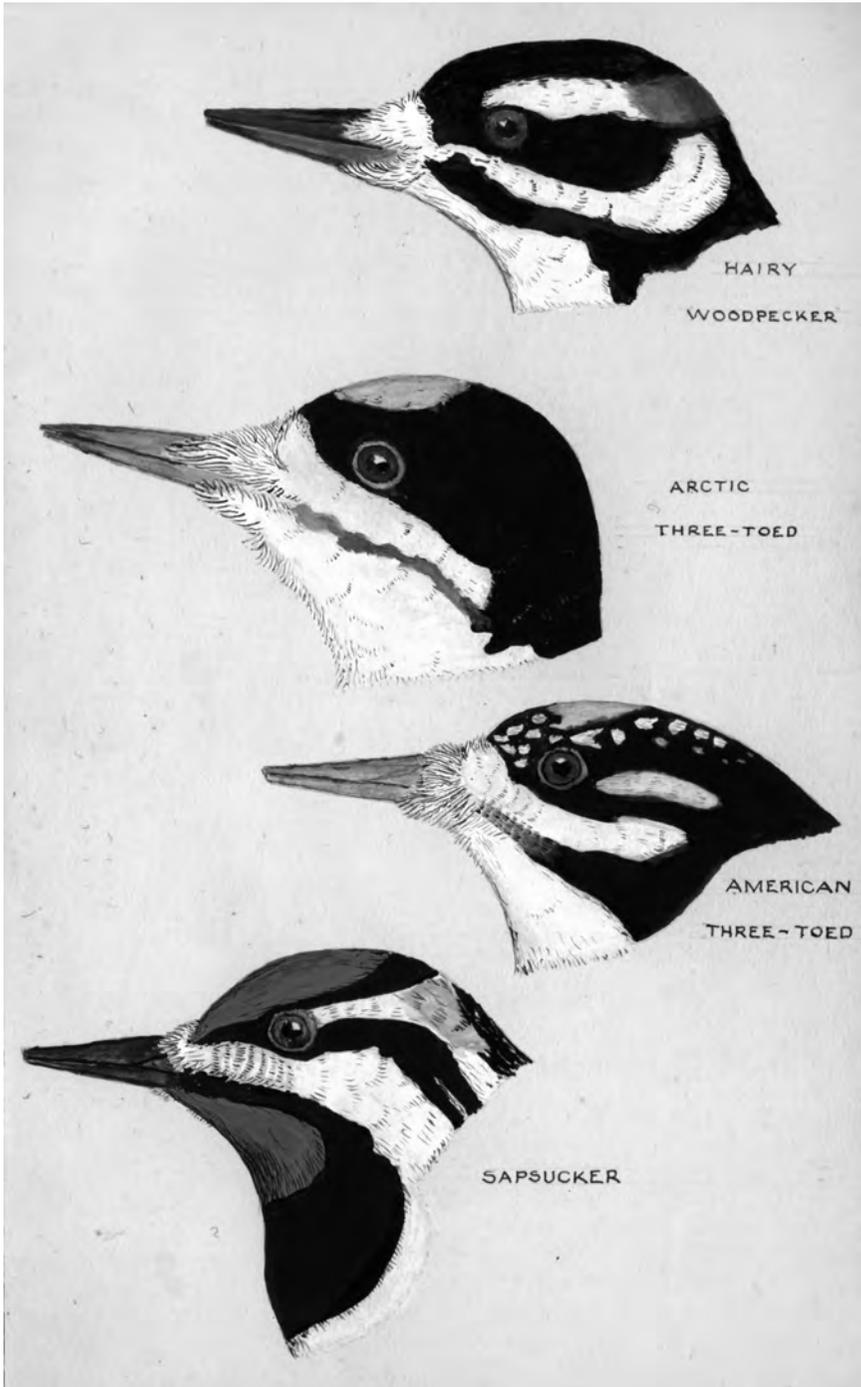


# Bird Observer

---

VOLUME 36, NUMBER 3

JUNE 2008



# HOT BIRDS

---



On April 13, 2008, Doug Kierdorf spotted what he thought might be a **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** (left) at Chandler Pond in Brighton, and on April 14 his friend Jean Dunlavy confirmed it. Wayne Petersen took this photo of the errant bird on April 15.

On May 3, Blair Nikula found a breeding-plumaged **Pacific Loon** (right) at Herring Cove in Provincetown and took this photograph of the handsome bird.



On May 3-4, two **Ruffs** were discovered in Rowley, a dark male by Paul Peterson and a light one by Herman D'Entremont and Oakes Spalding. Phil Brown took this photograph (left, with a yellowlegs) of the lighter bird.

Acting on a tip from Joe Jims, Lanny McDowell saw and photographed this handsome adult **Purple Gallinule** (right) in Oak Bluffs on May 5.



Blair Nikula was at Pilgrim Heights in North Truro when he captured this great image of a sub-adult **Mississippi Kite** (left) on May 29.

# CONTENTS

---

BIRDING THE SWEDISH COLONY OF NORTHERN MAINE	<i>Bill Sheehan</i>	133
NEEDHAM'S NATURALIST: THE BIRD JOURNALS OF TIMOTHY OTIS FULLER	<i>Gloria Polizzotti Greis</i>	148
TAKEN A BIRD WALK LATELY?	<i>Pamela Hunt</i>	154
BIRDING MY OWN PATCH	<i>John Nelson</i>	158
FIELD NOTES		
Common Raven and Red-shouldered Hawk at Suet Feeder	<i>Paul Fitzgerald</i>	163
Gray Squirrel Preys on Black-capped Chickadee	<i>Simon Hennin</i>	164
ABOUT BOOKS		
What to Make of a Diminished Thing?	<i>Mark Lynch</i>	166
BIRD SIGHTINGS		
January/February 2008		174
ABOUT THE COVER: Woodpeckers	<i>William E. Davis, Jr.</i>	186
AT A GLANCE	<i>Wayne R. Petersen</i>	189

## From the Editor

With gas prices soaring to unrecognizable heights and terms like “global warming” and “carbon footprint” now part of the American household vernacular, birders are compelled to reexamine their driving habits in pursuit of their hobby (or obsession) on both economic and ethical terms. This issue of *Bird Observer* is largely devoted to the idea of birding locally and making more careful, closer observations of local birds in preference to the pursuit of impressive lists. In that spirit, our cover features work from the field journals of exemplary early 20<sup>th</sup> century Needham naturalist Timothy Otis Fuller, who is also profiled in this issue.

For online indices and more, visit the *Bird Observer* website at  
<<http://massbird.org/birdobserver/>>.



# Bird Observer

A bimonthly journal — to enhance understanding, observation, and enjoyment of birds  
**VOL. 36, NO. 3 JUNE 2008**

## Editorial Staff

Editor	Paul Fitzgerald
Managing Editor	Mary Todd Glaser
Production Editor	David M. Larson
Bird Sightings Editor	Marjorie W. Rines
Compilers	Seth Kellogg
	Robert H. Stymeist
	Jeremiah R. Trimble
	Fay Vale
Copy Editors	Harriet Hoffman
	Susan L. Carlson
At a Glance	Wayne R. Petersen
Book Reviews	Mark Lynch
Cover Art	William E. Davis, Jr.
Where to Go Birding	Jim Berry
Maps	Dorothy Graaskamp
Associate Staff	
Judy Marino	Carolyn B. Marsh
Brooke Stevens	Trudy Tynan

## Corporate Officers

President	H. Christian Floyd
Treasurer	Sandon C. Shepard
Clerk	John A. Shetterly
Assistant Clerk	Fay Vale

## Board of Directors

Dorothy R. Arvidson	Susan L. Carlson
Paul Fitzgerald	Harriet E. Hoffman
Renée LaFontaine	David M. Larson
Judy Marino	Carolyn B. Marsh
John B. Marsh	Wayne R. Petersen
Marjorie W. Rines	Robert H. Stymeist

## Subscriptions

John B. Marsh

## Advertisements

Robert H. Stymeist

## Mailing

Renée LaFontaine

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** \$21 for 6 issues, \$40 for two years (U.S. addresses). Inquire about foreign subscriptions. Single copies \$4.00, see <<http://massbird.org/birdobserver/subscribe.htm>>.

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

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

**MATERIAL FOR PUBLICATION:** BIRD OBSERVER welcomes submissions of original articles, photographs, art work, field notes, and field studies. Scientific articles will be peer-reviewed. Please send submissions to the Editor by e-mail: Paul Fitzgerald <[paulf-1@comcast.net](mailto:paulf-1@comcast.net)>. Please **DO NOT** embed graphics in word processing documents. Include author's or artist's name, address, and telephone number and information from which a brief biography can be prepared.

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

BIRD OBSERVER (USPS 369-850) is published bimonthly, COPYRIGHT © 2008 by Bird Observer of Eastern Massachusetts, Inc., 462 Trapelo Road, Belmont, MA 02478, a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Gifts to Bird Observer will be greatly appreciated and are tax deductible. ISSN: 0893-463

# Birding the Swedish Colony of Northern Maine

*Bill Sheehan*

Aroostook County, in northern Maine, is a spot few birders have visited . . . or even seriously considered visiting for that matter. “THE County” (as it’s called by Mainers) has remained for many a vague locale “up there,” . . . somewhere beyond Freeport and Acadia National Park . . . the North Woods . . . inaccessible geographically and logistically. There is very little to compliment the area in the bird literature, and even the range maps in some field guides seem to get uncomfortably ambiguous when the limit lines extend this far north.

The lack of available information is only one reason the area remains among the least ornithologically explored regions in the east. Situated at the top of the state, Aroostook is the largest county east of the Mississippi River. It occupies an area of 6672 square miles, greater than Rhode Island and Connecticut combined, and has one of the lowest population densities in the east. Four-fifths of the county’s area is contiguous forestland, and the bulk of the remainder is rolling farmland, wetlands, and lakes. It is a huge, healthy ecosystem and it is home for me . . . and a lot of birds.

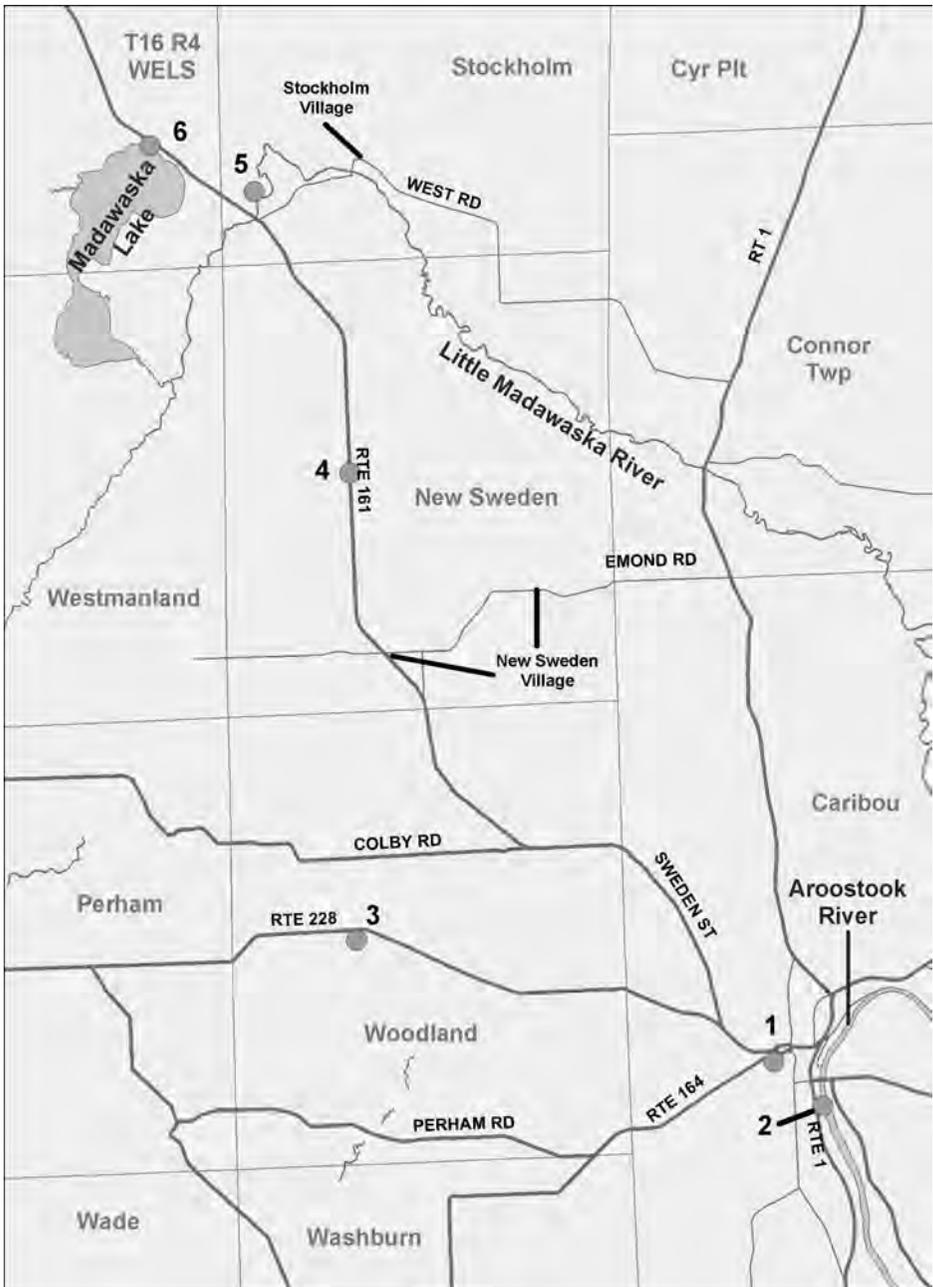
A day’s drive (albeit a long one for some) from most of New England, northern Maine is well within reach for any birder with a few days available to explore. But with literally millions of acres of habitat open to the ambitious birder, it is daunting for anyone to plan a visit to “the County.” Where do you begin?

## **The Swedish Colony**

For a birder interested in experiencing a diversity of habitats with a good taste of deep, dark boreal forest alive with warbler and thrush song, I recommend my home patch, the Swedish colony in north-central Aroostook. The colony is made of five townships settled in the 1870s by Swedish immigrants lured to Maine by promises of fertile farmland for free. The immigrant families were successful in their farming, and forestry endeavors and the colony thrived. The Swedish culture remains strong today, and museums and festivals regularly celebrate the area’s history and heritage. The blue and yellow Swedish flag is flown as often as the Stars and Stripes in this neck of the woods.

The Swedish colony is located at the limit of the area cleared and settled for farming and was hewn into the edge of the north woods of Maine. On the southern and eastern sides of the colony are rolling crop and hay fields interspersed with ample forested belts along streams and wetlands. The area is dotted with small farms and criss-crossed by quiet country roads. On the northern and western sides, the wild character of the north Maine woods becomes evident, and the birds species encountered reflect the boreal nature of the forest.

Included here are six of my favorite birding spots in the colony. These are mostly unknown areas in off-the-beaten-path locations. Few have signs, facilities, or even parking lots for that matter. None have crowds at any time of year. The sites are



MAP BY MICHAEL SMITH

scenic and easy to bird. During the breeding season, all offer a diversity and a density of birdlife that's hard to match elsewhere in New England.

Enjoy your visit.

### **#1 Collins Pond, Caribou (DeLorme Atlas, page 65)**

Though not officially part of the Swedish colony, Caribou is the nearest service center and likely starting spot for most visiting birders. The town offers accommodations, restaurants, pubs, and stores . . . and some excellent birding to start off the day.

A great location to begin your birding is Collins Pond in the center of Caribou. Some of the original settlers in the early 1800s created Collins Pond by damming Caribou Stream to provide water power for a saw and grist mill. This small impoundment has gradually filled with silt and sediment and become a perfect shallow-water habitat for waterfowl and waders. Unlike many urban parks, the city has wisely protected the wetland margin of the pond and maintained a buffer of cattails, alders, and other attractive vegetation around it. A covered picnic area and benches allow birders to scan the pond and wetlands in almost any weather.

From early April to early December the bird show at Collins Pond is all about the ducks and geese. During migration, waterfowl can number in the thousands in this small pond. Thanks to its in-town location, no hunting is allowed here at any time, and the birds are relaxed and allow close views. The diversity of species seen here is impressive. Of course Canada Geese, Mallards, and American Black Ducks dominate the counts, but Green- and Blue-winged teal can be abundant here in mid-summer and early fall. American Wigeon, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, and Gadwall are regular. For diving ducks, Hooded and Common mergansers and Ring-necked Ducks are dependable throughout the season. Common Goldeneye, Lesser Scaup, and occasionally Greater Scaup appear during migration.

During late summer and fall, Collins Pond becomes a daytime roosting location for huge flocks of Canada Geese. The geese stage here and feed in central Aroostook County's expansive barley and potato fields.

Their routine becomes dependable. The flocks leave the pond shortly after sunup and visit nearby fields to feed. By midmorning, the birds will return in groups of tens and hundreds to drink, bathe, and loaf around the pond for the bulk of the day. This spectacle is enjoyed daily by town residents and local birders, and it's not unusual to see a dozen people gathered in the park at Collins Pond in the morning, awaiting the return of the geese. The cycle is usually repeated in late afternoon with the birds returning at sundown.

For birders, it's a great opportunity to examine several subspecies of Canada Goose and search for unusual goose species among the hordes. In recent years, Collins Pond has been a fairly reliable location to find Cackling Geese in Maine. Other rarities, like Snow Goose, Barnacle Goose, Brant, and the Greenland subspecies of Greater White-fronted Goose, have also been spotted here.



A flock of Canada Geese spill into Collins Pond in Caribou. Six species of geese have been seen at this location. Photograph by the author.

In late summer and early autumn, water levels in the pond often drop and expose mud bars that are attractive to migrating shorebirds and dispersing waders. Over a dozen species of shorebirds will visit here to probe around the mud and stumps. Greater and Lesser yellowlegs, Least, Spotted, and Solitary sandpipers, and Killdeer are the most common visitors. Pectoral Sandpipers, Semipalmated Sandpipers, Wilson's Snipe, Short-billed Dowitchers, Semipalmated Plovers, and American Golden-Plovers are less common but usually seen each season. Keep an eye out for Caribou's resident Merlins to go buzzing through the shorebird flocks in search of a meal.

A spotting scope trained at the cattail margins of the pond may reveal skulking American Bitterns, Black-crowned Night-Herons, American Coots, Soras, or Virginia Rails. Check the stumps and partially submerged logs for Green Herons and Great Blue Herons. Misdirected Great Egrets have appeared here in late summer. Ospreys and Bald Eagles will regularly fly up Caribou Stream from the Aroostook River to hunt the shallows of the pond.

Passerines are also well represented here, and the park and trails around Collins Pond provide easy access to some nice riparian habitat. A one-mile loop trail runs from the park on the south side of the pond, around a small sports field, across the stream on a foot bridge, and back through town to the park.

The first half of the trail is most interesting to birders. The trail is accessed on the southwestern corner of the Collins Pond Park, and the first section is raised boardwalk. Almost immediately after starting, the boardwalk T's and a right turn and short walk will take you to a dead-end providing a nice overlook at the inlet of the pond. The wetlands near the inlet host Red-winged Blackbirds, Yellow Warblers, Northern Waterthrushes, Common Yellowthroats, Swamp Sparrows, and Eastern Kingbirds. Warbling Vireos, Least Flycatchers, Chestnut-sided Warblers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and Baltimore Orioles are regular during the nesting season along the boardwalk that edges the outfield of the baseball diamond on the south side of the pond.

In fall and spring, watch for migrating flycatchers, sparrows, and warblers in the thick brush along the trail. Scan the ball field for Killdeer, Snow Buntings, American Pipits, and Savannah Sparrows. In the past, Common Ravens have nested in the conifer trees just east of the ball field. After going around the ball field, the trail goes westward along the street for several hundred yards, then turns right. This section of raised trail and the footbridge over the Caribou Stream are very good spots to watch for migrants during spring and fall. It is not unusual to spot a dozen species of warblers here on a good morning in May. Wood Ducks frequent this section of the stream and may nest nearby. Listen for Gray Catbirds mewing in the thickets and watch for Cedar Waxwings flycatching and feeding young along the stream. Purple Finches, American Goldfinches, Pine Siskins, and Common Redpolls (late fall and winter) will enjoy the alder catkins here.

If you complete the walking loop eastward back through town, keep an eye to the sky for the Chimney Swifts, and in August, migrating Common Nighthawks.

There is a small park beside the bridge downstream from the Collins Pond dam. A quick check of the flowers and fruit trees here sometimes reveals Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Northern Orioles, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. In late fall and winter we have found American Robins, Bohemian Waxwings, and Pine and Evening grosbeaks feeding on the fruit and seeds of the trees here. Scan up the stream towards the Collins Pond dam for Belted Kingfishers, Spotted Sandpipers, and Great Blue Herons foraging along the stream. If the sun is shining at the right angle, large brook trout can be seen in the pool under the bridge.

**Directions:** Collins Pond is located near the center of Caribou. From Route 1, turn west at the traffic light at the intersection of Fort Street (Route 161), and follow to the flashing light at the intersection with Main Street. Turn right on Main Street, and go north two tenths of a mile. Take a left onto Roberts Street just before the Episcopal Church. Collins Pond park is at the end of Roberts Street. Park near the covered picnic area on the right. The pond is visible from the street.

## **#2 Aroostook River Dam, Caribou (DeLorme Atlas, page 65)**

Another spot worth checking in Caribou is the area near the dam on the Aroostook River. The river is viewable from several spots on Lower Lyndon Street along the western bank of the river.

The small public boat launch at the confluence of the Caribou Stream and the Aroostook River provides access to scan up and down the river. Double-crested Cormorants roost on the power lines downstream, and Bald Eagles, Great Blue Herons, and Black-crowned Night-Herons can be seen in the trees along the shore. This is a good spot to see large broods of Common Mergansers feeding in the shallows in mid-summer. Scan the rocky banks and bars of the river carefully for shorebirds picking their way along the water.

