

Bird Observer

VOLUME 32, NUMBER 6

DECEMBER 2004



THE HOT BIRD



Jeremiah Trimble took this stunning portrait (left).

Joe Sutherland took the flight image (right).



Peter Alden's photograph shows Vern Laux watching a pass by the falcon (left).



Phil Brown took this photograph of the falcon with lunch (above).

Glen Tepke took this great flight shot (right) <<http://www.pbase.com/gtepke>>.



Peter Alden shows the falcon to Walter Cronkite (right). Photograph by Ed Lam.



Jonathan Klizas took the portrait at right.



Phil Brown took this great shot of the perched bird (left).



Joe Sutherland caught the falcon flying overhead with Tree Swallows (right).



Another nice portrait by Phil Brown (left).

Eddie Giles took this photograph of a few falcon fans (below).

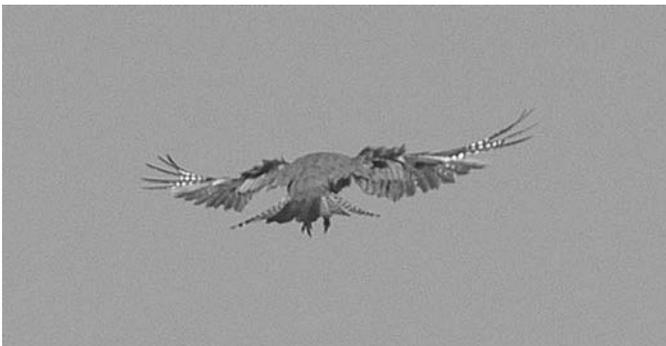


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105th Christmas Bird Count

For an up-to-date listing of counts, dates, and compilers, visit the Brookline Bird Club website at <<http://www.massbird.org/bbc/ChristmasBirdCount'04.htm>>. Be sure to make contact with compilers at least one week before the count. For information on previous count results, visit <<http://www.audubon.org/bird/bbc/>>.



RED-FOOTED FALCON BY JOE SUTHERLAND



Bird Observer

A bimonthly journal — to enhance understanding, observation, and enjoyment of birds
VOL. 32, NO. 6 DECEMBER 2004

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CHANGES OF ADDRESS and subscription inquiries should be sent to: Bird Observer Subscriptions, P.O. Box 236, Arlington, MA 02476-0003, or e-mail to John Marsh at <jmarsh@jocama.com>.

ADVERTISING: full page, \$100; half page, \$55; quarter page, \$35. Send camera-ready copy to Bird Observer Advertising, P.O. Box 236, Arlington, MA 02476-0003.

MATERIAL FOR PUBLICATION: BIRD OBSERVER welcomes submissions of original articles, photographs, art work, field notes, and field studies. Please send submissions to the Managing Editor: Carolyn Marsh, 16 Denton Rd., Wellesley, MA, 02482-6405; E-mail: <cmarsh@jocama.com>. If possible, please include a computer disk (Microsoft Word, txt, or rtf formats), or e-mail to the Editor as an attached file. Please do not embed graphics in word processing documents. Include author's or artist's name, address, and telephone number and information from which a brief biography can be prepared.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BIRD OBSERVER, P.O. Box 236, Arlington, MA 02476-0003. PERIODICALS CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT BOSTON, MA.

BIRD OBSERVER (USPS 369-850) is published bimonthly, COPYRIGHT © 2004 by Bird Observer of Eastern Massachusetts, Inc., 462 Trapelo Road, Belmont, MA 02478, a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Gifts to Bird Observer will be greatly appreciated and are tax deductible. ISSN: 0893-463

Letter from the Editor:

With the January-February 1975 issue, we had just completed our second year of publication, and our title read *Bird Observer of Eastern Massachusetts*. The front cover featured the sprightly Sanderlings that graced the issues from Volume 1 through Volume 5. On the back cover, the subscriber address was written by hand, and a 16¢ stamp was cancelled above it. A major article (typewritten) was an interview with the men who discovered the famous Ross's Gull of Newburyport.

Nearly thirty years later much has changed, but once again we are celebrating a birding phenomenon: the first New World appearance of a Red-footed Falcon on Martha's Vineyard. *Bird Observer* too has changed with the times. As creator and sponsor of the statewide birding website, Massbird.org, *Bird Observer* was actively involved in keeping the nationwide birding community informed about this bird, publishing photographs within hours after it was identified, and then updating its web page several times daily with additional links and information on the falcon.

Now it seems only natural that we take the next logical step with our involvement and publish an issue dedicated to this exciting event. Along with our extensive coverage, we're offering our first-ever color cover, a move unanimously endorsed by our directors, many of whom generously donated funds to cover the extra cost. Space considerations dictated by this focus have mandated that we omit several of our customary and popular features, including About the Cover and About Books. For this, we beg your indulgence. Be assured that they will reappear in the following issue.

We invite you to reminisce with us as you look back on *the* event of the summer. Find out how the falcon's discoverer, Vern Laux, almost let it get away. Read of Matt Pelikan's personal reflections on his experience with the bird. Do you remember the 1975 Ross's Gull? However you may answer, don't miss Wayne Petersen's and Paul Baicich's article on the striking parallels between these events. David Sibley (also our cover artist) works through the fine points of identification, while Julian Hough reviews the species' history of vagrancy and speculates on how it arrived at Katama. Bob Stymeist and Jeremiah Trimble challenge you to look for the next species new to Massachusetts, and Richard Veit discusses the provenance of vagrants.

And, finally, as a no-longer-suffering lifetime fan of the Boston baseball team, I take great pleasure in agreeing with Doug Chickering, who noted most aptly on the *massbird* listserv that he found it to be most propitious that the bird of the year — indeed the bird of the millennium — was a small gray falcon with Red Sox. Who knows what other miracles lurk in our future?

We hope you enjoy this very special issue as much as we have enjoyed putting it together.

Carolyn Marsh

A Tale of Discovery: The Americas' First Red-footed Falcon

E. Vernon Laux

Sunday, August 8, 2004

It all started just before noon on August 8, 2004, while birding the fields at Katama Farm, in the Town of Edgartown, on the island of Martha's Vineyard. A small group of birders, four visiting Manhattanites and I, their bird guide this day, were trudging across various mowed fields in bright sun in search of Upland Sandpipers. No luck on the sandpipers, but a couple of Ospreys, Red-tailed Hawks, and several Northern Harriers (as well as a handful of monarchs and American ladies) provided something to look at. Walking back to our vehicle, we saw a small raptor briefly hovering in the distance.

The only small raptor in this part of the world that hovers regularly is the American Kestrel. It is also the only small hawk one could reasonably expect to encounter in early August over the fields at Katama. Formerly a common bird on the island, the species has declined precipitously all over the state, and they have become very scarce as breeding birds. Getting the distant bird in binoculars, I thought something about it looked odd. Clearly, we needed a better view. This meant jogging north along a hedgerow for about a quarter of a mile to get unimpeded views. Finally, slightly winded, we arrived at a dirt road and, importantly, a break in the hedgerow. The bird could be seen hovering, hawking, and swooping at a distance.

It was being constantly harassed by both Tree and Barn swallows, which did not like the look of this curious bird. Quickly, getting the bird in the spotting scope at long range, I noted that it had what appeared to be a dark tail. Kestrel shows a rufous color on the tail. I was puzzled. When you've been birding, hard, for thirty years, and you are as familiar with North America's birds as I am, being puzzled is in itself a clue. I remember thinking to myself as I looked through the scope that it looked like a distant Peregrine Falcon, but it was too small for that. Prairie Falcon came to mind for a millisecond as I watched this bird hovering in the distance, the image dancing with heat distortion. All the time it was facing directly away from me as it flew into a fairly stiff southwest breeze.

The bird then made a turn allowing me to see the barred underwing and general coloration. Only one North American bird looks like this. Juvenile and subadult kites have barred wing linings that molt into the solid gray of the adult. I said to the assembled group, "It's an immature Mississippi Kite!"

For everyone but me, Mississippi Kite would have been a life bird. Excitement and delight gripped the group, and we patiently watched this lovely bird, acting very kestrel-like, as it swooped, hawked, and occasionally hovered at a distance. Periodically, while in aerial pursuit of a dragonfly, the bird would put on impressive,

big-falcon bursts of speed in the twenty-knot southwest wind. After we watched the bird for about ten minutes, it turned and ran with the wind soaring right over our heads, delivering “crippling views” as they say in the United Kingdom. “Ooohs” and “Aahs” all around from the group.

There had never been a live Mississippi Kite seen on the Vineyard before. (Sadly, I had discovered a still warm, dead, immature Mississippi Kite before sunrise on Saturday morning of Memorial Day Weekend in 1985.) I made a call to alert other island birders of this long-overdue first for the Vineyard. Matt Pelikan (editor of *Winging It* for the American Birding Association) of Oak Bluffs couldn’t come right away, but was kind enough to phone several other people, and within twenty minutes local birders began to arrive on the scene. All were excited by this new Vineyard bird. Others came and went for the rest of the afternoon.

Having watched this cooperative bird for almost forty-five minutes, I had to leave, but on my way to my appointment, I started thinking about what I had seen. I had a little nagging feeling in the back of my head. I didn’t know what exactly, but something was wrong. Then I realized in a lucid moment that it was the hovering. I have seen lots of Mississippi Kites, in migration, where they breed, in Kansas and Oklahoma, and I had never seen one hover!

The bright sun had made judging color impossible, and I wanted some pictures of this bird. So while driving, I called Sally Anderson of West Tisbury and asked her to try to get some photos. She arrived at the field around 5:30 p.m. and got some excellent photos, but like many people my age, she did not know how to download and send the photos, so she took them down to the Martha’s Vineyard Times, a weekly newspaper that I write a bird column for. Unfortunately, I did not know that these images had been taken.

Monday, August 9, 2004

I was on the run early until just after 12:30 p.m. I had heard nothing about the “kite” (or Sally’s photographs), and I wanted to relocate the bird and photograph it. I had one hour. Scouring the fields, I could not find the bird. So I ordered lunch at Whosie’s Diner, where I had arranged to meet friend and fellow birder Lanny McDowell. We were just getting in our vehicles when I spotted the bird, hovering again a long way off toward the beach. I had to leave, but I implored Lanny, “Please get some pictures of that bird, up close, if you can.” He devoted several hours to the task and managed to get some great shots.

I got home that night and found an e-mail from Lanny with photos attached. I was excited as I tried to view the images. Unfortunately, my dial-up connection has many bad days, and I was only able to open one picture, not one of the better shots. So, not as calmly or politely as I might have, I forwarded the e-mail to my friend Jeremiah Trimble who works in the Bird Department at the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University. Jeremiah is as talented a field observer as exists. I have had the pleasure of birding with him since he was a boy. He took to his father, Peter Trimble’s, passion for birding, and both have been great friends to me. I knew

the Trimbles were due back from a research trip in the Aleutian Islands and that Jeremiah would be in his office the next morning. Aside from being a brilliant field observer, he is also computer savvy, and I knew he could get at those pictures.

Tuesday, August 10, 2004

While I attended a meeting that took all morning, Jeremiah was facing the daunting task of sorting through almost three weeks of e-mail. He got to my forwarded message with its attached photos and assumed this should be easy. He opened the pictures and was stunned. Here were images of a falcon that was clearly no Mississippi Kite. According to Bob Stymeist, who also works at the Bird Department of the Museum, he arrived and found Jeremiah sitting on the floor, surrounded by study skins and all the literature he could find pertaining to Red-footed Falcon (*Falco vespertinus*) and the Amur Falcon (*Falco amurensis*). The species had recently been split; the Amur Falcon was previously considered to be the eastern race of the Red-footed Falcon. By this time, Jeremiah was wondering if I was playing a joke on him. He left a message on my cell phone.

I got out of the meeting and picked up Jeremiah's message saying he wanted to talk about the pictures. When I called him back, he asked me if I had seen the pictures, and I said, "No." He asked me if there was anything that struck me as odd or unusual about the bird. I said everything about that bird had struck me as odd, and it had been driving me crazy. I was trying to get pictures to get a better look at because the behavior was all wrong for Mississippi Kite. "So what do you think it is?" I asked.

"I think it might be a Red-footed Falcon," he answered.

I paused for a moment, stunned, synapses flashing, as the truth hit me. "That's exactly what it is," I replied. Same size and color as Mississippi Kite, and the immatures of both are extremely similar. They don't, however, occur together in the same hemisphere. Moments later the newspaper sent me the photos that Sally had taken on Sunday. I looked at the pictures, yet again stunned and elated. Sally had managed to take diagnostic photos that showed way more than what I had seen of the bird. Taken in excellent light, not the bright sunlight of midday, were shots of a Red-footed Falcon with orangey soft parts, rufous-undertail, orange orbital ring. I just about fell out of my chair. That's it then – it is a Red-footed Falcon, and we already have the photos. WOW!

I then put the general word out and had to contact everyone who had seen it and tell them it was a much bigger bird than what I had first called it. All were delighted, especially my friends in New York who were in on the original discovery. Jeremiah and Peter Trimble, Bob Stymeist, and Peter Alden proceeded at warp speed to the Vineyard. I met them, we raced out to Katama and were able to locate, photograph, and properly document and confirm the identity of the falcon. After reveling in this spectacular rarities occurrence and searing its image into our respective eyeballs, we agreed a celebration was in order.

We adjourned to Falmouth where Kristin Nuttle had prepared a veritable feast for the happy birders [see photograph on page 376]. The phone was in constant use and in

danger of burning the lines as news of the discovery exponentially radiated away from Massachusetts. This was very big news. A victory cigar, and the day was complete.

August 11-24, 2004

By 10:30 a.m. on August 11, Jeremiah's photos were posted on a web site and posted to Massbird (the Massachusetts birding information listserv). By August 12, the bird was making headlines in both local and national news outlets. The gates now were opened to a flood of birders. They came – armed with binoculars, high-powered spotting scopes, a vast array of cameras, and video gear. Passersby who wanted to look were afforded the opportunity to get an eyeful of this wayward and beautiful falcon. Birders reveled in the chance to share their passion, knowledge, and equipment with others.

By Saturday, August 14, the first weekend day after the discovery, a veritable army of birders arrived on the Vineyard. They lined the roads surrounding the Katama Airpark, and they in turn attracted vacationers, beachgoers, joggers, and proprietors of lemonade stands, all of which created an unforgettable scene. The number of birders by noon peaked at approximately 1000 individuals. Virtually every minute a taxi would arrive with yet another group; they piled out rapidly, expectations brimming. They came from all over the map, often having flown or driven all night, determined to catch the early ferry to the island. Many were bleary eyed, bewildered, tired, and wondering if they had done the right thing. Would the bird appear? Then, grinning from ear to ear, high-fiving companions and strangers alike, they rejoiced when the falcon arrived.

For its part the falcon was completely unimpressed by all the attention. With its powers of flight and worldly ways, having crossed more of the planet than seems possible, the bird cared little about the terrestrial bipeds who littered the edges of its feeding area. It had found an ideal habitat in which to spend the summer – this preserved sandplain grassland (a tip of the hat to the Nature Conservancy).

The falcon found plenty to eat in the form of long-legged bright green grasshoppers that it captured by dropping from a hover to the ground. It was also observed catching and eating at least five field mice. The most exciting chases occurred when the falcon launched off a perch (often an airport sign) in aerial pursuit of a high-flying dragonfly. It “ringed” up into the air, rapidly gaining altitude, often flying over a half a mile, before the target became visible to the human observer. In a lightning-fast strike, the bird grabbed its intended prey in its talons and then dispatched it with a bite from its beak. At one point, as it dismembered a dragonfly over the assembled group of birders, the crowd actually cheered.

From an observer's standpoint it was a perfect bird. The only day during its stay that it failed to be completely reliable was Monday, August 16, when the northeast wind and rainy conditions suppressed insect activity and made hunting difficult. The bird was not stupid, so it stayed roosting out of the weather to save energy. It made a brief cameo at 12:20 p.m., quickly realized there was nothing to be gained, and took

cover from the nasty conditions. But even on this day, when no raptor in its right mind would waste time attempting to hunt, persistent observers got the bird.

Postscript

The last sighting of the falcon was 12:30 p.m. on August 24, when a group of birders watched it sail off to the south. Its identity had been established with confidence (see David Sibley's discussion in this issue). How it managed to get to Martha's Vineyard remains a subject of interested speculation (see Julian Hough's summary in this issue).

Now that the North American birding community is alerted, in all likelihood there will be more sightings in the future. I think there is a good chance the Vineyard bird will return next summer after wintering in South America, since it imprinted on the Katama field and found lots of food. It is safe to say that hawk counters and birders everywhere (especially on the eastern seaboard) will be taking much closer looks at passing kites.

There are many lessons to be learned from this discovery that almost wasn't. I certainly got a big helping of humble pie, yet I am tickled that in the end we got it right. A collaborative effort was needed, illustrating yet again the importance of friendship.

The best thing about this story is that the one that almost got away did not. 🐦

***Vern Laux** is a realtor on Martha's Vineyard, an occupation which allows him the flexible hours necessary for a dedicated birder. He has visited all seven continents in pursuit of birds, often as a tour guide. He is featured on NPR's local stations WCAI and WNAN as a permanent guest on The Point, a show which includes discussion about birds. His weekly column on birds appears in the Martha's Vineyard Times. He has contributed articles to publications including the New York Times, Birding, and Birder's World magazines, and is the author of the book Bird News: Vagrants and Visitors on a Peculiar Island. He is no stranger to discovering rarities in Massachusetts. He first identified a Common Cuckoo (May 1981) and a Shiny Cowbird (October 2002). Only a month before finding the Red-footed Falcon he discovered a Black-tailed Gull, which will be a first or second state record if accepted by the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee.*



THE AUTHOR AT KATAMA, PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER ALDEN

Identification of the Martha's Vineyard Red-footed Falcon

David Allen Sibley

The first North American record of Red-footed Falcon was found on a small airstrip managed by the Nature Conservancy on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. It was first discovered on August 8, 2004, by Vernon Laux, conclusively identified on August 10 by Jeremiah Trimble, and seen daily until August 24.

In the justifiable excitement over the appearance of this fantastic little falcon in Massachusetts, there was lots of interest in its identification. While the bird is relatively easy to separate from all other North American and European falcons, there is a closely related species from Asia, the Amur Falcon, which could easily wander to North America (maybe "easily" is the wrong word, but I think it's only a little less likely than Red-footed in Massachusetts). There is no doubt that the Martha's Vineyard bird was a Red-footed Falcon, but how the bird was identified is of interest.

The key feature used to separate adult male (Western) Red-footed Falcon (*Falco vespertinus*) from the closely related Amur Falcon (*Falco amurensis*) is the color of the underwing coverts. These are all gray in adult Red-footed and all white in adult Amur. Unfortunately, juvenile males of both species have barred underwing coverts until about one year of age, and the Martha's Vineyard bird had just begun to molt those feathers. Many first-summer male Red-footed Falcons are farther along in their molt by mid-August and have the underwing coverts mostly gray, but this was not the case here, and the underwing coverts of the Martha's Vineyard bird were still almost entirely juvenal feathers. Furthermore, the typical views of the Martha's Vineyard bird — against a bright hazy sky and in brief, low, erratic flights — made it very difficult to obtain a clear view of the underwing coverts.

On August 11, 2004, I spent six hours watching the bird and intently trying to see any diagnostic feathers on the underwing. This was a very frustrating exercise since, depending on the lighting, the underwing coverts could look uniformly dark gray or pale buffy-white with fine barring. Fortunately, photographs by Jeremiah Trimble, Peter Alden, and others revealed that there were a few diagnostic gray feathers on the underwing coverts, and in retrospect I think I did see this in the field several times. Observers who wanted to convince themselves in the field that they were seeing the gray feathers of a Red-footed Falcon needed to have very good views of these specific coverts. As Julian Hough commented, he would have been hard pressed to identify this as a Red-footed rather than Amur falcon if it had flown past a hawkwatch site.

There are other features that make this bird a Red-footed Falcon, and the best reference is a paper titled "Identification of Amur Falcon" by Andrea Corso and William S. Clark, illustrated by Ian Lewington, and published in *Birding World* 11 (7).

On adult males the upperside of the tail is darker than the back in Red-footed, and about the same shade of gray as the back in Amur. The Martha's Vineyard bird



Illustration showing the Martha's Vineyard Red-footed Falcon in flight with the underwing coverts in shadow (left) and in sunlight (right). Both of these views are misleading. I've hinted at the few gray middle coverts in the brightly lit illustration on the right, but I believe that the bright light washes out the gray so that it blends in with the surrounding barred feathers. Presumably, if the bird was an Amur Falcon and these incoming feathers were white, they would be more conspicuous among the barred coverts. However, the generally blotchy, molting appearance and the normal shadows and contours of the feather tracts make these few small feathers very difficult to pick out. In flight the two incoming blackish adult primaries are obvious around the middle of the wing.

had molted about four central tail feathers, and these new adult feathers were distinctly darker than the back: slaty-blackish with a slightly darker band at the tip, correct for Red-footed.

