

# BIRD OBSERVER



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# BIRD OBSERVER

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## NOTICE TO OUR READERS

*Bird Observer* staff would like to thank Dorothy R. Arvidson who edited most of the articles appearing in this issue. Her work for this issue helped smooth the transition between editors.

Beginning with the August 1991 issue, the new organizational structure in which heads of various *Bird Observer* departments will report to the editor in chief will be operational. The department heads (and their departments) are: Jim Berry (Where To Go), Alden Clayton (Book Reviews), William E. Davis (Art), John Kricher (Features and Field Notes), Wayne Petersen (At A Glance), and Robert Stymeist (Field Records). We are excited by the prospects of increased participation in soliciting and editing articles and the wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm each department head brings to *Bird Observer*.

# NEW ENGLAND'S FINEST PELAGIC BIRDING

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**WHERE:** Hydrographer Canyon  
Stellwagen Bank

## **SPECIALTY**

**BIRDS:** Audubon's Shearwater      White-tailed Tropicbird  
White-faced Storm-Petrel      Long-tailed Jaeger  
Band-rumped Storm-Petrel      South Polar Skua

## **DATES/**

**COST:** Sept. 4 – Sept. 6, 1991  
\$350 per person

**LEADERS:** Wayne Petersen (Mass Audubon)  
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## FINDING A BLACK RAIL

by Emmalee Bowers Tarry

What caught my eye was a notice that the next tides suitable for viewing the Black Rail at the Baylands Marsh in Palo Alto, California, would occur during the last week of December. On a cold evening in January, I was indulging in one of my favorite quiet pastimes—reading birding magazines and thinking about how to add to my life list. The little Black Rail had been a big hole in my list for some time. Of course, if you live in southern New Hampshire as I do, California is a long way to go for a bird, but not so far if your sister lives in San Francisco.

I consulted the tide tables for the San Francisco coast. A 7.4-foot tide, the highest tide in twenty-seven years, would occur in the morning on New Year's Eve in 1990—plenty of time to persuade my sister to have Christmas for our widely dispersed family at her house. My Black Rail search was on.

The Black Rail (*Lateralis jamaicensis*) is a small, secretive bird that prefers running to flying and is most active at night. Little wonder that it is one of the most wanted birds in North America. Although rails do migrate, flying mostly at night, there is a limited year-round population in the region surrounding the San Francisco Bay.

Christmas in California was great, and we had some good birding along the coast. On the morning of the big day, my daughter and I arrived at the Baylands Nature Center at 8:30 A.M. Since there were no other birders in sight, we did a little general birding in the area. There were Common Goldeneyes and Canvasbacks in the pond near the parking lot. We strolled out on the boardwalk and found Black-necked Stilt, Western Sandpiper, Snowy Egret, Great Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, and Avocet. On the bay was a great raft of ducks including pintails, scaups, shovelers, and Ruddy Ducks. A Clapper Rail, a life bird for my daughter, browsed around and under the boardwalk. It appeared indifferent to us, but chased away another Clapper Rail that came poking along.

By 9:30 A.M. a small group of birders began to gather at the edge of the parking lot. We hurried to claim our spots. There is a walk out to the nature center, which is built on stilts in the marsh. Standing in the parking lot with the walk to your left, you will see two "No Parking" signs. Between these signs, the edge of the parking lot is bordered by large logs (telephone poles). In this area the vegetation is less than two feet high, providing a long vista of the refuge. This is the place to line up for the rail watch.

There is an informal agreement that you may stand on the logs, but not in front of them. This limits the line of spectators to one row unless one brings a stool or ladder to stand on to see over their heads. Having been forewarned of the problem, we were prepared with plastic milk crates, but our early arrival

insured that we got prime places on the logs. I had selected a spot with good visibility just opposite a small path of flattened grass that led straight into the marsh. The grass in front of us was filled with Song Sparrows. I had been advised that as the tide rose, the rails sometimes flew toward the parking lot, affording a good view. I followed every small dark bird that flew. They were all Song Sparrows.

The tide was rising, and the crowd had grown to sixty or more people. Late arrivals stood on our milk crates or tried to peer between the people in the tightly packed line of observers on the logs. A Sharp-tailed Sparrow, an unusual bird on the west coast, flitted from spot to spot. Every time it flew, someone down the line would yell, "There it is," breaking my concentration.

By eleven o'clock we could see the leading edge of the water inching toward the parking lot. The grass made soft popping noises as the water crept forward. We waited patiently, discussing birding equipment, birding trips, and rails. The people in the second row talked about bringing ladders and stools next time. For me, a next time might never come. I wanted to see this bird now.

Finally, the Sharp-tailed Sparrow perched high enough so that everyone had a good look. Then a Peregrine Falcon was spotted on the top of the power-line pylons in the distance.

Suddenly, from behind me someone said, "There it is." This time it was the rail, which had darted across the path from left to right. Darn! I was looking at another sparrow. Two large rabbits hopped through the water toward the crowd, stirring up a Sora Rail that flew a short distance. Another Clapper Rail waded close to the parking lot, and someone tried to make it into a Virginia Rail. A tiny mouse, caught by the high water, dog-paddled toward dry land. I concentrated on the path as the water crept to within six feet of the logs.

I spotted a small black animal darting from left to right about six inches above the water line. It disappeared into the grass without making any disturbance. It was virtually invisible except when it scurried across the open path. Was it a mouse or a bird? A few minutes later someone to my left spotted another bird approaching the path through the weeds. This time I clearly saw a small black bird with a chestnut nape dart across the path.

The area near the observation logs is optimal for viewing because the flood tide sends the water toward the dike, forcing the rails to move down a narrowing corridor between the parking lot and the rising tide. Since you stand on the logs looking down on the bird five to six feet in front of you, the chestnut nape is the most visible field mark.

The birds seemed to walk a few inches from the water line as if they wanted to keep their feet dry. Two more birds darted across the path. It was 11:20 A.M. The tide was cresting. Time passed, and the water began to recede. Was this it? My daughter had not seen the bird, and the only feature I had seen clearly was

the chestnut nape. I do not like to list a life bird unless I have really seen its features, and I wanted very much to share this experience with my daughter.

Then, it happened! A rail rose about five feet in front of us and flew about ten feet before dropping into the grass. Frozen in my mind is a picture of this small black bird with white spots, chestnut nape, small bill, short tail, and red eyes, flying with dragging feet. We had our Black Rail.

I think there may have been at least five Black Rails in the area, perhaps more. My daughter, a neophyte birder, is convinced that rails are easy to find.

The observation that the rails appeared to be avoiding the water is curious since rails can swim, and their normal habitat is in marshes or wet meadows. When the rail flew, it moved from a dry area to a place that was under several inches of water. The rabbits and the mouse caught by the high water illustrated that the very high tide caused a significant and rapid change in the depth of the water. I wondered about the impact of a flood tide during the nesting season.

I recommend that to see the rails at Baylands you bring a stool, stepladder, or box to stand on and arrive early. I was fortunate to have chosen a spot overlooking a small path that had been made by some animal walking through the grass, flattening it down. It is most important to be attentive and to persist. Do not give up the watch until the water has receded some distance from the parking lot. Telescopes are of no use. The bird was so close that I did not use my binoculars. The most important thing is to pay close attention. Many of the spectators had disappointing looks at the bird because they were talking or were otherwise distracted.

It is not always necessary to hit the very highest tide of the year. A Black Rail was seen earlier in the month on tides listed as 7.1 and 7.3 feet high and also two days before we were there, when the listed tide was 6.8-7.1 feet. I heard from people who had come there for several days that this was the second time in that week a Black Rail had flown.

Since the rail buggy at Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge in Texas has been discontinued to protect the environment, Baylands is probably the only dependable place to see Black Rails without trampling the marsh or using tape recordings. While it is obvious that the birds are somewhat stressed by the high tide, I do not think that the large group of spectators added significantly to their problems. I think the crowd may even have provided some protection from predation by keeping the larger birds away from the concentration corridor. Several people claimed that herons and egrets "eat the rails like popcorn."

To reach the Baylands Marsh in Palo Alto, take the Embarcadero exit east from Highway 101. Follow the signs to the small airport, and continue on to the parking lot near the nature center. The center is closed on Mondays. The best strategy for seeing the bird is to plan several days at Baylands during the flood-tide period. If you are lucky and see the bird on the first try, you will have no

trouble finding other good places to bird in the area. Information on the tides in the area can be found in *Dot's Fishing Guide, San Francisco, California Coast and San Francisco Bay*, published by Elliott Sales Corporation, 2502 South 12th, Tacoma, WA 98405.

**EMMALEE BOWERS TARRY** lives in Nashua, New Hampshire, and has been birding in New England for seven years. Prior to moving to this area, she was an occasional birder in Indiana, Pennsylvania, and Kentucky. Emmalee is employed by the Digital Equipment Company as a product manager for customer training.



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## WINTER POPULATIONS OF THE HOUSE FINCH IN NEW ENGLAND, 1985-1989

by Steve Davis

The House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) data reported in the 1985-86 through 1988-89 New England Christmas Bird Counts (CBC), published in *American Birds*, were examined to determine over those four years the extent and progress of the spread of this species throughout New England. Preliminary studies to determine the factors that seem to influence the number of House Finches seen on CBCs utilized primarily the 1985-86 and 1986-87 counts.

### **Factors that influence the number of House Finches seen.**

The following categories of data were evaluated using the 1985-86 and 1986-87 count data—count number, the latitude and longitude for each count center, the number of House Finches identified, party hours, and feeder hours. A more extensive evaluation was done using the 1986-87 counts. Additional categories of data were considered—high temperature, low temperature, maximum wind speed, party miles, number of species recorded, and number of individual birds. The variables entered enable other variables to be calculated; for example, knowing the number of House Finches counted and the number of party hours reported made it possible to calculate the variable, House Finches per party hour. Similarly, recording the latitude and longitude for each count center made it possible to calculate an approximate distance from another given point. (One degree of latitude is equal to about 69 miles, and a degree of longitude is equal to the cosine of the latitude times 69 miles.)

There were 91 New England CBCs in the 1985-86 count, 91 in the 1986-87 count, 91 in the 1987-88 counts, and 93 in the 1988-89 count. Eighty-six of the counts were included in all four years. In the preliminary study, correlations were calculated for the number of House Finches reported against the other variables recorded from each count. Correlations, briefly, may range from a perfect positive correlation (+1.00) through no correlation (0.00) to a perfect inverse correlation (-1.00). Generally, values in the 0.25 to 0.50 range, whether positive or negative, are considered moderately strong; those in the 0.50 to 0.80 range are considered very strong. If the correlation is much higher than 0.80, then odds are that the same thing is being measured in two different ways.

Results of these preliminary studies are the following:

1. There were few differences in correlation values between the two years examined (1985-86 and 1986-87).
2. Party hours in both years showed the best correlation with the number of House Finches (0.81 and 0.76).
3. The distance of the count centers from New York City, the presumed

origin of the New England House Finch population (Bock and Lepthien 1976), also correlated well (0.61 and 0.65) with the number of House Finches. In general, more House Finches will be reported if a count is farther south and west, i.e., closer to New York City. The distance variable was calculated from the longitude and latitude data as previously described.

4. The temperature, the wind speed, the high or low temperature of the count day, and the number of other birds reported have little effect on the number of House Finches that are reported.

Bock and Lepthien (1974) have shown that the number of a species reported per party hour is a valid measure of a species' prevalence. Using that concept, it is helpful to look at the correlates of the factors above (latitude, longitude, distance, and feeder hours) with House Finches per party hour (HF/P-h) for the two years (Table 1). The correlations for the additional variables (Table 2) from the 1986-87 counts with HF/P-h are similar to the correlations with House Finch numbers, though of smaller magnitude.

#### **House Finch Population Spread and Growth Rate.**

In the 1985-86 count, there were 91 New England CBCs; of these, 73 reported House Finches, and 5 of the counts reported new high counts for the number of House Finches seen. In the 1986-87 count, there were 91 New England CBCs; of these, 77 reported House Finches, and 10 counts had new highs. In 1987-88, 79 of the 91 counts reported House Finches, and 5 had new highs. In 1988-89, 82 of the 93 counts reported House Finches, and 9 had new highs. By the 1988-1989 count, the only non-Maine locations that reported no House Finches were the very northern Errol and Pittsburg, New Hampshire counts and the offshore and very watery Tuckernuck Island and Stellwagen Bank counts in Massachusetts. Only 7 of the 23 Maine CBCs reported no House Finches. Clearly, this is a dispersion that is still progressing.

Even more impressive are the increases in the average number of House Finches seen and the average number of House Finches seen per party hour. These values with their standard deviations appear in Table 3.

---

**Table 1. Correlations with House Finches per Party Hour**

	<b>1985-86</b>	<b>1986-87</b>
<b>Latitude</b>	-0.58	-0.47
<b>Longitude</b>	+0.48	+0.39
<b>Distance</b>	-0.62	-0.51
<b>Feeder Hours</b>	+0.10	+0.03

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**Table 2. Correlations with House Finches per Party Hour, 1986-87**

<b>Party Miles</b>	+0.11
<b>Low Temperature</b>	+0.11
<b>High Temperature</b>	+0.22
<b>Top Wind Speed</b>	-0.08
<b>Species Count</b>	+0.25
<b>Total Bird Count</b>	+0.06

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In spite of the reversal in trend for the 1987-88 count, the gain over three years is impressive—about fifty percent for both categories. The magnitude of these numbers is even more impressive when compared to Bock and Lepthien's (1976) data for the years 1962 to 1971, when eastern House Finches made the sevenfold leap from about 0.06 finches per party hour in 1962 to about 0.42 in 1971. In the seventeen years since then, House Finches have made a nearly tenfold increase.

In that study Bock and Lepthien calculated the House Finch exponential growth rate which best fits the data from the northeastern CBCs for those years. The best-fit formula is

$$y = 0.04 e^{0.23 x}$$

where  $y$  is the average number of House Finches seen per party hour,  $e$  is the base of the natural logarithms (about 2.718), and  $x$  is the number of years. From the graph presented by Bock and Lepthien, it seems that they used 1960 as the initial year for calculation purposes. Also, 0.04 is the  $y$ -intercept for the baseline year (1960), and 0.23 is the "instantaneous rate of increase" or exponential growth rate (Bock and Lepthien 1976).

