

# THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

*A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology*



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# The Connecticut Warbler

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## ON THE COVER

### Hermit Warbler

Few birds have touched people the way the Hermit Warbler along the Farmington River in Barkhamsted did in February 2016. Mark Szantyr captured its beauty and charm for this issue's cover.

# MABEL OSGOOD WRIGHT AWARD

2016: Robert Dewire

*Phil Rusch presented the following at the 32<sup>nd</sup> annual meeting of the Connecticut Ornithological Association on March 19, 2016.*

I have been asked to introduce this year's recipient of the Mabel Osgood Wright Award. This award is given annually to an individual who has made significant contributions to the study and conservation of our avifauna. Mabel Osgood Wright was a leading conservationist, naturalist and educator of the early Twentieth Century. Best known as the founder of the Connecticut Audubon Society and the Birdcraft Museum and Sanctuary in Fairfield, CT, she was also a tireless educator of natural history to both children and adults alike.

This year's recipient is a conservationist, a birder, a naturalist, a wildlife rehabilitator, a gardener and natural landscaper, and a bird bander. But first and foremost he is, in the tradition of Mabel Osgood Wright, an educator of young children, teenagers and adults. Along with the members of the Connecticut Ornithological Association, it is my great honor to present this year's Mabel Osgood Wright Award to my good friend and mentor, Robert C. (Bob) Dewire.

Like many of us here today, he was introduced to the wonders of the natural world through birds. In October 1958, 14-year-old Bob biked from his home in New London to Harkness State Park in Waterford for a field trip led by Bill Wylie of the Pequotsepos Wildlife Sanctuary. A Hooded Merganser was the first bird that he saw through a spotting scope, and he was hooked. For Christmas that year, he received a pair of binoculars and his first bird book. A Peterson Guide is my guess.

After Christmas, he participated in his first New London Christmas Bird Count, and he hasn't missed one since. Five years later he took on the compiling duties. And as they say, the rest is history - 53 years and counting. After graduating from high school, he earned a degree in wildlife management

1991	Ann Gaylord
1992	Roland C. Clement
1993	George A. Clark, Jr.
1994	Donald A. Hopkins
1995	Robert A. Askins
1996	Fred C. Sibley
1997	Gordon Loery
1998	Roger Tory Peterson
1999	NO AWARD
2000	Mark Szantyr
2001	Betty Kleiner
2002	Noble S. Proctor
2003	Dwight G. Smith

2004	Jay Kaplan
2005	Neil Currie
2006	Louis R. Bevier
2007	Patrick Comins
2008	Milan G. Bull
2009	Greg Hanisek
2010	Joseph D. Zeranski
2011	Buzz Devine
2012	Florence McBride
2013	Dennis Varza
2014	Tom Baptist
2015	David Allen Sibley
2016	Bob Dewire

*A roster of Wright Award winners*

from the University of Massachusetts. There was no such thing as a degree in environmental education in those days. He was hired right out of college to teach natural history at the Thames Science Center in New London. From there he moved on to the Westport Nature Center and later to the Pequotsepos Nature Center as director. It was here as a member of the Nature Center junior staff that I got to know Bob.

In 1990, Bob started Naturescapes, his own business, to provide natural history programming for local southeastern Connecticut elementary school children both in the classroom as well as outdoor programs. For over 20 years, he led every 5<sup>th</sup> grader from the Town of Stonington into the salt marshes of Barn Island for a crash course, sometimes literally, in salt marsh ecology. Among his many awards, Bob was presented the Elizabeth Abernathy Hull Award in March of 2011 by the Garden Club of America for Outstanding Contribution to the Environmental Education of our Youth.

As a Master Bird Bander, he has conducted hundreds of banding demonstrations over the years to introduce the young and old to wonders of birds. Many held their first bird at one of his banding demonstrations. Some of us endured our first bird related injury. A sliced finger from a Cardinal, a puncture from a raptor talon, or a woodpecker mistaking your hand for a tree trunk.

At the end of 2014, after 47 years of educating Connecticut's

children and adults, Bob closed Naturescapes to enjoy his retirement. Over the course of those years, Bob introduced literally tens of thousands of school children and adults to the wonders of our natural environment. He has led field trips locally, to all 6 New England states, to Texas, Arizona, Yellowstone, California, Florida, the Dakotas and internationally to England, Central and South America.

In the course of researching Bob's many years as an educator, I received testimonials from too many people to mention all of them. I'd like to share this one from his daughter Maureen:

"I think to speak to his impact as an educator, us four Dewire kids all remember that it seemed as though we could never go on a family vacation without running into kids from back home who would recognize dad, whispering and pointing and saying to their parents..."That's Mr. Dewire"! It was like they were seeing someone famous! This happened in Florida, Virginia, Cape Cod...those are the ones I can remember off the top of my head. I also know of kids who attended programs over the years who went on to careers in the natural sciences, and attribute their love of it to Dad's influence. It really speaks to the impact that he had on so many people."

Finally, I would like to thank Bob for helping me to appreciate all of the wonders of the natural world. From the looking through a microscope at a drop of pond water to the exhilaration of pulling that seine net ashore full of marine organisms at Barn Island. From seeing that Northern Wheat-ear at Lord's Point in Stonington to watching the Northern Hawk Owl hunting voles in the snows of Whitefield, New Hampshire. From the thrill of extricating that first bird from a banding net to the agony of having Herring Gull parents empty their stomach contents on you at the nesting rookery. And the thrill of watching a young child's eyes light up when they really get it.

Congratulations, Bob, on being the recipient of the 2016 Mabel Osgood Wright Award. Never stop teaching us!

# 2015's HISTORIC FLIGHT OF FRANKLIN'S GULL

By Nick Bonomo

Franklin's Gull, a long-distance migrant that breeds in the heart of the North American continent and winters mainly on the Pacific coasts of Central and South America, is a surprisingly rare visitor to Connecticut. Even by regional standards, where the species is recorded nearly annually in such neighboring states as Massachusetts and New York, this sprightly hooded gull is particularly rare in our state; only four individuals were recorded prior to 2015. The previous Connecticut records, all of single birds, are as follows: August 1971 in New Haven, June 1972 in New Haven, November 1998 in West Haven/Milford, and October-November 1999 in Stamford. That November 1998 bird, found and seen only by Frank and Linda Mantlik, was part of a previously unprecedented invasion that brought several dozen Franklin's Gulls to the mid-Atlantic, with New Jersey alone recording over 50 individuals on November 14-15 of that year. Only the 1999 Stamford bird, found by Patrick Dugan, was long-staying and chase-able, though even that bird was very difficult to pin down. Thus many of today's active Connecticut birders entered the year 2015 without Franklin's Gull on their state lists.

The autumn migration of 2015 in Connecticut began rather uneventfully, with birds trickling through rather than being concentrated by strong weather. Potent cold fronts were almost nonexistent, and those that did pass often brought with them rather tame winds. There were few "classic" fronts during September and early-mid October, so lacking were those conditions we associate with heavy southward migration: cool temperatures and northwest winds. Migration hotspots such as Lighthouse Point and Bluff Point had very few days of impressive hawk and passerine flights, respectively. This began to change later in October, when strong low pressure systems with associated cold fronts began to sweep across the continent on a more regular basis.

These strong lows have a history of bringing Franklin's Gulls to the western Great Lakes in good numbers, and the first such front of autumn 2015 came on October 12 when over 100 were seen on the lakefront of northern Illinois. While the appearance of Franklin's Gulls is expected in the western and central Great Lakes each autumn, the number of birds associated with this mid-October storm was above average, perhaps hinting at potential for a push even further east. Still, very few birds had reached the east coast by the end of October. One first cycle individual was found on the south shore of Long Island on September 29<sup>th</sup>, and another first cycle was found in central Maine on October 28<sup>th</sup>.

