

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology



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ON THE COVER

Paul Carrier bases his bird illustrations on close observation, and in this issue he offers two notes on bird behavior around his home in Harwinton. His cover art illustrates typical ground-feeding species, a White-throated Sparrow and a Dark-eyed Junco, feeding on tree seeds, the subject of one of the notes.

SHORT-RANGE MIGRATORY STRATEGIES

By Joseph Belanger

Introduction

After a summer of predictable breeding behavior, migratory demands across the northeastern United States scatter many species southward across the continent and beyond. But a number of short-range migrants always seem to leave some individuals behind, occasionally in substantial numbers. The exact reason for this has always been obscure, and often dismissed as the whimsy of local populations. But when Christmas and summer bird count data is subjected to Shannon-Wiener analysis, another strategy emerges. Winter rhythms across this region follow a distinctive pattern, with many short-range migrants apparently seeking to minimize their migration distance each year.

Selected Count Circles

For the purposes of this review, six Christmas count circles and three summer counts (held annually in June) were selected from the northeast, and these count circles are listed within Table 1. Christmas count data was readily available on the internet, and was downloaded for the years 2007 - 2011 (BirdSource, CBC data). Summer counts were gathered from internet sources (Willow Beach Field Naturalist, SBC data) and from published material (Zeranski and Comins 2007 - 2011).

This count data was analyzed using the Shannon-Wiener Index (Shannon 1948), based upon the underlying biodiversity theory that a well-balanced ecosystem is an equally proportioned one (Heywood 1995). For such systems all species are numerically well-represented, and are therefore capable of losing numerous individuals before they suffer any material weakening. Conversely, an ecosystem characterized by a handful of dominant species and several marginal populations is subject to sudden disruption.

The **Shannon-Wiener Index** (H) measures biodiversity, and has two components. The first increases with the number of species, while the second (evenness) reflects the proportionality of these species (Table 2).

The **Evenness Index** (E) breaks out the proportional component of Shannon-Wiener, and generates an index of 1.0 (100%) for perfect proportionality. As such, this index generates data that resembles test scores, and these scores comprise the central focus of this paper.

$$(H) = -\sum [P(i) \times \ln P(i)]$$

$x(i)$ = # of each species

N = # of total birds

$P(i)$ = $x(i)/N$

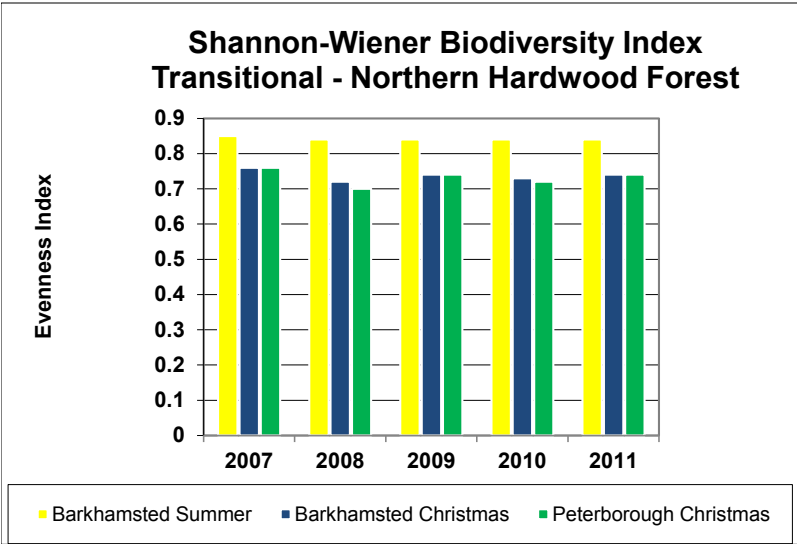
\ln = natural log

S = # of species

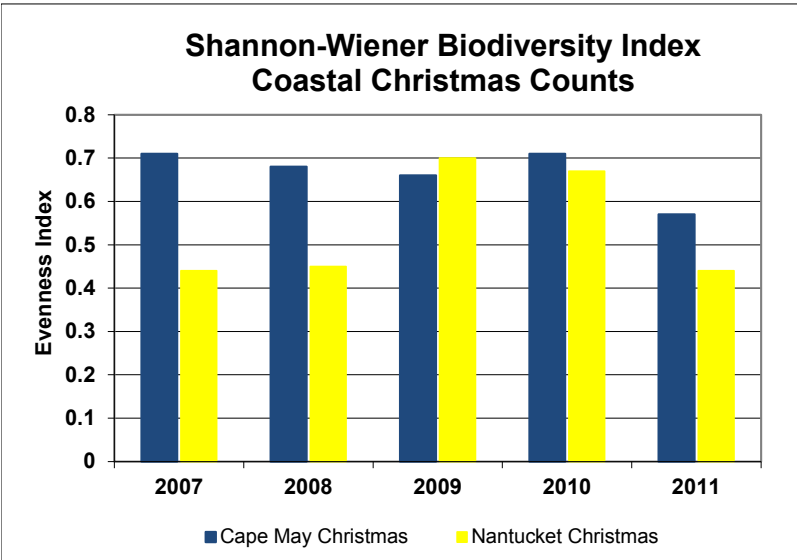
$$(E) = H/\ln S$$



The Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*) on the left and the Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) on the right represent opposite ends of the migration spectrum. This goose is a long distance migrant that probably bred in Greenland, while the gull is a year-round resident species in the northeast. Both birds were digi-scoped on Silver Lake in Westchester County, New York, during the winter of 2009-2010. While both species are absent from this pond in summer, they are fairly regular visitors to this location during winter. These two species represent the variable and disparate sources that contribute to the avian population of a geographic area each winter.



Graph 1 - The mixed transitional - northern hardwood forest demonstrates a high level of summer breeding stability, and despite a sharp drop-off in the number of species, a surprisingly stable evenness index during Christmas counts.



Graph 2 - Coastal areas feature pronounced volatility in Christmas count results, reflecting the reliance upon these areas as refuges for many stressed or vagrant migrants.

Table 1 - Selected Count Circles

<u>Count Circle</u>	<u>Geographic Location</u>	<u>Ecological Province</u>
Barkhamsted, CT	Interior- New England	Transitional Forest - Northern Hardwood
Peterborough-Hancock, NH	Interior- New England	Transitional Forest - Northern Hardwood
Greenwich-Stamford, CT	Coastal- Sound	Eastern Broadleaf Forest
Northumberland/ Port Hope-Cobourg, ON	Interior- Great Lakes	Eastern Broadleaf Forest
Cape May, NJ	Coastal- Peninsula	Eastern Broadleaf Forest Pine Barrens subregion
Nantucket, MA	Coastal- Island	Eastern Broadleaf Forest Pine Barrens subregion

Table 2 - Count Data

	<u>Summer Counts</u>					<u>Christmas Counts</u>				
	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
Barkhamsted, CT										
# Species	120	120	126	128	123	74	71	65	67	66
Shannon-Wiener	4.05	4.04	4.07	4.06	4.04	3.25	3.07	3.10	3.07	3.11
Evenness	0.85	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.76	0.72	0.74	0.73	0.74
Peterborough-Hancock, NH										
# Species	--	--	--	--	--	41	40	44	47	54
Shannon-Wiener	--	--	--	--	--	2.83	2.58	2.80	2.79	2.96
Evenness	--	--	--	--	--	0.76	0.70	0.74	0.72	0.74
Greenwich-Stamford, CT										
# Species	140	148	141	133	132	123	118	116	108	103
Shannon-Wiener	3.84	3.83	3.84	3.74	3.75	3.35	3.44	3.05	3.46	3.37
Evenness	0.78	0.77	0.78	0.76	0.77	0.70	0.72	0.64	0.74	0.73
Northumberland/Port Hope										
# Species	143	140	140	138	136	83	81	72	77	77
Shannon-Wiener	3.82	3.88	3.85	3.69	3.81	3.15	2.99	2.87	2.98	2.69
Evenness	0.77	0.79	0.78	0.75	0.78	0.71	0.68	0.67	0.69	0.62
Cape May, NJ										
# Species	--	--	--	--	--	161	155	150	152	152
Shannon-Wiener	--	--	--	--	--	3.62	3.42	3.32	3.59	2.88
Evenness	--	--	--	--	--	0.71	0.68	0.66	0.71	0.57
Nantucket, MA										
# Species	--	--	--	--	--	129	134	118	128	134
Shannon-Wiener	--	--	--	--	--	2.13	2.22	3.35	3.25	2.18
Evenness	--	--	--	--	--	0.44	0.45	0.70	0.67	0.44

Transitional - Northern Hardwood Forest

Barkhamsted (Connecticut) and Peterborough-Hancock (New Hampshire) comprise two count circles that are found within the mixed transitional - northern hardwood forest, a region characterized by beech, birch, maple, pine and hemlock (McNab and Avers 1994). This region forms a transitional zone between the North American temperate hardwoods and the spruce-fir biome to the north. As such, it demonstrates some characteristic traits of the boreal biome, with a high reproduction capacity and a sudden drop in winter diversity.

Summer data from the Barkhamsted count generates a very high Shannon-Wiener biodiversity index, much of which is driven by a strong evenness component. In fact, while the Barkhamsted summer circle did not exhibit a particularly high species count, its 84% evenness index was the highest in this review (Table 2). In addition, while this region's Christmas count results showed a dramatic drop in the number of species, Christmas data also generated surprisingly stable results. Both the Barkhamsted and Peterborough-Hancock counts featured an evenness index that consistently hovered roughly 10% below that of the Barkhamsted summer data (Graph 1).

A review of the Peterborough-Hancock Christmas bird count helps to explain this region's stability during the winter months. In 2009 this Christmas count recorded 605 Blue Jays and 20 American Robins, but the same count reversed these results in 2011 with 208 Blue Jays and 795 American Robins. Since these two species are not generally regarded as direct competitors, it seems likely that prevailing weather conditions and snow cover closed some ecological niches while opening others, acting like a conveyor belt across the entire region.

Eastern Broadleaf Forest

Greenwich-Stamford (Connecticut) and Port Hope-Cobourg/Northumberland (Ontario) represent count circles that are

located within the eastern broadleaf forest, an area primarily dominated by oak and hickory (McNab and Avers 1994). Greenwich-Stamford and Northumberland have conducted regular summer counts for many years, providing important summer data for this region. The Northumberland summer bird count data is roughly analogous to the Port Hope-Cobourg Christmas count, and while these circles are not perfectly aligned, they constitute very similar overlapping areas. Both circles are located on Lake Ontario, approximately 75 miles east of Toronto.

The eastern broadleaf region generated data results that broadly resembled the previous forest zone, but with less dramatic changes between summer and winter. Summer count evenness averaged 77% for both counts, dropping roughly 6% in Connecticut and 10% in Ontario during Christmas counts. And while both count circles featured Christmas data that was less stable than those of the previous forest region, they continued to demonstrate a distinctly definable pattern that seems to characterize inland sites (Table 2). These broadleaf results seem to reflect an intermediate zone between the well-defined pattern of the northern forest and the more variable coastal areas.

Coastal Locations

Cape May (New Jersey) and Nantucket (Massachusetts) are two coastal pine barren count circles (Lull 1968) that consistently exhibit high numbers of species on the Christmas bird count. The Cape May circle is located on the tip of a peninsula, while the Nantucket count takes place on an off-shore island. Summer data is lacking for these circles, but it appears likely that these counts would generate data that demonstrate the same stability as the previous two forest zones. None of the summer data gathered for this review deviated from this pattern, and there is little reason to think that it would.

However, coastal Christmas count data has proven to be highly variable (Graph 2). The reasons for this are uncertain,

but appear to be related to the adjacency of a major migratory pathway. These coastal locations, warmed by off-shore currents and benefitting from estuarine biomass, seem to become refuges for stressed or vagrant migrants. In other words, if inland sites can be compared to a conveyor belt, these coastal locations appear to act like sponges that absorb transient species.

The Cape May count is located on the mainland and represents the more stable of the two coastal circles, with an evenness index that ranged from 57% to 71%. Cape May volatility is best reflected by the American Robin, which totaled 17,184 individuals during 2009, 4,245 during 2010 and 27,883 during 2011. Nantucket is an island that exhibited even more volatility, featuring an evenness index that swung wildly from 44% to 70%. In addition to stray migratory transients, Nantucket regularly exhibited profound changes in waterfowl numbers. By way of example, this count recorded 3,718 Common Eiders during 2010, with a dramatic increase to 47,020 for 2011.

Conclusions

The summer counts shown above demonstrate remarkable stability with regard to the Shannon-Wiener and evenness indexes, even as the number of species changed each year. This is hardly surprising, since territorial breeding behavior tends to space family groups rather uniformly over the landscape during the summer. And while this summer circle data is admittedly limited, it clearly illustrates this territorial breeding pattern and reflects the effectiveness of the small volunteer groups that gathered this data.

In addition, while inland Christmas counts showed a dramatic drop in the number of species, these regions also reflected a surprising level of evenness stability. None of the Christmas counts exhibited the same stability as summer circles, but all of the Christmas inland sites continued to maintain a definable pattern. The transitional-northern hardwood forest was the most stable during winter, but the eastern broadleaf

forest also generated similar results. Winter populations in these forests have seen the departure of their neotropical and other long-distance migrants, leaving a scattered collection of short-distance migrants, winter irruptives and resident populations. This remaining avian biodiversity seems capable of distributing itself relatively evenly over the landscape during winter, even in the absence of territorial behavior.

This would help to explain why so many individuals linger well to the north during some winters, even as the main body of a species has departed. Rather than taking a direct southern beeline to a predetermined point, the short-range migratory pattern appears to be a discretionary cross-action sweep of existing biomass, slowly scrubbing its way southward across wetlands and river valleys. Many of these species seem to pile up along the coast, often during stressful climatic conditions, but at other times for no apparent reason.

While many such coastal locations have long been known to be vital refitting stops for regular migrants and navigationally-challenged vagrants, they also appear to represent important refuges for species that have seen their winter niches become crowded or closed. Further southern movement of these species is always possible, but seems to be a choice of last resort, and only once the coastline locations become overburdened. As such, locations such as Cape May and Nantucket constitute important regional safety valves for entire avian populations, minimizing the distance that many short-range migrants must travel during harsh winters.

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NOTES ON BEHAVIOR, STATUS AND DISTRIBUTION

The Value of Tree Seeds for Birds in Winter

For many years I have been observing the feeding habits of wild birds. The book *American Wildlife & Plants* by Martin, Zim & Nelson is a goldmine on wildlife food habits, and this has been my guide. It seemed, however, to have some omissions, but of course it was written in 1957 so that's expected. I now use the computer, which is more convenient and up to date, but still not always complete. I still find personal observations to be the best source of knowledge for much of wildlife, and this article is based on them.

One species I have studied more than any other has been the Dark-eyed Junco. This bird is an easy subject for me, for they feed here in Harwinton all winter and nest nearby, so I get to see them all year.

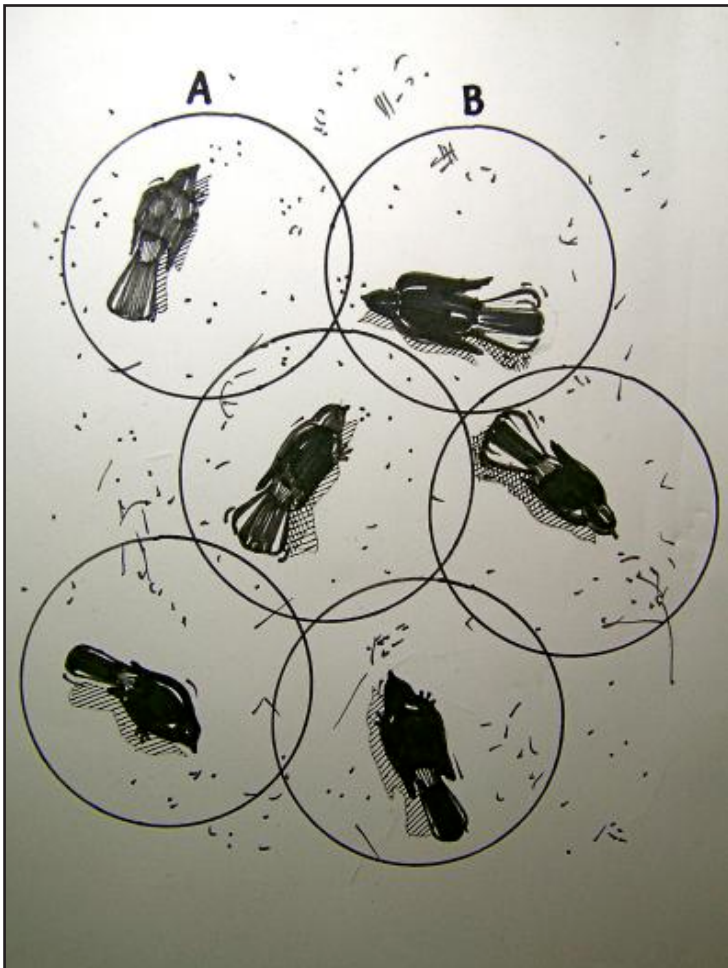
Through the years I have observed many plant species they feed on, and their utilization of tree seeds is especially interesting to me. During the winter, juncos can often be seen gleaning tree seeds that have fallen onto the snow's surface, and just by looking there you find out what they have been feeding on. Examples include Birch (Yellow, White, Black) Hemlock, and I suspect Pine, Tamarack, and other tree seeds as well as weed seeds.

Last winter I observed two White-throated Sparrows and six Dark eyed Juncos feeding together from the top of a Black Birch tree (*Betula lenta*) on the cone catkins, extracting seeds plus dispensing others onto the snow below, where many more birds were feeding on this bounty. Other bird species that have been documented feeding on these tree seeds are: Ruffed Grouse, Black-capped Chickadee, Purple Finch, Common Redpoll, Pine Siskin, Fox Sparrow, Tree Sparrow, and I can also add Red-winged Blackbird. Though weed seeds are used heavily by our winter visitors, some birds will also take advantage of the abundant tree seeds when available.

Paul Carrier

Dark-eyed Junco's Defense of Ground Feeding Areas Against Other Juncos

I did this study mainly in the winter of 2010, but have also compared it with what I discovered and documented during other winters since. During the winter, my bird feeders in Harwinton attract many Dark eyed Juncos, which overwinter. I often see distinctively marked birds that return again for many winters.



I often wondered how they feed from the ground near others of their own kind, yet seem to do it with little harassment or fighting. So I began to observe their feeding habits. After the winter snows and cold have settled in, usually just after the first of the year, seemed to be the best time to investigate this subject. With the more males over wintering here in the Northeast and fewer females, which winter more regularly farther to the south, I found the conflicts between males and females less frequent and less aggressive on average. I will deal more with encounters between males.

Juncos feed communally during the winter. They feed together at seed-rich areas, be it wild or domestic. Most of the wild feeding areas are less concentrated than under bird feeders, so encounters with other juncos are probably less frequent in the wild. Most of the seed consumed at our feeders is concentrated on the ground or snow under them, or occasionally from what we throw out on the snow. In order to feed there successfully, each bird needs its own space. This is where the problems occur. Fighting for personal space consumes time and caloric energy, and these are neither prudent nor useful for a full stomach to last the cold night ahead. Each bird must compromise its chosen space to the encroachment of others, but there is a limit. My observations suggest that limit is usually the same for all individuals.

I have found, on average, each bird will tolerate no less than being a full bird's length apart from the next, and when an adjacent bird comes too close or crosses this imaginary space, signals are given to stay away. As seen in the illustration, I have circled out an average space each bird will occupy and not tolerate intrusion from another. This area is usually equal around the bird, but can be adjusted a bit at will (see A). So how does one signal its disapproval to another yet avoid an energy-expending encounter? Most often they will flash or expose their white outer tail feathers, warning the encroaching bird they are becoming concerned. Most seem to heed this warning, but sometimes not. At this time they tend to continue feeding but will tail flash even more, exposing more white than previously.(see B).

In conclusion, the closer an adjacent bird comes to another's area, the more white they expose and usually with more vigorous flashing. If this does not work, a head-to-head fight might occur, or one of the two birds will eventually fly off. I found there are some variations to this, but on average this is what I have noticed through the years here at my feeders. When an area is too small to accommodate all birds seeking food, it is the yearlings that have to adjust. The more dominant older males take priority, with the few adult females second. The rest must then search for seed in the less saturated spots, which include the perimeter of the popular spill zone. Also utilized are another feeder's spill coverage or even a feeder itself. These, however, are not the prime productive areas, and it takes much more time for the birds to get their daily rations of seed than at the prime spots.

Paul Carrier



How would a junco like this fare in defense of a winter food source? This Dark-eyed Junco in aberrant plumage was photographed by Dennis Larkin in Sherman.

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Summer, June 1 to July 31, 2013

By Greg Hanisek

The heart of the summer, the pulse of Connecticut's bird life, centers on our breeding species. Of special interest this summer was the expansion, after a long wait, of our small, isolated breeding population of Boat-tailed Grackles. In habitat far-removed from the grackles' seaside outposts, Sandhill Cranes continued to tease us, and Mississippi Kites remained present but elusive.

Although it's our shortest season, summer is arguably the most complex, with birds coming, going and just hanging around. As always this report is divided into four sections to recognize this reality. Not surprisingly, some of the most exciting, if not the most significant, observations fall under Lingerers, Wanderers and Strays. This year's goodies include Swallow-tailed Kite, Black-necked Stilt and White-winged Dove.

For more information about the summer season, see the summary and charts of the state's Summer Bird Counts in the October Connecticut Warbler (Vol. 33 No. 4).

Northbound migration

Two Red-throated Loons were an interesting sight migrating over downtown Hartford on June 5 (PCi). A Red Knot was still northbound on June 14 at Sandy Point, West Haven (JOs). Two Western Sandpipers, very rare in spring but usually quite late when they make an appearance, were at Sandy Point June 14 (RP). A

Bonaparte's Gull feeding in the marsh at Milford Point was seasonally unexpected and probably still northbound June 1 (FG). Another was at Bantam Lake, Litchfield, on June 8 (JMa). Black-billed Cuckoo reports from Naugatuck (PDn), East Hadam (DR), Stonington (DW) and Guilford (MD) June 2-4 suggested a widespread arrival. It apparently involved

both species, because Yellow-billed Cuckoos were re-reported on June 5 from Bolton (EH), Avon (SSh) and Essex (DW) and on June 6 in Killingworth (JHi). A Common Nighthawk over Meriden on June 5 was probably a late migrant (PCo). A singing Tennessee Warbler was very late June 15 at Lion's Head, Salisbury (PDn). Mourning Warblers were at Osbornedale State Park, Derby, on June 8 (RH) and in Sharon the same day along with a Blackpoll Warbler (KF). A

single Pine Siskin visited a Goshen feeder on June 9 (KF). In Sterling, a single Pine Siskin on June 9 marked 252 straight days, going back to fall 2012, that the species was present at feeders (RD).

Southbound migration

An **American Avocet** made a very cooperative stop at Sandy Point, West Haven, on July 21 (TT et al.). Likely the same one was photographed July 24 at Milford Point by a seasonal wildlife intern (*fide* CB). A juvenile Upland



Julian Hough photo
 This stunning American Avocet delighted a group of birders on July 21 at Sandy Point in West Haven.

Sandpiper, a species seldom seen away from its few state breeding sites, was at Rocky Hill Meadows July 21 (BA). The first Whimbrel report came from Sandy Point on July 22 (RS). A foray along the coast from West Haven to Old Lyme on July 1 turned up a seasonally impressive 12 species of shorebirds, some of them breeders and summering non-breeders, but with the following likely southbound migrants: one Semipalmated Plover, seven Least Sandpipers and six Short-billed Dowitchers, including at least three of the *hendersoni* subspecies. Noteworthy among those apparent lingerers was an adult Dunlin in breeding plumage (NB). The first Pectoral Sandpiper was noted July 17 at Milford Point (PDe). Semipalmated Sandpiper numbers had reached 3500 by July 23 at Milford Point (FM). An adult Stilt Sandpiper was clearly on the move on July 20 at Milford Point (NB), and two were at HBSP the same day (RS). Stratford Marina held 123 Short-billed Dowitchers, including six *hendersoni*, on July 22-23 (FM), and the first Long-billed Dowitcher was there on July 24

(FM).

A Chimney Swift roost in Willimantic held c. 260 on July 2 (DR). A Purple Martin roost on a Phragmites island in the lower Connecticut River off Essex, which peaks at over 1000 birds in late August, held several hundred on July 31 (HG). This is presumably the largest concentration in New England. Swallows are known for early departures, so a Cliff Swallow on July 12 in Milford, far from any known breeding sites, was probably on the move (PDe).

Lingerers, wanderers and strays

Single Ring-necked Ducks were unseasonable June 22 on the Farm River in East Haven (BD) and July 15 at Mansfield Hollow Reservoir in North Windham (PR). An adult Greater Scaup summered at HBSP (RS et al.), and a White-winged Scoter summered off Westport (TG). A Long-tailed Duck was at Greenwich Point on June 27 (CEh), and two were at Sandy Point, West Haven, on July 1 (NB). A Bufflehead summered in Westbrook (CL), and one was in the



Michael Eddy photo

This Swallow-tailed Kite was a stirring sight over Griswold on June 2.

Quinnipiac River marshes in New Haven on June 22 (CL). Three Red-breasted Mergansers were at Milford Point on July 3 (FM), and four were at HBSP on July 22 (DR). A Little Blue Heron did some post-breeding wandering to a beaver pond in Litchfield July 10-11 (MK). Two adult Black-crowned Night-Herons were far up the Connecticut River in Wethersfield on July 29 (PCi).

A **Swallow-tailed Kite** seen and photographed over Pachaug State Forest, Griswold, on June 2 was an exciting find (ME). Possibly the same bird was seen flying over northern

Lyme on June 4 (*fide* HG). A **Common Gallinule** made one the species' patented enigmatic appearances on June 10 in the Great Meadows salt marsh at McKinney National Wildlife Refuge in Stratford (MB). An American Coot was out of season and alone July 9 at a pond in Ridgefield (JOI). Two **Black-necked Stilts** were present one day only on June 20 at Great Island in Old Saybrook (*fide* JOG). A Stilt Sandpiper in non-breeding plumage at HBSP on the in-between date of June 24 may have been a bird that never made it to the breeding grounds (GH). A Bonaparte's Gull was at Long Beach, Stratford, on July 28

(DCp). A first-summer Lesser Black-backed Gull was an atypical mid-summer find July 5 at Sandy Point (NB). Single Caspian Terns were at Barn Island, Stonington, on June 4 (CEL et al.) and at Sandy Point, West Haven, on July 17 (PDe). A Common Tern was unexpected inland on June 14 at Batterson Pond, Farmington (PCi). A subadult Forster's Tern, a species more common in the post-breeding period, was at the Housatonic River mouth in Stratford on June 17 (FM et al.). At least four Royal Terns were off Old Saybrook on July 5 (AG); singles were at Milford Point on July 9-10 (FM, SG); at HBSP on July 13 (JMa); and at Sandy Point on July 18 (DR). A high count of nine Black Skimmers rested on a sandbar at Milford Point at high tide on June 14 (PW). Despite numerous sightings of multiple birds, primarily at Milford Point, there were no signs of breeding again this season. One was unexpected on a mud flat at Holly Pond, Stamford, on July 22-23 (PDu, SMu).

A Red-headed Woodpecker was present throughout July at a feeder in Simsbury (GK). One visited feeders

in Madison on two occasions in mid-July (*vide* KM). A **White-winged Dove** was a great find in a residential neighborhood in Stratford on July 12-15 (FM et al.). A Merlin was interesting July 16 at Barn Island, but certainly not unexpected given the species recent southward range expansion into neighboring states (CEL). A **Western Kingbird**, the state's second spring record, was photographed at Barn Island, Stonington, on June 4 (CEL et al.). The season's only **Blue Grosbeak** turned up at a park in Columbia on June 4 (JMe). A Red Crossbill, a species noted for nomadic movements, was at Benedict Pond in Norfolk on July 27 (RS). Since there were no other reports, the species' penchant for far-flung nesting apparently didn't come into play.

The breeding season

A pair of Northern Shovelers lingered into June at HBSP, raising hope of nesting, but no breeding evidence was found (CR et al.). Three female-type Common Eiders were seen from the New London-Orient, N.Y., ferry July 15 in Connecticut wa-



Frank Mantlik photo
 These two Sandhill Cranes were on a private property in Colebrook on July 8. The property owner believed they nested nearby, but his property was too close to the Massachusetts line to surmise which state might have hosted them.

ter (FM). They're breeding close enough to our state to be hopefully placed in this category. An adult Tricolored Heron visited Milford Point on June 1 (FG); one was seen at Barn Island, Stonington, June 1-8 (RR, DR); and one was at the Salt Meadow unit of McKinney National Wildlife Refuge in Westbrook on July 21 (DCi). Although no evidence of breeding by Tricolored Herons was noted, their presence early

in the season, along with the multiple-year presence of hybrids, makes them legitimate entries in this category. A single adult Little Blue X Tricolored Heron summered at HBSP (JC m.ob.). A strong population of Little Blue Herons, such as 11 at Salt Meadow on July 25 (CEk), suggests additional instances of hybridization are a possibility.

Numerous **Mississippi Kite** sightings were made in July

Boat-tailed Grackle Nest
30 June 2013
Hammonasset Beach State Park
Madison, New Haven County, CT



Mark Szantyr photo



Mark Szantyr photo

Boat-tailed Grackles Nest at Hammonasset

Connecticut's long-standing Boat-tailed Grackle colony on the edge of the Great Meadows in Stratford occupies a mosquito-infested area of thickets at McKinney National Wildlife Refuge. The area is closed to the public but would be difficult to access were it open. Thus it came as a surprise that when this southern species finally nested in 2013, the pair chose an isolated tree in a heavily visited picnic area at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison



Jim Carr photo



Jim Carr photo

(see photo at upper left). At lower left is a close view of the nest, which was well hidden among heavy foliage high in the tree. Above, two young grackles are seen out of the nest. To the left, the female is seen feeding berries to one of the youngsters. The female also was seen feeding Seaside Dragonlets, a species of small dragonfly, to the young while they were in the nest. The dragonflies were apparently caught in their teneral state, when they first emerge as adults. In this stage they are soft and slow-moving.

at or not far from Great Pond State Forest in Simsbury, a spot where breeding has occurred in the past. However, we're unaware there was ever a sighting of more than one bird at a time this summer. No nest was found (PCi et al.). Three Soras, a scarce species during the breeding season, were calling in a wet field in the Station 43 area of South Windsor on June 20 (PCi). At least two **Sandhill Cranes** were seen regularly during the season ranging around Norfolk and Colebrook. Breeding was sus-

pected, but the area is close to the Massachusetts line, so if breeding occurred it could have been in either state (JA, m.ob.). A banded American Oystercatcher in June at Barn Island, Stonington, was the first from a Massachusetts project to be found in Connecticut (SMr *vide* CEI).

After the early June migratory push noted above, both cuckoos were widely reported through the month and into July, including four Yellow-billed Cuckoos at Trout Brook Valley in Weston



Mark Szantyr photo
 American Bitterns breed in marshes scattered around Northwest Connecticut, but they're hard to locate. This one was on Cobble Road in Canaan in mid-June

on June 15 (JP) and four at Walden Preserve in Salem on July 29 (DP). A Common Nighthawk, found for the eighth consecutive year on a Summer Bird Count in New Haven, may represent the state's last breeding site (LB). The state's explosive Common Raven population can't spread any farther south and west than Greenwich, where up to three were present in early June with breeding suspected (MSa). Inland nesting by Purple Martins remains rare, so a partly occupied house in Portland in June (LN) and a pair at Mudge Pond in Sharon on June 9 were noteworthy (FB). Added to the state's scattered Cliff Swallow breeding sites were a few nests under the eaves of a grocery store in New Hartford (PCa). Two Golden-crowned Kinglets, sparsely distributed as breeders in primarily planted Norway spruce groves, were in Canton in early June (PCi). A Lawrence's Warbler, first seen in May at Viney Hill Brook Park in Essex, remained on territory through June (DW), and one was at Eisenhower Park in Milford on June 15 (FG).

A Vesper Sparrow, a species

seldom seen during breeding season, was singing on territory in late July in farmland in Watertown (GH). A Grasshopper Sparrow was a heartening find on July 27 at Suffield Wildlife Management Area in Suffield, where an American Kestrel and an Eastern Meadowlark were seen on July 15 (PDe). The state DEEP is trying to establish grassland species at this site. With few Bobolinks left in Fairfield County, 18 were noteworthy on June 16 at Holcombe Hill Wildlife Preserve in Newtown (PDu,WK). At the Windham Airport/Mansfield Hollow Reservoir area in North Windham on July 15, eight Eastern Meadowlarks in two groups included six recently fledged juveniles (PR). Those kinds of numbers are seldom reported anywhere in the state anymore. Two male and one female Boat-tailed Grackles were noted at HBSP on June 5 (PF). Eventually, a pair fledged three young from a tree nest in the picnic area at Meigs Point, the first confirmed nesting away from the New England region's only colony at Stratford (SR et al.). The young were out of the nest during the last week

of July (m.ob.). Three Purple Finches were at a Sterling feeder June 1, and the species' continuing presence through the season included a juvenile on June 19 (RD). One was at a New Milford feeder June 11 (AD).