Passing under the bridge and closer to the dam, there are several other spots to pull off the street and scan the pool below the dam. This is one of few stretches of water in Aroostook County that remains open and ice-free in winter, and diving ducks congregate here to feed on crayfish and minnows. In addition to the dependable Common Goldeneyes and Common and Hooded mergansers, look for Barrow's Goldeneyes in winter. On migration, look for Wood Ducks, American Black Ducks, and Green-winged Teal along the shore. If there are no ducks to be seen, scan the tree limbs for Bald Eagles. Large numbers of blackbirds and grackles roost at night in the shrubs on the small island below the dam. It is not unusual to see five or six Belted Kingfishers perching and plunge-diving near the dam.

The impoundment above the dam can be accessed by proceeding southward (upstream) along Lyndon Street, which narrows and passes directly beside the power plant. Past the power plant, the road turns to dirt and ends at a small unimproved boat launch. I recommend parking in the grass on the right and not descending the steep (and sometimes muddy) track down to the river. Scan up and down the river for waterfowl, shorebirds, and waders. Common Loons summer here and may be nesting. For some reason, this area is inviting for migrating sea ducks. Common Eiders, Long-tailed Ducks, and Black and Surf scoters have all been spotted here during early spring migration.

Keep an eye (and ear) on the trees and thickets around the boat launch for Least Flycatchers, Veerys, Hermit Thrushes, Blue-headed, Warbling, and Red-eyed vireos, Ovenbirds, American Redstarts, Common Yellowthroats, Northern Waterthrushes, and Chestnut-sided, Nashville, Black-throated Blue, Yellow, and Black-and-white warblers. All are local breeders.

On the other side of the railroad tracks from the boat launch is a small, hidden beaver pond that is always worth checking. Best glimpses of the pond are gotten by walking to the right, along the track, and then peeking through the trees at the pond. Wood Ducks, Hooded Mergansers, and Black Ducks have all nested here. Occasionally, I have seen Eastern Phoebe, Olive-sided Flycatchers, and Eastern Kingbirds flycatching from the snags. Scan the big spruces on the back side of the pond for Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets and Blackburnian, Magnolia, Black-throated Green, and Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) warblers. Common Ravens and Merlins have nested in these big trees.

Though somewhat intimidating, the large mud puddles on the road out have solid bottoms and you should have no problems here.

Directions: To get to the Aroostook River and the dam from Collins Pond, follow Roberts Street back and turn left onto Main Street. Almost immediately, take the first right (just after the Nylander Museum), and follow this street down the hill, across Route 1 and on down to the river. The boat launch is on your left.

### **#3 Woodland Bog Preserve, Woodland (DeLorme Atlas, page 64)**

Ironically for a town with this name, Woodland probably has the most area of fields and cleared land of any of the Swedish colony towns. The topography is gently rolling farmland interspersed with woodlots and wetlands. A number of spots here offer very productive birding. My favorite is the Woodland Bog.

Established by the Nature Conservancy to protect rare plants found in this calcareous bog, the Woodland Bog Preserve offers excellent birding and fairly easy access. The preserve is bisected by the old gravel track bed of the former Aroostook Valley Railroad. The railroad tracks and ties have been removed and the bed has been transformed into a lightly-traveled multipurpose trail. It is best during breeding season in May, June, and July, when birders may be overwhelmed by the wave of birdsong emanating from the forested and wetland habitats along the first half-mile of trail. Since this is a rare-plant station and very soggy terrain, I don't recommend leaving the main trail.

A five-year bird-banding study here found over 40 bird species nesting in the bog. Northern Waterthrushes, Ovenbirds, and White-throated Sparrows were among the most productive breeders in the preserve.

From the moment you leave your car, listen for the Mourning Warblers, Common Yellowthroats, and Dark-eyed Juncos that sing in the clearing at the trailhead. Along the first section, a small trout stream borders one side of the trail and a deep, dark boreal forest the other side. Watch for Yellow, Nashville, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, and Canada warblers in the brown ash and poplar trees on the right. Listen for Winter Wrens (another abundant breeder), Veeries, and Swainson's and Hermit thrushes in the spruce and fir woods on the left. Look high in the deciduous trees for Barred Owls, which can sometimes be found roosting, tucked against the trunk. It is not unusual to experience the heart-stopping thrill of having a Ruffed Grouse explode from the bank along the stream. In addition to the common Red-eyed and Blue-headed vireos, Philadelphia Vireos can be found here by birders with a discriminating ear.

The trail curves gently to the left before straightening out near an open area of wetland. Stop just before the ponded water on the left and listen for the soft *che-wee* calls of the Yellow-bellied Flycatchers that breed here. Boreal Chickadees, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Red-breasted Nuthatches are regularly seen in the fir thickets. This is also a good spot for Canada Warblers. In mid- and late summer, the bright-orange drifts of jewelweed (*Impatiens* sp.) along the stream attract Ruby-throated Hummingbirds.

As the trail straightens, you will come out into a busy wetland created by years of beaver activity along the edge of the bog. On the left is a series of narrow pools and a

small area of dead standing timber. On the right the trout stream veers away through rank alder growth and into a small sedge meadow just out of sight behind the trees. During the breeding season, this area hosts a wonderful diversity of bird species.

Try to scan the ponds carefully before showing yourself since the waterfowl tend to be skittish in these tight quarters, so close to the trail. American Black Ducks and Hooded Mergansers nest here, as do Green-winged Teal every few years. Wood Ducks, Mallards, and even Canada Geese will drop in occasionally. In late spring and late summer this is a dependable spot for Solitary Sandpipers. Wilson's Snipe nest here, and the males can be heard high above the marsh doing their haunting winnowing display at dusk and dawn. Listen for the strange calls made by American Bitterns and Soras back in the tangles of the wetland.

After the wetland section, the trail is engulfed in deep dark spruce and cedar forest . . . the bog. The temperature seems cooler, and indeed snow can linger here until early June. Though I've yet to find the species here, this stretch looks like the habitat that supports Spruce Grouse in other northern Maine locations. Some time spent peering in to the gloom along the trail here may be rewarding.

Northern Flickers, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, and Hairy Woodpeckers are common, but keep an eye out for Black-backed and Pileated woodpeckers on the snags in the bog. The Black-backs favor recently dead standing wood, since they prefer to flake the bark in search of insects.



A Ruffed Grouse suns itself on a frosty morning in the Woodland Bog Preserve in Woodland. Photograph by the author.

Visitors to the Woodland Bog in spring and summer will quickly notice that there is an abundance of insects here (some of the biting kind). Insectivores like Alder, Least, and Olive-sided flycatchers can regularly be seen sallying up above the alder canopy to snag a meal. Tree Swallows, Eastern Kingbirds, and Cedar Waxwings will also show well as they hunt the bog.

Lincoln's and Swamp sparrows nest, while Fox, White-crowned, and American Tree sparrows are often encountered in early spring and late fall. In addition to the fourteen common species of warblers, the Woodland Bog hosts some rarer breeders including Tennessee, Cape May, Bay-breasted, and Wilson's. The Wilson's favor the alders; Tennessees can be heard singing around the margin of the open areas of the preserve. Cape May and Bay-breasted are both found in the dense spruce-fir areas at the south side of the wetland.

Though unpredictable from year to year, some northern finch species can usually be found here. Purple Finches and American Goldfinches are most dependable, but Pine and Evening grosbeaks, White-winged Crossbills, and Pine Siskins have all been seen here in breeding season. On years with good cone and seed crops, all of these may over-winter and be joined by Common Redpolls.

Directions: The preserve is accessed from Route 228 (Woodland Center Road), 5.4 miles west of Caribou and the intersection of Route 161 (Sweden Street) and Route 228. There are no signs announcing the presence of the preserve. The best landmark is an orange gate across the rail-bed trail on the left (south) side of the road. Park on the right side of the road, and do not block the trail or the field road nearby. Follow the trail southward into the bog.

#### **#4 Irving Woodlot, New Sweden (DeLorme Atlas, page 64)**

New Sweden is the geographical and cultural center of the Swedish Colony. Many of the "Midsommar" festivities are held in this small town in June at the height of the breeding season in northern Maine. The timing makes for a great opportunity to combine birding with a visit to the festival. Like Woodland, New Sweden is criss-crossed with lightly traveled country roads passing through hayfields, woodlots, and wetlands — all great birding!

One of my favorite spots for birding in New Sweden is located roughly in the geographic center of the town off Route 161. Privately owned and managed by the Irving Woodlands Company, the Irving woodlot is a large pocket of boreal forest and bog habitat crossed by several woods roads. The lot hosts many of the sought-after boreal species, most notably nesting Three-toed and Black-backed woodpeckers.

A slow, dark-watered stream with boggy margins, Beardsley Brook winds through the Irving lot from west to east. On both the north and south sides of the brook, woods roads head east and west from Route 161, giving you four choices of side roads to explore. These are well constructed gravel and shale roads but, like all woods roads, may have puddles, ruts, or washouts depending on the season and the time since the last maintenance. While all are worth checking, the two roads to the east of Route 161 seem to be best for a diversity of birds.

I recommend parking along the side of the woods roads shortly after leaving the pavement. Though all of the roads are dead-ends and currently inactive, foresters, woodsmen, and other recreationalists may use them, so find a wide spot and park off the road far enough to allow other vehicles to pass. Remember that these roads are designed for forestry operations and heavy equipment, and you must yield to loggers. If you encounter active operations it is best to find another spot to bird!

The southeast road in the Irving lot is the shortest of the four but gets plenty of traffic from birders, since it is one of the more reliable spots in northern Maine to find both Three-toed and Black-backed woodpeckers. The road bed curves right, then left, and then peters out quickly into a sedgey morass known as a winter road. Park on the wide spot on the second curve.

The northeast road is about one mile long and passes across a powerline cut and through some deciduous forest which helps kick up the diversity. The two woods roads on the western side of Route 161 offer warbler-rich conifer stands.

In spring and summer expect to find singing Winter Wrens, Blue-headed Vireos, Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned kinglets, Black-capped and Boreal chickadees, and Red-breasted Nuthatches. Listen, too, for the beautiful songs of Veery, Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, and White-throated Sparrow. A dozen warbler species should be found without much effort. These include Northern Parula, Tennessee, Nashville, Magnolia, Cape May, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green, American Redstart, Blackburnian, Bay-breasted, and Canada warblers, as well as Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, and Northern Waterthrush. Gray Jays are dependable here. Watch for the slate-gray juveniles in midsummer.

In addition to the sought-after Black-backed and Three-toed woodpeckers, Northern Flickers, Pileated, Hairy, and Downy woodpeckers, and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers also nest here. Anyone searching for the rarer woodpeckers should walk the roads listening for the quiet tapping of feeding birds as they chip off bark from dead tree trunks. Stay watchful for trees with freshly scaled bark which appears light brown from a distance (rather than a gray shade of weathered wood). Another good clue for finding these birds is to listen for their drumming. Both of the prized woodpeckers have a loud resonating drum that speeds up. The Black-backed's drum usually trails off slightly at the end. While some drumming is territorial, both sexes will drum, and drumming can be heard at any time of year.

The wide, boggy swath along Beardsley Brook is typical Spruce Grouse habitat. Though the grouse is yet to be found in this area by the few birders that have visited, birders should keep this species in mind.

It also can pay off to keep an eye to the sky, since woodland-nesting raptors such as Broad-winged Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Northern Goshawk, and Merlin are regular here. For the past couple of years, Merlins nested along the powerline. Also watch along the power line for Red-tailed Hawks and Common Ravens. In early spring and summer both Northern Saw-whet and Barred owls are vocal at night. Though they've yet to be found here, this area seems a likely spot for Boreal Owls.

Don't be surprised to find American Black Ducks or Solitary Sandpipers popping out of the icy, spring-fed pools along the sides of the roads. American Bitterns and Great Blue Herons will also visit these at times to take advantage of the emerging mink frogs and wood frogs.

Mammal watching is also good here. It is not unusual to encounter a moose or two on the roads. They will generally move away into the woods once they see or smell you. Other mammals seen here include white-tailed deer, Canada lynx, fisher, and porcupine.

**Directions:** This is another location that can be tough to find! There are no road signs or significant landmarks to distinguish the Irving Woodlot roads from others along Route 161. The best bet to find the area on your first try is by zeroing your trip odometer at the intersection of Station Road and Route 161. (This starting point is also the location of New Sweden's only gas station and store.) From here, travel north on Route 161 about 2.4 miles to the southernmost pair of roads that enter the woodlot, one to the east and one to the west. A northern pair of access roads is 0.4 mile north of these.

### **#5 Muscovic Road, Stockholm (DeLorme Atlas, page 68)**

Named after the Swedish capital, Stockholm is the northernmost town of the Swedish colony. Here cleared agricultural land gives way to huge township-sized tracts of spruce-fir forestland, and the character of the birding changes abruptly. Most of the settled area and village of Stockholm is located in the southwest corner of the town where the Little Madawaska River makes a short arc through town. Stockholm boomed in the late 1800s and early 1900s as several large sawmills were built along the banks of the river and a rail spur was constructed to serve the town. Today, what remains is a quiet village with a small general store, a restaurant, and a pub. The old mill dams are mostly gone from the river, allowing unobstructed paddling for canoeists and kayakers in spring. The rail bed has been transformed into a multi-use trail.

My preferred location to bird in Stockholm is along the Muscovic Road. Another privately owned road serving a large tract of managed forestland, the gravel track winds through gorgeous boreal forest and skirts a large sphagnum bog, offering good opportunity for locating sought-after boreal species.

The road is well marked on the north side of Route 161 just west of the Little Madawaska River bridge, and within the first mile there is enough great habitat to keep any birder busy for a morning. As noted before, this is a private woods road, built and maintained to support forestry operations; always yield to equipment and avoid active sites.

Within a few hundred yards after leaving pavement, you'll find an old woods yard on the left that is a good place to park. (A woods yard is a central spot where logs are brought to be loaded on trucks.) I recommend that you take advantage of it since wide spots to park a vehicle are hard to come by on this stretch.

Take a moment here to bird around the clearing. Singing Dark-eyed Juncos, White-throated Sparrows, and Purple Finches are dependable here in spring and early summer. Both kinglets should be nearby and Hermit Thrushes and Veeries are quite common.

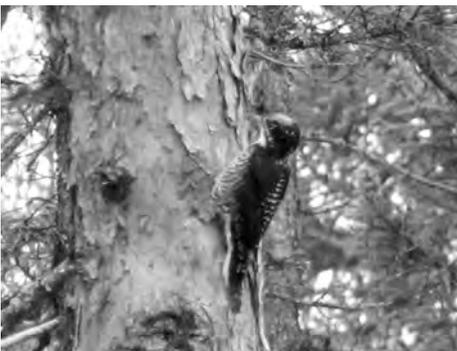
Bird down the road as it curves off to the left. Listen for Evening Grosbeaks and White-winged Crossbills in the conifers. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and Northern Flickers both nest in the poplar grove on the right side of the road and should be seen from mid-April through late September. In late June and July, Cedar Waxwings will be found on the ground along the edges of the road, dining on wild strawberries. It's not unusual to look back and spot a Ruffed Grouse dashing across the road after you have passed.

As the road straightens, the habitat turns to thick shrubby cedar and fir regeneration that is favored by Boreal Chickadees, Fox Sparrows, and Yellow-bellied Flycatchers. The chickadees and flycatchers have both nested here, and singing male Fox Sparrows on territory suggest breeding at this location. Listen carefully for all three. Magnolia, Nashville, and Yellow-rumped warblers also nest here, and one is very likely to encounter a noisy and confiding family of Gray Jays. Swainson's Thrushes are common.

Within an eighth of a mile from the parking spot, the area will begin to open up a bit with an old clearcut on the right and a sedgey wetland on the left. Scan pools of standing water on the right and left for Great Blue Herons, Hooded Mergansers, American Black Ducks, and Green-winged Teal. Interestingly, Solitary Sandpipers have been spotted here throughout summer. Though not yet documented as a breeder in Maine, the species may nest in boreal wetland locations such as this one.

Eastern Kingbirds nest here and can be seen hawking insects from the numerous snags in the wetland. In the small clearcut on the right, listen for Palm Warblers and Lincoln's Sparrows. Both species nest in the large bog found just to the west of this area. Olive-sided Flycatchers and Rusty Blackbirds may also be spotted on the snags.

In fall and winter, Rough-legged Hawks and Northern Shrikes will hunt these open areas.



A male Three-toed Woodpecker flakes bark from a dead spruce along the Muscovic Road in Stockholm. Photograph by the author.

Farther along the road, trees begin to close in again. Several years ago, beavers flooded a large area on the left, which killed most of the black spruce and tamarack trees here. Close inspection of the standing timber will show that many of the trees have had the bark scaled off by feeding Black-backed and Three-toed woodpeckers. These northern Maine specialties have

been regular at this spot for several years and usually can be found by listening for their typical quiet tapping or loud drumming.

After a thorough examination of the dead wood, continue northward down the road and back into a boggy black spruce stand. Here again, expect to encounter Boreal Chickadees, both kinglets, Winter Wrens, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and Swainson's Thrushes. In spring and early summer listen for the sibilant song of the Brown Creeper. Though I've yet to find them here, local residents say Spruce Grouse inhabit the bog. The area along the road appears to be ideal habitat for them.

At the end of the long straight section, the road turns right and heads away from the bog to the east. The best boreal habitat is behind you so I recommend turning around here. By all means, stay watchful on the return trip through this section. I have often been surprised to pick up several new species on the way back!

Directions: As you travel north along Route 161, the Muscovic Road is 3.8 miles from the southern access roads of the Irving woodlot. Though there is currently a large sign marking the road, the bridge over the Little Madawaska River is probably better as a more permanent landmark. The road is on the right about 100 yards past the bridge. Do not confuse it with West Road to Stockholm Village, which is before the bridge.

#### **#6 Madawaska Lake, T16 R4 (DeLorme Atlas, page 68)**

Just up Route 161 from the Muscovic Road is Madawaska Lake, another spot I find well worth visiting in spring, summer, and fall. The lake is located in a township so sparsely populated that it is yet to be named: Township 16 Range 4 (or T16R4). Though most of the area was found too wet and poor for farming, the Swedish settlers built some log cabins here in the late 1800s and even then used the lake for recreation.

This is the only lake in the Little Madawaska River watershed, and its shallow water and protected coves attract a nice diversity of waterbirds during migration. Except for a small boat launch on the north side of the lake, the shore is privately owned, but large sections of the pond are viewable from the roadside. In good weather, I recommend parking at the boat launch and walking westward along Lake Shore Drive. Most times traffic is very light here, and the birding along the road can be surprisingly productive.

Kayaking and canoeing birders can launch here for an enjoyable paddle along the shore. The boggy inlet of Carry Brook on the west shore is very birdy. This stream was part of a native canoe route connecting the waters of the Little Madawaska and Aroostook River watersheds to the Fish River and St. John River in the north. Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, Wood Duck, and Common Goldeneye broods may be encountered in the backwaters here. Tree Swallows glide back and forth overhead, and Wilson's Snipe and Spotted Sandpipers will flush from the shore. Keep an eye peeled for Swamp and Lincoln's sparrows and Rusty Blackbirds in the adjacent uplands.

From the boat launch, shore-bound birders should scan the lake and eastern shoreline for waterbirds. (A spotting scope certainly helps.) Common Loons are dependable here and nest at the lake. During fall migration, as many as twenty can be seen on good days. Groups of American Black Ducks, Ring-necked Ducks, and Common and Hooded mergansers often loaf in the middle of the lake. In the spring, the flocks of ducks sometimes include Common Eiders, Long-tailed Ducks, Black, Surf, and White-winged scoters, Red-breasted Mergansers, and scaup. Watch for migrating Horned and Red-necked grebes diving along the shore. Unusual waterbirds seen here in past few years include a rare inland Great Cormorant, Buffleheads, a Redhead, and a Red-throated Loon. Ospreys are regularly seen hunting over the lake and nest nearby.

A walk along the shore road usually produces some nice landbirds as well. During fair weather, the road is in the lee of the prevailing northwest winds, and it seems there is a localized concentrating effect by the lake, making this a busy spot bird-wise.

A pair of Merlins has been frequenting the north shore area recently and may be nesting. Broad-winged Hawks are the most common buteo. Watch for them hunting the roadsides from the phone lines and snags.

Red-breasted Nuthatches, Gray Jays, and Boreal Chickadees are regular in the yards here. Listen for singing Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Veeries, and Hermit and Swainson's thrushes. Olive-sided Flycatchers and Eastern Wood Pewees may also be heard. In summer, keen-eared birders have separated out the songs of Philadelphia Vireo from amongst the Red-eyed and Blue-headed vireos in the trees above the road.

This is a good spot for Mourning Warblers in late spring and early summer. Listen for the male's distinctive song along the edges of yards and clearings. Northern Parula, Black-throated Green, Nashville, Chestnut-sided, Yellow-rumped, and Magnolia warblers are common and should be encountered in the summer. Rusty Blackbirds may occasionally be spotted feeding along the lake shore, but the prize for rarest Icterid found here goes to a Yellow-headed Blackbird that was seen at a cottage feeder in May 1997.

Chipping Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, and White-throated Sparrows are common along the roadsides, but keep watch for Lincoln's Sparrows too, since they breed very near the lake. Good numbers of finches, including Pine Siskins, Purple Finches, and Evening Grosbeaks, are attracted to the feeders and may be seen any time of year.

**Directions:** From the intersection of Route 161 and the Muscovic Road it is only one mile north to the left turn at Lake Shore Drive on Madawaska Lake. Bear right at the "Y" immediately after turning off Route 161. The boat launch is only one tenth of a mile down Lake Shore Drive.

### **Some important considerations**

Though hardly wilderness, the Swedish colony area in northern Maine presents some challenges that visitors must be aware of and plan for.

First, be prepared for hordes of black flies from late May through July. Though it's doubtful you'll ever catch a local wearing one, head nets can make the difference between a good and bad birding experience. Insect repellent and minimization of uncovered skin also will help increase your comfort. Light-colored (not white!) articles of clothing seem less attractive to the flies.