Early November's weather brought a bit more hope for eastward displacement of migratory birds such as Franklin's Gulls (and more regular species such as Cave Swallows and Ash-throated Flycatchers). During the first week of November the southwest winds ahead of a cold front brought the chance for western vagrants and reverse migrants, but the winds behind this front were much weaker than anticipated. This once-promising front seemed like a bust.

All the while, Laughing Gull numbers in Long Island Sound were building through the autumn at a time when they are expected to thin out. An unusually high concentration of small baitfish throughout Long Island Sound was responsible for massive gull and tern numbers that lingered well into November. Even several Parasitic Jaegers, generally a rare species in Connecticut waters, were drawn into the sound by these flocks. With so many Laughing Gulls around, those birders with Franklin's Gulls on the mind knew that a wayward Franklin's would probably associate with the "Laughers."

Frank Gallo and I were birding the coast on a damp, dreary November 10<sup>th</sup>. As we drove through Seaside Park in Bridgeport we made a point of checking every gull flock for Franklin's given that the late fall timeframe has historically been the best for finding this species in the region. One particular section of beach held a flock of several dozen loafing gulls

that included many Laughing Gulls. As if on cue a first cycle Franklin's Gull was standing in the center of the flock. This was the fifth state record, the first since 1999. Unfortunately the bird did not remain long enough for anyone to successfully chase it, as so often seems to be the case with this species.

Over the ensuing two days, November 11-12, an extremely potent low pressure system tracked through the central plains and upper Midwest, where flocks of Franklin's Gulls were waiting, ripe to be displaced. This system packed with it severe weather and intense winds as it rolled across the continent. The storm reached the Great Lakes on the morning of the 12<sup>th</sup>, where the first signs of an eastward push were seen, as indicated by the afternoon passage of a single flock of 150 Franklin's Gulls at the southern tip of Lake Michigan. Franklin's Gulls were on the move right on the heels of the storm.

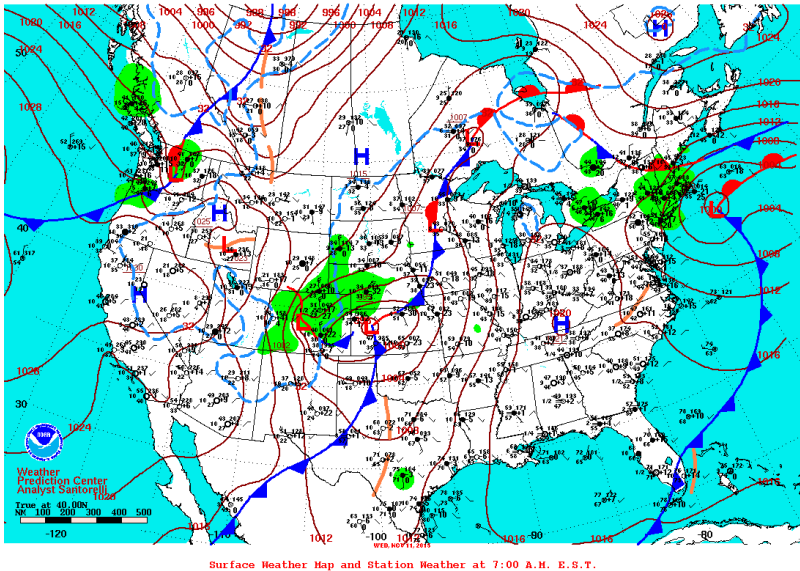
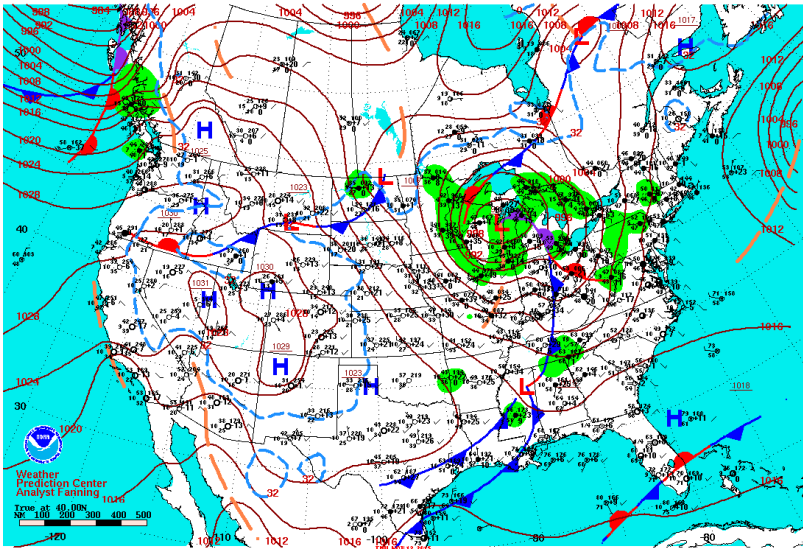


Figure 1. Surface Weather Map for November 11, 2015





Surface Weather Map and Station Weather at 7:00 A.M. E.S.T.

Figure 2. Surface Weather Map for November 12, 2015

From the Great Lakes the low tracked northeast through Ontario overnight. Locally, winds shifted from the southwest to due west. Daybreak on the 13<sup>th</sup> brought increasing west winds blowing directly from the Great Lakes region as can be seen in Figure 3. Winds would blow at a steady 20mph with gusts well into the 30s through most of the day.

It did not take long for the first Franklin's Gulls to be detected along the east coast. Patrick Dugan had an adult fly past Shippan Point in Stamford during the first hour of daylight, and he got the word out immediately. Online reports from neighboring states began to follow rapidly. Before 8am there were internet reports from Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Maryland. It was clear that something unique was happening, and word was spreading incredibly quickly via email, texts, listservs, social media, and phone calls.

Two more birds were seen along the Stratford coast followed by a handful from Seaside Park in Bridgeport by 10am. Soon birders were reporting Franklin's Gulls from up and down the coast, particularly west of New Haven. The mother lode

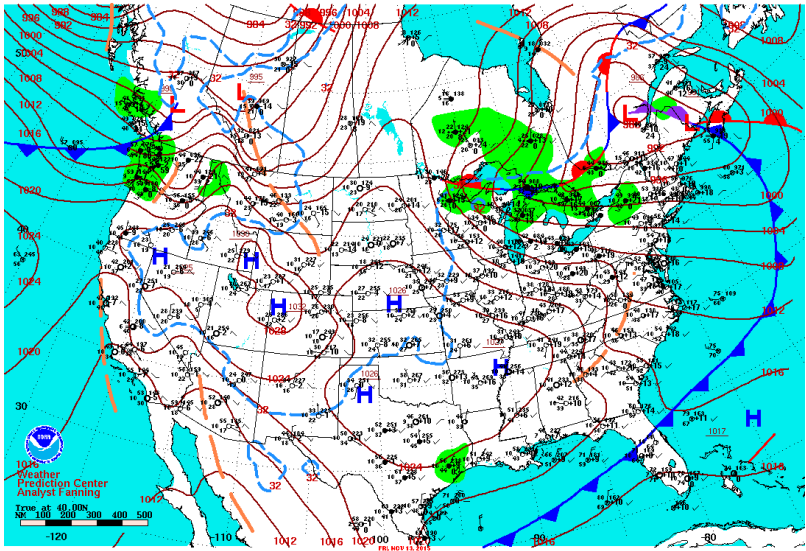


Figure 3. Surface Weather Map for November 13, 2015



Nick Bonomo photo

Figure 4. One of two first cycle Franklin's Gulls found at the Oyster River mouth (Milford/West Haven) by Julian Hough on the afternoon of the 13th as the invasion was winding down. .

was at Stratford Point, where a statewide high count of 14 birds was made. By the end of the day, approximately 44 Franklin's Gulls were reported in Connecticut, all of which were coastal.