Observers: John Anderson, Bill Asteriades, David Babington, Bill Banks, Charles Barnard, Fred Baumgarten, Larry Bauscher, Nick Bonomo, Milan Bull, Dana Campbell (DCa), Donna Caporaso (DCp), Jim Carr, Paul Carrier (PCa), Paul Cianfaglione (PCi), Dan Cimbaro (DCi), Patrick Comins (PCo), Peter DeGennaro (PDn), Barb DeRienzo, Paul Desjardins (PDe), Mike DiGiorgio, Angela Dimmitt, Robert Dixon, Patrick Dugan (PDu), Michael Eddy, Carl Ekroth (CEk), Chris Elphick (CEl), Cynthia Ehlinger (CEh), Kevin Finnan, Paul Fusco,

Frank Gallo, Hank Golet, Sean Graesser, Tina Green, Andy Griswold, Tony Hager, Greg Hanisek, Ernie Harris, Roy Harvey, John Himmelman (JHi), Julian Hough (JHo), Jay Kaplan, Marie Kennedy, Gil Kleiner, Wendy Knothe, Chis Loscalzo, Frank Mantlik, John Marshall (JMa), Jamie Meyers (JMe), Keith Mueller, Sean Murphy (SMr), Sean Murtha (SMu), Larry Nichols, John Ogren (JOg), Jane Olsen (JOL), John Oshlick (JOs), Richard Payne, Dave Provencher, James Purcell, Charlie Rafford, Shirely Rafford, Ron Rosza, Dan Rottino, Trudy Rottino, Phil Rusch, Meredith Sampson (MSa), Mark Scott (MSc), Russ Smiley, Susanne Shrader (SSH), Steve Spector (SSp), Mark Szantyr (MSz), Timothy Thompson, Dorothy Wadlow, Glenn Williams, Paul Wolter, Sara Zagorski, Roy Zartarian, Fran Zygmont.

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND BIRDS!

A Saga of Knowing What You Know VS Seeing What You
Are Looking At.

Or

When you Assume, You make..... (you know the rest).

By Mark S. Szantyr



*Figure 1 The Mystery Bird photographed 8 August 2010 in
Noank by Mark Szantyr. Find its identity in the April issue
of The Connecticut Warbler*

The advent of popularly priced digital SLR cameras has made documentation of rare birds much easier than it has been in the past. These cameras are so smart, so forgiving, that even if you do everything wrong, it is likely that you will come up with an identifiable image. That being said, Greg Hanisek and I were talking one night and we hatched a plan. Let's offer a very well exposed, extremely sharp image of a very common bird in a less than ideal pose, but an image that

gives a lot of identification information, and see how many birders can get it right. We did this in the wake of a rash of shorebird photos on the web that caused an international tsunami of mistaken identifications, ID dogma, vitriol, and lunacy.

I had a photo that I thought would be a good choice. I showed it to Greg and he agreed that it was the one. The fact that he had a modicum of difficulty with the identification at first made it all the better for us. Greg published the photo in his natural history blog provided under the auspices of the Republican-American Newspaper in Waterbury, Connecticut. He offered very little support information, just that the bird was photographed in Connecticut and that I was both diabolical and cruel. While true, I didn't believe that this identification challenge would be as hard as it proved to be.

The answers (let's call them guesses) came in and the list of species and genera involved grew and grew. I was gob-smacked by the range of possibilities being offered. The bird in the photograph is one of the most common birds in North America. My friend David Irons, a birder from Oregon with deep experience in bird identification and distribution, says that this species is "the most mis-identified bird in North America". Quite a claim but after this I think he might be right.

Leading contenders in the identification were immature Black-crowned Night-Heron and immature or female Green-winged Teal. The bird in the photograph is a passerine. How could the size and structure of this bird be so mis-interpreted?

References were made to the large, flat, duck-like bill. No bill is visible in the photograph. Many people talked about the thick legs yet no one spoke about the one exposed passerine-like toe. The tail, while mostly obscured, does show a decipherable basal shape and allusion to structure, none of which were right for a duck or a heron. It was thought that the bird was sitting on large rocks. If you look at the grain in the

rocks, the scale of the grain compared to the size of the rocks might suggest that the rocks are not quite that big.

So how does this happen? How often does it happen? Are we all (and I include myself in this question) so rarities crazy that we see what we want to see rather than what is right in front of us? If only provided a quick glimpse of a bird, perhaps it is more understandable, though no positive ID should be made on this kind of sighting. The annals of birding legend are full of situations where the first wishful identification started all observers down a garden path that resulted in a lemming-like plummet into the sea of OOPS! I am reminded of a Smith's Longspur in California, a Northern Hobby in New York, a Little Egret in Connecticut, and oh so many other subsequent heartbreaking moments in birding. We all go over the edge not only willingly but gleefully, basking in the golden sunlight of one more twitch on the lifelist. How quickly sunlight can turn into sunburn!



*Figure 2 Immature Black-crowned Night-Heron for comparison.
Photographed by Mark S. Szantyr*

PHOTO CHALLENGE



The bird is a bit skulky, but the small size, thin pointed bill and slender proportions point to a warbler. It doesn't seem to have any really distinctive features (a clue in itself) and it's not giving very good looks, but you manage to snap a few pictures. Checking the images later, you're still not seeing anything really distinctive and prepare for a long search through all of your references. You decide to start with your Sibley field guide, and one of his succinct summaries under Mourning Warbler proves a real eye-opener: narrow broken eye ring, yellow throat, yellowish supraloral (area above and in front of eye) and faint broken breast band. They're all there once David told you what to look for. Duncan Stewart photographed this immature Mourning Warbler on Sept. 14, 2013, at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison.



Photo Challenge No. 84

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

Brown Booby

Andrew Dasinger captured 2013's most exciting find, the state's first documented Brown Booby, by placing it on the bow of a Long Island Sound oyster boat with the Pecks Ledge light in Norwalk Harbor in the background.

MABEL OSGOOD WRIGHT AWARD

2013: To Dennis Varza

Milan Bull presented the following at the 29th annual meeting of the Connecticut Ornithological Association on March 23, 2013.

In the mid 1970's Carl Trichka (later to become the first Editor of the Connecticut Warbler) had just obtained his master banding permit and he, myself and Dennis Varza rejuvenated the old bird banding station begun in the 1930s by Frank Novak at Birdcraft Museum in Fairfield. Together, we banded hundreds of migrants that stopped by this "vest pocket" sanctuary in downtown Fairfield, as well as birds from dozens of other sites around the state. (Some of you may remember the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper that Dennis banded in Norwalk about that time).

In the fall of 1979, the three of us were sitting around a table near Hawk Mountain waiting for the weather to clear so we could get a look at the raptor migration from the north lookout. We were talking bird banding and wondered if there were many other active banders in the state and what their interest and research might be.

So we obtained a list of CT banders from DEP and were somewhat astounded to learn that there were 37 licensed banders in the state. That seemed to be a big number to us in those days. We thought it would be interesting to contact these folks and compare notes so we considered putting together a newsletter/bulletin that would be of interest to banders around the state. Originally, we thought about limiting the publication to banding information and related bird projects, but Dennis realized it had broader implications and so the idea grew into an ornithological journal format that included all CT projects concerning birds as well as field notes, etc.

In the beginning (the first Connecticut Warbler was published in January, 1981) the publication was funded by the Connecticut Audubon Society, but soon after we formed a separate more inclusive, not-for-profit organization called the

Connecticut Ornithological Association. The first Editorial Board was comprised of some past and present ornithology leaders whom you may know or remember: George Clark, Paul Desjardins, Bob Dewire, Frank Gardiner, Art Gingert, Gordon Loery, Noble Proctor and Fred Sibley. Carl served as Managing Editor and I was the Director and Technical Editor. Dennis put it all together, contacting potential authors and contributors, twisting the arms of potential editors, and otherwise getting the new association up on its feet. It all seems like yesterday.

He has played an important role in the understanding and conservation of birds in CT ever since.

Dennis graduated from Shippensburg State College in Pennsylvania and did his graduate work at LSU where he earned a MS in Zoology and went on to the University of Oklahoma where he studied aquatic ecology. He has worked for the Connecticut Audubon Society and also DEP as a contract biologist, gathering data on everything from shorebirds to Red-headed Woodpeckers.

Dennis wrote the Field Notes section of the Connecticut Warbler for several years before Clay Taylor took it over and he also put together the first summary of CT Christmas counts before Fred Sibley. A major contributor to CW with dozens of articles (21 articles published from 1980-1990 alone) Dennis more recently has been cataloging bird records from many sources – over 100,000 sightings since the 1830's.

Dennis sees the bigger ornithological picture and is most interested in patterns rather than individual sightings. His 300 plus "Southport sightings" and other observations is a start at data acquisition that over time will provide scientists with useful predictability patterns that will benefit conservation.

I could go on, but now let me please present the 2013 Mabel Osgood Wright award to my long-time friend and colleague Dennis Varza.

Editors Note; After a long battle with cancer, Dennis passed on Dec. 29, 2013, at the age of 59.

NINETEENTH REPORT OF THE AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE OF CONNECTICUT

By Jay Kaplan and Greg Hanisek

This is the 19th report of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (ARCC).

With the help of numerous board members, as well as students and staff from the University of Connecticut, all previous paper records and reports have now been archived at the university in Storrs in digital form. Additional work remains to be completed with regard to organizing the files and more recent digital reports prior to making them available to the public. However, there is now light at the end of what has been a very long tunnel, and the authors appreciate the efforts of all those who were involved with this project.

In the last report (see the Eighteenth Report of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut, Vol. 33 No. 2), it was noted that in spite of the severity of “superstorm” Sandy in late October of 2012, no new birds were added to Connecticut’s State List. This year four birds were added, bringing the State List to 435. One of these birds has not been observed in the state over the past two decades, while another has not been seen in Connecticut since the 19th century.

As discussed in previous reports, the Avian Records Committee welcomes the opportunity to view what are termed “historical” records, including records that may be one hundred or more years old. One such record is that of a Fieldfare, an Old World thrush. A specimen, tracked down at Chicago’s Field Museum by former committee member Louis Bevier, was labeled Stratford, Connecticut where the bird was reportedly collected in 1878. It is often difficult to find additional information on these long ago specimens, and committee members have voted to accept the bird with the addendum “origin uncertain.” At that time, birds were heavily collected and specimens were often traded, sold and

bartered as young boys of a later generation might have done with prized baseball cards. While Bevier found compelling evidence that the bird was of wild origin, this cannot be known with 100% certainty, hence the “origin uncertain” appellation.

A second bird from years past is a Jackdaw that was found in West Haven in 1988. Although this bird’s identity was never in question, the committee at that time felt that a leg injury suggested captive origin. During that period, there were a number of Jackdaw records from the Northeast, but little was known about Jackdaws and their movements. Over the years, more information on these birds has been compiled, and members of the committee, led by Frank Gallo, reviewed all of it, including the notation of a Jackdaw with an injured leg from Maine. Based on new evidence, the Jackdaw was accepted to the state list. Older files may be re-opened by a request from a committee member should new information become available, even if it happens many years later.

The other new additions to the State List are from 2013: a Brown Booby that alighted on boats in the western part of Long Island Sound and a Black-chinned Hummingbird that visited a yard in Fairfield for more than a week, allowing a large contingent of birders to view, photograph, and take notes on its feeding behaviors and flight patterns.

Of the many records reviewed by the committee this year, one record that was not accepted is noteworthy for the unusual circumstances surrounding it. A Le Conte’s Sparrow, or rather a portion of a Le Conte’s Sparrow, was retrieved from a Connecticut airport. Subsequent DNA analysis provided the identification, but there was no method of determining where the bird collided with the aircraft during this flight that originated out of state.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

At its meeting, the committee stood at nine active members, and bylaws allow for 10 to 12. The committee moved that Jacob Musser of New Haven and Phil Rusch of Chaplin be

added. At its April meeting the COA Board confirmed the nominations as per ARCC bylaws. Members, in addition to the authors, who voted on records in this report were Nick Bonomo, Frank Gallo, Julian Hough, Frank Mantlik, Dave Provencher, Dave Tripp and Glenn Williams. Former members Janet Mehmel and Mark Szantyr also voted on some of the records.

STATE LIST AND REVIEW LIST

The state list now stands at 435 species, with the addition of Brown Booby, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Jackdaw and Fieldfare. 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. The symbol ‡ following an observer's name indicates submission of a photo. 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 American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) Checklist. Multiple records of a particular species are listed chronologically. Months of the year are shortened to their first three letters.

ACCEPTED RECORDS

PACIFIC LOON (*Gavia pacifica*) One flew by Stonington Point on 30 Oct 2012 as "superstorm" Sandy approached. The observer, familiar with the species, included a sketch and field notes with his report (12-25 Tom Auer*). Connecticut's first spring bird, molting into alternate plumage, was found

on 18 May 2013 at the Oyster River mouth in West Haven (13-17 Frank Gallo*‡, Frank Mantlik‡). It was last seen on 20 May at Bradley Point, West Haven. An adult in basic plumage was seen on 4 Jan 2014 from a ferry inside the mouth of the Thames River between New London and Groton (14-09 Shaibal S. Mitra*). The observer, who provided a copy of his field notes, has extensive experience with the species in New York and Rhode Island waters.

WESTERN GREBE (*Aechmophoros occidentalis*) One was seen and identifiably photographed off Mulberry Point, Guilford, on 29-30 Apr 2013 (13-13 Sol Satin,* Ann Peterson‡). There are two previous accepted records since the 1978 split of the taxon that elevated Clark's Grebe (*Aechmophoros clarkii*) to species status. Records prior to the split do not include sufficient detail to assign them to a species.

BROWN BOOBY (*Sula leucogaster*) One landed on an oyster boat off Westport on 23 May 2013 and was relocated later in the day off Norwalk, where it landed on boats including one piloted by one of the birders trying to find the bird (13-25 Patricia Rauscher,‡* Nick Bonomo‡, Larry Flynn‡, T. Wetmore‡). The bird was assessed from photos to be a female at least 2.5 years old based on molt and soft part colors (Peter Pyle, personal communication). An unexplained increase in reports north of the species' normal range has resulted in at least 15 reports in the last five years from New England, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Ontario. There was only one in the five years before that. This represents the first documented state record. However, one was reported to have been collected in Guilford in the 19th century (Sage et al. 1913). There is no specific date associated with the report, although it was prior to 1843, and the whereabouts or existence of a specimen is unknown. It was excluded from the original state records committee report for lack of evidence, and Zeranski & Baptist (1990) also found its documentation insufficient.

YELLOW RAIL (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) An experienced observer flushed one from salt marsh at Barn Island Wildlife

Management Area in Stonington on 17 Nov 2013 (13-19 Tom Auer*). The written description was supported by a sketch of the bird in flight showing the white inner secondaries.

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) Two were found and photographed from a kayak by a single observer on 20 Jun 2013 on the west-facing sandy shore at Great Island in Old Lyme (13-18 Dave Lester*†).

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE (*Rissa tridactyla*) An adult was seen on 12 Jan 2013 on the New London to Orient, N.Y., ferry route (13-12 Patricia J. Lindsay,* Shaibal S. Mitra*). Two experienced observers who regularly travel this route provided a good description as well as documenting the bird's presence in Connecticut waters.

MEW GULL (*Larus canus*) An adult in basic plumage was found on 30 Jan 2014 on the Housatonic River below the Shepaug Dam in Southbury (14-07 Patrick Comins,*† Frank Mantlik†). It was seen sporadically through at least 2 Feb. Features including wing tip pattern, mantle color and head streaking are indicative of the European nominate subspecies, *L. c. canus*. This is the state's second photo-documented record.



Dave Lester photo
These two Black-necked Stilts were photographed from a kayak at Great Island in Old Lyme on 20 June 2013.



Frank Mantlik photo
 This Mew Gull was a great find on the Housatonic River in Southbury on 30 January 2014. The wingtip pattern, well-displayed in this photo, helped identify it as the European subspecies.

THAYER'S GULL (*Larus thayeri*) A first-cycle bird was found and extensively photographed on 24 Jan 2014 at the Windsor-Bloomfield landfill, the site of a number of rare gull discoveries since it became the last garbage dump accessible to the state's birders (14-01 Patrick Comins*†). Identification requires careful assessment of a subtle array of plumage and structural characters, a process greatly aided by a photo array.

SANDWICH TERN (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) A dead hatch-year bird was picked up on the beach at Milford Point in late Aug or early Sep 2005 and taken to Yale Peabody Museum for preparation as a specimen – YPM 141912 (13-16 Frank Gallo*†). This record had never been entered in the ARCC archive, so Gallo prepared a report that included multiple photos of the specimen. The report includes details on the likely age of the bird, as well as noting that the solid dark base of the tertials and inner wing coverts is consistent with the North American race *T. s. acuflavida*. This is significant because the nominate Old World taxon has been split into a separate species, although this has not yet been adopted by the American Ornithologists' Union. Were this to happen, the North American form would probably be renamed Cabot's Tern, a name formerly in use in North America. There are two documented North American records of the Old World

form. A bird photographed in Illinois in September 2010 is believed to represent the first record of *Thalasseus sandvicensis sandvicensis*. A banded Old World Sandwich Tern found and photographed at South Beach, and then at Nauset Marsh, Cape Cod, Mass. in July-August 2013 originated in the UK.

POMARINE JAEGER (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) An adult light morph bird was identified from a car traveling on Interstate 95 in Bridgeport on 31 Oct 2012 (13-27 Tom Johnson*). Although the view was brief, the observer, who has extensive experience with all three jaegers at sea and from land, was able to see the long and rounded tips of the central tail feathers characteristic of adults of this species. The observation was made in the wake of "superstorm" Sandy, when Pomarine Jaeger was one of the signature birds displaced into the Northeast.

COMMON MURRE (*Uria aalge*) One in basic plumage was seen by a group of eight observers riding the New London to Orient, N.Y., ferry on 13 Jan 2014 (14-04 Frank Mantlik,* Greg Hanisek). Its presence in state waters was determined by use of GPS on a smartphone. One in alternate plumage, possibly the same one seen a month earlier, was observed on the same ferry route on 16 Feb 2014 (14-08 Shaibal S. Mitra*). The observer, a frequent ferry rider, was aware of the demarcation of the Connecticut-New York boundary, confirming that the bird was in state waters.

THICK-BILLED MURRE (*Uria lomvia*) An experienced observer saw one sitting on the water as the New London to Orient, N.Y., ferry passed at close range on 20 Jan 2013 (13-14 Patricia J. Lindsay*). The observer, a frequent ferry rider, was aware of the demarcation of the Connecticut-New York boundary, confirming that the bird was in state waters. One was a surprising find on 18 Jan 2014 well inside the mouth of the Housatonic River off Birdseye Boat Ramp in Stratford (14-03 Stefan Martin,*‡). Although never common, historically this was the alcid most often documented or reported in state waters. Razorbill, now by far the most-often seen large alcid inside Long Island Sound, and no longer a review



Nick Bonomo photos
The state's first Brown Booby made it easy for Larry Flynn during its one-day stay on 23 May 2013. When Larry went looking for it, the bird landed on his boat. Photos of the cooperative bird resulted in determination that it was a female at least 2.5 years old.

species, wasn't accepted to the state list until 1992. Common Murre, which is now being seen more often than Thick-billed Murre, was not documented here until January 2011.

BLACK GUILLEMOT (*Cepphus grylle*) A long-staying bird, first found on the 1980-81 New Haven Christmas Bird Count, was seen on 19 and/or 26 Apr 1981 at the Thimble Islands off Stony Creek, Branford, by tern wardens traveling by boat to Falkner Island (14-06 Frank Gallo*). One was found off Meigs Point at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison on 1 Jan 14 (14-02 Dan Rottino,*‡ John Marshall,*‡). Despite its year-round presence just a few hours away, this species had been undocumented in the state for many years prior to the 2014 sighting. Noting this, Gallo realized that the 1981 record had never been presented to ARCC. He used CBC records, his own recollection and contact with others who had seen it to provide documentation. The 2014 observers broke the drought by providing good written descriptions along with a photo and videos. This is a good example of how photos alone may not always be sufficient to document a species. Neither the photo nor the video was of high quality, but in combination with written details they provided solid evidence. The bird, in basic plumage, was very white and thus suggestive of the arctic subspecies *C. g. mandtii*. The sub-specific taxonomy is complex and unsettled. Birds of North America Online notes that *mandtii* apparently intergrades along the coast of Labrador with *P. g. arcticus*, the subspecies breeding as nearby as New Hampshire, and possibly occurs south to New England. A specimen from Massachusetts was reported in Ridgway (1919).

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) One was seen and photographed on 12-13 Jul 2013 in the Lordship neighborhood near Stratford Point in Stratford (13-24 Frank Mantlik*‡). It was also heard vocalizing.

BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus alexandri*) A homeowner in Fairfield noticed a female/immature hummingbird coming to blooming Pineapple Sage in her yard on 23 Oct 2013 (13-26 Sara Jaeger,* Frank Mantlik‡, Jesus



Mark Szantyr photo
This adult male Fork-tailed Flycatcher captivated about 600 birders during its prolonged stay at the Hadlyme ferry slip in Lyme in November and December 2013.



*Frank Mantlik photo
Connecticut's first Black-chinned Hummingbird shows off its diagnostic broad
and blunt outer primary flight feathers while feeding on Pineapple Sage at a yard
in Fairfield in October 2013.*



*Russ Smiley photo
This White-winged Dove made a short stop in a Stratford neighborhood in July
2013.*

Tirado‡, Russ Smiley‡ m.ob, m.ph.). The bird was positively identified as a first state record after photos taken on 30 Oct resulted in a visit by several members of ARCC on 2 Nov. Photos taken then provided conclusive images showing the inner six primaries proportionately narrower than the outer four, with the outer primary (P10) being broad and blunt tipped. The latter feature distinguishes Black-chinned from its congener, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, which is very similar in non-adult male plumages. The bird was seen by more than 150 people. It was last seen on 13 Nov, when it apparently departed after a very cold night that killed the flowers on which it had been feeding.

FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannus savana*) Connecticut's fourth record was a bird found on 30 Nov 2013 at the Hadlyme ferry slip on the Connecticut River in Lyme (13-15 Jeff Feldmann*‡, m.ob, m.ph.). A large contingent of observers from around the U.S. and Canada saw the bird through 11 Dec 2013, establishing a late date for the state. Dan Rottino, who lives nearby, monitored the bird and visitors throughout its stay and put the number of observers at about 600. The bird was identified as an adult male based on wing molt, tail streamer length and notching on the outermost three primary flight feathers (A. Lamoreaux). The primary notching also confirmed it represented the southernmost and most migratory subspecies, *T. s. savana*. This is the only subspecies that has been unequivocally identified in North America.

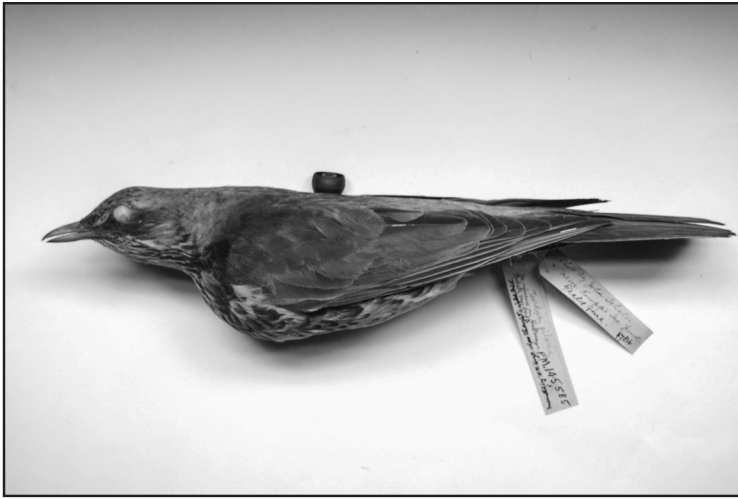
EURASIAN JACKDAW (*Corvus monedula*) One was observed on 16 Feb 1988 at the West Haven landfill (88-21R Frank Gallo*). ARCC originally voted not to accept the record because of origin questions, in part because of a leg injury that some members believed could be attributed to caging. Gallo asked that the record be reopened and provided an analysis supporting natural vagrancy. This Eurasian corvid has a unique history in northeastern North America. There was a major influx in the 1980s, including the 1984 arrival of 52 ship-assisted birds in Quebec, but the first few arrivals, including Nantucket, Mass., birds in 1982-84, predate the Quebec incursion. The ABA Checklist Committee accepted

an April 1984 record from Block I., Rhode Island, stating: "Origin – Natural vagrant. The various subsequent sightings in eastern Canada and in New England indicate a broad pattern of vagrancy rather than an escaped or ship assisted waif." In his reassessment Gallo said: "Eurasian Jackdaws have undergone a range expansion in Europe over the last 30+ years, and they are still occurring regularly in Iceland. There are at least two more-recent records in the ABA area, both from Newfoundland, in 1994-96 and 1996-97. According to Howell et al. (2014), as of 2006, there were 258 records for Iceland, and I found an eBird record there for as recently as 2011. It is clear that Eurasian Jackdaws have a record of moving west from Europe and are reaching the New World... Many authorities see this and all jackdaw records during the period as valid." This represents the first documented state record.

HOARY REDPOLL (*Acanthis hornemanni*) One visited a feeder in Plymouth on 11 Jan 2013, part of the winter 2012-13 invasion of a species seldom documented in the state (13-11 Buzz Devine*). For more on the subspecies status of birds reaching Connecticut during this flight see the Eighteenth Report in the Connecticut Warbler Vol. 33 No. 2.

RECORDS ACCEPTED, ORIGIN UNCERTAIN

FIELDFARE (*Turdus pilaris*) One was collected in April 1878 near Stamford and the specimen is now in the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago (13-10 Louis Bevier). This bird, then called European Thrush, was originally reported by William Henry Hoyt in a short note in *Ornithologist and Oologist* (Hoyt 1889). The record had never been considered by ARCC because the whereabouts of the specimen, originally in a private collection, was unknown. Zeranski and Baptist (1990) considered it hypothetical for this reason. Bevier investigated in 2013, discovered the specimen was in Chicago and arranged for photos to be taken. He then prepared an illustrated report. Sage et al. (1913) relegated the record to a section titled "Catalogue of introduced species and doubtful species." It remained in limbo until Bevier's recent efforts. Bevier



Fieldfare (Turdus pilaris) collected by John Schaler in or near Stamford at "Knapp's Ice Pond" April 1878 (Field Museum of Natural History, FMNH 145585). Photograph courtesy of John Bates, Associate Curator, Birds, The Field Museum

noted that despite Sage's categorization, that author said the feet and plumage were of a bird not recently in captivity (an opinion also shared by Bevier). Sage also quotes the collector as saying its actions were those of a wild bird. In conclusion, Bevier noted that the record fits neatly into the modern pattern of occurrence. He suggested that the bird was caught in weather over the North Atlantic during late fall or early winter, a scenario closely linked to other European birds that are vagrants to North America. The committee chose the above category as a conservative approach, noting that the specimen predates the next North American record by 60 years and occurred at a time when cage bird trade was common. Placement in this category denotes full acceptance to the state list but recognizes that in some cases 100 percent certainty is unrealistic despite a preponderance of positive evidence.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus alexandri*)

An adult male was reported from a feeder in Monroe on 26-27 Jun 2011 (11-45). The bird, which would have constituted a first state record, was seen only by the homeowners and was

not photographed. The report generated vigorous discussion through the maximum three rounds of voting. Lack of a pattern of spring-summer occurrence in the Northeast played a role in the committee's decision.

GYRFALCON (*Falco rusticolus*) One was reported flying over a yard in Stamford on 24 Oct 2013 (13-20). Identification of this species, especially flyby birds seen by a single observer, is fraught with difficulty. These birds present very little in the way of field marks, placing emphasis on description of shape, flight style and perceived size. In this case, the observation was rather short and lighting conditions were less than ideal. The description of the bird as an apparent white morph raises the problem of abnormally plumaged birds of other species. Another problem that may be unsolvable for briefly seen birds is the possibility of hybrids used in falconry.

COMMON MURRE (*Uria aalge*) One was reported on 29 Jan 2014 from Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison (14-05). The single observer reported difficult conditions including strong wind and very rough water in which the bird was swimming farther out into Long Island Sound. The description included some features that did not eliminate other large alcids.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED, ORIGIN UNCERTAIN

LE CONTE'S SPARROW (*Ammodramus leconteii*) Remains were found on 16 Apr 2012 at Tweed New Haven Airport (13-22). Andrew Dasinger learned of the record through a query of the Federal Aviation Administration Wildlife Strike Database, listing birds struck by aircraft. He then wrote to Carla Dove of the Smithsonian Feather Identification Lab, which is responsible for examining and identifying wildlife remains from aircraft-bird collisions. She said the Smithsonian received "a large chunk of wing and body feathers and a foot." Ultimately the identification was confirmed by DNA analysis, but there was no way to prove that the bird wasn't struck by a plane elsewhere and carried to New Haven.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The committee thanks Louis Bevier for researching the Fieldfare record and assisting with the Eurasian Jackdaw and Peter Pyle for comments on the Brown Booby.

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2013 FALL HAWK WATCH

By Steve Mayo

Hawk migration in Connecticut occurs in both spring and fall. The northward hawk migration occurs for several months starting in late winter. Spring migration is much less concentrated than that of the autumn, so organized hawk watching is rare in the spring. However, Johnnycake Mountain (Burlington) logged an impressive 21 hours from April 13-26. Of the 145 total hawks counted, 121 were Broad-winged Hawks.

It's the southward migration that brings watchers to Connecticut sites, to see hundreds and sometimes thousands of migrating hawks. In August along the coast, observers hope for that first frontal passage to start the migration season. Unfortunately, August of 2013 mostly comprised hot, humid days with southerly winds, or no winds at all. Coastal watchers counted anything that flew over, from Nighthawks to Gnatcatchers, but there were few hawks. Quaker Ridge (Greenwich) did have 16 (10 Broad-winged Hawks) on August 23. The site finished with 65 hawks over a site-record 100 August coverage hours. Lighthouse Point Park (New Haven) managed 8 hawks during 14 hours, the lowest August coverage in over a quarter century. Boothe Memorial (Stratford) near the Housatonic River, counted 13 hawks during 5 hours of coverage.

The autumn frontal passages of interest are the cold fronts. These are fast moving bodies of cooler, drier masses of air. The frontal passing is marked by a rise in barometric pressure, improving visibility (ie, clearing rain and clouds), a drop in humidity and moderate to strong northwest winds.

Fronts occurring during the second and third week of September result in an impressive Broad-winged Hawk migration. Botsford Hill (Bridgewater) had excellent daily coverage during this period. The site had a record-season total of 11,167 Broad-winged Hawks, including 3,924 on September 16. That same day, Middle School (Torrington) and White

Memorial (Litchfield) had peak counts of 4,451 and 2,559, respectively. Chestnut Hill (Litchfield) tallied over 5,000 September 15-19, and Johnnycake Mountain (Burlington) had over 3,000 during the same period. During the mid-day of September 18, after almost two days of light northerly winds, Booth Hill (West Hartland) had 3,047 Broad-winged hawks on west-southwest surface winds. All sites also reported excellent Bald Eagle flights. Johnnycake Mountain had at least one Bald Eagle for every day of coverage, and the site even logged an early Golden Eagle on the last day of their season (9/23).

To the south and west of these sites, six miles north of Long Island Sound, is Quaker Ridge. On September 14, after strong morning northwest winds, Broad-wings started streaming through mid-day. There were 2,812 on the 14th and 1,910 on the fifteenth. After morning rain showers and early afternoon northwest winds, a total of 5,485 were logged on September 16. The next day, 4,689 were counted streaming by on clear skies before the winds went south. Waveny Park (New Canaan) is to the east of Quaker Ridge, and just 4 miles from the coast. Also on the 17th, Waveny had 933 Broad-winged Hawks. The last significant Broad-winged Hawk flight occurred at the coastal sites. A frontal passage the morning of September 22 resulted in clear skies, northwest winds and plenty of hawks on September 23, including 1,640 Broad-wings at Lighthouse.

After this Broad-winged Hawk push, hawk watching continues near the Connecticut coast, where 10-15 different raptor species can be seen on any October day. Highest daily counts consist of large accipiter totals, as well as afternoon flights of falcons. These typically occur between the first and second weeks of October. Early October was hot, hazy and humid with an occasional period of very light northerly winds. The only highlight was 23 Northern Harriers over Lighthouse on October 5, but for the season, Lighthouse Harrier numbers were at record lows. The weather finally broke with a rainy, passing front on October 7. On October 8, the three remaining coastal sites each had 2013 daily records for Sharp-

shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, American Kestrel and Merlin. The 502 Sharp-shinneds that day at Lighthouse contributed to a season total of only 3,077. This was well below the previous 10-year average and one-third of the record flight 20 years prior. Sharpy numbers dropped at Quaker Ridge as well. The season total of 2,147 was lowest in ten years.

October 8 was soon followed by a moderate Nor'easter and more days of unsettled weather. On October 20 after a passing front the night before, there was a good Sharp-shinned flight (166) at Lighthouse, and west winds on the 24th and 25th brought Turkey Vultures (193 and 117, respectively) over Quaker Ridge.

November migration is noted for buteos. There was a strong push of Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks during the first four days of the month. Chestnut Hill "re-opened" for two hours on November 3 and counted 13 Red-tails. Lighthouse posted a record 5 Golden Eagles on the 3rd. Quaker Ridge and Lighthouse each ended up with 10 Golden Eagles for the season. November 3 was also the date of the last recorded Osprey, seen at Lighthouse. Lighthouse and Quaker Ridge both ended the season with low Osprey numbers.

Winds were light and variable until a front brought snow showers on November 12. The next day, buteos were back at Quaker Ridge and Lighthouse. Strong north winds returned on November 12, and by the time they subsided in the afternoon, 143 Red-tails were counted at Lighthouse. Bitter cold west and northwest winds prevailed through November 23 and 24, yet surprisingly few hawks were recorded. These frontal passages so sought after in September and October, had apparently arrived too late.

Additional data, including daily summary reports for 2013 and those of previous years, may be obtained from the Hawk Migration of North America website, hawkcount.org. Summaries for Connecticut and the rest of New England, can also be obtained from The Northeast Hawkwatch, <http://www.battaly.com/nehw/>.