Second, dress accordingly. Even in summer, early morning temperatures can be a bit chilly. A sweater or light pile jacket and gloves and hat aren't a bad idea! Good waterproof footwear and some rain pants will help you stay dry when tromping through the dew-covered vegetation in early morning. In late fall, winter, and early spring, bring plenty of warm layers and good insulated footwear if you plan on leaving your vehicle for more than a couple minutes.

Last, be considerate! Most of the good birding spots in the Swedish colony are undeveloped and privately owned. In northern Maine, most landowners still happily allow public access to these wonderful spots. Please park out of the way, stay out of farm fields and logging operations, and don't leave trash or take away anything you didn't bring.

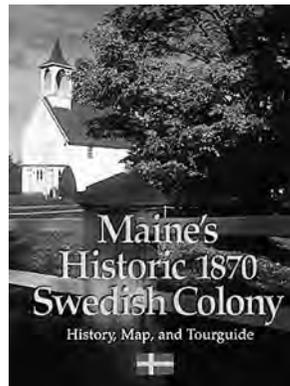
### General directions and accommodations

The fastest route to the Swedish colony and northern Maine is north on I-95 to Exit 302 in Houlton and then north on Route 1 to Caribou. It takes about 6 to 7 hours to reach Caribou by car from where I-95 crosses the New Hampshire/Maine state line. Traffic is rarely an issue north of Augusta.

Though there are no hotels in the Swedish colony, there are plenty of accommodations available in nearby Caribou and Presque Isle. Housekeeping cabins are offered at Madawaska Lake, and camping is available at Aroostook State Park in Presque Isle and several commercial campgrounds in the area. 🐦

*A birder for more than 20 years, **Bill Sheehan** lives in Aroostook County, Maine, with his family. He has worked on avian research projects in Maine, Florida, Kansas, Nebraska, Texas, and British Columbia. Bill currently serves on the Maine Bird Records Committee and volunteers as curator for the ornithological collections of the Northern Maine Museum of Science.*

*For more information on the history of Maine's Swedish Colony, visit <<http://www.geocities.com/mscguide/>>. You can also purchase a 24-page booklet from Maine's Swedish Colony, Inc., P.O. Box 50, New Sweden, ME 04762.*



# Needham's Naturalist: The Bird Journals of Timothy Otis Fuller

*Gloria Polizzotti Greis, Needham Historical Society*

“Linnaeus, letting fall his hand on a bunch of Moss at his side, exclaimed, ‘Underneath this palm is material for the study of a lifetime’; and if this is true of a handful of Moss, the treasures of a township must be inexhaustible. We need not seek for new worlds to conquer. Rather let us say with the poet, ‘I walk the hills my feet first knew, and year by year they grow dearer and dearer to me.’” Timothy Otis Fuller, *A Sketch of the Flora of Needham*, 1886

Timothy Otis Fuller (1845–1916) was a naturalist, and his field of study was Needham. Fuller’s roots in Needham reached very deep — he was born into a family that had settled this area in the 1600s, and members of the Fuller family signed the petition that established Needham as a separate town from Dedham in 1711.

Timothy Otis (as he was generally known) was born in 1845, the second of the five children of Ezra Fuller, Jr. and Catherine Smith Fuller. Fuller’s mother, and her brother Timothy Newell Smith, were both talented artists, and they taught Fuller as a youngster to draw and paint. Fuller also formed a friendship with his neighbor, the physician Josiah Noyes (1801-1875), and became his protégé in the study of natural history. Noyes was a natural scientist in the broad 19th-century sense, and his interests encompassed not only his profession of medicine and chemistry, but also plants, birds, the weather, geography, languages, and religion. He shared his knowledge, notebooks, and collections with Fuller — and in fact, Fuller continued and expanded much of Noyes’ work.

Fuller modeled himself on Thoreau, whom he called “the Mastermind.” He considered himself first and foremost to be a botanist, and most of his writings and collections are of local plants. His knowledge was based on patient and minute observation. His notes were primarily kept in his herbaria, and in his field journals, painstakingly compiled and revised over the years. Also like Thoreau, Fuller was a prodigious walker, walking in the pursuit of his studies as far south as Woonsocket, Rhode Island on one occasion and north to Ipswich on another. Most of Fuller’s “rambles,” however, were confined to Needham, where he examined every brook and every woodland, even the waste places beside the roads.

## The Bird Journals

“We have a better way of studying birds these days than by shooting them. There is little need for killing a bird in identifying it ... We now have museums filled with ample specimens of every species, and books are to be cheaply bought giving accurate descriptions of every bird we can hope to see. So we arm ourselves with that indispensable weapon of the modern bird-gazer, an opera glass...” Lecture at the Unitarian Chapel, 5 March 1905.

Although his herbaria and botany notebooks make up the bulk of Fuller's work, his bird journals are by far the most detailed and beautiful. Because of his aversion to killing the birds in order to study them, Fuller chose to use his considerable artistic skill to record the species he saw.

The four volumes of Fuller's bird journals are dated 1904, 1906, 1908, and 1912, though some of the observations date as early as 1901. These volumes, together with his unpublished writings on birds, all dating after 1900, indicate that ornithology as a systematic study was a later interest in Fuller's life, taken up as he reached his sixth decade.

The books show a clear progression of sophistication over time. The first volume (1904) is spare and modest; with relatively few illustrations — black and white ink sketches — tipped into the page margins after the entries were written. In the second volume the tipped-in illustrations are in color, painted by Fuller as he had been taught by his mother and uncle many years before. By 1908, his illustrations are fully integrated into the text, although he continued to add extra notes and pictures onto the pages over time.

The journals are a dynamic record of Fuller's observations and research. He recorded the dates when a bird was active in the Needham area and the bird's physical characteristics — its size, coloring, songs, identifying features, and so forth. Ongoing memoranda of local sightings are appended to the entries:

“Cooper's Hawk: Ridge Hill, May 10, 1908, in white pine 60 ft up, 5 fresh eggs. Also beyond Cartwright's, in white pine 20 ft up, May 18, 1909. May 11, 1912, High Rock woods 20 ft in oak, 1 egg.”

Tucked into the margins and between the lines are references from journals such as *The Auk*, notes from scientific publications, and from the work of colleagues — “[Bradford] Torrey says [Lincoln's Sparrow] often has a breast spot like Song Sparrow.”

The 1912 volume is Fuller's grandest production, bearing the title *A Rambler's Companion in the Woods and Fields and Along the Shores of New England*. This volume is a synthesis of the previous three; information from the earlier years is summarized and consolidated into an authoritative local field guide. This is also the most lavishly illustrated of the four. Although Fuller enjoyed good health his later years, it is likely that by 1912 his tree-climbing days were over, and he was summing up his work. He illustrated each entry with a stunning little work of art, sometimes as simple as a small profile of the bird's head, other times a full body painting. Fuller also created pages of feature comparisons: heads, beaks, wings, tails. He continued to tip portraits into the seams, and the text might be bordered by the long bill of the Sickie-Bill (now Long-Billed) Curlew or wrapped around the fat rump of an eider. Occasionally little vignettes ornament the text itself: in an entry on Snow Buntings — “Maynard [Newton naturalist Charles Johnson Maynard] says that a flock flying appears like drifting leaves, each bird wandering right and left, above and below” — a small flock of buntings flies from the page's margin into the manuscript.

SNOW BUNTING. 6/8.

Abundant win visitor; most com in Nov, Dec & Jan; less com Feb + Mar x  
 Generally appears suddenly & last Oct. are easily seen & their arctic plum.  
 • wh > secondaries • } conspic flight,  
 while • wh w-cov are prominent when  
 > ground x • wearing off > brown (-tips  
 makes • spr birds beautifully blk & wh x  
 Autumn & win x Head &  
 & wh, washed & head &  
 sides > breast • brown;  
 w & t blk & wh; bill  
 reddish-brown.

Breeds  
 in • arctic  
 zone, as high  
 at least as 83°

A.O.U. LIST.

Maynard says a flock flying, appears like  
 drifting leaves, each bird wandering >  
 right & left, above & below.



WINTER

Snow Buntings, from Fuller's 1912 journal

## Scientific Value

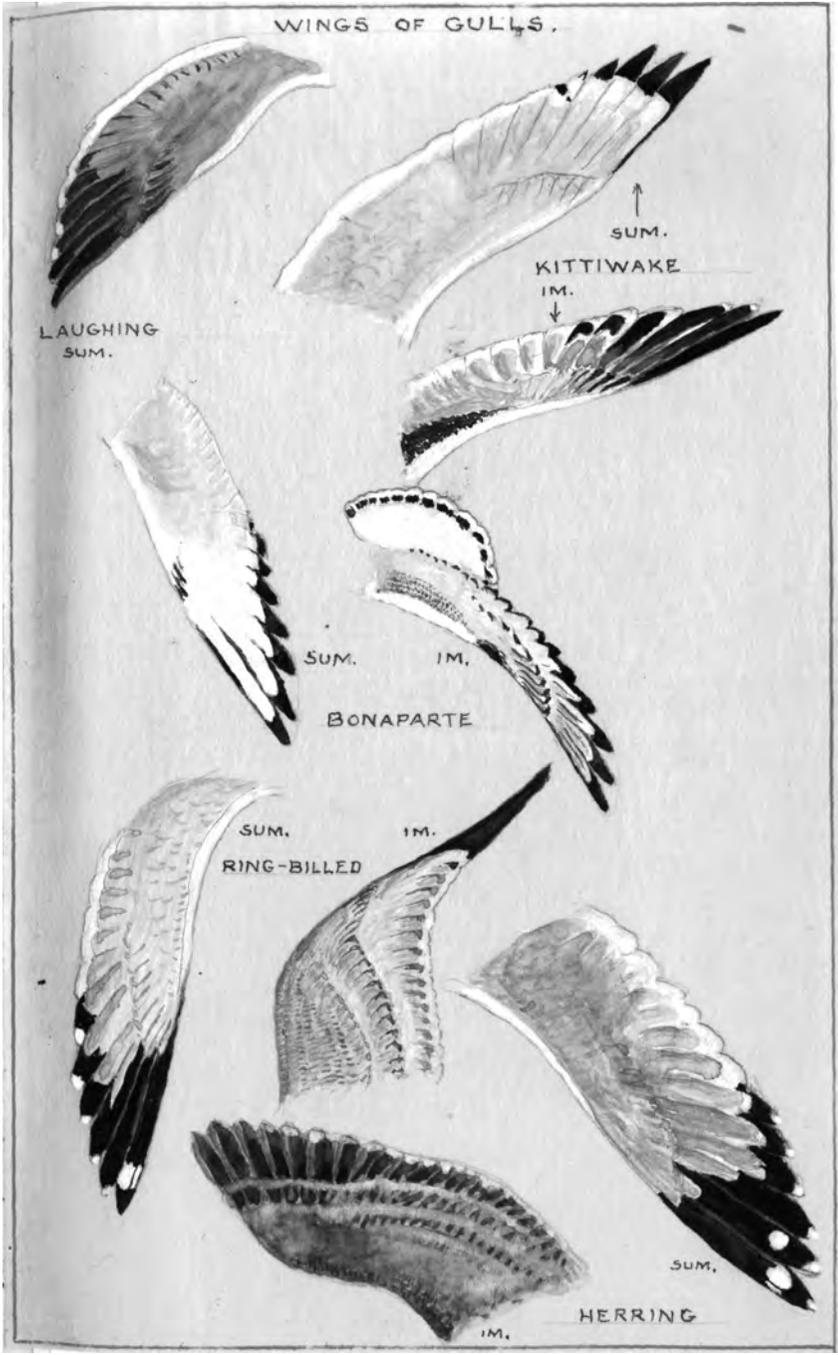
“After untold centuries of survival of those best adapted to the various conditions under which they live, the several species [of birds] as we now see them around us, could continue to hold their own in the same abundance for centuries to come; but there is one disturbing element in all this, and that arises from the very one that should be their chief protector — man himself.”  
Lecture at the Unitarian Chapel, 5 March 1905

Although we treasure the Fuller journals because they are so beautiful, perhaps their greater value lies in what they can tell us about changes in the bird population over time. The familiar woodsy New England landscape around us is mostly secondary growth. Settlement and farming in the colonial period largely deforested our area. Paintings of Needham from the mid-1800s, as well as early maps and photos, show a cleared landscape of fields and meadows. Modern views of these same scenes show a significant re-growth of the tree cover. In Fuller’s time the landscape was in transition; the decline of farming in favor of mercantilism and manufacturing, soon to be followed by the local transition to a suburban residential community, favored this process of modest reforestation. Thus the Needham landscape of Fuller’s day was different from the one we know, and since we can identify where many of his observations were made, it is possible to enumerate some of the differences.

In addition to descriptions, Fuller kept census records of the birds he saw each year. These records are readily compared to modern population data. For example, in 1912 Fuller made a table of the migration dates of warblers in eastern Massachusetts. The earliest species to arrive in 1912 was the common little Pine Warbler; he first observed it in the last week of March and consistently throughout the summer thereafter. Black-and-White Warblers, Black-throated Green and Yellow warblers — all common species then as now — arrived about a month later. Cape May, Tennessee, and Bay-Breasted warblers made a brief appearance in mid-May as they migrated northward. Blue-winged Warblers, now fairly common here in the summer, were rare here in 1912; their range has been shifting to the north. Conversely, Golden-winged and Nashville warblers, whose ranges are now contracting, were common here in Fuller’s day.

In other volumes, Fuller recorded sightings over time, or relative abundance. In the period 1901–1907 he saw Turkey Vultures only three years out of the seven; these are birds now seen daily in Needham, often circling in groups of three or four, as the range of both Turkey Vultures and Black Vultures has shifted northward.

Hawks of various species, even Red-tailed Hawks, were not always seen. Fuller noted that the birds of prey were becoming increasingly scarce, and that the Red-shouldered Hawk was the only raptor to be commonly seen in Needham. On the other hand, Bald Eagles, though scarce, were noted for every year of the seven. Northern Cardinals and Mourning Doves were rarer in Fuller’s day; and that most pestilential of species — the European Starling — was still unknown in rural habitats, having only been newly introduced into New York’s Central Park.



Wings of Gulls, from Fuller's 1908 journal

This is only a cursory tour of the information contained in Fuller's field books. Much more can be extracted from the journal entries, the tables, and the various notes he kept. A comparison of Fuller's information with data from systematic local census records can yield useful information about local habitat and climate change in the last century. This is work for the future — but not too distant, we hope.

As we learn about birds from Fuller's books, we also learn about Fuller and his exemplary habits and skills as an amateur naturalist. He was a man of patience and precision surely, who recorded every fact and image he observed in painstaking detail. Respected by his colleagues and neighbors for the breadth of his knowledge, he was also a man of great sensibility and enthusiasm, who never lost his wonder at the infinite variety of nature, and who would still climb a tree to peer into a nest at the age of 63.

“One of the first evidences of the approach of spring is the arrival of the migrating birds from their winter homes in the south; always an event of great importance to the bird crank. And I hope I may always be considered one, in the spring at least. Thoreau says, ‘If the warble of the first bluebird does not thrill you, know that the morning and spring of your life are past.’ Judged by this, I am right in the heyday of my youth.” 🐦

*Gloria Polizzotti Greis is the Executive Director of the Needham (MA) Historical Society. She holds a PhD in Anthropology from Harvard University, specializing in the agriculture of prehistoric Europe. She is the author of three books and numerous articles on archaeology, history, and various other topics. Timothy Otis Fuller's journals are in the collection of the Needham Historical Society. Information about the Society and its public hours, as well as more examples of Fuller's work can be found online at <<http://greisnet.com/needhist.nsf/Home!OpenPage>>.*



Timothy Otis, off on a ramble with his dog Don, c. 1890.  
Copyright 2004, Needham Historical Society.

# Taken a Bird Walk Lately?

*Pamela Hunt*

“It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching.” Saint Francis of Assisi

“Walking is the best possible exercise. Habituate yourself to walk very far.”  
Thomas Jefferson

“I have met with but one or two persons in the course of my life who understood the art of walking.” Henry David Thoreau, *Walking*

People have been birding on foot for as long as people have been interested in birds. Early naturalists were prone to taking long strolls in the countryside, taking notes, collecting specimens, and learning about their surroundings. From this tradition has evolved the modern birder, whose ultimate goal still revolves to one degree or another around collecting, although these days we tend to collect checkmarks on a list. And we still walk to do it, but the point of this essay is to suggest that maybe — just maybe — we don’t walk quite enough anymore.

We live in an age of both convenience and compressed time. If one desires, one can hop on a plane to almost anywhere and be halfway around the world in a matter of hours. We think nothing of it, but should we? Two hundred years ago the Lewis and Clark Expedition took a year and a half to reach the Pacific Ocean from St. Louis, something you can do today in 4.5 hours by plane or 35 hours if you decide to drive. I don’t need to tell you who would have the larger trip list. Lists aside, we pay for this rush toward speed. Unless you’ve been in a cave for the last few years, it should come as no surprise that the global climate is warming, a direct result of humanity’s burning of fossil fuels. At the same time, we see increasing evidence of the negative health effects of our increasingly convenience-oriented lifestyles.

Now, back to the subject of walking and birding. You have probably guessed by now that I’m not necessarily talking about a pleasant ramble through Mount Auburn Cemetery or along the boardwalk at Hellcat Swamp on Plum Island. I’m talking about the sort of walking alluded to by St. Francis, Jefferson, and Thoreau in the quotes that introduced this article; they had few other options. Prior to the invention of the steam engine, people had three choices for travel: wind, horses, or their own muscles. If for the sake of argument we agree that wind power is not well suited to anything other than crossing large bodies of water, and that horses come with their own set of limitations, we quickly arrive at walking (and other muscle-powered options like bicycling) as the default option for birding in its “purest” state.

Thus was born the concept of “human-powered birding” (HPB), a term I credit to a friend from the New Hampshire coast, who coined it sometime around 1998. This birder was reacting to the people who converged on Newmarket, New Hampshire, to see a Little Egret. The last straw was a birder from California who flew to Boston, rented a car, drove north, saw the egret, drove south, and flew back to California. This

was in the days before Al Gore and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change started winning prestigious awards for their work on climate change, but certainly the sentiment was already brewing among some environmentally conscious parts of the populace: at what cost do we pursue our present lifestyle?

It turns out I'd been a convert to HPB without even knowing it, since roughly nine years earlier I'd initiated something that came to be called the "Mascoma Lake Census." It all began when I stepped out of my apartment on October 7, 1989, to take a walk shortly after I moved to New Hampshire to begin graduate work at Dartmouth College. I traveled five miles that morning, and before I knew it, the loop became a regular weekly event. By the time I moved from the area in the summer of 2000, I'd walked that route 481 times, which converts to 2400 miles or roughly 300 days of walking, enough to travel by foot from St. Louis to the Pacific.

There were a lot of good birds along the Mascoma Lake Census route, which ultimately yielded a list of 220 species (all but four on foot). Highlights included Little Blue Heron, Baird's Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope, Little Gull, Yellow-throated, Cerulean, and Kentucky warblers, and twenty-three species of waterfowl. In case you're wondering, Mascoma Lake is in the Connecticut River Valley about 100 miles from the New Hampshire coast, which goes to show you that you never know what might be around unless you look. Think globally — bird locally.

It was that sentiment that slowly converted me to the rabid HPB advocate that I am today. For many years I'd been a zealous Big Day birder, racking up state and monthly records for New Hampshire almost as soon as I moved here. But by the early 1990s I'd started doing them on a smaller scale as well, focusing on the town of Enfield where I lived. Over seven years of these "Enfield Big Days," I averaged just over 100 species, and the stage was set for the next step in my evolution as an HPB. On the morning of May 21, 2000, a friend arrived at my apartment and the two of us set off by bike and foot on my first "Human-powered Big Day" (HPBD). We tallied 102 species despite rain, a leisurely brunch, and even an afternoon nap. I've not done a Big Day with a car since.



Black-throated Green Warbler found on the Great Penacook Walkabout route of May 18, 2008. Photograph by the author.

Since 2000 I've moved twice and in each case established a new walking bird survey. Now in Concord, New Hampshire, for my fourth year, both the census and HPBDs are going strong (current record for the latter is 115 species). But I still wasn't done. If you can do a human-powered big day, why not a human-powered Christmas Bird Count? Thus was born the "Great Penacook Walkabout," a monthly 14–20 mile perambulation that essentially takes in all available daylight with a break for breakfast and dinner, and which has recorded a cumulative 160 species as of this writing.



Solitary Sandpiper was among the 100 species tallied in the Great Penacook Walkabout. Photograph by the author.

With climate change on the tip of the tongue of every environmentally conscious person on the planet, the reasons for HPB are even more obvious. Perhaps as a result, and through the amazing powers of the internet, the movement has grown. There is now a new term for HPB; “Bigby” stands for “Big Green Big Year,” and the word has already entered the lexicon of birders around the world (e.g., “My Bigby stands at 97.”). Check out the Bigby website at <http://www.sparroworks.ca/bigby.html>. There are Bigbys and there are BIGBYs, with the prize going to Malkolm

Boothroyd, a teenager from Whitehorse (yes, in the Yukon) who, at the end of May, was approaching 10,000 miles and 534 species in a bicycle Big Year. I’m sorry if I offend anyone, but that’s a heck of a lot more impressive than the indulgent exploits featured in Mark Obamscik’s *The Big Year* (still a great read, mind you), and I honestly hope the bar has been raised as a result. You can read all about Malkolm’s “Bird Year” at <http://www.birdyear.com/>.

And so, after several twists in the road, we return to St. Francis, Jefferson, and Thoreau. In *Walking*, Thoreau speculates on the origin of the word “saunter,” and in his typical convoluted way comes to embrace walking as a sort of Crusade (“sainte terre,” meaning “holy land”). Here he converges on the sentiments of St. Francis, and it seems a fitting way to close my own literary ramble. For I am on something of a crusade: a campaign to promote a different way of birding. I have reached the point that I rarely even go birding outside of Concord (the Thoreau parallel is not lost on me!) and get fidgety if I miss one of my regular walks. As gas prices and global temperatures continue to rise, it strikes me as a not unreasonable adjustment to make — even if only to a small degree — in how we bird. It is unlikely to make one iota of difference in the long run, but neither will seeing this week’s rarity somewhere in Rhode Island.