Perhaps just as amazing as these birds' sudden arrival was the haste with which they departed. It was clear by their habits that these birds were healthy and actively migrating. Many birds were seen on the move, and all of them were moving westward along the coast, correcting course. Save for a few loafing birds, those individuals that stopped for a rest did so only briefly – for a few hours at most. The Stratford Point flock, for instance, rapidly built to over a dozen birds



*Frank Mantlik photo*

*This adult Franklin's Gull rested briefly at Birdseye Boat Launch in Stratford during the monumental flight of Nov. 13, 2015.*

before all took flight and continued their journey. Those birders who were forced to wait until late in the day to observe this historic event had already missed its peak, as sightings began to dwindle after noon.

Most birders who could not get in the field until the next day

to observe this historic event had to work for their Franklin's. Gone were the flocks of several birds. There were a handful of scattered morning reports, mostly of one or two birds each, and by the afternoon of the 14<sup>th</sup> the Franklin's Gulls had just about dried up completely. Two lingering birds were seen on the 15<sup>th</sup>, and one on the 16<sup>th</sup> was the last.

The final tally of Franklin's Gulls reported in Connecticut was a whopping 61, most of which were first cycle birds (i.e. individuals born in summer of 2015). Whether a few of those were repeat sightings as birds moved down the coast we cannot tell. But the exact timing and spacing of the sightings, and knowing that the directional movement was to the west, indicate that the number of repeats, if any, would have been quite low. One can only speculate how many Franklin's actually passed through the state, particularly during the peak of the invasion on the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup>. Not only were many birders caught off guard by the invasion and stuck at work on that Friday morning, but many of those who were free to chase headed to the Stratford-Bridgeport area thanks to the early reports from that region, concentrating efforts in this small area. Thus large stretches of the Connecticut coast were not checked during peak movement.

It should be noted that there was a complete lack of inland Connecticut sightings despite there being several inland records from nearby states, such as from Massachusetts and eastern Pennsylvania. This is almost certainly due to lack of coverage; it is hard to believe that the species did not make brief appearances on large inland reservoirs or along the Housatonic or Connecticut Rivers. Most interested inland birders probably rushed straight to the coast to see their Franklin's rather than checking their local inland bodies of water first, and who could blame them!

This easily enters the records books as the largest east coast invasion of Franklin's Gulls recorded to date, with reports from New Hampshire down to Florida and outliers from as far northeast as Nova Scotia. Cape May, NJ took the cake



*Frank Gallo photo*  
 Three subadult Franklin Gulls (right) with a Laughing Gull and a Ring-billed Gull on Nov. 13, 2015 in Bridgeport.

with over 300 seen on the 13<sup>th</sup> alone. Given the incredible similarity in timing and storm track to the November 1998 event, birders now have a blueprint for future occurrences of this species in Connecticut.

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# TWENTY-FIRST REPORT OF THE AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE OF CONNECTICUT

By Jay Kaplan and Greg Hanisek

This is the 21<sup>st</sup> report of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (ARCC). Following publication of the latest American Ornithologists Union (AOU) supplement, the Connecticut Ornithological Association (COA) checklist for Connecticut birds has been updated; there were some significant and surprising changes made to the taxonomic order. The Connecticut breeding bird review checklist has also been updated and can now be found on the COA web site. COA and ARCC archive accounts have been created on eBird, so that historical records can be added to this important database. Frank Gallo has begun the process, and the Connecticut State List has now been updated on eBird to include all species recorded in Connecticut back to 1900. If COA members find errors on eBird, please bring them to the Committee's attention by contacting either the Chair or the Secretary, whose addresses are at the end of this article.

In the last report (see the 20th Report of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut, Vol. 34 No. 2), Trumpeter Swan was added to the Connecticut State List. This year, another species, Zone-tailed Hawk, was added to the list following the observation of a bird at Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven last fall. The Connecticut State List now stands at 437 with this addition.

This year, the Committee voted on 43 records, a substantial number. It is unknown at this time as to whether the abundance of reports stems from greater coverage in the field by a larger number of enthusiastic birders or from impressive strides in technology that allow for easier and better identification/documentation of birds in the field. In addition to the previously mentioned Zone-tailed Hawk, other records of note included the state's second records for Hermit Warbler and "Western" (either Pacific Slope or Cordilleran) Flycatcher

and the third record for Burrowing Owl.

There were also a number of records for unusual gulls including two for Mew Gull, one of the nominate Eurasian race *canus* (known as Common Gull) and another of the Siberian race *kamtchatschensis* (known as Kamchatka Gull). Records for Franklin's, Slaty-backed and Thayer's Gulls, as well as the Siberian race *vegae* of the Herring Gull (known as Vega Gull), were also submitted to the committee, but some of these remain under consideration. With the recent closures of most landfills, many birders believed that gull numbers would quickly decline. Christmas Count data may indicate this to be true for common species like Herring Gull, but the reports for these vagrant gulls are intriguing. Continuing advances in digital photography now allow committee members to evaluate these records in a manner that was all but impossible just a few years ago.

The committee also continues to evaluate early records such as a 1939 record for Townsend's Solitaire. Unfortunately, this record presented too many unanswered questions, and without any accompanying photographs (not unusual for an almost 80-year-old record) or a specimen, the committee chose not to accept what would have become Connecticut's earliest record for this species.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

New members Tina Green of Westport and Bob Dixon of Sterling attended their first meeting. Members, in addition to the authors, who voted on records in this report were Nick Bonomo, Robert Dixon, Frank Gallo, Tina Green, Julian Hough, Frank Mantlik, Jacob Musser, Dave Provencher, Phil Rusch, Dave Tripp and Glenn Williams.

## STATE LIST AND REVIEW LIST

The state list now stands at 437 species with the addition of Zone-tailed Hawk. 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



*Frank Mantlik photo*  
 This is one of at least two Cory's Shearwaters that made a rare appearance in state waters on Aug. 31, 2015.

any species new to the state). The most recent State List and Review List can be viewed on the COA Website at [www.ct-birding.org](http://www.ct-birding.org). Submit written reports along with documentary material to Jay Kaplan, ARCC chairman (address below).

## FORMAT

This report continues the format of previous reports. In the case of accepted records, only observers who submitted reports are listed, with the original finder listed first followed by an asterisk. Observers who submitted a photo are acknowledged with ‡ following their names. Hyphenated numbers (e.g. 02-01) preceding the observers are the ARCC file numbers. For reopened files, an "R" follows the numbers. The species are listed in order according to the **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

**PINK-FOOTED GOOSE** (*Anser brachyrhynchus*) One was present from 20 Nov 2015 to 21 Jan 2016 at Fisher Meadow in Avon (15-35 Mark Danforth\*‡, Frank Mantlik‡, Mark Szantyr‡, m.ob.). It disappeared when the pond froze but returned



to open waters there on 2 Mar 2016 for a few days. One was present from 27 Dec 2015 to 1 Jan 2016 then reappeared from 16-31 Jan 2016 at Broad Brook Mill Pond in East Windsor, as well as at times along Frog Hollow Road in Ellington. (15-36 Jan Collins,\* Mark Danforth‡, Frank Mantlik‡, m.ob.). These represent the fifth and sixth state records, including one that involved two individuals. The first record, in 1998 in Mansfield, was the first fully accepted record of this Old World species for the Lower 48.

**ROSS'S GOOSE** (*Chen rossii*) An adult was found on 15 Jan 2016 at Broad Brook Mill Pond in East Windsor (16-01 Paul Dejardins,\* Mark Szantyr‡, Frank Mantlik‡, m.ob.). It remained there through 31 Jan, then was relocated 18-29 Feb 2016 in Vernon (Debbie McTigue‡). It was a third state record.

**TUFTED DUCK** (*Aythya fuligula*) A female was seen 29-30 Mar 2015 at North Cove, Old Saybrook, (15-23 Greg Hanisek,\* Tina Green,\* Jory Teltser‡, Anders Ogren‡).