Volunteers who counted at our Connecticut sites in 2013 included: Mark Aronson, Renee Baade, David Babington, Bill Banks, Charlie Barnard, Dan Barvir, Bill Batsford, Steve Beal, Eileen Becker-Dunn, Gail Benson, Raymond Belding, Nick Bonomo, Polly Brody, Tom Burke, Dana Campbell, Paul Carrier, Abby Carsten, Al Colins, Patrick Commins, Jim Cortina, Annette Cunniffe, Neil Currie, Ayreslea Denny, Paul Desjardins, Margot Dilmagani, Jim Dugan, Cindy Ehrlinger, James Fischer, Bobbie Fisher Anne Fiske, David Fiske, Woody Fitzgerald, Steve Foisey, Jared Franklin, Barry Freed, Rita Freed, Frank Gallo, Ted Gilman, Tina Green, Carol Griffiths, Frank Guida, Pete Gustas, Tony Hager, Nicki Hall, Greg Hanisek, John Hannon, Roy Harvey, Bo Hopkins, Julian Hough, Rich Huck, Brenda Inskeep,

Lynn James, Buck Jenks, Elsbeth Johnson, Lynn Jones, Anne Kehmna, Marie Kennedy, Sulmaan Khan, Celia Lewis, Jim MacLean, Ryan MacLean, Matt Male, Frank Mantlik, Jerry Marcellino, John Marshall, Jeff Martin, Shaun Martin, Stefan Martin, Steve Mayo, Robin McAllister, Ken Merrifield, Nancy Meyer-Lustman, Ken Mirman, Don Morgan, Judy Moore, Marty Moore, Tom Murray, Gene Newell, Suzanne Newell, Steve Oresman, Gary Palmer, Janet Petricone, Pattie Pickard, Art Potwin, Donna Potwin, Paul Roberts, Arne Rosengren, Ed Sadowsky, David Salmon, Sol Satin, Scott Slora, Dori Sosensky, Howie Sternberg, Maria Stockmal, Carol Titus, Tony Tortora, Lisa Wahle, Bill Wallace, Steve Walter, Mike Warner, Fitz Waterman, Art Welby, Paul Wolter, Sarah Zagorski, Joe Zeranski, Jim Zipp.

Connecticut - All Lookouts - Fall 2013

Lookout	Town	Hours	BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW
INLAND GROUP												
Booth Hill	West Hartland	11			5	5		19	1	1		3526
Botsford Hill	Bridgewater	79			24	23	1	75	10			11167
Chestnut Hill	Litchfield	60		1	26	22		25	3			5603
Johnnycake Mt.	Burlington	49		8	59	37		58	3			3895
MiddleSchool	Torrington	72			13	13		23	11			8987
White Memorial	Litchfield	52	7	49	17	25	4	9	9	3	15	3704
INLAND TOTAL		323		58	144	125	5	209	37	4	15	36882

BV-Black Vulture	SS-Sharp-shinned Hawk	BW-Broad-winged Hawk
TV-Turkey Vulture	CH-Cooper's Hawk	RT-Red-tailed Hawk
OS-Osprey	NG-Northern Goshawk	RL-Rough-legged Hawk
BE-Bald Eagle	RS-Red-shouldered Hawk	GE-Golden Eagle
NH-Northern Harrier		

Connecticut - All Lookouts - Fall 2013

Lookout	Town	Hours	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	uR	TOTAL
INLAND GROUP										
Booth Hill	W. Hartland	11				2	2	1		3562
Botsford Hill	Bridgewater	79				16	4		18	11338
Chestnut Hill	Litchfield	60	13			4			14	5711
Johnnycake Mt.	Burlington	49			1	19	4	2		4086
MiddleSchool	Torrington	72				7	3	1	14	9072
White Memorial	Litchfield	52	10			6	37	5	12	3917
INLAND TOTAL		323	23	0	1	54	50	9	58	37686

Connecticut - All Lookouts - Fall 2013

Lookout	Town	Hours	BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW
COASTAL GROUP												
Boothe Memorial	Stratford	130	19	200	173	92	16	334	70		22	2339
Lighthouse Point	New Haven	680	39	416	715	173	262	3077	843	6	209	2676
Quaker Ridge	Greenwich	761	15	928	470	177	165	2147	424	6	425	16188
Waveny Park	New Canaan	35			9	4	1	20	4			1038
COASTAL TOTAL		1606	73	1544	1367	446	444	5578	1341	12	656	22241

BV-Black Vulture	SS-Sharp-shinned Hawk	BW-Broad-winged Hawk
TV-Turkey Vulture	CH-Cooper's Hawk	RT-Red-tailed Hawk
OS-Osprey	NG-Northern Goshawk	RL-Rough-legged Hawk
BE-Bald Eagle	RS-Red-shouldered Hawk	GE-Golden Eagle
NH-Northern Harrier		

Connecticut - All Lookouts - Fall 2013

Lookout	Town	Hours	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	uR	TOTAL
COASTAL GROUP										
Boothe Memorial	Stratford	130	55			41	14	14	37	3426
Lighthouse Point	New Haven	682	486	3	10	906	393	147	459	10840
Quaker Ridge	Greenwich	761	223		10	484	83	33	171	21949
Waveny Park	New Canaan	35	10			10	1	2	15	1114
COASTAL TOTAL		1608	774	3	20	1441	491	196	682	37329

BV-Black Vulture	SS-Sharp-shinned Hawk	BW-Broad-winged Hawk
TV-Turkey Vulture	CH-Cooper's Hawk	RT-Red-tailed Hawk
OS-Osprey	NG-Northern Goshawk	RL-Rough-legged Hawk
BE-Bald Eagle	RS-Red-shouldered Hawk	GE-Golden Eagle
NH-Northern Harrier		

Broadwing Flight - Connecticut - Fall 2013

	August	Sept									Oct	Nov	Total
Lookout		thru 13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20-23	24-30			
INLAND GROUP													
Booth Hill			479				3047						3526
Botsford Hill		122	769	1413	3924	1779	2341	795	21	3			11167
Chestnut Hill		48	172	1322		1844	1267	893	57				5603
Johnnycake Mt.		96	279	1770	1129		197	132	292				3895
Middle School		98	270	1050	4451	623	5	2454	35	1			8987
White Memorial		7		573	2559	88	118	331	28				3704
COASTAL GROUP													
Boothe Memorial		23	1532	154	402	3	2		95	110	18		2339
Lighthouse Point		39	513	35	6	295	1	1	1648	44	93	1	2676
Quaker Ridge	23	523	2812	1910	5485	4689	3	41	250	440	12		16188
Waveny Park		2	15	88		933							1038
Total	23	958	6841	8315	17956	10254	6981	4647	2426	598	123	1	

Lighthouse Point, New Haven - Fall 2013

	Hours	BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PF	uR	Total
August	14			3		2	1								2				8
September	220	4	45	574	76	106	1412	213	2	13	2582	23	0	2	447	138	47	132	5815
October	257	30	170	136	64	120	1463	536	2	40	93	104	1	1	444	204	82	155	3645
November	168	5	201	2	33	53	201	87	2	155	1	342	2	7	13	49	16	143	1372
December	2																		2
Total	661	39	416	715	173	282	3077	843	6	209	2676	486	3	10	906	393	147	430	10840

Quaker Ridge, Greenwich - Fall 2013

	Hours	BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PF	uR	Total
August	100			19	11	7		1			23				2			1	65
September	274		2	378	115	88	1323	159	1	10	16153	9		1	318	46	10	87	18700
October	249	8	548	73	38	56	734	225	1	181	12	64		5	158	35	20	48	2186
November	138	7	378		13	14	90	39	4	254		150		4	6	2	2	35	998
Total	761	15	928	470	177	165	2147	424	6	445	16188	223	0	10	484	83	32	171	21949

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Fall Season, August 1 though November 30, 2013

By Greg Hanisek

After last fall's devastating but exciting "superstorm" Sandy, this season's weather seemed uneventful in comparison. In addition to a lack of storm birds, autumn 2013 offered no repeat of last year's much-anticipated northern finch flight. The start of a major Snowy Owl irruption offered compensation, as did a couple of mega-rarities, one of them a first state record. Big flight days included Sept. 14-15 for hawks and passerines and Nov. 9 for huge numbers of common late season migrants. Sandhill Cranes continued their surge, and overall avian variety in the four-month season kept birders out and on the move.

The rarer geese fell comfortably into recent patterns with eight **Greater White-fronted Geese** and five **Cackling Geese** for the season. The largest flock of Snow Geese was 130 (with at least two blue morphs) on Nov. 19 over Lighthouse Point hawk watch in New Haven (BB). A **Barnacle Goose** was found in a Canada Goose flock in corn stubble in Bethlehem on Nov. 1-2 (GH et al.), and one mingled with Canadas in Windsor on Nov. 8 (BK). Wood Ducks can stage in large numbers after the breeding season, such as 109 on Mud Pond in New Milford on Aug. 31 (JD). As part of a typical but understated arrival of dabbling ducks

early in the season, a female Northern Pintail was in Stratford on Aug. 7 (FM), and six Blue-winged Teal were in the Quinnipiac River marshes in Hamden on Sept. 8 (CL). Four adult male **Eurasian Wigeon** in one small pond in Milford on Nov. 23 were extraordinary for a species usually seen one at a time (FG).

Redheads, always scarce, showed a bit of an uptick with a male at North Farms Reservoir in Wallingford on Oct. 30-Nov. 2 (KM et. al.); a male and female on Nov. 6 at Twin Lakes, Salisbury, (PCa); and four at Sandy Point, West Haven, on Nov. 25 (SSp, CS). A female **King**



Russ Smiley photo

This is part of an unusually large flock of about 120 Black Scoters on the Connecticut River in South Windsor on Nov. 3, 2013.

Eider that stayed well into winter was first seen Nov. 29 at Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford (JMu, NB). The season's only **Harlequin Duck**, a female, flew by Stratford Point on Nov. 1 (FM). Four Surf Scoters, the least common of the three species inland, were also a bit early Sept. 24 at Batterson Pond in Farmington (PCi). Good-sized flocks of Black Scoters sometimes drop onto inland bodies of water during migration. They tend to form tight, restless groups and don't stay long, but a flock of 120 on the Connecticut River at South Windsor on Nov. 3 was unusually large (RMa, RS). The species

was clearly on the move that day, with more than 30 on Congamond Lakes in Suffield (DB) and 47 on Coventry Lake, Coventry (CEl). A **Barrow's Goldeneye** that wintered was found on Nov. 30 off East Haven (JRg). A flock of 87 Ruddy Ducks was at Coventry Lake in Coventry on Oct. 31 (DMo), followed by 150 on Bristol Reservoir No. 7 on Nov. 2 (PCa).

Since the once widespread Ruffed Grouse has retreated almost exclusively to the northwestern Connecticut, two flushed on Nov. 18 at Saugatuck Falls Natural Area in Redding, Fairfield County, were noteworthy and heart-

ening (JL). A Red-throated Loon at Twin Lakes, Salisbury, on Oct. 23 was inland at a time when good numbers were moving along the coast (PCa). Another good find at this location were two Red-necked Grebes on Nov. 2 (KKo). An immature Great Cormorant was unseasonable on Aug. 26 at Stratford Point (FM, AZ). Three **American White Pelicans** flew by the Lighthouse Point hawk watch on Oct. 29 (BB); later in the day three were seen flying over Quaker Ridge hawk watch in Greenwich (MW, RMc).

Away from known Connecticut River breeding sites, a Least Bittern was calling Aug. 19 in the Proto Drive marshes in East Haven (GH et al.), and one was along Canfield Island Creek on the Norwalk/Westport line on Sept. 11 (TGr). Snowy Egrets are difficult to find inland, but post-breeders move up the Connecticut River with some regularity, such as one on Aug. 13 at Wethersfield Cove (PCi) and one at the Hockanum River Linear Trail in East Hartford on Sept. 4 (PCi). At least 20 Little Blue Herons (eight adults and 12 immatures) on Aug. 4 in

Plum Bank Marsh, Old Saybrook, were indicative of a strong and possibly growing coastal breeding population (Jog). The number built to 25 (17 immatures) on Sept. 14 (Jog), and 20 were in the Menunketesuck area of Westbrook on Aug. 25 (CL). A Green Heron was late Nov. 3 in Darien (ph. CBo). A Black-crowned Night-Heron was inland Aug. 19 at Batterson Pond in Farmington (PCi). Birding around Stratford on Oct. 16 tuned up 30 Yellow-crowned Night-Herons, indicative of the area's strong breeding population (FM, TGr).

An adult **Mississippi Kite** seen sporadically in summer was last noted Aug. 26-27 in Simsbury and E. Granby (FZ, BA). An adult was extraordinarily late but apparently conspicuous to at least Oct. 7 in the central Connecticut River valley, with sightings in Moodus and Haddam (AL, DRo, THa). A late Osprey was in Westport Nov. 23 (LF). The Quaker Ridge hawk watch in Greenwich logged 2800 Broad-winged Hawks on Sept. 14 (RMc), and Boothe Memorial Park in Stratford had 1500 that day (LJo). Sept. 16 brought an-



*Hank Golet photo
This Snowy Owl on Nov. 26, 2013, in Old Lyme was one of the first of what became a monumental winter irruption.*



*Chris Bosak photo
This Green Heron was very late on Nov. 3, 2013 at a pond in Darien.*

other 5100 to Quaker Ridge (RMc). At Lighthouse Point, where Broad-wingeds peak later than at ridge sites, 2140 raptors on Sept. 23 included 1640 Broad-winged Hawks (GH et al.). Also see the fall hawk migration summary elsewhere in this issue. A very late Broad-winged Hawk was at Quaker Ridge in Greenwich on Nov. 29 (RMc). A light adult **Swainson's Hawk** was seen on Oct. 24 in Brooklyn (MSz). Away from the hawk watches, an immature Golden Eagle was an exciting find Nov. 14 at Sherwood Island, where it spent time perched after dining on Canada Goose (TGr et al.) A **Yellow Rail**, the regular migrant that's almost never seen, was flushed briefly at Barn Island Wildlife Management Area in Stonington on Nov. 17 (TAu). A Clapper Rail strolled along the edge of a tidal pond at Greenwich Point on the late date of Nov. 26 (MAu). **Sandhill Crane**, the species showing the greatest recent upsurge in numbers, criss-crossed the state this fall, generating reports of about 25 individuals. The first was reported from the Mystic area on Oct. 18 (SK), and the

largest groups were seven over Norwalk on Nov. 24 (LF) and eight over Moodus on Nov. 29 (AL).

The first of more than 30 American Golden-Plovers statewide was at Milford Point on Aug. 24 (PDe). The high count was six on Sept. 7 at the drained Riverside Park Pond in Hartford (PCi) and six again on Sept. 16 at Sikorsky Airport in Stratford (FM). A Semipalmated Plover on Aug. 16 at Greenwich Point displayed a flag tag indicative of banding in Peru (CEh). An American Oystercatcher roost on Cockenoe I., Westport, held 35 on Sept. 11 (TGr, AH), and Milford Point had 23 on Sept. 22 (SSp). Stratford Marina was packed with 138 Greater Yellowlegs and three Lesser Yellowlegs as late as Oct. 16 (FM). A juvenile Upland Sandpiper on Sept. 1 at Rocky Hill Meadows was probably a migrant, although the site is also not far from known breeding locations (BA). A migrant was at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison (hereafter HBSP) on Sept. 13 (PFu et al.). A good flight of Whimbrels appeared to peak around Sept. 1, when a flock of seven flew over Stratford

(TGr, SZ) and three were at Sandy Point in West Haven (JH). Two were in Westbrook the next day (CL). The season's only Marbled Godwit was on the Neck River in Madison on Sept. 1-2 (SSc, DRo et al.)

Red Knots continue to raise concerns with only about 15 reported. Semipalmated Sandpiper numbers built to 3700 on Aug. 12 at Milford Point (FM). As usual Western Sandpipers were hard to find, with just a few singles reported, but a very cooperative bird was inland at Cabela's Pond near Rentschler Field in East Hartford Aug. 27-28 (DL, JMe). The first four of 14 Baird's Sandpipers for the season, all juveniles as expected, were at Milford Point on Aug. 20 (FM). A large and extended flight of Pectoral Sandpipers included reports of c. 70, including high counts of 13 at Hockanum River Linear Trail in East Hartford on Oct. 5 (PCi) and 15 there on Oct. 17 (ADa). About 15 were still found around the state in November, with a record late one Nov. 23 at Greenbacker Pond in Durham (GH). An unusual concentration of 18 Stilt Sandpipers was ob-

served Aug. 9 at Shell Beach marsh in Guilford (PW). In the past, large fallouts of this kind have occurred when Lesser Yellowlegs were also moving in good numbers, and 80 Lessers were noted the same day in Stratford (FM). For the first time in recent memory, Buff-breasted Sandpipers went unreported. The first Long-billed Dowitcher appeared Aug. 10 at Stratford Marina, a regular location that produced reports deep into the season (FM). A juvenile was at Rocky Neck State Park in East Lyme on Nov. 8-9 (DL). The season's only **Wilson's Phalarope** was at HBSP on Sept. 14-17 (MCo et al.).

An incursion of 250 Laughing Gulls, most of them juveniles, was noted along the lower Housatonic River in the vicinity Short Beach, Stratford, on Sept. 12 (FM). Landfill gull-watching got off to a good start with four Iceland Gulls at Windsor-Bloomfield landfill on Nov. 26 (NB). A first-cycle Lesser Black-backed Gull turned up at Sandy Point, West Haven, on Aug. 28 (ABu). The oft-returning adult at Burying Hill Beach in Westport was first noted on Sept. 17 (TGr).



*Julian Hough photo
Short-eared Owls are always always a nice find. This
one popped up on Poto Drive in East Haven on Nov.
9, 2013.*

The first of seven Caspian Terns was at Sandy Point on Aug. 24 (NB et al.). Two were at Griswold Point in Old Lyme on Aug. 27 (CF), with three at Lighthouse Point on Sept. 22 (CL). Post-breeding Forster's Terns sometimes assemble on the lower Connecticut River. This season one was at Selden Creek in Lyme on Aug. 4 (CL). On Aug. 15 a group of nine at Deep River Landing consisted of five adults feeding four juveniles far from any known nesting area in typical tern fashion (NB). Single

adult Black Skimmers were at Milford Point (FM) and Holly Pond, Stamford, (PDu) on Aug. 1 and at Sandy Point, West Haven, on Aug. 14 (JOs). Two were at Compo Beach in Westport on Aug. 29 (TGr).

The opening volley in what turned into a Snowy Owl assault deep into the winter was one on Nov. 25 in West Haven (JSw), followed by numerous November coastal sightings of an unknown number of individuals. Common Nighthawks

staged a good and conspicuous migration. Triple figure counts included 175 on Aug. 19 in Woodbury (RN); 100 on Aug. 22 in Naugatuck (FR); 192 on Aug. 23 in Greenwich (BI); 125 on Aug. 24 in Mansfield (DMo); 125 on Aug. 27 in N. Windham (PR); 160 on Aug. 27 in Storrs (CEI); 150 on Aug. 27 in Seymour (RH); 200 on Aug. 27 in Simsbury (BK); 210 on Aug. 28 in Southbury (SSp); 210 on Aug. 29 in Greenwich (RMc); and 615 on Aug. 31 in Barkhamsted (DRs). There were many double- and single-digit reports, and the flight was quite protracted with more than 30 birds reported at four locations Oct. 1-4 (FG et al.). Eastern Whip-poor-wills are seldom heard singing out of nesting season and away from breeding sites, so one in a yard in Sterling on Aug. 18 was interesting. Presumably the same bird sang there on Aug. 25 (RD), and one sang at dusk on Sept. 17 at HBSP (TAn).

A **Black-chinned Hummingbird**, a first state record, visited a Fairfield yard from Oct. 23 to Nov. 13 (SJ, m.ob. ph.). Lighthouse Point recorded 74 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and 350 migrant Chim-

ney Swifts on Sept. 8 (SMa). The Chimney Swift count hit a remarkable 3000 there on Sept. 14 (SMa). A nice run of Red-headed Woodpeckers consisted of one through the season at a Simsbury feeder (GK); singles at Lighthouse Point in New Haven on Sept. 15 (RPe) and Sept. 22 (TGr et al.); a juvenile on Sept. 16 at Grass Island, Greenwich (SMu); an adult at Quaker Ridge, Greenwich, on Sept. 17 (RMc); an adult on Oct. 5 in Wallingford (MM); a flyover Oct. 27 at Sherwood Island (FM et al.), and a juvenile found on Nov. 5 on a residential street in downtown New Haven that remained through winter (ADo et. mult. al). The latest evidence of Peregrine Falcons nesting in the Waterbury area was an adult and juvenile on a church steeple in Naugatuck on Aug. 17, although there was no evidence the church was the actual nest site (APr).

Among ten reports of Olive-sided Flycatchers were two (or possibly three) at John Minnetto State Park in Torrington on Aug. 27 (CZ, JZ). **Western Kingbirds** were found on Aug. 27 in Mansfield (MSz) and

Sept. 8 at HBSP (JMu). The state's fourth **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** was found Nov. 30 at the Hadlyme ferry slip on the Connecticut River in Lyme (ph. JF, m.ob.) and was present into early December. A Great Crested Flycatcher present since Oct. 22 lingered to the record late date of Oct. 29 at HBSP (HW et al.). Ash-throated Flycatcher, which occurs in the Northeast in late fall-early winter, was carefully eliminated. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was first noted on Sept. 14 at Pine Creek in Fairfield (JP, ABu), with singles at Bluff Point

in Groton (GW et al.) and Naugatuck State Forest in Naugatuck on Sept. 15 (BDe, SH) and in Westport on Sept. 17 (TGr). Two were at McKinney Refuge, Stratford, on the latter date (FM). A late one was at Silver Sands State Park in Milford on Sept. 29 (JOs).

The season's only Northern Shrike vocalized Nov. 16-17 at Little Pond in Litchfield (RN et al.). A few Horned Larks were seen in Stratford in late September, which is early for southbound migrants (CBa). It's possible



Hank Golet photo
 The 2013 Fork-tailed Flycatcher in Lyme had to brave some snow to reach Connecticut's record-late date of 11 December.



*Julian Hough photo
This Lark Sparrow, seen here on Oct. 27, 2013,
was enjoyed by many birders at Hammonasset
Beach State Park.*

this rare state breeder could have nested at places such as Sikorsky Airport, Long Beach or Stratford Point. A roost-bound flight of 400 Purple Martins passed over East Haddam on Aug. 19 (DRo). After a big flight in 2012, the only **Cave Swallow** reports this year were singles at Sherwood Island State Park, Westport, on Nov. 3 (TGr) and Nov. 9 in Stratford (one for sure but probably three, FM). Blue-gray Gnatcatchers typically pass through Light-

house Point in visible migration in August and early September; an especially good count of 45 was made on Aug. 19 (GH et al.). A late one hung around to Nov. 15 in Monroe (TMu). Five-digit passage flights of American Robins are noted annually at Lighthouse Point, New Haven, but 190,000 on Nov. 9 was extraordinary (THa et al.) The first Lapland Longspur was early on Oct. 4 at Silver Sands in Milford (JOs). An especially large flock of

300 Snow Buntings was at Stratford Point on Nov. 14 (FM).

The latest Ovenbird was Nov. 3 in Hamden (CZ). A late Northern Waterthrush lingered to Nov. 26 in Newtown (RB). Three Golden-winged Warblers for the season were a lot by recent standards: singles at the Racebrook Tract in Orange on Sept. 3 (FM, TMu); at Lake Chamberlain in Bethany on Sept. 5 (JOs); and a different bird at Lake Chamberlain Sept. 15-16 (JOs). A Blue-winged Warbler on Sept. 20 in Windsor Locks was the latest ever in the state for a veteran observer (PDe). The first of eight Connecticut Warbler reports was on Sept. 9 at Quaker Ridge in Greenwich (RMc). A smattering of seven Orange-crowned Warblers started with one on Oct. 2 at Osbornedale State Park in Derby (FM et al.), followed by one the next day at Sherwood Island. A Nashville Warbler was still at East Shore Park, New Haven, on Nov. 25 (NB). The only Kentucky Warbler report came from Quaker Ridge on Sept. 17 (MW). A male Hooded Warbler was an interesting visitor to both

a hummingbird feeder and a thistle feeder in Sherman on Aug. 1 (PB). Cape May Warblers are usually rather sparse in Connecticut, but an excellent flight resulted in c. 40 reports. Four were in a Harwinton yard on Oct. 1 (PCa). A Yellow Warbler was late Oct. 17 at East Shore Park in New Haven (JOs), and a Black-throated Blue Warbler was late Nov. 9 at Sparkle Lake in Groton (PR, GW). Three Yellow-rumped Warblers were very early migrants Aug. 24 in New Haven (PDe) with one the same day at HBSP (RS). One of the season's most stunning birds was a leucistic Yellow-rumped Warbler that was nearly all white except for the yellow rump, Nov. 1 at Silver Sands (JOs).

Bluff Point in Groton, the state's premier morning flight location, logged the following significant days: Sept. 4 – 450 warblers of 12 species including 108 American Redstarts (CEI); Sept. 14 – 300 warblers of 13 species with Blackpoll Warblers rivaling American Restarts in numbers for the first time this season (GW); Sept. 15 – 1100 warblers of 19 species with American Redstarts

most numerous followed by Northern Parulas (GW et al.); and Sept. 24 – 7500 birds including 7200 warblers of 14 species, with Northern Parulas most numerous (FG).

The first American Tree Sparrow of the season appeared Oct. 25 in Woodbury (CF). Twelve **Clay-colored Sparrows** for the season was a modest number after more than twice that many last year. Vesper Sparrows were widely reported after the first one was found in Glastonbury on Sept. 24 (BA). About 25 were reported in October. **Lark Sparrows** were nice finds Oct. 26-27 at HBSP (DRo et al) and Nov. 12 in Stonington (ph. ND). Grasshopper Sparrows were typically scarce with only four reported, including one seen by many at Bauer Park in Madison on Oct. 19-22 (JOs et al.) Six Nelson's Sparrows were at the front end of their migration Sept. 26 at Sherwood Island (TGr, AH), with at least eight the next day (TGr). A count of 30 on Oct. 26 at Milford Point surely represented a migratory peak (JCa). The first Fox Sparrows scratched in Woodbridge Community Garden (JMo) and at Quaker Ridge (SMr)

on Oct. 23. The first report of White-crowned Sparrow was on Sept. 25 at Greenwich Point (AC). Northern Cardinals don't usually make this report, but 30 at the Dixon feeder in Sterling on Nov. 24 certainly were noteworthy (RD). Six **Blue Grosbeaks** for the season included one that remained at Bauer Park in Madison Oct. 16-28 (JCo et al.). Ten **Dickcissels** for the season were low by recent standards.

At Lighthouse Point, the diurnal flight of Bobolinks hit 1000+ on Sept. 6 (DMo). Six Eastern Meadowlarks were at Mansfield Hollow in North Windham on Aug. 6 (PR), and an excellent 30 were at Great Island, Old Lyme, on Nov. 26 (HG). A flock of 30 Rusty Blackbirds ate dogwood berries in a Colchester yard for four straight days, Oct. 26-29 (APe). Common Grackles typically form roosts in late summer-early fall; 1700 were counted headed toward a phragmites roost on the lower Housatonic River in Stratford on Aug. 12 (FM). Larger flights and larger roosts recur in November, and this year produced big numbers. A roost early in the month in Lebanon

held c 300,000 birds (DRo). At Lighthouse Point, where early November consistently brings huge morning passage flocks, 550,000 were noted Nov. 9 (THa et al.) and 220,000 on Nov. 11 (GH et al.). Things wound down to a mere 129,000 on Nov. 19 (BB) and 135,000 on Nov. 20 (LJa). The Nov. 9 flight at Lighthouse also included 60,000 each of Red-winged Blackbirds and Brown-headed Cowbirds (THa et al.). The post-breeding flock at the Stratford Boat-tailed Grackle colony held at least 35 birds on Aug. 23 (CBa). There were five November reports of Baltimore Orioles.

A flock of 26 Pine Siskins making a quick stop at a Harwinton feeder on Oct. 20 was the largest group of any northern finch reported in this non-flight season (PCa). Evening Grosbeaks could almost be counted on one hand: one at Lighthouse Point on Nov. 5 (BB); four there on Nov. 15 (DCa); and one flyby at Long Beach, Stratford, on Nov. 28 (JZ). Aside from a light flight of Purple Finches, none of the other boreal irruptives were reported.

Observers – Ralph Amodei, Tim Antanaitis (TAn), Mark Aronson (MAr), Bill Asteriades, Tom Auer (TAu), Michael Aurelia (MAu), Renee Baade, Pat Bailey, James Bair (JBa), Bill Banks, Charlie Barnard (CBa), William Batsford, Doug Beach, Steve Beal, Joe Bear (JBe), Nick Bonomo, Chris Bosak (CBo), Andy Brand (ABr), Alex Burdo (ABu), Joseph Cala (JCa), Dana Campbell (DCa), Donna Caporaso (DCo), Jim Carr (JCr), Paul Carrier (PCa), Mona Cavellero (MCA), Paul Cianfaglione (PCi), Linda Clancy, Kathleen Clark, Carolyn Cimino, Jan Collins (JCI), Patrick Comins (PCo), Jerry Connolly (JCo), Mary Covello (MCo), Annette Cunniffe, Mark Danforth (MDa), Andrew Dasinger (ADa), Peter DeGennaro (PDn), Barb DeRienzo (BDr), Paul Desjardins (PDe), Buzz Devine (BDe), Mardi Dickinson (MDi), Townsend Dickinson, Angela Dimmitt (ADi), Robert Dixon, Niall Doherty, Aaron Dollar (ADo), Jim Dugan, Patrick Dugan (PDU), Cynthia Ehlinger (CEh), Chris Elphick (CEl), Sarah Faulkner, Patrice Favreau (PFa), Jeff Feldmann, Bruce Finnan, Larry Flynn, Carrie

Folsom-O'Keefe, Paul Fusco (PFu), Frank Gallo, Ted Gilman (TGi), Hank Golet, Tina Green (TGr), Andy Griswold, Tony Hager (THa), Donald Haight, A.J. Hand, Greg Hanisek, Ernie Harris, Roy Harvey, Seth Harvey, Fran Holloway, Tom Holloway (THo), Julian Hough, Brenda Inskeep, Jalna Jaeger (JJa), Sara Jaeger, Lynn James (LJa), Denise Jernigen (DJe), Diana Atwood Johnson (DJo), John Johnson (JJo), Lynn Jones (LJo), Sulmaan Kahn, Jay Kaplan, Gil Kleiner, Brian Kleinman, Kateri Kosek (KKo), Katherine Kuckens (KKu), Andrew Landsman, David Lawton, Jacquie Littlejohn, Chris Loscalzo, Ryan MacLean (RMc), Rick Macsuga (RMa), Frank Mantlik, John Marshall (JMa), Stefan Martin (SMr), Steve Mayo (SMa), Tom McNamara (TMc), Dan Mercurio (DMe), Karen Mercurio, Jamie Meyers (JMe), Judy Moore (JMo), Marty Moore, Don Morgan (DMo), Steve

Morytko (SMo), Keith Mueller, Tom Murray (TMu), Sean Murtha (SMu), Jake Musser (JMu), Russ Naylor, John Ogren (JOg), John Oshlick (JOs), Richard Payne (RPa), Alex Pearson (APr), Ron Pelleier (RPe), Annie Perko (APe), Mike Perko, Bev Proppen, Dave Provencher, James Purcell, Frank Ragusa, Jason Rieger (JRg), Judy Richardson (JRI), Dave Rosgen (DRs), Dan Rottino (DRo), Phil Rusch, Dave Rathbun (DRu), Meredith Sampson (MSa), Scott Schuldt (SSc), Susanne Shrader (SSh), Jim Sherwonit (JSh), Russ Smiley, Charla Spector, Steve Spector (SSp), BK Stafford, Jack Swatt (JSw), Mark Szantyr (MSz), Timothy Thompson, Kathy Van Der Aue, John Wagenblatt (JWa), Lisa Wahle, Mike Warner, John Weeks (JWe), Glenn Williams, Hugh Willoughby, Paul Wolter, Sara Zagorski, Roy Zartarian, Anthony Zemba, Carol Zipp, Jim Zipp, Fran Zygmont.

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND BIRDS



Mark Szantyr's article in the January issue of *The Connecticut Warbler* offered, in his words, "a very well exposed, extremely sharp image of a very common bird in a less than ideal pose." The photo perplexed many birders when it was first posted on a blog site, and probably caused similar consternation more recently for readers of this journal. That's to be expected, since one very experienced and accomplished observer, David Irons of Orgeon, editor-in-chief of the excellent *BirdFellow.com* website, opined that even with its head showing this is "the most misidentified bird in North America." The second photo (above right) should make things at least somewhat easier. This immature Brown-headed Cowbird was photographed by Mark on 8 August 2010 in Noank.

PHOTO CHALLENGE

You encounter a sparrow sitting in the open, which is a good news/bad news scenario for many birders. It's good that its out in the open instead of skulking in shrubs or tall weeds, but it is, after all, a sparrow. The sparrow part might even be in question because of one feature that doesn't really compute – the white tail. Birds can be tough enough when they look like themselves. When you throw in an anomalous feature, things get more puzzling. At times like this it's best to remember that if things seem abnormal, they may in fact be abnormal. Abnormal amounts of white plumage, known as leucism, occur in all kinds of bird. If you can put the white aside and look at what's left, things become more orderly. Here we have a small sparrow with a rusty cap. The most common contender, Chipping Sparrow, has a very strongly marked face with a conspicuous white supercilium, a black eye line and a dark bill. Swamp Sparrows also have strong face markings and dark bills. American Tree Sparrows have bicolored bills and usually show



a conspicuous dark central breast spot. The rather plain face, white eye ring and pink bill on our quiz bird point in one direction. This Field Sparrow was photographed by Russ Smiley on 1 September 2013 at Hartman Park in Lyme. The date also points strongly away from American Tree Sparrow, which seldom appears before very late October. There's no need to invoke western species with rusty caps since everything fits an expected species so well.



