

Bird Observer

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HOT BIRDS

A **Wood Stork** was reported flying over Niles Pond in Gloucester on October 29. On November 4, Jeffrey Thomas came across one at Horn Pond in Woburn. The bird was in poor health, and the next day was captured and brought to New England Wildlife's Birdsey Cape Wildlife Center, where it was still recuperating at press time. It was suggested that the Woburn bird was the one that had been seen in Gloucester a week earlier until a stork was photographed on the Annisquam River in Gloucester two days after the Woburn bird had been captured. Mary McMahon took the photo on the right.



Suzanne Sullivan picked out a **Pacific Golden-Plover** from a crowd of 60-plus Killdeer at Spencer Pierce Little Farm in Newburyport. The fifth documented record for Massachusetts, it drew a crowd for the few days that it remained in town. Suzanne took the photo on the left.

Alex Burdo discovered a **Northern Wheatear** in his backyard in Yarmouthport on September 21. It was a one-day wonder but several birders did arrive before the day was over to enjoy the bird. Another Wheatear was found a mere week later and only 10 miles of shoreline away, but was thought to be a separate individual based on differences in plumage between the two. Sue Finnegan took the photo on the right.



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Birding the Roy and Margot Larsen Sanctuary, Fairfield, Connecticut

Aidan Kiley

The Roy and Margot Larsen Sanctuary in Fairfield, Connecticut, is one of the Connecticut Audubon Society's (CAS) most well-known destinations for birders and naturalists alike. It is a landmark location for Connecticut birding. The 184-acre sanctuary features an extensive trail system with more than seven miles of trails that cover many habitats, such as small marshes, streams, a swamp, open meadows, and forests. Nearly 200 species of birds have been observed here, including many uncommon species as well as a handful of rarities. It is an easy destination to bird, with well-marked trails; maps are available from the Connecticut Audubon Society. The CAS website has a checklist of the species that have been recorded on the property.

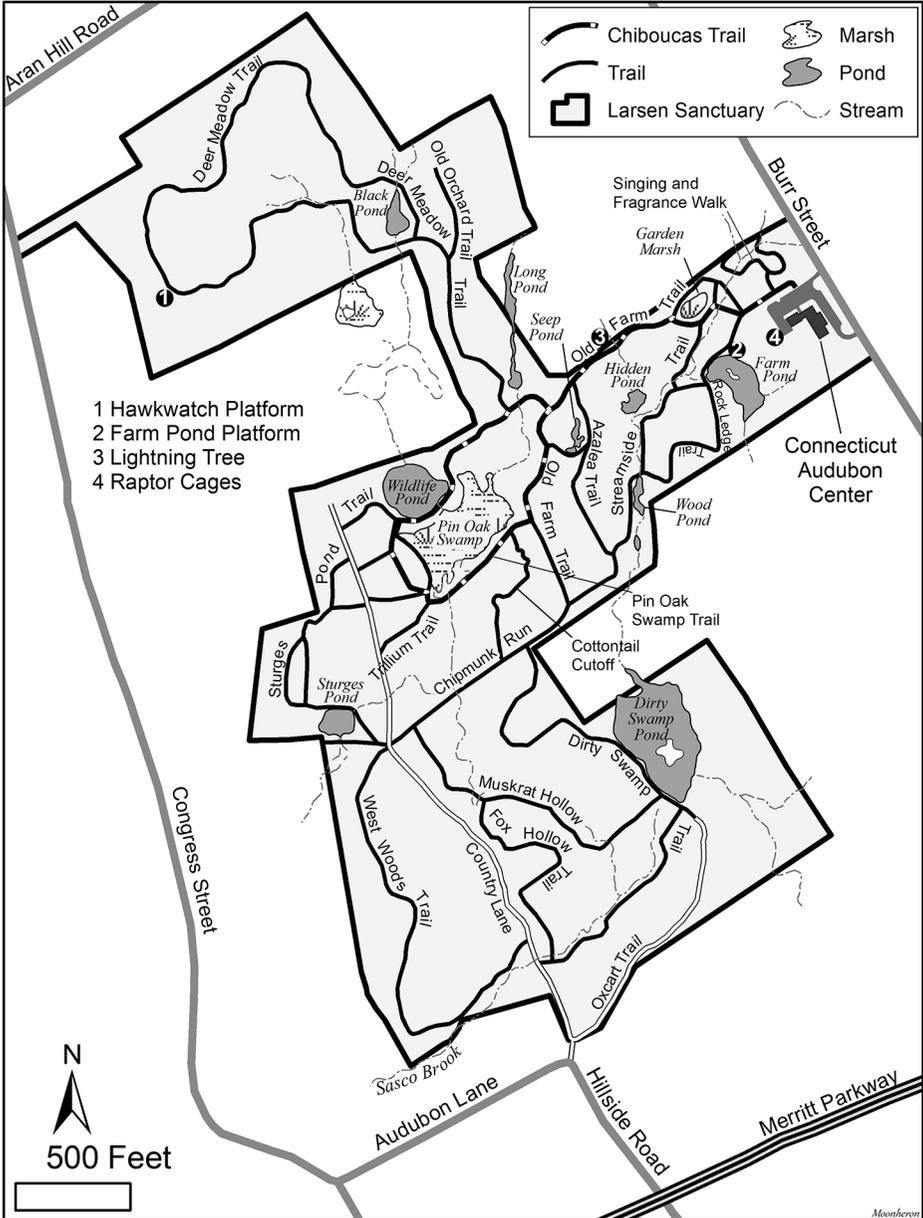


Larsen Sanctuary can be productive for birding in all seasons, but it is best known for spring migrants and summer breeders. The woodlands are a popular spot for many types of passerine migrants in spring. The woods surrounding the nature center and Farm Pond can hold substantial warbler flocks. Canada, Magnolia, Wilson's, and many other species can be found there. The Chiboucas Trail loop is an easy walk on a May morning or afternoon. The Wildlife Pond often attracts passerine flocks and holds a handful of American Bitterns. The nearby meadow attracts open-habitat dwellers such as Prairie Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and Indigo Bunting.

Trails

Chiboucas Trail: The most popular trail is the Edna Strube Special Use Chiboucas Trail, which is a flat, easily accessible path. Start at the main trailhead across from the nature center, pass the Garden Marsh on the right, and continue into a small meadow. Eastern Bluebirds nest in the boxes, and the conifers in the area are productive for warblers, and especially Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned kinglets in the fall. A winter walk in this area may provide an opportunity to find Golden-crowned Kinglets, Winter Wrens, Brown Creepers, and more. Continue past the marsh and meadow until you come to the intersection at the Deer Meadow Loop. The densely wooded areas near the trailhead are good for thrushes. Veery is a specialty breeder, and during migration, this area is a good bet to find Hermit, Swainson's and Gray-cheeked thrushes in season. Wood Thrush is also possible as a rare breeder and migrant in the preserve.

Continue straight past the Deer Meadow trail until you come to the Wildlife Pond. This is one of the best-known locations in the sanctuary. The pond is surrounded by tall grass, with an island in the middle where Red-winged Blackbirds nest. On the south shore of the pond is a boardwalk with dense brush on the edge of it. House Wrens, Blue-winged Warblers, Yellow Warblers, and Common Yellowthroats all breed in this area. In migration, the vegetation bordering the pond can hold flocks of warblers, vireos, and sparrows. Prothonotary Warbler has occurred just around the boardwalk.



Map of Roy and Margot Larsen Sanctuary, Fairfield, Connecticut



Farm Pond. Photograph by Aidan Kiley.

There are a handful of records of American Bittern at the pond. This is a rare species in Fairfield, and Wildlife Pond has been the most frequent spot for bitterns in recent years.

Around the bend from the Wildlife Pond, you enter the main meadow of the sanctuary. This is a good vantage point to look for flyover raptors as well as breeding and migrant passerines. The trail cuts through the meadow then circles Pin Oak Swamp, which provides water and food for many species. The tall dead trees here are good for woodpeckers. After walking past the swamp, follow the trail to the Old Farm or Azalea trails to explore a new area or continue back down the Chiboucas Trail to return to the nature center.

Streamside Trail: The Streamside Trail, which is accessible from the main Chiboucas Trail, is a boardwalk along a swampy stream. It is nice and crisp on a cool spring or fall morning. Louisiana Waterthrush nests along the trail, along with more common passerines. This is often a great place to hear an array of warbler songs on a May morning. Yellow-throated and Prothonotary warblers have occurred here in the past few years. This swampy area has the appearance of a more southern habitat, which may have attracted these spring overshoots. The boardwalk along the stream borders masses of skunk cabbage and other low-lying plants that are quite inviting to many species.

Deer Meadow Trail: The Deer Meadow is accessible from the Chiboucas Trail. It is a loop that covers deep, dense woods before opening up to a large meadow. The multitudes of goldenrod and ragweed are perfect for sparrows, and you should look for Connecticut Warbler, although it has not been seen in recent years. The hawkwatch platform is a fantastic spot for morning flight. Standing there for a few



Purple Finch. Photograph by Erika Kiley.

hours after sunrise will provide finches, warblers, sparrows, kinglets, and waterfowl flying over before raptors pick up once the thermals begin to form. Flocks of Northern Pintails, Green-winged Teal, and Common Mergansers have flown over in recent autumns. Finches, American Pipits, various thrushes, and flocks of swallows all may be encountered. On a day of north or northwest winds, especially after a cold front in September or October, this platform is certainly worthy of a visit. It is no longer actively an official hawkwatch site, but it is still a good spot to spend some time looking for eagles, vultures, and hawks.

Nature center and feeders: In the winter, I enjoy spending time at the feeders around the building. It is historically excellent for finches, with Purple Finches and Pine Siskins easily found in irruption years. It always merits a brief check, because there is a February record of Western Tanager. The sunflower mix, niger, and suet feeders attract a wide variety of common species. In the winter, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and Brown Creepers are regular visitors. The pond behind the building is Farm Pond. It can hold ducks in the winter, but nothing rarer than Green-winged Teal or American Wigeon. The pond's platform provides an excellent view of the whole area. Wood Ducks breed on the pond, and you can see chicks around by early summer. Most years there is an Eastern Phoebe nest close to the platform. One August record of a juvenile Least Bittern is likely the best bird that has been spotted at Farm Pond in recent years. On a good migration day, it is always worth a check near the boardwalk and the pond shore for passerines. Often there will be a small warbler flock, sometimes containing Canada, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, and the more common warblers. In the early morning the sunlight hitting the trees on the edge of the pond no doubt draws them in.



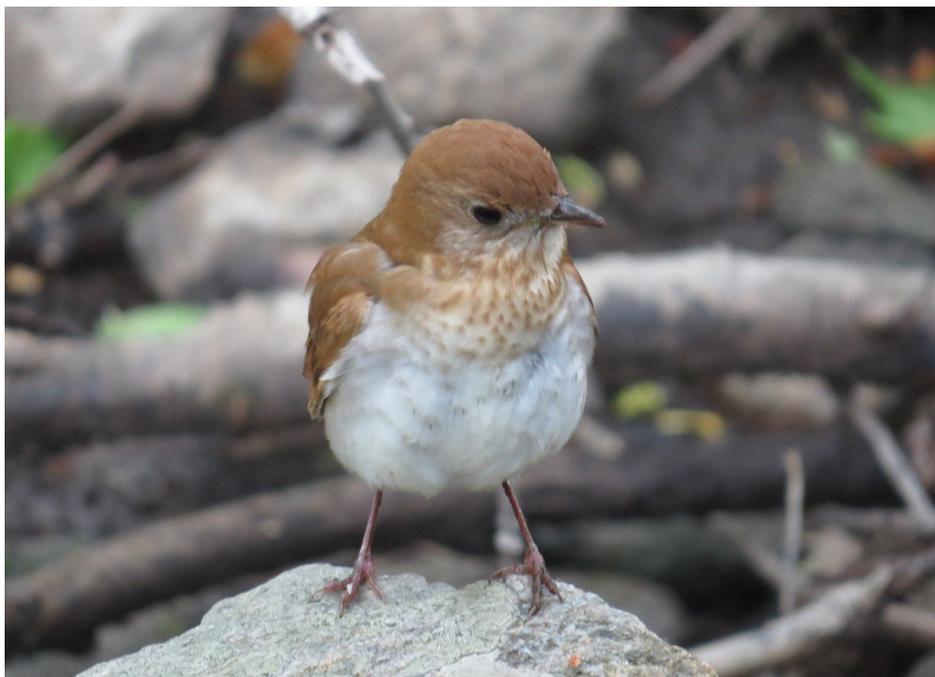
Gray-cheeked Thrush. Photograph by Aidan Kiley.

Seasonal highlights

Winter: The conifers throughout the sanctuary are good for feeding flocks of wintering passerines, and the feeders provide good looks at common resident species, with the chance at something more interesting. Farm Pond has a fountain heater, so when most inland bodies of water are frozen, there still may be ducks on the pond. If you walk out to Deer Meadow, look for finches and kinglets in the conifers, as well as wintering hawks such as Red-shouldered, Sharp-shinned, or Cooper's hunting the meadow. Trails are accessible in the snow, and a winter day there provides beautiful scenery for photos.

Spring: Spring is the most popular season to visit Larsen Sanctuary. It is famous for its early through late spring warblers, so a brief or extended walk here is worth the effort. For spring migrants, the Streamside Trail is a must, followed by the Chiboucas Trail. By covering both, you will go through swamps, ponds, dense deciduous woods, conifers, and a swampy stream, totaling an extensive assortment of habitats. In late April, the sanctuary will be full of Palm and Pine warblers, with other species not far behind. Birding a loop may turn up multiple vireo species, *Catharus* thrushes, and warblers such as Blackburnian, Bay-breasted, Canada, and Chestnut-sided. Hooded Warbler does not breed in the region, but there are a handful of migrant records, so it is good to keep an eye or ear out for them. Dirty Swamp Pond and Sturges Pond are favorable spots to find Solitary Sandpiper in May.

Summer/breeding: The sanctuary has many interesting passerine and nonpasserine breeders. Indigo Buntings, Blue-winged Warblers, and Eastern Towhees breed in the main meadow. Wild Turkeys breed in the area, and you can frequently locate young poults in random spots throughout the preserve in spring into summer. Veery, which is an uncommon breeder this close to Long Island Sound, can be heard singing



Veery. Photograph by Aidan Kiley.

throughout the sanctuary. On an evening walk along the Streamside Trail on a May or June day, it is easy to hear Veeries singing and calling and hear the harsh chip note of breeding Louisiana Waterthrushes. Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Ovenbird, Pileated Woodpecker, and Great Crested Flycatcher all breed in the Larsen Sanctuary.

Fall: Deer Meadow is the best location for fall birding in Larsen. In October or November, the Deer Meadow loop and open field with ragweed patches and small conifers in the meadow provide habitat for many sparrows, warblers, and more common visitors. If you are looking for a spot for morning flight, give Deer Meadow a try. It is a perfect vantage point for watching both passerine and nonpasserine migrants moving over. October through mid-November should be the best time of year to try morning flight there, although earlier in the fall could prove productive for warblers and raptors.

Fall migration in the sanctuary other than in Deer Meadow is not as good as in the spring, but it can be fruitful. The areas around the building and Dirty Swamp Pond are excellent for fall birds. Clay-colored, Lincoln's, and White-crowned sparrows have been recorded, plus Nashville, Tennessee, and Mourning warblers. At sunset in late August and September, nighthawks show nicely near sunset. The feeders and flower garden near the building attract sparrows and other typical migrants. Although there has been minimal reporting to eBird for the rest of the sanctuary, Larsen is certainly a good place to bird throughout the fall.

Hawkwatch: From 1972 to 1989, the sanctuary had an official hawkwatch site.

Deer Meadow, in the northern corner of the sanctuary, has a wooden platform that provides an excellent view of the skies on a cool fall day. This location recorded a significant number of hawks in its day, with Sharp-shinned Hawks and Broad-winged Hawks being the species on record with the highest frequency. Golden Eagles and Northern Goshawks were regular visitors in late October and November. There were at least three days with four Goshawks in the early 80s. Earlier in the fall is also good for raptors as the hawkwatch data suggest. The location is a good spot for morning flight and raptors, but there is no regular hawkwatch observer on fall days. On good finch winters in recent years, the platform has been productive for many Purple Finches, siskins, and other fall flyover passerines such as American Pipits and Cedar Waxwings.

General information

My favorite walk in the sanctuary is to walk the Streamside Trail and then cover Chiboucas. The Streamside Trail takes you over a boardwalk that is productive for migrants and has breeding Louisiana Waterthrush. Continue on the Chiboucas Trail, where there usually is a Red-shouldered Hawk nest in the vicinity of the “lightning tree.” Walking toward the Wildlife Pond, you will frequently see or hear Wild Turkeys and often hear calling Barred Owls. The sanctuary is typically quiet in the early morning, with few people. When the weather is nice it may be a bit crowded, so visit early to maximize quiet birding time. In the evenings it is rarely crowded, so that is also a good time to bird. Dogs are not allowed, unlike almost all other local spots, which makes birding quieter and hassle free.

The visitor center has a gift shop where bird seed, feeders, and other birder essentials are available. Ask an employee at the desk about birding the sanctuary, tips for exploring Larsen, and about becoming a Connecticut Audubon member. You can visit the raptor cages adjacent to the parking area when the building and gate are open. They have various birds such as Barn Owl, Barred Owl, Turkey Vulture, two American Kestrels, and a Red-shouldered Hawk.

The parking lot is at 2325 Burr Street, Fairfield, Connecticut, 06824. It is an easy drive from either Interstate 95 or the Merritt Parkway. From Interstate 84, take Routes 25, 8, or Interstate 91 to Wilbur Cross/Merritt Parkway (Route 15).

From the Merritt Parkway, take Exit 44 toward Fairfield/Reading. If you are coming from the south, turn right off the ramp onto Congress Street. Drive approximately 1.0 mile, and take a right onto Burr Street. The CAS Larsen Sanctuary is 1.1 miles on the left. From the north, turn left off the ramp onto Congress Street, take a quick left onto the Black Rock Turnpike (Route 58), and in 600 feet, turn right onto Congress Street. Follow Congress Street for approximately 1.0 mile, and take a right onto Burr Street; drive 1.1 miles to the sanctuary.

From Interstate 95, take Exit 21–Mill Plain Road. Proceed north on Mill Plain Road. In 2.3 miles, Mill Plain Road turns into Burr Street; continue straight for another 2.3 miles until you come to the CAS Larsen Sanctuary. 🐦

Aidan Kiley is a Connecticut native from the coastal town of Fairfield. You can find him spending hours at Lake Mohegan or obsessively searching for new county birds. He is an eBird fanatic and a regional reviewer and hotspot editor for Connecticut for eBird.

Tool Use by Atlantic Puffins?

Jeffrey Boone Miller



Atlantic Puffin. Photograph by Marsha Salett.

Along the New England coast, any sighting of an Atlantic Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*) is likely to bring a smile to even the most weary observer. The reestablishment of nesting populations on several islands off the Maine coast has been a conservation success story (Davis 1992), so birders in our area have a chance to observe their behavior. Puffins can dig burrows for their nests and catch their prey underwater, but is it possible that puffins have the capability to use tools? One group of researchers says yes (Fayet et al. 2020a, 2020b), but others have questioned the strength of the evidence and whether it is sufficient to support this conclusion (Auersperg et al. 2020; Farrar 2020; Sándor and Miklósi 2020; Sándor et al. 2021). Here is the story so far.

In January 2020, Fayet et al. (2020a) published a brief report describing two observations of Atlantic Puffins that the authors interpreted as “evidence of true tool use.” The first observation, on June 18, 2014, was of a puffin “sitting on the sea” near Skomer Island, Wales, that was observed through a spotting scope “holding a wooden stick in its bill and using it to scratch its back for ~5 s.” The second observation, on July 13, 2018, was from Grimsey Island, Iceland, and was recorded by an automatic camera. The authors describe the action in the ten-second video as “an adult puffin picks up a wooden stick from the ground then uses it to scratch its chest feathers.” The video, titled Movie S1, can be found at <<https://tinyurl.com/puffinwithstick>>.

The authors interpreted their observations as “two instances of puffins using a stick as a tool for body care” and noted that, in the wild, only primates and elephants had previously been observed scratching with a tool. Tool use by wild animals is rarely observed even by species that regularly use tools in captivity. So, if the authors are correct, these observations would be noteworthy both for rarity and for adding a new suborder—seabirds—to the list of birds known to use tools.

Based on earlier work (Bentley-Condit and Smith 2010; Shumaker et al. 2011),

Fayet et al. (2020a) defined tool use as the “direct manipulation of a detached object toward a specific part of the environment... with a specific goal.” A familiar example in our area is when gulls drop shellfish on hard surfaces to crack them open for eating. Herons using bait to attract prey fish is another example (Davis and Zickefoose 1998). For the two puffin observations, the birds certainly used a detached object—the stick—to contact a specific part of the environment—the birds’ plumage—but what was the specific goal? When discussing possible goals, the authors dismissed collection of nesting material, communication, foraging, and investigation of a novel object. Instead, the authors favored the possibility that the birds were “most likely engaged in body care,” and they further speculated, without additional evidence, that the stick was used to “dislodge parasites or relieve an itch.”

It did not take long for others to question whether Fayet et al. (2020a) had provided sufficient evidence to support tool use by puffins. First, a group of scientists well known for their work in animal tool use published a critique in the same journal suggesting that, “Likely and more parsimonious explanations for the object behavior are that the bird simply accidentally touched its plumage with the stick while bringing it toward its breast during a breeding display or was simply trying to scratch itself while still holding the object.” (Auersperg et al. 2020) This group also pointed out that there had been an earlier single observation of a seabird—a Double-crested Cormorant—using a feather as a tool for preening (Meyerriecks 1972). Farrar (2020) also suggested that the observations had occurred by chance and were not a convincing example of tool use.

In response, Fayet et al. (2020b) published a reply that accompanied the Auersperg et al. critique. Fayet et al. (2020b) acknowledged the previous cormorant report and agreed that further investigation of puffin tool use was necessary. However, they also pointed out that extensive investigation had not found puffins using sticks in nest building or courtship at their study sites. They also argued that the stick was used in a “precise and delicate” manner to touch the feathers only. Fayet et al. also wrote a point-by-point rebuttal to the Farrar (2020) critique, which is attached to the Farrar paper.