**EARED GREBE** (*Podiceps nigricollis*) One was found on 29 Dec 2014 at Stonington Point in Stonington. (15-41 Frank Mantlik\*, Tina Green\*). Although seen at great distance, Horned Grebes were present for comparison. Distinguishing features included a peaked head, dark throat and thin neck.

**CORY'S SHEARWATER** (*Calonectris diomedea*) Two or three were seen on 31 Aug 2015 from a New London-Orient, N.Y., ferry in Long Island Sound. (15-33 Frank Mantlik\*‡, Frank Gallo\*‡ and Greg Hanisek\*). The birds were determined to be in state waters using GPS on smart phones. The birds were identified as the race *C. d. borealis* based on underwing pattern and bill characteristics.

**WHITE-FACED IBIS** (*Plegadis chihi*) One was found 15 Apr 2015 at Rocky Neck State Park in East Lyme and was present the next day (15-14 Tom Murphy\*‡, John Marshall, Russ Smiley‡). One was at Indian River Cemetery, Clinton, 14-23 May 2015 (15-25 Nick Bonomo\*). One was found on 31 May 2015 in Wheeler Marsh at Milford Point (15-32 Frank Mant-

lik\*). The April-May time frame was typical for the increasing reports of this now-annual species.

**ZONE-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo albonotatus*) An adult, representing a first state record, flew by the Lighthouse Point hawk watch in New Haven on 20 Sep 2015 during the New Haven Migration Festival, thrilling dozens of people present for the event (15-13 Nick Bonomo\*† Don Morgan† et al.). Following unexpected 2014 sightings of this species in spring in Massachusetts and Nova Scotia and in fall from New Jersey and Delaware, one was seen on 15 Aug 2015 in Rhode Island, putting coastal hawk-watchers in Connecticut on high alert. After its 20 Sep passage at Lighthouse, what was certainly the same bird passed Cape May, N.J., on 23 Sep and arrived later that day at Kiptopeke, VA, where it lingered to at least the next day.

**PURPLE GALLINULE** (*Porphyrio martinicus*) A juvenile was found on 25 Sep 2015 at Mansfield Commons in Mansfield Center. (15-19 Tricia Reid,\* Chris Elphick, Robert Dixon, Frank Mantlik,† Bruce Finnan†). The bird, a sixth state record, was last reported on 5 Oct 2015.



Bruce Finnan photo  
A seldom-visited local sanctuary in Mansfield Center yielded this juvenile Purple Gallinule, shown here on Sept. 29, 2015.



*Nick Bonomo photo*  
*Connecticut's first Zone-tailed Hawk flew by the Lighthouse Point hawk watch on Sept. 20, 2015.*

**RUFF** (*Calidris pugnax*) One was found on 29 Jun 2015 at Plum Bank Marsh in Old Saybrook (15-20 Anders Ogren\*‡, Frank Mantlik, Alex Lin-Moore). It was relocated the next day, when it was seen by several observers and sketched by Lin-Moore.

**BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE** (*Rissa tridactyla*) Two were seen on 2 Jan 2016 aboard a ferry from New London to Orient, N.Y. (16-03 Frank Mantlik\*‡ Frank Gallo\*, Jory Teltser‡, Matthew Messina‡). The birds were determined to be in CT waters using GPS on a smart phone. They were recorded as part of the New London Christmas Bird Count.

**FRANKLIN'S GULL** (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*) A first-cycle bird was found 10 Nov 2015 at Seaside Park in Bridgeport (15-26 Nick Bonomo\*‡, Frank Gallo\*‡). A historic eastward movement had begun and reached Connecticut with this discovery. The influx then exploded on 13 Nov when dozens were found all along the coast (15-38 Frank Mantlik\*‡ Julian Hough\*‡). See article elsewhere in this issue.

**MEW (COMMON) GULL** (*Larus canus canus*) One was found on 16 Apr 2015 at the Oyster River mouth in Milford/West Haven. (15-37 Keith Mueller\*‡). The photos illustrate wing, head and bill details indicative of the nominate subspe-

cies from western Europe, the form expected in the Northeast. Three well-photographed Connecticut records prior to 2015 have been *L. c. canus*.

**MEW (KAMCHATKA) GULL** (*Larus canus kamtschatschensis*)

A first state record for this Siberian subspecies was found 10 Apr 2015 at Southport Beach in Fairfield (15-40 Mayn Hipp\*‡, Mike Warner) It was relocated 15 Apr by Bonomo and 17 Apr by Mueller, both at Oyster River mouth in Milford/West Haven. (15-40 Nick Bonomo‡, Keith Mueller‡). A substantially bigger and bulkier bird than the nominate form, it also showed wing, head and bill details that separated it from other subspecies.

**THAYER'S GULL** (*Larus thayeri*)

A worn juvenile was found on 19 Apr 2015 at the municipal boat launch in West Haven. (15-16 Julian Hough\*‡). The bird appeared during the heavy early spring staging of gulls in Long Island Sound, an annual event. It was a ninth state record, all but one of them at landfills that are now closed. The observer's experience and a detailed photo array facilitated identification of a difficult species.

**GULL-BILLED TERN** (*Gelochelidon nilotica*)

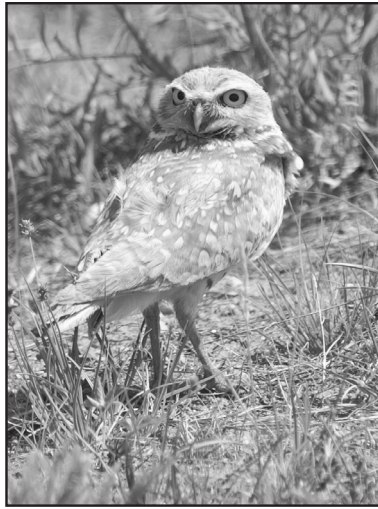
One was found on 20 June 2015 at Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford (15-11 Jerilyn Duefrene\*‡). It is the first record since 2012.

**POMARINE JAEGER** (*Stercorarius pomarinus*)

An experienced observer saw one in direct comparison with a Herring Gull 4 Sep 2015 on a return trip aboard a ferry from New London to Orient, N.Y. (15-17 Phil Rusch\*). The bird was in Connecticut waters.

**COMMON MURRE** (*Uria aalge*)

One was close to shore off Cornfield Point in Old Saybrook on 26 Dec 2015 (15-27 John Marshall,\* Russ Smiley‡, Dan Rottino‡, Mark Danforth‡). This is a sixth state record for a species that wasn't added to the state list until January 2011. It's only the second recorded from shore, the others being on the New London-Orient, N.Y., ferry route.



Rollin Tebbetts photo  
This Burrowing Owl, shown here on  
June 29, 2015, was a surprise find  
at Bradley International Airport in  
Windsor Locks.

**WHITE-WINGED DOVE** (*Zenaida asiatica*) One visited a yard and feeder in East Haven from 5-23 Nov 2015. (15-28 Andrew Main,\* Frank Gallo‡, Frank Mantlik‡, Russ Smiley‡). It was an eighth state record, all of them either attracted to feeders or associating with Mourning Doves in suburban neighborhoods. After the first state record in 1973, it took 24 years to document the second. The pace accelerated thereafter in conjunction with an eastward expansion of the species' historic breeding range in the Southwest.

**BURROWING OWL** (*Athene cunicularia*) A third state record was found 27-29 May 2015 at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks (15-12 Rollin Tebbetts\*‡). Tebbetts, an airport employee, investigated a maintenance worker's report of an unusual owl and found this rare species. Its appearance at an airport raised the possibility of transport by plane, but airports offer prime habitat as well. Investigation of its sub-specific identity helped solidify its acceptance as a naturally occurring vagrant. Plumage characteristics showed it to be of the migratory western race *A. c. hypugaea*, rather than the more sedentary *A. c. floridana*. The western race has wan-



A.J. Hand photo

*This Ash-throated Flycatcher attracted several hundred observers to Sherwood Island State Park in Westport from Nov. 17, 2015 to at least Jan. 8, 2016.*

dered far and wide in North America. Records have occurred at all seasons, but this bird's appearance falls into the May-July period of peak extralimital occurrence.

**CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD** (*Selasphorus calliope*) One visited a feeder 16-27 Oct 2015 in West Haven. (15-18 Antonina Kagan\*†). This is a fifth state record, all from Oct to Jan.

**PACIFIC SLOPE/CORDILLERN FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax difficilis/occidentalis*) One was found on 19-20 Dec 2015 in Branford during the New Haven Christmas Bird Count (15-29 Jim Cortina\*, Steve Mayo, Julian Hough‡, Howie Sternberg‡). This is the second state record for this sibling species complex arising from the split of Western Flycatcher into Pacific-slope and Cordilleran Flycatchers. None of the positional calls needed to separate these look-alikes was heard, but an excrement sample was collected and sent out for DNA analysis. Results are pending. Hough provided a detailed plumage analysis that separated it from other similar Empidonax species, notably the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. Seasonal timing also strongly favors "Western" over Yellow-bellied.



*Frank Mantlik photo*

*This immature male Hermit Warbler, shown here on Feb. 8, 2016, stopped traffic during its stay along the Farmington River in Pleasant Valley*

**ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus cinerascens*)

One was found on 17 Nov 2015 at Sherwood Island State Park in Westport. (15-21 A.J. Hand\*‡, Tina Green, Frank Mantlik‡, Robert Dixon‡, Mark Szantyr‡). The hatch-year bird was seen almost daily through at least 8 Jan 2016, and c. 170 people submitted eBird checklists including this Southwestern species – 90 of them with photos attached. This was a fifth state record, all of them in the Nov-Jan time period when this species typically occurs at our latitude in the East.

**FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER** (*Tyrannus savana*) A single observer saw and photographed one on 5 Oct 2014 in Old Lyme (14-19 Gary Squires\*‡). It was a fifth state record for one of the few non-pelagic birds that have been recorded visiting North America from the Southern Hemisphere.

**TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE** (*Myadestes townsendi*) One was found 5 Dec 2015 in a residential neighborhood in Greenwich. (15-30 Stefan Martin\*‡, Frank Gallo‡, Frank Mantlik‡). The bird remained through at least 15 Mar 2016 an unusually long stay. It was often conspicuous, perching in treetops

and vocalizing. It was a seventh state record, one of which involved two individuals. Aside from one March record, all were birds found in Nov-Dec. However, some have lingered into January, and the two birds in Hamden in 2006 were present to at least 22 February.

**SMITH'S LONGSPUR** (*Calcarius pictus*) A molting adult male was found on 1 May 2015 at Allen's Meadow in Wilton, and seen by many later that day (15-15 Bruce Stevenson\*, Julian Hough‡, Frank Mantlik‡). The bird, a fourth state record, could not be found the next day. Two of the records are from March and two from May.

**BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER** (*Setophaga nigrescens*) A quick look and fast work with a camera documented a one-observer sighting on 24 Sep 2015 at Boothe Memorial Park in Stratford (15-31 Frank Mantlik\*‡).

**HERMIT WARBLER** (*Setophaga occidentalis*) One was found on 31 Jan 2016 along the Farmington River in the Pleasant Valley section of Barkhamsted (16-07 Dave Rosgen\*, Fran Zygmunt‡, Frank Gallo‡, Nick Bonomo‡, Greg Hanisek, Frank Mantlik‡ John Oshlick). The bird, a second state re-



Frank Manlik photo

This Black-throated Gray Warbler was seen on Sept. 24, 2015 at Boothe Memorial Park in Stratford.





*A.J. Hand photo*

*This juvenile Painted Bunting (here Oct. 17, 2015) proved elusive during a stay of uncertain duration at a Connecticut Audubon property in Fairfield.*

cord, was relocated on 7 Feb and was then seen and photographed by many observers through 13 Feb, when it likely succumbed to sub-zero temperatures. It occupied a popular fly-fishing stretch of the river noted for year-round insect hatches and was often seen feeding on the ground on the stream edges. Based on molt and feather wear, the bird appeared to be a second-year male (hatched summer 2015.)

**DARK-EYED "OREGON" JUNCO** (*Junco hyemalis oregonus*)

An adult male visited a Salem feeder from 15 Jan through 5 Mar 2015 (15-09 Pat and Christine Tamborra\*†). Another, likely an adult female, visited a Monroe feeder on 13 Feb 2015 (15-10 Janet Holt\*, Robert Holt†). Age and sex variability makes subspecific identification of Dark-eyed Juncos difficult, but these two birds show the classic dark, well-defined convex hood, bright pinkish buff sides and brown back.

**WESTERN TANAGER** (*Piranga ludoviciana*) An adult male was found on 19 Dec 2015 in Peat Meadow Park, New Haven, on the New Haven Christmas Bird Count (15-24 John Oshlick\*†, Frank Mantlik†, Russ Smiley†). It was present through at least 3 Jan 2016. It was included in eBird checklists

by 62 different observers, 28 with photos attached.

**PAINTED BUNTING** (*Passerina ciris*) A juvenile was found on 23 Sep 2015 at Connecticut Audubon's Smith-Richardson Christmas Tree Farm in Westport (15-22 Tina Green\*, A.J. Hand‡). It was unexpectedly relocated by Green at the same location on 17 Oct 2015 and seen again the next day. An adult male returned to a feeder in a neighborhood adjacent to Cove Island Wildlife Sanctuary in Stamford on 21 Jan 2016. (16-04 David Winston\*‡, Greg Hanisek). It was present, on and off, to at least 18 Mar 2016. This undoubtedly is the same bird that made a long and sporadic stay at the same feeder and sanctuary from October 2014 until deep into the winter of 2014-15.

#### RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

**DOVEKIE** (*Alle alle*) One was reported on 19 Jan 2015 at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison. (15-02). The bird was seen flying by Meigs Point at considerable distance by a single observe. The committee believed the circumstances were insufficient to document a species that is less than annual in Long Island Sound.

**TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE** (*Myadestes townsendi*) Committee member Gallo attempted to verify a 1939 report of this species from Cedar Hill Cemetery in Hartford. An original index card in the Hartford Audubon archives lists the date of occurrence as 7-8 May, about a month later than all of more than 40 other New England records. A single May record from New York is the only regional one of similar seasonality. The only descriptive details provided were white tail feathers used by the observers to eliminate "Olive-backed Thrush." The committee agreed with Gallo's assessment that lack of extensive field notes and lack of mention of what would have been a very significant record elsewhere in the ornithological literature raised too much doubt for acceptance of what would have been the first state record. What little detail was available did not eliminate Northern Mockingbird, a very rare species at the time.

## RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED (ORIGIN UNCERTAIN)

**COMMON SHELDUCK** (*Tadorna tadorna*) A bird was first reported from Hanover Pond in South Meriden on 22 Nov 2015 and remained into at least February 2016 (15-34). There was no question about the identity of this distinctive adult duck, but it faced the usual skepticism about provenance attached to many possible vagrant waterfowl. In the case of this species, a history of natural occurrence from western Europe had been established recently in northeastern North America, primarily in eastern Canada, but also with one accepted record in Massachusetts. The pendulum swung away from acceptance when it became apparent that the bird had a red plastic band on its right leg. Keith Mueller, a waterfowl carver who has experience keeping captive waterfowl, noted that the band was consistent with ones used by aviculturists to mark their birds.