Photo Challenge No. 85

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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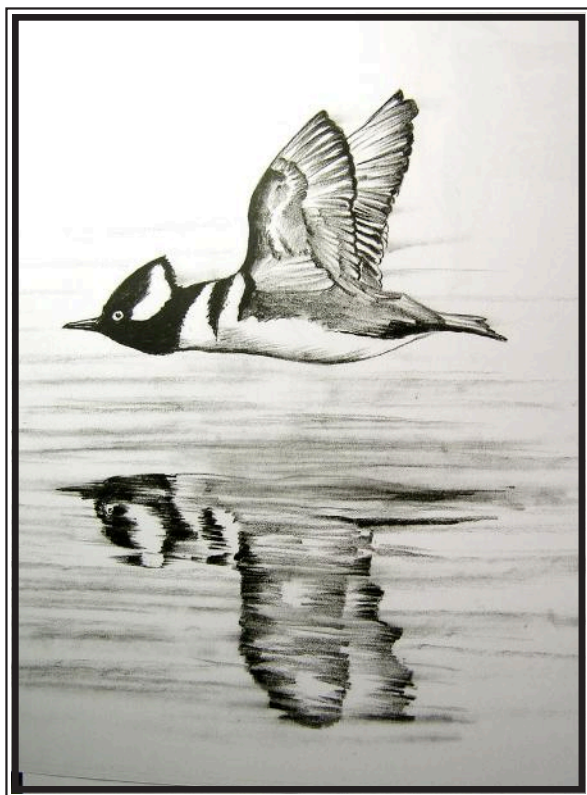
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ON THE COVER

Hooded Merganser

Paul Carrier, a frequent contributor of cover art, created this spritely drake Hooded Merganser, a species showing gains on a number the state's Christmas Bird Counts. See Steve Broker's review of the 2013-14 Connecticut CBCs in this issue.

MABEL OSGOOD WRIGHT AWARD

2014: Thomas R. Baptist

Patrick Comins presented the following at the 30th annual meeting of the Connecticut Ornithological Association on March 22, 2014.

Many of us have a seminal moment in our lives when we realize that we are a birder. For this year's recipient of the Mabel Osgood Wright Award that moment occurred December 15, 1970. As a 14-year-old he found a "baby" owl in a 12-foot-tall white pine sapling along the trail that borders the north side of Rockwood Reservoir in Greenwich. Curious as to why there would be a baby owl out in the wintertime, he reached out to the local Audubon chapter. They went back to the spot with him, and he learned it wasn't a baby, but rather a Northern Saw-whet Owl. This experience ignited a passion in his life that has never gone out. Upon seeing his enthusiasm for the discovery his mother said, "Maybe when you grow up, you can be a voice for the voiceless, so that precious places and moments like this can be protected forever."

Tom has more than fulfilled his mother's vision. It is my great honor to present the 2015 Mabel Osgood Wright Award to my friend Tom Baptist. Tom earned his Master of Science degree in Environmental Science from the University of New Haven, studying Peregrine Falcons in his thesis work. He served as conservation director for the Town of Greenwich from 1978 to 1997, playing a pivotal role in the conservation of Great Captains Island when the island became a heron rookery, after the abandonment of Chimon Island. As a side venture, Tom worked on a project with a fellow Greenwich birder, Joe Zeranski. As anyone knows who has worked with Joe, he is a hard taskmaster! That hard work paid off in 1990 when Connecticut Birds was published by the University Press of New England, the first compilation of the status of bird populations and distribution in Connecticut since 1913. Yes ladies and gentlemen, this year's recipient literally wrote the book on Connecticut birds.

In 1997, Tom became the founding executive director of Audubon Connecticut, establishing its Board of Directors in 1999 and leading the Connecticut State Office of the National Audubon Society to become a prominent force for conservation in Connecticut. Under his leadership, Audubon Connecticut recognized and initiated significant conservation measures at 27 Important Areas, internationally recognized places that are critical habitat for birds. Under Tom's leadership Audubon played a key role in the permanent protection of thousands of acres of open space in Connecticut, including hundreds of acres added to Barn Island Wildlife Management Area in Stonington, over one square mile of habitat in the tidal headwaters of the East River in Guilford, acreage added to the Bent of the River, and more than 300 acres protected in the upper Farmington River Watershed in the Pasquarello and Leopold Sanctuaries. Tom also established Audubon's strong presence in the legislative halls of Hartford, speaking out for better protection for birds and land.

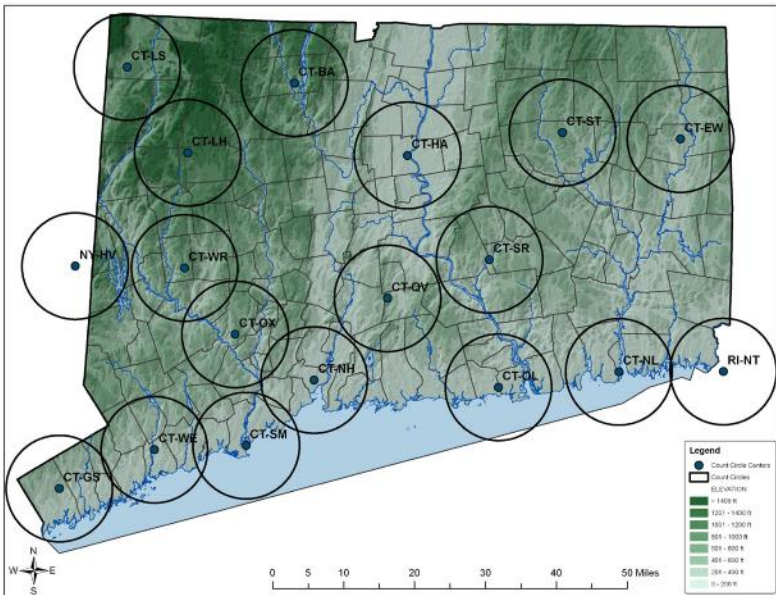
Tom led the Long Island Sound Campaign in partnership with Audubon New York to advocate at the local, state, and federal levels for funding and regulations to clean up and protect the Sound – an effort that has significantly improved water quality in this estuary of national significance. Tom also pushed to have menhaden conservation be a priority bird conservation issue. Many of the birds we care so much about depend on these oily fish as the base of prey to survive and raise their families. You may have noticed that there are more alcids, gannets and other fish-eating birds in Long Island Sound. When I do, I thank Tom Baptist for his visionary leadership in the conservation of Long Island Sound and its watershed. In 2012, he assumed the National Audubon Society senior scientist position.

He is currently Superintendent of Public Works for the City of Hartford, where he is leading the effort "to make Hartford the greenest capital city in the country." It is very reassuring to me that the care of such critical places as Keeney Park and Riverside Park in our state capital are in Tom's very capable hands. Please join me in congratulating Thomas R. Baptist, the 2014 Mabel Osgood Wright Award recipient!

THE 2013-14 CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

By Stephen P. Broker

This year we had another fine statewide Christmas Bird Count. It is the 114th consecutive year of the national CBC effort and the 114th year that a count has taken place in Connecticut. A total of 658 field observers and 86 feeder watchers participated in the state's 18 CBCs during the Dec. 14 – Jan. 5 window stipulated by National Audubon Society. In the process, 1,773 total party hours were logged, and 6,750 miles were covered by foot, car, and boat. In keeping with the Connecticut Christmas Bird Count review articles of recent years, each of the 18 counts occurring in the state is analyzed by reviewing its last 30 years of results, and on a species-by-species basis identifications are made of those birds that have been counted this year in record high totals, record low totals, species new to the count, and rarities (birds seen six or fewer times in the last three decades). The mass of CBC data collected on each count by our field observers and feeder watchers is kept in Excel spreadsheets that can be used in an effort to identify decade-long population trends



for each species.

A number of our birds have been showing steady increases in their early winter populations. These include some dabbling and diving ducks (notably Gadwall and Hooded Merganser), Wild Turkey, loons, New World vultures, Bald Eagle, several buteos (Red-shouldered and Red-tailed hawks), an accipiter (Cooper's Hawk), two falcon species (Merlin, Peregrine Falcon), alcids (still in low numbers in Long Island Sound but being seen more regularly), woodpeckers (Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker), Fish Crow, Carolina Wren, and a few "winter sparrows" (Fox Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco). At the same time, some species have been evidencing steady and severe declines in numbers over the last one to three decades, among them American Black Duck, Ring-necked Pheasant, Northern Bobwhite, American Kestrel, Ruddy Turnstone, gulls (Ring-billed, Herring, and Great Black-backed gulls), American Crow, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, American Tree Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Purple Finch and Evening Grosbeak. Christmas Bird Count data can be compared with census data from our statewide Summer Bird Counts, breeding bird and other surveys, the Connecticut Breeding Bird Atlas (covering the years 1982-1986), and annual Connecticut Audubon Society "State of the Birds" reports in order to reinforce our understanding of species that are maintaining increasing, stable, or declining populations. These various censusing techniques now are being supplemented by the rapidly expanding eBird database, launched 12 years ago by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society. This year's Connecticut CBC data tend to support the increasing or decreasing population trends listed above. A future article will focus more directly on those species which are either increasing or declining in their early winter numbers. For now, let's consider this year's Connecticut Christmas Bird Count data.

The 2013-14 total of 171 count day species and one count week species (Orange-crowned Warbler) represents an excellent result for our efforts. The species total compares favor-



Martha Penella photo
American Robin numbers fluctuate widely from year to year on Connecticut CBCs.



Ed Doyle photo
Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers' increase as a breeding species is also reflected in higher CBC numbers.

ably with the record 30-year high statewide species total of 177 count day and one count week species in 2007-08. An average year produces about 166 species statewide. Remarkably, we have recorded 263 different species of birds plus seven count week species over the the past 30 years. Those species seen only during the count period (three days before and three days after the designated count day) are: Chukar (1984-85), Atlantic White Pelican (2005-06), Gyrfalcon (1987-88 and again in 1995-96), Purple Gallinule (1998-99), Piping Plover (1993-94), Budgerigar (1985-86) and Western Kingbird (2006-07).

Thirty-year record high counts (12 species) and low counts (11 species) were fairly balanced in number. Notable high species counts were recorded for Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, Black Scoter, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Snowy Owl (15!), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (265!), Palm Warbler (20!), Song Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco. Low species counts included the early winter numbers of Mallard, both cormorants, Ruddy Turnstone, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Pigeon (feral), American Crow, Red-breasted Nuthatch and Northern Mockingbird. One new species was added to the 30-year list: Black Guillemot. The list of rare species observed is impressive, consisting of Pacific Loon (seen three times in 30 years), King Rail (six times), Sandhill Crane CW (four times), Long-billed Dowitcher (five times), Dovekie (four times), Thick-billed Murre (three times), Common Murre (two times), Rufous Hummingbird (five times), Nelson's Sparrow (three times, but note that earlier reports of Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow included some identified Nelson's Sparrows before the Nelson's/Saltmarsh species split was recognized by the AOU), and Yellow-headed Blackbird (five times). With the exception of Sandhill Crane and Yellow-headed Blackbird, these species were seen on coastal counts. Other noteworthy species in the state included Harlequin Duck, Nashville Warbler, and for hybrid enthusiasts, a Gadwall X Mallard hybrid.

Let's diverge from the usual AOU Check-List approach to reviewing the year's CBC results and focus instead on the highlights of individual Christmas Bird Counts. Each count cov-

ers a 15-mile diameter circle of land and water habitats with a designated center to the circle, as published in the National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count website. There is slight overlap of a few of our Connecticut CBC circles, and several counts extend across state lines into neighboring New York and Rhode Island. Sponsoring organizations (bird clubs, Audubon societies) are responsible for coordinating the count day with a CBC compiler, a series of area captains, and representative coverage of more than 175 square miles of geography. Not surprisingly, some counts extend into eight or more neighboring towns. The majority of our compilers have served in their volunteer positions for many years, and the area captains often have been birding their sections of the circle for 1, 2 3, or more decades. Such dedication to the concept, philosophy and protocols of the Christmas Bird Count give us powerful tools for an analysis of changing bird populations. In keeping with tradition, the CBC data are maintained for six northern, five mid-state, and seven coastal Christmas Bird Count circles.

Northern Counts (Barkhamsted, Edwin Way Teale - Trail Wood, Hartford, Litchfield Hills, Lakeville-Sharon, Storrs):

The six northern counts produced a total of 114 count day species, a respectable total yet far short of the record 124 species in 2001-02. Rarities included Cackling Goose, White-winged Scoter, and Red-necked Grebe (see below). Thirty-year record low counts outnumbered record high counts 2 to 1. Among the winners were Red-bellied Woodpecker (showing no sign of slowdown in its northward expansion), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (expressing significant increase in numbers), and Song Sparrow (a good year for this species). The "losers" included Mallard (perhaps a temporary glitch in its otherwise expanding population), Sharp-shinned Hawk (down slightly), Herring Gull (where have all the landfills gone?), Rock Pigeon (what's up with this?), Red-breasted Nuthatch (not a big year for this species exhibiting periodic incursion years), European Starling (undergoing a nationwide decline?), Field Sparrow (a source of concern), Brown-headed Cowbird (no tears there), House Finch (a different

problem of the eyes?), and House Sparrow (down more than 20%, but again no tears shed). Total field observers and combined field/feeder observers were at a new 30-year low, certainly a factor in the new low total of fewer than 80,000 individual birds counted on the northern CBCs. Combined numbers from the six northern counts give a 30-year list of 176 count day species.

Barkhamsted (CTBA), December 21, 2013, Litchfield Hills Audubon Society, Compiler David Tripp, Jr. Barkhamsted celebrated its 30th consecutive Christmas Bird Count this year. Count day temperatures ranged from 28 to 57 degrees Fahrenheit, with partly open still water and partly frozen moving water, clear to partly cloudy skies and no rain or snow throughout the day. Red-breasted Merganser was new to the count day, previously seen only as a count week bird. Greater Scaup, Red-necked Grebe, Eastern Phoebe and Snow Bunting were the best finds. Red-shouldered Hawk was well-represented for this northern count, and Northern Flicker, Carolina Wren and Hermit Thrush were in particularly high numbers. American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee and European Starling were comparatively hard to come by, however. The 75 count day species represent an excellent total in spite of the lowest number of total party hours in 30 years. The 30-year species total is 121 count day and one count week species (Long-tailed Duck in 2008-09).

Edwin Way Teale – Trail Wood (CTEW), December 29, 2013, Natchaug Ornithological Society, Compiler Susan Harrington. The Trail Wood CBC was held first in 1986-87, and this year's effort was the 28th in the last 29 years. Minimum temperature was 28 degrees Fahrenheit with a maximum of 42 degrees, leaving still water partly frozen and moving water partly open. A morning free of rain or snow gave way to an afternoon interrupted by heavy rain, bringing at least some field observations to a halt. One new species, American Woodcock, was added to the 28-year total. Wood Duck, Bufflehead and Iceland Gull all were good finds for the day. Species counted in record high totals included Wild Turkey, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush and

Gray Catbird. The only record low count was for American Tree Sparrow. Trail Wood has recorded 117 count day species since the count's inception.

Hartford (CTHA), December 14, 2013, Hartford Audubon Society, Compiler Jay Kaplan. The Hartford count circle was chilly, with temperatures ranging from 13 to 22 degrees Fahrenheit. Not surprisingly, still water was frozen, moving water was partly frozen, and the day saw light snowfall throughout. While no new species were added to the Hartford 30-year list, rarities observed included Cackling Goose, Marsh Wren, Lapland Longspur and Eastern Meadowlark. Significant new high counts were recorded for Merlin, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, American Robin (a 50% increase over the previous high count for this highly variable flocking bird), Song Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco. Mallard numbers plummeted (down nearly 50% from the previous record low), and other species counted in record low numbers included Sharp-shinned Hawk (only one seen). Ring-billed Gull (down 37%), Herring Gull (down 75%!), Rock Pigeon (down 36%), Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Northern Mockingbird (down 20%), European Starling, Field Sparrow (missed for the first time in more than 30 years), House Finch and House Sparrow. Hartford's 87 count day species again made for the highest species total among northern counts. Hartford's 30-year list of species totals 155 count day and two count week species (Virginia Rail in 1993-94, Yellow-breasted Chat in 1996-97), very lofty numbers indeed! Hartford long has been the envy of all Connecticut counts in the number of observers in the field and at feeders, yet new 30-year low total party hours and total party miles may account for the 30-year low total individual birds counted. To be clear about this, nobody can touch Hartford for participation levels, yet in the mid- to late-1990s twice as many birders took part in Hartford CBCs as in recent years. We look for continued inspiration from Charter Oak country!

Litchfield Hills (CTLH), December 16, 2013, Litchfield Hills Audubon Society, Compiler Raymond Belding. Temperatures ranged from a chilly 16 degrees Fahrenheit to a high

of 28 degrees, and birders had to deal with snow depths of 2 to 4 inches, although no snow or rain came down during the count. Still water was frozen, and moving water was partly open. Rare species seen included Red-breasted Merganser, Iceland Gull, Eastern Phoebe and Chipping Sparrow. Red-shouldered Hawk was the only species achieving record high totals, while Mourning Dove, American Crow, American Tree Sparrow (down nearly 30% from the previous record low) and House Sparrow were in very low supply. Field observers, total observers, total party hours, and total individual birds observed were in record low numbers. Litchfield Hills has recorded 141 count day and three count week species (Blue-winged Teal in 2003-04, Peregrine Falcon in 1999-2000, and Glaucous Gull in 2003-04) over the past 30 years.

Lakeville-Sharon (CTLS), December 15, 2013, Housatonic Audubon Society, Compiler Robert Moeller. Temperatures barely exceeded freezing, ranging from 25 to 35 degrees Fahrenheit, while this northeastern locality had 5 to 8 inches of snow cover. Not surprisingly, still water was frozen and moving water was partly open. Cloudy conditions during the count were not augmented by snow or rain. Sixteen observers trudged through the field, and three more birders were at feeders. Peregrine Falcon was a species new to the count (30-year perspective), and White-winged Scoter, Merlin and Yellow-rumped Warbler were nice rarities found. New high counts were achieved for three duck species: American Wigeon, White-winged Scoter, and Ruddy Duck. Red-tailed Hawks were sparse in the skies, as were American Crow and American Tree Sparrow, and Belted Kingfisher was not to be found – missed for the first time in 30 years. Lakeville-Sharon's 30-year list consists of 126 count day species.

Storrs (CTST), December 14, 2013, Natchaug Ornithological Association, Compiler Steve Morytko. Talk about cold, the temps for this count ranged from 14 to 19 degrees Fahrenheit. Pull on your parkas! Some areas of the count circle had 4 inches of snow on the ground, while other areas were free of snow. To add to that, morning birding hours had light



Mark Szantyr photo

Black-capped Chickadees were one of several common forest species recorded in sub-par numbers on the 2013-14 CBCs.

snow, and afternoon hours saw heavy snow fall. Still water, partly open, moving water, partly frozen. Twenty-eight field observers and five feeder watchers braved these conditions. What were the results? Well, 12 species were counted at record high totals and none at record low numbers. Among the new high counts were Ruddy Duck (124, when the previous high was 1!), Barred Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (from a high of four up to 13 this year), Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow (up 36% from the previous high), Dark-eyed Junco and Common Grackle. Storrs also added a new species to the 30-year list, a lone Gadwall. The rarities found were Green-winged Teal, Ruddy Duck, Merlin count week, and Fish Crow, working its way upstate. Winter sometimes brings out the best in us. The 30-year list stands at 133 count day species and two count week species (Peregrine Falcon in back-to-back years of 2011-12 and 2012-13 and Short-eared Owl in 2004-05.

Mid-State Counts (Oxford, Pawling, Quinnipiac Valley, Salmon River, Woodbury-Roxbury):

Five mid-state counts tabulated a total of 107 count day and one count week species (Long-tailed Duck). The only species counted in record high numbers was Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, but it shot up to 98 individuals seen, nearly 40% higher

than the previous record high of 71 individuals in 2008-09 and 2009-10. Species in at least temporary decline included Mallard, Great Black-backed Gull (a continuing trend), feral Rock Pigeon, Great Horned Owl, American Crow (down nearly 50%!), Northern Mockingbird (down nearly 30%), European Starling (there's a pattern here, statewide), and Field Sparrow (a scrubland species in decline). The mid-state counts did well with rarities: Cackling Goose, Long-tailed Duck count week, Horned Grebe, Golden Eagle, Glaucous Gull, Clay-colored Sparrow and Yellow-headed Blackbird. Over the past 30 years, mid-state counts have recorded 174 count day and two count week species (the introduced or escaped Chukar and Budgerigar).

Oxford (CTOX), January 5, 2014, Naugatuck Valley Audubon, Compiler Roy Harvey. The count was characterized by wide-ranging temperatures, with a low of 7 degrees Fahrenheit and a high of 31 degrees, with still water partly frozen, moving water open, clear to partly cloudy skies, light to no rain both morning and afternoon, and an absence of snow cover. Ten field observers covered this count circle. Clay-colored Sparrow was new to the count, and rarities included Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Iceland and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Eastern Phoebe, and Vesper Sparrow. Expanding numbers of Red-shouldered Hawks, Red-bellied Woodpeckers and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were consistent with their occurrence on northern counts, and Cedar Waxwing appeared in numerous small flocks. Field Sparrow was missed on the Oxford count for the first time in 30 years. The count has tallied 134 count day species over the past three decades.

Pawling, New York/Hidden Valley, Connecticut (NYHV), January 1 2014, Compilers Carena Pooth and Angela Dimmitt. Chilly temperatures of 17 to 27 degrees Fahrenheit accompanied morning partly cloudy and afternoon partly clear skies, still and moving water partly open, and no rain or snow. Pawling's best finds were Golden Eagle, American Woodcock (found for just the second time in 30 years), and Snow Bunting. Of the five species recorded at record highs, Winter Wren (14 individuals) and American Robin (4,472

birds, an increase of nearly 350 per cent over the previous high) were most noteworthy. With 78 species recorded on count day, only feral Rock Pigeon fell to a record low total. A total of 133 count day and three count week species (Barrow's Goldeneye in 2011-12, Chukar in 1984-85, and Brown Thrasher in 1987-88) have been seen on the Pawling/Hidden Valley count beginning with the 1984-85 CBC.

Quinnipiac Valley (CTQV), December 15, 2013, Quinnipiac Valley Audubon Society, Compilers Melissa Baston and Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe. Temperatures ranged from 20 to 37 degrees Fahrenheit under cloudy or partly cloudy skies with heavy morning snow and both still and moving water partly open. Quinnipiac Valley dealt with 4 to 7 inches of snow on the ground, similar to the situation at Storrs the day before. Most interesting rarities were Cackling Goose, Common Loon and Iceland Gull. Reflecting a developing pattern, there were record numbers of Red-bellied Woodpecker and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, abundant Eastern Bluebirds, and a strong supply of Dark-eyed Juncos. Mallard numbers were depressed, and Great Black-backed Gull was missed for the first time in 30 years. American Crow numbers also slumped. Quinnipiac Valley has very effectively boosted its numbers of field observers in recent years, yet slightly more than 11,000 individual birds counted this year represent a 30-year low total. Total party hours also have been higher in most recent years. The 30-year species list stands at 149 count day species, highest of all mid-state CBCs. (Horned Grebe was seen count week 31 years ago and now drops off the 30-year list.)

Salmon River (CTSR), December 15, 2013, Mattabeseck Audubon Society, Compiler Joseph Morin. Light morning snow delayed the start of birding for many field observers with temperatures ranging from 25 to 34 degrees Fahrenheit and cloudy or partly cloudy skies. Snow was a factor on the Salmon River count, as well, with depths of 3 to 6 inches. As expected, still water was frozen while moving water was partly frozen. A Long-tailed Duck observed at Bashan Lake in Moodus on December 16 most likely was present on count

day but was not picked up due to the field team not getting to this often productive water body on a day of abbreviated field time. Too bad. Dark-eyed Junco numbers were high, and Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles observed streaming across a power line cut, also in Moodus, made for big totals. There's something to be learned every year! Herring Gulls and Northern Mockingbirds reflected statewide declines. American Pipit was a good find, as was Chipping Sparrow. Time spent at feeders was up, but the inclement weather dampened total party hours to a new 30-year low. There have been 138 count day and one count week species (Long-tailed Duck this year) tallied on the 30-year list.

Woodbury-Roxbury (CTWR), December 14, 2013, Western Connecticut Bird Club, Compiler Ken Elkins. Cool temperatures characterized all December 14 CBCs, with Woodbury-Roxbury experiencing chilling lows of 12 degrees Fahrenheit and a high of 22 degrees. Snow depth ranged from 0 to 4 inches under cloudy A.M. and P.M. skies, but a major factor was the heavy snowfall on the morning of the count followed by light snow in the afternoon. Two species, Horned Grebe and Yellow-headed Blackbird, were new to the Woodbury-Roxbury 30-year list. Best rarities were Greater Scaup and Glaucous Gull, with Vesper Sparrow being another nice find. No new high counts were achieved, but 13 low counts were indicative in part of the difficult birding conditions. American Black Ducks (25 total this year) are variable in numbers from year to year in this count circle. A single Ring-necked Pheasant kept this species from being missed for the first time, and most of the lowest totals of pheasants have occurred in the last ten years. Rock Pigeons have plummeted here, and Mourning Doves also were comparatively scarce. The American Crow population censused is severely diminished this year. Black-capped Chickadee and White-breasted Nuthatch are two widely distributed species that set record low counts. Northern Mockingbird was at 33% of its previous low total. Similarly, House Sparrow numbers have crashed this year. Some of these low numbers can be attributed in part to the weather conditions, including a 30-year low total number of individual birds counted and low total



Mark Szantyr photo

Ruffed Grouse remains a species in steep decline, a trend underscored by CBC data.

party hours. Woodbury-Roxbury has recorded 144 count day and four count week species (Brant in 1988-89, Long-tailed Duck in 1988-89 and 2004-05, Budgerigar in 1985-86, and Western Tanager in 2000-01) over the course of the last 30 count years.

Coastal Counts (Greenwich-Stamford, Napatree, New Haven, New London, Old Lyme-Saybrook, Stratford-Milford, Westport):

Our seven coastal counts this year produced 164 count day and two count week species (these being Glaucous Gull and Orange-crowned Warbler). Two species and a hybrid are new to the 30-year list, with Sandhill Crane making a count day appearance (the species was count week in 1991-92) and Black Guillemot being a standout alcid sighting. The Gadwall X Mallard report has been noted already. This year's rare coastal species are mentioned above. Cackling Goose and Clay-colored Sparrow also are deserving of note. Fully 25% of all coastal species were recording in record high or record low numbers. Four Tundra Swans were particularly unusual. Hard to find diving ducks included three Harlequin Ducks, and two Barrow's Goldeneyes. A total of 58

Bald Eagles signal a continuing resurgence of this species. Undoubtedly the avian story of winter has been the unprecedented irruption of Snowy Owls into New England, with 15 Snowies decorating the coastal shorelines of Connecticut. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Common Raven are two species with clear trends of increasing numbers, and Carolina Wren has not been dampened by recent winters of greater snow cover. Speaking of snow, there were lots of Snow Buntings to count thanks largely to birds observed along the coast between the Housatonic and the Connecticut rivers. There is continuing concern about the dwindling numbers of American Kestrels on the Connecticut CBC with just two seen along the coast and three others inland. Among the sandpipers, Ruddy Turnstone is becoming more difficult to find. Whereas it was not unusual for us to count more than 900 Northern Mockingbirds coastally in the 1980s and early to mid-1990s, we were down to 251 individuals coastally this year. In 30 years, coastal counts have recorded 248 different species on count days and an additional 8 species seen only during count week.

Greenwich-Stamford (CTGS), December 15, 2013, Audubon Greenwich, Compiler Gary Palmer. Snow cover here of 3 to 6 inches also affected field observations, with temperatures



Bruce Finnan photo

It wasn't a notable year for lingering warblers overall, but Palm Warblers were logged in good numbers.



Mark Szantyr photo

No one is lamenting the long-term decline of the European Starling, which is reflected in plummeting CBC totals.

ranging from 28 to 36 degrees Fahrenheit. Partly clear morning skies gave way to a partly cloudy afternoon, with no new precipitation occurring. Greenwich-Stamford's best birds were four Tundra Swans (the first ones recorded here since 1989-90), six Razorbills, a Snowy Owl, and three Red-headed Woodpeckers (a family unit?). The Gadwall X Mallard hybrid also was found here. Ten new 30-year high counts outweighed six new 30-year low counts. The highs included 50 Snow Geese, 34 Black Vultures, 34 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and 10 Common Ravens. Both American Black Duck and Mallard numbers sank to new lows, and the three Great Horned Owls reported were far below the 30-year average of 17 Great Horned Owls on the count. Pied-billed Grebe was missed for the first time in 30 years. The count has recorded 187 count day and four count week species (Greater White-fronted Goose in 2002-03, Purple Gallinule in 1998-99, Laughing Gull in 1984-85 and 1998-99, Lincoln's Sparrow in 2012-13) in the last 30 years.

Napatree, Rhode Island-Connecticut-New York (RINT), December 22, 2013, Compilers Shai Mitra and Glenn Williams. The Napatree CBC was conducted under unseason-



Mark Szantyr photo

Dark-eyed Juncos were among the group of species found in above-average numbers on the Connecticut CBCs.

ably warm conditions, with temperatures of 49 to 52 degrees Fahrenheit. This warm spell led to local fog throughout the day, with light rain in the morning. Still water remained frozen and moving water partly frozen. Winds gusted to 16 mph. Two great coastal finds new to the count were Pacific Loon and Thick-billed Murre, with a Black Guillemot also being sighted for the second time in this count's 12-year history. House Wren was an inland rarity. Being the youngest of our 18 CBCs (the Napatree count circle takes in portions of Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York), the count would be expected to set numerous new high totals, and such was the case for 22 species. Among them were Gadwall, Iceland Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, the four Snowy Owls sighted, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy and Hairy woodpeckers, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, European Starling (certainly not the trend elsewhere for this species), Palm Warbler, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, and Eastern Meadowlark. Several diving ducks were in short supply (Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser), and singleton Double-crested and Great cormorants were found. Napatree benefited from record numbers of field observers (31) and a new high number of total party hours. The 12-year list for Napatree now stands at 179 count day species.

New Haven (CTNH), December 14, 2013, New Haven Bird

Club, Compiler Christopher Loscalzo. Light snow and cloudy skies in morning and afternoon presented some challenges to field observers, with temperatures ranging from 17 to 30 degrees Fahrenheit. Inland areas had up to 2 inches of snow cover. Winds ranged from 10 to 20 mph, and still water was partly open, moving water partly frozen. Best birds on or near Long Island Sound were a female Harlequin Duck, a drake Barrow's Goldeneye and a Snowy Owl. King Rail (last reported in the New Haven count circle in 1989-90), a tree-hugging Red-headed Woodpecker observed for many weeks in Downtown New Haven, and a Nashville and four Pine warblers added to the list of rarities. A remarkable 13 Palm Warblers reinforced the old adage about a bird in the hand. Dark-eyed Juncos were found in abundance. The 127 Rusty Blackbirds reported were welcome sightings for a bird apparently in serious decline. On the negative side, Long-tailed Ducks were scarce, Pied-billed Grebe was missed for the first time in 30 years, and such common birds as Mourning Dove, Black-capped Chickadee, and House Finch achieved new lows. The 23 Northern Mockingbirds seen were far below the previous record low of 65 individuals, and European Starling (2,211) continues its 30-year decline. New Haven has tabulated 202 count day and seven count week species (Gyr-falcon in 1987-88, Black-legged Kittiwake in 1992-93, Boreal Chickadee in 1987-88 and 1989-90, a Veery recovering from previous injury in 1989-90, American Redstart in 1993-94, Wilson's Warbler in 2001-02, Bullock's Oriole in 1991-92) over the last three decades.

New London (CTNL), December 28, 2013, Compiler Robert Dewire. Partly cloudy to cloudy skies, temperatures climbing from 22 to 47 degrees Fahrenheit, and an absence of rain or snow made for good birding conditions at New London. Water bodies were open or partly open. Best birds were American Bittern, Long-billed Dowitcher (last seen here in 1999-2000), Common Murre (also seen two years earlier), two Snowy Owls and an Eastern Phoebe. Hooded Mergansers continue to increase in early winter numbers here and elsewhere. There were a number of flocks of Cedar Waxwings. Most notably, New London counted more than 15,000 Red-

winged Blackbirds. This species is more highly variable in numbers from year to year than any other. Associated flocks of Brown-headed Cowbirds (712 individuals) also set a record high count. Pine Warbler and Baltimore Oriole were additional nice finds. Only one Gadwall was spotted, and the reduced numbers of feral Rock Pigeon on the statewide count were experienced at New London, also. New London's 30-year species list includes 190 count day and fur count week (Osprey in 1990-91 and 2005-06, Western Kingbird in 2006-07, Black-and-white Warbler in 1990-91, Orange-crowned Warbler in 1998-99) species.

Old Lyme-Saybrook (CTOL), January 5, 2014, Potapaug Audubon Society, Compiler Barbara Hawes. Frigid early morning temperatures gave way to above-freezing afternoon conditions, as Old Lyme-Saybrook dealt with 2 to 6 inches of snow cover. Light rain interrupted portions of morning and afternoon. Most water bodies were frozen. The count added two Eurasian Wigeons, two Snowy Owls, and a Clay-colored Sparrow to the 30-year list. Snowy Owl previously had been seen during count week in 1994-95 and 2011-12. Two Common Eiders also were reported. Significant high counts were made for Gadwall (331, up from a previous high of 44), American Wigeon and Green-winged Teal. Snow Buntings (1,140) also were well represented on the count. There were no record low counts. Old Lyme-Saybrook has recorded 190 count day and four count week species (Gyr Falcon in 1995-96, Sandhill Crane in 1991-92, Piping Plover in 1993-94, and a stunning male Painted Bunting at a feeder in 1989-90 and 1990-91) over the last 3 decades.