Next to appear was a paper that examined the puffin tool use paper in detail and used it as an example to set standards for reporting “a rare behavior or event that has been observed either once or few times.” (Sándor and Miklósi 2020) These authors proposed standards for describing behavior, as well as for analyzing function, cognition, and evolutionary considerations, and for presenting hypotheses. Based on these standards, the Fayet et al. (2020a) paper could likely have been improved, for example, by comparing the behavior of the puffin they recorded with other videos of puffins scratching or preening without sticks. Sándor and Miklósi (2020) did just that by viewing dozens of videos of puffins scratching without sticks, and they concluded that the actions they analyzed were in “all important aspects very different” from that reported as “scratching” by Fayet et al (2020a). It would be useful to know if other observers, including Fayet et al., would agree with this conclusion.

Finally, Sándor et al. (2021) recruited panels of professional ethologists and ornithologists, as well as laypeople, and asked each participant (n=408) to view the puffin video of Fayet et al. (2020a) alongside additional videos of puffin behavior, and

then fill out a questionnaire about how to interpret the behavior. All groups showed similar uncertainty about how to interpret the video—there was no consensus among either experts or nonprofessionals about whether the stick was used for scratching or for some other reason. The authors point out that an important limitation of their study was that even the experts had not been extensively trained specifically in puffin behavior.

So, as it now stands, different researchers have come to opposite conclusions about the purpose of the puffin behavior reported by Fayet et al. (2020a) and whether it meets the criteria for tool use. Those on both sides of the debate have advanced reasonable arguments for their case, but the debate will no doubt continue until further observations are made. In the meantime, if you are fortunate enough to happen upon an Atlantic Puffin with a stick in its beak, pay close attention. Your observation could settle the issue. 🐦

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Twenty-fifth Report of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee

Marshall J. Iliff, Jessica Johnson, and Jeremiah Trimble



European Golden-Plover. April 13, 2021. Duxbury Beach, Duxbury. Photograph by Frederick Bowes.

For its 25th report, the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (MARC) evaluated 140 records involving 62 species. The committee accepted 127 of those records. New records in 2021 added an impressive four species to the state list: European Golden-Plover, Heermann's Gull, Roseate Spoonbill, and Great-tailed Grackle. Rereview of a 2009 Common Shelduck and the recent split of Short-billed Gull (*Larus brachyrhynchus*) from Common Gull (*Larus canus*) added two more species, bringing the state list to 511 species. In addition, the first formally reviewed Great Auk record was accepted and the state's first Cave Swallow from the Caribbean population represents a new subspecies group for the state.

Other highlights from this report include the state's second confirmed Pacific-slope Flycatcher, third Yellow-green Vireo, third accepted Western Meadowlark, fourth Ancient Murrelet, fifth Chestnut-collared Longspur, and two records of Golden-crowned Sparrow that represent the state's first (from 1990) and sixth (from 2021) accepted records. Additional context is provided for selected species below.

Species taxonomy, nomenclature, and sequence follow the eBird/Clements Checklist (v2021), which closely follows the seventh edition of the American Ornithological Society (AOS, formerly American Ornithologists' Union) *Check-list of North American Birds* (AOU 1998) and its supplements (Chesser et al. 2009, Chesser et al. 2010, Chesser et al. 2011, Chesser et al. 2012, Chesser et al. 2013, Chesser et al. 2014, Chesser et al. 2015, Chesser et al. 2016, Chesser et al. 2017, Chesser et al. 2018, Chesser et al. 2019, Chesser et al. 2020, Chesser et al. 2021).

The list of species reviewed by the MARC (the Review List) is available at <www.maavianrecords.com>. Please check the Review List to send evidence of records that are not listed in our Searchable Database—even in this Information Age we often do not receive sufficient information for many records. The committee strongly encourages written submissions even when photographs are available.

The statistics in brackets for each species or taxon show the number of records accepted in this report, followed by the total number of accepted records; note that some species have a large number of reports that the MARC has yet to review (e.g., Scissor-tailed Flycatcher). Below, we present data for all records covered, formatted as follows: Record identification number, count of individuals, location, range of observation dates, original observers, and observers submitting documentation. We credit the discoverer with an asterisk (*). We indicate whether the evidence provided was photographic (ph), video (v), audio (au), or a written description (†). We indicate “v.o.” for various observers; several others also saw the bird and supported the identification. We use “m.ob.” for many observers; many people in addition to the listed observers provided documentation for the bird to eBird/Macaulay Library.

ACCEPTED RECORDS

Ross's Goose (*Anser rossii*) [1 record accepted in this report, 37 total]

- 2020-067: 1 at Crooked Lane and LeBaron Hills Country Club, Lakeville, *Plymouth* and *Bristol*, 12/1/2020 to 12/16/2020 [Jim Sweeney* (ph), m.ob.], seen also on adjacent Taunton, *Bristol*, portions of the country club 12/3/2020 to 12/9/2021.
- 2020-069: 1 at Gifford Road and Pine Hill Road, Westport, *Bristol*, 12/24/2020 to 1/10/2021 [Nathaniel Brown*, Carol Molander (ph), m.ob.].

These two records were determined by the committee to involve the same individual, which first moved just a couple of miles from Crooked Lane to LeBaron Hills Country Club, *Plymouth*, but then moved at least 17 miles south-southeast to *Bristol*, establishing county firsts in both places. Ross's Goose has now occurred in every Massachusetts county.

Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*) [3, 26]

- 2020-106: 1 at Duck Creek Marsh, Wellfleet, and at Eldredge Park and Boland Pond, Orleans, *Barnstable*, 11/26/2020 to 12/27/2020 [Peggy Sagan* (ph), Mark Faherty (ph), m.ob.].
- 2021-025: 1 at Horseneck Road and Bayview Farm, South Dartmouth, *Bristol*, 1/26/2021 to 4/25/2021 [Arthur Rainville* (ph), Beverly King*, Carol Molander* (ph), Sue Walas*, m.ob.].



Heermann's Gull. May 27, 2021. Horseneck Beach State Reservation, Westport. Photograph by Joel Eckerson.

- 2021-028: 1 at Forte Park, Newton, *Middlesex*, 3/5/2021 to 3/20/2021 [Gary Oines* (ph), Marshall Hiff (ph), m.ob.].

We continue to be amazed by the rapid increase in records of this species in the state; the second state record was in 2010 and the MARC has accepted records in every year since except 2013. The *Bristol* record established a new late date for the state by a couple weeks, though there are records from late May in Maine and Nova Scotia.

Brant (Black) (*Branta bernicla nigricans*) [1, 4]

- 2020-107: 1 at Fort Phoenix State Reservation, Fairhaven, *Bristol*, 12/4/2020 [Matthew Eckerson* (ph)].

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*) [4, 21]

- 2020-065: 1 at Quabbin Reservoir, Winsor Dam, Belchertown, *Hampshire*, 11/23/2020 [Larry Therrien* (ph)].
- 2020-098: 1 at Tri-Town Beach, Whately, *Franklin*, and Paradise Pond, Smith College, Northampton, *Hampshire*, 10/12/2020 to 10/17/2020 [Kevin Barnes*(ph), Sasha Auer*, m.ob.].
- 2020-099: 1 at Turners Falls Power Canal, Greenfield, *Franklin*, 11/23/2020 to 12/16/2020 [Edward Lewis* (ph), Sue Lewis*, m.ob.].
- 2020-100: 1 at Davis Farmland fields, Sterling, *Worcester*; 11/28/2020 to 12/6/2020 [Nick Newberry*, Bette Robo (ph), m.ob.].

Tundra Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*) [1, 8 since 2018]

- 2020-103: 5 at Horse Farm Lookout at Hummock Pond, Nantucket, *Nantucket*, 11/7/2020 to 12/1/2020 [Francis Morello* (ph), Skyler Kardell* (ph), Jaden Thompson*, m.ob.].

Common Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) [1, 1]

- 2009-038: 1 at Nahant, Lynn, and Swampscott beaches, *Essex*, 12/6/2009 to 12/7/2009 [Jim Malone*, Marshall Iliff (ph), Matthew Garvey (ph), Jeff Offermann, Jeremiah Trimble, v.o.].

Given the recent move by the ABA to accept some Newfoundland records of Common Shelduck as natural provenance, the committee voted to rereview the December 2009 record, which was the same year as one of the accepted Newfoundland birds. With increasing populations in Iceland and some support of a fall vagrancy pattern emerging, the committee reviewed the original documentation with these factors in mind and voted to accept this record as a wild vagrant and moved to add Common Shelduck to the state list.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) [1, 30]

- 1992-008: 1 at White Island Pond, Plymouth, *Plymouth*, 4/19/1992 to 4/21/1992 [Steve Arena*].

Eared Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*) [4, 17]

- 2020-108: 1 at Jamaica Pond, Boston, *Suffolk*, 12/6/2020 to 12/26/2020 [Ted Bradford* (ph), m.ob.].
- 2020-109: 1 at Wellfleet Town Pier, Wellfleet, *Barnstable*, 12/24/2020 [Mike Jones* (ph)].
- 2021-022: 1 at the Bridge Causeway, Marblehead, *Essex*, 1/11/2021 to 4/18/2021 [Lydia Curtis* (ph), m.ob.].
- 2021-029: 1 off Jerusalem Road, Cohasset, *Norfolk*, and Forest Avenue, Hull, *Plymouth*, 3/28/2021 to 4/14/2021 [Vincent Zollo* (ph), m.ob.].

The Jamaica Pond bird provided a first confirmed record for *Suffolk* and the Cohasset bird a first for *Norfolk*. As is often the case, a couple of these birds were first identified as Horned Grebes but the identifications were corrected when photos were posted online.

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) [2, 28]

- 2020-078: 1 at Tuckernuck Island, Nantucket, *Nantucket*, 7/13/2020 to 7/16/2020 [Zoe L'Ecuyer*, William L'Ecuyer*, Skyler Kardell* (ph)].
- 2020-079: 1 at Cuttyhunk Island, *Dukes*, 8/20/2020 to 8/31/2020 [Alex Burdo*, Matthew Eckerson* (ph), Preston Lust*].

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) [3, 43]

- 2020-057: 1 at Tucker Road, North Dartmouth, *Bristol*, 10/28/2020 to 10/31/2020



Roseate Spoonbill. August 11, 2021. Corbin's Neck, Sheffield. Photograph by Steve Motyl.
[Patricia Bergandy*, Marshall Iliff (ph), v.o.].

- 2020-096: 1 at Nipmuc Pond, Mendon, *Worcester*, 10/5/2020 [Carole Carnovale* (ph)].
- 2020-097: 1 at South Orleans, *Barnstable*, 12/2/2020 to 3/30/2021 [Susan Finnegan* (ph)].

Although two of these birds were banded and measured, the committee was ultimately convinced that spread tail photos of the *Bristol* bird showed sufficiently broad outermost rectrix and a diagnostic emarginate second rectrix, lending hope to field identification of at least some females with good enough photos.

Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus/sasin*) [1, 6]

- 2020-056: 1 at Pleasant Street, Natick, *Middlesex*, 10/10/2020 to 10/20/2020 [Dave Epstein* (ph)].

Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) [1, 46]

- 2021-003: 1 at Hardings Beach, Chatham, *Barnstable*, 2/5/2021 [Bird Watcher's General Store].

The bird in this unusual mid-winter record was found dead and photographed.

Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*) [8, 10]

- 2006-064: 1 at Belle Isle Marsh Reservation, Boston, *Suffolk*, 4/1/2006 to 4/8/2006 [Linda Ferraresso*, Robert Mayer (ph), v.o.].
- 2008-053: 1 at Pat's Puddle, Nantucket, *Nantucket*, 6/1/2008 to 6/2/2008 [Trish Pastuszak (ph)].
- 2013-065: 1 at Parker River NWR, Plum Island, *Essex*, 6/7/2013 to 6/15/2013 [Tom Wetmore*, Tom Murray (ph), m.ob.].
- 2014-080: 1 at Pikul's Farm, Rowley, *Essex*, 5/30/2014 to 6/3/2014 [Bob Stymeist*, Jason Forbes* (ph), m.ob.].
- 2016-052: 1 at Bell's Neck Conservation Area, West Harwich, *Barnstable*, 5/17/2016 to 5/23/2016 [Roger Debenham* (ph), m.ob.].
- 2019-155: 1 at Great Point Lagoon, Nantucket, *Nantucket*, 6/20/2019 to 7/5/2019 [Morgan Sayle*, Trish Pastuszak (ph)].
- 2019-156: 1 at Big Station Pond, Monomoy NWR, Chatham, *Barnstable*, 6/24/2019 [Sean Williams* (ph)].
- 2020-075: 1 at Allens Pond Wildlife Sanctuary, Dartmouth, *Bristol*, 5/25/2020 [Luis Agosto* (ph), Spencer Lott (ph)].

European Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [1, 1]

- 2021-006: 1 at Duxbury Beach, Duxbury, *Plymouth*, 4/5/2021 to 4/18/2021 [Frederick Bowes* (ph), Marshall Iliff (au), Sean Williams (ph, au), m.ob.].

First suspected as a possible Pacific Golden-Plover, this bird was identified from photos obtained April 13. The bird was refound the next day and enjoyed for almost a week, providing the first documented state record. Also, Bowes had photos of the bird that documented its arrival on April 5 but he initially identified it as a Black-bellied Plover. This record is outside the normal late-April early-May pattern of vagrancy to Newfoundland and winds were unfavorable for a trans-Atlantic crossing, so it probably represents a bird that wintered in the Americas—possibly the one known to have wintered on Bermuda—and was returning north.

Pacific Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*) [1, 4]

- 2020-049: 1 at Esther Island, *Nantucket*, 8/26/2020 [Lee Dunn* (ph)].

This breeding-plumaged bird was the third adult found in the state between July and August, and a county first.

Ruff (*Calidris pugnax*) [7, 8 since 2018]

- 2017-141: 1 at Allens Pond Wildlife Sanctuary Beach Loop, Westport, *Bristol*, 5/10/2017 to 5/16/2017 [Henry Kimberlin (ph), m.ob.].
- 2019-154: 1 at Wet Meadows Viewing Platform, Scotland Road, Newbury, *Essex*, 3/30/2019 to 3/31/2019 [Marjorie Watson*, Nate Dubrow, Jeffrey Offermann (ph), m.ob.].



Great-tailed Grackle. April 10, 2021. Nelson Field, Plymouth. Photograph by Sean Williams.

- 2020-071: 1 at Milestone Cranberry Bogs, Nantucket, *Nantucket*, 4/4/2020 [Skyler Kardell* (ph)].
- 2020-072: 1 at Navigation Road, West Barnstable, *Barnstable*, 4/25/2020 [Peter Crosson* (ph), v.o.].
- 2020-073: 1 at Winsegansett Avenue Marsh, Fairhaven, *Bristol*, 7/2/2020 to 7/3/2020 [Carol Molander* (ph), Moe Molander*, m.ob.].
- 2020-074: 1 at Monomoy NWR, Chatham, *Barnstable*, 7/30/2020 [Ian Davies*, Mike Sylvia* (ph), Nick Bonomo* (ph)].
- 2021-035: 2 at Parker River NWR, Newbury, *Essex*, 5/1/2021 [Sean Williams* (ph), Aliyah Coplan*, Jason Erichsen*, Joseph Crowley*, Kathleen Miller*, Nathan Lewis*, Sofia Raimo*, Thomas Huffman*].

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*) [1, 6]

- 2020-086: 1 at Third Cliff, Scituate, *Plymouth*, 8/2/2020 to 8/6/2020 [Thomas O'Brien*, Bill Lee (ph), m.ob.].

South Polar Skua (*Stercorarius maccornicki*) [2, 14]

- 2020-080: 1 at Race Point Beach, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, 7/17/2020 [Keegan Burke* (ph)].
- 2020-081: 1 at Race Point Beach, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, 10/3/2020 [Blair Nikula* (ph)].

Great Auk (*Pinguinus impennis*) [1, 1]

- 1602-001: Multiple birds at Chappaquiddick, *Dukes*, 5/20/1602 [Samuel Purchas*, Bartholomew Gosnold*].

Historical accounts of “Penguins” from the Martha’s Vineyard area helped the committee add a record from at least one specific date. The species is also known from middens in New England, so historically it surely occurred with some regularity. Alas, we may never know just how regular it once was.

Ancient Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus antiquus*) [1, 4]

- 2020-064: 1 at Race Point, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, 11/9/2020 [Amy O’Neill*, Peter Flood (ph), v.o.].

With the discovery of this bird by Amy O’Neill, the state’s four records are now evenly split between Race Point on the tip of Cape Cod and the tip of Cape Ann in *Essex*.

Ivory Gull (*Pagophila eburnea*) [1, 6]

- 2021-001: 1 at Andrews Point, Rockport, *Essex*, 1/2/2021 [Rick Heil*].

This full adult was a welcome sight at a seawatch at Andrews Point; with continued melting sea ice, its future as a vagrant to Massachusetts is most uncertain.

Franklin’s Gull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*) [4, 34]

- 2020-082: 1 at Coast Guard Beach, Eastham, *Barnstable*, 7/26/2020 [Nick Bonomo* (ph), David Provencher*, Sarah Dzielski*(ph)].
- 2020-083: 1 at Andrews Point, Rockport, *Essex*, 8/4/2020 [Davey Walters* (ph), Nathan Dubrow*].
- 2020-084: 1 at Sandy Neck, Barnstable, *Barnstable*, 8/29/2020 [Peter Crosson* (ph)].
- 2020-085: 1 at the Oxbow, Northampton, *Hampshire*, 10/26/2020 [Aaron Hulsey*, Larry Therrien (ph), m.ob.].

Heermann’s Gull (*Larus heermanni*) [1, 1]

- 2021-013: 1 at Horseneck Beach State Reservation, Westport, and Richmond Pond, Acoaxet, *Bristol*, 5/27/2021 [Nicole Kirkos* (ph), Tyler Tomassone*, Joel Eckerson (ph), v.o.].

First found on Horseneck Beach, it was later relocated first at Richmond Pond and then at Sakonnet Point, Rhode Island, providing state firsts for two states in a single day. From its second-cycle plumage and specific tattered wing coverts, this remarkable bird was identifiable as the same bird that was found in Florida as a first-winter bird on 8/31/2019; it then ranged up and down Florida’s east coast until it went missing on 1/27/2021. This bird visited Georgia from 2/15 through at least 3/2, and was successively seen in Virginia on 5/12, in Massachusetts and Rhode Island on 5/27, and then in Cape May, New Jersey, from 5/30 to 6/4, before it returned to Georgia on 6/18 and appeared in South Carolina on 6/21. By August, the bird had returned to Florida, where it remains as of this writing. Quite the tour for a single rarity, which now has established state firsts in at least four states. Perhaps it will go on another Massachusetts tour in 2022.



Short-billed Gull. April 15, 2018. Little Harbor and Sandy Beach, Cohasset. Photograph by Marshall Iliff.

Common Gull (*Larus canus*) [1, 30 for species pair; species-specific totals to be determined]

- 2021-026: 1 *kamtschatschensis* at Codfish Park, Siasconset, *Nantucket*, 2/25/2021 to 3/3/2021 [Skyler Kardell* (ph)].

See the introduction for more on this recent split. At least two subspecies of Common Gull have occurred in Massachusetts: European *canus*, which has historically been most regular, and east Asian *kamtschatschensis*, which has multiple recent records possibly involving as few as two to three wide-ranging birds. With the recent split, the MARC has added Common Gull and Short-billed Gull as full review species, with all reports requiring full committee review as opposed to a streamlined eBird-accept procedure.

Short-billed Gull (*Larus brachyrhynchus*) [1, 1]

- 2018-085: 1 at Sandy Beach, Cohasset, *Norfolk*, 4/15/2018 to 4/16/2018 [Vin Zollo* (ph), Dan Burton (ph), Marshall Iliff (ph), v.o.].

This record was initially accepted as Mew Gull [2018-020] but was rereviewed and accepted as Short-billed at the MARC 2021 annual meeting. With the 2021 split of Mew Gull (*Larus canus*) into Common Gull (*Larus canus*) and Short-billed Gull (*Larus brachyrhynchus*), Massachusetts gains one species to the state list because both gulls occur as vagrants. Just one record has been accepted so far and this bird occurred on the same beach at the same time as a banded Common Gull. Two other well-documented photo records (both accepted on eBird) will be reviewed in the coming year, one from *Barnstable* and one from *Bristol*.

Sooty Tern (*Onychoprion fuscatus*) [9, 15]

- 2020-045: 1 at the Kittansett Club, Marion, *Plymouth*, 8/4/2020 [Ian Davies* (ph)].
- 2020-046: 1 at Pocasset, Bourne, *Barnstable*, 8/4/2020 [Peter Trimble* (ph)].

- 2020-087: 18 at Lake Onota, Pittsfield, and Lake Pontoosuc, Lanesborough, *Berkshire*, 8/4/2020, with one individual continuing 8/5/2020 [Kyron Hanson*, Stefan Townsend*, Jean Jew*, Manuel Morales (ph), John Manuel Morales (ph)].
- 2020-088: 2 at Wachusett Reservoir, Scar Hill Road, Boylston, *Worcester*, 8/4/2020 to 8/13/2020 [Sean Williams* (ph)].
- 2020-089: 1 at Longmeadow, *Hampden*, 8/5/2020 [Mark Donohue* (ph)].
- 2020-090: 2 at Cuttyhunk Island, *Dukes*, 8/5/2020 [Mike Sylvia* (ph)].
- 2020-091: 1 at Tuckernuck Island, Nantucket, *Nantucket*, 8/5/2020 [Skyler Kardell* (ph)].
- 2020-092: 2 at Race Point Beach, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, 8/5/2020 to 8/6/2020 [Max Chalfin-Jacobs* (ph), William von Herff* (ph), Francis Morello* (ph), Oliver Patrick* (ph), Will Schenck* (ph)].
- 2020-093: 1 at Monomoy NWR, Chatham, *Barnstable*, 8/8/2020 [Jeremiah Trimble* (ph), Jeffrey Offermann* (ph), Peter Trimble*].

Tropical Storm Isaias made landfall as a Category 1 Hurricane near Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina, on August 4, 2020, and tracked north along the Hudson River Valley before speeding up and heading into Canada overnight. Although it displaced few other rare seabirds inland, this turned out to be an exceptional storm for Sooty Terns, accounting for all nine records in this report and involving at least 29 individuals. The Wachusett birds defied history by lingering for more than a week; most Sooty Terns clear out within a day of a hurricane's passage. The Bourne bird was possibly the same adult seen earlier in Marion, but the committee formally considered this possibility and voted to treat these as separate records, in part because of the large number of Sooties documented regionally.

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*) [1, 31]

- 2021-036: 1 at Gooseberry Neck, Westport, *Bristol*, 5/14/2021 [Matthew Eckerson* (ph)].