**AFRICAN COLLARED DOVE** (*Streptopelia roseogrisea*) One was found on 10 May 2015 in a residential neighborhood in Stratford (15-42 Mike Warner\*†, Frank Mantlik†). It remained in the area through at least 29 Aug. This species, formerly known as Ringed Turtle Dove, is not known to occur in the wild anywhere in the world. However, it is similar to Eurasian Collared Dove, a species that has become established in North America and has occurred three times in Connecticut. Vocalizations (recorded), as well as plumage features well-illustrated by a series of photos, eliminated Eurasian Collared Dove, which has darker flight feathers as well as darker areas on the tail and undertail area.

## CORRECTION

In the 20th Report of ARCC (Connecticut Warbler Vol. 34 No. 2), a photo of an adult male Painted Bunting in Stamford was taken on 10 Jan 2015. The caption contained an incorrect date.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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

Jay Kaplan, 71 Gracey Road, Canton, CT 06019

# CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Fall Season, August 1 through November 30, 2015

By Greg Hanisek and Frank Mantlik

Prevailing weather patterns failed to consistently deliver cold fronts. As a result the raptor passage at the state's hawk watches, as well as the morning flights of passerines at Bluff Point in Groton, were subpar. The appearance of northern irruptives was also unremarkable. However, a noteworthy flight of Arctic geese got underway and continued into the winter season. Pelagic species, especially jaegers, made a good showing in Long Island Sound; Franklin's Gulls staged a historic flight; and a broad array of rarities included the state's first Zone-tailed Hawk.

A **Pink-footed Goose** was found on Nov. 20 at Fisher Meadow in Avon, where it remained to at least March 8, 2016 (MDa, m.ob.), after an absence during freezing weather. Although the fifth record for Connecticut, this European species remains a major rarity throughout North America. Its consistent presence attracted birders from throughout the continent. Single **Greater White-fronted Geese** arrived on Oct. 12 at Broad Brook Pond in East Windsor (PDe, TT, LM) and Goodwin Park in Hartford on Oct. 13- Nov. 1 (PCi et al.). Others were in Enfield on Nov. 6 (PDe); in Windsor on Nov. 25-29 (BK et al.); and in East Hartford

on Nov. 28 (RMa). An unusual flock of seven dark morph Snow Geese were in a group of c. 2000 Canada Geese and one Cackling Goose on Oct. 12 in Bethlehem (RB). There were about ten Cackling Geese reported for the season; while more birders are getting a grip on identifying them, small Canada Geese still pose problems. A flock of seven Tundra Swans were seen flying south over Southport Beach on Oct. 22 (MW, PW).

A **Eurasian Wigeon** was inland at Bishop's Pond in Meriden beginning on Oct. 17 (JR). The inconspicuous but regular August arrival of dabbling ducks included



*Don Morgan photo  
This American White Pelican thrilled a crowd on a bird walk  
at Sherwood Island State Park in Westport on Nov. 21, 2015*



*Russ Smiley photo  
This long-staying and mobile Harlequin Duck is shown here on Sept. 14, 2015 at  
Stratford Point.*



*Jim Carr photo*  
*This handsome Lark Sparrow was photographed on Oct. 16, 2015 at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison.*



*Mark Szantyr photo*  
*This Pink-footed Goose attracted many birders to Fisher Meadow in Avon through period's end and into the new year.*

a Northern Pintail on Aug. 7 at Milford Point (FM). Three Blue-winged Teal were at Cemetery Pond in Litchfield on Aug. 23 (MDo), and one was at Riverside Park in Hartford the same day (PDe). A flock of seven Northern Shovelers on Sept. 14 at Quinebaug Fish Hatchery in Central Village was a good number for the early date (DP). The usual meager flight of Redheads included one on Oct. 27 at Bantam Lake in Litchfield (MDo) and two on Oct. 31 at Batterson Pond in Farmington (JM). A good flock of 170 Ring-necked Ducks was at Lake Bethany on Oct. 31 (LR).

What appeared to be a female/immature **Harlequin Duck** was seasonally unexpected on Aug 29 at Sandy Point in West Haven (JO). Presumably the same bird was found in the outer part of New Haven harbor Sept. 7 (DBr). On Sept. 14 it turned up at Stratford Point, where it remained until Oct. 13 and revealed through molt that it was an adult male (DZ, m.ob); two males were off Fairfield on Nov. 26 (TG). Seven Surf Scoters were a good inland find on Oct. 18 at Twin Lakes in Salisbury

(RB). Four White-winged Scoters were unexpected at a pond at Nod Brook Wildlife Management Area in Simsbury on Nov. 12 (DBe).

A significant flight on Nov. 28 brought 152 Red-throated Loons past Shippan Point, Stamford (PDU). A Pied-billed Grebe was seasonally unusual on Aug. 17 at Sandy Point in West Haven (FM). The first Red-necked Grebe was at Milford Point on Oct. 25 (TBU et al.). A total of about 15 for the season included highs of three on Nov. 20 at Barkhamsted Reservoir (DRO) and three on Nov. 28 at Shippan Point in Stamford (PDU, TG). Up to three **Cory's Shearwaters** on Aug. 30-Sept. 2, all from the New London-Orient, N.Y., ferry, were very unusual inside Long Island Sound (FM, FG, GH, JSh, SZ). The first Great Cormorant appeared in Greenwich Sept. 25 (BM). One **Wilson's Storm-Petrel** was seen in state waters Oct. 16 from the New London-Orient, N.Y., ferry (TA). An unidentified **storm-petrel** flew by Shippan Point on Oct. 3 (PDU). A flyover **American White Pelican** on Nov. 21 provided a thrill for a group on a bird walk at



Sherwood Island State Park in Westport (TG et al.). The first Great Cormorant appeared in Greenwich Sept. 25 (BM).

An American Bittern at Community Lake in Wallingford on Aug. 23 was clearly a migrant (MM). Another was a yard first (number 174) as a nocturnal flyover on Sept. 25 in Sterling (RD). Riverside Park in Hartford held 14 Great Egrets, a good number for an inland location, on Aug. 2 (PDe). A Little Blue Heron was inland at Rentschler Field in East Hartford on Aug. 9 (PDe). A Cattle Egret that arrived at Maynard's (Ingham) Pond in Old Saybrook in late July was present to at least Aug. 6 (HG et al.). A Black-crowned Night-Heron was far up the Connecticut River Sept. 4 in Wethersfield (PCi). A Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was well east of its normal strongholds on Aug. 1 at Griswold Point in Old Lyme (HG). A high count of 58 Glossy Ibis were at Maynard's Pond on Aug. 1 (RD).

Three juvenile Black Vultures were in a yard in Pawcatuck with two adults nearby on Aug. 26 (RD). An excellent

flight of 180 Ospreys was logged on Sept. 11 at Lighthouse Point hawk watch (DC). The state's first **Zonetailed Hawk**, presumably the same one seen Aug. 15 in Rhode Island, and at several locations in the Northeast in fall of 2014, became a first state record when it flew by Lighthouse Point in New Haven on Sept. 20 (m.ob.). See additional details in the 21<sup>st</sup> Report of ARCC elsewhere in this issue. A juvenile Sora on Aug. 2 at Lords Cove in Lyme could have been reared locally or been a recent arrival. The migratory schedules of the rails are not well-known because of their secretive nature. A top find in a season that was full of them was a juvenile **Purple Gallinule** Sept. 25 to Oct. 5 in a small marsh in Mansfield Center (TR et al.). Single **Common Gallinules** were at Little Pond in Litchfield Oct. 9-12 (MDo et al), and at Milford Point on Oct. 11 (JD). Twelve **Sandhill Cranes** for the season included six over Quaker Ridge, Greenwich, on Nov. 30 (RMc). Also noteworthy was one seen at Branford, New Haven, Milford and Stratford as it flew across the state on Nov. 14 (DL, NB

et al.). Two were at Milford Point Nov. 8-9 (GN, FM); the same two were reported flying over Lighthouse Point earlier on Nov. 8 (SMA).