Stratford-Milford (CTSM), December 22, 2013, Compiler Steve Mayo. The unusually warm and consequently foggy conditions at Napatree on this date also prevailed at Stratford-Milford, with a temperature range of 47 to 57 degrees Fahrenheit – veritable shirt-sleeve weather. Still bodies of water retained some frozen sections. The one addition to the 30-year list was a count week Sandhill Crane, the species making its fourth appearance on a Connecticut CBC in the last 30 years. Among the excellent rarities seen were

Black Vulture, Long-billed Dowitcher CW, Glaucous Gull CW, Common Raven, Orange-crowned Warbler CW, and Baltimore Oriole. Five of the state's Snowy Owls were found here. Red-bellied Woodpecker and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker were in record high numbers. No species were observed in new low counts. The 30-year list includes 183 count day and three count week species (Sandhill Crane this year, American Oystercatcher a year ago, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in 1985-86).

Westport (CTWE), December 15, 2013, Connecticut Audubon Birdcraft Museum/Kymry Group, Compilers Mardi Dickinson and Townsend Dickinson. Temperatures through the day never made it out of the 30s, as Westport birders dealt with 2 to 8 inches of snow cover and light winds from the northwest. The snow cover and light morning rain contributed to record low counts for a dozen species, yet Westport added one new species to its 30-year list, a Rufous Hummingbird. Additional rarities were two Eurasian Wigeons, Barrow's Goldeneye, six Common Ravens and a Baltimore Oriole. Coastal birds counted in high numbers were Common Loon (56) and Northern Gannet (6). More than two dozen American Pipits were observed. Westport's own flocking bird frenzy consisted of a record high 412 Common Grackles, up from the previous high of 52 individuals. Unlike other counts in the state, Westport missed finding Yellow-bellied Sapsucker for the first time in 30 years. American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Mockingbird, and Northern Cardinal all were in short supply. American Tree Sparrow (only nine counted) continues a dramatic slide downward in numbers, and Savannah Sparrow was missed for the first time. Total observers (field and feeders) have remained in the 30s for the last few years, due in part to a substantial reduction in feeder watchers on this count since the 1980s. Greater numbers of field observers also participated in earlier years. Westport's species total for the past 30 years stands at 178 count day and 4 count week species (Cackling Goose in 2010-11, American White Pelican in 2005-06, Willet in 1985-86, and Red Crossbill in 2012-13).

SPECIES	THE 2013-2014 CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT					MIDSTATE COUNTS					COASTAL COUNTS					STATE TOTAL		
	NORTHERN COUNTS																	
	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NA	NH	NL		OL	SM
12/21/2013	12/29/2013	12/14/2013	12/16/2013	12/15/2013	12/14/2013	01/09/14	01/01/14	12/15/2013	12/15/2013	12/14/2013	12/15/2013	12/22/2013	12/14/2013	12/28/2013	01/05/14	12/22/2013	12/15/2013	
Snow Goose					70							50	1					
Brant			1									108	2	1216	170	6	11	1706
Cackling Goose														1				3
Canada Goose	134	488	6600	1327	6493	865	176	808	2259	648	3343	4114	2743	5686	3716	1390	2237	2034
Mute Swan			9	24	20	5	16	29	89	109	4	35	187	97	129	176	31	25
Tundra Swan																		985
Wood Duck		2								1	5	5	4	1	1	1	1	22
Gadwall			9									125	44	217	1	331	275	42
Eurasian Wigeon														1				7
American Wigeon					5							61	2	63	2	2	2	7
American Black Duck	29	22	223	78	21	3	77	81	78	10	25	327	394	725	438	996	192	580
Mallard	148	70	355	267	39	196	358	529	262	13	245	687	543	1681	1384	740	1780	5558
Mallard Hybrid				1				1	3					6			6	17
Gadwall X Mallard Hybrid												1						1
Northern Shoveler															3			3
Northern Pintail			1							1	1					1	8	12
Green-winged Teal (Amer.)						1								96	2	50	6	159
Canvasback												2					4	32
Ring-necked Duck			1	77	21	23	7	23	45		34	303	3	20	191	51	54	84
Greater Scaup	3			1							1	99	1	1302	231	1266	1402	4734
Lesser Scaup	1			7					3		2	7	2	300	20	1	2	750
scaup, sp.													150				600	1365
Common Eider												1264			99	2		1365
Harlequin Duck												2	1					3
Surf Scoter												1	22	1	80	45	2	165
White-winged Sooter					5							24	1	12		CW	7	49
Black Scoter												138		18				156
scoter, species												1						1
Long-tailed Duck										CW		163	12	13	20	26	88	274
Bufflehead		1		1	2	14	1	7	1		2	506	78	138	576	51	105	163
Common Goldeneye	2		2	2	1	2	1	21		19		121	15	367	171	136	291	199
Barrow's Goldeneye														1				1
Hooded Merganser	51	13	26		176	27	18	100	51	36	17	234	209	207	846	135	128	139
Common Merganser	142	23	81		36	71	145	348	11	92	198	1136	38	68	85	102	36	5
Red-breasted Merganser	1			1								259	209	187	367	385	138	150
Ruddy Duck	1			15	96	124		4	142		2	20	34	78	22	115		653
Ring-necked Pheasant	3		4	3	8					2	2	1						23
Ruffed Grouse		1			1													2
Wild Turkey	109	121	54	33	72	161	3	76	38	17	48	48		51	43	55	7	22
Red-throated Loon												20	20	9	29	20	3	15
Pacific Loon													1					1
Common Loon	3		1									37	135	23	91	98	6	56
Pied-billed Grebe								2			2	0	0	8	1	1	1	15
Horned Grebe	1										1	40	20	6	22	31	11	27
Red-necked Grebe	1											5						6
Northern Gannet												11	62				6	85
Double-crested Cormorant									1			CW	1	2	13	1	5	24
Great Cormorant										3		30	1	11	21	13	7	87
cormorant, sp.																		1
American Bittern													1	2			CW	2
Great Blue Heron	2	17	15	CW	1	1	2	7	10	3	10	30	16	14	37	13	9	11
Black-crowned Night-Heron												CW					3	6
Black Vulture				6		3		5			1	34	8	CW	12		1	71
Turkey Vulture			39		36			1	1	1	1	92	10	CW	114	CW	2	18
Bald Eagle	8	4	9	4	7	1	1	17	4	5	4	3	8	39	1	5	122	315
Northern Harrier	1		3	1				1	1			2	7	13	10	23	16	4
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	1	1	4	2	1	6	4	2	2	2	3	3	5	8	11	6	3
Cooper's Hawk	CW	1	9	3	5	6	5	2	9	4	2	14	10	6	7	17	8	7

SPECIES	THE 2013-2014 CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT														STATE TOTAL					
	NORTHERN COUNTS				MIDSTATE COUNTS						COASTAL COUNTS					WE	STATE TOTAL			
	BA	EW	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NA	NH				NL	OL	SM
12/21/2013	12/29/2013	12/14/2013	12/16/2013	12/15/2013	12/14/2013	01/05/14	01/01/14	12/15/2013	12/15/2013	12/14/2013	12/15/2013	12/22/2013	12/14/2013	12/28/2013	01/05/14	12/22/2013	12/15/2013			
crow, sp.														92						
Common Raven	35	3	1	7	5	5	5	10	11	4	4	10	1	10	1	1	6	120		
Horned Lark			250	41	136	189			5	5		84	35	85	40	122	182	47	1216	
Black-capped Chickadee	654	411	320	832	162	437	373	659	283	266	362	392	334	195	655	236	129	60	6760	
Tufted Titmouse	243	109	228	310	66	297	267	380	272	234	314	409	120	170	138	232	73		4110	
Red-breasted Nuthatch	4					1											2		15	
White-breasted Nuthatch	176	88	152	150	35	123	122	220	99	138	111	179	65	89	107	113	60	22	2049	
Brown Creeper	17	2	15	10	1	8	7	16	8	3	7	13	1	11	4	4	5	4	136	
Carolina Wren	62	34	54	24	8	35	48	67	47	47	35	138	182	51	158	82	63	22	1157	
House Wren														1						
Winter Wren	7	7	4	4	7	7	5	14	4	3	3	18	10	9	7	6	4	3	118	
Marsh Wren			1											3		3			8	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	73	30	36	29	7	32	12	10	13	7	13	7	51	31	22	10	4	10	397	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet			3	1					7	1	2	4	14	6	7		5		51	
Eastern Bluebird	127	72	31	122	65	66	74	200	161	116	148	60	101	34	75	69	2	49	1572	
Hermitt Thrush	17	7	5	24	7	8	15	27	17	13	28	11	19	4	22	12	3	2	241	
American Robin	1055	498	2482	448	485	522	1201	4472	1298	583	1626	1766	683	1136	1185	1972	284	103	21799	
Gray Catbird		7	3	2	2	2	2	3	12	2	1	7	26	10	12	7	1	2	101	
Northern Mockingbird	15	15	43	4	2	11	14	20	18	5	11	52	46	23	51	29	37	13	409	
Brown Thrasher														2	6	2	1		11	
European Starling	480	1554	1733	668	720	670	686	1649	1494	275	609	1665	7868	2211	4375	2685	2888	443	32673	
American Pipit			3							1		3	28	78	15	5	3	27	163	
Cedar Waxwing	506	37	88	136	133	880	627	375	79	80	136	179	239	111	524	282	4	86	4502	
Orange-crowned Warbler														CW			CW		CW	
Nashville Warbler														1					1	
Common Yellowthroat																	1		1	
Palm Warbler													7	13					20	
Pine Warbler													4	1	1				6	
Yellow-rumped Warbler	5		19		3	27	19	37	16	52	8	355	10	184	94	3	1		833	
Yellow-breasted Chat														2	12	13	3	5	142	
Eastern Towhee	1	1	1		1	5	2	9	6	4	26	39	4	22	12	3	3		142	
American Tree Sparrow	83	19	758	104	44	39	24	108	38	29	156	15	165	137	40	103	146	9	2017	
Chipping Sparrow				1					3	1	2	1	1	6	6	1	CW	3	25	
Clay-colored Sparrow									1								1		2	
Field Sparrow			0	2				0	1	1	2	5	5	25	10	31	9	3	95	
Weeper Sparrow								1				1							3	
Savannah Sparrow			48					2				15	2	50	38	32	9	39	0	235
Savannah 'Ipswich' Sparrow														1		1	4		6	
Nelson's Sparrow																			1	
Fox Sparrow	CW	2	5	3		3	4	1	5	8	5	21	54	11	27	22	4	12	187	
Song Sparrow	60	54	744	80	34	145	224	167	182	155	208	393	506	659	379	317	194	66	4567	
Swamp Sparrow	3	4	21	11		4	9	18	3	5	12	7	47	16	27	34	14	3	238	
White-throated Sparrow	145	116	588	292	106	471	392	576	475	406	598	963	631	694	652	536	163	144	7948	
White-crowned Sparrow			12					2				2		6			CW		24	
sparrow, sp.								10											10	
Dark-eyed Junco	733	683	2389	860	685	1418	633	1242	1264	1257	1387	1828	461	1263	561	360	249	481	17754	
Lapland Longspur			2											3	2	1			6	
Snow Bunting	1		4					4					5	65	72	3	114	146	22	436
Northern Cardinal	155	106	411	117	31	198	151	212	124	174	197	284	251	255	269	162	113	69	3279	
Red-winged Blackbird	1	8	1468	2	2	94	47	33	14	171	22	125	67	812	15008	39	33	124	18070	
Eastern Meadowlark			6										14		4	10			34	
Yellow-headed Blackbird													1						1	
Rusty Blackbird		7	29		3	1	13		11	4	3	6	2	127	8	4	3	1	222	
Common Grackle	1	32	5666	107	2	134	36	8	566	84	1560	2	1489	283	52	421	412		10855	
Brown-headed Cowbird	39	32	38	49	4	68	25	9	14	132	4	66	177	304	712	121	13	57	1864	
Baltimore Oriole				14	7			1	4	3			CW		1		1	1	3	
Purple Finch	10							1	4	3	2	29	5	3			1		81	
House Finch	97	55	166	153	34	128	84	265	153	95	116	180	359	146	328	147	75	107	2688	

Common Redpoll									20										1	20
Pine Siskin	1			1	3		1													7
American Goldfinch	329	68	619	242	101	175	104	193	182	235	184	304	240	267	279	105	125	102	3854	
House Sparrow	265	94	541	209	89	253	386	285	178	243	83	783	410	551	1326	311	745	344	7096	
TOTALS																				
Total Individuals	8249	6111	36483	8330	11110	9289	8243	15727	11326	7556	12556	25950	22887	30397	43172	18101	21964	12264	309715	
Total Count Day Species	75	87	87	80	69	73	78	78	83	70	86	109	128	119	122	118	115	102	171	
Total Count Week Species	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	5	1	3	0	1	10	0	1	
Total Field Observers	21	10	97	21	16	28	10	43	26	37	20	63	31	85	45	52	28	25	658	
Total Feeder Watchers	7	0	11	2	3	5	0	2	5	14	3	11	0	10	5	2	1	5	86	
Total Observers	28	10	108	23	19	33	10	45	31	51	23	74	31	95	50	54	29	30	744	
Total Party Hours	72.5	48.5	198	69.95	49.5	91.25	76.5	115	134.85	43	81.5	182.5	101.25	120	137	97.75	93	60.5	1772.6	
Total Party Miles	403.5	278.5	467	451.5	312.5	396	414.7	605.5	579.11	276	401.75	641	319.2	362	141	304.5	238.5	164	6756.3	
Northern Counts										Mid-State Counts					Coastal Counts			Legend		
BA = Barkhamsted										OX = Oxford					GS = Greenwich-Stamford			CW		
EW = Edwin Way Teale, Trail Wood										PA = Pawling, NY/Hidden Valley, CT					NA = Napatree			XX		
HA = Hartford										QV = Quinnipiac Valley					NH = New Haven			XX		
LH = Litchfield Hills										SR = Salmon River					NL = New London			XX		
LS = Lakeville-Sharon										WR = Woodbury-Roxbury					OL = Old Lyme-Saybrook			XX		
ST = Storrs															SM = Stratford-Milford			0		
															WE = Westport			30 Years		

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Winter Season, Dec 1, 2013, through Feb. 28, 2014

By Greg Hanisek

In a season that was cold and snowy by recent standards, a lack of late lingerers and half hardy species was no surprise. Last winter's broad-based and wide-ranging winter finch flight offered barely an echo, but a monumental flight of Snowy Owls offered ample compensation. As a group, waterfowl provided a number of highlights, and the recent acceleration of alcid sightings continued, delivering decent quantity and excellent quality.

A total of seven **Greater White-fronted Geese** included two at Amos Lake in Preston beginning on Dec. 29 (TT et al.), and continuing late into the season. A **Barnacle Goose**, a Eurasian species that now appears annually, consorted with several thousand Canada Geese on Dec. 2 in East Granby (JMe). One appeared at Fisher Meadow in Avon the next day (LK), with one in Somers on Dec. 5-8 (JPf et al.). It's possible these sightings all involved the same bird. One that was almost certainly different was in Westport/Fairfield from Jan. 4 to at least Feb. 2 (SZ et al.). About eight **Cackling Geese** were reported for the season. An adult **Trumpeter Swan** of unknown origin was found at Konold's

Pond in Woodbridge on Jan. 19 and remained through the season (CL et al.). This follows one at the same site last year and a pair there the year before. A **Tundra Swan** was a good find at North Farms Reservoir, Wallingford, on Jan. 17 (RS et al.), often well-camouflaged among up to 90 Mute Swans through at least Feb. 8.

A total of eight **Eurasian Wigeons** were scattered along the coast. A Mallard X Northern Pintail hybrid was at Raven Pond and other ponds in Stratford for the fifth straight year (FMa et al.). A Blue-winged Teal found wintering at 14-Acre Pond in Norwalk on Jan. 13 was seasonally unexpected (PDu et al.). A handful of Northern Shoveler reports

included one that wintered with the teal in Norwalk (PDU et al.). An unusually good season for Redheads included eight at Lake Galliard in North Branford on Jan. 2 (TK) and a group near Sandy Point, West Haven, that peaked at 13 on Jan. 16 (KMu et al.). Later in the season eight were at Beacon Street Cove in Bridgeport on Feb. 17 (CBa et al.), and throughout the winter another 20 were reported in groups of one to five at various locations throughout the state. A female **King Eider** settled in off Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford early in the season and was seen into January (PR et al.).

An impressive raft of 1500 Long-tailed Ducks was off Shippan Point, Stamford, on Feb. 9 (SMr). A single one was a good inland find Dec. 16 at Bashan Lake in Moodus (RDe, SD). Female **Harlequin Ducks** were at Harkness on Dec. 1 (PR); at Merwin Point, Milford, on Dec. 14-Jan. 16 (FMa et al.); and at Brazos Road in East Haven on Dec. 15-Jan. 20 (RP et al.). The latter was found during observation of a **Barrow's Goldeneye** that remained for most of the season (JR et al.). Other Barrow's were found at Penfield Reef in Fairfield on Dec. 15-Feb. 2 (JPu et al.), in the Connecticut River in Enfield Feb. 1 (PCi) and off



*Russ Smiley photo
This leucistic Red-throated Loon cruised through the Connecticut River in Old Lyme on Feb. 22, 2014.*

Gulf Beach in Milford on Feb. 10 (JBa).

A white (leucistic) Red-throated Loon was in the Connecticut River in Old Lyme on Feb. 22 (RS). A **Pacific Loon** was seen inside the mouth of the Thames River in Groton on Jan. 4 from the New London-Orient, N.Y., ferry (SMi), with a few reports from within the restricted Electric Boat property in Groton shortly thereafter (fide TT). An unusually large count of 133 Horned Grebes was off Sherwood Island State Park, Westport, on Jan. 16 (FMa). One was unusual on the Quinebaug River in Putnam on Feb. 10 (GV). Reports of c. 15 Red-necked Grebes, which built as the season progressed,

foreshadowed a major spring movement. An **Eared Grebe** found on Feb. 2 at Greenwich Point remained through the season (SMr et al.). Scattered sightings of single Northern Gannets continued through January in Long Island Sound. One on Feb. 22 off Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison (hereafter HBSP) on Feb. 22 was probably the first northbound bird (JMu).

American Bitterns went almost undetected, with the only reports coming from Barn Island Wildlife Management Area in Stonington on Dec. 22 (BA) and at HBSP on Jan. 15 (LD). Aside from one on Dec. 1 in Stonington (PDn), Great Egrets were essentially unreported, a



Mark Szantyr photo
This amazingly tame juvenile Sandhill Crane ignored heavy traffic on a street in South Windsor on Dec. 7, 2013.



*Gary Lemmon photograph
This backyard "feeder" at the Lemmon home in Branford attracted 31 Black Vultures on Jan. 24, 2014.*

change from recent years with lingerers into January. A Snowy Egret, apparently in weakened condition, was at a frozen marsh in Chester on Jan. 1 (MMA). Two Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were still present in Stratford on Dec. 4 (FMA). Significant flocks of Black Vultures included 31 visiting a "feeder" stocked with roadkill in a Branford yard on Jan. 24 (C&GL); 25 in Danbury on Jan. 6 (MW), 17 over Essex on Dec. 8 (KMU); and 13 in Norwich on Dec. 27 (DP). The year's first Ospreys were early Feb. 27 over the

Housatonic River in Stratford (RS) and at Griswold Point in Old Lyme (JOG). A good winter for Bald Eagles on the Connecticut River was illustrated by 22 on an Eagle Watch boat tour out of Essex on Feb. 8 (BY). Rough-legged Hawks staged a good movement. Reports of at least 15 individuals included birds both in the coastal marshes and at suitable farmland locations inland. Single Clapper Rails were in Stonington on Dec. 22 (SMI) and in Old Saybrook on Jan. 18 (BA). A juvenile **Sandhill Crane** was an unexpected find Dec. 6-7

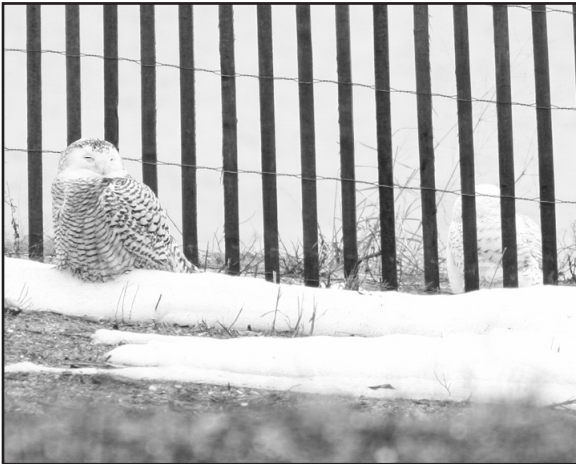
on a lawn at a busy intersection near the South Windsor-Manchester line (CCa). An adult was photographed at Long Beach in Stratford on Dec. 24 (FL, MC).

An American Oystercatcher lingered to Dec. 7 at Milford Point (PCo). A late White-rumped Sandpiper was at HBSP on Dec 1 (JMe, JK). An unidentified peep was at Silver Sands State Park in Milford on Dec. 5 (SSp). A Long-billed Dowitcher was at the reliable Stratford Marina location Dec. 16-25 (FMa et al.). Another was at the edge of the Groton-New London Airport on Dec. 28 (BDw). A nice group of 13 Wilson's Snipe was in Storrs

on Dec. 11 (SMo).

A **Black-headed Gull** found Dec. 15 at Barn Island in Stonington was likely the same one present the previous two winters (BDw).

An adult **Mew Gull** found on the Housatonic River in Southbury on Jan. 30 was the season's larid highlight (PCo et al.); it remained to at least Feb. 2. A first-cycle **Thayer's Gull** was photographed on Jan. 24 at Windsor-Bloomfield landfill (PCo). A high tide on Jan. 3 at Circle Beach in Madison produced eight Iceland Gulls among about 500 gulls total (KMU). Iceland Gulls were widely reported with more than 20 individuals of various ages. They



Bruce Finnan photo

One of the many Snowy Owls enjoyed by birders and the general public this winter huddled along a snow fence at Stratford Point.



*Bruce Finnan photo
This Long-eared Owl perched in the open in the
campground at Hammonasset Beach State Park
in Madison on Jan. 27, 2014.*

continue to easily outnumber Lesser Black-backed Gulls (c. 10 total), despite that species' presence in large numbers to both our north and south. It was a very good winter for **Glaucous Gulls** with about 10 reports, including two at the pig-feeding operation in Southbury, where the concentration of several thousand gulls on the Housatonic River included the Mew Gull. Reports of single **Common Murres** came from the New London-Orient,

N.Y., ferry on Dec. 28 (BDw), Jan. 13 (FMa et al.), and Feb. 16 (SMi). Totally unexpected, a **Thick-billed Murre** was found well up the Housatonic River at Birdseye boat launch in Stratford on Jan. 18 (SMr). The high count of Razorbills was 24 off Shippan Point, Stamford, on Dec. 24 (PDu). A **Black Guillemot** photographed off HBSP on Jan. 1 (DRt, JMa) was the state's first well-documented individual in decades.



Brooks Chamberlan photo

In a season with few late lingerers, this long-staying Black-and-White Warbler at a Darien feeder stood out.

The Snowy Owl flight, which got off to a strong start in November, was easily the signature event of the season, continuing well into spring. It would be impossible to accurately enumerate the number of birds involved, but reports came almost daily from primarily coastal sites. The largest number seen at a single location was five on Jan. 16 at Milford Point. They were viewed from the Stratford side of the Housatonic River, allowing the observer to see two more at Long Beach minutes later (CBa). Among the few inland reports was one in downtown Hartford on Dec. 30 that was

seen by many (GHm et al.). However, three were seen in Hartford on Dec. 24 at a solid waste facility closed to the public (TB). A roost of eight Long-eared Owls, large by recent standards, was found at an undisclosed locations on Dec. 21 (SH). One was calling in Ashford on Feb. 23 (MSz). Short-eared Owls were at HBSP on Dec. 21 (DRt), at Long Beach in Stratford on Dec. 24 (JHo), at Great Island in Old Lyme on Jan. 5-6 (HG, BM) and at Silver Sands in Milford on Jan. 9-10 (FMa).

The season's only **Rufous Hummingbird**, which ap-

peared in November at a Norwalk feeder, was present through Jan. 2 (LF). An immature Red-headed Woodpecker found during the fall in downtown New Haven wintered at an intersection near Yale University (m.ob.). Other wintering birds included an immature in North Stonington (TT et al.); an adult that had been making brief visits to a Simsbury feeder since July (GK), and one in Ansonia (MMr). An adult was at Portland Fairgrounds on Jan. 5 (KH); an adult visited a feeder in North Stamford on Jan. 4 (SMr); and one was seen in Darien on Jan. 12 (KW). The disparity between Merlins and American Kestrels continued, with the former reported from 35 locations to

only 12 for the latter.

An Eastern Phoebe made it to at least Jan. 20 at a small spring in Lyme, a place where the species has attempted to winter in the past (HG et al.). Another was present to at least Jan. 5 in Oxford (BDe). The **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** found on Nov. 30 was present at the Hadlyme ferry slip in Lyme until Dec. 11, a record late date (m.ob.). A Blue-headed Vireo was a surprise find singing briefly on Dec. 24 in Goshen (KF). Single Northern Shrikes were reported from near Talcott Mountain in Avon on Dec. 20 (DH); in New Hartford on Dec. 21 (FZ); and at Storrs on Feb. 2 (SSt). Concentrations of Fish Crows continue to grow, such as 40 circling over



Russ Smiley photo

This juvenile Red-headed Woodpecker wintered on a street corner in downtown New Haven.

northern Stratford on Jan. 17 (CBa). A noisy flock of 24 Common Ravens circled over Danbury on Jan. 21 (BO); ravens are now widespread but concentrations of this number remain unusual. A sign of spring as the season waned were "good numbers" of Tree Swallows on the lower Connecticut River and several coastal locations Feb. 22-23 (BY et al.). A Marsh Wren at Station 43 in South Windsor on Dec. 8 (PDe) was the latest there for an observer who's made it his local patch for decades. A good mid-winter count of nine American Pipits were at Circle Beach in Madison on Jan. 3 (KMu).

A remarkable count of 24 Lapland Longspurs was made on Jan. 26 at HBSP (PCo). A flock of 16 at Long Beach in Stratford on Jan. 29 was also noteworthy (SMr). An Orange-crowned Warbler was found on Dec. 8-12 at East Shore Park in New Haven (JOs et al.). Other reports came from Branford on Dec. 19 (MSt), Stratford on Dec. 20-21 (FMa et al.) and Pine Creek in Fairfield in January (JPu et al.). In a season with very few noteworthy lingerers, a **Black & White War-**

bler at a Darien feeder from Dec. 10 to Feb. 5 certainly stood out (BC). The latest Pine Warblers were at HBSP on Jan. 2 (TG et al.) and at Long Wharf in New Haven on Jan. 18 (ST).

Two Clay-colored Sparrows were at HBSP to at least Dec 7 (RS et al.), with one continuing deep into the season. One was at Osbornedale State Park in Derby on Jan. 5 (FG). Six Field Sparrows at Fisher Meadows in Avon on Jan. 20 was an unusual concentration for an inland location (BK). A Vesper Sparrow turned up on Hard Hill in Bethlehem on Jan. 24 (GHa). An unusual winter Lincoln's Sparrow visited a feeder in Harwinton on Jan. 19 (PCa). Northern Cardinals sometimes flock in winter, but 41 at a feeder in Sterling on Jan. 21 was extreme (RDl).

A handful of Eastern Meadowlark reports included an excellent 10 on Jan. 5 at Great Island in Old Lyme from a kayak (DP). An adult male **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was found on Dec. 14 in New Milford, coming to a feeder with grackles, but was not seen thereafter (RB). Also seen only once was a female/

first-winter male on Jan 18 at Rocky Neck State Park in East Lyme in a mixed blackbird flock (TG). A good winter for Rusty Blackbirds included 80 in Edgewood Park in New Haven on Dec. 12 (LB). A reliable feeder near Brooksvale Park in Hamden had 43 on Dec. 20, an early date for that number at the location (C&JZ), climbing to 60 in early February. Another spot that hosted a flock through the winter, N. Lake Drive in Hamden, had 40+ on Dec. 30, climbing to 130 on Jan. 8 (AS, SB). At Quinebaug Fish Hatchery in Plainfield, 82 were counted on Jan. 22 (RDi), and c. 50 visited a New Milford yard on Feb. 15 (ADi). After last year's historic breeding, a singing male Boat-tailed Grackle returned to HBSP on Feb. 23 (CL).

Lingering Baltimore Orioles included singles at a feeder in Branford on Dec. 7 (CL); at a feeder in Northfield in late December and early January (fide JTr); at Chatfield Hollow State Park in Killingworth on Dec 24 (FH et al.), at Mason's Island in Mystic on Dec. 28 (fide BDw), visiting a feeder at Wild Birds

Unlimited in Danbury in mid-January; and wintering in Meriden (KMe). Aside from a few single Pine Siskins at feeders and the usual scattering of Purple Finches, northern finches were essentially absent. Five Evening Grosbeaks on Jan. 21 at Compo Beach in Westport seemed to come out of nowhere (JMa). Two were in Barkhamsted on Jan. 15 (DRo).

Observers – Tim Antanaitis, Mark Aronson, Phil Asprelli, Bill Asteriades, Bill Banks, Tom Baptist, Charlie Barnard (CBa), John Barriger (JBr), J.P. Barsky (JBa), William Batsford, Larry Bauscher, Douglas Beach, Joe Bear (JBe), Ray Belding, Nick Bonomo, Chris Bosak (CBo), Steve Broker, Milan Bull, Alex Burdo, Caleb Cadman (CCa), Joseph Cala (JCa), Matthew Caligiure, Dana Campbell (DCa), Donna Caporaso (DCp), Paul Carrier (PCa), Brooks Chamberlin, Paul Cianfaglione (PCi), Carolyn Cimino (CCi), Linda Clancy, Al Collins, Jan Collins (JCn), Patrick Comins (PCo), Jerry Connolly (JCo), Annete Cunniffe, Mark Danforth (MDa), Andrew Dasinger (ADa),

Peter DeGennaro (PDn), Roy Dellinger (RDe), Sharon Dellinger, Paul Desjardins (PDe), Ed Dettore, Buzz Devine (BDe), Bob Dewire (BDw), Mardi Dickinson (MDi), Townsend Dickinson, Angela Dimmitt (ADi), Robert Dixon (RDi), Aaron Dollar (ADo), Laurie Doss, Patrick Dugan (PDu), Cynthia Ehlinger, Ken Elkins, Sarah Faulkner, Patrice Favreau, Jeff Feldmann, Kevin Finnan, Larry Flynn, Frank Gallo, Rick Gedney, Hank Golet, Tina Green, Kathy Hall, Gary Hamilton (GHm), Greg Hanisek (GHa), Dee Hansen, Roy Harvey (RHa), Scott Henckel, John Himmelman (JHi), Fran Holloway, Tom Holloway, Bo Hopkins, Julian Hough (JHo), Robert Hutton (RHu), Denise Jernigan, Jay Kaplan, Tom Kelly, Lea Kessler, Brian Kleinman, Gil Kleiner, Cindi Kobak, Dennis Kocyla, Steve Kotchko, Frank Labbate, Carol Lemmon, Gary Lemmon, Chris Loscalzo, Bob MacDonnell, Matthew Male (MMA), Frank Mantlik (FMa), John Marshall (JMa), Mary Beth Martin (MMr), Stefan Martin (SMr), Steve Mayo (SMa), Florence McBride (FMc), Dan Mercurio (DMe), Karen Mercurio (KMe), Jamie Mey-

ers (JMe), Shai Mitra (SMi), Judy Moore (JMo), Marty Moore (MMo), Don Morgan (DMo), Steve Morytko (SMo), Keith Mueller (KMU), Tom Murray, Sean Murtha (SMu), Jake Musser (JMu), Russ Naylor, Gina Nichol, Anders Ogren, John Ogren (JOg), Maryann O'Leary, John Oshlick (JOs), Brian O'Toole, Richard Payne, Annie Perko, Mike Perko, Jim Pfeifer (JPf), Bev Propen, Dave Provencher, James Purcell (JPu), Mike Resch, Jason Rieger, Tom Robben, Dave Rosgen (DRo), Dan Rottino (DRt), Phil Rusch, Meredith Sampson (MSa), Mark Scott (MSc), James Sherwonit (JSh), Arthur Shippee, Russ Smiley, Paul Smith, Steve Spector (SSp), Duncan Stewart, Stephanie Stewart (SSt), Maria Stockmal (MSt), Jack Swatt (JSw), Mark Szantyr (MSz), Andy Thiede, Stephen Thomas, Timothy Thompson, Jesus Tirado (JTi), John Triana (JTr), Gary Valarde, Mike Van Valen, Lisa Wahle, Mike Warner, Allan Welby, Kim Westcott, Glenn Williams, Chris Woerner, Paul Wolter, Bill Yule, Sara Zagorski, Roy Zartarian, Anthony Zemba, Carol Zipp, Jim Zipp, Fran Zygmunt, Sophie Zyla.

THE USE OF MORPHOMETRIC MEASUREMENTS TO DETERMINE THE SEX OF BALD EAGLES FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

By Donald A. Hopkins

As with most raptors, reverse sexual dimorphism is exhibited by Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) (Brown, L.H.,D. Amadon). Using museum skins and live eagle measurements (Bortolotti, G) to determine the sex of bald eagles, he developed the following formula; (beak depth \times 0.392) plus (Hallux \times 0.340) minus 27.694. A positive value indicates a female and a negative value indicates a male. I seek to apply this technique to eagle photographs.

