

Bird Observer

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John Gill

HOT BIRDS



The fourth state record of **Common Ringed Plover** was found at Gooseberry Neck by Marshall Iliff. It allowed many excellent photos, videos, and recordings of its calls for the first couple of days. While additional reports trickled in after the 13th, none included objective documentation, and some included photos which were found to be of misidentified Semipalmated Plovers. There are possibly fewer than a dozen records for this species in the entire lower 48 states. Amusingly, it was found on the same date as the second state record, exactly seven years earlier. Justin Lawson took the photograph on the left.

Marj Rines reported a **MacGillivray's Warbler** from Dunback Meadow on September 17, but was unable to photograph it, and the bird was never seen again. However, Sean Williams and Maili Waters improbably found and photographed another one the very next day out on Cape Cod! Sean took the photo on the right.



Another uncooperative warbler at Dunback, a **Goldenwing**, was reported originally by Renee LaFontaine on September 14, and apparently relocated by Chris Floyd on the 18th, but never photographed. But another one flew into the nets and was banded at Manomet on October 4, and recaptured the next day. Sarah Duff took the photograph on the left.

By far the most shocking sighting of the many at Race Point on September 23 was a **Short-tailed Shearwater**, not just a first state record, but a species with possibly fewer than five documented records from the entire Atlantic coast of the US. Even more astounding than its original detection that day was that it was photographed again roughly three weeks later! Peter Flood took the photo on the right.



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Cover: Herring Gull by John Sill © Massachusetts Audubon Society. Courtesy of the Museum of American Bird Art.



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Birding Marion, Mattapoisett, and Rochester, Massachusetts

Nate Marchessault

North of Allens Pond, south of Myles Standish State Forest, and east of the Assawompset Pond Complex lies an area in southeastern Massachusetts that is not often birded. Locals call it the Tri-Town area, and it comprises Marion, Mattapoisett, and Rochester. These towns were all part of Rochester until 1852 when Marion became a separate town. Five years later, Mattapoisett separated as well. Marion was once home to many wealthy sea captains, Mattapoisett became known as a town of shipbuilders, and Rochester a town of farmers and loggers. Marion and Mattapoisett lie along the coast of Buzzards Bay, with Marion north of Mattapoisett. Rochester is a landlocked town west of Marion and Mattapoisett.

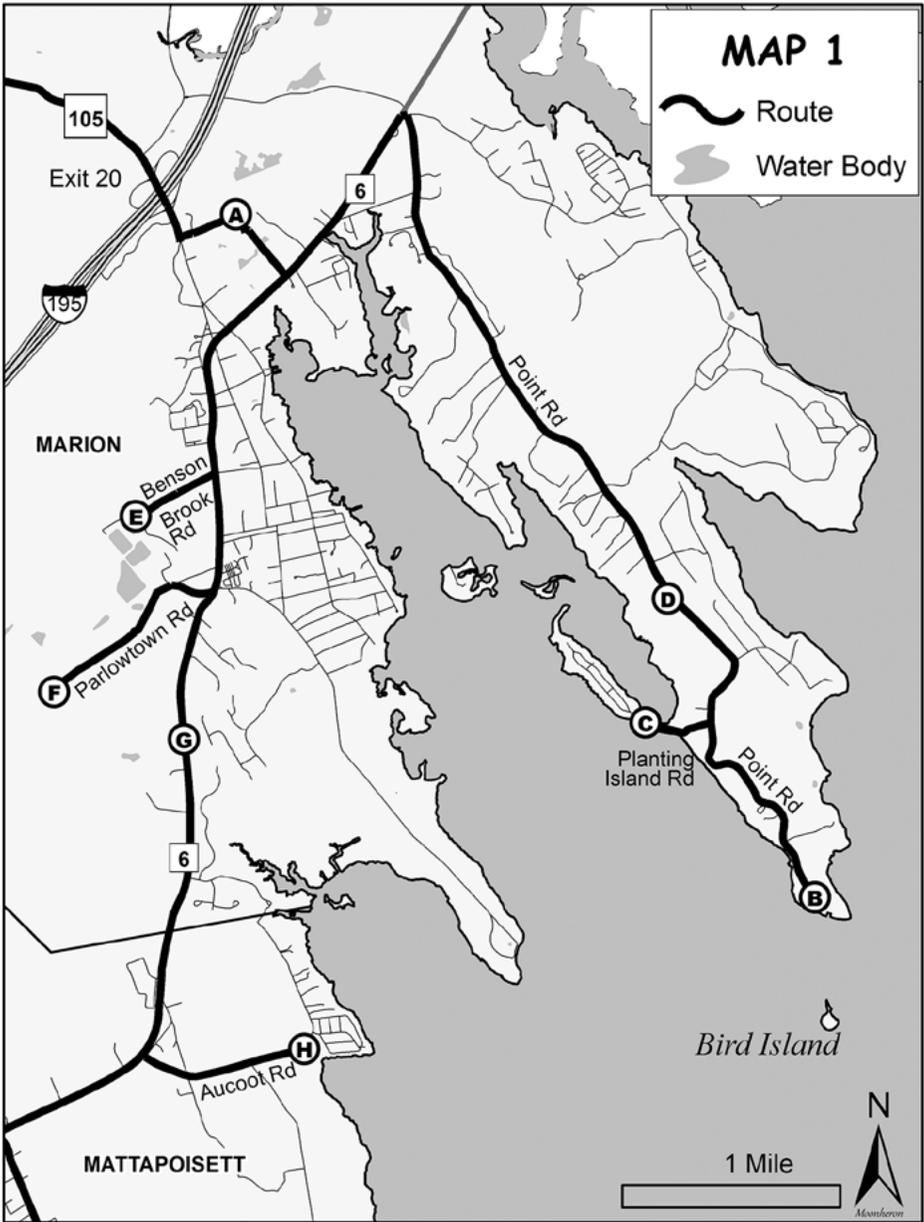


Due to this area's proximity to the ocean and its many peninsulas—or necks—that jut out into Buzzards Bay, the Tri-Town area generally experiences cooler temperatures than surrounding areas in summer, and warmer temperatures in winter. The sheltered nature of Buzzards Bay affords moderate protection from storms coming in from the ocean, and the seas are typically less rough than the nearby areas outside the bay. When birding early in the morning in this area, it is not unusual to be greeted by a sunrise over an ocean of glass.

This article is a year-round guide to the area, although it is worth noting that some overarching themes apply to the entire region in terms of seasonality. This area truly shines in the winter. With generally mild winters, the Tri-Town area is attractive to many semi-hardy thicket birds and other winter lingerers. Fall can also be productive, with reasonably good duck, goose, and sparrow diversity. In summer, the area hosts rare breeders such as Saltmarsh Sparrows, a fairly numerous population of American Oystercatchers, and two major Common and Roseate tern colonies.

Spring is a season that requires reasonable expectations in order to be fully appreciated. The Tri-Town area seldom experiences spring migration the way some other nearby locations do. It has few migrant traps and lacks the numbers or diversity of nearby inland locations such as Lakeville, the Bridgewaters, or Middleborough. If you don't mind seeing fewer passerine migrants and get excited by the sight of a Northern Parula, Chestnut-sided Warbler, or Magnolia Warbler, then you will be sure to have an enjoyable time tracking the return of the various breeding species in the area.

Since the area currently does not receive much birding traffic and because many new trails and areas of conservation have opened up recently, I will offer some selected bird records from my own expeditions and those of other frequent visitors. It is worth visiting the region with an open mind because you never know what you might find. I have discovered many locations in my ventures that have been quite productive for birds, and surely there are many more to find. Several resources for finding and



exploring new locations are available online by visiting the websites of the Buzzards Bay Coalition, Mattapoisett Land Trust, Rochester Land Trust, Rochester Conservation Commission, Sippican Lands Trust, and Wildlands Trust.

Although there are many scenic back roads to get to the Tri-Town area, the quickest way is to take Interstate 195 (I-195). Exit 20 will put you on Route 105 in Marion, which is where we'll begin birding the Tri-Town area. See Map 1. When you get off at Exit 20, turn right onto Route 105 (Front Street) and head south for 0.2 mile, then turn left at the sign to Washburn Park (A). Drive to the end of the paved road to the small dirt parking lot. You can download a trail map at http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/map_washburn-park.pdf > The open field is a good spot to see Eastern Phoebes catching flies along the fences at the edge of the ball fields, and may prove to be a decent spot to observe American Woodcocks displaying at dusk in the spring.

There is an entrance into the woods adjacent to the parking lot. Walk along the wooded trail, cross the power line cut, and make your way to a small bog pond. This is generally the most productive area for finding birds. In spring and fall this pond has attracted Blue-winged Teal and Northern Pintails, among other ducks. The small island on this pond hosts an active Osprey nest, as well as a few Great Blue Heron nests. This is a good spot to bring a scope to observe these species nesting at close range. Belted Kingfishers and Tree Swallows often use the dead trees as perches since they offer such commanding views of the pond. In the winter this can be a fairly quiet spot, although encountering a Hermit Thrush or Winter Wren is not unprecedented. If the pond remains unfrozen, it can host Ring-necked Ducks, Buffleheads, Hooded Mergansers, and other dabblers and divers. The trails back to the parking lot consist mostly of pine and mixed hardwoods, and the woodland regularly hosts Red-bellied, Downy, and Hairy woodpeckers, Eastern Wood-Pewees, Great Crested Flycatchers, Brown Creepers, and Pine Warblers, depending on the season.

Instead of leaving the park on the paved road you came in on, turn left and follow the dirt road as it curves around the ball fields, then drive straight to Route 6. Turn left onto Route 6 (Wareham Road), and at the first set of lights turn right onto Point Road. Drive 4.5 miles to the end of the road to the Kittansett Club (B). Drive into the club's parking lot and take a right to park in the grassy portion of the lot. Bear in mind that the management is kind enough to allow birders to park here and bird this area, so please be respectful when visiting. If there is a function or event going on, or if the parking lot is somewhat full, turn around and visit another time. Follow the trail at the edge of the grass to an open area with views of Bird Island. In spring and summer, this island is host to hundreds upon hundreds of Common and Roseate terns, which is truly a sight worth seeing. In winter, this is also one of the better spots in the area to scope the bay. Common Eiders, Surf Scoters, Black Scoters, Long-tailed Ducks, Red-breasted Mergansers, Red-throated and Common loons, Horned Grebes, and Great Cormorants are relatively common here, and occasionally you can see a small group of Razorbills. Before returning to your car, walk over to the paved portion of the parking lot and scope from there for another vantage point of interior Buzzards Bay.

Return to Point Road and drive for 1.0 mile, turning left onto Planting Island Road (C), which has parking areas along the road. This is another location worth visiting in winter, since it provides good views of Planting Island Cove and Sippican Harbor. The ocean here attracts many of the same species found at the Kittansett Club, and you can find large numbers of Greater Scaup and sometimes a Northern Shoveler or two on Planting Island Cove. This is solely a winter birding location because in summer the parking areas are for residents only.

Return to Point Road and head back toward Route 6. In fall and early winter, keep your eyes open for thickets along this road, as several roadside thickets have from time to time yielded Yellow-breasted Chats. On the left in 0.5 mile there will be a sign for Osprey Marsh (D), which also can be good for winter lingerers.

Turn left onto Route 6 and drive south for 2.0 miles, then turn right onto Benson Brook Road. The Marion Water Treatment Plant (E), which is one of the better birding locations in the area, is at the end of this road. This area is fenced and gated and is only accessible during normal transfer station hours. The hours as of September 2017 are Tuesday through Saturday 8:00 am to 4:00 pm and Sundays from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. These hours are subject to change, so check the Town of Marion website. Drive all the way to the end of the road and park out of the way in the large dirt area where people drop off compost. In fall and winter, the plant's retention ponds hold an impressive number and diversity of duck species. For the best vantage points, walk up to the top of the compost piles to view the closest two retention ponds or walk through the woods at the end of the dirt parking area to view the third pond. You can find Gadwalls, American Wigeons, Blue-winged Teal, Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintails, Hooded Mergansers, and Ring-necked Ducks. This is a consistent location to find a few Northern Shovelers. Eurasian Wigeons have also appeared here, so it may pay to look at the wigeons carefully.

The water treatment plant is productive for more than ducks. The tree line along the parking area and the thickets near the office can be great in the winter, when you can consistently find Winter Wrens and Fox Sparrows, and occasionally a Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, or Eastern Towhee. In fall, the weedy growth near the parking area can be a great spot for sparrows and warblers; Connecticut Warblers, White-crowned Sparrows, and Blue Grosbeaks have been seen. In spring and summer, there are a surprising number of breeding warblers and other passerines. Wood Ducks and Double-crested Cormorants inhabit the ponds, and a Belted Kingfisher can often be heard or seen hunting around the ponds. In May of 2017, a Cattle Egret was observed associating with the farm animals near the office area.

Return to Route 6 from Benson Brook Road, turn right, drive 0.5 mile, and where the road starts to bend, take a quick right onto Parlowtown Road. At the end of the paved road, turn left onto a dirt road. Following the dirt road leads to Goldavitz Bog, a Town of Marion property, and eventually to the White Eagle Property (F), owned by Sippican Lands Trust. You can download a map at <<http://sippicanlandstrust.org/wp-content/uploads/white-eagle.pdf>>. Goldavitz Bog is a relatively small overgrown bog, where Sora and Virginia Rail have been found in the spring. The bog also hosts

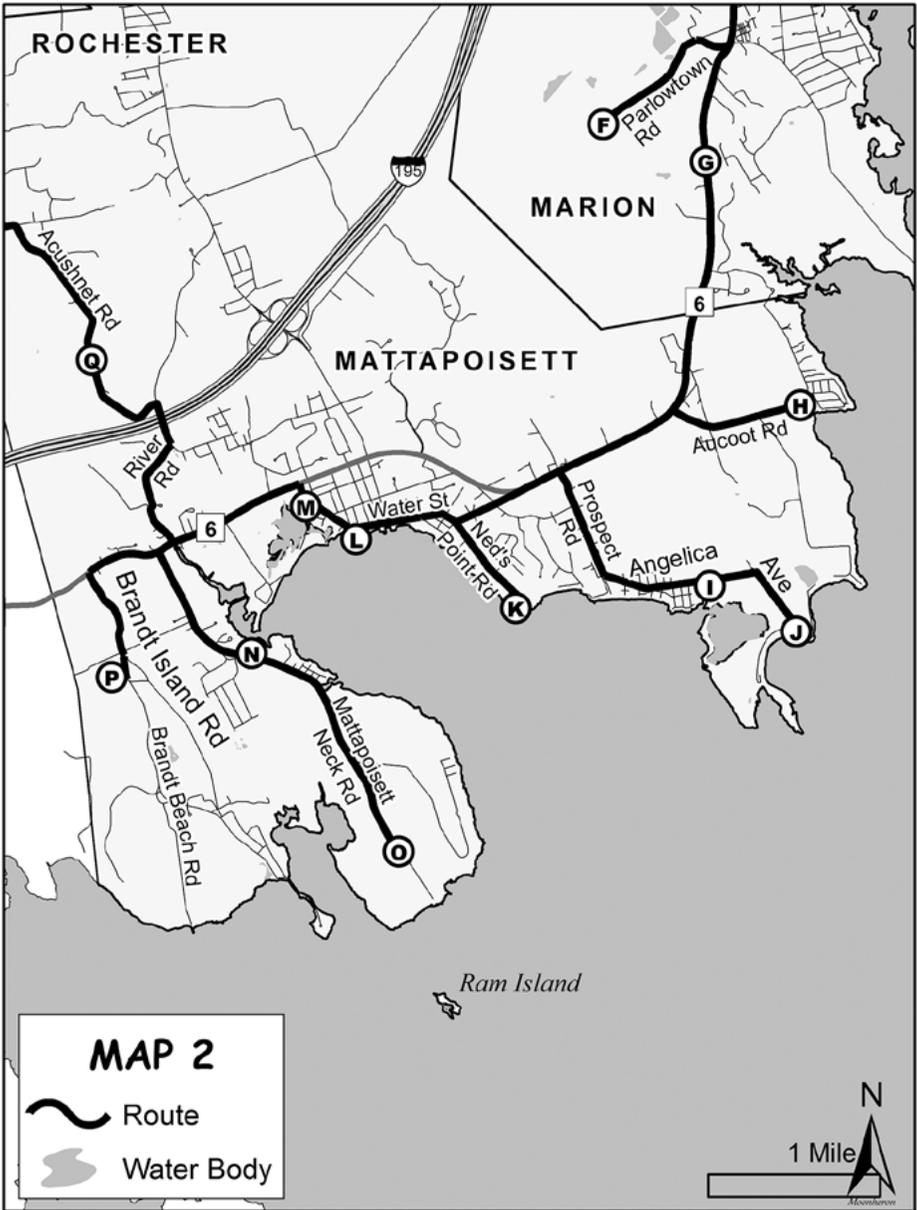
Tree Swallows, Common Yellowthroats, Swamp Sparrows, and Red-winged Blackbirds throughout the year.

White Eagle Property consists of extensive trails through mostly white pine forest. It also has a large working cranberry bog that contains several retention ponds along the borders. If you are lucky, the parking area here can be a great spot to hear duetting Veeries and Wood Thrushes in season. Walking the trail into the woods from the parking area leads to a small boardwalk over a stream, where you might hear and (if lucky) see a Winter Wren in early spring. Beyond the boardwalk, an expansive network of trails eventually connects to the Benson Brook Road parcels and the Marion Water Treatment Plant.

The woods here are home to common breeders such as Black-and-white Warblers and Eastern Towhees, but generally are not diverse in terms of bird species, likely due to the lack of understory and diversity in tree species. The bog area can be a great place to photograph Tree Swallows, as there are several nests along the trails, and the ponds may hold ducks and shorebirds in spring and fall. Wood Ducks are likely breeders in the area, and Buffleheads occasionally show up in the winter if the ponds remain unfrozen. Killdeer, Least Sandpipers, and Spotted Sandpipers are the most common shorebirds here, but occasionally Semipalmated Plovers, Semipalmated Sandpipers, Solitary Sandpipers, and Pectoral Sandpipers show up as well. In the early spring and fall, when walking along the bogs it is not unusual to flush a snipe or two from the ditches.

Returning to Route 6 from Parlowtown Road, turn right, and drive for 0.75 mile. On the left will be a shop (currently called Fieldstone); right after it and just before a guardrail is a nondescript dirt road on the right. Take this short dirt road and park off to the side. This is Grassi Bog (G), where I have never seen another person despite its proximity to a major road. This area has several overgrown bogs and retention ponds. In 2017, the Town of Marion altered the water flow through the bogs as part of the Grassi Bog restoration project, which may impact which species may be here in the future. Historically, Virginia Rails have been here in breeding season, as well as Wood Ducks, Ospreys, Red-shouldered Hawks, Eastern Phoebes, Common Yellowthroats, and Swamp Sparrows. Once, a Marsh Wren was observed here in late February. Grassi Bog could benefit from more birding coverage in order to learn which species migrate or reside here. For those who enjoy occasional solitude, it can be a great place to get away from people for a while.

Be cautious when you pull back out onto Route 6. Drive south, and in 1.5 miles turn left on Aucoot Road shortly after Old Rochester Regional High School. About 0.5 mile down Aucoot Road is a small horse pasture (H). You can park off the road and check out the thickets and woodland. The thickets across the street and at the end of the pasture have yielded Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Eastern Towhee, and even a wintering Brown Thrasher. Just as the road begins to curve left, turn right onto a dirt road that leads to a small beach that is worth checking for sea ducks in winter. Please note that in summer these roads are much more heavily trafficked and the beach has resident-only parking restrictions.



Drive back to Route 6, turn left, and in 0.75 mile, turn left again onto Prospect Road. See Map 2. Prospect Road turns into Angelica Avenue. Keep driving until you come to a stream flowing under a small stone culvert. Find a place to park off the road on either side of the culvert. You can view Pine Island Pond (I) from the edge of the road or you can walk into the marsh. You will usually see American Oystercatchers, Willets, and Greater Yellowlegs, particularly on the large sand spit protruding into the pond from Pine Island. On the opposite side of the road, a small trail follows a brackish stream into the woods that can be good for chickadee flocks and other species that associate with them in fall and winter.