First summer male Red-footeds show smudges of pale reddish brown within the gray breast, while Amur lacks this reddish color and usually shows broad dark streaks on the belly. The Martha's Vineyard bird showed some small patches of reddish brown on the breast, and only very fine dark streaks on the flank feathers. This was difficult to see in the field.

Juvenile male Red-footed Falcons usually have the barring on the underwing coverts reddish brown, while on Amur the barring is usually blackish. There is apparently some overlap in color, but the Martha's Vineyard bird clearly had reddish-brown barring on the underwing coverts, and this was visible in the field whenever the underwing coverts were well-lit.

And some comments:

Ferguson-Lees and Christie (2001. *Raptors of the World*) report that the wingtips of the Red-footed reach or exceed the tail tip when perched, while on Amur the wingtips fall just short of the tail tip. The Martha's Vineyard bird in my view showed wingtips just about equal to the tail tip, sometimes looking slightly shorter or minutely longer, depending on the angle, but another observer reported that the wingtips looked consistently shorter than the tail. Obviously this is tricky to ascertain, and it could be more complicated since adults and juveniles may have different proportions.

The illustration in the *Handbook of Birds of the World* (Volume 2, 1994) shows the Amur Falcon with white along the bend of the wing when perched. This may be a distinction from the gray of adult Red-footed, but is not useful on immatures, since the Martha's Vineyard bird showed a white edge there as well and often revealed a few bright white feathers at the bend of the wing when preening or stretching. 📌

David Sibley, son of the well-known ornithologist Fred Sibley, began seriously watching and drawing birds in 1969, at age seven. Since 1980 David has traveled throughout the North American continent in search of birds, both on his own and as a leader of birdwatching tours, and has lived in California, Arizona, Texas, Florida, Georgia, New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey. This intensive travel and bird study culminated in the publication of his comprehensive guide to bird identification The Sibley Guide to Birds (National Audubon Society) in the fall of 2000, and the companion volume The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior the following year. In the fall of 2002 Sibley's Birding Basics, an introduction to bird identification, was published, and in spring 2003 the Sibley Guides to Eastern and Western Birds were released. David now lives in Concord, Massachusetts, where he continues to study and draw birds. You can learn more about his work at <<http://www.sibleyguides.com>>. He would like to thank Vernon Laux, Jeremiah Trimble, Chris Elphick, Peter Alden, Julian Hough, and David Cooper for assistance and comments.



Illustration of the Red-footed Falcon perched [see cover]. The smooth gray color is unlike any North American Falcon. Old juvenal wing and tail feathers are slightly brownish and barred, while adult feathers will be uniformly blackish. Juvenal feathers are obvious on the outer tail, the primaries (molt reveals the boldly barred inner web of one outer primary), the brownish and faintly barred tertials and secondaries, and some brownish wing coverts. The pale cheeks, small dark "mustache," and buffy nape are also immature features. All of these things show that the bird is in its "first summer," born in 2003 just over one year ago.

Red-footed Falcon: How Did It Get Here?

Julian Hough

The occurrence of North America's first Red-footed Falcon on Martha's Vineyard generated great buzz in both the ornithological and nonornithological communities.

The flight of a small, insectivorous falcon from Europe across the Atlantic embodies a Herculean feat of stamina and willpower, and it is intriguing to speculate as to how on earth this superb little hunter made it here in one piece!

Several hypotheses as to how such a bird arrived in the continental United States were floated about, and not surprisingly, there was some question of the bird's origin.

Before we can discuss migration and movements, it seems pertinent to dispel the captive origin theory. Many species, especially passerines, are kept widely in captivity and often escape. It is necessary for committees to consider this factor when adjudicating rare records. Although some falconer's banded birds do escape and cause problems in the field (e.g., Hybrid Gyrfalcon x Peregrine Falcon), there is no reason to suggest that an unbanded Red-footed Falcon, mainly an insectivore and therefore not suitable for falconry, had escaped from captivity.

It seems more productive to focus on the fact that Red-footed Falcons are proven long-distance migrants, capable of sustained flights between their Eurasian breeding grounds and southern Africa. These birds fly 6000 miles each way, and as a result are prone to vagrancy. Four records (all post-1980) from Iceland (April-July) are testament to its vagrancy potential well to the west of its main wintering and breeding areas. In Europe, Red-footed Falcons breed from Belarus east into Asia, with the European breeding population concentrated in Hungary. The whole of the European population departs the breeding grounds for South Africa commencing in August, often peaking in areas of the Middle East later in October (Dick Forsman, *in litt* 1999).

A summary of what we know of Red-footed Falcon migration and molt strategy may be helpful to use in conjunction with our discussion of the Martha's Vineyard individual. In the fall, the main migration route is through eastern Europe down into southern and western parts of South Africa. In the spring, the birds return northward via a more westerly route. This clockwise portion of its migration loop is the main reason that this eastern breeding species is annual in western Europe, birds reaching as far north as the United Kingdom and Scandinavia. This westward dispersal into northwest Europe peaks in late May. Of the males that occur in the United Kingdom, a significant proportion are second calendar-year (first-summer) birds with mostly retained juvenile flight feathers, barred underwing coverts, and barred outer tail feathers. In early fall, juveniles and adults have a complete annual molt, but flight and tail feathers are molted on the wintering grounds. Any adults that start primary molt

on the breeding grounds generally suspend molt during migration and complete it later on arrival in southern Africa.

It is important to use correct age terminology when trying to piece together information on vagrants. The Martha's Vineyard individual was in its second calendar year (or first-summer) plumage — a phase rather common among vagrants occurring in spring/early summer in northern Europe. It would seem that the time of year and age class of the Martha's Vineyard bird mirrors that. Public discussions reflected some confusion over the ageing terminology, with occasional references made to the Massachusetts bird as a second-summer individual. This is inaccurate since that would imply that the bird was two years old (i.e., third calendar-year). Without wanting to get bogged down with molt terminology, simply put, a juvenile bird is in its first calendar-year up until December 31. On January 1 it then becomes a second calendar-year bird. Our subject bird, a second calendar-year bird, was still in its first year of life. We can then assume that this individual had spent the previous winter as usual in Southern Africa and somehow during its northward return to Europe had become displaced.

It is unknown at what time or location the bird deviated from its usual northward migration from Africa. Did it get caught up in one of the fast-moving tropical depressions off the Atlantic coast of Africa and make landfall in the Caribbean or Lesser Antilles? Once in the western hemisphere, it might then have resumed its northward flight, only 180 degrees off course, arriving finally in New England. There are others who hypothesize that the bird arrived in the far northern United States in late spring, arriving there via northern Europe or Iceland, and that it then headed south to land at Martha's Vineyard in August. We must remember that genetically this bird is programmed to head north in spring, so personally, I feel that a southbound trajectory at this time of year would be somewhat contradictory.

In the United Kingdom, while the influx of Red-footed Falcons generally occurs in late May, birds continue to be seen throughout the summer months. These dates may reflect birds that arrived in spring and have gone undetected, rather than newly arrived migrants. This bird, on its long northward flight, may have made it as far north as southern Europe or the United Kingdom, where transatlantic shipping traffic may have offered a "lift" to such a tired migrant. Personally, I believe that this is the most plausible explanation, and that the bird may have been present in the country since early June, closer to the peak of dispersal into Europe.

In species such as Red-footed Falcons, a gregarious and communal bird, large-scale influxes often occur. For example, in 1992, 5000+ were recorded in Italy, 2000 in the Netherlands, and over 100 in Britain. It is during such years of large-scale invasions that vagrants might be expected to reach their most remote outposts. However, unlike the invasion in 1992, in 2004 there have been only fifteen to twenty individuals noted in the United Kingdom, and almost fifty percent of those were second calendar-year males.

No one will ever really know how this bird reached Martha's Vineyard. It is occurrences like this, rare and unusual, that force our inquisitive minds to sit up and marvel at what birds can accomplish. To see such rarities is fantastic. To find one is an exhilarating triumph of hard work and luck.

Well done, Vern! 🐦

Julian Hough, currently a graphic designer living in New Haven, Connecticut, began his birding career in his native England, where he spent his early years chasing around the British Isles in the pursuit of rare birds. His passion has led to extensive travel to many parts of the world, including extended periods in India, Nepal, Australia, Europe, and the Middle East. He has worked as a field biologist for both Long Point and Cape May Bird Observatories. Examples of his talents as an artist and photographer are available at his website: <<http://www.naturescapes.net>>.



RED-FOOTED FALCON BY JEREMIAH TRIMBLE

Massachusetts Miracles: The Gull and the Falcon

Wayne R. Petersen and Paul J. Baicich

They came spontaneously, from across the country, to bear witness to a miracle — the appearance of a lipstick-colored gull that had absolutely no sane right to be there. ‘The Bird of the Century,’ as some have called it.

This is how a leading spokesperson for birders, Pete Dunne, described the 1975 appearance of a Ross’s Gull (*Rhodostethia rosea*) in Newburyport, Massachusetts, in his 1992 book, *The Feather Quest*. Nearly thirty years after the appearance of the gull, noted author and bird artist, David Allen Sibley, was quoted in *The New York Times* as saying, “It’s a once-in-a-lifetime thing” when referring to the Red-footed Falcon (*Falco vespertinus*) that appeared on Martha’s Vineyard in August 2004.

Comments such as these from the likes of Pete Dunne and David Sibley underscore the fact that there was obviously something very special, almost mystical, about the occurrence of these two birds in New England. Unequivocally, from the perspective of avian vagrancy, the appearance of a Red-footed Falcon in Massachusetts is matchless, since the species has never before been recorded in the Americas. And although subsequent to 1975, Ross’s Gulls have been recorded in over a dozen states in the lower forty-eight United States, in 1975, the appearance of the species in Newburyport was unprecedented. But precedent and geographical rarity aside, there is another dimension to these events and another story that needs to be told. The background for this other story, particularly in the case of the Red-footed Falcon, is that the falcon’s appearance involved just the right bird, at just the right place, at just the right time, with just the right individual to “host, toast, and share” the alien visitor with the public at large. But lest we get too far ahead in the story, more background is critical in order to understand the point of this commentary.

There had never before been a birding event in North America generating anything like the frenzy created by the initial visit of a Ross’s Gull to Newburyport. Longtime birders who vividly recall the state’s initial visit by a Ross’s Gull inevitably made comparisons between the gull and the recent occurrence of the Red-footed Falcon at Martha’s Vineyard. It was said that the Ross’s Gull might have drawn up to 10,000 visitors during its protracted stay in Newburyport. By comparison, Vern Laux, discoverer of the Red-footed Falcon and gracious host to many of the birders who came to observe it, estimated that “the biggest crowds were on Saturday, August 14, the first weekend day after the find. Estimates of observer numbers ranged from 1500 to 2500, just for that day. At one point late in the morning there were more than 1000 people congregated.” It is important to note, however, that the falcon was only present on Martha’s Vineyard for two weeks, while the gull stayed for months.

Regardless of the actual numbers and final figures, however, one thing seems pretty clear. “This falcon [was] probably a bigger find than the Ross’s Gull,” said Steve Grinley, well-known birder and owner of the Bird Watcher’s Supply and Gifts in Newburyport. Grinley further noted, “[If the Ross’s Gull] was ‘The Bird of the



RED-FOOTED FALCON BY PETER ALDEN



ROSS'S GULL BY PETER ALDEN

Century,' [the Red-footed Falcon] is going to be the bird of THIS century." Just like big league baseball fanatics who argue over who was the greatest slugger of all times, or boxing aficionados who debate who the most potent prize fighter in history might have been, it really does not matter, because in this case the *real story* is something far more important than the birds themselves. The real story lies in the fact that both the media and the general public made so much of these spectacular avian visitors. The recent focus of attention on the Red-footed Falcon reinforces everything we hear and read about the numbers of people interested in birds these days. Or, as Pete Dunne reflected when writing of the birders who made the pilgrimage to Newburyport in 1975 "to bear witness to a miracle," they "discovered something that took them completely by surprise. They discovered that they were many. They have never forgotten that lesson."

Not only are there many more birders today than there were thirty years ago, but also technology and logistics have evolved to the falcon's advantage. Information about the bird traveled farther and faster than was even remotely possible when the Ross's Gull was discovered in 1975. Word of the falcon's appearance spread with phenomenal quickness. After its initial discovery, the Red-footed Falcon was ultimately identified from digital images taken through a telescope — itself a new and rapidly growing field technique — and the bird's presence on Martha's Vineyard was literally announced worldwide overnight via the Internet. No longer were old-fashioned phone-trees, recorded bird alerts, or unreliable birding grapevines needed to publicize the wandering raptor. Information and images pertaining to the bird were shared globally within hours after its discovery and identification.

Clearly, the Red-footed Falcon was a glamour-bird, a fact underscored by Vern Laux when he pointed out that "A raptor is sexy. [It] ain't no striped, stinking little flycatcher." But the Ross's Gull in Newburyport had its own charisma; what made the falcon so special? Many glitteringly rare vagrants regularly show up on remote islands in the Bering Sea or miles from shore in the Gulf Stream off North Carolina's Outer Banks, but unlike vagrants in these localities, the falcon was accessible, both seasonally and geographically! It was within the reach of huge numbers of birders, along with a greater number of people who came to view the bird, yet did not even

consider themselves birders.

The fact that the falcon took up residence at a high-use vacation area at the height of the tourist season, not late winter as was the case with the Ross's Gull, was critical to the phenomenon that ensued. For many people vacations are a time to do things slightly out of the ordinary, so at Martha's Vineyard in August, the stage was perfect for curious vacationers, as well as avid birders, to investigate something "slightly out of the ordinary." The essence of this synergistic event, however, was that the timing and place of the falcon's visit afforded a splendid opportunity to reveal both a spectacular bird, and birding as an activity, to many hundreds of inquisitive people. This coalescence of observers, neophytes and experienced alike, prompted noted birding celebrities and authors, Don and Lillian Stokes, to comment, "We let lots of people (including one great 10-year old youth) view the bird in our scope and providing an 'Oh, Wow!' birding moment for each of them. We [also] answered lots of questions about 'The Bird,' and birds and birding in general for many nonbirders — kind of like an impromptu birding seminar."

In addition to the already mentioned technological advances that contributed to "Falcon Mania," mention needs also to be made of transportation efficiency. The ability of people to quickly mobilize and efficiently travel is far greater today than it was in 1975. Within one or two days following the falcon's discovery, out-of-region birders (beyond the Northeast) began arriving from as far away as California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Texas, and Virginia. Adding to the sudden influx of birders was the flood of curiosity-seekers resulting from the influence of the media. During its two-week stay at the Katama Air Park, the Red-footed Falcon received front page billing and significant national coverage in such prestigious publications as *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *Newsweek*, and *Time*. Besides the extensive coverage provided by the local Massachusetts media, including newspapers, radio, and television, Vern Laux debuted on ABC News as "Person of the Week" for August 27. When a *birder* achieves his "15-minutes of fame" as "Person of the Week" on the evening national news, a major statement has been made about what birding has become in this country in the 21st century.

The importance of the role played by Vern Laux himself must not be overlooked or underestimated when reflecting on the "Miracle Falcon." Throughout the Red-footed Falcon's entire stay on Martha's Vineyard, Vern was the perfect ambassador and ideal spokesperson, not just for the falcon, but for birders everywhere. During the excitement and fanfare following the original discovery of the rarity, Vern successfully managed to conduct himself with humility, good nature, unselfishness, and unbounded enthusiasm. In the print media, some of which he artfully crafted himself, as well as in person, Vern brought nothing but credibility and respect to birding and the marvelous pastime that it is. Birders everywhere should take note.

The appearance of mega-rarities such as the Red-footed Falcon and Ross's Gull inevitably bring more than publicity to the venues where they occur. On Martha's Vineyard, where things were already in overdrive for the summer, local commerce received an additional birder-boost with the discovery of the Red-footed Falcon. Carol

Ward, spokesperson at the Martha's Vineyard Chamber of Commerce, summarized the economic scene by pointing out that "We got tons of calls about the bird. It was incredible the amount of excitement it generated." Taxi drivers quickly got into the routine of meeting all incoming Vineyard ferries and promptly packing birders into their cabs for what practically became a shuttle service to the Katama Air Park. Whosie's, a small restaurant at the Katama Air Park, did a thriving business throughout the falcon's tenure. Morgan Hauck, a waitress at Whosie's, reported that the falcon's surprise visit was definitely good for business. She indicated that she had been scheduled to be off for two days, but because the restaurant was crowded with hungry, thirsty birders, she remained on the job, and took in about \$200 over lunch alone. Satisfied birders from far and near crowded daily around lunch tables or the restaurant's veranda to enjoy a sandwich or cold beverage while swapping falcon or other birding stories. Whosie's owner, Rebecca Lundstrom, commented that "The birders were fun to have around, and except for their scopes and tripods getting in the way, we had a great time. There were crowds, but the birders were easy to please."

In case the birding frenzy, social and economic impact, and media attention created by the appearance of the Red-footed Falcon on Martha's Vineyard were not enough to grab the attention of thoughtful birders, there is an additional component that provides the ultimate silver lining. What if the Katama Plains on Martha's Vineyard did not exist? Had it not been for intense and decisive protection efforts by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to protect and preserve this highly desirable and egregiously expensive piece of property on an island where real estate prices can only be described as chilling, the very habitat that sustained the exotic summer visitor would not exist. Kendra Buresch, an ecologist for the island's TNC office, indicated that the Katama Plain represents a unique sandplain grassland habitat that essentially only occurs from Long Island, New York, to Cape Cod. (Birders with a penchant for nostalgia may recall that Katama is not far from the area where the now-extinct Heath Hen made its final stand on the planet until 1932.) The Katama Plains are owned by the community of Edgartown and have been creatively managed since the 1980s by TNC and the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. The entire area is divided into three management units, each on a four-year rotating schedule that includes prescribed burning followed by mowing in the same year. That this management regimen works is proved by the fact that the Katama area has hosted a number of unusual birds and other wildlife species through the years. For example, the senior author of this article observed his only Massachusetts Burrowing Owl at this locality, along with some of the last regal fritillary butterflies ever to occur in New England. Today, thanks to the carefully managed regimen of mowing and prescribed burning, Upland Sandpipers and Grasshopper Sparrows, both Massachusetts state endangered species, have returned to nest in the area. Katama is indeed a unique and wonderful place, which provides a stunning example of how effective ecological management can benefit birds, including some of the rarest of the rare.

So, one might ask, what is the takeaway message in this tale of "Massachusetts

Miracles?" It is simply this: birds like the Red-footed Falcon and the Ross's Gull become bigger than life. Each opens a window to views of a higher plane — a plane that features frenzied excitement, invites curiosity and speculation, offers beauty and satisfaction, and provides reward and fulfillment — not just to birders, but to all who come to look, to learn, and even to profit from visits by The Gull and The Falcon.

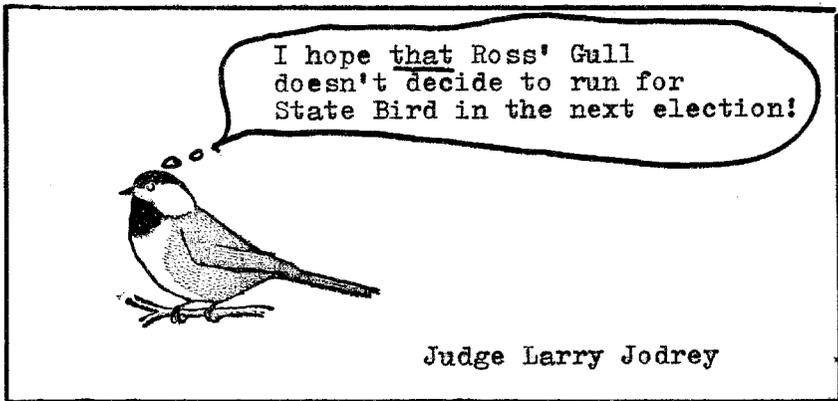
Wayne R. Petersen and Paul J. Baicich promote birding for Swarovski Birding, an initiative of Swarovski Optik – North America. Both authors vividly recall the excitement surrounding the Ross's Gull in Newburyport, and both were equally thrilled to see the Red-footed Falcon on Martha's Vineyard. Each has made numerous contributions to birding literature as author and editor.