This well-photographed spring migrant was a second for *Bristol* and for Gooseberry Neck, following a fall migrant seen there in November 2020.

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*) [4, 32]

- 2020-047: 1 at Stony Beach, Woods Hole, Falmouth, *Barnstable*, 8/5/2020 [Nathaniel Marchessault* (ph)].
- 2020-048: 1 at First Encounter Beach, Eastham, *Barnstable*, 8/17/2020 [Sean Williams* (ph)].
- 2020-076: 1 at 40.6867337, -70.4547011, about 46 miles south of Wasque Point, Martha's Vineyard, *Dukes*, 8/15/2020 [Laurie Dugan* (ph)].
- 2020-077: 1 at Race Point, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, 8/17/2020 [Blair Nikula* (ph)].



Varied Thrush. February 17, 2021. Fox Run Road, Sudbury. Photograph by Joe Oliverio.

Brown Boobies continued their strong recent showing with four records in 2020; the state's third record was in 2005.

White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) [2, 33]

- 2021-031: 1 at Egypt Lane Ponds, Fairhaven, *Bristol*, 4/15/2021 [Sue Walas* (ph)]. Second for *Bristol* following one in November 2019.
- 2021-032: 1 at New England Biolabs, Ipswich, *Essex*, 4/17/2021 to 5/3/2021 [Ava Steenstrup*, Jeff Offermann (ph), m.ob.].

Roseate Spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*) [1, 1]

- 2021-044: 1 at Corbins Neck and Bartholomew's Cobble, Sheffield, *Berkshire*, 8/8/2021 to 8/11/2021 [Pauline Banducci*, Matt Kelly* (ph), m.ob.].

The summer of 2021 was the most remarkable northward invasion ever for Roseate Spoonbills; therefore, a Massachusetts record was anticipated for more than a month before a bird in Canaan, Connecticut, on 8/7 (eBird) was found the next day across the state line in Massachusetts. Because the spoonbill invasion seems to have originated in the western Gulf of Mexico and proceeded north and west primarily west of the Appalachians, it was not surprising that this year's bird was in the far western part of the state rather than at the coast. This sighting

is, apparently, the first new bird that *Berkshire* has added to the state list since 1900, when the county recorded the state's first Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) (Parnass 2021).

Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) [5, 21]

- 2021-015: 1 at 100 Duck Pond Road Extension, South Dennis, *Barnstable*, 6/1/2021 to 6/8/2021 [Karen Fiske*].
- 2021-034: 1 at Neck Road, Rochester, *Plymouth*, 5/1/2021 to 5/3/2021 [Brian Vasa* (ph), Charlie Wade* (ph), Marshall Iliff (†)].
- 2021-037: 1 at Nemasket Trail, Plympton, *Plymouth*, 5/15/2021 [Leslie G.* (ph)].
- 2021-039: 1 at Waquoit Farms Drive, Falmouth, *Barnstable*, 6/2/2021 to 7/4/2021 [Karen Fiske*, Keelin Miller*, Elizabeth Hill-Gest*, Scott Dresser* (ph), v.o.].
- 2021-041: 1 at 23 Widow Coombs Walk, Sandwich, *Barnstable*, 6/6/2021 [Jo-Anna Ghadban* (ph)].

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) [5, 38]

- 2021-012: 1 at Bachelor Brook/Stony Brook Resource Area, South Hadley, *Hampshire*, 5/26/2021 [Ted Gilliland* (ph)].
- 2021-017: 1 at Egypt Lane Ponds, Fairhaven, *Bristol*, 6/7/2021 [Carolyn Longworth* (ph), Julie R. (†)].
- 2021-018: 1 at I-495 along Hockomock Swamp, Taunton, *Bristol*, 6/7/2021 [Alan Kneidel* (†)].
- 2021-040: 1 at Frances A. Crane WMA, Falmouth, *Barnstable*, 6/5/2021 to 6/7/2021 [Peter Trimble*, Mark Kasprzyk* (ph)].
- 2021-043: 1 at Bearberry Hill, Truro, *Barnstable*, 5/26/2021 [Will Sweet* (ph), Nick Tepper* (ph)].

Gyr Falcon (*Falco rusticolus*) [1, 7]

- 1997-035: 1 at Merrimack River, Lowell, *Middlesex*, 2/1/1997 [Linda Hunnewell* (ph)].

Pacific-slope Flycatcher (*Empidonax difficilis*) [1, 2, plus one accepted as Pacific-slope/Cordilleran]

- 2020-066: 1 at Fresh Pond, Cambridge, *Middlesex*, 11/24/2020 to 12/16/2020 [Ben Shamgochian* (ph, au), Jeremiah Trimble (ph, au), Marshall Iliff (ph, au), m.ob.].

Shamgochian, a Tufts student, found this bird in the afternoon and was able to get definitive photos to show it as a Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatcher. Fortunately, the next day he and others were able to secure diagnostic audio recordings for a second state record of Pacific-slope Flycatcher. The bird remained for almost a month to be widely enjoyed by birders.



Ancient Murrelet. November 9, 2020. Race Point, Provincetown. Photograph by Peter Flood.

Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*) [1, 15]

- 2020-095: 1 at Aquinnah Circle, Aquinnah, *Dukes*, 10/3/2020 to 10/4/2020 [Bob Shriber* (ph), Maurice Gilmore*].

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) [3, 32]

- 2020-104: 1 at Salisbury Beach State Reservation, Salisbury, *Essex*, 11/8/2020 [John Keeley*, Suzanne Sullivan* (ph)].
- 2020-105: 1 at Orleans, *Barnstable*, 12/20/2020 [Luke Seitz* (ph), Jeremiah Trimble* (ph)].
- 2021-002: 1 at Savary Avenue, Sagamore Beach, *Barnstable*, 1/10/2021 to 1/25/2021 [Rob Timberlake*, Susan Finnegan (ph), m.ob.].

Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) [1, 4, plus two Tropical/Couch's]

- 2021-010: 1 at Provincetown Airport, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, 5/15/2021 [Peter Trimble* (ph), Sean Williams (ph, au), Blair Nikula, v.o.].

This Tropical Kingbird was a first record for May. The species complex (Tropical/Couch's) now has been found in the state in May, June, July, September, October, and November. This bird was unsettled and moved around frequently in the dunes near the airport, but observers were able to get diagnostic audio to confirm the species. Audio recordings are critical to species identification for Tropical and Couch's kingbirds.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*) [9, 15]

- 2005-062: 1 at Swampscott Beach Club, Swampscott, *Essex*, 11/21/2005 to 12/7/2005 [L. Pivacek*, Stephen Mirick (ph)].
- 2009-061: 1 at Orange Municipal Airport, *Franklin*, 10/21/2009 to 10/22/2009 [Jeff Johnstone*, James Smith (ph), m.ob.].
- 2010-088: 1 at Parker River NWR, Plum Island, *Essex*, 4/29/2010 [Tom Wetmore*, Brian Harris*, Timothy Spahr* (ph)].
- 2010-089: 1 at Parker River NWR, Plum Island, *Essex*, 6/13/2010 to 9/18/2010 [Karsten Hartel*, Jeremiah Trimble (ph), m.ob.].
- 2011-103: 1 at Pat's Puddle, Nantucket, *Nantucket*, 10/21/2011 to 11/6/2011 [Edie Ray*, Simon Perkins*, Vernon Laux (ph)].
- 2013-066: 1 at Great Pond dunes, Edgartown, *Dukes*, 7/8/2013 [Wendy Elsner* (ph)].
- 2013-067: 1 at Nantucket Memorial Airport, Nantucket, *Nantucket*, 11/15/2013 to 11/17/2013 [Edie Ray*, Oliver Burton (ph)].
- 2017-142: 1 at Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary, Sharon, *Norfolk*, 6/4/2017 to 6/5/2017 [Elana Price* (ph), v.o.].
- 2020-102: 1 at Shore Drive, Plymouth, *Plymouth*, 11/7/2020 [Tom White*, Manomet Bird Observatory (ph)].

There are many older records yet to be reviewed for this species. If you have observed one, please send documentation.

Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*) [1, 3]

- 2020-054: 1 at Andrews Point, Rockport, *Essex*, 10/3/2020 to 10/4/2020 [Brian Harris* (ph), Lauren Grimes*, v.o.].

This species is being found more frequently in the mid-Atlantic and Northeast as a vagrant, with the state's three records being recent. This sighting was of a hatch-year bird. Unfortunately, it was in a private area on the coast and because of concerns about heavy visitation during the pandemic, the observers chose not to release the location widely.

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) [1, 6]

- 2020-101: 1 at Central Street, East Bridgewater, *Plymouth*, 11/6/2020 to 11/15/2020 [Brian Vigorito* (ph), m.ob.].

Boreal Chickadee (*Poecile hudsonicus*) [1, 2 since 2017]

- 2021-023: 1 at North Hoosac Road, Williamstown, *Berkshire*, 1/11/2021 to 3/22/2021 [Lori van Handel* (ph), Neil Dowlgin (ph), Nick Tepper (ph, au), m.ob.].

Cave Swallow (Caribbean) (*Petrochelidon fulva* [fulva Group]) [1, 1 subspecies / 20 for species]

- 2021-008: 1 at Cherry Hill Reservoir, West Newbury, *Essex*, 4/18/2021 to 5/1/2021 [Andy Sanford* (ph), Ellen Keane*, Marshall Hiff (ph), Stephen Mirick (ph), m.ob.].

Massachusetts has many Cave Swallow records from fall—primarily November—and a couple from May, but all of these have proven to be the subspecies *P. f. pallida* from northern Mexico, Texas, and New Mexico. This individual was not only the first for April, but showed a cinnamon-colored rump, dark buff cinnamon on the sides coalescing to streaks, and a cinnamon wash on the rear portion of the nape, which led the committee to accept it explicitly as one of the Caribbean forms. Cape May, New Jersey, conclusively documented its first Caribbean Cave Swallow April 4–5, 2021. Other records are mostly from Atlantic Canada, e.g., Sable Island, Nova Scotia, 5/20/1968; Seal Island, Nova Scotia, 5/15/1971; and St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador, 5/29/2016.

Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*) [1, 5]

- 2020-113: 1 at Great Pond, Hatfield, *Hampshire*, 12/13/2020 to 3/11/2021 [Theresa Gessing* (ph), Larry Therrien (ph), m.ob.].

The Hatfield bird, which appears to have successfully overwintered (Sage Thrashers begin migrating north in March), represented a first for the inland portion of the state and for *Hampshire*, but came in a year with other records nearby in southern Vermont and eastern New York, making for a remarkable inland showing for this very rare vagrant that usually appears coastally.

Townsend’s Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*) [2, 28]

- 2021-020: 1 at Mill Pond, Orleans, *Barnstable*, 1/7/2021 [Mike O’Connor* (ph)].
- 2021-033: 1 at Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, *Middlesex*, 4/19/2021 [Robert Parker*, Clara Easter* (ph)].

Unrecorded until 1993, this species continues to be found almost annually. The Mount Auburn bird was a first for that well-watched location and established the second latest date in spring. The latest was a sighting by Maili and Liam Waters on 4/22/2018 of a bird that overwintered at Demarest Lloyd State Park, Dartmouth, *Bristol*.

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*) [2, 20]

- 2021-030: 1 at Wickaboag Valley Road, West Brookfield, *Worcester*, 4/5/2021 to 4/6/2021 [Anne Phillips* (ph)].
- 2021-042: 1 at Fox Run Road, Sudbury, *Middlesex*, 12/30/2020 to 4/8/2021 [Christine Goddard* (ph), m.ob.].

Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) [1, 14]

- 2020-094: 1 at Parker River NWR, Ipswich, *Essex*, 9/21/2020 to 9/22/2020 [Dave Larson* (ph), Sue Carlson*, m.ob.].

Chestnut-collared Longspur (*Calcarius ornatus*) [1, 5]

- 2020-061: 1 at First Encounter Beach, Eastham, *Barnstable*, 10/31/2020 to 11/4/2020 [Jason Barcus* (ph), Katherine McGaughey*].

This bird was seen and photographed in flight only, which provided a fun identification challenge for the committee. In the end, the face pattern, wing pattern, and tail pattern were shown well enough to eliminate other longspurs. Jason Barcus is to be congratulated for his repeated efforts to document this bird. The committee notes that audio recordings are also diagnostic in longspurs and can help supplement photos, especially for birds that are not cooperative.

Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*) [2, 6]

- 1990-009: 1 at Smith's Neck Road, Dartmouth, *Bristol*, 1/14/1990 to 1/26/1990 [George Gove*, Judy Gordon*, Peter Trimble (ph), v.o.].
- 2021-009: 1 at Katama Road, Edgartown, *Dukes*, 4/28/2021 to 5/2/2021 [Brendan Burke* (ph), m.ob.].

The 1990 record, the earliest the committee has reviewed to date and the only record from midwinter, was reviewed in 2020, but was not accepted because there was only a short description from a single date. For 2021, we were able to locate more information on this bird's two-week stay, including diagnostic photos. With the acceptance of the *Dukes* record—a county first—five of the state's six records fall between April 9 and May 6.

Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*) [1, 5]

- 2020-112: 1 at Allens Pond Wildlife Sanctuary, Allens Neck, Westport, *Bristol*, 11/9/2020 to 3/6/2021 [Matthew Eckerson* (ph, au), Jonathan Eckerson* (ph), Liam Waters (ph), Marshall Iliff (ph, au), m.ob.]. Second for *Bristol*.

Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*) [1, 3]

- 2020-060: 1 at Cuttyhunk Island, *Dukes*, 10/24/2020 [Tim Lenz* (ph), Sean Williams* (ph), v.o.].

This species is challenging to identify because the visual differences are subtle and field marks can overlap with Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*). This individual was well documented through photos and written descriptions by various observers. The members agreed that the details of the plumage markings and coloration were consistent with Western and not supportive of Eastern, establishing a new species for *Dukes*.

Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*) [3, 13]

- 2020-062: 1 at Read Street, Seekonk, *Bristol*, 11/8/2020 [Natalie Gruppuso* (ph)].
- 2020-063: 1 at Crystal Court, Haverhill, *Essex*, 12/4/2020 to 12/14/2020 [Amie Holen*, Andy Sanford (ph)].
- 2020-111: 1 at Howe Road, Cohasset, *Norfolk*, 11/2/2020 to 3/3/2021 [Steven Magnell* (ph), Ellen Freda* (ph), m.ob.].

For the *Bristol* record, the observer believed there were two Bullock's present—which would have been unprecedented—but was able to get photos of only one immature male. These records plus another bird photographed in Marion, *Plymouth*, (yet to be reviewed) made for a banner winter for the species in the state.

Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) [2, 5]

- 2020-058: 1 at Meadow Street, Amherst, *Hampshire*, 10/11/2020 [Scott Surner* (ph)].
- 2020-059: 1 at Oak Street, Dighton, *Bristol*, 12/9/2020 to 12/10/2020 [Joel Eckerson* (ph), m.ob.].

Brewer's Blackbird has been much less prevalent throughout the East in recent decades. The 2020 records—the first accepted since 2002—represent the second for *Hampshire* and the first for *Bristol*, but neither bird stuck around long.

Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) [1, 1]

- 2021-007: 1 at Spooner Pond and Nelson Field, Plymouth, *Plymouth*, 4/9/2021 to 4/10/2021 [Leslie G.* (ph, au), Sean Williams* (ph, au)].

Boat-tailed Grackle (*Q. major*) has long been anticipated as one of the state's next species, because it breeds as close as Stamford, Connecticut. When a large grackle appeared at Nelson Field on 4/10, Williams initially assumed it would be a Boat-tailed. When photos and audio recordings were shared, Iliff and Trimble helped confirm it as the state's first Great-tailed Grackle. Unfortunately, it left quickly and could not be refound. Remarkably, on the evening that the record was shared, Leslie G. posted a video of an odd grackle—the same Great-tailed—from the previous day that she had video-recorded singing and displaying at nearby Spooner Pond.

Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) [2, 12 since 2017]

- 2020-050: 1 at Mass Audubon's Habitat Education Center and Wildlife Sanctuary, Belmont, *Middlesex*, 8/30/2020 to 8/31/2020 [Jonathan Layman* (ph), Andy Sanford (ph), Francis Morello (ph), m.ob.].
- 2021-011: 1 at Mount Auburn Cemetery, Watertown, *Middlesex*, 5/19/2021 [David Hursh*, David Scott*, Ford Avery*, Jan Brandin*, Alan Kneidel (au), Graham Schmidt (ph), v.o.].

The committee continues to struggle with assessing these records, because hybridization with Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora cyanoptera*) is hard to eliminate without good photos of the wings and underparts. Photographs of these two individuals helped put the committee's collective minds at ease.

Townsend's Warbler (*Setophaga townsendi*) [2, 27]

- 2020-115: 1 at Bellevue Street, Fairhaven, *Bristol*, 12/14/2020 to 4/13/2021 [Jessica Whiteley* (ph), Matthew Eckerson (ph), Marshall Iliff (ph), v.o.]. First county record.
- 2021-024: 1 at Sagamore Recreation Area, and Savary Avenue, Bourne, *Barnstable*, 1/11/2021 to 1/26/2021 [Andy Sanford* (ph), Leslie Kramer*, m.ob.].

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*) [2, 21]

- 2020-114: 1 at Timberlane Drive, Brewster, *Barnstable*, 11/28/2020 to 1/17/2021 [Mark Faherty (ph)].
- 2021-021: 1 at Harwich Port, Harwich, *Barnstable*, 1/8/2021 [Jennifer Hutchins* (ph)].

Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) [4, 42]

- 2021-005: 1 at Brookwood Drive, Westport, *Bristol*, 12/20/2020 (approximately; noted as “about a week before Christmas”) to 4/9/2021 [Ellen Orsi* (ph), Carol Molander (ph), Beverly King, m.ob.].
- 2021-019: 1 at Monomoy NWR, Morris Island, Chatham, *Barnstable*, 1/1/2021 [Frederick Atwood* (ph)].
- 2021-027: 2 at Rock Harbor area, Orleans, *Barnstable*, 3/3/2021 [Philip Kyle* (ph)].
- 2021-038: 1 at Pro Drive Wetland, 15 University Road, Canton, *Norfolk*, 5/20/2021 [Brian Sullivan* (ph), m.ob.].

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*)

- 2019-153: 1 at Corporation Beach, Dennis, *Barnstable*, 12/29/2019.

The committee thought that this description did not adequately address similar species, such as Horned Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*) and Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*).

Common Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)

- 2020-052: 1 at Gooseberry Neck, Westport, *Bristol*, 9/12/2020.

This heard-only bird was noted as a flyby among a flock of small shorebirds. Although there is precedent for the location on that exact date by the same observer, the committee was uncomfortable accepting a seventh state record based on a single call note that was not backed up by visual confirmation.

White-winged Tern (*Chlidonias leucopterus*)

- 2021-014: 1 at Race Point, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, 5/30/2021.

This bird was seen among masses of terns through the scope for a matter of seconds by two observers. Although several key field marks were noted, the committee was uncomfortable accepting a rarity of this magnitude based on such a brief observation.

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*)

- 2021-016: 1 at Plymouth Airport, Plymouth, *Plymouth*, 6/5/2021.

This record was from a plausible location and a perfect date for the species, but the description was a single sentence and failed to eliminate similar raptors that are regularly mistaken for this species, such as Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) and Northern Harrier (*Circus hudsonius*).

Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*)

- 2020-053: 1 at Northampton, *Hampshire*, 9/17/2020 to 9/22/2020.

This sighting would be a second state record, but the description received no support from the committee on its second round.

Brewer's Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*)

- 2017-140: 1 at Northampton, *Hampshire*, 5/7/2017.

This sighting would be a second state record, but the description received no support from the committee on its second round.

Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*)

- 2020-070: 1 at Andrews Point, Rockport, *Essex*, 12/20/2020.

Although the committee was in unanimous agreement that at least one parent was a Spotted Towhee, enough committee members thought a hybrid was involved, so this record was not accepted. Another bird, reported as a hybrid and documented with photos, was recorded at the John J. Donovan Reservation, Hamilton, *Essex*, on 11/30/2020 (Andy Sanford [ph.]) but has not been reviewed.

Common Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)

- 2009-062: 1 at 11 Miriam Road, Waltham, *Middlesex*, 12/1/2009 to 3/15/2009.

The committee accepted the identification of this bird, but a majority thought the provenance was questionable—or at least that it needed better information on status in captivity to make an assessment. There are accepted records from April 1, 1961, and April 3–5, 1997. The committee would prefer to compile and review a full dossier including information that might support both natural and human-assisted provenance for its three Common Chaffinch reports.

Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*)

- 2020-051: 1 at Brooks Estate, Medford, *Middlesex*, 9/19/2020.

The MARC has taken a conservative stance in reviews of this species, given the frequent hybridization that is especially prevalent at its range limits that are close to Massachusetts and the annual occurrence of known hybrids. This report did not consider and eliminate a hybrid when the bird was being observed, and, although the underparts were described as whitish, the committee thought more critical observation of the face pattern and underparts was required for acceptance. Note, however, that the committee was comfortable endorsing this bird as either a Golden-winged Warbler or a Blue-winged x Golden-winged warbler hybrid.

Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*)

- 2020-110: 1 at Tuckernuck Island, *Nantucket*, 10/3/2020.

This record was difficult for the committee. In a split vote, the majority of members thought that the three-second views at 15–20 feet without binoculars were too brief and distant to warrant acceptance for a bird this unusual.

Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's) (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*)

- 2020-055: 1 at Beaver Pond Recreation Area, Franklin, *Norfolk*, 10/4/2020.

Many members took note of the submitter's comments on the different call note that was heard. However, the committee thought that the physical description, and other supporting

details, were not sufficient to rule out the possibility of a Myrtle Warbler (*Setophaga coronata coronata*), given that fall plumage can be confusing on hatch-year birds.

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*)

- 2021-004: 1 at 579 Meeting House Road, South Chatham, Barnstable, 1/26/2021.

This description was only a single sentence and did not adequately eliminate the possibility of a Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*).✎

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Volunteer Staff Openings at Bird Observer

BIRD SIGHTINGS COMPILER OR TWO FOR WORCESTER COUNTY

Bird Observer is looking for a Bird Sightings Compiler for Worcester County; two people may share this position. Our long-running Bird Sightings column relies on data from compilers around the state. The compiler for Worcester County would be responsible for sending in reports every two months of species seen in the county for the previous two months. Species should be reported in a spreadsheet template and include sightings that are representative of high counts, early and late dates and anything rare or unusual. The compiler should be familiar with the birds (and birders!) of Worcester counties, be comfortable with using a spreadsheet and be able to use eBird.org to query sightings. This is a volunteer position.