Drive to the end of Angelica Avenue. There will be a sign on the right and a dirt road for Angelica Point (J). This road is private but open to foot traffic. There is room to park one car next to this sign, and it is best to let any passengers out on the passenger side before parking in order to get off the road as much as possible. Walking down the dirt road, you will come to several spots that have views of Pine Island Pond. In fall, winter, and spring, look for Ruddy Turnstones and Dunlin on the nearby rocks. Continuing up the road, you will pass a marsh where you can frequently find Ospreys, Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets, and Willets. Beyond the parking area for the last house at the end of the road, you will come to a narrow path. This path leads to the edge of Pine Island and Angelica Point, which is one of the better shorebirding spots. Although bird numbers are not as high as at Plymouth Beach, the diversity is good. On lower tides, you can wade through the stream that leads into the marsh onto Pine Island. Follow the edge of the marsh where there are a few small salt pans that attract shorebirds. This portion of the marsh also hosts Saltmarsh Sparrows in the breeding season.

If you don't cross the stream, walk along the path to Angelica Point. The sandy area to the right of the narrow path leading toward the peninsula is a good spot for American Oystercatchers, Piping Plovers, and Greater Yellowlegs. Left of the path you can sometimes find White-rumped Sandpipers, Short-billed Dowitchers, and other common peep species. Continuing left where the beach splits leads to a small salt marsh with an equally small salt pond. This area usually has a fairly high density of breeding Saltmarsh Sparrows. The salt pond may hold shorebirds in the spring and fall, and occasionally Gadwalls will use the pond in winter.

When you finish birding Angelica Point and Pine Island, drive back to Route 6 via Angelica and Prospect roads. Turn left, and in approximately 0.25 mile, turn left at the fork at Oxford Creamery to remain on Marion Road. At the stop sign, turn left onto Ned's Point Road and drive to Ned's Point Lighthouse (K). This location has good views of most of Mattapoisett Harbor and some of Buzzards Bay, so it can be a worthwhile stop in the winter for sea ducks and other ocean-loving species such as Great Cormorant. Mattapoisett Harbor accumulates large flocks of Surf Scoters and Long-tailed Ducks in the winter and regularly hosts hundreds of Greater Scaups. Around dusk the ducks fly to their night roosts on the ocean, which creates quite a spectacle. Ned's Point Light is probably the best location to observe these evening flyouts. Parking here is free year-round, and there are restrooms open in the summer; however, the birding is best in winter.

Returning up Ned's Point Road, drive straight past the stop sign onto Beacon Street—which becomes Water Street—for 0.5 mile, and take a left onto the town wharf (L) for views of Mattapoissett Harbor. This is a great spot for a window-mounted scope and a hot cup of coffee on a cold winter's day. Along with the aforementioned species, Hooded and Red-breasted mergansers as well as the occasional Common Loon often swim right along the wharf, giving close views.

When leaving the wharf, turn left onto Water Street, which soon becomes Main Street. In 0.25 mile, turn left onto Depot Street, which ends at a large parking lot. Park here and walk down Goodspeed Island Road to get to Eel Pond (M), a large salt pond that feeds into Mattapoissett Harbor, and a small beach. In summer, the mouth of the river is a great spot to observe American Oystercatchers feeding. Walking the short trail along the river, you will frequently see a Green Heron or two. In May 2014, Clapper Rail was heard in this marsh; in August 2016, several juvenile Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were feeding in the marsh throughout the entire month. In fall, this area doesn't pick up many shorebirds, but will often attract a Spotted Sandpiper or two, and occasionally high numbers of Greater Yellowlegs. Normally, you'll see a few Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets, but occasionally in migration many of these birds will pass through the marsh. In winter, Dark-eyed Juncos and Yellow-rumped Warblers are common in the cedars. A pair of Gadwalls is almost always present in the pond. The small thicket in the parking lot and another shortly after the entrance to Goodspeed Island Road can be productive for Fox Sparrows. In late winter, there is a blackbird roost in the phragmites near the entrance, and large numbers of Common Grackles and Red-winged Blackbirds will fill the trees at dusk, their chorus a welcome reminder that spring is not far.

Head out of the parking lot on Railroad Ave and turn left onto Route 6 (now Fairhaven Road). Drive for a mile and turn left onto Mattapoissett Neck Road. In 0.75 mile, there is a boat ramp (N) that is another good spot to scope Mattapoissett Harbor in winter. Large numbers of ducks—often including Gadwalls and sometimes Northern Pintails—and occasionally geese sometimes roam around the sand spit opposite the boat ramp. Drive down the road to Molly's Cove along the right-hand side of the road and check for shorebirds and waders. In 2016, there were a few juvenile Yellow-crowned Night-Herons here in August, and I have heard Clapper Rails calling in these marshes.

Follow Mattapoissett Neck Road until it ends at a parking area on the right. Do not drive beyond the stone pillar onto Antassawamock Road. Park here, which is the access to the Munn Preserve (O), recently acquired by Mattapoissett Land Trust. You can download a map at <http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/map_munn-preserve.pdf>. A short path through mostly deciduous woods leads out to a strip of beach that overlooks Brandt Island Cove and Buzzards Bay. This is a great location in the summer to bring a scope and observe Ram Island, which is host to hundreds of nesting Common and Roseate terns, clouds of them occasionally filling the sky, their calls audible from over a mile away. The narrow strips of marsh along the beach are home to breeding Saltmarsh Sparrows, and this is a good location to see American Oystercatchers. In fall, the small marsh supports a reasonable diversity of

shorebirds, and in 2016, a Tricolored Heron was seen here. The number of Ospreys is spectacular—careful observation can yield more than 20 in one visit. In winter, this is also a decent spot to look for sea ducks. The woods here are home to many breeding species; White-eyed Vireo has likely bred here in the past. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker has also been heard in early spring. This is truly one of the great spots in the Tri-Town area and should not be missed.

Go back up Mattapoissett Neck Road, turn left onto Route 6, and proceed for 0.5 mile before turning left onto Brandt Island Road. Drive 1.25 miles until the road forks. Stay to the right and look for signs for Nasketucket Bay State Reservation (P). You can download the reservation's trail map at http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/map_nasketucket-bay-state-reservation.pdf. This park has many different habitats: mixed forest, extensive secondary growth, thickets, open field, a beach that overlooks Nasketucket Bay, and a small salt marsh. Birding here can be good any time of year, although it is truly fantastic in the winter. It is open to hunting, so be sure to wear orange if birding during hunting season. Walking the main trail (Bridle Trail), turn right onto the Meadow Trail and continue to where the path turns left and begins to open up at some thickets. This area has yielded Winter Wrens, Hermit Thrushes, Gray Catbirds, Fox Sparrows, and Yellow-breasted Chats in winter, and is a great spot to observe Blue-winged Warblers in spring. The field along Meadow Trail is where I often hear my first Baltimore Oriole in spring and is a great spot to observe displaying American Woodcocks. For those interested in butterflies, this field is particularly good in summer and early fall.

The Meadow Trail reconnects with the Bridle Trail. Continue along this trail. I have encountered Fox Sparrows along the edges of this part of the trail in winter. The sounds of catbirds mewing and towhees scratching in the leaf litter is omnipresent in spring and summer. You can hear Wood Thrushes frequently throughout the reservation, as well. Eventually the Bridle Trail forks. Go right along the Saltmarsh Trail, which will lead out to Nasketucket Bay. This is another spot worth checking for sea ducks in the winter. In summer, the marsh to the right from the entrance to the beach is a spot where Saltmarsh Sparrows likely breed. At the end of the Saltmarsh Trail, return along the Holly Trail, which will take you back to the meadow and Bridle Trail. Along the way, you can hear Scarlet Tanagers in spring and summer, and Brown Creepers year-round in the conifers.

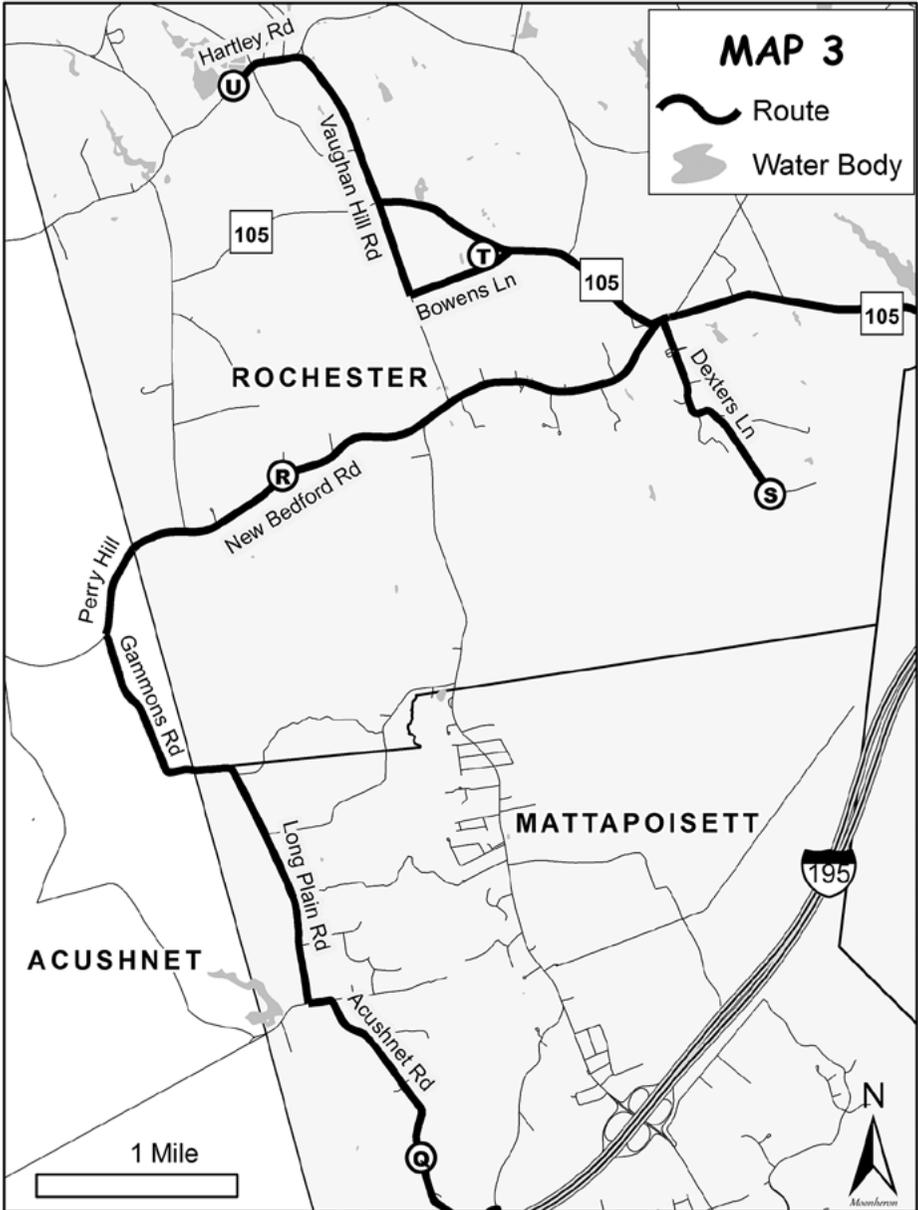
When you get back to Route 6 from Brandt Island Road, turn right. Drive for about 0.5 mile and turn left onto River Road just before the Mattapoissett River. Carefully cross the one-lane bridge over the river, and turn left where the road ends at Acushnet Road. After passing over Interstate I-195, turn left to continue on Acushnet Road. In a little over 0.5 mile, there will be a sign and parking for The Bogs (Q), a property owned by Buzzards Bay Coalition. This can be a productive spot for hawk watching in spring and fall. The key is to bring a scope and a chair. If you set up in the parking lot or along Acushnet Road, these treeless old bogs provide open views of the sky. Although The Bogs cannot compare with locations in western Massachusetts, you can get decent raptor diversity. It is a particularly good spot on a warm windy day to watch for migrating hawks and is one of the most reliable locations in Plymouth County for

Black Vulture. You can encounter a surprisingly high number of species just sitting here for a while; 40–50 species are not unprecedented for an observer with keen eyes and ears.

Drive north on Acushnet Road. See Map 3. Turn left where the road ends at Tinkham Lane, then take a quick right onto Long Plain Road. Follow this road—which curves sharply to the left and then sharply to the right (where it becomes Gammons Road in Bristol County)—for approximately 2.25 miles to the end. Turn right onto Perry Hill Road (which will shortly become New Bedford Road in Plymouth County). In 1.5 miles, you will come to a Mattapoisett Land Trust sign and small parking lot on the right. Known as the Shoolman Preserve (R), this is a loop trail through mixed forest that has a healthy understory, with two offshoots that feature scenic views of the Mattapoisett River and large holly trees. You can download the trail map at <http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/map_shoolman-preserve.pdf>. This is a particularly good spot for an ear tune-up in the spring to compare Pine Warbler and Chipping Sparrow songs and the diverse repertoire of American Redstarts versus Yellow Warblers. You will see and hear large numbers of American Redstarts and Ovenbirds in the breeding season. Canada Warblers have been heard here and are possible breeders. The preserve also hosts Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Brown Creepers, and Scarlet Tanagers, as well as many common forest-loving birds.

Drive east on New Bedford Road for two miles, and take a sharp right onto Dexter Lane. Drive to the end of the road to the entrance of Haskell Swamp Wildlife Management Area (S), an area of more than 3,100 acres of coniferous and hardwood forests. The main trail here is wide and occasionally wet, with several offshoot trails that eventually peter off due to downed trees. In spring, you can often hear Winter Wrens and Northern Waterthrushes, and a Barred Owl may respond to imitated hoots. The sound of singing Ovenbirds is almost ubiquitous throughout this forest. Hermit Thrushes are also present in the breeding season, and a few may linger here in winter. In 2017, a pair of Sharp-shinned Hawks showed up in the summer, indicating possible breeding. This WMA is a huge area with many trails to explore and certainly many interesting birds to be discovered.

Drive back up Dexter Lane and turn left onto Route 105. Proceed for about 1.0 mile until you reach a large farm field on the left. This area is part of the Vaughan Hill Road fields (T), a complex of fields known for their large numbers of geese, including the occasional rarity almost every year. The best way to bird this area is to drive along the triangle of roads surrounding it: Route 105, Vaughan Hill Road, and Bowens Lane. These fields are quite hilly, so you will need to observe them from multiple vantage points to get decent coverage. Parking on the street is allowed, but be sure to safely pull all the way off the road and use extreme caution if it is wet so you don't get stuck. Parking at the entrance to the Rochester Golf Club is an option in winter. In fall, winter, and early spring, the goose flocks here have included Greater White-fronted Goose, Snow Goose, and Cackling Goose. The fields, once plowed, have also hosted Sandhill Cranes, wintering Eastern Meadowlarks, and large numbers of Killdeer. In spring, the wet fields attract dabbling ducks including Wood Ducks, American Wigeons, Gadwalls, American Black Ducks, Mallards, Northern Pintails, and Green-winged Teal. The small



puddles in the middle of the field may hold shorebirds such as Wilson's Snipes, Spotted Sandpipers, and Greater Yellowlegs. The small farm pond on the opposite side of Route 105 has occasionally hosted Blue-winged Teal; when the water level is low, it can be surprisingly productive for shorebirds such as Solitary Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, and peeps in the fall.

From Route 105 turn right onto Vaughan Hill Road, where more farm fields are worth checking for geese. At the fork toward the end of the fields, bear left onto Hartley Road, bear left at the next fork, and continue to the parking lot for Hartley Reservoir at the Rochester Wildlife Management Area (U) on the right. You can download a map at <<http://rochestermaconservation.com/pdf/hartley-reservoir.pdf>>. This is a complex of manmade ponds that were formerly cranberry bogs with a trail around the perimeters of the ponds. In breeding season these ponds are home to Wood Ducks. Hooded Mergansers have bred here in the past, although probably only sporadically. In fall, winter, and spring, the ponds may also host waterfowl such as American Black Ducks, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shovelers (rarely), Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Ducks, Lesser Scaups, Buffleheads, and Pied-billed Grebes. In spring and summer, you can hear Warbling Vireos throughout this area. On a cool or cloudy day, swallows and swifts feed low near the surface of the ponds. There is a blackbird roost in the phragmites patch in the woods at the end of the central trail, where you can occasionally find Rusty Blackbirds in the spring.

This is the end of the Tri-Town birding trail. To return to I-195, drive back down Hartley Road, turn right on Vaughan Hill Road, and turn left at the stop sign onto Route 105.

My suggestions are snapshots of the locations worth birding in the area, and careful exploration may yield a discovery of something unexpected. What the Tri-Town area lacks in migrants, it more than makes up for in breeding and wintering birds. Complementary to this is the opportunity to delve into uncharted territory. The area is like a treasure chest, waiting to be discovered! 🐦

Nate Marchessault is an avid birder from Mattapoisett, Massachusetts. In 2016 he did a Plymouth County Big Year, where he frequently traveled out of the Tri-town area to chase after rare birds. Currently, he enjoys birding locally and leads trips for South Shore Bird Club and Buzzards Bay Coalition.

Northward Expansion of Blue Grosbeaks into Massachusetts

Christopher Neill



Male Blue Grosbeak at the Crane Wildlife Management Area, June 3, 2017. Photograph by Craig Gibson.

On July 18, 2017 Nate Marchessault and I found and photographed the nest of a Blue Grosbeak (*Passerina caerulea*) with four large young at the Frances Crane Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Falmouth, Massachusetts. Five days later, Nate and Alan Kneidel photographed a fledged bird in the shrub-filled kettle hole near the nest. These observations for the first time documented successful breeding of Blue Grosbeaks in Massachusetts (Marchessault 2017).

Successful breeding by Blue Grosbeaks in Massachusetts is not by itself surprising. A nesting attempt was documented in 2016 at the Cumberland Farms Important Bird Area in the towns of Middleborough and Halifax. Also, Blue Grosbeak is one of a growing list of bird species with southerly distributions that are expanding northward in the eastern U.S., including into Massachusetts. The accompanying photo shows a Blue Grosbeak at the Crane WMA in the summer of 2017.

What is important, however, was that the 2017 successful nesting occurred at a site that the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) actively manages for sandplain grassland and shrubland habitat. The successful Blue Grosbeak nest was

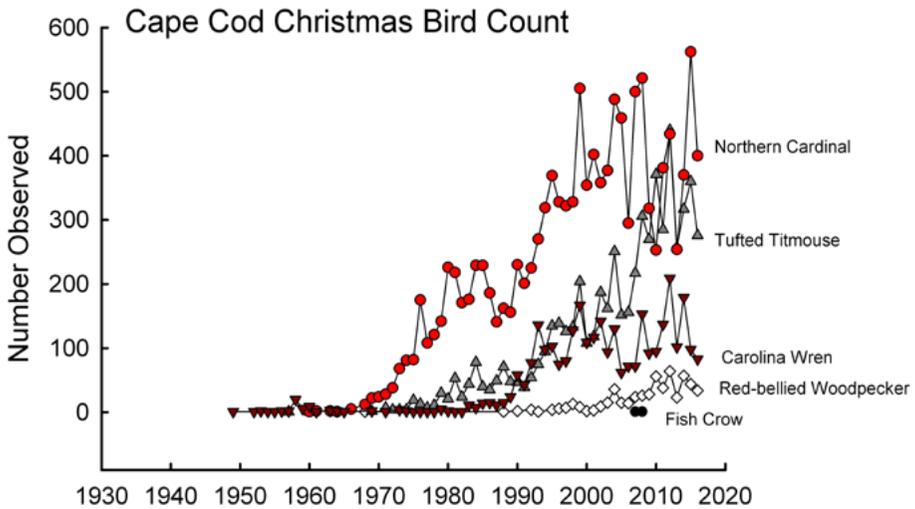


Figure 1A. Trends in numbers of Northern Cardinals, Tufted Titmice, Carolina Wrens, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, and Fish Crows recorded on the Cape Cod Christmas Bird Count since initiation of the count in 1930 (National Audubon Society 2017).

in the middle of a 48-acre area that DFW cleared in 2014 to expand grassland habitat. DFW cleared an additional 148 acres in 2015, and the Crane WMA now contains about 400 acres of unfragmented grassland habitat (Buelow 2017).