VIEWING THE RED-FOOTED FALCON BY EDDIE GILES



VIEWING THE ROSS'S GULL BY MIKE LASALANDRA (THE NEWBURYPORT DAILY NEWS, MARCH 10, 1975)



FROM BIRD OBSERVER 3(1): 38, 1975

One Birder's Falcon

Matt Pelikan

The Red-footed Falcon discovered August 8, 2004, at Katama Air Park, in Edgartown, became, like no bird since the Newburyport Ross's Gull almost three decades ago, a public bird. Thousands of people (and, by some estimates, as many as several hundred *at once*) watched the elegant falcon perch on signs, hover, slice the sea breeze, and snag insects and the occasional vole at this grass-runway airport. The errant raptor's image cropped up in countless media outlets, and word of its presence on the Vineyard reached distant corners of the globe. But birding is strange: however famous a bird may be, the act of seeing it retains a highly personal quality. Each of those thousands who saw this most public bird carries a unique set of reflections and memories. Here are some of mine.

I. Screwing Up

Birders may fantasize about instant recognition when an important vagrant comes their way, and sometimes, I suppose, it happens that way. More often, though, identification of a rare bird, especially an unthinkable rare bird, is a drawn-out process, as pieces of information gradually assemble themselves into revelation. So it was with the falcon.

On my forty-sixth birthday, I received a call from Vineyard birding icon Vern Laux, whose voice held an edge that makes a Vineyard birder cringe: "Oh, jeez, what has he found *now*?" In this case, Vern reported that a Mississippi Kite was eating grasshoppers at Katama. I phoned the news on to a couple of other birders, but it was not until the next afternoon that I had a chance to drive to Katama, where I located the putative kite without much difficulty. I watched it through binoculars at moderate range, in indifferent light, as it perched, preened, hawked, and hovered. Then I drove home. I remember a vague sense of the bird not looking quite as I recalled Mississippi Kites looking — but this is a species I've seen just a handful of times, and anyway, when Vern reports a bird, one goes to see it, not confirm it. I doubt I even had a field guide in the car, and the scope stayed snoozing on the back seat. Satisfied that my memories of past kites had sprouted weeds, I never contemplated another explanation for any mild dissonance I felt.

This was not my finest hour. (Happily, I wasn't the only experienced Vineyard birder thus snookered.) But it isn't surprising that even Vern, a better birder than I am, indeed a better birder than pretty much everybody, also booted this one at first. Mississippi Kites occur pretty regularly in Massachusetts, mainly on Cape Cod, and although the only one found on the Vineyard in recent decades was a dead one, it's a species that surely hits the Vineyard from time to time. A slate-gray raptor eating insects at Katama? That's a Mississippi Kite. Hard to think of another candidate. There *are* no other candidates. Under those circumstances, to make reality conform to expectation is only to acknowledge the limitations of memory and sense, and the

variability of birds. Perhaps the light is bad, the plumage aberrant, the feathers worn or stained. If the bird is behaving strangely, maybe that's because it's in an unfamiliar habitat, or ill-equipped for that muscular sea breeze.

Not one to be embarrassed about anything in any case, Vern wasn't and shouldn't have been at all bashful about the episode. Birders may crave rarities, but conscientious observers don't pounce immediately on the most exciting alternative: a bird is a common one until proved otherwise. True, cautious observers may miss the occasional chance to enhance our understanding of bird distribution. But if a species occurs somewhere, sooner or later that will become apparent. An incorrect claim of a rarity, on the other hand, actively distorts our understanding of where birds travel: once a bum report gains currency, it has dented the fender of the ornithological record. The point is, Vern found the bird and made a reasonable assumption. But his lingering unease about the bird ("It gave me a headache," he says) prompted continued scrutiny, and on Tuesday, August 10, this led to another telephone call with that familiar edge in Vern's voice.

"But what if the bird had left in the meantime?" you may ask. Ah, but it didn't, did it?

II. Mind Expansion

A few weeks or so postfalcon, I headed home along the Beach Road, paralleling the coastal lagoon that stretches between Edgartown and Oak Bluffs. I had scoped Sarson's Island, a sandbar in the lagoon, earlier that morning, and a second breakfast beckoned. So I just crunched over clamshells into a pullout for a quick scan out the car window. Amid the usual suspects, a bird, partially obscured, might have been a Lesser Yellowlegs — uncommon but expected on the Vineyard — but somehow didn't look quite right. I shut the car off, hopped out, dragged the scope from its bed, and potted a juvenile Stilt Sandpiper I might easily have blown off. No great rarity, to be sure, but a nice Vineyard bird: only the second time I'd seen this species in my eight fall migrations here, and the first time in this plumage. The falcon episode, if nothing else, provided a salutary reminder to pay attention.

But the falcon episode had implications that went far beyond a refresher course in birding basics. Once one learns of the normal migratory pathway of Red-footed Falcon and its pattern of vagrancy in the Old World, its appearance on the Vineyard doesn't seem so far-fetched. (See the article by Julian Hough in this issue.) Of course, since you can't really prove a negative, the possibility that the bird was an escape will always remain, and indeed rumors of bereft falconers began to circulate within days of the correct identification of the bird. But even the most cynical observers agree that a natural arrival here of a Red-footed Falcon is at least possible. Whatever its true origin, the Katama falcon altered the perception U.S. birders have of this species.

And beyond that, falconmania sent me and no doubt many others back to the field guides. Few of us peruse range maps in Eurasian bird books looking for potential North American firsts (unless, perhaps, we are traveling to Attu). And if any one had predicted Red-footed Falcon as an East Coast arrival, I'm sure I never heard of it.

But the falcon's appearance sets one to wondering: What other Eurasian birds show similar patterns of seasonal movements and vagrancy? Which engage in different patterns of movements that might plausibly launch them on a New World trajectory? Will you be ready for North America's first Eleonora's Falcon when it misses the Canary Islands?

III. Mixed Flocks

One inevitable side effect of a public bird: large aggregations of birders put the full spectrum of our community on display.

Sometimes, this not a good thing. Within five minutes of my arriving to view the now correctly identified falcon, two New Jersey birders had nearly commenced a fist fight over some past exchange of insults, sputtering refurbished opprobrium and butting each other like billy goats until fellow Vineyard birder Al Sgroi and I realized they weren't clowning, recovered from our astonishment, and pried them apart.

Generally, though, the falcon brought out the best in birders. It was as close to 100 percent reliable as a bird can be. Most visitors had the falcon in their glasses within minutes, even seconds, of their arrival on site. Moreover, this bird wasn't just rare, it was spectacular, interrupting its aerobatic hunting flights only to tee up obligingly on a runway sign. Satisfied birders were cheerful and cooperative, scrupulously observing the airport manager's request to keep out of the air park boundaries, bantering happily, and loading up on sandwiches at Whosie's, the quirky little restaurant at the air park. Has there ever been a rarity more conducive to projecting a favorable image of the birding community?

Moreover, as a public bird, the falcon came to the awareness of provinces quite remote from the world of birding. Once, as I scoped with a squad of birders by the roadside, a small car with four occupants pulled onto the shoulder beside us. An excited young woman, perhaps of college age, popped like a champagne cork from the passenger door and asked, almost gasping, "Who is it? Who is it?" There was a moment of blank expressions as the birders' minds clanked into gear: Martha's Vineyard ... airport ... celebrities ... *human* celebrities.

I explained the situation. The young woman, frowning as she grappled with the odd notion of ogling a bird, stepped back into the car. I could see her speak briefly; then all four of the car's occupants erupted in laughter. But they didn't drive off. And after a moment the woman got out again. "Um," she began. "Could we look at it?"

But the bird was more than just a stand-in for Carly Simon in the eyes of most nonbirders. They came on purpose to see the bird, standing patiently in line to squint through a birder's telescope. Off-balance in the face of an unknown birder's etiquette, most timidly waited to be invited rather than asking for a peek. For many, it was a family outing: many children will recall 2004 as the summer they saw that really rare bird on the Vineyard. Some asked questions; others just gazed, with the same awed expression that I imagine genuine Carly or Clinton sightings inspire. The Vineyard means two things to most off-islanders, celebrities and natural beauty, and in the Red-footed Falcon, these two attractions merged.

IV. Cult of Celebrity

Once Cornelia Dean's article on the Red-footed Falcon hit the front page of the *New York Times*, the die was cast: this was a Big Story. Although my own contribution to discovering and identifying the bird had merely been to bungle it, as a Vineyard naturalist I nevertheless found myself in considerable demand. I wrote newspaper articles on the bird — one on its discovery, one on its departure — and I provided background for many more articles. I was interviewed for a Boston public radio program (one happy result was that an old friend in Sudbury, long out of touch, was prompted to “Google” and e-mail me after hearing whatever it was that I said). I even donned a shirt with buttons on it to be interviewed (live!) on a local cable TV program, in a mercifully obscure morning time-slot.

On the one hand, it's gratifying when society abruptly decides that skill or knowledge you possess is of general interest, and as a passionate advocate of conservation, I welcomed a chance to help people understand, appreciate, and take local pride in an unusual natural event. And the falcon provided, in spades, what educators call a “teachable moment.” Many nonbirders, for example, had no idea that while a particular vagrant like the falcon may be astoundingly rare, vagrancy in general is a common phenomenon, a factor in the natural history of nearly every species that migrates. But if all the falcon-related pontificating I did may have been useful, it also felt sterile, almost irrelevant. Facts are just facts. “Do you really want to learn about birds?” I wanted to say to the interviewers. “Lose the microphone and let's go birding.”

The bird also became inescapable in everyday conversation around the Vineyard. “Have you been to see the falcon yet?” friends invariably asked on greeting me. “Yes, several times,” I replied, by which I'm afraid I meant, “A potential first North American record, eight miles from my house? What do you think, you ninny?” Acquaintances apologized as if they had insulted me by not going to see the bird. I grew tired of explaining why “Oh, the poor thing! It must be lonely!” was not really the right response, even if it was a well-intentioned one. Things began to seem out of balance, as people somehow managed to assign the bird both more importance in my life than it had, and less. An episode that began in unity devolved, paradoxically, into yet another source of birder's alienation. Public bird or no, the nonbirders still didn't quite get it.

And, of course, a Big Bird means requests for information and transportation from visiting birders. The exemplary handling of the falcon by Massbird (the state internet forum) took much of the burden from Vineyarders for providing information on the bird and how to get to it by taxi or bus. Still, I heard from people from as far away as Florida, California, and Colorado. Is the bird still there? How long will it stay? Is there any chance you could meet me at the boat? One tries to be helpful to other birders, and the falcon provided a welcome occasion for me to see old friends and meet e-mail acquaintances of long standing. But as time passed, interruptions while working (and, a few times, while sleeping) began to grow burdensome.

All in all, then, my life with the falcon was ambivalent from the start, pride and enthusiasm tempered by exasperation and stress. Strongly positive at first, the mixture shifted relentlessly toward the negative as time passed, in a progression probably familiar to any birder who has lived near a lingering mega-rarity. I'd have been crushed if the bird had left the day after its identification. But when it did spiral up and head west, after two weeks of bringing joy and wonder to so many, I was halfway happy it had gone.

V. Good-bye

My final view of the falcon was also my favorite one. Around sunrise two days before the bird disappeared, I drove to Katama to work the shorebird flock that roosts on the Katama Farm hay fields in late summer. The falcon wasn't even much on my mind, but given where the plovers were milling about, it made sense to enter the hay fields through a gate just across a dirt road from the airfield. Inevitably, I scanned the runways and grassland for a glimpse of the celebrity, which I quickly spotted parked on one of his favorite taxiway signs.

From behind me, golden light from the rising sun swept across the Katama plains like a cavalry charge. Dew sparkled; the light intensified every color; through my spotting scope, the falcon looked like a glossy photograph of itself. As I watched, it came to life, rising for one of its patented hunting forays, likely its first real flight of the day. I stepped back from the scope and raised my binoculars, following the falcon as he hovered, sheared, and circled over the grassland. Drawing close to where I was standing, it feinted at a startled Savannah Sparrow. Then it swooped past, nearly over my head, so close I could hear the air rush past the bird's famously molting wings.

As it passed over, the falcon spared me the briefest of glances before resuming its search for prey. Captivated by its grace, power, beauty, and rarity, I tracked the bird as intently as if I sought to draw him into my binocs. The bird, thoughtless of his own attributes, intent only on his next meal, considered me for an eye-blink and dismissed me as irrelevant. It was simply a bird, living as a bird. Yet my own impulse, the urge to observe, felt equally like a law of nature. Birds act like birds. And birders, acting like birders, watch them. That's what I learned from the falcon.

Good luck, bird. May grasshoppers always be plentiful. 🐞

Matt Pelikan, a resident of Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard, since 1997, works as a freelance writer and as an editor for the American Birding Association. He is a former editor of Bird Observer and has been a dedicated birder since he was old enough to look through binoculars.

What's Next After the Red-footed Falcon? Predictions of Future Vagrants in Massachusetts

Robert H. Stymeist and Jeremiah R. Trimble

1990 Predictions Revisited

It has been nearly fifteen years since Dick Forster and seven other well-known state birders tried to predict which would be the next ten new species of birds to appear in Massachusetts. In the June 1990 issue of *Bird Observer* [18 (3), pp.149-154] Forster published his results. Nearly forty species received at least one top-ten vote, and another fifteen received votes as "runners-up." Four of the species ranked at the top of that list have now been recorded in Massachusetts as follows:

Cave Swallow (#2): This species, which has become routine in the fall in New Jersey, was long expected in Massachusetts. Following reports of Cave Swallows in Connecticut and Rhode Island, it was finally added to the state list on November 14, 2003, when two individuals were seen in Orleans. Less than two weeks later on November 27 a single individual was seen in nearby Chatham.

Ross's Goose (#4): Population increases and range shift made it only a matter of time before this species landed in Massachusetts. Two birds were discovered in a flock of Snow Geese in Sunderland, May 25-26, 1997. Another individual was seen in Chilmark October 14-22, 2001, and a third report from Turners Falls October 21-25, 2004, is pending a decision from the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (MARC).

Lazuli Bunting (#7): Although it often wanders east of its territory to the Midwestern states, Lazuli Bunting has only been recorded once or twice in the northeast. This individual was conclusively photographed on Nantucket, where it was seen from May 5-10, 2002.

Black-capped Petrel (#10): This species occurs regularly over deep water as far north as North Carolina, so it was a prime candidate for a storm-blown visit to Massachusetts waters. The first report was April 22, 1991, on Stellwagen Bank, followed by a second four months later on August 19, as one was described battling the winds of Hurricane Bob in Cape Cod Bay.

Additionally, twelve of the other species that were listed, but did not make the "top ten," have since appeared in Massachusetts. They are:

Northern Lapwing, December 26-30, 1996, Chilmark

Pacific Golden Plover, April 21-May 5, 2002, Plum Island

Snowy Plover, June 11, 1994, Chatham

Common Ringed Plover, September 5, 1990, North Monomoy Island, Chatham

Elegant Tern, August 4 and 15-28, 2002, South Beach, Chatham

Band-tailed Pigeon, May 29-June 4, 1995, Brookline

Calliope Hummingbird, November 1-December 19, 2002, Eastham
Vermilion Flycatcher, October 14-15, 1995, Plum Island
Tropical Kingbird, November 8-30, 2000, World's End in Hingham
Couch's Kingbird, September 9, 2001, Plum Island
Violet-green Swallow, May 12, 1997, Provincetown
Shiny Cowbird, October 14, 2002, Edgartown

Red-footed Falcon was not even on the radar for occurrence in Massachusetts (or North America!) in 1990. But what else did the panel of experts fail to predict? Remarkably, only two: **Ancient Murrelet** (November 29, 1992, Rockport) and **Broad-billed Sandpiper** (September 10, 2002, Plum Island).

An Update for 2004

So, what do we have to look forward to after the Red-footed Falcon? We gathered another panel of expert birders from Massachusetts to predict the next new birds for Massachusetts, just as Richard Forster and his panelists did fifteen years ago. They were asked to list the ten species most likely to be added to the Massachusetts State List and, as with the 1990 effort, they were also invited to include a list of runners-up (or long-shots). The votes were to be based upon the current accepted state list maintained by the MARC and could thus include species such as Black-tailed Gull and Trumpeter Swan, which have been reported but not yet accepted. The contributors for this effort included five players from the original group: Rick Heil, Blair Nikula, Wayne Petersen, Robert Stymeist, and Dick Veit. The team was rounded out by newcomers Vernon Laux, Peter Trimble, and Jeremiah Trimble.

Forty-three species received at least one top-ten vote by a member of the panel, and a number of others received honorable mention votes. Just as in the 1990 survey, there was an impressive diversity of opinion in what might be the next ten birds in Massachusetts. However, as you will see from the final tallies, there was some consensus on a number of species. For example, the top three received votes from six out of eight members of the panel; the top six received top-ten votes from at least five members. In 1990 Forster commented: "The final tally is skewed somewhat by Veit's selections, his rationale apparently being, if it can occur in California, it can occur in Massachusetts." While Veit has since moved from California to New York, his votes were again wildly different from the rest of the committee (only two of his ten choices were repeated by other panel members). Although Veit's selections may have skewed the results with his perhaps unconventional votes, his foresight may prove prophetic, since three of his 1990 top-ten have been accepted on the Massachusetts State List since then!

The ranking in the top-ten list is based on the number of top-ten votes received, with ties being broken first by how each species was ranked in the panelists' top-ten (for example, a number one vote and number four vote are better than two number six votes), and then by the number of runner-up votes received. The numerals in parentheses show number of top-ten votes, followed by number of runner-up votes.

Results and Comments

1. **Yellow-billed Loon** (*Gavia adamsii*): (6, 1). This, the largest species of loon, has a proven track record of vagrancy throughout the lower forty-eight states. Last winter, for example, up to three individuals were found in the southeast, one each in Georgia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. It has recently been recorded in interior New York, and there is a historical record from Long Island, New York, in 1930. The pattern of records suggests that it is most likely to occur in the winter or early spring on large inland bodies of water. Quabbin and Wachusett Reservoirs seem likely spots for this species to turn up. (#6 on the 1990 list)

2. **Slaty-backed Gull** (*Larus schistisagus*): (6, 1). This Asiatic gull is routinely encountered in Alaska and has recently been turning up throughout central and eastern North America, including Florida (two records), Michigan, New York (two records), Ontario (three records), and Nova Scotia. An individual reported in New Hampshire in December 2003 is pending NHRBC approval. Diligent searching among large flocks of wintering gulls in coastal Massachusetts may turn up this difficult-to-identify species. (Runner-up on 1990 list)

3. **Bell's Vireo** (*Vireo bellii*): (6, 1). Although its eastern populations have been declining, this species has been recorded at least twice in New Jersey and at least twice in New Hampshire! As one panel member put it, "Any bird that can occur twice in New Hampshire before being found in Massachusetts is bound to have been overlooked in the past and can be expected in the future!" (#8 on the 1990 list)

4. **Black-tailed Gull** (*Larus crassirostris*): (5, 0). This is another Asiatic gull that has shown a strong tendency to wander across North America. *Larus crassirostris* has occurred at many localities in eastern North America, including Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Nova Scotia. Indeed, it may have already occurred in Massachusetts (Lynn Beach, June 2004 and Chatham, August 2004), though at the time this article was written, neither of these sightings had been accepted by the MARC. Panel members were asked to use the current official state list to base their lists on to avoid confusion. (Not mentioned on the 1990 list)

5. **Boat-tailed Grackle** (*Quiscalus major*): (5, 0). *Q. major* currently routinely breeds as close as southwestern Connecticut, has been observed in Rhode Island, and is thus a legitimate candidate for occurrence in Massachusetts. The difficulty with recording this species in Massachusetts is providing sufficient documentation to eliminate the very similar, though perhaps less likely, Great-tailed Grackle (*Q. mexicanus*). To date there are two records of a large grackle species in Massachusetts, neither of which provided enough evidence to prove without a doubt which species was involved. Interestingly, *Q. mexicanus* made it on to the top 10 in 1990, chosen for the fact that its range was expanding greatly in the west, and it was definitively recorded in Nova Scotia in 1983-1984. Most other records of this species pair in eastern and northeastern North America have gone unresolved. (Not mentioned on the 1990 list, but this may be because the panel at the time accepted a sight record in

1986 as valid, which was later accepted by the MARC as Boat-tailed/Great-tailed Grackle)

6. **Eurasian Collared-Dove** (*Streptopelia decaocto*): (5, 1). Originally introduced to the Bahama Islands in the 1970s, this species spread to Florida and has since been expanding its range westward to California and northward in the East, at least to Pennsylvania and Long Island, New York. This species is quite similar to the Ringed Turtle-Dove, which is frequently reported as an escapee in Massachusetts. Birders in Massachusetts should be aware of this similarity and be prepared to diligently record plumage on any bird suspected of being a Eurasian Collared-Dove. Along those same lines, don't dismiss any strange dove as an escaped Ringed Turtle-Dove; it could be a new state record! (Not mentioned on the 1990 list)

7. **European Golden-Plover** (*Pluvialis apricaria*): (4, 0). This species was regarded by some panelists as the most overdue species for Massachusetts. Although it has yet to be definitively recorded in the United States, there are a large number of records for eastern Canada, including over 350 seen in Newfoundland in the spring of 1988! It occurs regularly in southern Greenland and even breeds in eastern Greenland. It is most likely to turn up in the spring, during or following a strong northeasterly blow. (#1 on the 1990 list)

8. **Redwing** (*Turdus iliacus*): (2, 1). This Eurasian thrush breeds commonly from Iceland across Eurasia to central Siberia and winters south to the British Isles, casually wandering to Greenland. In North America it has been recorded in Newfoundland (at least five times), Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, and even New York. It has occurred at various seasons from late fall through spring, often associating with flocks of American Robins. (#3 on the 1990 list)

9. **European Storm-Petrel** (*Hydrobates pelagicus*): (2, 1). *H. pelagicus* breeds on islands in the northern and eastern Atlantic Ocean, as well as the western Mediterranean Sea. As many pelagic species do, it ranges widely when at sea, and can be seen throughout the eastern Atlantic. In the western Atlantic there is a record from Nova Scotia (in 1970) and a specimen at the Smithsonian labeled as being collected in "Bay of Fundy." In May 2003, a bird was inadvertently photographed off Hatteras, North Carolina, that showed many characteristics of *H. pelagicus*. This species closely resembles other species of dark, white-rumped, storm-petrels, especially Wilson's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus*), and it will take a diligent and alert documenter to get this species on our state list. (Not mentioned on the 1990 list)

10. **Common Greenshank** (*Tringa nebularia*): (2, 2). This Eurasian wader is a fairly common species throughout Europe and Asia, breeding from Scotland east to Siberia. It undergoes a long-distance migration, wintering as far south as southern Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. In eastern North America it has been recorded in Quebec, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia, with a sight report from New York. (Runner-up on 1990 list)

The following three species also received two top-ten votes but were ranked lower on the panelists' lists (runner-up votes in parentheses):

Cassin's Sparrow (*Aimophila cassinii*): (1). This southwestern sparrow has been recorded in the northeast on numerous occasions in Nova Scotia, Ontario, Maine, New York, and New Jersey. (#5 on the 1990 list)

Brown Shrike (*Lanius cristatus*): (0). This beautiful species of shrike has been observed on several occasions in Alaska and California. In eastern North America it has recently been sighted in Nova Scotia in November-December 1997.