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**Table 3. CBC House Finch Counts (with standard deviations)**

	<b>Average No./CBC</b>	<b>Average No./Party Hour/CBC</b>
<b>1985-86</b>	256 (+/- 301)	2.65 (+/- 2.30)
<b>1986-87</b>	321 (+/- 388)	3.72 (+/- 5.11)
<b>1987-88</b>	304 (+/- 304)	3.30 (+/- 2.53)
<b>1988-89</b>	376 (+/- 389)	4.12 (+/- 3.46)

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The growth rate has fallen off since 1971. However, the New England House Finch population has not leveled off, as one might expect a population that is reaching its carrying capacity to do. In fact, if the calculated House Finch per party hour data for the above four years (Table 3) is added to Bock and Lepthien's (1976) data for the 1960s (and it makes little difference whether two or all of their data points are used in the calculation), the resulting best-fit exponential growth curve is

$$y = 0.06 e^{0.15 x}.$$

If the 74 CBCs in the 40-45/65-70 latitude/longitude are used instead of all the New England counts, then the best-fit exponential equation changes slightly to

$$y = 0.05 e^{0.16 x}.$$

Although the New England House Finch population has not maintained the exponential coefficient rate of increase of 0.23 that Bock and Lepthien calculated, it has been able to achieve a growth rate consistent with an exponential growth of 0.15. The fact that this growth rate has occurred for twenty-eight years and does not seem to be decreasing is very impressive. The doubling time for the population in the interval 1962 to 1971 is slightly more than three years, and the doubling time for the population from 1971 to 1989 is about five years.

The scope of this paper does not include the years 1972-1984, and it would also be interesting to examine how consistent the growth has been. Also, it may be that the growth rate in the southwestern New England counts has already leveled off and that the aggregate increase is accounted for by the continued range expansion into more northern and eastern count areas. Smaller latitude-longitude areas of one or two degrees would have to be examined over the intervening years to assess these possibilities.

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**STEVE DAVIS** is a family doctor who is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Family Medicine at Brown University. He lives in Swansea, Massachusetts, and birding and math are two of his hobbies.

## DIFFERENCES IN FORAGING ABILITY OF ADULT AND JUVENILE SNOWY EGRETS OBSERVED IN THE SAUGUS RIVER MARSH

by Donald M. Kent

It is generally accepted that young birds are less skilled foragers than adult birds are. Differences in foraging ability can be attributed to juveniles feeding in suboptimal habitats or at unsuitable times, juveniles having a more difficult time than adults locating prey within a habitat, juveniles having less success than adults at capturing prey, or juveniles having more difficulty than adults handling prey.

During a study of habitat use by Snowy Egrets (*Egretta thula*) in the Saugus River marsh (Kent 1987), I had the opportunity to compare adult and juvenile foraging behavior. In July and August adults and juveniles forage side by side in large tidal creeks. While in the creeks, egrets feed almost exclusively on sand shrimp (*Crangon septemspinosa*). This affords a unique opportunity to compare juvenile and adult abilities to locate and capture a standard prey item, i.e., sand shrimp.

Foraging Snowy Egrets were observed July 24, 25, and August 6, 1985, and August 7 and 8, 1986. Age classes were distinguished on the basis of breeding plumes on adults and the pale color of the bill and legs of juveniles (Palmer 1962). Each age class was observed for 111 one-minute periods, 67 in 1985 and 44 in 1986. Observations were initiated following an egret's successful strike at prey and continued for one minute, after which a one-minute observation was conducted on the nearest bird of the other age class. Observations were made with a zoom spotting scope from a blind on the creek bank. The distance from the blind to the focal bird never exceeded twenty-five meters. The number of captures attempted (strikes), the number of successful captures, and the size of the shrimp captured were noted and dictated directly into a tape recorder.

There was no significant difference in juvenile and adult Snowy Egret striking rates (number of captures attempted per minute): juveniles averaged 5.00 strikes per minute, whereas adults averaged 4.96 strikes per minute. Nor was there a significant difference in juvenile and adult capture rate (number of shrimp captured per minute): juveniles averaged 2.26 captures per minute, whereas adults averaged 2.37 captures per minute.

Determination of shrimp size was made possible by my closeness to the egrets (less than twenty-five meters), by the relatively long time the egrets handled the shrimp (two to three seconds), and by the known length of Snowy Egret bills (Palmer 1962). The size of a captured shrimp observed as it was handled by the egret was designated as "quarter-bill" or "half-bill" length. Juvenile Snowy Egrets ate significantly more quarter-bill-length shrimp than

half-bill-length shrimp, 141 of 238 shrimp (59 percent), whereas adults ate significantly more half-bill-length shrimp than quarter-bill-length shrimp, 194 of 258 (75 percent). The difference in proportion of each size class of shrimp eaten by juveniles and adults is statistically significant.

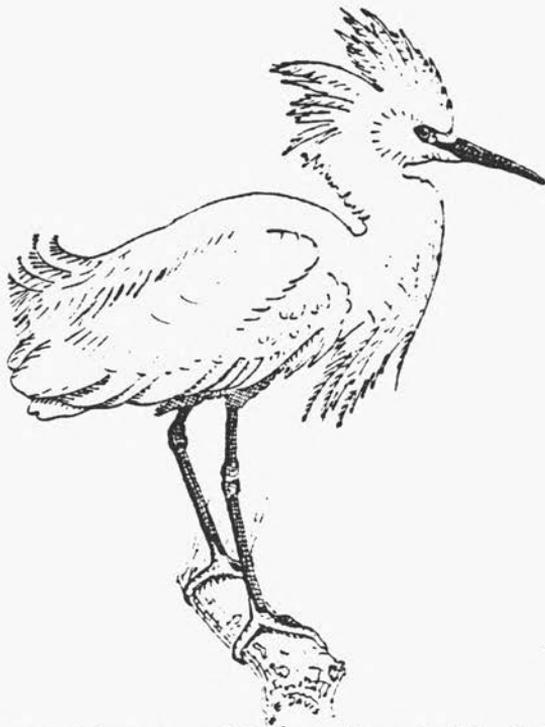
Determining the gross energy intake rate for juvenile and adult egrets required assigning an energy value to the shrimp. Therefore, shrimp were collected in August 1986 and "bombed" in an adiabatic oxygen calorimeter. Given an average bill length of 81 millimeters, quarter-bill-length shrimp have an energy value of 320 J (joules), whereas half-bill-length shrimp have an energy value of 2234 J.

By assigning the above energy values to captured and eaten shrimp, the gross energy intake rate for juvenile and adult Snowy Egrets foraging in the Saugus River marsh was determined. Juveniles obtained energy at a rate of 2.57 kJ (kilojoules) per minute. This is significantly less than the adult rate of 4.23 kJ per minute, which is one and a half times that of juveniles.

In a Canadian study (Draulans and Van Vessem 1985), the relative inefficiency of juvenile Grey Herons (*Ardea cinerea*) was attributed to the use of unsuitable times and places. However, in the Saugus River marsh, juvenile Snowy Egrets began feeding in the creek at approximately the same time as the adults, and they were not observed foraging in other less suitable parts of the marsh (e.g., pannes) when the creek was accessible. Therefore, juvenile Snowy Egrets in the Saugus River marsh appear to be as able as the adults to select an appropriate time and place to feed.

Other studies have found that juvenile herons are sometimes less efficient at locating and capturing prey. For seven species of herons in Florida there was a tendency for juveniles to attempt more captures than adults (Rodgers 1983). Adult and juvenile Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*) in Canada had comparable striking rates, but adults had a greater capture rate (Quinney and Smith 1980). In New Jersey juvenile Little Blue Herons (*Egretta caerulea*) captured fewer prey per attempt than did adults (Recher and Recher 1969). However, the same authors reported that juvenile and adult Little Blue Heron capture rates were comparable in Florida. In the Saugus River marsh juvenile Snowy Egrets were able to locate prey as well as the adults as is indicated by comparable striking rates. Juveniles were also able to capture prey as well as the adults, which is indicated by comparable capture rates.

However, juvenile Snowy Egrets in the Saugus River marsh were less efficient foragers than were the adults. This inefficiency was the result of juvenile Snowy Egrets eating more quarter-bill-length shrimp than half-bill-length shrimp, whereas adults were eating more shrimp of the larger size. Given that half-bill length shrimp contain almost seven times as much energy as do quarter-bill-length shrimp, both age classes should have been eating as many



*Illustration by  
William E. Davis, Jr.*

half-bill-length shrimp as possible. Juveniles and adults feeding side by side, as they did in the Saugus River marsh, should have encountered approximately equal numbers of half-bill-length shrimp.

There could be several reasons why juvenile Snowy Egrets foraging in the Saugus River marsh captured proportionately fewer half-bill-length shrimp than did the adults. The relative value of half-bill-length shrimp to juveniles may have been reduced because of handling difficulties. Juvenile egrets required less than one additional second to handle half-bill-length shrimp. While this difference in handling time is statistically significant, it cannot be considered biologically significant given the large difference in energy value between the two size classes of shrimp. Also adult egrets as well as juveniles dropped a greater percentage of half-bill-length shrimp than of quarter-bill shrimp, indicating only that the half-bill shrimp may be more difficult to handle, regardless of the age of the egret. The difference in size of shrimp eaten by juvenile and adult Snowy Egrets in the Saugus River marsh may be related to juvenile inability to differentiate the size of shrimp before attempting capture or the ability of half-bill-length shrimp to avoid capture by juvenile egrets. Neither can be determined without a controlled experiment.

Generally, juvenile heron mortality is almost two and a half times greater than adult mortality (Lack 1949, Owen 1959, Hickey in Palmer 1962, Kahl 1963). Juvenile mortality is especially high from the time just following

fledging to December of the first year. Juvenile and adult differences in the size of prey eaten, as identified in this study, may help to explain this difference in mortality rate.

**Acknowledgments.** This study was supported in part by grants from the E. Alexander Bergstrom Memorial Research Fund of the Association of Field Ornithologists, the Frank M. Chapman Memorial Fund of the Museum of Natural History, Sigma Xi, and the Boston University Biology Department. Thanks to W. E. Davis, Jr., and F. Wasserman for reviewing the work and an earlier manuscript and to the Refuse Energy Systems Company of Saugus for allowing me to use their property.

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## BOOK REVIEW: *BIRDING CAPE COD*

by Marilyn S. Murphy

*Birding Cape Cod* by the Cape Cod Bird Club and Massachusetts Audubon Society, illustrated by Barry Van Dusen, maps by Janet Heywood, cover by John Sill; Arey's Pond Press, South Wellfleet, Massachusetts, 1990; 125 pages; \$12.95 (soft cover).

Cape Cod is a difficult place to look for birds, particularly shorebirds. Surrounded by three different bodies of water, the Cape has a lifetime supply of cul-de-sacs and a bewilderment of tides and tidal ranges. It is no surprise that one of Massachusetts' most celebrated birds of 1990, the Spotted Redshank, was never sighted outside the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, though many a frustrated birder can testify that it was often elsewhere.

Recent changes on the Cape have exacerbated its natural difficulties for birders. No one needs to be reminded of the effects of development on Cape Cod habitat and land access: the private point associations at once-cherished overlooks, the asphaltting of Hyannis, condominiums, retirement communities, golf courses, shopping malls, midsummer traffic jams. Even Stage Island has succumbed to overdevelopment, the consummation of the 1960s' crusade by the good citizens and selectmen of Chatham to exclude Stage and Morris Islands from the emergent National Seashore.\* Development has transformed the Cape and continues to threaten despite the current economy. If a Rhode Islander has his way, an amusement park with boats and canals will be constructed on Route 6 near Truro's Corn Hill so that, in the words of the developer, children of summer visitors won't be bored when they come to the Cape.

It is no wonder that birders who still cross the bridge head for the best known, easiest-to-find, and least dispiriting destinations: Sandy Neck, Monomoy, Fort Hill, and Race Point, and assume that the days of exploring the lanes and picturesque byways of old Cape Cod are gone forever. Or are they?

---

\* Jonathan Moore, legislative aide to Senator Saltonstall during Congressional hearings on the formation of the Seashore, considered four areas crucial for inclusion in the National Seashore: "... the pond areas in Wellfleet-Truro, Great Island in Wellfleet, Fort Hill in Eastham, and Morris Island in Chatham. He said 'the only one we lost was Morris Island, which was a very special political case. I considered it a jewel, and I still am very upset that it was not included in the Seashore boundary.'" (Francis P. Burling, *The Birth of the Cape Cod National Seashore*, Plymouth, Massachusetts: Leyden Press, 1979)

There has long been a need for a birder's guidebook to the Cape, and now, happily, the Cape Cod Bird Club and Massachusetts Audubon Society at Wellfleet Bay have provided one. Written by local birders, *Birding Cape Cod* is a site-description guide to selected public lands throughout Cape Cod including Monomoy.

Maps by Janet Heywood reflect the sound editorial decision of the committee that one good map is worth hundreds of words. These excellent maps, twenty-seven in all, are the cornerstone of the book and are placed in proximity to their relevant site descriptions.

The format and production of *Birding Cape Cod* are exceptional. The book is handy in size, the typeface is attractive and easy to read, and illustrations by Barry Van Dusen add interest throughout. The eye-catching Piping Plover on the cover is the work of John Sill.

*Birding Cape Cod* is divided into regional areas: the Upper Cape, the Mid-Cape, and the Outer Cape, with each town and site treated separately. Information is given about the best times of year and weather or tide conditions to bird that area, nesting species, other species seen in the recent past, trails, and parking. Over one hundred locations are described in a concise, well-written text that smacks not at all of committee prose. *Bird Observer* readers will recognize several Blair Nikula pieces published earlier in the journal. The Nikula chapter on Monomoy, originally printed in *Bird Observer* (15 [3] June 1987: 112), is essential reading for any birder planning a trip there.

Because public lands, in general, are the focus of *Birding Cape Cod*, birders should be cautioned not to look for information about well-known hot spots such as the chicken farm in Truro.

Light conditions go unnoted in most of the site descriptions. Great Pond in Eastham may be "one of the best freshwater ponds for birding on the Outer Cape," but you won't enjoy the birds there with the sun eyeballing you. For locations with only one vantage point, check Janet Heywood's maps before setting out. So many sites are described, that all but the most seasoned Cape Cod birders will find new locations to explore. The variety of areas and the currency of species and other information make these site descriptions invaluable. Both locations and species are included in the index.

Also included is an introduction with information on subjects ranging from habitats to ticks, a chapter on pelagic birding, and an annotated list of Cape Cod specialties. The list of specialties is a mystery to this reader. Do people really go to Cape Cod looking for Great Cormorants, Brant, Snowy Owls, and Lapland Longspurs? Reproduction of the Cape Cod Bird Club checklist would have been a helpful addition to or substitute for this mystery list, but, curiously, the availability of the checklist goes unmentioned. The impact of the hunting season on a birder's itinerary also is not addressed although much of the Cape,

particularly the National Seashore, becomes a hunter's playground around the end of October, and birdlife hunkers down.

But these are minor omissions and do not diminish the success of this publication for which all responsible deserve accolades. *Birding Cape Cod* ranks among the best of the regional guides, and anyone with a glimmer of interest in birding the area should own a copy. You won't want to cross the bridge without it.