Massachusetts records going back to the middle of the last century show a number of bird species expanding north. We know from the Cape Cod Christmas Bird Count (CBC), which has run since 1930, that Northern Cardinals invaded in the 1970s, Tufted Titmice in the 1980s, Carolina Wrens in the 1990s, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers in the 2010s (Figure 1A). The first Fish Crows, which appeared on the count in 2007, are likely the vanguard of a future and more permanent presence. Massachusetts Breeding Bird Survey data show a similar timing of increase in these species (Figure 1B). The main difference is that Tufted Titmice expanded in the interior about a decade before they became common on Cape Cod.

Climate is almost certainly the principal driver of these changes. The center of abundance for 305 North American Bird species moved northward on average 40 miles between 1966 and 2014, largely because of warmer winter temperatures (La Sorte and Thompson 2007). Winter temperatures are increasing about 0.28°F per decade (Tibaldi et al. 2013), but the changes occur year-round. The northeast United States is warming faster than any United States region except Alaska (Karmalkar and Bradley 2017). Massachusetts' average temperature has increased 1.2°F since 1960, and every year since 1993 has exceeded the 20th century average temperature (Bradley 2017).

This warming—including a projection that summer in Massachusetts by the end of this century could feel like the current summer in South Carolina—raises interesting and troubling questions about how birds will adapt. A recent Mass Audubon report

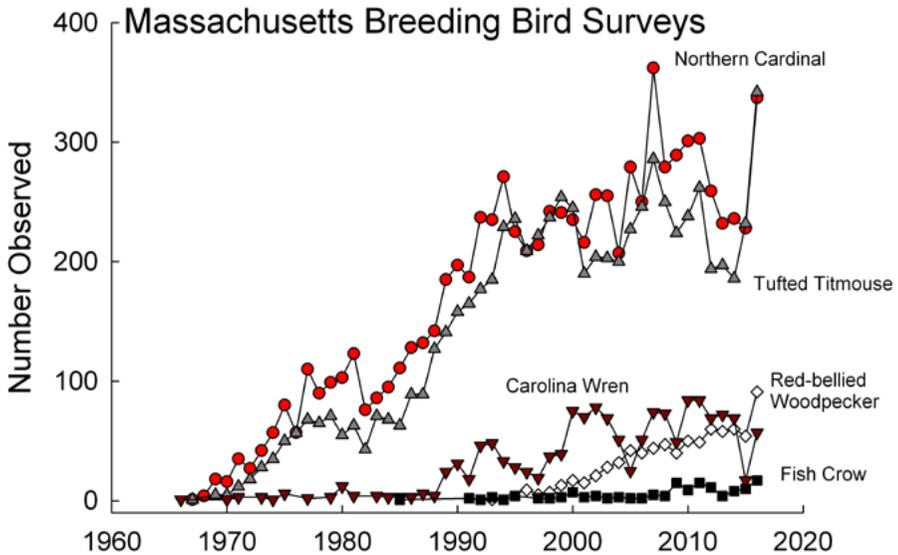


Figure 1B. Trends in the numbers of those same species as recorded on all Massachusetts Breeding Bird Survey transects since 1967. Y-axis is the sum of the birds observed on all Massachusetts transects. Data from Pardieck et al. 2017.

rated 61 of 143 breeding species “highly vulnerable” to climate change largely because places where they now live will become less suitable (Mass Audubon 2017). The mechanisms by which birds adapt to climate change by shifting ranges is a critical question.

Imagine you are a Northern Cardinal taking a chance on northward movement into new territory in Massachusetts. You have thousands of acres of woodland or yard edges to choose from. Same if you are a Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, or Red-bellied Woodpecker. If you are a Fish Crow, you have miles of commercial strips and mall parking lots that roll out a red carpet.

But what if you are a Blue Grosbeak? You need a much more specialized grassland and shrubland habitat. However, that habitat is shrinking in the northeast—along with the many birds that depend on grasslands (Figure 2). So Blue Grosbeaks likely face a much different challenge than Cardinals or Titmice when adapting to climate change through northward expansion.

Think about how range expansions occur. Joseph Grinnell described this process in his 1922 paper in *The Auk*, “The Role of the Accidental.” Grinnell wrote, describing the expanding bird list for California at the time, “[T]here is indicated a continual appearance, within the confines of the state, through time, of additional species of extra-limital source.” He went on to state, “There is nothing really ‘accidental’ about it; the process is part of the ordinary evolutionary program.”

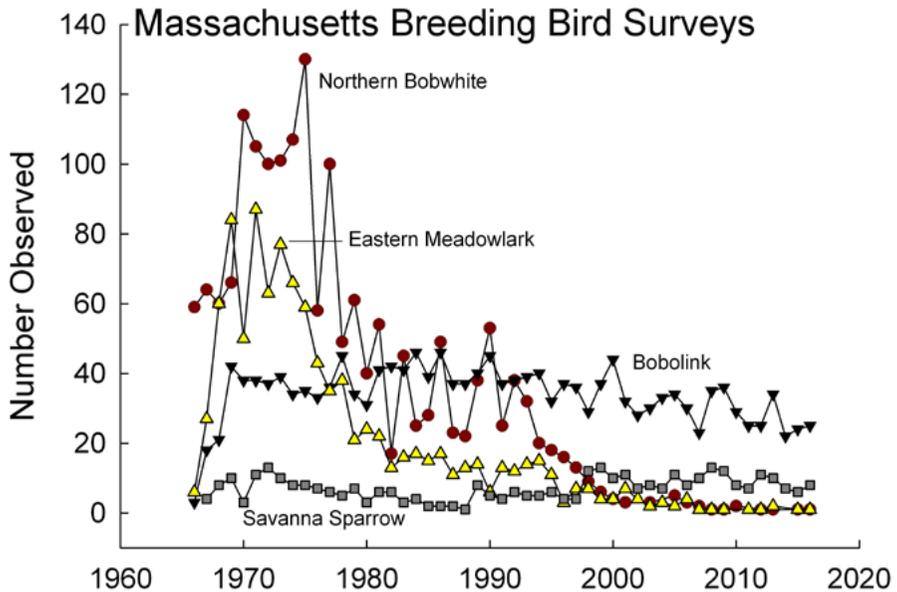


Figure 2. Trends in numbers of selected grassland-associated species recorded on all Massachusetts Breeding Bird Survey transects since 1967. Y-axis is the sum of the birds observed on all Massachusetts transects. Data from Pardieck et al. 2017.

The vast majority of these pioneers are, in Grinnell’s words, “foredoomed to an early destruction without any opportunity of breeding.” But occasionally these accidentals find conditions to their liking, and a new population—or a range expansion—occurs.

Take the case of the Cattle Egret. Cattle Egrets first appeared in Guyana and Suriname between 1877 and 1882 (Wetmore 1963) and first bred in the US in 1953 (Telfair 2006). Weather conditions that could allow these strong flyers to have crossed the Atlantic unaided almost certainly occur regularly (Massa et al. 2014). But the odds of successful expansion of the Cattle Egret’s range from the late 1800s to the present almost certainly increased with the presence of the combination of open land and large grazing animals in South, Central, and North America.

The presence of appropriate habitat is essential. In 25 years working along the southern edge of the Brazilian Amazon, I have watched Blue-black Grassquits (*Volatinia jacarina*) and Red-breasted Blackbirds (*Sturnella militaris*) expand into the pastures created from former rain forest.

When there is no corridor of appropriate habitat, scientists and managers now debate “assisted migration” as a way of avoiding the decline—or extinction—of species that have nowhere to move (McLachlan et al. 2007). In managing the Crane WMA as grassland and shrubland, the Massachusetts DFW created just the habitat Blue Grosbeaks needed to expand north.

More of this approach will be needed to help birds—and indeed a wide range of plants and animals—adapt to unprecedented rates of climate change. If projections of approximately 5°C warming in this century occur—which is looking more and more likely lacking dramatic reductions in fossil fuel use—then the Earth will have experienced about the same amount of global mean warming as it did at the end of the last ice age, but at a rate about 20 times faster. This rate of temperature change is unmatched by any comparable global temperature increase during the last 50 million years (Solomon et al. 2007).

Grinnell’s words nearly 100 years ago were prescient, “In a world of changing conditions it is necessary that close touch be maintained between a species and its geographical limits, else it be cut off directly from persistence[.]”

That close touch is more important today than ever before. Habitat management in advance of range shifts—particularly for species with more specialized habitat requirements—can be a key part of a regional conservation and climate change adaptation strategy. The Blue Grosbeaks we found show just how that approach can be successful. 🐦

Acknowledgments

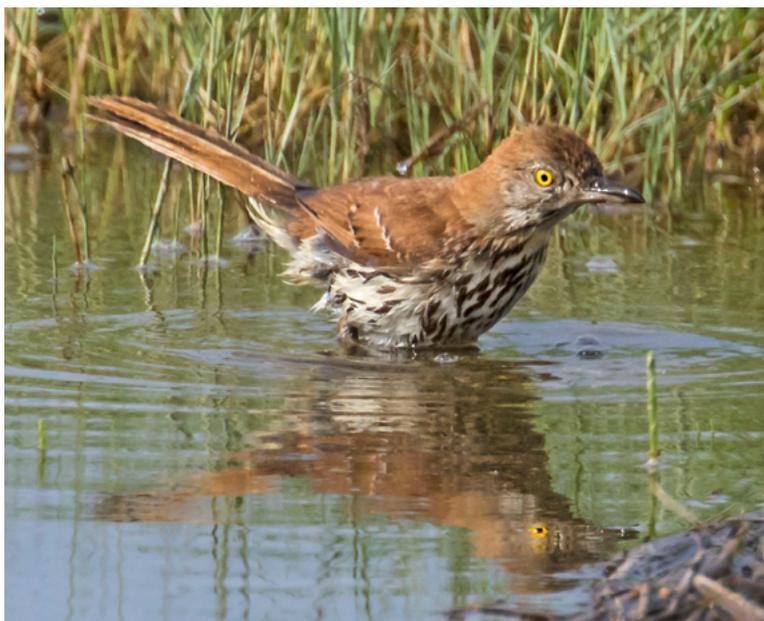
I thank Nate Marchessault for letting me tag along in the discovery of the Blue Grosbeaks breeding at Crane. I thank Dov Sax for bringing the Grinnell article, “The role of the ‘accidental’,” to my attention. Thanks to Craig Gibson for permission to use his marvelous photo. CBC data are provided by National Audubon Society and through the generous efforts of Bird Studies Canada and countless volunteers. I also thank thousands of USA and Canadian participants who annually perform and coordinate the Breeding Bird survey.

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BROWN THRASHER BY SANDY SELESKY

Mass Audubon Releases State of the Birds 2017: Massachusetts Birds and Our Changing Climate

Margo Servison and Joan Walsh



56% of the coastal-nesting birds analyzed and 70% of the salt marsh-nesting birds analyzed, including the Saltmarsh Sparrow, are highly vulnerable to climate change. Photograph by Shawn Carey (Migration Productions).

In the summer of 2017, Mass Audubon completed *State of the Birds 2017: Massachusetts Birds and Our Changing Climate*. This third edition of the *State of the Birds* reports builds on the previous 2011 and 2013 editions, in which we compared the present to the past, using the results of our *Breeding Bird Atlas 1* data (collected in 1974–1979) and *Breeding Bird Atlas 2* data (collected in 2007–2011). In those reports we evaluated identifiable changes in Massachusetts bird populations and used those changes to set priorities for our work.

State of the Birds 2017 is an effort to predict the possible future of selected Massachusetts bird species. In many respects climate (i.e., temperature and precipitation) controls or determines the range of bird distribution, and birds and people



Massachusetts Birds and Our Changing Climate

State^{of the}Birds



Report No. 3 // September 2017

alike are already feeling the impact and effects of a rapidly changing climate. Using a scientific process called “climate envelope modeling,” Mass Audubon evaluated and projected the possible future distribution of 143 breeding Massachusetts birds in 2050.

The results of the climate envelope modeling revealed that of the 143 breeding birds analyzed, 43% are “highly vulnerable” to climate change, 15% are “likely vulnerable”, and 42% are “least vulnerable.” Forest birds, coastal birds, and long-distance migratory birds are groups that appear to be particularly vulnerable.

The results of *State of the Birds 2017* will help Mass Audubon and other organizations and individuals set up on-the-ground advocacy, land conservation, science, and education programs that will help Massachusetts birds cope with a warming climate in the future. The future that *State of the Birds 2017* describes is but one possible future. With this information, the actions of individuals, the conservation community, and state and federal governments today will be able to change this future for birds.

Download and read the full report online at <massaudubon.org/sotb>. Look for further explorations from Mass Audubon’s science team over the next year. 🦉

A Simple Solution to Keep Your Birding Gear in Perfect Condition

Gail Fisher



Corroded binocular lenses. All photographs by the author.

Taking care of your birding gear is an essential part of optical performance. Maintaining the cleanliness of your lenses is vital in regard to the clarity and performance of binoculars and spotting scopes. The first step is to remove dirt particles, since they can scratch the lenses. You can remove these particles by using an optical lens brush or by using a canned air duster to blow away dirt and sand before cleaning to prevent any damage to the lenses. Once you've removed any particles, breathe onto the lens surface to form a coat of condensation and wipe using a soft, moist lens-cleaning cloth. If there are any hard to remove dirt or sand particles, send the product to the manufacturer's repair department for a professional cleaning so that the lenses are not damaged. It is recommended that the product be sent in every few years for cleaning and a quality control check to ensure perfect performance.

If using your gear in saltwater environments, you should rinse it off when your day is done as long as the product is waterproof. Salt water causes intense degradation of all metal parts. Removing screws can be difficult for repair technicians because they become corroded and must be drilled out. This corrosion also affects metal parts of the focus mechanisms and may cause difficulty in focusing by jamming up components that are needed for smooth focusing.

Cleaning the body of your product is easy. You can use Simple Green (mixed with water) and a toothbrush to brush away the dirt. When finished, use a cloth or paper towel to dry the surface of the armor.

The following pictures of a repair show where the binoculars were corroded by salt water. All photographs were taken by the author.



Gail Fisher has always been an outdoor person and considers her birding gear so important not only to see birds, but all of what nature offers us. She has spent 25 years as a repair technician and the manager of the Swarovski Optiks repair department in Rhode Island.

Summer of Pied-billed Grebes

Carolyn Longworth

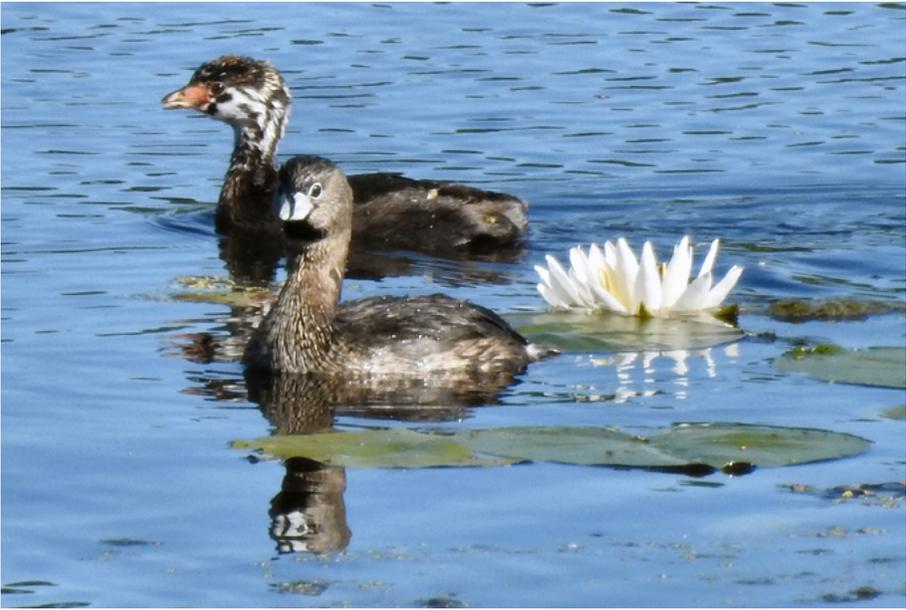


Pied-billed Grebe chick with parent. All photographs by the author.

As a beginning birder, I was excited just to checklist the small, brown, nondescript Pied-billed Grebe listed as endangered in Massachusetts, let alone have the opportunity to watch a family of grebes all summer in 2017 at Egypt Lane Ponds in Fairhaven, Massachusetts.

Egypt Lane Ponds was formerly part of the dumping ground for the processing effluents of Atlas Tack Corporation. The plant was built in 1901 and manufactured wire tacks and steel nails until 1985. The plant discharged wastes that contained cyanide and heavy metals, which contaminated soil, groundwater, and nearby wetlands. It became a US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Superfund Site in 1990. Site cleanup occurred between 2005 and 2007, and long-term monitoring is ongoing (EPA 2017). In the 1960s, a hurricane dike was built that split the salt marsh and interrupted the flow of the creek from the bay, creating a pond from some freshwater streams on the north side of the dike. The \$20 million Superfund cleanup created just the spot for birds of freshwater and salt marshes.

Sitting on the hurricane dike on a warm spring evening several years ago, my birding companions and I heard a loud *cow-cow-cow* sound that baffled us. Fortunately Pied-billed Grebes are at the beginning of the bird song CDs, so we quickly identified it.



Pied-billed Grebe chick with parent.

In the spring and summer of 2014 and 2015, several birders saw and heard an adult Pied-billed Grebe throughout the summer. In 2016, birders heard the grebe in late spring and someone said another birder had seen chicks. But Egypt Lane Ponds was only one stop on our birding route and we didn't put in a lot of time.

In April 2017, fellow birders Dan Logan, Dan Mackinnon, and I decided to focus on the pond and visit once or twice a day. We heard a single grebe calling, but in May we heard duetting. At first we'd see only one, but the unseen bird was always in the same spot farther out on the pond. In late May, we saw the pair—their wings extended—steam after a muskrat that had gotten too close to the nest. Later, there were frequent surreptitious food deliveries and on June 4, with the aid of a scope, we saw the nest and two tiny orange heads.

Three days later, the adults swam out together. One rose up, fluffed its feathers, and three chicks fell out. Soon the tiny striped babies were doing many classic grebe moves: diving, eating a feather, and riding on a parent's back. The attending parent made sure all the babies were fed. Any time a duck swam toward the new arrivals, one of the parents, wings akimbo, would sail out in pursuit.

A few weeks later only two chicks were left. We saw one adult and heard the other calling from the nest area. We hoped that it was a sign of a second nesting attempt. However, we never saw the adult again and the calls stopped, leading us to believe that the grebes were victims of predators. A family of five cygnets and two adult swans met with a similar disaster and we had seen coyotes in the area. We had also seen mink, river otters, snapping turtles, fishers, and herons.

The surviving chicks were fun to watch as they practiced aggressive and evasive behavior and learned to get their own food. Once they were able to skitter along the water, the parent sometimes had a hard time finding them to feed them fish and frogs.

Often the chicks would swim around a couple of Mallards sunning on a rock. They did the sudden sinking and the show of circling with wings held high. The Mallards ignored the chicks. However, when the smaller, more aggressive chick submerged and headed toward a cygnet, the adult swan chased the chick away.

When the grebes were alarmed, they stretched their necks out very tall. One time, a dozen Canada Geese landed in the pond and the grebe chicks quickly swam into their midst, looking like Viking ships. The grebes, by means of diving, rippling, and touching the geese from underwater, managed to herd them to the other side of the pond. The larger chick then joined the adult to snooze, while the smaller one displayed another classic grebe move, the crash dive, suddenly submerging while kicking up a big splash of water several feet high.