White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*): (0). In eastern North America two subspecies of White Wagtail have been documented. There are records of *Motacilla alba alba* (the European subspecies) from Quebec (May 2002) and Newfoundland (Sept. 1998), and recently in North Carolina (October 2002). The Siberian subspecies (*M. a. ocularis*) was recorded in South Carolina in April 1998.

The next listed species each received one top-ten vote (with the panelist and number of runner-up votes in parentheses):

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (Petersen, 2)	Jack Snipe (Laux, 0)
Clark's Grebe (P. Trimble, 1)	Heermann's Gull (Laux, 1)
Shy Albatross (Veit, 0)	Common Wood Pigeon (Veit, 0)
Kermadec Petrel (Veit, 0)	Broad-tailed Hummingbird (Heil, 0)
Juan Fernandez Petrel (Veit, 0)	Green Violet-ear (Heil, 1)
Fea's Petrel (J. Trimble, 0)	Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatcher (Petersen, 0)
Herald Petrel (Heil, 0)	Swainson's Flycatcher (Veit, 0)
European Shag (Veit, 0)	Plumbeous Vireo (Nikula, 0)
Gray Heron (J. Trimble, 3)	Rook (Veit, 0)
Eurasian Hobby (Laux, 0)	Red-throated Pipit (Laux, 0)
Eurasian Dotterel (Nikula, 0)	Stonechat (Laux, 0)
Common Redshank (Laux, 0)	Virginia's Warbler (Petersen, 2)
Lesser Sand Plover (J. Trimble, 0)	Slate-colored Fox Sparrow (Veit, 0)
Wood Sandpiper (P. Trimble, 2)	Lesser Goldfinch (Laux, 0)

Finally, the species below were mentioned as runners-up but received no top-ten votes:

Pink-footed Goose	Groove-billed Ani
Velvet Scoter	Pacific Swift
Little Shearwater	Broad-billed Hummingbird
Swinhoe's Petrel	Anna's Hummingbird
Masked Booby	Eurasian Wryneck
Corn Crane	Cassin's Vireo
Eurasian Oystercatcher	Common House-Martin
Common Sandpiper	Arctic Warbler
Great Knot	Rose-colored Starling
Long-toed Stint	Yellow Wagtail
Mediterranean Gull	Eurasian Redstart
Large-billed Tern	Lesser Whitethroat
Whiskered Tern	

Certain birds mentioned in these lists (namely Velvet Scoter and Slate-colored Fox Sparrow) are currently considered subspecies but are distinct enough to be recognizable in the field and are being considered for full species status by certain groups.

Herein, the challenge has been laid down. We hope that this list provides birders with a perspective into the future and excitement of Massachusetts birding. Although part of the challenge in finding vagrant birds such as these is to know what species are possible and what they look like, it is just as important to have a wide knowledge of our commonly-occurring avifauna so that we may recognize that one different species when it comes along. 🍷

Robert Stymeist and Jeremiah Trimble have been birding since childhood, write the bi-monthly commentaries on bird sightings for Bird Observer, and work in the Ornithology Department at the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology. They share a passion for birding, but while Stymeist is more likely to be searching for songbirds in a corner of Boston, Trimble is more often found on outer Cape Cod scanning for water birds. Stymeist is a former member of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee. Trimble is a current member.



CELEBRATING THE RED-FOOTED FALCON ARE (LEFT TO RIGHT) PETER ALDEN, BOB STYMEIST, VERN LAUX, JEREMIAH TRIMBLE, AND PETER TRIMBLE. PHOTOGRAPH BY KRISTIN NUTTLE.

The Provenance of Vagrants and Their Evaluation by Rarities Committees

Richard R. Veit

Birders and rarities committees have a bias in the evaluation of records of rare birds. The bias, surprising in light of the tremendous effort expended by birders in documenting long-distance dispersal by birds, is in favor of the conclusion that a given vagrant is escaped from captivity rather than wild. A point increasingly being espoused is that if there is *any* chance that a given individual is escaped from captivity, then the chance that it is in fact a wild bird becomes irrelevant, and the record is rejected on the basis of questionable origin.

This reasoning runs counter to generally accepted scientific practice. Nothing can ever be “proved” scientifically; rather, the accepted practice is to weigh the evidence in favor of a number of possible outcomes and then choose the most likely outcome on the basis of probability. In the case of vagrants of questionable origin, this means evaluating the evidence in favor of a given bird being either escaped or wild, then drawing a conclusion based on this evidence. As in any other scientific question, the conclusion will never be absolutely certain because conclusions, outside of mathematics, are always based on probability.

The issue here is analogous to the difference between Type I and Type II Errors in statistics. Accepting a record of a vagrant that was in fact an escape would be a Type I Error, whereas rejecting a record on the basis of questionable origin when the bird was in fact wild would be a Type II Error.

In most experimental work, scientists worry much more about Type I Error — and that is because of the way experiments are designed. Experiments are designed to detect differences, not to detect *lack* of differences — and for that specific reason, scientists generally worry more about Type I Error. But there is no reason at all that rarities committees should worry more about Type I Error than Type II Error. That is, we as rarities committee members should be *just as concerned* about rejecting records of bona fide vagrants as we are about accepting records of escapes.

Therefore, in considering whether a given bird is an escape or not, we should evaluate all the available evidence and reach a conclusion based on this evidence. It makes no sense to conclude that a given bird is an escape simply because the species is commonly kept in captivity, especially if there is substantial evidence of repeated vagrancy in that species.

At one point, the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (MARC) was simultaneously considering Pink-footed Goose, Garganey, and Cinnamon Teal. Being waterfowl, individuals of these species found “out of range” are often suspected of, or assumed to be, escapes from captivity. Using these submissions as an example, there is considerable, *direct* evidence that these species are undergoing significant range

expansion, and there has been an increasing frequency of occurrence of vagrants in the eastern United States (e.g., Caithamer et al. 1993, Caithamer and Smith 2004, del Hoyo et al. 1992, and Spear et al. 1988). On the other hand, there is no *direct* evidence for any of these individuals to involve escaped birds. The fact that these species are kept by zoos and wildfowl enthusiasts is not in itself evidence that these individuals are escapes. [Editor's note: See Bird Observer, April 2002, for the MARC Annual Report discussing these submissions.]

In sum, we need to get away from the notion that we need to know with 100 percent certainty whether any given bird is wild or not in order to form a consensus opinion. No scientist insists on such an unrealistic degree of certainty. Instead, we need to accept that occasionally we may make a mistake, and make reasoned judgments about the origins of purported vagrants on the basis of evaluation of the evidence available. 📌

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Richard Veit is a Professor of Biology and Chairman of the Department at the City University of New York, where he conducts research on foraging ecology, long-distance dispersal, and population dynamics of birds — work which has led him to fourteen seasons of field research in the Antarctic. He grew up in Massachusetts and New York and has served for six years as a member of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee. He is, with Wayne Petersen, co-author of *The Birds of Massachusetts*.



RED-FOOTED FALCON BY PHIL BROWN



Nagog Pond: Inland Gull and Waterfowl Haven

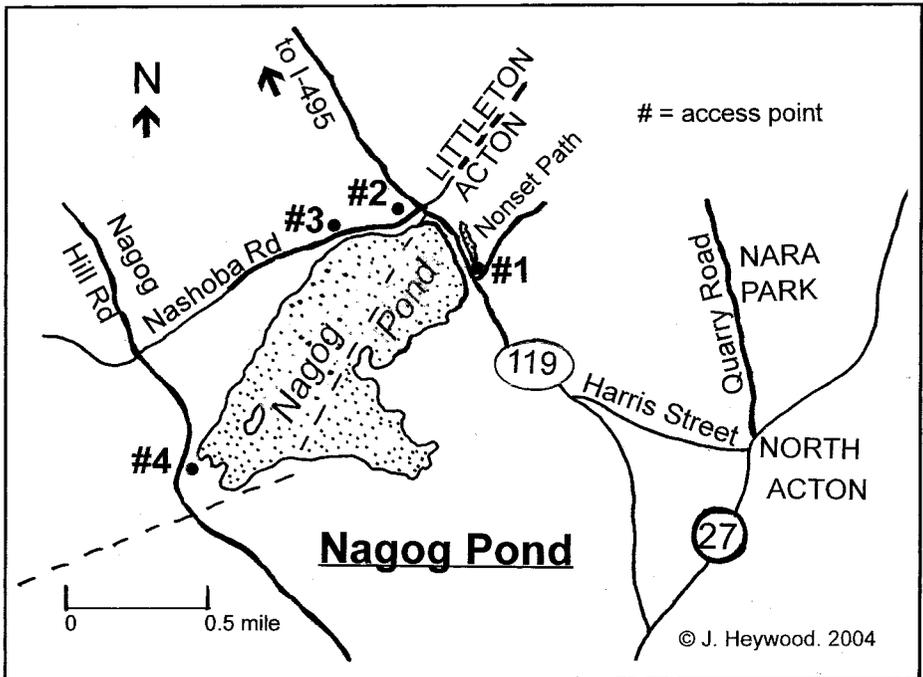
Mike Resch

Nagog Pond, actually a good-sized lake, is an excellent inland location for gulls and waterfowl during migration. Over the last ten years I have seen seven gull species and twenty-five species of waterfowl and related birds there, including several rarities. Fall gull numbers well into the thousands are possible at Nagog Pond — one day I conservatively estimated over 5000 gulls on the water! (I've heard “Nagog” pronounced with both a long and a short “a” and cannot attest to an “authentic” pronunciation.)

Located on the Littleton/Acton line along Route 119 in western Middlesex County, Massachusetts, this 284-acre lake is a water-supply reservoir for the Town of Concord. As such, boating and fishing are not allowed. This lack of human activity is undoubtedly a big reason why Nagog Pond is so attractive to migrant waterfowl, which indeed can be quite tame. Gulls are present on the lake for bathing, drinking, and roosting, following foraging at a nearby feedlot located on private land a short distance to the northeast.

Gull Species and Frequencies

Migrant gulls begin to arrive in small numbers in September and peak later in the fall, generally in November. Daily counts during that season are 1000 or more in most years. Totals then tend to drop, but increase again when the lake is partially iced over,



which typically occurs in early to mid-December. As with many other aquatic locations that attract large numbers of gulls, these birds seem to favor conditions where they can bathe and drink but still have an opportunity to roost on the ice. The numbers drop dramatically when the lake freezes solid, which typically occurs late in December or sometimes in January. A small flock of 100 to 200 birds will generally last throughout the winter until the lake melts in the spring. Gull numbers increase only slightly in spring, with totals never coming close to those seen in the fall.

Many fall days will feature six species of gulls, with Iceland, Lesser Black-backed, and Glaucous gulls being of prime interest. Herring Gulls of all ages are by far the most common. Great Black-backed Gulls are very numerous, typically representing up to twenty to thirty percent of the flock, with all plumages present. Surprisingly, Ring-billed Gulls are quite rare, many times being outnumbered by the actual rarities. These are detailed below.

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides*). These are the most common of the three target gulls, with as many as five birds seen on one day, though seeing one on any given day is not guaranteed. Most Icelanders are first-winter birds, with occasional second-year birds mixed in. One adult was seen one winter.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*). “Lessers” are seen on most, but not all, days when significant gull numbers are present. My highest total in a day is three birds, although one per day is typical. Most birds are adults or subadults, with an occasional first-year bird seen. One very dark-backed bird seen numerous times one fall was possibly of the *intermedius* race.

Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*). The frequency of Glaucous Gulls is about the same as for Lesser Black-backs. One or two are seen most days, with two as my single-day maximum. All birds have been in first-winter plumage.

As for extreme rarities, two sightings are notable. On December 2, 1994, I found an adult gull that may have been a California Gull swimming among Herrings and a few Ring-bills (details were submitted to the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee but the sighting was not accepted). Then, a week later, I saw a probable first-winter Thayer’s Gull. Unfortunately, the bird was not sufficiently cooperative to allow me to confirm the sighting. Whenever the gull flock numbers in the thousands, almost anything is possible, though identification of the rarer Larids can be a very difficult process.

Gull-Viewing Strategies

Gull-watching can be a frustrating part of our birding activities. Not only can identification be problematic, but many times the birds are distant and/or partially hidden in a flock. Here are some tips to try to increase your chances of finding the rarer gulls at Nagog Pond.

Only a portion of Nagog Pond is visible from, and close to, any of the viewing locations described below (and a portion of the southeast part of the lake is not visible

from any accessible spot). So it is important to look from most, if not all, of the viewing locations, and of course bring a scope.

There is an almost constant movement of the gulls between Nagog Pond and their feeding location to the northeast, so there is a good chance that your targets may not be resting on the lake at any given time. If you don't see them at first, just give it some time, and maybe they'll arrive. You might also try nearby Nara Park in Acton where a portion of the same gull flock will also roost (see below for details).

A good way of seeing the gulls up close is to come when the lake is partially iced-over (usually in December). The last open water is generally toward the northern part of the lake. As a result, the gulls tend to bathe and roost closer to most of the access spots during that time.

Waterfowl and Related Species

A typical fall day at Nagog Pond will feature quite a high diversity of waterfowl, with twelve to fifteen species to be expected. The vast majority of the waterfowl seen are Canada Geese and the more common inland migrant dabblers and divers. But what gives birding Nagog Pond a special edge is the rather high frequency of waterfowl more typical of coastal locations. I normally spend more time on the gulls at Nagog Pond than on the waterfowl. Undoubtedly, more time spent with the waterfowl could result in an even greater list of species.

As mentioned above, I've found that many of the waterfowl are rather tame and quite approachable. A slow and quiet approach to the water's edge at most of the access points will often result in great close-up views of a nice flock of ducks. Brief summaries of each group of waterfowl are provided below.

Loons. Commons are regular migrants in small numbers, once as many as five. Red-throated have been seen.

Grebes. Horneds are uncommon; Pied-billed are occasional. A Red-necked was seen once.

Cormorants. Double-crested are rare at Nagog. A Great was present once.

Geese. Canadas are abundant. An immature White-fronted was seen several times one year.

Dabbling Ducks. Mallards are very common. Black Ducks, American Wigeon, and Green-winged Teal are uncommon but expected on most trips, with as many as twenty-five of each species sometimes found. Pintails and Gadwalls are occasional, with numbers never exceeding a pair for either species. A Eurasian Wigeon made an appearance one year.

Aythya Ducks. Ring-neckeds are rather common, numbering in excess of 200 on peak days. Both Greater and Lesser scaups are occasional, typically in very small numbers.

Scoters. I've seen a White-winged on two occasions; once four birds were present.

Goldeneyes and Buffleheads. Common Goldeneyes are found in small numbers (sometimes up to ten birds) on almost every trip later in the fall. Buffleheads are rather common, frequently with one or more flocks of twenty to thirty birds.

Mergansers. Hoodeds and Commons are rather common and are seen almost every trip. Loose flocks totaling up to twenty are typical. I've seen Red-breasteds a couple of times.

Ruddy Ducks. Small flocks are seen most years, typically staying on Nagog Pond for a week or two at a time. One year a flock of nearly 100 birds was present.

American Coots (admittedly not a waterfowl species). Small flocks are seen most years, though sometimes numbering close to 100.

Access Points

Access to view Nagog Pond is rather limited. As shown on the accompanying map, four locations are listed, but only #4 on Nagog Hill Road affords good parking opportunities. At all other locations, birders are urged to use caution to ensure they have parked completely off the road.

#1 – Route 119. Park on the very wide shoulder on the northeast side of Route 119 just northwest of a road called Nonset Path. Traffic is heavy and fast on Route 119, so I suggest setting your scope up even with or behind your car. This location is the closest for viewing the northeast part of the lake and can be good during partial and complete freeze-ups, since the gulls frequently are closest to the north end of the lake during these times.

#2 – Nashoba Road. There is a very small brushy shoulder on the northwest side of the road just after turning southwest off Route 119. This spot can be very muddy in wet conditions. As with #1, this is a good location during partial freeze-up.

#3 – Nashoba Road. Two very small shoulders are present on the northwest side of the road before the mailbox for house number 27. Alternatively, you can walk from location #2. Unfortunately, the brush between Nashoba Road and the lake is thick in most places, so you need to find a location along the road where a path may be evident to take you to the water's edge. This is the best viewing location to see the largest part of the northern end of Nagog Pond. Waterfowl can be at your feet here. Directly southeast across the lake from this location is the most likely spot for gulls to swim before the ice forms. Also, on the southeast edge of the lake opposite this location are a number of rocks that are favorite perches for the gulls. Although quite far away, this is a good location to check for rarities. One Christmas count an immature Bald Eagle was perched on these rocks. Because you are looking to the southeast from #3, early morning viewing can be difficult on a sunny day. As a side note, the hillside on the northwest side of the road here has a lot of bushes and shrubs with berries that are attractive to waxwings, mockingbirds, and robins in fall and winter.

#4 – Nagog Hill Road. Parking is on the east side of the road at a small path to the southern edge of the lake, which you can take to the water's edge. Wide dirt shoulders on both sides of the road mark this parking spot where Nagog Hill Road is closest to the water. This location gives you close views of the southern end of the lake and the south side of a small island, with a number of rocky perches in the area. This is a favorite spot for many of the waterfowl species, and gulls enjoy using the rocks as perches (one year a Lesser Black-back used one rock as favorite perch for several weeks). Canada Geese enjoy grazing in the adjacent fields. I've seen Red-bellied Woodpeckers here on many trips and once found a flock of Wild Turkeys in one field.

One additional nearby spot to check for gulls is Nara Park. To reach this location, turn right off Nashoba Road onto Route 119, and continue southeast on 119 for about 0.8 mile to Harris Street. Turn left on Harris, go to the end of this road (0.6 mile), then left again on Route 27. Then take an immediate left onto Quarry Road. Nara Park is about 0.3 mile ahead on the right. This community park includes a small pond that in some years is also favored by the gulls for roosting and bathing. The same gulls seen at Nagog Pond rest here as well, but viewing can be closer here, and there is considerable movement of the birds between Nara Park and Nagog Pond. However, in some years park management makes efforts to prevent gulls from roosting on the pond and adjacent beach. Depending on the success of these efforts, gulls may or may not be present at this location in any appreciable numbers. Other birds to look for at this site include Horned Larks, sometimes present at the sandy beach, and the occasional Northern Shrike or flock of Eastern Bluebirds in the ornamental trees planted at the park. 📍

Mike Resch has been an avid birder all his life, previously living in Maryland, Florida, and Pennsylvania. He moved to Massachusetts in 1993 to take a job in an office building at Nagog Park in Acton. Little did he know that this was directly along the route that thousands of gulls use to travel between Nagog Pond and their favorite feeding location. Nice to have Iceland and Glaucous gulls fly by your office window! The biggest part of Mike's birding focus is state listing. His Total Ticks (sum of all state lists) just exceeded the 10,000 milestone.