Interested candidates should contact Bird Sightings Editor, Neil Hayward at: neil.hayward@gmail.com.

PHOTO ESSAY

Birds of the 25th MARC Report



This adult Sooty Tern at Race Point, Provincetown, on 8/5/2020 was one of more than a dozen brought to the state by Tropical Storm Isaias. In contrast to many other storms that have brought Sooties, multiple birds were found up to several days after Isaias's passage, and a couple of birds at Wachusett Reservoir lingered for almost a week, which is unheard of in New England. Photograph by Max Chalfin-Jacobs.



Eared Grebes, like this one on Jamaica Pond, Boston, 12/24/2020, are often first misidentified as Horned Grebes. Focus on the extensively dark face, the head shape with a peak towards the center of the head rather than the rear of the head, and especially bill color and shape. Horned has a pale tip to the bill and lacks the upward bevel at the tip of the mandible (i.e., lower mandible) that gives the bill of Eared an upturned appearance. Photograph by Ryan Schain.



The state's second Pacific-slope Flycatcher appeared at Fresh Pond, Cambridge, where it was photographed 11/25/2020. While recordings of the call notes (or genetics) are critical to eliminate Cordilleran Flycatcher, it is also important to eliminate Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. Notice the teardrop-shaped eye ring, brownish cast to the wings, more peaked appearance to the head, buffy versus clear yellow tinge to the wing bars in fall, and the fairly narrow extent of the dark gap below the second wing bar (more extensive in Yellow-bellied); the latter is a new field mark published in 2014 that is proving quite helpful. Photo by Jeremiah Trimble.



Cave Swallow has a track record of late fall vagrancy to Massachusetts, but that pattern involves birds from the western population *P. f. pallida*. The state's earliest record was established in 2021 at Cherry Hill Reservoir, Newbury. The two populations are field identifiable and the Newbury bird proved to be from the Caribbean population by virtue of its much darker chestnut rump, prominent streaking on the flanks, and infusion of chestnut into the buffy throat and buffy collar, all seen well in this photo from 4/24/2021. Photo by Sam Zhang. 🐦

[Editor's Note: Bird Observer supports the Brookline Bird Club's new Code of Ethics and Conduct for its emphasis on respect for birds, people, and the environment. We print it here as an excellent example for promoting accessibility and inclusion of all birders and protecting birds and their habitats. Please read it.]

A note from Leslie Kramer, president of the Brookline Bird Club:

If you are involved with the Brookline Bird Club, we know that you have a great love and appreciation for birds and nature. The BBC has always been and continues to be committed to providing programs in which *all* participants have a safe and welcoming space to explore their own personal connection to birds and nature. During the past two years, the BBC board formed the Committee on Community and Culture (C and C Committee), which has assisted the club in working toward its mission of building a more diverse, more welcoming community and a culture of inclusion and respect. This Committee took a fresh look at and updated our Code of Ethics and Conduct and Trip Leader Guidelines, all of which reflect who we are as a bird club. The resulting updates emphasize the importance of respect for birds, the environment, *and* for each other. To learn more about our work or to get involved, please contact the committee at community@brooklinebirdclub.org

Across Massachusetts and the country, the birding community is moving forward with a new focus on programming that is more accessible to all who want to enjoy nature and policy that promotes safety and inclusion. The BBC is excited to be part of that movement.

Please visit the club's website to review informative resources and get involved. If you have meaningful resources you would like us to add to this list, please let us know.

BBC Code of Ethics and Conduct

Adapted from the American Birding Association

The Brookline Bird Club expects that its members and participants practice and promote respectful, enjoyable, and thoughtful birding as defined in this code. BBC members, participants, and event leaders are responsible for upholding the terms of this Code of Ethics & Conduct, as follows:

Promote a positive image of bird watching and the club:

- Act as an ambassador of the BBC and the birding community.
- Be an exemplary ethical role model by following this Code and leading by example.
- Share bird observations, as long as such reporting does not put birds or habitat at risk.
- Never enter private property without the landowner's permission. Respect the interests of and interact positively with people living in the area where you are birding.

- Be respectful and follow [BBC Guidelines for Birding in Cemeteries](#).
- Respect the rules and protocol of public lands.
- Use courtesy in the use of cell phones and refrain from loud conversation which might disrupt the birding experience of others and/or may be an annoyance for other visitors or neighbors.
- Always report sightings with honesty and integrity.

Act in ways that do not endanger the welfare of birds and that do not harm the environment and wildlife:

- Avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger. Be particularly cautious around active nests and nesting colonies, roosts, display sites, and feeding sites.
- Limit the use of recordings and other audio methods of attracting birds, particularly in heavily birded areas, for species that are rare in the area, and for species that are nesting, threatened, or endangered.
- Always exercise caution and restraint when photographing, recording, or otherwise approaching birds. Keep an appropriate distance from birds and nests.
- Stay on trails and minimize habitat disturbance.

Be respectful and considerate of others:

- Respect fellow birders of all skill levels.
- Be considerate of people participating in other outdoor activities.
- Respect and welcome all participants and fellow birders regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, gender identity, age, disability status, sexual orientation, or political affiliation.
- Be respectful of differing viewpoints, experiences, and cultures.
- The BBC does not tolerate behavior that disrespects or threatens the well-being, safety, or rights of others, including verbal, physical, or otherwise inappropriate behaviors, including unwanted in-person or online interaction.

If you experience or observe behavior inconsistent with the BBC Code of Ethics and Conduct at a BBC trip or event, please email ethics@brooklinebirdclub.org.

*Birding should be fun and help build a better future for birds, for birders, and for all people.
Birds and birding opportunities are shared resources that should be open and accessible to all.* 



MUSINGS FROM THE BLIND BIRDER

Transitions

Martha Steele



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Photo by Sandy Selesky

It is mid-afternoon on September 19, 2021, and Alvin and I are lying half asleep on a lawn chair in our Vermont yard. The sun warms our face and bodies as we listen to occasional insect buzzing sounds and squirrels chattering and breaking small branches as they scamper among the trees in the forest. Chip notes from Yellow-rumped Warblers and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers drift to my ears. We are otherwise awash in silence and stillness save for our quiet breathing.

The days are getting shorter and the sun lower as we approach the autumnal equinox. The lush green of the summer is starting to give way to the brilliant reds, yellows, and oranges of the northern forest's fall foliage. Migrants, largely silent, are passing through on their way to their wintering grounds. We listen and look for our resident Ruby-throated Hummingbirds to record the last day we note their appearance before they, too, are gone.

We are in another period of transition between seasons and between the birds we see and hear. But there is so much more to these annual transitions. Lying in the lawn chair on that brilliant late summer afternoon, everything felt different. The stillness, the silence, the crisp air, the disappearance of biting insects, the angle of the sun, the now empty vegetable garden, the crunching underfoot of leaves already fallen, the fading bee balm and other flowers, and the absence of frenetic bird activity. The transition in time also signals another birding season gone by, a reminder of our peregrinations of the spring and summer; what birds we saw and missed; or what we might do differently next year. Other more practical changes that were in full swing or imminent flooded my mind, such as changing out the screen door for the storm door, swapping out summer clothes for winter clothes, sweeping out the chimney for the upcoming kitchen stove fires, cutting out the dead canes from the raspberry patch in favor of new growth that will yield raspberries next year, putting the vegetable garden to bed for the winter, and switching from lawn mowers to snow shovels.

This year marked another major singular transition when I lost my mother in early March 2021. Bob, Alvin, and I have remained at her Vermont house, now ours, for nearly the entire time since then, taking full advantage of the spring and summer birding and continuing my parents' vegetable and perennial gardens. Having spent nearly all of the pandemic in Vermont, I have grown to appreciate all the changing days and weeks of the northern year: walking on a narrow path across the snow to fill the bird feeders in winter; celebrating the first spring arrivals of migrants; earnestly planting vegetable seeds in early May; rising in the dawn hours throughout May and June to see what birds we could find; weeding and squashing insect pests in the summer; harvesting, sharing, cooking, canning, or freezing the bounty of the gardens; saying goodbye and good luck to our migrants heading south in the fall; collecting balsam to make wreaths for friends and family; setting up the bird feeders for another winter; and celebrating the year's final holidays.

Many transitions, be they familiar and regular or born out of singular events such as a death, birth, marriage, or unexpected change come with visceral emotions. As I lay there with Alvin in the warm sun, I felt both relaxed and anxious, content and restless, satisfied and worried, and mindful and churning. I realized that the palpable change in the air also reminded me of the loss of my mother and how the coming seasonal transitions would carry the undercurrent of undesirable firsts: the first time we would not celebrate my mother's October birthday with her; the first Thanksgiving in decades without her; and the first Christmas without her presence somewhere. At least with our migratory birds, I know I will hear them again and welcome them back the following spring to the northern forest, fields, and waters. But with the end of 2021 now approaching, the presence of my mother's now permanent absence sinks deeper into my core and is, I think, part of why I feel such mixed emotions. Some transitions, then, reflect life's regular ebb and flow, such as the seasonal changes in bird populations, and some transitions come with a finality that is not always welcomed.

When the sun dipped below the tree line along the edges of our yard thereby chilling the air, I got up with Alvin, folded the lawn chair to put it away, and went back into the house. I felt sad for my loss and all the losses that we all endure throughout our lives. I love the New England autumn but this year, I was already missing my mother and my avian friends whom I would not hear again for another six months or more. The sadness just showed up, as it often does, and I let myself feel it before moving on, as I know I will, to the next moment and the next transition that awaits me. 🦋

Martha Steele, a former editor of Bird Observer, has been progressively losing vision due to retinitis pigmentosa and is legally blind. Thanks to a cochlear implant, she is now learning to identify birds from their songs and calls. Martha lives with her husband Bob Stymeist, in Arlington. Martha can be reached at marthajs@verizon.net.

FIELD NOTES

Cedar Waxwings with a Taste for Salt

Marsha C. Salett



Cedar Waxwing. Photograph by Jaden Thompson.

In late August on Cape Cod when fruits are ripening—beach plum, bayberry, chokecherry, Virginia creeper, and eastern red cedar’s gin-scented berries—it is not unusual to see Cedar Waxwings (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) at Mass Audubon’s Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary at a frequency that belies their nomadic habits. Their diet consists almost entirely of sugary fruits (Witmer et al. 2020) and, in August 2021, the sanctuary had an abundance of food for them.

For several days, I had seen a small flock of waxwings flying around Goose Pond and landing in the oaks that border the pond, near the eastern red cedars that were laden with blue waxy berries this year. The birds did not feed on the cedar berries—a primary source of food in winter—leading me to think that the berries were not quite ripe enough yet. And I did not notice any waxwings feeding on other fruits while I was birding the trails.

On August 29, 2021, around 3:00 pm, my grandson Jaden Thompson and I stopped at Goose Pond to look for shorebirds, although the pond has been reduced to a trickle of water most of the summer. We were delighted to see several Cedar Waxwings fly back and forth across the pond and land in a nearby oak, providing us with good looks of these beautiful frugivores. We continued our walk to the beach and returned to Goose Pond at approximately 5:30 pm.



Cedar Waxwing foraging on *Salicornia*. Photograph by Jaden Thompson.

Jaden and I found a couple of Cedar Waxwings in the oak tree and several more in the low shrubs at the pond's edge. Movement drew our gaze to the exposed mudflats, where we saw a waxwing walking. It hopped up onto a patch of *Salicornia*—commonly called sea pickle for its briny taste—and began to peck at the plant, repeatedly squeezing the succulent stems in its bill but not breaking off any pieces and swallowing them. Soon, three other waxwings joined the first bird on the *Salicornia*, where they foraged for 15–20 minutes. It reminded me of how we pick *Salicornia* and chew on it for a burst of saltiness.

Cedar Waxwings take insects and arthropod prey starting in May and tapering off by September, feeding on emerging aerial prey near streams or ponds and gleaning insects from vegetation such as sap-feeding scale insects and spruce budworm (Witmer et al. 2020). None of these insects were present in the saltmarsh vegetation or the little bit of brackish water in Goose Pond; it was the wrong habitat or the wrong time of year. I did not notice any insects on the *Salicornia* that day, nor did I find any when I zoomed in on the photographs later. Obviously, there is no sugary fruit on *Salicornia*. What were these waxwings doing?

Witmer et al. (2020) note that Cedar Waxwings are “Reported occasionally to peck at mud of sodium-rich roadside pools; this behavior possibly related to low sodium levels in their predominantly vegetable diet...” I would like to think that after consuming all that sugar, the waxwings simply wanted a taste of salt for a change. 🐦

Reference

Witmer, M. C., D. J. Mountjoy, and L. Elliott. 2020. Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*), version 1.0. In *Birds of the World* (A. F. Poole, Editor). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. <https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.cedwax.01> Accessed October 29, 2021.

New Hampshire's Mississippi Kites Have a Rough Year in 2021

Steve Mirick



Mississippi Kite with dead chick. Photograph by Deb Powers.

Mississippi Kites in New Hampshire had a difficult year in 2021. On the plus side, all four pairs that attempted to nest in 2021 returned to the same territories where they had nested previously, but unfortunately we were able to confirm success in only one of the four territories. The kites were first made famous in 2008, and 2021 is at least the thirteenth consecutive year in which between one and four pairs have nested in New Hampshire in this isolated, rare, nesting colony.

Durham

The Madbury Road territory was first noted in 2017, and 2020's nest successfully fledged one chick as is the norm. In no breeding season has there ever been more than a single chick in a nest in New Hampshire. This year, 2021, the pair moved the nest back down the street to the same location where they nested three years ago. They nested in the same white pine tree in the same backyard as in 2018. Deb Powers found the nest this year. The homeowners were gracious and welcoming—as they were in 2018—of the birds and birders to visit. But the nest did not succeed. The incubation start date was not documented but hatching occurred roughly on June 30. July started with cold wet weather and this combination likely led to the death of the recently hatched chick. Deb Powers captured the horrific end of this nest on July 6 with a photo of what appears to be an adult trying to remove the dead baby from the nest: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/143862779@N08/51295275588>.

Newmarket

This specific Newmarket territory was first noted in 2018. Last year, the kites nested high up in an oak tree and the nest failed for unknown reasons. This year, the pair returned and quickly got to work. Dan McCoy captured them copulating on May 21st: <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/341082111>.



Mississippi Kites copulating. Photograph by Deb Powers.

But after that, sightings of the birds became intermittent. Despite a few birders searching all summer, no territory, nest, or fledged young were found. If they built an undiscovered nest, I believe the pair were not successful in fledging a chick.

Stratham

This territory was first noted in 2017 and 2020's nest successfully fledged one chick. In 2021, they moved the nest again to a new location into the side yard of a different home in the neighborhood. The nest was placed in a black cherry tree and was discovered by Chris Duffy.

The black cherry was a new species of nest tree for the kites in New Hampshire, which have now used maple, hickory, oak, pine, and cherry trees for their nests:<<https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/350022551>>. The nest was not easily seen and the neighbors were not happy about birders, so the nest was not well documented. Incubation started somewhere during the first week of June and hatch date was sometime on or before July 15. The chick was doing well in the nest and was last reported on August 26 when it was roughly 42 days old. No one saw it fly but it is presumed to have fledged due to its age. This is the only fledged Mississippi Kite in the summer of 2021.

Greenland

This territory was first noted in 2020, when a pair of kites nested successfully in a hickory tree, raising a single chick. The nest fell down over the winter; however, the pair returned and rebuilt the nest in the same crotch of the tree in 2021. Sightings were few after the nest was built, however, and incubation was never observed. We do not know what happened here. Sightings of one or possibly two birds were reported from time to time, but no evidence of a renesting attempt was found. It is purely speculative as to what happened; however, a pair of Cooper's Hawks successfully raised a family in the immediate vicinity, and I wonder if there could have been conflict between the two species. Regardless, we do not know if they built another, undiscovered nest, but I believe they were not successful if they did.

No other hints of new territories were uncovered. There may have been three birds at the Stratham nest site on a couple of occasions. This was not conclusive, and it also may reflect one of the adults from the Greenland territory.

Thank you to Deb Powers, Chris Duffy, Dan McCoy, Ed Norton, Sheila Graydon, and the homeowners for their help and cooperation in following these birds. 🐦

ABOUT BOOKS

Learning Nests and Loving Vultures

Mark Lynch

Peterson Field Guide to North American Bird Nests. Casey McFarland, Matthew Monjello, and David Moskowitz. 2021. Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

A Vulture Landscape: Twelve Months in Extremadura. Ian Parsons. 2020. Dunbeath, Caithness, Scotland, United Kingdom: Whittles Publishing Ltd.

Although these two books are about birds, they could not be more different. One book is a revised, updated, and expanded field guide to North American bird nests written by three authors. The other book is one man's paean to just one group of birds and the unique region where he has watched it for years.

When you find a nest, be open to a range of possibilities, and look for interesting clues. (p. 7 *Peterson Field Guide to North American Bird Nests*)

In the introduction to the new *Peterson Field Guide to North American Bird Nests*, the three authors cite the 1975 *Peterson Field Guide to Birds' Nests* by Hal H. Harrison. That old field guide had been a favorite of theirs, but now their personal copies are dog eared and worn, and it has gone out of print. They were a good choice to write and edit this updated and expanded version of that important guide. This new guide covers 650 species and has 750 color photographs and several line drawings. Under species accounts there is typically one accompanying color photograph, but for some species there are more. Under Great Blue Heron there is a shot of a rookery as well as a close-up of a single nest (p. 189). Marbled Murrelet rates four nest shots. This seems odd since so few of us will ever just stumble across the unique nest of that Pacific alcid. I will explain why below.

The introductory sections, pages 6–65 of this guide, are well worth reading by all birders. The authors begin with a cautionary note to discourage birders from getting close to birds' nests. "Well-intentioned curiosity about a nest can too easily lead to the demise of its contents." (p. 2)

It is always tempting to get close to any bird nest just to see what is going on or to take a photograph, but readers of this guide are well warned by the authors to give nests some distance.

Learning to identify nests starts first with acknowledgement that, for birds, nesting is a difficult and taxing behavior that often ends in failure. Our interest in this aspect of avian life can have real consequences for the birds we so admire—many eggs and nestlings never make it through the hurdles of this initial stage of life, even without human disturbance contributing to the odds. (p. 2)

Of course, identifying a nest while the species is in the process of building it is no problem. But identifying nests after the birds have fledged, with no adults around, presents a challenge. The birder has to be a bit of a detective. First, you must take into account how old the nest is. By the end of a breeding season, nests can be quite a mess, looking worn, dirty, misshapen, and some of the finer materials may be gone. Take stock of what you see, the materials that are left, what you can make of the structure, and finally, consider the location.

Included in the *Peterson Field Guide to North American Bird Nests* is a five-page “Nest Key” (p. 11–15), which is a great place to start. Examples of these basic “nest categories” (p. 11) include “Outer layer decorated with lichen flakes” (p. 12), a design used by hummingbirds, peewees, and gnatcatchers. Each category directs the reader to several groups of birds to consider as the builder of the nest. One category includes only one species. Under the category “No nest, in divot in moss on branch of mature conifer in old-growth forest” (p. 15), only one species is listed: Marbled Murrelet. This unique alcid’s nest is “usually 1082 m high in a mature tree, typically in the top half to third of the canopy.” (p. 150) Their nest is not even found in trees right along the coast but found in trees 12.4 km *or more* from the coast. Which is why, as I mentioned above, you are very unlikely to just stumble across this nest. Unless you are a lumberjack.

We assume that all birds instinctively know how to build their nests well, but this is not always the case.

It is important to note that not all nests are built well. At times, birds may build suboptimal, poorly insulated nests, perhaps resulting in the stunted development of young or an energetically costly increase in brooding time. (p. 41)

This reminded me of a time when, conducting the Breeding Bird Atlas II, we watched a nest-building Eastern Peewee deep inside eastern Quabbin. The bird had constructed the outer perimeter of the nest and part of the base, but most of the bottom of the nest was open. The bird kept putting materials in the base, but the potential nest bits just fell through the hole. We watched this bird for thirty minutes as it continued to try to line the bottom of the nest, and the materials kept falling through. It was like watching an avian Sisyphus.

Some nesting species closely associate with other nesting species to enhance the chances of their offspring’s survival.

Other species will seek the “protection” of other animals, birds or otherwise, benefiting from some additional neighborhood muscle. Using the defensive aggression of another species increases the odds of reproductive success, and such associations can reduce nest predation as well as brood parasitism. Bullock’s Orioles, for example, may build their nests near those of the predator-mobbing Yellow-billed Magpie. Many species may occupy nest

Peterson

*Field Guide to North
American Bird Nests*



Casey McFarland, Matthew
Monjello & David Moskowitz



sites near wasp or ant nests, limiting the approach of terrestrial reptiles and small mammals, and species comfortable among human habitation (e.g. Barn Swallows) effectively minimize the risks posed by wild predators. Similarly, some passerines such as House Sparrows will nest within the large nests of predatory birds such as eagle. (p. 21)

If you have ever watched broods of Wood Ducks, Hooded and Common mergansers, you will be interested in this guide's sections on "Brood Parasitism" (p. 33) and "creches." (p. 25) Many readers will be familiar with Brown-headed Cowbirds as brood parasites. You may not realize that it is also a behavior among certain species of waterfowl that breed in Massachusetts. Brood parasitism can be intraspecific, parasitizing the same species, or interspecific, parasitizing different species. Cowbirds are interspecific brood parasites. Wood Ducks are common "egg dumpers," with some females laying their eggs in the cavity of another Wood Duck or sometimes in the nest of a Hooded Merganser.

At north Quabbin and in the Berkshires, I have seen female Common Mergansers with very large numbers of ducklings swimming frantically behind them. Is this an example of intraspecific brood parasitism or something else? I was told long ago that Common Mergansers often form a crèche with one or more females watching the young of two or more nests. Here is what the *Peterson Guide to North American Bird Nests* says about crèche formation:

The young of many species that nest colonially, such as Royal Tern, Pinyon Jay, and Common Eider, congregate together in crèches. Among other benefits, crèches reduce the risk of predation of any one individual and allow for fewer adults to stand guard while others spend time foraging. Young may be identified among the group and fed by their parents, or, depending on the species, fed also by other adults. (p. 29)

Common Mergansers are cavity nesters and do not nest colonially. Doing some further reading in the *Birds of the World* website, I learned that the jury is still out on whether Common Mergansers form crèches or if all the records of abnormally high broods of ducklings watched over by one female are just intraspecific brood parasitism. Either way, it is always an interesting behavior to watch.

