JMH) and Torrington (RBe); House Wren - April 13 in Pawcatuck (RD); Veery - May 2 in Mansfield (SMo); Wood Thrush - April 25 in Fairfield (ME).

Worm-eating Warbler - April 27 in Lyme (DP); Louisiana Waterthrush* - April 1 in Canton (JK); Northern Waterthrush - April 14 in Milford (SSp); Blue-winged Warbler - April 21 in Glastonbury

(BAs); Nashville Warbler - April 26 in Southbury (PCo); Black-and-White Warbler - April 20 in Lyme (DP) and Bridgeport (KB); Tennessee Warbler - May 5 in Avon (DL); Hooded Warbler - April 30 in Naugatuck (GH); American Redstart - April 26 in New Haven (JCu); Cerulean Warbler - May 4 in Lyme (HG); Northern Parula - April 22 in Cheshire (SMa) and New Haven (MSc); Magnolia Warbler - April 20 in South Windsor (PFa); Bay-breasted Warbler - May 6 in Granby (ND).

Blackburnian Warbler - April 24 in Winsted (DR); Yellow Warbler - April 21 in New

Haven (MSc) and Stratford (NB); Chestnut-sided Warbler - April 28 in Glastonbury (BAs); Blackpoll Warbler - May 2 in Hamden (KB); Palm Warbler - March 30 in Woodbury (GH) and Woodbridge (SBr); Pine Warbler - March 12 in Danbury (JLo); Prairie Warbler - April 24 in Nauvauk (BBa), Black-throated Green Warbler - April 18 in Ashford (DM); Canada Warbler - May 4 in Killingworth (F&TH); Wilson's Warbler - May 4 in five locations; Scarlet Tanager - April 21 in Mystic (GW); Grasshopper Sparrow - April 29 in East Hartford (TGr); Rose-breasted Grosbeak - April 20 in Ashford (SMo); Indigo Bunting - April 24 in Pawcatuck (RD); Orchard Oriole - April 26 in Milford (ES) and New Haven (MSc).

Two **Pink-footed Geese** visited fields in South Windsor from March 3-9 (PCi et al.). This followed the presence of one in this general area and another in Durham-Middlefield during winter. Two **Greater White-fronted Geese** included one in South Windsor to at least March 9 (PCi et al.) and one in the Pistapaug Pond-Mackenzie Reservoir area of Walling-

ford through at least March 8 (GH, NB). A flock of 110 Brant was northbound over Colebrook on May 26 (DR). **Cackling Geese** were reported from Stearns Farm in Mansfield on March 4 (SMo) with two in the Mackenzie Reservoir area of Wallingford on March 8 (NB). A pair of **Trumpeter Swans** without bands or tags was at Konold's Pond in Woodbridge from Feb. 5 to March 15 (JMa, SBr et al.). It was the second year in a row that a pair made an extended spring stay on the pond. A flurry of **Tundra Swan** reports involved one at Mono Pond in Columbia on March 4 (JHa); three in Beaver Dam Marsh in Eastford on March 5-10 (DM, BBi et al.); and one at Batterson Pond, Farmington, on March 5 (JSw et al.).

Four **Eurasian Wigeons** for the season, all at expected coastal locations, included one surface feeding on zooplankton with gull flocks March 17 off West Haven (NB). A good season for Northern Shovelers included up to nine on March 18-19 at a Durham skating pond (JMe, BS) and eight at Station 43, South Windsor, on April 1-10 (PDe, TAn). A late

pair was at Milford Point on May 31 (TM et al.). A **Eurasian Teal** was a nice inland find on March 17 at Station 43, South Windsor (PDe). A **Green-winged X Eurasian Teal** intergrade was at Milford Point on March 3 (NB).

A male and two female Redheads were on a pond at Research Parkway in Meriden on March 27 (MM), and two males and a female were at Bristol Reservoir No. 7 on March 31 (PCa). The Norwalk Islands held c. 8,000 Greater Scaup on March 17 (DV), and a drake lingered to May 20 in Westport (TGr). A Surf Scoter was unexpected on April 21 on the Connecticut River in Glastonbury (BAs), and 89 were staging off Savin Rock, West Haven, on May 15 (FG). On the same day, 13 White-winged Scoters dropped into Bantam Lake in Litchfield (JMa), illustrating this group's easily overlooked May movements. Five Long-tailed Ducks were an unusual early spring find on March 25 on Bantam Lake, Litchfield (JMa, MD, GS). One was on Lake Winnemaug in Watertown on March 27 (RN). A female Hooded Merganser escorted five ducklings on May 5 at

the Somersville Mill Pond (JCI). Lake Waramaug in New Preston held c. 2,000 Common Mergansers on March 8 (RBe). A tightly packed flock of 28 Ruddy Ducks was on Batterson Pond, Farmington, on April 27 (PCi).