ICELAND GULLS BY DAVID LARSON

MASSWILDLIFE NEWS

MAN PLEADS GUILTY IN BALD EAGLE SHOOTING

A Pittsfield man was convicted November 4 in federal court of killing a bald eagle last October in Cheshire. Joseph Donahue, of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, pleaded guilty to violating the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

In October of 2003, a pheasant hunter came across the carcass of an immature bald eagle and reported it to MassWildlife Western District Manager, Tom Keefe, who picked up the bird. The carcass was x-rayed by local veterinarian, Dr. Keith Beebe of Waconah Mobile Veterinary Services. Numerous metal fragments were found that were later verified as shot from a shotgun. The Massachusetts Environmental Police and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service were notified and began an investigation. "The sportsman who found the bird deserves a lot of credit for reporting his finding," said Special Agent Tom Ricardi Jr., of the United States Fish & Wildlife Service. "Tom Keefe's action in obtaining x-rays was also very helpful as it allowed us to take immediate action with the investigation. We appreciate Dr. Beebe's assistance."

Several newspaper stories ran in the Pittsfield area after the bird was discovered, and several sportsmen who had been hunting in the area prior to the discovery of the bird came forward to assist local and federal law enforcement during the investigation. These witnesses stated that a large bird was seen in the air above a field in which several parties were hunting. The witnesses identified Donahue as the shooter saying they saw him raise his gun and shoot, and then saw the bird fall. The sportsmen said that, although they were uncertain about the exact species of the bird, due to its large size and wing span, they knew it was a raptor and therefore could not legally be hunted. "I can't stress how much easier our job became, once we heard from witnesses," said Ricardi. "Their action in coming forward demonstrates how sportsmen will not tolerate illegal and unethical behavior from others."

Sentencing has been scheduled for January. A violation of the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act is a federal misdemeanor with a maximum term of imprisonment of one year and a fine of up to \$100,000. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act carries a maximum term of imprisonment of up to six months and a fine of up to \$15,000. The case was investigated by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Office of Law Enforcement and the Massachusetts Environmental Police. For more information, contact: Samantha Martin, United States Attorney's Office at 617-748-3139.

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Wayne R. Petersen

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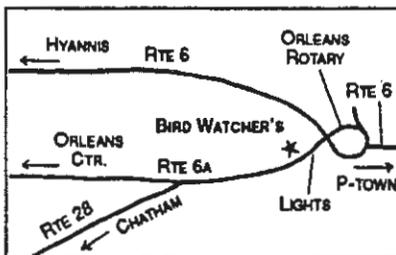
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BIRD SIGHTINGS

July/August, 2004

July and August were both wet months, with precipitation above normal; they were also quite a bit cooler than average. In Boston, the temperature averaged 71° during July, nearly 3° below normal, making this the coolest July since 2001 and the first since 2000 without a reading of 90° or more. Rain totaled 3.87 inches in Boston, almost an inch above the average, with measurable amounts falling on ten days. Locally heavy rain fell on July 25 in some suburban areas to the north and west of Boston, where the July totals were more than double the 30-year normal levels. Thunderstorms were heard on just two days; a very strong storm with large hail was noted on July 2.

In August, the temperature averaged 72°, just a bit below average. The month as a whole was comfortable, although three days reached into the 90s and the final days brought a hot and humid streak. Rainfall was recorded at 4.38 inches in Boston, 1.01 inches higher than normal. There was a streak of rainy weather that lasted for six days from August 12-17, and several suburbs had very severe thunderstorms on both August 20 and 21.

R. H. Stymeist

WATERFOWL THROUGH ALCIDS

Gadwall and Blue-winged Teal, both uncommon nesters in the state, were noted breeding at Plum Island this summer. As many as ten Gadwall broods were noted on July 20. On the same date, a female Blue-winged Teal was observed in Plum Island's North Pool with three young. This provided the first confirmed breeding of Blue-winged Teal on Plum Island in over fifteen years. American Wigeon have only been confirmed breeding in the state on three occasions. While not breeding, one was present at Turners Falls at the end of July, and several were noted in mid-August at Plum Island, somewhat earlier than normal.

A Harlequin Duck spent the entire summer at Chilmark on Martha's Vineyard. This is only the second time this species has summered in the state, and one of only very few summer records overall. Martha's Vineyard also hosted a Bufflehead, equally rare in the summer, for a single day at the end of July. The female Common Goldeneye that was noted at Turners Falls throughout June and during each of the last five summers was present there through at least the end of August. Rounding out the uncommon breeding waterfowl were the Ruddy Ducks breeding on South Monomoy. This species is a rare breeder in the state and has apparently not bred in Massachusetts in several years. This summer six pairs were noted by the USFWS during early July, and five adults and three juveniles were found there at the end of August.

A Horned Grebe found at Rockport during the first half of July provided the first mid-summer record of this species for Massachusetts. In fact, there are no records from June or July during the last ten years. This bird, in breeding plumage, lingered for over two weeks. Not quite as unusual, but still noteworthy, was the Red-necked Grebe found at Gloucester on July 17. An **Eared Grebe** was found at South Monomoy on August 27. Interestingly, there are only three previous summer records for Eared Grebe in the state, and two of these occurred at South Monomoy.

A pelagic trip to Veatch Canyon on August 28 organized by the Brookline Bird Club proved to be very successful. The list of pelagic species found on that trip included such all-stars as three **Audubon's Shearwaters**, nineteen Leach's Storm-Petrels, a **Band-rumped Storm-Petrel**, two **Great Skuas**, one **South Polar Skua**, and a **Bridled Tern**! There are only a

few handfuls of records for Audubon's Shearwaters, though it appears to be pretty reliably encountered in warm water bubbles to the south of Cape Cod. There are only two previous sightings of Band-rumped Storm-Petrels in Massachusetts, both from nearby Hydrographer Canyon.

Least Bitterns were confirmed nesting at both Plum Island and Great Meadows NWR, exciting news for this declining denizen of our declining freshwater marshes. The female and two young observed at the North Pool on Plum Island provided the first confirmed breeding record on Plum Island since 1987.

This season's MVB (Most Valuable Bird) honors would have to go to the **Red-footed Falcon** that dazzled birders and non-birders alike at Katama Air Park on Martha's Vineyard for over two weeks in August. Indeed, this record, the first for the Americas, should rank among the top most exciting birds ever found in Massachusetts, and perhaps even North America, based on its rarity and the excitement it generated. Originally discovered on August 8, its identity as a Red-footed Falcon was not determined until August 10. It was subsequently observed by thousands of appreciative birders from across the country.

King Rails provided yet more exciting news from Plum Island. This species was observed and heard calling in the freshwater marshes on Plum Island throughout much of the summer. On August 4, two families of King Rails were observed on the refuge. One adult was seen with three young in the Bill Forward Pool, and another family with three more young was observed in the North Pool! Soras were also able to successfully breed on Plum Island this year. On July 26 an adult with two juveniles was observed there. **Common Moorhens**, another rare freshwater marsh dependent, were found at a number of locations in the state, notably Plum Island and Great Meadows NWR. In Stockbridge, an adult Common Moorhen was observed with an immature in early August. A **Sandhill Crane** was observed on July 1 at New Marlboro, providing a very rare mid-summer record for the state.

Hanscom Field in Bedford, the stronghold for Upland Sandpipers in Massachusetts, harbored as many as sixteen birds this summer. Fair numbers of Baird's Sandpipers were noted throughout the state, with a high count of five coming from inland at Northampton on August 25. The shorebird highlight of the season was the Curlew Sandpiper found at South Beach in Chatham at the end of August.

As mentioned above, there were a number of skuas found during the period. These included two Great Skuas and a South Polar Skua seen during the Veatch Canyon pelagic. Another South Polar Skua was reported from Martha's Vineyard, and an unidentified skua was observed east of Chatham at the end of July. A juvenile **Long-tailed Jaeger** was observed east of Chatham at the end of August.

The larid highlight of the season, however, was a **Black-tailed Gull** that was reported from South Beach in Chatham on July 7. This follows a report earlier this summer of a Black-tailed Gull at Lynn Beach on June 11. There are no previous records for this species in the state, although there are a number of records from surrounding states. Both reports are pending approval of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (MARC). Three **Sabine's Gulls** were reported during this reporting season, all from land. Single **Sandwich Terns** were seen on Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard and may have represented the same bird. Rounding out the list of exciting birds found on the BBC Pelagic trip to Veatch Canyon was the sub-adult Bridled Tern that was found sitting on a piece of driftwood, as so often is the case, and which gave all participants wonderful views. Five pairs of Black Skimmers were reported nesting on "Minimoy", a small islet between North and South Monomoy. The Monomoy area has traditionally been a key breeding area for this species in Massachusetts, where one to three

pairs have bred sporadically since the 1960s. A Black Guillemot, very unusual in the summer in Massachusetts, was reported from Rockport on July 31 and August 2.

J. Trimble

Brant				8/15	Rockport (A.P.)	3	R. Heil
7/23	Nomans Land	1	A. Keith#	8/30	Woods Hole	1	G. Hirth
8/10	Duxbury	2	D. Clapp	Bufflehead			
8/16	Squantum	1	R. Donovan	7/27	Gay Head	1	A. Keith
8/30	Revere	1	BBC (P. + F. Vale)	Common Goldeneye			
Wood Duck				thr	Turners Falls	1	H. Allen
7/2	Williamsburg	20	H. Allen	Hooded Merganser			
7/5	Wakefield	29	P. + F. Vale	7/1	HRWMA	2 f	T. Pirro
8/2	GMNWR	20	T. Pirro	7/10	Plainfield	6	S. Kellogg#
8/8	S. Egremont	17	M. Lynch	7/11	Hardwick	1 w/3yng	C. Buelow
8/8	W. Springfield	12	T. Gagnon	7/18	Paxton	4 juv	M. Lynch
8/8	Stockbridge	73	M. Lynch	7/23	DWWS	1 juv	D. Crockett#
8/17	Northfield	13	M. Lynch	7/23	New Braintree	5	C. Buelow
8/31	Longmeadow	30	S. Kellogg	7/30	Lenox	7	R. Laubach
Gadwall				8/3, 10	PI.	4 juv	R. Heil
7/thr	P.I.	10 broods	R. Heil	8/6-9	Mt.A.	1	S. Ketchian
8/5	DWWS	1 f	D Furbish	Common Merganser			
8/19	P.I.	70+	R. Heil	7/29	S. Hadley	13	H. Allen
8/27	S. Monomoy	60	W. Petersen#	8/3	Northampton	12	T. Gagnon
American Wigeon				Red-breasted Merganser			
7/28	Turners Falls	1	H. Allen	7/4	Fairhaven	3	M. Lynch
8/19	P.I.	3	R. Heil	7/20	PI.	1	R. Heil
8/27	S. Monomoy	6	W. Petersen#	8/1	WBWS	2	M. Lynch
Blue-winged Teal				8/6	Rockport	1 f	J. Berry
7/6	P.I.	11	R. Heil	Ruddy Duck			
7/20	P.I.	f + 3 yg	R. Heil	7/1-13	S. Monomoy	6 pr	USFWS (Brady)
8/8	S. Egremont	1	M. Lynch	8/27	S. Monomoy	5 ad, 3 juv	W. Petersen#
8/15	Acoaxet	2	M. Lynch	8/28	P.I.	1 m ad	P. + F. Vale
8/20	Hatfield	1	R. Packard	Ruffed Grouse			
8/24	Newbury	20	R. Heil	7/3	Quabbin (G10)	1	G. d'Entremont
8/25	Egartown	1	A. Keith	7/9	Conway	3	R. Packard
8/27	S. Monomoy	20	W. Petersen#	7/19	Barre F.D.	1	S. Sutton
Northern Shoveler				7/28	New Braintree	1	C. Buelow
8/27	S. Monomoy	10	W. Petersen#	Wild Turkey			
Northern Pintail				7/18	DWWS	6 f ad, 16 imm	D. Furbish
8/19, 31	P.I.	2, 1	R. Heil	7/20	Byfield	1 ad, 4 yg	S. Haydock
8/27	S. Monomoy	10	W. Petersen#	7/21	P'town	1 ad, 2 juv	C. Franklin
Green-winged Teal				7/30	Scituate	6	D. Furbish
7/thr	P.I.	8 max	R. Heil	7/31	Montague	20	C. Gentes
8/8	S. Egremont	1	M. Lynch	8/14	E. Bridgewater	2	G. d'Entremont#
8/9	GMNWR	20	M. Rines	8/16	Quabbin Pk	18	M. Lynch
8/10	P.I.	37	R. Heil	8/25	Leicester	34	M. Lynch
8/24	Newbury	90	R. Heil	Northern Bobwhite			
8/27	S. Monomoy	90	W. Petersen#	7/24	Falmouth	2	P. + F. Vale
Ring-necked Duck				7/31	WBWS	2 ad + 15 yg	M. Lynch
8/27	S. Monomoy	2	W. Petersen#	7/31	Chatham	1	M. Lynch
Greater Scaup				Common Loon			
8/27	S. Monomoy	1	W. Petersen#	7/1	Leominster	2 ad, 2 juv	T. Pirro
Common Eider				7/3	Buzzards Bay	7	R. Farrell
7/3	Dartmouth	5	A. + D. Morgan	7/4	Mattapoisett	6	M. Lynch
7/10	N. Monomoy	65	B. Nikula	7/6	P.I.	7	R. Heil
7/19, 8/15	Cape Ann	56, 81	R. Heil	7/17	Gardner	pr, 1 juv	T. Pirro
7/31	Stellwagen	20	M. Lynch	7/19	Cape Ann	4	R. Heil
8/10	Duxbury	119	D. Clapp	7/24	Wachusett Res.	4ad+1 1stS	M. Lynch
8/14	P.I.	11	T. Wetmore	8/5	Eastham	4	P. Flood
8/15	Westport	16	M. Lynch	8/16	Quabbin Pk	3 ad	M. Lynch
Harlequin Duck				8/17	Leominster	1 ad, 2 juv	T. Pirro
thr	Chilmark	1 m	A. Keith	Pied-billed Grebe			
Surf Scoter				8/8	Sheffield	1	M. Lynch
7/12	Chatham (S.B.)	1 f	R. Heil	8/10, 31	P.I.	2, 1	R. Heil
7/19, 8/15	Cape Ann	5, 12	R. Heil	8/27	S. Monomoy	1	W. Petersen#
7/25	Acoaxet	1m	M. Lynch	Horned Grebe			
7/28	Chatham (S.B.)	3	B. Nikula	7/1-19	Rockport	1 br pl	R. Heil
White-winged Scoter				Red-necked Grebe			
7/14, 8/15	Rockport (A.P.)	2, 7	R. Heil	7/17	Gloucester	2	H. Pearce
7/25	P.I.	1 m	T. Wetmore	Eared Grebe			
7/28, 8/22	Chatham (S.B.)	1, 25	B. Nikula	8/27	S. Monomoy	1	W. Petersen#
8/15-31	Chatham (S.B.)	1 albino	B. Nikula#	Cory's Shearwater			
8/26	Buzzards Bay	1	R. Farrell	8/5	off Chilmark	2	A. Keith
Black Scoter				8/26	40 miles S of M.V.30	3	A. Keith#
7/6	P.I.	7	R. Heil	8/28	Nantucket Shoals	95	BBC (R. Heil)
7/19, 8/15	Rockport	9, 3	R. Heil	Greater Shearwater			
7/27, 8/15	Sandwich	1 m	M. Keleher	7/8, 14	Cape Ann	12, 3	R. Heil
7/28-8/31	Chatham (S.B.)	8 max	B. Nikula	7/12	Chatham (S.B.)	170	R. Heil

Greater Shearwater (continued)				Great Egret			
7/21	12 m. E. of Chatham	1200	B. Perkins#	7/4	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	7	M. Lynch
7/23	Stellwagen	7	C. Dalton	7/21, 8/9	GMNWR	3, 12	M. Rines#
7/31	P'town (R.P.)	4	M. Lynch	7/25	Westport	15	M. Lynch
8/1	1-2 m off Chatham	10+	C. Dalton	8/1	Gr Barrington	7	R. Reed
8/16	Chatham	6	F. Atwood	8/2	Hadley	4	P. Yeskie
8/28	Nantucket Shoals	210	BBC (R. Heil)	8/15	Westport	85	M. Lynch
Sooty Shearwater				8/15, 31	P.I.	35, 60	R. Heil
7/7	Stellwagen	2	SSBC (Emmons)	8/16	Turners Falls	6	M. Fairbrother
7/12	Chatham (S.B.)	210	R. Heil	8/20	Hanson	5	J. Sweeney
7/21	12 m. E. of Chatham	1500	B. Perkins#	Snowy Egret			
7/24	Eastham	20	P. Flood	7/3, 8/8	Hingham	5, 10	E. Taylor
8/1	1-2 m off Chatham	75+	C. Dalton	7/4	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	21	M. Lynch
8/16	Chatham	11	F. Atwood	7/26	Scituate	12	D. Furbish
8/24	10 m. E. of Chatham	10	S. Perkins#	7/30	GMNWR	1	M. Rines#
8/28	Nantucket Shoals	16	BBC (R. Heil)	8/1	Eastham	20	M. Lynch
Manx Shearwater				8/2, 26	Falmouth	14, 23	R. Farrell
7/1	S. Boston	1	R. Donovan	8/3, 31	P.I.	45, 135	R. Heil
7/12	Chatham (S.B.)	4	R. Heil	8/15	Westport	19	M. Lynch
7/14, 8/15	Rockport (A.P.)	13, 2	R. Heil	8/17	Sterling	2 imm	M. Lynch
7/21	12 m. E. of Chatham	1	B. Perkins#	Little Blue Heron			
7/24	P.I.	2+	S. Mirick#	thr	P.I.	1-3	v.o.
7/31	Stellwagen	3	M. Lynch	7/3-11	DWWS	1	E. Taylor
8/16	Chatham	6	F. Atwood	7/7	Edgartown	1	A. Keith
8/28	Nantucket Shoals	1	BBC (R. Heil)	7/11-8/5	Scituate	1	S. Maguire#
Audubon's Shearwater				8/5	Eastham	1 ad	P. Flood
8/28	Veatch Canyon	3	BBC (R. Heil)	8/14	S. Chatham	1	F. Atwood
Large shearwater species				8/18	WBWS	1 imm	v.o.
7/12	Chatham (S.B.)	100+	R. Heil	8/22	Essex	2	J. Nelson
Wilson's Storm-Petrel				8/22	Hingham	1 ad	G. d'Entremont
7/7	Stellwagen	74	SSBC (Emmons)	Tricolored Heron			
7/8, 19	Cape Ann	450, 350	R. Heil	7/3-8/6	P.I.	1-2	v.o.
7/11	P.I.	90	T. Wetmore	8/10	Chatham	1	F. Atwood
7/12	Chatham (S.B.)	500	R. Heil	8/15	Westport	1	M. Lynch
7/21	12 m. E. of Chatham	2000	B. Perkins#	Cattle Egret			
7/24	Stellwagen	620	BBC (d'Entremont)	7/8	Ipswich	1 ad	J. Berry
7/26	Nantucket	70	E. Ray	Green Heron			
8/1	Jeffries L.	50	K. Hartel#	7/11	Bolton Flats	7	M. Lynch
8/5	Eastham	85	P. Flood	7/11	DWWS	3	E. Taylor
8/6	P'town	750	S. Perkins#	7/11	Amherst	4	H. Allen
8/15	Rockport (A.P.)	1040	R. Heil	7/29	Turners Falls	6	L. Therrian
8/16	Chatham	2100	F. Atwood	7/31	WBWS	5	M. Lynch
8/28	Nantucket Shoals	210	BBC (R. Heil)	8/1	Eastham (F.H.)	4	M. Lynch
Leach's Storm-Petrel				8/4	Pittsfield	4	D. St. James
7/22	Nomans Land	10+	A. Keith#	8/6	Sudbury	pr + 4 yg n	M. Rines#
8/14	Cape Cod Bay	1	M. Faherty	8/7	GMNWR	6	M. Lynch
8/28	Nantucket Shoals	19	BBC (R. Heil)	8/17	Sterling	5	M. Lynch
Band-rumped Storm-Petrel				8/23	S. Lancaster	4	S. Sutton
8/28	Veatch Canyon	1	BBC (R. Heil)	Black-crowned Night-Heron			
Northern Gannet				7/22	Mashpee	14	M. Keleher
7/7	Stellwagen	2	SSBC (Emmons)	7/31	P.I.	21	P. + F. Vale
7/12	Chatham (S.B.)	1	R. Heil	8/3	Ipswich	35	R. Heil
7/14, 8/15	Rockport (A.P.)	66, 15	R. Heil	8/7	GMNWR	30	P. Roberts
7/25, 8/15	P.I.	6, 2	T. Wetmore	8/8	W. Springfield	1	T. Gagnon
Double-crested Cormorant				Yellow-crowned Night-Heron			
7/19	Cape Ann	670	R. Heil	7/3, 8/4	Salem	1	Hoye, Daley
7/23	DWWS	250	D. Furbish	7/29	Ipswich	3	J. Berry
8/20	Chatham (S.B.)	1000+	J. Berry#	7/29-8/31	WBWS	1 imm	v.o.
Great Cormorant				8/14, 29	MNWS	1 imm	Dysart, Haley
7/12	Chatham (S.B.)	1 1S	R. Heil	Glossy Ibis			
7/31	Newbypt H.	1	NHA (S. Mirick)	thr	P.I.	48 max	v.o.
American Bittern				7/14	Gay Head	1	A. Fischer#
7/1	HRWMA	1	T. Pirro	7/17	Hanson	1	M. Emmons
7/16, 8/29	P.I.	1	Chickering, Wetmore	7/24	Essex	34	E. Taylor
8/7	GMNWR	1	M. Lynch	Black Vulture			
Least Bittern				8/8	Sheffield	1	M. Lynch
7/thr	P.I.	pr + 3 yg	v.o.	8/13	Washington	3	D. St. James
7/thr	GMNWR	pr + 3 yg	v.o.	Turkey Vulture			
7/11	Bolton Flats	1	M. Lynch	7/3	Erving	12	M. Lynch
7/18	IRWS	1	D. Hill	7/4, 8/30	Bourne	4, 7	R. Farrell
Great Blue Heron				8/7	Newbypt H.	12	P. + F. Vale
7/5	DWMA	51	S. Sutton	8/8	Sheffield	16	M. Lynch
7/9	Halifax	60+ nests	K. Anderson	8/8	P.I.	9	T. Wetmore
7/17	P.I.	30	P. + F. Vale	8/17	Barre	73	M. Lynch
7/17	Hanson	41	M. Emmons	8/22	HRWMA	35	T. Pirro
7/28	Turners Falls	11	R. Packard	Osprey			
8/7	GMNWR	27	M. Lynch	thr	Springfield	pr + 3 yg	v.o.
8/15	P.I.	23	R. Heil	7/thr	Westboro	pr + 3 yg	E. Taylor