I therefore challenge each and every birder that reads this to walk more and drive less. Maybe it’s only one day a week, but that’s how I started. The very next time you reach for the car keys to take yet another trip up the New Hampshire coast or down to Cumberland Farms, take a second and think: “Do I *really* need to go there today?” You probably don’t. Will you miss something “cool?” Perhaps, but you’ll never know what you also might have missed right in your backyard. Are the birds at a well-known birding spot that much better than those in your yard? What does “better” really mean? Is finding my first Blackburnian Warbler a couple of miles from my house better or worse than finding it thirty miles away?

There are of course no answers to the previous questions, but I hope they got you thinking. I suspect by now you also know what *my* answers would be to them. We all

rank experiences against some personal standards, and the same applies to our cherished bird lists. What is a year list really, other than a personal attempt to pass some predetermined line in the sand? After all, very few of us are serious contenders for the record books. If we *really* want to compete among ourselves for bragging rights, we need a level playing field, but the nature of our avocation makes this impossible. So take a moment to think about who you're competing against. If it's the person down the road with a state list ten species larger than yours, then you aren't going to change how you bird. If, on the other hand, you find a challenge in testing your own skills and knowledge, then the size of your playing field is as big or as small as you want to make it.

I said it once and I'll say it again. Think globally, bird locally. Opt for the smaller playing field. In the process, not only will you discover new places and learn the seasonal rhythms of your backyards, but you will also be doing your small part in reducing your footprint upon the earth (pun intended). Heck, maybe you'll even find a "good bird" or two.

"Everywhere is walking distance if you have the time." Steven Wright 🐦

**Pam Hunt** began birding at the tender age of twelve, and since then her passion for all things avian has led her all over North America and the Caribbean, as well as to two graduate degrees. She is currently a conservation biologist for New Hampshire Audubon, where she works on conservation planning, the NH IBA program, Whip-poor-will biology and monitoring, and the NH Dragonfly Survey. Her human-powered state list stands at 230 species.



Route of the author's Great Penacook Walkabout on May 18, 2008: 21 miles, 100 species

# Birding My Own Patch

*John Nelson*

For the Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas I cover an area in Gloucester bordered by Ipswich Bay on the north, the Annisquam River on the east, Routes 128 and 133 on the south, and Walker Creek on the west. Annually I partner with Jim Barber to cover the same area for the Christmas Bird Count. For our Cape Ann-only Birdathon team, my range expands to include Essex and other parts of West Gloucester. During the rest of the year, on foot or by bicycle, I routinely visit such spots as Dykes Pasture Road along Lily Pond, the marshes and fields of Essex, and Essex Bay, where the Essex River meets the Atlantic between Coffin Beach in Gloucester and Crane Beach in Ipswich. This is home. The birds here, whether residents, annual breeders, or migrants, are my neighbors. Brits talk about “birding your own patch.” This is my patch.

I don't chase rare birds here. This is the place where I come to know birds on intimate terms. The most unusual bird I've found here was a Prothonotary Warbler that my wife Mary and I heard, then managed to locate, while walking Dykes Pasture Road in June 2007. I took a proprietary interest in the bird, tracking its movements around the pond the next few days and trying to help others find it, while wondering if it might stay and breed. I wanted it to feel welcomed in my neighborhood. That spring I heard Fish Crows for the first time at Lily Pond. I hope they'll feel welcome here too.

In Essex Bay the waters flow together — the Atlantic Ocean, the Essex River, Farm Creek. Mudflats exposed at low tide, clam beds, an active Osprey platform, Tree Swallows fluttering around their boxes, sand streaked with grains of garnet, summer houses on Cross Island, autumn leaves aflame, sailboats napping in the bay, kayakers rounding a point into current, distant riders prancing on horseback past dunes at the end of Crane Beach, a view up the coastline to New Hampshire—this is a wondrous, open place, the beauty New England has to offer. In winter you'll find seabirds, seals, perhaps some Brant or a roving band of Snow Buntings or Horned Larks. In summer, terns and shorebirds gather on the sandbars, while Willets court on the marsh, Glossy Ibises feed, and on the edge, Common Yellowthroats, Song Sparrows, and Cedar Waxwings breed. On a lucky day you might see a flyby oystercatcher in June, a show of hundreds of plunging gannets in late October, a few Sanderlings playing tag with the tide in January, or an early Piping Plover passing through in April. My wife, not one to distinguish among gulls, casually observed one day that a gull we'd just passed had very red feet and a very red bill. I don't come here hoping for rarities. I'm content to find nothing vagrant as long as the usual suspects are around. There's nothing common about the lime-green beauty of a Common Eider. Each winter a small group of Oldsquaw returns, as faithful as the locally famous Eared Grebe on Niles Beach. Yes, I call them Oldsquaw, a name more flavorful, more endearing, and more fitting, given our long connection here, than the more formal and politically correct Long-tailed Duck. I feel the same sense of fond familiarity with a particular Common Loon,

which hangs out reliably at the river mouth, and a certain bold Eastern Towhee that likes to sing from a telephone wire above Wingersheek Road. As I listen, a mantra runs through my brain. Keep the common birds common. Keep the common birds common.

There's a pond on Bray Street in West Gloucester — the best freshwater habitat in my neighborhood — where I've spent hours watching birds fly in and out of cavities. For the atlas I've confirmed three woodpecker species breeding here— Downy, Red-bellied, and Northern Flicker — as well as Common Grackles, Tree Swallows, Eastern Phoebes, Eastern Kingbirds, House Wrens, American Crows, and House Sparrows. Future confirmation challenges await me: Green Heron, Wood Duck, Belted Kingfisher, Hairy Woodpecker, maybe Pileated. During lulls in my woodpecker study I watch belching bullfrogs or Little Blue Herons in different stages of plumage: adult, juvenile, mottled. Newt and Bonnie, the gracious owners of a house beside the pond, have placed a bench by the water to give passersby a comfortable perch from which to pond-watch. I've compared notes with them and their neighbors about raptor sightings, the exact source of Whip-poor-will songs, and encounters with Ruffed Grouse and American Woodcocks in the adjacent Thompson Street woods. I've met other neighbors by knocking on doors rather than barging onto private property to track down breeding birds. Often they know about the birds I'm looking for. Advice for fellow atlasers: if you want to befriend your neighbors, ask about their wrens. I've found that we share not only an interest in birds but also a camaraderie that comes from living in a neighborhood — the “wilds” of West Gloucester—that, despite encroaching development, still has a sense of identity. Some days I bring my wife to the pond. I'm reminded of these words from Antoine Saint-Exupery: “Love does not consist in gazing at each other, but in looking outward in the same direction.”

For grassland and marsh birds, I visit the fields of Cogswell's Grant, a Historic New England property in Essex, and the nearby salt marsh across the river from the Essex County Greenbelt Cox Reservation. It's a good area for Orchard Orioles, Virginia Rails, Glossy Ibises, Little Blue Herons, Spotted Sandpipers, Horned Larks, and birds of prey, as well as the only location near home where I see Eastern Meadowlarks with any regularity. In spring, the fields abound with singing Bobolinks. It's also a place where I can let our dog, Sierra, run free with little concern about her disturbing others. Although I worry about her disturbing birds, she's a skittish, nervous little thing — a rescued Puerto Rican street dog—and she's as apt to be the victim of birds as their antagonist. Swallows dive-bomb and taunt her, while the broken-wing tricks of Killdeer leave her feeling confounded and cheated. From Cogswell's Grant I generally walk a private road that leads out to a causeway and island, and, until recently, I would stop to chat with a frail old man who lived by the road and had given us permission to walk there. A dog lover, he wasn't much interested in birds, but he always asked what I'd seen. He proudly recalled the day a “nice Southern gentleman” came down his road in search of what, from his description, I took to be a Rough-legged Hawk. (I've seen them several times here.) The old man died a few months ago, a loss to my family and dog and, though he was unknown to the birding community, to all of us. We're fortunate in Essex County to

have both a long tradition of organized land preservation and many private citizens willing to share the beauty of their land with no expectation but friendliness in return.

Of course my patch includes our yard — a small patch of grass and a homemade pond surrounded by an acre of woods atop a hill at the end of a dead-end street. It was the birds in our yard — chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, finches, and juncos — that got me started birding, and I'll never weary of watching them. They're our true New England neighbors, hearty souls, here for the duration, rain, sleet, or snow, without a thought of retiring to Florida. This year, without going beyond the deck, I could confirm breeding by Northern Cardinals, Gray Catbirds, Great Crested Flycatchers, American Robins, Eastern Towhees, and three species of finches. If I could no longer travel to such exotic lands as Bhutan or Brazil, I could bear it, but my heart sinks at the thought of living day by day without cardinals or towhees nearby.

Sometimes an uncommon migrant shows up. At dawn I heard the song of a Black-billed Cuckoo. I jumped out of bed, threw on some clothes, but foolishly chose to wear the slippers at hand instead of more sensible shoes. The cuckoo sang every few minutes, each time more distant. I followed deeper into the woods, then down the treacherously steep hill, losing traction on the slick granite boulders and nearly tumbling ass over binoculars. Never did see the bird. In spring 2007 a wave of migrants hit Gloucester and, stalled by the weather, stuck around through the Birdathon. At one point I sat at my computer and gaped out the window as a single oak ten feet away filled up with eight species of warbler — two Tennessees — two vireo species, two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, four Scarlet Tanagers (one oriole orange), a Swainson's Thrush, and a Red-bellied Woodpecker. Glorious. Ridiculous. My personal migrant trap. I was living in the middle of Mount Auburn Cemetery.

My wife, a fiend for finding birds of prey in our travels, is also our resident hawkwatcher, an avocation that adds thrills to her gardening. Her deepest love is for our most regular visitors, Red-tailed Hawks. On a tour of Alaska she astonished the other group members by choosing, as her favorite bird of the trip, a Harlan's variety of a Red-tail, above McKay's Bunting, a Bristle-thighed Curlew perched and calling thirty feet from us, and a Ruff in outrageous breeding plumage. A few years later, we met David Sibley while looking for (and, thanks to his help, finding) a Long-eared Owl at Dunback Meadows in Lexington, and she told him her Redtail-in-Alaska story. "If it's not the most wonderful bird in North America," she asked him rhetorically, "why would you put it on the cover of your book?" David smiled and nodded. Mary hears my mantra with a variation: Keep raptors common. Let us hear owls. Let Red-tailed Hawks thrive.

Some birds will never be just birds but will always carry with them associations, stories, memories laced with emotion. Mary and I are fortunate to live in a place where we regularly hear Whip-poor-wills. For years, once May arrived, I would listen intently each night, determined to be the first that spring to report a West Gloucester Whip-poor-will. And each year I failed because Jerry Soucy and Larry Jodrey, who lived on the other side of Cape Ann for heaven's sake, beat me to the punch. I could hardly feel resentful. Jerry and Larry (Avocet and Curlew) had been among my birding mentors, as they had generously mentored many others. When it became

difficult for them to walk, they birded Cape Ann by car, and I'd come to consider them my personal scouts and bird-finders. Their intimacy with birds far surpassed mine; nightjars, upon arrival, called them on their cell phones. They were beloved by thousands of birders. To some, the song of a Whip-poor-will epitomizes solitude, the forlornness of a lone creature in the woods at night, but I'll never hear one without thinking that I'm part of a community — the community of birders that cherished Larry and Jerry, or the community of readers who've marveled at the way William Faulkner uses a chorus of Whip-poor-wills to chilling effect at the end of "Barn Burning." I wish I'd recommended the story to Jerry and Larry.

Part of birding's appeal is that even in a local patch, one keeps on happening upon surprises. During a cold, blustery CBC, a flock of shivering goldfinches abandoned a windblown tree, leaving behind a single Eastern Bluebird, the first I'd seen in West Gloucester. While scanning the salt marsh, Mary and I caught a flash of pink — so pink, flamingo pink, spoonbill pink, on a bird hidden in the reeds—that turned out to be the wattle of a wandering turkey. And in our yard, in an area where breeding Purple Finches are scarce, we found one breeding pair, then two breeding pairs, then an adult teaching offspring how to "forage" at our window feeder — breeding status confirmed from the breakfast table. That same week, Mary returned from a stroll on Wingaersheek Beach to report swallows in the sand banks there — news to me that Bank Swallows nested on Cape Ann. I checked it out, I spread the word, and a few days later I got an e-mail message from Chris Leahy about an 1894 Winslow Homer wood engraving — "Raid on a Sand-Swallow Colony — How Many Eggs?" — that depicts Gloucester boys collecting eggs from a Bank Swallow colony, perhaps at Wingaersheek Beach. In a small way Mary and I felt ourselves part of a community with a history both natural and cultural. Bank Swallows nesting on a popular public beach, Winslow Homer, seascapes — this is why I've come to love our adopted home, Gloucester.

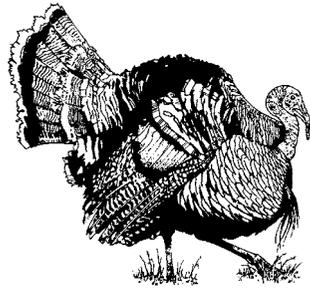
While birding near home I ask endless questions. How will the latest development down the road — "luxury living" for those over fifty-five — affect the birds in my patch? Can I find the spot where the Turkey Vultures nest when they're not ominously circling our hill? Will Bank Swallows return to Wingaersheek? Will Common Ravens breed here? How do birds know that this is the season for a third clutch? How do they choose to forage here, not there, to build a nest in this bush, not that one? Some questions may be answered through future observations. Others I'll probably never answer. At least I hope not.

The data from the Breeding Bird Atlas and the Christmas Bird Counts will provide ornithologists with useful information about the ranges of birds, population trends, and species that are threatened or endangered. In addition to its scientific value, the data will have personal meaning. How, I'd like to know, are my neighbors doing? Are the commoners still common? Is my patch still a place where birds want to live? Is it a place where they will be able to live? 

*John Nelson, of Gloucester, is the author of Cultivating Judgment, a book on critical thinking. "Twitcher's Temptation," his initial article for Bird Observer, has recently been reprinted in the British journal Essex Birding. His short story "The Money Bird," about a birding guide in Thailand, will appear in an upcoming issue of The Snowy Egret.*

## HELP MASSWILDLIFE COUNT TURKEY FAMILIES

Sportsmen and -women, birders, landowners and other wildlife enthusiasts are encouraged to assist MassWildlife to count turkey families this summer. MassWildlife conducts an annual wild turkey brood survey from June through August. "The brood survey serves as a long-term index on reproduction," explains Jim Cardoza, MassWildlife's Turkey Project Leader. "It helps us determine overall productivity and allows us to compare rates of reproduction over a long period of time." Cardoza also points out that citizen involvement in this survey is a cost-effective means of gathering useful data, and he encourages all interested people to participate. A turkey brood survey form has been posted on the front page of MassWildlife's website. Information needed includes date, town, number of hens seen, and number of poults (young turkeys) and their relative size compared to the hens. Multiple sightings of the same brood should also be noted. The survey period runs from June 1 to August 31. The last two years of survey data is posted in the Wild Turkey area of the website <[http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/dfw\\_turkey.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/dfw_turkey.htm)>. Completed forms should be mailed to the MassWildlife Westborough Field Headquarters, 1 Rabbit Hill Rd, Westboro, MA 01581.



## BIRDERS!

### Duck Stamps are not just for hunters.

By purchasing an annual Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation ("Duck") Stamp, you contribute to land acquisition and conservation.



Duck Stamps are available for \$15 from U.S. Post Offices, staffed National Wildlife Refuges (where it serves as an annual pass), select sporting goods stores, and at Mass Audubon's Joppa Flats Education Center in Newburyport.

***Display your Duck Stamp and show that birders support conservation too.***

# FIELD NOTES

---

## *Editor's Note: Opportunistic Feeding*

*Necessity is the mother of invention and day-to-day survival is the ultimate necessity. Animals can prove remarkably flexible and resourceful in their dietary choices when those choices become very limited, as they do during the long New England winter.*

## Common Raven and Red-shouldered Hawk at Suet Feeder

*Paul Fitzgerald*

On March 24, as I passed by my dining room window in Hingham, out of the corner of my eye I caught a glimpse of a crow at my bird feeder, evidently attracted to the well-stocked suet cage. (It's a platform feeder set on a pole and protected from the weather by a small pitched roof. I hang the suet cage on a nail below the roof's overhang, specifically to dissuade larger birds — like crows — who don't have room to perch on the platform itself.) It's always entertaining to watch crows negotiate the overhang to get at the suet but I quickly realized that the black behemoth on my feeder was no crow but a Common Raven. Ten years ago this yard bird would have warranted a victory cigar, but with this species' steady recent expansion into eastern Massachusetts, I was merely delighted. As I've seen crows do many times, the raven gripped the edge of the roof with one foot, it's legs splayed awkwardly, with the other foot balanced on the suet cage, which pivoted loosely on its nail as the bird extracted hefty chunks of fat. I approached the window gingerly but the raven, startled, immediately abandoned the feeder and flew off. I cursed myself until I noticed the likelier cause of the disruption. An adult Red-shouldered Hawk was now perched on a limb about fifteen feet above the feeder, eyeing it intently. I assumed that the object of the hawk's attention was the unlucky grey squirrel, motionless — and hopelessly exposed — on the bare ground below the feeder. I waited breathlessly for the cruel drama of predation to unfold, but after a few tense moments the squirrel bounded off into the bushes unmolested, leaving me feeling quite gypped. The hawk then swooped down to the feeder, perching on its roof. Red-shouldered Hawks nest in my neighborhood and are regular year-round visitors to my yard, but I had never seen this before. The bird craned forward, looking for the suet feeder which must have been blocked from its view by the overhang.

The hawk then tried to sidestep its way down the slippery pitched roof but lost its footing, flapped, and scrambled back to the peak. It repeated this ungainly ritual several times until, going for broke, it executed a controlled slide down the slope, and just as it slipped off the overhang, dropped one foot to the feeder, snagged the cage in its talons, and attempted to fly off with it.

I keep the suet cage attached to its nail with a short swag of chain to prevent exactly this from happening, so the hawk was only able to drag its quarry back onto the feeder roof, where it proceeded to gorge itself for several minutes. The bird ignored the store-bought beef suet in favor of some much gnarlier and bloodier fat that I had trimmed from a leg of lamb and added to the feeder the day before. This it tore from the cage in long, rubbery shards.

I had never seen or heard of any raptor taking suet at a feeder, but subsequent conversations and online research turned up a number of records of Red-shouldered Hawks specifically, exhibiting that behavior in winter. 

## Gray Squirrel Preys on Black-capped Chickadee

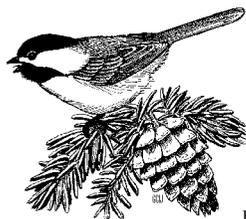
*Simon Hennin*

On March 21, I was gazing out of the window overlooking our patio and backyard in Worcester to see if there was any bird activity. Sure enough, off to the right I saw a Black-capped Chickadee foraging on the ground underneath one of our feeders. I noticed that the feathers of one wing were sticking out at an odd angle. At first I thought that this might be because the bird had its back to the wind that was gusting strongly. But when the chickadee turned, the feathers did not lie flat, and I guessed that the bird was injured and probably unable to fly. The chickadee then turned a corner and was blocked from my view by a low pile of logs.

My attention was then drawn to a gray squirrel that crossed the patio in front of me and proceeded in the direction of the feeder. It turned the same corner as the chickadee and was mostly blocked from view, although I could still see the tip of its tail. I then got the sense that something had interrupted the squirrel's forward motion, and I started to wonder if the chickadee had gotten out of the way.

I moved to a different window closer to the feeder area. Our outdoor air conditioning unit is located right outside this window. To my amazement I found the squirrel perched on the unit holding the now dead chickadee between its front feet and eating it, apparently starting with the head. The squirrel moved off after a couple of minutes, leaving the remains of the chickadee on the unit. I examined the bird's body the next morning. The head was completely gone and the tail was severed from the body, but most of the body remained.

We all expect that injured birds will not survive very long. But in this case I was unprepared for the *coup de grace* being delivered by an opportunistic squirrel. 



BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE BY GEORGE C. WEST

## From MassWildlife: TERN CAM ON LINE!

Bird enthusiasts are invited to visit a Tern Cam website that recently went live on the MassWildlife website. Tern Cam enables viewers to observe activity at a Common Tern nest located on Bird Island, a small, but important tern nesting location off the coast of Marion. Bird Island, owned by the town of Marion, is one of three islands in Buzzards Bay where MassWildlife has been actively working towards restoration of Common and Roseate terns. Bird Island is home to about 12 percent of Massachusetts' Common Terns, state-listed as a Species of Special Concern, and 22 percent of the Northeastern population of the Roseate Tern, federally and state-listed as Endangered. The Tern cam is a result of cooperation between Burr Brothers Boatyard <<http://www.burrbros.com/>>, who provided most of the funding for equipment, the Town of Marion <<http://www.townofmarion.org/>>, and MassWildlife. "We especially wish to acknowledge and thank Andy Shor of Burr Brothers Boatyard in Marion for his support and assistance with the web cam," said Carolyn Mostello, MassWildlife Tern Restoration Manager. The web link for the tern cam is: <[http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/conservation/birds/tern\\_cam.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/conservation/birds/tern_cam.htm)>. Web users are advised that they may need to load AXIS Media Control software to view streaming video. Click on the "Snapshot" icon for still images.

Until the early 1950s, up to 15,000 pairs of terns nested on several islands throughout Buzzards Bay, but by 1975 only 1400 pairs remained, all at Bird Island. Gulls displaced terns from nesting islands, and exposure to PCBs from New Bedford Harbor also impacted tern populations. Over a period of decades, intensive management at Ram, Penikese, and Bird Islands has resulted in a gradual recovery of numbers to nearly 7000 nesting pairs as of the 2007 nesting season. Overall funding for tern restoration and management on these islands has been provided by the New Bedford Harbor Trustee Council since 1999. More information about MassWildlife's tern restoration project can be found at <[www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/conservation/birds/tern\\_restoration.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/conservation/birds/tern_restoration.htm)>.