The season's first American Golden Plover was at Windham Airport in South Windham on Aug. 9 (PR). Singles were widespread in September with a high of four at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison (hereafter HBSP) on Sept. 9 (CI). Inland the drawn down Colebrook Reservoir attracted a Black-bellied Plover on Aug. 27 (DRo). A Spotted Sandpiper was late Oct. 31 at Bishop's Pond in Meriden (JR). Sandy Point in West Haven held 15 species of shorebirds on Aug. 8, including three juvenile western Willets along with nine juvenile eastern Willets (NB). Two Upland Sandpipers were a good migration season find Sept. 2 at the capped Hartford landfill (TBa). One was at Windham Airport on Aug. 2 (PR). The top count of Whimbrels was five on Aug. 29 in Madison (PCo, KM). A **Hudsonian Godwit** found on Oct. 20 at Milford Point soon moved to a roost on the Housatonic River in Stratford (MR et al.). It remained there to at least

Dec. 2 (FM.). Another one was at Barn Island Wildlife Management Area in Stonington on Nov. 1 (BDw). A Marbled Godwit was on the move on Aug. 17 with reports from Guilford (PW), Sandy Point (RS) and Milford Point (TM). Another appeared at Chaffinch Island in Guilford on Aug. 22 and remained to at least Sept. 4, an unusually long stay (SSa et al.). Two of the decreasing Red Knots were at Milford Point on Aug. 6, with three there on Aug. 20 (SSp). The latest one was at Long Beach in Stratford on Nov. 13 (JO).

Stratford Point held 2500 Semipalmated Sandpipers on Aug. 4 (PCo), and the first Western Sandpiper report came from there on Aug. 13 (PCo). The season's first White-rumped Sandpiper was at Sandy Point on Aug. 8 (NB). A White-rumped was at Colebrook Reservoir on Aug. 28 (PCa). A Baird's Sandpiper was at Windham Airport on Aug. 30 (PR); another visited Shell Beach Sept. 6-7 (PW, SSa); one was at Sandy Point on Oct. 3 (NB); and one was at Colebrook Reservoir on Sept. 2-4 (PCa). The high count of Pectoral Sandpipers was

eight on Oct. 20 at Rocky Hill Meadows (PDe); three were at Great Pond in Simsbury on Oct. 24 (PDe). The first Stilt Sandpiper was at Shell Beach in Guilford on Aug. 15-17 (JHo, TG et al.), with two there on Aug. 21 (SSa). A juvenile was a good inland find Aug. 30 at Aspetuck Park in Easton (JN et al.). Single Buff-breasted Sandpipers were at Silver Sands State Park in Milford Aug. 24-25 (LS et al.) and at Sandy Point on Aug. 30 (BM et al.). Buff-breasteds at Rocky Hill meadows Sept. 3-9 topped out at a season high four on Sept. 8 (SZ et al.). Other singles were at HBSP Sept. 8-9 (JCa) and at Sherwood Island Sept. 10-12 (TG).

The first (juvenile) Bonaparte's Gull appeared Aug. 16 at Cockenoe Island in Westport (NB). Up to five lingered inland at Bantam Lake in Litchfield Oct. 9-22 (RB et al.). Sandy Point held 1500 Laughing Gulls, about 65% juveniles, on Aug. 17 (FM). An astonishing flight of **Franklin's Gulls** Nov. 10-16 increased the number of state records almost 20-fold. See a detailed article elsewhere in this issue. The first two Caspian Terns were at the mouth

of the Housatonic River, Stratford/Milford, on Sept. 9 (FM, PCo). Two were off Guilford on Oct. 3 (MW, PW) and one was at Milford Point on Oct. 20 (CS, MR). A good movement of Black Terns included four on Aug. 17-19 in Stratford (FM, MR) and a high count of 10 on Sept. 1 in the Norwalk Islands (NB). A Roseate Tern was at Stratford Point on Aug. 1 (SMr). A small number of coastal reports was topped by five at Stratford Point on Sept. 3 (PCo). Similar numbers continued at coastal sites through the month with a high of eight on Aug. 21 at Stratford Point (PCo). A flock of 920 Common Terns, 30 to 35% of them juveniles, was at Short Beach, Stratford, on Aug. 5 (FM). The flock grew to 1180 on Aug. 6, and 4000 were at Stratford Point on Aug. 20 (FM). A flock of 1000 were still at Long Beach on Oct. 3 (FM), and a very late one was at Merwin Point, Milford, on Nov. 5 (FM, TG). A Forster's Tern was inland at Bantam Lake in Litchfield on Sept. 20 (FZ). A seawatch on strong northeast winds Oct. 4 at Old Saybrook logged 150 Forster's Terns (NB). A scattering of Royal

Terns in September and October included four at HBSP on Sept. 27 (JSh) and four off Guilford on Sept.28-Oct. 1 (FM, BB). A later one was at HBSP on Oct. 29 (TM). A single Black Skimmer visited Milford Point from Aug. 14 (SSp) to Sept. 20 (CL, MV).

It was perhaps the best year on record for jaegers in Long Island Sound. An adult **Pomarine Jaeger**, rare in Connecticut waters, was seen from the New London-Orient, N.Y., ferry Sept. 3-4 (MR, PR). Parasitic Jaegers, although increasing in recent years, were present in un-

usual numbers from Sept. 5 to at least Nov. 20 (FM, NB, m.ob.). In addition to ferry trips, land-based sightings, including some involving more than one individual, were made from places such as Stratford Point (PCo, SK et al.) and Shippan Point, Stamford (PDU et al.). An abundance of baitfish, which held Laughing Gulls and terns late into the season, played a key role in the appearance of the jaegers.

A **White-winged Dove** was faithful to a yard in East Haven Nov. 5-23 (AM et al.). Southbound cuckoos arrived



*Jory Teltser photo*  
 This immature Parasitic Jaeger, seen from the New London-Orient, N.Y., ferry on Sept. 5, 2015, was part of a major fall movement of jaegers in Long Island Sound.

on Aug. 15, with a Black-billed Cuckoo at Stratford Point (PCo) and a Yellow-billed Cuckoo in Mystic (GW). Late ones comprised a Black-billed on Oct. 14 in Farmington (PDe) and a Yellow-billed on Oct. 16 at Stratford Point (FM). The season's lone Barn Owl was seen in Hartford on Oct. 18 (DM). The first **Snowy Owl** in what turned out to be a moderate flight was on a building in downtown Hartford on Nov. 24 (fide BA). A Short-eared Owl showed itself Oct. 21 at Milford Point (LBA). The first report of a southbound Common Nighthawk came from Barkhamsted on Aug. 12 (DRo). The high count in a good flight overall was 620 at Quaker Ridge in Greenwich on Sept. 3 (RMc, SMr). A late one was in Norwalk on Oct. 14 (BM). An Eastern Whip-poor-will sang as late as Sept. 7 in Sterling (RD).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird migration was well underway on Aug. 14, when 18 were feeding on Jewelweed flowers at Quinebaug fish hatchery (RD). Oct. 18 was a late date at Lighthouse Point for 10 passage hummingbirds, presumably but not necessarily all Ruby-

throateds (SMa). An unidentified hummingbird flew by Lighthouse on Nov. 14 (SMa). Female **Rufous Hummingbirds** were in Old Lyme (SL) and Montville (DBu, LBU), both from late November to early January. Another apparent Rufous was at a Norwalk feeder Oct. 24 (LF). The state's fifth **Calliope Hummingbird** visited a West Hartford feeder Oct. 16-26 (AK). A Merlin was found dead in Winsted on Aug. 4 (PF). Red-headed Woodpeckers were on the move Sept. 22 at Kellogg Environmental Center in Derby (FM) and the next day at Boothe Memorial Park in Stratford (FM). Away from the major hawk watches, which had a few reports, singles were noted Oct. 13 at HBSP (LT) and Oct. 21 in Coventry (JTr).