**MARILYN MURPHY** recently retired from Houghton Mifflin Company where she was Research Librarian. She spent several months in 1990 birding the Outer Cape, "trying to figure out the tides in Nauset Marsh and counting the cars on Route 6."

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## BOOK REVIEW: *OUTDOOR OPTICS*

by Robert Manns

*Outdoor Optics* by Leif J. Robinson, published by Lyons and Burford, New York, 1990; 146 pages; black and white photographs and illustrations; \$13.95 (soft cover).

This is truly a book for birders who want some background about binoculars. It is the book buyers need to read to avoid making costly mistakes. Although it is not written in the most scintillating scientific prose, although its cover features an archaic instrument used some twenty-five years ago, although the author hard sells a maker who does not make one blessed binocular for wildlife observation (Steiner), although the author's Table A on page 49 in which he attempts to come forward with some direct comparisons is maddeningly sketchy and arbitrary, and although there is no mention anywhere of the difference in equal power sizes between roof prism and Porro prism binoculars, this is the best book of its kind known to this reader.

Robinson's brief and effective dismissal of zoom binoculars as "curious devices" should put the reader's curiosity about them to bed permanently. In Chapter 4 he neatly describes the basic differences between roof and Porro design without teasing the reader into optical physics. The chapter is written by a man who knows far more about optics theoretically than he needs to divulge in the name of histrionics, and this is a great saving in reader time. However, it is this reviewer's opinion that Robinson is overly generous in reviewing the fast-focus rocker arm of some Bushnell models. The method is fast, certainly, but too fast and too critical. It is equally quick out of focus, making the focus band too narrow and only gradually available to the eye.

The authority of the book is briefly uneven when the author, for some odd reason, allows to the reader that his choices of binoculars were guided by the New Jersey Audubon Society review of 1984 and a Consumer's Union report in 1989. Why does an authority depend on them at all? Why not do his own homework? Of course, the answer may be: Where does he get all the binoculars for doing a direct comparison? And that is a consideration.

Excellent treatment is given to eye relief in the binocular. This is where a buyer can really bury himself. Example: Man goes into a camera store wearing eyeglasses. The clerk hands him a Bausch and Lomb Discoverer 9 x 35 and kindly turns back the rubber eyecups. Neat. The buyer is seeing something, possibly for the first time, at nine-power magnification. The view is all grandeur. Wrap it up. Down the tube go three or four hundred dollars. The seven or eight millimeters of eye relief are nowhere near the seventeen millimeters

necessary.

However, best of all, if briefly covered, are some notes on contrast and what it means to the total picture. Photographs amplify the notes.

The chapter on spotting scopes is full of fine information (I say this guardedly), e.g., the ability of seventy- and eighty-millimeter-aperture scopes to gather more "thermals" than a sixty. But as the author admits, you cannot argue with the success of Questar and Kowa. The Japanese have stated their case for fluorite through two manufacturers, Kowa and Takahashi. For the present they work. But fluorite lenses also have a reputation among some physicists for instability, and if that is the case, they may not be the only solution to aberration in refractors. We seem to be waiting, and the Germans seem to be waiting.

Robinson's Table B on page 91 compares "Five Exceptional Spotting Scopes," two of which I feel might be completely expendable and another in grave doubt. But the reader must understand that getting two experienced optical people to agree on optics is like getting two poets to agree on what they like in verse. Talk about your hard-hitting play-offs.

The chapter on spotting-scope supports favors the wobbliest, lightest, almost-not-there, and, fortunately, long-gone flip-lock tripod. But what did I just tell you about poets? And I also have no use for shoulder mounts and monopods for scopes, since neither one attributes any steadiness to the image in powers over fifteen.

Lastly, the closing chapters of the book on Cleanliness and Care (of optics), Tips for Testing Equipment, and Little Things (covering straps, harnesses, and truly little things) are certainly going to be helpful not only to the buyer but to the user as well. With these chapters, I am in agreement, at least sixty percent.

Anyone wanting to feel that an eventual binocular or scope purchase resulted from some understanding of the basics of optical design and craft will have begged, bought, or stolen a copy of Robinson's *Outdoor Optics* and will have read it.

**ROBERT MANN**S, the owner of Robert Manns and Associates, Inc., is an avid birder who has been in the optical supply business in Atlanta, Georgia, for nine years. He has written about optics for *Bird Watcher's Digest*, *Wild Bird*, *Birding*, Florida Audubon Society's *Field Naturalist*, and other journals. His business telephone is 404-350-9791.

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**PHOTO RECORD: AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN**

**October 6, 1990, Eastham, Massachusetts**

*Editor's Note. The following are field notes taken by Kyle Jones while observing an American White Pelican at Coast Guard Beach, Eastham, Massachusetts, on October 6, 1990.*



*American White Pelican  
Photo by Kyle Jones*

At 3:10 P.M., I was walking down the access road at Coast Guard Beach on my way to photograph shorebirds at a spring high tide roost. I observed a very large light-colored bird soaring over the Nauset Bay Bluff. By its size and heavy chest, I knew immediately that the bird was not a gull, raptor, or cormorant. With my binocular, it was quickly evident that the bird was nearly all white with solid black primaries and black on the distal secondaries. The large, yellow bill was easily seen: an adult American White Pelican. While the bird continued soaring, I took several photographs with a 300 mm lens. Using the binocular again, I saw its yellow face as the bird continued to drift northward in the west to southwest wind. I watched the bird for a total of seven minutes.

Additional species to consider in the identification of an American White Pelican include similarly patterned black and white birds such as Snow Goose, Wood Stork, and Northern Gannet. The Snow Goose shows no black in the secondaries, has an outstretched neck in flight, and has a short bill. The Wood Stork also flies with an outstretched neck and has a dark neck, head, and bill,

long legs, and completely black secondaries and outer rectrices. The Northern Gannet has a long neck, white secondaries, and a pointed tail and wings. Of the tens of thousands of Northern Gannets I have seen, I saw only one fly over land. The only other pelican species in the world with a similar white and black feather pattern while in flight is the Eastern White Pelican, which lacks the bare yellow face of the American White Pelican. Other outer Cape Cod records of the American White Pelican are: July 13, 1989 in East Orleans; December 8, 1963 in Orleans; October 1 through 14, 1961 in Chatham (two birds); April 23 and 24, 1953 in North Truro (two birds).

Kyle Jones, Cape Cod

### OWL COUGHS UP A BOULDER

On February 20, 1989, I was leading a Brookline Bird Club walk on Crane Beach and Castle Hill in Ipswich, Massachusetts. When we came to the white pine grove on the hill that harbors Great Horned Owls, we found their pellets everywhere. One member of the group, Dottie Case, discovered the largest owl pellet I have ever seen. The pellet measured four inches by two and a quarter inches. How any Great Horned Owl could cough up such a monstrous pellet challenges the imagination.

But that isn't the best part. Protruding from the side of the pellet was the banded leg of a songbird. I took the pellet to David Rimmer, the wildlife biologist on the Crane Beach staff who bands birds on the property for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Sure enough, the leg was from a bird he banded in the vicinity: a Gray Catbird, hatched in 1988, banded on October 3, 1988, sex unknown, and weighing 40.9 grams at banding.

Because the recovery was in February, it is evident that the young catbird never migrated unless it arrived in Ipswich from farther north before October 3 and decided to stay. What we can never know is whether the owl caught a healthy bird, found a starving bird, or picked up a freshly dead one. Whatever the case, I doubt if I will ever again have such an unusual band recovery. My hat is off to these awesome predators.

Jim Berry, Ipswich

## AN OBLIGING SHORT-EARED OWL

After spending most of a crisp and clear day in January 1989 on Plum Island looking for Snowy Owls (and getting photographs of an inquisitive immature sitting on a chimney on a home near the island bridge), I went to Salisbury State Park to search for a Short-eared Owl. I arrived at about three o'clock in the afternoon. I knew from past experience that chances of seeing a Short-eared Owl are best at dawn or dusk. I roamed around the open fields for a while and kept running into members of a Connecticut birding group who were also hoping to see a Short-eared Owl. Near the entrance booth of the park, two people further up the road were looking at something large flying over their heads. I quickly put my binocular on the bird: it was a Short-eared Owl. As I watched its swooping motions, I realized that another Short-eared Owl had joined it in flight, both owls flying low across the road and above the fields.

After watching the owls for a few minutes, I left to look for the Connecticut group to tell them the owls were out. Unable to find the group, I turned around and started back towards the entrance booth. All of a sudden, one of the owls flew out of the grasses and landed on a white road post. The sun was low and the lighting was beautiful. A golden glow lit up the yellow eyes of the Short-eared Owl like those of a jack-o-lantern. He turned his head in different directions as he sat still on the post. I started taking pictures from my car window and slowly moved my car until I was directly across the road from him. The bird was not scared away by other cars driving by. (I once saw a Short-eared Owl land on a post near Parking Lot Number One in the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge but he flew off as soon as a car drove by.) After a few minutes, the Connecticut birding group arrived and watched the owl from forty feet away. They were very excited and gave me a victory sign.

The Short-eared Owl sat on the post, unafraid of people watching and cars passing him, for at least fifteen minutes. It was a wonderful sight. After the owl flew away, a fellow birder took me to a grove of trees across from the park entrance. Sitting in a pine tree no more than nine feet from the ground was a Long-eared Owl, a life bird. That was the end to a truly wonderful day: three species of owls in less than six hours and some memorable photographs.

Sandy Selesky, Westford

## ANOTHER WILD GOOSE CHASE: ADDENDUM TO THE OSTERVILLE BARNACLES

*Note. Reluctantly, I must share with Bird Observer readers the following letter, dated April 3, 1991, sent to me by Brian Dalzell, of Castalia, New Brunswick, Canada. It will be sad news for those birders who added another species to their life lists when they finally located (not an easy task) the family of six Barnacle Geese that were present in Osterville from January 18 to March 22, 1991.*

Dorothy R. Arvidson

I don't think you are going to like what I have to say, but I have decided to say it anyway. . . . I was aware that the Barnacle Geese had been seen on Cape Sable, Nova Scotia, during the fall and early winter, and Ian McLaren had told me they later showed up on Cape Cod, much to the delight of local birders. During the Grand Manan Christmas Bird Count here, I saw three White-fronted Geese but did not include them as I knew a local goose-fancier that they probably belonged to. I think you know the rest.

Last night I phoned the gentleman involved and had a long chat. After convincing him I was not a game warden, he told me that several of his geese got out of their pens last summer for reasons he did not wish to elaborate upon. . . . Among these geese were two pairs of Barnacle Geese, one pair of which disappeared shortly afterward and the other of which stayed around and mated. According to him they produced a nest, which was predated by crows. However, a second nesting was attempted, and four young were seen in late July, The family remained around together until late August when they disappeared.

In view of this evidence I can draw no other conclusion: the family that turned up three weeks later on Cape Sable Island one hundred miles to the southeast was indeed the Grand Manan group. I see no reason to doubt these were the same birds that showed up at Osterville and attracted quite a few list-hungry birders. You can do what you want with this information, [but] . . . . give me a call first, as I'm not sure I want to be known as the bearer of bad news—the grinch that plucked Barnacle Geese from the life lists of hundreds of irate birders. . . .

## REQUEST FOR OBSERVATIONS OF WETLAND BIRDS IN MASSACHUSETTS

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and the Department of Forestry and Wildlife Management at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst began a project to monitor the abundance and distribution and examine habitat relationships of some wetland bird species in Massachusetts. We are soliciting information on observations of these species from birders around the state. Data gathered through the project will contribute to the conservation of these species and their habitats through the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act. Target species include:

Pied-billed Grebe  
Clapper Rail  
Common Moorhen  
American Bittern  
King Rail  
American Coot  
Least Bittern  
Virginia Rail  
Common Snipe  
Green-backed Heron  
Sora  
Sedge Wren

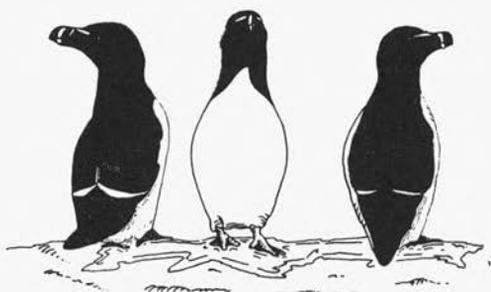
We are interested in May, June, and July observations of individuals believed to be resident or breeding birds rather than migrants or transients. Breeding need not be confirmed for observations to be of value. The following information is requested:

Species observed  
Date(s) of observation(s)  
Location of sighting (photocopy of USGS topographic map showing exact location would be most helpful)  
Brief description of observation (was bird seen or heard; how close; what was bird doing?)  
Evidence that observation was of a resident or breeding bird (e.g., multiple observations during May through July; territorial behavior evidence of nests or young)

Observations may be forwarded to: Shawn Crowley, Department of Forestry and Wildlife Management, Holdsworth Hall, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003, or to Dr. Scott Melvin, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Westboro, MA 01581 (508-792-7270).

# FIELD RECORDS

## JANUARY 1991



by Glenn d'Entremont and Robert H. Stymeist

January's weather was as close to normal as a month ever gets. The temperature averaged 29.4 degrees, only 0.2 degrees below normal. The high at Boston was 49 degrees on January 2, 20, and 30; the low was 4 degrees on January 22. Precipitation totaled 3.24 inches with measurable amounts falling on eleven days. Snowfall totaled 11.7 inches, just 0.5 inch less than normal. Most of this came in one storm on January 11-12 when 8.5 inches fell in less than 24 hours. Some southern suburbs had thunder on January 16, and Boston recorded thunder on January 17.

The Take A Second Look (TASL) Boston Harbor monitoring census continued through February 1991. These observations are shown as reports from Boston Harbor, which includes the area from East Point in Nahant to the Weir River in Hingham.

R. H. S.

### LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

On January 11-12 a coastal storm with strong easterly winds produced a good number of loons, especially off Martha's Vineyard. An Arctic/Pacific Loon was carefully identified and photographed off the Scusset Beach area of Bourne. Good concentrations of Double-crested Cormorants continued to be found in Boston Harbor. A Glossy Ibis, first noted on the Boston CBC on December 17, was still present at Logan Airport on New Year's Day. Two Snowy Egrets were the only winter white in marshes in Quincy and Centerville.

The birds of the season, at least temporarily, were the family group of six Barnacle Geese that were found on January 18 in the West Bay marsh in the village of Osterville. Certainly six Barnacle Geese were wild, so birds descended on the quiet village to finally add these northern visitors to their North American and Massachusetts lists. Ian McLaren, the *American Birds* regional editor for the Maritimes, informed us that six Barnacle Geese were discovered around mid-September at Cape Sable, Nova Scotia, and were recorded on the area's CBC. After a storm on January 8, 1991, these birds disappeared and apparently then discovered Cape Cod.