Management at Bird Island is conducted with the cooperation of the Town of Marion. Each year, MassWildlife staff protects, manages, and monitors the terns to increase abundance, enhance productivity, and gauge progress towards recovery of the populations.



# ABOUT BOOKS

---

## What to Make of a Diminished Thing?

Mark Lynch

*Rare Birds Yearbook: 2008.* BirdLife International. 2007. MagDig Media Limited. Shropshire, England.

*Birder's Conservation Handbook: 100 North American Birds At Risk.* 2007. Princeton University Press. Princeton, New Jersey.

*The Life of the Skies: Birding At the End of Nature.* Jonathan Rosen. 2008. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. New York, New York.

### The Oven Bird

There is a singer everyone has heard,  
Loud, a mid-summer and a mid-wood bird,  
Who makes the solid tree trunks sound again.  
He says that leaves are old and that for flowers  
Mid-summer is to spring as one to ten.  
He says the early petal-fall is past  
When pear and cherry bloom went down in showers  
On sunny days a moment overcast;  
And comes that other fall we name the fall.  
He says the highway dust is over all.  
The bird would sing and be as other birds,  
But that he knows in singing not to sing.  
The question that he frames in all but words  
Is what to make of a diminished thing.

– Robert Frost 1916

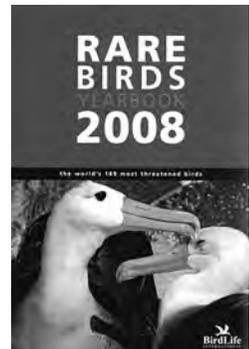
Birding lately, I feel at times that I am furiously arranging deck chairs aboard the Titanic. What does birding mean at a time of massive environmental degradation? Does running around ticking birds contribute to their destruction? After all, you burn gallon after gallon of fossil fuel racing hither and yon just to tick a year bird. Birders do this weekly, sometimes daily, without thinking about it. Birders chase birds wherever they are, typically without a second thought. And what about longer distance trips? Do most birders see the irony of increasing their carbon footprint by flying around the world to see more and more dwindling species? Does the fanatic global pursuit of birds and its resulting contribution to global warming outweigh the benefits of “eco-tourism?” Is our single-minded pursuit of our passion ultimately bad for the birds and, perhaps, the planet?

I began to change my birding style some years back as a conscious response to the looming challenge of global warming. I must admit that it is also true that grandchildren help change one's perspective. What legacy I am leaving succeeding generations has become a concrete consideration. I bird more locally now than I did fifteen years ago. This is also true for many other birders in the state. I restrict my trips to the coast to just a handful a year, typically to the closest part of the coast. I have long since given up on a year list, the single greatest waste of gas in birding. I will still chase a "life bird" or a "state bird," but for the most part, if I have seen the species in the state before, I back off. I remind myself that the trip really isn't necessary, as much as I would like to see that species again. Instead of driving around to many locations on any one outing, my wife and I now travel to one town, conservation area, or atlas block and bird there. And despite a severe disability, if I am able — which is not often — I hike. I have switched my style of birding to longer observations of the birds I find in front of me. I find myself less concerned about a list as I now learn more about behavior, breeding, and local migration trends. Make no mistake, I am no eco-saint; our car is not a hybrid, but an SUV, chosen because of the problems I have with my disability and getting in and out of other cars. But I take public transportation when possible, and we consciously minimize our use of the car.

Still, every time I walk out the door I have to wonder: am I helping or hurting? There was a saying in the 1960s: "If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem." Birding's contribution to global warming and the real need for birders to become seriously conservation-minded is now the elephant in the living room. Yes, it would be great to not have to think about all this and just blithely go on birding as before, but the evidence is in and none of us can avoid the issue; to do so is to be "part of the problem." Below are some thought-provoking books to read to hopefully spur you to further action.

"Birds say *life life life*, but something right alongside them is always whispering *death death death*. More than the blue sky, death is the backdrop against which the birder sees the bird. We go to look at them while they are still here to be seen and while we ourselves are still here to see them." (p. 68, *The Life of the Skies*)

Opening the *Rare Birds Yearbook 2008*, put out by BirdLife International, is like looking at a global ornithological stock report. The Forest Owlet's fortunes continue on a downward spiral, while the Puerto Rican Nightjar's fortunes remain unchanged; but the Turquoise-throated Puffleg is headed for bankruptcy, i.e. "extinction." A concise review of each of the world's 189 "most threatened" birds comprises the bulk of this book. Each account includes a small picture of the bird, a short history of the bird since its discovery, its former and current range and population, and a detailed listing of threats to this species' existence. Other headings include "Conservation Actions to Date" followed by "Conservation Actions Required." Finally, there is the population estimate given in a red bar accompanied by a



helpful arrow that points up if the population is bouncing back, horizontally if the population is unchanged since the last review, or pointing down if the bird species is continuing its decline to extinction. Care to guess which arrow is most often used? To be fair, there are also an alarming number of species that are simply listed “trend unknown.” Could there be a more depressing avian list?

What I found most interesting and helpful in this issue are several of the essays that precede the species accounts. “Ecotourism: Following the Green Road to Enjoy Birds in a Beneficial Way” (p. 68) includes tips for the birder/tourist on how to judge a tour company’s effect on the environment they are supposed to be preserving. Just because the word “eco-tourism” is used in boldface in a brochure does not necessarily mean that the organization is operating responsibly or in a way that encourages long term benefits to the bird and its habitat.

“But while many conservation organizations and governments may try to ensure that projects are sustainable and beneficial, many ecotourism projects simply pay lip service (to) the important issues and merely hint that they are based on environmentally friendly policies.” (p. 72)

In “Species-Finders—the Lives and Adventures of Four Field Ornithologists” (p. 26), these rough and ready scientist/birders get to talk about their discoveries, their disappointments, and what their greatest concerns are when it comes to bird protection in the future. Obviously tired of eco-political correctness, Frank Lambert declares:

“Climate change and the number of people on the planet are surely the main factors that are going to determine which species survive the coming century. Unfortunately, conservation organizations tend to not say much about human population growth and it seems like a bit of a taboo subject, even though it is going to have as much an impact on wildlife, on mankind and our environment as climate change will have.” (p. 31)

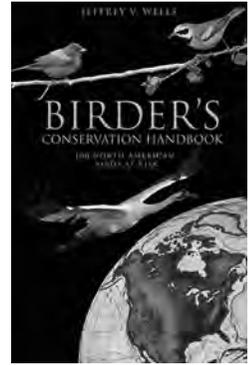
Finally “Falling off the Edge of the World: The Impact of Climate Change on Birds and their Ranges” (p. 41) is a nice summary of what is now known and what is suspected about global warming, ending with a call to arms to all birders to get involved and “begin to make changes in our own lives.” (p. 50)

Granted, the *Rare Birds Yearbook 2008* is a fundraising tool for BirdLife International, so there is an obvious organizational agenda behind all sections of this book. But it is an agenda we should all share, and it is an organization we should also support.

“No sooner had I discovered birds and that beating place in myself that craved and needed nature than I discovered how precarious the wild world is.” (p. 39, *The Life Of The Skies*)

Jeffrey V. Wells’ *Birders Conservation Handbook: 100 North American Birds at Risk* is a monumental and unique achievement: a thoroughly scholarly book that is also of practical value for all birders.

Wells is senior scientist for the Boreal Songbird Initiative, visiting fellow at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and former director of bird conservation for the National Audubon Society. The *Birders' Conservation Handbook* is a collection of monographs on what Wells and others have determined to be the top one hundred North American species "at risk." Each account consists of details about the species "status and distribution," "ecology," "threats," "conservation action," and most important, a list of practical "conservation needs" that would help prevent further declines of that species. This last category is useful for those of us who would like to get more involved, whether that means getting local parcels of land protected or lobbying to get state and national conservation laws passed or changed. Each account is thoroughly referenced.



Though it will seem obvious to most birders that species like Bristle-thighed Curlew and Golden-winged Warbler are listed among the "100 North American birds at risk," other choices will be surprising. American Black Duck, American Woodcock, Prairie and Canada warbler are also considered by Wells to be species at risk. Here in Massachusetts, only long-time birders may be aware of the sudden, rapid decline of breeding Black Ducks that has occurred locally in the last several decades. In the mid-twentieth century, the American Black Duck was a common breeder across much of southern New England. Yet now we are finding it difficult to tick them as a "confirmed" breeding species for many Breeding Bird Atlas blocks in the interior of the state. Because Black Ducks still appear to be common migrants, many birders may not have any idea how dramatically this species' breeding population has declined.

Similarly, while it may seem that woodcocks are "around," this is definitely a species at risk. "The bulk of the habitat for the species lies on private lands. In the northeast U.S. most of it is owned by timber companies. Balancing the needs of early-successional woodland species like American Woodcock against the needs of species that require mature forest is one of the greatest challenges facing conservation in the eastern U.S." (p. 200)

Introductory chapters in the *Birders' Conservation Handbook* include essays on how this list was determined, birds as indicators of the health of the environment, a fine overview of the state of North American bird populations, and a detailed listing of the major conservation issues affecting North America birds. Most important is Wells' chapter "What You Can Do" because it empowers each of us to help to prevent further decline in these birds. His suggestions include protecting the "last of the large," working together to save the last large areas of undisturbed habitat, and saving and restoring "the remnants of the rare." Wells also believes we all need to "teach at every opportunity" to ensure that all children and adults are aware of what's at risk and be shown what we are trying to save. Wells encourages all of us to teach a class, or lead a local birdwalk, or host a slide show at our library. Finally, Wells adds a useful list titled "How to Help Save Birds: a Few Good Ideas," which includes tips on

how to become more of an activist for conservation, as well as simple ideas for reducing your carbon footprint.

The *Birders Conservation Handbook* is an important book. It is a concise and scientific assessment of the challenges facing North American birds as well as a spirited “call to arms” for all of us to get involved in efforts to help preserve habitat and educate the non-birder. It should be in the library of every conservation-minded birder in North America.

“I suppose I look like someone with a hobby, but that isn’t right at all. I’ve been doing a disguised activity, which is what birdwatching is. It isn’t a hobby any more than I would call raising my daughters a hobby. Or writing. It’s a natural, inevitable part of my engagement with the world. It’s my way of answering the question of what to make of a diminished thing.” (p. 156, *The Life of the Skies*)

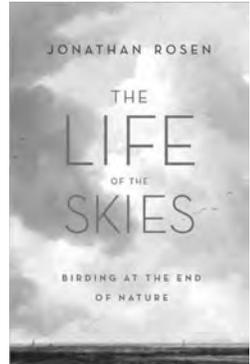
The final line of Robert Frost’s poem, “The Oven Bird,” weaves throughout *The Life of the Skies* like an ancient Greek chorus. What are we to make of birding at a time of ruined habitats and dwindling species, when we always have to weigh the needs of a growing human population against the needs of a diminishing natural world? Jonathan Rosen has written a deeply literate and meaningful meditation on birding that captures the ineffable complexity of the joyous and melancholy human experience of nature. Rosen is a writer by profession, author of several novels and pieces for the *New York Times* and the *New Yorker*. Rosen came to birding rather late in life and he uses his considerable mature literary talents to analyze his need to watch birds. The result is a book that will cause even the most hardheaded twitcher to re-examine his or her life chasing birds.

It is Rosen’s seemingly effortless ability to capture the fleeting moments of quiet reflection that can occur while birding and then expound on their deeper meaning that makes *The Life of the Skies* such a revelation. Central Park becomes Rosen’s “Walden,” his home base and touchstone. From there, the book shuttles between two opposing birding experiences, searching for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker and birding in Israel. The book is divided into two sections, “Backyard Birds” and “Birds of Paradise.” These are the two poles between which Rosen is always careening: the grounded world of the human experience of birding and the philosophical and spiritual world that any serious experience of nature can reveal, if only briefly. It is Rosen’s belief that birdwatching lends itself to such private symbolism.

Being a writer, Rosen seeks answers in the writings of others, and *The Life of the Skies* closely examines the books, poems, and lives of Walt Whitman, Henry David Thoreau, Claude Levi-Strauss, William Faulkner, Teddy Roosevelt, Robert Frost, and Alfred Russel Wallace among others.

But it is the story of Baal Shem Tov, the eighteenth century Jewish mystical master that, like Robert Frost’s “The Oven Bird,” resonates through the book. This is a traditional story of the gradual forgetting over generations of the rituals of Hasidism, the locations, the prayers that were sung, and the lighting of the fires. Eventually the

Rabbi declares, “We cannot light the fire, we cannot speak the prayers, we do not know the place, but we can tell the story of how it’s done, and that is sufficient.” (p. 93) For Rosen, looking at a Black-throated Green Warbler in the very artificial environment of Central Park is like the story of Baal Shem Tov. Most of our ancestors’ experience of the natural world is now lost to us, and we cannot ever recapture what once was, but by doing this one small thing, we can remember, and that is sufficient.



*The Life of the Skies* is a book that transcends the facile category of birding literature, but it is certainly one of the most serious and enjoyable investigations of why we derive pleasure from what amounts to sanctioned voyeurism. Most of all, this is a book that examines the reasons why we should all continue birding, because Rosen understands the pain, joy, and irony of celebrating nature as it slowly vanishes.

“There are times when the birdlife in the park can seem like the bloom of a magnolia tree in a cemetery, its very intensity suggesting a sort of graveyard profusion that undermines the feeling of exaltation. The owl of Athena flies at dusk. Never have I better understood the meaning of Hegel’s observation, which essentially means that insight arrives when the end is near, or that cultures peak as they are about to die, than when I started birding. Birds cluster in patches of green because they have fewer places to go on their journey. There is a reason why birdwatching is an urban invention and a modern — perhaps the quintessential modern — activity.” (p. 92) 🦉

### **Observations needed for Concord and surrounding towns**

Researchers at Boston University are studying the effects of climate change on spring arrival times of songbirds to the Concord area. For past years, we are using the journals of Thoreau, Brewster, and Griscom. Now, we are in need of records of arrival times for any years since 1960. If you have records (or know anyone else who has such records) of the arrival times of songbirds to Concord, Acton, Carlisle, Bedford, Lincoln, Wayland, Sudbury, and/or Maynard for any recent span of years, please contact us. For similar work done in our lab see:

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/walden.html>>.

Thank you!

Libby Bacon (bacon@bu.edu) and Richard Primack (primack@bu.edu)  
617-353-2454

# Bird Watcher's General Store

Featuring: The Amazing AVIARIUM In-House Window  
Birdfeeder. One-way mirrored plexiglass allows you to  
watch the birds for hours but they can't see you!

Come see this exceptional birdfeeder in action.



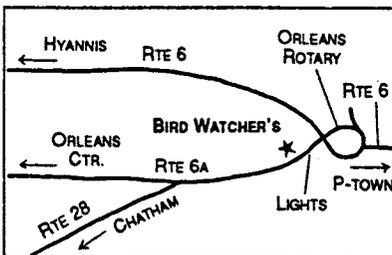
## OTHER BIRD-LOVER ITEMS INCLUDE:

- Bird Mugs
- Bird Note Cards
- Bird Carvings
- Bird Field Guides
- Bird Books
- Bird Key Chains
- Bird Jewelry
- Bird Door Knockers
- Bird Telephone
- Bird Houses
- Bird Baths
- Bird Gift Wrap
- Bird T-Shirts
- Bird Photos
- Bird Prints
- Bird Calls
- Bird Recordings
- Bird Potholders
- Bird Towels
- Bird Carving Kits
- Bird Welcome Mats
- Bird Thermometers
- Bird Sun Catchers
- Bird Calendars
- Bird Pillows
- Bird Place Mats
- Bird Mobiles
- Bird Fountains
- Bird Bath Heaters
- Bird Switch Plates
- Bird Puzzles
- Bird Bookmarks

- A complete line of Binoculars, Spotting Scopes and Tripods
- A children's section with birdhouse kits, beginner books, and other fun and educational items

PLUS over 100 different types of bird feeders including Bluejay and Squirrel-proof feeders that work, GUARANTEED, plus ten different types of Bird Seed

GIFT CERTIFICATES & U.P.S. SHIPPING • OPEN YEAR ROUND



## Bird Watcher's General Store

36 Route 6A • Orleans, MA 02653

(508) 255-6974

or

1-800-562-1512

[www.BirdWatchersGeneralStore.com](http://www.BirdWatchersGeneralStore.com)



2008 Exhibit

*Flight Path:  
Plymouth Beach*

Photographs by  
Jim Fenton

*Flight Path: Plymouth Beach* is Plimoth Plantation's featured exhibit for the 2008 season. With a focus on the stunning photographs by Jim Fenton, Flight Path takes you through a season on Plymouth Beach—from the arrival of the Piping Plover in the spring to the rare visit of the beautiful Buff-breasted Sandpiper in the fall.

Accompanying the exhibit is a full roster of events. The **Thursday Series**, lectures and movies once a month on the topic of bird migration from a local to a global perspective and **bird walks** on Plymouth Beach led by experts in the field. Transportation to the beach is by water taxi with a stop at Goldenrod Cottage for snacks and a brief introduction before the walks begin.

For a complete calendar of events go to **[www.plimoth.org](http://www.plimoth.org)** and click on Flight Path.

# BIRD SIGHTINGS

---

January/February 2008

*Seth Kellogg, Marjorie W. Rines, Robert H. Stymeist, and Jeremiah R. Trimble*

The New Year opened with a relatively warm morning, and birders got a nice start on a new year list. The weather quickly went downhill, and by noon the northeast wind kicked in and rain, sleet, and snow pretty much killed the rest of the day. January was warmer than average with below-normal rain and snow. In Boston the average temperature of 33.4° was four degrees above normal. The high was 67° on January 8, and the low was just 7° on January 3. Rainfall in Boston was 2.69 inches, 1.23 inches below average, and measurable amounts occurred on seven days. Snowfall reached 8.3 inches in Boston, five inches below average but 7.3 inches more than last January.

Although February 2008 was also mild, there was a lot of precipitation. An unseasonable high of 62° was noted in Boston on February 18, and the low of 11° fell on Leap Day, February 29. Rain totaled 7.94 inches in Boston, 4.64 inches above average, breaking the 1984 record of 7.81 inches. Snowfall totaled 15.0 inches, 3.4 inches above average, for a season total of 51 inches, 17.8 inches above average and 44.6 inches more than last year's almost snow-free winter.

*R. H. Stymeist*

## WATERFOWL THROUGH ALCIDS

Interesting goose sightings were mostly of birds lingering from earlier in the winter. Notables in Sharon included a **Greenland Greater White-fronted Goose** and a **Barnacle Goose**. A single **Cackling Goose** was discovered in Sheffield. Wood Ducks and Northern Shovelers, uncommon in winter, were reported in scattered locations. Five Eurasian Wigeons was a typical winter number and involved the more easily identified males. The two males at Swansea on January 19 were discovered in an impressive flock of 286 American Wigeons. Cape Cod had a number of Redheads lingering, including as many as four in Falmouth and two in North Truro.

The sandy environment of Cape Cod is not ideal for the rock-loving Harlequin Duck, but a section of Nauset Beach with a small area of rocky habitat along a rip has proved to be a regular wintering spot for this species. As many as five individuals were discovered there this winter. The more typical habitat around Cape Ann held upwards of 152 birds. A female King Eider discovered on fresh water at Pilgrim Lake was noteworthy, even though the ocean was only a few hundred yards away. Large concentrations of scoter were massing off of Plum Island during January and February. High counts included 4730 White-winged Scoters on January 6 along with 4000 unidentified scoters. Even adjusting for possible repeats, at least twenty Barrow's Goldeneyes were encountered during January and February in the state, twenty and a half if you add the hybrid Common X Barrow's Goldeneye discovered on Plum Island on February 3.

**Pacific Loons** were reported from Provincetown and Rockport. Although reported regularly in winter, these loons are rarely photographed, apparently due to their elusiveness. Because of the difficulty in differentiating this species from other loons, detailed written reports should always be submitted to the MARC, and birders should attempt to get photographs when possible. The **Eared Grebe** reliably continued near Eastern Point in Gloucester.

The discovery of an **American White Pelican** standing in the snow near the Connecticut River was astonishing. Interestingly, the wintering range of this species is expanding to our south, as far north as the Carolinas, a situation which may be reflected in future reports in Massachusetts. A **Snowy Egret** in West Harwich on January 11 was only the second January record for this species in Massachusetts in the last fifteen years!

As in recent years, a few **Black Vulture** sightings trickled in from the usual localities in the western part of the state as well as a typical area in southeastern Massachusetts. Probably the most notable raptor sighting of the period was an **Osprey** in Maynard, last seen on February 7. Good numbers of Bald Eagles were noted at the Merrimack River and at Quabbin Reservoir.

During this period there were significant shorebird records. A single Semipalmated Plover was reported for two days in Orleans in late February, only the third February record for this species. One lucky observer discovered a mixed flock of large shorebirds, including two Willets and three Long-billed Dowitchers at Nauset Marsh on February 19. This is the first time that either species has been recorded in February in Massachusetts! Although the subspecies of these Willets were not identified, both were probably "Western" Willets since there are no winter records of "Eastern" Willets anywhere in the United States. Still, the description of one bird as being smaller and darker brings up the possibility of an "Eastern" Willet. Separation of these two subspecies in winter is exceedingly difficult and would require detailed photographs showing both structure and coloration. Interestingly, in December 2006 three Willets were discovered in this general area, and one was suspected then of being an "Eastern" Willet.