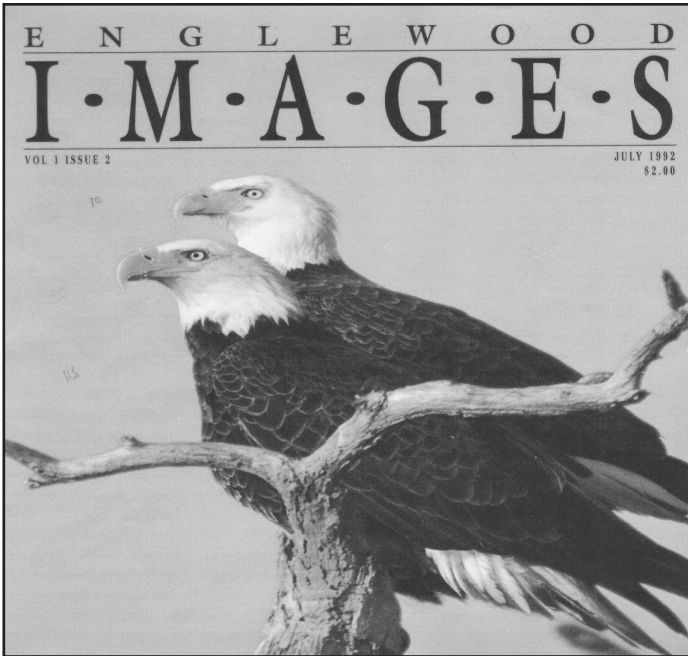
Method:

Selecting the photographs of eagles in flight, both flapping and soaring, I chose to use those in which the wing and the camera appear to be in parallel planes. I also used a photograph of eagle heads in profile. Measurements were made using metric ruler and calipers.

Results:

The first photograph to be measured was a profile of two eagles supplied by J. Flowers (see photo). These eagles were known to be associated with a nest, and it was reasonable to assume one was male and one was female. Measurements were made of the horizontal iris diameter (HID) and divided into the beak depth (BD). The upper eagle has a ratio $8/4 = 2$, a male, and in the lower eagle the ratio was $10/4 = 2.5$, a female. Of note here is the HID is the same for both sexes. Sexual dimorphism does not apply for the eye.

Using photographs of eagles in flight I measured the aspect ratio of the wings; the wing span (WS) divided by the wing width (WW). The photographs were of both flapping and soaring flights. In the case of soaring flight, direct measurements were made of the wing. In the case of flapping



J. Flower 1992

The author used this photo on a magazine cover to calculate beak depth aspect - beak depth divided by the horizontal iris diameter. The top is a male with ratio of 2 and the lower is a female with ratio of 2.5

flight, measurements were made of the proximate wing fully extended at the peak of its flap, with the primaries fully splayed. A tracing of the wing was made of a known male eagle. The measurement of the proximate wing from the belly to the tip of the wing, multiply this by 2 for the wing span, divide this by the wing width to achieve the aspect ratio. The wing aspect ratios are shown in Table 1. I have separated the values based on the known male tracing value of 5.35 for males and the average value of 6.43 for females. The spread of values of the aspect ratios is due in part to the photographed birds and the camera not being on parallel planes and to a lesser extent the individual eagle variation in size.

Discussion

With a digital camera and a long lens, multiple photographs can be taken and measured to supplement the notes of the field worker. With the exception of the profile photograph which was of the southern sub-species (*H.I. Leucocephalus*), the other photographs were of the northern sub-species (*H.I. alascanus*). Bortolotti found no overlap of the sexes of this sub-species.

Acknowledgement

Thanks to the following for sharing their photographs, P. Collins, M. Davis, P. Fusco, R. Michard, J. Tobin, J. Welch and M. O'Leary for supplying a tracing.

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Brown, L.H. and D. Amadon.1968, *J.Wild. Manage.* 48(1)
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Feltham, Middlesex, UK 26-27pp

Flower, J, Englewood Images, 1992, July Cover

Table 1**Male**

ID	Wing span	Wing width	Ratio	Sex	comments
RM2	85	16	5.31	male	S
MO1	198	37	5.35	male	T known male
MD69	123	22	5.59	male	S
PF1	276	49	5.63	male	F
MO2	211	37	5.70	male	T
TW1	184	32	5.75	male	F
RM3	92	16	5.75	male	S
PC1	170	29	5.86	male	S
PF2	282	48	5.88	male	S
PF4	256	40	5.90	male	F
MD68	184	31	5.94	male	S

Female

IT2	80	13	6.15	female	S
MD62	115	18	6.39	female	S
RM1	173	27	6.41	female	S
MD67	129	20	6.45	female	S
IT1	84	13	6.46	female	F
RM4	181	27	6.70	female	S

Source

P.Collins, M.Davis P.Fusco, R. Michard, M. O'Leary, J. Welch, J. Tobbin

Key

F - flapping

S-soar

T-tracing

The aspect ratio was calculated by dividing the wing span by the wing width.

NOTES ON BEHAVIOR, STATUS AND DISTRIBUTION

DISTRIBUTION

Red-tailed Hawk Subspecies in Connecticut

The common breeding Red-tailed Hawk in Connecticut is the eastern subspecies, *Buteo jamaicensis borealis*. (*Buteo jamaicensis* is the species binomial for all Red-tailed Hawks. Adding *borealis* creates a trinomial that identifies the taxon at the subspecies level). *B.j. borealis*, sometimes referred to as Eastern Red-tailed Hawk, can be found here throughout the year, but in late fall and winter darker birds often catch the attention of birders and hawk-watchers. There is often casual speculation that some of these may be Western Red-tailed Hawks, *B.j. calurus*, a subspecies with a well-defined dark morph, but this is in fact a rare form in the East .

There's no question darker birds than typical *borealis* appear here, but what are they? In an article in *North American Birds*, Liguori and Sullivan write: "Few observers have considered another, almost forgotten, alternative: Northern Red-tailed Hawk (*B.j. abieticola*).



Patrick Comins photo.

In January 2014, Patrick Comins, director of bird conservation for Audubon Connecticut, photographed a dark Red-tailed Hawk on Cassidy Road at Southbury Training School in Southbury, New Haven County. The bird shows features associated with Northern Red-tailed Hawk, and after examining the images Liguori concurred with that identification.

Comins' photo, shown here, illustrates key features indicative *B. j. abieticola*. The perched bird, presenting a ventral view, has a dark throat, streaked chest sides and "blobby" belly band. Eastern Red-tailed Hawk typically shows a white throat, clear chest and a belly band comprising distinct streaks, sometimes quite fine.

Another apparent *abieticola*, photographed last winter at Rocky Hill Meadows by Keith Lewis, shows pale upper tail coverts typical of Northern Red-tailed Hawks.

True dark morph Red-tailed Hawks, with dark under wing coverts and underparts, are believed to all be either *B. j. calurus* or *B. j. harlani* (Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk.). Liguori and Sullivan note: "Thus far it has not been proven that *abieticola* occurs in a dark morph." They also caution that because the variability of *abieticola* has not been studied on the breeding grounds (the boreal forests from Alaska to Labrador), "until more information is available, it is best to leave many individual migrants and wintering birds unidentified to subspecies." Much more information is available in the article. cited below.

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Greg Hanisek

PHOTO CHALLENGE

By Julian Hough

It's early June and overhead glides a ratty looking raptor. It is pale below with obvious streaks on the underparts, and it looks odd with those molting inner primaries. We take a quick digital photo so we can ponder the identification later, a really useful advantage provided by the digital age.

Reviewing the image, the head seems small and the wings have a long "hand." The hawk presents a jizz that is less robust than the expected Red-tailed Hawk. The lack of a dark leading edge of the wing and the clear-cut spots on the upper breast also rule out Red-tailed. The wings look too broad and the tail too short for either a Cooper's Hawk or a Sharp-shinned, so we feel we can narrow it down to one of the other Buteos likely to be seen in spring and summer - Red-shouldered or Broad-winged.

The fact that the bird is in molt may be slightly confusing in trying to judge the structure accurately. The molt implies the bird is a second-calendar year, one that was born the previous year and is nearly a year old. Adults of both these species would not be in molt during the lead-up to the breeding season and would have the characteristic breast patterns and boldly striped tails of an adult.



So, we have to look at plumage. Both Red-shouldered and Broad-winged are similar, and identification can be difficult in this plumage since the amount of dark streaking and spotting is variable on the underparts in both species.

The extensive spotting on the central breast fits Broad-winged. Red-shoulders often, but not always, look slightly less marked here. Despite the ratty plumage, the wing shape and general proportions solidify the identity as a Broad-winged Hawk. Despite its name, the Broad-winged's outer wing and primaries look quite pointed, perhaps due to a shorter P10 (the outermost primary flight feather) compared to the rather more rounded wingtips of a Red-shouldered. Also, even though the bird is in molt and a second-year, the pale translucent windows characteristic of Red-shouldered would still be visible. They are not present on our individual, further enforcing the identification as a Broad-winged.

This second-year Broad-winged Hawk was photographed by myself in June in Connecticut.



Photo Challenge No. 86

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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

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THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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ON THE COVER

Indigo Bunting

Mark Szantyr's Indigo Bunting in full song represents a suite of scrubland species whose habitat has been vanishing in Connecticut. The Summer Bird Count summary in this issue offers a window on how a wide array of the state's breeders are doing.

2014 CONNECTICUT SUMMER BIRD COUNT

By Joe Zeranski and Patrick Comins

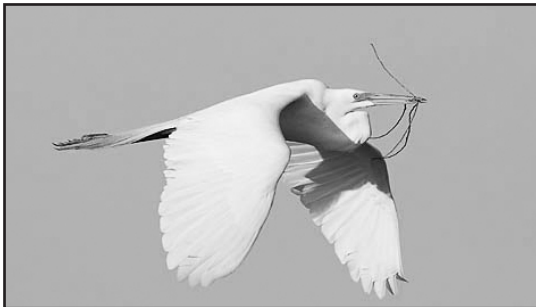
Introduction

The Summer Bird Count is now in its 23rd year. It is our largest summer citizen science effort and provides valuable insight to the status of our breeding bird species and non-breeding June visitors to Connecticut. Thank you to the volunteer observers, compilers and captains for your efforts and dedication that make this analysis possible.

Results

This year 184 count day species were recorded. This is just about average and equal to last two years' total species counts. Two additional species were recorded in the count period, a **Red-breasted Merganser** in Greenwich/Stamford and a **Vesper Sparrow** in Hartford. There were 251 observers, in 146 parties. The number of observers was two more than last year and is one shy of the record high from 2009. Volunteers tallied 1409.3 party hours, with 1341.25 being daylight hours and 68 night hours, more than doubling last year's night hours.

There were 101,552 individual birds recorded, which is slightly above (103%) average and about 4,000 more than last



Julian Hough photo
Great Egrets hit a 10-year low on the 2014 SBC.

year's total. The ten most abundant species were, in descending order: **American Robin, European Starling, Red-winged Blackbird, Gray Catbird, Red-eyed Vireo, Common Grackle, Song Sparrow, Canada Goose, Chipping Sparrow** and **Cedar Waxwing**. Nine of these are repeats from the last two years, but in a slightly different order. **Chipping Sparrow** replaces **House Sparrow** from last year's list.

Eighteen species were represented by a single individual: **Common Goldeneye, Ruffed Grouse, Northern Bobwhite, Red-throated Loon, Least Bittern (T), Little Blue Heron (SC), Northern Harrier (E), Solitary Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Ruddy Turnstone, Dunlin, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Nashville Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Saltmarsh Sparrow (SC), White-crowned Sparrow** and **Blue Grosbeak**.

There were 25 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, Common Goldeneye, Red-throated Loon, Common Loon (SC), Horned Grebe, Semipalmated Plover, Solitary Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Ruddy Turnstone, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Dunlin, Laughing Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Forster's Tern, Royal Tern, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Swainson's Thrush, Blackpoll Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Blue Grosbeak and **White-crowned Sparrow. Additionally, **Red-breasted Merganser**, was noted for count period.**

The underlined species are potential nesters, but in the absence of additional supporting evidence they will be considered non-nesting visitors.

Noteworthy among these include: The **Common Goldeneye** from New Haven was only the 3rd SBC record since 2004 and 6th overall since 1992. All of those records were single birds, except for 1998 and 2004, when six and two were recorded. Greenwich/Stamford yielded a **Red-throated Loon**. This is only the 2nd record since 2004 and 6th record since 1992. They

also found two **Horned Grebes**, a record high and only the 3rd recent record and 6th overall. Litchfield Hills found a lingering **Solitary Sandpiper**. This is the 4th SBC record since 2004, but they were found more regularly in earlier counts, making it the 12th SBC record. They were recorded in eight of the ten years between 1994 and 2003, but only in four of the last ten years.

Greenwich/Stamford logged seven **Least Sandpipers**, which are on average recorded about every other year. Their **Dunlin** was the 4th since 2004, and has also been recorded on average about every other year. That count also found one of the best species for this year's count, two **Royal Terns**, a species for which there is only one previous SBC record, in 2002. **Olive-sided Flycatchers** are another species that is found in just about half of the years. They are a potential nester in the state, but are also a late migrant. That this bird was found on the New Haven count certainly indicates a late migrant.

A record-high five **Swainson's Thrushes** were found, two each by Hartford and Woodbury-Roxbury and one by the Greenwich/Stamford team. Three **Mourning Warblers** were recorded, in Litchfield Hills, Woodbury/Roxbury and Greenwich/Stamford. All are likely migrants, but this species could potentially nest in any of our northern counts. Woodbury/Roxbury's **White-crowned Sparrow** is only the 3rd SBC record. Eight of them were found on the 1998 count! New Haven's **Blue Grosbeak** teeters on the boundary between a notable vagrant and a potential nesting bird. A male was singing and appeared territorial atop East Rock in New Haven for several weeks, but perhaps did not attract a mate. This is only the 2nd SBC record. Likewise, the **Kentucky Warbler** found on the Greenwich Stamford count could represent a breeding individual or perhaps a pioneer trying to attract a mate. **Kentucky Warbler** is a species that is at its extreme northern limit of its range in our area. This is only the 2nd recent record, but this is a species that was formerly seen more regularly and represents the 8th record overall. Seven were recorded in 1997.



*Mark Szantyr photo
Saltmarshes are alive with the calls of
(Eastern) Willets, a species showing increasing
numbers on the SBC.*

Notable Nesting Species

Four **Ring-necked Pheasants** were found on the Woodbury/Roxbury count. We had contemplated moving this species to the “non-nesters” section because their populations are reliant upon stocking, but decided to leave in this section because they do occasionally nest. Likewise, the **Northern Bobwhite** found on the New Milford/Pawling count could also be classified as a non-nester for the same reason. **Ruffed Grouse** have declined to the point where they are a notable find and only one was located this year on the Barkhamsted count.

Least Bitterns (T) are often found on the Hartford count at Station 43, but this year they came from New Haven instead, likely from the Quinnipiac River Tidal Marsh. Both Litchfield Hills (2) and New Milford (1) logged **American Bitterns** (E). **Little Blue Herons** (SC) have been found on 17 of the 23 counts since 1993, but this year’s report from New Milford/Pawling is notable as an inland record and likely represents a non-breeding individual. Storrs recorded a **Northern Har-**

rier (E), the first ever for the Storrs count. This could represent a nesting attempt, as there is abundant farmland in the count area, but harriers have not been confirmed as nesting in the state in several years. **Nashville Warblers** are at the southern edge of their range in Connecticut and are quite uncommon as nesters. Kudos to Litchfield Hills for tracking one down. New Haven picked up the only **Saltmarsh Sparrow** (SC). This species could easily be overlooked on a count because their key nesting areas do not overlap with SBC territories. They also found the only **Glossy Ibis** (SC) (2). Litchfield Hills did well with secretive marsh birds with two **Soras**. One **Sora** was found in the count period in Hartford. Litchfield Hills found the only **Northern Saw-whet Owls** (SC) (2), New Haven the only **Gadwalls** (3) and Hartford the only **Upland Sandpipers** (E) (3). A **Vesper Sparrow** (E) was recorded within the count period on the Hartford count, the first ever SBC record.



*Julian Hough photo
Black-throated Blue warblers are
doing well in the state's upland
forests, according to results of the
2014 summer count.*

Species Recorded in Above Average Numbers

Thirty nesting species reached new 10-year high counts this year. This is in part because the Barkhamsted count happened later than usual and reported "larger than normal numbers of juvenile birds". The following birds were at 10-year or all time high numbers: *Hooded Merganser*, *Black Vulture*, *Bald Eagle*, *Red-shouldered Hawk*, *Broad-winged Hawk*, *Willet*, *Black-billed Cuckoo*, *Chimney Swift*, *Ruby-throated Hummingbird*, *Pileated Woodpecker*, *Eastern Wood-Pewee*, *Acadian Flycatcher*, *Willow Flycatcher*, *Least Flycatcher*, *Eastern Kingbird*, *Eastern Phoebe*, *Yellow-throated Vireo*, *Warbling Vireo*, *Brown Creeper*, *House Wren*, *Blue-gray Gnatcatcher*, *Black-throated Blue Warbler*, *Blackburnian Warbler*, *Pine Warbler*, *Ovenbird*, *Louisiana Waterthrush*, *Common Yellowthroat*, *Chipping Sparrow*, *Grasshopper Sparrow* (E) and *Indigo Bunting*.

Of particular note among these was the record high number (19) of *Grasshopper Sparrows* (E) all reported from the Hartford Count. This is more than double the previous high count of eight from 1995. This number was due in part to unprecedented access to Rentschler Field. In past years the birds had to be counted from the edges of the grassland and



Bruce Finnan photo

Grasshopper Sparrow numbers were high as the result of increased access to the Rentschler Field area in East Hartford.



*Hank Golet photo
Eastern Screech-Owl is a species
counters make a special effort to census
on the summer count.*

this year we were able to explore more of the habitat. This number could have been much higher though. The field was in the process of being mowed over the count weekend and counts prior to the mowing were as high as 50 singing males! Some **Grasshopper Sparrows** were also recorded at the, now capped, Hartford Landfill.

Species Recorded in Below Average Numbers

Twenty species came in at 10-year or all-time low counts. **Canada Geese** came in at an all-time low of 2,964 and **Mute Swans** came in at an all-time low of 111, beating out last year's low of 142. **Mallards** (1,062) continue the all-time low theme for waterfowl. All of these three are introduced to the state as nesters, but Mallards and Canada Geese were native to the area as non-breeding visitors.

Wild Turkeys put in a new 10-year low of 415, but there were more turkeys than in any year prior to 1999 and only 43 were found on the first statewide count in 1992. **Great Egrets** (T) came in at a 10-year low of 138. The all-time lows for this



Mark Szantyr photo

Monk Parakeets were among several non-native nesters recorded in decreased numbers.

species occurred in 1992 and 1993 with 98 and 88. **Black-crowned Night-Herons** also had a meager showing, with a new all-time low of 71, eclipsing last year's record low by 40 birds!

Only six **American Kestrels** were found statewide, exceeding the record low count of 2011 by one. **Killdeer** came in at a ten-year low of 217, exceeded only by 2003's record low of 158. **Spotted Sandpipers** had a 10-year low of 45, but well off of the all-time low of 20 in 1993. Terns appear to have had a bad year for nesting in Long Island Sound, perhaps because of a lack of forage fish. **Common Tern** numbers reflect this, with a 10-year low of 168. This exceeds the numbers recorded in several years before 2003 though and the all-time low was 56 in 1995.

Rock Pigeon numbers continue a theme of record lows for introduced species, with a new low count of 578, beating out the previous low from 2011 by 181 individuals. There was much talk on CTBirds about scarcity of **Belted Kingfishers** this summer. Our results mirror this, with an all-time low of 69, beating out the old low from 2006 by a single bird. **Northern Flickers** came in at an all-time low of 436. This

species appears to be undergoing a dramatic decline on the count. The all-time high for flickers was 828 in 1995 and only one (590 in 2000) of the first ten counts for this species was under 600 individuals. **American Crows** do not seem to have recovered to their pre-West Nile virus numbers and have come in at a record low level for the second year in a row with 1,968 recorded. **Northern Mockingbird** came in at an all-time low of 362. Though still common, this is a species we have been watching with concern for apparent declines. **European Starling**, continues a theme for introduced species with a new all-time low 4,455. **Yellow-rumped Warbler** was bucking the trend for the northern forest birds, many of which appear to have had a good year. Though not an all-time low, 80 was a 10-year low and the third lowest total ever for the SBC. Two of our most common wetland-nesting birds came in at 10-year lows, but still managed to make the list of our ten most abundant birds on the count. The 1,491 **Red-winged Blackbirds** is the 9th lowest total ever and the 3,502 **Common Grackles** the second lowest total ever, only exceeded on the first year of the statewide count in 1992. **House Sparrow** rounds out the list of introduced species recorded at low level, shattering the previous all-time low of 2,152 in 1992 with a new low point of 1,869. All of our introduced species came in at record low numbers except for **Ring-necked Pheasants**, **Monk Parakeets** and **House Finches** and each of those came in at well below average levels.

Thank you

In conclusion, on behalf of the Connecticut Ornithological Association, we would like to thank all of the volunteer observers, captains and compilers for all of your hard work. 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 (NDDDB) Project. This will ensure that the best available information can be taken into account in land-use decisions.*

2014

Connecticut Summer Bird Count Totals

Species known to nest within historically Connecticut are shown in italics. The stats under State Totals pertain to the prior 10 SBCs unless double underlined when they pertain to the all-time results.

- Rare** - noted on fewer than five years during previous 10 years [outlined box] = XX
- New Count Day**[CD] **species** - not recorded on previous 10 years [darkened outlined box] = XX
- Higher numbers** were tallied than were on any of the previous 10 years [underlined number] = XX
- Fewer numbers** were tallied than recorded on any of the previous 10 year [boldfaced number] = **XX**
- Not recorded in** [CD] **2014**, but recorded on all the previous 10 years [underlined, boldfaced zero] = **0.0**
- All-time SBC record** - surpassing all previous SBC records [double underline] = 0.0

SPECIES	Coastal SBCs		CT	Upland SBCs:					2014	% of	#	2004-2013			
	GS	NH	Valley	Mid-state		Northern			State	2004-13	yrs	obs.	Ave	Low	High
			Hfd	WR	NM/P	Ba	LH	St	Totals						
Snow Goose									0%	3	0.4	0.0	2		
<i>Canada Goose</i>	1031	393	384	375	168	286	<u>253</u>	74	2964	80%	10	3690	2988	4153	
Brant	1	4							5	11%	10	47	12	235	
<i>Mute Swan</i>	<u>27</u>	67	2	1	8		6		111	49%	10	226	142	306	
<i>Wood Duck</i>	<u>78</u>	35	45	41	<u>73</u>	<u>49</u>	53	7	381	90%	10	425	272	607	
<i>Gadwall</i>		3							3	79%	8	3.8	0	13	
American Wigeon										0%	2	0	0	1	
<i>American Black Duck</i>	<u>13</u>	9							22	43%	10	51	30	86	
<i>Mallard</i>	<u>385</u>	135	130	64	<u>155</u>	66	100	27	1062	59%	10	1799	1228	2064	

<i>Mallard/Black Duck</i>		1																	
<i>Blue-winged Teal</i>											0%	1	0.3	0	3				
Northern Shoveler											0%	1	0.1	0	1				
<i>Green-winged Teal</i>											0%	3	0.4	0	2				
Ring-necked Duck											0%	5	0.7	0	2				
Greater Scaup											0%	5	1.2	0	7				
Lesser Scaup											0%	2	0.2	0	1				
Surf Scoter											0%	1	0.1	0	1				
White-winged Scoter											0%	2	0.6	0	5				
Long-tailed Duck											0%	7	2.1	0	6				
Bufflehead											0%	5	0.7	0	2				
Common Goldeneye		1							1	333%	2	0.3	0	1					
<i>Hooded Merganser</i>					13	4	37	2	56	216%	10	26	7	39					
<i>Common Merganser</i>				26		81	31		138	111%	10	124	86	234					
Red-breasted Merganser	cp								cp	0%	9	1.5	0	2					
Ruddy Duck										0%	6	2.0	0	6					
<i>Ring-necked Pheasant</i>				4					4	75%	10	5.3	1	8					
<i>Ruffed Grouse</i>						1			1	9%	10	11	1	24					
<i>Wild Turkey</i>	47	20	19	37	13	172	90	17	415	81%	10	514	447	582					
<i>Northern Bobwhite</i>					1				1	59%	7	1.7	0	5					
Red-throated Loon	1								1	1000%	1	0.1	0	1					
Common Loon	2	1				1	1		5	125%	9	4.0	0	9					
<i>Pied-billed Grebe</i>										0%	6	1.5	0	4					
Horned Grebe	2								2	1000%	2	0.2	0	1					
Wilson's Storm-petrel										0%	1	0.3	0	3					
<i>Double-crested Cormorant</i>	359	165	20	37	15	7	1	1	605	73%	10	834	598	1025					
Anhinga										0%	1	0.1	0	1					
<i>American Bittern</i>					1		2		3	111%	9	2.7	0	6					

SPECIES	Coastal SBCs		CT	Upland SBCs:					2014	% of	#	2004-2013		
	GS	NH	Valley	Mid-state		Northern			State	2004-13	yrs	Ave	Low	High
			Hfd	WR	NM/P	Ba	LH	St	Totals	Average	obs.			
<i>Least Bittern</i>		1						1	56%	9	1.8	0	4	
<i>Great Blue Heron</i>	23	36	58	29	46	55	44	26	317	116%	10	274	211	375
<i>Great Egret</i>	115	28						143	57%	10	252	163	345	
<i>Snowy Egret</i>	55	12						67	79%	10	85	66	102	
<i>Little Blue Heron</i>					1			1	143%	6	0.7	0	2	
<i>Cattle Egret</i>									0%	1	0.1	0	1	
<i>Green Heron</i>	15	8	6	8	12	8	12	3	72	90%	10	80	59	113
<i>Black-cr Night-Heron</i>	53	17		1				71	29%	10	242	111	449	
<i>Yellow-cr Night-Heron</i>	2	3						5	116%	10	4.3	1	10	
<i>Glossy Ibis</i>		2						2	59%	8	3.4	0	8	
<i>Black Vulture</i>	4	17		13	6	7	9	3	59	197%	10	30	17	51
<i>Turkey Vulture</i>	37	39	17	51	73	104	61	55	437	119%	10	368	292	463
<i>Osprey</i>	57	91	7	2	1	2	1	1	162	128%	10	126	90	184
<i>Mississippi Kite</i>									0%	1	0.1	0	1	
<i>Bald Eagle</i>	5	4	4	3	2	18	3		39	162%	10	24	13	35
<i>Northern Harrier</i>								1	1	167%	4	0.6	0	2
<i>Sharp-shinned Hawk</i>	3	1			2	3	1		10	88%	10	11	7	18
<i>Cooper's Hawk</i>	4	3		6	2	19	8	2	44	119%	10	37	21	49
<i>accipiter species</i>				3										1
<i>Northern Goshawk</i>									0%	9	3.7	0	7	
<i>Red-shouldered Hawk</i>	6	13	12	35	4	26	29	10	135	189%	10	72	43	120
<i>Broad-winged Hawk</i>	4	2		10	2	38	18	6	80	139%	10	57	45	66
<i>Red-tailed Hawk</i>	88	28	34	43	25	34	35	11	298	102%	10	293	217	360

<i>American Kestrel</i>			1	2		2	1	6	45%	10	13	7	21
Merlin									0%	2	0.2	0	1
<i>Peregrine Falcon</i>	1	2	3					6	91%	10	6.6	4	9
<i>Clapper Rail</i>	2	3						5	59%	10	8.5	2	17
<i>King Rail</i>									0%	2	0.2	0	1
<i>Virginia Rail</i>		1	2	3	3			15	93%	10	26	13	32
<i>Sora</i>			cp					2	222%	7	0.9	0	2
American Coot									0%	6	1.1	0	5
Black-bellied Plover									0%	8	3.5	0	9
Semipalmated Plover	2	1						3	67%	8	4.5	0	15
<i>Piping Plover</i>		12						12	88%	10	14	5	24
<i>Killdeer</i>	23	16	71	26	7	25	25	24	87%	10	249	219	297
<i>American Oystercatcher</i>	42	11							100%	10	53	29	78
<i>Spotted Sandpiper</i>	3	6	21	2	1	8	2	2	96%	10	47	31	65
Solitary Sandpiper							1		333%	3	0.3	0	1
Greater Yellowlegs	1							1	63%	7	1.6	0	5
<i>Willet</i>	<u>15</u>	14						<u>29</u>	220%	9	13	0	26
<i>Upland Sandpiper</i>			3					3	429%	3	0.7	0	3
Ruddy Turnstone		1						1	24%	8	4.2	0	11
Red Knot									0%	4	2.7	0	22
Sanderling									0%	5	3.0	0	21
Semipalmated Sandpiper	<u>24</u>	41						65	229%	7	28	0	215
Least Sandpiper	7							7	35%	4	20	0	73
White-rumped Sandpiper									0%	7	1.7	0	6
Pectoral Sandpiper									0%	2	0.3	0	2
Purple Sandpiper									0%	1	0.1	0	1
Dunlin	1							1	71%	3	1.4	0	11
Short-billed Dowitcher									0%	1	0.3	0	3

SPECIES	Coastal SBCs		CT	Upland SBCs:					2014 State	% of 2004-13	# yrs	2004-2013		
	GS	NH	Valley	Mid-state		Northern						Totals	Average	obs.
			Hfd	WR	NM/P	Ba	LH	St						
Wilson's Snipe										0%	1	0.1	0	1
<i>American Woodcock</i>			1	7		1	8		17	116%	10	15	8	24
Laughing Gull	3	1							4	12%	9	34	0	111
Bonaparte's Gull										0%	1	0.1	0	1
Ring-billed Gull	45	252			1		2		300	84%	10	356	190	476
<i>Herring Gull</i>	378	282							660	96%	10	689	413	975
Glaucous Gull										0%	2	0.2	0	1
<i>Great Black-backed Gull</i>	73	42							115	51%	10	226	107	373
<i>Least Tern</i>		71							71	42%	10	169	13	334
Gull-billed Tern										0%	1	0.2	0	2
Caspian Tern										0%	2	0.5	0	3
Black Tern										0%	1	0.1	0	1
<i>Common Tern</i>	144	24							168	48%	10	351	217	547
Forster's Tern	6								6	273%	7	2.2	0	6
Royal Tern	2								2	#####	0	0.0	0	0
<i>Black Skimmer</i>										0%	7	6.1	0	26
Rock Pigeon	138	123	86	36	10	69	59	57	578	58%	10	996	759	1154
<i>Mourning Dove</i>	438	237	291	256	178	394	244	153	2191	85%	10	2567	2072	2897
<i>Monk Parakeet</i>	23	41							64	65%	10	98	20	288
<i>Black-billed Cuckoo</i>	3	10	2	19	8	13	10	9	74	349%	10	21	10	69
<i>Yellow-billed Cuckoo</i>	22	21	6	14	4	17	14	17	115	306%	10	38	11	144
<i>cuckoo species</i>	1				1									
<i>Eastern Screech-Owl</i>	3	cp	2	9	7	1	8	7	37	86%	10	43	26	59

<i>Great Horned Owl</i>	2		2	2	1	4	3	14	58%	10	24	10	36	
<i>Barred Owl</i>	9	2	1	23	6	39	26	16	122	133%	10	92	61	132
<i>Northern Saw-whet Owl</i>							2		2	125%	8	1.6	0	4
<i>Nighthawk, Common</i>		2		1			1		4	148%	10	2.7	1	6
<i>Whip-poor-will</i>						4			4	41%	10	10	1	22
<i>Chimney Swift</i>	164	117	90	117	31	438	111	64	1132	146%	10	776	554	1109
<i>Ruby-throated Hummingbird</i>	18	6	10	27	23	105	54	35	278	146%	10	190	146	236
<i>Belted Kingfisher</i>	11	5	3	6	9	25	8	2	69	72%	10	96	70	118
<i>Red-bellied Woodpecker</i>	273	59	72	98	56	77	76	38	749	114%	10	654	506	790
<i>Yellow-bellied Sapsucker</i>				58	63	321	135		577	117%	10	493	337	649
<i>Downy Woodpecker</i>	157	84	53	74	92	189	64	43	756	92%	10	825	667	1095
<i>Hairy Woodpecker</i>	94	16	25	18	17	84	23	10	287	108%	10	265	235	356
<i>Northern Flicker</i>	142	54	66	28	20	58	45	23	436	84%	10	520	468	613
<i>Pileated Woodpecker</i>	36	6	14	30	19	61	39	9	214	155%	10	138	103	167
<i>Olive-sided Flycatcher</i>		1							1	91%	6	1.1	0	3
<i>Eastern Wood-Pewee</i>	164	76	71	114	53	142	166	47	833	127%	10	658	592	797
<i>Yellow-bellied Flycatcher</i>							1		1	111%	4	0.9	0	5
<i>Acadian Flycatcher</i>	4			23			8		35	147%	10	24	16	34
<i>Alder Flycatcher</i>	1		1	6	7	24	60		99	99%	10	100	62	139
<i>Willow Flycatcher</i>	48	47	52	36	40	40	101	2	366	139%	10	264	224	315
<i>Least Flycatcher</i>				38	10	60	65	15	188	143%	10	132	75	158
<i>Epidonax species</i>														
<i>Eastern Phoebe</i>	64	24	24	126	96	279	176	66	855	113%	10	756	548	939
<i>Great Crested Flycatcher</i>	101	55	48	83	31	59	100	26	503	110%	10	459	389	529
<i>Eastern Kingbird</i>	69	44	27	97	42	179	120	41	619	116%	10	534	456	616
<i>White-eyed Vireo</i>	1	2		8	4				15	153%	10	10	2	22
<i>Yellow-throated Vireo</i>	26	4	9	55	31	41	100	25	291	119%	10	244	206	280
<i>Blue-headed Vireo</i>				16	3	67	34	1	121	74%	10	164	102	227