Osprey (continued)				8/7	Ludlow	6	M. Lynch
7/3	DWWS	pr + 3 yg	E. Taylor	8/19	Hadley	3	R. Packard
7/3	Quincy	pr + 3 yg	E. Taylor	8/22	Leicester	10	M. Lynch
7/3	Squantum	3 ad, 3 yg	E. Taylor	Red-footed Falcon			
7/4	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	3 pr n	M. Lynch	8/10-24	Katama, M.V.	1 m ph	V. Laux# + v.o.
7/4	Mattapoisset	pr + 2 yg n	M. Lynch	Merlin			
7/4	Fairhaven	pr n	M. Lynch	7/4	S. Boston	1	R. Donovan
7/21	Pepperell	pr + 2 yg	E. Stromsted	7/21-8/30	Reports of indiv. from 11 locations		
7/25	Acoaxet	23	M. Lynch	Peregrine Falcon			
7/25	Westport	39	M. Lynch	7/16	Worcester	2	M. Lynch
8/1	Revere	pr + 2 juv	S. Zende#	7/23-31	P.I.	1-3	T. Spahr#
8/22	Northampton	4	T. Gagnon	7/31	P'town (R.P.)	1 imm	M. Lynch
8/26	Falmouth	5	R. Farrell	8/1	Groveland	1	D. Chickering#
Bald Eagle				8/15	Westport	1 ad	M. Lynch
7/1-13	S. Monomoy	1 imm	USFWS (Brady)	8/16	Squantum	1	R. Donovan
7/17	Chatham (S.B.)	1 imm	S. Mirick#	8/24	Chatham (S.B.)	1 imm	B. Nikula#
7/20	Chilmark	1 ad	N. Freed	8/28	Northampton	1 imm	M. Lynch
7/21	Nantucket	1 imm	J. Decker	8/29	Boston	1	B. Miller
7/24	Wachusett Res.	1 ad	M. Lynch	King Rail			
8/4	N. Truro	1 imm	P. Trull	7/thr	P.I.	pr + 6 yg	v.o.
8/13	Pembroke	1 ad	F. Vale	8/8	Stockbridge	1	M. Lynch
8/16	P'town	1 imm	P. Trull	Virginia Rail			
8/17	Barton's Cove	1 imm+1 ad	M. Lynch	7/13	Ipswich	ad + 1 juv	J. Berry
8/31	Northampton	1 ad	T. Gagnon	8/3	Stockbridge	3 ad, 2 juv	R. Heil
Northern Harrier				8/8	Stockbridge	7	M. Lynch
thr	P.I.	1-6	v.o.	Sora			
7/17	Chatham (S.B.)	2 ad m	S. Mirick#	7/13-8/21	P.I.	pr + 2 yg	v.o.
8/4	DWWS	1 imm	D. Furbish	8/7	GMNWR	1	M. Lynch
8/11	Sandwich	1 m	M. Tuttle	Common Moorhen			
8/13	GMNWR	1 juv	E. Morrier#	7/thr	GMNWR	1 (USFWS)	S. Koch
8/14	M.V.	1 imm	M. Lynch	7/2	P.I.	1	S. Mirick
8/14	Woods Hole	1 m	M. Lynch	7/30, 8/5	GMNWR	2	M. Rines#
8/20	Hanson	1 imm	J. Sweeney	8/5	Lenox	1	D. St. James
8/23	Deerfield	2	H. McQueen	8/8	Stockbridge	1 ad+1 imm	M. Lynch
8/24	Newbury	1 f ad	R. Heil	American Coot			
8/28	Carlisle	1	BBC (Brownrigg)	8/27	S. Monomoy	1	W. Petersen#
8/29	Northampton	1	C. Gentes	Sandhill Crane			
8/31	Leicester	2	M. Lynch	7/1	New Marlboro	1	<i>fide</i> R. Laubach
Sharp-shinned Hawk				Black-bellied Plover			
7/8	Ipswich	1 ad	J. Berry	7/7, 8/24	Chatham (S.B.)	380, 2500	B. Nikula
7/13	Lenox	1	R. Laubach	7/24, 8/25	P.I.	25, 700	P. Flood
7/25	Revere	1	P. + F. Vale	7/30, 8/28	Newbypt H.	18, 345	P. + F. Vale
7/26	Scituate	1	D. Furbish	8/1, 31	Plymouth B.	1, 747	A. Brissette
7/27	Amherst	2	H. McQueen	8/8	Ipswich (C.B.)	50+	J. Berry#
8/3	Northampton	1	T. Gagnon	8/10	Duxbury	60	D. Clapp
8/5	Chilmark	1	T. Rivers	8/15	Revere	140	S. Zende#
8/15	Westport	1 imm	M. Lynch	8/22	Squantum	125	G. d'Entremont
8/22	Bolton	2	S. Sutton	American Golden-Plover			
8/22	Leicester	2	M. Lynch	8/21, 24	Chatham (S.B.)	1	F. Atwood#
8/29	Rutland	1	M. Lynch	8/25	Katama	1	A. Keith
Cooper's Hawk				8/25-29	Northampton	2	S. Surner#
7/thr	Reports of indiv. from 9 locations			8/27	S. Monomoy	2	W. Petersen#
8/thr	Reports of indiv. from 11 locations			8/27	Leicester	4	M. Lynch
Northern Goshawk				8/28	Northampton	1	M. Lynch
7/3	Hawley	1	M. Lynch	8/29-31	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore
7/3	Quabbin (G10)	1 ad	G. d'Entremont	Semipalmated Plover			
7/26	E. Middleboro	1	A. Brissette	7/24, 8/25	Eastham	130, 3500	P. Flood
8/8	Wrentham	1 imm	D. Furbish#	7/25, 8/30	Revere	23, 492	P. + F. Vale
8/17	Northfield	1 ad	M. Lynch	7/25, 8/24	Chatham (S.B.)	650, 3000	B. Nikula
Red-shouldered Hawk				7/28	Turners Falls	8	R. Packard
7/3	Hawley	1	M. Lynch	8/1, 31	Plymouth B.	135, 1246	A. Brissette
7/27	Scituate	2	D. Furbish	8/3, 31	P.I.	870, 1100	R. Heil
Broad-winged Hawk				8/8	Ipswich (C.B.)	950	J. Berry#
7/10	Plainfield	2	S. Kellogg#	8/9	GMNWR	15	M. Rines
7/12	Mt. Washington	2	M. Faherty	8/15	Hatfield	5	C. Gentes
7/25	Savoy	4	R. Packard	Piping Plover			
8/17	Northfield	4	M. Lynch	7/5	Plymouth B.	35	G. d'Entremont
8/22	Moran WMA	3	M. Lynch	7/9, 8/25	Eastham	25, 10	P. Flood
8/22	Williamsburg	2	R. Packard	7/20	P.I.	13	R. Heil
8/22	Leicester	3	M. Lynch	7/25, 8/29	Chatham (S.B.)	20, 48	B. Nikula
8/22	HRWMA	1 ad, 2 imm	T. Pirro	8/8	Ipswich (C.B.)	8	J. Berry#
8/25	Lexington	2	J. Forbes	8/22	Nantucket	12	E. Ray#
8/28	Carlisle	2	BBC (Brownrigg)	Killdeer			
American Kestrel				7/28	Harvard	57	T. Pirro
7/10	Cambridge	pr + 3 yg	J. Crystal	8/8	GMNWR	40	G. d'Entremont
7/27	Amherst	4	H. McQueen	8/21	Hatfield	50	C. Gentes
7/31	Bedford	5	M. Daley	8/21	Northampton	53	C. Gentes
8/3	Montague	3	R. Packard	8/28	Northfield	125	C. Gentes

Killdeer (continued)				7/12-8/31	Nantucket	40 max	8/12	v.o.
8/29	Rutland	54	M. Lynch	7/30	Eastham (F.E.)	60		M. Lynch
American Oystercatcher				8/2	Westport	14		L. Tyralla
7/3	Dartmouth	2 ad, 1 yg	A. + D. Morgan	8/11	Sandwich	2		M. Tuttle
7/4	Mattapoisett	7	M. Lynch	8/27	Wellfleet	20		S. Hedman
7/4	Fairhaven	8	M. Lynch	8/30	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	6		T. Raymond
7/12, 8/25	Chatham (S.B.)	47, 195	Heil, Nikula	Hudsonian Godwit				
7/12	Winthrop	8	S. Zende#	7/10-8/18	Newbypt	9 max		v.o.
7/19	E. Gloucester	1 ad	R. Heil	7/12-8/20	Chatham (S.B.)	87 max	8/6	B. Nikula
7/26	N. Monomoy	65	B. Nikula	7/25	Westport	1		M. Lynch
7/31	Eastham	6	M. Lynch	7/25	Essex	1		D. Brown
8/7	Marblehead	2 ad + 2 yg	J. Berry	8/8	Chilmark	1		V. Laux#
8/15	Westport	2	M. Lynch	8/10	P.I.	1 ad		R. Heil
8/16	Squantum	5	R. Donovan	Marbled Godwit				
8/30	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	10	T. Raymond	7/20-8/26	N. Monomoy/S.B.	2		B. Nikula
Greater Yellowlegs				8/1	Chatham	1		M. Lynch
7/2, 8/29	P.I.	4, 100	T. Wetmore	8/7-12	Newbypt H.	1		E. Stokes#
7/9, 8/25	Eastham	15, 125	P. Flood	8/19	Lynn B.	2		C. Floyd
7/17, 8/28	Newbypt H.	28, 116	P. + F. Vale	8/21	Scituate	1		D. Furbish
7/24	Sterling	3	M. Lynch	8/29	Chatham (S.B.)	4		MAS (Petersen)
7/26, 8/25	N. Monomoy	80, 240	B. Nikula	Ruddy Turnstone				
7/28	Turners Falls	4	R. Packard	7/24, 8/31	Plymouth B.	11, 90		A. Brissette#
8/1, 15	Revere	22, 60	S. Zende#	7/25, 8/20	Chatham (S.B.)	80, 300		Nikula, Berry
8/1	WBWS	80+	M. Lynch	7/28	Sterling	1		T. Pirro
8/4	Chatham (S.B.)	115	F. Grenon#	8/1	Lynn	12		L. Pivacek
8/13	Longmeadow	3	D. Mako	8/1	Newbypt	15		K. Hartel#
8/22	Squantum	67	G. d'Entremont	8/5, 24	Scituate	40, 15		S. Maguire
8/26	GMNWR	20	E. Taylor	8/7	Marblehead	10		J. Berry
8/29	Edgartown	75	L. McDowell	8/18	P.I.	17		M. Lynch
Lesser Yellowlegs				8/20-21	Northampton	1		H. McQueen#
7/20, 8/3	Newbypt H.	410, 750	R. Heil	Red Knot				
7/24, 8/25	Eastham	160, 18	P. Flood	thr	Chatham (S.B.)	1300 max	8/4	B. Nikula
7/25	P.I.	500	P. Roberts#	8/1, 30	Revere	3, 7		Zende#
7/28	Turners Falls	1	H. Allen	8/1, 31	Plymouth B.	4, 4		A. Brissette
8/1	GMNWR	22	M. Rines	8/5, 8/25	Eastham	15, 4		P. Flood
8/3	N. Monomoy	175	B. Nikula	8/13	M.V.	51		A. Keith
8/3	Rowley	40	R. Heil	8/22	Nantucket	8		E. Ray#
8/21	Hatfield	1	C. Gentes	8/31	P.I.	9 juv		R. Heil
Solitary Sandpiper				Sanderling				
7/28	Sterling	3	T. Pirro	7/24, 8/31	Plymouth B.	607, 1516		A. Brissette#
8/7	GMNWR	14	M. Lynch	7/25, 8/4	Chatham (S.B.)	2600, 4000		B. Nikula
8/8	S. Egremont	5	M. Lynch	7/25, 8/30	Revere	311, 337		P. + F. Vale
8/18	Newbypt	3	S. Grinley	7/28-29	Turners Falls	6		H. Allen#
8/21	Northampton	3	C. Gentes	8/1	P.I.	1000 migr		D. Chickering
8/22	Newbury	5	R. Hamburger	8/1, 31	Nahant	380, 400		L. Pivacek
8/28	Carlisle	3	BBC (Brownrigg)	8/15	Acoaxet	128		M. Lynch
8/30	Winchester	4	M. Rines	Semipalmated Sandpiper				
Willet				7/20, 8/3	Newbypt H.	630, 7000		R. Heil
7/2	Chappaquiddickpr	+ 3 yg	R. Jennings#	7/20, 8/3	P.I.	140, 3000		R. Heil
7/4	Fairhaven	19	M. Lynch	7/24, 8/25	Eastham	2300, 7500		P. Flood
7/7	N. Monomoy	140	B. Nikula	7/24, 8/31	Plymouth B.	1776, 1663		A. Brissette#
7/9, 8/25	Eastham	25, 1	P. Flood	7/24	Sterling	9		M. Lynch
7/16	Essex	24	A. Manganiello#	7/25, 8/4	Chatham (S.B.)	3800, 5000		B. Nikula
7/18	Winthrop	63+	P. + F. Vale	7/25, 8/30	Revere	1918, 4830		P. + F. Vale
7/20	Newbypt/P.I.	248	R. Heil	7/28	Turners Falls	4		R. Packard
7/25	Chatham (S.B.)	260	B. Nikula	8/1, 31	Nahant	3200, 800		L. Pivacek
7/25	Westport	13 + 2yg	M. Lynch	8/7	GMNWR	25+		M. Lynch
Western Willet				8/15	Hatfield	3		C. Gentes
7/12, 8/29	Chatham (S.B.)	1, 15	Heil, Petersen	Western Sandpiper				
Spotted Sandpiper				7/9, 8/25	Eastham	1, 8		P. Flood
7/6	Hatfield	7	R. Packard	7/19	Plymouth B.	1		C. Dalton
7/17	Grafton	6	M. Lynch	7/25, 8/22	Chatham (S.B.)	10, 10		B. Nikula#
7/24	Essex	6	D. Brown	8/10, 31	P.I.	1, 52		R. Heil
7/24	Hadley	5	P. Yeskie	8/16	Squantum	1		R. Donovan
7/25	Easthampton	7	H. Allen	8/19	Lynn B.	3		C. Floyd
8/7	GMNWR	10+	M. Lynch	8/26	Falmouth	1 ad		R. Farrell
Upland Sandpiper				Least Sandpiper				
7/20	Katama	2	A. Keith	7/20, 8/3	N. Monomoy	900, 200		B. Nikula
7/30	Bedford (Hanscom)	16	M. Rines#	7/20, 8/31	P.I.	140, 75		R. Heil
8/7	Ludlow	2	M. Lynch	7/22	Cumb. Farms	20		K. Anderson
8/18	WBWS	1	W. Petersen	7/24	Sterling	29		M. Lynch
8/21	Eastham (CGB)	1	B. Nikula#	7/24, 8/25	Eastham	250, 65		P. Flood
8/22-24	Northampton	1	T. Gagnon#	7/25	Chatham (S.B.)	500		B. Nikula#
8/22-29	Leicester	1	M. Lynch	8/1	GMNWR	120		M. Rines
Whimbrel				8/8	Longmeadow	14		T. Gagnon
thr	P.I.	16 max	7/25	8/15	Deerfield	12		C. Gentes
thr	Chatham (S.B.)	12 max	8/17	8/27	Northampton	20		A. Spencer
7/1-13	S. Monomoy	2	USFWS (Brady)					

Roseate Tern (continued)				Least Tern			
7/12, 8/22	Chatham (S.B.)	25, 2000	Heil, Nikula	7/4	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	6	M. Lynch
7/20	P.I.	4 ad, 1 juv	R. Heil	7/8	Gloucester	4	R. Heil
7/22	Plymouth B.	4	C. Dalton	7/9, 8/5	Eastham	100, 80	P. Flood
8/thr	S. Monomoy	27 pr	USFWS (Brady)	7/20	P.I.	90+ ad	R. Heil
8/3, 30	Falmouth	65, 89	R. Farrell	7/22	Plymouth B.	35	C. Dalton
8/6	P'town	500	S. Perkins#	7/27	Sandwich	65	M. Keleher
8/10-17	Edgartown	50-75	A. Keith#	7/31	Stellwagen	35+	M. Lynch
Common Tern				8/14	Chatham (S.B.)	91	BBC (M. Burns)
7/9, 8/5	Eastham	250, 500	P. Flood	Bridled Tern			
7/12; 8/22	S.B.	25,000; 10,000	Heil, Nikula	8/28	Nantucket Shoals	1	BBC (R. Heil)
7/12	Winthrop	150+	S. Zende#	Black Tern			
7/23, 8/20	Nantucket	339, 739	E. Ray#	7/1-13	S. Monomoy	12	USFWS (Brady)
8/thr	S. Monomoy	10,258 pr	USFWS (Brady)	7/7, 8/12	Edgartown	1, 1	A. Keith
8/2	Ellisville	125	C. Dalton	7/20, 8/28	Nantucket	3, 39	E. Ray#
8/3, 27	Falmouth	230, 207	R. Farrell	7/21	Scituate	1 ad	D. Furbish
8/3, 15	P.I.	85, 300	R. Heil	7/26	Chilmark	1	D. Bryant
8/6	P'town	1500	S. Perkins#	8/1	Jeffries L.	1	K. Hartel#
8/10-17	Edgartown	200-500	A. Keith#	8/2	Ellisville	4	C. Dalton
8/15	Rockport (A.P.)	126	R. Heil	8/4	Sandwich	1	G. Gove
8/15	Westport	195+	M. Lynch	8/15	Eastham (F.E.)	6	E. Masterson#
8/16	Turners Falls	2	M. Taylor	8/19	Northampton	1	W. Laflay
Arctic Tern				8/21	Eastham (CGB)	3	B. Nikula#
7/12-8/12	Chatham (S.B.)	1	v.o.	8/22	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore
7/19	Plymouth B.	8 ad, 3 juv	C. Dalton	8/22	Wellfleet	2+	G. d'Entremont
7/25	Acoaxet	1 ad	M. Lynch	8/22, 30	Falmouth	2, 4	R. Farrell
8/12	Nantucket	1	F. Gallo	8/29	Chatham (S.B.)	6	MAS (Petersen)
Forster's Tern				Tern species			
7/4, 8/15	P.I.	1, 6	Chickering, Heil	8/24	Chatham (S.B.)	20,000+	P. Flood
7/9, 24	Eastham	2, 1	P. Flood	Black Skimmer			
7/11	Edgartown	1	A. Keith	7/26, 8/15	Chatham (S.B.)	2 ad, 14	B. Nikula#
8/3, 30	Falmouth	1, 2	R. Farrell	8/thr	Minimoy	5 pr	USFWS (Brady)
8/15	Newbypt H.	2 juv	R. Heil	Black Guillemot			
8/15	Westport	7	M. Lynch	7/31, 8/2	Rockport	1	P. Trotter
8/20	Nantucket	2	E. Ray#				
8/21	Eastham (CGB)	3	B. Nikula#				
8/29	Chatham (S.B.)	5	MAS (Petersen)				
8/30	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	6	T. Raymond				

CUCKOOS THROUGH FINCHES

Several observers noted that there were large movements of migrants earlier than usual that included some species that are uncommon migrants in our area. For example, there were two reports of **Western Kingbird**, four reports of Blue Grosbeak, and three reports of Dickcissels during August. These birds, especially Blue Grosbeak, are more typically found later in migration. In Worcester County, Mark Lynch noted that his best counts of warblers, flycatchers, and vireos were one to two weeks earlier than he had in the last twenty years!