By August, the chicks' stripes and orange bits were faded. Weeks later, it was hard to tell the adult from the chicks at a distance. The parent's bill stripe was fading too. Even rainy days provided good views of the family tucked into the porkpie position in the lily pads. They also folded their legs up, so that they looked like rowboats with the oars shipped.

In September, the grebes' territorial behavior on the pond ceased. Mallards no longer avoided the grebes, but headed straight for them, making them give way. We even saw young Wood Ducks lunging at grebes.

Looking back over old photos, I realized that we had seen small groups of grebes in the fall in previous years and they may have been born at Egypt Lane Ponds. One group of three immatures had stripey heads in October of 2011.

It was hard paying whole-hearted attention to the grebes this past spring and summer with two clutches of Clapper Rails, a visiting King Rail, a Common Gallinule, and Least and American bitterns also putting on a show, not to mention groups of birders gazing into the marsh. I learned the value of reading, listening to other birders, and spending hours of observation.

In short, 2017 gave us a good opportunity to see the value of the transformation of a lagoon filled with cyanide and heavy metals into a breeding spot for interesting and endangered birds through the efforts of state, local, and federal funding. 🦆

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Carolyn Longworth has been a librarian in Fairhaven for over 40 years and a birder for about 15 years. Website at <<http://bvm1290.blogspot.com/p/blog-page.html>>

PHOTO ESSAY

Pied-billed Grebe Family

Carolyn Longworth





MUSINGS FROM THE BLIND BIRDER

Travel

Martha Steele



The author with her dog Alvin, staring at a Spruce Grouse. Photograph by Bob Stymeist..

As another New England winter approaches, many birders turn their attention to distant and warmer domestic and international birding destinations. As a birder, you have likely done a lot of traveling and your destinations have been carefully chosen to maximize your opportunities to see the most species possible or your specific target species.

I am often struck by conversations shared in the field that include stories from recent travels. Although sometimes there may be heard a tinge of boasting on the part of the traveler, most often the stories are fun or fascinating. Among the dozens of birding trips that I have taken around the world, some memories stand out, and they often do not focus specifically on birds. I will not soon forget, for example, a late afternoon effort in Tanzania with our safari vehicle to guide a lone young wildebeest back to its herd. We drove slowly, cajoling the youngster to follow us until we

eventually found the herd. We cheered and clapped as we watched the little one run to its mates. It is certainly possible that the wildebeest would have found its way back on its own but that did not dampen our spirits over the rescue effort.

It is also striking that birders often visit places that would otherwise not enter our minds were it not that the location happens to have terrific birding. One can think of many New England places that might otherwise hold little appeal, such as Moose Bog in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont, one of the best places in the region for easy access to boreal bird species such as the Spruce Grouse. If not for birding, I doubt I would visit Texas much, if ever, but being a birder I have visited Texas many times and plan to do so many more times.

But the heart of travel to me has always been the people that I am traveling with. I find birding is often a solitary pursuit in your local area but very much a group pursuit on birding trips, with your experience enhanced by those traveling with you and sharing in special, even spectacular, moments.

During my first Texas trip I visited the Edwards Plateau with a tour group of a dozen other birders. One day, the tour company arranged for our group to be the only people in an otherwise closed Texas state park. We enjoyed a spectacular day of birding, including scope views of a male Painted Bunting, my life bunting. That evening, we were set up for a picnic dinner at the mouth of a small cave opening in the ground. We stood at the opening of the cave and then experienced one of the greatest spectacles of my life. Millions of Mexican free-tailed bats came streaming out of the cave, whizzing by every part of our bodies with nary a collision, spinning an ever wider trail into the early evening sky as they dispersed for the night. I had thought that the Painted Bunting would be my day's highlight but instead all of us were treated to one of the most memorable evenings of our lives.

There is something invigorating about travel, be it within New England or to the other side of the world. Travel expands our horizons, makes us feel more alive, often brings us closer together, sometimes tests our patience with each other, and nearly always produces good stories long after the trip has ended.

Still, our tastes for travel change as we age. When we were younger, we tended to bird longer days, include post-dinner nocturnal forays, stay in more basic accommodations, and cover as much territory as possible. As we get older, the length of the birding day might shorten, we may want to include a social hour before dinner, opt for more lush accommodations, and choose to sign up with bird tour companies rather than guide ourselves.

We can also hope that our appetite for good birding destinations helps conserve the habitats of these locations. We are careful to tell any local person, be it a guide, a service provider, or a passerby, what we are doing and why we are there. In this way we educate locals about the potential economic benefits to them of habitat conservation that would continue to attract birders or other wildlife enthusiasts to their region.

We share our earth not only with other humans but with so many other forms of life. Our travels heighten our appreciation of the complexity and relationships of the earth's inhabitants, and perhaps give us pause to reflect on small things we can do to conserve places we enjoy visiting for birds and other wildlife. Traveling fundamentally is also a time of connecting with those we are traveling with, free of the minutiae of everyday life. This is true whether it is a bird club getaway to a remote New England region or an otherworldly voyage to Antarctica. Yes, we go for the birds, and yes, it is a whole lot more fun when you can enjoy the birds with family or friends, old and new. 🐦

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

GLEANINGS

Colorful Flickers

David M. Larson

Northern Flickers (*Colaptes auratus*) occur in two distinctively colored subspecies groups—Yellow-shafted (*C. a. auratus*) and Red-shafted (*C. a. cafer*). In each case, the subspecies groups contain multiple populations. The names come from the coloration of the shafts and undersides of the flight and tail feathers, a genetically determined distinction caused by the yellow carotenoid pigments in *auratus* and red 4-keto derivatives of the same carotenoid pigments in *cafer*. The largely eastern Yellow-shafted and western Red-shafted subspecies groups interbreed in the midwestern states, often giving rise to offspring with intermediate coloration. While the overlap zone is far from the East Coast, it is not uncommon to see Northern Flickers with a few red primaries in New England. So how does that happen? Some researchers have suggested that the multicolored birds are hybrids with periodic shifts in the types of pigments deposited. However, no one has come up with a plausible genetic control mechanism for coloring some feathers and not others, changing coloration patterns in the same individual birds from year to year, and changing the color part way through feather growth.

Hudon et al. (2017) hypothesized instead that red pigments in feathers of *auratus* are due to exogenous pigments derived from non-native plants. There are examples of this phenomenon in other birds—for instance, the different feather tip colors in Cedar Waxwings that feed on certain berries, though such a mechanism has not been described in flickers. While flicker diets consist largely of ants, they do consume fruit in the fall, including that of the patchy but widely distributed Tatarian (*Lonicera tatarica*) and Morrow's (*L. morrowii*) honeysuckles and their hybrids. If ingestion of exogenous pigments from such plants is the explanation of the anomalous colors in Yellow-shafted Flickers, then the red pigment in the red *auratus* feathers would be rhodoxanthin from the honeysuckles rather than 4-keto-carotenoids in *cafer*. Other investigators had shown that carotenoids ingested by birds are rapidly deposited in growing feathers, which could help to explain the shifts from yellow to red along the shafts of some eastern flickers.

Selected feather samples from normal *cafer*, normal *auratus*, hybrids, eastern birds with red feathers, and samples of honeysuckle fruit were extracted using standard techniques to concentrate carotenoids and subjected to spectrophotometry and high-performance liquid chromatography to identify and quantify pigments. Without getting into the details of all the spectral differences in samples from the birds, the red feathers in the eastern birds showed clear evidence of rhodoxanthin—and presumed metabolites—but not 4-keto-carotenoids, often starting abruptly along the length of a feather and trailing away during subsequent feather growth. The feather color was not just due to an overlay of exogenous rhodoxanthin on the five normal yellow pigments in *auratus* flickers, but a change in expression of some of the yellow pigments in the

red feathers—for instance, the normally predominant pigment lutein decreased while 3'-dehydro-lutein increased. So it seems clear that the red pigment in some of the feathers of the eastern *auratus* Northern Flickers had a plant-based source and that regulation of deposition of these pigments is under poorly understood control.

But the question still remained as to whether pigment deposition during feather growth and the availability of fruit were temporally matched. The authors examined molt status records from 134 Northern Flickers processed at the Manomet banding station in Plymouth, Massachusetts, between 1978 and 2014. Of these birds, 105 were actively molting when captured. In fact, 12% of flickers banded at Manomet, and 36% of those captured in two or more seasons—resident birds—had some red flight feathers. Based on molt timing derived from the banding data, a source of rhodoxanthin would have had to be available to the birds in early August in order to effect the color change patterns recorded. While honeysuckle fruits become available in June, they continue to fruit until flickers start ingesting plant materials in August. The only other widespread source of rhodoxanthin is the plump red arils of yew trees (*Taxus* spp.), though these are not normally available until later in September, so temporally disconnected from the observed color deposition in the flicker feathers. Hence, honeysuckles are the most likely source of this pigment.

Interesting future investigation lines from this research include elucidating the mechanisms by which exogenous carotenoids influence the deposition of endogenous carotenoids, understanding the pathways and functioning of the detected metabolites of rhodoxanthin in the flicker feathers, and determining whether simple spectrographic evidence can suffice to detect rhodoxanthin in feathers. Intriguingly, this work simplifies our understanding of the taxonomic relationship between Red-shafted and Yellow-shafted Northern Flickers by clearing away false suppositions of hybrids beyond the contact zone. 🐦

Reference

Hudon, J., R.J. Driver, N.H. Rice, T.L. Lloyd-Evans, J.A. Craves, and D.P. Shustack. 2017. Diet explains red flight feathers in Yellow-shafted Flickers in eastern North America. *The Auk* 134: 22-33.

David M. Larson, PhD, is the Science and Education Coordinator at Mass Audubon's Joppa Flats Education Center in Newburyport, the Director of Mass Audubon's Birder's Certificate Program and the Certificate Program in Bird Ecology (a course for naturalist guides in Belize), a domestic and international tour leader, Vice President of the Nuttall Ornithological Club, and a member of the editorial staff of *Bird Observer*.

FIELD NOTES

Massachusetts' Oldest Bald Eagle Died Too Young

Thomas W. French



Female chick (W02 in the foreground), and her male sibling (W03 in the background) on the day they were banded. Photograph by Bill Byrne.

This past spring, on March 30, 2017, a passing motorist found an injured adult Bald Eagle lying near a dead opossum on Island Road inside the Hockanum Oxbow, Connecticut River, near the Oxbow Marina in Northampton, Massachusetts. Although the eagle was still alive and was taken to a veterinarian, her injuries were severe and she did not survive. She was a known bird, banded with an aluminum nine-digit leg band issued by the Bird Banding Laboratory on her right leg and a field-readable color band—W02 gold with black figures—on her left. W02 was one of the pair of eagles that originally nested at

the oxbow on the west side of the Connecticut River, then moved to a location on the east side, and later moved back to the west side in the oxbow.

It turns out that W02 was an important bird in the history of Bald Eagle restoration in Massachusetts. The first wild-born eagles in Massachusetts in modern times were three chicks hatched in two different nests at Quabbin Reservoir in 1989. The banding of the single chick, W01, in a nest in a large white pine in Quabbin Park was the center of a major media event. The same day, two additional chicks, W02 and her sibling W03, were banded with no fanfare in a nest in a red oak tree on Russ Mountain, an island off the east shore of the Prescott Peninsula. The father of these two chicks was seven-year-old Ross, one of the first two eagles raised on the hack tower at the mouth of Egypt Brook on the east side of the Prescott Peninsula in 1982. Both of these first two birds had been taken from wild nests in Michigan. The mother of W02 was a four-year-old bird taken from a wild nest on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia.

In 1992, as a three-year-old, W02 found a mate and the pair constructed their first nest on top of an old Red-tailed Hawk nest in a large cottonwood tree near where the Mill River enters the oxbow. The following year she laid her first eggs and fledged two chicks, W29 and W30. In a stroke of coincidence, one of W02's first two chicks, W29, was also killed on a road this spring. She was found dead at the intersection of Main Street and James Street in Holyoke on March 4, 2017. At the age of 24, she was our second-oldest documented eagle, the daughter of W02 from our first cohort of wild-born chicks, and the granddaughter of Ross who was a member of the first cohort of founding chicks in our restoration program.

During the 24 years of W02's reproductive life, she occupied five different nests and successfully fledged 19 chicks during 13 successful seasons, which amounts to 1.5 chicks per successful year. However, her nest failed in 11 years, reducing her overall productivity to 0.8 fledged chicks per year. She failed to raise chicks 45.8 % of the time. In the 11 failed years, the nest collapsed in three years (twice with a chick and once with eggs), she failed to hatch the eggs in four years (probably due to cold, rainy weather), she lost chicks in three years, and in one year the circumstances of failure are unknown. After she was killed, her twenty-fifth clutch of eggs was left unattended and failed to hatch. This high rate of failure is probably not unusual.

None of the original 41 eagles brought to Quabbin Reservoir as founders of our modern population are known to still be alive, so at 28 years old, W02 is presumed to be our longest-lived Bald Eagle so far. Having been struck by a vehicle, her death was premature, so the question is, how long could she have lived? The oldest wild Bald Eagle on record was 38. This bird died on June 2, 2015, in Henrietta, Monroe County, New York, surpassing the previous longevity record by five years. She had hatched in a wild Minnesota nest and was brought to the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge in New York to be raised on a hack tower in the second year of New York's extensive Bald Eagle restoration program. But she too was killed on a highway by a vehicle, so the question of how old a wild Bald Eagle can live remains unanswered.

For more information on the recovery of the Bald Eagle in Massachusetts, see:
French, Tom. 2016. The History of Bald Eagle Decline and Recovery in Massachusetts. *Bird Observer* 44: 398-407. 🦅

Whip-poor-will Ground Display

David M. Larson and Susan Carlson

On May 19, 2017, we attended an evening presentation on Eastern Whip-poor-wills by Nancy Landry at the Hellcat Parking Lot on the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge on Plum Island. The evening was a great success, with several Whips and a couple of Common Nighthawks. After the program, we slowly drove north toward the exit, hearing and seeing a dozen Whips and several American Woodcocks. As we neared Parking Lot 2, we noticed a disturbance at the north end of the roped-off lot—two Whip-poor-wills were evident in the headlight beams of our vehicle.

It is not uncommon to see Whips on the ground at night, but one of these birds was engaged in a peculiar display. Standing erect with head down, the bird had its wings spread wide, underwing facing us, advancing in tiny hops toward the other bird. The effect was comical, very odd, and somewhat reminiscent of something out of a vampire movie. We assumed that we were watching courtship behavior, though neither of us had ever seen these moves before. We could not identify the gender of either bird. This behavior lasted about five minutes while we were unsuccessfully attempting to extract a camera from the back seat. Finally the birds moved off into the scrub and out of sight.

At home, we dove into the literature. The species account in *The Birds of North*

America (Cink, et al., 2017) suggests that little is known about courtship displays in this species:

Anecdotal accounts by three authors present three different versions of the event, all three of which were observed in same evening in Kansas (DLC). Female may solicit attention of the male perched above her by strutting on ground with wings and tail outspread and head lowered. Female may rock side to side as she walks, circling first in one direction then the other, producing a guttural chuckle (soft popping sound) as she moves (Coale 1920). Male may respond by approaching the female on the ground (or along a tree branch or downed log), raising and lowering his body in a “sort of undulating” manner (Bolles 1912). Male may circle female and she, in turn, moves her body up and down and/or quivers her wings (Fuller 1960). . . . Male may approach female using Tail-Flashing display in which bird hovers in place with tail fanned maximally and showing all of white on retrices (CLC).

Our observations contain some of the disparate elements mentioned above: a displaying bird advancing—“strutting” might not be the right word—on the ground with wings outspread and head lowered, and moving to the right and left—not really “circling”—as if herding the other bird. The displaying bird’s holding of its wings to display the underwings continuously seemed a new feature. Since both birds were on the ground, perhaps a Tail-Flashing display was precluded.

It was a most interesting end to a very pleasant evening program. 🐦

References

Cink, C.L., P. Pyle, and M.A. Patten. 2017. Eastern Whip-poor-will (*Antrostomus vociferous*). *The Birds of North America* (P.G. Rodewald, Ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Retrieved from <https://birdsna.org/Species-Account/bna/species/whip-p1> on 6/25/2017.

The “Dinner’s Ready” Call of the Barred Owl

Alfred Maley

Having a pair of Barred Owls nesting in my yard in Hampstead, New Hampshire, for two years has provided an insight into how the female communicates with her mate during the nesting period and also how she communicates with her newly fledged young. In a previous article (*Bird Observer* October 2015, Volume 43, Number 5, pp. 294-298) I described the “listless Sora” or admonition call of the female to her mate once the young have hatched but are still in the nest. Also called a “begging call” by scientists, I interpret it as, “Honey, we’re still here. Bring food!”

Once the young fledge there is a second, much softer call that the female uses, when she has a food item, to locate the young and assess their level of hunger. I alluded to this call in the article, but was unable to describe it clearly, except to say that it started with a variant of the “listless Sora” call and had a different ending. This year, under extraordinary circumstances, I heard this call and can describe it.

The call is soft as it is only meant for the youngsters, who are all within a hundred meters or so. There is no point in attracting potential predators, like a Great Horned Owl. This year I was standing within six meters of the female who had just obtained a prey item. The young were in the trees above and around us. She called four times in quick succession. The call began with the Sora thing and then ended with a sharp *EEK*, reminiscent of the call of the Rose-Breasted Grosbeak. There was no opportunity to record the call and the situation did not recur.

The purpose of the call is to locate the young, who responded immediately with a hiss. The strength of the hiss probably indicates the hunger level. At any rate, the female went off and fed just one of the young.

This call is somewhat academic since humans are unlikely ever to hear it. Unlike the admonition call, which humans can hear for perhaps a few hundred meters (and owls much farther), the “Dinner’s Ready” call is not audible beyond a hundred meters, and most female owls would be reticent to call in the presence of a human intruder. But in this case, we’re old friends. 🦉



On August 1, an estimated 100,000 Tree Swallows were noted on Plum Island. See Sightings on page 413. Photograph by Bob Stymeist.

ABOUT BOOKS

Four for Your Shelves

Mark Lynch

Waders of Europe, Asia, and North America. Stephen Message and Don Taylor. 2016. London: Christopher Helm.

Shorebirds in Action: An Introduction to Waders and Their Behavior. Richard Chandler. 2017. Dunbeath, Scotland, United Kingdom: Whittles Publishing.

Birds of Prey: Hawks, Eagles, Falcons, and Vultures of North America. Pete Dunne with Kevin T. Karlson. 2016. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Wildfowl of Europe, Asia and North America. Sébastien Reeber. 2015 (English Edition). London: Bloomsbury.

The following are four “guides with a difference.” Every serious birder would enjoy owning them all. You may already have one or two in your library, or you may want to start dropping hints for presents.

The scope and range of field guides have gone through an interesting evolution in the last thirty or more years. Early guides to the birds of a particular country sometimes split their coverage into two books: “land birds” and “water birds.” The latter included herons, waterfowl, shorebirds, and gulls. Later regional guides included all the birds in one country but concentrated on the essential identification characteristics as well as range maps. Details on species behavior were few or non-existent unless they helped identify the species. The mid-eighties saw the publication of massive “identification guides,” which were large books that gave limited identification specifics to all the birds in a world family or group. These were of particular interest to world birders. In the last fifteen years, the pendulum has swung back to a narrower geographical focus, books on single families or groups of birds. Now you find guides to the raptors of North America or the shorebirds of Europe. These new guides offer more in-depth identification information as well as more detail on behavior, range, and occurrence than a typical field guide.

The Waders of Europe, Asia, and North America is an interesting variation on this theme. The focus is on one order of birds but includes only those found in the Northern Hemisphere. This is useful for the hard-core birder because some of the most sought after species of shorebirds are those from continents other than our own. Good examples would be a Semipalmated Sandpiper found in Britain or a Ringed Plover in Massachusetts.