Now comes a story, reported in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* on January 12, 1991, that on a little island off Grand Manan Island in the Bay of Fundy, an aviculturist who kept exotic waterfowl under federal license tired of the birds in 1989 and let them go. The alien species included Egyptian, Greater White-fronted, and, yes, Barnacle geese. A pair of Barnacle Geese stayed near the property, nested, and raised four young. They disappeared in mid-September 1990 and, you guessed it, arrived at Cape Sable, Nova Scotia. The arrival of the geese at Osterville on January 18 coincided with the disappearance of six birds from Cape Sable. Well, folks, you decide, at least four birds were born in the wild!

Other waterfowl highlights included one flock of 50 Northern Pintails in East Barnstable and two drake Blue-winged Teals in Yarmouth. The lack of a hard freeze produced good numbers of several species of waterfowl, notably Hooded and Common mergansers and lingering Ruddy Ducks.

G. d'E. and R. H. S.

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	JANUARY 1991
Red-throated Loon				
12	M. V.	50+	V. Laux	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	JANUARY 1991
<b>Arctic/Pacific Loon</b>				
13-20	Sagamore to Scusset Beaches	1 ad	R Abrams + v. o.	
<b>Common Loon</b>				
5, 6	Quabbin (G43), Newbypt	3, 14	M. Lynch#, BBC (R. McHale)	
12	M. V.	400+	V. Laux	
13, 17	Gloucester, Scusset Beach	16, 42	M. Lynch#, R Abrams	
<b>Pied-billed Grebe</b>				
thr	Plymouth (Billington Sea)	4 max	v. o.	
thr	Nantucket	6 max 1/25	v. o.	
11, 13	Lakeville, Winchester	9, 1	K. Anderson, L. Taylor	
14, 20	S. Dart., Chatham	1, 1	M. Boucher, G. d'Entremont#	
<b>Horned Grebe</b>				
2, 5	N. Scituate, Quab. (G43)	6, 1	M. Lynch#, M. Lynch#	
12, 13	Newbypt, Rockport	12, 2	BBC (P. Stevens), J. Berry	
20, 29	Boston Harbor, Dennis	115, 30+	TASL (M. Hall), M. Lynch#	
<b>Red-necked Grebe</b>				
2, 5	N. Scituate, E. Gloucester	14, 6	M. Lynch#, J. Berry	
6, 13	Nahant, P'town	20, 6	R. Forster, SSBC (W. Petersen)	
20, 26	Boston Harbor, Nant.	13, 9	TASL (M. Hall), J. Papale	
<b>Northern Gannet</b>				
19, 20	P'town (R.P.), A. P.	200, 6	I. Giriunas#	
<b>Great Cormorant</b>				
thr	Newbypt, N. Scituate	15 max, 201 max	v. o.	
thr, 5	Nant., Gloucester	7 max 1/1, 99	v. o., J. Berry	
6, 13	Nahant, Rockport	50, 120+	R. Forster, J. Berry	
18, 22	Lakeville, Falmouth	1, 20	R. Abrams#, P. Trimble	
<b>Double-crested Cormorant</b>				
thr	Newbypt, Boston Harbor	1, 65 max 1/20	v. o., TASL (M. Hall)	
1-13, 2	P'town, Plymouth	2, 2	K. Jones + v. o., M. Lynch#	
22, 31	Falmouth, Nant.	2, 4	P. Trimble, J. Papale	
<b>American Bittern</b>				
2	Eastham (Fort Hill)	1	K. Jones	
22	Middleboro	1	D. Zimberlan	
<b>Great Blue Heron</b>				
5, 6	Framingham, Newbypt	4, 7	K. Hamilton, BBC (R. McHale)	
13, 20	Westport, Boston Harbor	21, 26	G. Gove, TASL (M. Hall)	
18, 21	Eastham (F.H.), Plymouth	9, 11	M. Maurer, R. Forster	
<b>Snowy Egret</b>				
1-3, 23	Quincy, Centerville	1, 1	D. Brown, K. Hamilton	
<b>Black-crowned Night-Heron</b>				
1-19	Boston (Muddy River)	4 imm max 1/1	T. Aversa + v. o.	
1, 24	Nant., S. Boston	1 imm, 2 imm	G. d'Entremont#, K. Ryan	
<b>Glossy Ibis</b>				
1	Boston (Logan Airport)	1	N. Smith	
<b>Tundra Swan</b>				
2	M. V.	4	V. Laux	
<b>Mute Swan</b>				
thr	North Scituate	42 max 1/2	v. o.	
thr	Plymouth (Billington Sea)	43 max 1/14	v. o.	
<b>Snow Goose</b>				
9	Medfield	1	P. Iarrobino	
<b>Brant</b>				
5, 20	Gloucester (B.R.), Boston H.	117, 2126	H. Wiggin#, TASL (M. Hall)	
<b>Barnacle Goose (escaped)</b>				
18-31	Osterville to Cotuit	6	B. Barber + v. o.	
<b>Canada Goose</b>				
2, 5	Plymouth, Framingham	700+, 1063	M. Lynch#, K. Hamilton#	
7, 13	Winchester, Somersset	540, 500	T. Aversa, B. Sorrie	
26, 27	Newbypt, Westport	450, 750	W. Petersen, E. Raymond	
<b>Wood Duck</b>				
1, 15; 15	Plymouth; S. Natick	1 m; 2	D. Ludlow#; fide W. Petersen	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	JANUARY 1991
Green-winged Teal				
thr, 6	Nant., W. Barnstable	9 max, 20	v. o., P. Trimble	
8, 24	W. Roxbury, Centerville	38, 21	T. Aversa, K. Hamilton	
American Black Duck				
4, 20	Essex, Boston Harbor	200+, 3394	D. Rimmer, TASL (M. Hall)	
13, 24	Outer C. Cod, P.I.	900, 721	SSBC (W. Petersen), W. Drew#	
Mallard				
1, 20	Worcester, Boston H.	320, 324	M. Lynch#, TASL (M. Hall)	
Northern Pintail				
2, 13	P.I., E. Barnstable	17, 50	T. Aversa, T. Prince	
Reports of 1-7 (total 21) from ten locations.				
Blue-winged Teal				
23	Yarmouth	2	K. Hamilton	
Northern Shoveler				
4-6, 6	Scituate, S. Monomoy	2 f, 15	v. o., B. Malcolm	
19, 29	DWWS, Chatham	1 m, 1	CCBC, S. Thompson	
Gadwall				
1, 13	Worcester, Somerset	4, 29	M. Lynch#, B. Sorrie#	
2	Plymouth (Billington Sea)	25	M. Lynch#	
20, 31	Boston H., Nantucket	4, 1 m	TASL (M. Hall), J. Papale	
29	Centerville, Dennis	6, 7	M. Lynch#, M. Lynch#	
Eurasian Wigeon				
thr	Plymouth (Billington Sea)	1 m	v. o.	
13-19	Chatham (Lovers Lake)	1 m	SSBC (W. Petersen) + v. o.	
American Wigeon				
thr	Plymouth (Billington Sea)	56 max 1/2	v. o.	
1-13, 1	Arlington, Worcester	51 max, 3	L. Taylor, M. Lynch#	
6, 13	N. Scituate, Somerset	35, 41	G. d'Entremont, B. Sorrie#	
20, 31	Chatham, Nantucket	27, 35	G. d'Entremont, J. Papale	
Canvasback				
13, 13	Dighton, Westport	130, 500	B. Sorrie#, G. Gove	
19	Falmouth, Lakeville	258, 60	R. Stymeist#, W. Petersen	
29, 31	Dennis, Nantucket	104, 53	M. Lynch#, J. Papale	
Redhead				
thr, 13	Nantucket, Westport	4, 1 m	J. Papale, G. Gove	
1-2	Plymouth (Billington Sea)	10+	M. Lynch# + v. o.	
22, 29	Falmouth, Dennis	6, 3	P. Trimble, M. Lynch#	
Ring-necked Duck				
thr, 1	Nantucket, W. Newbury	36 max, 40	J. Papale, H. Wiggin#	
2	Plymouth (Billington Sea)	21	M. Lynch#	
1, 3	Arlington, Lakeville	38, 25	L. Taylor, K. Anderson#	
5, 29	Framingham, Falmouth	26, 73	K. Hamilton#, M. Lynch#	
Greater Scaup				
6, 20	Hingham, Boston H.	400, 960	G. d'Entremont, TASL (M. Hall)	
22, 31	Falmouth, Nantucket	900+, 430	P. Trimble, J. Papale	
Lesser Scaup				
2, 20	P.I., Lakeville	1 m, 8	T. Aversa, K. Holmes#	
31	Nantucket	2	J. Papale	
Common Eider				
2, 5	N. Scituate, Plymouth	204, 3000+	M. Lynch#, BBC (R. Timberlake)	
20, 29	Boston H., Nant.	7021, 2600	TASL (M. Hall), J. Papale	
29	Dennis, Yarmouth	1500, 600	M. Lynch#	
King Eider				
13	Rockport, Winthrop	1 f, 2	M. Lynch#, H. Wiggin#	
18, 20	N. Truro, Orleans	1, 3	M. Maurer, K. Jones	
28, 29	Quincy, Dennis	1, 1	R. Abrams, W. Bailey#	
Harlequin Duck				
thr	M. V.	43 max 1/2	V. Laux	
thr	Rockport, N. Scituate	15 max 1/29, 5 max 1/2	v. o.	
1, 1	Nant., Duxbury Beach	1 m, 2 m	D. Brown#, v. o.	
6, 19	Nahant, Gloucester	2, 1 m	R. Forster, R. Forster#	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	JANUARY 1991
Oldsquaw 6	Nantucket (Madaket)	75,000	E. Andrews#	
Black Scoter thr, 13 5, 23	Newbypt, Rockport Plymouth, Dennis	12 max 1/6, 4 3, 2 m	v. o. BBC (R. Timberlake), T. Aversa	
Surf Scoter 5, 13 20, 22	Plymouth, Rockport Hingham, Falmouth	4, 20 16, 22	BBC (R. Timberlake), J. Berry TASL (M. Hall), P. Trimble	
White-winged Scoter thr 5, 13	Newbypt, Boston H. Plymouth, Gloucester	350+ max, 344 max 26, 90+	v. o., TASL (M. Hall) + v.o. BBC (R. Timberlake), M. Lynch#	
Common Goldeneye 20, 26	Boston H., Newbypt	1659, 600	TASL (M. Hall), W. Petersen	
Barrow's Goldeneye 10-22, 19-20 27	Wellfleet H., Osterville New Bedford, Westport	1 m, 2 1, 1	v. o. D. Zimmerlin, E. Raymond	
Bufflehead 1, 20 21, 29	Newbypt, Boston H. Osterville, Falmouth	200+, 2231 220, 456	J. Berry, TASL (M. Hall) P. Trimble, M. Lynch#	
Hooded Merganser 1, 5 2, 29	Arlington (2 loc), Quab. (G43) Plymouth (Billington Sea), Falmouth	118, 40 24, 67	L. Taylor, M. Lynch# M. Lynch#	
Reports of 36 individuals from eight locations.				
Common Merganser 1, 2 5, 20 27	Arlington (2 loc), Plymouth Quabbin (G43), Barnstable Newbypt, Westport	63, 58 78, 100 46, 400+	L. Taylor, M. Lynch# M. Lynch#, P. Trimble T. Aversa#, E. Raymond	
Red-breasted Merganser 5, 29 14, 20	Plymouth, Falmouth Outer C. Cod, Boston H.	70+, 172 1500, 1467	BBC (R. Timberlake), M. Lynch# SSBC (W. Petersen), TASL (M. Hall)	
Ruddy Duck 1, 2 8, 25	Winchester, S. Monomoy Boston (Jamaica Pd), Nant.	4, 7 24, 3	L. Taylor, B. Malcolm T. Aversa, J. Papale	

#### RAPTORS THROUGH ALCIDS

Turkey Vultures continued their northward trend wintering in the Blue Hills area. As many as 13 Northern Harriers were present in the Newburyport-Plum Island area, and accipiter reports were too numerous to list individually. The Boston Peregrines continued throughout the period, while others were found at Plum Island, Pembroke, and on outer Cape Cod.

The Common Moorhen was noted from Nantucket and from Chatham, and a count of over 250 American Coots was tallied at the Billington Sea, a stronghold for this species in recent years.

Exceedingly rare inland, a Common Black-headed Gull was found and photographed eating french fries at a Burger King in Brockton. A total of 15 Common Black-headed Gulls was present at Lewis Lake in Winthrop, where a **Mew Gull**, first noted on the CBC, continued to be seen. At Raccoon Island in Quincy another **Mew Gull** and a Little Gull were observed. Two **Common Murres** were carefully identified at close range off Race Point in Provincetown, where over 1000 Razorbills were also noted. The strong easterly winds associated with the coastal storm on January 11-12 may have produced the 9 Atlantic Puffins noted off the Vineyard.

G. d'E. and R. H. S.

Turkey Vulture thr, 10	Blue Hills area, Byfield	3 max, 1	v. o., R. McHale
Bald Eagle thr, 2 11, 12	Newbypt, Orleans Quabbin, Lakeville	7 max 1/20, 1 31, 5	v. o., K. Jones fide W. Davis, K. Holmes
Northern Harrier thr 20, 23	Newbypt, E. Middleboro Boston Harbor, DWWS	13 max, 5 5, 4	v. o. TASL (M. Hall), G. d'Entremont#
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Reports of 18 individuals from 17 locations!		

DATE LOCATION NUMBER OBSERVERS JANUARY 1991

Cooper's Hawk

Reports of 11 individuals from 11 locations!

Northern Goshawk

5, 9 Framingham, Lincoln 1,1 R. Forster, W. Petersen  
 10, 11 E. Orleans, Scituate 1, 1 A. Williams, R. Abrams#  
 20, 30 Bridgewater, Topsfield 1, 1 M. Maurer, J. MacDougall

Red-shouldered Hawk

Reports of 9 individuals from 8 locations.

Red-tailed Hawk

5, 19 Framingham, Milford-Wareham (Rt495) 15, 17 K. Hamilton#, J. Gordon  
 27 Framingham-Concord 28 fide R. Walton

Rough-legged Hawk

13 Bridgewater-Middleboro-Halifax 8 K. Holmes#  
 25, 26 DWWS, P.I. 7, 3 M. Maurer, W. Petersen

Golden Eagle

11 Quabbin 1 fide W. Davis

American Kestrel

thr; 1 Newbypt, Essex; P.I. 5 max, 3 max; 2 or 3 v. o.; J. Berry  
 11, 31 S. Carver, Nantucket 3 f, 4 M. Maurer#, J. Papale

Reports of 9 individuals from seven locations.

Merlin

Reports of 9 individuals from nine coastal locations.