This is a guide not just to the physical structure of nests, but also a guide to the nest building behavior of those species, as well as how they rear their young. In the introductory section there are essays worth reading on the evolution of bird nests, nests and bird biology, the energetic costs of nest construction, and avian mating systems and behaviors.

This guide covers all of North America north of Mexico. The habitats here range from "tropical deciduous forest to Arctic tundra" (p. 3), so the variety of nest materials and nesting sites described in this book is mind-blowing. The authors describe the species accounts as streamlined, but they still contain a wealth of detail. Most accounts include notes on "Habitat" (generally where the bird lives), "Location and Structure" (where specifically within that habitat the nest is built, and what materials are used to construct the nest, and what it looks like), "Eggs" (the typical clutch size and size of the eggs), and finally "Behavior" (are they colonial nesters or are they solitary nesters,

for example). A small but detailed range map is included for every species.

There are also extensive general introductions to the nesting behavior of groups of birds like gulls (p. 157) and hummingbirds (p. 107). An interesting inclusion is a gallery of goose and duck feathers (p. 63–66) to aid in the identification of a down-lined nest. Frankly, most of these photographs at first glance looked like “white and fluffy” feathers to me, so I am not sure how useful this section will be. More useful are the plates showing all the various egg shapes as well as the categories of egg markings.

Even the organization of the species accounts in this guide aids in the identification of a nest. For instance, the section of ducks is divided into sections on “cavity nesters,” “overwater nesters,” and “ground-nesting” ducks. The photographs included in the species accounts are by necessity small, but generally of good quality. It was interesting to see a photograph of a Purple Martin nesting in a natural cavity rather than a martin house or gourd.

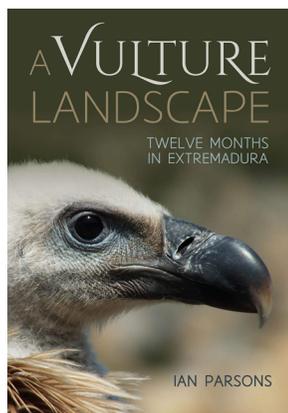
Authors McFarland, Monjello, and Moskowitz have done a masterful job updating and expanding what was a decades old popular field guide. The *Peterson Guide to North American Bird Nests* is one of those basic texts that should be in every birder’s library.

To watch vultures over the plains, to gaze at a huge bird as it effortlessly glides through the air above the oaks of the dehesa, is an exhilarating experience that we should all have. (p. 1, *A Vulture Landscape*)

Ask anyone what their favorite birds are and you will get answers like owls, hawks, hummingbirds, bluebirds, and parrots. Serious birders might give more unexpected answers like shorebirds or American warblers. Personally, I love rails, particularly Virginia Rails, for reasons too long to write about here. But few, if any, people you know would likely list vultures as their favorite birds. After all, vultures are not particularly colorful, they eat carrion, and they have been symbols of death since ancient times. What’s to like? Well, Ian Parsons would beg to differ with that opinion. Give him a chance, and he will positively wax poetic about vultures:

Vultures are brilliant birds; birds that first captured my imagination as a child watching wildlife documentaries as these huge birds swarmed over large mammal carcasses on the African savannah. I can still remember seeing my first real-life one, even though it was a quarter of a century ago—an indelible memory of a Griffon Vulture drifting high in the blue sky of a Spanish spring. I was instantly hooked. (p. 1)

Not only does Parsons thoroughly enjoy watching vultures, he loves watching them in one particular spot, the Extremadura area of central western Spain. *A Vulture Landscape* is his attempt to convey his excitement watching these magnificent birds in this dramatic, arid, barren steppe country. The Extremadura has long been recognized as an area important for wildlife. There is a major reserve and national park at



Monfragüe. There is also a Tagus River National Park. Though two major rivers cross the area, the Tagus and Guadiana, much of the Extremadura is open arid country with scattered rocky hills. Here are also found *dehesas*. These are large areas of cultural landscape used primarily for grazing by Spanish fighting bulls and Iberian pigs, among other livestock. This ensures a constant source of carcasses for vultures to feast on. These open spaces are dotted with small trees, mostly species of oaks like Holm and Cork. Though *dehesas* are agricultural spaces, they are also enjoyed by many species of raptors and other birds.

The book is divided into twelve chapters, one for each month of the year. Parsons knows this area well because he has lived here for years, though not currently, and he regularly conducts trips to the Extremadura for birders. The breeding vultures in Extremadura are the Griffon Vulture, the Egyptian Vulture, and the Eurasian Black Vulture of Europe and Africa. This latter species (*Aegypius monachus*) is not related to the North American Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) and is visually like a more formidable and darker Griffon Vulture. The Griffon and Black vultures will remind North American readers of what they see deified in Egyptian art or even the vultures as they are shown in old cartoons with the ruffled collars and large beaks. These are big, powerful-looking birds. The Egyptian Vulture is the odd bird among the group, being smaller and mostly white. In the Pyrenees of Spain you can also find a small population of the Bearded Vulture, also known as the Lammergeier.

As I learned in *A Vulture Landscape*, there is another species of vulture that in recent years has been regularly, if rarely, showing up in the Extremadura. This is the Ruppell's Vulture. The nearest population of this species to Extremadura is Senegal in west Africa. Most sightings of this rarity (in Europe) have been in June. Could the Ruppell's eventually breed in the Extremadura? Only time will tell. The White-rumped Swift, another African species, has recently colonized Spain.

The whole area is rich in bird life. Bonelli's, Golden, and Spanish Imperial eagles share the plains and hills of Extremadura with the vultures. Larks found here include Crested, Short-toed, and Calandra. There are Little and Great bustards. Other species that are found breeding in the Extremadura include Rock Bunting, Blue Rock Thrush, Black Redstarts, and Great Spotted Cuckoos. All of these birds make an appearance in *A Vulture Landscape*.

Spring migration begins in earnest in February with the arrival of the Great Spotted Cuckoos, and fall migration is a time of passing flocks of Common Cranes. In winter it does get cold, and there is ice on small ponds. Most of the Egyptian and Griffon vultures migrate out of the area, but the Black Vultures remain. In summer, the Extremadura can get very hot. August in particular sounds like a tough time to visit.

Desiccated and devoid of moisture, the land is exhausted by the aridity of the long punishing summer. Mini, self-generated, whirling dervish dust tornadoes spontaneously spin into life before burning themselves out across the open, exposed plain. Great Bustards blur and break up in the wavy sea of heat haze that has drowned the parched land. (p. 43)

Throughout the book, Parsons touches upon many other topics concerning vultures. Particularly concerning is the massive die-off of vultures in India due to the ingestion at dumps and sewer areas of the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) called Diclofenac. You would think a group of birds that survive on carrion could resist anything humans could throw at them, but this is a serious and ongoing avian catastrophe.

Not only is the Extremadura a great place to watch these magnificent vultures soar and devour carcasses en masse, it is also a fine place to see them nesting. But unlike watching flying birds soar over the dehesas, you have to travel to more remote areas of the Extremadura to find Griffon Vulture nests.

The real excitement in watching vultures' nests comes in the places you have to be to do so. They are wild places, places where our species is not comfortable or numerous. Places like this—a rocky arc of hills on the western edge of the region with Portugal visible on the horizon. (p. 13–14)

I have only birded the Catalonia region of Spain, but we stumbled across the nests of Egyptian and Griffon vultures. Seeing the hulking Griffons tending a nest high in a rocky outcropping is indeed a dramatic sight.

A Vulture Landscape is a unique book. You will learn a lot about the behavior of the breeding vultures of the area, as well as the other birds to watch. This is also a wonderful portrait of the land and people of the area. It is illustrated with many fine color photographs. Finally, *A Vulture Landscape* is about the love one man has for a group of birds and the special place they are found.

In some places, vultures are common, a feature of azure blue skies and the harsh landscape below them. Extremadura in central Spain is one of these places. It is a vulture landscape. (p. 5) 🦅

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To listen to Mark Lynch's interview with Ian Parsons for WICN, go to: <<https://www.wicn.org/podcast/ian-parsons/>>

To listen to Mark Lynch's interview with Casey McFarland, one of the authors of the *Peterson Field Guide to Bird Nests of North America*, go to: <<https://www.wicn.org/podcast/casey-mcfarland/>>

STAFF CHANGE: WHERE TO GO BIRDING (WTG) EDITOR

Nate Marchessault Retires and Matt Sanda Joins the Editorial Staff

Marsha C. Salett

Thank You, Nate Marchessault

I became acquainted with Nate Marchessault in fall 2017 when he wrote a long, thorough, detailed article, “Birding Marion, Mattapoisett, and Rochester, Massachusetts.” (*Bird Observer* December 2017, 45 (6):365–376) It was clear that this was his patch; he seemed to know every bird in every thicket and water body in all three towns during all four seasons. Nate’s Where to Go Birding article shone the spotlight on one of the lesser-known birding territories in Plymouth County.

A year after writing that article and a few Field Notes, Nate became our Where to Go Birding (WTG) editor. Nate remembers our first meeting, “You, Wayne Petersen, and I met at your old house in Orleans and you cooked us a nice meal to go over everything.” We hit it off and Nate took on the position of WTG editor.

Here’s why Nate took the position:

I was interested in becoming editor for the WTG section for several reasons. I thought *Bird Observer* was a fantastic and important journal, and I enjoyed the prospect of an opportunity to contribute. On a personal level, being WTG editor allowed me to learn about birding locations both near and far and pushed me out of my comfort zone to network with people all throughout New England. One of my favorite aspects of the position was the opportunity to get younger birders published.

For the past four years, Nate has solicited Where to Go Birding articles from all over Massachusetts and other New England states and has been the liaison between authors and *Bird Observer*’s mapmaker, Jill Moonheron. He has, indeed, met his objective of publishing young birders’ articles. When a potential author backed out or missed a deadline, Nate always remained unruffled, found another author (sometimes me), and occasionally wrote a last-minute article himself. He contributed other WTG articles, including “Winter Birding on Cape Cod: Provincetown to the Orleans Rotary” (*Bird Observer* December 2018, 46 (6):349-364), which became part of our booklet, “A Guide to Winter Birding on Cape Cod,” available through our online store (www.birdobserver.org/store). Thank you, Nate, for your excellent and comprehensive work!

In addition to his position as WTG editor, Nate works as a microbiologist in Falmouth, Massachusetts. He is president of the South Shore Bird Club and is its representative for the Association of Massachusetts Bird Clubs.

Always professional, organized, diligent, and fun to have at staff meetings, Nate will be missed. Fortunately, he is not leaving *Bird Observer*. Starting January 1, 2022, Nate will be joining our Board of Directors.

Welcome, Matt Sanda

Matt Sanda responded to our ad looking for a WTG editor, noting that “the recruitment and article pipeline generation, project management, and figuring out ways to get things done” had parallels to his full-time job as an operations executive at a small software start-up. I thought that Matt’s enthusiasm for birding and sharing it with other people was even more impressive than his work skills, which are a necessary part of this position.

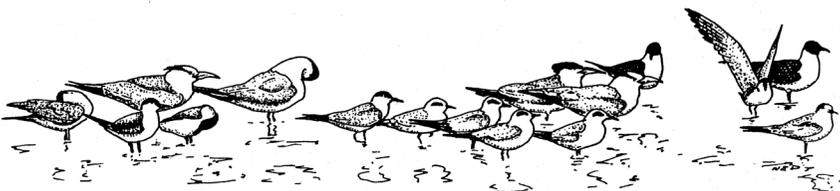
What attracted Matt to the position of WTG editor for *Bird Observer*?

As a child, Matt developed a small obsession with the Eastern Towhee when visiting his grandmother’s cabin in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. He was reintroduced to birdwatching by a coworker in time for the spring migration of 2018, shortly after receiving his first pair of binoculars as a gift from his father. An avid hiker, swimmer, and lover of nature, he became fascinated by the diverse colors, calls, and habits of the hundreds of species that he had overlooked or ignored for years. In the process of exploring the swamps, mountains, beaches, and woods of New England to learn the birds of the area, he brought his wife Olivia, brother Greg, and brother’s fiancée Shannon into the lifestyle.

Matt spent late nights scouring satellite maps and eBird hotspots for places to go birding until he eventually discovered *Bird Observer*’s Where to Go Birding, which guided him and his brother to Spruce Grouse, Red Crossbills, Pine Grosbeaks, Evening Grosbeaks, Bohemian Waxwings, and a Black-backed Woodpecker on a late-autumn trip to the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont.

Matt joins *Bird Observer*, taking the reins of editing Where to Go Birding from Nate Marchessault, to help document both the well-known hotspots and to shed light on many overlooked—and sometimes threatened—nooks and crannies favored by birders in communities across New England. In doing so, he hopes to help others discover and document the biodiversity of their own backyards or sanctuaries that may be just a short drive away. You might run into Matt birding Franklin Park and the Arnold Arboretum, Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, Fowl Meadow in Norwood, or many of the far-afield biomes throughout New England.

Welcome, Matt! 



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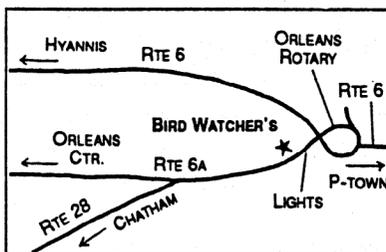
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A Birder's Quick Guide to HUNTING SEASONS

Hunting in Massachusetts ramps up in the fall, but that doesn't mean that birders and hunters can't share the outdoors. Learn where and when hunting may be taking place and review these safety tips to enjoy a more relaxed time outside!

2021 Seasons*

Deer	Youth Deer Hunt	Oct. 2
	Archery (Zones 10–14)	Oct. 4 – Nov. 27
	Archery (Zones 1–9)	Oct. 18 – Nov. 27
	Shotgun	Nov. 29 – Dec. 11
	Primitive Firearms	Dec. 13 – Dec. 31
Turkey	Spring: Zones 1–13	April 26 – May 22, 2021
	Fall: Zones 10–13	Oct. 4 – Nov. 27
	Fall: Zones 1–9	Oct 18 – Nov. 27
Coyote		Oct. 16 – Mar. 8, 2022
Black Bear		Sep. 7–Sep. 25; Nov. 1–Nov. 20; Nov. 2–Dec. 11
Pheasant		Oct. 16 – Nov. 27
Waterfowl†		Sept. 1, 2021 to Feb. 15, 2022

*Season dates change annually. Full regulations and seasons can be found at mass.gov/hunting.

†These dates are all-inclusive of waterfowl species. Species-specific regulations are found at mass.gov/hunting.

Tips

- Do what the hunters do! Wear a bright orange vest or hat to stay visible. If your dog is venturing out with you, put bright orange on him or her too!
- If you see someone hunting or hear shots, call out to let them know you're there.
- Hunters and birders both want to reduce unnecessary noise. Once you've made your presence known, avoid making excessive noises.
- MassWildlife-owned lands—Wildlife Management Areas and Wildlife Conservation Easements—allow hunting.
- Most state parks and forests are open to hunting, and many towns allow hunting on municipal lands.
- Hunting is not permitted on Sundays throughout Massachusetts.

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BIRD SIGHTINGS

July–August 2021

Neil Hayward and Robert H. Stymeist

A Note on Taxonomy

Bird Observer follows the taxonomy published by the American Ornithological Society (AOS). The AOS was previously known as the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) before its merger with the Cooper Ornithological Society in October 2016. Each summer the AOS's Committee on Classification and Nomenclature of North and Middle American Birds (NACC) publishes an annual supplement to its bird checklist. This summer the AOS published their 62nd update (Chesser, R. T. et al.).

The biggest change for Massachusetts birders in the 62nd update is the addition of one species to the state list; Mew Gull was split into Common Gull and Short-billed Gull, both of which have been recorded in the state. The genus *Phalacrocorax*, which previously served as an umbrella genus for Old and New World cormorants, has been split. *Phalacrocorax (sensu strictu)* is now an Old World genus, although retains our Great Cormorant. Our Double-crested Cormorant is now *Nannopterum auritum*, sitting in the same genus as the extralimital Neotropical Cormorant. Within the kinglet family, Regulidae, Ruby-crowned Kinglet is now recognized as being sufficiently different from Golden-crowned as to warrant its own genus, *Corthylio*, and now appears before Golden-crowned Kinglet in the linear sequence order.

Weather

Statistically, July is one of the sunniest months of the year, but not this year. Boston, like many municipalities in New England, set a record for most July days with measurable rain. A total of 10.07 inches of precipitation fell over 19 days during the month, Boston's second wettest July since 1872. July was also unusually cold; a high temperature of 60 degrees in Boston on July 3 set a new historical record for the coldest high temperature for the city for July. Worcester logged a high of only 57 degrees that day, setting its own record for lowest high temperature for the city on that date. For only the third time in Boston since 1872, July was colder than June. The month ended with no heat wave nor even a prolonged stretch of warm weather. Boston's average temperature for the month was 1.7 degrees below normal. On July 9, Tropical Storm Elsa made landfall at Watch Hill, Rhode Island, the first tropical storm to hit New England directly since Tropical Storm Beryl in 2006. Elsa brought extensive flooding to most of eastern Massachusetts. Boston picked up 2.04 inches of rain from Elsa, while other towns to the west and south reported nearly four inches. Elsa, however, was a dud for bringing in any significant pelagic birds along the coast.

August started out much more pleasantly than July. There were nine days on which the mercury hit 90 degrees or above during the month, although rainfall continued to be above average. Precipitation totaled 7.00 inches in Boston, 3.77 inches above normal for August. There were 15 days with measurable rain during the month. The remnant of Tropical Storm Fred brought some heavy rain mid-month mainly to the west and north of Boston. Tropical Storm Henri, which stayed mostly offshore, followed quickly on the heels of Fred. Henri brought strong winds mainly to Cape Cod and the Islands, and good numbers of pelagic birds off the Nantucket Shoals.

R. Stymeist

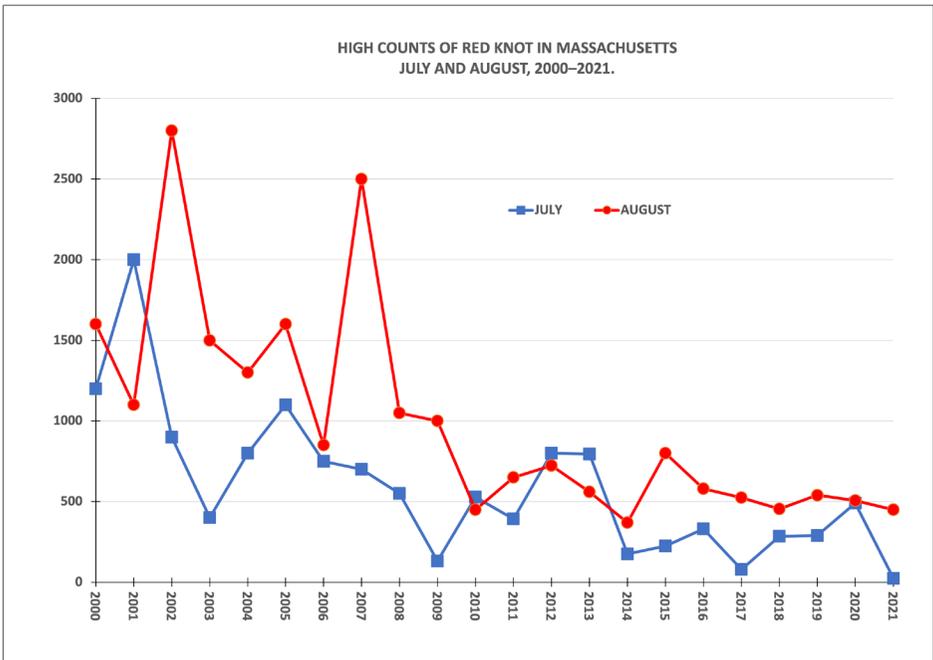


Fig. 1. July and August high high counts of Red Knot in Massachusetts, 2000–2021. Data from eBird.org.

WHISTLING-DUCKS THROUGH SPOONBILLS

Seven **Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks** were photographed in Chilmark on July 30—the largest group of this peregrinating southern breeder since a flock of 11 were found in Sandwich in 2016. Earlier in July, singles were also reported from Falmouth and Tuckernuck Island.

Duck news featured some high numbers for August; a count of 41 Blue-winged Teal at Plum Island is the highest count for the month in over a decade and five Ring-necked Ducks at Monomoy is the second-highest count for August this century. Ring-necked Duck is a rare breeder in the state (most recently at Royalston this year) and has been detected on Monomoy in August since 2018, indicative of possible breeding.

Pied-billed Grebe is listed as “endangered” under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA). Successful breeding was confirmed this year at Richmond Marsh, where a pair with six stripy-headed young were observed on August 1. This Berkshire hotspot had also hosted a breeding pair with young in 2018. **Common Gallinule**—another waterbird species listed under MESA—bred nearby at Beach Road Marsh in Richmond, where up to four juveniles were observed. An adult **Purple Gallinule** was photographed by a birder in a kayak at the Cutler Park Reservation, Needham on August 4. The bird then flew across the river to Millennium Park, to become the first record for Suffolk County. Purple Gallinules are almost annual to the state, with this bird being the first this year. It is only the third August record this century; most records are in October.

A **White-winged Dove** was photographed under feeders at Provincetown on August 11. This migratory southern dove is almost annual to the state, with this Provincetown record being the first one this year.

Sandhill Cranes nested in a record five counties this summer: Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, Plymouth, and Worcester. This species was first confirmed nesting in the state at New Marlboro in 2007 and then again in 2016 in Worthington, after which reports and breeding records have increased steadily.

The shorebird highlight of the period was the remarkable inland sighting of 104 Hudsonian Godwits at Longmeadow on August 23—the highest count for the state since 2001 and the first record for Hampden County since 1987. The birds were photographed flying south a day after the arrival of Tropical Storm Henri. A Stilt Sandpiper at Longmeadow at the end of August was an unusual inland record. An **American Avocet** was on Outer Cape Cod from August 22—the same fall arrival date for the state as in 2019 and 2020. An American Golden-Plover at Eastham on August 10 was the earliest fall migrant of that species to the state since 2009. Four Piping Plovers were seen at Cohasset in August. This species bred at nearby Wollaston Beach this year—the second breeding record for Norfolk County after the first record in 2020.