The annual Common Nighthawk migration is one sure thing each August. Several veteran observers noted better results this year over last year's poor flight. The bulk of migrants were noted from August 22-29 in many localities. The hot spots were Sunset Hill in Northampton, where Tom Gagnon logged in a total of 1490, and the Worcester Airport in Leicester, where Mark Lynch and friends tallied 1545. Another August event is the great congregation of Tree Swallows that gathers on Plum Island, a sight not to be missed. The estimated count exceeded 40,000 at mid-month. Tree Swallows also gathered at the East Meadows in Northampton, where the total number of birds was estimated at nearly 100,000 individuals! Mark Lynch reported the sight was "nothing short of breathtaking, swirling in huge dense clouds, certainly rivaling anything I have ever seen at Plum Island."

Yet another great gathering is that of the American Robin. During the day, these birds spread out in sizeable roaming flocks which concentrate at food sources, but in the evening, starting in late summer and continuing often into early January, they fly to roosts in large numbers. At Bolton Flats, Steve Sutton has been monitoring an evening roost over the past three years. He counted 3700 in 2002 and 4200 in 2003, but this year on August 22 Steve carefully estimated over 11,000 birds coming in to roost from 4:45 to 8:05 p.m. In his own

words: “Robins began arriving in earnest just after 6:00 p.m., and for nearly two hours they poured into the marsh. The peak period was from about 7:15 to 7:45, during which time they came in so fast and thick that it was extremely difficult even to make a rough estimate. In that half-hour alone, there were at least 7200 robins – that’s an average of 240 per minute, and four per second! And yet I believe this to be a conservative count.”

As many as eleven Olive-sided Flycatchers were reported in July, compared with just four birds during the same period last year. Seven Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were reported, including a very early migrant in Agawam on August 5. The previous earliest migrant was on August 15, 1998. On a migration watch from Sunset Hill in Northampton, a total of twenty-three migrating Ruby-throated Hummingbirds was tallied from August 20 on. Interestingly, only three Monarch Butterflies were noted migrating at this site during that same period. A total of twenty-nine warbler species was noted during this period; among the more interesting were two **Golden-winged**, a single **Cape May**, a **Prothonotary** from East Orleans, a **Kentucky Warbler** from Marblehead, and a **Yellow-breasted Chat** from Leicester.

Interesting is the report of a Kentucky Warbler that was found on May 19 in Sudbury and was still singing in precisely the same spot on July 2. Attempts to find a second bird were unsuccessful. On Martha’s Vineyard, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were confirmed breeding for the fifth year in a row, and a nest of Indigo Buntings was found on June 28, believed to be the first ever confirmed nesting on the island. Among the more unusual birds during the period, some of which have been mentioned previously, were: Western Kingbird, a shrike from Gay Head, a **Lark Sparrow**, Blue Grosbeak, Dickcissel, **Yellow-headed Blackbird**, a wayward Pine Siskin from Wellfleet, and Evening Grosbeaks from three localities.

R. H. Stymeist

Black-billed Cuckoo				8/27, 29	Leicester	530, 230	M. Lynch#
7/3	Wompatuck SP	2	S. Mirick#	8/28	Southwick	150	S. Kellogg
7/3	Leyden	1	H. Allen	8/28, 29-30	Northampton	559, 77	T. Gagnon
7/4	Falmouth	2	R. Farrell	8/28	Maynard	116	L. Nachtrab
7/10	Acton	1	M. Rines#	8/28, 29	Worcester	250, 134	Walker
7/10	Sheffield	1	R. Laubach	8/28, 29	Grafton	341, 43	J. Liller
7/11	Bolton Flats	3	M. Lynch	8/30	Uxbridge	100	P. + B. Milke
7/14	Hawley	1	R. Packard		Whip-poor-will		
7/29	Scituate	1	D. Furbish	7/1	Montague	15	R. Packard
7/31	P.I.	1	NHA (S. Mirick)	8/12	Southwick	1	S. Kellogg
8/8	Stockbridge	1 imm	M. Lynch	8/19	P.I.	2	R. Heil
Yellow-billed Cuckoo					Chimney Swift		
7/4	Medfield	1	W. Webb#	8/8	GMNWR	150	G. d'Entremont
7/5	E. Middleboro	1	K. Anderson	8/15	Lawrence	80+	S. Sutton
7/22	Mashpee	1 ad	M. Keleher	8/23	Belmont	50	R. Stymeist#
7/24	Barre F.D.	2	S. Sutton	8/26	GMNWR	60	E. Taylor
Eastern Screech-Owl				8/30	Jamaica Plain	90+	A. Joslin
thr	Reports of indiv. from 10 locations				Ruby-throated Hummingbird		
7/10	Worcester	2 gray	M. Lynch	7/12	Mt. Washington	5	M. Faherty
8/24	Mt.A	2	R. Stymeist#	8/7	Pepperell	4	E. Stromsted
8/25	Medford	2	M. Rines#	8/8	Sheffield	5	M. Lynch
8/31	Belmont	3	R. Stymeist#	8/20-31	Northampton	23 migr	T. Gagnon
Great Horned Owl				8/22	Bolton Flats	3	S. Sutton
7/27	Bolton Flats	1	S. Sutton	8/24	Wayland	3	J. Hoye#
8/14	Dennisport	1	D. Silverstein	8/27	E. Middleboro	3	K. Anderson
8/24-26	Northampton	1	T. Gagnon		Red-bellied Woodpecker		
Barred Owl				7/25	Woburn	4	P. Ippolito#
7/6	E. Middleboro	1-2yg	A. Brissette		Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		
7/19	Barre F.D.	1	S. Sutton	7/3	Quabbin (G10)	14	G. d'Entremont
7/27	Fitchburg	1 juv	C. Cringan	7/3	Leyden	5	H. Allen
Common Nighthawk				7/3	Hawley	14	M. Lynch
8/8	Melrose	1	D. + I. Jewell	8/8	Stockbridge	1	M. Lynch
8/12	Holyoke	2	S. Kellogg	8/17	Northfield	1	M. Lynch
8/18, 25	HRWMA	62, 389	T. Pirro	8/22	Moran WMA	1	M. Lynch
8/20, 22	Northampton	47, 47	T. Gagnon		Hairy Woodpecker		
8/22, 25	Leicester	458, 237	M. Lynch#	7/3	ONWR	6 ad, 3 juv	S. Sutton
8/23, 31	Belmont	86, 8	R. Stymeist#	7/9	Manchester	6	J. Berry
8/24, 25	Northampton	151, 144	T. Gagnon		Pileated Woodpecker		
8/24, 25	Mt.A.	91, 15	R. Stymeist#	7/1	Concord	pr	E. Sackton
8/26, 27	Northampton	231, 132	T. Gagnon	8/16	Quabbin Pk	2	M. Lynch

Olive-sided Flycatcher			7/4	Medfield	1	W. Webb#
8/17 Northfield	2	M. Lynch	7/12	Boxford (C.P.)	3 m	J. Berry
8/17 Stoneham	1	D. + I. Jewell	7/18	Lenox	1	R. Laubach
8/17, 20 HRWMA	1, 2	T. Pirro	7/19	Barre F.D.	1	S. Sutton
8/22 Moran WMA	1	M. Lynch	8/8	Stockbridge	1	M. Lynch
8/22 Medford	1	J. Sutherland	8/17	Stoneham	1	D. + I. Jewell
8/23 Belmont	1	R. Stymeist#	8/29	Winchester	1	M. Rines
8/27 Paxton	1	M. Lynch	8/31	Medford	1	R. LaFontaine
8/28 Northampton	1	T. Gagnon				
Eastern Wood-Pewee				Blue-headed Vireo		
7/3 Quabbin (G10)	6	G. d'Entremont	7/3	ONWR	1	S. Sutton
7/21 Pepperell	6	E. Stromsted	7/3	Quabbin (G10)	5	G. d'Entremont
8/16 Quabbin Pk	12	M. Lynch	7/18	Hawley	15	M. Lynch
8/17 Northfield	7	M. Lynch	7/19	Mt. Watatic	1	T. Pirro
8/27 Paxton	4	M. Lynch	8/8	Barre F.D.	6	S. Sutton
8/29 Rutland	9	M. Lynch	8/22	Stockbridge	5	M. Lynch
8/30 Falmouth	4	G. Hirth		HRWMA	4	T. Pirro
8/31 Medford	2	R. LaFontaine		Warbling Vireo		
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher			7/5	Bolton Flats	8	S. Sutton
8/5 Agawam	1	S. Kellogg	8/7	Medford	7	M. Lynch#
8/23 Medford	1	A. Ankers	8/29	Winchester	7	M. Rines
8/24 P.I.	1	J. Hoye#		Red-eyed Vireo		
8/25 Melrose	1	D. + I. Jewell	7/3	Quabbin (G10)	44	G. d'Entremont
8/26 Mt.A.	1	R. Stymeist	7/3	Hawley	84	M. Lynch
8/27 Paxton	1	M. Lynch	7/19, 24	Barre F.D.	63 total	S. Sutton
8/29 Rutland	1	M. Lynch	8/22	HRWMA	20+	T. Pirro
Acadian Flycatcher				Fish Crow		
7/3 Quabbin (G10)	1	G. d'Entremont	7/18	Marshfield	30	D. Furbish
7/9 Granville	1	S. Kellogg	7/29	Northampton	5	R. Packard
Alder Flycatcher			7/29	Scituate	6	D. Furbish
7/7 Chilmark	1	A. Keith	8/1	WBWS	1	M. Lynch
7/10 Sheffield	1	R. Laubach	8/3	Westford	3	S. Sutton
7/10 Plainfield	3	S. Kellogg#	8/8	Longmeadow	1	T. Gagnon
7/18 Leicester	2	M. Lynch	8/12	Mashpee	1	M. Keleher
Willow Flycatcher				Common Raven		
7/11 Bolton Flats	16	M. Lynch	7/3	Hawley	3	M. Lynch
7/17 Hadley	1	R. Packard	7/11	Petersham	1	C. Buelow
7/20 P.I.	6+	R. Heil	7/19	Barre F.D.	2	S. Sutton
7/22 Northampton	1	H. Allen	8/8	Stockbridge	1	M. Lynch
7/25 Newbyrt	9	D. Chickering	8/16	Quabbin Pk	1	M. Lynch
7/30 GMNWR	6	M. Rines#	8/22	Moran WMA	5	M. Lynch
8/4 DWWS	5	D. Furbish		Horned Lark		
8/4 Pittsfield	2	D. St. James	7/12	Chatham (S.B.)	2 ad + 1 juv	R. Heil
Least Flycatcher			7/20	WBWS	1	D. Silverstein
7/3 Hawley	3	M. Lynch	7/27	Sandwich	3 juv	M. Keleher
8/14 Bedford	1	J. Young	7/30	Eastham (F.E.)	4	M. Lynch
8/22 HRWMA	2	T. Pirro	8/1	WBWS	2	M. Lynch
8/23 S. Lancaster	1	S. Sutton	8/24	Northampton	20	C. Gentes
8/27 Paxton	1	M. Lynch		Purple Martin		
Eastern Phoebe			7/18	DWWS	34	D. Furbish
8/17 Northfield	28	M. Lynch	8/3, 28	P.I.	60, 1	Heil, Vale
8/22 HRWMA	10+	T. Pirro		Tree Swallow		
8/22 Moran WMA	15	M. Lynch	8/9, 19	P.I.	8000; 40,000	R. Heil
8/25 Melrose	10+	D. + I. Jewell	8/15	Westport	550+	M. Lynch
8/31 P.I.	13	R. Heil	8/20	Hanson	200+	J. Sweeney
Great Crested Flycatcher			8/21	Topsfield	475+	P. + F. Vale
8/7, 30 Medford	4, 1	M. Rines#	8/29	Northampton	100,000	C. Gentes
8/12 Mashpee	5	M. Keleher	8/31	P.I.	25,000+	R. Heil
8/22 MNWS	2	K. Haley		Northern Rough-winged Swallow		
8/26 Southwick	1	S. Kellogg	7/9	Eastham	8	P. Flood
8/29 Winchester	1	M. Rines	7/11	Deerfield	6	R. Packard
Western Kingbird			7/22	Falmouth	55	R. Farrell
8/22 Edgartown	1	F. + W. Spar	8/7	Marlboro	10	E. Taylor
8/31 P.I.	1	J. Trimble#	8/26	Wakefield	35	P. + F. Vale
Eastern Kingbird				Bank Swallow		
8/5 Northampton	30	L. Therrian	7/6, 8/9	P.I.	50, 50	R. Heil
8/8 Stockbridge	28	M. Lynch	7/9	Eastham	80+	P. Flood
8/9, 31 P.I.	24, 16	R. Heil	7/23	DWWS	80+	D. Furbish
8/20 Northampton	14	T. Gagnon	8/8	Ipswich (C.B.)	20+	J. Berry#
8/28 Katama	18	A. Keith	8/8	Sheffield	30+	M. Lynch
Shrike species			8/28	Northampton	40+	M. Lynch
8/24 Gay Head	1	S. Whiting + v.o.		Cliff Swallow		
White-eyed Vireo			7/1	Lunenburg	39+	T. Pirro
7/4 S. Dart. (A.Pd)	1	M. Lynch	7/2	Williamsburg	1	H. Allen
7/18 Falmouth	2	R. Farrell	7/7	Groton	20	T. Pirro
7/25 Westport	2	M. Lynch	7/7	Newbury	16+	J. Berry#
Yellow-throated Vireo			7/11	Deerfield	1	R. Packard
7/3 Quabbin (G10)	3	G. d'Entremont	7/12	Stockbridge	20	M. Faherty
			7/23	DWWS	1	D. Furbish

Cliff Swallow (continued)			7/11	Petersham	3	C. Buelow	
8/9	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore	7/11	Montague	16	R. Packard
8/22	Cheshire	50+	M. Lynch	7/12	Boxford (C.P.)	7	J. Berry
8/24, 29	Northampton	2, 5	T. Gagnon	7/18	Mt. Watatic	5	T. Pirro
Barn Swallow			7/19, 24	Barre F.D.	29 total	S. Sutton	
7/22	Falmouth	600	R. Farrell	Wood Thrush			
7/27	Bolton Flats	100	S. Sutton	7/3	Hawley	4	M. Lynch
7/30	Bedford (Hanscom)	250	M. Rines#	7/5	Bolton Flats	5	S. Sutton
8/8	Sheffield	250+	M. Lynch	7/5	Sudbury	5	M. Lynch
8/15	Rockport (A.P.)	70+	R. Heil	7/18	Leicester	8	M. Lynch
8/15	Westport	130+	M. Lynch	American Robin			
8/19	P.I.	300+	R. Heil	7/27; 8/22	Bolton Flats	2830; 11,410	S. Sutton
8/26	GMNWR	200	E. Taylor	8/3, 31	P.I.	400, 460	R. Heil
8/28	Northampton	200+	M. Lynch	Gray Catbird			
Red-breasted Nuthatch			7/4	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	33	M. Lynch	
7/3	Hawley	9	M. Lynch	7/11	Bolton Flats	71	M. Lynch
7/18	Leicester	12	M. Lynch	8/8	Stockbridge	36	M. Lynch
7/19, 24	Barre F.D.	31 total	S. Sutton	8/26	Burlington	55	M. Rines
8/12	Mashpee	3	M. Keleher	8/31	P.I.	117	R. Heil
8/22	Moran WMA	5	M. Lynch	Brown Thrasher			
8/27	Paxton	11	M. Lynch	7/19	Nantucket	3	D. Witheau
8/29	Rutland	19	M. Lynch	7/27	Amherst	4	H. McQueen
Brown Creeper			8/7	Southwick	4	S. Kellogg	
7/3	Hawley	6	M. Lynch	8/31	P.I.	15	R. Heil
7/19, 24	Barre F.D.	8 total	S. Sutton	Cedar Waxwing			
Carolina Wren			7/19, 24	Barre F.D.	47 total	S. Sutton	
7/17	Amherst	3	H. Allen	8/3	P.I.	50	R. Heil
8/3	P.I.	4+	R. Heil	8/8	Stockbridge	36	M. Lynch
8/7	Medford	4	M. Rines#	8/22	Moran WMA	24	M. Lynch
8/22	Marshfield	5	G. d'Entremont	8/31	P.I.	80+	R. Heil
House Wren			Blue-winged Warbler				
7/21	Pepperell	10	E. Stromsted	7/3	W. Newbury	4	J. Berry
8/7	Medford	10	M. Rines#	7/18	Leicester	2	M. Lynch
8/26	Burlington	17	M. Rines	7/25	Westport	2	M. Lynch
Winter Wren			8/4	Lexington	3	M. Rines#	
7/3	Hawley	21	M. Lynch	8/25	Woburn	2	M. Rines#
7/3	Wompatuck SP	1	S. Mirick#	8/26	Burlington	2	M. Rines
7/10	Plainfield	5	S. Kellogg#	Golden-winged Warbler			
7/18	Mt. Watatic	1	T. Pirro	8/22	MNWS	1 m ad	K. Haley
Marsh Wren			8/30	Medford	1 m	R. LaFontaine	
7/5	P.I.	20+	BBC (T. Young)	Nashville Warbler			
7/5	Wakefield	8	P. + F. Vale	7/3	Hawley	1	M. Lynch
7/5	Bolton Flats	3	S. Sutton	7/11	Mt. Washington	1	M. Faherty
7/6	Amherst	2	H. Allen	7/24	Barre F.D.	1	S. Sutton
7/25	Acoaxet	2	M. Lynch	8/2	Pittsfield	1	K. Ryan
8/3	P.I.	30+	R. Heil	8/4	Lexington	1	M. Rines#
8/5	Richmond	3	D. St. James	8/15	Washington	1	D. St. James
8/9	GMNWR	12	M. Rines	8/22	HRWMA	1	T. Pirro
Golden-crowned Kinglet			8/24	Medford	2	H. Pearce	
7/3	Hawley	8	M. Lynch	8/26	Burlington	1	M. Rines
7/11	Colrain	1	M. A. Wilson	8/29	MNWS	1	D. Chickering#
7/19	Barre F.D.	1	S. Sutton	8/30	Falmouth	1	G. Hirth
8/6	W. Tisbury	1 br	S. Anderson	Northern Parula			
8/22	Moran WMA	10	M. Lynch	8/26	Burlington	2	M. Rines
8/22	Monroe	3	M. Lynch	8/29	Rutland	3	M. Lynch
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher			Yellow Warbler				
7/11	Bolton Flats	9	M. Lynch	7/11	Bolton Flats	47	M. Lynch
7/30	Amherst	3	H. Allen	8/9	P.I.	32	R. Heil
8/7	GMNWR	7	M. Lynch	8/14	Medford	6	M. Rines#
8/16	Quabbin Pk	7	M. Lynch	8/29	Rutland	4	M. Lynch
8/17	Northfield	4	M. Lynch	8/31	P.I.	3	T. Wetmore
8/25	Medford	3	M. Rines	Chestnut-sided Warbler			
Veery			7/3	Hawley	6	M. Lynch	
7/3	Quabbin (G10)	21	G. d'Entremont	7/3	Quabbin (G10)	20	G. d'Entremont
7/3	ONWR	20	S. Sutton	7/18	Leicester	4	M. Lynch
7/3	Hawley	18	M. Lynch	7/19, 24	Barre F.D.	22 total	S. Sutton
7/5	Bolton Flats	6	S. Sutton	8/7, 25	Medford	2, 8	M. Rines#
7/9	Manchester	13	J. Berry	8/17	Northfield	6	M. Lynch
7/18	Leicester	6	M. Lynch	8/22	HRWMA	4 imm	T. Pirro
7/19, 24	Barre F.D.	7 total	S. Sutton	8/22	Sudbury	4	T. Spahr
7/22	Manchester-Essex	7	J. Berry	8/25	Medford	8	M. Rines
Swainson's Thrush			Magnolia Warbler				
7/3	Hawley	5	M. Lynch	7/3	Hawley	7	M. Lynch
Hermit Thrush			7/12	Mt. Washington	3	R. Laubach	
7/3	Hawley	24	M. Lynch	8/22	Moran WMA	4 imm	M. Lynch
7/3	Quabbin (G10)	6	G. d'Entremont	8/22	HRWMA	2	T. Pirro
7/9	Manchester	6	J. Berry	8/25	Mt.A.	1	R. Stymeist
7/10	Falmouth	6	G. Hirth	8/25, 30	Medford	1, 4	M. Rines#