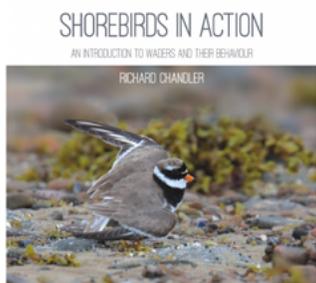
This compact book is almost a pocket guide, trim and lightweight and perfect to keep in your car’s book box. You can easily put it in a backpack. Each species is fully illustrated in several plumages, and the text is opposite the plates. Similar species are

featured on adjacent pages. Species descriptions include notes on key identification features, behavior, habitat, plumage, racial variations, and “confusion species.” A special end section (p. 127–202) features illustrations and written descriptions of the species in flight.

This title is part of the Helm Field Guide Series. First published in 2005, this is the latest version. Although it doesn’t include all the fine identification points, it does cover the basics and is a good reference if you think you have found a Little Stint on South Beach.

“What is the particular appeal of shorebirds? This book attempts to answer that question.”
(p. v, *Shorebirds in Action*)

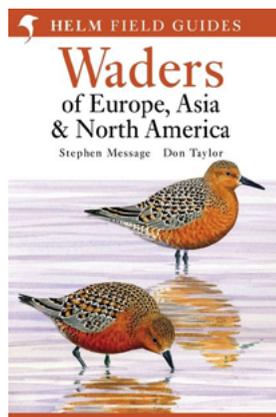
Richard Chandler is well known as a photographer and as an author of several key books on shorebirds. He has been a photographic consultant to *British Birds* and a member of its editorial board. *Shorebirds in Action* is nothing less than a college level course on world shorebird behavior by one of the experts in the field. It is beautifully illustrated with Chandler’s own photographs. The photography is excellent, with many outstanding shots. These photos show 80% of the world’s species of shorebirds, yet this soft-covered book is light in weight.



Unlike almost all shorebird guides, the focus of this book is exclusively on shorebird lives and behavior. Though the photography will initially grab your attention, the text is genuinely interesting and often entertaining. It will certainly expand your enjoyment of Charadriiformes. Identification details are almost completely absent. The first 66 pages are devoted to a thorough overview of the order. The remaining chapters each tackle different aspects of shorebird behavior, including plumage and molt, plumage maintenance, breeding and territorial behavior, migration, and finally flocking, roosting, and predator avoidance. Each chapter is thoroughly referenced.

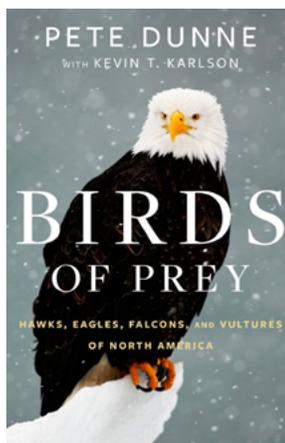
My only complaint, and it is a very minor one, is that the title of each chapter is a wee bit “cutesy.” For instance, the chapter on plumage maintenance is titled “When ah itchez, ah scratchez” (p. 146). I am sure this is intended to make the book less boring and more fun, but I personally have a low tolerance for cute. Luckily, the rest of the text moves right along. And then there are those photographs to enjoy!

Shorebirds in Action is a unique book that presents an overview of charadriiform behavior illustrated by the author’s own photography. It doesn’t matter if you live near the shore and sift through vast flocks of peeps on a regular basis or if you are content mostly to watch the breeding Spotted Sandpipers and Killdeers of your inland patch. You will find a lot to enjoy in *Shorebirds in Action*.



Pete Dunne has been enjoying and writing about raptors for decades. His writing style is enthusiastic, informative, and chatty. Team him up with the wonderful photography of Kevin T. Karlson, who shot many of the pictures in this book, and you have a “must own” account.

This book strives to offer a contemporary profile of North America’s diurnal raptors. It was written to appeal to anyone who has ever been inspired by those magnificent birds and designed to compile in comprehensive fashion the biological particulars that distinguish and unite this bird group. (p. ix, *Birds of Prey*)



Now, before you taxonomic nitpickers get upset about Dunne’s inclusion of New World vultures and falcons in a book about hawks and eagles, he answers your concerns this way: “Three compelling reasons: convention, convergence and convenience.” (p. 3) But he quickly adds “Honesty compels me to admit that it is mostly convention that prompted me to take a broad and inclusive view when selecting the species to be covered in this book.” (p. 5)

Of course, Dunne knows that “our” vultures belong on the list after the herons, and the falcons now follow the woodpeckers, but like many of us who have been birding for a while, we still think of them as part of a hawkwatch’s tally.

Each species account includes notes on etymology, profile, a complete description, measurements, systematics and subspecies, breeding and behavior, and status. The text is lively and is fun to read. After all, this is a book by Pete Dunne. For instance, under the profile of the Hook-billed Kite, he describes the species like this: “A goofy-looking, bulbous-billed tree snail specialist that comports itself below the forest canopy in the manner of a feathered sloth.” (p. 33)

Because of Dunne’s many years studying raptors, he has lots of personal observations, many of which he shares with the reader. In the chapter on Osprey we read two accounts of Osprey-drowning lore:

Cape May resident Clay Sutton advises that his father, an avid fisherman, once secured a large bluefish that had two detached Osprey feet embedded in its back. It should be pointed out that feeding bluefish have a piranha-like quality and that, upon hitting the water, the bird was likely set upon by fish in the “blitzing” school. (p. 32)

Birds of Prey contains many personal anecdotes and observations like that, information you will not find in any typical field guide.

Superb photography is found throughout the book. Besides showing identification points to look for in the field, raptors are often shown behaving: diving, chasing prey, catching prey, being chased by other birds, or just looking cool. *Birds of Prey* sets a new standard for the quality and amount of photography in any guide; it is a high bar

to surpass. This is a book to enjoy in many ways, including as a standard reference to the North American birds once collectively known as raptors.

As for *Wildfowl*, “The main aim is to summarize current knowledge concerning the specific and subspecific identification, ageing and sexing of the 83 species of geese, swans, and ducks found in Europe, Asia and North America.” (p. 8, *Wildfowl*)

Unlike *Birds of Prey*, *Wildfowl* is not a fun-to-read book. Instead it is a thick, thorough, and always serious reference to what we in North America call “waterfowl.” Because of that, it belongs on most birders’ bookshelves and will likely be used to solve field problems more than the other three books discussed in this review. It is a book for field ornithologists as well as birders.

One of the initial titles in the Helm Identification Guide Series, the first *Wildfowl* was written by Steve Madge and Hilary Burn and was published in 1988. It included all the wildfowl of the *world*. This new *Wildfowl* is restricted only to those species found in the Northern Hemisphere. Even so, this book clocks in at 656 pages, whereas the original *Wildfowl*, of the world, mind you, ran only 298 pages! There are more plates in this new version, and those are augmented by numerous color photographs. The written sections have all been greatly expanded as well.

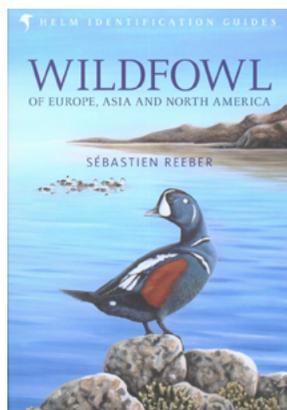
Originally written in French, this book is the first English edition. Reeber monitors birds and works for the Société Nationale de Protection de la Nature.

Each species account includes sections on taxonomy, a thorough section on identification, plumages, moult (European spelling), hybridization, habitat, life cycle, range and population, and ends with a complete list of references. Range maps are shown opposite the drawn plates.

Serious birders will welcome an attention to specific differences between subspecies. For instance, there is a detailed illustration (plate 5, pages 40–41) showing the differences between the bills of different subspecies of the Bean Goose.

Reeber splits what we call “White-winged Scoter” into three species: Velvet Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*), White-winged Scoter (*M. delgandi*), and Siberian Scoter (*M. Stejnegeri*). Furthermore he splits the North American Black Scoter (*M. Americana*) from the Eurasian Common Scoter (*M. nigra*). (see plate 63, pages 156–157). Although these splits have been discussed and accepted by some authorities for several years, they have not been accepted by all ornithologists. *Wildfowl* also does an amazing job of discussing, describing, and illustrating hybrid waterfowl, particularly among the *Aythya* (pochards).

Although not a book to read casually in a comfortable chair, *Wildfowl* is an outstanding reference volume, one that will likely be of use to anyone trying to identify an odd plumage of some odd duck. 🦆



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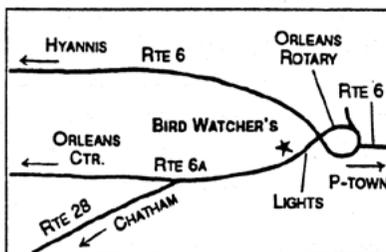
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BIRD SIGHTINGS

July-August 2017

Neil Hayward and Robert H. Stymeist

Weather-wise, July and August are good months for conducting breeding bird surveys and watching the start of the fall shorebird migration. July saw average temperatures below normal and the month felt more like spring than summer; the average temperature in Boston was 72 degrees, two degrees below normal. The high for the month was 93 degrees on July 19, part of a three-day heat wave with temperatures in the nineties. The only other day that hit 90 degrees was July 2. A low pressure to our southwest in mid-July kept all of New England to a near record cool; the high in Boston on July 14 was just 67 degrees! Rainfall totaled 4.03 inches in Boston, a little more than normal. The most rain in any single day was 1.41 inches on July 24.

August's weather was much the same as July's. The temperature averaged 72 degrees in Boston, which is about normal for the month. The month's highest temperature of 91 degrees was recorded on August 22. Rainfall was only 1.58 inches for the month in Boston, 1.77 inches below the average for August. However, other regions of the state received more rainfall; severe thunderstorms hit eastern Massachusetts on August 2 prompting the National Weather Service to issue flood warnings. Heavy downpours dumped nearly four inches of rain in some communities in the region, such as Dorchester, where 3.46 inches fell. Elsewhere, reports included 3.37 inches in Maynard and 2.72 inches in Walpole. Wind speed on August 2 was clocked at 52 mph at Logan Airport. Hurricane Gert was far off the New England coast on August 15 but the storm impacted our shoreline with high surf warnings for southeastern Massachusetts, Cape Cod, and the Islands.

R. Stymeist

WATERFOWL THROUGH SKIMMERS

The state summer tourism ads are working—winter visitors stayed for the sun and the beach crowds, including a Brant at Westport from July 27–29 and single **King Eiders** in August at Eastham and Duxbury Beach. The only other August record this century for King Eider was from Rockport in 2009. Also unseasonal was a male Bufflehead present for the beginning of July at Wachusett Reservoir.

The annual August deepwater pelagic trip run by the Brookline Bird Club has been invaluable in showing us what lies and flies off our watery horizons. Sadly, this year's trip was cancelled due to bad weather. Who knows what was lurking out there? For those pelagic birders confined to *terra firma*, Provincetown has been the go-to place to scope passing shearwaters. This summer, though, birders didn't even need binoculars; unprecedented numbers of Great Shearwaters (up to 24,000) were seen in the surf and at the water's edge. The birds have been feeding on the billions of menhaden fry driven to the shore by mackerel and other predatory fish.

Equally significant was an unusual event to the south, in Buzzards Bay, where shearwaters are rarely encountered. Observers at Gooseberry Neck have been recording almost unprecedented numbers of Cory's Shearwater (see figure 1). On July 22, recorders tallied 1,397 birds flying east into the bay. The day before, 636 Cory's were accompanied by an extraordinary report of an **Audubon's Shearwater**. This diminutive shearwater is a warm-water bird, usually seen only on pelagics that venture beyond the continental shelf and into the warmer Gulf Stream. The large number of shearwaters (including a handful of Great, Manx and Sooty shearwaters) may indicate

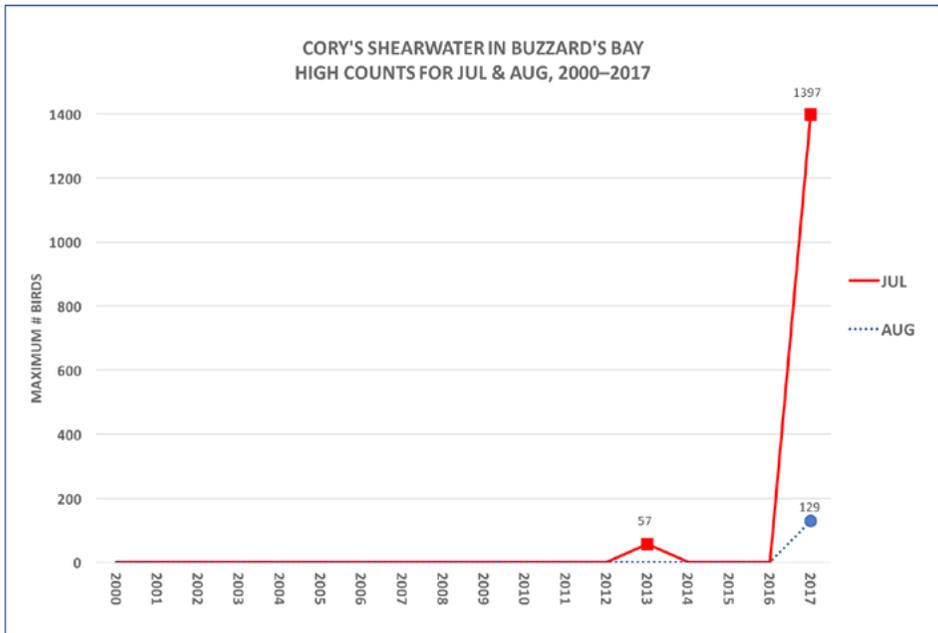


Figure 1. Cory’s Shearwater: monthly high counts for July (solid line) and August (dotted line) 2000–2017 in Buzzards Bay (area bounded by southern coasts of Bristol and Plymouth Counties, western Cape Cod, and the Elizabeth Islands). Data from eBird.

a sudden food bonanza similar to that at Provincetown, where a probable Audubon’s was also sighted. Spencer Fullerton Baird (first curator of the Smithsonian Institute and perhaps more familiar to us as the eponym for a sparrow and a sandpiper) noted a similar phenomenon in the fall of 1886 when “thousands” of Cory’s Shearwaters entered Buzzards Bay. Apparently, young sea herring, chased into the bay by predatory mackerel and bluefish, attracted the shearwaters that year.

An adult **Brown Booby** was spotted from Herring Cove Beach on July 14 and perhaps the same individual was seen a month later from a whale watch cruise out of Provincetown. Last period we reported the unusual number of dying Northern Gannets that had been brought into rehabilitation facilities on the Cape. While the cause is still unknown, lab results from Wild Care, Eastham, indicate that the birds were not suffering from a virus.

This year’s incursion of **Brown Pelicans** continued throughout July with an immature beach-hopping around the North Shore and coastal New Hampshire. An adult bird was recorded on Nantucket on July 1. An **American White Pelican** at Scituate on August 25 was the most northerly record for the species along the Eastern Seaboard this year. The same, or a different bird, was present at the end of the month on Martha’s Vineyard.

Two immature **White Ibis** spent over two weeks enjoying the beautiful Mass Audubon sanctuary at Wellfleet Bay. They were spotted again the day after their departure in Chatham, presumably on their return south. **White-faced Ibis** has become regular in spring around the Ipswich area, but is less often encountered in the summer months. A bird seen on August 14 at Plum Island was thus noteworthy.

Rail enthusiasts got their fix this summer at Fairhaven, where a pair of Clapper Rails raised

as many as eight young. A **King Rail** was also present through most of July, and represents only the second Bristol County record after a bird seen at Allens Pond in 2013.

Sandhill Crane was first documented as a breeding bird in Massachusetts at New Marlborough in 2007. Last year a pair nested in Worthington, and this year perhaps the same pair successfully raised two young at that site. Additional pairs were present at New Marlborough and Burrage Pond, though neither seems to have bred.

An adult **Little Stint** was found on August 9 at Monomoy NWR and represents only the third record this century, all from Chatham. The bird was obliging to the many visiting birders, spending almost two weeks in the same small patch of mud. The Siberian and Alaskan subspecies of **Bar-tailed Godwit** (*baueri*), first discovered in June, continued in the Lower Cape until August 21. **American Avocet** is almost an annual fall vagrant to the state, recorded in 15 of the last 18 years. Most of those records have come from Plum Island, which is where two birds were seen again this year in mid-August. Plymouth Beach hosted an additional bird earlier in the month.

Regular fall shorebirds were roughly on target with their fall arrival dates: Western Sandpiper (July 13) and Long-billed Dowitcher (July 15), both a day later than their average arrival this century. Others were notably early: Baird's Sandpiper (July 24) and Buff-breasted Sandpiper (August 3), both more than two weeks earlier than average.

The star attraction at the Provincetown beaches this summer has been a somewhat chaseable **South Polar Skua**. At least two different individuals were reported in the area. South Polar Skuas breed in the Antarctic and it was only within the last 50 years that they were shown to cross the equator and winter here (that is, during our summer). Provincetown is also the best place to see **Long-tailed Jaeger**, a species rarely seen from land. First and second summer birds were seen on July 30.

The only alcid of the period was, predictably, a Black Guillemot, seen off Andrew's Point on July 29.

All the leaves are brown and the sky is gray. Well, perhaps not quite yet, but there was some "California Dreamin'" on the south coast, when an adult **California Gull** was spotted at Westport on the last day of August. There are only five accepted records of this western larid in the state; the most recent was Nantucket in January 2006. Otherwise, the best gull of the period was **Franklin's Gull**, capping off a great summer locally for this species. Separate individuals were seen at Ipswich and Chatham. **Sabine's Gull** has been almost regular in August at Provincetown, sighted on average every other year. This year unprecedented high counts of three birds (two adults and an immature) were seen in mid-August. A highly unseasonal Glaucous Gull in Gloucester Harbor is only the second record this century of a summering (July or August) bird.

Migrating Black Terns turned up along the coast as normal, but an inland record at Pittsfield was unusual. There have been only six records for Berkshire County, the westernmost county in the state, all singles in May, except for four birds in August of 1999. Royal Terns continued throughout the period, with birds, all singles, dotted along the coast from Ipswich south to Nantucket.

Three Black Skimmers at Hatches Harbor on July 10 represented the most northern record globally this year. Black Skimmers have been reclaiming their historical territory up the East Coast, with recolonization beginning here in the 1940s. This year the species bred at Monomoy and nesting pairs were present on Martha's Vineyard.