SPECIES	Coastal SBCs		CT	Upland SBCs:					2014	% of	#	2004-2013		
	GS	NH	Valley	Mid-state		Northern			State	2004-13	yrs	Ave	Low	High
			Hfd	WR	NM/P	Ba	LH	St	Totals	Average	obs.			
<i>Warbling Vireo</i>	245	111	155	187	80	120	174	103	1175	151%	10	779	682	1011
<i>Red-eyed Vireo</i>	298	130	97	403	203	1276	922	179	3508	124%	10	2839	2490	3526
<i>Blue Jay</i>	399	129	113	136	84	399	112	36	1408	94%	10	1501	1227	1757
<i>American Crow</i>	224	139	67	270	229	522	401	116	1968	83%	10	2383	1993	2623
<i>Fish Crow</i>	48	14	3	11	4	2	11	16	109	104%	10	105	62	148
<i>Common Raven</i>	3	6	2	11	9	44	38	1	114	122%	10	93	50	116
<i>Horned Lark</i>										0%	1	0.2	0	2
<i>Purple Martin</i>	48	7		2			10	2	69	183%	10	38	14	87
<i>Tree Swallow</i>	183	115	111	112	194	603	310	134	1762	96%	10	1828	1245	2200
<i>Northern Rough-w Swallow</i>	83	58	24	44	34	138	12	24	417	97%	10	432	349	504
<i>Bank Swallow</i>	1		59	11	30	33	3	12	149	59%	10	254	148	407
<i>Cliff Swallow</i>	83	16	9	38	31	141	4		322	119%	10	271	181	365
<i>Barn Swallow</i>	397	163	59	238	214	467	249	165	1952	112%	10	1744	1483	1990
<i>Black-capped Chickadee</i>	280	87	72	230	140	784	247	92	1932	103%	10	1876	1570	2254
<i>Tufted Titmouse</i>	372	96	104	251	128	565	212	114	1842	100%	10	1835	1648	2005
<i>Red-breasted Nuthatch</i>		5			4	19	2	1	31	112%	10	28	7	60
<i>White-breasted Nuthatch</i>	152	33	55	76	86	342	77	37	858	128%	10	672	486	1040
<i>Brown Creeper</i>	5		2	9	1	36	21	1	95	152%	10	63	41	78
<i>Carolina Wren</i>	110	21	51	59	41	45	22	27	376	107%	10	353	199	502
<i>House Wren</i>	318	80	56	197	154	136	183	79	1203	131%	10	921	723	1143
<i>Winter Wren</i>	5	2		7	6	27	12	1	60	118%	10	51	13	93
<i>Marsh Wren</i>	7	52	2	1	8		33		103	105%	10	98	46	253
<i>Golden-crowned Kinglet</i>						7	4		11	167%	10	6.6	1	16

Ruby-crowned Kinglet										0%	1	0.1	0	1
<i>Blue-gray Gnatcatcher</i>	28	5	5	84	23	<u>111</u>	43	44	<u>343</u>	131%	10	262	193	321
<i>Eastern Bluebird</i>	<u>70</u>	13	13	115	<u>99</u>	<u>160</u>	95	66	631	120%	10	526	445	684
Gray-checked Thrush										0%	1	0.1	0	1
<i>Veery</i>	143	19	13	197	240	853	564	101	2130	106%	10	2001	1698	2335
Bicknell's Thrush										0%	1	0.1	0	1
Swainson's Thrush	1		2	2					<u>5</u>	556%	7	0.9	0	2
<i>Hermit Thrush</i>				7	2	132	26		167	78%	10	213	147	270
<i>Wood Thrush</i>	147	58	68	159	112	229	197	65	1035	85%	10	1211	943	1419
<i>American Robin</i>	2227	724	793	564	306	<u>1042</u>	850	<u>523</u>	7029	99%	10	7074	5738	8404
<i>Gray Catbird</i>	781	192	212	424	<u>445</u>	<u>1013</u>	652	<u>259</u>	3978	99%	10	4021	3538	4762
<i>Northern Mockingbird</i>	95	64	59	41	<u>58</u>	<u>17</u>	11	17	362	82%	10	444	370	511
<i>Brown Thrasher</i>	7	1	1	<u>10</u>	<u>6</u>	1	7	2	35	93%	10	38	26	56
<i>European Starling</i>	1196	569	773	292	279	350	450	546	4455	80%	10	5549	4766	6613
<i>Cedar Waxwing</i>	232	147	78	166	139	<u>1207</u>	264	59	2292	121%	10	1901	1234	3039
<i>Blue-winged Warbler</i>	65	22	12	45	17	31	62	44	298	95%	10	314	276	392
<i>"Lawrence's Warbler"</i>														
<i>"Brewster's Warbler"</i>	1													
<i>Golden-winged Warbler</i>										0%	1	0.1	0	1
Tennessee Warbler										0%	1	0.1	0	1
<i>Nashville Warbler</i>								1	1	111%	7	0.9	0	2
<i>Northern Parula</i>	1					<u>5</u>	1		7	140%	10	5.0	2	9
<i>Yellow Warbler</i>	422	130	184	183	159	220	521	146	1965	98%	10	2012	1791	2297
<i>Chestnut-sided Warbler</i>	2		3	<u>63</u>	37	222	297	14	638	105%	10	609	529	672
<i>Magnolia Warbler</i>	2	1	1	<u>6</u>	1	109	12		132	131%	10	101	75	139
<i>Black-throated Blue Warbler</i>		1		<u>11</u>	1	146	<u>87</u>		<u>246</u>	123%	10	200	162	243
<i>Yellow-rumped Warbler</i>				1		65	<u>14</u>		80	74%	10	108	90	129
<i>Black-thr Green Warbler</i>		2	2	<u>41</u>	<u>11</u>	127	<u>98</u>	12	293	85%	10	345	272	416

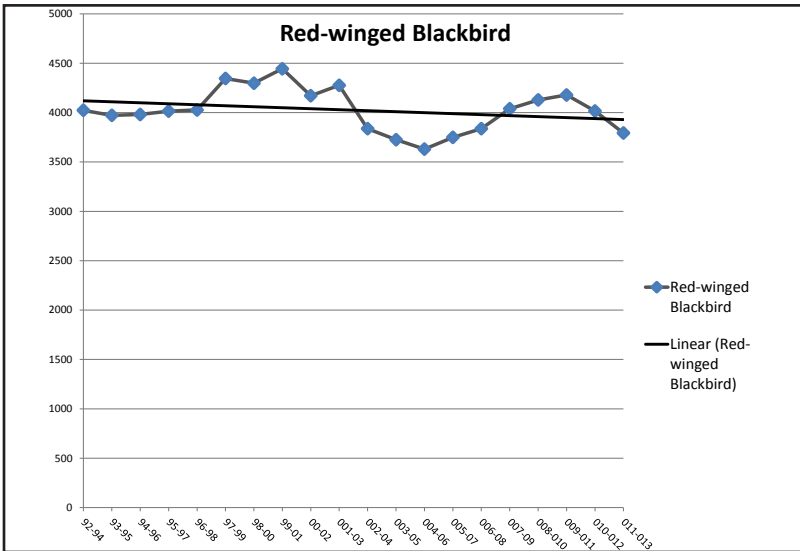
SPECIES	Coastal SBCs		CT	Upland SBCs:					2014	% of	#	2004-2013		
	GS	NH	Valley	Mid-state		Northern			State	2004-13	yrs	Ave	Low	High
			Hfd	WR	NM/P	Ba	LH	St	Totals	Average	obs.			
<i>Blackburnian Warbler</i>				11	<u>3</u>	170	68		<u>252</u>	127%	10	198	139	231
<i>Pine Warbler</i>	51	<u>31</u>	21	30	<u>17</u>	197	112	30	<u>489</u>	116%	10	420	398	460
<i>Prairie Warbler</i>	3	<u>14</u>	20	45	<u>21</u>	9	<u>1</u>	10	<u>123</u>	118%	10	104	80	146
Blackpoll Warbler	<u>1</u>			2			<u>4</u>		7	226%	10	3.1	1	7
<i>Cerulean Warbler</i>						2	9	9	20	163%	10	12	4	21
<i>Black-&-White Warbler</i>	10	<u>38</u>	1	48	31	<u>273</u>	<u>117</u>	19	537	103%	10	522	417	624
<i>American Redstart</i>	36	12	59	206	94	<u>543</u>	464	73	1487	114%	10	1305	1131	1566
<i>Worm-eating Warbler</i>	23	<u>28</u>	1	<u>39</u>	6	7	13	16	133	130%	10	102	75	141
<i>Ovenbird</i>	77	<u>136</u>	26	<u>244</u>	131	<u>739</u>	585	<u>129</u>	<u>2067</u>	131%	10	1581	1333	1951
<i>Northern Waterthrush</i>	1			6	4	<u>8</u>	27		<u>46</u>	92%	10	50	41	77
<i>Louisiana Waterthrush</i>	31	5	7	64	16	<u>103</u>	50	<u>25</u>	<u>301</u>	161%	10	188	145	225
<i>Kentucky Warbler</i>	<u>1</u>								<u>1</u>	500%	1	0.2	0	2
<i>Mourning Warbler</i>	<u>1</u>			<u>1</u>			<u>1</u>		3	333%	5	0.9	0	4
<i>Common Yellowthroat</i>	219	57	91	185	<u>232</u>	<u>688</u>	<u>527</u>	93	<u>2092</u>	118%	10	1778	1516	2019
<i>Hooded Warbler</i>	1	1		28	<u>30</u>		<u>12</u>		<u>72</u>	159%	10	45	34	72
Wilson's Warbler										0%	2	0.2	0	1
<i>Canada Warbler</i>				<u>9</u>		12	19		40	77%	10	52	39	75
<i>Yellow-breasted Chat</i>										0%	3	0.4	0	2
<i>Eastern Towhee</i>	49	24	37	78	81	<u>147</u>	106	30	552	99%	10	556	446	677
<i>Chipping Sparrow</i>	358	81	113	317	208	<u>1074</u>	367	262	<u>2780</u>	116%	10	2407	2178	2745
<i>Field Sparrow</i>	10	5	13	34	<u>33</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>31</u>	4	<u>146</u>	130%	10	112	77	156
<i>Verper Sparrow</i>			<u>cp</u>						<u>cp</u>	#####	0	0	0	0
<i>Savannah Sparrow</i>			<u>53</u>	10			10	10	83	111%	10	75	55	106

<i>Grasshopper Sparrow</i>			<u>19</u>						<u>19</u>	487%	10	3.9	2	7
<i>Nelson's Sparrow</i>										0%	5	0.5	0	1
<i>Saltmarsh Sparrow</i>		1							1	16%	10	6.4	1	11
<i>Seaside Sparrow</i>										0%	4	0.8	0	3
<i>Song Sparrow</i>	576	193	307	351	280	<u>687</u>	563	117	3074	110%	10	2807	2374	3133
<i>Swamp Sparrow</i>	3		7	9	42	<u>101</u>	<u>122</u>	5	289	88%	10	329	245	463
<i>White-throated Sparrow</i>						<u>7</u>			7	113%	10	6.2	1	19
<i>White-crowned Sparrow</i>				<u>1</u>					<u>1</u>	0%	0	0	0	
<i>Dark-eyed Junco</i>						<u>50</u>	7		<u>57</u>	123%	10	46	35	60
<i>Scarlet Tanager</i>	116	46	30	108	33	202	164	36	735	96%	10	764	680	888
<i>Northern Cardinal</i>	<u>534</u>	146	184	241	180	<u>452</u>	210	129	2076	109%	10	1903	1649	2247
<i>Rose-breasted Grosbeak</i>	<u>56</u>	27	36	79	66	<u>87</u>	100	21	472	101%	10	467	385	577
<i>Blue Grosbeak</i>		<u>1</u>							<u>1</u>	0%	0	0	0	0
<i>Indigo Bunting</i>	83	<u>47</u>	29	107	<u>110</u>	<u>181</u>	103	34	<u>694</u>	130%	10	535	446	616
<i>Dickcissel</i>										0%	1	0.1	0	1
<i>Bobolink</i>			23	148	35	34	212	14	466	95%	10	492	391	703
<i>Red-winged Blackbird</i>	597	585	517	509	434	383	770	496	4291	89%	10	4808	4413	5453
<i>Eastern Meadowlark</i>			3	cp	<u>2</u>		<u>5</u>	3	13	75%	10	17	8	28
<i>Common Grackle</i>	1291	384	419	276	<u>196</u>	437	361	138	3502	69%	10	5083	3786	6534
<i>Boat-tailed Grackle</i>										0%	1	0.1	0	1
<i>Brown-headed Cowbird</i>	140	72	50	91	104	<u>226</u>	151	94	928	81%	10	1139	928	1284
<i>Orchard Oriole</i>	13	12	6	29	5	<u>2</u>	2	<u>2</u>	71	89%	10	80	68	112
<i>Baltimore Oriole</i>	328	123	81	157	52	<u>139</u>	112	100	1092	95%	10	1145	930	1400
<i>Bullock's Oriole</i>										0%	1	0.1	0	1
<i>Purple Finch</i>					<u>9</u>	91	48		148	96%	10	154	102	200
<i>House Finch</i>	155	<u>36</u>	115	135	<u>122</u>	<u>200</u>	126	54	943	87%	10	1078	776	1240
<i>Red Crossbill</i>										0%	1	0.1	0	1
<i>Pine Siskin</i>										0%	4	5.7	0	50

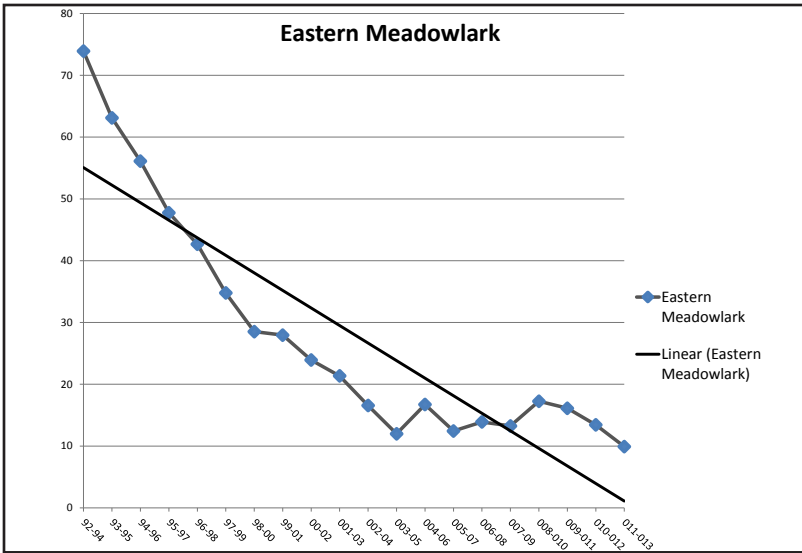
SPECIES	Coastal SBCs		CT	Upland SBCs:					2014 State Totals	% of 2004-13 Average	# yrs obs.	2004-2013		
	GS	NH	Valley	Mid-state		Northern						Ave	Low	High
			Hfd	WR	NM/P	Ba	LH	St						
<i>American Goldfinch</i>	284	103	202	215	<u>135</u>	<u>673</u>	279	66	1957	86%	10	2288	1737	2685
<i>Evening Grosbeak</i>										0%	2	0.9	0	7
<i>House Sparrow</i>	163	175	490	163	175	320	202	181	1869	56%	10	3327	2816	4194
other unidentified/hybrid												8.0	8	22
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	19937	8550	8015	10927	7998	<u>23828</u>	16077	6220	101552	103%		98260	82283	1E+05
<i>CD Species</i>	137	129	105	123	119	121	137	104	184	101%		183	174	191
<i>CP Species</i>	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0				2.0	1.0	6.0
DEGREE OF EFFORT:														
<i>Observers</i>	49	40	35	23	22	<u>28</u>	41	13	251	102%		247	229	263
<i>Parties</i>	35	18	23	15	13	<u>19</u>	15	8	146	110%		133.1	116	149
<i>Party Hours</i>	357.5	<u>139</u>	103	125	<u>129</u>	262	181	<u>112.8</u>	1409.3	108%		1301	1184	1417
<i>Day Party Hours</i>	350.5	136	101	120	<u>123</u>	253	166	<u>91.75</u>	1341.3	107%		1248	1124	1358
<i>Night Party Hours</i>	7	3	<u>2</u>	5	<u>6</u>	9	15	<u>21</u>	68	129%		53	32	60
<i>Indiv. birds per 10 PHs</i>	558	303.9	<u>778</u>	874	620	909.5	888.2	551.7	720.6					
<i>Indiv. birds per Observer</i>	407	106	229	475	364	851	392	478	405					
<i>% SBC Observers</i>	20	16	14	9	9	11	16	5	100					
<i>% SBC Party Hours</i>	25	10	7	9	9	19	13	8	100					
<i>% SBC Individual Birds</i>	20	8	8	11	8	23	16	6	100					

This year we present graphs on 23 years of results of two groups of birds, our icterid blackbirds and Introduced/escaped species that are not native to Connecticut.

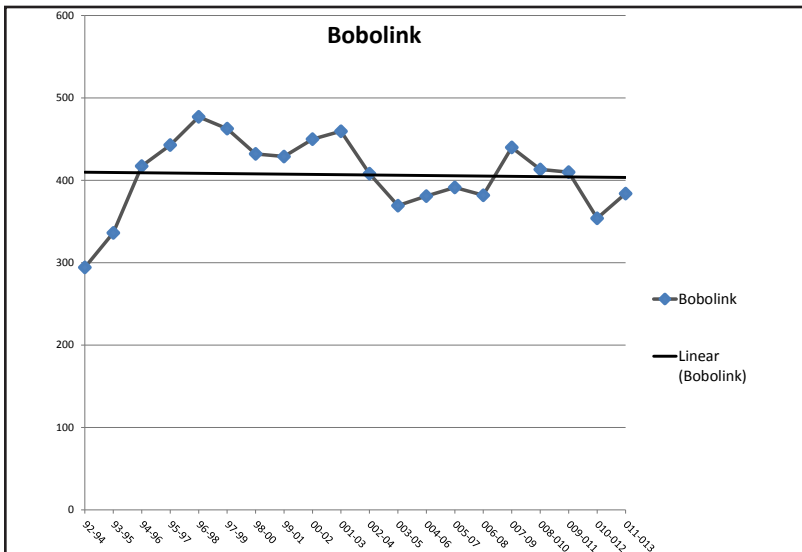
The below graphs present the number observed per 1000 party hours on a three- year rolling average of those results. Correcting for 1000 party hours rather than simply by party hours gives a result that is more in line with the actual number of birds observed. A simple linear trend-line was added via the Excel “linear trend line tool”, which uses the method of least squares to estimate a trend from a given series of points. This is for illustrative purposes only and should not be considered definitive evidence of a significant trend.



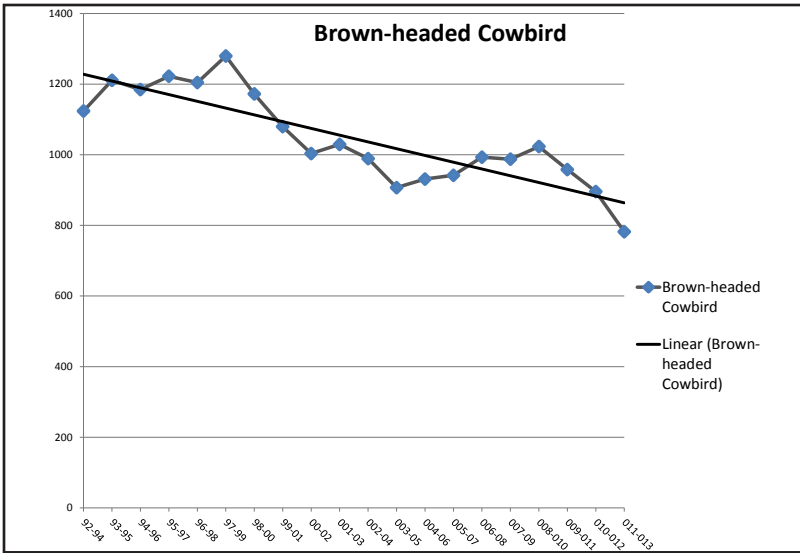
Red-winged Blackbirds are perennially one of the most abundant species found on the SBC. The trend-line seems to indicate a slight reduction in number in later years relative to early years of the count, but there are ups and downs within the overall period.



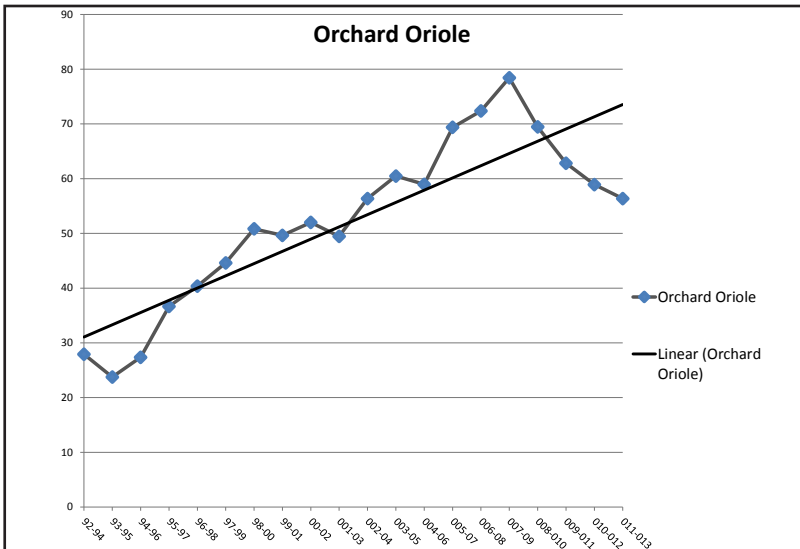
Eastern Meadowlarks are listed as a species of special concern by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection because of long-term population declines. Our SBC data certainly reflects this decline.



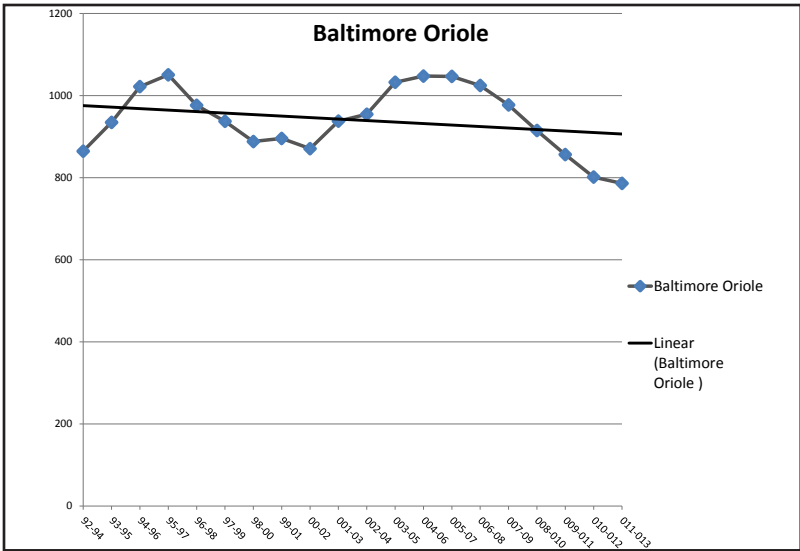
Bobolinks are listed as a species of special concern in Connecticut because of long-term population declines and concerns about reproductive success at many of their nesting sites. No real trend is indicated by our SBC data, but there is little question that they are less common now than they were throughout much of the 20th Century. Much of the decline happened before SBC was implemented.



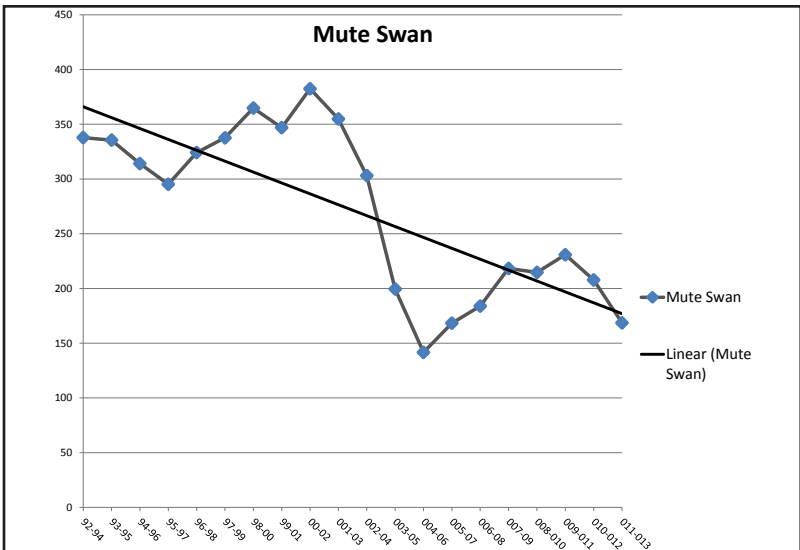
The data for Brown-headed Cowbird does appear to indicate a general decline in the number of this species recorded on SBC.



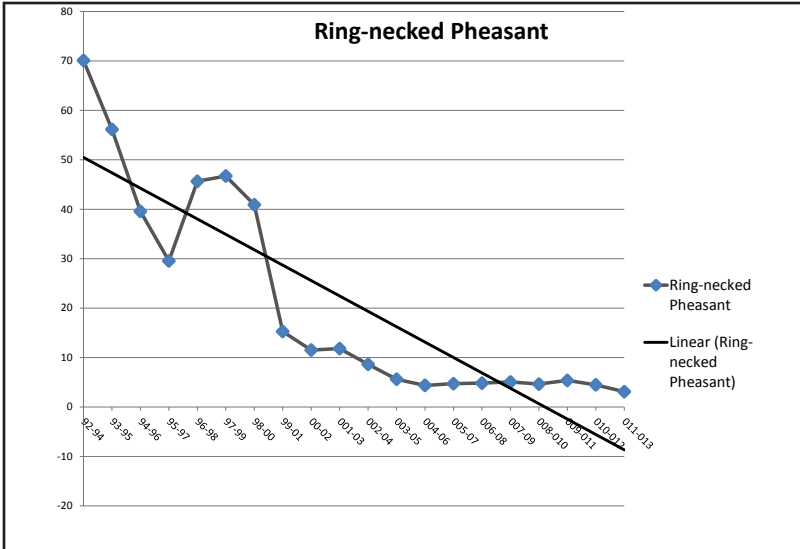
Though there is certainly some year-to-year variability in the number of Orchard Orioles recorded and the numbers have backed off the peak levels of a few years ago, there appears to be an increasing trend indicated by SBC data. This matches the general observation that Orchard Orioles are doing well.



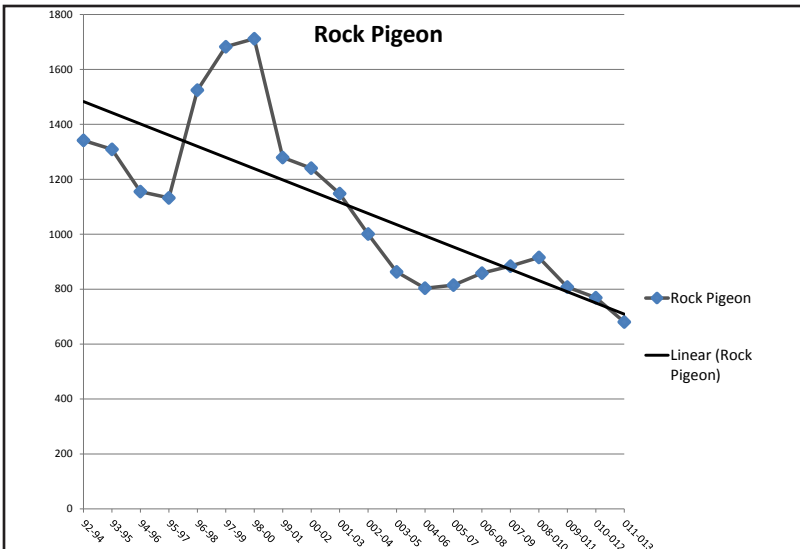
The trend-line indicates that there are perhaps fewer Baltimore Orioles being recorded in recent years, but a poor showing over the last three time periods may be influencing this and future years' data will be useful to determine if this is a indeed a trend.



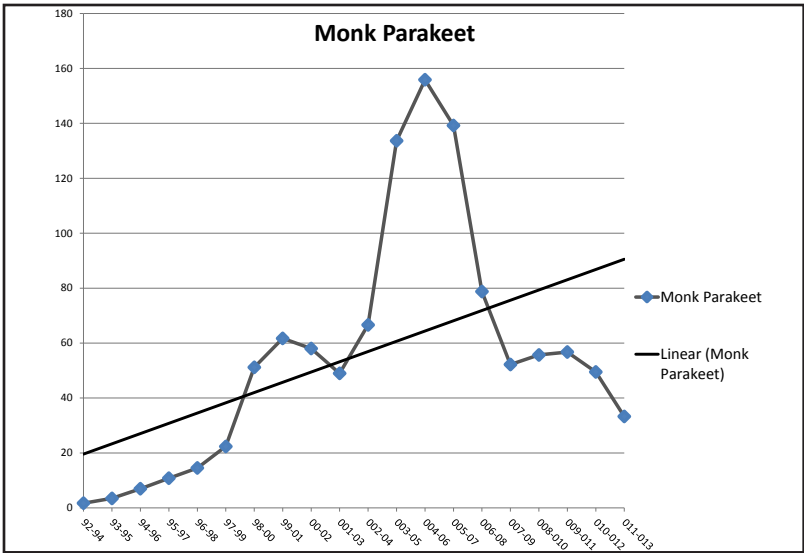
Mute Swans appear to have taken a big hit early in the 21st Century and have perhaps stabilized in the last decade. Overall there appears to be fewer of them recorded on 21st Century counts than were recorded on the 20th Century counts.



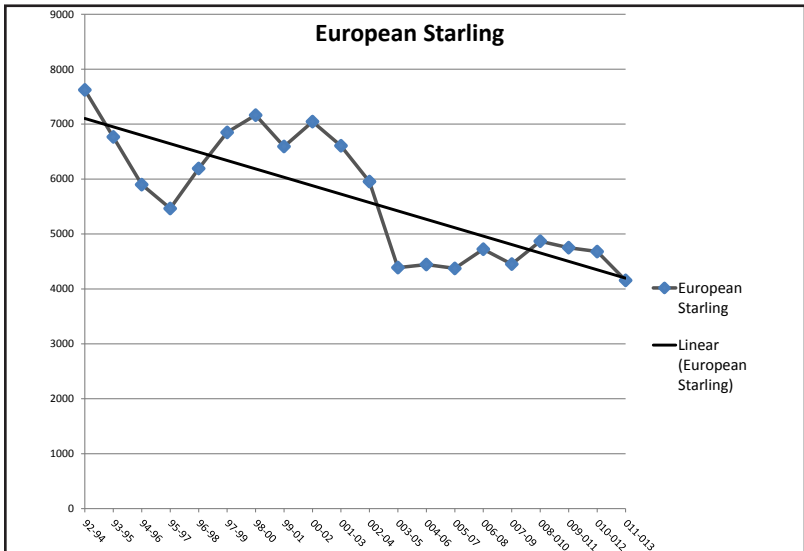
There are clearly fewer Ring-necked Pheasants being recorded in recent counts relative to the earlier years.



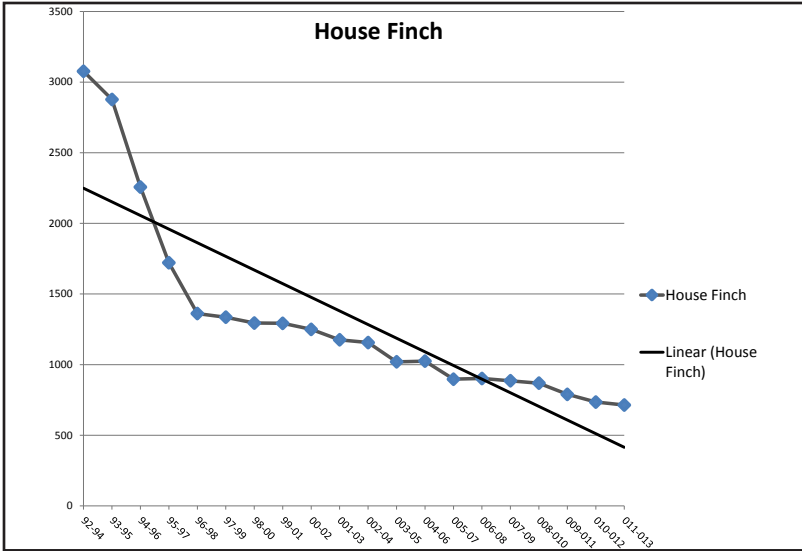
There appear to be some dramatic swings in Rock Pigeon numbers in the late 20th Century counts, but overall there appear to be fewer Rock Pigeons being recorded in recent counts.



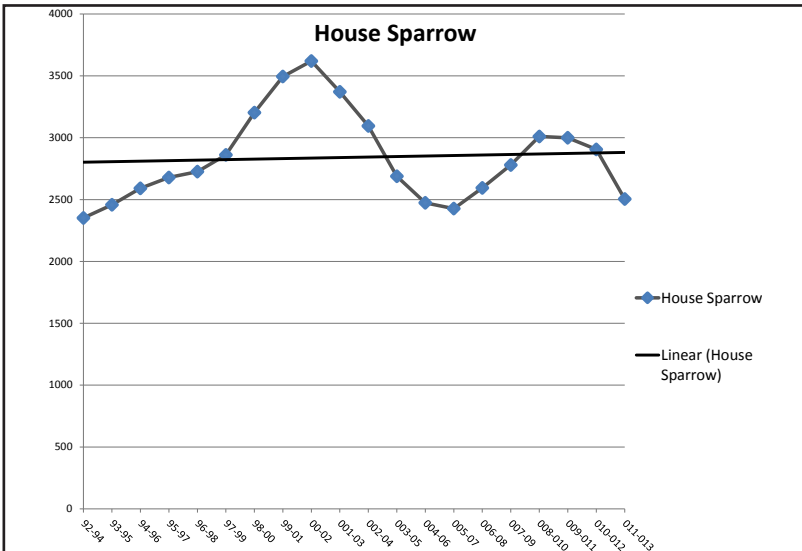
There are clearly more Monk Parakeets being recorded than were found in the early years of the SBC, but numbers are also way down from counts in the early 21st Century.