Peregrine Falcon

thr P.I., Boston (Custom House) 1, 2 v. o.  
 2-5, 11 Outer C. Cod, Pembroke 1, 1 v. o., D. Ludlow

Ruffed Grouse

6, 13 Newbypt, W. Barnstable 4, 1 J. Berry#, D. Hlouser  
 21, 26 Ipswich, Quabbin (G41) 4, 4 J. MacDougall, M. Lynch#

Wild Turkey

27 Barre 5 G. Gove + J. Gordon

Northern Bobwhite

1, 6 Nantucket, Easton 1, 16 G. d'Entremont, K. Ryan  
 17, 29 DWWS, N. Middleboro 7, 2 D. Hlouser, K. Holmes

Virginia Rail

26 Ipswich, Nantucket 2, 2 I. Giriunas#, J. Papale

Common Moorhen

1, 29 Nant. (Hummock, Miacomet ponds) 1, 2 D. Brown#, E. Ray  
 13-19 Chatham (Lovers Lake) 1 SSBC (W. Petersen) + v. o.

American Coot

thr Plymouth (Billington Sea) 250+ max 1/2 M. Lynch# + v. o.  
 thr, 1 Nant., W. Newbury 49 max 1/31, 17 J. Papale, H. Wiggin#  
 5, 12 Arlington, Natick 31, 3 L. Taylor, R. Forster

Black-bellied Plover

thr, 1-14 Eastham, P'town 2, 14 max K. Jones, SSBC (W. Petersen)  
 3 Quincy (Raccoon Island) 6 G. d'Entremont

Killdeer

15, 19 Dorchester, Nant. 1, 1 G. d'Entremont, J. Papale#

Greater Yellowlegs

1, 6, 18 P.I., B. I., F. H. 1, 3, 4 H. Wiggin#, L. Rogers, M. Maurer#  
 24, 25 Yarmouth, Nantucket 1, 1 K. Hamilton, J. Papale

Red Knot

11 Cohasset 4 R. Abrams + P. Fitzgerald

Sanderling

thr, 10 Nahant, Revere 100+ max, 120 I. Lynch + v. o., T. Aversa

Purple Sandpiper

6, 11 N. Scituate, Cohasset 75, 200 G. d'Entremont#, R. Abrams#  
 16, 20 Westport, Winthrop 80+, 39 M. Maurer#, TASL (M. Hall)

Dunlin

3, 13 Quincy (Raccoon I.), Winthrop 4, 85 G. d'Entremont  
 13, 14 Westport, P'town 50, 100 G. Gove, SSBC (W. Petersen)

Common Snipe

13-27, 2 Newbypt, Worcester 1 or 2, 1 v. o., M. Lynch#

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	JANUARY 1991
Little Gull				
16	Quincy (Raccoon Island)	1 ad	D. Brown	
Common Black-headed Gull				
thr, 13	Winthrop, Gloucester H.	15 max, 1 ad	v. o., M. Lynch#	
22-25, 26-27	Brockton, Nant.	1 ad ph, 1 ad	N. Cyrus, J. Papale#	
Bonaparte's Gull				
thr	Nantucket, Newburyport	800, 31 max 1/20	v. o.	
2,, 20	Lynn (Flax Pd), Winthrop	300, 17	J. Quigley, J. Berry	
Mew Gull				
thr	Winthrop, Quincy (Raccoon I.)	1 ad ph, 1 ad ph	v. o.	
Ring-billed Gull				
17, 20	Quincy, Winthrop	355, 200	G. d'Entremont, I. Giriunas#	
Iceland Gull				
13, 26	P'town, P.I.	6, 15+	SSBC (W. Petersen), W. Petersen	
29	E. Gloucester	10	T. Aversa	
Lesser Black-backed Gull				
3, 26	Lynn (Flax Pd), P.I.	1 ad, 1 ad	J. Quigley, P. Roberts	
19	Rockport (A.P.)	1 (3W)	R. Forster#	
Glaucous Gull				
thr	E. Gloucester, Rockport	1, 1 ad	v. o.	
thr, 11	P'town, Scituate	1-2, 1 ad	v. o., R. Abrams#	
19, 20	Ipswich, Quincy	1, 1	C. Cook, TASL (M. Hall)	
Black-legged Kittiwake				
19, 26	P'town (R.P.), Rockport	300, 4	I. Giriunas#, BBC (S. Bolton)	
26-27, 31	Nantucket, P.I.	2, 3 ad	J. Papale, R. Forster#	
Dovekie				
19, 26	P'town (R.P.), Sagamore	2, 1	D. Brown, R. Abrams + v. o.	
Thick-billed Murre				
13	P'town (R.P.)	2 (1 oiled)	SSBC (W.Petersen)	
1-9, 19	P'town wharf, Rockport	1, 1	K. Jones, K. Hamilton	
Common Murre (details on file)				
13-19	Provincetown (R.P.)	2	SSBC (W.Petersen) + v. o.	
Razorbill				
thr	P'town (R.P.)	1000 max 1/3	v. o.	
thr	Truro	250 max	K. Jones	
1, 12	Nantucket, M. V.	50, 50	G. d'Entremont#, V. Laux	
Black Guillemot				
13-19, 19	P'town, Cape Ann	6, 16	v. o., R. Forster#	
Atlantic Puffin				
12	M. V.	9	V. Laux	

#### DOVES THROUGH FINCHES

Thirteen Eastern Screech-Owls were tallied in Framingham on January 5, and Great Horned Owls were widely reported. Snowy Owls were scarce, but one or two were regular at Plum Island and at Logan Airport all month. Two immature Red-headed Woodpeckers were present throughout the month in two locations, while Red-bellied Woodpeckers were found at seven sites. Sapsucker reports came from Nantucket, Hingham, and Scituate, while the **Black-backed Woodpecker** continued in Upton through at least January 7.

The Framingham crow roost contained an estimated 10,000 American and 1000 Fish crows. Compared with last year, the former held their own while the latter dropped by 33%. A **Varied Thrush** was discovered at a feeder in Wrentham on New Year's Day. The Bottomlys were very gracious to the birding community and opened their house to all who came by to see this handsome individual. Three **Bohemian Waxwings** were found among a flock of over 100 Cedar Waxwings and as many as 600 American Robins were seen at midmonth in Truro.

The fact that the temperature averaged 4.1 degrees above normal during December and January certainly had an effect on lingering passerines. On Nantucket a **Prairie Warbler** was carefully studied where an **Orange-crowned** and 3 **Palm warblers** were also noted. A **Nashville Warbler** was found in South Boston, and 4 individual **Yellow-breasted Chats** were located. Sparrow highlights included reports of 7 **Chipping**, 1 **Vesper**, and 2 **White-crowned sparrows**. Winter finches were scarce with no notable numbers.

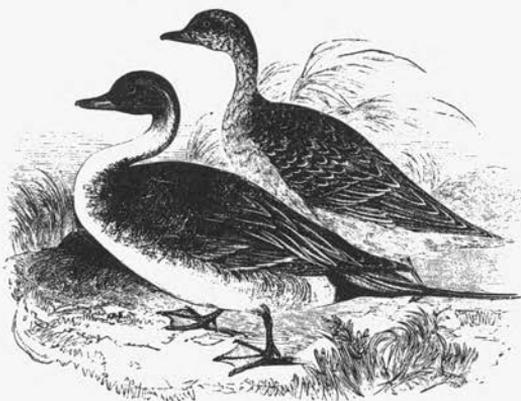
G. d'E. and R. H. S.

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	JANUARY 1991
Mourning Dove thr	Essex, Rochester	73 max 1/28, 35	T. Young, M. Maurer	
Barn Owl thr	Nantucket	2	G. Frost	
Eastern Screech-Owl 5, 13	Framingham, Brewster	13, 2	K. Hamilton#, SSBC (W. Petersen)	
Reports of 7 (5 red, 1 gray, 1 not specified) from six sites.				
Great Horned Owl 1, 29	E. Middleboro, Forestdale	3, 3	K. Anderson, P. Trimble	
5	Framingham	5	K. Hamilton#	
Reports of 1 or 2 individuals (14 total) from nine locations.				
Snowy Owl thr	Boston (Logan Airport)	1 or 2	N. Smith	
thr, 1	P.I., Duxbury Beach	2, 1	v. o., D. Ludlow# + v. o.	
Barred Owl 5	Quabbin (G43)	1	M. Lynch#	
Long-eared Owl 1, 1	Wachusett Res., Nant.	2, 1	M. Lynch#, v. o.	
13	Brewster (Nickerson S.P.)	1	SSBC (W. Petersen)	
24-31, 27	Wayland, Ipswich	1, 1	S. Arena + v. o., T. Aversa#	
Short-eared Owl 1, 6	Leicester, Rowley	1, 2	M. Lynch#, J. Berry	
6, 12	P.I., Fairhaven	2, 1	BBC (R. McHale), D. Zimmerlin	
13	Eastham	1	SSBC (W. Petersen)	
27	Salisbury	3	BBC (D. + D. Oliver)	
21, 24-31	Middleboro, Essex	7, 2	W. Petersen, T. Young	
Northern Saw-whet Owl 1, 6	Wachusett Res., Quab. (G43)	1, 1	M. Lynch#, M. Lynch#	
24-31, 27	Wayland, Quabbin	2, 1 ph	S. Arena + v. o., P. O'Neill#	
Belted Kingfisher	Reports of 1 or 2 individuals (17 total) from 13 locations.			
Red-headed Woodpecker thr	Rutland, Hingham	1 imm, 1 imm	B. Clunk + v. o., v. o.	
Red-bellied Woodpecker thr	Medford, Byfield	1, 1	D. Lange#, T. French	
thr	S. Dartmouth	1	v. o.	
1-2	Canton	1	B. Blakely	
1	Nantucket	1	G. d'Entremont	
27	Falmouth	1	E. Salmela	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 1	Nantucket	1 imm	G. d'Entremont#	
2	Hingham	1	R. Donovan	
23-26	Scituate	1	E. Burbank	
Black-backed Woodpecker 1-7	Upton	1	v. o.	
Northern Flicker 3, 5	Hingham, Framingham	8, 3	G. d'Entremont, K. Hamilton#	
Pileated Woodpecker 5, 29	Quabbin (G43), Wachusett Res.	3, 2	M. Lynch#, M. Lynch#	
Horned Lark thr	Newbypt, Halifax	114 max, 75 max	v. o.	
Blue Jay 26, 29	Hardwick, Falmouth	42, 28	M. Lynch#, M. Lynch#	
American Crow thr	Framingham (roost)	10,000	E. Taylor	
Fish Crow thr	Forestdale, Framingham	1, 1000	P. Trimble, K. Hamilton#	
19, 24	Barnstable, Duxbury	1, 1	D. Brown, D. Hlouser	
Common Raven 5	Quabbin (G43)	1	M. Lynch#	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	JANUARY 1991
Black-capped Chickadee				
2, 6	Rochester, Upton (1 feeder)	36 b, 20	M. Maurer#, G. d'Entremont#	
Tufted Titmouse				
2, 20	Rochester, Sandwich	26 b, 14	M. Maurer#, P. Trimble	
Red-breasted Nuthatch				
thr, 5	Brookline, Framingham	3, 26	H. Wiggin, K. Hamilton#	
Brown Creeper				
5, 30	Quabbin (G43), Duxbury	9, 14	M. Lynch#, D. Hlouser	
Carolina Wren				
thr	E. Gloucester	1 or 2	v. o.	
1, 5	Hardwick, Framingham	1, 3	M. Lynch#, K. Hamilton#	
29, 29	Falmouth, Rockport (A.P.)	26, 1	M. Lynch#, T. Aversa	
Winter Wren				
5, 5	Stoneham, Framingham	2, 1	T. Aversa, R. Forster#	
	Reports of 6 individuals at six locations.			
Marsh Wren				
1, 26	Marshfield (S.River), Nant.	1, 1	D. Ludlow#, J. Papale	
Golden-crowned Kinglet				
5, 28	Framingham, W. Barnstable	17, 6	K. Hamilton#, D. Hlouser	
	Reports of 2-4 individuals (22 total) from seven locations.			
Ruby-crowned Kinglet				
5, 20	Framingham, Osterville	1 m, 1	R. Forster, M. Lynch#	
29	E. Harwich	1	M. Lynch#	
Eastern Bluebird				
1-7, 2	Nant., E. Middleboro	16+, 4	v. o., K. Anderson	
5, 13	Hardwick, Lincoln	2, pr	M. Lynch#, S. Perkins#	
14, 22	Quincy, Marion	12, 6	N. Smith, M. Maurer	
Hermit Thrush				
	Reports of 10 individuals from eight locations.			
American Robin				
17, 18	Essex, N. Truro	20+, 600	T. Young, M. Maurer#	
26, 31	Quabbin (G41), Nantucket	7, 168	M. Lynch#, J. Papale	
Varied Thrush				
thr	Wrentham (at feeder)	1 m	A. Bottomly + v. o.	
Gray Catbird				
1, 2	Nantucket, Plymouth	1, 1	G. d'Entremont#, M. Lynch#	
6, 29	Squantum, Falmouth	2, 4	J. Young, M. Lynch#	
Northern Mockingbird				
5	Framingham	68	K. Hamilton#	
Brown Thrasher				
thr	Foxboro	1	J. Goodwin	
American Pipit				
1-10	Revere (Point of Pines)	1	v. o.	
Bohemian Waxwing				
18	N. Truro	3	M. Maurer + J. Mason	
Cedar Waxwing				
thr, 5	Hardwick, Framingham	60+ max, 15	M. Lynch#, R. Walton#	
18, 18	Milton, N. Truro	50+, 100+	G. d'Entremont, M. Maurer#	
22, 26	Falmouth, Nantucket	40, 18	P. Trimble, J. Papale	
Northern Shrike				
thr	Nantucket, Ipswich	3 max, 1-3	v. o., T. Aversa	
	Reports of 6 individuals from six locations.			
Orange-crowned Warbler				
1	Nantucket	1	G. d'Entremont#	
Nashville Warbler				
5	South Boston (railroad yards)	1	K. Ryan	
Yellow-rumped Warbler				
	Reports of 1-8 individuals (only 25 total) from six locations.			
Pine Warbler				
thr, 19-20	E. Middleboro, Wakefield	3, 1	K. Anderson, C. Shubarth	
Prairie Warbler				
1	Nantucket (Siasconset)	1 imm	G. d'Entremont#	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	JANUARY 1991
Palm Warbler 1, 15	Nantucket, Eastham	3, 4	G. d'Entremont#, K. Hamilton	
Common Yellowthroat 1	Wayland	1	B. Howell	
Yellow-breasted Chat thr, 15	Nant., Jamaica Plain	1, 1	E. Cahoon, M. Primack	
15, 20	E. Orleans, Fairhaven	1,1	A. Williams, D. Zimberlin	
Northern Cardinal 5, 29	Framingham, Falmouth	86, 21	K. Hamilton#, M. Lynch#	
Rufous-sided Towhee 5, 7	Framingham, Weston	1 f, 1	R. Forster#, S. Walton	
13	Westport, S. Dartmouth	3 m, 5	G. Gove + J. Gordon	
6, 22-29	Easton, Falmouth	1 f, 1	K. Ryan, v. o.	
American Tree Sparrow 1, 5	Concord, Framingham	190, 99	R. Forster, K. Hamilton#	
13, 26	Newbypt, Petersham	30, 40+	BBC (C. Shubarth), M. Lynch#	
Chipping Sparrow 1, 9	N. Dartmouth, Yarmouth	3, 3	M. Boucher, K. Hamilton	
13	Framingham	1	K. Hamilton	
Field Sparrow	Reports of 2-4 individuals (20 total) from six locations.			
Vesper Sparrow 20-27	E. Middleboro	1	K. Anderson	
Savannah Sparrow 1, 1	Concord, N. Dartmouth	10, 5	R. Forster, M. Boucher	
6, 10	Forestdale, E. Boston	23, 3	P. Trimble, T. Aversa	
"Ipswich" Savannah Sparrow 25	South Duxbury	1	M. Maurer	
Fox Sparrow	Reports of 7 individuals from seven locations.			
Song Sparrow 1, 6	Concord, Forestdale	26, 28	R. Forster, P. Trimble	
5, 22	Framingham, Falmouth	51, 22	K. Hamilton#, P. Trimble	
Swamp Sparrow 1, 2	Concord, Plymouth	9, 6+	R. Forster, M. Lynch#	
5, 23	Framingham, DWWS	5, 3+	K. Hamilton#, G. d'Entremont#	
White-throated Sparrow 1, 5	N. Dartmouth, Framingham	15, 77	M. Boucher, K. Hamilton#	
13	Westport, S. Dartmouth	60, 40	G. Gove + J. Gordon	
White-crowned Sparrow thr, 1	Forestdale, Concord	1, 1imm	P. Trimble, R. Forster	
Dark-eyed Junco thr, 5	Ipswich, Framingham	20 max, 167	J. Berry, K. Hamilton#	
11, 22	E. Middleboro, Rochester	25, 30+	M. Maurer, K. Anderson	
Lapland Longspur 14, 26	S. Boston, Newbypt	4, 30	G. d'Entremont#, I. Giriunas#	
26, 27	P.I., Halifax	50+, 50	W. Petersen, K. Anderson	
Snow Bunting 5, 13	Newbypt, Halifax	25, 20+	H. Wiggin#, K. Holmes	
26	Plum Island	60	W. Petersen	
Red-winged Blackbird 1, 6	W. Roxbury, Easton	5 m, 150	T. Aversa#, K. Ryan	
6, 13	Forestdale, Westport	19, 16	P. Trimble, G. Gove#	
Eastern Meadowlark 14, 20	DWWS, Bridgewater	27, 15	G. d'Entremont#, M. Maurer#	
20, 26	E. Middleboro, S. Dart.	30, 14	K. Anderson, E. Raymond	
Rusty Blackbird 3, 6	Lexington, Wakefield	6, 20	F. Morris, P. + F. Vale	
27	Wayland	1	K. Hamilton	
Common Grackle thr, 2	Boston, Worcester	14, 7	T. Aversa, M. Lynch#	
24, 29	Duxbury, New Bedford	1, 3	D. Hlouser, D. Hlouser	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	JANUARY 1991
Brown-headed Cowbird				
4, 6	N. Dartmouth, Easton	3 f, 50	M. Boucher, K. Ryan	
29	Forestdale	1	P. Trimble	
Purple Finch				
8, 20	W. Roxbury, Framingham	6, 4	T. Aversa, K. Hamilton	
Reports of 1 or 2 individuals (9 total) from seven locations.				
House Finch				
5	Framingham	327	K. Hamilton#	
Red Crossbill				
7, 26	Topsfield, Quab. (G41)	1, 10	J. MacDougall, M. Lynch#	
White-winged Crossbill				
27	Wachusett Reservoir	2	M. Lynch#	
Pine Siskin				
1, 2	Upton, Morris Island	2, 3	M. Lynch#, D. Arvidson#	
20, 26	Hanson, Hardwick	10, 4	W. Petersen, M. Lynch#	
American Goldfinch				
1, 5	Forestdale, Framingham	180, 87	P. Trimble, K. Hamilton#	
Evening Grosbeak				
4-6, 5	Upton, Quabbin (G43)	31 max, 4	v. o., M. Lynch#	
23, 26	N. Middleboro, Hardwick	12, 74	K. Holmes, M. Lynch#	