The story of the season was the gull show at Niles Pond in Gloucester. This began in December with the discovery of a **Slaty-backed Gull** in the area. As January continued, the show exploded. The adult Slaty-backed Gull remained through at least February 24 and was enjoyed by many and well photographed. Amazingly, as many as four **Thayer's Gulls** were identified at Niles Pond and surrounding areas during January and February. Thayer's Gull is an often controversial species and very difficult to identify, so it was lucky that these gulls were well photographed. The enormity of this influx of gulls was perhaps best illustrated by the exceptionally high numbers of white-winged gulls. A high count of fifty-eight "Kumlien's" Iceland Gulls during the period was one of the highest single-day counts ever in Massachusetts outside of Nantucket, which has harbored nearly 200 Iceland Gulls at times. Truly amazing and unprecedented was the single-day high count of twenty-three Glaucous Gulls during the period. To put this into perspective, the previous Massachusetts high counts for this species (the only double digit counts) were ten in 1964, twelve in 1979 and ten in 1981. Otherwise, this species has never been encountered in groups of more than three! The Niles Pond area also produced one Black-headed Gull and up to four Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Not to be completely overshadowed, Nantucket, typically the best winter gull site in the state, produced a **Mew Gull**, fifty-seven Iceland Gulls, and ninety-eight Lesser Black-backed Gulls on February 10! Dovekies were reported spottily from standard locations on Cape Cod and the North Shore. One interesting report was received from Fairhaven on Buzzards Bay, which is a rather unusual locality. A total of twenty-nine Common Murres in Rockport on February 1 was impressive but not atypical for the last few years. That same day, fourteen Thick-billed Murres were also reported from the same location, as were two Atlantic Puffins.

*J. Trimble*

Greenland Greater White-fronted Goose				1/26	Nahant	100+	R. Heil#
thr	Sharon	1	v.o.	1/26	W. Dennis	103	M. Keleher
Snow Goose				2/4	Plymouth	212	I. Davies#
1/1-10	Sharon	1 imm	v.o.	2/25	Gloucester	33	R. Heil
1/4	Norwell	1	C. Nims	<b>Barnacle Goose</b> (details submitted) *			
1/6	Gr Barrington	1	G. Ward	1/1-12	Sharon	1 ad	v.o.
Brant				<b>Cackling Goose</b>			
1/6	Fairhaven	125	M. Lynch#	1/16	Sheffield	1	J. Morris-Siegal
1/6, 2/3	Boston H.	644, 1041	TASL (Hall)	Canada Goose			
1/19	Swansea	635	M. Lynch#	1/2	Newbypt	800	J. Berry

Canada Goose (continued)				1/13	New Bedford	1 m	A. + D. Morgan
1/6, 2/3	Boston H.	1927, 963	TASL (Hall)	2/16	Wayland	1 f	G. Long
1/6	P.I.	960	R. Heil		Ring-necked Duck		
1/12	Sharon	1250	G. d'Entremont	thr	Winchester	20 max	2/19 M. Rines
1/12	Sheffield	2447	M. Lynch#	1/4, 2/15	Waltham	10, 28	J. Forbes
1/19	Swansea	1699	M. Lynch#	1/7, 2/15	Barnstable	9, 285	M. Keleher#
1/27	Lakeville	437	SSBC (Anderson)	1/25	Northbridge	4	M. Lynch#
Mute Swan				1/26	N. Falmouth	28	P. + F. Vale
1/7	Barnstable	20	M. Keleher#	2/3	Eastham	275	SSBC (Petersen)
1/17	Turners Falls	28	H. Allen	2/17	Westport	30	S. Grinley#
1/19	Swansea	278	M. Lynch#	Greater Scaup			
1/26	Somerset	28	R. Stymeist#	1/6, 2/3	Boston H.	991, 1120	TASL (Hall)
2/8	Scituate	30	MAS (J. Galluzzo)	1/10	E. Gloucester	11	R. Heil
2/19	S. Carver	30	B. Conway	1/19	Swansea	550	M. Lynch#
Wood Duck				1/19	N. Truro	140	J. Young
1/4, 28	Watertown	1 m	L. Ferraresso	2/6	Hingham H.	81	C. Nims#
1/19	Waltham	1	J. Forbes#	2/9, 23	Falmouth	350, 500	G. Hirth
1/26	Gloucester	1	S. Grinley#	2/10	Eastham	140	B. Nikula
2/16	Marston Mills	1 m	M. Keleher	2/25	Lakeville	30	K. Anderson
2/21	Salisbury	1 m	S. McGrath	Lesser Scaup			
2/21	Dedham	3	T. Raymond	1/5	Newbypt H.	2	J. Offermann
Gadwall				1/7	Gloucester	3	J. Berry
thr	P.I.	70 max	v.o.	2/3	Bourne	50	G. d'Entremont
thr	Gloucester	17 max	v.o.	2/7	Falmouth	22	M. Malin
1/7, 2/15	Barnstable	5, 28	M. Keleher#	2/17	Westport	20	S. Grinley#
1/10, 2/10	Springfield	1, 2	Carpist, Rutman	2/21	Nahant	87	L. Pivacek
1/20	Plymouth	67	SSBC (Gd'E)	King Eider			
2/16	Eastham	6	P. + F. Vale	thr	Gloucester	1-2	v.o.
Eurasian Wigeon				thr	Truropt (A.P.)	1-2	v.o.
thr	Eastham	1 m	v.o.	1/19-29	Truro	1 f	M. Iliff#
thr	Falmouth	1	v.o.	Common Eider			
thr	Plymouth	1 m	v.o.	1/6, 2/3	Boston H.	4654, 6104	TASL (Hall)
1/19	Swansea	2 m	M. Lynch#	1/6	Fairhaven	621	M. Lynch#
American Wigeon				1/7	Barnstable	260	M. Keleher#
thr	Plymouth	50 max	v.o.	1/27	Bourne	1590	SSBC (Anderson)
1/5, 2/7	Falmouth	80, 11	M. Malin	2/9	Woods Hole	650	G. Hirth
1/19	Swansea	286	M. Lynch#	2/17	Westport	550	G. d'Entremont
1/26	Somerset	105	R. Stymeist#	2/25	Cape Ann	687	R. Heil
2/7	Deerfield	2	R. Ranney-Blake	Harlequin Duck			
2/15	Barnstable	41	M. Keleher	1/6	Winthrop	1	TASL (Hall)
2/16	Eastham	25+	P. + F. Vale	2/3	Orleans	5	SSBC (Petersen)
2/17	Acoaxet	16	S. Grinley#	2/5	Acoaxet	5	I. Davies#
American Black Duck				2/10	N. Scituate	14	SSBC (Gd'E)
1/6, 2/3	Boston H.	942, 687	TASL (Hall)	2/25	Cape Ann	152	R. Heil
1/6	P.I.	2150	R. Heil	Surf Scoter			
2/4	Plymouth	1739	I. Davies#	1/6	Fairhaven	520	M. Lynch#
Mallard				1/6, 2/3	Boston H.	442, 381	TASL (Hall)
1/6, 2/3	Boston H.	504, 294	TASL (Hall)	2/4	P.I.	50+	P. + F. Vale
1/20	Plymouth	400	SSBC (Gd'E)	2/25	Cape Ann	1406	R. Heil
2/15	Barnstable	210	M. Keleher	White-winged Scoter			
Northern Shoveler				1/6, 2/3	Boston H.	1559, 1294	TASL (Hall)
2/3	P.I.	1 m	R. Heil#	1/6, 2/3	P.I.	4730, 2700	R. Heil
2/10	Melrose	1 m	D. Jewell#	2/21	Nahant	30	L. Pivacek
2/24	Boylston	1 f	M. Lynch#	2/25	Cape Ann	879	R. Heil
Northern Pintail				Black Scoter			
thr	P.I.	66 max	v.o.	1/6	P.I.	1960	R. Heil
1/6	Yarmouth	32	M. Keleher	1/6, 2/3	Boston H.	5, 9	TASL (Hall)
1/16	Sheffield	5	J. Morris-Siegal	2/3	Orleans	75	SSBC (Petersen)
1/20	Plymouth	10	SSBC (Gd'E)	2/25	Cape Ann	103	R. Heil
1/26	Harwich	20	J. Hoye#	Scoter Species			
1/26	Westport	94	R. Stymeist#	1/6, 2/3	P.I.	4000, 3000	R. Heil
1/29	Ipswich	5	J. Berry	Long-tailed Duck			
2/5, 19	Concord (NAC)	1, 5	S. Perkins#	thr	P.I.	85 max	v.o.
2/25	Cape Ann	2 f	R. Heil	1/6, 2/3	Boston H.	110, 96	TASL (Hall)
Green-winged Teal				1/6	Fairhaven	69	M. Lynch#
1/1	P'town	2	B. Nikula	2/17	Marion	29	J. Sweeney#
1/7	Plymouth	8	K. Doyon	2/25	Cape Ann	89	R. Heil
1/26, 2/10	Eastham (CGB)	1, 20	M. Malin#	Bufflehead			
2/3	P.I.	2 m	R. Heil#	1/5	Falmouth	450+	M. Malin
Canvasback				1/6, 2/3	Boston H.	1752, 2212	TASL (Hall)
1/2, 2/23	Falmouth	2, 22	Malin, Hirth	1/7	Barnstable	165	M. Keleher#
1/4-5	Essex	1	v.o.	1/19	Swansea	318	M. Lynch#
1/12	Fairhaven	1	K. Mills#	1/26	Nahant	400+	R. Heil#
2/5	Acoaxet	123	I. Davies#	2/17	Marion	161	J. Sweeney#
2/8	Eastham (F.H.)	1	M. Faherty	2/17	Mattapoisett	113	J. Sweeney#
Redhead				2/25	Cape Ann	113	R. Heil
thr	Falmouth	3-4	v.o.	Common Goldeneye			
thr	N. Truro	2	v.o.	1/6	Fairhaven	594	M. Lynch#

Common Goldeneye (continued)			1/15	Yarmouth	10	fide P. McFarland
1/6, 2/3	Boston H.	590, 743	TASL (Hall)	Red-throated Loon		
1/13	E. Sandwich	252	D. Manchester	thr	34 max	v.o.
1/13	Wachusett Res.	26	M. Lynch#	1/6, 2/3	23, 22	TASL (Hall)
1/14	Northfield	200	M. Taylor	2/3	25	SSBC (Peterson)
1/19	Swansea	524	M. Lynch#	2/9	16	R. Stymeist#
2/6	Turners Falls	34	H. Allen	2/25	2	R. Heil
2/15	Barnstable	115	M. Keleher	2/28	1	I. Davies
2/17	Newbypt	275	B. Harris	<b>Pacific Loon</b> (no details)		
2/25	Cape Ann	122	R. Heil	1/27, 2/3	1	B. Nikula
Barrow's Goldeneye			2/25	Rockport	1	R. Heil
1/2	Worcester	1 f	M. Lynch#	Common Loon		
1/6	S. Boston	1	BBC (R. Stymeist)	thr	68 max	v.o.
1/6	Fairhaven	4 m	M. Lynch#	1/5	33	M. Lynch#
1/6-2/1	Cotuit	1 m	M. Keleher	1/6	16	SSBC (Anderson)
1/7, 2/6	Turners Falls	1	Bowrys, Allen	1/6, 2/3	75, 100	TASL (Hall)
1/12	Wellfleet	1	P. Trull#	1/13	4	M. Lynch#
1/12	Boston	1 m	B. Larson	1/27	19	SSBC (Anderson)
1/19	N. Truro	1 m	J. Young#	2/8	18	M. Faherty
1/19	Swansea	1 m	M. Lynch#	2/15	10	M. Keleher
2/3	Westport	1 f	B. Cassie	<b>Pied-billed Grebe</b>		
2/4	Newbypt	1 m, 1 f	P. + F. Vale	1/5, 2/7	1, 2	M. Malin
2/5	Acoaxet	1 f	I. Davies#	1/6	2	J. Hoye#
2/8	Hull	1	MAS (J. Galluzzo)	1/7, 2/4	1, 1	Doyon, Davies
2/23	Falmouth	1 m, 1 f	G. Hirth	1/12	1	P. Trull#
2/25	Gloucester	1 f	R. Heil	2/24	1	P. Trull
Common X Barrow's Goldeneye				<b>Horned Grebe</b>		
2/3	P.I.	1 m	R. Heil#	thr	67 max	v.o.
Hooded Merganser			1/6	Fairhaven	85	M. Lynch#
1/4	Waltham	30	J. Forbes	1/6, 2/3	219, 291	TASL (Hall)
1/5	Falmouth	100	M. Malin	1/9	16	L. Therrien
1/6	Eastham	60	J. Hoye#	1/26	22	R. Stymeist#
1/7, 2/15	Barnstable	42	M. Keleher#	2/8	24	M. Faherty
1/8	Watertown	30	C. Thrope	2/25	48	R. Heil
1/20, 2/17	Brookfields	59, 15	M. Lynch#	<b>Red-necked Grebe</b>		
1/26	Somerset	38	R. Stymeist#	thr	20 max	v.o.
2/4	Brewster	198	P. Trull	1/1, 2/3	8, 7	B. Nikula
2/19	Winchester	16	M. Rines	1/6, 2/3	38, 49	TASL (Hall)
Common Merganser			1/12	Dennis	11	P. Trull#
1/4	Waltham	30	J. Forbes	2/1	6	R. Heil
1/6	S. Quabbin	55	L. Therrien	2/8	78+	M. Faherty
1/10	Brewster	44	M. Keleher	2/25	21	R. Heil
1/16	Lakeville	50+	K. Anderson	<b>Eared Grebe *</b>		
1/19	S. Quabbin	244	L. Therrien	1/1-2/17	1	v.o.
2/15	E. Sandwich	63	D. Manchester	<b>Northern Gannet</b>		
2/20	W. Newbury	24	R. Heil	1/1	7	BBC (L. de la Flor)
2/23	Medford	142	M. Rines	2/1	10	R. Heil
Red-breasted Merganser			2/4	P'town (R.P.)	127	I. Davies#
thr	Turners Falls	1	v.o.	2/8	40	M. Faherty
1/2	Newbypt H.	110	D. Ely	2/18	42	B. Nikula
1/5	Falmouth	45	M. Malin	<b>American White Pelican *</b>		
1/6, 2/3	Boston H.	643, 540	TASL (Hall)	1/9	1 ph	D. Wheeler
1/27, 2/23	P'town	500, 900	B. Nikula	<b>Double-crested Cormorant</b>		
2/15	Barnstable	42	M. Keleher	1/5	1	M. Lynch#
2/25	Cape Ann	148	R. Heil	1/26	1	M. Malin#
Ruddy Duck			2/2	Medford	1	P. Roberts
1/10	S. Boston	2	M. Rigano	<b>Great Cormorant</b>		
2/3	Boston H.	57	TASL (Hall)	1/6	11	SSBC (Anderson)
2/7, 26	Falmouth	32, 33	M. Malin	1/13	1	imm M. Lynch#
Ring-necked Pheasant			1/19	N. Truro	145	J. Young
1/28	Amherst	1	H. Allen	2/2	3	M. Rines#
Ruffed Grouse			2/3	Newbypt	35	R. Heil#
1/1	Hardwick	5	C. Buelow	2/3	27	TASL (Hall)
1/6	S. Quabbin	1	L. Therrien	2/10	59	SSBC (Gd'E)
1/26	E. Sandwich	2	D. Manchester	2/25	86	R. Heil
2/9	Royalston	1	J. Smith#	<b>American Bittern</b>		
2/20	Belchertown	3	L. Therrien	1/11	1	CCBC (Keleher)
Wild Turkey			1/25	Rowley	1	S. McGrath
1/13	Petersham	22	P. + F. Vale	1/26	1	S. Sutton#
1/16	Gloucester	21	B. Harris	<b>Great Blue Heron</b>		
1/17	Eastham (CGB)	64	P. Trull#	1/7	4	M. Keleher#
1/31	S. Quabbin	44	L. Therrien	2/15	5	M. Keleher
2/5	Sunderland	99	F. Bowrys	2/19	7	B. Harris
2/17	Brookfields	43	M. Lynch#	2/23	6	C. Gibson
2/21	W. Brookfield	23	J. Hoye#	<b>Snowy Egret</b>		
2/25	Tyringham	128	E. Neumuth	1/11	1	C. + S. Thompson
Northern Bobwhite				<b>Black-crowned Night-Heron</b>		
1/12	S. Yarmouth	9	A. Middleton	1/5, 2/24	1, 1	Smith, Brown

Black-crowned Night-Heron (continued)		2/28	Hadley	1	F. Bowrys
1/6 Sandwich	6	SSBC (Anderson)	Red-tailed Hawk		
1/18 Barnstable	1	J. Ghabban	2/10 N. Marshfield	10	SSBC (Gd'E)
1/27 Bourne	6	SSBC (Anderson)	2/20 W. Newbury	10	R. Heil
1/27 Winthrop	3	R. Stymeist	Rough-legged Hawk		
2/4 Plymouth	1	I. Davies#	thr P.I.	6 max	v.o.
<b>Black Vulture</b>			1/1 Gloucester (E.P.)	1 dk	T. Martin
1/12 Sheffield	3	M. Lynch#	1/2 Falmouth	1	M. Malin
1/23 Gr Barrington	2	C. Barrett	1/4, 2/6 Essex	2, 1	J. Nelson
2/3 Westport	4 ph	M. Boucher	1/4 Fitchburg	1 m ad lt	P. Maher
Turkey Vulture			1/18 Barnstable	1	J. Ghabban
thr Ipswich	3-9	v.o.	1/19 N. Truro	1 dk	B. Nikula
1/6 Sandwich	4	SSBC (Anderson)	1/19 Sudbury	1	G. Long
1/19 P.I.	6	T. Wetmore	1/20 Newbury	1	S. McGrath
1/27 Bourne	4	SSBC (Anderson)	2/3 Cumb. Farms	3 lt, 1dk	J. Sweeney
2/2 Westport	6	J. Hoye#	2/3 DWWS	5	D. Manchester
2/5 N. Falmouth	4	I. Nisbet	American Kestrel		
2/20 Palmer	35	B. Jones	thr P.I.	1	v.o.
2/24 Marstons Mills	4	D. Manchester	1/thr Melrose	1 m	D. + I. Jewell
<b>Osprey</b>			1/2 Newbypt	1	MAS (B. Gette)
1/17-2/7 Maynard	1	P. Boothroyd	1/5 Danvers	1	M. Lynch#
Bald Eagle			1/6 Fairhaven	2	M. Lynch#
thr Reports of individuals from 24 locations			1/6 S. Carver	1	B. Conway
thr Merrimack R.	16 max	v.o.	1/9 Salisbury	1	S. McGrath
thr Quabbin	14 max	v.o.	1/16 Lakeville	1	J. Mason
2/4 Sharon	2 ad	K. Ryan	1/17 Arlington	1	M. Rines
2/17 Westport	2	S. Grinley#	1/26 Nahant	1 m	R. Heil#
Northern Harrier			1/28, 2/17 Boston (Logan)	4, 5	N. Smith
thr DWWS	7 max	v.o.	1/31 Springfield	1	C. Carpist
thr P.I.	12 max	v.o.	2/thr Newbury	1 m	v.o.
1/7 Cotuit	2	M. Keleher#	2/5 Sunderland	1	F. Bowrys
1/12 Fairhaven	2	A. + D. Morgan	2/9 Halifax	2	K. Anderson#
1/17 Duxbury	3	R. Bowes	2/16 Hadley	1	L. Therrien
2/3 Cumb. Farms	4	J. Sweeney	Merlin		
2/15 Barnstable	3	M. Keleher	thr Medford	1	R. Augart
2/17 Marion	2	J. Sweeney#	1/1 Squantum	1	G. d'Entremont#
2/23 W. Harwich	3	A. Curtis	1/1 Boston (A.A.)	1	J. Dibbell
Sharp-shinned Hawk			1/2 Northampton	1	L. Therrien
thr Reports of indiv. from 20 locations			1/3 Mashpee	1	M. Keleher
1/27 Athol	2	SSBC (E. LeBlanc)	1/8 Ipswich	1	J. Berry
Cooper's Hawk			1/11 Pittsfield	1	G. Hurley
thr Reports of indiv. from 30 locations			1/12 Gloucester	1	BBC (Ferraresso)
1/8 P.I.	2	R. Heil	1/17 Amherst	1	F. Bowrys
1/10 E. Gloucester	2	R. Heil	1/19 Rockport	1	J. Berry
1/25 Newbypt	2	S. McGrath	1/26 P'town	1	M. Malin#
2/3 P.I.	2	R. Heil#	1/26 P.I.	2	T. Wetmore
2/17 Amherst	2	H. Allen	1/26 Eastham (F.E.)	1	M. Malin#
Northern Goshawk			1/29 Salisbury	1	J. Nelson
1/1 Athol	1	D. Small	1/29 Woburn (HP)	1 m	M. Rines
1/2 Boxford	1	T. Martin	1/30 Stoneham	1	D. + I. Jewell
1/2-8 P.I.	1	1W ph	2/12 Wayland	1	B. Harris
1/3 Hinsdale	1	L. Roberson	2/17 Fairhaven	1	J. Sweeney#
1/19 Newbury	1	adMAS (D. Larson)	Peregrine Falcon		
1/20 Quabbin Pk	1 ad	M. Lynch#	thr Boston	2	v.o.
1/29 N. Falmouth	1 m ad	I. Nisbet	thr Gloucester	2	v.o.
2/7 Washington	1	M. Wiley	1/12 Gloucester	2	BBC (Ferraresso)
2/8 Amherst	1	H. Allen	1/26 P'town	3	M. Malin#
2/17 Brookfields	1 ad	M. Lynch#	2/25 Worcester	pr	J. Dekker
Red-shouldered Hawk			American Coot		
1/1 Plymouth B.	1 ph	G. Harriman	thr Woburn (HP)	8-14	M. Rines
1/2 N. Falmouth	1	I. Nisbet	1/6 Falmouth	52	M. Keleher
1/5 IRWS	1 ad	J. Berry#	1/12 Eastham	17	P. Trull#
1/6 Rowley	1	P. + F. Vale	1/20 Plymouth	6	SSBC (Gd'E)
1/15 Easton	pr	K. Ryan	1/26 Lynn	8	R. Heil#
1/20 Georgetown	1	P. + F. Vale	2/14 Jamaica Plain	37	L. Ferraresso
1/26 Westport	2	R. Stymeist#	Black-bellied Plover		
2/1 Ipswich	1	S. McGrath	1/2 Duxbury B.	2	R. Bowes
2/3 DWWS	1	D. Manchester	1/16-26 Gloucester (E.P.)	1	v.o.
2/4 Acushnet	pr	K. Langevin	1/17, 2/10 Eastham (CGB)	6, 8	Trull, Malin
2/7 Falmouth	1	M. Malin	1/27 Salisbury	1	S. Grinley
2/10 N. Marshfield	1	SSBC (Gd'E)	Semipalmated Plover		
2/17 Mattapoissett	1	J. Sweeney#	2/23-24 Orleans	1	C. Ekroth#
2/20 Middleboro	pr	K. Anderson	Killdeer		
2/20 Springfield	1	A. + L. Richardson	1/14 Orleans	4	R. Stymeist#
2/21 Ipswich	1	sub-ad	1/18 Fairhaven	1	J. Hoye#
2/22 Granby	1	C. Allen	2/17 Westport	1	S. Grinley#
2/23 Dartmouth	2	A. + D. Morgan	2/18 Clinton	1	K. Bourinot
2/23 Groton	1 ph	T. Murray			