The American subspecies of Red Knot, *Calidris canutus rufa*, is often held up as the poster child for shorebird population declines—blamed on a combination of climate change, habitat loss, and horseshoe crab over-harvesting in the Delaware Bay, a key stopover site on their annual migration between South America and the Arctic. A count of 25 Red Knots on Monomoy on July 5 is the lowest July record for Massachusetts and well below even last year's high of 490 (see Figure 1). The August high of 450 is the second lowest this century. Sadly, this low number is consistent with Red Knot reports from the Delaware Bay this spring; northbound migrants represented only about a third of those counted in 2020 (Hurdle 2021). The species has been federally listed as threatened since 2014.

A count of seven **Atlantic Puffins** past Andrews Point on July 8 is a high for the month. A young **Sabine's Gull** was photographed at Race Point Beach on July 24, perhaps one of the birds seen there in May earlier this year. This year continues to be good for seeing **Sandwich Terns**, with two records this period, including the first record for Bristol County since 2013.

Tropical Storm Henri passed mostly to the west of Massachusetts on August 22. What it lacked in number and diversity of pelagic vagrants—no Sooty Terns, inland jaegers, or storm-petrels—it made up for in quality: a **Magnificent Frigatebird** seen by many birders in Dorchester Bay on August 22. This was the ninth record of this piratic seabird this century, although that number belies their real rarity; many of these are one-day one-person wonders. Frigatebirds have been recorded in the state between May and October, with September and October hosting the lion's share. This year's bird was a first for Norfolk County.

This period provided some important data on our pelagic avifauna, with three boats targeting the continental shelf and the warm waters of the gulf stream. The Brookline Bird Club forayed into the waters southeast of Nantucket with their overnight “extreme pelagic” on August 7–8. Also exploring our southern waters were observers on two National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) survey vessels: Tom Johnson on the NOAA's *Henry B. Bigelow*, and Doug Gochfeld and Alison Black on the NOAA's *Pisces*.

The rarest bird found by the pelagic spotters was **Barolo Shearwater**, with singles photographed by Tom Johnson on August 1 and by Doug Gochfeld and Alison Black on August 8. The latter bird, found south of Martha's Vineyard, represents the westernmost documented record for the Atlantic Ocean. These are the third and fourth records of this diminutive shearwater for the state; the first two came from BBC pelagic trips on August 25 in both 2007 and 2012. **Audubon's Shearwaters** are expected in the deeper, warm waters of the Gulf Stream and were seen in good numbers by all three boats. A one-hour period count of 160 birds from the NOAA's *Pisces* on the afternoon of August 9 was unprecedented for the state and occurred as the

boat was passing through water nearing 80 degrees and covered with sargassum. **White-faced Storm-Petrels** were also seen by all three boats, delighting viewers with their characteristic kangaroo hopping. Three adult **White-tailed Tropicbirds** were photographed by Tom Johnson on August 18–19. The last record of this species was an adult seen by Alison Black on the NOAA *Henry B. Bigelow* on June 30, before which the species had not been recorded since 2015. Johnson also logged a **Bridled Tern** on July 31, the first one for the state since July 2016. **Black-capped Petrels** were seen on seven days from the NOAA *Henry B. Bigelow* with a maximum count of 15 on August 10. The biggest miss for the Brookline Bird Club trip was **Band-rumped Storm-Petrel**, because August is the best time to see this bird in our waters. The species was detected in small numbers by the two NOAA boats. A subadult **Masked Booby** was spotted from the NOAA *Henry B. Bigelow* on August 9. It is only the fifth record for the state—the first was in September 2015—and the fourth in August. The same boat also logged an adult **Brown Booby** on August 17. An immature Brown Booby was photographed on a whale watch at Stellwagen Bank on July 10.

Nationally, 2021 will be remembered as the summer of the spoonbill. **Roseate Spoonbills** were reported well north of their range, with New Hampshire, Michigan, and the District of Columbia scoring their first records of this colorful and enigmatic wader, while New York and Pennsylvania hosted numerous birds this summer. Massachusetts did not miss out on the fun; a juvenile spoonbill—a first for the state—was present at Corbin’s Neck, Ashley Falls, on August 8–11. **White Ibises** wandered north of their range in a similar fashion, with Massachusetts hosting an adult at Wayland on July 30 and an immature also at Wayland on August 16–17; the same immature was then photographed flying over Dighton on August 18. Although an exciting draw for local birders, the phenomenon speaks of trouble farther south. Kevin Welsh, a biologist with the Audubon Everglades Science Center, has noted an increase in nest failure of Roseate Spoonbills in the Everglades in recent years and believes the birds are moving north, “mostly due to rising water levels here in the southern peninsula in Florida. They’re losing ideal foraging habitat for them to be able to get the young birds to reach fledgling age.” Connecticut, Maine, and Québec logged their first spoonbill records in 2018, and New Brunswick in 2020. Chances are, if you missed the bird at Corbin’s Neck—and many did as it was a frustrating and difficult bird to pin down—you may not have to wait too long for another.

N. Hayward

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck				American Wigeon			
7/15	Falmouth	1	ph A. Roberts + v.o.	7/30, 8/27	PI	1,1	D. Prima, D. Williams+v.o.
7/15	Tuckernuck I.	1	G. Andrews	Northern Pintail			
7/30	Chilmark	7	ph J. Shoemaker	7/31, 8/18	S. Monomoy	6,2	D. Bates
Brant				Green-winged Teal			
7/4	Winthrop	1	A. Gurka	8/13	Concord	2	J. Forbes
7/6-8/31	Chatham	1	M. Vogler	8/14	Quincy	2	D. Burton + v.o.
Wood Duck				8/18	S. Monomoy	12	P. Trimble#
7/1-7/29	Longmeadow	63	max A. Burrage# + v.o.	8/30	PI	50	T. Wetmore#
7/12-7/23	Sheffield	30	max v.o.	Ring-necked Duck			
8/25	Petersham	82	M. Lynch#	8/18	S. Monomoy	5	P. Trimble#
Blue-winged Teal				8/18	Boston (CHRes.)	1	R. Doherty + v.o.
8/14-8/23	Quincy	3	J. Bock + v.o.	8/19-8/23	Turners Falls	1	S. Griesemer + v.o.
8/17	E. Boston (BI)	6	S. Riley + v.o.	Greater Scaup			
8/21	Chatham	2	D. Clapp#	8/14-8/15	Lynn	1	C. Kaynor#
8/22	Aquinnah	4	B. Shriber	Black Scoter			
8/28	PI	41	N. Tepper	7/31	PI	1	S. Sullivan#
Northern Shoveler				Bufflehead			
8/10-8/18	E. Boston (BI)	1	M. Tillinghast + v.o.	7/4-7/24	Winthrop	1	A. Gurka + v.o.
8/18	S. Monomoy	6	P. Trimble#	7/7-8/3	Mashpee	1	M. Keleher
Gadwall				Hooded Merganser			
7/4	PI	21	R. Heil	7/15	Falmouth	1	T. Bradford#
8/18	S. Monomoy	134	P. Trimble#	8/8	Burrage Pd WMA	3 f	G. d’Entremont

Common Merganser				Sandhill Crane			
8/6	Hardwick	3	M. Lynch#	thr	Worthington4	max 2ad+2juv	T. Gessing+v.o.
8/25	Boston (CHRes.)	5	R. Doherty	7/1-8/21	Burrage Pd WMA4	max 2ad+2juv	v.o.
Ruddy Duck				7/4-8/27	Hardwick	4 1pr+2yg	W. Howes
7/1-7/9	Boston (CHRes.)	2	R. Doherty	7/23-8/18	Ashfield/Plainfield	4 2ad+2yg	P. Gagarin + v.o.
7/10	Fall River	1	A. Wilson	8/1	New Marlborough	3 2ad+1juv	J. Pierce, R. Wendell
Northern Bobwhite				8/25	Plympton	2	M. Perrin
7/8-7/12	Cambr. (Blair Pd)	1	F. Bouchard#	American Avocet			
8/7	Eastham (FH)	9	K. Doe#	8/22	P'town (RP)	1 ph	P. Flood
Wild Turkey				8/24-8/31	N. Truro	1 ph	T. Bradford
7/25	Wachusett Res.	25	M. Lynch#	American Oystercatcher			
Ruffed Grouse				7/23	Marion	16	R. Sawyer
7/21	Petersham	1	M. Lynch#	8/10	Monomoy NWR	40	F. Gallo#
7/24	Royalston	1	G. d'Entremont#	8/12	Beverly	8	G. Power
8/6	Falmouth	1	J. Carroll	Black-bellied Plover			
Pied-billed Grebe				8/20	Hadley (Honeypot)	1	L. Therrien
7/3-7/17	Pittsfield	1	S. Townsend + v.o.	8/22-8/23	N. Adams	1	N. Henkenius + v.o.
7/29	Sunderland	2	J. Harrison	8/28	PI	80	S. Sullivan
8/1	Richmond Marsh	8 1pr+6yg	S. Townsend	American Golden-Plover			
8/11	Needham	1	H. Wu	7/10	Eastham	1	N. Tepper
8/18	S. Monomoy	1	P. Trimble#	7/15	Tuckernuck I.	1	S. Kardell#
Horned Grebe				7/19	PI	1	K. Rosenberg
thr	Marblehead	1	J. Smith + v.o.	8/21	Nantucket	1	S. Demarest
White-winged Dove				8/31	Revere	1	A. Heredia
8/11	P'town	1 ph	Fide M. Faherty	Killdeer			
Yellow-billed Cuckoo				7/18	Northfield	12	J. Smith
7/14	Sharon	1	R. Hennessey	8/29	Wachusett Res.	25	M. Lynch#
7/24	Royalston	5	G. d'Entremont#	Semipalmated Plover			
Black-billed Cuckoo				8/18	Eastham	4980	L. Waters
7/21	Petersham	1	M. Lynch#	8/21	PI	1200	G. d'Entremont#
7/29	Ware R. IBA	1	M. Lynch#	Piping Plover			
Common Nighthawk				7/4	PI	29	S. Sullivan#
8/16	Pittsfield	50	T. Collins	7/17	Nantucket	21	T. Sackton
8/21	Belchertown	406	L. Therrien	8/5	Cohasset	4	J. Young
8/24, 8/25	MtA	35,43	R. Stymeist#	8/13	Monomoy NWR	35	D. Minsky#
8/30	Easthampton	189	J. Harrison	Upland Sandpiper			
Chuck-will's-widow				8/8	S. Monomoy	1	N. Bonomo#
7/20	Falmouth	1	J. Hoye	8/8	Westborough	1	T. Spahr
Eastern Whip-poor-will				Whimbrel			
7/15	Melrose	1	R. Hennessey	8/2	Monomoy NWR	219	B. Harrington#
7/22-8/31	Mount Tom	3 max	D. Allard + v.o.	8/6-8/24	BHI (Georges I.)	1	S. Jones
7/27-8/31	Quabbin Pk	3 max	L. Therrien + v.o.	8/7	Hyannis H.	1	BBC
8/1-8/28	PI	4 max	v.o.	8/23	Northampton	1	D. Allard + v.o.
8/19	Montague	2	J. Blue	8/28	Rowley (RMWS)	1	R. Heil
Ruby-throated Hummingbird				Hudsonian Godwit			
7/28	Rowley (RMWS)	7	R. Heil	8/9	S. Monomoy	7	N. Bonomo#
8/19	Easton	4	K. Ryan	8/9	Monomoy NWR	6	B. Harrington#
Clapper Rail				8/23	Longmeadow	104	M. Moore + v.o.
7/3-7/31	Ellisville	1	I. Davies + v.o.	8/24	Monomoy NWR	11	A. Kneidel#
8/11	PI	1	N.+ S.Tea	Marbled Godwit			
8/17	W. Harwich	4	N. Tepper	7/24-8/30	Chatham	2	F. Atwood + v.o.
King Rail				8/9	Monomoy NWR	2	B. Harrington#
7/1-7/10	PI	1 ph au	T. Wetmore#	8/14	S. Dart. (APd)	1	S. Lott
Virginia Rail				8/15	BHI (Georges I.)	3	S. Jones
7/6-7/25	Deerfield	3 max	J. Smith+v.o.	Ruddy Turnstone			
7/10-7/29	Richmond	7 max	J. Felton+v.o.	8/23	Northampton	1	M. Harris# + v.o.
7/24	Warren	6	M. Lynch#	Red Knot			
8/17	W. Harwich	9	N. Tepper	8/9	Monomoy NWR	450	B. Harrington#
Sora				8/11	Winthrop B.	3	S. Riley
7/9-7/26	GMNWR	1	K. Zhang#	8/28	Rowley (RMWS)	15	R. Heil
7/14-7/25	Northampton	2 max	M. McKittrick + v.o.	8/28	PI	3	V. Burdette
7/18	Concord	1 au	J. Barcus	Stilt Sandpiper			
7/26-7/28	Sunderland	2 max	S. Griesemer# + v.o.	7/30	PI	15	T. Wetmore#
8/28-8/31	PI	1	J. Keeley + v.o.	8/2	E. Boston (BI)	1	S. Jones + v.o.
Common Gallinule				8/10	S. Monomoy	7	N. Bonomo#
thr	Richmond	8 max	M. Ridge + v.o.	8/22	Quincy	3	V. Zollo + v.o.
7/18-7/23	Truro	1 ph	T. Bradford + v.o.	8/27-8/31	Longmeadow	1	F. Bowrys + v.o.
8/18	S. Monomoy	4	P. Trimble#	Sanderling			
American Coot				8/9	Monomoy NWR	1200	B. Harrington#
7/9	PI	1	G. Revelas + v.o.	Dunlin			
8/18	S. Monomoy	1	P. Trimble#	7/27	Aquinnah	5	L. Grebe
Purple Gallinule				7/28-8/10	PI	1	v.o.
8/4, 8/14	Needham, W. Roxbury (MP)	1 ad ph	H. Wu	8/29	Revere (POP)	3	C. Litman

Baird's Sandpiper				8/17	Nantucket Shoals	125		A. Black#
8/19	Northfield	1	J. Smith	8/17	P'town (RP)	8		L. Waters
8/20	Quincy	1 juv	J. Bock	8/24	Wilmington	1		K. McLennen
8/26-8/31	Longmeadow	2 max	L.+A.Richardson+v.o.	Red Phalarope				
8/29	P'town (RP)	1	P. Flood#	8/8	S. of Nantucket	1		BBC
Least Sandpiper				8/17	Nantucket Shoals	3		D. Gochfeld#
7/2-7/30	Sheffield	18 max	J. Pierce# + v.o.	8/28-8/31	PI	1	T. Wetmore# + v.o.	
7/4, 7/28	Rowley (RMWS)	125,195	R. Heil	South Polar Skua				
8/8	Warren	20 min	M. Lynch#	8/1	SE. of Nantucket	1 ph		T. Johnson#
8/15	PI	100	S. Sullivan#	8/10,8/11,8/17	SE. of Nantucket	1,1,4 ph		D. Gochfeld#
8/18	Eastham	300	L. Waters	Pomarine Jaeger				
White-rumped Sandpiper				7/4	P'town (RP)	1		P. Flood#
8/15, 8/30	PI	35,90	S. Sullivan#, T. Wetmore#	8/8	S. of Nantucket	1		BBC
Wetmore#				Parasitic Jaeger				
8/18	S. Monomoy	18	P. Trimble#	7/3	P'town (RP)	1		B. Nikula
8/22	Quincy	7	V. Zollo + v.o.	8/8	S. of Nantucket	3		BBC
Buff-breasted Sandpiper				8/22	Acoaxet	8		L. Seitz#
8/29-8/30	Boston (Logan)	3	S. Jones + v.o.	Long-tailed Jaeger				
8/29	Winthrop B.	2	H. Miller + v.o.	8/17, 8/29	S. of MV	1,1	A. Black#, M. Sylvia	
Pectoral Sandpiper				8/22	MBO	1 ad		M. Gray
7/22-7/23	Sheffield	1	G. Ward + v.o.	Common Murre				
8/4	PI	9	R. Heil	7/3, 7/8	Rockport (AP)	1,1	A. Sanford, R. Heil	
8/8	Quincy	2	J. Bock + v.o.	7/4	P'town (RP)	2		P. Flood#
8/11	S. Monomoy	4	N. Bonomo#	Razorbill				
8/25	Petersham	7	M. Lynch#	7/4	P'town (RP)	1		P. Flood#
Semipalmated Sandpiper				7/13, 7/28	Rockport (AP)	1,1	A. Sanford	
7/18-7/19	Northampton	12 max	C.Elowe + v.o.	8/18	Salisbury	1		S. Knapp
8/4	PI	5330	R. Heil	8/20	PI	1		D. Prima#
8/10	Duxbury B.	2965	L. Schibley#	Black Guillemot				
8/13	Monomoy NWR	7376	F. Gallo#	thr	PI	1 min		v.o.
8/18	Eastham	2160	L. Waters	7/8	Rockport (AP)	2		R. Heil
Western Sandpiper				7/27, 8/16	Gloucester H.	1	S. Zhang, M. Whitbeck	
8/10	Monomoy NWR	4	F. Gallo#	Atlantic Puffin				
8/14-8/30	PI	2 max	M.Watson# + v.o.	7/3, 7/4	P'town (RP)	1,5 ph	I. Davies#, P. Flood	
8/28-8/31	Quincy	3	J. Bock + v.o.	7/5	Stellwagen Bank	4 ph		P. Flood#
Short-billed Dowitcher				7/8,7/9	Rockport (AP)	7,1		R. Heil
7/8-7/21	PI	24, 115	R. Heil	Sabine's Gull				
7/17,7/28	Rowley (RMWS)	88,62	R. Heil	7/24	P'town (RP)	1 ph		P. Flood
8/10	Monomoy NWR	3400	F. Gallo#	Bonaparte's Gull				
8/23	Sheffield	2	G. Ward	7/2	Gill	1		J. Smith
Long-billed Dowitcher				7/19	Stockbridge	2		J. Pierce
7/31, 8/4	PI	3,8	S. Sullivan#, R. Heil	8/3,8/31	Lynn	300,500		J. Quigley
Wilson's Snipe				Black-headed Gull				
8/15-8/31	Topsfield	7 max	S. Zhang + v.o.	8/22-8/24	Nbpt H.	1 ph	S. Sullivan + v.o.	
8/22	Newbury	1	R. Heil	Little Gull				
Spotted Sandpiper				7/2	Manomet Point	1 juv	I. Davies + v.o.	
7/6-7/29	Sheffield	10 max	G. Ward + v.o.	7/3	P'town (RP)	1 1S		B. Nikula
8/4	Warren	10	M. Lynch#	Laughing Gull				
8/17	W. Harwich	11	N. Tepper	8/10	Monomoy NWR	1500		F. Gallo#
Solitary Sandpiper				8/13, 8/26	Lynn	6,10		J. Quigley
7/7-7/16	October Mountain	5 max	J. Pierce + v.o.	8/23	Northampton	1	M. Harris# + v.o.	
7/29	Southwick	8	D. Holmes	Lesser Black-backed Gull				
8/8	Warren	8	M. Lynch#	8/9-8/10	Richmond	1 ad	K. Hanson + v.o.	
Lesser Yellowlegs				8/12	Longmeadow	1 ad		T. Gilliland
7/17-7/28	Rowley (RMWS)	28,47	R. Heil	8/15	P'town (RP)	3 1S		B. Nikula
7/21	PI	57	R. Heil	8/22	Cohasset	1		J. Bock + v.o.
8/13	S. Monomoy	70	N. Bonomo#	8/22	Quabbin Pk	1 ad	M.McKittrick,L.Therrien	
8/22	Longmeadow	100	M. Moore	8/22	Revere	1	S. Jones + v.o.	
Willet				8/28	PI	2 ad		T. Wetmore
7/4,7/8	PI	82,48	R. Heil	Bridled Tern				
7/17,7/28	Rowley (RMWS)	18,19	R. Heil	7/31	Hydrographer Canyon	1 ph		T. Johnson#
8/10	Monomoy NWR	280	P. Crosson#	Least Tern				
Willet (Western)				7/4	Nantucket	800		W. Hutcheson
8/10	Monomoy NWR	8	F. Gallo#	7/23	Chatham	400		M. Faherty
Greater Yellowlegs				8/15	P'town (RP)	150		B. Nikula
8/15	PI	60	S. Sullivan#	Caspian Tern				
Wilson's Phalarope				7/25	Quincy	1		A. Trautmann
8/2-8/5	E. Boston (BI)	1	S. Jones + v.o.	8/14	Wakefield	1		J. Wood
8/8	Quincy	1	E. Nielsen	8/18-8/20	PI	1	M. Watson# + v.o.	
8/28	PI	1	N. Tepper	8/18-8/22	Nbpt H.	1,1	A. Steenstrup#, S. Sullivan	
8/29	Monomoy NWR	3	M. Miller	8/28	Mashpee	2		M. Keleher
Red-necked Phalarope				Black Tern				
8/8	Nantucket Shoals	60	BBC	7/24	Nantucket	67		S. Fee