N. Hayward

Brant				8/23	PI	6		T. Wetmore
7/27-29	Westport, Dartmouth	1, 1	S. Wilson, S. Carney	8/29	Quabbin (G35)	4 ad, 1 juv		N. Demers#
8/17	Monomoy NWR	2	B. Winn#	Pied-billed Grebe				
Wood Duck				7/4	Fairhaven	3		C. Longworth#
7/9	W. Newbury	ad, 10 juv	P. + F. Vale	7/26-7/27	PI	1		D. Adrien + v.o.
8/6	NewMarlborough	22	M. Lynch#	8/6-8/7	Royalston	1		E. LeBlanc + v.o.
8/26	Warren	53	M. Lynch#	Northern Fulmar				
8/28	GMNWR	80	J. Kovner#	7/4	E. of Chatham	1 lt		P. Flood #
8/28	Waltham	30	J. Forbes	8/22	P'town (RP)	1		G. Richards
Gadwall				Cory's Shearwater				
8/29	PI	17	R. Heil	7/4, 8/11	E. of Chatham	15, 150		B. Nikula#
American Wigeon				7/17, 7/22	Westport	396, 1397		M. Iliff, L. Waters
7/5	PI	1	R. Heil	7/20, 7/23	P'town	380, 4250		B. Nikula#
8/9	E. Boston (BI)	1	P. Peterson	7/25	PI	15		R. Heil
8/30	Ipswich	2	J. Berry	7/29	Cohasset	15		V. Zollo
Blue-winged Teal				8/12, 8/19	P'town (RP)	1200, 725		S. Arena, B. Nikula#
8/6-8/30	PI	5 max	G. Gove# + v.o.	8/14	Jeffrey's L.	9		J. Berry#
Northern Shoveler				Great Shearwater				
8/9	Ipswich (CB)	1	A. Gomez-Yafal	7/4, 8/11	E. of Chatham	5000, 10000		B. Nikula#
8/13	Nantucket	4	S. Fee	8/14	Jeffrey's L.	41		J. Berry#
Green-winged Teal				8/8	Westport	22		J. Eckerson#
7/4, 8/25	PI	7, 32	T. Wetmore + v.o.	8/19	P'town (RP)	24000		J. Trimble#
8/25	Winchendon	4	M. Lynch#	8/30	PI	6		T. Wetmore
8/27	Nbpt	11	J. Berry	Sooty Shearwater				
8/28	Winchester	6	R. LaFontaine#	7/4	Chatham	2500		B. Nikula#
8/30	Nantucket	8	S. Kardell	7/21	Westport	2		M. Iliff
King Eider				7/30	Cohasset	2		D. Burton
8/6	Eastham	1 ph	M. Miller#	8/19	P'town (RP)	1200		J. Trimble#
8/24	Duxbury B.	1	R. Bowes	Manx Shearwater				
Common Eider				7/22	Westport	4		L. Waters
7/29	Acoaxet	104	M. Lynch#	7/27	Revere B.	5		P. Peterson
8/16	Westport	18	M. Lynch#	7/30	Cohasset	2		D. Burton
Surf Scoter				8/10	PI	2		M. Goetschkes#
8/26	PI	1	T. Wetmore	8/12	P'town (RP)	505		B. Nikula
White-winged Scoter				Audubon's Shearwater				
8/18	PI	2 m, f	T. Wetmore	7/21	Westport	1		L. Waters
8/24	Duxbury B.	1	R. Bowes	8/26	P'town (RP)	1		G. d'Entremont
Black Scoter				Wilson's Storm-Petrel				
7/15, 8/30	PI	80, 20	T. Wetmore	7/19	Winthrop B.	9		M. Iliff
7/29	Westport	11	M. Lynch#	7/30	Cohasset	75		D. Burton
Long-tailed Duck				8/3	PI	8		T. Wetmore
7/15-7/30	PI	1	v.o.	8/11	E. of Chatham	800		B. Nikula#
Bufflehead				8/14	Jeffrey's L.	375		J. Berry#
7/1-7/12	Wachusett Res.	1	A. Bairstow + v.o.	Leach's Storm-Petrel				
Hooded Merganser				7/5	Stellwagen Bank	7		L. Waters#
7/20	E. Boston	1	C. Dalton	Brown Booby				
8/25	Falmouth	2	G. Hirth	7/14-8/12	P'town	1 ad, ph		B. Nikula
8/27	W. Gloucester	1	P. + F. Vale#	Northern Gannet				
Common Merganser				7/4	E. of Chatham	10		B. Nikula#
7/16	Sandisfield	13	M. Lynch#	7/25	PI	166		R. Heil
Ruddy Duck				7/29	P'town	145		B. Nikula
7/28	Chilmark	1 m	G. Babineau#	7/30	Rockport	11		J. Berry#
8/29-8/30	Melrose	1	J. McCoy	Great Cormorant				
Northern Bobwhite				7/15, 8/31	Westport	1		E. Lipton, M. Iliff
7/2	N. Truro	3	E. Goodman	Double-crested Cormorant				
7/4	Lunenburg	2	T. Murray	8/16	Westport	125		M. Lynch#
7/22	Eastham (FH)	3 ad, 7 yg	M. Faherty#	8/18	PI	121		J. Berry#
Ruffed Grouse				8/30	Wachusett Res.	66		M. Lynch#
7/31	Huntington	1 d	M. Lynch#	American White Pelican				
8/20	Barre Falls	4	M. Ess-Why	8/25	Scituate	1	MAS	(D. Ludlow)
8/26	Townsend	1	J. Forbes	8/25-8/30	Chilmark	1		S. Whiting#
Wild Turkey				Brown Pelican				
8/8-8/25	PI	7	T. Wetmore	7/1	Nantucket	1 ad	S. Fee, A. Renaud	
8/25	Winchendon	17	M. Lynch#	7/7	Quincy	1 1S		M. Garvey#
8/27	Wendell	19	M. Lynch#	7/15	PI	1 1S		M. McCarthy#
8/28	Newburyport	20	P. + F. Vale	7/16-7/30	Rockport	1 1S		v.o.
Red-throated Loon				American Bittern				
7/14	PI	1	T. Wetmore	7/28	Burrage Pd WMA	1		E. Vacchino
7/17-8/21	Wareham	1	M. Stone	8/17-8/26	Wayland	2		B. Harris
8/20	Monomoy NWR	2	L. Seitz#	8/28	Winchester	1		J. Kovner
8/22	P'town (RP)	1	G. Richards	Least Bittern				
Common Loon				7/1-8/25	PI	3 max		v.o.
7/22	Plymouth B.	13	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	7/5	W. Harwich	4		C. Whitebread#

Least Bittern (continued)				Northern Harrier			
7/6-8/3	GMNWR	3 max	A. Bragg#	7/4-8/31	PI	3max	T. Wetmore + v.o.
8/1	E. Boston (BI)	2 ad, juv	DCR(S.Riley)	7/9	Nantucket	4	S. Kardell
Great Egret				7/15	Chilmark	4	S. Whiting
7/13	E. Boston (BI)	24	DCR (S. Riley)	8/20	Monomoy NWR	3	L. Seitz#
7/15	Gloucester	16	P. + F. Vale	Sharp-shinned Hawk			
7/23	W. Barnstable	43	P. Crosson	7/30	Belchertown	1	L. Therrien
8/3	Uxbridge	11	B. Milke	8/11	N. Dighton	1	M. Eckerson
8/15	PI	148	R. Heil	8/17-8/31	Mt Wachusett	12	Hawkcount (R. Chase)
8/16	Westport	86	M. Lynch#	8/22	DFWS	1	MAS (P. Sowizral)
Snowy Egret				Cooper's Hawk			
7/13	E. Boston (BI)	33	DCR (S. Riley)	7/5	Quabog IBA	1 imm	M. Lynch#
7/15	Gloucester	35	P. + F. Vale	8/10-8/31	PI	1	v.o.
7/23	W. Barnstable	64	P. Crosson	8/12	Essex	2 imm	P. Brown
8/14	Revere	26	P. Peterson	8/25	Winchester	3 imm	R. LaFontaine
8/15	PI	355	R. Heil	Northern Goshawk			
8/22	Monomoy NWR	25	B. Winn#	8/21	Colrain	1 ad	M. Lynch#
Little Blue Heron				Bald Eagle			
7/29-8/7	Northampton	1 imm	D. Pritchard	7/31	Huntington	2 pr	M. Lynch#
8/19-8/31	Nantucket	2	S.Kardell, S.Keene	8/26	Quabog IBA	3	M. Lynch#
8/26	Gloucester	6 ad, 6 imm	C. Haines	8/29	Quabbin (G35)	2 ad, juv	N. Demers#
8/27	W. Gloucester	2 imm	P. + F. Vale#	8/31	Mt Wachusett	2 ad	Hawkcount(R.Chase)
Cattle Egret				Red-shouldered Hawk			
7/3-7/4	Ipswich	1	N. Dubrow + v.o.	7/30	Saugus	1 ad	D. Jewell
7/18	P'town (RP)	1	R. Heil	8/6	New Marlborough	1	M. Lynch#
Green Heron				8/13	Ware R. IBA	1	M. Lynch#
8/7	Waltham	4	J. Forbes	8/27	Wendell	1	M. Lynch#
8/11	WBWS	18	S. Williams	Broad-winged Hawk			
8/13	Orange	2 ad, 2 juv	G. d'Entremont#	7/1	Quabbin (G10)	3	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
8/19	Chatham	4	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	7/15	Wendell	4	M. Lynch#
8/20	Sterling	4	J. Forbes	7/16	Sandisfield	4	M. Lynch#
8/26	Warren	4	M. Lynch#	8/6	Ashby	4	J. Forbes
Black-crowned Night-Heron				8/17-8/31	Mt Wachusett	31	Hawkcount (R. Chase)
7/19	Medford	8 ad, 1 imm	P. Roberts	8/25	Winchendon	8	M. Lynch#
7/23	W. Barnstable	14	P. Crosson	Red-tailed Hawk			
7/28	PI	11 imm	R. Heil	8/24	Mt Wachusett	12 migr	R. Chase
8/18	Nbpt	9	J. Berry	King Rail			
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron				7/4-7/23	Fairhaven	1 ph	H.Zimmerlin + v.o.
7/15	Wareham	4	C. Ewer	Clapper Rail			
7/23	W. Barnstable	6	P. Crosson	7/18	Fairhaven	2 ad, 8 juv	D. Williams
7/31-8/5	S. Dartmouth	ad, 2 imm	Morgan, Hepburn	Virginia Rail			
8/10	Ipswichad,	5 imm, 6 juv	N. Dubrow	7/2	Sheffield	4	M. Lynch#
8/18	Edgartown	4	A. Eppedio#	8/3	GMNWR	3	A. Bragg#
8/18	Nbpt	3 juv	J. Berry	8/11	IRWS	2	L. Cawley
8/21	Gloucester	2 ad, imm	A. Smith	8/19	Quabog IBA	6	M. Lynch#
White Ibis				8/24	Belchertown	2	L. Therrien
7/28-8/16	WBWS	2 imm ph	J. Bragger#	Sora			
8/17	Chatham	2 imm ph	S.Mathenev	7/21, 8/24	GMNWR	1	A. Wilmot
Glossy Ibis				8/8	W. Roxbury (MP)	2	P. Peterson
7/5	Quincy	1	P. Peterson	8/19-8/26	PI	1	D. Adrien + v.o.
7/9	Concord	6	S. Perkins#	8/27	Worc. (BMB)	2	B. Robo
7/15	E. Boston (BI)	15	P. Peterson	8/30	Nantucket	2	S. Kardell
7/31	ONWR	2	L. Therrien	Sandhill Crane			
8/4	Newbury	117	D. Chickering#	7/9-8/9	Burrage Pd WMA	1 pr	J. Sweeney + v.o.
8/4	Worcester	1	B. Robo#	7/10	Tolland	2	D. Holmes
8/14	PI	80	D. Adrien	7/23-8/13	Worthington	1 pr, 2 yg	S. Surner + v.o.
8/23	Great Barrington	4	C. Blake	7/27	N. Marlborough	2	D. Holmes
White-faced Ibis				7/28	Boxborough	1	M. Ess-Why#
8/14	PI	1	T. Wetmore	8/27	W. Bridgewater	2	P. Jacobson
Black Vulture				American Avocet			
7/2	Sheffield	3	M. Lynch#	8/5-8/6	Plymouth B.	1	S. Hepburn + v.o.
7/6	Quincy	2	E. Gorda	8/18-8/20	PI	2	P. + F. Vale + v.o.
7/19	Sharon	2	L. Waters	American Oystercatcher			
Turkey Vulture				7/4-7/14	E. Boston (BI)	7	P. Peterson + v.o.
7/2	Sheffield	20	M. Lynch#	7/5	Chatham	18	M. Faherty
7/28	PI	30	R. Heil	7/17	Fairhaven	3	J. Hoye#
8/16	Westport	14	M. Lynch#	8/4	Edgartown	10	M. Gilmore
8/24	Mt Wachusett	14	R. Chase	8/18	Quincy	18	P. Peterson
Osprey				8/19	Winthrop	15	S. Riley#
7/29	Westport	61	M. Lynch#	8/22	Monomoy NWR	66	B. Winn#
8/29	PI	18	R. Heil	8/28	Nantucket	14	S. Keene

Black-bellied Plover				Dunlin			
8/19	Essex	57	D. Brown	7/5-7/31	PI	2 max	v.o.
8/22	Monomoy NWR	400	B. Winn#	8/thr	Nbpt H.	1	R. Heil + v.o.
8/27	Nbpt	250	J. Berry	Baird's Sandpiper			
8/29	PI	246	R. Heil	7/16-8/31	PI	2 max	T. Wetmore + v.o.
American Golden-Plover				7/25	Ipswich (CB)	1 ad	N. Dubrow
7/22-8/31	PI	2 max	v.o.	8/17	Westboro	1	N. Paulson
8/18, 8/31	Longmeadow	1	D. Holmes	8/23, 8/31	Longmeadow	1	S. Motyl
8/27-8/31	Newbury	1	P. + F. Vale + v.o.	Little Stint			
8/28-8/29	Revere	1	P. Peterson + v.o.	8/9-8/21	Monomoy NWR	1	Finnegan, Pratt, v.o.
Semipalmated Plover				Least Sandpiper			
7/22	Plymouth B.	110	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	7/11	E. Boston (BI)	100	DCR (S. Riley)
7/23	Ipswich (CB)	330	J. Berry	7/16	Rowley	60	J. Berry
7/28-8/27	PI	2300 max	R. Heil + v.o.	8/5	Eastham	115	J. Trimble#
8/5	Eastham	1850	J. Trimble#	8/15	PI	200	R. Heil
8/19	Winthrop B.	600	S. Zende#	White-rumped Sandpiper			
8/22	Monomoy NWR	400	B. Winn#	8/2	E. Boston (BI)	6	C. Dalton
Piping Plover				8/2	Quincy	4	P. Peterson
7/2	Revere B.	16	R. Styemeist	8/5	Eastham	260	J. Trimble#
7/5	PI	22 ad, 9 juv	R. Heil	8/7	Essex	127	D. Brown#
7/20	Chatham	20	B. Albro	8/13-8/19	Winthrop B.	5	S. Zende#
7/22	Plymouth B.	20	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	8/22	Monomoy NWR	65	B. Winn#
7/22	Winthrop	8	R. Styemeist	8/29	PI	128 ad, 23 imm	R. Heil
7/23	Ipswich (CB)	18 ad, 10 juv	J. Berry	Buff-breasted Sandpiper			
8/12	P'town (RP)	18	S. Arena	8/3	Sandwich	1	P. Crosson
Killdeer				8/20	Monomoy NWR	1	M. Resch#
7/15	E. Boston (BI)	20	P. Peterson	8/21-8/31	PI	1	D. Adrien, R. Heil, v.o.
7/16	PI	12 ad, 2 juv	P. + F. Vale	8/29-8/31	P'town (RP)	1	B. Nikula + v.o.
8/5	Ipswich	62	J. Berry#	Pectoral Sandpiper			
8/31	Newbury	50	P. + F. Vale#	7/22	Squantum	4	J. Forbes
Upland Sandpiper				8/8-8/25	E. Boston (BI)	2	S. Jones + v.o.
8/30	N. Dighton	1	A. Eckerson	8/15	PI	3 juv	R. Heil
Whimbrel				8/20	Saugus	2	S. Zende#
thr	PI	4 max	D. Swain#	8/22	Monomoy NWR	3	B. Winn#
7/13-7/16	Quincy	2	M. McQuaid#	Semipalmated Sandpiper			
7/13, 8/31	E. Boston (BI)	1	DCR (S. Riley)	7/22	Plymouth B.	1200	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
7/30-8/21	WBWS	50 max	v.o.	7/22	E. Boston (BI)	385	R. Styemeist
Hudsonian Godwit				7/23	Ipswich (CB)	1900	J. Berry
7/13	Monomoy NWR	10	M. Miller	7/25-8/31	PI	5500 max	v.o.
7/25-8/18	PI	1	T. Wetmore + v.o.	8/5	Eastham	4000	J. Trimble#
8/10	Chatham (SB)	10	B. Harrington	8/7	Chatham (SB)	2200	B. Harrington
Bar-tailed Godwit (baueri)				8/7	Essex	765	D. Brown#
7/8-8/21	Chatham	1	B. Nikula + v.o.	8/19	Winthrop B.	600	S. Zende#
Marbled Godwit				8/22	Monomoy NWR	1000	B. Winn#
8/14-8/18	PI	1	D. Adrien + v.o.	8/22	Revere (POP)	300	P. Peterson
8/17-8/29	Chatham	5	v.o.	8/27	Nbpt	1000	J. Berry
8/19	Winthrop	1	S. Riley#	Western Sandpiper			
8/20	Plymouth B.	1	E. Lipton#	7/22	Plymouth B.	1 ad	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
8/21	Monomoy NWR	6	B. Harrington#	8/3	Squantum	1	J. Hoye#
Ruddy Turnstone				8/18	Rowley	1	J. Berry
7/29	Westport	17	M. Lynch#	8/22	Nahant	5	L. Pivacek
7/30	Rockport	5	J. Berry#	8/27-8/29	Quincy	1	V. Zollo + v.o.
8/5	Nantucket	150	L. Dunn	8/29	PI	5	R. Heil
8/19	Winthrop B.	7	S. Zende#	Short-billed Dowitcher			
8/19	PI	6	D. Swain#	7/5-8/27	PI	280 max	R. Heil
Red Knot				7/8	Westport	15	M. Lynch#
8/5	Eastham	86	J. Trimble#	7/11	E. Boston (BI)	100	DCR (S. Riley)
8/7	Monomoy NWR	525	B. Harrington	7/19	Essex	20	P. + F. Vale
8/19	Essex	10	D. Brown	7/22	Plymouth B.	46	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
8/21	Chatham (SB)	250	B. Harrington	8/11-8/13	Longmeadow	1	L. Richardson
Stilt Sandpiper				8/22	Monomoy NWR	450	B. Winn#
7/11-8/28	E. Boston (BI)	3max	P. Peterson + v.o.	Long-billed Dowitcher			
7/12-8/31	PI	17 max	T. Wetmore + v.o.	7/25-8/29	PI	10 max	R. Heil
8/18-8/19	Longmeadow	1	D. Holmes	8/20	Monomoy NWR	1	L. Seitz
8/19	Essex	1	D. Brown	8/28	Quincy	1	D. Burton
8/28	Quincy	1	D. Burton	Wilson's Snipe			
Sanderling				7/6	PI	1	P. + F. Vale
7/14	Pittsfield	1	R. Wendell	8/21	Sudbury	1	J. Forbes
7/23	Ipswich (CB)	175	J. Berry	American Woodcock			
8/3	PI	40	T. Wetmore	7/4	E. Boston (BI)	1	P. Peterson
8/16	Acoaxet	44	M. Lynch#	Wilson's Phalarope			
8/21	Chatham (SB)	1800	B. Harrington	8/14, 8/19	PI	2,1	T. Wetmore, D. Swain#
8/22	Revere (POP)	40	P. Peterson				