Greater Yellowlegs				1/3	Medford	1	M. Rines
2/1, 15	Osterville	1, 2	M. Keleher	1/25	Holyoke	2	B. Bieda
2/24	W. Harwich	3	B. Nikula	1/27-2/29	P'town	15 max	v.o.
Willet				1/27	N. Truro	7+	B. Nikula
2/19	Fort Hill	2	B. Harris	2/3	Newbypt	4	R. Heil#
Ruddy Turnstone				2/10	Nantucket	57	E. Ray
thr	Gloucester (B.R.)	7 max	v.o.	Lesser Black-backed Gull			
1/6	Hull	21	TASL (Hall)	thr	Gloucester (E.P.)	1-4	v.o.
1/7	Osterville	22	M. Keleher#	1/1-2/6	Turners Falls	1	v.o.
1/12	Fairhaven	1	K. Mills#	1/6, 2/12	Boston	2	R. Stymeist
2/3	P'town	3	D. Bates#	2/1	Cotuit	1	CCBC (M. Keleher)
2/3	Boston H.	10	TASL (Hall)	2/8	P'town (R.P.)	1 ad	L. Ferraresso#
Sanderling				2/10	Nantucket	98	E. Ray
1/6	Quincy	45	TASL (Hall)	2/15	Osterville	1	M. Keleher
1/9	Osterville	11	A. Curtis	2/17	Plymouth	1	K. Doyon
1/20	Plymouth	12	SSBC (Gd'E)	Slaty-backed Gull (no details) *			
1/27	Salisbury	28	S. Grinley	1/1-2/24	Gloucester	1 ad ph	v.o.
2/3	Boston H.	15	TASL (Hall)	Glaucous Gull			
2/3	P.I.	200	T. Wetmore	thr	Gloucester (E.P.)	23 max	v.o.
2/9	P'town	600	B. Nikula	1/4	Turners Falls	2	J. Smith
Purple Sandpiper				1/6, 2/10	P.I.	1 ad, 1 W	Wetmore, Williams
thr	Gloucester	130 max	v.o.	1/25	Holyoke	2	B. Bieda
thr	P.I.	15 max	v.o.	1/27	P'town	1 W	B. Nikula
1/6, 2/3	Boston H.	21, 271	TASL (Hall)	2/3	Boston H.	1	TASL (M. Hall)
1/9, 2/1	Osterville	7, 6	A. Curtis	Nelson's Gull			
1/26	Westport	9	R. Stymeist#	1/1-2/17	Gloucester (E.P.)	4	v.o.
2/3	Bourne	22	M. Keleher#	Black-legged Kittiwake			
2/3	Salisbury	30	R. Heil#	1/6 2/3	P.I.	41 ad, 6 ad	R. Heil
2/8	Scituate	55	MAS (J. Galluzzo)	1/27	N. Truro	125	B. Nikula
2/9	Manomet	7	K. Anderson#	1/28	Eastham (F.E.)	360	B. Nikula
2/25	Rockport	115	R. Heil	2/1	Rockport (A.P.)	405	R. Heil
Dunlin				2/9	P'town	220+	B. Nikula
1/2, 2/17	Newbypt	125, 200	Berry, Mirick	Dovekie			
1/17	Eastham (CGB)	400	P. Trull#	1/1, 2/24	Gloucester	1, 1	BBC
1/26	Westport	22	R. Stymeist#	1/6	Fairhaven	1	M. Lynch#
1/26	Essex	35	R. Heil#	1/12, 2/25	Rockport (A.P.)	1, 2	Ferraresso, Vale
2/1	Duxbury B.	400	MAS (J. Galluzzo)	1/13	Wellfleet	3	T. Johnson
2/4	Plymouth	450	I. Davies#	2/4	P'town (R.P.)	3	I. Davies#
2/9	P'town	800	B. Nikula	Common Murre			
2/9	Truro	25	R. Stymeist#	1/19	P'town (R.P.)	2	M. Iliff#
2/15	Barnstable	20	M. Keleher	2/1	Rockport (A.P.)	29	R. Heil
2/23	Gloucester	20	P. + F. Vale	Thick-billed Murre			
Long-billed Dowitcher				1/1	Rockport (A.P.)	1	S. Moore#
2/19	Fort Hill	3 ph	B. Harris	1/19	Gloucester	1	J. Berry#
Wilson's Snipe				1/19, 2/3	P'town	3, 6	B. Nikula
1/26	Newbypt	1	S. Grinley#	1/20	N. Truro	1	J. Young
2/4	Brewster	1	P. Trull	2/1	Rockport (A.P.)	14	R. Heil
American Woodcock				2/10	P.I.	2	S. Williams#
2/3	E. Sandwich	1	D. Manchester	Razorbill			
2/5	W. Barnstable	1	C. Walz	thr	P.I.	490 max 1/6	v.o.
2/16	M.V.	2	J. Liller#	1/5, 2/1	Rockport (A.P.)	40, 490	Vale, Heil
Black-headed Gull				1/6, 2/3	Orleans	590, 750	Iliff, Petersen
1/1	Gloucester (E.P.)	1 1W	E. Nielsen	1/19, 27	P'town	125, 60	B. Nikula
1/1	Truro	1	J. Young	1/19	Wellfleet	1300	G. d'Entremont
1/6-19	Osterville	1	M. Keleher	2/3, 18	P'town	300, 150	B. Nikula
1/26-2/17	Newbypt	1-2	v.o.	2/9	Truro	400	R. Stymeist#
Bonaparte's Gull				Black Guillemot			
1/1	P.I.	6	T. Wetmore	1/5	Gloucester (E.P.)	21	M. Lynch#
1/19	Gloucester	8 ad	J. Berry	1/13	Wellfleet	2	T. Johnson
1/26	Swampscott	1 ad	R. Heil#	1/19	Duxbury	1	R. Bowes
2/3	Lynn	53	P. + F. Vale	2/1	Rockport (A.P.)	3	R. Heil
Mew Gull				2/3	Boston H.	12	TASL (M. Hall)
2/10	Nantucket	1 ph	E. Ray	2/3	P.I.	1	R. Heil#
Thayer's Gull (no details) *				2/9	P'town	1	B. Nikula
thr	Gloucester (E.P.)	3	v.o.	2/25	Cape Ann	41	R. Heil
Iceland Gull				Atlantic Puffin			
thr	Gloucester	58 max	v.o.	1/20	P'town	1 dead	B. Nikula#
thr	P.I.	2	v.o.	2/1	Rockport (A.P.)	2	R. Heil
1/2, 2/20	Turners Falls	2, 1	J. Smith, Bowrys	2/9	P'town	1	B. Nikula

## OWLS THROUGH FINCHES

There were many reports of Great Horned Owls during the period, often heard calling, as is typical prior to the breeding season. Plum Island hosted as many as three Snowy and five Short-eared owls as well as a brief visit by a cooperative Northern Saw-whet Owl in mid-January. Barred Owls were well noted, especially in western Massachusetts. A **Rufous Hummingbird**, first found on November 19, 2007, remained at a Marshfield feeder through January 12.

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported in good numbers. Infrequent after December, a **Western Kingbird** was found and photographed in Barnstable during January. It was a big flight year for Northern Shrikes, with over sixty individuals reported widely throughout the state. Very few reports of Fish Crows were noted, but Common Ravens continued to be found in many areas in eastern Massachusetts. Among the hardier of overwintering species, American Robins were noted in flocks of over 200 individuals in many areas, and there were good numbers of Hermit Thrushes, Eastern Bluebirds, Gray Catbirds, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Eastern Towhees reported.

Among the rare birds noted, the **Townsend's Solitaire** first reported December 24, 2007, continued to be seen in Rockport through at least February 23. The **Yellow-throated Warbler**, found in East Orleans on December 22, 2007, was last noted on February 21, the day before a heavy snowstorm. There were two reports of **Western Tanagers** during the period. A brightly plumaged bird came to a feeder in Merrimac from January 21 through February 4, and another showed up at a Brewster feeder on January 31. A Lark Sparrow in Millbury and an Ovenbird in Brewster were other unusual feeder birds this season. One or two Seaside Sparrows were observed in the marsh at the edge of Newburyport Harbor, which has become a nearly annual winter site for this species, probably the northern-most routine site in North America.

The unprecedented flight of **Bohemian Waxwings**, first noted in late December, continued into this period, though not in the large flocks seen in December. There were over 100 individuals reported from Andover and 100 or more from Wellfleet, with other birds noted from all over the state, single individuals and flocks of up to sixty-five. Large flocks of Cedar Waxwings, well into the hundreds, were also noted. This winter also brought extraordinary numbers of **Pine Grosbeaks**, almost all to areas west and north of Worcester; this was the biggest invasion since 2002 and rivaled the invasions of the 1970s. Purple Finches, on the other hand, were few and far between; the largest group reported was a paltry three! This was a tremendous year for redpolls, similar to the invasion of 1986; Common Redpoll flocks in some areas numbered well into the hundreds, and in these flocks several **Hoary Redpolls** were reported. There are two subspecies of Hoary Redpoll, the nominate *Carduelis hornemanni* and the Southern race (*C. exilipes*), which we are more apt to see in the northeast. To complicate identification problems, there are at least four plumage types of Common Redpoll. There was at least one Common Redpoll race of *rostrata* found among a flock of redpolls coming to a feeder in Readville. This large, dark species comes from Greenland. Seeing it was a good lesson in redpoll identification, and I for one was very confused!

R. Stymeist

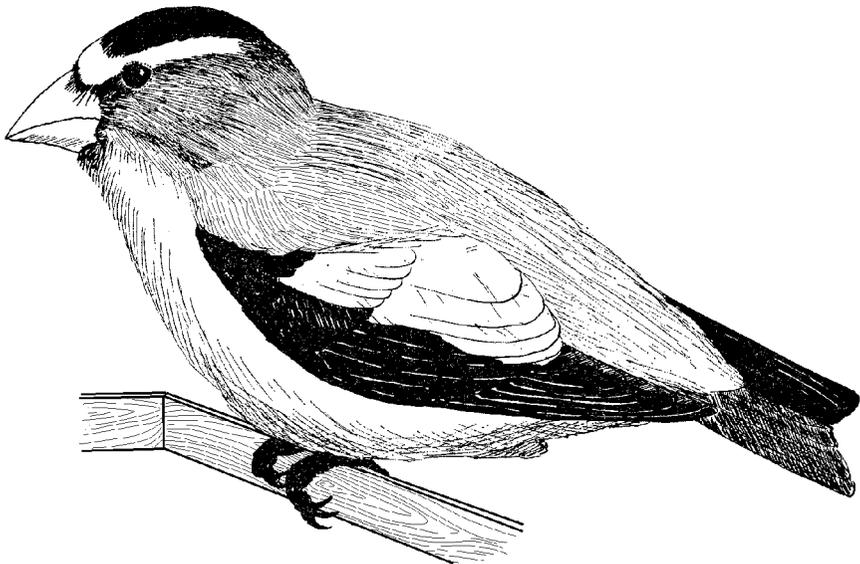
Barn Owl				1/19	Amherst	3	H. Allen
2/16	M.V.	1	J. Liller#	1/26	Rowley	3	S. Sutton#
Eastern Screech-Owl				1/26	Ipswich	3	B. Harris
1/6	Mashpee	2	M. Keleher	2/25	Acushnet	pr	K. Langevin#
1/26	Ipswich	4	B. Harris	Snowy Owl			
2/20	Wayland	2	B. Harris	thr	PI.	1-3	v.o.
Great Horned Owl				1/13, 2/17	Boston (Logan)	1, 3	N. Smith
1/1	W. Boylston	3	M. Lynch#	1/19	Newbury	1	dkMAS (D. Larson)
1/1	Worcester	2	M. Lynch#	1/25	Rowley	1	S. McGrath
1/6	Belchertown	2	L. Therrien	1/26	Eastham (FH)	1	M. Malin#
1/13	Spencer	7	M. Lynch#	Barred Owl			
1/14	Northboro	2	S. Moore	thr			
							Reports of indiv. from 15 locations

Barred Owl (continued)				1/24	Lexington	2	M. Rines
1/1	W. Boylston	2	M. Lynch#	1/25	DWWS	2	T. Prince
2/19	W. Newbury	2	S. McGrath	2/20	W. Newbury	2	R. Heil
Long-eared Owl				American Crow			
1/6	Squantum	1	C. Jackson	1/1	Worcester	400+	M. Lynch#
1/12	DWWS	5	N. Smith	2/20	Gloucester	500+	S. Hedman
1/22	Essex	4	J. Berry	Fish Crow			
1/26	Gloucester (E.P.)	1	T. Pirro#	1/6	Boston	3	BBC (R. Stymeist)
Short-eared Owl				1/22	Framingham	3	B. Harris
thr	P.I.	1-5	v.o.	1/26	Mattapan (BNC)	2	J. Miller
1/19, 2/8	Boston (Logan)	1, 4	N. Smith	1/26	Somerset	4	R. Stymeist#
1/19	Newbury	3	MAS (D. Larson)	1/26	Seekonk	4	R. Stymeist#
1/25	Rowley	1	S. McGrath	2/4	Framingham	2	J. Hoye#
1/26	Duxbury B.	2	R. Bowes	2/15	Waltham	3	J. Forbes
2/9	Rochester	1	K. Langevin	Common Raven			
2/20	DWWS	4	M. Faherty	1/1	Ipswich	1	S. McGrath
Northern Saw-whet Owl				1/1	Royalston	6	E. Nielsen
1/1	W. Boylston	1	M. Lynch#	1/5	W. Newbury	1	S. McGrath
1/6	Topsfield	1	T. Martin#	1/10	Becket	3	R. Laubach
1/12	Lincoln	1	N. Soulette#	1/20	Rowley	2	S. Ricker#
1/13	Spencer	1	M. Lynch#	1/24	Merrimac	1	T. Pirro#
1/19	Newbury	1	MAS (D. Larson)	1/26	Georgetown	1	R. Heil#
1/19-21	P.I.	1	MAS (J. Hully)	1/29, 2/27	Waltham	3, 2	I. Dukovski
1/26	Boxford	1	B. Krisler#	2/thr	Lincoln	1	S. Perkins#
1/26	Brewster	1	J. Hoye#	2/9	Bradford	1	S. Carlson#
1/26	Essex	1	T. Pirro#	2/11	Athol	2	I. Davies#
2/15-29	Mt.A.	1	R. Stymeist#	2/16	Quabbin Pk	8	J. Hoye#
2/15-29	Lexington	1	M. Rines	2/24	Milton	2	A. Joslin
2/18	Medford	1	R. LaFontaine#	Horned Lark			
<b>Rufous Hummingbird</b> (details submitted) *				thr	P.I.	97 max	v.o.
1/1-12	Marshfield	1	H. Koelsch	thr	Gloucester	34 max	v.o.
Belted Kingfisher				1/6	Scusset B.	20	SSBC (Anderson)
1/6	Wareham	2	SSBC (Anderson)	1/6	Fairhaven	69	M. Lynch#
1/12	Sheffield	2	M. Lynch#	1/6	Sharon	140	B. Cassie#
1/19	W. Springfield	2	J. Zepko	1/10	Brewster	26	M. Keleher
2/3	Bourne	2	G. d'Entremont	1/22	Gr. Barrington	62	J. Drucker
2/4	Mashpee	4	M. Keleher#	1/23	Cumb. Farms	30+	K. Anderson
2/5	Acoaxet	2	I. Davies#	2/8	Nantasket B.	42	MAS (J. Galluzzo)
2/24	Brewster	2	P. Trull	2/10	Williamstown	67	J. Wilder
Red-bellied Woodpecker				2/17	Hadley	250	H. Allen
1/1	IRWS	2	J. MacDougall	2/22	Ipswich	150	J. Berry
1/4	Lincoln	pr	M. Rines	Red-breasted Nuthatch			
1/6	Ipswich	2	J. Berry#	thr	P.I.	6 max	T. Wetmore
1/25	Middleton	3	J. Berry#	1/4	Brewster	4+	D. Clapp
1/26	Westport	6	R. Stymeist#	1/4, 2/4	Mashpee	3, 9	M. Keleher
1/26	N. Falmouth	2	P. + F. Vale	1/6	Scusset B.	3	SSBC (Anderson)
1/31	Melrose	2	D. + I. Jewell	1/7	Barnstable	7	M. Keleher#
2/4	Bolton Flats	3	S. Sutton	1/14	Worcester	3	C. Cook
2/11	Middleboro	2	K. Anderson	2/8	Wellfleet	7	M. Faherty
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker				2/9	Truro	5	R. Stymeist#
thr	Reports of indiv. from 24 locations			2/16	Orleans	5	P. + F. Vale
Hairy Woodpecker				2/17	Westport	4	S. Grinley#
1/1	Royalston	3	E. Nielsen	2/24	Salisbury	5	P. + F. Vale
1/7	Woburn (HP)	3	M. Rines	Brown Creeper			
1/13	Barre	3	M. Lynch#	1/3	Hardwick	3	C. Buelow
1/26	Mashpee	3	M. Keleher	1/7	Williamstown	3	R. Laubach
2/4	Mashpee	5	M. Keleher#	2/4	Mashpee	3	M. Keleher#
Northern Flicker				2/20	Wayland	7	B. Harris
1/6	Rowley	6	P. + F. Vale	Carolina Wren			
1/6	Fairhaven	6	M. Lynch#	1/6	Fairhaven	15	M. Lynch#
1/8	P.I.	3	T. Wetmore	1/7	Barnstable	9	M. Keleher#
1/10	Falmouth	3	M. Keleher	1/19	Swansea	6	M. Lynch#
2/8	Eastham (F.H.)	4	M. Faherty	1/24	E. Gloucester	9	R. Heil
2/17	Amherst	3	S. Kellogg	1/26	Westport	14	R. Stymeist#
2/17	Orleans	9	T. Martin#	1/26	Somerset	6	R. Stymeist#
2/20	W. Newbury	4	R. Heil	2/10	N. Marshfield	5	SSBC (GdE)
Pileated Woodpecker				2/17	Westport	19	G. d'Entremont
2/16	Lincoln	2	B. Harris	2/17	S. Dartmouth	7	G. d'Entremont
2/17	Amherst	3	H. Allen	2/20	W. Newbury	4	R. Heil
Eastern Phoebe				Winter Wren			
2/20-27	Middleboro	1	K. Anderson	1/1	IRWS	1	J. MacDougall
<b>Western Kingbird</b>				1/5	Belmont	1	J. Forbes
1/9-19	Barnstable	1 ph	K. Morton + v.o.	1/6	Fairhaven	1	M. Lynch#
Northern Shrike				1/7	Plymouth	1	K. Doyon
thr	Reports of indiv. from 47 locations			1/9	S. Quabbin	1	L. Therrien
thr	P.I.	4 max	v.o.	1/12	Lee	1	M. Lynch#
thr	Gloucester	1-2	v.o.	1/13	Hardwick	1	M. Lynch#
1/13	Hardwick	2	M. Lynch#	1/24	E. Gloucester	1	R. Heil