A field in Sterling held 90 Turkeys on March 3 (RD). A group of 34 Common Loons was on the water off Savin Rock, West Haven, on May 15 (FG). It was a good season for Red-necked Grebes, with nine reports starting with one on March 16 at Batterson Pond (PCi), which held four on March 31 (PCi). Three were present the same day on Nepaug Reservoir in Burlington (PCi). The first returning Double-crested Cormorant was noted on Feb. 2 on the Branford River in Branford (PW). Approximately 600 were at the Norwalk Islands on April 17, mostly in a colony on Goose Island in Westport (LF).

An American Bittern was at McKinney National Wildlife Refuge in Stratford April 14-15 (FM&LMa, JDu); one was seen along the Farmington Canal in Cheshire on April 22 (SMa); and one

was along the West River in Guilford on May 23 (LG). A Great Blue Heron rookery in Portland held at least 85 birds on March 10 (TAz), and 135 nests were counted there on March 27 (PW). A Great Egret that wintered in Stratford was still there on March 3 (FM), and one made an early inland appearance March 20 at Station 43, South Windsor (PDe). A count of 160 on April 17 in the Norwalk Islands consisted mainly of birds in a breeding colony on Cockenoe Island, Westport (LF). A Snowy Egret with two long head plumes was at McKinney Refuge in Stratford on May 4 (FM). Birds of this type, seen previously in Connecticut, have raised speculation about hybridization with Little Egret, but aside from the plumes they seem to show typical Snowy characters. A Little Blue Heron was a good inland find in Hamden on April 14 (RH), when there apparently was a widespread arrival with birds noted in Madison (PW) and Clinton (CLO). A Tricolored Heron was an unexpected inland find on May 11 in East Hartford (PCi, PG et al.). Reports of Tricolored Herons from Hammonasset

Beach State Park in Madison (hereafter HBSP) were muddied by the presence of one or two birds that were apparently hybrid Tricolored X Little Blue Herons. (See Photo Challenge in this issue). The season's only Cattle Egret made a brief appearance on April 26 at Sherwood Island (TGr). A Glossy Ibis was on a tiny farm pond in Woodbury April 23-26 (DL), and a high count of 50 came on a kayak survey of the East River marsh complex May 6 in Guilford/Madison (CLO). The now annual **White-faced Ibis** made a terrific showing with singles on April 19 in Guilford (JMh); on May 12 at HBSP (PW et al.); and on May 15-16 at Sherwood Island (TGr, FM et al.).

A **Swallow-tailed Kite** was elusive but seen sporadically May 12-16 in Willimantic (CEl et al.). **Mississippi Kites** were reported from Norwich on April 24 (MSz); Granby on May 5 (JW); the Branford Supply Ponds on May 18 (GN et al.); and at Great Pond, Simsbury, on May 26 (PW). There was no indication of breeding. An injured Golden Eagle fitted with a transmitter was tracked last spring to Quebec. The sig-

nal was lost then recovered when the bird returned in late February to the Amenia, N.Y., area, where it had been injured, and was tracked electronically flying over Sharon, Conn., on March 1 (SH). An immature Golden Eagle was on the lower Connecticut River in mid-March (AGr).

Three Virginia Rails on March 18 in Old Lyme were probably new arrivals, although wintering does occur in that part of the state (CCi). One on March 20 at Sherwood Island was known to have wintered in the spot where it was seen (TGr). A flurry of inland reports suggesting widespread arrival included one on March 23 at

Little Pond, Litchfield (GH, BBa), two on March 23 at a beaver swamp in East Granby (BK), and one on March 29 near Canaan Mountain in Falls Village (DM). A Sora called in a field at Station 43, South Windsor, on April 28 (SZ); and one was in East Granby on May 3 (BK). Six **Sandhill Cranes** were present on March 2 with three staying through March 6 in Canaan near the state line (JDr, JDu). This is near a place in Massachusetts where breeding has been confirmed in the recent past. One was seen in flight in the afternoon on both March 26 & 27 near the Coginchaug River in Middlefield (ABa) and one was at Rocky Hill Meadows on May 15 (RA).