Wilson's Phalarope (continued)				7/8	N. Truro	2	1S	B. Nikula
8/16-8/17	Longmeadow	1	S. Motyl	7/11-7/16	Dennis	1		P. Flood#
8/26-8/31	Quincy	1	M. McWade + v.o.	Laughing Gull				
Red-necked Phalarope				7/15	P'town	350		B. Nikula
7/15	Plymouth	6	D. Peacock	8/16	Acoaxet	6		M. Lynch#
7/29	Rockport (AP)	7	R. Heil	8/19	Winthrop B.	10		S. Zende#
8/20	E. of Chatham	20	P. Flood#	8/29	PI	4		R. Heil
8/20	Stellwagen Bank	20	P. Crosson	Franklin's Gull				
8/26	Warren	1 juv	M. Lynch#	7/20	Ipswich (CB)	1		N. Dubrow
8/27	Quincy	1	V. Zollo#	8/31	Chatham	1		B. Harris#
Spotted Sandpiper				California Gull				
7/23	Sandisfield	14	M. Lynch#	8/31	Westport	1		M. Iliff
8/10	PI	4	D. Prima	Lesser Black-backed Gull				
8/13	E. Boston (BI)	4	S. Zende#	7/4, 8/11	E. of Chatham	5		B. Nikula#
Solitary Sandpiper				7/25	Winthrop B.	1	1S	C. Dalton
8/1	Petersham	3	B. Lafley	8/19-8/31	PI	1	ad T.	Wetmore + v.o.
8/15	PI	2	R. Heil	8/22	Monomoy NWR	45		B. Winn#
8/20	Sandisfield	3	M. Lynch#	8/22	Duxbury B.	1	ad	R. Bowes
8/25	Winchendon	5	M. Lynch#	8/29	P'town (RP)	13		B. Nikula
Greater Yellowlegs				Glaucous Gull				
8/3	PI	125	D. Prima	7/15-8/18	Gloucester	1	1cy	P. + F. Vale
8/22	Monomoy NWR	80	B. Winn#	Least Tern				
8/27	Nbpt	20	J. Berry	7/5-7/13	E. Boston (BI)	40		DCR (S. Riley)
Willet				7/22	Plymouth B.	70		SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
7/3	PI	70	T. Wetmore	7/23	P'town	175		B. Nikula
7/8	Westport	29	M. Lynch#	7/23	Ipswich (CB)	120		J. Berry
7/13	Quincy	4 ad, 2 fl	D. Burton	7/25	PI	110		R. Heil
7/22	Plymouth B.	18	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	Caspian Tern				
Willet (Western)				8/17	Chatham	2		A. Kneidel
7/19-7/21	E. Boston (BI)	1	M. Iliff + v.o.	8/18	Stockbridge	2		K. Schopp#
Lesser Yellowlegs				8/26-8/27	Quincy	4		L. Ferraresso + v.o.
7/16	Nbpt	106	J. Berry#	8/31	Turner's Falls	2		J. Smith
7/16	Rowley	17	J. Berry	Black Tern				
7/19-8/31	PI	60 max	v.o.	7/18-8/19	PI	1		v.o.
8/11	WBWS	60	S. Williams	8/10	Nantucket	24		L. Dunn
8/14	E. Boston (BI)	17	P. Peterson	8/18	Pittsfield	1		G. Hurley
South Polar Skua				8/19	Winchester	1		J. Thomas
7/17, 8/19	Stellwagen Bank	1 ph	J. Reddoch, J. Trimble	8/22	P'town (RP)	16		G. Richards
7/23-8/27	P'town	2 max	P.Flood#, B.Nikula#	8/28	Chatham	12		L. Schibley#
8/12	N. Truro	1	J. Young	Roseate Tern				
Pomarine Jaeger				7/29	PI	6		T. Wetmore
7/23	P'town	2	B. Nikula	8/6	P'town (RP)	225		P. Flood
8/11	E. of Chatham	1	B. Nikula#	8/17	Monomoy NWR	275		B. Winn#
Parasitic Jaeger				8/24	Chatham	200		C. Goodrich
7/15-8/12	P'town	15 max	B. Nikula#, S. Arena	8/27	Nantucket	300		L. Dunn
7/15-7/17	Westport	1	E. Lipton + v.o.	Common Tern				
Long-tailed Jaeger				thr	P'town	1700 max		B. Nikula#
7/30	P'town	2	1S, 2S	7/5	PI	50		R. Heil
8/17	Monomoy NWR	1	A. Kneidel	7/22	Quincy	50		P. Peterson
Black Guillemot				7/29	Westport	123		M. Lynch#
7/29	Rockport (AP)	1	N. Dubrow	Arctic Tern				
8/14	PI	1	T. Wetmore	7/8	N. Truro	1	1S	B. Nikula
Black-legged Kittiwake				7/23	P'town	2	1S	B. Nikula#
7/8	N. Truro	80	B. Nikula	8/13	Westport	1		L. Waters#
7/14	P'town	8	B. Nikula	Forster's Tern				
7/29	Rockport (AP)	1	N. Dubrow	7/16	Plymouth B.	1		J. Eckerson
Sabine's Gull				8/1	Quincy	2		D. Burton
8/18-8/19	P'town (RP)	3 max	B. Nikula# + v.o.	8/1	PI	1		D. Adrien
Bonaparte's Gull				8/16	Acoaxet	1		M. Lynch#
7/8	N. Truro	40	B. Nikula	Royal Tern				
7/24-8/18	Pittsfield (Onota L.)	1	J. Pierce + v.o.	7/1-7/9	P'town (RP)	1		P. Flood#
7/28	Nbpt H.	25	P. + F. Vale	7/10	Nantucket	1		N. Foley
7/30	Rockport	4	J. Berry#	7/13	Rockport (AP)	1		R. Heil
8/9	Revere B.	74	R. Stymeist	7/17	Westport	1		E. Lipton
8/19	Essex	42	D. Brown	7/18	Dennis	1		L. Schibley
8/24	PI	34	D. Prima	7/29	Ipswich (CB)	1		N. Dubrow
Black-headed Gull				8/15	N. Truro	1		B. Nikula
7/5-8/28	P'town (RP)	1	v.o.	8/17	Quincy	1	ph	D. Burton#
7/14-8/19	Dennis	2 max	P. Flood + v.o.	Black Skimmer				
Little Gull				7/13	Monomoy NWR	6		M. Miller
7/1-8/3	P'town	2 max	B. Nikula + v.o.	8/20	Edgartown	17		M. Eppedio

CUCKOOS THROUGH FINCHES

The fall migration of Common Nighthawk, beginning in the last weeks of August, is an event to which many birders look forward. However, reports of this enigmatic goatsucker in Massachusetts appear to be decreasing in recent years, consistent with a general population decline. A recent study from the American Bird Conservancy showed populations of Common Nighthawk and other aerial insectivores, including Chimney Swift, have dropped by more than 70 percent since the mid-1970s. **Chuck-wills-widows** were noted from Plymouth, Chappaquiddick, and Falmouth.

Early to mid-July is still a good time to get a pulse on breeding bird abundance. A South Shore Bird Club trip to Quabbin Reservoir (Gate 10) on July 1 tallied some impressive numbers: 11 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, 11 Eastern Wood Pewees, 78 Red-eyed Vireos, 26 Veeries, 54 Ovenbirds, 24 Chestnut-sided Warblers, and 16 Scarlet Tanagers. Another census in Wendell on July 15 recorded 126 Red-eyed Vireos, 53 Eastern Towhees and 20 Scarlet Tanagers. Purple Martins had a very successful nesting season. Colonies in Rehoboth fledged 442 young, Mashpee 180, and Plum Island 109. **Blue Grosbeaks** were confirmed nesting at the Frances Crane Wildlife Management Area in Falmouth, only the second documented nesting in Massachusetts. The first nesting was confirmed just last year at Cumberland Farms in Middleboro. The full report of the Falmouth nesting by Nathaniel Marchessault appears in the October 2017 issue of *Bird Observer* Volume 45, No 5, pp. 326–329.

The fall migration really kicks off in August when tens of thousands of Tree Swallows gather along our coasts. On Plum Island, an estimated 100,000 birds were noted on August 1 along with 5,000 Barn Swallows and 500 Bank Swallows. A report of an Olive-sided Flycatcher on August 7 in West Roxbury was early for a migrant but reports of birds in Pittsfield and Sudbury at the end of August were in the typical migration window. Other early migrants included: a Swainson's Thrush in Wayland on August 17, a Philadelphia Vireo at Plum Island on August 19, and a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher in Colrain on August 21. During this period a total of 28 warbler species were reported, including four early Connecticut Warblers.

Rarities are unusual during this period; a **Say's Phoebe** on August 31 at the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary was the first August record for the species in Massachusetts. The previous earliest report was September 7, 2015 on Nantucket. A **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was photographed on Nantucket on August 23. Red Crossbills were reported from Camp Edwards on Cape Cod and single Evening Grosbeaks were noted from Royalston, Colrain and Tolland.

R. Stymeist

Yellow-billed Cuckoo			8/17	Waltham	1	J. Forbes
thr	Reports of indiv. from 5 locations		8/25	Winchester	1	R. LaFontaine
8/11	Winchendon	2	M. Lynch#	Barred Owl		
Black-billed Cuckoo			7/1	Quabbin (G10)	1	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
7/1-7/30	PI	1	J. Keeley + v.o.	7/16	Sandisfield	2 1d
7/15	Stoughton	2	G. d'Entremont	7/16	Gardner	2
7/31	Huntington	2	M. Lynch#	8/9	Ware R. IBA	1
8/11	Winchendon	2	M. Lynch#	8/11	Winchendon	1
Barn Owl			8/31	Natick	1	G. Dysart
7/28	Nantucket	1	N. Foley	Common Nighthawk		
Eastern Screech-Owl			8/19	Easthampton	285	J. Laffley
7/17	Worc.	1	M. Lynch#	8/26	ONWR	89
8/5	Newburyport	1	N. Landry#	8/26	Grafton	180
8/24	Winchester	1	P. Devaney	8/26	Leicester	122
8/26	Westboro	1	T. Spahr	8/28	Longmeadow	91
8/28	GMNWR	1	J. Kovner#	8/29, 8/30	MtA	30, 40
8/29	Medway	1	B. Knowlton	8/31	Lynnfield	17
Great Horned Owl				Chuck-will's-widow		
7/6	PI	1	T. Wetmore	7/3	Falmouth	2
7/7	Concord	1 ad, 3 fl	P. Peterson	7/4	Chappaquiddick	1
8/10	MSSF	2	G. d'Entremont	7/4-7/8	Plymouth	1

Eastern Whip-poor-will				Eastern Kingbird			
8/thr	Quabbin Pk	2 max	L. Therrien	7/2	Sheffield	11	M. Lynch#
8/1	Wachusett Res.	3	B. Robo	7/19	Northfield	14	M. Lynch#
8/1	PI	1	R. Heil	8/1	PI	37	R. Heil
Chimney Swift				8/19	Quabog IBA	23	M. Lynch#
7/27	Quabog IBA	14	M. Lynch#	White-eyed Vireo			
8/15	Medford	30	J. Kovner	8/16	Acoaxet	5	M. Lynch#
8/22	MtA	75	R. Stymeist#	Yellow-throated Vireo			
Ruby-throated Hummingbird				7/2	Sheffield	7	M. Lynch#
7/29	Westport	5	M. Lynch#	7/12	Quabbin	5	M. Lynch#
7/31	Huntington	18	M. Lynch#	Blue-headed Vireo			
8/12	Essex	6	P. Brown	7/15	Wendell	8	M. Lynch#
8/24	GMNWR	9	A. Bragg#	7/23	Sandisfield	10	M. Lynch#
Red-headed Woodpecker				8/11	Winchendon	10	M. Lynch#
7/1-7/17	Lexington	1	J. Williams	Philadelphia Vireo			
7/17-8/31	Plymouth	1 ad ph	Susan Abele	8/19	PI	1	T. Wetmore
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker				8/26	Warren	1	M. Lynch#
7/1	Quabbin (G10)	11	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	Warbling Vireo			
7/2	Sheffield	9	M. Lynch#	7/2	Sheffield	12	M. Lynch#
7/15	Wendell	8	M. Lynch#	7/5	Quabog IBA	4	M. Lynch#
Pileated Woodpecker				Red-eyed Vireo			
7/2	Sheffield	2	M. Lynch#	7/1	Quabbin (G10)	78	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
7/14-8/26	Ipswich	2 max	J. Berry	7/15	Wendell	126	M. Lynch#
8/25	Winchendon	2	M. Lynch#	7/16	Sandisfield	83	M. Lynch#
8/27	Wendell	3	M. Lynch#	7/31	Huntington	72	M. Lynch#
American Kestrel				8/1	PI	1 ad, 2 juv	R. Heil
7/5	E. Boston (BI)	2	DCR (S. Riley)	Fish Crow			
7/19	Northfield	2 f imm	M. Lynch#	7/15	Stoughton	3	G. d'Entremont
8/5	Wachusett Res. m, f, 3 juv		B. Kamp	7/16	Nbpt	2	J. Berry#
8/20	Saugus	1	S. Zende#	Common Raven			
8/25	Winchendon	1 imm	M. Lynch#	7/12	PI	4	T. Wetmore
Merlin				7/16	Tolland	2	M. Lynch#
thr	Reports of indiv. from 7 locations			7/16	Dorchester	2	P. Peterson
8/3-8/29	Nantucket	2	D. Blatt + v.o.	7/23	Bedford	2	J. Forbes
Peregrine Falcon				8/6	New Marlborough	2	M. Lynch#
thr	Reports of indiv. from 8 locations			8/11	Winchendon	5	M. Lynch#
thr	PI	3 max	T. Wetmore + v.o.	8/24	Mt Wachusett	7	R. Chase
8/9	E. Boston (BI)	2	P. Peterson	Horned Lark			
8/20	Winthrop	2	P. Peterson	8/26	P'town (RP)	6	G. d'Entremont
Olive-sided Flycatcher				Northern Rough-winged Swallow			
8/7-8/8	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	M. McMahon	7/4	Wakefield	2	P. + F. Vale
8/20	Carlisle	1	T. + D. Brownrigg	7/9	Ipswich	4	J. Berry
8/28	Pittsfield	1	G. Hurley#	7/9	Huntington	2	M. Lynch#
8/31	Sudbury	1	J. Forbes	7/14-8/21	PI	3 max	v.o.
Eastern Wood-Pewee				7/15	E. Boston (BI)	5	DCR (S. Riley)
7/1	Quabbin (G10)	11	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	7/28	W. Newbury	12	P. + F. Vale
7/31	Huntington	12	M. Lynch#	8/25	Winchendon	2	M. Lynch#
8/4	Georgetown	10	J. Berry#	Purple Martin			
8/13	Ware R. IBA	11	M. Lynch#	thr	Mashpee	180 yg b	M. Keleher
8/13	Ipswich	10	J. Berry	7/1	PI	24	J. Keeley#
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher				7/16	Rehoboth	116 pr	R. Marr
8/21	Colrain	2	M. Lynch#	7/16	Seekonk	7 pr	R. Marr
8/25	Winchendon	1	M. Lynch#	7/16	Nbpt	14	J. Berry#
8/29	Hadley	1	A. Griffiths	7/28	WBWS	3 ad 4 yg	M. Faherty
Acadian Flycatcher				8/15	Barnstable	28	M. Keleher#
7/1-7/9	Quabbin (G8, G10)	2 max	C.Whitebread#, v.o.	8/24	GMNWR	1	T. Swain
Alder Flycatcher				Tree Swallow			
7/2	Sheffield	3	M. Lynch#	7/29	Acoaxet	630	M. Lynch#
7/2	Wayland	2	B. Harris	8/1	PI	100000	R. Heil
7/31	Huntington	5	M. Lynch#	8/19	Ipswich (CB)	2000	J. Berry
8/13	Royalston	4	G. d'Entremont#	8/19	Chatham	1000	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
Willow Flycatcher				Bank Swallow			
7/5	PI	7	R. Heil	7/23	Ipswich (CB)	30	J. Berry
7/22	Eastham (FH)	6	M. Faherty#	7/27	Quabog IBA	10	M. Lynch#
Least Flycatcher				8/1	PI	500	R. Heil
7/2	Sheffield	17	M. Lynch#	8/21	Mt Wachusett	5	R. Chase
8/18	Lexington (DM)	2	J. Forbes	8/30	GMNWR	5	J. Forbes
Say's Phoebe				Barn Swallow			
8/31	WBWS	1	S. Sullivan#	7/29	Acoaxet	275	M. Lynch#
Great Crested Flycatcher				8/1	PI	5000	R. Heil
7/15	Wendell	3	M. Lynch#	8/5	Quabog IBA	150	M. Lynch#
7/16	Middleboro	4	G. d'Entremont	8/17	GMNWR	100	J. Stoner#
7/29	Acoaxet	3	M. Lynch#				

Cliff Swallow				Worm-eating Warbler			
7/3	Falmouth	1	R. Doherty	7/26-7/31	Quincy	3 max	P. Peterson
8/2	Chatham	2	B. Harris	Louisiana Waterthrush			
8/6	PI	2	J. Keeley#	7/9	Huntington	2	M. Lynch#
8/12	Wachusett Res.	1	E. Kittredge	7/16	Sandisfield	2	M. Lynch#
8/16	Acoaxet	1	M. Lynch#	7/19	Northfield	1	M. Lynch#
Red-breasted Nuthatch				8/3	W. Roxbury	1	P. Peterson
7/12	PI	1	T. Wetmore	8/6	PI	1	B. Harris
7/16	Middleboro	5	G. d'Entremont	8/10-8/16	Belchertown	1	L. Therrien + v.o.
8/11	Winchendon	49	M. Lynch#	Northern Waterthrush			
8/13	Royalston	7	G. d'Entremont#	8/5	WBWS	4	J. Trimble#
8/21	Colrain	23	M. Lynch#	8/7	Nahant	8	L. Pivacek
Brown Creeper				8/28	Winchester	2	R. LaFontaine
7/8	Harwich	1	G. d'Entremont	8/29	PI	4	R. Heil
8/5	Stoughton	2	G. d'Entremont	Blue-winged Warbler			
House Wren				8/2	DFWS	1	MAS (P. Sowizral)
7/26	Quincy	18	P. Peterson	8/3	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	P. Peterson
7/31	Huntington	8	M. Lynch#	8/5	Stoughton	1	G. d'Entremont
8/27	Wendell	6	M. Lynch#	8/9	Ware R. IBA	4	M. Lynch#
Winter Wren				8/20	Winchester	1	R. LaFontaine
7/15	Wendell	2	M. Lynch#	Black-and-white Warbler			
8/21	Colrain	1	M. Lynch#	7/1	Quabbin (G10)	6	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
Marsh Wren				7/2	Sheffield	6	M. Lynch#
7/2	Ipswich	13	J. Berry#	8/thr	PI	2 max	v.o.
7/5	PI	44	R. Heil	8/13	Ware R. IBA	14	M. Lynch#
7/6	GMNWR	34	A. Bragg#	8/20	Tolland	4	M. Lynch#
7/8	Harwich	8	G. d'Entremont	8/22	MNWS	2	R. Heil
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher				8/27	Wendell	10	M. Lynch#
8/3	W. Roxbury	5	P. Peterson	Tennessee Warbler			
8/5	Ipswich	2	J. Berry#	8/24	Brookfield	1	B. Robo
8/10	DFWS	3	MAS (P. Sowizral)	8/28	Lenox	2	J. Pierce
Eastern Bluebird				Connecticut Warbler			
7/2	Sheffield	7	M. Lynch#	8/27	Northfield	1	J. Coleman
8/5	Ipswich	8	J. Berry#	8/28	Pittsfield	1	G. Hurley#
8/22	DFWS	7	MAS (P. Sowizral)	8/28	MBO	1 b	T. Lloyd-Evans#
Veery				8/30	Rockport	1	R. Heil
7/1	Quabbin (G10)	26	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	Mourning Warbler			
7/2	Sheffield	25	M. Lynch#	7/2-8/24	Quabbin Pk	2 max	L. Therrien + v.o.
7/5	Quabog IBA	38	M. Lynch#	8/22	MNWS	1 imm	R. Heil
7/15	Wendell	31	M. Lynch#	Common Yellowthroat			
Swainson's Thrush				7/1	Quabbin (G10)	28	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
7/17	Concord	1	G. Dupont	7/2	Sheffield	46	M. Lynch#
8/16	Quabbin (G40)	1	M. Ess-Why#	7/5	PI	30	R. Heil
8/17	Wayland	1	B. Harris	7/15	Wendell	34	M. Lynch#
Hermit Thrush				8/25	Winchendon	27	M. Lynch#
7/1	Quabbin (G10)	6	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	Hooded Warbler			
7/8	Middleboro	6	G. d'Entremont	8/26	Falmouth	1	S. Surner
7/15	Wendell	14	M. Lynch#	American Redstart			
7/23	Sandisfield	5	M. Lynch#	7/2	Sheffield	19	M. Lynch#
8/11	Winchendon	32	M. Lynch#	7/5	Quabog IBA	14	M. Lynch#
Wood Thrush				8/1	PI	5	R. Heil
7/1	Quabbin (G10)	4	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	8/23	Wakefield	5	J. + T. Beers
7/2	Sheffield	7	M. Lynch#	8/27	Wendell	11	M. Lynch#
7/5	Quabog IBA	12	M. Lynch#	Cape May Warbler			
Gray Catbird				8/25	Shutesbury	1	B. Emily
7/4	Wakefield	29	P. + F. Vale	8/26	Stow	1	C. Tessaglia-Hymes
8/16	Acoaxet	29	M. Lynch#	8/29	Belchertown	1	L. Therrien
8/19	Quabog IBA	43	M. Lynch#	Northern Parula			
8/21	MBO	40 b	T. Lloyd-Evans#	7/22	Marlborough	1	T. Spahr
8/29	PI	60	R. Heil	7/23	Medford	1	K. Hartel
Brown Thrasher				8/21	Petersham	1	N. Demers#
7/5-7/14	E. Boston (BI)	1	DCR (S. Riley)	8/25	Shutesbury	1	B. Robo
8/29	PI	16	R. Heil	8/26	Wayland	2	B. Harris
Cedar Waxwing				8/29	Quabbin (G29)	1	N. Demers#
7/2	Sheffield	19	M. Lynch#	Magnolia Warbler			
8/1	PI	54	R. Heil	7/22-thr	Indiv. reported from 5 locations		
8/21	Colrain	19	M. Lynch#	8/27	Wendell	4	M. Lynch#
Ovenbird				8/31	MBO	1 b	T. Lloyd-Evans#
7/1	Quabbin (G10)	54	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	Bay-breasted Warbler			
7/5	Quabog IBA	18	M. Lynch#	8/28	Lenox	1	J. Pierce
7/9	Huntington	10	M. Lynch#	8/29	PI	1	R. Heil
8/21	Boston (RKG)	1	A. Laquidara				