8/18	P'town (RP)	5	G. d'Entremont#	8/7, 8/8	S. of Nantucket	10,18 max	BBC
8/22-8/24	Quincy	2 min	J. Bock + v.o.	8/15	P'town (RP)	15	B. Nikula
8/23	Quaboag IBA	2	M. Lynch#	8/22	Winthrop	1	S. Jones + v.o.
8/28	Tuckernuck I.	20	N. Dorian	Sooty Shearwater			
Roseate Tern				7/9, 8/21	P'town (RP)	900,170	P. Flood, B. Nikula
7/21	PI	10	R. Heil	8/7, 8/8	S. of Nantucket	44,28	BBC
8/18	P'town (RP)	1000	G. d'Entremont#	Great Shearwater			
8/24	BHI (Georges I.)	12	S. Jones	7/9, 8/21	P'town (RP)	1600	P. Flood, B. Nikula
Common Tern				8/7, 8/8	S. of Nantucket	10,227 max	BBC
7/1-7/10	Mystic River	70 max	J. Forbes + v.o.	Manx Shearwater			
8/10	N. Quabbin	1	B. Kanash, J. Johnstone	8/7, 8/8	S. of Nantucket	15,7 max	BBC
8/15	P'town (RP)	1200	B. Nikula	Audubon's Shearwater			
8/24	BHI (Georges I.)	75	S. Jones	8/7, 8/8	S. of Nantucket	30,13 max	BBC
Arctic Tern				8/9, 8/10	SE. of Nantucket	160,55 min	D. Gochfeld#
7/9	Rockport (AP)	5	R. Heil	Barolo Shearwater			
Forster's Tern				8/1	SE. of Nantucket	1 ph	T. Johnson#
7/29	Dennis	60	B. Nikula	8/8	S. of MV	1 ph	D. Gochfeld#
8/24	BHI (Georges I.)	1	S. Jones	Magnificent Frigatebird			
8/29-8/30	PI	2	S. Babbitt#	8/22	Quincy/Dorchester	1 ph	M. McWade + v.o.
Royal Tern				Masked Booby			
7/2	Rockport (AP)	1	A. Sanford	8/9	SE. of Nantucket	1 subad ph	T. Johnson#
7/7	Nantucket	3	K. Benarcik	Brown Booby			
7/13	Stellwagen Bank	1	N. Schleissmann	7/10	Stellwagen Bank	1 imm ph	B. Vigorito
7/18-7/20	Duxbury B.	2	A. Single + v.o.	8/17	SE. of Nantucket	1 ad ph	T. Johnson#
7/25	P'town (RP)	1	P. Flood	Great Cormorant			
7/31	Marblehead	1	J. Smith	7/11	Manomet Point	1	L. Shibley
8/13	Winthrop B.	1	E. Szczypek	7/31	BHI (Green I.)	1	M. Iliif
8/26	Ipswich (CB)	1	A. Gomez-Yafal	8/22	Lakeville	1	J. Sweeney
Sandwich Tern				Double-crested Cormorant			
7/1	P'town (RP)	1	T. Bradford	7/7	Boston	18	N. Hayward
8/22	Fairhaven	1	B. Griffith	8/8	S. of Nantucket	20	BBC
Black Skimmer				8/29	Wachusett Res.	31	M. Lynch#
7/6	Boston H.	2	M. Sullivan	American Bittern			
7/7	Cotuit	5	N. Marchessault	7/3	IRWS	1	J. MacDougall
7/8	Barnstable	3	T. Bradford	7/7-7/14	October Mountain	2	J. Pierce + v.o.
7/8, 8/24	Edgartown	43,23	S. Rappaport, M. Gilmore	7/8	GMNWR	1	C. VanDyke
7/23	Westport (GN)	1	M. Iliif	7/8	Nantucket	1	T. Pastuszak
8/24	P'town (RP)	3	J. Zhang	7/24-7/25	Lynnfield	1	P. Vale + v.o.
8/26	Ipswich (CB)	4	A. Gomez-Yafal	Least Bittern			
White-tailed Tropicbird				7/1	PI	3 max	v.o.
8/18-19	S. of Nantucket	3 ad ph	T. Johnson#	7/3	IRWS	1	J. MacDougall
Red-throated Loon				7/3-7/6	Deerfield	3 max	J. Smith + v.o.
7/17	Quincy	1 imm	V. Zollo	7/17	Concord	1	K. Dia#
Common Loon				7/24	E. Boston (BI)	1	S. Riley
7/4	Camb. (FP)	1	J. Forbes	8/1-8/31	GMNWR	2 max	v.o.
7/15-8/10	Concord (Walden Pd.)	1	v.o.	Great Blue Heron			
7/25	Lincoln	2	J. Forbes	7/1-7/30	Sheffield	22 max	G. Ward + v.o.
8/22	Wachusett Res.	9	M. Lynch#	7/24	Warren	16	M. Lynch#
Wilson's Storm-Petrel				Great Egret			
7/4-7/8	PI	82,35	R. Heil	7/24-7/28	Rowley (RMWS)	40,43	R. Heil
7/5	Cohasset	90	V. Zollo + v.o.	8/17	W. Barnstable	120	L. Waters
7/5-8/6	Winthrop B.	140	J. Layman + v.o.	8/31	PI	70	T. Wetmore
7/8	Rockport (AP)	14	R. Heil	Snowy Egret			
8/7	S. of Nantucket	310	BBC	7/30	PI	60	S. Zhang
8/8	S. of MV	130	D. Gochfeld#	8/15	Squantum	89	BBC (G. d'Entremont)
8/10	E. of Chatham	1200	N. Bonomo#	8/17	W. Barnstable	152	L. Waters
White-faced Storm-Petrel				Little Blue Heron			
7/31,8/10,8/19	SE. of Nantucket	3,2,1 ph	T. Johnson#	thr	Indiv. reported from	38 locations	
8/8	S. of MV	2 ph	D. Gochfeld#	8/8	Centerville	8	S. Johnson#
8/8	S. of Nantucket	1 ph	BBC	8/24	W. Barnstable	2	P. Crosson
Leach's Storm-Petrel				Tricolored Heron			
7/3	P'town (RP)	1	I. Davies#	8/7	Edgartown	1	S. Rappaport
8/7,8/8	S. of Nantucket	27,26 max	BBC	Green Heron			
8/9	S. of Nantucket	160	D. Gochfeld#	8/5	Wachusett Res.	2	M. Lynch#
8/10	S. of Nantucket	27	T. Johnson#	8/14	Wellfleet	12	D. Long
Band-rumped Storm-Petrel				8/17	W. Harwich	7	N. Tepper
8/8	S. of MV	1	D. Gochfeld#	Black-crowned Night-Heron			
8/17, 8/18	S. of Nantucket	5,13	T. Johnson#	8/4	PI	19	S. Babbitt#
Black-capped Petrel				8/18	Eastham	22	L. Waters
8/1-8/19	SE. of Nantucket	15 max ph	T. Johnson#	Yellow-crowned Night-Heron			
Cory's Shearwater				thr	Nbpt	5 max	v.o.
7/9	Truro	200	E. Goodman	7/7	Franklin	1	L. Benson
7/25	P'town (RP)	2	Scopoli's P. Flood	7/8	Barnstable	6 5ad+1 imm	N. Villone

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (continued)				8/16-8/17	Wayland/Sudbury	1 imm ph R. Schlegel + v.o.
7/11-8/31	PI	8 max	R. Heil + v.o.	8/18	Dighton	1 imm ph J. Eckerson
7/19-8/31	Quincy	3 max	G. Hantsbarger + v.o.	Glossy Ibis		
7/27	MNWS	2	A. Sanford	7/5	Concord	4 D. Swain#
7/28-7/31	Rowley (RMWS)	2 max	R. Heil	7/5, 8/10	Quincy	1, 1 ad, juv J. Bock + v.o.
8/1-8/11	Boston (Fens)	1	J. Zhang + v.o.	7/17	Woburn (HP)	1 A. Flynn
8/3-8/23	S. Boston	1	L. Markley + v.o.	7/26-7/29	Sunderland	1 S. Griesemer# + v.o.
8/17	W. Barnstable	23	L. Waters	7/30	PI	5 D. Prima
8/18	Eastham	20	L. Waters	8/4	Waltham	2 J. Forbes
8/29	E. Boston (BI)	1	J. Forbes	Roseate Spoonbill*		
White Ibis				8/8-8/11	Sheffield	1 juv ph M. Kelley, P. Banducci + v.o.
7/30	Wayland	1 ad ph	M. Mee			

VULTURES THROUGH DICKCISSEL

Before its ban in 1972, the insecticide dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) wreaked havoc on the Osprey population by thinning eggshells and reducing their breeding potential. According to Veit and Petersen (1993), “In 1970, there were fewer than 10 successful nests in Massachusetts, all of them along the Westport River”. After the ban, Ospreys rebounded and prospered; today there are well over 200 nesting pairs in the state. This summer, Steve Babbitt conducted a survey of Ospreys from Hellcat Tower on Plum Island. He reported more than 35 nests that were visible from the tower, including nests on the mainland side of the sound. He tallied an impressive count of 45 adults and nestlings.

The raptor highlight of the period was a **Swallow-tailed Kite** in Mashpee. There were two other recent sightings of this handsome raptor from July: Chatham in 2011 and Nantucket in 2015. Merlin is a rare breeder in the state and a report of a pair in Williamstown that successfully raised two young was notable.

July and August are a transition period, with reports of breeding birds and the beginning of fall migration. Mark Lynch and Sheila Carroll surveyed the town of Hardwick on July 11; their results confirmed a successful breeding season. Some of the impressive totals included 54 Veeries, 16 Wood Thrushes, 12 Chestnut-sided Warblers, and 15 Scarlet Tanagers. Acadian Flycatchers, once rare, were presumed breeders in several locations. In Southwick, on the Connecticut border, as many as 12 Grasshopper Sparrows were noted along with a pair of Dickcissels that successfully raised two young.

The fall migration of many of our visiting summer breeders gets underway in August. One of the highlights is the gathering of thousands of Tree Swallows on Plum Island. This year, over 40,000 were estimated. Philadelphia Vireos are unusual in the spring but regular in the fall; August 2021 was no exception with five reports during the last weeks of August. Yellow-bellied Flycatchers are generally the last to arrive in the spring but are among the first to leave in the fall. Migrant Yellow-bellieds were found on Plum Island and in Rowley on August 28. For the July and August period, 29 warbler species were reported, compared with 34 species noted during the same period last year. Some of the more unusual birds noted in August included a **Yellow-headed Blackbird** in Concord, Lark Sparrows in Eastham and Plum Island, a Clay-colored Sparrow in Windsor, Blue Grosbeaks in three locations, and Dickcissels in eight different locations.

Red Crossbills were noted from Gate 33 at the Quabbin Reservoir as well as many from Berkshire County locations, including a count of 65 from Pittsfield. Single Pine Siskins were noted in four scattered locations in the state. 🦜

R. Stymeist

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Black Vulture	7/4-8/11	Sheffield	12 max	A.+J.Eckerson+v.o.	Great Crested Flycatcher	7/5	Wompatuck SP	4	G. d'Entremont		
	7/24	Hopkinton	2	M. Perrin		7/8	Ware R. IBA	2	M. Lynch#		
	8/27	Bourne	2	L. Seitz#		7/31	PI	3	S. Sullivan#		
Turkey Vulture	7/11	Hardwick	43	M. Lynch#	Eastern Kingbird	8/4	Warren	21	M. Lynch#		
	7/24	Warren	29	M. Lynch#		8/21	PI	19	G. d'Entremont#		
Osprey	7/24	Warren	3	1ad+2yg	M. Lynch#	Olive-sided Flycatcher	8/15-8/31	Deerfield	1	D. Sibley	
	7/26	Quincy	11	J. Bock + v.o.		8/28	Hardwick	1	M. Lynch#		
	8/1	PI	45	S. Babbitt		8/31	Quabbin (G33)	1	B. Lafley		
	8/8	Hyannis H.	12	BBC	Eastern Wood-Pewee	7/24	Rowley (RMWS)	7	R. Heil		
Swallow-tailed Kite	7/4-7/8	Mashpee	1	ph	M. Keleher	8/6	Hardwick	12	M. Lynch#		
Northern Harrier	7/31	PI	1	G. d'Entremont#		8/28	Rowley (RMWS)	10	R. Heil		
Bald Eagle	7/5	Quincy	1	ad	J. Bock + v.o.	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	8/15	Warren	1	M. Lynch#	
	7/24	Royalston	3	G. d'Entremont#		8/16	Hadley	1	T. Gilliland		
	8/22	Sharon	1	K. Ryan		8/28	Rowley (RMWS)	2	R. Heil		
	8/23	Quaboag IBA	4	3ad+1yg	M. Lynch#	8/28	PI	1	S. Grinley#		
Red-shouldered Hawk	8/16	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	V. Burdette + v.o.	Acadian Flycatcher	7/1	Williamsburg	1	au	L. Therrien	
	8/25	Petersham	2	M. Lynch#		7/1-7/24	Quabbin (G8)	3	max	M. McKittrick + v.o.	
Broad-winged Hawk	7/29	Ware R. IBA	6	M. Lynch#		7/1-8/20	Granville	5	max	br	D. Holmes
	8/22	Medfield	2	K. Ryan		7/11	Waban	1	au	C. Dalton	
Barred Owl	7/11	Hardwick	2	1d	M. Lynch#	7/11	Wellesley	1	au	C. Dalton	
Northern Saw-whet Owl	7/8	Erving	2	R. Bradley	Alder Flycatcher	7/1-7/24	GMNWR	1	v.o.		
Belted Kingfisher	8/15	Warren	4	M. Lynch#		7/24	Royalston	5	G. d'Entremont#		
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	7/3	Quabbin (G10)	2	G. d'Entremont		7/31	Winchendon	4	M. Lynch#		
	7/11	Hardwick	8	M. Lynch#	Willow Flycatcher	7/8	Ware R. IBA	6	M. Lynch#		
	8/14	Groton	1	juv	S. Wilson	7/30	PI	6	T. Wetmore		
Northern Flicker	7/8	Ware R. IBA	8	M. Lynch#	Least Flycatcher	7/8	Ware R. IBA	3	M. Lynch#		
Pileated Woodpecker	8/25	Petersham	5	M. Lynch#		8/21	Cambr. (FP)	1	J. Forbes		
American Kestrel	7/14	Falmouth	4	J. Carroll		8/28	PI	1	N. Tepper		
	8/1-8/18	Medfield	2	E. Nielsen + v.o.	White-eyed Vireo	7/1-8/26	Woods Hole	1	R. Olshansky		
	8/6	Hardwick	2	imm	M. Lynch#	8/18-8/19	Brewster	1	S. Finnegan#		
Merlin	7/2-8/5	Williamstown	4	2ad+2yg	So. Auer + v.o.	Yellow-throated Vireo	7/11	Hardwick	5	M. Lynch#	
	7/21	Nantucket	4	S. Engelbourg#		7/15	Medfield	2	J. Bock		
	7/30	PI	2	S. Zhang		8/1, 8/15	PI	1	W. Tatro, S. Sullivan#		
Peregrine Falcon	7/31	PI	2	G. d'Entremont#		8/28	Rowley (RMWS)	1	R. Heil		
Monk Parakeet	7/1-8/30	Winthrop	2	L. Markley + v.o.	Blue-headed Vireo	7/31	Winchendon	6	M. Lynch#		
					Philadelphia Vireo	8/21	PI	1	M. Goetschkes#		
						8/26	GMNWR	1	S. van der Veen		
						8/28	Boston (FPk)	1	S. Jones		
						8/28	Rowley (RMWS)	1	R. Heil		
						8/29	Quincy	1	M. Perrin		

Warbling Vireo	7/6	Quaboag IBA	11	M. Lynch#	Swainson's Thrush	8/28-8/31	Deerfield	1	D. Sibley		
	8/8	Warren	3	M. Lynch#		8/29	Hadley	1	R. Bedard		
Red-eyed Vireo	7/21	Petersham	171	M. Lynch#		8/31	Williamstown	1	So. Auer		
Fish Crow	7/18	Plymouth Airport	12	BBC (G. d'Entremont)	Hermit Thrush	7/29	Ware R. IBA	21	M. Lynch#		
	7/24	W. Brookfield	3	1ad+2yg	M. Lynch#	7/31	Winchendon	39	M. Lynch#		
Common Raven	7/6	Nantucket	6	W. Hutcheson	Wood Thrush	7/6	Quaboag IBA	9	M. Lynch#		
	8/3	Greenfield	67	J. Rose		7/11	Hardwick	16	M. Lynch#		
	8/10	Vineyard Haven	3	J. Amsellem	Gray Catbird	7/4-7/8	PI	32,50	R. Heil		
	8/27	N. Truro	4	T. Marvel		8/18-8/31	MBO	292 b	T. Lloyd-Evans#		
Horned Lark	7/4-7/27	Northampton	6	max 3ad+3juv	C. Elowe+v.o.	8/29	Brewster	101 b	S. Finnegan#		
	7/12	Turners Falls	1	imm	J. Smith	Brown Thrasher	7/11-7/23	Medway	1	M. Pierre-Louis	
	7/18	Plymouth Airport	8	BBC (G. d'Entremont)		Cedar Waxwing	7/29	Ware R. IBA	33	M. Lynch#	
Bank Swallow	7/1-8/25	Hadley	73	max L. Therrien+v.o.		Evening Grosbeak	7/10	Bernardston	2	m+f	E. Huston
	7/10	Southwick	25	G. d'Entremont			7/28-8/18	Harwich	1		D. Gray
Tree Swallow	8/4	PI	40000	R. Heil	Purple Finch	7/29	Ware R. IBA	6	M. Lynch#		
	8/8	Burrage Pd WMA	2000	G. d'Entremont	Red Crossbill	8/4	Monterey	2	m+f	So. Auer	
	8/17	W. Harwich	3150	N. Tepper		8/11	Pittsfield	65	S. Townsend		
	8/28	Rowley (RMWS)	4000	R. Heil		8/13-8/31	October Mountain	3	max	M. Boschetti,	
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	7/2	Wachusett Res.	4	M. Lynch#	G. Hurley+v.o.	8/28	Quabbin (G33)	2	A. Kallenbach		
	8/28	PI	1	N. Tepper	Pine Siskin	8/14	Brimfield	1	T. Meehan		
Purple Martin	7/1-7/31	PI	25	max G. d'Entremont#		8/15	Hadley	1	C. Sokoloski		
	7/1-8/16	Hadley	4	max E. Rubenstein+v.o.		8/25-8/26	Essex	1	A. Bean		
	7/28	Rowley (RMWS)	8	R. Heil		8/29	Wellfleet	1	C. Hight		
	8/29	P'town (RP)	3	P. Flood#	Grasshopper Sparrow	7/1-8/10	Southwick	12	max br J. Meyers+v.o.		
Barn Swallow	thr	Hadley	178	max L. Therrien+v.o.		7/11	Falmouth	12	N. Schleissmann		
	7/2	Wachusett Res.	57	M. Lynch#		7/15	Westover AFB	1	M. Maity#		
	7/24	Rowley (RMWS)	65	R. Heil		7/18	Plymouth Airport	2	1juv	BBC (G. d'Entremont)	
	8/8	Burrage Pd WMA	50	G. d'Entremont		7/20	Shirley	3	J. Flagg		
	8/20	Shutesbury	40	max	K. Weir	Lark Sparrow	8/11	Eastham (CGB)	1	Z. Smart	
Cliff Swallow	7/31	Quincy	2	V. Zollo + v.o.		8/25-8/31	PI	2	max	S. Miller# + v.o.	
	8/1	Rumney (Revere)	1	S. Zende# + v.o.		Clay-colored Sparrow	7/5	Windsor	1	J. Pierce + v.o.	
	8/24	BHI (Georges I.)	2	S. Jones	Field Sparrow	7/10	Southwick	8	G. d'Entremont		
	7/1-7/6	Rowe	30	max	C. Hyytinen		7/18	MSSF	3	BBC (G. d'Entremont)	
	7/1-8/1	Great Barrington	80	max	L. Merry + v.o.		7/21	Petersham	2	M. Lynch#	
Red-breasted Nuthatch	thr	October Mountain	9	max	K. Hanson, J. Jew+v.o.	Dark-eyed Junco	7/3-7/25	Great Barrington	7	max	A.+J. Eckerson+v.o.
	7/24	Royalston	24	G. d'Entremont#			7/5-8/28	Mount Greylock	7	max	M. + S. Gates+v.o.
	7/31	Winchendon	34	M. Lynch#			7/14-8/30	October Mountain	9	max	K. Hanson, J. Jew+v.o.
House Wren	7/6	Quaboag IBA	18	M. Lynch#	White-throated Sparrow	7/5	Windsor	3	S. Gowen		
	7/24	Royalston	12	G. d'Entremont#		7/14-7/21	Mount Greylock	2	max	T. + N. Walker + v.o.	
Winter Wren	7/8	Milton	3	2ad+1juv	E. Zawatski	7/24	Royalston	5	G. d'Entremont#		
	7/11	Hardwick	1	M. Lynch#	Vesper Sparrow	7/1-8/6	Hadley (Honeyopt)	5	max	L. Therrien + v.o.	
	7/21	Petersham	1	M. Lynch#		7/10-8/24	Northampton	1	M. Harris + v.o.		
	8/1	Concord	1	J. Forbes		7/11-7/14	Northampton	2	max	M. Harris + v.o.	
Marsh Wren	7/6	Quaboag IBA	8	M. Lynch#		7/18-7/22	Orange Airport	1	B. Lafley		
	7/15	Millis	6	J. Bock	Seaside Sparrow	7/24	Eastham	2	K. Schopp		
	8/17	W. Harwich	32	N. Tepper		8/3	PI	2	T. Wetmore		
Golden-crowned Kinglet	7/11-8/31	October Mountain	6	max	J. Pierce# + v.o.	Saltmarsh Sparrow	7/4, 7/8	PI	58,42	R. Heil	
	7/31-8/31	Mount Greylock	3	max	K. Yuza-Pate# + v.o.		7/20	Quincy	9	J. Bock + v.o.	
Eastern Bluebird	7/24	Royalston	10	G. d'Entremont#		8/7	Harwich	5	G. d'Entremont#		
	8/29	Rutland	12	M. Lynch#	Savannah Sparrow	7/1-7/24	Southwick	12	max	J. Meyers + v.o.	
Veery	7/11	Hardwick	54	M. Lynch#		7/5-7/24	Pittsfield	12	max	S. Townsend	