Paul Fusco photo
This Ruff was a popular visitor to Hammonasset Beach State Park May 15-18.



Frank Mantlik photo

This Red-necked Phalarope dropped into Milford Point on April 24.

Single American Golden Plovers, sparse spring migrants, were seen on April 5 in Groton (TT) and May 15 in Stratford (FM). A record-early Lesser Yellowlegs that arrived in late February at Greenbacker Pond in Durham was still present on March 2 (PW). The Upland Sandpiper's well-established breeding presence at Rentschler Field in East Hartford was illustrated by four there on April 26 (PCi). A migrant dropped in at Sherwood Island on May 3 (TGr). A Semipalmated Sandpiper was quite early April 10 at Milford Point (SSp). A Pectoral Sandpiper was late May 11 at Cabela's Pond in East Hartford (PCi). A **Ruff** in non breeding plumage was at HBSP May 15-18 (BDw et

al). A search for this bird on May 15 turned up a **Curlew Sandpiper** in breeding plumage (TGr). The first report of a Short-billed Dowitcher came from Milford Point on April 24 (SSp). Good concentrations of Wilson's Snipe included 22 on March 31 at the Portland fairgrounds (BAS) and 25 on April 8 at Silver Sands State Park in Milford (SSp&CS). Late May is phalarope time, and they came though this spring. A **Wilson's Phalarope** made a brief stop at HBSP on May 31 (RS), and a handsome adult female **Red-necked Phalarope** was a stellar find at Milford Point on May 24 (SSp, FG et al).

Peak numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls during the spring staging in Long Island Sound had been on the decline the



*Russ Smiley photo
The season ended on a high note with this Wilson's Phalarope at
Hammonasset Beach State Park on May 31.*

past few years, but this year brought an upswing, with 3,300 on March 26 at Southport Beach (FM) and 5,000 at Russian Beach, Stratford, on April 2 (FM). There were also counts of 1,000+ at other locations. Inland four visited Snipsic Lake in Tolland on April 23 (CEk). **Black-headed Gulls** were at Barn Island Wildlife Management Area in Stonington on March 10-12 (PW et al.); at Cove Island Wildlife Sanctuary in Stamford on March 12-13 (PDU, DWn); at the Lordship seawall in Stratford on March 23 (FM); and at Southport Beach on March 25-26 (TGr, TAn). An adult **Little Gull** was at Burying Hill Beach in Westport on April 1 (NB,

JMu). A Laughing Gull, more common as a post-breeding visitor, was in Greenwich on April 17 (SMr). The season's three Caspian Terns were at Sandy Point on April 21 (TGr), at Long Beach, Stratford, on May 15 (FM) and at Milford Point on May 26 (PDe). A group of seven Black Skimmers on May 26 off the mouth of the Farm River in East Haven were the only ones reported (BDz).

Both Yellow-billed and Black-billed Cuckoos were first reported on May 9, and both were widely reported through season's end. A pair of Barn Owls was in an undisclosed location in southwestern Connecticut

in late April (FM). A Long-eared Owl was heard calling about 1 a.m. March 20 in Chaplin, a spot where calling has been heard in the past (PR). Another was found on the grounds of Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks on March 15 (RT). An Eastern Whip-poor-will on May 4 in Newtown was at a previously unreported location (PDu), and one was quite a surprise singing in Wilcox Park in Milford on May 30 (FG, VM). Other sites



Rollin Tebbetts photo
This Long-eared Owl was found on the grounds of Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks on March 15.

included Ellington (CEk), North Canton (PCi), Plymouth (GH), Waterbury (GH), Sterling (RD) and Southington (JN). One of the season's best finds was a **Chuck-will's-widow** flushed during the day on May 4 at Stratford Point and then relocated that night (SK et al.). A Red-headed Woodpecker that wintered along the Hockanum River in East Hartford was present through most of the season (m.ob).