Blackburnian Warbler				8/11	Winchendon	25		M. Lynch#
7/1	Quabbin (G10)	11	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)	8/21	Colrain	4		M. Lynch#
8/6	Sandisfield	2	imm	M. Lynch#	Savannah Sparrow			
8/6	Ashby	1		J. Forbes	7/3, 8/29	PI	16, 3	R. Heil
8/9	Ware R. IBA	3		M. Lynch#	7/22	Plymouth Airport	6	G. d'Entremont#
Yellow Warbler					8/26	Leicester	11	M. Lynch#
7/2	Sheffield	12		M. Lynch#	Swamp Sparrow			
7/5	PI	26		R. Heil	7/2	Sheffield	12	M. Lynch#
7/8	Acoaxet	15		M. Lynch#	7/4	Wakefield	5	P. + F. Vale
Chestnut-sided Warbler					7/6	GMNWR	8	A. Bragg#
7/1	Quabbin (G10)	24	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)		7/27	Quabog IBA	18	M. Lynch#
7/9	Huntington	13		M. Lynch#	Eastern Towhee			
8/6	Sandisfield	11		M. Lynch#	7/1	Quabbin (G10)	18	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
Blackpoll Warbler					7/15	Wendell	53	M. Lynch#
8/30	HRWMA	1		B. Robo	8/10	MSSF	21	G. d'Entremont
Black-throated Blue Warbler					8/25	Winchendon	43	M. Lynch#
7/1	Quabbin (G10)	22	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)		8/29	PI	24	R. Heil
7/15	Wendell	12		M. Lynch#	Scarlet Tanager			
8/16	Quabbin (G40)	2	ad, juv	M. Ess-Why#	7/1	Quabbin (G10)	16	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
8/31	MBO	1	b	T. Lloyd-Evans#	7/15	Wendell	20	M. Lynch#
Pine Warbler					7/15	Ipswich	4	m J. Berry
7/1	Quabbin (G10)	25	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)		7/23	Sandisfield	14	M. Lynch#
7/15	Wendell	16		M. Lynch#	8/1, 8/29	PI	1,1	D. Adrien, R. Heil
8/25	Winchendon	43		M. Lynch#	Rose-breasted Grosbeak			
Yellow-rumped Warbler					7/1	Quabbin (G10)	8	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
7/1	Quabbin (G10)	5	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)		7/2	Ipswich	3	m J. Berry#
7/15	Wendell	8		M. Lynch#	7/15	Wendell	ad, 7	imm M. Lynch#
8/25	Winchendon	11		M. Lynch#	Blue Grosbeak			
8/26	Townsend	1		J. Forbes	7/2-7/6	Cumb. Farms	1	G. d'Entremont
8/29	PI	1		R. Heil	7/23-8/18	Falmouth	2	ad, 1 fl N. Marchessault, v.o.
Prairie Warbler					Indigo Bunting			
7/26	Quincy	2		P. Peterson	7/5	Quabog IBA	8	ad 3 yg M. Lynch#
8/1-8/29	PI	1	ad f	R. Heil + v.o.	7/9	Ipswich	5	m J. Berry
8/10	MSSF	2		G. d'Entremont	7/31	Huntington	29	M. Lynch#
8/27	Wendell	5		M. Lynch#	Dickcissel			
Black-throated Green Warbler					8/1	N. Dighton	1	A. Eckerson
7/1	Quabbin (G10)	21	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)		8/11	Brewster	1	S. Finnegan#
7/15	Wendell	21		M. Lynch#	8/14	PI	1	T. Wetmore
8/25	Winchendon	14		M. Lynch#	8/17	Hadley	1	L. Therrien
Canada Warbler					8/21	Nantucket	2	K. Rogers
7/15-8/26	Indiv. reported from 5 locations				8/26	Quincy	1	D. Burton
8/9	Ware R. IBA	2		M. Lynch#	Bobolink			
8/16	MBO	1	b	T. Lloyd-Evans#	7/5	PI	49	R. Heil
8/22	MNWS	2		R. Heil	7/16	DFWS	30	MAS (P. Sowizral)
Wilson's Warbler					7/27	Quabog IBA	32	M. Lynch#
8/22	MNWS	1		R. Heil	8/19	P'town (RP)	2	J. Trimble#
8/23	Eastham	1		M. Faherty	8/24	GMNWR	34	A. Bragg#
8/31	MBO	1	b	T. Lloyd-Evans#	Eastern Meadowlark			
Yellow-breasted Chat					7/22	Plymouth Airport	2	G. d'Entremont#
8/20	Dartmouth	1		B. King	Yellow-headed Blackbird			
8/31	MBO	1	b	T. Lloyd-Evans#	8/23	Nantucket	1	ph S. Fee
Grasshopper Sparrow					Orchard Oriole			
7/1-7/29	Norfolk	1		J. Johnson + v.o.	7/27	Newton	1	M. Kaufman
Nelson's Sparrow					7/29-8/5	Ipswich	2	max v.o.
8/21	PI	1		T. Wetmore	8/9	Concord	1	m C. Winstanley
Saltmarsh Sparrow					8/10	Wayland	1	B. Harris
7/5	PI	56		R. Heil	8/11	PI	6	T. Wetmore
7/8	Westport	13		M. Lynch#	8/12	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	J. Huestis
7/13	E. Boston (BI)	4		DCR (S. Riley)	Baltimore Oriole			
8/5	Eastham	10		J. Trimble#	7/5	Quabog IBA	12	M. Lynch#
Seaside Sparrow					7/15	Wendell	5	M. Lynch#
8/6	Newbury	1		N. Dubrow	8/15	PI	20	R. Heil
8/8	PI	ad, 2	fl	T. Wetmore	Purple Finch			
Field Sparrow					7/15	Wendell	3	M. Lynch#
7/14	PI	ad, 2	juv	D. Prima	8/6	New Marlborough	3	M. Lynch#
8/10	MSSF	2	ad, 1	juv G. d'Entremont	8/11	Winchendon	5	M. Lynch#
8/27	Wendell	5		M. Lynch#	8/29	PI	8	R. Heil
Dark-eyed Junco					Red Crossbill			
7/9	Huntington	4		M. Lynch#	7/6, 7/31	Camp Edwards	2,3	J. McCumber
8/6	Ashby	5		J. Forbes	Evening Grosbeak			
8/21	Colrain	3		M. Lynch#	7/21	Royalston	3	pr, juv f E. LeBlanc
White-throated Sparrow					8/20	Tolland	1	M. Lynch#
7/28	Nantucket	1	b	N. Foley	8/21	Colrain	1	M. Lynch#

ABBREVIATIONS FOR BIRD SIGHTINGS

Taxonomic order is based on AOS checklist, Seventh edition, up to the 57th Supplement, as published in *Auk* 2016, vol. 133:544-560 (see <<http://checklist.aou.org/>>).

Location-#	MAS Breeding Bird Atlas Block	Nbpt	Newburyport
AA	Arnold Arboretum, Boston	ONWR	Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge
ABC	Allen Bird Club	PG	Public Garden
AP	Andrews Point, Rockport	PI	Plum Island
APd	Allens Pond, S. Dartmouth	Pd	Pond
B.	Beach	POP	Point of Pines, Revere
Barre FD	Barre Falls Dam	PR	Pinnacle Rock, Malden
BHI	Boston Harbor Islands	P'town	Provincetown
BI	Belle Isle, E. Boston	Pont.	Pontoosuc Lake, Lanesboro
BR	Bass Rocks, Gloucester	RP	Race Point, Provincetown
BBC	Brookline Bird Club	Res.	Reservoir
BMB	Broad Meadow Brook, Worcester	RKG	Rose Kennedy Greenway, Boston
BNC	Boston Nature Center, Mattapan	SB	South Beach, Chatham
CB	Crane Beach, Ipswich	SN	Sandy Neck, Barnstable
CGB	Coast Guard Beach, Eastham	SRV	Sudbury River Valley
CP	Crooked Pond, Boxford	SSBC	South Shore Bird Club
Cambr.	Cambridge	TASL	Take A Second Look, Boston Harbor Census
CCBC	Cape Cod Bird Club	WBWS	Wellfleet Bay WS
Corp. B.	Corporation Beach, Dennis	WE	World's End, Hingham
Cumb. Farms	Cumberland Farms, Middleboro	WMWS	Wachusett Meadow WS
DM	Dunback Meadow	Wompatuck SP	Hingham, Cohasset, Scituate, Norwell
DFWS	Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary	Worc.	Worcester
DWMA	Delaney WMA, Stow, Bolton, Harvard	WSF	Willowdale State Forest, Ipswich
DWWS	Daniel Webster WS	Other Abbreviations	
EP	Eastern Point, Gloucester	ad	adult
FE	First Encounter Beach, Eastham	b	banded
FH	Fort Hill, Eastham	br	breeding
FP	Fresh Pond, Cambridge	dk	dark (morph)
FPk	Franklin Park, Boston	f	female
G40	Gate 40, Quabbin Res.	fide	on the authority of
GMNWR	Great Meadows NWR	fl	fledgling
H.	Harbor	imm	immature
HPt	Halibut Point, Rockport	juv	juvenile
HP	Horn Pond, Woburn	lt	light (morph)
HRWMA	High Ridge WMA, Gardner	m	male
I.	Island	max	maximum
IRWS	Ipswich River WS	migr	migrating
L.	Ledge	n	nesting
MAS	Mass Audubon	ph	photographed
MP	Millennium Park, W. Roxbury	pl	plumage
MV	Martha's Vineyard	pr	pair
MBWMA	Martin Burns WMA, Newbury	S	summer (1S = first summer)
MI	Morris Island	thr	throughout reporting period
MNWS	Marblehead Neck WS	v.o.	various observers
MSSF	Myles Standish State Forest, Plymouth	W	winter (2W = second winter)
MtA	Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambr.	yg	young
NAC	Nine Acre Corner, Concord	#	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 email. 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 email submission, visit: <<http://www.birdobserver.org/Contact-Us/Submit-Sightings>>.

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

A Birder's Quick Guide to HUNTING SEASONS

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

2017 Seasons*

Deer	Youth Hunt	Sept. 30
	Archery	Oct. 16–Nov. 25
	Shotgun	Nov. 27–Dec. 9
	Primitive Firearms	Dec. 11–30
Turkey	Youth Hunt	Apr. 28, 2018
	Fall	Oct. 23–Nov. 4
	Spring	Apr. 30–May 26, 2018
Pheasant		Oct. 14–Nov. 25
Waterfowl		Sept. 1–Feb. 15, 2018

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

Tips

- Do what the hunters do! Wear a bright orange vest or hat to stay visible.
- If you see someone hunting or hear shots, call out to let them know you're there.
- Be courteous. Hunters and birders both want to reduce unnecessary noise.
- Most MassWildlife lands, including Wildlife Management Areas and Wildlife Conservation Easements, allow hunting.
- Most state parks and forests are open to hunting, and many towns allow hunting on municipal lands.
- Hunting is not permitted on Sundays throughout Massachusetts.

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ABOUT THE COVER

Herring Gull

Gregarious and conspicuous, the Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*) is our most common and widespread North American gull species. It is a large white-headed gull, which in adult breeding plumage is also white below with a gray mantle and wings, and wingtips that are black with white spots. The legs are pink and the bill is yellow with a red spot near its tip. In winter, the head and neck are finely streaked with brown. Young Herring Gulls usually do not achieve adult plumage until their fourth year. Juvenile and immature plumages are highly variable, change with age, and differ geographically. Thus they can be confused with juveniles and immatures of more than a half dozen other gull species. In general, sub-adult birds are mottled brown with bills that are dark or pinkish with dark ends. To add to the confusion, Herring Gulls frequently hybridize with other gull species. Good luck with identifying molt classes and separating juveniles and immatures from sub-adults of other gull species! Six subspecies of Herring Gull are recognized worldwide by some authorities, but only *L. a. smithsonianus* breeds in North America.

Herring Gulls have a circumpolar breeding distribution. In North America, they breed from Alaska to Newfoundland in a broad swath across Canada, including parts of Baffin Island. In the United States, their breeding colonies are found in the Great Lakes region and from New England south to North Carolina. Most Herring Gulls are partial migrants or nomadic except for birds nesting in eastern Alaska and along the East Coast from Massachusetts to North Carolina, where they are year-round residents. The migrants winter along coastal areas in the west from northern Canada south to central Mexico, and in the east from North Carolina south along the Gulf coast to Belize, the Caribbean Islands, and parts of Central America to Panama. They are also found inland throughout the southern states west to Oklahoma and in limited numbers north to the Great Lakes.

In Massachusetts, Herring Gulls are locally abundant breeders, particularly along the coast and on islands, and are abundant migrants and wintering birds, primarily along the coast. Herring Gulls did not nest in Massachusetts until the twentieth century. Eggers and plume hunters seriously reduced their numbers until the 1930s when protection and ready access to large food resources provided by garbage dumps and other human refuse caused spectacular population increases. Herring Gull populations have since stabilized and are actually now declining, partly due to the closure and capping of dumps and the cleaning up of harbors in Massachusetts.

Herring Gulls are monogamous and mate for life. They are territorial and defend the nest site aggressively, particularly when the young chicks are present. They have several calls and displays that are given in a variety of circumstances. The long or trumpeting call functions in individual recognition and is given by both sexes when a mate returns to the nest. The mew call, a single drawn out note, given while in a forward bent posture with neck extended, is performed during courtship, nest relief, and in aggressive situations. The choking call is given by the pair as they crouch,

breasts forward, tails up during early courtship, nest relief, and territorial disputes. Another display includes an upright posture, usually by the male, with neck stretched upwards and head pointed down, and sometimes the wings slightly lifted, which is common during territorial defense. This may lead to a charge, running at an intruder with wings flapping. In territorial disputes the male may pull grass, which is considered a threat display. Head-tossing by females and young may serve to elicit feeding by the male. Males may mate-guard females early in the nesting cycle. In winter, Herring Gulls defend feeding areas, for example, on beaches, and some gulls defend feeding areas year-round.

Herring Gulls nest in mixed-species colonies that sometimes number in the thousands of pairs, usually with other gull species. They prefer islands or other areas that provide protection from mammalian predators. The pair selects the nest site, usually protected from the wind near a shrub, rock, or other large object, and usually in an area with vegetation. The nest is a scrape lined with feathers and vegetation. They may make more than one nest but only use one. The typical clutch is three smooth, olive to greenish eggs, spotted or splotched with dark colors. Both sexes develop three brood patches and share incubation duties for about one month until hatching. The chicks are semi-precocial: their eyes are open, they are covered with down, and are capable of leaving the nest hours after hatching. Both parents brood the chicks for the first week or so and during inclement weather thereafter. Herring Gulls will mob mammalian and avian predators. The young fledge after six or seven weeks. The parents feed the chicks by regurgitation on their territory for three to four months, as well as for several months after leaving the territory.

Herring Gulls feed on a wide variety of marine organisms including invertebrates, fish, and the eggs and young—and occasionally adults—of other seabirds. They also are scavengers, feeding on carrion and frequently pillaging human garbage dumps. Accomplished predators and scavengers, they will follow an outgoing tide to catch worms, dive into shallow water for invertebrates, and follow fishing boats for scraps and bycatch. Herring Gulls dropping bivalves or gastropods from heights onto hard surfaces to break them is a common sight. They are the ultimate foraging generalists, although individuals may specialize.

Herring Gull predatory behavior impacts other seabird species at nesting colonies, which has prompted human intervention through culling and egg destruction. They are preyed upon by eagles, falcons, and owls. Breeding colonies are preyed upon by foxes, domestic dogs, raccoons, and herons. Their generalist foraging behavior also exposes them to pesticides and other harmful pollutants. Herring Gulls have not fared well in areas with expanding Great Black-backed Gull populations, and human development often restricts breeding habitat. However, their circumpolar breeding distribution and flexible foraging behavior bode well for the future of Herring Gulls. 🐦

William E. Davis, Jr.

AT A GLANCE

October 2017



WAYNE R. PETERSEN

Large-eyed, long-legged, slim-necked, straight-billed, and extensively white below is the impression provided by this issue's mystery species. More than anything, however, it is the bird's long pale legs that offer the best clue to its identity. Although herons and egrets have undeniably long legs, there are enough conflicting features in the photograph that few readers are likely to think in that direction. Indeed, the leg length alone of the mystery bird leaves only a shorebird of some sort as a viable alternative.

With a shorebird in mind, the fact that the bird clearly has light-colored legs is an important clue, a characteristic especially noticeable when viewed in color on the *Bird Observer* website. This feature is particularly relevant when one considers that most light-legged shorebirds have variously streaked underparts (e.g., yellowlegs, Upland Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper), or else they are buffy below and not strikingly white (e.g., Buff-breasted Sandpiper, juvenile Ruff). There are only two regularly occurring shorebird species in Massachusetts that have strikingly white underparts and light-colored legs: juvenile and nonbreeding plumaged Spotted Sandpipers and Wilson's Phalarope.

Spotted Sandpipers not in breeding plumage always have brownish sides to their upper breast and a white spur-like marking in-between the brownish sides and in front of the bend of the wings. They also have relatively short legs. Clearly the mystery species lacks brownish sides to its upper breast and its legs are decidedly long. When these features are combined with the bird's longish thin neck, prominent white face and eye stripe, and straight thin bill, it can only be a Wilson's Phalarope (*Phalaropus*

tricolor). In breeding plumage an adult Wilson's Phalarope would exhibit dark legs, but from the pictured view it is difficult to determine with certainty if the bird is a juvenile or an adult in nonbreeding plumage.

Wilson's Phalaropes are rare and sporadic breeders in Massachusetts and scarce migrants in both spring and fall, most often appearing from late April to early June, and again in August and September. Though most frequent on the coast, they also occur inland with some regularity. The author photographed this juvenile Wilson's Phalarope at South Beach, Chatham, Massachusetts, on August 10, 2008. 🐦

Wayne R. Petersen

ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST

John Sill

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



Cock-of-the-Rock, by Dave Parish

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AT A GLANCE



WAYNE R. PETERSEN

MORE HOT BIRDS



Paul Dutil's first-ever eBird submission was a great one. He was kayaking on the Connecticut River oxbow near Northampton and encountered an immature **White Ibis**, only the fourth state record west of the Quabbin. Unfortunately, heavy rains in the days that followed made the water much deeper in the areas where the bird had been feeding; neither he nor anyone else could relocate it after his original report. Paul took the photo on the left.

Sean Williams and Maili Waters found a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher at the Highland Light golf course in Truro. After leaving there it was relocated at the nearby Old North Cemetery. It bounced between these two locations for the next few days. Sean took the photo on the right.



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**PERIODICALS
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