The first Olive-sided Flycatchers were at Quaker Ridge in Greenwich on Aug. 27 (RMc) and the next day at Lighthouse Point (DC). A late one was in Hartland on Oct. 6 (DRo). An *Empidonax* sp. on Nov. 8 at Bluff Point in Groton was both fascinating and frustrating (GW, PR). The state's longest-staying **Ash-throated Flycatcher** attracted birders to Sherwood

Island State Park from Nov. 17 to at least Jan. 8, 2016 (AH, TG, m.ob.). The only **Western Kingbird** of the season was at Mansfield Center Oct. 11-12 (RR et al.), found during the search for the Purple Gallinule. The first Philadelphia Vireo was noted on Aug. 12 in Barkhamsted (DRo). Common Ravens are now not only widespread but also capable of producing some high counts, such as 23 on Oct. 12 in Pomfret (GV). If not a local breeder, a Horned Lark on Sept. 29 at Milford Point was an early migrant (SSp).

Purple Martins numbered an unusually high 150 on Aug. 29 at an inland roost at Raymond Brook marsh in Hebron (RS), and c. 170 moved over an East Haddam yard on Aug. 30 (DRt). A Northern Rough-winged Swallow was still at the East Hartford sewage treatment plant on Nov. 28 (RMA). A Cliff Swallow was late on Oct. 12 at Stratford Point (FM). Two early **Cave Swallows** appeared Oct. 23 at Sherwood Island (TG). A few more were seen on Nov. 11-13, followed by a major flight Nov. 14 totaling c. 80 birds. These included 35 at Greenwich

Point (MSa et al.). Reports of smaller numbers continued to Nov. 24 (FN). A Golden-crowned Kinglet was an early arrival Aug. 29 at Bluff Point State Park in Groton (RS). At the same location on Oct. 17, observers logged 200 each of Golden-crowned and Ruby crowned Kinglets (GW, PR). The season's only **Sedge Wren** dropped into Stratford Point on Oct. 12 (PCo). Nocturnal flight calls revealed 200 to 300 Swainson's Thrushes over Barkhamsted on Sept. 12 (FZ). An early Lapland Longspur appeared at Sandy Point on Oct. 3 (JO).

An Ovenbird was late Oct. 27 in Greenwich (SMr). An extraordinary double-header of Golden-winged Warbler and Prothonotary Warbler was in Stonington on Aug. 26 (ND). Prothonotarys of rather mysterious origin turn up sporadically in fall. Since the loss of our breeding population, Golden-wingeds are hard to come by at any time. The first Tennessee Warbler was noted Aug. 13 at Station 43 in South Windsor (PDe). Of special interest was a Connecticut Warbler identified only from overhead flight photos on Sept. 15 at Bluff Point in Groton (NB). The

first of about 10 Mourning Warblers was seen by many at Milford Point on Aug. 28 (KV et al.), the same day that brought the first Cape May Warbler to Barkhamsted (DRo). A Yellow-rumped Warbler was early on Sept. 5 in Derby (DS). A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** was a good find Sept. 24 at Boothe Memorial Park in Stratford (FM). A Yellow-breasted Chat distracted hawk watchers on Sept. 15 at Quaker Ridge (JHa).

At Bluff Point a morning flight on Aug. 27 included c. 750 warblers of 13 species, with a high of 400 American

Redstarts (PR). A flight of 150 warblers of 12 species on Sept. 12 included 48 redstarts (CE). On Oct. 17 the majority of 400 warblers of seven species were Yellow-rumped Warblers as expected (GW, PR). A string of warblers lingering into October included a Wilson's Warbler on Oct. 17 at Sherwood Island (PDe), a Northern Waterthrush on Oct. 21 at Silver Sands (JO), and a Black-and-White Warbler on Oct. 25 in Essex (JSr). November late dates included a Tennessee Warbler Nov. 9 at East Shore Park in New Haven (JO); a Nashville Warbler at Ecology Park in Branford (NB) and Black-



*Russ Smiley photo*  
This Clay-colored Sparrow, an increasing species, was at East Shore Park in New Haven on Nov. 4, 2015.

throated Green Warblers at HBSP (JTe) and Quinebaug Fish Hatchery (RD), all on Nov. 15; and an American Restart on Nov. 26 at Nod Brook (BR).

The first of about 12 **Clay-colored Sparrows** was at Glastonbury Meadows on Sept. 25 (BA). The season's three **Lark Sparrows** were at Sherwood Island on Oct. 15 (TG, JTe), at HBSP on Oct. 16 (JCa, SZ) and at Cove Island on Oct. 31 (DW, BV et al.). Away from known breeding areas, seven migrant Grasshopper Sparrows was a good seasonal total (JN, BDe et al.). The first White-crowned Sparrow was in Woodbridge on Oct. 3 (CL). First arrivals for two common migrants were White-throated Sparrow on Sept. 22 in South Windsor (PDe) and Dark-eyed Junco on Sept. 24 in Fairfield (KV). More than 300 White-throateds were at Bluff Point on Oct. 17 (GW, PR). The next day at Bluff Point 1100 sparrows included 430 White-throated and 235 juncos (PR, GW).

The only **Summer Tanager**, a female, was at Quaker Ridge on Sept. 15 (SMr). A Scarlet Tanager was late Nov. 2 at

Lighthouse Point (FM). Two of four **Blue Grosbeaks** were at Smith-Richardson Tree Farm in Westport on Aug. 30 and again on Nov. 2-7 (TG). The other two were found on Oct. 15 at Cove Island (PDu) and Stratford Point (SK). A juvenile **Painted Bunting** was at Smith-Richardson on Sept. 23-24 (TG, AH), and it was relocated Oct. 17-18 (TG). Among about 30 Dickcissels was one that spent November at Sherwood Island and remained there through the winter (TG et al.). An Eastern Meadowlark was early Sept. 28 at Lighthouse Point (GH). **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** were at Quinebaug Fish Hatchery on Oct. 25 (RD, TT), in Cromwell on Nov. 21 (ST) and at Station 43 on Nov. 28 (RMa). A flock of 21 Rusty Blackbirds were in Chaplin on Oct. 25 (JM). Scattered Pine Siskins in the second half of October included 25 at White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield on Oct. 25 (GH). An Evening Grosbeak was unexpected Sept. 28 at a feeder in Goshen (KF). One was a fly-over Nov. 17 at Lighthouse Point hawk watch (BB).

Exotics: A Common Shelduck was present from at



least Nov. 24 to deep into winter 2015-16 (SSo et al.). A color band on its right leg was highly indicative of captive origin.

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## PHOTO CHALLENGE



Shorebirds aren't your strong point. In fact you don't really go out of your way to look for them. But this one isn't giving you much choice. It appeared right in front of you, at quite close range, as you walked down to the edge of the river. It's almost demanding you to come up with its identity. Since it's swimming, that's a good place to start. Although various shorebirds swim on occasion, you know the phalaropes are especially noted for this behavior, but which one is this? The compact dimensions, in both the bill and the body, don't seem to work for Wilson's Phalarope, so that leaves two superficially similar birds – Red-necked and Red Phalaropes. In basic plumage the bird isn't offering a lot of plumage field marks, but concentrating on the bill might be productive. Red-necked Phalarope has very thin, sharply pointed bill. This bird's bill is rather stout and blunt, eliminating Red-necked. This Red Phalarope was photographed on Oct 4, 2009 in the Connecticut River in South Windsor by Bob Simon.



Photo Challenge No. 93

# THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

## Editor

Greg Hanisek - 175 Circuit Ave., Waterbury, CT 06708  
(203) 754-4401 email: ghanisek@rep-am.com

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Send manuscripts to the Editor. Please type double spaced with ample margins, on one side of a sheet. Submit a copy on a computer disk, if possible. Style should follow usage in recent issues. All manuscripts receive peer review.

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

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