Winter Wren (continued)				1/6	Sudbury	2	B. Volkle#
1/26	Essex	1	R. Heil#	1/31	W. Townsend	2	T. Pirro
1/26	Nahant	1	T. Pirro#	2/4	Royalston	30	L. Ferraresso
2/3	Belchertown	1	L. Therrien	2/5	Uxbridge	25+	I. Davies#
2/4	Mashpee	2	M. Keleher#	2/8	Gloucester (E.P.)	16	M. Iliff#
2/5	Acoaxet	1	I. Davies#	2/21	Ashfield	65	J. Morris-Siegel
Marsh Wren				2/23	Wellfleet	100	F. Caruso
1/6	Barnstable	1	M. Keleher	2/25	Shelburne	4	T. Gagnon
1/6	P.I.	2	R. Heil	Cedar Waxwing			
1/12	Lee	1	M. Lynch#	1/6	Lincoln	180	M. Rines#
1/17	W. Harwich	1	B. Nikula	1/6	Rowley	450	P. + F. Vale
1/26	Newbypt	1	R. Heil#	1/12	Tyringham	144	M. Lynch#
2/3	Newbury	1	R. Heil#	1/15	Concord	250	S. Perkins
Golden-crowned Kinglet				1/17	Turners Falls	210	F. Bowrys
1/1	Gloucester (E.P.)	6	J. Offermann	1/23	Ipswich	175	B. Harris
1/7	Barnstable	8	M. Keleher#	1/27	Gill	150	SSBC (E. LeBlanc)
1/19	Sudbury	3	G. Long	1/27	Athol	635	SSBC (E. LeBlanc)
2/3	Newton	3	H. Miller	1/29	Waltham	170	M. Rines
2/4	Mashpee	3	M. Keleher#	1/29	Gr Barrington	200	G. Ward
2/9	Hamilton	3	J. Berry#	1/31	W. Townsend	150	T. Pirro
2/20	Sheffield	3	R. Laubach	2/25	Shelburne	140	T. Gagnon
2/29	Belchertown	3	L. Therrien	Orange-crowned Warbler			
Ruby-crowned Kinglet				1/1-2/24	Mashpee	1	M. Keleher
1/2	Turners Falls	1	J. Smith	1/3-4	Danvers	1	M. Taylor
1/6	Wareham	1	SSBC (Anderson)	1/14	Orleans	1	C. Thompson
1/6-28	Gloucester	1	D. + D. Marchant	1/26	Hamilton	1	S. Grinley#
1/7	Medford	1	R. LaFontaine	2/21	Springfield	1	A. + L. Richardson
1/19, 2/23	Natick	1, 1	G. Long	2/22	Andover	1	ph D. Cooper
1/25-31	Arlington	1	N. White	Yellow-rumped Warbler			
1/26	S. Peabody	1	R. Heil#	1/6	Fairhaven	6	M. Lynch#
2/9	Truro	1	R. Stymeist#	1/6	Scusset B.	11	SSBC (Anderson)
2/10	Orleans	2	L. Kramer#	1/10	Brewster	9	M. Keleher
2/10	N. Marshfield	1	SSBC (GdE)	1/16	Gloucester	10	B. Harris
2/24	Waltham	1	J. Forbes#	1/26	Essex	25	R. Heil#
Eastern Bluebird				1/27	Bourne	17	SSBC (Anderson)
1/12	Wellfleet	16	J. Hoye#	2/10	Falmouth	2	G. Hirth
1/13	Hardwick	40+	M. Lynch#	2/10	N. Marshfield	4	SSBC (GdE)
1/26	Westport	10	R. Stymeist#	2/17	S. Dartmouth	7	G. d'Entremont
2/10	Amherst	10	S. Surner	2/19	Wellfleet	150	B. Harris
2/16	Orleans	10	P. + F. Vale	Yellow-throated Warbler			
2/17	S. Dartmouth	11	S. Grinley#	1/1-2/21	Orleans	1	v.o.
Townsend's Solitaire *				Pine Warbler			
1/1-2/23	Rockport	1	v.o.	1/4	Boston	1	C. Marchant
Hermit Thrush				1/4	Mashpee	1	M. Keleher
thr	Reports of indiv. from 21 locations			1/4, 2/9	W. Gloucester	2, 1	J. Nelson
1/23	Medford	2	R. LaFontaine	1/4	Brewster	2	D. Clapp
1/26	Rockport	2	R. Heil#	1/17-21	Middleboro	1	K. Anderson
1/26	Westport	8	R. Stymeist#	1/19	Truro	1	J. Young
American Robin				1/23	Falmouth	1	M. Malin
1/2	Lincoln	375	M. Rines	1/24, 2/24	Newbury	2, 1	L. Leka
1/6	Fairhaven	388	M. Lynch#	1/29	Wellfleet	1	M. Malin#
1/15	Concord	350	S. Perkins	2/3	Orleans	3	SSBC (Petersen)
1/20	Worcester	250++	M. Lynch#	Palm Warbler			
1/27	Bourne	217	SSBC (Anderson)	1/6	Fairhaven	1	M. Lynch#
1/27	Athol	400	SSBC (E. LeBlanc)	Ovenbird			
2/3	Belchertown	325	L. Therrien	1/26-28	Brewster	1	R. Everett
2/18	S. Quabbin	450	L. Therrien	Common Yellowthroat			
Gray Catbird				1/4	Cambridge	1	ph J. Nevins
thr	Reports of indiv. from 15 locations			1/6	Fairhaven	1	M. Lynch#
1/6	P.I.	2	R. Heil	Yellow-breasted Chat			
1/10	Fairhaven	3	G. Gove#	1/4	Cambridge	1	ph J. Nevins
1/26	Westport	3	R. Stymeist#	1/7	Osterville	1	M. Keleher#
2/17	S. Dartmouth	3	G. d'Entremont	1/12	Mattapoisett	1	A. + D. Morgan
Brown Thrasher				1/24	E. Gloucester	1	R. Heil
1/25, 2/21	Nahant	1	L. Pivacek	1/25	Rockport (H.P.)	1	B. Krisler#
1/26	Westport	1	R. Stymeist#	2/17	S. Dartmouth	1	G. d'Entremont
1/29	Fairhaven	1	A. + D. Morgan	Western Tanager *			
American Pipit				1/21-2/4	Merrimac	1	ph V. Penney + v.o.
1/12	Fairhaven	20	A. + D. Morgan	1/31-2/29	Brewster	1	Maddock
1/16	Gloucester (E.P.)	1	R. Heil	Eastern Towhee			
2/17	S. Dartmouth	53	S. Grinley#	1/thr	E. Sandwich	1	D. Manchester
Bohemian Waxwing				1/12	Fairhaven	1	K. Mills#
1/1-19	Rockport	60 max	v.o.	2/2	Westport	3	J. Hoye#
1/1	Truro	34	D. Clapp#	2/3	W. Barnstable	1	m C. Walz
1/1	Grafton	12	M. Lynch#	2/4	Mashpee	4	M. Keleher#
1/1	Eastham	18	M. Faherty	2/17	S. Dartmouth	2	G. d'Entremont
1/2	Andover	100	B. Drummond	American Tree Sparrow			
1/5	Pepperell	1	M. Resch	1/6	Fairhaven	18	M. Lynch#



Pine Grosbeak (continued)									
1/17	Westfield	36	D. James	1/12	Woburn	150	L. Kaplan		
1/20-2/17	Brookfields	36 max	M. Lynch#	1/15	Cummington	200	B. Spencer		
2/3	Royalston	15	R. Stymeist#	1/17-2/3	Millbury	400 max	D. Berard#		
2/4	Williamstown	100	L. Reed-Evans	1/20	Boston	50	C. + J. Hepburn		
2/17	Turners Falls	75	H. Allen	1/27	E. Boston	55	R. Stymeist		
Purple Finch				2/1	Readville	90+	S. Jaffe		
1/1	IRWS	1	J. MacDougall	2/2	Wakefield	48+	P. + F. Vale		
1/4	W. Gloucester	1 f	J. Nelson	2/9	Windsor	40	K. Conway		
1/6	Gardner	1	T. Pirro	<b>Hoary Redpoll *</b>					
1/9	Lenox	1	R. Laubach	1/1	Gloucester	2	BBC (L. de la Flor)		
1/26	Ipswich	3+	R. Heil#	1/1	Royalston	1	R. Lockwood		
1/26	Southwick	1	S. Kellogg	1/5-2/25	WBWS	1-2	v.o.		
1/27	Merrimac	1 f	P. + F. Vale	1/6	Eastham (CGB)	2	M. Iliff		
2/11	E. Longmeadow	1	G. Kinston	1/8	PI.	1 f	R. Heil		
2/14	Williamstown	1	L. Reed-Evans	1/14-2/3	Readville	1-2 ph	S. Jaffe		
2/18	Belchertown	3	L. Therrien	1/17-2/3	Millbury	1-2	D. Berard#		
2/20	W. Newbury	2	R. Heil	1/29, 2/16	Chesterfield	1, 2	D. Snoyenbos		
Red Crossbill				Pine Siskin					
2/9	Royalston	1	D. Bates	1/5	Lenox	1	R. Laubach		
White-winged	Crossbill			1/15, 26	S. Orleans	10, 1	C. Thompson		
1/6	Dalton	1	C. Blagdon	1/20	Natick	1	G. Dysart		
1/23	Windsor	5	J. Morris-Siegel	1/30	Wayland	2	B. Harris		
2/6-10	Wellfleet	24 max	v.o.	2/3, 27	Shutesbury	27, 8	K. Weir		
2/7	Eastham	1 m	I. Ace	2/4	Amherst	8	S. Sumner		
2/24	Mt. A.	6	K. McLoud	2/16	Brimfield	6	I. Lynch		
Common Redpoll				2/16	Holland	6	I. Lynch		
1/1-12	P.I.	75 max	v.o.	2/17	Westport	1	G. d'Entremont		
1/1	Royalston	75	R. Lockwood	Evening Grosbeak					
1/1	Gr Barrington	41	R. Laubach	thr	Royalston	120 max	v.o.		
1/3	Hinsdale	60	L. Roberson	1/8	Eastham (CGB)	pr	P. O'Neill		
1/4-20	Brewster	153 max	D. Clapp	1/10, 2/9	Savoy	6, 30	T. Gagnon		
1/4	N. Falmouth	75	I. Nisbet	1/13	Barre	40+	M. Lynch#		
1/5, 2/16	WBWS	85, 30	M. Faherty	1/26	New Salem	2	M. Lynch#		
1/10, 2/4	Ashfield	300, 300	S. Sauter	2/3	Phillipston	18	R. Stymeist#		
				2/26	Ipswich	6	S. ffolliott		



EVENING GROSBEEK BY GEORGE C. WEST

## ABBREVIATIONS FOR BIRD SIGHTINGS

Taxonomic order is based on AOU checklist, Seventh edition, 42nd, 43rd, 44th, 45th, 46th, 47th, and 48th Supplements, as published in *The Auk* 117: 847-58 (2000); 119:897-906 (2002); 120:923-32 (2003); 121:985-95 (2004); 122:1026-31 (2005); 123:926-936 (2006); 124(3):1109-1115, 2007 (see <<http://www.aou.org/checklist/index.php3>>).

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

## HOW TO CONTRIBUTE BIRD SIGHTINGS TO *BIRD OBSERVER*

Sightings for any given month must be reported in writing by the eighth of the following month, and may be submitted by postal mail or e-mail. Send written reports to Bird Sightings, Robert H. Stymeist, 36 Lewis Avenue, Arlington, MA 02474-3206. Include name and phone number of observer, common name of species, date of sighting, location, number of birds, other observer(s), and information on age, sex, and morph (where relevant). For instructions on e-mail submission, visit: <<http://massbird.org/birdobserver/sightings/>>.

Species on the Review List of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (indicated by an asterisk [\*] in the Bird Reports), as well as species unusual as to place, time, or known nesting status in Massachusetts, should be reported promptly to the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee, c/o Marjorie Rines, Massachusetts Audubon Society, South Great Road, Lincoln, MA 01773, or by e-mail to <[marj@mrines.com](mailto:marj@mrines.com)>.

# ABOUT THE COVER

---

*Editor's note: This month our cover has a somewhat different look. Instead of a drawing or painting by a living artist, Bird Observer is using a leaf from the notebooks of Timothy Otis Fuller (1845–1916). Fuller was a renowned naturalist whose bird journals are preserved at the Needham (MA) Historical Society. An article about Fuller and his journals by Needham Historical Society director Gloria Polizzotti Greis appears in this issue.*

## Hairy Woodpecker

## Black-backed Woodpecker (known in Fuller's time as Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker)

## Three-toed Woodpecker (formerly American or Northern Three-toed Woodpecker)

## Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

These four woodpecker species, Hairy Woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*), Black-backed Woodpecker (*P. arcticus*), Three-toed Woodpecker (*P. tridactylus*), and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*) are all primarily black and white birds. The Three-toed is separated from the similar Black-backed by the presence of white on the back. The Hairy Woodpecker's larger size and large, heavy bill distinguishes it from the similarly plumaged Downy Woodpecker (*P. pubescens*). The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker has a red forehead and crown and, as the name implies, yellowish underparts. The male has a red throat. All four species are sexually dimorphic: the female Three-toed has white streaks in her yellow crown patch, the female Black-backed lacks the yellow patch entirely, and the female Hairy lacks the red head patches that characterize the male. The Three-toed and Black-backed are the only woodpecker species with three toes instead of four.

The breeding ranges of all four species extend from Alaska across Canada to Newfoundland, but the range of the Three-toed extends farther north, making it the most northern breeder of any woodpecker species. The ranges of the Three-toed and Black-backed woodpeckers and the sapsucker extend into the United States in the Northeast, and into the Rocky Mountains in the case of the Three-toed species. The Hairy Woodpecker is found throughout most of the United States, and its range extends south to Panama. Hairy Woodpeckers, with their broad latitudinal range, follow Bergmann's Rule, with northern birds being much larger than the southern birds. The sapsucker is the only migratory species, wintering in the central and eastern United States, the West Indies, and south to Central America. The other three are largely resident species, although the northern-most Hairy Woodpecker populations are prone to wandering in winter, and some populations are partial migrants. The Three-toed Woodpecker is the only woodpecker species found in both the New and

Old World. The Hairy Woodpecker is considered a fairly common breeder in Massachusetts with numbers augmented by migrants. Sapsuckers are fairly common breeders in the western part of the state, and they are common to uncommon migrants. Black-backed Woodpeckers are rare to very uncommon winter visitors to Massachusetts, and Three-toed Woodpeckers very rare and irregular in winter.

The Black-backed and Three-toed species are largely confined to boreal and montane coniferous forests, while sapsuckers prefer early successional woodlands and forest. Hairy Woodpeckers are more cosmopolitan, occupying mature forest, woodlots, cemeteries, and residential areas, and in winter they frequent bird feeders.

Woodpeckers are known for their nonvocal sounds, especially “drumming.” Sapsucker drumming is characterized as slow and irregular; in the two three-toed species rapid drumming is considered aggressive and a territorial display, while slow drumming serves as a contact call between mates. Drumming also functions in attracting mates. In Hairy Woodpeckers, both sexes drum, with the multiple functions of territorial advertisement, courtship, contact calls, and summoning a mate from a distance. All species have a variety of calls. The four species are monogamous, the Hairy Woodpecker possibly mating for life. Migratory sapsuckers often return to the same site each year and may reuse nest holes or drill a new hole in the same tree. Both members of the pairs of all four species will defend their territory and nest. Sapsuckers have a number of ritualized postures given in agonistic and courtship displays, including crest-raising, throat-fluffing, wing-flicking, head-swinging, and wing-drooping. The four species nest in cavities in the trunks of living trees or snags; they often select live trees with heart-rot. Both parents excavate the cavity. As is the case with most cavity-nesting birds, the eggs are pure white. All four species have variable clutch sizes but average about four eggs per clutch. Incubation and brooding are done by both parents, and both have brood patches. Incubation periods vary from ten to fourteen days, and the young fledge in twenty-three days to about a month. The age of the young at independence is poorly known and apparently highly variable, with reports of from nine days in sapsuckers to several months in Three-toed Woodpeckers. Three-toed and Black-backed parents may divide the brood and move about the territory independently.

Woodpeckers are the major constituents of the bark-foraging guild in North America, preying mostly on arthropods and their larvae, which they take on or under the bark of tree trunks and large branches. They glean, probe, pound, peck, and scale bark in search of their invertebrate prey. Their chisel-like bills are ideally suited for stripping bark from trunks and branches and excavating tunnels in search of prey. Tapping with the bill along the trunk or branch presumably facilitates hearing the resonance produced by the tunnels of wood-boring insects. The sapsuckers are somewhat atypical in that they drink sap from the holes they bore. They defend and maintain their sap wells, although other birds, such as Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (*Archilochus colubris*), frequently use them. Fruit and seeds also make up an important part of sapsucker diets. Their diet varies with the season, with sap comprising the greater part at some times and a small fraction at others. They often eat insects drawn to the sap wells.

Three-toed and Black-backed woodpeckers are sensitive to timber harvest and in some areas have experienced population declines related to forest management practices. Black-backed Woodpeckers forage opportunistically on wood-boring beetles in recently burned coniferous forests and thus are vulnerable to fire suppression and postfire salvage logging efforts. However, their extensive and northern ranges may give them a degree of security. Similarly, Hairy Woodpeckers are sensitive to clear-felling and forest fragmentation and have declined in areas affected by these practices. However, their extremely extensive range may offer them some protection. Conversely, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers may have benefited from deforestation since colonial times because of their dependence on second-growth forest and woodland. Breeding Bird Survey data from 1966–2000 indicate no overall changes in sapsucker population numbers, despite significant habitat alteration on their wintering grounds in the Neotropics. It appears that these four woodpecker species are doing rather well in our human-altered world. 

*William E. Davis, Jr.*

## From MassWildlife: LOOK OUT FOR LOONS!

The haunting wail of the Common Loon (*Gavia immer*) evokes a sense of wild and remote areas, which may be why some people are surprised to learn Massachusetts is home to a small, but growing number of nesting loons. MassWildlife Biologist Bridgett McAlice compiled Common Loon nesting activity for 2007 and will be working with other cooperators this spring to document loon nesting sites across the state. In 2007, 20 territorial pairs on 8 water bodies were documented. A total of 5 chicks were produced and presumed fledged. “The Quabbin and Wachusett Reservoirs are home to the majority of Massachusetts’ nesting loons,” said McAlice. “Other nests have been documented in relatively quiet water supplies and private ponds in Worcester County, but it’s entirely possible there are nests in other parts of the state which haven’t been reported to us.” McAlice noted that cooperators and volunteers play a vital role in gathering field data for MassWildlife.



COMMON LOON BY GEORGE C. WEST

# AT A GLANCE

---

April 2008



WAYNE R. PETERSEN

The mystery species in the April issue is obviously a dark goose; as such, its identity would seem to be fairly obvious. The identification possibilities for wild-occurring dark geese in Massachusetts include such familiar species as the Canada Goose, Cackling Goose, and Brant, and rarities such as the Pink-footed Goose, Greater White-fronted Goose, and Barnacle Goose. The dark morph of the Snow Goose (formerly called “Blue” Goose) completes this list.

Even a casual look at the dark goose in the photo should eliminate Canada and Cackling Geese as possibilities to practically anyone who regularly drives, walks, plays golf, or canoes on the highways and waterways of Massachusetts. The brown body, black neck, and white chin of these two species are diagnostic in all but their downy young plumages. Brant also have dark heads and necks, and in adult plumage exhibit a white slash of varying extent on the side of their neck. The much rarer Pink-footed Goose and Greater White-fronted Goose are also dark-headed, but would never show the complete white face and throat of the mystery goose.

The remaining possibilities are either the very rare and vagrant Barnacle Goose or a dark morph of one of the white geese (e.g., Snow Goose or Ross’s Goose). In recent years the Barnacle Goose, a species with a primarily Palearctic (i.e., European) distribution, has appeared with increasing frequency in northeastern North America.

The handsome Barnacle Goose would exhibit a black neck and chest and a white chin and face, not unlike this month's mystery goose. However, the pictured goose also has partially black underparts, along with obviously long and broadly white-fringed tertials and wing coverts. A perched Barnacle Goose would exhibit pale gray wings with noticeable dark horizontal bars on the wings that would give it a striped appearance across the back. A Barnacle Goose would also possess a black bill.

With these points in mind, we are inevitably led to the dark ("blue") morph of one of the white goose species as the logical identification candidate. Since Snow Goose is the more abundant of the two white goose species in North America, a dark morph Snow Goose is a logical first assumption for the identification of the mystery goose. But wait! There seems to be something wrong with this picture — the dark goose in the picture is significantly smaller than the white geese that surround it.

At this point the reader should be thinking about what differentiates Snow Geese from Ross's Geese, as well as recalling that Ross's Geese are quite rare in New England. Equally important, it should be pointed out that until fairly recently dark morph Ross's Geese were very rarely encountered anywhere. With this in mind, we need to examine the dark goose in the picture very carefully. The most obvious feature of the mystery goose in addition to its overall small size is its tiny bill, especially in comparison to the white geese around it. A close look at the bill of the white goose at the extreme right of the photograph reveals a distinct "grin patch" on the side of the bill that appears to be lacking in the dark goose. The presence of this grin patch is distinctive of the two Snow Goose subspecies that occur in New England, but it is not a feature of the more diminutive Ross's Goose. The difference in overall body and bill size, bill structure, and more rounded head shape than that of the white geese nearby all indicate that the dark goose is a Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*) in the rare blue morph — a morph that is quite unusual throughout the population, but a color form that appears to be increasing with the overall increase and change in the continental distribution of Snow and Ross's goose populations. If the pictured bird was a dark-morph Snow Goose, it would be the size of the Snow Geese in the picture and would have an all-dark belly, not the white belly shown by the mystery goose. Needless to say the genetics of Snow and Ross's goose populations are complex.

Ross's Goose is a rarity in Massachusetts with fewer than five accepted records in the state. Despite the recent increase in reports of this high-arctic Canadian-nesting goose, to date there have been no reports of birds in the dark morph in New England. The author photographed the dark morph Ross's Goose at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico in November 2007. 

Wayne R. Petersen



SNOW AND ROSS'S GEESE AT BOSQUE BY DAVID LARSON

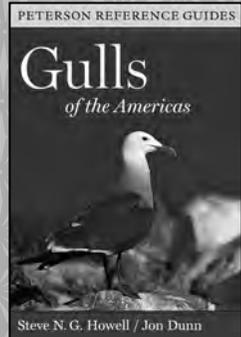
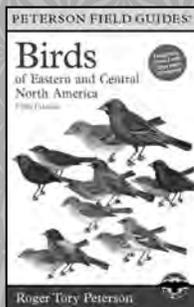
# AT A GLANCE



DAVID LARSON

Can you identify the bird in this photograph?  
Identification will be discussed in next issue's AT A GLANCE.  
**AT A GLANCE is sponsored by the Peterson Field Guide series.**

# Peterson Field Guides®



*for Beginning To Expert Birders*

Houghton Mifflin • [www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/Peterson/](http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/Peterson/)

**BIRD OBSERVER (USPS 369-850)  
P.O. BOX 236  
ARLINGTON, MA 02476-0003**

**PERIODICALS  
POSTAGE PAID  
AT  
BOSTON, MA**

**VOL. 36, NO. 3, JUNE 2008**

**<http://massbird.org/birdobserver/>**

## **CONTENTS**

---

BIRDING THE SWEDISH COLONY OF NORTHERN MAINE	<i>Bill Sheehan</i>	133
NEEDHAM'S NATURALIST: THE BIRD JOURNALS OF TIMOTHY OTIS FULLER	<i>Gloria Polizzotti Greis</i>	148
TAKEN A BIRD WALK LATELY?	<i>Pamela Hunt</i>	154
BIRDING MY OWN PATCH	<i>John Nelson</i>	158
FIELD NOTES		
Common Raven and Red-shouldered Hawk at Suet Feeder	<i>Paul Fitzgerald</i>	163
Gray Squirrel Preys on Black-capped Chickadee	<i>Simon Hennin</i>	164
ABOUT BOOKS		
What to Make of a Diminished Thing?	<i>Mark Lynch</i>	166
BIRD SIGHTINGS		
January/February 2008		174
ABOUT THE COVER: Woodpeckers	<i>William E. Davis, Jr.</i>	186
AT A GLANCE	<i>Wayne R. Petersen</i>	189