Despite year to year fluctuation, there seems to be a reasonably clear downward trend for European Starlings.



There appears to have been a steep decline in House Finch numbers in the 1990's and a slight but steady decline appears to continue. This is not surprising with the incidence of House Finch conjunctivitis.



Though we had a record low number of House Sparrows recorded in 2014, this is smoothed out by 3-year averages and correcting for party hours. Overall there appears to be more year to year variability than any real trend.

2014 CONNECTICUT SUMMER BIRD COUNT

STATEWIDE COUNT TOTALS

Count Dates: June 1, 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, 22, 28 & 29

Totals: 184 count days [CD] species were recorded and totaled 101,552 individual birds. Two hundred and fifty-one observers in 149 parties spent 1409.3 Party Hours [PH] in the field.

Since 1976, 262 SBC species have been counted, while another 3 species remain only count period (cp) birds. During the prior decade 234 species were recorded on count days.

LOCAL COUNT TOTALS

Barkhamsted Summer Bird Count (*founded 1992*)

Count Dates: June 28 & 29 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 121 species, 23,828 individual birds. Twenty-eight observers in nineteen parties spent 262 PHs in the field. Since 1992 157 CD species have been recorded.

Participants: Bob Barbieri, Penny Bauer, Ray Belding, Ayreslea Denny, Angela Dimmitt, Peter Faber, Nikki Hall, Seth Harvey, Vicki Hester, Bill Hiller, Marianne Horn, John Johnson, Jim Kandefer, **Marie Kennedy** (assistant compiler, 226 Maple St., Litchfield, Ct., 06759; 860 567-5487, mariekennedy226@gmail.com), Bianca LeGeyt, Leona LeJune, Vima LeJune, Russ Naylor, Carol Parent, Andrea Pelletier, Mike Placo, William Roberts, **David Rosgen** (121 Laurel Way, Winsted, CT 06098-2534; ctbluebird1020@gmail.com), Sam Slater, Jay Winslow, Debbie Woodward, Carol Youell, and Fran Zygmunt.

Weather: 6/28 - daytime: W winds, 0-5 mph., 57° to 79°F.; evening: W winds, 0-5 mph., 79° to 59°F., 6/29 - daytime: 0 mph., 59° to 81°F.; evening: 0 mph., 81° to 66°F.;

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 7 & 8 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 135 count species, plus 1 count period species, and 19,937 individual birds. Forty-nine observers in 35 Parties observed for 350.5 party hours [PHs]. Since 1976, 235 CD species have been recorded, including this year's addition of Royal Tern.

Participants: Tom Andersen, Mike Aurelia, Andrew Baksh, Marty Barris, Trudy Battaly, Joe Belanger, Gail Benson, Kelli Bochnik, Michael Bochnik, **Thomas W. Burke** (235 Highland Road, Rye, NY 10580; 914 967-4922, tom.burke@mcgladrey.com), Ioa Byrne, David Callan, Al Collins, Annette Cunniffe, Rachel Diersen, Patrick Dugan, Cynthia Ehlinger, Andrew Farnsworth, Kathy Gellman, Ted Gilman, Olivia Giuntini, David Havens, Jalna Jaeger, Dave Johnson, Wendy Knothe, JoAnn LaBare, Ryan MacLean, Stefan Martin, Ellen McClean, Maryann O'Leary, **Gary Palmer** (34 Field Road. Cob Cob, Ct., 06830; 203 661-4897, gejlpalmer@yahoo.com), Drew Panko, Matt Popp, Steve Ricker, Polly Rothstein, David Salmon, Meredith Sampson, Jonna Schaffer, Alan Scuterud, Elaine Scuterud, Bob Shriber, Andy Towle, Matt Tozer, Marvin Turner, Bill Van Loan, Jr., Jim Voros, Bill Wallace, Mike Warner, and Alec Wiggin.

Weather: 6/7- NW winds, 7-18 mph, 51° to 81°F., Pleasant, breezy; 6/8- SS/W winds, 4-12 mph, 59° to 82°F., Pleasant.

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 7 & 8 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: One hundred and five CD species, two CP species, 8,015 individual birds. Thirty-five observers in 23 Parties covered 101 PHs. One 173 CD species have been documented since 1992.

Participants: Bill Asteriades, Nick Barnett, Betsy Bumbach, Jane Bradovchak, Katie Cianfaglione, Paul Cianfaglione, Patrick Comins, Pamm Cooper, Andrew Dasinger, Paul Desjardins, Peter Eagan, Patrice Favreau, Mark Flaherty, Beth Fordiani, Roberta Gowing, Kathy Hall, Dee Hanson, Eric Hanson, Ernie Harris, **Jay Kaplan** (71 Gracey Road, Canton, CT. 06019; 293 693-0157, jaybrd49@aol.com), John Karpinsky, Gil Kleiner, Steve Kotchko, Alan Lurie, Dave Lyons, Annette Pasek, Ann Pettengill, Roger Preston, Peg Schader, Susanne Shrader, Brian Toal, Jon Ward, Judy Whittlesey, Mike Whittlesey, and Roy Zartarian.

Weather: 6/7- clearing up after previous day's 1.58" rainfall, 52° to 78°F., 6/8- a gorgeous day 56° to 81°F.,

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

Litchfield Hills Summer Bird Count (*founded 1994*)

Count Dates: June 7 & 8 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 137 species, 16,077 individual birds. Forty-one observers in 15 Parties accumulated 181 PHs. Since 1994, with the addition of Solitary Sanspiper this year, 177 CD species have been recorded.

Participants: Janet Baker, John Baker, Bob Barbieri, Ray Belding, Arsylea Denny, Angela Dimmitt, Eileen Finnan, Nicki Hall, Greg Hanisek, Marianne Horn, Alex Kennedy, Marie Kennedy, Jerry Marcellino, Debbie Martin, Scott Mills, Russ Naylor, Ann Orsillo, Sam Slater, Donna Rose Smith, Olaf Soltau, **David Tripp Jr.** (63 Dyer Ave., Canton, Ct. 06019; dtrippjr@comcast.net), John Wagenblatt, Dave Wakefield, Ryan Wirtes, and Fran Zygmunt. plus 15 class members

Weather: 6/7 – 51° to 78°F., evening: N/NW winds, 0-10 mph.. 6/8 - 53° to 82°F., S winds, 0-5 mph.

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 7 & 8 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 129 species, 8,579 individual birds. Forty observers in 18 Parties spent 139 PHs in the field. Since 1991, 187 CD species have been confirmed with the addition this year of Olive-sided Flycatcher.

Participants: Marion Aimsbury, Ralph Amodel, Mark Aronson, Dan Barvir, Bill Batsford, Larry Bausher, Steve Broker, Gail Cameron, Cheryl Cape, Elena Coffey, Patrick Comins, John Farley, Mike Ferreri, Mike Horn, Laura Lawrence, Patrick Leahy, Mary Ann Lewis, Christ Loscalzo, **Steve Mayo** (27 Tuttle Court, Bethany, CT 06524; 203 393-0694, rsd-mayo@sbcglobal.net), Florence McBride, Pat McCrelless, Ann Meacham, Bob Mitchell, Mike O'Brien, John Oshlick, Frank Ragusa, Nancy Ragusa, Jason Rieger, Arne Rosengren, Dan Rotino, Lee Schlesinger, Mark Scott, Arthur Shippee, Nancy Specht, Charla Spector, Steve Spector, Deborah Tenney, Marianne Vahey, Lisa Wahle, and Paul Wolter.

Weather: 6/7– daytime: N/W winds shifting S/W, 0-10 mph, 60° to 76°F., clear, nighttime: S winds, 5 mph, partly cloudy. 6/8– N winds shifting S, 0-8 mph., 61° to 82°F., partly cloudy, nighttime: S/SW winds, 3 mph, 75° to 72°F., mostly cloudy.

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 21 & 22 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 120 species, 7998 individual birds. Twenty-

two observers in thirteen parties spent 129 PHs in the field. Since 2003, 155 CD species have been recorded, including this year's addition of an unidentified shrike.

Participants: Pat Bailey, Ray Belding, Jacob Berendsohn, Don Breeger, Barbara Butler, Binnie Chase, **Angela Dimmitt** (PO Box 146, Sherman, Ct. 06784; 860 355-3429, angeladimmitt@aol.com), Dot Fleury, Sibyll Gilbert, Josh Hamilton, Linton Hamilton, Carol Hartel, Marge Josephson, Anne Kehmna, Marie Kennedy, Dennis Larkin, Sariena Masiero, Russ Naylor, Nancy Nichols, Sally Spence, Nick Thold, and Bill Wallace.

Weather: 6/21 – daytime: 56° to 77°F. Wind: 5 mph., “Perfect”; evening: 55° to 46°F., clear, calm; 6/22- daytime: 55° to 81°F. Wind: 4 mph., “Perfect”, evening: 53° to 56°F., Clear.

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 Wingdale, and Poughquag.

Storrs Summer Bird Count (*founded 1990*)

Count Dates: June 14 & 15 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 104 species, 6146 individual birds. Thirteen observers in eight parties accumulated 112.8 PHs in the field. Since 1990 138 CD species have been counted.

Participants: Mike Curtis, Jorge de Leon, Susan Harrington, Tom Harrington, Susan Hochgraf, Paul Manzone, Joy Mark, **Steve Morytko** (288 Varga Road, Ashford, CT 06278-1828; 860 680-5728, smorytko@yahoo.com), Jason Rieger, Maura Robie, Steve Rogers, Philip Rusch, and Mark Szantyr.

Weather: 6/14- W winds, 3-15 mph., 53° to 73°F., some fog and drizzle early AM, clear later, 6/15- NW winds, 0-20 mph., 50° to 78°F., sunny and windy most of the day.

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, Willington, Windham and small portion of Andover.

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

Count Date: June 1 (Sun.)

Totals: 123 species, 10,927 individual birds, and one count period [cp] species. Twenty-three observers in 15 Parties counted during 120 PHs in the field. Since 1978, 182 CD species have been recorded.

Participants: Dave Baade, Renee Baade, Dave Babington, Ray Belding, Polly Brody, Robert Cartoceti, Buzz Devine, Angela Dimmitt, Ken Elkins, Larry Fischer, Dennis Hannon, Tom Hook, Anne Kehmna, Marie Kennedy, Bill Liedlich, Nancy Liedlich, **Russ Naylor** (44 Church Street, Woodbury, CT 06798, 203 263-2502), Donna Rose Smith, Jesus Tirado, Carol Titus, Leigh Wells, Tom Zissu, and Fran Zygmont.

Weather: 6/1 daytime: W/SW Winds, 10-15 mph., 50° to 80°F.

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

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Spring, March 1 through May 31, 2014

Spring began on a wintry note, not only because March was cold, but because the winter season's major Snowy Owl flight continued through the month and lapped over into April. Overall April was relatively uneventful, with unfavorable weather at the end slowing what is normally a time of wide-spread new arrivals. That all changed as the weather broke along with the start of May. A major statewide incursion of passerines brought first arrivals to many locations on May 2 (see details below), and the month overall produced exciting finds and good numbers of migrants throughout, from a phalarope on May 1 to a cooperative chat to close out the season.

Following is a list of typical first arrival dates for regularly occurring species:

Great Egret – March 13 in Madison (PCo); Snowy Egret – March 22 in East Lyme (RS); Little Blue Heron – April 7 in Madison (WB); Green Heron – April 13 in Hartford (JCo); Yellow-crowned Night-Heron – March 28 in Stratford (TG); Glossy Ibis – April 5 in Madison (Drt, JOs); Clapper Rail – April 21 in Milford (SSp); Virginia Rail – April 18 in Litchfield (JMa, DRt); Semipalmated Plover – May 1 in Stratford (SMr); Piping Plover – March 21 in Old Lyme (HG) and Milford (SSp); Spotted Sandpiper – April 11 in Milford (WB,	TG); Solitary Sandpiper – April 21 in Litchfield (MW); Upland Sandpiper – April 24 in East Hartford (BA); Least Sandpiper – April 7 in Westport (TG); Pectoral Sandpiper – April 1 in Stratford (PDe); Willet – April 14 in Westport (PDe, TG); Least Tern – May 2 in Milford (FMa) and Stratford (SZy); Common Tern – May 3 in Milford (SSp); Yellow-billed Cuckoo – May 3 in New Haven (DRt); Black-billed Cuckoo – May 1 in Salem (DB); Common Nighthawk – May 10 in New Hartford (JKa); Whip-poor-will – April 14 in Lyme (HG); Chimney
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*Bruce Finnan photo
This Red-necked Grebe on the Connecticut R. in Enfield on
March 19 was one part of a major spring flight.*

Swift – April 23 in Pawcattuck (RD); Ruby-throated Hummingbird – April 19 in Milford (Ssp) and Uncasville (SBe); E. Wood-Pewee – May 4 in Stamford (MMo); Eastern Phoebe – March 22 in Hamden (FMc) and Bethany (SMa); Willow Flycatcher – May 9 in Morris (RW); Eastern Kingbird – April 20 in Southbury (RN); White-eyed Vireo – April 18 in New Britain (DCr); Blue-headed Vireo – April 12 in Colebrook (SSt) and Barkhamsted (DRo); Warbling Vireo – April 28 in Greenwich (SMr).

Also Barn Swallow – March 24 in Greenwich (SMr); N. Rough-winged Swallow – March 30 in Norwalk (BM);

Cliff Swallow – April 17 in Oxford (RHa); Purple Martin – April 7 in Milford (MB) and Stonington (NDo); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher – April 11 in Milford (TG); Wood Thrush – May 1 in Glastonbury (DJ); Louisiana Waterthrush – April 9 in Naugatuck (GH) and Glastonbury (RS); Northern Waterthrush – April 13 in Litchfield (RW); Black-and-White Warbler – April 17 in Litchfield (TG); N. Parula – April 25 in New Haven (JOs); Bay-breasted Warbler – May 8 in Stamford (BI) and Greenwich (AWe); Blackburnian Warbler – May 3 in Litchfield (MD); Yellow Warbler – April 25 in Greenwich (CEh); Blackpoll Warbler – May 8 in Salem (DB) and Greenwich

(AWe); Palm Warbler – April 5 in Manchester (MPr); Pine Warbler – March 23 in Stamford (MMo); Black-throated Green Warbler – April 18 in Canton (JMe); Canada Warbler – May 3 in Hamden (RC); Wilson’s Warbler – May 7 in Windsor (PDe) and Rocky Hill (PCo); Vesper Sparrow – April 6 in Westport (TG); Grasshopper Sparrow – May 9 in East Hartford (PCi); Saltmarsh Sparrow – May 10 in Guilford (Pco) and Madison (FMa); Bobolink – May 3 (three locations); Rose-breasted Grosbeak – April 16 in Harwinton (RB).

May 2, a big flight day, produced so many first records throughout the state that species are listed separately here: Least Flycatcher – (three locations); Great Crested Flycatcher (7 locations); Yellow-throated Vireo (four locations); Red-eyed Vireo – (three locations); Veery (seven locations); Swainson’s Thrush – Milford (FG); Ovenbird (18 locations); Blue-winged Warbler – (10 locations); Nashville Warbler – (three locations); Worm-eating Warbler – (four locations); Common Yellowthroat – (eight locations); Hooded Warbler –

Southbury (BBa) and New Haven (JOs); American Redstart – (eight locations); Magnolia Warbler – Madison (JCa); Chestnut-sided Warbler – Torrington (RB); Black-throated Blue Warbler – (seven locations); Scarlet Tanager (six location); Lincoln’s Sparrow – New Haven (JMu); Orchard Oriole (four locations).

May 13 was a key arrival day for typically late migrants, with a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher banded at Birdcraft Sanctuary in Fairfield (KV), a Mourning Warbler in Hamden (ABr) and an inland race Nelson’s Sparrow at Sperry Pond in Middlebury (KE).

A group of four **Greater White-fronted Geese** and a Snow Goose were on the Connecticut R. at Glastonbury on March 14 (BA), and a Greater White-fronted was in the Mackenzie Reservoir area of Wallingford in mid-March, where it was often accompanied by a **Cackling Goose** (GH et al.). Single Cackling Geese were also present in March on the Farmington R. in Farmington (PCi et al.), at North Farms Reservoir in Wallingford (RS et al.) and at Sherwood

Island State Park in Westport (PW et al.). A Tundra Swan was a good find March 15-20 at Salmon River Cove in East Haddam (HG et al.). Two were at the Farmington Meadows Mar 21 (SJo) and again on Mar 31 (PCi). Two were in South Windsor on March 30 (BA, RMa), and one at North Farms Reservoir in Wallingford April 4-6 may have been the same one present there in late winter (RS et al.). A Trumpeter Swan of unknown origin again settled in at Konold's Pond in Woodbridge, where it was last seen April 9 after a stay of about 80 days (SBr et al.).

The Shell Beach area of Guilford was a hot spot for dabbling ducks, with 24 N. Pintails on March 23 (PW) and 325 Green-winged Teal on March 15 (TT). The same Green-winged Teal total was noted April 27 at Glastonbury Meadows (BA, ADa). Whalebone Creek in Lyme held 28 N. Pintail on March 26 (DRt). Among a number of large Greater Scaup concentrations was 11,400 off Shippan Point, Stamford, on April 1 (PDU). After a good winter for Redheads, spring produced a high count of 7 at Grass I., Greenwich on Mar

2 (SMr). The now-regular presence of Common Eiders in the eastern end of Long Island Sound included 147 on May 7 at Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford (FMA). Three **King Eiders**, two immatures and a first-year male, March 2 at Sunken I. in Fairfield were unusual for a species that typically occurs singly (JP). An immature male was at Harkness on May 19 (NB). An adult male was a stunning flyby May 13 at Shippan Point, along with 48 White-winged Scoters (PDU) on a day of heavy White winged Scoter movement all along the coast (NB). This movement actually spanned several days, with a massive flyby of 720 off Stratford on May 15 (FMA). Five White-winged Scoters were on Bantam L. in Litchfield on May 1 along with 18 Buffleheads during a fallout of grebes (GH). A Surf Scoter was a good inland find at Wethersfield Cove on the Connecticut R. on April 29 (PCi). The concentration of Long-tailed Ducks off Long Beach, Stratford, reached 3500 on April 1 (FMA). One was inland April 14 at West Hartford Reservoir 6 (PCi). A male **Barrow's**



Paul Fusco photo
This Red-headed Woodpecker drew many birders to Cedar Hill Cemetery in the Hartford area during its extended stay



Carol Arrowsmith photo
This Summer Tanager in Broad Brook was one of four reported in spring 2014.



Russ Smiley photo
This is one of several Cape May Warblers that delighted birders in mid-May at East Rock Park in New Haven.



Russ Smiley photo
A male Yellow-headed Blackbird, like this one at Cove Island Wildlife Sanctuary in Stamford, always provides excitement.



John Oshlick photo

This pale-colored White-crowned Sparrow was a nice find March 3 at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison.

Goldeneye was at Penfield Reef, Fairfield, on March 7 (JP), and a pair was found on the Connecticut R. at Haddam Meadows State Park in Haddam on March 14 (HS). A Red-breasted Merganser on April 3 at Great Pond in Simsbury was at an unusual location (PDe). About 100 Ruddy Ducks were at Saybrook Point on March 17 (MK).

Three Ruffed Grouse were on Mount Riga in Salisbury on April 24 (PCo). A basic-plumaged **Pacific Loon** was

reported April 23 from the west side of the Thames River in New London, an area that produced a winter record (MMc fide SMi). A Horned Grebe found May 12 at Sandy Point in West Haven remained through summer and well into fall (SL, m.ob.) An **Eared Grebe** present during the winter season at Greenwich Point remained to at least March 12 (SMr et al.). A major flight of Red-necked Grebes was spread across the whole season at both coastal and inland sites, with a major

grounding of 46 on May 1 at Bantam L., Litchfield along with 13 Horned Grebes (GH). A **Manx Shearwater** flying east past Shippan Point on April 29 was a seasonal highlight (PDu).

Least Bitterns were unexpected May 15 at Sherwood Island (TG) and May 27 in Stratford (MW). At Wangunk Meadows in Portland, 140 Great Blue Heron nests were 90% occupied on March 22 (HG). In what turned out to be a good spring and summer for Tricolored Herons, the first one was at Milford Point on April 13 (JMa). Other reports came from East Haven on April 17 (RHu) and Harkness Memorial State Park on May 6 (DRt). An adult Tricolored X Little Blue Heron hybrid, apparently the last of a family group under observation for several years, was first seen April 14 at HBSP (FMa). A Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was an unusual inland find May 17 in Southbury after a wet, easterly blow (PCo). A Glossy Ibis was inland in Wallingford on April 17 (MMr). Especially noteworthy were seven in a meadow in Oxford on April 19-20 (fide AG). Now annual

in spring, a **White-faced Ibis** found May 18 at HBSP was present through the end of the season (PR, GW).

A Black Vulture nest with two eggs, found by a rock climber, was confirmed April 27 in Redding (JMu et al.). Another, also with two eggs, was found in a barn in New Milford on April 25 and the young hatched May 24 (JKr). A seasonal highlight was reports of flyover **Swallow-tailed Kites** in Guilford on April 16 (JZ, RZ) and possibly the same bird the next day from an office window in New Haven (SJn); April 23 in Bridgeport (FG); and May 16 at Cove Island in Stamford (MMo). A **Mississippi Kite** on May 15 at Great Pond in Simsbury was at a location where breeding has been confirmed in the past (NB). There were multiple sightings in Glastonbury from May 3 through the last week in May but none thereafter (BA, DJ). Ospreys were at nest sites March 11 in Old Lyme and Old Saybrook (HG, ALa). A build-up of Bald Eagles on the lower Connecticut River included 17 immatures on March 2 at the Great Island boat launch in Old Lyme (PCi). A flight



Russ Smiley photo
This Black-headed Gull showed off its distinctive wing pattern March 15 at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison.

of 236 Broad-winged Hawks passed over Suffield on April 25 (JW), with 136 at the Johnnycake Mountain hawk watch in Burlington the same day (KMe). A very late light morph Rough-legged Hawk was seen in Ridgefield on May 7 (LH). An immature Golden Eagle April 27 was a seasonal highlight at Johnnycake (KMe).

The elusive and seldom-verified King Rail was at Elys Ferry in Lyme on May 18-21 (PR, GW). Two **Sandhill Cranes** were on the ground in Winchester Center on April 17 and had been seen in flight for several days be-

fore that (AHi). Two flyovers were noted in Hamden on May 7 (JOs). A good inland shorebird concentration at Wethersfield Meadows on May 6 included 27 Greater Yellowlegs, 16 Lesser Yellowlegs and 43 Solitary Sandpipers (PCi). A Lesser Yellowlegs was a bit early March 11 at HBSP (LB). A flock of 14 Semipalmated Sandpipers were also a bit ahead of schedule April 26 at Milford Point (TG), as were two White-rumped Sandpipers May 3 at Milford Point (FG). Twenty Wilson's Snipe were in a wet field in Wallingford on March 31 (PCo), and on April 12 Glastonbury Mead-

ows held 61 (BA). An American Woodcock nest with three eggs on April 16 in New Milford offered insight on the intimate life of one of our more secretive breeders (ADi). A **Red-necked Phalarope** was a great find May 1 at Bantam L. in Litchfield (MD). After rainy, easterly weather another was at Shell Beach in Guilford May 17-18 (PW m.ob.).

The first **Black-headed Gull** turned up on March 15 at HBSP (RS) with two there March 17 (PCo et al.). Others were at Shell Beach in Guilford on March 23 (PWe et al.) and Southport on April 1 (AHA). **Little Gulls** joined the staging flocks of Bonaparte's Gulls in Long Island Sound in good numbers. High counts included four (three basic-plumaged adults and an immature) on April 5 at Short Beach, Stratford, with a different adult reported at the Stratford sea wall (FMa et al.). Four, two adults and two immatures, were at Southport Beach on April 10 with 1400 Bonaparte's (KMU et al.). An adult Laughing Gull, unusual in spring, was in Stratford on May 1 (FMa). Perhaps the season's most unexpected

find was a gull found March 25 at Wethersfield Cove that on close examination appeared to be a hybrid Black-headed X Ring-billed Gull (PCi). A Nelson's Gull (Herring Gull X Glaucous Gull hybrid) was reported from Holly Pond in Stamford on March 31 (SMr). A Caspian Tern was a good early find April 27 at HBSP (GH et al.); others were in Stratford on May 8 (RS) and in Greenwich on May 16 (SMr). A Black Tern graced the Connecticut R. in Glastonbury on May 11 (BA), and two were at Compo Beach, Westport, the next day (TG). An **Arctic Tern**, very rare in the state, was reported from Batterson Pond in Farmington during a rainy, foggy May 16 morning with easterly wind, favorable conditions for this offshore migrant (PCi). Black Skimmers first appeared on drizzly May 9 at Sandy Point, West Haven, (FMc et al.) and Compo Beach, Westport (TG).

Winter's major movement of Snowy Owls continued with birds widespread in March, including inland sightings March 13 at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks (JFI) and April 19 in

Bethlehem (DN). The latest was April 24 at Milford Point (FG). A Short-eared Owl was a seasonal surprise May 2 at Long Beach in Stratford (SZy). A Whip-poor-will May 17 in Easton was a rare find for Fairfield County (TM). A male Red-headed Woodpecker found April 17 at Cedar Hill Cemetery in Hartford remained to at least May 10 (NDI et al.). Others were in Rosa Hartman Park in Stamford on May 4-10 (CEh et al.) and at a Canaan feeder on May 11 (TS, IS).

Olive-sided Flycatchers were not detected until one was seen May 25 in Stafford (PDe). Acadian Flycatcher, a species that appears on the upswing, was widely reported after the first one on May 10 in Lyme (RMi). Alder Flycatcher maintained its status as the latest returning regular breeder with a first appearance May 12 in Watertown (NB, GH). A Northern Shrike was in Eastford on Mar 9 (RR) and in Morris on Mar 31 (RB). A Bank Swallow was early April 4 at Lake Zoar in Southbury (PCo). Two Marsh Wrens on April 2 at Sherwood I. were early if not wintering birds (TG). Gray-cheeked Thrush remains an

elusive presence with few reported after the first one on May 10 in Orange (CL). A Bicknell's Thrush, a species essentially impossible to identify visually in the field, was banded May 27 at Birdcraft Sanctuary in Fairfield (KV).

The only Golden-winged Warbler reports came from Granby on May 11 (JW), Bent of the River Audubon on May 14 (SH) and Meriden on May 15 (PCo). Lawrence's Warblers were found May 6 in Milford (TM); May 11 in Naugatuck State Forest, where the bird remained for several weeks (CL et al.); and May 26 in Andover (JMe). A Brewster's Warbler was in Kent on May 19 (KF). Four Cerulean Warblers were on territory in Chaplin on May 5 (PR). The only **Kentucky Warbler** was reported from Fairfield on May 17 (ABu, JP). A **Yellow-throated Warbler** found on April 17 at Mondo Ponds in Milford remained to at least May 5 (FG, SSp, m.ob.). Another was in Chaplin on May 31 (JCh). A Yellow-breasted Chat found May 29 at Housatonic Wildlife Management Area in Kent was cooperative for several days (RB et al.)

A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was singing May 19 at Sherwood Island (TG). A **pale-lore immature White-crowned Sparrow**, indicative of a bird of western origin, was at HBSP on March 3 (JOs). March 13 marked a major movement of Fox Sparrows, with 23 at Sherwood Island (TG) and a total of 24 reported from 11 other locations around the state (m.ob.). An adult male **Summer Tanager** made a May 4 walk to the mailbox in Chaplin memorable (PR). Others were seen by many on May 13-14 in East Rock Park, New Haven (JMu et al.); photographed May 5-7 in Broad Brook (CA); and found May 17 in Goodwin State Forest in East Hampton (ALe). An Indigo Bunting was early April 16 in Branford (MR). A **Blue Grosbeak** was photographed at Tod's Point in Greenwich on May 11 (SMr, CEh); others were at Station 43 in South Windsor on May 13 (PDe) and at Bent of the River on May 15 (SH).

An Eastern Meadowlark singing at Sherwood Island on March 11 was presumably a new spring arrival (TG). Boat-tailed Grackles were first noted at their Stratford breeding colony March 10,

when 20 birds were present (FMA). Away from that area, a male and a female were at Greenwich Point on April 21 (CEh), a male was in Westport on April 23 (TG), one was in Norwalk May 24 (TG), and three at HBSP on April 27 signaled breeding there for the second straight year (MK et al.). A **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was a great find March 12 in Chester (A&SW), and a second appeared April 24-27 at Cove Island Wildlife Sanctuary in Stamford (MO). Two Evening Grosbeaks were in Goshen on April 17 (DRo), and one was a pleasant surprise May 13 at Grace Salmon Park in Westport (TG).

Observers – Carol Arrow-smith, Bill Asteriades, Bill Banks (BBa), William Batsford, Larry Bauscher, Ray Belding, Bob Beaumont (BBe), Scott Besade (SBe), David Bingham, Nick Bonomo, Chris Bosak, Andy Brand (ABr), Steve Broker (SBr), Milan Bull, Alex Burdo (ABu), Dana Campbell (DCa), Jim Carr (JCa); Remi Castonguay, Jackson Childs (JCh), Paul Cianfaglione (PCi), Kathy Clark, Jonah Cohen (JCo), Patrick Comins (PCo), Don Crockett (DCr), Andrew

Dasinger (ADa), Paul Desjardins (PDe), Angela Dimmitt (ADi), Robert Dixon, Neil Doherty (NDo), Nina Dolan (NDI), Mike Doyle, Patrick Dugan (PDU), Cynthia Ehlinger (CEh), Ken Elkins, Chris Elphick (CEl), Jason Flanders (JFl), Jo Fasciolo (Jfa), Kevin Finnan, Larry Havey, Frank Gallo, Art Gingert, Hank Golet, Tina Green, A.J. Hand (AHa), Greg Hanisek, Roy Harvey (RHa), Seth Harvey, Andrea Hitt (AHi), Julian Hough, Robert Hutton (RHu), Brenda Inskip, Denise Jernigan, S.H. Johnston (SJo), Stuart Johnson (SJn), Jay Kaplan (KA), Mickey Komara, Justin Krul (JKr), Alex LaForce (ALa), Ann Lewis (ALe), Shawn Loewen, Chris Loscalzo, Rick Macsuga (RMa), Frank Mantlik (FMa), John Marshall (JMa), Stefan Martin (SMr), Steve Mayo (SMa), Florence McBride (FMc), Michael McBrien (MMc), Ken Merrifield (KMe), Jamie Meyers (JMe), Rob Mirer (RMi), Shai Mitra (SMi), Mike Moccio (MMo),

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PHOTO CHALLENGE

By Mark Szantyr

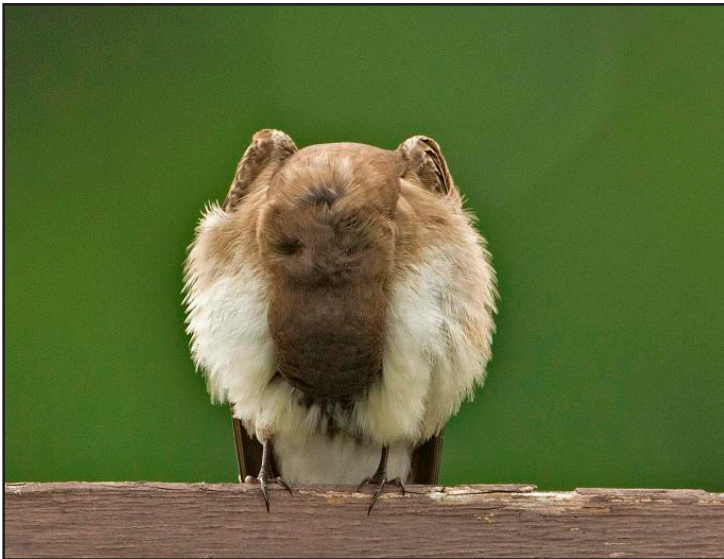
First, it is not a Brown-headed Cowbird. Also not a Herring Gull. Eliminating these two species should just about clinch the ID.

So we have a perching bird, fairly plainly colored, with its head and tail obfuscated. What we can see of the color suggests it has a very pale to nearly plain white underparts, a warmer buffy breast, and the head and other visible feathering is a warm brown.

OK, not much to go on.

What can we see. Well, we see wings that appear to be long, and primaries that also appear long. We also see feet. Small, shortish-toed feet. Not strong grasping feet or long-toed digging feet. We see feet that likely belong to a bird that spends a lot of time using its long-primaried wings.

Small feet are typical of the swallows, martins, humming-



birds, swifts, nightjars....again, birds that fly a lot. Having said that, did any bells go off? Any lights go on? Have you seen anything looking like this along your local stream bank? Perhaps diving into a drain hole along a rocky shoreline or under a bridge overpass?

This bird is indeed a Northern Rough -winged Swallow. This relatively common nesting species can appear this warm chocolate brown or a very drab gray brown depending on the light, but in either case, the pattern of brown upper parts with pale under parts, a buffy washed breast and no inkling of a breast band or central breast stripe is spot on for this elegant swallow.

This Northern Rough-winged Swallow was photographed by me in Mansfield, Tolland Co., in June 2014.



Photo Challenge No. 87

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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