### HOW TO CONTRIBUTE BIRD REPORTS TO *BIRD OBSERVER*

This publication prints monthly compilations of reports of birds seen in eastern Massachusetts. Space does not permit the inclusion of all material submitted. However, field reports sent to *Bird Observer* are archived at Massachusetts Audubon Society. Our compilers select and summarize for publication sightings that document early and late dates for migratory species, maximum counts of migrants, high or low numbers of some common birds, and species found beyond their normal ranges.

Sightings for any given month must be reported in writing by the eighth of the next month. Send to Bird Reports, Robert H. Stymeist, 98 Boylston Street, Watertown, MA 02172. Organize reports by month and by species in current A.O.U. checklist order. Include name and phone number of observer, common name of species, date of sighting, location, number of birds, number of observers, and information relevant to age, sex, morph, etc.

Reports of difficult identifications, vagrants, and rarities should include, in addition to the above information, time of day and light available, wind and weather conditions, the optics used and approximate distance from the bird, length of observation, the observer's prior experience with the species, and field guide or other reference used. Provide a description of the bird based solely on personal observation. Comment on the distinguishing field marks (observed and unobserved), vocalizations, activity, general behavior, the habitat in the immediate vicinity, and other birds present. Include with your report documentation such as copies of the observer's field notes and sketches.



## FIELD RECORDS

### FEBRUARY 1991

by Glenn d'Entremont, George W. Gove, and Robert H. Stymeist

February was mild and dry with very little snow. The temperature averaged 36.1 degrees, 5.4 degrees above normal, making this February the sixth warmest in 121 years of record. The high temperature of 65 degrees on February 5 was a new record, as was the 64 degrees mark on February 4. The lowest temperature was 9 degrees on February 12. Precipitation totaled only 1.58 inches, 2.12 inches below normal. Measurable amounts fell on only eight days. Snowfall measured just 5.8 inches, 8.6 inches less than the average for the month. The ground was bare most of the month. The most in any 24-hour period was 1.2 inches on February 18-19.

R. H. S.

#### LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

The Arctic/Pacific Loon present since last month continued to be seen in the Scusset Beach area and in Duxbury. A Western Grebe was carefully described at Nantucket. The family of six Barnacle Geese continued in the Osterville-Cotuit marshes and were seen by many observers, unaware of the origin of the geese. A Greater White-fronted Goose (we hope not from Cape Sable) was found in New Bedford, where white-fronted geese were present last year. The Blue-winged Teals first noted in January continued through the month in Yarmouthport, and Eurasian Wigeons were noted in New Bedford, Somerset, and the Billington Sea. A good concentration of Canvasbacks was counted in Acoaxet at midmonth, while only 10 Redheads were reported during the month.

R. H. S.

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVER	FEBRUARY 1991
Red-throated Loon				
3, 21; 2	Provincetown; P.I.	95, 25; 2	P. Trimble; W. Petersen#	
10, 24	Orleans, Wellfleet	3, 45	G. d'Entremont#, K. Jones	
Common Loon				
4, 28; 9	P.I.; Cape Ann	5, 7; 15	W. Drew#; SSBC (J. Kenneally)	
10, 24	Scusset, Gloucester	5, 6	I. Giriunas#	
Arctic/Pacific Loon				
21	Scusset, Duxbury	1, 1 (same?)	J. Hoye, M. Sylvia	
Pied-billed Grebe				
thr	Wareham, Eastham	6, 2	M. Sylvia, K. Jones	
2, 22	Wayland, Plymouth	2, 2	G. Gove#, I. Lynch	
Horned Grebe				
9	P.I., Scituate	9, 9	T. Young, I. Giriunas#	
17, 24	Boston Harbor, Rockport	31, 10	TASL (M. Hall), I. Giriunas#	
Red-necked Grebe				
9	Cape Ann, N. Scituate	25, 6	SSBC (J. Kenneally), I. Giriunas#	
18-22	Gloucester	32 max 2/24	J. Berry + v. o.	
Western Grebe				
11	Nantucket	1 (details)	J. Papale	
Northern Gannet				
9, 10	Cape Ann, Orleans	12, 15	SSBC (J. Kenneally), G. d'Entremont#	
21	Provincetown	75	P. Trimble	
Great Cormorant				
9	Cape Ann, Scituate	40, 40	SSBC (J. Kenneally), I. Giriunas#	
24; 27	Concord, Gloucester; Wellfleet	1, 18; 130	R. Abrams, I. Giriunas#; K. Jones	
Double-crested Cormorant				
10, 17	Cambridge, Boston Harbor	20, 21	R. Stymeist#, TASL (M. Hall)	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVER	FEBRUARY 1991
Great Blue Heron				
2, 5	Boston, Newton	1, 5	T. Aversa, J. Hepburn	
10	Eastham, Provincetown	3, 2	G. d'Entremont#	
22, 24	N. Scituate, Amesbury	4, 1	R. Campbell#, W. Petersen	
Black-crowned Night-Heron				
2, 12	Boston, E. Boston	1 imm, 1 ad	T. Aversa	
11, 12	Saugus, Orleans	3, 1	J. Quigley, K. Hamilton	
15, 16	Nantucket, Charlestown	1, 1 ad	J. Papale, D. Flood	
Mute Swan				
thr	N. Scituate, Framingham	42 max 2/22, 1	G. d'Entremont#, K. Hamilton	
19-23	New Bedford	26-28	I. Giriunas#	
5, 28	N. Carver, Lakeville	2, 2	K. Anderson	
Snow Goose				
26	Acushnet	1	K. Anderson	
Brant				
9	Quincy, WBWS	1000, 260	E. Taylor, K. Jones	
10, 17	Revere, Boston Harbor	375, 2772	P. + F. Vale, TASL (M. Hall)	
Greater White-fronted Goose				
13, 28	New Bedford	1, 1	T. Aversa, J. Hoye	
Barnacle Goose (escaped)				
thr (from Jan.)	Osterville	6	v. o.	
Wood Duck				
6, 24	Nantucket, Middleboro	3, 2	E. Ray, K. Holmes	
13, 19-27	Lakeville, Halifax	2, 2	T. Aversa#	
Green-winged Teal				
thr	W. Roxbury	23 max 2/27	T. Aversa	
4, 10	P.I., Eastham	4, 10	W. Drew#, G. d'Entremont#	
15, 27	Nantucket, Halifax	14, 26	J. Papale, T. Aversa	
American Black Duck				
thr	P.I.	400 max	W. Drew#	
3, 6	Middleboro, Halifax	300, 800	W. Petersen, T. Aversa	
10, 12	Acoaxet, Orleans	250, 720	B. Sorrie#, K. Hamilton	
17	Boston Harbor	1896	TASL (M. Hall)	
Northern Pintail				
2, 9	Yarmouthport, Lynn	40, 3	T. Prince, R. Stymeist#	
4-20; 3, 17	P.I.; Middleboro, New Bedford	15 max; 2, 6	W. Drew#; W. Petersen#	
Blue-winged Teal				
thr	Yarmouthport	2	K. Hamilton	
Northern Shoveler				
22	DWWS	1 f	v. o.	
Gadwall				
2, 18	Marston's Mills, Wareham	15, 4	K. Jones, C. Ewer	
4-20, 10	P.I., Somerset	22 max, 46	W. Drew#, B. Sorrie#	
10-21, 25	DWWS, S. Dartmouth	11 max, 9	D. Clapp#, M. Boucher#	
Eurasian Wigeon				
1-22	Plymouth	1 m	v. o.	
17, 24	New Bedford, Somerset	1 m, 1 m	M. Lynch#, S. Davis	
American Wigeon				
13-23, 18	New Bedford, Eastham	45 max, 30	v. o., K. Jones	
13, 24	Acoaxet, Belmont	8, 24	T. Aversa, J. Hepburn#	
Canvasback				
thr	Lakeville	28 max	v. o.	
6-24, 8	Dorchester, Westport	12, 314	R. Donovan, R. Abrams	
13, 18	Acoaxet, Falmouth	380, 125	T. Aversa, D. Hlouser	
Redhead				
3; 18, 23	Brockton, New Bedford	1; 2, 2	W. Petersen#; I. Giriunas#	
16	Plymouth (Billington Sea)	7	M. Sylvia	
Ring-necked Duck				
3, 5	Brockton, Duxbury	2, 33	W. Petersen, D. Hlouser	
10, 24	Westport, Lakeville	6, 5	K. Perkins#, K. Holmes	
24	Framingham	58	K. Hamilton	
Greater Scaup				
9, 10; 10	Hingham, Osterville; Westport	350, 200; 250	I. Giriunas#; B. Sorrie#	
15, 17	Falmouth, Boston Harbor	140, 1087	D. Hlouser, TASL (M. Hall)	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVER	FEBRUARY 1991
Lesser Scaup 9, 9-16 18, 24	Lakeville, Plymouth New Bedford, Lakeville	3, 15 max 2, 28	G. d'Entremont#, M. Sylvia + v. o. I. Giriunas#, K. Holmes	
Common Eider 10 11, 17	Dennis, Plymouth Nantucket, Boston Harbor	500, 2300 3500, 4994	G. d'Entremont#, M. Lynch# J. Papale, TASL (M. Hall)	
King Eider 9	Orleans	1 m	J. Hoye	
Harlequin Duck thr 9-24	N. Scituate Rockport	5 10 max 2/9	v. o. SSBC + v. o.	
Oldsquaw 3	Nantucket	29,500 in 20 minutes	J. Papale	
Black Scoter 10	Orleans	3	G. d'Entremont#	
Surf Scoter 23	Nantucket Sd.	77	F. Bouchard	
White-winged Scoter 4, 17 23	P.I., Boston Harbor Nantucket Sd.	140, 242 128	W. Drew#, TASL (M. Hall) F. Bouchard	
Common Goldeneye 2, 10; 10 10, 18 17, 21	Newburyport; Plymouth Osterville, New Bedford Boston Harbor, Provincetown	400-500; 120 70, 40 1033, 120	W. Petersen#; M. Lynch# I. Giriunas# TASL (M. Hall), P. Trimble	
Barrow's Goldeneye 2-24 6, 9 18, 23	Newburyport Osterville, Provincetown New Bedford, Nantucket	2 max 2, 1 1, 2	v. o. R. Forster#, J. Hoye I. Giriunas#, F. Bouchard	
Bufflehead 10, 17	Osterville, Boston Harbor	40, 1654	I. Giriunas#, TASL (M. Hall)	
Hooded Merganser 2 7-22 23	Sudbury, Boston Belmont S. Carver	4 f, 21 8 max 2/7 5	G. Gove#, T. Aversa D. Oliver + v. o. M. Maurer#	
Common Merganser 2, 17 9, 19 10, 21	Sudbury, Plymouth Cambridge (F.P.), Belmont Provincetown, Nantucket	8 m + 2 f, 132 89, 117 35, 4 m + 1 f	G. Gove#, R. Abrams D. Flood, J. + H. Hepburn G. d'Entremont#, J. Papale	
Red-breasted Merganser 17, 21 7-22, 9 20	Boston Harbor, Provincetown Belmont, Cambridge (F.P.) Lakeville, Winchester	757, 2100 11 max, 15 1 f, 4	TASL (M. Hall), P. Trimble D. Oliver + v. o., D. Flood K. Anderson, T. Aversa	

#### VULTURES THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

An early Osprey sighting at Lakeville was unusual. There were many reports of Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks, including several birds that were banded. Apparently Cooper's Hawks are becoming more common. There were two reports of **Golden Eagles** and two reports of **Gyr Falcon**. American Kestrels were seen copulating on the early date of February 9. Peregrine Falcons were reported from three urban locations.