Savannah Sparrow (continued)				8/28	PI	1		N. Tepper
7/10	Worc.	12	M. Lynch#	8/29	Brewster	1 b		S. Finnegan#
Swamp Sparrow				8/29	Rutland	1 f/imm		M. Lynch#
7/6	Quaboag IBA	58	M. Lynch#	Common Yellowthroat				
7/11	Hardwick	22	M. Lynch#	7/4	PI	23		R. Heil
Eastern Towhee				7/6	Quaboag IBA	42		M. Lynch#
7/11	Hardwick	35	M. Lynch#	Hooded Warbler				
7/18	MSSF	31	BBC (G. d'Entremont)	8/28	PI	1		N. Jacob
7/29	Ware R. IBA	28	M. Lynch#	8/29	Nahant	1		S. Hill
Yellow-breasted Chat				American Redstart				
8/20, 8/31	MBO	1,2 b imm	T. Lloyd-Evans#	7/6	Quaboag IBA	5		M. Lynch#
8/29	Northampton	1	L. Therrien	8/20	MBO	2 b imm		T. Lloyd-Evans#
8/29	Nantucket	1	T. Pastuszak	Cape May Warbler				
Yellow-headed Blackbird				8/16-8/31	October Mountain	8 max		B. Robo + v.o.
7/14	Concord	1 f ph	E. Davies	8/28	PI	4		N. Tepper
Bobolink				Cerulean Warbler				
thr	Hadley	119 max	A. Hulseley + v.o.	7/1-8/3	Mount Holyoke	4 max		L. Therrien + v.o.
7/10	Worc.	24	M. Lynch#	8/13	Boston (FPk)	1		D. Sloan
Eastern Meadowlark				Northern Parula				
7/1-7/17	Hadley (Honeypt)	4 max	L. Therrien + v.o.	8/28	Easthampton	4		D. Peake-Jones
7/1-7/24	Southwick	8 max	J. Meyers + v.o.	8/31	Amherst	5		M. McKittrick
7/3-7/30	Northampton	4 max	T. Gilliland + v.o.	Magnolia Warbler				
7/18	Plymouth Airport	5	BBC (G. d'Entremont)	7/11-8/30	October Mountain	5 max		J. Pierce# + v.o.
Orchard Oriole				7/24	Royalston	1 imm		G. d'Entremont
7/4	Falmouth	14	G. Hirth	7/31	PI	1		J. Keeley#
7/4	PI	4	R. Heil	Bay-breasted Warbler				
7/18	Rowley (RMWS)	4	R. Heil	8/21	Mount Greylock	1		So. Auer
8/18	Wayland	3	2ad+juv	8/28	Boston (FPk)	1		S. Jones
Baltimore Oriole				8/28	Rowley (RMWS)	1		R. Heil
8/21	PI	10	G. d'Entremont#	8/29	Boston (PG)	1		J. Layman
8/25	Waltham	6	J. Forbes	Blackburnian Warbler				
Ovenbird				7/8	Ware R. IBA	1		M. Lynch#
7/8	Ware R. IBA	43	M. Lynch#	8/13	Boston (FPk)	1		S. Jones + v.o.
8/28	PI	1	N. Tepper	Yellow Warbler				
Worm-eating Warbler				7/4-7/8	PI	14,20		R. Heil
7/1-8/3	Mount Holyoke	1	L. Therrien	Chestnut-sided Warbler				
7/5	Falmouth	3	N. Marchessault	7/11	Hardwick	12		M. Lynch#
7/5-8/16	Hadley	2 max	Sa. Auer, C. Stern v.o.	8/12-8/25	Boston (FPk)	2		S. Jones
7/11-7/22	Sharon	1	J. Barcus + v.o.	Blackpoll Warbler				
Louisiana Waterthrush				8/16	Pittsfield	1		P. Sibner
8/6	Hardwick	1	M. Lynch#	8/16, 8/30	PI	1,1		R. Sirull, J. Layman
8/15	PI	1	S. Sullivan#	8/27	Boston (CHRes.)	1		R. Doherty
8/16	Hadley	1	T. Gilliland	8/28	Boston (FPk)	1		S. Jones
8/17	Granville	1	D. Holmes	Black-throated Blue Warbler				
Northern Waterthrush				7/8	Ware R. IBA	3		M. Lynch#
7/8	Ware R. IBA	1	M. Lynch#	8/20	Westwood	1 ad m		E. Nielsen
8/11	Waltham	1	J. Forbes	Palm Warbler				
8/28	PI	1	N. Tepper	8/28	Longmeadow	1		T. Gilliland
Blue-winged Warbler				Pine Warbler				
7/1-7/30	Hadley	3 max	M. McKittrick + v.o.	7/18	MSSF	16		BBC (G. d'Entremont)
7/1-8/2	Amherst	3 max	M. Locher + v.o.	7/29	Ware R. IBA	28		M. Lynch#
7/24	Rowley (RMWS)	1	R. Heil	Yellow-rumped Warbler				
8/4	Brewster	1 b	S. Finnegan#	thr	Mount Greylock	8 max		J. Pierce + v.o.
8/8	Boston (FPk)	3	S. Jones	thr	October Mountain	3 max		J. Pierce + v.o.
Black-and-white Warbler				7/24	Royalston	6		G. d'Entremont#
7/24	Southwick	9	G. d'Entremont#	7/29	Ware R. IBA	14		M. Lynch#
7/24	Rowley (RMWS)	1	R. Heil	Prairie Warbler				
7/31	PI	1	J. Keeley#	7/1-8/20	Montague	4 max		N. Dorian + v.o.
8/23-8/29	MNWS	1 ph	A. Sanford# + v.o.	7/10	Southwick	4		G. d'Entremont#
8/28	PI	1	N. Tepper	7/18	MSSF	4		BBC (G. d'Entremont)
8/31	Waltham	3	J. Forbes	8/24	Chatham	16		R. Schain
Tennessee Warbler				Black-throated Green Warbler				
8/8	Boston (FPk)	1	S. Jones	7/31	Winchendon	3		M. Lynch#
8/12	Boston (McW)	1	L. Grimes + v.o.	8/23	BHI (Deer I.)	1		K. Hansen
8/15	Huntington	2	K. Jones, D. McLain	Canada Warbler				
Nashville Warbler				7/24	Royalston	2		G. d'Entremont#
8/2	Shelburne	1	T. Webler	8/13	Boston (McW)	1		T. Bradford
8/21	Mount Greylock	2	So. Auer, J. Felton	8/13-8/14	Boston (FPk)	1		S. Jones + v.o.
8/29	Rutland	1	M. Lynch#	8/14	Boston (AA)	1		J. Murphy
Mourning Warbler				8/18	Ware R. IBA	3		M. Lynch#
7/4	N. Adams	1	M. Glines	Wilson's Warbler				
8/12	Boston (McW)	1	L. Grimes	8/16	Hadley	1		T. Gilliland
8/17	Hadley	1	S. Surner	8/28	Quincy	1		J. Bock

Scarlet Tanager				Dickcissel			
7/11	Hardwick	15	M. Lynch#	7/1-7/24	Southwick	4 max	J. Meyers + v.o.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak				8/7	Rockport (HPt)	1	J. Cobb#
7/8	Ware R. IBA	5	M. Lynch#	8/13	GMNWR	1	J. Forbes
7/11	Hardwick	7	M. Lynch#	8/13	Wellfleet	1	D. Sibley
Blue Grosbeak				8/23-8/29	Longmeadow	1	A. Hulsey# + v.o.
thr	Hadley (Honeypt)	4 max br	J. Smith + v.o.	8/24-8/27	W. Roxbury (MP)	2	M. Iliff + v.o.
7/1-7/24	Southwick	1	J. Meyers + v.o.	8/27	Eastham (FH)	1	J. Sweeney
8/20	Falmouth	5 1pr+3yg	M. Keleher#	8/30	Westwood	1	E. Nielsen
Indigo Bunting							
7/10	Southwick	13	G. d'Entremont				

BYGONE BIRDS

Historical Highlights for July–August

Neil Hayward

5 YEARS AGO

July–August 2016

A flock of 11 **Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks** was photographed in Sandwich on July 12. The Brookline Bird Club's pelagic trip on August 20–21 produced a **Black-capped Petrel**, five **Audubon's Shearwaters**, six **White-faced Storm-Petrels**, six **Band-rumped Storm-Petrels**, and six **Long-tailed Jaegers**. A day before the pelagic, a **Red-billed Tropicbird** was photographed south of Nantucket Island. An **American Avocet** spent nearly three weeks at Plum Island between July and August and a **Franklin's Gull** was observed there on July 8. A **Bridled Tern** was photographed flying past Race Point on July 9.

Best nesting: the first breeding record of **Merlin** for Worcester County was confirmed in Barre. **Blue Grosbeaks** attempted to nest at Cumberland Farms.

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10 YEARS AGO

July–August 2011

Tropical Storm Irene battered the state on August 28 and blew in a good number of rarities including single **White-tailed Tropicbirds** at Lake Onota in Pittsfield and Quabbin Reservoir, **Sooty Terns** in six coastal locations as well as inland at Onota and Quabbin, **Band-rumped Storm-Petrels** and **Bridled Terns** at three locations on the southern coast, and a **Gull-billed Tern** at Westport. A **Brown Booby**—the fifth for the state—spent a week at Corporation Beach in Dennis in mid-August. A **Little Egret** was photographed on Plum Island on July 10 and again on August 6. A **Sedge Wren** was found in Tyringham in July and August.

Best sighting: an **Elegant Tern** on Plum Island on July 23 was the second record for the state.

Bird Observer
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FRANKLIN'S GULL BY BLAIR NIKULA, 2016

20 YEARS AGO



July–August 2001

Highlights of the Brookline Bird Club pelagic trip on August 27 were three **Audubon's Shearwaters** and two **White-faced Storm-Petrels**. A **Sandhill Crane** appeared at Great Meadows NWR on August 18 and stayed for the rest of the month. A **Curlew Sandpiper** was seen sporadically at South Beach on August 5–26. Early fall flycatchers included a **Western Kingbird** on Plum Island on August 29 and an **Ash-throated Flycatcher** at Rock Meadow, Belmont the following day. A **Sedge Wren** was at the Daniel Webster Sanctuary in Marshfield in August.

Best sighting: the summer of the storm-petrel. From July, Wilson's Storm-Petrels were seen in unprecedented numbers in coastal waters and very close to shore along much of the state's coastline. A circuit of Cape Ann on August 5 tallied 830 birds, while Stellwagen Bank claimed the high count of 9,500 on July 9. An unexplained food source may have enticed the birds inshore.

40 YEARS AGO



July–August 1981

The high count for Red Knots this year was 2,800 in Scituate on August 3. An adult **Gull-billed Tern** was seen at Plum Island on July 14, and an adult **Sabine's Gull** was reported from Stellwagen Bank on August 30. A singing male Northern Cardinal on July 6 was Jim Berry's first record for Crane's Beach.

Best sighting: a **Spotted Redshank** was photographed at the salt pans on Plum Island on July 28. It was found by two birders from New Jersey and seen by no one else. It was the first record for Massachusetts. Since then, there has only been one other record: South Wellfleet, July 31–August 19, 1990. 🐦

ABBREVIATIONS FOR BIRD SIGHTINGS

Taxonomic order is based on AOS checklist, Seventh edition, 62nd Supplement, as published online at <<http://checklist.aou.org/taxa>> (see also <<http://checklist.americanornithology.org/>>).

Locations		Pd	Pond
AA	Arnold Arboretum, Boston	PG	Public Garden, Boston
ABC	Allen Bird Club	PI	Plum Island
AFB	Air Force Base	Pk	Park
AP	Andrews Point, Rockport	PLY Co. seas	Plymouth County, offshore
APd	Allens Pond, S. Dartmouth	Pont.	Pontoosuc Lake, Laneshoro
AthBC	Athol Bird Club	POP	Point of Pines, Revere
B.	Beach	PR	Pinnacle Rock, Malden
Barre FD	Barre Falls Dam	P'town	Provincetown
BBC	Brookline Bird Club	R.	River
BFWMA	Bolton Flats WMA, Bolton & Lancaster	Res.	Reservoir
BHI	Boston Harbor Islands	RKG	Rose Kennedy Greenway, Boston
BI	Belle Isle, E. Boston	RP	Race Point, Provincetown
BMB	Broad Meadow Brook, Worcester	SB	South Beach, Chatham
BNC	Boston Nature Center, Mattapan	SF	State Forest
BR	Bass Rocks, Gloucester	SN	Sandy Neck, Barnstable
BRI Co. seas	Bristol County, offshore	SP	State Park
Cambr.	Cambridge	SRV	Sudbury River Valley
CB	Crane Beach, Ipswich	SSBC	South Shore Bird Club
CCBC	Cape Cod Bird Club	TASL	Take A Second Look, Boston Harbor Census
CGB	Coast Guard Beach, Eastham	WBWS	Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary
Co.	County	WE	World's End, Hingham
Corp. B.	Corporation Beach, Dennis	WMA	Wildlife Management Area
CP	Crooked Pond, Boxford	WMWS	Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary
CPd	Chandler Pond, Boston	Wompatuck SP	Hingham, Cohasset, Scituate, Norwell
C. Res.	Cambridge Reservoir, Waltham	Worc.	Worcester
CSpk	Cold Spring Park, Newton	WS	Wildlife Sanctuary
Cumb. Farms	Cumberland Farms, Middleboro	WSF	Willowdale State Forest, Ipswich
DFWS	Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary	WWMA	Westborough WMA, Westborough
DM	Dunback Meadow	Other Abbreviations	
DWMA	Delaney WMA, Stow, Bolton, Harvard	*	first state record (pending MARC review)
DWWS	Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary	!	subject to MARC review
EP	Eastern Point, Gloucester	ad	adult
FE	First Encounter Beach, Eastham	alt	alternative plumage
FH	Fort Hill, Eastham	au	audio recorded
FHC	Forest Hills Cemetery, Boston	b	banded
FP	Fresh Pond, Cambridge	basic	basic plumage
FPk	Franklin Park, Boston	br	breeding
G#	Gate #, Quabbin Res.	cy	cycle (3cy = 3rd cycle)
GMNWR	Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge	d	dead
GN	Gooseberry Neck, Westport	dk	dark (morph)
H	Harbor	f	female
HCB	Herring Cove Beach, Provincetown	fl	fledgling
HP	Horn Pond, Woburn	h	heard
HPt	Halibut Point, Rockport	imm	immature
HRWMA	High Ridge WMA, Gardner	inj	injured
I.	Island	juv	juvenile
IBA	Important Bird Area	lt	light (morph)
IRWS	Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary	m	male
JPd	Jamaica Pond, Boston	MARC	Massachusetts Avian Records Committee
L.	Ledge	max	maximum
MAS	Mass Audubon	migr	migrating
MBO	Bird Observatory, Manomet	min	minimum
MBWMA	Martin Burns WMA, Newbury	n	nesting
McW	McLaughlin Woods	nfc	nocturnal flight call
MI	Morris Island	ph	photographed
MNWS	Marblehead Neck Wildlife Sanctuary	pr	pair
MP	Millennium Park, W. Roxbury	r	rescued
MSSF	Myles Standish State Forest, Plymouth	S	summer (1S = first summer)
MtA	Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambr.	subad	subadult
MV	Martha's Vineyard	v.o.	various observers
NAC	Nine Acre Corner, Concord	W	winter (2W = second winter)
Nbpt	Newburyport	yg	young
ONWR	Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge	#	additional observers

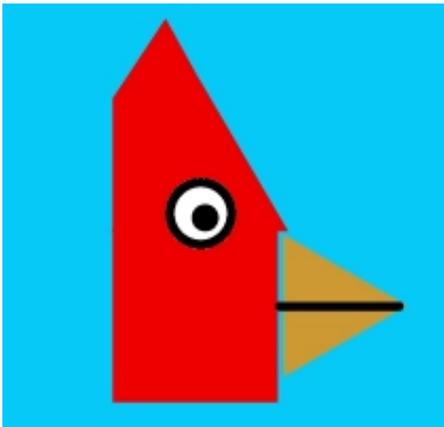
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Sightings for any given month should be reported to *Bird Observer* by the eighth of the following month. Reports should include: name and phone number of observer, name of species, date of sighting, location, number of birds, other observer(s), and information on age, sex, and morph (where relevant). Reports can be emailed to sightings@birdobserver.org or submitted online at <<http://www.birdobserver.org/Contact-Us/Submit-Sightings>>, or sent by mail to Bird Sightings, Robert H. Stymeist, 36 Lewis Avenue, Arlington MA 02474-3206.

Species on the Review List of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee, as well as species unusual as to place, time, or known nesting status in Massachusetts, should be reported promptly to the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee, c/o Sean Williams, 18 Parkman Street, Westborough MA 01581, or by email to seanbirder@gmail.com.

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ABOUT THE COVER

Ruby-crowned Kinglet

The Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Corthylio calendula*) is one of the tiniest of our songbirds yet produces the largest clutches of any North American passerine species. Ruby-crowned Kinglets are gray-green above and light yellowish gray below. They have two distinct, white wing bars on dark gray wings and a white eye ring that is broken at the top and bottom. The sexes are similar in appearance except for the scarlet crown of the male. They have tiny bills and can often be identified by their almost constant wing-flicking behavior.

The Ruby-crowned Kinglet is easily separated from Golden-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus satrapa*) by the latter's boldly striped face and crown. The taxonomy of the genus *Regulus* is problematic, with studies indicating that the Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned kinglets have a substantial genetic distance between them, which is usually associated with different genera. Ruby-crowned Kinglets differ from all the other *Regulus* species as well, leading to classification in its own genus: *Corthylio*. Three subspecies are recognized. *C. c. calendula* breeds from Alaska in a broad swath across Canada south of Hudson Bay to Newfoundland that dips into the United States around the Great Lakes region and through northern New England. *C. c. grinnelli* breeds from coastal Alaska south through British Columbia. *C. c. obscurus* formerly inhabited Isla Guadalupe, Mexico, and is now extinct.

In the western United States, Ruby-crowned Kinglets breed or are year-round residents in the mountains from Washington State south through central California, Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico; they also breed from Montana south to New Mexico. Ruby-crowned Kinglets winter from Washington State to the Southwest and continue through Mexico to Guatemala. In the East, they winter sparingly from southern Massachusetts and Connecticut south through Florida and west through Missouri and southern Kansas, Texas, and Mexico. In Massachusetts, there only a few questionable breeding records. However, the Ruby-crowned Kinglet is a common to sometimes abundant migrant but a scarce and irregular winter visitor. Ruby-crowned Kinglets arrive in Massachusetts in early April; fall migration peaks in early October. They frequently join mixed flocks of other small woodland species on their wintering grounds.

Ruby-crowned Kinglets are monogamous. They breed when a year old and produce a single brood each year. Because Ruby-crowned Kinglets usually nest high in spruce trees or other conifers, making observation difficult, little is known of courtship or nest building. The loud, jumbled, musical song is given by the male on the breeding grounds, usually from a high perch in a conifer. An abbreviated version is given by the female. The song has been described as two-parted, the first being a high-pitched *tee* or *zee* note followed by a series of *tu* or *turr* notes. The second part is composed of loud, high-pitched notes: *tee-da-leet*, *tee-da-leet*, *tee-da-leet*. They also have several contact calls. Males have several aggressive displays that may be related to territorial defense. The most extreme display involves a male leaning forward and down toward an

opponent with tail cocked, rump feathers fluffed, white wing bars exposed, and scarlet crown fully erect, as the bird vigorously sings. A toned-down version of this display may play a role in courtship.

In the East, Ruby-crowned Kinglets primarily nest in spruce-fir forests or mixed hardwood-conifer forests, usually close to water. In the West, they tend to nest in coniferous forests. It is thought that the female selects the nest site high in a spruce or other conifer; the nest is suspended from small branches or on a limb, often near the trunk, and always protected by overhanging foliage. The female builds the open, often pendulous cup nest, which is made of moss, lichens, twigs, rootlets, conifer needles, and spider web, and lined with mammal hair, feathers, and fine grasses. The female alone broods the usual clutch of seven to eight eggs—there can be up to 12— for about two weeks until hatching. The eggs are buffy white and spotted with red brown around the large end. At hatching, the chicks are helpless, without a covering of down and with their eyes closed. While the female broods the chicks, the male may bring her food. Both parents feed the chicks. The period to fledging is poorly known; in one instance, it was 16 days. At another nest, a male was observed feeding the chicks 10 days after fledging.

Ruby-crowned Kinglets forage mostly in conifers, usually by gleaning needles, but also by hovering, hawking, and pecking at branches. Their diet consists primarily of insects such as flies and beetles, spiders, and berries and some small seeds in summer. They also visit sapsucker wells for sap and insects.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet adults and young are taken by owls, hawks, and grackles; and their nests are also robbed by jays and squirrels. Many are killed each year in collisions with towers during migration. Logging and wildfires are a constant threat on both the breeding and wintering grounds. Despite these threats, several factors work to their advantage: (1) the breeding range is widespread and often secluded, (2) Partners in Flight estimates a breeding population of 90,000,000 birds, and (3) Breeding Bird Census data indicate a stable population from 1966 through 2015. Thus, it appears that the future of this lovely tiny songbird is secure. 🐦

William E. Davis, Jr.

ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST

John Sill

John Sill is a freelance wildlife artist living in the mountains of North Carolina. He was the illustrator for the Bird Identification Calendar for Mass Audubon for many years. His work has appeared in *Birds In Art* at the Leigh-Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, Wisconsin, and in *Art of the Animal Kingdom* at the Bennington Center for the Arts in Vermont. He continues to illustrate the “About” and “About Habitats” series of natural history books for children written by his wife Cathryn. 🐦

AT A GLANCE

October 2021



DAVID CLAPP

For the second issue in a row, the mystery species possesses a conical bill suggestive of a member of either the Family Emberizidae or Fringillidae. The online color image fails to show any of the bright reddish, pink, or yellow color characteristics of some of the fringillids, or the small bill, fine streaky plumage, and short tail of other species such as Common Redpoll and Pine Siskin. Although a female or juvenile Brown-headed Cowbird also has a conical bill similar to members in the two families above, the presence of brownish patterning on the back, nape, and rump of the mystery bird, along with some white feathering on the wings and a long tail, are inappropriate features for a cowbird. With these points in mind, the mystery species is likely an emberizid of some sort.

The mottled appearance on the back and light streaks on the sides suggest that the bird is a juvenile. Few sparrows in any plumage exhibit the mottled pattern present on the back of the bird in the photograph, especially in combination with black wings and a long black tail. Indeed, when these features are considered along with the fairly large size of the mystery bird—its overall size, long tail, and stout longish legs can be judged in the context of the leafless twigs the bird is sitting on—there are no sparrows that are a good match for the mystery species.

Remembering that towhees are also emberizids, the shape of the mystery bird is appropriate for a towhee, as are the shape of its bill, the black tail, and black wings with white markings on them. The mottled and streaky appearance of the back and rump are also perfectly consistent with a juvenile towhee. These features point to the identification of the mystery species as a juvenile male Eastern Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*).

Eastern Towhees are common spring and fall migrants and summer residents in brushy pastures, forest edges, and deciduous or mixed forests with a thick understory, especially on the coastal plain and at lower elevations in the interior of Massachusetts. Small numbers regularly winter in thickets on Cape Cod and along the coast, and a few also routinely visit feeders. David Clapp photographed this juvenile Eastern Towhee in Harwich, Barnstable County, Massachusetts on August 1, 2021. 🐦

Wayne R. Petersen

AT A GLANCE



WAYNE R. PETERSEN

Can you identify the bird in this photograph?

Identification will be discussed in next issue's AT A GLANCE.

MORE HOT BIRDS



The big storm on October 28 caused a flabbergasting flight of seabirds past First Encounter Beach, including more than 10,000 eiders, 16,000 scoters, 640 Red Phalaropes, 630 Dovekies, 380 jaegers of all three species (but mostly Pomarine), and two **Great Skua**. More than a dozen birders, anticipating the weather conditions, were on hand to witness the incredible spectacle. Tim Spahr took the photo on the left.

Pineapple sage is a plant known for attracting vagrant hummingbirds in the late fall and winter. Matt Garvey planted some in his yard in Brookline, and this fall it paid off when a **Rufous Hummingbird** showed up on October 28. Sue Finnegan caught and banded the bird, and confirmed its identification. It continues to visit Matt's feeder at the time of this writing. Erik Nielsen took the photo on the right.



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