Magnolia Warbler (continued)			7/3	Hawley	33		M. Lynch
8/29 Winchester	4	M. Rines	7/3	Quabbin (G10)	13		G. d'Entremont
Cape May Warbler			7/9	Manchester	11		J. Berry
8/29 Rutland	1 ad f	M. Lynch	7/10	Falmouth	4		G. Hirth
Black-throated Blue Warbler			8/4	Greylock	5		D. St. James
7/3 Hawley	5	M. Lynch	8/14	Marion	6		M. Maurer
7/3 Quabbin (G10)	16	G. d'Entremont		Northern Waterthrush			
7/12 Mt. Washington	4	R. Laubach	7/3	Wompatuck SP	2		S. Mirick#
7/18 Mt. Watatic	2	T. Pirro	7/9	Manchester	1 m		J. Berry
7/19, 24 Barre F.D.	3 total	S. Sutton	8/5	Agawam	1		S. Kellogg
8/17 Northampton	3	T. Gagnon	8/6	Marblehead	1		K. Haley
8/29 Rutland	6	M. Lynch	8/9	W. Tisbury	1		S. Anderson
Yellow-rumped Warbler			8/12	Mashpee	1		M. Keleher
7/3 Quabbin (G10)	7	G. d'Entremont	8/14	Cambridge	1		J. Young
7/3 Hawley	12	M. Lynch	8/21	Nantucket	1		E. Andrews
7/11 Petersham	5	C. Buelow	8/25	Mt.A.	1		R. Stymeist
7/18 Mt. Watatic	5	T. Pirro	8/25	Medford	1		M. Rines#
7/19, 24 Barre F.D.	12 total	S. Sutton		Louisiana Waterthrush			
8/22 Moran WMA	8	M. Lynch	7/11	Hardwick	1		C. Buelow
8/29 Rutland	7	M. Lynch	8/4	Williamsburg	1		R. Packard
Black-throated Green Warbler			8/14	Medford	1		M. Rines#
7/3 Hawley	28	M. Lynch		Kentucky Warbler			
7/12 Mt. Washington	9	R. Laubach	7/2	Sudbury	1 m from 5/19		T. Spahr
7/19, 24 Barre F.D.	30 total	S. Sutton	8/22	MNWS	1 IS		P. + F. Vale
8/15 Washington	10	D. St. James		Mourning Warbler			
8/17 Northfield	18	M. Lynch	7/10	Williamstown	1		M. Faherty
8/22 HRWMA	10+	T. Pirro	8/15	Washington	1		D. St. James
8/29 Rutland	18	M. Lynch	8/22	Moran WMA	1 imm		M. Lynch
Blackburnian Warbler			8/28	Lincoln	1		M. Rines
7/3 Hawley	18	M. Lynch		Common Yellowthroat			
7/3 Quabbin (G10)	3	G. d'Entremont	7/3	Quabbin (G10)	27		G. d'Entremont
7/11 Petersham	2	C. Buelow	7/3	ONWR	18		S. Sutton
7/18 Mt. Watatic	3	T. Pirro	7/11	Bolton Flats	55		M. Lynch
7/19 Barre F.D.	2	S. Sutton	7/19, 24	Barre F.D.	21 total		S. Sutton
8/22 Sudbury	1	T. Spahr	8/22	Moran WMA	37		M. Lynch
8/24 Medford	1	R. LaFontaine	8/31	P.I.	21		R. Heil
Pine Warbler				Hooded Warbler			
7/3 Quabbin (G10)	11	G. d'Entremont	7/3	Wompatuck SP	1 m		S. Mirick#
7/10 Falmouth	10	G. Hirth	8/8	E. Orleans	1		C. Goodrich
7/18 Paxton	10	M. Lynch	8/16	Chatham	1 m		F. Atwood
7/19, 24 Barre F.D.	13 total	S. Sutton		Wilson's Warbler			
8/29 Rutland	24	M. Lynch	8/22	HRWMA	1		T. Pirro
Prairie Warbler			8/25	Mt.A.	1		R. Stymeist
7/11 Southwick	3	S. Kellogg	8/30	Medford	1		M. Rines#
8/15 Westport	3	M. Lynch		Canada Warbler			
8/16 Quabbin Pk	5	M. Lynch	7/3	Hawley	2		M. Lynch
8/27 Montague	3	R. Packard	7/9	Manchester	1 m		J. Berry
8/31 P.I.	3	R. Heil	7/19, 24	Barre F.D.	2 total		S. Sutton
Blackpoll Warbler			7/25	Savoy	2		R. Packard
7/18 Marblehead	1 m ad	K. Haley	8/14, 25	Medford	2, 3		M. Rines#
8/7 Medford	1	M. Rines#	8/15	Washington	1		D. St. James
8/29 Rutland	1	M. Lynch	8/17	Northfield	6		M. Lynch
Black-and-white Warbler			8/17	Stoneham	1		D. + I. Jewell
7/3 Hawley	4	M. Lynch	8/22	Chesterfield	1		R. Packard
7/18 Leicester	3	M. Lynch	8/22	MNWS	1		K. Haley
7/19, 24 Barre F.D.	6 total	S. Sutton	8/29	Rutland	6		M. Lynch
8/7, 25 Medford	2, 7	M. Rines#		Yellow-breasted Chat			
8/17 Northfield	9	M. Lynch	8/27	Leicester	1		M. Lynch
8/27 Paxton	4	M. Lynch		Scarlet Tanager			
8/29 Winchester	3	M. Rines	7/3	Quabbin (G10)	11		G. d'Entremont
8/29 MNWS	5	D. Chickering	7/12	Boxford (C.P.)	7		J. Berry
8/29 Rutland	21	M. Lynch	8/17	Northfield	5		M. Lynch
American Redstart			8/22	HRWMA	5+		T. Pirro
7/3 Hawley	3	M. Lynch		Eastern Towhee			
7/4 S. Dart. (A.Pd)	15	M. Lynch	7/3	Quabbin (G10)	29		G. d'Entremont
8/7, 30 Medford	10, 21	M. Rines#	7/18	Leicester	14		M. Lynch
8/22 Sudbury	4	T. Spahr	8/16	Quabbin Pk	10		M. Lynch
8/29 Rutland	37	M. Lynch	8/31	P.I.	11		R. Heil
8/30 Falmouth	4	G. Hirth		Field Sparrow			
8/31 P.I.	5	R. Heil	7/3	Hawley	5		M. Lynch
Prothonotary Warbler			7/3	Turners Falls	6		M. Lynch
8/8 E. Orleans	1	C. Goodrich	7/11	P.I.	3		T. Wetmore
Worm-eating Warbler			7/18	Leicester	4		M. Lynch
7/3 Wompatuck SP	1 ad, 1 fl	S. Mirick#	7/24	Falmouth	8		P. + F. Vale
7/11 Mt. Washington	1	M. Faherty	8/16	Quabbin Pk	5		M. Lynch
8/23 Nantucket	1	R. Veit#		Vesper Sparrow			
Ovenbird			7/3	Plainfield	1		M. Lynch
7/3 Ipswich	5 m	J. Berry	7/9	Southwick	2		S. Kellogg

Vesper Sparrow (continued)				Bobolink			
7/12	Sunderland	1	H. Allen	7/3	DWWS	25+	E. Taylor
7/13	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore	7/8	Ipswich	60	J. Berry
Lark Sparrow				7/9	Bedford (Hanscom)	220	M. Rines#
8/31	Belmont	1	R. Stymeist#	7/18	Leicester	47	M. Lynch
Savannah Sparrow				7/25	Pepperell	35	E. Stromsted
7/9	Bedford (Hanscom)	320	M. Rines#	7/28	New Braintree	75+	C. Buelow
7/16	Saugus	27	L. Pivacek#	8/9	P.I.	275+	R. Heil
8/26	S. Lancaster	17+	S. Sutton	8/18	S. Lancaster	43	S. Sutton
8/28	Northampton	30+	M. Lynch	8/20-31	Northampton	299 total	T. Gagnon
Grasshopper Sparrow				Red-winged Blackbird			
7/3	Turners Falls	2	M. Lynch	7/12	New Braintree	100+	C. Buelow
7/9	Bedford (Hanscom)	5 m	M. Rines#	8/3	P.I.	200+	R. Heil
7/11	Southwick	1	S. Kellogg	8/8	Stockbridge	112	M. Lynch
7/16	Saugus	2	L. Pivacek#	8/22	Bolton Flats	415+	S. Sutton
7/24	Sunderland	2	M. Faherty	Eastern Meadowlark			
8/1	Falmouth	2	G. Gove	7/3	Turners Falls	1	M. Lynch
Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow				7/4	Newbypt	1	D. Chickering
7/4	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	10	M. Lynch	7/8	Ipswich	6	J. Berry
7/4	Mattapoisett	6	M. Lynch	7/9	Bedford (Hanscom)	29	M. Rines#
7/6, 8/3	P.I.	25, 10	R. Heil	7/11	Southwick	5	S. Kellogg
7/12	Chatham (S.B.)	1	R. Heil	7/12	New Braintree	1	C. Buelow
7/25, 8/22	Falmouth	2, 1	R. Farrell	7/16	Saugus	6	L. Pivacek#
7/25	Westport	7	M. Lynch	7/17	Amherst	9	H. Allen
7/27	Sandwich	4	M. Keleher	7/18	Leicester	7	M. Lynch
8/1	WBWS	1	M. Lynch	7/21	Newbypt	1	D. Larson#
Seaside Sparrow				7/24	Falmouth	1	F. Vale
7/6	P.I.	2-3	R. Heil	7/25	Westport	5	M. Lynch
Lincoln's Sparrow				7/30	Bedford (Hanscom)	44	M. Rines#
8/22	Moran WMA	1 imm	M. Lynch	8/14	M.V.	1	M. Lynch
White-throated Sparrow				8/22	Leicester	3	M. Lynch
7/3	Hawley	6	M. Lynch	8/23	S. Lancaster	3	S. Sutton
7/19, 24	Barre F.D.	3 total	S. Sutton	8/29	Falmouth	2	G. Hirth
8/22	Chatham	1	B. Nikula#	Yellow-headed Blackbird			
8/22	Moran WMA	6	M. Lynch	8/10-12	Edgartown	1	T. + S. Baird
Dark-eyed Junco				Orchard Oriole			
7/3	ONWR	1 f	S. Sutton	7/6	P.I.	3	R. Heil
7/3	Hawley	7	M. Lynch	7/31	Falmouth	10 imm	G. Gove#
7/18	Mt. Watic	8	T. Pirro	8/4	Lexington	2	M. Rines#
7/19	Barre F.D.	1	S. Sutton	8/8	E. Orleans	6	C. Goodrich
Rose-breasted Grosbeak				8/29	Falmouth	2	G. Hirth
7/19, 24	Barre F.D.	8 total	S. Sutton	Baltimore Oriole			
8/8	Stockbridge	6	M. Lynch	7/24	Falmouth	50+ juv	P. + F. Vale
8/22	HRWMA	10+	T. Pirro	8/3	P.I.	34	R. Heil
8/25	Lexington	6	J. Forbes	Purple Finch			
8/27	Woburn (H.P.)	5	P. Ippolito#	7/3	Ipswich	1 m	J. Berry
Blue Grosbeak				7/3	Hawley	8	M. Lynch
8/1	Westfield	1	J. Hutchison	7/9	Manchester	1 m	J. Berry
8/7	Southwick	1	S. Kellogg	7/10	Plainfield	8	S. Kellogg#
8/10	Katama	1	V. Laux#	7/12	E. Middleboro f + 1 yg		K. Anderson
8/17	Sterling	1 imm	M. Lynch	7/28	Hardwick	2	C. Buelow
Indigo Bunting				8/10	Chatham	1	F. Atwood
7/3	Hawley	7	M. Lynch	8/22	Moran WMA	3	M. Lynch
7/11	Bolton Flats	6	M. Lynch	8/31	P.I.	15	R. Heil
7/11	Southwick	10	S. Kellogg	Pine Siskin			
7/19, 24	Barre F.D.	8 total	S. Sutton	7/1	Wellfleet	1	M. Faherty
7/thr	M.V.	pr n	fide A. Keith	Evening Grosbeak			
8/7	Pepperell	6	E. Stromsted	7/3	Hawley	2	M. Lynch
8/18	Concord	5	J. Hoye#	7/24	Barre F.D.	1	S. Sutton
Dickcissel				8/2	Pittsfield	4	G. Shampang
8/6-8	Chatham (MI)	1	F. Atwood#				
8/15	Westport	1 f	M. Lynch				
8/29	Groveland	1 imm	D. Chickering#				

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE BIRD SIGHTINGS TO BIRD OBSERVER

Sightings for any given month must be reported in writing by the eighth of the following month, and may be submitted by postal mail or e-mail. Send written reports to Bird Sightings, Robert H. Stymeist, 94 Grove Street, Watertown, MA 02172. Include name and phone number of observer, common name of species, date of sighting, location, number of birds, other observer(s), and information on age, sex, and morph (where relevant). For instructions on e-mail submission, visit: <<http://massbird.org/birdobserver/sightings/>>.

Species on the Review List of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (indicated by an asterisk [*] in the Bird Reports), 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 Marjorie Rines, Massachusetts Audubon Society, South Great Road, Lincoln, MA 01773, or by e-mail to <marj@mrines.com>.

ABBREVIATIONS FOR BIRD SIGHTINGS

Taxonomic order is based on AOU checklist, Seventh edition, 44th Supplement, as published in *The Auk* 117: 847-58 (2000); 119: 897-906 (2002); 120: 923-32 (2003).

ABC	Allen Bird Club	ONWR	Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge
A.P.	Andrews Point, Rockport	PI.	Plum Island
A.Pd	Allens Pond, S. Dartmouth	Pd	Pond
B.	Beach	P'town	Provincetown
Barre FD	Barre Falls Dam, Barre, Rutland	Pont.	Pontoosuc Lake, Lanesboro
B.I.	Belle Isle, E. Boston	R.P.	Race Point, Provincetown
B.R.	Bass Rocks, Gloucester	Res.	Reservoir
BBC	Brookline Bird Club	S. Dart.	South Dartmouth
BMB	Broad Meadow Brook, Worcester	S.B.	South Beach, Chatham
C.B.	Crane Beach, Ipswich	S.N.	Sandy Neck, Barnstable
CGB	Coast Guard Beach, Eastham	SRV	Sudbury River Valley
C.P.	Crooked Pond, Boxford	SSBC	South Shore Bird Club
Cambr.	Cambridge	TASL	Take A Second Look
CCBC	Cape Cod Bird Club	WBWS	Boston Harbor Census
Cumb. Farms	Cumberland Farms, Middleboro	WMWS	Wellfleet Bay WS
DFWS	Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary	Wompatuck SP	Wachusett Meadow WS
DWMA	Delaney WMA	Worc.	Hingham, Cohasset, Scituate, and Norwell Worcester
DWWS	Stow, Bolton, Harvard Daniel Webster WS	Other Abbreviations	
E.P.	Eastern Point, Gloucester	ad	adult
EMHW	Eastern Mass. Hawk Watch	alt	alternate
F.E.	First Encounter Beach, Eastham	b	banded
F.P.	Fresh Pond, Cambridge	br	breeding
F.Pk	Franklin Park, Boston	dk	dark (morph)
G40	Gate 40, Quabbin Res.	f	female
GMNWR	Great Meadows NWR	fl	fledgling
H.	Harbor	imm	immature
H.P.	Halibut Point, Rockport	juv	juvenile
HRWMA	High Ridge WMA, Gardner	lt	light (morph)
I.	Island	m	male
IRWS	Ipswich River WS	max	maximum
L.	Ledge	migr	migrating
M.V.	Martha's Vineyard	n	nesting
MAS	Mass. Audubon Society	ph	photographed
MBWMA	Martin Burns WMA, Newbury	pl	plumage
MNWS	Marblehead Neck WS	pr	pair
MSSF	Myles Standish State Forest, Plymouth	S	summer (1S = 1st summer)
Mt.A.	Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Cambr.	v.o.	various observers
NAC	Nine Acre Corner, Concord	W	winter (2W = second winter)
Newbypt	Newburyport	yg	young
		#	additional observers



SOUTH BEACH MARBLED GODWIT BY DAVID LARSON

AT A GLANCE

October 2004



DAVID LARSON

This month readers are once again faced with only a partial view of a mystery bird, a situation not unfamiliar to field birders who routinely get to see only bits and pieces of birds under certain field conditions. Because this phenomenon has from time to time been previously addressed in this column, rather than reviewing old ground, let us simply begin to analyze the mystery photograph for what it is — a partial view of the front end of a shorebird.

Arguably the first point to consider when viewing the picture is to determine whether or not the bird is fully-grown or a chick. Since the bird appears to have quite a short bill and a rather “gentle” appearance, the notion that it could be a chick seems logical. Reasonable though the assumption may be, however, the answer is simple — it is not a chick. Shorebird chicks, for those readers who may have never been fortunate enough to actually see one, have a downy plumage, much like a duckling or an “Easter chick.” It is obvious that the pictured bird possesses real feathers as opposed to a covering of down; hence it is not a shorebird chick.

In identifying shorebirds one ideally likes to use a combination of characters, including size, shape, behavior, leg color, bill shape, coloration and pattern of the underparts, pattern of the wings, rump and tail, and in some cases vocalizations and habitat preference. Needless to say, most of these characteristics are not available for

scrutiny or evaluation in the picture provided. So what can we see and what sense can we make of it? Most obvious is the fact that the bird has a very straight and very short, uniformly dark bill. Furthermore the shorebird gives the appearance of having a small, round-headed, short-necked appearance with a finely streaked crown and a plain, unstreaked face. In spite of the fact that the upper breast feathers are slightly fluffed up, there seems to be little vertical streaking on the feathers, except possibly a tiny dark speckle on the shaft of a few of the feathers at the sides of the upper breast. This combination of features gives the bird a rather clear-breasted appearance. The scapulars and feathers of the middle of the back are clearly dark-centered with broad, pale (white?) fringes or spots on most of them.

Keeping these features in mind, a number of shorebird possibilities can at once be eliminated. The short, straight bill is key. Although plovers have relatively short bills, their bills are thick and blunt-tipped, often exhibiting a slightly bulbous appearance at the distal end. Since the pictured bird is obviously not a plover or a member of either of the highly distinctive families Haematopodidae (oystercatchers) or Recurvirostridae (avocets and stilts), it belongs to the family Scolopacidae (sandpipers and allies). This large shorebird family exhibits great diversity in bill shape and form, ranging from species with long bills that are variously straight (e.g., dowitchers), recurved (e.g., godwits), or decurved (e.g., curlews), to extremely fine, slender bills (e.g., most phalaropes), or bills that are short and sharp-pointed (e.g., turnstones). Having thus reduced the possibilities, the most likely remaining options are that the mystery sandpiper is either a “peep” (e.g., Semipalmated Sandpiper) of some sort, or else one of several species not in the genus *Calidris*.

The only “peep” possessing a bill as short and fine as the pictured species is Least Sandpiper; however, the bill of this species is decidedly more curved with a more noticeable droop to the fine-pointed tip. Also, the face of a Least Sandpiper would not appear as plain and unmarked, and there would be more evidence of a pale stripe (i.e., supercilium) over the eye. Given the round-headed appearance and short, straight bill of the featured species, another possibility would be Upland Sandpiper. Although Upland Sandpipers have relatively short straight bills and rounded heads, their eyes are noticeably larger in proportion to their head, and their bills have a yellow lower mandible that gives the bill a notably bicolored appearance. Indeed, only one species possesses the combination of a small, rounded head; short, straight bill; plain, unmarked face; and relatively unstreaked upper breast shown by the mystery shorebird — Buff-breasted Sandpiper (*Tryngites subruficollis*). The fact that the scapulars and mantle feathers appear to have prominent pale fringes suggests that the pictured bird is in juvenal plumage, a feature that is consistent with the great majority of Buff-breasted Sandpipers seen on the Atlantic Coast of North America.

Buff-breasted Sandpipers are very uncommon to rare late summer and early autumn migrants in Massachusetts, where most birds are found in short grassy areas near the coast, or more rarely in pastures and fields in the interior. They are often seen in the company of American Golden-Plovers or Baird’s Sandpipers. David Larson captured the image of this juvenile Buff-breasted Sandpiper at South Beach. 📷

Wayne R. Petersen

AT A GLANCE



DAVID LARSON

Can you identify this bird?

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



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VOL. 32, NO. 6, DECEMBER 2004



JEREMIAH TRIMBLE