A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was early May 10 in Woodbury (RBa). May 5 brought a flurry of flycatchers at least a week ahead of their normal arrival times - Olive-sided Flycatcher in West Cornwall (AGi), plus one the next day in Stratford (SK); Eastern Wood-Pewee at East Rock Park in New Haven (MSc) and Boston Hollow (DCa); Acadian Flycatcher in Fairfield (ABu), plus one the next day in Lyme (DP); and Willow Flycatcher at Sherwood Island State Park (BM, SMu), with one two days later in Waterford (DP). There was a more widespread arrival of Acadian Flycatcher May 12, when they were reported from three locations, followed by an unusually high

count of seven on May 21 at Trout Brook Valley in Easton (JB et al.). An adult **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** on May 12 in Lyme was a great rarity but nonetheless present in the typical late spring-early summer time period for this species in Connecticut (DP).

Northern Shrikes were at Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton on March 3 (JK); at Donnelly Preserve in South Windsor, where it wintered, to at least March 10 (ED et al.); on Cassidy Road in Southbury on March 11 (JMa); and in Watertown on March 14-18 (GH et al.). A White-eyed Vireo, always a good find in the western part of the state, was singing at Brooksvale Park in Hamden on April 15 (NB). Others were in Milford on May 6 (FG) and Shelton on May 8 (TGr). One on May 13 in Chaplin was unusual for the Storrs area (MSz). A Yellow-throated Vireo was a bit early April 21 in Woodbridge (CLo), as was a Warbling Vireo April 17 in West Hartford (PDe). Scarce as usual in spring, Philadelphia Vireos were reported from Sterling on May 10 (RD), Avon on May 23 (DL) and in Fairfield on May 29 (ABu). The last

two were heard singing, which eliminates confusion with Warbling.

A group of 21 Common Ravens cavorted over Canaan Mountain in Falls Village on March 3 (JDu). A Horned Lark on May 8 at Stratford Point may be indicative of local breeding; a recently fledged juvenile was found there several years ago (TL). A N. Rough-winged Swallow that wintered at East Shore Park, New Haven, was still present to at least March 7 (KM). A Barn Swallow was very early March 9 in Stratford (CBa). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was record early April 1 in Chaplin (PR), followed by one on April 4 in New Hartford (BDe). A more widespread arrival occurred April 15-16. A **Townsend's Solitaire** was a terrific find on March 7 at Sunny Brook State Park in Torrington (RBe). Gray-cheeked Thrush was reported from three locations May 10-11 (PDu et al.). The recent early trend for Swainson's Thrush continued with a first report May 3 in Milford (ES) followed by multiple reports the next day. A Lapland Longspur was a bit late April 10-13 at HBSP (JCo).

An Ovenbird was early on April 14 at Talcott Mountain in Avon (PCa). A record-early report of a Louisiana Waterthrush was on March 24 in Darien (CBo), followed by one well-inland March 30 in West Hartford (PDe). Lawrence's Warblers were found on May 4 in Essex (AGr), May 5-10 in Greenwich (TGi), May 12 in Mansfield (JMe) and May 16 in Naugatuck (CLo). The season's only **Prothonotary Warbler** was found May 4 on private property in Lyme (PCo). A Mourning Warbler was very early May 2-3 in Greenwich (SMu et al.), followed by others on May 3 in Naugatuck State Forest (JMa) and on May 9 in Avon (BT). Kentucky Warbler made an unusually a good showing: May 5 in Manchester (MPr); May 6 in Kent (OS) and Greenwich (SMr, RT); May 8 in Wethersfield (PCi et al.); and May 23 in Wilton (JB). Cape May Warbler displayed its love of planted spruce trees in Canton, where up to three were present May 7-13 (DTr et al.). The recent early trend for Blackpoll Warbler continued with the first on May 2 in Hamden (KB) and another one on May 3 in Woodbury

(RN). Many birders remember when Blackpoll was one of the last warblers to arrive, and its song was considered the death knell of spring migration. A **Yellow-throated Warbler** found in winter at an Enfield feeder stayed until March 12 (JLa); one was present and singing in Old Lyme April 12-14 (CCl). Yellow-breasted Chats were reported May 6 at Allen's Meadow in Wilton (MR); May 10 at Birdcraft Sanctuary in Fairfield (ABu); May 12 in Glastonbury (DCa); and May 14 in Old Lyme (DWi).

A Vesper Sparrow, a sparse spring migrant, was at Rentschler Field in East Hartford on April 26 (PCi). Nelson's Sparrows' spring passage is poorly understood, but Elphick's Saltmarsh Sparrow research team confirmed their presence at Barn Island, Stonington, on and around May 17, some showing signs of hybridization with Saltmarsh Sparrow (CEl). Surprising was an early one April 4 at Sherwood Island (FM et al.) A **Harris's Sparrow** wintering in a roadside fencerow in Lebanon was last reported on May 6, in a remarkably long and late stay that began on Jan. 9

(AP&MPe et mult. al.).