Common Moorhens seem to be common only on Nantucket and only in the fall and winter. Coots were noted at several locations with 260 at Billington Sea. Shorebirds included several displaying American Woodcocks.

G. W. G

Turkey Vulture thr 9, 13 3-24	Randolph Halifax, S. Dartmouth	7 max 2, 20	N. Smith + v. o. D. Brown#, T. Aversa
Osprey 25	Lakeville	1	M. Murphy
Bald Eagle 2 3 5, 24	Newburyport Quabbin (G37) Mansfield, Lakeville	4 imm + 2 ad 9 imm + 1 ad 1 imm, 1 imm	W. Petersen M. Lynch# D. Clapp, K. Holmes

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVER	FEBRUARY 1991
Northern Harrier				
thr	Halifax	6 max	K. Anderson + v. o.	
9, 10	Bridgewater, Eastham	2, 2	G. d'Entremont#	
13	Newbury	1 m	D. Rimmer	
Sharp-shinned Hawk				
2, 12	Ipswich, E. Middleboro	1, 1 b	J. Berry, K. Anderson	
7, 27	Salem, N. Dartmouth	1, 1	I. Lynch, M. Boucher	
3-24	Reports of individuals from 9 locations.			
Cooper's Hawk				
6, 28	Marion	1 b, 1 b	M. Maurer#	
13-28	Sandwich	6 max (3b)	M. Maurer#	
2-22	Reports of individuals from 10 locations.			
Northern Goshawk				
18, 22	Charlton, E. Middleboro	1 ad, 1 ad	B. Sorrie#, K. Anderson#	
24	Carver, Concord	1 ad, 1 ad	J. Hoye, S. Perkins#	
Red-shouldered Hawk				
thr	E. Middleboro	2	K. Anderson	
2, 22	Framingham, Rochester	1, 2	H. Wiggin#, M. Maurer#	
12-22, 22	Orleans, Pembroke	1 ad, 2	K. Jones, D. Ludlow#	
Red-tailed Hawk				
9	Rt. 95 (Danvers-Topsfield)	8	R. Stymeist#	
17	Rt. 95 (Topsfield-Newbury)	6	I. Giriunas#	
21, 24	Norwell, SRV	4, 29	D. Hlouser, fide R. Walton#	
Rough-legged Hawk				
2	Newburyport, P.I.	2, 3	W. Petersen#	
10-27	Middleboro-Halifax	8 max 2/22	v. o.	
10	DWWS	2	D. Clapp	
10-16	Reports of individuals from 4 locations.			
Golden Eagle				
3	Quabbin (G37)	1 ad	M. Lynch#	
American Kestrel				
thr	Rochester	2	M. Maurer#	
2, 10	P.I., Halifax	2, 2	M. Lynch#	
8, 24	Nantucket, Bridgewater	2, 1	J. Papale, K. Holmes	
Merlin				
2, 8	Salisbury, Nantucket	1, 1	W. Petersen#, J. Papale	
9, 27	Cotuit, Middleboro	1, 1	J. Hoye, T. Aversa	
Peregrine Falcon				
thr	Boston	2 ad	v. o.	
13, 17	Fall River, New Bedford	1 ph, 1 ad	M. Sylvia, M. Lynch#	
Gyrfalcon				
4, 28	Provincetown, Nantucket	1, 1	fide B. Nikula, D. Beattie	
Ruffed Grouse				
5, 13	Bridgewater, Lexington	3, 2	T. Aversa, L. Taylor	
24	Quabbin (G40)	8	G. d'Entremont#	
Wild Turkey				
3, 27	Barre, Topsfield	48, 10	M. Lynch#, J. Cardoza	
Northern Bobwhite				
7, 9	Nantucket, Halifax	4, 10	J. Papale, G. d'Entremont#	
12	Yarmouthport	14	K. Hamilton	
Virginia Rail				
9	Ipswich	1	H. Wiggin#	
Common Moorhen				
14	Nantucket	1	J. Papale	
American Coot				
10	Plymouth, Dighton	260, 5	S. Perkins#, B. Sorrie#	
13	Medford, Arlington	3, 4	L. Taylor	
Killdeer				
12, 15	Orleans, Wareham	1, 2	K. Hamilton, C. Ewer	
22	Bridgewater, Quabbin (G43)	1, 1	K. Anderson, M. Lynch#	
22, 27	Middleboro, DWWS	1, 1	R. Abrams, v. o.	
Ruddy Turnstone				
6, 23	N. Scituate, Nantucket	3, 27	T. Aversa, F. Bouchard	
Red Knot				
6	N. Scituate	1	T. Aversa	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVER	FEBRUARY 1991
Sanderling 2	P.I.	20	W. Petersen#	
Purple Sandpiper 9	Winthrop	35	R. Stymeist#	
9	Cape Ann	30	SSBC (J. Kenneally)	
10, 13	Acoaxet, S. Dartmouth	72, 4	B. Sorrie#, T. Aversa	
23	Nantucket	20	F. Bouchard	
Dunlin thr	Eastham	90 max 2/18	K. Jones	
25	S. Dart. (Allens Pd)	65	M. Boucher	
Common Snipe 12	Orleans	3	K. Hamilton	
22	Dorchester	1	R. Donovan	
American Woodcock 9-28	Chatham	1 displaying	B. Nikula	
9	Salem	1 displaying	I. Lynch#	
9, 22	Middleboro, Marshfield	3, 1	G. d'Entremont#	
22	Bridgewater	4 displaying	K. Anderson	
28	DWWS	4	R. Abrams#	

#### LARIDS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

The Common Black-headed Gull flock seen in January remained in Winthrop with a maximum of 15 individuals reported. Brockton was the place for gulls with 1000 Ring-billed, 3 Iceland, and one Glaucous gull. Birders observed two Mew Gulls in Winthrop while another individual was observed in Newburyport.

Five alcid species were reported from Race Point in Provincetown, including two Common Murres present all winter. An impressive count of 32 Black Guillemots was tallied on Cape Ann during the month. Owls were widely reported as they set up nesting territories. Four Barred Owls were noted including one that was "observed catching a Peromyscus mouse." The Long-eared Owl continued at the state forest at Nantucket while one bird was heard calling in Bridgewater. Short-eared Owls were scattered in numbers and were reported from all the likely sites. Northern Saw-whet Owls were noted from five locations.

Only three Belted Kingfishers were reported. The Red-headed Woodpecker continued at World's End in Hingham. Red-bellied Woodpeckers are doing well with many scattered reports. The only Pileated Woodpeckers were at Quabbin. G. d'E.

Common Black-headed Gull thr, 10	Winthrop, Cambridge	15 max, 1 ad	v. o., R. Stymeist
10-24	Newburyport	3 max 2/10	v. o.
Bonaparte's Gull 2, 14	Newbypt, Nahant	150, 7	W. Petersen#, J. Quigley
15	Winthrop	1 imm	J. Berry
Ring-billed Gull 3	Brockton	1000+	W. Petersen
Mew Gull 1-9, 10-28	Winthrop	1 ad, 2 ad	v. o.
1-7, 10	Quincy, Newbypt	1 ad, 1 ad	v. o., S. Mirick + v.o.
Iceland Gull thr	P'town, Cape Ann	8 max, 3 max	K. Jones, v. o.
7, 8	Brockton, Quincy	3 1W, 2 ad	J. Hoye#, G. d'Entremont
17, 24	New Bedford, Barre	2, 1 1W	W. Petersen#, M. Lynch
Glaucous Gull thr, 5	P'town, Lynn	3 max, 1	v. o., J. Quigley
6, 7	Gloucester, Brockton	1, 1	J. Quigley, J. Hoye#
14, 17	S. Dartmouth, Plymouth	1, 1 ad	M. Boucher#, R. Abrams
Black-legged Kittiwake 9, 10	Cape Ann, P'town	6, 50+	SSBC (J.Kenneally), G. d'Entremont
Dovekie 21	Provincetown (R.P.)	1	P. Trimble
Common Murre thr	Provincetown (R.P.)	1 or 2	P. Trimble + v. o.
Thick-billed Murre 6	Osterville	1	R. Forster#
18, 23	Gloucester, Eastham	1, 2	C. Floyd, D. Hlouser

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVER	FEBRUARY 1991
Razorbill thr, 9	P'town (R.P.), Cape Ann	95 max, 1	v. o., SSBC (J. Kenneally)	
Black Guillemot thr, 3	Cape Ann, P'town (R.P.)	32 max, 8	v. o., P. Trimble	
Mourning Dove thr 13	Essex, Sherborn Rochester	59 max, 60 max 52	T. Young, E. Taylor M. Maurer	
Eastern Screech-Owl 9, 16 18, 20	Salem, Waltham Lexington, Stoneham	2 or 3, 1 1, 1 red	J. Berry#, L. Taylor R. Forster + v.o., T. Aversa	
Great Horned Owl thr, 4 9, 9 13, 23	Ipswich, Boston E. Middleboro, N. Dartmouth Waltham, S. Carver	1 pr, 1 1 pr, 1 1 on nest, 1	J. Berry, T. Aversa K. Anderson, M. Boucher L. Taylor, M. Maurer#	
Snowy Owl thr, 11 21	Plum Island, Barnstable (S.N.) Quincy (Raccoon Island)	2 max, 1 1	v. o., P. Auger R. Abrams	
Barred Owl 6, 9 9, 11	E. Middleboro, Hamilton Halifax, Winchendon	1, 1 1, 1	K. Anderson, D. Lange# D. Brown#, W. Petersen#	
Long-eared Owl 2, 6 10, 18	Bridgewater, Nantucket Lexington, Essex	1, 1 1, 1-2	BBC (K. Holmes), J. Papale Da. Oliver, T. Young	
Short-eared Owl thr 9, 10 12, 24	Middleboro, Essex Bridgewater, Eastham Salisbury, Barnstable (S.N.)	6 max, 3 2, 3 2, 2	v. o., T. Young# G. d'Entremont#, G. Martin T. Aversa, D. Hlouser	
Northern Saw-whet Owl 2, 2 5, 23 26	Wayland, Middleboro Ipswich, Nantucket Quabbin (G40)	1, 1 1, 1 1	v. o., BBC (K. Holmes) J. Berry, F. Bouchard T. Aversa	
Red-headed Woodpecker thr (from Dec.)	Hingham (World's End)	1 imm	v. o.	
Red-bellied Woodpecker thr thr, 3 9, 19-20	Medford, S. Orleans Nantucket, S. Dartmouth Nant. (Quidnet), Walpole	1, 2 1 m, 1 1, 1	R. Stymeist + v. o., G. Martin# v. o., M. Boucher L. Van Duyn, F. Michelson	
Northern Flicker 10, 16 17, 24	Dennis, Waltham Lincoln, Nantucket	4, 1 1, 7	G. d'Entremont#, L. Taylor W. Petersen, F. Bouchard	
Pileated Woodpecker 3, 24	Quabbin (G37), (G43)	2, 3	M. Lynch#, G. d'Entremont	

#### LARKS THROUGH FINCHES

As many as 600 Horned Larks were counted in the Cumberland Farm fields near Middleboro, many of which were probably migrants heading north. The crow roost in Framingham remained constant in numbers all month, while as many as 14 Common Ravens were found at Quabbin.

The **Varied Thrush** first found on January 1 continued throughout the month at a feeder in Wrentham. Other interesting holdovers included Ruby-crowned Kinglets, House Wren, several Marsh Wrens, and good numbers of Eastern Bluebirds, several of which arrived after February 20. Northern Shrikes were widely reported with as many as 20 individuals noted.

At Yarmouthport a maximum of 12 Chipping Sparrows and a single Clay-colored Sparrow were present late in the month. A Clay-colored Sparrow was also present in Forestdale, where a White-crowned Sparrow and a Vesper Sparrow were seen. The Cumberland Farm fields in the Halifax-Middleboro area also played host to many sparrows, including American Tree, Field, and Savannah sparrows as well as a White-crowned Sparrow.

Blackbirds returned with the first arrival around February 20. A few Rusty Blackbirds were among the more abundant Redwings and Common Grackles. Winter finches were few and far between.