A female **Summer Tanager** visited a feeder in Winsted April 24-27 (LMc). A **Western Tanager** that arrived at a feeder at Peace Sanctuary in Mystic in February remained into mid-March (MJ, GW et al.). An adult male was photographed along the Far Mill River in Stratford on April 7 (DCp). **Blue Grosbeaks** turned up on May 4 in Essex (AGr), May 7 in Coventry (EK), May 11 in Milford (PCs) and May 15 in Greenwich (GK, RTr).

The season's lone **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was found May 6 in Glastonbury (BAs). Two Rusty Blackbirds were still on the move May 15 at Bakerville Swamp in New Hartford (PCa). Boat-tailed Grackles are seldom seen away from their Stratford stronghold, but one was in a marsh at Fairfield Country Club May 16 (ABu). At least 16 were back at the breeding site and courting March 3 at Stratford Great Meadows (FM). A House Finch nest in Middletown had four eggs on March 30, and five on March 31 (TAn), which is quite early. Unique for the season were five Common

Redpolls on March 16 in Woodbury (RN).

Exotics - Two male European Goldfinches were seen on March 16 at Riverside Park in Hartford (PCi), adding to several Hartford area reports in recent years.

Observers - Ray Acker, Carol Ansel, Tim Antanaitis (TAn); Tony Antonovitz (TAz), Bob Askins (BAk), Phil Asprelli, Bill Asteriades (BAs), Renee Baade (RBa), Dave Babington, Bill Banks (BBa), Tom Baptist, Charles Barnard (CBa), Aaron Barriger (ABa), Steven Beal (SBe), Joe Bear, Eileen Becker-Dunn, Ray Belding (RBe), Bob Bitondi (BBi), Nick Bonomo, Chris Bosak (CBo), Steve Broker (SBr), Milan Bull, Alex Burdo (ABu); Kevin Burgio, Dana Campbell (DCa), Donna Caporaso (DCp), Jim Carr, Paul Carrier (PCa), Paul Cashman (PCs), Paul Cianfaglione (PCi), Carolyn Cimino (CCi), Kathy Clark, Christina Clayton (CCl), Jonah Cohen (JCh), Jan Collins (JCl), Patrick Comins (PCo); Jerry Connolly (JCo), Annette Cunniffe, John Cunningham (JCu), Neil Currie, Peter DeGennaro (PDn), Nicole DeGray, Barbara DeRienzo (BDz), Paul Desjardins (PDe), Ed Dettore, Buzz Devine (BDe), Bob Dewire (BDw), Angela Dimmitt, Robert Dixon, Mike Doyle, Jacob Drucker (JDr), Jim Dugan (JDu),

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PHOTO CHALLENGE

By Mark Szantyr

Tricolored Heron is becoming scarce in New England. So scarce, in fact, that when one was reported at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison in summer 2011, I made several attempts to see it. On Sept. 26, while scanning the marsh off the Nature Center parking area with my partner Joy Mark, she noted an odd heron in the distance. It superficially looked like a Tricolored, but I noted and Joy agreed that the bird seemed very pale. We both wondered why it showed a large amount of white in the head and neck and why the wing coverts were edged broadly in white rather than the rust color typical of juvenile Tricolored Heron. This bird looked like a Tricolored in many aspects, including overall gray-blue color to the upper parts with rusty edging to the neck and a white stripe down the ventral surface of the throat and neck lined on both sides by darker feathering. Yet many features seemed wrong for that species:

- The previously mentioned broad white edges to the wing coverts.
Tricolored Heron in juvenile plumage shows rusty edges here.
- The admixed white in the lateral aspects of the head and neck
These areas are usually well-marked and crisply edged dark without the additional white feathers.
- The bill shape and color.
Juvenile Tricolored Heron usually shows a very long bill, with a very straight culmen, sometimes appearing concave along its length. This bird showed a thicker bill that appeared to show a weakly curved culmen. A typical juvenile Tricolored Heron bill is dark on the upper mandible with a yellowish orange base. The lower mandible has a yellow-orange base and is



The four black-and-white Challenge photos in the July issue included one (upper left) of a typical juvenile Little Blue Heron and three of the puzzling Hammonasset birds. The color image here shows advanced plumage from 6 Sept. 2012 that leads to a conclusion of Tricolored X Little Blue Heron hybrids at Hammonasset Beach State Park. All images are by Mark Szantyr.

slightly dark-tipped, with the bottom surface being largely pale. This bird showed a two-toned upper and lower mandible with a fleshy pink base with bluish tones.

On a subsequent visit, two birds showing the same features noted above were seen. Three birds showing this white plumage were noted during the intervening weeks. Again, I took notes and photographed both birds. I was left with two unanswered questions:

- Why did these birds show so much white?
- What were the structural and color differences of the bill about?

In response to the question about the excessive white feathering, two answers seemed reasonable to consider:

- Leucism.
- Hybridization between a Tricolored Heron and one of the white herons / egrets.

Leucism, the lack of melanin resulting in pale or even white feathering, is a worthwhile discussion beyond the scope of this note. Suffice it to say that subsequent observations make this discussion moot.

The hybrid question is much more important here. If this bird were a hybrid between Tricolored Heron and some other heron or egret, what species might account for its anomalous characteristics? There are known hybrids between Snowy Egret and Tricolored Heron. In fact, there was at least one of these hybrids occurring this summer at Scarborough, Maine. This bird was mostly white with the ghost of the Tricolored pattern, and it showed the yellow feet of Snowy Egret. Less is known about Tricolored Heron X Great Egret, but these birds did not show characters that might be attributable to Great Egret other than increased white in the plumage. The same is true for white morph Reddish Egret, and Cattle Egret is not even in consideration. Dead end?

In fact, we have one more contender. Little Blue Heron in juvenile plumage is all white with some irregular gray in the plumage. Structurally, Little Blue Heron's bill is very similar to the shape of the Hammonasset herons, that is showing a heavier, dagger-like shape with a slightly decurved culmen. The same is true of the color of the bill. The two-toned pattern - distal dark and proximal fleshy pink with bluish tones - was a good match to these odd-ball herons. Since the Hammonasset birds were in juvenile plumage, it seemed to me that Tricolored Heron X Little Blue Heron needed to be seriously considered. All the characteristics pointed in that direction, and the fact that these birds were constantly in the company of and often seen harassing an adult Little Blue Heron added to my suspicion. But, the season ended, the birds moved on.

But this is not the end of the story.

In spring 2012, at least two of these birds returned to Hammonasset. They were recognizable as the same birds in that they were superficially like Tricolored Herons but

showed extensive white in the flight feathers. Immediately, I was struck by how this pied plumage matched the pied second-year plumage of Little Blue Herons. The birds still retained the basic look of a Tricolored until they flew. In flight, they were nearly identical to second-year Little Blue Herons. The bills were still aberrant for Tricolored Heron and still resembled the bill of Little Blue in structure and color. Even the shaggy mane of these birds was more the violet color of adult Little Blue than the color of adult Tricolored.

One of these returning birds was consistently in either the boulder pond at Meigs Point or in the marshes to the east of the Nature Center. I studied and photographed it all through the season. As in 2011, this bird still closely associated with an adult Little Blue Heron and often harassed the bird as it hunted.

As the season progressed, changes to the bird's plumage confirmed my suspicion of hybrid origin. The bird's white belly and the ventral surface of the neck, once the gleaming white of Tricolored Heron, began filling in with the newly acquired dark feathering of a maturing Little Blue Heron. By mid-August, the bird was entirely dark-bellied and showed only a very narrow white stripe down the ventral surface of its throat and neck. This bird could easily be mistaken for a Little Blue Heron if not seen well.

Tricolored Heron and Little Blue Heron show quite different feeding behaviors. Tricolored often feeds frantically, dashing back and forth with raised wings as it pursues baitfish. Little Blue Heron feeds slowly and methodically, carefully and quietly moving along the grassy edges in search of prey. This bird showed a mixture of both styles as it hunted.

The vocalizations of the two species are similar but likely separable to my ear. This bird was heard and recorded and sounded closer to Little Blue Heron than to Tricolored, but the audio is still pending analysis.

A search of the literature shows that this may be the first documented occurrence of this hybrid pairing. A more in-depth treatment is in preparation. I would like to thank, Louis Bevier, Nick Bonomo, Greg Hanisek, Russ Smiley Jim Carr and all the others who kept me posted as to the whereabouts of these birds.



Photo Challenge No. 79

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