G. d'E. and R. H. S.

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVER	FEBRUARY 1991
Horned Lark				
2, 2	Newbury, Plum Island	80+, 30+	M. Lynch#, M. Lynch#	
22, 25	Middleboro, S. Dartmouth	600, 70+	R. Abrams, M. Boucher#	
American Crow				
thr, 3	Framingham, Worcester	10,000+, 300+	E. Taylor, M. Lynch	
Fish Crow				
thr, 3	Framingham, Holbrook	200+, 1	E. Taylor, G. d'Entremont	
13, 15	Mt. A, Mansfield	1, 3	J. Heywood, B. Sorrie	
22, 25	Scituate, Brookline	1, 1	R. Campbell#, H. Wiggin	
Common Raven				
3, 24	Quabbin (G37), Hardwick	14, 2	M. Lynch#, M. Lynch#	
Red-breasted Nuthatch				
thr	Reading, Lincoln	3, 2	F. Burrill, W. Petersen	
3, 22	Quabbin (G37), (G43)	22, 15	M. Lynch#, M. Lynch#	
24, 26	Nant., Quabbin (G40)	7, 36	F. Bouchard, T. Aversa	
Brown Creeper				
10, 20	DWWS, Winchester	2, 3	D. Clapp, T. Aversa	
21, 22	N. Middleboro, Quab. (G43)	2, 7	K. Holmes, M. Lynch#	
24, 26	Reading, Quabbin (G40)	1, 7	I. Giriunas, T. Aversa	
Carolina Wren				
Reports of one to five individuals (25 total) from 12 locations.				
House Wren (no details)				
4	N. Dartmouth	1	M. Boucher	
Winter Wren				
10, 13	Plymouth (B. Sea), Lexington	2, 1	M. Lynch, L. Taylor	
18, 20	Lexington, Stoneham	1, 1	L. Taylor, T. Aversa	
Marsh Wren				
thr, 9	Dorchester, Middleboro	1 or 2, 1	R. Donovan, D. Zimmerlin	
10	Westport	1	B. Sorrie#	
Golden-crowned Kinglet				
22	Hingham (World's End)	8	G. d'Entremont#	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet				
9	Nantucket (Quidnet)	1	L. Van Duyne	
Eastern Bluebird				
13	S. Dartmouth	14	T. Aversa	
General arrival around the 20th with reports of 1-5 individuals (30 total) from nine locations.				
Hermit Thrush				
10, 12, 18	Westport, Yarmouthport, Lexington	1, 1, 1	M. Boucher, K. Hamilton, L. Taylor	
Varied Thrush				
thr	Wrentham (at feeder)	1 m	A. Bottomly + v. o.	
American Robin				
3, 12	Salem, Halifax	24, 124	I. Lynch, D. Clapp	
15, 17	Nantucket, Boxford	85, 30	J. Papale, I. Giriunas#	
Gray Catbird				
13, 16	Lexington, Marshfield	1, 1	L. Taylor, BBC (G. d'Entremont)	
Cedar Waxwing				
2, 3	Ipswich, Hardwick	20+, 24	J. Berry, M. Lynch	
3, 6	Nantucket, N. Middleboro	12, 8	J. Papale, K. Holmes	
10, 17	Marstons Mills, Boxford	18, 150	I. Giriunas, I. Giriunas#	
Northern Shrike				
Reports of one to two individuals (20 total) from 18 locations!				
Yellow-rumped Warbler				
8, 20	Squantum, E. Middleboro	2, 1	G. d'Entremont, K. Anderson	
24, 25	Nantucket, S. Dartmouth	135, 22	F. Bouchard, M. Boucher	
Palm Warbler				
13	Osterville	1	P. Hunt	
Pine Warbler				
thr, 10	E. Middleboro, Rochester	1 or 2, 6	K. Anderson, D. Zimmerlin	
Yellow-breasted Chat				
24	N. Dartmouth	1	M. Boucher	
Northern Cardinal				
thr	Ipswich, Brookline	18, 15	J. Berry, H. Wiggin	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVER	FEBRUARY 1991
Rufous-sided Towhee				
13, 13	Arlington, S. Dartmouth	1, 3	L. Taylor, T. Aversa	
24, 25	Belmont, S. Dartmouth	1, 3	L. Taylor, M. Boucher	
American Tree Sparrow				
8, 10	Squantum, Middleboro	13, 30+	G. d'Entremont, M. Lynch#	
10, 26	P'town, Quabbin (G40)	7, 70	G. d'Entremont#, T. Aversa	
Clay-colored Sparrow				
1, 20-27	Forestdale, Yarmouthport	1, 1	P. Trimble, K. Hamilton	
Chipping Sparrow				
5, 11-27	Forestdale, Yarmouthport	1, 12 max	P. Trimble, K. Hamilton	
Field Sparrow				
1, 3	Forestdale, Middleboro	14, 7	P. Trimble, G. Gove#	
13, 23	S. Dartmouth, Marion	8, 3	T. Aversa, M. Maurer#	
Vesper Sparrow				
1	Forestdale	1	P. Trimble	
Savannah Sparrow				
thr, 1	Middleboro, Forestdale	25 max 2/27, 24	v.o., P. Trimble	
13	South Dartmouth	8	T. Aversa	
"Ipswich" Savannah Sparrow				
16	Eastham	1	K. Jones	
Swamp Sparrow				
19, 27	Marshfield, Middleboro	4, 6	T. Aversa, T. Aversa	
White-throated Sparrow				
thr, 8	Ipswich, Squantum	8 max, 6	J. Berry, G. d'Entremont	
White-crowned Sparrow				
1-15, 10	Forestdale, Middleboro	1, 1 imm	P. Trimble, M. Lynch#	
"Oregon" Dark-eyed Junco (no details)				
26-28	Foxboro	1 m	N. Reynolds	
Snow Bunting				
3, 6	P'town (R.P.), Newbypt	35, 1	P. Trimble, P. & F. Vale	
11	Ipswich	12	D. Rimmer	
Red-winged Blackbird				
General arrival around 15th with several large flocks reported from southern locations.				
Eastern Meadowlark				
thr, 2	Middleboro, Plum Island	40 max, 1	v. o., M. Lynch	
13, 16	Acoaxet, Easton	5, 3	T. Aversa, K. Ryan	
18, 26	Fairhaven, Hingham	7, 8	M. Boucher, S. Smith	
Rusty Blackbird				
3, 23	Weston, Marshfield	1, 5	fide W. Petersen, N. Phinney#	
24	Nantucket	4	J. Papale#	
Common Grackle				
thr, 18	Boston, New Bedford	14, 8	T. Aversa, M. Boucher	
22, 24	Middleboro, Concord	25, 80	R. Abrams, S. Perkins#	
24, 26	Lexington, Danvers	40, 25+	R. Forster#, T. Young	
Brown-headed Cowbird				
8, 16	Westport, Salisbury	200, 10	R. Abrams, P. & F. Vale	
10, 21	P'town, Marshfield	2, 12	G. d'Entremont#, D. Ludlow#	
Northern Oriole				
thr	Wayland	1	T. Hart	
Purple Finch				
thr, 27	Sherborn, W. Roxbury	5, 2	E. Taylor, T. Aversa	
Red Crossbill				
24	Quabbin (G40)	37	G. d'Entremont & T. Prince	
White-winged Crossbill				
22	Quabbin (G43)	1	M. Lynch	
Pine Siskin				
3, 3	Middleboro, Hanson	6, 5	J. Gordon#, W. Petersen	
4	Athol	25	D. Brown#	
American Goldfinch				
12, 27	Yarmouthport, Harwich	14, 32	K. Hamilton, K. Hamilton	
Evening Grosbeak				
2, 15	Middleboro, Lakeville	11, 14	BBC (K. Holmes), D. Clapp	
24, 24	Hardwick, Athol	8, 40	G. d'Entremont#, T. Prince#	

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ad	adult	G37 or 40	Gate 37 or 40, Quabbin
alt	alternate	H.	Harbor
b	banded	I.	Island
br	breeding	M.V.	Martha's Vineyard
dk	dark (phase)	Mt.A.	Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge
f	female	N.A.C.	Nine Acre Corner, Concord
fl	fledged	Nant.	Nantucket
imm	immature	Newbypt	Newburyport
ind	individuals	P.I.	Plum Island
juv	juvenile	Pd	Pond
loc	location	P'town	Provincetown
lt	light (phase)	Quab.	Quabbin
m	male	Res.	Reservoir
max	maximum	R.P.	Race Point, Provincetown
mi	mile	S. Dart.	South Dartmouth
migr	migrating	S.F.	State Forest
n	nesting	S.N.	Sandy Neck, Barnstable
ph	photographed	S.P.	State Park
pl	plumage	Stellw.	Stellwagen (Bank)
pr	pair	BBC	Brookline Bird Club
S	summer (1S = first summer)	BMB	Broad Meadow Brook, Worcester
thr	throughout	BOEM	Bird Observer of Eastern Massachusetts
v.o.	various observers	CBC	Christmas Bird Count
W	winter (2W = second winter)	CCBC	Cape Cod Bird Club
w/	with	DFWS	Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary
yg	young	DLSP	Demarest Lloyd State Park
#	additional observers	DWWS	Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary
A.A.	Arnold Arboretum	EMHW	Eastern Massachusetts Hawk Watch
A.P.	Andrews Point, Rockport	FCBC	Felix Cutler Bird Club
B.	Beach	GMNWR	Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge
B.I.	Belle Isle, E. Boston	IRWS	Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary
B.R.	Bass Rocks, Gloucester	LCES	Lloyd Center for Environmental Studies
Buzz.	Buzzards Bay	MAS	Massachusetts Audubon Society
C.	cape as in Cape Cod	MBO	Manomet Bird Observatory
Cambr.	Cambridge	MDFW	MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
C.B.	Crane Beach, Ipswich	MNWS	Marblehead Neck Wildlife Sanctuary
Corp. B.	Corporation Beach, Dennis	NEHW	New England Hawk Watch
C.P.	Crooked Pond, Boxford	ONWR	Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge
E.P.	Eastern Point, Gloucester	PRNWR	Parker River National Wildlife Refuge
F.E.	First Encounter Beach, Eastham	SRV	Sudbury River Valley
F.H.	Fort Hill, Eastham	SSBC	South Shore Bird Club
F.M.	Fowl Meadow	TASL	Take A Second Look Harbor Census
F.P.	Fresh Pond, Cambridge	USFWS	US Fish and Wildlife Service
F.Pk	Franklin Park, Boston	WBWS	Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary
F.S.F.	Federation State Forest	WMWS	Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary

## ABOUT THE COVER: RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD

Almost everything about hummingbirds is unusual which may help explain why so many people are thrilled by the sight of these smallest and often brilliantly colored birds. They are the only birds that can hover in one spot as long as they wish and the only birds that can fly backwards. They also have the highest metabolic rate of all vertebrates.

The name "hummingbird" was acquired from the early english colonists who knew the Ruby-throated Hummingbird by its buzzing flight. The Rubythroat's body size is no larger than the end joint of one's thumb. It is the only hummingbird that breeds east of the Mississippi River, and is usually seen in Massachusetts from about mid-May to late September. The Rubythroat produces two, and occasionally three, broods per season in deciduous or mixed woodlands, open areas with scattered trees, gardens, and parks. Many Rubythroats, in both spring and fall, migrate across 600 miles of water of the Gulf of Mexico to and from its wintering grounds in Central America.

The male Ruby-throated Hummingbird has an iridescent green back and a brilliant red throat, while the female lacks the red throat. Interestingly, most of the colors of hummingbirds are the result of structural effects rather than pigmentation. The scaly feathers of hummingbirds produce their iridescence from the play of light on their surfaces. The only true pigments in hummingbirds are black and rufous: the rest of their spectacular colors are produced mechanically.

In breeding season, the male Ruby-throated Hummingbird moves from partner to partner, leaving the female to raise the young alone. Such mating systems, in which no pair bonds are formed, are termed promiscuous. During courtship, the male swings pendulumlike before the female, rising about eight to ten feet above and five to six feet to each side of her. Before copulation, the male and female face each other, alternately ascend about ten feet and descend, and eventually drop to the ground and copulating.

The nest, built by the female, is a delicate cup, about one and one half inches wide, decorated with lichens, bound together by spider silk, and anchored on a small branch. Two white bean-sized eggs are laid. The young birds are fed by regurgitation. The female puts her long sharp bill directly downward into the young bird's open gape.

One of the more fascinating aspects of hummingbirds is their ability to hover and their extremely rapid wingbeat. A high speed motion picture of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird in flight, taken in 1936 by Harold Edgerton of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, revealed wing beats of fifty-five times per second while hovering, sixty-one times per second while backing up, and seventy-five times per second while flying straightaway. The ability to hover

can be traced to an extremely mobile shoulder joint which enables the bird to twist its wings in such a way as to generate lift on both the forward and backward strokes. Ehrlich and coauthors described the mechanics as follows:

The front edge of the wing leads on both strokes, and on the backstroke it is the underside of the feathers that face upward, the shoulder rotation having, in effect, turned the wing upside down . . . The direction of thrust changes between the forward and backward strokes, so that they cancel each other out . . . the hovering flight is quite expensive: about 30 percent of the total body weight of hummingbirds is invested in the breast muscles (which power the wings), whereas other strong-flying birds have about 20 percent, and weak fliers may have only about 15 percent [Ehrlich, P.R., D.S. Dobkin, and D. Wheye. 1988. *The Birder's Handbook: A Field Guide to the Natural History of North American Birds*, New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., p. 323].

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds feed on insects and occasionally tree sap from woodpecker drillings. The latter feeding behavior is an example of commensal feeding, where members of one species (such as a woodpecker species) assist the foraging of another (such as a hummingbird species) but incur no significant costs and receive no benefits.

Martha J. Steele

### MEET OUR COVER ARTIST

This issue of *Bird Observer* is the second consecutive issue with cover art provided by Gordon Morrison. The cover shows a detail of a limited edition print of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird. In addition to his works described in our April 1991 issue, two coloring books of the Peterson series, *A Field Guide to Tropical Rainforests Coloring Book* and *A Field Guide to Endangered Animals of North America Coloring Book* are due for release in the fall of 1991. Gordon had previously provided the art for two other coloring books, *A Field Guide to Dinosaurs Coloring Book* and *A Field Guide to Seashores Coloring Book*. For readers interested in a limited edition print of this month's cover or in other artwork, Gordon can be reached at 52 Bulfinch Street, North Attleboro, MA 02760.

Martha J. Steele

Birders are often cautioned against making field identifications of birds solely on the basis of single field marks. Usually, multiple characteristics, in conjunction with a bird's behavior, vocalizations, habitat, seasonality of occurrence, and geographical distribution are desirable as supporting elements in making a correct determination. The physical characteristics of a bird, however, are often obscured or distorted such that an observer must use a single feature to make an identification. Indeed, April's mystery photograph requires that the reader use a single clue to identify the pictured bird, not only because of a distorted view of the bird but also because other supporting elements are not usable in the picture.

The bird's headless appearance in the photograph removes any identification clues offered by bill structure or head patterning, while the stretched wing precludes seeing the sides or underparts. The spread wing does, however, afford a look at the one diagnostic feature visible in the picture. Close examination reveals a series of distinct white tips to the primary coverts and a faint suggestion of pale coloration on the inner webs of one or two of the primaries. This white feather edging and the uniformly black appearance of the wing, back, and visible portions of the tail leads one to conclude that the picture can represent only one North American bird species: an immature male Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) in first winter plumage. The white tipping on the primary coverts will eventually develop into the extensive white wing patch of the adult male, parallel to the progressive acquisition of the species' distinctive yellow head and chest. While a quick look might suggest that the white spotting could be confused with the buffy bar that borders the scarlet shoulder patch of a male Red-winged Blackbird, the position of the spots on the primary coverts is very different than those on a Redwing, which are on the median coverts and which have a different orientation relative to the bend of the wing. The Yellow-headed Blackbird in the picture was photographed in September 1990 at South Monomy, Massachusetts.



*Photo by  
Wayne R. Petersen*

## AT A GLANCE

---

Photo by Roger Everett



Can you identify this bird?

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

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